



# Conservation Conversation

## 2015 Centre County Envirothon

**Inside this issue:**

Ag & Grant Updates	2-5
E&S / Permitting	6
Watershed News	7

The Centre County Conservation District sponsored the 31<sup>st</sup> annual Centre County Envirothon on May 13, 2015 at Bald Eagle State Park. Twelve teams from Central PA Institute of Science and Technology, Penns Valley, Bald Eagle Area, Bellefonte and State College Area high schools participated on a beautiful spring day. The Envirothon tests students' knowledge of the following five subject areas: Aquatic Ecology; Forestry; Soils and Land Use; Wildlife; and Urban / Community Forestry, the current environmental issue topic for 2015.

For the 16<sup>th</sup> consecutive year, a team from Bald Eagle Area high school captured the County Envirothon title. Team "Tree Huggers" from Bald Eagle Area high school scored 325 out of a possible 500 points. Team members Sarah Van Cise, Matthew Blaylock, Natasha Jozefick, John Friedline and Haley Giedroc also achieved the highest scores at the Forestry and Wildlife stations. The Penns Valley III team placed second with a score of 324 and also achieved the highest score at the Soils and Land Use station. Team "Just in Time" from State College Area Ag Science class placed third with a score of 304 and also achieved the highest score at the Urban / Community Forestry station. "Team Awesome" from Bald Eagle Area scored highest at the Aquatic Ecology station. Jade Thompson and Jacy Clark are the Bald Eagle Area advisors.

The Bald Eagle Area "Tree Huggers" team represented Centre County at the Pennsylvania Envirothon on May 19 and 20 at the University of Pittsburgh at Johnstown and Windber Recreation Park and placed 36<sup>th</sup> of the 63 county teams participating. Penncrest High School, Delaware County won the Pennsylvania Envirothon championship and went on to take second place honors of the 52 teams competing at the National Envirothon held at Missouri State University.

**Mission Statement**

The Centre County Conservation District is a committed, professional agency functioning as the primary local source of assistance to all individuals and organizations who benefit from the county's natural resources that we collectively strive to sustain and improve.



Bald Eagle Area "Tree Huggers"

## AG UPDATES and GRANTS

### ACT 38 Nutrient Management Plan Submission Changes

Crop year 2015 will be coming to a close by the end of September. If your operation is regulated under Pennsylvania's Nutrient Management Program (ACT 38), this would include Concentration Animal Operations (CAOs) and Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs), and your plan does not currently reflect crop year 2016 you should have by now contacted your plan writer to ensure your plan is submitted to the Conservation District for review and approval before October 1, 2015.

Plans must be submitted and approved prior to the crop year it is to cover. If the plan is not approved before the crop year BEGINS (October 1, 2015), no manure applications are allowed to occur before plan approval. Any manure applications made during a crop year, when there is not an approved plan, are not in compliance with the law.

For example, your NMP is being written for crop years 2016, 2017, 2018. The actual calendar plan dates are October 1, 2015 thru September 30, 2018. In order for any manure planned for application after October 1, 2015, the NMP must be submitted to the Conservation District in sufficient time (at least 90 days prior to October 1 e.g. May 30 or earlier) for the plan to be approved by October 1, 2015 in order for you to spread manure according to your plan after October 1, 2015.

This policy change regarding NMP submission will become effective for the 2016 Crop Year (starting October 1, 2015) Therefore Nutrient Management Plans for crop year 2016 and beyond must be submitted for review and approval earlier than in the past.

Volunteers can choose to "opt out" of having their plans updated if they incline to do so. However you are still required to develop and maintain a manure management plan.

All farming operations that land apply manure whether they generate the manure or import it from another operation need to develop **and implement** a written Manure Management Plan.



### DEP- Growing Greener Grants

The Centre County Conservation District continued to utilize funding from two Growing Greener Grants for projects located in the Little Fishing Creek and Halfmoon Creek Watersheds. Recently a project was completed on a beef farm located in Walker Township. The project included a Roofed Heavy Use Area, Water Supply Pipeline, Watering Facilities & Cattle Walkways. In Halfmoon Township a project was completed that included a stabilized Stream Crossing, Streambank Fencing, Cattle Walkway, Heavy Use Area Protection and Roof Runoff Controls.



