

## Conservation District History

During the Dust Bowl of the 1930's, a unique unit of local government was born: the Conservation District. Today, there are nearly 3,000 Conservation Districts in the U. S. Each assesses conservation problems on the local level, sets priorities for conservation efforts, and then carries out programs to solve those problems, ranging from poor water quality in a nearby stream to decreased wildlife habitat. Delaware's Conservation Districts- the New Castle Conservation District, Kent Conservation District, and Sussex Conservation District- are governmental sub-divisions of the State of Delaware authorized by the state legislation in Title 7 of the Delaware Code, Chapter 39. The Districts' mission is to help Delawareans conserve and improve their own local natural resources, including focused attention on land, water and related resource problems; develop conservation programs to solve them; enlist and coordinate help from public and private sources to accomplish these goals; and increase awareness of the inter-relationship between human activities and the natural environment.

Delaware's district supervisors have a statewide organization known as the Delaware Association of Conservation Districts (DACD). DACD is a voluntary, non-profit alliance, providing a forum for discussion and coordination among the Conservation Districts as they work to ensure the wise use and treatment of renewable natural resources.



## **GOVERNOR'S CONSERVATION AWARDS**

## **PROCLAMATION OF SOIL AND WATER STEWARDSHIP WEEK**

**&**

## **DACD LEGISLATOR OF THE YEAR**

**DELAWARE AGRICULTURAL MUSEUM  
DOVER, DELAWARE**

**May 3, 2022**

## SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

- 11 AM WELCOME/INTRODUCTIONS**  
Roland Hill, President of DACD
- REMARKS**  
Kasey Taylor, USDA-NRCS State Conservationist
- PROCLAMATION PRESENTATION**  
Shawn M. Garvin, DNREC Secretary
- CONSERVATION AWARDS PRESENTATION & LEGISLATIVE TRIBUTES**  
Shawn M. Garvin, DNREC Secretary  
Roland Hill, President of DACD  
Kasey Taylor, USDA-NRCS State Conservationist  
Representatives from Senate, House & Kent County Levy Court
- LEGISLATIVE AWARD PRESENTATION**  
Roland Hill, President of DACD  
Kasey Taylor, USDA-NRCS State Conservationist  
Shawn M. Garvin, DNREC Secretary
- CLOSING REMARKS**  
Jennifer Nelson, DACD Executive Director
- NOON RECEPTION AND LUNCH**  
Circular Gallery

## About Stewardship Week

NACD's 67th Stewardship Week  
will April 24 - May 1, 2022  
"Healthy Soil: Healthy Life."



The National Association of Conservation Districts Stewardship Week is one of the largest national programs to promote natural resource conservation. Celebrated annually since 1955 between the last Sunday in April and the first Sunday in May, NACD Stewardship Week reminds us of our individual responsibilities to care for natural resources.

Each spring, NACD and thousands of dedicated conservationists organize a multitude of outreach events and educational learning experiences for students and adults in order to increase awareness about the importance of natural resource conservation. During Stewardship Week, local conservation districts and their state associations educate the public on the importance of soil health, water quality, pollinator habitat and other conservation topics. Different classroom activities, field visits and community events are hosted to honor and recognize efforts in conservation at the local level.

## DACD Legislator of the Year Award



### Representative Valerie Longhurst

DACD recognizes Representative Valerie J. Longhurst for her enthusiastic advocacy for the Clean Water for Delaware Act, signed into law on July 22, 2021.

As the primary sponsor and champion for HB200, Rep. Longhurst worked with the Delaware Conservation Partnership and elected officials on both sides of the aisle to ensure the bill's success.

“My goal with the Clean Water for Delaware Act was to create an innovative new program to fund projects that would tackle water quality challenges on many fronts.” said Rep. Longhurst, “We will help to right the wrongs of the past and, perhaps most importantly, we will set Delaware on a path to a future where people from all walks of life can enjoy the beauty and splendor of our streams, rivers, lakes and beaches.”

Rep. Longhurst was first elected to the Delaware House of Representatives in November 2004 to represent the 15th District. The district consists of 20,000 people living in Bear, Delaware City and St. Georges.

