



Conservation Matters



These snowy days...

Snow days. I lived for them as a kid. Watching the TV and waiting for my school district to show up as closed was my favorite part of winter. Some people love snow days; some not so much.

For us, winter means planning and meetings. Some don't realize how much work comes before project installation. Permits need to be applied for, landowner agreements need signed, and budgets need finalized. All these things need to be in place before any shovels hit the ground.

We will also be holding a number of meetings this winter. See inside for dates of manure management workshops and our annual winter forum. We hope you'll be able to join us!

Whether snow creates more work for you or provides a much needed break, I hope the winter months are enjoyable. If not, spring is just around the corner!

Sincerely,

Judy Becker

Chesapeake Bay Inspections Reminder

We want to remind you that DEP will be performing inspections in the coming months on the farming community. Letters were sent in the fall to farms that DEP will be visiting to perform compliance inspections. Farmers will be asked if they have a Manure Management Plan, an Agricultural Erosion and Sediment Plan (or updated Conservation Plan). They will also be looking for water quality issues.

You can find copies of the letter that was sent out, as well as the inspection report that will be used by visiting the following website: <http://www.dep.pa.gov/Business/Water/Pages/Chesapeake-Bay-Office.aspx>.

If you are in need of assistance, please contact Bryanna Kenno at our office at 570-495-4665 x304. We will also be holding several Manure Management/ Agricultural Erosion and Sediment plan workshops during the winter months. Please see inside for the dates of these workshops and how to register.

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"Conservation Matters" is a quarterly newsletter published by the Northumberland County Conservation District, Sunbury.

Our Programs: Erosion and Sedimentation Control, National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES), Dam Safety and Waterway Management, Environmental Education, Nutrient Management, Chesapeake Bay Program, Dirt & Gravel Roads, Agricultural Land Preservation, Watershed Protection and Education

Visit www.nccdpa.org for more information. We are also on Facebook at www.facebook.com/nccdpa.

CENTRAL SUSQUEHANNA THRUWAY UPDATE

by: Michael McCleary, Erosion and Sediment Technician

Phase I of the CSVT consists of construction of the proposed bridge over the Susquehanna River and the approaches to the bridge from Ridge Road in Point Township, Northumberland County to SR 15 on the top of the mountain south of Winfield in Union Township, Union County. The earth moving required for this phase of the project began in December of 2015 and recently stopped pending completion of the structural portion of the bridge. The bridge piers are currently under construction and will begin to emerge from the



Area southeast of intersection of SR 405 with SR 147 being prepared for stream relocation under thruway via 66' culvert.

ground as the pylons and footers are constructed. A framework of reinforcement steel has been formed for the footers for two of the piers on the west side of

the Susquehanna River.

Concrete is scheduled to be poured around this reinforcing steel by the end of 2016. One of these pours will be 800 cubic yards of concrete, and the second will be 1,000 cubic yards. Work will continue on the bridge piers throughout the winter. When the piers on the eastern half of the river are complete, the causeway will be moved to the western side, and work will proceed on the remaining piers.



View of earthwork from a point east of SR 147 looking west toward the Robert Snyder Farm, which is located west of SR 147 and south of SR 405.

Work has begun on **Phase II of the project** which includes all additional earth moving in Northumberland County from Ridge Road north to the current 4 lane section of SR 147. This will include the relocation of Ridge Road and 2 side roads, an interchange at relocated Ridge Road, approximately 700 linear feet of relocated stream under the thruway, 5 structures, and 3 miles of additional road through Point Township into West Chillisquaque Township. Approximately 2.5 million cubic yards of earthwork will be required for this phase of construction.

A similar stream relocation will also be constructed to carry Ridge Run under the thruway prior to the relocation of Ridge Road and the associated interchange. Ridge Road will be relocated and will reconnect with SR 147 in front of the UGI Maintenance Offices. A sediment basin is currently under construction as earthwork is being performed to cut down the hills and fill in the valleys to establish the subbase for the thruway southeast of the intersection of SR 147 with SR 405.



