



# Rooted in Healthy Soil *and Clean Water*

## 2017 Highlights | Somerset Soil Conservation District

### OUR MISSION

The Somerset Soil Conservation District is located in the southernmost region of Maryland's Eastern Shore. Broilers, corn, soybeans, vegetables, swine, and dairy operations comprise the agricultural makeup of the area. Because of its agricultural productivity, Somerset County is ranked among the top 100 agricultural counties in the United States. Developing Soil Conservation and Water Quality Plans (SCWQPs) to protect natural resources and implementing the Maryland Agricultural Water Quality Cost-Share (MACS) Program are chief priorities for the district's technical staff. Additionally, district staffers are involved in planning and implementing strategies to reduce agricultural nutrients in Lower Eastern Shore watersheds. Drainage is a major concern. Many of the streams and rivers in the county are tidal, and approximately two-thirds of the soils have impeded drainage. Moreover, only about ten percent of the county's soils can be farmed without artificial drainage. Helping farmers maintain good drainage is a major activity for the Somerset Soil Conservation District.

STAFFING	LOCAL	GRANT	STATE	FEDERAL
District Manager			1	
District Conservationist				.5
Soil Conservationist				0
Agricultural Planner		1	1	
Soil Conservation Technician				1.25
Program Support Assistant				.2

CURRENT STAFF AND OPERATION BUDGETS		
	Staff	Operating
Federal	\$152,058	\$29,372
State	\$249,152	\$24,402
Local	\$0	\$0
MDA Grants	\$53,840	\$2,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$455,050</b>	<b>\$55,774</b>

### 2017 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

#### Soil Conservation and Water Quality Plans

**(SCWQPs)**—Developed 82 comprehensive SCWQPs to help farmers protect natural resources on 7,518 acres of farmland. Currently there are 56,580 planned acres in the county.

#### Best Management Practices (BMPs)

Worked to help farmers install 31 conservation projects on 129 acres.

#### Cover Crop Program

Provided technical assistance to 55 farmers who planted 17,014 acres of cover crops on their fields during the 2017 planting season.

#### Erosion and Sediment Control

Reviewed and approved 19 erosion and sediment control plans for construction projects on 1,325 acres.



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## SOMERSET SOIL CONSERVATION DISTRICT STAFF PROFILE:

### Outstanding Employee | Tara O'Neal Krick

Tara began working for the Somerset Soil Conservation District in September 2015 as an agricultural technician. She transitioned into her current position as an Agricultural Resource Conservation Specialist the following year. Tara had been living in Pennsylvania when her high school Envirothon teacher encouraged her to apply for the district position. The position has allowed her to return to her home county to live and work. Looking back, Tara says that she is glad she made the move, because the job has allowed her to develop relationships with farmers in this tight knit community.

“Any time I get to be out in the field is a good day,” Tara said. She finds it satisfying to develop Soil Conservation and Water Quality Plans for farmers and install best management practices prescribed by the plans on farms. When Tara is not writing farm plans, she surveys and inspects best management plans such as manure sheds, composters, and heavy use areas to make certain that they are in good working order. In addition, she helps with the cover crop program. Tara is a tremendous asset to the district.



*Tara O'Neal Krick, Outstanding Employee*