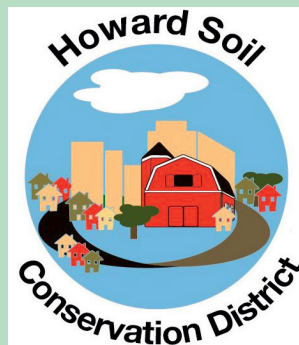


Howard Soil
Conservation District
14735 Frederick Road
Cooksville, MD 21723
410.313.0680
www.howardscd.org

Conservation Matters



MARCH 2021

While the Howard Soil Conservation District office continues to be closed to the public the District continues to serve and support the community. If you have questions or need assistance please do not hesitate to contact us, 410.313.0680.

CALENDAR

March 1: MDA Nutrient Management Annual Implementation Report (AIR) due

March 16: Howard County Mid-Winter Ag Meeting (Virtual)

April 2: Office Closed in Observance of Good Friday

May 31: Office Closed in Observance of Memorial Day

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

MDA Cover Crop Program: see page 3 for important dates

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Follow us on social media.

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servationDistrict



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HowardSCD

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The Truth About ROUNDUP

Under the title of “food comes from the grocery store”, politicians in Annapolis have once again proposed a ban on Glyphosate, the active ingredient in the herbicide RoundUp. It is not clear if our elected officials don’t understand the science behind weed control, are disproportionately influenced by special interest groups, or if they just don’t really care about family farms. Whatever the reason, it seems that farmers are constantly under assault by politicians looking to outlaw, restrict, or over-regulate something they barely understand, often to cater to special interest groups.

Let’s clear the air about glyphosate. There is probably no herbicide that has been researched more than glyphosate. Since 1974, in trial after trial by government agencies, universities and organizations all across the globe, it has been approved for use without causing demonstrable hazards to humans or the environment. “In January 2020 the Environmental Protection Agency released an interim decision for registration review for glyphosate. As part of this review EPA continues to find that there are no risks of concern to human health when glyphosate is used in accordance with its current label and it is unlikely to be a human carcinogen”. (www.epa.gov/ingredients-used-pesticide-products/glyphosate#actions). In fact, one of the few studies to ever find “limited evidence” that glyphosate is “probably carcinogenic to humans” was a 2015 assessment by a division of the World Health Organization known as the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC). Interestingly, other divisions of the WHO have concluded just the opposite. Also, it is enlightening to note other items that the IARC includes in their Group 2A of “Probable human carcinogens”, such as – red meat, coffee and very hot beverages, indoor emissions from burning wood, high-temperature frying, and late-night work shifts. And, if politicians in Annapolis REALLY want to address public health and not just pander to special interests, here are

some items that IARC places in an even stronger-evidenced category “Known human carcinogens” – processed meats, all alcoholic beverages, sunlight, engine exhaust, and outdoor air pollution. The science on the safety of glyphosate is unequivocal.

Glyphosate (RoundUp) is an effective tool for farmers, and an integral part of a variety of **conservation** measures, including pasture renovation, no-till farming and cover crops. Maryland farmers were pioneers of no-till farming in the late 1960s and early 1970s and are also national leaders in the use of cover crops. Both of these practices are integral to the Chesapeake Bay restoration, and both practices are made possible by glyphosate. Returning to plowing fields and the use of more aggressive herbicides to manage cover crops would undo decades of progress in the Bay clean-up effort.

Across the globe about 26% of people derive their livelihoods from agriculture (www.globalagriculture.org), yet in the U.S. only about 1.3% of our population are farmers. How can 1.3% of the population feed the other 98.7%, including politicians and their families? Through science, efficiency, innovation, ingenuity, hard work, sweat, sacrifice, determination, and a love of the land. Someday, when elected officials in the General Assembly come to the realization that all their voters and constituents eat food, and that all of that food is produced by the other “one percenters” (aka farmers), maybe they will start using their time to develop legislation to help farmers instead of trying to ruin them. Here’s a recommendation for the General Assembly – since beer and sunlight are greater “known” carcinogens, why don’t you propose a bill to ban summer, and leave decisions on glyphosate to the scientists and the farmers who grow your food.

