

Annual Report

2020



**Three Rivers Soil & Water
Conservation District**



Three Rivers Soil & Water Conservation District

772 Richmond Beach Road * Tappahannock, VA 22560

804-443-2327 x 4

About Us

The Three Rivers Soil & Water Conservation District mission is to be a partner in conservation for landowners in the counties of Essex, King William and King & Queen.

The District works in partnership with localities to support local conservation programs, and to bring state and federal conservation programs and resources to each community.

Support for the District comes through the Commonwealth of Virginia, state and federal grants, contributions from each locality, private grants, and donations.

Our District is governed by locally elected Directors, who serve without pay.

We Work With People Who Work The Land

In Virginia, Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCD) are authorized through the Code of VA 10.1, Chapter 5. SWCDs are locally controlled, special purpose governmental subdivision of the State of Virginia comprised of one or more localities.

Directors are charged with the responsibility of promoting soil and water conservation and establishing conservation programs, which is done through cooperation of other agencies and local government.

There are over 3,000 SWCDs in the U.S. covering about 98% of the country's land area.

Acknowledgements: The Commonwealth of Virginia supports the Three Rivers SWCD through financial and administrative assistance provided by the Virginia Soil & Water Board and the Department of Conservation & Recreation.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS & STAFF

Lloyd Mundie, Chair, Essex Co

Troy Johnson, Vice Chair,
King William Co

T. Keith Balderson, Treasurer, Essex Co

Robert T. Bland, IV, Secretary,
King & Queen Co

Robbie Longest, Essex County
Extension Appointment

Langdon Townsend, King William Co

Benjamin Ellis, Essex Co

Bruce Taylor, King & Queen Co

Thomas Fox, Associate Director,
King William Co

Roland Geddes, Associate Director,
Essex Co

W. Todd Henley, Associate Directors,
King & Queen Co

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Waring Baylor, Education Coordinator
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Sarah Cole, Conservation Specialist
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Board Members contributed 584 volunteer hours during FY 20

Letter from the Chair:

I would like to thank the Directors and Staff for a very successful FY20. Through hard work and dedication, many goals in our Annual Plan of Work have been exceeded. In addition to our workload, the District was able to obtain two pilot grants, one from DEQ to work with localities on Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act Assessments and the second was a Cost Share Program "Whole Farm Approach" for local Producers. Both grants were a big success!

We look forward to continuing the great work in FY21. Please contact us if we can be of service or assistance to you in the coming year.

Respectfully,

Lloyd B. Mundie, Chairman

FISCAL OPERATIONS

Personnel

The major goals of the District are achieved by the employees through planning, budgeting, and the provision of technical assistance. The District has five employees. In order to provide the highest quality service and up-to-date information, District employees regularly attended training workshops and seminars throughout the year to improve their skills. DCR and NRCS provided most of the training. Annual personnel reviews were conducted by the Personnel Committee Chair & Board of Directors to evaluate the progress of employees and to ensure the orderly day to day operations of the District. The Annual Plan of Work was reviewed and updated to ensure the goals and objectives of the District were met. The District also updated its 5 year Strategic Plan.

District Operations

The Three Rivers SWCD Finance Committee oversees the operating budget. The District receives financial and administrative support from King William, King & Queen and Essex counties, the Commonwealth of Virginia, the Virginia Department of Conservation & Recreation, the District's equipment rental program and private grants. The District is audited every two years to ensure the proper use of funds. The District was audited in February of 2020 by Clifton, Larson, Allen LLP.

Board Meetings

The District conducts monthly board meetings to work with conservation issues and landowners concerns within Essex, King William and King & Queen counties. The public, as well as cooperating agencies, are invited to attend the District Meetings to provide input. Unless otherwise noted, meetings are held on the third Tuesday of each month. Notification of Board Meetings are published in the newspapers at the beginning of the fiscal year. Minutes and the agenda are mailed out a week prior to Directors and cooperating agency representatives. Although parliamentary procedures are followed, the atmosphere is warm and welcoming.

