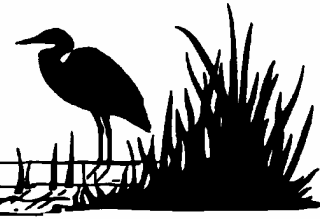
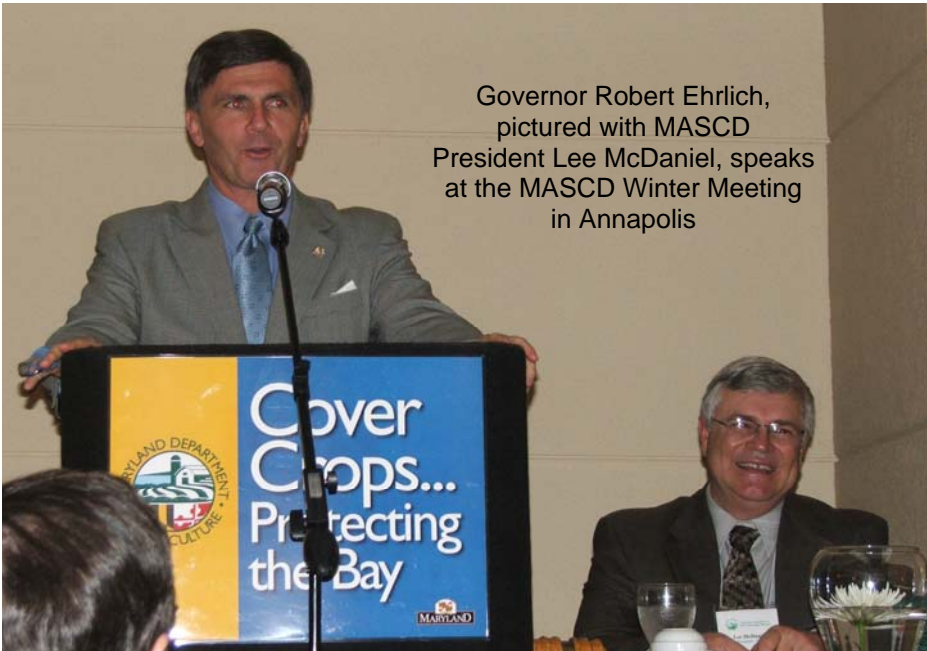


P Maryland Conservation PARTNERSHIP PRESS



WINTER 2006 VOLUME 13, ISSUE 1

A MESSAGE FROM LEE MCDANIEL, PRESIDENT MASCD



Governor Robert Ehrlich, pictured with MASCD President Lee McDaniel, speaks at the MASCD Winter Meeting in Annapolis

I was delighted that Governor Bob Ehrlich joined us at the MASCD Winter meeting at the Loews Hotel in Annapolis. The Governor reminded us that districts have accomplished a great deal and offered thanks. He spoke of exciting times for agriculture as farmers are finally being recognized by environmental groups, the General Assembly, the news media, and the general population as leaders in land preservation and conservation.

Governor Ehrlich noted his aggressive support for agriculture through his budget proposal of more than \$443 million in Chesapeake Bay, Land Preservation, Agricultural and Energy Programs that will preserve and restore our resources, enhance our quality of life, and support Maryland's booming economy. For agriculture, he said, it includes \$84.6 million for approximately 24,000 acres in MALPF easements plus almost \$2 million in operating money for the program, and \$9 million for cover crops, including a small grain enhancement of \$1 million. He hopes that this will help spur ethanol pro-

duction and other income possibilities. He said that this is almost double last year's record funding making it possible to plant 400,000 acres. He sought MASCD support to get the practices on the land. The budget also included almost \$4.6 million for MACS and \$650,000 for manure transport.

While the Governor has added six field positions in his budget, he did not include funding for the 27 additional positions necessary to bring the district numbers to 110 as stated in the Water Quality Improvement Act.

Having the Governor on the program was just icing on the cake at what I thought was a very informative and productive meeting. I would like to thank the staff and supervisors from the Western area for organizing the event—especially if they were in charge of this year's weather!

Staffing for SCD's has been listed as a priority by several groups. Now we need to make sure we get financial support. As the legislative session moves into decision time—

(Continued on page 7)

NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT PLAN IMPLEMENTATION AND ENFORCEMENT UPDATE

Nutrient management non-compliance enforcement began in July 2005 and as of December 31, over 600 notices had been sent to operators who had not responded to Department of Agriculture letters or had not replaced their Justification for Delay form with a nutrient management plan. As a result of enforcement actions, almost 570 have now complied with the requirements. Warning letters are being mailed to the others.

