

Garrett Soil Conservation District

Conservation News

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

<https://garrettscd.org>

301-501-5886

IRA Funding Freeze

President Trump signed an executive order in January requiring all federal agencies to immediately pause the disbursement of IRA (Inflation Reduction Act) funding.

For the past year, we have been letting you know about new funding available for cost-share projects in Garrett County. Approximately half of the program funds in 2024 were through IRA. IRA fund availability is currently paused pending a review by Secretary of Agriculture Brooke Rollins. Secretary Rollins is reviewing funding to ensure that programs are directly supporting farmers.

Contracts funded in 2024 with IRA funds are fully funded contracts and funds are being reimbursed as projects are completed. But no 2025 contracts have been funded with IRA funds. No timeline has been provided regarding when IRA funding might be available.

We have been funding applications with traditional Farm Bill funding, such as EQIP (Environmental Quality Incentive Program). Maryland has been allocated approximately \$15 Million in EQIP funds for 2025. To date, the EQIP funds for Fiscal Year 2025 have all been allocated to preapproved applications. Applications that have not been preapproved to date will not likely be funded in 2025.

MACS (Maryland Agricultural Cost Share) funding through the Maryland Department of Agriculture is also somewhat limited at present. Funding for MACS capital (fence, water developments, manure storage) projects for the next Maryland budget year is limited to \$5 Million.

The application deadline for Fiscal Year 2025 federal EQIP funding will likely be November or December 2025, at the earliest.

Producers who are interested in moving forward with MACS- only funding should [contact the office](#) to discuss the status of their conservation plan and practice designs.



- May 22 –GSCD Board of Supervisors meeting, 7 pm
- June 11-12 – [Maryland State Envirothon](#) to be held in Garrett County
- June 19 – GSCD Board of Supervisors meeting, 7 pm
- End June – [Cover Crop](#) sign up, 10 acres or more. Actual dates TBD

When we have important updates, we send out emails. If you would like to be added to the list, please send your email address to jeannie.frazee@maryland.gov or call 301-501-5886. Don't get left out!



The District Donates GPS Units

In April, the District donated 5 Handheld GPS units to the Northern High School FFA Club (Future Farmers of America).

Last fall, the District donated [Munsell Soil Color books](#) to the Southern FFA Club.

These donations were the result of the District asking the FFA teachers at each school to make a request for a needed item for their club.

Funds raised at the Cooperator's Dinner in October through auction item sales, and funds generated from the 2024 Fruit Tree & Bush Sale were instrumental in the District being able to fill these needs.



District staff member, Jillian Mason, presents GPS units to the Northern High School FFA Club

Understanding Cover Crop Programs

Regular [Cover Crop Program](#)

- **Sign up** – End of June – Beginning July
- **Planting Size** – 10 Acres or more
- **Qualifications** – Must be planted after cash crop (vegetables, corn, soybeans, hemp, millet, sorghum)
- **Grant Amount**
 - Base Rate - \$60 acre
 - Rye & Mixed Species – Add \$20 acre
 - Triticale – Add \$20 acre
 - Maximum payment \$105 acre
 - Must follow planting and termination dates to receive full amount

[Small Acreage Cover Crop](#) Program

- **Sign up** – March – April
- **Planting Size** – 10 Acres or less
- **Qualifications** – Farm must generate a minimum of \$1000 annually
- **Grant Amount** – Reimbursement for the cost of the seeds. Must have receipts. Maximum is \$1,500 annually

[Cover Crop Plus](#) - Same cover crop on same field for 3 years – Sign up with Regular Cover Crop program

- **Planting Size** - 10 Acres or more
- **Base Rate** - \$115 acre
- **Crop Rotation** – Add \$15 acre
- **Integrate Livestock into Cropland** – Add \$15 acre
- **Use PSNT** – Add \$15 acre
- **Must include** - 50% cereal grains and 25% legumes



Meet New Board Member Dorsey Guard

Dorsey Guard is a fourth-generation farmer from Friendsville, Maryland. Having managed the family farm for many years, he now works alongside his eldest son, Jeremiah, daughter-in-law Amanda, and grandson Grant, who has proudly continued the family's agricultural legacy. Following a long history in dairy farming, the Guard family transitioned to raising beef cattle and cultivating grain crops, focusing on corn and soybeans.

In addition to farming, Dorsey worked for the Maryland State Highway Administration, retiring in 2019 after 23 years of service.

He and his wife, Wanda, are the parents of two sons, Michael and Mitchell. Michael is married to Esther, and Mitchell to Allison.

