



**VIRGINIA ASSOCIATION OF SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICTS
EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION**

College Scholarship Application & Guidelines

Submit to Mountain Castles SWCD by **April 2, 2026**. Questions? Contact Tim Miller at (540)797-0217 or tim.miller@mountaincastles.org

Overview: Mountain Castles SWCD will use this application for TWO scholarships: the MCSWCD district scholarship AND the VASWCD state scholarship. Mountain Castles SWCD will award a \$2,000 scholarship to a qualified graduating senior from each district high school: Lord Botetourt HS, James River HS, and Craig County HS

Purpose:

- To promote the education of Virginia citizens in technical fields focused on natural resource conservation, environmental protection, and sustainability.
- To recognize a qualified student from each district high school with a \$2,000 award.
- To give financial support to students majoring in natural resource conservation, agriculture, environmental studies, or a related field.

Qualifications: *The applicant must be a resident of either Botetourt County or Craig County and have plans to enroll as a college freshman in the fall of 2026.* (Note: current college freshmen are also eligible for the VASWCD statewide scholarship). A copy of the applicant’s most recent official school transcript must accompany the application. Applicants should demonstrate a clear interest in conservation through their essay and activities.

Amount Awarded: One \$2,000 scholarship will be awarded to a qualified student from each district high school. Four \$1,000 scholarships will be awarded to statewide winners. For both scholarships, a check will be issued directly to the selected institution of higher education on behalf of the student.

Deadlines:

Early 2026	Application and guidelines distributed to SWCD offices and schools
April 2, 2026	Completed application due to MCSWCD office
Late April, 2026	District’s selected applicant with all supporting documentation must be received at the VASWCD Office
May, 2026	District and State Scholarship award winners will be announced

Applications for the MCSWCD district scholarships will be reviewed by the Education/Outreach Committee before being approved by the MCSWCD Board of Directors. Submitted applications for the VASWCD state scholarship will be reviewed and screened by the Scholarship/Awards Committee. All applications and information contained therein shall remain confidential. Nominations from the Committee will be submitted to the VASWCD Educational Foundation Board of Directors for final approval.

All programs and services of Mountain Castles SWCD and the Virginia Association of Soil and Water Conservation District’s Educational Foundation, Inc. are offered on a nondiscriminatory basis, without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, marital status, or disability. All submitted paperwork is confidential and becomes the property of MCSWCD and the VASWCDEF.

Return application to: Mountain Castles SWCD, 36 Executive Circle, Suite 1, Roanoke, VA 24012;
Emailed applications will also be accepted. Email to tim.miller@mountaincastles.org

VIRGINIA ASSOCIATION OF SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

Please use black or blue ink

A. Personal Information

1. Applicant's Name _____
Last First Middle
2. Home Address _____

3. County of Residence _____
4. Local Soil & Water Conservation District _____
5. Home Telephone Number _____
6. Date of Birth _____ 7. Email: _____

B. Educational Background (15 pts)

Attach your most recent official transcript. Your official transcript must show the official school seal.

1. High School Attending or Attended: _____
2. Anticipated or Date of Graduation: _____
3. Number of students in your class: _____ Class Rank: _____
4. Scholastic Average (GPA): _____
5. College(s) Attending or Plan to Attend: Include College Name and Location
(1) _____
(2) _____
6. Major or Intended Field of Study: _____

C. Environmental Leadership & Activity Experience (15 pts) - *Attach additional information as needed.*

List any environmental leadership or activity experience - designating if high school or college experience - you may have including participation in Envirothon, Youth Conservation Camp, 4-H, Future Farmers of America (FFA), etc.

D. Other Leadership & Activity Experience (10 pts) - *Attach additional information as needed.*

List all other organizations and important extracurricular activities - designating if high school or college experience - in which you have or currently are participating. Indicate any activities in which you hold or have held office and note which position. Include other activities such as athletics, music, drama, dance, public speaking, clubs, societies, public events/exhibits or awards, list honors or letters earned.

E. Volunteer & Employment Experience (10 pts) - *Attach additional information as needed.*

List any volunteer or paid experiences including your position, date of service, and brief description of duties.

1. _____

2. _____

F. Financial Information and Other Circumstances (10 pts) *While this is primarily a merit-based scholarship, the review committee may take consideration of need or other special circumstances. The more detail provided about your need and why you deserve this scholarship is helpful to the review committee. Attach more detail if necessary.*

1. Are you applying for or will you receive a scholarship or loan from other sources? **Please highlight one.** YES NO
2. **If yes**, please list loan and/or scholarship sources and estimated amounts that you are applying for:

3. In addition to the above, financing for your education will primarily come from: _____

4. Do you have other circumstances (ex. first generation college student, multiple siblings in college, etc.) or a personal situation you would like to share? _____

G. References/Letters of Recommendation (5 pts)

Attach recommendation letters from at least 3 references - other than family members – who can provide additional information about your academic and community activities. Share with your references that the purpose of this scholarship is to promote through education the conservation of our natural resources by providing financial support to students majoring in or showing a strong desire to major in a curriculum related to natural resource conservation or environmental studies. List below details on those from whom you have requested recommendation letters.

1. Name of Reference: _____

Position/Relation to Applicant: _____ Telephone: _____

Address: _____

2. Name of Reference: _____

Position/Relation to Applicant: _____ Telephone: _____

Address: _____

3. Name of Reference: _____

Position/Relation to Applicant: _____ Telephone: _____

Address: _____

H. Essay (35 points)

Attach a typed essay of approximately 500-650 words describing yourself and your involvement/interest in the environment. Address what you feel is the most important environmental issue in your community and why. How can you assist and promote leadership in the conservation of natural resources?

I. Signatures/Certification

In submitting this application, I hereby certify that the information provided is complete and accurate to the best of my knowledge. Falsification of information may result in termination of any scholarship granted. If declared a recipient of this scholarship, I will provide MCSWCD and VASWCD a photo and/or statement that will be used for publicity purposes.

Applicant: _____ Date: _____

Parent/Guardian: _____ Date: _____

Reminder - Attachments to Include: Letters of Recommendation, Essay, Transcripts & any additional information.