

Three Rivers Soil & Water Conservation District

ANNUAL REPORT

2021-2022



772 Richmond Beach Road
Tappahannock, VA 22560
804-443-2327 x 4

www.trswcd.org



Table of Contents

Chairman's Perspective	2
Our Team	3
About Us	4
Operations	5
Year in Review	6
Continuing Education	7
VA Ag BMP Cost Share Program/Whole Farm Approach	8
Resource Management Program	11
Conservation Awards	12
Partnership Awards	14
Community Outreach	15
Teacher Mini Grants	16
Wildlife Food Plot Competition	18
Education/Outreach	20
Thank You	25

Our Team

Chairman's Perspective

We hope you enjoy our Annual Report covering July 2021 through June 2022. As we welcomed in a new fiscal year, we immediately turned our focus to the unprecedented amount of VA Agricultural Best Management Practice Cost Share funding allocated to the District (\$3,748,996.85). The District was also offered another year of the hugely successful Whole Farm Approach Cost Share Pilot Program that complimented the VACS program.

As you will read, our accomplishments are the result of hard work on the part of dedicated Directors and Staff, as well as outstanding support from the County Boards of Supervisors, the Virginia Soil and Water Board and the Virginia General Assembly.

Please contact us if we can be of service to you in the coming year or better yet, come visit our office and share your ideas or concerns.

Respectfully,

Robert T. Bland, IV

Robert T. Bland, IV
Chair



Our Team

Directors

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

Langdon Townsend
V. Chair, King William Co.

Bruce Taylor
Secretary, King & Queen Co.

Keith Balderson
Treasurer, Essex Co.

Benjamin Ellis Jr.
Essex Co.

Troy Johnson
King William Co.

Lloyd B. Mundie
Essex Co.

Robbie Longest, VCE
Essex Co.

Associate Directors

Thomas Fox
King William Co.

W. Todd Henley
King & Queen Co.

Staff

Michelle Carter
District Manager

Anne Davis
Administrative Coordinator

Sarah Cole
Conservation Coordinator

Waring Baylor
Conservation Specialist



Vision: Three Rivers SWCD envisions engaged communities working together to protect water quality and restore natural resources.

About Us



The Three Rivers Soil and Water Conservation District (TRSWCD) was formed under the authority of Title 21, Code of Virginia, passed by the General Assembly in 1938. TRSWCD is a self-governed subdivision of State Government encompassing all the land within the boundary lines of Essex, King William, and King & Queen Counties. Three Rivers is named for the Rappahannock, Mattaponi, and Pamunkey River Watersheds that are located within the District; which are very important tributaries of the Chesapeake Bay.

The District establishes priorities, sets policy, and works through partnerships formed with Federal, State and Local Governments, Watershed Groups, and private organizations to administer effective soil and water conservation programs to landowners, homeowners, and producers.

The TRSWCD operates under the direction of a Board of Directors that serve four-year terms. The Board is composed of two elected directors from each jurisdiction (Essex, King William, King & Queen Co.) and two at-large directors appointed by the VA Soil and Water Conservation Board. One of the at-large members represents the VA Cooperative Extension. Directors are elected under the general election laws. There are also a number of Associate Directors, respected in their fields of natural resources, education or business. All Directors (elected and associate) serve the District as volunteers. TRSWCD is a member of the Virginia Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts and the National Association of Conservation Districts. There are 47 Districts statewide.

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 four 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. The Department of Conservation & Recreation and the VA Conservation District Employees Association provided most of the trainings. 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 and Long Term Strategic Plan were reviewed and updated to ensure the goals and objectives of the District were met.

District Operations: The District 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 and private grants. The District is audited every two years to ensure the proper use of funds. The District was audited in December 2021, by Robinson, Farmer, & Cox Associates.

Board Meetings: The District conducts monthly board meetings to work on conservation issues and landowner 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.

Year In Review

\$3,748,996.85

Whole Farm Approach & Ag BMP
Cost Share funding provided for
on-the-ground BMP's

49,886.40 Acres

Planted in Small Grain & Legume
Cover Crop

110 Hours

Continuing Educational Trainings,
and Certification Courses for Staff
& Directors

3,880.72 Acres

Resource Management Plans
3-Year Inspections Completed

231

Cover Crop Field Verifications &
5-Year Lifespan BMP Spot Checks

4,225

Youth & Adults reached through
outreach programs, social media,
newsletters and educational
activities

\$7,850

Support Teacher Mini Grants, Youth &
Adult Natural Resources
Education/Outreach, Awards,
Competitions, and Partner Support

88,815 Acres

Nutrient Management Plans
Implemented

Continuing Education

Directors, Operational, and Technical staff participated in continuing educational classes either in-person or virtually throughout the year.

