



STRATEGIC PLAN

2020-2025

WASHINGTON COUNTY SOIL
CONSERVATION DISTRICT

ORGANIZATION

The Washington County Soil Conservation District (WCSCD) was organized and established on January 22, 1940 under the Maryland Soil Conservation District Law. A Soil Conservation District constitutes a political subdivision of the state and, as a public body, exercises public powers.

The law includes a declaration of policy that has guided the WCSCD in responding to the needs of Washington County residents:

“It is the policy of the General Assembly to provide for the conservation of the soil, water and related resources of the State and for the control and prevention of soil erosion in order to preserve natural resources, control floods, prevent impairment of dams and reservoirs, assist in maintaining the navigability of rivers and harbors, preserve wildlife, protect the tax base, protect the public lands, protect and promote the health, safety, and general welfare of the people of the State, and otherwise enhance their living environment.”

To meet this policy challenge the District Board of Supervisors of WCSCD provide programs that are balanced in their approach to natural resource management. It has been the belief of the WCSCD that voluntary incentive driven programs of direct technical and financial assistance to landowners and land users accomplishes the most balanced result with the most lasting effects.

The District Board of Supervisors is made up of five residents from Washington County. They are appointed for five year terms by the State Soil Conservation Committee from recommendations from the Washington County Farm Bureau, Washington County Cooperative Extension, and two at-large positions selected from residents of the County, and the remaining supervisor is appointed by the County governing body.

The Supervisors meet monthly to guide and direct the work of the WCSCD, which consists of personnel, assigned to them from the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, The Maryland Department of Agriculture, and locally funded District personnel. The Supervisors oversee funding from Federal, State and Local sources to accomplish our goal of balancing a productive land in harmony with a quality environment.



“The soil is the great connector of lives, the source and destination of all. It is the healer and restorer and resurrector, by which disease passes into health, age into youth, death into life. Without proper care for it we can have no community, because without proper care for it we can have no life.”

– **Wendell Berry**

CORE VALUES

- ◆ A commitment to respect the desires and objectives of the landowner.
- ◆ Supervisors and staff exhibit the highest ethical standards and are held accountable for their performance.
- ◆ Diligence and integrity in meeting expectations of our customers and cooperating agencies.
- ◆ Providing compensation and recognition to employees commensurate with their status as natural resource management professionals.
- ◆ A commitment to preserve and strengthen our core partnership between Washington County Government, the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service, and the Maryland Department of Agriculture.
- ◆ A commitment to excellence in customer service for our customers.

"History is largely a record of human struggle to wrest the land from nature, because man relies for sustenance on the products of the soil. So direct, is the relationship between soil erosion, the productivity of the land, and the prosperity of people, that the history of mankind, to a considerable degree at least, may be interpreted in terms of the soil and what has happened to it as the result of human use."

- Hugh H. Bennett and W.C. Lowdermilk, circa 1930's

VISION, MISSION, AND FUNCTION

VISION

We are recognized for effective leadership in natural resource conservation in assisting people and communities to achieve a productive land in harmony with a quality environment

MISSION

To provide effective leadership in addressing the conservation of soil, water, and related natural resources, through delivery of programs in education, information, financial incentives, and technical assistance to the land owners and land users of Washington County

FUNCTION

To use available technical, financial, and educational resources, whatever their source, and focus or coordinate them so they meet the needs of the local land owner or land user for the conservation of soil, water and related natural resources

"There are two spiritual dangers in not owning a farm. One is the danger of supposing that breakfast comes from the grocery and the other that heat comes from the furnace." - Aldo Leopold

WHO WE SERVE



WCSCD provides technical, educational, financial and information services to a wide range of customers, including agriculture producers, developers, engineers, homeowners, as well as, Local, State and Federal cooperating agencies, municipalities, and government entities.

Agricultural Producers: Traditional producers, such as, dairy, beef, poultry, swine, orchard, nursery, horticultural, and grain farmers, non-traditional operations, such as, horses, goats, llama's and other specialty animals and crops. Technical, financial, and informational resources and services are provided to reduce or eliminate sources of agricultural point and non-point source pollution while maintaining a productive and sustainable agriculture in Washington County.

Developers/Engineers: The District provides Soil Erosion and Sediment Control Plan, small pond, Forest Harvest, and subdivision, review and approval services to the engineering and development communities. Information and education services are provided through the use of soil survey, historical and current resource inventories, as well as, direct technical assistance to these customers.

WCSCD provides this service to meet statutory responsibilities and provide for the conservation of natural resources during development activities. WCSCD provides field services through Pre-Construction Meetings, Interim Water Quality Inspections, and Final Site Closeout Reviews through an agreement with the Maryland Department of the Environment. These field services help ensure erosion and sedimentation from construction sites is kept to a minimum and when construction is complete, sites are stabilized with permanent vegetation.

