

# Leon D. Tillman Jr.

Soil Conservationist- Chesapeake Bay Coordinator

## Core Qualifications:

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- Conservation Planning
- Areawide Planning
- Conservation Engineering
- Financial Management
- Establishing Partnerships
- Quality Assurance Reviewing
- Natural Resource Systems Management
- Identifying Conservation Alternatives
- Environmental Compliance Planning
- Verbal and Written Communication
- Process Improvement and Lean 6 Sigma
- Personnel Management

## Professional Experience:

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► **Natural Resources Specialist/ Soil Conservationist- Chesapeake Bay Coordinator, USDA/ NRCS- Annapolis, MD, Supervisor: Terron Hillsman**

**April 25, 2021 – Present (Permanent)      Annapolis SO      Full-Time Work: 40 hrs/ week**

- **Conservation Planning, Conservation Programs Management, and Areawide Planning:** Coordinated conservation planning and initiatives across the Bay between NRCS staff and partners. Organized, lead, and executed meetings with NRCS State Conservationists and leadership to communicate national and state priorities for consistent execution across states and at the local level. Drafted accomplishments reports and talking points for leadership for the NRCS Chesapeake Bay Action Plan.
- **Customer Service, Partnerships, Relationship Management, and Negotiating:** Represented NRCS to the Chesapeake Bay Program, including ongoing discussions and collaborative efforts through recurring meetings.

► **Resource Conservationist (CSP Program Manager, RCPP Program Manager, Appeals & Equitable Relief Contact, & Business Tools Specialist), USDA/ NRCS- Nashville, TN, Supervisor: Jamie Carpenter**

**Feb 8, 2015 – Sept 29, 2018      Nashville SO      Full-Time Work: 40 hrs/ week**

- **Conservation Planning, Programs Management & Implementation, and Conservation Programs:** Expert on Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP), and Contract policy providing the area and field office staff guidance and solutions to abstract and challenging problems that arise during program application and contract implementation. Consistently, managed the CSP program to obligate at least 90% and occasionally over 100% of the state's initial acre allocation. Budgeted and managed financial and technical assistance funds for NRCS' CSP and RCPP programs totaling over \$7.3 million dollars. Worked in drafting five federal agreements with partners for long term federal assistance through RCPP and a Forestry Service Partnership agreement. Drafted and/or assisted in drafting over 8 state bulletins in one year related to programs and solve complex program issues in Tennessee. Also serve as the point of contact that provides resolutions to complex appeals and equitable relief issues, handling over 10 equitable relief and appeals requests.
- **Customer Service, Partnering, Relationship Management, Communication and Negotiating:** Worked and negotiated with various partners, federal, state, and private, in other departments and agencies, to establish over 4 grants and cooperative agreements that leveraged NRCS and partner technical and financial assistance totaling over \$7 million. Worked with partners and coworkers to

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write agreements that leveraged resources for federal funding for diverse conservation initiatives. Routinely (at least monthly) provide oral and written presentations to partners and customers at State Technical Committee meetings and briefings regarding program evaluation, performance, and changes to receive partner input.

- **Quality Assurance, Teamwork, and Process Improvement:** Served on the national CSP Oversight and Evaluation Team reviewing CSP contracts for improper obligations and payments for corrective action. Served and led the state's program support specialist (PSS) team that was instrumental in the planning, implementation, evaluation, and standardization of PSS use across the state. I lead the team in identifying where additional assistance was needed and drafting some of the first standard operating procedures to be used in the state, some of which will be examined for consideration nationally. Assisted in updating the state EQIP screening tool into compliance with national policy and educated staff statewide on the new policies and procedures related to its use. Worked with other state specialists to update the State quality assurance process for programs.

► **Acting Assistant State Conservationist for Programs (Supervisory Soil Conservationist), USDA/ NRCS- Knoxville, TN, Supervisor: Jamie Carpenter**  
**May 22, 2017 – Aug 20, 2017**                      **Nashville SO**                      **Full-Time Work: 40 hrs/ week**

- **Leadership, Management, Supervision, and Strategic Thinking:** Provided overall leadership, making program staff work assignments, evaluated program performance, determined training needs, and carried out needed personnel actions to accomplish agency work for a staff of nine. Managed conservation program financial assistance funds, including Mississippi River Basin Initiative (MRBI) and National Water Quality Initiative (NWQI), to ensure appropriate technical assistance balance. Managed multimillion-dollar conservation program financial assistance funds to ensure appropriate technical assistance balance. Worked with various staff to address easement funding and closing issues, then took steps to resolve the issues. Worked with a partner to establish a long term \$1 million contract position to fill a vacancy during hiring restrictions. Routinely met with partners to address program concerns and questions.

