

# Virginia Conservation Assistance Program (VCAP)

## Brings New Cost Share Opportunities to Loudoun



The Virginia Conservation Assistance Program, or “VCAP” is a program of the Virginia Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts which allows non-agricultural landowners the chance to receive cost share funds to install conservation practices.

For decades, Loudoun farmers have been able to take advantage of the Virginia Agricultural Best Management Practices Cost Share Program to help protect soil and water resources, and now with VCAP, suburban, urban, and other residential and business

property owners are able to install practices such as rainwater harvesting, conservation landscaping, and a host of other initiatives.

Through fiscal year 2017, ten VCAP practices have been signed up which have included meadow plantings, tree plantings, rainwater harvesting systems, and a vegetated stormwater swale. The project sites have included homeowners’ lawns, as well as HOA open space parcels, and a school property.

The VCAP program is like the Agricultural BMP program, in that the landowner receives “cost share” funds through the program, but also pays a portion of the project costs out of pocket, requiring them to have skin in the game as well. Also, similar to the Ag BMP program, VCAP practices generally have a ten year lifespan and are eligible to be spot checked to make sure they are still intact during that time period.



The aim of the Conservation Landscaping (tree and meadow planting) practices is to reduce nutrient run off by replacing lawn with a less nutrient intensive land use, while also providing increased wildlife and pollinator habitat. The rainwater harvesting practice, which covers larger scale projects (not rain barrels) aims to reduce reliance on treated or well water for outdoor use. The entire suite of practices help Loudoun and in turn Virginia meet the goals of the Chesapeake Bay clean-up which aims to reduce sediment and nutrient run off which causes oxygen depleted “dead zones” to form. To learn more about eligible VCAP practices, visit [www.vaswcd.org/vcap](http://www.vaswcd.org/vcap).