Students: Educational programs, such as, the Envirothon, and classroom demonstrations provide hands-on training in the area of soils, wildlife, aquatics, forestry and an annual current environmental issue. Education of the next generation is essential in maintaining the progress made in conservation of natural resources.

Homeowners: Through one on one contact and outreach at the annual Home Builders Association of Washington County annual Home Show, WCSCD advises homeowners on backyard conservation with topics, such as, drainage control, sink holes, composting, lawn fertilization and plantings to improve water quality and provide habitat for wildlife.

Private ownership of land makes up the majority of land ownership in Washington County. As the landscape becomes fragmented into smaller parcels, it is imperative the District respond with approaches that address those natural resource issues. The actions of individuals in their own backyards, when taken as a whole, contribute significantly to erosion reduction, water quality improvement, and creation of valuable wildlife habitats.

Cooperating Organizations: Cooperating organizations, such as, County Government, the Maryland Department of Agriculture, USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service, USDA-Farm Services Agency, Department of the Environment, Department of Natural Resources, University of Maryland Extension, Western Maryland Resource Conservation and Development Council and municipalities, provide funding and technical services to assist with fulfilling our mission. WCSCD in turn provides services to all cooperating organizations to assist them in their mission.

"Nature has endowed the Earth with glorious wonders and vast resources that man may use for his own ends. Regardless of our tastes or our way of living, there are none that present more variations to tax our imagination than the soil, and certainly none so important to our ancestors, to ourselves, and to our children" - Charles Kellogg

STRATEGIC PLAN

The strategic plan for WCSCD focusses on our four major programmatic areas of service:

District Operations: Functions carried out by SCD employees and District Supervisors, such as, administration of financial accounts, human resources, policies, office management, Board of Supervisors monthly meetings, travel, training, program administration, and partnership coordination.

Agricultural Conservation: Functions related to administration and coordination of State, Federal and Local conservation programs. Staff provide turn key services, including conservation planning to identify resource concerns, site survey, conservation practice design, and permitting and construction supervision. Local administration of the State cost-share program, Cover Crop Program, Manure Transport Program and assistance with delivery of Federal cost share and incentive programs. Primary focus of the program is assisting the agricultural sector in meeting the Watershed Implementation Plan and Farm Bill goals.

Urban Conservation: Environmental compliance reviews, including review and approval of Soil Erosion and Sediment Control Plans, for all earth disturbances requiring approval under State law, and compliance with the County's Sensitive Area Review requirements, primarily related to identification and conservation of stream buffers and steep slopes. Field inspection services under agreement with the MD Department of the Environment. The District assists Washington County with implementation of the Forest Conservation Ordinance, identifying and enlisting landowners to preserve or create new forests with funds provided by the development community.

Information and Education: Information and education crosses all of our service areas and includes our County Envirothon competition, outreach to students in the class room through hands on demonstrations, and participation in community events, such as, the Washington County Homebuilders-Home Show, Boonsboro Green Fest and Washington County Ag Expo. Our web site and quarterly newsletters, along with social media, provide another element to our outreach.

"Plans are only good intentions unless they immediately degenerate into hard work." Peter Drucker

GOALS 2020-2025

- ◆ Strengthen and streamline District Operations
- ◆ Provide for adequate, trained, and certified staff across all areas of service delivery
- ◆ Deliver Conservation Planning, Technical assistance and financial incentives to enable the agricultural community to reach Watershed Implementation Plan III goals
- ◆ Maintain, increase and broaden funding sources from partnership agencies, Washington County, fees for service, and grants
- ◆ Continue implementation of the Antietam Creek Watershed Restoration Plan
- ◆ Improve efficiency and service responsiveness to all customers
- ◆ Expand outreach and education through community events, quarterly newsletters, published news articles and use of social media
- ◆ Continue partnership with Washington County, to implement the Forest Conservation Ordinance “payment in lieu” program to permanently conserve existing forests and create new forest lands
- ◆ Supervisors and staff participation annually in State and national conferences, as well as, training opportunities to stay current in the field of conservation

Annual goals in each area of service delivery will be developed and monitored for implementation by the Board of Supervisors and the District Manager. Staff will report annually on progress and develop new annual goals for approval and implementation at the beginning of each fiscal year.

There are risks and costs to a program of action. But they are far less than the long range risks and costs of comfortable inaction.
– **John F. Kennedy**

DISTRICT OPERATIONS

GOAL #1: Acquire and develop new staff and Supervisors

STRATEGIES	ACTIONS TAKEN & DATE
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Evaluate staffing needs 2. Recruit new Associate Supervisors 3. Create and update position descriptions for Administrative Assistant 4. Identify and provide training for staff and Supervisors 	

GOAL # 2: Provide training and development for District Supervisors, and staff.

