

# PARTNERSHIP PRESS

Maryland Conservation



WINTER 2007 VOLUME 14, ISSUE 1

## A MESSAGE FROM LEE MCDANIEL, PRESIDENT MASCD

I have just returned from the Annual National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) meeting in San Diego, CA. The emphasis at the meeting was the concern nationwide about the declining USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) funding and its impact on local conservation activities. Of greatest concern is the decline in NRCS's basic Conservation Operations funding, which includes funding for the Conservation Technical Assistance (CTA) Program (better described as *basic staff support*). Once a farmer signs up for a Farm Bill program such as the Environmental Quality Improvement Program (EQIP), Wildlife Habitat Improvement Program (WHIP), Agricultural Management Assistance (AMA) or Conservation Security Program (CSP), funds are allocated for technical staffing but prior to them signing up, CTA funds must be used.

The Conservation Technical Assistance funds have diminished considerably and need to be restored. This funding is essential to provide technical planning and implementation expertise to Maryland landowners, including those that may not be seeking any federal financial assistance for resource conservation, for farmer education, general planning, or to assist with the technical aspects of state and local programs. It is important that Maryland's Congressional members to support the NRCS budget in the Chesapeake Bay re-

*(Continued on page 4)*

## 2007 LEGISLATIVE SESSION, BY LYNNE HOOT, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, MASCD

The highest priority for MASCD does not have its own bill number – it is part of the annual budget (HB 50/SB 55). MASCD supports maintaining the \$1 million in the Department of Agriculture budget provided as part of the Agricultural Stewardship Act of 2006 for 12 additional field positions in the soil conservation districts and for grade level increases for all district employees so MDA can hire and retain personnel in these field positions. We request authority for the Department of Budget and Management to approve the annual salary rate adjustments presented by MDA to provide more comparable salaries for the employees working in the districts.

The reason the soil conservation districts have lost so many field employees since the 110 level was provided after passage of the Water Quality Improvement Act of 1998, is that the low salary levels of these SCD employees have resulted in unacceptable turnover rates so when the budget has been cut and PIN numbers eliminated, these positions have been vacant and therefore have been the easiest for MDA to eliminate.

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## ROGER RICHARDSON NAMED NEW SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE

MASCD welcomes Roger Richardson as Maryland's next Secretary of Agriculture. Roger is a 6th generation farmer, who works 3,500 acres of land on the Eastern Shore. He also has a private trucking company devoted to the transportation of agricultural products.

Roger has experience working within the Conservation Partnership serving previously as Chairman of the Maryland Farm Service Committee, a Presidential appointment, a State Committee member of the Maryland Agricultural Stabilization Committee, and a former supervisor of the Worcester Soil Conservation District from 1972 to 1977.

Roger has been in public service for years. He currently serves as President of the National Association of Farmer Elected Committees, Director of the American Corn Growers Association, Chairman of the Board of Review for the Maryland Department of Agriculture, as president of the Snow Hill Grain co-op and a board member of the Maryland Grain Producers Utilization Board and the Maryland Grain Producers Association. In addition, Richardson is a member of the Agricultural Stewardship Commission, the Board of Directors for the Maryland Center for Agro-Ecology, and the Worcester County Farmland Committee.

MASCD also welcomes Buddy Hance as Deputy Secretary. We have worked closely with Buddy in his position as President of Maryland Farm Bureau and have appreciated his support in the past. We look forward to working with Roger and Buddy to strengthen Maryland's soil conservation districts as we continue to serve the agricultural community.

## KUDOS TO SECRETARY LEWIS RILEY

As we welcome two new faces to Maryland's Department of Agriculture, we would like to offer Kudos to former Secretary Lewis Riley. We wish him all the best in his retirement. He has been a great asset to Maryland's soil conservation districts and will be missed.

We would also like to thank Deputy John Brooks for his assistance and wish him well.

The team at MDA's Office of Resource Conservation has worked well under their leadership and we know they will continue to work with scd'd under the new leadership.

## EVENTS

### MDA OPEN HOUSE, MARCH 24

Bring family and friends to a perennial favorite springtime event, the Maryland Department of Agriculture's Open House, on Saturday, March 24 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.

