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Goochland County Situation Analysis Report 2023

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Introduction

Virginia Cooperative Extension (VCE) builds relationships within the Commonwealth's counties and cities, collaborates among partnerships while providing education to individuals, businesses, and communities. Issues, problems and needs of the people in specific localities guide individual VCE unit programming. In an effort to identify key issues facing Goochland County citizens, an updated Situation Analysis was necessary as the last assessment conducted locally was in 2018.

Organizing for action was the first step in conducting a Situation Analysis and took place during a staff meeting in March 2023. Since an Extension Leadership Council does not currently exist in Goochland, staff established a timeline to complete the process by December of 2023. The Goochland County Situation Analysis is the product of a combination of qualitative and quantitative data. The issues are the distillation of information and inferences derived from each category. The Situation Analysis was developed by compiling quantitative data from distributed surveys, annual reports, county departmental records, and local, state and national online databases. These included sources such as the comprehensive Goochland County Community Action Program Needs Assessment, Community Health Assessment & Improvement Plan, Goochland County Public Schools Enrollment Projections Report, Kids Count, Goochland County Comprehensive Plan, Chickahominy Health District Reports, and the United States Census Bureau (Census Bureau). Surveys were completed by clients and constituent groups. Key informant and citizen interviews were conducted to collect qualitative input. These informants were asked to look at issues from a professional standpoint and as residents of Goochland County. Unit staff, community partners and agency representatives reviewed the data and noted trends, statistics, and anomalies that signify emerging issues for Goochland County. The quantitative and qualitative results were then cross-referenced to produce the prominent issues currently confronting Goochland County and predicting those which will emerge in the near future. Issues were also reviewed for the role in which Extension can, should, or would participate with appropriate resources, personnel and support.

Unit Profile

Overview

Goochland County encompasses a land area of 282.03 square miles, with a total population of 26,109 as estimated by the Census Bureau in July 2022. It is predominantly rural land which is seen as the defining characteristic of the county. As outlined in the Goochland County 2023 Comprehensive Plan, balanced development that simultaneously ensures the continuation of the county's rural charm, as well as benefits its citizens, is a steadfast pillar for future progress and development. Goochland is located along the northern bank of the middle James River and bordered on the north by I-64. The county tends to experience distinct seasons, with hot summers and relatively mild winters. The county is located within USDA hardiness zone 7a, a determining factor for which plants survive with the most success in the area. The average precipitation in the area per month for 2022 was 2.05 inches (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Commission) as opposed to the average 3.5 inches of rainfall the county generally receives monthly.

Demographics

The total population for Goochland County was 26,109 as estimated by the Census Bureau in July 2022. Gender distribution in the region is as follows: 50.5% female and 49.5% male. Persons under 18 years are 16.3% and those under 5 years are represented by 3.7% of the population. Racial demographics for the county include a make-up of 81.8% white alone, 14% African American alone, 0.4% Native American and Alaska Native alone, 1.9% Asian alone, and 1.9% two or more races. An estimated 3.5% of Goochland's population was Hispanic or Latino.

Households

A 2022 survey conducted by the Census Bureau determined that the total number of housing units in Goochland County was 11,224, with a total households of 9,788. The median value of owner-occupied homes between 2018-2022 was \$433,600, while the median gross rent for the same time period was \$1,407.

In terms of income and poverty, the Census Bureau data from 2022 reported that median household income was \$105,600, as compared to the median household income for all of Virginia totaling \$80,963. The poverty rate was 6.1%, as compared to the 10.2% average rate of poverty rate across all of Virginia. According to Kids COUNT 2020 data, the unemployment rate for the county totaled at 3.1%. The total number of employed citizens that resided in Goochland for the year 2021 was 19,133, making the employment percent difference between the years 2020 and 2021 -9.3% as reported by the United States Census Bureau.

