

CONSERVATION NEWS

Tidewater Soil & Water Conservation District
6969 Fox Hunt Lane, P. O. Box 677
Gloucester, VA 23061
Phone : (804) 693-3562 ext. 5 Fax : (804) 693-7100
www.tidewaterswcd.org

Summer 2018 Serving the counties of Gloucester, Mathews, and Middlesex

VACS Cost Share Sign-up Friday, July 13th - Monday August 13th, 2018

This is the time to sign up for all Practices - with an emphasis on Nutrient Management Plans and Cover Crops. The Tidewater SWCD VACS Allocation for Cost Share for Program Year 2019 is \$227,826 with a participant cap of \$30,000.

Here are some highlights about the Priority Practices for PY 2019:

Nutrient Management Plan Writing and Revisions (NM-1A)

Participants need to have up-to-date plans on file to be eligible for Cost Share.

This annual practice applies to crop, hay, and pasture lands.

All plans must be written by a certified Nutrient Management Plan writer.

NMP's must include an aerial photograph and scaled map with tract and field numbers.

Participant may redirect payment to the certified plan writer.

Plans must be developed based on soil analyses taken within the previous three years.

The cost share rate is \$2 per acre for tracts receiving commercial fertilizer or imported manure.

The cost share rate is \$4 per acre that receive the participant's on-farm generated animal manure.

Cover Crops—Small Grain and Mixed Cover Crop for Nutrient Management and Residue Management (SL-8B)

No nutrients allowed between the harvesting of the previous crop and March 1, 2019. No nutrients are allowed at planting.

Date Requirements:

“Early Planting” deadline date is October 25, 2018

“Standard Planting” deadline date is November 15, 2018

Kill down dates: no earlier than March 15, 2019 and no later than May 15, 2019

Payment rates: Range from \$15 to \$48 per acre:

\$15/acre for non-rye, standard planting

\$25/acre planting bonus if planted on or before October 25

\$8/acre bonus for pure rye stands

Cover Crop Species options include Rye, Winter Rye, Winter Barley, Winter Hardy Oats, Winter Wheat, Triticale, Small grain mixtures with legume, daikon radish, or canola and rape.

Depending on NMP and Cover Crop enrollment, we do not foresee being able to fund Split Nitrogen Practices this program year. However, if funds are available we will open another sign-up and you will be notified.

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Please come by the office to sign-up
Monday-Friday 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

We look forward to working with you this program year!

USDA Farm Service Agency County Committee Nomination Period Underway

The nomination period for local Farm Service Agency (FSA) county committees began on Friday, June 15, 2018. Locally, the 2018 committee election is for Mathews. Thus, farm operators and farm landowners in Mathews can submit nominees or nominate themselves. The local county FSA committee has a representative from Gloucester, Mathews & Middlesex. “County committees allow farmers and ranchers to make important decisions about how federal farm programs are administered locally to best serve their needs,” said FSA County Executive Director Jeff S. Davis. There’s an increasing need for representation from underserved producers, which includes beginning, women and other minority farmers and ranchers.”

County committees are made up of farmers and ranchers elected by other producers in their communities to guide the delivery of farm programs at the local level. Committee members play a critical role in the day-to-day operations of FSA. Members serve three-year terms. To be eligible to serve on an FSA county committee, a person must participate or cooperate in an agency administered program, and reside in the local administrative area where the election is being held. After the nomination period, candidates will encourage the eligible producers in their local administrative area to vote. FSA will mail election ballots to eligible voters beginning Nov. 5, 2018. Ballots will be due back to the local county office either via mail or in person by Dec. 3, 2018. Newly-elected committee members and alternates will take office on Jan. 1, 2019.

To become a candidate, an eligible individual must sign an FSA-669A nomination form. The form and other information about FSA county committee elections are available at www.fsa.usda.gov/elections. All nomination forms for the 2018 election must be postmarked or received in the local FSA office by Aug. 1, 2018. Contact 804-693-2691, ext 2 for more information. USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender.

Pine Savannah Restoration Funding Available for Landowners in the Tidewater SWCD

Picture yourself on a crisp June morning. The sun is shining as you walk through your mature loblolly pine forest, keeping an eye on your old bird dog just up ahead. Unlike the thick loblolly stands that cover much of the county, this forest is different. It isn’t dark and it lacks the typical thick layer of pine needles under your feet. Much to the contrary, you take notice of how majestic the stand is. The canopy is wide open and sunlight scatters all around you. The trees are getting towards sawtimber stage, ready for harvest in a few years, and their lower bark bares a black charring. Fire has been here. You see emerging vegetation all around you – broomsedge, goldenrod, boneset, partridge pea, blackberry – so much so that a stranger might never guess the place was burned just a few months ago. What a paradise!

As your bird dog happily picks up a scent, you notice some rabbits scatter, you pass a weed-covered hollow where deer had obviously been sleeping, and dozens of songbirds sing all around you. For a moment it seems as if you are in the Red Hills of Georgia, arguably the world’s capital for quail hunting – a true wildlife paradise. And at last your bird dog points, right towards a greenbrier thicket – a few months ago this might have been a good chance for dinner, but for now you just enjoy the bird dog at work. Sure enough, as the dog moves again a pair of quail flush to the east. ‘Sorry, pal, we’ve got a wait awhile.’ Though it isn’t hunting season, watching the dog and having the knowledge of Bobwhites on the property fills you with great joy. What a place!

Yes, this could be you. Whether a hunter, non-game enthusiast or all-round wildlife conservationist, you could have similar experiences. Maybe your dog is simply a happy old lab taking an early morning stroll. Or perhaps you are just enjoying a walk in the woods with your grandchild. Whatever be the case, you too could manage this unique ecosystem that we call a pine savannah along with all its associated game and non-game wildlife. Savannahs are a native ecosystem that have been fairly extirpated from the state over the past few centuries, but you can help bring them back to your own property. Our team has already helped other Coastal Plain landowners achieve their dreams to great success as seen here and are always looking to do more.

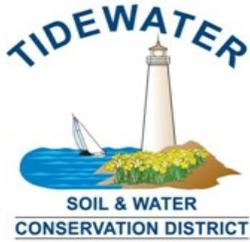
There are trade-offs, of course – financial and in terms of management. Simply put, the more pulpwood you take out, the less potential sawtimber you have for future harvest. And pine savannah habitats do require more work with understory spraying, firebreak establishment and rotational prescribed burning all necessary to keep the ecosystem in shape. Thankfully, the federal Environmental Quality Incentives Program provides incentives for marking the timber, the thinning itself (in addition to the money you will get from the logging job), as well as associated management practices through a new initiative called “Working Lands for Wildlife: Northern Bobwhite in Pine Savannahs”. Or if you only want technical assistance, our team is glad to help you on that front as well. So do you want to create your own paradise for wildlife and your own enjoyment? Give us a call and we’ll help you determine if this opportunity is right for you.

David Bryan, Private Lands Wildlife Biologist, NRCS/VDGIF, 804-287-1661, david.bryan@va.usda.gov



This Pine Savannah has been thinned to 50 sqft/acre, the maximum basal area under the WLFW program.

Credit: David Bryan



Bulk Rate
U.S. Postage Paid
Gloucester, VA
Non-Profit
Permit No. 53

P.O. Box 677
Gloucester, VA 23061

District Directors

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

Return Service Requested

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 Personnel

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

NRCS Personnel

Mike Combs-District Conservationist
Sean Allen- Soil Conservationist

Newsletter Mailing

In order to help us 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