

Calvert Soil Conservation District



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2019 ANNUAL REPORT



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A Message From Our District Conservationist



In 2019 the Conservation District, staff and Board members alike, spent significant amounts of time focusing on the details of the Chesapeake Bay Program's Watershed Implementation Plan, Phase III (WIP3). Each jurisdiction in the Chesapeake Bay watershed is charged with developing its own Implementation Plan, based on specific nutrient reductions in the Bay Model that are required to meet and maintain water quality in the estuary. This year we learned more about the data the Bay Model receives. We learned how that data affects the output of the model, and how the WIP3 will shape our collective goals over the next five years. The model shows us, in specific numbers, how our work reduces pollutant loads into the Chesapeake Bay. To me, the Bay model is a giant mathematical box hungry for data.

The data entered reflects the work done over the years in conservation planning and the work done by farmers in putting conservation on the ground – from planting crops no-till, to planting wildflower meadows

and field borders, to building manure storage structures and grassed waterways, and a myriad of conservation practices in between. Our conservation planning activities are one part of the accounting system that is being used to gather data and feed the model. Approximately 60 practices contribute to the model, exactly quantifying the reduction of nitrogen, phosphorus and sediment being delivered to the Chesapeake Bay. Farm plans enable us to capture and document all the efforts landowners and operators make every day to implement conservation. The plan gives us a place to translate conservation work on the ground into numbers that feed the model. These numbers represent the reductions in nitrogen, phosphorus and sediment resulting from those efforts.

If you already have a conservation plan and have completed a listed practice, such as planting no-till or completing a year of rotational grazing, let us know and we will be happy to record and report your conservation efforts. What you may think of as normal operations might actually be a nice tidbit of data to feed the Bay Model. Just by letting us know which practices in your conservation plan have been implemented, you can help us feed the data-hungry model. It will reflect well on agriculture's impact toward the goal of reducing nutrients and sediment entering the Chesapeake Bay.

So, what connects it all together? If you ask your District Conservationist, she will say that it is the soil. How we treat the soil affects how well it can function. Healthy soils are resilient and assist in reducing the amount of nutrients and sediment entering the Chesapeake Bay. But degraded soils are fragile and susceptible to erosion, contributing to the sediment and nutrient loads which pollute the Bay. If you are interested in starting a conversation about soil health and your land, please contact us. I, for one, am always happy to talk about soils.

Susan Lamb

NRCS District Conservationist
Calvert Soil Conservation District

Calvert High Places 10th at National Competition!

2019 has proven to be a banner year for the Calvert County Envirothon Program. Once again, Northern HS, Huntingtown HS, Calvert HS and Patuxent HS all sent teams to the local competition. In all, eight teams comprised of 40 students competed among the four schools for the County title – the highest Envirothon student participation rate at the local level since the 2011-2012 school year! Each team consisted of amazing students who brought with them their own unique interests, skills and talents to their teams. Led by their dedicated coaches, the teams were well prepared and enthusiastic, demonstrating a high level of intellectual curiosity and proficiency about soil science.

This year students were afforded a longer training session for the fall training in November, where the basics of soils science were introduced. New this year, trainers from Calvert SCD utilized an interactive sandbox which demonstrated the relationship between topography and soils and the harmful effects of erosion. During the spring training in March the students discussed ways technology affects agriculture and completed a modified version of the exam. At both trainings, students analyzed soil profiles to make scientific interpretations and evaluated soil samples influenced by human management to determine soil health properties.

The eight teams all participated in the April 3rd County Envirothon competition at Kings Landing Park. Calvert High School continued their winning streak from 2018 by winning the overall competition, placing first in three out of four resource categories. Once again, the team from Calvert HS represented Calvert County at the state competition, where they placed second last year. Held at St. Mary's College on June 18-20 our team placed first for the state of Maryland – the first State Envirothon Championship for the Calvert County Envirothon Program! The team then headed to North Carolina State University in Raleigh to represent Maryland at the National competition July 28 through August 2, 2019 and placed an admirable 10th out of 53 teams! Our District is very proud of these students and their outstanding achievement and thank them for their hard work and dedication.

