

# Conservation Update

A Publication of the Charles Soil Conservation District

Fall 2023



## ***Charles Soil Conservation District 2023 Annual Cooperator Dinner***

By: Luis Dieguez, District Manager

**O**n Wednesday May 24, 2023 the Charles Soil Conservation District (District) held its Annual Cooperator Dinner.

It was a fun and beautiful evening under a tent on the District property. 136 dinner guests came out to celebrate the conservation work of the District. This annual event included a delicious meal catered by Thompson's Catering. Among other festivities it was an opportunity to celebrate the 82nd Anniversary of the founding of the District. District Chairman, Charles Rice served as master of ceremonies.

One of the highlights of the evening was the recognition of the 2022 Cooperator of the Year, Patrick Goldsmith, of Goldsmith Family Farms LLC. Patrick is a farmer in the southern portion of Charles County Maryland (Cobb Neck) who has been a cooperator with the Charles Soil Conservation District for approximately 20 years. He has a long term commitment to soil conservation efforts and is an excellent steward of the land. Patrick Goldsmith (with cap in photo) received several awards in recognition of his conservation work.



## ***Mark Your Calendars!***

*Fall 2023*

<b>Sept. 14-17</b>	Charles County Fair—Stop by our display in the Garden & Tobacco Building
<b>Oct. 14</b>	Nanjemoy Heritage Day 11:30 -3:00; Nanjemoy Community Center—Stop by our table
<b>Oct. 26</b>	Charles County Envirothon fall training
<b>Nov 15</b>	Late-Planted Cover Crop Planting Deadline

*Be sure to check out [charlesscd.com](http://charlesscd.com) for calendar updates!*



## ***Charles Soil Conservation District 2023 Annual Cooperator Dinner***

By: Luis Dieguez, District Manager

The evening also included the recognition of Jeff Bossart, Vice Chairman of the District, for his 25 years of dedicated service. Jeff Bossart (3rd from right in photo) received a commemorative print from fellow District supervisors.

Charles County Commissioner Gilbert O. Bowling (photo below) also attended the event. He expressed his strong support for the District and the programs which serve Charles County's agricultural community. He announced Charles County Board of Commissioners FY2024 funding support for the acquisition of a tractor for the District's Agricultural Equipment Rental Program.

The annual dinner is a celebration of the important work of soil conservation and the preservation of our natural resources. We hope you can join us next year!



## ***Nutrient Management Plan Writing***

By: Chris Swift, CharlesSCD agricultural plan-

For the past few months, there have been discussions about potential funding cuts by the Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) for the University of Maryland Extension (UMDE) to employ certified nutrient management specialists. However, MDA ultimately chose to retain funding for UMDE, ensuring that they will continue offering free nutrient management plans. MDA and UMD will enter a 3-year memorandum of understanding (MOU) to continue funding UMDE Nutrient Management plan writers to be renewed annually, contingent upon funding.

According to Maryland law, farmers generating \$2,500 or more annually or livestock producers with over 8,000 pounds of live animal weight are required to adhere to nutrient management plans. These plans guide the responsible application of fertilizer, manure, and nutrients, preventing excessive nutrient runoff into waterways. Due to their intricacy, certified specialists, private consultants, or trained farmers must prepare these plans.

If you need a nutrient management plan for a property in Charles County, you can contact the Charles County UMD Extension office at 301-934-5403, or stop in their office at 9501 Crain Highway, Bel Alton, MD. They are open from 8:00am – 4:30pm, Monday through Friday, with no appointment needed.



## *District Personnel Changes*

**T**his past October, we welcomed a new full-time engineer, Jessica Linn. She focuses mostly on agricultural work, assisting local farmers to solve erosion issues on their property. Jessica has a Bachelor's degree in Physics from Salisbury University, as well as a Bachelor's in Engineering from the University of Maryland. It has been a pleasure having her on our team, and we look forward to continuing working with her! In March of 2023, Janina Jones, District part-time plan reviewer, finished her Master's in Water Resources Management and took a full-time position in Washington D.C. In August, District Secretary, Sue Pirner, retired after 35 years of dedicated service.

