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snapshot dated October 19, 2023

MULTIPLE-SELECT VOTING

Northern Virginia Soil and Water Conservation District Director

Select up to **3 candidates**

You can select up to 3 candidates to vote for in this race. Order of selection does not matter.

About This Race

Soil and Water Conservation Districts develop comprehensive programs and plans to conserve soil resources, control and prevent soil erosion, prevent floods and conserve, develop, utilize and dispose of water. Three directors are elected to a four year term.

General Information



Independent

Dana H. Barakat

NO RESPONSES YET.

We asked the candidate some general information questions, such as campaign details and important source links. Unfortunately, the candidate has not answered at this time.



Independent

Rhonda J. Bitterli

CAMPAIGN WEBSITE

rb-soilandwater.com

INSTAGRAM

[instagram.com/rhondabitterli](https://www.instagram.com/rhondabitterli)

CAMPAIGN EMAIL

rhondabitterli@gmail.com

BIOGRAPHY

M.S. degree in Soil and Water Science. Areas of experience: Migration of pollutants through soil; municipal solid waste; hazardous waste; agricultural practices and their effects on the environment; and geothermal energy.

FACEBOOK

[facebook.com/rjbitterli](https://www.facebook.com/rjbitterli)



Independent

Mary Ellen "Mell" Flynn

NO RESPONSES YET.

We asked the candidate some general information questions, such as campaign details and important source links. Unfortunately, the candidate has not answered at this time.



Independent

Christopher E. Koerner

BIOGRAPHY

Northern VA Soil and Water Conservation District – Incumbent Elected Director 2019-Present, prior Associate Director, Current Treasurer; BA Chemistry/Biology – Colby College; BS Civil Engineering/Hydrology – UConn; Registered Professional Engineer in 11 US states; Diplomate, American Academy of Environmental Engineers (retired)



Independent

Debra O. Maddrell

BIOGRAPHY

Retired U.S. Navy Officer, resident of Fairfax County since 1999. Church and community volunteer, and member of my HOA's Board of Directors.



Independent

Edward W. Monroe Jr.

NO RESPONSES YET.

We asked the candidate some general information questions, such as campaign details and important source links. Unfortunately, the candidate has not answered at this time.



Independent

Mary E. Strayhorne

PHONE

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What is the role of Northern Virginia Soil and Water Conservation District (NVSWCD) in serving both the objectives and mission of Virginia Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts (VASWCD) and the public?



Independent

Dana H. Barakat

The candidate has not yet responded.



Independent

Rhonda J. Bitterli

Entities involved in soil and water conservation are committed to addressing issues and protecting our soil and water resources. They serve the public interest, as all of us want to live in communities with healthy soil and water resources. VASWCD is an association of the 47 Districts in Virginia, including NVSWCD, which serves Fairfax County. The Association provides opportunities to collaborate, exchange ideas, and coordinate efforts. It also provides educational and leadership resources, including its Envirothon and Youth Conservation Camp programs, which support the development of the next generation of leaders. The partnership with the Association enhances the ability of the NVSWCD staff to achieve conservation goals in the county.



Independent

Mary Ellen "Mell" Flynn

The candidate has not yet responded.



Independent

Christopher E. Koerner

NVSWCD Directors and exceptional technical staff are leaders in natural resources conservation through stewardship and education (“mission”). Although 47 Virginia and >1000 national SWCDs are rural, our District is the national leader in developing conservation practices in urban settings. We are fortunate to have Ffx Co as an active and innovative partner who provides ¾ of our budget to address urban conservation, stormwater management, education, and energy saving initiatives. Our Board/staff are respected unbiased technical experts, often asked to mediate issues & develop sustainable solutions. My goals are to help increase District visibility and obtain adequate financing to support our talented staff. Endorsed by Democratic party.



Independent

Debra O. Maddrell

To inform, and represent the interests of, Fairfax County residents and taxpayers, including conservation groups and activists, regarding actions needed and taken to preserve and protect Northern Virginia's forests, farmlands, green spaces, and waterways.



Independent

Edward W. Monroe Jr.

The candidate has not yet responded.



Independent

Mary E. Strayhorne

The VASWCD provides and promotes leadership to 47 districts, including the NVSWCD, in conserving our state's natural resources through stewardship and education programs. The NVSWCD, our district, serves to promote sustainable activities and stewardship within Fairfax County to conserve our soil, water, air, plant and animal life—essential components of our Chesapeake Bay Watershed. The NVSWCD achieves this through effective leadership, technical assistance, and outreach and education programs that serve to promote stewardship, develop, facilitate and strengthen public and private partnerships within Fairfax County, to obtain adequate and reliable funding, recruit expertise and volunteers and facilitate full stakeholder participation.

What is the strongest skill you would bring to soil and water conservation in Fairfax County and what is your experience with creating partnerships?



Independent

Dana H. Barakat

The candidate has not yet responded.



