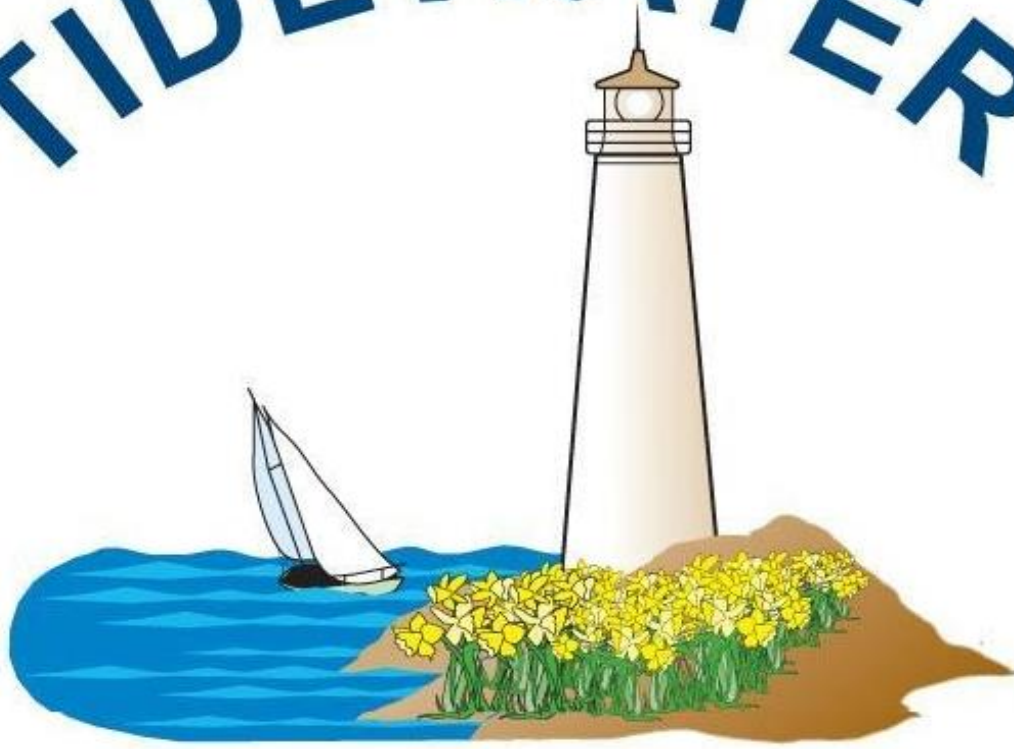


TIDEWATER



SOIL & WATER
CONSERVATION DISTRICT

ANNUAL REPORT

JULY 2022 - JUNE 2023

6969 Fox Hunt Lane | P.O. Box 677 | Gloucester, VA 23061
(804) 699-3482 | www.tidewaterswcd.org

The Tidewater Soil and Water Conservation District is a political subdivision of the Commonwealth of Virginia serving the counties of Gloucester, Mathews, and Middlesex. The district is empowered to develop comprehensive programs and plans that conserve and improve the quality of soil and water resources. The leadership of the district is committed to two basic concepts; local citizens can best identify and find solutions to local environmental and conservation issues and the district, or through assistance with its cooperating agencies, will assist individuals with their natural resources conservation planning and problem solving. The district is governed by an eight-member board of directors who serve a four-year term. Six directors, two from each county, are elected in a general election. Two directors are appointed by the Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board, one of these appointees must be a Virginia Cooperative Extension Agent. Non-voting associate directors may be selected by the Tidewater SWCD Board of Directors. The daily operations of the district are conducted by the staff which consists of a District Manager, Conservation/Education Specialist, and Conservation Office Assistant. Technical assistance is provided by the Commonwealth of Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation and the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. The district maintains a close working relationship with the Virginia Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts, Virginia Cooperative Extension, Virginia Department of Forestry, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service and Farm Service Agency, and other federal, state, and local agencies. Operating funds are provided by grants and appropriations from state and local governments. The Commonwealth of Virginia supports the Tidewater Soil and Water Conservation District through financial and administrative assistance provided by the Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board and the Department of Conservation and Recreation. All programs, services, and employment opportunities of the Tidewater Soil and Water Conservation District are offered on a nondiscriminatory basis, without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, marital status, handicap, or political affiliation.

