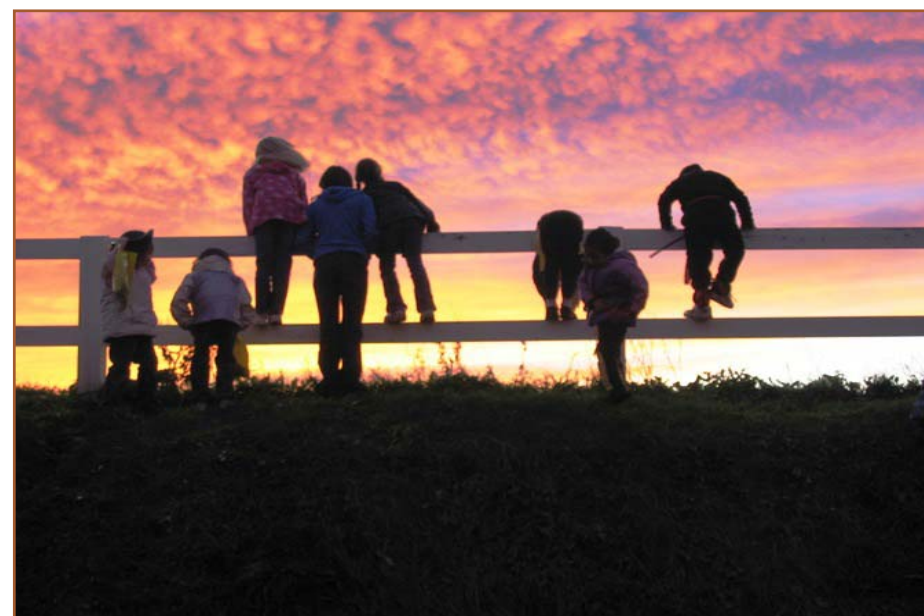


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OLD DOMINION

Resource Conservation & Development

Annual Report 2005

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Sue Adams, National RC&D President Sharon Ruggi, Carlyle Wimbish and Virginia Chairman Jerry Walker at the VARCDC Awards Dinner.

Direct inquiries to:

Old Dominion Resource Conservation & Development
250 LeGrande Avenue, Suite F
Charlotte Court House, VA 23923
434-542-5489
434-542-5976 Fax

Staff:

Dave Roberts, RC&D Coordinator
email: dave.roberts@va.usda.gov

Sue Adams, Program Assistant
email: sue.adams@va.usda.gov



Council attends DVD Premiere.



Council and visitors at a board meeting.



Guests gathered at the DVD Premiere.

Program Assistant of the Year Honors Bestowed

Administrative Assistant Sue Adams was named Program Assistant of the Year for the Southeast Association of RC&D Councils. Sue has worked for the council for 13 years. Her many years of service have allowed her the opportunity to work with four coordinators and numerous interim coordinators. She has provided the continuity needed by the council through times of transition. She helped the council move projects forward, manage grants and make decisions when the coordinator position was vacant.

Several major accomplishments were outlined in the award. Sue coordinated the RC&D secretary's training conference in Staunton last year. She contacted various professionals and arranged an agenda packed with workshops on topics of interest to her and her co-workers. She arranged for two courses through Blue Ridge Community College and obtained grant funding to pay for the courses. Sue traveled to the South Centré Corridors RC&D office in



Sue Adams and VARCDC Vice Chair Jay Hubble in Orlando at SE Association meeting.

Prince George on numerous occasions to assist Keith Boyd who was without office support. Sue also helped her NRCS Service Unit plan a unique skit for the All Employees Meeting.

After being named assistant of the year for Virginia, Sue's nomination was entered into competition for the regional award for the Southeast Association of RC&D Councils. She was chosen as the winner among entries from North Carolina, South Carolina, Kentucky, Tennessee, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, Florida, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. Sue traveled to Orlando in September for the award presentation. During the luncheon, she was surprised with a dozen red roses presented by Jay Hubble, vice chairman of the VARCDC. Following this presentation, Sue

received the regional award and was congratulated by NRCS Chief Bruce Knight and SE President Jeanette Jamieson.

Sherry Swinson Elected State Chair



From left are Jay Hubble, Sherry Swinson, and Jerry Walker.

Taking over from outgoing chairman, Jerry Walker, Sherry Swinson is the new VARCDC chair. She began her duties in November 2005 and presided over her first meeting at the annual fall business meeting in Charlottesville. Jay Hubble is the new vice chair. Ms. Swinson will serve a two-year term.

