

Mountain Castles Soil & Water Conservation District



We work with the people who work the land.

2024 District Update

With another year of record-high cost share available, Mountain Castles Soil & Water Conservation District allocated nearly one million dollars for the construction of new Best Management Practices (BMPs) in Botetourt County and Craig County. Cost share was in high demand in areas “outside the Chesapeake Bay” watershed, especially in the Sinking Creek watershed of Craig County.

While many of these BMPs will take time to build, the district paid out nearly \$400,000 for projects completed in the 2024 program year, which ended June 30. The Tinker & Glade Creek Residential septic program continued to be used, with nearly \$65,000 paid in cost share, mainly in the Rainbow Forest area of Blue Ridge. The district built staff capacity for the Virginia Conservation Assistance Program (VCAP), hiring Emily Williams as a contractor to conduct site visits and help homeowners navigate the application process.

The district’s education and outreach program reached nearly 4,000 students and adults through classroom programs, workshops, and field trips. Highlights included a canoe experience on the James River for every Botetourt County seventh-grader, a sixth-grade field experience in Catawba Creek, and fall “Land Day” activities at Camp Bethel for every Botetourt second-grader. The district also co-hosted the Area I Envirothon with Natural Bridge SWCD.

The district cannot do this work without collaboration with our partners. Our partners include the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), the Virginia Association of Soil & Water Conservation Districts, Botetourt County, Craig County, Farm Service Agency (FSA), Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Virginia Department of Forestry, Virginia Department of Environmental Quality, Virginia Cooperative Extension, the Virginia Department of Health, the Chesapeake Bay Restoration Fund, Valley Conservation Council, Blue Ridge Land Conservancy, the Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Commission, the Catawba Sustainability Center, and Roanoke Cement Company.