

**Tidewater Soil & Water
Conservation District
Annual Report
July 2016 - June 2017**

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

David Moore -VCE Agent - Appointed

District Staff

LaVerne Calhoun - District Manager

Kristal Evens - 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 **400 4th grade students** during the **4 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.

At Achilles Elementary School Bay Warriors Day provided the Enviroscape model demonstration to **176 students**.

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 **260 4th & 7th grade students**.



Virginia Department of Forestry and Tidewater SWCD celebrated the week of Arbor Day by providing trees to **527 third grade elementary students at six 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 Deep Run Recreation Center, Henrico. 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. Volunteered at the Virginia Association of Soil & Water Conservation Districts booth at the State Fair of Virginia.

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.

"We All Need Trees" was the theme for 2016 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. This contest begins at the local level, with the winners advancing to the state level, and then to the national level. **One** local winner was selected and awarded a **\$25.00** Wal-Mart gift card compliments of Tidewater SWCD.

2016 Poster Contest Winner

Cecilia Crane



Pictured left to right: **Cecilia Crane** 7th - 9th grade winner and Kristal Evens -Tidewater SWCD

Tidewater SWCD awarded **Ella Metzger**-Mathews High School as the 2017 recipient of the **\$1,000.00 Martin Menges college scholarship**. Ella will continue her education at Thomas Nelson Community College and major in environmental science. The Martin Menges scholarship was established in memory of Mathews County resident, Mr. Martin J. Menges, a former District Director. 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 have a 3.0 or greater grade point average.

Tidewater SWCD submitted the scholarship application of Amanda Davis-Gloucester High School to the Virginia Association of Soil & Water Conservation Districts Educational Foundation to compete for one of the **four \$1,000.00 college scholarships**. **Amanda Davis** was awarded a **\$1,000.00** scholarship from the **VASWCD Educational Foundation**. She will continue her education at Christopher Newport University and major in environmental science. 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 a course curriculum related to natural resource conservation and/or environmental studies.

2017 Scholarship Recipients Amanda Davis and Ella Metzger



Pictured left to right: Amanda Davis-Gloucester High School, Ronnie Lewis-Vice Chairman Tidewater SWCD and Ella Metzger-Mathews High School

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, and the Middle Peninsula Cover Crop Conference.

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 **\$624,773.00** of Cost Share funding for completed voluntary BMP practices:

10,291 acres of Cover Crop for Nutrient Management and Sediment Retention

19,723 acres for Nutrient Management Plans

10,602 acres of Split Application of Nitrogen on Corn

2,004 acres of Split Application of Nitrogen on Small Grain

213 acres of Precision Nutrient Management of Nitrogen and Phosphorous on Cropland

806 acres in Long Term High Residue Minimum Soil Disturbance Systems.

Also **two producers** completed projects for **stream exclusion and grazing land management cattle practices**. A total of **19,950 linear feet of stream bank** was protected which includes **63 acres of buffer created, 135.5 acres of grazing land** benefitted, and **six freeze-proof watering troughs installed**.

The **2016 Clean Water Farm Award** for the Chesapeake Bay Coastal Watershed was proudly presented to **Benjamin South**. 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.

2016 Clean Water Farm Award Benjamin South



Pictured left to right: Benjamin South-Clean Water Farm Award and William Richardson, Jr. - Chairman Tidewater SWCD

Completed a three year multi-species cover crop test plot with partners NRCS and Virginia Cooperative Extension.



Provided Cost Share BMP program updates and sponsored the VCE Middle Peninsula Summer Field Day with **60+** attendees.

Attended and sponsored the Middle Peninsula Cover Crop Conference with **57** attendees.

Provided Cost Share BMP program updates and was a sponsor of the Virginia Cooperative Extension Lower Middle Peninsula Winter Agricultural Conference with **70+** attendees.



Pictured left to right: David Moore, Albert Marshall, and Ronnie Russell

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.

Approved the **first Living Shoreline** application of the Virginia Conservation Assistance Program. VCAP is an urban cost share program that provides financial incentives and technical and educational assistance to property owners installing eligible Best Management Practices (BMP's) in Virginia's Chesapeake Bay Watershed.

Administration

Tidewater SWCD proudly welcomed **Joseph Gerdes** as the new Conservation Office Assistant on June 16, 2017. He graduated from University of Mary Washington with a Bachelor's of Science Degree in Environmental Science.



Attended the annual meeting of the Virginia Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts at Hotel Roanoke.

Attended the Area III Spring Meeting of the Virginia Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts at Ingleside Vineyards in Oak Grove. Meeting highlights included conservation program feedback presentations from local seafood, beef, and vegetable producers.

Attended the annual Virginia Association of Conservation District Employees training at Graves Mountain Lodge.

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 2017-2018 annual plan of work, budget, office policies, and the 2017-2020 Strategic Plan.

Recognized **David M. Moore** for **22 years** of dedicated service and valued leadership as director of the Tidewater Soil & Water Conservation District.

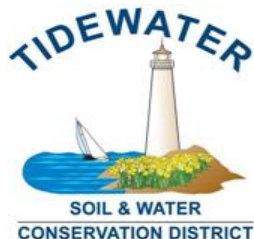


The Board of Directors met monthly to discuss local conservation issues and receive reports from District partners: Department of Conservation and Recreation, Virginia Cooperative Extension, Virginia Department of Forestry, Natural Resources Conservation Service, and Farm Service Agency.

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

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

Return Service Requested

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District Personnel

LaVerne Calhoun - District Manager
Kristal Evens - Conservation/Education Specialist
Joseph Gerdes- Conservation Office Assistance

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