



Shore Conserver

Eastern Shore Soil & Water Conservation District

22545 Center Parkway, Accomac, VA 23301

ANNUAL REPORT

July 1, 2015 to June 30, 2016

DISTRICT STAFF

Carmie M. Savage, *District Manager*

Cole Charnock, *Conservation Specialist*

Latonya Justice, *Conservation Technician*

Bonnie Mahl, *Education Director*

ELECTED DISTRICT DIRECTORS

Robin Rich-Coates, *Chair*

Fred Holland, II, *Vice-Chair*

Davis Lovell

James A. Evans

Theresa Long-Pittman

W. Rawlings Scott, Jr.

Locally-Led Conservation

DISTRICT ASSOCIATE DIRECTORS

Richard F. Hall, III

Brian Broadwater

Robbie Lewis

Dave Vaughn

William Shockley, Jr.

Ursula Deitch

Edwin R. Long

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

The Eastern Shore Soil & Water Conservation District's FY16 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.

2016 Agricultural Best Management Practices Cost-Share

Nutrient Management Planning

Accomack Bayside 19,641/Seaside 15,351 acres
Northampton Bayside 9,083/Seaside 6,060 acres

Small Grain Cover for Nutrient Management

Accomack Bayside 3,741 /Seaside 4,097 acres
Northampton Bayside 810 /Seaside 555 acres

Harvestable Cover Crops

Accomack Bayside 2,410 /Seaside 1,284 acres
Northampton Bayside 663 /Seaside 793 acres

Small Grain Cover behind Vegetables

Accomack Bayside 1,448 /Seaside 750 acres
Northampton Bayside 744 /Seaside 170 acres

Vetch Cover Crop

Accomack Bayside 1,627 /Seaside 1,144 acres

Continuous No-Till 5-Yr Program

Accomack Bayside 1,413 /Seaside 741 acres
Northampton Bayside 905 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 FY2016, the District provided \$975,052.20 in cost-share assistance to landowners and producers on the Eastern Shore.

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 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. 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 Chesapeake Bay, the Atlantic Ocean and Maryland. The Chesapeake Bay is the largest estuary in the United States and is considered a National Treasure. Our ocean coastal resources are recognized as an international biosphere reserve by the United Nations.

Agriculture is Virginia's largest industry, contributing over \$55 billion annually to the State's economy. Approximately 120,000 acres (or about 50% of the land use) supports row crop production. Across Virginia, the Eastern Shore is #1 in winter wheat production and harvested vegetables -- Accomack and Northampton holding the top two spots. Virginia is ranked 7th in the nation for fresh market tomatoes. Accomack County is #1 in vegetables, soybeans, dry peas and corn, and #2 in potatoes, sweet potatoes, melons and broiler production. Accomack is #1 in soybeans and #4 in aquaculture. And Northampton is #1 in aquaculture and #4 in soybeans. Because of the importance of sensitive Chesapeake Bay and Atlantic Ocean ecosystems, 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.

Through funding provided by the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) and Accomack and Northampton Counties, two of our major roles are to administer the Virginia's incentive programs 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.



Northampton Agricultural County Fair

October 15, 2016, 10:00am - 2:00pm

7207 Young ST, Machipongo, VA



Agricultural related Contests, Games and Educational booths such as:

Tractor Driving Competition

Pie Eating Contest

Dunking Booth

Kids Crafts Horse Rides

Farming Machinery Displays

Craft Vendors

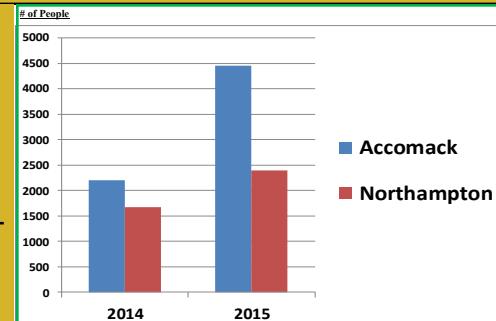
Food Vendors

Petting Zoo and much more!

FUN FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY!!

Environmental Education Programs

The past two years the District's education outreach program has reached over 10,000 people on the Eastern Shore. Using a tracking program created by David Ruble from DCR, the District has been tracking environmental education programs the past couple of years. In 2014, 2,205 Accomack Residents and 1,673 Northampton Residents received an environmental education program. In 2015 the numbers increased to 4,448 Accomack Residents and 2,398 Northampton Residents. The following articles will showcase some of the environmental education outreach programs presented to residents of the Eastern Shore by the District.