This year's open house celebrates the State's farmers and the important role they play in providing food and protecting the environment today and in the future. Visitors can see the Department's insect collection, make slime in the State Chemist's laboratory, enjoy a Maryland food and craft market, demonstrate their hog calling skills, take in a petting farm, milk a cow, ride a pony, and learn about the world of agriculture today through hands-on activities. For more information, 410-841-5882 or visit [www.mda.state.md.us](http://www.mda.state.md.us).

### NACD SUMMER BOARD MEETING WITH LEGISLATIVE CONFERENCE, JULY 21-24

The NACD Board of Directors decided at their most recent meeting to combine the association's summer board meeting with a legislative conference for a two-year trial period. This joint meeting will replace the traditional spring legislative conference. It will expand the board's opportunity for exposure and interaction in Washington, and will maximize efforts to educate and influence decision makers.

The meeting format will be expanded beyond traditional board business to include a speaker program, legislative and executive branch visits and a Congressional Reception on Capitol Hill. The joint meeting will be held July 21-24 at the Washington Court Hotel.

For more information go to <http://www.nacdnet.org/meetings/SummerMeeting.htm>, or contact NACD, 509 Capitol Ct. NE, Washington, DC 20002, 202-547-6223.

## ITEMS OF INTEREST

### ANNUAL REPORTS AVAILABLE

The Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) has published its 2006 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](http://www.mda.state.md.us).

The Maryland Association of Soil Conservation Districts (MASCD) has released its 2006 annual report entitled, *Local Conservation Works*. 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](http://www.mascd.net).

## PERSONNEL NOTES

### MDA WELCOMES...

**Tony Riggi** - District Manager, Queen Anne's SCD

### NRCS WELCOMES...

**Tiffany Laws** - as a Farm Bill Specialist at the Annapolis State Office. Laws will be joining the Programs staff effective March 5, 2007. She currently works as a Soil Conservationist with NRCS in New Jersey.

Laws will have primary responsibility for the Conservation Security Program (CSP), Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP), and the Grassland Reserve Program (GRP).

**Patty Engler** will resume her duties on the Resources Staff to assist field offices with CRP/CREP, conservation planning, forestry, and water quality issues, and will also serve as the Cultural Resources Coordinator and Toolkit Coordinator.

**Steve Strano** will continue to provide field offices with assistance concerning fish and wildlife habitat management, endangered species, and wetlands.

**Kyla Pitts, Matthew Flack, and Erik Kramer** - three STEP (Student Temporary Appointments) Soil Conservationist Technicians, located at the National Plant Materials Center in Beltsville.

### MDA BIDS FAREWELL TO...

**Dick Parsons** - PDA Coordinator

**Kyong Chung** - Planner, Charles SCD

**Jason West** - Technician, Worcester SCD

### NRCS BIDS FAREWELL TO...

**Mitchell Scott** - a soil scientist in the Prince George's County Field Office left NRCS on November 26, 2007 to take a job with Defense Intelligence Agency.

### NRCS EMPLOYEES ON DETAIL...

**Valerie Cohen** began a detail for at least 13 months at the Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service (CSREES) in Washington, DC on Monday, January 22, 2007. Her temporary detail assignment with CSREES is to work on Afghanistan support project. She served as a soil scientist in the Prince George's County Office and also served on the Civil Rights Advisory Committee as the Federal Women's Program Manager.

**John Minnick** - formerly the District Conservationist in Anne Arundel County has extended his detail as an agricultural advisor in Afghanistan until November 2007.

## CONSERVATION DELIVERY SYSTEM

Discussion of the future Conservation Delivery System was center stage at the MASCD meeting. The input the SSCC had requested from SCDs was summarized and mailed to all SCD supervisors, SCD managers and District Conservationists in December. Although there were three pages of comments the vote tally was as follows:

- Super NRCS Technical Center - 9
- Support Super NRCS Technical Center with changes - 4
- Do not support any of scenarios - 10
- No response - 1

Ginger Murphy, State Conservationist, Doug Scott, MDA Assistant Secretary, Bebe Shortall speaking for FSA State Director and Dick Coomb, USDA/NRCS, Regional Assistant Chief all presented their perspectives.

Additional refinement of the Super NRCS Technical Center will occur over the next couple of months with input from district conservationists and the field offices.

## NOTES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

The following supervisor appointments were made:

- Baltimore County SCD: Stephen Smith
- Harford SCD: Michael Birch

## DNR LEADS EFFORT TO ESTABLISH FOREST CONSERVATION GOALS

The Chesapeake Bay Executive Council directed jurisdiction in the watershed to evaluate the state of forest resources in Chesapeake Bay with interest in establishing new conservation goals and tracking and a greater focus on the urban landscape.

