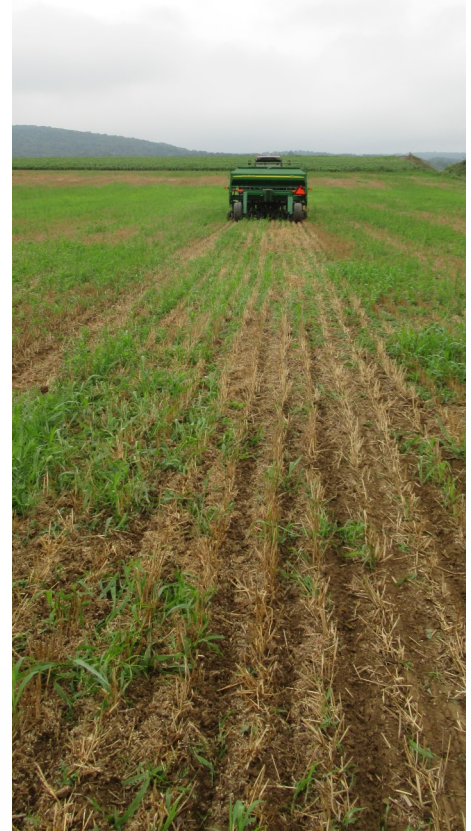




2020 Annual Report

2020 Board of Directors

Chair, Farmer Director—Oscar Campbell, 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
 Public Director—Mike Clark, Newport PA
 Public Director—Dave McLaughlin, Elliottsburg PA
 Associate Director—Lloyd Byers, Liverpool PA
 Associate Director—William Shilling, Liverpool PA
 Associate Director—Shawna Weller, Loysville PA
 Associate Director—Grant Finkenbinder, Duncannon PA
 Associate Director—Scott Flanders, Liverpool PA
 Associate Director—Marsha Snyder, Blain PA



2020 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, NRCS Contribution Partnership,
 Nutrient Management Program
 Ben Smith—Ag Resource Specialist
 Nutrient Management Program,
 No-till Drill Rental Program Coordinator
2020 NRCS Staff
 Kevin Morgan—District Conservationist
 Samantha DiLorenzo— Soil Conservationist
 Don Graybill— Engineering Technician

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2020 District Board Members

District Board Highlights

“This has been a year of challenges and innovations. It was a year when our staff had to come up with new ways to execute our programs and activities. They had to completely restructure the way our activities were presented, doing most of it virtually. In a way, this was a blessing in disguise, as more new people had a chance to see what the District is all about. As we proceed into 2021, I’m sure there will be many more challenges but we remain committed to keep Perry County environmentally safe and protect our natural resources.”
 -Oscar Campbell,
 Board Chairman



*Oscar Campbell,
Chairman, Farmer Director*



*Mel Weaver,
Vice Chairman, Farmer Director*



*Larry Gildner,
Treasurer, Public Director*



*Michael Clark,
Public Director*



*Ken Martz,
Farmer Director*



*Dave McLauhlin,
Public Director*



*Commissioner Director
Gary Eby*

2020 Associate Board Members

(From left to right)
 Lloyd Byers,
 Grant Finkenbinder,
 Scott Flanders,
 William Shilling,
 Shawna Weller, and
 Marsha Snyder.



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

Cooperating Agencies & Contacts

Perry County Ag-Land Preservation Board—Jonas Stoltzfus, Chairman

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

Penn State Cooperative Extension—Dr. Liz Bosak and Becky Kaucher

Farm Service Agency—Bobbie Jo Zimmerman, CED

PA Fish and Boat Commission—Richard Morder, Conservation Officer

PA Game Commission—WCO Kevin Anderson and WCO Steve Brussese

PA Dept. of Environmental Protection—Patrick McDonnell, 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