Fifty-seven percent of the county population over the age of 16 was actively involved in the civilian labor force between the years 2017 and 2021. The 2022 Virginia Community Profile shows data regarding Goochland residents employment by industry as follows: 2,537 employed in management of companies and enterprises, 1,612 employed in government (federal, state and local), 1,124 employed in construction, 1,250 employed in retail trade, 905 employed in health care and social assistance, 580 employed in arts, entertainment, and recreation, 580 employed in accommodation and food service, 550 employed in administrative, support and waste management, 549 employed in professional, technical, and scientific services, 401 employed in wholesale trade, 354 employed in manufacturing, 264 employed in real estate, rental and leasing, 113 employed in transportation and warehousing, 109 employed in education services, 97 employed in mining, quarrying, oil and gas extraction, 56 employed in agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting, 31 employed in information, 330 employed in other services, and 49 employed in a profession that is considered unclassified. Additionally, the profile reports that as of 2014, 1,583 employed residents live and work in the county, 14,752 people commute into the county to work, and 8,310 residents commute out of the county to work.

Education

According to the Virginia Department of Education in 2020, Goochland County Public Schools met requirements for its division performance with a score of 93%. This statewide assessment includes a review of the standards of learning and the subsequently implemented curriculum, use of best learning practices to refine instruction, and administrative scoring. According to the 2022 Census, Goochland County's population of youth ages 5 to 19 is approximately 3,083. This accounts for 13.3% of the county population, compared to the 21.4% that accounts for the youth population of Virginia as a whole. The county accredits five public schools: three elementary schools, one middle school, and one high school. Total enrollment in public education for the 2022-2023 school year was 2,643. In 2022, 96% of all students received diplomas from the district, with 78.1% of those being advanced diplomas. Throughout the 2020-2021 school year, 12.8% of students were considered chronic absentees, missing more than 10% of class instruction which falls below the school district's annual target of 13%. The student-to-teacher ratio for the school year stood at 10.98:1 for grades K-7, as well as 11.85:1 for grades 8-12. In addition to public education, the county has three private schools. Enrollment rates for Goochland County private schools from the United States Census Bureau 2018 estimates are as follows: 40.3% kindergarten enrollment, 18.8% elementary enrollment (grades 1-4), 20.2% elementary enrollment (grades 5-8), and 18.2% high school enrollment (grades 9-12). During the 2023 school year, 144 students in the county were enrolled in private education.

According to Kids COUNT data in 2020 for Goochland County, 4.5% of children were classified as experiencing food insecurity. Data from 2016-2020 also shows that 60.3% of children living in the county under six years of age had all parents actively participating in the workforce. The number of students qualifying for free or reduced lunch in the county was 26.1% between the years 2016-17. Between 2019-2020, the percent of kindergarteners falling below PALS-K indicators, a measure of children's knowledge of numerous literary fundamentals, was just 8.8%. Additionally, Kids COUNT reports that between 2019 and 2020 the percentage of children held back in grades K-3 was 0.9%.

Goochland's Health

Goochland County offers a variety of community facilities and outdoor recreation areas. Goochland Parks and Recreation lists four separate parks within the county: Hidden Rock Park, Leakes Mill Park, Matthews Park, and Tucker Park at Maidens Crossing. Reynolds Recreation complex and Goochland Sports Complex is available to residents for further recreational opportunities alongside 22 acres of fairgrounds. A YMCA, the Goochland Branch Library (part of the Pamunkey Regional Library System), Meadows Nursing Home, Goochland Department of Social Services, Goochland Cares, Goochland/Powhatan Community Services Board, Office on Youth, Parks and Recreation, General District Court, Goochland Fire and Rescue, Senior Connections, the Center for Caring, and Goochland Fellowship and Family Service are additionally accessible to county residents.

Per the Virginia Community Health Assessment, lack of health insurance is a large driving force in overall poor health status. The assessment reports that 5.76% of Goochland's population ages 18-64 were without health insurance coverage in 2020 as opposed to the 6.5% the year prior. The Goochland Cares free clinic and family services annual report for the year of 2021 reiterates its mission is to provide health care resources to Goochland residents in need. The report states that in light of COVID-19, 1,624 COVID tests were performed by the clinic, as well as 1,321 vaccinations being administered by the 22 COVID-19 vaccination clinics held. Despite the pandemic, volunteer involvement for the organization remained strong with 755 separate volunteers donating 17,587 hours of their time (valued at \$910,417). In 2021, total medical, dental, and mental health visits to the clinic was 2,091. In that same year, 3,125 prescriptions were given out (valued at \$1,009,178), as well as 338 trips for medical appointments to the clinic taking place. The food pantry associated with the clinic was able to provide 429,593 meals to a total of 729 families. The free Sexual and Domestic Violence Services provided for 96 residents in need and took on 50 hotline calls. The United States Census Bureau reports that drug abuse deaths between the years of 2016-2020 was stated to be 17 in total. In that same time period data shows five alcohol related crash deaths, as well as 24 reported deaths by suicide, and ten hospitalizations for drug related instances in the year 2020.

