

KENT SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

CONSERVATION QUARTERLY

Helping landowners protect soil and water quality since 1938.

July 2025

Volume 8, Issue 3



KSWCD Takes on the Kent County Fair

This year's Kent County Fair was held July 16 through July 19. The, now, four day event allows 4-Hers to display their projects for the public to see. These 4-Hers and volunteers put countless hours into fair preparation. Alumni and the community have stepped up to develop new events to entertain the crowd. In recent years, a power wheels demolition derby and an alumni swine show have been added to the fair schedule.

The Kent Soil and Water Conservation District also set up a booth at the annual event. Staff interacted with the fair-goers, answering questions and sharing conservation knowledge. Promotional and informational brochures filled the KSWCD tent. The public was also able to see the Kubota used for our Prescribed Burns. The highlight of the booth seemed to be the conservation trivia and a chance to spin our prize wheel. Prizes ranged from frisbees to tick removers to socks printed to look like corn on the cob. It was great to engage with those that stopped by and to share a little knowledge and have a little fun with those of all ages!

Congratulations to all of the 2025 Kent County Fair participants.



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Important Dates

- August Board Meeting - 8/21**
- Labor Day - 9/1**
OFFICE CLOSED
- September Board Meeting - 9/18**
- Columbus Day - 10/13**
OFFICE CLOSED
- October Board Meeting - 10/16**
- Veterans Day - 11/11**
OFFICE CLOSED
- November Board Meeting - 11/20**

Find Us

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kentsoilandwaterconservationdistrict.org

 Find Us on Facebook

Meet Our Board

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Christopher Davidson
Civil Engineering Technician

Jenny Lee Freebery
Conservation Planner

Kelsie Fronheiser
Conservation Planner

Shelly Gsell
Administrative Assistant

Elizabeth Jamison
Program Support Specialist

Sam Leaverton
Conservation Planner

Peggy Lowman
Soil Conservationist

Chris Myers
Engineering Technician

Brooke Shaw
Administrative Assistant

Tina Stevens
Field Assessment Planner

Congratulations Scholars!

The Kent Soil and Water Conservation District Board Supervisors and Associate Supervisors presented Paige Miller and David Daniels, Jr. each with a scholarship before the May Board Meeting. Each year, KSWCD awards the Andelot, LLC Scholarship and the S. Wickes Westcott Memorial Scholarship to high school students who reside in Kent County and are pursuing a degree in agriculture or natural resources.

Paige Miller was this year's recipient of the Andelot, LLC Scholarship. Paige plans to attend the University of Maryland in the fall. Although still uncertain on a major, she has narrowed down her selection to Environmental Science and Policy or Agronomy. Miller has completed the STEM program, the Ag Pathway, has remained on the high honor roll, and was named the Kent County High School Class of 2025 Salutatorian, all while staying active in sports and 4-H.



David Daniels, Jr. was the 2025 recipient of the S. Wickes Westcott Memorial Scholarship. In the fall, David will be attending Washington College to study Environmental Science, taking what he learns back to the family farm. David is active with Kent County FFA, Triple Shots 4-H Club, and the Maryland State 4-H Shooting Team. Daniels plans to continue his shooting at Washington College for their Trap & Skeet Team.



Scholarships are funded in part by the Maryland Association of Soil Conservation Districts (MASCD), Andelot, LLC, KSWCD, and funds generated by the Cooperator's Dinner Silent Auction.

Congratulations Paige, David, and the rest of the Class of 2025. We wish you all the best of luck as your next chapter begins!

MDA Cover Crop Updates and Changes

Maryland's 2025-2026 Cover Crop Sign-Up ran from **June 23 through July 17, 2025**. The program has been simplified and aligned with state budget projections to support as many farmers as possible in their conservation efforts.

This year's base payment is **\$35/acre**, but you can earn up to **\$65/acre** with add-on incentives for using highly valued planting practices.

2025-2026 COVER CROP PLANTING AND PAYMENT OPTIONS					
TRADITIONAL COVER CROPS PAYMENT OPTIONS	NO-TILL	CONVENTIONAL	BROADCAST WITH LIGHT, MINIMUM OR VERTICAL TILLAGE	AERIAL	BROADCAST STALK CHOP AND BROADCAST CULTIPACKER
Base payment:	\$35/acre	\$35/acre	\$35/acre	\$35/acre	\$35/acre
Incorporate on or before October 10, add:	\$15/acre	\$15/acre	\$15/acre	\$0/acre	\$0/acre
Aerially seed into standing corn by October 10, add:	\$0/acre	\$0/acre	\$0/acre	\$10/acre	\$0/acre
Plant rye, triticale, or a multi-species cover crop, add:	\$15/acre	\$15/acre	\$15/acre	\$15/acre	\$15/acre
MAXIMUM PAYMENT AMOUNT:	\$65/acre	\$65/acre	\$65/acre	\$60/acre	\$50/acre

Plant cover crops after corn, soybeans, sorghum, tobacco, vegetables, hemp, sunflowers, sod, or millet. You must plant at least 10 acres of cover crops to participate in this program. Total enrolled acres may not exceed acreage managed under the farm's Nutrient Management Plan. Direct deposit of cost-share grants is available.

