

JEFFERSON COUNTY
CONSERVATION DISTRICT

2013 ANNUAL REPORT



About the Conservation District

The county was declared a District by the Jefferson County Board of Commissioners in October, 1946, in accordance with the provisions of the "Soil Conservation Law" of 1945, Act 217, of the Pennsylvania General Assembly. The Jefferson County Conservation District was formed at the request of farmers and others in the county who were interested in the conservation of soil and water resources and land use planning. The District is a subdivision of state government and is administered by a seven-member Board of Directors. The current District Board is composed of three farmer directors, three urban directors, and one County Commissioner. Currently there are four full-time staff members. The County Conservation District, through delegation agreements with the PA Department of Environmental Protection and the PA Department of Agriculture, administers many environmental programs in Jefferson County. Some of the programs that the District staff works with include the following: Erosion and Sediment Pollution Control Program, Chapter 105 Stream Encroachment, Dirt & Gravel Roads, Nutrient Management, Ag Conservation Technical Assistance, and sponsoring the Jefferson/Clarion County Envirothon. The Conservation District also provides administrative duties for the Jefferson County Sewage Association and the Greater Jefferson Area Council of Governments. The following information will highlight the District's programs and activities in 2013.

Program Administration

Funding for District staff and programs comes from several sources. The State Conservation Commission receives funding from the Department of Environmental Protection and the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture for technical assistance and staff funding. Jefferson County and the Jefferson County Sewage Association also provide funding for staff and administrative expenses.

Chapter 102/NPDES

The Erosion and Sediment (E&S) Pollution Control Program operates under a delegation agreement with PADEP, Pennsylvania Code Title 25, Chapter 102 of the Pennsylvania Clean Streams Law. At the local level, the Conservation District is responsible for specific program activities enforcing Chapter 102 and controlling erosion and sediment control for all types of earthmoving activities. Through combined efforts to ensure water quality standards and minimize sediment pollution to the Waters of the Commonwealth, in 2013 the Conservation District:

- Reviewed 44 E&S Control Plans for Chapter 102 Compliance.
- Conducted 61 site inspections in an effort to obtain voluntary compliance.
- Recommended 1 Individual NPDES Permits to DEP to be issued.
- Issued 5 General NPDES Permits.



Shaun Wessell, District Technician

Sites that will disturb over one acre of land are required to obtain an "NPDES Permit for Stormwater Discharges Associated with Construction Activities." This permit requires a detailed plan to address both sediment and erosion during construction and the long-term impacts of stormwater from the site after construction. Several types of activities such as road maintenance, timbering and agricultural plowing and tillage are exempt from this permit but need to meet other requirements including having a written plan to control erosion from the site. In some cases, other types of permits may be required and this must be evaluated on a case by case basis.

Although agricultural plowing and tillage operations are exempt from obtaining permits for these activities, it is important to realize that this exemption does not include the construction of buildings and other support facilities on the farm. These types of earth disturbances are subject to the same permitting requirements as any off-farm activity.

Chapter 105 – Dam Safety and Encroachments Act

This state delegated program provides oversight of work in and around streams, wetlands and other bodies of water that has a potential to impact water quality, increase flooding or degrade riparian habitat. The District registers PA DEP General Permits, which authorize certain types of work including: Fish Habitat Enhancement; Small Docks & Boat Ramps; Streambank Stabilization; Utility Line or Minor Road Crossings of streams or wetlands.

21 General Permits for water obstructions and encroachments were acknowledged. 19 Chapter 105-related complaints were investigated. Information and technical assistance is available concerning permit and other requirements associated with Chapter 105 Regulations.

Act 167 Stormwater Management

The Jefferson County Conservation District has entered into working agreements with 24 Municipalities in Jefferson County to implement the Jefferson County Act 167 Stormwater Management Plan by providing assistance to these Municipalities with enforcement of their Stormwater Ordinances. In 2013, 200 stormwater plans were reviewed by either Conservation District staff or Geo-Tech Engineering for compliance with the municipal ordinance.

Dirt and Gravel Roads Program

In 2013, \$4 million was directed from the state motor vehicle license fund to prevent dust and sediment pollution by employing environmentally sound maintenance of dirt and gravel roads. Each county's allocation is based on the number and condition of dirt and gravel roads in the county. Jefferson County received \$ 47,648 for road maintenance projects. Projects in Knox, Perry, Polk, Ringgold and Barnett Townships were completed.

In order to be eligible for these funds, at least one member of a municipality or eligible agency must complete a two day training program given by Penn State's Center for Dirt and Gravel Roads. For information on the next training date call the District's Program Coordinator, Shaun Wessell, at 849-7463.

