

District Digest

Spring 2023

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CATOCTIN & FREDERICK SOIL CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

92 Thomas Johnson Drive
Suite 230
Frederick, MD 21702

Phone: (301)-695-2803 Ext. 3
Email: soil.conservation@comcast.net
catocinfredericksd.com

DISTRICT MANAGERS MESSAGE

I would like to welcome you to the first edition of the District Digest – a quarterly newsletter of the Catocin and Frederick Soil Conservation Districts.

What a busy and exciting year 2022 was! I marked my first anniversary as District Manager, we are at full staff in both the urban and agricultural programs and we participated in several outreach activities to engage the public about the conservation efforts of Frederick County Farmers.

The districts hosted a booth at the Great Frederick Fair and participated in Harvest Days at the Sabillasville Environmental School. Each event involved hands-on activities where students learned about the importance of soil health.

We partnered with the Frederick County Farm Bureau and Horizon Farm Credit to host the Soil Smart Farm Tour in September. This tour gave elected officials an opportunity to engage with local farmers and learn about the technology and conservation practices farmers are using to improve soil health, maximize nutrient utilization by crops and protect water quality.

Our year culminated with the Joint Cooperators Banquet where over 150 farmers helped us celebrate the 2022 Cooperators of the Year from Catocin and Frederick.

2023 is shaping up to be equally exciting. In February we hosted a very well attended “Digging Deeper into Soil Health” and today we present to you the inaugural edition of the District Digest! We plan to use this newsletter, along with our Facebook page, to provide updates on programs, important dates, and other relevant topics. We welcome your feedback and ideas for future issues.

Yours in Conservation,

Heather Hutchinson
District Manager



COVER CROP

Preparing for your 2023-2024 Cover Crop Application

Annual Cover Crop sign-up will be here before you know it. To be eligible for participation, you must be in good standing with the Conservation Grants Program and have a current Nutrient Management Plan.

The nutrient management consultant position at Frederick Extension is currently vacant so it is more important than ever to start this process early! If your plan has been written by Extension in the past, please contact the extension office. Extension is working the Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) to assign plans for Frederick County farmers to other county extension offices and MDA employees. Priority is being given to those farmers who plan to participate in cost share programs like Cover Crop.

If you have not previously had your nutrient management plan written by extension, please reach out to one of the private consultants listed on our website. <https://www.catocinfrederickscd.com/resources-for-farmers/>

Please watch our Facebook page for updates on when Cover Crop sign-up begins!

MANURE TRANSPORT PROGRAM

The Manure Transport Program helps cover the cost of injecting manure and/or transporting manure to farms with low phosphorus fields. To qualify for transport assistance, manure must be transported more than 1 mile from the sending source. There is no distance requirement for manure injection. As with all cost share programs, you must have a current nutrient management plan.

Manure can be applied after March 1st with the last day to haul of December 15th.

- For Spring or Summer land application– manure must be transported or injected by September 9th.
- For Fall land application– manure must be transported or injected by December 15th.
- The claim for cost-share funds must be submitted to MDA within 30 days of the relevant September or December deadline.

For questions related to the Manure Transport Program and how you can apply, feel free to contact the District for more information.

CONSERVATION AG LEASE BUILDER

Recently the University of Maryland's Agricultural Law Education Initiative launched an online ag lease builder to help farmers and landowners create agricultural leases. This tool is FREE and intended to protect business interests, encourage environmental stewardship, and support implemented conservation practices on leased land. The lease builder asks for information on the property, landowner, tenant, length of lease, etc. After building the draft lease, parties are encouraged to seek individual legal advice prior to execution. Find the lease builder at www.AgLeaseBuilder.org. For questions about the lease builder, contact Sarah Everhart via email : severhart@law.umaryland.edu

2022 COOPERATORS OF THE YEAR

Join us in congratulating the Ripley Family and the Derr Family!

THE RIPLEY FAMILY

The Ripley Family of Ripleyvale Farms were selected as the Frederick SCD Cooperator of the year. The Ripleys raise replacement dairy heifers and grain crops on over 400 acres. They have worked with the Soil Conservation District for many years and with their most recent projects, have addressed all of the identified resource concerns on their farm. In 2022 they installed a waterway, roofed heavy use area and manure storage. All of their streams are fenced and they are converting crop ground to pasture with the goal of retiring marginal pastures. The Ripleys prioritize conservation and have instilled this value in their children and now grandchildren. Their conservation efforts provide benefits beyond the farm gates and are worthy of celebration.



THE DERR FAMILY

Over the past 10 years, Chris and Jamie Derr, of Valley Ho Farm, have implemented many conservation practices to protect and preserve the natural resources of their dairy farm. Fencing, a watering trough and a roofed heavy use area protect a stream and increase options and opportunities to maximize grazing while maintaining healthy, productive pastures on the farm. They plant cover crops protect the soil over the winter months. Liquid and solid manure storage facilities help the farm to effectively manage manure nutrients to the benefit of crops and the environment. The Derr's commitment to conservation serves not only the farm, but the Middletown Valley, Catocin watershed, and all of their downstream neighbors.



