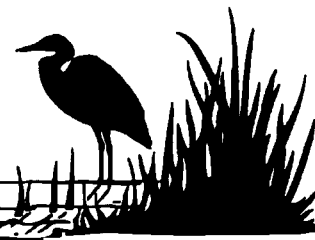


PARTNERSHIP PRESS

Maryland Conservation



Spring 2004 Volume 11, Issue 2

A MESSAGE FROM MASCD PRESIDENT

BY ROBERT WILSON

Spending the winter in Florida was very pleasant. I highly recommend it, especially when you have someone as capable as Lee McDaniel to leave your responsibilities with! My thanks to Lee for holding down the fort during my two months away.

Lee reports that you had a good March MASCD Board meeting with some interesting discussion. Treasurer, Martha Clark presented a budget for district review prior to the Annual meeting. This was in response to concerns raised at the 2003 Annual meeting that districts need a greater opportunity to review the budget prior to approval, especially when it calls for a fee increase. The 2004/5 MASCD budget keeps district fees at the same level as 2003/4.

MASCD's day in Washington, DC was held on March 17th. Fortunately Kent County came through as Wickes Westcott, Karen Miller and Lynne Hoot visited all ten Maryland Congressional offices, sharing information on conservation issues. We truly need to make a bigger commitment to this effort as we have several influential members of Congress who can use the information we provide to make a difference. It is not an accident that Maryland's conservation programs are well funded at the federal level.

We also have influence in Annapolis, conservation fared surprisingly well in the budget considering the overall state of the economy. In fact, agriculture as a whole fared remarkably well. Lynne Hoot has prepared a "Sine Die" end of session report for your review. Give her a call if you have any questions. Remember, now is the time to consider legislative changes for the 2005 session. Bring your ideas to the Annual meeting.

Plans for the Annual meeting are well underway at the Rocky Gap Lodge and Golf Resort, July 19-21. Mark your calendar. Our theme is "Energizing Conservation", and our opening session will focus on energy issues – both use and production. We will also learn how the new regulations on the Conservation Security Program will impact Maryland farmers. Unfortunately this program has been severely under funded but in light of the recent ruling by the World Trade Organization on Cotton subsidies, we may see greater emphasis placed on "green" payments as rewards for conservation rather than rewards for production.

The Long Range Strategic Planning Committee met recently to evaluate the progress on our 2010 goals. While not complete, much has been accomplished and I thank you for your support of MASCD activities as we carry out our important mission.

SINE DIE REPORT, BY LYNNE HOOT, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

BUDGET

In spite of tightening budgets, the Office of Resource Conservation and soil conservation district activities fared as well as could be expected during the 2004 Legislative Session. Operating budgets were kept at the same funding level as this Fiscal year. Although the Governor had put an additional \$250,000 request for cover crops this increase was eliminated so cover crop funding will also remain the same. The funding level for the MACS program is at \$5.6 million. The MALPF program however will see a significant reduction in funding. They will not receive money from Program Open Space; instead they will receive about \$5 million in bond money and a further \$750,000 from Green Print funds. They will also seek federal funding through the Farm Bill. The MALPF state budget appropriation is usually around \$15-20 million.

WATER QUALITY

SB 320 & HB 555 - Water Pollution - The Chesapeake Bay Watershed Restoration Fund

SB 320 was the Governor's bill to raise funds to improve waste water treatment plants. As passed SB 320 was amended to include a \$30/year fee for septic system users starting in October 2005. The delay is to allow the Administration time to work out how the funds will be collected. 40% of the funds collected from the septic provision are to pay for cover crops through MDA. The remaining 60% is to be provided as grants to upgrade septic systems. A committee will work out the details. The bill was also amended to include the nutrient management bill in its entirety. The companion bill HB 555 did not pass.

SB 182 & HB 291 - Water Quality Improvement Act - Nutrient Management

SB 182 did pass even though the same language exists in SB 320. The companion bill HB 291 did not pass.

HB 495 - Water Management Administration - Wetlands and Waterways Programs Fees

This bill did not pass however MDE had offered amendments to exempt projects that are being carried out as part of a soil conservation and water quality plan

HB 288 & SB 184 - Department of Natural Resources - Chesapeake Bay Recovery Fund

These were given unfavorable reports. They were the Administration's bills to raise funds from various sources to protect the Bay. CBF and other environmental groups objected that it might take their funding away. The committees agreed to reconsider the bills next year with the objectives more clearly spelled out.

(Continued on page 7)

PROGRAM

NEW MEMBERS ON NRCS MARYLAND'S CIVIL RIGHTS ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS

The following individuals have volunteered to serve as Maryland's collateral-duty Special Emphasis Program Managers (SEPMs) and members of the Maryland Conservation Partnership Civil Rights Advisory Committee (CRAC). The Committee serves as Partnership management's advisory body to promote and assist in meaningful and effective civil rights programs within the Maryland Conservation Partnership.