DNR has had two meetings with stakeholders and has partitioned the process of making recommendations into three components: Forest Protection, Forest Management and Forest Restoration. Current efforts center around creating graphical information from an assortment of data bases to determine how and if forest resource protection should be targeted.

## AGRICULTURAL WASTE STORAGE STRUCTURES: PROPER USE

It was brought to the attention of SSCC that there are incidents of cost shared waste storage structures being used for storing materials other than animal manures and wastes. MACS Program developed a policy to clarify allowable uses under different scenarios. This policy was endorsed by SSCC and will be incorporated into the program.

1. If the waste storage structure is within the 15 year maintenance life of the practice and animals are still present on the farm, its use is **restricted** to animal waste materials generated on-farm. The operator must:

- a. follow guidelines for upkeep from SCD
- b. follow recommendations in nutrient management plan.

2. If the waste storage structure is within the 15 year maintenance life of the practice but animals are no longer part of the farm operation, the farmer/landowner may payback the prorated value of the structure if they wish to use it for alternative materials.

- The owner/operator is not relieved of any legal responsibility for pollution just because the structure is no longer under MACS contractual requirements.
- Any materials that have nutrient value and are applied to agricultural land are subject to nutrient management requirements.
- Any materials or leachate that are stored / applied must not be allowed to runoff into waters of the state and are to be applied following common agricultural procedures.

3. If the waste storage structure is past the 15 year maintenance life of the practice and no longer subject to MACS contractual requirements, the farmer/landowner may **conditionally** make whatever use they wish of the structure. If livestock are present on the farm then the Waste Storage Structure should be used for its intended purpose.

- The owner/operator is not relieved of any legal responsibility for pollution just because the structure is no longer under MACS contractual requirements.
- Any materials that have nutrient value and are applied to agricultural land are subject to nutrient management requirements.
- Any materials or leachate that are stored / applied must not be allowed to runoff into waters of the state and are to be applied following common agricultural procedures.

# SSCC



# Report

*Information from the State Soil Conservation Committee*

## GOVERNOR'S WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Governor's Water Resource Management Advisory Committee has developed subcommittees to focus on two issues over the next several months. These include:

1. Water quality as related to water supply
2. Financing mechanisms (to implement recommendations contained in their 2 reports such as MDE staffing needs, research, water use monitoring, etc).

The financing subcommittee is recommending the use of focus groups comprised of specific water user groups- one will be agricultural users. Facilitated sessions will allow focus groups to review and comment on several fund raising options – including creation of a dedicated funding source, permit fees, consumptive use fees.

## NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT COST SHARE RATES

SSCC endorsed a proposal to adjust cost share rates provided to private sector nutrient management consultants who prepare nutrient management plans. Rates will now include a flat fee, so smaller operations are not precluded from participation. Additionally caps have been slightly adjusted with the largest farms now being eligible for up to \$4000/year. Robert Ensor, MACS Administer, will phase in implementation of deadlines for preparing and billing for nutrient management plans to assure plans are developed prior to planting in the current cropping year. Additional information will be provided to SCDs.

### Future Dates to Remember

March 24	Open House, MDA Annapolis
March 27	MASCD Board Meeting
April 19	SSCC, MDA Annapolis
April 30	Partnership Press Deadline
April 29-May 6	Soil & Water Stewardship Week
May 17	SSCC, MDA Annapolis
June 21	SSCC, MDA Annapolis
June 15	MACCA August Exam Registration Deadline
June 19-21	Maryland Envirothon, UMES, Princess Anne
July 17-19	MASCD Annual Meeting, Solomons
July 18	SSCC, Solomons
July 21-42	NACD Board Meeting and Legislative Conference, including MASCD Hill visits, Washington, DC
July 29-Aug 4	Canon Envirothon, Geneva, NY
July 30	Partnership Press Deadline
August 3	MACCA Exam

### A MESSAGE FROM LEE MCDANIEL, (CONTINUED)

gion so that the state's efforts to increase SCD staffing through HB 2 do not result in a "status quo" with continued inadequate support for farmers and the Bay.

MASCD will be meeting with our congressional members in July in conjunction with the NACS Summer Board meeting to discuss NRCS funding and the Conservation Title of the 2007 Farm Bill. I hope we can take many district supervisors to make our Hill visits.

