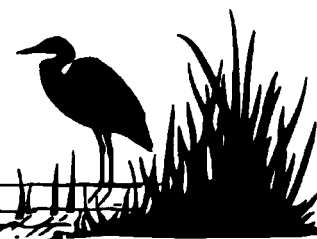


# PARTNERSHIP PRESS

Maryland Conservation



Spring 2016 Volume 23 Issue 2

## STRATEGICALLY PLANNING THE PARTNERSHIP'S ENGINEERING WORKLOAD BY STATE CONSERVATIONIST

TERRON L. HILLSMAN, PH.D.

"Time flies when you are having fun." We have all heard that familiar saying and I can vouch for its accuracy. I have just passed my one-year anniversary as the State Conservationist for NRCS in Maryland. And it has been one fun and exhilarating year getting to know Maryland's Conservation Partnership and the unique opportunities and challenges that we deal with on a daily basis.

I can't believe that it has been 12 months since I left Massachusetts to manage conservation work in a key Chesapeake Bay Watershed state. During this time, I have noticed a few trends while meeting partnership employees at field service centers and at state level headquarter offices. Those trends are that "Everyone believes in voluntary conservation and works really hard to get the best management practices on the ground. And, no matter how hard we work, the Partnership accumulates increasingly more work – which leads to backlogs or delays in responding to the technical assistance requests from our farmers and forest landowners."

One example of this is how we are currently working with our core partners to better manage engineering services in the State.

Determining how to cross a moving "finish-line" required Partnership leaders and field staff to work together to identify and prioritize key projects that were being delayed by a shortage of engineering and field staff with adequate job approval authorities. More than 50 Partnership staff joined me about 1 month ago to discuss the engineering workload and review the online tracking system. At the "Engineering Tracker" Review Meeting, we evaluated the engineering project backlog and workload and prioritized the assignment of projects to NRCS engineers and engineering technicians.

*(Continued on page 6)*

## USDA UNVEILS NEW 'URBAN AGRICULTURE TOOLKIT' FOR URBAN FARMERS AND AGRI-BUSINESS ENTREPRENEURS

On April 29<sup>th</sup> in Baltimore, Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack unveiled the USDA Urban Agriculture Toolkit, a new resource created by USDA's Know Your Farmer team to help entrepreneurs and community leaders successfully create jobs and increase access to healthy food through urban agriculture. From neighborhood gardens grown on repurposed lots, to innovative mobile markets, and intensive hydroponic and aquaculture operations, urban food production is rapidly growing into a mature business sector in cities across the country.

"Urban agriculture helps strengthen the health and social fabric of communities while creating economic opportunities for farmers and neighborhoods," Vilsack said. "USDA's Urban Agriculture Toolkit compiles guidance from our Know Your Farmer team and many private partners into one comprehensive resource to help small-scale producers manage

*(Continued on page 6)*

## SINE DIE REPORT BY LYNNE HOOT, MASCD EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

SB 645/HB 1110 – Chesapeake and Atlantic Coastal Bays 2010 Trust Fund – Allocation of Funds - Senator King/Delegated Frush

SB 645/HB 1110 would have allocated \$5 million annually from the Chesapeake Bay Trust Fund (CBTF) to fund the current district staff being funded annually through CBTF and add five regional engineers. The outcome was that budget language was included in the Joint Chairman's report for a summer study of the issue. The good news was that there was excellent bipartisan support for the legislation. However, in hindsight, the timing was not good for this legislation as Governor Hogan made a big issue that Maryland's budget has 83% mandated funding that eliminates the Administrations options on where to make cuts, and HB 1110 and SB 645 amounted to mandated funding, albeit mandated funding within a mandate.

The Governor's office did suggest that Governor Hogan would likely veto the bill, if passed. Because of this, the bill sponsors thought it better to address district needs through budget language and look for a long-term solution rather than pass HB 1110 & SB 645. The Senate leadership tried to insert the funding but the House leadership preferred to establish a study of staffing needs for this year to enable us to have a report backing up our request for funding in FY18. The Senate tried two separate amendments through the conference committee to add an additional \$710,000 for FY17 but the House conference committee did not support it. Senators Nancy King and Mac Middleton were champions for our cause. For FY17, there is \$3,290,000 in the Chesapeake Bay 2010 Trust Fund which will fund the 25 district manager and administrative staff and the 43 technical assistance positions at the current funding level.

The study calls for a staffing needs assessment and "any other pertinent information the agencies believe would be important to include in the report", MASCD will work with MDA to do an assessment of the cost of water quality improvements using SCD planners and technicians with MACS to install BMPs as a per pound cost. This will stress the benefits on the cost per pound for BMPs installed using fully trained planner and technician vs staff in training. The report is due September 1, 2016.

District supervisor and staff support for this legislation played a critical role, special thanks to everyone who came to Annapolis and made a difference. MASCD supported. **Did not pass.**

*(Continued on page 7)*

## IN MEMORIUM



### FORMER CHIEF OF NRCS PEARLIE REED PASSES

On April 8, a tremendous supporter of the National Conservation Partnership passed away. Pearl S. Reed served the conservation movement in many positions throughout his career. He came from a family with agricultural roots in Arkansas and worked with the Soil Conservation Service and later the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in a number of increasingly influential positions including serving as NRCS State Conservationist for Maryland and California, before ascending to the head of the agency as Chief from 1998-2002.

Reed was called back from retirement into federal service to serve as Assistant Secretary for Administration in the US Department of Agriculture in the first term of the Obama administration. Throughout his career Reed was a steadfast supporter of conservation districts and the National Conservation Partnership. He will be remembered for his energy and tireless work on behalf of conservation all across the USA for which he received numerous awards and recognition for his accomplishments.