How We Operate

The 2019-2020 operating budget (July 1, 2019 —June 30, 2020) for the District was \$355,254. Funding included \$145,789 in general operating funds from the Commonwealth, \$163,766 in agricultural technical assistance funding from the Commonwealth; \$25,699 from local governments; and \$20,000 to administer a DEQ Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act Grant. Outside of operations, the District received \$1,937,892 for the VA Ag BMP Cost Share Program and \$1,200,000 for a pilot Whole Farm Approach Cost Share Grant to allocate toward best management practices for water quality.

FY20 SNAPSHOT



\$3,676,865.80

Whole Farm Approach &
VA Ag BMP Cost Share
funding provided for on-
the-ground Best
Management Practices



29

Chesapeake Bay Preservation
Act Soil & Water Conservation
Assessments were developed in
Essex, King William and King &
Queen Counties



1221

Youth & Adults reached
through outreach programs or
participated in watershed
educational activities



6,195.62

Acres

Resource Management Plans
reviewed and inspected



87,586.90

Acres of Nutrient
Management
Plans



35,797.8

Acres Planted in Small Grain
& Legume Cover Crop



53,696.7

Tons of Soil Saved
by effective BMP's

ASSISTANCE TO LOCALITIES

TRSWCD was the recipient of a \$20,000 grant from DEQ to work with the localities of Essex, King William and King & Queen to complete 29 Soil & Water Quality Assessments on active agricultural lands. The District targeted ag activities within the locally designated RPA or RMA Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act areas to verify compliance with buffer encroachment by 50 or 75 feet. Each Assessment included a current Nutrient Management Plan, field documentation identifying the scope of conservation practices applied and the effectiveness of these practices. Conservation Plans were developed, and Soil Loss calculations were performed on each agricultural parcel. Based on field assessments, if additional Best Management Practices were required or needed such as buffers, cover crops, no-till, erosion control measures, or fencing livestock from streams, the VA Ag BMP Cost Share Program was offered as an option for compliance to the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act regulations.

This partnership is to ensure that water quality protection is being accomplished consistent with the Bay Act. There is the common objective of helping to bring about the conservation, and wise use of the land, water and related resources. Funding through this grant assisted local governments to achieve compliance with the Chesapeake Bay Program Compliance Review.

Why are Resource Protection Areas (RPA) so important?

A naturally or planted vegetated RPA, or buffer, acts as a stream protector, a filter, a transformer, a nutrient sink and a food source. These critical functions enable the RPA to remove pollutants from stormwater runoff and to protect the stream or other water body.

WFA-1 WHOLE FARM APPROACH GRANT

The District received a \$1.2 million grant from the Department of Conservation & Recreation to pilot a new BMP – WFA-1 “Whole Farm Approach” to local producers. This approach bundles agricultural best management practices to collect data, assure that implemented nutrient management plans are accurate and up to date, minimize the impact of nutrients used in crops and highly managed hay production, and to provide for the establishment of vegetative cover on cropland for protection from erosion and the reduction of nutrient losses to groundwater. Due to the success of the program- the District was able to allocate VACS funding to supplement WFA signup to fund all applications.

