



The Talbot Soil Conservation District

Fall 2009



2009 COOPERATORS OF THE YEAR—THE SUMP'S

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DID YOU KNOW?

It takes about 4,000 to 6,000 pounds of crop residue per year to maintain the content of organic matter in a soil.

Our Office Will Be Closed On:

November 11
Veterans Day

November 25, 26 & 27
Thanksgiving

December 24 & 25
Christmas

December 31 & Jan. 1
New Years

The Talbot Soil Conservation District is pleased to recognize Mark and Vicki Sump, owners of Dunmore Heath Farm as the 2009 Cooperators of the Year. Dunmore

Heath Farm came into the family when Vicki's great grandfather purchased it 104 years ago. Vicki's grandfather, Kenneth Dulin owned the farm for 50-60 years before Mark and Vicki purchased it in 1987. Dunmore Heath Farm is a Century Farm recognized by the Maryland Department of Agriculture for being owned by the same family for 100 years and it is forever preserved through the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Program.

Dunmore Heath Farm has been a poultry farm since 1962 shortly after the Bayshore Foods Company came to the area. Mr. Dulin raised chickens until 1985. Mark and Vicki upgraded the two original poultry houses in 1987 when they bought the farm and have been Allen's growers ever since. Perhaps the most notable event at the farm was the tornado which went through on May 18, 1995. The tornado destroyed every thing but the poultry mortality composteer built by the Beechy Construction Company.

The Sumps had plans already in the works for two new chicken houses which turned into plans for three new 42 x 548 houses. Today the Sumps raise 6-7 flocks per year of Allen's small birds which average 4.6 pounds in as little as 37

days. These birds are processed just around the corner in Allen's Cordova plant.

Another prominent farm enterprise is the 3/4 acre of greenhouses which were built in 2004. These are

used to produce annuals under contract with Bell Nurseries of Burtonsville, MD which supplies plants to Home Depot. The green houses can hold 18,000 flats and 5000 hanging baskets and produce two turns of plants from January through July 1. Despite the recession, Vicki said annual plant sales have held up and 2009 was their best year yet.

Aside from the poultry and greenhouse operations the farm is also a grain farm

which includes the home farm on Kitty's Corner Road, a farm on Lewistown Road, and 10 rented farms throughout Talbot and Caroline Counties. Major crops include corn, soybeans, wheat, and in previous years barley.

Dunmore Heath Farm has a long history of conservation. Mark has continued the conservation work

through the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program, the Environmental Quality Incentive Program, the Maryland Agricultural Cost Share Program, the Conservation Security Program, and most recently has sold carbon credits through a mid western aggregator.

Again we congratulate the Sumps on the conservation work they've done and look forward to working with them on future projects.



NEW CONSERVATION STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

HEYDSHA R. CORDERO-RODRIQUEZ, SOIL CONSERVATIONIST

The 2008 Farm Bill created the New Conservation Stewardship Program (CStP) to replace the old Conservation Security Program (CSP) of prior years and improve its availability and appeal to agricultural and forestry producers. CStP is a voluntary program that encourages agricultural and forestry producers to address resource concerns by improving, maintaining and managing existing conservation activities and adopting new ones on their operations. This program is available nationwide and has a continuous sign-up with periodic cut-offs for ranking. USDA-NRCS had begun the continuous sign-up on Aug 10th with the first cutoff on September 30th, 2009. The target dates are as follows:

- Pre-Approve Applications.....November 16
- Verify & Approve.....November 30
- Second Round.....December 1
- Second Cutoff.....January 14

New features of CStP include: Added non-industrial private forest lands as eligible land, competitively ranks peers who face similar resource challenges and focuses on resource concerns identified as a priority for the state or areas of the state. Maryland determined 5 priority resources concerns that will be used to rank applications. These 5 resources concerns are: air quality, soil erosion, soil quality, water quality and water quantity.

The program has 2 types of payments for performance: Annual Payment- for installing additional conservation activities as scheduled and maintaining existing activities, and Supplemental Payments- available for participant receiving an annual payment who also adopts a resource conserving crop rotation. CStP

payments may not exceed \$200,000 for all contracts entered into during any 5-year period.

There are two (2) different types of activities: Enhancements- used with the purpose to improve the level of stewardship on the farm and to address a specific resource concerns, and Practices- used for the purpose of encouraging producers to meet additional stewardship thresholds. During the application process an applicant may identify resource concerns (stewardship thresholds), that they are not meeting with existing activities (practices), and agree to meet them by installing new conservation practices.

Eligible lands include cropland, grassland, improved pastureland, rangeland, and non-industrial private forest and agricultural land. Eligible applicants may include individual landowners and legal entities.

To apply for the newly revamped CStP, potential applicants will be encouraged to use a Self-Screening Checklist to determine whether the new program is suitable for them or their operation. It is available on the NRCS Website and at our office. After self-screening, the producer's current and proposed conservation practices are entered in the Conservation Measurement Tool (CMT), which inventory resources to estimate existing conservation performance level, schedule new conservation activities and estimate conservation performance improvement, determine land treatment eligibility and ranking score and establish an annual payment. Based on the ranking, the application is Pre -approved and an On-site Field Verification is conducted to check if



resources inventory information was accurate prior to contract approval.

Applicants must meet the following CStP requirements: Be an operator in the FSA farm records management system (Owners can be participants). Operation includes all agricultural or forestry land operated where the operator has control for the contract term, be in compliance with Highly Erodible and Wetland Conservation provisions and not exceed the Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) limitations set by Congress.

CStP provides participants a broaden amount of benefits such as: delivers new conservation; expands to include forestry producers that produce greater environmental benefits; improves air, soil, and water quality; creates and enhances wildlife habitat; addresses global climate change; and encourages energy conservation and production.

For more information please visit our office or contact us at (410) 822-1577 x 3 or visit the NRCS web site at www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/new_csp/csp.html

TALBOT COUNTY SOIL SURVEY UPDATE

JAMES BREWER, NRCS SOIL SCIENTIST

The Natural Resources Conservation Service, with funding from Talbot County and support from the Talbot Soil Conservation District have completed the update of the Soil Survey for Talbot County, Maryland. This certified data has been posted to the Soil Data Mart and Web Soil Survey. Everyone can now view soil maps, interpretations, tables, and reports for Talbot County through Web Soil Survey (<http://websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov>) and download geospatial data for the survey from Soil Data Mart (<http://soildatamart.nrcs.usda.gov/>).



2009 MARYLAND ENVIROTHON & CANON ENVIROTHON 2009 NORTH CAROLINA

CRAIG ZINTER, DISTRICT MANAGER

The 2009 Maryland Envirothon was held at Mount St. Mary's University in Emmitsburg, Frederick County, MD. June 16-18, 2009. Twenty teams competed. Wicomico County attended for the first time and a team represented Baltimore City for the second time, the previous appearance being in 2001.

The fifth issue for 2009 was Biodiversity in a Changing World. The team from Carroll County was crowned Maryland State Champions with a score of 456.50 points, followed by Harford County with 445.50 points and St. Mary's County with 435.00 points.

High score awards for resource stations went to Carroll County for Aquatics (88.50 pts.), Wildlife (94.00 pts.) and Biodiversity (97.00 pts.), Harford County for Forestry (104.00 pts.), and Howard County for Soils (93.00 pts.).

The Carroll County team members are actually from the BSA Venture Crew 202 in Westminster, MD. The team represented Maryland at the Canon Envirothon 2009 North Carolina event.

The event was held at the Univ. of North Carolina – Asheville campus August 2-9, 2009. The Maryland team did very well finishing third out of 52 teams from the U.S. and Canada.

Pennsylvania was crowned the Canon Envirothon champions with host North Carolina second, followed by Maryland, Delaware and Missouri. High scores went to Pennsylvania for Aquatics (88.25 pts.) and Wildlife (98.00 pts.), North Carolina for Forestry (91.00 pts.), Soils 93.00 pts.), and Biodiversity (100.00 pts.). High oral presentation score went to Delaware with 186.00 points.



Left to Right - Lee McDaniels, President Maryland Association of Soil Conservation Districts, Paul Kazyak, advisor, Deborah Portney, advisor, team members Rebecca Baldwin, Eric Spioch, Ranson Leland Baldwin, VII, Eric Kayzak, Reed Portney; and Ben Wilkenson, Chaney Foundation

The Canon Envirothon 2010 event will be hosted by California. The 5th issue topic selected by California will be Protection of Groundwater Through Urban, Agricultural

2009 POSTER CONTEST WINNERS ANNOUNCED

CRAIG ZINTER, DISTRICT MANAGER

Talbot Soil Conservation District (SCD) sponsored the 19th Annual Land Stewardship Poster Contest culminating with county-wide judging of school winners on Earth Day.

Talbot SCD annually provides posterboard and poster contest theme instructions to all public and private schools in Talbot County. This year's theme was entitled Dig It! – The Secrets of Soil. Posters are accepted in four age groups: Grade 1-2, 3-5, 6-8 and 9-12.

