



NORTHERN NECK
SOIL & WATER

CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Annual Report
July 1, 2008-June 30, 2009

Northern Neck Soil and Water Conservation District programs, activities and employment opportunities are available to all people regardless of race, color, religion, sex, age, disability, national origin or political affiliation. An equal opportunity/affirmative action employer.

Mission:

To promote the stewardship of natural resources through leadership, education and technical assistance for natural resource owners and users.

Directors, Staff & Partners

Elected Directors:

Junius C. "J.C." Berger, Chairman (Richmond)
E. Derwin Booker, Jr., Vice-Chairman (Lancaster)
J. Vince Garland, Treasurer (Richmond)
William D. Allensworth (Westmoreland)
John A. Kelley (Northumberland)
H. Shirley Powell (Westmoreland)
Lora Smith (Lancaster)
Robert Vanlandingham (Northumberland)

Appointed Directors:

Matt Lewis, Virginia Cooperative Extension Agent (Lancaster/Northumberland)
James Minor, At-Large (Westmoreland)

Associate Directors:

John Barber
Richard F. Haynie
Luther Welch

Staff:

J. Craig Brann, District Manager/Conservation Specialist
Faye A. Andrashko, BMP Information/Education Coordinator
Kathy E. Clarke, Office Manager
Brandon W. Dillistin, Conservation Specialist
Sam Johnson, NPS Specialist

Natural Resources Conservation Service:

Debbie Bullock, District Conservationist
Robert Lewis, Civil Engineering Technician

Cooperating Partners:

DCR, Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation
DEQ, Virginia Department of Environmental Quality
FSA, USDA Farm Service Agency
Lancaster County
NACD, National Association of Conservation Districts
NNLC, Northern Neck Land Conservancy
NNMG, Northern Neck Master Gardeners
NNPDC, Northern Neck Planning District Commission
NNTC, Northern Neck Tourism Council
Northumberland County
NPS, National Park Service
NRCS, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
RC&D, Tidewater Resource Conservation and Development Council
Richmond County
USFWS, U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service
VASWCD, Virginia Association of Soil & Water Conservation Districts
VCE, Virginia Cooperative Extension
VDACS, Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services
VDOF, Virginia Department of Forestry
VDGIF, Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries
VDOH, Virginia Department of Health
VDOI, Virginia Department of Transportation
Westmoreland County

Introduction

What are Soil and Water Conservation Districts?

Soil and water conservation districts are local government entities that were created in the 1930s to promote soil conservation and protection of natural resources. A Board comprising local elected and appointed residents oversees a staff responsible for accomplishing these goals in cooperation with local, state and Federal partners. The Soil & Water Conservation Law within the Code of Virginia states:

“A soil and water conservation district...shall constitute a governmental subdivision of this State, and a public body corporate and politic. Exercising public powers...” (§10.1-5.38)

“They (a District and its Directors) shall have power to develop comprehensive programs and plans for the conservation of soil resources and for the control and prevention of soil erosion and for flood prevention or agricultural and nonagricultural phases of the conservation, development, utilization and disposal of water within District...” (§10.1-546)

The Northern Neck Soil & Water Conservation District (NNSWCD) is responsible for assisting the agricultural community, landowners, residential property owners and local government in Westmoreland, Lancaster, Richmond and Northumberland counties in the wise management and maintenance of the region’s valuable natural resource base.

How were Districts formed?

Congress passed the Soil Conservation Act of 1935 to provide a permanent program to control the ever-increasing problem of erosion, floods and sky-blackening dust storms that at the time swept through the country. This policy was addressed by the development of the Natural Resources Conservation Service (formerly SCS). To encourage local participation, President Roosevelt sent all state governors a letter requesting that legislation be passed to form soil and water conservation districts. In 1938 the Soil Conservation District Law of Virginia was passed so that local residents would take responsibility for directing programs aimed at solving conservation problems in their communities. Virginia currently has 47 Districts that are funded by local government appropriations and federal, state and private grants.

The NNSWCD Board began with four local producers in Heathsville in July 1940.

What is the District’s governing body?

A Board of elected and appointed Directors oversees a District. In any one District, there must be at least five Directors, two of which must be appointed by the elected Directors. One of the appointed Directors must be an extension agent. The term of office is four years, and Directors receive no payment for their services. In addition, each year the Board elects one Director as Chairman and one Director as Vice-Chairman. Districts also have the right to appoint Associate Directors. These advisors to the Board serve no specified term and do not vote.

The NNSWCD has ten Directors and five Associate Directors. Eight Directors are elected, two from each of the four Northern Neck counties, and two Directors are appointed by the Board. The NNSWCD Board meets monthly to conduct and oversee District business. These meetings are public, and the Board encourages attendance by sending meeting notices to local newspapers. Meetings are held the second Wednesday of each month.



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Letter from the Chairman

To Residents, Landowners, Producers and Local Governments:

The Northern Neck SWCD has continued its record of outstanding service to the Community during fiscal year 2008-2009. Our fine staff of five outstanding performers have met the challenges of administering a million-dollar Ag BMP Cost-share program, participating in a pilot program to apportion water quality improvement goals in the Rappahannock Tributary Strategy to a county level in Richmond County, conducting or participating in rain-barrel workshops and numerous other outreach and education programs to improve water quality, and working with Federal, state and local partners in various conservation programs and events. This report highlights some of those accomplishments.

