



2025 ANNUAL REPORT

MARYLAND ASSOCIATION
OF SOIL CONSERVATION
DISTRICTS

View MASCD's Digital
Report with information
about your local district!



PARTNERSHIP



LEADERSHIP



EDUCATION

Our Mission: To promote practical and effective soil, water, and related natural resources programs to all citizens through individual conservation districts on a voluntary basis through leadership, education, cooperation, and local direction.

MESSAGE FROM MASCD'S PRESIDENT

Supporting farmers. Protecting soil. Restoring the Bay.

As the President of the Maryland Association of Soil Conservation Districts (MASCD), I am honored to share our 2025 Annual Report. This year marks a pivotal moment in our mission to weave together the economic success of our producers with the health of the Chesapeake Bay.

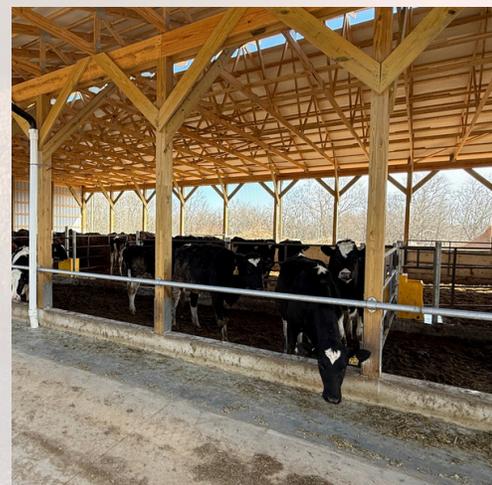
Our 23 local conservation districts remain the "boots on the ground," providing the technical expertise and trusted partnership that Maryland farmers rely on. This relationship has never been more vital. Today, our agricultural sector faces a staggering "cost-price squeeze," with production expenses at record highs and commodity prices under immense pressure. These economic hurdles directly impact our farmers' capacity to invest in new conservation practices, making our role in securing financial assistance and streamlining technical support more critical than ever.

The landscape of federal support is also shifting. Under the new Trump administration, we are seeing a renewed focus on streamlining regulations and empowering landowners through initiatives like the "Farmer First" programs. We remain committed to ensuring these federal shifts translate into tangible results for Maryland's fields and local water bodies.

Looking toward the future, we celebrate the signing of the revised Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement at the end of 2025. This update extends our shared commitment through 2040, focusing on resilient landscapes and clean water. As we embark on this new chapter, we must acknowledge the incredible progress made since the 2010 TMDL was established; thanks to the tireless work of our farmers, Maryland is on pace to meet its nutrient reduction targets.

Together, we will continue to protect our soil, our water, and the livelihoods of those who feed us.

John Swaine, III, President



495,000

**ACRES OF
COVER CROPS**

Photo credits: Top photo- Prince George's Soil Conservation District; Bottom photo- Washington SCD

2025 BY THE NUMBERS

3,152

BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES



965

FARMERS ASSISTED ON BMP PROJECTS



10,439

EROSION & SEDIMENT CONTROL PLANS REVIEWED, PROTECTING 36,889 ACRES



1,581

SOIL CONSERVATION & WATER QUALITY PLANS WRITTEN OR UPDATED

176,308

ACRES PROTECTED IN PLANS WRITTEN OR UPDATED IN 2025



Photo credits this page, courtesy of Prince George's Soil Conservation District

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

The backbone of conservation delivery.

Maryland's soil conservation districts provide a wide range of services to assist farmers, residents, developers, and communities to be good stewards of the land. Assistance to farmers is free of charge! Cooperators receive service from a seamless team of District, MDA and NRCS staff- while it varies over time, each of the partners employs a roughly equal share of staff across the state.

