



**PERRY COUNTY
CONSERVATION DISTRICT**

2022 Annual Report

2022 Board of Directors

Chair, Public Director—Mike Clark, Newport PA
 Vice Chair, Farmer Director—Mel Weaver, Ickesburg PA
 Treasurer, Public Director—Larry Gildner, Duncannon PA
 Commissioner Director—Gary Eby, New Bloomfield PA
 Farmer Director—Ken Martz, Duncannon PA
 Farmer Director—Marsha Snyder, Blain PA
 Public Director—Dave McLaughlin, Elliottsburg PA
 Associate Director—Lloyd Byers, Liverpool PA
 Associate Director—William Shilling, Liverpool PA
 Associate Director—Shawna Swartz, Elliottsburg PA
 Associate Director—Grant Finkenbinder, Duncannon PA
 Associate Director—Scott Flanders, Liverpool PA



2022 District Staff & Corresponding Programs

Sally Tengeres—District Manager

April Skethway—Administrative Assistant

Neil Imes—Resource Specialist

Erosion & Sediment Control Program, Dirt & Gravel, Low Volume Road Program and Farmland Preservation Program

Kristie Smith—Watershed Specialist

Watershed Specialist Program, Environmental Education, Keep Perry County Beautiful Coordinator, Recycling and Solid Waste Program Coordinator

Lauren Leinbach—Ag Resource Specialist

Chesapeake Bay Program and Nutrient Management Program

Ben Smith—Ag Resource Specialist

Nutrient Management Program, No-till Drill Rental Program Coordinator

2022 NRCS Staff

Kevin Morgan—District Conservationist

Samantha DiLorenzo— Soil Conservationist

Don Graybill— Engineering Technician

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2022 District Board of Directors

Reflections from the Chairman

Greetings on behalf of the Perry County Conservation District Board of Directors. We are privileged to serve you as a community of commissioners, staff and a board of directors. Our commissioners serve in many capacities within the boundaries of Perry County to include our Conservation District. We appreciate their willingness to speak into and support our staff and programs. Our staff is top notch! Each staff member brings knowledge, experience, and leadership to the positions they have and the programs they organize, develop, and implement for Perry County residents. Maybe you had the opportunity to participate in one of our field days, experienced an educational opportunity for high school students through Land Judging or the Envirothon, benefited from one of our assistance programs, purchased trees through our tree sale, or were able to tap into their experience or advice. If so, thank you! If not, please understand you will find staff that are willing and able to assist you, educate, and or provide support in a variety of areas.

Please allow the Perry County Conservation District to support and assist you in managing the natural resources of Perry County and beyond.

Sincerely, Michael Clark—Board Chairman



(From Left to Right) Board Chairman & Public Director Michael Clark, Board Treasurer Larry Gilder, Farmer Director Marsha Snyder, Associate Member William Shilling, Board Vice Chairman Mel Weaver, Associate Member Lloyd Byers, Associate Member Scott Flanders, and Public Director Dave McLaughlin. (Not Pictured) Commissioner Gary Eby, Farmer Director Ken Martz, and Associate Members Shawna Swartz and Grant Finkenbinder.

“A sincere thank you from all of us here at the Conservation District for your continued support of our programs.”

2022 District Staff



*Sally Tengeres,
District Manger*



*April Skethway,
Administrative Assistant*



*Neil Imes,
Resource Specialist*



*Kristie Smith,
Watershed Specialist*



*Lauren Leinbach,
Ag Resource Specialist*



*Ben Smith,
Ag Resource Specialist*

*- Mission Statement -
Conserving Natural Resources For Our Future*

Cooperating Agencies & Contacts

Perry County Ag-Land Preservation Board—William Lyons, Chairman

Natural Resources Conservation Service—Kevin Morgan, District Conservationist; Samantha DiLorenzo, Soil Conservationist and Don Graybill, Engineering Technician

Penn State Cooperative Extension—Becky Kaucher

Farm Service Agency—Bobbie Jo Zimmerman, CED

PA Fish and Boat Commission—Richard Morder, Conservation Officer

PA Game Commission— WCO Scott Frederick and WCO Michael Smith

PA Dept. of Environmental Protection— Ramez Ziadeh, Acting Secretary

PA Department of Agriculture—Russell Redding, Secretary

DCNR Bureau of Forestry—Luke Book, Service Forester

State Conservation Commission—Karl Brown, Executive Director

Department of Transportation— New Bloomfield HQ

County of Perry Maintenance Manager—Marty Smith

Community Partnerships RC&D—Sam Price, Executive Director

Chesapeake Bay Foundation—Bill Chain, Agriculture Program Manager

Keystone 10 Million Tree Partnership—Brenda Seiglitz, Program Manager

PP&L Community Roots Program—Donna Haskins, Penn E&R

Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful—Shannon Reiter, President



*William Lyons,
Chairman
Ag-Land Preservation
Board*



*Kevin Morgan, NRCS
District Conservationist*

A Message From The District Manager

Greetings,

I am pleased to introduce our 2022 Annual Report! Each year I look forward to sharing the District milestones, accomplishments, and activities with you. On the following pages you will discover that the District had quite a productive year filled with a challenging work load and an ever changing funding and staffing landscape.

We started the year with Mike Clark stepping up to fill Oscar Campbell's seat as Board Chair while Marsha Snyder was selected from our impressive associate director bench to replace Oscar as a Farmer Director. We are grateful for their willingness to take on new responsibilities while enabling a strong dedicated Board and a smooth transition.

We moved beyond the planning phase and began implementing our County Action Plan (CAP) goals while also working through planning for 2023. The first CAP project completed was a waterway on the Steve Nolt Farm. Our Cover Crop Implementation Program was so well received that we only modified it slightly for the upcoming year. In addition, we purchased an Esch 5612 no-till drill with CAP funds and traded in our 2018 JD 1590 on a 2022 JD 1590 Pro Series.

