



NORTHERN NECK
SOIL & WATER

CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Strategic Plan
July 1, 2008-June 30, 2012

Northern Neck Soil & Water Conservation District
Strategic Plan
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Mission:

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

Elected Directors:

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 G. Vanlandingham (Northumberland)

Appointed Directors:

Matthew A. Lewis, Virginia Cooperative Extension (Lancaster/Northumberland)
James Minor, At-Large (Westmoreland)

Associate Directors:

John Barber (Richmond)
Richard Haynie (Northumberland)
Luther Welch (Northumberland)

Staff:

J. Craig Brann, District Manager/Conservation Specialist
Faye A. Andrashko, Education Coordinator
Kathy E. Clarke, Office Manager
Brandon W. Dillistin, Conservation Specialist
Dwight S. Forrester, Conservation Specialist

Natural Resource 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
NNSWCD, Northern Neck Soil & Water Conservation District
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
USACE, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
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
VDOT, Virginia Department of Transportation
Westmoreland County

Strategic Plan Process:

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 this 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.

Introduction

The purpose of this Strategic Plan is to assist the Northern Neck Soil & Water Conservation District, NNSWCD, through the next four fiscal years, 2009 through 2012, in effectively fulfilling its responsibilities as stated in the Code of Virginia Section 10.1-104.1 (B). 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 region is a peninsula of land adjacent to the Potomac River, the Rappahannock River and the Bay Coastal area where numerous creeks and rivers flow directly into the Chesapeake Bay. Located in the Atlantic Coastal Plain, soils are predominantly sandy and well drained, with limited organic matter. Agriculture, forestry and commercial fishing remain the economic base of the region. In the recent past, waterfront development has increased dramatically, bringing a significant population of retired residents.

The 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.

Partnering Agencies listed on page 3 are vital to accomplishing the goals outlined in this Strategic Plan, especially when staffing resources to the District are limited.

Goal I: Leadership/Partnership

The NNSWCD will continue to work to be recognized by all citizens of the Northern Neck as a public service organization providing technical assistance and education towards the conservation and protection of natural resources. The District will endeavor to:

- 1) Improve public knowledge of the NNSWCD by:
 - a) Increasing awareness through media venues such as radio announcements, newspaper articles, private mailings and NNSWCD Web site.
 - b) Partnering with local government and partner agencies in conservation related programs.
 - c) Supporting and participating in local conservation studies and plans.
 - d) Continuing efforts with the four local governments to strengthen their erosion and sediments control programs.
- 2) Acquire adequate funding and resources to carry out District Operations and Conservation Programs by:
 - a) Seeking stable and dedicated conservation funding from the General Assembly.
 - b) Seeking local government support for increased local funding for conservation programs for general operations of the NNSWCD.
 - c) Supporting efforts for a new data and financial management system.
 - d) Supporting efforts for a new Best Management Practices (BMP) Implementation Program.
 - e) Supporting efforts for technical assistance to landowners for shoreline erosion control.
 - f) Pursuing grant funding for innovative conservation programs (e.g., mobile education vehicle).
 - g) Pursuing grant funding to provide leadership in addressing water issues on the Northern Neck (e.g., well and aquifer monitoring, surface water retention).
- 3) Support efforts within the Northern Neck to maintain farms, farmland and forest lands that are the basis of our rural heritage and economy by:
 - a) Acting as co-holder of conservation easements, where appropriate.
 - b) Supporting forestry BMP implementation through state and federal programs.
 - c) Participating in planning and implementation of Down on the Farm Tours with RC&D.
 - d) Supporting programs that enhance the profitability and viability of farming and forestry.
 - e) Supporting planned development that does not fragment larger parcels of farm and forest land and leave it impractical and unprofitable to manage.
- 4) Support efforts to create a Virginia Urban BMP Program to address the non-point source pollution from non-agricultural land by:
 - a) Participating on local and statewide advisory committees.
 - b) Supporting efforts for obtaining funding to develop closer relationships with county governments and partnering agencies for education programming and cost-share assistance for implementation of urban LID programs and shoreline protection from local, state and/or federal sources.

Goal II: Education/Outreach

The NNSWCD, in partnership with other agencies and organizations, will provide education on natural resource issues and management to the citizens of the Northern Neck to improve their understanding and decision making while maintaining competent staff.