- 01 Soil Conservation & Water Quality Planning**
Districts work with farmers to identify conservation goals for the farm, diagnose resource needs and determine the practices that are a best fit for their operations. **In 2025, SCDs developed/ updated 1,581 plans, protecting 176,308 acres. Cumulatively, over 1,000,000 acres in the state are covered by a Soil Conservation and Water Quality Plan.**
- 02 Technical Design**
For structural practices, districts develop engineering designs specific to each farm and project.
- 03 BMP Implementation Guidance**
Districts provide guidance throughout best management practice (BMP) implementation to ensure practices are effective in meeting their objectives.
- 04 Financial Assistance Coordination**
District planners help farmers to identify and apply for cost-share programs that can defray most of the cost of implementing practices.
- 05 Erosion & Sediment Control Plan Review**
In 2025, SCDs reviewed 10,439 E&SC plans and approved 6,208 plans, reducing the impact of construction and land development projects on 36,889 acres.
- 06 Urban Compliance Assistance**
Some districts also perform compliance activities for MDE's Sediment, Stormwater and Dam Safety Program, resulting in faster turnaround times.
- 07 And many more!**
Depending on the needs of their local community, soil conservation districts may also offer heavy equipment services or equipment rental, forest management plans and more. **In 2025 for example, districts developed 332 Forest Harvest Plans, covering 18,340 acres.**

A True Passion for the Land: Fabio Terlevich, Kent County



OUTSTANDING COOPERATOR OF THE YEAR

In Rock Hall, Fabio Terlevich has been working to turn nearly 600 acres into a wildlife oasis near the Chesapeake Bay. He has been working to create early successional habitat for bob white quail, turkey, grassland birds, rabbits, and deer using a multi-prong approach. He's converted dozens of acres of crop fields into early successional grass, legume, and wildflower habitat, and has been rewarded by the sound of several cubbies of quail calling around the farm.

He participates with the MDA Cover Crop Plus Program, which is a multi-year program that emphasizes soil health practices like maximizing diversity in crop rotation and cover crops, minimizing disturbance, and armoring the soil, particularly with living roots.

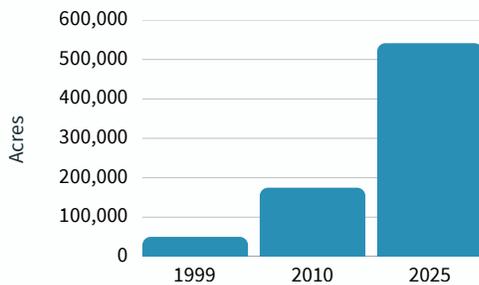
Above: Prescribed burns are an essential tool for managing the habitat. Fabio has employed this technique in both grassland and forested settings.

Chesapeake Bay Check-In

2025 marked a significant year in the Chesapeake Bay restoration effort. For the past fifteen years, Maryland has ramped up its efforts to meet nutrient and sediment targets in the Chesapeake Bay Total Maximum Daily Load. The work of the conservation districts goes back much farther than 2010- farther even than the first Chesapeake Bay Agreement was signed in 1983. Our roots go back to the 1930s, when the challenges of the Dust Bowl drove our work.

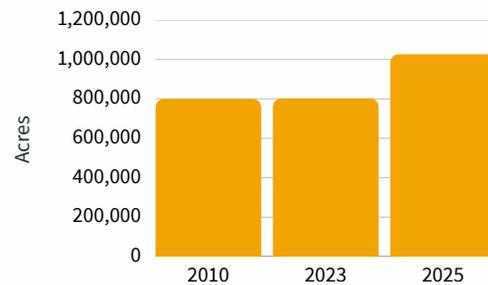
For 2025, we're looking at the progress that farmers have made since the Chesapeake Bay TMDL was established in 2010.

Cover Crops



Cover Crops are a true Maryland success story. Since they were first reported in 1999, acreage of cover crops (including commodity cover crops) has grown to more than 500,000 acres in 2025. That's about 38% of Maryland's cropland, compared to a national average of 5%!

Conservation Plans



Soil Conservation and Water Quality Plans (SCWQPs, or Conservation Plans) are the backbone of conservation adoption. For a time, limited capacity in the districts made it challenging to keep up with the demand, but an increase in technical staff has resulted in a 28% increase in planned acres since 2023.