NACD President Lee McDaniel, recalled Pearl's service to Maryland prior to becoming Chief, "He had a clear understanding of how the Maryland partnership and Chesapeake Bay issues made our state unique and addressed these issues appropriately. He will be missed by all of us."

## PERSONNEL

### NRCS WELCOMES...

**Laura Eddy**, Administrative Support Specialist working with the Resources and Engineering Teams at the State Office. She started on February 21, 2016.

**Linda Saunders**, Administrative Support Specialist working with the Field Operations Team at the State Office. She started on February 21, 2016.

**Shirl Johnson**, Administrative Assistant, working with the Management and Strategy Team at the State Office. She started on April 4, 2016.

### NRCS BIDS FAREWELL TO...

**Oliver Miranda**, District Conservationist in St. Mary's, Charles and Calvert Counties.

### NRCS TEMPORARY ASSIGNMENTS...

**Assistant State Conservationist for Programs:** **Patty Engler**, State Resource Conservationist, and **Rob McAfee**, Assistant State Conservationist for Field Operations, shared acting responsibility for the Programs Team from January through April. Patty will continue to serve as the acting team lead until May 15, when Rob will serve as the acting team lead until the position has been filled.

**Assistant State Conservationist for Field Operations:** **Teresa Kampmeyer**, District Conservationist for Dorchester and Wicomico Counties will serve in this position, while Rob is working with the Programs Team.

**Acting District Conservationist for Anne Arundel and Prince George's Counties:** **Heydsha Cordero**, Soil Conservationist in Talbot and Caroline Counties, served in this position from February through April. **Gemelle Brion**, Soil Conservationist in Somerset and Worcester Counties, is now serving in this position.

## INTERNET

### EROSION AND SEDIMENT CONTROL CERTIFICATION AVAILABLE ONLINE

Maryland Department of the Environment's erosion and sediment control training course (formerly "green card") is now available online. The course is intended to provide the necessary training for individuals acting as the "Responsible Person" tasked with implementing and maintaining erosion and sediment controls as required by State law. Because of the significant changes included in the 2011 erosion and sediment control regulation update, MDE is requiring all certificate holders who went through training prior to 2012 to renew their certification via the online course by **December 31, 2016**.

The Certification of Responsible Personnel training is valid for three years and automatically renews unless otherwise notified by the Department. Not only will this ensure that participants are familiar with the most current version of the program, but proof of certification will be available online as documentation. For more information, visit <http://mderpc.mde.state.md.us/Account/login.aspx>.

### USDA LAUNCHES PLANT A WINDOW BOX FOR POLLINATORS!



The USDA kicked off a campaign to get Americans of all ages to "Plant a Window Box for Pollinators" by using their new online tool on the new People's Garden Initiative website, <https://peoplesgarden.usda.gov/>. The tool helps users select the appropriate pollinator plants based on their location and provides a printable list to take to your local garden store. The campaign aims to teach people how easy it is to provide habitat for local pollinators and encourage more people to grown pollinator-friendly plants in their own backyards.

Visitors to the new People's Garden site can also play a virtual window box planting game or view the popular "bee cam" which broadcasts a live feed of honeybee activity from the room of the USDA headquarters building in Washington, D.C. The website also features an interactive map of the more than 2,100 gardens planted since Agriculture Secretary Vilsack launched the People's Garden Initiative at the start of the Obama Administration. It also has success stories, resources and guides for creating your own garden that benefits the community and incorporates sustainable practices.

## SCD OPPORTUNITIES- COUNTY STORMWATER PROGRAMS

Louise Lawrence presented background information to the SSCC in April on county stormwater permits for the jurisdictions with a population that brings them under a MDE NPDES permit known as MS-4 permit. Jurisdictions include Montgomery, Prince George's, Howard, Anne Arundel, Carroll, Hartford, Charles, Frederick, Baltimore counties, and Baltimore city. To meet permit conditions these jurisdictions are required to address and mitigate for stormwater and impacts from impervious surface. Legislation passed in 2012 and amended in 2014 authorizes these jurisdictions to establish a fee or "rain tax" to help fund stormwater and stream restoration practices required to mitigate impacts from development.

The SSCC expressed interest in exploring opportunities this requirement might afford SCDs who had the capacity to work with their counties and provide support or expertise for these types of projects

Milly Welsh said that AASCD has an employee who receives salary support from the county's "rain tax." This person has broad duties related to urban programs including some stormwater design oversight. Hoot noted that Anne Arundel county is investing in stream restoration projects.

Kevin Smith noted that DNR has contracts for stream restoration projects in Harford county and the Harford SCD is assisting with their implementation.

In addition to SSCC information collection on this opportunity, Lawrence recommended follow up with SCDs in these counties and the possibility for a panel presentation at MASCD.

## VERIFICATION PROCEDURES FOR AGRICULTURAL BMP IMPLEMENTATION

Alisha Mulkey, MDA, discussed the process approved by EPA Chesapeake Bay Program in February 2016 for verification of agricultural BMP implementation. Jurisdictions will be required to implement verification programs beginning in FY2017. These include 100% of BMP checks at initial implementation stage and a 10% rolling status review during BMP 10-15 year lifespan. MDA will coordinate with SCDs to assure MD meets obligations. These can include Resource Improvements or functional equivalents which are assumed to have a lifespan at one-half the publicly funded equivalent BMPs.