The Program also began conducting Plan Implementation Review and Evaluations in December 2005. Reviews will determine how an operator is implementing their plan. The process begins by random selection from the Nutrient Management Database. Once an operator has been selected they are notified by letter. The letter has a proposed time and date of the site visit and implementation evaluation. Operator's have the opportunity to reschedule the meeting if the time and date given are not convenient.

After a date and time are agreed upon, the Nutrient Management Specialist and the operator review records, comparing the nutrient recommendations in the plan with the nutrient application records and fertilizer receipts. Upon completion of the evaluation a copy of the report will be left for the operator. Depending on the outcome of the visit, an additional Implementation Evaluation may need to be scheduled. If no additional meeting is required the operator will not be visited again until their name is again randomly selected. The Nutrient Management Program is looking to conduct 600 visits by the end of the year.

EVENTS

MDA OPEN HOUSE MARCH 25

Bring family and friends to a perennial favorite springtime event, the Maryland Department of Agriculture's Open House, on Sat., March 25 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. There is no admission fee for the Open House, which will be held rain or shine at the agency's headquarters, 50 Harry S. Truman Parkway, Annapolis.

The MDA also is seeking vendors to sell food, agricultural products, hand-crafted items, and other goods during the day. Call 410-841-5882 or visit www.mda.state.md.us for more information on the Open House. To inquire about selling items at the event, vendors can contact Janet Crutchley at 410-841-5896.

SPRING LEGISLATIVE CONFERENCE MARCH 26-28

The 2006 NACD Legislative Conference will boast informative sessions on conservation districts' legislative and program priorities. The agenda is shaping up to cover Farm Bill and appropriations and budget issues, and to address the association's strategic planning initiative. Administration officials, members of Congress and coalition partners have all been invited to provide attendees with a complete perspective of what is happening on natural resources policy in our nation's capitol.

We urge attendees to act now to schedule congressional visits for Tuesday, March 28. We also encourage you to use Monday evening, March 27, as an evening to meet up with Hill staff and coalition partners for dinner at one of Washington's terrific eateries. Your NACD headquarters will be open during normal business hours during the conference - feel free to stop by.

For Hotel reservations, please call 800-321-3010. Be sure to ask for the NACD block of rooms. Washington Court Hotel Room rate: \$235 single/double, cutoff date for room reservations: Friday, March 3, 2006. For more information go to <http://nacdnet.org/meetings/leg/index.htm>.

PERSONNEL NOTES

MDA WELCOMES...

Christopher Prigge, EQIP Planner, Harford SCD
Armand Smithberger, N.M. Specialist, Frederick Area Office

MDA NEW APPOINTMENT...

Secretary of Agriculture Lewis Riley announced the appointment of **Mark Powell** as Acting Chief of Maryland Department of Agriculture's Marketing & Agricultural Development Division. The marketing division's principal role is to identify and develop profitable opportunities for Maryland farmers and agricultural producers. The division also serves as a conduit for federal resources and for policy information specific to Maryland agriculture. As Acting Chief, Powell is responsible for oversight of all managerial, strategic planning, communications and other activities of the marketing division.

At MDA, Powell had previously served as director of special projects. In that role he managed MDA's federally-funded program to promote crop insurance to the state's farmers. He also worked with a variety of MDA initiatives, including the Governor's Poultry Issues Action Team in 2003 and bioenergy projects. Powell also represents MDA on the Maryland Soybean Board, the Maryland Grain Producers Utilization Board and the Maryland Dairy Industry Association. Before coming to MDA in 2003, Powell served more than 11 years as editor of a group of Easton-based agricultural newspapers including The Delmarva Farmer, The New Jersey Farmer and the Mid-Atlantic Grower. He has served as a board member of the Maryland Agricultural Education Foundation and the LEAD Maryland Foundation.

WASHINGTON CO SCD BIDS FAREWELL TO...

John Herbst, a Supervisor of the Washington Co. SCD retired from the board in January 2006. He was presented with a plaque and custom pocket knife by the Board, and a cake and ice cream was provided during his last meeting for the board and staff to share. John served as Vice-Chair and Chair for the Board, and helped to usher in an expanding role for the District in terms of increasing staff and providing services for the growing urban community, as well as stream restoration projects. John first was appointed to the Board in 1985, and prior to that was an associate for some time.