The total number of live births in the county between 2018 and 2020 was reported to be 502. According to Census Bureau data between the years 2015 and 2019 the top net migration into Goochland County was from Richmond City, Virginia with 128 people moving into the county. High numbers of net migration into the county from other areas were as follows: Henrico County, Virginia (48 people), Chesterfield County, Virginia (220 people), Guilford County, North Carolina (92 people), Fluvanna County, Virginia (63 people), Fairfax City, Virginia (63 people), Fredericksburg County, Virginia (32 people), Spotsylvania County, Virginia (48 people), Gloucester County, Virginia (48 people), and Tazewell County, Virginia (44 people).

Agriculture

An updated census from Virginia Agricultural Statistics Service Census Data in 2017 indicates a 13% increase in the number of farms since 2012, now standing at 355 farms within Goochland County. Land in farms is 56,739 acres, of which the average size of farm is 160 acres, also indicating a 13% increase since 2012. Total market value for the products sold was \$11,740,000 with an average per farm of \$33,070. Government payments equaled out to \$144,000. Of the agricultural sales, 39% was from crops and 61% from livestock, poultry, and products. In addition to this, the land in farms by use is split by 42% cropland, 21% pasture land, 32% woodland, and 5% other. In terms of the top crops in acres, forage production was the largest with 10,265 acres, soybeans for beans with 3,061 acres, corn for grain with 2,521 acres, wheat for grain with 2,263 acres, and corn for silage, or green chop, with 1,650 acres. Livestock inventory for the year included: 870 broilers and other meat-type chickens, 6,991 cattle and calves, 611 goats, 98 hogs and pigs, 992 horses and ponies, 3,721 layers, 95 pullets, 111 sheep and lambs, and 56 turkeys.

Community and Resident Perspectives

Results from Goochland's Situation Analysis confirmed that one of the most pressing issues concerning residents is the preservation of farm and forest land. This issue has been a recurring topic in past needs assessments, due to the increase in urbanizations towards the eastern end of the county. Similarly, another key issue identified through

the survey is the management of natural habitats and ecosystems. With the increased population and expansion of the county, residents still want to make sure these areas are being protected and managed. Lastly, the next priority for our residents is the controlling invasive pests, including insects, animals, and plants. In addition, the following issues that while they were not within the top three priority issues, they are still important and in the top 10 needs noted, and will be addressed in the upcoming years as staffing permits: Preserving water quality, assisting farm and forest landowners with sustainable management practices, promoting scientific literacy in youth, and ensuring safe, high quality foods.

Community Issues

The Situation Analysis questionnaire results identified a number of program areas where VCE is in position to serve and educate citizens, communities, landowners, and farmers in Goochland County. Analysis of the questionnaire targeted issues/needs that received a sum total of 75 percent, or greater, rating in the high and very high effort needed categories. These issues/needs are ranked based on the survey results and will be used as a guide for programming over the next five years. Programs developed and implemented will support one or more of the defined issues/needs in Figure 1.