Envirothon is just one way for students to explore and support their interest in natural resources. At the April competition several teachers and natural resources professionals spoke about the many camps, scholarships, and internships available to students interested in pursuing an education and career in natural resources. Organizations providing these opportunities include the Calvert Forestry Board, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Calvert County Natural Resources Division, Calvert Nature Society, Morgan State University: Patuxent Environmental and Research Laboratory, and the American Chestnut Land Trust.

The District would like to thank its partners from Calvert County Public Schools, Maryland Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Calvert County Technology Services, and St. Mary's Soil Conservation District for their assistance with this year's Envirothon program.



The team receiving their first place award at the State Envirothon Competition at St. Mary's College. From left: Coach Chuck Gustin, Vincent Sullens, Ben Springer, Grace Miller, Kristina Dubé and Michael Deffinbaugh



The team at the National Competition held at North Carolina State University in Raleigh

Galations 6:9...And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.

2019 ENGINEERING AND PLANNING ACCOMPLISHMENTS

County Landowners Assisted	186
Conservation Plans Completed	1,340.9 acres
New Cooperators.....	4

BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES INSTALLED (68 total projects):

Conservation Crop Rotation.....	351.2 acres
Residue and Tillage, No-Till.....	69.7 acres
Residue and Tillage, Reduced Till	277.3 acres
Cover Crop	2,713.3 acres
Critical Area Planting	1.8 acres
Streamside Fence (10' - 34')	3,486 feet
Non-Streamside Fence.....	4,404 feet
Mulching.....	0.2 acre
Forage and Biomass Planting	55.5 acres
Prescribed Grazing.....	15 acres
Heavy Use Area Protection.....	0.2 acres
Structure for Water Control	1
Nutrient Management.....	351.2 acres
Watering Facility	2
Upland Wildlife Habitat	355.5 acres
Conservation Cover	10.1 acres
Riparian Herbaceous Cover	1.3 acres
Shoreline Protection	2,000 feet
Tree/Shrub Establishment	6 acres
Forest Stand Improvement.....	599 acres

EROSION AND SEDIMENT CONTROL REVIEW

Site Plan Reviews (all types)	449
Commercial/Subdivision Plans Reviewed	30
Commercial Preconstruction Meetings.....	30

I Corinthians 3:6 ... I have planted, Apollos water; but God gave the increase.

Calvert Hosts Meeting of the Southern Maryland Soil Conservation Districts

Calvert Soil Conservation District hosted the 60th Annual Meeting of the Southern Maryland Soil Conservation Districts on Thursday, October 24, 2019 at the Calvert County Fairgrounds.

Approximately 100 people attended including district managers and staff from Anne Arundel, Calvert, Charles, Prince George's and St. Mary's Soil Conservation Districts. County Administrator Terry Shannon, County Commissioner President Tim Hutchins and Commissioner Earl "Buddy" Hance were also in attendance.

The dinner kicked off with MDA Patuxent Regional Coordinator Adam Lyon singing a beautiful solo of the National Anthem accompanied on the keyboard by Calvert SCD intern Isaac Smoot.

The five Southern Maryland Soil Conservation District managers each spoke about Watershed Implementation Plan (WIP) Phase III goals and their struggles achieving them. Watershed Implementation Plans document the steps, measures and practices Maryland and its local jurisdictions take to implement, achieve, and maintain the Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) of nitrogen to the Chesapeake Bay by 2025. Maryland's Watershed Implementation Plan is being executed in three distinct phases: Phase I concluded in 2010; Phase II was an update of Phase I adopted in 2012; and Phase III which addresses the pollution reductions needed from 2018 to 2025 to meet the ultimate goals.

Calvert District Manager Bill Clark also gave a presentation on the History of the Chesapeake Bay Clean-up Program and how it relates to the Water Implementation Plan.

Everyone enjoyed a delicious buffet of seafood and fried chicken catered by Thompson's Seafood. The meal was finished off with an assortment of delicious pies and Mrs. Moo's ice cream from the Farm Stand at Spider Hall.

The District would like to thank Horsmon Farm and Spider Hall Farm for graciously donating the beautiful mums and pumpkins that were used as decorations for the evening.



