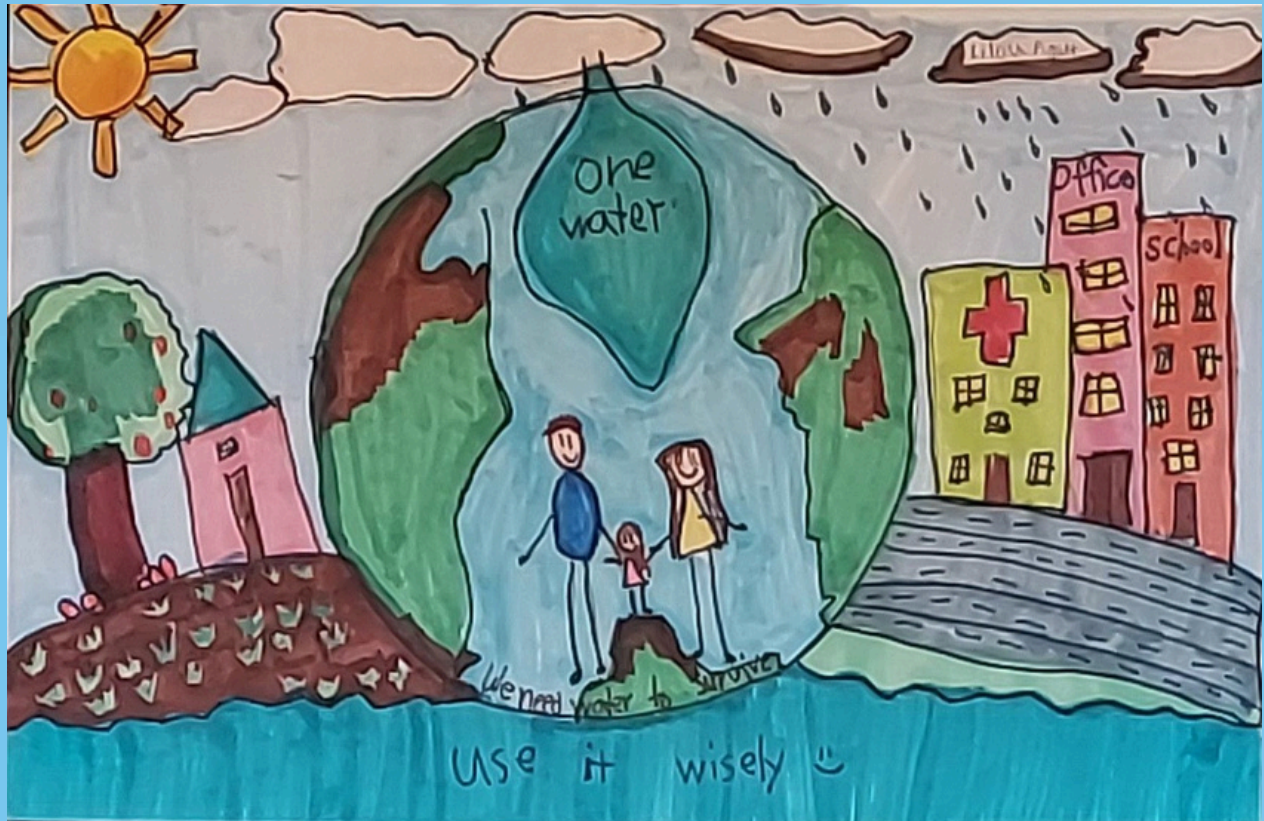




2023 - 2024 Annual Report



Cover art by Lilou P., Rivers Edge Elementary, Grades 2-3 Poster Contest Winner

**Guiding Henrico citizens in the
sustainable use of our natural resources**



A Commitment to Inclusion

The Commonwealth of Virginia supports Henricopolis Soil and Water Conservation District through financial and administrative assistance provided by the Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board and the Department of Conservation and Recreation. Henricopolis programs, activities, and employment opportunities are available to all people without discrimination based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, marital status, pregnancy, childbirth or related medical conditions, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, disability, genetic information, military status, political affiliation, or any other protected characteristic established by law.

OUR FY 23-24 IMPACT



Education

In addition to our SOL-based classroom programs, in 2024 Henricopolis distributed a copy of the newly updated booklet *Living in Your Watershed* to **every 4th grade student** in Henrico County Public Schools!



