



PRINCE GEORGE'S  
SOIL CONSERVATION DISTRICT

# FY 26 Transportation, Infrastructure, Energy & Environment (TIEE) Committee Budget Review

## CONSERVING SOIL, WATER & NATURAL RESOURCES SINCE 1941



## PRINCE GEORGE'S SOIL CONSERVATION DISTRICT

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FY 26 Budget Review for TIEE Committee,  
Prince George's County Council



PRINCE GEORGE'S  
SOIL CONSERVATION DISTRICT

# DISTRICT OPERATIONS

2025 marks the Prince George's Soil Conservation District's 84th year of implementing locally led soil and water conservation in Prince George's County.

The Soil Conservation District works inclusive of the Maryland Conservation Partnership along with 22 other Soil Conservation Districts and over 3000 Districts nationally.

The District receives funding, staff, equipment and operating funds from multiple sources.

We have three primary partners:

- Prince George's County
- Maryland Department of Agriculture
- USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service

FY26 Proposed Budget Sources:

- **County:** Prince George's County Government (69%)
- **Federal:** U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) - Natural Conservation Service (NRCS) (18%) Resource
- **State:** Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) (6%)
- **Review Fees :** Technical Plan Review (5%)
- **Grants:** Chesapeake Bay Trust Fund (2%)



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# THE PRINCE GEORGE'S SOIL CONSERVATION DISTRICT IS A TECHNICAL SERVICE AGENCY

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## Locally Led Soil & Water Conservation Programs

- **Rural Agricultural Conservation Program**
- **Agricultural Land Preservation Program**
- **Urban Agricultural Conservation Program**
- **Urban Development & Conservation Program**
- **Outreach & Education Programs**

## Agricultural Conservation Program

The Agricultural Conservation Program through the District provides farmers and stakeholders engaged in agricultural activities with the technical assistance and potential funding needed to implement Best Management Practices (BMPs) to conserve soil and water resources. Cooperators receive technical services free of charge. Planners and technicians will assist in the preparation of soil conservation and water quality plans on farms and appropriate BMPs and engineering designs as needed. Staff can also assist with programs and applications with the landowner if eligible for State or Federal cost-share.



**91 plans**  
covering  
**7,765 acres**

**210 BMPs**  
installed by  
**91 farmers**  
covering  
**4,177 acres**

**10 Cover Crop**  
**Participants**  
covering  
**2,591 acres**

**64 Federal Contracts**  
for **\$1,365,799**  
**3 State Contracts for**  
**\$95,266**

## 2024 Agricultural Conservation Program Highlights

2024 was another busy year of fielding new landowner requests, current landowner designs, contracts, best management practice (BMP) implementation and maintaining operation of our rental equipment program. This is the final year to meet 2025 Watershed Implementation Plan (WIP) goals and staff has been working diligently to update expired plans while managing a hefty current workload. The partnership with USDA/NRCS has been a tremendous asset to the office and to our cooperators with 64 federal contracts obligated totaling \$1,365,799! MDA has also been consistently helpful with our cover crop program, 3 capital projects totaling \$95,266 and backfilling our **MDA Technician** position, welcoming **Vern Crocker** to his new role/transition from RC&D. Our office also welcomes new staff/transitions for NRCS (**Miya Felder, Soil Conservationist** and **Mike Montillo, Area Civil Engineering Technician**) and RC&D (**Chase Kolstrom, Forester** and **Ben Stewart, Grazing Specialist**). All of this couldn't be possible without all the hard work our farmers do, so special shout out to all our cooperators for your hard work helping get conservation on the ground!

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Agriculture is a significant part of Prince George's County, both as an industry and as a contributor to the County's character. It is a goal of the Prince George's Soil Conservation District to preserve agricultural land from development. These properties will produce local commodities, protect scenic vistas and enhance environmentally sensitive areas. In order to achieve this goal, the District administers several programs that preserve land through perpetual easements while allowing landowners to retain their private property rights.

Land preservation programs administered by the District include the Historic Agricultural Resource Preservation Program (HARPP), Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation (MALPF) and the Rural Legacy Program (RLP). As Administrator for Prince George's County, the District has preserved 82 properties on about 7,463 acres, utilizing \$52M of land preservation funds.



*HARPP preserved*  
**5 Farms,**  
*Totaling*  
**161 acres**

**82**  
Farms Preserved  
Since 2008,  
Totaling  
**7463** Acres

## 2024 Ag Land Preservation Program Highlights

In 2024, five landowners submitted applications for land preservation, and those applications had been vetted through the Historic Agricultural Resource Preservation Program. The 161 acres submitted totaled an overall fiscal investment of \$1.45 million. It is anticipated that these properties will settle in early 2025, continuing Prince George's Soil Conservation Districts commitment to agricultural preservation in Prince George's County.

