

CONSERVATION NEWSLETTER

LOUDOUN SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT



SUMMER 2026

Upcoming Dates:

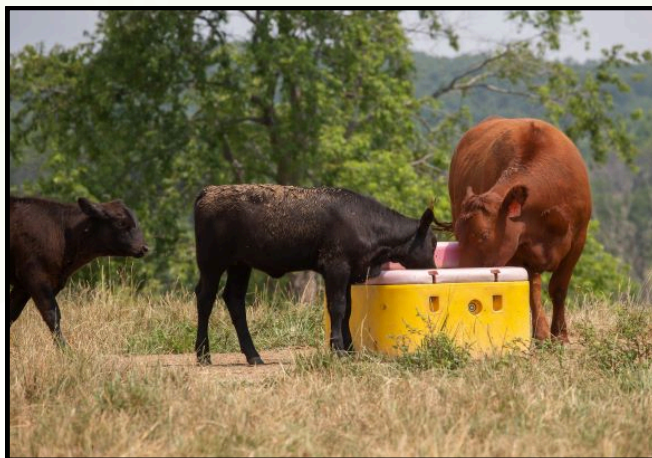
- Loudoun VCE Water Testing Kits, pick-up kits, August 17th . More information [here](#).
- Pasture Renovation and Fertility, Middleburg MARE Center, August 20th. [Register](#)
- IPSMP Invasive Tree of Heaven management webinar. August 28th . Register [here](#).*
- IPSMP Residential Community Workshop. August 28th . Aldie, VA. Register [here](#).*
- Loudoun VCE Master Gardeners information meeting, September, 17th. Register/more information [here](#).
- [Virginia State Fair](#), September 25th - October 4th Caroline County, VA*

Connect with LSWCD Staff*



Protecting Water Quality on Virginia's Farms

By: Matt Sabas



The Environmental Protection Agency designated August as National Water Quality Month nearly 20 years ago to promote the importance of clean water in safeguarding public health, agriculture and the environment. From access to clean drinking water to growing healthy crops and sustaining the state's ecologically important watersheds, water quality impacts every aspect of our lives. As Virginia's lead conservation agency, DCR is committed to supporting both individual natural resource stewardship and local conservation efforts aimed at preserving the commonwealth's water resources.

For the past four decades, DCR has administered water quality improvement programs designed to reduce water pollution caused by nutrient, waste and sediment runoff from farms. DCR **encourages** the reduction of runoff by offering cost-share dollars and tax credits to implement an array of voluntary agricultural best management practices, or BMPs, while offering nutrient management planning, conservation planning, **shoreline erosion advice** and technical and financial support for Virginia's **47 soil and water conservation districts (SWCDs)**.

[Continue Reading...](#)

Conservation Tip

Time to start thinking about stockpiling pasture for late fall and winter grazing!

Spring 2026 Small Farm Outreach Program

This spring Loudoun sponsored a small farm outreach event in partnership with Fireside Farm and the Department of Conservation and Recreation. Loudoun SWCD as well as DCR discussed available conservation programs for small farmers and what resources can be available depending on their conservation needs. Attendees were also informed of an equipment share program made possible through a soil health grant from American Farmland Trust.

Grant funded equipment included a lime/poultry litter spreader, a cover crop crimper, a 3pt. No-Till Drill, a flail mower for chopping cover crops. The listed equipment is focused on building and improving soil health and is shared amongst the three farms that applied for the grant. If you are interested in a similar grant, reach out to [American Farmland Trust](#). Thank you to all attendees for joining our small farm outreach educational program.



Small herd? No problem.



The **Small Herd Initiative** helps farmers like you keep livestock out of streams. Smaller cattle operations can receive up to \$50,000 for best practices — plus ongoing technical assistance, **without competing for funding against larger operations.**

The practices benefit your farm, promoting:

- Lower rates of animal injury and disease.
- Greater weight gain in cattle, plus higher quality and quantity of milk produced.
- Less soil loss from stream bank erosion.

