



Join Us In a  
Partnership for  
Clean Water,  
Healthy Soil  
and a Bright  
Tomorrow.



# Plant the Seeds of Conservation In Your Community

## Support your local soil conservation district as it works to:

- Help farmers, developers and other landowners prevent soil from washing or blowing away.
- Protect the Chesapeake Bay by implementing Tributary Strategies to safeguard the rivers that feed it.
- Protect communities from too much or too little water.
- Promote conservation and farmland preservation programs.
- Plant trees and other vegetation to protect water quality, provide wildlife habitat and beautify the natural landscape.
- Educate our youth on the importance of conserving natural resources.
- Help farmers comply with federal and state mandated natural resource protection programs.
- Help farmers secure financial assistance to install conservation practices.
- Assist local governments with growth, development and natural resource management issues.
- Provide homeowners with conservation information to assure that home and garden projects protect natural resources.

## Who We Are



We are your local soil conservation district. You can find us in every county in Maryland and in nearly every county and city across the nation. Our origins date back to the Dust Bowl Years of the 1930s when Congress—in response to the widespread damage caused by the loss of our nation’s top-soil—passed the Soil Conservation Act. This Act created for the first time a national program to control and prevent soil erosion and led to the birth of soil conservation districts—-independent units of state government responsible for carrying out natural resource protection programs at the local level.

Today there are more than 3,000 soil conservation districts in the United States, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. District responsibilities have evolved over the last half century as our land use patterns have changed and the importance of addressing the environmental impacts of development activities and nutrient pollution in our waterways has come to light. This brochure highlights the activities of Maryland’s 24 soil conservation districts as we work with farmers, landowners and county governments to place conservation practices where they are needed most—on the farm fields, pastures and construction sites that can impact Maryland’s streams, rivers and the Chesapeake Bay.

## What We Do



The men and women of your local soil conservation district perform a range of conservation activities aimed at keeping the soil productive and our waterways clean and healthy. A typical soil conservation district office includes a manager, district conservationist, engineers, agricultural planners, technicians, soil scientist, urban reviewers and administrative staff. These professionals work with landowners to enhance farming operations, prevent flooding, safeguard streams and reservoirs, foster wildlife habitat, manage forest resources and address natural resource impacts from urban growth. Helping farmers install best management practices on their farms to protect soil and water resources and comply with environmental laws is a top priority. Districts also work with small horse farms and other livestock operations to help them manage manure more efficiently and improve pasture health. In addition, districts provide landowners and developers with information on soils and other natural resources, while assisting local governments with stormwater management and sediment and erosion control plans required by Maryland law.

A casual glance within your own community will attest to the work being performed by Maryland’s soil conservation districts. Farm fields and streams protected from erosion and nutrient runoff, new developments and shopping centers outfitted with special sediment and stormwater management controls and a strong, conservation-minded agricultural community are among the accomplishments of Maryland’s 24 soil conservation districts.

## How We Work for You



Each soil conservation district functions independently under a local five-member Board of Supervisors. This ensures that local natural resource issues are addressed. Although soil conservation districts typically occupy the same boundaries as counties, we are not part of county government. Our staff and operating budgets are funded through a combination of federal, state and local assistance.

To carry out our mission, soil conservation districts work with a number of local, state and federal agencies including county government offices, the Maryland Departments of Agriculture, Environment and Natural Resources, the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service and Farm Service Agency, University of Maryland Extension, US Fish and Wildlife Service, US Army Corps of Engineers and state and federal legislators.

## Become a Partner In Conservation



Your soil conservation district is hard at work protecting natural resources and the quality of life for you and your family. But we can do an even better job with your help. If you are a farmer, become a cooperator with your local soil conservation district. Remember, we are not a regulatory agency. Districts work voluntarily with farmers to enhance farming operations and protect natural resources. We specialize in helping farmers secure financial assistance to install agricultural best management practices that control soil erosion, manage nutrients, and protect water quality.

If you live on a smaller parcel of land, you can practice conservation by joining your local Tributary Strategy team, becoming an Earth Team volunteer, signing up for local environmental cleanup activities and educating yourself on sound conservation practices for home, lawn and garden projects. Call your local soil conservation district today to become a partner in conservation.