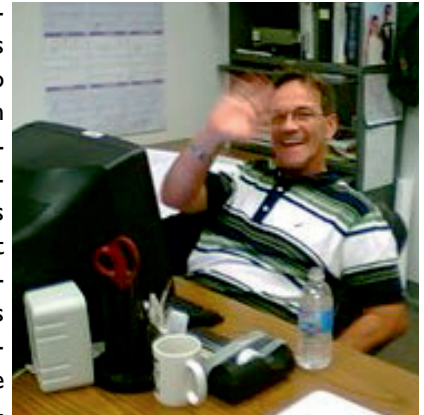
(Some details on IARC were derived from an Oregon State University publication)

Bob Says “Goodbye”

It's official. After 45 years in the conservation field, John Robert “Bob” Robertson retired on December 31, 2020 as one of the most skilled and seasoned experts in minimizing pollution from sediment runoff. His journey started with the Soil Conservation Service on Maryland's Eastern Shore in 1975, working on the public drainage system, then on to the Maryland Department of Agriculture in 1978 where he surveyed, designed and oversaw construction of multiple best management practices, and finally settled into urban plan review with the Howard Soil Conservation District in 1988. Since then, 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. Way to go, Bob! At any time during the ebb and flow of development, Bob has always maintained a consistent and rigorous pace of review, earning the respect of his peers in the development community, including developers, builders, engineers, reviewers, inspectors, and the citizens of Howard County. Anyone who knows Bob is keenly aware of his drive to assist, sharp wit, memory

for detail, and occasional humorous Eastern Shore quip passed down from his elders. His management, communication, and office skills enabled the district to traverse uncharted waters as it became more independent during the great recession, analyzing workload, developing a tracking and fee system, helping to establish payroll, and coordinate the District's 401K plan.

Bob will be sorely missed, but we will be forever grateful for his legacy of conservation and his service to the residents of Howard County. Congratulations Bob, enjoy those greener pastures!



“Each soil has had its own history. Like a river, a mountain, a forest, or any natural thing, its present condition is due to the influences of many things and events of the past.” - Charles Kellogg, The Soils That Support Us, 1956

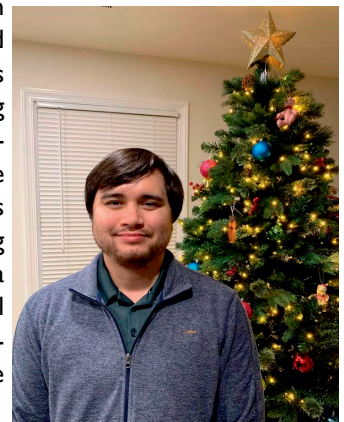
Alex Bratchie, New Engineering Specialist

We would like to introduce our new Engineering Specialist in urban plan review, Alex Bratchie, who started on October 27th. Alex grew up in Eldersburg, MD and now lives in Columbia, MD. After graduating from Liberty High School, he attended the University of Maryland, College Park, where he received a Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering with a minor in Project Management.

After graduation, he worked for a private engineering consulting firm in Baltimore, MD that specialized in the design of transportation infrastructure. Alex performed design and inspection work for government agencies throughout the mid-Atlantic, including the Maryland State Highway Administration, Maryland Transit Administration, Baltimore City Department of Transportation, and Virginia Department of Transportation. He worked on a wide variety of engineering tasks, including roadway design, traffic safety analysis, stormwater management design, and structural inspections. He

also served as a program manager for the Maryland Transportation Authority's environmental engineering division, where he was responsible for managing the repair of aging storm drains and culverts. While working full-time, he completed a Master of Science in Civil Engineering from the University of Washington, Seattle via distance learning.

