

# Jefferson County Conservation District

A photograph of a sunset over a dark field. The sun is a bright yellow-orange circle just above the horizon, with its light reflecting on the ground. The sky is filled with horizontal bands of orange and yellow clouds. The overall scene is peaceful and natural.

2022  
Annual  
Report

# Background

## 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, environmental education, river cleanups, 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.
- ▶ The Jefferson County Conservation 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 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.
- ▶ It is the responsibility of the Conservation District Directors to plan and develop the District's programs. 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 JCCD.
- ▶ Funding for District operations is obtained from a multitude of sources, mostly State and Federal grants. About 18% of the District's operating budget came from the County Commissioners' general fund, which makes District programs a good investment.



# Board of Directors



Pictured From Left to Right: Terry Shields, (Farmer Director); Senator Cris Dush, (Not a Director); Allen Campbell, Sec/Treasurer (Public Director); Theresa Shick, (Farmer Director); Tom McFarland, Vice-Chairman (Public Director); Sam Farcus, (Public Director); Herb Bullers, Chairman (Commissioner Director); Not pictured Porter Duvall, (Farmer Director)

## Our Mission

- ▶ **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 all.**

## Our Vision

- ▶ **The Jefferson County Conservation District enables residents, businesses and industries to optimize environmental systems interactions throughout the county through subject expertise, education, project management, and research.**

# Staff



Pictured From Left to Right: Dana Hannibal, District Technician; Shaun Wessell, District Manager; Evan DeLong, Watershed Specialist; Christine Hughes, Administrative Assistant; Rebecca Gaston, Conservation Technician; Carl Johnson, Resource Technician; Megan Whitlatch, ACT/Nutrient Management Technician

## Cooperating Agencies

- Farm Service Agency
- Penn State Cooperative Extension
- PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources
- Natural Resource Conservation Service
- PA Fish & Boat Commission
- PA Game Commission
- PA Department of Environmental Protection
- PA Department of Transportation
- Jefferson County Solid Waste Authority
- Jefferson County Department of Development
- Western Pennsylvania Coalition for Abandoned Mine Reclamation
- Bureau Veritas



# State Delegated Programs

## Dirt, Gravel and Low Volume Road Program

Pennsylvania's Dirt, Gravel and Low Volume Road (DGLVR) Maintenance Program provides funding to eliminate stream pollution caused by runoff and sediment from the State's comprehensive network of unpaved and low volume public roads. The Program was enacted into law in April 1997 as Section 9106 of the PA Vehicle Code, with annual funding for "environmentally sensitive road maintenance" for unpaved roads. The goal of the Program is to create a more environmentally and economically sustainable low volume road network through education, outreach, and project funding. Beginning in 2014-2015, a portion of the Program's funding was directed towards paved or sealed low volume roads with 500 vehicles per day or less.

In 2022, JCCD was able to provide nearly \$544,200.00 in DGLVR funds to 12 different municipalities. Carl Johnson, Resource Technician, oversaw the completion of the Dirt, Gravel & Low Volume Road Projects.



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. Carl oversaw DGLVR projects in 3 different Forest County Municipalities in 2022.

## Chapter 102 -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, JCCD 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 2022, 25 Erosion and Sediment Control Plans were reviewed and approved and 11 NPDES Permits were authorized by Dana Hannibal, District Technician.

Dana, along with Conservation Technician, Rebecca Gaston conducted 98 construction site inspections while providing a total of 497 technical assistance contacts.

Dollar General, Falls Creek Borough



Brockway True Value, Washington Twp.



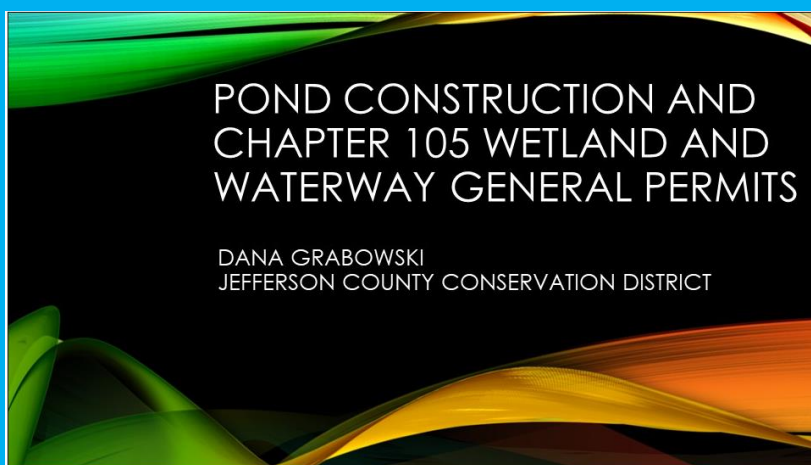


# Chapter 105 - Dam Safety and Encroachments Act

- ▶ 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 acknowledges 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.
- ▶ In 2022, 12 General Permits for water obstructions and encroachments were acknowledged. 9 Chapter 105-related complaints were investigated.
- ▶ The District provides information and technical assistance concerning permit and other requirements associated with Chapter 105 Regulations.

