

# Garrett Soil Conservation District

## Conservation News

1916 Maryland Hwy, Suite C Mt Lake Park, MD 21550

<https://garrettscd.org>

301-501-5886

### Important Dates

Now - [Scholarship Appls Open](#)

March 1 – [Manure Spreading](#)  
Resumes. Ban began Dec 16.

March 8 – Deadline for [Buffer Initiative](#)

March 19 – GSCD Board Meeting

March 29 – [MARBIDCO](#) deadline

April 1 – Last Day to [Purchase Trees  
and Bushes](#)

April 11 – [VAPG deadline](#)

April 16 – GSCD Board Meeting

May 1 – [Scholarship Deadline](#)

## Funding Increases for 2024

[The Inflation Reduction Act](#) (IRA) is providing the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) with over 19.5 billion dollars in additional funds beyond the amount allotted yearly for the programs involved. Here in Garrett County, this funding boost will particularly affect the [Environmental Quality Incentives Program](#) (EQIP).

EQIP is one of the largest sources of funding that the District uses to provide cost-share assistance to local farmers and land-owners.

This means that there is a considerable amount of funding available in Garrett County for qualified projects.

IRA funds target projects that reduce greenhouse gas emissions and expand carbon storage.

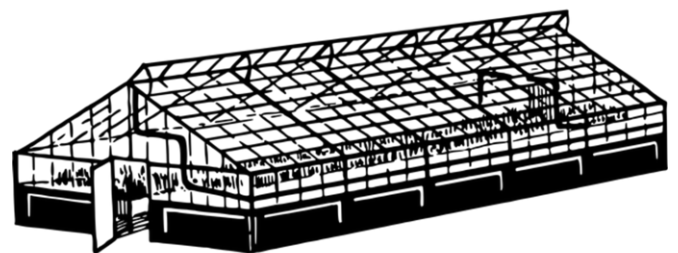
With these increased monies added to the regular funding pools, many more projects will be able to be supported in Garrett County than in previous years.

Currently, there is a waiting list for projects that require design and engineer work. Though, if producers are interested, they should apply so that they can be added to the list.

The following projects can be funded more quickly. Farmers and landowners who are interested are encouraged to apply now.

- [High Tunnel](#) (not needing water assistance)
- [Riparian Buffers](#)
- [Wildlife Habitat Planting](#)
- Pollinator Planting
- [Windbreak Establishment or Renovation](#)
- [Forest Management](#)
- [Grazing](#)

To apply, please come to our office at **1916 Maryland Hwy, Ste C, Mt Lake Park, MD 21550**.





## Letter from the Chairman James “Smokey” Stanton

Several reminders and announcements as we move to spring 2024.

**GSCD Scholarship applications due May 1.** The Garrett Soil Conservation District scholarship program application season is open. The GSCD Board of Supervisors annually awards a \$1,000 college scholarship to a student who is attending – or who attended – Garrett County schools and who is majoring in agricultural, natural resources, or an environment-related field. The Board is pleased to announce this year’s scholarship is also supported financially by Farm Credit of the Virginias.

The scholarship is “unrestricted”, i.e., the student may use the funds for school-related expenses as well as for tuition costs. Applications must be submitted by May 1, 2024, and include the completed form, transcripts, and a one-page essay. More information and the application form at:

<https://garrettscd.org/scholarship/>

### **Nutrient Management Annual Implementation Reports**

Approximately 5,500 Maryland farmers are regulated by the department’s Nutrient Management Program. Farmers are required to follow nutrient management plans when fertilizing crops and managing animal manure and submit annual reports summarizing nutrient applications for the previous year. Confined Animal Feeding Operations (CAFO’s) operating under a permit from the Maryland Department of the Environment submit one combined Reporting Form and a manure analysis to Maryland’s Nutrient Management Program. The deadline to submit Annual Implementation Reports (AIR’s) outlining nutrient applications made in calendar year 2023 is March 1, 2024. More information and forms, both electronic and hard copy, at [https://mda.maryland.gov/resource\\_conservation/Pages/air.aspx](https://mda.maryland.gov/resource_conservation/Pages/air.aspx).

