

**ST. MARY’S COUNTY
AGRICULTURE, SEAFOOD & FORESTRY BOARD
2020 ANNUAL REPORT**

INTRODUCTION: PURPOSE OF THE GROUP

The St. Mary’s County Agricultural, Seafood and Forestry Board members shall be appointed by the Commissioners for St. Mary’s County, to meet statutory requirements, to include:

- at least three (3) members from the agricultural community (owner-operators of commercial farms who earn fifty (50) percent or more of their income from farming);
- at least one (1) member from the forestry community;
- at least one (1) member from the real estate community and
- at least one (1) member from the community not actively engaged in agriculture.

Each member of the Board shall be appointed for a term of office of five years with no member serving for more than two consecutive full terms. Members of the St. Mary's County Agricultural, Seafood and Forestry Board during 2020 are as follows:

<u>Member</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>Expiration Date</u>
Scott Bacon	Forestry	12/31/2025
Bonnie Brown	Citizen Member	12/31/2024
Phil Dorsey	Real Estate	12/31/2024
Lynn Klug	Farmer	12/31/2023
Phil Langley	Waterman	12/31/2025
Robert Lumpkins	Waterman	06/30/2025
Charles Mattingly	Citizen Member	12/31/2023
Alan Polk	Forestry	12/31/2024
Stephen Reeves	Chair, Farmer	12/31/2025
Patrick Russell	Farmer	06/30/2024
Michael Sirk	Forestry	06/30/2021
Ronald Verbos	Citizen Member	12/31/2024
Joseph Wood	Vice Chair, Farmer	06/30/2021

The following shall be ex-officio members:

- one (1) member from the University of Maryland Extension – St. Mary’s County and
- one (1) member from the St. Mary’s Soil Conservation District.

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SIGNIFICANT ACTIVITIES FOR THE PAST YEAR

Agriculture, Seafood, and Forestry Board:

- Over the past year, the Board has strongly advocated to relocate the North St. Mary's County Farmer's Market from the Charlotte Hall Library to a new location. A site was purchased in December 2017. The Board has worked with staff to review proposed site plans for this project.
- The Board has worked with the Southern Maryland Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) and the Patuxent Tidewater Land Trust (PTLT) to ensure the success of the Rural Legacy Program in St. Mary's County. At the request of the Maryland Department of Natural Resources, RC&D is now the land trust representing the Mattapany Rural Legacy Area and PTLT represents the Huntersville Rural Legacy Area.
- The Board is pleased to have submitted 12 applications to the Maryland Agriculture Land Preservation Foundation (MALPF) for consideration of easement purchase for the FY2021 funding cycle. 14 applications were reviewed overall.

Subcommittees

Agriculture Land Preservation Advisory Board

The duties of the Agricultural Land Preservation Advisory Board are:

- (1) To advise the county governing body with respect to the establishment of agricultural districts and the approval of purchases of easements by MALPF within the county;
 - (2) To assist the county governing body in reviewing the status of agricultural districts and land under easement;
 - (3) To advise MALPF concerning county priorities for agricultural preservation;
 - (4) To approve or disapprove an application by the county for certification;
 - (5) To promote preservation of agriculture within the county by offering information and assistance to farmers with respect to establishment of districts and purchase of easements;
 - (6) To meet at least annually with forest conservation district boards in order to work cooperatively to encourage the promotion and retention of farmland and woodland in their respective jurisdictions; and
 - (7) To perform any other duties as assigned by the county governing body.
- The Agriculture Land Preservation Advisory Board approved Lot Requests on 3 easement properties. All requests were forwarded to the State MALPF Board for consideration.

Program	Acres Preserved in 2020	Total Acres Preserved To Date
MALPF	843.75	13,329.45
Rural Legacy	308.81	6,348.30
TDRs	130.00	4449.03
Total	1,282.56	24,126.78

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Farmers Market

The duty of the Farmers Market Subcommittee is to address issues facing farmers markets administered by DED throughout the County.

- The Home Grown Farm Market is located at 21078 Three Notch Road in Lexington Park. The Home Grown Farm Market was open Saturdays April 4 through December 19 from 9 am until 1 pm. The Home Grown Farm Market had thirty (30) vendors in 2020.
- The California Farmers Market is located at the BAE Systems parking lot at the corner of Town Creek Drive and Route 235. The California Farmers Market was open Saturday from 9 am until 1 pm May 9 through November 14. The California Farmers Market had eleven (11) vendors in 2020.
- The North St. Mary's County Farmers Market is located at the Charlotte Hall Library Parking Lot. The North St. Mary's County Farmers Market was open Monday through Saturday April through November. The North St. Mary's County Farmers Market had thirteen (13) vendors in 2020.

Agriculture Reconciliation Committee

The Agricultural Reconciliation Committee arbitrates and mediates disputes involving agricultural operations conducted on agricultural lands. The Committee issues opinions on whether such operations conform with generally accepted agricultural management practices.

- No activity for this committee was required in 2020.

PROBLEMS AND CHALLENGES

- Attendance. Member attendance at Board meetings continues to be a challenge. The Board was only able to hold two (2) official meetings in 2020 as a quorum was not present for other regularly scheduled meetings.
- St Mary's County Farmers Market. It is the desire of the Board to identify a common oversight mechanism for the three (3) farmers markets in the County.
- Farmland Conservation Easements. Year after year there is interest to participate in the MALPF program from landowners however there is a shortfall of funding for the program.
 - The Agriculture Land Preservation Advisory Board continues to be concerned over the quality of appraisals used to determine easement values for the Maryland Agriculture Land Preservation Foundation easement offers. It is the opinion of the Board that the appraisers used by the State are not familiar with the area and therefore determine lower than realistic property values for St. Mary's County. In addition, on multiple instances, the two appraisers had widely varying assessments of the properties.

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PLANS FOR THE CURRENT YEAR

- The Board will continue to meet the second Thursday of each month

*2021 Meeting Calendar

January 14, 2021	July 8, 2021
February 11, 2021	August 12, 2021
March 11, 2021	September 9, 2021
April 8, 2021	October 14, 2021
May 13, 2021	November 18, 2021
June 10, 2021	December 9, 2021

*Commissioner and citizen attendance is always welcomed.

ONGOING ACTIVITIES

- The Board will continue to promote and discuss initiatives, projects and programs as they relate to the implementation and update of the St. Mary's County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy.