



# PROGRESS REPORT

OF THE BALTIMORE COUNTY SOIL CONSERVATION DISTRICT

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## PROGRAM ACCOMPLISHMENTS FOR THE YEAR 2007

### AGRICULTURAL CONSERVATION PROGRAMS

#### **PLANNING:**

- Eighty five (85) new Soil Conservation/ Water Quality Plans (SC/WQP) were developed to provide protection for 5,417 acres. *[2007 Plan of Operation Goal: 60 new plans.]*
- Revisions were made to 37 existing SC/WQ Plans to reflect protection for recent landuse changes on 3,883 acres. *[2007 Plan of Operation Goal: 70 revised plans.]*

#### **PLAN IMPLEMENTATION**

Throughout the year 2007, 24 landowners installed 376 best management practices (BMPs) on their land according to their soil conservation/water quality plan. *[2007 Plan of Operation Goal: installing 205 BMP's.]*

### URBAN CONSERVATION PROGRAMS

#### **SEDIMENT CONTROL**

**Urban Development** – During the year 2007, 889 plan reviews were performed, resulting in 212 sediment control plan approvals to protect 2,080 acres under active construction. *[2007 Plan of Operations Goal: 840 sediment control plans reviewed.]*

**Forestry** – Seventeen (17) sediment control plans for forestry were approved, protecting 289 acres during logging operations.

#### **STORM WATER MANAGEMENT**

The District approves storm water management plans after a cursory review in conjunction with primary review provided by the Baltimore County Department of Environmental Protection and Resource Management. For the year 2007, 130 storm water management plans were approved, protecting 804 acres of new developments after construction is completed.



## 2008 PLAN OF OPERATIONS

### **STRATEGY 1—PROTECT SOIL RESOURCE BASE FROM DEGRADATION BY EROSION.**

- Develop 65 new conservation plans and revise 41 existing conservation plans.
- Assist in the implementation of 205 best management practices (BMPs).
- Review 840 sediment and erosion control plans.
- Provide education outreach efforts to 3,000 agricultural landowners and operators via quarterly newsletters and publications.

### **STRATEGY 2 — PROTECT SURFACE AND GROUNDWATER FROM EXCESSIVE SEDIMENTATION AND POLLUTED RUNOFF FROM ANIMAL WASTE, NUTRIENTS AND PESTICIDES.**

- Promote participation in federal, state and local programs including USDA conservation programs, Environmental Quality Incentives Program, Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program, Nutrient Management Program, Cover Crop Program and Maryland Conservation Grants Program.
- Support watershed initiatives such as Tributary Strategies, the Prettyboy Watershed Action Strategy, and the agricultural practices in the 2005 Reservoir Watershed Management Agreement.
- Promote the establishment of 40 acres of wildlife buffers.

### **STRATEGY 3 — FACILITATE PROGRAM DELIVERY THROUGH THE CONSERVATION PARTNERSHIP'S LOCALLY LED CONSERVATION APPROACH.**

- Improve efficiency, effectiveness, quality and equality of conservation programs, customer services and operations. Support Equal Employment Opportunities. Provide quality customer services on a non-discrimination basis.
- Expand partnerships, coalitions and outreach. Inform landowners through an established information and education program.
- Share training opportunities with all district staff to improve technical and administrative skills.
- Provide assistance to Cooperative Extension Service with seminars and field days. Continue to work with the Nutrient Management Program

### **STRATEGY 4 — LOCAL PRIORITIES**

- Promote the availability of a no-till drill for rent to introduce farmers to no-till planting.
- Sponsor the Baltimore County and Maryland Envirothon to engage high school students in natural resources study.
- Sponsor the poster contest to provide a focus on the environment for younger students.
- Provide administrative support for the Baltimore County Noxious Weed Program.
- Publish Semi-Annual and Annual Progress Reports.
- Provide assistance to Baltimore County Agricultural Land Preservation Program.
- Provide assistance with conservation plans for minor subdivisions.
- Hold quarterly urban conservation meetings with county and state departments.
- Provide assistance to suburban and rural homeowners. Distribute the Homeowner's Guide to environmental protection for urban, suburban and rural homeowners.
- Publish quarterly District agricultural newsletters and urban newsletters as necessary.
- Distribute "My Conservation Book", a District published coloring book with a conservation message.
- Work in Prettyboy Branch to reduce N and P loading in streams; assist Baltimore County in developing the Prettyboy WRAS.
- Continue to work with the Baltimore Metropolitan Council in protecting the reservoir watersheds.
- Promote the District's Small Farm Cost-Share Program.
- Develop a plan for Equine Outreach in Baltimore County. Promote MDA's Horse Farm Cost-Share Program.



