

CONSERVATION PLEDGE

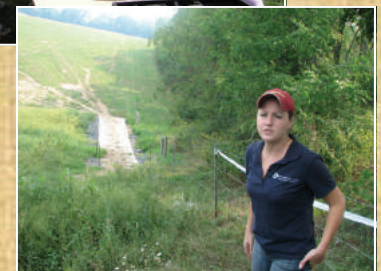
I give my pledge as an American to save and faithfully to defend from waste the natural resources of my country - its air, its soil and minerals, its forests, waters and wildlife.



Located near Montandon, this is the oldest covered bridge still in use in America. Built in 1830 of Burr trusses, it spans 121 feet across Chillisquaque Creek.



Promoting Wise Use of Natural Resources Since 1943



District Partners

Each of the programs administered by the NCCD could not be as successful as they are without the assistance of our partnering agencies. Below is a list of these agencies which have aided the district in being so prosperous.

- ◆ Northumberland County Board of Commissioners
- ◆ USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service
 - ◆ USDA Farm Service Agency
 - ◆ Penn State Cooperative Extension
 - ◆ PA Bureau of Forestry
 - ◆ PA Department of Environmental Protection
- ◆ PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources
 - ◆ PA Department of Agriculture
 - ◆ PA State Conservation Commission
 - ◆ PA Association of Conservation Districts
 - ◆ Pennsylvania Envirothon
- ◆ Pocono Northeast Resource Conservation & Development Council
 - ◆ PA Game Commission
 - ◆ PA Fish & Boat Commission
 - ◆ PA Department of Education
 - ◆ Shamokin Creek Restoration Alliance
 - ◆ Little Shamokin Creek Watershed Association
 - ◆ Chillisquaque Limestone Watershed Association

History of the NCCD

The Northumberland County Conservation District (NCCD) was established on February 23, 1943 by a group of local farmers who were interested in creating an organization to assist farmers in establishing soil and water conservation practices. Mark Witmer was the man most responsible for stimulating public awareness of the need for using soil and water conservation practices in Northumberland County. Mr. Witmer served as the first chairman of the district and remained on the board of directors for nearly 20 years.

During the 40's and 50's, the Stone Valley Watershed, a 2,000 acre tract of gently rolling farmland near Dalmatia, became nationally famous as an example of successful conservation farming. Stone Valley played such a large role in the early history of the conservation district that it became synonymous with the District's efforts.

Throughout the 60's and 70's, the District programs continued to expand and began to play a greater role in environmental education programming and in the formation of local watershed associations to clean up the streams of the county. During these years, the District was honored on three occasions by the State Association of Conservation Districts as the most outstanding conservation district in Pennsylvania.

Over the years, the role of the conservation district has expanded to include a wide variety of activities and programs. Today, the NCCD is involved in environmental education programs, sponsors an annual tree sale, works with a variety of local watershed organizations, holds workshops on current issues of conservation, administers the nutrient management program, runs the farmland preservation program for the county, and is the authorized inspection agency for erosion and sediment control in Northumberland County. We truly strive to promote wise use of our natural resources.



District Structure

In 1938, Pennsylvania, with great forethought, realized that the best way to have effective conservation was to have local control and leadership. Based on this time-tested principle, local leaders are appointed to the Conservation District Board of Directors to serve their own district and community. Northumberland County was the sixth in the state to institute a county program.

The District Board is composed of seven directors who are appointed by the Board of County Commissioners. The District Board meets on a regular monthly schedule. These meetings, which are open to the public, are held on the first Thursday of each month. Four of the directors have agricultural backgrounds, two with urban interests, and a county commissioner member. The County Commissioners make district appointments from a list of nominees submitted to them from county-wide organizations that have been approved by the State Conservation Commission. It is important to note that the district directors serve as public officials without compensation. They are charged with the responsibility of coordinating the conservation activities of the district. In this role, the district is empowered to work with state, federal, or civic agencies in the promotion of conservation. The District is affiliated with the Pennsylvania Association of Conservation Districts as well as the National Association of Conservation Districts.

Since the District's beginning in 1943, only 47 people have served on the Board of Directors, including the present seven. On the following page is the list of all of those directors who have given so graciously to enhance and protect the natural resources of Northumberland County.



