

# Conservation Matters



DECEMBER 2017

Howard Soil  
Conservation District  
14735 Frederick Road  
Cookeville, MD 21723  
410-313-0680  
www.howardscd.org

## CALENDAR

**EQIP Sign-up Deadline**  
**December 15**

**Christmas Holiday:**  
**Offices Closed**  
**December 25**

**New Years Day:**  
**Offices Closed**  
**January 1**

**Martin Luther King**  
**Day: Offices Closed**  
**January 15**

**Mid-Winter Ag Meeting**  
**February 13 (tentative)**

**President's Day:**  
**Offices Closed**  
**February 19**



William "Bill" Edgar Barnes passed away at his home on Wednesday, October 18, 2017, at the Woodbine farm, Air View Farm, where he spent his entire life. Bill was born on January 12, 1944, the son of the late Edgar J and Dorothy Hopkins Barnes.

Bill graduated from Glenelg High School in 1962, after which he spent 6 years serving in the Maryland Army National Guard. Bill first worked for his father's excavation business before going into business for himself. He artfully created many ponds for area farmers, and skillfully graded around people's homes. Farming, however, was a big source of pride and joy for him. Anyone who has driven past his fields or been a guest on his farm has admired the beauty created by his meticulous planning and his hard-working ethic.

Bill Barnes was on the Howard Soil Conservation District (HSCD) Board of Supervisors for twenty-five years and served as chairman for twenty of those years. Mr. Barnes always had the District's best interest at heart concerning its mission and employees. He was the quintessential chairman in that he listened patiently and thoughtfully to all points-of-view when considering district direction and policy, without ever losing his composure. Mr. Barnes made himself available to staff for discussion and to share his experience and knowledge in farming and conservation. His field experience and advice always kept one humble and practical in their work.

Bill Barnes implemented best management practices (BMPs) on his farm as needed and participated in (and promoted) the cover crop program. Through his excavation business Mr. Barnes installed agricultural BMPs on other farms as well. He was one of the preeminent conservation contractors in Howard County and surrounding areas for the past 30+ years. It is safe to say that no single person built, constructed, or installed more best management practices in Howard County than Bill Barnes. His passion for conserving natural resources and protecting the Bay extended far beyond his own farm operation. He helped farmers throughout Central Maryland to realize their conservation goals on their own farms by constructing conservation practices to the highest quality standards anywhere. Whenever anyone had a question about a conservation practice or how to construct it they called Bill.

He had great stories and anecdotes to liven conversations, and was quick to provide help when needed. And he will be greatly missed. Howard County will never be the same, but Mr. Barnes's legacy will remain for years to come.



Mr. Barnes, with his wife Merhlyn, receives the MASCD 2016 Outstanding Leadership Award.

## Conservation Funding for Howard County Farmers

In addition to providing farmers with technical guidance to protect soil, water and other natural resources, the Howard Soil Conservation District also helps farmers to access a wide array of financial assistance to implement conservation practices. By working with our federal, state, and local partners, Howard SCD is able to provide farmers with access to a variety of funding sources that help defray the costs of implementing conservation practices. Planning, designing, and constructing conservation practices can be expensive, and it frequently involves significant investment by the farmer, changes in management, considerable maintenance costs, and taking land out of production. All of these factors can negatively impact