At the NACD Annual Meeting, Maryland again received the District participation Award for our continued support of NACD programs.

I would like to thank the district staff for their continued support of NRCS as they re-evaluate their staffing within the local delivery system. I think we all agree that although time consuming, the process has been worthwhile and has reinforced our need to ensure that we have strong partners as the local level as well as our traditional federal and state partners.

I believe that there are opportunities for SCD's to strengthen their partnerships at the county level with the increased interest in improving sediment and erosion control and stormwater management to reduce pollution from non-agricultural sources. Many of our more urban districts have already developed strong local relationships but there are new opportunities, particularly in the more rural areas, as counties face increased development pressures. Districts may approve only high quality sediment and erosion control plans, but without adequate inspection and enforcement, we have all seen construction activities take advantage of little or no oversight and reduce important protections for the Bay. Legislation in Annapolis is seeking ways to improve sediment and erosion control and stormwater management activities and MASCD welcomes the opportunity to provide district input.

## CIVIL RIGHTS

### **CELEBRATING BLACK HISTORY MONTH, BY TONY HARVEY, NRCS MARYLAND BLACK EMPHASIS PROGRAM MANAGER**

NRCS employees will be celebrating Black History Month during the entire month of February. The theme of this year's National African American History Month, "From Slavery to Freedom: Africans in the Americas," recalls African Americans' long journey to justice and commemorates the courage and persistence of the heroes who called on our Nation to live up to its founding promise.

I wanted to inform you that the recognition posters are on the way to all offices. Please display the posters in your offices. Please take a few minutes to read the Proclamation below issued by the President.

### **2007 NATIONAL AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY MONTH**

A Proclamation by the President of the United States: African Americans have been an integral part of America for generations, and our Nation is stronger because of their contributions. During National African American History Month, we honor the achievements of African Americans and recognize our continued responsibility to strive for equality for all our citizens.

With grace and determination, African American men and women have shaped our Nation and influenced American life. Frederick Douglass, W.E.B. DuBois, Rosa Parks, and Martin Luther King, Jr., advanced the cause of civil rights for all Americans and helped change the course of American history. Educators Booker T. Washington and Carter G. Woodson helped break down racial barriers in education to provide opportunity for all people. Americans have benefited from the achievements of scientists like George Washington Carver. Artists such as Pearl Bailey, Ella Fitzgerald, and Louis Armstrong inspired Americans and created some of the most celebrated music this Nation has ever produced.

The theme of this year's National African American History Month, "From Slavery to Freedom: Africans in the Americas," recalls African Americans' long journey to justice and commemorates the courage and persistence of the heroes who called on our Nation to live up to its founding promise. A century after African American soldiers fought for their freedom on the battlefields of the Civil War, African Americans struggled peacefully for their rights in the streets of Birmingham, Alabama, and on the Mall in Washington, D.C. Courageous civil rights leaders answered hate and discrimination with love and dignity, toppled segregation laws, and worked to make America a more just and hopeful Nation.

All Americans can be proud of the progress we have made, yet the work for a more perfect union is not done. As we celebrate National African American History Month, we reaffirm our commitment to build a society where every individual has the opportunity to achieve the promise of this great land.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, GEORGE W. BUSH, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim February 2007 as National African American History Month. I call upon public officials, educators, and all the people of the United States to observe this month with appropriate programs and activities that honor the significant contributions African Americans have made to our Nation.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-sixth day of January, in the year of our Lord two thousand seven, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirty-first.

GEORGE W. BUSH

### **MARTIN LUTHER KING MEMORIAL**

During January, Federal and State employees celebrated the birthday of the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. He would have been 78 years of age on Monday, January 15th.

This past November, the ceremonial groundbreaking for the King Memorial located on the National Mall occurred. Dr. King has become the first African-American to be honored with his own memorial on the National Mall and the third non-President to be honored in this way.

The Memorial is situated on a four-acre site along the Tidal Basin. The Washington, DC Martin Luther King, Jr. National Memorial is adjacent to the Franklin D. Roosevelt Memorial and on a direct line between the Lincoln and Jefferson Memorials.