As if we were not busy enough, funding through the newly created Clean Streams Fund was announced with the State Conservation Commission seeking delegation agreements with the Conservation Districts to provide funding for the implementation of ag best management practices. Perry signed on to the delegation agreement and is eligible to receive \$3.1 million over the next 4.5 years. All aspects of the delivery of this new program will need to be worked out, and fine tuned for successful implementation. Our incredible staff have risen to the challenge with enthusiasm and are already lining up potential projects and partners.

We achieved 10,000 acres preserved under the Farmland Preservation Program with settlement on the 146.22 acre Clarence and Lois Martin Farm on May 5. What a milestone! Our program was initiated under the guidance of a small group of dedicated folks who had their first meeting in 1989, eventually forming the Ag Land Preservation Board that created our County Farmland Preservation Program, and here we are 10,000 acres later and still going strong under our new Chair, Bill Lyons. In December, we celebrated the year and the 10,000 acre milestone by holding our Annual Dinner Banquet at the Perry Mennonite Reception Center and inviting all past and present preserved farm owners in Perry County, our dedicated partners, and special guests.

I am continually thankful for our amazing staff and dedicated Board of Directors and Associates for uniting to navigate the continual changes in programs and funding sources to successfully implement projects and events throughout Perry County.

Best wishes on an amazing 2023!
Sincerely, *Sally*

Nolt Farm Project Photos



Subsurface drainage and footer pipes daylighting into the grassed waterway



Grass growing up through the straw netting on a grassed waterway



The start of gully erosion in a pasture that was fixed by shaping a parabolic waterway

State Programs

Dirt & Gravel, Low Volume Road Program

The Perry County Conservation District partners with the State Conservation Commission (SCC) and the Penn State Center for Dirt and Gravel Road Studies to improve roads to reduce pollution that directly impacts Perry County's streams. Since 1997, Perry County has spent \$1,857,984.34 on Dirt and Gravel Road (DGR) projects and \$734,763.19 on Low Volume Road (LVR) projects. Funding is provided through yearly allocations by the SCC and distributed to each qualified County based on potential workload. The District then distributes the funds to eligible municipalities. Eligibility depends on meeting project criteria and the program requirement that each municipality have a current employee(s) working directly on the project that has attended the two-day Center for Dirt and Gravel Roads Environmentally Sensitive Maintenance Workshop.

During 2022, three Dirt and Gravel Low Volume Road projects were completed. Green Valley Road in Tyrone Township implemented a stream crossing replacement project, having installed a 19'4" x 4'3" structural plate culvert with a bottom. Homestead Road in Juniata Township also completed a stream crossing replacement project where a 6' x 2'9" aluminum plate arch culvert was installed. Moose Road in Jackson Township placed 1,827 tons of driving surface aggregate to the road, applied 730 tons of road fill to establish a proper crown, installed a French Mattress to manage natural spring seeps, and installed a head-wall and an end-wall for all of the existing drain pipes. All three projects reduced the sediment and dust entering Perry County's streams while leaving each road more drivable and easier to maintain. The new stream crossing policy was discussed at the Quality Assurance Board meeting and it was decided that due to limited staff and liability concerns, stream crossing projects will be put on hold and re-evaluated in 2 years (December 2024).



*Green Valley Road,
Tyrone Township*



*Homestead Road,
Juniata Township*



*Moose Road,
Jackson Township*

Erosion & Sedimentation Control Program

Pa. Code Title 25 Chapter 102 was created to require persons proposing or conducting earth disturbance activities to develop, implement and maintain BMPs to minimize the potential for accelerated erosion and sedimentation during construction and plan for post construction stormwater management. Through a delegation agreement with the Department of Environmental Protection, the Perry County Conservation District reviews Erosion and Sediment Control Plans (E&S Plans). Each E&S plan is reviewed for technical adequacy under Chapter 102 requirements. A Federal regulation that works in conjunction with the State E&S program is the National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Program. This regulation requires earth-moving activities disturbing one acre or more to obtain an NPDES permit which is reviewed by the District.

In 2022, 24 Erosion and Sediment Control Plans were reviewed and approved. On an average year, Perry County typically processes 10-15 NPDES Permits. In 2022, 13 NPDES Permits were processed. 52 construction site inspections were conducted with a total of 138 technical assistance contacts, and 17 complaints were investigated.

Nutrient Management Program

The Nutrient Management Act (Act 38) has been in effect since October of 2006. The State Conservation Commission (SCC) has oversight of the State-wide Nutrient Management Program and Conservation Districts are delegated to administer it at the County level. Act 38 requires concentrated animal operations (CAOs) to develop and maintain a site specific Nutrient Management Plan (NMP). A CAO is defined as an agricultural operation with 8 animal equivalent units or more where animal density of all livestock on the farm exceeds 2 animal equivalent units per acre suitable for manure application on an annualized basis. The goal of the program is to protect and maintain soil and water quality through the development and implementation of NMPs and agricultural Best Management Practices (BMPs) on livestock operations that: possess livestock, generate, store, and/or spread manure. Examples of BMPs may include: a certified concrete manure storage tank, or HDPE lined lagoon, a roofed solid manure stacking area, a composting facility, reinforced animal stream crossings, concrete barnyard areas, a vegetated or riparian buffer between the barnyard and a well or stream, rain gutters to divert clean water around barn yard areas, fence to improve pasture management and/or prevent animals from accessing streams to protect stream banks from erosion, but there are so many more! The District is delegated to administer the Pennsylvania Nutrient Management Program in Perry County. Currently, there are 16 Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs), 13 Concentrated Animal Operations (CAOs), and 2 Volunteer Animal Operations (VAOs) in Perry County. The District is responsible for reviewing and approving NMP amendments, reviewing updates, conducting status reviews, investigating complaints, having technicians maintain their certification, and providing education and outreach within the community.

In 2022, the District received 16 NMPs for triennial review and approval: 8 CAFOs and 8 CAOs. Status reviews were conducted during the plan review visits for these operations. The Perry County Conservation District also conducted 4 separate annual status reviews on 3 CAFO and 2 CAO operations that were not due for renewal at the end of crop year 2022.