I anticipate FY 2009-2010 will present a continuing challenge to the District, to our partners and to all of you. The economic downturn has affected all of us. Our operating funds from the state have already been reduced, and we expect further reductions when the Governor announces his budget in December. Our state Association (VASWCD) has been working and will continue to work with the Administration and the General Assembly to protect a viable level of operational and Cost-share funding for Districts. However, the requirement for improving water quality in the waters of the state will not diminish – only grow as population increases. So we will be in the proverbial position of ‘doing more with less’ once again.

Therefore, we continue to need your help and input as we tackle the daunting tasks of improving water quality in the Northern Neck creeks, rivers and the Chesapeake Bay; helping producers to implement Best Management Practices (BMPs) which both reduce pollution and make economic sense; assisting local governments and partners in carrying out their responsibilities for conservation; providing or arranging for technical support to all our clients; and expanding an education program to reach our consumers, local governments and schools, and the public. Please contact any of our staff or Board members with your ideas, your suggestions for change, or to volunteer to help us accomplish our mission.

Sincerely,

J.C. Berger, Chairman

Contributed Support

The NNSWCD receives funding from local government appropriations and federal, state and private grants. During FY 08/09, the NNSWCD received financial contributions from the following sources:

Local Funding:

Local Government Contributions:

In response to county support and partnerships, the District provides progress reports to each county's Board of Supervisors to keep local government leaders and staff informed and updated. In FY 08/09, NNSWCD presented to the Boards of Supervisors for the four counties, an overview of water quality issues and efforts, community financial and technical support of conservation practices, tributary nutrient reductions by basin, education programs, policy changes and special projects undertaken by the District. During FY 08/09, the NNSWCD continued to receive level funding from each of the four Northern Neck counties it serves: Lancaster, Northumberland, Richmond and Westmoreland.

Newspaper Recycling Program:

The District began a newspaper recycling program in 1998 to create an educational fund for conservation projects, workshops, youth training and field days. A collection bin is located at the Warsaw office where students, town residents, producers, businesses and local newspaper offices contribute newsprint.

No-Till Drill Rental Program:

The NNSWCD promotes conservation seeding techniques through the rental of a no-till drill. In June 2006, the NNSWCD traded in its 10' John Deere™ no-till drill on a new 7' Great Plains™ no-till drill. Among some of the features of the new equipment were a V-bottom seed box for easy cleanout; a small seed box for clover, alfalfa and other small seeds; lockout hubs for reduced wear on chains and sprockets and a narrow transport width. With the reduced width, operators were able to access areas that were previously inaccessible and reduce the horsepower previously needed for operation. In FY 08/09, the no-till drill was rented for use on 495.2 acres.

Soil Survey CDs:

In January 2006, the NNSWCD began selling electronic versions via compact discs of the soil surveys for Northumberland/Lancaster, Richmond and Westmoreland Counties. The surveys delineate the soil types for land parcels and the associated traits of those soils. Information such as crop yield expectations, leaching variables, septic site suitability and many more traits are found in the surveys.

Sponsorships:

To help offset the cost of educational events and the District Newsletter, the NNSWCD often looks to local businesses and organizations for sponsorships.

In FY 08/09, the NNSWCD Sponsors included:
Colonial Farm Credit—Ag Day

State Funding:

Bay Restoration Grant:

A grant proposal submitted in September 2007 requesting funding for the District to purchase its own Enviroscope and carrying case was awarded by the Chesapeake Bay Restoration Fund (the license plate fund) in the amount of \$1512.50.

DCR-Additional Staff Grant:

In FY 06/07, the NNSWCD was awarded a two-year Additional Staff Grant that enabled the District to hire additional staff to assist with the administration and implementation of the Virginia Ag BMP Cost-Share Program. Funding for FY 06/07 was for 1.5 technical staff positions; in FY 07/08, the funding was increased to 2.0 positions. During FY 08/09, the NNSWCD received a 9% reduction in funding due to mandatory statewide budget cuts.

DCR-Cost-Share Grant:

The NNSWCD administers the state Agricultural Best Management Practice (BMP) Cost-Share Program, which provides funds and/or state tax credits for the installation of conservation practices preventing soil erosion and runoff that contribute to water-quality degradation in streams, rivers and the Bay. The program offers 45 different practices that can assist landowners and producers in maintaining soil on the land, with consequent benefits to crop production and water quality. The implementation of conservation practices also assists localities in working toward the nutrient and sediment reduction goals outlined in the Potomac and Rappahannock Tributary Strategy plans and the goals of the Chesapeake Bay 2000 Agreement.

The following table captures the practices installed and the funds used to assist residents with implementation during the FY 08/09 time period:

Conservation Practice:	Lancaster:		Northumberland:		Richmond:		Westmoreland:	
	Acres:	Funds:	Acres:	Funds:	Acres:	Funds:	Acres:	Funds:
Engineered Practices*	-	\$ -	-	\$ -	-	\$ 4,500.00	-	\$ -
Permanent Cover on Cropland	-	\$ -	-	\$ -	7.7	\$ 1,905.59	-	\$ -
Continuous No-Till	438.6	\$ 43,860.00	1,446.8	\$ 144,681.68	931.1	\$ 93,110.00	1,841.1	\$ 184,109.50
Cover Crops	1,118.3	\$ 55,929.50	1,025.8	\$ 47,550.50	498.0	\$ 26,762.50	2,899.2	\$ 138,200.00
Nutrient Management Plan Writing	10,702.0	\$ 21,404.00	25,231.1	\$ 50,462.18	13,161.8	\$ 26,323.58	20,392.1	\$ 40,356.30
Nutrient Management Plan Implementation	-	\$ -	177.3	\$ 531.90	941.4	\$ 2,824.20	20.3	\$ 60.90
State Tax Credit**	-	\$ -	-	\$ -	-	\$ -	-	\$ -
TOTALS:	12,258.9	\$ 121,193.50	27,881.0	\$ 243,226.26	15,540.0	\$ 155,425.87	25,152.6	\$ 362,726.70

* Practices that require a site-plan design and must be maintained by the landowner for 5 to 10 years after installment.