*Jonas Stoltzfus,
Chairman
Ag-Land Preservation
Board*



*Kevin Morgan, NRCS
District Conservationist*

2020 District Staff



*Sally Tengeres,
District Manager*



*April Skethway,
Administrative Assistant*



*Neil Imes,
Resource Specialist*



*Kristie Smith,
Watershed Specialist*



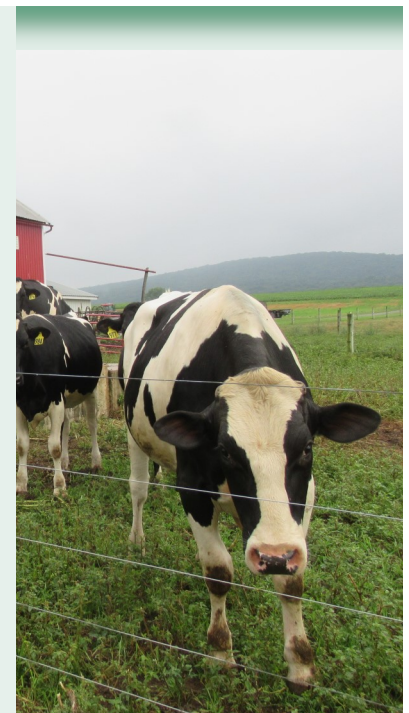
*Lauren Leinbach,
Ag Resource Specialist*



*Ben Smith,
Ag Resource Specialist*

Mission Statement

Conserving Natural Resources For Our Future



*A curious Holstein on the
Weller's Dairy Farm in Elliottsburg PA.*

A Message From The District Manager

What can I say about 2020? List the reasons why I am glad it is over, and why I hope we never have another year like it? Discuss how its events will impact how we do business and live our lives going forward? Describe how the District was able to stay focused on its mission and meet the challenges as they arose?

I believe I will let 2020 Covid 19 pandemic commentary to others and stick to District matters. Reading through our 2020 Annual Report, you will discover that the District was able to rise to the pandemic challenge and deliver the same great service that the residents of Perry County have come to expect.

2020 started like any other year, with a flurry of year-end paperwork and the excitement generated by planning and discussing potential events and projects for the upcoming year. By mid-March when it was becoming evident that business as usual was about to change dramatically, we were gearing up for the Tree Sale, Spotted Lanternfly outreach and education, the Envirothon, and our summer Field Day. By April, we were teleconferencing Board meetings and our educational activities had been cancelled or moved on-line. The rest of the year involved getting work done safely while deciphering and meeting various levels of Covid-19 guidelines and procedures.

District staff persevered and delivered District programs successfully by navigating all the barriers that the pandemic provided. We managed to have our first drive through Tree Sale, Tire War AND ChemSweep Collection. We were able to create environmental education videos and post them to our new YouTube Channel. Podcasts, which we had not considered before, were produced and made available. State program site visits and projects were briefly delayed but, after a reset, were completed safely. The Farmland Preservation Program closed on one state purchase and a donation, for a total of 293 acres preserved! The No-Till Drill program kept rolling without a pause. Our equipment demo in August at the Weller Farm provided a welcomed diversion for us, and I suspect the attending farmers as well. We were not able to offer lunch, but it was great seeing so many farmers out discussing and comparing soil disturbance levels between the different types of equipment being demonstrated.



Legislator Leadership Award

Rep. Mark Keller is recognized by the District and PACD for his dedication to conservation in the community.

On a different note, Mary Lou Moyer retired in May after serving as administrative assistant since 1999. Of course we had a surprise party to celebrate, and to show our gratitude for Mary Lou's 20 plus years of service. We wish her the best in this next phase of her life. April Skethway started at the District on May 19th after being interviewed via Zoom. Definitely a year of firsts! Welcome aboard April!

Looking back, it is clear that our Board and staff were able to navigate pandemic restrictions and find a safe way forward to complete "business as usual." Kudos to our dedicated Board of Directors, Associate Directors, and our determined energetic staff for making this a very productive year!

Thank you for your interest in District activities and I do hope that you enjoy reading our 2020 Annual Report.