NCCD Board of Directors

Front row (L-R): Dave Crowl, Public Director; Leon Wertz, Farmer Director; John Kopp, Chairman & Farmer Director; Cyril Shaffer, Farmer Director.
Second row (L-R): Mike Erdley, Public Director; John Pfleeger, Farmer Director; Kurt Masser, Commissioner Director

Why Preserve Farmland?

Farmland is an important industry in Northumberland County. According to the National Agriculture Statistics Service 2007 Census:

- There are 715 farms in Northumberland County on 117,000 acres. (40% of the county!)
- The average farm covers 164 acres
- The average Northumberland County farm sold approximately \$44,870 in products

By actively preserving Northumberland County's farmland, we also help protect:

- Pennsylvania's #1 industry, agriculture
- Local supplies of fresh food
- Surface and ground water resources
- Air quality
- Wildlife habitat
- Scenic beauty and open space
- Quality of life
- Northumberland County History



The George and Renee Pick farm, Delaware Township, 98.71 Acres, preserved in 2009.

Preserving farmland can also help to keep property taxes down for all landowners in a community, as many studies have shown that farm properties provide more in tax revenue to municipalities and school districts than they consume in municipal and school services.

For more information on how to preserve your farm, please contact our office at 570-286-7114 ext. 4.

Agricultural Land Preservation Program

The Pennsylvania Agricultural Conservation Easement Purchase Program was developed in 1988 to help slow the loss of prime farmland to non-agricultural uses. The program enables state, county and local governments to purchase conservation easements (sometimes called development rights) from owners of quality farmland. Counties participating in the program have appointed agricultural land preservation boards with a state board created to oversee this program. The state board is responsible for distribution of state funds, approval and monitoring of county programs and specific easement purchases.

The Northumberland County Agricultural Land Preservation Board was formed by a resolution of the Northumberland County Commissioners on September 3, 1991, and was approved by the State Board on July 16, 1992. The first easement purchase took place in 1994. In 1997, the Northumberland County Conservation District began administering the program. To date, there have been 15 farms preserved for a total of 1,831 acres.



The Larry & Vicki Waldman farm, Delaware Township, 59.308 Acres preserved in 2007.

In order to be considered for the program, minimum requirements have been established by the State Board that farms must meet to be eligible. Farms must be located in an agricultural security area consisting of 500 acres or more; contiguous acreage of at least 50 acres in size, unless the tract is at least 10 acres in size and is either used for a crop unique to the area, or is contiguous to a property which has a perpetual conservation easement in place that is held by a “qualified conservation organization”; contain at least 50% of soils which are available for agricultural production and are of capability classes I-IV, as defined by the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service; and they must contain the greater of 50% of 10 acres of harvested cropland or pastureland. In addition, the State Board requires that consideration be given to the likelihood that the tract will be converted to a non-agricultural use and the applicant’s stewardship of the land.

Applications received by the county board are ranked using a two-part land evaluation and site assessment system (LESA). The LESA looks at the quality of soils and site assessment, and considers location factors that may have an impact on the current or future viability of a farm.

Name	Term	Name	Term
Mark Witmer	1943-1961	Stanley Crone	1996-2002
Thomas Hoffman	1943-1949	Roger Menges	1997
Marr Patton	1943-1959	Mary Lou Rebuck	1997-2001
Ira Renn	1943-1950	Alvin Shaffer	1999-2004
William Gauger	1950-1956	Albert Mabus	1999-2007
Frank Martz, Sr.	1951-1954	Leon Wertz	2000-Present
Raymond Shaffer	1955-1988	Sue Menges	2002-2004
Rolland Rumberger	1955	George Richard	2003-2006
Fred Kitchen	1957-1964	John Kopp	2004-Present
Donald Cotner	1960-1979	John Pfleegor	2005-Present
Eugene Meckley	1962-1973	Blair Carbaugh	2004-2005
J. Lowrie Moore	1965-1985	Dave Crowl	2006-Present
D. Joseph Sacco	1968-1983	Cyril Shaffer	2007-Present
Harry Criswell	1968-1971	Mike Erdley	2008-Present
James Wise	1972-1973	Commissioner Directors	
Marlin Rothermel	1974-1977	Leroy Thomas	1943-1951
Richard Morgan	1974-1997	John U. Shroyer	1952-1955
Serene Witmer	1978-1990	Fred Hoffman	1956-1969
Robert Pardoe, Jr.	1980-1999	Lawton Shroyer	1970-1976
Lorraine Kinder	1984-1992	Dr. George Dietrick	1977-1979
Henry Forman	1986-1996	James P. Kelley	1980-1981
Frank Martz, Jr.	1991-1995	Charles Lewis	1982-1985, 1992
Donald Kauffman	1992-1996	Lester Blevins	1986-1987
Vicki Castetter	1992	Samuel Dietrick	1995, 2000-2003
David Unger	1995-2003	Robert F. Jones	1996-1999
		Kurt Masser	2004-Present

