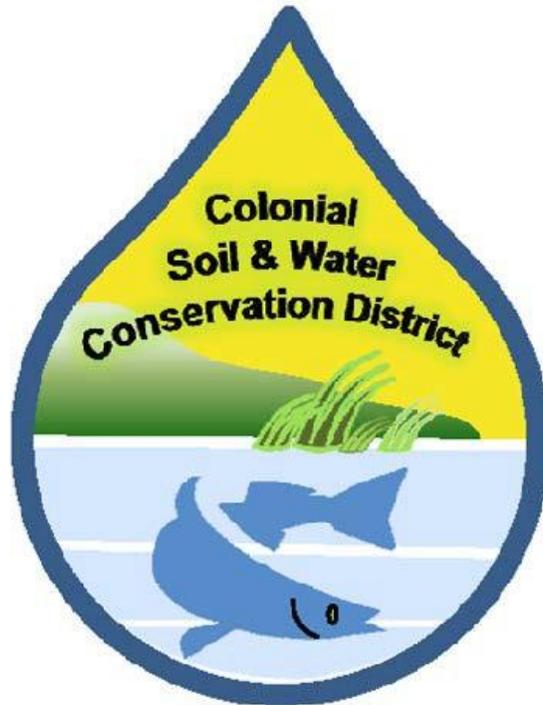


Colonial Soil & Water Conservation District



STRATEGIC PLAN

FY 2017 – 2020

Colonial Soil & Water Conservation District

3402 Acorn Street, Ste. 103

Norge, VA 23127

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Directors and Staff

Directors:

Charles Hill Carter III, At Large Director, Charles City County - Chair
Timothy B. Beale, York County -Vice Chair
Robert E. Lund, James City County - Secretary
Charles H. Evelyn, New Kent County – Treasurer
Edward T Overton, James City County
Fred Browning, Charles City County
Richard Phillips, City of Williamsburg
Robert Jeremiah, New Kent County
William Karaktin, York County
Norman Hofmeyer, Charles City County
John Allison, Virginia Cooperative Extension, Charles City & New Kent Counties

Staff:

James Wallace, District Manager
Thomas Dunlap, Conservation Specialist
Sheila Jaruseski, Office Coordinator

Local Government:

Charles City County
City of Williamsburg
James City County
New Kent County
York County

Cooperating Agencies:

Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR)
USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)
Farm Service Agency (FSA)
Virginia Department of Forestry (DOF)
Virginia Cooperative Extension (VCE)

Acronyms and Their Definitions

AFD—Agricultural Forestal District

APW—Annual Plan of Work

ASA—Agriculture Stewardship Act

BMP—Best Management Practices. Best Management Practices (BMPs) are effective, practical, structural or nonstructural methods which prevent or reduce the movement of sediment, nutrients, pesticides and other pollutants from the land to surface or ground water, or which otherwise protect water quality from potential adverse effects of landward activities. For the purpose of this plan, these practices are developed to achieve a balance between water quality protection and the production of agricultural crops within natural and economic limitations.

CBPA—Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act. The Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act, commonly known as "The Bay Act" in Virginia, was adopted by the Virginia General Assembly in 1988. The Bay Act created a cooperative program between the Commonwealth of Virginia and Tidewater local governments to protect and enhance water quality through environmentally responsible land use management.

CDC—Conservation District Coordinator

CREP—Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program

CSWCD—Colonial Soil and Water Conservation District, also referred to as The District. The District is a political subdivision of the State covering Charles City, James City, New Kent and York Counties and the City of Williamsburg. As a result of the Dust Bowl era of the 1930's legislation was passed that would allow local landowners to form soil conservation districts. The first district was established in 1937. Today, the country is blanketed with nearly 3,000 conservation districts.

DCR—Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation. DCR conservation district coordinators (CDCs) serve as liaisons between the commonwealth and districts. These coordinators interact daily with district directors and employees, participate at district functions, assist with personnel management matters, oversee fiscal management, and guide NPS programs and activities.

DEQ—Department of Environmental Quality

FSA—Farm Service Agency

JRA—James River Association

NRCF—Natural Resource Commitment Fund

RMP—Resource Management Plan

TMDLs—Total Maximum Daily Loads. Under section 303(d) of the Clean Water Act, states, territories, and authorized tribes are required to develop lists of impaired waters. These are waters that are too polluted or otherwise degraded to meet the water quality standards set by states, territories, or authorized tribes. The law requires that these jurisdictions establish priority rankings for waters on the lists and develop TMDLs for these waters. A Total Maximum Daily Load, or TMDL, is a calculation of the maximum amount of a pollutant that a water body can receive and still safely meet water quality standards.