DISTRICT DIRECTORY

DIRECTORS

Daniel Rilee, Vice-Chairman - Gloucester
Keith Horsley, Treasurer - Gloucester
George Rogers - Mathews
Ronnie Lewis – Mathews
Jason Bray - Middlesex
Alan Sutherlin - Middlesex

APPOINTED DIRECTORS

William Richardson, Jr., Chairman - At Large
Frank Long, Secretary - VCE Agent

STAFF

LaVerne Calhoun - District Manager
Meredith Rose - Conservation/Education Specialist
Debbie Billings - Conservation Office Assistant

NRCS STAFF

Scott Hammond - District Conservationist
Ariel Coleman - Soil Conservationist

EDUCATION

The **Martin J. Menges scholarship** was established in memory of Mathews County resident and former District Director, Martin J. Menges. Mr. Menges was co-founder of the watershed group “Save the Ole Piankatank.” Recipients of this scholarship must plan to major in natural resource conservation or environmental studies and have a grade point average of 3.0 or greater. With great honor, Tidewater Soil & Water Conservation District is proud to recognize **Faith Lewis as the 2023 Martin J. Menges \$1,000.00 scholarship recipient**. Faith is a 2023 graduate of Mathews High School and will be attending Clemson University. She will major in environmental science.

The **Virginia Association of Soil & Water Conservation Districts Educational Foundation** annually provides four **\$1,000.00 statewide scholarships** that promotes the education of Virginia citizens in technical fields with a natural resource conservation and environmental protection emphasis. With great honor, Tidewater Soil & Water Conservation District is proud to recognize **Kayleigh Miller as the 2023 VASWCD Education Foundation \$1,000.00 scholarship recipient**. Kayleigh is a 2023 graduate of Gloucester High School and will be attending Coastal Carolina University. She will major in oceanology and minor in education.



Pictured above left to right: Faith Lewis & Kayleigh Miller

Participated in the **Urbanna Oyster Festival Education Day** by providing a soil erosion box and the EnviroScape watershed model demonstrations to **over 300 students**. Students participated in a **hands-on soil erosion box demonstration** and discussion on how erosion reduces soil fertility, pollutes water bodies, and creates other problems. They theorized the results they expected after a simulated rainfall on the bare soil, grass, and crop residue boxes. While observing the runoff from the boxes, they were able to see the changes to water color, clarity, and amount of sediment that was deposited into the collection containers. Students were able to quickly see the importance of keeping soil covered and the benefit of the VACS Cover Crop practices to our community. Next, they were provided an **EnviroScape watershed model demonstration**. The three-dimensional watershed model includes residential, recreational, agricultural, and industrial landscapes. The students watched stormwater runoff carry pollutants through the watershed and into the river. They learned about the best management practices required to prevent the pollution and realized that what we do in our community makes a difference and impacts the environment.



Meredith & Scott demonstrating rainwater erosion.



LaVerne demonstrating the EnviroScape watershed model.

Provided the **EnviroScape** watershed model demonstration to **365 4th grade Gloucester students** during the **5-day Meaningful Watershed Educational Experience** at Beaverdam Park.

Meredith demonstrating the EnviroScape model.



Promoted the **Youth Conservation Camp** scholarship (**\$550.00 value**) program. This week-long summer conservation camp is on the campus of Virginia Tech and is sponsored by the Virginia Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts. The program brings together approximately 70 Virginia high school students (*currently enrolled in grades 9-12*) for a week of learning about Virginia's natural resources from conservation professionals and faculty from Virginia Tech. Most of the instruction is hands-on and outdoors.

Virginia Department of Forestry and Tidewater SWCD celebrated Arbor & Earth Day for five days by providing educational programs to **430 students at six local elementary schools**.

Each student planted a white dogwood seedling in a cup to take home and participated in an interactive program on the environmental benefits of trees.



Debbie helping students plant their seedlings.

The annual **conservation poster contest** provides K-12 grade students an opportunity to convey their thoughts about soil, water, and related natural resource issues through art. It also highlights the educational outreach efforts of conservation districts and their state conservation associates, auxiliaries and agencies. The **2022 “Healthy Soil, Healthy Life” Poster Contest Winner was Kyla Walden** from Middlesex Elementary School. She was presented an award certificate and a Walmart **\$25.00 gift card** compliments of Tidewater SWCD.