Trainings were provided by the Department of Conservation & Recreation, the VA Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts and the VA Association of Conservation District Employees. Listed below are trainings attended in FY22:



Conservation Selling Skills
VA Ag BMP Cost Share Program
Logi & DCR BMP Tracking Module
Quickbooks Pt I & II
Personnel Management - 5 Part Series
The Local Choice Health Insurance Training
Website 101 & WordPress Beginner Training
Virginia Resources Concerns - DNH, DWR, DHR
VA Tax Credit Update
IRS Form 1099 & Financial Training
VASWCD Area III Meeting
4theSoil/Soil Health Coalition Training
Manure Injection 101
Conservation Planning Module Training
Cover Crop Benefits & Management
BMP's for Drill-Interseeding Cover Crops into Corn
Interpreting Forage Analysis
VA Conservation Assistance Program (VCAP)
Whole Farm Approach BMP Training
COIA & FOIA Trainings
Records Retention Certification Training

VA Ag BMP Cost Share Program

The Department of Conservation & Recreation awarded Three Rivers SWCD with a grant for another year to pilot the 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 sign up to fund all applications. Total WFA Cost Share allocated to Producers in Essex, King William and King & Queen Counties was \$3,590,382.40.



VA Ag BMP Cost Share Program

Total WFA Cost Share allocated: \$3,590,382.40.

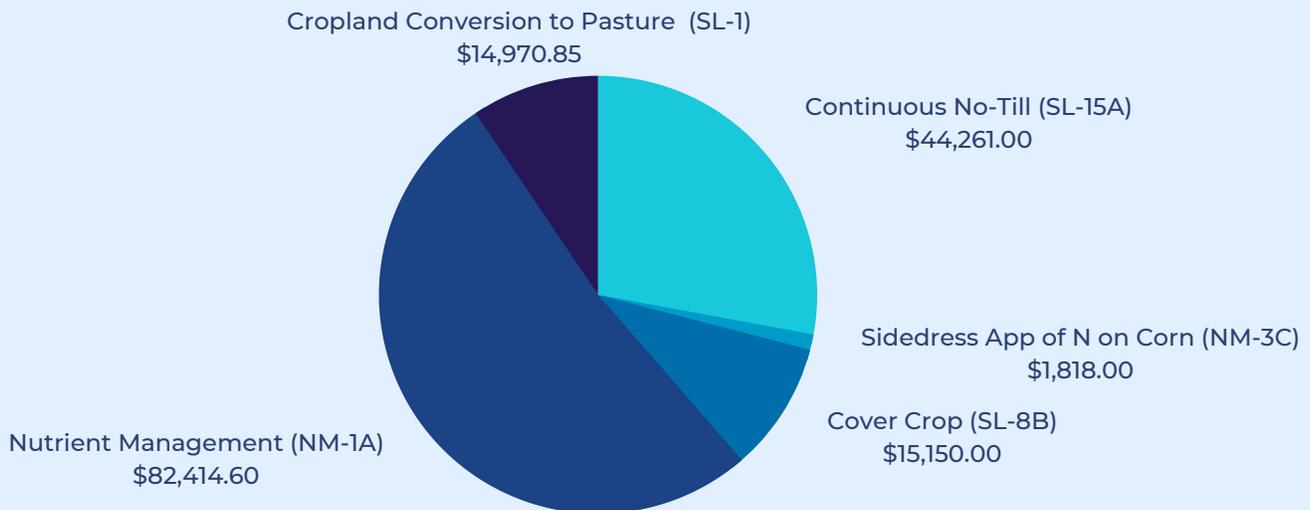
BMP's Implemented	Essex County Acres	King & Queen County Acres	King William County Acres
Core Nutrient Management Plan	34,103.1	28,694.7	26,017.2
Infurrow Banded N	12,421.3	9,821.3	9,792.4
Infurrow Banded P	12,556.9	9,821.3	9,831.9
1st Sidedress	13,516.4	11,200.8	10,392.8
2nd Sidedress	3,825.1	1,109.8	3,010.6
2nd Topdress	7,259.1	2,446	3,828.2
3rd Topdress	7,259.1	2,446	3,828.2
Variable Rate N	7,103.3	706.2	404.1
Variable Rate P	17,659.2	1,689	3,393.1
Early Rye Cover Crop	4,722.4	10,800.1	5,949.6
Standard Rye Cover Crop	274.2	739.2	199.3
Early Non-Rye Cover Crop	12,256.7	4,471.9	7,380.3
Standard Non-Rye Cover Crop	680.5	421.7	386.9
Legume Cover Crop	70.8	0	0
Harvestable Cover Crop	634.8	620.8	277.2



