



St. Mary's Soil Conservation District

2018 Annual Report
April 2019

Soil Stewardship Week
April 28th - May 5th

Message from the Chairman

Robert "Bobby" Cooper

As I take a moment to reflect back on 2018, I think most of us can count our blessings as we look forward to a better and more profitable 2019. The previous year broke records in most counties in Maryland for total measurable precipitation and number of days with rain or snow. This was all done without a direct hit by any 6 tropical storms or hurricanes. Impacts to agriculture started in the spring with delayed planting because of wet fields, or replanting your crops one or more times because of poor germination or the crop was drowned out. Some producers had to switch from corn to beans due to delayed planting dates. Once you were fortunate to get a crop in, it was a constant battle with grass, weeds, and fungus because of the inability to spray. To compound lower yields due to the wet weather, most weren't able to get crops out until much later than normal. I saw more crops still in the fields in very late November and December than ever before.



With all of the rain our region received, District staff responded to many calls for technical assistance on both urban construction sites and rural farms. Most of the calls dealt with erosion, sediment transport and sediment deposition in ditches, roads, and streams or waters of the state. Even though erosion is a naturally occurring result of mother nature, we as farmers and stewards of the land need to do our part to keep our precious topsoil and nutrients such as nitrogen and phosphorous in our fields and not let it wash away where it will harm our streams, rivers, and the Chesapeake Bay.

The District is here to assist with that in any way we can. We have five soil conservation and water quality planners that can assist you with strategies to reduce erosion and improve soil health through various management options. If a structural best management practice (bmp) is called for, than our planners will work with you and one of our four district engineering technicians to come up with the most cost effective structural practice that will solve the environmental concern. The technicians will advise you on your eligibility for cost share assistance and be with you through the entire process to a completed project. Some very cost effective bmp's that you can implement on your own are continuous no-till, the use of winter cover crops, grass or wooded buffers along streams and ditches and by retiring highly erodible land through permanent cover. Additional resources available to you through the District are the equipment rental program, the Maryland Department of Agriculture Cover Crop Program and the new Healthy Soil Biomass Pilot Program.

The District Supervisors and staff look forward to assisting you, in what we hope, is a very productive new year.

Sincerely,
Bobby Cooper

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Special points of interest:

- Healthy Soil Biomass Pilot Program
- New Manure Spreader has Arrived!
- Coloring Contest Winners for 2018. Alaina Balcom from St. Mary's wins 1st at State Competition
- BMP Verification and WIP III. How St. Mary's County ...
- Cooperator of the Year - Rick Gerek
- Meet Caroline Trossbach - New District Grant Planner

District History and Background

The St. Mary's Soil Conservation District is an independent political subunit of state government which was created on November 14, 1941. The legal charter was issued by the state of Maryland on January 5, 1942.

The District is governed by a board of supervisors who are local county residents. Members are appointed to five (5) year terms by the State Soil Conservation Committee, with recommendations from the County Commissioners, Farm Bureau, and Cooperative Extension Service. There are five voting members, one non-voting member and three associate members. These supervisors regularly attend meetings to keep informed on local, state and national issues, which could have an impact on farmers, landowners and residents within our area. The District's technical staff is provided by the USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service, the Maryland Department of Agriculture and from the District itself.



1964 photo of grass waterway between fields

Each year the District prepares detailed budget requests for administrative and operating funds from MDA and St. Mary's County to meet its goals and objectives. In calendar year 2018 the District received operating funds of \$73,946 from the County, \$19,985 from MDA, and \$114,661 from the Chesapeake Bay Trust Fund. Additional support provided by MDA and NRCS is in the form of staff (\$466,644) and cost share support for best management practices installed through the Maryland Agriculture Cost Share (MACS) Program and Environmental Quality Assistance Program (EQIP).

