



Conservation News

Serving the counties of Gloucester, Mathews, & Middlesex

WINTER 2024 EDITION

College Scholarships Available Applications Due March 27th

The Tidewater Soil and Water Conservation District, through the Virginia Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts, has TWO scholarship opportunities available. These scholarships are intended to promote the education of Virginia citizens in technical fields of natural resource conservation and environmental protection. The awards will be considered for students majoring in, or showing a strong desire to major in, a course curriculum related to natural resource conservation and/or environmental studies. All applicants must be residents of Gloucester, Mathews, or Middlesex County.

One scholarship, in the amount of \$1,000.00, was established in memory of Mathews County resident, Mr. Martin J. Menges, a former District Director. Mr. Menges was co-founder and past president of the York River Chapter of the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, and co-founder of the watershed group Save the Ole Piankatank. Tidewater Soil & Water Conservation District will select the winner for the Martin J. Menges scholarship.

The Virginia Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts will award four freshmen level scholarships in the amount of \$2,000.00 each on a statewide competitive basis. Each SWCD is to select one freshman applicant and forward the application to the VASWCD office for consideration. Applicants need to complete only one application which will be used for both the VASWCD and Martin J. Menges scholarships.

All programs and services of the Virginia Association of Soil and Water Conservation District's Educational Foundation, Inc. are offered on a nondiscriminatory basis, without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, marital status, or disability. All submitted paperwork is confidential and becomes the property of the VASWCD.

Scholarship guidelines & application are available at the district office at 6969 Fox Hunt Lane in Gloucester, VA – or online:

www.tidewaterswcd.org/Scholarship.htm

Applications are due March 27, 2024

Mail or hand-deliver completed applications to:

**Tidewater SWCD
6969 Fox Hunt Lane
P.O. Box 677
Gloucester, VA 23061**

2024 PHOTO CONTEST

Presented by the Virginia Association of Soil & Water Conservation Districts

Enter up to 10 digital images that represent:

“Conservation Across the Commonwealth”

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT:
WWW.VASWCD.ORG/PHOTOCOMPETITION

- Images must be taken in Virginia
- One Overall Winner, People's Choice, & Young Photographer will be selected.
- Full list of rules can be found online





ENTRIES DUE
8.1.2024

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Meeting Reminder

Monthly board meetings are held the 4th Thursday of the month except for the month of November. Please call our office to verify meeting date and time. (804) 699-3482.

2023 Clean Water Farm Award Winner

Daniel Rilee

Tidewater Soil and Water Conservation District has chosen to present Daniel Rilee with the 2023 Clean Water Farm Award. Mr. Rilee is a third-generation farmer raised on his family's grain farm in Gloucester County. Being raised on a farm, Daniel was taught early in childhood to value and respect the land. Those values lead him to accept an appointment as a director for Tidewater Soil and Water Conservation District in 2010. He has continued to serve as a member of our board for 13 years. He has provided our District with strong leadership serving as a slated officer in the positions of chairman, vice-chairman, and secretary. While Daniel's profession was not always farming, he took over full time management of the farm in 2015. Daniel primarily raises corn and soybeans in continuous no-till rotations. He is an avid participant in the Virginia Agricultural Cost Share program both in Tidewater SWCD and Three Rivers SWCD. Daniel participates in conservation tillage practices enrolling his acreage in continuous no-till. He plants rye, barley, and mixed species cover crops that include a mix of clover, radishes, and turnips. The farm is equipped with tile drainage and sod waterways to mitigate soil erosion and nutrient loss due to runoff. Mr. Rilee uses precision and variable rate technology for the application of nutrients which increases crop productivity and reduces nutrient runoff. In addition, he utilizes split applications, in-furrow/banded applications and nitrogen stabilizers to reduce nutrient losses. When asked about his operation Daniel shared, his father Ray Rilee can be found running equipment, planting, keeping records or acting as an advisor to his son, but "my mom is really the one that keeps things running." Frances Rilee can be found running the drying equipment, helping to move equipment, keeping records, advising and many other tasks that have allowed her son and husband to remain productive all of these years. It is our pleasure to award Mr. Daniel Rilee the 2023 Clean Water Farm Award for his years of dedication to agricultural and conservation practices serving Tidewater SWCD and his implementation of best management practices throughout his grain farming operation to prevent soil loss and reduce excess nutrients from entering the Bay.



