

Garrett Soil Conservation District

Conservation News

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

<https://garrettscd.org>

301-501-5886

Important Dates

Nov 15 – Deadline Apply NRCS ActNow – Tunnels, Energy Audits, Cover Crop Initiative

Nov 19 – GSCD Board of Supervisors Mtg

Nov 22 – Late Season Deadline Cover Crop

Dec 2 – Certification Deadline Cover Crop

Dec 15 – Deadline Apply NRCS, Cropland, Grazing, Livestock, and Forestry projects

Dec 17 – GSCD Board of Supervisors Mtg

Visit the Website often for important notices and updates.

<https://garrettscd.org>

Spotted Lantern Flies

[Spotted Lantern flies](#) have started to make their way into Garrett County. If you see any, please be diligent to stomp on them. This is a dangerous invasive species that multiplies rapidly. Each one you kill will reduce the numbers that would be by thousands.



GSCD Fruit Tree & Bush Sale

Numerous folks have asked us if we are going to have the [Fruit Tree & Bush Sale](#) again this coming spring.

Well, we have good news. It's back!

We are accepting orders now for pick up in April.

All our trees and bushes have been [customized](#) for the Garrett County and surrounding area climate and growing conditions. They are all winter hardy to at least zone 5a with most being zone 4 and below. Additionally, we have specialized the rootstocks whenever possible so that the trees are better suited for cold-hardiness, stability, and drought tolerance. This will be particularly apparent in the smaller semi-dwarfs and dwarfs, which are typically sold in stores on a rootstock with a shallow, surface rooting system. Ours will have deep roots to help with stability and drought tolerance.

We have 10 varieties of **apple** trees, (5 of which are heirlooms); **plum; pear; cherry; and peach. For bushes, we have blueberry, elderberry, red raspberry, and black raspberry.**

Some of the cultivars that we are carrying are more difficult to find and our stock of those is limited. Therefore, we recommend that you order early, as some varieties may be sold out before the end of the sale.

Funds raised from the sale will be used for our outreach programs such as the scholarship and costs of our community conservation efforts not paid by other sources.

You can order online at <https://garrettsoilconservation.org> or email us at jeannie.frazee@maryland.gov for more information.



New Board Member Nevin Sines

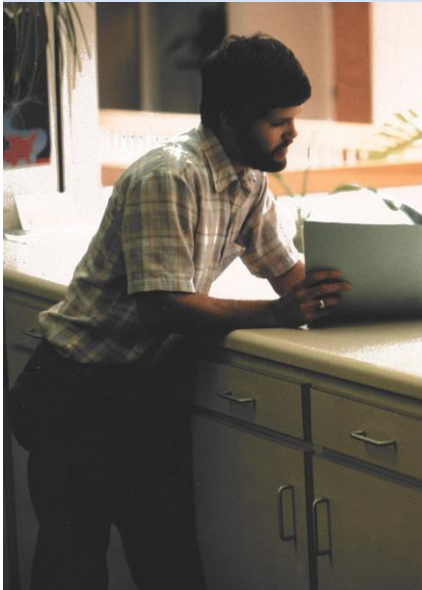
Nevin Sines was nominated to the District Board of Supervisors in 2024, as the Garrett County UMD Extension representative. Nevin and his wife Yvonne own and operate a 600-acre farm and dairy with 100 head in the Oakland area. Nevin's parents started the farm in 1945, and Nevin and Yvonne purchased it in 1998.

Sines Dairy was previously awarded the Garrett Soil Conservation District Farm Family of the Year, and in 2020, the Garrett County Farm Bureau recognized them for 75 years of dairy farming in the county.

Nevin is a welcome addition to the Board, bringing a wealth of agricultural experience and expertise, as well as knowledge about conservation best practices and their benefits for agricultural.



Nevin Sines



Chuck Hayes back in the day explaining a Conservation plan to a producer.



Retired in 2024

Both Chris Herbert and Chuck Hayes have retired from the District this year. Chris Herbert was an MDA Soil Conservation Engineering Technician for 8 years in Garrett County and 16 years in Washington County, and Chuck Hayes worked as a Soil Conservation Associate for MDA. Chuck worked at the District from 1984 through this year, for a whopping 40 years! We greatly appreciate their hard work and dedication through the years!! They have both made a difference to many producers in Garrett County through their tireless efforts.

Miranda Rounds <mailto:miranda.rounds2@maryland.gov> is now overseeing Cover Crop, and <mailto:tricia.kipp@maryland.gov> is working with Manure Transport.