**State Tax Credit for Agricultural Best Management Practices

DCR-Operations Grant:

Each year the NNSWCD receives funding from the Commonwealth, through the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation, to support the costs of staff, rent, communications, travel and the like. In FY 07/08, the NNSWCD experienced an increase in essential funding; it was the first increase since 1999. In FY 08/09, the NNSWCD took an initial approximate 9% cut in funding followed by an additional 5.165% cut later during the fiscal year.

Federal Conservation Programs:

Federal funding was made available to landowners in FY 08/09 through the following programs:

The Conservation Reserve Program/Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CRP/CREP) provides two conservation options for landowners: 1) rental payments for removing cropland from production and establishing and maintaining vegetative cover for a minimum 10-year period; and 2) funding for the establishment of buffers on land adjacent to water. Landowners may choose a 10-year, 15-year or permanent easement contract. The program combines federal and state dollars to cover rental and incentive payments, materials to establish buffers or restore wetlands, BMP installation and annual maintenance costs. The programs are administered through the Farm Service Agency (FSA), Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCD).

The Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) derives from the Conservation Title of the new Farm Bill and offers producers cost-share sponsorship for grazing-land protection and cropland practices. Locally, applications have been received and funded for nutrient and residue management and cover crops.

The Conservation Security Program (CSP) is administered through the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). The program supports ongoing stewardship of private agricultural lands by providing payments for maintaining and enhancing natural resources. The program identifies and rewards those producers who are meeting the highest standards of conservation and environmental management on their operations.

A summary of federal funding provided to landowners through these programs is presented as follows:

Fiscal Year 2008-2009

County:	CRP/CREP	EQIP	Great Wicomico Watershed CSP
Lancaster	\$7,508	\$63,938	-0-
Northumberland	\$27,453	\$153,301	\$270,752
Richmond	\$21,236	\$123,723	-0-
Westmoreland	\$27,453	\$77,577	-0-
*TOTALS:	\$66,016	\$418,539	\$270,752

**Federal fiscal year reporting dates are October 1st thru September 30th.*

Educational Programs/Community Outreach:

The NNSWCD provides ongoing services, programs, materials and information to producers, landowners and school groups throughout the year. District personnel also contribute to field-day and other community programs conducted by partnering agencies. In FY 08/09, the NNSWCD continued to build upon its educational activities and community outreach through a variety of programs and partnerships such as:

Agriculture Awareness Day (Ag Day):

Each year the NNSWCD, together with the local agricultural community, partnering agencies and organizations, conducts an annual agricultural field day for all third-grade students of the Northern Neck. The event provides a hands-on learning experience focusing on agriculture and natural resources and how they contribute to the environment and economy of the region. The event is an excellent learning opportunity for young people to build and expand their knowledge of SOL-based subjects related to agriculture and the environment.

The 2009 Ag Day was held on Wednesday, April 22, 2009, at the Eastern Virginia Agricultural Research & Extension Center (EVAREC) in Warsaw. Nearly 250 third-graders and others from Northumberland and Richmond County Elementary Schools, Woodland Academy, and Northern Neck Homeschoolers' enjoyed the beautiful outdoors on Earth Day, to be educated and entertained at a variety of interactive agricultural and conservation exhibits. Students were treated to goodie bags and ice cream before their departure.

Area III Spring Meeting:

The 2009 Area III Spring Meeting was hosted by James River SWCD on April 2, 2009, at the Country Club of Petersburg. Among the topics of discussion were: the opportunities for environmental stewardship as development increases and in particular, how Chesterfield County deals with the challenges; as well as a presentation on Virginia's Conflict of Interest Act and its implications for SWCDs. The NNSWCD attendees included District Manager Craig Brann, Conservation Specialist Brandon Dillistin, Chairman J.C. Berger, and Lancaster Director Lora Smith.

Belle Isle State Park Winter Warmers 2009

On February 19, 2009, NNSWCD Nonpoint Specialist Sam Johnson presented "Stormwater Management for Homeowners" as part of Belle Isle State Park's Winter Warming Series. The program series, initiated this year, offered six free public programs on Thursdays at 1:00PM at the new BISP Visitor Center.

The final program on March 19, 2009, featured Matt Lewis, NNSWCD Board Member and VCE Agent for Lancaster/Northumberland Counties. His presentation "Conservation Measures in Northern Neck Grain Production" focused on agricultural activity in the Northern Neck and its importance to the local economy, how it affects the Chesapeake Bay, and what farmers are doing to minimize the impacts—current and emerging solutions to water quality issues.

Chesapeake Bay Foundation Grasses for the Masses

In response to the Chesapeake Bay Foundation's annual Grasses for the Masses campaign, NNSWCD Education Coordinator Faye Andrashko coordinated a local effort. Lancaster Middle School students of 7th grade science teacher Kim Seaver played a part by planting seeds of Wild Celery and growing them in their classroom. The classroom-grown seedlings and those of other volunteer Northern Neck growers were transported by the NNSWCD and planted on May 2,

2009, in the James River, at Westover Plantation. Traveling from the Northern Neck to the planting site were Mrs. Seaver with three youths, including daughters; Faye Andrashko; and volunteer Gary Andrashko.

Clean Virginia Waterways:

In FY 08/09, as part of the annual international coastal cleanup event held by the Ocean Conservancy, and coordinated statewide by Clean VA Waterways, NNSWCD Education Coordinator, Faye Andrashko, coordinated two local waterway cleanup events. The first was held on September 20, 2008, at Westmoreland State Park where volunteers collected 45 pounds of debris including 1569 cigarette butts and filters, the top-ranking item. Hundreds of plastic food containers, wrappers, bottles, and other debris were also counted. The second event was held on October 4, 2008, at Farnham Creek Landing where 12 bags plus other large debris, totaling 511 pounds altogether, were recovered, including large pieces of building material, 5 tires, a tire rim, a crab pot, an 18-foot TV antenna, and a large rotting rug. Volunteers represented Northern Neck Master Naturalists, Washington & Lee High School, Chesapeake Governor's School, St. Margaret's School in Tappahannock, Boy Scout Troop 258, Colonial Beach High School, Colonial Beach Treasurer's Office, as well as individuals and families.

Cost-Share Conference:

Due to the lack of any changes within the Virginia Agricultural BMP Cost-Share Program, the NNSWCD did not host a Cost-Share Conference during FY 08/09. Instead the sign-up period was announced via radio announcements and ads in the local newspapers.

DEQ Ag BMP Loan Program:

In January 2006, the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) implemented a new pilot loan program which enabled producers to purchase no-till drills or planters. In FY 08/09, the NNSWCD successfully promoted the program and assisted with the application process for 4 Northern Neck participants, of which 2 received funding.

Earth Day:

On April 23, 2009, in celebration of Earth Day, NNSWCD Education Coordinator Faye Andrashko read *Michael Recycle* and *Why Should I Recycle* to pre-school children at the YMCA in Kilmarnock. Later that day, she and NNSWCD Office Manager Kathy Clarke presented an afternoon program at the Richmond County YMCA, reading *Michael Recycle* to the K-2 children and presenting the Enviroscape to the older students.

Envirothon:

Envirothon is an internationally recognized competition which began in 1979. It is the largest non-athletic environmental high school competition that challenges students to use the information that they have learned to solve real-life environmental problems. Participating teams complete training in five natural resource categories: Soils, Aquatics, Forestry, Wildlife and a Special Topic. The 2009 Special Topic was "Biodiversity in a Changing World."

For FY 08/09, while interest in participation increased due to expanded promotion of the event to teachers, the NNSWCD was unsuccessful in securing a local team and subsequently did not sponsor a Local Envirothon. The Area III event was hosted by Henricopolis SWCD on April 30th at Dorey Park in Richmond. NNSWCD Education Coordinator Faye Andrashko assisted with preliminary planning; T-shirt design, ordering and distribution; and was on hand to offer support and assistance with the day's event along with NNSWCD Chairman J.C. Berger and Office Manager Kathy Clarke.

Grace Episcopal Church Environmental Projects:

On September 19, 2008, NNSWCD Chairman J.C. Berger and Education Coordinator Faye Andrashko met with a Committee from Grace Episcopal Church to discuss possible stewardship projects within the church and its members.

Hazardous Waste Collection:

In response to the success of the summer 2008 event, Lancaster and Northumberland Counties offered two additional collection events for residents during FY 08/09. NNSWCD Education Coordinator Faye Andrashko and staff of the Virginia Cooperative Extension were on hand to assist with the events held on October 18, 2008, and June 13, 2009. The products were received, sorted, and transported by CARE Environmental Corp. of Landing, NJ, and MXI Environmental Services of Abingdon, VA, respectively, to be disposed of at their processing sites.

The June 13, 2009, event set a record with a combined 11,621 pounds of hazardous materials being collected between the two counties. The Lancaster collection offered electronics recycling, which was well received by residents. The Arc Gloucester, a volunteer organization that helps people with developmental disabilities, picked up dozens of computers, televisions, and other electronic items to be refurbished or recycled for parts and materials.

Holiday Lake Forestry Camp:

During the spring of 2009, the NNSWCD promoted the 2009 Holiday Lake Forestry Camp to schools, the public, and partnering agencies by offering to cover the registration fee for two area students 13-16 years of age. The camp is for students who have an interest in forestry, wildlife or related conservation activities and have a good academic standing. The camp was held on June 15-20, 2009 at the Holiday Lake 4-H Educational Center located within the 20,000 acre Appomattox-Buckingham State Forest. Despite efforts, no applications were received by NNSWCD.

Hull Springs Farm Marsh Grass Planting:

Hull Springs Farm, which consists of 643 acres in the Mt. Holly section of Westmoreland, was bequeathed to Longwood University in 1999 by Mary Farley Ames Lee, a 1938 Longwood alumna. To protect an exceptionally vulnerable point and to become a demonstration site for living shoreline techniques, Hull Springs Farm launched its "Living Shorelines: Shoreline Erosion Control and Habitat Enhancement Project." Longwood University secured grants from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration through the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation to assess how living shoreline techniques could be used on-site to control erosion, while also preserving or restoring shoreline habitat that supports shorebirds, juvenile fish, and other wildlife species. During the summer of 2008, NNSWCD Education Coordinator Faye Andrashko assisted with planting marsh grass at the site.