Agriculture

The Nutrient Management Act (Act 38) requires all Concentrated Animal Operations (CAO's) to develop, submit, and implement a **Nutrient Management Plan**. A Nutrient Management Plan (NMP) considers existing soil nutrient levels and nutrients needed for achieving crop yield goals, accounts for manure generated on the farm, and determines a proper application rate. The NMP calculates the quantity and location of additional nutrients needed and may also recommend practices to reduce soil loss and prevent nutrients from contaminating surface and ground water. Four NMPs were approved by the JCCD Board of Directors. Three NMPs were developed for volunteers in the program. Six Status Reviews on farms with NMPs were completed, and two Ag related complaints were investigated.



Megan Whitlatch, ACT/Nutrient Mgmt. Specialist

A written **Agriculture E&S Plan** is required for any agricultural plowing or tilling over 5,000 square feet, including no-till cropping, and for animal heavy use areas such as barnyards, feedlots, etc. The Plan must include cost-effective and reasonable best management practices (BMPs) to minimize the potential for accelerated erosion and sedimentation. A Conservation Plan that meets the state regulatory requirements, often prepared with the help of the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), may be used in place of an Agriculture E&S Plan.

Agriculture Cont'd

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A written **Manure Management Plan** is required for every farm that produces or applies manure. This includes small (one horse) operations. A Manure Management Plan addresses manure application setbacks from streams, drinking water supplies, and sinkholes as well as winter manure spreading. An approved Act 38 Nutrient Management Plan may be used in place of a Manure Management Plan.

Megan Whitlatch, ACT/Nutrient Management Specialist coordinated a workshop in April 2013 to assist animal owners with writing an Agriculture E&S Plan or a Manure Management Plan. Presenters included: Ron Lybrook, DEP; Jamie Ulrich, SCC; and Megan Whitlatch, JCCD. Financial support for this project was provided by the PA-DEP through the Chesapeake Bay Implementation Grant and the Clean Water Fund.

REAP Program

The Resource Enhancement And Protection Program is a tax-credit program in which farmers can earn tax credits for implementing best management practices on their farm. This year, the district helped farmers apply for a little over \$62,000 in tax credits for practices that improve soil and manure management, and protect water quality in their watershed.

Special Projects/Grants

Noxious & Invasive Weed Survey

Over the past four years the Conservation District has partnered with the Headwaters Resource Conservation & Development and the Natural Resources Conservation Service to conduct noxious and invasive weed surveys. Focusing on properties that had been enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP), farm visits were made by the District's Ag Technician, Megan Whitlatch, to provide landowners with educational tools to help them identify and control noxious and invasive weeds as well as information on beneficial plants for wildlife and wildlife habitat.

Grants

Phase IV of the Sugar Camp Run Discharge as a Municipal Water Supply continued in 2013. Funding provided through a grant from The Pennsylvania Infrastructure Investment Authority (PENNVEST) is being used to construct a treatment system to treat 3,000 gpm of mine water from Sugar Camp Run in Sykesville Borough for commercial use. The Conservation District is working with Sykesville Borough and Winner Water Services, LLC to investigate the possibility of further treating the mine water for potable uses.



Sugar Camp Run Discharge



Maelstrom Oxidizer Treatment System

The original Conifer Treatment System was built in 1998. A project to regrade the limestone in the ALD, and fill a portion of the settling pond with limestone to create a large limestone bed (FeAlMn bed pronounced Fel-al-men) was completed in July, 2011. The Conservation District has entered into a Working Agreement with the Redbank Creek Watershed Trust to provide continued monitoring and maintenance on the system.



Conifer Treatment System FeAlMn bed



Treatment System outfall

Watersheds

The North Fork Watershed Association (NFWA) continued in their goal to protect and preserve the North Fork Watershed. This is done through community-based education, outreach, and implementation of a comprehensive plan to monitor the water quality of North Fork, by conducting bi-annual water sampling and annual macro-invertebrate sampling.

Manners Run (a tributary of North Fork Creek) has shown substantial improvement in 2013. Land liming and dam removal projects have been completed in this watershed, resulting in lower water temperatures and a higher pH. Prior to the liming project in the summer/fall of 2007, the pH of Manners Run was in the 4's. In 2013, the pH is in the 6's. As a result of the higher pH and a lower water temperature (due to the dam removal) native brook trout populations have risen dramatically since 2007. Standard electrofishing sampling by the PA Fish & Boat Commission, with assistance from NFWA, illustrates the increasing native brook trout numbers: 9 in 2007, 26 in 2008 and 66 in 2013.



The Mill Creek Coalition of Clarion and Jefferson Counties (MCC) came into existence in 1990 after a fall conference held at Clarion University focused on the restoration of Mill Creek from the effects of AMD. Its first AMD treatment system (Howe Bridge Site) was constructed in late 1991. Over the past 24 years, the Coalition and its state, federal, non-governmental organizations and other partners have plugged two abandoned gas wells and treated nearly two dozen AMD sites via the construction of passive treatment systems. Along with other accomplishments, over 40 sites have been improved, resulting in less AMD flowing into the watershed. In 2013, the Coalition continued to pursue funding opportunities to maintain or improve the effectiveness of their present 20+ passive treatment systems.

