



THE ALEXANDER SWCD TIMES



The Bill Chapman Memorial Award

The Alexander Soil & Water Conservation District is proud to announce that Mr. Lindsay Deal has been selected as this years Bill Chapman Memorial Award recipient. Lindsay has spent his life supporting agriculture , education, and conservation in our community. He has donated apples for our fifth grade field days, hosted sites for the 3rd grade Ag history Tour, helped with school fundraisers, and welcomed farm tour groups to his property. His generosity has made a lasting difference for local students and families. Lindsay has been a strong supporter of conservation, always ensuring he followed the rules in our cost share programs and leading by example. His commitment to agriculture, education and conservation shows what exactly this award is all about
Congratulations Lindsay Deal on this well deserved award!



Pictured left to right: Eugene White, Bryant Chapman, Lindsay Deal, Kathy Bunton, Colby Herman, and Myles Payne

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

The Bill Chapman Memorial Award.....1

Cost Share Program.....2

AgWrap Program.....3

Farmland Preservation.....4

New Drone.....5

2025 Envirothon.....6

2025 Contest Winners..7

Education Programs.....8

Contact Information...9



Agriculture Cost Share Program

Each year, the Alexander Soil & Water District is appropriated funds for this program from the N.C. Soil and Water Conservation Commission. These program dollars are allocated from the state to address non-point source pollution from agricultural activities. They are available to assist farmers in the installation of conservation practices which help decrease the amount of sediment, animal waste, nutrients, chemicals and other potential pollutants from entering the surface and ground waters of the state. Landowners and operators that are in agricultural production for at least three years may apply for cost share assistance to install Best Management Practices (BMP's) on their farm. These BMP's include: sediment & erosion control, litter storage structures, poultry composters, livestock exclusion from streams in conjunction with alternative watering systems, stock trails and heavy-use areas for livestock in confined areas, and other practices that benefit water quality. Alexander Soil & Water District's program year begins each year on July 1st and runs through June 30th. Typically, the Alexander Soil & Water District will have a one month sign-up period to accept new program year applications. All applications will be prioritized according to a locally adopted ranking process based on water quality parameters. The applications providing the most water quality benefits will be approved for funding in priority order. Any applications that are not funded in the first batching period will be considered for funding if additional program dollars become available later in the year.



Agriculture Water Resources Assistance

The NC Soil and Water Conservation Commission administers this water quantity program across the state. The Alexander Soil & Water Conservation District can apply for funds under this program to address water quantity issues on farmlands. Best management practices (BMP's) that may be offered include: new pond construction, pond repair/retrofit, pond sediment removal, new wells, conservation irrigation, and other practices that address water availability on agricultural lands. Projects must be able to show that they have an agricultural need for more water in order to be eligible for this program (for example: no water or limited water resources onsite). If applying for a pond practice, the pond water must be needed for some agricultural use to be eligible. In addition, the particular property must have been in agricultural production for at least one year prior to applying to be eligible. Applications are accepted throughout the year.



VOLUNTARY FARMLAND PRESERVATION PROGRAM

The Alexander County Voluntary Farmland Preservation Program, administered by the Soil & Water Office, has been around since the original ordinance was approved by the Board of Commissioners in March of 2002. Since that time, the program has grown to include 84 farms and total over 13,483.718 acres. The purpose of the program is to promote health, safety, & rural agricultural values; while increasing awareness & pride in the agricultural community's way of life. Voluntary protection of farmland safeguards from residential and/or commercial development & increases protection against nuisance lawsuits. Once your land is enrolled in the program, the county GIS site will signify to potential real estate purchasers that they are moving into a Voluntary Agricultural District of working farmland, and lets them know upfront that they may experience certain noises, smells, and other activities related to traditional farming. In order to be considered for the Program, a farm must: Be eligible to participate in the present-use value taxation program, include a minimum of 10 acres, and be properly managed. Participants will sign an agreement that they plan to continue farming the land for at least 10 years. The ordinance was updated in 2023 to comply with revisions to State statutes. Under the revised ordinance, farmlands are automatically renewed in the program after 10 years as long as the owner doesn't request removal or the land use changes to non-ag. Even when land is transferred due to selling property, death, etc., the land will remain in the farmland preservation program as long as it remains in agriculture use. However, we would like to be notified of the landowner change for our records. There are several benefits for landowners to join the program. Other benefits for farmers include recognition through Agricultural District signs, the right for the Advisory board to hold public meetings on condemnation in the districts and eligibility for possible Farmland Preservation Funds. This program will be a wonderful tool that we can use to protect the rapidly vanishing farmland and to help preserve our rural way of life in Alexander County. The Alexander Voluntary Farmland Preservation Program VAD Advisory Board meets quarterly and consists of Chairman Coy Reese, Vice Chair Eugene White, JD Sink, Traci Fox, Kent Herman, Dustin Queen, and Bryant Chapman.



