



Mountain Castles
Soil & Water Conservation District

ANNUAL
REPORT
Program Year 2026



OUR PROGRAMS



FARMERS

Mountain Castles SWCD administers the Virginia Agricultural Best Management Practices Cost Share Program (VACS) which provides financial and technical assistance for agricultural producers to implement Best Management Practices (BMPs) in order to improve water quality on their farm and downstream.



HOMEOWNERS

The Virginia Conservation Assistance Program (VCAP) provides financial reimbursement to homeowners installing Best Management Practices (BMPs) which reduce stormwater runoff and erosion on their property. Churches, local government, and businesses are also eligible to participate.



RESIDENTIAL SEPTIC

Up to 50% financial reimbursement for residential septic improvements may be available for homeowners in the Tinker Creek watershed (Daleville, Cloverdale, parts of Troutville) and the Glade Creek watershed (Blue Ridge). Eligible practices include pump outs, repairs, and replacement systems.



EDUCATION

Mountain Castles SWCD delivers free K-12 educational programming both in the classroom and through District-organized outdoor field trips, including the "Every 7th Grader Canoes" program. Outreach programs for all ages are delivered through clubs, festivals, fairs, and local libraries, including our popular rain barrel workshops.

VACS

New contract obligations

Chesapeake Bay watershed: **\$774,941**

Outside the Chesapeake Bay: **\$340,082**

Total amount obligated in PY26: **\$1,115,023**

Payments

Chesapeake Bay watershed: **\$528,211.29**

Outside the Chesapeake Bay: **\$235,539.24**

Total amount paid in PY 26: **\$763,750.53**

VCAP

Total cost share provided:

\$8,356.00

Emily Williams was hired as our new part-time employee dedicated to VCAP.



RESIDENTIAL SEPTIC

Total cost share provided: **\$13,169.15**

New grants received: **\$100,706.00**

PY 26 was largely spent compiling a “wait list” as we applied for additional funding from the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality, which we received in June. With over \$90,000 of cost share available, the program will fully resume in PY 27.

EDUCATION & OUTREACH

Total number of programs: **111**

Partner organizations: **13**

Total participants: **3,687**

Educational grants received: **\$9,600.00**

Scholarships awarded: **\$8,145.00**

OPERATIONAL INCOME

Income (state): **\$328,769.23**

Income (local): **\$10,000.00**

Income (other): **\$18,827.91**

Dam maintenance (state): **\$22,640.00**

Interest: **\$7,537.31**

Total operational income: **\$387,774.45**

OPERATIONAL EXPENSES

Operations & Education:
\$294,245.00

Dam maintenance: **\$17,259.54**

Total operational expenses:
\$311,504.54

DAMS

Mountain Castles SWCD manages four flood control dams on Johns Creek in Craig Co.

Income

Small dam repair (state): **\$42,000.00**

Johns Creek #1 rehab (state/federal):
\$103,395.14

Expenses

Small dam repair: **\$40,000.00**

Johns Creek #1 rehab: **\$175,267.35**

Mountain Castles SWCD



2026 DISTRICT AWARDS



S&R Family Homestead was the recipient of this year's Clean Water Farm award. The Smith and Ribble families expanded their original stream exclusion project to incorporate rotational grazing and improve pasture quality. They have been exceptional collaborators with the District over the years and serve as role models for the farming community.

Sponsored by the Virginia Department of Conservation & Recreation, the CWFA celebrates dedicated farmers who lead by example to preserve water quality through conservation practices.

High School Scholarships

Mountain Castles SWCD annually awards \$2,000 scholarships to graduating seniors from District high schools. Recipients must major in natural resource conservation, agriculture, environmental studies, or a related field.



Georgia Miller,
James River High
School



Tiffany Ratliff & Carter
Calfee, Craig County
High School

IT'S A TEAM EFFORT



Contact Us

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Our Website

mountaincastles.org



Partners

Virginia Dept of Conservation & Recreation
Virginia Association of Soil & Water
Conservation Districts
Botetourt County Board of Supervisors
Botetourt County Schools
Craig County Board of Supervisors
Craig County Schools
Natural Resources Conservation Service
Farm Service Agency
Shenandoah Valley Conservancy
Blue Ridge Land Conservancy
Virginia Cooperative Extension



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Virginia Dept of Environmental Quality
Virginia Department of Health
National Assoc of Conservation Districts
VSU Small Farm Outreach Program
Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional
Commission
Upper James RC&D
Upper & Middle James Buffer Consortium
James River Association
Roanoke Cement