



# Shore Conservor

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

**November 2016**

## **Board of Directors**

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## **Associate Directors**

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## **District Personnel**

Carmie M. Savage  
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Cole Charnock  
*Conservation Specialist*

Latonya E. Justice  
*Conservation Technician*

Bonnie Mahl  
*Education Director*

## **Conservation Partners**

Natural Resources  
Conservation Service

Jane Corson-Lassiter  
*District Conservationist*

Bob Smith  
*Soil Conservation  
Technician*

Jenny Templeton  
*Soil Conservationist*

## Natives—More Than Just a Pretty Flower

Plant Native. What does that mean? Well, there are plants that have been growing in the United States before Captain John Smith, before Columbus since the time of Native Americans and way before that. These plants are what you would define as native to the United States. The wildlife living in the same area as these plants has evolved alongside these plants. The plants that grow in the desert like in Arizona have different features than the plants that grow in Virginia because of their adaptations. Over time they have adapted to their surroundings. Native desert plants are more succulent holding water until they need it. If you were to cut open a cactus, it would have lots of liquid. It would also have spines so that every animal couldn't just help itself. Because of adaptation, native plants on the Eastern Shore may be different than native plants of California, Maine or Florida. Or they may not be that different because some plants are native to the entire United States. Some native plants on the Eastern Shore have adapted to be salt tolerant, drought tolerant, or deer resistant, etc. You may be able to understand why these traits would allow an Eastern Shore native to thrive better than a non-native plant that does not have these traits. However, what good would it be for a plant to be deer resistant where no deer live? Or salt tolerant where salt water cannot reach it? A drought tolerant plant would not have any advantage in the Rain forest or somewhere with a lot of rainfall. Being pest resistant or drought resistant allows for the homeowner to use less pesticide or fertilizer saving one time and money. These are all good traits for a plant to have on the Eastern Shore because the Shore can be dry and arid in the summer due to high temperatures and lack of rainfall; have lots of marshland that is often overrun by salt water during storm surges and high tides; and have a high deer population (deer are herbivores, they eat only plants).

Native plants can also have attributes that help native insect populations survive. For instance, Butterfly Milkweed is essential to the survival of Monarch butterflies. Butterfly weed is the ONLY plant Monarch butterflies will lay their eggs on because Butterfly Weed is the only food that a Monarch caterpillar can eat. The milky substance in some other varieties of milkweed has a toxin in it. The toxins in the Milkweed are poisonous to birds and mice but not to the Monarch. When the monarch eats it, the toxin ingested, builds up in the butterfly making it poisonous or unappetizing to its predators. If a predator eats one Monarch Butterfly and gets sick, the predator will not want another Monarch Butterfly. So predators learn to stay away from Monarch Butterflies. Non-native plants like the Black Swallow Wort and the Pale Swallow Wort (introduced from Europe) are poisonous to Monarch Butterflies. The Butterflies get confused and lay their eggs on this plant. When the larvae hatch, they eat the plant and die.



Butterfly Weed

Besides possibly being poisonous, non-natives usually have a lot less nutrition for native wildlife. For instance, Cranberry Bush/Snowball Tree, Multiflora Rose and Japanese Honeysuckle are non-natives and their berries have less than 1% fat and approx. 17 kJ/g of energy content whereas Grey Dogwood, Arrowwood Viburnum and Spicebush (all natives) have 35-49% fat and average 28 kJ/g of energy<sup>1</sup>. Sometimes, the non-natives still taste good and the birds fill their bellies but do not put on weight for the winter or store energy for migration. So, every flower, leaf and berry are not created equal. In general, native plants are better overall for native wildlife.

<sup>1</sup>2016. Mary Nemecek. Fall Berries for the Birds. *Burroughs Audobon Society of Greater Kansas City*. [www.burroughs.org/2015/11/berries-for-the-birds](http://www.burroughs.org/2015/11/berries-for-the-birds)

## Cover Crop Planting Reports due to the District as soon as planting is complete

**\*Report all plantings, as unapproved may change to approved.**

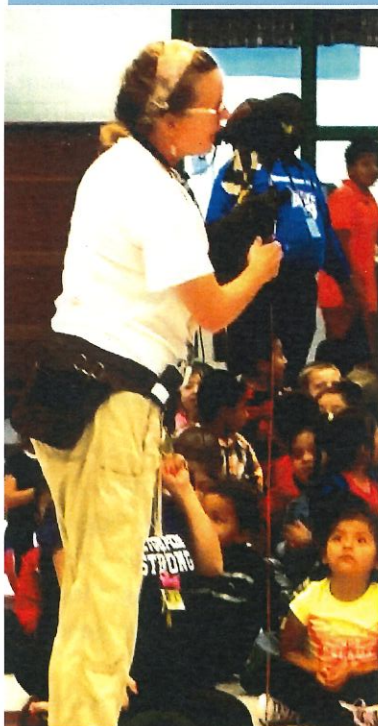




## Watershed Festival 2016

The Eastern Shore Environmental Education Council (EE Council) partnered with Accomack County Schools to bring all of their sixth graders to the Watershed Festival at Makemie Monument Park. This event would not be possible without funding from the Eastern Shore Soil & Water Conservation District, the help of the Master Gardeners who volunteered to serve as group guides, the Francis Makemie Society and members of the EE Council.

