

2024 ANNUAL REPORT



**Frederick County**
Soil Conservation District

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ABOUT FCSCD

The Frederick County Soil Conservation District (FCSCD) was officially recognized on January 25, 2024, following a successful referendum to merge the Catoctin Soil Conservation District and the Frederick Soil Conservation District. Originally established in 1939, the Catoctin Soil Conservation District focused on serving operators within the Catoctin Watershed. The Frederick Soil Conservation District was formed in 1944 after a referendum divided the Monocacy Soil Conservation District along county lines forming the Carroll Soil Conservation District and Frederick Soil Conservation District. Now unified, FCSCD serves all of Frederick County, MD, promoting responsible land and water conservation across the region.

As a member of the Maryland Association of Soil Conservation Districts (MASCD), FCSCD plays an active role in advocating for Maryland's 23 soil and water conservation districts on state legislative matters. MASCD also provides training, policy development, and opportunities for collaboration through its annual and quarterly meetings.

FCSCD works to protect and enhance soil and water resources by implementing local, state, and federal conservation programs, including the Environmental Quality Incentives Program, Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program, and the Maryland Agricultural Water Quality Cost-Share (MACS) Program. The district develops soil conservation and water quality plans and assists landowners in adopting best management practices to improve environmental sustainability.

Beyond agriculture, FCSCD is also responsible for erosion and sediment control reviews for Frederick County's current and future infrastructure projects. Additionally, it provides inspection services in Frederick City.



MEET OUR TEAM

District Staff

Heather Hutchinson, *District Manager*
Kendra McAfee, *Soil Conservation Coordinator*
David Stonesifer, *Urban Technician*
Mark Matovich, *Urban Technician*
Roger Thomas, *Urban Engineer*



MDA Staff

Holly Boyer, *Conservation Planner*
Emily Doney, *Conservation Planner*
Kaitlyn Fuss, *Conservation Planner*
William Rawlings, *Conservation Planner*
Mark Freese, *Technician*
Cooper Sweeney, *Technician*
Chris Zawitoski, *Technician*
Jason Watt, *Engineering Technician*



NRCS Staff

Brent Cammauf, *District Conservationist*
Jadie Buhrman, *Program Assistant*
Grace Garst, *Soil Conservationist*
Cara Green, *Soil Conservationist*
Mark Buchholz, *Soil Technician*
Barry Feaga, *Soil Technician*
Sean Daly, *Civil Engineering Technician*
Matt Drury, *Civil Engineering Technician*
Teala Campbell, *CNMP Planner*



BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

Supervisors

Benjamin Sowers, *Chairman*
Diane Flickinger, *Vice Chairman*
John Falkenstein, *Treasurer*
Millard 'Wes' Shafer, *Assistant Treasurer*
Robert Black

Associates

Matt Ahalt
Scott Hipkins
Adam Holter
Steve Leatherman
Robert Myers

The Frederick County Soil Conservation District Board of Supervisors meets the third Tuesday of every month, 9AM, at the SCD office.

BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES (BMPS)

- Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) **Manure Injection and Transport programs** provided **\$253,382.61** in assistance to help district cooperators inject **2,796 acres** with manure and transport **3,215 tons** of manure from fields with high phosphorus to fields where phosphorus was needed.
- The **Maryland Agricultural Water Quality Cost-Share (MACS)** Program provided **\$2,135,134.65** in cost share assistance to cooperators in Frederick County to assist with the installation of various best management practices.
- Frederick County farmers enrolled **35,807 acres** in MDA's **Cover Crop** program which provided **\$1,753,707.50** in assistance to help offset the cost of purchasing seed and planting small grains that provide winter cover, but are not harvested.
- Frederick County cooperators received more than **\$2.8 million** in payments for completed contracts through **NRCS** programs including: **EQIP, AMA, RCPP, and CSP**.
- With both state and federal funds **344 BMPs** were installed.
- Planners wrote conservation plans covering **16,107.4 acres** in Frederick County.