Their family has been blessed with seven grandchildren: Gentry, Trent, Eleanor, Emma, Madelyn, and Lillian. Both Michael and Mitchell serve in the United States Marine Corps, and Esther in the United States Air Force Reserves. Their family's commitment to service stands as a testament to their shared values and dedication.

A lifelong advocate for agriculture, Dorsey proudly served as the past President and member of the Northern Garrett Future Farmers of America and as a former Director of the Garrett County Fair Board. Currently, he serves on the Farm Service Agency Committee, Maryland Farm Bureau, Freedom Ag & Energy Board, and is a Trustee of Mill Run Mercy Chapel.

Dorsey's dedication to farming, family, and community continues to inspire those around him.

2025 Tree & Bush Sale Distribution & Beyond

Thank you so much to everyone who supported our Fruit Tree and Bush sale.

The 2025 Fruit Tree and Bush Sale distribution was on April 10 and 11. It was rainy on the 10th, leaving staff sloshing through rain and mud to find bundles of trees and bushes. But it was a great time anyway. Staff loved meeting so many of you in the community.

The Fruit Tree & Bush Sales have not only generated much valued funds for outreach and other needs associated with keeping GSCD operational to support area farmers and landowners, but they have also helped to increase the planting of fruit trees and shrubs in the area. And in addition, we've been able to make them affordable at a time when costs are soaring everywhere. This makes us happy.

Plans for next year's sale are already underway, and it is hoped that we will have next year's trees and bushes up on [the website](#) to begin taking orders in June or July. Of course, they won't be distributed until April 2026 but having them up so early will allow individuals to begin ordering ahead. It is fine to place multiple orders throughout the sale. We will compile them all for distribution.

We are hoping to add more heirlooms for 2026 and possibly a few nut trees.

If you have a particular fruit tree or fruit bush that you would like to see offered, please let us know at jeannie.frazee@maryland.gov.



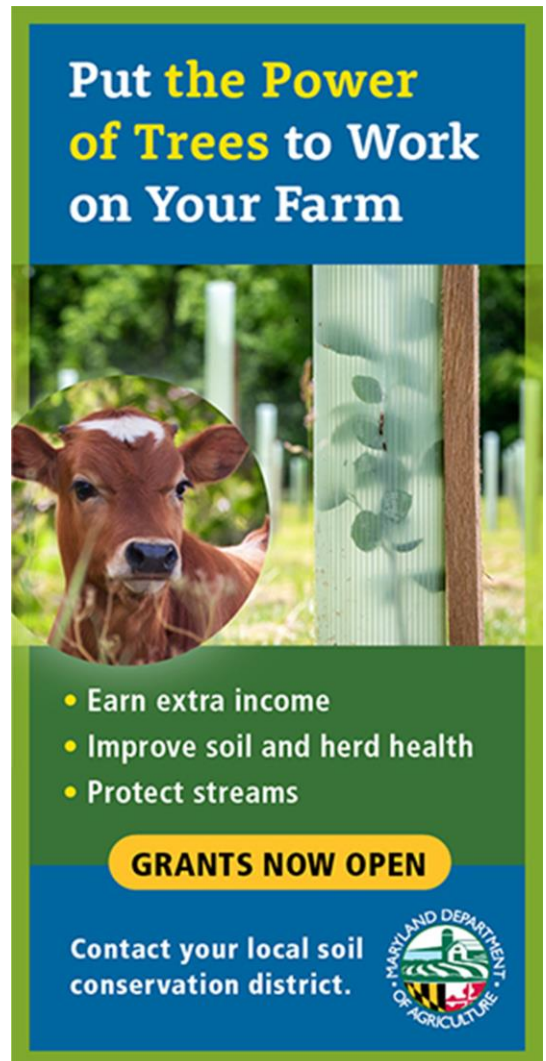
MDA Promotes Tree Planting

Trees improve soil and protect streams.

“Farmers depend on their land to support their families and their operations,” said **Maryland Agriculture Secretary Kevin Atticks**. “If you own marginal farmland near a stream, pastureland that could be integrated with trees, or other land that could benefit from a tree crop, I encourage you to explore our tree planting incentive programs. Planting trees can benefit both your farm and the environment.”

The Maryland Department of Agriculture has several income generating and cost-share programs available to help farmers add trees to their land. Eligible tree-planting and agroforestry practices include:

- **Riparian Forest Buffers**—Trees and shrubs planted along streams to act as natural filters
- **Alley Cropping**—Growing crops in wide alleys between rows of trees to improve soil health
- **Hedgerow Plantings**—Living fences of trees and shrubs that attract wildlife and boost biodiversity
- **Windbreaks**—Rows of trees planted near farm production areas to filter the air and reduce odors
- **Silvopasture**—Integrating trees and grazing livestock to improve herd and soil health
- **Tree and Shrub Establishment**—Planting trees and shrubs to provide environmental benefits



Put the Power of Trees to Work on Your Farm

- Earn extra income
- Improve soil and herd health
- Protect streams

GRANTS NOW OPEN

Contact your local soil conservation district.

MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Watch the Maryland Department of Agriculture Tree Planting Incentives for Farmers video at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cetHqTpcNE8&t=2s>

Tree Planting Programs

Conservation Buffer Initiative – Incentive payments to plant trees next to streams. MDA program. Contact seth.metheny1@maryland.gov

CREP – Landowners receive payments for areas left in trees and shrubs to provide stream buffers. FSA program. Contact annetta.enlow@usda.gov

MACS – Cost-share funding to plant trees and shrubs for hedgerow, windbreaks, silvopasture, etc. Contact GSCD at 301-501-5886 to be added to the list for a Conservation plan.

Healthy Soils Competitive Fund – Incentive program that is competitively awarded and offers up to \$50K for a 3-year agreement. Full-system approach to soil improvement. Contact Nick Miller 410-841-5866.

Garrett Soil Conservation District 2024

Soil Conservation and Water Quality Plans Written/Updated - **66**

Number Acres in Conservation Plans Written – **4,060.30**

Best Management Practices Installed Through Cost-Share - **473**

Number of Farmers Involved - **56**

Erosion & Sediment Control Plans Reviewed - **242**

Erosion & Sediment Control Plans Approved - **192**

Acres Covered with E&S Plans Reviewed – **1,929.58**

Forest Harvest Plans Reviewed - **33**

Acres Covered with Forest Harvest Plans – **2,344.71**

Acres of Cover Crops Planted – **1114.9**

Number of Farmers Planting Cover Crops - **19**

Conservation
Accomplishments
in Garrett
County for 2024



Equipment Rental Policy

Producers must present an **active credit card** to be placed on file prior to taking the drill. No exceptions.

Producers will need to take **photos of the Drill acreage meter** both before and after use and send them to the District.

The Producer's credit card will **automatically be charged for usage**.

Producers must **clean the seed boots and seed box after** using the Drill.*

If equipment is returned dirty the **producer's card will be charged a \$350 cleaning & maintenance fee**.

New Equipment Rental Policy

Beginning in April 2025, the District has instituted a new policy for all equipment rentals.

In the past, there were issues with the equipment being returned dirty, and farmers had to take the time to clean it before use. At that point, mud was dried and caked on, and mechanical issues were not always noticed until they became larger mechanical problems. It is asked that all producers clean the equipment before it is returned.

If equipment is returned broken and it is determined that it is the fault of the producer and not due to normal wear and tear, **the producer will be responsible for the costs of the repair**.

Producers will be required to sign a **rental agreement** yearly.

*Producers receiving the drill from another farmer must provide us with a photo of the underside of the carriage & seed box as soon as it changes hands to relieve themselves of responsibility for issues arising before it was in their possession.



The Southern Salamander's won this year's Garrett County Envirothon. Pictured above are the winning team members and District Manager Seth Metheny. The Salamanders will be eligible to compete in the State Envirothon in June.

The District presented each member of the winning team with a Garden Tool set along with seeds and a raspberry bush. Great job to everyone who competed!

2025 Garrett County Envirothon

The Garrett County [Envirothon](#) was held on Tuesday, April 29, at Camp Hickory.

Teams from both Southern and Northern high schools competed in the categories of aquatics, soil, forestry, wildlife, and roots & resiliency.

Both teams train with a coach during the school year and then attend a full day training session at Camp Hickory a couple weeks prior to the competition. Southern's coach is Erin Coffman and Northern's is Carrie Glass.

Numerous agencies helped with the training and the competition including the District (MDA & NRCS), Maryland DNR, GC Forestry Board, and GC Extension.

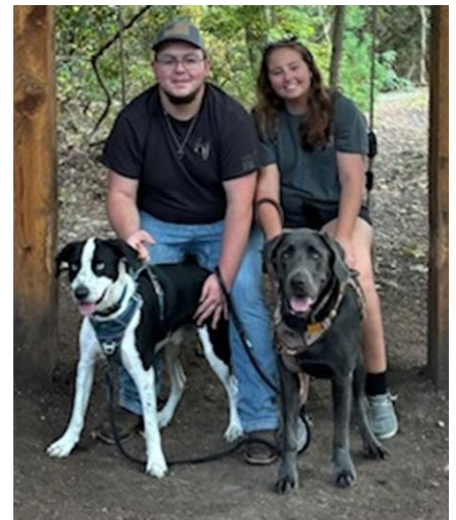
The State Envirothon will be held in Garrett County June 11 and 12.