VA Ag BMP Cost Share Program

The District locally administers the VA Agricultural Best Management Practices (BMP) Cost Share and Tax Credit Program, which allows the District to offer technical and financial assistance to Producers who wish to implement eligible BMP's.

Listed below is an accounting of BMP's implemented through the VACS Cost Share Program. FY22: \$158,614.45



- Additional Nutrient Management Plan implementation is being captured in Essex, King William, and King & Queen Counties through the DCR Precision Ag Specialist and the Direct Pay program totaling 47,607.7 acres.
- Staff completed 75 tillage compliance spot checks and 156 cover crop field verifications.

RMP 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 water quality standards; in particular, regulations related to the Chesapeake Bay and all local stream segment TMDL's. 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. After review and inspections are complete, the Board of Directors approve the plans or approve RMP-2 contracts for cost share payment.

The District conducted (12) 3-Year Continued Implementation Inspections covering 3,880.72 acres in Essex, King William, and King & Queen Counties.



Conservation Awards

On November 16, the District hosted an Annual Awards Banquet at To-Do Cafe in Tappahannock to recognize youth and adult conservation leaders for their outstanding contributions to the preservation of our natural resources.

The 2021 recipient of the Clean Water Farm Award is Ryan Ellis, a producer who goes to great lengths to identify the true meaning of conservation.

Ryan is a fourth-generation farmer who began his operation in 2011 with 25 acres of land. Ryan has now grown his operation to approximately 1,300 acres of land in Essex, Caroline, and King & Queen Counties. Ryan utilizes precision ag on all of his acreage, as well as numerous best management practices such as no-till and winter cover crops which help reduce runoff and erosion on the farm. Ryan's operation is located in the Rappahannock River Basin.



Ryan has also supported and contributed to agricultural research and advancement through the years and he works continuously with local stewards through corn and soybean hybrid variety trials. Additionally, Ryan has hosted numerous field days for area producers.

Conservation Awards

The Outstanding Stewardship Award is presented to stewards of the land who are conscious in their effort to improve soil health and water quality. Mr. Thomas H. Fox, Jr. is the 2021 recipient of the Outstanding Stewardship Award for the Three Rivers District. Mr. Fox joined his family's operation in 1976 with his father and became a fourth-generation farmer. The family operation dates back to 1905 and Thomas currently works just over 800 acres of land, 300 of which are located on the Mattaponi River in King William County. Thomas's operation consists of crops such as corn, soybeans, barley, wheat, rye, sorghum, and hay. Thomas also raises approximately 15-20 beef cattle.



Thomas has been instrumental in plot work including varietal and hybrid testing, as well as plot work researching the effectiveness of cover crops in row crop production with both the District and Virginia Cooperative Extension. Last fall, Thomas participated in plot work that explored the effectiveness of brassica cover crops such as canola and radishes before soybeans. He has also participated in plotwork studying ten different hybrids of early maturity corn and is currently participating in a plot consisting of twenty varieties of wheat. Thomas has proven to be a great cooperater and has donated a substantial amount of his time, energy, and equipment to plotwork.

Thomas participates in multiple best management practices annually including winter cover crops and the use of no-till systems. Thomas's dedication and commitment to soil health and water quality has been superb, and we commend him for his ongoing efforts.

Partnership Awards

Three Rivers SWCD was pleased to recognize two operations in the District with Partnership Awards at our Annual Awards Banquet. The District appreciates the cooperation of area producers willing to partner and support our continued interest in evaluating the use of cover crops to improve soil health and crop production on some of our sandy soil types. These farm operators are critical to the district carrying out its educational and outreach goals, as putting in test plots requires a significant time and equipment commitment.

J.M. Newcomb & Sons were the cooperators on a plot evaluating the use of wheat cover crops in corn production in 2021. Results from this plot are still being evaluated, but show the value of small grain cover crops in corn production.



The Ellis Family cooperated on a plot evaluating the use of different small grains and brassica cover crops in soybean production in 2021. While this plot was recently harvested, valuable data was collected for Extension to evaluate the value of small grain cover crops in soybean production.