### **Maryland Department of Agriculture Nutrient Management Planning Producer Task Force Final Draft Report**

The Maryland Secretary of Agriculture, in conjunction with the Dean of Agriculture at the University of Maryland, called for a Producer Task Force to evaluate the NMP program, review data, and make

recommendations. The intent and goal for the task force is to build a more modern NMP program incorporating the latest research while still meeting environmental safeguards. The Final Draft Report was released November 2023 and is available at:

[https://mda.maryland.gov/resource\\_conservation/counties/MDANMPTaskForceFinalDraftReport15\\_Nov2023%20%282%29.pdf](https://mda.maryland.gov/resource_conservation/counties/MDANMPTaskForceFinalDraftReport15_Nov2023%20%282%29.pdf)



**GARRETT SOIL  
CONSERVATION DISTRICT**

**2024  
\$1000 SCHOLARSHIP**

Now Open- Deadline May 1, 2024

<https://garrettscd.org/scholarship>

## Nutrient Management

The Garrett UMD Extension Office has hired a new full-time Nutrient Management Planner. Andrea Steyer will be writing plans for both Garrett and Allegany County.

Many of the funding opportunities from MDA require that producers have a current Nutrient Management plan. This includes things like Cover Crops, Manure Transport, and MDA cost-share funding, among others.

Because there wasn't a full-time Nutrient Management Planner for a while this past year, plans being completed by the Garrett Extension are backlogged.

If you are planning to apply for funding, and you need to update your Nutrient Management plan or need a Nutrient Management plan to be written, and you intend to have your plan written by the Extension office, we highly recommend that you contact Garrett Extension and get your name on the list as soon as possible.

The Extension office is no longer sending out soil samples, but they have soil bags and information for you to send out your samples yourself.

**You can reach the Extension at 301-334-6960.**



## 2024 Conservation Buffer Initiative

The enrollment period for the Conservation Buffer Initiative this year is January 29 through March 8.

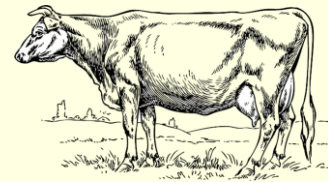
Eligible buffers are forest buffers planted next to waterways, grass buffers planted next to waterways or field ditches, and watercourse access control areas adjacent to pastures.

Payments range from \$500 acre to \$4,500 acre, and contracts are for 5 or 10 years.

Qualifying farmers who plant forest buffers receive a one-time \$1,000 acre signing bonus in addition to incentive payments for this practice.

For more information go to: <https://garrettscd.org/bufferinitiative>

## Introducing District Board of Supervisor's Member, Butch Helbig



Butch Helbig joined the GSCD Board of Supervisors in 2023 as the University of Maryland Extension representative.

Butch has lived in Garrett County all his life. He has long-term experience in both Agriculture and Business, as well as an understanding of Engineering, which are strong assets to the Board.

In high school, he worked at the A&P Store in downtown Oakland, where he garnered a love for serving the Garrett County community. After graduation, he attended University of Maryland to study Pre-Engineering, and then went on to work in Construction for C&P Telephone Company.

Returning to his love for direct service to the community, Butch opened Helbig's Carpet and Cleaning in 1979, where he oversaw operations for 38 years, until he turned the business over to his son and grandson.

Despite his many other endeavors, Butch has always been rooted in Agriculture. He managed a dairy for ten years in partnership with his father-in-law, and then expanded to opening his own beef cattle operation.

Butch's talents are a valuable addition to the Board. Currently, he serves as the Assistant Treasurer.



## 2023 Cover Crops

This fall in Garrett County, 1110.3 acres were planted with cover crops through the Maryland Cover Crop program.

In order to be eligible, farmers needed to sign up by July 17, 2023.

Cover Crop sign up for 2024 will begin around the end of June to the beginning of July 2024.

For more information about the Cover Crop Program, visit our website at:

<https://garrettscd.org/covercropprogram/>



## FAFSA Changes for Farmers

Farm families who have students in college, or who have students that plan to enter college soon, need to be aware that FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) guidelines have changed.

The FAFSA dictates federal aid for college students. Additionally, colleges and universities may use the FAFSA score to select other need-based scholarship awards.

Farm families filing schedule F must now claim the full net worth of the farm as an asset. The guidelines are complex, so it is suggested that farm families research the changes. This may reduce aid for some farm families but increase it for others due to a raise in the maximum income level. For more information, go to <https://garrettscd.org/fafsa>.

## Healthy Soils Competitive Fund



The Maryland Department of Agriculture is offering grants to farmers to adopt a range of healthy soil and agroforestry practices.

Grants are up to \$50,000 to support three years of enhanced healthy soil practices.

Individual farmers operating in Maryland are eligible, as well as groups of farmers operating in Maryland and individuals or organizations conducting research with farmers in Maryland.

