



CONSERVATION NEWS

Tidewater Soil & Water Conservation District
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Gloucester, VA 23061
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www.tidewaterswd.org

Winter 2011 Serving the counties of Gloucester, Mathews, and Middlesex

Are you interested in competition, the environment, being outdoors and a chance to earn scholarships? If so, you may be interested in...

Virginia Envirothon

What is Envirothon?

Envirothon is a hands-on environmental problem-solving competition for high school students. Teams compete in 5 areas: soils, aquatics, forestry, wildlife and a current environmental issue. The 2011 Environmental Issue will be **Salt and Fresh Water Estuaries**. The competition is held in the field and teams will have the opportunity to work with natural resource professionals.

How do you form a team?

Teams consist of 5 members. Members must be in grades 9-12. FFA, 4-H and home school groups are also eligible. Coaches may be a teacher, coach, or any enthusiastic adult willing to help.

Competition Structure:

Local competition :hosted by local soil & water conservation district

Regional/Area competition :1st, 2nd and 3rd place teams will go on to compete at the VA State Competition.

VA State Competition: teams from all regions of Virginia compete. The 1st place team from the State competition goes onto the 2011 Canon Envirothon in New Brunswick, Canada to compete for scholarship money and prizes.

Why should you participate?

Learn about important environmental issues

Gain hands on experience in solving real-world problems

Great for college and job applications

Spend time with teammates and friends

Possibly travel across the country to the Canon Envirothon for a chance to win scholarships and prizes!

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Interested in starting a team or learning more about the program?

Contact Beth Sokolik, VASWCD (804)559-0324 or Elizabeth.sokolik@vaswcd.org

Visit the VA Envirothon website at <http://www.vaswcd.org/envirothon.htm>

Tidewater SWCD will be hosting the 2011 Area III Envirothon competition which will be held April 14, 2011 at Thousand Trails Campground. It is our goal to organize an Envirothon team to compete in this event. In order to be successful the team must train and review materials on a regular basis. The majority of the training is provided by the team coach. We have available an Envirothon trunk that includes most of the training materials needed to prepare for this competition. Tidewater SWCD will be available to assist the students in preparing for the Envirothon and can coordinate training sessions with our partner agencies. For more information on starting a team contact LaVerne Calhoun at 804-693-3562 Ext. 5 or lcalhoun@tidewaterswcd.org

Help Wanted- Conservation Specialist

Degree in agricultural, environmental or related studies, or combination of education and experience showing the knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary to perform job duties. Applicant must be able to work independently, manage grants, and have strong computer skills. This position is responsible for promoting and administering the Ag BMP Cost Share program, assisting VCE with field days, preparing soil & water conservation plans, and presenting educational programs. Valid VA driver's license required. Salary \$27,000-\$30,000/benefits. Forward completed VA State application to Tidewater SWCD, P.O. Box 677, Gloucester, VA 23061. Closing date January 31, 2011. For more information call (804) 693-3562 Ext. 5. email lcalhoun@tidewaterswcd.org or www.tidewaterswcd.org

2011 BMP Cost Share Sign-Up

January 10—February 10

The 2011 BMP Cost Share Sign-up begins on **Monday, January 10th** and will run through **Thursday, February 10th**. This is the time to sign up for the Split Application of Nitrogen on Corn and Small Grain Practices. The sign up will also include any other qualified BMP's as well. Due to budget cuts, our funds are limited this year. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to call or come by the office. We look forward to working with you in 2011.

Continuous Conservation Reserve Program

The Continuous Conservation Reserve Program offered thru FSA allows participants to enroll field borders/perimeters in conservation practices throughout the year that will reduce soil erosion, improve water and soil quality and provide wildlife habitat and food sources. As an example, CRP practice CP 33-Habitat Buffers for Upland Birds creates strips of warm season grasses around field borders that provide cover and nesting habitat for quail. The field borders/ grass strips can be between 30 and 120 feet in width. In order to be eligible for Continuous CRP, the land must have a cropping history between 2002-2007 and fields offered in which the buffer will be established must be larger than 5 acres. The producer must have owned or operated the land for at least 12 months prior to enrolling the land. Continuous CRP program participation is voluntary. Eligible landowners or farm operators enter into contracts that range from 10 to 15 years in length. In return, the landowners will receive annual rental and maintenance payments, and cost share for establishment. The rates can max out at \$95/acre in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed. Take time to look at those unproductive low yielding field borders as conservation areas. For more information on Continuous CRP enrollments or local Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) availability, please contact your local FSA office at 804-693-2691 ext 102 or visit <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/pas/publications/facts/html/crpcont03.htm>

