

Conservation Matters



Montgomery Soil
Conservation
District
18410 Muncaster Rd
Derwood, MD 20855
301-590-2855

June 2016

Calendar

State
Envirothon
Competition
June 22- 23

Offices
closed for
Independence Day
July, 4

Cover Crop
Sign Up
June 24 -July 15

Montgomery
County Fair
August 12-20

Cooperators
Dinner
September 8

On The Trail With Secretary Bartenfelder

On May 20th, Maryland Agriculture Secretary, Joe Bartenfelder, and Deputy Secretary, Jim Eichhorst, took time out of their busy schedules to grab some lunch and take a quick tour of the Waredaca Brewing Company in Laytonsville.

The lunch was hosted by the Montgomery Soil Conservation District (MSCD) and gave the Secretary an opportunity to tour the newly opened facilities.

The popular micro brewing company is the latest addition to Waredaca Farm, which was established in the 1930's by Beecher Butts as a day camp for Washington area boys and moved to the present location in the 1950's. The Butts family still owns and operates the farm which specializes in a variety of equestrian activities. The Brewery will complement the existing farm activities and expand their long tradition of sustainable farming practices.

Earlier in the day, the Secretary visited the Woodbourne Creamery at Rock Hill Orchard in Mt. Airy to officially open the 2016 Maryland's Best Ice Cream Trail.



Secretary Bartenfelder and Deputy Secretary Eichhorst tour the Waredaca Brewing Company

The Creamery is the newest addition to the nine dairy trail, and the County's first all new dairy facility in 60 years. John and Mary Fendrick purchased Rock Hill Orchard in 2010, and began building a Creamery shortly thereafter. The cows at Woodbourne Creamery are able to graze freely at all times, and the farm features a robotic voluntary milking system that allows the cows to choose their own milking time.

The Fendricks were recognized as the 2015 Cooperators of the Year by the Maryland Association of Soil Conservation Districts.

Both of these farms represent the innovative

thinking and commitment to land stewardship that is so prevalent among Montgomery County agricultural producers. The MSCD has worked closely with both operations to establish and maintain several conservation practices using district,

state and federal cost-share funding options.

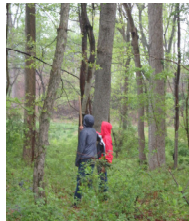
A variety of practices are eligible for cost share

funding through the Maryland Agricultural Water Quality Cost-Share (MACS) and Natural Resource Conservation Service Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP).



2016 Montgomery Envirothon—A Close Finish

On April 28th, 14 teams from four Montgomery County Schools competed in the annual Envirothon Competition at the Agricultural History Farm Park in Derwood.



It was a cool and rainy day but that didn't dampen the spirits of the participants.

Students from Richard Montgomery, Montgomery Blair, Northwest, and Poolesville High Schools demonstrated their knowledge of soils, wildlife, aquatics, forestry and invasive species.

At the end of the competition, the top two scores were the closest in recent memory.

The "Militant Platypodes" from Richard Montgomery High School finished on top—just 2.5 points over the "Duck Fizzers" from Montgomery Blair High School.

The winning team represented Montgomery County at the Maryland State Envirothon on June 22nd and 23rd at Mount Saint Mary's University in Emmitsburg, Maryland.

The "Duck Fizzers" were the 2015 county champions and several members from the "Militant Platypodes" were on the 2013 and 2014 teams that went to back to back Maryland State Competitions. We wish them good luck again this year.

We extend special thanks to all the program sponsors as well as the volunteers who

support this program by providing their time and energy.

The Envirothon is an important educational event that gets kids to think about their role in the natural world and consider a possible career in the life or environmental sciences.



Militant Platypodes 2016 Winners
Montgomery County Envirothon

Save the Date for the 2016 Cooperators Dinner

Keep your calendars open for Thursday, September 8th, 2016 for the annual Montgomery Soil Conservation District (MSCD) Cooperators Dinner.

This year the event will be held at the Bethesda-Chevy Chase Chapter of the Izaak Walton League of America (IWLA), 20601 Izaak Walton Way, Poolesville, MD 20837.

The "B-CC" Chapter was chartered on October 23, 1935 with an initial membership of 15. In 1949 the chapter purchased a 366 acre farm, over the years additional land purchases have allowed the farm to grow to its current 623 acre size.