NRCS WELCOMES...

Eric Hines as the new District Conservationist in Carroll County. Previously, he worked as a soil conservationist in that field office.

NRCS BIDS FAREWELL TO...

Tom Heisler, state resource conservationist, who retired after 31 years of Federal service.

Doug Valentine, district conservationist in Carroll County, who retired after 41 years of Federal service.

Jerry Griswold, previously the Chesapeake Bay Program Manager, who retired after more than 35 years of Federal service.

Gabe Hiza, a technical writer assigned to MLRA 13 Soils Group, accepted a position as a technical writer with the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms in Washington, D.C.

Russ Mader, a resource conservationist, transferred to NRCS national headquarters in Washington, DC. He had worked for NRCS Maryland in the Chesapeake Bay Program Office.

CONSERVATION DELIVERY SYSTEM EVALUATION

A study evaluating the Conservation Delivery System is being done for NRCS by the National Association of State Conservation Agencies (NASCA). Its purpose is to collect information about the current delivery system shared among Soil Conservation Districts, State Conservation agencies and NRCS and to offer recommendations on improvements to meet changing needs.

The first phase of the NASCA evaluation involved input from two focus groups. One session was held in Utah and the other in Ohio. Representatives from conservation agencies, farm organizations and other stakeholders from all areas of the country were invited to participate. Information from these sessions was collated and regional differences noted. Some of key areas identified as needing improvement included

- Improving flexibility and local decision making to advance locally led as a means of accommodating regional and local differences
- Simplifying and streamlining the delivery process and increase participation by making it more user friendly
- Reducing delays and inconsistencies in programs and agencies
- Better applying technology and human resources in staffing, training; improve use of private sector and increase capacity.

A second phase of this evaluation will garner input directly from under-represented groups. One aim is to collect information that is state or region specific to note geographic variability. The SSCC agreed to participate in the second phase of the project.

During their January meeting at the MASCD Annual meeting, SSCC used its meeting time to hold an input forum. Jim Cox, Executive Director of NASCA, presented background information and findings from the first phase of the evaluation. Breakout sessions were then utilized to collect input from approximately 40 participants. SSCC will review the outcome of this session at their February meeting. Maryland will also be working with the Mid-Atlantic Certified Crop Advisor Program to survey their members. NASCA had minimal success getting the input of technical service providers. If successful, a survey instrument will poll professionals who currently work as or could qualify to work as TSPs in the Mid-Atlantic region- DE, MD, NJ, VA, and WV.

INCREASED FUNDING PROPOSED FOR CONSERVATION

There is a current legislative proposal, the Agricultural Stewardship Act of 2006, working its way through the General Assembly, which advocates increased funding for a number of conservation programs. The bill proposes increased funding for Cover Crops, Maryland Agricultural Water Quality Cost Share Program (MACS), Soil Conservation District and Cooperative Extension staffing and Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation. The bill expresses the intent that the Administration provide certain levels of increased funding to these programs, but does not mandate it.

The first hearing was held in the Senate Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee. All those testifying expressed favor for the bill. The hearing in the House Environmental Matters Committee will be February 14. If these bills pass in committee they must still be voted on in each house. Currently the bills are the same in each House.

Governor Ehrlich has also proposed increased funding to several conservation programs in his 2007 budget. It must still be approved by the General Assembly. Funding increases are proposed for Cover Crops, targeted watershed projects in the Corsica watershed and a yet to be named watershed, SCD staffing and Manure Transport Project. The budget also proposes use of the entire transfer tax revenues for MALPF and Program Open Space.

NOTES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

SSCC Appointments:

Allegany SCD – Wilbert Paul

Catoctin SCD – Dan Poole

Frederick SCD – Ray Ediger

Area Representative Appointments to the SSCC

Secretary Riley recently made several appointments to the State Soil Conservation Committee for Area Representatives.

Anne Collier, from the Caroline SCD, was reappointed in December to serve a second term representing Caroline, Kent, Queen Anne and Talbot SCDs.

Robert Davis, Wicomico SCD, was appointed in January to serve the remaining 1.5 years of Johnson Shufelt's term. He represents Dorchester, Somerset, Wicomico and Worcester SCDs.

Ron Hawk, Allegany SCD, was reappointed in January to serve a second term representing Allegany, Carroll, Catoctin, Frederick, Garrett, and Washington SCDs.