Farm size is not a consideration. For farmers, funds may be used to cover overhead or indirect costs, support implementation of conservation practices, cover research costs and to purchase or rent equipment that supports the adoption of soil health practices.

The deadline to apply is **March 6**, and grant recipients will be announced by **April 30, 2024**.

For more information and a list of the types of projects funded, please go to the GSCD website at <https://garrettscd.org> and click on the Announcements tab. You'll find it under Healthy Soils Competitive Fund.

## Value-Added Producer Grants

The Value-Added Producer Grant Program (VAPG) helps agricultural producers enter value-added activities to generate new products, create and expand marketing opportunities, and increase producer income.

Grants are up to \$75,000 for Planning and up to \$250,000 for Working Capital.

Matching grant funds may be available from MARBIDCO.

Deadlines are March 29 for MARBIDCO and April 11 for VAPG.

For more information go to

[https://www.marbidco.org/pages/programs\\_grants/grant\\_programs\\_mvampg.htm](https://www.marbidco.org/pages/programs_grants/grant_programs_mvampg.htm)

## How Garrett Soil Conservation District is Funded

Have you ever wondered how the District itself is funded?

You may be interested to know that only a portion of the money necessary to operate the Soil Conservation District comes from state funds. This is because back in 1935, when Soil Conservation Districts were created, they were designed to be a local entity that would work toward soil conservation goals in their respective counties.

Soil Conservation Districts (SCD) are governed by a local Board of Directors with the goal of helping local citizens conserve their soil and water. The Garrett SCD is primarily made up of Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS, federal) and Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA, state) employees, with NRCS providing the technical trainings and software that is needed to install best management practices (BMP).

SCDs have never been a regulatory body but do review and approve erosion and sediment control plans when at least 5,000 square feet of ground is disturbed. They were established under the premise that landowners want to conserve their soil and water but that barriers, such as costs of construction and engineering hinder BMP's from being installed. SCDs help to remove or lessen those barriers.

Because they are considered a local entity, it was expected that a substantial portion of funding for SCD's come from local sources.

The State of Maryland does contribute some of the money needed to run the Garrett Soil Conservation District. But the State expects the District to obtain funding locally for the rest.

In many counties, the County government matches the State of Maryland contributions and provides additional staff when it is required.

Only a portion of the money needed from local sources to operate the District comes from Garrett County government. That means that the Garrett SCD must raise funds to pay for the rest.

If our District does not raise money from fund-raisers, we cannot do as many of our outreach endeavors such as the scholarships, 4-H fair competitions, the Fair Booth, much more.



And that's not all. The District also has to raise money locally to pay for some of the administrative and operational costs to keep the District staffed and open to farmers and landowners to help them with their soil and water conservation.

The fact is, without local money, the District simply would not be here. And that means all the District assistance that is provided to local farmers and landowners would stop, not to mention the many community outreach projects.

There are countless worthy organizations asking for financial help these days. Sometimes it may seem overwhelming. So, we have a better plan. One where everyone benefits!

Right now, we are offering Fruit Trees and Bushes, which will be distributed in April 2024. They are superior-quality, and our pricing is below the average. Everyone wins because:

- We earn local funds
- You get a bargain on fruit trees & bushes
- More trees planted helps our community environment

See the next page for details or visit <https://garrettsoilconservation.org>

- **Helping You**
- **Helping Us**
- **Helping the Environment**



## High Tunnel Funding through NRCS

(Natural Resource  
Conservation  
Service)



A [high tunnel](#), which is sometimes called a hoop house, is a metal framed structure covered with greenhouse plastic. They look a lot like a greenhouse, but they generally don't have an artificial heating source, and plants are grown in the ground as opposed to in pots.

Farmers in Garrett County use high tunnels to extend the growing season because crops can be successfully grown in them, both earlier and later in the year in our cold climate. Plus, they can be effective in keeping deer at bay.

In addition, High Tunnels:

- Improve plant quality and soil quality
- Reduce nutrient and pesticide transportation
- Improve air quality through reduced transportation inputs
- Reduce energy use by providing consumers with a local source of fresh produce

Because high tunnels prevent direct rainfall from reaching plants, farmers can use precision tools like drip irrigation to efficiently deliver water and nutrients to plants. High tunnels also offer farmers a greater ability to control pests and can even protect plants from pollen and pesticide drift.

Normally, funding to help purchase High Tunnels in Garrett County is very limited because only a small amount of money is approved for this use. But thanks to an increase in funding, the NRCS can now assist more individuals and farmers with cost-share for tunnels. But this funding is available only for a short time. Please be advised that you will need to have a water source at the area where you plan to put the tunnel, as there is a long waiting list for water assistance.