Both homegrown and purchased seed must be tested and labeled following Maryland Seed Law and Regulations. Seed must be free of prohibited noxious weed seeds, have a minimum germination rate of 80%, and have no more than 16 restricted noxious weeds per pound. **NEW** If you incorporate your cover crop into the soil, you'll need to follow **NRCS recommended seeding rates**.

Planting a cover crop mix can increase biodiversity on your farm and protect against weather extremes. Two-species cover crop mixes may be planted at a rate of 50% cereal grains and 50% brassicas or legumes. Three species mixes (50/25/25) must contain a minimum of 50% eligible cereal grains. **NEW** To maximize their soil health benefits, mixes containing legumes must be terminated **after May 1** with no additional incentives.

Plant cereal grains by **November 5, 2025**. Some species have earlier deadlines. **NEW** Plant oats and mixes containing legumes, forage radish, or canola/rape by **October 10, 2025**. The aerial seeding deadline is **October 10, 2025**. Terminate crops between **March 1** and **June 1, 2026**.

After becoming well established, eligible cover crops may be grazed or chopped for on-farm livestock forage. **NEW** Non-poultry manure may be applied to cover crop fields in the fall at a base payment rate of **\$25/acre** with no additional incentives.

To receive payment, you must certify your cover crop within one week of planting and by **November 12, 2025**. In addition, all follow-up documentation must be submitted by **December 1, 2025**.

The Conservation Grants Program will not be accepting applications for the Cover Crop Plus+ Program this year. MDA is currently re-evaluating the program which will likely be incorporated into the Healthy Soils Programs in the future. However, the Conservation Grants Program will continue with all the active agreements until the end of their three-year agreement.

Participants enrolled in Cover Crop Plus+ are required to terminate the cover crop and plant the spring crop within 1 week of termination, OR plant "green" into the living cover crop and notify the SCD within 3 days of planting the spring crop.



Why Cover Crops?

Cover crops are your first line of defense against erosion and runoff in winter. They are important to the health of local waterways and the Chesapeake Bay. Want to improve your soil's health? Check out this starting lineup of benefits.

Cover crops:

- Recycle unused nutrients for spring cash crops
- Add organic matter to the soil
- Control weeds and pests
- Reduce soil compaction
- Protect the fields from too much to too little rain

Eligible Species

- **Cereal Grains:** Wheat/spelt, rye, barley, triticale, oats, and ryegrass
- **Brassicas:** Forage radish and canola/rape
- **Legumes:** Clover, Austrian winter peas, and hairy vetch (must be planted with a cereal grain as part of a mix)

For more information on the Cover Crop or Cover Crop Plus+ Programs visit the Maryland Department of Agriculture website at <https://mda.maryland.gov/conservation>.



Environmental Education Spring 2025

Submitted by: Jenny Freebery



Above: Jenny reads to students in Rock Hall

Conservation Planners, Kelsie Fronheiser and Jenny Freebery, read this year's agricultural literacy book 'The Soil in Jackie's Garden' to elementary students in the county. This cute book was apparently in hot demand because it was sold out everywhere when Jenny first tried to order it. Thankfully, a copy was acquired and Kelsie and Jenny were able to read to four of the elementary schools, reaching dozens of preschool through 2nd grade students.



In the Text,

Top: Kelsie shares the literacy reading with the Judy Center

Middle: Jenny and Emily Hocking and her senior project

Bottom: Kelsie teaching students at the CCA Ag Day

Below: Kelsie, Paige Miller and her senior project, and Jenny



Kelsie and Jenny also were able to work with the Kent County High School (KCHS) ag program to see some very impressive senior projects, such as the competitiveness of different crops to outcompete palmer amaranth by Paige Miller and how no-till can sequester carbon by Emily Hocking. The students did a remarkable job coming up with research projects, executing experiments, and creating posters with their results.

Both planners ran a station at the Chestertown Christian Academy (CCA) Ag Day and Kelsie taught at the KCHS Ag Day. These events are run by the high school students and elementary students in Kent County are able to move to different stations. Many people display animals at these ag days and Kelsie and Jenny did too, but very tiny ones. The lesson was about all the living things in the soil, from worms, to insects, to plants, to fungi. The planners enjoyed teaching the next generation the benefits of the soil and the organisms. There may even be future conservationists among these groups!



