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Conservation Conversation

Centre County Conservation District Envirothon 2016

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The Centre County Conservation District sponsored the 32nd annual Centre County Envirothon on May 11, 2016 at Bald Eagle State Park. Fifteen 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 Invasive Species: A Challenge to the Environment, Economy, and Society, the current environmental issue topic for 2016.

For the 17th 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 359 out of a possible 500 points. Team members Sarah Van Cise, Matthew Blaylock, Natasha Jozefick, Kate Haagen and Cameron Cody also achieved the highest scores at the Forestry (tie), Wildlife and Current Issue stations. The Penns Valley I team placed second with a score of 349 and also achieved the highest scores at the Aquatic Ecology, Forestry (tie) and the Soils and Land Use stations. The State College Area Ag Science team placed third with a score of 292. Jade Thompson and Jacy Clark are the Bald Eagle Area advisors.



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.



The Bald Eagle Area "Tree Huggers" team represented Centre County at the Pennsylvania Envirothon on May 24 and 25 at Susquehanna University and Camp Mount Luther and placed 27th of the 65 county teams participating. Penncrest High School, Delaware County won the Pennsylvania Envirothon championship and will represent Pennsylvania at the National Conservation Foundation North American Envirothon to be held at Trent University in Peterborough, Ontario.

Special Recognition

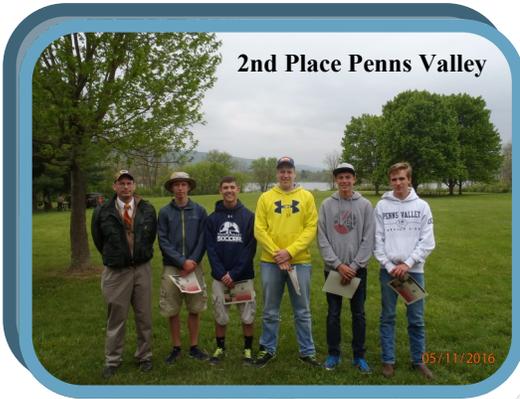
John Buzzell of State College was recognized by the Centre County Conservation District at the Centre County Envirothon in May for more than 23 years of volunteer service to the Envirothon program. Originally from Wisconsin, John and his wife Jane have lived in State College since 1989. As a PA-DCNR Bureau of Forestry volunteer, John has assisted with every Centre County Envirothon since 1993 providing study sessions to local high school students and assisting District Forester Tim Cole with the Forestry station at the county event. Thank you John!



John Buzzell and Robert Switzer 05/11/2016



Envirothon at Bald Eagle State Park



2nd Place Penns Valley



3rd Place State College



Photo Gallery



Program Changes and Updates, Chapter 102 and 105

New “Pennsylvania Conservation Explorer” tool

Earlier this year, the Pennsylvania Natural Heritage Program replaced the Pennsylvania Natural Diversity Inventory (PNDI) Environmental Review tool with the new Pennsylvania Conservation Explorer. This new tool is a “one stop shop” for conservation planning and PNDI Environmental Review. The Explorer provides conservation information on biological diversity, protected lands, streams and other natural resources for planning purposes and also allows users to screen a project area for potential impacts to threatened, endangered, and special concern species.

As a reminder, a PNDI receipt is needed to apply for most permits and approvals under the Ch. 102 and 105 programs. In order to obtain an online search receipt, the Pennsylvania Natural Heritage Program now charges a convenience fee of \$40.00 per project using Visa, MasterCard or Discover Card. Government agencies and Municipalities are exempt from this convenience fee.

Change in Stream Designation – Slab Cabin Run

Slab Cabin Run has recently been designated as a Class A Wild Trout Stream by the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission. This designation results in an upgrade of the Chapter 93 Existing Use classification to HQ-High Quality, as per 25 PA Code Ch. 93 §93.4b(a)(2)(ii).

Pennsylvania State Programmatic General Permit (PASPGP) 5

As of July 1, 2016, PASPGP-4 has been replaced by PASPGP-5. The PASPGP is the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers General Permit Authorization for certain types of impacts to waters and wetlands in Pennsylvania. In most cases, when the Conservation District issues a State General Permit for a water obstruction, we are also able to issue Federal authorization at the same time through PASPGP-5, assuming that certain conditions are met.

When submitting a State General Permit for a stream obstruction or encroachment, be sure to include the “PASPGP-5 Reporting Criteria Checklist.” For assistance with the forms, please contact the Conservation District office.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

September

5-Labor Day-Office Closed

14-Board Meeting

October

12-Board Meeting

November

9-Board Meeting

11- Veterans Day-Office Closed

Farm City Dinner

24&25- Thanksgiving Holiday-Office Closed

December

14-Board Meeting

23 & 26-Christmas Holiday-Office Closed

Farm Inspections to Increase across Pennsylvania



Chesapeake Bay Watershed

Officials from the PA Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and/or the County Conservation District will be inspecting farms across the state in response to the EPA and the Chesapeake Bay clean-up effort. Pennsylvania and surrounding states draining to the Bay have specific goals to reduce the amount of nitrogen, phosphorus, and sediment discharging from their streams into the Chesapeake Bay. Although Pennsylvania has made progress with valuable reductions in these pollutants, achievements to date have been deemed insufficient by the EPA to meet water quality expectations.