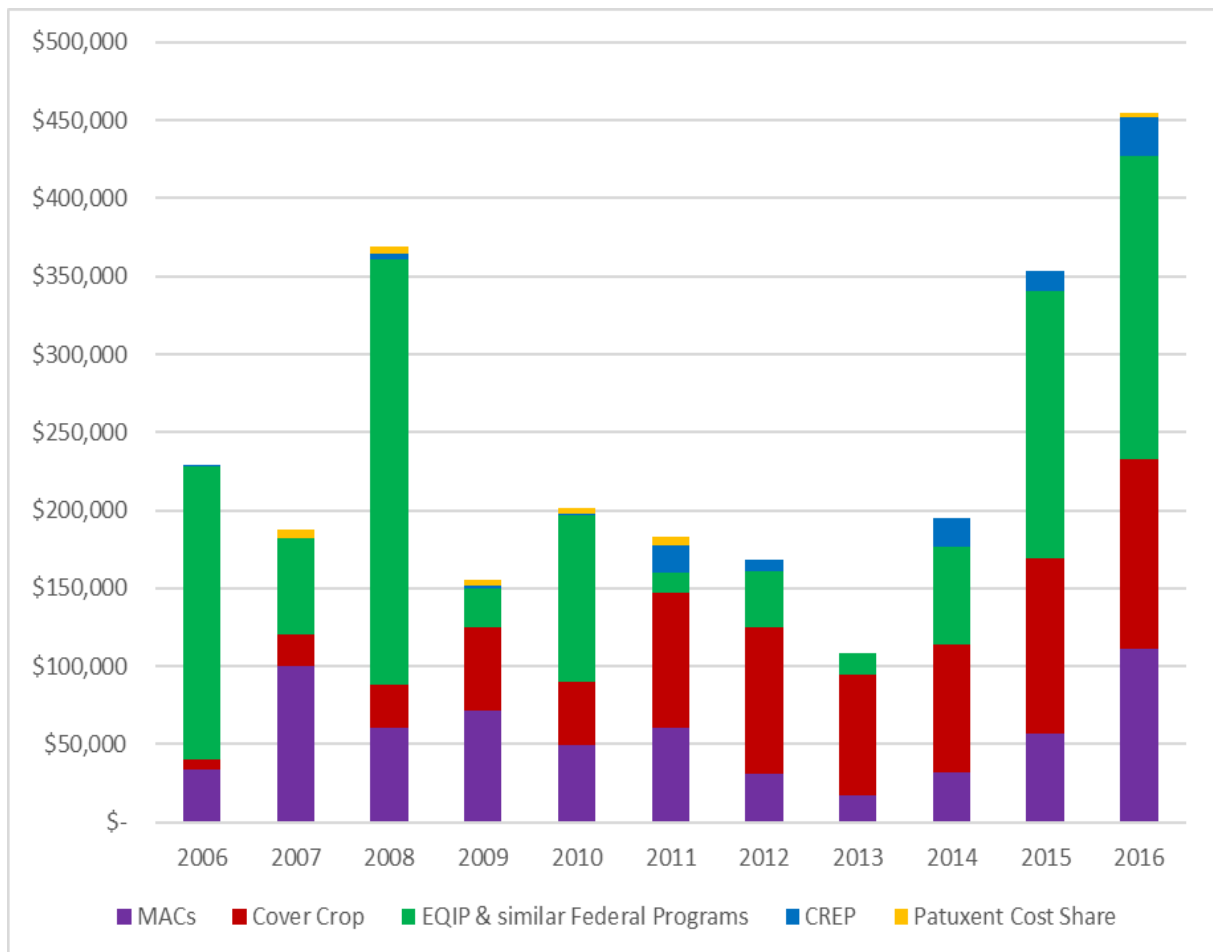
profitability and a farmer's bottom line. However, farmers were the original conservationists, and their dedication to protecting the land for future generations is unparalleled.

Fortunately, the Howard SCD can assist in accessing cost-share funding to help offset some of the expenses farmers incur when implementing conservation practices. The chart below shows the annual dollar amounts of cost-share funds approved for Howard County farmers over the past decade. It is clear that Howard County farmers are committed to doing everything they can to protect and enhance our local natural resources and the Chesapeake Bay.

The Maryland Agricultural Water

Quality Cost Share program (MACS) and the Cover Crop program are both administered by the Maryland Department of Agriculture. The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) is administered by the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service. The Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) is administered by the Farm Service Agency. And the Patuxent Cost Share program is a local program sponsored by Howard County and the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission, and is administered by Howard SCD. All of these various funding sources have guidelines and requirements, but are available to landowners through the Howard SCD.

### CONSERVATION FUNDING for HOWARD COUNTY FARMERS



## Howard SCD's Supervisors Recognized

Each year at the Maryland Association of Soil Conservation District's Summer Meeting, Supervisors, employees, cooperators and others in the community are recognized for their leadership, hard work and conservation efforts. At this year's meeting three of Howard Soil Conservation District's Supervisors received awards.

### **William Barnes: Outstanding Leadership**



### **Dr. Allan Bandel: Special Achievement**



### **Keith Ohlinger: New Supervisor**



HSCD Supervisors pictured with MASCD President Charles Rice.

## Cover Crops in Soil Health

For years the state of Maryland has been at the forefront of encouraging the planting of cover crops by farmers. Through the state's cover crop program, hundreds of thousands of acres are planted each year. The primary goal of Maryland's program is for cover crops to uptake excess nutrients into the plants, that otherwise may leach or runoff to surface waters, and eventually, to the Chesapeake Bay. This is a major part of the Chesapeake Bay improvement strategy.

As farmers know, cover crops do more than uptake and hold any nutrients which may linger in the soil after harvest. They prevent soil erosion, can smother weeds, break insect and disease pest cycles, and maintain soil moisture. A legume cover crop can provide nitrogen to the next crop in a rotation.