URBAN SEDIMENT & EROSION CONTROL

796 Sediment & Erosion Control Plans Reviewed

3,380 Acres under Approved Sediment Control Plans

11 Forest Harvest Permits

483 Grading Permits

36 Pre-Construction Meetings

290 Site Inspections

2024 COOPERATOR OF THE YEAR

The Stewart Family- Deer Run Farm

The FCSCD hosted its annual Cooperators Banquet on Thursday, November 21, 2024, at the Jefferson Ruritan. The 2024 Cooperator of the Year is the Stewart Family of Deer Run Farm. The Stewart Family of Deer Run Farm is recognized for their enduring commitment to soil conservation and natural resource stewardship. Over the past decade, in partnership with NRCS, MDA, and the FCSCD, the Stewarts have worked tirelessly to protect the farms' soil, water, and other critical resources. They have embraced soil health principles and implemented best management practices including planting cover crops, rotating diverse crops, maintaining a strict no-tillage approach for row crops, optimizing fertilizer use, and utilizing adaptive grazing strategies on their perennial pastures. The Stewart's outstanding conservation efforts and their ongoing dedication to protecting natural resources are commendable and provide environmental benefits far beyond the farm gates.



Above: Board members present the Stewart Family of Deer Run Farm with the 2024 Frederick County Soil Conservation District Cooperator of the Year.

SOIL SMART FARM TOUR

On September 5, 2024, local and state legislators, including County Executive, Jessica Fitzwater, and many others joined the FCSCD, Frederick County Farm Bureau, and Horizon Farm Credit to tour four farms that represent the agricultural diversity throughout Frederick County. This is the fourth year the Soil Smart Farm tour was offered.

The tour started in Mount Airy with a stop at Jarrod and Becky Burrall's farm. The Burralls spoke about their cattle and grain operation and their efforts to incorporate a value-added farm stand to make local beef available to the community. The group then made their way to Gaver Farm where Lisa Gaver provided a tour of the operation with a wagon ride and discussed agritourism and the educational benefit to the community. Next stop on the tour was Paradise Stables with Elizabeth Tate. Elizabeth Tate spoke about Common Ground, a non-profit that brings the healing power of horses to veterans and others in the community who have suffered trauma. The final stop of the day was Hedgeapple Farm where Chris Zook, farm manager, spoke about rotational grazing on their beef cow/calf operation. It was a great day spent discussing local agriculture and we look forward to next year's tour.



Top Left: A attendee pets a horse used in the Common Ground non-profit. **Top Right:** Lisa Gaver speaks on her agritourism operation. **Bottom Left:** Becky Burrall speaks on her cow/calf operation. **Bottom Right:** Tour attendees posing at Hedgeapple Farm.

DIGGING DEEPER INTO SOIL HEALTH

The FCSCD hosted its 3rd Annual Digging Deeper into Soil Health on February 28, 2024, at the Great Frederick Fair Grounds. Our keynote speaker was Dale Strickler of Regenerative Wisdom. Dale Strickler is an internationally recognized agronomist, agroecologist, speaker and consultant with more than 30 years of experience in agronomy, pasture management, and soil and crop advising. While working in academia as well as in private industry, Dale has developed highly effective crop and grazing systems for numerous farms and ranches with a range of often challenging climates and soil types. Dale has consulted in every region of the USA and as far away as Hungary and South Africa. Dale is also the author of the best-selling books, *The Drought Resilient Farm*, *Managing Pasture*, and *The Complete Guide to Restoring Your Soil*, which was named a top ten farming book by *Modern Farmer*. Dale can be found in numerous YouTube videos and podcasts and his articles have appeared in publications like *Mother Earth News*, *Acres USA*, *Stockman Grass Farmer*, and *Grit*. Dale started his own ranch and farm in 1997. Over the years, he tested and refined his techniques for optimal land management, earning awards, such as the 2013 Water and Energy Progress Award Model of Innovation from the State of Kansas, the Kansas Farm Bureau Natural Resources Award in 2015, and the 2014 Kansas Bankers Association Conservation Program Water Conservation Award.



