

Howard Soil
Conservation District
14735 Frederick Road
Cooksville, MD 21723
410.313.0680
www.howardscd.org

Conservation Matters



March 2019

CALENDAR

**2018-19 MDA Cover Crop
Spring Certification**
March 1- June 3

**MASCD Mental Health
Seminar (see page 2)**
March 5, 6, 7, or 8

**Mid-Winter Ag Meeting
(see page 7)**
March 12

Envirothon Spring Training
March 27

**Howard County GreenFest
at Howard CC**
April 13

Good Friday: Office Closed
April 19

Howard County Envirothon
April 30

Memorial Day: Office Closed
May 27

**Maryland State Envirothon
at St Mary's College**
June 19-20

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Howard County Agricultural Legislative Breakfast

Several Howard County agricultural organizations and agencies teamed up in December to provide current and incoming legislators an introduction to the various programs and resources available to farmers. For many of the newly elected officials this was their first opportunity to learn about the different agricultural organizations and the services they provide. The meeting, held at the Howard County Fairgrounds, was designed to create a forum for legislators to ask questions of the agency representatives and also to exchange ideas with the broader agricultural community. About 60 people attended the breakfast, including 15 legislators and aides.



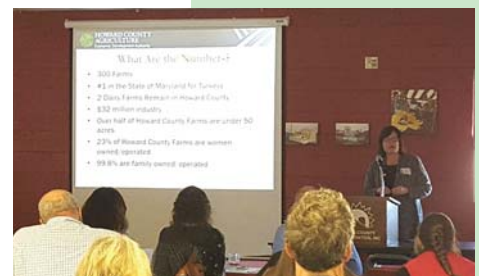
About 60 people attended the Howard County Agricultural Legislative Breakfast.



Howie Feaga, Howard County Farm Bureau President, welcomes everyone to the Howard County Agricultural Legislative Breakfast on December 18, 2018.

Farm Bureau President Howie Feaga served as facilitator for the meeting, and kicked things off by highlighting some of the challenges faced by farmers in Howard County. Rick Walter, Area Extension Director for the University of Maryland Extension, provided information on 4-H Programs, University research, and community outreach efforts. Joy Levy, Administrator for the Agricultural Land Preservation Program pre-

sented a detailed summary of agricultural preservation in Howard County. James Zoller, Agricultural Coordinator for the Office of Community Sustainability, informed attendees about the Roving Radish, HoCo Fresh, and some of the assistance his office provides to farmers. David Plummer, District Manager for Howard Soil Conservation District, spoke about conservation projects and programs to improve water quality, and highlighted some of the challenges farmers face in transferring their operations to the next generation. The last presenter was Kathy Johnson, Agricultural Development Manager for the Howard County Economic Development Authority. In addition to summarizing key points from the morning, Kathy also introduced some of the marketing and education programs her office administers, as well as the grant program, which has provided over \$170,000 to Howard County farm operations.



Kathy Johnson, Howard County Economic Development Authority presents statistics about Howard County agriculture.

Feedback from elected officials indicated that they came away from the Legislative Breakfast with a much better understanding of the programs offered by various agencies, and a deeper appreciation for the challenges farmers face in Howard County. All five new County Council Members attended the event, demonstrating their interest in the issues that impact Howard County's agricultural community.

Cooperator Spotlight: Sharp's at Waterford Farm



Sharp's at Waterford Farm is a 530-acre working farm located in the western part of Howard County. The Sharp family has been farming for over 110 years and has been offering educational programs to Maryland area schools,

daycares, Scout groups, homeschoolers and families for more than four decades. The farm produces field corn, soybeans and pumpkins. There are several production greenhouses full of organic herbs, vegetables and flowers. They are well known for their educational tours & country store.

Chuck Sharp is a third-generation farmer. Growing up, he helped milk cows on his family's dairy farm. After



Landscape at Sharp's at Waterford Farm; capturing the beauty of the land and the diversity of the operation.

returning from the Army, Chuck started raising beef cattle and hay. In the early 1980s, Denise and Chuck married, and Denise expanded the operation to include produce, greenhouses, and educational tours. About seven years ago, Chuck started transitioning the management of the farm to his son Alan. Alan has been involved with the farm for years and is interested in continuing the tradition of opening the farm to visitors each spring and fall for educational tours. He plans field trips, plants pumpkins and designs the corn maze.