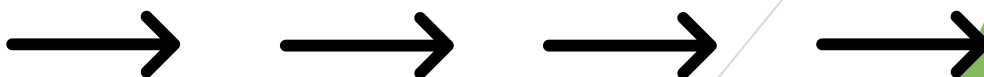
The District presented at the 2022 Clarion Forest Landowner Conference via webinar on ponds.

There were approximately 128 participants at the webinar.



# Nutrient Management Program

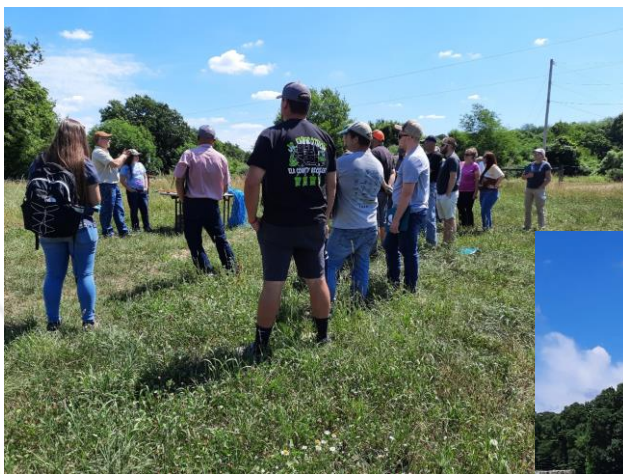
- ▶ The Nutrient Management Act (Act 38) requires Concentrated Animal Operations (CAOs) to have and implement a Nutrient Management Plan (a more in-depth version of an MMP). A CAO is an agricultural operation with 8 or more animal equivalent units (AEUs) where the animal density exceeds two AEUs per acre suitable for the application of manure on an annualized basis. (An AEU is equivalent to 1,000 lbs. of animal weight on an annualized basis). Operations that are not CAOs may voluntarily have a NMP developed. **In 2022, 2 NMPs were written for non-CAOs totaling 928.6 acres.**
- ▶ The goal of the program is to maximize use of nutrients on the farm, and to protect soil and water quality.
- ▶ The State Conservation Commission has oversight of the Nutrient Management Program and the District is delegated to administer Act 38 in Jefferson County.
- ▶ The District is responsible for reviewing and approving new and amended NMPs, conducting status reviews, investigating complaints, maintaining certification, and providing education and outreach within the community. **In 2022, 5 CAO annual status reviews were conducted.**
- ▶ State required farm plans, including Manure Management Plans (MMPs) & Agricultural Erosion and Sedimentation Control Plans (Ag E&S Plans) are developed upon request/as time permits (note: Conservation Plans may be used to meet Chapter 102 requirements in place of an Ag E&S Plan). **The District developed 4 MMPs in 2022 covering 179.1 acres**





## Agricultural Technical Assistance

- ▶ PA REAP: The PA Resource Enhancement And Protection (REAP) Program is a state tax credit program administered by the PA State Conservation Commission in which farmers can apply for conservation best management practices (BMPs) they implement on their farm. The District assists farmers through the application process.
- ▶ NRCS Partnership: through an NACD Grant, Megan works with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to develop conservation plans and provide technical assistance for farmers enrolled in NRCS funded programs. **26 conservation plans were developed through the District in 2022 covering 736.7 acres.**
- ▶ In 2022, 184 soil test kits were distributed to farmers in Jefferson County to help improve the nutrient management on their farm.
- ▶ We are a partner along with other organizations and local farmers in arranging the Western PA Grazing Conference each year to promote sustainable grazing practices to farmers across the state. The conference was held March 17<sup>th</sup> with Greg Halich as the keynote speaker. Approximately 150 people were in attendance.
- ▶ A Grazing Field Day was held at Del & Sue Moore's operation in Summerville on June 29<sup>th</sup>. Topics of discussion included soil health, pasture management, financial and technical assistance, and a tour of the farm looking at forage species and grazing best management practices.



