

Jefferson County Conservation District



2024 Annual Report

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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.

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 15% of the District's operating budget came from the County Commissioners' general fund, which makes District programs a good investment.



Meet the Board of Directors



(from left to right)

Theresa Shick-Farmer Director

Mark Humes- Commissioner Director

Sam Farcus-Vice Chairman-Public Director

Allen Campbell, Secretary/Treasurer- Public Director

Tom McFarland, Chairman- Public Director

Mark Pifer- Farmer Director

Terry Shields- 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.

Retired & New



Carl Johnson – Resource Technician



Carl began his career with Jefferson Conservation District in February of 2016. He was hired to fill the Resource Technician position. He came with a knowledgeable background of road maintenance, improving roads, construction equipment, aggregates and great communication skills. We thank Carl for the years he dedicated to the District.

Bruce Snyder – Conservation Technician

Bruce became involved with our District in June 2022 and became an Associate Director in August 2022. He had an Engineering background and interest in the environment. Bruce resigned as JCCD Associate Director in June 2024 to join the team as the Conservation Technician.



Staff



Shaun Wessell,
District Manager



Christine Hughes,
Administrative Assistant



Dana Hannibal,
District Technician



Megan Whitlatch,
ACT/Nutrient
Management Technician



Laryssa Remmick,
Resource Technician



Bruce Snyder,
Conservation Technician



Jenna Biggie,
Watershed Specialist

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 2024, JCCD was able to provide \$248,915.71 in DGLVR funds to different Municipalities. Laryssa Remmick, Resource Technician, oversaw the completion of the Dirt, Gravel & Low Volume Road Projects.



Chapter 102: Erosion & Sediment 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.



**I-80 Bridge Project,
Brookville Borough & Pine
Creek Township**



**Punxsutawney Hospital,
Young Township**

In 2024, 30 Erosion and Sediment Control Plans were reviewed and approved and 10 new NPDES Permits and 1 ESCGP Permit were authorized by Dana Hannibal, District Technician.

Dana Hannibal and Bruce Snyder, Conservation Technician, conducted 147 construction site inspections while providing a total of 592 technical assistance contacts. ⁸

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 2024, 23 General Permits for water obstructions and encroachments were acknowledged. 13 Chapter 105 related complaints were investigated.

The District provided 245 technical assistance contacts concerning permitting and other requirements associated with Chapter 105 regulations.

Inspections and How to Prepare

Dana Hannibal, JCCD

Boots on the Ground

Dana Hannibal, JCCD

DEP NW Regional office held monthly trainings to DEP and Conservation District staff. Dana Hannibal presented on “Inspections and how to Prepare” and “Boots on the Ground”.

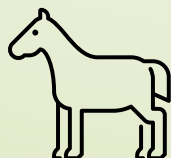
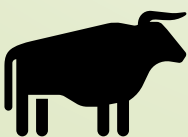
Nutrient Management Program

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.

- 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 2024, the District completed:

- 4 NMP status reviews
- 3 NMP review & approvals
- 10 complaint investigations
- 2 PACD Ag Plan Reimbursement applications



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.
- ▶ **Farm Plans:** State required farm plans, including Manure Management Plans (MMPs) & Agricultural Erosion and Sedimentation Control Plans (Ag E&S Plans) are developed upon request. Nutrient Management Plans for non-CAOs are also developed upon request.
- ▶ **Soil Sampling:** The district provided free soil sampling services to area farmers
- ▶ **CREP Outreach:** The District provides education and outreach for the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP). Administered by FSA, this program promotes conservation practices on non-productive farmland.



In 2024:

- REAP application assistance was provided for 5 farmers implementing conservation best management practices.
- 8 Manure Management Plans, 2 NRCS 590 Nutrient Management Plans, and 7 Ag E&S Plans were developed.
- 85 soil sample test kits were distributed, with district staff taking 55 of these samples for area farmers.
- 7 CREP Status Reviews were completed to assess land enrolled in the program. The status reviews were completed through a PACD CREP mini-grant.

Agriculture Conservation Assistance Program (ACAP)

The Agriculture Conservation Assistance program (ACAP) awards grants to Pennsylvania farmers to install best management practices (BMPs) on their farms that reduce pollution from entering streams and waterways. The program is an opportunity for farmers to install soil and water conservation practices that have shared environmental and farm management goals.