NRCS

Maggie Rhodes, Chair
Melissa Rochford, Vice Chair
Nancy Basil, Secretary
Carol Hollingsworth
Terry Heinard
Herman Purnell
Eric Hines
Melissa Rochford
Valerie Cohen
Oliver Miranda
Annette Ensor
Gary Wynn

Partners

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

Advisors

NRCS – Ronald Harris
NRCS – Selena Miller
NRCS – Sandra Thompson

Special Emphasis Program Managers

Federal Women's Program Manager

Nancy Basil
NRCS RC&D Secretary
Eastern Shore RC&D Office

Hispanic Emphasis Program Manager

Melissa Rochford
NRCS Soil Scientist
State Office

Disability Emphasis Program Manager

Valerie Cohen
NRCS Soil Scientist
Prince George's Field Service Center

Asian/Pacific American Emphasis Program Manager

Oliver Miranda
NRCS District Conservationist
Prince George's Field Service Center

Native American Emphasis Program Manager

Annette Ensor
NRCS Soil Conservation Technician
Harford Field Service Center

Black Emphasis Program Manager

Gary Wynn
NRCS District Conservationist
Calvert Field Service Center

Please feel free to contact any of the CRAC members regarding any employment issues.

2002 ANNUAL NRI DATA RELEASED, BY MELISSA ROCHFORD, NRCS MARYLAND NRI COORDINATOR

An initial release of the 2002 Annual National Resources Inventory (NRI) was made on Earth Day. Results are being released in two phases – the first phase provides estimates on land use and wetlands status and trends on nonfederal lands in the contiguous United States. The second phase will provide additional estimates on land use, erosion, and land use conversions. The second phase is planned for release this summer.

Key findings in the 2002 NRI

The 2002 NRI indicates that the majority of the contiguous United States (71 percent) can be classified as nonfederal rural land - nearly 1.4 billion acres. Non-federal rural land use includes rangeland, forest land, cropland, pastureland, other rural land, and Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) land. NRI results indicate the nation's cropland acreage declined from 420 million acres in 1982 to 368 million acres in 2002, a decrease of about 12 percent. The net decline of cropland acreage between 1992 and 2002 was 13 million acres, or 3 percent. The percentage of total cropland that is non-cultivated has continued to increase since 1982. Non-cultivated cropland accounted for 15 percent (57 million acres) of cropland acreage in 2002, up from 11 percent (44 million acres) in 1982.

Additionally, the 2002 NRI indicates that wetlands cover 7 percent of the nonfederal land area of the 48 contiguous states, accounting for nearly 111 million acres. Most wetlands occur in the eastern half of the United States, particularly in the Lake States, Southeast, and Delta States farm production regions. Maryland makes up part of the Northeast region, where palustrine and estuarine wetlands comprise approximately 14.2 million acres.

The 2002 NRI also indicates that nationally, most wetlands occur on forest land, while 15 percent of wetlands occur on lands associated with crop production and pasture. Between 1997 and 2002, there was a significant wetland gain due to agriculture - an average annual net gain of 26,000 acres. Average losses of 10,000 wetland acres per year were more than offset by corresponding average annual gains of 36,000 acres.

About the Data

Results calculated from the NRI database produce estimates - not absolute facts. This is because the results are tabulations of NRI sample data as opposed to data from a census or a direct measurement. Proper interpretation of NRI results requires an understanding of the inventory procedures and the amount of uncertainty associated with each estimate. Margins of error (at the 95 percent confidence level) are reported for all NRI estimates.

It will take a number of years before the Annual NRI provides reliability levels comparable to those of the 1997 NRI. National, regional, and some state-level status estimates will be available in 2005. The 2005 NRI reliability level should approach that of the 1997 NRI, with the exception that many sub-state level trend estimates still will have unacceptable levels of statistical uncertainty.

Additional information about the 2002 annual NRI release can be found at <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/technical/land/nri02/>.

PROGRAM CONT'D

NRCS AND PARTNERS ENTER 2ND YEAR OF CONSERVATION EFFECTS ASSESSMENT PROJECT (CEAP), BY MELISSA ROCHFORD, NRCS MARYLAND NRI COORDINATOR

The USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service is partnering with USDA's Agricultural Research Service (ARS), National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS), Farm Service Agency (FSA) and other agencies to conduct a national assessment of environmental benefits and effects of 2002 Farm Bill programs. The Conservation Effects Assessment Project (CEAP) studies the benefits of most conservation practices implemented through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program, Wetlands Reserve Program, Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program, Conservation Reserve Program and NRCS Conservation Technical Assistance. This project evaluates conservation practices and management systems related to nutrient, manure, and pest management, buffer systems, tillage, irrigation, and drainage practices, as well as wildlife habitat establishment, and wetland protection and restoration. CEAP will provide the farming community, general public, legislators and others with a scientific accounting of environmental benefits achieved through conservation programs.

CEAP is being conducted using the National Resources Inventory (NRI) as the sampling base for estimating the environmental benefits of conservation practices. NASS is conducting farmer surveys in select cropland fields containing NRI sample points. The farmer surveys are used to gather information about field level land management and conservation practices. FSA and NRCS are gathering information regarding the implementation of conservation practices and program participation.