On the farm there are five waterfowl impoundments, three irrigation ponds and acres of installed riparian forest

buffers. Sharp's at Waterford Farm has worked with the District over the



Denise, Chuck and Alan Sharp receive the 2012 Howard County Cooperator of the Year Award, presented by Chairman Bill Barnes.

years to install Best Management Practices (BMPs) and responsibly manage their natural resources. BMPs implemented on the farm include: cover crop, high tunnel system, grassed waterway, subsurface drainage, grade stabilization structures, pipelines, underground outlets and watering troughs. As a testament to their land conservation ethic and natural resources management efforts the farm was awarded the Howard Soil Conservation District's Cooperator of the Year Award in 1984, and again in 2012.

MASCD Mental Health Workshops

During the first week of March, Maryland Association of Soil Conservation Districts (MASCD) will be holding four Mental Health Workshops across the state. The purpose of the workshops is to educate individuals working with farmers on a daily basis to detect early warning signs of, and the prevention methods for, severe mental stress and substance abuse. These workshops will be targeted towards, but not limited to, agricultural lenders, agribusiness professionals, crop consultants, extension agents, farm bureau leaders, nutrient management planners, and soil conservation district employees. Farmers and farm families are also welcomed and encouraged to attend. Registration and more information can be found here: www.mascdmentalhealth.eventbrite.com

Date & Locations:

- March 5: Chesapeake College
- March 6: Bel Air Library
- March 7: Frederick Community College
- March 8: Charles SCD

BMP Highlight: Grade Stabilization Structure

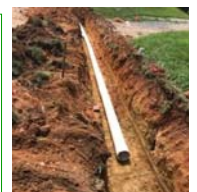
A grade stabilization structure is used to control the grade and head cutting in natural or artificial channels. The structure drops water from one stabilized grade to another, preventing gullies from advancing up a slope. A grade stabilization structure is often used to stabilize the outlet of a grassed waterway. Grassed, non-eroding waterways with a grade control structure provide better water quality, can be crossed with equipment, and look better than non-stabilized gullies. This practice may

be applied as part of a conservation management system to support one or more of the following purposes:

1. To control erosion in natural or artificial channels;
2. To stabilize channel grades that may be erosive;
3. To prevent the formation or advance of gullies;
4. To reduce pollution hazard and enhance environmental quality.



Components of a grade stabilization structure: grate (top left), drop pipe (top right), and pipeline (right).



HOWARD SOIL CONSERVATION DISTRICT 2018 ANNUAL REPORT

Highlights

Soil Conservation and Water Quality Plans (SCWQPs)—Developed/updated 38 SCWQPs to help farmers protect natural resources on 4535.7 acres. Currently, there are 21,566.4 planned acres in the county.

Best Management Practices (BMPs)—Worked with farmers to install 75 BMPs to protect natural resources on farmland.

Cover Crops—Provided assistance to 15 farmers. About 2537 acres of cover crops were planted in Howard County.

Erosion and Sediment Control—Reviewed 873 erosion and sediment control plans for construction projects; 237 of these plans were approved to protect 2282.5 acres of land.

Education Outreach – 2 on-farm sessions of Farm Academy; Mid-Winter Ag Meeting for farmers; Envirothon program for high school students; provided support to Howard County Public School's Our Environment in Our Hands program, and Monarch Buddies program; participated in 5 additional community events.

Farm Academy

Howard Soil Conservation District along with Howard County Economic Development Authority and Howard County Government held their eighth on-farm Farm Academy for the public. This session was held at Myrtle Woods Farm in the Lawyers Hill Historic District of Elkridge, Maryland. Myrtle Woods Farm is a multifaceted operation with hogs, chickens, produce, herbs, and edible flowers raised on its 8.8 acres. While not certified organic, organic farming practices are used in the management of the farm. The session included learning about agricultural preservation in Howard County, conservation on farms, the economic aspects of farming decisions and the management of the farm. The 25 participants took a walking tour of the farm for a chance to see the operation in action and to ask questions about the farm.



Cathy Hudson, Myrtle Woods Farm, explains about the farm operation, and answers questions.

Howard County Mid-Winter Ag Meeting

The Howard Soil Conservation District, Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA), University of Maryland Extension, and USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service sponsored the annual Howard County Mid-Winter Ag Meeting. Topics included Soil Health, Micronutrients, Composting, Liming, and updates from Maryland Department of Agriculture on Nutrient Management.



Mid-Winter Ag Meeting attendees listen to a speaker.



Meeting attendees will be eligible to receive two (2) Maryland Nutrient Management continuing education credits.



