



What is a Conservation District?

A Conservation District is a legal subdivision of State Government, responsible under law for conservation work within its boundaries, just as Townships and Counties are responsible for roads and other services and school districts are responsible for education. Conservation Districts were created in PA in 1945 in response to the dust bowl of the 1930s.

Conservation Districts were created to improve soil and water conservation. District program areas include erosion and sediment control on earthmoving activities, farm conservation planning, nutrient and manure management planning, preservation of agricultural land, environmental education, river cleanups, pollinator and conservation plantings, abandoned mine drainage abatement, and environmentally sensitive maintenance of dirt and gravel roads. The goal of Districts' activities is to make all citizens aware of the inter-relationship between human activities and the natural environment.

Districts are managed by citizens who know local problems. In Pennsylvania, a District's governing Board is comprised of six appointed Directors (3 Farmer Directors and 3 Public Directors) and one County Commissioner Director. Districts employ staff to assist Directors in carrying out their responsibilities and objectives.

employees act as a liaison between all levels of government, environmental agencies, and the general public. The District does not have environmental regulatory authority for any of its conservation programs but strives to solve environmental problems through landowner cooperation and voluntary compliance.

How Do Districts Work?

It is the responsibility of the Conservation District Directors to plan and develop the District's program. Directors work through District staff to develop programs that address the natural resource conservation needs of the county.


Conservation programs dealing with agriculture, past mining, stormwater, wetland protection, environmental education, and earthmoving are all high priority for the Jefferson Conservation District.

Funding for District operations is obtained from a multitude of sources, mostly State and Federal grants. Only about 12% of the District's operating budget came from the County Commissioners' general fund, which makes the District program a good investment.

State Delegated Programs

Dirt & Gravel, Low Volume Road Program

The Jefferson County Conservation District works with the State Conservation Commission (SCC) and the Penn State Center for Dirt and Gravel Road Studies to improve roads that directly impact Jefferson County's stream network. Funding is provided through yearly allocations by the SCC and distributed to each County willing to participate in the program. In 2019, nearly \$320,000 in DGLVR funds was spent on maintenance projects. Each year, the District distributes grant funds to eligible Townships. Municipality eligibility depends on meeting project criteria and the program requirement that each municipality have a current employee (s) who will be working directly on the project that have attended the two day Environmentally Sensitive Maintenance Workshop put on by the Center for Dirt and Gravel Roads.



**JEFFERSON COUNTY
CONSERVATION DISTRICT**

2019 DISTRICT PERSONNEL

Board of Directors

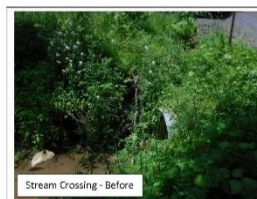
Todd Beers, District Chairman	Tom McFarland, Director
Porter Duvall, Vice-Chairman	Theresa Shick, Director
Allen Campbell, Sec/Treasurer	Terry Shields, Director
Herb Bullers, Commissioner Director	

District Staff

Shaun Wessell, District Manager	<u>Associate Directors</u>
Deb Wilson, Executive Director	Jerry Chamberlin
Melissa Buck, Administrative Assistant	George Miller
Megan Whitlatch, ACT/Nutrient Mgmt	Laura Lynn Yohe
Carl Johnson, Resource Technician	Tom Kundrich
Dana Grabowski, Watershed Technician	Dennis Day
Rebecca Gaston, Conservation Technician	

The District is a nonprofit entity established by the Jefferson County Commissioners under Pennsylvania's Conservation District Law. Much of the District's effectiveness is due to its ability to coordinate local, state, and federal government resources to solve local environmental problems. District

Polk Township – Dixon Road



Stream Crossing - Before



Stream Crossing - After

Under the supervision of Carl Johnson, Resource Conservationist, seven (7) DGLVR projects in seven different Jefferson County Municipalities were completed in 2019. Two of these projects were on Low Volume Roads.

The Conservation District continued a working agreement with the Forest County Conservation District & Planning Department (FCCD&PD) to provide technical support to the FCCD&PD throughout the construction phase of projects. Five (5) DGLVR projects in 4 different Forest County Municipalities were completed in 2019.

