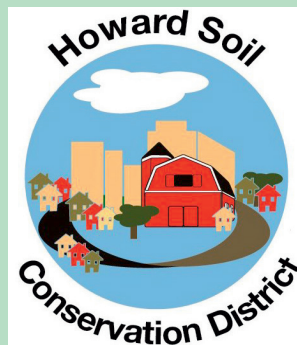


Howard Soil  
Conservation District  
14735 Frederick Road  
Cooksville, MD 21723  
410.313.0680  
www.howardscd.org

# Conservation Matters



FEBRUARY 2023

## CALENDAR

### HSCD Office Closures:

April 7: Good Friday  
May 29: Memorial Day  
June 19: Juneteenth

### Cover Crop Dates:

March 1: First day to terminate cover crop  
May 1: Acres receiving delayed termination incentive can be terminated  
See Page 7 for Additional Important Dates and Information

March 1: Nutrient Management AIR Forms Due

March 14: Howard County Mid-Winter Ag Meeting

April 15: Howard County GreenFest (Stop by to say hello)

April 18: Howard County Envirothon

April 22: Earth Day

## Maryland's Conservation Buffer Program

*Applications Accepted Through March 10, 2023*

Now in its third year, Maryland's Conservation Buffer Initiative provides farmers with attractive incentive payments to plant streamside buffers on farmland to improve the health of local streams and the Chesapeake Bay.

### What's New in 2023

- Additional incentives for planting riparian forest buffers are available this year. These payments are on top of the \$4,000 or \$4,500 per acre offered for installation. To encourage more tree planting, the new incentives include:
- A one-time bonus payment of \$1,000 per acre to install forest buffers.
- Up to \$330/acre/year to help cover costs associated with maintaining forest buffer viability and health for the first 5 years of the contract.

### Program Highlights

- Three types of buffers are eligible for funding under this program: **forest buffers** planted next to waterways, **grass buffers** planted next to waterways or field ditches, and **watercourse access control areas** adjacent to pastures.

Here's how the program works:

- Payment rates range from \$500/acre for an existing grass buffer to a maximum of \$4,500/acre to install a riparian forest buffer with pasture fencing.
- Mowing and hay harvesting are allowed; nutrient applications are not.
- An extra one-time bonus payment is offered for enrolled forest buffers.
- Annual maintenance payments are available for forest buffers during the first five years.
- Contracts are for 5 or 10 years.
- All work must be completed by June 30, 2024

### Easy Sign-up

- Applications can be mailed or emailed.
- Applications accepted through March 10, 2023

For more information and to complete an application, visit:

[mda.maryland.gov/resource\\_conservation/pages/conservation-buffer-initiative.aspx](https://mda.maryland.gov/resource_conservation/pages/conservation-buffer-initiative.aspx)

Funding for Maryland's Conservation Buffer Initiative is provided by the Chesapeake and Atlantic Coastal Bays Trust Fund and the Environmental Protection Agency.

## 2023 Conservation Buffer Payment Options

Practice Name	Adjacent Land Use	Payment (New or Improved)	Payment (Existing)	Agreement Term (Years)
<b>Watercourse Access Control</b> Narrow Grass Buffer 10 ft – 34 ft wide	Pasture	\$1,500/acre	none	5
<b>Watercourse Access Control</b> Grass Buffer 35 ft – 100 ft wide	Pasture	\$2,500/acre	none	5
<b>*Watercourse Access Control</b> Forest Buffer: 35 ft – 100 ft wide	Pasture	\$4,500/acre + 1,000/acre bonus	none	10
<b>Grass Buffer on Watercourse</b> Narrow Buffer: 10 ft – 34 ft wide	Cropland	\$1,000/acre	\$500/acre	5
<b>Grass Buffer on Watercourse</b> 35 ft – 100 ft wide	Cropland	\$2,000/acre	\$500/acre	5
<b>*Forest Buffer on Watercourse</b> 35 ft – 100 ft wide	Cropland	\$4,000/acre + 1,000/acre bonus	none	10

**\*OPTIONAL Annual Maintenance Payment for Forest Buffers:** \$330/acre/year for five years

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## MDA's Healthy Soils Competitive Fund

*Applications Accepted Through March 3, 2023*

The Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) is accepting applications for its new Healthy Soils Competitive Fund until March 3rd, 2023. If you have an innovative conservation idea for your farm, this program is for you! It provides financial assistance to qualifying farmers who adopt conservation practices that provide soil, water, and climate benefits. Its aim is to support farmers and operators who are ineligible for other programs.

This competitive grant program awards selected applicants with up to \$50,000 to support 3 years of enhanced healthy soil practices. Individual producers and organizations that want to take the next step to improve soil health may apply.

Grant recipients will be announced by April 30th, 2023

Financial assistance is available to manage conservation practices in new and innovative ways that improve soil health,

yield, and profitability and capture carbon.

Please note:

- There are no minimum or maximum acreage requirements.
- Grant recipients will receive 20% of the funds upfront, with the remainder distributed annually upon verification of progress.
- Funds may be used to purchase or rent equipment that supports the adoption of soil health practices.

For more information, including eligible practices, visit: [mda.maryland.gov/resource\\_conservation/Pages/Soil-Health.aspx](http://mda.maryland.gov/resource_conservation/Pages/Soil-Health.aspx)

*Funding for this program is provided by the Chesapeake and Atlantic Coastal Bays Trust Fund.*

## MDA Nutrient Management Annual Implementation Reports

Annual Implementation Reports (AIRs) documenting nutrient applications for **Calendar Year 2022** are due to the Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) Nutrient Management Program by **March 1, 2023**. For details on how to complete & submit the AIR visit: [mda.maryland.gov/resource\\_conservation/Pages/air.aspx](http://mda.maryland.gov/resource_conservation/Pages/air.aspx)

## Howard County's New Ag Agent

Nathan Glenn is excited to serve Howard County as a University of Maryland Extension Educator for the Agriculture and Food Systems program. Nathan holds a BS degree in Animal Science and Secondary Education; as well as a MBA degree specializing in New Business Development. He worked as an Agriculture Educator and FFA advisor at the High School level before developing and implementing educational and economic development initiatives with farmers in Liberia, West Africa. Nathan's love for agriculture developed on his family's farm in Howard County where they raised sheep, cattle and chickens. He is passionate about strengthening the local agriculture industry by empowering farmers and helping them to get connected to their consumers.

## Howard County Mid-Winter Ag Meeting

The Howard Soil Conservation District, Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA), University of Maryland Extension, and USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service will sponsor the annual Howard County Mid-Winter Ag Meeting on Tuesday, March 14th, 6:00 PM - 9:00 PM. Registration and a light meal will be at 6:00 PM, with the meeting beginning at 6:30 PM. Topics include Mental Health, Urban Ag Grants, Soil Lime Requirement Test Methods, Soil Health, and a Nutrient Management Update.

This year's meeting will be held in-person at the Howard County Fairgrounds in the Annex Building, as well as have a virtual option for attending. There is no cost but attendees

should pre-register by Friday, 3/10/23. A link, for those attending virtually, will be sent the morning of the meeting. If you are unable to attend please pre-register and you will receive a link to the recording. Call the Howard Soil Conservation District, 410.313.0680, or email [kmccormick@howardcountymd.gov](mailto:kmccormick@howardcountymd.gov), to pre-register or with any questions.

Nathan Glenn, Howard County's new Ag Extension Agent will be at the meeting. Be sure to join us, and introduce yourself to Nathan.

# HOWARD SCD 2022 ANNUAL REPORT

## Cooperator of the Year

Howard SCD recognized the Franciscan Fathers of the Shrine of St Anthony, as the Cooperator of the Year. This year's award was a little different than past years in that the District recognized a landowner who has been very accommodating in allowing conservation practices to be implemented on their property.

