



BOOTS ON THE GROUND

Improving Technical Assistance for Farmers

A REPORT OF THE CHESAPEAKE BAY COMMISSION
NOVEMBER 2017

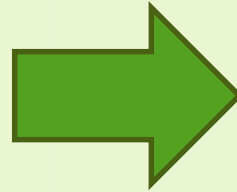
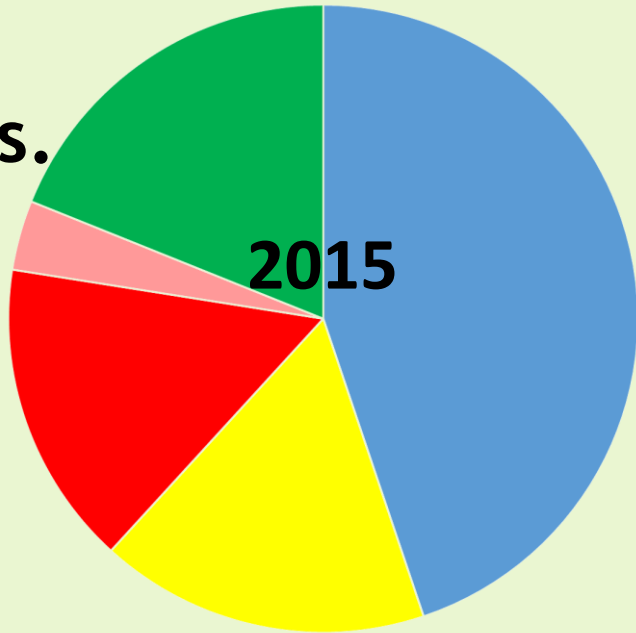
Ann P. Swanson
CBC Executive Director
Harrisburg, PA
November 9, 2017



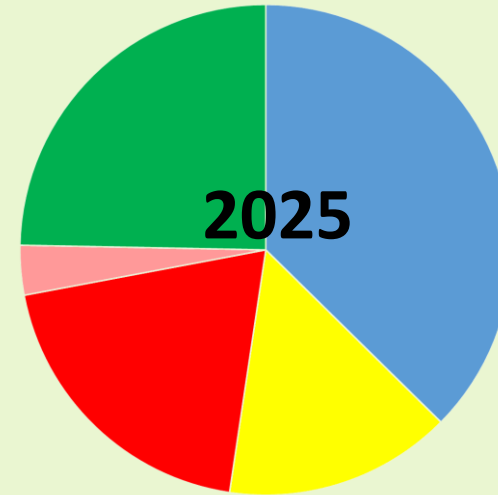
Chesapeake Bay Watershed Nitrogen Reductions 2015-2025

■ Agriculture ■ Urban Runoff ■ Wastewater+CSO ■ Septic ■ Forest

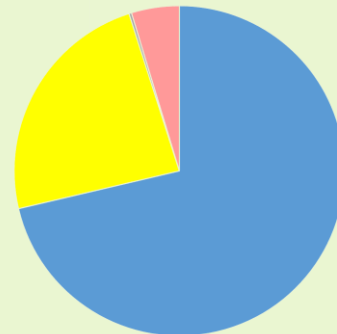
242
m/lbs.



192
m/lbs.



Where will the remaining nitrogen reductions* come from?



71% Agriculture
24% Urban Stormwater
5% Septic Systems

*Chesapeake Bay Program Partnership, Based on the jurisdictions' Phase II WIPs.

Boots On The Ground

- ▶ **What is technical assistance, who provides it, and how does it work?**
- ▶ **How is it funded?**
- ▶ **What do we need to do to ensure availability and effectively delivery?**

Farmers' participation and success in conservation practices is dependent upon close partnerships between the farmer and trained personnel who supply: **TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE**



Boots On The Ground: Solutions That Work

All farmers rely on technical assistance for help to prepare plans and install farm conservation practices.



EXAMPLES INCLUDE:

- Stream fencing
- Rotational grazing
- Nutrient management techniques
- In-field livestock watering stations
- Manure storage facilities
- Cover crops
- Conservation tillage
- Precision feeding



CBC's Technical Assistance Expert Team

- Kristen Saacke Blunk, *National Fish and Wildlife Foundation*
- Russ Brinsfield, *Private Consultant*
- Matt Ehrhart, *Stroud Water Research Center*
- Fred Fiscus, *Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Resources*
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- Tim Garcia, *Natural Resources Conservation Service*
- Darryl Glover, *Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation*
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- Kelly Shenk, *Environmental Protection Agency*
- Jeff Swinehart, *Lancaster Farmland Trust*
- Christopher Thompson, *Lancaster County Conservation District*
- Lindsay Thompson, *Delaware-Maryland Agribusiness Association*
- Kendall Tyree, *Virginia Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts*
- Bobby Whitescarver, *Whitescarver Natural Resources Management, LLC*
- Tim Woodward, *Tellus Agronomics*
- Dana York, *Green Earth Connection*

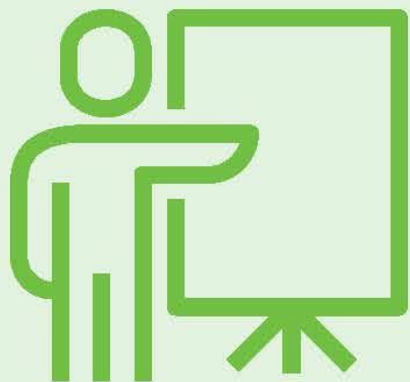
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Steps to On-Farm Conservation

1

EDUCATION



Initial education can come from NRCS, a District, or the private or non-profit sector, in the form of meetings, field days, workshops or site visits.

2

PLANNING



There are many types of plans and planners to assist farmers. Certified conservation and nutrient management plans can be written by the NRCS, a District, or private or non-profit sector experts.

3

DESIGN



Conservation projects can be designed by the NRCS, a District or the private or non-profit sector. Engineering designs for structures generally require NRCS review and approval.

4

IMPLEMENTATION

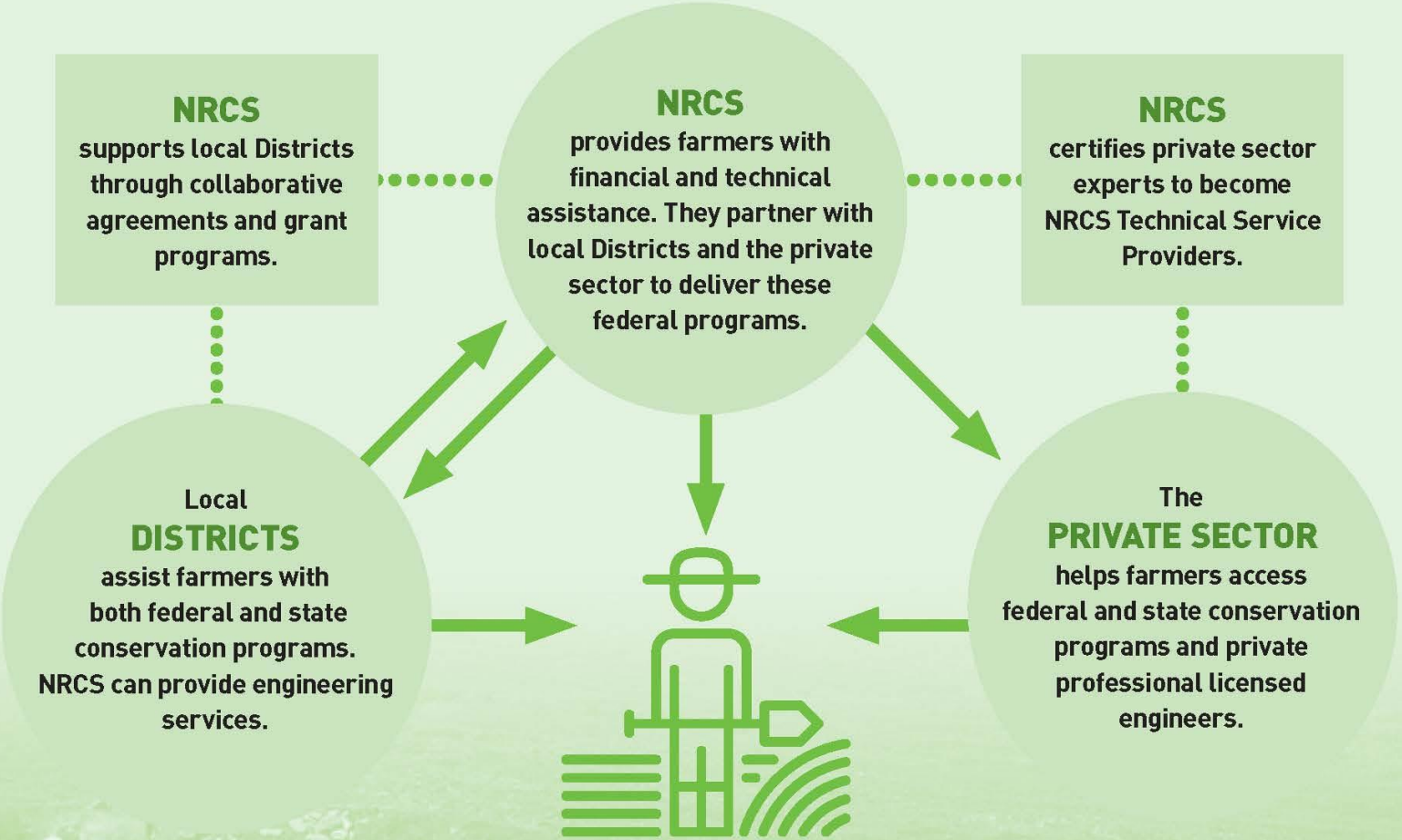


The farmer takes the lead with BMP implementation and maintenance, with guidance and assistance from a technical assistance provider. Financial assistance can offset the cost.



USDA NRCS (PA)

A Network of Public and Private “Boots on the Ground” Assists Farmers



ALL PARTNERS — private, state, and federal — provide education about conservation practices through farm site visits, workshops and meetings.

“ Seeing that same face come in, you become like friends and family. They come in and yes, there’s paperwork, but I didn’t run into one person that was pushy or arrogant and I would like to see that keep going. It’s a valuable service, and I wouldn’t want to do it without them. ”

— Raymond King, Lancaster County, PA

60% more

Technical Assistance is needed to meet the our 2025 Bay TMDL goals



...It’s about Trust

“ Planting cover crops is a big project for us every year. Without the Conservation District there to verify what’s going on, get us signed up and understand the programs, we wouldn’t be doing near as much as we do. And, I like the fact that I know the guy, I have his cell number, and I can say hey, it’s this farm, and he immediately knows what I’m talking about. ”

— Jason Scott, Dorchester County, MD



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How is Technical Assistance Funded?

State Funding for Technical Assistance

Fiscal Year	Pennsylvania*	Maryland	Virginia
2009	5.7	8.0	1.0
2010	5.6	7.9	1.6
2011	6.0	8.0	1.2
2012	6.8	8.5	1.2
2013	7.1	9.6	2.8
2014	7.1	9.5	1.2
2015	7.1	8.1	2.8
2016	6.9	8.8	2.8
2017	Not avail.	9.7	7.4
2018	Not avail.	Not avail.	2.2

*In millions.

How is Technical Assistance Funded?

NRCS Funding for Technical Assistance

Fiscal Year	Pennsylvania*	Maryland	Virginia
2005	29	17.3	26.4
2006	27.5	17.1	26
2007	26.9	13.5	22.3
2008	28	15.5	24.9
2009	29.9	15.2	24.9
2010	35.7	18.9	29.6
2011	34.5	18.2	27.6
2012	31	14.5	25.8
2013	31	12.7	22
2014	32.7	14.5	24.8
2015	21.9	15.2	25

*In millions.

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What do we need to do to ensure availability and effectively delivery?

- ▶ Create a robust network of **private sector** and non-profit providers of technical assistance.
- ▶ Enhance the **job climate for governmental** conservation professionals providing technical assistance.
- ▶ Provide more consistent, stable and predictable **levels of funding** for technical assistance, including funds independent of cost-share programs.

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Questions?
Ideas?
Opportunities?