## 2022 Governor’s Conservation Awards

### Kent

Urban Award	Champions Club at Jonathan’s Landing HOA
Agriculture Award	Chris and Karen Breeding

### New Castle

Urban Award	Simonds Gardens Civic Association
Agriculture Award	Jeffrey A. Bartsch, Sr.

### Sussex

Urban Award	Meadows of Beaver Creek
Agriculture Award	Jay Hastings

## 2022 Governor's Conservation Awards

### Kent County- Ag Award Recipient

#### **Chris and Karen Breeding Tomahawk Cattle and Twin Cedar Ag**

Chris and Karen Breeding of Greenwood, DE own Tomahawk Cattle and Twin Cedar Ag. Chris is a 5th Generation Farmer and his wife is an Agriculture Teacher at Woodbridge High School. They have 2 children and are working to take care of and invest in the land for their future generations.

They are a Century Farm, founded in 1903, where the operation consisted of cash grain and vegetables, along with a dairy operation. Chris is a past Kent Conservation District Employee, a member of the Delaware Beef Advisory Board, Woodbridge Ag Advisory Committee, Reliance Grange, the American Angus Association, and is also the Tomahawk Branch Tax Ditch Manager.

Currently they till 254.39 acres of cropland, consisting of corn, soybeans, cover crop and hay. They have on average 12-15 beef cattle and have received cost share assistance from the Kent Conservation District, and the Natural Resource Conservation Service for 2 manure storage structures, 3 heavy use area protection, fencing, 2 waterers, pipeline and more recently are in phase 1 of 3 of the installation of a pattern tile. They utilize the Kent Conservation District to keep their Nutrient Management Plan up to date and have been long standing participants in the Kent Conservation District Cover Crop Program.

## 2022 Governor's Conservation Awards

### Sussex County- Urban Award Recipient

#### **The Meadows of Beaver Creek**

In 2019, the Meadows of Beaver Creek, a 154-home development in Harbeson, began exploring ways to enhance the barren open space. The Common Area Landscape Improvement (CALI) team was formed and designed a plan to combine ornamental aesthetics with ecological plants.

The CALI team began implementing the five-year, three-phase plan to create attractive naturalistic enhancements that mimic the coastal landscape. In spring 2021, pond buffers were enlarged and enhanced with native plants while homeowners donated over 50 trees. In fall 2021 an additional 36 trees were added with the goal of reaching 125 trees total. Subsequent phases include shrubs, perennials, groundcover, wildflowers, pond enhancement and pond aeration.

Kicking off the project, over \$8,000 was directly invested by homeowners while countless hours have been spent enhancing the traditional turfgrass open space with purposeful plantings. The change not only benefits the community but also wildlife and pollinators. The trees, meadows and pond buffers will absorb excess water and filter nutrients, improving water quality entering Beaverdam Creek and the Delaware Bay.

## 2022 Governor's Conservation Awards

### Sussex County- Ag Award Recipient

#### **Jay Hastings**

As a fourth-generation farmer, Jay Hastings grew up learning the importance of drainage and responsible land management. As the owner of Westwind Farms, Inc., he implements conservation practices on nearly 1,000 acres in western Sussex County, all within the Chesapeake Bay watershed. Hastings also manages the cropland, irrigation, fertilizer and spraying applications associated with the nearly 50-year-old family butcher shop.

He has planted cover crops for many years and two years ago he began participating in the Sussex Conservation Districts (SCD) cover crop program. Ever conscientious of his impact to the environment and those around him, Hastings practices conservation tillage which minimizes soil disturbance, improving soil health and productivity. His goal is to leave the ground better than when he started and when he cleared woodland to put into production he wanted to give back to the land.

In 2020 SCD helped Hastings transform marginal land into a wildlife habitat with three shallow ponds. The improvements provide a buffer between wildlife and crops but also collect excess water allowing for more productive cropland and improved water quality. As manager of the Bacon and Kenney tax ditch, he is working diligently to restore drainage while implementing conservation practices such as vegetative buffers which capture sediment and filter nutrients while providing a barrier between farmland and adjacent homes.

