



ANNUAL REPORT 2020



Talbot Soil Conservation District

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[Front cover photo description:](#) First project completed in 2020, a grassed waterway with rock lined inlet along with a grade stabilization structure to rock lined outlet, funded through the Maryland Agricultural Cost-Share Program (MACS).

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INTRODUCTION



About the Talbot SCD

Since the Talbot Soil Conservation District's inception in 1958 it has been the goal of the Board of Supervisors and staff to provide assistance to Talbot County farmers and landowners in addressing the conservation of soil, water and related natural resources of Talbot County. The District's formation provided a means to resolve concerns and problems as they relate to our natural resources through association with other private, county, state and federal agencies.

Agriculture remains the primary industry in Talbot County with 109,000 acres of the county's 178,650 total acres being farmed.



Miles River, tributary of the Eastern Bay, part of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed

Numerous rivers and creeks cut through the county creating six watersheds with over 600 miles of shoreline. The diverse nature of Talbot County necessitates constant close scrutiny of agricultural bills, county and state regulations and ordinances in order to administer the wide range of services as they pertain to conservation of our soil, water and related natural resources.

The District also plays a role in the prevention of erosion and sediment delivery for construction development activity. The District reviews the sediment and erosion control plans required by state law for these activities to ensure that they are complete and adequate.



*Talbot County,
Maryland*

District Mission

To provide leadership and support to agriculture and the citizens of Talbot County by conducting regulatory, service, and educational activities that assure consumer confidence, protect the environment, and promote agriculture.

District Vision

To achieve excellence in programs and in services that preserves and protects agricultural resources and the environment, promotes profitable agriculture and consumer confidence, and enhances the quality of life for all residents in Talbot County.

Chairman's Message

Our local conservation partnership was certainly tested in 2020 with limiting our ability for District staff to interact with producers and landowners to discuss their specific resource concerns. Despite this fact, our staff was still able to provide technical and financial resources for several producers, allowing them to install a record number of Best Management Practices. As we move into 2021, we hope to continue to provide the highest level of commitment to our producers and landowners.



John Swaine III
Talbot SCD Chairman

Board of Supervisors

The Talbot SCD Board of Supervisors provides overall supervision and sets policy assuring that the district performs tasks required by law and memorandums of understanding. Supervisors are appointed to represent farming, forestry, wildlife, suburban/urban interests, and other natural resource interests in a district. Appointments are made by the following groups: Talbot County Government, Talbot County Farm Bureau, and the Talbot County Cooperative Extension. Two supervisors are appointed by the SSCC from among residents of Talbot County. Each term is five (5) years.

BOARD MEMBERS & ASSOCIATES

- John Swaine III, Chairman (County Appointee)
- Lewis Smith, Vice Chairman
- Kyle Hutchison, Treasurer
- Lemmie Swann, Member (UMD Extension)
- Sarah Everhart, Member (Farm Bureau)
- Shannon Dill (Extension Service), Secretary
- Bill Foster, Associate
- Raymond Harrison III, Associate
- Norman Fike, Honorary Member



Left to right: John Swaine III, Lewis Smith, Sarah Everhart, Kyle Hutchison, Lemmie Swann and Bill Foster

Field Staff



Name	Position	Agency	Contact E-mail
Shawn D. Smith	District Manager	MDA	shawn.smith@maryland.gov
Jack L. King, Jr.	District Conservationist	NRCS	jack.king@usda.gov
Laura Eddy	Soil Conservationist	NRCS	laura.eddy@usda.gov
Dale Willson	Secretary	MDA	dalel.willson@maryland.gov
Kim Reynolds	Program Support Specialist	NRCS	kimberly.reynolds@usda.gov
Rocky Donovan	Ag. Res. Conservation Specialist II	MDA	rocky.donovan@maryland.gov
Levin Schwaninger Jr.	Ag. Res. Conservation Specialist III	MDA	levin.schwaninger@md.nacdnet.net
Steve Spielman	Ag. Res. Conservation Specialist III	MDA	steve.spielman@md.nacdnet.net
D. Scott Nordhoff	Ag. Res. Conservation Specialist III	SCD	scott.nordhoff@md.nacdnet.net
Brandon Zinter	Technician	RC&D	brandon.zinter@usda.gov
Ray Geist	Soil Conservation Associate	SCD	raymond.geist@md.nacdnet.net
James Brewer	Soil Scientist	NRCS	james.brewer@md.usda.gov
Annie Rossi	Soil Scientist	NRCS	ann.rossi@usda.gov

Welcome to the Talbot SCD

Laura Eddy - Laura originally started with NRCS as a Management Analyst in Annapolis, and joined the field staff in Talbot County as a Soil Conservationist approximately a year ago. Since arriving in Talbot County, she has taken on the responsibility of administering Farm Bill programs county-wide. Laura received her Bachelor's degree in Natural Resources Management from University of Maryland, and received her Master of Natural Resources degree from Oregon State University.

