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Multi-Species Winter Cover Crop (Cover Page)

Winter cover crops are comprised of a mixture of plant species, such as grasses, legumes, grains, and brassicas. In addition to being excellent grazing for cattle, sheep, and goats, these crops also provide fantastic soil health benefits!

A keen eye may have noticed there's a tape measurer protruding from the ground. Its purpose was to keep track of growth over a period of time—in this case, eight weeks!



If allowed to mature and flower, these crops provide an excellent habitat for potential pollinators!





The Importance of Soil Health



Healthy soil is the foundation of a productive garden. It is a living natural resource that is teaming with billions of bacteria, fungi, and other microbes. Together, these elements create an ecosystem that sustains plants, animals, and humans. For more information on managing soil health, please refer to:

https://www.fs.usda.gov/nac/topics/soil-health.php

Have you ever heard of the "Soil Your Undies" challenge? A fun way to gauge good soil health is to take a pair of plain cotton underwear (or any piece of cotton clothing), and bury at least 3 inches underground. After 60 days, the microbes in the soil will have worked their magic, and the newly harvested clothes should show signs of decomposition—the more they've decomposed, the healthier the soil!

For more information on this challenge, visit: https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/conservation-basics/conservation-bystate/oregon/soil-your-undies-challenge

Featured Left: A sign of healthy soil—A lost cotton glove having noticeably decomposed in the soil over the course of 10 months.



The great dust bowl in the mid 1930's resulted in tremendous loss of life and millions of tons of topsoil in the Mid-West. It was obvious that extraordinary efforts were needed to turn around the devastating damage caused by this event. This effort was spearheaded by a group of forward-thinking environmentalists, naturalists, soil scientists, farmers, ranchers and elected officials. However, one man stood out among all the others: **Hugh Hammond Bennett**. Bennett worked as a soil surveyor, and recognized the connection between soil erosion and soil quality. Bennett understood the importance of respecting the soil as a finite resource and that the degradation of this resource through erosion was detrimental to the health and prosperity of the United States. His 1928 book "Soil Erosion: A National Menace" helped members of congress take notice. Bennett advocated for change and convinced Congress to pass the



Above: The Great Dust Bowl, circa 1939

Credit: Wikimedia

Soil Conservation Act on April 27, 1935. This act created the Soil Conservation Service (SCS) under the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) which is now known as the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

Bennett was the first director of SCS and immediately dispatched his resources to set up soil erosion prevention and remediation demonstration projects. These demonstration projects showed farmers how to reduce soil erosion by changing their methods of farming. The strategic placement of grass plantings, new techniques for tillage like terrace farming and contour farming were quickly adopted by farmers,

and in a relatively short time more than 40,000 farmers had adopted various soil erosion reduction best management practices (BMPs) on 5.5 million acres. The results of these efforts were tremendous, and the soil conservation movement began to grow nationally.

Prince George's Soil Conservation District (**PGSCD**) was Maryland's fourth Soil Conservation District (**SCD**) established on April 7, 1941. We are one of more than three thousand soil and water conservation districts in the United States and one of twenty-four soil conservation districts in Maryland.

Prince George's Soil Conservation District: Who We Are and How We Got Here (Cont'd.)

Maryland SCDs are unique as they are a part of a larger group, known as the Maryland Conservation Partnership, and are responsible for delivery of locally led soil and water conservation initiatives and programs. Primary partners include local county governments, the Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) and USDA-NRCS working in unison to deliver programs.



Above: District Urban Development Conservation and staff reviewing plans with Inspectors and contractors in the field



Above: Crops in a hoopframe at **ECO City Farms** in Bladensburg, MD

Roles and responsibilities have grown and diversified since 1941. We continue to offer services to farmers in soil conservation planning and implementation of BMPs to reduce soil erosion and improve water quality. Additional responsibilities now include delegated State authority to review and approve all grading, erosion/sediment control plans as well as small pond review and approval for dam safety.