"If agriculture goes wrong, nothing else will have a chance to go right."

-M. S. Swaminathan

Governor's Buy Local Cookout

Kent County was well represented at the Governor's Buy Local Cookout on July 16, 2025! Modern Stone Age made delicious food using ingredients from Langenfelder Pork, Lockbriar Farms, Red Acres Hydroponics, and other local farms. Wildly Native Flower Farm provided the flowers for this event.



2025 MASCD Coloring Contest Winners

Class A - 1st Place



Phoebe - HHGES

Class A - 2nd Place



Taylynn - HHGES

Class A - 3rd Place



Clara - CCA

Class B - 1st Place



Emmett - HHGES

Class B - 2nd Place



Landon - HHGES

Class B - 3rd Place



Hadley - HHGES

Class C - 1st Place



Marley - HHGES

Class C - 2nd Place



Elin - CCA

Class C - 3rd Place



Benjamin - HHGES



In partnership with the Maryland Association of Soil Conservation Districts (MASCD), the Kent Soil and Water Conservation District hosts a coloring contest for children in grades K-5th around the county. Each year, Shelly Gsell reaches out to Kent County's elementary schools to ask for students' participation in the coloring contest. Entries are broken into three age groups: Class A (K-1st), Class B (2nd-3rd), and Class C (4th-5th). Shelly, Brooke Shaw, Kelsie Fronheiser, and Jenny Freebery had the tough job of narrowing down all the impressive coloring contest entries before the staff and board voted on them. This year's picture included a lot of wildlife in the farm scene and the students did an excellent job at bringing those black and white scenes to life with their colorful crayons. The first place entries in the District contest will be judged at the July MASCD meeting. Congratulations to this year's top entries and good luck to Phoebe, Emmett, and Marley.



Supplemental Disaster Relief Program

Agricultural producers who suffered eligible crop losses due to natural disasters in 2023 and 2024 can now apply for assistance through the Supplemental Disaster Relief Program (SDRP).

USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) is delivering assistance in two stages; this first stage is open to producers with eligible crop losses that received assistance under crop insurance or the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program during 2023 and 2024. Stage One sign up started on July 7, 2025 with pre-filled applications being mailed to producers. SDRP Stage Two signups for eligible shallow or uncovered losses will begin in early fall.

FSA has launched a streamlined, pre-filled application process for eligible crop, tree, and vine losses by leveraging existing Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) and Risk Management Agency (RMA) indemnified loss data. The pre-filled applications were mailed on July 9, 2025.

Eligible losses must be the result of natural disasters occurring in calendar years 2023 and/or 2024. These disasters include wildfires, hurricanes, floods, derechos, excessive heat, tornadoes, winter storms, freeze (including a polar vortex), smoke exposure, excessive moisture, qualifying drought, and related conditions. To qualify for drought related losses, the loss must have occurred in a county rated by the U.S. Drought Monitor as having a D2 (severe drought) for eight consecutive weeks, D3 (extreme drought), or greater intensity level during the applicable calendar year.

To apply for SDRP, producers must submit the FSA-526, Supplemental Disaster Relief Program (SDRP) Stage One Application, in addition to having other forms on file with FSA.

Stage One payments are based on the SDRP adjusted NAP or Federal crop insurance coverage level the producer purchased for the crop. The net NAP or net federal crop insurance payments (NAP or crop insurance indemnities minus administrative fees and premiums) will be subtracted from the SDRP calculated payment amount. For Stage One, the total SDRP payment to indemnified producers will not exceed 90% of the loss and an SDRP payment factor of 35% will be applied to all Stage One payments. If additional SDRP funds remain, FSA may issue a second payment.

All producers who receive SDRP payments are required to purchase federal crop insurance or NAP coverage for the next two available crop years at the 60% coverage level or higher. Producers who fail to purchase crop insurance for the next two available crop years will be required to refund the SDRP payment, plus interest, to USDA.

FSA will announce additional SDRP assistance for uncovered losses, including non-indemnified shallow losses and quality losses and how to apply later this fall.

FSA Contacts

Susan Mackey-Taylor
County Executive Director
susan.mackeytaylor@usda.gov

Molly Bryden
Program Analyst
molly.bryden@usda.gov

W Jeffrey Galt
County Committee Chairperson

James Miller
County Committee Vice Chairperson

Brad Morris
County Committee Member

Alice Mason
County Committee Advisor

FSA Upcoming Deadlines

August 1, 2025 - County Committee Nominations Due

August 8, 2025 - Grassland Conservation Reserve Program signup ends

August 15, 2025 - Emergency Commodity Assistance Program (ECAP) Deadline

Joke Junction

What do you call a sleeping steer?