► **Assistant State Conservationist for Field Operations (Supervisory Soil Conservationist), USDA/ NRCS- Cookeville, TN, Supervisor: Sheldon Hightower**  
**Sept 30, 2018 – Apr 24, 2021 (Permanent) Cookeville AO**                      **Full-Time Work: 40 hrs/ week**  
**Aug 24, 2015 – Oct 2, 2015 (Acting) Knoxville AO**                      **Full-Time Work: 40 hrs/ week**

- **Partnerships and Interpersonal Skills:** Provided leadership and guidance to the team in working with soil and water conservation districts and other conservation partners resulting in improved relationships with the soil conservation district board and employees. Fostered partnership with other environmental organizations to establish conservation initiative areas which became priorities for conservation in the area. Supervised work and worked with Army Corps of Engineers, Environmental Protection Agency, US Fish and Wildlife Service, Tennessee Department of Agriculture, Defenders of Wildlife, The Nature Conservancy, APHIS- Wildlife Services, Land Grant extension services, and other partners. This work led to improved collaboration with PL-566 Watershed work, conservation initiatives, and award proposals. Sought feedback from partners and others to aid in decision making.

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- **Conservation Planning, Managing Change, and Resource Management:** Organized and facilitated recurring area-wide trainings to update the staff on policy changes, new business tools, and improved conservation planning. Collected and analyzed census and office performance data and activities in the area to ensure program and planning policy were met and goals accomplished more equitably throughout the area. Directed and managed field staffing to obligate over \$51,000 in Working Lands for Wildlife funds.

► **District Conservationist, USDA/ NRCS- Madisonville, TN, Supervisor: Kurt Simon**  
**July 30, 2012 – Feb 7, 2015**                      **Madisonville FO**                      **Full-Time Work: 40 hrs/ week**

► **Soil Conservationist, USDA/ NRCS- Union City, Tennessee, Supervisor: Matthew Denton**  
**May 24, 2009 – July 30, 2012**                      **Union City FO**                      **Full-Time Work: 40 hrs/ week**

► **Student Career Experience Program (USDA 1890 Scholar), Intern - USDA/ NRCS**  
Throughout Middle Tennessee (Murfreesboro FO, Clarksville FO, Springfield FO, Ashland City FO, and Franklin FO) - **Area 2**                      **Summers 2005 – 2008**                      **Full-Time Work: 40 hrs/ week**

### **Leadership Experience:**

Chief's Hiring Strategy Task Force Team 8 – Employee Orientation and Development (2021); Emerging Leaders Development Program (ELDP) Courses- (Jan 2014-2016); Recording Secretary for National Organization of Professional Black NRCS Employees (NOPBNRCSE) and served on committees (Jan 2013 - Present); Program Support Specialist Standard Operating Procedures Team (2018-2019); CSP Oversight and Evaluation Team – Quality Assurance Review for Entity Contracts (2017); Vice Chairman (2017) and Recording Secretary (Oct 2014 – Sept 2016) of the TN Civil Rights Committee and Committee Member (Oct 2013-Present)

### **Education:**

**University of Tennessee at Martin, Martin, Tennessee; January 2011- December 2013**

**Masters of Natural Resource Systems Management Overall GPA: 3.91/ 4.0**

**Tennessee State University, Nashville, Tennessee; August 2005- May 2009**

**Bachelors of Agricultural Sciences- Concentration: Plant Science Overall GPA: 3.97/ 4.0**

### **Academic Research:**

- Tillman, L. (2013). *Examining Conservation Spending for Working Land Programs Administered by the Natural Resources Conservation Service Between 2004 and 2013*. UTM Graduate Research Papers. Graduate Project. University of Tennessee at Martin, Martin, TN.
- Tillman, L. (2008). *Analyzing Sources and Areas of Possible Pollution on the TSU Farm*. Presented at the 31<sup>st</sup> Annual Research Symposium for Physical Sciences. Tennessee State University, Nashville, TN. (1<sup>st</sup> Place).

### **Publications:**

- Tillman, L. (2018). *Gulf of Mexico Hypoxia*. Richard Crume. *Environmental Health in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: From Air Pollution to Zoonotic Diseases [2 Volumes]*. Greenwood, 2018. ABC-CLIO, publisher.abc-clio.com/9781440843655.