Erosion & Sedimentation Control Program

Pa. Code Title 25 Chapter 102 was created to require persons proposing or conducting earth disturbance activities to develop, implement, and maintain BMPs to minimize the potential for accelerated erosion and sedimentation during construction and plan for post construction stormwater management. Through a delegation agreement with the Department of Environmental Protection, the Jefferson County Conservation District reviews Erosion and Sediment Control Plans (E&S Plans). Each E&S plan is reviewed for technical adequacy under Chapter 102 requirements.

A federal regulation that works in conjunction with the state E&S program is the National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Program. This regulation requires earthmoving activities disturbing one acre or more to obtain an NPDES permit which is reviewed by the District.

In 2019, 36 Erosion and Sediment Control Plans were reviewed and approved and 9 NPDES Permits were authorized. 57 construction site inspections were conducted with a total of 864 technical assistance contacts.

Nutrient Management Program

The Nutrient Management Act (Act 38) has been in effect since October of 2006. The State Conservation Commission has oversight of the state wide Nutrient Management Program and conservation districts are delegated to administer it at the county level. Act 38 requires concentrated animal operations (CAOs) to develop and maintain a site specific Nutrient Management Plan (NMP). A CAO is defined as an agricultural operation with 8 animal equivalent units or more where animal density of all livestock on the farm exceeds 2 animal equivalent units per acre suitable for manure application on an annualized basis.

The goal of the program is to protect and maintain soil and water quality through the development and implementation of NMPs and agricultural Best Management Practices (BMPs) on livestock operations that: possess livestock, generate, store, and/or spread manure. Examples of BMPs may include: a certified concrete manure storage tank, or HDPE lined lagoon, a roofed solid manure stacking area, a

composting facility, reinforced animal stream crossings, concrete barnyard areas, a vegetated or riparian buffer between the barnyard and a well or stream, rain gutters to divert clean water around barn yard areas, fence to improve pasture management and/or prevent animals from accessing streams to protect stream banks from erosion, but there are so many more!

The District is delegated to administer the Pennsylvania Nutrient Management Program in Jefferson County. Currently, there are 5 Concentrated Animal Operations (CAOs), and 5 Volunteer Animal Operations (VAOs) in Jefferson County. The District is responsible for reviewing and approving NMP amendments, reviewing updates, conducting status reviews, investigating complaints, maintaining technician certification, and providing education and outreach within the community.

In 2019, the District received 1 CAO Plan Amendment and conducted 5 annual CAO status reviews.

Technical Assistance Efforts

The District coordinates agricultural plan development workshops each year to assist landowners and operators in achieving agricultural compliance under state regulations. Participants learn about manure management and agricultural erosion and sedimentation planning, best management practices, and potential funding opportunities.

The Pennsylvania Resource Enhancement and Protection Program (PA REAP) is a State Tax Credit program administered by the Pennsylvania State Conservation Commission. The District assists farmers seeking help with completing an application and determining BMP and Plan eligibility.

Outreach & Education

Ag Newsletters

A quarterly newsletter is published to assist farmers with conservation planning and provide technical assistance to farmers interested in doing conservation work. The District promotes conservation practices in the agriculture community by:

- Assisting farmers with improvement of agriculture, conservation and nutrient management activities.
- Administering and publicizing information regarding Nutrient Management Law (Act 38)
- Promoting and assisting in educational events

Workshops

In 2019, The District held 4 Ag related workshops

- Manure Management
- Grazing Conference
- Wildlife Conservation
- Cover Crop Field Day (with Clearfield)

The District Agriculture Conservation Technician (ACT) is available to assist farmers with conservation planning and provide technical assistance to farmers interested in doing conservation work on their farms pertaining to agriculture conservation.

Erosion & Sedimentation/Dirt & Gravel, Low Volume Road Program Outreach

The District routinely performs technical assistance throughout the year. In 2019, 864 technical assistance contacts were made by either phone conversation, email, or meetings held in-office or on-site. The District continues to assist residents of Jefferson County for compliance with Chapter 102 regulations.

A Dirt & Gravel, Low Volume Road workshop was held in March of 2019. Participants included municipal officials and roadworkers. The workshop focused on “environmentally sound maintenance of unpaved and low volume paved roadways. A representative from PA One Call explained the importance of the “811” system.



