

Shore Conservor

Eastern Shore Soil & Water Conservation District • 22545 Center Parkway • Accomac VA 23301

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Plans for the Beach? Plan Not to Litter

It's almost time for beach weather which means new bathing suits, more sun-screen, fast food, souvenirs and fun outdoor activities. For the Bay that means plastic bags, plastic bottles, plastic food containers, six-pack rings, plastic wrap, fishing gear, cigarettes, candy wrappers and more. This year when you are lying on the beach soaking up the warm rays of the sun, think about what you can do to help keep the ocean clean and free of marine debris (litter). Whenever we throw trash out of our car, leave trash on the beach or see trash blowing across our lawn and don't pick it up, that piece of trash has the potential to end up in our waterways and our oceans.

Fighting pollution, especially marine debris is everyone's responsibility. And today there is more plastic in marine debris than ever before. Debris, especially plastic debris, is the worst type of pollution that affects our oceans and every body of water on the planet. Ocean currents flow like rivers. They carry warm water from the tropics, and cold water from the North and South Poles. Waste can flow hundreds of miles in these currents. Marine debris affects us all. It has a negative impact on humans, wildlife,



and habitats. Medical waste such as plastic disposable needles and hygienic items like condoms and plastic tampon applicators may contain viruses and harmful bacteria such as infectious hepatitis and E. coli. Contact with contaminated water has been known to cause skin rashes, diseases, unsafe water conditions for swimming, dysentery, diarrhea and other ailments. More than 1 billion people worldwide lack access to safe drinking water. About 2 million children die every year from diseases linked directly to unsafe drinking water.

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Put It On My Tap

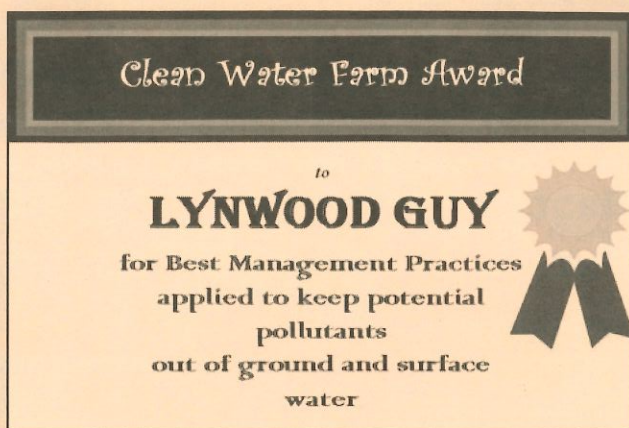
Tap into your tap water again. When it comes to bottled water, do it yourself and use a refillable bottle and your tap water (find out if you need a water filter). Rediscovering tap water is a lot cheaper and a lot better for the environment than manufacturing, shipping and discarding all those plastic single use bottles. A whopping 40% of the volume of your water bottle is approximately the amount of oil it takes to produce and ship that water bottle to you!

According to the Container Recycling Institute, 86% of plastic water bottles used in the United States aren't recycled. Incinerating used bottles produces toxic byproducts such as chlorine gas and ash containing heavy metals. Buried water bottles can take up to 1,000 years to biodegrade.

I ♥
TAP
WATER

Continued on page 3

Local Award Becomes a Grand Basin Winner!



Lynwood Guy receives statewide recognition.

The Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) is the lead agency for the Clean Water Farm Award and the Bay Friendly Farm Award program which recognized 43 farms as winners in 2007. Of the 43 Clean Water Farm Award winners, 10 farms were selected which best represent Virginia's 10 major river basins. Lynwood Guy has received one of these Grand Basin Awards as an exemplary farmer and steward of our area's soil and water resources.

At the VASWCD Area VI spring meeting, Jack Frye, Director of the Soil and Water Conservation Division of DCR, extolled Mr. Guy's conservation work on his farm that lies within the Chesapeake Bay watershed on the Eastern Shore.

Mr. Guy tends 190 acres of a third generation family farm. He farms a total of 390 acres and he's recently transitioned his farming operation from vegetable to no-till grain production; though, he still plants pumpkins for market and school programs. Mr. Guy grazes a small flock of sheep on the farm. His pastures are always in excellent condition because he rotates grazing to maintain productivity.