Best Management Practice	2010	2025	2025 vs 2010
Agricultural Drainage Management (acres)	4,505	22,413	498%
Manure Incorporation (Acres) **	92,815	134,573	145%
Soil and Water Conservation Plan (Acres)	799,766	1,026,416	128%
Tree Planting (Acres)	1,531	4,668	305%
Wetland Creation, Rehabilitation and Restoration (acres)	5,465	20,612	377%
Barnyard Runoff Control (acres)	634	821	130%
Livestock + Poultry Waste Management Systems (Animal Units)	1,347,598	1,711,584	127%
Conservation + LowResidue + High Residue Tillage (Acres)	754,384	858,395	114%
Ammonia Emission Reductions (Litter Amendments) (Animal Units)	12,113	932,721	7700%
Forest Buffers (Acres)	21,511	19,097	89%
Grass Buffers (Acres)	35,829	42,473	119%
Manure Transport Out Of Area (Dry Tons of Manure)	32,550	61,436	189%

INVESTING IN CONSERVATION

Financial assistance for conservation adoption is especially important in an economically challenging year like 2025, when tight margins can make it difficult for farmers and landowners to prioritize conservation projects. While farmers typically share in the cost to adopt BMPs, soil conservation districts can help to leverage different sources of funding to provide maximum support.

MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

- **Cover Crop Program: \$32.545 Million**— Includes 495,200 acres through both the traditional program and Cover Crop Plus
- **Capital Program/Special Project Grants: \$11.5 Million approved for 319 projects, and \$7.6 Million for 317 completed projects**- Providing farmers with cost-share grants to install 723 BMPs on farms to protect natural resources
- **Manure Transport Grants: \$2.1 Million**—370,000 tons of manure transported away from areas with high soil phosphorus levels through 484 projects; Poultry companies provided an additional \$662,000 in matching funds to transport poultry litter
- **Manure Injection Grants: \$532,000** to help offset costs to inject manure below the soil surface on 58 projects
- **CREP Incentive Payments: \$232,000** distributed to enroll 199 projects with 1,935 acres
- **Small Farm & Urban Ag Grants:**
 - **Small Acreage Cover Crop Program- \$22,000** for 24 projects to plant 102 acres
 - **Water & Power Infrastructure Grant Program- \$151,000** to support 8 projects

USDA NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE*

- **Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP): \$17 Million** to help 266 landowners address natural resource concerns on 16,700 acres
- **Conservation Stewardship Program: \$6.1 Million** to help 101 farmers maintain and improve existing conservation systems and adopt additional conservation practices to address priority resource concerns on 23,200 acres
- **Agricultural Management Assistance Program: \$258,000** to help 6 farmers improve water quality on 180 acres
- **Agricultural Conservation Easement Program: \$600,000** to help farmers protect and enhance wetlands on 180 acres

*USDA-NRCS data estimates are preliminary and subject to change.

\$78.3

MILLION
COMBINED STATE,
FEDERAL AND LOCAL
INVESTMENTS

LOCAL FUNDING

- Relationships with county and local governments are critical to the success of many districts in their support for positions and programs.
- Other sources of funding include grants, service fees such as for E&SC reviews and equipment rentals, and product sales such as trees, soil test kits and wildlife products.

Finally, a critical source of conservation funding is the farmers' or landowners' portion of a cost-shared project. Maryland truly is a success story for strong partnerships!



MASCD SPECIAL PROJECTS

MARYLAND BAY-FRIENDLY FARMING

MarylandBFF recognizes and supports certified bay-friendly farmers who keep our waters and natural resources healthy. Learn more at BayFriendlyFarms.com (National Fish & Wildlife Foundation, the Campbell Foundation)



ACCELERATING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF NATURE-BASED STRUCTURAL PRACTICES ON DELMARVA

Provides implementation and incentive funding for public drainage associations to create and restore wetlands, reconnect floodplains and install buffers adjacent to public ditches. (National Fish & Wildlife Foundation)

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE

Creates for peer-to-peer opportunities for district managers to share successful strategies and training to increase the effectiveness of their teams. (The Campbell Foundation)

NRCS COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT

Adds administrative capacity to districts on the Eastern Shore, freeing up technical staff to focus on their core duties.

