



# Calvert Soil Conservation District

# 2025 ANNUAL REPORT

Message from the District Manager

Engineering & Planning Accomplishments

2025 Annual Dinner

2025 Cooperator of the Year

Envirothon

We Moved!

Equipment Rental Program

MASCD Coloring Contest

Oyster Shell Recycling Program

In Remembrance Phillip Jones, Sr.

USDA-NRCS Update

New Faces



[www.calvertsoil.org](http://www.calvertsoil.org)

410-535-1521

## Message from the District Manager



As we reflect on the past year, I am proud to share the continued progress and strengthened partnerships that define the work of the Calvert Soil Conservation District. Our mission—to conserve, protect, and enhance the soil, water, and natural resources of Calvert County—remains at the center of every decision we make, every plan we review, and every acre we help steward.

This year, we focused on expanding our technical support to landowners, advancing conservation planning, and addressing some of the most pressing local challenges: shoreline and slope stability, stormwater impacts, agricultural viability, and the resilience of our working lands. With the help of our committed staff and the guidance of our Board of Supervisors, we successfully delivered conservation projects that not only protect natural resources today but build long-term environmental and economic resilience for tomorrow.

A notable area of growth has been our work with living shoreline and coastal restoration projects. We have spent significant effort to integrate oysters as a natural and effective component of shoreline stabilization, recognizing their ability to reduce wave energy, accumulate sediment, and improve water quality. These projects not only protect vulnerable shorelines but also enhance habitat, support ecological diversity, and strengthen the long-term resilience of our coastal communities. By incorporating oysters into living shoreline systems, we are helping create sustainable, nature-based solutions that provide benefit to landowners and improve water quality in the Chesapeake Bay.

Our agricultural community continues to demonstrate remarkable leadership in adopting conservation practices—whether through enhanced nutrient management, cover crop implementation, stream protection, or new soil-health initiatives. We also strengthened our engagement with local governments, nonprofit partners, and residents to support responsible development, protect critical areas, and ensure that conservation remains an integral part of Calvert County’s future.

Looking ahead to 2026, we remain dedicated to meeting emerging challenges with practical solutions, sound science, and collaborative partnerships. Issues such as accelerated shoreline erosion, changing precipitation patterns, sedimentation, and land-use pressure require a coordinated approach—and the District is committed to being a trusted, proactive resource for the community. We will continue to modernize our programs, enhance our technical capabilities, and improve access to conservation services for farms, homeowners, and local agencies.

I am grateful for the trust placed in the District by our cooperators, county leaders, and partner organizations. Together, we are making meaningful progress in conserving the natural resources that support our agricultural heritage, our environment, and the quality of life we value so deeply in Calvert County.

*Thank you for your continued support as we move forward with purpose and dedication.*

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Jason Leavitt', written in a cursive style.

Sincerely,

Jason Leavitt  
District Manager

## 2025 ENGINEERING & PLANNING ACCOMPLISHMENTS

<u>Best Management Practice</u>	<u>Count</u>	<u>Extent Done</u>	<u>Units</u>
Conservation Cover	1	3.20	AC
Conservation Crop Rotation	16	292.19	AC
Cover Crop	14	267.59	AC
Critical Area Planting - Construction	1	0.03	AC
Forage Harvest Management	4	55.11	AC
Forest Management Plan - CAP	2	2.00	NO
Heavy Use Area Protection	1	0.01	AC
High Tunnel System	1	2070.00	SF
Livestock Pipeline	2	758.01	LF
Mulching	1	0.03	AC
Non Streamside Fence	1	1673.00	LF
Nutrient Management	16	395.89	AC
Pasture & Hay Planting	2	1.90	AC
Prescribed Grazing	3	11.15	AC
Residue and Tillage Management Mulch Till	2	22.63	AC
Residue and Tillage Management No Till/Strip Till	17	335.79	AC
Streamside Fence (35'+ Trees)	2	2275.00	LF
Watering Facility	2	3.00	NO
Watering Trough	2	3.00	NO
<b>EROSION &amp; SEDIMENT CONTROL REVIEWS:</b>	944	Site Plan Reviews (all types)	
	14	Commercial Pre-construction Meetings	
	4	Forest Harvest Plans	

### Southern Maryland Districts to Host MASCD in 2026

The Maryland Association of Soil Conservation Districts (MASCD) serves as the voice for Maryland's 23 soil and water conservation districts on state legislative issues. It also provides a forum for training, policy-making and the exchange of information at their annual and quarterly gatherings.

