

2021 MWMC Above and Beyond Award – Daniel Savoy

Dan Savoy has been a Wicomico River Creekwatcher volunteer for nine years, taking biweekly water samples from his site in the Wicomico River watershed during each sampling season (March to November) as well as serving as a member of Wicomico Environmental Trust's board of directors (WET). Dan grew up on a tobacco farm in the Upper Marlboro, Maryland area, a son of a sharecropper. After attending college (the first in his family to do so) at University of Maryland Eastern Shore, (Maryland State College at the time he attended), he worked his way up from teaching science to generations of kids to become principal of James M. Bennett High School and then science education supervisor for Wicomico County public schools.

Since his retirement Dan has worked tirelessly to teach kids (and their parents) about sources of water pollution. He and the EnvirScape model he uses to show people how nonpoint source pollution runs off impervious surfaces and farm fields into streams have become a favorite fixture at Earth Day celebrations, Outdoor Discovery days, 3rd Fridays in Salisbury and many other events over the past decade. In 2021 alone, he participated in numerous outreach events for WET.

But giving so much of his time and energy to this direct, hands-on encounter is not the extent of his volunteer work with WET and Creekwatchers. He is an avid planter of trees and devoted mentor to all young people, especially those from underserved neighborhoods, showing them the wonders of nature and instilling in them a sense of connection with nature and love of the Earth. Dan's largest tree-planting effort took place several years ago at Billy Gene Jackson Park, a county-owned park and playground used primarily by African-American children. Dan organized an event with extensive involvement of students who attend a nearby elementary school, who planted 149 trees. Dan taught them not only about the role trees play in protecting clean water, but also the importance of regularly watering the newly planted trees until they become established. In the ensuing years, only one tree did not survive, a testimony to Dan's example of ongoing care and maintenance of trees that are planted.

More recently, when the Salisbury Fire Department moved into its new headquarters on Cypress Street, Dan organized another tree-planting event, placing numerous trees in the open area behind the new firehouse. For several years Dan also visited these trees regularly to give them the care they needed. In 2020 he removed the protective tubes because the trees had grown too large for the protection.

These are noteworthy examples of what Dan does, but are not isolated instances. Dan is as reliable as the sunrise. Going above and beyond what is expected just what he does.