



Shore Conserver

Eastern Shore Soil & Water Conservation District • *promoting locally led conservation*
22545 Center Parkway • Accomac, VA 23301 • (757)787-0918 • www.esswcd.org

November 2013

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Winter is No Time for Hibernation – You Can Still Experience Nature

Winter is usually a time to be inside, drinking warm beverages and hunkering down till spring. Though, just because it is cold outside should not stop you from going out and exploring nature. There is



Snow on the beach

no better time to look for animal tracks then after a fresh snow. Being outside when it is snowing is like being in a real world life-size snow globe. There is something special about the turning of the leaves, walking in the forest and hearing the sound of them crunching under your feet. The Eastern Shore has a lot of places to take advantage for your winter exploration. The Eastern Shore National Wildlife Refuge has three trails that you can walk to observe wildlife during winter. Guided tours of Fisherman Island are offered on Saturdays from Mid-October to Mid-March. This is a great opportunity to visit a trail that is otherwise closed to the public. Just down the road from the ES National Wildlife Refuge is another great place to explore--Kiptopeke State Park, which has 11 trails for exploration. Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge has six trails for you to enjoy observing winter wildlife. If you have never been on the beach while snow is on the ground, you are missing a real treat! It is amazing to watch the extra white foam on the ocean waves. Bonfires (with adult supervision) are a great way to have over friends, make s'mores, tell stories in the glow of the fire and keep warm while being outside in the fresh air.

If cold weather is really not for you, then I would suggest putting a bird feeder in front of a window that you can admire from inside your house. Have your bird field guide and a pair of binoculars nearby and you can enjoy nature all within the comforts of your home. Also, do not forget to look up and see the stars. During the colder winter months the stars appear to be clearer because of lesser humidity. The constellation Orion is best seen during the month of January around 9:00pm, just look in the southeastern sky for a line of three stars in a row, this is Orion's belt. The trio of stars pointing in a southerly direction right beneath Orion's Belt is Orion's Sword. The Orion Nebula is in the center of the two sets of stars.



View of Orion Constellation through a winter tree canopy

So, be it a winter hike, looking for tracks in the snow, looking at the night sky or just watching birds feed at your feeder; there are lots you can do to really enjoy nature during the winter. So leave hibernation to the reptiles and amphibians!

**Cover Crop Planting Reports due
December 6, 2013 to the District**

21st Annual Birding Festival 2013

The Wildlife Birding Festival is a three day internationally recognized festival beginning on the first Friday of October each year. The Birding Festival celebrates the arrival of migratory birds to the Shore with tours, trips, exhibitors and vendors.

Coastal Zone Management of DEQ sponsors a poster contest between the local high schools on the Shore and the winning artwork is used as the Birding Festival's signature logo. Sarah Cashwell of Broadwater Academy, Exmore, VA was this year's winner. She painted two Magnolia Warblers with one perched on an evergreen tree and one in flight. The artwork is featured as the edge to edge picturesque front cover of the 2013 Family Passport created by ESSWCD. The Family Passport Program was started by the District in 2003 to get more children involved with the festival. The passport booklet has always been designed like a real passport with pages for stamps, but this year it had a scavenger hunt, a page for birds and wildlife you have seen in my back yard and a page for your favorite animal. The District had a "Bird ID" booth set up at the festival where children could identify birds by using a field guide for songbirds,



Sarah Cashwell of Broadwater Academy painted this picture of Magnolia Warblers

2013 Youth Conservation Camp

The Virginia Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts (VASWCD) has hosted the Youth Conservation Camp located on the campus of Virginia Tech annually for 37 years. Partnering with Ye Accawmacke Garden Club, Charlotte Olmsted and Evan Lawrence, both from Nandua High School were sponsored for the 2013 Conservation Camp in July. The Eastern Shore Soil and Water Conservation District's Endowment Committee provided funds towards transportation expenses. Campers experience amazing activities condensed into a weeklong adventure learning about VA's natural resources from conservation professionals and faculty from Tech.