Congratulations Troy Whitehead 2010 Clean Water Farm Award Winner

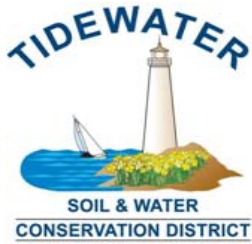
The Tidewater Soil & Water Conservation District has chosen Troy Whitehead as the Clean Water Farm Award/Bay Friendly Award Winner. He has shown the desire to conserve through the many years that he has utilized Best Management Practices on his farm. Having followed a Nutrient Management Plan for several years, he is aware of the precise amount of nitrogen that needs to be applied without leaching or runoff occurring. His methods of no-till planting and installing buffers for wildlife are among the many reasons that the Troy Whitehead is an excellent recipient of the Clean Water Farm Award.

Troy came to the Middle Peninsula in 1966. He started farming in 1967 and has been farming ever since. He has 8 pigs, 10 chickens, 12 cow/calf pairs and grows watermelons and pumpkins aside from his traditional grain crops. His farm is located at the North End Branch of the North River and Cobbs Creek. All of the water from this large watershed runs down and is channeled into Troy's stream. Understanding the importance of this watershed, Troy decided to implement a Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) practice on his farm. This is a joint practice in which the District, NRCS and FSA all join together to provide cost share for the expenses to fence his cattle out of the stream, provide an alternative water source and plant a buffer between the fence and the stream. He has both sides of the North End Branch fenced out. Being very conscious of the land they have located near the bay, buffers and filter strips have been installed voluntarily on his farm to reduce the chance of fertilizer and pesticides entering the watershed. For many years, Troy has been an excellent steward of the land. His land has been a family farm passed down for generations. Their father was one of the first farmers in this area to practice no-till. He is a farmer who takes pride in his work and does his best to conserve the land. Being an avid hunter, he wants to do what's right for the bay and the land. Aside from full-time farming, Troy is also a member of the Farm Service Agency County Committee.

Troy also manages to generously share his produce with the entire community expecting nothing in return. As prices go up and farming becomes more difficult to do to make a living, Troy still continues to take into consideration what is best for the soil and water. He understands the importance of the Best Management Practices and other efforts to protect the land. It is for this reason that the Tidewater Soil and Water Conservation District has chosen Troy Whitehead for the Clean Water Farm Award/Bay Friendly Farm Award.

Thank you Troy for your many years of stewardship and protecting our natural resources for future generations.





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District Directors

- Tyler Crittenden-At Large-Chairman
- David Moore -At Large-Vice Chairman-VCE
- Jason Bray-Middlesex-Secretary
- Keith Horsley-Gloucester-Treasurer
- Ronnie Lewis-Mathews
- Daniel Rilee-Gloucester
- Robert Respass,Jr-Mathews
- Alan Sutherland-Middlesex

Return Service Requested

All programs of the Tidewater SWCD are offered on a nondiscriminatory basis; without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, political affiliation, marital/familial status, or handicap. The Commonwealth of Virginia supports the Tidewater Soil and Water Conservation District through financial and administrative assistance provided by the Department of Conservation and Recreation.

District Personnel

- LaVerne Calhoun - District Manager
- Rene Moring- Conservation Assistant

NRCS Personnel

- Mike Combs-District Conservationist

Congratulations

Robert Respass Jr. and David Moore were honored for serving **15** years as Directors for Tidewater SWCD December 7,2010 at the VA Association of Soil & Water Conservation Districts Annual Meeting in Roanoke.

Thank you Robert and David for your faithful service and dedication to conservation.

