

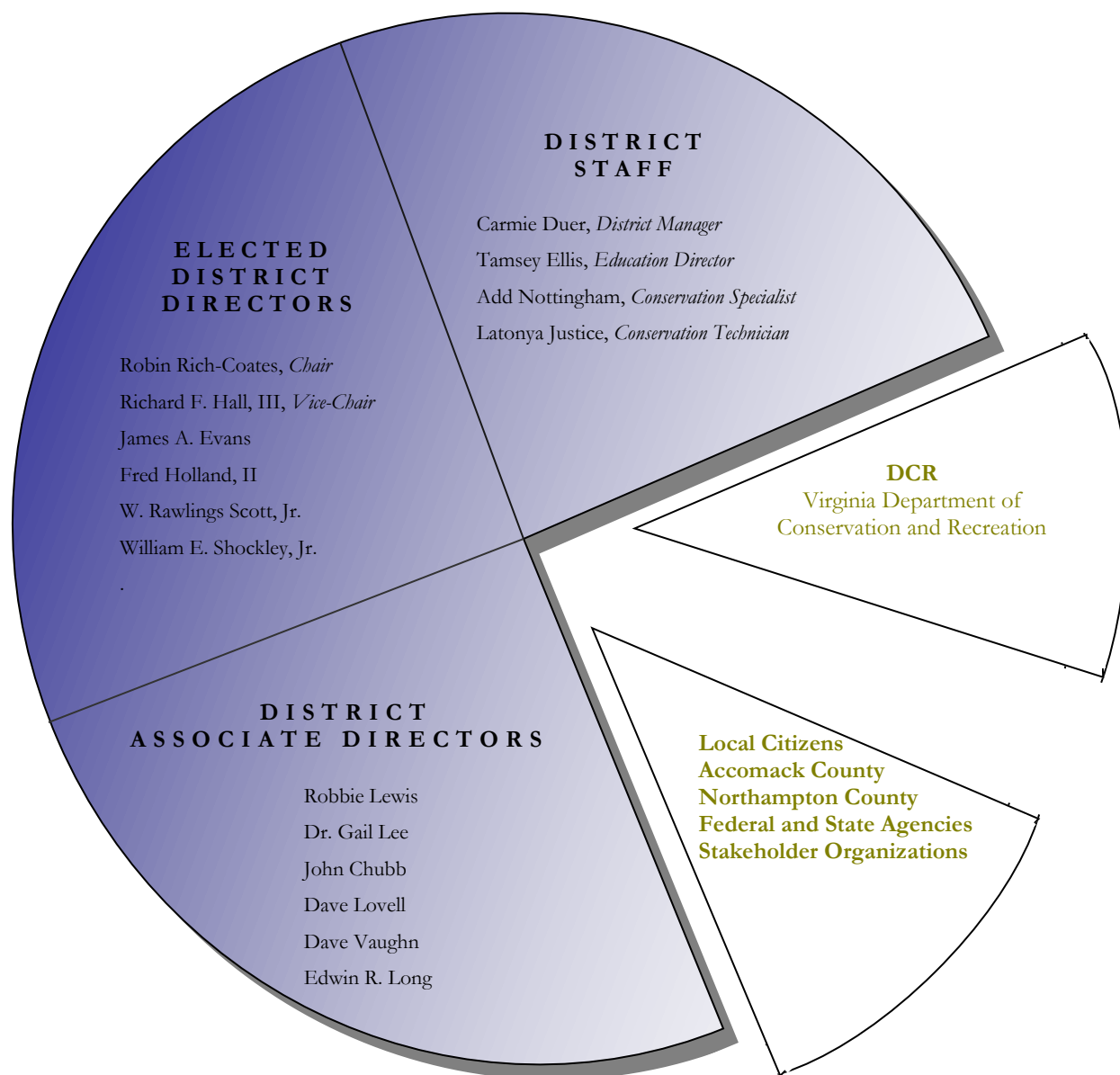


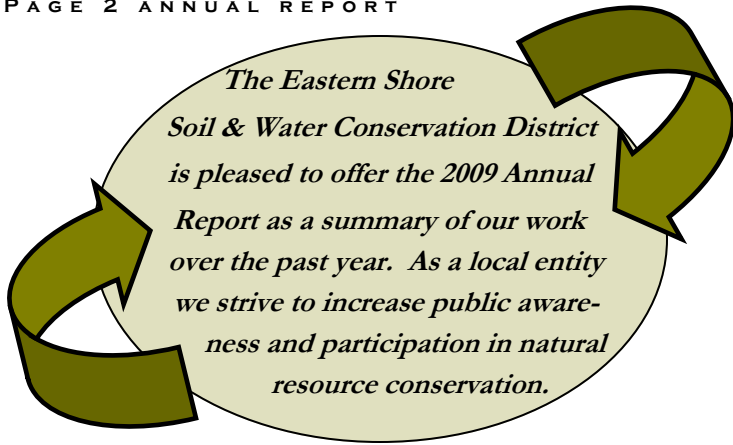
Shore Conserverver

Eastern Shore Soil & Water Conservation District
22545 Center Parkway, Accomac, VA 23301

ANNUAL REPORT

July 1, 2010 to June 30, 2011





Formed in 1945, the Eastern Shore Soil and Water Conservation District is a political subdivision of the Commonwealth defined and established by the Code of Virginia, Title 10.1, Chapter 5.

The District's service area covers the Eastern Shore of Virginia—a region on the Delmarva Peninsula comprised of Accomack and Northampton Counties and bounded by the Chesapeake Bay and the Atlantic Ocean. The abundance of natural resources has produced an economy based on agriculture and seafood production.

Farming has long been the area's trademark industry and accounts for an estimated \$350 million in annual sales. The region produces over 80% of the State's vegetable crop and an estimated 120,000 acres or about 50% of the land use supports row crop production. Because of the importance of sensitive Chesapeake Bay and Atlantic Ocean ecosystems within the area's watersheds, the impacts of farming on surface and ground water quality are a primary focus for the District's conservation programs and services. The District works closely with area growers through voluntary incentive programs, research and outreach to address resource concerns resulting from agriculture.

Since conservation involves everyone, the District provides various programs to students and adults promoting awareness, action and support for the area's natural resources. The District also serves as a valued partner and service provider to various agencies and organizations working together towards resource conservation on the Shore.