TRC—Technical Review Committee

USDA NRCS—United States Department of Agriculture’s Natural Resources Conservation Service.

VACS—Virginia Agricultural Cost Share

VASWCB—Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board

VCAP—Virginia Conservation Assistance Program. An urban cost share program provides incentive funding to private owners installing conservation landscaping practices.

VCE—Virginia Cooperative Extension

VDoF—Virginia Department of Forestry

WQIF—Water Quality Improvement Fund

Who We Are

The Colonial Soil and Water Conservation District (CSWCD) is a political subdivision of the Commonwealth of Virginia that includes Charles City County, City of Williamsburg, James City County, New Kent County and York County. Founded in 1947 the District initially included Charles City and New Kent Counties. In 1949 James City County was added to the District. In 1972 York County and the City of Williamsburg were added. CSWCD is one of forty-seven conservation districts within Virginia.

The District is governed by a twelve member Board of Directors. Ten Directors are elected in the general election every four years and two are appointed. Currently, the staff is composed of three individuals: a District Manager, a Conservation Specialist, and an Office Coordinator. The District operates on the fiscal year July 1 to June 30.

The District focuses on a wide range of programs encouraging community participation in conserving and protecting soil, water and related natural resources, with a particular focus on the following:

- ◆ Virginia Agricultural Best Management Practices (BMP) Cost-Share Assistance
- ◆ Agricultural Conservation Planning and Technical Assistance
- ◆ Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act
- ◆ Virginia's Agricultural Stewardship Act
- ◆ Environmental & Agriculture Education
- ◆ Urban BMP Cost-share and Technical Assistance
- ◆ TMDLs
- ◆ Lend technical expertise for design and installation of agricultural conservation practices implemented voluntarily by Virginia farmers.

Some activities of the CSWCD during FY 2016:

- ◆ Virginia Agricultural Cost Share Program – Cover crops, no-till applications, and nutrient management plans valued at over \$420,000.
- ◆ Envirothon Competition – Support of the Jamestown High School Envirothon team who advanced to the state finals. A team based natural resources competition for high school students. Students who participate learn stewardship and management concepts and work to solve real world environmental problems. The program is field-oriented, community based and gives students an opportunity to work with natural resource professionals.
- ◆ Blayton Elementary School Garden – Grant project supplying resources to install a rainwater harvesting system for the school's learning garden.
- ◆ Natural Resources Farm Link Center & Warhill Community Garden – Demonstration grant project. A partnership by CSWCD and James City County demonstrating yard waste to improve soil quality. A garden conservation demonstration showing the use of cover crops, pollinator species and the integration of wildflowers and meadow grasses into the landscape.
- ◆ Support of the Holiday Lake Forestry Camp (Appomattox-Buckingham State Forest) – Program for high school students on forest management, wildlife and environmental protection by natural resource professionals.

- ◆ Sponsorship Youth Conservation Camp – Scholarships for two campers. A week long summer conservation camp for Virginia high school students (*currently enrolled in grades 9-12*) on the campus of Virginia Tech.

All constituent citizens can have a voice in resource and conservation planning by attending monthly district meetings and committee meetings, communicating their concerns and participating in District Programs. Our purpose is to give local citizens the ability to work on conservation problems at the local level. Our philosophy of natural resource management is to provide the necessary technical expertise that assists the community in identifying, discussing and solving local conservation issues. Our community constituents are farmers, homeowners, teachers, youth, homeowner's associations, environmental groups, developers, elected officials, local businesses, and civic organizations. We recognize that our constituency base continues to evolve. As such, we strive to remain flexible in developing programs to meet its changing needs.

The Public is invited to attend all Board and Committee meetings consistent with Virginia open meeting law. Notices of meetings are published at the following locations:

- ◆ District office, 3402 Acorn Street, Ste. 103, Norge VA 23127
- ◆ Heritage Public Library, 6215 Chesapeake Cir # D, New Kent, VA 23124
- ◆ James City County Library, 7770 Croaker Rd, Williamsburg, VA 23188
- ◆ Williamsburg Regional Library, 515 Scotland Street, Williamsburg, VA 23185
- ◆ York County Library, 100 Long Green Blvd, Yorktown, VA 23693
- ◆ CSWCD Facebook page–Colonial Swcd
- ◆ CSWCD website on the Events tab (<http://www.colonialswcd.net/#/events>)
- ◆ CSWCD Blog (<http://www.colonialswcd.net/#/blog>)

Introduction: The Strategic Planning Process

The Strategic Plan is a proactive document that is intended to guide the CSWCD through the next four years, from fiscal year 2017 to 2020. It assumes that the future of our organization will be based on changing circumstances and priorities. The purpose of this document is to direct the District toward more effective programs in soil and water conservation within its boundaries.

