

AGRICULTURAL CONSERVATION NEWS

A PUBLICATION OF THE BALTIMORE COUNTY SOIL CONSERVATION DISTRICT

410-666-1188, EXTENSION 3

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VOLUME 10, ISSUE 2

APRIL 2008

A LOOK AT 2007 CONSERVATION ACCOMPLISHMENTS

2007 was an active and productive year for putting conservation on the ground. Soil conservation and water quality plans (SCWQPs) list the best management practices (BMPs) that need to be installed to solve all existing erosion and water quality problems on a farm.



To help landowners cover the cost of installing BMPs, soil conservation districts obtained \$20 million in federal

and state grants. The Maryland Agricultural Water Quality Cost-Share (MACS) Program provided \$13.1 million in state grants to install more than 2,100 projects across the state. Those projects control soil erosion and sediment and manage nutrients to protect water quality in streams, rivers and the Chesapeake Bay. Farmers provided \$1.4 million of their own money. The collective impact of MACS projects prevented an estimated 18,300 tons of sediment, 1,900 tons of manure, 2.7 million pounds of nitrogen and 149,000 pounds of phosphorus from entering Maryland waterways each year. Baltimore County completed 9 capital projects with \$91,600 in MACS funds and 12 cost-shared BMPs.

MACS also offered cost-sharing on winter cover crops. During the 2006/2007 planting season, MACS provided \$7.7 million in grants to plant a record 240,400 acres of cover crops, which included traditional cover crops and a "commodity cover crop" of

hullless barley, which could serve as a future feedstock for ethanol production. In Baltimore County, \$61,000 was provided to plant cover crops on 3,117 acres. MACS also reimburses farmers for the cost of developing nutrient management plans by consultants for a total of \$405,000 for 184,000 acres statewide and \$8,100 for 2,900 acres in Baltimore County.

In 1999, Maryland became the first state in the country to cost-share the transportation of excess manure from farms to other areas where it could be used as organic fertilizer and meet nutrient management

guidelines. In FY2007, 99,300 tons of manure was hauled at a cost of \$847,000, with MACS paying \$490,000 and major poultry companies paying the rest. Since the program began, a total of 357,000 tons of manure has been transported at a total cost of \$4.5 million.

The USDA Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) provided \$6.4 million in federal cost-share funds to Maryland farmers to protect 37,300 acres of cropland, forest land and grazing land and for capital projects such as animal waste storage facilities. The USDA Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP) provided another \$310,800 to create and improve habitat for wildlife on 1,100 acres. The USDA Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) provided \$277,400 to restore wetlands on 50 acres.

2007 Conservation Accomplishments

Area	Agricultural Program					Urban Program		
	New SCWQPs	New Acres Under Protection	Revised SCWQPs	Revised Acres Under Protection	Installed BMPs	Reviewed	Approved	Acres
Maryland	920	75,700	980	127,650		12,000	7,700	65,800
Baltimore Co.	85	5,415	37	3,883	376	889	212	2,080

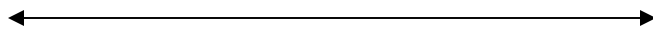
New Urban Stormwater Law

On October 1, 2007, the Stormwater Management Act of 2007 went into effect. The Act requires that environmental site design (ESD), through the use of nonstructural best management practices and other better site design techniques, be implemented to the maximum extent practicable. The Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) is in the process of addressing the requirements of the Act including changes to regulations, revising the 2000 Maryland Stormwater Design Manual and other guidance materials.

Stormwater management attempts to treat the flow of stormwater after development takes place to approximate pre-development conditions. Before development, a site will absorb the maximum amount of rainfall into the soil before it will begin to run off. After development, the significant addition of impervious surfaces such as rooftops, sidewalks, driveways and roads, result in much more stormwater running off the site, resulting in erosion and water quality problems. Stormwater management practices collect the excess stormwater in retention and infiltration facilities. Incorporating environmental site design requires more attention to practices that focus on smaller, non-structural, more natural processes throughout a site rather than large central facilities. In general, these practices are designed to:

- Conserve natural features (existing drainage patterns, swales, berms, vegetation);
- Minimize the use of impervious surfaces (permeable pavements);
- Slow down the flow of runoff to maximize infiltration and evaporation;

Adding more vegetative practices protects the soil, slows down and infiltrates runoff and also absorbs and uptakes some pollutants such as excess nutrients in a more natural setting that is less noticeable, easier to maintain and more aesthetically pleasing. There are even provisions for “green roofs”. The evolution of stormwater management since it was first required in Maryland more than 30 years ago has progressed from water quantity control to more of a focus on water quality control.



