

Success Stories | Maryland

- Verification | Field Assessment Team

- Over 80% of reported BMPs, including historical records, have been field assessed and mapped.
- Has proven to be a valuable feedback loop to return cooperators to SCD for assistance. Helps promote our suite of available programs while on farm. Role of the team continues to diversify.

- Healthy Soils Program

- Manage conservation practices in new and innovative ways that improve soil health, yield, and profitability - and capture carbon.
- Examples: Agroforestry, multi-species cover crops, IPM – provide soil health assessment.

- Conservation Buffer Initiative

- Allows for flexible management and design options, while still providing WQ benefits through installation of riparian buffers.

- HOW – Equine Outreach

- Equine Planners throughout SCDs support this effort.

- Whole Watershed Act and Fund

- “A direct response to the Chesapeake Bay Program’s Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee’s Comprehensive Evaluation of System Response (CESR) report, the pilot projects will address multiple restoration and conservation benefits, including water quality, increased public access, wildlife habitat, fisheries improvement, environmental justice and climate resiliency. ”

Challenges and Obstacles

- Identifying barriers and obstacles --
 - What is unclear about our programs or initiatives? Identifying that can be challenging.
 - Need for stakeholder engagement in many forms.
 - Reaching beginning farmers and all industry sectors.
- Staff Capacity
 - It takes many farm visits before implementation of a single BMP, plan writing and design get done in office - that takes a lot more staff time than some may think. And ultimately, it's up to the landowner to install or adopt.
 - Paperwork – necessary to document, we utilize public funds to provide public services - but trying to help streamline effort and clarify questions.
- A lot of cooks in the kitchen --
 - There are so many groups doing this work. While a positive, creates a challenge from a data perspective - are we capturing it all?
 - Are we working in alignment or coordination? Feedback from farmers and landowners – can be overwhelming, where to start?

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