Clockwise from left: District Engineer Glenn Gass, County Commissioner President Tim Hutchins, Calvert County Finance Director Tim Hayden, Jeff Shannon and his wife Calvert County Administrator Terry Shannon



Wade Hampton (left) from Prince George's Soil Conservation District with Calvert District's Associate Supervisor J.R. Cosgrove

Meet New Grant Planner Jennifer Carlson

Jennifer Carlson is our new Soil Conservation Planner. She grew up in St. Mary's County and had her first exposure to soil conservation in high school when she participated in the Envirothon Program. She earned her bachelor's degree in Environmental Science from Longwood University in Farmville, Virginia. At Longwood she had the opportunity to work in the Office for Sustainability helping to educate the campus community about environmental stewardship. For two summers she also had the privilege of being a counselor at an Environmental Summer Camp in Montross, Virginia, helping to teach kids about nature.

Immediately before coming to work with the Calvert Soil Conservation District, she worked as a farm hand at Sassafras Creek Organic Farm in St. Mary's County, where she enjoyed playing in the soil and snacking on the produce. Her favorite vegetable to harvest was arugula. Jennifer's free time largely revolves around food; she enjoys eating, cooking, baking, looking at pictures of food on social media, vegetable gardening, going to farmer's markets, and watching Food Network. She has not encountered many foods that she won't eat.

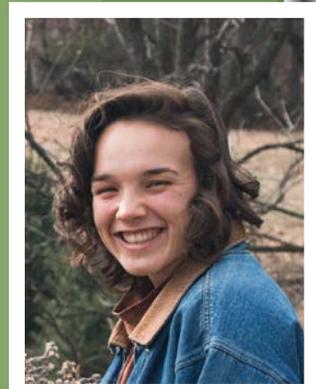


Meet Interns Noah Cook, Katelyn Pearson and Isaac Smoot

Noah Cook is a senior computer science major at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC). Noah is studying in hopes of one day working for the federal government doing cyber security. Over the summer he worked to create plans for the repair of a storm culvert on Ball Road and to repair a dam at Stoneleigh Court. In his spare time Noah enjoys reading and playing hockey.

Katelyn Pearson is a senior social work major at Messiah College in Pennsylvania. She is a midfielder on the women's lacrosse team and works at the Career and Professional Development Center on campus helping students create resumes and plan their career paths. She also sits on the NCAA Student-Athlete Advisory Committee representing the women's lacrosse team. She also volunteers at a local food bank and enjoys drawing, reading and spending time with her team. Katelyn was instrumental in developing a fresh new website for the District over the summer of 2019 and worked on a highly technical wetlands document known as an Umbrella Mitigation Banking Instrument.

Isaac Smoot is working with Erosion & Sediment Control Specialist Geoff Westbrook to learn all aspects of the District's design and CAD drafting procedures. Isaac is studying to become a mechanical engineer at Liberty University. He is a gifted pianist; he has been playing the piano for over 13 years and plays for several churches and at various events. Isaac also has earned his Black Belt Prep in martial arts. In addition to practicing martial arts and playing the piano, he enjoys singing, cooking and playing sports. Isaac comes from a family of 14. He has five brothers and six sisters.



2019 Annual Cooperators' Dinner

Calvert Soil Conservation District held its 17th Annual Cooperators' Dinner on March 21, 2019 at the Calvert County Fairgrounds. This year we celebrated "A Farmer's Best Friend" with table centerpieces comprised of a dog planter filled with treats for our four-legged friends. We had another full house again this year with over 300 attendees who enjoyed a delicious buffet catered by Thompsons, finished off with cake from Wildewood Bakery and ice cream from Mrs. Moo's for dessert.

The 2018 Cooperator of the Year Award was presented to the Bowen Family of Patuxent Overlook Farm in Prince Frederick. Donnie Bowen and his father Leslie (Page) own and operate the farm. They were recognized for their ability to adapt to new practices while protecting the soil and water resources on their farm. The Bowens were presented with a plaque and sign from Chairman Tommy Briscoe, and were honored with citations from Scott Travers of the office of U.S. Senator Chris Van Hollen, MDA Assistant Deputy Secretary Julie Oberg, and NRCS Acting State Conservationist Jackie Byam.