Technical Assistance Efforts

The Pennsylvania Resource Enhancement and Protection Program (PA REAP) is a State Tax Credit program administered by the Pennsylvania State Conservation Commission (SCC). The District offers fee based assistance to farmers seeking help with completing an application and determining BMP and plan eligibility. The District charges a fee of \$50 to verify three or less REAP BMPs, and \$100 for four or more REAP BMPs per application and/or required plan, as well as a \$150 fee per plan reviewed for completeness. In 2022, the District verified plan completeness for 2 operations as well as meeting with 7 farmers to discuss what plans they need to have in order to be eligible for REAP.



A curious dairy cow on green pasture



*A happy little Stonefly Nymph
in Shermans Creek*

Chesapeake Bay Program

The Chesapeake Bay Program was created by the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to promote and facilitate the installation of conservation best management practices (BMPs) in the Bay watershed to support the Pennsylvania Watershed Implementation Plan efforts. Through this delegation agreement, the District provides technical assistance on an as needed basis, assists with REAP applications and associated BMP verifications, conducts 50 farm inspections to check that required agricultural plans are in place, receives and processes complaints, and offers educational outreach and workshops. Conservation Plans



Well fed pigs lined up for dinner time

are also written for farms that are going through the preservation process or are already preserved but need an updated plan. During 2022, 8 plans were written covering 968 acres of farmland. In the spring of 2022, the District completed 5 initial inspections for the Chesapeake Bay Program's fiscal year of 2021-2022. During the second half of 2022, 39 initial inspections were completed, 2 of which were able to produce the plans needed for their operation. The inspection list is created by randomly pulling 2 farm operations from each township. These operations are sent a letter after July 1, informing them that they have been selected for an initial inspection. That letter asks the operator to call and schedule an appointment for the District to come out and complete the inspection. During the inspection, the plans are reviewed or a determination is made on what plans are needed. If the reviewed plans are up-to-date and administratively complete at the time of the inspection, the inspection is closed and marked complete. If plans cannot be produced or plans are not administratively complete, the operation is given 90 days to write the plans themselves or hire someone to write the necessary plans. In addition to the inspections, the District also offered educational events that included an evening pasture walk and a cover crop demo. Both events are described within this document. The District provides free technical assistance to farmers who request help. Issues can range from soil erosion, compaction, poor pastures, to animal heavy use area concerns. Assistance typically starts with a farm visit and proceeds with either practice recommendations being made or connecting the farmer to the person with the expertise level needed. We received 9 technical assistance requests as well as multiple calls where aid was provided over the phone.

Agricultural Conservation Assistance Program—ACAP

In 2022, Pennsylvania created the Agricultural Conservation Assistance Program (ACAP) through the Clean Streams Fund legislation. This State program is administered through the State Conservation Commission (SCC) via delegations to the County Conservation Districts. During February of 2022, contacts started being made to farmers interested in implementing BMPs on their farms. Through the spring and summer, engineers were brought out to get basic Inventories and Evaluations (I&Es) completed and planning remained ongoing. The District has 4 potential operations in the works to be ready for the 2023 construction season. These projects were initially being prepared for County-wide Action Plan grant funding, but in December of 2022 the Board of Directors voted to accept the delegation which gives the District until 2025 to allocate and spend \$3,046,968.14 on implementing farm best management practices (BMPs).

County Assistance

Farmland Preservation

In 2022, the Perry County Ag Land Preservation Board celebrated the achievement of reaching a significant milestone of 10,000 acres preserved within Perry County with the preservation of the 146.22 acre Clarence and Lois Martin Farm in Spring Twp, on May 5, 2022. An additional 75.88 acres were preserved with the Brian and Dennis Cauffman Farm in Jackson Township, which occurred in November. The 10,000 acre milestone was highlighted with the District's Perry County Fair display in August and at the Annual Banquet held in December. All past and present preserved farm owners were invited, and a power point that included stats on all of Perry County's 71 preserved farms was shown. The purpose of the Perry County Farmland Preservation Program is to protect prime agricultural lands through agricultural conservation easements, which prevent the development of the land for any other purpose other than ag production. Perry County leads the State in the amount of donated easements, coming in at 2,991.92 acres. In total as of December 2022, there are 71 farmland easements with 10,076.35 acres preserved. Of those, there are 2,991.92 acres in donation, 3,950.02 acres in State purchased, and 3,134.41 acres in Federal purchased. There are 44 operation types represented on these preserved farms which are 8 crop, 16 dairy, 8 poultry, 10 beef, 1 sheep, and 1 swine. The Farmland Preservation Program accepts applications year-round with ranking usually taking place each fall. The combined efforts of all of the landowners who have committed their farms to the program have made this endeavor highly successful since its establishment in March of 1990.



The banquet crowd of 114 attendees celebrates 10,000 Acres of Farmland Preservation at the Perry Mennonite Reception Center on the evening of December 12



The Martin family Farmland Preservation sign

County-wide Action Plan—CAP

In 2022, the following goals were accomplished with funding received from the County-wide Action Plan grant allocation: Three agricultural projects 1) the construction of a grassed waterway, 2) the development of the District's Cover Crop Incentive Program (CCIP), 3) the purchase of an Esch no-till drill, and two watershed projects 1) a workshop for the Baken Creek Alternative Restoration Plan and 2) the verification of buffers and BMPs completed by the District's summer intern Gabe Guthrie. The grassed waterway was installed on Steve Nolt's dairy farm in Elliottsburg. The waterway runs from where a culvert pipe outlets water from the road down about 900 feet through a pasture to the edge of the property. Steven was very excited to take care of the erosion and water problems in the pasture and mentioned that he was already seeing the benefits in the fall, only a month after the final grading. The District reimbursed 90% of the project cost at \$5,389.54. The CCIP, worth \$131,380.00, was designed to be as farmer friendly as possible. The program consists of Tier 1: a 5 species mix that has to be planted between Aug 1 and Sept 15, paying \$70 per acre, Tier 2: a 3 species mix that has to be planted between Sept 15 and Oct 31, paying \$50 per acre, and Tier 3: a single species that can be planted any time after Aug 1, paying \$30 per acre. The District had 23 operators enroll in the program; within Tier 1 having 661 acres, Tier 2 having 420 acres, and Tier 3 having 2,137 acres making the total acreage of 3,218 acres! Field verification will occur in late March of 2023 by Capital Area RC&D. The Esch no-till drill was purchased for \$44,275.00 and placed right into action. As time progresses, the goal is to reach 1,400 of planted acres with this machine as part of the District's No-till drill rental program. The District has continued to work with HRG on regularly scheduled meetings and planning strategies. The other projects mentioned above are detailed under the Our Summer Intern and Watershed Initiatives headings within this report.