## 63 YEARS OF SERVICE TO BALTIMORE COUNTY

A national conservation movement was begun in the 1930's. The devastation of the Dust Bowl resulted in the formation of the Soil Conservation Service, (now known as the Natural Resources Conservation Service). The conservation movement evolved from President Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal programs to bring the country out of the desolation of the Depression and put them back to work. The founding mission of the Soil Conservation Service was to provide information to farmers, who constituted 20% of the population at the time, on the best way to farm their land without losing valuable topsoil and nutrients to erosion. Since then, the mission was expanded to help all landowners protect their natural resources and to promote practices that will provide soil and water quality and related issues.

Conservation districts were conceived to be the local gateway through which federal, state and county government could work directly with private landowners to help them protect their natural resources. At the same time, public benefit was achieved by reducing pollution problems, one property at a time. Nearly 3,000 conservation districts have been formed across the country by state laws, based on a federal model. Maryland's Soil Conservation District Law establishes districts as political subdivisions of the state.

Another basic concept embodied in conservation districts was that local citizens should determine the best way to protect the natural resources in their jurisdiction. The governing body of the District, the Board of Supervisors, is composed of five county residents who are appointed by various organizations to serve unsalaried, five-year terms, for which they take an oath of office. For the last 63 years, the District has upheld these traditions and worked to encourage landowners to see themselves as stewards of the land with a responsibility to pass their property on to future generations in a better state than when they received it.

When the District was established in 1944, the predominant land use in Baltimore County was agriculture, as it was in most of America. The initial programs developed by the Soil Conservation Service and the District demonstrated agricultural conservation practices to farmers that were effective in controlling erosion and water quality. Plans were developed for individual farms that inventoried natural resources, listed erosion and water quality problems, identified practices that would solve pollution problems and established a schedule of implementation.

The District created an urban conservation program after Maryland passed the first sediment control law in the nation in 1970. The law requires a sediment control plan to be reviewed and approved by the District before the county could issue a grading permit. The sediment control plan includes practices that will control erosion generated by grading and construction sites and prevent sediment from entering nearby streams. From 1975 to 1996, the District also reviewed and approved storm water management plans, which call for practices that retain excess runoff produced by the addition of impervious surfaces such as roads, sidewalks, rooftops and parking lots. Currently, the Baltimore County Department of Environmental Protection and Resource Management (DEPRM) performs the primary review of storm water management with a cursory review by the District.

In addition to protecting major tributaries to the Chesapeake Bay, efforts overseen by the District and its state and federal partners have direct impact on most of the watershed acreage that drains to the three reservoirs constituting the water supply for more than 1,800,000 residents of Baltimore City and the surrounding counties. The District has worked closely with officials from Baltimore City and Baltimore, Carroll and Harford County governments and districts to ensure that reservoir capacity and good water quality are maintained.

*"...CONSERVATION DISTRICTS WERE CONCEIVED TO BE THE LOCAL GATEWAY THROUGH WHICH FEDERAL, STATE AND COUNTY GOVERNMENT COULD WORK DIRECTLY WITH PRIVATE LANDOWNERS..."*

Problems created by rapid urbanization and "leap-frog" development caused the Baltimore County Government to establish a Comprehensive Re-zoning Program in 1976. The process sought to provide for

more orderly growth by establishing resource conservation zones to protect agricultural land and reservoir watersheds, creating new town centers to concentrate future growth, filling in development along the existing urban-rural demarcation line and other effective measures. The re-zoning process was a timely effort to help preserve a viable agricultural industry in Baltimore County. The State of Maryland and Baltimore County each have agricultural preservation programs that offer to purchase development rights from farmers and impose perpetual easements on the land.

The Baltimore County Soil Conservation District is one of few in the country to have equally viable agricultural and urban programs. It is also one of few that built the building in which the District, USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service and USDA-Farm Services Agency are housed. Through a partnership with Baltimore County, the District was able to retain existing federal services for County landowners by providing a building that met USDA requirements for a Service Center. A picture of the Service Center can be viewed on the District web site (see bottom of right column on page 4).



### Agricultural Program

The Baltimore County Soil Conservation District has been working with landowners for 63 years. Developing a Soil Conservation / Water Quality Plan (conservation plan) is the first step in working with landowners to solve conservation problems. District staff show landowners that often practices that conserve natural resources improve farming operations in many ways, including financial return. Various federal and State programs offer cost-share incentives to farmers to implement highly effective conservation practices, reflecting the public benefit derived from preventing potential pollution at its source.

One basic conservation plan component is a natural resources inventory of the property that lists the soil types, the underlying geology, current land use and other features. Another component identifies all existing erosion and water quality problems and the conservation practices (also known as best management practices (BMP's) that will solve them. A conservation plan also establishes a schedule of implementation in which the landowner indicates when he or she will install the conservation practices. During 2007, District agricultural staff completed drafting 85 new conservation plans that, once implemented, will protect 5,417 acres. Conservation plans remain in effect until changes occur in farming operations or land use that would render the original plan ineffective. It is not uncommon that revisions are necessary over time. During the year, revisions were made to 37 existing plans that would allow for resource protection to continue on 3,883 acres. By following their schedules of implementation, 24 landowners implemented 376 best management practices.

### Urban Program - Sediment Control

In a rapidly developing county like Baltimore County, the collective loading of many active and highly erosive construction sites occurring at the same time creates major sediment pollution problems. Maryland became the first state in the country to pass a sediment control law in 1970. The law required developers to submit sediment control plans to the local soil conservation district for approval before grading or building permits could be issued by the county. The sediment control plan would place BMP's on an active construction site to first prevent erosion where feasible and second to collect and retain sediment on site before it could be carried by runoff into streams and rivers.

Usually, a sediment control plan requires several reviews and modifications before it is finally approved. In 2007, 889 plan reviews were performed by District staff and 212 plans were given final approval, providing protection to 2,082 acres under active construction.

### Forestry

After the passage of the sediment control law, standards and specifications were established specifically for forestry operations. Sediment control plans for forestry contain BMP's for temporary hauling roads, stream crossings, staging areas and other erosive situations that might impact fragile wooded areas and streams. The District approved 17 such plans during this year, protecting 289 acres of wooded areas during logging operations.

### Storm Water Management

Since 1996, the District approves storm water management plans after a cursory review in conjunction with primary review provided by the Baltimore County Department of Environmental Protection and Resource Management (DEPRM). Over the course of the year, 130 storm water management plans were approved, protecting 804 acres of new developments after construction is completed.

**"...Conservation means the wise use of the earth and its resources for the lasting good of man. Conservation is the foresighted utilization, preservation, and/or renewal of forests, waters, lands and minerals for the greatest good of the greatest number for the longest time..."**

*— Gifford Pinchot, first Chief of the U.S. Forest Service*

## BALTIMORE COUNTY SOIL CONSERVATION DISTRICT

A political subdivision of the State of Maryland, the Baltimore County Soil Conservation District was established in 1944. Its mission is to protect the natural resources of Baltimore County and assist landowners in implementing sound conservation measures. The District is managed by a Board of Supervisors, five appointed county residents who take an oath of office to serve their community. The staff is composed of federal, state and district employees.

### Board of Supervisors

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

### Associate Supervisors

Daniel Dorsey      Lucy Wright  
Patricia Ghingher      Dianna Gutierrez

### District Staff

#### **Administrative**

Jim Ensor, District Manager  
Essy Frey, Administrative Secretary

#### **Agricultural**

Tim Clippinger, District Conservationist, NRCS  
Ray Sufczynski, Soil Conservationist, NRCS  
Andy Thomas, Soil Conservation Eng. Tech., MDA  
Mike Scheffel, Planner/Outreach Specialist, SCD  
Jared Wagner, Soil Conservation Planner, MDA  
Serafina Rayner, Technician, MDA

#### **Urban**

Jeff West, Urban Conservationist  
Quintin Cornwell, Urban Conservationist  
David Bachman, Urban Conservationist  
Fred Jones, Urban Conservationist

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Visit our website at:

<http://www.mascd.net/BCSCD>

*All District services are offered on a nondiscriminatory basis, without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, marital status or handicap.*