View of earthwork in the vicinity of Acorn Drive looking at the intersection of Acorn Drive with SR 147 .

You may contact us at any time by email or phone to be added to, or removed from, our mailing list. Simply call 570-495-4665 or email info@nccdpa.org. If you would rather "Go Green," email us with the words "electronic newsletter" in the subject line and we will send our newsletter to you electronically.

Our 2017 Affiliate Drive Has Started - Support NCCD Today!

By: Judy Becker, District Manager

There are two questions we get asked quite a bit: What are you, and what do you do? First, we are a subdivision of state government, one of 66 conservation districts across the state, and one of 3,000 conservation districts across the United States. We have been in existence since 1949. The history of conservation districts is rooted in serving the agriculture community. In fact, conservation districts were born to help alleviate the soil erosion crisis of the Dust Bowl era. Today, conservation districts have grown to serve a much greater variety of issues. Not only do we serve the agriculture community, but we also work with contractors, municipalities, watershed organizations, and YOU! We can't do this, though, without your support. In addition to the satisfaction of joining a team that has worked to conserve the natural resources of Northumberland County for over 65 years, you can be proud of the fact that your contribution is going towards this very cause.

There are 3 ways you can help support NCCD:

1. Become an affiliate member of the Conservation District. Members will receive a membership certificate and have their name published in our publications, as well as on our website: www.nccdpa.org. We will always encourage individuals to patronize your business because of your support to Conservation. Members will also receive a 5% discount on orders placed in the Conservation District's annual spring tree sale and ad space in our quarterly newsletter (depending on level of membership). Visit our website at www.nccdpa.org, and you will find a membership application and more information.
2. Become a director or associate director of the NCCD Board. Our board is made up of a variety of individuals from Northumberland County who have one common goal: their love of conservation.
3. Volunteer. We have a variety of activities throughout the year, and we're always looking for assistance with our programs.

**GET
INVOLVED**
Be a volunteer. Make a difference.

Contact our office at 570-495-4665 today for more information on any of the above opportunities!

Manure Management Workshops Scheduled

By: Bryanna Kenno, Agricultural Conservation Technician

The Northumberland County Conservation District has received a grant through the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and the Pennsylvania Association of Conservation Districts (PACD) for manure management educational workshops. The workshops are intended for farmers, consultants, and others in the agricultural field to raise awareness of the revised Manure Management Manual. The workshops will also focus on PA Chapter 102 Erosion and Sedimentation requirements for farms; i.e. an Agricultural Erosion and Sedimentation (Ag E&S) plan.

Three full day workshops are planned, and lunch will be provided. Three half day workshops are planned with breakfast refreshments available. The workshops will be held at the following locations:

- Tuesday, January 10th, 2017 from 8-4pm in the Environmental Education Center at the NCCD office
- Monday, January 23rd, 2017 from 8-12pm at Martz's Game Farm in Dalmatia
- Wednesday, February 1st, 2017 from 8-4pm in the Environmental Education Center at the NCCD office
- Thursday, February 16th, 2017 from 8-12pm at Tractor Supply in Milton
- Friday, February 24th, 2017 from 8-4pm in the Environmental Education Center at the NCCD office
- Friday, March 10th, 2017 from 8-12pm at Rovendale Ag & Barn, Inc. in Watsontown

Space is limited! Each workshop will be capped at **10 individuals** so reserve a seat quickly! To register, or for more information, please contact Agricultural Conservation Technician Bryanna Kenno at (570) 495-4665 x304 or bkenno@nccdpa.org.

The Importance of Partnerships

by Jaci Harner, Watershed Specialist

Improving local water quality requires a background in many science subjects, including; agriculture, biology, and chemistry. We also need to know how to manage various funding sources. But there is another critical component that is needed for project success: the efforts of supportive people.

Creating useful working relationships is important and can influence the outcome of a project. Participants must make an effort to communicate openly and often; not always an easy task. No matter how hard we try, we can't control everything. Weather, traffic, and schedule changes are all variables that can quickly modify even the most well thought out plans. And we can't overlook the possibility of common human error. It happens. Sometimes people make mistakes. We have to remind ourselves we are all human. It can be during those moments that open communication can be most difficult.

Fortunately, the Northumberland County Conservation District (NCCD) has had the opportunity to work with some great partners. Some planned events go smoothly, while others have challenges, but in the end we've learned to pull together and work towards a successful end. It's impossible to name everyone we've worked with, but I'll try to fill you in on some of the groups who have helped us out over the years:

- NCCD Board of Directors
- NCCD staff
- Local and state legislators
- Northcentral PA Conservancy (NPC)
- PA Fish and Boat Commission (PA F&B)
- PA Department of Environmental Protection (PA DEP)
- Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)
- Bureau of Forestry
- State Conservation Commission
- Volunteer watershed groups
- NCCD interns
- Local Boy Scout troops
- Youth volunteers
- Local school districts
- Local universities
- Local townships/boroughs
- Local farmers
- Private landowners
- Local landscape services/nurseries
- Local contractors
- Local quarries



Presentation of Certificates of Appreciation for our 2016 youth volunteers.



Presentation of Certificates of Appreciation for our 2016 youth volunteers.

The Importance of Partnerships, *continued*

We have an especially strong partnership related to our stream restoration projects.

- NPC writes a grant to obtain project funding and administers grant funds.
- PA F&B and PA DEP provide project design and construction oversight.
- The conservation district works directly with local landowners to evaluate project sites, develops permit paperwork, orders supplies from local businesses, and coordinates project details during week of construction.

This partnership spreads the work load out so that project responsibilities can be shared and accomplished more effectively. Also, people work within their area of expertise, creating an efficient process. This partnership works throughout a 14 county area, therefore we have a network of contacts and resources to utilize when we need help solving a problem. A tremendous amount of work has been accomplished in this county as a result of this partnership; I am very grateful to be a part of this team and bring project opportunities to our county.



Media Day at Brush Valley Road Project. Partners- NPC, PA DEP, PA F&B, local landowners.

The coming winter months will give us time to organize and plan our 2017 projects; everything from high school field trips and data collection to stream restoration and farm improvement projects. Although none of us are big fans of desk time, we can't get to the implementation phase without taking the time to develop and coordinate a working plan. The reassuring part of this task is knowing I am surrounded by a reliable and supportive group of people who will do whatever it takes to make sure project goals are met with success.

Thank you to all who have participated in the past and to those who will invest their time and efforts in 2017.



2016 Stream Restoration project. Partners- NPC, PA DEP, PA F&B, local landowners, youth volunteers.



2016 Stream Restoration project. Partners- NPC, PA DEP, PA F&B, local landowners, youth volunteers.

The Importance of Partnerships, *continued*



Local school field trip related to acid mine drainage, history of local coal industry, and efforts to improve local streams. Partners- Kulpmont Borough and Shamokin Creek Restoration Alliance.

“But there is another critical component that is needed for project success: the efforts of supportive people.”

Stay up to date on our events by visiting www.nccdpa.org or www.facebook.com/nccdpa.



Tree plantings. Partners- Little Shamokin Creek Watershed Association, Lloyd's Landscaping, Boy Scout Troop 331.



Collecting fish data on Warrior Run. Partners- NPC, Susquehanna University.



UGI Gas Pipeline

By: Michael McCleary, Erosion and Sediment Technician

While a few areas of earth disturbance remain in Northumberland County related to the UGI gas pipeline, the 20" diameter gas line has been installed. Most places have been covered over and the right-of-way stabilized with seed and mulch. This pipeline project entered Northumberland County south of Interstate 80, where it crossed Creek Road in East Chillisquaque Township. From there it runs south between Creek Road and North Mill Road, crosses SR 642 east of Pottsgrove, and continues south between South Mill Road and Chillisquaque Creek to a point near Shakespeare Road. At this point the pipeline crosses Shakespeare Road, Chillisquaque Creek, and SR 45 by horizontal directional drilling to a point south of SR 45. From there it runs between Frederick Road and Chillisquaque Creek, crosses Snyder and Vogt Roads, and traverses Montour Ridge into Point Township. In Point Township the pipeline descends Montour Ridge west of Comfort Road, crosses Ridge Road, and travels west across Cannery Road to a point in the right-of-way of an overhead high tension power line. It crosses SR 147, Norfolk Southern's rail lines, and the West Branch of the Susquehanna River via horizontal directional drilling and thence into Union County.



