



Shore Conserver

Eastern Shore Soil and Water Conservation District

promoting locally led conservation

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November 2022

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2022 Conservation Awards

On October 26th, the District held its 2022 awards banquet. The banquet was dedicated in memory of Robin Rich-Coats and Fred Holland. The following awards were presented to some very deserving folks

2022 Conservation Educator Award

Phil Goetkin of Cape Charles received the 2022 Conservation Educator Award for his outstanding commitment to educating and inspiring youth. Phil has been a board member and is the current president of New Roots Youth Garden in Cape Charles. This is an all-volunteer organization that teaches children about gardening and the environment by having them get their hands dirty. New Roots boasts a gardening area, a pollinator garden, compost area, and rain barrels. In addition to school year programming, there is programming every Thursday evening during the gardening season where students garden, have an educational lesson, eat the fruits of the labors, sell produce, and take fresh produce home to eat.

Phil is very active in the Master Gardeners and has been the president for the last 3 years and has been on the board for several years. Last spring, Phil was instrumental in helping the District and VA Department of Forestry organize

this year's Arbor Day celebration. He is also active on the Cape Charles Tree Advisory Board.

Phil strives to live by the mission of the National Park Service which is to preserve the natural and cultural resources for the enjoyment, education, and inspiration of this and future generations. Thank you Phil for the many contributions you have made to education and the environment on the Eastern Shore of Virginia.



Phil working with children in the garden.



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2022 Conservation Awards

2022 Conservation Forester Award

The Conservation Forester Award recognizes someone who goes above and beyond to enhance forest health, wildlife habitat, and to protect water quality. Nominated by the VA Department of Forestry Area Office, this year's recipient is Bill Dougherty of Hack's Neck.

Bill has worked closely with the Virginia Department of Forestry to manage forest stands on his property which is situated at the mouth of Nandua Creek. An in-depth Forest Stewardship plan was written to help guide forest management efforts in thinning a mid-rotation age loblolly pine stand, establishing new loblolly stands in old agricultural field sites, and establishing riparian buffers. While conducting these practices Bill has experimented with various planting methods and techniques to improve seeding and nursery stock survival, and benefit stand growth.

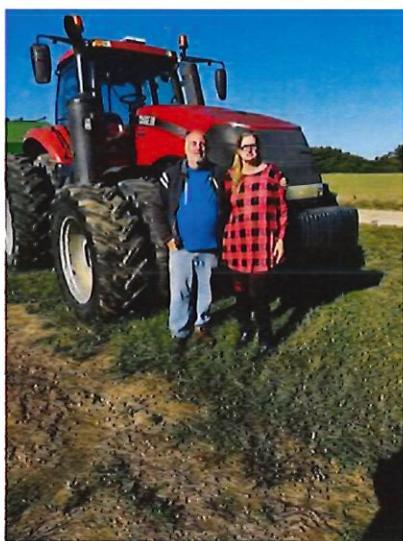
Bill's tract received a stewardship forest designation and is a certified Tree Farm. We commend Bill for his outstanding accomplishments in forestry conservation and management. Congratulations.



Nick Thomas, ESSWCD Board Chair (left), presents the 2022 Conservation Forester Award to Bill Dougherty.

2022 Conservation Farmer Award

Each year the District acknowledges a local farmer who regularly applies best management practices to improve water quality and promote soil and water conservation. This year, the District's 2022 Conservation Farmer Award is presented to Mark Newman of Eastville.



Mark and Diane Newman

Mark farms over 2,000 acres and is a 4th generation farmer. He grows primarily corn and soybeans. He maintains a current nutrient management plan and participates in the Virginia Agricultural Best Management Practices Cost Share program which is administered by the ESSWCD. Mark grows primarily winter rye as a cover crop. He uses minimal tillage practices and equipment as well as low drift spray nozzles to more accurately apply nitrogen to his crops. He maintains buffers along drainage ditches to reduce soil and nutrient loss. Mark is concerned about ag conservation and is proactive in implementing beneficial improvements to his farming operation.

Thank you Mark for your tireless conservation efforts!