Mr. Guy uses nutrient management plans on his farm and keeps careful application records. He also participates in State cost-share incentive programs for conservation tillage and cover crops.

In 2007, Lynwood placed his family farm under a perpetual conservation easement with the Virginia Outdoors Foundation. The Eastern Shore Soil and Water Conservation District serves as an easement co-holder on this property that contains 100% prime farmland and an historic home circa 1824, the Sally Westcott House.

Mr. Guy serves on the Board of the Northampton County Farm Bureau, the Eastern Shore Marketing Cooperative and the FSA County Committee. □

-Plan Not to Litter *Continued from page 1*

Discarded fishing gear like used nets and fishing line pose a huge threat to wildlife. Many birds, turtles and fish get entangled in the fishing line and strangle or drown. The nets can inflict cuts and wounds. The nets can limit mobility causing starvation by preventing the animal from eating, suffocation or drowning. Abandoned nets left by fishermen continue to float, catch and kill fish and small animals. It happens so frequently they have a name for it. It's called *ghost fishing*.

Animals often mistake marine debris for food. When swallowed, debris may choke or cause a blockage in an animal or if lodged in an animal's stomach create a feeling of cessation which causes the animal to feel full. When this happens, the

animal stops eating and slowly starves to death. Plastic waste kills up to 1 million sea birds each year.

Ensnares marine litter such as nets and filament line can destroy habitat because they move with the currents and can damage living coral reef and sea grasses by abrading, rubbing, scouring, tugging, breaking or smothering them. Marine debris can also cause turbidity and a shift in sand creating a build up in one place and erosion in another. Another concern is that drifting debris can host a whole community of organisms, transporting them great distances in the currents and allowing them to settle in areas far away where they can compete against native organisms as invasive species.

Marine debris also harms marine property by entangling in the propellers and rudders of boats. Plastic bags clog and block water intakes resulting in burned-out water pumps. Problems such as these decrease recreational activities and can hurt tourism causing harm to the economic situation in the area.

It will take all of us to have marine debris managed better. Every piece of litter was sometime handled improperly by a beach visitor, a traveler on the highway, a boater, a person eating fast food, a school child, a commercial fisherman or someone you know. We can only hope to overcome this problem if we all take responsibility for our actions and stop littering, find better ways to dispose of litter and pick up litter when we see it! □

...Put It On My Tap Continued from page 1

Recent studies show that many compounds leach chemicals into the water — chemicals shown to be hormone disrupters and carcinogens. So go with glass, ceramic or stainless steel reusable containers. If you consider reusing a plastic bottle, clean it well to avoid bacteria growth. If you do stick with plastic, some choices are better than others. Look for the numbers on the bottom (see chart on right). Tap water is often as safe or safer than bottled water. In 2004 global consumption of bottled water reached 41 billion gallons, up 57% from 5 years earlier. According to the Earth Policy Institute, "Even in areas where tap water is safe to drink, demand for bottled water is increasing— producing unnecessary garbage and consuming vast quantities of energy". □

Choices for Plastic Bottles

BETTER

- #2 (HDPE)
- #4 (LDPE)
- #5 (PP)



AVOID

- #3 (PVC)
- #6 Polystyrene
- #7 (catchall category— Polycarbonate hard plastic camping and baby bottles)

Small Grain Field Day Agricultural Research Extension Center Painter, VA May 29, 2008 4:00 p.m.

Topics include new wheat varieties, treating mite damage and fungus, nutrient management, minimal disturbance tillage equipment, upcoming conservation cost-share programs, new Farm Bill and more.



This was the scene at the Eastville location on April 18th and 19th. Approximately 1,000 citizens, including the young and small, came out to the Eastern Shore's Arbor Day to pick up trees to plant.

Conservation Corner

From Kiptopeke in southern Northampton County to the Maryland state line in northern Accomack County, the Eastern Shore Soil and Water Conservation District has been a conservation partner with landowners and farmers for the past 63 years.

The district is known for its leadership in conservation work to improve and enhance water quality. One important tool in this effort is the agricultural best management practices cost share program, where state funds are administered by the district to help reduce nonpoint source pollution.