Winner Kyla Walden and Middlesex Elementary School Principal, Danielle Daniel.



Volunteered at **2022 Area III Virginia Dominion Energy Envirothon** at the VCU Rice River Center in Charles City. The Virginia Dominion Energy Envirothon is a team based natural resources competition for high school students. Students who participate learn stewardship and management concepts and work to solve real world environmental problems. Teams compete in five areas: soils, aquatics, forestry, wildlife, and a current environmental issue.

NATURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

The Tidewater Soil and Water Conservation District administers the **Virginia Agriculture Cost Share (VACS) Best Management Practices Program** which offers Cost Share assistance as an incentive to install or implement voluntary BMPs. BMPs improve water quality in the state's streams, rivers, and Chesapeake Bay.

Winter Wheat Cover Crop



Hosted the annual **Virginia Agriculture Cost Share (VACS) Breakfast Meeting** at Nick's Spaghetti & Steakhouse in Shackelfords. The informational meeting included a summary of the VACS Program, agency updates, and guest speakers Robert Harper-Virginia Farm Bureau Grain Division and Tracy Porter & Frederick Custis-Virginia State University Small Farm Outreach. Approximately **43 attendees** participated in the training session.

**Robert Harper
from the
Virginia Farm
Bureau Grain
Division.**



VA Ag BMP Cost Share Program

Total Cost Share Allocated: \$1,764,701.21

BMP's Implemented	Gloucester County Acres	Mathews County Acres	Middlesex County Acres
Core Nutrient Management Plan	9,877.15	2,157.18	13,188.96
In-Furrow Banded N	3,176.00	474.66	4,081.51
In-Furrow Banded P	3,039.51	459.01	4,081.51
1st Sidedress	3,592.93	669.61	6,461.47
2nd Sidedress	992.76	268.01	2,224.04
2nd Topdress	36.23	0.00	849.42
3rd Topdress	0.00	0.00	277.13
Variable Rate N	103.41	0.00	1,573.31
Variable Rate P	1,426.98	0.00	1,623.72
Early Rye Cover Crop	4,628.92	505.31	3,308.36
Standard Rye Cover Crop	349.60	17.43	39.49
Early Non-Rye Cover Crop	2,137.86	265.47	4,936.39
Standard Non-Rye Cover Crop	0.00	0.00	276.81
SL8 Specialty Crop	0.00	0.00	133.57
Harvestable Cover Crop	222.27	0.00	879.99
Continuous No-Till	136.49	0.00	805.98
NM Plan Writing and Revisions	273.66	0.00	0.00

34,171.61 Total Acres of Nutrient Management Plans were either written by DCR or plan writers were paid directly by DCR.

Sponsored and provided a Cost Share program overview at the **2023 Middle Peninsula Crops Conference** that was hosted by Virginia Cooperative Extension at the Cook's Corner Office Complex. Approximately **33 attendees** participated in the training session.

Hosted the annual awards ceremony dinner at The Pilot House in Middlesex. The **honoree** was the **2022 Clean Water Farm Award recipient Roger Calhoun - Carlton & Calhoun Farms, Inc.** The Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation annually sponsors the **Clean Water Farm Award** to recognize farmers utilizing their time, effort, and resources in implementing conservation practices that prevent nutrients, pesticides, and chemicals from entering our local waterways. These farmers deserve recognition and thanks for adopting innovative tools, technologies, and practices that are protecting and enhancing water quality and being a role model for others.

2022 Clean Water Farm Award Carlton & Calhoun Farms, Inc.



Pictured left to right: Dustin Calhoun, Roger Calhoun, & Chairman, William Richardson, Jr.

