

CONSERVATION AROUND THE NECK

2023 VA AG EXPO - LAND OF PROMISE

The VA Ag Expo is the largest agricultural field day in Virginia and is typically held on the first Thursday in August. The 2023 VA Ag Expo was held at the Land of Promise Farms in Virginia Beach. This year's theme was *"Agriculture: Bringing Promise to Our Future"*. Staff & NRCS partners learned about the different types of soil at this particular farm, networked with different organizations & enjoyed delicious homemade ice cream. We are already looking forward to the 2024 Ag Expo and the possibility of it being closer to the Northern Neck!



THIS ISSUE:

2023 VA AG EXPO
PAGE 01

PHOTO CONTEST WINNER
PAGE 02

HHW EVENTS
PAGE 03

EDUCATION
PAGE 04

USDA CORNER
PAGE 05

PROGRAM UPDATES
PAGE 06 & 07



DID YOU KNOW?

NNSWCD Newsletters are also available through email! Contact Kelly to sign-up.



And the winner is.....

We couldn't be more excited to have such a beautiful picture captured in the Northern Neck be selected as the Overall Winner in the 2023 VASWCD Photo Contest. Congratulations to Alicia Beall of Montross! Another photo she submitted, "Honey Harvest", was selected as Honorable Mention.

Alicia Beall has been a part of the Northern Neck since she was a young adult. She moved here permanently seven years ago and lives near the Potomac River. She loves the outdoors and can frequently be found running, hiking, boating, beachcombing or gardening. Alicia strives to capture memories of the beauty and wonder of nature through the lens, ever working to learn and improve her skill and technique.

In addition, Alicia wanted to provide a little background information about her photos. "Crimson and Clover" captures the cover crop in a field on Grapewood Farm, an organic grain farm owned by Fred and Cathy Sachs. "Sunny Harvest" was taken in my backyard among the sunflowers I plant and grow each year. Both photos were taken with an iPhone 11 Pro.

NNSWCD would like to congratulate and thank Alicia Beall for participating in the 2023 VASWCD Photo Contest and allowing us to share her photos in our Fall Newsletter.





HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS & ELECTRONIC WASTE COLLECTION

It is hard to believe the Fall Household Hazardous & E-Waste collection events are here. There are four HHW's planned every Fall - two in September and two in October. Sometimes we are asked "What is a household hazardous waste collection event?" or "what items are accepted?". A household hazardous & electronic waste (HHW & E-Waste) collection is an event where county residents and/or property owners are allowed to bring household hazardous or e-waste items to a designated location for proper disposal. **What is a household hazardous waste item?** These items can include pesticides, old paint cans, used oil, bad gas, fluorescent light bulbs, batteries, aerosol cans and so much more! E-waste items include TV's, computers, printers, phones, or any other electronic device. NNSWCD partners with the counties, MXI Environmental Services, and Virginia Cooperative Extension (VCE) offices to make this event possible. The 2024 HHW dates can be found on our website, www.nnswcd.org, as well as a list of accepted and non-accepted items.

Lancaster County & Westmoreland County had their Fall HHW in September. The Lancaster County event consisted of heavy rain and wind, however, 82 vehicles came through the line. Residents timed it perfectly between rain showers to bring their hazardous and electronic waste. On behalf of all participating partners, we would like to thank GeoProducts, LLC in Kilmarnock for saving the day! The propane tank on the forklift turned out to be empty after the first hour of use and the employees at GeoProducts hooked us up with a full propane tank so we could complete the event successfully. The weather cooperated beautifully for the Westmoreland County event and we were just shy of 60 vehicles, which is an increase compared to previous Fall events. A new item was added to the Westmoreland event - "Prescription Drug Take Back". Westmoreland County Sheriff's office was present and collected prescription drugs that were brought in. The local fire department also participated by setting the ladder truck up and providing smoke detectors to those in desperate need. Both events were successful and we look forward to the Fall events for Richmond & Northumberland Counties. Check out the dates below:

- **Richmond County Fall HHW** - Saturday, October 21st at the RCC parking lot
- **Northumberland County Fall HHW** - Saturday, October 28th at the Middle School Bus parking lot





EDUCATION

In September, Menokin Foundation hosted a field experience for Richmond County Middle School's seventh graders. NNSWCD, Menokin Foundation and Friends of the Rappahannock collaborated to provide an educational experience for all. NNSWCD brought the Mobile Education Unit and took the students exploring underground. They were able to feel the cool temperature of the soil, see the water flowing through the aquifer and touch the roots growing underground. Students then explored a small watershed leading from the Visitor's Center to Cat Point Creek. Along the way, staff taught about the changes in the understory, tree identification and importance of riparian buffers for water quality. Menokin Foundation had students building bricks and touring the ruins while Friends of the Rappahannock taught everyone how to paddle on Cat Point Creek. Field experiences at Menokin are one of NNSWCD's favorite collaborations because the history and culture of the Northern Neck is brought to life through the connection of science, history and nature. In October, Wendy from the Virginia Cooperative Extension office joined us for another field day experience. This time Menokin Foundation hosted first semester science class sixth graders from Montross Middle School. Check out Wendy's educational lesson she shared with the students:

What Goes Down Your Drain?

