



Conservation Conversation

Summer 2019 - Volume 32, No. 2

2019 Centre County Envirothon

The Centre County Conservation District sponsored the 35th annual Centre County Envirothon on May 8, 2019 at Bald Eagle State Park. Ten teams from Central PA Institute of Science and Technology, Penns Valley Area, Bald Eagle Area, Bellefonte and State College Area high schools participated on a beautiful spring day. The Envirothon tests students' knowledge of five subject areas: Aquatic Ecology; Forestry; Soils and Land Use; Wildlife; and Agriculture & the Environment: Knowledge & Technology to Feed the World, the current environmental issue topic for 2019.

For the first time in 20 years, a team from State College Area high school captured the County Envirothon title. The State College "Animal Crackers" team scored 397 out of a possible 500 points. Team members Willow Martin, Adalee Wasikonis, Caroline Vancura, Luly Kaye and Katy Liu also achieved the highest scores at the Current Issue, Forestry, and Soils and Land Use stations. The Bald Eagle Area I team placed second with a score of 391 and also achieved the highest scores at the Wildlife station. The Penns Valley Area I team placed third with a score of 370 and achieved the highest score at the Aquatic Ecology station. Susan Braun is the State College Envirothon team advisor.

Inside this issue:

Page

1 **Envirothon Event**

2-3 **DEP Open House—
Streams in Your
Community**

4-5 **Chesapeake Bay
Program**

6-7 **DG&LVR Program**

8-9 **AG BMP Grants**

10 **Watershed News**

11 **Poster Contest**

12 **Contact Info./Calendar**

The State College team represented Centre County at the Pennsylvania Envirothon on May 21 and 22 at the University of Pittsburgh at Johnstown and Windber Recreation Park. State College placed 19th of the 65 county teams participating. Carmichaels Area High School, Greene County won the Pennsylvania Envirothon championship and represented Pennsylvania at the international National Conservation Foundation Envirothon in late July at North Carolina State University in Raleigh, North Carolina where they placed 3rd of the 52 teams participating.



Pictured from left: Mark Long, Susan Braun, Adalee Wasikonis, Willow Martin, Luly Kaye, Frank Liu, Caroline Vancura, & Matt Wise

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.

PA Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Open House—Streams in Your Community

The PA Department of Environmental Protection Northcentral Regional Office (DEP-NCRO) held an Open House on stream maintenance, flooding, and a potential new program: “*Restore Pennsylvania*” to assist with project funding for flood improvement projects- including major stream restoration and maintenance proposals. This Open House was particularly targeted for municipal officials and streamside landowners, but was open to the general public.

The Open House was July 15, 2019 at DEP’s Moshannon District Office in Philipsburg. Officials from DEP’s NCRO in Williamsport, PennDot District 2 (Clearfield), Clearfield County Conservation District and Centre County Conservation District were in attendance to interact with the public and answer questions- after DEP presented a short program about stream regulations as they pertain to maintenance and flooding issues. In addition to the agencies mentioned, there were about 20 participants - including Centre County Commissioner Michael Pipe, as well as a mixture of private and municipal attendees. The Centre Daily Times was there to cover the story- with an article in their July 16th issue newspaper, about the event.



DEP emphasized the fact that all streams and the land adjacent to them (their floodway) are regulated areas; often needing some kind of permit or other authorization to do any digging, filling, and/or building something near or across (bridge, other structure, etc.). *Keep in mind, even small trickles of water or “dried up” channels may be an actual stream and are regulated the same if they meet the State’s regulations for being a stream.* Even installing a utility, where it might be buried or bored/tunneled below the stream bed is regulated. An exception to this is when there is tree/branch/woody debris or other floating trash/items that is not part of the natural streambed or its banks (soil, sand and rock)- as well as any vegetation (including trees and other woody growth) growing in or along the stream—these may be cut and removed often without a permit. But caution is advised- do so safely, after high waters have receded. Often, root systems of trees and other vegetation contributes to keeping stream banks stable during high water events, and help provide shade to cool waters passing below them- so it is a balancing act between the removal and keeping. Sometimes a compromise is best, selectively cutting and removing some, but not all.