Pipe line has been installed and the trench backfilled, topsoil replaced on the right-of-way and stabilized with seed and mulch.



A mainline valve has been installed in the pipeline south of Ridge Road. This portion of trench will be backfilled after surface restoration plans have been approved and implemented.

Another part of this project which is still under construction is an Interconnect station at the intersection of Franklin Road and SR 45. This facility consists of a gravel pad (approximately 73' x 130') on which a small metering building has been placed, along with related pipe and valves.

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SAVE THE DATE!

03.07.17

6th Annual Winter Forum

REVIVAL TABERNACLE
Watsontown, PA

MORE INFORMATION TO FOLLOW

The Scoop on Soil Health: More Than Just Dirt

by: Bryanna Kenno, Agricultural Conservation Technician

Sometimes overlooked and underappreciated, soil is considered one of the necessities to life on Earth. Without soil, crops could not be grown, animals could not graze on vegetation, and in turn, humans would not have an established food supply. Soil consists of more than just “dirt;” soil comprises a very complex and valuable ecosystem right under our feet.

Soil is made up of about 25% air, 25% water, about 48% mineral matter, and about 2% organic matter. Mineral matter includes things like sand, silt, and clay, while organic matter is composed of dead and decaying plants and animals. While soil itself is not a living, breathing organism, soil is a living ecosystem that supports plant, microorganism, and microbe life. A healthy soil contains many things:

- Pore space to allow water and air to move about freely
- Organic matter to increase nutrient cycling and water-holding capacity
- Darker colors due to an increased amount of organic matter
- Crumbly, non-compacted appearance
- Minimal disturbance from tillage
- Surface residue year round to protect subsoil from erosion

Unfortunately, many issues can arise in agriculturally productive soils. Some of these issues include compaction, erosion, loss or inability to hold water, weeds, and decreased organic matter. You, or a farmer you know may have experienced some of these issues on your farm; they are not uncommon in the county! Fortunately, there are many practices you can implement on your farm to combat soil issues and be on your way to healthy, productive soils!

In order to boost the health of your soil, try following these four guidelines: 1) Disturb your soil as little as possible, 2) Grow many different species of plants through crop rotations and cover crops, 3) Plant cover crops after harvest to keep living roots in the soil for as much of the year as possible, and 4) Keep the soil surface covered with crop residue throughout the year.

Many of these practices can be implemented through practices such as crop rotations, cover cropping, the use of no-till equipment, mulching, proper pest management, and managing nutrients and fertilizers applied on your soil through soil testing. Managing your soil's health has many benefits for your farm's production and for your pocket. Healthier soils will lead to increased crop production over time. Healthier soils most often require less passes over your fields because they are minimally tilled and will not require excess nutrient application. Thus, labor, fuel, fertilizer, and pesticide expenses will be reduced. Remember, improving soil health will not happen overnight, but the benefits are sure worth the wait!



Soil Health Conference 2017—An Event You Don't Want to Miss!

By: Janette Leshner, District Conservationist, NRCS

With the recent holidays behind us, I thought it would be appropriate to talk about the gift that keeps on giving: SOIL! It is probably not what most of you thought I was going to say. However, the bounty from this living resource now feeds and clothes more than 7 billion people, and we will continue to ask it to give us even more. Unfortunately, in many areas we continue to lose this precious resource to development and erosion. In Northumberland County we are part of a movement in soil health realizing that the soil is alive, and recognizing that by using soil health improving systems, we can stop its deterioration and improve its health and function. As we continue to learn more about the dynamic soil system, our goal is to reach out to our county farmers and share the news. The conservationists in Northumberland County would like to invite you to attend the **3rd Annual Soil Health Conference** on March 9, 2017 at the Pine Barn Inn, Danville. The day will consist of a packed full agenda of soil health information, networking, and good food. We are excited to have Keith Burns, owner of Green Cover Seeds, and Russ Wilson, cattle farmer from Forest County, PA, join us to share their knowledge and experiences on soil health. Registration is \$25 and is due by March 3, 2017. Vendor space is also available. Contact Tracy at 570-784-1310 ext 102 to register today! Stop by the Northumberland County Ag Center for more information or to pick up a flyer for the event.



