

SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

6969 Fox Hunt Lane

P.O. Box 677

Gloucester, VA 23061

(804) 699 - 3482

www.tidewaterswcd.org

In This Issue:

College Scholarship Information

Photo Contest

Clean Water Farm Award

Poster Contest

Youth Conservation Camp

Cost Share Updates

Important Dates:

March 15, 2025

Nutrient Management Plans Due

March 25, 2025

Scholarship Application Deadline

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.

Conservation News

Serving the counties of Gloucester, Mathews, & Middlesex

WINTER 2025 EDITION

College Scholarships Available Applications Due March 25, 2025

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 VASWCDEF.

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 25, 2025

Mail or hand-deliver completed applications to:

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



2025 PHOTO CONTEST

Presented by the Virginia Association of Soil & Water Conservation Districts

Enter up to 10 digital images that represent: "Virginia's Charm: Capture Conservation"

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT:

WWW.VASWCD.ORG/PHOTOCOMPETITION

Images must be taken in Virginia.

One Overall Winner, People's Choice & Young Photographer will be awarded.



**ENTRIES DUE BY
8-1-2025**

2024 Clean Water Farm Award Winner Pointer Bros Inc.

Tidewater Soil and Water Conservation District has chosen to present Owen and Chris Pointer of Pointer Bros Inc. with the 2024 Clean Water Farm Award. Owen and Chris Pointer are 4th and 5th generation farmers who both grew up on the farm. Owen took over fulltime management of the incorporation in 2018, about the same time his son, Chris, joined him fulltime to assist with farm operations. Before they took over, Owen's Dad, William Joseph, and his uncle, James "Jimmy" had co-owned Pointer Bros Inc. and they had incorporated it in 1997. Hence the name, Pointer Brothers.



Pictured above left to right: Theresa, Paige holding Loraine, Chris, and Owen Pointer with Amanda Armstrong, TSWCD Chairman.

Riverview Farm, as the home farm is known, sits on the banks of the York River in Gloucester County. Owen recalled his Granddaddy, Michael Harvey Pointer (2nd Generation), growing potatoes there. After several years of just breaking even, he realized being a potato farmer was not for him. The farm was then turned into a flower farm that grew daffodils. The daffodils were harvested, bunched, placed in crates, and loaded onto a steamship at the Clay Bank dock to be taken to Baltimore to sell. Michael Harvey had purchased the first tractor that was ever used on the farm on January 3rd, 1940. That old John Deere has since been fully restored by Chris, as his senior project (with a little help from his family), and remains operable to this day. Michael William Pointer was the patriarch of their family farming legacy. When asked "What is the most satisfying part of farming for you?" Owen replied, "Seeing the next generation taking it over!" as he beamed, glancing over at his son.

Riverview Farm grows a 2-year rotation of corn and soybeans and will sometimes grow a wheat commodity crop in the winter too. When planting any crop, the Pointers use a no-till drill for the benefit of minimal soil disturbance and uniform placement, ensuring their plants get enough sunlight and nutrients to grow, and also giving the seed protection from pests and the elements as it is covered by soil when planted. Pointer Bros Inc. began the use of cover crops on their farm prior to the cost share program that pays an incentive to help alleviate the cost. Annually, they plant as many acres as they can with or without cost share assistance. They firmly believe in drilling the seed to continuously establish a good stand. They also try to plant early to fully reap the benefit of having living roots in the soil, try nitrogen fixating species, and are trying to increase soil organic matter. They have tried many different species of cover crops to include clover, rye, wheat, barley, and radishes. Owen and Chris believe the use of cover crops has contributed to positive changes in their soil and, in turn, their farming operation. Their nutrient management planner even noted the vast increase of organic matter shown on their soil test results. The increase in soil organic matter can also be attributed to their conservation tillage practice of no-till farming.

When planting corn, Pointer Bros places in-furrow applications of nitrogen, phosphorus, and micro-nutrients that contain zinc, boron, and sulfur to nourish the seed as it germinates. They also side-dress their nitrogen on corn to reduce nitrogen loss and increase their crop yield by making sure the crop gets the nutrients it needs when the plant needs it most. They also split apply nitrogen on commodity small grains through the winter for the same added benefits. Owen and Chris, implement a nutrient management plan on all of their crop acres and execute a NRCS conservation plan to guide all of their conservation practices.

On top of his contributions of conservation on their farm, Chris Pointer has been an active member of the Gloucester/Mathews Chapter of Virginia Farm Bureau since 2020 and has served as the Chapter's President since 2021. He has demonstrated leadership among his peers to ensure they have educational opportunities and technical resources to remain competitive in the agriculture industry. It is this selfless dedication to agricultural producers in our area that sets Chris apart.

Tidewater Soil and Water Conservation District is honored to present the father son duo, Owen and Chris Pointer of Pointer Bros Inc., with the 2024 Clean Water Farm Award for their contributions implementing conservation practices on their farm and for the commitment to bettering the agricultural industry in the community where they live and grow.

2025 Poster Contest Announced

The National Association of Conservation Districts selects a theme yearly for the national conservation outreach initiative. This year's is "Home is where the Habitat is." The winner in each age group will receive a Walmart gift card for \$25 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 24, 2025. The complete rules and required entry form may be obtained by contacting the Tidewater SWCD office at 6969 Fox Hunt Lane, Gloucester, VA, calling 804-699-3482 or by visiting our website www.tidewaterswcd.org/poster_contest.html.



Youth Conservation Camp Deadline April 23, 2025

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 2024-2025 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.

2025 Cost-Share Updates

***New* Requirement Prior to Payment Processing**

Producers are required to sign Part III paperwork for the cost-share contract they are seeking payment on **PRIOR** to the District issuing a payment this year. If a producer wishes to conduct business remotely, we are able to accept signed forms electronically. Please reach out to Meredith with any questions or to conduct business remotely.

Conservation Tillage and Precision Agricultural Equipment Tax Credit

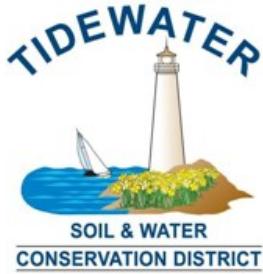
The tax credit is offered by the Virginia Department of Taxation. You may qualify for this credit if you: 1) Purchase certain equipment designed to reduce soil compaction and disturbance, or to more precisely apply fertilizers and pesticides. 2) You are engaged in agricultural production for market. 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, 2025: 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, 2025: Cover Crop Kill-down and Reporting Period

All cover crops must be terminated after March 15th but before June 1, 2025 to qualify to receive cost share payment. Producers who signed up for the late kill-down incentive payment must wait until May 1, 2025 to begin kill-down in order to receive the additional \$10/acre incentive.



Bulk Rate
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Non-Profit
Permit No. 53

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

District Directors

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

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