Community Outreach



Farmers Market: District staff participated in the Tappahannock Farmers Market on Saturday July 17th. Staff informed visitors about Best Management Practices that are offered by the District. Whenever children stopped by, we shared educational opportunities for students such as camps or scholarships. This was a great day for outreach as we got to speak with members of the community about soil and water conservation. 171 visitors reached.

Best Management Practice Field Signage:

TRSWCD updated our roadside signage highlighting the Cover Crop program. In this initiative, we also wanted to make sure we were delivering the message “Farmers Working Every Day To Improve The Chesapeake Bay”. Signs were installed at VACS or Whole Farm Approach participating fields along the Rt. 360 and Rt. 17 corridors for maximum exposure.



Reel In & Recycle: Staff continues to monitor and collect monofilament fishing line to keep our waterways clean.

The 3 receptacles are located at June Parker Marina in Essex County, the public boat landing in Aylett, King William County and Rainbow Acres Camp Ground in King & Queen County. So far 4 buckets of fishing line have been collected.

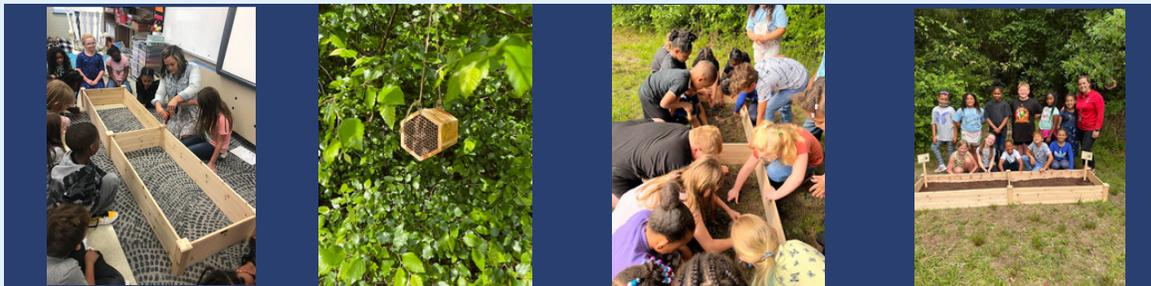
Newsletter: The Districts' quarterly newsletter was electronically emailed to approximately 1,625 citizens in our community, including state and local officials, schools, and cooperating agencies. A special Thank You to our sponsors: Java Jacks Cafe, Riverland Insurers, Three Rivers Forestry, James River Equipment, Colonial Farm Credit, and Barbour Printing.

Teacher Mini Grants

The Three Rivers Soil and Water Conservation District annually offers a limited number of Mini Grants to Essex, King & Queen, and King William teachers. The Mini Grants are intended for projects that integrate soil and water conservation into any curriculum. School year 2021-2022, the recipients are:

Lawson Marriott Elementary – “Feel the Sting: A Bee Project”

"The overarching goal of this project was to support second grade students in understanding their role in protecting the environment and making a positive contribution to their communities. Using bees becoming endangered as an illustration, this project sought to ignite a passion in students to become more active participants in problem solving in the world. Together, we studied the life cycle of a honeybee, explored the many ways they contribute to our environment, and created safe bee homes and pollinator gardens around our school tree line. Throughout this 3-week unit, our students developed empathy for our environment and spent countless time discussing the ways they can protect the bees now and in the future. With the grant funds provided, we purchased the materials to build the bee homes, raised garden beds, pollinator seeds, pollinator trees, critter fencing, and garden soil. Thank you again for your support in our classroom. We are so appreciative!" Vivian Kaze, Teacher - \$400



Hamilton Holmes Middle School: Outdoor Classroom

Funding was provided to begin setting up an outdoor classroom. Wonderful outdoor learning stations were purchased with the funds to allow teachers/students to arrange the space in any way imaginable to best enhance their lessons that include: Watersheds and the Chesapeake Bay; Cycles of Matter and Life – Ecology; and Renewable and Non-Renewable Resources. \$517

Teacher Mini Grants



Aylett Country Day School: "Aylett Outdoors' Species ID Program"