Recycling & Municipal Solid Waste

The District serves as the Recycling Coordinator for the County. Grants are processed to obtain State support for educational outreach and program assistance. The Pa Department of Environmental Protection is the cooperating agency. The local municipalities that have maintained a regular recycling service for their residents are Marysville Borough, Duncannon Borough, Wheatfield Township, Rye Township, and the DCNR Bureau of Forestry Office located in Toboyne Township. Our Keep Perry County Beautiful affiliate also organizes special collections each year.

In the first half of 2022, the closing of the Cocolamus Creek Disposal recycling center was a major setback after providing a buy-a-bag service since for many years. Technical assistance efforts in the form of public press releases and outreach were conducted to residents and municipalities. Sylvester's began working with several municipalities to fill the gap and replace the buy-a-bag deposit service.

In 2021, a total of 746.04 tons of materials (glass, plastic, paper, cardboard, aluminum, mixed metals, electronics, organics, and leaf/yard waste) from both residential and commercial operations were collected and reported within the County. The District provides Solid Waste Planning and oversight for the County as we promote the implementation of the 2015 Solid Waste Plan. Administrative support is offered on an as needed basis to municipalities who create and implement their own ordinances. In 2022, the DCNR Bureau of Forestry discussed the possibility of establishing a key card system at their location as it is already a 24/7 drop-off program and surveillance is already on site, this will continue into 2023. Obtaining a glass crusher for County use was also discussed but decided against due to logistical issues. The Perry County municipal waste tonnage collected in 2022 was reported as 14,488.4 tons.

District Programs

No-till Drill Program

The District has four No-till Drills that are available to be rented out to residents in Perry County. We have two John Deere 10 foot drills, a 2017 JD 1590 and a 2022 JD 1590 Pro Series, and a 12 foot 2022 Esch 5612 no-till drill. Both drill types are primarily used for reseeding large crop fields either to be harvested for grain, silage, or to serve as cover crops destined to be used as a green manure. Large pastures may also be planted with these drills so long as the gates are wide enough for the drills to fit through. The fourth no-till drill is a smaller Land Pride LP 606 with a 6ft wide grain bin that is convenient for reseeding pastures, small crop fields, and small hayfields. While this drill can plant the same grain or cover crop seeds as the larger John Deere and Esch no-till drills, it has an additional seed bin for planting a wide variety of light and fluffy native grasses such as Brome or Kentucky Blue Grass. The practice of No-till helps to keep the soil intact, improve water infiltration and water retention, retain nutrients for the next crop to be planted, keeps the soil biology active between primary crop harvests, and reduces the presence of weeds. In 2022, the No-till Drill Rental Program planted a total of 1,570.65 acres in no-till throughout the County. 606.1 of those acres were in cover crops.



The new Esch No-Till Drill, purchased with funding from the County-wide Action Plan Grant allocation in the spring of 2022

NRCS Partnership

During fiscal year 2022 (October 1 through September 31), the USDA - Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) staff in Perry County was comprised of two full time staff members, 2 part-time employees, and a volunteer. We are pleased to present our newest certified conservation planner in the County, Samantha DiLorenzo. Sam has gained confidence in planning and designing projects on her own. Our most satisfying project completion would be the Growing Greener streambank stabilization and vegetative buffer project done at Blain View Farm LLC with the multi-agency partnership from the Perry County Conservation District, NRCS, and DCNR. Conservation planning highlights this year included writing 36 conservation plans for over 2,200 acres and documenting conservation practices applied for on over 58 plans for a total of 3,500 acres.

Installation highlights consisted of the following cropland practices and enhancements; 6 acres of grassed waterways and diversions were installed to prevent gully erosion, 3,500 acres of conservation crop rotation/ no-till farming/ cover cropping, and over 150 acres of nutrient management. On farmsteads and livestock operations the following conservation practices were completed; 4 waste storage facilities, multiple waste systems, over 7,500 square feet of heavy use area protection, and several hundred feet of underground outlet. On pastures and hay land the following grazing practices were completed; installation of 6,500 feet of fence to improve grazing operations. On forest land multiple contracts were completed with nearly 250 acres treated. We wrote out 17 contracts (CSP & EQIP) this year that will provide Perry County producers with over \$800,000 to treat resource concerns and improve water quality in Perry County. We are expecting another banner year in contracting with over 25 applications that have been accepted and a busy construction season with all these new contracts.

The work done by NRCS in conjunction with the Perry County Conservation District, and other partners, has provided a variety of benefits to the environment, the private landowners, and the public right here in Perry County. -Submitted by Kevin Morgan, NRCS District Conservationist.



Kristie Smith of PCCD with Samantha DiLorenzo and Kevin Morgan of NRCS set up the Soil Health Tunnel at the Earth Day Celebration held at the Clarks Ferry Tavern in Duncannon on April 23, 2022



Kevin Morgan and Samantha DiLorenzo of NRCS oversee the Soils & Land Use station at the Perry County Envirothon held at Hall's Dairy in Millerstown this year



Kevin Morgan and Don Graybill of the NRCS Perry County Field Office instruct at the demo pit during Land Judging held at the Byers Farm in Liverpool

Our Summer Intern—Gabe Guthrie

“This summer I worked as the Conservation Intern for the District. Being raised in Elliottsburg and having worked on several farms, I was excited to be able to learn more about how conservation works in the County. It has been a great opportunity to see the effort that so many producers and residents put into being good stewards of the land and water that they rely on. I was able to participate in many projects that ranged from installing and monitoring spotted lanternfly traps and planting trees for a streambank restoration project, to helping deliver the no-till drill program and soil health bucket to County producers.

