



NORTHERN NECK  
SOIL & WATER  
CONSERVATION DISTRICT

# ANNUAL REPORT

## JULY 1, 2019 – JUNE 30, 2020



### **Our Mission:**

*To promote the stewardship of natural resources through leadership, education, and technical assistance for all resource users, and to engender a trusted relationship between the District and these users.*

## **2020 LETTER FROM THE CHAIR**

Dear Partners in Conservation:

It is not unusual for agriculture and conservation to face unanticipated change and challenges. This year has confronted our Northern Neck producers and partners with challenges unlike those experienced in the past. The staff at NNSWCD has been remarkable in its ability to evaluate the change, adapt to the challenges, and still deliver the programs and services our community has come to expect.

Through the advocacy of our local conservation district, the Virginia Association of Conservation Districts, the Department of Conservation and Recreation, and the hard work of our legislators, we received the largest budget allocation for cost share in our history. These funds were used to put conservation practices on the ground by our motivated producers and landowners. These individuals care about water quality, erosion control, soil improvement, and a sustainable future for agriculture. Over 1.7 million dollars went to work for cover-crops, nutrient management, no-till methods, and engineered practices. These contributions help make the Northern Neck a special place and keep our agribusinesses viable. Additionally, we had several successful off-farm projects using reimbursement funds from the Virginia Conservation Assistance Program.

I am personally proud of our agricultural community here in the Northern Neck and the leadership provided by NNSWCD, NRCS, FSA, Virginia Cooperative Extension, and many others. All of these efforts have given us a rewarding year to look back on as we have protected the environment and worked to “feed the people.”



### **NNSWCD DIRECTORS & STAFF**

5559 Richmond Road, Suite B  
P.O. Box 220  
Warsaw, VA 22572  
(804) 313-9102  
[www.nnswcd.org](http://www.nnswcd.org)

#### **Elected Directors**

E. Derwin Booker, Chairman - 2019 (L - 2019)  
Charles “Chip” Jones, Vice-Chair - 2019 (W - 2019)  
Robert E. Pickett, Chairman - 2020 (N)  
Frank A. “Bert” Johnson, Jr., Vice-Chairman - 2020 (R)  
J. Vince Garland, Treasurer (R)  
Faye A. Andrashko (L - 2020)  
William “Billy” McCarty (L - 2020)  
Kenneth Savko, (L - 2019)  
H. Shirley Powell (W)  
Robert G. “Bobby” Vanlandingham (N)  
Richard Wilkins (W - 2020)

#### **Appointed Directors**

Stephanie Romelczyk, Virginia Cooperative Extension Agent  
James E. Minor, At Large Appointed Member (2019)  
Louis Gregory “Greg” Basye, At Large Appointed Member (2020)

#### **Associate Directors**

William D. “Danny” Allensworth  
John Barber  
E. Derwin Booker, Jr. (2020)  
Junius C. “J.C.” Berger  
Richard F. Haynie  
Kenneth Savko (2020)

#### **District Staff**

Kathy E. Clarke, District Operations Manager  
Brandon W. Dillistin, District Technical Manager  
Joanna Balderson, Administrative Assistant  
Lowery Becker, Non-Point Source Specialist  
Kelsey Moss, Intern  
Aaron Saunders, Conservation Specialist  
Kathleen Watson, Education/Outreach Specialist

*The Commonwealth of Virginia supports the Northern Neck Soil & Water Conservation District through financial and administrative assistance provided by the Virginia Soil & 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 disability, race, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, color, age, religion/religious creed, veteran status, or genetics.*

*An equal opportunity/affirmative action employer.*



# VIRGINIA AGRICULTURAL BMP COST SHARE PROGRAM

Payments By County	Engineered Practices	No-Till	Cover Crops	Nutrient Management	Total
Lancaster	\$ 16,255.07	\$ 12,302.50	\$ 172,849.90	\$ 71,831.15	\$ 273,238.62
Northumberland	\$ 2,625.00	\$ 14,212.50	\$ 347,903.20	\$ 63,116.60	\$ 527,857.30
Richmond	\$ 2,817.50	\$ 19,315.00	\$ 249,775.48	\$ 127,558.55	\$ 399,466.53
Westmoreland	----	\$ 22,515.00	\$ 310,518.40	\$ 180,048.65	\$ 513,082.05
<b>Grand Total FY 19/20 VACS Payments:</b>					<b>\$ 1,713,644.50</b>

Acres By County	Engineered Practices	No-Till	Cover Crops	Nutrient Management	Total
Lancaster	232	492.10	4,474.10	18,987.60	24,185.80
Northumberland	.10	568.50	8,938.60	43,093.10	52,645.30
Richmond	6.5	772.60	6,219.25	34,963.50	41,961.85
Westmoreland	-	900.60	8,658.60	45,881.70	55,440.90
<b>Grand Total FY 19/20 VACS Acres:</b>					<b>97,402.75</b>

## EQUIPMENT RENTAL INCOME

To support Continuous No-Till practices, the District has two no-till drills available for rent. From lawns, to pastures, to small grains, we can help you with your planting needs.