One of the best impacts of cover crops is their affect on soil health by adding organic matter. The increase

in organic matter, includes not just the above ground plant, but also, the plant roots. For many cover crop species, the root system is as abundant as the biomass on top of the soil. The growing roots help to improve soil structure. The roots also provide channels for water to flow, increasing water infiltration. By growing something year-round, the soil has increased biological activity. The soil microbes are fed continuously. Fungi thrive and are important for bringing nutrients to the plant roots. As microbes die, they become part of the soil organic matter content too.

Planting a mix of cover crops, a cover crop cocktail, enhances benefits to the soil. For one, plants with different rooting systems and growth habits provide multiple benefits. The grass in the mixture can scavenge nitrogen. A brassica can scavenge nitrogen and provide large root channels for water infiltration. Prob-

lems that may occur in varying soil types and weather conditions may be avoided by including multiple species in a planting. Some plants may thrive in conditions that are problematic to others.

Cover crop growth and the increase in organic matter sequester carbon which would otherwise be released into the atmosphere as greenhouse gases. The extensive application of cover crops may be a great way to mitigate climate change by sequestering the carbon in the soil in the form of organic matter. Thus, a simple practice as cover crop use, can go a long way to influence the soil and our environment as a whole.

To learn more about cover crop opportunities and how they may rejuvenate your field or garden soil, visit the Howard Soil Conservation District or call 410-313-0680.



## Howard Soil Conservation

The Howard Soil Conservation District's annual Co-operators Dinner was held at Air View Farm on September 14, 2017. Hosts Bill and Merhlyn Barnes welcomed 130 participants to their farm, entertaining them with hay wagon rides, scenic views of the countryside, and a display of antique farm equipment. The event was located up on the Barnes' airplane landing strip, which is one of the highest spots in Lisbon, and provides beautiful views of the surrounding farmland. Air View Farm is a traditional grain and beef cattle operation, and has been in the Barnes family since 1865.

The property has a long history of stewardship, and many conservation practices were featured on the hay wagon tours of the farm. The Barnes family is very dedicated to conserving natural resources, with Bill serving as the Chairman of the Howard SCD Board of Supervisors for over 20 years, and Merhlyn employed as an Administrative Assistant on the HSCD Staff. So hosting the event at Air View presented a great opportunity to celebrate farmers' conservation efforts and to recognize some of the significant accomplishments by members of the agricultural community.

The evening was highlighted by the presentation of conservation awards to Howard County farmers. Every year, the Howard SCD recognizes cooperators that have made significant commitments to protecting natural resources and promoting agriculture and conservation.



(Above) View of the pond, pastures and beef cattle at Air View Farm.

(Left) Grassed waterway in a crop field at Air View Farm.

## District's Cooperator Dinner



Council Member Mary Kay Sigaty presents Jamie Brown and Jen Poston with recognition from the County Council.

This year's recipient of the Conservation Education Award was Triadelphia Lake View (TLV) Tree Farm. TLV Tree Farm has been family owned and operated for over 100 years. They offer a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program and also sell fruits, vegetables, lamb, beef, pork, chicken, and eggs through their farm market and at Farmers Markets across the County. TLV Tree Farm also offers a variety of agritourism programs and sells Christmas Trees. Recently, they initiated a farm camp for both children and adults to learn about agriculture and conservation. In addition to receiving the District's Conservation Education Award, TLV was also awarded a Secretary's Citation from the Maryland Department of Agriculture and recognition from the County Council, which was presented by Council Member Mary Kay Sigaty.

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Sill Engineering  
Frank's Produce & Greenhouse  
Manor Hill Brewery  
Air View Farm



"Air View"



HSCD Chairman Bill Barnes presents the Cooperator of the Year Award to David and Lydia Liker.

Howard SCD also recognized David and Lydia Liker of Gorman Farm with the 2017 Cooperator of the Year Award, for their outstanding efforts to implement conservation practices on their farm. The Likers, who started farming around 2008, grow organic produce and focus on providing food for their 500 member Community Supported Agriculture (CSA). They have worked with Howard SCD to establish a row arrangement system, which minimizes cropland sheet erosion while providing for field surface drainage. They have also installed over an acre of grassed waterways, an irrigation farm pond, and routinely establish cover crops to protect their fields in the winter. Their conservation efforts demonstrate the commitment shown by Howard County farmers to help improve our environment and restore the Chesapeake Bay for future generations. The Likers also received an MDA Secretary's Citation, and recognition from the County Council and the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).