"Funding provided the 7th Grade Life Science Students an opportunity to explore the watershed with field scopes, waders, plankton and seine nets. In addition to trips based from June Parker Marina, students used the new gear to explore Piscataway Creek and the Dragon Run. Our school year culminated with a species ID competition between 2 groups in the 7th grade. Using equipment purchased with funds from the Three Rivers Soil and Water Conservation District the two groups each identified 62 and 69 species from the Dragon Run, respectively. We are currently working on a press release with Friends of the Dragon Run to highlight this fantastic opportunity and give thanks to TRSWCD for their support of the Aylett Outdoors' Species ID Program. We look forward to working with the District on conservation projects in the watershed during the upcoming school year." Richard Moncure - Teacher \$1,600



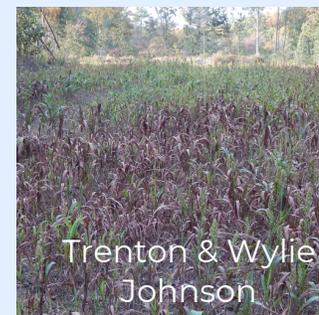
Wildlife Food Plot Competition

Three Rivers sponsored two Wildlife Food Plot competitions this year for local students. Students 9 to 12 years of age are eligible for the Junior Division whereas, students 13 to 18 years old are eligible for the Senior Division. Each division is awarded a 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place winner. The program is not only used to attract wildlife but to provide an opportunity for the students to learn about conservation and wildlife while helping them to develop an appreciation for the world around them. Applications were submitted by September 30 and the plots were judged on seed production, variety of seeds used, location of plot, and bonus points were given for evidence of wildlife using the plots. For the Junior Division we had one entry from Hamilton Holmes Middle School, Tucker Townsend. Tucker planted turnips and used a rotor tiller to prepare his seed bed, then broadcasted his seed with a walk spreader. His plot had good uniform cover and was close to the woods for security. Evidence of deer and rabbits using his plot were found. Tucker Townsend won first place in the Junior Division.



Wildlife Food Plot Competition

In the Senior Division, we had four entries (Ashlee Powell, Trenton and Wylie Johnson, Patrick Upshaw, and Kaleb Jimmo) from King William High School Ag Production Technology, Horticultural Science and FFA Classes. All four participants planted soybeans, buckwheat, rape, ryegrass, cowpea, sorghum, and crimson clover. Ashlee prepared her plot by bush hogging and then disking. She broadcasted her seed by hand and ran a cultipacker over it. Her plot had good uniform cover and was close to the woods for security. Evidence of quail and deer using her plot were found. Trenton and Wylie prepared their plot by chisel plowing and then turbo tilling. Their plot had uniform cover and was close to the woods for security. Evidence of deer using the plot was found. Patrick prepared his plot by bush hogging and tilling with a box tiller. He planted the seed with a seed spreader pulled by a 4-wheeler and then lightly tilled over it. He had good uniform cover and was close to the woods for security. Evidence of deer using his plot were found. Kaleb prepared his plot by bush hogging and then tilled with a box tiller. He broadcasted his seed by hand and then covered the seeds with a harrow. Evidence of deer were found. **This year's winners of the Senior Division are 3rd place Kaleb Jimmo, 2nd place Trenton and Wylie Johnson and 1st place Ashlee Powell and Patrick Upshaw.**



Education/Outreach

Science SOL Review: District staff provided hands-on science SOL activities for Ms. Rector, 6th grade class at James H. Cary Intermediate School. Topics that were covered consisted of soils, erosion, point vs non-point pollution, water quality, and Chesapeake Bay tributaries. Students pictured to the right captured runoff from two different environments (a cover crop field vs. a field that was bare and had been tilled).



State Fair of VA: Three Rivers SWCD staff volunteered at the VASWCD (Virginia Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts) booth at the State Fair in Doswell, Virginia on Wednesday, September 29th. Staff discussed different programs that are offered across the state whether it be VCAP, Cost Share, or Best Management Practices that are implemented to improve water quality within the Chesapeake Bay Watershed.

Children had an opportunity to spin a question wheel to learn about the Envirothon program. When adults came by, they learned their "watershed address". This was a great day to promote various programs/opportunities that are offered by Districts across Virginia!

The District helped promote the following programs through schools, news releases, Facebook posts, and local churches:

- VASWCD Photo & Poster Contest
- NACD Soil & Water Conservation Week
- Boy & Girl Scout Badge Program
- Youth Conservation Camp

Education/Outreach

Academic Scholarship Recipients: The District offers three academic scholarships for students within Essex, King William, and King & Queen Counties. Applications are due by March 1 annually.

The District also assists in promoting the Larkin Hundley Memorial Endowment, which is administered by Colonial Farm Credit.