2018 District Highlights

- Held 12 monthly meetings, which were scheduled for the first Thursday of each month and are open to the public
- Reviewed Memorandums of Understanding between the District and cooperating agencies at regular Board Meetings
- Attended the Winter and Summer Maryland Association of Conservation Districts (MASCD) Meetings
- Attended quarterly MASCD Board of Directors Meetings
- Maintained membership in state and national soil conservation district associations
- Cooperate with Maryland Department of the Environment on the local sediment control program
- Chairman Bobby Cooper and District Manager Bruce Young serve on the Southern Maryland RC&D Board
- Member of the County's Technical Evaluation Committee for site and subdivision approval
- Advisory member of St. Mary's County Agriculture, Seafood, & Forestry Board
- Tom Koviak and Mike Russell are certified as Nutrient Management Consultants by MDA
- Member of the local WIP III Team
- Developed a workload analysis and a plan of operations for fiscal year 2018
- Maintained a list of contractors that do conservation work
- Assisted landowners in making determinations for acceptance into Agricultural Land Preservation Programs
- Selected as participant with NACD Northeast Capacity Building Conference
- District staff are members of the State Envirothon Committee
- Bruce Young is a representative on the Maryland Cost Share Technical Advisory Committee
- Member of MASCD Endowment Committee
- Held a Kick-Off Meeting with core partners to initiate local funding pool through NRCS EQIP Program
- Staff attended Patuxent Area Meeting
- Savannah Dobbins was selected as NRCS Student Leadership Council Representative
- Member of County Committee to update the agricultural component of the St. Mary's County Comprehensive Plan



2018 District Accomplishments

Agricultural Accomplishments

Waste Storage Facilities	2 no.
Conservation Cover	1.1 ac.
Conservation Crop Rotation	699.2 ac.
Residue and Tillage Management, No-Till	353.6 ac.
Cover Crop	494.3 ac.
Critical Area Planting - Construction Related	1.6 ac.
Residue and Tillage Management, Mulch Till	346.1 ac.
Roof & Covers	2.0 no.
Fencing (Non-Streamside)	7998 ft.
Grade Stabilization Structure	1.0 no.
Waterway	0.2 ac.
Lined Waterway or Outlet	33 ft.
Mulching	0.5 ac.
Forage Harvest Management	24.6 ac.
Forage and Biomass Planting	50.6 ac.
Livestock Pipeline	973 ft.
Prescribed Grazing	51.2 ac.
Access Road	97 ft.
Roof Runoff Structure	3 no.
Heavy Use Area Protection	0.2 ac.
Stormwater Runoff Control	1 no.
Structure for Water Control	2 no.
Nutrient Management	753.7 ac.
Subsurface Drain	220 ft.
Watering Facility	5 no.
Underground Outlet	300 ft.
Shallow Water Development	3.2 ac.
Early Successional Habitat Development	49.2 ac.
Forest Stand Improvement	56.8 ac.
Seasonal High Tunnel System	6960 sq. ft.
Conservation Plans	49 for 5205 ac.
68 Farmers Installed 175 BMP's to protect 2888 acres	



Urban Accomplishments

Plans Reviewed	944
Plans Approved	238
Acres on Approved Plans	756
TEC Reviews	57
Site Inspections	96
Forest Harvest E&S Plans	24
Pre-Construction Meetings	106

Outreach & Education



- ◇ 257 people attended the 65th annual cooperators' dinner meeting. Meeting was held at the Bay District Fire Department in Lexington Park

- ◇ Cooperated with the University of Maryland Extension in the development of Nutrient Management Plans
- ◇ Sponsored University of Maryland Soil Judging Team
- ◇ Member of the Mentoring Program for high school students at the Forrest Career and Technology Center
- ◇ Member of the St. Mary's County Curriculum for Agricultural Science Education (CASE) program advisory committee
- ◇ Held 4 staff meetings throughout the year
- ◇ Promote conservation tillage through the lease of the District owned no-till drills.
- ◇ Participated in the Easter Festival at the St. Mary's County Fairgrounds

- ◇ Met with congressional delegates concerning legislation that would affect St. Mary's County
- ◇ Sponsor of the Southern Maryland Crops Conference
- ◇ Sponsored the St. Mary's County Science and Engineering Fair



- ◇ District staffed a display at the STEM Expo held on October 27th at the St. Mary's County Fairgrounds