USDA, Farm Service Agency is developing the use of ARCGIS for electronic mapping according to Bebe Shortall. They currently have a Geographic Information System expert on staff to implement this system. Once it is made available to each county office, they will have 90 days for certification. All paper maps and photo copies will be digitized. Shortall indicated that once finalized, this info can be shared across agencies. Bob Tjaden asked about Cooperative Extension nutrient management advisors accessing maps. Shortall said she would have to explore how that would work.

ITEMS OF INTEREST

NRCS BEGINS CAROLINE COUNTY SOIL SURVEY UPDATE *BY CHARLIE HANNER, NRCS SOIL SCIENTIST*

In cooperation with the Caroline County Soil Conservation District, the USDA- Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has begun a project to update the county's soil survey. The original soil survey, published in 1964, is out-of-print and in terms of modern environmental and development issues it is outdated. New information about soils is needed to address changes in demographics, advances in building and farming technology, new environmental questions and the greater intensity of land use. There have also been many advances in soil science and soil survey procedures that need to be incorporated into the new survey. Planning departments, health departments, nutrient management specialists, wetland creation and mitigation specialist, civil engineers and a host of USDA programs all use soil survey information as a basis for making important land use decisions.

An update of Caroline County's soil survey will include more detailed descriptions of soils and their interpretive ratings. Information in this updated survey will be applicable to the management of soils for crops, woodlands, building sites, sanitary facilities, highways, parks and for wildlife habitat. It will also be used to identify the strengths and limitations of unique soils for specific land uses and to help prevent construction or crop failure caused by unfavorable soil conditions. Soil surveys can help planners maintain and create land use patterns in harmony with the natural soil. Contractors can use the soil survey to locate sources of sand, road fill and topsoil. Health officials will also find the soil survey useful. The survey can help them plan the safe disposal of wastes.

There have been several advances in soil survey since the original survey was published just over 40 years ago. In 1976 a soil taxonomic classification system for identifying different types of soil was developed. With the advent of computers all soil mapping can now be completed onscreen with the use of mapping software. Other technical advances such as GPS (global positioning system) units, color infrared ortho-photography and portable hand held computers all help in increasing the speed, efficiency and accuracy of the soil survey update. Much of the soil survey update process still involves going to the field, auguring and describing soil borings much like the soil scientists did in Caroline County just over a half a century ago.

Soil survey activities have been occurring in Maryland since 1899 when Cecil County had one of the first soil surveys in the nation. Because of the support from partnership agencies like the Maryland Department of Agriculture, the Maryland Association of Soil Conservation Districts and the University of Maryland Agricultural Experiment Station, Maryland has one of the most progressive and advanced Soil Survey programs in the nation. Almost all of Maryland's county soil surveys have already been updated or are in the process of being updated.

To learn more about the Caroline County Soil Survey Update, visit <http://www.md.nrcs.usda.gov/> and click on soils.

SIGN UP NOW FOR COMMUNITY SUPPORTED AGRICULTURE

The Beltsville Agriculture Research Center (BARC) is encouraging citizens to join a community supported agriculture (CSA) farm to support local farmers while receiving delicious, healthy, fresh produce all summer long. CSA subscribers purchase a share of the product harvest or a weekly portion from farmers they come to know and trust at the start of the season. For the rest of the summer members receive weekly shares of the harvest. Beyond fruits and vegetables, some CSA farmers offer meat, eggs, herbs, flowers, jams and other products.

2006 marks the fourth year that BARC has hosted a CSA drop off site for the Howard County Growers, a partnership of six farms. For information on CSAs in your area visit www.sare.org/csa/index.htm or contact Valerie Berton at vberton@sare.org.

ANNUAL REPORTS AVAILABLE

The Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) has published its 2005 annual reports for the Maryland Nutrient Management Program and the Maryland Agricultural Water Quality Cost-Share (MACS) Program. The reports highlight agriculture's activities and accomplishments in protecting water quality in the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries. For copies, call MDA at 410-841-5863 or visit www.mda.state.md.us.

The Maryland Association of Soil Conservation Districts (MASCD) has released its 2005 annual report entitled, *Outstanding in Our Field*. The report highlights the importance of conservation professionals in helping farmers protect soil and water resources as well as the full array of services and activities provided by Maryland's 24 soil conservation districts. For a copy of this report, contact Lynne Hoot at 410-956-5771 or visit www.mascd.net.

