

[From Spring 1997]

New Partnership for the Birds

Recognizing the marked decline in neotropical migratory birds over the last few years and the value of critical stop-over habitats of Virginia's Eastern Shore, the Eastern Shore of Virginia NWR, Chesapeake Bay Bridge and Tunnel District, Virginia Tech, and Northampton County High School have joined in partnership to restore over 20 acres of critical migratory bird habitat. The demonstration planting, located on the Refuge, includes native warm season grasses, shrubs, and trees that offer both food and shelter throughout the migration period and winter season. Funds for this project were made available by the Chesapeake Bay Bridge and Tunnel District and Virginia's Coastal Resources Management Program of the Department of Environmental Quality. This project is part of a larger grant administered by Dr. William Reay of Virginia Tech to highlight the functional values of riparian vegetative buffers through demonstration plantings and the development of educational material.

Enrollees from the Legacy Program at Northampton High School, Refuge staff and interns have provided much of the skilled labor to assure a successful planting. The Legacy Program Instructors, Tom Bonniwell, Doug Coburn, and Bill McCarter stress the importance of community and the environment to the heterogeneous group of 10th and 11th grade students. In its fourth year and second year utilizing Refuge facilities, the Legacy Program curricula utilizes hands-on experiences to help satisfy social studies, English, biology and environmental science learning credits. A primary goal of the Program is to have students learn and make a connection with their local community and environment.

Bob Wilson, Acting Refuge Manager, Eastern Shore NWR

Dr. William Reay, Virginia Tech