The property includes woodlands, campgrounds, picnic areas, meeting facilities, shooting ranges, cut your own Christmas trees and a Chapter-house. The restoration of the existing historic cabin and surrounding buildings is an ongoing project.

Conservation and Education are the primary focus of the B-CC-IWLA's mission, various educational programs are held each year.



Look for a flyer about the dinner later this summer.

We look forward to seeing you at the B-CC Chapter.

Call for early registration
301-590-2855. or email:

Karen.Walker@montgomerycountymd.gov



MSCD 2015 Annual Report



Close Encounters with Agriculture

Montgomery County's population now exceeds one million people. The Montgomery Soil Conservation District (MSCD) Board and staff have made educating that growing population a top priority in order to help promote the future of agriculture in our county.



MSCD Chairman, Robert Butz teaches a group of students about water quality.

Many young people today are unaware of the benefits agriculture provides to them and the ways in which they can become good stewards of the land. Close Encounters with Agriculture creates a rare opportunity for these students to enjoy a hands-on learning experience that could have a real impact on their future. Students often take the lessons learned home with them and help to educate their families.

The Close Encounters with Agriculture Program provides an educational opportunity for students of all backgrounds. Each year this 2 ½ week program, presented jointly by University of Maryland Extension and MSCD, provides approximately 2,900 Fourth Grade students and 500 teachers and parents from across the county with a comprehensive agricultural learning experience.

The program includes not only Extension and MSCD staff but also receives assistance from the Farm Bureau, local farmers, and members of the Master Gardeners program, who present programs in nutrition, production agriculture and conservation. Each group has a full day of fun activities that provide a great opportunity to learn about things not usually covered in their regular curriculum.



Cost-Share Funding for Landowners



Leveraging private investments in conservation with government sponsored cost-share funding provides additional opportunities for landowners to implement practices that will improve water quality. Financial incentives represent an important link in the efforts to clean up our local streams and the Chesapeake Bay.

By offering landowners a combination of state, federal and local cost-share, the District strives to help farmers protect their soil, water, and other natural resources. By pairing USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service funding through EQIP and MDA assistance through the MACS program, we were able to assist Montgomery County farmers in securing over \$1 million in conservation funding in 2015.

One example of leveraging funds for conservation projects is the Maryland Department of Agriculture's Cover Crop Program. Cover Crops are one of the most important practices for cleaning up the Chesapeake Bay, and Montgomery County farmers have consistently increased their participation in this valuable conservation program.

In 2015, Montgomery County farmers planted 14,063 acres of cover crop resulting in cost share payments of \$620,000. This also means that farmers invested considerable amounts of private capital in conservation in their efforts to help restore the Chesapeake Bay.

MSCD 2015 Annual Report

Agricultural Conservation Programs

Planning and Implementation — Forty-five Soil Conservation and Water Quality Plans were developed for Montgomery County landowners to protect 4,311 acres of land. The District continued to expand the availability of programs for the growing equestrian community. Providing cost-share programs and technical assistance to horse owners and the growing organic farming community will continue to be critical components of conservation efforts in Montgomery County.

Best Management Practices

Following is a list of the practices completed by MSCD Cooperators in 2015.

Access Control	1	Acres
Access Road	270	Feet
Conservation Cover	1	Acres
Contour Farming	56.3	Acres
Cover Crops	14063	Acres
Critical Area Planting	0.4	Acres
Diversion	100	Feet
Dry Waste Storage	1	Structure
Field Border	1,380	Feet
Grassed Waterway	4.9	Acres
Heavy Use Area Protection	0.4	Acre
Lined Waterway or Outlet	47	Feet
Livestock Pipeline	1,322	Feet
Nutrient Management	441.9	Acres
Roof Runoff Structure	1	Structure
Seasonal High Tunnel System	2,200	Sq. Ft.
Spring Development	1	Structure
Stream Crossing	1	Structure
Streamside Fencing	4,580	Feet
Surface Subdrain	1,450	Feet
Underground Outlet	688	Feet
Waste Storage Structure	2	Structures
Watering Facility	2	Structures



MSCD 2015 Annual Report

Conservation Education Programs

The MSCD provides a variety of educational opportunities for landowners, students, and the general public. Educating the citizens of Montgomery County about agriculture and conservation is one of our most important initiatives. Some of our educational programs conducted in 2015 are listed below:

Envirothon— The MSCD has one of the most competitive county Envirothon programs in the state, with 15 teams and more than 75 students competing in 2015. The winning 2015 Montgomery County Team placed 3rd at the Maryland Statewide Envirothon Competition.