The Franciscan Fathers own about 230 acres of farmland, located in Ellicott City, MD, that is predominantly farmed by the Cunningham Family. Attempting to implement conservation practices on rented land can present a variety of challenges for farmers—short lease periods or uncertainty of future access, landowner skepticism about participating in long-term programs, conflicting opinions among property family members, etc. However, the Franciscan Fathers have worked with Howard SCD, in cooperation with the Cunningham Family, to establish a variety of conservation practices. Some of the practices they have implemented include fencing off streams and wetlands, installing watering troughs and heavy use areas, constructing trails and walkways, planting cover crops, and establishing a rotational grazing system.

On top of all these conservation practices the landowners also established a small scale vegetable operation which has grown, harvested and donated over 23,000 pounds of produce to those in need.

## Cover Crops

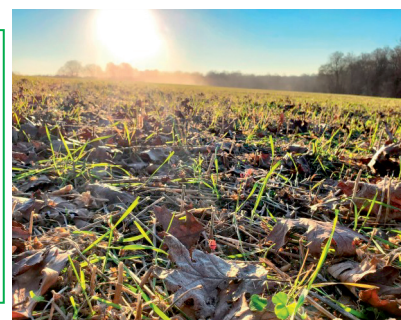
3687 acres of cover crops were planted in Howard County under Maryland Department of Agriculture's (MDA) Cover Crop Program. This does not include the many acres that farmers planted on their own, without cost-share.

Of those acres planted through MDA's cost-share program about 1/3 were planted to a multi-species mix. These plantings hold nutrients over winter, and the diversity plays an important role in soil health.

Right: When doing ground aerial, the applicator follows the tracks left by the sprayer earlier in the season so as not to damage the standing crops.



Right: Another example of using ground aerial to plant cover crops while soybeans are still in the field. This planting option allows for cover crops to be planted behind double-crop soybeans in a timely manner.



Right: A beautiful stand of cover crop. Cover crops take up, and hold, nutrients over winter. This prevents nutrients from entering waterways. When the cover crops are terminated the nutrients are released back into the soil for the next crop.



Left: This soybean field was planted to cover crop, using ground aerial, in late September. The picture is just 2 months later, during harvest. As the combine is taking off the soybeans, cover crop is already established.

## YEAR AT A GLANCE

**Soil Conservation and Water Quality Plans (SCWQPs)** - Developed/updated 45 SCWQPs to help farmers protect natural resources on 5418 acres. Currently, there are 19,728.4 planned acres in the county.

**Best Management Practices (BMPs)** - Worked with 23 farmers to install 48 BMPs to protect natural resources on farmland.

**Cover Crops** - Provided assistance to 12 farmers. 3687 acres of cover crops were planted in Howard County.

**Erosion and Sediment Control** - Reviewed 861 erosion and sediment control plans for construction projects, protecting 1669 acres of land.

**Education Outreach** - Mid-Winter Ag Meeting for farmers; supported HCPSS initiatives; Howard County Fall Farm and Conservation Tour for Elected Officials were among the many outreach events in 2022.