### Halfmoon Township Farm



Before streambank fence & stabilized walkway were installed



After streambank fence & stabilized walkway were installed



Before streambank fence & stabilized stream crossing were installed



After streambank fence & stabilized stream crossing were installed

Native trees and shrubs are scheduled to be planted within the riparian area

### Walker Township Farm



2006 before Best Management Practices were installed



2015 after Best Management Practice were installed

BMPs include Stream Crossings, Streambank Fence and Riparian plantings installed in 2007. Roof, Wall, Curbing, Water Supply Pipeline, Watering Facilities & Roof Runoff Controls installed in 2015.

## REAP

The REAP (Resources Enhancement and Protection) program was established in 2007 as an opportunity for farmers and landowners to offset costs associated with the implementation of conservation BMPs. It is a first-come, first-served program administered by the State Conservation Commission. Eligible applicants can receive 50% or 75% (depending on BMP) of out of pocket expenses in the form of PA tax credits.

### Submission Information:

Completed Projects—New applications for completed projects will be accepted by the Commission on a first-come, first-served basis beginning on August 3, 2015.

Proposed and Completed Projects—New applications for proposed and completed projects will be accepted beginning on August 17, 2015.



The following are considered eligible costs of a project to which a tax credit may be applied:

Project design, engineering and associated planning

Project management costs, including contracting, document preparation and applications

Project construction or installation

Equipment, materials and other components of eligible projects

Post construction inspections

Interest payments on loans for project implementation for up to one year prior to the award of the tax credit.

An agricultural operation that is an applicant for the REAP Tax Credit Program for agricultural BMPs or equipment must first have in place the following:

- A current Conservation Plan or Agricultural E&S plan for all acres plowed and/ or tilled that are under their management controlled (owned or rented or leased or utilized) in the year that they are applying for REAP Tax Credits. The applicant must be on-schedule for full implementation of the plan.
- A current Nutrient Management Plan or Manure Management Plan (as required by law) for all acres under their management control if they generate and utilize manure and or other organic sources of plant nutrients (i.e. biosolids) in the program year that they are applying for REAP Tax Credits. The applicant must be on-schedule for full implementation of the plan.

Contact the Centre County Conservation District (814-355-6817) or the State Conservation Commission (717-705-3778) for more information or go on line at [www.pda.state.pa.us/REAP](http://www.pda.state.pa.us/REAP) for an application.

# MANURE MANAGEMENT and AG E&S PLANS

## Got Plans?

Do you have your State required Manure Management Plan or Cropland Erosion and Sediment Control Plan? The Conservation District has been holding local public workshops in addition to visiting with farmers to help them develop these written plans. The Conservation District has Contract Plan Writers that can help develop these plans – or you can write the Plans yourself!

Anyone who has livestock (even just a few) or applies manure to their land needs a written Manure Management Plan. A fill-in-the-blank Manure Management Plan Workbook is available online or at the Conservation District office. Farmers can complete this workbook and the Plan does **not** have to be submitted to any agency, unless otherwise requested. You can download an electronic version to type in Microsoft Word, or simply print a copy to fill in by hand, from the following website: <http://extension.psu.edu/plants/nutrient-management/manure>. If you have any questions while working on the Plan, feel free to call the Conservation District at 814-355-6817 for assistance.

Anyone who disturbs 5,000 square feet (1/10 of an acre) or more of land requires an agricultural Erosion and Sediment (E&S) Control Plan. The cropland E&S Plan can also be written by farmers. The main components of an E&S Plan include farm maps and a determination of the amount of soil loss from individual crop fields. Many factors affect how much soil can erode from a field over time, including crop rotation, tillage, soil type, slope, and rainfall to name a few. Many resource professionals use a complex computer program to determine soil loss, plugging in all the variables to compute a soil loss in tons per acre per year. Now farmers can create their own maps and calculate soil loss using a free website developed by Penn State University Cooperative Extension, called PAOneStop. The website [www.paonestop.org](http://www.paonestop.org) was created to help farmers meet the regulatory requirements for conservation farm planning. Farmers can draw in their own fields and produce high quality maps to meet plan requirements. The web browser 'Firefox' has to be used, but this can be downloaded free of charge. After drawing fields over an aerial photo, farmers select and enter their own crop rotation, tillage used, and a few other factors such as the use of cover crops. Many parameters such as field slope, soil type, and average rainfall are figured "behind the scenes" and automatically entered after the field is drawn on the map. Even field acreages are automatically calculated. Farm information can be saved online for future edits and individual farm data is secured. Farmers are encouraged to call with questions for help in using this website. Contact Rick Day at [rday@psu.edu](mailto:rday@psu.edu) or call the toll free phone number 877-222-4724.

