



# Shore Conserverver

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

**February 2013**

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Bob Smith  
*Soil Conservation Technician*

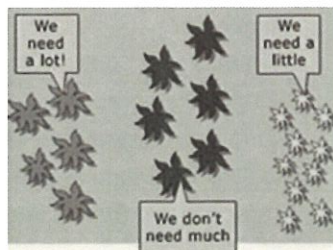
Jenny Templeton  
*Soil Conservationist*

Jane Corson-Lassiter  
*NRCS/FPPC Regional Director*

## **GreenSeeker Technology Saves N and \$\$\$**



According to Virginia Tech research<sup>1</sup>, GreenSeeker Technology (GST) can save Virginia farmers an average of 4 lbs. Nitrogen (N)/acre on wheat and 21 lbs. N/acre on corn with a resulting equal or higher yield. With that information alone, one might easily decide to try one of the variable rate N applicators available for use to anyone through Crop Production Services (CPS) in Keller, VA, CPS (Shore Fertilizer) in Belle Haven, VA or Helena Chemical in Tasley, VA. But add to that N savings an additional \$40/acre cost share, and of course the reduction in N losses through runoff and leaching, and you've got a real WIN-WIN situation! That's just what the new Greenhouse Gas Conservation Innovation Grant from NRCS does for Shore producers.



GreenSeeker uses variable rate technology to apply N fertilizer more efficiently by putting down the right amount at the right place at the right time on wheat and corn. It's just as John A. Bricker, State Conservationist for NRCS in Virginia says, "This new technology promises to take conservation to the next level with benefits for farmers and the environment."

This special funding is available through the Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) to producers in Accomack and Northampton counties who are interested in using innovative technology that helps them apply fertilizer only where it is needed most. Resulting reductions in fertilizer will not only decrease potential nitrogen runoff into streams and the Bay but will cut air emissions of nitrous oxide, a potent greenhouse gas.

If you farm on Virginia's Eastern Shore and would like to learn more about or participate in this project, contact NRCS at the Accomack USDA Service Center. There you can reach Tina Jerome, Jenny Templeton or Bob Smith by phone at (757) 787-0918, extension 3 or e-mail Tina Jerome, District Conservationist at [tina.jerome@va.usda.gov](mailto:tina.jerome@va.usda.gov). Applications are accepted on a continual basis, but NRCS encourages everyone to apply by February 15, 2013 in time for this season's wheat!

<sup>1</sup>Thomason, W.E. et al. 2011. Variable nitrogen rate determination from plant spectral reflectance in soft red winter wheat. *Precision Agriculture* 12:666-681.

# Tax Credit for Precision Equipment and Virginia's Ag BMP Loan Programs

One of the latest topics in the Shore's agricultural industry is precision farming. The General Assembly has authorized tax credits to encourage the purchase and usage of certain agricultural equipment in support of soil and water conservation. As with any tax credit usage the taxpayer is responsible for determining that they are eligible to utilize the tax credit in compliance with instructions and regulations from the Virginia Department of Taxation. The District offers tax credits for purchase of advanced technology pesticide and fertilizer application equipment through the Virginia Agricultural Cost-share Program. Any individual engaged in agricultural production who has a nutrient management plan approved by the Eastern Shore Soil and Water Conservation District shall be allowed a credit against the tax imposed by §58.1-320 of an amount equaling 25% of all expenditures made for the purchase of equipment certified by the Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board as providing more precise pesticide and fertilizer application. The amount of this tax credit shall not exceed \$3,750 or the total amount of the tax imposed by this chapter, whichever is less, in the year of purchase. If the amount of such credit exceeds the taxpayer's tax liability for such taxable year, the amount which exceeds the tax liability may be carried over for credit against the income taxes of the next five taxable years until the total amount of the tax credit has been taken.

Low interest loan financing is available to Virginia's agricultural producers for the implementation of specific agricultural best management practices. The initial funding to implement the Ag BMP low interest loan program was provided by a set-aside of \$5,000,000 from the Virginia Clean Water Revolving Loan Fund program's fiscal year 2000 revenue and two additional \$5,000,000 set-asides in subsequent years. The VCWRLF loan program was established in 1988 to create a self-perpetuating source of low interest financing. DEQ's Virginia Ag BMP loans program is a subset of the parent VCWRLF loan program and is intended to create a continuing source of low interest financing that will be available to Virginia's agricultural producers to assist them in their efforts to reduce agricultural non-point source pollution. All repayments of principle and interest from previous Ag BMP loans are returned to the Fund and used to provide additional loans to other Virginia farmers. Any Virginia agricultural producer wishing to implement eligible Best Management Practices in order to reduce the amount of polluted

agricultural runoff entering Virginia waters adjacent to their existing agricultural operation will be considered by DEQ for Ag BMP low interest loan assistance whether or not they participate in any State assistance program. The minimum loan amount allowed is \$5,000. There is no maximum loan amount however, funding can only be authorized for expenses relating to the implementation of the eligible practices. Loan rates are usually no more than 3% per year. Virginia producers may request loan assistance from DEQ Ag BMP low interest loan program in order to finance their portion of implantation expenses under a cost-share grant agreement or up to 100% of loan eligible expenses for approved BMPs if they are not participating in another funding program. Where cost-share funds will be provided at completion of one or more practices an Ag BMP low interest loan may be approved for the total cost of the proposed practice. In this case, when the cost-share funds become available they must immediately be applied to the Producer's loan obligation. Repayment periods typically range from 1-10 years depending on the practice and the amount of the loan. The following list of Best Management Practices pertaining to construction of facilities or structures for water quality protection eligible for loan assistance include but are not limited to:

- Streambank Stabilization
- Composter
- Animal Waste Control Facility
- Wetland Restoration
- Stormwater Retention Pond
- No-till Drills/Planters and
- Surface Water Runoff Impoundment.