The work of the District is determined by directors, elected by the people of the District at general elections or appointed by the Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board. Directors serve four-year terms and designate non-voting associate directors to help guide District efforts. Directors and Associate Directors serve as volunteer public servants.

Funding for the District office and for special programs comes primarily through grants with the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation. The District seeks outside grants to expand its work efforts and the two counties within the District's service area contribute supporting funds.

2009 Agricultural Best Management Practices Cost-share (BMP)

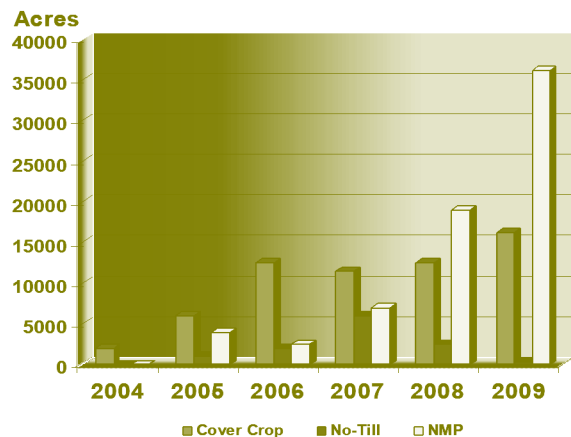
Breakdown of BMP Acreage in 2009

| | |
|--------------------------------------|--------------|
| Small Grain Cover Crop | 7,570 acres |
| Legume Cover Crop | 2,139 acres |
| Small Grain Cover Crop 3-yr Contract | 2,402 acres |
| Harvestable Wheat Cover Crop | 4,230 acres |
| Nutrient Management Plans | 36,553 acres |
| Nutrient Mgt. Plan Recordkeeping | 20,964 acres |
| Five-year Continuous No-till | 411 acres |

The VA Agricultural Best Management Practice Cost-share Program (VACS) is administered by the VA Department of Conservation & Recreation (DCR) through local Soil & Water Conservation Districts to improve water quality in the State's streams, rivers and the Chesapeake Bay. The program encourages voluntary installation of agricultural BMP's by offering cost-share assistance for implementation.