Joined the District in 2024

Tricia Kipp joined the District in March of 2024, as a Soil Conservation Associate II.

Tricia worked as an Administrative Associate at Garrett College before beginning a career in Engineering and Land Surveying. Prior to joining the District, she worked in the Engineering private sector for six years.

Tricia enjoys spending time with family, being outdoors, and hiking and biking the Great Allegheny Passage.

She is looking forward to working with the Garrett County farmers; producers; and landowners from problem solving, to design, to building.



Funding Available to Help with Water

Did you experience hardship on your farm this summer because your well or spring went dry during the drought?

There is [funding assistance](#) available to help with springs and wells through the NRCS. But be aware that it does take time because there is a waiting list for projects that require design and engineering work.

If you are interested, you should apply at our office by December 15. We are available Monday – Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. To make an appointment, please contact John Grose at john.grose@usda.gov or call 301-501-5886.



MACS Funding Has Changed

MACS stands for Maryland Agricultural Water Quality Cost-Share Program. This program provides grants to help farmers protect natural resources and comply with environmental laws and regulations. This grant funding is provided through the State of Maryland. MACS is one of the funding pools we use to help farmers pay for many of the projects and practices that are cost-share funded through our office.

Traditionally, to qualify for MACS, producers had to have at least 8 animal units. An animal unit is 1000 lbs. live weight of a particular animal. Producers that did not have 8 animal units or who were not planning to obtain 8 animal units by the time the practice was installed were not eligible for funding.

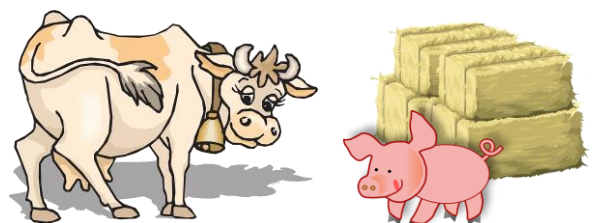
As of October 1, MACS [policy has changed](#) so that operations only need to have one animal unit to apply for the cost-share grants. Funding is prorated, with those producers with 15 or more animal units receiving the full amount of funding, and those with animal units between 1 and 14 receiving less funding based on the number of animal units.

Additionally, the Cost-Effectiveness Factor for eligible practices has doubled. This means that the dollar amount in the equation of cost-share for a particular practice has doubled. In case that sounds confusing, to break it down, the cost-share for different practices is based on an equation that takes into consideration the number of animal units of the producer, the number of years of service-life of the project, and the cost share dollar figure. The cost share dollar figure has doubled. So that means twice as much money in cost-share for the producer.

Check out the list to the right for eligible projects.

Eligible Projects for MACS Funding

- Waste Storage Structure
- Conservation Cover
- Critical Area Planting
- Water Lagoon
- Diversion
- Roofs and Covers
- Fencing
- Silvopasture
- Riparian Herbaceous Cover
- Grade Stabilization Structure
- Grassed Water Way
- Lined Water
- Pasture Management
- Roof Runoff Structure
- Heavy Use Area Protection
- Spring Development
- Stream Crossing
- Watering Facility
- Vegetation Treatment Area
- Water Well





The District's Outreach Projects

The District has fund raisers like the Fruit Tree and Bush sale to obtain funds for its outreach projects. But what does that mean?

Envirothon

Each year, the District assists with the [County Envirothon](#). Envirothon is a training and competition for high school students in aquatics, soils, forestry, wildlife, and a yearly surprise area. Throughout the year, dedicated leaders work with interested students. In the spring, there is a county-wide training and competition. Various agencies come to the training and competition to lead educational activities and challenges in their specific area of expertise. The District leads the Soil portion. The District uses funds raised through our fundraisers to pay for supplies, gifts for the students, and other needs. In addition, this year, the District will be making a donation to the County Envirothon teams for both Southern and Northern high schools to help offset the costs of an Envirothon Field Trip.



Scholarship

The District offers a [scholarship](#) each year to an eligible Garrett County student that is planning to study Agriculture, Forestry, or a related field. For 2025, we will be offering two \$1000 scholarships. Students can apply on our website at the beginning of the year.

The students the District supports are individuals that aspire to improve their knowledge in agriculture or forestry and apply it here in Garrett County. It's an investment in the future of the County, and it's an investment in our kids.