Need both plans? The PAOneStop website can be used to develop maps for your Manure Management Plan as well. The maps can display manure application setbacks, location of manure storage, Best Management Practices (BMPs), and other required map items. Feel free to call the Conservation District with any questions about either of these Plans.

### 2015 CONSERVATION POSTER CONTEST WINNERS

The Centre County Conservation District sponsored the 2015 annual conservation poster contest. This year's theme was "**Local Heroes – Your Hardworking Pollinators**". Winners in the Kindergarten through 1<sup>st</sup> grade division are: 1<sup>st</sup> place –Audrey Zheng; 2<sup>nd</sup> place – Nicolas Staub; 3<sup>rd</sup> place – Autumn Shoemaker. All students are first graders of Mrs. Shoffner - Corl Street Elementary. In the 2<sup>nd</sup> through 3<sup>rd</sup> grade division, there were no entries received. In the 4<sup>th</sup> through 6<sup>th</sup> grade division, the winners are: 1<sup>st</sup> place – Cecelia McGovern; 2<sup>nd</sup> place – Breyanna Williams; 3<sup>rd</sup> place – Cody Merrill. All students are fourth graders of Mrs. Mason – Marion-Walker Elementary. Winners were awarded a Certificate of Appreciation and cash prize for their efforts in promoting conservation. First place posters were sent to PACD ("Pennsylvania Association of Conservation Districts") at the end of June for the statewide competition.



## E&S PROGRAMS and PERMITTING

### Dirt, Gravel and Low Volume Roads

The Centre County Conservation District received 14 applications from 8 Municipalities that have attended *Environmentally Sensitive Maintenance for Dirt, Gravel and Low Volume Roads* training workshops, making them eligible to apply for funding through this program. After a site visit of each, 10 were selected by Centre County Conservation District's Quality Assurance Board (QAB, consisting of representation from the PA Fish & Boat Commission, Natural Resources Conservation Service, and the Conservation District) for a recommendation for funding and subsequently funded for a total of over \$190,000!

The 10 approved projects, which include 4 paved/sealed Low Volume Roads (LVR) sites, are with the following municipalities: Curtin Township, 3 sites; Gregg Township; Worth Township; Potter Township; Boggs Township, LVR site; Penn Township, LVR site; and Benner Township, 2 LVR sites.

**Now eligible projects include: Low Volume Roads (LVR), paved or sealed roads with 500 or less vehicles per average day. Dirt and Gravel roads, regardless of traffic volume, remain eligible for funding as in the past since the start of this program.**

The Dirt, Gravel and Low Volume Roads Program wishes to promote a better public road system with a reduced environmental impact—with a focus on utilizing recognized "Environmentally Sensitive Road Maintenance (ESM) Practices". Funding is limited to public roads; owned and maintained by municipalities or other state or local public entities. Applicants wishing to participate must have personnel that both design and oversee their proposed project and have been recently (within 5 years) trained in *Environmental Sensitive Maintenance for Dirt, Gravel and Low Volume Roads*.

**Often, an effort to better manage drainage (both from the road surface and keeping offsite runoff from draining onto or across) is key to proper maintenance and will help to minimize impacts to our waterways- resulting in a longer lasting smooth road and nearby streams being less impacted!**

Contact the Centre County Conservation District for more information regarding the Dirt, Gravel and Low Volume Roads Program or check out the Center for Dirt and Gravel Road Studies website at: [www.dirtandgravel.psu.edu](http://www.dirtandgravel.psu.edu)

### New PNDI Rules for Permits, Effective May 4, 2015

Permits that are reviewed and authorized by the Conservation District, including National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permits for the Discharge of Stormwater from Construction Activities, and Chapter 105 Dam Safety and Waterway Management General Permits, require that an applicant obtain Pennsylvania Natural Diversity Inventory (PNDI) clearance as part of the permit review/authorization process. The Pennsylvania Natural Diversity Inventory enables the public to perform online PNDI searches for potential impacts to threatened, endangered, special concern species and special concern resources in PA.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced on April 1, 2014 it is protecting the northern long-eared bat (*Myotis septentrionalis*) as a threatened species under the Endangered Species Act (ESA), primarily due to the threat posed by white-nose syndrome, a fungal disease that has devastated many bat populations. At the same time, the Service issued an interim special rule that eliminates unnecessary regulatory requirements for landowners, land managers, government agencies and others in the range of the northern long-eared bat. These measures are designed to protect northern long-eared bats when they are most vulnerable, including when they are hibernating and during the two-month pup-rearing season from June through July.

