SSSC WELCOMES NEW EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

Effective November 7, 2018, Alisha Mulkey was named Executive Secretary for the SSCC. Mulkey assumed the duties after the retirement of Louise Lawrence. She joined MDA in 2014 and previously worked as the Program Coordinator for the Agricultural Watershed Implementation Plan. Over the years, she has been responsible for tracking and analyzing agricultural best management practices that help Maryland meet its Chesapeake Bay cleanup goals. She has represented the department on several Chesapeake Bay workgroups focused on agriculture and nutrient modeling.

NACD PUBLICATIONS

NACD issues a number of publications to keep member conservation districts informed of recent association activity, the latest news affecting districts and their customers and newly available resources. Publications are provided to districts free of charge.

eResource - eResource is NACD’s weekly news briefs issued every Tuesday afternoon. It is posted on the NACD website and emailed to most district employees and to a general distribution list. You can read eNotes online or, or have a copy sent to your inbox.

The Resource - NACD’s quarterly print publication, The Resource, provides in depth coverage of the association’s recent activities and features columns by the NACD CEO and President, in addition to guest and partnership columns. Published quarterly, the newsletter is distributed electronically and through the mail.

MARYLAND CHARITY CAMPAIGN

MASCD Envirothon is a participant in the Maryland Charity Campaign, which allows Maryland state employees and retirees to give to over 700 participating charitable organizations.

To help support Maryland high school students strive to learn more about our natural world and compete at county, state, and national levels, please visit http://www.mdecharity.org/ and enter code 6483, or enter Maryland Association of Soil Conservation Districts, Inc.

MARYLAND GENERAL ASSEMBLY—LEGISLATIVE UPDATE, BY LINDSAY THOMPSON, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, MASCD

MASCD held our winter meeting and legislative reception last week on February 13-14th, 2019. Thank you to all of those who took the time to attend and communicate with your legislators about the importance of soil conservation and other timely bills and issues. The legislative luncheon was a huge success with over 70 legislators in attendance from both rural and urban districts.

During our Board meeting, MASCD chose to take positions on the following bills:

HB20/SB344—State Agricultural Land Transfer Tax - Non-agricultural Use Exemption - Repeal
Repealing the exemption from paying the agricultural transfer tax on unimproved land for which the residential tax rate has been paid for five years before changing the landuse from agriculture to developed.

MASCD SUPPORTS

HB255/SB407—Public Schools - Agricultural Education Programs
This bill encourages each jurisdiction to implement an agricultural education program that prepares students for successful careers and secondary education in agricultural related fields.

MASCD SUPPORTS

HB408—Natural Resources - Chesapeake and Atlantic Coastal Bays Trust Fund
Renaming the Chesapeake and Atlantic Coastal Bays 2010 Trust Fund to be the "Chesapeake Bay and State Waters Trust Fund"; modifying the purpose of the Fund to include the restoration and protection of the health of the waters of the State.

MASCD SUPPORTS

HB1008—MALPF—Valuation of Easement
This bill allows MALPF to use an appraisal for up to two years.

MASCD SUPPORTS

HB532/SB744—Protecting Natural Resources and Preserving Productive Farms - Commission on the Development of a Blueprint for Solar Energy in Maryland
This bill establishes a Commission to develop a blueprint for solar energy to guide the state and local jurisdictions in their placement of solar projects. Special emphasis is given to avoiding solar on productive farmland and in environmentally sensitive areas such as wetlands and productive forests.

MASCD SUPPORTS

(Continued on page 5)
**PERSONNEL NOTES**

**CHARLES SCD WELCOMES...**
Randy Sweeney, CBTF grant-funded Soil Conservation Planner.

Udeni Leanage, CBTF grant-funded Soil Conservation Engineering Technician.

**NRCS WELCOMES...**
Stephen Ricks, Program Assistant at the State Office
Mitchell LeMieux, Soil Conservationist in Anne Arundel
Michael Montillo, Soil Conservation Technician in St. Mary’s
Katherine Biggs, RC&D Wildlife Biologist in Talbot
Colleen Kieffer, Soil Conservationist in Charles
Elizabeth Goering, RC&D Grazing Specialist in Allegany
Alyssa Leach, RC&D Conservation Planner in Frederick
Chase Colmorgen, Ducks Unlimited Wildlife Biologist for Delmarva

**NRCS BIDS FAREWELL TO...**
Odessa Armstrong, Assistant State Conservationist for Management & Strategy, accepted a position with NRCS in North Carolina.