Volunteer Tree Plantings—MSCD staff help coordinate volunteer tree planting projects in cooperation with the Montgomery Forestry Board. These School reforestation projects provide a hands-on learning experience for students and help to restore forested habitats to school sites throughout the County.



Workshops, Fairs and Expos - The MSCD staff also contacted thousands of constituents through their participation in the County and State Fairs, Maryland Horse Expo, the Flower and Garden Show, Arbor Day and Earth Day Events.

Cooperators Dinner—The 2015 Cooperators Dinner was held on September 3, 2015 at Butler's Orchard in Germantown, Maryland. Approximately 120 people attended the dinner, including several local and state policy makers.

The focus of the evening was to showcase the agricultural industry and conservation in Montgomery County and for people to learn about the on-farm market industry in Maryland. Butler's Orchard provided an excellent opportunity for guests to learn about agri-tourism, conservation, and the innovative marketing being used by Montgomery County farmers.



Montgomery Soil Conservation District Staff
are members of a variety of Work Groups:

**Maryland Horse Council,
Montgomery Forestry Board,
Regional Agricultural Workgroup,
Forest Conservation Advisory Committee,
Patuxent Reservoirs Watershed Protection Group**

Cover Crop Incentive Program Continues



The Maryland Cover Crop Program for the winter of 2015/2016 was the most successful in history. Maryland farmers certified a record 492,244 acres.

Cover crops are widely recognized as one of the most cost-effective and environmentally sustainable ways for farmers to meet nutrient and sediment reduction

“Maryland farmers believe in the environmental and agronomic benefits of planting cover crops on their fields to improve the soil, recycle unused plant nutrients, control erosion, and protect local waterways,” said Maryland Agriculture Secretary Joe Bartenfelder. “This is the sixth consecutive year that

targets outlined in Maryland’s Watershed Implementation Plan to protect and restore the Chesapeake Bay by 2025.

farmers have planted more than 400,000 acres of cover crops on their fields.”

Sign-up for this winter’s program runs from June 24th through July 15th at the Montgomery Soil Conservation District or at your local soil conservation district office.

Grants are available to help farmers offset seed, labor and equipment costs associated with planting cover crops in the fall. Maryland has earmarked approximately \$22.5 million for this year’s program.

Please visit the Department of Agriculture’s Conservation Grants webpage for more information.

http://mda.maryland.gov/resource_conservation/Pages/cover_crop.aspx

Educational Program Available This Fall

What’s your carbon hoofprint?

A new program available for young riders and horse enthusiasts may help them answer this question.

The Ecohoof program has been developed by MSCD staff to provide a fun and educational way for children ages 7 years and older to learn about land and water conservation.

Designed to appeal to a variety of age groups the program will be available in the Fall of 2016 for presentations at club meetings and other events. Activities will vary, based on age and expertise and will range from interactive puzzles to video and hands on demonstrations of composting,

rotational grazing and other effective Best Management Practices (BMPs) available to all horse owners.

The goal of the program is to make young riders aware of the ways in which they can help preserve the land, reduce pollution and become more familiar with the natural world. Club members will also become more aware of the effect farm management actions can have on the environment and the ways, both large and small, in which they can make a difference.

The EcoHoof program will help prepare young riders to be better stewards of the land whether they continue to enjoy horses as a



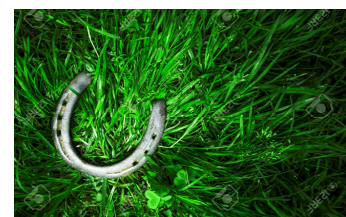
hobby or go on to become professional riders, trainers and farm owners.

Participants will be eligible for prizes as they advance through the levels and can apply the concepts they have learned while working

toward earning a scholarship for their club.

For more information about this program contact:
Shelly Ingram 301-590-2853

Shelly.Ingram@montgomerycountymd.gov



Local Farmer Nationally Recognized For Land Stewardship



Drew Stabler didn't learn the importance of conservation and sustainable farming so much as he absorbed it throughout a lifetime and six decades of farming. His journey to achieve sustainability earned Stabler recognition from the National Corn Growers Association for Good Stewardship during the recent 2016 Commodity Classic convention and trade show.

