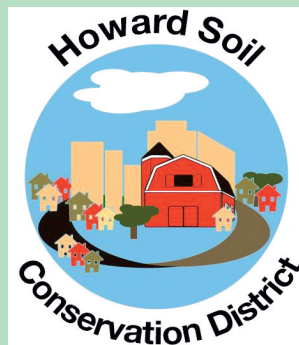


Howard Soil
Conservation District
14735 Frederick Road
Cooksville, MD 21723
410.313.0680
www.howardscd.org

Conservation Matters



OCTOBER 2021

CALENDAR

HSCD Office Holiday
Closures:

November 11

November 25-26

December 24

December 31

Cover Crop Dates:

October 15: Last Day to Plant Barley and Ryegrass; Last Day to Plant Cereal Rye, Triticale and Wheat Using Broadcast Stalk Chop or Broadcast Multi-packer

November 5: Last Day to Plant Cereal Rye, Triticale and Wheat Using No-till or Conventional Methods

See Page 7 for More Important Cover Crop Dates and Information

Howard SCD Board Meetings: 4th Thursday at 8AM (Call 410.313.0680 for more details)

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High-Priority Agricultural Conservation Practices Now Available for 100% Cost-Share Grants

The Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) announced in early August that over 20 high-priority agricultural conservation practices are now eligible for cost-share funding of up to 100% through the Maryland Agricultural Water Quality Cost-Share (MACS) Program. Installation of these practices by farmers will help Maryland meet its 2025 Chesapeake Bay cleanup goals.

"Clean water and healthy natural resources benefit all Marylanders," said Agriculture Secretary Joe Bartenfelder. "The department is committed to providing farmers with the financial and technical resources and support they need to install best management practices on their farms that will improve water quality in the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries."

Earlier this year, Governor Larry Hogan signed a new law that authorizes MDA to provide farmers with cost-share assistance that covers up to 100% of eligible costs to install certain high-priority best management practices on farms.

Qualifying practices must have at least a 10-year maintenance life; provide environmental benefits that are consistent with Maryland's Watershed Implementation Plan; and focus largely on in-field or edge-of-field practices that protect local waterways from nutrient runoff associated with crop production. In addition, these practices are required to be implemented as part of a current Soil Conservation and Water Quality Plan developed by a local soil conservation district.

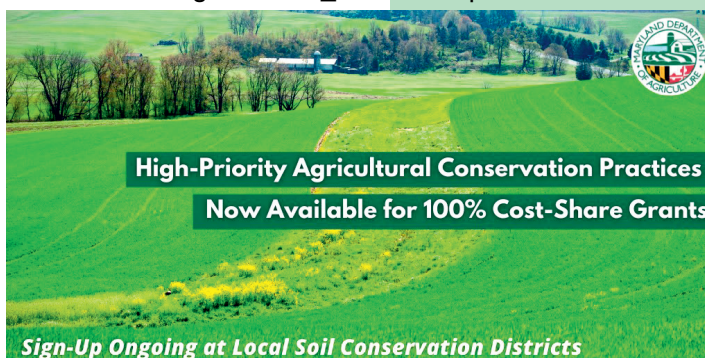
Practices now eligible for up to 100% cost-share funding and free technical assistance include:

- Conservation drainage practices
- Conservation cover

- Critical area planting
- Diversion
- Stream exclusion fencing
- Field border
- Filter strip
- Grade stabilization structure
- Grassed waterway
- Lined waterway or outlet
- Riparian forest buffer
- Riparian herbaceous cover
- Sediment basin
- Terrace system
- Tree and shrub establishment
- Wetland restoration or creation

Interested farmers should contact their local soil conservation district to apply for cost-share funding and to receive free technical assistance to design and install these practices. To be eligible for cost-share assistance, applicants must be in good standing with MDA, the MACS Program and in compliance with Maryland's nutrient management regulations. Other restrictions may apply.

