

Calvert Soil Conservation District



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Pictured on the cover: Lydia Leath Thompson, age 10, with “Danny Girl,” age 12, a Golden Retriever purchased from Danny Gibson of Huntingtown.

Message from the District Conservationist

Farm Bill Update in Calvert County

The new Farm Bill 2014 is now on its second year of implementation in Calvert County. We have seen program participation in the Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) to address resource concerns and implement conservation practices in grazing systems with fence, watering facilities and pipeline, heavy use area protection and pasture planting, erosion control and nutrient management in grain cropping systems, pond repair, and restoration of oyster habitat.

In 2014, completed cost-shared practices under EQIP and Chesapeake Bay Watershed Initiative (CBWI) include a Pond Repair and Structure for Water Control, 4,485 feet of Fence, 2 Lined Outlets, Obstruction Removal, Forage and Biomass Planting on 6 acres, 1,815 feet of pipeline, 44 acres of Prescribed Grazing, 2 Roof Runoff Structures, 205 feet of Underground Outlet, Stream Crossing, and 8 acres of oyster habitat restoration.

In 2015 implemented cost-shared practices under EQIP include 1,348 feet of fence, 32 acres of Prescribed Grazing, one Roof Runoff Management System, 113 feet of Underground Outlet, and 496 acres of Nutrient Management.

We look forward to more opportunities to address resource concerns in 2016 with the introduction of Local Funding Pools, whereby each Maryland district has been allotted \$100,000 for EQIP projects. Please contact Oliver Miranda, District Conservationist, or the field office staff if interested in program participation in 2016.

*Oliver Miranda
NRCS District Conservationist*

2015 Envirothon

Each year Calvert Soil Conservation District helps sponsor the County Envirothon. The Envirothon is a competition designed for high school students that focuses on the importance of natural resources and uses the outdoors as an alternative to classroom learning. This environmental competition cultivates a passion for environmental science.



The winning team from Calvert High School with District Manager Bill Clark (far left), Linda Subda of CHESPAX, Tristan Heibel, Audrey Evans, Jason Lopynski, Sabrina Tolbert, and the team's teacher, Chuck Gustin.

An outdoor training session was held at Kings Landing Park one month before the competition. The Envirothon Competition resulted in Calvert High School's team advancing to the state competition, having placed first overall. Calvert High School's team placed first in the soils portion of the event as well.

Our preparation for the 2015 Envirothon started in the fall of 2014 by giving study guides and soil samples to each school to prepare for the competition. Congratulations to the students and teachers whose enthusiasm for the event makes the preparation worthwhile.

Next year will be the 25th anniversary of the competition in Calvert County, so we will have some exciting things planned.



Jeremiah 4:3 For thus saith the Lord...break up your fallow ground, and sow not among thorns.



2015 ENGINEERING AND PLANNING ACCOMPLISHMENTS



County Landowners Assisted	190
Conservation Plans Completed	1,254.7 acres
New Cooperators	6

Best Management Practices Installed (24 total projects):

Fence	701 feet
Lined Waterway/Outlet	12 feet
Underground Outlet.....	113 feet
Spoil Spreading	0.9 acres
Upland Wildlife Habitat Management	17.4 acres
Nutrient Management.....	79.3 acres
Conservation Crop Rotation.....	58.3 acres
Cover Crop.....	3,907.2 acres
Pasture and Hayland Planting.....	2.5 acres
Prescribed Grazing	29.5 acres
Residue and Tillage Management, Mulch-Till	58.3 acres
Critical Area Seeding Restoration and Management	0.3 acres
Conservation Cover.....	17.4 acres
Filter Strip.....	2 acres
Field Border	0.6 acres
Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan.....	1 each
Roof Runoff Structure.....	1 each
Grade Stabilization	1 each
Watering Facility	3 each

EROSION AND SEDIMENT CONTROL REVIEW

Site Plan Reviews (all types).....	663
Commercial/Subdivision Plans Reviewed	43
Commercial Preconstruction Meetings.....	34

DISTRICT HAPPENINGS

David Cox Wins 2014 Outstanding Leadership Award from Maryland Association of Soil Conservation Districts

Calvert SCD's Treasurer, David A. Cox, was presented with the 2014 Outstanding Leadership Award at the 2015 annual MASCD meeting held in July. Calvert SCD staff and board members, along with David's family, were in attendance at the dinner held in Solomons. It was a lovely evening.

