



STRATEGIC PLAN

2026-2030

WASHINGTON COUNTY SOIL
CONSERVATION DISTRICT

ORGANIZATION

The Washington County Soil Conservation District (WCSCD) was organized and established on January 22, 1940 under the Maryland Soil Conservation District Law. A Soil Conservation District constitutes a political subdivision of the State and, as a public body, exercises public powers.

The law includes a declaration of policy that has guided the WCSCD in responding to the needs of Washington County residents:

“It is the policy of the General Assembly to provide for the conservation of the soil, water and related resources of the State and for the control and prevention of soil erosion to preserve natural resources, control floods, prevent impairment of dams and reservoirs, assist in maintaining the navigability of rivers and harbors, preserve wildlife, protect the tax base, protect the public lands, protect and promote the health, safety, and general welfare of the people of the State, and otherwise enhance their living environment.”

To meet this policy challenge, the District Board of Supervisors of the WCSCD provide programs that are balanced in their approach to natural resource management. It has been the belief of the District, voluntary incentive driven programs of direct technical and financial assistance to landowners and land users accomplishes the most balanced result with the most lasting effects.

The District Board of Supervisors is made up of five residents from Washington County. They are appointed for five year terms by the State Soil Conservation Committee with recommendations from the Washington County Farm Bureau, University of MD Extension, two at-large positions selected from residents of the County, and the remaining supervisor is appointed by the County governing body.

The Supervisors meet monthly to guide and direct the work of the District which consists of personnel from the the Maryland Department of Agriculture, locally funded District personnel. and our partner, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. The Supervisors oversee funding from Federal, State, and Local sources to accomplish our goal of balancing a productive land in harmony with a quality environment.



“The soil is the great connector of lives, the source and destination of all. It is the healer and restorer and resurrector, by which disease passes into health, age into youth, death into life. Without proper care for it we can have no community, because without proper care for it we can have no life.”
— Wendell Berry

CORE VALUES

- ◇ A commitment to respect the desires and objectives of the landowner
- ◇ Supervisors and staff exhibit the highest ethical standards and are held accountable for their performance
- ◇ Diligence and integrity in meeting expectations of our customers and cooperating/partnering agencies
- ◇ Providing compensation and recognition to employees commensurate with their status as natural resource management professionals
- ◇ A commitment to preserve and strengthen our core partnership between Washington County Government, the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service, and the Maryland Department of Agriculture
- ◇ A commitment to excellence in customer service for our customers

"History is largely a record of human struggle to wrest the land from nature, because man relies for sustenance on the products of the soil. So direct, is the relationship between soil erosion, the productivity of the land, and the prosperity of people, that the history of mankind, to a considerable degree at least, may be interpreted in terms of the soil and what has happened to it as the result of human use." - Hugh H. Bennett and W.C. Lowdermilk, circa 1930's

VISION, MISSION AND FUNCTION

VISION

We are recognized for effective leadership in natural resource conservation in assisting people and communities to achieve a productive land in harmony with a quality environment

MISSION

To provide effective leadership in addressing the conservation of soil, water, and related natural resources, through delivery of programs in education, information, financial incentives, and technical assistance to the land owners and land users of Washington County

FUNCTION

To use available technical, financial, and educational resources, whatever their source, and focus or coordinate them so they meet the needs of the local land owner or land user for the conservation of soil, water and related natural resources

"There are two spiritual dangers in not owning a farm. One is the danger of supposing that breakfast comes from the grocery and the other that heat comes from the furnace." - Aldo Leopold

WHO WE SERVE



WCSCD provides technical, educational, financial and information services to a wide range of customers, including agriculture producers, developers, engineers, homeowners, as well as, Local, State, and Federal cooperating/partnering agencies, municipalities and government entities.

Agricultural Producers: Traditional producers, such as, dairy, beef, poultry, swine, orchard, nursery, horticultural and grain farmers; non-traditional operators, such as, horses, goats, llama's and other specialty animals and crops.

Technical, financial, and informational resources and services are provided to reduce or eliminate sources of agricultural point and non-point source pollution while maintaining a productive and sustainable agriculture in Washington County.

Developers/Engineers: The District provides Sensitive Area, Concept, Soil Erosion and Sediment Control Plan, Small Pond, Forest Harvest, Preliminary Consultation, Plat, review and approval services to the engineering and development communities. Additionally, the District conducts Field Services, working as a Contractor for the Maryland Department of the Environment. Information and education services are provided through the use of the Soil Survey, historical and current resource inventories, as well as, direct technical assistance to these customers.