Free Manure Management Manual Workshops

Hosted by Northumberland County Conservation District

Tuesday, January 10th

8-4pm
NCCD Environmental
Education Center
441 Plum Creek Road
Sunbury, PA

Monday, January 23rd

8-12pm
Martz's Game Farm
610 Game Farm Road
Dalmatia, PA

Wednesday, February 1st

8-4pm
NCCD Environmental
Education Center
441 Plum Creek Road
Sunbury, PA

Thursday, February 16th

8-12pm
Tractor Supply Company
925 Carpenter Road
Milton, PA

Friday, February 24th

8-4pm
NCCD Environmental
Education Center
441 Plum Creek Road
Sunbury, PA

Friday, March 10th

8-12pm
Rovendale Ag & Barn
1300 Susquehanna Trail
Watsontown, PA

Full Day Agenda

8:00-8:30 Registration/Refreshments
8:30-10:00 Manure Mgmt. Intro & Work Time
10:00-10:15 Break
10:15-Noon Continued MMP Work Time
Noon-1:00 Lunch (Provided)
1:00-2:30 Ag E&S Plan Intro
2:45-3:30 Ag E&S Pa OneStop Work Time
3:30-4:00 Questions/Discussion/Wrap Up

Half Day Agenda

8:00-8:30 Registration/Refreshments
8:30-10:00 Manure Mgmt. Intro & Work Time
10:00-10:15 Break
10:15-Noon Ag E&S Plan Intro & Work Time

What to Bring: Detailed maps of your farm

Each workshop will be capped at 10 individuals. Register at (570) 495-4665 x 304 a week prior to your chosen workshop.



Please contact the Northumberland County Conservation District at (570) 495-4665 x 304 with any questions or to register by phone. *Financial support of this project is provided by the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection through the Chesapeake Bay Implementation Grant and the Clean Water Fund.*

Survey Finds Pa. Farmers Have Done Much to Protect Chesapeake Bay Water Quality

By: Jeff Muhollem, Penn State University (reprinted with permission)

UNIVERSITY PARK, Pa. — Many Pennsylvania farmers in the Chesapeake Bay watershed have voluntarily implemented, at their own expense, practices aimed at improving water quality, according to newly released survey research conducted by Penn State's College of Agricultural Sciences.

The study — built around a survey that nearly 7,000 farmers responded to — presents the first comprehensive inventory of farmers' voluntary use of water-quality best management practices. The study stemmed from agricultural leaders' desire to document measures Pennsylvania farmers have taken on their own, without federal or state funding, to reduce nitrogen and sediment levels in local streams, rivers and lakes.

The state Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), which funded the research along with Penn State, expressed interest in having the study done.

The study began with the Penn State Survey Research Center administering a survey in early 2016. A total of 6,782 farmers in 41 counties in the Chesapeake Bay watershed completed the survey, and researchers analyzed the responses. To verify response accuracy, researchers then randomly selected more than 700 of the respondents for farm visits in August by dozens of trained and experienced Penn State Extension staff.

Respondents reported implementing and covering the cost of the following water-quality best management practices:

- 475,800 acres of nutrient/manure management
- 97,562 acres of enhanced nutrient management
- 2,164 animal-waste storage units
- 2,106 barnyard runoff-control systems
- 55,073 acres of agricultural erosion and sedimentation control plans
- 228,264 acres of conservation plans
- More than 1.3 million linear feet of streambank fencing
- 1,757 acres of grass riparian buffers
- 5,808 acres of forested riparian buffers

The verification component of the survey confirmed that farmers were accurate in their reporting, according to Matthew Royer, director of the Penn State Agriculture and Environment Center, who oversaw the survey project.