Every year, in the cost share program, the district emphasizes the use of cover crop planting as an important means to enhance water quality. Cover crops grown over winter can capture and save soil nutrients that might be lost through leaching if fields were left fallow. A good stand of winter cover if achieved early in the fall can also protect the area from wind erosion.

The success of the various conservation cover crop practices depends on paying attention to details. The cost share program requires that the seed is tested and has at least

80% germination and is free of noxious weeds. Insects in bin-run seed can significantly reduce the germination from good to poor in a short time. This problem can be avoided by treating the seed with an approved pesticide. Check with your county extension agent to learn what works best.

Now is the time to plan for next fall's cover crop program. Sign-up in the District will begin after August 1. There are some changes to the upcoming year's program. Most significantly, the SL-8H program, Harvestable Cover, has been changed so that fertilizer cannot be used on the crop until after March 1. The SL-8, Protective Cover after Vegetables, and SL-8B, Small Grain Cover for Nutrient and Residue Management, remain in place, however, and are still good options for winter.

Cover crop rates for FY2009 may change. Currently they range from \$20 to \$40 per acre, with boosts coming from early planting dates and use of cereal rye. For more information on next year's cover crop program, contact Add or Carmie in the District office. □

Local Envirothon Winner Advances to Regionals

The annual Eastern Shore Envirothon on March 20 ended with Arcadia High School's Jolly Green Giants team taking first place. The Nandua Newts placed 2nd and Broadwater Academy's team took 3rd. The Jolly Green Giants advanced to the Tidewater Area VI Competition held at Camp Young in Chesapeake, VA on April 10th. They came in second and are advancing to state-wide competition in Richmond, VA on May 18-19.

Congratulations are due to all the local students who participated in this year's event. They work hard and devote extra-curricular time to the study of our area's natural resources. Pictured below are these outstanding high school student teams.

Students, great job. Thanks!



Arcadia Jolly Green Giants

1st Place

Marianne Simko (coach), Scott Snyder, George Snyder, James Kelley, Luis Martinez, and Elizabeth Simko, Charles Love (coach)

SOILS

AQUATICS

Nandua Newts

2nd Place

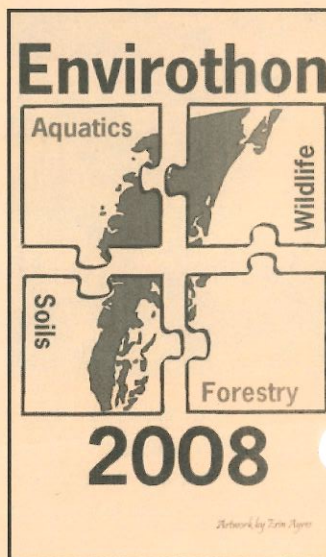
Ethan Battone, Emily Milner, Jeffery Hall (back row), David Weitzel, Alex Zager (captain, back row), Ian Andrew Battone, Alex Conover and Dr. Gail Lee (coach)



Broadwater Academy

3rd place

John Paul Harris, Amelia Province, Kristen Jenkins (back row), Cailin Sisk (front row, alternate), Ben Gorske and Jessica Smith, (not pictured) Debra Milburn (coach)



*Winning T-shirt design by
Arcadia High School art
student Erin Ayres*



Chinoteague High

Mason Karafa, Elizabeth Cathey,
Hillary Chesson and Fred Gers (coach)

WILDLIFE

Northampton B

Renee Wood, Jennifer Rasmussen, Taylor Gray, Taylor Gray,
Jennifer Quintanar, Tom Bonniwell (coach) and Alex Hand



FORESTRY

Arcadia Tree Huggers

Marianne Simko (coach), Krissy Rantz
(alternate), Maggie McDade (back row),
Brooke Stacey, Daniel Basuel (back
row), Tiffany Young (back row), Raven
Sobel, and Charles Love (coach)



Northampton A

Kendall Combs, Kevin Edel-
mann (back row), Kelsie
Burkhard, Ryan Cashwell
(back row), Jessica A. Lee
and Sally Richardson (coach,
back row)