The District provides this service to meet statutory responsibilities and provide for the conservation of natural resources during development activities. The District provides field services through Pre-Construction Meetings, Interim Water Quality Inspections, and Final Site Closeout Reviews. These field services help ensure soil erosion and sedimentation from construction sites is kept to a minimum and when construction is complete, sites are stabilized with permanent adequate vegetation.

Students: Educational programs, such as, the Envirothon, and classroom demonstrations provide hands-on training in the area of soils, wildlife, aquatics, forestry and an annual current environmental issue. Education of the next generation is essential in maintaining the progress made in conservation of natural resources.

Homeowners: Through one on one contact and outreach, the District advises homeowners on backyard conservation with topics, such as, rainwater harvesting, pollinators, drainage control, sink holes, composting, lawn fertilization, and plantings to improve water quality and provide habitat for wildlife.

Private ownership of land makes up the majority of land ownership in Washington County. As the landscape becomes fragmented into smaller parcels, it is imperative the District respond with approaches that address those natural resource issues. The actions of individuals in their own backyards, when taken as a whole, contribute significantly to erosion reduction, water quality improvement and creation of valuable wildlife and pollinator habitats.

Cooperating Organizations: Cooperating organizations, such as, County Government, Maryland Department of Agriculture, USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service, USDA-Farm Services Agency, Department of the Environment, Department of Natural Resources, University of MD Extension, Western Maryland Resource Conservation and Development Council and municipalities provide funding and technical services to assist with fulfilling our mission. The District in turn provides services to all cooperating organizations to assist them in their mission.

"Nature has endowed the Earth with glorious wonders and vast resources that man may use for his own ends. Regardless of our tastes or our way of living, there are none that present more variations to tax our imagination than the soil, and certainly none so important to our ancestors, to ourselves, and to our children" - Charles Kel-

STRATEGIC PLAN

The strategic plan for the District focuses on our four major programmatic areas of service!

District Operations: Functions carried out by District employees and District Supervisors, such as, administration of financial accounts, human resources, policies, office management, Board of Supervisors meetings, travel, training, program administration, and partnership coordination.

Agricultural Conservation: Functions related to administration and coordination of State, Federal and Local conservation programs. Staff provide turn key services including, conservation planning to identify resource concerns, site survey, conservation practice design, permitting, and construction supervision. Local administration of the State cost-share programs; Cover Crop Program, Manure Transport Program, and assistance with delivery of Federal cost-share and incentive programs. Primary focus of the program is assisting the agricultural sector in meeting the Watershed Implementation Plan and Farm Bill goals, as well as, meeting the needs and wants of landowners and operators.

Urban Conservation: Environmental compliance reviews, including review and approval of Soil Erosion and Sediment Control Plans, for all earth disturbances requiring approval under State law, and compliance with the County's Sensitive Area Element requirements primarily related to identification and conservation of water courses, stream buffers, and steep slopes. Field inspection services under agreement with the Maryland Department of the Environment. The District assists Washington County with implementation of the Forest Conservation Ordinance, identifying and enlisting landowners to preserve and/or create new forests with funds provided by the development community within the PIL fund governed by Washington County.

Information and Education: Information and education crosses all of our service areas and includes our County Envirothon competition, outreach to students in the classroom through hands on demonstrations, and participation in community events, such as, the Boonsboro Green Fest and Washington County Ag Expo. Our web site along with social media provide another element to our outreach.

"Plans are only good intentions unless they immediately degenerate into hard work." **Peter Drucker**

GOALS 2026-2030

- ◇ Continuing to strengthen and streamline District Operations
- ◇ Provide for adequate, trained, and certified staff across all areas of service delivery
- ◇ Deliver Conservation Planning, Technical Assistance, and financial incentives to enable the agricultural community to reach Watershed Implementation Plan goals
- ◇ Maintain, increase and broaden funding sources from partnership agencies, Washington County, fees for service, and grants
- ◇ Continue implementation of the Antietam Creek Watershed Restoration Plan
- ◇ Continue efficiency and service responsiveness to all customers
- ◇ Expand outreach and education through community events and use of social media
- ◇ Continue partnership with Washington County, to implement the Forest Conservation Ordinance, Payment-in-lieu of Program, to permanently conserve existing forests and create new forest lands
- ◇ Supervisors and staff participation annually in State and National conferences, as well as, training opportunities to stay current in the field of conservation and to maintain certifications (Envirocert International and National Stormwater Center).

