



## Dam Maintenance and Rehabilitation



The District and Craig County are the owners of the four Johns Creek Watershed Dams located in Craig County. The Dams were constructed in the 1960's for flood control and are now approaching 50 years of age. The Department of Conservation and Recreation has issued Conditional Class I Operation and Maintenance Certificates because of the "current known downstream hazard potential from upstream characteristics." This classification means that the dams do not meet the requirements of the Dam Safety Act and the Dam Safety Board's regulations and indicates that this would cause loss of life and property of others should the dams breach. In January of this year (2005), the Mountain Castles District Board of Directors and the Craig County Board of Supervisors agreed to file applications for rehabilitation for federal assistance with the United States Department of Agriculture through the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) for the Johns Creek Dams (#1, #2 and #4). The applications start the official process for reviewing and planning for the rehabilitation by NRCS.

The cost estimate for rehabilitation is \$2.9 million (Dams #1, #2 and #4) which means that 35% of that amount must come from local or state funding sources. Each application required a local commitment of \$20,000 in financial obligations that could be either monetary or in-kind services from the applicant's. The loss of community knowledge about what happened with floods prior to the installation of the dams has decreased the importance and the role the flood control dams provide to New Castle and the surrounding community. The need for legislative and public support will be an important part in receiving funding for the future rehabilitation of the John's Creek Dams. The Department of Conservation and Recreation provided additional funds for maintenance and repairs for dams #1 and #4, with the work to be completed by June 2006. The fiscal year 2005—2006, the operational and maintenance funding for each dam will be \$2,000 from DCR.

## Farm Tours and Outreach Programs

The staff from the Mountain Castles Soil and Water Conservation District, the DCR Staunton Nutrient Management office and the Virginia Cooperative Extension participated in a series of three education programs in 2004 that was funded by a mini-grant for Poultry Litter on Hay and Pasture Field as a demonstration project. The grant was sponsored by the Virginia Poultry Federation and DCR.



Bottom: (L to R) Joan Crenshaw, Nathan and Jay Day.

The first program was held at the Penn Farm located in Botetourt County. Jack Spigle owns and operates the Penn farm along with his family. Guest speakers were Marc Puckett, from the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries and Dr. John Hall, Professor at Virginia Tech. Richard Fitzgerald and Jeff Cline spoke about nutrient management and poultry litter, then Andy Allen offered information about cattle grazing. The second program was held at the Fincastle Fire House where invited guests could view poultry spreaders and listen to Richard Fitzgerald, Ned Jeter and Andy Allen speak of programs available. In December, guests were invited to the 2004 awards and education program that highlighted conservation practices and recognized individuals for their work in conservation.

Farm Tours provide landowners and farmers an opportunity to visit local farms that have conservation practices already installed and ask questions of local resource agency personnel about the cost share programs available.

## Popular BMPs in the District

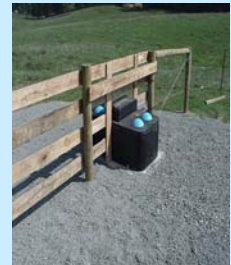
### SL-6 Grazing Land Protection

A structural and/or management practice that will enhance or protect vegetative cover to reduce runoff of sediment and nutrients from existing pastureland and reduce non-point source pollution (NPS) associated with grazing livestock.

**RATE:** 75%

**Tax Credit:** 25% of total eligible costs to the cooperator

**Lifespan:** 10 years



### SL-1 Permanent Vegetative Cover on Cropland

Grass and/or legume vegetation established on cropland or fallow land with existing cover of less than 60% to pasture or hay land.

**RATE:** 75% + \$25/ac

**Tax Credit:** 25% of total eligible costs to the cooperator

**Lifespan:** 5 to 10 years

### SL-11 Permanent Vegetative Cover on Critical Areas

Land shaping and planting permanent vegetative cover on critically eroding areas.

**RATE:** 75%

**Tax Credit:** 25% of total eligible costs to the cooperator

**Lifespan:** 5 years

# USDA Bonsack Service Center

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 USDA Farm Service Agency  
 USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service  
 36 Executive Circle, Suite 1  
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## USDA Farm Service Agency

The Farm Service Agency (FSA), a branch of USDA, helps ensure the well-being of American Agriculture, the environment and the American public through efficient and equitable administration of Federal farm programs.



These programs are designed to help farmers in time of natural disasters, to improve the economic stability of agriculture during low market swings for farmers and consumers, to help farmers adjust production to meet demand through commodity programs, to assist with obtaining credit when private lenders are not an option. In addition to financial assistance, FSA administers conservation programs that help farmers improve water quality and animal health, stop erosion, improve wildlife habitat, and protect endangered species. Other services include assistance with aerial photography, Geographical Information System (GIS), acreage and commodity measurement service and soil sample preparation for forwarding of samples to the soil lab. To learn more about FSA and its services visit <http://www.fsa.usda.gov> or visit your local FSA County Office.

## Technology Advances

Global Positioning Satellite Equipment (GPS) and Geographic Information System (GIS) Software is used in planning and documenting installation of conservation practices and crop fields. Our maps look very similar to the one pictured.

### Directions

#### From I-81

- Take Alternate 220A toward Bedford for about 6 miles
- At Alt. 220A and Rte 460 take a left

#### At 460E

- Turn left at Avery Row (Blue Ridge Public Library)
- Turn right onto Executive Circle



USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service Report

Mountain Castles Soil and Water Conservation District

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is the primary federal agency that works with private landowners to help them conserve, maintain and improve their natural resources. NRCS's natural resources conservation programs help people reduce soil erosion, enhance water supplies, improve water quality, increase wildlife habitat, and reduce damages caused by floods and other natural disasters. Public benefits include enhanced natural resources that help sustain agricultural productivity and environmental quality while supporting continued economic development, recreation, and scenic beauty.

### NRCS/District Conservation On-the-Ground

Prescribed Grazing, Nutrient Management, Wildlife Management Applied\*

Wells	2
Pumping Plant	3
Fence	36,401 ft
Pipeline	11,363 ft
Pasture, Hay Plantings	32 acres
Prescribed Grazing	496 acres
Brush Management	130 acres
Nutrient Management	1,406 acres
Waste Utilization	979 acres
Riparian Buffer	5 acres
Use Exclusion	15 acres
Forage Harvest Management	34 acres

\*October 1, 2004 — August 15, 2005

## Virginia Agricultural Best Management Practice (BMP) Cost Share Program

Mountain Castles SWCD assists local agriculture producers and landowners in conservation practices that qualify under the Virginia Agricultural Best Management Practice Cost Share Program. Farmers can be reimbursed up to 75% of project costs along with receiving a 25% Virginia Tax Credit on out-of-pocket expenses with approved conservation plans. Over \$65,000 went towards improving the areas water quality and farmland in fiscal year 2004—2005. There were a variety of projects completed in the counties of Botetourt and Craig this year including; grazing land protection, permanent vegetative cover on cropland and critical areas, and stream bank protection. The USDA Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) creates riparian buffers along stream banks of pasture and crop land.

### WP-2 Stream Protection

Protection by fencing along streams to reduce erosion, sedimentation, and the pollution of water from agricultural non-point sources.

**RATE:** 75%

**Tax Credit:** 25% of total eligible costs to the cooperator

**Lifespan:** 5 years

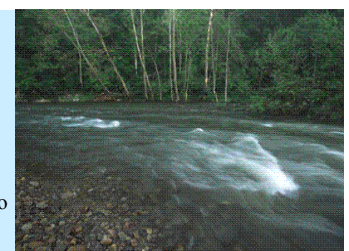


Photo Courtesy of USDA NRCS