Students had the opportunity to shop for products that go down the drain like soap, shampoo, cleaner and detergents. Students were given a budget and could look at the product cards to make their choices. After shopping, we had a discussion about why they made the choices that they did and if they stayed within their budget. For round 2 of this activity, students were provided with an information sheet about some of the ingredients in the products. Students were then allowed to shop again for the same products with the same budget. After round 2, we had more discussion about the choices that they made and what they were based on and we talked about what it means to be an informed consumer.

A Peek at Packaging: Students were allowed to pick a product's packaging out of a tub of assorted trash. Students used a worksheet to analyze that packaging. They examined things like what was the purpose of the packaging, was it made from recycled materials, was it recyclable, how much of it gets thrown into a landfill, was it necessary, was there a more sustainable packaging option. After analyzing the packaging, we had a discussion about their selected product and its packaging. By combining the two activities, we were able to think about and discuss the choices that we can make as consumers and how we can individually take action by making better choices for our environment.



USDA CORNER

Harvest season is upon us and that means it's time to start planting cover crops, recording or continuing to record harvest yields, preparing for 2024 crop rotations, and planning ahead for 2024 nutrient management plans! If you have active contracts with NRCS and need additional information on planting specs or planned practices or tracts, don't hesitate to give us a call. If you're unsure of what is in your plan, we'd rather check it prior to planting instead of after it's too late!

If you have a nutrient management payment coming this fall after harvest, please don't forget that we will need to get a copy of your 2023 plan (or we can obtain a copy from Brandon or Aaron if you are okay with that), your fertilizer records to ensure your plan was followed (or a signed verification form from your nutrient management planner), and a copy of whatever technique was chosen to justify the additional payment IF it is in your plan (the "technique" portion of this reminder usually only applies to CSP payments). Again, if you're unsure what technique was chosen, or where you stand with nutrient management payments, please give us a call!

We've had several producers contacting us about the FY24 funding cycle for EQIP and CSP. We're always accepting applications; however, we really don't know many specifics about what practices or funding are available at this point. We do know that the application deadline for FY24 funding consideration is Friday, October 13th, 2023. If you had an unfunded application in FY23, we will be contacting you soon to see if you want to roll it over to FY24 to receive funding consideration once we are given details by National Headquarters and our State Office. If you did not have an unfunded application, but still wish to sign up, come by the office so we can discuss your needs and goals and get your application in the system.

In order to cut down on the time it takes to take a preapproved application to an obligated contract, our State Office has informed us that ALL producers who have active FY24 applications in the system MUST come into the local FSA office to complete FY24 eligibility paperwork by December 8th, 2023.

From the Farm Service Agency (FSA) side of the office, Abby wants to remind everyone of the following:

- Program year 2024 began October 1, 2023
- Agriculture Risk Coverage/Price Loss Coverage signup began October 1, 2023
- Please remember to report all fall crops to the office

Just a couple short notes to close, we will have a new face in the office at the end of the calendar year. Karen Balentine will be joining our team as a third soil conservationist in mid December to assist with conservation planning, contracting, and field work. She is coming to us from the US Fish and Wildlife Service and brings a wealth of information to our team. Because our team has grown quite a bit over the past year, we are moving offices and work stations within the office. If you come into the office and can't find us, you may have to holler, but we'll come find you and, as usual, do everything we can to help with whatever is needed!

Safe harvesting and happy fall to everyone!

Lucee

**USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.*



Program Updates

Virginia Conservation Assistance Program (VCAP)

Initial site visit with Shoreline Erosion Advisory Service's Shoreline Engineer, Mike Vanlandingham: District staff and Mike walked the shoreline and discussed options with the homeowner. This particular site had some sections that did not meet VCAP specifications and included some invasives that need to be managed. (image on the left)

Final site inspection: This project included a riprap sill, sand fill and plantings. The low, intertidal marsh was planted in *Spartina alterniflora*, smooth cord grass. *Spartina patens*, saltmeadow cordgrass, was planted above high tide. After a growing season, this living shoreline will look full and beautiful! (image on the right)

Upcoming Application Deadlines:

- November 1
- Not accepting applications in December

Check out the sneak peek of NNSWCD's very own brochure on VCAP! It is set to be released soon.



FOR MORE INFORMATION

Lowery Becker
Education Conservation Specialist

804-313-9102 x104

lowery.becker@nnswwcd.com

www.nnswwcd.org

5585 Richmond Rd.
Warsaw, VA 22672

NORTHERN NECK SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

VIRGINIA ASSOCIATION OF SWCD

VIRGINIA CONSERVATION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

LIVING SHORELINE PROJECTS

A living shoreline is a shoreline management practice that provides erosion control and water quality benefits. These benefits include:

- protection and restoration of natural shoreline habitat
- maintaining of coastal processes.

Living Shoreline practices include:

- sills and breakwaters when incorporated with vegetation
- 5 ft. opening, drop down, or overlap every 100 ft.
- maximum fetch of 1.5 miles
- existing or created tidal wetland with a minimum total width of 8 ft.
- slope of sand fill shall be 10:1 with classified, loose to coarse clean sand

VCAP

The Virginia Conservation Assistance Program (VCAP) is a program for homeowners, property owners, and businesses. It is an urban cost share program of the Virginia Association of Soil & Water Conservation Districts which the Northern Neck Soil & Water Conservation District facilitates.

VCAP provides financial reimbursement to property owners who install specific conservation practices including the installation of living shorelines. The living shoreline practice is eligible for 80% cost share with a \$30,000 cap. All funds are taxable.

VCAP assists with additional practices which can be found at: www.vaswcd.org/vcap-landing-3/



Program Updates

Virginia Agricultural Cost-Share Program (VACS)

Sign-ups, sign-ups and more sign-ups! For program year 2024, the Northern Neck SWCD received \$6,189,089 in cost-share funds. Our technical staff was busy ensuring all producers in the Northern Neck were aware of the VACS program, our participation in Whole Farm Approach and came in to sign up their fields. Our sign-up period was held from July 5th through August 11th by appointment only. To show appreciation for coming in the office to participate in the Virginia Agricultural Cost-Share Program, we had specialty koozies created for each producer.

ATTENTION PRODUCERS - keep these important cover crop dates in mind:

- **November 10** - last day to plant early cover crop
- **November 30** - last day to plant (late) cover crop

The technical staff will be out in the field throughout November checking fields that have been reported as planted with cover crop. Once you have finished planting cover crop, give Aaron or Brandon a call.

804-313-9102 x102
804-313-9102 x106



Northern Neck Community Calendar:

October

14	WARSAW FEST
21	RICHMOND CO. HHW
28	NORTHUMBERLAND CO. HHW
31	WRCMSP TRUNK-OR-TREAT

November

4	IRVINGTON FARMER'S MARKET
4	FALL FAMILY FUN DAY @ STRATFORD
1	ELECTION DAY
23	HAPPY THANKSGIVING

December

8	WARSAW CHRISTMAS TOWN
8	KILARMNOCK LIGHTED CHRISTMAS PARADE
25	MERRY CHRISTMAS



5585 Richmond Rd.
P.O. Box 220
Warsaw, VA 22572
www.nnswcd.org

Phone: 804-313-9102

Non Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Warsaw, VA 22572
Permit No. 85

Staff:

Kathy Clarke, District Operations Manager
Brandon Dillistin, District Technical Manager
Joanna Balderson, Administrative Assistant
Lowery Becker, Education Conservation Specialist
Kelly Brann, Marketing & Outreach Specialist
Aaron Saunders, Agricultural Conservation Specialist

Elected Directors:

Robert E. Pickett, Chairman (Northumberland)
Frank A. "Bert" Johnson, Vice-Chair (Richmond)
J. Vince Garland, Treasurer (Richmond)
Faye A. Andrashko (Lancaster)
William A. "Billy" McCarty (Lancaster)
Robert G. "Bobby" Vanlandingham (Northumberland)
H. Shirley Powell (Westmoreland)
Richard E. Wilkins (Westmoreland)

Appointed Directors:

R. Trent Jones, Virginia Cooperative Extension Agent
Louis Gregory "Greg" Basye-At Large Appointed Member (Northumberland)



The Commonwealth of Virginia supports the Northern Neck Soil & Water Conservation District through financial and administrative assistance provided by the Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board and the Department of Conservation and Recreation. Northern Neck Soil & Water Conservation District programs, activities, and employment opportunities are available to all people regardless of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, pregnancy, childbirth or related medical conditions, age, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, military status, or any other bases protected by law. An equal opportunity/affirmative action employer.