Urban agriculture conservation is growing rapidly as we assist producers in managing their land in the urban setting, while addressing soil and water conservation concerns. We have robust outreach-education programs for youth and adults alike. Staff participate in a variety of activities, such as the Envirothon, Upper Marlboro Green Team, the Prince George's County Public School's Environmental and Natural Resources Advisory Board, and many others.

Along with these diverse roles, ag-land preservation, nutrient management, carbon sequestration, climate resiliency, soil health, diversity equity and inclusion are also important responsibilities of what **your** local soil conservation district does to promote the sound implementation of locally led soil and water conservation programs.

By: Joseph A. Haamid, Urban Ag Conservation Specialist



Four farms piloted their operations at the new Urban Farm Incubator (UFI) at Watkins Regional Park for the Inaugural 2022 growing season. This tenacious group of farmers overcame unexpected challenges (such as lack of water!) and are full of great expectations for 2023. As you may recall, Prince George's SCD received an Urban Agriculture Conservation (UAC) Grant from the National Association of Conservation District (NACD) for the purpose of implementing conservation practices and technical assistance at the UFI.

Thanks to the commitment from its partners and funders, the UFI is well on

its way to accomplishing its collective vision to address barriers to launching a farm business. The UFI offers its farmers affordable space, farm equipment and infrastructure, marketing opportunities, and technical assistance to prepare farmers to secure permanent land and capital in the future. In addition, the farm provides a unique opportunity to highlight the role of soil and water conservation, soil health, and stormwater management in urban agriculture.





Despite the challenges and truncated season,

farmers produced **3,720 pounds of produce** and coordinated **348 volunteer hours** on the farm.

PGSCD is grateful for the invaluable lessons learned alongside our committed stakeholders and the farmers. One of the reasons why this project launch has been successful is because of the stakeholders' prior strong foundational relationship. ECO City Farms and the MD-National Capital Park & Planning Commission have worked with us to design a flagship program for new urban farmers. Many of the integral components, such as water, irrigation, electric, fencing, equipment storage

and high tunnel systems, have been funded and implemented through MNCPPC and grants secured by ECO City Farms. There are a few additional conservation practices to be incorporated during this upcoming season, as well as, infrastructure such as a wash-pack station, cold storage, food waste composting facility, and the expansion of the perimeter access road.

Thanks to our partners such as the MD Department of Agriculture, USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service, UMD Extension, and experienced local farmers. We look forward to the expanded educational opportunities for our UFI farmers and other new and beginning farmers in Prince George's County.

By: Fiona Thampi, Urban Engineer

PGSCD participated in the **Dam Owner Workshop** in September of 2022, organized by Maryland Department of the Environment (**MDE**). This workshop was attended by dam owners, engineers, regulatory agencies who work closely in understanding the designing, operation and maintenance of dam facilities, as well as the governing laws associated. Over **100** conference exhibitors and sponsors participated attendees were able to access the Dam Safety 2022 exhibit

hall, where dam safety officials from across the country were present.

This year's topic focused on Operation and Maintenance of Dams. Course goals were as follows:

- ⇒ Understanding different parts of a dam and how they work together
- ⇒ Recognizing typical problem areas that require maintenance
- ⇒ Distinguishing between maintenance and repair issues
- ⇒ **Learning** operation and maintenance procedures

MDE also discussed the policy changes to Small Pond reviews and approvals by the Soil Conservation District in Maryland, which began January 1, 2023.



Above: Urban Engineer, Fiona Thampi, and Gail Myers, P.E., Conservation Engineer at the 2022 Dam Workshop

Start Direct client to prepare Project exempt END and submit an exemption from G/ESC? application. Infill developments to submit a combined CSC END development? SSC/FSC application. See note VI. o subdivisio Direct client to submit ar END application SSC application. needed? Prepare and submit a CSC application to PGSCD.

Above: The early stages of a CSC workflow; for the full image, please refer to: www.pgcsd.org/policy-guidance-documents/

DISTRICT FLOW!



