

Jefferson County Conservation District

2017 ANNUAL REPORT



The Mission of the Jefferson 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.

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Agricultural Services

Nutrient Management Program

The Nutrient Management Act requires all Concentrated Animal Operations (CAO's) to develop, submit and implement a nutrient management plan. The District Board approved three new plans this year. Megan Whitlatch, Ag Conservation Technician, conducted five annual status reviews in 2017. She works with area farmers and NRCS to design and implement nutrient management plans in Jefferson County. Over 70 soil samples were taken for local farmers.

The Resource Enhancement and Protective Act of Pennsylvania (REAP) is another tool to help landowners with their conservation efforts. REAP works by giving farmers a dollar for dollar Pennsylvania tax credit for money spent on Best Management Practices. Megan assisted farmers in applying for over \$21,223 in REAP state tax credits for BMPs on their farms.

CREP Workshop

A CREP Workshop was held in April. This Meeting was held at the Jefferson Conservation Center. The Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) pays farmers and other landowners to conserve and enhance their land. In this workshop, participants learned about the benefits of CREP, riparian forest buffers, how to identify and control the spread of noxious & invasive weeds on your land, and safe herbicide use. Speakers included Mike Kerr of the Farm Service Agency, Nicole Carutis of the Penn State Extension, Megan Whitlatch of the Jefferson Conservation District, and John Brundege of the DCNR – Bureau of Forestry.

Financial and other support for the CREP Outreach Program Office Mini-grant Program was provided by the Pennsylvania Association of Conservation Districts, Inc. through a Growing Greener Watershed Protection grant from the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection and with additional support from USDA-NRCS.

20th Annual Annual Grazing Conference

The Conservation District, along with Headwaters RC&D Council, Clearfield Conservation District, NRCS, Penn State Extension, Foundations for PA Watersheds, Dean's Dairy, and PA Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative, held this year's NW Grazing Conference. "Celebrating Milestones" was the main topic of this event. The event focused on tried and true and innovative methods applicable to grass-based farmers facing ever-changing environmental and economic conditions. Various experts hosted sessions focused on the economics of a successful grass-fed beef operation, responsible management of pastureland, and the economic and soil health benefits of integrating livestock into cropping systems and purchasing hay.

Other Programs

Stormwater Management



The Jefferson County Conservation District has signed working agreements with 25 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 2017, 181 stormwater plans were reviewed by either Conservation District staff or Geo-Tech Engineering for compliance with the municipal ordinance.

Multi-municipal Cooperation

For the past 20 years, the Conservation District has worked with the Jefferson County Sewage Association and the Greater Jefferson Area Council of Governments (COG) by providing supervision and office support. The working relationship between the three organizations is a unique situation. In 2014, Bureau Veritas (a third-party building code officer) moved their office into the Conservation Center complex and thus providing a *one-stop shop* for anyone in the process of purchasing property to build. There is someone available to assist with getting sewage permits, stormwater plans, building permits, and DEP permits Monday through Friday. This arrangement also provides checks and balances throughout the permitting process. The staff members responsible for each permit are familiar with the entire process and work together to help the applicants save time and money. These three agencies together with Bureau Veritas have worked together to save their member municipalities money; help their employees; and provide professional, qualified service to ensure that state and local laws are being followed.

Watershed Group Support

The Conservation District continued to provide technical support to two local watershed groups – the Northfork Watershed Association and the Mill Creek Coalition. Assistance with water sampling, maintenance of AMD treatment systems, and fundraising events were some of the services the District provided.

MESSAGE FROM THE MANAGER – Deborah Wilson

This year marks the 71st anniversary of the Jefferson County Conservation District. I am happy to report that the District has successfully administered our programs, as well as completed several special projects.

Our employee team continues to do fine work and is highly regarded in the community, and the District continues to lead others in environmental stewardship.

Much has been accomplished on behalf of Jefferson County and its residents as well as the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection for these past 71 years. The Jefferson County Conservation District believes there is still much to be done and intends to continue to focus on one fundamental goal: to preserve natural resources and protect/promote the health, safety and general welfare of the people of Jefferson County

On behalf of all of our Directors, I invite you to explore the Jefferson County Conservation District and see who we are, what we do and what we intend to do in the future.