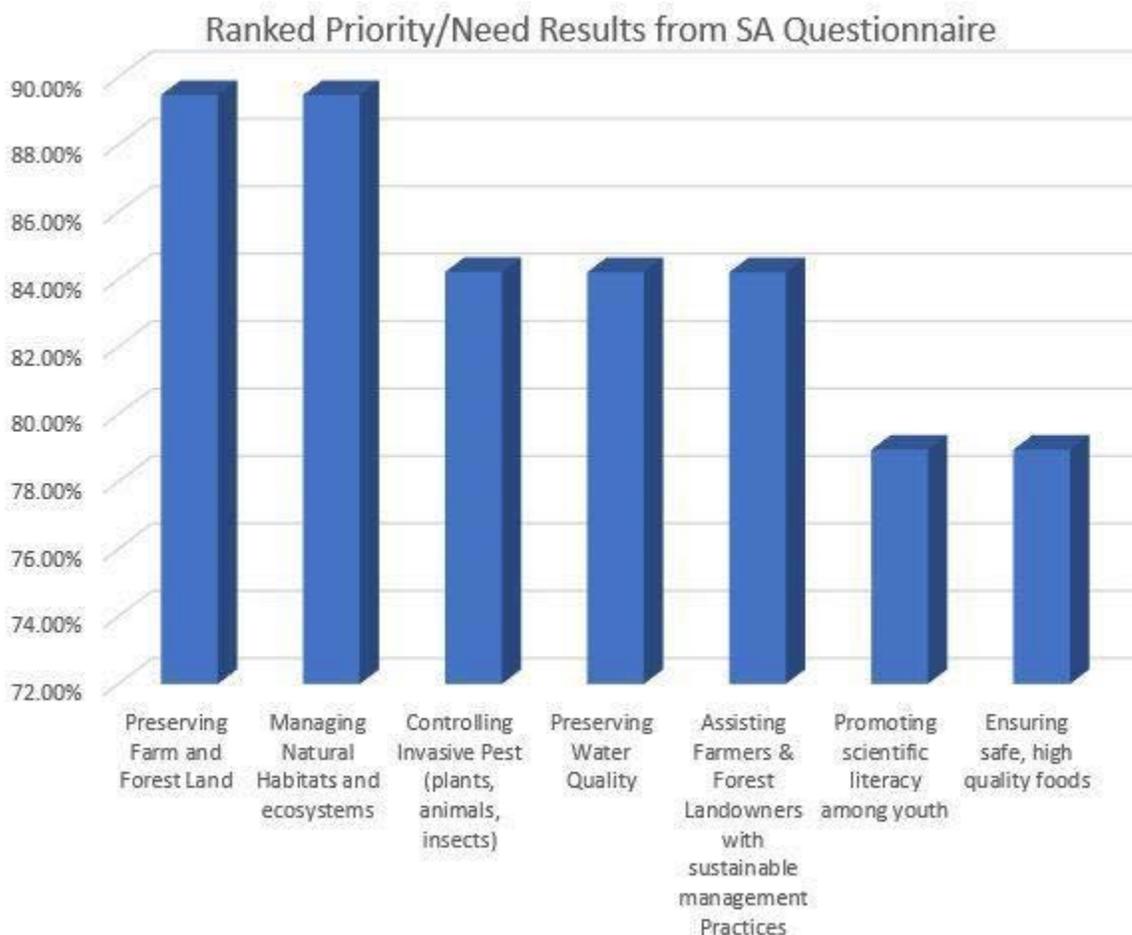


Figure 1. Survey Reported High Priority Issues/Needs

After the completion of the survey, Goochland staff met to discuss the results. After careful consideration, five community issues were highlighted as priorities for Extension programming. Following are the five top ranking needs Goochland’s Extension staff will emphasize through educational programs during the next five years.

1. Preserving Farm and Forest Land
2. Controlling Invasive Pest (plants, animals, insects)
3. Preserving Water Quality
4. Assisting Farmers & Forest Landowners with sustainable management Practices
5. Promoting Scientific Literacy Among Youth

Priority Issues

Table 1. Ranked Priority/Need Results from SA Questionnaire

Priority Rank	Issue/Need	Respondents Reporting High & Very High Effort Needed (Percentages)	Total
1	Preserving Farm and Forest Land	21.05% + 68.42%	89.47%
2	Controlling Invasive Pest (plants, animals, insects)	42.11% + 42.11%	84.22%
3	Preserving Water Quality	31.58% + 52.63%	84.21%
4	Assisting Farmers & Forest Landowners with sustainable management Practices	73.68% + 10.53%	84.21%
5	Promoting scientific literacy among youth	31.58% + 47.37%	78.95%

Preserving Farm and Forest Land

As in previous years, land use/development and the environment continue to be a top-level issue. Many people give the rural nature of Goochland as the reason for moving to the county. But development threatens their perceived view of country living while at the same time residents balk at higher taxes for services such as roads, convenience centers, schools, parks and other amenities. Agriculture remains an important economic engine in the county but the rural suburban interface continues to cause friction, especially on the east end of the county. Preserving natural resources such as land and water are a high priority for the residents of Goochland County.

Controlling Invasive Pest (plants, animals, insects)

Controlling invasive species has always been in the forefront of ANR activities. However, in 2023 the Spotted Lanternfly was confirmed in Goochland County. The county has a number of vineyards and other agricultural operations which could be severely impacted by this pest. The situational analysis survey data supports the continued emphasis on management of all types of invasive species.