There were 400 sixth graders from Arcadia Middle School, Chincoteague Combined School and Nandua Middle School. The Watershed Festival serves as a Meaningful Watershed Education Experience (MWEE), where the students investigate more about their watershed. In this case they learned how the watershed of the 1600's differs from the watershed of today. Students visited different exhibitors where they learned about the effects of pollution, bird banding, horseshoe crabs, the history of Makemie Monument Park, evolution of Chesapeake Bay Style boats, the complexity of groundwater, the benefits of limiting water usage, and much, much more. There were 17 exhibitors. Students took turns being reporters of each exhibit. A big thank you to the Master Gardener volunteer group leaders, the Francis Makemie Society, EE Council members, and all 17 exhibitors who were instrumental in bringing the information to the students.



## Flight of the Raptor Program

The Flight of the Raptor Program visited 8 local schools on the Shore: Chincoteague Elementary School, Chincoteague High School, Accawmacke Elementary, Arcadia High School, Metompkin Elementary, Shore Christian Academy, Northampton High School and Cape Charles Christian School. The Flight of the Raptor Program reached 1,940 local students on the Eastern Shore this year plus 250 people during the Birding Festival. Sharon Montgomery and Ray Pena gave multiple demonstrations at each school where students were able to learn firsthand about raptors and see them fly.

## SAVE THE DATE— Eastern Shore Agricultural Conference & Trade Show January 25-26, 2017

The Eastern Shore Agricultural Conference and Trade Show will be held at the Eastern Shore Community College, Workforce Development Center, 29300 Lankford Highway, Melfa, VA 23410 on Wednesday and Thursday, January 25-26, 2017. For more information contact: Ursula Deitch, Northampton County VCE at 757-607-6133 or [utankard@vt.edu](mailto:utankard@vt.edu) or Theresa Long, Accomack County VCE at 757-709-2342 or [tmjlong@vt.edu](mailto:tmjlong@vt.edu).

The Shore Conservator 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 Accomack, 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.



## Student of the Year Award



Erica Head

The District awarded the Conservation Student Award to an exceptional student who participates in environmental studies and conservation outreach, **Erica Head**. Erica graduated Northampton High School in June with a 4.24 GPA ranking fifth in her class and is attending James Madison University majoring in Biology. Erica was a member of the Northampton H.S. Envirothon team. Erica has attended Holiday Lake Forestry Camp and the Virginia Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts Youth Conservation Camp at Virginia Tech. Erica has worked at Copper Cricket Farm in Machipongo. Erica participated in the VASWCD Youth Leadership Institution by doing a project on the importance of water conservation. She gave a presentation on this project to over 500 sixth graders at the District's Watershed Festivals for Accomack and Northampton Counties. A quote provided by Erica may sum it up quite nicely: "Small acts, when multiplied by millions of people, can transform the world." –Howard Zinn

## Fletcher/Beasley Conservation Scholarships



Tucker Spady

This year, the District's Endowment Committee awarded four scholarships in the amount of \$500 each. The first was the William H. Beasley, Sr. Memorial Scholarship awarded to **Benjamin Holland** (not pictured) who is a junior at Virginia Tech. Ben's Academic Advisor of Department of Agricultural & Applied Economics said "[Benjamin] is a conscientious student with a passion for agriculture." Three high school students received a \$500 W. Foster Fletcher Conservation Scholarship: **Tucker Spady, Erica Head and Carolyn Olmsted** (not pictured). Tucker Spady of Northampton High School is attending Warren Wilson College in North Carolina majoring in Environmental Science. Tucker's work ethic and determination demonstrate excellent leadership qualities and environmental focus. Erica Head's academic skills and resume demonstrate her passion and love for the environment. Carolyn Olmsted of Nandua High School is attending Virginia Tech majoring in Environmental Civil Engineering. Her academic record and resume demonstrate environmental consciousness and excellent direction.

## National Poster Contest Honorable Mention



Nia Imani Richardson

Each year the District's 1st place local winners are entered into the State's Conservation Poster Competition. The 2015 theme was "Local Heroes: Your Hardworking Pollinators". Representing the District and the Shore, **Nia Imani Richardson** from Northampton High School won 1st place in the 7th-9th grade category in the State competition. Nia received an Honorable Mention in the National Competition. Congratulations to all the award recipients for being good stewards of the land, conservation minded and overall good neighbors to the people of the Shore!

*The District honors local students, teachers, farmers and community members for their efforts in the conservation of our natural resources. The District would like to thank the farmers, landowners, teachers, students and other partners whose contributions to conservation help assure clean water and productive soil for the future.*

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**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.