District staff members have been busy developing Flowcharts to assist Engineers and Developers with the preparation and submission of Grading, Erosion and Sediment Control plans to the District. Whether you are submitting a Concept Grading, Erosion and Sediment Control Plan (CSC), Environmental Site Design Grading, Erosion and Sediment Control Plan (SSC), Final Grading, Erosion and Sediment Control Plan (FSC), Exemption (EXP), Standard Grading, Erosion and Sediment Control Plan (STD), or Forest Harvest Erosion and Sediment Control Plan (FH), these easy-to-follow flowcharts will guide you through the review process and expectations at the District. These flow charts are now available on our District website, www.pgscd.org.

Prince George's County Gardeners Gather for the 2022 Community Garden Summit

By: Heaven Jordan, Prince George's Food Equity Council (reprinted with permission from PGCFEC)



On Saturday, October 1, 2022, the Town of Cottage City and Bloomin' PGC Partners organized a Community Garden Summit to engage and connect those currently gardening or interested in community gardening. We had a fantastic turnout of community leaders and politicians, such as **Councilwoman Jolene Ivey**, **Senator Malcolm Augustine** (surprise guest speakers), leaders from faith-based organizations, educators, and residents interested in community gardening.

The Summit started with great information on the Piscataway Tribe presented by David Proctor. He happens to be a Cottage City Community Gardener. Commissioner Wanda Wheatley energized the crowd to make meaningful connections and look forward to the community resources shared throughout the Summit. Then, we heard a realistic and engaging presentation from Community Garden member Brittney Drakeford on the lack of food access within Prince George's County and how to keep your Community Garden connected with the community by hosting events in the garden, staying active on social media, and engaging residents with community gardens.

Next, we heard about real experiences from Prince George's County community gardeners, River of Life Community Garden, Fiesta Place Community Garden, and Laurel Community Garden. These gardeners shared the successes and challenges that they face day-to-day. Attendees then brainstormed and shared their skills as community gardeners. They shared testimonies and resources and networked with fellow and aspiring community gardeners. We then recharged with some food catered by Chef Rasheed Abdurrahman and enjoyed one another's company. Cottage City Community gardeners Denise Hamler and Mark Haskell led the attendees to the Cottage City Community Garden for a guided tour. Guests were able to take resources and giveaways. Kathy Jentz from the Washington Gardener donated back issues of her publication, as well as some seeds pending availability.

Prince George's SCD was an active facilitator and host of this event. Thank you to the following Bloomin' PGC Partners and co-hosts for their sponsorship and support:

- ⇒ Prince George's County Food Equity Council
- ⇒ Prince George's County Department of Parks and Recreation (M-NCPPC)
- ⇒ Prince George's County Planning Department (M-NCPPC)
- ⇒ Prince George's County Department of the Environment (DoE)
- ⇒ Prince George's County Office of Food Security (OFS)
- ⇒ University of Maryland Extension

By: Kim Rush Lynch & Kim Summers



Prince George's SCD co-coordinated another successful virtual Envirothon Competition this year with Prince George's County Public Schools and William S. Schmidt Outdoor Education Center. Laurel High School won first-place honors in the 2022 Prince George's County Envirothon Competition. Potomac High School came in a strong second place. Due to field trip restrictions related to the pandemic, the competition was held virtually from April 20th to April 27th. Twenty-five Prince George's County high school students were tested in five categories: Aquatics, Forestry, Soils, Wildlife, and this year's

fifth issue, "Waste to Resources." Participating high schools in the competition included: Fairmont Heights High School, Laurel High School, Oxon Hill High School, and Potomac High School.



Students and coaches from Laurel High School, at the state competition

"We are extremely proud of our students who competed in the 2022 Prince George's County

Envirothon competition. We want to give a special congratulations to the winning team from Laurel

High School and the runners-up from Potomac High School. This program wouldn't have been a success

without the hard work and dedication of the local Envirothon coordinators, teachers, and sponsors.

We give many thanks to everyone involved." - Steven E. Darcey, PGSCD's District Manager

Prince George's County Envirothon Tackles Waste to Resources (Cont'd.)