- ◇ Participated in Town of Leonardtown Earth Day
- ◇ Participated in the STEM Bio-Blast Field Day
- ◇ Retain records of approved sewage sludge permits in the District office
- ◇ Published news articles in the local paper showcasing District programs and accomplishments
- ◇ Actively promoted and assisted landowners in applying for MACS and EQIP cost-share
- ◇ Participated in the MASCD Coloring Contest. Presented cash awards to the top three winners in each category
- ◇ Participated in Quality Assurance Review of District Operations and Programs

- ◇ Participated in Town of Leonardtown Christmas Tree Lighting Activities
- ◇ Had information booth at the St. Mary's County Fair in September
- ◇ Participated with the MDA Cover Crop Technical Advisory Committee
- ◇ Attended St. Mary's County Farm Bureau Legislative Dinner attended by State Legislators and County Commissioners. Gave presentation on District activities
- ◇ District Technician Nancy LaRoche provided a soil health training at a Pioneer Seed Meeting
- ◇ Bruce Young participated in a radio interview for a local station detailing history of Maryland Envirothon
- ◇ Participated with the Curriculum for Agriculture and Science Education (CASE) Program in mock interviews for senior students



- ◇ Sponsored and coordinated the county envirothon program. Three (3) public high schools participated. County winner competed at the State Envirothon in Garrett County. Team placed 13th at the Maryland Envirothon



Maryland Association of Soil Conservation Districts

Coloring Contest

Each year the St. Mary's Soil Conservation District sponsors a coloring contest for Kindergarten through fifth grade. The District awards cash prizes for first, second, and third place drawings in each of three classes. The pictures are judged on neatness, attention to detail, and how well directions are followed. The first place winners in each class are then forwarded to the MASCD state contest to be judged against the winners from the other Maryland Districts.



Alaina Balcom wins 1st Place in Class A at the State Competition in August

Class A (K – 1st Grades)

- 1st Place - Alaina Balcom, Duke Elem.
- 2nd Place - Maggie Marie Russell, Banneker Elem.
- 3rd Place - Emily Hunley, Leonardtown Elem.

Class B (2nd-3rd Grades)

- 1st Place - Zora Peterson, St. Michaels School
- 2nd Place - Nathan Nepini, St. Michaels School
- 3rd Place - Sammy Schoeny, Duke Elem.

Class C (4th-5th Grades)

- 1st Place - Gretchen Brady, Evergreen Elem.
- 2nd Place - Shirley Hoot, Piney Point Elem.
- 3rd Place - Caroline Coleman, Evergreen Elem.



**Congratulations
Alaina!**



Best Management Practices - Verification Process

Most of our cooperators should be familiar with the Chesapeake Bay clean-up strategies that are part of the Watershed Implementation Plan, but you are probably not fully aware of how agriculture reductions are achieved and documented. Districts have been assisting farmers for over 75 years with strategies to minimize erosion and more recently with water quality plans to reduce nutrient runoff. Both of these strategies are accomplished through the development of Soil Conservation and Water Quality Plans and the implementation of best management practices.

For years Districts have been reporting the implementation of structural BMPs that have used state and federal cost share funds. All of these BMPs have what we call useful lifetimes of 5, 10, or 15 years. Previous versions of the Bay Model have counted all of the BMPs reported, but did not take into account if the BMPs were retired due to the properties being converted to other uses or a change in farm operation. With the onset of the latest version of the model, there is now a requirement to field verify all agricultural BMPs.

This BMP verification process started at MDA in 2016 in the development of staff and a strategy to field verify all of the BMPs reported since 1985. St. Mary's had our first round of the field verification in October of 2017 with five more rounds in 2018. Total St. Mary's County WIP eligible BMPs that are entered in the Conservation Tracker database to be verified are 824. As of this report, 51.8% of that number or 427 BMPs have been field inspected. Of the field located BMPs, an outstanding 64.3 % still meet current standards. The balance of the BMPs either did not exist anymore (26.3%), did not meet current standards (6.5%), met standard but there were no longer any animals associated with the practices (1.4%), superseded by another BMP (1.4%), or other (0.1%). It is important to point out that 90 percent of the raw nutrient reduction potential has been verified with the 51.8% of the BMPs already inspected.