Pictured above: William Richardson, Jr., Chairman with Frances and Daniel Rilee.

Director Service Awards

At the 2023 Annual Holiday and Awards Dinner, we said farewell and presented plaques to four amazing Directors in recognition of their service as they are stepping away from the Board – Jason Bray served 17 years (Middlesex), Alan Sutherlin served 15 years (Middlesex), Daniel Rilee served 13 years (Gloucester), and George Rogers served 3 years (Mathews).



2024 Poster Contest Announced

The National Association of Conservation Districts selects a theme yearly for the national conservation outreach initiative. This year's is "May the Forest Be With You Always." The winner in each age group will receive a \$25.00 Walmart gift card and will also have their poster advance to compete at the state competition. All entries are due to the Tidewater Soil and Water Conservation District in Gloucester by September 25, 2024. The complete rules and required entry form may be obtained by contacting the Tidewater SWCD office at 804-699-3482 or by visiting our website www.tidewaterswcd.org/poster_contest.html.



Youth Conservation Camp Deadline April 24, 2024

Youth Conservation Camp applications are now available at the Tidewater Soil and Water Conservation District for Gloucester, Mathews, and Middlesex students that are in the 9th -12th grade during the 2023-2024 school year. Youth Conservation Camp is a week long camp that is sponsored by the VA Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts 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. Two students are chosen by Tidewater SWCD to attend this camp at Virginia Tech each year. Camp admission, meals and lodging during the camp (a \$550.00 value) are provided by Tidewater SWCD. Transportation to and from camp is the sole responsibility of the camper. While at camp, students will bunk in the college dorms and be involved in many activities and educational events. Applications may be found on our website at www.tidewaterswcd.org/conservation_camp.html. Please complete and return application **AND \$100 deposit** to: Tidewater Soil & Water Conservation District, P.O. Box 677, 6969 Fox Hunt Lane, Gloucester, VA 23061.

2024 Cost Share Updates

Conservation Tillage and Precision Agricultural Equipment Tax Credit

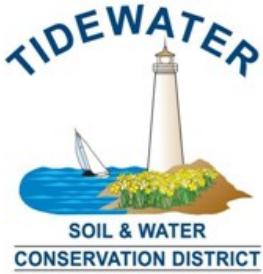
The tax credit is offered by the Virginia Department of Taxation. You may qualify for this credit if you: 1) Purchase certain equipment designed to reduce soil compaction and disturbance, or to more precisely apply fertilizers and pesticides. 2) You are engaged in agricultural production for market. 3) You have a nutrient management plan developed by a certified nutrient management plan writer. 4) You have a soil conservation plan that is approved by the District. The income tax credit is equal to 25% of the cost of the equipment with a maximum credit of \$17,500. Please contact Meredith if you are interested in applying for credit.

March 15, 2024: Nutrient Management Plans Due to District Office

Producers are required to have an up-to-date nutrient management plan on file in order to receive cost share payments. This is a busy time of year for plan writers, please do not wait to contact them.

March 15th – June 1, 2024: Cover Crop Kill-down and Reporting Period

All cover crops must be terminated after March 15th but before June 1, 2024 to qualify to receive cost share payment. Producers who signed up for the late kill-down incentive payment must wait until May 1, 2024 to begin kill-down in order to receive the additional \$10/acre incentive.



P.O. Box 677
Gloucester, VA 23061
(804) 699- 3482

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District Directors

William Richardson, Jr, Chairman - At Large
Jacob Kirby, Vice Chairman - Middlesex
Keith Horsley, Treasurer - Gloucester
Frank Long, Secretary - VCE Agent
Amanda Armstrong - Gloucester
Amy Maloney - Middlesex
Richard Hicks - Mathews
Jean Howard - 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