SHOUT OUTS



Maryland Places in Top 3 AGAIN at NCF Envirothon

North Harford High School returned to the NCF Envirothon in 2025 to compete in Alberta, Canada. The team took 2nd place overall in the international competition, and 1st in the Aquatic Ecology category. The Envirothon is an annual competition where high school students learn and apply hands-on skills in natural resource management. Learn more at mdenvirothon.org/



Dave Tribbett Receives 2025 Leopold Award

Innovation has been the hallmark of Dave Tribbett's approach to farming. Raising more than 1 million chickens annually and 1,500 acres of cropland, Tribbett pioneered the use of wooden trussed poultry barns. Recently, he has focused on the production and potential uses of Miscanthus as both a bedding material and a best management practice. He also founded the Mid Atlantic Organic Resource Company to transform agricultural byproducts into valuable compost. Read his full profile at sandcountyfoundation.org/

Maryland Farm & Harvest Returns for Season 13

A wonderful vehicle to tell the stories of Maryland farmers and their exceptional stewardship, MASCD continues to support this popular show on Maryland Public Television. In the photo on the right, Carroll SCD Supervisor Greg Dell appears in the Season 13 premiere episode to talk about tissue testing and his nutrient management practices. The show frequently features stories about conservation and how Maryland's farmers are helping to improve water quality.



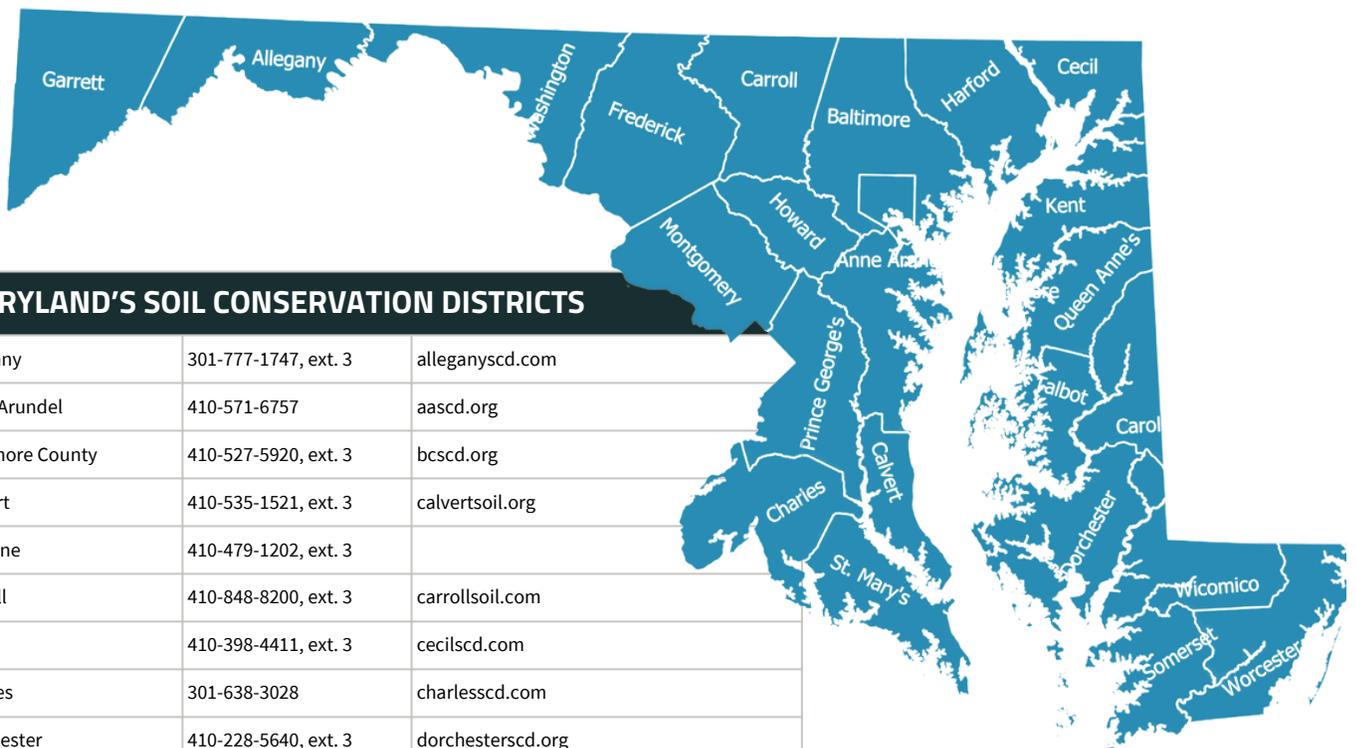
MASCD Honors Exceptional Service at our 2025 Annual Meeting

