



# Shore Conserver

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

**February 2017**

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## Local Farmers Win State Award for Protecting Water Quality



From left to right: Aarin Nottingham Kuzzens Inc., Secretary of Natural Resources Molly Ward, Senator Lynwood Lewis and Richard Davis of Kuzzens Inc.

Lipman Family Farms (Kuzzens Inc. – Eastern Shore of VA branch) was awarded the Clean Water Farm award, a State award sponsored by the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation. It is awarded to Virginia farmers who implement nutrient management plans and are exemplary in their protection of the State's soil and water resources.

From the pool of Virginia Clean Water Farm Award recipients, up to 10 grand winners representing Virginia's major river basins are selected each year. Lipman Family Farms (Kuzzens Inc.) was nominated and submitted by the Eastern Shore Soil and Water Conservation District. Grand Basin Award winners must meet criteria of the Clean Water Farm Award and demonstrate exceptional conservation on the land and in managing operations. This award presents a chance to recognize farmers and land managers who use stewardship practices that benefit us all.

On behalf of Virginia Governor McAuliffe, Senator Lynwood Lewis and Molly Ward, Secretary of Natural Resources, presented Richard Davis and Aarin Nottingham of Lipman Family Farms (Kuzzens, Inc. – Eastern Shore branch), Virginia, with the 2016 Coastal River Grand Basin Award. Lipman Family Farms were recognized at the Virginia Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts Annual Meeting on December 6, 2016 in Roanoke, VA.

Kuzzens Inc. now owns and leases approximately 4,000 acres of land in Accomack and Northampton Counties cycling a various rotation of tomatoes, corn, wheat, and soybeans. Lipman Family Farms operates over 10,000 acres on the East Coast and produces many vegetables including eggplant, melons, squash, peppers, green beans and citrus. Kuzzens Inc. is implementing a method of pesticide application using crab meal. The chiton from the crabs incorporated into the ground serves as an alternative target for nematodes-diverting their attention from the tomatoes. This significantly decreases the need of other fumigants. Not only does Kuzzens exemplify conservation stewardship through best management practices and voluntary efforts; they utilize innovative technology to open doors for more effective methods to minimize their ecological footprint in the local community.

Kuzzens Inc. maintains at least 65-foot buffers to separate their production lands from ditches and other water ways. Out of the 4,000 acres they own and lease for agriculture, roughly 1,300 acres serve as buffer systems. Mindful of water use, Kuzzens Inc. uses the Evapotranspiration system in their low-flow irrigation tape. All plastic is recycled, and Kuzzens Inc. reuse tomato stakes for up to 5 years. Providing over 1,300 seasonal jobs on the Shore, Kuzzens Inc. has a facility in Melfa, Virginia and a packing facility in Westover, MD.

## Two \$500 Fletcher/Beasley Scholarships Available

Eastern Shore Soil and Water Conservation District Announces the 2017 Fletcher/Beasley Scholarship. The Eastern Shore Soil and Water Conservation District's Endowment Committee offers the W. Foster Fletcher Conservation Scholarship and the William H. Beasley, Sr. Memorial Scholarship annually. Eastern Shore of Virginia residents who are pursuing an undergraduate college degree in agriculture, conservation or environmental related studies are eligible to apply for this scholarship. Graduating seniors enrolling as a full-time college student can apply for the W. Foster Fletcher Conservation Scholarship. Students already enrolled full-time in an undergraduate or graduate school can apply for the William H. Beasley, Sr., Memorial Scholarship.

**For an application** contact your School Guidance Office or Eastern Shore Soil and Water Conservation District, 22545 Center Parkway, Accomac, VA 23301, Ph(757) 787-0918 x129, Fax(757) 787-3769, [Mary.Melson@esswcd.org](mailto:Mary.Melson@esswcd.org), or [www.esswcd.org/](http://www.esswcd.org/) Scholarships. **Deadline: April 14, 2017**



### State Conservation Poster Contest Winner



Poster by Arrington Johnson of Nandua High School

Eastern Shore students entered their posters into the 2016 local Conservation Poster contest sponsored by the Eastern Shore Soil and Water Conservation District. Of the 375+ entries, 5 were chosen as first place winners in categories of K-1, 2-3, 4-6, 7-9 and 10-12. These five first place winners were sent to the Virginia Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts' State Poster Contest. At the State level Arrington Johnson of Nandua High School was awarded 1st place in the 10<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade category. Congratulations Arrington for a job well done!

### Youth Conservation Camp Scholarship Available



For 40 years, the Virginia Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts has sponsored a week long summer conservation camp for Virginia high school students (currently enrolled in grades 9-12) on the campus of Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA. This year the camp will be held July 9-15, 2017. The program brings together about 70 interested students from across the State for a week of learning about Virginia's natural resources from conservation professionals and faculty from Virginia Tech. Most of the instruction is hands-on and outdoors.

The Eastern Shore Soil and Water Conservation District and Ye Accawmacke Garden Club are offering scholarships to send two Eastern Shore High School Students to the Youth Conservation Camp. During the week long camp, campers will learn about lake ecology, fisheries management and stream morphology through hands-on experiences. There will be tours of the Forest Products Center, Swine Center and Veterinary Teaching Hospital. If hiking to the Cascades Waterfall, swimming, fishing, tree and insect identification and canoeing sound like something you would enjoy, then this camp is for you! Apply by April 14, 2017. To see pictures from last year's camp and an application please visit the Eastern Shore SWCD webpage: [www.esswcd.org/camp.html](http://www.esswcd.org/camp.html) or contact Mary Melson at (757)787-0918 x129 or [mary.melson@esswcd.org](mailto:mary.melson@esswcd.org).