Youth Conservation Camp is a great opportunity for local students to see the western part of the state and meet other kids interested in the environment. Charlotte said, "...The camp was the best week she had all summer....and going to camp was an experience...that she would cherish for the rest of her life." Evan stated "All the activities were hands-on and interactive" and mostly outdoors including a hike to the famous Cascades Waterfalls, a trip to Clayton Lake State Park, a Forest Products Center tour, a canoe trip on the New River and activities about shoreline erosion, karst topography, water quality, dendrology, stream morphology, and lake ecology. They also learned about agricultural best management practices such as rotational grazing, alternative watering systems and nutrient management. For more information on Youth Conservation Camp, contact the District at (757)787-0918.



Cascades Waterfalls



Evan Lawrence is on the right in the blue looking for macro-invertebrates

Watershed Festival 2013

The Watershed Festival, in partnership with the Ker Place event "Ride the Tide & God-speed" was held on Saturday, October 19, 2013 at the Historic Onancock School. Held annually, the Watershed Festival is a fun-filled event of discovery and hands-on educational activities for children and adults alike.

Hosted by the Environmental Education Council sponsored by the Eastern Shore Soil and Water Conservation District (ESSWCD), the Watershed Festival had approximately 23 exhibitors from across the region including the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, the ES RC&D Council, Agricultural Research Extension Center, the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, The Marine Science Consortium now named the Chincoteague Bay Field Station, ES Master Naturalist, and the Ward Museum to name a few.

Exhibitors had interactive displays highlighting the treasures found in the Chesapeake Bay, on the Eastern Shore and right in your backyard. Visitors learned how unique the Eastern Shore is and why it is so valuable to wildlife. They observed live critters and identified trees on the Historic Onancock Walking Trail and took advantage of numerous other activities.

This educational event helped children get a head start at school this year by focusing on the Science Standards of Learning (SOL's) for grades 3-6. It provided plenty of fun and golden opportunities for everyone to participate in some great activities. The Festival's theme was Treasure's of Your Watershed with three

gold coins given to each patron as they entered the free festival. The gold coins were used to purchase a hotdog, popcorn and a drink. The Three Sheets' musicians sang festive music the entire time. Children collected an informational watershed token at each activity they participated. This year's tokens were the Eastern Tiger Swallowtail Butterfly (shown below on the left), New Jersey Chorus Frog, Yellow Garden Spider, Northern Cardinal and five others. After collecting eight tokens, they were able to head to the prize hold booth to receive a treasure of their own: sunglasses, blow-up globes, bug-catching nets, tote bags or some other reward for taking this quest. There was also an opportunity for children to take a picture as a superhero or to have their face painted.

The Watershed Walk was funded through a whole community watershed restoration grant awarded from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, with funds from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency through the Innovative Nutrient and Sediment Reduction Grant Program. Next year's Watershed Festival will be held on Saturday, October 18, 2014 at the Historic Onancock School, Onancock, VA. For further information or a set of this year's Watershed Tokens, contact Bonnie Mahl, Education Director, at ESSWCD at (757)787-0918 x129.

Each year the Watershed Festival has a free drawing of various items. These items are donated by businesses and local residents each year. Some of this year's free drawing winners are shown below to the right.



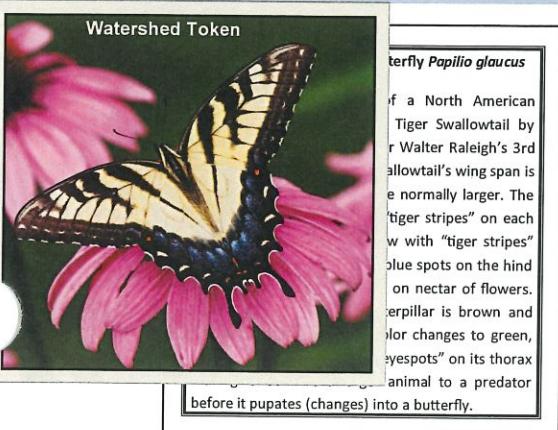
Turner Saunders won a bat house crafted and donated by Joe Wares.



Jenny Templeton of Nassawadox, VA won one of three birdfeeders with one year's supply of birdseed from ACE Hardware in Exmore, VA.



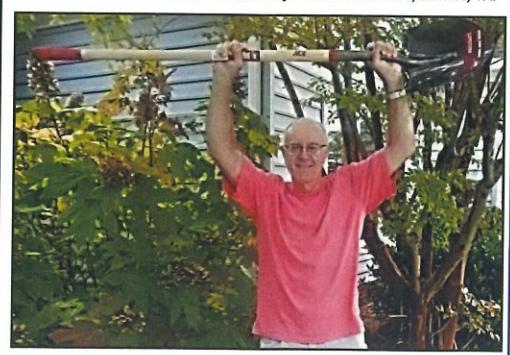
Ashley Tull won a birdfeeder with a year's supply of birdseed donated from ACE Hardware, Exmore, VA.



Front and back of the Eastern Tiger Swallowtail Butterfly Token



Kathy Boyd won "The Naturalist Guide to the Virginia Coast" donated by Curtis Badger.



Earl Schrag picked up a brand new garden shovel donated by ACE Hardware, Exmore, VA, for his daughter, Kirsten Schrag, the Watershed Festival Winner.

Small Farmer Workshop Series

Non-Traditional Livestock

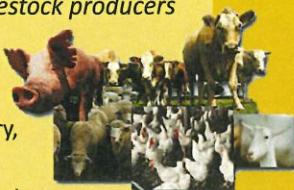
Wednesday, November 20th, 2013

9 am—3 pm; registration begins at 8:30

Please join us for an all-day workshop geared towards non-traditional and small-operation livestock producers

Topics include:

- Grazing/Pasture Concerns
- Egg & Meat Production, Pastured Poultry, and On-Farm Processing
- Family FARMS (Farmer Access to Regional Markets)
- Food Safety Requirements/Laws
- Loan and Grant Opportunities
- Cost-Share Programs
- Producer Experiences



Lunch provided
Exhibitors on-site



Location:
Shore Bank Corporate Headquarters
25020 Shore Parkway
Onley, VA

Contact:
Tina Jerome, USDA-NRCS
(757) 787-0918 x120
tina.jerome@va.usda.gov

Partners and Sponsors:



The Shore Conserver is published quarterly by the Eastern Shore SWCD to provide information to land users. The District customarily meets monthly on the second Wednesday of the month at 5:00pm at the USDA Service Center in Accomac, VA. The public is welcome to attend. To be added to the mailing list, please contact the District office at 757-787-0918 x101.

All programs and services of the Eastern Shore Soil and Water Conservation District and the Natural Resources Conservation Service are offered on a nondiscriminatory basis, without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, marital status or handicap.

ESSWCD COST-SHARES 100% ON STREAM EXCLUSION BMP!

Cost-share funds are available through the District for Stream Exclusion with Grazing Land Management. The purpose of this practice is to reduce runoff of sediment and nutrients from existing pastureland and to reduce non-point source pollution from grazing livestock. This practice provides livestock water systems and/or a hardened pad for winter-feeding that will improve water quality by establishing rotational grazing to control erosion and eliminate direct access or runoff input to live streams. Stream exclusion fencing is a required component of this practice. State cost-share and tax credit on this practice are limited to pastureland that borders a live stream or Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act Resource Protection Area. Some exceptions may be granted in cases of severe environmental degradation occurring around ponds or wetlands.

The cost-share payment for FY2014 is 100% reimbursement of the total eligible cost. There is no maximum state payment for this practice. Participants receiving more than \$70,000 shall not be eligible for any additional cost-share funds for any other cost-share practices. All participant enrollments received during the 2014 program year will be honored as cost-share becomes available. For more information, contact the District at (757) 787-0918.

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Eastern Shore Soil and Water

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