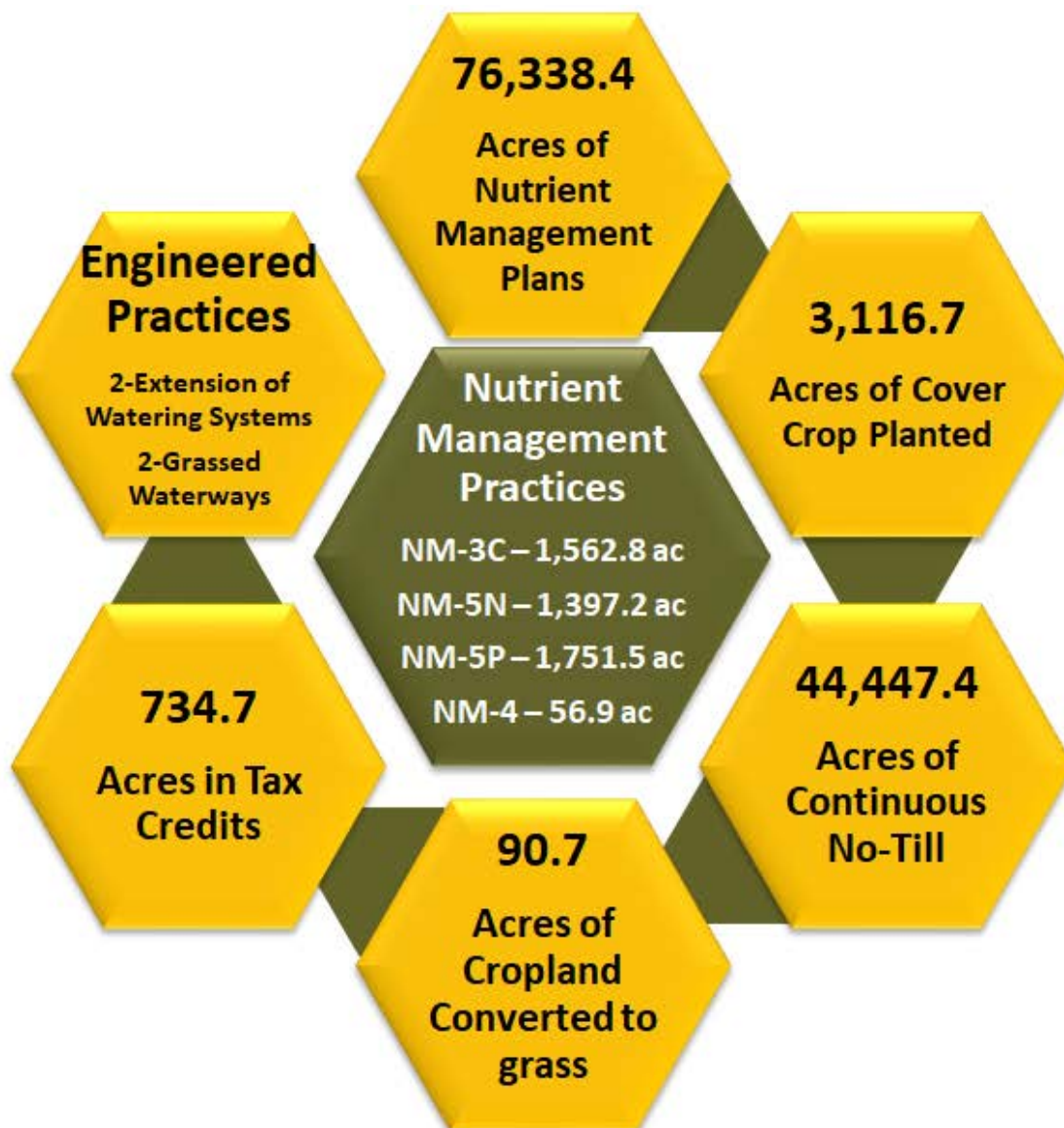
Total Cost Share allocated to Producers was \$2,008,598.15

BMP's Installed by Acre	King & Queen County	King William County	Essex County
Core Nutrient Management	26,998.3	22,141.1	31,950.4
Infurrow Banded Nitrogen	8,938.9	8,957	13,164.4
Infurrow Banded Phosphorous	8,938.9	8,493	12,643.1
1 st Sidedress Corn	10,853.2	9,800.1	15,108.8
2 nd Sidedress /Highly Managed Hayland	913.4	2,346.7	3,773
2 nd Topdress Small Grains	2,872.3	4,176.9	6,000
3 rd Topdress Small Grains	2,801.1	3,750.3	6,000
Variable Rate Nitrogen	263.3	601.1	4,501.3
Variable Rate Phosphorous	697.3	224	12,158.3
Early Rye Cover Crop	6,764.2	3,387.7	3,730.3
Standard Rye Cover Crop	428.2	93.4	196
Late Rye Cover Crop	57.4	-	-
Early Non-Rye Cover Crop	4,689.6	3,886.5	7,381.2
Standard Non-Rye Cover Crop	39.2	66.8	464.6
Legume Cover Crop	-	-	386.9
Harvestable Cover Crop	827.2	127.4	154.5
Total WFA-1 Cost Share	\$709,996.65	\$509,015.05	\$789,586.45