Future Farmers of America

The District has helped FFA with various needs throughout the years. Last year, the District made a [donation to FFA](#) to help with costs for a State Competition. This year, the District plans to help FFA team members for both Northern and Southern high schools obtain needed equipment for competitions. As requested by each FFA club, the District will be donating Munsell Soil Books to the Southern FFA and GPS units to the Northern FFA.



Education and Programming

The District focuses on Conservation education, and we try to reach people in many ways. For example, at the Garrett County Agriculture fair, we set up an informational booth with lots of kids' activities. We have a rain simulator that we can take to classrooms, clubs, and community groups. And we can provide educational programs and activities when requested.

Additionally, our staff avails itself of every opportunity to help counsel producers and the community about best conservation practices.



Thank You to the Following Businesses!

The District's Cooperators Dinner was held on November 15, at Bittinger Mennonite Gymnasium. In conjunction with the dinner, the District held a Ticket Bowl Auction and 50/50 drawing to raise money for outreach programs like the scholarship, Envirothon, FFA contributions and other outreach endeavors.

The following business donated items for the auction. Be sure to support these businesses and thank them for caring about local farmers.

- [Rigidply Rafters](#) – 2 Gift Baskets
- [Firefly Farms](#) - \$75 Cheese & Accessories
- [Fischer Auto](#) – Collector Toy Bus
- [Brenda's Restaurant Group](#) – Two \$25 Gift Certificates
- [Montcroft Farm](#) – 20 Bags of Potatoes
- [Naylor's Hardware](#) – \$45 Yeti Cup
- [Fun Zone](#) – 2 Tickets to Fun Zone
- [Advance Auto](#) – Wash Bucket
- [Uno's Pizzeria & Grill](#) – A \$25 Gift Certificate
- [Manor Home Center](#) – A Voltage Tester
- [Lowe's](#) – A Christmas Tree
- [Sam's Agway](#) - \$25 Gift Certificate

Tri-Colored Bat Now Endangered Species

The Tri-Colored Bat has now been listed as a [State Endangered Species](#) in Maryland.

It is the smallest bat in Maryland. It has distinct tri-colored fur that appears yellowish-brown and is dark brown at the base, pale in the middle, and dark at the tip. It has black wing membranes.

The Tri-Colored Bat was once quite common but much of its population has been wiped out due to White-Nose Syndrome.

These bats often roost in clumps of leaves and open buildings. In the winter they roost in caves, rock crevices, and mines.



Results of Forest Conservation Efforts

48% of Maryland's total land area is covered in forest or tree canopy.

Allegany County has the most percent of tree canopy cover. Baltimore has the least.

The largest loss of forest has been in the Washington D.C. and Baltimore areas, not surprisingly.

Garrett County has the highest total timber harvests on private and state lands, which is consistent with its forested acreage.

Priority protected areas have seen a smaller loss, indicating that programs to protect the land are working.

In 2018 and 2019, approx. 550,533 trees and an additional 477 acres were planted through tree planting programs, including those funded through NRCS & MDA.

Sadly, Emerald Ash Borer has caused a loss of 83% of Ash Trees in the State.

From Chesapeake Conservancy, 2022 study

They are now listed as a Species of Greatest Conservation Need in Maryland and are ranked Highly State Rare.

For producers this means that any conservation practices funded by the NRCS or MDA must take into consideration, and not disturb, the Tri-Colored Bat's habitat. This can affect how and where conservation practices occur.

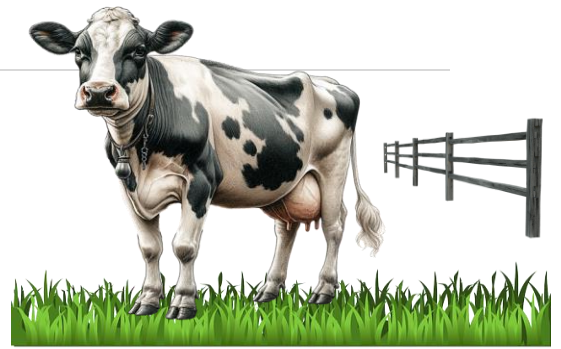
Additionally, for those interested in helping the bats, there may be funding available to help improve their habitat in areas where they are found.



You Asked...

Q. Why does there suddenly seem to be a lot of opportunity for help with agricultural and forestry conservation practices?

A. There has been a temporary, and very large, [increase in funding](#). And to help get that funding into the hands of local producers there has been an increase in staff. In the past, the staff was very small, and funding was far more limited. There are two years left (2025 and 2026) for this funding.



