



NRCS assistance for Brook Trout
Julie Devers – MD State Biologist

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United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service

Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

- 1862 - U.S. Department of Agriculture – USDA
- Authorized by the Farm Bill (2018)
- 1935 - **Soil** Conservation Service
- 1994 – **Natural Resources** Conservation
Service – SWAPAE
- **NRCS Mission:** We deliver conservation solutions
so agricultural producers can protect natural
resources and feed a growing world.

Conservation Assistance

- **Soil**
- **Water**
- **Air**
- **Plants**
- **Animals**
- **Energy**



NRCS in Maryland

State Office – State Conservationist and staff (program specialists, agronomists, livestock specialists, biologist, public affairs, management, etc.)

Field Offices – 1 in every county – 23 counties in MD – usually in the Soil Conservation District Office

Partners - Soil Conservation Districts, Maryland Department of Agriculture, RC&Ds, DU, TNC, TU, USFWS, MD DNR, etc.

Resource Concerns



Identify
Options for
Improvement

Reduce Erosion

Conserve Soil

Improve Water Quality

Revegetate

Enhance Stream Habitat

Conservation Practices

- **134 NRCS Conservation Practices in MD – plus a few interim**
- **Address resource concerns**
- **What is a Conservation Practice?**
 - - A structural or vegetative measure, or management activity used to protect or reduce the degradation of soil, water, air, plant, animal, or energy resources (SWAPAE)



Conservation Practices



Field Office Technical Guide (FOTG)



Field Office Technical Guide | MW



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Aquatic Organism Passage (396)



Aquatic Organism Passage (396)





Riparian Forest Buffer (391)

Riparian Herbaceous Buffer (390)



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Stream Habitat Improvement and Management (395)

Streambank and Shoreline Protection (580)



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NRCS Programs

- ACEP – WRE – Agricultural Conservation Easement Program – Wetland Reserve Easements
- RCPP – Regional Conservation Partnership Program
- **EQIP – Environmental Quality Incentives Program**
 - **EQIP – WLFW – Working Lands for Wildlife**
- **CSP – Conservation Stewardship Program**
- CRP/CREP – Conservation Reserve Program/
Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program

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Agricultural Conservation Easement Program - Maryland

ACEP
Apply by: March 17, 2023

Wetland Reserve Easements - WRE

- Permanent Easement - NRCS pays 100% of the easement value and 70-100% of restoration
- 30-year Easement - NRCS pays 50 – 75% of the easement value and 50-75% of the restoration costs

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Regional Conservation Partnership Program - Maryland

RCPP
Apply by: January 20, 2023



Locally led conservation through partners

Current projects

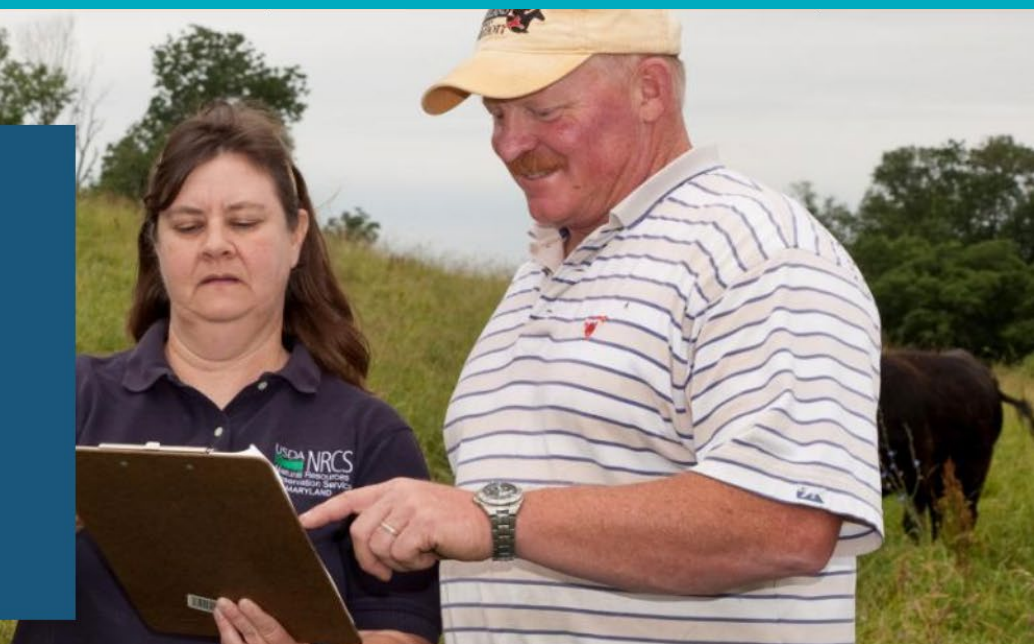
- Achieving WIP Goals and Nutrient Management in Maryland
- Grazing for Water Quality & Soil Health
- Million Acre Challenge-
- Engaging Small Animal Feeding Operations (AFOs) in the Nutrient Management Planning Process
- Connecting Small and Urban Farms in the Baltimore and Washington D.C. Urban Corridor with Conservation Resources
- Mid-Atlantic Dairy Farmers Producing Tangible Results Through Climate Smart Solutions
- ESLC Land Protection Initiative

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Environmental Quality Incentives Program - Maryland

EQIP
Apply by: March 24, 2023



- Work with producers to address **resource concerns**
- Producers implement the conservation practices
 - Cleaner air
 - Cleaner water
 - Healthier soil
 - Better wildlife habitat
- Financial assistance – Usually around 75%

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EQIP Eligibility

- Land where Ag commodities, livestock or forest related products - are produced
 - Cropland
 - Pastureland
 - Non-industrial private forest
- No minimum acreage –
- Applicants can be
 - individuals,
 - legal entities,
 - joint operations,
 - tribes with control of land
 - currently manage for ag, forest, livestock production



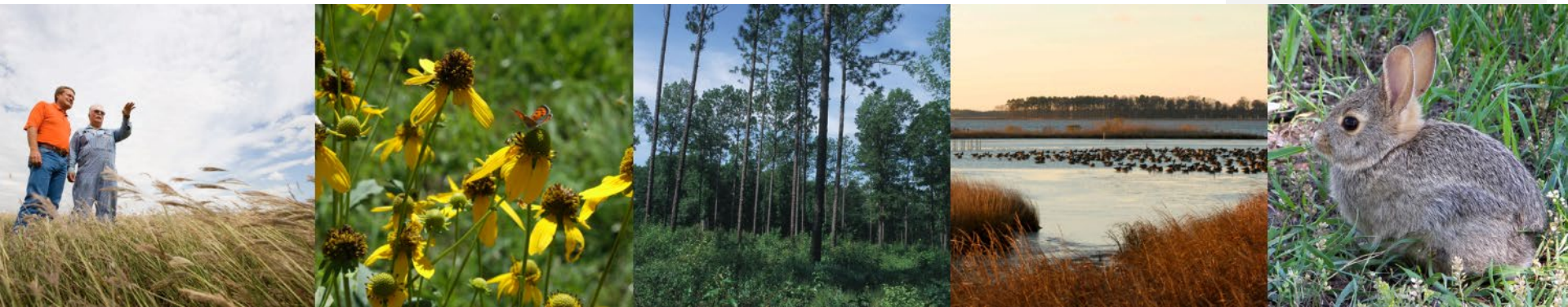
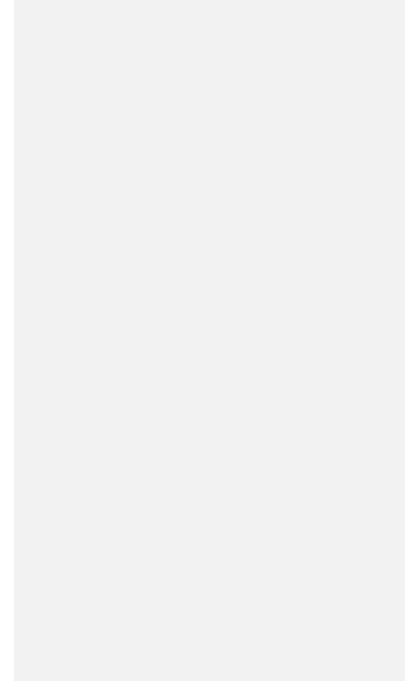
EQIP Payments

- **Reimbursement**

- Conservation Plan
- Contract
- Implement Practice
- Landowner Pays for Implementation
- NRCS Certification
- **Reimbursement**

- **Taxes**

- **All payments made are reported to IRS**
- **Form 1099 – for reporting on tax return**



Conservation Stewardship Program - Maryland

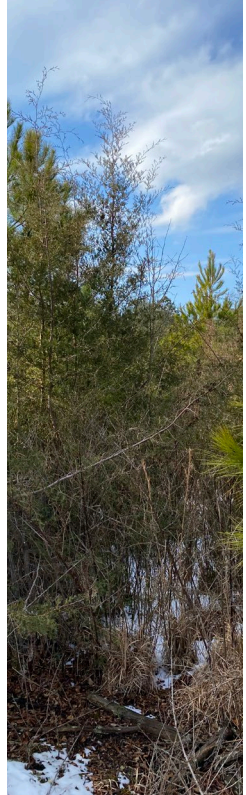
CSP
Apply by: April 7, 2023

- Expand on existing conservation efforts
- 5-year program
- Eligibility
 - Planners calculate stewardship threshold
- Plan new CSP conservation practices and enhancements

CSP Eligibility

Land

- Private Agricultural Lands – Cropland and Pasture
- Non-Industrial Private Forest
- Farmstead
- Associated Agricultural Land
- Public Land – under control of the applicant – part of their operation
- **No minimum acreage requirement**
- **Enroll Entire Operation**
- **Forest Land – Requires current Forest Management Plan**
- **\$4000 minimum annual payment**



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CRP - CREP

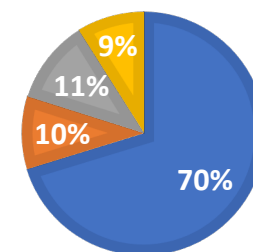
- **CRP – Conservation Reserve Program - Administered by FSA**
- **CREP – Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program – Partnership MDA, MD DNR, NRCS – Administered by FSA**
- **10 – 15 year contract**
- **Practices implementation payments**
- **Annual rental and incentive payments**
- **Signing Bonus of \$1000 per acre for riparian forest buffers**

Ways We're Improving Water Quality

- Grassroots efforts
- Discussions and relationship building
- 112 active contracts in Carroll and 34 in Baltimore
- Address water quality resource concerns directly and indirectly by addressing other resource concerns like inadequate livestock feed and forage, wildlife habitat, air quality, soil health practices

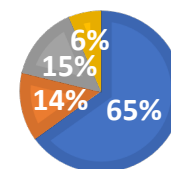
Carroll County Farmland

■ Cropland ■ Pastureland
■ Forest ■ Other



**BALTIMORE COUNTY
FARMLAND**

■ Cropland ■ Pastureland
■ Forest ■ Other



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396 Aquatic Organism Passage

NRCS Conservation Practices

391 Riparian Forest
Buffer and
Herbaceous Cover

395 Stream Habitat
Improvement and
Management

578 Stream Crossing

580 Streambank and
Shoreline Protection

612 Tree Shrub
Establishment

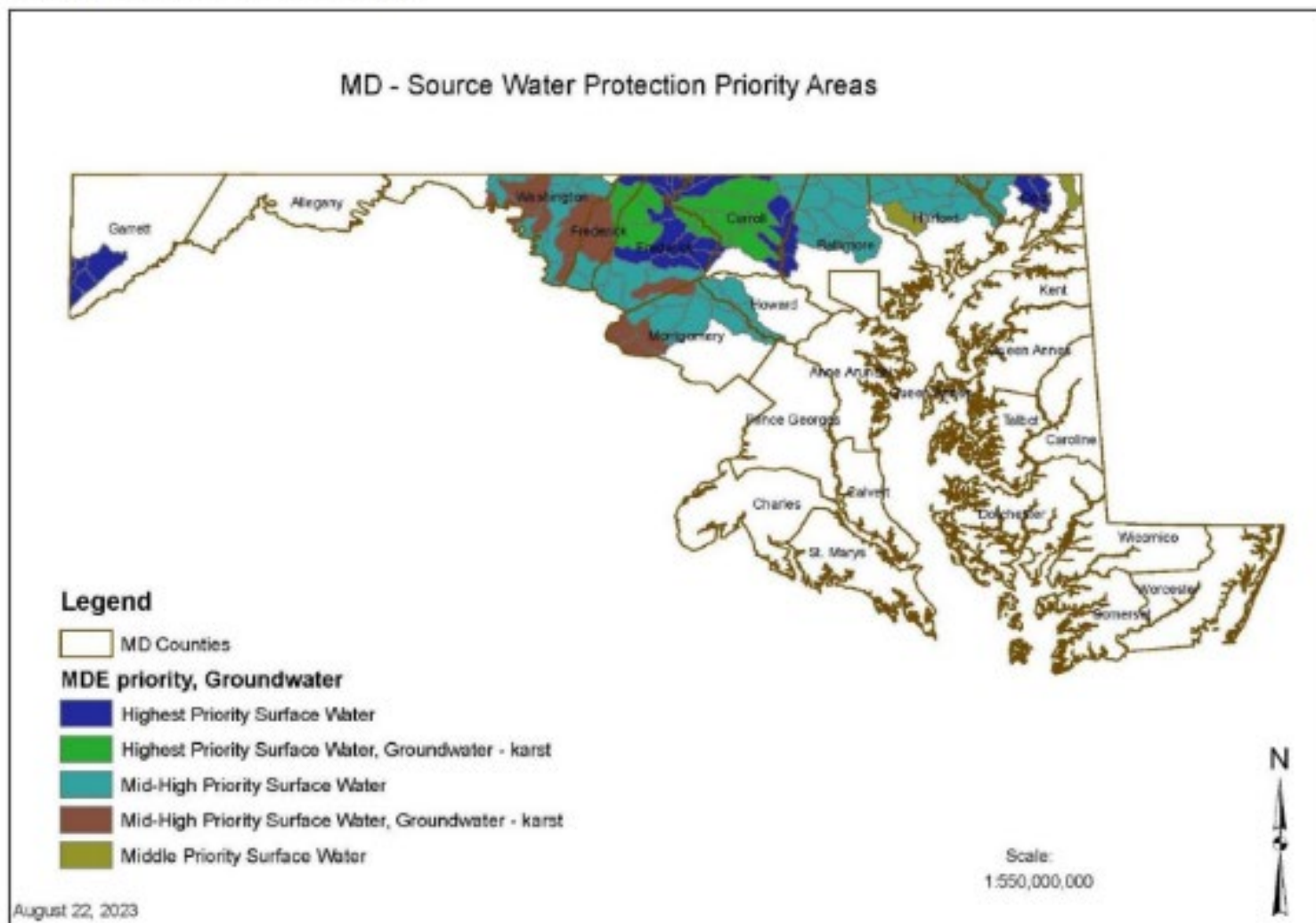
658, 659 Wetland
Enhancement &
Restoration



Stream Restoration Project at
River Valley Ranch

Source Water Protection – 90%

Source Water Protection Area Map



National Water Quality Initiative – 90%

The FY24 Maryland priority areas are:

HUC12 Watershed Name	HUC12 Code
Lower Catoctin Creek	020700080103
Middle Catoctin Creek	020700080102
Upper Catoctin Creek	020700080101
Prettyboy-Gunpowder Falls	020600030302
Lower Little Pipe Creek	020700090403
Middle Little Pipe Creek	020700090402
Upper Little Pipe Creek	020700090401

Practices That Avoid, Control and Trap Sediment, Nutrients and Pathogens – there are about 80 practices

Examples

- Waste treatment lagoons
- to
- Tree and shrub establishment

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United States
Department of
Agriculture