Alex is newly licensed as a Professional Engineer in Maryland. In his spare time, he enjoys cooking, reading, and playing video games. Please help us welcome Alex to Howard County.



Howard SCD's Newest Associate Supervisor

Howard SCD would like to introduce to you our newest Associate Supervisor, Chuck Schuster.

Chuck Schuster is recently retired from the University of Maryland Extension. He earned a B.S. in Agriculture from the University of Maryland and an M.S. in Education from McDaniel College. Prior to coming to Extension work, Chuck taught high school vocational agriculture in Westminster, Maryland and farmed for twenty years raising cattle, field crops and vegetables. Chuck moved to Howard County in December of 2020. Chuck is still actively teaching, planning fishing and camping trips and spending time with his family. Please help us welcome Chuck to Howard SCD.



Chuck Schuster speaking at the Montgomery County Ag Leaders Luncheon (2019).

Associates are nonvoting, volunteer members of the District Board of Supervisors. They assist the district by contributing time, knowledge, and information helpful to developing and implementing our soil conservation and water quality programs and responsibilities. In addition, an associate supervisor gains valuable experience and may use their tenure as a training opportunity for the position of district supervisor in the future.

If you are a Howard County resident, interested in soil conservation, water quality, and related natural resource management issues and would like to learn more about serving as an Associate Supervisor, we invite you to contact us at 410.313.0680.

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 16th, 6:30 PM - 9:00 PM. Topics include Grazing Management Strategies to Maximize Forage Quality and Yield; An Introduction to Soil Water Holding, Storage, and Movement; Sulfur on Soybeans: Learning the When and the Why; and Measuring and Managing Soil Acidity in the Mid-Atlantic.

The meeting will be held via Zoom, and will be recorded for those unable to attend. There is no cost but attendees should pre-register by 3/15/21 to receive the link in time for the meeting. Call the Howard Soil Conservation District, 410.313.0680, or email kmccormick@howardcountymd.gov, to pre-register or with any questions.

***"The soil is the great connector of lives, the source and destination of all. It is the healer and restorer and resurrector, by which disease passes into health, age into youth, death into life."** - Wendell Berry, The Unsettling of America: Culture & Agriculture*

MDA Cover Crop Cost-Share Program



Reminders concerning spring certification for the 2020-21 Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) Cover Crop Cost-Share Program ...

Termination may begin **March 1, 2021**. For those who requested the delayed termination incentive you must notify the SCD by **April 15, 2021** which acres you intend to declare for this incentive. The SCD, MACS, or MDA representative shall conduct a spot check to determine eligibility. These acres cannot be terminated prior to **May 1, 2021**. Once these acres have been spot checked for eligibility you will be notified. Those acres may then be terminated.

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 after kill-down or suppression of the cover crop, but **no later than June 3, 2021**, you must certify to the SCD that the cover crop has been suppressed or killed down.

If you are interested in participating in the 2021-22 MDA Cover Crop Program look for information in mid-late spring. If you would like to be added to the HSCD's contact list please contact Kristal McCormick, 410.313.0680. or kmccormick@howardcountymd.gov

HOWARD SCD 2020 ANNUAL REPORT

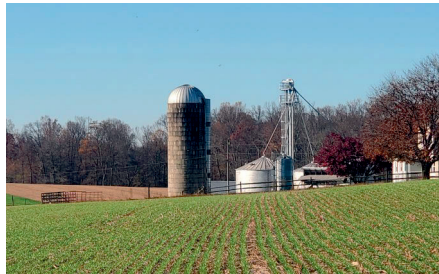
Conservation Efforts

The conservation practices installed by farmers are part of the broader multi-state effort to restore the water quality of the Chesapeake Bay. Each county in Maryland has a Watershed Implementation Plan (WIP) which tracks the nutrient reduction progress being made by the agricultural sector.