David owns and operates three family farms totaling 500 acres and rents an additional 400 acres. All of these farms are under a current Soil Conservation and Water Quality Plan and have Nutrient Management Plans implemented. All properties have both agronomic and structural BMPs including diversions, waterways, and grade stabilization structures. David uses all of the current agronomic BMPs including no-till, conservation tillage, strip cropping, and contour farming. He is an advocate of cover crops and kept all his fields in cover crops long before the State of Maryland had a cover crop program.

David attends many meetings as a representative of Calvert SCD and promotes the use of conservation practices and agricultural preservation. He regularly attends agricultural meetings in Southern Maryland to promote conservation activities.

David's commitment to conservation was formed when he observed his family install and promote conservation practices when he was a youngster working on the family farm. Working alongside his father instilled in him the desire to make farming and conservation a way of life. As a sixth generation farmer he is passing his knowledge and commitment to good solid conservation practices to his children so they too can become responsible stewards of the land. For this, and for his 22 years of continuous service as Treasurer to Calvert SCD, David received this well-deserved Outstanding Leadership Award.



David Cox (holding certificate) with his family at the Annual MASCD Dinner Meeting. From left, Bobby, Catherine, wife Susan, Charlie, and Amy.

Calvert Soil Conservation District Shows Support at Breakfast

Several district staff members attended a Farm to Table Breakfast on March 21, 2015 at the Calvert County Fairgrounds. The event was hosted by the Calvert County Farm Bureau and Calvert County Young Farmers. Over 300 people were served at the breakfast, which featured locally sourced meats, eggs, honey, jam and other breakfast foods. Tables were set up family style to encourage interaction among neighbors and each table featured



Three members of Future Farmers of America (FFA) proudly display their jackets during the Farm to Table breakfast.

several "Ag Facts" with information about Calvert County and Maryland Agriculture. The breakfast was prepared and served by the Calvert County Farm Bureau along with the End Hunger Program of Calvert Culinary School.

The event attracted a large number of families with children and allowed them to connect with local farmers, find sources for local food, and meet agricultural and environmental organizations. The Calvert County Young Farmers included the 4-H and Calvert High School Future Farmers of America (FFA) to further connections with youth. Money generated from the event was used to directly support youth.

2015 Annual Cooperators' Dinner



Byron Petrauskas, MDA Program Manager, reads a citation for the 2014 Cooperator of the Year, the Tiralla Family of Monnett Farms. Pictured, from left, Joseph, Marilyn, Henry, Caroline, Jamie and Benson.

Calvert Soil Conservation District held its thirteenth Annual Cooperators' Dinner on March 12, 2015 at the Calvert County Fairgrounds. A recordbreaking three hundred cooperators, staff, friends, and family gathered together to enjoy a delicious meal prepared by Thompson's Seafood. During the dinner the district presented the 2014 Cooperator of the Year Award to the Tiralla Family of Monnett Farms for their conservation efforts over the years. To show our support for Calvert County farmers and watermen, our door prizes this year were purchased from Calvert County producers while others were donated. Prizes included fresh eggs, beef, honey, oysters, and wine from local wineries.



This year's theme was the History of Calvert Soil Conservation District. The table centerpieces featured vintage planters filled with candy themed from the 50's and 60's. Everyone had an enjoyable time at the dinner and the district hopes to see Calvert's farmers again in 2016 to share a good meal and information on conservation programs.



Dinner featured a presentation on the history of Calvert Soil Conservation District by District Manager Bill Clark. Dessert included ice cream catered by Mrs. Moo and a cake displaying a vintage photo of first district chairman Calvert Norfolk on his farm with his tractor.



Dinner attendees included Calvert County Commissioner Evan Slaughenhaupt Jr. (on left) and former Maryland Secretary of Veterans Affairs George Owings, III.

CONSERVING OUR RESOURCES...