Agricultural Conservation

Cost share funding to Henrico farmers: **\$436,010**
Nutrient Management Plan cost share acreage: **2,271.80**
Cover Crop cost share acreage: **4,721.45**
Henrico producers receiving cost share funds: **15**



Neighborhood Conservation

Virginia Conservation Assistance Program contracts approved: **5**
VCAP cost share funding to Henrico homeowners: **\$30,271.86**
Site visits: **15**



Conservation Easements

Total acres protected in Henrico as of 6/30/24: **1,200**
Total number of easements: **10**



Community Outreach

Community events: 10	Water monitoring volunteers: 9
Free trees distributed: 2,000	County streams monitored: 10
Newsletter subscribers: 250	Volunteer hours: 890 (includes Directors' hours filling in for staff vacancies)

ABOUT US

Vision

Clean waters, productive soil.

Mission

To educate and guide Henrico County citizens in the sustainable use of our natural resources.

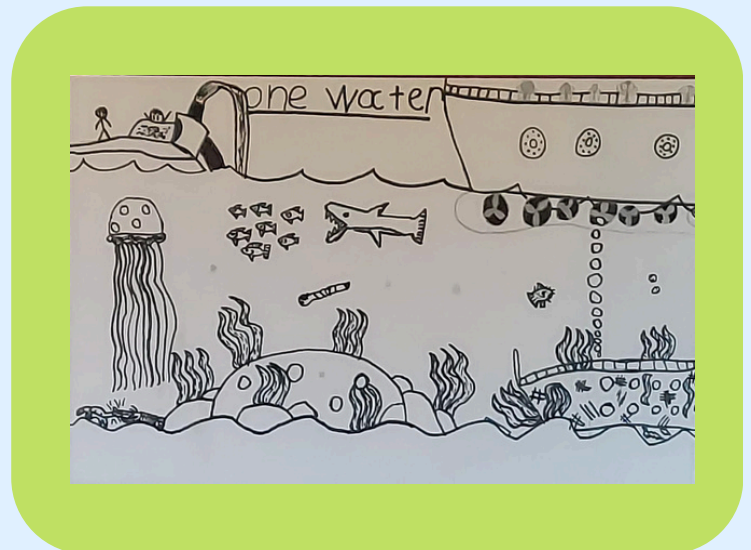
History

Following the environmental devastation of the Dust Bowl in the 1930s, President Roosevelt recommended the Standard State Soil Conservation Districts Act be signed into law by all state governors. This act gave states a guide to creating conservation districts as subdivisions of state government.

In 1940, Henrico, Chesterfield, and Prince George counties formed the James River Soil and Water Conservation District. In 1975, due to rapidly growing population, the Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board realigned boundaries and created the Henricopolis Soil and Water Conservation District conterminous with the borders of Henrico.



**Beatrice C., Gayton Elementary
Grades 4-6 Poster Contest Winner**



**Oliver Y., Twin Hickory Elementary
Grades K-1 Poster Contest Winner**

ABOUT US

Staff

The District employs a staff to conduct operations. Staff members during FY 2023 - 2024 were:

Charlie Lively, District Manager
Lindy Durham, Education Specialist
Stacey Sovick, Conservation Specialist

The District office is located in the Henrico County Human Services Building:
8600 Dixon Powers Drive, Henrico, VA 23228
(804) 501-5175
www.henrico.gov/henricopolis

Board Meetings:

3rd Thursday of
each month

4:00 p.m.

Henrico Human
Services Building

**The public is
welcome to
attend.**

Board of Directors

Henricopolis Soil and Water Conservation District is governed by a five-member volunteer Board of Directors, each of whom serves a four-year term. Three are elected, and two are appointed by the Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board. One of the appointed Directors is always the Henrico County Extension Agent. The Board appoints non-voting Associate Directors at its discretion. An election took place in November of 2023 with new Board members taking the oath of office in December. The Board members as of January 1, 2024 were:



Herb Dunford, Jr.
Chair
Appointed



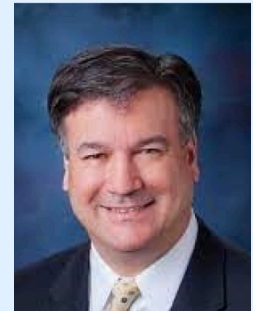
Claiborne Ewing
Vice Chair
Elected



Brittany Rose
Treasurer
Elected



Becky Lakin
Secretary
Elected



Ed Olsen
Appointed
(Henrico Extension)

Associate Directors as of 1/1/24: Leon P. App; Joyce Davis; Anne-Marie Leake; Terri Higgins; Steve Yob

