

# 2016 ANNUAL REPORT

## CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

BY R. CALVERT STEUART

### INVOLVEMENT IS THE KEY TO SUCCESS

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:	
REVOLVING LOAN PROGRAM	2
EDUCATION	3
EDUCATION	4
URBAN AGRICULTURE	5
RENTAL EQUIPMENT	6
DAM SAFETY WORKSHOP	7
MDE DELEGATION	7
RECYCLING	7
TOYS FOR TOTS	7
AGRICULTURAL CONSERVATION	8
LAND PRESERVATION	9
75 YEARS OF CONSERVATION	10
ARBOR DAY	11

During 2016, District, MDA and NRCS staff exceeded goals in conservation planning and best management practice (bmp) installation on farms. Staff has worked closely with Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) preparing for Maryland's Watershed Implementation Plan Phase III that will begin development in the Spring of 2018. A major component is the verification of existing legacy bmps on the landscape. The District is one of five Maryland soil conservation districts to participate in MDA's "BMP Verification Pilot Project". District staff assisted a certified verifier from MDA with the identification and verification of over 780 bmps on 236 farms in Prince George's County.

The District's "BMP revolving loan program" assists beginning farmers and historically underserved farmers with the initial cost of bmp installation. The first application and bmp implementation was successfully completed.

The County's urban ag legislation provides a potential property tax credit to qualifying participants. To be eligible, urban farmers must sign up as a "Cooperator" with the District and implement an approved "Farm Management Plan" that addresses soil erosion and water quality.

The District's Agricultural Land Preservation program reached a major milestone in 2016. Perpetual conservation easements now protect 58 properties covering 5500 acres from future development.

Urban engineers continued providing timely erosion and sediment control plan reviews during 2106. Staff reviewed over 1700 plan submissions while maintaining an average turnaround time of 3.5 business days. In addition, staff assisted the County with the Maryland Department of the Environment's (MDE) two year delegation review, and provided numerous training sessions to other agencies and private consultants.

Education and outreach remain an important part of the District's overall mission. The 2016 local Envirothon team from Eleanor Roosevelt High School placed 6<sup>th</sup> at the Maryland State Envirothon competition. The District continues providing funding and staff support to the local, state and national Envirothon events.

As the Soil Health movement grows nationally, the District's outreach efforts have expanded by participating in training and education activities with schools, partner agencies and foundations including the National Association of Conservation District's (NACD) Soil Health Champion Network.

As leaders in the delivery of locally led soil conservation and water quality programs, District staff and supervisors are involved in multiple arenas and engaged in conservation at all levels. This has been a core value of the Prince George's Soil Conservation District over the past 75 years and will continue to be a cornerstone of the District's standard plan of operations in the future.

## HELPING FARMERS WITH A NEW INNOVATIVE LOAN PROGRAM

BY YATES CLAGETT

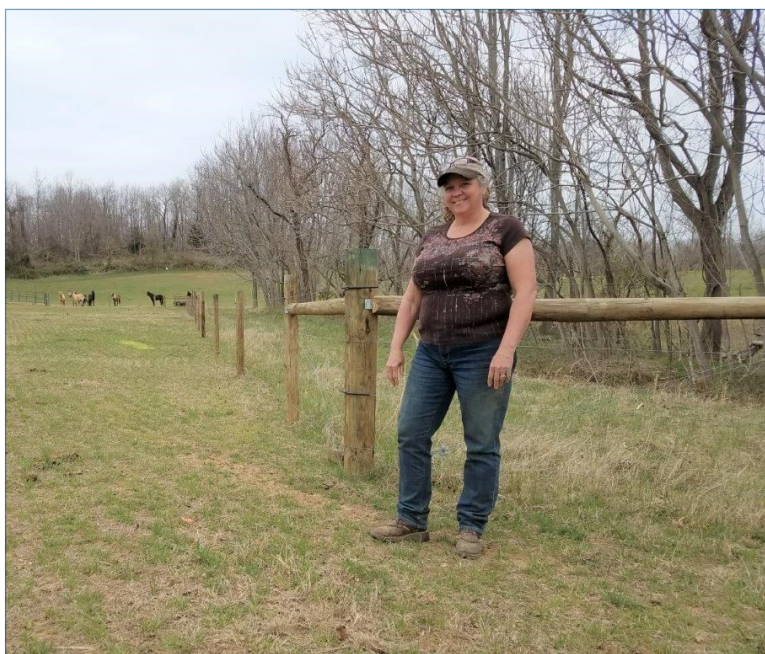
In 2010, The Prince George's Soil Conservation District began an "Agricultural BMP Revolving Loan Fund Program". The program is designed as a short term loan for the installation of best management practices (bmps) on farms to new or beginning farmers, limited resource farmers and socially disadvantaged farmers, as defined by USDA-NRCS.