Independent

Rhonda J. Bitterli

My strongest skill is asking good questions. With my M.S. degree in soil and water science and my environmental experience, I am well positioned to ask good questions regarding conservation issues. Another strong skill is being able to communicate complex technical information clearly to nontechnical audiences. Throughout my career, creating partnerships has been essential. My approach is to ensure that all the stakeholders are at the table, that information is shared freely, and that decisions and actions are communicated out. It is also important to look for new partners. Networking and social media are both great ways to do this. I also reach out to persons and groups outside the silos. We have got to break down those silos.



Independent

Mary Ellen "Mell" Flynn

The candidate has not yet responded.



Independent

Christopher E. Koerner

45 years as a technical expert (chem/eng) I developed/implemented strategies to clean up toxic waste sites-specialized in difficult groundwater contamination in US/Europe/South America; led nationwide expert panels. My diverse environmental team leadership, management experience and exposure to world cultures created a broad understanding of Environmental Stewardship- that we all must work together to preserve our beautiful planet. NVSWCD Incumbent Director; Former Chair Sierra Club Great Falls ExCom; Former Chair Fairfax Co Chesapeake Bay Preservation Ordinance Committee; Fairfax Co Master Naturalist; Fox Heritage HOA VP -25 yrs; Fairfax Co Environmental Excellence Award-dredged/restored developer-damaged riparian habitat of community lake



Independent

Debra O. Maddrell

As an officer in the U.S. Navy, I was responsible for ensuring U.S. Navy installations and vessels complied with regulations protecting U.S. and international land areas and waterways; and implementing energy conservation programs. I have nearly three decades of leadership experience working in and across large bureaucracies to create functional partnerships, as well as managing multi-million dollar budgets. The appointed members, and the Soil and Water Board staff bring technical expertise to the table - the elected Directors should be advocates for the community.



Independent

Edward W. Monroe Jr.

The candidate has not yet responded.



Independent

Mary E. Strayhorne

I am a Fairfax County native and a people person who understands and values conservation and preservation principles. My career and education in Sustainable Development law and public interest advocacy provide me a wealth of expertise and experience in environmental policy advocacy, sustainable development, land use, zoning, real estate development, construction scheduling support, environmental law, historic preservation and conservation and regulatory practice. My practical experience and academic background uniquely qualify me to assist the Board in public outreach, education, finding and pursuing funding opportunities through collaborative efforts with local stakeholders and from various local, state and federal resources.

What is your vision for developing an urban agriculture program?



Independent

Dana H. Barakat

The candidate has not yet responded.



Independent

Rhonda J. Bitterli

NVSWCD already has an urban agriculture program, encompassing horse pasture and farm management, maintenance of residential lawns in ways that protect water quality in the watershed, raising chickens in your backyard, and no-till agriculture. Interest in urban agriculture seems to be growing, and I envision expanding the availability of community gardens, providing more raised beds so that persons with mobility issues can more easily garden, and promoting gardening in food-insecure parts of the county. Opportunities to expand gardens at schools, houses of worship, and other community settings should also be explored.



Independent

Mary Ellen "Mell" Flynn

The candidate has not yet responded.



Independent

Christopher E. Koerner

NVSWCD's talented coordinator Ms. Evers leads a unique/ effective Urban Agricultural grant "Nourish the Land, Cultivate Community" to develop community gardens to boost food production, address food insecurity in lower-income neighborhoods, and facilitate partnerships and planning through the Urban Ag Roadmap Workgroup. Supporting and enhancing this program is a personal and Board priority (interestingly it also helps reduce crime rates). The District team provides great value to ag community in stormwater runoff control, tree planting, manure management, pasture health and riparian/forest protection, Conservation Management Plans, Conservation Assistance Planning grants, and Ag & Forestry plans - all improving our local natural resources



Independent

Debra O. Maddrell

Fairfax County's current urban agriculture effort is modest, focusing on community gardens. The county can address food insecurity by designating unused county land as urban farms, and dedicating funding to managing them indefinitely by exponentially increasing the Soil & Water Board's budget (which will also allow the Board to expand its current program to remove invasive species, and create water and native plant gardens). Fairfax Food Council sees a "healthy planet" as an urban agriculture goal - that depends on arresting urban overdevelopment and ending dependence on Utility Scale Solar farms. As a start, the Board of Supervisors should amend building codes to require transition to roof-top solar installations on commercial facilities.



Independent

Edward W. Monroe Jr.

The candidate has not yet responded.



Independent

Mary E. Strayhorne

I plan to identify unused parcels of land in our community that could be remediated and converted into urban gardens. I had the unique pleasure of developing a Smart Growth plan to convert a parcel of land in Montgomery, AL along a waterway managed by the Army Corp of Engineers, adjacent to a Newspaper plant, along an abandoned railroad track. I researched, identified and assessed all federal, state and local funding opportunities available to fund the project and researched, identified, evaluated & established a plan to overcome any local, state and federal land use challenges relating to zoning, remediation, human health and environmental impact. This is a plan to mitigate impact, improve upon underutilized land & engage stakeholders.

All above responses come directly from the candidates and are unedited by LWV. The League does not support or oppose any candidates or parties.