MASCD's mission is to promote practical and effective soil, water, and related natural resources programs to all citizens through individual conservation districts on a voluntary basis through leadership, education, cooperation and local direction.

The Southern Maryland region looks forward to hosting the multi-day conference next year!



## 2025 Annual Cooperators Dinner



On March 18, 2025, the Calvert Soil Conservation District held its annual Cooperators' Dinner at the Calvert County Fairgrounds, where 250 attendees gathered to celebrate the 2024 Cooperator of the Year: the American Chestnut Land Trust (ACLT).



Founded in 1986 to protect 436 acres at Scientists Cliffs, ACLT has since expanded to manage more than 3,500 acres across Prince Frederick and Port Republic. At Double Oak Farm, the organization practices sustainable agriculture through no-till soil building, on-site composting, and four-year crop rotations, donating its harvests to St. John Vianney's Inter-Faith Food Pantry. To further protect soil and waterways, ACLT has installed grade stabilizations and native buffer plantings and works closely with the Calvert Soil Conservation District through programs such as EQIP, CSP, and MACS.



ACLT also invests in education and community involvement by supporting Envirothon trainings and competitions, collaborating with Scouts, and mentoring Chesapeake Conservation & Climate Corps members. Volunteers play a vital role by helping remove invasive species, restore meadows, maintain trails, and support farm operations, while staff continue exploring innovative conservation tools like beaver dam analogs and digital land-management apps.



The organization maintains 26 miles of trails across two watersheds, including the 6.1-mile PF-2BAY Trail and a unique raft crossing on Parkers Creek, all designed to provide recreation while preventing erosion.



Through dedicated stewardship, strong partnerships, and community engagement, ACLT protects local landscapes, enhances public well-being, and demonstrates exemplary conservation leadership - earning recognition as the 2024 Cooperator of the Year!



**Tommy Briscoe (center), former chair of Calvert Soil Conservation District, receives a plaque from the Calvert Soil Conservation District Board of Supervisors for his 27 year tenure. Presented by District Manager Jason Leavitt (left) and new Calvert SCD chair, Benson Tiralla (right).**

## 2025 Cooperator of the Year Donna Newman, Seven Oaks Farm

Donna Newman, owner and operator of Seven Oaks Farm, has partnered with the Calvert Soil Conservation District since 2004, when she first contacted the District for assistance with fencing. Her 11.4-acre farm is home to three horses, two miniature donkeys, and a flock of chickens.

Donna consistently goes the extra mile to conserve natural resources by taking full advantage of the District's programs and technical assistance. Her horses are rotationally grazed across seven pastures, with temporary fencing used to create smaller paddocks within larger fields. This system allows her to adjust pasture sizes as needed, rotate horses effectively, and prevent overgrazing. She also uses temporary fencing to stockpile one pasture during the winter months, ensuring a reliable source of forage.

Through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), a federal program that provides technical and financial assistance to implement conservation practices, Donna has completed several important improvements. EQIP-supported practices benefit not only individual landowners but also the entire Chesapeake Bay watershed by reducing erosion and nutrient runoff. With EQIP assistance, Donna installed three watering facilities, heavy use area protection, and 800 feet of livestock pipeline. Prior to these improvements, she manually transported water by truck or ATV to pastures without access. The new system has significantly reduced resource concerns on the property while improving efficiency and animal management.