In 2009, the District provided cost-share assistance to landowners and producers for the implementation of over 17,000 acres of BMP's in Accomack and Northampton Counties. In addition, cost-share assistance was provided for the implementation of over 50,000 acres of nutrient management planning and recordkeeping. The chart below shows significant growth in cost-share assistance provided locally, especially in nutrient management planning and record keeping.

Growth in Costshare Programs



It's time for Cover Crop Sign-up!

Important considerations for the upcoming year's cover crop program:

1. The 1st round of approvals has a sign-up deadline of September 4th. Funding will be on a first come/first serve basis.
2. Seed must be either certified (submit bag labels) or lab tested. Bin-run seed must be tested prior to seeding and show a minimum of 80% germination and have no more than 16 restricted noxious weed seeds per pound. Please bring in 2 lbs. of seed and the District will send it off to be tested at no cost to the grower.
3. All cover crop fields must have a current Nutrient Management Plan on file with the District by March 15, 2010.

SL-8B/ Small Grain Cover for Nutrient Management

- ▶ The cost-share rate is \$25 per acre if planted by November 15. Add \$25 per acre bonus if planted on or before October 25. Add \$10 per acre bonus if planting Abruzzi Rye varieties.
- ▶ A good stand and good growth of winter cover must be obtained in sufficient time to protect area in the fall and winter. Standard review is based on 30 plants/square foot with two tillers per plant by mid-December (60 tillers sq. ft.).
- ▶ No nutrients from any source may be applied before March 1, except manure (with less than 40 lbs N per acre) is permitted if animals are raised as part of applicant's operation, there is inadequate winter storage, and application is in accordance with a certified nutrient management plan.
- ▶ Cover may be killed using mechanical or chemical means or by grazing between March 15 and May 15. Harvesting for hay, silage, grain, straw or seed is not permitted. Pasturing is permitted as long as a 60% residue cover is maintained through March 14.

SL-8H/ Harvestable Cover Crop

- ▶ No nutrients from any sources may be applied before March 1, except on-farm manure under special conditions.
- ▶ The cost-share rate is \$25 per acre.
- ▶ A good stand and good growth of winter cover must be obtained—see above.
- ▶ Must be harvested after March 14. Pasturing permitted.
- ▶ This practice is limited to 300 acres per applicant per year.
- ▶ Must be planted by October 25.
- ▶ Tax Credits do not apply.*

**Sign-up Deadline
September 4th!**

WQ-4/Legume Cover Crop

- ▶ Legume cover crop must be left on surface intact to serve as mulch for the no-till planting of grain crops.
- ▶ Must be planted by October 15 (October 1st for Clover).
- ▶ The cost-share rate is \$35 per acre.

*Ask the District about additional tax credits for the portion of your costs to plant cover crop that are not covered by incentive payments.
Contact the District office at 757-787-0918 or just drop by for more information!*

Conservation Awards 2009

The Eastern Shore Soil and Water Conservation District (ESSWCD) honors local students, teachers, farmers and other community members for their efforts in the conservation of our natural resources. Our award winners are as follows.

Conservation Farmer Award



Tom Shockley

The District awarded Tom Shockley the 2009 Conservation Farmer Award. Tom Shockley has been farming since 1993 and was one of the District's first participants in the Conservation Tillage program in 2005. He uses no-till practices in managing over 2,000 acres. He also raises strawberries, sweet corn, various vegetables and no-till pumpkins. Tom currently works with both the ESSWCD and Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) on several conservation practices such as cover crop, conservation tillage, nutrient management, pond expansion and irrigation efficiency.

Bay Friendly Clean Water Farm Award

The Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) 2009 Bay Friendly Clean Water Farm Award was given to Davis Lovell who runs a large poultry operation near Melfa Virginia, raising over 1,287,000 broilers each year for Perdue. Dave has undertaken several improvements to protect air and water quality including tree buffers to reduce air emissions and proper storage of poultry litter. He is active in the conservation community and is very interested in innovation and improvements that further stewardship in the poultry industry.