Although MDA will be assessing what the routine checks by SCDs and others already encompass, five positions are proposed as a Verification Taskforce to be dedicated to addressing additional workload and also respond to EPA's interest in having 3<sup>rd</sup> party verifiers. Reviewers will be assigned regionally and do field checks at a parcel level-reviewing all practices present. Conservation Tracker will be used to house the data generated from reviews.

Taskforce members include employees assigned to implement the Agricultural Certainty program. Lynne Hoot noted she had staff funded by NFWF verifying Resource Improvements. Dr. Terron Hillsman said NRCS planners have also been encouraged to document these.

## SUPERVISOR APPOINTMENT PROCESS

Members expressed concerns about developing diversity, making alternative roles available for long-term members to stay engaged and mentor newer supervisors, developing guidance for recruitment of new or associate supervisors and assuring adequate information is provided to make informed appointments.

Members discussed the legal requirement that Farm Bureau and UM Extension submit three nominees for consideration. There is some reluctance to volunteer if the applicant is not really interested in the job. Hans Schmidt noted the need to applicant information if there are multiple responses to enable SSCC to make an informed appointment. There may be an issue of "credibility" if SSCC only appoints the incumbent without due consideration of other nominees.

Luis Dieguez said Charles SCD would like to maintain a list of potential candidates that could be approached when a vacancy occurred. Stanton suggested the SSCC identify what the characteristics of a supervisor in the future might be and change the appointment process as needed to achieve the desired outcome. Milly Welsh suggested each SCD list the areas of expertise they needed locally and make sure their board could fulfill these. Frank Richardson said expertise could be broadened by use of Associates. The MASCD length of service recognition awards reward longevity. Lynne Hoot noted that some states elect supervisors and candidates run campaigns. Frank Richardson noted in York, PA they have a 9 member board and some SCDs operate on a watershed basis with more than 20 board members. Welsh suggested we address turnover or lack thereof before recruitment issues. Dr. Terron Hillsman said there should be flexibility so SCDs could take actions to grow if they are ready and look for opportunities to cast the net wider. Richardson suggested rotating leadership position as a way to assure board growth. Pete Parreco suggested SCDs use the cooperator's dinner to promote the role of supervisors and also that SSCC get input from more boards on the topic at hand. Hoot suggested the local working group members could be a pool of candidates from which to draw.

Members agreed to use the summer MASCD training module to discuss recruitment.

(Continued on page 4)

SSCC



# Report

*Information from the State Soil Conservation Committee*

## SUPERVISOR APPOINTMENT PROCESS

*(Continued from page 3)*

Louise Lawrence presented current background information developed by SSCC in past to document SCD supervisor responsibilities and duties. Information includes a job description, SCD supervisor authorities with examples of how these have been implemented, and the "Facts Supervisors Should Know" sheet that accompanies requests for nominations.

Members discussed making this information available on the MDA and MASCD websites. There was discussion of the MidAtlantic Farm Credit SCD award criteria and comment that SCDs could use the form to evaluate themselves and have a baseline for identifying opportunities for improvement. Also the SSCC could use collated information to improve the appointment process.

There was discussion about the effort to conduct outreach for new membership to the board. Bobby Guy noted this is the importance of using Associates. Discussion included increased use of available media such as website and local community cable networks.

## UPDATES

### 2016/2017 COVER CROP PROGRAM

Incentives for planting cover crops after corn and after use of spring manure will be removed from the 2017 program to reduce the fiscal note on this program. Eligible acres fall certified has exceeded the fund allocation for this program over the last few years.

### NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

MDA has a nutrient management form that allows producers to try new technologies that may result in nutrient applications in excess of UM recommendation rates. Farmers requesting this exemption must be pre-approved by MDA, agree to do test strips as a control and collect and share yield data and other information with MDA. This may prove useful as a source of data when UM considers updates to their recommendations.

MDA is organizing workshops for dairy producers who may need to construct additional manure storage to be in compliance with nutrient management regulations. The purpose of these workshops will be to provide producers a more comprehensive analysis of the economics at play when making these decisions requiring sometime a significant investment.

MDA conducted a survey to determine the need for additional manure storage by dairy farms and identified 240 producers. There are 80 projects in the SCD/MACS pipelines at present. The cost to address all these operators and their site conditional could be as much as \$55 million.

### MANURE TRANSPORT PROGRAM

The Governor has made a commitment to streamline government. Part of this effort will include MDA's re-examination and streamlining of the Manure Transport Program. The Delmarva Land and Litter Challenge is also examining manure transport programs in the region and will provide its own set of recommendations. Information collected on Phosphorus FIV soil test data indicates that one-third of the cropland suitable for use of poultry litter on the mid and upper shore would be adequate to use all poultry litter produced annually through cropland utilization.

## PUBLIC DRAINAGE ASSOCIATION (PDA) - O&M

Bobby Guy noted concerns about PDA maintenance and impacts caused by installed wetlands using NRCS WRP. The area where wetlands tie in the drainage system is a PDA right of way which is managed and must be maintained under state law by the PDA. Steve Strano has said that NRCS would be responsible for maintenance costs if the PDA experienced problems maintaining the system because of the wetland. There continues to be questions related to legal process for wetland to infringe on rights of way and landowner responsibilities for these private projects.

## SCD STAFFING STUDY

The SCD staffing study required in the budget bill by the legislator will incorporate workload and engineering needs. MDA plans to have a draft available for SCD review and discussion at the summer MASCD meeting. Lynne Hoot suggested that the cost per pound of nutrient reduction a BMP achieves should account for staff time and the technical assistance required. Also the productivity comparison of an experience technician and a new person should be addressed. Dr. Terron Hillsman noted that the resources provided for training new staff needs to be accounted for in the analysis regardless of the funding source.