Sincerely,

Deborah Wilson

DISTRICT STAFF



Melissa Buck, Deb Wilson, Megan Whitlatch
Carl Johnson, Grace Pesselato, Dana Grabowski, Shaun Wessell

Who We Are

Created under the Conservation District Law, districts are the local unit of state government that provides the link between you, the citizens, and the multitude of local state and federal natural resource management programs. A Board of Directors, appointed by the County Commissioners from nominations received from County-wide organizations, serve as your voice. A staff of professionals provides information, technical assistance, financial assistance and educational programs and support at the direction of that Board.

The Jefferson County Conservation District Board of Directors is comprised of seven directors (three farmer members, three urban/public members, and a County Commissioner). As volunteer members representing a variety of local communities, the Board leads District programs and sets District policies. Jefferson County residents are encouraged to contact their nearest District Board member with conservation concerns and issues

2017 TEAM SHEET

Board of Directors

Chairman, Herb Landes/Todd Beers
Vice-Chairman, Porter Duvall
Secretary/Treasurer, Allen Campbell
Director, Tom McFarland
Director, Terry Shields
Director, Theresa Shick
Commissioner Director, Herb Bullers

Associate Directors

Jerry Chamberlin
Laura Lynn Yohe
Tom Kundrich
Becky Gaston
George Miller

District Staff

Deborah Wilson	District Manager
Shaun Wessell	Assistant District Manager
Melissa Buck	Administrative Assistant
Dana Grabowski	District Technician
Grace Pesselatto	Watershed Specialist
Megan Whitlatch	ACT/Nutrient Management Specialist
Carl Johnson	Resource Technician

DEP Field Representative

John Green	NW Regional Office, Meadville
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Nominating Agencies

Jefferson Co Holstein Breeders Assoc.	Jefferson/Elk/Cameron FSA
Jefferson Co Farmers Union	Jefferson Co Fed of Sportsman's
Jefferson Co Twp Officers Assoc.	Jefferson Co Farm Bureau
Jefferson Co Cooperative Extension	Pamona Grange #20

Special Projects

Big Run Borough – Flood Protection Rehabilitation Project

The District was successful in securing a \$410,100 DCED Commonwealth Financing Authority grant for removal of approximately 22,000 cubic yards of shoaling (sediment deposition) and debris necessary to restore the flood control channel to its originally constructed dimensions within the flood damage reduction system of Mahoning Creek in Big Run Borough.

Gwin, Dobson & Foreman, Inc., Altoona, PA completed the design and permitting work for the project and provided construction oversight. Big Run Borough provided the 15% match required.



Kyle Lake Improvement Project

A Partnership Agreement was created between the Conservation District and the PA Fish and Boat Commission in 2016. The long-term goal of the agreement is to complete construction of an ADA compliant fishing pier, fish habitat improvements and shoreline stabilization on Kyle Lake. The lake is a 165-acre impoundment located in Washington Township, that is owned by the Commonwealth and managed by the PAFBC for public fishing and boating.

Channel Catfish Boxes and Turtle Basking Platforms were constructed by students from Penn State, DuBois in 2016. This year a handicap accessible fishing pier was designed by GeoTech Engineering. The pressure preservative treated wood deck measures 16 ft. long by 32 ft. wide with an 8 ft. wide by 15 ft. wide walkway. The project included placement of 52 sq. yds. of pavement to provide a smooth transition from the existing ground surface to the walkway. Construction was completed by Horizon Construction Group.

Funding for this work is being provided by the Redbank Creek Watershed Trust.

Environmental Education (Cont'd)

Cloe Lake Field Day

Cloe Lake is a 27-acre lake located in southern Jefferson County. The stream that feeds this man-made lake is Jackson Run. This stream provides an excellent opportunity for students from Punxsutawney High School to study the variable factors that impact a watershed.



Students check the chemical parameters of the water. They use kick nets to catch macro-invertebrates in the stream and learn to map the stream to determine if the stream has changed its course. Also, physical parameters of the stream, such as, temperature, width, depth, flow and velocity are collected. All this information is calculated and compared with data from previous years to determine the relative health of Jackson Run.

Dirt, Gravel and Low Volume Roads Program

This program administered by the District focuses on reducing run-off from dirt and gravel roads, as well as, “low volume” paved roads with less than 500 vehicles per day of traffic. The District’s allocation of funding provides \$251,000 for remediation on dirt and gravel thoroughfares and \$76,000 directed to low volume roadways.

