

**TIDEWATER SOIL AND WATER  
CONSERVATION DISTRICT**

**STRATEGIC PLAN  
2021-2024**

**TIDEWATER SOIL AND WATER  
CONSERVATION DISTRICT  
P.O. BOX 677  
GLOUCESTER, VA 23061  
804-699-3482  
[www.tidewaterswcd.org](http://www.tidewaterswcd.org)**

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. Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) were established in the 1930s to develop comprehensive programs and plans to conserve soil resources, control and prevent soil erosion, prevent floods and conserve, develop, utilize and dispose of water. Tidewater SWCD was the **first** district organized in Virginia in 1938. The District originally included the counties of Essex, King & Queen, and King William. Years later New Kent, Caroline, Hanover, Middlesex, Mathews, and Gloucester counties joined Tidewater SWCD. In 1982, District boundaries were redefined to include only Gloucester, Mathews, and Middlesex counties. The District locally administers the Virginia Agricultural Best Management Cost Share Program (VACS). The program's goal is to improve water quality in the state's streams, rivers, and the Chesapeake Bay. VACS offers cost share assistance as an incentive to construct or implement Best Management Practices (BMPs). Voluntary BMPs reduce nonpoint source pollution and improves soil health and water quality. Tidewater SWCD also offers environmental educational programs, college scholarships, youth conservation camp, camp woods & wildlife, poster contest, and Envirothon.

The District is governed by an eight-member board of directors who serve a four year term. Directors receive no payment for their services. Six directors, two from each county, are elected in local general elections. Two directors are appointed by the Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board, one of which must be a Virginia Cooperative Extension Agent. The Board meets monthly to conduct and oversee district business. Meetings are held on the fourth Thursday of each month and are open to the public.

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**

### **Elected Directors**

Ronnie Lewis - Mathews

George Rogers - Mathews

Jason Bray - Middlesex

Alan Sutherlin - Middlesex

Keith Horsley - Gloucester

Daniel Rilee - Gloucester

### **Appointed Directors**

William Richardson, Jr. - At Large

Frank Long - Virginia Cooperative  
Extension Agent

### **District Staff**

LaVerne Calhoun - District Manager

Sam Markwith - Conservation/Education Specialist

Shirley Tinker - Conservation Office Assistant

### **NRCS Staff**

Michael Combs - District Conservationist

## **COOPERATING AGENCIES**

Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR)

Virginia Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts (VASWCD)

Virginia Cooperative Extension Service (VCE)

Virginia Department of Forestry (VDOP)

Natural Resources Conservation Service (USDA-NRCS)

Farm Service Agency (USDA-FSA)

The Counties of Gloucester, Mathews, and Middlesex

## **Planning Process**

Tidewater SWCD began the Strategic Planning process in August 2020. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, we were unable to hold a public Strategic Planning meeting. Instead, County administrators, school superintendents, community organizations, farmers, and partner agencies were contacted for assistance in preparing the new 2021-2024 Strategic Plan. Also, the community was notified of the public comment period for the Strategic Plan via press releases in local newspapers and the District's website. Once the period for public comments had concluded, the Tidewater SWCD Board of Directors met to review comments and began drafting the Strategic Plan. The Strategic Plan will assist Tidewater SWCD in achieving its goals and developing its Annual Plan of Work.

## **TIDEWATER SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT STRATEGIC PLAN 2021-2024**

### **MISSION STATEMENT**

The mission of the Tidewater Soil and Water Conservation District is to promote the conservation of natural resources through stewardship, outreach, and education.

# VISION STATEMENT

To be a leader in conservation education and in evaluating and providing creative solutions to natural resource related issues.

## Goals for 2021-2024

### **Goal #1: Provide Agricultural BMP Assistance and Information to Producers**

**Objective #1** Educate producers about Agricultural BMPs and increase VACS program participation

**Action #1** Newsletter articles about Ag BMPs

**Action #2** Ag Field Days/workshops,

**Objective #2** Improve communication between all parties and partners; agricultural, government, and citizens

**Action #1** Seminars/workshops with cooperating agencies

**Action #2** Select Clean Water Farm Award Recipient

**Action #3** Participate in an Urban Conservation Program

**Action #4** Provide educational assistance to non-traditional agricultural operators

**Objective #3** Advocate for increasing Cost Share funding

**Action #1** Work with existing stakeholders for increased funding for new technology and precision agriculture BMPs

**Action #2** Directors contact their Board of Supervisors and local officials concerning conservation issues and increased funding

**Goal #2: In Partnership with other agencies and organizations  
Provide Conservation Education for the Community**

**Objective #1** Educate homeowners, special citizen groups, conservation groups, and professionals

**Action #1** Develop conservation programs to include information about land and stormwater management, soil testing, and wildlife

**Action #2** Provide educational material for contractors, gardening groups, and lawn care providers

**Action #3** Workshops on specific topics and public service announcements

**Action #4** Initiate projects with local governments to implement conservation practices on county property

**Objective #2** Educate local youth in schools and community organizations

**Action #1** Promote organization of an Envirothon team

**Action #2** Present and coordinate SOL based conservation programs and information to schools and community youth groups

**Action #3** Create an action committee, between school personnel and district, to work with schools on conservation program development and implementation

**Objective #3** Educate the community on Agricultural BMPs

**Action #1** Host BMP bus tour and/or Down on the Farm Tour for county officials and citizens

**Action #2** Directors discuss the benefits of BMPs with their Board Supervisors and local officials

**Action #3** Increase BMP and District signage

**Goal #3: Advocate for Conservation Practices in Natural Resource Management and Agricultural Production**

**Objective #1** Increase District input and influence in planning and decision making process

**Action #1** Directors contact their Board of Supervisors and local officials concerning conservation issues and increased funding

**Action #2** Provide Board of Supervisors and planning departments presentations

**Action #3** Promote farmland preservation

**Action #4** Training for District Board on important issues

**Goal #4: Seek Outside Funding Sources.**

**Objective #1** Research available grant opportunities

**Action #1** Seek additional grant and other funding opportunities

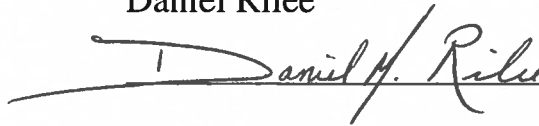


**Approved:** Tidewater Soil and Water Conservation District  
Board of Directors

William Richardson, Jr., Chairman




Daniel Rilee



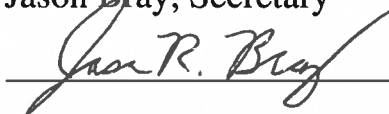
Ronnie Lewis Vice Chairman



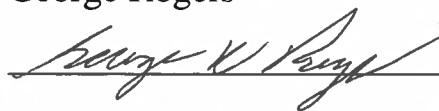
Alan Sutherlin



Jason Bray, Secretary



George Rogers



Keith Horsley, Treasurer



Date

10/22/2020

**Approved:** Commonwealth of Virginia Department of  
Conservation and Recreation

Amy Walker, CDC

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Date

10/22/2020