Typically, farmers pay 100% out of pocket expenses for the installation of bmps. After the project is complete and certified by the District, the applicant waits to be reimbursed a certain percentage of the project cost from a State or Federal Cost Share program. This may take 6-8 weeks or longer. The revolving loan program allows the applicant to pay only the estimated "share" of the project upfront, and the District "loans" the remaining project costs until the cost share funds are paid.

The process is simple. The applicant works with the District on design, cost estimates and processing of the State or Federal Cost Share forms. Once the costs are finalized, the applicant enters into an agreement with the District where the cooperator pays forward their estimated percentage of the project cost. These funds are held in escrow by the District until the project is complete. The District pays the contractor once the job is certified meeting NRCS standards and specifications. After the cost share claim for payments are processed, the District waits to be reimbursed by the cost-share program.

In 2016, Ms. Dee Fleetwood became the District's first revolving loan participant. As a new and beginning farmer, Ms. Fleetwood recently purchased an 80 acre farm in Croom and began converting the farm from grain crops, to pasture for horses and other livestock. As she worked with District planners developing a soil conservation and water quality plan, she was informed about the BMP revolving loan program. The installation of a livestock stream exclusion fencing project and subsequent revolving loan process went smoothly. Once the project was completed, the funds were restored to the "revolving loan account" and the revolving loan cost share program was ready to be utilized by the next applicant.

If you are interested in participating in this "one of a kind" program, please contact the District for more information and to see if you qualify.



Dee Fleetwood in front of her new livestock stream exclusion fence and grass buffer.

## EDUCATION

BY DEBBIE SANDLIN

On April 20, 2016, the Prince George's Soil Conservation District and the Prince George's County Public Schools hosted approximately 80 students from county schools for the annual Prince George's County Envirothon at the William Schmidt Outdoor Education Center in Brandywine, Maryland. This high school level event combines "hands on" experiences, testing and teamwork on environmental issues. The winning team, led by Ms. Peggy Brosnan, was from Eleanor Roosevelt High School. Prince George's County was well represented at the state competition held at

Mount Saint Mary's College in Emmittsburg, Maryland, June 22-23 placing 6th overall. Sixteen teams from across the state participated, and the top team earned the right to represent Maryland at the national competition. The top ten teams at the National Level earn scholarships. The experience is invaluable to the students and each year the District strives to reach more students. Past County Envirothon students have chosen careers in the environmental field. In addition to sponsoring the event, the District offers scholarships for local winning team members. Since 2013, we have awarded \$17,000. For more information on the Envirothon, or if you wish to participate or support this program, please contact our office at 301-574-5162 Ext. 3.



Students identifying specimens at the wildlife station.



Students learn how to use a clinometer at the forestry station.



## PGSCD GOES TO LOCAL SCHOOLS

BY GENE WHITEHEAD

### Seabrook Elementary School's Annual Career Day

PGSCD staff broke format and took students outside for a hands-on workshop exploring soils, erosion, and sediment control.

Using their school and immediate surroundings as a laboratory, we explained the basics of the soil profile, rainfall-induced erosion, and storm-water management. Students were encouraged to work alongside the professionals as we obtained and analyzed Russett-Christiana complex soil samples from right outside their classrooms. After measuring the



MDA Grant Planner, Joseph Haamid, teaches students soil texturing techniques.

depth of our borehole using a survey rod, they experienced the joy of the soil ribbon test; gleefully getting their hands dirty while grappling with the effects of the clay component on soil properties.

