



Shore Conservor

Eastern Shore Soil & Water Conservation District

22545 Center Parkway, Accomac, VA 23301

DISTRICT STAFF

Carmie M. Savage, *District Manager*

Bill Savage, *Conservation Specialist*

Julie Head, *Education Director*

COOPERATORS

VA Department of
Conservation and
Recreation

VA Soil and Water
Conservation Board

Accomack County

Northampton
County

Federal, State and
Local Agencies

Stakeholder Organi-
zations

Local Citizens

**Locally Led
Conservation**

ELECTED DISTRICT DIRECTORS

Robin Rich-Coates,
Chair

Fred Holland, II,
Vice-Chair

Ursula Deitch

James A. Evans

W. Rawlings Scott,
Jr.

Nick Thomas

DISTRICT ASSOCIATE DIRECTORS

Edwin R. Long

Richard F. Hall, III

Robbie Lewis

William E. Shockley

Norman Pitt

Richard Davis

ANNUAL REPORT

July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2019

The Eastern Shore Soil & Water Conservation District's FY19 Annual Report is a summary of our work over the past year. As a local entity we strive to increase public awareness and participation in natural resource conservation.

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, Chap 5. The work of the District is determined by directors, elected by the people of the Districts at general elections or appointed by the VA 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 service as volunteer public servants. 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 District's service area covers the Eastern Shore of Virginia--a region on the Delmarva Peninsula comprised of Accomack and Northampton Counties, bounded by the Atlantic Ocean, the Chesapeake Bay and Maryland.

The Commonwealth of VA supports the District through financial and administrative assistance provided by the VA Soil and Water Conservation Board and the Department of Conservation and Recreation. Accomack and Northampton Counties also provide financial assistance and support to the District. Two of our major roles are to administer the Virginia's incentive program for agricultural Best Management Practices and provide environmental education. Since conservation involves everyone, the District provides various programs to students and adults promoting awareness, action and support for the area's natural resources.

2019 Agricultural Best Management Practices Incentive Program

Nutrient Management Planning (+41.7% from FY18)

Accomack Bayside 14608.9 acs / Seaside 12694 acs
Northampton Bayside 7670.3 acs / Seaside 4840.9 acs

Small Grain Cover for Nutrient Management (+71.4%)

Accomack Bayside 3477.5 acs / Seaside 12300.2 acs
Northampton Bayside 731.7 acs / Seaside 349.7 acs

Harvestable Cover Crops (+143.7%)

Accomack Bayside 905.5 acs / Seaside 2830.8 acs
Northampton Bayside 1353.6 acs / Seaside 1011.6 acs

Small Grain Cover behind Vegetables (+154.1%)

Accomack Bayside 988.8 acr / Seaside 445.3 acs
Northampton Bayside 879 acs / Seaside 226.4 acs

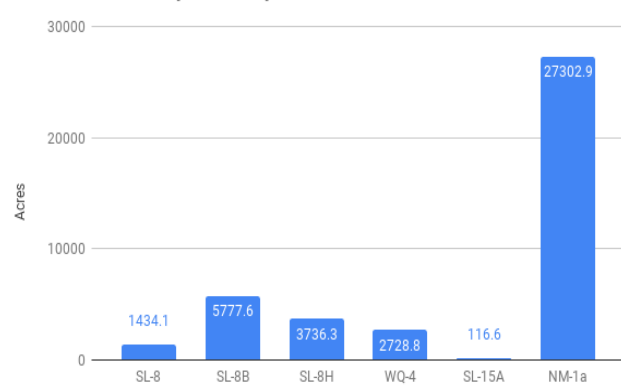
Vetch Cover Crop (+190.4%)

Accomack Bayside 1206.7 acs / Seaside 1521.1 acs
Northampton Bayside 310.4 acs

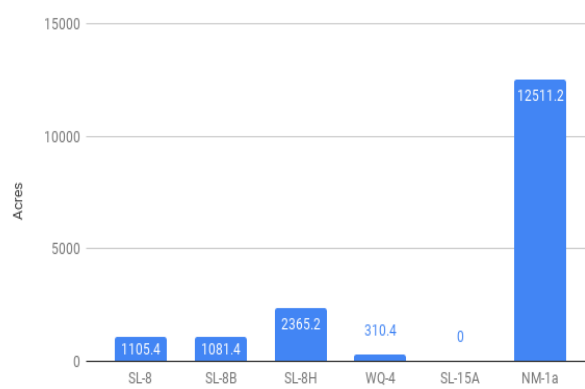
Continuous No-till 5-Yr Program

Accomack Bayside 32.4 acs
Northampton Bayside 84.2 acs

Accomack County Acres by BMP



Northampton County Acres by BMP



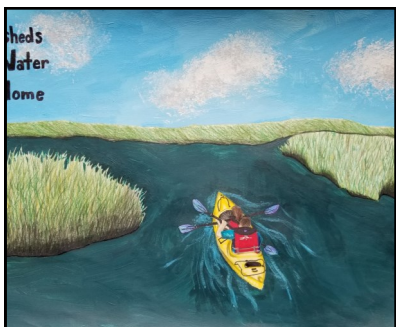
In FY19, the District provided \$665,950.10 in cost-share assistance to landowners and producers on the Eastern Shore. The VA Agricultural Best Management Practice Cost-share Program is administered by the VA Department of Conservation & Recreation through local Soil & Water Conservation Districts to improve water quality in the State's streams, rivers, Chesapeake Bay and the ocean. The program encourages voluntary installation of agricultural BMP's by offering cost-share assistance for implementation.