Roger Calhoun of Carlton & Calhoun Farms, Inc. has been farming for 41 years. Upon graduating from high school in 1981, Roger and his brother, Steven, formed a partnership with their “Papa”, William H. Carlton. Their operation consisted of raising hogs, cattle, grain crops, hay and logging operations. Around 1997, due to economic reasons, the decision was made to no longer raise livestock. In 2007, Roger became sole owner of the farming operation, which was incorporated as Carlton & Calhoun Farms, Inc. Roger attributes becoming a farmer to his “Papa,” who can be credited for Roger’s desire and passion for farming. The Carlton portion of the business name “Carlton & Calhoun Farms, Inc.” is in honor of William H. Carlton. Roger inherited that compassion and work ethic and is passing it on by teaching his son the benefit of utilizing Best Management Practices. He has all of his acres in Tidewater District signed up for continuous no-till. Roger split applies his nitrogen on corn and small grains to minimize runoff to our waterways. He maintains grass buffers around his fields to minimize nutrient and soil loss. Roger also utilizes crop rotation practices and cover crops. Roger has the privilege of farming alongside his son, Dustin Calhoun. Dustin has worked fulltime for Carlton & Calhoun Farms, Inc. since graduating from college. Peachie Brown Jr. has been a dedicated and essential employee for over 35 years. Tidewater Soil and Water Conservation District is proud to honor the values passed down from William H. Carlton by awarding Roger Calhoun of Carlton & Calhoun Farms, Inc. the 2022 Tidewater Clean Water Farm Award.

2022 Virginia Forestry Best Management Award

John Elkin, Jr.



John Elkin, Jr. of Hunters, LLC and Bigfoot, LLC was presented the 2022 Virginia Forestry Best Management Practice Award at the VASWCD Annual Meeting in Roanoke, VA. Pictured from left: Travis Voyles, Acting Secretary of Natural & Historic Resources, Terry Lasher, Assistant State Forester, Mr. & Mrs. John Elkin, Jr., & Matt Lohr, Secretary of Agriculture & Forestry.

ADMINISTRATION



Pictured from left: LaVerne Calhoun, District Manager being recognized for 20 years of service; Meredith Rose, Conservation/Education Specialist in the Parade of Districts at the Annual Meeting; & Debbie Billings, Conservation Office Assistant at the Urbanna Oyster Festival Education Day.

Debbie Billings was welcomed to Tidewater SWCD as the Conservation Office Assistant in July 2022. Debbie comes to us after seventeen years in the healthcare industry. She holds an Associate's Degree in Business Management and certificates in accounting, microcomputer applications, and early childhood development. She lives on her family's homestead with her significant other of thirty-seven years in Middlesex County.

Directors and employees attended the **Virginia Association of Soil & Water Conservation Districts Annual Meeting** at The Hotel Roanoke. The meeting included training sessions, business meetings, partner agency updates, and guest speakers. **LaVerne Calhoun**, District Manager, was recognized for 20 years of dedicated service during the Area III meeting.



From the left: Ronnie Lewis, TSWCD Director; Meredith Rose, Conservation/Education Specialist; Lisa Deaton, Virginia Department of Forestry; Jason Bray, TSWCD Director; & LaVerne Calhoun, District Manager enjoying the Annual Meeting dinner at the Hotel Roanoke.

Attended the **Area III Spring Meeting of the Virginia Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts** in Goochland. The meeting included a business session, partner agency updates, and guest speakers.

Attended trainings with partner agencies: Virginia Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts, Virginia Association of Conservation District Employees, Department of Conservation & Recreation, Natural Resources Conservation Service, and Virginia Cooperative Extension.

The Tidewater SWCD Board of Directors conducted monthly business meetings with local partners: Department of Conservation and Recreation, Virginia Cooperative Extension, Virginia Department of Forestry, Natural Resources Conservation Service, and Farm Service Agency.

Tidewater Soil & Water Conservation District Board of Directors



Front Row (L to R): George Rogers, Mathews; Frank Long, VCE Agent; Daniel Rilee, Gloucester; Ronnie Lewis, Mathews. Back Row (L to R): Alan Sutherlin, Middlesex; Keith Horsley, Gloucester; William Richardson, Jr., At Large, Jason Bray, Middlesex.



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District Directors:

William Richardson, Jr., Chairman – At Large
Daniel Rilee, Vice Chairman - Gloucester
Keith Horsley, Treasurer – Gloucester
Frank Long, Secretary – VCE Agent, Appointed
Alan Sutherlin – Middlesex
Jason Bray, Chairman – Middlesex
George Rogers – Mathews
Ronnie Lewis – Mathews

Return Service Requested

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

District Personnel:

LaVerne Calhoun - District Manager
Meredith Rose - Conservation/Education Specialist
Debbie Billings - Conservation Office Assistant

NRCS Personnel:

Scott Hammond - District Conservationist
Ariel Coleman—Soil Conservationist

Tidewater SWCD Telephone Number: (804) 699-3482