Kilmarnock-Irvington-Whitestone Rotary Club Presentation:

On January 21, 2009, NNSWCD District Manager Craig Brann made a presentation to the Kilmarnock-Irvington-Whitestone Rotary Club at Rappahannock Westminster Canterbury in Irvington. An overview of NNSWCD operations and programs including the Virginia Agricultural BMP Cost-Share Program was provided. Approximately forty people were in attendance including Lancaster Director E. Derwin Booker, Jr.

Lancaster Middle School Environmental Curriculum:

Starting in October 2008, NNSWCD Education Coordinator Faye Andrashko conducted a series of meetings with Craig Kauffman, Lancaster Middle School Principal, Rebecca Wilson, DCR Natural Heritage Steward, Charlene Talcott, Educator/Interpreter at Belle Isle State Park, and Gale Dickerson, Master Naturalist, in a joint effort between the NNSWCD, DCR, and Master Naturalists towards development of a 6th grade curriculum surrounding Dameron Marsh and Hughlett Point Natural Area Preserves.

Lancaster Middle School Science Fair:

For a second year, NNSWCD provided volunteer judges for the Annual Science Fair for grades 4 through 8, held this year on February 25, 2009. The volunteers consisted of Northumberland Director John A. Kelley and Staff members Brandon Dillistin and Sam Johnson.

Lancaster Primary School Rain Garden:

In a joint effort with Northern Neck Master Gardeners, NNSWCD Education Coordinator Faye Andrashko and NPS Specialist Sam Johnson met with Sue Lindsay, NNMG, to discuss the development of a rain garden at the school to allay standing water problems after heavy rains. A subsequent meeting with Sam Johnson, Timothy Guill, Director of Operations and Transportation of Lancaster County Public Schools, and three Lancaster Primary School teachers resulted in approval of the project concept. Sam Johnson worked on the design information for the garden, which will be added to a teaching garden that the NNMG developed several years ago.

Legislative Day:

The Virginia Association of Soil & Water Conservation Districts (VASWCD) lobbies annually to the General Assembly for support of conservation, improvements and advancements to new and existing programs as well as adequate funding to meet the obligations of the Tributary Strategies and Chesapeake Bay 2000 Agreement.

In FY 08/09, Legislative Day was held on Monday, January 19, 2009, and was attended by the NNSWCD Chairman J.C. Berger, Vice-Chairman E. Derwin Booker, Jr., Lancaster Director Lora Smith, Westmoreland Director Danny Allensworth and District Manager Craig Brann. They met with Virginia State Senator Richard Stuart and Delegate Albert Pollard and discussed the VASWCD Legislative Program. The 2009 VASWCD Legislative Agenda prioritized: funding for the Natural Resources Commitment Fund in support of reducing nonpoint (runoff) sources of pollution and assisting farmers with installation of conservation practices; funding for the state's 47 SWCDs and their work; a stream and shoreline erosion program; support for the governor's goal of conserving 400,000 acres by 2011 to meet Virginia's commitments of the Chesapeake Bay 2000 Agreement; a VA Urban BMP Cost-Share and Tax Credit program; and financial assistance for SWCDs to implement the requirements of the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act.

NNSWCD Newsletter:

The District produces and distributes a newsletter, *Conservation Around the Neck*, to producers, landowners and residents to inform them of new and existing programs, cost-share deadlines, legislative matters, water quality issues, regional meeting dates, educational opportunities for youth and other District and conservation events. Local businesses are encouraged to advertise to defray printing costs.

NNSWCD Publicity:

The NNSWCD issues timely press releases to all Northern Neck newspapers and radio stations, as well as to Rappahannock Connect, an electronic posting forum for non-profits.

NNSWCD Soils Writing Contest:

In celebration of the National Association of Conservation District's annual Stewardship Week, April 26 to May 3, 2009, the NNSWCD sponsored a writing contest for middle school aged students entitled "Tap into the Wonders Beneath Your Feet: Dig up the Dirt on Soil!" Alexandra Pitman, a 7th grader at Northumberland Middle School, was selected as the winner of the contest and treated to a chaperoned trip to the Smithsonian Institution Natural History Museum's "Dig It! The Secrets of Soil" exhibit in Washington, DC. Education Coordinator Faye Andrashko and NPS Specialist Sam Johnson served as chaperones on the trip.

NNSWCD Web Site:

The NNSWCD Web site, www.northernneckswcd.org or www.nnswcd.org, designed by VECTEC of Christopher Newport University from information and images compiled and coordinated by NNSWCD Education Coordinator Faye Andrashko, was officially launched March 26, 2008. During FY 08/09, Faye continued to manage and update the Web site.

Northern Neck Crop Production Conference:

On February 5, 2009, the annual Northern Neck Crops Production Conference was held at Cobham Park Baptist Church in Warsaw with the main theme being no-till. The program began in the morning with pesticide recertification for farmers and agency staff. As a result of financial contributions from NNSWCD and VCE towards travel expenses, guest speaker Dr. Ron Hammond of Ohio State University was obtained to provide his presentation "Managing Slugs in Corn and Soybeans." NNSWCD District Manager Craig Brann, Conservation Specialist Brandon Dillistin, and NPS Specialist Sam Johnson attended the conference.