Preserving Water Quality

Water Quality is another area where survey respondents indicated a need for increased emphasis. Goochland is in the Chesapeake Bay watershed and the James River traverses the entire length of the county fed by numerous

creeks, streams. “Virginia is committed to compliance with the EPAs’ phase III watershed implementation plan and is working towards two-year Nutrient and Sediment Reduction Milestones.”¹

Each year, Goochland VCE offers a well water testing clinic through the Virginia Household Water Quality programs at Virginia Tech. In 2023, Extension recorded its highest participation so far with the addition of a new partnership with Goochland Cares and Goochland Rotary Club. This allowed services to reach many underserved families in the area.

Assisting Farmers & Forest Landowners with sustainable management Practices

A growing trend in Goochland is the emphasis on sustainable farm management practices. Likewise, homeowners are interested in maintaining their landscape and gardens in a manner that protects the environment, water quality, emphasizes control of invasive species and utilizes desirable native species in landscape design.

The Goochland Extension office works closely with partner agencies, such as the USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA), USDA Natural Resources Conservation Services (NRCS), The Virginia Department of Forestry (DOF), The Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (VDACS), Virginia Farm Bureau (VFB) and the Monacan Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) to ensure that agricultural, natural resources and conservation programs are provided to area farmers and landowners. This collaboration helps this audience increase production while improving water quality by reducing soil runoff, reducing the amount of pesticides used and increasing the number of landowners participating in cost share conservation programs.

Promoting scientific literacy among youth

Goochland County has a growing youth population as new families move into the county. While many of these youth are enrolled in the Goochland County School system, some are homeschooled or in private learning institutions outside of the county. Within Goochland, youth have many opportunities for educational experiences in the classroom as well as programs through the YMCA, Parks and Recreation, and Goochland 4-H. According to results from the Situation Analysis, a growing importance in promoting scientific literacy to the youth population was noted. The Extension office has assisted with this issue in the past by implementing lessons in the classroom that support hands-on scientific inquiry, such as plant science lessons or through the 4-H embryology program. Additionally, other programs such as 4th Grade Ag Day, and 4-H Camp have elements of scientific learning that are included throughout the youth development program.

Future Programming to Address Community Issues

Preserving Farm and Forest Land

To educate producers on preserving farm and forest land, Goochland Extension will reach out to homeowners and landowners through programs, field visits, and office consultations. We will provide opportunities for stakeholders to be connected to forest specialists. Some of the programs offered include my virtual forest through extension forestry specialists, on-site consultations and recommendations involving forest habitat, collaboration with SWCD on creating conservation plans and grazing systems, riparian waterway buffers, and farm transition planning; among others.

Controlling Invasive Pest (plants, animals, insects)

To help aid in issues dealing with invasive pests, Goochland Extension will help identify and recommend treatment of pests both invasive and not depending on the nature of the pest, as well as assist with plant health

¹ <https://www.deq.virginia.gov/our-programs/water/chesapeake-bay/chesapeake-bay-nutrient-sediment-reduction-milestones>

diagnostics, site visits to homes, and special interest workshops. Partnerships in this effort include Master Gardeners, and Extension personnel from other units, as well as state specialists.

Preserving Water Quality

In regards to issues pertaining to well water quality, horticulture, and pest management, Goochland Extension staff will continue to offer an annual well water program for local residents. In addition, plans will also include providing educational materials regarding the importance of water quality in both youth and adult programming modes.

Assisting Farmers & Forest Landowners with sustainable management Practices

In issues related to sustainable management practices for farms and forest land, Goochland Extension staff will continue to conduct site visits, assist with sample taking, and provide educational materials on management practices for producers and landowners in need of services. Partnerships within this program area include Women in Agriculture, Farm Bureau, Farm Credit, Master Gardeners, Master Naturalists, NRCS, FSA, and MSWCD.

Promoting scientific literacy among youth

In order to address issues pertaining to youth development and education, Goochland Extension staff will utilize partnerships between 4-H and Goochland County Public Schools, Ag in the Classroom, and Goochland Parks and Recreation to provide instruction and materials relating to science and any other topics requested by teachers or school administration. In addition, Extension staff will continue to operate 4-H clubs and other activities to support the work of in-school enrichment programs.

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