



St. Mary's Soil Conservation District

2020 Annual Report
May 2021

Soil Stewardship Week
April 25th - May 2nd

Message from the Chairman Robert "Bobby" Cooper

The COVID-19 pandemic has certainly brought many changes and challenges to all of us this past year and has been very concerning to everyone. Not only has COVID caused problems for everyone, but farmers and construction companies have also been dealing with the weather and excessive rainfall this past fall and winter as well. An unofficial rainfall total for 2020 by a weather station in Mechanicsville Md. was 85 inches. I believe the average rainfall for our area is around 47 inches per year. With all the excessive amounts of rain, the harvest season was very challenging for farmers trying to get their crops out of the water logged fields, as well as the construction industry trying to keep their sites stabilized. Bruce Young and the folks at the District have been quite busy assisting with drainage and erosion issues over this past year.



Cover crop acres were down considerably this year, not only in St. Mary's County, but statewide as well due to the extreme wet weather. The Maryland Department of Agriculture did extend the planting dates so that farmers could possibly get more acres planted. The one stipulation with the late planted acres is that they cannot be burned down or destroyed until after May 1st. Haley Carter has been contacting farmers in the cover crop program, making sure they are aware of these dates. If you have any questions or concerns about the cover crop program, give Haley a call.

The District has been fully operational throughout this past year, despite the pandemic, assisting with problems caused by the weather events and other causes. There have been numerous erosion issues on both farms and construction sites and the District has been there to assist in any way they can to help citizens correct what issues they may have. If you have erosion problems or a concern on your property don't hesitate to call the District office for help for advice. There are cost share programs available for agricultural landowners that can possibly help with repairing some of this storm and rain damage.

The District staff are in the office daily, however, the general public is not allowed in the office building at this time. If it is necessary to meet with any staff you may make an appointment and staff will make arrangements to accommodate you, or weather permitting, we have a table in the parking lot that you can meet with staff and maintain the recommended safe distance. The Maryland Department of Agriculture and Natural Resource Conservation Service employees are still required to telework and are currently only allowed in the office one day a week. However, the MDA employees are allowed to meet on site while maintaining the proper safety precautions. MDA and NRCS employees can always be reached by phone or email and will get back with you in a timely manner. If you need any of their contact information the District office will be happy to assist you.

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Special points of interest:

- NRCS Update from District Conservationist
- New Poultry Litter Manure Spreader has Arrived!
- Coloring Contest Winners for 2020.
- North County Farmers Market Partnership



May 1964, Photo of minimum till corn being planted in Great Mills, MD

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.

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 2020 the District received operating funds of \$81,497 from the County, \$34,052 from MDA, \$50,000 from the National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD), and \$78,872 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).

2020 District Highlights

- Held 11 monthly meetings, which were scheduled for the first Thursday of each month and are open to the public (April meeting cancelled due to COVID-19)
- 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 (Annual Meeting was virtual event)
- Attended quarterly MASCD Board of Directors Meetings (Virtual 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, Mike Russell, Haley Carter, George Beavan, Sara Lewis, and Nancy LaRoche 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 2020
- Maintained a list of contractors that do conservation work
- Assisted landowners in making determinations for acceptance into Agricultural Land Preservation Programs
- District staff are members of the State Envirothon Committee
- Bruce Young and Haley Carter are representatives on the Maryland Cost Share Technical Advisory Committee and Cover Crop 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
- Member of planning group for State Buffer Initiative
- Kayla Thomas participated as NRCS Student Leadership Council Representative
- Member of NACD Northeast Regional Training Committee
- Completed design for 300 feet of wetland boardwalk for North County Farmers Market in cooperation with Southern Maryland RC&D and Commissioners of St. Mary's



