



# St. Mary's Soil Conservation District

2022 Annual Report  
May 2023

Soil Stewardship Week  
April 30th - May 7th

## Message from the Chairman

Robert "Bobby" Cooper



As we are entering the spring months now and winter is behind us, I feel that this area has been very blessed with the mild winter weather we had. Other than a few days of really cold temperatures, we did not have any severe rain or snow events, unlike other parts of the country. We experienced minimal erosion issues in the Ag sector as well as on construction sites, unlike some previous years.

The Southern Maryland Soil Conservation Districts have been working with Maryland Department of Agriculture and the MACS office for the last several months to increase the cost share flat rates for structural best management practice implementation projects. With the rising cost of building and construction materials in the last couple of years it was very costly for anyone to implement conservation practices. The Southern Maryland Districts and MDA agreed on the new cost share flat rates and they will be effective as of April 1, 2023. Hopefully this will encourage people to apply for projects that have been put off because of the higher material prices. If you have an erosion problem that you are looking for assistance with, or are considering installing a structural best management practice, contact the District office and someone will certainly assist you.

Finally after three years of COVID fears and restrictions, the District was able to hold its 68th cooperators dinner on February 17th at the Bay District Fire hall. The cooperators' of the year were the Norris Family for the erosion control project on one of their farms. The contractor of the year was P J Bean Excavating and Hauling for his exemplary work on an erosion project. More about their projects will be later in this report. The District congratulates them both.

We bid farewell this past fall to Caroline Trossbach who left the District for a new position. We wish her well on her new journey and thank her for the good work while at the District. We have several vacancies at the District office, one for a conservation planner and one for a technician. If you or anyone you know might be interested in either of these positions, the job advertisements can be found on the Maryland Department of Agriculture web site.

Wishing everyone a great 2023 and most of all be safe!

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## Special points of interest:

- NRCS Update from District Conservationist
- Coloring Contest Winners for 2022
- District Staffing Changes - District Bids Farewell to Caroline Trossbach & Brittany Wolford
- Norris Family is selected as 2022 Cooperator of the Year

## 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 two 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.



July 21, 1964  
Strip cropping near intersection of Norris Rd & Chancellors Run Rd

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 2022 the District received operating funds of \$193,078 from the County, \$35,407 from MDA, and \$69,547 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).

## 2022 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 Soil Conservation Districts (MASCD) Meetings (Winter Meeting was virtual event)
- Attended quarterly MASCD Board of Directors Meetings (Hybrid 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 Development Review Application Process for site and subdivision approval
- Advisory member of St. Mary's County Agriculture, Seafood, & Forestry Board
- Tom Koviak, Haley Carter, Luke Mudd, Sara Lewis, and Nancy LaRochelle 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 2022
- 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
- Completed construction of 300 feet of wetland boardwalk and overlook for North County Farmers Market in cooperation with Southern Maryland RC&D and Commissioners of St. Mary's
- District owns five pieces of conservation equipment for lease to county farmers. All equipment was purchased with funds provided by SMADC
- Bruce Young made two presentations to St. Mary's College of Maryland classes for living shoreline
- Sponsored National Association of Conservation Districts NE Regional Meeting
- Presented to Commissioners of St. Mary's County on proposed new erosion and sediment control fees
- Living shoreline presentation to Maryland Agriculture Teachers Association (MATA) as part of their summer meeting



