



TALBOT SOIL CONSERVATION DISTRICT

NEWSLETTER

December 2022

Volume 22, Issue 4



UPCOMING EVENTS

- January 12, 7 PM—January Board Mtg.
- February 9, 7 PM—February Board Mtg.
- March 9, 7 PM—March Board Mtg.



CONSERVATION AG LEASE BUILDER IS NOW AVAILABLE ONLINE

The Conservation Ag Lease Builder is a **FREE**, new resource for farmers and landowners in the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

www.AgLeaseBuilder.org

Build your custom farm lease to:

- Protect business interests;
- Incorporate stewardship planning; and
- Implement conservation practices on leased land.

The Lease Builder has easy-to-answer leasing questions, including the selection of common on-farm conservation practices – to generate a customized draft lease with suggested provisions to support those practices. Funding for the site was made possible by the Keith Campbell Foundation for the Environment.

For questions about the Lease Builder, contact Sarah Everhart:
severhart@law.umaryland.edu.

41.2% of total available cropland in Talbot County has been planted into Cover Crops

2021/2022 COVER CROP Highlights

- 84 applications
- 33,637 traditional acres certified
- Acres down 19% from previous year

Cover crops are your first line of defense against erosion and runoff in winter.

Want to improve your soil's health?

Check out this triple play of benefits:

- Cover crops **add organic matter** to the soil.
- Cover crops **help suppress weeds** and reduce compaction
- Cover crops **protect fields** from too much or too little rain



To keep up with our all of our local conservation efforts, Like & Follow!



Like us on Facebook "[Talbot Soil Conservation District](https://www.facebook.com/TalbotSoilConservationDistrict)"

Follow us on Twitter at [@talbotscd](https://twitter.com/talbotscd)



Recent MDA Changes at the Talbot SCD

The Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) recently hired Brandon Dudrow as Soil Conservation Associate, where he will work out of the Talbot SCD office. Brandon had been working as a grant funded technician through the National Association of Soil Conservation District's technical assistance program since November 2021. Congratulations Brandon!

Unfortunately we will be losing Nathan Hoffman to the Caroline SCD, but he will still be working for MDA. Nathan has been around the Talbot SCD since November 2020, as an USDA-NRCS Earth Team volunteer. Initially Nathan worked out of the SCD once a week, and over time he accepted a grant funded technician position, which he held until we was hired by MDA in November 2021. Congratulations Nathan, we will miss having you at the office but we know Caroline farmers are in good hands!



L to R: Brandon Dudrow and Nathan Hoffman



CALLING ALL HIGH-SCHOOL STUDENTS—We challenge you to compete in the *Envirothon!*

The Talbot Soil Conservation District is looking to support a few teams from Talbot County in 2023! The *Envirothon* is a hands-on natural resource competition where high school aged students work outdoors in teams use the tools and skills of professions in the environmental and agricultural fields to solve real-world problems. These teams can be from public or private high schools, 4H clubs, scouts or any other group of 4-5 students.

- One day in-person Eastern Shore Regional competition at a T.B.D. state park in May 2023
- Virtual trainings by resource professionals
- A chance to compete at the state and international level to win scholarships

To learn more about this opportunity, contact Shawn Smith at 443-746-4308 or shawn.smith@maryland.gov.



Farewell to our NRCS District Conservationist, Jack King

On Wednesday, December 7, 2022, the Talbot Soil Conservation District and the Caroline Soil Conservation District board of supervisors and staff officially celebrated the upcoming retirement of John "Jack" L. King, Jr. Jack started his "third" career in 2001, when he was hired as a grant funded soil conservation planner for the Dorchester Soil Conservation District. He was then later hired by the Talbot SCD before being hired by the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation District as a soil conservationist. In 2007, Jack was promoted to the District Conservationist for Caroline, and 2011, he began serving as D.C. for both Caroline & Talbot counties. Jack has worked with hundreds of landowners over his career to advance his passion for conservation and soil health.



When I was a small kid on my family's dairy farm I loved to play in the dirt with my toy tractors, trucks, and farm equipment, just like my dads, only smaller ones. That love of farming continued to grow and I knew early on in my life I wanted to be a farmer. I had a great experience as a Maryland 4-Her growing up in Montgomery County when it was still agriculture driven. All of our friends, neighbors and relatives were farm kids. We produced milk on our home farm and I eventually became the third generation dairy farmer in my family. I followed my interest in dairy farming which was being nurtured in 4-H and FFA experiences and attended University of Maryland and graduated with a degree in Dairy Science. Along the way I became skilled in dairy cattle judging. Winning a trip to Europe on our National Champion 4-H judging team.