With the help of sponsors, including a grant from the Maryland Association of Soil Conservation Districts (MASCD), PGSCD was able to donate Envirothon Training Kits to six high schools in the county to help their coaches and teams prepare for the competition. These kits contained numerous materials, including field guides, fish models, male turkey legs, clinometers, tree and log scale sticks, pH soil kits, and soil tools, to name a few.





PGSCD and the Schmidt Center collaborated with partners from the Maryland-National Capital Park & Planning Commission's Parks and Recreation division and Maryland's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS-MD) to provide training opportunities and resources to teams and coaches. Each month, Parks & Recreation's Resource Specialists and USDA met to develop the interactive and virtual training, competition, review, and awards ceremony to prepare students for the State competition.

Due to field trip restrictions, the Envirothon competition continued to challenge and prepare the winning team for the Maryland Envirothon in a virtual setting. Laurel High School represented Prince George's County at the State competition on June 22nd at the University of Maryland Extension Research and Education Center's Clarksville Facility. They placed six out of thirteen in the state competition and placed second in the soils section!

With more counties and states participating each year, the Envirothon competition continues to expand its reach. The District remains committed to its goal to educate as many students and teachers as possible on the importance of conserving our natural resources to preserve and protect the environment. As always, we are **#PrinceGeorgesProud!**



There are several preservation options in Prince George's County:

- Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation (MALPF)
- Historic Agricultural Resource Preservation Program (HARPP)
 - Rural Legacy Program (RLP)

All of these programs purchase development rights and place a conservation easement on the property. Should a landowner like to donate a conservation easement there is the Maryland Environment Trust (MET).

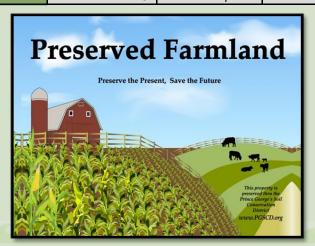
Current Activity

One HARPP property (84 acres) was permanently preserved in 2022. As of December 31, 2022, a total of 76 properties for 7,217 acres have been permanently preserved under the District's administration.

Currently 8 properties totaling 446 acres have applied to sell an easement.

Of those, 3 properties, **156** acres, have received an offer and expect to settle in 2023 year. We continue to seek out landowners who would be interested in applying to these programs.

Program	Number of Easements Preserved	Preserved Acres	# of Pending Applications	Acres Awaiting Preservation
HARPP	49	4,329	8	446
MALPF	20	1,972	0	n/a
Rural Legacy	7	916	0	n/a
Total	76	7,217	8	446



Featured Left: Our Preserved Farmland sign. If you have a preserved property and have not received your sign, please contact Jeanine Nutter at our Upper Marlboro Office: 301-574-5162, x3

Total Tons of Soil Saved 1,787 tons

PLANNING ACTIVITIES	CONSERVATION APPLICATION	
New Cooperators: (13) 245 ac	Farmers Applying BMPs: 87 ea	
New Farm Plans: (44) 1,893 ac	BMPs Installed on Farms: 291 ea	
Revised Farm Plans: (18) 3,360 ac	Acres Receiving Treatment: 6410 ac	
Total Plans: (62) 5,253 ac	Estimated Tons of Soil Saved: 1787 tons	

BMP Funding Sources

FUNDING SOURCE	BMPS INSTALLED	
MACS Capital Projects — 5 Agreements	11	
MACS Cover Crop — 12 Farmers	48	
USDA-EQIP — 14 Contracts	23	
USDA-AMA — 1 Contract	3	
USDA — CSP	3 Participants	
BMPs applied with cost share	85	
Farmer/ landowner funded	206	
TOTAL BMPs Applied	291	

Equipment Rental Program

EQUIPMENT TYPE	FARMERS	ACRES	
No-till Drill (10') OLD	3	34	
No-till Drill (10') NEW	9	171.5	
No-till Drill (6')	14	72.8	
Post Pounder (#of posts)	7	380 posts	
Manure Spreader	4	17	
Lime Spreader	8	34	

