

**Tidewater Soil & Water
Conservation District
Annual Report
July 2017 - June 2018**

The Tidewater Soil and Water Conservation District is a political subdivision of the Commonwealth of Virginia that serves the counties of Gloucester, Mathews, and Middlesex. The District is empowered to develop comprehensive programs and plans that conserve and improve the quality of soil and water resources. The leadership of the District is committed to two basic concepts; local citizens can best identify and find solutions to local environmental and conservation issues and the District, or through assistance with its cooperating agencies, will assist individuals with their natural resources conservation planning and problem solving. The District is governed by an eight member board of directors who serve a four year term. Six directors, two from each county, are elected in a general election. Two directors are appointed by the Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board, one of these appointees must be a Virginia Cooperative Extension Agent. Non-voting associate directors may be selected by the Tidewater SWCD Board of Directors. The daily operations of the District are conducted by the staff which consists of a District Manager, Conservation/Education Specialist, and Conservation Office Assistant. Technical assistance is provided by the Commonwealth of Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation and the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. The District maintains a close working relationship with the Virginia Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts, Virginia Cooperative Extension, Virginia Department of Forestry, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service and Farm Service Agency, and other federal, state, and local agencies. Operating funds are provided by grants and appropriations from state and local governments. The Commonwealth of Virginia supports the Tidewater 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. All programs, services, and employment opportunities of the Tidewater Soil and Water Conservation District are offered on a nondiscriminatory basis, without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, marital status, handicap, or political affiliation.

DISTRICT DIRECTORY

District Directors

Ronnie Lewis - Mathews
Robert Respass, Jr.- Mathews
Jason Bray - Middlesex
Alan Sutherlin - Middlesex
Keith Horsley - Gloucester
Daniel Rilee - Gloucester
William Richardson, Jr. - At Large

District Staff

LaVerne Calhoun - District Manager
Kristal McKelvey- Conservation/Education Specialist
Joseph Gerdes - Conservation Office Assistant

NRCS Staff

Michael Combs - District Conservationist
Sean Allen - Soil Conservationist

Education

Provided the Enviroscape model demonstration to **408 4th grade students** during the **5 day Meaningful Watershed Educational Experience** at Beaverdam Park. This demonstration helps students gain a better understanding of the sources and prevention of water pollution. By using visual aids students become aware that what we do in our backyard makes a difference and impacts the environment.

Provided the Enviroscape model demonstration at Chesapeake Bay Day to **86 Thomas Hunter Middle School students**. The event was sponsored by Mathews Maritime Foundation.

Participated in the Urbanna Oyster Festival Education Day by providing the **Enviroscape** model demonstration to **107 7th grade students**.



Virginia Department of Forestry and Tidewater SWCD celebrated the week of Arbor Day by providing trees to **295 third grade elementary students at four local schools**. Each student planted a tree in a cup to take home and participated in an educational program on the environmental benefits of trees.



Volunteered at the Area III Envirothon at Meadow Event Park, Doswell. Envirothon is a hands-on environmental problem solving competition for high school students. Teams compete in five areas: soils, aquatics, forestry, wildlife, and a current environmental issue. The competition is

held in the field and teams have the opportunity to work with natural resource professionals. Preparation is underway for Tidewater SWCD to host the 2019 Area III Envirothon.

Volunteered at the Virginia Association of Soil & Water Conservation Districts booth at the State Fair of Virginia.

Sponsored and participated in the Middlesex County Summer Sizzling Fair-Tomato Contest.

Tidewater SWCD promoted the Youth Conservation Camp scholarship (**\$550.00 value**) program. This week long summer conservation camp is on the campus of Virginia Tech and is sponsored by the Virginia Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts. The program brings together about 70 Virginia high school students (*currently enrolled in grades 9-12*) for a week of learning about Virginia's natural resources from conservation professionals and faculty from Virginia Tech. Most of the instruction is hands-on and outdoors. Joseph Gerdes, Conservation Office Assistant, on behalf of Tidewater SWCD volunteered as a camp counselor.

“Healthy Soils Are Full of Life” was the theme for 2017 national youth poster contest sponsored by the National Association of Conservation Districts. Tidewater SWCD accepted entries from Mathews, Gloucester, and Middlesex youth in grades K-12. The contest begins locally with the district winner advancing to the state level. The state winners then advance to the national contest. **One** local winner was selected and awarded a **\$25.00** Wal-Mart gift card compliments of Tidewater SWCD.

2017 Poster Contest Winner Haylee Smart



Pictured left to right: Teacher Teresa Lukasik, **Winner Haylee Smart** and Tidewater SWCD Kristal McKelvey

Tidewater SWCD promoted the **\$1,000.00 Martin Menges college scholarship**. The Martin Menges scholarship was established in memory of Mathews County resident and former District Director Martin J. Menges. Mr. Menges was co-founder and past president of the York River Chapter of the Chesapeake Bay Foundation and co-founder of the watershed group Save the Ole Piankatank. Recipients must plan to major in natural resources conservation or environmental studies and also have 3.0 or greater grade point average.

Promoted the Virginia Association of Soil & Water Conservation Districts Educational Foundation scholarship program which awards **four \$1,000.00 college scholarships**. The VASWCD Educational Foundation scholarship program promotes the education of Virginia citizens in technical fields with a natural resource conservation and environmental protection emphasis. The program provides financial support to students majoring in or showing a strong desire to major in a course curriculum related to natural resource conservation and/or environmental studies.