District Manager Bill Clark gave a presentation titled "The District in Black and White" that included slides of cooperators and their dogs, photos of the district's old newsletters, old tractor identification, and high school graduation photos of several local officials, many of whom were in attendance.

Attendees were again afforded a chance to win one of over 110 great door prizes, many of which were generously donated by our local farming and business communities. We hope to see everyone at the next Annual Cooperators' Dinner scheduled for March 19, 2020 at the Calvert County Fairgrounds!



Chairman Tommy Briscoe welcomes everyone to the Seventeenth Annual Cooperators' Dinner Meeting.



Donnie (left) and father Leslie "Page" Bowen accept a citation presented by NRCS Acting State Conservationist Jackie Byam.



District cooperators Barbara and Donald Cox were among the attendees at the Annual Dinner.



Engineering Technician Ryan St Laurent lends a hand scooping ice cream.



Pat Terrant and Erosion & Sediment Control Specialist Ron Babcock prepare to hand out door prizes.



Over 300 attendees enjoyed this year's Annual Cooperators' Dinner.

2019 Cooperator of the Year

James and Jennifer Dowell are the 2019 Cooperators of the Year. They both grew up on tobacco farms in Calvert County. In 1988 they built a home on “Paris Farm” in Owings, family land which has been in James’ family since 1669. They



James with his oxen, Phil and Butch



Heidi, their Jersey cow, produces three gallons of milk daily.



Some of the Dowell's cattle

are well-known at the North Beach Farmers’ Market for selling their “Paris Farm Meats”—grass-fed beef and milk-fed pork. For eleven straight years, they could also be seen giving ox cart rides, and milking demonstrations at Jefferson Patterson Park’s Children’s Day on the Farm.



Jennifer & James Dowell

In 2015, James and Jennifer purchased Tyverne Creek Farm in Lower Marlboro. It consists of 203

acres on the Patuxent River and is the perfect place to expand their grass-fed cattle operation. Their concern for the resources on their property, and the environment, has led to restoring barns and a small house, as well as cleaning up piles of debris. They currently have cattle there, and will be adding horse boarding in the future. They raise their own hay without utilizing herbicides or pesticides.

With the help of the Soil Conservation District, the Dowells have been implementing Best Management Practices on this farm using the Maryland Agricultural Cost-Share (MACS) and the Environmental Quality Incentives (EQIP) programs. They have encouraged pollinators with a ½ acre planting to attract and support bees and butterflies. The carefully planned seven paddocks, totaling 84 acres, will keep cattle out of the waterways and nutrients out of the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries. So far, they have established 70 acres of permanent pasture and have 48 of those acres fenced. Their future plans include seeding 14 more acres of pasture and fencing the remaining three paddocks, for a grand total of approximately 4 miles of fencing! A huge accomplishment will be the installation of the watering facility, planned by Soil Conservation, to provide fresh clean water to all seven paddocks and several barns. This system will support rotational grazing for cattle and horses.

This is a fine example of a farm using Best Management Practices to save the Bay, and good conservation to enhance the environment.

Proverbs 27:23 ...Be thou diligent to know the state of thy flocks, and look well to thy herds.

Farm Tour 2019

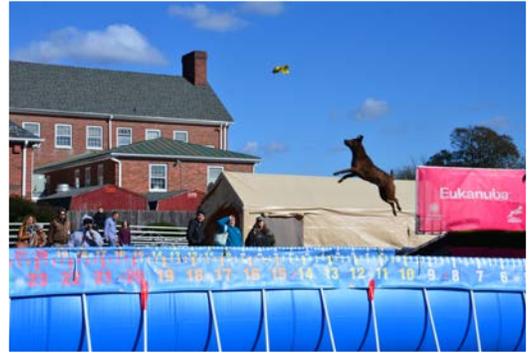
On the brisk morning of Friday, November 8, 2019 District staff and a bus full of cooperators embarked on a trip to Easton, Maryland for the annual Easton Waterfowl Festival. Considered the art and cultural heart of the Eastern Shore, each year this charming town welcomes visitors from near and far in celebration of the migratory birds and waterfowl that are so much a part of the area's historical legacy, its people, their land and their connection to the Chesapeake Bay.