Dave Lovell

Wildlife Conservationist Award

The District honored Beth Walker (not pictured) with the 2009 Wildlife Conservationist Award. Working with NRCS, she maintains a tree line with softened edges adjacent to her twenty acres of cropland for the protection of wildlife. She has a wooded buffer along the seaside marsh for protection of water quality and to provide a habitat for migratory birds. Beth has provided and continues to increase habitat devoted primarily to endangered and at risk species which include a variety of migratory songbirds and pollinators.

Forestry Conservationist Award

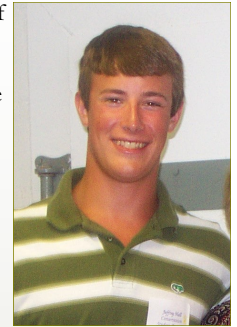
The 2009 District Forestry Conservationist Award was presented to Eleanor Whittock. In 2006, she requested the Department of Forestry to write a stewardship plan incorporating soil and water conservation and forestry practices which include wildlife habitat enhancement plantings (benefitting quail, songbirds, and turkeys), along with a forest stand maintained for traditional timber production. In 2007 Mrs. Whittock was nominated and certified as a "Forest Steward" by the Virginia Department of Forestry, for the VA Forest Stewardship Program.



Eleanor Whittock

Conservation Student

The District also honored Conservation Student, Jeffrey Hall of Nandua High School. Jeff graduated June 10, 2009 as valedictorian of his class, and plans to major in Political Sciences at the University of Virginia. He has taken an online advance placement course in environmental science, receiving three college credit hours. He helped with Nandua's recycling program, and has been a member of the Envirothon Team all four years-serving as team captain his senior year. He chaired the Virginia Delegation at the National Affairs Tri Hi Y and Hi Y Conference. He supplied valuable environmental information on marsh systems that helped with the re-writing of their bill. When asked why his interest in conservation and the environment, he modestly replied "I guess every generation has a focus and ours is the environment. We see this as one of the biggest problems and observed the effects of the last ten years. We feel this has to be corrected."



Jeffrey Hall

Conservation Educator Award

Errin Sullivan was awarded the 2009 Conservation Educator Award. Her love for students and the environment is evident. This fall she will be starting her fifth year teaching fourth graders at Broadwater Academy where she helped start the recycling program. For the last three years she has co-taught a camping club where members learn about safety, environment care and camping preparation. Last year she developed a week-long nature day camp at Broadwater. Errin believes that children learn best by participation. She uses gardening as a medium to get the children excited about learning. She has developed habitat and vegetable gardens on the Broadwater Campus. Students discover what organisms need to survive and learn the parts of a flower and the inter-relationship of plants to animals, especially insects. Students make observations on changes in the zucchini, string beans, kale and broccoli that they grow and later eat. Errin's gardens are being used as a learning tool by other classrooms.



Errin Sullivan

VASWCD State Poster Contest Winners

The District also acknowledged three State winners in the VA Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts (VASWCD) 2008 State Poster Contest. Eastern Shore students received three of the five awards given by the State. The following students were the State's 1st Place winners in this contest: Alyson Gorske, Broadwater Academy, grades 4-6 category, James Baker, Northampton High School, grades 7-9 category, and Esha Horé, Arcadia High School, grades 10-12 category.

The District would like to thank the farmers, landowners, students, teachers, and other partners whose contributions to conservation help assure clean water and productive soil for the future.



James Baker
Not pictured:
Esha Horé and
Alyson Gorske

2009 Environmental Education Programs



2009 Envirothon teams

Envirothon: This program was started in the State by the District and is now in its 17th year! Working with 20 educators and community leaders, the District coordinated this 2-day environmental competition for over 35 area high school students. The winning Eastern Shore team, Nandua High School's Newts, continued competing at the state level. The Nandua Newts traveled to Wakefield, VA for the State competition in May 2009.