Northern Neck Farm Museum:

In FY 05/06, the NNSWCD agreed to co-hold the easement on the Northern Neck Farm Museum (NNFM) with the Virginia Outdoors Foundation (VOF). The easement was finalized on December 27, 2006.

During FY 08/09, the NNSWCD took the lead in an environmental Low Impact Development (LID) initiative with the NNFM. Plans began in obtaining an engineering plan and grant funding for development and installation of a storm-water catchment system to manage and harvest rainwater at the museum's barn building and grounds. At the request of NPS Specialist Sam Johnson, also a Farm Museum Board Member, the Williamsburg Environmental Group, Inc. offered its services, pro bono, to complete the design and engineering of the system.

Northern Neck Land Conservancy Boots 'n Barbeque:

In support of the Northern Neck Land Conservancy (NNLC), NNSWCD District Manager Craig Brann manned a booth at the group's annual membership gathering, "Boots 'n Barbeque" on Sunday September 21, 2008, at King Copsico Farm in Westmoreland County. The NNLC assists private landowners in protecting open space on their property through voluntary agreements that allow owners to retain title and use of their land for themselves and their heirs.

Northern Neck Master Gardeners Lawn Care Seminar:

On August 9, 2008, NNSWCD Education Coordinator Faye Andrashko represented the NNSWCD at the NNMG annual Lawn Care Seminar "Beautiful Lawn, Healthy Bay" in White

Stone. The event provided information on how to establish and maintain a lawn and was attended by more than 80 people.

Northern Neck/Regional Recycling Project:

On February 17, 2009, NNSWCD Education Coordinator Faye Andrashko attended a Reduce, Reuse, Recycle program coordinated by the Northern Neck Gardener's Club. As a result of that program key contacts were made and an effort was spearheaded by Faye to address the logistical challenges of development of a regional recycling project. The goal of the NNSWCD in this project is to develop a regional recycling initiative that encompasses the schools as well as citizens. Meetings of twelve interested parties who represent a number of Northern Neck organizations were coordinated and subgroups have been formed for projects to take immediate action on and others that would require more time.

Northumberland County Young Farmers Corn Contest:

In June 2007, due to the lack of an Advisor for the Northumberland County Young Farmers, the NNSWCD was approached by the group about assisting with their annual Corn Contest. The NNSWCD Board agreed that this was an excellent opportunity to show support to the local farmers and other local businesses and agribusiness groups. During September and October of 2008, NNSWCD Staff checked corn yield test plots in all four counties of the Northern Neck.

Northumberland/Lancaster Twilight Field Day:

On August 18, 2008, District staff assisted Northumberland/Lancaster Extension in hosting a tour for local farmers. The tour provided approximately 35 local agricultural producers with information and research and the ability to see firsthand how different seed and crop varieties fare in this region. The tour wrapped up at Brann Farms in Village with a boxed dinner and guest speakers. Jonah Bowles, Virginia Farm Bureau presented Exploring the 2008 Farm Bill and Marketing Outlook; Craig Giese, Dehnert Clark & Co., PC spoke on Making Smart Financial Decisions in 2008; and Herman Ellison, USDA-National Agricultural Statistics Service VA Field Office provided commentary on Virginia agricultural statistics. A question and answer period followed.

Rain Barrel Workshops:

Due to the lack of a proper storage facility and the continuing number of Northern Neck citizens interested in obtaining rain barrels, the NNSWCD turned over the rain barrel project to the Northern Neck Master Gardeners during FY 08/09. The NNSWCD continues to serve as a liaison for securing barrels for the group as well as referring residents to the rain barrel workshops hosted by the NNMG.

Reedville Fisherman's Museum Family Day:

On February 21, 2009, NNSWCD Education Coordinator Faye Andrashko represented the NNSWCD at the Family Day event held at the Reedville Fisherman's Museum. As part of a collaborative effort with Julie Tritz, VCE-4-H Agent, and Jane Petersen of the Master Naturalists, Faye developed and prepared materials for the event including a wetlands program and activities that included a soils/runoff component for the program: The Chesapeake Bay, a Partnership between Humans and Nature.

Richmond County Elementary School Fun Day:

On May 22, 2009, NNSWCD Office Manager Kathy Clarke manned a booth at the Richmond County Elementary School Annual Fun Day. Students and parents visited the booth and learned about the NNSWCD and conservation efforts.

Richmond County Elementary School Outdoor Bucket Project:

During May and June 2009, NNSWCD Education Coordinator Faye Andrashko conducted four afterschool outdoor sessions of the “Bucket Program” with more than twenty third through fifth grade students enrolled in the RCES Gifted Program. The project aimed to bring the students acute awareness of nature and the interconnectedness of living things through use of teaching the “outdoors” on the school yard. Recycled plastic buckets were used to carry learning tools such as magnifiers, bug boxes, thermometers, rulers and compasses, outside to capture things which were further discussed outdoors, or studied indoors. The buckets also served as seats for discussion time while outdoors. Volunteer Russ Talcott of Farnham assisted with the program.

Richmond County Elementary School Recycling Program:

On October 27, 2008, NNSWCD Education Coordinator Faye Andrashko and Office Manager Kathy Clarke met with Richmond County Elementary School Principal Davis Roberts to learn about their in-house recycling program. Plastic bottles and bottle caps were being collected in the cafeteria; the bottles were being taken to a local recycling bin and the bottle caps were being personally mailed at the expense of Mr. Roberts to a US Air Force base in Japan where they were being processed and recycled. The money realized for the processed plastic material was used for the vaccines for children in Asia and Africa. Faye continues to provide assistance in garnering support for grant funding to further the school’s recycling program.