### **2006 HIGHLIGHTS OF THE MARYLAND PARTNERSHIP CIVIL RIGHTS COMMITTEE BY MELISSA HANNER, NRCS SOIL SCIENTIST/GIS FORMER CHAIR OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

First I want to thank Maryland NRCS and our Partners for the opportunity I have had to serve on the Civil Rights Advisory Committee for the past 4 years. After serving for 3 years as Hispanic Emphasis Program Manager and one year as the chairperson of the Committee, I am rotating off the Committee. I'd like to welcome Terry Heinard as the Committee's new chairperson.

This past year has been especially productive, with the Committee members working together to revise their bylaws, participate in career fairs and host a student employee luncheon. The Special Emphasis Program Managers have worked hard to learn about and provide outreach in their areas. I am happy the Committee members have been able to make contributions to the Partnership Press and assist with the Field Office Compliance Reviews.

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## CRAC HIGHLIGHTS

*(Continued from page 5)*

The Committee has finalized this year's Business Plan, which will guide them through another productive year exploring and providing feedback to management and fellow employees on Civil Rights. This collateral duty work is at times challenging, but it is also a rewarding opportunity to learn a lot about the agency and the diverse groups our agency serves and employs. I hope as many employees as are able will serve on this Committee at sometime during their career.

*The Maryland Civil Rights Advisory Committee is made up of NRCS and Partnership employees from around the state. The Committee, also known humorously by its acronyms CRAC, meets quarterly to review statewide Civil Rights issues and activities and provide feedback to the management team. The Committee is composed of 6 NRCS Special Emphasis Program Managers, 4 Partnership members, and 5 NRCS members-at-large. Contact any of the Committee members to learn how you can get involved. <http://www.md.nrcs.usda.gov/about/civilrights.html>*

## VOLUNTEER

### NRCS MARYLAND EMPLOYEE MINNICK VOLUNTEERS FOR SECOND TOUR AS AN AG ADVISOR IN AFGHANISTAN

John Minnick, a career employee with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in Maryland recently volunteered to begin a second continuous tour of duty in eastern Afghanistan, reported Virginia (Ginger) L. Murphy, NRCS Maryland State Conservationist.

Prior to reporting to the Nangarhar and Laghman Provinces in Afghanistan, along the border with Pakistan, Minnick worked as the District Conservationist in Anne Arundel County. He began his international assignment in May 2006 and is expected to return in November 2007. His return stateside assignment is unknown at this time.

Minnick serves as an agricultural advisor to the Commander of a US-military led Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT). During a stateside visit, Minnick described his work in Afghanistan as very rewarding. He said he travels to local areas and works through the PRT which provides funds to the villages to purchase seeds, tools, and piping for water supply. Minnick provides the technical assistance, via an interpreter, to help villagers plant and maintain a crop that will survive in the mountainous climate and instructs farmers on soil fertility and plant diseases.

Minnick provided a description of the area; many days the temperature soars above 130 degrees (F) and water is scarce. The area only receives six inches of water annually. Local crops include grains, tomatoes, cucumbers, citrus fruit, and olives.

"The villagers are hard working people. Families work together, from dawn to dusk, in the fields with very little ag tools and almost no tractors," said Minnick. "The fields are small, usually less than one-half acre and must be terraced and irrigated, so water will flow into all parts of the field. Ag practices in Afghanistan do not fit into the typical American model of agriculture."

"Crops that are harvested must be sold or consumed quickly as there is very little electricity for refrigerated storage," he added. Minnick explained why he wanted to accept a second tour of duty. "I wanted to serve my country overseas in a reconstruction purpose. I find it very rewarding to use my agricultural training and experience gained while working for NRCS to help the Afghan people. They are in desperate need of conservation technical assistance."

"I am excited about working with the University of Nangarhar's Department of Agriculture to set up a soil-analysis laboratory and the opportunity to work with local ag scientists. I want to build a watershed management structure for irrigation and flood prevention (to capture water when the snow melts in the nearby mountains). The villages need to learn how to store water as their water sources usually run dry in July."

Minnick described the villagers, ".....as very generous and always offer to share chai tea and talk with me at length during my visits." Minnick follows local dress codes, by wearing a head scarf and keeping skin covered. He travels with a military escort and is required to wear body armor when outside of the military compound where he resides.

Minnick said he is proud of his contributions to the ag communities and appreciates the support from NRCS and especially the PRT. He recently was awarded battle coins by the US Armed Forces Commander of the PRT to commemorate his work in Afghanistan.



**2007 LEGISLATIVE SESSION, (CONTINUED)**

BY LYNNE HOOT, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, MASCD

If MDA is to fully implement the Agricultural Stewardship Act of 2006 to provide at least 110 field employees (originally written in the Water Quality Improvement Act of 1998), they must hire 30 new employees for soil conservation districts over the next four years and retain existing trained staff. MDA must be able to offer competitive salaries to get viable candidates and retain current employees.

We ask that MDA be authorized to use the funding allocated from HB 2 to complete their Amended Class Salary upgrades for FY 2008. This will not require an increase in their budget allocation and will enable them to employ and retain personnel in the soil conservation districts to provide technical assistance to Maryland farmers to install best management practices to protect the Chesapeake Bay.

Another effort to improve the staffing in soil conservation districts is HB 558 Department of Agriculture - Appointment or Employment - Exemption from Ethics Restrictions, which will allow the Department of Agriculture to hire farmers. Currently this is deemed unethical as farmers are regulated by the Department. There are many farmers with small operations who cannot survive without off-farm employment and many seek positions with a major interest in gaining health insurance for their families. Positions at MDA, especially those in the soil conservation district, provide a perfect opportunity for these farmers to work in an area where they have expertise and understanding and who are well received by the clients they serve. Who better to write a soil and water conservation plan and schedule the implementation of the best management practices in the plan than a fellow farmer who understands cropping patterns, farming issues and financial limitations?

MASCD supports HB 471 - State Government – State Soil – Sassafras Soil which designates Sassafras Sandy Loam as the State soil. The Sassafras Soil Series covers more land area than any other soil in Maryland (310,000 acres in 15 counties), is very fertile, is used for a wide variety of purposes, and is unique in the history of the State of Maryland and the United States having been established as one of the first soils in 1901. Its significance in Maryland was identified in 1993 when NRCS and other soil scientists from across the state first identified it as the state's most significant soil. Now, as the Smithsonian Institute prepares to honor the importance of soil to this nation by showcasing the state soils from across America in 2008, it is timely that Maryland should designate Sassafras Soil Series as the state soil.

Stormwater Management and Sediment and Erosion Control: Several bills have been introduced to evaluate and improve stormwater management and sediment and erosion control. Not everyone understands the role that soil conservation districts serve having the legal authority to review and approve sediment and erosion control plans for construction activities. There is considerable support for improving stormwater management especially as it relates to retrofitting existing facilities or providing new ones where no stormwater control practices exist. It appears that most of the concerns about sediment and erosion control stem from a lack of inspection & enforcement rather than the construction project not having an approved plan. MASCD will endeavor to explain the role of SCD's in stormwater management and sediment and erosion control and ensure a presence for districts on any task force that is asked to review and make recommendations on exiting or new programs.

**MASCD PASSES 8 RESOLUTIONS AT THE 2007 WINTER MEETING**

At the recent MASCD Winter meeting in Annapolis, MASCD passed the following resolutions at the General Session:

**State Issues:**

MASCD requests that the Governor and Secretary of Budget and Management (DBM) support the Annual Salary Review (ASR) for soil conservation district employees. A letter is to be sent to the Governor and Secretary of DBM.

MASCD supports the addition of vertical tillage equipment to the list of equipment eligible for Maryland's conservation tillage equipment for Income Tax Subtraction Modification.

MASCD supports the designation of "The Sassafras Soil Series" as Maryland's state soil.

MASCD urges MDA, district staff, and the state technical committee to work together to review and simplify the MACS Cover Crop Program.

**Federal Issues:**

MASCD requests that NRCS provides additional engineering support to districts, including filling existing vacancies of engineering positions, to help the increasing ag and urban workload.

MASCD urges NRCS to:

1. Recognize the importance of the districts continued inclusion in the restructuring process.
2. Recognize the importance of locally lead conservation.
3. Provide for clarification for the timeline for implementation.
4. Clearly illustrate the budget savings and the methodology used to support the restructuring conclusions ensuring that the current level of conservation delivery is protected and/or enhanced.

MASCD opposes any federal Farm Bill proposal that provides funding for technical service Providers (TSP) rather than boosting NRCS staff funding for Conservation Technical Assistance (CTA).

**MASCD Action Items:**

MASCD should investigate options for developing statewide ID cards for district personnel.

## CONGRESSMAN GILCHREST TO HOST AG MEETINGS TO DISCUSS UPCOMING FARM BILL

As Congress gets ready to tackle a new Farm Bill this year, Congressman Wayne T. Gilchrest (R-Maryland-1<sup>st</sup>) will be spending some time in February and early March visiting farm operations and hosting meetings to hear from farmers about how the Farm Bill affects them.

“We want to talk with those people directly affected by the Farm Bill and hear their views on how it can be improved to help protect the family farm and keep agriculture viable here in the 1<sup>st</sup> District,” Gilchrest said.

Congressman Gilchrest plans to visit a variety of agricultural operations, including an organic community supported agriculture (CSA) farm, a grain elevator, a lumber mill, a greenhouse operation, a dairy farm, a new biodiesel facility planned for the Shore, and many other locations in counties across the 1<sup>st</sup> District.

Here are the dates/times for his Agriculture Town Meetings:

### Monday, February 26, 2007

8:30 a.m.

Linkwood-Salem Volunteer Fire Company  
3905 Ocean Gateway  
Linkwood, MD 21835

7 p.m.

USDA Service Center  
30730 Park Drive  
Princess Anne, MD 21853

### Tuesday, February 27, 2007

8 a.m.

Cecilton Volunteer Fire Company  
110 East Main Street  
Cecilton, MD 21913

Noon

Maryland Cooperative Extension Service  
Harford County Office  
2335 Rock Spring Road  
Forest Hill, MD 21050

### Monday, March 5, 2007

1 p.m.

The Arundel Center, 1<sup>st</sup> floor meeting room  
44 Calvert Street  
Annapolis, MD 21401

For more information about the meetings or the Farm Bill, contact Congressman Gilchrest's office at (877) 891-9719.

## 2007 SMALL WATERSHED GRANTS PROGRAM SEEKING PROPOSALS

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, in partnership with the Chesapeake Bay Program, is pleased to announce the 2007 Small Watershed Grants Program. For more detailed information and application materials please visit the website: [www.nfwf.org/chesapeake/](http://www.nfwf.org/chesapeake/).

For information on the proposal application process, contact Amanda Bassow (amanda.bassow@nfwf.org) or Brian Kittler (brian.kittler@nfwf.org) at the Foundation. Proposals are due April 2, 2007.

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and the Chesapeake Bay Program also invite you to attend a free workshop on the Chesapeake Bay Small Watershed Grants Program. This workshop will provide an overview of the Small Watershed Grants Program, offer recommendations on what makes for a strong proposal, and answer any questions that potential applicants may have about the significant changes in the Small Watershed Grants Program for 2007.

Please note that there will only be one workshop for the Small Watershed Grants Program held this year. All are encouraged to attend Friday, February 16, 2007, at the Chesapeake Bay Program Office in the “Fish Shack” Conference Room, 9:30 AM - 12:30 PM. Directions can be found at [www.chesapeakebay.net/directions.htm](http://www.chesapeakebay.net/directions.htm).

The workshop will also be available via webcast. Please RSVP to chesapeake@nfwf.org and indicate whether you will participate in person or via webcast. If you plan to participate via webcast, instructions will be e-mailed to you. A recording of the webcast workshop will be posted on the NFWF website and available for download.

## NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT TRAINING, MARCH 14

MDA's first nutrient management training class for golf course superintendents is scheduled for March 14, 2007 at Patuxent Research Refuge in Laurel, MD. The course will cover golf course nutrient recommendations, soil and tissue testing, and record keeping requirements. With nearly 200 golf courses in MD, this class is expected to sell out quickly. Visit [www.mda.state.md.us](http://www.mda.state.md.us) to register. Scroll down the Quick Links to Nutrient Management and click on 2007 Nutrient Management Training Classes for a registration form.

## HULLESS BARLEY COMMODITY COVER CROP

Farmers across the state planted 700 acres of Doyce hulless barley last fall for an added bonus of \$15/acre above the states regular commodity cover crop program that allows for fertilizer to be applied after March 1<sup>st</sup> and the crop to be harvested. Under the USDA Conservation Innovation Grant, awarded to the Maryland Grain producers Utilization Board, Maryland farmers will again be given this opportunity for the upcoming fall. Farmers can sign up during the regular cover crop sign-up period to grow up to 10,000 acres of hulless barley for an additional incentive payment of \$12/acre. In the 3<sup>rd</sup> year of the grant, farmers will be eligible for \$10/acre for up to 48,000 acres. It is anticipated that by the spring of 2009, when this crop is harvested, that there will be an opportunity to market the hulless barley to a state ethanol plant. Farmers are asked to contact their local soil conservation district for more information.

## TRAINING

### “HORSE FARM: MUD, MANURE, AND PASTURE MANAGEMENT” WORKSHOP, MARCH 20, 2007

Elmer Dengler, NRCS State Grazing Specialist announces a training workshop, titled, “Horse Farm: Mud, Manure, and Pasture Management Workshop on March 20, 2007 from 7 pm – 9 pm in Laurel, Maryland. A longer session will also be available from 9AM-3:30 PM. Call 443-482-2934 to reserve a seat for either!

The workshop is sponsored by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), the Maryland-Delaware Forage Council / Maryland Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative Coalition and the Maryland Cooperative Extension Service.

The workshop will be held at the US Fish and Wildlife National Visitor’s Center at 10901 Scarlet Tanager Loop, Laurel, MD 20708-4027, off of Powder Mill Road (East) from (Route 295) Baltimore Washington Expressway. For directions, please call 443-482-2935 or 301-497-5760.

Topics during the day session from 9 AM-3:30 PM include:

- Horse Fencing Issues and Materials
- 6 Techniques for Managing Mud on Horse Properties
- Composting and Other Useful Manure Options
- Horse Manure Storage and Composting
- Lunch –ON YOUR OWN BRING A SACK LUNCH
- Nutritional Needs of Horses on Pasture
- Growing More Pasture! For Large and Small Places
- Saving Dollars by Grazing for Cover or Forage Production

Topics at the Evening Session from 7 PM-9PM include:

- Nutritional Needs of Horses on Pasture
- Growing More Pasture! For Large and Small Places
- Managing Mud on Horse Properties
- Nutritional Needs of Horses on Pasture

Working in partnership, the local Soil Conservation Districts, the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, the Maryland Department of Agriculture, and Maryland Extension all provide technical and where possible financial assistance on conservation and water quality practices such as: manure storage, composting, pasture establishment and management, heavy use areas, and water systems that improve environmental quality on farms. Information on how to get this assistance will be available at this evening workshop.

## CALVERT SCD HOSTS PASTURE WALK AND MEDIA TAPING

On September 28, 2006, the Calvert Soil Conservation District (SCD) and NRCS Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative Coalition (GLCI) sponsored a pasture walk and a USDA media taping at Donald T. Gott’s beef cattle farm in Calvert County. In the morning, Dave Kosling with USDA TV and Brenda Curtis with USDA Radio interviewed and filmed Calvert SCD staff, NRCS GLCI’s Elmer Dengler, Dr. Les Vough with the University of Maryland Cooperative Extension Service, and farm owner/operator Donald T. (Tim) Gott at his farm on the Patuxent River. The interview focused on the conservation efforts of farmers to improve water quality in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed. Mr. Gott’s conservation efforts, which include fencing cattle out of a stream, rotational grazing, progressive pasture planting, and creation of wetlands were discussed.

In the evening a pasture walk was held at the farm, that focused on forage management and cutting production costs. Participants saw an established stand of novel endophyte tall fescue while Dengler and Vough discussed pasture management and provided details on the establishment and management of the grass. The benefits of the grass, which include lower production costs and its high resistance to livestock traffic, were also highlighted.

Calvert SCD and GLCI view this grass as a key to minimizing soil erosion on the numerous highly erodible livestock pastures and the increasing number of horse pastures found in Calvert County. Widespread adoption of this grass on Calvert livestock operations should have a significant effect on water quality in the Bay. Through this pasture walk and taping and other similar events, Calvert SCD and GLCI hope to promote prevalent use of this grass and other livestock conservation practices in a county in which a significant amount of runoff goes directly into the Bay.



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, audiotope, 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.

## STEWARDSHIP WEEK



The NACD Stewardship and Education Committee is pleased to announce 2007 Stewardship Week, themed "Today is the Day to be a part of Conservation's Power." Stewardship Week will be observed April 29 - May 6, 2007. Basic topics to be covered in the 2007 theme materials include energy saved by no-till farming practices; solar, wind, alternative fuel sources; renewable and non-renewable resources; conservation at home; and partnerships with conservation districts, community and families working together.

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! For more information, NACD, 202-547-6223, <http://stewardshipweek.com/>.



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