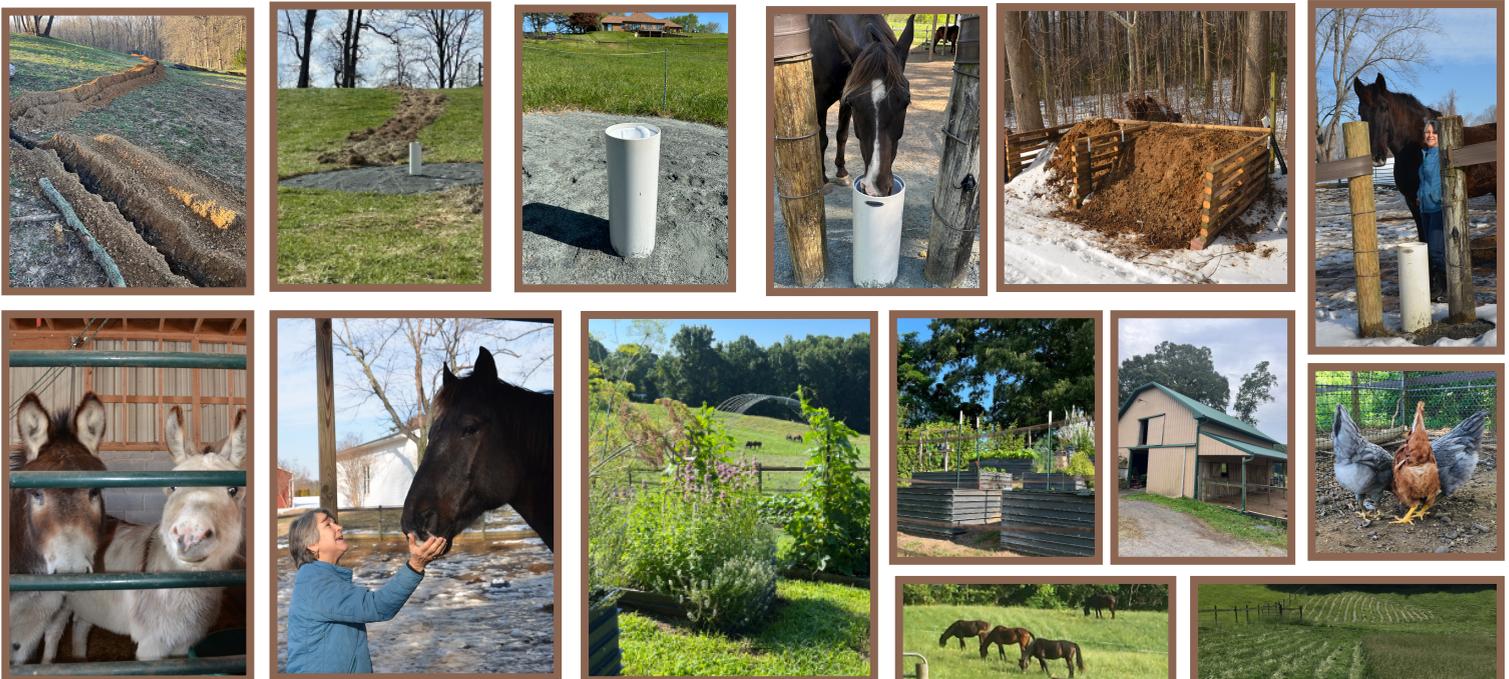
In addition to participating in federal programs, Donna has implemented several farmer-installed Resource

Improvements (RIs), which also contribute credit toward Maryland's Watershed Implementation Plan (WIP). These improvements include a waste storage facility with composting and barnyard clean water diversions. She also maintains a designated sacrifice lot—an area where livestock are confined during inclement weather to protect grazing pastures from damage.

Donna has been a pleasure to work with, collaborating closely with equine planners Eileen Beard and Taylor Clarkson, as well as conservation technicians Amaya Remmel and Luke Mudd. She consistently welcomes District staff to her property to explore opportunities for further improvements. In 2024, she hosted County, State, and Federal staff for a Pasture Grazing Tour and Training, demonstrating how prescribed grazing can successfully benefit an equine operation.