For more information, please contact MDA's Conservation Grants Program at 410.841.5864 or visit mda.maryland.gov/resource_conservation/Pages/financial_assistance.aspx



Upcoming Environmental Permitting Changes

By Alexander Bratchie and Geoffrey Schoming

Howard Soil Conservation District (SCD) would like to make the public aware of the following upcoming changes to some of Maryland's environmental permits:

General Permit for Stormwater Associated with Construction Activity

A new version of the General Permit for Stormwater Associated with Construction Activity, which is required for all construction projects with at least one acre of earth disturbance, is being prepared by the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) and will be released later this year. One major proposed change is the implementation of new stream protection Zone (SPZ) requirements. The draft permit requires permittees to maintain an undisturbed natural buffer at least 50 feet from the edge of a Tier I stream or an average buffer width of 100 feet (with a minimum width of 50 feet) from the edge of a Tier II stream.

If the SPZ buffer requirements cannot be met, then permittees must implement additional erosion and sediment control measures, which may include accelerated stabilization, redundant controls, increased storage volume for traps and basins, or a reduction in the size of the grading unit. The SPZ must be delineated on the erosion and sediment control plans. There are only a few limited exceptions to the SPZ requirement, such as for the construction of marine or water-dependent structures, for linear construction projects with limited right-of-way, and for streams with no natural buffer due to pre-existing development.

Maryland State Programmatic General Permit

On October 1st, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Baltimore District, issued an updated Maryland State Programmatic General Permit (MDSPGP), which authorizes work in Waters of the U.S. that has minimal environmental impacts. The most significant change concerns the

threshold for 'Category B' stream impacts that are eligible for coverage under the MDSPGP. These stream impacts require USACOE review and approval but are still eligible for coverage under the General Permit.

For most environmental impacts, the former MDSPGP allowed for up to ½ acre impact to Waters of the U.S. and 2,000 linear feet of impacts to stream channel; the proposed General Permit decreases the limit of stream channel impacts to 1,000 linear feet. Projects that exceed this 1,000 linear feet limitation will not be eligible for coverage under MDSPGP and must instead seek coverage under a USACE individual permit, which could significantly increase review time.

Changes to Small Pond Reviews

There are two major changes coming to the review of Small Ponds in Maryland. The first change concerns the review of Small Ponds in Use III watersheds. Currently, all ponds in Use III watersheds must be reviewed by the MDE Dam Safety Permits Division. A proposed regulation change will remove this requirement, allowing for these ponds to be reviewed by the local soil conservation district (SCD). There is currently no timeline for when this regulatory change will take place.

The second major change concerns the role of the Maryland Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS-MD) in Small Pond reviews. Currently, NRCS-MD has agreements with soil conservation districts to perform Small Pond technical reviews when the local SCD does not have any licensed professional engineers on staff. Per a recent NRCS-MD bulletin, starting next year, NRCS-MD will no longer perform such reviews. SCDs across the state are currently working with MDE to determine a path forward regarding this review authority.

Effective Monday, August 2, 2021 Howard County offices, including Howard Soil Conservation District are now OPEN to the public with an appointment. If you would like to make an appointment, have any questions or need assistance, please call our main line at 410.313.0680.

Howard County Envirothon

The Envirothon is a fun and exciting way for high school students in grades 9-12 to learn about the natural world around us. Envirothon teams are made up of 5 students who work together to study Maryland's natural resources over the course of the school year. Topics are hands-on and include practical skills. Topics include Aquatics, Forestry, Soil, Wildlife and a 5th Topic which is a current environmental issue.

The Howard County Envirothon will be held in April 2022 at the Howard County Conservancy's Mount Pleasant Farm. Training videos and kits are available. To learn more contact Howard County Envirothon Coordinator, Kristal McCormick, kmccormick@howardcountymd.gov or 410.313.0680

New Faces: Introducing New Staff in the Office

Soil Conservationist Dana Rushovich

Dana is a recent graduate from University of Maryland's Master's in Soil and Watershed Science program where she studied Sulfur Fertility Management in Soybeans under Dr. Ray Weil's guidance. Prior to graduate school she completed her undergraduate degree in Environmental Science and Policy from University of Maryland and spent 5+ years working on and managing diverse vegetable operations. She spent several years working at Boone Street Farm, an urban farm in Baltimore City where she served as the production manager, overseeing all the farm production, interns, volunteers, and sales to farmer's markets, CSA, and restaurants. While working at Boone Street Farm she participated in the Future Harvest Beginning Farmer Training Program where she was paired with mentor farmer John Dove, owner of Love Dove Farms in Woodbine, MD. After leaving Boone Street Farm, Dana served as an AmeriCorps member at Little Gunpowder Farm in Monkton, MD and then worked as the Assistant Farm Manager at Love Dove Farms. Throughout her time on farms she developed a passion for soil health and the integral role that soils play in developing a healthy farm ecosystem, which is what led her to pursue a

Master's in Soil Science. She has an extensive background in vegetable production, soil fertility, and nutrient management and is passionate about supporting local food systems. Dana continues to be an active member of the Baltimore urban agriculture community through volunteer work as the assistant site manager of Hidden Harvest Farm, a cooperatively run urban farm in Baltimore. Outside of work Dana enjoys gardening, cooking, hiking, traveling, and rock climbing. Dana is very excited about working with the Howard Soil Conservation District as an NRCS Soil Conservationist and the agriculture community in Howard County.



Dana Rushovich, NRCS Soil Conservationist, in the field working towards her Master's in Soil and Watershed Science.

RC&D Program Support Specialist Nick Azat

Nick graduated from McDaniel College with a degree in environmental studies a few years ago. Since then he has held a few jobs trying to start a career he can be proud of serving the community and working toward conservation efforts. For three years he worked for EMG, an environmental engineering firm working to prepare environmental reports for clients. He then moved over to WeCare Denali, a large compost and mulch producer in Woodbine, where he worked as an Inventory and Production Analyst. He then got



the opportunity to work for Western Maryland Resource Conservation & Development (RC&D). He is excited to be able to really get into a career where he can say he will be making a difference.

Left: Nick Azat, RC&D Program Support Specialist.



MDA Regional Technician Michael Lock

Originally from Pennsylvania, Michael has found a home in Maryland working with Maryland Department of Agriculture. He started in a Chesapeake Bay Trust funded position and was recently given the responsibilities of a Patuxent Regional Conservation Technician. He is a graduate from Penn State University with a Bachelor of Science in Earth Science and Policy, and has been working with conservation districts ever since. He enjoys biking and just about anything outdoors. Michael looks forward to meeting more people and getting some projects started in Howard County.

Left: Michael Lock, new MDA Regional Conservation Technician for the Patuxent Area, prepares for a survey.

Howard Soil Conservation District's Cooperators Dinner:

The Howard Soil Conservation District (SCD) hosted the 2021 Cooperators Dinner at Circle D Farm in Woodbine on September 9, 2021. This year's event also included the celebration of the District's 75th Anniversary. The Howard SCD was founded on May 10, 1945, but the pandemic presented some challenges for celebrating this momentous occasion in 2020. Even though the Anniversary had to be delayed for a year the crowd of attendees were enthusiastic and the venue offered the perfect location for this wonderful celebration.

A variety of organizations helped celebrate the District's 75th Anniversary by presenting the Howard SCD staff and Supervisors with plaques, awards and recognition. County Council members Deb Jung and David Yungmann presented current and



Councilmembers Deb Jung (far left) and David Yungmann (far right) present a Council Resolution to current and former Supervisors. (left to right: Justin Brendel, John Dove, Joe Rutter, Chuck Schuster, Martha Clark, Tim Dowd)

past Howard SCD Supervisors with an Honorary Resolution from the Council. County Executive Dr. Calvin Ball thanked the District for their conservation efforts and the support

they provide to the agricultural community. Dr. Ball also presented the Supervisors and the staff with a Certificate of Recognition to commemorate 75 years of conservation.