Amy Albright, Soil Conservationist in Allegany, accepted a new position with the Forest Service.

Aaron McCann, Soil Conservationist in Prince George’s, accepted a position with NRCS in California.

Retirements
Allan Stahl, State Conservation Engineer retired after 48 years of service
Dean Cowherd, Assistant State Soil Scientist, retired after 45 years of service
Jim Brewer, Resource Soil Scientist in Talbot, retired after 42 years of service
Marie Monn, Financial Resource Specialist at the State Office retired after 39 years of service

**NRCS TEMPORARY CHANGES...**
Gail Myers and Jacob Dieguez are sharing duties as the Acting State Conservation Engineers.

Jackie Byam is serving as Acting Assistant State Conservationist for Management & Strategy.

**MDA WELCOMES...**
Ryan Fisher, Agricultural Resource Conservation Specialist, Cecil Soil Conservation District

**MDA BIDS FAREWELL TO...**
Ben Cooper retired from Agricultural Resource Conservation Specialist, Allegany Soil Conservation District

Ed Null retired from District Manager, Carroll Soil Conservation District

Butch Miller retired from Soil Conservation Associate, Garrett Soil Conservation District

**TRAINING**

**MDA TO HOST BOXWOOD BLIGHT TRAINING MARCH 14**
The department’s Plant Protection & Weed Management program will host a boxwood blight training seminar on March 14 at 10 a.m. at the Maryland Department of Agriculture, 50 Harry S Truman Pkwy, Annapolis, in Room 112. Boxwood blight, an exotic fungal disease, is a serious concern for Maryland’s nursery industry. Occurrence of this disease has been increasing in the nursery trade and beyond.

The training will include a discussion on boxwood blight management, biology, exterior quarantines imposed by other states for boxwood plants leaving Maryland, new developments, and current issues facing the disease.

This free training is limited to 50 participants. If there are fewer than 15 attendees registered by March 5, the training may be cancelled. To register, please contact the department’s Plant Protection & Weed Management program at ppwm.mda@maryland.gov or 410-841-5920.

**NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT TRAINING**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CLASS DESCRIPTION</th>
<th>October 2018 - March 2019 - Voucher Training</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Farmers who apply nutrients to 10 or more acres of cropland are required to attend a two-hour nutrient applicator training course once every three years. Click the Voucher Training link above for dates and locations of this free training. Farmers who are certified to write their own nutrient management plans are not required to attend voucher training.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>University of Maryland Extension Nutrient Management Specialists will be available to assist farm operators in updating their nutrient management plans for the upcoming cropping season.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CLASS DESCRIPTION</th>
<th>January - March 2019 - Farmer Training and Certification Workshop 2019</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>These workshops allow producers with cropland and pastures who use commercial fertilizer and/or manure to learn how to write nutrient management plans for their own operations that meet the department's requirements.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CLASS DESCRIPTION</th>
<th>March 2019 - Farmer Training and Certification for Intensive Small Scale Food Production Operations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>This class provides an opportunity for urban and peri-urban farmers to learn how to write nutrient management plans for their own operations.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CLASS DESCRIPTION</th>
<th>Webinars (Available Anytime) - Learn and Earn CEUs Online</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The University of Maryland and other institutions provide excellent nutrient management webinars. Even if you cannot attend a session &quot;live,&quot; you might be able to earn CEUs at a later date.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For registration information, visit:

https://mda.maryland.gov/resource_conservation/Pages/nutrient_management_training_program.aspx
DELMARVA POULTRY INDUSTRY “GOOD NEIGHBOR” EFFORTS

Holly Porter, Assistant Executive Director of Delmarva Poultry Industry (DPI), reported on DPI’s ongoing efforts related to air quality concerns adjacent to poultry operations.

