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FARMING AT



METRO'S EDGE

www.farmingatmetroedge.com

**An Agricultural Planning Conference
Universities at Shady Grove
January 11 and 12, 2013**

Thirty-five years ago, a group of interested people convened a conference on the future of agriculture around Sugarloaf Mountain. Their work led to the creation of the Montgomery County Agricultural Reserve in 1980, and supported the farm culture in Frederick County. Now a current group of interested people in Frederick and Montgomery Counties are planning another conference to ensure viable agricultural systems for the next generation.

Focused on two neighboring counties in the Washington DC metropolitan area, this conference will gather together farmers, consumers, citizen advocates, government agencies and other interested parties. Participants will discuss the current state of agriculture in Frederick and Montgomery counties and identify both the obstacles and opportunities that exist for sustainable agricultural productivity in the region.

In Montgomery County more than 100,000 acres are set aside by ordinance for the preservation of agriculture. Montgomery County farmers harvest commodities crops, hay, fruits and vegetables, both conventional and certified organic. County farms also produce livestock including sheep, goats, llamas, alpacas, pigs, chickens, horses and cattle.

The Frederick County agricultural community is strong in dairy and grain. More than 80% of Frederick's land zoned for agriculture is used to grow corn, soybeans, wheat, barley and hay. The dairy industry makes up 40% of the annual gross agricultural sales in the county. Frederick has seen a strong diversification in the agricultural industry over the last ten years with Christmas tree farms, wineries, nurseries, organic and specialized agriculture farms becoming more prevalent.

Farmers in the area face increasing challenges associated with continuing residential development, limited marketing opportunities, challenges transporting commodities to market, increased local and state regulations and difficulty incorporating new opportunities on the farm such as alternative energy production. To ensure the continued viability of agriculture in Frederick and Montgomery counties, as well as similar areas nearby, a concerted effort must be made to understand agriculture as it exists today, the challenges it will face tomorrow, and to encourage its continued growth in the metropolitan area.

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Conference Objectives

Develop information and ideas that can be used to advance productive and profitable agriculture and strong farm communities in Montgomery and Frederick Counties for the next generation. The core work of the conference will be done in three panels.

By the end of the conference, participants (including panelists) will have:

1. Gained greater appreciation of the economic and environmental challenges and opportunities the diverse farming operations in our region will confront in coming decades.
2. Discovered common interests among the different types of agricultural enterprises and among various non-farm stakeholders in the 2 counties.
3. Recommended actions that the various stakeholders could take to help achieve the goal of a vibrant agricultural industry integrated into the broader life of our metropolitan region.

If you would like to work on a conference committee, or have any questions or suggestions, please email us at info@farmingatmetroedge.com.

Conference Advisory Committee Members

- Royce Hanson**, Chair: Research Professor, George Washington Institute of Public Policy, Former Chairman, Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission
Tom Leedy, Co-Chair: Board of Directors, Montgomery Countryside Alliance
Jim Baird: Mid-Atlantic Director, American Farmland Trust
Margaret Coleman: Vice Chair, President, Sugarloaf Regional Trails
Jeremy Criss: Agricultural Services, Montgomery County Department of Economic Development
Colby Ferguson: Development Specialist-Agriculture, Frederick County Office of Economic Development
Ellen Gordon: Board of Directors, Sugarloaf Citizens Association
Katherine Holt: Senior Planner, Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission
Lee Langstaff: Senior Environmental Mediator, Independent Practitioner
Dolores Milmo: Conservation Associate, Audubon Naturalist Society
Callum Murray: Supervisor, Area 3, Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission
Carol Oberdorfer: Secretary and Treasurer, Sugarloaf Regional Trails; President, Dickerson Community Association
Robert Raver: Retired Extension Agent, Farmer
Leslie Saville: Senior Planner, Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission
Caroline Taylor: Executive Director, Montgomery Countryside Alliance
Beverly Thoms: Board of Directors, Sugarloaf Regional Trails, Tiewyan Textiles, Shepherd, Fiber Artist
David Vismara: Chief, Horticulture, Forestry and Environmental Education Division, Montgomery Parks

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With our most sincere thanks!

We are still in need of sponsors to help us defray our costs and would welcome your contributions.

Sponsor Levels and Benefits

Bumper Crop \$10,000- \$20,000

- Co-branding as conference partner on all publications (mailers, email marketing, website, social media, press releases, programs, on-site signage)
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- Premium exhibit space
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Cultivators \$50

- Name listed in Conference Program
- Tabletop exhibit space.

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If **mailing** your check, please be sure to include the information shown below.

Please send this information and your tax deductible contribution to our **fiscal sponsor**, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization:

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Sugarloaf Regional Trails is a 501c3, non-profit corporation governed by an elected Board of Directors. It was formed in 1974. Our members focus on conservation of natural resources in the Potomac Piedmont/Sugarloaf Mountain area. Meetings are held four times a year with membership open to anyone who shares our interests and commitment. For more information: www.sugarloafregionaltrails.org.