

Madison County Government Newsletter



Employee Recognition

- Congratulations to Amanda Cutshaw for making the President's List at AB Tech while she works on obtaining her degree in Public Safety Administration! Amanda works in the Finance Department as a Finance Technician III.
- Congratulations to Callie Shelton for receiving the Rookie of the Year award at the Madison County Transportation Roadeo training event! Callie works for the Nutrition Department as a Cook and Driver.
- Congratulations to Mike Frady for finishing third overall at the Madison County Transportation Roadeo training event! Mike works in the Transportation Department as a Transportation Driver.

Thank you for your hard work and dedication to Madison County!

2022 Madison County Transportation "ROADEO"

On June 10th, the Madison County Transportation Authority hosted the yearly "Roadeo" for the Northwest Region of Public Transportation. Drivers from Avery, Madison, and McDowell, Mitchell, and Yancey counties participated in a driving course and various trainings. Callie Shelton, who is a cook and driver with the county nutrition, won rookie of the year. Mike Frady of MCTA finished third overall. All of our drivers did a great job and represented our county well. The MCTA would like to thank the many volunteers who made this possible and Madison High School for sharing their beautiful campus.



Madison County Offices will be closed on Monday, July 4, 2022 in observance of Independence Day.



Madison County Parks & Recreation Summer 2022 Program Schedule

Day	Date	Venue	Time	Amount
Thursday	June 30	Mars Hill Pool	11:15AM-3:30 PM	\$5.00
Tuesday	July 12	Trampoline Park	10:45 AM- 3:00 PM	\$20.00
Thursday	July 14	Horseback Riding	9:00 AM- 12:00 PM	\$25.00
Tuesday	July 19	Rafting	8:15 AM- 1:00 PM	\$25.00
Thursday	July 21	Retrocade	9:15 AM- 12:25 PM	\$10.00
Tuesday	July 26	Trampoline Park	10:45 AM- 3:00 PM	\$20.00
Thursday	July 28	Mars Hill Pool	11:15 AM- 3:30 PM	\$5.00

Contact the Madison County Parks and Recreation Department for registration and other information!

<https://www.madisoncountync.gov/park-summer-events.html>

Madison County Employee Featured in Virginia Tech article:

MNR alum Richard Gustafson advances sustainability in Appalachia's farming community



Richard is surveying at a local farm to design a cattle watering system. In fencing out waterways, the practice decreases non-point source pollution, mitigates erosion, and preserves bank vegetation.

By Lindsay Kuczera

<https://cliqs.vt.edu/blog/mnr-alum-richard-gustafson-advances-sustainability-in-appalachia.html>

June 7, 2022

With an appetite for growing his own food, 2020 Virginia Tech Master of Natural Resources (Online) alum Richard Gustafson found himself at the intersection of conservation, food policy, and sustainable agriculture. Gustafson recently started a new position as a soil conservationist with Madison county in North Carolina. There, he makes connections with local Appalachian farmers and helps write conservation plans to help each farmer achieve their individual needs as a community provider while protecting their natural resources for decades to come.

From foodie to farmer

What sparked it all was Gustafson's post-undergrad backpacking trip in South America where he worked on farms in Argentina and became passionate about farm-to-table cooking. He imagined this would lead to a culinary career, and when he returned to the United States, he began farming on his property outside of Asheville, North Carolina. Shortly after, Gustafson was working for a forestry non-profit when he met a Virginia Tech alum and learned about the MNR (Online) program.

Gustafson enrolled and instantly started connecting the dots between his past work and his passion for farming, finding his niche in agricultural sustainability. In fact, he credits Dr. Jennifer Jones' Food Policy & Sustainability course for inspiring him to make a career transition to his current role. The course reinforced his passion for food issues and sustainability while looking at landscapes, land use, and conservation. He now directly applies the skills he learned in class to his job as a soil conservationist.

Forming connections for localized conservation

In one instance, Gustafson worked with a small organic farmer who provides a vegetable CSA for 13 families within a mile in a remote valley of Appalachia. Since they did not have a very good water source for irrigation, Gustafson helped put together a cost share program so they could install a solar well. "By implementing conservation practices like this, you're allowing people to have access to better food," he explains.

With the effects of climate change worsening, local farmers are particularly vulnerable to increasing drought and flooding. In Appalachia, many of the farms are passed down through generations, instilling pride and a deep commitment to preserving the land. With additional pressure from encroaching urban sprawl, a good working relationship between farmers and local government ensures agricultural land is kept sustainable and viable—avoiding the need to sell the farmers' land to developers.

Collaboration at the root of sustainability

A large aspect of Gustafson's job is forming personal connections and engaging the community. Every week, he visits different landowners and listens to their needs. Sometimes he's writing conservation plans, giving conservation technical assistance, or implementing cost share programs—at other times, he's sitting on their porch talking about the weather and gas prices. Whatever the day brings, it's always a collaborative experience, where creating plans to mitigate each individual's natural resource concerns is at the forefront.

Gustafson also noted the great inter-agency and inter-office collaboration he's seen in his role with the county, and how the MNR program helped prepare him for such an experience. "I think a lot of times in conservation we sort of get in our silos and we don't collaborate as well as we should. The program really helped me with that," he says.

Although he came from a global perspective and is now working at a localized level, these grassroots conservation approaches that Gustafson is helping to implement are applicable in any country and in any community.



Congratulations to the Town of Mars Hill for Receiving \$750,000 in Grant Funding!

30 local governments in rural areas across North Carolina have been awarded grants from the Rural Transformation Grant Fund, a new source of support for rural economic development projects in North Carolina funded by the federal American Rescue Plan. The grant focused on three areas: Downtown Revitalization, Resilient Neighborhoods, and Community Enhancements.

The Town of Mars Hill received funding for the Community Enhancements Category. The Community Enhancements for Economic Growth category provides grants to local governments to smooth the way for economic development opportunities, such as acquisition of land and buildings, the preparation of business sites, and the removal of structural and physical barriers that may be limiting development.

For more information go to: <https://www.nccommerce.com/news/press-releases/rural-communities-awarded-american-rescue-plan-transformation-grants-boost-local>

Coming up in May at Madison County Public Libraries!

Fly Fishing 101

Join Josh Garris from Curtis Wright Outfitters as he discusses how to get started fly fishing and shares some of the basics about our local rivers. There are three chances to attend this program. This program is for teens and adults. Registration is recommended - <https://bit.ly/mcpl-fishing>.

- Marshall Library – **June 30** – 2pm
- Pine Hall in Hot Springs (64 S Spring St) – **July 5** – 1pm

Music, Puppets, and More

The Abells will perform an all-ages show on **June 29** at 11am at the Marshall Library. Susana and Timmy Abell present an exciting, engaging, and interactive blend of music, puppetry, poetry, and storytelling. Registration recommended but not required - <https://bit.ly/mcpl-abells> Don't miss out!!

Get Started with Windows Basics

Join Shawna at the Mars Hill Library every Wednesday in July at 10:30am for the next session in her Windows Basics program. Come each week or for the topics you need. Register to attend at <https://bit.ly/WindowsClasses>.

FREE Friday Night at the Movies – Luca

Come by the Marshall library branch on **July 1** at 6pm as we kick off the summer reading season with a free family showing of the movie, *Moana*, the next in a series of First Friday Movie Nights. Snacks will be served!

Explore the Deep Blue Sea

Join the Hands On Museum at the Hot Springs Library on **July 11** at 11am to learn about the bottom of the deep blue sea and the creatures living in the ocean. We'll discuss the multitude of amazing ocean life, the life of a marine biologist, and make our own ocean in a bottle. Registration recommended at <https://bit.ly/mcpl-sea> - or call one of the libraries.

Make Your Own Book Bag

Join Cathy and Caroline on **July 11** at 3:30pm at the Mars Hill Library for a hands-on craft class where you will make your own book bag from a t-shirt (provided). Take home your own creation at the end of the class. No registration required!

New Hires at the Cooperative Extension Office

Livestock & Horticulture Agent

Peyton Duckett is the new North Carolina Cooperative Extension Livestock and Horticulture Agent for Madison County. Peyton has been a Madison County resident for her entire life, growing up on a small commercial beef operation in Little Sandy Mush. She was involved in FFA and 4H throughout her middle school and high school education. After high school, she earned a Bachelor's of Science Degree in animal science from North Carolina State University, and she is currently working on her master's degree in animal science, with a minor in agriculture education and extension.

She is committed to helping livestock farmers in the area improve their production toward their goals and potential, while also doing everything possible to help livestock and crop producers reach their most sustainable potential, improving their annual yields and maintaining soil health in the process.

"I can't wait to help current and future producers of crops and livestock solve problems and contribute to the growth of Madison County agriculture in quantity and quality."

Cooperative Extension Director

We would like to introduce Madison County Extension's new Director, Elizabeth Ayers. She was born and raised in Madison County. Elizabeth graduated from Madison High School and went on to graduate from Clemson University with a B.S. in Agriculture Education and a M.S. in Plant and Environmental Science.

Elizabeth is not new to North Carolina Cooperative Extension. Elizabeth worked for 10 years as Madison Extension's tobacco, livestock and consumer horticulture agent. She also worked for 5 years as the Small Farms and Alternative Agriculture Agent.

"I look forward to serving my community and being able to give back to the place I have always called home."

To learn more about the services offered at the Madison County Cooperative Extension Office call (828)649-2411 or go to:

<https://madison.ces.ncsu.edu/>

Family & Consumer Sciences Agent

Jessica Mollet is the new N.C. Cooperative Extension Family and Consumer Sciences agent in Madison County. She is a licensed and registered dietitian in N.C. who previously had a private practice in Madison County. Jessica received her B.A. in Education at UNC – Chapel Hill and a B.S. with a double-major in Dietetics as well as Nutrition and Health at Kansas State University. She is a Master Gardener, a Master Food Volunteer and ServSafe Certified.

Jessica is passionate about helping people learn how to improve their health and wellbeing with tasty, simple, and inexpensive meals, especially with foods that come from right here in our county.

"The pandemic has really highlighted issues around food, nutrition and health. In Madison County we are lucky to have a rich growing season and access to many wonderful local small farms. This makes it easier to enjoy delicious seasonal foods, whether from our backyard and community gardens, or the many small farms located in our county."

"These past two years have been challenging for most of us, and that has taken a toll on our health. Getting back to eating real food is an instrumental part of regaining our health. I look forward to learning with, sharing and assisting residents in exploring ways to bring tasty, healthy, simple and inexpensive meals to our tables."