

Howard Soil  
Conservation District  
14735 Frederick Road  
Cooksville, MD 21723  
410.313.0680  
www.howardscd.org

# CONSERVATION MATTERS



SEPTEMBER 2024

## CALENDAR

### HSCD Office Closures:

**September 2: Labor Day**

**October 14: Indigenous Peoples Day**

**November 11: Veterans Day**

**November 28 & 29: Thanksgiving Holiday**

### Cover Crop Dates:

**See Page 5 for Important Dates & Information**

**September 12: Cooperators Dinner**

**October 8: HoCo Envirothon Info Session**

## Financial Assistance to Help Address Natural Resource Concerns

In addition to providing technical assistance to agricultural producers and landowners, USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) also has financial assistance programs to help address resource concerns relating to soil health, water quality, crop productivity, animal health, wildlife habitat, and more.

These federal financial assistance programs cover over 100 best management practices, addressing several different natural resource concerns. Some funded practices include cover crop, high tunnels, erosion control practices, pasture/grazing practices, and wildlife practices.

***It is never too early to plan for future conservation projects – and NRCS is making it easier to do just that.***

The Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) provides NRCS with \$19.5 billion in additional funds over five years for these existing conservation programs.

The IRA directs NRCS to use these additional funds specifically for climate change mitigation, activities that reduce greenhouse gas emissions and improve carbon storage, like:

- Cover Crops
- Reduced-Till and No-Till
- Nutrient Management
- Prescribed Grazing
- Tree/Shrub Establishment
- Wetland Restoration

Through this funding, NRCS is seeking to both benefit the climate, by reducing greenhouse gas emissions; and the producer, by improving access to programs and providing financial and technical assistance to improve their farm, ranch, urban agriculture operation or forest land.

NRCS accepts producer applications for its conservation programs year-round, it is never too early.

If interested, please contact your local NRCS office / SCD partnership (Howard County: 410.313.0680).

## Howard County Enhanced Agricultural Grant

Howard County has a grant funding opportunity with a mission to preserve and support agriculture in the County. These Howard County Enhanced Agriculture Grants can be used for programing, research, and/or capital investments provided it facilitates the expansion, sustainability, and/or education of Howard County Agriculture. These grants are being funded through the Agricultural Preservation Fund.

\* Applicants can receive grants up to \$250,000.00.

\* Grant applications will be accepted until November 15, 2024.

Application and additional information can be found here:  
[www.howardcountymd.gov/boards-commissions/agricultural-preservation-board](http://www.howardcountymd.gov/boards-commissions/agricultural-preservation-board)

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## Howard SCD 2024 Cooperators Dinner

The Howard Soil Conservation District invites you and your family to join us at Fine Idea Farm to honor the Howard SCD's Cooperator of the Year. The event will be held September 12th, 2024 at 5:30 p.m. Please join us for a tour of conservation practices, a Dressage demonstration, catch up with friends from the agricultural community and enjoy a delicious meal! Help us celebrate the agricultural community and the conservation efforts of Howard County farmers!

Fine Idea Farm is a full-care eventing and dressage facility in Mt. Airy, Md., owned and

operated by USEF "r" judge and FEI competitor Abby Gibbon. Her goal is to create a dynamic and supportive environment for both horses and riders, leveraging years of competitive experience with connections to top-level clinicians and equestrian care professionals for an all-encompassing approach. She strives to help riders find greater fulfillment in equestrianism both in and out of the saddle, leaving no corner unturned, fueled by the belief that there's always more to learn.

Details concerning menu and cost can be found in the invite at the link below.

Invite: [https://www.howardscd.org/files/ugd/49874f\\_8b7f518cf9dd494aab26d904cb1566e4.pdf](https://www.howardscd.org/files/ugd/49874f_8b7f518cf9dd494aab26d904cb1566e4.pdf)

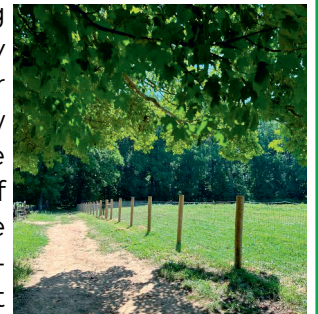
## Alleyways with Abby: Community and

Before the pandemic, Stephanie Williams' hands were full running her theatrical education company, the Drama Learning Center, and teaching riding lessons on the side. But as pandemic closures ramped up and businesses were forced to slow down, interest in outdoor activities like riding lessons skyrocketed. Before long, demand for Williams' lessons found her outgrowing her 4-stall operation, first leasing a larger property before going full-tilt and purchasing the 33+ acre Ellicott City farm her Clover Luck Stables now calls home. "When we bought the place in 2021, it was just land, a house and a 3-stall cow barn," Williams says. "Now it's an equestrian facility with almost 30 horses and a thriving lesson program."

Williams has been busy in the few years since purchasing Clover Luck, which currently hosts a roster of about 60 clients from all over the central Maryland and DC area, and boasts a large new barn and indoor arena. Williams helms the operation, while her fiancé, Matthew Carroll, initially an unsuspecting farm hand, now enthusiastically helps with property management. Students participate in riding lessons, camps and leasing opportunities, and also compete in hunter/jumper shows and equitation leagues. Last year, their team

took the top National Capitol Adult Equitation League title in only their second year participating.

But Williams is quick to emphasize that horsemanship and community are the basis for her program. "Prioritizing horsemanship really makes a difference for these horses and how happy they are to do the job," she says. "In terms of the community, everyone is everyone else's cheerleader. We have about half kids and half adults, and we even have some families, parents and kids who ride together. In our lessor group, they'll coordinate ride times together, do a weekend ride, and then go down to the brewery to have a pizza and a beer."



Top: This new fence has helped create additional pasture for the horses.

Bottom: The additional fencing will facilitate rotational grazing and better pasture management.

## What is Bay-Friendly Farming?

Conservation matters to Maryland. When our local farmers go the extra mile to conserve farmland and natural resources, their actions benefit us all.

The Maryland Bay-Friendly Farming (BFF) program — established by the Maryland Association of Soil Conservation Districts — is a certification program that recognizes farmers who take verified actions that keep our waters and other natural resources healthy. The program certifies farmers who demonstrate outstanding stewardship and provides them with three-year waivers from state nutrient management inspections. Certified farmers also gain access to new resources, conservation programs, and promotional benefits.

<https://bayfriendlyfarms.com>



## Conservation at Clover Luck Stables

Plans to continue developing the property involve several county- and state-aided practices, including working with Howard SCD on fencing to exclude a stream and pond, water troughs, and rotational grazing.

“Right now I’m feeding round bales year-round because I don’t have the pasture health,” she says. “Being able to rest a pasture, and rotate them back and forth, is going to be huge. We’ll be spending less on hay year-round. I’m very excited about that.”

Williams is also looking forward to the smoother operating procedures that implementing conservation practices will provide. The water troughs alone will save employees lots of time and physical effort, since they won’t have to transport water tanks out to the fields anymore. “We’re making it user-friendly not only for clients, but also for the people who are working. It’s going to improve stress levels,” she says.

Conservation and a close relationship to nature are also a top motivating factor. “We want to make sure we are putting back into the land what we’re taking out of it,” she says. “I love our property for its nature-sanctuary feel. It’s a surprising 33 acres right outside of Columbia, where you just wouldn’t think it’s

there. We have a great bird population, we have bees, we have pollinators, lots of really cool things aside from just having the horses. I want to look at the farm in a holistic way, and I want it to be a good property where we’re putting effort back into the land.”

Since Williams is the stables’ primary instructor, freeing up time and resources through conservation practices will ultimately provide her a greater ability to focus on her passion for education. She’s even found ways to tie the themes together.

“We do a lot of conservation stuff with our students,” she says. “I think it’s important for kids to understand, What do bees do for us? Let’s go for a walk in the woods and see what we find there, and talk about it. It’s similar to the way we teach them to take care of the horses, not just ride them. That educational piece is very important for us.”