Erosion and Sedimentation Control Program

Erosion control programs developed in the 1930's with passage of the Soil Conservation Act by the U.S. Congress. The Act created the Soil Conservation Service as part of a national program to address soil and water conservation. Since 1973, over 30 states have adopted legislation to implement erosion control programs.

During the late 1960's increasing awareness of the damage caused by sediment to flood control facilities and other property resulting from accelerated erosion from construction sites and agricultural lands resulted in revisions to the Clean Streams Law. The revisions included defining sediment as a pollutant and included changes to Section 316, Responsibilities of Landowners to provide an incentive for implementing agricultural erosion practices. Section 316 was changed to state that landowners can be excluded from responsibility for pollution in the form of sediment resulting from an act of God if a complete conservation plan for the land has been developed and the plan has been fully implemented and maintained.

Pennsylvania's existing Erosion Control Rules and Regulations at 25 Pa Code Chapter 102 were developed prior to the federal Water Pollution Control Act and prior to the development of the 1972 Model State Act for Soil Erosion and Sediment Control. The Chapter 102 regulations were adopted under the authority of the Clean Streams Law to define specific procedures and requirements of the program. The regulations also reflect the Declaration of Policy contained in Act 217, the Conservation District Law, to implement a program to help provide for the conservation of soil, water and related resources, for the control and prevention of soil erosion and preservation of natural resources. The Chapter 102 regulations require erosion control planning for all types of earthmoving: urban, agricultural plowing and tilling, forestry, mining, utilities, and others. No earthmoving activities are exempt from the regulatory requirements.

The conservation district continues to serve as the authorized inspection agency for the erosion and sediment control program for Northumberland County. This program has always been and remains successful the District.



This is a silt fence used to eliminate sediment from eroding from a construction site.



The top photo shows one of the various Acid Mine Drainage treatment systems installed in Northumberland County. This system is located in the Shamokin Creek Watershed and is designed to treat the polluted water discharge before it enters the main stem of the Shamokin Creek. The photo below shows the installation of a vegetative buffer along a stream bank in the Little Shamokin Creek watershed, where plant roots will absorb excess nutrients and hold soils in place.



Check the groups on the web: www.nccdpa.org

Watershed Groups

The watershed group movement in Northumberland County started in the late 1970's. During the early years, prior to any volunteer groups being formed, the majority of the work being done focused on abandoned mine reclamation projects. As conservation awareness began to increase the factors effecting stream water quality began to broaden. What was once mine reclamation based has expanded to include additional activities such as enhancing fish habitat, stream bank stabilization, stormwater management, and water quality awareness.

Are There Water Problems in Northumberland County?

Unfortunately, the answer is yes. The majority of the streams in the county are affected by non-point source (NPS) pollution. NPS pollution is pollution whose source cannot be traced back to a single point of origin as opposed to point source (PS) pollution, which usually originates from a pipe, culvert or other specific source.