PARTNERSHIPS

Henricopolis conducts its work through ongoing partnerships with and/or funding from local, state, and federal governments and their agencies, and other organizations, including but not limited to:

- Henrico County
- Henrico County Public Schools
- Virginia and Henrico Cooperative Extension
- Henrico Master Gardeners
- Keep Henrico Beautiful
- USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
- Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board
- Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation
- Virginia Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts
- Virginia Department of Forestry
- Capital Region Land Conservancy (CLRC)
- Middle James Roundtable
- Commonwealth Girl Scout Council



Varina LandLab

The 353-acre Varina LandLab property on Deep Bottom Road supports public access to the outdoors and environmental education. It has been permanently protected by a conservation easement co-held by **CRLC** and Henricopolis. Dedicated for public access, trails opened for hiking and birding in 2023. It is dubbed a “LandLab” for its purpose as an outdoor classroom for K-12 students, university classes, and curious minds of all ages.



Varina Grove

Henricopolis received a grant of over \$25,000 from the **Virginia Department of Forestry's Trees for Clean Water** program to replace a sun-baked grass quad at **Varina High School** with a forest classroom. Throughout the 2022 - 2023 school year the students at the brand new **Center for Environmental Studies and Sustainability** researched, designed, and helped plant this forest classroom, which includes native trees and conservation landscaping, and will continue to grow as the Center does.



Cornerstone Community Farm

Henricopolis remains deeply proud of our partnership with **Henrico County, Henrico County Public Schools, Fairfield Middle School, the National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD), the Western Henrico Rotary Club,** and other allies in the world of urban agriculture for the founding and ongoing success of Cornerstone Community Farm. Cornerstone's harvest continues to be sold at local markets, including Dorey Park Farmers Market and the 25th Street Market.

Additional partnerships and grants are highlighted throughout this annual report.

EDUCATION

Classroom Programs

SOL-based classroom programs delivered to Henrico students include:

Living In Your Watershed provides 4th graders with an exploration of the importance of Henrico County's watersheds and how to protect them.

I ♥ SOIL! is designed especially for 3rd graders and studies the importance of soil to plants and animals.

Who Polluted the River? engages students in an interactive story to learn how many of our rivers have become polluted as populations have grown and land uses have changed.

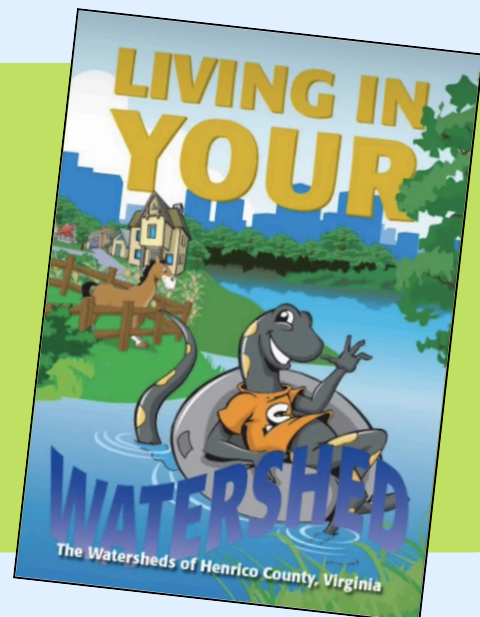
Weathering-Erosion-Deposition is our program for 5th graders, examining these three forces of nature that result in new land formations.

The Incredible Journey is an interactive activity in which students pretend to be water molecules as they simulate the movement of water through the water cycle.

The Scientific Method introduces students to the practice of proving or disproving a hypothesis by performing an experiment. Students can investigate how soil holds water or the quality of the water in a nearby stream.



The booklet ***Living In Your Watershed: The Watersheds of Henrico County, Virginia*** has long been a valuable resource to county students. When Henricopolis discovered that it was no longer in print, we worked to secure the publishing rights, make necessary updates, and collaborate with **Henrico County Public Schools** to distribute a copy to **every HCPS fourth grader!**



EDUCATION

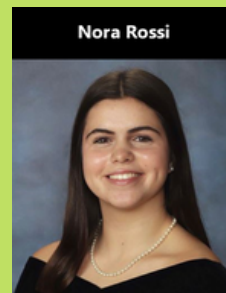
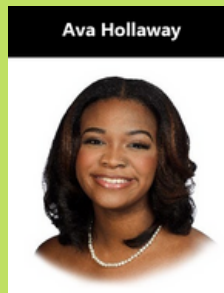
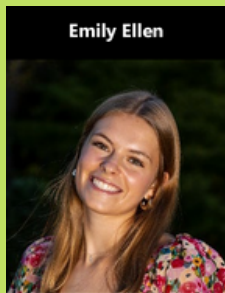
Scholarships