...With the Establishment of Bermudagrass

Bermudagrass is a warm season grass that has been recommended with increasing frequency as a forage alternative during the summer months. It also has the capability of withstanding heavy livestock traffic. Two plantings occurred in Calvert County and in 2015 are now considered established.



Sprigs (pieces of bermudagrass plants) are either transported by the trailer load or by bags, depending on the size of the area to be planted.

Sprigs are spread either by hand or by manure spreader.



After spreading the sprigs, tillage is necessary to ensure good soil contact.

With good management, both livestock and the producers are satisfied.



Isaiah 30:23 Then shall he give the rain of thy seed, that thou shalt sow the ground withal; and bread of the increase of the earth, and it shall be fat and plenteous: in that day shall thy cattle feed in large pastures.

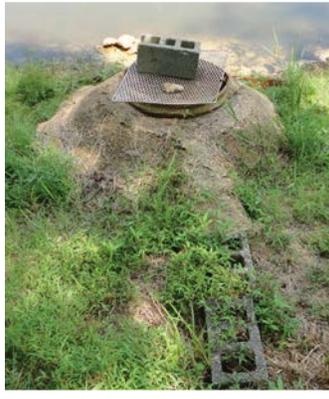
CONSERVING OUR RESOURCES...

...With a Sediment Control Pond Repair

For many years the sediment control pond served as one of the premier conservation practices, capturing sediment loads and associated nutrients from agricultural operations. Ponds serve as water sources for irrigation of valuable crops, livestock needs and fire control. They help to manage storm water and provide habitat for fish and other wildlife. For many landowners, they are also a source of pride for the farm, providing families with abundant natural beauty and enjoyment. Many ponds dot the landscape of Calvert County today, a remnant of the tobacco culture of the past and a testament to the success of conservation efforts by previous generations. Unfortunately, many of these structures are in disrepair. Every year the district receives multiple requests for assistance to help rebuild these failing structures.



The riser pipe of an old sediment control pond has rusted out, dropping the water level of the pond by several feet.



Previous attempts by the landowner to maintain the water elevation eventually could not stop further deterioration of the spillway.



The bottom of the barrel pipe was also rusted out, increasing the chances that the embankment could become unstable and ultimately fail.

This pond was repaired by draining down the pond, removing the old rusted pipe system and installing a new, larger riser and barrel. Today's systems are made of either aluminum pipe, aluminized steel or polymer coated steel, and have a much longer service life than the old bituminous coated material they are replacing. Options also exist for plastic pipe systems and concrete box/pipe combinations.



A new riser structure and cap-style trash rack were installed.



A view of the new outlet, including the barrel pipe and the riprap lined outlet protection.



A beautiful shot of the completed pond. The water level has been restored, the embankment rebuilt and secure, and the landowners can now enjoy their valuable resource for years to come.

2015 Cooperator of the Year

The Cosgrove Family receives the 2015 Cooperator of the Year award for their implementation of conservation practices while simultaneously transitioning to a different agricultural operation. The Cosgrove Family owns one farm and operates four others in Saint Leonard. The 55-acre Horsmon Farm has been a family farm for four generations.

JR Cosgrove, wife Cathy, two children Kaitlyn and Wesley, and father-in-law Richard Horsmon work together on Horsmon Farm. Horsmon Farm provides a variety of agricultural products including mums, pumpkins, gourds, straw, hay, beef, pork, and chickens along with a variety of agritourism activities.

JR Cosgrove grew up raising tobacco and grain and became a cooperator in 2010. Before the current agritourism, livestock, and hay operation, the farm grew tobacco. JR's mother-in-law Phyllis Horsmon was the driving force to diversify the farm away from tobacco and focus on mums and fall products. JR and Cathy have expanded on the fall sales to include agritourism and meats.



The Cosgrove family from left: daughter Kaitlyn, son Wesley, Chester the dog, wife Cathy, and J.R.



Fences were installed to separate large fields into smaller lots for more intense grazing.



Pasture fields were disked to prepare them for planting of warm season grasses.

JR is currently working with the District to self-install his current contract for fence, a watering facility, and pasture planting through the federal Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). He has innovatively planted Bermudagrass as a warm season forage for grazing under this contract. He also participated in a previous EQIP contract for self-installed practices, which included pasture plantings, fencing, a watering facility, and a roof runoff structure. These contracts have ensured conservation is a key element throughout Horsmon Farm's agricultural operation.