Environmental Education

Envirothons

The 2013 Jefferson-Clarion County High School competition was held at the Jefferson County Fairgrounds, on May 7, 2013. This year's Envirothon included 14 teams from 7 schools from Jefferson and Clarion Counties. Redbank High School won 1st place and represented Clarion County at the State Envirothon. Finishing 2nd was Jefferson County's Punxsutawney High School. Brookville High School represented Jefferson County at the State Envirothon Competition at Juniata College in Huntingdon, PA.



2nd Place Winners – Punxsutawney High School



Brookville High School -- 3rd place Winners

A total of 115 students from 5 classrooms participated in the 17th Annual 4th & 5th Grade Envirothon. First Place went to Mrs. Statler's class. This competition has been created to provide a learning session, along with testing at each of the stations. There were activities in the areas of Wetlands, Poisonous Plants, Water, Wildlife, and Recycling. Each station included an instructional period where the students listened to a presentation and completed a short quiz on what they learned.



PAGC Wildlife Conservation Officer, Andy Troutman

Field Days

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In May, 396 second grade students from schools in Jefferson County attended Farm Safety Days, sponsored by Penn State Extension, at the Jefferson County Fairgrounds. Students rotated to presentations on Gun Safety, Hidden Hazards, Smoking Education, Dog Safety, 911 Presentations, Poisonous Plants, Emergency Whistles and many more. Special presentations by Keystone Elk and Unilec (Safety Program) were enjoyed by the group.



On a very cold day in May, over 100 students from Brockway Area School District converged on Clear Creek State Park for their Annual Sixth Grade Field Day arranged for by the PA Game Commission. Throughout the day the students learned about their environment. Representatives from the Conservation District presented information on poisonous plant identification including poison ivy and poison hemlock. Other topics included tree and plant identification, firearms and hunting safety, fishing skills and fish identification.



Melissa Buck, Admin.Asst/EE Coordinator



Punxsutawney High School students learned about the watershed where they live by attending a field day at Cloe Lake near Punxsutawney, PA. The curriculum included identification of macroinvertebrates, stream mapping, and testing the chemical and physical parameters of Jackson Run. This annual event allows students to compare the changes in Jackson Run from year to year. The weather was extremely cold, but the event was still a great learning experience.

The 16th Annual Northwest PA Grazing Conference entitled, "Forages: Changes, Challenges, and Opportunities", was held on March 12, 2013 at the Zion Church in Clarion, PA. The Grazing Conference is sponsored by agencies including Headwaters RC&D Council & Charitable Trust, NRCS, Clearfield and Jefferson County Conservation Districts, Penn State Extension, Foundations for PA Watersheds, and PA Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative. 180 attendees listened to presentations by speakers including Dr. Garry Lacefield, a Professor of Plant and Soil Science from the University of Kentucky and Sid Brantly, a Grazing Land Specialist for NRCS.

2013 Board of Directors

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 Public Director – Tom McFarland
 Farmer Director – Theresa Shick
 Farmer Director – Terry Shields

Associate Directors

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 Jerry Chamberlin Andrew Laska
 George Miller Laura Lynn Yohe
 Richard Bowser Rusty & Claire Orner
 Doug Catalano Chris Mitterer
 Matt Ferut Todd Beers

Staff Members

District Manager – Deborah Wilson
 Administrative Assistant/
 Environmental Ed Coord. – Melissa Buck
 Watershed Specialist/
 Resource Technician – Shaun Wessell
 Nutrient Mgmt Specialist/
 Ag Conservation Technician – Megan Whitlatch

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2013 FINANCIAL STATEMENT

Income:	
Act 13 – Gas Well Impact Fees	\$ 54,946
County Appropriation	33,240
Stormwater Plan Reviews	2,800
E&S Plan Reviews	3,913
Fund Raisers	4,588
JCSA – Administration	20,000
Miscellaneous	300
PA Program Reimbursements	104,980
Grant Income	<u>2,746</u>
Total Income	\$ 227,513
Expenses:	
Audit	\$ 3,500
Auto	4,226
Building Maintenance	1,112
Dues	4,200
Employee Salaries/Benefits	214,928
Environmental Education	1,632
Fund Raisers	3,577
Grant Expenses	10,562
Insurance/Bonds	2,427
Miscellaneous	550
Office Expenses	9970
Meetings/Trainings	1,699
Staff Expenses	<u>1,068</u>
Total Expenses	\$ 259,451

Mission Statement

The Mission of the Jefferson County Conservation District is to preserve natural resources and protect/promote the health, safety and general welfare of the people of Jefferson County and to provide technical services to improve resource management for the benefit of farmers and urban residents.