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# Urban Agricultural Conservation Program

Through its Urban Agricultural Conservation (UAC) Program, the District provides and connects urban farmers and partners engaged in urban agricultural activities with the tools, services and potential financial assistance needed to implement Best Management Practices (BMPs) to conserve soil, water and other natural resources. Typically, urban soils have been manipulated in some form and may be contaminated. District staff can help identify climate-smart solutions to improve the health and productivity of urban soils for growing food and mitigating stormwater runoff. Urban soils are important to protect because they are found in watersheds which provide drinking water, food, waste utilization, and natural resources to communities. The Program is supported by staff from the District, the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (USDA-NRCS), and the Maryland Department of Agriculture.



**15**  
farmer workshops & community events conducted  
**12**  
Soil Conservation & Water Quality Plans developed

**85**  
Conservation Technical Assistance (CTA) site visits on  
**60**  
urban farms

**42**  
collaborators engaged with UAC & food system initiatives  
**3,280**  
Individuals reached through outreach events

**\$184,116**  
USDA NRCS funding through CSP & EQIP for  
**16**  
urban farms

## 2024 UAC Program Highlights

*The UAC Program played a leadership role in a variety of initiatives related to urban ag, conservation, and food security. Over the course of 2024, staff have:*

- Provided CTA to 40 new urban farm cooperators (worked with 60 farmers total) and 42 collaborators
- Assisted with planning the 2024 Prince George's County Community Garden Summit and the District's annual Seedling Giveaway
- Served as advisors for conservation related grants received by ECO City Farms and University of MD Extension
- Served on the Prince George's County Food Equity Council, Metro Washington Council of Governments Regional Ag Workgroup, PGC Public Schools Environment, Ag & Natural Resources Program Advisory Committee, and the Urban Farm Incubator Steering Committee
- Lead 2 urban farm tours and conducted 15 trainings including 6 Bloomin' PGC Open Mic Nights on urban ag conservation topics
- Received a National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) Technical Assistance Grant and hired Prince George's County native, Jason Sierra, as a Conservation Planner for the UAC Program and Climate-Smart Commodities Pilot Program
- Received the 2024 Maryland Civil Rights Award from the Natural Resources Conservation Service's MD Civil Rights Advisory Committee

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# Urban Development & Conservation Program

The Prince George's Soil Conservation District's Urban Development and Conservation team members review Erosion and sediment control plans for conformance with the Maryland Standards and Specifications for Soil Erosion and Sediment Control, as well as, the Prince George's Soil Conservation District Soil Erosion and Sediment Control Pond Safety Reference Manual. Grading, erosion and sediment control plans are reviewed and approved for residential, commercial, forest harvest, stream maintenance, surface mining, fill sites, landfills and county or municipal projects. The District is regarded as being responsive to the needs of the development community and the private engineering sector for reviewing and approving plans in a timely manner.



**4,622 acres**

approved for Urban Development projects

**Reviews:**

**44.6%**

within 5 business days

**97.8%**

within 10 business days

**MDE Delegated Inspections**

**Authorities Supported:**

**4**

(Prince George's County, Laurel, Greenbelt, Bowie)

**156 Hours +**

of one-on-one client consultations and collaborations

## 2024 Urban Development Program Highlights

Improving customer experience, programmatic efficiencies, and reducing application timelines were the main headers in 2024 for developments proposed within the urban sphere. Proactive and constructive feedback from the industry—specifically, the Maryland Building Industry Association (MBIA), consultants, builders, and developers—over several roundtable engagement sessions provided for a targeted approach and prioritization of efforts. Several bulletins and clarifications were issued for the purpose of improving the consistency and predictability of applications, as well as reducing submission iterations. An increased emphasis on earlier interventions, where needed, and client engagements have resulted in better communication, and alignment of expectations and deliverables. 2025 will be—and has been thus far—a continuation of these efforts.

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At Prince George's Soil Conservation District we strive to make an impact through our educational efforts and outreach programs. Our District has worked in various capacities to improve the education and knowledge of our citizens, honor those who have made a difference in their own communities, and promote new ways of learning to empower students for a better future (and planet). A few of the outreach and education programs we are involved with include: Envirothon; County Fair; Beautification Committee; Summer Youth Enrichment Program (SYEP); Annual Cooperator's Dinner; PGCPs - Environment, Agriculture, Natural Resources; District Coloring Contest; Community Garden Summit; PGC Bloomin' Open Mic Nights; Spring Seedling Giveaway and Vendor Fair; Earth Day Plant Giveaways; Arbor Day Tree Planting; and Community Farmer's Markets.