## SUPERVISOR APPOINTMENTS

- Anne Arundel SCD - John Colhoun
- Charles SCD - William Tomlinson
- Prince George's SCD - Raymond Watson
- Caroline SCD - Jeff Towers
- Carroll SCD - Stacy Sellers
- Montgomery SCD - Robert Butz
- Queen Anne SCD - Steve Freeman
- St. Mary's SCD - Donald Ocker
- Washington Co. SCD - Janet Fulton
- Washington SCD - Harry Strite

## TRAINING

### FEDERAL EMPLOYEE SURVEY RELEASED FOR 2016

Federal employees once again have the opportunity to participate in the annual Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS). Participation in the survey is offered via email to a randomly selected one-third of the Federal workforce. The survey will be open for participation from April 27 through June 8.

USDA encourages you to take the time to complete the survey and help in its efforts to improve its workforce environment. The Office of Personnel Management uses the survey results to identify general trends in job satisfaction.

Using the FEVS results, Forbes magazine has ranked USDA as #142 in its list of the top 500 midsized places to work in the country. Last year, USDA was ranked as #216. USDA is the largest federal agency listed in the rankings. The survey results tell us that USDA employees are recognizing that they are part of a great place to work.

If you are asked to participate in the survey, please take a few minutes to respond to the questions. Let your leadership know what you think and be part of positive change.

## CIVIL RIGHTS

### SOIL HEALTH PUBLICATIONS IN SPANISH LANGUAGE

#### “NRCS – LA SALUD DE LOS SUELOS EN ESPAÑOL”

A new website has been developed by the NRCS soil health communications team, which offers a convenient location for visitors to access Spanish-language soil health-related publications and to view soil health video demonstration and public service announcements.

Additional Spanish-language materials will be added to the site throughout the year.

<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detailfull/national/soils/health/?cid=nrseprd939206>

## MASCD GRANT UPDATE

### Farm Stewardship Certification and Assessment Program (FSCAP) –

- There have been 183 FSCAP reviews on 161 farms, resulting in 129 certified conservation stewards doing a great job in protecting 45,954 acres in 20 counties across the state.
- Although the program provided 129 FSCAP farm signs with installed signposts, there are 180 signs displayed because many of the stewards believe that the recognition is also good for business. Every sign includes the district’s name and logo.
- We offer perks to stewards with other projects. Through our Nutrient Trading Project, 22 stewards had free baseline assessments conducted that determine compliance with the TMDL plan and the number of nitrogen and phosphorus credits. Through our Pollinator Habitat Projects, 29 stewards have participated so far and five of them we certified as a result of meeting them as participants in Pollinator Habitat.
- District support: Washington County SCD -29; Carroll - 12; Cecil - 10; Frederick and Wicomico SCDs - 8; St. Mary’s - 7.

### Pollinator Habitat Project –

- The grant from the Baltimore Gas and Electric Company allowed the establishment of five acres of pollinator habitat. Three acres were planted last fall and two acres were planted this spring.
- Our three Pollinator Habitat projects will total 56 acres on 62 farms, two agricultural centers, one school and one environmental education center in 15 counties.

### Resource Improvement

- We were approved to receive a grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, working in partnership with another consultant company, Conservation Partners, to assist districts in verifying resource improvements, which are BMPs installed by farmers on their own without cost-sharing. After verification, the BMPs will be entered in MDA’s Conservation Tracker system and eventually in the Chesapeake Bay database to increase credit for agriculture’s contributions to the Watershed Implementation Plan.
- To date, 16 farms were verified in Washington County, five farms in Anne Arundel County and 33 farms in Howard County. Activity will begin soon in Caroline County.

### GERALD TALBERT, MASCD’S PROJECT LEADER FOR THE TRANSLATION OUTREACH PROJECT RECEIVES THE 2016 CIVIL RIGHTS AWARD



Dr. Terron Hillsman, State Conservation (left), Heydsha Cordero-Rodriguez, MD Civil Rights Committee Chair (middle), Gerald Talbert, MASCD Grants Project Leader (right).

Gerald Talbert, MASCD’s Project Leader for the Translation Outreach Project, received the 2016 Civil Rights Award at NRCS’s Diversity Day event on May 5th at the Beltsville Agricultural Research Center.

The four-year project translated key conservation information for approximately 100 Korean and Vietnamese poultry growers on Maryland’s Eastern Shore.

Project partners included the University of Maryland Extension Office, Midatlantic Farm Credit and the Delmarva Poultry Industry Inc. The project was funded with an NRCS Conservation Innovation Grant.



## ITEMS OF INTEREST

### ENGINEERING WORKLOAD

*(Continued from page 1)*

Together, we created a strategy to enhance our engineering resources through a variety of ways. But the common end result was for all Partnership members to agree to make engineering work a priority as a solution to decrease the backlog and accelerate the completion of these projects. This can be done by reassigning work, bringing in staff for temporary details and filling vacancies. Partners had an open and transparent discussion which included reviewing the tracker entries and assigning appropriate staff and timelines to prioritized projects.

After our meeting, we have determined what and where the backlog is located. Additionally, we are continuing to complete designs and prepare for spring construction. This is the first time in quite a while we can quantify how many engineering plans were prepared statewide and what still needs to be completed.

We now have the capability as a Partnership to use the Engineering Tracker system to set realistic goals and know where to focus our efforts for completing design work needed to meet the conservation engineering needs of the state. I am certain that working together as a Partnership we will see results through clearing up the backlog and raising conservation technical assistance in Maryland to a higher level that shows what we, as a Partnership Team, are capable of doing.

### URBAN AGRICULTURE TOOLKIT

*(Continued from page 1)*

all aspects of their business. From protecting soil health to marketing to schools and grocery store chains, USDA has tools to meet the needs of this new breed of innovative urban farmer and small business owner."

USDA's Toolkit is an electronic document that helps urban and small farms navigate more than 70 helpful resources, including technical assistance and financing opportunities. It focuses on some of the most pressing challenges confronting urban producers such as land access, soil quality, water resources, capital and financing, infrastructure, market development, production strategies, and applying for federal, state or private foundation grants.

University extension service partners in Chicago and Indianapolis helped develop cost estimates for starting urban farms and the Toolkit includes information on best practices and check lists for start-ups and early-stage producers planning outdoor or indoor operations.

Some of the USDA resources featured in the Toolkit include:

- Natural Resources Conservation Service technical and financial assistance for drip irrigation and seasonal high tunnels to extend the growing season.

### 2016 NACD/AUXILIARY PHOTO CONTEST



The NACD/NACD Auxiliary Photo Contest is open to amateur photographers who are residents of the United States or its territories. Participants can enter as many as five photos total each year. Each photo has to fit in one of the four natural resource or conservation photo categories: Conservation Practices, Close Up Conservation, Conservation in Action, and Agriculture and Conservation Across America. The deadline is **December 1, 2016**. For more information, email [stewardship@nacdn.org](mailto:stewardship@nacdn.org), or you can visit <http://www.nacdn.org/education/contests/photo>.

### MARYLAND GRAIN PRODUCERS SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE

The Maryland Grain Producers Utilization Board is awarding up to four \$2,500 scholarships to deserving students enrolled in a Maryland or out-of-state institutions. Funded by Maryland grain checkoff funds, the scholarships 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. Application deadline is **June 1, 2016**. For an application, please call Lynne Hoot at 410-956-5771 or visit [www.marylandgrain.com](http://www.marylandgrain.com).

- Farm Services Agency microloans that provide up to \$50,000 in financing for equipment, working capital or other expenses.
- Food and Nutrition Service assistance to help urban farmers become authorized to accept SNAP, WIC and Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program benefit cards.
- Agricultural Marketing Service Farmers Market Promotion Program grants that support direct-to-consumer marketing activities in cities, and Local Food Promotion Program grants that support food hubs, farm-to-retail, and related projects.
- National Institute of Food and Agriculture's Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) program support for field trials in urban settings and urban farm planning and marketing guides.

The Urban Agriculture Toolkit is part of USDA's Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food Initiative (KYF2) supporting the Obama Administration's work to strengthen economic bonds between rural and urban areas.

Launched in 2009, KYF2 breaks down silos and takes stock of USDA programs that support the growing demand for local and regional food systems.

Visit the KYF2 website at [www.usda.gov/knowyourfarmer](http://www.usda.gov/knowyourfarmer) to find local and regional food system resources in your community.

**SINE DIE REPORT (CONTINUED)****HB 132 – State Government – Pollinator Habitat Plans - Delegate Lafferty**

Requiring DNR, SHA and MES to consult with the Department of Agriculture to establish a pollinator habitat plan by July 1, 2017. Requiring State agencies to implement pollinator habitat plans on or before July 1, 2018, and to make the pollinator habitat plans available on the State agency's website by September 1, 2017. Requiring the State agencies to report to specified committees of the General Assembly by January 1, 2018. MASCD supported. **Passed, not yet signed by the Governor.**

**HB 1464/SB 927 Program Open Space - Trust Fund Act of 2016 - Delegate Gaines/Senator Middleton**

This legislation would have done several things including establishing a plan for repayment of the \$90 million removed from the Trust Fund in 2006 but legislated to be returned to the Fund. Additionally, the bill will safeguard the Program Open Space Fund by requiring repayment within two years of any monies taken to balance the state's budget in the General Fund. Finally, this legislation seeks to jump start the Next Generation Acquisition Fund with \$5 million in 2018. MASCD supported. **Did not pass, but incorporated into HB 462/SB 383.**

**HB 462/SB 383 Program Open Space – Transfer Tax Repayment – Use of Funds - Speaker, President, Administration**

This legislation was a cumulative effort to improve the Program Open Space (POS) legislation and incorporated the language MASCD supported in HB 1464 and SB 927 to safeguard the Project Open Space funding so it isn't taken to help balance the budget each year. If the Governor does take money for the Fund, then they must have a plan on how and when it will be paid back. The bill also requires that the governor repay any funds taken in 2016 by 2018 and any funds taken in 2017 by 2019. In 2006, the legislature passed a bill that required the governor to pay back the \$90 million that he took that year. That money has not been paid back yet. Starting in 2019, this bill would require the governor to pay back the money by putting \$45 million back into the POS funding and \$40 million in the critical park maintenance funding. The final \$5 million would be put into the Next Generation Farmland Acquisition Program in 2018. MASCD Supported. **Passed, signed by Governor.**

**HB 150/SB 190 – Budget Bill (Fiscal Year 2017) - Administration**

The Budget Bill included full funding for the Chesapeake Bay Atlantic and Coastal Bays 2010 Trust Fund at \$53 million. The Joint Chairman's report included language directing stakeholders to conduct a study over the summer on soil conservation district staffing needs. **Passed, signed by the Governor.**

**HB 151/SB 191 – Creation of State Debt – Maryland Consolidated Capital Bond Loan - Administration**

The Capital Budget included the requested \$6 million for the Maryland Agricultural Cost Share program. **Passed, signed by the Governor.**