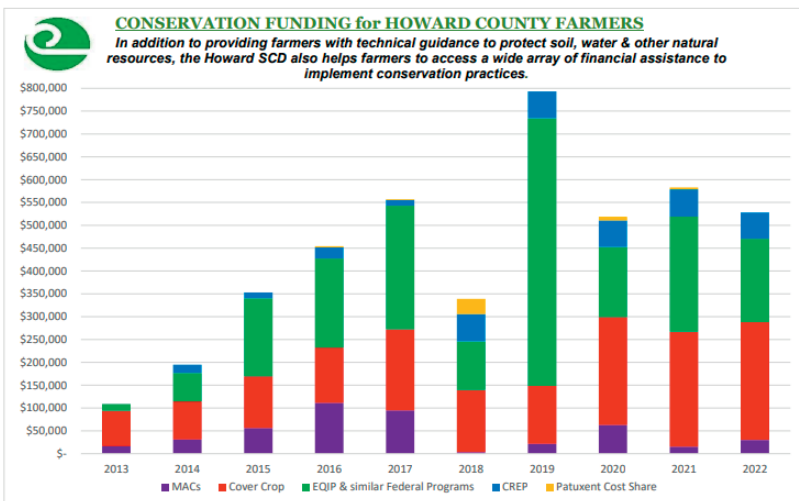
## Conservation Efforts

<u>Conservation Practice</u>	<u>Amount</u>
Addition of Fruit-Producing Trees and Shrubs to Existing Plantings	0.1 ac
Establish Pollinator or Beneficial Insect Habitat	2.2 ac
Leave Standing Grain Crops Unharvested to Benefit Wildlife	307.8 ac
Measures That Allow Desired Species to Flush or Escape	276.4 ac
Plant Communities Consistent With the Ecological Site	1.5 ac
Utilization of Precision Pesticide Application Techniques	854.6 ac



Left: A constructed grassed waterway, before grass is established. Notice the parabolic shape of the waterway to carry the water from a storm. Note the erosion control measures including matting down the middle and straw mulch along the sides, as well as the sediment control fencing.

Maryland Agricultural Cost-Share (MACS)	\$30,000
MDA Cover Crop Program	\$258,069
Federal Funding	\$182,554
Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)	\$57,676
Total 2022 Funding for Howard County Farmers	\$528,299

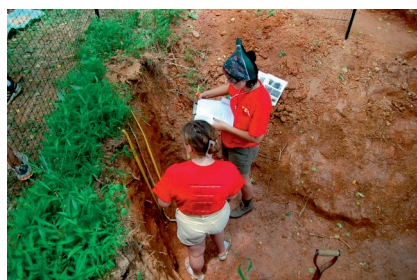




# HOWARD SCD 2022 ANNUAL REPORT

## Education Outreach

Howard SCD had the opportunity to participate in several outreach and community events including: Howard County Elementary School STEM events, HCPSS's Our Environment in Our Hands, High School Career Days, Envirothon, Farmer Brown's Summer Camp, Howard County Community College Sustainability Event, Howard County GreenFest, Robinson Nature Center Open House, and Howard County Fair. It was a busy year for outreach. Educating is something we love to do, in addition to our conservation work.

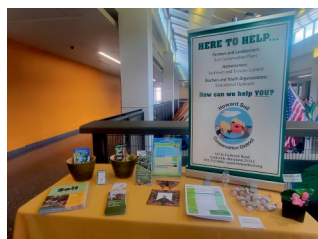


Top Left: Students in the soils pit at Maryland Envirothon, which was hosted in Howard County this year, at the University of Maryland Central Maryland Research & Education Center - Clarksville.



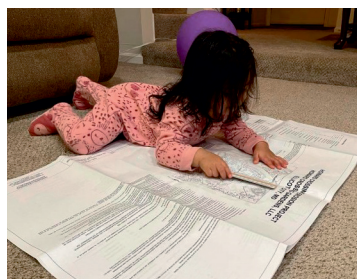
Top Right: Helping students at HCPSS Our Environment in Our Hands' 4th grade program.

Right: Display at Howard County GreenFest.



## Erosion and Sediment Control

861 erosion and sediment control plans were reviewed, impacting 1,669 acres of land.



Never too young to teach them about erosion and sediment control, and just how important soil is.

*"The nation that destroys its soil destroys itself."*

*-Franklin D. Roosevelt*



Above: An educational display, to plant seeds even during the break of our Mid-Winter Ag Meeting.

Below: Attendees listen to a speaker at our 2022 Howard County Mid-Winter Ag Meeting. A diverse lineup of topics and speakers were brought to the agricultural community.



