



# Shore Conserver

Eastern Shore Soil & Water Conservation District

22545 Center Parkway, Accomac, VA 23301

## ANNUAL REPORT

July 1, 2013 to June 30, 2014

### DISTRICT STAFF

Carmie M. Savage, *District Manager*

Cole Charnock, *Conservation Specialist*

Latonya E. Justice, *Conservation Technician*

Bonnie Mahl, *Education Director*

### ELECTED DISTRICT DIRECTORS

Robin Rich-Coates, *Chair*

Fred Holland, II, *Vice-Chair*

Davis Lovell

James A. Evans

W. Rawlings Scott, Jr.

Theresa J. Long

### DISTRICT ASSOCIATE DIRECTORS

Robbie Lewis

Richard F. Hall, III

Dave Vaughn

Edwin R. Long

Brian Broadwater

William Shockley, Jr.

Ursula Deitch

Accomack County  
Northampton County  
Federal and State Agencies  
Stakeholder Organizations  
Local Citizens

*The Eastern Shore Soil & Water Conservation District's FY2014 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 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 Chesapeake Bay, the Atlantic Ocean and Maryland. The abundance of natural resources has produced an economy based on agriculture and seafood production.

Agriculture is Virginia's largest industry, contributing \$55 billion annually to the State's economy. The region produces over 80% of the State's vegetable crop. Approximately 120,000 acres (or about 50% of the land use) supports row crop production. Because of the importance of sensitive Chesapeake Bay and Atlantic Ocean ecosystems within the area's watersheds, the impacts of farming on surface and ground water quality are a primary focus for the District's conservation programs. The District works closely with area growers through voluntary incentive programs and outreach to address resource concerns resulting from agriculture.

Since conservation involves everyone, the District provides various programs to students and adults promoting awareness, action and support for the area's natural resources. 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 work of the District is determined by directors, elected by the people of the District 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 serve as volunteer public servants.

Funding for the District office and for special programs comes primarily through grants with the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR). The two counties within the District's service area contribute supporting funds. The District also seeks outside grants to expand its work efforts such as the two-year National Fish and Wildlife Federation grant the District was awarded in 2013 to help landowners attain Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act compliance by assessing what Best Management Practices (BMPs) are necessary.

## **2014 Agricultural Best Management Practices Cost-Share**

### **Nutrient Management Planning**

Accomack Bayside 18,751/Seaside 13,400 acres  
Northampton Bayside 6,850 /Seaside 4,846 acres

### **Small Grain Cover for Nutrient Management**

Accomack Bayside 2,483 /Seaside 3,492 acres  
Northampton Bayside 683 /Seaside 82 acres

### **Harvestable Cover Crops**

Accomack Bayside 2,232 /Seaside 1,688 acres  
Northampton Bayside 940 /Seaside 879 acres

### **Small Grain Cover behind Vegetables**

Accomack Bayside 222 /Seaside 269 acres  
Northampton Bayside 440 /Seaside 23 acres

### **Vetch Cover Crop**

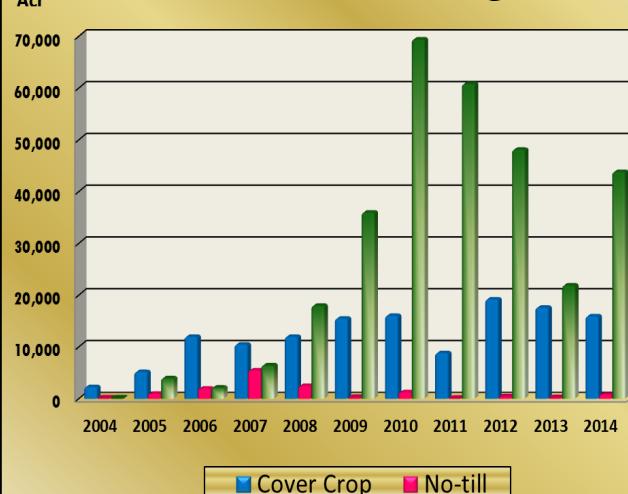
Accomack Bayside 1,415 /Seaside 1,109 acres

### **Continuous No-Till 5-Yr Program**

Accomack Bayside 340 /Seaside 477 acres

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. In FY2014, the District provided \$848,728.70 in cost-share assistance to landowners and producers.

### **Growth in Cost Share Programs**



## Environmental Education Programs



2014 Envirothon participants



This year marked the 22<sup>nd</sup> year that the District has sponsored the Envirothon, a natural resources competition testing high school students on aquatics, forestry, soils, wildlife and a special topic. This year teams from Arcadia High School, Broadwater Academy, Chincoteague High School and Northampton High Schools competed chance to represent the Eastern Shore at the State Competition. Arcadia High School placed 1<sup>st</sup> and traveled to Sweet Briar College in Sweet Briar Virginia in May 2014.

**Rain Barrel Workshops:** ESSWCD in partnership with Virginia Department of Environmental Quality and the Eastern Shore (ES) RC&D under the umbrella of the ES Watersheds Network hosted two rain barrel workshops—one at Eastville and one at Chincoteague. The rain barrel workshops are a hands-on-workshop where each recipient makes their own rain barrel. There were 40 rain barrels made through these workshops.