Best Management Practices Applied

PRACTICE	AMT APPLIED	PRACTICE	AMT APPLIED
Cover Crop	2004 ac	Residue & Tillage Management	1,486 ac
Heavy Use Area Protection	8,700 sqft	Fence	8,300 ft
Nutrient Management	1643 ac	Upland Wildlife Habitat Mgt.	2 ac
Grade Stabilization Structure	1 ea	Conservation Crop Rotation	1078 ac
Pasture/Hay Land Planting	83 ac	High Tunnel	13 ea
Watering Facility	3 no	Filter Strip	2 ac
Grassed Waterway	1 ac	Composting Facility	5 no
Stormwater Runoff Control	30 ea	Mulching	4 ac
Forage Harvest Management	205 ac	Dry Waste Storage	3 no
Critical Area Planting	2 ac	Conservation Cover	124 ac



2022-2023 MDA Cover Crop Program

12 Farmers Fall-Certified

1,624 Acres for \$54,373

MACS Cost-Share Payments: 5 Agreements for 11 BMPs totaling \$52,542

MACS Applications Submitted: 7 Applications for 28 BMPs

Agricultural Best Management Practices – Another Busy Year in Getting Conservation 2 on the Ground

By: PGSCD Agricultural Team

A multitude of engineering BMPs were inventoried, surveyed, designed, installed, and as-built. Staff assisted landowners with various cost share options. Some examples include the following:



Grade Stabilization Structure (410) rebuild was completed this summer and will help prevent gulley erosion on the edge of a farm field.

Maryland Agricultural Cost-Share (MACS) funding from Maryland Department of Agriculture was received to help fund a portion of this project.

Watering Facility (614), Livestock Pipeline (516), Heavy Use Area (561) & Fence (382) practices were used to help rotate cattle within divided pasture fields and excludes livestock from accessing streams.

This project received state cost-share through the MACS program.





Pond (378) rebuild, finalized this fall, will help manage stormwater runoff, as well as store sediment. Many farm ponds and pipe drop structures constructed many years ago have exceeded their functional maintenance life. Rebuilds help preserve these structures for future generations, and expand the maintenance lifespan for these BMPs.

This project received state cost-share through the MACS program.

Agricultural Best Management Practices – Another Busy Year in Getting Conservation on the Ground (cont.)

Well (642), Pumping Plant (533), Livestock Pipeline (516), Heavy Use Area (561), and trough/hydrant (614) was installed for a beef cattle operation to improve pasture management and watering operations for livestock within existing pastures.

This project received cost-share assistance from United States

Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service (USDA -NRCS) through the Environmental Qualities Incentive Program (EQIP).





Fence (382) BMP was completed and being measured for certification in this photo for another cattle operation to help better facilitate pasture management and improve soil health.

This project received federal cost-share through the EQIP program.

These photos represent only a fraction of the work completed by our ag team. We have enjoyed working with all of our landowners through the various phases of conservation needs unique to each property. If interested in any of the sample of engineering projects listed or the many other resource (non-engineering) practices that may benefit your farm please contact our Upper Marlboro Field Office at: 301-574-5162, x3.





By: Gail Myers, P.E, Conservation Engineer



Above: Joseph O'Brien, USDA Forest Service, Bugwood.org

Many folks around the area have been noticing oak trees in our area declining or dying recently. Based on a study in 2019 by University of Maryland Extension (UME) this has been called "oak decline" and is not attributed to a single factor.

A combination of factors these oaks tend to have in common include age (over 40 years), rapid onset of symptoms, predominantly white oaks, browning of canopy, large trunk wounds or root damage from compaction, and a variety of pests and diseases. It's possible that extreme rainfall in 2018 and early 2019 may have had a hand in the acceleration of this phenomenon, which can be damaging to the roots and cause mold pathogens. By summer of 2019 it then turned very hot and dry and depleting moisture rapidly from the roots. This alongside other natural stresses such as pests and diseases

create a "perfect storm" for oaks in the area to overcome. UME is continuing research into many unanswered questions on this topic. If we have another hot dry summer, one word of advice is prevention by infrequent but deep watering into the root ones before trees enter winter dormancy.