The association has been actively promoting the installation and research of practices that improve air quality around poultry houses. The primary practice is known as the Vegetated Environmental Buffer (VEB) of trees, shrubs, or grasses. VEBs are strategically planted near the houses to capture dust and particulates from the fans, reduce odors and noise from the house, act as a snow fence, provide shade and reduce energy use, and act as a visual screen between poultry houses and adjoining properties. The multiple benefits of VEBs have been recognized by many localities and recent zoning ordinance revisions in some VA and MD counties are requiring the installation of VEBs at new poultry operations. Where counties do not require a VEB, often the integrator is “strongly recommending” the practice to their growers.

Research has demonstrated the combination of setbacks and VEBs adjacent to the poultry house fans can reduce downstream ammonia concentrations to a negligible amount. For these reasons, DPI updated its “Good Neighbor Policy” in 2015 to include VEBs, setbacks, housing locations, manure and mortality management, and more odor control techniques. To further encourage the use of VEBs, DPI offers in-house technical assistance to its members to develop planting plans, installation contacts, and cost-share resources. Concurrently, DPI is working with MDA to better inventory the existing VEBs for poultry operations. Where counties do not require a VEB, often the integrator is “strongly recommending” the practice to their growers.

Last, Holly presented next challenges for the poultry industry related to current stormwater regulations. The sizable ponds now required by Erosion & Sediment plans and process are requiring considerable more ground disturbance regulations create an avian influenza risk to the flock, and require considerable more ground disturbance. DPI is exploring the use of pollinator habitat adjacent to the stormwater ponds as a means of property beautification, slope stabilization, and increasing habitat. A demo siren in Millsboro, DE is in development.

SITING SOLAR FACILITIES IN MD

David Tancabel, Director of the Power Plant Research Program at Maryland Department of Natural Resources reported on the department’s siting and evaluation process for solar energy facilities.

Maryland enacted its renewable standard (RPS) in 2004 with a goal of achieving 25% renewable energy by 2020. A 2.5 percent contribution is included for in-state solar generation. Currently, the state is on track to meet its goals, but achievement is largely from out-of-state generation credits (RECs) for non-solar sources. The success of the program could result in new legislation being considered to increase the RPS and the solar portion carve out. This will continue to put demands on agricultural lands since they are often located near existing transmission and have site conditions (clear land, minimal slope) easier for installation.

David reviewed the process for new generation being sited in Maryland. Generators of newly proposed sources must complete a lengthy permit process, acquire an interconnection agreement for the transmission, and be granted a certificate known as the CPCN from the Public Service Commission. The latter step is a legal proceeding that includes hearings, data reviews, testimony, supporting documentation, and public comment. The Power Plant Research Program at DNR is the legal representative for Maryland in the hearings to review the environmental and socioeconomic impacts of the proposed generation. Their recommendation and conditions are often included if the CPCN is granted. Also important to the process is the “due consideration” required, whereby the recommendation (or opposition) of the county or municipal government for the proposed site is strongly considered, along with the proposal’s consistency with local comprehensive planning and zoning efforts. With this in mind, David encourages the local government (including SCDs) to be an active participant in the process. The Public Service Commission will consider their preferences. And time forward, the SCDs could be recognized as a technical resource to improve the permit conditions as it relates to use of agricultural lands. The DNR website provides additional resources on the process and a list of current applications currently under review.

2019 WORK PLAN DRAFTED

In December, the SSCC met to draft its 2019 work plan based on issues of interest for SSCC members, and requested needs from the SCDs. The following topics will be addressed in 2019:

- 2018 Farm Bill overview of conservation programs
- Composting facilities
- MDE inspections of ag operations
- Erosion & Sediment plans and process
- Urban agriculture programs and Extension
- MDA’s final WIP III
- Soil health research efforts
- MDA Biomass Pilot Study outcomes
- Grant opportunities – funding and eligibility for SCDs
- “Waters of the United States” tutorial
- Federal Climate Change report
- Mental health outreach within ag community
- New hemp and marijuana regulations
SUPERVISOR APPOINTMENTS

- Calvert SCD – Walter Wells
- Allegany SCD – Lee Heavner
- Baltimore SCD – John Michael McGinnis
- Cecil SCD – Victor Priapi
- Frederick SCD – Robert Myers
- Harford SCD – Lee McDaniel

SSCC MEETING FEBRUARY 21

The State Soil Conservation Committee will meet Thursday, February 21, 2019 at 9:30 a.m. at the Maryland Department of Agriculture, 50 Harry S. Truman Parkway, Annapolis, MD 21401.

