



# Shore Conserver

Eastern Shore Soil and Water Conservation District

*promoting locally led conservation*

22545 Center Parkway Accomac, VA 23301 (757)302-4431 [www.esswcd.org](http://www.esswcd.org)

## **February 2024**

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## **Why worry about invasives?**

Invasive species are non-native plants, animals, and pathogens that are likely to cause economic losses, ecological disruptions, or harm to humans. Many times they have been introduced intentionally as plants for gardens, erosion control, and food for humans and animals. Sometimes their introduction is accidental such as ship ballast water, shipping crates, and they may even “hitchhike” on a traveler’s clothes, luggage, or vehicles.

There are currently over 90 plant species that are classified as invasive species in Virginia. There are also a number of animals, insects, and pathogens are invasive. The economic cost of these invasives is estimated to be over \$1 billion annually (Pimental, et al, 2005).

Most invasive species show similar characteristics. They grow rapidly and reach maturity quickly. They are prolific seed producers and have high success with seed dispersal, germination, and colonization. They are able to out-compete native species and they exhibit rampant vegetative spread. They also tend to be difficult or expensive to remove or control.

What problems do they cause? In addition to displacing native species they alter natural ecosystem processes and reduce wildlife habitat. This leads to degraded forests, rangeland, and ag land. They clog waterways, interfere with power line rights of way, and invade landscapes. They spread crop, livestock, and human diseases and impact crop yields.

Invasive species give truth the old adage “an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.” It is easier to prevent them from becoming established than it is to eradicate them. Make sure that you clean boats, tools, and shoes frequently, especially if they are coming from a different location, don’t buy invasive species, limit soil disturbance, don’t move firewood, and plant natives whenever possible. If you purchase seeds, make sure that it is from a trusted source so that invasives are not accidentally introduced when planting.

If you find an invasive species, contact a local expert (such as your local extension agent) for help in coming up with a mitigation plan. It is much easier to eliminate if caught early before it has become widely established.



# Eastern Shore Invasive Plant Highlight

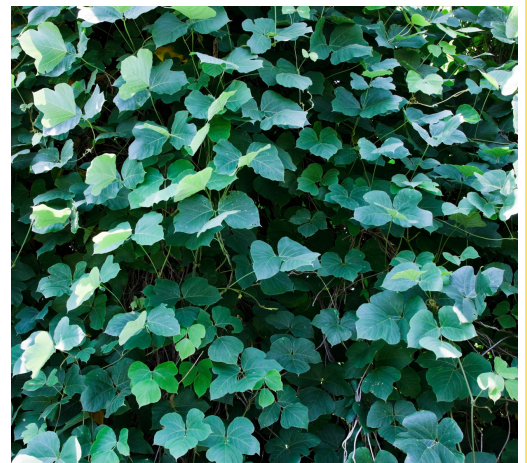
## Kudzu, The Vine that Ate the South

Kudzu is present in both Accomack and Northampton counties. It is a perennial, trailing, or climbing vine that forms a dense stand of identically colored plants growing on or around everything in its path. During the peak growing season, it can grow at a rate of up to a foot a day. Kudzu has the ability to out-compete and eliminate native plant species. Its extremely rapid growth rate and ability to grow over objects threatens natural areas by killing native vegetation through crowding and shading. Tens of thousands of plants may inhabit a single acre of land. Kudzu can seriously inhibit agricultural and timber production. In addition to its growth, kudzu is host to the kudzu bug. In the spring these feed extensively on kudzu, legumes, wisteria and some vetches. In July and August the bugs will move into soybeans causing yield losses of up to 60 percent.

Kudzu grows in a variety of habitats and environmental conditions but does best on deep, well-drained, loamy soils. Almost any disturbed area is suitable habitat for this vine. Kudzu usually spreads but sending out stems and in all directions from the root crowns, with new plants beginning every 1 to 2 feet at stem nodes.

When identifying kudzu, look for trifoliate (3) leaves that are arranged alternately on the stem. Leaflets have tiny hairs on the underside and margins. Stems are hairy and yellow green when young and harden off to a grey woody stem that may be up to 10 inches in diameter. Leaflets are ovate (egg-shaped) and may have a smooth or lobed margin.

While not extensively established on the Eastern Shore, there are patches that should be eradicated before it becomes a more extensive problem. More information can be found at [dcr.virginia.gov](http://dcr.virginia.gov).





# 2024 Conservation Poster Contest



Open to all public, private, and homeschooled students who reside in Accomack or Northampton Counties.

Contest categories for hand drawn posters are:

K -1st Grade

2nd - 3rd Grade

4th - 6th Grade

7th - 9th Grade

12th - 12th Grade

7th - 12th Grade digitally created

New this year is a K - 12th assisted category. This category is for any student who may need assistance in completing their entry.

**Entries are due to the ESSWCD office no later than  
4:30 p.m. on Friday, May 10, 2024**

[Contest rules and entry forms can be found at:  
https://www.esswcd.org/conservation-poster-contest](https://www.esswcd.org/conservation-poster-contest)

In person presentations, virtual presentations, and classroom materials on the importance of trees are available. For more information please contact Julie Head, Education Director at [julie.head@esswcd.org](mailto:julie.head@esswcd.org) or 757-302-4433.