One of the pressure fed troughs, not quite to completion. Installation within the fence line allows the waterer to serve two pastures.

## Livestock Parasite Management Program

This program is designed to provide in-depth, one-on-one assistance to help dairy, equine, and livestock farms in Maryland improve intestinal parasite management practices. We are looking for producers who are interested in learning more about an integrated approach to intestinal parasite management and are eager to implement some of these changes on their farm.

This program is open to all dairy, equine, and livestock producers located in Maryland. A maximum of 15 farms will be enrolled each year on a first come, first served basis.

### Program Description

This program will involve 2 one-on-one farm consultations with each participant. During each consultation, two or more extension educators will visit the farm. Following the second consultation, educators will assemble an individual parasite management plan for each participant. Participants can expect to learn about the components of a successful parasite management program, including:

- Pasture management
- Parasite load assessment
- Targeted deworming
- Dewormer selection and application
- Dewormer evaluation



### Services Provided:

- Two farm visits
- Pasture management recommendations
- Integrated parasite management plan
- De-wormer effectiveness evaluations

Contact Nathan Glenn for more information:  
Call: 410.313.2707  
Email: nglenn@umd.edu

For more information: <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSejZXRNkmTBmNmWV78bcO0WYbxQzQGHLPlQeE6vjoziGZrpQ/viewform>



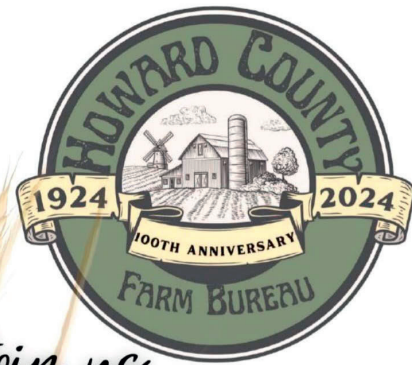
\* Requirement: Must have a minimum of 10 animals of the same species.

## Howard County Farm Bureau is celebrating 100 years in 2024!

To mark the occasion, Howard County Farm Bureau will be celebrating with an 100 Year Anniversary Picnic on September 28th . See the flyer to the right or visit their Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/p/The-Howard-County-Farm-Bureau-100064804445853/>

**“Agriculture is our wisest pursuit, because it will in the end contribute most to real wealth, good morals, and happiness.”**

**– Thomas Jefferson**



*Join us*  
**SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 28**  
DINNER *at 7pm* DOORS OPEN AT 6PM  
FOLLOWED BY MUSIC + DANCING  
TICKETS: \$75.00  
SERVING BEER, WINE + FRIENDSHIP!

*Purchase tickets here...* *CELEBRATING AT THE Howard County Fair*  
<https://form.jotform.com/241168571743157> NEW ANNEX BUILDING  
CONTACT HOWIE (443-472-6264) 2210 FAIRGROUNDS RD  
WITH ANY QUESTIONS! WEST FRIENDSHIP, MD

## 2024-2025 MDA Cover Crop Program

Maryland Department of Agriculture's (MDA) Cover Crop Program is a key component of the state's plan to reduce the amount of nutrients that reach the waterways – creeks, streams and rivers – that eventually flow to the Chesapeake Bay. The program incentivizes farmers to plant a cover crop to take up and hold nutrients over winter, as well as prevent soil loss through erosion.



A field of cover crop planted with a species mix to promote soil health.

Sign-up in Howard County for the 2024-2025 program resulted in 13 approved applications for 4782 acres. Planting and fall certification is currently underway.

Some reminders for those participating in this year's program ...

- Seed tags for purchased seed and seed tests for home grown seed must be submitted. The seed tags need to be signed by the Operator and any seed tests not in the Operator's name shall also be signed.
- All Custom planted acres including Aerial and Aerial Ground require an FSA map signed and dated by the applicator, designating which fields were planted.
- The applicant will also need to provide signed documentation, for all aerial or aerial

ground seeded acres, certifying previous crop, crop planted, seeding rate.

Important Dates ...

September 10: Incentive Planting Deadline for Aerial Seeding into Standing Corn

September 17: Certification Deadline for Aerial Seeding into Standing Corn Incentive

October 1: Last Day to Plant Canola/Rape, Forage Radish, Oats, Clover, Hairy Vetch and Winter Peas

October 10: Last Day to Aerial Seed; Incentive Planting Deadline for Incorporated Methods

October 15: Last Day to Plant Barley or Ryegrass; Last Day to Plant Using Broadcast Stalk Chop or Broadcast Cultipacker

October 17: Certification Deadline for Aerial Planting and Oct. 10 Incorporated Planting Incentive

November 5: Last Day to Plant Cereal Rye, Triticale and Wheat Using No-till or Conventional Methods

November 12: Certification Deadline for MACS Base 11/05 Planting

November 6-15: Late Planting of Cereal Rye, Triticale and Wheat Using No-till or Conventional Methods for a **Reduced Payment** of \$40 per acre (No Incentive Payments)

November 22: Certification Deadline for MACS Reduced Payment for Late Planting

Any questions, please contact Kristal McCormick, kmccormick@howardcountymd.gov or 410.313.0680

## Mental Health Offerings

Michigan State University offers factsheets to help farm families support their own mental health as well as the mental health of those around them.

[https://www.canr.msu.edu/managing\\_farm\\_stress/managing\\_stress](https://www.canr.msu.edu/managing_farm_stress/managing_stress)

South Dakota University Extension offers "A Five Step Approach to Alleviating Farm Stress" <https://extension.sdstate.edu/sites/default/files/2019-01/P-00052.pdf>

University of Maryland Extension has even more links to help you manage farm related stress. These resources are categorized into: Recognizing Stress, Establishing Communication, and Depression, Mental Health Resources, and Suicide Prevention.

<https://extension.umd.edu/programs/agriculture-food-systems/program-areas/integrated-programs/farm-stress-management/stress-management/>

## All About Envirothon

The Envirothon program is a hands-on environmental science and natural resources competition for high school students. It is the largest high school environmental science contest in North America. Participation takes place at three levels: county, state and national.

Envirothon engages and challenges students to think critically about the natural world and their role in it. The program provides a chance to experience and learn about things they may not have a chance to do in a normal classroom setting.

Teams will study and train prior to the competition and then be tested on their knowledge of five subject areas:

Aquatics: ecology of water, stream improvement, water quality, plants and animals living in or around water, pollution, wetlands, and conservation.

Forestry: tree identification, forest ecology, pests, forest measurements, and silvicultural practices.

Soils: classification, erosion, web soil survey, site suitability, current issues, profiles, soil characteristics, and conservation practices.

Wildlife: habitat, identification, foods, diseases, and management.

Current Environmental Issues: any current or newsworthy environmental issue. It changes each year as it is picked by the state or province hosting the North American Event.

The competition is open to public, charter, private, and home schools, as well as, 4-H clubs, FFA groups, Scout Troops, and other clubs. Teams consist of 5 members and at least one adult advisor. In Howard County there is no limit to the number of teams each school or organization can have.

Interested Howard County groups should contact Howard Soil Conservation District, Kristal McCormick ([kmccormick@howardcountymd.gov](mailto:kmccormick@howardcountymd.gov) or 410.313.0680) to learn more about the info session, training, and participating at the Howard County Envirothon.



Top Left: Practice using a clinometer (instrument used to measure tree height)  
 Above: Determining the soil's color using the Munsell Soil Color Chart.  
 Left: Team work at the Wildlife station during the HoCo Envirothon competition.  
 Right: Tree identification takes practice.

### HoCo Envirothon 2025 Dates

Info Session:

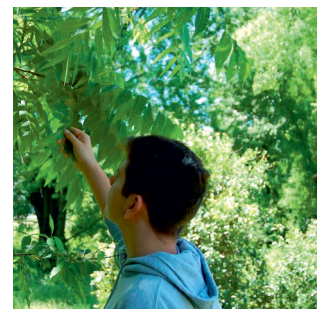
10/8/24

Training Day:

3/20/25

Competition:

4/29/25



## Upcoming Events and Opportunities

### Women in Agriculture Webinars

#### Interplanting for Pollinators

September 10, 2024 • 12:00 PM

Using a variety of native plants incorporated into the landscape can increase biodiversity and improve natural pest control. Learn more about what these insects need, and how we can encourage their populations.

[https://agnr.umd.edu/events/2024-webinars-interplanting-for-pollinators/?featured\\_date=371](https://agnr.umd.edu/events/2024-webinars-interplanting-for-pollinators/?featured_date=371)

#### How to Interpret a Soil Test Report

October 8, 2024 • 12:00 PM

pH, organic matter, CEC, ppm, FIV, base saturation, oh my! This presentation will cover the basics of a soil test report and how to make management decisions based on your test results.

[https://agnr.umd.edu/events/2024-webinars-how-to-interpret-a-soil-test-report/?featured\\_date=361](https://agnr.umd.edu/events/2024-webinars-how-to-interpret-a-soil-test-report/?featured_date=361)

#### Advanced Cover Cropping

November 12, 2024 • 12:00 PM

We will present a cover crop planning protocol and tools for getting more agronomic and financial benefits from cover cropping. We will evaluate successful cover crop systems used in various farming enterprises and sizes of farms.

[https://agnr.umd.edu/events/2024-webinars-advanced-cover-cropping/?featured\\_date=351](https://agnr.umd.edu/events/2024-webinars-advanced-cover-cropping/?featured_date=351)

### Impacts of Deicing Salt on Water Quality (Wednesday Water Webinar)

December 18, 2024 • 12:00 PM

The negative impacts of deicing salts on the environment, road infrastructure, cars, and home appliances, and drinking water quality can be significant. An overview of these impacts with emphasis on drinking water, and recommendations will be presented.

[https://agnr.umd.edu/events/impacts-of-deicing-salt-on-water-quality/?featured\\_date=346](https://agnr.umd.edu/events/impacts-of-deicing-salt-on-water-quality/?featured_date=346)

#### Alternative Fertility Sources for Forage Systems (previous recorded webinar)

Ensuring proper soil fertility provides the foundation for a successful forage system. Commercial fertilizers are one option for providing nutrients but there are also other means for providing fertility to pastures and hayfields. This presentation will discuss the use of alternative fertility sources, including manure, legumes, annuals, stored forages, and soil biological activity, along with some fertility considerations for grazed versus harvested forages and strategies for ensuring more uniform nutrient distribution.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mzfOG5eTVrA>

### Get Answers to Your Maryland Gardening Questions

Ask Extension is a free service available to all Maryland residents online. You can send up to three photos at a time along with your inquiry.

They answer questions about:

- Plant problems
- Insects and pests in residential settings
- Getting started with gardening or caring for an existing garden
- Soils and composting
- Weeds and invasive species
- Indoor plant care & more!

Your questions will be answered by Maryland Certified Professional Horticulturists, University of Maryland Extension (UME) faculty and staff, and/or UME Master Gardeners. Our goal is to bring you the best available, research-based information to solve problems most effectively and sustainably. We're here to help you gain knowledge, save time and money, reduce pesticide risks, and help you get the most enjoyment out of your plants and green spaces!

[go.umd.edu/AskExtension](https://go.umd.edu/AskExtension)

Howard SCD's  
Cooperators Dinner is  
quickly approaching.  
Mark your calendars  
for September 12th,  
and be sure to join us.  
See page 2 for more  
details and how to RSVP.

HSCD Board of Supervisors

- Justin Brendel, Chairman
- John Dove, Vice-Chair
- Nora Vese, Treasurer
- Chuck Schuster, Member
- JG Warfield, Member
- Merhlyn Barnes, Associate Member
- Ken Clements, Associate Member
- Abby Gibbon, Associate Member

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- David C. Plummer, District Manager
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- Henry Berghoff, Stormwater Management Specialist
- Jackie Covington, Administrative Aide
- Kristal McCormick, Engineering Specialist
- Kristen Parris, Equine Conservation Planner
- Geof Schoming, Engineering Specialist
- John Vargo, Engineering Specialist



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