



Shore Conservor

Eastern Shore Soil & Water Conservation District

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District awards outstanding environmental stewardship



Award winners pictured left to right, front row, Justin Bagwell, Paul Zimmerman, Ellen and William Nelson, Lynn Walker. Back row, Dave McElroy, Pat Bell, Hillary Little, Fred and Steve Darby.

On Saturday evening, October 15, the District honored local students, teachers, farmers, and other community members who deserve recognition for their contributions to conservation of our natural resources.



Lynn Walker 2005 Conservation Student

While working on her graduate degree in marine biology from Old Dominion University, Lynn Walker also serves as the student representative from Virginia on the Chesapeake Bay Advisory Committee. This group advises the governors of the Bay watershed states on Bay clean-up efforts.



2005 District Scholarships Olivia Newman & Jo Young

Olivia Newman will receive the 2005 W. Foster Fletcher Conservation Scholarship while at Mary Washington Uni-

versity, and Jo Young will receive the William H. Beasley, Sr. Memorial Scholarship while studying at VA Tech.



Dave McElroy 2005 Conservation Educator

Arcadia High School Biology teacher, Dave McElroy, shares his enthusiasm and environmental focus with his students. He has instructed and teaches in outdoor classrooms.



Justin Bagwell & James West State Poster Contest Winners

Justin Bagwell from Nandua Middle School and James West from Northampton High School both placed first in their grade categories in the Virginia Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts annual Poster Contest. The 2005 theme was "Celebrate Conservation"

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Awarding outstanding environmental stewardship (continued from page 1)



Robert C. Darby & Sons 2005 Clean Water Farm

Fred and Steve Darby are 4th generation family farmers. In 1908 their grandfather established Fred Chesser and Company, supplying produce to northern markets. The Darbys still grow and pack produce, but also raise small grain on over 3000 acres in Accomack County. They are also one of the larger poultry growers on the Shore. The Darbys make extensive use of best management practices, including careful nutrient management planning to protect water quality



Tim Brown 2005 Wildlife Conservationist

The Browns have conservation easements on their 633 acre farm, protecting over 500 acres of critical forest and marshland habitat. Working with Ducks Unlimited and VDGIF, over 40 acres of cropland are flooded and managed for migrating waterfowl. Another 13 acres are planted in field buffers of native

warm season grasses.



John Payne & Pat Bell 2005 Conservation Farm

Over 60 acres of farmland have been converted to conservation buffers under the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP). Native grass and shrub plantings between the fields and fragile shorelines protect water quality on this narrow, 3/4 mile-wide peninsula between the Machipongo River and Hogg Island Bay.



Hillary Little 2005 Forestry Conservationist

Working closely with area foresters, Hillary Little manages his land with prescribed burnings, selective thinning, and tree planting to enhance timber harvest. These practices also improve wildlife habitat and help protect water quality by maintaining healthy forested buffers along Jacobus Creek near Nassawadox.

"These community members lead by example. They strengthen and encourage our belief in the positive outcomes of conservation."

Robin Rich-Coates,
ESSWCD Chairman



CREP border of native warm season grasses on Brown farm on Hunting Creek.



Darby poultry operation near Assawoman on Bogue's Bay.

Eastern Shore VASWCD 2005 Conservation Education District of the Year



The Virginia Association of Conservation Districts is honoring the Eastern Shore SWCD from among 47 districts across Virginia for its outstanding conservation education programs. The Eastern Shore SWCD is proud of its long-standing traditions in education and outreach. Since the early 80's the district has staffed an education coordinator and has built a vital program with events such as Envirothon, the Conservation Poster Contest, and teacher training.

Recently the District expanded its partnership with the Eastern Shore Environmental Education Council to help bring the Watershed Festival and newspaper insert, *Shore Outdoors*, to the community.

District co-holds first conservation easement with VES Land Trust

One of the District's newest conservation partners is the Virginia Eastern Shore (VES) Land Trust. This local land trust is working to protect our area's open space. At the August 10th District Board Meeting, directors voted to work cooperatively with VES Land Trust and co-hold two of their conservation easements on land owned by William L. and Ellen Nock Nelson.

The easements protect 167 acres on Custis Neck Road and bring the total amount of land protected on the creek to 907 acres. Both farms lie within Accomack County's Locustville Agricultural and Forestal District and contain a total of 97 acres of prime agricultural soils and 50 acres of mature forest. The easements prohibit any further subdivision of the land, while permitting traditional uses such as farming, forestry and hunting.



For the Nelson's foresight and contribution to protecting some beautiful land on Folly Creek, on the seaside, the VESLT presented the Nelson's with their 2005 Conservation Stewardship Award.

District Director Robin Rich-Coates said, "The Nelson's easements reflect the careful stewardship of the land and its natural resources that is the

mission of the Soil & Water Conservation District. We were pleased to join the VES Land Trust in preserving these properties for future generations."

Apply for NRCS federal cost-share by January 13

Landowners and farmers can sign-up from October 1, 2005, through January 13, 2006, for the following programs:

Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP)

Through WHIP, the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) provides technical and financial assistance to landowners who develop upland, wetland, riparian, and aquatic habitat areas on their property. Landowners can receive 75% or 100% cost share on the installation of conservation practices such as shrub planting, establishing warm and cool season grasses, winter flooding of cropland and planting hardwood trees.

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)

The EQIP program is a voluntary program to help farmers address serious environmental concerns related to animal waste, forestry, grazing, erosion, irrigation water conservation and poultry litter transfer.

Several conservation practices are available for cost-share, including animal waste storage and animal mortality facilities, continuous no-till, cover crop, cropland irrigation, cropland erosion control practices, poultry litter transfer, tree planting, and controlled grazing systems. The cost-share rate is between 35% and 75% depending on the conservation practice.

For more information regarding these programs please contact the NRCS District Conservationist, Robert Williams, in the USDA Accomack Service Center at 757-787-0918.



State cost-share available on Bay tracts

\$ \$ \$

For more information please contact ESSWCD staff for eligible programs such as waste stacking sheds, animal mortality composters, 5-year continuous no-till, split application N on winter wheat (sign-up before February 1), and nutrient management planning.

Cleaner Ag Plastic Mulch is Goal of Recycling Project

Bill Shockley, Northampton County's Extension Agent and Butch Nottingham, Virginia Department of Agriculture's Consumer Affairs representative, are pleased that so many bales of waste plastic mulch film were shipped off the Eastern Shore to be recycled this year, but they don't want to stop with this victory.

Up to 50% of the weight of a bale of plastic may be soil and plant material, which means extra freight charges for the broker who finds a buyer and arranges transportation. The contaminants create a risk that a buyer may reject a shipment of plastic if it is too difficult to clean or too expensive to dispose of the waste soil.

Currently each row of plastic film is pulled from the ground by hand and deposited in piles for collection and baling. Dirt, leaves and flattened tomato skins cling tightly to the plastic sheeting and irrigation tubing. Reducing that extra material to 10% or less is the challenge.

One of the first suggestions people make is to use water to wash off the dirt. Right now the only com-

mercially available processes for cleaning waste plastic film require transporting the bales to an expensive central washing station, where the debris removed must be hauled away for disposal.

To come up with a lower cost approach to cleaning tons of plastic, several local folks have been recruited to design a machine that will leave the soil in the field when the plastic is removed.

The Resource Conservation and Development Council applied for and received a USDA Rural Development grant for work on this project. If you'd like more information, call Marian Huber, RC&D Coordinator at 787-2786.



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.

**The Shore Conserver is published quarterly
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Please contact the district office to be added to the mailing list
at 757-787-0918.**

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