



Summer 2015

CONSERVATION PAGES

A NEWSLETTER BY MECKLENBURG SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

THE 44TH ANNUAL TREE SEEDLING SALE WAS A HUGE SUCCESS



Mecklenburg Soil and Water Conservation District partnered with Trees Charlotte to make this year's annual tree seedling sale a huge success! Trees Charlotte, established in 2012, is the driving force behind the bold initiative of achieving 50% tree canopy coverage by 2050. Trees Charlotte works tirelessly to address the City's tree loss from development, protect its forests and native species, and create new green space.

A wide variety of species were sold (Buttonbush, Eastern Redbud, Pawpaw, Pecan, Persimmon, Possumhaw, Viburnum, Red Chokeberry, Red Maple, Spicebush, Sweetbay Magnolia, Waxmyrtle, and Eastern Red Cedar). We are pleased to announce that all 1,450 seedlings were sold on this year. A big thanks goes to all of our customers that purchased seedlings and help make it a successful event.

Mecklenburg Soil and Conservation District will again partner with Trees Charlotte for our 45th Annual Tree Seedling Sale. Details about the event will be coming in late-September / early-October of this year.

RAIN BARRELS ARE A GREAT WAY TO STORE RAIN WATER

Rain Barrels provide an easy way for homeowners to help protect our streams and lakes in Charlotte and Mecklenburg County.

Capturing the water that flows off your roof keeps rain water out of the storm drains and allows it to flow into the ground and replenish the ground water supply.

Not only are rain barrels ecologically friendly, they are pocket friendly as well. Rain barrels provide you with a FREE source of chemical-free water for your yard and garden and reduce your need for treated water.



Mecklenburg County has experienced little rain fall this year. The next time it rains be prepared to collect rain water in your new rain barrel. Rain Barrels are available for purchase year-round at the Mecklenburg Soil and Water Conservation District. We offer two sizes: 60 gallon rain barrel is \$105 and 80 gallon rain barrel is \$120 (prices include tax). Business hours are Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Please call 704.336.2455 to confirm availability and schedule a time for pick up.



The Urban Cost Share Program is an incentive-based program to help land users address existing erosion and other non-point source water pollution issues in approved watersheds. The program offers financial and technical assistance to reduce runoff, stop erosion and filter non-point source water pollution. Approved applicants are eligible to receive 75% of allowable costs, up to \$7,500, associated with installing approved Best Management Practices at their location.

Urban Cost Share Availability:

Currently, the Urban Cost Share Program is open to citizens throughout the City of Charlotte and in unincorporated Mecklenburg County.

Urban Cost Share Program Information:

Interested parties should complete an interest form as a first step in being considered for assistance. District staff will review forms and property maps and schedule a site assessment and assist with application to the program when appropriate.

Urban Cost Share Interest Form. All applications to the program are ranked for their benefit to water quality. Qualified applications are funded in order of rank as funds allow. Approved applicants will receive a BMP design and installation guidance. Applicants may begin implementation of practices upon notice of board approval. Funds expended prior to board approval are not eligible for reimbursement. Per contract terms, participants are responsible for maintaining practices for a minimum of five years. Additional restrictions may apply.

For additional information or questions, please contact the Mecklenburg Soil and Water Conservation District at 704-336-2455 or Leslie.VandenHerik@mecklenburgcountync.gov.

Best Management Practices Offered:

Critical Area Planting: Establishing permanent vegetation on sites that have steep slopes with high erosion rates, and on sites that have physical, chemical, or biological conditions that prevent the establishment of vegetation with normal practices.

Streambank Stabilization: Vegetative stabilization (planting) and/or grading of erosive streambanks and shorelines to stabilize erosion and reduce soil loss.

Grassed Waterway (Swale): A natural or constructed channel that is shaped or graded to required dimensions and established in suitable vegetation for the stable conveyance of runoff.

Pet Waste Receptacles: Receptacles and supplies to better manage pet waste, usually in public areas.

Rain Garden: A landscaped area that collects storm water runoff.

Riparian Buffers: An area dominated by trees and/or shrubs located adjacent to and up-gradient from water courses or water bodies.

FEDERAL COST SHARE PROGRAMS

USDA Federal Cost Share Programs

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) provides financial and technical assistance focused on natural resource concerns. Programs available to approved applicants include:

Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)

CREP is a collaborative effort between the local District, the NCDA&CS Division of Soil and Water Conservation and Division of Forest Resources, and the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service and Farm Service Agency. CREP provides long-term protection of environmentally sensitive cropland and marginal pasture land through conversion to conservation practices (e.g. Stream Buffers) on agricultural land. CREP is currently only available in and east of the Yadkin River Basin (includes eastern Mecklenburg County). Eligibility is subject to qualification by USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA). For more information, please contact Leslie Vanden Herik at 704-336-2455.