Q. I came to the District office a number of years ago and talked about a project I would like to have help with funding. But it didn't go further. Now, I see other farmers in the area getting a similar project. Why didn't I get funded?

A. Have you talked to our office recently about a Conservation Plan or filled out an application if it is an NRCS cost-share project? Funding has recently increased. If we haven't heard from you lately, we assume you are no longer interested.



Q. My neighbor applied for help with a High Tunnel, and he had it built and paid for within months. How is that possible?

A. NRCS has a new program called [ActNow](#). Some practices, including Tunnels, can qualify. With ActNow, projects can be approved very quickly and funds dispersed swiftly once the project is complete. Not all practices qualify for ActNow though.



Q. I want a new [Waste Storage Facility](#), but I can't afford to pay any money toward the cost.

A. All our programs are cost-share funding. That means you do have to pay for some of the costs. [Beginning farmers](#) and [socially disadvantaged farmers](#) may have a slightly lower cost share.



Q. Why do I need a Conservation Plan?

A. A [Conservation Plan](#) is like a blueprint of your farm or forest and its needs. It allows us to show you clearly how specific changes can help with conservation on your land. Once the plan is complete, our staff can tell you about funding that may be available to complete certain project that are recommended for your property. Looking at the property as a whole assures that everything works together. You do need to have a resource concern to get funding. The plan documents that there is a concern.



Q. I would like to have help, but I don't know where to start.

A. Come to our office and ask to be added to the list for a Conservation plan. If you already have a current Conservation plan, schedule a time to talk to one of our staff. If you are looking for help with a Tunnel, Forestry, or something pertaining to Grazing, come to our office and fill out an NRCS application.

Q. I'm afraid MDE will find out about my farm if I work with GSCD

A. The District ([MDA](#)) & [MDE](#) are separate organizations. GSCD has no interest in calling MDE if we see any violations. We hate to break the news, but if you have a farm MDE knows about you already because they have [Google Earth](#) too, so they can look down on the whole county any time. The District does work with farmers to help them get out from under MDE violations though.

Programs for Wildlife Habitat

NRCS has a cost-share program to help landowners create, increase, or improve [wildlife](#) habitat on their property.

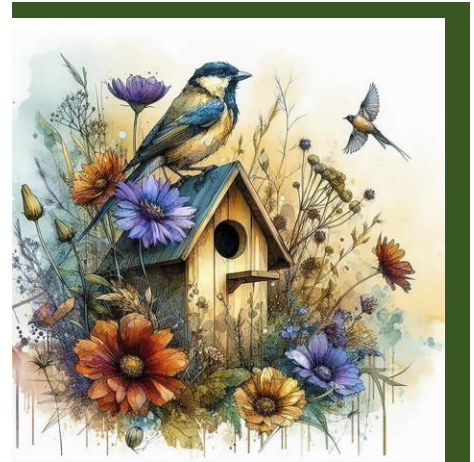
Some of the things the program can do are establish vegetation, create structures, and manipulate vegetation to make it more desirable for habitat over time. These practices are aimed at providing shelter, food, and protection for wildlife.

After someone applies for help with Wildlife Habitat, a Conservationist will come out and assess the property to see what practices will be best suited. The landowner will be included in the evaluation, allowing the landowner to express needs, concerns, and goals.

Landowners are never required to complete the suggested practices. The evaluation simply lets the landowner know what things could be done on the property to improve wildlife habitat and what cost share help is available for those things.

There are funds for both wetland areas and upland.

The deadline to apply for funding for 2025 is December 20, 2024. However, there could be another enrollment around the beginning of the year if additional funding becomes available.



Birdhouses and Other Wildlife Structures

[Structures for wildlife](#) are constructed pieces designed to provide loafing, escape, nesting, rearing, roosting, perching, and/or basking habitat. An example would be bird houses, nesting boxes, rock piles, brush piles and rapture perches.

In conjunction with the Wildlife Habitat program, there is funding through the NRCS to help pay for some of these structures if they pose a benefit to wildlife because the property is lacking in shelter or protection.