Above: County Councilman David Yungmann (far left) and Howard County Executive Calvin Ball (fourth from right) pictured with (left to right) Barry Burch (Maryland Envirothon Steering Committee Chair), Melissa Bell (Wilde Lake High School Envirothon team advisor), Cristina Wilcox (Wilde Lake High School Envirothon team member), Jacob Niv (Wilde Lake High School Envirothon team member), Andrew Heffner (Wilde Lake High School Envirothon team member), and David Plummer (Howard SCD District Manager) at the 2022 Maryland Envirothon.





## Howard County Fall Farm & Conservation Tour

The Fall Farm and Conservation Tour provides an opportunity for elected officials to visit working farms in Howard County, expanding their understanding about the challenges and opportunities farmers experience. The Farm Tour is organized by Howard Soil Conservation District, Howard County Economic Development Authority, and Howard County Farm Bureau. The goal of the Farm Tour is to give policy makers a chance to meet with farmers and discuss important facets of their operations in a hands-on environment. Elected officials that attend the event are often amazed by the complexity and diversity of the agricultural operations in Howard County. They also get a chance to see many conservation practices that farmers implement to protect local water quality and the Chesapeake Bay.

It was clear that our Howard County elected officials care about the agricultural community and are interested in learning about the challenges that farmers face. Four out of the five Councilmembers attended the Fall Farm and Conservation Tour. Also in attendance were staff members of the Howard County Delegation to the General Assembly.

The 2022 Fall Farm and Conservation Tour, held October 20th, started at Myrtle Woods Farm in Elkridge. Myrtle Woods Farm is a small urban operation that focuses on



Cathy Hudson (left), one of the owners of Myrtle Woods, explains the farm's management practices to Deb Jung, County Council, District 4.

community agriculture and growing food locally, sustainably, and in an environmentally friendly manner. Owners Ryan and Bill Rogers and Cathy Hudson employ principles of organic farming, and sell the majority of their produce to local restaurants.

During the tour, Cathy Hudson reviewed some of their farming techniques and explained how they produce food in a sustainable manner. The farm uses several high tunnels to extend their growing seasons. She also discussed some of the challenges they have faced as the area around them has developed.

The next stop on the tour was Blue Gables Farm, a small and relatively new flower growing operation in Clarksville. Owners Frank and Sessy Hazzard have only been operating for a couple of years, but they have already learned a great deal about the local cut-flower industry. They shared some of their challenges, including the difficulty that local growers have in competing with flowers imported from warmer cli-



Attendees of the Fall Farm & Conservation Tour are guided through the flowers at Blue Gables Farm.

mates, especially South America and California. They also informed the elected officials about the biggest impact to their flower production operation... DEER! They have tried a variety of fencing and other tactics to keep the deer away from their operation, but like most farmers in the county they have realized it is a constant battle to save their crops from the ravaging deer population!

For lunch the group was hosted at Triadelphia Lake View Farm, a diversified traditional farm operation providing Christmas trees, vegetables, meats, and a variety of agritainment activities. Owner Jamie Brown discussed how the operation has changed over the 100 years the farm has been in his family. The property started as a dairy farm in the late 1800's and began transitioning to growing vegetables, Christmas trees and providing a farmers market around 1985.

The focus now is on providing locally grown food and creating opportunities for families to have a fun experience on the farm.



Jamie Brown, Triadelphia Lake View Farm, shares conservation concerns he previously had, and how the concerns were addressed, with the help of HSCD.



David Yungmann, District 5 and Liz Walsh, District 1 play a game of pumpkin checkers after lunch, while Deb Jung, District 4 oversees the fun.

Mr. Brown hosts Farmer Brown Camps in the summer to provide students with an opportunity to see how food is grown and to learn what is involved in farming. He also participates in several local farmer's markets and offers a Community Supported Agriculture opera-

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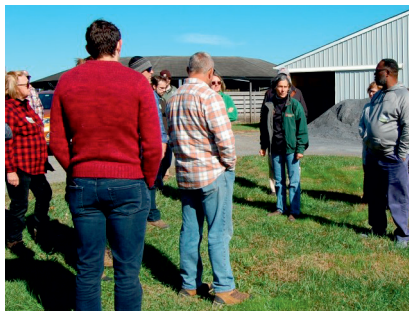
## Howard County Fall Farm & Conservation Tour (Continued)

tion, where the public can purchase a share of the food the farm produces throughout the season. The visit concluded with elected officials enjoying a hay wagon ride around the farm to see some of the conservation practices installed on the property to protect soil and water resources.

The final stop of the day was to Chanceland Farm, a thoroughbred boarding and training facility in West Friendship. The owner of Chanceland Farm, Katherine Voss, guided participants on a tour of the facilities, grounds, and conservation practices. At 191 acres, Chanceland is the largest thoroughbred boarding and training facility in Howard County.



Attendees taking in the beautiful weather and scenery, all while learning more about Howard County's farms and farmers.



Katherine Voss (second from right), Chanceland Farm, speaks to tour attendees about the farm's operation.

The farm offers a variety of rehabilitation opportunities for horses recovering from injury or surgery, including a 5-furlong outdoor track and swimming pond equipment. Ms. Voss worked with the Howard Soil Conservation District to install watering troughs and over 1600 feet of stream fencing to limit access to a small tributary of the Middle Patuxent River. Farmers throughout Howard County install similar conservation practices to protect local streams and the Chesapeake Bay.

The Fall Farm and Conservation Tour was a great opportunity to connect elected officials with their local farmers and to help our representatives understand how the policies they legislate can have a profound impact on family farms. From a small cut flower operation to the largest thoroughbred operation in the county, participants got a chance to experience a broad spectrum of agriculture in Howard County.

## Maryland's New State Conservationist

Suzy Daubert recently started as the new NRCS State Conservationist for USDA in Maryland. She brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to this leadership position.

Born and raised in Maryland, Suzy began her career with NRCS as a part-time employee, mapping soils while earning her Bachelor of Science in Natural Resource Management/Soils from the University of Maryland College Park. After graduation, she worked for a geo-tech engineering firm and the University of Maryland running a soils lab. Suzy Daubert joined NRCS full-time as an intern in Wyoming and Maine, eventually transitioning to a permanent soil conservationist position. She served as a District Conservationist for nearly

10 years in New York and Florida. In 2019, she became the NRCS Assistant State Conservationist for Field Operations in Beckley, West Virginia. Having worked for NRCS for 21 years, she joins us from Reno, Nevada where she was serving as the Acting State Conservationist.

Her heart is in the field, with conservation, partnerships, and the customers we serve.



Suzy Daubert, Maryland's new NRCS State Conservationist.

## MDA 2022-2023 Cover Crop Program Update

Reminders concerning spring certification for the 2022-23 MDA Cover Crop Cost-Share Program ...

Termination may begin **March 1, 2023**. For those who requested the delayed termination incentive, and for those who did late planting, these acres cannot be terminated prior to **May 1, 2023**.

Options for end of winter management include green chopping (for on-farm use only), plowing under, or killing by using a burn-down herbicide. Grazing of a cover crop does not qualify as an acceptable spring termination method.

Within two weeks of termination of the cover crop, but **no later than June 2, 2023**, you must certify to the SCD that the cover crop has been destroyed.

If you are interested in participating in the 2023-24 MDA Cover Crop Program look for information in mid-late spring. If you would like to be added to the HSCD's cover crop contact list please contact Kristal McCormick, 410.313.0680 or [kmccormick@howardcountymd.gov](mailto:kmccormick@howardcountymd.gov)



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**HOWARD SOIL  
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