County Farm Preservation Program Receives \$2 Million in Federal Funds

USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has awarded \$2,085,500 to Baltimore County in addition to County and State funds to be used to purchase perpetual easements from an existing ranked list of a total of 62 farms. The grant is from the Farm and Ranchland Protection Program, created in the 2002 Farm Bill.

For those interested in selling development rights on their farm, apply to the Baltimore County Agricultural Preservation Program before July 1, 2008. Contact Wally Lippincott at 410-887-4488, ext. 241.

Baltimore County Agriculture Profitability Study

An Executive Committee made up of agricultural community leaders, University of Maryland Extension Office, and County staff are initiating a study which identifies initiatives that can improve the profitability of the agricultural industry in Baltimore County by increasing the sustainability of farming in the future; revitalizing local food and crop related businesses; providing a local source of agricultural products to the larger Baltimore region; and, influencing rural land use issues that will impact water quality and public water supplies for 1.8 million residents served by the Baltimore City municipal water system. The study will call upon the expertise of local farm producers and experts to ensure their concerns are identified and their suggestions incorporated. North County Preservation, Inc. (NCP) will provide project management and logistical support for this study.

Implementing the study’s recommendations could enhance benefits to Baltimore County farmers by:

- Increasing farmer income;
- Increasing the attractiveness of farming as a career;
- Increasing business for local food processing and distribution;
- Providing a greater source of local agricultural products and reducing transportation and environmental costs of food products;
- Providing better control of food security and supply;
- Providing tax benefits; and,
- Protecting water quality in Prettyboy, Loch Raven and Liberty Reservoirs.

Phase 1 of the study will assess the current county agricultural profile. Phase 2 will define viable goals and the actions necessary to achieve the goals. Phase 3 will collect successful county level initiatives and benchmarks for implementing the actions. Phase 4 will create the business case for each action. Phase 5 will design an overall implementation plan for each action. The study will begin in the near future on Phases 1 and 2.

North County Preservation (NCP) is a non-profit organization founded in 2004 with a mission to support and promote rural life in Northern Baltimore County. To find out more about the study, you can contact Alice Chalmers, NCP Vice President, at (443) 243-2998 or email at chalmer-salice@hotmail.com.

“...The real Arsenal of Democracy is a fertile soil, the fresh produce of which is the birthright of nations...”
—Sir Albert Howard, *The Soil and Health*



2007 Engineering Awards

The District's 2007 Engineering Awards were made to Matis Warfield, Inc. as the Consulting Firm of the Year and to Kristy Bischoff of Daft McCune Walker, Inc. as the Consultant of the Year. Above left, Jeff West (left) head of the District Urban Review Section, presents the Consulting Firm Award to Steve Matis (right). Above right, Jeff presents the Consultant Award to Kristy Bischoff. The engineering awards acknowledge excellence in sediment control plan design and preparation. Developers are required to get a sediment control plan approved by the District before the County will issue a grading permit for a construction site.

Photos by Essy Frey



Serafina Ravner is the newest District employee, serving as an Agricultural Technician. Serafina attended the University of Maryland, College Park and graduated with a degree in Environmental Science and Policy in 2002. Prior to graduating, she completed an internship at the Harford County Soil Conservation District

Photo by Jim Ensor

DO YOU HAVE A SMALL FARM IN THE PRETTYBOY WATERSHED?

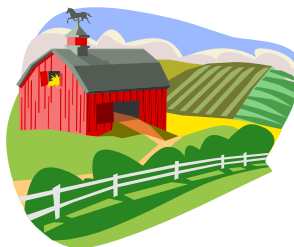
- Operate with 7 or less animal units (1 animal unit = 1,000 lbs.)?
- Want free technical assistance to develop a conservation plan for your property?
- Could use cost-share funds up to 87 1/2 % of the installation cost of conservation practices (up to a maximum of \$5,000 per farm if applicable)?

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

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.

Baltimore County Soil Conservation District
 9831 Van Buren Lane
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<http://www.mascd.net/BCSCD>



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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
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 Thomas Reynolds—Vice Chairman
 Loring Sparks—Treasurer
 Vernon Foster
 Stephen Smith
 David Martin, Secretary, Cooperative Extension

ASSOCIATE SUPERVISORS
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 Serafina Rayner, Technician, MDA

URBAN
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 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