The farmer survey component of CEAP began in 2003 and will be conducted every fall for the duration of the project. The information collected in the annual CEAP surveys will be used in physical process models to estimate the loss of materials from farm fields, accumulation of soil carbon, and water quality benefits. Annual reports will be published beginning in 2005 that document the environmental benefits of conservation practices.

For more information on the Conservation Effects Assessment Project or the National Resources Inventory, visit <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/technical/NRI/>.

ENVIROTHON

MARYLAND TEENS GEAR UP FOR FIRST ROUND OF ENVIRONMENTAL COMPETITIONS

Across Maryland, teenagers are grabbing their binoculars, pulling on their waterproof boots, and consulting their field guides as they gear up to take part in the first round of competitions leading up to the 2004 Canon International Envirothon, North America's largest and most prestigious natural resources event for high school students. Students participating in the Envirothon have been studying the state's natural resources for the past year. They have learned from the experts how to identify and categorize living resources, perform soil surveys, measure tree heights and solve other complex natural resource issues. Teams are tested in five areas: soils, aquatics, wildlife, forestry and environmental issues. The team with the highest cumulative total wins the local competition and advances to the Maryland Envirothon. The state Envirothon will be held at Mt. Mary's college in Emmitsburg. The winner of the Maryland Envirothon earns the right to represent the state at the 2004 Canon International Envirothon slated for July 26-August 1, at Wesleyan College in Buckhannon, West Virginia.

For a complete list of county Envirothon competition dates and locations, contact Beth Horsey at the Maryland Department of Agriculture, 410-841-5865, or visit the Maryland Association of Soil Conservation District's website at www.mascd.net and click on Maryland Envirothon. Envirothon is sponsored by soil conservation districts and the State Soil Conservation Committee.

TRAINING

7 STEPS TO A POWERFUL PRESENTATION

Next time that you give a presentation, try these seven steps that will increase the power of your communication. You may feel a little uncomfortable, but try to be comfortable as you make changes to your presentation style.

- 1. Meet, greet, and incorporate...** Introduce yourself to audience members as they enter the meeting room. Reference people's names as you give your presentation.
- 2. Start at the back...** If you are wearing a wireless microphone, stand at the back of the room as you are introduced. Walk down the aisle to the front and engage the audience in questions like, "Raise your hand if you want to learn more about...."
- 3. 360 degree story...** If you are giving a long example or telling a story to illustrate a point, walk around the room. Your audience will follow you and pay attention as you move around the room.
- 4. Lose the lectern...** Don't stand behind the lectern the whole time. Move around the room. You can turn the lectern sideways if you need to review lecture notes.
- 5. Eliminate the housekeeping...** Discuss administrative issues at the beginning, such as breaks and lunch. This will answer audience questions in advance.
- 6. Present without PowerPoint...** Have handouts available at the end of the session so the audience can focus on you and what you are saying without trying to quickly read a screen.
- 7. Talk to the audience...** Become listener-friendly. Be conversant with your audience, instead of lecturing them with statements. If you find yourself lecturing the audience, shift gears, and ask the audience a question to break the lecture cycle.

Excerpted from *Presentations* magazine, April 2004.

MDE & BACTERIA SOURCE TRACKING

Lee Curry and Kathy Brohawn, MDE presented information to SSCC in February on the bacteria source tracking program which monitors water quality to determine shellfish closures. This methodology is also being applied to TMDLs to allocate loadings and improvements.

The methodology is one used in Virginia and consists of establishing a library of potential bacteria sources - human, livestock and wildlife - using scat samples - against which water samples are compared with results being based on antibiotic resistance. It also can more narrowly define animal type such as differentiating avian sources. They have piloted this method in the Wye River working with Virginia Department of Environmental Quality, EPA and Salisbury University.

The sampling protocol will be monthly for one year. Sampling will occur in both tidal and nontidal waters. The TMDL program has found that this type of sampling has a greater level of confidence than current modeling efforts as are in use for nutrient limited TMDLs. MDE needs to complete this work by 2007 and has 24 shellfish (bacteria) related TMDLs scheduled for monitoring in 2004.

Hoot asked how MDE will address situations when bacteria sources causing impairment are found to be wildlife? Brohawn said data could be used for a baseline and uncontrollable source like wildlife may not be part of criteria for establishing impairment. However Curry said no decisions had been made in this regard.

Sandt questioned how seasonal changes impact results? Brohawn said in the Wye River deer are the problem and they don't fluctuate seasonally, however a greater human influence is present in the summer potentially from boats. Brohawn and Curry requested additional feedback and asked for assistance in understanding antibiotics in use in MD animal industries.

MODIFICATIONS TO MANURE TRANSPORT COST-SHARE

Emergency regulations were approved at the end of March to increase the flexibility of the Manure Transport Project and make it easier for animal operations to obtain state cost-share funds. The regulations are effective immediately.

The new guidelines allow livestock producers-including dairy, beef, and swine operations-to receive cost-share assistance to transport manure within their own operation, provided the manure is moved more than one mile from the production or storage site. Poultry operations are required to transport their litter a minimum of seven miles from the poultry house or storage facility for use within their own operation. Revised regulations for applying manure to crop or pastureland under this program are also in place.