STRATEGIES	ACTIONS TAKEN & DATE
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Maintain professional certifications for staff through continuing education 2. Participate in MASCD quarterly, Summer and Winter meetings 3. Staff attend Human Resources training as needed 	

GOAL #3: Improve District administrative and fiscal procedures

STRATEGIES	ACTIONS TAKEN & DATE
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Evaluate fiscal and accounting procedures for compliance with acceptable standards and develop fiscal policies for Board approval 2. Evaluate administrative procedures that impact staff workload across all service delivery functions in context of position descriptions 	

GOAL # 4: Secure adequate funding for all areas of service delivery

STRATEGIES	ACTIONS TAKEN & DATE
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Evaluate all funding sources, operating budgets, cash reserves, and grant funds to develop the annual operating budget 2. Participate fully in the County and State Budget processes to secure needed funding 3. Develop/define funding sources for District Manager, Urban Program Director, Administrative Assistant, and Engineering Technician/Urban Plan Reviewer 	

AGRICULTURAL CONSERVATION

GOAL # 1: Assist agricultural community with meeting the goals of the Watershed Implementation Plan III

STRATEGIES	ACTIONS TAKEN & DATE
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Work with MD Department of Agriculture to hire permanent State funded Conservation Planner and Technician to meet WIP III goals 2. Monthly monitoring of BMP design and delivery to customers 3. Develop 5,000 acres of Soil Conservation and Water Quality Plans 4. Identify and provide training for Agricultural staff 	

GOAL # 2: Improve local administration of State cost share programs

STRATEGIES	ACTIONS TAKEN & DATE
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review all administrative procedures 2. Develop application and claim checklist 3. Conduct monthly follow-up with approved projects to increase implementation 4. Evaluate and improve Cover Crop Program workload distribution 	

GOAL # 3: Actively participate in BMP verification efforts with Md Dept of Agriculture

STRATEGIES	ACTIONS TAKEN & DATE
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Follow-up with customers regarding issues identified in the ongoing rounds of verification 2. Assist MDA verifiers with any new rounds of verification 	

GOAL #4: Maintain and expand funding to implement Watershed Implementation Plan III

STRATEGIES	ACTIONS TAKEN & DATE
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Evaluate all funding sources, operating budgets, cash reserves, and grant funds to develop annual operating budget 2. Pursue grants to implement agricultural conservation projects for the Antietam Creek Watershed 3. Participate fully in the County and State Budget processes to secure needed funding 4. Evaluate animal units recorded in Tracker to reflect actual animal units served by manure storage facilities. Pursue funding to accomplish the task 	

URBAN CONSERVATION

GOAL # 1: Provide excellence of service to the urban community

STRATEGIES	ACTIONS TAKEN & DATE
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Maintain a maximum ten working day turn around for all plan reviews 2. Evaluate all administrative procedures to improve efficiency 3. Train full time Engineering Technician/Urban Plan Reviewer to achieve certification 4. Maintain/achieve professional certifications 	

GOAL # 2: Promote full implementation of all approved Soil Erosion and Sediment Control Plans

STRATEGIES	ACTIONS TAKEN & DATE
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Evaluate delivery of field services with periodic meeting with Maryland Department of the Environment and County staff 2. Increase site visits as part of initial plan review 3. Explore demonstration and educational opportunities for the urban community 	

GOAL #3: Assist Washington County / City of Hagerstown with meeting MS4 requirements

STRATEGIES	ACTIONS TAKEN & DATE
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Continue pilot Urban Conservation Program, and if successful, develop program for the future. All dependent on implementation of the City SWM Utility 2. Assist Washington County with Clean County Initiative and other MS4 requirements as requested 	

GOAL #4: Ensure adequate funding to conduct Urban program functions

STRATEGIES	ACTIONS TAKEN & DATE
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Evaluate fees to provide for periodic increases 2. Seek funding for all positions implementing the Urban Program from Washington County as part of the annual budgeting process 3. Seek an increase in the fee for Sensitive Area reviews from Washington County 4. Complete two Forest Conservation projects to bring funding to the District and retain/plant forest 	

INFORMATION AND EDUCATION

GOAL # 1: Conduct Washington County Envirothon

STRATEGIES	ACTIONS TAKEN & DATE
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Conduct fundraising to support the event2. Participate in the State Envirothon3. Provide stipend for coaches to attend the State Envirothon	

GOAL # 2: : Improve outreach to agricultural community

STRATEGIES	ACTIONS TAKEN & DATE
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Publish quarterly e-newsletter2. Publish 4 news articles to promote agricultural BMP's and programs3. Provide display and information at Ag Expo4. Continue development of e-mail list to foster timely communication with customers	

GOAL #3: Improve outreach to the urban community

STRATEGIES	ACTIONS TAKEN & DATE
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Promote Backyard Conservation display and information at the Washington County Homebuilders Annual Home Show and Boonsboro Green Fest2. Include urban conservation articles in each quarterly E-newsletter3. Participate in monthly Land Use Council meetings4. Update website to include more Urban Program content	