Ray Geist - Ray joined the SCD in September as a technician funded through the National Association of Conservation Districts. He is originally from Trappe and has an extensive background in construction. He enjoys the outdoors and looks forward to working with agricultural producers in Talbot.

Kim Reynolds - A native of Talbot County, Maryland, Kimberly attended Towson University, where she earned her Bachelor of Science degree in Communications. Returning to the Eastern Shore to spend more time with her family, Kimberly worked for many years at a local title company, assisting buyers, sellers, realtors and lenders with finalizing real estate transactions and loan closings. Kimberly looks forward to supporting NRCS participants and staff in Caroline and Talbot County.

CONSERVATION ON THE LAND



Despite dealing with a worldwide pandemic, the Talbot SCD staff and cooperators were able to install several best management practices financed through federal and state cost-share programs.

MACS Cover Crop Highlights (2019-2020)

- Processed 87 applications
- Certified 32,717.6 acres out of possible 81,000 eligible acres of cropland
- Provided cost-share reimbursement of \$648,000.00 to farmers/landowners



Aerial seeded tillage radish cover crop

MACS Manure Transport Program

In 2020 the Maryland Department of Agriculture was able to provide a limited amount of funding to assist dairy farmers in transporting manure from fields with high phosphorous levels to those with lower phosphorous levels. With the Districts assistance, two farmers transported 940,000 gallons of manure.

MACS Capital Cost-Shared Project Highlights



Grassed Waterway funded through MACS

Talbot SCD planners and technicians worked with seven (7) cooperators to install eleven (11) conservation projects funded through the Maryland Agricultural Cost-Share Program (MACS). Conservation projects ranged from grassed waterways with rock lined outlets to wetland restoration co-funded through the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP). Each of these projects consisted of at least one Best Management Practice (BMP), while most involved of two or three practices. Combined cost-shared reimbursement of \$207,387.87 to Talbot County landowners.

USDA Farm Bill Program Highlights



NRCS accepted a total of 30 applications in Talbot County in the 2020 funding year. This includes 2 Agricultural Management Assistance (AMA) applications, 1 Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) application, and 27 Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) applications. The 2020 applications resulted in 17 conservation contracts, including 1 in AMA, 1 in CSP, and 15 in EQIP. These contracts lead to 27 different farm bill practices planned or installed:

- Agricultural Energy Management Plan - 1
- Agrichemical Handling Facility - 1
- Critical Area Planting - 0.6 acres
- Diversion - 100 feet
- Silvopasture Establishment - 4 acres
- Fence - 3,030 feet
- Grassed Waterway - 0.4 acres
- Lined Waterway or Outlet - 161.8 feet
- Mulching - 0.5 acres
- Obstruction Removal - 0.2 acres
- Pasture and Hay Planting - 6.8 acres
- Livestock Pipeline - 1,860 feet
- Prescribed Grazing - 12.7 acres
- Access Road - 190 feet
- Heavy Use Area Protection - 675 square feet
- Stream Crossing - 3
- Subsurface Drain - 626 feet
- Watering Facility - 3
- Hedgerow Planting - 21,021 feet
- Restoration and Management of Rare and Declining Habitats - 40 acres
- Early Successional Habitat Development/Management - 3.9 acres
- Sprinkler System (micro-irrigation) - 10.8 acres
- Irrigation Water Management - 10.8 acres
- Water Well - 1
- Pumping Plant - 1
- Conservation Cover - 2 acres
- E300EAP1 (CSP Existing Activity) - 1,721.5 acres

On August 25th, 2020, NRCS hosted the first of three discussion meetings for producers participating in the RCPP adaptive management and cover crop practices. These discussions are intended to bring farmers and experts together to share knowledge and experience related to meeting soil health goals through cover cropping. The discussions are part of a larger study intended to assess the benefits of cover cropping as a soil health practice.



NRCS soil scientists Dr. Annie Rossi and Jim Brewer demonstrate in-field soil health techniques and strategies.

In 2020, NRCS hosted a total of four Earth Team Volunteers in Talbot County, two of which converted to Conservation District interns. The volunteers assisted with duties including surveying, soil investigations, and routine site visits. Despite difficulties caused by the COVID19 pandemic, NRCS and the Talbot Soil Conservation District found ways to safely and effectively engage with the public to create mutually beneficial relationships.



Newsletters

Quarterly district newsletters were sent to over 250 cooperators and landowners in Talbot County, which highlighted USDA Farm Bill programs, general conservation planning, outreach materials, new cost-share programs, as well as staff and board of supervisors' information. Newsletters were also available online.

