



Peter Francisco Soil and Water Conservation District Strategic Plan 2026-2029

January 2026 – December 2029

Board Approved: 09/17/25

Mission Statement

The Peter Francisco Soil & Water Conservation District provides the citizens of Buckingham and Cumberland counties educational programming, technical assistance, and conservation practices to encourage stewardship of the environment and natural resources.

Vision Statement

The Peter Francisco Soil & Water Conservation District envisions Buckingham and Cumberland counties as agricultural, rural and urban areas committed to water quality and soil health. The District is accessible, committed, and focused on service for our community. We strive to educate our rural and urban landowners and the general public to be responsible stewards now and into the future.

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Justice Statement

We value the educational and program benefits of diverse ideas, peoples, and cultures in order to contribute to equitable inclusion through collaboration and partnerships, guided by open expression, self-awareness, and mutual respect.

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Peter Francisco Soil and Water Conservation District Strategic Plan 2026-2029

Overview:

The Peter Francisco Soil and Water Conservation District (PFSWCD) is a political subdivision of the Commonwealth of Virginia and is responsible under State Law for soil and water conservation work within the boundaries of Buckingham and Cumberland Counties. The District's purpose is to encourage and initiate land use practices that help improve water quality and reduce soil erosion as well as educating the community in protecting our natural resources.

Soil conservation is not something new or recently considered. In the mid-1930's, Franklin D. Roosevelt wrote to the governor of each state recommending legislation to establish soil and water conservation districts to prevent the loss of valuable soil resources. The President's letter expressed this concern: "The nation that destroys its soil, destroys itself." Soil Conservation District laws were passed in all states to provide local leadership for soil conservation programs.

The Peter Francisco SWCD was originally organized on July 24, 1940, and was made up of the counties of Amherst, Appomattox, Campbell, Buckingham, and Cumberland. During a time of reorganization, Buckingham and Cumberland Counties separated to form the Peter Francisco SWCD in December 1972, and became active on January 1, 1973. The District covers an area of 873 square miles and is located in the Southern Piedmont Region of Virginia. It is bounded on the North by the James River and bounded on the South by the Appomattox River. Within the District, there are over 17 watershed dams that were built for flood control that affect the Slate and Willis Rivers and are a part of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed. The District is a rural, agricultural district with the majority of the area in woodland and small farms. The main industries are timber, cattle, and poultry.

The Commonwealth of Virginia supports the District through financial and administrative assistance provided by the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) as well as the District utilizing local and some federal funds. The Board of Directors is the governing body of the District, consisting of six members: Four Directors, two from each county, elected every four years in the general election; one is appointed by the Virginia Association of Soil and Water Conservation Board, and one is appointed as a representative of the Virginia Cooperative Extension Service within the District.

Peter Francisco SWCD's partnering agencies:

- Bear Creek Lake State Park
- Buckingham Cattlemen's Association (BCA)
- Buckingham County Government
- Buckingham County Public Schools
- Central Virginia Christian School
- Cumberland County Government
- Cumberland County Public Schools
- Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF)
- Farm Service Agency (FSA)
- Holiday Lake 4-H Educational Center
- Holliday Lake State Park
- James River Association (JRA)
- James River State Park
- National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD)
- Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)
- US Fish & Wildlife Service
- Virginia Association of Soil & Water Conservation Districts (VASWCD)
- Virginia Cooperation Extension (VCE)
 - Buckingham VCE
 - Cumberland VCE
- Virginia Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services (VDACS)
- Virginia Department of Conservation & Recreation (DCR)
- Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ)
- Virginia Department of Forestry (DOF)
- Virginia Department of Health (VDH)
- Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources (DWR)
- Virginia Soil & Water Conservation Board

GOAL ONE: Improve Water Quality and Soil Health

Objective One: Provide conservation and technical assistance to the community (agricultural, forestry, and urban)

Strategy One: Promote the agricultural cost-share program (VACS)

Strategy Two: Promote the residential septic program

Strategy Three: Support the Virginia Conservation Assistance Program (VCAP) by sharing storm water practices with the community

Strategy Four: Work with partner agencies and organizations to provide community outreach

Strategy Five: Provide producers an opportunity to improve soil quality through access to the District's equipment rental program (No-Till Drill)

Strategy Six: Search and apply for local, state, and federal grants to support residential practices such as the septic tank pump-out program and the VA Conservation Assistance Program (VCAP)

Objective Two: Provide conservation and technical assistance to Local Government

Strategy One: Assist localities with implementation of the Erosion & Sediment (E&S) programs

Strategy Two: Advise and educate local government on land use issues and planning processes

Goal One Metrics

- Organize a field day to promote cost-share programs and no-till drill use
- Per DCR deliverable, hold one educational event per year

GOAL TWO: Educate Youth and Adults about Natural Resources and District Programs

Objective One: Provide educational opportunities for adults

Strategy One: Conduct farm tours and field days to provide conservation programs in action

Strategy Two: Recognize local producers and landowners through our awards program (e.g. Clean Water Farm award, Educator award)

Strategy Three: Work to be a presence at local public events to promote District programs

Strategy Four: Utilize social media and on-line platforms in educational program delivery

Objective Two: Provide educational opportunities for youth

Strategy One: Conduct and evaluate educational programs for public schools, home-schools, and private schools correlated to the VA Standards of Learning (SOL's)

Strategy Two: Provide scholarships to promote continuing education in the field of natural resources, biology, or agriculture