Henricopolis has established academic scholarships for Henrico students through an endowment with the **Colonial Agricultural Educational Foundation**. In the 2023-2024 school year we awarded scholarships to:

Emily Ellen attending North Carolina State University, awarded the Gatewood Stoneman Henricopolis Memorial Scholarship

Ava Hollaway attending the University of Miami, awarded the Charles Curry Henricopolis Memorial Scholarship

Nora Rossi attending Virginia Tech, awarded the Herb Dunford Sr. Henricopolis Memorial Scholarship



Scout Programs

Our Education Specialist serves as the Soil and Water Conservation District liaison for the Commonwealth Girl Scout Council, delivering the Virginia Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts scout patches as well as several Girl Scout badges to area troops. Henricopolis was honored with the **Outstanding Community Partner** recognition for 2022 by the **Commonwealth Girl Scout Council**.



EDUCATION



Youth Conservation Leadership Institute

Youth Conservation Leadership Institute (YCLI) is a recognition program for students in grades 9 - 12 that focuses on volunteer service and environmental stewardship. In 2023-2024, **Glen Allen High School student Lydia Crouch** represented Henricopolis in YCLI. Lydia researched and created a website quiz to understand the recycling knowledge of adults in Central Virginia. She presented her project to the Henricopolis Board of Directors.



Conservation Camp

The **Virginia Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts** sponsors a week-long summer conservation camp at Virginia Tech for high school students that provides hands-on learning about Virginia's natural resources from conservation professionals and Tech faculty. Henrico high school students can apply to have their camp registration fee paid by Henricopolis.



Envirothon

The **Virginia Dominion Energy Envirothon** is a team-based natural resources competition for high school students where they learn stewardship and management concepts and work to solve real-world environmental problems. **In 2024 Henricopolis District fielded two teams: Glen Allen High School and Varina High School.** A \$1,000 grant is available each year from the **Virginia Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts' Education Foundation** to support the Henricopolis Envirothon program.

AGRICULTURE

Conservation and Nutrient Management Planning

Henricopolis provides conservation planning services to local landowners to assist them in meeting the requirements of the **Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act**. The District also provides the service of assisting with writing nutrient management plans for Henrico agricultural producers to avoid unnecessary nutrient applications and minimize adverse environmental effects.



Best Management Practices Cost-Share and Tax Credit Program

Conservation districts receive funding from the **Department of Conservation and Recreation** for distribution to local agricultural producers and landowners. The program provides incentives to install Best Management Practices (BMPs) in their agricultural operation to improve the water quality of the state's streams and rivers and the Chesapeake Bay by reducing the amount of water-borne sediments, nutrients, and other pollutants resulting from agricultural operations. **In FY 2023-2024, Henricopolis administered the distribution of \$436,010 for agricultural cost-share practices**, including nutrient management plans and small grain cover crops.

NEIGHBORHOODS



Homeowner Help

Technical assistance to Henrico residents is a fundamental component of our work. Inquiries about pond management, stream stabilization, erosion, drainage problems, and soil and watershed protection all receive attention from our staff. Many of these inquiries are addressed via e-mail or phone call, while others involve a site visit and analysis or research.

Virginia Conservation Assistance Program

The Virginia Conservation Assistance Program (VCAP) is available to all homeowners as well as commercial and public land in the Chesapeake Bay watershed. This program, **funded by the state budget**, provides financial incentives for eleven Best Management Practices (BMPs) to help non-agricultural landowners reduce their stormwater footprint and improve water quality in support of the state's **Watershed Improvement Plan (WIP)**. Those practices include rainwater harvesting, bioretention systems, rain gardens, conservation landscaping, permeable paving, impervious surface removal, vegetated stormwater conveyances, constructed wetlands, dry wells, infiltration basins, and green roofs. **Henricopolis is one of the 13 districts currently participating in the program** out of the 47 conservation districts in Virginia. **In FY 2023-2024, Henricopolis approved 5 VCAP contracts and distributed \$30,271.86 in cost share funds to Henrico County homeowners.**



NEIGHBORHOODS

Soil Testing Program

Henricopolis offers a soil test incentive program that provides payment vouchers to Henrico citizens to cover the cost of soil analysis. The goal is for the homeowner to use the results to reduce the amount of nutrients entering the Chesapeake Bay through over-fertilization. This program is financed by a \$3,000 grant from the **Department of Environmental Quality through the Middle James Roundtable**, a collaborative effort among various stakeholders.