### *I Bid You a Farewell...*

By: Susan Pirner

**A**s I hang up my hat as secretary at the Charles SCD on August 18th, I ponder all the many years and changes I have been a part of. When I started working at the Charles SCD in 1988, I was given a brand new typewriter and through the years, not wanting to part with it even after I was given a new computer, I decided when my typewriter breaks this is when I retire... Unfortunately it did break a few years ago and after outliving it, I decided to stay a few more years. After the birth of my granddaughters a few years ago, I decided this might be a good time to retire and spend more time with my grandbabies and then COVID happened and also the way I did my work. As I have survived COVID-19 pandemic unscathed, and after learning how to navigate the new digital world at work, I now find this the perfect time to hang up my hat, jacket, shirt or whatever here at the Charles SCD!

Throughout my 35 years working here, I consider myself very fortunate to work for two District Managers who I consider amazing leaders. Their vision, creativity and honesty has been an inspiration to all. I am also very grateful for all the wonderful co-workers, supervisors, farmers, engineers, foresters, inspectors/county employees and others I have met along the way. I would like to give a special thanks to the generous farmers who brought in their produce to share, to the foresters who shared their saplings, and to all the others who provided sweet treats or a casual conversation when stopping by the office. As I am looking forward to spending more time with family and friends, I am also very excited for the next chapter of my life! Please know I will miss you all! Take care, and God Bless!



*Susan Pirner at her retirement luncheon after 35 years of service to the District. She is pictured with former District Manager, Pete Cruikshank.*

## Charles County Envirothon

By: Dee Dee Saunders, District Coordinator

Charles Soil Conservation District proudly hosted its 30th Charles County Envirothon this past spring. The competition was held at Gilbert Run Park on April 19th and including teams from all of the county's seven public high schools. Participation increased 26% over 2022's Envirothon and, thankfully, has returned to pre-COVID numbers. For the first time in Charles County Envirothon's history, a team from Henry E. Lackey High School won first place – Team 2. They also earned the top score in the Current Issue. Team 3 from La Plata High School received second place, taking top honors in Forestry and Wildlife. Maurice J. McDonough High School placed third and scored highest in Soils. La Plata High School Team 4 earned the highest Aquatics score. Lackey Team 2 went on to represent the county at the Maryland Envirothon (see photo at bottom of page) at the Western Maryland 4H Center in June.



During the awards ceremony, the District took the opportunity to recognize two Envirothon advocates that were instrumental in bringing the program to Charles County. (See photo) Aggie Higdon (On left), former Administrative Specialist at the District, spearheaded the first Charles County Envirothon program, continuing to coordinate the program for fifteen years before her retirement from the District in 2008. Polly Zimmerman (On right) was also recognized for her efforts as one of the first coaches at Maurice J. McDonough High School, where she even coached her daughter who was on the first winning

The District also recognized the generous support of the trainers that work with the Charles County Envirothon. Without their time, energy, efforts, and commitment to Envirothon, bringing this worthwhile environmental education program to interested Charles County high schoolers would not be possible. Some of these trainers' alumni of the Charles County Envirothon program themselves and are prime examples of the impact that being involved in Envirothon in their youth had on their future career endeavors. The District looks forward to kicking off the 2023–2024 season in October with the first training of the year which covers Aquatics, Forestry, Soils and Wildlife. This year's "Current Issue" will be Renewable Energy for a Sustainable Future, and will be the focus of the February training. Students and coaches will return in March for the final training of the season covering all five topics. And this year's program will culminate in testing the students' knowledge at the 31st Charles County Envirothon to be held in April. The Charles County Envirothon program is coordinated by and primarily funded by the District. This past season the District was able to secure a generous grant from the Maryland Assn. of Soil Conservation Districts Endowment Fund to partially offset expenses. Sponsorship of the program is always appreciated. If you would like to support the Charles County Envirothon, feel free to send your donation to Charles Soil Conservation District with "Envirothon" in the memo line.