Stabler, of Laytonsville, MD, is the third honoree in NCGA's Good Steward Recognition Program which began in 2014. The program funding was provided by the Howard G. Buffett Foundation as part of their Harvesting the Potential campaign to raise awareness among U.S. farmers of the importance of conservation agriculture.

"This program is about expanding awareness of the best management

practices in sustainable corn production. Our goal is to recognize the special efforts of those who demonstrate the economic and conservation value of soil management," said NCGA President Chip Bowling. "Drew has shown a lifelong commitment to conservation practices and sustainable production that is remarkable. It is my privilege to honor him with this recognition. It's people like Drew who lead by example on their own farms and help make it possible for all Maryland farmers to continue to farm in the Chesapeake Bay watershed!"

Stabler owns and operates Sunny Ridge Farm, a grain and beef farm with his partners, Fred and David Lechliden in Montgomery County. He farms 1,800 acres of corn, wheat and soybeans and has 75 head of beef cattle.

"My dad was the extension agronomist for the University of Maryland, so he instilled in my brother and I the respect you had to have for the land and how you need to take care of it," Stabler said. "That's what we've always tried to do."

Practices employed by Stabler include split nitrogen applications, contour farming, contour strip cropping, cover crops, grassed waterways,

rotational grazing, filter strips, switchbacks and installation of spring-fed cattle troughs which have enabled him to install fencing to eliminate cattle contact with the nearby stream. He became a certified nutrient management planner so he can keep his nutrient management plan current.

"The Stabler Farm and the whole family have been conservationists from the beginning. Drew is really a pioneer and one of the early adopters of no-till farming starting in 1970, converting to completely no-till by 1985," said Lynne Hoot, Executive Director of the Maryland Grain Producers Association. "The farm is located in the Chesapeake Bay watershed, which is a focal point for the national discussion on soil conservation and water quality. Drew has become a needed spokesperson for the industry."

In addition to making significant improvements on his farm, Stabler is a leader in conservation outreach. He has hosted numerous tours and field days for local farmers, agribusinesses, and agency officials and legislative leaders.

"All the conservation practices we've done have rewarded us from the savings and conservation of soil or the good for the environment," Stabler added. "I appreciate the recognition for our farm. It's been a team effort."

**reprinted with permission of NCGA*

Nutrient Trading and Baseline Assessments

In March of 2015, MSCD in cooperation with Montgomery County Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and the World Resources Institute hosted a Nutrient Trading Outreach meeting at the Agricultural History Farm Park to introduce the concept of nutrient trading between the urban and agricultural sectors.

In order to determine the tradable credits on a farm, a nutrient baseline assessment must be completed. This assessment is based on a protocol developed by the Maryland Department of Agriculture which involves

analysis of the nutrient management plan and soil conservation and water quality plan.

Montgomery farmers willing to complete a baseline assessment will receive an incentive payment of \$500 from MSCD for their time and effort. This funding is available from the Water Quality Protection Charge funding received by the District.

To date three Montgomery County farms have completed the assessment process.

For more information about this process please contact the MSCD office at 301-590-2855.

twitter

Montgomery Soil Conservation District

Find our account by searching "MSCD Maryland" on twitter.com or

click on this link

<https://twitter.com/MontgomeryMDSCD>

MONTGOMERY SOIL CONSERVATION DISTRICT

18410 Muncaster Road
Derwood, MD 20855



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

The Montgomery Soil Conservation District (MSCD) prohibits discrimination in its programs on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs and marital or familial status.

MSCD Staff

David C. Plummer, District Manager
Jim Myers, District Conservationist
Brandy Gibbons, Soil Conservationist
J. Harne, Resource Conservation Specialist
Shelly Ingram, Equine Conservationist
Paul Meyer, Engineering Technician
Melbaliz Santiago, Soil Conservationist
Karen Walker, Administrative Aide
Michael Weyand, Soil Conservation Technician

MSCD Board of Supervisors

Robert Butz, Chairman
George E. Lechlitter, Vice Chairman
Pam Saul, Treasurer
Wade F. Butler, Member
Robert Stabler, Member
Robert Butts, Associate Member
Tim McGrath, Associate Member

**You Can Receive
This Newsletter by EMAIL!!!**
Enjoy a full color version
emailed to you as soon as it is
posted to our website.
Register by
phone 301-590-2855
or
email
Karen.Walker@
montgomerycountymd.gov