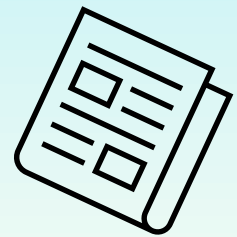
# PA Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)

Through the NACD Grant, Field visits were conducted for 19 landowners to verify NRCS CSP contract implementation, including over 20 acres of Wildlife habitat Plantings (E420A), and over 10 acres of Tree/Shrub Establishment (E612C)



## Ag Newsletters

Agriculture Newsletters are developed on a quarterly basis and provide information on a variety of ag conservation topics, financial assistance opportunities, and upcoming events farmers may be interested in.



## No-Till Equipment Rental

The District coordinated no-till equipment rentals for interested farmers in a cooperative partnership, utilizing Clearfield County Conservation District's no-till drill. Jefferson County farmers planted over 40 acres with the drill.



# Outreach & Education

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

The District routinely performs technical assistance throughout the year. In 2022, well over 1,000 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.

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.





# 2022 Clarion-Jefferson ENVIROTHON

9 Teams  
50 Students  
3 Schools from  
Clarion and  
Jefferson Counties  
participated in our  
local High School  
Envirothon  
competition at Clear  
Creek State Park



The winning team was  
Keystone Area High School



The second-place team was  
North Clarion Area High School





# Other Events

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



Vernal Pool Tour



Senior Picnic



Conservation Workshop



Brookville After School Program



Outdoor Camp



Mahaffey Camp

# Special Projects

In 2022, the District worked on projects funded by the PA Department of Community and Economic Development and the Redbank Creek Watershed Trust.

*PA Department of Community and Economic Development- CFA Grant*

## *Sugarcamp Run Aquaponics*

The Conservation District was awarded a Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) grant to support the ongoing operations of the Sugar Camp Run mine drainage treatment system in Sykesville PA. This grant allowed for the procurement of a hydroponic growing system to produce fresh leafy greens as well as serve as an environmental education facility highlighting the reuse of treated mine water. The facility was delivered in 2022 with installation and production slated for 2023.

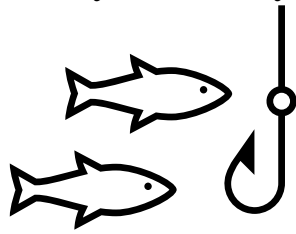




# Sugarcamp Run Water Testing



Also made possible by DCED grant funds, the Conservation District conducts quarterly water quality testing on the Sugar Camp Run Treatment System, an Abandoned Mine Drainage (AMD) passive treatment system in Sykesville.



## Sidewalk Improvements at Kyle Lake

## Redbank Creek Watershed Trust

Funding from the Redbank Creek Watershed Trust was used to improve access at Kyle Lake by installing a sidewalk along the boat ramp.



## Conifer Treatment Systems Maintenance

Funding from the Redbank Creek Watershed Trust was used for maintenance of the Conifer East and Conifer West AMD treatment systems in Beaver Township.

**Conifer West** is a passive limestone bed treatment system at an acid mine discharge site located in Conifer, Jefferson County. The treatment system was designed to precipitate (fall out in solid form) and contain iron, aluminum, and manganese solids in a manner that would allow for periodic monitoring and maintenance of the treatment system. When standing water is observed on 75% of the treatment system, it indicates that precipitate has formed over a large portion of the treatment bed and maintenance is needed. This maintenance consists of an excavator scooping and rinsing the stone allowing the precipitated minerals to slough from the stone. Once excess precipitate has been removed from the stone, subsurface treatment is restored. Subsurface treatment provides the maximum surface area of the limestone to interact with the mine discharge, which allows the system to function at its highest level.



Manifold and pooled water

### Conifer West



Limestone bed with subsurface drainage

**Conifer East** is a passive treatment system, consisting of a series of ponds, wetlands and a limestone channel at an acid mine discharge site located in Conifer, Jefferson County. The treatment system was designed to precipitate and contain iron, aluminum, and manganese solids in a manner that would allow for periodic monitoring and maintenance of the treatment system. Routine inspections and water sampling help determine if the system is functioning properly and when maintenance is necessary. Maintenance consists of reshaping the channel and replacing the limestone. The placement of fresh limestone re-establishes subsurface treatment. Subsurface treatment provides the maximum surface area of the limestone to interact with the mine discharge, which allows the system to function at its highest level.





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814-849-7463**

**For more information on the  
District, please visit our website  
at  
[www.jeffersonconservation.com](http://www.jeffersonconservation.com)**