Environmental Education Programs

The past three years the District's education programs have reached approximately 18,000 people on the Eastern Shore. Using a tracking program created by David Ruble from DCR, the Education Director has been tracking the District's program reach for several years. In 2019 the District reached approximately 6,000 Accomack and Northampton residents. The following programs include some of the environmental education outreach programs presented to residents of the Eastern Shore by the District.

***Conservation Poster Contest:** The 2019 Poster Contest theme was "Life in the Soil: Dig Deeper." The District had 126 entries. Each year the District's first place local winners are entered into the State Conservation Poster Contest. Last year ESS-WCD had two first place state winners. Laurna Kellam of Accawmacke Elementary placed first the K-1st category and Bella Ochsner of Broadwater Academy place first in the 7th-9th grade category.

***Watershed Festival:** The District's EE Council sponsors the biannual Watershed Festival. This educational festival event has been shaped into a Meaningful Watershed Educational Experience for sixth graders. It is a three-part event that focuses on a project that encompasses getting the children outside with hands-on activities. This educational festival focuses on aquatic and biological activities demonstrating our relationship to the Chesapeake Bay and the Atlantic Ocean. The exhibitors are organizations and governmental agencies who work with VA Science Standards of Learning (SOLs) along with how citizens can protect their watersheds thus protecting our local wildlife, migratory birds, groundwater and soil quality. This past year, it was held at Makemie Park for over 300 Accomack County sixth graders and at Kiptopeke State Park for over 150 Northampton County sixth graders.



***Billie Fitzgerald Memorial Spring Grants:** In 2019 the District's Endowment Committee awarded over \$1,100 in spring grant funds. This year the grants helped to fund a Monarch Butterfly Waystation with Accomack County Parks and Recreation, a weather station for the New Roots Community Youth Garden in Cape Charles, and a Playground Earth project for Cape Charles Christian School. In addition, No Limits Eastern Shore received money for enhancements to their garden in the form of a rain barrel, rain gauge, purple martin house, and trellis. The spring grants help programs and children over the entire Eastern Shore of VA.

***Nature Detectives Camp:** For five years now, the District has been working in conjunction with Ker Place to hold a weeklong Nature Detectives Camp. This year, eight campers looked at water quality indicators, went kayaking, seine netting, learned about worms, bird migration and bats. Campers made bat houses and learned about how bats are an important part of our community. They also made mini-worm composters. By participating in these activities, campers had a chance to get up close and personal with the world around them.



***Dominion Energy Envirothon:** 2019 marked the 27th year the District has sponsored the local Envirothon, a natural resources competition testing high school students on the use of technology in farming, aquatics, wildlife, forestry and soils. Chincoteague High School placed 1st at the local competition.

Educational Programs (...Continued from page 3)

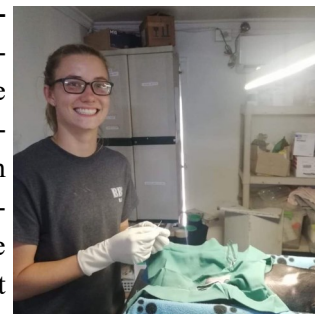
***Outdoor Exploration Day:** The 2nd annual Outdoor Exploration Day in September 2018 welcomed 1,000 visitors to and from the Shore to learn about migratory birds, wildlife, culture and history. The Flight of the Raptor program was viewed by over 500 local students. The District partners with Kiptopeke State Park and ESO Art Center to organize this event. The District had a booth teaching participants about different bird beak adaptations for what they eat.



***Youth Conservation Camp:** The VA Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts has sponsored the week-long Youth Conservation Camp at Virginia Tech annually for 43 years. Ye Accawmacke Garden Club and the Endowment Committee sponsored Brooke Budd and Ta'Vonta Timmons, both from Nandua High School to attend. The District provided financial support toward traveling expenses.



***W. Foster Fletcher Conservation Scholarships:** The District's Endowment Committee awarded two Scholarships totaling \$1,500. Toby Hamilton from Nandua High will be attending Virginia Tech in the fall. Erica Head, is a senior at James Madison University with a biology major and minors in Pre-veterinary Medicine and Honors Interdisciplinary Studies.



*District Welcomes New Education Director

The Eastern Shore SWCD would like to welcome Julie Head as the new Education Director!!

She has a background in agriculture, life and environmental sciences, and spent the last eight years teaching high school mathematics.



Julie and her husband David live in Machipongo, VA, and have four grown children. When they are not working they have a small farm where they produce milk, beef, pork, hay, and eggs. They also have some goats and sheep that they use for weed control and as a petting zoo for events on the Eastern Shore.

Julie's contact info at the District is 757-302-4433 and she can be reached by email at julie.head@esswcd.org.

Farmland Easements

Sixty percent of Chesapeake forests have been divided into disconnected fragments by roads, homes, and other gaps that are too wide or dangerous for wildlife to cross. The District is proud to do its part and serve as a co-holder of conservation easements in an effort to help conserve open spaces. The District currently co-holds 28 easements totaling nearly 5,000 acres with Virginia Eastern Shore Land Trust and co-holds one with the Virginia Outdoor Foundation for the benefit of future generations.

The Commonwealth of VA supports the Eastern Shore SWCD through financial and administrative assistance provided by the VA Soil and Water Conservation Board and the Department of Conservation and Recreation.

Eastern Shore SWCD programs, activities and employment opportunities are available to all people regardless of disability, race, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, color, age, religion/ religious creed, veteran status, or genetics. An equal opportunity/ affirmative action employer.