Some types of NPS pollution include:

- Acid Mine Drainage (AMD)
- Nutrient runoff from farm lots and fields
- Sediment from construction, logging, mining, farming and other disturbances
- Stormwater runoff
- Improper disposal of human and chemical wastes

Northumberland County Watershed Associations

- Chillisquaque/ Limestone Watershed Association
- Little Shamokin Creek Watershed Association
- Lower Mahantango Creek Watershed Association
- Mahanoy Creek watershed Association
- Roaring Creek Valley Conservation Association
- Shamokin Creek Restoration Alliance
- Tri-Valley Watershed Association



A sediment basin is just one of the many practices which can be utilized to help minimize the impact construction activities can have on our local waterways.

Dirt and Gravel Roads

Pennsylvania's Dirt & Gravel Road Maintenance Program provides dedicated and earmarked funding to eliminate stream pollution caused by dust and sediment from unpaved roads. The program and its annual \$4M apportionment for "environmentally sound maintenance" was enacted into law in April 1997, as Section 9106 of the PA Vehicle Code. Each year, the State Conservation Commission allocates program monies to county conservation districts based on identified need. Townships and other road-owning entities, after successful completion of a required 2-day Environmentally Sensitive Maintenance (ESM) training, are eligible to apply to their county conservation district for maintenance funds to address identified pollution problems using environmentally sound practices.

Since the programs inception, the conservation district has assisted with the installation of over \$230,000.00 worth of practices within the county.



Here is a picture of a completed Dirt and Gravel Roads project on Swank Road in Rockefeller Township

Chesapeake Bay Program

The Chesapeake Bay Program began in 1983 as a Bay Financial Assistance Funding Program available to farmers to implement best management practices that reduce non-point source pollution to the watersheds and ultimately in the Chesapeake Bay. It runs on a voluntary basis for participation with agricultural operations.

The Chesapeake 2000 Agreement called Pennsylvania to make a commitment to help remove the bay from the federal Clean Water Act's list of impaired waters by 2010. To meet this goal the new sediment and nutrient reduction goals were developed. From 1985 to 2004, Pennsylvania, through implemented measures, has reduced 13.5 millions pounds per year of nitrogen and 822,000 pounds per year of phosphorous and 106,000 tons per year of sediment that was entering the Chesapeake Bay.

In the start of the program manure storages were the main best management practice funded. Since 1987, 36 manure storages were constructed through the program in Northumberland County through the Bay program. As the program continued other best managements practiced included composters, stream bank fencing, stream crossings and smaller scale projects. Now with limited funding for best management practices the Bay programs switched gears to promote more education and give incentives for softer BMP's such as no-till, cover crops, and field buffers.



This is a roofed structure built to control runoff from a beef cattle feedlot.

To date, the conservation district has received a total of \$868,859.15 in funding for the administration of the Chesapeake Bay Program. Forty-nine Northumberland County farmers have signed contracts to date, installing best management practices worth \$1,528,653.10. Current projects in Northumberland County through Bay Program are Roof Water Management which provides funding for roof gutters or barnyards and other areas where clean roof water can mix with manure. A cover crop incentive program gives a payment for each acre enrolled for two years if the operator agrees to implement the cover crop for three more years. A third grant was obtained through the Bay to fence out heifers from a stream and fund a crossing, along with constructing log vanes for fish habitats. Northumberland County is putting forth a great effort to meet the goals of preserving and improving the Chesapeake Bay.

Snapshots of our Educational Programs...



Women In Agriculture



**Susquehanna Valley
Envirothon**



Twilight Meetings

YAC

(Youth, Ag, Conservation)



**Taking Part in the
Children's Pavilion
Activities at the Ned
Smith Festival**



Environmental Education

Environmental education has always been and continues to be one of the highest priorities for the conservation district. Each and every one of the staff members strive to include education as one of the main goals of their daily business.

The educational programs sponsored by the district have grown immensely since the creation of the district. What was once a mainly agricultural-based educational effort, has expanded to include such things as the benefits of recycling, abandoned mine drainage effects, and forestry issues. Just a few of the longer standing and very effective efforts are the Susquehanna Valley Envirothon, Annual Farmers Winter Conference and Twilight Meetings, Plant a Tree, Poster Contest, and Soil Stewardship which is an outreach to our county's churches. A variety of classroom presentations in area schools are also given each year. These, along with occasional teacher workshops, are aligned to the Academic Standards for Environment & Ecology as set by the PA Department of Education. Some of the newer programs at the NCCD include Women In Agriculture, and our summer youth programs, YAC (Youth, Ag, Conservation), and Ag-Citement.