Newsletters, Annual Report, and “Conserving Water at Home”, “Rain Barrels”, “Making Compost from Yard Waste”, “Scoop the Poop” brochures and other publications relating to soil conservation and water quality were provided to the community.

Our website www.tidewaterswcd.org was maintained and updated with current information.

Monetary donations were made to Area III Envirothon, Holiday Lake Forestry Camp, Virginia Cooperative Extension.

Provided assistance and guidance to those requesting soil testing information, aerial photographs, topographic maps, and other conservation information.

Natural Resources Management

Tidewater Soil and Water Conservation District administers the **Virginia Agriculture Cost Share Best Management Practices Program** which offers Cost Share assistance as an incentive to install or implement voluntary BMPs. BMPs improve water quality in the state’s streams, rivers, and Chesapeake Bay.

Disbursed **\$275,109.23** of Cost Share funding for completed voluntary BMP practices:

6,894 acres of Cover Crop for Nutrient Management and Sediment Retention
18,013 acres for Nutrient Management Plans

Due to a lower than usual Cost Share allocation Tidewater SWCD was not able to fund Split Application of Nitrogen on Corn or Small Grain even though most producers did implement these practices.

2,523 acres of Cover Crop received **no funding** but was eligible for a tax credit.
1,379 acres for Resource Management Plans were written and approved.

The **2017 Clean Water Farm Award** for the Chesapeake Bay Coastal Watershed was proudly presented to **Wayne H. Bray & Sons Inc.** This award is sponsored by the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation and is given to recognize and thank Virginia farmers who implement nutrient management plans and are exemplary in their protection of the state's soil and water quality.

2017 Clean Water Farm Award **Wayne H. Bray & Sons Inc.**



Pictured left to right: Jason Bray-Clean Water Farm Award, William Richardson Jr.- 2017 District Board Chairman and Wayne Bray- Clean Water Farm Award

Sponsored and assisted with the Virginia Cooperative Extension Private Pesticide Applicator Recertification Class with **33 attendees.**

Provided Cost Share BMP program updates and was a sponsor of the Virginia Cooperative Extension Lower Middle Peninsula Winter Agricultural Conference with **65 attendees.**

Participated in the Virginia Cooperative Extension 2018 Grain Production Meeting with **27 attendees.**

Sponsored and attended the Northern Neck Next Generation No-Till Field Day.

Prepared pasture clearing plans as guidance for small acreage landowners who had concerns with soil erosion and pasture improvement. Identification of environmentally critical areas, slopes, soil characteristics, and adjacent bodies of water are important in developing a land disturbance management strategy.

Pasture seeding information was distributed to pasture owners to promote the importance of a protective vegetative cover to reduce erosion.

Virginia Conservation Assistance Program is an urban cost share program that provides financial incentives and technical and educational assistance to property owners installing eligible Best Management Practices (BMPs) in Virginia's Chesapeake Bay Watershed. The program includes twelve different types of practices that can be installed in areas where erosion, poor drainage, or poor vegetation occur.

The Tidewater SWCD in Fiscal Year 2018 provided **\$80,000.00** in VCAP Cost Share to **four Living Shoreline projects** totaling **653 linear feet** of installed Living Shorelines at private residences and a HOA community. Living Shorelines is a shoreline management practice that provides erosion control and water quality benefits; protects, restores or enhances natural shoreline habitat; and maintains coastal processes through the strategic placement of plants, stone, sand fill and other structural and organic materials.



Administration

Attended the annual meeting of the Virginia Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts in Portsmouth.

Attended the Area III Spring Meeting of the Virginia Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts at Upper Shirley Vineyards in Charles City. The meeting included a business session, partner agency updates, and guest speakers.

Gloucester, Mathews, and Middlesex County Board of Supervisors were given a presentation that highlighted the valuable services provided by Tidewater SWCD.

Attended trainings with partner agencies: Virginia Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts, Virginia Association of Conservation District Employees, Department of Conservation & Recreation, Natural Resources Conservation Service, and Virginia Cooperative Extension.

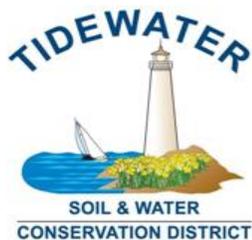
The Board of Directors approved the FY 2018-2019 annual plan of work, budget, and office policies.

The Board of Directors met monthly to discuss local conservation issues and receive reports from District partners: Department of Conservation and Recreation, Virginia Cooperative Extension, Virginia Department of Forestry, Natural Resources Conservation Service, and Farm Service Agency.

Tidewater Soil & Water Conservation District Board of Directors



Pictured left to right: Alan Sutherlin, Robert Respass Jr., David Moore, Ronnie Lewis, Jason Bray, William Richardson, Jr., Keith Horsley and Daniel Rilee



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District Directors

Jason Bray-Middlesex-Chairman
Daniel Rilee-Gloucester-Vice Chairman
Ronnie Lewis-Mathews-Secretary
Keith Horsley-Gloucester-Treasurer
Alan Sutherlin-Middlesex
Robert Respass, Jr.-Mathews
William Richardson, Jr.-At Large

Return Service Requested

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District Personnel

LaVerne Calhoun - District Manager

Kristal McKelvey - Conservation/Education Specialist

Vacant - Conservation Office Assistant

NRCS Personnel

Mike Combs-District Conservationist

Sean Allen- Soil Conservationist

Newsletter Mailing

In order conserve our natural resources please notify the office if you would like to be removed from our mailing list or would prefer to have the newsletter emailed to you.

Call 804-693-3562 Ext. 5

or

Email lcalhoun@tidewaterswcd.org