VA AGRICULTURAL BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES COST SHARE PROGRAM

The TRSWCD locally administers the Virginia Agricultural Best Management Practices (BMP) Cost Share Program and Tax Credit Program, which allows the District to offer technical and financial assistance to Producers who wish to implement eligible BMP's. Cost Share funds and/or tax credits are available to plant cover crops, convert cropland to grass, continuous no-till system, obtain a Nutrient Management Plan, and Precision Nutrient Management of Nitrogen/Phosphorous on Cropland.

VACS Cost Share provided to Producers to implement Best Management Practices: \$1,668,267.65



EDUCATION PROGRAM

TRSWCD provides a variety of natural resource related educational services to school aged children. School presentations include grade-specific Science Standards of Learning (SOLs), several 4-H programs (Reality Store and Market Place), as well as "Meaningful Watershed Educational Experiences" (MWEE).

These programs assist local schools in meeting the goals of the Chesapeake Watershed Education Agreement: Fostering Chesapeake Stewardship.

Additionally, the District participates in the Envirothon program on the local level, provides teachers with classroom mini-grants (TRSWCD Mini Grant Program), and provides Science SOL based learning kits for teachers to assist in hands-on learning activities in the classroom or virtually.

221

6th Graders from Essex participated in the Meaningful Watershed Educational Experience, Watershed Day and VCE 4-H Market Place Program

203

6th Graders from King William participated in the Meaningful Watershed Educational Experience at Sandy Point State Park and campers ranging from 6-14 years old participated in the River Camp; TRSWCD partnered with MPRA to conduct these events

58

5th & 7th Graders from King & Queen County participated in the VA Cooperative Extension 4-H Reality Store Program

160

10th graders from Essex High School were able to charter the "Bay Quest" to experience a hands-on outdoor meaningful watershed experience on the Potomac River. Students examined oyster habitat, took water samples, and explored the ecosystem of the Chesapeake Bay. Trip provided by TRSWCD Mini Grant Program \$2,000

8

Developed 8 Science SOL based hands-on activity kits focused on 4th - 6th grade - Teachers have the opportunity to check the kits out for classroom activities or for virtual demonstrations



OUTREACH PROGRAM

Outreach & Education for our community is a key initiative for Three Rivers SWCD. Some of our outreach efforts include camp scholarships, photo contest, interactive displays, conservation signage highlighting best management practices, and academic scholarships. Adult outreach consists of exhibits at public events such as Farmers Markets, rental of a no-till drill, newspaper and radio releases, quarterly newsletters, and social media outreach.

Academic Scholarships

John F. Townsend, Sr.

Jenna Kirkland, West Point HS

J. Franklin Townsend, Jr.

Carrie Fox, St. Margaret's HS

Earl H. & Anna K. Longest

Kathryn Bland, CNU

Larkin Hundley

Regan Allen, Rappahannock HS

6' No-Till Drill Rental

TRSWCD rents the drill to local citizens interested in using the no-till method to renovate pasture or plant buffer strips. A total of **503** acres were planted this year. Funds raised from rentals are used to support the Education Program.

Exhibits at public events

160 people visited exhibits and gave us an opportunity to explain "Who We Are " and "What We Do". Promotional materials were provided for homeowners interested in conservation landscaping, and "What Is Your Watershed Address" identifying your location in the watershed.