"This survey is extremely valuable in reporting voluntary practices that, to date, have not been adequately captured and reported for credit," he said. "The cumulative numbers of conservation practices on the ground are significant and reveal a large amount of conservation being implemented by farmers outside of government cost-share programs. They have put a lot of their dollars and resources into conservation, so they should get credit for that."

Each year, DEP tracks agricultural conservation practices that are implemented to reduce pollution — many of which are government-funded and reported by state and federal agencies to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Chesapeake Bay Program Partnership to document the Commonwealth's progress toward improving local water quality and restoring the Chesapeake Bay. However, many Pennsylvania farmers want to ensure that the measures they install voluntarily, without state or federal cost-share, also are credited by the Chesapeake Bay Program Partnership.

Nevertheless, Royer said, "it doesn't mean that agriculture as a whole, or all farmers, have implemented what they need to meet water-quality goals — clearly more needs to be done."

The survey results were provided to DEP and presented today (Dec. 15) to the Chesapeake Bay Program's Agriculture Workgroup, which approved the survey process and was expected to recommend that EPA incorporate the results as part of this documentation and verification effort.

Survey, *continued*

"Penn State is pleased to have taken the lead in documenting best management practices implemented by farmers," said Rick Roush, dean of the College of Agricultural Sciences. "We place a high priority on research and extension programs aimed at improving the Chesapeake Bay and working with our partners to develop new strategies for accelerating agriculture's efforts to meet water-quality goals while continuing to support a vibrant and viable ag economy."

The survey approach reflects the Chesapeake Bay Restoration Strategy announced by Gov. Tom Wolf in January, which calls for public and private collaboration to maintain the quality of local waters in Pennsylvania through technical and financial assistance, technology, expanded data gathering, improved program coordination and capacity, and stronger enforcement and compliance measures when necessary.

The survey was developed collaboratively by Penn State, Pennsylvania Farm Bureau, PennAg Industries Association, Pennsylvania Farmers Union, Pennsylvania Association for Sustainable Agriculture, Professional Dairy Managers of Pennsylvania, the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture, the Pennsylvania State Conservation Commission, the Pennsylvania Association of Conservation Districts, and DEP.

For more information, please contact Jeff Muhollem at jjm29@psu.edu.



Don't forget about our annual tree sale! Brochures for our 47th annual sale will be mailed out in early February. If you are unsure if you are on our mailing list, contact our office today! (If you receive a newsletter, that does not mean you are on our tree sale mailing list.)

As we start a new year, NCCD would like to thank our 2016 members for their kind support. We look forward to another great year in 2017!

Conservation Benefactor:

KW Enterprises, LLC, Milton

Friend of Conservation:

Hoffman Brothers Lumber, Inc., Richfield

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Northumberland County Conservation District

The NCCD, formed in 1943 under the Conservation District Law, is a subdivision of state government and is one of 66 Conservation Districts throughout the state of Pennsylvania. The purpose of the Conservation District is to promote protection, maintenance, improvement, and wise use of the land, water, and other natural resources.

Directors

Richard Daniels: Chairman, Farmer
Leon Wertz: Vice-Chairman, Farmer
Richard Shoch: Commissioner
Gary Truckenmiller: Farmer
John Kopp: Farmer
Dave Crowl: Public
Mike Hubler: Public

Mike Erdley: Associate
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Judy Becker: District Manager, AgLand Preservation, Editor
Shirley Snyder: Administrative Assistant
Jaci Harner: Watershed Specialist, Nutrient Management Technician
Michael McCleary: Erosion & Sediment Technician, Dirt & Gravel Roads
Bryanna Kenno: Agricultural Conservation Technician

NCCD Board of Directors Upcoming Meetings:
January 5th, February 2nd, and March 2nd at 12:30pm all held at the
NCCD EE Center