PARTNERSHIP

CAREER DAY WITH CALVERT SCD

On Friday, November 18, Calvert Soil Conservation District's (SCD) conservation planner, Jennifer Snoddy and intern, TaNeshia Taylor participated in Career Day at Mutual Elementary School. They shared their presentations with the third grade students at Mutual Elementary. Students were informed about the role of the Calvert SCD in both the farm and residential communities. Snoddy explained the responsibilities, qualifications, and the typical activities of technical employees who work in conservation services. After the briefings, they played conservation bingo to incorporate the information that was given to the children during the presentation.

PARTNERSHIP

SUCCESS OF THE COMBINED FEDERAL CAMPAIGN

BY BECKY HICKMAN, NRCS COMBINED FEDERAL CAMPAIGN COORDINATOR

I would like to thank employees who contributed to the 2005 Combined Federal Campaign (CFC). Again this year we are very proud of the participation and in achieving 92 percent of our projected goal of \$8,000.00.

I realize that 2005 has been tremendously challenging due to all the weather related disasters. Many of you gave during all these disastrous events. With this in mind, I am especially proud of the level of participation in this year's campaign.

Again, thank each of you for your Spirit of Giving!

CIVIL RIGHTS

The NRCS Civil Rights Advisory Committee, known as the CRAC, has elected new officers in 2006. The Maryland Civil Rights Advisory Committee is an advisory body to the State Conservationist (STC) which promotes and assists in meaningful and effective affirmative action consistent with the goals and objectives set forth by management. The Committee:

- provides feedback on the performance of the civil rights program.
- makes recommendations for improvement.
- identifies emerging areas needing special attention by the STC and Management Team.
- makes recommendations to the STC regarding policy, practices, and procedures as they affect civil rights statewide.

If you are interested in filling any of the vacant positions, please contact Melissa Hanner at 443-482-2923.

NRCS Members At Large

Melissa Hanner, Chair
 Vacant, Vice Chair
 Nancy Basil, Secretary
 Terry Heinard
 Herman Purnell
 Eric Hines

NRCS Advisors

Charlie Royer
 Sandra Thompson
 Andrea Clarke
 Carol Hollingsworth
 Maggie Rhodes

Partnership Members

MDA – Ravendra Gahlot
 MDA – Janet Crutchley
 MDA – Karen Hoy
 MASCD – Marguerite Guare

Special Emphasis

Program Managers

Federal Women – Valerie Cohen
 Black - Tony Harvey
 Hispanic – Vacant
 American Indian – Annette Ensor
 Disabilities – Vacant
 Asian Pacific – Oliver Miranda

FUN FACTS:

Black History Month -- February

The Martin Luther King Holiday was established as a national holiday in 1986. It is observed on the third Monday of January each year, which is right around his birthday (January 15, 1929). On January 18, 1993, Martin Luther King Day was officially observed by all 50 states.

The government center in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania is the only city hall in the U.S. to be named in the honor of Dr. King.

RECOGNIZING BLACK

HISTORY MONTH BY TONY HARVEY, BLACK EMPHASIS PROGRAM MANAGER

The USDA recognizes the accomplishments of African – Americans throughout the month of February with a celebration of Black History Month. Each year a new theme is chosen for Black History Month. The theme for this year is “Celebrating Community: A Tribute to Black Fraternal, Social, & Civic Institutions”. For this February 2006, I would like to recognize Dr. Carter G. Woodson (1875 – 1950). Dr. Woodson is known as the Father of Black History. It was his drive and effort to get a Black History Celebration started. His reason for wanting to create such a celebration for Blacks was because of his concern that the contributions of Black Americans were being overlooked, so he began his push for Negro History Week as early as 1915.

In 1915, Dr. Woodson and several of his acquaintances in Chicago established the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History (ASALH). The Association's role was to archive sociological and historical data, publish books, promote the study of Afro-American life and history, and encourage racial harmony through the organization and work of clubs and schools. In 1916, the ASALH published its first issue of the “Journal of Negro History”. This is one of the U.S.'s oldest learned journals. The ASALH is now known as the Association for the Study of Afro – American Life & History.

In February 1926, Dr. Woodson organized the first annual Negro History Week, which was the second week in February. The reason for choosing this week was because it coincides with the birthdays of Frederick Douglass and Abraham Lincoln. Their birthdays were February 14th and February 12th respectively. These two individuals were instrumental in creating better lives for Blacks.