Other Resources

Henricopolis maintains a variety of conservation reference materials, technical sheets, and brochures in the District office, including current and historical aerial photos of Henrico County; the Henrico County Soil Survey, produced by the **Natural Resources Conservation Service**; and various maps related to topography, wetlands, and hydrologic information. These materials are available to both the public and private sector for review, and our staff is available to help with interpretation of data.

EASEMENTS

Henricopolis is a leader among conservation districts statewide with our Conservation Easement program. Henricopolis is proud to partner with Henrico County residents and the non-profit **Capital Region Land Conservancy** to help landowners voluntarily preserve forest and farmland, thereby protecting fertile soils, clean water, fresh air, robust habitat, and scenic beauty in both the James River and Chickahominy watersheds. **As of FY 2023 - 2024, a total of 1,200 acres have been preserved in Henrico County through 10 easements.**



Chickahominy River



Hottonia inflata (American Featherfoil)



Pileated Woodpecker



Ruby-throated Hummingbird

These photos were provided by a Henrico landowner who captured these beautiful scenes on their conserved property.

Community Events

Henricopolis participated in the following community events in FY 2023-24:

- Henricopolis Earth Day Tree Seedling Giveaway (in partnership with the **Henrico Environmental Action Resource Team**)
- **Henrico Master Gardeners'** Pollinator Festival
- **Henrico Extension** Bug Bizarre (including **Girl Scouts** bug badge)
- Dorey Park Farmers' Market Conservation Day
- Dorey Park Juneteenth Celebration
- State Fair of Virginia - **VASWCD** booth
- HAWQS macroinvertebrate monitoring and stream cleanup events
- **Fairfield Middle School & Cornerstone Farm** FallFest
- Poster Contest winners display at Deep Run Recreation Center
- Fairfield Middle School Back to School Day



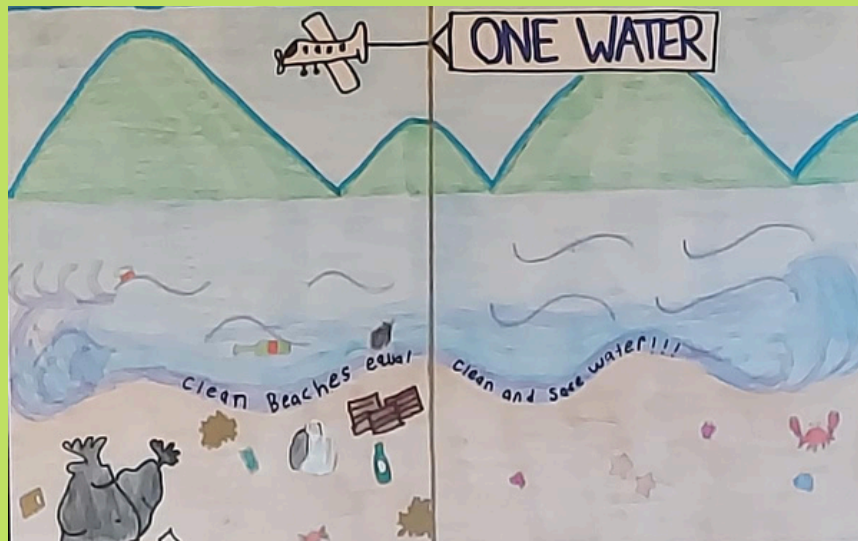
Henrico Area Water Quality Samplers

The Henrico Area Water Quality Samplers (**HAWQS**) Team is our citizen water monitoring program. HAWQS volunteers perform a variety of water quality tests that measure the overall health of the county's waterways. Volunteers are trained to monitor a basic suite of parameters that include temperature, turbidity, and e. coli bacteria. Supplemental training and projects are offered throughout the year, such as benthic macroinvertebrate monitoring and stream clean-up events, often in partnership with **Keep Henrico Beautiful**. Under the guidance of our Conservation Specialist, **10 county sites are being monitored by 9 volunteers**. The data from the HAWQS program is used to raise community awareness and address pollution concerns.





Jacob C., Glen Allen High School
Grades 7-9 Poster Contest Winner



Robert J., Highland Springs High School
Grades 10-12 Poster Contest Winner



Henricopolis Soil and Water Conservation District
(804) 501-5175
www.henrico.gov/henricopolis/

Follow us on Facebook and Instagram!