2022 Conservation Awards

2022 Wildlife Conservationist Award

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Bill's tract received a stewardship forest designation and is a certified Tree Farm. We commend Bill for his outstanding accomplishments in forestry conservation and management. Congratulations.



Nick Thomas, ESSWCD Board Chair (left), presents the 2022 Conservation Forester Award to Bill Dougherty.

2022 Conservation Stewardship Award

This year the District created a new award to acknowledge a deserving landowner who participated in the Virginia Conservation Assistance Program (VCAP) to improve water quality on the Eastern Shore. The 2022 Conservation Stewardship Award winner is John Malbon.



Nick Thomas, ESSWCD Board Chair (left), presents the 2022 Conservation Stewardship Award to John Malbon.

John contacted the district with an interest in constructing a living shoreline on his historic property located along Occohannock Creek near Belle Haven. Working with a local consultant, plans were drawn and applications were made to construct a 520 linear foot living shoreline. A total of 470 feet of the project was cost shared through VCAP. During the most recent inspection, the project was in great condition and positive changes were occurring along the re-established living shoreline.

Congratulations John and thank you for helping to protect our environment!

2022 Conservation Awards

Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation 2022 Clean Water Farm Award

The Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries have 11,684 miles of shoreline—more than the entire U.S. west coast. Approximately 51 billion gallons of water flow into the Bay each day. It is important we all do our part to keep our waterways clean so we are pleased to recognize farmers who are good stewards of our soil and water resources. The Clean Water Farm award, is a State award sponsored by the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation, given to Virginia farmers who implement nutrient management plans and are exemplary in their protection of the State's soil and water resources. This year's Clean Water Farm Award is presented to Jim Evans.

Jim grows primarily corn, soybeans, wheat and string beans on his 2,297 acre farm. Partnering with another producer, he now farms an additional 1,700 acres. He maintains a current Nutrient Management Plan on all his acreage and uses plant tissue and soil testing to determine exactly what nutrients are needed and when, so he can limit runoff. He annually participates in the cover crop program administered by the ESWCD, planting wheat and barley cover crops to protect soil and water quality over the winter. Jim uses no-till and strip-till systems to limit the amount of soil tillage. Fertilizer is applied with fertilizer applicators that use precision technology to apply the right products at the right rates and at the right times, so nutrient use is accurate and efficient.

Jim is very conscientious about ag conservation and tries to implement beneficial improvements to his farming operation. Every farmer would like to improve his bottom line, but he takes it a step farther in an effort to improve the quality of his farming environment for future generations. With conservation in mind, he planted two acres of pollinator habitat through the NRCS Conservation Stewardship program. This plot was planted to attract local pollinating insects and serve as an ecosystem for other wildlife.

This year, Jim was featured in the Virginia Agriculture 2022 edition. The opening sentence of the article is a quote from Jim, "While many of the State's diverse agricultural growers are mindful of their roles in protecting the soil and water in the region, some rise to the top as leaders in demonstrating the value and effectiveness of conservation practices."

Jim has served as a Director on the Eastern Shore Soil and Water Conservation District Board since 2008 and this year is now also serving as Board Vice-Chair. The staff and Board of Eastern Shore SWCD feel Jim is well deserving of this award and is a model steward of the land. Congratulations!



Jim Evans with his wife Cheryl, daughter Claire, and son Jake.

ESSWCD Welcomes Palmer Smith as the Conservation Technician



Hi everyone! My name is Palmer Smith and I'm excited to be the new Conservation Technician at the ESSWD! I was born and raised in Cape Charles, VA. During high school, I was a member of Envirothon, attended Youth Conservation Camp at VT, and was awarded the 2018 Conservation Student of the Year Award from the District. Following my interest in agriculture, I attended Virginia Tech and graduated with a double major in Crop & Soil Science and Animal & Poultry Science in May of 2022. I enjoy going to Virginia Tech football games, being on the boat or beach, and really anything that involves my dog Nala. I look forward to serving the District and meeting everyone!

