

TIDEWATER SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

STRATEGIC PLAN 2025-2028

**TIDEWATER SOIL AND WATER
CONSERVATION DISTRICT
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 that serves the counties of Gloucester, Mathews, and Middlesex. Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) were established in the 1930s to develop comprehensive programs and plans to conserve soil resources, control and prevent soil erosion, prevent floods and conserve, develop, utilize and dispose of water. Tidewater SWCD was the first district organized in Virginia in 1938. The District originally included the counties of Essex, King & Queen, and King William. Years later New Kent, Caroline, Hanover, Middlesex, Mathews, and Gloucester counties joined Tidewater SWCD. In 1982, District boundaries were redefined to include only Gloucester, Mathews, and Middlesex counties. The District locally administers the Virginia Agricultural Best Management Cost Share Program (VACS). The program's goal is to improve water quality in the state's streams, rivers, and the Chesapeake Bay. VACS offers cost share assistance as an incentive to construct or implement Best Management Practices (BMPs). Voluntary BMPs reduce nonpoint source pollution and improves soil health and water quality. Tidewater SWCD also offers environmental educational programs, college scholarships, youth conservation camp, camp woods & wildlife, poster contest, and Envirothon.

The District is governed by an eight-member board of directors who serve a four-year term. Directors receive no payment for their services. Six directors, two from each county, are elected in local general elections. Two directors are appointed by the Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board, one of which must be a Virginia Cooperative Extension Agent. The Board meets monthly to conduct and oversee district business. Meetings are held on the fourth Thursday of each month and are open to the public.

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

Elected Directors

Amanda Armstrong - Gloucester
Keith Horsley - Gloucester
Richard Hicks - Mathews
Jean Howard - Mathews
Jacob Kirby - Middlesex
Amy Maloney - Middlesex

Appointed Directors

William Richardson, Jr. - At Large
Frank Long - Virginia Cooperative Extension Agent

Associate Director

Ronnie Lewis - Mathews

Staff

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

Natural Resources Conservation Services

Scott Hammond - District Conservationist

PARTNERING AGENCIES

Mathews County

Middlesex County

Gloucester County

National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD)

United States Department of Agriculture-Farm Service Agency (FSA)

United States Department of Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

Virginia Association of Soil & Water Conservation Districts (VASWCD)

Virginia Cooperative Extension Service (VCE)

Virginia Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services (VDACS)

Virginia Department of Conservation & Recreation (DCR)

Virginia DCR Shoreline Erosion Advisory Service (SEAS)

Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ)

Virginia Department of Forestry (VDOF)

Virginia Department of Game & Inland Fisheries (DGIF)

Virginia Soil & Water Conservation Board (VSWCB)

Virginia State University

Virginia Tech

Fellow Virginia Soil & Water Conservation Districts

Planning Process

Tidewater SWCD began the Strategic Planning process in August 2024. Local officials and partner agencies were contacted for assistance in preparing the 2025-2028 Strategic Plan. The community was notified of the public comment period via press releases in local newspapers and on the Tidewater SWCD's website www.tidewaterswcd.org. Once the period for public comments had concluded, the Tidewater SWCD Board of Directors met to review comments and began drafting the Strategic Plan. The Strategic Plan will assist Tidewater SWCD in achieving its goals and developing its Annual Plan of Work.

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MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Tidewater Soil and Water Conservation District is to promote the conservation of natural resources through stewardship, outreach, and education.

VISION STATEMENT

To be a leader in conservation education and in evaluating and providing creative solutions to natural resource related issues.

Goals for 2025-2028

Goal #1: Ensure all agricultural producers are aware of the Virginia Agricultural Cost Share (VACS) and Whole Farm Approach (WFA) programs

Objective #1 Inform producers about the benefits of agricultural best management practices (BMPs) and increase program participation

Action #1 Newsletters, press releases, website

Action #2 Agricultural meetings and field days

Objective #2 Improve communication between all parties; agricultural, government, and the general public

Action #1 Meetings /workshops with partnering agencies

Action #2 Select Clean Water Farm Award Recipient

Objective #3 Advocate for increasing Cost Share funding and new innovative BMPs

Action #1 Work with stakeholders to increase funding for advance technologies and precision agriculture BMPs

Action #2 Directors contact their Board of Supervisors and local officials concerning conservation issues and increased funding

Goal #2: In partnership with other agencies and organizations provide conservation educational programs and materials

Objective #1 Educate the general public and community organizations

Action #1 Participate in the Virginia Conservation Assistance Living Shoreline Program

Action #2 Provide conservation programs for land and stormwater management, wildlife, soil testing, etc.

Action #3 Provide educational materials for contractors, lawn care providers, and gardening groups

Action #4 Workshops on special topics and public service announcements

Action #5 Initiate projects with local governments to implement conservation practices on county property

Objective #2 Educate local youth in schools and community organizations

Action #1 Promote organization of an Envirothon team

Action #2 Present and coordinate SOL based conservation programs and information to schools and community youth groups

Action #3 Create an action committee, between school personnel and the district, to assist schools with conservation program development and implementation

Objective #3 Educate the community on Agricultural BMPs

Action #1 Host BMP tour and/or Down on the Farm Tour for county officials and the general public

Action #2 Directors discuss the benefits of BMPs with their Board of Supervisors and local officials

Action #3 Increase BMP and District signage

Goal #3: Effectively manage growth and development while preserving our natural resources

Objective #1 Increase District input and influence in local planning

Action #1 Directors contact their Board of Supervisors and local officials concerning conservation issues and increased funding

Action #2 Provide Board of Supervisors and planning departments presentations

Action #3 Promote farmland preservation

Action #4 Director training on important issues

Approved: Tidewater Soil and Water Conservation District
Board of Directors

William Richardson, Jr., Chairman

William J. Richardson

Jacob Kirby, Vice Chairman

Jacob Kirby

Frank Long, Secretary

Frank Long

Keith Horsley, Treasurer

Keith Horsley

Date

10/24/2024

Amanda Armstrong

Amanda Armstrong

Richard Hicks

Richard Hicks 10 Nov 2024

Jean Howard

Jean Howard

Amy Maloney

Amy Maloney

Approved: Commonwealth of Virginia Department of
Conservation and Recreation

Marissa Roland, Eastern Area Manager

Marissa Roland

Date

10/24/2024