These projects and many other site visits showed me the variety of services the District offers, and the complexity behind the planning, design, and implementation of those projects and services. Being a current student at Shippensburg University, earning a Bachelor’s Degree in biology and certificate in Geographic Information Systems (GIS), I was able to utilize my training to help the District as well. I digitally mapped and then verified in-person over 1,000 acres of streambank buffers in three of the County’s sub-watersheds. I was also able to use my GIS training to make maps for the District to use as quick reference guides in the office as well as display materials to the public. These maps showed overviews of the acres applied for in the Cover Crop Incentive Program and the special protection watersheds and streams within the County. I also made 250 verification entries into DEP’s online software PracticeKeeper to record BMP’s that have been implemented in our area so that the County receives credit for all the hard work that has been done by producers and landowners. I appreciate the opportunity to work with the District and I hope in the future to be able to use this experience to continue to help the community meet its conservation goals.” - Gabe



Gabe Guthrie in action planting shrubs at the Growing Greener Project site.

Annual Tree Seedling Sale

In preparation for spring, the District promotes and publicizes our Annual Tree Sale through the use of brochures sent out to a lengthy list of previous customers and a paid advertisement featured in the local newspapers the first week of March in hopes of attracting new buyers. The seedlings that are selected each year are native species that have been known to grow well in the average backyard habitat, as well as the wildflower seed mixes that are offered. These are all intended to benefit our local birds and wildlife. Proceeds from the sale are used towards environmental education programs sponsored by the District, such as the Envirothon & Land Judging events.

On average, over 3,000 trees are sold each spring. We graciously thank the community for their continued support of this program and we look forward to organizing it every year!

In 2022, we offered four types of conifers: Eastern White Pine, Colorado Blue Spruce, Norway Spruce, and Concolor Fir. The deciduous varieties that we offered were Eastern Redbud, Sawtooth Oak, Sugar Maple, Sycamore, and Tulip Poplar. We also sold Elderberry shrubs and Highbush Blueberry Plants. Under the umbrella of ‘Habitat Enhancers’ we offered a Northeast Perennial and Annual Wildflower seed mix, a Butterfly and Hummingbird seed mix, and an Oat seed variety for cover cropping in gardens and small plots. A customer favorite are the wooden Bluebird Nesting Boxes hand-crafted by the local West Perry FFA Chapter.



The yard is full of orders!



Hand-crafted Bluebird Boxes

District Highlights - Outreach & Education

New District Website In Development

Changing times call for changing digital platforms. The District's website was in need of an overhaul and with assistance from the County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania (CCAP), we were able to copy over, build upon, and improve our District website www.perrycd.org through a system called Kentico, where their website designers on staff worked with us to make this a successful endeavor. The new version of the website is due to go live in January of 2023!

Presentations & Displays

We strive to reach more students and members of the public with our programs by participating in community events, providing in-classroom demonstrations, submitting press releases to the local newspapers, conducting presentations as requested, posting to social media, and uploading videos to our YouTube Channel. During 2022, we were able to provide 31 trainings with a total of 1,672 participants and conducted 37 mass outreach activities with the potential of reaching over 94,258 individuals. This year, we achieved a special milestone, as our Farmland Preservation acres reached an impressive 10,000 acres. In celebration, we dedicated our 2022 Perry County Fair display in honor of those farms.



2022 District display "Celebrating 10,000 Acres of Farmland Preservation" at the Perry County Fair

Spotted Lanternfly Outreach

The District was a recipient of a Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture grant in the fall of 2021 to monitor the population of Spotted Lanternfly (SLF) in the eastern part of the County and provide outreach to residents which continued through 2022. 18 additional circle traps were purchased with left-over grant funding from last year. These and the on-going supply of sticky trap accessories and educational signage were distributed throughout the County to residents and businesses on an as needed basis upon their request. Higher populations of SLF were observed in the circle traps and sticky traps throughout the Marysville, Duncannon, and Newport areas. In correspondence with the Pennsylvania Dept of Agriculture, it is estimated that the SLF populations in our area will peak within the next two years. After that time, we will hopefully begin to see a steady drop in their numbers as they move west. Information on how to 'help stop the spread' was also sent out within our 2022 District Summer Newsletter and was posted several times to our District Facebook page. The District also worked with our local Penn State Extension office and Master Gardeners to distribute SLF Management Manuals, ID cards, and fact sheets on how to check vehicles before the transfer of this invasive species occurs.



A spotted lanternfly under the field scope

No-till Group Meeting

The District held their no-till group meeting on April 8. This was a morning meeting hosted by Jay and Kenneth Hoover of Hickory Lane Farms in Blain. The Hoovers had planted 5 cover crop plots in addition to their regular cover crop mix. The plots included Triticale, Cargo mix, Timothy/Vetch mix, Dart 815 mix, and the Soil Builder Plus mix. Each plot was planted at the recommended forage rate and the cover crop rate. NRCS soil scientist, Charles Hanner, dug a soil pit in the cover crop plots to show root depth and how the roots of the planted cover crops make a significant difference compared to crop residue. He also dug a pit in a permanent pasture, where we were able to talk about the differences between permanent vegetation and annual crop ground. We also had the special opportunity to have 2 local school groups come to take a look at the soil pits. This was the first time seeing a soil pit for many of these students. In addition, each student got their hands dirty and learned how to texture the soil. There were 25 adults in attendance and 33 students.