Beginning with a simple demonstration of the role of grass cover in preventing rainfall-derived erosion, we then turned attention to the primary concepts behind sediment control plan design. Students were guided on a virtual mini-tour of the Willows Condominium project, an active construction site adjacent to the school (using selected photos taken earlier in the week). Analyzing installed best management practices, our junior conservationists began to see the 'method behind the madness.' Students and teachers alike appreciated the opportunity to question and learn more about things they see and walk by every day. PGSCD staff, in turn, were impressed with their eagerness to learn.



Gene Whitehead, PGSCD Engineer, explains soil maps to students.

In another endeavor, two of our urban conservation engineers served as judges for the **Annual STEM (Science Technology Engineering Mathematics) Fair at Suitland High School in Forestville.** Students from grades 9 through 12

and International Baccalaureate programs submitted posters summarizing their projects in physics, chemistry, biology, and environmental science. PGSCD judges were joined in the effort by representatives from agencies such as USDA-NRCS, as well as local professionals and teachers from other schools. Scores were compiled at the end of the day and winners announced in an evening ceremony. The enthusiasm and pride of the science teachers was evident. We look forward to taking part in future events.

## URBAN AGRICULTURE

BY JOSEPH HAAMID

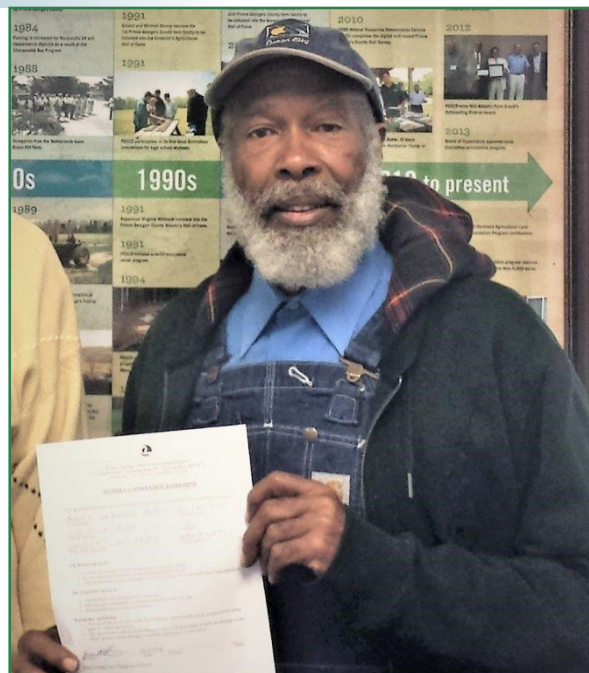
The *Urban Agriculture Movement* is growing globally and the District is happy to be an important part of Prince George's County's 2016 Urban Agriculture Initiative. This is an opportunity to expand the District's assistance to citizens throughout the county. Bringing 75 years of conservation experience will help make farming more accessible and sustainable to the County's urban and suburban residents. The District participation will help enhance urban food security, contribute to urban environmental management and increase the County's economic development potential.

### Accomplishments in 2016:

- Assisted nine (9) urban ag landowners.
- Signed two (2) new Urban Cooperator Agreements with the District and developing Farm Management Conservation Plans.
- Assisted with soil testing for heavy metals.
- Educated and Promoted the importance of soil health.
- Encouraged residents to attend beginning farmer/small farmer conferences and workshops facilitating farmer to farmer information sharing.

The District's working partnership with University of MD Extension and USDA-NRCS staff is paying dividends for interested new Prince George's urban farmers. The County's Urban Agricultural Tax Credit became law in November 2016 which requires urban farm properties to produce \$2,500 of gross income annually to receive a property tax credit. The partnership is helping new urban farmers meet this and other eligibility requirements through offering a range of beginning farmer educational opportunities. In addition, new farmers are encouraged to become USDA farm/producer eligible and sign up for USDA Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) for conservation financial assistance. Four (4) new EQIP applications for financial assistance for High Tunnels and associated conservation practices were received.

As the interest in Urban Agriculture grows, the District staff welcomes the opportunity to expand our assistance to Prince Georges' County urban farmers.