Healthy Soil Biomass Pilot Program

In 2018 the Maryland Department of Agriculture launched its Healthy Soil Biomass Pilot Program. Farmers who participated in the Cover Crop Program were eligible to participate and enroll the acres they were unable to get planted by the planting deadline in the Cover Crop Program. This program is a separate and distinct program from the Cover Crop Program and has its own set of rules and requirements. Farmers were allowed to use the planting method of their choice but could only plant rye, wheat or triticale. The base payment of \$45/ac is also the same as the Cover Crop Program.

One of the major differences with the Biomass Program is the requirement that the cover crop, or biomass, be present up to May 1st and cannot be killed down prior to that date. Research shows that delayed kill down of a cover crop contributes substantial amounts of carbon and root matter to the soil while providing a protective mulch that guards against erosion. Certification of the biomass will be conducted in the spring with spot checks to each farm enrolled in the program.

While MDA is still working out some of details for this program, it sounds like this program is here to stay. Contact the District if you have questions about this program or any of the cost share programs offered by the Maryland Department of Agriculture.

Equipment Rental Program Reminders and Updates

The District has offered the equipment rental program to farmers in St. Mary's County since 1992. Over the years we have replaced equipment as needed and had to make a few changes to the program's rental policies and procedures. To be sure that everyone is aware of the current rental information, here are some reminders and updates:

- A new 340 bushel Frontier Manure Spreader is available for rent March 1, 2019
- A \$50.00 deposit is required on all rental equipment each time equipment is rented and prior to its use. Lessees must stop in the District office to pay the deposit, sign a lease agreement, and provide current proof of liability insurance on tow vehicle prior to renting
- The minimum fee assessed to lease District equipment is \$50.00
- Equipment is available to landowners and farmers within the boundaries of St. Mary's County. Any requests for exception must be submitted in writing to the District Board of Supervisors for consideration

For rental information, contact the District at
301-475-8402 ext 3 or
visit our website at
<https://stmarysscd.com>



6 Ft Frontier Overseeder
Purchased September 2010
\$25/day \$10/ac SMADC



10 Ft John Deere No-Till Drill
Purchased April 2017
\$25/day \$10/ac SMADC



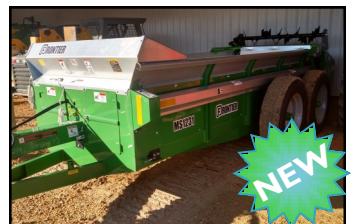
12 ft Great Plains Turbo Till
Purchased September 2010
\$25/day \$10/ac SMADC



7 Ft Great Plains No-Till Drill
Purchased September 2010
\$25/day \$10/ac SMADC



Shaver Post Driver
Purchased September 2010
\$150/day SMADC



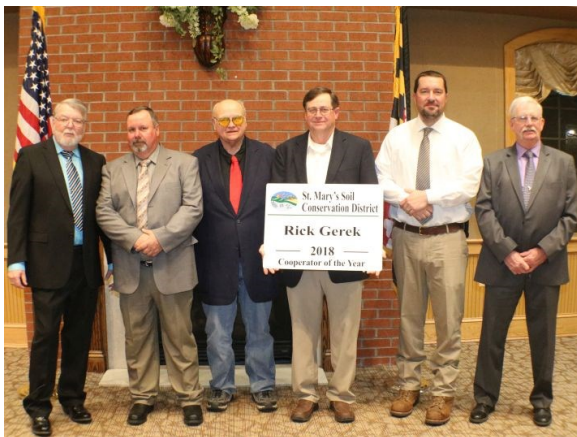
Frontier Manure Spreader
Purchased January 2019
\$25/day \$10/load SMADC



2018 Cooperator of the Year - Rick Gerek

Rick Gerek runs and operates a 36 acre farm in St. Mary's City. His current operation consists of a small herd of beef cattle, hay production and row crops. Rick has a current nutrient management plan and uses best management practices such as conservation crop rotation, no-till, reduced tillage and cover crops to improve his soil health, as well as to reduce nutrient and sediment loss from the farm.