Receiving farms may apply manure according to a nitrogen-based nutrient management plan if the soil test results register less than 101 for phosphorus on the Fertility Index Value (FIV). FIV is a measurement used to determine the availability of nutrients to a plant or crop. A phosphorus-based nutrient management plan is required for soil registering 101 to 150 on the FIV. Fields measuring over 150 on the FIV are not eligible to receive transported manure under the program.

Regulations were also modified to waive the bonding requirement for brokers or alternative use facilities stockpiling less than 500 tons of manure. However, these operations must have a Maryland Department of Agriculture prior-approved contingency plan in the event that the manure cannot be used for its intended purpose. Operations stockpiling more than 500 tons of manure are still required to post a bond or other form of security with MDA in order to be eligible for cost-share funding.

Maryland's Manure Transport Program helps poultry, dairy, beef and other livestock producers cover the costs of transporting excess manure off their farms. Animal producers with high soil phosphorus levels or inadequate land to spread their manure can receive cost-share assistance of up to \$18 per ton to transport excess manure for use on other farms or alternative use facilities that can use the product safely.

In FY 2003, Maryland's Manure Transport Program provided farmers with \$233,444 in state grant payments to transport 28,556 tons of manure away from areas with high soil phosphorus levels. Cost-share funds to transport poultry litter-comprising the bulk of the manure transported-were matched by Delmarva poultry companies, bringing to \$463,089 the total amount of financial support provided.

SUPERVISOR PER DIEM INCREASED

MASCD passed a resolution at their January meeting requesting the SSCC give consideration to increasing the per diem a SCD supervisor is eligible to receive. The resolution was initiated by Southern Maryland Area and Cal Steuart, Southern Area representative, explained that the per diem had been \$25 with an allowable \$25 from non-state match for approximately 25 years. He said that some SCD supervisors lose earnings by volunteering their time to SCD activities. Steuart recommended that the allowable match be authorized at \$100 allowing a maximum of \$125 per diem from state and match funds.

Connelly asked if payment of per diem was elective and if payment level could vary by SCD? Lawrence confirmed that currently SCDs provided different amounts but the cap was set by SSCC. After some discussion the SSCC approved a per diem allowance from non-state funding sources of up to \$100 per day to match the \$25 provided by the state for a maximum of \$125.

SSCC



Report

Information from the State Soil Conservation Committee, continued

2003 MACS PROGRAM REVIEW POINTS TO TRAINING NEEDS

Ed Sanders, MACS Administrator, presented a summary of 2003 MACS application data he had analyzed to determine program strengths and weaknesses in order to develop a training plan. 1373 applications were categorized in accordance with their main treatment objective into:

1. soil conservation,
2. animal operations and
3. CREP.

Additionally, eligibility requirements that MACS program uses to screen applicants were divided into three categories:

1. administrative requirements such as social security or FID number, signatures of applicant and responsible SCD representative, inclusion of deed;
2. program elements such as program payment limits, co-cost share requirements, inclusion of plan view and
3. BMP requirements such as relevant forms, ceiling rates, cost effectiveness calculations (tons soil saved or manure managed).

Notable was that out of 1373 applications, only 16 were denied by the MACS office. Reasons for denial include projects not being applied to agricultural land, applicants on probation for failure to comply with program, or applicants having reached per farm payment limits.

MACS had to hold up application approval to get additional information from SCDs for 37% of the 1373 submitted in 2003. Of those incomplete applications the following types of information was lacking: administrative (43%), program (40%), BMP (14%). The number of incomplete applications according to project type were: soil conservation (157), animal operations (422) and CREP (794). Sanders also provided the SSCC with information that broke out application status by county and region. He suggested that MDA develop a recognition program for those SCDs that were doing a good job locally administering the MACS program.

SSCC members discussed whether program changes would have impacted performance but Sanders noted that with the exception of animal unit eligibility criteria, most of the requirements had been in place for nearly 20 years. Concern was expressed about efficiencies of SCD and MACS staff suffering due to incomplete applications.

SSCC agreed that additional training could improve efficiencies and SCD supervisors needed to promote staff participation in these opportunities. Some support was also given to creating an awards program for SCD related to local administration of MACS.

NOTES/ANNOUNCEMENTS

Cooperative Extension is instituting a distant plant diagnostic system which will create a cyber-network to expand the capacity to diagnose disease. It will also eliminate the biosecurity problem related to the current system of mailing diseased plants to experts for identification. This service will be provided through the Home and Garden Center and at College Park.

Kodak American Greenways Grants

The Greenways Awards Program, a partnership of the Eastman Kodak Company, the Conservation Fund, and the National Geographic Society, provides small grants to stimulate the planning and design of greenways in communities throughout America. Grants can be used for all appropriate expenses needed to complete a greenway project, including planning, technical assistance, legal, and other costs. The maximum grant award is \$2,500, although most grants will range from \$500 to \$1,500. The application deadline is June 1, 2004; only online applications will be accepted. See the Conservation Fund web site for complete guidelines, application forms, and information on previous grant recipients at <http://www.conservationfund.org/?article=2372>.