### 2016 ESCH™ 5507NT DRILL

#### Specs:

- 7 feet wide
- 5 ½ inch spacing
- Best for: grasses, lawns and small seed
- One main seed box, one small seed hopper
- Requires a minimum of a 45 horse power tractor with at least two hydraulic remotes
- 3,900 pound weight



#### FY 19/20 Figures:

- 19 Total Rentals
- 18 Different Renters
- 246.6 Ac. Planted
- \$2,765.00 Income



### 2018 GREAT PLAINS™ 706 NO-TILL DRILL

#### Specs:

- 7 feet wide
- 7 ½ inch spacing
- Best for: barley, clover, soybeans, and wheat
- One main seed box, one small seed hopper
- Requires a minimum of a 45 horse power tractor with at least two hydraulic remotes.
- 3,900 pound weight



#### FY 19/20 Figures:

- 10 Total Rentals
- 8 Different Renters
- 131.6 Ac. Planted
- \$1,422.00 Income





## COVID and Conservation



### Safe Office Practices Keep District Work Flowing

Conservation work never stops. When COVID-19 shut the District Office's doors to the public last March, the staff was determined to maintain high standards of service, despite the pandemic. Working together to keep the office clean and safe, everyone agreed on a cleaning regimen, socially distant staff schedules, and other safety measures like having masks and gloves available.

Prior to the pandemic, the office was accessible to all during business hours. While planning the Virginia Ag BMP Cost Share sign up period, staff decided to implement an appointment only policy as a safety measure. Workstations in all common areas and meeting spaces received plexiglass shields. Partitions were installed in the technical office (see upper right). Adhesive markers on the floor remind everyone to stay six feet apart. A rental tent was put in the parking lot for shade and a place to wait while producers were screened before their appointments.

The Board of Directors and all committees did not meet from mid March until June, when Phase 3 relaxed some restrictions on gatherings. The Personnel Committee (see right) met at the District Office to conduct staff performance evaluations.

On June 24, 2020 the Board of Directors met after three months (see bottom right) at the Richmond County Public Meeting Room. Distanced seating, masks, and individually boxed lunches were just a few of the measures taken to ensure everyone's safety.

The District will continue to follow all CDC guidelines during this challenging time. The health and safety of our community, producers, directors, and staff are our primary concern. We look forward to serving you in FY 20/21.



## VIRGINIA CONSERVATION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (VCAP)

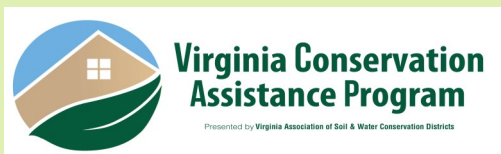
*VCAP provides financial, technical and educational assistance to property owners installing eligible stormwater control practices.*

### FY19/20 VCAP Figures:

5 applications, 3 approved

- 1 Conservation Landscaping
- 2 Living Shorelines

Projects in Lancaster, Northumberland, and Richmond Counties totaling \$31,320.41.



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## EDUCATION AND OUTREACH PROGRAM UPDATES

### District Endows a Second College Scholarship for Conservation & Environmental Studies

The District now offers two one thousand dollar college scholarships to Northern Neck students majoring in natural resources, conservation, or environmental studies.

The J.C. Berger Conservation Advancement Scholarship is open to permanent residents of the Northern Neck entering their first year of study in one of the above mentioned fields. Mr. Berger, a long time District Director, is a champion of conservation education and youth programs.

The second scholarship, the James Edward Minor Ag Stewardship Award, is open to sophomores, juniors, and seniors majoring in the same conservation areas mentioned above. James Minor served as At-Large Director from 2003 until his untimely death in August 2019 and was deeply committed to engaging youth in agriculture. Resolutions officially naming the two awards were presented at the 2019 Holiday Dinner and Awards Presentation at Indian Creek Yacht and Country Club.



The family of the late James Edward Minor receives the resolution naming the newly endowed scholarship in his memory from District Technical Manager Brandon Dillistin.

### 2020 J.C. Berger Conservation Advancement Scholarship



Rappahannock High School graduate Austin Vaughn (pictured left) was chosen as the 2020 recipient of the \$1,000 J.C. Berger Conservation Advancement Award. Austin is the son of Mark and Jessica Vaughn of Warsaw.

Austin's interest in water quality and conservation is a product of growing up on the Northern Neck and its waterways. This fall he began his first year at Eastern Mennonite University, where he studies business and turf management. Austin Hopes to own a landscaping business in the future and looks forward to helping property owners understand the negative impact of overfertilization and pesticide usage close to waterways.

### COVID Stops District's In-Person Conservation Education for Northern Neck Students

In the fall of 2019, our *A River Runs Through Us (ARRTU)* program kicked off a successful semester of conservation education for Northern Neck students. Roughly 300 sixth graders from the counties of Richmond, Lancaster, Northumberland, and Westmoreland explored "the world beneath your feet" going "underground" to see examples of the millions of organisms that don't only rely on soil but in many cases, enrich it too.

ARRTU is one of several environmental conservation lessons that are a part of a Meaningful Watershed Education Experience (MWEE) that the District conducts with local partners. As part of the MWEE, lessons come together at *Think Outside the Sink (TOTS)*, an interactive field experience that normally takes place every spring. Unfortunately, those students we met in in the fall were never able to experience the spring field experience due to COVID.

In February 2020, a classroom visit to Richmond County 4th graders was the only in-person lesson that took place. That lesson introduced students to watersheds with an interactive exercise from Project WET, Sum of the Parts. In the above photo, students design the layout of their own piece of waterfront property. The pieces are put together to form a river. As each student introduces their property, there is a discussion of the impact that each piece of property, whether it is a dairy farm, a golf course, or a private home, has on the body of water that flows past it and where all of the pollution ends up.

We are excited to work with local teachers and develop virtual lessons to assist them any way possible. We look forward to returning to classrooms in person, which we hope will be sooner rather than later.





## District Welcomes Four New Directors

The NNSWCD Board of Directors introduces its four new members who took office at the beginning of 2020. There were three vacant seats for voters to fill during the November 2019 election. Lancaster County voters chose two new representatives, Faye A. Andrashko, a long-time educator and conservation advocate, and William “Billy” McCarty, III, Shellfish Specialist with the Virginia Department of Health and part-time farmer. Westmoreland County’s newly elected District Director is Richard Wilkins, owner and operator of Cedar Hill Farm in Colonial Beach.

The At-Large Director position, an appointed seat on the Board, was left vacant by the sudden death of James Edward Minor in August 2019. Following a review of potential appointees, NNSWCD’s Board voted at the February meeting to appoint Louis Gregory “Greg” Basye of Lottsburg, VA to the At-Large Director seat.

The District’s Executive Board members are:

Robert E. Pickett, Chairman

Frank A. “Bert” Johnson, Vice Chairman

J. Vince Garland, Treasurer



Clockwise from top left:  
Faye A. Andrashko, William “Billy” McCarty, III,  
Louis Gregory “Greg” Basye, and Richard Wilkins.

## 2019 Holiday Dinner: A Time of Celebration and Reflection

The District’s annual Holiday Dinner and Awards Presentation took place December 18, 2019 at the Indian Creek Yacht and Country Club. Three District Directors who did not seek re-election were recognized for their service (see page 7) to conservation efforts on the Northern Neck.

Ken Savko, (right, with District Technical Manager Brandon Dillistin) who represented Lancaster County for one term was not only recognized for his service as an elected Director; he also received the District’s Blue Crab Award. This award is given annually to an individual known for their commitment to saving natural resources and protecting the environment.

Charles “Chip” Jones received the Bobby Wilkinson Outstanding Director Award at the Virginia Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts (VASWCD) Annual Meeting, held in Norfolk, VA in December. It is the highest award given to a District Director. Chip appears with (left to right, Derwin Booker, Robert Pickett, Kathleen Watson, Brandon Dillistin, Kathy Clarke and Frank Johnson who also attended the Annual Meeting.



## VASWCD Annual Meeting Highlights

Kathy Clarke, Brandon Dillistin and Kathleen Watson presented a Field Safety Awareness session during the 2019 Annual Meeting. Topics covered included proper field attire, personal safety and conducting site visits in a safe manner.

The Virginia Association of Conservation Districts Employee Association (VACDE) recognized Kathleen Watson, Education and Outreach Specialist, for five years of service to the District.

