



Virginia Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts
Conservation Poster Contest
A Patch Program for Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts



VA Association of Soil & Water Conservation Districts
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www.vaswcd.org



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The Conservation Poster Contest Patch Program was developed by
the Virginia Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts and
the Henricopolis Soil and Water Conservation District.

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Soil and Water Conservation Districts

The VASWCD Educational Foundation Mission

The Virginia Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts Educational Foundation is nonprofit and classified as a 501(c)(3) organization that was established in 1990. The VASWCD Educational Foundation provides and promotes leadership in the conservation of natural resources through stewardship and education programs. Funding for activities such as Envirothon, Youth Conservation Camp, Youth Conservation Leadership Institute and the Conservation Poster Contest are provided through donations made by individuals, corporations, organizations and other foundations as well as fundraising efforts. Contributions to the VASWCD Educational Foundation are used to support educational efforts within the Commonwealth.

There are 47 Soil and Water Conservation Districts serving localities throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia. Governed by a board of directors of local citizens, districts work hand-in hand with state, federal and county agencies, other conservation organizations, schools, and many community partners to achieve their conservation objectives.

Districts offer many educational programs which target a variety of audiences. Emphasis is on education programs based on the VA Standards of Learning. Resources include activities, games, models, videos, skits, and more. Many districts also have a variety of resources available to teachers and scout leaders.

Contact information for the Soil and Water Conservation District serving each county in Virginia can be found on pages 4 and 5.

Soil and Water Conservation Districts



Virginia Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts

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Soil and Water Conservation Districts

Listed by city/county

County/City	SWCD
Accomack Co.	Eastern Shore SWCD
Albemarle Co.	Thomas Jefferson SWCD
Alleghany Co.	Mountain SWCD
Amelia Co.	Piedmont SWCD
Amherst Co.	Robert E. Lee SWCD
Appomattox Co.	Robert E. Lee SWCD
Augusta Co.	Headwaters SWCD
Bath Co.	Mountain SWCD
Bedford Co.	Peaks of Otter SWCD
Bedford, City of	Peaks of Otter SWCD
Bland Co.	Big Walker SWCD
Botetourt Co.	Mountain Castles SWCD
Brunswick Co.	Lake Country SWCD
Buchanan Co.	Big Sandy SWCD
Buckingham Co.	Peter Francisco SWCD
Buena Vista, City of	Natural Bridge SWCD
Campbell Co.	Robert E. Lee SWCD
Caroline Co.	Hanover-Caroline SWCD
Carroll Co.	New River SWCD
Charles City Co.	Colonial SWCD
Charlotte Co.	Southside SWCD
Chesapeake, City of	Virginia Dare SWCD
Chesterfield Co.	James River SWCD
Clarke Co.	Lord Fairfax SWCD
Covington, City of	Mountain SWCD
Craig Co.	Mountain Castles SWCD
Culpeper Co.	Culpeper SWCD
Cumberland Co.	Peter Francisco SWCD
Dickenson Co.	Lonesome Pine SWCD
Dinwiddie Co.	Appomattox SWCD

County/City	SWCD
Essex Co.	Three Rivers SWCD
Fairfax Co.	Northern Virginia SWCD
Fauquier Co.	John Marshall SWCD
Floyd Co.	Skyline SWCD
Fluvanna Co.	Thomas Jefferson SWCD
Franklin Co.	Blue Ridge SWCD
Frederick Co.	Lord Fairfax SWCD
Fredericksburg, City of	Tri-County/City SWCD
Galax, City of	New River SWCD
Giles Co.	Skyline SWCD
Gloucester Co.	Tidewater SWCD
Goochland Co.	Monacan SWCD
Grayson Co.	New River SWCD
Greene Co.	Culpeper SWCD
Greenville Co.	Chowan Basin SWCD
Halifax Co.	Halifax SWCD
Hanover Co.	Hanover-Caroline SWCD
Harrisonburg, City of	Shenandoah Valley SWCD
Henrico Co.	Henricopolis SWCD
Henry Co.	Blue Ridge SWCD
Highland Co.	Mountain SWCD
Isle of Wight Co.	Peanut SWCD
James City Co.	Colonial SWCD
King George Co.	Tri-County City SWCD
King & Queen Co.	Three Rivers SWCD
King Williams Co.	Three Rivers SWCD
Lancaster Co.	Northern Neck SWCD
Lee Co.	Daniel Boone SWCD
Lexington, City of	Natural Bridge SWCD