It was also mentioned that it is not illegal to drive through water in emergency situations such as when high waters occur- and one is cut off from their home, BUT again- do so safely. 6 inches of water may sweep away a vehicle, and if it's not known if driveway pipe or driveway itself is intact, it is probably wise to turn around till one may later assess the conditions- after letting the water levels drop or at least clear up a bit. After a flood event, things like minor channel cleaning of sediment or gravel deposits that restricts flow through a pipe or bridge (and are within 50 feet up or downstream of it) may sometimes be authorized with a phone call or emergency permit within days of calling. So, it is best to contact DEP or your County CD sooner rather than later after any high water event.

Finally, the public, both private citizens and municipal officials—should be aware that often neither DEP or County CD's have the authority to MAKE landowners remove fallen trees, repair natural stream bank erosion, or remove gravel bars regardless of where they are found. We can be contacted to determine if an activity is regulated, and whether or not a permit would be needed for a given activity. Keep in mind, in remote areas where streams flow, all of these things occur naturally- but seldom impact public property or safety. In fact, these things, when left alone and when not a threat to health, safety, and private or public property (homes, driveways, roads, etc.)—are often ways that enhance the natural environment and can provide habitat for a variety of wild fauna and flora.

Bottom line—contact your local Conservation District or Regional Department of Environmental Protection Office (Williamsport DEP is their Northcentral Region Office, which includes Centre and Clearfield CDs), for help with your site and guidance, potential permitting, as well as other suggestions. NEITHER DEP NOR CENTRE COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT HAS HEAVY EQUIPMENT OR EQUIPMENT OPERATORS THAT CONDUCT EXCAVATION OR TREE REMOVAL SERVICES

Guidelines for Maintaining Streams in Your Community

DEP wants to help Pennsylvania communities complete all necessary stream work in a way that is environmentally-responsible, reduces the likelihood of future flooding problems, and complies with regulations. When in doubt, contact PA DEP for assistance before you start stream work projects.

Green Light—Go!

Proceed—These actions do not require DEP notification, pre-approval, or additional permits:

- Removing woody debris and manmade debris materials from the stream, banks, and riparian areas by hand or using handheld equipment
- Removing above items using heavy equipment from the bank; equipment should not enter the stream or dig into the streambed
- Removing gravel and debris in and close to bridges and culverts (Note: review permit conditions first)
- Crossing a flooded stream for emergency access to your property, if conditions are safe

Yellow Light—Slow Down!

Call DEP first—Notification, pre-approval, or emergency permits may be required:

- Rebuilding roads and bridges across streams
- Streambank stabilization projects, including riprap
- Removing gravel bars from the stream channel using heavy equipment
- Repairing a bridge or culvert, or removing one in danger of failure

Red Light—Stop!

These actions require permits from DEP, and possibly from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers or other agencies:

- Redirecting the flow of a stream by reshaping gravel bars, or moving gravel to the streambank
- Moving/relocating a stream
- Dredging or damming streams, or creating dikes
- Building a new bridge or culvert

Remember: When in Doubt, Call DEP!

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pennsylvania
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Visit the DEP website at <http://www.dep.pa.gov> for more information about relevant permits and programs.

Some municipalities have flood insurance studies and maps prepared by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) which indicate the floodway boundary for some streams. In the absence of such a study, the floodway shall be considered to extend 50 feet landward from the top of each stream-bank. In Centre County, FEMA has delineated floodway areas along Spring Creek in Spring Township, Bellefonte Borough and Milesburg Borough; and also along Bald Eagle Creek in Boggs Township, Milesburg Borough, and some downstream municipalities. Most other areas and streams would use the "50 foot rule" mentioned above.