Charlie Hanner of NRCS shows the different layers of the soil pit



Charlie shows how to identify compaction



The local Clarks Run Mennonite School joined in to do some learning in the field at the Hoover Farm

Grazing Group Pasture Walk

The District held their second pasture walk with the recently formed grazing group on August 4. This was an evening meeting hosted by Dane and Holly Rumberger in Millerstown. We started the evening with a light supper that the Rumbergers graciously provided. After eating, we walked to the top of the access road where we could look over most of the paddocks. Dane was able to talk us through their farming journey into rotational grazing. He described how he ran additional water lines to be able to break up the original paddocks into smaller paddocks. He explained how by keeping and reviewing good grazing records, he was able to see how much less hay he was feeding and how that translated to how much money they were saving. We ended the evening by heading into a paddock that the Rumbergers were controlling pig weed in to look at the impacts of how weed control affects grass availability. There were 20 people in attendance.



Members of the Perry County Grazing Group gather at the Rumberger Farm in Millerstown on August 4



Dane Rumberger and his border collie



Dane explains his grazing rotation

Envirothon

The District sponsors the Perry County Envirothon competition each spring, which is open to all students in grades 9 through 12. The winning County team also gets sponsored to travel and compete at the State Envirothon. “The mission of the PA Envirothon is to provide students with the knowledge and tools necessary to address the natural resource challenges of today’s world.”

In 2022, the traditional activities within the Envirothon program were back in full swing. Our County competition was graciously hosted by the Hall’s Dairy family on their property in Millerstown on May 5. As always, the tests were standardized from the PA State Envirothon Board and Agency staff from the PA Game Commission, PA Fish & Boat Commission, DCNR, and NRCS were able to join us at each of the stations. We had incredibly nice weather, which aided in the overall success of the event. It was great to see a crowd of 165 participants back in action!

Greenwood High School had 11 teams, Newport had 2 teams, West Perry had 7 teams, and Susquenita had 6 teams. When the results were in, the West Perry Eastern Hemlocks Team were the overall County winner with members Tristan Baker, Brenden Lightner, Marissa Hare, Gavin Neff, and Abbie Barrick. Curtis Sharp was also chosen as the winner of the T-shirt design contest and received a \$25 prize and a framed copy of his wearable artwork.

Team Perry went on to compete in the virtual State Envirothon Oral Component on May 19 and traveled to compete at Camp Mt. Luther on May 25 against 62 other counties. They placed 35th in Aquatics, 50th in Current Issue, 28th in Forestry, 37th in Wildlife, and an impressive 14th in Soils!



2022 Perry County Envirothon Winning Team: The West Perry Eastern Hemlocks, members Tristan Baker, Brenden Lightner, Marissa Hare, Gavin Neff, and Abbie Barrick. Pictured with Rep. Perry Stambaugh, Commissioner Gary Eby, Peggy & Matt Hall of Hall’s Dairy, and Envirothon Coordinator Kristie Smith



2022 Envirothon T-shirt Design Winner: Curtis Sharp of Susquenita High School



Team Perry at the State Envirothon Soils & Land Use Station, where they took 14th Place!



Land Judging

The District serves as the coordinator and sponsor of the county-wide Land Judging competition for students in grades 9 through 12 each fall. Land Judging sites are chosen on a rotating basis with local farmers. This event is designed to provide a hands-on learning experience for students so they can effectively evaluate the composition of soil and determine the 'best use' for the land and select the appropriate best management practices.

In 2022, the event was held at the Byers Farm near Liverpool on November 9, which turned out to be a beautiful sunny day. In total, we had 55 students compete from West Perry, Greenwood, Susquenita, and Newport High Schools. There were five stations: The Demo Pit was presented by Kevin Morgan and Don Graybill of the NRCS Perry County Field Office, the Alternate Station was presented by Land Protection Specialist Cameron Weiser of the Central Pennsylvania Conservancy. Test Pit #1 was run by District Board Treasurer and volunteer Larry Gilder, Test Pit #2 was run by our District Ag Resource Specialist Lauren Leinbach, and the Farm Talk and No-till Drill demo was presented by farm owner Lloyd Byers and District Ag Resource Specialist Ben Smith. Reese Fedder of West Perry took first place and was the recipient of the Steel Trowel Trophy. Skylynn Daughenbaugh of Greenwood took second place and Jonathan Bradshaw of Greenwood took third place. Congratulations to these young people! We want to thank Lloyd Byers, who is one of our District Associate Board Members, and his wife Sue and family for graciously hosting this event on their beautiful farm. An excellent lunch was also prepared by Sue and her fellow Perry Valley Grange members.



2022 Land Judging winners (front L to R) Reese Fedder of West Perry, Skylynn Daughenbaugh of Greenwood, and Jonathan Bradshaw of Greenwood are pictured with District Board Treasurer Larry Gildner, farm owners Lloyd and Sue Byers, Rep. Perry Stambaugh, Commissioner Brenda Watson, and District Board Chairman Mike Clark.



Lloyd Byers demos the no-till drill



A beautiful day for a big group photo!

Erosion & Sedimentation, Dirt and Gravel & Low Volume Road Program Outreach

Perry County routinely performs technical assistance throughout the year. In 2022, 138 technical assistance contacts were made by either phone conversation, email, or meetings held in-office or on-site. The District continues to assist residents of Perry County for compliance with Chapter 102 regulations. In 2022, a detailed D&G,LVR Newsletter was sent out to all 30 Perry County municipalities explaining the program, grant eligibility, ESM training dates, the benefits of the program, the Perry County Cost Share Policy, a 'French Mattress' Best Management Practice Showcase, and how to submit an application.

District Newsletters

We use the Winter and Summer Newsletters to promote our events and programs and also provide information on current issues and topics where multiple inquiries have been received by the District and NRCS. In 2022, our summer and winter newsletters include updates and offerings associated with the following:

Our Winter 2022 Newsletter provided the no-till drill updates to the program as the fees were changed leading into 2022. There were three articles featuring compliance related issues which were food residuals and setbacks, Act 38 thresholds and Nutrient Management Plan writing, and a friendly reminder about winter spreading. There were two invitations for upcoming events, one featured the overview on what to see at our Cover Crop Demo Day and the other was how to participate in our Annual Tree Sale fundraiser for District Environmental Education programs. An update from NRCS was provided, along with a District update on the County-wide Action Planning process. An article titled 'You have a say in this. It's your land. Your legacy.' was also featured. In conclusion, the District gave a tribute to Oscar Campbell, a long standing Chairman of the District Board, who passed away in December. Oscar will be remembered fondly and missed greatly.