**Special thanks to
those who helped
with this year's event!**

JUDGES PANEL

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Northampton Board of Supervisors

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NRCS District Conservationist

Grant Harter
USDA Wildlife Services

William Shockley
ESSWCD Director

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Dot Field
Richard Ayers
DCR-Division of Natural Heritage

Forestry

Robbie Lewis
Toni Noreika
Virginia Department of Forestry

Wildlife

Yvonne Schultz
Pat Denmon
Eastern Shore National Wildlife Refuge

Soils

H.L. Kellam
Farm Services Agency
Addison Nottingham
ESSWCD Conservation Specialist

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Marianne F. Simko

Nandua
Dr. Gail Lee

Broadwater Academy
Debra Milburn

Northampton
Sally Richardson
Tom Bonniwell

Chincoteague
Fred Gers

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ESSWCD Education Specialist

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Carmie Duer
ESSWCD Conservation Specialist

Latonya E. Justice
ESSWCD Conservation Technician

Photographs by Latonya Justice

District Issues an Anti-litter Challenge.

There are several groups in the Adopt-A-Highway and Adopt-A-Stream programs who regularly pick up litter. However, it doesn't seem to be enough without everyone's help. There are two parts to this problem, the first is trash being carelessly thrown out or dumped; and, the second is litter that's already on the ground not being picked up.

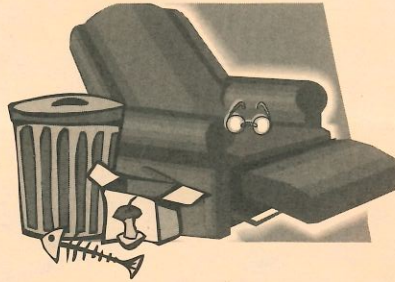
On April 23rd, the Eastern Shore Soil and Water Conservation District staff cleaned up Folly Creek Road in Accomack, one of our well-visited boat ramps. Data shows that recreational activities account for nearly 58% of all trash found. This is a sad indicator of how insensitive and careless our nation's citizens can be.

With a staff of only five members, and just a few hours, the District was able to collect over 19 large bags of trash and debris. And the District challenges you to do the same.

Of the trash picked up, plastic containers and bottles made up the majority. The staff found an entire easy chair recliner almost in perfect shape, in need of only a little upholstery cleaning. The recliner still had the owner's bifocals laid in the seat! One of the staff com-

mented, "The only thing missing is the television set and the owner sitting in the chair".

In order to see a cleaner Eastern Shore, it's up to each of us to pitch in. The District encourages individuals and groups to mount an anti-litter campaign and tackle the debris on our roadside ditches, woods, beaches and boat ramps.



Many statewide programs gratefully give guidance and trash bags to concerned citizens willing to pick up litter. Adopt-a-Stream, www.adopt-a-stream.org and the Ocean Conservancy, www.nature.org hosts international fall and spring beach clean-ups and compiles data on exactly what is littering the world's oceans.

Alternatively, consider connecting with local clean-up efforts. Challenge

your office mates to adopt a local site. Accomack County Public Works will provide bags and direct individuals to public boat ramps in need of assistance. Their litter coordinator, Randy Fischer, can be reached at (757)302-1307.

In Northampton County, there's a group of concerned individuals known as the Northampton Alliance Against Trash - NAAT. A contact number for this group that targets trash pick-ups in different communities is (757) 442-7464.

One opportunity to help out that's coming up soon is CLEAN THE BAY DAY, a Bay-wide event on June 7. Sponsored by the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, the local clean-up coordinator is Pete Henderson with the Virginia Eastern Shore Land Trust. Plan to spend a few morning hours picking up trash at the water's edge with other volunteers. Trash bags and gloves will be provided. This is a great opportunity for church and youth groups. Henderson's contact number is 442-5885.

Whether part of an international state or local team or as a solitary individual, consider helping with what is an all too obvious problem that can be surmounted when we all work at it!

All programs and services of the Eastern Shore Soil and Water Conservation District and the Natural Resources Conservation Service are offered on a nondiscriminatory 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 SWCD to provide information to land users.
To be added to the mailing list, please contact the District office at 757-787-0918.**

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