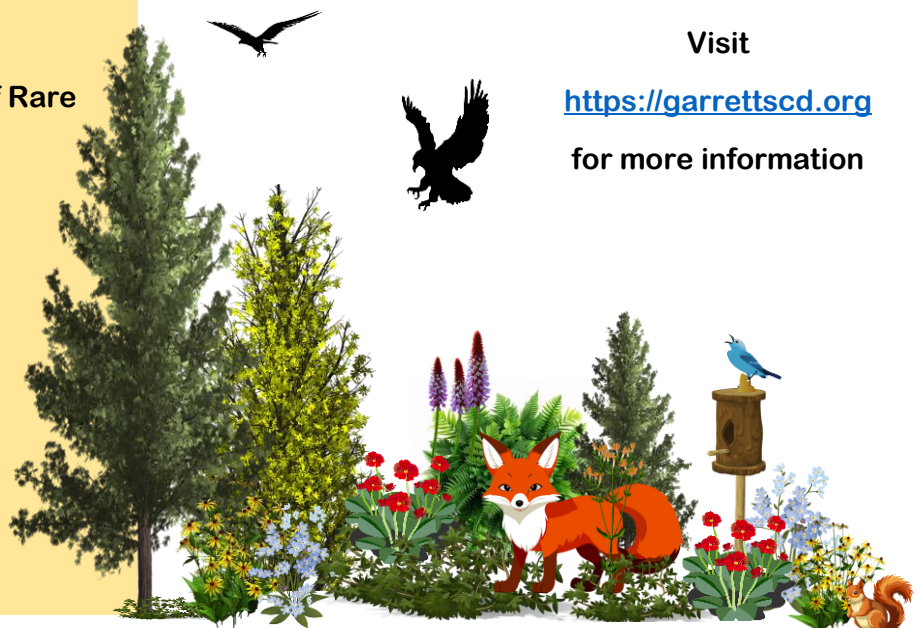
Additionally, funding can help pay for modifications to existing structures like fences and watering facilities that pose an immediate danger to at-risk species. Did you know there is cost-share funding to pay for wildlife escape ramps in watering troughs?

Locally, some of the things that have been installed through this program so far include: Purple Martin houses, Raptor poles, Bluebird boxes, and other nesting boxes.



Cost-Share for Wildlife Management

- Pasture & Hay Planting
- Wildlife Watering Facility
- Early Successions Habitat Development
- Restoration & Management of Rare or Declining Habitats
- Wildlife Habitat Planting
- Structures for Wildlife
- Tree/Shrub Establishment
- Range Planting
- Prescribed Grazing
- Prescribed Burning
- Forage Harvest Management
- Use Exclusion
- Riparian Forest Buffer
- Forest Stand Improvement



Visit

<https://garrettscd.org>

for more information

See if you can find the following items in this newsletter.

If you are age 18 or younger, email us at jeannie.frazee@maryland.gov with a list of each thing and the page # where you found it. If you have them all correct, we will enter you in a random drawing for a gift basket. Tell us your age because the gift basket will be tailored to the winner's age. Get your parents' permission. You will need to come pick it up.

Help Us Get the Word Out

Do you know someone who you think may want our newsletter? **Please refer them to us!**



1. Black-eyed Susans
2. Beagle Dog
3. Two Green Bugs
4. Bell
5. Apple
6. Bunny with Blue Ear
7. A Rock
8. Orange Cat & Bucket
9. The word "Fischer"
10. An eagle
11. Grey Squirrel
12. Hard Hat
13. The word "Silvopasture"
14. 3 Butterflies
15. A Silo

- What do you call a sleeping cow? A bull-dozer
- Why do cows wear bells? Because their horns don't work
- What do you call a pig that lost its voice? Disgruntled
- What do you call a horse that lives next door? A neigh...bor.

Did You Know?

The largest tomato ever picked weighted over 7 lbs? That is the size of the average newborn baby. It was picked in Oklahoma in 1986.



Bonus – Part of an Ice Cream Cone

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)
- [Will Gindlesberger](#), Soil Conservationist (USDA-NRCS)
- [Jarrod Sisler](#), Soil Conservation Technician (MDA)
- [Craig Zimmermann](#) – Soil Con Technician (USDA-NRCS)
- [Jillian Mason](#), Conservation Planner (MDA)
- [Miranda Rounds](#), Conservation Planner (MDA)
- [Tricia Kipp](#), Soil Conservation Technician (MDA)
- [John Grose](#), Program Support Specialist (RC&D)
- [Jeannie Frazee](#), Administrative Specialist/Web Developer (GSCD)



Board of Supervisors

- James "Smokey" Stanton**, Chairman
- Kristen Enlow**, Vice Chairman
- Butch Helbig**, Treasurer, *UMD Representative*
- Nevin Sines**, *GC Commissioner's Representative*
- Farm Bureau Representative is Pending**

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

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.

[Editor](#) – Jeannie Frazee