Looking ahead, Donna plans to continue strengthening her sustainable horse operation through prescribed grazing and expanded water access in all pastures. Her next project is to establish wildlife habitat plantings for pollinators through EQIP. Donna is an outstanding example of how thoughtful conservation practices can transform land into a more productive and environmentally responsible operation. We are grateful for her commitment and look forward to recognizing her at the 2026 Calvert Soil Conservation District Annual Dinner Meeting.

Congratulations to Donna Newman of Seven Oaks Farm!  
2025 Cooperator of the Year!



# CONGRATULATIONS NORTHERN HIGH SCHOOL! 2025 CALVERT COUNTY ENVIROTHON 1ST PLACE TEAM



*Northern High School, Calvert County Envirothon, First Place Team (left to right): Sally Shnawa, Ashlynn Vilcheck, Raleigh Sterling, Trinity Pierce, Madilyn Ketchum*

## WHAT IS ENVIROTHON?

The Envirothon is an environmentally-based problem-solving competition for high school students. Teams are comprised of 5 to 7 students who work together to study Maryland's natural resources over the course of the school year. Schools compete in four resource categories: aquatics, forestry management, soil conservation, and wildlife management. All topics are hands-on and include practical skills and trainings taught by experts in each field.

## CALVERT COUNTY ENVIROTHON COMPETITION

The competition was held on a chilly but sunny Tuesday, April 8, 2025, at King's Landing Park in Huntingtown, MD. 9 teams of students, from all 4 Calvert County high schools participated. The first-place team of this year's Calvert County Envirothon was Northern High School with 336.5 points out of a possible 400 points. 2 teams from Huntingtown High school placed 2nd and 3rd with 315.5 and 297.5 points. The 2nd place Huntingtown High School team received gift cards for placing first in the Soils category.



The Maryland Envirothon

## MARYLAND STATE ENVIROTHON COMPETITION

The Northern High School team represented Calvert County at the Maryland State Envirothon competition, held June 11<sup>th</sup> & 12<sup>th</sup> at the Western Maryland 4-H Park in Swanton, MD. They placed 7<sup>th</sup> of 14 teams. Maryland's first place team was from Hartford County and placed 2nd in the International Envirothon, narrowly missing 1st place by just 1 point! Congratulations to Hartford County!

## THANK YOU

The Envirothon has many sponsors including the Calvert County Soil Conservation District, Calvert Forestry Board, Calvert County Natural Resource Division, Morgan State University Estuarine Research Center (PEARL), American Chestnut Land Trust, and the CHESPAX program of Calvert County Public Schools. Thank you for the continued support in making this program a success.

*Congratulations Northern High School!  
1<sup>st</sup> Place - Calvert County Envirothon!  
7<sup>th</sup> Place - Maryland State Competition!*



*NHS at the State competition.*

# We Moved!



Photo courtesy of thebaynet.com



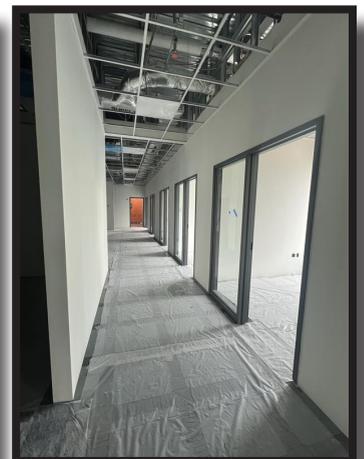
Calvert Soil Conservation District has relocated a handful of times over its 77 years of establishment. In the beginning, in 1948, with just 2 staff members, the district worked from the 2nd floor of the Calvert County Courthouse in Prince Frederick. Every May and November, they had to vacate for the grand and petty juries, and work from the fairgrounds instead.

- 1957 - Johnson Building; adjacent to the courthouse
- 1966 - Upstairs of the USPS in Prince Frederick, shortly after its construction
- 1988 - Kaine Building; 65 Duke Street, Prince Frederick, MD
- 2014 - 489 Main Street, Prince Frederick, MD
- 2025 - County Administration Building; 150 Main Street, Prince Frederick, MD

The covid pandemic slowed things down in 2020 and shook up the work force entirely by transforming the way we conduct business: introducing telework and hybrid office schedules. Adapting to the times, Calvert Soil Conservation District implemented strategic changes to stay flexible for the future.