**HB 65 – Tree Expert License – Application and Renewal – Repeal of Sunset - Chair E&T (Department of DNR)**

Repealing a sunset and requiring an applicant a tree expert license or renewal to complete the professional development curriculum established by the Department of Natural Resources after September 1, 2017. **Passed, signed by the Governor.**

**HB 69 – Personal Property Tax – Credit for New or Small Business - Delegate Luedtke**

Authorizes the governing body of a county or municipal corporation to provide a property tax credit for up to 100% of the county or municipal corporation property tax imposed personal property that is owned or leased by a new or small businesses. **Passed, signed by the Governor.**

**HB 79 – Health – Milk Products – Raw Milk – Consumer Owned Livestock - Delegate Morhaim**

Would have allowed for the distribution of raw milk and raw milk products from to consumers if that consumer has an ownership interest in the animal or herd producing the milk through a written contract. **Did not pass.**

**HB 178 – Natural Resources – Roadside Trees – Preservation and Protection - Delegate Lafferty**

Would have authorized the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to issue a permit for roadside tree maintenance (\$250) or removal (\$500) only for public health and safety purposes or if the tree is dead. Would have required a person removing a roadside tree to replace the tree within two months after its removal and DNR to verify the replacement. **Did not pass.**

**HB 211/SB 198 – Neonicotinoid Pesticides – Restrictions on Sale and Use - Delegate Healy/Senator Nathan-Pulliam**

The bill prohibits a retailer from selling a neonicotinoid pesticide unless they also sell restricted use pesticides. Prohibits a person from using a neonicotinoid pesticide unless they are a farmer or someone under their supervision, certified applicator or someone under their supervisions, or a veterinarian. Exemptions include pet care products, personal hygiene products, and indoor pest control products. The bill also requires the Department of Agriculture to include ways

to expand and enhance pollinator habitat in their Managed Pollinator Protection Plan. Additionally, MDA is required to do a review of the EPA Pollinator Risk Assessments and make recommendations to the legislature for pollinator protection based on EPA's assessment. **Passed, not yet signed by the Governor.**

**HB 325 – Environment – Bay Restoration Fund – Use of Funds – Nutrient Credit Purchases - Chair E&T (Department of the Environment)**

Authorizing Bay Restoration Fund monies to be used for costs associated with the purchase of cost effective nitrogen and phosphorus nutrient credits. Requiring MDE consult with MDA and DNR when adopting these regulations. **Withdrawn.**

**HB 410/SB 266 – Natural Resources – Poaching Restitution Act of 2016 - Delegate O'Donnell/Senator Salling**

This bill prohibits a person from knowingly and willfully hunting, killing, or taking, a sika deer, antlerless white-tailed deer, or antlered white-tailed deer. The bill establishes criminal penalties for violations. Any fine revenue collected under the bill's provisions is credited to the State Wildlife Management and Protection Fund within the Department of Natural Resources (DNR). DNR must adopt implementing regulations. The Bill is effective June 1, 2016. **Passed, not yet considered by the Governor.**

**HB 486 – Motor Vehicle Weight – Agricultural Products - Delegate Reilly**

This bill would have established a 15% tolerance from the gross vehicle weight limits for vehicles carrying agricultural products. This bill was combined with other hauling bills into a study. **Did not pass but there is a plan for a study.**

**HB 599/SB 496 – Poultry Litter Management Act - Delegate Lam/Senator Madaleno**

Would have prohibited an integrator from placing poultry at an operation that does not have an up to date, fully implemented nutrient management plan. Excess manure is defined as "in excess of the amount of manure able to be fully utilized under a certified nutrient management plan developed for the contract operation for adjacent land under the contract grower's control," and the integrator is responsible for removal once per year. Contract growers may voluntarily elect to retain manure so long as it does not exceed the amount of manure that can be annually applied at the contract growers operation unless they obtain a manure alternative use plan defined as "a plan that is designated to use manure in a manner that does not result

*(Continued on page 8)*

**SINE DIE REPORT (CONTINUED)**

in any additional nutrient loads to the Chesapeake Bay." The contract grower must receive permission from the integrator and MDA to retain any excess manure. Integrators and manure brokers must maintain and report the following records: the name and address of the integrator or transporter, amount of manure removed, the nutrient analysis of the manure, the name and location of the farm it was removed from and grower or facility it was delivered to and, the amount of manure delivered. These records are to be submitted to MDA annually and made available to the public upon request. Public funds may not be used for the transport of litter deemed as "excess manure." All excess manure must be covered during transfer and storage. The penalty for violating any of these provisions is a misdemeanor subject to up to \$50,000 in fines per violation. **Did not pass.**

**HB 1163 – Agriculture – Veterinary Feed Directives – Information Collection - Delegate Lam**

Requiring a veterinarian who issues a veterinary feed directive for antibiotics to livestock to submit to the Department of Agriculture information from the veterinary feed directive beginning July 1, 2017, and every 6 months thereafter. Requiring the Department to make the information available for public review in a manner that protects the identity of the farm operation or owner of a farm operation for which the veterinary feed directive relates, and requiring the Department to issue an annual report. **Did not pass.**

**HB 1496 – Farmers' Rights Act - Delegate M. Washington**

Would have required that farmer-integrator contracts for the production of livestock impose a specified obligation of good faith on all parties. Also that contracts have a disclosure telling contract signators to "read carefully" and a summary of the provisions. **Did not pass.**

**SB 61 – Natural Resources – Forest Lands and the Chesapeake and Atlantic Coastal Bays 2010 Trust Fund – Miscellaneous Corrections and Clarifications - Senator Simonaire**