Josh Sandt, DNR, will be retiring in June after 35 years of state service. Sandt has served as Department of Natural Resources representative to the SSCC for a number of years, has held various leadership positions with the Wildlife section at DNR and worked on CREP issues. A recognition celebration is planned for May 22 at Wye Lodge.

Supervisor Appointments

- Caroline SCD - David Harris
- Montgomery SCD - George Lechluder
- Prince George's SCD - James Edelen
- Queen Anne's SCD - Charles Haines
- St. Mary's SCD - Stanley Boothe
- Washington Co. SCD - Betty Meyers

SSCC Meeting Set for June 17

The State Soil Conservation Committee has announced that its next meeting will be held Thursday, June 17 at 9:30 A.M. at the Maryland Department of Agriculture's headquarters, 50 Harry S Truman Parkway, Annapolis.

The meeting is open to the public and will focus on soil conservation and water quality program implementation and policy development.

ITEMS OF INTEREST

DISTRICT MAKES CONTACT WITH ENGLAND

Calvert County's history is tied to England in many ways. The county and surrounding areas were settled and developed by the English. Maryland, along with many Calvert County towns, are named after prominent English noblemen. Examples are Prince Frederick, Marlborough, St. Leonard, and Dunkirk. Today, we have lost contact with this historical aspect of our community. However, the Calvert County Commissioners are working to change that. Recently our own local author and historian, Donald Shomette, has been researching the location of John Paul Jones' famous ship, the Bonhomme Richard, which was sunk in English waters. Don has written numerous books on local history, including Shipwrecks of the Chesapeake and Lost Towns of the Tidewater. Through his research, Don has begun to develop ties between Calvert County and Filey, England. Our Commissioners have requested that the two towns become "Sister Cities" and share information. This is how the district became involved.

We began conversations with the townspeople of Filey about conservation issues and the installation of best management practices on their farmland. We sent information to them on the types of BMPs we install and the benefits provided to farmers. From these exchanges we have begun to help the farming community of Filey with conservation planning and specific BMPs that would help their farmers retain soil and increase productivity. Recently, we began conversing with them about urban BMPs and sent them a manual about this and about community planning. Their town council now has a subcommittee that is looking into preparing documentation for their local farmers and urban planners to review. This is a relationship that will continue for many years to come and will benefit both the Filey farmers and our own community. We have reestablished ties to the "mother county" from which we derived. Calvert Soil Conservation District hopes to continue this relationship into the future and help those who have helped us become the great county we are today.

CONSERVATION INNOVATION GRANTS RFP'S ANNOUNCED

NRCS announced a request for proposals for the nationwide Conservation Innovation Grants competition with a \$15 million funding pool, published in the March 29th issue of *Federal Register*. Applications should demonstrate the use of innovative technologies or innovative approaches, or both, to address a natural resource concern or concerns. Applications are due May 28, 2004. The five natural resource concerns for possible funding through Conservation Innovation Grants for Fiscal Year 2003 are: Water Resources, Soil Resources, Atmospheric Resources, Grazing Land and Forest Health and Wildlife Habitat. The first year will only include a national competition. Next year there is a proposal for state-level awards. USDA has also announced the Conservation Innovation Grants interim final rule with request for comments published in the March 29th *Federal Register*. NACD will submit comments on behalf of conservation districts. For more information visit <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/cig/>.

MARYLAND GRAIN PRODUCERS SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE

The Maryland Grain Producers Utilization Board (MGPU) has allocated \$5,000 of grain check-off funds to support a scholarship program. The program, administered by the Maryland Grain Producers Association, will award two deserving students enrolled in a Maryland or out-of-state institution with \$2,500 scholarships. Now entering its seventh year, the purpose of the MGPU scholarship is to provide financial support to students interested in pursuing a career in agriculture. The scholarships will be awarded to Maryland residents who are enrolled in or accepted by a four-year institution and working toward a BS degree, or students enrolled in or accepted by a two-year institution with an agricultural program.

The selections will be based on agricultural background, family farm involvement, financial need, grade point average, agriculture related studies, career goals, and extra curricular activities. Applicants or the applicant's immediate family must be involved in the production of grain. The deadline for applications is June 1, 2004. For an application, call Lynne Hoot at 410-956-5771 or visit www.marylandgrain.com and look for scholarship information.

WATERSHED SUMMITS TO TAKE PLACE THIS YEAR

NACD will join a number of other organizations in conducting three Working Lands Watershed Summits beginning with one in St. Louis, MO on June 22-24, 2004 followed up by one in Sacramento, CA in late summer and the last one in Richmond, VA in early fall. The planning committee is encouraging state teams to attend the same workshop.

10-YR STRATEGIC PLAN FOR PARTNERS & COASTAL PROGRAMS

The US Fish & Wildlife Service (FWS) is in the information gathering process to help identify the issues and challenges that are facing fish and wildlife and their habitat now and over the next 10 years. The objective is to provide partner groups and organizations, like NACD, the opportunity to provide input on the Partners for Fish and Wildlife and Coastal programs. The input groups provide will aid in the FW's development of a 10-year Strategic Plan for the two programs. NACD is in the process of responding to the request for input.