Being in the new County Administration Building, the district now shares the same building as many other county departments including the Calvert County Board of County Commissioners and County Administrator, Department of Public Works, Department of Inspections and Permits, Maryland Department of Environmental Health, Calvert County Attorney, Department of Communication and Media Relations, and the Treasurer's Office, several other internal departments. Having multiple entities under one roof, rather than scattered about Prince Frederick, citizens and staff alike will benefit greatly from the convenience of the relocations.

So please, stop by next time you're in town and see our new space! We're incredibly grateful to the Calvert County Board of County Commissioners and to the many people who helped make this move a success - custodians, engineers, grant writers, executive administration, contractors, project managers, and so many others behind the scenes. We look forward to serving you for many years to come in our new location!



# Equipment Rental Program



Next-Gen Extreme Post-Driver with Vibrating Head

Calvert Soil Conservation District owns and maintains several pieces of equipment that cooperators of the district are able to rent at a low cost. Among the fleet are a Great Plains 7ft no-till drill, John Deere 10ft no-till drill, Great Plains 12ft Turbo Till, Brillion 8ft seeder, weed wiper, a new 6ft overseeder and a new post-driver with a vibrating head. We also have an older generation post-pounder with a hammer-head, grain vac, weed wiper, round hay balers, a litter spreader, and a potato-harvester available.

Rentals are reserved on a first-come, first-served basis, and is provided as a benefit of being a cooperator with the district. For more information can be found at [www.calvertsoil.org/equipment-rental](http://www.calvertsoil.org/equipment-rental) or contact: Ashley Brown at 410-535-1521, or [ashley@calvertcountymd.gov](mailto:ashley@calvertcountymd.gov).



Brillion Seeder



Weed Wiper



Overseeder

## MASCD Elementary Schoolers Coloring Contest

Calvert Soil Conservation District participated in the MASCD Coloring Contest this year. We received over 500 entries! Congratulations to these kiddos! We look forward to another great year in 2026!



Class A - 1st Place  
Hailey  
Windy Hill E.S.



Class B - 1st Place  
Charlotte  
Sunderland E.S.



Class C - 1st Place  
Charli  
Beach E.S.



Class A - Runner Up  
Maisie  
Windy Hill E.S.



Class B - Runner Up  
E. Hoffmaster  
Patuxent Appeal Campus



Class C - Runner Up  
Catherine  
Plum Point E.S.

# Calvert Launches Oyster Recycling Program!



**OYSTER SHELL RECYCLING**

**OYSTER RESTORATION LIFECYCLE**

**EAT** — Eating oysters helps support local watermen and oyster farms.

**COLLECT** — Leftover shell is collected and recycled at local convenience centers.

**PREP** — The shell is then aged and washed to prepare for seeding.

**OFF TO THE SCIENTIST**

**GROW** — Scientist produce oyster larvae in a hatchery, which attach to recycled shell and grows into new oysters.

**PLANT** — The recycled shell, along with its attached baby oysters called spat, is planted on oyster reefs in the Bay.

**REBUILD** — Oysters are the foundation of the bay. They clean the bay, create reefs that provide habitat for marine creatures and rebuild and protect the shore.

Scan the QR code or visit [calvertcountymd.gov/OysterShells](http://calvertcountymd.gov/OysterShells) for more information.

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS  
Solid Waste & Recycling Division

Place oyster, hard-shell clam and scallop shells in the bin.  
**NO PLASTIC BAGS PLEASE!**

Southern Marylanders know that oysters are both good to eat and good for the environment. They provide protein, omega-3s, vitamin B-12, zinc, and iron that support heart, brain, and immune health. They also filter algae and sediment, remove excess nitrogen and phosphorus, create diverse habitat, and help protect shorelines from erosion - all important benefits for Southern Maryland.