Nature Detectives Camp:

In partnership with Ker Place's Spy Camp, the District offers the Nature Detectives Camp. The District had **13 campers** attend last year. The campers performed water quality testing, bird identification, solar heat cooking and animal track identification. They also crafted birdfeeders, dissected owl pellet, painted t-shirts, and made a glass terrarium. With all of these hands-on fun-filled outdoor activities, they are more capable to investigate and learn about their environment around them.

Envirothon: 2016 marked the 24th year the District has sponsored the local Dominion Envirothon. The Envirothon is a natural resources competition testing high school students on aquatics, wildlife, forestry, soils and a special topic decided yearly. This year's special topic was Invasive Species. Arcadia High School placed 1st at the local Envirothon competition, advancing them to the Area VI Competition. Arcadia High School placed second in the Area competition and represented the Eastern Shore in the State competition at Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, VA where they placed 10th overall out of 17 teams. Arcadia's Envirothon coach is Marianne Simko standing on the right.



Arcadia High School, winning team of the 2016 Local Dominion Envirothon competition

Conservation Poster Contest: The 2016 Poster Contest theme was "We All Need Trees". The District Annual Conservation Poster Contest encourages students to creatively think about conservation and the environment. **The District had 265 poster entries.** Each year the District's 1st place local winners are entered into the Virginia Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts 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 State com-

petition. Her poster placed 1st in the 7th-9th grade category. The State Competition winners are entered into the National Association of Conservation Districts Poster Competition. **Nia Richardson received Honorable Mention in the National Competition.**



Nia Richardson won Honorable Mention for above poster in the National Poster Contest

Watershed Festival: The EE Council under the umbrella of the District sponsors the Watershed Festival, an annual educational festival focusing on aquatic and biological activities demonstrating our relationship to the Chesapeake Bay and the Atlantic Ocean. Participating exhibitors are organizations and governmental agencies who work with schools and VA Science Standards of Learning (SOLs) along with how citizens can protect their watersheds from pollution thus protecting our local wildlife, migratory birds, groundwater and soil quality. The Watershed Festival also focuses on an appreciation of the Shore's natural and cultural heritage. Last fall, the festival was held at the Historic Onancock School for all **370 sixth graders** in Accomack County. For the first time all of the **190** Northampton County 6th graders were able to attend the Watershed Festival held at Kiptopeke State Park in the spring.



Spring Grants: Each spring the Endowment Committee offers Billie Fitzgerald Memorial Spring Grants to educators, schools and community groups. In 2016 the committee **awarded \$1,105** in Spring Grants. The spring grants are nominal but go towards far-reaching, long-term educational projects such as a Caterpillar to Butterfly Program at Broadwater Academy; Greenhouse and Outdoor Classroom at Arcadia High School, an expansion of the Eastern Shore Native Plant and Pollinator Garden created by No Limits, Composting at Cape Charles Christian and a Carbon Measuring Project as it relates to climate change for Broadwater Academy this year.

Educational Programs...Continued from page 3

Eastern Shore Birding and Wildlife Festival (ESBWF): The Eastern Shore Birding and Wildlife Festival is an internationally recognized festival which celebrates the arrival of migratory birds to the Shore packed with tours, trips, exhibitors and vendors. The District had a booth teaching children and parents how to ID birds. This year, 311 paid registered participants from all over the country participated in field trips with 184 bird species spotted during the Festival weekend. There were 178 people counted at Kiptopeke State park during the Festival and **190 children participated** in the Family Wildlife Explorer Program. The Flight of the Raptor program, which the District helped organize, was viewed by **2,838 local students on the Shore**.

Coastal Zone Management, one of the District's many partner agencies, sponsors the Eastern Shore Birding & Wildlife poster contest with the local high schools on the Shore and the winning artwork is the ESBWF's yearlong signature logo. **Sarah Cashwell**, a senior of Broadwater Academy was the 2015 poster winner. She painted the Peregrine Falcon that you see here.

Youth Conservation Camp: The Virginia Association of Soil & Water Conservation Districts has sponsored the weeklong Youth Conservation Camp at Virginia Tech annually for 40 years. Ye Accawmacke Garden Club and the District co-sponsored three campers, **William "Toby" Hamilton, IV** from Nandua High School, **Carolyn Olmsted** from Nandua High School, and **Dyshawn Beckett** from Northampton High School 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.

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 24 easements** with the Virginia Eastern Shore Land Trust and Virginia Outdoors Foundation (VOF) totaling **over 5,000 acres and helps monitor 17 easements** in partnership with VOF.

Newsletter Publications: The District published four issues of the *Shore Conserver* in FY16 reaching almost **900** households each time with updates on District activities and information on various resource concerns. If you would like to be placed on the mailing list, call the District at (757)787-0918 x101.

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