Visit the Centre County Conservation District website at:
<http://centrecountypa.gov>

- [Services](#)
- [Conservation District](#)
- [Stream Permits](#)

for more information about relevant permits & programs.

Chesapeake Bay Program Supports Local Farm in Protecting Water Quality

The Conservation District worked with a dairy farm in College Township to protect the local water quality in Slab Cabin Run, and ultimately the Chesapeake Bay. Working with other state and federal partners, the Conservation District applied for a grant to install Best Management Practices on the farm, to reduce runoff contaminated with manure and sediment. The Chesapeake Bay Program Special Projects grant was awarded in 2017. The Conservation District worked with the farmer, engineer, contractors, and other federal partners to construct a Roofed Heavy Use Area and Manure Stacking Facility. The roofed concrete facility will provide 4 months of manure storage. This will allow the farmer to store and spread the manure (and

valuable nutrients) to crop fields at the appropriate time. In addition, this facility will provide an area for the animals to hang out during the winter and other wet periods of the year. Keeping the animals out of the soggy pasture will further reduce sediment and manure laden runoff, as well as protect the pasture from compaction. The facility is equipped with roof gutters to safely convey the clean rain water away from the facility, and adjacent stabilized access road.



Pictured above:

BEFORE—manure running off barnyard area along with rain water.

Pictured right:

AFTER—manure is contained and stored for future use.



DO YOU HAVE FARM ANIMALS?

YES? *WE CAN HELP YOU!!!*

Centre County Conservation District Receives a \$127,200 Grant to Assist Agricultural Operations with Conservation Plan Development

The Centre County Conservation District received \$127,200 in Growing Greener grant funds from the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to offer professional plan development to farmers in Centre County. This grant will assist approximately 215 agricultural operations in Centre County.

The grant will offer financial assistance to agricultural producers to develop Conservation and Manure Management Plans for their farms, as required by state law. A professional planner will offer technical assistance to develop the Plans, which will ultimately reduce agricultural pollutants reaching our local streams and groundwater, and eventually the Chesapeake Bay. The Conservation District will pay the professional planner to develop the Plans, which can cost anywhere from \$350 to \$1,500 per plan. Many agricultural producers need 2 plans - a Manure Management Plan and an Agricultural Erosion & Sediment Control Plan (or Soil Conservation Plan). Farmers are required to pay \$50 toward the cost of the plans. Planning is the first, most critical step in reducing agricultural pollutants in runoff that flows to our local streams. When the program is ready, the District will offer this assistance to farmers on a first-come, first-served basis.

Farmers interested in this service can contact the Conservation District office at 814-355-6817.

Farm City Dinner

In celebration of Pennsylvania Farm / City Week, the 2019 Centre County Farm City Dinner will be held on Wednesday, November 6, 2019, at the New Hope Lutheran Church in Spring Mills. The annual dinner highlights the importance of the relationship between our agricultural community and our urban neighbors. The event will feature a milk & cheese reception followed by dinner and awards ceremony. Tickets are available to purchase in advance only. A silent auction and door prizes will also be offered. The event is sponsored by the Bellefonte FFA, Centre County Conservation District, Centre County Farm Bureau, Kiwanis Club of State College & Penn State Extension-Centre County. For additional information or to purchase tickets, please contact Brandi at the Centre County Conservation District 814-355-6817 Ext.1454.

Dirt, Gravel and Low-Volume Roads Summary

2019 is the 22nd year for the Dirt, Gravel and Low-Volume Road Program (DGLVR). Through the program to date, Centre County has awarded grants totaling over \$1.7 million for Dirt, Gravel and Low-Volume Roads. DGLVR projects in Centre County have improved stream/road interfaces along 30 miles of dirt roads and 9 miles of low-volume (paved) roads. Public-road owning entities (municipalities and other state or local public entities) may apply for grant monies; funding eligibility requires at least one individual who is responsible for project design and oversight to attend a two-day Environmentally Sensitive Maintenance for Dirt, Gravel and Low-Volume Roads training. ESM trainings are regularly held throughout the state and are offered at no-cost to public-road owning entities.

