

## **HIGHLIGHTS OF GOVERNMENT COST SHARE PROGRAMS**

All of these programs are administered by the local soil conservation district office and NRCS office. All programs require an agreement between the landowner or farm operator and the government entity. Agreement length varies by program. For more details, in Frederick County, contact the Catocin and Frederick Soil Conservation District at 301-695-2803, ext 3.

### **MACS – Maryland Agricultural Cost Share**

- Pay up to 87.5% of eligible costs for Best Management Practices to solve water quality or erosion problems on agricultural land
- Eligible costs are based on flat rates for the county
- Administered by the Maryland Department of Agriculture with support of local soil conservation districts
- This program can be piggybacked on the CREP and EQIP programs to get 87.5% cost share for a project.
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### **EQIP – Environmental Quality Incentives Program**

- Main federal cost share program
- Pay up to 75% of some best management practices
- Eligible land is land that is in agriculture, including cropland and pasture
- Government land at all levels of government is no longer eligible since under the 2008 Farm Bill
- Compete for funds with other applicants through environmental benefits ranking – this is on a statewide basis

### **CREP – Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program**

- Program goals are water quality improvement and wildlife habitat enhancement
- Pays up to 87.5% of eligible cost of practices
  - o 50% paid by federal government through Farm Services Agency (FSA)
  - o 37.5% paid through the state of Maryland's MACS program
  - o Note: NRCS is the technical agency that helps to implement the conservation plan and best management practices for the program.
- Offers annual rental rate for keeping the land in the conserving cover
- Eligible land is cropland, highly erodible land or marginal pasture  
Continuous sign up and no competition for funds
- Current practices are: riparian forest buffer, filter strip, conservation cover on highly erodible land, and shallow water areas for wildlife.
- Enrollment goal in Maryland of 100,000 acres. There are currently over 70,000 acres enrolled in the state.

- Requires at least a 10-year contract. Riparian forest buffers can be enrolled for 15 years.
- There are opportunities for easements under this program. The land cannot already be under easement and get another easement.

**WHIP – Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program**

- Pays up to 75% of the eligible costs for several wildlife practices in Maryland
- Eligible land is private land that can support wildlife habitat improvement
- Can be non-agricultural land – but must be able to be farmed
- Practices include conservation cover like warm season grasses or cool season grass mixtures, riparian forest buffers, filter strips, and shallow water areas
- Competitive statewide – all applicants compete based on wildlife benefits.
- Requires a five year contract with no annual rental