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SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- **Area III Piedmont Envirothon**
- **North Carolina Envirothon**

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

VAD	2
Spring Meeting	2
Education Banquet	3
Farm Family, Teachers and Partners in Conservation	4
Annual Meeting	5

Conservation Connection

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Area III Piedmont Envirothon

Each year more than 200 students from an eleven county area gather at Elon University every March to gain hands on environmental experience as a part of the Area III Envirothon.

The Envirothon program is sponsored by the NC Association of Soil and Water conservation districts. There is competition for middle schools and one for High Schools.

Area III consists of Alamance, Caswell, Chatham, Guilford, Lee, Montgomery, Moore, Orange, Person, Randolph and Rockingham Counties. Students come together in school sponsored teams to study and test their knowledge of the natural resources.

Middle school teams involve of 5th-8th graders and high school teams involve 9th-12th graders. The teams should consist of 5 members, with one adult advisor and one alternate.

The Public, Private and home schools, school clubs, FFA groups, etc. are all eligible to participate in the Envirothon Program.

The Area III Envirothon was held March 22, 2016.

This year the Soil and Water office sponsored two teams from Lee Early College and one from SanLee Middle School.



The top seven teams from each area competition will go on to compete in the State Envirothon which is normally held late April at Cedarrock Park in Alamance County.

The first place winner in the state competition then moves to the North American Envirothon and will compete with teams from across the United States and Canada.

Board of Supervisors & Staff

Mike Gaster, Chairman

Tony Ragan, Vice Chair

David Dycus, Treasurer

John Gross

Tommy Dalrymple



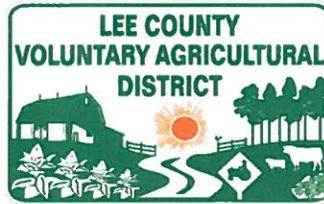
Ryan Faulk, Soil Conservationist

Teresa Nicholson, Administrative Assistant

Darryl Harrington, NRCS District Conservationist

Megan Engel, NRCS Soil Conservationist / Technician

Voluntary Agriculture District



Lee County has a strong agricultural industry. However, our farmers are dealing with increased pressures from the urban encroachment and rural housing development.

Many urban dwellers are moving into rural settings, but do not understand nor appreciate that living next door to a farm may include such issues as noise, odors, dust, insects, early morning or late night schedules of farmers. This has resulted in nuisance suits being filed by new rural residents against their farm neighbors.

To help prevent some of the problems, the State of NC has enabled counties to adopt Voluntary Agricultural Districts.

The objective of Voluntary Agricultural Districts are:

- 1: To encourage the preservation of farmland and natural resources.
- 2: To provide that agricultural community a voice in land-use decisions within the county.

For more information, please contact Lee Soil and Water or North Carolina Cooperative Extension.

Area 3 Spring Meeting

The Area 3 Spring Meeting was held on March 3, 2016, at the Pleasant Union Methodist Church in Julian, NC.

There was a panel discussion from different agencies leaders of Soil and Water. Bruce Rider gave an introduction to the NRCS Client Gateway. The Guest Speakers were Laurie Barnhart and Jessica Proctor of NC Grange and Connect NC, respectively, and spoke about Agriculture and Legislation. Don York spoke of under cover farming and Will Mann spoke on the Science of Cover Crops. The members of the church cooked a wonderful meal for everyone.

The Public Speaking Contest was held with all the 1st place winners of their district. Lee County had two students competing in the Area competition and they both won 1st place. They will go on to the State Public Speaking Contest.

There was an optional tour of a local farm using cover crops.

Education Banquet

The Lee Soil and Water Conservation District held its 2016 Annual Awards Banquet March 15 at the Lee County Farm Bureau Auditorium in the McSwain Extension Education and Agriculture Center. The annual event recognizes conservation efforts promoting good land stewardship and awards winning students and teachers of District sponsored poster, essay and public speaking contests in Lee County.



The theme for the 2015-2016 Contest was “We all live in a Watershed”

5th Grade Poster Contest Winners

Vanessa Martinez Maldonado, 1st place, Kailey Barker 2nd place, Leah Womack 3rd place and Corey Vanderroest, School Winner Nikki Ragland 4th place(not pictured)



6th Grade Essay Contest Winners

William Smith 1st place, Anna Boone 2nd place and

Erica Dodson 3rd place



8th Grade Public Speaking Contest Winners

Mikayla Comer 1st place and Madison Villacorta 3rd place. Not Pictured Aylah Aucompaugh 2nd place

7th Grade Public Speaking Winner

Allison Podlogar was honored for winning first place In the seventh grade public speaking contest.



Conservation Farm Family

Gross Farms was recognized the 2016 Lee County Conservation Farm Family. Gross Farms boasts a diversified enterprise not only with traditional row crops, strawberries and other produce but also an ever-expanding agritourism component that includes a corn maze, pumpking patch and a vareieity of activities to keep visitors of all ages entertained.

Gross Farms understands the importance of resource conservation and they are actively engaged in innovative and conservation practices. water and other conservation work, entertaining and public about the of farm life.



Gross Farms against other Family winners across the Piedmont area of North Carolina.

plementing sound, in-cost effective conserva- In addition to soil, wa-natural resource con-the Gross family enjoys educating the general many positive aspects

will go on to compete Conservation Farm

Pictured from the left are Cody Gross, Colton Gross, Makayla Gross, Kassidy Gross, Tina Gross and John Gross.

Teachers of Winning Students

These teachers of the first place winners were honored with a monetary award to help buy supplies for their classrooms. Jamie Holt from West Lee Middle School was recognized as teacher with the first place winner in the Essay Contest. Bonnie Marshall and Cindy Quiggle from SanLee Middle School were recognized as place winners in the Public Speaking Competition. Jennifer Buchanan (not pictured) from J. Glenn Edwards was also recognized as teacher poster contest winner.



Partners in Conservation

The Partners in Conservation were recognized for volunteering their time to judge the poster and essay contests. In grateful appreciation, the Board presented them with a small gift. These Partners include Carol Cox, Georgia Garner and Betty Lynn Godfrey.

NC Association of Soil and Water Conservation Annual Meeting

The NC Association of Soil and Water Conservation (NCASWCD) held its 72nd Annual Meeting January 3-5, 2016 at the Sheraton Hotel in Durham. Conservation Partners across North Carolina came together and provided training opportunities for district supervisors.

NC State Association President Manly West presided over the meeting. The theme for the Annual meeting this year was "Conservation –Contagious Enthusiasm". Sunday there was a President's welcome reception and dinner. A memorial service was conducted in honor of those supervisors that have passed away in 2015. Commissioner Steve Troxler, NCDA&CS, was the keynote speaker and Dr. Charles Petty, of Family Success Unlimited, Inc. was the speaker. During the General Session meeting on Tuesday, audience members watched the video "Faces of Agriculture: The Albemarle Region". Greg Fishel, Chief Meteorologist, WRAL TV, spoke on climate change. Ray Stalling, General Counsel and Senior Policy Advisor, Staff for US Senator Thom Tills also spoke.

At the banquet held on Tuesday evening, the Outstanding Conservation Farm Family for each region was recognized. President John Langdon gave outgoing remarks followed by remarks from the incoming President Ben Knox.