The ACAP was created through the Clean Streams Fund to reduce non-point source pollution in the streams and surface waters of the Commonwealth. The State Conservation Commission is providing funding to many Pennsylvania Conservation Districts.

In 2024, a Roofed Heavy Use Area Protection and Manure Storage Facility was installed through the program for a beef operation.



Outreach & Education



Backwoods Chicks Camp

The second annual Backwoods Chicks camp was a weekend camp held with Quiet Creek Farms that provided various workshops on sustainability practices, water pollution, conservation, and outdoor recreation for women. This event was made possible by DEP through the 2024 Environmental Education Grants Program.

Vernal Pool Tours

The third annual vernal pool tours were held with DCNR. This event allowed people to experience an amphibian migration to a vernal pool habitat. Approximately 30 people attended in total.



Farmer Workshop

The District held a Farmer Workshop on April 18th. Topics of discussion included Soil & Manure Mgmt. in Your Watershed, Keeping Pesticides out of Groundwater, and Weed ID & Control. The workshop was funded through a PACD NPS mini-grant.

Blue Bird Box Workshop

A blue bird box building event was held with the Game Commission to learn about Bluebirds and build a box that would encourage nesting. 20 free boxes were provided by the Game Commission.



Composting Workshop

A composting workshop was held with Quiet Creek Farms to learn how to construct a home-based worm composting bin. The attendees received a worm composting kit thanks to the DEP Watershed Specialist mini-grant.



Western PA Grazing Conference

The 26th Annual Western PA Grazing Conference was held on Thursday, March 14th, at the Trinity Point Church of God in Clarion, PA. This conference promotes sustainable grazing practices to Pennsylvania farmers. The keynote speaker this year was Joel Salatin of Polyface Farm in VA. Over 150 people were in attendance. The District helps coordinate this conference every year as a member of the Western PA Grazing Conference Committee (Members include NRCS, Jefferson, Clarion, and Clearfield Conservation Districts, Penn State Extension, NW & SW Project Grass, and local farmers).

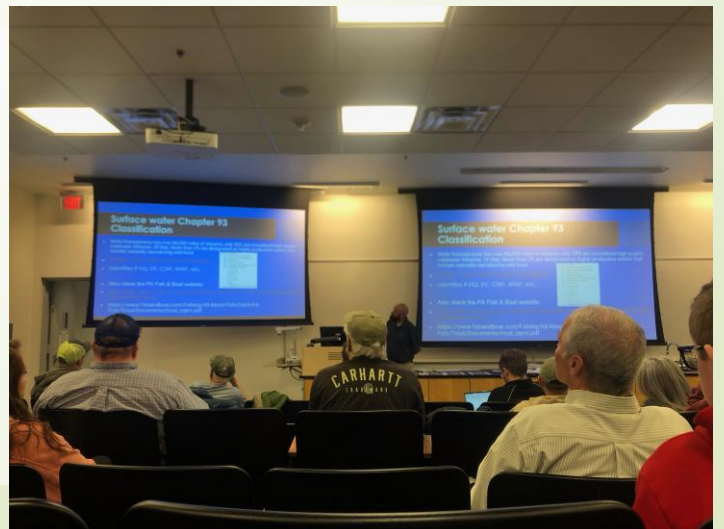


Pasture Walk

A Pasture Walk was held on September 21 at Sandy Lick Farm, a beef operation owned by Del & Sue Moore. Del provided insight into his rotational grazing practices, and the District & Penn State Extension discussed invasive plant species management, forages, and soil health. The event was funded through a PACD PRISM grant.

Trout Unlimited Workshop

With assistance from the Clarion Conservation District, presentations on water quality and environmental regulations were given to the Iron Furnace Chapter of Trout Unlimited and Penn West-Clarion students on March 20, 2024 at Penn West Clarion.



Ag Safety Days

The 2024 Ag Safety Days, hosted by the Penn State Extension, was held on 5/9/24 and 5/10/24. Over 300 second grade students from area schools including Brookville, Punxsutawney, and C.G. Johnson listened to presentations on various safety topics. Conservation District staff presented on Poisonous Snakes, and Poisonous Plants. Other stations included Firearms Safety, Electric Safety, Animal Safety, and many others.



Drinking Water Workshop

The JCCD participated in a drinking water workshop held by Penn State Extension. Participants that attended provided drinking water samples to be tested during the workshop and at the lab with Penn State Extension.