## 2020 Legislative Day at the General Assembly



Each year, SWCD directors, staff members and friends of conservation travel to Richmond for VASWCD Legislative Day. It is an opportunity to remind our state legislators about the important work that SWCDs do to benefit producers statewide resulting in better farming practices and ultimately, cleaner waterways. Pictured at left are representatives from Area III who traveled to the Capital and met with Delegate Margaret Bevans Ransone who represents the 99th District. (Left to right, Frank A. Johnson, Jr. NNSWCD Vice Chairman; Giannina Franz, TCCSWCD Chair; Robert Pickett, NNSWCD Chair; Delegate Margaret Bevans Ransone, 99th District; Kathy Clarke, District Operations Manager; Faye A. Andrashko, NNSWCD District Director and Joanna Balderson, Administrative Assistant.

## A YEAR OF CHANGE

### IN MEMORIAM

**James Edward Minor**  
**February 18, 1964 — August 16, 2019**

A Northern Neck native, farmer, steward of the land;  
A husband, father, and family man;  
A man of faith, who quietly served others;  
A dedicated District Board Member since 2003.  
An unfathomable loss to us all.



*"...most of all, he taught us all the importance of kindness and how far it will go."* - Northern Neck 4-H Parent

### We Thank You for Your Service and Dedication to Conservation

In the fall of 2019, Derwin Booker (Lancaster County) and Charles "Chip" Jones (Westmoreland County) announced that they would not seek re-election to the District's Board of Directors.

Having served as an Elected Director since 2002 and Board Chairman since 2012, Derwin felt it was time to focus on his beloved family. His dedication to the NNSWCD is evident by his decision to continue to serve as an Associate Director.

Chip, who served as Vice-Chair since 2011, answered another call to service with the 276th Combat Engineer Company to support National Guard Soldiers.

At the 2019 District Holiday Dinner and Awards Program, Derwin and Chip were recognized and thanked for their contributions to conservation efforts in the Northern Neck. Pictured at right Derwin (top right) and Chip (bottom right) were presented with a special commemorative Northern Neck print as a token of appreciation for their long-term contributions.

A third District Director, Kenneth Savko (Lancaster County) also did not seek re-election. His increasing workload at the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality was demanding more of his time. Ken was awarded the Blue Crab Award at the 2019 Holiday Dinner (see photo, page 6).



### A Warm Welcome to Our Newest Staff Member

In September 2019 we welcomed Joanna Balderson, the District's Administrative Assistant. A Richmond County resident for over 20 years, Joanna came to the District from the Westmoreland County Commission of the Revenue's Office. Joanna is an Emergency Medical Technician with Westmoreland County's Volunteer Fire Department. Joanna has become a vital member of the District staff, providing support to the District Operations Manager and District Technical Manager and to anyone else on the team who needs assistance.







**NORTHERN NECK**  
**SOIL & WATER**  
**CONSERVATION DISTRICT**

***WE WISH TO THANK OUR PARTNERING AGENCIES AND ORGANIZATIONS  
THAT ASSIST WITH THE NNSWCD'S CONSERVATION EFFORTS AND MAKE THEM POSSIBLE...***

Belle Isle State Park  
Chesapeake Bay Commission  
Friends of the Rappahannock (FOR)  
Hull Springs Farm of Longwood College  
Lancaster County  
National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD)  
National Park Service (NPS)  
Northern Neck Land Conservancy (NNLC)  
Northern Neck Master Gardeners (NNMG)  
Northern Neck Master Naturalists (NNMN)  
Northern Neck Planning District Commission (NNPDC)  
Northern Neck Tourism Council (NNTC)  
Northumberland County  
Richmond County  
Tidewater Oyster Gardeners Association (TOGA)  
Town of Colonial Beach  
Town of Irvington  
Town of Kilmarnock  
Town of Montross  
Town of Warsaw  
United States Department of Agriculture-Farm Service Agency (FSA)  
United States Department of Agriculture-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)  
United States Department of Agriculture-Rural Development (RD)  
United States Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS)  
Virginia Association of Soil & Water Conservation Districts (VASWCD)  
Virginia Cooperative Extension (VCE)  
Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (VDACS)  
Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR)  
Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ)  
Virginia Department of Forestry (DOF)  
Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (DGIF)  
Virginia Department of Health (VDH)  
Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT)  
Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS)  
Virginia Farm Bureau  
Virginia Native Plant Society  
Virginia Outdoors Foundation  
Virginia Tech  
Water Stewardship, Inc.  
Westmoreland County  
Westmoreland State Park

**Fellow Virginia Soil & Water Conservation Districts**

Delegate Margaret B. Ransone- 99<sup>th</sup> House District  
Senator Richard H. Stuart-28<sup>th</sup> Senate District  
Senator Ryan T. McDougle-4<sup>th</sup> Senate District  
Representative Robert J. "Rob" Wittman-1<sup>st</sup> Congressional District  
Senator Mark R. Warner  
Senator Tim Kaine