## Conservation Equipment for Rent

By: Randy Sweeney, MDA Agricultural Planner

The District's conservation equipment rental program continues to provide producers with the availability of low cost farming implements intended for applying best management practice such as minimal soil disturbance planting, crop residue handling, hay and pasture establishment, and livestock fencing. Currently the District's equipment consists of a Great Plains 12ft. "turbo till" vertical tillage machine, a John Deere 1590 10ft seed drill, a Land Pride NTS1207 seven ft no till over-seeder, a Wheathart brand hydraulic post pounder, and a Great Plains 706NT no till 7ft seed drill. For photos of equipment see <https://charlesscd.com/equipment-rental/>

New equipment ordered and expected to be in service by spring of 2024 is a Brillion SSB-8ft direct seeder and an I&J brand 8ft cover-crop roller/crimper. The new seeder will allow cooperators who are converting cropland, renovating hay and pasture fields or otherwise are establishing new grass crops on prepared ground, an option for getting the planting done in a low cost and timely manner. Likewise, the new cover crop roller crimper will allow farmers to terminate cover crops in a proven manner which makes the maximum use of biomass for weed suppression and ground moisture retention.

All equipment was acquired with the assistance of a conservation grant from the Southern Maryland Agriculture Development Commission. The District's website contains information on the individual pieces of equipment as well as the policies and procedures for renting and the rental rates.

### Get Started

1. Contact the Charles SCD Office to schedule rental days, pick up time and location. (If renting the post pounder, view the safety video at the Charles SCD Office—4200 Gardiner Rd, Waldorf)
2. Complete the Conservation Assistance Agreement & provide proof of insurance. Download or visit the SCD for the agreement from the link above.
3. Pick up and pay for the equipment
4. Schedule return of equipment



## 2022-23 Urban Erosion & Sediment Control Summary

By: Jessica Linn, Charles SCD Agricultural Engineer

The trends we have seen for construction and land development in Charles County in years 2020 and 2021 are starting to level off after increasing seemingly exponentially. The demand for real estate and material costs still remains high, and a labor shortage still remains, however. That being said, the need for erosion and sediment controls still exists as we have seen the past couple of years. In 2022, we had higher than average rainfall consistently throughout the year. Thus far this year, there has been much less than average rainfall, but more severe storms. These circumstances on occasion require changes on the plan and in the field in a timely manner to prevent sediment from leaving the sites.



A large part of accomplishing this is through the efforts of the Charles County Inspections department. They are tasked with inspecting the sediment controls approved on the engineered plans during construction and coordinating with the contractors to ensure they are installed and maintained properly. They will also check for damages after a major storm event and verify repairs needed are made in a timely manner. Frequently, site conditions will require changes to the erosion and sediment control design. In these situations, the inspectors will coordinate with the contrac-

tors, design engineers and us here at SCD to achieve the ultimate goal of preventing contaminated waters from entering our watersheds, with the least amount of interference with construction. Because of their importance in overseeing the development in our county, we hold quarterly meetings with them to discuss problems and solutions being seen in the field, project statuses, and in general creating a game plan for keeping construction activities running smoothly and avoiding issues in the future.

You can help make your community be a better place. If you see erosion or sedimentation in your local communities, please reach out to us at the District or the county inspections staff so we can attempt to fix the issue. With everyone's help, we can help save our soil and keep the Chesapeake Bay clean!

### Conservation Planning for Horse Farms

By: Sara Lewis, Soil Conservation Planner Regional Equine Specialist

Is your pasture overgrazed and you need help? Are you interested in extending your grazing season and willing to try a rotational grazing system? Then contact Sara Lewis; she is an Agricultural Resource Conservation Specialist Regional Equine Planner with the Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) for this area, and she specializes in Equine Conservation Planning and can help you with your grazing needs and other soil conservation and water quality concerns. Sara works out of the Charles and St. Mary's Soil Conservation District offices. Sara Lewis can be reached at the Charles County office: 301-638-3028, Cell: 240-925-2397, or Email: [Sara.Lewis@md.nacdnet.net](mailto:Sara.Lewis@md.nacdnet.net).