**Watershed Festival:** The Watershed Festival was held at the Historic Onancock School on Saturday October 19th, 2013. Over 300 festival attendees visited booths to learn about their watershed. After visiting the booths, attendees received watershed tokens that showcased different trees, insects, animals, birds, and fish that one would find on the Eastern Shore. Exhibitors for the Watershed Festival included: The Chesapeake Bay Foundation, AREC, The Chincoteague Bay Field Station, Eastern Shore Master Naturalists, The Eastern Shore of Virginia National Wildlife Refuge, VDGIF, Coastal Zone Management, Waste Watchers, Watermen's Heritage, Eastern Shore Foodbank, Onancock Tree Board, Reptiles & Amphibians, SPARK, Kiptopeke State Park, Girl Scouts, Ward Museum, Master Gardeners, ESRC&D, and Virginia Space Flight Academy.

**Conservation Poster Contest:** The District received over 300 poster submissions for the 2014 "Dig Deeper- Mysteries in the Soil" Poster Contest. Mrs. Rich-Coates' Chemistry class at the ES

Community College judged this year's entries. First place winning posters are sent to the state level to compete. **New this year**, any Girl Scout that submits a poster for the Poster Contest can earn the Conservation Poster Patch. Seven **Girl Scouts earned the Conservation Poster Patch** for the 2014 Poster Contest! For



Left to right: David's Mom Mrs. Warren, David Warren III holding his first place State winning poster and Principal Candy Farlow



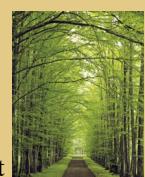
Left to right: Vice-Principal Waldenmaier, Matthew Teasley, Matthew's Art Teacher Chicki Jo Jester, and Principal Killmon

the 2013 "Where Does Your Water Shed?" Poster contest the Eastern Shore SWCD had two 1st place state winners- **David Warren III** of Shore Christian Academy for grade category 2-3 and **Matthew Teasley** of Nandua Middle for grade category 7-9.

## Preserving Farmland By Co-holding Easements

Conservation easements conserve rural lands which best preserve the forests, fisheries, farms and heritage of Virginia's Eastern Shore for the benefit of future generations. They protect specific natural, scenic and historic features of the land by limiting future development. The District is proud to be a co-holder of conservation easements in an effort to help conserve open spaces. The District currently **co-holds 34 easements** with the Virginia Eastern Shore Land Trust and Virginia Outdoors Foundation (VOF) totaling over **8,300 acres and monitors 19 easements** in partnership with VOF. The District also partners with Northampton County to provide technical assistance and monitoring services for their Purchase of Development Rights Program.

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### Newsletter Publications:

The District published four issues of the **Shore Conserver** in FY14 reaching over 850 households each time with updates on District activities and information on various resource concerns. If you are not on the mailing list, call the District at (757)787-0918 x101.

## Educational Programs...Continued from page 3

### Birding and Wildlife Festival:

The Birding and Wildlife Festival is an internationally recognized festival which celebrates the arrival of migratory birds to the Shore. The District has been involved with the Family Passport program helping coordinate educational programs for children during the festival. **New this year**, the ESSWCD was able to help organize The Flight of the Raptor program to Kiptopeke Elementary School and Cape Charles Christian School. Over 500 students were able to learn about raptors and see them up close. Also new this year, was education exhibits featured at Kiptopeke State Park. The District had a booth teaching children and parents how to ID birds.



2013 Winning Painting of Birding and Wildlife Festival Contest drawn by Sarah Cashwell from Broadwater.

**Farm Tour Day:** The District presented the “Story of Soil” to over 300 3rd grade students from Accomack County Public schools, Broadwater Academy and Shore Christian Academy at the VA Cooperative Extension’s annual event held at Duncan Farms in New Church, VA.

**Spring Grants:** The ESSWCD Endowment Committee **awarded \$1,080 in Spring Grants** this year. These grants are funding small but far-reaching, long-term educational projects.

**Youth Conservation Camp:** The Virginia Association of Soil & Water Conservation Districts has sponsored the weeklong Youth Conservation Camp at Virginia Tech annually for 38 years. Ye Acawmacke Garden Club and the Eastern Shore SWCD co-sponsored one camper, **Brittnae' Patterson** of Exmore, VA this year.



All programs and services of the Eastern Shore Soil and Water Conservation District and the Natural Resources Conservation Service are offered on a non-discriminatory basis, without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, marital status or handicap. The Shore Conserver is published quarterly by the Eastern Shore Soil and Water Conservation District to provide information to land-users. 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.

**Project Wild:** The District partnered with the Eastern Shore Wildlife Refuge to conduct a Project Wild Workshop for ten teachers. The workshop was November 22-23, 2013 at Kiptopeke State Park. Teachers learned how to incorporate environmental education in Math, Science and English curriculum.

**Arbor Day:** To celebrate Arbor Day over **4,000 seedlings were given away** at three locations- Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge, Eastern Shore Community College, and Old Courthouse Grounds in Eastville. Thanks to donations from Broadleaf, David's Nursery, ES of Virginia Nursery, Hermitage Farm Nursery, Hortco Nursery and Tankard's Nursery **60 potted plants and trees were given away** as well.

**ES Environmental Education (EE) Council:** In 2013 the EE Council grew produce in two raised beds at the



Bonnie Mahl, ESSWCD Education Director talks about the Pizza Garden

Eastern Shore Foodbank in Tasley. Over **100lbs of produce**, tomatoes, squash, dill, peppers, and kale was donated to the Foodbank from these two beds. This year the EE Council created a “Pizza Garden” growing tomatoes, peppers, basil, onions, thyme and oregano. The goal is to

create pizza kits from the garden and distribute to Foodbank clients so they can make their very own fresh pizzas.