Agricultural Accomplishments

Best Management Practice	Extent Done	Unit
327 - Conservation Cover	4.0	AC
328 - Conservation Crop Rotation	1,190.1	AC
329 - Residue and Tillage Management	628.5	AC
340 - Cover Crop	426.2	AC
342 - Critical Area Planting	1.3	AC
342A - Critical Area Planting - HEL	1.2	AC
342B - Critical Area Planting -Const	0.4	AC
345 - Residue and Tillage Management	460.8	AC
362 - Diversion	150.0	FT
382D - Non Streamside Fence	2,188.0	FT
449 - Irrigation Water Management	103.0	AC
468 - Lined Waterway or Outlet	5.0	FT
484 - Mulching	0.8	AC
511 - Forage Harvest Management	90.2	AC
512 - Pasture & Hay Planting	58.5	AC
516 - Livestock Pipeline	805.0	FT
528 - Prescribed Grazing	55.5	AC
570 - Stormwater Runoff Control	4.0	NO
587 - Structure for Water Control	2.0	NO
590 - Nutrient Management	1,219.6	AC
612 - Tree/Shrub Establishment	39.0	AC
614 - Watering Facility	1.0	NO
645 - Upland Wildlife Habitat Manage	46.2	AC
646 - Shallow Water Development and	18.2	AC
647 - Early Successional Habitat Dev	6.5	AC
798 - Seasonal High Tunnel System	5,920.0	SF

Soil Conservation Water Quality Plans Written - 42 Plans on 2,380.1 acres

Urban Accomplishments

Plans Reviewed	739
Plans Approved	246
Acres on Approved Plans	968
TEC Reviews	50
Site Inspections	52
Forest Harvest	10 for
E&S Plans	513 ac
Pre-Construction Meetings	103
SWM 378 Pond Reviews	14



OTHER COST SHARE PROGRAM ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Cover Crop

48 applicants with 6034.3 acres certified

Poultry Litter Transport

28 applicants for 7913.08 tons imported

Outreach & Education

- ◇ 229 people attended the 67th annual cooperators' dinner meeting. Meeting was held at the Bay District Fire Department in Lexington Park
- ◇ Met with congressional delegates concerning legislation that would affect St. Mary's County
- ◇ Sponsor of the Southern Maryland Crops Conference
- ◇ 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
- ◇ Member of the St. Mary's County Curriculum for Agricultural Science Education (CASE) program advisory committee
- ◇ Held 3 staff meetings throughout the year
- ◇ Promote conservation tillage through the lease of the District owned no-till drills and turbo till
- ◇ Participated with the MDA Cover Crop Technical Advisory Committee
- ◇ Bruce Young participated in a WebEx Meeting with the Commissioners of St. Mary's County, Senator Bailey, Delegate Morgan, Maryland Department of the Environment, Maryland Department of Natural Resources, and the State Highway Administration to discuss long term relief for landowners experiencing flooding along the McIntosh Run in Leonardtown
- ◇ Hosted two student interns from the Forrest Career and Technology Center. Both students were recognized during the NRCS Volunteer Appreciation event held on November 19, 2020. The students received certificates and T-shirts for their volunteerism
- ◇ District and office staff received recognition for three consecutive years of hosting a NRCS Student Leadership Council Representative as part of NRCS Volunteer Appreciation event
- ◇ Chairman Cooper, Vice-Chairman Boothe and District Manager Bruce Young met with St. Mary's County Farm Bureau Representatives, St. Mary's County Department of Public Works and Transportation, and County Commissioner Colvin to develop the new Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination (IDDE) Ordinance

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 2020 coloring page was drawn by St. Mary's own MDA Equine Planner, Sara Lewis. The NACD theme last year was about protecting and encouraging pollinations. She did a great job incorporating the theme with a beautiful farm scene. Thanks Sara!

Class A (K – 1st Grades)

- 1st Place - Raelee Clem, Mother Catherine Academy
- 2nd Place - Margaret Hayden, Dynard Elem.
- 3rd Place - Lucy Long - Dynard Elem.