Our Summer 2022 Newsletter focused on agriculture practices that featured topics such as how to avoid leaching with Mortality Composting, effective measures of Biosecurity, how to participate in the District's new Cover Crop Incentive Program, and celebrating a 10,000 acre milestone of Farmland Preservation within Perry County. District program updates included planning for the fall no-till drill rental program, block grant funding that was allocated within our County-wide Action Plan, the current state of spotted lanternfly populations within the County, and introducing our summer intern Gabe Guthrie. There was also an announcement and date for the North American Manure Expo to be held in Chambersburg on July 13 and 14.

District YouTube Channel

In recognition of National Pollinator Week (June 19—26), the Perry County Conservation District partnered with the Perry County Penn State Master Gardeners to bring our digital audience two videos featuring Amy Weibley (*pictured top right*) and Joe Swager (*pictured bottom right*) as they spoke about the organization's Demo Gardens found in New Bloomfield Borough behind the Penn State Extension Office, a colorful pollinator garden, and at the Neighbor Helping Neighbor Food Bank next to the Perry County Prison, a production vegetable garden. These are practices that you can do to help pollinators and how to have your home garden certified as pollinator friendly.



Watershed Initiatives

Keep Perry County Beautiful

The District serves as the coordinator for the local Keep Perry County Beautiful (KPCB) affiliate of Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful. Programs such as the Great American Clean-up, Pick Up Pennsylvania, the International Coastal Clean-up, and America Recycles Day are shared events by all of the local affiliates throughout the State. In 2022, we were able to continue our regional involvement with Vintage Tech for electronics recycling through Dauphin County's Recycling Center and it has remained a free resource opportunity for Perry County residents.

New this year, we were able to host an Earth Day Celebration on the grounds of the historical Clark's Ferry Tavern in Duncannon Borough on April 23. 100 members from the public attended the event. Mini-grant funding was awarded to our affiliate to organize the event and feed our volunteers. 16 local partnering organizations also joined in the fun: Smokey Bear and DCNR Bureau of Forestry, hands-on nature with DCNR Little Buffalo State Park, a giant soil tunnel with NRCS, tree and shrub seedling giveaway compliments of the K10 Partnership, "Say Trees" photo booth and Anti-Litter Quiz, a youth poster contest, spotted lanternfly awareness with Perry County Master Gardeners, reduce your carbon footprint with the Newport Environmental Club, Pick Up PA Litter Clean up in the Borough by the 4H Duncannon Cloverleaves, the Duncannon Appalachian Trail Club, the Duncannon Sportsmen's Association, the Perry County Historical Society, New Blooms Greenhouse, Artisan Pizza, and Hall's Dairy.

We were able to get a waterway clean-up done on Shermans Creek from Lupfer's Grove Campground to the Shell Gas Station bridge in Shermans Dale on September 1. A group of 10 dedicated Keep Perry County Beautiful volunteers and Perry County Conservation District staff came armed with kayaks and canoes for the day working in pairs removed approximately 850 pounds of junk and trash from the creek. Items consisted of a ceramic toilet and half of a bath tub, a clock, all kinds of scrap metal, a pair of reclining chairs, random clothing, bags of garbage, several lengths of garden hose, several tarps, and 8 tires. The County of Perry Maintenance Department supported the project by providing free dumpster space for the proper disposal of these items. The photo album was shared on the District's Facebook page and received many positive comments.

Our annual Tire War was held at the Oliver Township building on September 17 with help from 10 volunteers and Oliver Township officials. Perry County residents brought in 430 tires to be properly recycled within our 4 hour timeframe. The breakdown was 419 car tires, 2 truck tires, and 9 tractor tires from 22 households. Huntingdon came in first with 1,197 tires, Perry in second, and Mifflin in third with 377. Juniata County did not participate in the event this year.



Earth Day festivities hosted at the historical Clark's Ferry Tavern in Duncannon on April 23



Scenes from the Shermans Creek Clean-up and our awesome volunteers all together on September 1



Tire War volunteers at the Oliver Township building in Newport on September 17

Keystone 10 Million Tree Partnership

'Clean Water Grows on Trees' is the Chesapeake Bay Foundation's slogan for this state-wide initiative that is designed to assist partners in producing more local community tree plantings that result in meeting the challenges of reducing pollution, which supplies cleaner water for Pennsylvania. In 2022, we hosted two landowner distribution tree seedling giveaways. The first one was the Earth Day Giveaway that took place on April 23 at the historical Clark's Ferry Tavern in Duncannon and the other was hosted in the yard behind the USDA Service Center/Perry County Conservation District building in New Bloomfield. Each giveaway resulted in 425 seedlings (850 seedlings total) finding a new home within the County and many new landowners were added to our contact list.



Loading up the District Explorer with 425 seedlings at the CBF 'Tree House' with Dan Welliver and Eric Livelsburger

DEP Growing Greener Grant Funding

Streambank Stabilization & Vegetated Buffer Project on Blain View Farm, LLC—in Blain, PA

Blain View Farm is home to the Rice family. Their legacy of stewardship is evident across many spectrums, from cover cropping to many acres in farmland preservation. This project took nearly three years to complete, but the results were impressive. Partnering agencies were the NRCS Perry County Field Office and the DCNR Bureau of Forestry Office in Blain. J.P.H Enterprises of Mifflintown, PA was the selected contractor and the field work took place during the first week of August with their excellent team.