Criteria: Applicants should be pursuing a degree in agriculture, natural resources, or come from a farming background.



Earl H. & Anna K. Longest
Memorial Scholarship
Kathryn Bland
Christopher Newport University



J. Franklin Townsend, Jr.
Memorial Scholarship
Addie Johnson
East Carolina University



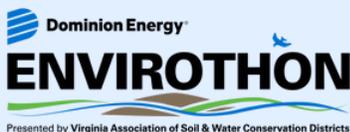
John F. Townsend Sr.
Memorial Scholarship
Ashlee Powell
Virginia Tech



Larkin Hundley Memorial
Endowment
Regan Allen
Virginia Tech

Education/Outreach

The 3-R's: District staff conducted a Recycling Program for 88 first graders at Tappahannock Elementary School on May 19th. The topic for the day was Reuse, Reduce, Recycle – The Three R's of Recycling. The children learned the definition, what items/products could be recycled, and what items could be reused for other purposes. The staff discussed the definition of the word “decomposing” and what happens to items once they enter a landfill. Household items were distributed to each child to determine if the item could be reused or recycled. If the item was not recycled, but thrown away, the students were to guess how long it would take the items to decompose. The staff also discussed composting. Each student was given a reusable folder with recycling worksheets, pencils, bumper stickers, book marks, and Three Rivers "Living in Your Watershed" booklets.



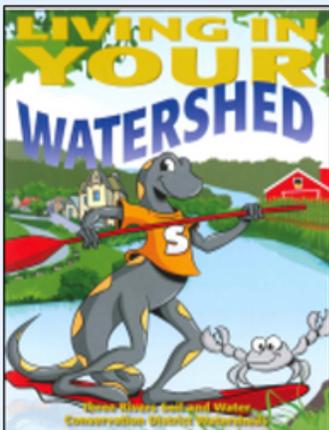
Envirothon: District Staff supported and attended the Area III Virginia Dominion Energy Envirothon Competition by providing participation certificates to all students and coaches. Staff also supported the Host by ensuring all graded tests were properly secured and delivered to the scorekeeper.

District Support - The District partners with and/or financially supports many workshops, field days, 4-H activities, and the VA Association of Soil and Water Conservation District Educational Foundation. Listed below are the sponsorships for FY22

- VA Farm Bureau Ag In the Classroom - \$200
- Fredericksburg 4-H Livestock Sale - \$200
- VCE 5 County Ag Conference - \$150
- Virginia Association of Soil and Water Conservation District Golf Tournament - \$100

Education/Outreach

Summer Interns: Three Rivers SWCD hosted two Summer Interns this year! Claire Wilmore was a rising 4th year student at Christopher Newport University working toward a degree in Environmental Biology with a Psychology Minor. Elaine Walters was a student at Old Dominion University working toward her degree in Biology with a Marine Biology concentration and a Sustainability & Conservation Leadership Minor. Claire and Elaine worked on educational and outreach activities such as the Farmer's Market, additional Educational Capsule development, geology/fossils, and a conservation literacy program for elementary students.



K-8 Rappahannock & York Watershed Booklets

Available: As District staff participates in classroom education or outreach events, the "Living in Your Watershed" booklets are provided to youth and adults.

These booklets were specifically designed and published with Rappahannock and York Watershed information included. It highlights conservation concepts such as non-point source pollution, watersheds, suggestions on how we can improve water quality, and Science SOL text that helps students understand their relationship and indirect impact upon the health of local waters and the Chesapeake Bay. 400 booklets were distributed.

Educational Capsules: District staff continued to promote 8 Science SOL Conservation Capsules for local teachers to provide hands-on Science SOL materials to their students.

The capsules are all-inclusive interactive science activities targeting K-6 grades. They also include lesson plans to support the teachers. Activities include VA watersheds, storm water erosion simulator, conservation jeopardy, water contaminants and water supply. We were able to reach 164 teachers.



Three Rivers Soil & Water Conservation District





Thank You

The Commonwealth of Virginia supports the Three Rivers Soil and Water Conservation District through financial and administrative support provided by the Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board and the Department of Conservation & Recreation.

Three Rivers SWCD would also like to thank the Counties of Essex, King William, and King & Queen for their continued financial support of water quality programs.

Please contact us if we can be of service or assistance to you in the coming year.

Three Rivers Soil & Water Conservation District
772 Richmond Beach Road
Tappahannock, VA 22560
804-443-2327 x 4