Negro History Week became a month long observance in 1976. The Association for the Study of Afro – American Life and History, successfully lobbied to extend the week long observance into a full month. This is the 80th anniversary of celebrating Black History in the month of February, and the 30th anniversary of celebrating the entire month for Black History.

NACD PHOTO CONTEST



The above photo entitled “O’Meara Strips” gained Dan Bard a first place win in the Conservation category. Congratulations Dan!

2006 NACD/NACD Auxiliary Photo Contest. Winners were announced at the NACD National Meeting in Houston recently.

To see the winning photos go to <http://2006.nacdn.net.org/awards/photos/>

IN MEMORY...

MASCD is deeply saddened by the passing of Young D. Hance on February 14, 2006. Y.D. first served as a supervisor of Calvert Soil Conservation District from 1954 to 1959 and again from 1979 until last year when he retired from that position and began serving as an associate supervisor. From 1988 until 1997 he served as Chairman of the board.

From 1973 to 1979 he served as Maryland’s first Secretary of Agriculture. Y.D. was also the father-in-law of Calvert SCD’s current Vice Chair, Walt Wells.

MASCD and the entire Maryland agricultural community will miss Y. D.’s wisdom, experience, and guidance.

Condolences may be sent to Walt and Susie Wells, 4885 Adelina Road, Prince Frederick, MD 20678.

Future Dates to Remember

| | |
|----------------|--|
| March 16 | SSCC, MDA Annapolis |
| March 25 | Open House, MDA Annapolis |
| March 26-28 | NACD Spring Legislative Conference, Washington, DC |
| March 28 | MASCD Board Meeting, NRCS Office, Annapolis |
| April 20 | SSCC, MDA Annapolis |
| April 30 | Partnership Press Deadline |
| April 30-May 7 | Soil & Water Stewardship Week |
| May 18 | SSCC, MDA Annapolis |
| June 15 | SSCC, MDA Annapolis |
| June 16 | MACCA August Exam Registration Deadline |
| June 20-22 | Maryland Envirothon, Schmidt Center, PG County |
| July 17-19 | MASCD Annual Meeting, Solomons |
| July 18 | SSCC, Solomons |
| July 23-29 | Canon Envirothon, Winnipeg, Manitoba |
| July 30 | Partnership Press Deadline |
| August 4 | MACCA Exam |
| August 17 | SSCC, MDA Annapolis |



is a quarterly newsletter published for and about the members of Maryland’s Conservation Partnership: MD Department of Agriculture, MD Association of Soil Conservation Districts, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, USDA Farm Service Agency, MD Cooperative Extension Service, and the State Soil Conservation Committee.

The deadline for articles is January 30, April 30, July 30 and October 30. Please direct comments or questions to the Maryland Association of Soil Conservation Districts at (410) 956-5771.

The members of the Conservation Partnership, prohibit discrimination in their programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, and marital or familial status. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact the USDA TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD).

To file a complaint, write the Secretary of Agriculture, USDA, Washington, D.C. 20250 or call 1-800-245-6340 (voice) or (202) 720-5964 (TDD). Agencies in the Maryland Conservation Partnership are equal employment opportunity employers.

TRAINING**SPACE STILL AVAILABLE AT
UPCOMING FARMER TRAINING &
CERTIFICATION WORKSHOPS**

Space is still available at two upcoming workshops designed for farmers who want to become certified by the Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) to write nutrient management plans for their own operations. Crop operations that use manure and fertilizer may register for the February 21, 2006 workshop in Garrett County.

A workshop will also be offered in Kent County on February 28, 2006 for pasture-based operations. Certification requires a two-day commitment. For more information, call 410-841-5959 or visit www.mda.state.md.us.

**GRAZING WORKSHOP, ELMER
DENGLER, MARYLAND GRAZING SPECIALIST**

The snow may be flying, but spring is coming -- and decisions need to be made now for EQIP plans and contracts that are being written for pasture and hayland planting.

NRCS is hosting a two-day workshop to review both in the field (you bet!) and in the office with Extension personnel helping us on issues such as weed control and establishment issues. We will go through a planning exercise on specific fields to come up with a recommended treatment plan.

It would be good if one person from each office could attend. We will be building an entire process so one part builds on the others. The training will review the complete establishment process from site evaluation to stand maintenance.

Training is scheduled for Monday, February 27th from 9:30 AM to 4 PM at the NRCS State Office and in the field on Tuesday, February 28th from 9:30 AM to 4 PM.