Class B (2nd-3rd Grades)

- 1st Place - Hannah Wood - Lettie Marshall Dent Elem.
- 2nd Place - Sterling Muchrick, Chesapeake Public Charter
- 3rd Place - Christina Derisavi - Greenview Knolls Elem

Class C (4th-5th Grades)

- 1st Place - Isabella Derisavi, Lexington Park Elem.
- 2nd Place - Annalee Tulley, Benjamin Banneker Elem.
- 3rd Place - Boden Hunt, Hollywood Elem.



MACS Poultry Litter Program

The poultry litter transport program seems to become more popular every year as the farmers in St. Mary's that use poultry litter have started to see the improvements in their soil quality and crop production. In 2017, Maryland Governor Hogan signed legislation creating Maryland's Healthy Soils Program to aim at increasing awareness on soil health, productivity, and profitability along with education and adoption of soil health practices. Using poultry litter is one many ways farmers can do their part in the goal to improve Maryland soils as long as they do so following the recommendations in their nutrient management plan. One of the disadvantages to using poultry litter is the variation in nutrient value from source to source. That is why it is important to have a nutrient management plan that gives application recommendations based on each specific manure analysis that a farmer may use.



One way the state of Maryland encourages farmers to use poultry litter is through the Maryland Agricultural Cost Share Manure Transport Program. This program helps cover some of the transport costs from sources on the eastern shore to farms here in St. Mary's. The program has been enhanced the last few years with faster approvals and increased cost share rates. There are three different options for application and approval - a standard application which requires a nutrient management plan with recommendations submitted with the application, a fast track approval which gives the farmer an approval within 48 hours, and lastly there is the "haul now, apply later" option which allows the farmer to receive litter and submit an application and claim when the transport is complete. The last two options limit the transport to 3 tons to the acre on corn and non-legume hay and 1.5 tons on soybeans and sorghum and both require proof of a nutrient management plan when the claim is submitted. For transport to St. Mary's, the current cost share rate \$0.16 per mile and anything 175 miles and over would be paid at the capped rate of \$28.00 per ton.

MDA has also announced that it will begin to cost share satellite poultry litter storage buildings. The details for this cost share practice are still being finalized and we hope to have more information available soon.

If you have questions about the new poultry litter storage buildings or the manure transport program contact the District and we will be happy to see how these program can work for you.



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Natural Resources Conservation Service

NRCS Update

By: Rachel Yeatman
District Conservationist

2020 was certainly an unusual year for all of us. The good news is that we were still able to secure over \$238,000 in funding for 16 new federal financial assistance contracts that will help install over 70 new BMPs on farms in St. Mary's county. And even despite the Covid pandemic, farmers here were still able to install many practices on their farms. During calendar year 2020, we made over \$111,000 in payments through EQIP, CSP, and AMA to help offset the cost farmers incurred to install these practices. I'm continually grateful for the high level of commitment and stewardship the farmers and landowners in St. Mary's devote to their land.

Our office closed to visitors near the end of March and we have been on maximum telework since then for the safety of our staff and community. Thankfully the backbone of our business is outdoors on your farms, and we were able to continue all field work necessary to help you help the land. Another bit of what I think is good news that came about because of the pandemic- our expanded ability to use electronic resources to streamline processes. In the past we were required to get hard copy signatures for nearly everything we did. Options have now expanded and in many cases we can accept scanned signatures or even photos of signature pages. In some instances, we can even use verbal phone confirmation to get things started when in the past it would require you to make a trip into the office to sign a form. We also have a new option to let folks sign electronically through Box/One Span. This allows you to sign applications, plans, contracts, and payment forms all with just a few clicks from your phone (or computer). At a time convenient for you. These new options not only help us while we are working remotely but give you more flexibilities and can save you a lot of time too.

North County Farmers Market



A groundbreaking ceremony was held in December 2020 for the new North County Farmers Market (NCFM). This new market is tentatively scheduled to open in the fall of 2021 and will relocate the current farmers market from the Charlotte Hall Library. In addition to the standard vendor stalls, this new market will feature a 5,100 square foot year round value-added market building with refrigerators, freezers and commercial kitchen. The NCFM is located on county owned land in Charlotte Hall and will be easily accessible from Thompson Corner Road (MD Route 236). The site is near White Marsh Elementary School and adjacent to the Three Notch Trail.

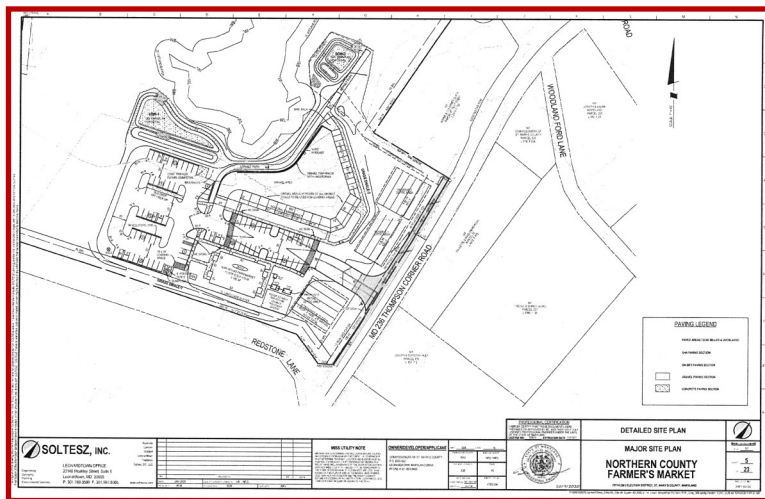


This project was developed in partnership with St. Mary's County Government, Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission, Rural Maryland Council, University of Maryland Extension, St. Mary's County Farm Bureau, and the Charles County Farm Bureau. Southern Maryland Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) is providing the project management working closely with St. Mary's County Departments of Public Works and Transportation and Economic Development. RC&D produced a final development plan that met the approval of all of the partners and is being implemented now.



The market site was selected based on its accessibility by the Amish Community, has sufficient acreage to allow for market expansion, sufficient parking capacity and room for large vehicular access. The Three Notch Trail is a popular and well-traveled hiking and biking amenity for the county. The proximity of the market to the trail will now allow for greater access to the northern portions of the trail.

The St. Mary's SCD, working cooperatively with the RC&D, has designed a 300 foot wooden boardwalk that will connect the Three Notch Trail to the NCFM. Non-tidal wetlands and a natural shallow pond separate the Three Notch Trail from the market property. The District has completed the design and has submitted the permit package to the Maryland Department of the Environment for approval. The boardwalk will meander through the wetland and have a platform that will overlook the natural pond. Signage for the native flora and fauna is being designed by the University of Maryland Extension. The boardwalk trail extension is anticipated to begin construction this summer and be completed prior to the market grand opening this fall.





Message from the Chairman *(continued from page 1)*

We at the District have a couple people that we would like to recognize. First of all, the District would like to congratulate Mike Russell who retired in December 2020. We would like wish him a healthy and happy retirement. Mike retired after 20 years of service as an Engineering Technician with the Maryland Department of Agriculture. Our congratulations also to Caroline Trossbach who was recently hired by MDA into a permanent planner position. Caroline has been a Grant Planner for the District for about two years and has now moved into a permanent MDA position. Caroline will remain working in the District office as a permanent MDA employee.

After 25 years of service to the District Board of Supervisors, Donnie Ocker has decided to retire from the board. Donnie was appointed to the board of Supervisors in March 1996 and has been very active with the district throughout his tenure. Donnie brought a wealth of knowledge to the board with his experience in the engineering and surveying field, as well as his experience with farming and being a waterman. Mr Ocker was very instrumental in the design and build of the St Mary's County Agricultural Center helping to make it what it is today. For the past 10 years Donnie has held the position of treasurer for the district and has done an extraordinary job managing the district funds. The District certainly thanks Donnie for his many years of dedicated service and he will surely be missed.