The CSWCD began the current strategic planning process in March 2016. A survey was sent out in July 2016 to 75 representatives of constituent groups, agency partners, local governments and other stakeholders. A Board strategic planning work session was held in August 2016. During that session, the mission statement was evaluated and utilized in determining the critical issues facing the District and goals for the next four years were established. Lead Committees were identified for each of these goals. Priorities were developed in collaboration with the Committees. The statement of goals shown in this document are grouped by Lead Committees and Staff and organized by priority.

The Strategic Plan will be used by our Board of Directors, committees, and our staff to develop and manage District programs. The major goal areas, are presented in this document to help the District develop its Annual Plans of Work and guide the District's day-to-day operations. It is our hope that this strategic plan will help the CSWCD meet the challenging future of natural resource conservation in our constituent localities.

Mission

Our mission is to educate the public on the importance of protecting our soils and water as the basis of our existence, and to work with landowners and operators, government agencies, schools, businesses, and civic groups to assist them to preserve our natural resources, especially soils and water. Use the funds entrusted to the District to provide technical and financial assistance as responsible stewards.

Vision

The main objective of the Colonial Soil and Water Conservation District is promoting the conservation of natural resources. The initiatives will include serving as a primary resource for educational and technical assistance to local government, schools, civic groups, agricultural, urban, transitional, and business communities.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE GOALS

1. Continue to successfully implement current programming

Multi-year effort

Continue to do the successful things we are doing.

Continue in FY 2017 and beyond as part of the Annual Plan

2A. Better utilize committees

Board should not be ‘the committee of the whole’ except in emergencies or special cases; committees are to deliberate & process information into recommendations.

Begin transition in FY 2017

2B. Holding meetings across the District

Multi-year effort

Concurrent with 2a. Hold meetings in the constituency locations we represent.

Begin in FY 2017 and make adjustments each FY as part of the Annual Plan review to find the correct balance in increasing exposure to the constituencies.

3. Upgrade facilities, equipment

Multi-year effort

To determine needs, costs, and priorities for the District to meet its goals as recommended by the committees.

Possibilities include relocation to a larger office, what equipment would be needed, how this matches our mission and programs– Executive & Finance Committees to meet and determine what is financially feasible to meet the goals and recommendations.

Begin in FY 2017 and develop as part of the Annual Plan with bi-annual reviews.

AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE GOALS

1. Continue to successfully implement current Agricultural programming

Multi-year effort

- a. Continued implementation of the Virginia Agricultural BMP Cost-Share Assistance.
- b. Set timelines/deadlines for Cost Share Applications and Nutrient Management Plans.
- c. Review and make recommendations to the Board on Cost Share applications.
- d. Develop and make recommendation to the Board for the Annual VACS Cost List.
- e. Develop and make recommendations to the Board for the TRC membership FY 2017 and annually thereafter

2. Better utilization of the Committee

Study and Develop additional ways the Committee can contribute to the mission of the District.

- a. **Engage HOA's and other larger landowners** – in conjunction with Urban Committee - Multi-year effort
 - i. Continued involvement with the AFD program in New Kent FY 2017 and annually thereafter.
 - ii. Study increased involvement with other conservation programs FY 2018 and annually thereafter.
- b. **Expand Urban/Suburban conservation programming** – in conjunction with Urban Committee provide experience and guidance that can apply to urban/suburban areas.
FY 2017 begin planning effort with possible rollout in FY 2018
- c. **Hold Committee meetings across the District**
 - i. Bi-annual meetings with producers to discuss and educate about VACS/BMP programs
FY 2018 and annually thereafter
 - ii. Meet local officials and group leaders at agricultural sites to discuss/educate improved utilization of VACS/BMP programs.
FY 2018 and annually thereafter
- d. **Upgrade facilities, equipment** - Committee recommendations to the Executive and Finance Committees about the equipment, facilities, and personnel needed to meet the Committee's goals in the Annual Plan of Work
FY 2017 and annually thereafter

3. Develop programs to engage horse land owners – in conjunction with Urban Committee

Begin investigation/consultation with other Districts

Late FY1017 - assess options

FY2018 - develop possible plans

FY2019 & beyond – possible rollout

EDUCATION COMMITTEE GOALS

1. Continue/Expand Participation in Envirothon

Multi-Year Effort

Envirothon is potentially the most visible/public means of promoting soil and water conservation programs and ideals. This program involves high school teachers, students, possibly the parents and family members of the participating students and even entire student bodies of the participating schools. Jamestown High School has been particularly successful the past two years, winning Second Place in Virginia State Competition both years.