## 2022 Governor's Conservation Awards

### Kent County- Urban Award Recipient

#### **Champions Club at Jonathan's Landing HOA**

Champions Club at Jonathan's Landing HOA is a 55+ active adult community located on 112 acres just south of Dover.

Champions Club at Jonathan's Landing is being awarded for their practices implemented that aid in sediment erosion and stormwater management. Reforesting, native species introduction and vegetative management of open space are some of the practices used. The community has developed the open space that previously contained golfing greens and walkways as vegetative open space to be enjoyed as a natural conservation area.

These actions ensure that stormwater and sediment is contained within the conservation area and what water does enter nearby stormwater, best management practices contain very little sediment and debris. Through the community's action they prevent costly repairs to the stormwater infrastructure that conveys stormwater through the conservation area.

All communities across Delaware have to deal with stormwater management. Often these practices can be completed by a motivated HOA by utilizing the community members as the work force. The community has joined the Stormwater Maintenance District, which is a joint program between Kent Conservation District and Kent County Levy Court to address stormwater management issues such as repair and maintenance.

## 2022 Governor's Conservation Awards

### New Castle County- Urban Award Recipient

#### **Simonds Gardens Civic Association**

Simonds Gardens is a community of townhomes in New Castle Delaware.

The community wide project started with several meetings of the Simonds Gardens Civic Association, NCCD staff and the engineering consultant team followed by a neighborhood walk to identify issues of concern within the Simonds Gardens community.

An engineering study and construction plans were partially funded with a matching grant from the Water Infrastructure Advisory Council (WIAC), NCCD RC&D funds and Community Transportation Funds (CTF).

Consulting engineering design services were provided by AECOM's David Athey, P.E. and Lawrence R. Carson, P.E. of the Carson Management Co.

Funded projects include:

- the installation of a new stormwater basin at the entrance into Simonds Garden from Lambson Lane
- replacement of two existing DeIDOT stormwater basins and inter-connecting stormwater pipes as well as a new
- stormwater outlet in NCC's Simonds Gardens Park
- installation of over 1200' of new curbing and road re-surfacing to address ponding and impaired curb-side drainage
- Utility easement vegetation clearing (to begin April 2022).
- Project construction was funded by \$428,901.52 of NCCD RC&D funds and \$354,259.64 of Community Transportation Funds (CTF), and \$42,500 of WIAC's Surface Water Matching Planning Grant.

## 2022 Governor's Conservation Awards

### New Castle County- Ag Award Recipient

#### **Jeffrey A. Bartsch, Sr**

For more than 30-years, Jeff Bartsch has been one of NCCD's primary contractors for tax ditch work and RC&D-CTF drainage improvement projects in New Castle County. He is very knowledgeable about tax ditch maintenance and improvement projects, works well with the different tax ditch managers and landowners, and does excellent work. Jeff's has extensive drainage improvement and site construction project experience in Maryland and Delaware.

Recently, Jeff has done work on numerous tax ditches throughout southern New Castle County, from maintenance activities like mowing ditch banks and drainage rights-of-way, to repair projects such as replacing rusted corrugated metal pipes with high-density polyethylene pipe. One recent tax ditch project involved the removal and replacement of a subsurface tile system that was located within the tax ditch right-of-way.

As a landowner/farmer Jeff has been involved with the Herring Branch Tax Ditch for many years, taking care of ditch maintenance. In December 2021, he became Chair of the Herring Branch Tax Ditch. Starting in 2008 when he planted 50-acres of cover crop, Jeff has tried to do his part to improve water quality and soil health on his farms. Jeff has implemented a total of 1,947 acres of cover crop with the NCCD's cover crop cost-share program over the past 14 years and a total of 172 acres of cover crop using NRCS EQIP funds. Jeff also completed a subsurface - tile replacement project at his farm with District water management cost-share funds in 2014. Being a farmer at heart, Jeff takes great pride in improving the land and its productivity. Currently Jeff and his wife, Joyce, till 585 acres in Delaware and Maryland.