JR participated in the Maryland Department of Agriculture Cover Crop program in 2014 and 2015 and he has utilized the District's Equipment Rental Program. He has implemented practices such as waste utilization, crop rotation, forage harvest management, residue management, and stripcropping. Future operational and conservation goals include expanding spring agritourism opportunities and a waste management structure.

For incorporating conservation throughout the operational changes of Horsmon Farm, the Cosgrove Family is presented the 2015 Cooperator of the Year.



Preparation for installation of an underground outlet to aid a roof runoff structure.

2015 Annual Farm Tour

After a hiatus last year due to our move to a new location, the District held its annual Farm Tour on November 10. The tour focused around the Cambridge and Easton areas of Maryland, specifically Horn Point Laboratory and Chapel's Country Creamery.

At Horn Point Laboratory, an environmental research facility, we learned about oysters, fish, and how the lab collects other necessary data to improve the health of the watersheds of the Chesapeake Bay.

Horn Point Laboratory has one of the largest oyster hatcheries in the region. They produce spat (baby oysters) to set on oyster shells to introduce throughout Chesapeake Bay. The facility is able to extend the spawning window for increased success of oyster restoration.

Atlantic sturgeon restoration is prominent at the laboratory as well. The sturgeon population has been overfished for caviar, but have been observed in the tributaries of Chesapeake Bay in recent years. The sturgeon are tagged and tracked to learn more about their movements. We also learned about American and hickory shad, submerged aquatic vegetation, and diamondback terrapin restoration efforts. Some of us were brave enough to touch the Atlantic sturgeon and diamondback terrapin!

We had a delicious lunch of fried chicken, ham, and vegetables at Jimmie & Sook's in Cambridge.

At Chapel's Country Creamery, a family owned and run farm, we sampled and purchased a variety of artisan cheeses made from fresh raw milk. We toured the milking parlor with a young family member and saw the predominately Jersey cows and calves up close. We also learned that their cheeses are sold at a variety of farmers' markets and restaurants, and are available wholesale.

We had a wonderful farm tour and are already thinking of where to go next year. Thanks for all your support!

If you would like to join us for next year's tour, give us a call and we will add your name to our invitation list.



Tour participants view sturgeon at the Horn Point Laboratory. Sturgeon can grow up to 14 feet in length!



The laboratory uses a variety of environmental observation systems including buoys and an autonomous underwater research vehicle to gather data.



From Bay Bleu to Chapel Cheddar, we enjoyed touring and tasting at Chapel's Country Creamery.



Psalm 96:11 Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad; let the sea roar, and the fullness thereof.

International Year of the Soils



2015
International
Year of Soils

The United Nations General Assembly designated 2015 as the International Year of the Soils to help increase knowledge of how soil is important for food security and essential ecosystem functions.

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations promoted yearlong events to celebrate the year of soil, such as World Soil Day. World Soil Day was celebrated on December 4, 2015.

The logo of the International Year of the Soils represents concepts such as the intertwining of human, plant, and soil health. The different colors represent horizons, or layers, commonly present in soils. The colors also represent vital functions of healthy soils such as retaining air, water, and nutrients.

While the commemorative year may be past let's not forget the importance of soils every day. Calvert SCD is here to help you learn more about your soils. We can help you take care of your soils and build a healthy soil to support crops, pastures, wildlife habitat and more. Healthy soils are important to our vibrant ecosystem and they connect and conduct water from the land to the Patuxent River and the Chesapeake Bay.

Learn more about your soils today – explore Web Soil Survey!

<http://websoilsurvey.sc.egov.usda.gov/App/HomePage.htm>

Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza

In early to mid-2015, avian influenza “bird flu,” had been detected in twenty-one states. Outbreaks have drastically affected fifteen states in our nation. These outbreaks have developed to become the most expensive agricultural emergency in our nation's history, according to the Maryland Department of Agriculture.

Due to the potential spread of the disease to Maryland, information has been distributed at events, including the annual Conservation Planner's Workshop. The Maryland Department of Agriculture is coordinating with a multi-state emergency preparedness team to provide veterinary assistance and notification of an outbreak to registered flocks.