James Leonard Anthony  
from Capitol Heights becomes the  
1st Urban Ag Cooperator.

**2016 EQUIPMENT RENTAL PROGRAM**

BY WADE HAMPTON



The Prince George's Soil Conservation District (District) offers a variety of conservation rental equipment for farmers. Currently, the District has available for rent two 10' wide no-till drills, one 6' wide no-till drill, a post pounder, a 5-ton capacity lime spreader, a 125 bushel capacity manure spreader, a 3-point hitch fertilizer spreader, an 8' wide pasture aerator and a single shank sub-soiler.

In 2016, the rental program was a success with active participation from new and established farmers. Our no-till drills (pictured above) were the most popular pieces of equipment rented. Combined, over 1100 acres of cover crop, pasture and hay were planted. In addition, this equipment allows farmers to plant soybeans, wheat, rye, oats, sunflowers and a variety of cool season grasses and legumes. No-till is a critical best management practice (bmp) for reducing soil erosion and improving water quality. Using no-till planting methods in concert with crop rotation, cover crops and crop residue management, can significantly improve soil health and profitability on farm operations.

The option to rent no-till equipment has opened the door for District staff to educate land-owners on other aspects of soil and water conservation programs. These farmers have found that we have much more to offer than just equipment, and continue to work with us for technical assistance and farm planning.

The no-till drills are also being utilized by county grain farmers to participate in Maryland's cover crop program. The program offers incentives for farmers to plant a small grain cover crop on fields that would have otherwise been bare through the winter. Thousands of acres of cover crop have been planted in Prince George's County using the District's no-till drills, which has helped in the uptake of excess nitrogen and reduction of runoff.



## THE DISTRICT GOES TO DAM SAFETY WORKSHOP

BY JULIE MILLER

According to the National Inventory of Dams, there are currently 346 regulated dams in Maryland. Soil Conservation Districts are mandated by the state as the approval agency for all low hazard class “A” dams. In November, urban staff members attended an Emergency Action-Dam Safety Workshop presented by the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) at their headquarters in Baltimore. The workshop was geared towards dam owner/operators and MDE partner agencies. Speakers reviewed basic dam terminology and functions, and highlighted the difference between maintenance issues and repair issues. The main objective of the workshop was to discuss common causes of dam failures and how they relate to maintenance. The importance of developing a detailed Emergency Action Plan (EAP) was emphasized. The workshop proved to be an excellent reminder to all attendees of the importance of routine dam maintenance and inspection, and the significance of being prepared when unforeseen changes arise.

## RECYCLING PROGRAM

BY DEBBIE SANDLIN

In 2016, we continued our recycling efforts. District, MDA and USDA staff recycled nearly 700 cubic feet of paper, plastic and glass at the District’s Headquarters building in Upper Marlboro. Without these efforts, those waste products would have been buried in the County landfill.

## 2016 MDE DELEGATION REVIEW SEDIMENT AND EROSION CONTROL PROGRAM

BY SUPREET REKHI

The County is required to maintain an acceptable erosion and sediment control enforcement program and is granted delegated authority from the Maryland Department of the Environment. As a part of this delegation, MDE conducts biennial reviews of the County’s program to ensure that regulatory standards are being upheld and any deficiencies found with the program are addressed during this evaluation. The cities of Bowie and Laurel in Prince George’s County are also two municipalities that have their programs evaluated. These field reviews are attended by staff from MDE and Prince George’s County Department of Permits, Inspection and Enforcement (DPIE). The District urban staff also attends all field evaluation events as a resource, and assists in interpreting approved erosion and sediment control plans.

In November 2016, 19 development sites were visited and reviewed from the three County district areas – North, South and Central. The sites were in different phases of development with various sediment control practices and Environmental Site Design (ESD) facilities that had to be installed and properly maintained during the construction process. The emphasis of this evaluation was on construction site runoff control and stormwater management runoff control.

## TOYS FOR TOTS

BY DEBBIE SANDLIN

PGSCD is pleased to participate for the fourth year, in the Toys for Tots Drive! Toys for Tots is a program run by the United States Marine Corps Reserve which distributes toys to less fortunate children throughout the United States. Toys for Tots helps to bring communities together with a common goal.

