

# AGRICULTURAL CONSERVATION NEWS

A PUBLICATION OF THE BALTIMORE COUNTY SOIL CONSERVATION DISTRICT

410-666-1188, EXTENSION 3

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## 2007 DISTRICT COOPERATOR OF THE YEAR MORRIS' CHOICE BISON RANCH

The Baltimore County Soil Conservation District announced its choice for the District Cooperator of the Year 2007 as the Morris' Choice Bison Ranch, operated by Robert, Carol and Josh Morris. Starting with a few bison 10 years ago, the Morris' now manage 85 head of bison on their 270 acre ranch, located in Freeland, MD.

Robert and Carol contacted the District in May 2006 and requested their

assistance in developing and implementing a conservation plan for their property. The first problem was to protect a spring in one pasture that was being trampled by the bison, creating a muddy, unstable condition. The conservation practice to solve that problem is called a spring development which pipes the flow from the spring into three watering troughs. The bison now have access to clean water in a dry area that protects the pasture from concentrated hoof traffic.

The Morris' were also interested in improving their 40 acres of pasture. Good pasture management involves rotational grazing by fencing small areas and moving the herd to a new area before it is overgrazed, allowing the grass stand to recover and protecting the soil from erosion. The pastures were reseeded with warm season grasses including big bluestem, little bluestem, Indian



From left to right—Tim Clippinger, NRCS District Conservationist, Robert Morris, Josh Morris and Jim Ensor, District Manager

*Photo by Charles Conklin*

grass and switchgrass. Warm season grasses do better in Maryland's hot summers than conventional cool season grasses such as fescues.

An additional water well was drilled and the conservation plan calls for more watering facilities that will be pressure fed from the well.

According to Tim Clippinger, District Conserva-

tionist with the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service, the Morris' were selected because of "exemplary cooperation and willingness to work with the District to install best management practices to improve water quality and management on the ranch."

"The Morris' provide an excellent example of landowners who understand that protecting their natural resources is not only good stewardship but also good farm management," said Charles Conklin, Chairman of the District Board of Supervisors.

By the way, there is no difference between bison and buffalo. Bison is the scientific name for the largest land mammal in North America which are ruminant animals in the bovine family, also known as buffalo.

# Protect Your Oak and Ash Trees – Two Deadly Pests

Trees protect our environment by improving air, soil and water quality, by providing habitat for wildlife, by storing carbon to help offset the effects of global warming and by moderating the climate around our homes in addition to our admiration for their majestic stature and the comforting effect they can provide for us. As one slogan goes, "the best time to plant a tree is twenty years ago. The second best time is now."

Both homeowners and forestland owners must provide proper care and maintenance of their trees to keep them healthy and protect them from deadly pests and diseases. Two serious threats to trees in Maryland are from infestations of gypsy moths and emerald ash borers.

## Gypsy Moths

The gypsy moth is by far the most destructive pest of forest and shade trees in Maryland. The caterpillars eat the leaves of oaks and other hardwoods in May and June. Heavy populations of caterpillars will eat most or all leaves in a tree. Large outbreaks have affected hundreds of thousands of acres statewide.

The gypsy moth caterpillar often is confused with the eastern tent caterpillar, which also appears each spring. (Though very visible with web-like tents, the eastern tent caterpillar is not as serious a threat to trees.) Heavily defoliated trees may re-leaf, but are still weakened, especially if defoliation occurs again the next year. Weakened trees are more vulnerable to other forest pests, diseases, drought and other stresses, and may die.

The critical time to suppress gypsy moths is when the caterpillars emerge from eggs in May and June. Spraying at this time is the best opportunity to control their spread. Trees that have suffered not only from pest attack, but also from drought, insuffi-



**Gypsy Moth**

cient nutrients may accumulate stress factors that seriously weaken them. Tree specialists may recommend deep root fertilization and other treatments that can help to strengthen them and build their resistance to pests.



**Emerald Ash Borer**

## Emerald Ash Borers

The emerald ash borer is a serious pest of quarantine significance. In August 2003, a Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) nursery inspector found emerald ash borer infested trees at a single Prince George's County nursery. The nursery unknowingly accepted 121 ash trees from a Michigan nurseryman who shipped the trees in violation of a quarantine in that state. There was adult emergence of the emerald ash borer from the ash trees shipped into Maryland. Through a cooperative effort involving federal, state and local officials, private contractors, public utilities, landowners, and business people, approximately 1,000 potentially infested ash trees were destroyed on 500 acres of public and private land around the site of the 2003 introduction. In 2006, some instances of damage by emerald ash borers outside the initial infected area have been confirmed by the USDA Systematic Entomology Laboratory in Beltsville, MD.

Adults are dark metallic green in color, 1/2 inch in length, and 1/16 inch wide, and are present only from mid-May until early August. They stay in the larval stage through winter, transform into adults next spring, then emerge from the tree, fly and mate. Larvae are creamy white in color and are found under the bark.

## Contact MDA

If you think you have a problem with gypsy moths, emerald ash borers or any other tree pests, contact the Maryland Department of Agriculture. MDA's Forest Pest Management Regional Northeast Office which covers Baltimore County can be contacted at 410-879-8034 or email [fpm@mda.state.md.us](mailto:fpm@mda.state.md.us). If the state suppression program will not be in effect in your area, private tree specialists can also eradicate these pests.

## Baltimore County Agricultural Center



Baltimore County is developing an Agricultural Resource Center and Farm Park on a 149-acre property located at 1114 Shawan Road, on the corner of Shawan and Cuba Roads. The Center will consolidate many of the support services for the agricultural community, promote the future sustainability of the agricultural industry, serve as an educational resource center and field destination for school children and adults, and provide open space benefits of walking and equestrian trail riding. The Center will be designed to look and feel like a farm from the architectural design of the buildings to the presence of field and livestock operations.

The planning process is well underway and public meetings conducted in October 2007 and January 2008 keep neighbors and interested citizens up to date on developments and to receive feedback and suggestions for all phases of the project. David Carroll, Director of the County Department of Environmental Protection and Resource Management (DEPRM), is overseeing the project and coordinates with a steering committee, whose membership represents the major stakeholders. A team of

consultants, led by the firm of Beyer Blinder Belle is developing the master plan for the property and includes specialists in planning, traffic, landscaping, civil and site engineering, agriculture, sustainable design and cost estimating. The master plan is still a work in progress and few major decisions have been made.

The master plan identifies four phases of development, but only the first phase has secured funding. The initial development includes building a facility to house the Soil Conservation District, the Cooperative Extension Office, USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service and USDA-Farm Services Agency. The Maryland Horse Breeders Association plans to fund and build its own facility. Existing structures may be relocated on the site and restored. Other organizations plan to utilize the Center including 4-H, Master Gardeners, Maryland Beekeepers Association and the Maryland Wineries Association.

### District Outreach

Speakers from the Baltimore County Soil Conservation District are available at no charge to give presentations on natural resource conservation programs in agricultural and urban areas. If your organization or school would like to hear about the ways that conservation practices can improve soil, water and air quality for any land use, contact the District office at 410-666-1188, extension 3 to request a speaking engagement.

### DO YOU HAVE A SMALL FARM IN THE PRETTYBOY WATERSHED?

- Operate with 7 or less animal units (1 animal unit = 1,000 lbs.)?
- Want free technical assistance to develop a conservation plan for your property?
- Could use cost-share funds up to 87 1/2 % of the installation cost of conservation practices (up to a maximum of \$5,000 per farm if applicable)?

Contact the District office at 410-666-1188, ext. 112 and make an appointment .

### 2008 District Board of Supervisors Meeting

#### Dates

January 15	February 19
March 18	April 15
May 20	June 17
July 15	August 19
September 16	October 21
November 18	December 16

All meetings start at 9:30 a.m.

**B**altimore County Soil Conservation District  
 9831 Van Buren Lane  
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 Phone: 410-666-1188; Fax: 410-666-0179  
<http://www.mascd.net/BCSCD>



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[essy.frey@md.nacdnet.net](mailto:essy.frey@md.nacdnet.net) .

**BALTIMORE COUNTY SOIL CONSERVATION DISTRICT**  
*A political subdivision of the State of Maryland, the Baltimore County Soil Conservation District was established in 1944. Its mission is to protect the natural resources of Baltimore County and assist landowners in implementing sound conservation measures. The District is managed by a Board of Supervisors, five appointed county residents who take an oath of office to serve their community. The staff is composed of federal, state and district employees.*

**BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**  
 Charles Conklin—Chairman  
 Thomas Reynolds—Vice Chairman  
 Loring Sparks—Treasurer  
 Vernon Foster  
 Stephen Smith  
 David Martin, Secretary, Cooperative Extension

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 Dianna Gutierrez

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 Jim Ensor, District Manager  
 Essy Frey, Administrative Assistant

**AGRICULTURAL**  
 Tim Clippinger, District Conservationist, NRCS  
 Ray Sufczynski, Soil Conservationist, NRCS  
 Andy Thomas, Soil Conservation Eng. Tech., MDA  
 Mike Scheffel ,Planner/Outreach Specialist, SCD  
 Jared Wagner, Soil Conservation Planner, MDA  
 Serafina Rayner, Technician, MDA

**URBAN**  
 Jeff West, Urban Conservationist  
 Quintin Cornwell, Urban Conservationist  
 David Bachman, Urban Conservationist  
 Fred Jones, Urban Conservationist

*All District services are offered on a nondiscriminatory basis, without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, marital status, or handicap.*

**LET US KNOW IF WE CAN HELP YOU!**

The Maryland Agricultural Cost-Share Program (MACS) will pay up to 87.5% of the installation cost of these practices for qualifying landowners:

Waste Storage       Grassed Waterway  
 Riparian Buffer       Winter Cover Crop  
 Diversion       Field Border  
 Heavy Use Area Protection       Filter Strip  
 Roof Runoff Mngt. System  
 Sediment Basin       Stream Fencing  
 Nutrient Mngt. Plan       Strip Cropping  
 Spring Development       Stream Crossing  
 Trough or Tank       Critical Area Planting

If you would like to see if you qualify or you'd like more information on these or other conservation practices, a conservation plan for your property or updating an old plan, mail or fax this form to us and we will contact you.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Phone # \_\_\_\_\_

Fax to: 410-666-0179 or mail to:

Baltimore County Soil Conservation District  
 9831 Van Buren Lane  
 Cockeysville, MD 21030