Circle D Farm, owned and operated by the Dowd family, was the perfect venue for the 75th Anniversary Celebration. Participants were able to take a wagon ride around the farm to observe conservation practices the Dowd family has installed over the years. These practices included grassed waterways, watering troughs, stream crossings, and a riparian forest buffer planting completed about 20 years ago. There was also a reception area where attendees could learn about Howard SCD's history and enjoy old photos of conservation practices through the years. Also on display were photos of some of the prominent Howard SCD Supervisors from the past, including the owner of Circle D Farm – Mr. Tim Dowd. Mr. Dowd was a member of the Howard SCD Board of Supervisors from 2000-2011.

One of the focal points of the Cooperators Dinner is to present conservation awards to individuals that have made significant commitments to protecting natural resources and promoting conservation. The Howard SCD Chairman Justin Brendel presented conservation awards to two farmers and two people that have been involved with the District for many years. Because we couldn't hold the Cooperators Dinner in 2020 the District recognized two operations with the Cooperator of the Year Award. Both awards went to equine operations, which are a prominent component of Howard County agriculture.

THANK YOU TO OUR CONSERVATION SPONSORS:

**Circle D Farm/The Dowd Family
Sun Nurseries, Inc.
Walnut Springs Nursery, Inc.**

THANK YOU TO OUR CONSERVATION SUPPORTERS:

**Manor Hill Brewing
Mildenberg, Boender & Associates, Inc.
Penn Oaks Winery
VanMar Associates, Inc.
Willard Agri-Service**

*Special Thanks to the Dowd Family for hosting
the 2021 Cooperators Dinner!*

The first Cooperator of the Year award went to Jerry Robb, who is well known and respected in the Maryland Horse Racing Industry. In 2020 Mr. Robb gained his 2000th career win as a trainer, an amazing achievement. He recently started a horse breeding operation on a small farm in Howard County. Mr. Robb worked with Howard SCD from the very beginning to establish a variety of conservation practices, including fencing off streams and wetlands, installing watering troughs and heavy use areas; and establishing a rotational grazing system. In addi-



Maryland Department of Agriculture Assistant Secretary Hans Schmidt presents a Secretary Citation to Cooperator of the Year Jerry Robb.

Celebrating 75 Years of Conservation and Community

tion to the Cooperator of the Year award from Howard SCD, Mr. Robb also received a Secretary Citation from the Maryland Department of Agriculture.

The other Cooperator of the Year award went to Abby Gibbon, owner of Fine Idea Farm, an equine boarding and training facility in the western part of the County. Abby has worked with Howard SCD for several years and has installed a number of practices to improve the functionality of her operation as well as protect natural resources. Her farm is located near the headwaters of the Patuxent River, and conservation is an important part of her farm management. She has used technical and financial assistance from the District to install watering troughs, heavy use areas, animal trails and walkways, and a rotational grazing system.



Howard SCD Board Chairman Justin Brendel presents Joe Rutter the Contribution to Conservation award.

The District also presented an award to the longest serving current Supervisor, Mr. Joe Rutter. Mr. Rutter served two 5-year terms as the County Executive appointee on the Board of Supervisors, starting in 2011. Mr. Rutter served during a fairly tumultuous time in the District's history. At the time of his appointment the District was in a significant battle with the County over erosion and sediment control review authority. Mr. Rutter's experience with the planning process, having been the former Director of Planning and Zoning for Howard County, and

his insight regarding county government operations and policy were instrumental in bridging the relationship between the District and the County. Mr. Rutter also received recognition from the County Council and a Governor's Citation from the Maryland Department of Agriculture.

The final award recipient of the night was one of the District's longest serving employees, Mr. Bob Robertson. Bob started his career on the Eastern Shore of Maryland in 1975 working for the Soil Conservation Service (now the Natural Resource Conservation Service or NRCS). In 1978 he switched to the Maryland Department of Agriculture, where he surveyed, designed and oversaw construction of a variety of best management practices. In 1988 he began working



Howard SCD Board Chairman Justin Brendel presents Bob Robertson with an award acknowledging his contributions and years of service.

with the Howard SCD as an urban plan reviewer, and the rest is history. During his career Bob has reviewed an estimated 15,000 plans, helping to protect 100,000 acres of land and prevent 500,000 tons of sediment from entering Howard County's streams and waterways. Throughout his career in reviewing erosion and sediment control plans, Bob has maintained good relationships with developers, engineers, reviewers, inspectors, and the citizens of Howard County... which is not an easy task when you are responsible for insuring that natural resources are being protected in accordance with state and county regulations! For his lifetime commitment to conserving natural resources Bob also received a Governor's Citation from the Maryland Department of Agriculture.



(Left) District Manager David Plummer presents County Executive Ball with a framed Delmarva Farmer article featuring Dr. Ball helping elementary school students establish a school vegetable garden on Earth Day 2021.

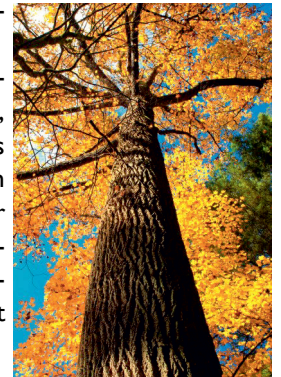
(Right) Mrs. Martha Clark served as a Supervisor for Howard SCD from 1989 to 2009. She also served as the President of the Maryland Association of Soil Conservation Districts for four years (1997-2001)



(Left) Howard SCD Supervisor John Dove discusses agriculture policy with County Executive Dr. Calvin Ball.

Fall Outdoor Yard & Garden Tips From University of Maryland Home & Garden Information Center

- Instead of blowing fallen leaves off of your lawn, run over them with your lawnmower when the leaves are dry and leave them in place. As the leaf pieces decompose, they will add nutrients and organic matter to your soil.
- Fallen leaves also can be raked under trees and shrubs and used as mulch. Some butterflies and other beneficial insects use fallen leaves as shelter to survive the winter.
- Save seeds from annual and perennial flowering plants like zinnias, cosmos, celosia, and butterfly weed to be planted next spring.
- Daffodil bulbs, alliums, and other spring-flowering bulbs can be planted now. Plant them in a sunny spot, in well-drained soil. Tulip bulbs should be planted from mid-October through November to prevent them from sprouting prematurely.
- Discard badly-diseased plants and fruits; don't till them back into the soil. All other plant waste can be composted.
- Black rat snakes may still be hatching in October. These harmless baby snakes are not black at hatching but are a light gray with dark brown rectangular markings down the back.
- Start a compost pile by mixing together spent plants, kitchen scraps, fallen leaves, old mulch, and grass clippings. Shred your materials with a lawnmower, string trimmer, or machete to speed-up the break-down process. Keep twigs, branches, and other woody materials out of the pile.



“Essentially, all life depends upon the soil.” -- Charles Kellogg

Maryland's Lawn Fertilizer Law

Maryland's lawn fertilizer law helps protect the Chesapeake Bay from excess nutrients entering its waters from a variety of urban sources, including golf courses, parks, recreation areas, businesses and hundreds of thousands of lawns. Nutrients, primarily nitrogen and phosphorus, are key ingredients in lawn fertilizer. When it rains, lawn fertilizer can wash into nearby storm drains and streams that empty into the Chesapeake Bay. Once in our waterways, fertilizer contributes to the growth of algae blooms that block sunlight from reaching Bay grasses, rob the water of oxygen and threaten underwater life. Lawn fertilizer now accounts for approximately 44 percent of the fertilizer sold in Maryland. While certain restrictions on fertilizer use have been in place for farmers since 2001, everyone needs to do their part to protect and restore the Bay. Maryland's lawn fertilizer law took effect October 1, 2013.



- **Everyone must follow** University of Maryland fertilizer recommendations.
- **A single fertilizer application may not exceed** 0.9 pound total nitrogen per 1,000 sq ft which can include no more than 0.7 pound of soluble

nitrogen per 1,000 sq ft.

- **Visit extension.umd.edu/hgic** for seasonal and yearly nitrogen recommendations.
- Lawn care pros should consult the **Maryland Professional Lawn Care Manual**.
- **Phosphorus may only be applied** when a soil test indicates that it is needed or when a lawn is being established, patched or renovated.
- **Fertilizer may not be used** to de-ice walkways and driveways.
- **It is against the law** to apply fertilizer to sidewalks or other impervious surfaces. Fertilizer that lands on these surfaces must be swept back onto the grass or cleaned up.
- **No fertilizer applications** within 10 to 15 feet of waterways.
- **Do not fertilize** lawns if heavy rain is predicted or the ground is frozen.
- **Do not apply lawn fertilizer** between November 16 and March 1.
- **Enhanced efficiency controlled release products** may be applied at no more than 2.5 pounds per year, with a maximum monthly release rate of 0.7 pound of N per 1,000 sq ft.

Maryland Agricultural Water Quality Cost-Share Program Cost-Share Rates Increase by 30% Thru June 30, 2022

Have you been waiting to install conservation practices on your land due to COVID pandemic related cost increase of materials?

In response to rising material costs the Maryland Agricultural Water Quality Cost-Share (MACS) Office has authorized a "30% COVID-Related Material Price Adjustment".

Payment will be based on actual cost not to exceed 30% above the established flat-rate for the item. This provision may also be applied retroactively to projects that have already received funding approval and have not yet been submitted to MACS for payment.

All projects must be approved for funding by June 30, 2022 to be eligible for the "30% COVID-Related Material Price Adjustment."

OCTOBER is ... MARYLAND HORSE MONTH RIPARIAN FOREST BUFFER MONTH

Maryland Farm Bureau Presents an Agribusiness Forum: Managing Your Future Profits

Maryland Farm Bureau and Kathy Johnson, Howard County Economic Development, are planning an agribusiness forum "Managing Your Future Profits". The forum will be held Thursday, January 13th, 2022, 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM, at the Howard County Fairgrounds. The main speaker, Dr. Alex White from Virginia Tech, is one of the top experts in agricultural economics, and is known for teaching countless ag financial management courses and other programs educating farmers throughout the country. Guest speakers from across the state of Maryland will also be invited, to share experiences and knowledge in starting businesses. There will be discussions on alternative revenue sources, agritourism, cash-flow budgeting, liability coverage, SWAT analysis, personal finance, and much more.

More details, including how to register, will be available soon.

MDA Cover Crop Program Update

Maryland Department of Agriculture's Cover Crop Program is a key component of the state's plan to reduce the amount of nutrients that reach the waterways – creeks, streams and rivers – that eventually reach the Chesapeake Bay. The program incentivizes farmers to plant a cover crop to take up and hold nutrients over winter, as well as prevent soil loss.

The 2020-2021 program wrapped up with more than 3900 acres in Howard County being certified.

Sign-up for the 2021-2022 program resulted in 16 approved applications for 4000 acres. Planting and fall certification is currently underway.

Some reminders for those participating in this year's program ...

- Seed tags for purchased seed and seed tests for home grown seed. **The seed tags need to be signed by the Operator and any seed tests not in the Operator's name shall also be signed.**
- All custom planted acres including aerial and aerial ground will require an FSA map signed and dated by the applicator, designating which fields were planted.
- The **applicant** will also need to provide signed documentation for all aerial or aerial ground seeded acres, certifying previous crop, crop planted, seeding rate and planting date.

Important Dates ...

October 10: Last Day to Aerial Seed; Incentive Planting Deadline for Incorporated Methods

October 15: Last Day to Plant Barley or Ryegrass; Last Day to Plant Cereal Rye, Triticale and Wheat Using Broadcast Stalk Chop or Broadcast Cultipacker

October 17: Certification Deadline for Aerial Planting and 10/10 Incorporated Planting Incentive

November 5: Last Day to Plant Cereal Rye, Triticale and Wheat Using No-till or Conventional Methods

November 12: Certification Deadline for MACS Base 11/05 Planting

Questions please contact Kristal McCormick, kmccormick@howardcountymd.gov or 410.313.0680

**HOWARD SOIL
CONSERVATION
DISTRICT**

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The Howard Soil Conservation District (HSCD) prohibits discrimination in its programs on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs and marital or familial status.