The drive through Maryland was very scenic as we passed numerous farms and waterways with fall colors in full swing. Coffee, hot chocolate, and donuts awaited the participants upon arrival at Easton High School.

The festival started at the high school where there was an exhibit about the history of duck hunting with numerous duck decoys on display. Multiple tents showcased the decoys and duck calls; many tents were brimming with waterfowl sculptures, paintings and other artwork, while others offered a variety of hunting and sportsmen's gear for sale. One artist whose work was on display happened to be from Calvert County and made beautiful, lifelike sculptures of wildlife out of driftwood. Educational booths sponsored by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources, Ducks Unlimited and many others highlighted conservation efforts in the Chesapeake Bay region. Our cooperators thoroughly enjoyed watching the "Dock Dogs" competition, a very popular attraction at the festival where dogs jump off a "dock" into a pool of water. Dogs compete to see who can jump the farthest or the highest to retrieve a toy.

For lunch, participants enjoyed traditional Maryland fare such as oysters, clams, crabs, and the "best cream of crab soup in the state." The chilly weather made the hot food taste even better.

Since 1971 the Waterfowl Festival has been dedicated to the promotion and protection of the unique culture of Maryland's Eastern Shore as well as the wildlife and habitat that are the foundation of its heritage. The event raises money to support conservation, education and research in the Chesapeake Bay area.



Some of the attractions attendees enjoyed at the Waterfowl Festival in Easton, Maryland

Projects at Jefferson Patterson Park

In 2015 the District was contacted by Jefferson Patterson Park & Museum (JPPM) and Maryland Department of General Services (DGS) to commence design and permitting on the fourth phase of JPPM's Shoreline Protection Program.

The District surveyed the shoreline and began the design work for the 2,000 feet of shoreline in July of 2016. JPPM and DGS were also ready to replace and rebuild 265 feet of boardwalk and a 150 foot long pier in the same area of the park. The District was tasked with designing and permitting this project as well. Construction began on both projects in the fall of 2018, and was completed by the spring of 2019. The pier is constructed to receive all manner of rivercraft from small runabout boats and sailboats to mid-size excursion boats, expanding access to the park from the historic river thoroughfare.

The shoreline project is expected to bring new aquatic life to the site. In fact, within two weeks of completion horseshoe crabs were seen exploring the new habitat!



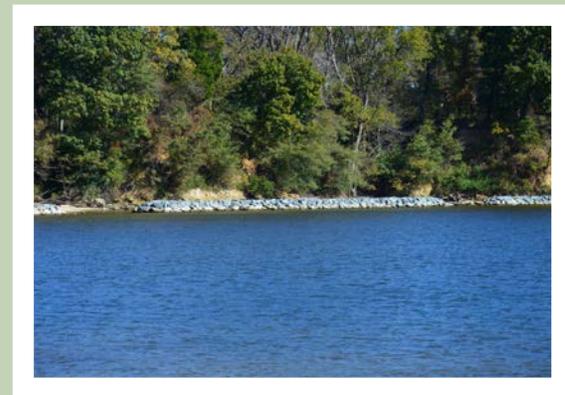
Pier before construction



Pier after construction



Shoreline before construction



Shoreline after construction

Conserving Our Resources

Pollinator Habitat



Birds...
Bats...
Beetles...
Bees!



We need animals to pollinate more than half of the fruits, vegetables, fiber, medicine and fuel plants we grow. These animals are faced with many challenges from disease, habitat loss and environmental contamination. We can help! Pollinator habitat can be created, providing nectar, pollen and food for a variety of pollinators - and it can be pleasing to the eye.



If you are interested in installing conservation cover for pollinator habitat, the District staff can assist you in planning a seed mix that suits your soils and your goals.

CALVERT SOIL CONSERVATION DISTRICT

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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.

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Jennifer Carlson
Conservation Planner

Cooperating Agencies

Calvert County

Calvert County Commissioners
Planning and Zoning
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