Our district is equipped with biosecurity supplies for farm visits which include disposable boot covers, gloves, brushes, and bleach.

Signs of the virus may include: respiratory symptoms, such as sneezing, coughing, gasping, and nasal discharge; watery and green diarrhea; lack of energy; poor appetite; purple discoloration of wattles, combs, and legs; decrease in egg production; soft, thin, misshapen eggs; changes in mobility, such as tremors, drooping wings, circling, twisting of the head and neck, or lack of movement.

Report any increase in illness or mortality in production poultry to the Animal Health Unit to 410-841-5810 during office hours and to 410-841-5971 after office hours and during weekends.

Prevent contact between production poultry and ducks, geese, and shorebirds. Waterfowl are known to carry the disease.

Continue safety measures such as cooking eggs and poultry to an internal temperature of 165° F to kill bacteria and viruses, and practicing biosecurity by limiting access to flocks unless deemed necessary.

PASTURE MANAGEMENT



Dr. Les Vough evaluates forage condition.



District staff assist with a pasture planning.



A recent crop-to-pasture conversion in the process of being established.

Every year animal agriculture continues to command an increasing share of the commodities produced in Calvert County. From long standing traditional grain operations converting some or all of their operation into livestock, to newer operations finding niche markets for grass fed beef, meat goats, wool and dairy products, to equine facilities that board, train and raise horses, all livestock owners should be aware of the benefits of a well-planned pasture management system.

Many realize that good pasture management is essential to producing high quality forage and maintaining optimum health for the animals in their care. Aside from nutritional problems, poorly managed pastures provide opportunity for weeds to outcompete the forage species and contributes to pest and disease problems for the herd. Healthy pastures prevent erosion and protect the soil resource by balancing animal densities against available forage. Pastures allowed to recover after grazing are stronger, more vigorous and drought tolerant, with greater yields and less need for supplemental fertilizer. Excluding animals from sensitive areas protects our stream and waterways from excess nutrient loading.

Technical and financial assistance is available – let us help you plan and implement a quality pasture management operation for your farm.



Healthy pastures benefit animals and protect the soil resource.



A mix of annual and perennial vegetation forage can provide year round grazing.



Fencing facilitates rotational grazing and excludes animals from wetlands, streams and other sensitive areas.



A mix of watering systems, hydrants, and portable troughs add flexibility to the grazing system.

CALVERT SOIL CONSERVATION DISTRICT

489 Main Street
Suite 101
Prince Frederick, MD 20678

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489 Main Street, Suite 101, P.O. Box 657
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Phone (410) 535-1521, Ext. 3 • Fax (410) 414-8006
www.calvertsoil.org

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Associate Supervisor

All district programs and services are offered on a nondiscriminatory basis, without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, marital status, or handicap. Calvert Soil Conservation District's Annual Report is published regularly to provide information to the land user.

Assisting Staff

Oliver L. Miranda
District Conservationist USDA-NRCS

William A. Clark
District Manager

Ronald M. Babcock
E&S Control Specialist

Geoffrey S. Westbrook
E&S Control Specialist

Janet Payne Hall
Administrative Secretary

Tammy S. Bowen
District Secretary

Jennifer M. David
*MDA Conservation
Engineering Technician*

Caroline A. Trossbach
Conservation Planner

Angella D. Hunter
Conservation Planner/Technician

Susan L. Davis
Resource Conservationist USDA-NRCS

Cooperating Agencies

Calvert County

Calvert County Commissioners
Community Planning and Building
Department of Public Works
Economic Development
Inspections and Permits
Marine Museum
Natural Resources
Parks & Recreation
Southern Maryland Resource Conservation
and Development Board

State of Maryland

Maryland Department of Agriculture
Maryland Department of the Environment
MD Department of Natural Resources
MD Forest, Parks & Wildlife Service
State Soil Conservation Committee
MD Cooperative Extension

United States Government

USDA Farm Service Agency
USDA Rural Development
USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Environmental Protection Agency

Others

Chesapeake Bay Critical Area Commission
MD Association of Soil Conservation Districts
Maryland Farm Bureau
National Association of Conservation Districts