This bill changes terminology used in provisions of law relating to forest lands and the Chesapeake and Atlantic Coastal Bays 2010 Trust Fund. References to the "Chesapeake 2000 Agreement" are replaced with the "2014 Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement". "Watershed implementation plan" is defined as a plan to achieve the nutrient and sediment limits required under the Chesapeake Bay Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL). **Passed, signed by the Governor.**

**SB 67/HB 1193 – State Government – Administrative Procedure Act – Effective Date of Adopted Regulations - Senator Young/Delegate Platt**

Would have required that all nonemergency bills become effective and published in the Maryland Register on a quarterly basis. **Did not pass.**

**SB 100 – Farm Labor Contracting – State License Requirements – Repeal - Chair FIN (DLR)**

Repealing the requirement that an individual be licensed by the Commission of Labor and Industry as long as they have a Farm Labor Contractor Certificate of Registration from the U.S. Department of Labor. Repealing a provision of law authorizing the Commissioner to require a farm labor contractor to post a surety bond or other security. **Did not pass.**

**SB 110 – Agriculture – Young Farmers Advisory Board – Membership - Chair EHEA (Department of Agriculture)**

Increasing the number of members on the Young Farmers Advisory Board from 12 to 20 and specifying that one shall be an officer of the MD State FFA Association, one an urban farmer, and increasing the number of the general public members from 8 to 14. **Passed and enacted.**

**SB 137/HB 276 – Income Tax Credit – Preservation and Conservation Easements - Senator Eckardt/Delegate Stein**

Expanding the provision of the law that allows for an individual to receive a tax credit for a conservation easement to allow for "pass through entities," defined as a corporation, partnership, LLC or business trust to receive this credit as well. This credit against state income tax can be received for easements conveyed to the Maryland Environmental Trust, Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation or the Department of Natural Resources. **Passed, signed by the Governor.**

**SB 249 – Income Tax Credit – Qualified Farms – Food Donation Pilot Program - Senator Middleton**

Would have allowed a farm to receive a tax credit for tax years 2016-2018 of up to \$5,000 against the State income tax. The tax credit would be equal to 50% of the value of edible food donated or 75% of the value of donated certified organic produce. The total amount for all applicants for the tax credit is not to exceed \$250,000. This bill also reestablishes the task force to study the implementation of a Hub and Spoke Program in Southern Maryland. **Did not pass.**

**SB 323/HB 610 – Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction Act – Reauthorization - Senator Pinksy/Delegate Barve**

This bill repeals the termination date of the current requirement to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 25% from 2006 levels by 2020 and requires the State to develop plans, adopt regulations, and implement programs to reduce GHG emissions by 40% from 2006 levels by 2030. The Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) must develop proposed and final plans in accordance with specified requirements. The bill also requires an independent academic study of the economic impact of requiring GHG emissions reductions from the manufacturing sector; the Maryland Commission on Climate Change (MCCC) must oversee the study. Finally, the bill requires MDE to submit a report by October 1, 2022, and every five years thereafter, on the progress toward achieving the 2030 GHG emissions reduction goal and the reductions needed by 2050 to avoid specified climate changes, based on contemporary science. The bill's requirement to reduce GHG emissions by 40% below 2006 levels by 2030 terminates December 31, 2023. **Passed, signed by the Governor.**

**SB 371/HB 1643 – Income Tax – Subtraction Modification – Perpetual Conservation Easements - Senator Peters/Delegate Jackson**

Providing a subtraction modification under the Maryland income tax for the first \$500,000 in proceeds from the sale of a perpetual conservation easement on real property in the State. **Did not pass.**

**SB 383/HB 462 – Program Open Space – Transfer Tax Repayment – Use of Funds - Speaker/President**

This bill requires the State of Maryland to begin to repay funds diverted from Program Open Space in 2006 in the amount of \$90 million. In 2008, \$5 million will be allocated to MARBIDCO for the Next Generation Farmland Acquisition Program. In fiscal years 2019-2021, \$15 million per year will be allocated and split between MALPF, Rural Legacy and the Heritage Conservation fund. In fiscal years 2019-2025, a total of \$40 million will be appropriated to DNR for critical maintenance of parks and other properties managed by the Department. **Passed, signed by the Governor.**

**SB 526 – Agriculture – Commercial Feed – Exemption - Senator Bates**

Altering the defined term "distribute" and defining "donation" as used in the Maryland Commercial Feed Law to allow for the donation of spent grains from a brewer or distiller to a single farmer. **Passed, signed by Governor.**

(Continued on page 9)



**SINE DIE REPORT (CONTINUED)****SB 573/HB 698 – Task Force to Study the Impact of Hauling Grain, Poultry, and Dairy on State Highways - Senator Mathias/ Delegate Otto**

This bill establishes the Task Force to Study the Impact of Hauling Grain, Poultry, and Dairy on state highways, staffed by the State Highway Administration (SHA). The task force must study and make recommendations regarding the impact of short and long distance hauling of grain, poultry, and dairy on state highways, including safety impacts, infrastructure needs, and associated costs. The bill specifies the membership of the task force and requires it to report findings and recommendations to the Governor and the General Assembly by December 1, 2016. **Did not pass but there are still plans to conduct a study.**

**SB 607/HB 829 – Agriculture - Cattle, Swine, and Poultry – Use of Antimicrobial Drugs - Senator Pinsky/ Delegate Lam**

Prohibiting an owner of cattle, swine, or poultry from administering or authorizing an agent to administer specified antimicrobial drugs in cattle, swine, and poultry without a prescription or veterinary feed directive issued by a licensed veterinarian. Requiring a veterinarian who issues a veterinary feed directive to submit to the Department of Agriculture the species administered to, the amount, duration, etc. **Did not pass.**