You may then wonder: if oysters do so much good in the water, why eat them? Because responsible harvest and shell recycling helps grow more oysters. In the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries, oysters grow on top of existing shells. Each shell can support at least four new oysters, often times more. Baby oysters (spat) need a hard surface to attach to, and oyster shells act as the perfect building blocks to grow more oysters that will support aquaculture farmers and sustain wild oyster populations. While tossing shells back into the water might help, recycling programs make sure shells are used exactly how and where they will have the greatest impact. For these reasons, any spare or used oyster shells are in high demand.

The collected oyster shells are cleaned and seasoned outdoors before being placed in hatcheries, where spat attach and begin growing.

Once strong enough, they are moved to nurseries and are later planted on reefs or farms, thus continuing the cycle. By eating oysters AND recycling the shells, you help restore oyster populations throughout the Chesapeake Bay watershed!

## Where to recycle:

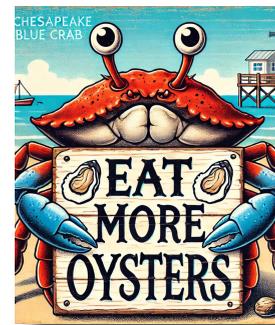
Blue recycling bins are available at all six Calvert County convenience centers with clear and informative signs (above):

- Ball Road: 1045 Ball Road, St. Leonard, MD
- Barstow: 350 Stafford Road, Barstow, MD
- Huntingtown Road: 3666 Hunting Creek Road, Huntingtown, MD
- Lusby: 11725 H.G. Trueman Road, Lusby, MD
- Mt. Hope: 96 Pushaw Station Road, Sunderland, MD
- Plum Point: 2801 Plum Point Road, Huntingtown, MD

This program is made possible through partnerships with Calvert Soil Conservation District, CHESPAX, Calvert County Department of Public Works, Calvert County Solid Waste and Recycling Division, and Oyster Recovery Partnership.



Scan for more info!



## Remembering Associate Supervisor Phillip Jones, Sr.



Associate Supervisor of nearly 30 years, Phillip Jones, Sr., passed away on March 24, 2025. He was an avid farmer, and proud of it. He served as an associate on Calvert's Board of Supervisors since 1995. We want to thank him and his family for their contributions and leadership in the agriculture world.

---

## USDA-NRCS and District Conservationist Update

2025 was another exciting year for Calvert Soil Conservation District. In 2025 Calvert SCD processed a total of \$233,965.00 in payments to help facilitate conservation projects directly impacting Calvert County agricultural operations. It was also a record year for new contract obligations for USDA-NRCS programs: Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) and Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) with a combined total of \$1,194,577.00. It is remarkable the forward progress cooperators in Calvert County are making to better conserve their land and taking advantage of the many programs available utilizing the Soil Conservation District and we expect 2026 to be another busy year for conservation!

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) is USDA NRCS's primary conservation program supporting farmers and forest landowners in Calvert County, Maryland. EQIP provides technical assistance and financial support to help producers implement conservation practices on working lands, with a strong focus on improving water quality, reducing nutrient and sediment runoff to local waterways and the Chesapeake Bay, improving soil health, conserving water, and enhancing wildlife habitat.

The Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) helps you build on your existing conservation efforts while strengthening your operation. NRCS works one-on-one with Calvert County producers to develop site-specific conservation plans that address local resource concerns while supporting productive agricultural operations. Applications are accepted year-round, with Maryland-specific ranking deadlines for funding.

Farmers can contact me for questions and assistance applying:

*Mitch LeMueix*  
USDA-NRCS District Conservationist for  
Anne Arundel & Calvert Counties  
*mitchell.lemueix@usda.gov*  
410-535-1521



## Welcome to the Team!



I am Jack Hines. I graduated from Towson University in 2024 with a degree in Environmental Policy and Management. I joined MDA in February as an Ag Resource Conservation Specialist I. I am very grateful for the wide variety of experiences that working with the Calvert Soil Conservation District has provided. My favorite part of working in soil conservation is going out in the field and talking to cooperators and members of the community. After almost a year with the Conservation District, I am excited to continue learning and contributing to natural resource conservation.



My name is Emily Smalley, and I am the new PSS for the Anne Arundel and Calvert County Soil Conservation District Offices.