New Directional Signs Point the Way

New directional signs were installed by town and Virginia Department of Transportation personnel in the region to point the way to the Civil Rights in Education Heritage Trail sites. The Trail is the newest historic tourism destination in Southside Virginia and is driving economic development. The trail is managed by Virginia's Retreat, a regional tourism marketing consortium comprised of the counties of Amelia, Appomattox, Brunswick, Buckingham, Charlotte, Cumberland, Dinwiddie, Halifax, Lunenburg, Mecklenburg, Nottoway, Prince Edward, and the City of Petersburg. A large scale marketing campaign is



underway to attract tourism to the area. People are visiting sites where they or loved ones gained their education. Others who lived their lives within the region are becoming more familiar

with their own local history. Calls have been received from people as far away as California. Travelers who drive the trail are experiencing the culture of Southside. Travelers from all walks of life are coming to Southside Virginia to learn the area's history, meet the people and enjoy the unprecedented natural beauty that exists in rural Virginia. Information on the Heritage Trail and other area attractions can be found at www.varetreat.com or by calling 1-800-6-RETREAT.

Council Provides Grant Assistance for Youth Facility



A new baseball and softball facility is under construction in Charlotte County. The Phenix Dixie Youth Inc. (PDY) was formed in

2000 with the sole mission to develop a baseball and softball program for the youth in the area. It obtained its 501(c)(3) non-profit status from the Internal Revenue Service. Now the Phenix Dixie Youth Inc. has teamed with the Old Dominion RC&D to help them find and apply for some much-needed funds so the recreation facility can be completed. Together they have applied for grant funds from the Baseball Tomorrow Fund. Old Dominion RC&D agreed to assist the PDY because the project meets the council's goal to expand community recreational resources. Construction of these fields will include the final grading and seeding, infield mix, dugouts, lighting, restroom facilities and bleachers. This request will be matched by volunteer labor, donated machinery and materials. The people living in the Phenix community took the initiative to start developing their own facilities rather than taking their request to the county.

To date Phenix Dixie Youth Inc. has raised over \$45,000 in capital funds generated through donations and fundraising activities. These figures do not reflect the volunteer man hours that have been dedicated already to constructing the ball fields. Nor does it account for equipment donated by local

businesses. The initial ground leveling work and rough grading was completed by six front-end loaders and bulldozers owned by two local excavation companies who donated their use along with the operators and fuel. Additionally materials have been delivered to the site by tractor-trailers at no cost to PDY. The fields are being seeded with donated labor, and the list goes on. The anticipated schedule, based upon funding, is for construction to begin on the final grading to prepare a seedbed. This will be followed by planting grass in the field this fall. Through the winter and spring, the structures such as the player dugouts, the backstop, field fencing and bleachers for the spectators, will be constructed. In the spring, the fields will be managed until the grass becomes established and the fields can be utilized for sporting events.

"Never doubt that a group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."

Margaret Meade

Farm Safety Day Camp

"Farm safety camps only last a day, but they'll be remembered for a lifetime." That was the message of the first Progressive Farmer Farm Safety Day Camp® that was held at the Five County Fairgrounds in Prince Edward County. Old Dominion RC&D became a partner in the Day Camp to help educate children and demonstrate the potential dangers found on a farm. The Council recognizes that farming is a cherished way of life for many in Southside Virginia, and knows that life on the farm is full

of potential dangers. Two of the largest dangers are from farm equipment and large animals.

Patrick Murphy, local forester with the Department of Forestry, was the lead coordinator of the camp and was joined by a large group of volunteers. Professionals covered topics such as all-terrain vehicles, electricity, farm equipment, animals, firearms, fire, lawn equipment, the sun and tractors. One of the most vivid demonstrations concerned safety around a power take off unit.

Ninety-three youth attended the day camp with nearly fifty adults lending a hand. Since the first camp was such a resounding success, a second camp will be added during 2006 in order to reach more youth.



Dan Goerlich demonstrates proper handling of power tools.



Dr. Anderson talks about practicing safety around animals.

Environmental Field Schools Give Youth A Boost On SOL Tests

Educational projects such as the Environmental Field School are intended to improve youth awareness of our natural resources. 2005 marked another successful year that the Environmental Field School project was conducted in our region. This amazing program helps children learn about nature from specialists. Our conservation education partners - Soil and Water Conservation Districts - along with Department of Conservation and Recreation staff planned and taught the students who attended two week-long field schools and received hands-on instruction. With the assistance of many experts, classes were fun as well as educational. Students got to walk in streams for the water monitoring exercises. They spent time in class hearing about watersheds, pollution, best management practices, forestry, fish and wildlife. Students were introduced to the relationships of land uses within their watersheds and learned the importance of watershed planning to achieve better water quality. "Students gained more awareness of their surroundings and learned how their decisions impact the environment," said Julie Hamlett, the director of the field school for the southern counties.

To provide the program free to students, donations from local companies and organizations are requested. Facilities, instructors and educational tools are provided by the partners. Contributors during this year were Farmville Wal-Mart, Farm Credit of the Virginias, Zach Tucker, Morgan Lumber, R.O. Harrell Inc., Hancock Forest Management, Colonial Farm Credit - ACA, Luck



Field School student helps his team design a watershed community.

