



Shore Conserver

Eastern Shore Soil & Water Conservation District

22545 Center Parkway, Accomac, VA 23301

ANNUAL REPORT

July 1, 2016 to June 30, 2017

DISTRICT STAFF

Carmie M. Savage, *District Manager*
Cole Charnock, *Conservation Specialist*
Latonya Justice, *Conservation Technician*
Mary Melson, *Education Director*

DISTRICT ASSOCIATE DIRECTORS

Richard F. Hall, III
Brian Broadwater
Robbie Lewis
William Shockley, Jr.
Edwin R. Long
Ursula Deitch

ELECTED DISTRICT DIRECTORS

Robin Rich-Coates, *Chair*
Fred Holland, II, *Vice-Chair*
Davis Lovell
James A. Evans
Theresa Pittman
W. Rawlings Scott, Jr.

Virginia Department of
Conservation and Recreation

**Locally-Led
Conservation**

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

The Eastern Shore Soil & Water Conservation District's FY17 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.

2017 Agricultural Best Management Practices Cost-Share

Small Grain Cover for Nutrient Management

Accomack Bayside 4,333.3 /Seaside 4,184.2 acres
Northampton Bayside 810.6 /Seaside 593 acres

Harvestable Cover Crops

Accomack Bayside 481.1 /Seaside 1,527.8 acres
Northampton Bayside 599.6 /Seaside 888.6 acres

Small Grain Cover behind Vegetables

Accomack Bayside 909.6 /Seaside 628.3 acres
Northampton Bayside 488.5 /Seaside 57 acres

Vetch Cover Crop

Accomack Bayside 1,019.8 /Seaside 303.8 acres
Northampton Bayside 98 / Seaside 197.1 acres

Continuous No-Till 5-Yr Program

Accomack Bayside 235.6 /Seaside 565.8 acres

Nutrient Management Planning

Accomack Bayside 21,005.7/Seaside 17,344 acres
Northampton Bayside 12,380.8/Seaside 8,036.3 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 FY2017, the District provided \$733,315.80 in cost-share assistance to landowners and producers on the Eastern Shore.

The Eastern Shore Soil and Water Conservation District, formed in 1945 as a political subdivision of the Commonwealth, was 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 and Associate Directors serve as volunteer public servants. The District serves as a valued partner and service provider to various agencies and organizations working together towards resource conservation on the Eastern Shore of Virginia.

The District's service area covers the region on the Delmarva Peninsula comprised of Accomack and Northampton Counties, bounded by Maryland, the Chesapeake Bay and the Atlantic. The Chesapeake Bay, the largest estuary in the U.S. is home to two of the five major North Atlantic ports—Baltimore and Hampton Roads. According to VA Dept of Agriculture and Consumer Services, agricultural and forestry exports reached \$3.19 billion in 2015, solidifying the Commonwealth's status as the second largest agricultural exporter on the East Coast. Agriculture is Virginia's largest industry, contributing over \$55 billion annually to the State's economy. Approximately 120,000 acres (about 50% of the land use) supports row crop production. Virginia has over 44,700 farms. Many Virginia commodities and products rank in the top 10 among all U.S. states. Leaf tobacco is third. Northampton County has the largest fresh-market snap bean processor on the East Coast. Virginia is ranked 7th in the nation for fresh market tomatoes, apples, grapes and Christmas trees. Accomack County alone is #1 in vegetables, soybeans, dry peas and beans and corn, #2 in potatoes, sweet potatoes, melons and #4 in 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 primary focuses 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 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 and support for the area's natural resources.



Northampton Agricultural County Fair

October 21, 2017, 10:00am - 2:00pm

7247 Young ST, Machipongo, VA



Agricultural related Contests, Games and Educational booths such as:

Tractor Driving Competition
Rides

Farming Machinery Displays

Pie Eating Contest

Dunking Booth

Kids Crafts

Horse

Craft Vendors

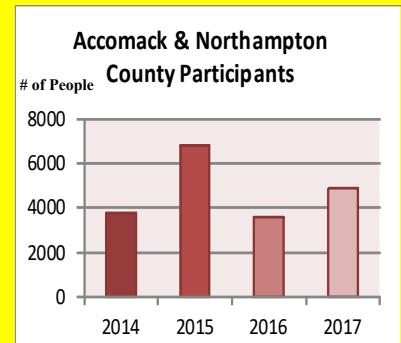
Food Vendors

Petting Zoo and much more!

FUN FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY!!

Environmental Education Programs

The past four years the District's education outreach program has reached over 18,500 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. In 2016 the District reached 3,600 Accomack & Northampton Residents. In 2017 the District reached 4,900 Accomack and Northampton residents. The following articles will showcase some of the environmental education outreach programs presented to residents of the Eastern Shore by the District.