ESSWCD Welcomes Sally Williams to the Board

The newest member to the ESSWCD Board of Directors is Sally Williams. She and her husband Doug live on the seaside near Capeville in Northampton County. Sally brings an extensive background in formal education, environmental education, and agriculture to her new position.

Sally was a high school science teacher at Northampton High School for 30 years and retired in 2012. Among other science classes she taught biology and marine science. Sally was a key player in bringing the Envirothon program to Virginia and the Eastern Shore. She coached the Northampton Envirothon team from the inception of the program in the early 1990's until her retirement in 2012.

Sally is active in Capeville United Methodist Church and is currently a lay leader. She also enjoys gardening, riding bikes, and traveling.

We look forward working with Sally and appreciate the expertise and experience she brings to ESSWCD.



Education & Outreach Happenings

2nd Annual Ag Camp at the Barrier Islands Center

Held on August 2 -3, fourteen kids participated in the 2nd Annual Ag Camp. Held in conjunction with Northampton 4-H, students learned about farm animals and pollinators. They spent a busy two days making beeswax lip balm and candles, dyeing wool, and making bread in a bag. The grand finale was making ice cream in a bag that was enjoyed by all!



NCPS New Teacher Farm to Table Breakfast

On Thursday, August 18, 2022, the new teachers with Northampton County Public Schools were guests at a Farm-to-Table breakfast hosted by ESSWCD, Shore Breeze Farms, Extension, and Farm Bureau. In addition to breakfast, teachers toured the hydroponic greenhouse at Shore Breeze Farms, toured the ESSWCD mobile classroom, heard about programs from ESSWCD and 4-H, and received a bag full of goodies and information on local agriculture. Door prizes were provided by Farm Bureau.



Education & Outreach Happenings

Accomack and Northampton Farm Tour

On September 20 and 21, 2022, 3rd graders in Accomack and Northampton Counties participated in Farm Tour. Coordinated by Farm Bureau and VT Extension, the district participated in presentations utilizing the Life Underground Mobile Classroom. More than 450 students and adults in the two counties were introduced to a variety of agricultural related topics.

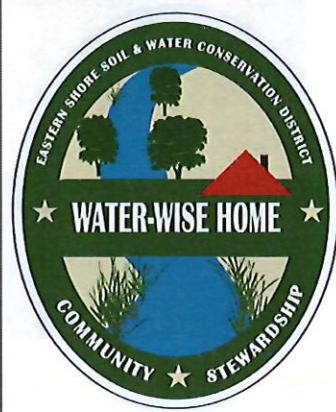


Classroom Programming

With the return to a more normal school year after a couple of years of COVID the district's educational programming has had an extremely busy fall. In addition to already available programs, we now offer the following: Origami Reproductive Parts of a Flower, Make Your Own Watershed, The Ocean Floor, Dichotomous Key Lesson using native organisms,, and Ecosystems and Food Webs.



Water Wise Home Challenge



Protecting Our Planet Starts with You!

Take the Water-Wise Home Challenge from the Eastern Shore Soil and Water Conservation District and see how you can help protect our natural resources.

Do your part!

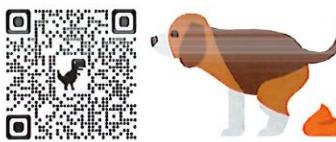
Everyone has a part to play in protecting our natural resources. Adopt at least three of the challenge actions to receive your Water-Wise Home garden flag or sign to proudly display on your property.

Water Wise Home Challenge – scan the QR code for more information!

Plant a Pollinator Pocket



Commit to Scoop the Poop



Install a Rain Barrel



Participate in a litter Clean-Up Day



Start a Vermicomposter



Reduce or Eliminate Your Use of Fertilizer or Pesticides



Install Conservation Landscaping



Plant Three Native Plants



Mulch Leaves and Grass



Claim Your Flag

Once you have adopted at least three of the action challenges, let us know about it. Contact us at julie.head@esswcd.org, and we'll send your flag or sign. Please allow several weeks for delivery.

While we encourage everyone to participate in the Water Wise Home Challenge, yard flags and signs are only available to residents of Accomack and Northampton Counties

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.