Spring and summer of 2019 was a busy DGLVR construction season and included two DGLVR project firsts for Centre County – our largest road fill project and largest stream crossing installation.

Vonada Gap Road in Gregg Township was entrenched for approximately 1400', lacked a good base (native material and no crown) and had inadequate drainage. Over 6,000 tons of fill was placed to raise the road elevation 2-4'. Additionally, 4 new culvert pipes were installed for improved drainage and a "crowned" 2A limestone base running surface was added.



Vonada Gap Road – Gregg Twp. (Before)



Vonada Gap Road – Gregg Twp. (After)

The stream crossing along Neff Road in Boggs Township replaced a failing 56" metal pipe with an 8' aluminum arch culvert - sized to allow the stream to flow through the structure without "pinching". Additionally, large rip-rap was used to stabilize the embankments at the inlet and outlet of the crossing. Stream material was placed within the culvert to facilitate aquatic organisms (and terrestrials) passing through the culvert and being able to move further upstream.



Neff Road – Boggs Twp. (Before)



Neff Road – Boggs Twp. (After)

CCCD other 2019 completed projects. . .

Union Twp. (Dubbs Road) – This project fixed the road base and converted a paved low-volume road to a dirt road. Culvert pipes and turn-outs were added to improve drainage. The road received Driving Surface Aggregate.

Boggs Twp. (Egypt Hollow Road, Stauffer Road, Lucas Road) – Culvert pipes were upgraded and additional pipes were added to these roads to improve drainage. Portions of the UNT to Wallace Run (High Quality Fishery) embankment along Egypt Hollow Road were armored with rip-rap to reduce erosion.

Walker Twp. (Blue Ball Road) – This project included the installation of 3 new culvert pipes and upgrading one culvert pipe. This will improve drainage along this stretch of road, which is tributary to Little Fishing Creek.

Benner Twp. (Barns Lane) – This project included adding three new culvert pipes to improve the drainage along a portion of this road. Several turn-outs were also re-established and stabilized to limit erosion. This will improve drainage along this stretch of road, which is tributary to Spring Creek.

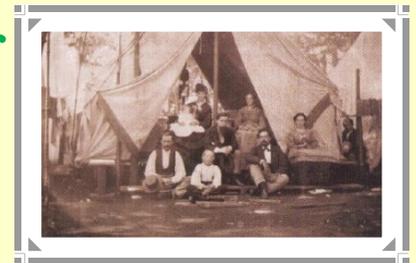
DGLVR projects have an environmental benefit – a thanks to our participating municipalities and. . .

Are you part of a public-road owning entity desiring to be ESM trained and therefore eligible for DGLVR funds? Contact the Conservation District at (814) 355-6817 or check out the Center for Dirt and Gravel Road Studies website at: www.dirtandgravel.psu.edu to learn more.

“Better Roads. . . Cleaner Streams”!

145th Annual Centre County Grange Fair

The Centre County Grange Encampment and Fair began in 1874 as the “Granger’s Pic-nik.” The founder, Leonard Rhone, organized the “pic-nik” of the local Granges. Members were urged to invite their neighbors so that they could learn about the Grange organization. This first “pic-nik” took place on Thursday, September 24, 1874 in Leech’s Woods, near Centre Hall. Nearly 3,000 people attended. The “Pic-nik” was an opportunity for recreation and also education on the advancements of agriculture. In 1890, the Centre County Pomona Grange purchased twenty-six acres in Centre Hall and named it “Grange Park.” The “Pic-nik” now had a permanent home. Today, Grange Park encompasses 264 acres! The Centre County Grange Fair is a nine-day fair and it is the only remaining tenting fair in the nation! It includes 1,000 tents, 1,500 RVs, hundreds of concessions, over 7,000 exhibit items, nationally known entertainment, amusement rides, livestock competitions, equine events, tractor pulling and much more!