Community Outreach Update

By: Cedrick Coles, Administrative Aide

Our District staff is always looking for opportunities to reach out to our surrounding communities, and 2022 was quite the eventful year in that regard. We worked in collaboration with the City of Upper Marlboro to help with a variety of community-driven events, and our combined efforts blossomed into truly amazing outcomes. (Cont., Page 15)

Below: Our District staff, clad in pink, for Breast Cancer Awareness



Below: District Staff, Terry Hampton, at the 2022 "Trunk-or-Treat" event in Upper Marlboro



Below: District Staff, Terry Hampton, with the Easter Bunny at Upper Marlboro Community Center's "Spring Fling"



For the nineth year, PGSCD was proud to participate in the local Toys for Tots Drive! Organized nationwide by the United States Marine Corps Reserve, Toys for Tots has been bringing joy to children and their families since 1947. The nationwide campaign encourages donations of new, unwrapped toys to be distributed to those in need.

Businesses and organizations participate on a local level and encouraged their community to engage with the program.

We were proud to donate over \$500.00 worth of toys for the Toys for Tots Drive!



Above: District Staff, Terry Hampton and Gail Myers, with the Prince George's County Police Department post-dropoff

Please ve blood.
1-800 RED CROSS BLOCKS BLOC

Above: District Staff, Terry Hampton, with a representative from American Red Cross

Your District also assisted the town of Upper Marlboro with the American Red Cross Blood Drive. The American Red Cross Blood Drive was able to collect **94 units** of plasma over the months of January (**29** units), April (**22** units), July (**25** units), and October (**18** units). Every unit collected can assist 3 donors; with the total plasma collected, **282 patients in need** could potentially be helped!

Lastly, our Annual Seedling Giveaway flourished this year! For Earth Day, our District held the giveaway alongside a "How Does Your Garden Grow?" class, taught by Master Gardener and Urban Farmer, Renee Baccus. The types of seedling plants included tomatoes, beans, and peppers; with 700 seedling plants given a new home, the event was a great success!

We eagerly look forward to working with our supporting communities in the future.



Above: District Staff, Kim Rush Lynch, and her mother, Lynn Rush, at our 2022 Seedling Giveaway



Above: The beginning stages of planting the seeds for the community garden



Above: Everyone working together, choosing where each crop will be ultimately planted

The District has partnered with Providence St. John's Baptist Church (PSBC) and the Town of Upper Marlboro to grow fresh fruits and vegetables for the Marlboro Churches Food Bank. The first crops started out in pots at the District and were cared for by district staff until it was time for planting at the church's community garden. The collective efforts of the community yielded several crops such as corn, greens, tomatoes, bell peppers, jalapeno peppers, okra, cantaloupes, watermelons and even some surprise pumpkins!



Above: The seedlings having successfully matured and moved to their new home



Above: PSBC Outreach Director and Garden Manager Stacy Jordan, Town of Upper Marlboro Mayor, Sarah Franklin with her daughter Carina, and District Staff Terry Hampton



Cieandra Stephens

Having been a part of the Admin team since 2020, Cieandra's efforts and resourcefulness were integral to the smooth functioning of our office operations. We wish Cieandra the best in her future endeavors with Prince George's County!



Donnell Richardson

Since joining us in 2019, Donnell was an important cog to our Admin staff. Donnell consistently demonstrated a sharp attention to detail and tech savviness. Many of the articles available on pgscd.org were established and maintained by him! Donnell has since pursued a career in graphic design, and we wish nothing but the best for him!



Cedrick Coles

Cedrick joined the PGSCD team as our new Administrative Aide! As a member of our Admin team, Cedrick will be assisting clientele and staff alike with his optimistic outlook and enthusiastically joyful demeanor.

Cedrick is very passionate about gaming and tech, typically spending his off time with a controller in hand. We're very happy to have Cedrick as a part of our team, and look forward to his accomplishments with the PGSCD team.



DISTRICT STAFF

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