In January 2016, DEP announced a Chesapeake Bay “Reboot” strategy to improve water quality across the State and ultimately the Chesapeake Bay. The strategy will focus on nutrient reduction by meeting EPA’s goal of inspecting 10% of all farms in the Bay Watershed each year. Inspectors will be asking if farmers have their Manure Management Plans and/or Agricultural Erosion and Sediment Control Plans. Farmers will be given a deadline to obtain these plans if not available. The ultimate goal is for farmers to implement these plans with best management practices to reduce polluted runoff, keeping the valuable nutrients and sediment on the farm. In addition to increased oversight of the agricultural community, DEP has announced that it will impose additional requirements on municipalities to reduce their stormwater discharges, ranging from sewage treatment plants to homeowners spreading excess fertilizer on lawns.

Centre County Dirt, Gravel and Low Volume Roads-Summer 2016

The Centre County Conservation District received 8 applications from 6 applicants (5 Municipalities and the PA Game Commission)– who 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, 6 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 **\$140,000**.

The 6 approved projects, which include 2 paved/sealed Low Volume Roads (LVR) sites, are with the following applicants:

- | |
|--------------------------|
| Curtin Township |
| Gregg Township |
| Potter Township |
| Boggs Township, LVR site |
| Penn Township, LVR site |
| PA Game Commission |



Can you identify these two common Wild Flowers?



Low Volume Roads (LVR) eligible projects include:

paved or sealed roads with an average daily vehicle use of 500 or less vehicles. 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



Spring Creek July 11, 2016 by Mike Philippe

2016 Conservation Poster Contest

The District sponsored the 2016 annual conservation poster contest as part of the Pennsylvania Department of Education’s 12th goal of quality education which states: “To help every student acquire the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to maintain the quality of life in a balanced environment.” This year’s poster contest theme was “We All Need Trees”. The top three winners in each age division (K-1, 2-3, and 4-6 grades) were awarded a Certificate of Appreciation and cash prizes, for their efforts in promoting conservation.

Division K-1 –Corl Street Elementary

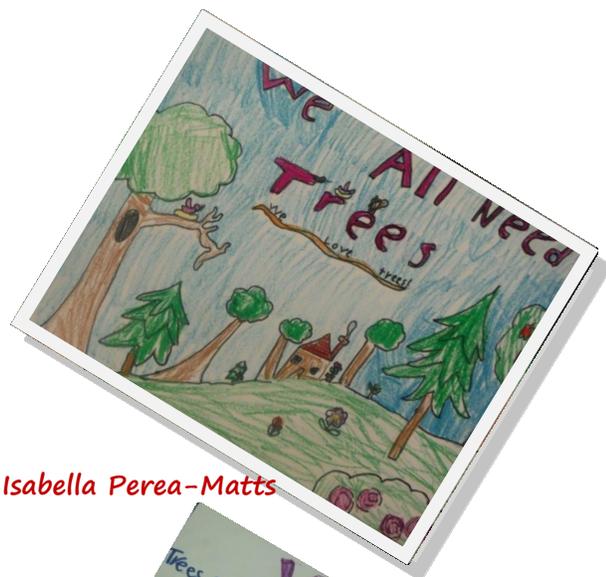
- 1st Place: Isabella Perea-Matts
- 2nd Place: Molly Staniar
- 3rd Place: Isla Jackson



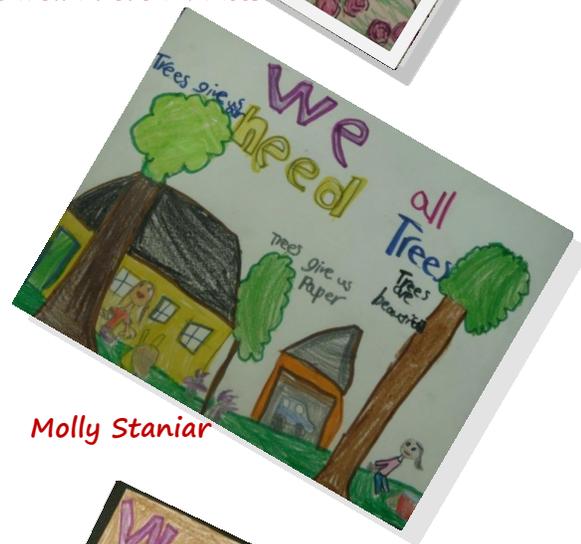
Grades 2 & 3-Bellefonte Elementary

- 1st Place: Ava Bathgate

Winning posters were displayed in the entrance of the Willowbank Building in Bellefonte. 1st place posters were sent to Pennsylvania Association of Conservation District (PACD) in Harrisburg for the state wide poster competition.