The Annual Grange Fair was held on Aug. 16-24, 2019. Pictured is the district display booth in the Emporium Building, photographed by Brandi Marks, CCCD Fiscal Technician. The CCCD display consisted of informational handouts and complimentary seed balls.

Thank you to everyone who stopped by our booth.

See you next year at the fair Aug. 21-29, 2020!

Agricultural Best Management Practices Implementation Grants

The Centre County Conservation District (CCCD) continues to partner with other organizations utilizing different sources of funding to construct Agricultural Best Management Practices on farms throughout Centre County. Best Management Practices are installed to help reduce nutrient and sediment runoff from impacting our local streams, groundwater and ultimately the Chesapeake Bay. After a slow 2018 construction season because of excessive rainfall, 2019 is looking to be one of our best construction seasons in recent years. In 2019 projects are planned for farms located in Halfmoon, College, Haines, Liberty and Miles Townships.

Project:

Roofed Heavy Use Area / Manure Stacking Facility for a Beef operation located in Liberty Township. Facility was built to accommodate 25 Cow/Calf & 25 Finishers.

Roofed Heavy Use Area measures 5,500sqft & Roofed Manure Stacking Facility measures 2,400sqft with 13,000 cubic feet of storage capacity providing 4-5 months of storage.



Pictured above:
Feeding area before construction, manure uncollected.

Pictured right:
Feeding area after construction, manure collected.



Pictured left:
Roofed Heavy Use Area setup for feeding round bales in a built-in feed bunk and also silage or grain using the drive-by-feeding area under the 8' truss overhang.



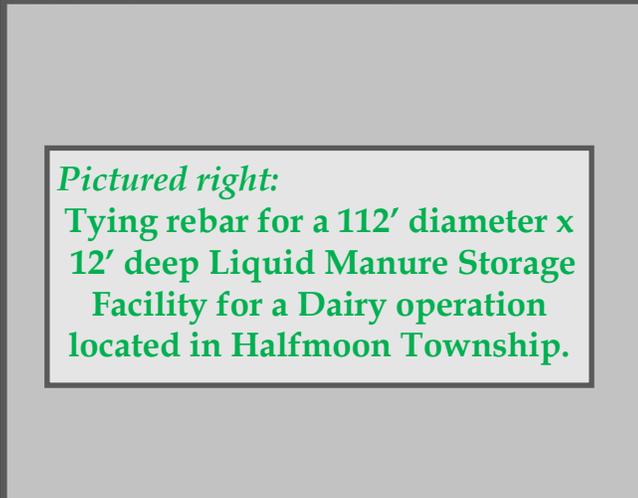
Additional BMPs include: Roof Runoff Controls, Underground Outlets, Water Supply Pipeline, Watering Facility, Cattle Walkway, Structure for Water Control, Confinement Fence, Streambank Fence, Stabilized Stream Crossings, Riparian Plantings.



Springs were developed to supply drinking water for a pasture on an Amish Dairy operation located in Miles Township. In 2017, utilizing CREP funds, livestock were excluded from surface waters and native trees & shrubs were planted within the protected riparian area. The addition of this water supply eliminates the need for livestock to travel back to the barn for their only other source of water.



Pictured left:
Pouring the floor for an 83' diameter x 12' deep Liquid Manure Storage Facility for a Dairy operation located in Haines Township.



Pictured right:
Tying rebar for a 112' diameter x 12' deep Liquid Manure Storage Facility for a Dairy operation located in Halfmoon Township.



Watershed News – Riparian Buffers

In the fall of 2018, the District applied funding from a Pennsylvania Association of Conservation Districts (PACD) grant to conduct a series of environmental education workshops. Collaborating with Frank Rohrer, of the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, and Dr. Art Gover, of Penn State University and Fruittown Land Stewardship Services, three workshops were held across Centre County, Pennsylvania. The workshops educated participants on different aspects of *riparian buffers*, including the ecological benefits of riparian buffers, how to establish and maintain buffers, and opportunities for financial assistance and incentives. The workshops were presented to 26 adults, whom left with multiple educational materials, including guidance on invasive species control and general buffer maintenance checklists.

