



PRINCE GEORGE'S
SOIL CONSERVATION DISTRICT

2025 Annual Report

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Featured Photo

Lacinato Kale growing at the Love Bug Farm at the Urban Farm Incubator (UFI)



Agriculture Conservation Program

The Agricultural Conservation Program through the District provides farmers and stakeholders engaged in agricultural activities with the technical assistance and potential funding needed to implement Best Management Practices (BMPs) to conserve soil and water resources. Cooperators receive technical services free of charge. Planners and technicians will assist in the preparation of soil conservation and water quality plans on farms and appropriate BMPs and engineering designs as needed. Staff can also assist with programs and applications with the landowner if eligible for State or Federal cost-share.



11 Cover Crop Participants covering **1,965 acres**

274 BMPs installed by **84 farmers** covering **4,176 acres**

Featured:
Roofed Waste Storage Facility at the University of Maryland Terp Farm

75 plans covering **5,327 acres**

78 Federal Contracts for **\$2,144,573**

2025 Highlights

2025 was another busy year assisting landowners with soil and water conservation technical assistance. The conservation equipment program saw an increase in usage especially for stream fencing projects to restrict animal access into local tributaries. The Conservation Partnership with Maryland Department of Agriculture saw continued support for the State's cover crop program that protected over 1900 acres of farmland as well as the Maryland Agricultural Cost Share Program that helped fund major engineering best management practices (BMPs), such as the large, roofed animal waste storage facility shown in the photo above. BMPs Reduce soil erosion and improve water quality by reducing sediment and nutrients from entering surface and subsurface water bodies. The USDA-Natural Resource Conservation Service partners set a record by processing 78 federal conservation contracts for \$2.15M of which 67 federal contracts worth \$1.7M were obligated and paid out to County farmers.





Ag-Land Preservation

Agriculture is a significant part of Prince George's County, both as an industry and as a contributor to the County's character. It is a goal of the Prince George's Soil Conservation District to preserve agricultural land from development. These properties will produce local commodities, protect scenic vistas and enhance environmentally sensitive areas. In order to achieve this goal, the District administers several programs that preserve land through perpetual easements while allowing landowners to retain their private property rights. Land preservation programs administered by the District include the Historic Agricultural Resource Preservation Program (HARPP), Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation (MALPF) and the Rural Legacy Program (RLP). As Administrator for Prince George's County, the District has preserved 83 properties on 7,513 acres utilizing \$52M of land preservation funds.



HARPP easements in process:
6 farms,
 Totaling
341 acres

83 Farms
 Preserved
 Since 2008,
 Totaling
7,513 Acres

2025 Highlights

Six properties are pending the sale of a land preservation easement. Once settled, 341 acres more will be permanently preserved. Recent legislation has reduced state-sponsored land preservation programs; fortunately, in Prince George's County, the local Historic Agricultural Resource Preservation Program (HARPP), sponsored by the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC), is committed to continuing its funding. As land values have increased, land preservation values per acre have increased to near highs since program inception. Please contact our office if you have a qualifying property!





Urban Agricultural Conservation Program

Through its Urban Agricultural Conservation (UAC) Program, the District connects urban farmers and partners engaged in urban agricultural activities with the tools, services, and potential financial assistance needed to implement Best Management Practices (BMPs) to conserve soil, water, and other natural resources. District staff identify climate-smart solutions to improve the health and productivity of urban soils for growing food and mitigating stormwater runoff. Urban soils are important to protect because they are found in watersheds which provide drinking water, food, waste utilization, and natural resources to communities. The Program is supported by staff from the District, the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (USDA-NRCS), the Maryland Department of Agriculture, and a National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) Technical Assistance Grant.



15
farmer workshops & community events conducted

31
Soil Conservation & Water Quality Plans developed

85
Conservation Technical Assistance (CTA) site visits on

81
urban farms

Featured:
New Urban Ag Cooperator proudly displaying their District farm sign

44
collaborators engaged with UAC & food system initiatives

2,090
individuals reached through outreach events

43
USDA NRCS urban ag contracts

\$576,447
USDA NRCS funds for urban farms

2025 Highlights

- **Assisted with planning** the 2025 Prince George's County Community Garden Summit and the District's annual Seedling Giveaway (donated 1,000 seedlings)
- **Served on committees** for the Prince George's County Food Equity Council, Metro Washington Council of Governments Regional Ag Workgroup, PGC Public Schools Environment, Ag & Natural Resources Program, the Urban Farm Incubator, the Prince George's Food Security Collaborative, the Interagency Climate Commission, and Extension Advisory Committee
- **Worked with 40 urban farmers** to install **19** Best Management Practices
- **13 urban** and/or small farms participated in the MDA's **Small Acreage Cover Crop Program**
- **Received** National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) **2024 Technical Assistance Grant**
- **Presented** at the 2025 Braveboy Climate Leadership Summit
- **Served as advisors** for conservation-related grants received by ECO City Farms and the University of MD Extension



Urban Development Conservation Program



The Prince George's Soil Conservation District's Urban Development and Conservation team members review Erosion and Sediment Control (ESC) applications, and dam safety designs (impoundment facilities) for conformance with federal, state, and local standards, specifications, regulations, and codes. Application types include residential, commercial, forest harvest, stream channel mitigations and repairs, surface mining, fill sites, landfills, and county/municipal projects. Additionally, the District provides program support and consultation to the four delegated inspections/enforcement authorities in the County. Staff routinely engage development teams – developers/consultants – to facilitate the progression of projects from concept to permit with fewer iterations and to preserve timelines.



4,580 acres

approved for Urban Development projects

Reviews:

56.6%

within 5 business days

98%

within 10 business days

Featured:

National Capital Business Park
(Mid-Development)

MDE Delegated Inspections

Authorities Supported:

4

(Prince George's County, Laurel, Greenbelt, Bowie)

180 Hours +

of one-on-one client consultations and collaborations

2025 Highlights

Improving customer experience, programmatic efficiencies, and reducing application timelines were the main headers in 2025 for developments proposed within the urban sphere. Proactive and constructive feedback from the industry—specifically, the Maryland Building Industry Association (MBIA), consultants, builders, and developers—over several roundtable engagement sessions provided for a targeted approach and prioritization of efforts. Several bulletins and clarifications have been issued for the purpose of improving the consistency and predictability of applications, as well as reducing submission iterations. An increased emphasis on earlier interventions, where needed, and client engagements have resulted in better communication, and alignment of expectations and deliverables. 2026 will be—and has been thus far—a resilient continuation of these efforts.



At Prince George's Soil Conservation District we strive to make an impact through our educational efforts and outreach programs. Our District has worked in various capacities to improve the education and knowledge of our citizens, honor those who have made a difference in their own communities, and promote new ways of learning to empower students for a better future (and planet). A few of the outreach and education programs we are involved with include: Envirothon; County Fair; Beautification Committee; Summer Youth Enrichment Program (SYEP); Annual Cooperator's Dinner; PGCPS – Environment, Agriculture, Natural Resources; District Coloring Contest; Community Garden Summit; Bloomin PGC's Open Mic Nights; Spring Seedling Giveaway and Vendor Fair; Earth Day Plant Giveaways; Arbor Day Tree Planting; and Community Farmer's Markets.



17
Teams from **10**
schools
competed in the 2025
Envirothon
Competition with
training provided to
over
120
students

\$48,500
Envirothon scholarship
money awarded to
31
high school students
since 2013

Featured:
Laurel High School participants
with their Envirothon coach
(right)

54
Outreach events
coordinated in 2025,
reaching
thousands
of County residents

192
Guests attended
Annual Cooperator's
Dinner
600+
Copies of Annual
Report distributed

2025 Envirothon

The Envirothon is a natural resources competition for high school students. Five-member teams study provided reference material and participate in hands-on training in soils, aquatics, wildlife, forestry, and a fifth environmental issue that changes from year to year. The winning team earns the right to compete at the next level, be it the state or national event. The Envirothon provides a fun and exciting way for high school students to learn about natural resources, make informed decisions about the environment, and earn scholarship money for college. The event is a problem-solving competition that challenges students to work collaboratively to answer questions and conduct hands-on projects focusing on natural resource issues. The goal is to increase students' environmental knowledge and understanding, while also motivating young people to care for the environment by practicing stewardship in their homes, schools, and communities. **We are proud to announce that Laurel High School won first-place honors at the 2025 Prince George's County Envirothon for the fourth year in a row and went on to compete at the state level!**



The 49th Annual Cooperator of the Year Dinner

On Friday, April 25, 2025, Prince George’s Soil Conservation District celebrated their 49th annual cooperator dinner, honoring **Dwayne Catterton of Bonnie Breeze Farm** at Baden Fire Hall in Brandywine, MD.

The Supervisors and staff of Prince George’s Soil Conservation District are extremely proud of Dwayne Catterton and his installation of numerous best management practices (BMPs) on the farm. Some of these BMPs include but are not limited to 11,250 linear feet (LF) of Streamside Fence, 2,020 LF of Non-Streamside Fence, 3 Livestock Watering Facilities, 2,875 LF of Livestock Pipeline, 3 Heavy Use Area pads, and a deep well to provide livestock watering. Dwayne has also implemented agronomic BMPs such as Residue and Tillage Management, Pasture and Hay Planting, Nutrient Management and Critical Area Planting.

Congratulations again to Dwayne on a job well done and for being named Prince George’s Soil Conservation District’s 2024 Cooperator of the Year!



Featured:
The Catterton Family presenting their award at the 49th annual Cooperator of the Year Dinner

2025 Outreach Highlights

Though various partnerships, District staff remain occupied at all times of the year. In 2025, we worked alongside:

- **American Red Cross** to host *quarterly blood drives*
- **Ujamaa Cooperative Farming Alliance, University of Maryland Extension Master Gardeners, the Maryland-National Capital Park & Planning Commission, and various vendors** to facilitate our annual *Seedling Giveaway Tour*
- **The Prince George’s County Police Department** to help transports gifts and donations for *Toys for Tots*
- **Local entities**, such as the Upper Marlboro Community Center, hosting a *wide range of events*

2026 is shaping to be just as eventful, so we’re excited to see what experiences await the District in the future!



DISTRICT STAFF



Steven E. Darcey, CPESC, District Manager
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United States Department of Agriculture
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Colleen Kiefer, District Conservationist
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Jake Kiessling, NRCS Conservation Engineering Technician
Mike Montillo, Area Civil Engineering Technician
Nya Segears, NRCS Soil Conservationist
John Knowles-Kellett, RC&D Program Support Specialist
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Chase Kolstrom, RC&D Forester
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