



CHARLES SOIL CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Organized 1941

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MEMO REGARDING AGRICULTURAL CLEARING OPERATIONS

JULY 2023

The Charles Soil Conservation District has addressed several situations involving land clearing operations related to agricultural land. If you are considering similar operations please note the following:

- Land clearing and grading operations require Charles Soil Conservation District (District) sediment and erosion control approval. This approval is obtained by submitting a sediment and erosion control plan to the District which is compliant with current Charles Soil Conservation District Plan Submittal Guidelines (See website: CharlesSCD.com). Consult the appropriate professional consultant to prepare required plan. A Charles County grading permit will also be required (see next bullet.)
- Questions related to Charles County Government permits should be directed to the Department of Planning and Growth Management at (301) 645-0692. Applicant should inquire as to whether or not the issuance of an agricultural activity exemption for forest conservation letter is applicable.
- Converting wetlands for crop or pasture production could make a landowner or operator ineligible for USDA programs. Current and potential future USDA participants should request a USDA Certified Wetland Determination before clearing. Contact USDA Farm Service Agency at (301) 934-9588 to get a Farm/Tract number and complete the AD-1026 form.
- Land clearing and grading operations exceeding 1 acre will require a Notice of Intent for coverage under the General Permit for Stormwater Associated with Construction Activity to be submitted to the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE). Contact MDE at (410) 537-3019.
- Land clearing and grading work carried out specifically to construct structural Best Management Practices (BMPs) as part of a Soil Conservation and Water Quality Plan (SCWQP) receive District sediment and erosion control approval via said plan. Please contact the District to speak to an agricultural planner for assistance and to determine if your project qualifies. Such projects do not require a Charles County grading permit. The act of clearing the land in preparation of agricultural activity is not considered a BMP, is not a practice included within the SCWQP, and is subject to all stated permits and approvals referenced in this memo.
- Land clearing and grading activities which disturb less than 5,000 square feet of land area and disturb less than 100 cubic yards of earth are exempt from the requirement of District erosion and sediment control plan approval. This exemption is not intended to allow land disturbance to be performed incrementally.
- Logging and timber harvesting operations, which do not involve stump removal and/or land grading, require a Charles Soil Conservation District Standard Erosion and Sediment Control Plan for Forest Harvest Operations. For a Forest Harvest operation, you will need to complete an application and submit through the District along with the appropriate review fee. Please consult a professional forester to prepare required plan.
- Plans submitted to the Charles Soil Conservation District must reflect current conditions and cannot be approved for post construction.
- Approval from the Maryland Department of the Environment is required for land disturbance that impacts wetlands or waterways.
- The appropriate design professional should be consulted to prepare and submit applicable plans for the required approvals.