Individual schools judge their entries and submit the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place winners for county-wide judging by the Talbot SCD. County-wide winners receive a \$100.00 U.S. Savings Bond/ 2nd and 3rd place receive a \$50.00 U.S. Savings Bond.

County-wide winners were:

Grade 1-2 - Elena Esper (Ss. Peter and Paul Elem.)

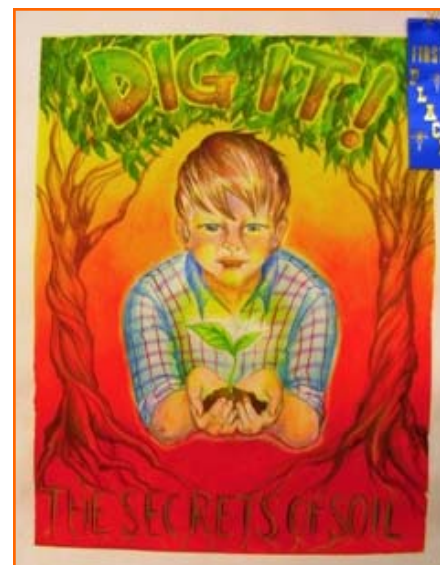
Grade 3-5 - Magan Gleason (Chapel District Elem.)

Grade 6-8 - No entries

Grade 9-12 - Avery Noyes (St. Michaels H.S.)

County-wide winners for each age group are submitted in the Maryland Association of Soil Conservation Districts (MASCSD) Poster Contest held in July. The State-wide Poster Contest has five age groups K-1, 2-3, 4-6, 7-9, and 10-12. Therefore, Talbot SCD was able to submit posters in grade K-1 Leila Gosnell, grade 2-3 Elena Esper, grade 4-6 Magan Gleason and grade 10-12 Avery Noyes. This year Talbot County artists won three age groups and their entries will be entered in the National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) Poster Contest. Congratulations go out to Laila Gosnell, Elena Esper and Avery Noyes! State winners received a \$25.00 check.

This year's NACD Poster Contest will be held in conjunction with the NACD Annual Conference held in Orlando during February.



1st Place winners will receive \$100.00 and 2nd Place winners will receive \$75.00. Good luck to the Talbot County artists!

BEING A GOOD STEWARD OF THE LAND— IT'S NEVER BEEN MORE IMPORTANT

TERESA KAMPMEYER, DISTRICT CONSERVATIONIST

What exactly does it mean to be a good steward of the land? One definition of Stewardship is “the individual’s responsibility to manage his life and property with proper regard to the rights of others.” E. William Anderson suggests stewardship “is essentially a synonym for conservation”. Well conservation is what Soil and Water Conservation Districts are all about. When people work with their local conservation districts they show they are doing their part to conserve natural resources and improve the land and water. How is this done? One way is by becoming a District Cooperator and letting us develop a soil and water conservation plan. Soil conservation planners assist our cooperators to identify resource problems. We listen to the client’s objectives, propose feasible solutions to resource problems, and help the client to choose and implement an effective treatment or alternative treatment that treats the resource concern while meeting their objectives.

With all the hype of agriculture being the No. 1 reason the Chesapeake Bay is dying; not to mention the new EPA poultry regulations enforcing chicken farms to “zero” percent runoff; and the possibility this could extend to all farms, it has never been more important to demonstrate that our farms are being managed correctly when it comes to producing crops in an environmentally friendly manner. So let’s make sure our farms in Talbot county show a positive message when it comes to growing food or managing livestock.

Ask yourself this question, “If an official from EPA showed up on my doorstep today, would I gladly show him around my farm to prove my operation is safe for the environment?”

If you can’t answer yes to that question, then ask why not. Call us for help. Call us for a farm plan update so you can have your BMP’s (Best Management Practices) documented.

The 2008 Farm Bill has a lot of money tied to the clean up of the Chesapeake Bay. Take advantage of the cost share dollars available through the many programs of the state of Maryland and federal government. Right now there is grant money available for landowners or farmers living in the Tuckahoe watershed where they could receive up to 100% for installing certain BMP’s. If you live in the Tuckahoe watershed give George Maurer a call at 443-758-5023.

Here are 4 simple things you can do that are not only noticeable to anyone passing by, but they offer an immediate positive result on water quality and the Chesapeake Bay while giving farmers a better image:

1. Set back from ditches: Do you really need to farm right up to the ditch? There are many benefits for 5’to10’set backs. No one is going to face financial hardships from sacrificing two rows of corn. So please stay back at least 5’ from ditches.