Howard County farmers implemented a variety of best management practices this year to improve water quality:

New Conservation Plans (25) 3,586.9 acres
Revised Conservation Plans (7) 829.1 acres

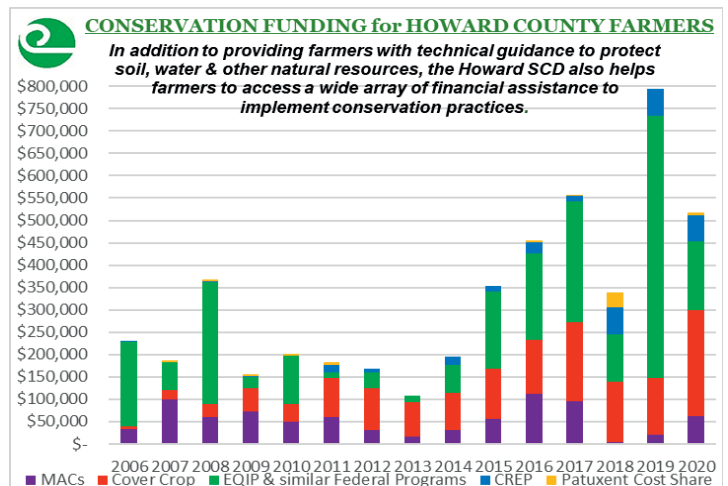
<u>Best Management Practice</u>	<u>Amount (#)</u>
Access Road	80 l.f. (1)
Animal Trails & Walkways	37,487 l.f. (3)
Brush Management	16.5 acre (2)
Conservation Crop Rotation	114.9 acre (6)
Critical Area Planting	0.4 acre (3)
Diversion	420 l.f. (1)
Fence: Non-streamside	2,573 l.f. (1)
Fence: Streamside	1,811 l.f. (2)
Grassed Waterway	1.2 acre (2)
Heavy Use Area Protection	0.2 acre (2)
High Tunnel	2,200 sq.ft. (1)
Mulch	0.5 acre (4)
Pasture & Hay Planting	64.4 acre (3)
Pipeline: Irrigation	354 l.f. (1)
Pipeline: Livestock	14,687 l.f. (1)
Prescribed Grazing	65.3 acre (3)
Sediment Control Pond	2 each
Shallow Water Impoundment	1 each
Stream Crossing	2 each
Subsurface Drainage	1,000 l.f. (1)
Watering Facility	3 each
Waste Storage Facility	1 each
Water Well (Livestock)	1 each



Above: Happy customers.
Left top: Cover crop planting.
Left bottom: Ford stream crossing for horses.
Below: An established grassed waterway.

Federal, State and Local Funding allocated for Howard County Farmers through various programs administered by the District in 2020:

Maryland Agricultural Cost-Share (MACS)	\$62,986.00
MDA Cover Crop	\$236,220.00
Federal Funding	\$153,341.00
Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)	\$58,180.00
Patuxent Reservoir Cost-Share	\$8,012.00
Total 2020 Funding for Howard County Farmers	\$518,739.00



HOWARD SCD 2020 ANNUAL REPORT

Erosion & Sediment Control

The District reviewed 628 erosion and sediment control plans for construction projects, protecting 1,574 acres of land.

Cover Crop

Provided assistance to 15 farmers. About 3,937 acres of cover crops were planted in Howard County.

Education & Community Support Efforts

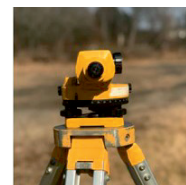
Howard County Mid-Winter Ag Meeting

Howard County Watershed Stewards

Judge for High School Capstone Projects

High School FFA Class: How to Work a Transit

High School FFA Class: Shallow Water Impoundment Virtual Tour



A transit being used in the field.



Above: Randy Marriner explains the brewing process.



Above: Lori and Bob Baker share their experience growing tea plants in Maryland.