Richmond County Fair:

On August 19-23, 2008, the NNSWCD hosted a booth at the Annual Richmond County Fair manned by NNSWCD Office Manager Kathy Clarke. Thanks to a donation from the Kilmarnock Wal-Mart, compact fluorescent bulbs were handed out to residents of the Northern Neck visiting the booth.

Richmond County Family YMCA Healthy Kids Day:

During FY 08/09, the Richmond County Family YMCA launched its “Y Go Green” campaign, geared towards preserving the beautiful Northern Neck and perpetuating “green” habits in the youth. In response, NNSWCD Education Coordinator Faye Andrashko and Office Manager Kathy Clarke coordinated with Meaghan Ptucha, Youth and Family Services Director, the providing of signage and booth material for their Healthy Kids Day event held on April 18, 2009.

Richmond County Tributary Strategies Pilot Project:

At the May 14, 2008, NNSWCD Board Meeting, Moira Croghan, Assistant Director of DCR, provided an overview of the Richmond County Tributary Strategies Pilot Project. The mission of the project encompassed establishing locality-level, nonpoint source (NPS), nutrient and sediment reductions, and formulating strategies to meet and maintain the goals. During FY 08/09, the NNSWCD was represented at the meetings by Chairman J.C Berger, District Manager Craig Brann, and NPS Specialist Sam Johnson.

River District’s Boy Scout Camporee:

The NNSWCD and Three Rivers SWCD partnered in a joint conservation exhibit at the 1st Annual Rivers District Scout-O-Rama Crossover on May 2nd. The three-day scout program was held on the grounds of Rappahannock Community College in Warsaw. Cub Scout Packs, Boy Scout Troops, and Venture Crews from Essex, King William, King and Queen, Lancaster, Middlesex, Northumberland, Richmond, and Westmoreland counties gathered at the campus in Warsaw. The Scout-O-Rama was a Trade Show of Scouting in the newly formed Rivers District. Scouts and their families enjoyed a fun-filled day of exhibits, competitions, skits, and displays,

which included the conservation exhibits and games of NNSWCD and Three Rivers: Good Farm, Bad Farm, and Conservation Jeopardy. Other popular events included Dutch-Oven Cooking, Turtle Races, Official District Pinewood Derby Championship, a Catapult, and a crash simulation put on by Richmond County Emergency Services and the Sheriff's Office.

Roller Crimper Pilot Program:

On April 6, 2006, the NNSWCD entered into a pilot project agreement with the Three Rivers SWCD (TRSWCD), the Virginia Cooperative Extension (VCE), the Tidewater Resource Conservation & Development Council (RC&D) and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to introduce a roller crimper to local producers. The agreement expired in August 2008 and a new agreement was devised. The NNSWCD agreed to continue to serve in the same role as before, mainly promoting the equipment, while Three Rivers SWCD would be responsible for housing it.

Strategic Plan:

In April 2008, the NNSWCD publicly announced in accordance with the Code of Virginia Section 2.2-3707.(C) a public meeting to be held on Tuesday, April 22, 2008, from 10:00AM to Noon EST in the Community Room (beside Fire Department) of the Northern Neck Electric Cooperative on 173 Pine Street in Warsaw, VA. The purpose of the meeting was to review the Draft Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 2009 through 2012 and solicit comments from the general public as well as interested groups.

Comments received at the meeting, as well as any written comments received in the office prior to the meeting, were considered in developing the final Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 2009 through 2012. The final plan was adopted by the NNSWCD at the meeting held on May 14, 2008.

VASWCD Annual Meeting:

The 70th VASWCD Annual Meeting was held in Roanoke, VA on December 7-9, 2008. The theme of the 2008 meeting was “*Virginia Conservation-Powered by 47 SWCD's and their Partners?*”. The NNSWCD was represented by Staff members: Craig Brann, Kathy Clarke, and Sam Johnson and Directors: Chairman J.C. Berger, Vice-Chairman E. Derwin Booker, Jr., and Northumberland Elected Director John A. Kelley. The Annual Meeting proved to be an award-winning event for the Staff & Directors of the Northern Neck Soil and Water Conservation District (NNSWCD).

At the Area III portion of the meeting, the NNSWCD was recognized as the winner of the 1st Annual Area III Outstanding District Challenge, an awards program created to recognize an outstanding SWCD and staff within Area III that consistently goes above and beyond what is expected and to recognize that district's exceptional contributions and accomplishments. In addition to a trophy, each member of the NNSWCD Staff consisting of District Manager Craig Brann, Education Coordinator Faye Andrashko, Office Manager Kathy Clarke and Conservation Specialist Brandon Dillistin were presented with a cash award.

At the Awards Banquet on Tuesday evening, NNSWCD District Manager Craig Brann was presented as a winner of the Chaffin Soil and Water Conservation District Employee of the Year Award.

As the grand finale of the Awards Banquet on Tuesday evening, NNSWCD Chairman and VASWCD Secretary/Treasurer, Junius C. “J.C.” Berger was awarded with the prestigious R.E.