- 1) Continue educational programming that has been effective in promoting natural resource education to the youth of the Northern Neck by:
 - a) Conducting Envirothon for local high schools and participating in Area Envirothon.
 - b) Conducting Ag Appreciation Day for Northern Neck third-graders.
 - c) Promoting and supporting efforts of conservation-related scholarships and camps.
 - d) Providing the schools of the Northern Neck with additional educational programs at their request.
 - e) Promoting community building among local educators.
- 2) Update and educate producers and landowners on non-point and point source pollution issues for continued improvement in erosion control, nutrient management and protection of the land and water resources by:
 - a) Conducting Annual Cost-Share Conference to keep producers and landowners informed of changes and the availability of conservation practices within the Virginia Ag BMP Cost-Share Program.
 - b) Promoting and supporting all state and federal conservation programs.
 - c) Participating in local extension field days and crop conferences to keep farmers informed on conservation issues and programs.
 - d) Providing conservation equipment for rental that demonstrates and helps to implement innovative conservation practices with producers and landowners.
 - e) Preparing and publishing newsletters and news articles on conservation programs and issues for education of producers, landowners and the public.
- 3) Educate the general public on agricultural and forestry issues and practices particularly related to conservation and the application of good science to land and water management by:
 - a) Conducting seminars and programs for non-agricultural public on farm and forestry practices.
 - b) Making biennial progress reports to Boards of Supervisors on NNSWCD programs and conservation needs of the Northern Neck.
 - c) Supporting forestry education with VDOF, RC&D and VCE.
 - d) Promoting Ag BMP implementation through signage.
- 4) Educate the general public and contractors on residential issues related to management of fertilizers and pesticides in the residential landscape, low impact development (LID), recycling opportunities and storm water issues and innovations by:
 - a) Promoting and conducting workshops on water management practices (e.g., rain barrels).
 - b) Promoting lawn care practices, such as urban nutrient management plans, as related to conservation and environmental protection.
 - c) Promoting shoreline management to landowners on alternatives for controlling shoreline erosion problems.

- 5) Educate the general public on prevention of other types of pollution—and the relationship of these to soil and water health and conservation by conducting forums and outreach programs for pollution prevention, such as litter, recycling, hazardous waste and energy consumption.
- 6) Pursuing educational/training opportunities for the Staff and Directors that would enable them to achieve and maintain professionalism and certifications

Goal III: Technical Assistance/Implementation

The NNSWCD will work with partner agencies and local government to enhance water quality and quantity through improved management of soil and water resources. The District will:

- 1) Implement BMPs for agriculture through available Virginia Agricultural BMP Cost-Share Programs by:
 - a) Assessing a producer/landowner's individual needs and making recommendations for improvement based on those needs.
 - b) Promoting and conducting a Cost-Share sign-up period in which applications will be taken.
 - c) Ranking and approving Cost-Share applications in accordance with the Virginia Agricultural Cost-Share BMP Manual.
 - d) Directing producers/landowners to the most appropriate state or federal program for water quality improvement [e.g., Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP)].
 - e) Developing Chesapeake Bay Act Plans on request from producers/landowners and educating them on the application of these plans to their land resource.
- 2) Provide local government with technical support where appropriate on soil and water management by:
 - a) Investigating information and data availability on conservation related issues.
 - b) Acting as a conduit by referring, when appropriate, to other resources.
 - c) Participating in local pilot tributary strategy implementation projects (e.g., Richmond County Pilot Project).
 - d) Assisting with erosion, sediment and water quality improvement, where appropriate.
- 3) Provide technical assistance to the non-agricultural and non-conventional agricultural community by:
 - a) Using existing partner information to identify land that is not being managed properly.
 - b) Using local realtors as a conduit of providing educational conservation materials.

Closing

In conclusion, the Northern Neck Soil & Water Conservation District extends appreciation to all who supported and participated with us in this important planning process. The concern and sincerity of the citizens of the Northern Neck for protecting their natural resources are reflected in this plan and the District will do its utmost to fully implement the plan, both in letter and in spirit.

The NNSWCD takes full responsibility for this document and any errors contained therein. Additional information should be submitted to the address below.



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.