Habitat screening for the Northern Long-Eared Bat will be required in Pennsylvania beginning Monday, May 4, 2015.

- The PNDI tool will reflect this screening on May 4, 2015.
- All previous PNDI receipts dated prior to May 4, 2015 will no longer be valid, and a new PNDI search will be required.

Please keep this new policy in mind as you prepare new NPDES and Ch. 105 permit applications.

## WATERSHED NEWS

The Centre County Conservation District has been planning and implementing stream restoration projects for the summer and fall of 2015. Once again we are partnering with the US Fish and Wildlife Service to stabilize eroded stream banks, plant riparian buffers and create fish habitat structures. Sediment is a major pollutant in Pennsylvania waterways and consequently in the Chesapeake Bay. Stabilizing the banks prevents silt and sediment from entering the stream and habitat structures provide shelter and protection for aquatic life. The shade provided by a healthy riparian buffer lowers the temperature of the water, providing an added benefit to fish and macroinvertebrates. The roots of the trees and shrubs act as anchors, holding the soil in place, preventing even more erosion.

In June and July of this year we worked on the Tice and Stoltzfus properties in Little Fishing Creek. This large project is a continuation of a smaller project that we completed with North Central PA Conservancy and the Pa Fish and Boat Commission in 2009. At that time we built a mudsill, two log vanes and an agriculture crossing on the Aquilla Stoltzfus farm. This year, USFWS personnel, headed by Dave Putnam, added multiple mudsills and log vanes on this Amish farm and then moved downstream to the English neighbor, Glenn Tice. On the Stoltzfus farm we built 9 more mudsills, one rubble cross vane and one rubble wall. On the Tice farm we installed three agricultural crossings last fall. In June and July we created 7 mudsills, positioned four sections of level logs and installed 2 log cross vanes and one rock toe. We will build two strand fencing on both sides of the stream on the Tice property and in the fall we plan to plant a buffer of trees and shrubs inside the fence. The quality of the USFWS work is exceptional and the length of this improved contiguous section of Little Fishing Creek is impressive.

The stream work and fencing on Little Fishing Creek is funded by DEP's Growing Greener Program. All buffer work will be paid for through the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Forestry Program, US Forestry Service.



Centre County Conservation District  
 414 Holmes Street  
 Suite #4  
 Bellefonte, PA 16823

Non-Profit Organization  
 U.S. Postage  
 PAID  
 State College, PA  
 Permit No. 41



Printed on Recycled Paper

If you wish to receive our newsletter electronically, please  
 call our office or email: [bsivicic@centrecountypa.gov](mailto:bsivicic@centrecountypa.gov)



**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**  
 Robert Shannon, Chair  
 Allen Ishler, Vice-Chair  
 Steven G. Dershem, Commissioner  
 Tom Boldin  
 Martin Melville  
 James Walizer  
 Kaleb Wolfe

**ASSOCIATE DIRECTORS**  
 Al Stewart  
 Donn Fetterhoff  
 John Smith  
 Lori Hartle

**CENTRE CO. RECYCLING HOTLINE**  
 (814) 238-6649

**DEP EMERGENCY HOTLINE**  
 1-800-541-2050

**CENTRE CO. COMMISSIONERS**  
 (814) 355-6700

**CENTRE CO. PLANNING**  
 (814) 355-6791

**DISTRICT STAFF**  
 Robert E. Swetzer, District Manager  
 Barb Ivicic, Dept. Clerk III  
 John Wataha, Agriculture Conservation/  
 Nutrient Management Technician  
 Ann Donovan, Watershed Specialist/  
 Education Coordinator  
 Daina Beckstrand, CBP/NM Technician

**F&S STAFF**  
 Jim Costo Jr., Resource Conservation  
 Supervisor  
 Mike Philippe, Resource Conservation  
 Coordinator II  
 LuAnn Bruno, Department Clerk I

**USDA-Natural Resource Conservation  
 Service (NRCS)**  
 (570) 726-3196 or (814) 355-2447  
 Scott D. Heckman, Supervisory District  
 Conservationist  
 Bryan Conklin, Engineering Technician  
 Zach Larson, Soil Conservationist

**CENTRE COUNTY  
 CONSERVATION DISTRICT**

414 Holmes Street, Suite #4  
 Bellefonte, PA 16823  
 Phone: 814-355-6817  
 Fax: 814-355-8696  
 E-mail: [reswetzler@centrecountypa.gov](mailto:reswetzler@centrecountypa.gov)

Website: [centrecountypa.gov/conservation](http://centrecountypa.gov/conservation)