# 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 – First Place Prize: \$50 in each category, Second Place: \$25, Third Place: \$15 and Fourth Place: \$10. This year's theme is about our soil. Posters must have the title: "Healthy Soils Are Full of Life" somewhere in the drawing. Posters must be submitted to ESSWCD by Friday, April 7, 2017 with a 2017 Conservation Poster Contest Entry Form attached to the back.

Winning posters will be on display and awards will be given during the ES Science Fair held on Saturday, April 29, 2017 at the Eastern Shore Community College. For entry forms and complete rules and tips on how to make an effective poster, contact your art teacher or Mary Melson at [Mary.melson@esswcd.org](mailto:Mary.melson@esswcd.org) or 757-787-0918 x129.



## Robin Rich-Coates, District Chair Recognized for 25 Years of Service

Robin Rich-Coates was recognized for 25 years of service on the Eastern Shore SWCD Board by the Virginia Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts (VASWCD). VASWCD presented a 25-year service pin commemorating her 25 years of public service to the District at the Annual Meeting on Tuesday, December 6, 2016 in Roanoke, VA.



Assistant to the Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs and Associate Professor of Biology and Chemistry at the Eastern Shore Community College, Robin was the District's first female board member. She was an ESSWCD volunteer since 1985 and became a director in 1991. She holds a B.S. in Biology from Madison College (now James Madison University) and an M.S. in Human Genetics from the Medical College of Virginia. Robin has always been active in local environmental education activities, including work with the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, the Virginia Institute of Marine Science, the Nature Conservancy, the Arbor Day committee, Endowment committee and the Environmental Education Council. Each year Robin coordinates the College's science fair for students in Northampton and Accomack public and private schools. The District Board and Staff appreciate Robin's dedication and commitment to the District for so many years.

## Conservation Grants Available for Environmental Education

Are you or is your organization involved in environmental education on Virginia's Eastern Shore? Do you need funds to help provide these opportunities? Then you might be interested in applying for this grant by filling out the one page application form.

Wednesday, March 1, 2017 is the application deadline for the 2017 Billie Fitzgerald Memorial Conservation Grants from the Eastern Shore Soil and Water Conservation District. Schools, Scouts, Community groups and other organizations in Accomack and Northampton Counties are eligible for these grants.

Funding up to **\$250** is available for projects such as outdoor classrooms and nature trails, recycling programs, butterfly plantings, storm drain stenciling, water quality testing, birdfeeders for the schoolyard, and field trips for environmental study. The Eastern Shore Soil & Water Conservation District Endowment Committee does not fund beautification projects, food or money for textbooks.

Interested parties may obtain an application form from the District office in Accomac by email - [Mary.melson@esswcd.org](mailto:Mary.melson@esswcd.org), online - [www.esswcd.org/education.html](http://www.esswcd.org/education.html) or phone 757-787-0918.



## Scholarships Available to Virginia Students

Virginia residents enrolled in or having applied to a college curriculum related to natural resource conservation and/or environmental sciences may apply for scholarship funding from state sources. The Virginia Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts will award **four \$1,000 scholarships**.

Guidelines and application materials may be obtained from the Eastern Shore Soil and Water Conservation District office in Accomac by calling 757-787-0918, ext. 129 or e-mailing [Mary.melson@esswcd.org](mailto:Mary.melson@esswcd.org). Completed applications must be returned to Eastern Shore Soil and Water Conservation District by March 1, 2017.

## The District Says Goodbye to Bonnie Mahl, Education Director

The Eastern Shore Soil and Water Conservation District would like to thank Bonnie Mahl, Education Director from 2012-2016 for her years of service and dedication. Bonnie's deep dedication to environmental education on the Eastern Shore will be deeply missed. Bonnie is excited to continue to work with Soil and Water Conservation Districts in her new role as Education Training Coordinator for the Virginia Association of Soil & Water Conservation Districts (VASWCD). Bonnie Mahl has joined the VASWCD staff at the beginning of this year. Bonnie will serve as the point of contact for the many Foundation activities including Youth Conservation Camp, Youth Leadership Institute, and more, in addition to expanding VASWCD efforts in assisting our 47 districts. We hope you share in our excitement and wish her the best in her new role.

## The District Welcomes Mary Melson as Education Director



Mary Melson, New ESSWCD Education Director

The District welcomes Mary Melson as its new Education Director. Mary is a true southern girl, being born and raised in a suburb of Atlanta, Georgia. She developed a passion for marine science and conservation at a young age, delighting in the things that she discovered on trips to the beach, walks in the woods, and family campouts. Mary followed her passion to the College of Charleston where she received a Bachelor's degree in Marine Biology. She discovered her love of environmental education through her work with Loggerhead Conservation at Edisto Beach State Park. She made her way to the Eastern Shore in 2012 when she began working for at the Chincoteague Bay Field Station where she spent two seasons as an Educator and three seasons as School Program Coordinator. Mary recently received her MS in Ecological Teaching and Learning from Lesley University in Boston, MA. She enjoys spending time with her new husband, Hunter, playing with her 13 year old lab, Mowgli, and spending as much time outside as possible. If you would like an educational program at your school, please contact Mary Melson at (757)787-0918 x129 or [Mary.melson@esswcd.org](mailto:Mary.melson@esswcd.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 x101. The Commonwealth of Virginia supports the Eastern Shore Soil and Water Conservation District through financial and administrative assistance provided by the Department of Conservation and Recreation. 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.