## *Changes to Small Pond Review and Approval*

By: Tim Wells, Charles SCD Conservation Engineer, P.E.

As many urban developers and engineers know, the Maryland Department of the Environment, specifically the Dam Safety Division, is responsible for ensuring all dams are designed, constructed, operated, and maintained safely to prevent dam failures and the resulting consequences. In the state of Maryland, a dam safety permit from MDE is required in order to construct, reconstruct, alter, or repair any reservoir, dam, or waterway obstruction. Certain dams that are classified as 'low hazard' and meet all requirements are considered 'small ponds', and are exempt from the MDE permit as long as they obtain District Small Pond approval from the local Soil Conservation District. Charles SCD has that responsibility for review and approval for dams classified as small ponds constructed in Charles County.



Historically, the USDA-NRCS has provided the technical review for this District Small Pond approval, and ensured that dams met all the requirements of the NRCS pond standard, known as MD-378, in accordance with Maryland COMAR. However, beginning in 2023 NRCS announced that they would no longer be providing technical review for urban or stormwater management ponds. NRCS Maryland also released an updated MD-378 document, to bring it into compliance with the National NRCS 378 standard. In response to this, MDE Dam Safety developed a Small Pond Approval Policy document that outlined minimum reviewer qualifications needed to review and provide District Small Pond approval. In conjunction, MDE also developed an updated Pond Summary Sheet to replace the previous MD-14 document, and released several memos to clarify design requirements and provide updates to the as-built process.

Consultants and dam owners are encouraged to review MDE Dam Safety's website to familiarize themselves with the updated small pond policy document, the updated MD-378, as well as all new documents, and policy memos. These will be utilized in small pond reviews and enforced moving forward.

Dam owners are also encouraged to review the as-built process, as all dams receiving District Small Pond approval are required to submit a completed as-built to the SCD for review and acceptance within 30 days of project completion. This as-built must certify all dam components, both internal and external, were installed per the approved design, or that the dam still meets all requirements after any changes were made during construction. Any changes made to a dam during construction should be submitted as a revision before moving forward with the changes, particularly for internal dam components such as pipes, cutoff/core trench, or seepage control devices as these can be costly to change post-construction. If as-built information is not received in a timely manner, MDE Dam Safety will be notified for enforcement action.

## Cover Crop Fall Planting

2023-2024 COVER CROP PLANTING AND PAYMENT OPTIONS					
TRADITIONAL COVER CROPS PAYMENT OPTIONS	NO-TILL	CONVENTIONAL	BROADCAST WITH LIGHT, MINIMUM OR VERTICAL TILLAGE	AERIAL	BROADCAST STALK CHOP AND BROADCAST CULTIPACKER
Base payment:	\$55/acre	\$55/acre	\$55/acre	\$55/acre	\$55/acre
Plant by October 10, <b>add:</b>	\$15/acre	\$15/acre	\$15/acre	\$0/acre	\$0/acre
Plant between October 11 and November 5, <b>add:</b>	\$5/acre	\$5/acre	\$5/acre	\$0/acre	\$0/acre
Aerial seed into standing corn on or before September 10, <b>add:</b>	\$0/acre	\$0/acre	\$0/acre	\$10/acre	\$0/acre
Plant rye, triticale, or a multi-species cover crop, <b>add:</b>	\$20/acre	\$20/acre	\$20/acre	\$20/acre	\$20/acre
Terminate cover crop after May 1, <b>add:</b>	\$15/acre	\$15/acre	\$15/acre	\$15/acre	\$15/acre
<b>MAXIMUM PAYMENT AMOUNT:</b>	<b>\$105/acre</b>	<b>\$105/acre</b>	<b>\$105/acre</b>	<b>\$100/acre</b>	<b>\$90/acre</b>
<b>Flat rate:</b> For cover crops incorpo- rated into fields (November 6 through November 15)	\$45/acre	\$45/acre	\$45/acre	\$0/acre	\$0/acre