Meet New District Employee Samantha Miller

My name is Samantha Miller, and I am one of the new Soils Technicians with the Maryland Department of Agriculture. I have spent most of my life in central Maryland (Howard County).

In Fall of 2019, I moved to Garrett County to earn my Associate's Degree in Natural Resources and Wildlife Technology at Garrett College. I then proceeded to get my Bachelor's in Environmental Science online through Southern New Hampshire University.

I am currently living in Mount Storm, WV, with my Fiancé. I really enjoy being outdoors and spending time with my family. My Hobbies include gardening, hunting, fishing, and hiking with my Fiancé and our 2 dogs. I do not have much experience with agriculture; however, I am eager to start learning. I am excited to be part of the Maryland Department of Agriculture and can't wait to see what I accomplish.



Farm and Food Animal Veterinary Education Repayment Grants

Garrett County has a need for veterinarians that treat farm animals.

Garrett County is considered a Type III Veterinarian shortage area. That means the shortage is critical.

The USDA offers a loan repayment plan called Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment Plan (VMLRP) whereby they will repay up to \$40,000 per year for three years of student loan debt for those completing college and obtaining their veterinary credential. There is a catch, though, Veterinarians must agree to practice in a shortage area for at least three years, and they must specialize in one of the areas of veterinary medicine of shortage for the region, which are all food animal or farm animal specific.

Students need to have graduated college and have a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine credential before they can apply.

The grant covers the cost of loans for attendance in the veterinary program and interest.

Students should consult the National Institute of Food and Agriculture for specifics. You can find their webpage at <https://www.nifa.usda.gov/grants/programs/veterinary-medicine-loan-repayment-program>



Virginia Maryland College of Veterinary Medicine

The Virginia Maryland College of Veterinary Medicine was created as a joint venture between University of Maryland and Virginia Tech to try to help fill the need for veterinarians in both Virginia and Maryland. Students in both states are considered “in-state” students.

There is a branch of the college in Blacksburg, Virginia and another at University of Maryland in College Park.

In 2024, four students graduating from this program received the VMLRP grant.

The [Virginia Maryland College of Vet Med](#) program allows for about 120 students per year, 30 of which must be Maryland residents.

University of Maryland is also seeking accreditation for a School of Veterinary Medicine at University of Maryland Eastern Shore. They are hoping to begin accepting applications in fall of 2026.

There are 34 Veterinary colleges in the US.



Merck Future Veterinarian Scholarship

Merck also offers a \$10,000 scholarship to 26 third and fourth year Veterinary students each year. Visit their website at <https://www.merck-animal-health-usa.com/about-us/veterinary-wellbeing-and-scholarships/veterinary-student-and-scholarship-program> for more information.

Conservation for Teens

Career Facts

Garrett County needs [large animal veterinarians](#). The field is wide open.

Degrees in [Applied Sciences](#) can lead to positions in places like MDA or NRCS, though those positions are somewhat limited in the county. However, there are many openings around the state.

Local farms generated [\\$29 million in revenue](#) in 2017. Who says farming isn't profitable?

The average income for a [Soil Scientist](#) in Maryland is \$82,000, (*some make over \$100,000*) and there is a distinct lack of people trained in this field.



Young Associates

Did you know that older teens and young adults can join the GSCD Board of Supervisors as an Associate Member? Associate Members can't vote, and they won't receive a per diem, but it is an excellent opportunity to get involved in the work of the Conservation District.

Associate Members need to have a passion for agriculture and soil conservation, and they need be willing to commit to attending one meeting per month and possibly assisting with occasional projects. For information, please contact seth.metheny1@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)
[Will Gindlesberger](#), Soil Conservationist (USDA-NRCS)
[Jarrod Sisler](#), Soil Conservation Technician (MDA)
[Vacant](#) – Soil Con Technician (USDA-NRCS)
[Jillian Mason](#), Conservation Planner (MDA)
[Miranda Rounds](#), Conservation Planner (MDA)
[Tricia Kipp](#), Soil Conservation Technician (MDA)
[Samantha Miller](#), Soil Conservation Technician (MDA)
[John Grose](#), Program Support Specialist (RC&D)
[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
Butch Helbig, Treasurer, UMD Representative
Nevin Sines, GC Commissioner's Representative
Dorsey Guard, GC Farm Bureau 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