Fall Farm and Conservation Tour

The Fall Farm and Conservation Tour, organized by Howard SCD, Howard County Economic Development Authority, and Howard County Farm Bureau, provided Council members, their staff and a local Senator with an opportunity to learn more about Howard County agriculture and conservation efforts. The focus of the Farm Tour was to get elected officials onto farms so they could experience firsthand the conservation efforts and unique operations in Howard County.



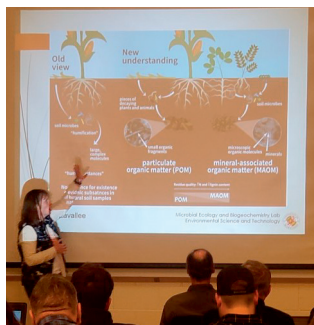
Left: Justin Brendel, Howard SCD Chairman and farmer, welcomes everyone.

Right: Attendees observe the pond restoration in progress at Frank's Produce and Greenhouse Farm.



2020 Howard County Mid-Winter Ag Meeting

The Howard County Mid-Winter Ag Meeting was held Wednesday, March 11th at the Gary J. Arthur Community Center at Glenwood. Topics included Nutrient Cycling, Storage and Soil Microbiology, Perspective on Soil Health and Implications for Agricultural Soil Assessment, Spraying and Drift: Effect on Sensitive Crops and Pollinators, and a Nutrient Management update from Maryland Department of Agriculture. More than 40 people were in attendance, and were eligible to receive two continuing ed credits for MDA's Nutrient Management Certification.



2020—A Crazy Year!

As for many, 2020 and the pandemic brought about major changes for our community. The Howard Soil Conservation District office closed to the public, as per guidance from Howard County. Staff continued to provide assistance to farmers, landowners and engineers to the best of their abilities, while following health and safety protocols. While we strived to keep things the same as much as possible there were many changes outside of our control including education outreach and community events, which decreased dramatically.

Riparian Buffers

Trees, shrubs or grasses planted next to waterways filter runoff, improve water quality, protect against erosion and provide wildlife habitat.

DESCRIPTION

Vegetative buffers slow or intercept water flow, trapping sediment and other pollutants such as pesticides and nutrients. Trees and shrubs planted along a waterway (including rivers, streams and drainage ditches) provide wildlife habitat and reduce stream temperatures, providing aquatic benefits. They also deposit leaves, twigs and branches in water, providing structure for aquatic life and a valuable food source.

BENEFITS

- Buffers prevent contaminants from entering waterways and provide shade, food, and habitat for wildlife, fish and other aquatic life.
- Buffers help stabilize streams, by holding streambanks in place and slowing floodwaters.
- Trees and shrubs sequester additional carbon from the atmosphere and create a forest floor that absorbs excess water and nutrients like a sponge.

PLANNING/CONSIDERATIONS

- Are adequate soil conservation measures installed upslope of the buffer?
- Will fencing be needed to exclude livestock from buffers?
- What types of plants are suitable for site conditions?
- How wide should the buffer be to meet objectives?

TECHNICAL NOTES

- Work with your local SCD to select plants for the buffer and determine its width.
- Prepare the site to ensure the survival and growth of selected species.
- Treat any existing or potential weed problems prior to planting. This may take a year to accomplish. Consult with a weed specialist.
- Use tree shelters to increase the survival rate of young trees.



MAINTENANCE

- Delay mowing grass areas until after August 15 to protect nesting birds and mammals.
- Troubleshoot survival problems before replanting; replace dead trees and shrubs as needed.
- Remove tree shelters two - four years after trees emerge, once they have hardened to the wind.
- Control weeds and other undesirable vegetative competition.
- Repair fences and check for damage to livestock crossings.

Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program

The Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) is a federal-state partnership that pays top dollar to landowners who agree to take environmentally sensitive cropland out of production for 10 to 15 years and plant streamside buffers, establish wetlands, protect highly erodible lands or create wildlife habitat while providing steady, dependable land rental income. This completely voluntary program offers a one time signing bonus of up to \$250 an acre, attractive annual rental and incentive payments, cost-share assistance for streamside buffers, wetlands, livestock fencing and more. These buffers meet all Maryland Nutrient Management Program setback requirements.

For additional information please visit: https://mda.maryland.gov/resource_conservation/Documents/CREP%20Brochure.pdf

If interested in enrolling in CREP please contact Howard SCD, 410.313.0680

Benefits of MARYLAND CREP:

- Attractive, steady rental income
- One-time signing bonus of up to \$250/ac
- Up to 87.5% cost-share for most practices
- Maintenance payments
- Easy re-enrollment of expiring contracts
- Permanent easement option

Plus

- Cleaner, healthier waterways
- Erosion and flood control
- Healthier conditions for livestock
- Habitat for wildlife, fish and game

Rhodes Pond Restoration

The Howard Soil Conservation District offers a variety of assistance to our cooperators in the agricultural community, including technical guidance with conservation practices and access to funding assistance through cost share programs. One project which has been in demand by farmers recently is the repair and restoration of farm ponds.

Howard SCD recently assisted the Rhodes family, Frank's Produce and Greenhouse Farm, who purchased a 90-acre farm off route 32 in Sykesville. With their current produce stand in Elkridge, they knew that they needed more acreage to expand their operation and to grow more of the produce they sell at the stand. Shortly after buying the property, Mr. Rhodes contacted Howard SCD to discuss some management and conservation goals for the site.

One of the first steps the Soil Conservation District takes is to work with the landowner to develop a Soil Conservation and Water Quality Plan that meets the owner's objectives for their operation. The Rhodes family was interested in repairing the current pond that was built in the 1970's. The old stand pipe had failed, and water had breached the dam.

With technical assistance from Howard SCD and funding assistance from the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), a federal cost-share program, the Rhodes family was able to restore and repair the pond. The project took a year to design and several months to construct. It included removing the sediment that had filled up the pond over the last 50 years and reconstructing the dam and emergency spillway. While the pond still serves first and foremost as a sediment trap, it also provides the Rhodes family with a reliable water source for irrigating their crops.

The Rhodes' have been very happy with their collaboration with the District and look forward to future opportunities to partner on conservation projects.

Right: Panoramic view of the project during construction.

Below: The pond restoration completed.



Above: A great blue heron visits the pond during construction.

Upcoming Events

How to Write a Nutrient Management Plan

The Maryland Department of Agriculture and the University of Maryland Extension will host an online training event **March 8 through March 12** on how to write a nutrient management plan using the Nu-Man Pro nutrient management planning software. The workshop awards six (6) continuing education credits to newly certified consultants.

<https://extension.umd.edu/events/mon-2021-03-08-1300-how-write-nutrient-management-plan-session-2-2021-online-multi-day-series>

Pond Management Basics

Webinar Hosted by University of Maryland Extension

March 17 · 12:00-12:45 PM

The basics of pond ecology and water quality will be presented with the goal of providing pond owners an understanding of the pond ecosystem and practices to help maintain good water quality. In addition, strategies for managing ponds for varied uses, e.g. fishing, swimming, and irrigation will be covered.

<https://extension.umd.edu/events/wed-2021-03-17-1200-pond-management-basics>

Upgrading to Best Available Technology (BAT) Septic System

Webinar Hosted by University of Maryland Extension

May 19 · 12:00-12:45 PM

Advanced nitrogen reduction technologies provide significant improvements in onsite wastewater treatment compared to a traditional septic tank. This webinar will present how the systems work, operation and their care, and will describe Maryland's Bay Restoration Fund grant program supporting upgrading to the technology.

<https://extension.umd.edu/events/wed-2021-05-19-1200-upgrading-best-available-technology-bat-septic-system>



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**HOWARD SOIL
CONSERVATION
DISTRICT**

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