Maryland's Soil Conservation Districts rely on outstanding staff and dedicated supervisors to carry out our mission. This year, we recognized the following districts, employees, board supervisors, farmers and partners for their contributions:

- Outstanding Cooperator
Fabio Terlevich, Kent
- Outstanding Employee
Wade Hampton, Prince George's
- Special Achievement (Employee)
Haley Carter, St. Mary's
- Outstanding Contribution
Howard Eakes, Harford
- District Attendance Award
Baltimore County SCD
- Outstanding Leadership
Bobby Cooper, St. Mary's
- Outstanding Associate
Merhlyn Barnes, Howard
- Conservation Education Teacher of the Year
Laura Louise O'Leary, Harford
- Outstanding Communications
Garrett SCD
- Conservation Education District
Cecil SCD
- Farm Credit Outstanding District- St. Mary's
1st, Prince George's 2nd, Frederick 3rd
- President's Awards
Bobby Wilson, Bob Fitzgerald



Top: John Swaine, left, Bobby Wilson, right
Bottom left to right: John Swaine, Bob Fitzgerald, Mark Carey



MARYLAND'S SOIL CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

Allegany	301-777-1747, ext. 3	alleganyscd.com
Anne Arundel	410-571-6757	aascd.org
Baltimore County	410-527-5920, ext. 3	bcscd.org
Calvert	410-535-1521, ext. 3	calvertsoil.org
Caroline	410-479-1202, ext. 3	
Carroll	410-848-8200, ext. 3	carrollsoil.com
Cecil	410-398-4411, ext. 3	cecilscd.com
Charles	301-638-3028	charlesscd.com
Dorchester	410-228-5640, ext. 3	dorchesterscd.org
Frederick	301-695-2803, ext. 3	fcscd.com
Garrett	301-501-5856, ext. 3	garrettscd.org
Harford	410-638-4828	harfordscd.org
Howard	410-313-0680	howardscd.org
Kent	410-778-5150, ext. 3	kentsoilandwaterconservationdistrict.org
Montgomery	301-590-2855	montgomeryscd.org
Prince George's	301-574-5162, ext. 3	pgscd.org
Queen Anne's	410-758-3136, ext. 3	qascd.com
St. Mary's	301-475-8402, ext. 3	stmarysscd.com
Somerset	410-621-9310	
Talbot	410-822-1577, ext. 5	talbotscd.com
Washington County	301-797-6821, ext. 3	conservationplace.com
Wicomico	410-546-4777, ext. 3	wicomicoscd.org
Worcester	410-632-5439, ext. 3	worscd.org

About Soil Conservation Districts

Long before the term environmentalist was coined, Maryland's soil conservation districts were working with landowners to protect natural resources on their farms. Established more than 75 years ago following the ecological disaster brought on by the Dust Bowl, districts perform a range of conservation activities aimed at keeping the soil healthy and our waterways clear and clean.

Here in Maryland, more than 120 volunteers serve in appointed positions on the governing boards of soil conservation districts. They work directly with thousands of cooperating land managers across the state, and their efforts impact almost two million acres of private land. The staff of a typical soil conservation district office includes a district manager, district conservationist, engineers, agricultural planners, technicians, soil scientist, urban reviewers, and administrative staff. Staff and operating budgets are funded through a combination of federal, state, and local sources as well as grants.

Soil conservation districts carry out many federal and state mandates at the local level and serve as the agricultural representative on local, regional, and statewide environmental task forces and committees charged with protecting natural resources and the Chesapeake Bay.

Maryland's Conservation Partnership

Maryland's Conservation Partnership is a coalition of federal, state, and local agencies dedicated to protecting and conserving natural resources and promoting Maryland agriculture, including soil conservation districts along with:

- Maryland Association of Soil Conservation Districts
- Maryland Department of Agriculture
- USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
- USDA Farm Service Agency
- State Soil Conservation Committee
- University of Maryland Extension



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