An annual workshop was conducted by Resource Technician, Carl Johnson and District Technician, Shaun Wessell. In addition to training elected officials and roadworkers on environmentally sensitive road maintenance, the workshop also provides an opportunity to share ideas among different projects which could be utilized elsewhere.



Before



After

Erosion & Sediment Pollution Control Program



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, the Jefferson County Conservation District has:

- Reviewed 32 E&S Control Plans
- Conducted 47 Site Inspections
- Investigated 15 complaints
- Referred 1 violator to PADEP
- Issued 12 NPDES Permits

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.

Twenty-four (24) General Permits for water obstructions and encroachments were acknowledged. Thirty-six (36) Chapter 105-related complaints were investigated. Information and technical assistance is available concerning permit and other requirements associated Chapter 105 Regulations.

Farm Plan Writing Workshop

State regulations require farmers to have written plans that address soil and manure management. This workshop provided participants with a better understanding of the regulations and showed how to complete a Manure Management Plan and an Ag Erosion and Sedimentation Control Plan for their farm. Free soil test kits were available.

Environmental Education

Earth Day

Megan Whitlatch, Ag Technician, participated in the Earth Day event held at the Penn State Campus in DuBois. A display as well as information was distributed on manure management and problems associated with manure runoff.

C.G. Johnson Elementary Envirothon



Fourth & Fifth Grades at the C.G. Johnson Elementary (DuBois School District) competed in the Reynoldsville Envirothon for the 21st year. The students experienced a learning session and/or activity relating to: deer ticks, water pollution, forestry, bears, and waste management, followed by a test.

Presenters included staff from DCNR – Bureau of Forestry, Jefferson County Solid Waste Authority; as well as District staff. Each classroom's quizzes were scored. First place went to Mrs. Bailey's 5th Grade class and Second Place winners were Mrs. Reigel's 5th Grade class.

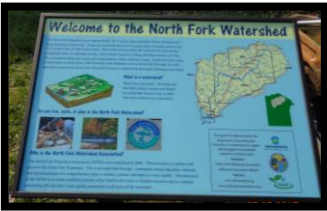
Tri-County High School Envirothon

The 2017 Tri-County Envirothon, coordinated by Melissa Buck, Admin. Assistant, was held at the Jefferson County Fairgrounds in Brookville and was sponsored by the Clarion County Conservation District (CCCD), Forest County Conservation District (FCCD) and Jefferson County Conservation District (JCCD). Eight school districts from the three counties were represented.

The day-long event is an outdoor environmental-education competition testing students' knowledge in five general areas: soils, wildlife, forestry, aquatics, and a current environmental issue "Ag Soil & Water Conservation Stewardship". Clarion-Limestone (Clarion County) Team A captured first place. West Forest (Forest County) Team A placed second. Brockway High School (Jefferson County) Team A placed third. Team A from Brockway High School represented Jefferson County at the State Envirothon.

Environmental Education (Cont'd)

North Fork Watershed Signage



A new sign has been placed at the Dr. Walter Dick Park that will aid visitors to understand the North Fork Watershed. The Brookville Borough Council, the Brookville Municipal Authority assisted the Conservation District in the creation and installation of the sign. A photograph taken by Judy Schwab was used on the sign. Funding for this project

was received from the Department of Environmental Protection through an Environmental Education Grant.

Safety Days

District staff participated in the 2017 Safety Days coordinated by Penn State Extension. Second graders from elementary schools throughout the county took a field trip to the fairgrounds, where residents and representatives of local businesses and non-profits offered presentations on a variety of safety topics, including animal safety, farm safety, hearing safety and more.

6th Grade Conservation Field Day

The Conservation District assisted at the annual Conservation Field Day sponsored by the PA Game Commission. Students from Brockway Area Elementary School enjoyed activities relating to fish, animals and recycling. Ag Technician, Megan Whitlatch, educated the students on protecting against ticks and Lyme disease. The County Solid Waste Coordinator presented recycled items and ideas on recycling.

Punxsutawney 1st Grade Field Day

The Conservation District assisted with an Environmental Field Day for 140 First Graders from the Punxsutawney Area School District. A presentation on Deer Ticks and Lyme Disease was given by Megan Whitlatch, Ag Technician.