Strategy Three: Conduct and evaluate educational programming such as Envirothon, camps and watershed explorations

Strategy Four: Effectively publicize events and activities — both to encourage attendance beforehand and to showcase outcomes afterward

GOAL THREE: Identify and Create Opportunities for Conservation Programming

Objective One: Communicate District services through newsletters, mailings, website, flyer, social media and booths

Strategy One: Attend both counties Board of Supervisors meetings to give program updates and recaps at a minimum of once a year, more if needed

Strategy Two: Create an infographic that details conservation program data to share with constituents

Strategy Three: Improve the website to be more user friendly and easier to navigate

Strategy Four: Create posts for social media outlining events or past event details

Strategy Five: Create promotional materials for educational programs and services through new marketing tools and technology

Strategy Six: Update the mailing list for all informational material(s)

Strategy Seven: Utilize an evaluation form for District programming activities

Strategy Eight: Continue to provide scholarships for education in natural resources, biology, or agriculture

Objective Two: Foster and Improve partnerships to enhance District programs and opportunities

Strategy One: Attend meetings, roundtables, discussions and updates with partnering organizations

Strategy Two: Continue seeking grant opportunities with new and current partners

Strategy Three: Increase joint participation in outreach and educational events

Goal Three Metrics

- Improve the website to be more user friendly and easier to navigate
- Utilize an evaluation form for District programming activities

GOAL FOUR: Operate and Maintain 17 Watershed Flood Control Dams

Objective One: Manage dams to ensure compliance with the VA Dam Safety Regulations

Strategy One: Coordinate with Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) dam safety engineers for PE inspections, permitting and repairs as needed

Strategy Two: Perform annual owners' inspections and submit inspection forms through Dam Safety Inventory System (DSIS)

Strategy Three: Train additional people/volunteers to assist with inspections as needed

Strategy Four: Maintain dams in accordance with DCR/NRCS standards to ensure future rehabilitation eligibility

Strategy Five: Perform bi-annual mowing and general maintenance

Strategy Six: Utilize remote monitoring equipment and periodically review rainfall/lake level data collected

Strategy Seven: Keep Emergency Action Plans (EAPs) current

Objective Two: Uphold requirements for Emergency Action Plans (EAPs)

Strategy One: Provide updates/reports to the counties including inspection reports, Dam Break Inundation Studies (DBIS), and EAP's

Strategy Two: Encourage localities to use DBIS as part of their comprehensive plans and appropriate ordinances

Strategy Three: Routinely work with localities Emergency Services Coordinators to generate an Emergency Action Plan (EAP) exercise for emergency action responses to include an annual review of EAP documentation and a tabletop exercise every 6 years as required by DCR Dam safety regulations.

Objective Three: Communicate the purpose of the watershed flood control dams, structures and maintenance responsibilities as pertaining to the Public Law-566 Watershed Project and Flood Prevention Program

Strategy One: Inform landowners of upcoming maintenance and inspections, and offer educational meetings periodically

Strategy Two: Inform our elected/legislative officials, landowners, developers, realtors about sound land use practices to protect water quality of the lake and downstream watershed as needed

The Strategic Planning Process

The strategic planning process involves not only the staff and directors within the organization, but guidance from local, state and federal agencies and citizens from Buckingham and Cumberland Counties. All 47 Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Districts are encouraged to conduct strategic planning every four years. The Peter Francisco Soil and Water Conservation District last conducted a planning process in 2016. The District hired a facilitator to assist with the next round of the planning process for a revision of the current strategic plan by December 2025. Stakeholder interviews were conducted with county government, landowners, and school officials prior to a in-person event held on May 22, 2025.

The Strategic Plan is a document that will enable the District to incorporate anticipated changes that may affect our natural resources for the future. The planning committees have recognized future priority issues, set goals and strategies, and identified steps needed to accomplish the goals within the next four years. The District's Strategic Planning Committee will track this plan on a quarterly basis. District Staff will refer to stakeholder survey notes and use it as a tool to update and develop on-going plans for further growth within the District.

The District office is housed in the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Service Center, Sprouses Corner located at 16842 W. James Anderson Highway, Buckingham Virginia. Office hours are 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. The District phone number is (434) 983-7923. Website: <http://peterfranciscoswcd.org/>

Monthly District meetings are held on the 3rd Wednesday at 9:00 a.m. at the USDA Service Center Conference Room.

2026 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

M. Todd Smith, Chairman (Cumberland)
Terry Seal, Vice-Chairman (Cumberland)
Donna McRae-Jones (Buckingham)
Kevin Dunn (Buckingham)
Barbara Teeple (Buckingham – Appointed)
Amber A. Taylor (Cumberland Extension Agent - Appointed)

ASSOCIATE DIRECTORS

H. Gwynn Tyler, Treasurer
Ruth Wallace
Jennifer Ligon
Linda Eanes
Vertia Mae Jamerson

DISTRICT STAFF

Kelly Snoddy, District Manager/Sr. Conservation Specialist
Brandy Maxey, Operations Manager
Cody Smith, Conservation Technician
Charlotte Drake, Conservation Education Coordinator
Jesse Hudgins, Equipment Manager

The Peter Francisco Soil and Water Conservation District prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, and marital status. The Commonwealth of Virginia supports the Peter Francisco Soil and Water Conservation District through financial and administrative assistance provided by the Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board and the Department of Conservation and Recreation.