Undertake outreach to additional high school science teachers, especially in the more urban areas such as York County and the City of Williamsburg.

Continue in FY 2017 and beyond as part of the Annual Plan

2. Utilize University/High School Students and Faculty

Multi-Year Effort

- a. Study the possibility of developing a program where college professors/students can act as coaches/mentors to the schools Envirothon Teams.

Study beginning in FY 2017

FY 2018 develop action items for implementation for school year 2017-2018

- b. Study the possibility of offering Schools at William and Mary, Christopher Newport, Thomas Nelson access to portions of the Farm Link Center/Warhill site for study/field work.

Study beginning in FY 2018; Develop action items in FY 2019

3. Expand Training

Continuing Multi-Year Effort

- a. Committee to develop recommendation for the Personnel Committee and Board of criteria for District Staff training for the District Manager's performance evaluation.

FY 2017

- b. Study how training for directors might be improved to have more directors participate.

-Perhaps localized to avoid lengthy travel

-Possible ½ day sessions

-More webinars

Study FY 2017

FY 2018 and annually thereafter – lobby for feasible changes

4. Collaboration With Technical Providers

Multi-Year Effort

- a. Work with District Manager and the Conservation District Coordinator to develop a listing of Technical Providers and contact information.

Schedule 2 sessions in FY 2017 and annually thereafter

- b. Work with District Manager and the Conservation District Coordinator to establish working relationships with some of these Technical Providers. Invitations to Providers to meet with Committee or Committee visits to other sites.

FY 2018

- c. Continue to build upon working relationships with Technical Providers.

FY 2019 and beyond

5. Demonstrate the Integration of Innovative Technology Into Conservation Practices

Multi-Year Effort

- a. Work with District Staff and the Conservation District Coordinator to educate the Committee and interested Board members on advancements and innovations in technology that has been integrated into conservations practices.

FY 2017 & 2018

- b. Study where and how to demonstrate these innovations to constituencies.

FY 2018 and annually thereafter

FINANCE COMMITTEE GOALS

1. Upgrade facilities, equipment – in conjunction with the Executive Committee Multi-Year

- a. Develop needs, cost estimates, and priorities for possible District office relocation and equipment needs. Joint meetings with Executive Committee to provide goals for Annual Plan FY 2018

FY 2017

- b. Continue to plan for these needs and also solicit input from other Committees on an annual basis for development of goals for Annual Plans.

FY 2018-2020

2. Review grant opportunities periodically to address staffing needs

Multi-Year

- a. Work with the District Staff and the Conservation District Coordinator to solicit and review grant opportunities – schedule sessions as part of the Finance Committee meetings at least 2 times per year.

FY 2017 and then plan for future years

- b. Solicit information monthly from other Committees on possible grant opportunities.

FY2017 and annually thereafter

- c. The Committee should meet no less than quarterly to review the financial position of the District and develop future plans.

FY 2017 and annually thereafter

3. A. Develop additional funding

Multi-Year

- a. Work with the District Staff, the Conservation District Coordinator and utilize outreach to other Districts to seek out additional funding sources.

FY 2017 and continue in subsequent years.

- b. Solicit recommendations from the Program Committees at least 4 times per year.

FY 2017 and continue in subsequent years.

3. B. Seek competitive funding where possible

Multi-Year

Work with the District Staff, the Conservation District Coordinator and utilize outreach to other Districts to find other competitive funding opportunities.

FY 2017 and continue in subsequent years.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE GOALS

1. Succession plan

Multi-Year effort

Create succession plans for staff, directors, associate directors and volunteers in conjunction with Planning Committee.

Begin FY 2017 and update every year thereafter

2. Better utilize committees – in conjunction with Executive Committee

Study expanded roles for the committee to provide additional value to the District, e.g. succession planning

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE GOALS

1. Adjust staff, as appropriate, to meet the District's mission

Multi-year effort

A key ongoing focus for the Board and Personnel Committee as we work through the personnel needs and evaluations, budgeting, job descriptions, planning & APW reviews and renewals. Adjust staffing as needed to fulfill our mission and meet our program and other needs. Outsourcing of specific tasks or projects may be considered in specific or unusual situations

No 'hard dates' other than being a perennial goal and question to ask at each major review in the planning and budgeting cycles. Twice a year reviews of staffing and workloads.