### Tunnel Program Facts

- NRCS has funding available to help individuals purchase high tunnels.
- You do not have to own a farm to receive help purchasing a tunnel.
- Senior Citizens and Families that want to grow vegetables for their own consumption can apply.
- You will need to have a water source available at the area where you plan to put the tunnel.
- The only income stipulation is that individuals cannot make over \$900,000 per year.
- Tunnels range in size from large to small. Applicants choose the size based on their needs. If getting a smaller tunnel, though, you may need to pay a higher cost-share.
- Tunnel plastic lasts about 3 years. You will have to pay for tunnel upkeep.
- You will need to pay first, and after the tunnel is completed, you will be reimbursed.
- Funding generally provides 75% of the project costs. Socially disadvantaged and new farmers may be eligible for higher reimbursement rates.
- If you are serious about wanting a tunnel, now is the time to apply. Funding increases will only be available for a limited time. Without these funds, there are only a few tunnels funded each year in Garrett County.
- For more information, please contact Jacob Metcalf at [jacob.metcalf@usda.gov](mailto:jacob.metcalf@usda.gov) or 301-501-5862.



## Helping Maple Syrup Producers

The Garrett Soil Conservation District is helping interested Garrett County Maple Syrup producers conduct energy audits and operation upgrades.

Through the [Environmental Quality Initiatives Program On-Farm Energy Initiative](#), the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), which is part of the District, is able to help Producers obtain financial assistance to inventory and analyze farm systems that use energy, and identify opportunities to improve efficiency through the development of an Agricultural Energy Management Plan (AgEMP).

Once an AgEMP has been completed, eligible producers can apply for EQIP assistance for the purchase, installation, or retrofit of certain buildings or equipment to improve energy efficiency.

The AgEMP is completed by NRCS-certified Technical Service Providers (TSPs). It offers:

- Itemized energy use by individual systems to establish a baseline for electricity and other fuel improvements,
- Recommendations for equipment improvements and upgrades,
- Potential energy reductions and financial savings for each recommendation
- Cost estimates of potential improvements, and
- Length of expected payback for energy efficiency upgrades

With so many Maple Syrup producers in Garrett County, local NRCS staff jumped on the opportunity to use the Initiative to help add value to the Maple Syrup operations of interested farmers.



### On-Farm Energy Initiative Facts

The On-Farm Energy Initiative isn't just for Maple Syrup producers. Any Garrett County farmer can take advantage of the funding. It may pay for energy efficiency improvements such as:

- Lighting
- Plate Coolers
- Ventilation and Fans
- Irrigation Pumps
- Grain Dryers
- Greenhouse Improvements
- Maple Syrup Evaporators
- Heating and Refrigeration Units
- Insulation and Building Envelope Sealing
- Motor Controls and Variable Speed Drive

If you are a commercial maple syrup producer in Garrett County who has not yet been contacted about the program, or if you are interested in knowing more about the On-Farm Energy Initiative for other farming practices, please contact our office.

**301-501-5886**

<mailto:jacob.metcalfe@usda.gov>

## Our Website: More Than Just an Online Presence

One of the best resources the District has to offer is our website. It is loaded with information. We have outlined Conservation Practices, funding sources, information about the District's outreach programs, regulations, usable tools, updates, old photos, opportunities, and much more.

Our website has close to 100 pages right now, with more being added regularly.

The goal for the website is to help producers, landowners, and the community by providing as much useful information as possible.

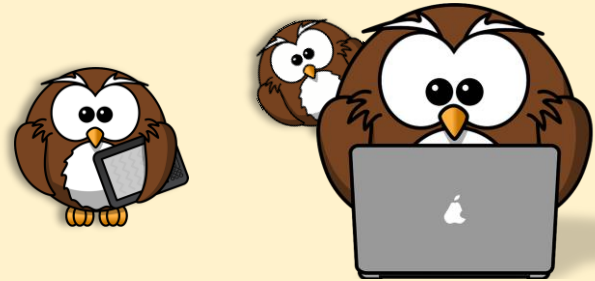
Our new website went up last winter, when we opted to replace the old one with something more than just a simple online presence. Today, the site is loaded with resources accessible at any time.

You will find it at <https://garrettscd.org>. Or you can simply Google the Garrett Soil Conservation District, and you'll find us listed.

In addition to the main website, the District also has another website dedicated specifically to fund-raising. Since the District's outreach endeavors and some other activities are not paid for by State or Federal funds, the District needs to raise money ongoingly. Right now, we are hosting a fruit tree and fruiting bush sale.