Featured Photo: Envirothon 2024 Winners

Laurel High School



**17**

Teams from **11 schools** competed in the 2024 Envirothon Competition with training provided to over **135** students

**\$47,000**

Envirothon scholarship money awarded to **30** high school students since 2013

**51**

Outreach events coordinated in 2024, reaching **Thousands** of County residents

**173**

Guests attended Annual Cooperator's Dinner **Over 600** Copies of the 2023 Annual Report distributed

## 2024 Envirothon Competition



The Envirothon is a natural resources competition for high school students. Five-member teams study provided reference material and participate in hands-on training in soils, aquatics, wildlife, forestry, and a fifth environmental issue that changes from year to year. The winning team earns the right to compete at the next level, be it the state or national event. The Envirothon provides a fun and exciting way for high school students to learn about natural resources, make informed decisions about the environment, and earn scholarship money for college. The event is a problem-solving competition that challenges students to work collaboratively to answer questions and conduct hands-on projects focusing on natural resource issues. The goal is to increase students' environmental knowledge and understanding, while also motivating young people to care for the environment by practicing stewardship in their homes, schools, and communities. We are proud to announce that Laurel High School won first-place honors at the 2024 Prince George's County Envirothon for the third year in a row and went on to compete at the state level.

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## FY 26 PROGRAM INITIATIVES

### Ag Conservation

Focus on meeting 2025 WIP III Goals. Meet with Maryland Department of Agriculture to discuss post 2025 WIP III goals

### Ag-land Preservation

Continue promotional outreach efforts to eligible landowners. Continue working with land preservation partners to shorten the timeline from application to settlement

### Urban Ag Conservation

Continue collaboration with USDA/MDA/UM Extension and County Agencies to smooth out challenges with zoning and permit requirements for urban ag

### Urban Development and Conservation

Implement electronic platform for plan submission and review. Continue the hands on and one-on-one weekly interaction with Engineers and Clients to further lower the number of “submissions” to obtain approvals

### Education and Outreach

Target outreach activities that will encourage more schools to be involved in the Envirothon, FFA activities, Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources and Related Sciences and Natural Resources (MANRRS) and Green School Initiatives



# THANK YOU for your support!

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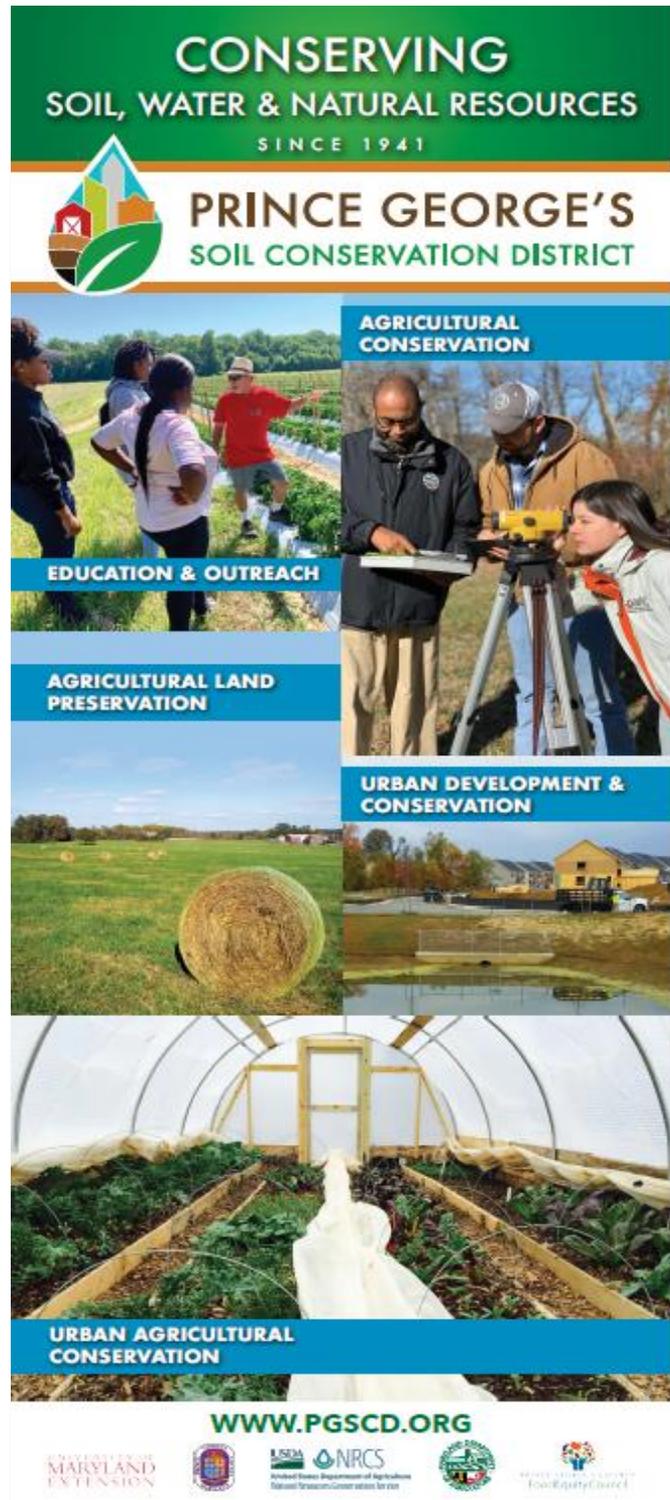
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The Prince George's Soil Conservation District prohibits discrimination in its programs on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation and marital or family status.



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