Darrell Goode was appointed to the district board of supervisors this past March at the State Soil Conservation Committee meeting. Darrell has been an Associate Supervisor for the past several years and been very active with the District. Darrell replaces retiring Supervisor Donnie Ocker on the Board of Supervisors and we look forward to working with Darrell as a District Supervisor.

We would also like to welcome two new Associate Supervisors on the Board. Bonnie Brown joined the board in December 2020 and Abigail Sivak joined in February 2021. We look forward to working with both of them. Bobby Wise, Associate Supervisor, has decided to leave his position on the Board. We thank him for his input on the Board for the past four years.

At the January 2021 Board of Supervisors meeting it was decided by the Board not to have our annual Cooperators Dinner this year. Instead of trying to reschedule for a later date in the year, the board decided it would be best to cancel the dinner for 2021, not knowing how COVID will be in the upcoming months. Hopefully conditions will improve and we can hold the dinner next year. Also, all of our normal educational and outreach events this past year and in the near future were canceled along with many other District events. We certainly hope that conditions will improve and we can get back to holding these events.

I would like to wish everyone a safe, healthy, and prosperous 2021 and as always the District Supervisors and staff look forward to working with everyone.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Robert C. Cooper".

Robert C. Cooper

Equipment Rental Program Updates

St. Mary's SCD is excited to offer a new piece of rental equipment to our inventory. The new equipment is a 16' Endurance pull type poultry litter spreader. Funding to purchase this new spreader came from a grant provided by the Southern Maryland Agriculture Development Commission (SMADC). This is a 10 ton hydraulic spreader designed for poultry litter, compost, and lime.

This is a tandem axle spreader that should be pulled using a minimum 70 horse power tractor. The spreader is hydraulically driven by pump off of the tractor 540 RPM or 1000 RPM PTO. The cost to rent this spreader, as well as our Frontier Manure Spreader, is \$150 a day.

The District also has a 10' John Deere No-Till Drill, a 7' Great Plains No-Till Drill, a 12' Great Plains Turbo Till, and a 6' Frontier Overseeder available for rent. All equipment rentals require a \$50 deposit, proof of insurance, and a signed lease agreement. See the Equipment Rental page on our website for more details.





26737 Radio Station Way
Suite B
Leonardtown, MD 20650
Phone: 301-475-8402 ext 3

To:

Cover Crop Reminders

- ♦ Kill down can occur anytime after March 1st
- ♦ Must spring certify no later than June 3rd
- ♦ Call in and report kill down over the phone

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.

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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

The St. Mary's SCD Board of Supervisors

Robert "Bobby" Cooper - Chairman
Stanley Boothe - Vice-chairman
Darrell Goode - Treasurer
Jeffrey Raley, Sr. - Member
Carl Dyson - Member
Ben Beale - Secretary
Bonnie Browne - Associate
Abigail Sivak - Associate

St. Mary's Soil Conservation District Staff

Bruce Young - District Manager
Haley Carter - Program Manager
Jane Sanders - Erosion & Sediment Control Specialist
Glenn Gass - Contract Engineer
Karyn Hankins - Administrative Aide

Natural Resources Conservation Service Staff

Rachel Yeatman - District Conservationist
Brittany Wolford - Soil Conservationist
Mike Montillo - Soil Conservation Technician
Brian Brookhart - Civil Engineer
Valinda Clark - Program Support Specialist

Maryland Department of Agriculture Staff

Tom Koviak - Ag Resource Conservation Spec.
George Beavan - Ag Resource Conservation Spec.
Caroline Trossbach - Ag Resource Conservation Spec.
Sara Lewis - Ag Resource Conservation Spec./Equine
Vacant - Engineering Technician
Luke Mudd - Engineering Technician
Nancy LaRoche - Engineering Technician