Soil and Water Conservation Districts

Listed by city/county



County/City	SWCD
Loudoun Co.	Loudoun SWCD
Louisa Co.	Thomas Jefferson SWD
Lunenburg Co.	Southside SWCD
Lynchburg, City of	Robert E. Lee SWCD
Madison Co.	Culpeper SWCD
Mathews Co.	Tidewater SWCD
Mecklenburg Co.	Lake Country SWCD
Middlesex Co.	Tidewater SWCD
Montgomery Co.	Skyline SWCD
Nelson Co.	Thomas Jefferson SWCD
New Kent Co.	Colonial SWCD
Northampton Co.	Eastern Shore SWCD
Northumberland Co.	Northern Neck SWCD
Nottoway Co.	Piedmont SWCD
Orange Co.	Culpeper SWCD
Page Co.	Shenandoah Valley SWCD
Patrick Co.	Patrick SWCD
Petersburg, City of	Appomattox River SWCD
Pittsylvania Co.	Pittsylvania SWCD
Powhatan Co.	Monacan SWCD
Prince Edward Co.	Piedmont SWCD
Prince George Co.	James River SWCD
Prince William Co.	Prince William SWCD
Pulaski Co.	Skyline SWCD
Rappahannock Co.	Culpeper SWCD
Richmond Co.	Northern Neck SWCD
Roanoke, City of	Blue Ridge SWCD
Roanoke Co.	Blue Ridge SWCD
Rockbridge Co.	Natural Bridge SWCD

County/City	SWCD
Rockingham Co.	Shenandoah Valley SWCD
Russell Co.	Clinch Valley SWCD
Scott Co.	Scott County SWCD
Shenandoah Co.	Lord Fairfax SWCD
Smyth Co.	Evergreen SWCD
Southampton Co.	Chowan Basin SWCD
Spotsylvania Co.	Tri-County/City SWCD
Stafford Co.	Tri-County/City SWCD
Staunton, City of	Headwaters SWCD
Suffolk, City of	Peanut SWCD
Surry Co.	Peanut SWCD
Sussex Co.	Chowan Basin SWCD
Tazewell Co.	Tazewell SWCD
Virginia Beach, City of	Virginia Dare SWCD
Warren Co.	Lord Fairfax SWCD
Washington Co.	Holston River SWCD
Waynesboro, City of	Headwaters SWCD
Westmoreland Co.	Northern Neck SWCD
Williamsburg, City of	Colonial SWCD
Winchester, City of	Lord Fairfax SWCD
Wise Co.	Lonesome Pine SWCD
Wythe Co.	Big Walker SWCD
York Co.	Colonial SWCD



The Conservation Poster Contest

The annual Conservation Poster Contest provides kindergarten through twelfth grade students an opportunity to convey their thoughts about soil, water and related natural resource issues through art. It also highlights the educational outreach efforts of conservation districts and their state conservation associations, auxiliaries and agencies. The poster contest theme follows the annual National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) Stewardship theme.

Each year, the poster contest starts at the district level. The contest is open to public, private or home school students, girl scout/boy scout troops, 4H Clubs, etc. Individuals and teachers with questions regarding district contests should contact their local district. To locate your local district search our online SWCD Directory or contact the VASWCD. District winners advance to the state level. Local SWCDs forward their local winning poster entries to the VASWCD office for consideration at the state level. Finally, state winners advance to the National Contest. National winners are recognized each year at the NACD Annual Meeting.

Poster Categories by Grade:

- K-1
- 2-3
- 4-6
- 7-9
- 10-12

2017 Contest Theme



MANY PEOPLE DON'T REALIZE THAT SOIL, ESPECIALLY HEALTHY SOIL, IS FULL OF LIFE.

Many people don't realize that soil, especially healthy soil, is full of life. Millions of species and billions of organisms make up a complex and diverse mix of microscopic and macroscopic life that represents the greatest concentration of biomass anywhere on the planet.

Bacteria, algae, microscopic insects, earthworms, beetles, ants, mites, and fungi are among them. All together, their value has been estimated at \$1.5 trillion a year worldwide.

Estimates vary, but if you could weigh all the organisms in the top six inches of soil on an acre of land, you'd find they would weigh between 2,500 pounds to more than 5,000 pounds, depending on how healthy the soil is. That is a LOT of life.

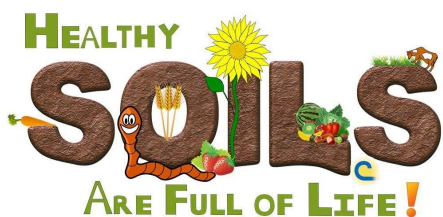
What these low-lying creatures lack in size, they make up for in numbers. Consider bacteria, the soil microbes with the highest numbers, for example. You can fit 40 million of them on the end of one pin. In fact, there are more soil microorganisms (microbes for short) in a teaspoonful of soil than there are people on the earth.

These microbes, which make up only one-half of one percent of the total soil mass, are the yeasts, algae, protozoa, bacteria, nematodes, and fungi that process soil into rich, dark, stable humus.

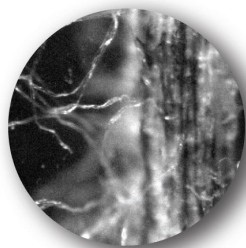
Like other living creatures, the organisms in the soil also need food and shelter. Some feed on dead organic matter, and some eat other microbes. As a group, they cycle nutrients, build the soil and give it structure.

The healthiest soils are those with a diversity and abundance of life. Farmers with the healthiest soils nurture that life by creating a diversity of plant life above the soil surface, with year-round ground cover, no tillage, and judicious pesticide use.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.



2017 Contest Theme

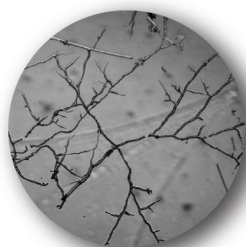


Fully realizing the soil is full of life is a game-changer for producers who are farming with healthy soils in mind. For those producers, farming centers around feeding the organisms that build healthy soils.

These farmers understand that tillage, the turning of the soil that has been the standard for growing crops for years and years, is disruptive to soil microbes and destructive to the soil system.

Instead, they disturb the soil as little as possible. And, they grow a diversity of living plants in the soil as much of the time as practical, covering the soil and offering food to soil microbes through living roots. Those soil organisms, in turn, cycle nutrients back to the plant, allowing it to grow and flourish.

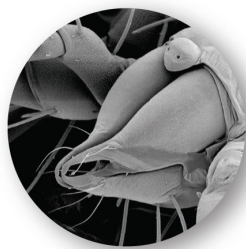
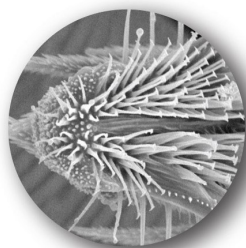
It's a natural, symbiotic system that leads to healthy soils and more sustainable and profitable agriculture.



ORGANISM

WHAT DOES IT DO?

BACTERIA	Feed on organic matter, store and cycle nitrogen, and decompose pesticides.
FUNGI	Up to 3,000 species of fungi are in the soil. Some feed on dead organic matter like crop residues that are more difficult to break down—others are parasites that attack other microbes. Some fan out from the root to get more nutrients and hold more water for the plant, delivering nutrients to the plant in exchange for carbon.
PROTOZOA	Eat bacteria, fungi, and algae. When they eat bacteria, their main food source, they unlock nitrogen that's released into the soil environment slowly. They convert organic nitrogen to inorganic nitrogen that's available to plants.
MITES	Decompose and shred organic matter as an important part of the nitrogen cycle.
NEMATODES	These microscopic worms are an important part of the nitrogen cycle. Most are non-pathogenic and don't cause disease. They eat other organisms in the soil.
EARTHWORMS	Expel partially decomposed organic matter, produce nutrient-rich casts, and make lubricated tunnels that aid soil structure and water movement in the soil.



Note: It's important to know how these organisms contribute to building healthy soil, but it's also important to know what harms them. Both tillage and the non-judicious use of pesticides can harm these important organisms.

Earning the Patch



The VASWCD conservation poster contest is open to all Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts. Scouts must complete all 5 activities to earn the patch.

1. Almost every locality in Virginia is served by a Soil and Water Conservation District. Look at pages 3-5 of this booklet for the name of the soil and water conservation district serving your county. Cities are usually served by the districts in the counties surrounding them.
2. Find out what soil and water conservation districts do. Type the name of your district in your search engine and explore the programs offered by your soil and water conservation district.
3. One of the programs offered across Virginia is the Conservation Poster Contest. Each year the contest has a new theme. Visit the VASWCD website (www.vaswcd.org) for the current theme and contest rules.
4. Invite a member of your local SWCD or another environmental group to visit your troop and talk about the current poster contest theme. Contact information is available by visiting the VASWCD website (www.vaswcd.org). You may also complete this step by researching the topic on your own using the resources offered in this booklet on pages 10-11.
5. Create a poster reflecting the contest theme and submit it to your local SWCD. Winners at the local level will advance to a state competition. Winners of the state competition are sent to the National Association of Conservation Districts for a national competition. GOOD LUCK!



Poster Contest

Following are the rules for the national conservation poster competition. Entries should be submitted to your local Soil and Water Conservation District office. Contact your local district office to determine local deadlines.

- Any media may be used to create a flat or two-dimensional effect (paint, crayon, colored pencil, charcoal, stickers, paper or other materials on regular posters.
- Poster size must be between 8.5"x11" and 22"x28".
- Posters should be packaged so they remain flat when sent for judging.
- All posters must be created by an individual student rather than a team of students.
- The 2017 Stewardship title **"Healthy Soils Are Full of Life!"** must be on your poster. This is the only title eligible for the national poster contest.
- Each entry must have a signed entry form completed and signed by a parent or guardian to be eligible for judging. Entry forms are available from your local SWCD.
- Although younger students will most likely receive help in planning from parent or teachers, each student is encouraged to do as much of the work as possible by him/herself. Entries completed by students in their handwriting and coloring will score better than those designed, drawn and colored with adult assistance.
- Each entry must be judged at each conservation district's or area contest prior to the state contest. Check with your local Soil and Water Conservation District for your local contest due date. Winners at the local level advance to the state contest. Winners in each category at the state level will then proceed to the national contest.

Steps to a Great Poster!



- Research the theme topic.
- Decide on the information to include on your poster.
- Sketch out your idea.
- Lightly mark guidelines for lettering.
- Clean up your poster so it is neat. Erase any guidelines that are showing.
- Complete the poster entry form, be sure it is signed by a parent or guardian and attach it to the back of your poster. Turn in your poster on time.
- Entries must be the contestant's original, hand-done creation. It may not be traced from photographs or other artists' published works.
- Any media may be used to create a flat or two-dimensional effect (paint, crayon, colored pencil, charcoal, paper or other materials).
- You should not:
 - Laminate your poster
 - Use staples, tacks or tape.
 - Use fluorescent poster board
 - Create a poster that is all words or all pictures



Resources

Visit these website links for information for your project. Most of these links will have additional pollinator resource links. This is only a small sample. There are many more resources. Check your local library.

What is soil?

http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/soils/edu/?cid=nrcs142p2_054280

Do you have a clue where your food comes from?

<http://extension.illinois.edu/food/>

Healthy soils for a healthy life

<http://www.fao.org/soils-2015/news/news-detail/en/>

The challenge of feeding our world

<https://www.nutrientsforlife.org/for-students>

The story of the soil

<https://www.soils.org/discover-soils/i-heart-soil>

Amount of each food group you need daily

<https://www.choosemyplate.gov/MyPlate-Daily-Checklist>

State ag facts

http://www.agclassroom.org/kids/ag_facts.htm

My first garden

<http://extension.illinois.edu/frstgarden/planning/school.cfm>

Resources



All about soil

<http://www.soils4kids.org/about>

Gardening for nutrition

<http://faitc.org/teachers/gardening-for-nutriton/>

Soil Conservation

<http://www.eschooltoday.com/soils/what-is-soilconservation.html>

Healthy soil for life

<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/>

Life under your feet

<http://lifeunderyourfeet.org/en/soileco/intro/>

Soil and Health

<https://www.soil-net.com/legacy/schools/>



The Patch!

Those Scouts who have submitted a poster by the local SWCD deadline and adhere to the rules and activities listed on page six and seven of this Leaders' Guide are eligible to receive the VASWCD Conservation Poster Patch. Scouts or Troop Leaders will receive their patch through their local Soil and Water Conservation District in a timely manner once posters have been submitted and processed.

Patches are provided free of charge to Scouts completing the poster program per the enclosed guidelines. This Patch Program is sponsored by the Virginia Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts Educational Foundation.





2017 NACD/VASWCD POSTER CONTEST

Local Entry Form

Submit this entries to your local Soil & Water Conservation District
Not familiar with your local SWCD? Visit www.vaswcd.org for information.
Local deadlines may vary.

Attach this registration form to the back of your poster.

Please check
appropriate
category

K-1st	
2 nd -3 rd	
4 th -6 th	
7 th -9 th	
10 th -12 th	

☐ This poster
is being submitted
to earn a Scout
VASWCD Poster
Contest Patch

STUDENT

First Name _____ Middle _____ Last _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone (_____) _____ E-mail _____

School Name _____ Grade _____ Age _____

_____ The poster is an original completed by the student.

_____ The student received assistance from another person or materials/ideas
from another source. If so, please explain on another piece of paper.

TROOP

Leader _____

Troop Number _____

Address _____ Phone (_____) _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

E-mail address _____

Parent or guardian name (printed) _____

Signature of parent or guardian allowing NACD/District to utilize the poster for
educational or promotional purposes:

_____ Date _____

SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

SWCD Name _____

Contact Name _____

Email Address _____

Questions?

Contact Your Local Soil & Water Conservation District or Bonnie Mahl at
(804) 559-0324 or bonnie.mahl@vaswcd.org
Virginia Association of Soil & Water Conservation Districts
<http://vaswcd.org/poster-contest>