

AGENCY SUMMARY

PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY

SOIL CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Budget & Policy Analyst: Alex Hirtle

SCD [Agency website](#)

SCD [FY 2025 Approved Budget](#)

SCD [FY 2025 Budget Review Report](#)

SCD [FY 2026 Budget Review Report](#)

Leadership

- **Steve Darcey**, Executive Director
- **James Parreco**, Chair- Board of Supervisors

Core Services

- Provide technical review/approval for land grading, erosion, and sediment control and small pond dam safety
- Provide services for soil and water conservation program implementation
- Administer rural land preservation programs
- Provide soil and water conservation technical services to urban agriculture operations
- Provide education and outreach to citizens and students through multiple soil and water conservation programs

Organizational Structure

The Office consists of the Director, sixteen staff including planners, engineers, and administrative support, as well as two staff from Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) and seven staff from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). The District is overseen by the five-member Board of Supervisors, and is one of 24 Districts in the State of Maryland supported by the MDA and USDA.

FY 2025 Key Accomplishments

- Continued to meet and exceed the Maryland Watershed Implementation Plan (WIP) milestone goals for conservation planning and best management practice (BMP) implementation

BACKGROUND

The Prince George's County Soil Conservation District (SCD) was created by the need for soil conservation. Although not widely practiced in Colonial America, many farmers, including Thomas Jefferson, realized the importance of protecting topsoil. After the Dust Bowl in the 1930s and witnessing the devastating results of erosion, the U.S. Government created soil conservation districts. A political subdivision of state government, districts typically have the same boundaries as their county. Soil conservation districts provide farmers, developers and the general public with soil and water conservation expertise at the local level. The Prince George's Soil Conservation District was established on April 7, 1941. Initially created to assist the farming community in saving valuable topsoil, the District has expanded its programs to include water quality protection, public education, urban erosion and sediment control, small pond approval, and technical assistance to urban agricultural producers, landowners, schools, federal, state and local agencies and other groups.

Each Soil Conservation District within the State has a Board of Supervisors, established under COMAR §8-302. The Board oversees each District, and consists of five members with training and expertise of soil conservation and erosion control. The appointments come from the County Executive, the Farm Bureau, Extension Service, and the State Committee (2 members). Duties of the Supervisors include recordkeeping of all proceedings and Resolutions, provide for annual audits, consulting with local legislative bodies, accept financial gifts from governments and other agencies for projects, enter into agreements with governments and private entities to support the mission of the District, and lease, sell, and dispose of properties and interests to further the purpose of the District.

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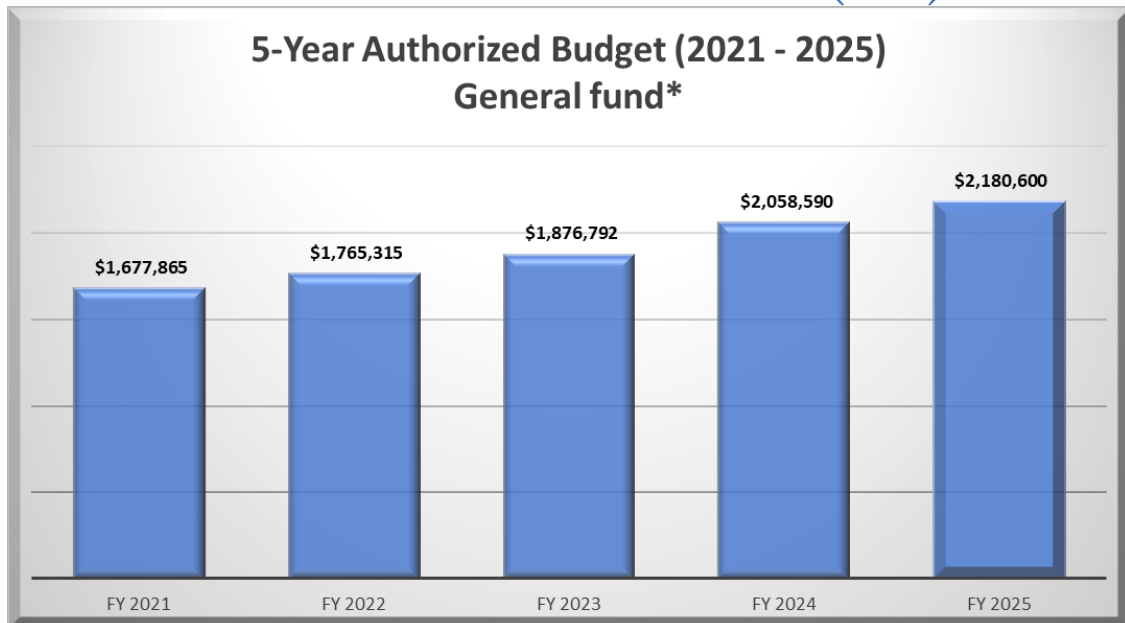
- Exceeded the outreach goals for the urban agriculture conservation program. Continued the development of a 12-acre incubator farm for aspiring urban ag producers in partnership with National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD), USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) and ECO-City Farms.
- Maintained an average urban plan review time of five business days while continuing to partner with DOE and the Clean Water Partnership on Stormwater Management retrofit projects throughout the County. Designed flow charts for the development community to clarify and provide greater efficiency navigating District processes and phasing of grading, erosion and sediment control plans and forest harvest plans.
- Conducted two trainings and one competition for the local Envirothon, educating over 100 high school students on the importance of environmental stewardship.
- Preserved additional acres of agricultural land through the Historic Agricultural Resource Preservation Program (HARRP) and the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation (MALPF) Rural Legacy programs totaling 79 farms and 7,371 acres (20% of the estimated eligible farmland that can be preserved).

FY 2026 Top Priorities

- Maintain the average turnaround time for urban land grading, mining, erosion/sediment control, dam safety and small pond plan reviews at or below five days by providing efficient technical assistance to customers.
- Increase the number of acres treated by best management practices (BMPs) on agricultural land by providing technical assistance to agricultural landowners on appropriate installation of those BMPs in order to mitigate water quality issues.
- Increase the acres of preserved agricultural land in the County by preserving agricultural land through perpetual easements, possibly directing growth away from the rural tier and limiting the need for infrastructure funding to rural areas of the County.
- Increase education and outreach of soil and water conservation to the citizens and students of Prince George's County.
- Increase technical assistance for the conservation of soil and water resources on urban agricultural operations in the County

Budgetary Resources – Below is the 5-year overview of resources allocated to SCD from FY 2021-25.

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*Soil Conservation District funds are 100% recovered from non-general fund sources, so budgeted funds do not come out of the County's general fund.

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