The first part of the loan process is the pre-application. The pre-application is a short questionnaire asking for farm location, specific BMP proposed for loan financing, estimated total cost of the practice and the applicant's estimate of the amount of loan assistance that will be required. Loan Pre-applications can be submitted anytime throughout the year. Applications for loan assistance are prioritized on a monthly basis. Pre-application forms are located at the Eastern Shore Soil and Water Conservation District, 22545 Center Parkway, Accomac, VA 23301, (757)787-0918.



## \$500 Fletcher/Beasley Scholarship Available

Eastern Shore Soil and Water Conservation District announces the 2013 Fletcher/Beasley Scholarship.

For a Graduating Senior, an Undergraduate or Graduate College

Student pursuing a curriculum related to

**Conservation, Environmental Studies or Agriculture.**

**For an application**

Contact your School Guidance Office or the

**Eastern Shore Soil and Water Conservation District**

[www.esswcd.org](http://www.esswcd.org)

22545 Center Parkway Accomac, VA 23301

Ph (757) 787-0918 x129, Fax (757) 787-8142

[bonnie.mahl@esswcd.org](mailto:bonnie.mahl@esswcd.org)

**Deadline: April 15, 2013**

## Theresa Long, New Director



*Theresa Long, Accomack County Extension*

The Eastern Shore Soil and Water Conservation District would like to welcome Theresa Long as our newest Director! Theresa Long is a graduate of Virginia Tech with a bachelor's degree in Agricultural Sciences with a double minor in Agricultural and Extension Education and Agricultural and Applied Economics. Upon graduation from Virginia Tech, She returned to her native Eastern Shore and returned to her position on the family farm before accepting the job as Accomack County's Agricultural and Natural Resources Extension Agent. A native Eastern Shore-woman, she hails from an established farming family in lower Northampton County and has many years' experience in vegetable and grain production.

## Conservation Poster Contest

The ESSWCD Conservation Poster Contest is open to all local students, grades K-12. **Cash prizes** will be given for 1st-4th place in each of the five grade categories: K-1, 2-3, 4-6, 7-9, and 10-12 — Top Prize: \$50 in each category. Posters must be completed with this year's theme: "How Does Your Water Shed?" and submitted to ESSWCD by Thursday, March 28, 2013 with a 2013 Conservation Poster Contest Entry Form attached on the back.

Poster awards will be given during the ES Science Fair held on April 27, 2013 at the Eastern Shore Community College. Winning posters will be displayed in the Accomack Public Library. For entry forms and complete rules and tips on how to make an effective poster, contact your art teacher or Bonnie Mahl at [Bonnie.mahl@esswcd.org](mailto:Bonnie.mahl@esswcd.org), 757-787-0918 x129 or go to [www.esswcd.org](http://www.esswcd.org).

## Conservation Youth Camp

The Virginia Association of Soil & Water Conservation Districts is sponsoring a week-long summer conservation camp, July 14-20, 2013 on the Virginia Tech Campus in Blacksburg, VA. The Camp is for high school students in grades 9-12. The Eastern Shore SWCD & Ye Accawmacke Garden Club are offering two scholarships to send two Eastern Shore High School Students to the Conservation Youth Camp. At the Conservation Camp, students learn about the environment and conservation through hands-on experiences. There will be hikes, swimming, canoeing, tours of Virginia Campus and Science Centers and other outdoor fun! If hiking to the Cascades Waterfall and stimulating educational tours sounds like something you would enjoy, then this camp is for you! If you know a student with keen interest in the environment, please encourage them to apply by April 15, 2013 to the District. For more complete description of the camp, this year's schedule and application, please visit the VASWCD Conservation Camp website at [www.vaswcd.org/youthcamp](http://www.vaswcd.org/youthcamp) or contact Bonnie Mahl (757)787-0918 x129 or [bonnie.mahl@esswcd.org](mailto:bonnie.mahl@esswcd.org).



# Water Stewardship Can Show You How Your Farm Rate

Eastern Shore farmers now have the opportunity of taking advantage of a new, free program offered by Water Stewardship Inc. (WSI), a nongovernmental, independent, third party assessor with extensive background and experience working with farmers in the Shenandoah Valley. WSI assesses and verifies landowner's current water quality protection efforts and provides quantitative estimates of N and P reductions from existing and recommended conservation practices. According to Michael Sigrist, Agricultural Liaison of WSI on the Eastern Shore of Virginia, all the information gathered remains strictly confidential under a WSI Confidentiality Agreement. Sigrist says that the documentation provided will give farmers a snapshot of where they are currently and an additional tool to help them plan for and take advantage of today's conservation and water quality programs as well as future environmental concerns. The **planning is free and participants will receive a small incentive payment.** For more information contact Michael at 443-235-1673 or [mikes@waterstewardshipinc.org](mailto:mikes@waterstewardshipinc.org). Visit the Water Stewardship Inc. website at [www.waterstewardshipinc.org](http://www.waterstewardshipinc.org).

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 x119.

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.

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