Rick has cooperated with the District for many years and annually participates in the Maryland Department of Agriculture cover crop program. In the spring of 2017, Rick approached the district for recommendations to convert an existing crop field to pasture for his beef operation. The field was relatively small, so he needed to produce good forage as well as a plan to best utilize the available pasture area. Working with District staff, a grazing plan was developed and a series of structural best management practices were designed to best meet his management goals.



Utilizing cost share assistance from MDA cost share program (MACS) and NRCS environmental quality incentive program (EQIP), Rick planted a fescue/clover mix to improve his pasture and installed 2318 feet of critical confinement perimeter fence and 1358 feet of non-critical confinement fence to create a rotational grazing system. One heavy use area pad and a freeze proof watering facility was located and constructed to provide water to each of the four sub sections of his pasture. In the fall of 2018, Rick was able to move his cattle onto the pasture and by rotating them between the four areas, he has been able to keep his pasture healthy and give the animals' longer access to quality forage. When weather conditions warrant it, so that his pasture is not degraded, Rick is able to confine the animals on the heavy use area and feed hay.

District Welcomes New Staff

Caroline Trossbach



Caroline Trossbach is a new employee who started in September of 2018. As a grant-funded employee, she focuses on conservation planning and financial assistance programs. She enjoys working with others to solve problems in order to achieve improvements in water quality and soil health. Previously, she worked at Calvert Soil Conservation District for 5 years, in a similar position.

She grew up and currently resides on the family farm in Dameron, at the southern end of St. Mary's County. For her education, she attended public schools in St. Mary's County, along with Washington College on the Eastern Shore of Maryland. She is also taking classes through a partnership with University of Maryland – College Park, Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission, and Rural Maryland Council. In general, she enjoys being outside, music, travelling, and spending time with family and friends.



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Cover Crop Reminders

- ♦ Kill down can occur anytime after March 1st
- ♦ Must spring certify no later than June 3rd
- ♦ 2019/2020 Program Sign-Up is June 21 - July 17, 2019

To:

All NRCS, MDA, and SCD programs and services are offered on a nondiscriminatory basis, without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, marital status, or handicap.

<https://stmarysscd.com>

Cooperating Agencies, Supervisors, & Staff

STATE OF MARYLAND

Critical Area Commission
State Highway Administration
State Soil Conservation Committee
Department of Agriculture
Department of the Environment
Department of Natural Resources
University of Maryland Extension

ST. MARY'S COUNTY

Commissioners of St. Mary's County
Environmental Health
Board of Education
Metropolitan Commission
Dept. of Public Works & Transportation
Dept. of Land Use & Growth Management
Dept. of Recreation and Parks
Dept. of Economic Development

United States Government

Army Corps of Engineers
Natural Resources Conservation Service
Farm Service Agency

Others

Leonardtown Commissioners
Historic St. Mary's City Commission
MD Assoc. of Soil Conservation Districts
Nat'l Assoc. of Conservation Districts
Southern Maryland RC&D
St. Mary's County Farm Bureau
St. Mary's County Fair Board

The St. Mary's SCD Board of Supervisors

Robert "Bobby" Cooper - Chairman
Stanley Boothe - Vice-chairman
Donald Ocker - Treasurer
Jeffrey Raley, Sr. - Member
Carl Dyson - Member
Ben Beale - Secretary
Bobby Wise - Associate
Darrell Goode - Associate

St. Mary's Soil Conservation District Staff

Bruce Young - District Manager
Haley Carter - Program Manager
Jane Sanders - Erosion & Sediment Control Specialist
Caroline Trossbach—Grant Planner
Glenn Gass - Contract Engineer
Sara Williams - Administrative Aide

Natural Resources Conservation Service Staff

Rachel Yeatman - District Conservationist
Matthew Hobart - Soil Conservationist
Mike Montillo - Soil Conservation Technician
Gail Myers - Civil Engineer
Valinda Clark - Program Support Specialist

Maryland Department of Agriculture Staff

Tom Koviak - Ag Resource Conservation Spec.
George Beavan - Ag Resource Conservation Spec.
Sara Lewis - Ag Resource Conservation Spec./Equine
Mike Russell - Engineering Technician
Luke Mudd - Engineering Technician
Nancy LaRochelle - Engineering Technician