Envirothon: This year's local Dominion Energy Envirothon training and testing day took place at the Eastern Shore Agricultural Research and Extension Center, Painter, VA. The District also hosted the Area VI Envirothon this year at Kiptopeke State Park. Teams from Area VI Districts included the Eastern Shore, Peanut, James River & Appomattox River. 2017 marked the **25th year** the District has sponsored the local Dominion Energy Envirothon, a natural resources competition testing high school students on aquatics, wildlife, forestry, soils and a special topic. This year's special topic was Agricultural Stewardship. Arcadia H.S. placed 1st at the local Dominion Envirothon competition, advancing them to the Area VI Competition.



Local schools participating in 2017 Local Dominion Energy Envirothon training

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 along with how citizens can protect their watersheds from pollution thus protecting our local wildlife, migratory birds, groundwater and soil quality. Participating exhibitors are organizations and governmental agencies who work with schools and VA Science Standards of Learning (SOLs). 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 2017 the committee **awarded \$1,800 in Spring Grants**. The spring grants are nominal but go towards far-reaching, long-term educational projects. This year the grants have funded a Caterpillar to Butterfly Program at Broadwater Academy, a Butterfly Garden for the Eastern Shore Ecology Club, a Littles Garden for ages 3-5 for New Roots Youth Garden, a Monarch Butterflies and Pollinators

Educational Program for summer Migrant Head Start students at Eastern Shore National Wildlife Refuge (pictured here on the left), a field trip to Kiptopeke State Park for Kiptopeke Elementary, an expansion of the Eastern Shore Native Plant and Pollinator Garden created by No Limits, and an Educational Landscape Film Series for Master Gardeners (marquee at the Palace Theater above right).

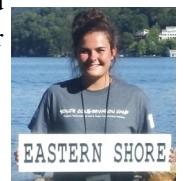


Scholarships: This year, the District's Endowment Committee **awarded two \$500 scholarships**. The first is the William H. Beasley, Sr. Memorial Scholarship awarded to **Erica Head** who is a rising sophomore at James Madison University. The second recipient, **Logan Godwin**, received the W. Foster Fletcher Conservation Scholarship in the amount of \$500. Logan Godwin just graduated Arcadia High School second in his class and will be attending the Virginia Military Institute in the fall majoring in Environmental Civil Engineering.

Conservation Poster Contest: The District Annual Conservation Poster Contest encourages students to creatively think about ways to protect the environment. The national theme varies each year. The 2017 Poster Contest theme was **"Healthy Soils Are Full of Life!"**. The competition is not just about being a good artist, but understanding the concept of what healthy soils are. Representing the District and the Shore in the 2016 competition, **Arrington Johnson from Nandua High School won 1st place in the State competition**. Her poster shown here placed 1st in the 10-12th grade category.



Youth Conservation Camp: The Virginia Association of Soil & Water Conservation Districts has sponsored the weeklong Youth Conservation Camp at Virginia Tech annually for 41 years. Ye Accawmacke Garden Club and the District co-co-sponsored **Palmer Smith**, a rising senior from Broadwater Academy.



EASTERN SHORE

Educational Programs *Continued from page 3...*

Eastern Shore Birding and Wildlife Festival

October 6-7, 2017 • Kiptopeke State Park, Eastern Shore, VA



Black-throated Blue Warbler by Gabrielle Perez, Nanus High School, Winner - 2017 Festival Art Contest

From 10am-4pm, Oct. 7 at Kiptopeke State Park:

- 11am & 2pm Flight of the Raptor, falcony demos & live programs with hawks, falcons and owls
- Hands-on Activities • Wagon Rides
- Interpretive Hikes • Live Animals
- 1:30pm Art Award Presentation

For boat trips and additional hikes go to www.esabirdingfestival.com




Eastern Shore Birding and Wildlife Festival: The Eastern Shore Birding and Wildlife Festival is an internationally recognized festival which celebrates the arrival of migratory birds to the Shore. The Birding Festival celebrates the arrival of migratory birds to the Shore with tours, trips, exhibitors and vendors. The District had a booth teaching children and parents how to ID birds. There were 200 people counted at Kiptopeke State park participating in the Outdoor Exploration Day. The Flight of the Raptor program, which the District helped organize, was viewed by **2,000 local students** on the Shore.

Nature Detectives Camp: Working in conjunction with Ker Place (Spy Camp) for a third year, the District held a weeklong Nature Detectives Camp. The District had **11 campers** attend its Nature Detectives Camp. The campers performed water quality testing, animal track identification, and solar heat cooking. They also crafted birdfeeders, painted t-shirts and made a glass terrarium. With all of these hands-on fun-filled outdoor activities, the campers are better able to investigate and learn about their environment around them.

Shore Outdoors: Annually the ES Environmental Education Council with the support of the District creates and publishes Shore Outdoors. This year the 2017 publication focused on getting local kids outside this summer. The insert included easy at home how to's outside, a list of books at our local libraries connected to outdoor spaces and a map depicting outdoor locations on the Shore. There were **4,500 copies** printed in the Eastern Shore News and **500** copies were delivered to local businesses and libraries. Shore Outdoors was made possible this year through NASA, The Nature Conservancy, Fish & Wildlife Service, Chincoteague Bay Field Station, ESSWCD, and many more.

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.

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