2. Grant writing training as needed

Multi-year effort

This is concurrent 1. rather than secondary to it. If/when staff needs additional grant-writing capacity for current or anticipated grant offerings, training should be incorporated into the appropriate staff positions.

This also has no 'hard dates' other than being a perennial goal and question to ask at each major review in the planning and budgeting cycles. Outsourcing grant writing may be considered for special cases or unusual grants.

PLANNING COMMITTEE GOALS

1. Succession plan

Multi-Year effort

Create succession plans for staff, directors, associate directors and volunteers in conjunction with Nominating Committee.

Begin FY 2017 and updated every year thereafter

2. Annual Plan of Work

Multi-Year effort

a. Organize development of District APW.

FY 2017 and continue in subsequent years

b. Bi-annual reviews and recommendations to the Board.

FY 2017 and every year thereafter

3. Four-Year Strategic Plan

Multi-Year effort

a. Organize development of District Strategic Plan.

FY 2019 & 2020

b. Annual reviews and recommendations to Board for situational changes requiring adjustments.

FY 2017 and every year thereafter

4. Restructure Organization Outreach

Multi-Year effort

Collaborate with Executive, Personnel, Nominating Committees and Staff on improving District outreach. The initial objectives for this effort are to:

- Improve district engagement with local governments.
- Establishment of a District “Friends” group.
- Determine how to more effectively partner with volunteer organizations.
- Facilitate promotion of “Farm Link/Warhill” project and collaboration with its partners.

A possible approach might be the establishment of an Outreach Committee.

Study FY 2017 & 2018

FY 2018 & beyond – roll out changes

STAFF GOALS

1. Continue to successfully implement current programming

Multi-year effort

Continue to do the successful things we are doing.

Continue in FY 2017 and beyond as part of the Annual Plan

2. Develop list of services information

Multi-year effort

Develop list.

FY 2017

Continue to revise list as needed to keep information and services current. Seek input from committees as to the services they want to promote or new services to offer.

FY 2018 and subsequent years

3. Develop simple language around the science

Multi-year effort

Identify areas of need and address them.

FY 2017

Continue to identify areas of need in the future to keep current.

FY 2018 and subsequent years

4. Implementation of pilot projects

Multi-year effort

Seek pilot project opportunities

FY 2018

Be prepared to take advantage of opportunities when/if they arise. Contingent upon workload and labor resources available.

FYs 2019 and 2020

5. Utilize more volunteers and interns

Multi-year effort

Continue to identify obstacles and opportunities as time allows. Outcomes may be contingent on decision to hire 4th full time staff person.

FY 2017 with more focus in FY 2018

Develop work plan for volunteers/interns

FY 2018

URBAN COMMITTEE GOALS

1. Expand Urban/Suburban conservation programming

Multi-year effort

a. Utilize VCAP

Begin FY2017 & reassess as part of the Annual Plan with bi- annual reviews

b. Successfully complete “Warhill” and other grants – in conjunction with

Agriculture Committee; participation by Urban Chair & perhaps selected

members in “Warhill” Board at least during transition period, “Warhill”

rep. (s) invited to attend Urban Committee meetings.

FY2017 & beyond follow through

c. Upgrade facilities, equipment - Committee recommendations to the

Executive and Finance Committees about the equipment, facilities, and

personnel needed to meet the Committee’s goals in the Annual Plan of Work

FY 2017 and annually thereafter

2. Increase educational and outreach programming

Multi-year effort

a. Collaborate, as appropriate, with Master Naturalist, etc.

Begin FY1017 & reassess as part of the Annual Plan with bi- annual reviews

b. Develop urban “ready to use” plans to local government

Begin plan element effort {preparation} in FY1017 for roll out FY2018

c. Engage HOA’s and other larger landowners – in conjunction with

Agriculture Committee.

Begin plan element effort {preparation} in FY1017 for roll out FY2018

d. Develop programs to engage horse land owners – in conjunction with

Agriculture Committee.

Begin investigation/consultation with other Districts late in FY1017

Assess options and possible plans in FY2018

Possible roll-out FY2019 & beyond

Approval Page

Charles Hill Carter III, Chair

Date

Timothy B. Beale, Vice Chair

Date

Charles H. Evelyn, Treasurer

Date

Robert E. Lund, Secretary

Date

James Wallace, District Manager

Date

John Allison, Virginia Cooperative Extension

Date

Approved:
Conservation District Coordinator
Department of Conservation and Recreation

Date