Stone, Climate Control, Cardinal Homes, McDannald Construction, Halifax Farm Bureau Women's Committee, Charlotte County Farm Bureau and First Citizen's Bank. Old Dominion RC&D serves as the fiscal officer for the EFS program. Peter Francisco SWCD and Piedmont SWCD funded the expenses not covered by sponsor donations for students in their field school.

"We hope the instruction each student gets at the field school helps them increase their scores on Virginia's required Standards of Learning tests."

Sherry Ragland

Heritage Trail is Chosen VARCDC Project of the Year



And the winner is...Civil Rights in Education Heritage Trail! The Virginia Association of RC&D Councils chose the trail grand opening as the Outstanding Project of the Year. In a ceremony held in Petersburg at the Annual Spring VARCDC Meeting,

"We are honored to receive this award as recognition for the efforts and dedication of so many who worked over numerous years to make the trail a reality."

Carlyle Wimbish

Planning Committee Chairperson Stephanie Heintzleman and council Vice Chairman Carlyle Wimbish at the People's Community Center, one of 41 sites on the Heritage Trail.



From Abandoned Railbeds To Recreational Trails

Old Dominion is on board when it comes to creating opportunities and expanding resources for recreation. The region has some abandoned railbeds that are being used to create greenway trails. Virginia's Piedmont region offers miles of hiking, biking and horseback riding trails. The trails lead visitors over varied terrain amidst pristine hardwood forests, scenic rivers, lakes and wetlands. What makes these rail/trails so appealing to visitors is their accessibility. Since the railroad once was the connection between small rural towns, each town on the line has a point of entrance to the trails and typically has ample parking. Long hikes, cycling and horseback riding outings can be planned. When traveling through rural areas, enthusiasts are treated to a wide variety of natural beauty. Unique plants, wildflowers, birds and animals of all sorts are prevalent. Whether it is by hiking, running, cycling, riding horseback, inline skating, or any non-motorized activity, the rail/trails are available to use. Individuals who are physically challenged are able to use the trails as well. Since trains could only travel on shallow grades, there are no steep inclines with which to contend. Expect to see a fair amount of local people using the trails. In other portions of Virginia, studies have shown that the majority of people using rail/trails live within a ten-mile radius.

The surface of a rail/trail typically is a very fine compacted gravel. Trails have wide grassy

right-of-ways allowing people to pass each other with relative ease. Beyond the grassy edge of the trail, native trees are encouraged to grow and provide a shaded and pleasant corridor during the warmer months and the chance to see wildlife such as deer, turkey and squirrels making their home along the trail. Though a relatively new idea to this state, many states throughout the country have well established trails. Rail/trails can spark economic revitalization in small towns with some businesses expanding to provide bike and skate rentals, horse livery, bed and breakfasts, restaurants and fountain shops to accommodate visitors. It has happened already as demonstrated when the Virginia Creeper Trail was opened, the Town of Damascus had a complete economic turn around. From a health point of view, rail/trails provide an excellent resource for exercise, even for people who

are not the typical outdoor enthusiast. With people living more and more sedentary lives, rail/trails give them a place to exercise in an open environment.

Old Dominion RC&D is using funds from an Urban and Community Forestry Grant from the Virginia Department of Forestry to advertise the trails of the Piedmont in *Blue Ridge Outdoor Magazine*. The publication is intended to market outdoor attractions of Southside Virginia. Two rails/trails - the Tobacco Heritage Trail and the High Bridge Trail - are currently under development in this region.

"We are starting to see results from our workshop last year. I see an increase in the awareness of leaders, both at the local and state levels."

Dave Roberts

Horse enthusiasts enjoy a trail ride along a converted railbed.



Letter from the Chairman

I am pleased with what the council has accomplished this year. Several long term projects are starting to show benefits. The Heritage Trail continues to grow, and we are working with the Department of Education to incorporate the trail site histories into Virginia's Standards of Learning. Several abandoned rail beds are becoming trails as a result of the symposium we hosted last year. Governor Warner proposed to set aside \$950,000 to purchase abandoned railways in Southside and convert them into trails before he left office. These two tourism projects will bring more visitors to our area and enrich our economy for years to come.

With the multi-year projects mostly behind us, we will focus on the needs and concerns of people in our communities and find ways to keep our agricultural and timberlands viable and sustainable. Our efforts this past year have benefited our youth through the environmental field schools and farm safety day camp. Another farm safety camp will be added in 2006 so that the entire region can participate. We have been searching for grants for athletic fields and recreation parks. We continue to support the volunteers of the Halifax Saddle Club and the Friends of the Appomattox River.