You can reach our fundraising website at <https://garrettsoilconservation.org>. Or just click on the link at the top of our main website.

If there are things you would like to see added to our website, please let us know by emailing us at <mailto:jeannie.frazee@maryland.gov>.



Visit us at <https://garrettscd.org> and on [Facebook](#) at **Garrett Soil Conservation District**

### Garrett Soil Conservation District

**Business Hours:**  
Monday through Friday  
8:00 am – 4:30 pm

**Phone: 301-501-5886**



#### Office Staff

- [Seth Metheny](#), District Manager (MDA)
- [Chad Bucklew](#), District Conservationist (USDA-NRCS)
- [Charles "Chuck" Hayes](#), Soil Conservation Associate (MDA)
- [Chris Herbert](#), Soil Conservation Engineering Technician (MDA)
- [Jacob Metcalf](#), Soil Conservationist (USDA-NRCS)
- [Will Gindlesberger](#), Soil Conservationist (USDA-NRCS)
- [Jarrod Sisler](#), Soil Conservation Technician (MDA)
- [Matt Jones](#) – Soil Conservation Technician (MDA)
- [Craig Zimmermann](#) – Soil Con Technician (USDA-NRCS)
- [Jillian Mason](#), Conservation Planner (MDA)
- [Miranda Rounds](#), Conservation Planner (MDA)
- [Jeannie Frazee](#), Administrative Specialist/Web Developer (GSCD)



The Garrett Soil Conservation District (GSCD) prohibits discrimination in its programs on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, and marital or family status.

**Board of Supervisors**  
James "Smokey" Stanton, Chairman  
Kristen Enlow, Vice Chairman, Acting Treasurer  
Bill Buckel, Member, *Farm Bureau Representative*  
Butch Helbig, Member, *UMD Representative*  
Nevin Sines, *GC Commissioner's Representative*

If you would like to know more about being a supervisor or associate supervisor, please contact the district office at 301-501-5886.

[Editor](#) – Jeannie Frazee



# Garrett Soil Conservation District's Tree and Bush Sale

## *Fruit Trees*

- **Apple**
  - Albemarle Pippin – Hard Cider
  - Fuji – Long Term Storage
  - Yellow Transparent – Grandma’s Applesauce
  - Gala - #1 in US, Fresh Eating
  - GoldRush – Beginning Grower
  - Autumn Crisp – More Vitamin C
  - Crimson Crisp – Voted Superior to Honey Crisp
  - Ruby Rush – Grow Organically
- **Plum**
  - Castleton – Heavy Fruiting
  - Long John – Black Knot Resistant
- **Pear**
  - Bartlett – Can Bear 50 to 100 years
  - Potomac – Fireblight Resistant
- **Cherry**
  - Montmorency - #1 Commercial Cherry

## *Berry Bushes*

- **Blueberry** – Cold-hardy varieties. Set of 4 ripen in succession. Nelson, Patriot, Elliot, Bonus. Plus Northland.
- **Raspberry** – Pequot Lakes Black famous for cancer killing antioxidants. Addison Red is a known variety from a Garrett County Breeder
- **Elderberry** – Bob Gordon resists Japanese Beetles. Wyldewood is a late bearing elderberry.



Order Now!  
Some varieties may  
be sold out by end  
of sale.

**Order online at:**  
<https://garrettsoilconservation.org>

Albemarle Pippin -	x \$20 =
Fuji -	x \$20 =
Yellow Transparent -	x \$20 =
Gala -	x \$20 =
GoldRush -	x \$20 =
Autumn Crisp -	x \$20 =
Crimson Crisp -	x \$20 =
Ruby Rush -	x \$20 =
Castleton -	x \$20 =
Long John -	x \$20 =
Bartlett -	x \$20 =
Potomac -	x \$20 =
Montmorency	x \$20 =
Blueberry 4 Pack	x \$35 =
Nelson	x \$10 =
Patriot	x \$10 =
Elliott	x \$10 =
Bonus	x \$10 =
Northland	x \$10 =

Pequot Lakes -	x \$10 =
Addison -	x \$10 =
Bob Gordon -	x \$10 =
Wyldewood -	x \$10 =

Total Trees \_\_\_\_\_ Amount Due \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Make checks payable to, and mail to: Garrett Soil Conservation District,  
1916 Maryland Hwy, Ste C, Mt. Lake Park, MD 21550

For more information - 301-501-5886 or jeannie.fraze@maryland.gov