The meeting is open to the public and will focus on composting requirements in Maryland – MDA composting certification requirements, and MDE permitting and inspection of licensed composting facilities.

CIVIL RIGHTS UPDATE

MARYLAND NRCS CIVIL RIGHTS ADVISORY COMMITTEE COMMEMORATES BLACK HISTORY MONTH AT THE BANNEKER-DOUGLASS MUSEUM

On January 23 and 24th, the Maryland Civil Rights Advisory Committee celebrated Black History month during their January meeting. As part of the agenda, Black Special Emphasis Program Manager Matt Drury made a presentation and organized a tour at the state’s official museum of African American heritage to commemorate the upcoming Black History Month in February.

During his presentation, Matt spoke about the Freedom Riders and the impact of greyhound buses during the civil rights movement in 1960's. He also showed the group a clip on the significance of black military members in the various American wars.

The group also went to The Banneker-Douglass Museum in Annapolis and went on a tour throughout the state’s official museum of African American heritage as well as the historic church next door. Governor Larry Hogan issued a proclamation declaring 2018 as the “Year of Frederick Douglass” in Maryland in honor of the bicentennial anniversary of the birth of Frederick Douglass.

During the tour, the group learned about black history specifically in Maryland. In addition to hearing the history of Maryland natives, Benjamin Banneker and Frederick Douglass, the group also learned about Harriet Tubman who was born in Dorchester County, Maryland. As an abolitionist and political activist, she utilized the Underground Railroad and made about thirteen journeys to bring approximately seventy slaves to freedom. They also learned the history of the church where the museum is located, Mt. Moriah African Methodist Episcopal Church, and how various notable black abolitionists visited during its active period.

If you are interested in learning more about the museum, please visit https://bdmuseum.maryland.gov/

The museum displayed a piece of art that was made up of the remnants from the original stain glass windows in the Mt. Moriah African Methodist Episcopal Church.

EVENTS

MASCD ANNUAL MEETING, AUGUST 5-7

MASCD’s Annual Meeting will be held August 5-7, 2019 at the Turf Valley in Ellicott City.

The MASCD Board meeting will begin at 3 p.m. on Sunday afternoon. The Central Area is this year’s host and they are planning an event Sunday at a local venue. The Opening Session will begin at 8:30 a.m. on Monday morning.

Meeting responsibilities go to:
Registration—Montgomery
Hospitality Room—Howard
Registration table & typing room—Cecil
Endowment Auction—Harford

The Technical and Administrative Committee Meetings and Area Meetings will be held later in the day. Tuesday will wrap up with a supervisors training and general session with any new business.

District supervisors, district staff and partnership agencies are encouraged to attend to share information as well as the camaraderie of your peers in Maryland’s Conservation Partnership.
MARYLAND GENERAL ASSEMBLY—LEGISLATIVE UPDATE, BY LINDSAY THOMPSON, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, MASCD, CONTINUED

(Continued from page 1)

HB808—Weed Control - Noxious Weeds - Regulations and Penalties
This bill takes the list of noxious weeds out of statute and gives MDA the authority to set the list through regulation. It also allows MDA to pursue civil penalties with fines and a “three-strikes” method before pursuing criminal charges for violations of the noxious weed law. All fines are to be directed to a fund for noxious weed eradication.

MASCD SUPPORTS

HB904/SB546—Agriculture - Nutrient Management - Monitoring and Enforcement
This bill does a variety of things including: Require MDA to levy up to a $250 fine for a planner who has not yet reported their soils data under the PMT. Increase the minimum fine for not having a nutrient management plan to no less than $100 or more than $250. Increase the minimum fine for each violation of a nutrient management plan to no less than $100 or more than $500 per violation for a total of no more than $5,000 per farmer per year. Institute a minimum fine for application of phosphorus (P) to a field not eligible to receive P under the PMT of $250. Require an application fee of $5,000 for a CAFO permit and $1,500 annual renewal. Require manure haulers and brokers to become certified by MDA and report annually on the tonnage of manure they transported; and require that any CAFO use a certified hauler to remove manure from their farm. Require that an operator obtain their CAFO permit before any construction begins on the new CAFO. Requires "onsite monitoring" equipment to be installed at each CAFO and reports submitted to MDE. Requires continuous water quality monitoring stations be installed in 9 locations on the Eastern Shore.