## Agricultural Accomplishments

334 BMPs  
Protecting 5123.5 acres

Soil Conservation Water Quality Plans  
64 Plans on 4884.8 acres



| Best Management Practice             | Extent Done | Unit |
|--------------------------------------|-------------|------|
| 325 - High Tunnel System             | 6,205.0     | SF   |
| 327 - Conservation Cover             | 76.1        | AC   |
| 328 - Conservation Crop Rotation     | 1,204.0     | AC   |
| 329 - Residue and Tillage Management | 610.0       | AC   |
| 340 - Cover Crop                     | 642.5       | AC   |
| 342A - Critical Area Planting - HEL  | 6.4         | AC   |
| 342B - Critical Area Planting - Cons | 4.7         | AC   |
| 345 - Residue and Tillage Management | 365.6       | AC   |
| 362 - Diversion                      | 654.0       | FT   |
| 378 - Sediment Control Pond          | 2.0         | NO   |
| 382A - Streamside Fence (10'-34')    | 1,550.0     | FT   |
| 382D - Non Streamside Fence          | 9,006.0     | FT   |
| 386 - Field Border                   | 0.3         | AC   |
| 390 - Riparian Herbaceous Cover      | 2.5         | AC   |
| 393 - Filter Strip                   | 30.1        | AC   |
| 410 - Grade Stabilization Structure  | 3.0         | NO   |
| 412 - Grassed Waterway               | 1.3         | AC   |
| 468 - Lined Waterway or Outlet       | 147.7       | FT   |
| 484 - Mulching                       | 13.7        | AC   |
| 500 - Obstruction Removal            | 3.3         | AC   |
| 511 - Forage Harvest Management      | 148.1       | AC   |
| 512 - Pasture & Hay Planting         | 122.5       | AC   |
| 516 - Livestock Pipeline             | 274.0       | FT   |
| 528 - Prescribed Grazing             | 28.7        | AC   |
| 570 - Stormwater Runoff Control      | 6.0         | NO   |
| 572 - Spoil Spreading                | 2.6         | AC   |
| 580B - Shoreline Protection          | 1,928.0     | FT   |
| 587 - Structure for Water Control    | 1.0         | NO   |
| 590 - Nutrient Management            | 1,343.9     | AC   |
| 606 - Subsurface Drain               | 590.0       | FT   |
| 612 - Tree/Shrub Establishment       | 8.3         | AC   |
| 614 - Watering Facility              | 1.0         | NO   |
| 620 - Underground Outlet             | 15.0        | FT   |
| 644 - Wetland Wildlife Habitat Manag | 36.3        | AC   |
| 645 - Upland Wildlife Habitat Manage | 368.5       | AC   |
| 646 - Shallow Water Development and  | 5.2         | AC   |
| 647 - Early Successional Habitat Dev | 5.7         | AC   |
| 649 - Structure for Wildlife         | 12.0        | NO   |
| 666 - Forest Stand Improvement       | 93.2        | AC   |
| RI-08 - Grass Buffer on Watercourse  | 4.6         | FT   |
| RI-10 - Forest Buffer on Watercourse | 2.6         | FT   |
| RI-18 - Watering Trough              | 1.0         | NO   |

### Urban Accomplishments

|                           |        |
|---------------------------|--------|
| Plans Reviewed            | 873    |
| Plans Approved            | 257    |
| Acres on Approved Plans   | 655    |
| Development Review Apps   | 69     |
| Site Inspections          | 78     |
| Forest Harvest            | 24 for |
| E&S Plans                 | 736 ac |
| Pre-Construction Meetings | 112    |
| Concept SWM Plan          | 7      |
| Approvals                 |        |



### OTHER COST SHARE PROGRAM ACCOMPLISHMENTS

#### Cover Crop

46 applicants with 4754 acres certified

#### Poultry Litter Transport

34 applicants for 22,682 tons imported

## Outreach & Education

- ◇ 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
- ◇ Participated in the St. Mary's County Easter Festival to support the St. Mary's County Envirothon Program
- ◇ 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 Natural Resources Class program advisory committee
- ◇ Held 12 staff meetings throughout the year
- ◇ Promote conservation tillage, soil health and nutrient management through the lease of the District owned no-till drills, manure spreaders, and turbo till
- ◇ Participated with the MDA Cover Crop Technical Advisory Committee
- ◇ Financial sponsor of the 10th season of the very successful Maryland Public Television Farm and Harvest Program
- ◇ Participated in the Forrest Career and Technology Center Natural Resources Class on three field trips to remove invasives from the Church Point Living Shoreline
- ◇ Stanley Boothe & Bruce Young were featured in a new video series by MDA. Series highlights BMPs around the state
- ◇ Had a display booth at the St. Mary's County Fair, assisted 4H Program with judging natural resource projects
- ◇ Participated in the two (2) day Farm to School Program at two (2) elementary schools
- ◇ Held Envirothon Competition with 5 teams from 2 high schools competing. Chopticon High was county winner and participated at the Maryland Envirothon
- ◇ Participated at St. Mary's County STEAM Festival at the St. Mary's County Fairgrounds
- ◇ Kaitlyn Sokoloff assisted District as a summer volunteer as part of the NRCS Student Leadership Council
- ◇ Assisted Southern Maryland RC&D with annual easement monitoring within the Mattapanay Rural Legacy Area

Maryland Association of Soil Conservation Districts

## Coloring Contest

**E**ach 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.



### Congratulations to Our Local Winners

#### Class A (K – 1<sup>st</sup> Grades)

- 1<sup>st</sup> Place - Cullen Cavanaugh, Mechanicsville Elem
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Place - Lincoln Oberhausen, Kings Christian Academy
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Place - Quinn Howlan - Kings Christian Academy

#### Class B (2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> Grades)

- 1<sup>st</sup> Place - Margaret Hayden - Dynard Elem.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Place - Cecelia Hidalgo Vasquez, St. Michaels School
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Place - Piper Cooper - St. Michaels School

#### Class C (4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> Grades)

- 1<sup>st</sup> Place - Rebecka Brown, Kings Christian Academy
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Place - Teagan Ryan, Kings Christian Academy
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Place - Christina Derisavi, Little Flower School

## 2022 Cooperator of the Year Norris Family

The Norris family, Silences Rest Farm is the 2022 Cooperator of the Year for St. Mary's County. The family owns several farms in the central to southern area of the County and rents considerable additional farm area from Hollywood to Ridge. All of their owned farms and a majority of the rented land have current Soil Conservation and water quality plans developed and implemented. The Norris family use a 2 year crop rotation of corn, winter wheat or small grain cover crop, and soybeans. Tillage practices utilize minimum tillage with a turbo till and no till planting.

The Norris' have been cooperators with the District for over thirty years. Agronomic practices that are implemented are crop rotation, residue management, cover crop, Nutrient Management, and field buffers. They are also annual participators in the Maryland Department of Agriculture cover crop, and the Manure Transport Program. The Norris's were early adopters of both programs as they saw and realized the environmental and economic benefits.

In addition to the many agronomic and management practices that the Norris' implement, there are times that they are just not sufficient to control erosion coming off the crop fields. The District was contacted in 2019 regarding erosion occurring in two separate locations on the farm owned on Hermanville road. The first site was a gully that had been in the woods was now migrating out into the crop field. In addition to the main cut, there was other rills forming along the tree line and extending out into the field. The second site was located near Hermanville road where water flow coming out of the field was directed to a culvert pipe going under the road.

District technicians completed surveys of both sites and developed plans to stabilize the sites. In the fall of 2021, the Norris' applied for the cost share to install both practices using Maryland Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources Conservation Service Environmental Quality Incentive Program funds. Work on both projects started in mid- March of 2022 by J. Browne Excavating. Site two was the simpler project which involved some minor grading and the installation of a 14' wide x 41' long lined outlet. This stabilized an eroding area using filter fabric, 21 tons of  $\frac{3}{4}$ " bedding stone and 50 tons of class I rip rap. All disturbed areas around the rock swale were regraded, seeded, limed, fertilized and covered with straw mulch. Site I was a more complex erosion issue and District technical staff determined that the proper fix was to install a pipe drop grade stabilization structure. Due to the location of the main gully, in the woods, some large trees needed to be removed. During construction, this site encountered ground water and the project was modified to include a subsurface drain tile. 480' of diversion dikes were constructed to divert the field runoff to the pipe drop structure. The pipe drop structure consisted of a 7' tall 48" diameter aluminum riser attached to 50' of 30" diameter aluminum outlet pipe. The basin area of the grade stabilization structure and the diversion were permanently stabilized. The pipe outlet and the subsurface drain both discharged to a class I rip rap plunge pool to dissipate the discharged water velocity to non-erosive rate prior to its discharge to the natural receiving channel.



## 2022 Contractor of the Year PJ Bean, Beans Excavating & Hauling

In December 2019, Farm owners Jessica Myers and Stephen Vallandingham requested district assistance for an upgrade to their Soil Conservation and Water Quality Plan. A new "Farm Plan" was needed in

order to determine eligibility for Cost Share assistance to repair, and permanently fix, an eroding gully in one of their fields. Upon completion of the plan it was determined that the gully repair met program eligibility. District technicians completed the project site survey in the spring of 2020 and started the design process.

With the design complete, an application for Maryland Department of Agriculture Cost Share assistance was submitted. The landowner's also entered into a contract with USDA NRCS for co-cost share funds through the Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP). Both cost share funding sources were approved. Several Contractors were contacted to provide bids to construct the project, but all of the bids received were much higher than the District Cost Share estimate. The project was put on hold until the Maryland Cost Share Program initiated a COVID pandemic adjustment to the State program.

With adjusted cost share rates, the project was re-bid to local contractors. PJ Bean, Bean's Excavating submitted the lowest bid and was selected to construct the project. The project design to fix the gully erosion required the construction of a diversion and grass waterway. While the waterway was under construction, underground springs were encountered which brought the work to a stop. District staff had to redesign the project to account for the springs. The NRCS Area Engineer was consulted and the redesign added a 4" subsurface tile drain and a 6' wide rock lined center in the waterway. With the redesign, PJ was quickly able to provide the landowners with a new cost estimate and remobilize back on-site to complete the work. PJ was very responsive to the Technicians and the Engineers throughout the whole process. He showed up on site after every rainfall event and made immediate storm repair and installed erosion control matting numerous times.

The final project included 175 feet of diversion, .5 ac (534 feet) of grass waterway with a 6' wide gabion stone center, a 12'x 39' feet lined outlet, 590 feet of 4" drain tile and one tenth of an acre of permanent critical area planting. Site technician Luke Mudd stated "Very much appreciate his willingness to do things right and one time and his ability to be open to infield adjustments." "Contractor's like PJ make projects go smoothly."

## University of Maryland Extension Farm Stress Management Program

Farm families are dealing with more stress than ever and a recent study by the American Farm Bureau indicated that 46 percent of farmers say it's difficult to access a therapist in their rural communities, and 87 percent cited the cost of treatment as an obstacle when procuring that care.

University of Maryland Extension (UME) is partnering with mental health clinics around the state to help alleviate the issues of accessibility and availability of treatment for mental health concerns.

Supported by U.S. Department of Agriculture - National Institute of Food and Agriculture grant, six free counseling sessions are available for agricultural farmers, farm families, ranchers, workers, business owners, and non-industrial private forest owners and managers.

"Farmers deal with ordinary stress like finances and child care, but they also have unpredictable factors like weather events and labor shortages, and those compounding stressors can have long-term impacts," said Alec Chan, UME mental and behavioral health specialist. "Our partners in therapy have been trained in relevant issues for farmers and are better prepared to meet the unique needs of farm workers and their families."

Interested participants can request a referral by visiting [go.umd.edu/farmtherapy](https://go.umd.edu/farmtherapy). For more information on the University of Maryland Extension Farm Stress Management Program and additional resources, go to [go.umd.edu/farmfamily](https://go.umd.edu/farmfamily)



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MARYLAND  
EXTENSION

## St. Mary's SCD Staffing Changes



*Savannah with her horse, Ivy*

Savannah Dobbins, Agricultural Resource Conservation Specialist (ARCS) (NACD Grant) accepted a MDA ARCS planner I position in St. Mary's. Savannah will still be writing Soil Conservation and Water Quality plans but is in a new permanent position. The District bid farewell to two other staff recently. Caroline Trossbach, ARCS III left in November for a position with Calvert County Government. Brittany Wolford, NRCS Soil Conservationist just recently resigned to accept a different position with the federal government in Washington D.C. While we hate to lose good staff, we wish both Caroline and Brittany much success in their new careers.

## NRCS Update

By: Rachel Yeatman  
District Conservationist



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Natural Resources Conservation Service

Hello St. Mary's cooperators. Taking a quick look back at FY22 federal financial assistance programs in the county may not look promising but the overall picture is looking good again now. We ended up with less contracts obligated this past year mostly due to the ongoing uncertainty of project costs; however, we did obligate 5 new contracts, totaling over \$80,000. In 2022 we also made payments totaling over \$160,000 for 19 projects implemented. This is funding that goes directly to farmers and landowners to help offset the costs of installing BMPs on their farmland. The promising news is that we currently have a record sign up this year (FY23) and hopefully will be able to get all the needed funding for many projects that had been put on hold during the pandemic.

Other good news moving forward- we will have a new NRCS Soil Conservationist starting this year, likely in June. Keep an eye out for our new planner and please stop by and say hi when they get here.

Starting in FY23 MD NRCS will also receive substantially more funding for several key programs, including EQIP and CSP, under the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA). This IRA investment will help farmers implement more climate smart mitigation BMPs on farms, which include practices to increase soil carbon and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Many of the BMPs that are commonly installed on St Mary's farms fit the climate smart practice list so we will have the opportunity to compete for this increased EQIP funding available.





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

To:

## Cover Crop Reminders

- Spring Kill Down must occur by June 3rd
- You do not need to come to the office in person, you can 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

### 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  
Vacant - 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.  
Vacant - Ag Resource Conservation Spec.  
Savannah Dobbins - Ag Resource Conservation Spec.  
Sara Lewis - Ag Resource Conservation Spec./Equine  
Vacant - Engineering Technician  
Luke Mudd - Engineering Technician  
Nancy LaRochelle - Engineering Technician