Visit us @ www.trswcd.org or on Facebook

Roadside Signage

TRSWCD installed 3 signs on the Rt. 17 and Rt.360 corridors to raise awareness and educate the public on the importance of Producers planting Cover Crops within the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

2 Camp Scholarships Youth Conservation Camp, VT Campus

Lindsey Bartos, West Point HS
Zachary Edgecomb, King William HS



PARTNER SPOTLIGHT

Stormwater Education & Riparian Zone Projects

This year we were proud to partner with the Town of Tappahannock on two Projects; Stormwater Drain Labeling Education Project and a Riparian Zone Kiosk.



The Storm Drain Labeling was a two-day project where students from St. Margaret's School and the Northern Neck Technical Center took stainless steel "disks" or markers and glued them to 95 storm drains on Rt. 360 and Rt. 17 corridors. Our main goal was to raise awareness in the community of how stormwater flows directly into the Rappahannock River and ultimately the Chesapeake Bay.



TRSWCD worked with the Town Manager to install a weatherproof kiosk at the picnic area across from Tappahannock Elementary School.

The Kiosk was designed by TRSWCD to bring awareness to the community on Riparian Zones reflecting habitat protection for existing wildlife and waterfowl.



Riparian Zones are ecosystems that border rivers or streams. They are natural biofilters and protect the aquatic ecosystem from excessive sedimentation, polluted runoff, and erosion.

CLEAN WATER FARM AWARD RECIPIENT

The recipient of the 2019 Clean Water Farm Award is Old Place Farm. With the assistance of their sons Owen and Philip, David Johnson and his wife of 43yrs Mary Ann, operate Old Place Farm near the Pamunkey River. Old Place Farm is an innovative King William County farm operation that excels in implementing conservation practices. This recipient consistently demonstrates a high level of agricultural best management practices throughout his farm.

David grew up on the farm which was operated by his father Oliver. David's father Oliver started no-tilling in 1970 when his brother WC Johnson planted Oliver's first crop of no-till soybeans after his Rye crop. David stated "that soybean crop made my father a believer in no-till".

Old Place Farm is a cash grain and forestry operation consisting of 525 acres of cropland and 70 acres of woodland. Over the years, David has incorporated rye cover crops into his cropping system to build organic matter, reduce soil erosion, and scavenge carryover nutrients. He follows a certified nutrient management plan, and David is also a certified private pesticide applicator licensed through the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services.

In addition to his farming skills, David is an accomplished ag engineer. He custom built a fertilizer truck for his operation, and has modified several pieces of equipment to fit his operation and make it more efficient. David is also active in the farming community. He currently represents King William County on the local Farm Service Agency county committee while also serving on the King William Farm Bureau Board since 1985. He is a past member of the Virginia Corn Growers Association.

Three Rivers SWCD thanks David and Old Place Farm for all their hard work and dedication to conservation.



RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN PROGRAM

The Virginia Resource Management Planning program provides a voluntary way to promote the use of conservation practices that improve farming operations and water quality.

RMP plans are designed to encourage farmers or landowners to use a high level of best management practices that reduce runoff pollution to local waters and in many cases, improve the farmers' financial bottom line. In return for full implementation, the plan holder can be assured that he or she is in compliance with any new state nutrient, sediment, and waste quality standards; in particular, regulations related to the Chesapeake Bay and all local stream segment TMDLs. The certificate of safe harbor is valid for 9 years provided the farmer continues to implement the RMP.

The District has a Technical Review Committee made up of conservation professionals that review these plans. In FY20, Three Rivers SWCD had one of the largest workloads in the Chesapeake Bay region.

11 Plans
approved by
the Board of
Directors

4 Plans
Reviews
Conducted on
1,855.67 acres
\$18,556.70 in
cost share

7 Certification
Inspections
Completed on
3,027.1 acres

4 RMP-2
Cost Share
Applications-
\$6,516.60
1303.32 acres

Benefits of RMP certification

- "Certainty" for nine years.

- A comprehensive approach to determine the best conservation practices for each farming operation.
- Credit for implementing practices that protect water quality.
- Shows farmers as "good actors"; helps stave off future regulations.



Here's To Another Great Year!