I want to thank my fellow council members for a great year of volunteerism and service to their communities. I want to thank Dave Roberts for his leadership and coordinating efforts. And I want to thank Sue Adams for another year of excellent service to RC&D and congratulate her on winning Program Assistant of the Year honors. I want to say a special thanks to NRCS for the support they continuously provide the council, both technically and financially. It has been a good year, and we are hopeful that next year will be even better.

George Ingram

George Ingram Takes Over as Chairman



RC&D Council. George Ingram, a resident of Lunenburg, was elected as the chairman of ODRCD in January 2005. He follows William Park of Mecklenburg County. In January of 2006, Mr. Ingram began his first term as the chairman of the Lunenburg County Board of Supervisors. Some of the RC&D projects adopted during 2005 were Heartland Industrial Park

For years he served as the senior enlisted man in the Pacific Fleet of the United States Navy, but now he is at the helm of the

Sign, Trash Cleanup, Halifax/South Boston Sports Hall of Fame, Farm Safety Day Camp/Southern Counties, Wetlands in the Park, Biodiesel Workshop and Phenix Dixie Youth Ballfield. Open projects that moved forward this year were Farm Safety Day Camp, DVD Premiere Event, Project Playground, Heritage Trail and Rails to Trails. The council is keeping abreast of the TMDL (Total Maximum Daily Load) hearings held by the Department of Environmental Quality. RC&D supports the Friends of the Appomattox River, environmental education and actively participates in Virginia's Retreat.

Secretary of Education is Guest Speaker at Premiere



Beverly Hawthorne of Virginia's Retreat, on left, presents DVD to Dr. Wheelan.

Dr. Belle S. Wheelan, Secretary of Education under Governor Mark Warner, visited The Peoples Community Center in Victoria on Thursday, July 14, 2005, where she served as the keynote speaker. The event was attended by 85 people from various parts of the state. This celebration honored those who inspired and worked diligently toward the completion of the Civil Rights in Education Heritage Trail, a driving tour highlighting 41 sites

where women, African Americans, Native Americans and the mentally challenged struggled for equal education. The Peoples Community Center is site #21 on the trail. The luncheon was hosted by Virginia's Retreat and the Old Dominion RC&D Council. These two groups worked hand in hand with the Virginia Department of Transportation on a TEA-21 grant to develop the trail. The highlight of the celebration was the unveiling of a DVD made to market the trail. It features people, some of whom worked on the planning committee, speaking about their personal experiences as well as an overview of the entire trail. The 9.5 minute video was presented to members of the Core Planning Committee, many of whom were present. Copies may be obtained from Old Dominion RC&D for a \$5 donation.

The Old Dominion Resource Conservation and Development Council, Inc. is a 501c(3) non-profit organization with a mission to initiate and coordinate resource development and conservation programs that enhance the social, economic and environmental quality of the region.

Council Sponsors: Council Member and Alternate

Amelia County Board of Supervisors: David Keener, Phillip Vannoorbeeck
 Brunswick County Board of Supervisors: Dorothy Thomas, Gerald Vincent
 Buckingham County Board of Supervisors: Henry Hagenau, Rebecca Carter
 Charlotte County Board of Supervisors: Stephanie Heintzleman
 Cumberland County Board of Supervisors: Sherry Swinson, Elbert Womack
 Halifax County Board of Supervisor: Carlyle Wimbish, James Edmunds
 Lunenburg County Board of Supervisors: George Ingram, Catherine Giorgetti
 Mecklenburg County Board of Supervisors: Wayne Carter, Jim Jennings
 Nottoway County Board of Supervisors: Ronnie Roark, John Prorise
 Prince Edward County Board of Supervisors: Susie Hampton, Sarah Puckett
 Halifax Soil & Water Conservation District: Baxter Wilson, Kenneth Cassada
 Lake Country Soil & Water Conservation District: Cynthia Gregg, Harold Alderfer
 Peter Francisco Soil & Water Conservation District: Sherry Ragland
 Piedmont Soil & Water Conservation District: Gary Dillard, Don Maxey
 Southside Soil & Water Conservation District: Eugene Morris, Julie Hamlett
 Piedmont Planning District Commission: Andre Gilliam, Todd Fortune
 Southside Planning District Commission: Billy Park, Joyce French

2005 Executive Council

Chairman, George Ingram
 Vice Chairman, Carlyle Wimbish
 Secretary, Cynthia Gregg
 Treasurer, Stephanie Heintzleman
 Past Chair, William Park
 Member-At-Large, Kenneth Cassada

The Old Dominion RC&D Council wishes to express appreciation to all of the groups, organizations and agencies for assistance given in support of projects during 2005. Active involvement and local leadership were the key components toward the successful completion of projects. A special thank you goes to the Natural Resources Conservation Service for providing an office, staff and supplies to help us carry out our mission.