(above) Soil Health demonstration by Dr. Sara Via

(left) Dr. Sara Via explains the importance of soil health, and the crucial functions a healthy soil performs.

Howard County Envirothon

The 2018 Howard County Envirothon was held at the Howard County Conservancy. Three teams studied in preparation for the event. Congratulations to the winning team from Mount Hebron High School. The team represented Howard County at the Maryland Envirothon. They had the 3rd highest score in the Forestry and Fifth Issue stations, and the 8th highest score overall out of 17 teams.

If interested in learning more about the Envirothon program contact Howard County Envirothon Coordinator, Kristal McCormick, kmccormick@howardcountymd.gov



Winning team from Mount Hebron HS.

HOWARD SCD 2018 ANNUAL REPORT

The conservation practices installed by farmers are part of the broader multi-state effort to restore the water quality of the Chesapeake Bay. Each county in Maryland has a Watershed Implementation Plan (WIP) which tracks the nutrient reduction progress being made by the agricultural sector.

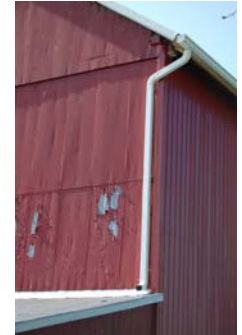
Howard County farmers implemented a variety of best management practices this year to improve water quality:

New Conservation Plans (32) 3242.4 acres

Revised Conservation Plans (6) 1293.3 acres



Roof runoff structures divert clean water and prevent erosion.



Gravity-fed watering trough, providing clean drinking water for live-stock.



Ford stream crossing made of precast concrete panels.



Grassed waterway, a stabilized area to carry concentrated flow from a landscape, preventing erosion.

<u>Best Management Practice</u>	<u>Amount (#)</u>
Roof Runoff	1 each
Critical Area Planting	0.3 acre (3)
Grassed Waterway	0.4 acre (1)
Grade Stabilization Structure	2 each
Heavy Use Area Protection	1.02 acre (7)
Pipeline	8431 l.f. (13)
Mulch	0.3 acre (3)
Watering Facility	16 each
Streamside Fence	8020.7 l.f. (3)
Non-streamside Fence	34,294.7 l.f. (18)
Forage & Biomass Planting	90.6 acre (3)
Riparian Forest Buffer	10 acres (1)
Stream Crossing	3 each
Sediment Control Pond	2 each
Stream Habitat Improvement	10 acres (1)
Forest Management Plan	1 each
Amending Soil Properties with Gypsum	13.9 acres (1)
High Tunnel System	2,160 sq.ft. (1)

Federal, State and Local Funding allocated for Howard County Farmers through various programs administered by the District:

Maryland Agricultural Cost-Share (MACS)	\$3,516.00
MDA Cover Crop	\$102,391.00
Federal Funding	\$232,956.64
Patuxent Reservoir Cost-Share	\$33,374.69
Total 2018 Funding for Howard County Farmers	\$372,238.33



Cover crop, takes up unused nutrients from the root zone, controls soil erosion and improves the soil.

HOWARD SCD 2018 ANNUAL REPORT

In addition to assisting farmers with their conservation initiatives, the Howard SCD is also very active in outreach and education to the agricultural community, students and the general public. These efforts are critical to promoting a better understanding of our soil, water, and other natural resources.

Education and Community Support Efforts



Guests trying their aim at pumpkin chunkin at our Cooperators Dinner. Thanks to Tim McGrath and Chunkin' Up.



Even after the Farm Academy session ended, questions and education continued.

- Howard County Mid-Winter Ag Meeting
- Our Environment in Our Hands
- Howard County Envirothon
- Supported Maryland Envirothon
- Farm Academy
- Monarch Buddies
- Mock interviews at High School
- Judge for High School Capstone Projects
- Presentation to High School Class
- Soils presentation at Farmer Brown Camp
- Participated in the County Executive's Ag Roundtable



Jennifer Corn delivers a thank you card from Lisbon Elementary School 3rd graders to Michael Calkins for his help with the Monarch Butterfly Program.



Displays at outreach events create opportunities for community interaction, letting them know who we are and how we can help; it also allows for educating about the importance of soil and conservation, and the important role of agriculture in Howard County.

Community Outreach Events

- Howard County Fair
- Howard SCD Cooperators Dinner
- Robinson Nature Center Open House
- University of Maryland College of Agriculture Open House
- Harvest at the Hill, Manor Hill Brewery

Maryland Department of Agriculture Deputy Secretary Visits Howard County Farmers and Howard Soil Conservation District



Geof Schoming, HSCD Engineering Specialist, looks over a sediment and erosion control plan with MDA Deputy Secretary of Ag, Julie Oberg, and explains the review process.



Keith Ohlinger, Howard County farmer and HSCD Board Member, discusses issues facing farmers with Deputy Secretary Oberg.



Deputy Secretary of Ag, Julie Oberg, and farmer Fenby Moore discuss opportunities and challenges facing Howard County farmers.

Maryland Deputy Secretary of Agriculture, Julie Oberg traveled to Howard County in early May to visit with, and listen to, some farmers in the County, as well as visit with Howard SCD to learn more about what they do. The Deputy Secretary was able to visit Larriland Farm in Woodbine for a tour of their orchards and to observe agritourism at its finest.

Maple Dell Farm Stream Restoration

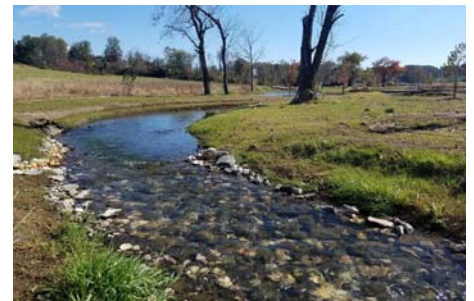
If you have been traveling the rural roads of Howard County this past year you might have seen a large restoration project being constructed in western Howard County. The project was completed by Resource Environmental Solutions (RES) and the owners of Maple Dell Farm this past year on one of the only remaining dairy farms left in Howard County. RES performed stream, wetland, riparian buffer, and floodplain restoration on the farm, which drains into the Triadelphia Reservoir and the Patuxent River in western Howard County. The project resulted in 14+ wetland acres, 6,200 + linear feet of stream restoration, and 62 acres of impervious surface credit. While the impervious runoff being treated by this project is significant, the county has many more acres to treat in the coming years. The Maple Dell project is the first large stormwater runoff project for the county on privately owned agricultural land. This project not only improves water quality in the Cattail Creek through the restoration practices on the stream and wetlands, but also through the installation of Best



A ford stream crossing was installed to provide a stabilized crossing area.

Management Practices (BMP'S) designed to capture stormwater runoff from the dairy, row crop operations in the area and the communities around the farm. Other best management practices that have been installed are watering facilities, stream fencing, and stream crossings to name a few. This project also provides additional educational opportunities related to environmental stewardship and agricultural sustainability. For years, Maple Dell farm has worked with the Howard Soil Conservation District on a variety of conservation practices, many of which

have included participation in conservation programs through the Maryland Department of Agriculture and the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service. This project was a partnership with Howard County Government, Howard County Office of Community Sustainability, Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission, and other partners for a collaborative effort to restore water quality. The project is unique in that the County will get nutrient reduction credit to address urban sector goals and some of the BMP's will accomplish agricultural goals under the Watershed Implementation Plan.



A photo of one reach of the stream restoration project.

Howard County Farm Survey

Keep an eye out this spring for the 2018 Howard County Farm Survey, which is a cooperative effort among agricultural agencies to gather important information about the agricultural industry in Howard County. The Howard County Office of Community Sustainability, Howard County Economic Development Authority, Howard County Agricultural Land Preservation Program, and Howard Soil Conservation District are collaborating on the survey, with the goal of better understanding the needs of farmers in Howard County. The survey, which will be completely anonymous, will focus on the size of farm operations, the number of family members involved, crops/livestock produced, conservation and preservation topics. Farmers will also have the opportunity to complete

a "Comments" section which will allow them to express ideas they have related to the agriculture industry in the county or to outline any challenges they see for the future of farming in Howard County. Surveys will be mailed out sometime this spring, and should only take about 15 minutes to complete. There will also be an online version of the survey for anyone that prefers so submit information electronically. The information gathered from this survey will help the agricultural agencies better understand and serve Howard County's agricultural community. It will also provide a clearer picture about the diverse agricultural operations found in the county. Online information about the survey is available at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/2019HOCOFARMSURVEY>

Cover Crop: Spring Certification

Reminders concerning spring certification for the 2018-19 program ...

Options for end of winter management by the Operator include green chopping (for on-farm use only), plowing under, or killing by using a burn-down herbicide. Grazing of a cover crop does not qualify as an acceptable spring kill-down method.

Within two weeks after the Operator's kill-down or suppression of the cover crop, but **no later than June 3, 2019**, the Operator must certify to the SCD that the cover crop has been suppressed or killed down.

If you have any questions about the Cover Crop Program please contact the Howard SCD at 410.313.0680.

Howard County Mid-Winter Ag Meeting

The Howard Soil Conservation District, Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA), University of Maryland Extension, and USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service will sponsor the annual Howard County Mid-Winter Ag Meeting on Tuesday, March 12th. Topics include Reading

Your Land for Optimal Soil Fertility Recommendations, Grazing Impacts on Soil Physical Properties, Runoff and Sediment Production, Industrial Hemp in Maryland and Mobile Apps for Agriculture.

The meeting will be held at the Gary J. Arthur Community Center at Glen-

wood, and will begin at 6:15 PM, with registration and light refreshments at 6:00. There is no cost but attendees must pre-register by 3/7/19. Call the Howard Soil Conservation District, 410.313.0680, to pre-register or with any questions. Individuals requiring special accommodations please contact the office by 3/1/19.

Howard SCD Coloring & Poster Contest

The Howard Soil Conservation District will be sponsoring a countywide coloring contest for students, Kindergarten through grade 3; and poster contest for students, grade 4 through 12.

The contest entries will be broken into three classes according to grade level:

Class I: K through 1st Grade

Class II: 2nd through 3rd Grades

Class III: 4th through 6th Grades

Class IV: 7th through 9th Grades

Class V: 10th through 12th Grades

The entries will be judged at the Howard Soil Conservation District Board meeting in May. Prizes will be awarded to the first top three entries overall for each class / category. The winners will be notified by letter.

The first place winner from each class will then be submitted to the State contest. The entries for the State contest will be judged at the Maryland Associa-

tion of Soil Conservation Districts (MASCD) meeting in August. State winners will receive a check in the amount of \$25.00. Winners of the State poster contest will then be submitted to the National Association of Conservation District's Auxiliary contest. Winners in each class at the National level will receive \$100.00 bond, and \$75.00 bond will be given for second place.

The coloring contest picture can be found on the Howard SCD website, www.howardscd.org. Only wax crayons are to be used. And coloring should be done by the participating child only.

The theme for the poster contest is "Life in the Soil: Dig Deeper" For more information about the contest visit: www.nacdnet.org/general-resources/stewardship-and-education-materials/contests To learn more about "Life in the Soil: Dig Deeper" please visit:

www.nacdnet.org/general-resources/stewardship-and-education-materials/2019-life-in-the-soil-dig-deeper

The poster entries can be any size between 8 1/2" x 11" and 22" x 28". No commercial advertisements may appear on the poster. The following criteria will be used to evaluate the entries:

Conservation message (adhere to theme)	50%
Visual effectiveness	30%
Originality	10%
Universal Appeal	10%

Please complete the NACD poster contest entry form (found at the website above) and attach to the back of the poster.

Please return all entries to the Howard SCD office by Wednesday, May 17th. If there are any questions please call 410.313.0680

Howard County Envirothon

The Envirothon is a national environmental event for high school students. Students train throughout the year and compete at a County level competition sponsored by the local Soil Conservation District. The winning team, the team with the highest cumulative score, from each county then travels to a statewide event for further training and competition. The winning team from that competition then represents their state at the National Conservation Federation (NCF) North American Envirothon. Prizes and scholarships are awarded to top placing teams at each level.

The Envirothon program/competition consists of five topics - Aquatics, Forestry, Soils, Wildlife and a Fifth Area / Current Environmental Issue which changes year to year. The 2019 Current Environmental Issue is Agriculture & the Environment: Knowledge & Technology to Feed the World. Resource professionals assist students in training for each of the resource areas, providing students with a unique opportunity to interact with professionals in a variety of environmental fields.

The Envirothon program reconnects students with the outdoors and the natural resources that will be theirs to

IMPORTANT DATES:

3/27: Howard County Envirothon Training
4/30: Howard County Envirothon Event
6/19-20: Maryland Envirothon

manage.

The Howard Soil Conservation District is the primary sponsor for the Howard County Envirothon. To be successful, additional support is needed from individuals, community organizations and businesses. This is where you come in. Your donation can make the difference.

If interested in participating in, or financially supporting, the Howard County Envirothon please contact Kristal McCormick, 410.313.0680 or kmccormick@howardcountymd.gov, or visit our website, www.howardscd.org

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The Howard Soil Conservation District (HSCD) prohibits discrimination in its programs on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs and marital or familial status.