DIGGING DEEPER INTO SOIL HEALTH

A day full of learning, innovative ideas, and fellowship.

On February 7th our Districts, in cooperation with Frederick County Farm Bureau and the Maryland Association of Soil Conservation Districts, held “Digging Deeper into Soil Health” at the Great Frederick Fair Grounds Null Building. Our keynote speaker was Jim Hoorman of Hoorman Health Services. Mr. Hoorman is currently a private industry consultant on soil health who has been a National No-Till Convention Speaker, was a former national Soil Health Specialist with NRCS, and also was a former Ohio State University Extension Agent.

The days talk was tailored to Maryland soils, climate, and agricultural practices. Topics included slugs, the nitty gritty of soil structure and composition, micronutrients and humates for plant health, and the importance of soil ecology and nutrient cycling. Local ag sales companies along with government agencies were set up and able to answer questions as well. We look forward to hosting another event like this in the future!



Above: Jim Hoorman of Hoorman Health Services



Below: Local operators talking during lunch.



ENVIROTHON

Envirothon has a long history of providing education in the areas of natural resource planning and protection. This opportunity gives students exposure to natural resource professionals as they engage with them to learn about the subject areas. These professionals can provide a sense of direction for this potential career path and discuss other career opportunities that may be of interest to the students. Many of our local staff participated in Envirothon as students which is a testament to the value of investing in this program. This competition allows teams from the County's high schools to compete in five areas- aquatics, forestry, wildlife, soils, and a fifth issue that changes every year based on the national topic. The winning team then competes at the Maryland State Envirothon.



Training Day– Tuesday, March 28, 2023

Competition Day– Tuesday, April 25, 2023

Dates to Remember

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| March 1st | Nutrient Management AIR Forms Due |
| March 1st | Frederick County Economic Development Ag Innovation Grant opens |
| March 1st | First day to apply manure |
| March 21st | Catoctin SCD Board Meeting, 9am at Burkittsville Ruritan |
| March 21st | Private Pesticide Training by Frederick County Extension |
| March 28th | Private Pesticide Certification Exam by Frederick County Extension |
| March 29th | Frederick SCD Board Meeting, 10am at the SCD Office |
| April 25th | Frederick County Envirothon |
| May 29th | Memorial Day– Offices Closed |

NEW FACES IN THE OFFICE

The Maryland Department of Agriculture has some new faces located in our office. Next time you're in, say hello!

[Peter Hatchett]

Please join us in welcoming Peter to the office. Peter is a Soil Conservation Associate from the Maryland Department of Agriculture. From Rockville, MD, he is a graduate of Davis & Elkins College with a Bachelors Degree in Environmental Science. In his free time you can find Peter fishing, collecting lapel pins, or cheering on the Minnesota Vikings.



[Kaitlyn Fuss]

Born and raised in Frederick county, Kaitlyn is a graduate of North Carolina State University with a Bachelors in Agricultural Science and her Masters in Business Administration from University of MD Global Campus. She may be a familiar face to some as she previously worked in the Extension office. Kaitlyn joined the Maryland Department of Agriculture as a Conservation Planner. With a wealth of knowledge in the local agricultural community, Kaitlyn is a great asset to the Districts. In her free time you can find her working in the barn with her sheep, at local livestock shows, or playing with her lab puppy.



Ag Innovation Grant

Open March 1 - March 31

Eligibility Requirements

- Must be currently operating in Frederick County
- Must have recorded at least \$2,500 in annual (not cumulative) sales
- Minimum capital request \$5,000 to help farmers diversify operations
- Must submit a business plan and budget
- For more information:
rtucker1@frederickcountymd.gov 240-739-2013
kstevens1@frederickcountymd.gov 240-285-2795



2023 GEORGE A. NICHOLSON SCHOLARSHIP

The Frederick Soil Conservation District will offer one or more George A. Nicholson Sr. Memorial Scholarships of up to \$1,000 to qualified students who are interested in pursuing a career relating to renewable natural resources, land use or conservation. Applications are due April 15. Applicants may apply online using the link below or paper applications are available by request- please call the District at (301)-695-2803 Ext. 3.

<https://www.catocinfrederickscd.com/scholarship/>



Top Row (L-R): Barry Burch, Scott Hipkins, Brian Sweeney, and Bobby Myers.

Bottom Row (L-R): Diane Flickinger, Abigail Beckman (2022 scholarship recipient), Alana Baye (2022 scholarship recipient), and Heather Hutchinson (District Manager).



*92 Thomas Johnson Drive, Suite 230
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The Catoctin and Frederick Soil Conservation Districts prohibits discrimination in its programs on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, and marital or familial status.