Presentations & Displays

We strive to reach more students and members of the public with our programs by participating in community events, providing in-classroom demonstrations, submitting press releases to the local newspapers, posting to social media, and conducting presentations as requested.

Envirothons

The District co-sponsors a **Tri-County High School Envirothon** competition each spring, which is open to all students from Jefferson, Clarion and Forest County schools in grades 9 through 12. Over 100 students participated from the 3 different counties.

The Tri-County Envirothon was held at the Jefferson County Fairgrounds in Brookville in partnership with the DCNR Bureau of Forestry, NRCS, and the PA Game Commission.

The winning team from Jefferson County was Team A from Brockway High School and was eligible to compete at the State Envirothon.

Prior to the awards, Don Crytzer & Ruth Rowan of North Fork Watershed Association used a Stormwater Simulator and Dana Grabowski & Becky Gaston of JCCD used a Groundwater Flow Model to educate students on managing stormwater and protecting water resources.

Congratulations to all of our participants and thank you to all agency staff who make this event possible!

A Third and Fourth Grade Envirothon is held each year at the C.G. Johnson Elementary School in Reynoldsville. Conducted similar to the Regional High School Envirothon students learn from agency personnel about natural resource conservation.

The winning class was Mrs. Buchanan’s 4th Grade Class. Each year the students and presenters enjoy the competition and look forward to next year.

Other Workshops & Events

The Conservation District’s environmental education activities target farmers, municipal officials, homeowners, teachers and students along with many other audiences. Activities range from participating in large community events, i.e. the County Fair, hosting many school programs, professional workshops and technical training sessions, or going out in the field to provide one-on-one assistance.

Special Projects

In 2019, the District was awarded funding from the PA Department of Community and Economic Development, the PA Department of Environmental Protection, and the Redbank Creek Watershed Trust to complete projects in watersheds located throughout Jefferson County.

Big Run Flood Control Facility – DCED – CFA Grant

Maintenance of the flood control project in Big Run Borough was completed in 2019. Approximately 32,300 cu. yd. of sediment deposition has been removed within the permitted reach of Mahoning Creek. As evidenced by the reduced flooding throughout the Borough after heavy rains this past year, working together with the Borough has allowed for a successful project.



Kyle Lake Dam Renovation and Fish Habitat Improvements

The District worked with the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission to complete the rehabilitation of the gatehouse, spillways and embankment of Kyle Lake to ensure that current PADEP standards are being met.

While the Lake was drained, Redbank Creek Watershed Trust funds were used to install a handicap accessible fishing pier, catfish spawning boxes, turtle basking platforms, fish habitat structures, shoreline improvements and to improve the access road and parking areas for the handicap accessible fishing pier.

Pine Run Watershed Agricultural Best Management Practices Implementation – Growing Greener Grant

The Pine Run Watershed is designated as an EPA Section 319 Priority Watershed. The Pine Run Watershed Implementation Plan (PRWIP) identifies agriculture, urban pollution, and acid mine drainage as causes of nonpoint source pollution within the watershed. This project proposes to improve water quality in the Pine Run Watershed and to address areas listed in the PRWIP as “highly affected by agriculture”. The PRWIP identifies livestock access on the stream as the “primary contributor of NPS pollution” on several sites along the main stem of Pine Run.



In 2019, work began on the Don Powell farm to install fencing to establish a rotational grazing system and to exclude livestock access to the stream and a pond. The grazing system included a spring development, a pumping plant, livestock pipeline, and 4 troughs to provide an alternative water source.

Rattlesnake Creek Flood Mitigation – DCED – CFA Grant

The District was approved for funding through the DCED Flood Mitigation Program to be used to reduce flooding in a one-mile section of Rattlesnake Creek by removing debris and sediment, installing and/or replacing drainage pipes and completing streambank rehabilitation in Snyder Township, Jefferson County. Work completed will provide protection to 4 businesses and approximately 41 homes located along the project area that have had severe flooding events.



JEFFERSON COUNTY
CONSERVATION DISTRICT

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“A sincere thank you from all of us here at the Conservation District for your continued support of our programs.”