## Howard County Envirothon

Envirothon is a competition for high school students that tests their knowledge and promotes the use of problem solving skills in natural resources.

The competition consists of five test stations, in the areas of Aquatics, Forestry, Soils, Wildlife and a

Current Environmental Issue, where students work together as a team.

For more information or to register the team for the training or event contact Kristal McCormick, Envirothon Coordinator., 410-313-0680 or [kmccormick@howardcountymd.gov](mailto:kmccormick@howardcountymd.gov)

### IMPORTANT DATES

Howard County Training Day  
Wednesday, 3/28/18

Howard County Envirothon  
Tuesday, 5/1/18

Maryland State Envirothon  
Thursday-Friday, 6/14-15 /18

## Farm Academy

On Saturday, October 7th Howard Soil Conservation District along with Howard County Economic Development Authority and Howard County Government held their seventh on-farm Farm Academy for the public. This session was held at Merry Acres Farm in Ellicott City Maryland. Merry Acres Farm is a premiere horse boarding facility. Their operation also includes corn, soybeans, small grains

and hay. They are conservation minded, having installed many best management practices on their farm. Once a dairy farm, Merry Acres transitioned to horse boarding in the mid-90s. The session included learning about agricultural preservation in Howard County, conservation on farms, the economic aspects of farming decisions and the management of the farm. The group took a walking

tour of the farm for a chance to see the operation in action as well as an opportunity to ask questions. It was a beautiful day and a learning opportunity for everyone.

To learn more about upcoming Farm Academy Sessions visit [www.livegreenhoward.com/green/health/farm-academy](http://www.livegreenhoward.com/green/health/farm-academy)



Howie Feaga explains manure storage and composting to Farm Academy participants.



Farm Academy was held on Merry Acres Farm, owned by Howie and Chris Feaga.



Participants listen to the economic benefits of grain storage.

## Dickcissel Follow-up

For those of you interested in the Dickcissels of the last newsletter, we'd like to provide an update. The field chosen by the spring migrants was idled into early September.

The effort was spontaneously paid for by local birders as the original funding from the Howard County Bird Club's Habitat Fund was replenished by member donations for this cause. The chapter of the Maryland Ornithological Society welcomes

such local endeavors and would like to find and back more of them (<http://www.howardbirds.org/>).

There may have been two nesting cycles and adults were seen feeding fledglings in late August. Pictures of the birds can be found at [http://www.howardbirds.org/photo\\_page/member\\_photos/Dickcissel.htm](http://www.howardbirds.org/photo_page/member_photos/Dickcissel.htm)

The adults and their young, that successfully make their fall migration, will gather with others in large flocks

wintering in the grasslands of Columbia, Venezuela, and Guyana before returning next spring and starting over. You can learn more about their lifecycle at <https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Dickcissel/lifehistory>. While playing only a small role, the HSCD would like to thank everyone who had a part in this successful community effort; particularly the farmer who allowed this area to remain fallow during the nesting cycle.

## NRCS Program Deadline: December 15th

You may apply for NRCS programs at any time, but funding is available during certain dates. With that in mind, the sign up deadline to be considered for funding in FY 2018 will be December 15, 2017. Programs include EQIP – Environmental Quality Incentives Program, AMA – Agricultural Management Assistance, CSP

– Conservation Stewardship Program, and RCPP- Regional Conservation Partnership Program.

The first step for involvement is to work with a conservation planner from the local office to develop a soil and water conservation plan for your farm. Then, based on your ob-

jectives and resource issues on the property, the planner can assist in helping you choose the best program to meet your goals.

Call the HSCD office at 410-313-0680 or visit our website [www.howardscd.org](http://www.howardscd.org), if interested in any program.



## Are you familiar with BMP's?

**Best Management Practices (BMPs) describe ways to manage your property to reduce or prevent pollution of surface and groundwater near you.**

*Are you tired of dealing with mud around your gates?*

*Would you like a sacrifice lot, so that you can keep your horses off your pasture during inclement weather?*

*Would you like a better way to store your manure?*

**A few of our Best Management Practices are:**



**Manure Storage Facility**

**Roof Runoff Structure**

**Heavy Use Area**

**Stream Fencing**

**Watering Trough**

**Forage & Biomass Planting**

**Prescribed Grazing**

**Stream Crossing**



**You may be eligible for cost sharing, so give us a call and we'd be happy to help! 410-313-0680**

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**[www.howardscd.org](http://www.howardscd.org)**

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