Riparian buffers are the natural vegetation from the edge of the stream bank out through the riparian zone. The vegetative zone serves as a buffer to pollutants entering a stream from runoff, controls erosion, and provides habitat and food source input into the stream. A relatively undisturbed riparian zone supports a vigorous stream ecosystem, while narrow riparian zones occur when roads, parking lots, fields, lawns, bare soil, rocks, or buildings are near the stream bank. Golf courses, residential developments, and commercial spaces are common causes of anthropogenic degradation of the riparian zone. *Riparian buffers are the most valuable protection a stream system has* against outside influences. Enhancement of the riparian buffer by re-planting trees, native grasses, and shrubs is the first step in the recovery of the stream back to a more natural condition.

Some of the many benefits of a healthy riparian buffer include:

- Provides organic material as food for insects, fish, and wildlife
- Supplies woody debris that provides habitat for fish, insects, and amphibians
- Alters how sunlight reaches the stream and is an important temperature moderator
- Stabilizes stream banks and reduces erosion/loss of property
- Filters sediment and materials from runoff and roots of plants traps and holds sediment
- Absorbs nutrients from overland and sub-surface flows
- Reduces the impacts of flooding through temporary storage, interception, and slow releases from heavy rains

Technical and financial assistance is readily available. For more information on riparian buffers, please contact: jmkozak@centrecountypa.gov



Figure 1. Participants learning about riparian buffer management methods at a workshop in Coburn, PA.



Figure 2. Expert advice on invasive weed control at workshop in Howard, PA.



2019 Conservation Poster Contest Winners

The Centre County Conservation District sponsored the 2019 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 theme was ***"Life in the Soil – Dig Deeper."***

Winners in the 2nd through 3rd grade division are:

1st place – Alexis Bruss, 3rd grade, Wingate Elementary;

2nd place – Madison Max, 3rd grade, Wingate Elementary;

3rd place – Piper Emel, 3rd grade, Wingate Elementary.

Winners in the 4th through 6th grade division are:

1st place – Ava Howard, 4th grade, Benner Elementary;

2nd place – Zoe Michaleris, 5th grade, Easterly Parkway;

3rd place – Abigail Haas, 4th grade, Benner Elementary. *(Pictured)*



***Pictured :
Abigail Haas, 4th Grader
Benner Elementary
School, 3rd Place Winner
displaying her winning
poster entry.***

Winners were awarded a Certificate of Appreciation and cash prize for their efforts in promoting conservation. Winning posters were displayed in the entrance of the Willowbank Building in Bellefonte. First place posters were sent to Pennsylvania Association of Conservation Districts (PACD) at the end of June for the statewide competition.



Conservation Conversation



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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

October

- 2 Board Meeting
- 5-6 Dutch Fall Festival -Aaronsburg
- 12 Howard Punkin Chunkin
- 14 Columbus Day
- 26 Talleyrand Fall Fest
- 31 Halloween

November

- 5 Election Day
- 6 Board Meeting—Cancelled
- 6 Farm City Dinner
- 11 Veteran’s Day - Closed
- 28-29 Thanksgiving—Closed

December

- 4 Board Meeting
- 24-25 Christmas Holiday—Closed

January

Board Meeting—TBA

February

Board Meeting—TBA

March

Board Meeting—TBA

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- Dr. Robert Shannon, Chair
- Allen Ishler, Vice-Chair
- Steven G. Dershem, Commissioner
- Tom Boldin, Lori Hartle,
- Matthew Ulmer, James Walizer

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- Donn Fetterolf
- Martin Melville

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- Michael Pipe
- Mark Higgins
- Steven Dershem

*If you wish to receive our
 newsletter electronically, please call
 our office or email:
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- Jim Coslo Jr., Resource Conservation
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- Chris Myers, Resource Conservation
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