Aside of the formal workshops and classroom presentations, much of the education takes place on a very informal one-on-one basis. Whether the topic of discussions are the advantages of no-till farming, installation of erosion control practices or the benefits of abandoned mine land reclamation, all are key to the conservation of the natural resources of Northumberland County.

In 2003, the Conservation District was proud to open their Environmental Education Center (EE Center). The EE Center was a joint venture between the NCCD and Penn State Cooperative Extension, made possible through a grant received from Merck, Inc. The EE Center was dedicated and named in honor of Mr. David Unger who was a District Board Member for eight years before passing away in 2003. Mr. Unger served a pivotal role in making the EE Center a possibility for the District. Both the District and Penn State Cooperative Extension provide a variety of educational programs and hold various meetings at the Center. It is equipped with technology equipment such as computers and a videoconferencing system that aid in its capabilities for educational programs.



- **For more information about our educational programs, please contact our office at (570) 286-7114 Ext. 4 or log onto our website at www.nccdpa.org**



This is an example of barnyard stabilization with a filtering system.

Nutrient Management Program

“In the spring of 1993, the Pennsylvania legislature passed and the governor signed the Nutrient Management Act into law. Before this legislation was passed, problems with nutrient pollution were administered under the Clean Streams Law, which dealt only with surface waters. This existing law stated that if a farmer follows practices in the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) publication *Manure Management for Environmental Protection* (Manure Manual), no special permits or approvals are required for manure utilization on farms. The Nutrient Management Act is the first law in Pennsylvania that requires regulatory oversight of nutrient plans on certain farms. This law took effect on October 1, 1997. An important question is, who is affected by this legislation? The Act states that “concentrated animal operations” will be required to develop and maintain a nutrient management plan. Concentrated animal operations (CAO) are defined as agricultural operations where the animal density exceeds *two animal equivalent units (AEU) per acre on an annualized basis*. An AEU is 1,000 pounds of live weight of any animal.”, excerpted from Penn State College of Agricultural Sciences • Cooperative Extension **Agromony Facts 54**.



A nutrient management plan written according to NMA program requirements is subject to a 2 -step review and action process. A farmer seeking approval of a nutrient management plan must submit a complete plan to the county conservation district office in the county the operation exists. Conservation district staff will then review the nutrient management plan to determine if it meets NMA program requirements and will advise the plan writer and farmer on any necessary changes to the plan. Once the nutrient management plan has been properly reviewed, the conservation district will either approve or disapprove the plan at a public meeting. The farmer is then contacted in writing of the district's action on the nutrient management plan. Northumberland County has approximately 54 NMPs, 16 are CAO's, and 38 are volunteers.

On the Web...www.nccdpa.org

Northumberland County Conservation District



<http://www.nccdpa.org/> [6/9/2010 1:27:25 PM]

Log onto the NCCD website for the most up-to-date information about the organization—from learning how YOU can be actively involved in environmental projects to locating an event flyer.

CONTACT INFORMATION:

Northumberland County Conservation District

441 Plum Creek Road
Sunbury, PA 17801

(570) 286-7114 Ext. 4
(570) 988-4488 (Fax)

Community Outreach



Annual Tree Sale

The NCCD conducts a sale each April as a fundraiser. A variety of trees, ornamentals, and bulbs are sold. To receive a sale brochure, contact our office and you will be included on our mailing list.

Annual Poster Contest

Students in grades K-12 from throughout the county enter posters based on a conservation theme. In 2010, the contest centered on "Conservation Habits = Healthy Habitats".



K-1: Hannah Michael
Watsontown Christian Academy



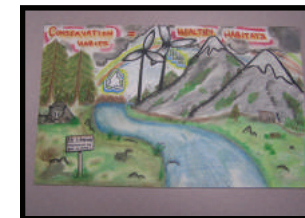
2-3: Abigail Baker
Watsontown Christian Academy



4-6: Brittany Lahr
St. Monica School



7-9: Christa Beveridge
St. Monica School



10-12: Ryan M.
Northwestern Academy