Engineering Education Program



Throughout the fall the District hosted two Earth Team volunteers, Brandon Dudrow and Nathan Hoffman, who met weekly with SCD technicians. While shadowing District technicians the volunteers were able to provide over 59 volunteer hours to the SCD. During their time they assisted staff with construction oversight, surveying, and as-built certification for several cost-shared projects. They were also introduced to our surveying and designing computer software. The District looks forward to working with these two young men in the near future and we are grateful for the support they provided.



Bottom photo, L to R: Brandon Dudrow and Nathan Hoffman

Land Stewardship Poster Contest

For 29 years the Talbot Soil Conservation District has sponsored the Land Stewardship Poster Contest. Each year Talbot SCD provides poster board and a theme to public and private schools in Talbot County. The 2020 theme was *Where Would We BEE Without Pollinators?*

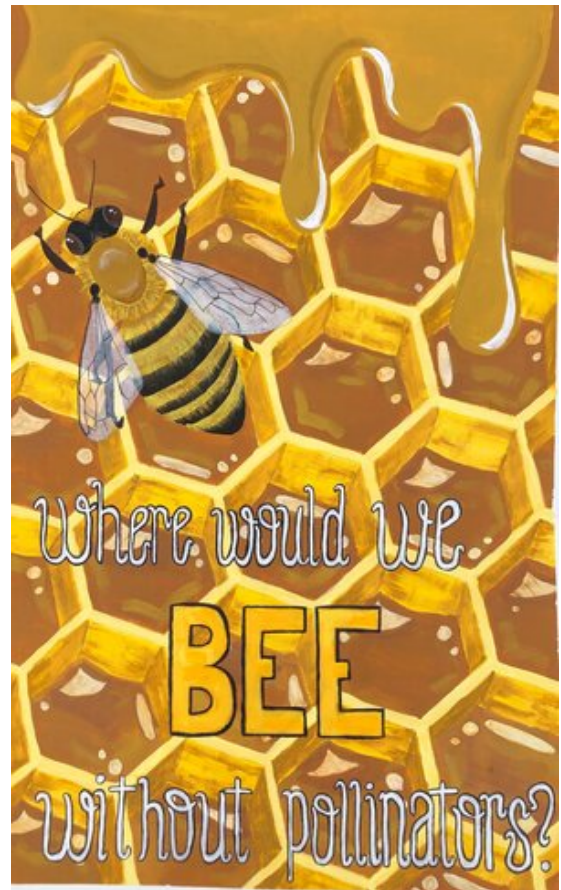
For the County Wide Land Stewardship Poster Contest each school sets up a panel of judges and provides 1st place winning posters in four age groups (grades K-1, 2-3, 4-6, 7-9 and 10-12) to the Talbot SCD for County wide judging that coincides with Earth Day Celebrations. 1st place winners receive a \$50 Check, 2nd and 3rd place winners receive \$25 checks.

K-1st, 2nd-3rd, 4th-6th, 7th-9th Grades

No submissions this year due to COVID-19

10th-12th Grades (All from St. Michaels) Place

Tori G.	1st
Kaila R.	2nd
Georgia K.	3rd



1st Place Winner Tori G.

Regional Envirothon

The Envirothon is a problem-solving, hands-on natural resources education program for high school students. Teams of five students work and study under guidance of local and regional natural resource professionals to hone their knowledge of Maryland's natural resources and conservation efforts.

In order to achieve this, students take an in-depth at five natural resource areas: Aquatics, Forestry, Soils, Wildlife and a fifth area that incorporates a current environmental issues that change each year.



Students from the 2019 Maryland State Envirothon

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2020 Eastern Shore Regional Envirothon competition was cancelled, along with the 2020 Maryland Envirothon competition.

EROSION & SEDIMENT CONTROL



About the Program

In order to protect the natural resources of the State, the Maryland General Assembly set forth in the Maryland Annotated Code of Regulations (COMAR), Environment Article, Subtitle 1. Sediment Control, Sec. 4-101 that the Secretary of the Environment, in consultation with the Secretary of Natural Resources adopt criteria and procedures for the counties and soil conservation districts to implement soil erosion control plans.



An active construction site using silt fence and a stabilized construction entrance in order to reduce surface runoff from the project

The outcome of that charge resulted in the development and adoption of the Maryland Standards and Specifications for Soil Erosion and Sediment Control. This document is overseen by the Maryland Department of the Environment in association with the Natural Resources Conservation Service and State Soil Conservation Committee. The Foreword of the Standards and Specifications states in a general overview the what, when, how, and where of erosion control.

It states:

At the onset, it is necessary to establish the fact that soil erosion and sediment control are only the overall management of stormwater during and after site development. As the original ground cover of a site is disturbed and removed, the runoff characteristics are modified. Velocities of flow are increased and the total runoff volume is also increased. Limited management of runoff during the construction phase is provided by sediment control practices. Runoff control after the site development is accomplished by means of permanent stormwater management practices such as infiltration trenches or ponds. The practices contained in these standards and specifications are designed to provide a protective transition from initial site disturbance until implementation of permanent stabilization and stormwater management facilities. The practices described herein are minimum requirements. Local concerns may require practices that are more restrictive than these minimum standards.



90 plans submitted



70 plans approved

AGRICULTURAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS



2020 Cooperators of the Year Award

In 2020, the Talbot SCD recognized the Beaven and Shortall farms as the Co-Cooperators of the Year. Both families recently worked together to address an extensive erosion problem that traversed both farms.

The Beaven Family, which consists of brothers, Mark and Andy Beaven, recently acquired their family farm when their father, William “Bill” Beaven, passed away in 2019. The farm is located just outside of Easton. In the fall of 2019, after waiting patiently for assistance, they were able to restore a wetland, install grassed waterways with lined outlets which addressed massive amounts of soil erosion



from leaving the farm. They enrolled the land into the Conservation Reserve Program. Their father was a pioneer in the no-till field, worked for many years for the Soil Conservation Service, and also served as a member on the Talbot SCD Board of Supervisors. Mark and Andy want to continue on with their father’s legacy by protecting their resources for future generations to come.



The Shortall Family, which consists of Henry and Shirley Shortall and their son Mickey, operate a 211.3 acre cash grain farm outside of Easton. In the fall of 2019, after waiting patiently for assistance, they were able to establish a grassed waterway with a lined outlet which addressed massive amounts of soil erosion from leaving the farm. They also have other land enrolled as grassed buffers through the Conservation Reserve Program. Most crops are established in a no-till system and most acreage is annually planted to a cover crop. The goal of the Shortall’s operation is to improve the land and build an economically viable and environmentally sustainable

farm to pass on to the next generation.



Conservation Planning Report

Including Conservation Technical Assistance (CTA), Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) plans.

Total Plans	Total Acres Planned	# of Cooperators Served
64 (Increase of 10%)	12,781 (Increase of 35%)	53



Best Management Practices Report

Complete report of all federal and state cost-shared best management practices installed during calendar year 2020.

Practice Code	Practice Name	Amount
342	Critical Area Planting	0.4 ac.
362	Diversion	1,639 ft.
410	Grade Stabilization Structure	8 no.
412	Grassed Waterway	2.85 ac.
468	Lined Outlet	358 ft.
512	Pasture & Hay Planting	38.9 ac.
516	Livestock Pipeline	1,363 ft.
561	Heavy Use Area	0.1 ac.
614	Watering Facility	3 no.
642	Water Well	1 no.
	Cooperators Served	28



Conservation Reserve Program Report

Report includes, but not limited to, Riparian Herbaceous Cover (390), Conservation Cover (327), Tree/Shrub Establishment (612), Riparian Forested Buffer (391), Shallow Water Area (646) and Wetland Restoration (657).

New Acres Installed	Re-Enrolled Acres	# of Cooperators Served
0	296.1	20

COOPERATING AGENCIES AND GROUPS



Local

- Talbot County Commissioners
- Talbot County Planning & Zoning Office
- Talbot County Department of Public Works
- Talbot County Roads Department
- Talbot County Parks & Recreation
- Critical Area Committee
- FSA Committee

State

- State Soil Conservation Committee
- Dept. of Agriculture
- University of Maryland Extension
- Forest, Parks & Wildlife Services
- Dept. of Natural Resources
- Dept. of Environment

Federal

- Natural Resources Conservation Service
- Farm Service Agency
- Fish & Wildlife Service
- Army Corps of Engineers

Others

- Maryland Association of Soil Conservation Districts
- National Association of Soil Conservation Districts
- Soil Conservation Society of America
- Chesapeake Bay Critical Area Commission
- Chesapeake Bay Foundation
- Envision the Choptank
- ShoreRivers
- National Wildlife Federation

NACD TA Support

For the third consecutive year, the Talbot SCD received grant funding from the National Association of Conservation Districts to fund a technician. The technician is focused on designing and implementing Farm Bill funded projects throughout Talbot County. For full grant reports, visit <http://www.nacdnet.org/technical-assistance-grants/>.



National Association of
Conservation Districts

*The Talbot SCD is a proud member of the
National Association of Conservation
Districts and the Maryland Association of
Soil Conservation Districts*





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