The association also encourages state conservation district leaders to take part in this important process with state fish and wildlife agencies. More information on this process can be found at http://partners.fws.gov/More_Information/strategic%20plan.htm.

SINE DIE REPORT, BY LYNNE HOOT, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR*(Continued from page 1)***SB 65 - Environment - Water Quality - Penalties**

This bill increases the maximum penalties that may be imposed for knowingly making false statements or falsifying monitoring devices or methods in violation of water quality laws.

FORESTRY SEDIMENT & EROSION CONTROL**HB 783 - Environment - Sediment Control Plans for Forest Harvest Operations - Term**

This bill was withdrawn on the grounds that it is not needed. MDE met with the sponsor and explained how MDE & SCDs have expressed an interest in working with the forestry industry on this issue. MASCDC will work through SSCC to ensure that the concerns of the forestry industry are addressed so the bill does not come back again next year.

RENEWABLE ENERGY REQUIREMENT**HB 1308 & SB 869 - Electricity Regulation - Renewable Energy Portfolio Standard and Credit Trading - Maryland Renewable Energy Fund**

This bill passed requiring utility companies to purchase green energy. This issue needs to be studied in greater detail by agriculture as in the future, it could help large animal producers with methane digesters find a market for their end product. It could also help the viability of ag by providing alternative products such as switch grass, fast growing trees and wind generators.

AGRICULTURAL LAND PRESERVATION BILLS**HB 98 - Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation - Arbitration of Easement Values**

This bill did not pass out of EHEA. It was an MDA bill that would have set a deadline of September 30th of the following year for a decision to be made on a disputed easement value.

HB 164 - Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation

As passed, unless there is a foreclosure, a five-year lien placed on a lot created on land in the MALPF will prevent the premature sale of the lot.

HB 317 - Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Fund - Income Tax Checkoff

Had this bill passed it would allow taxpayers to make a voluntary donation to MALPF on their tax return.

HB 470 - Income Tax Checkoffs - Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Fund and Rural Legacy Program

Had this bill passed it would allow taxpayers to make a voluntary donation to MALPF and/or Rural Legacy on their tax return.

HB 606 - Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation - Installment Purchase Agreements and Termination of Easements

This bill authorizes MALPF to purchase lands through installment payments extending up to 15 years.

HB 607 - Income Tax - Gain Recognized on Sale of Agricultural Land Preservation Easement

Had this bill passed it would have provided a subtraction modification under the state income tax for gain recognized on the sale of an easement under MALPF.

HB 625 - Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation - Grants - Installment Purchase Programs

This bill authorizes MALPF to provide the counties with funds purchase lands through installments.

HB 768 & SB 479 - Income Tax Credit for Preservation and Conservation Easements - Transferability

Had it passed this bill would have allowed a person who donated an easement to transfer the full value to another individual to claim the deduction.

HB 770 & SB 367 - Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation - Tenant Houses - Construction

This bill allows the MALPF Board to grant an exception to the 1 tenant house per 100 acres if there is a compelling need.

SB 327 & HB 777 - Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation - Easement Termination

The bill makes all easements purchased after September 30, 2004 perpetual easements and establishes procedures for requests for easement termination for those purchased prior to 9/30/04.

HB 1086 & SB 481 - Income Tax Credit for Preservation and Conservation Easements - County Tax Credit Authorized

Had it passed this bill would have authorized the county to permit a credit against the county income tax for preservation and conservation easements. It was passed by the Senate but not the House.

ELIMINATION OF AG SALES TAX EXEMPTION**HB 1166 - Sales and Use Tax - Exemptions for Ag Products and Property Used in Production Activity - Conditional Repeal**

This bill was withdrawn after a 20:0 unfavorable vote. Had this bill passed the ag sales tax exemption that exists on nearly all agricultural input costs would have been removed reducing profit margins significantly.

OTHER BILLS OF INTEREST**HB 1179 & SB 589 - Rural Maryland Prosperity Investment - Agricultural and Resource-Based Industry Development**

These bills came from the Maryland Rural Council and aim to provide a funding source for rural resource based activities as well as to coordinate a lot of other activities. As passed the bills establish the Agricultural and Resource-Based Industry Development Program (MARBIDCO) but no funding was allocated.

HB 395 & SB 21 - Motor Fuel Tax - Exemption for Biodiesel Fuel - Queen Anne's County

Had this bill passed it would have eliminated the state tax on bio-diesel used in Queen Anne's County government vehicles and school buses through 2007.

HB 493 - Environment - Hazardous Material Security

This bill would have required repetitive reporting to the state and federal governments. The bill passed with an amendment being added to exempt agriculture and ag fertilizer retailers.

HB 755 & SB 392 - Young Farmers Advisory Board

These bills passed setting up a Young Farmers Advisory Board as part of the Maryland Agricultural Commission within MDA.

(Continued on page 8)

SINE DIE REPORT, BY LYNNE HOOT, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR*(Continued from page 7)***HB 825 & SB 202 - Anne Arundel County - Right to Farm**

This bill passed authorizing Anne Arundel County to adopt an ordinance to protect a person's right to farm or engage in agricultural or forestry operations

HB 1009 & SB 694 - Chesapeake and Atlantic Coastal Bays Critical Area Protection Program - Miscellaneous Enforcement Provisions

This bill passed reaffirming the intent of the Critical Area Law to limit development in the critical area.

HB 1229 - Environment - Sewage Sludge - Land Application

This bill would have limited the sludge used in the Critical Area to Class A sludge something that, MDE does by regulation. The bill did not pass.

SB 382 - Ambient Air Quality Control Permit - Rendering Facility - Prohibited Location

This bill would have prevented a rendering facility in Baltimore City from upgrading and expanding its livestock rendering operation. The bill was given an unfavorable report.

SB 417 - Agriculture - Confinement of Pregnant Sows and Gilts - Prohibition

This bill would have required gestation crates to be sized so that sows could turn around. The bill passed out of committee but was given an unfavorable vote 25:22 on the floor.

INTERNET**CSP UPDATE**

All the public comments submitted to NRCS on the draft Conservation Security Program (CSP) rule are available electronically through the agencies website. More than half of the comments were sent by email. There are many substantive comments from individual conservation districts. The majority of the electronically submitted comments from individuals were form letter responses with the same or similar responses. Please visit the site at <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/csp/comments.html>.

WFA INFO AVAILABLE

The Forest Service maintains a website devoted to the Watershed Forestry Assistance (WFA) provisions that passed into law last year as part of the NACD-supported Healthy Forests Restoration Act. The overall purposes of the WFA include: improving public understanding of the connection between forest management and watershed health; encouraging property owners to maintain tree cover and use tree plantings and vegetative treatments as creative solutions to watershed problems; enhancing forest management and riparian buffer use in watersheds, stewardship, and conservation.

Similar to other private forest land programs, districts could have the responsibility to help the Forest Service and state forestry agencies deliver the new WFA program to nonindustrial private forest landowners by providing technical and educational assistance. This program would be available nationwide where tree planting is included in watershed restoration. Please visit the WFA site at: <http://www.fs.fed.us/cooperativeforestry/programs/wfa/index.shtml>.

EVENTS**MD 4-H FOUNDATION'S ANNUAL GOLF TOURNAMENT JUNE 7, 2004**

It's time once again for the Maryland 4-H Foundation's Annual Golf Tournament. The date is Monday, June 7th and will be held at the Piney Branch Golf and Country Club in Hampstead, MD. This is an opportunity to support the young people who benefit from 4-H programs throughout the State of Maryland. The funds raised help the Maryland 4-H Foundation provide educational workshops, scholarships, mini-grants, and help underwrite local, regional and national judging and recognition events for young people throughout Maryland. For more information contact Doris at 301-314-9070.

URBAN WATERSHED SUMMIT ON THE DELAWARE: MAKING THE CONNECTION, SEPT. 13-15, 2004

The Urban Watershed Summit on the Delaware: Making The Connection will be held September 13-15, 2004 at the Wyndham Hotel, 700 N. King Street in Wilmington. This two and a half day Summit will include panel discussions, workshops and a poster session linking land and water management to achieve sustainable goals.

The nation recognizes the unique environmental management challenges facing urban communities. Municipalities are employing diverse strategies to address not only traditional environmental problems, but also historical, cultural and socio-economic issues as well. The Delaware River Watershed (New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Delaware) serves as an excellent backdrop for exploring the value of the watershed management approach in balancing public health and environmental goals with communities' goals to remain economically viable. Five major cities - Camden, Trenton, NJ; Chester, Philadelphia, PA; and Wilmington, DE - are located along this vibrant river, and depend on the maintenance of its environmental integrity to link important socio-economic issues.

Abstracts for the event are being sought in the areas of Linking Land and Water, Waterway Management, State of the Environmental Indicators, Urban Influences on the Watershed, and Education and Involvement for Stewardship. Application deadline for Abstracts is May 28th. For more information contact Ralph Spagnolo at 215-814-2178 or Spagnolo.Ralph@epa.gov.

MARYLAND COMMODITY CLASSIC JULY 29, 2004

The Maryland Grain Producers Association and the Maryland Soybean Board host the sixth annual Maryland Commodity Classic which will be held at the Howard County Fairgrounds in West Friendship, Thursday, July 29th. Agenda topics include value added agriculture, Asian soybean rust and crop insurance. For more information contact Lynne Hoot at 410-956-5771 or lynnehoot@aol.com.

PERSONNEL NOTES

MDA BIDS FAREWELL TO...

Mary Ann Layfield, Office Secretary, Somerset SCD
Ed Sanders, Program Manager, MACS
David Kann, Nutrient Management Specialist, Frederick

NRCS WELCOMES...

Robert Ellsworth has been selected for the position of Contract Specialist in the State Office. Robert is coming to NRCS from the US Dept of State and joined us on April 19, 2004.

Ray Sufczynski has been selected for the position of Soil Conservationist in the Baltimore County Field Office. He will be joining us on May 3, 2004.

Jen Pakula, as the new Information Technology Specialist at the State Office. Jen had previously worked as a volunteer and the Geographic Information System (GIS) Coordinator for NRCS Maryland since 1992.

NRCS BIDS FAREWELL TO...

Lori Ziehr, state agronomist in Annapolis. Lori transferred to NRCS in Corpus Christi, Texas. Lori's husband, Rob Ziehr, also transferred from the NRCS East Region to work for NRCS in Texas.

LENGTH OF SERVICE AWARDS

NRCS Maryland employees were recognized at the recent All-Employees' Meeting for their combined length of Federal Service. 72 employees were honored for a combined total of 1,210 years of Federal service.

35 Years of Federal Service

Dave Wilson, Maryland Eastern Shore RC&D Office
 Linda Sergeant, Frederick Staff Office
 Jim Brown, State Office
 Paul Biddle, Talbot County Field Office

30 Years of Federal Service

Roger Thomas, Frederick Staff Office
 Gabe Hiza, State Office
 Deborah Hepburn, State Office
 Dean Cowherd, State Office
 Jerry Griswold, Chesapeake Bay Program Office

25 Years of Federal Service

Russ Mader, Chesapeake Bay Program Office
 George Teachman, Aberdeen Proving Ground
 Tim Hahn, Western Maryland RC&D Office
 Ruth Koch, State Office
 Jim Brewer, Talbot County Field Office
 Mary Ann Tully, Frederick Staff Office
 Joseph Haamid, Anne Arundel County Field Office
 Ronald A. Harris, State Office

20 Years of Federal Service

Star Parsons, Wicomico County Field Office
 Ken Wolfe, Frederick Staff Office
 Joe Kraft, Frederick County Field Office

Kim Meyers, Garret County Field Office
 Fred Strem, Garret County Field Office
 Terry Welsh, Frederick County Field Office
 Mary Monn, State Office
 Jim Luzader, Dorchester County Field Office
 Leslie Burks, Washington, DC Field Office
 Warren Johnson, Frederick Staff Office
 Nancy Basil, Maryland Eastern Shore RC&D Office
 Jim Cary, Charles County Field Office
 Elmer Dengler, State Office
 Ann Baldwin, Kent County Field Office
 Laurie Blasky, State Office
 Linda S. Elben-Adams, State Office

15 Years of Federal Service

Patrick Berry, Queen Anne's County Field Office
 Mark Rose, Southern Maryland RC&D Office
 Lindsay Tulloch, Cecil County Field Office
 Roger Smith, Somerset County Field Office
 Joan Lucini, Southern Maryland RC&D Office
 Mark Brodesser, St. Mary's County Field Office
 Annette Ensor, Harford County Field Office
 Becky Hickman, State Office
 Samone Scanlon, State Office
 Eddie Earles, Charles County Field Office
 Selena Miller, State Office
 Dave Verdone, Prince George's County Field Office
 Oliver Miranda, Prince George's County Field Office
 John F. Mattingly, St. Mary's County Field Office
 Lenore M. Vasilas, EPA Liaison, Harford County
 Gary L. Wynn, Sr., Calvert County Field Office

10 Years of Federal Service

Sandra Thompson, State Office
 Jeffrey Teets, Frederick Staff Office
 Nancy Metcalf, Kent County Field Office
 Don Brown, State Office
 Charlene Mills, Wicomico County Field Office
 John Englert, National Plant Materials Center
 Lori Ashbaugh, Carroll County Field Office
 Jen Pakula, State Office
 Darcy Harding, Jr., Dorchester County Field Office

5 Years of Federal Service

R. Jay Ugiansky, National Plant Materials Center
 Susan Demas, Somerset County Field Office
 Steve Strano, Charles County Field Office
 Valerie Cohen, Prince Georges County Field Office
 Andy Piri, Howard County Field Office
 Kim McAdams, State Office
 Chad Bucklew, Garret County Field Office
 Susan L. Davis, Anne Arundel County Field Office
 Lydia Donovan, State Office
 Jason Bozarth, Kent County Field Office
 Bill Metcalf, Cecil County Field Office
 Matthew Molchan, Caroline County Field Office
 Dan Dusty, National Plant Materials Center
 Brandy King, Montgomery County Field Office

Future Dates to Remember

June 7	Maryland 4-H Foundation's Annual Golf Tournament, Hampstead
June 17	SSCC Mtg., Annapolis
June 22-24	State Envirothon, Mt. St. Mary's College, Emmitsburg, MD, Frederick County
June 25	MACCA Aug. Exam Registration Deadline
July 19-21	MASCD Annual Meeting, Rocky Gap
July 20	SSCC Mtg., Rocky Gap
July 26-Aug 1	2004 Canon International Envirothon, Buckhannon, WV
Aug 6	Nutrient Management & MACCA Exams
Aug 1-4	NACD NE Regional Mtg., Burlington, VT
Aug 19	SSCC Mtg., Annapolis
Sept 13-15	Urban Watershed Summit on the Delaware, Wilmington, DE

PARTNERSHIP PRESS

Maryland Conservation



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, Maryland Cooperative Extension, 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



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