“Bobby” Wilkinson Award. The award is given annually to a District Director for unselfish and dedicated acts and services that have furthered the effective implementation of the VASWCD’s policies and the achievement of its program objectives. J.C. was recognized for his contributions in streamlining the financial management and investment processes of the VASWCD, his successful lobbying efforts, and for spearheading a major statewide software modernization project. In addition to a letter of support submitted by the NNSWCD Directors and Staff, a letter of recommendation was provided by 1st District Representative Robert J. Wittman.

VASWCDEF Scholarship Program:

Each year the NNSWCD locally promotes the Virginia Association of Soil & Water Conservation Districts Educational Foundation (VASWCDEF) Scholarship Awards Program. The Program supports the education of Virginia citizens in technical fields involving natural resource conservation and environmental protection through financial support to students majoring in or showing a strong desire to major in a course curriculum related to natural resource conservation and/or environmental studies. Four (4) \$1000 scholarships are awarded throughout the state each year.

Individual applicants must be full-time students enrolled in, or who have applied to a college freshman level curriculum. Applicants must reside or attend school in one of the four counties served by the NNSWCD: Lancaster, Northumberland, Richmond or Westmoreland. Applicants must document a class ranking in the top 20% of his or her graduating class, a 3.0 or greater Grade Point Average or appropriate equivalent of individual scholastic achievement.

In FY 08/09, the NNSWCD submitted one local application; however, the applicant was not selected as a scholarship recipient.

Virginia Ag Expo

The 2008 Virginia Ag Expo was held on August 14, 2008, at Billy Bain Farms in Dinwiddie, VA. Noted as the largest agricultural field day in the state of Virginia, the event featured exhibitors showcasing the latest in equipment, agricultural technology, crop inputs and goods and services. Field plots included corn, soybeans, peanuts, cotton, tobacco, summer annual forages, and pumpkins. The NNSWCD was represented by District Manager Craig Brann, Conservation Specialist Brandon Dillistin, and Education Coordinator Faye Andrashko.

Virginia Department of Forestry Chilton Woods Project:

On October 30, 2008, NNSWCD Education Coordinator Faye Andrashko participated in a Virginia Department of Forestry (VDOP) trailblazing project at Chilton Woods State Forest in Lancaster County. The effort was coordinated by Rich Steensma, Forester Specialist, and the Master Naturalists. The trail is envisioned to become an educational feature for the area.

Virginia Small Grains Field Day:

NNSWCD Staff attended the Virginia Small Grains Field Day at Corbin Hall Farm in Water View on May 14, 2009. The event included field tours and presentations on wheat variety strip trials, bread wheat variety and disease interactions, potential new seed treatment insecticides for wheat, foliar disease control strategies in wheat and barley, and barley plant growth regulator evaluation.

Warsaw-Bauman 332 Masonic Lodge Presentation:

On November 17, 2008, NNSWCD District Manager Craig Brann made a presentation to Warsaw Masons at the Warsaw-Bauman 332 Masonic Lodge in Warsaw. An overview of

NNSWCD operations and programs including the Virginia Agricultural BMP Cost-Share Program was provided. Approximately twenty people were in attendance.

Water Festival:

On September 30, 2008, and October 2, 2008, NNSWCD Education Coordinator Faye Andrashko participated as salt marsh instructor at the annual water conservation education event for sixth-graders of Lancaster and Northumberland Counties. The event was held at Camp Kekoka YMCA in Kilmarnock. In its seventh year, the event has primarily been run by some fifty volunteers on the Northern Neck.

Youth Conservation Camp:

For the past 30 years, the VASWCD has sponsored a weeklong summer conservation camp for Virginia high school students on the campus of Virginia Tech. The program brings together about 90 interested students for a week of learning about Virginia's natural resources from conservation professionals and faculty of Virginia Tech. Most of the instruction is hands-on and outdoors.

Each year the NNSWCD accepts applications to sponsor two campers to the weeklong session. Applicants must be in grades 9-12 during the academic school year and cannot have previously attended. The total cost per student for FY 08/09 was \$550.00. The 2008 Youth Conservation Camp took place July 13-19, 2008, at Virginia Tech in Blacksburg, VA. The NNSWCD sponsored one camper, Carson Klein of Northumberland County.

Representation:

District Directors and Staff serve on various Boards, Councils and other committees to maintain knowledge and information of current natural resource issues and to provide input into developing programs, policies and funding.

In FY 08/09, the District represented its localities through the following:

- Ag BMP Advisory Committee & 3 Sub-Committees
- Ag BMP Modernization Steering Committee
- Ag BMP Modernization User Group
- Area III Spring Meeting Planning Committee
- Area III Challenge Steering Committee
- Area III Envirothon Planning Committee
- Area III Excel Roundtable
- Northern Neck Farm Museum (NNFM) Education Committee
- Northern Neck Master Gardeners (NNMG) Seminar Steering Committee
- Northern Neck Master Naturalists (NNMN) Curriculum Committee
- Northern Neck Recycling Regional Network
- Potomac Conservation Council (PCC)
- Potomac Watershed Round Table
- Rappahannock River Basin Commission (RRBC)
- Richmond County Tributary Strategy Implementation Pilot Project Steering Committee
- Three Rivers Environmental Educators (T.R.E.E.) Board & Planning Committee
- Tidewater Resource Conservation & Development Council (RC&D)
- Virginia Association of Conservation District Employees (VACDE) Finance Committee
- Virginia Association of Soil & Water Conservation Districts (VASWCD) Executive Committee
- Virginia Cooperative Extension (VCE) Leadership Council