Isabella Perea-Matts



Molly Staniar



Isla Jackson



Ava Bathgate



“We All Need Trees”

One large tree can make enough oxygen in one day for 4 people



Watershed News

Members of the Centre County environmental community have been active during these last few months. The Bald Eagle Watershed Association recently completed their second Bald Eagle Creek access project funded by the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy. With labor donated from members of the Canoe Club of Centre County, the first access was installed in Milesburg at the Community Center and the second one is located downstream at the Curtin Bridge. Boggs Township provided assistance to the group by doing extensive work on the parking lot at Curtin.

The Spring Creek Watershed Association is planning a twentieth anniversary celebration to be held at Millbrook Marsh on Saturday, September 10 from 12-4. The group has been busy compiling a timeline of accomplishments that have been completed over the years. Begun in 1996 as an outcome of the International Stewardship Exchange, the group was first known as the Spring Creek Watershed Community.

The Penns Valley Conservation Association is in the process of completing one Growing Greener grant and beginning another one. The previous one provided for the installation of Agricultural Best Management practices on two farms in the Elk Creek Watershed in partnership with the Centre County Conservation District. The current funding will cover the costs of multiple stream projects throughout the watershed.

The Conservation District recently completed the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Forestry Project, funded by the US Forest Service. We helped to install and maintain buffers in multiple watersheds throughout the County. We provided funds for buffer work to 3 municipalities, 6 organizations and 16 individual landowners.

The Spring Creek Chapter of Trout Unlimited planted a buffer in Oak Hall in the spring utilizing funding from the CCCD. They continue with their many outreach efforts---Trout in the Classroom and the Veteran Service program are two of their most successful projects.

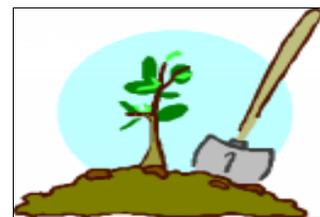
The two Centre County monitoring groups continue to do their monitoring activity. The Spring Creek Water Resource Monitoring Program is planning a Field Day on September 23 at Millbrook Marsh for cooperating landowners and municipalities.

The Centre County Chapter of the Senior Environment Corps added a new team and two new sites to their roster. The Moose Run Team is monitoring at the bridge on Front Street and at a site off Moose Run Road.

Two of our groups received unsolicited monetary gifts. The Talleyrand Edible Garden committee received \$500 from a Bellefonte family to use to continue their work and to establish a Butterfly Garden in the fall. The new garden will be a satellite garden of the Snetsinger Butterfly garden in Tudek Park.

The Central PA Source Water Alliance for Protection has received numerous contributions in memory of their founder, Mike Savage, who passed away this year. The money will be used to pay for busing over 500 elementary school students to the annual Clean Water Days event at Black Moshannon State Park,

The Wood Duck Chapter of Trout Unlimited recently donated 171 acres of land to the PA Game Commission. The land, located in Rush Township, is adjacent to existing State Game lands 33.



Volunteers from USFWS, UAJA, College Township and CCCD plant trees and shrubs in the Kissinger Meadow along Slab Cabin Run.

ACT 38 Nutrient Management Plan Submission

Crop year 2016 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 2017 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, 2016.

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, 2016), 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 2017, 2018, 2019. The actual calendar plan dates are October 1, 2016 thru September 30, 2019. In order for any manure planned for application after October 1, 2016, 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, 2016 in order for you to spread manure according to your plan after October 1, 2016.

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

Ag BMP Implementation Grants

The Centre County Conservation District (CCCD) continued to utilize funding from several grant sources to construct Best Management Practices (BMPs) on farms throughout Centre County. Recently projects were completed on 2 adjacent dairy operations located in the Elk Creek Watershed in Penn Township. The CCCD partnered with Penns Valley Conservation Association to install streambank fence and plant native trees and shrubs within the riparian area of an Elk Creek tributary which runs along the two dairies.



Construction is well underway to install BMPs on a dairy operation located in Ferguson Township. The CCCD is partnering with the Natural Resources Conservation Service on this project.



Nearly completed Barnyard (Heavy Use Area Protection)



Construction of an HDPE Lined Manure Storage Facility
(Nearly completed push-off ramp and barnyard towards the right)

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 1, 2016.

Proposed and completed projects New applications for proposed and completed projects will be accepted beginning on August 15, 2016.

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 control (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. bio solids) 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 for an application.



The two wild flowers on page 4 are Chicory and Jewelweed (Touch me not)



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"Here is your country. Cherish these natural wonders, cherish the natural resources, cherish the history and romance as a sacred heritage, for your children and your children's children. Do not let selfish men or greedy interests skin your country of its beauty, its riches or its romance." — [Theodore Roosevelt](#)

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