My current job is with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) whose job is to implement the conservation work of the United States Department of Agriculture. We cover a lot of areas in agriculture and to do this I have had to learn new skills. I have honed those skills and learned the methods of farming in a more environmental friendly system than what I was taught and practiced in my farming past.

Protecting the environment and growing healthy food for America are now my farming goals. It is my intention to take the knowledge gained from over 30 years of farming plus my 20 plus years of work with the NRCS and apply that to growing a variety of healthy fruit in Maryland. We have named our endeavor Kings Berries. Our plan is to feature blueberries, raspberries, blackberries and other fruit that will be available pick-your-own or pre-packaged.



The Talbot SCD Board of Supervisors and staff wishes all the best to Jack. We will miss his passion for conservation, his wealth of knowledge and his steadfast support for staff career development within the conservation partnership in Maryland.

When talking about soil health programs and how to be successful with cover crops...

"I'm a guy who has been there, done that."

State Cost-Share Opportunities for Conservation Drainage

Conservation drainage practices

help reduce the movement of sediment, nitrogen and phosphorus into surface waters from agricultural land that is artificially drained. Agricultural practices and components commonly used in Maryland include subsurface denitrifying bioreactors, saturated buffers, created wet-lands, water control structures, underground outlets, and subsurface drains.

- ◇ **Subsurface Denitrifying Bioreactor** - A buried trench filled with a carbon source, usually wood chips, and installed at the edge of a field to remove nitrate nitrogen from subsurface agricultural drainage water.
- ◇ **Saturated Buffer** - A biological treatment system used to divert subsurface drainage water to a vegetated area for treatment.
- ◇ **Wetland Creation** - A wetland is constructed at the edge of a field to treat and filter drainage water on a site that was not previously a wetland. Wetlands remove sediment, nutrients, organic matter and other pollutants from subsurface ground-water associated with farming operations.
- ◇ **Water Control Structure** - Used in conjunction with the above practices or as a stand-alone practice to help prevent gully erosion, manage water to improve crop production, and reduce the movement of nitrates to downstream waters.
- ◇ **Subsurface Drain** - An underground pipe used to collect and convey subsurface drainage water to a buffer, wetland, or bioreactor.
- ◇ **Underground Outlet** - Tubing, tile or pipe installed to move surface water from a treatment practice to a designated outlet.



Contact one of our planners for more information at 410-822-1577 ext. 5.

Denitrifying bioreactor | USDA-NRCS <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/>



What is a Soil Conservation & Water Quality Plan and why should I have one for my farm?

Soil Conservation and Water Quality Plans (SCWQP) or Conservation Plans are a valuable tool for farmers and landowners to manage resources and improve profitability.

A conservation plan is a working document designed to fit each individual farmer's needs while protecting and conserving their soil and water resources.

Conservation plans are not mandatory unless all or part of the farm falls within the Chesapeake Bay Critical Area or you are applying for or currently participate in an agricultural land preservation program, or participate in any state or federal cost share programs.

If you are interested in developing a conservation plan for your farm, please contact one of our conservation planners to set up an on-farm visit. The planner will need to walk the farm and take notes on current farming practices and identify any resource issues which may need to be addressed. These plans are free and should be updated at least every 10 years.

CONSERVATION SPOTLIGHT

Blind inlets, similar to a French drain, is an in-field conservation practice that replaces a surface inlet in the middle of an agricultural field. These inlets are placed in depressions to improve water quality benefits such as reducing phosphorus and sediment loss. This recently completed project consists of a blind inlet of approx. 15'x10'x3', which outlets to 735 ft. of tile, to rock lined outlet, on a farm located near the Choptank River.

More photos can be found on our Facebook page, <http://www.facebook.com/talbotscd>.



Talbot SCD 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.

Our Board also consists of associates. Associates are nonvoting, volunteer members who actively contribute to developing and implementing the district's programs.

Supervisors

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

INTERESTED IN SERVING?

Contact Shawn Smith at 410-822-1577 x 3 or shawn.smith@maryland.gov for details.



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