## AGRICULTURAL CONSERVATION ACCOMPLISHMENTS

BY DIANA LAGUNES

PLANNING ACTIVITIES	CONSERVATION APPLICATION
New Cooperators (14) 1069 ac	Farmers Applying BMPs 76 ea
New Farm Plans (22) 1509 ac	BMPs Installed on Farms 238 ea
Revised Farm Plans (30) 5650 ac	Acres Receiving Treatment 5039 ac
Total Plans (52) 7159 ac	Estimated Tons of Soil Saved 1496 tons

### BMP Funding Sources

FUNDING SOURCE	BMPS INSTALLED
MACS Capital Projects (5 Agreements)	6
MACS Cover Crop (17 Farmers)	2858 ac
Farmer/ landowner funded	154
TOTAL BMPs Applied	238

### Equipment Rental Program

EQUIPMENT TYPE	FARMERS	ACRES
No-till Drill (10') OLD	12	2793
No-till Drill (10') NEW	13	630
No-till Drill (6')	14	136
Pasture Aerator	0	0
5 ton Lime Spreader	4	125
Post Pounder (# of posts)	2	590 posts
Manure Spreader	1	5 tons
Sub-soiler	0	0
Vicon Fertilizer Spreader	1	2

### Best Management Practices Applied

PRACTICE	AMT APPLIED	PRACTICE	AMT APPLIED
Winter Cover Crop	2858 ac	Residue & Tillage Management	1644 ac
Heavy Use Area Protection	0.23 ac	High Tunnel	2 ea
Nutrient Management	11,722 ac	Prescribed grazing	46 ac
Conservation Cover	175 ac	Conservation Crop Rotation	725 ac
Pasture/Hay Land Planting	308 ac	Field Border	35,892 ft
Forage Harvest Management	154 ac	Subsurface drainage	1730 lf
Critical Area Planting	9 ac	Pipeline	1200 ft

**Total Tons of soil saved:** 1,496 tons of soil saved.

**MDA 2014-2015 Cover Crop Program:** 17 farmers fall certified 2,858 acres for \$63,392.

**MACS Cost Share Payments:** 5 agreements for 6 BMPs totaling \$51,421.



## LAND PRESERVATION

BY JEANINE NUTTER

The Prince George's Soil Conservation District began administering Ag Land Preservation for Prince George's County in 2007. To date, a total of 58 properties, for 5,500 acres, have been permanently preserved. There are several options for land preservation in the county. Programs available include the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation (MALFP), Historic Agricultural Resource Preservation Program (HARPP) and the Rural Legacy Program (RLP). All of these programs purchase development rights, and place a conservation easement on the property. In 2016, one RLP property (30 acres) and five HARPP properties (366 acres), for a total of 396 acres, were permanently preserved. At this time, we have 12 properties (985 acres) that have applied to sell easements. Of those, 5 properties (258 acres) have received offers and expect to settle this year. Landowners may also wish to donate a conservation easement. This is accomplished through the Maryland Environment Trust (MET).

Program	Number of Easements Preserved	Preserved Acres	Number of Pending Applications	Acres Awaiting Preservation
HARPP	36	3,339	11	932
MALPF	18	1,651	0	0
Rural Legacy	4	510	1	53
<b>Total</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>5,500</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>985</b>

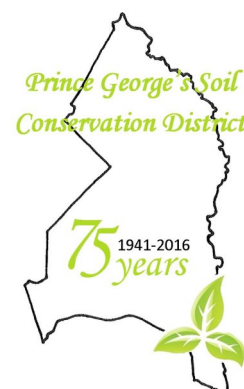


*Please contact  
Jeanine Nutter at  
301-574-5162 x3  
for more infor-  
mation.*

## 75 YEARS OF CONSERVATION

### District Celebrates 75 Years

On April 27, 2016, the District celebrated 75 years of soil and water conservation in Prince George's County. Over 200 cooperators and friends from around the State gathered to hear speakers, reminisce about the good old days and to celebrate 75 years of accomplishments.