Top: *Guests listening to Dale Strickler speak at Digging Deeper into Soil Health*
Bottom: *(L-R) Grace Garst, Dale Strickler, and Heather Hutchinson.*

FREDERICK COUNTY ENVIROTHON

The FCSCD is proud to host the annual Frederick County Envirothon for Frederick County school students. Envirothon is an environmental and natural resource competition for high school students. Students test their knowledge in aquatics, forestry, soils, wildlife, and a fifth issue that is a current environmental topic that changes each year. This years fifth issue was “renewable energy for a sustainable future”.

On April 23, 2024, the Frederick County Envirothon was held at the Cunningham Falls State Park-Manor Area. Twenty-two teams competed in this years competition.



Above: First place team, “Blue Herons”, from Brunswick High School.

1st Place: “Blue Herons” from Brunswick High School

2nd Place: “Rose Mallow” from Urbana High School

3rd Place: “Planet Pals” from Governor Thomas Johnson High School

The “Blue Herons” from Brunswick High School went on to place 9th at the Maryland Envirothon held in July at Mount Saint Mary’s University in Emmitsburg, MD.

GEORGE A. NICHOLSON, SR.

MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP

Initiated by the Frederick Soil Conservation District, the FCSCD annually awards the George A. Nicholson, Sr. Memorial Scholarship in honor of George A. Nicholson, Sr. George and Emily Nicholson moved from Montgomery County to Frederick County on April 1, 1952. Four days later, a tornado tore through the farm, missing the house and barn but destroying everything else in its path. Mr. Nicholson contacted the Frederick Soil Conservation District for assistance with the aftermath of huge gullies, pastures in need of reseeding, and other existing resource concerns identified on the farm.

Mr. Nicholson developed a relationship with the Frederick Soil Conservation District as they worked towards resolving the resource concerns on the farm. This relationship led to him serving on the Frederick Soil Conservation District Board of Supervisors from 1966 to 1990. Mr. Nichols passed in 1996 and the family requested memorial donations be sent to the SCD to establish a scholarship in his honor.

The George A. Nicholson, Sr. Memorial Scholarship is awarded to deserving students who are interested in pursuing an education toward a career related to renewable natural resources, land use, and/or conservation. Academic achievement and participation in extra/intra-curricular activities warrant consideration. Scholarships are also considered for other agricultural related educational experiences.

The 2024 George A. Nicholson, Sr. Memorial Scholarship was awarded to two deserving students- Caroline Clark and Tate Ondrik. Caroline Clark is a 2024 graduate of Catoctin High School and in her first year at the University of Maryland where she studies veterinary medicine. Tate Ondrik is a 2024 graduate of Linganore High School and a first year student at the University of Tennessee at Martin where is studies natural resources.



Above Left to Right: Steve Leatherman, Robert Myers, John Falkenstein, Diane Flickinger, Benjamin Sowers, Caroline Clark (Scholarship Winner), Millard 'Wes' Shafer, and Heather Hutchinson.

GREAT FREDERICK FAIR

Since 1822, The Great Frederick Fair has strived to promote and educate the community about the many facets of agriculture. 'City Streets and County Roads' is a national award-winning exhibit for agriculture that includes animal displays, hands-on activities, and more. Each year, the FCSCD hosts a booth as part of this exhibit.

During the week of the fair, over 4,000 Frederick County School students make their way through 'City Streets and County Roads' where the FCSCD booth hosts an educational activity. Staff utilize a rainfall simulator to demonstrate differences in runoff vs. infiltration of rainfall in soils with and without surface cover, such as cover crops or crop residue, and show the differences in tilled vs. no-till soils.



Above: William Rawlings, a MDA Conservation Planner, demonstrates the rainfall simulator for school students during the Great Frederick Fair.



CONTACT US



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The logo for the Frederick County Soil Conservation District. It features a stylized yellow and orange wheat stalk graphic above the text. The text 'Frederick County' is in a large, bold, serif font, and 'Soil Conservation District' is in a smaller, italicized serif font below it.

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Soil Conservation District