Taking Flight: Our New Drone Has Arrived!

Thanks to a generous grant from the North Carolina Foundation for Soil and Water Conservation, we were able to purchase a new DJI Mavic 3E drone to enhance the many services we provide through our office. This advanced drone allows us to efficiently map areas and capture detailed aerial views of streams, erosion issues, land use, and conservation projects. With its high resolution imaging and flight capabilities, the drone supports our efforts in stream debris assessment and overall conservation planning.



2025 NW Envirothon

Students from Alexander County Schools participated in the 2025 NW Envirothon, held March 26th and 27th at the Edwin McGee Center in Wilkesboro. The Envirothon is a competitive academic event where middle and High school students work in teams to test their knowledge in five categories: Aquatics, Current Environmental Issues, Forestry, Soils, and Wildlife. This year, the district had a total of 7 middle school teams and 4 High School Teams compete, with representation from East Alexander Middle, Millersville Christian Academy, and Alexander Early College. Advisors and professionals supported students as they prepared through intensive study and hand on learning. Two East Alexander Middle School teams qualified for the state level competition: the Stars & Stripe” team placed 6th, and the Fried Taters” team earned 3rd place. Congratulations to all the students and teachers for their hard work and success!



Middle School Teams



High School Teams



2025 Annual Contest Winners

Wetlands Are Wonderful!

The Alexander Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) held our yearly environmental education contests for the 2024/2025 school year. The school winners from each category were honored at our Soil & Water Awards Banquet held on April 16th at the Emerald Hill in Hiddenite. All of the education contests shared the theme “Wetlands Are Wonderful!” Contests include a 5th grade poster contest, a 6th grade essay contest, a 9th-12th grade essay, a 6th grade computer designed slide show, or PowerPoint, a 9th– 12th Slide show, or PowerPoint, a 7th, 8th, and 9th–12th grade speech contest. As always, we had some great entries, and the judges had a hard time deciding on some of the winners. The Alexander SWCD Board of Supervisors and Staff would like to again congratulate all of the 2025 Conservation Contest participants and winners on a job well done! The students who received awards were presented with ribbons and checks. Our county winners for each contest were:

Fifth Grade poster winner- Weston Teague, Millersville Christian Academy

Sixth Grade essay winner- Lane Baumgarner, West Alexander Middle School

Sixth Grade slide show winner- Rachel Smithey, Millersville Christian Academy

Seventh Grade speech winner- Nayeli Galarza Deleon, East Alexander Middle School

Eighth Grade speech winner- Ziva Sothoron, East Alexander Middle School

Ninth-Twelve grade slide show winner - Adrian Castaneda-Covarrubias, Alexander Early College

Ninth-Twelve grade speech & essay winner
Laurel Mitchell, Alexander Central High School



Congratulations to Ziva Sothoron for winning 1st place in the Area 2 8th Grade Speech contest and making her way to the State Competition!

2024/2025 Education programs



The Alexander Soil & Water Conservation District offers free, hands on programs for all Alexander County Schools (k-12). We can visit your classroom to help meet your environmental goals! Our lessons cover topics like soil and water conservation, agriculture, and natural resources. Programs are fun, interactive, and designed to spark curiosity and learning about the world around us!



Alexander Soil & Water Conservation District

DISTRICT SUPERVISORS

Myles Payne– Chairman

Eugene White– Vice-Chairman

Colby Herman– Secretary/Treasurer

Bryant Chapman– Member

Kathy Bunton- Member

The Alexander Soil and Water Conservation District Board of Supervisors meets at 12:00 PM on the Second Friday of every month in the District Office.

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Office Hours:

8am-5pm

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For More Information

**Visit: [https://
alexandercountyn
c.gov/
departments/soil-
water/](https://alexandercountync.gov/departments/soil-water/)**

District Staff

Pamela Bowman– Director

**Tyler Cornett– Soil & Water
Conservationist**

**Hannah Bengé - Office
Assistant**

NRCS Staff

**Will Faulkner - Supervisory Soil
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