Goals in each area of service delivery will be developed and monitored for implementation by the Board of Supervisors and the District Manager. Staff will report on progress and develop new goals for approval and implementation.

There are risks and costs to a program of action. But they are far less than the long range risks and costs of comfortable inaction. – **John F. Kennedy**

DISTRICT OPERATIONS

GOAL # 1: Acquire and develop new Staff and Supervisors

STRATEGIES	ACTIONS TAKEN
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluate staffing needs Recruit new Associate and Regular Board Supervisors Create and update position descriptions for all District positions Identify and provide training for staff and Supervisors 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Identified staff needs for Urban and Ag Programs – February 2026 Jim Kriner added as new Associate Supervisor; Ariel Herrod moved from Associate to Regular Board Supervisor – 2025 All position descriptions on file and up-to-date District Staff attend trainings digitally and in-person, i.e. Fred Pryor sessions; Urban webinars, etc.

GOAL # 2: Provide training and development for District Supervisors and Staff

STRATEGIES	ACTIONS TAKEN
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain professional certifications for staff through continuing education Participate in MASCD Summer and Winter meetings Staff attend Human Resources training as needed 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> District Manager has maintained the CESSWI Certification since 2014, as well as, CSI Certification since 2020. Programs Technician/Office Coordinator and the Urban Planner maintain their CSI Certifications Staff and Supervisors attend Winter and Summer MASCD Meetings All staff attend required trainings

GOAL #3: Improve District administrative and fiscal procedures

STRATEGIES	ACTIONS TAKEN
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluate existing policies on an annual basis. Evaluate fiscal and accounting procedures for compliance with acceptable standards Evaluate administrative procedures that impact staff workload across all service delivery functions in context of position descriptions 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Policy Manual developed by current District Manager in 2022 Fiscal ... procedures are completed per the Policy Manual. Other revisions to include, Board of Supervisor elections moved to correspond with State Fiscal Year Evaluation of procedures for improvement is continuous

GOAL # 4: Secure adequate funding for all areas of service delivery

STRATEGIES	ACTIONS TAKEN
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluate all funding sources, operating budgets, cash reserves, and grant funds to develop the annual operating budget Participate fully in the County and State Budget processes to secure needed funding Develop/define funding sources for District Manager, Programs Technician/Office Coordinator, Urban Planner, and Administrative Assistant 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Washington County Budget request submitted annually; request based upon COL increases and Washington County Staff increases State and CBTF Budgets are expected flat for several years due to budget constraints Staff will present overall District Budget to Supervisors at June/July Board Meeting annually

AGRICULTURAL CONSERVATION

GOAL # 1: Assist Agricultural community with meeting the goals of the Watershed Implementation Plan

STRATEGIES	ACTIONS TAKEN
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Monthly monitoring of BMP design and delivery to customers 2. Meet required plan and acre numbers as developed by MDA per year 3. Identify and provide training for agricultural staff 4. Participate in the USDA, NRCS Local Work Group process to obtain available financial incentives for agricultural producers 5. Provide technical assistance and conservation planning services to support agricultural producers participation in USDA, NRCS cost-share programs to implement BMP's 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. District Manager working with staff and MDA Area Coordinator/District Conservationist - continuous 2. Planners must meet plan and acre numbers - monitored by MDA Area Coordinator/District Manager 3. Ag Staff attend; soil health, Conservation Desktop, NRCS Planner Certification, Nutrient Management Certification, etc. trainings 4. Local Work Group governed by NRCS District Conservationist per NRCS guidance; District Manager participates as applicable 5. Assist NRCS with cost-share and program implementation for producers

GOAL # 2: Improve local administration of State cost-share programs

STRATEGIES	ACTIONS TAKEN
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review all administrative procedures 2. Conduct monthly follow-up with approved projects to increase implementation 3. Evaluate and improve Cover Crop Program work-load distribution 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Continuous 2. Continuous 3. Workload shared by all MDA Staff under management of the District Manager

GOAL # 3: Actively participate in BMP verification efforts with MD Department of Agriculture

STRATEGIES	ACTIONS TAKEN
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Follow-up with producers as needed regarding issues identified within rounds of verification 2. Assist MDA verifiers with any new rounds of verification 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. MDA provides a Reconciliation Report following each verification round. District Manager provides resolution to all items requiring action on the report 2. Planners and Technicians visit farms with the MDA Verifier as needed