Conservation Poster Contest: The District received over 200 student entries on the 2009 theme "Soil. Dig it.". The VA Association of Conservation Districts announced three 1st place state-level winners from the Eastern Shore in the 2008 contest (see page 4).

Conservation Youth Camp: Ye Accawmacke Garden Club joined with the District in 2009 to cover expenses for a camper at the VA Association of Conservation Districts' weeklong summer camp at VA Tech in Blacksburg.

Project Wild/ Project Aquatics Teacher Training: The District's Education Director, a certified trainer for these EE curriculum materials, provided an all-day course and CE credits for 25 teachers and professionals.

Arbor Family Fun Day: Sponsored through the ES Tree Care, the Arbor Family Fun Day was used to educate children about the benefits of trees through fun activities and to get feedback on the planner's rendition of a new playground. The District provided a hands-on exhibit of the interaction between trees, wildlife and the environment. This was held at Onancock School on Sunday, April 26, 2009.

Publications: The District published three issues of the *Shore Conserver* reaching over 850 households with updates on District activities and information on various resource concerns.

Spring Conservation Grants: The District awarded grants totaling \$1000 to area educators for projects ranging from a school recycling program to field trips to Chesapeake Bay Foundation's Port Isobel, the VA Marine Science Center and Norfolk Zoo.

Farm Field Day: District presented the "Story of Soil" to over 400 3rd grade students in Accomack County at the Cooperative Extension's annual event.

Birding and Wildlife Festival: The District designed the 2008 Family Passport, assisted with coordinating the Activities Tent and provided a booth with hands-on activities for 150 visitors.

Eastern Shore Chapter Master Naturalist: The District partnered with DCR in program start-up and serves on the Steering Committee for this adult education opportunity.

Skill-a-thon: During the two-day event, the District presented SOL-based programs discussing hibernation, mimicry, camouflage and migration for over 80 2nd and 3rd graders at the 4-H sponsored program at Kiptopeke Elementary School.

Environmental Education Council: The District continues to coordinate this group that works collaboratively to increase environmental awareness in the community. Member projects are supported by District through participation and funding.

- **Education Directory:** This local resource guide is a booklet listing agencies and organizations involved in environmental education. It supplies services provided by these organizations along with contact information, field trip opportunities, website information, training opportunities, and teacher supplies, grant and speaker availability.

2009 Grant Projects & Partnerships

Supporting Environmental Education

Wetlands on Wheels

Funded by VaNaturally Partner Grant for Meaningful Watershed Educational Experiences, the District brought this traveling wetlands classroom to all Northampton County public elementary schools and Broadwater Academy in October of 2008.

ES Environmental Education Council

VaNaturally Environmental Education grant funding assisted with building capacity of the organization, including publication of a November '08 edition of Shore Outdoors focusing on native plants in the Eastern Shore News and an updated version of the District's Conservation Education Resource Directory.

Native Plant Campaign

The District partnered with NOAA CZM to promote the use of native species in Eastern Shore landscaping. With funding from DCR Trib Strategies, Resource Conservation & Development, the District provided campaign materials and design of demonstration landscape and stormwater wetlands at the new ES Rural Health Medical Center.

DCR Trib Strategies

ESSWCD hosted a GIS Conference at VIMS in Wachapreague, VA to over 40 participants through funding from DCR Trib Strategies grant. The conference brought together local GIS users to share data and resources.

Preserving Farmland

Through partnership with the District with support from the Chesapeake Bay Restoration Fund, Virginia ES Land Trust and the ESSWCD performed outreach to Northampton County working farmers in an effort to educate them on federal, state, and local incentives for permanent lead protection. A color brochure "A Guide to Conservation Easements in Northampton County, VA" was circulated to over 100 working farmers and will continue to be used as an educational tool.

Partnered with Virginia Outdoors Foundation to monitor their perpetual conservation easements on Eastern Shore properties.

Partnered with Northampton County to provide technical assistance and monitoring services for their Purchase of Development Rights Program.

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

**The Shore Conservator is published quarterly by the Eastern SWCD to provide information to landusers.
Please contact the District office to be added to the mailing list at 757-787-0918.**

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