MASCD OPPOSES - MASCD opposes levying minimum fines on farmers that are actively trying to comply with the nutrient management law but may have an out of date plan or violation due to lack of planning resources.

HB1050—Agriculture - Cost-Sharing Program - Sale of Harvested Cover Crops
Authorizing a person that plants barley, rye, or wheat cover crops under the cover crop program to sell the harvested cover crop to a distiller or brewer that will process the crop in the State of Maryland.

MASCD OPPOSES *MASCD staff will work with the bill sponsor to explain that the current cover crop program allows MDA the flexibility year to year to change priorities of the program without legislation.

I will keep you updated on the status throughout the legislative session. Please contact me with any questions or concerns at Lindsay.mdag@gmail.com.

ITEMS OF INTEREST

ANNUAL REPORT AVAILABLE

The Maryland Association of Soil Conservation Districts has released its 2018 annual report entitled, “Pulling Our Weight”.

The report highlights the ways Maryland’s 24 soil conservation districts work to protect natural resources. Contact Lindsay Thompson, 443-262-8491 for a copy or visit www.mascd.net.

PARTNERSHIP PRESS ELECTRONICALLY

To receive the newsletter by email, as opposed to a mailed copy, please email marguerite.mdag@gmail.com. Past issues are also posted on www.mascd.net.

POSTER AND COLORING CONTEST

MASCD encourages each soil conservation district to solicit participants for the annual poster and coloring contests. Districts can work through public and private schools, civic organizations, community associations, churches, and troops to advertise the contest and encourage students to participate. Winners of the state poster contest will be sent to the national competition at NACD. The 2019 theme is “Life in the Soil: Dig Deeper”.

More information on the contest guidelines can be found at http://www.nacdn.org/general-resources/stewardship-and-education-materials/contests/. State winners of the coloring contest in their age groups receive $100.00 and winners of the poster contest in their age groups receive $100.00 for first place, and $50.00 for second place.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FUTURE DATES TO REMEMBER</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feb 21</td>
<td>SSCC, MDA, Annapolis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 21</td>
<td>SSCC, MDA, Annapolis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 27</td>
<td>MASCD Board Meeting, TBD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 18</td>
<td>SSCC, MDA, Annapolis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 28 - May 5</td>
<td>Soil &amp; Water Stewardship Week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 16</td>
<td>SSCC, MDA, Annapolis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 20</td>
<td>SSCC, MDA, Annapolis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 18</td>
<td>SSCC, MDA, Annapolis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 19-20</td>
<td>Maryland Envirothon, St. Mary’s College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 22</td>
<td>MACCA August Exam Registration Deadline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 28 - Aug 2</td>
<td>National Envirothon - Raleigh, NC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 2</td>
<td>MACCA Exam, Annapolis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 5-7</td>
<td>MASCD Annual Meeting, Turf Valley</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

In 1955, the National Association of Conservation Districts began a national program to encourage Americans to focus on stewardship. Stewardship Week is officially celebrated from the last Sunday in April to the first Sunday in May. It is one of the world's largest conservation-related observances.

The theme for NACD’s 2019 Stewardship Week is “Life in the Soil: Dig Deeper.” Soil is a dirty topic, but everyone needs to learn more about it! Soil is the foundation for many of the items we use in our daily life, such as food, clothing, clean water, homes and more. Healthy soil equals healthy food, which equals a healthy you. Don’t treat your soil like dirt! Contact your local conservation district to help you care for your soil.

Rules, entry forms and other resources for the 2019 NACD Poster. The 64th Annual Stewardship Week will take place April 28 – May 5, 2019. Please use the 2019 stewardship materials for educational purposes only.

Rules, entry forms, and other resources related to the 2019 NACD poster contest can be found at http://www.nacadnet.org/general-resources/stewardship-and-education-materials/contests/.

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 opportunity employers.