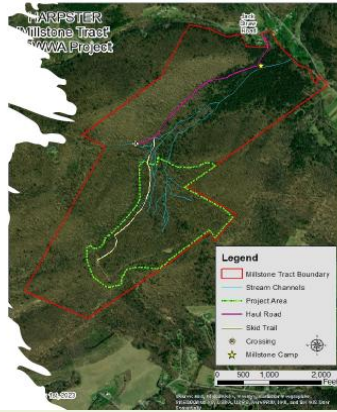
4th Grade Heritage Park

The JCCD assisted with two stations, pond critters, and native plant-pollinator ecology to Hickory Grove 4th Grade students.



Questions to Ask

- Location: get coordinates
- How large is the stream?
- What type of stream is it?
 - CWF or WWF?
 - Special Protection? If so is it HQ or EV?
 - Is it a trout stream, if so what kind? WTS, TSF, Class A, WTS?
- Existing crossing? Is there a pipe or bridge already there from the landowner?
 - Are there existing permits?
 - Chapter 105 Dam Safety and Waterway Management
- Are there wetlands in the area?



GIS Class

A lecture was provided to the Penn State DuBois GIS class on the use of maps and the role of conservation districts.



PSU DuBois Earth Day
Outreach was provided to students and faculty of the campus on environmental practices.

Mussel Surveys

The JCCD staff assisted Western Pennsylvania Conservancy with surveying mussels on the Clarion River. The survey revealed the first ever record of mussel life in the lower Clarion River and the discovery of a federally listed endangered species.



Fish Stocking with PFBC
The JCCD staff assisted with fish stocking season at various locations.

Jefferson County Fair



6th Grade Brookville Envirothon



4th Grade Reynoldsville Envirothon



After School Programs



Brookville Laurel Festival



Tri-County Envirothon

Jefferson, Clarion, and Forest Counties



1st place:



2nd place:



3rd place:

- Clarion County Winner: Keystone 1
- Jefferson County Winner: Brookville 1
- Forest County Winner: West Forest 1

The Tri-County Envirothon was held on Tuesday April 30, 2024. This year's event was held at the Clear Creek State Park in Sigel & was sponsored/planned by the Clarion Conservation District (CCD), Forest County Conservation District & Planning Department (FCCD &PD), & Jefferson County Conservation District (JCCD) .

Thirteen teams from seven different schools in Clarion, Forest & Jefferson Counties participated.

The schools at this year's Envirothon included:

Clarion County: Keystone, North Clarion, Redbank & Union High Schools

Forest County: West Forest High School

Jefferson County: Brockway & Brookville High School

Presenters at this year's event were:

Forestry Station- Department of Conservation & Natural Resources (DCNR)

Aquatics Station- PA Fish & Boat Commission

Wildlife Station- PA Game Commission

Soils Station- Jefferson County Conservation District (JCCD)

Renewable Energy for a Sustainable Future- Saint Francis University Institute of Energy

Students use study materials provided by the Pennsylvania Envirothon to prepare for the event.

Growing Greener Grant

Rattlesnake Creek

- In 2022, the Jefferson County Conservation District was awarded a PA DEP Growing Greener Grant to continue the improvement of the Rattlesnake Creek watershed by installing structures to stabilize eroded streambanks and provide fish habitat. Streambank stabilization will help to reduce erosion within the stream channel and prevent scour of the stream bank so property owners will no longer lose property, minimizing risk to nearby structures. Stabilization of streambank erosion through the construction of structures that provide habitat to fish and macroinvertebrates, and construction of fish habitat structures will continue to provide protection to life and improved properties over time. Rattlesnake Creek is a wild and stocked trout stream, and construction of the instream structures will provide a benefit to adjacent property owners by increasing stability of the stream channel and provide a benefit to fish by improving habitat within the stream.
- The PA DEP Growing Greener grant allowed for the installation of 61 streambank stabilization and fish habitat structures along 720 linear feet of streambank along Rattlesnake Creek. This PA DEP Growing Greener grant has allowed for great improvement to the Rattlesnake Creek watershed, additional worksites will be identified for project completion in 2025.



Redbank Creek Watershed Trust

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.



Before
Maintenance



After
Maintenance

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.



Contact Us



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15825

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For more information on the
Jefferson County Conservation
District, visit our website at:

www.jeffersonconservation.com