GOAL #4: Maintain and expand funding to implement Watershed Implementation Plan

STRATEGIES	ACTIONS TAKEN
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Evaluate all funding sources, operating budgets, cash reserves, and grant funds to develop annual operating budget 2. Pursue grants to implement agricultural conservation projects for the Antietam Creek Watershed 3. Participate fully in the County and State Budget processes to secure needed funding 4. Develop/define funding sources for District Manager, Assistant Manager, Administrative Assistant, Programs Technician/Office Coordinator and Urban Planner 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Washington County Budget request submitted annually; request based upon expense increases and funding received from the State General Fund and CBTF 2. Two grant projects currently underway at various stages; interest for two additional restoration projects 3. Budget requests submitted annually per direction from the County and State 4. Continuous process, monitoring Urban Program fees, as well as, State and County budgets

URBAN CONSERVATION

GOAL # 1: Provide excellence of service to the Urban community

STRATEGIES	ACTIONS TAKEN
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide a maximum ten working day turn around for all plan reviews 2. Evaluate all administrative procedures to improve efficiency 3. Maintain professional certifications through continuing education 4. Maintenance Urban Database 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reaching goal dependent on workload and staff; currently exceeding goal 2. Continuous 3. District Manager has maintained the CESSWI Certification, as well as, CSI Certification. Programs Technician/Office Coordinator and the Urban Planner maintain the CSI Certifications 4. Gather deficiencies and schedule maintenance

GOAL # 2: Promote full implementation of all approved Soil Erosion and Sediment Control Plans

STRATEGIES	ACTIONS TAKEN
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Evaluate delivery of field services with annual meeting with Maryland Department of the Environment 2. Evaluate potential benefits of adding inspection services after erosion and sediment controls have been installed 3. Increase site visits as part of initial plan review 4. Create a soil erosion and sediment control bonding program 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Met with new MDE Leadership Fall 2025; will continue to do so regularly 2. Continuous observance of construction site compliance to determine need 3. Completed for updates and as needed in other scenarios 4. In process; verified authority to move forward

GOAL #3: Assist the City of Hagerstown with meeting MS4 requirements

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Work with the City Engineer to develop a contingency for their Grading Permit issuances 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Schedule meeting with City Engineer and permitting staff to develop; assurance no work begins without a pre-construction meeting, etc.
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GOAL #4: Ensure adequate funding to conduct Urban Program administration

STRATEGIES	ACTIONS TAKEN
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Evaluate fees to provide for periodic increases 2. Seek funding for all positions implementing the Urban Program 3. Provide Forest Conservation Ordinance services to Washington County 4. Seek an increase in the fee for Sensitive Area reviews from Washington County 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Continuous 2. Continuous - Discussed with every County budget request 3. Retained two properties in the past few years at 68+- acres total; customers contact the District with interest 4. Worked on and with the County Planning Director on numerous occasions to increase from \$50 to \$75-\$100; Planning Director never moved forward. The District will work with new leadership to implement

INFORMATION AND EDUCATION

GOAL # 1: Conduct Washington County Envirothon

STRATEGIES	ACTIONS TAKEN
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Conduct fundraising to support the event 2. Participate in the State Envirothon 3. Seek grant funds to support the program from MASCD 4. Provide stipend for coaches to attend the State Envirothon 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Conduct contribution campaign in January annually 2. Winners of local event participate 3. Submit grant application and final report prior to and following each year's event 4. Provided annually to support event

GOAL # 2: : Improve outreach to Agricultural community

STRATEGIES	ACTIONS TAKEN
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Display at Ag Expo (1 Week) 2. Maintain e-mail list for customers 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Staff set up unmanned booth with literature and Backyard Conservation display 2. E-mail list is developed and being updated continually, used for programs updates, office schedules, etc.

GOAL #3: Improve outreach to the Urban community

STRATEGIES	ACTIONS TAKEN
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Promote Backyard Conservation at outreach events 2. Participate in monthly Land Use Council meetings 3. Update website to include more Urban program content 4. Continue development and growth of the Wildlife Program; being developed in cooperation with SMORES 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Literature, staff and/or display for outreach events 2. Staff participate in monthly meetings as workload and time allows 3. Continuous 4. MOA signed and flyer being developed; program pilot to begin Spring 2026