**SB 770/HB 1297 – Education – Public High Schools – Agriculture Science - Senator - Senator Bates/Delegate McKay**

Requiring each county board of education, beginning in the 2018-2019 school year, to implement a specified agriculture science curriculum in at least one public high school or at least one career and technology education center in each county; and requiring that the agriculture science curriculum be selected from existing curricula developed by the State Department of Education or be developed by a county board and approved by the Department. **Passed, signed by the Governor.**

**PARTNERSHIP PRESS ELECTRONICALLY**

In an effort to conserve, if you prefer to receive the quarterly newsletter by email, as opposed to a mailed hard copy, please email [marguerite@gmail.com](mailto:marguerite@gmail.com) to be added to the email list. The Partnership Press newsletter is posted on [www.mascd.net](http://www.mascd.net).

Future Dates to Remember	
June 22-23	2016 State Envirothon, Mount Saint Mary's University, Emmitsburg, MD
June 16	SSCC Meeting, Annapolis
June 24	MACCA August Exam Registration Deadline
July 15-19	NACD Summer Board Meeting, Minneapolis, MN
July 21	SSCC Meeting, Annapolis
July 28	Maryland Commodity Classic, Queen Anne's 4-H Park, Centreville
July 31-August 2	MASCD Annual Meeting, Hyatt Regency, Cambridge, MD
July 24-27	SWCS Annual Conference, in Louisville, KY
August 8	Nutrient Management & MACCA Exams

**EVENTS****MASCD ANNUAL MEETING – JULY 31-AUGUST 2**

The MASCD Annual Meeting will be held at the Hyatt Regency in Cambridge July 31– August 2. The Upper Eastern Shore Area soil conservation districts are planning an interesting and informative agenda. Meeting registration packages have been mailed. Hold the date and look forward to information sharing with your colleagues from Maryland's 24 soil conservation districts and Partnership agency staff. Registration materials will be distributed through your local SCD and made available by calling 410-956-5771.

**NACD SUMMER BOARD MEETING AND TOUR – JULY 15-19**

Registration is now open for the NACD Summer Board and Conservation Tour, July 15-19 in Minneapolis, MN. Registration begins June 18. For more details and to register, visit <http://www.nacdn.net/events/summer-board-meeting>.

**MARYLAND COMMODITY CLASSIC, QA 4-H PARK – JULY 28**

The Maryland Commodity Classic to be held on Thursday, July 28, at the Queen Anne's 4-H Park in Centreville. This annual event, sponsored by the Maryland Grain Producers Utilization Board (MGPU), the Maryland Grain Producers Association, the Maryland Soybean Board (MSB) and the Mid-Atlantic Soybean Association.

The gates will open at 10:00 a.m. for presentations from select MGPU and MSB funded researchers who will present information about their projects. As a grant recipient, the Maryland Envirothon will have a display to showcase the environmental education activities of the districts to the 250 plus farmers who attend. The event concludes with the famed Crab Feast, Pork and Chicken BBQ. Tickets are available for \$10 each for entry prior to 2:00 p.m. (\$20 after 2:00 and no entry after 3:00 p.m.) Event sponsorships are now being accepted. For more information, call 410-956-5771.

**SWCS INTERNATIONAL ANNUAL CONFERENCE – JULY 24-27**

Join your colleagues July 24-27, 2016, in Louisville, KY for the 71st Annual International Conference of the Soil and Water Conservation Society. The Annual Conference will provide a forum for exploring and promoting science-based knowledge about management practices that protect land and river ecologies and make them productive and more resilient.

The conference will offer unique opportunities to showcase conservation efforts in both the uplands and bottomlands of great rivers and their tributaries, including nutrient management, erosion and sediment control, nonpoint source pollution and watershed policy, flood and drought management, and other issues influencing the health and functionality of our soil and water. For more information, please visit the SWCS website at [http://www.swcs.org/en/conferences/2016\\_annual\\_conference/](http://www.swcs.org/en/conferences/2016_annual_conference/).

## PRINCE GEORGE'S SOIL CONSERVATION DISTRICT CELEBRATES 75 YEARS

Close to 200 people gathered at Robin Hill Farm and Vineyard in Brandywine, MD on April 27, 2016 to celebrate the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Maryland's 7<sup>th</sup> Soil Conservation District. Guests included Mr. Jeremy Peter's-CEO NACD, Mr. Lee McDaniel-President NACD, Mr. Joe Bartenfelder Maryland Secretary of Agriculture, Mr. Jim Eichorst Deputy Secretary of Agriculture and Mr. Hans Schmidt Assistant Secretary for Resource Conservation. Other guests included representatives from US Senator Barbara Mikulski and Prince George's County Executive Mr. Rushern Baker III. The key note speaker, Mr. Jason Weller- chief of USDA-NRCS, gave a wonderful presentation about the importance of locally led conservation around the country and the important role Soil Conservation Districts play in improving water quality and the overall quality of life at the local, state and federal level.

### AGRICULTURAL ADVOCATE JOB OPENING

Maryland Agricultural Associates is seeking an adaptive, hard-working and creative individual with strong agricultural knowledge and excellent communication skills. **Application deadline is June 8th.** Visit [mascd.net](http://mascd.net) for details.

# P Maryland Conservation PARTNERSHIP PRESS



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 equal employment opportunity employers.

NONPROFIT  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
ANNAPOLIS, MD  
PERMIT NO. 188

MASCD  
53 Slama Road  
Edgewater, MD 21037-1423  
410-956-5771, [www.mascd.net](http://www.mascd.net)