2. Water leads: install a grassed filter strip around areas where the water outlets the field. Nothing like muddy waters to get folks calling in those complaints and targeting agriculture.

3. Don’t spray up to the ditch. Dead grass doesn’t filter as well as grass that is alive and growing.

4. Don’t grow in between power lines. Quite often these result in crops growing adjacent to road ditches. (There’s that 5-10’ setback again).

These are just a few things I see that could be done. Imagine the impact this would have if every farmer in Maryland would practice these 4 things. Let’s all try to do a little better and maybe we won’t have to ask “Am I a good steward of the land?” Keep volunteer conservation working! Do your part to help clean up the Chesapeake Bay watershed.



A road ditch that should have a grassed buffer



A good example of a road ditch buffer with a minimum set back

COVER CROP REMINDERS

LEVIN SCHWANINGER, SOIL CONSERVATION PLANNER

Please remember to certify your Cover Crop within one week of planting or one week after the planting deadline.

The last planting deadline is November 5th, with certification taking place on or before November 12th.

Please be sure to bring in your FSA maps and seed test or tags.

All fields that were planted with low germination seed will be checked with 30% of the fields having plants counted in one

square foot. The remaining fields will be visually checked.

If you have any questions, please contact Levin Schwaninger at ext. 116.



ALL ABOARD FOR THE NEW AND IMPROVED CREP

ROYDEN N. POWELL III, ASSISTANT SECRETARY
MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

If you are a farmer or landowner looking to earn additional income from your land, don't let this train leave the station without you. Recent changes to Maryland's Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) now provide even more financial incentives to farmers who remove environmentally-sensitive cropland from production for 10 to 15 years and plant streamside buffers, protect highly erodible land or establish wetlands to safeguard local streams.

CREP—a federal-state conservation program—was reauthorized and revamped earlier this year to help even more farmers stabilize and protect marginal crop and pastureland. By simplifying program requirements, increasing land rental rates, and offering a one-time signing bonus of up to \$200 an acre, CREP helps landowners reduce soil erosion, protect water quality and create wildlife habitat while earning dependable income from enrolled lands. It's a good investment choice for landowners looking to supplement farm earnings with steady income.

Many farmers will find the new formula for determining the annual CREP land rental payment quite attractive. New this year, landowners receive the local soil rental rate (SRR) plus an additional incentive payment that ranges from 80 percent to 200 percent of the local SRR, depending on the environmental benefits of the practice installed.

Financial help to cover the costs of installing buffers and other best management practices (BMPs) is also available. The Maryland Agricultural Water Quality Cost-Share (MACS) program will provide landowners with up to 87.5 percent of the cost to plant buffers, protect highly erodible land



A warm season grass CREP buffer

install other best management practices (BMPs) on enrolled lands. New this year, cost-share to restore wetlands has increased from 50 percent to 87.5 percent. Cost-share is even available to help farmers install livestock fencing, stream crossings and watering troughs to protect local streams from animal traffic.

In addition, USDA will provide a one-time practice incentive payment worth 40 percent of the total cost of establishing certain qualifying BMPs. This payment is in addition to the 87.5 percent cost-share that is available from MACS for most practices. Free technical assistance to install BMPs is provided by local soil conservation districts.

At a time when every dollar counts, CREP is an excellent way for Maryland farmers to protect local waterways and earn extra income. If you have marginal cropland or pastureland that is next to a stream or highly erodible land that is within 1,000 feet of a stream you may be eligible to participate in CREP. Keep in mind that CREP also offers easy re-enrollment of expiring CREP or CRP contracts at attractive rates.

Contact your local soil conservation district or Farm Service Agency today to find out if you qualify for CREP. But don't delay...or this train may leave without you. Sign-up is ongoing until acreage goals are met. To date, Maryland landowners have enrolled more than 70,000 acres toward a goal of 100,000 acres, so now is the time to get on board with CREP.

ALL-INCLUSIVE OFFICE SPACE FOR RENT

Brand new office space in the Talbot Agricultural Service Center building at the Talbot Commerce Park. Suite D is 2001 sq. ft. Suite E is 1575 sq. ft. Units can be combined for a total space of 3576 sq. ft. CAM of \$500.00 is all-inclusive, including insurance and utilities (except telephone). Premier office space with a great location on the west side of Easton. 1-5 year terms available.

Rental Price: \$12.00 sq. ft.

Please call Craig Zinter at 410-822-1577 x 109 for more details.





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FALL 2009 NEWSLETTER

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NATURAL RESOURCE CONSERVATION SERVICE



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MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE