

KNOW YOUR CONSERVATION TEAM



If you own or operate a farm in Maryland, the Maryland Conservation Partnership can help with many aspects of conserving the natural resources on your property. The partnership consists of government and non-government entities geared towards reducing erosion and nutrient runoff from agricultural land by utilizing both agronomic and structural Best Management Practices (BMPs) and cost-share opportunities. Assistance from the

Conservation Partnership is free, and together they offer a variety of programs and services.

Groups in the Partnership are often referred to by their acronyms, which can be confusing for those unfamiliar with what and who they stand for. Read on to learn about the players in the Conservation Partnership, their acronyms, and the assistance they provide.

MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE (MDA), OFFICE OF RESOURCE CONSERVATION



This department has employees both at MDA headquarters in Annapolis and in field offices (such as Soil Conservation Districts) across the state. They assist farm owners and operators in writing Soil Conservation and Water Quality Plans (Farm plans), planning/designing/installing BMPs, and navigating state and federal cost-share programs.



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE (USDA-NRCS), FARM SERVICE AGENCY (USDA - FSA)



USDA employees are located in their State Office in Annapolis and in field offices across the state. NRCS is the technical lead in each Soil Conservation District and maintains the standards and specifications for Soil Conservation and Water Quality Plans and BMPs. NRCS staff write Soil Conservation and Water Quality Plans, plan/design/certify BMPs, and navigate state and federal cost-share programs. NRCS may also have grazing or forestry specialists in offices across the state. FSA provides support to conservation staff and programs, disaster relief programs, and loan programs for agricultural operations.



RESOURCE CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT (RC&D)

The Western MD RC&D and Southern MD RC&D partner with NRCS to provide staff and support. RC&D employees may include a program support specialist, forester, biologist, conservation technicians, planners, and a grazing specialist.

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UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND EXTENSION (UMD EXTENSION/UME)



University of Maryland Extension offers practical, research-based resources to help horse farm owners manage their operations more sustainably and efficiently. With offices in each county, Extension provides localized support through workshops, demonstrations, and expert guidance on topics like pasture management, equine nutrition, environmental stewardship, and horse health. Their goal is to empower farm owners with the tools needed to enhance productivity and protect natural resources.

SOIL CONSERVATION DISTRICTS (SCDs)

SCDs exist in every county and function independently under a Board of Supervisors. SCD employees may include the District Manager, administrative specialists, urban reviewers and planners, conservation and engineering technicians, soil agricultural resource conservation specialists, and stormwater specialists. Many SCDs are field offices for the MDA, NRCS, and RC&D employees.

For more information on horse manure management and other soil conservation and water quality practices, contact your local Soil Conservation District or visit mda.maryland.gov/HOW.

The Horse Outreach Workgroup (HOW) provides information to horse owners on pasture and manure management. HOW consists of representatives from local Soil Conservation Districts, the Maryland Department of Agriculture, USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service, University of Maryland Extension, Maryland Horse Council, and the Maryland Horse Industry Board.

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