The training agenda is:

Monday AM: Selecting forage species by soil/site conditions/livestock/management and finding needed information in the soil survey.

Monday PM: Field evaluation exercise using specific tools and benchmarks.

Tuesday AM: Timing, weed control, planting equipment. Tuesday PM: Putting the management plan together.

Snow dates are March 1st and 2nd.

2006 LEGISLATIVE SESSION,*BY LYNNE HOOT, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, MASCD*

There are several bills of interest to the soil conservation districts.

HB 2 & SB 5 are the result of the work of the Agricultural Stewardship Committee that was appointed by the leadership of the House and Senate. The bills require County governments to include Priority Preservation Areas for agricultural land in their comprehensive plan, create an agricultural internship program at UMD for students to work on farms, and create a task force to look at taxation. The bill also includes language to encourage increased funding for several ag programs including MARBIDCO, cover crops, manure transportation, MACS cost-share, reestablishing the soil testing lab at UMD and Cooperative Extension staffing.

Of importance to soil conservation district is language calling for \$2.5 million to restore funding for MDA to hire 110 field positions as required in the Water Quality Improvement Act of 1998. At the two hearings, there was no opposition and a call for funding. The bill also calls on MDA to allow the harvesting of small grains cover crops for biofuels and generally offers support for a biofuels industry in Maryland.

MESSAGE FROM LEE MCDANIEL (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

districts need to start calls and letters to the Governor and legislators reminding them of our staffing needs. Contact your assigned legislators and remind them to fund the additional staff.

I have just returned from the NACD Annual meeting in Houston, TX where I was extremely proud to be representing Maryland. We were presented with the 100% quota award for the second year running. While West Virginia proudly took the award for the 55th consecutive year, only 10 other states were recognized this year for

HB 91 will raise the per practice cap for the MACS program from \$75,000 to \$100,000, this cap will be for animal waste practices while other caps will be set by regulation.

Several rural legislators have introduced bills that will eliminate the septic fee portion of the Bay Restoration Act which would essentially eliminate the 40% dedicated funding for cover crops.

If passed, Anne Arundel and Montgomery counties have legislation to allow them to hunt deer on Sundays.

Several bills have been introduced to re-couple the Estate tax with the federal tax. It appears likely that the cap will be raised from \$1,000,000 to \$2,000,000 and MASCD will be supporting this effort.

Eminent Domain is also generating a lot of interest and MGPA will look into each bill and determine how best to protect agricultural land.

MASCD's web site keeps a list of all the bills of interest to enable you link to the Maryland legislative site for a copy of the bill and its current status – www.mascd.net.

meeting quota. I thank each district for your support of NACD and for putting our state in the limelight.

MASCD's resolution to support the use of vertical tillage such as no-till rippers as an eligible practice under continuous no-till provisions of the CSP was approved. The reference to turbo-tills was removed, in part I believe, because individuals were unfamiliar with the equipment.

Olin Sims from McFadden Wyoming was elected president elect of NACD, bypassing 1st vice-president Tim Reich in an interesting election.

STEWARDSHIP WEEK - 50 YEARS STRONG



Soil and Water Stewardship Week is one of the world's largest conservation-related observances. Since 1955, the NACD has sponsored the national Soil and Water Stewardship Week program. The concept of stewardship involves personal and social responsibility. We have a duty to learn about and improve natural resources as we use them wisely. By doing this we can achieve material and spiritual growth in our own lives, and leave a rich legacy for future generations.

Everyone wants to help improve the world. But sometimes the scope of the world's problems seems beyond the reach of one person. And sometimes we are tempted to believe that large agencies and organizations will take care of this important work, without our help.

Soil and Water Stewardship Week helps reminds us of the power of each person to conserve natural resources and improve the world. When people work together with their local conservation district, that power grows and grows. And as these good deeds multiply across the nation's network of conservation districts, the results can be spectacular!

"Water Wise" theme for Stewardship Week 2006, April 30 - May 7

Water is vital to our life. Water makes up more than 60% of our body, and about 75% of our brain. Water helps make possible our every movement, thought, and feeling. All our food and most other products we use require water. It takes about 4,000 gallons of water to grow a bushel of corn, and about 11,000 gallons for a bushel of wheat. To ensure future water supplies, we need to learn about water resources, and plan to use them carefully. For more information, <http://stewardshipweek.com/>.



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