The Small Herd Initiative pays:

- Up to 100% for stream exclusion with buffer and grazing land management
- Up to 80% for stream protection fencing with buffer
- Per foot of portable fencing, plus charger(s)

**Expert support and
up to 100% cost
reimbursement for
small cattle farms**

**Ever wish cost-share
worked better for
smaller operations?**

**If you're a farmer with
20-49 head of cattle,
now it does.**



Interested?

Contact your Soil and Water Conservation District.
Find your district at www.dcr.virginia.gov/districts



Invasive Plant Management Program Update

The Invasive Plant Species Management Program (IPSMP) has hosted over 65 projects in its first year. To ensure the Program is excelling at meeting the needs of all Loudoun residents, we have paused for an end-of-year evaluation. During this evaluation, the IPSMP team is hosting a variety of workshops and events to give an opportunity for all to get involved.

We invite you to participate in our upcoming events! The Summer IPSMP Webinar will be held on 8/26/26, 12pm-1pm. In this webinar, we will discuss best management practices for the invasive tree of heaven.

[Register here!](#)

Our residential community workshop is being held on 8/26/26, 6:30pm. In this workshop, the IPSMP team will discuss the best ways to get your HOA involved with invasive plant management and Loudoun's IPSMP.

[Register here](#) and visit the flyer below!



To stay up to date with the Invasive Plant Management Program sign up for *The Leaf Debrief*, the program's new newsletter!



managing **INVASIVE PLANTS** in your HOA **WORKSHOP**

LOUDOUN'S INVASIVE PLANT
SPECIES MANAGEMENT PROGRAM



LEARN HOW TO COMBAT INVASIVES IN YOUR COMMUNITY

Join us for an informative workshop to learn how your Homeowners Association (HOA) can get involved with invasive plant management!

Wednesday, August 26
6:30–7:30pm

Hal and Berni Hanson Regional Park – Nature Center
42071 Nature Overlook Drive
Aldie, VA 20105

WHAT YOU WILL LEARN:

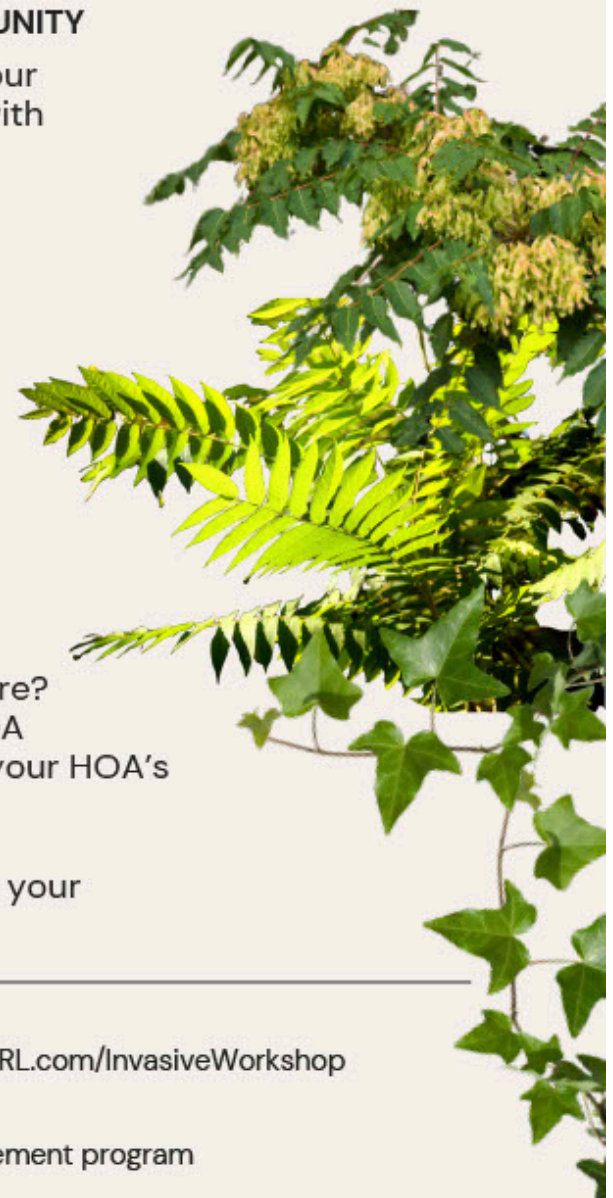
- What are invasive plants, and why should we care?
- How to organize a volunteer event with your HOA
- Strategies for protecting native species within your HOA's bylaws and regulations
- How to plan for native plant restoration
- Next steps: how to spread the word throughout your community