### PLANTING/TERMINATION DATES & LATE PLANTING EXTENSIONS

- Plant cereal grains by November 5, 2023. Some species have earlier deadlines.
- Mixes containing legumes, forage radish, canola/rape, or oats must be planted by October 1, 2023.
- The aerial seeding deadline is October 10, 2023. Some species have earlier deadlines.
- Terminate cover crops between March 1 and June 3, 2024.
- Late-planted cover crops must be planted by November 15 using an incorporated planting method and one of the following cover crops: rye, triticale, or wheat to receive \$45/acre. Late-planted cover crops may not be terminated before May 1, 2024. They are not eligible for the delayed termination incentive.

## Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)

### What is CSP?

The Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) offers technical and financial assistance to help agricultural and forest producers take their conservation efforts to the next level.

The program is designed to compensate agricultural and forest producers who agree to increase their level of conservation by adopting additional conservation activities and maintaining their baseline level of conservation. CSP is for producers who are passionate about conservation and environmental stewardship.



## ***Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)***

### ***What Are the Benefits?***

CSP may provide many benefits, including increased crop productivity, decreased inputs, wildlife habitat improvements and increased resilience to weather extremes. CSP also encourages adoption of new technologies and management techniques.

For example, CSP can help you:

- Schedule timely planting and management of cover crops
- Develop a grazing plan that will improve your forage base
- Implement no-till to reduce erosion or manage forested areas in a way that benefits wildlife habitat

If you are already taking steps to improve the condition of the land, chances are CSP can help you

### ***How Does CSP Work?***

CSP offers opportunities for producers to expand on existing conservation efforts by applying new conservation practices, enhancements, and bundles. These new activities will help enhance natural resources and improve the operation. For example, if you have been planting a cover crop, you may decide to try an enhancement for a multi-species cover crop or implement a deep-rooted cover crop to break up soil compaction.

If you decide to apply for CSP, the local NRCS conservation planner will have a one-on-one consultation with you to evaluate your current management system and the natural resources on your land. You will then work with the NRCS conservation planner to select new CSP conservation activities based on your management objectives for your operation. Once you choose the conservation practices or activities that best fit, and if your application is selected for funding, CSP offers annual payments for implementing these practices on your land and operating and maintaining existing conservation efforts. Want to take it a step further? CSP also offers bundles where you can select a suite of enhancements and receive a higher payment rate.

### ***Payments and Deadlines***

Contract payments are made annually based on the following components:

- Existing activity payment — payment to maintain the existing conservation based on the
- land uses and NRCS assessment of existing stewardship at the time of enrollment.
- Additional activity payment — payment to implement additional conservation activities.
- Supplemental payment — payment for adopting one of two systems:

Adopting or improving a resource-conserving crop rotation

Adopting advanced grazing management (AGM)

NRCS may provide a minimum annual payment of \$1,500 and a maximum annual payment of \$40,000 over the 5-year contract.

**Charles Soil Conservation District**  
**Board of Supervisors**

Charles Rice.....Chairman  
Jeffrey Bossart.....Vice Chairman  
Jack Welch.....Treasurer  
Wes Tomlinson.....Member  
Wayne Hancock.....Member  
Vacant.....Secretary, U.M. Extension  
Kevin Warring.....Associate  
Lynne Wheeler.....Associate  
Denitra Brawner.....Associate

*Charles SCD*

*2023/2024 Office Closures*

- > **Sept 4**, Labor Day
- > **Oct 9**, Columbus Day
- > **Nov 10**, Veterans' Day
- > **Nov 23-24**, Thanksgiving
- > **Dec 25**, Christmas Day
  
- > **Jan 1**, New Year's Day
- > **Jan 15**, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Birthday
- > **Feb 19**, Presidents' Day
- > **March 29**, Good Friday
- > **May 27**, Memorial Day
- > **June 19**, Juneteenth
- > **July 4**, Independence Day

If you would like to receive this newsletter by email, please send your email address to **[info@CharlesSCD.com](mailto:info@CharlesSCD.com)**



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