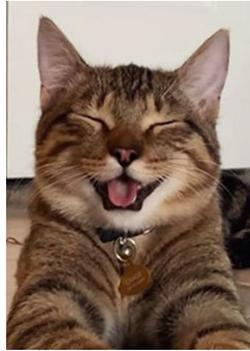
-a Bull dozer

What new crop did the farmer plant?

-Beets me

What did the duck say when she bought lipstick?

-Put it on my bill!



Growing Soil Health and Bigger Antlers with Cover Crop Mixes

Submitted by: Jenny Freebery

There is something just so impressive about seeing a big rack of antlers on a deer, and who hasn't smiled upon seeing a spotted fawn? Some fun facts about deer - April is the time when deer need a lot of nutrition, both for does who are lactating and feeding fawns and for bucks who are putting energy into their antler growth. Spring green up is a time that sets them up for fawn recruitment as well as antler growth. Although deer will eat a wide variety of plants, grasses are some of their least favorite; forbs, legumes and brassicas can be a good food source. Much of our forests in Kent County are very mature with little forage at deer height (more on this in a future article), but what else is on our landscape in April? Cover Crops!

Another surprising benefit of cover crops, beyond their amazing ability to build soil organic matter, reduce erosion, suppress weeds, reduce compaction, and take up excess nutrients, is that they provide forage for deer at a time when they need high energy. Not all cover crops are created equal for this, but a wide variety of species have good benefits. Legumes like crimson clover and Austrian winter pea are great deer food. Brassicas such as canola/rape and radish create quality winter forage. Deer also like oats, awnless (not bearded) winter wheat, and winter rye. Kip Adams, the Chief Conservation Officer of the National Deer Association, recommends all of these species as part of food plots. Species such as vetch and annual ryegrass are not as preferred. If planting cover crop wheat to support wildlife, choose an awnless variety (conversely if you have commodity wheat that you want less deer pressure on, use one with awns).

A later kill down on your cover crop means extra time for wildlife to forage. Try to keep your cover crop up into May before killing it down. Consider extending the forage season even further with planting green or drilling directly into your standing, living cover crop, then killing it down on a later date. Certain species of cover crops left up later can also have pollinator benefits, such as canola or clover. Wildlife and soil health is a win-win situation!



Important Contacts

Kent County Weed Control:

Jay Bennett - 667-337-3663 or
jbennett@kentgov.org

University of MD Extension Kent County:

Dwayne Joseph, PhD - 443-480-8369;
Sam Covington, Nutrient Management -
443-480-8530

Maryland Department of Natural Resources Forest Service

Andrew Amoruso - 410-819-4121 or
andrew.amoruso@maryland.gov
Shaun Creasey - 410-819-4121 or
Shaun.creasey@maryland.gov

Maryland Dept of Agriculture

Animal Health Program

<https://mda.maryland.gov/AnimalHealth/Pages/default.aspx>

Bird Flu and Biosecurity

<https://news.maryland.gov/mda/bird-flu-blog>
410-841-5810

Nutrient Management Practices

https://mda.maryland.gov/resource_conservation/Pages/nm_manual.aspx
410-991-3114

Manure Transport

https://mda.maryland.gov/resource_conservation/pages/manure_management.aspx

Plant Industries and Pest Management

<https://mda.maryland.gov/plants-pests/Pages/default.aspx>

Resource Conservation

https://mda.maryland.gov/resource_conservation/pages/default.aspx

Spotted Lanternfly

<https://mda.maryland.gov/plants-pests/Pages/spotted-lantern-fly.aspx>
dontbug.md@maryland.gov

2023 MDA Annual Report

https://mda.maryland.gov/Documents/Annual_Reportv15.pdf

Important Links

Farmers.gov

<https://www.farmers.gov/>

Farm Service Agency

<https://www.fsa.usda.gov/>

Natural Resources Conservation Service

<https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/>

Maryland Department of Agriculture

<https://mda.maryland.gov/Pages/default.aspx>



BBQ Pork Pizza

Ingredients

- 1 (13.8 oz) package refrigerated pizza dough
- 1 (18 oz) container barbequed pulled pork
- 1/4 red onion, thinly sliced
- 1/2 cup dill pickle slices
- 2 cups shredded mozzarella cheese



1. Preheat oven to 425 degrees F. Grease a 9x13 inch baking pan.
2. Roll the dough out into the prepared pan. Top the dough with the barbequed pork. Sprinkle with the red onions, and layer on the dill pickle slices. Sprinkle mozzarella cheese evenly over the top.
3. Bake in the preheated oven until crust is golden and cheese is melted, about 18 minutes.

Prep Time: 10 mins Cook Time: 18 mins Total Time: 28 mins
Serves 4

671 Calories, 25g Fat, 66g Carbs, 44g Protein

<https://www.allrecipes.com/recipe/173699/bbq-pork-pizza/>



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