

**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](http://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](http://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.

## **TIDEWATER SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT**

### **STRATEGIC PLAN 2025-2028**

## **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 Richardson, Jr.

Amanda Armstrong

Amanda Armstrong

Jacob Kirby, Vice Chairman

Jacob Kirby

Richard Hicks

Richard Hicks 20 Nov 2024

Frank Long, Secretary

Frank Long

Jean Howard

Jean Howard

Keith Horsley, Treasurer

Keith Horsley

Amy Maloney

Amy Maloney

Date

10/24/2024

**Approved:** Commonwealth of Virginia Department of  
Conservation and Recreation

Marissa Roland, Eastern Area Manager

Marissa Roland

Date

10/24/2024