We are located in Accomac, VA, at 22545 Center Parkway.

# 2024 Spring Grants & Contests

## Conservation Grants Now Available!

**Deadline: Wednesday, April 24, 2024**



Are you or your organization involved in environmental education on Virginia's Eastern Shore? Do you need funds to help provide these opportunities? You might want to apply for the Billie Fitzgerald Memorial Conservation Grants through the ESSWCD. Schools, teachers, scouts, community groups and other organizations in Accomack and Northampton Counties are eligible to apply.

Funding up to \$400 is available for projects such as outdoor classrooms, nature trails, storm drain stenciling, recycling programs, butterfly gardens, birdfeeders, worm composters, rain gardens, or other environmental projects. We do not fund beautification projects, food, or textbooks.



Applications can be found on the ESSWCD website under the education tab or by clicking [here](#). You may also contact Julie Head at 757-302-4433 or [julie.head@esswcd.org](mailto:julie.head@esswcd.org).



## 2024 VASWCD Photo Contest



The VASWCD is committed to conservation of natural resources through stewardship and education programs and we want to see it through your eyes. The theme this year is "Conservation Big and Small". Capture those vibrant moments and express what conservation looks like through your lens! The contest is open from January – August 1, 2024. To learn more about the contest please click [here](#). All photographs must be taken within the Commonwealth of Virginia. Photographs taken outside the state of Virginia will be disqualified.



# 2024 Scholarships

## Scholarships Available!

Deadline: Wednesday, April 24, 2024



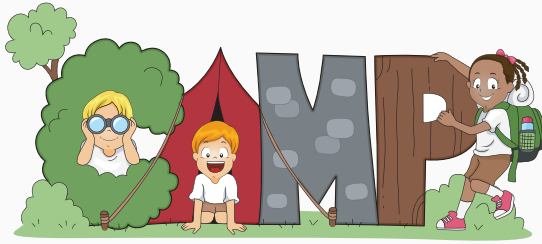
Do you know a current college student or a high school student planning to attend college in the fall of 2024. The W. Foster Fletcher Conservation Scholarship and William H. Beasley, Sr. Memorial Scholarship are available to Eastern Shore of Virginia residents who will be full-time undergraduate college students in the fall of 2024. The scholarships are administered by the Endowment Committee of the ESSWCD.

Up to \$1000 will be available for scholarships to be awarded to two students, depending upon the qualification of the applicants. Wednesday, April 24, 2024, is the deadline to apply for the W. Foster Fletcher Conservation Scholarship and the William H. Beasley, Sr. Memorial Scholarship.

Application materials may be obtained from the District office in Accomac by calling 757-302-4433, by email at [julie.head@esswcd.org](mailto:julie.head@esswcd.org) or by visiting <https://www.esswcd.org/scholarships>



# Upcoming Camps



**Who:** Students currently in 9th - 12th grade

**When:** July 14 - 20, 2024

**Where:** Virginia Tech

9th through 12th grade students who live on the Eastern Shore of Virginia are invited to apply to attend Youth Conservation Camp. The Fred Holland Memorial Youth Conservation Camp scholarship is available from the Eastern Shore Soil and Water Conservation District for those who are selected to attend. The scholarship covers the full cost of camp. Applications are due by Wednesday, April 24, 2024. To apply, please get an application at <https://www.esswcd.org/youth-conservation-camp> or contact Julie Head, Education Director, at [julie.head@esswcd.org](mailto:julie.head@esswcd.org) or 757-302-4433.

## Ag Camp at the Barrier Islands Center Farm

Tuesday, August 13 - Wednesday, August 14, 2024

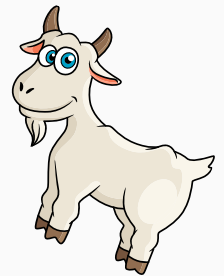
9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Ages 8 - 12, \$25 per camper



Campers will make their own butter and ice cream and interact with real sheep, goats, and calves. Other activities will be based on the AgBadge Program from National Ag In The Classroom.

Campers should bring a lunch both days, wear close toed shoes, and clothes that they can get dirty in. ESSWCD, BIC, and 4-H are partnering together for this educational fun on the farm camp.



## Junior Ag Camp

Ages 5 - 7

Tuesday, July 1 - Wednesday, July 2, 2024

Ages 5 - 7, \$15 per camper

Registration at [barrierislandscenter.org](http://barrierislandscenter.org)

## Upcoming Camps

# Nature Adventure Camp

June 20 - 21, 2024

Ages 9 -12



## Kiptopeke National Wildlife Refuge

Campers will be learning about our local ecosystems including wildlife, forestry, birds, etc... The camp is being co-hosted by ESSWCD, 4-H, and KNWR. Come join us at this all new camp for a couple of fun-filled days. For more information e-mail [julie.head@esswcd.org](mailto:julie.head@esswcd.org).

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 or color, national origin, traits historically associated with race or religion including traits associated with hair, religion or creed, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, pregnancy status, childbirth or related medical conditions, marital status, veteran status, whistleblower status or genetic information.