Project Accomplishments: GP-3 Permit approval, total project area of 0.77 acres, 383 linear feet of streambank stabilized, 55 tons R6 Riprap installed, 700 sq yards of brush matting, 22 lbs of pollinator seed mix, 150 native shrubs planted (grown at Aqua-niche in Marysville), 350 feet of new pasture fence, and a Celebrating Stewardship sign installation set for 2023.

BEFORE



AFTER



Total Value of the Project: \$24,362.53
Pollution Load Reduction: 44.55 Tons Per Year

Baken Creek Alternative Restoration Plan Outreach

Through the District's County-wide Action Plan grant allocation, we were able to make progress on the Baken Creek ARP by hosting a Watershed Meet & Greet on the evening of October 25, hosted at the Spring Twp building. 33 residents participated in the workshop. The District was joined by Josh Yetter Clark of HRG and Andy Yencha of Penn State Ext.



Andy Yencha, Water Resource Specialist with Penn State Extension, explains the importance of riparian buffers

Awards & Recognition

Years of Service - District Board Members

Lawrence “Larry” Gildner (*pictured right*) was recognized at the Annual District Banquet held on December 12 for his 5 years of dedicated service to the District Board of Directors. In his most recent term, Larry serves as the Board Treasurer and one of the Public Directors. Before being elected, Larry served many hours of volunteer time with several of the District’s programs such as the Envirothon and the SCOPE Project, in addition to volunteering with NRCS as an Earth Team member where he compiled data and created maps.



Chairman Mike Clark honors Mel Weaver for his 35 years of service to the Board of Directors. Mel has served as Vice Chairman for many years and counting!



Melvin “Mel” Weaver (*pictured left*) was recognized at the Annual District Banquet for his 35 years of dedicated service to the District Board of Directors. Mel has served as Vice Chairman since his appointment to that position in 1993, having been a Farmer Director since 1988. He is the longest standing member of the District Board and doesn’t plan on stepping away anytime soon! His contributions to the agricultural community in Perry County are beyond measure and we are incredibly grateful for his involvement.



Chairman Mike Clark honors Larry Gilder for his 5 years of service to the Board of Directors. Larry began as a dedicated volunteer for the District and now serves as the Board Treasurer.

Keep Perry County Beautiful Volunteer of the Year

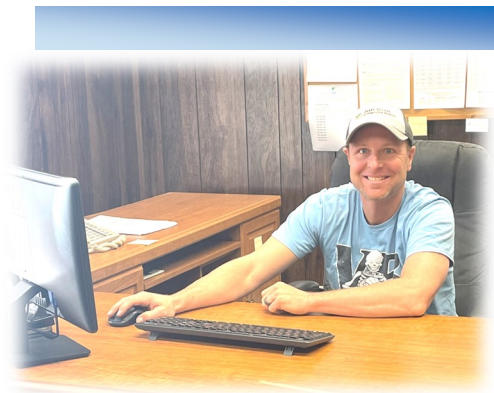
Fred Wertz is a local resident of Newport, PA. He is a very active member within our community at large and he started volunteering with Keep Perry County Beautiful before 2016, joining in during our annual Juniata River Clean-up. Since then, Fred has assisted with every waterway clean up we’ve hosted and helped to make the first official Earth Day Celebration in Perry County a success. He has also recruited some friends to be part of our affiliate activities. In addition to volunteering with us, Fred also sits on the Friends of Little Buffalo State Park Board as the Secretary and Treasurer. He is always busy fixing the playground equipment, fundraising and volunteering for special events there such as Apple Fest and the annual Christmas Walk. Fred is also the Vice Chairman of the Newport Revitalization and Preservation Society (NRPS) where he keeps an eye on the Borough’s playground equipment, helps out with the general maintenance of the town’s public nature area, and volunteers for Canal Days. He might be in his seventies, but that doesn’t keep him from getting in his kayak and making a difference. Fred is one of the nicest people you will ever meet and his commitment and passion to help the environment and our community is incredible. It is both an honor and a lot of fun to work beside Fred. We all agree that there needs to be more people like him!



2022 Volunteer of the Year Fred Wertz and KPCB Coordinator Kristie Smith

Employee Updates

Neil Imes, our trusted Resource Specialist for 15 and a half years took a position with the Bureau of Farmland Preservation in November. Neil was responsible for the oversight and delivery of three of our core programs; the Erosion and Sediment Control Program (Chapter 102), the Dirt Gravel Low Volume Road Program and the Farmland Preservation Program. He was here through major changes in the Chapter 102 program and maintained a consistent approach with a clear message. He voluntarily served as a Chapter 102 mentor for other Districts as well. He enjoyed partnering with the township supervisors and the staff at the PSU Center for Dirt and Gravel Roads to get many quality Dirt Gravel Low Volume Road Program projects on the ground. Neil took on the Farmland Preservation program in 2015 and was able to re-energize it and take us straight up to 10,000 acres! We are sorry to see Neil leave, but wish him the best at the Bureau of Farmland Preservation where we know he will continue to do great work!



Commissioner Gary Eby was the representative to our District Board during his term with the County. In that time, he met the fellow Board members with strong advocacy and left no stone unturned when it came to important matters and questions. He also supported our staff, took an interest in our work, and participated in many of our events. We wish him all the best with his retirement!



Digging Into The District Archives

“We would like to give credit to Bill Briggs, Jim Bistline, and Tom Balthaser for their photography work when they were District partners. Without their fingers on the shutter button, all of these pictures would not exist. We hope you enjoy this little trip down memory lane!”



Soil scientists demonstrate a soil probe and display soil profiles for members of the public.



Tom Balthaser is being interviewed by the local tv news crew during the 'Last Acre Ceremony', with an interested audience, that took place at St. Matthews Luthern Church in Perry Valley in recognition of completing the official Perry County Soil Survey in 1979.



Building from this knowledge and technology, the soil names and descriptions were approved in 1980 and the Perry / Cumberland County Survey results and contents were issued for professional use in April of 1986. This survey was made cooperatively by the United States Department of Agriculture Soil Conservation Service, Penn State University College of Agriculture, the Department of Environmental Resources, and the State Conservation Commission.

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