Mr. Jason Weller, USDA-Natural Resource Conservation Services Chief, delivered the keynote address. His comments stressed the importance of “locally led” conservation and the tremendous impact it has on improving lives in the community. He mentioned the strong cooperative partnership that exists in Maryland between local Soil Conservation Districts, the Maryland Department of Agriculture, USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service, local County Governments and other agencies and groups.

Other distinguished speakers included

Dr. Terron Hillsman, USDA-NRCS Maryland State Conservationist, Mr. Lee McDaniels, National Association of Conservation Districts President, the Honorable Joseph Bartenfelder, Maryland Secretary of Agriculture and Mr. Barry Stanton, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer for Economic Development in Prince George's County.

For 75 years, the mission has stayed the same, but the programs have changed considerably. Since its creation in 1941 until the mid-1970s, the District's primary function was helping farmers with soil erosion on farms. Maryland's erosion and sediment control legislation in the 1970s that addressed sediment pollution from urban development, followed by implementation of the Bay Program in the 1980s, greatly broadened the roles of the District.



Pictured l-r: Treasurer, Raymond Watson; Chairman, R. Calvert Steuart; Supervisor, Pete Parreco; District Manager, Steve Darcey and Supervisor, Jimmy Edelen.

Current District programs include soil and water conservation planning, implementation of conservation best management practices on farms, nutrient management planning, total maximum daily load (TMDL) reductions to local tributaries that drain into the Chesapeake Bay, review and approval of soil erosion and sediment control plans for rural and urban grading activities, review of small ponds for dam safety, administration of Prince George's County's agricultural land preservation program, assisting the growing urban agricultural sector, as well as multiple education and outreach programs.



## ARBOR DAY 2016

BY STEVE DARCEY



Dave Watson, DPW&T Sign Shop, puts the finishing touches on the Arbor Day Banner.

The District hosted the 2016 Arbor Day Event and Tree City USA ceremony in cooperation with Prince George's County Beautification Committee, Department of Environment, Department of Public Works and Transportation, Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission and the Neighborhood Design Center.



District Manager Steve Darcey, DOE Director Adam Ortiz, DNR Forester Horace Henry, DPW&T Director Darrell Mobley and District Chairman R. Calvert Stuart mulching the 75th Commemorative Tree donated by the Prince George's County Beautification Committee.

Tree City USA Banner  
DOE Director Adam Ortiz, District Chairman R. Calvert  
Steuart and DNR Forester Horace Henry.





## **DISTRICT STAFF**

Steven E. Darcey, District Manager  
John Tarr, District Engineer  
Brenda Sanford, Urban Engineer  
Supreet Rekhi, Urban Engineer  
Kebede Shihamit, Urban Engineer  
Eugene Whitehead, Urban Engineer  
Julie Miller, Urban Engineer  
Robert “Yates” Clagett Jr., Conservation Engineer  
Wade Hampton, District Planner  
Jeanine Nutter, District Planner/Land  
Preservation Administrator  
Debra Sandlin, Administrative Assistant/Program  
Coordinator/Editor  
Terry Hampton, Administrative Aide/Office Manager  
Rita Jones, Administrative Aide

Samantha Meinhardt, Administrative Aide  
Diana Lagunes, MDA Planner  
Eileen Beard, MDA Planner/Regional Equine Outreach  
Specialist  
Joseph Haamid, Agricultural Resource Conservation  
Specialist II (USDA District Conservationist Retired)

## **BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**

R. Calvert Steuart, Chairman  
James Edelen, Vice Chairman  
Raymond Watson, Treasurer  
James “Pete” Parreco, Supervisor  
Reverend Robert Slade, Supervisor  
Phil Hutton, Associate Supervisor

## **USDA-NRCS**

Heydsha Cordero, District Conservationist  
Aaron McCann, Soil Conservationist



“Society is defined not only by what it creates, but by what it refuses to destroy.” - John Sawhill

## **Prince George’s Soil Conservation District**

### **Headquarters**

5301 Marlboro Race Track Rd, Suite 100  
Upper Marlboro, MD 20772  
301-574-5162 ext. 3

### **Largo Office**

9400 Peppercorn Place, Suite 219  
Largo, MD 20774  
301-883-3265

[www.pgscd.org](http://www.pgscd.org)  
Fax: 1-855-416-9660