REGISTER HERE!

or visit : TinyURL.com/InvasiveWorkshop

For more information about the invasive plant species management program visit loudoun.gov/InvasivePlants.

Questions about the workshop? Contact Leah.Sattler@LSWCD.org

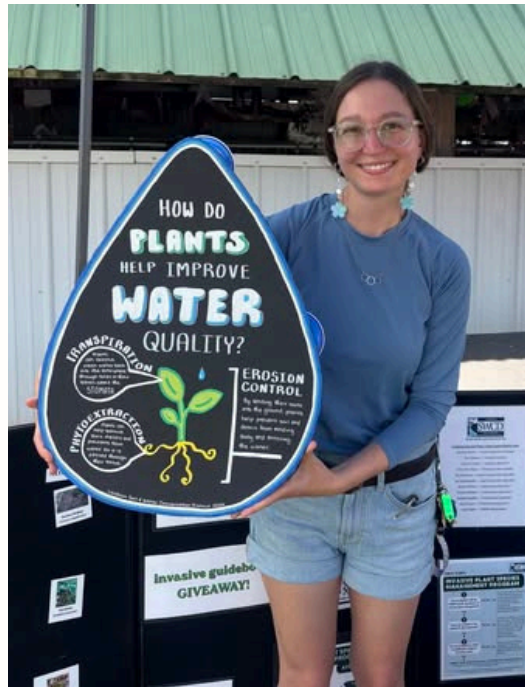


Welcome Caroline!

LSWCD

Invasive Plant Management Program Outreach Specialist

Caroline is a recent George Mason University graduate from Mount Solon, VA. She earned her Bachelor of Environmental Science in 2024, followed by her Master of Environmental Science in 2026. During her time as a graduate student, Caroline spent a summer in Lexington, KY as an ORISE fellow at the USDA FS Forest Health Center Laboratory, where she studied pathogens that affect oak and chestnut trees. During the semesters, she taught introductory oceanography and geology laboratories to undergraduate students as part of a teaching assistantship program. Caroline also has experience teaching younger audiences as a field interpreter with a local Meaningful Watershed Education



Caroline presenting outreach material at the Loudoun County Fair, 2025.



Volunteer invasive plant removal at the Potomac Science Center, 2023.

Experience program, a hands-on learning experience for K-12 students designed to highlight the importance of environmental issues. In her free time, Caroline enjoys hiking, mushroom hunting, macrophotography, crafting, and caring for her many plants and critters. As the newest addition to the LSWCD team, Caroline is excited to use her knowledge and passion for the natural sciences to educate Loudoun County residents about the dangers that invasive plants pose to our ecosystem, and the resources offered to help manage them.

caroline.miller@lswcd.org | (571) 676-5548

Conservation Education

NACD Poster Contest now open!

Please access the LSWCD website to view the guideline for participating in the NACD poster competition. We welcome all K-12 Participants and look forward to seeing your fantastic posters following this years theme of, *Soil. Where it all Begins.*

More information [here](#).

Please submit posters to Jessie.Freeland@lswcd.org or drop them off at our Leesburg office by October 1st 2026.



Free Conservation Education Check Out Lessons

Teachers and Educators! The end of summer is a perfect time to reach out to Jessie.Freeland@lswcd.org to schedule your conservation education lesson visit. Please visit our [lesson catalog](#) to see which lesson will best fit your classes curriculum.

Options include lessons on soil health, watersheds, water quality, recycling and more!