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program provides financial and technical help to eligible producers for installation of conservation practices on agricultural land. Eligibility is subject to qualification by USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA). For more information, please contact Chris Childers at 704-788-2107 extension 3.

STATE COST SHARE PROGRAMS

Agriculture Cost Share Program (ACSP)

The District is available to help farmers and other agricultural producers prevent water pollution and reduce erosion. The District anticipates the state will allocate \$25,000 to Mecklenburg this fiscal year; with an additional \$9,000 earmarked for the Goose Creek, Rocky River, McDowell and other impaired watersheds. Funds are available to assist with the cost of installing conservation practices to protect water quality and agricultural interests. For more information, please call 704-336-2455 or visit www.MecklenburgConservation.com.

Agricultural Water Resources Assistance Program (AgWRAP)

The newest of our state cost share assistance programs; the Agricultural Water Resources Assistance Program (AgWRAP) is available to assist with increasing water availability for agricultural production. For the 2016 fiscal year funds may be available to assist with the construction of new farm ponds (restrictions apply), the dredging or repair of existing farm ponds, wells for irrigation and/or livestock watering and other water conservation practices. For more information, please call 704-336-2455 or visit www.MecklenburgConservation.com.

As part of our Urban Cost Share and Community Conservation Assistance Programs, we are encouraging Home Owners Associations, pet owners, and dog walkers to do their part to maintain a healthy watershed by cleaning up pet waste. Many Charlotteans have had the unfortunate experience of smelling or even stepping in pet waste while on their evening walk. While an unpleasant experience to be sure, many are not aware of the environmental impacts of pet waste. One of the greatest threats to water quality in the Charlotte area, pet waste can contain harmful pathogens, viruses, and bacteria such as E. Coli. When it rains, pet waste is washed into storm drains where it exits untreated into the water system. With hundreds of thousands of pets residing in the Charlotte area, large amounts of waste accumulate in water systems after storms and cause high levels of these harmful microorganisms. These contaminants pose a risk not only to wildlife that may come in contact with them, but to humans and pets as well.

To address this issue Mecklenburg Soil and Water Conservation District offers Pet Waste Receptacle Installation as part of our Urban Cost Share Program and the NC Community Conservation Assistance Program! This means applicants are eligible to receive up to 75% of allowable costs up to a maximum of \$7,500 for the implementation of this and other Best Management Practices. Receptacles may be installed as stand-alone structures or retro-fitted to existing trash receptacles. All cost shared practices must be maintained for a minimum of five years. Applicant is responsible for maintenance of receptacle and other practices.

This project has the potential to greatly reduce the amount of non-point source pollutants that make their way into our watersheds while having the added benefit of providing a cleaner more pleasant outdoor experience. For further details please visit www.MecklenburgConservation.com or contact the Mecklenburg Soil and Water Conservation District staff at Leslie.VandenHerik@MecklenburgCountyNC.gov.



Pet Waste Receptacle



What's in your soil?

Every homeowner looks forward to having a lush green lawn during the summer months. In addition they enjoy a beautiful landscape with a nice selection of flowers, hearty plants and shrubs. There are many homeowners that try their hand at gardening and they look forward to reaping a bountiful harvest of freshly grown herbs and veggies in June, July, August and September.

Healthy lawns and gardens start with healthy soil!

Soil Sampling for Home Lawns and Gardens:

What's in your soil? The NC Agronomic Services Division in Raleigh, NC analyzes soil for its nutrient content and for properties that affect plant growth.

Soil Testing

- Fosters plant growth by providing optimal lime and fertilizer recommendations,
- Diagnoses common nutrient deficiencies and toxicities and
- Promotes environmental quality

When gardeners follow recommended guidelines for fertilization, nutrient runoff into surface or ground water is minimized, money is saved and natural resources are conserved.

Reference: www.ncagr.gov/agronomi/ (Soil Sampling for Home Lawns & Gardens Brochure)

Obtain A Soil Sample Kit:

Mecklenburg Soil and Water Conservation District provides soil sample kits to residents in Mecklenburg County. For more information or to request a soil sample kit along with instructions, please call 704-336-2455 or email Anganette.Byrd@mecklenburgcountync.gov.



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Business Hours are Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

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Chris Childers

Administrative Support Assistant III

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***A special thanks to our proud partner Charlotte-Mecklenburg Storm Water Services.**

Thank you for subscribing to our newsletter.