I currently live in Odenton, Maryland, but my roots are in both Montgomery and Frederick county. I graduated from University of Maryland and my studies focused on communication, business administration and marketing. Prior to joining RC&D, I gained experience in influencer marketing and management, as well as in the real estate industry. In addition to my professional background, I am a certified yoga teacher. While I am not currently teaching, it is a passion I hope to pursue further in the future. I love being outside, going on walks and hiking new trails. This past year I got into mountain biking with my partner and some friends, and I recently started running and have a 10k planned for March!

I look forward to expanding my knowledge in agriculture and applying my skills to this industry. With my diverse background and fresh perspective, I am eager to support our community's conservation efforts!



Hello! I am Kane Aguila, and I started as an Ag Resource Conservation Specialist I at Calvert Soil Conservation District in March. I have a master's degree in Anthropology from Louisiana State University, and I was previously a park ranger for the Louisiana Office of State Parks. I worked at the Audubon State Historic Site and our claim to fame was that John Audubon stayed at our site and created much of his Birds of America series during his visit. My interest in conservation and agricultural work really started when I did a service year with the Maryland Conservation Corps at Tuckahoe State Park. I gained invaluable knowledge and appreciation of Maryland's natural resources. It has been a pleasure to learn more about agriculture in Maryland, and I look forward to assisting your farming operations.

# CALVERT SOIL CONSERVATION DISTRICT

150 Main Street  
Suite 419  
Prince Frederick, MD 20678

Nonprofit  
Organization  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Pr. Fred. MD  
Permit No. 247

## **Board of Supervisors**

Benson H. Tiralla, Chair  
Adelina

Walter L. Wells, Vice Chair  
Prince Frederick

David A. Cox, Treasurer  
Prince Frederick

Leonard R. Ogden, Supervisor  
Prince Frederick

Thomas D. Briscoe, Supervisor  
St. Leonard

J.R. Cosgrove, Associate  
St. Leonard

Charlie R. Cox, Associate  
Prince Frederick

Ben R. Wood, Associate  
Huntingtown

## **District Staff**

Jason D. Leavitt  
District Manager

Ryan St Laurent  
Assistant District Manager

Rebecca S. Willis  
Administrative Aide

Ashley E. Brown  
District Secretary

Dean Bivens  
Erosion & Sediment  
Control Specialist I

## **MDA**

Adam Lyon  
Patuxent Regional Coordinator

Eileen M. Beard  
Conservation Planner III  
Regional SoMD, Equine

Taylor Clarkson  
Conservation Planner III  
Regional SoMD, Equine

Broderick Pascual  
Soil Technician

Jack Hines  
Conservation Planner

Kane Aguila  
Conservation Planner

## **USDA-NRCS**

Mitch LeMueix  
District Conservationist

Jamare'e Taylor  
Soil Conservation Planner

Amaya Remmel  
Conservation Technician

Chase Kolstrom (RC&D)  
Southern MD Forester

Emily Smalley  
Program Support Specialist

Mike Montillo  
Engineering Technician

Brian Brookhart  
SoMD Area Engineer

Jacob Koenig  
Regional Engineer

Jake Kiessling  
Regional Engineer

Glenn Gass, P.E.  
Engineer

## **Cooperating Agencies**

### **Calvert County**

Calvert County Board of County Commissioners  
Department of Planning and Zoning  
Department of Public Works  
Department of Economic Development  
Department of Inspections and Permits  
Calvert Marine Museum  
Natural Resources Division  
Department of 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  
MD State Soil Conservation Committee  
UMD 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  
Maryland Association of Soil Conservation Districts  
Maryland Farm Bureau  
National Association of Conservation Districts  
Southern Maryland Agriculture Development Com-  
mission

## **PUBLISHED BY:**

**Calvert Soil Conservation District**  
**150 Main Street**  
**Suite 419**  
**Prince Frederick, Maryland 20678**  
**(410) 535-1521**  
**[www.calvertsoil.org](http://www.calvertsoil.org)**

*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. USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender.*