LSWCD at the 2026 Loudoun County Fair



The 90th Loudoun County Fair was held from July 22nd to July 26th. The Loudoun Soil and Water Conservation District attended on Wednesday, July 22, to discuss conservation program opportunities with Loudoun residents. LSWCD Staff, Leah Sattler, Caroline Miller, and Jessie Freeland spoke with dozens of enthusiastic fair attendees. Visitors were able to participate in hands-on activities sponsored by LSWCD and win conservation-themed prizes, such as our new invasive plant trading cards!



Summer Spotlight

Youth Conservation Camp

July 12th - 18th

Youth Conservation Camp (YCC), hosted on Virginia Tech's campus, was a major success! Loudoun SWCD was able to sponsor two students to attend camp as well as staff two YCC counselors. Robert Wilbur and Jessie Freeland happily assisted with the week's planned activities and ensured all campers had a positive experience. This year at camp, students learned from organizations such as the Virginia Department of Forestry, Fish and Wildlife Conservation, the Natural Resources Conservation Service, a wildlife and rescue rehabilitation center, and Virginia Soil and Water Conservation District staff themselves. Not only were students learning from these partner organizations, but campers also spent time touring and learning from students, professors, and staff at the Virginia Tech College of Natural Resources, Food Sciences, Veterinary College, and the Virginia Tech Dairy Farm.

To get campers outside and learning, we hiked the Cascades Waterfall Trail, tubed down the New River, boated Claytor Lake while shock fishing, and toured the Virginia Tech Campus.

We ended the long but fun-filled week with a pizza party and a volleyball tournament that had all of camp on the edge of their seat. See you next year, YCC!!



Loudoun SWCD

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Uzma Rasheed, Vice Chair

John Flannery, Treasurer

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Barbara Christian, Associate Director

Tia Earman, Associate Director

Derrick Clarke, Associate Director

Holly Flannery, Associate Director

Robin Bartok, Associate Director

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Kris Dennen, Program Assistant

Chris Van Vlack, Urban/Ag. Conservationist

Pat McIlvaine, Senior Conservation Specialist

Jay Frankenfield, Lead Conservation Specialist

Robert Wilbur, Conservation Specialist

Kaylea Powell, Conservation Specialist

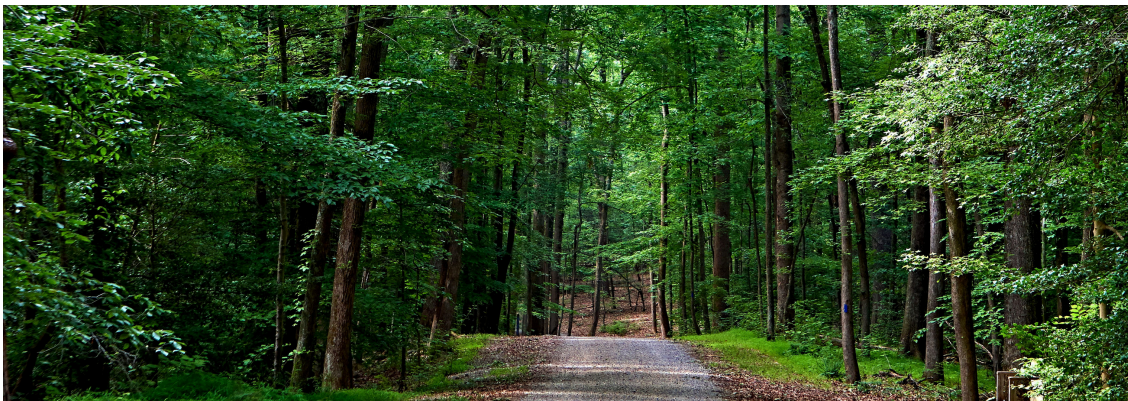
Fletcher Dilldine, Conservation Specialist

Jennifer Venable, Conservation Specialist

Jessie Freeland, Education and Outreach Specialist

Leah Sattler, Invasive Plant Program Administrator

Caroline Miller, Invasive Plant Outreach Specialist



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