Sincerely,
Sally

Our 2020 Scrapbook...



January -Perry County Corn & Crops Day
PCCD Staff with Ms. United States Agriculture
Chelsea Fultz of Mifflin County.



Early-March—Perry County is added to
the Spotted Lanternfly Quarantine Area.



Mid-March—Corona Virus Strikes
The world quarantines at home.



April/May—District Launches YouTube Channel
Environmental education goes from stream-side to
virtual with the use of a few clever tools...



May—Mary Lou Moyer's Retirement Party
20 years of service as the District's Administrative
Assistant, best wishes to you Mary Lou!



Late May—Welcome April
April Skethway joins the District team
as the new Administrative Assistant.



July—Bye Bye Blazer!



September— District Launches Podcast
FYI, the basement is the quietest part of the office...



October—American Farmland Trust Interviews



December—ChemSweep
Collection
The District joins forces
with the PA Dept of Ag,
MXI, and Tyrone Township
successfully disposing of
1,500 pounds of pesticides
and herbicides properly.

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 \$1,526,213.38 on Dirt and Gravel Road (DGR) projects and \$593,781.89 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. In 2020, the District completed one LVR project on Meadow Grove Road in Buffalo Township to replace a failing road shoulder and streambank undercutting. The road shoulder and streambank were strengthened with tiered concrete block retaining walls. This was Buffalo Township's first project in the DGLVR Program.

During 2020, four dirt and gravel road projects were completed. Mt. Pleasant Road in Jackson Township implemented practices to improve road surface runoff, subsurface runoff, road ditch stabilization, and added approximately 600 tons of driving surface aggregate (DSA). Greenwood Township's project on Reward Road Phase 2 consisted of adding approximately 900 tons of DSA. Juniata Township's project on Gabel Road consisted of installation of cross pipes, 4" underdrain, and approximately 1500 tons of DSA. Kline Hollow Phase 2 in Liverpool Township consisted of installation of cross pipes, road fill, and approximately 2500 tons of DSA. All five projects reduced the sediment and dust entering Perry County's streams while leaving each road more drivable and easier to maintain.



Meadow Grove Road
Buffalo Township
LVR Project



Newly placed DSA on
Reward Road
Greenwood Township



New DSA and culvert
installed on Mt. Pleasant 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 earthmoving activities disturbing one acre or more to obtain an NPDES permit which is reviewed by the District. In 2020, thirty three (33) Erosion and Sediment Control Plans were reviewed and approved and eight (8) NPDES Permits were authorized. Forty one (41) construction site inspections were conducted with a total of 139 technical assistance contacts. DEP is proposing a rollout of E-Permitting in early 2021. As a result, the District was tasked with internal and external user data entry training on the new system, and providing feedback on the process.



A newly installed rock lined channel on the PPL Rebuild Project in Carroll Township.

Nutrient Management Program

The Nutrient Management Act (Act 38) has been in effect since October of 2006. The State Conservation Commission 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 include but certainly are not limited to: 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 barnyard areas, fence to improve pasture management and/or prevent animals from accessing streams to protect streambanks from erosion. Currently, there are 15 Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs), 14 Concentrated Animal Operations (CAOs), and 5 Volunteer Animal Operations (VAOs) in Perry County. The District is responsible for reviewing and approving NMP amendments, reviewing updates, conducting status reviews, investigating complaints, maintaining technician certification, and providing education and outreach within the community. In 2020, the District's Ag Resource Specialist Ben Smith, successfully obtained his Nutrient Management Specialist Public Review Certification by completing the last step in the process which was developing a NMP under the direction of the SCC. In 2020, the District received 10 NMPs for triennial review and approval: 4 CAFOs, 4 CAOs, and 2 VAOs. The District conducted 18 annual status reviews on 8 CAFOs, 9 CAOs, and 1 VAO.



Poultry mortality compost storage.

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.

In the spring of 2020, the District completed 18 initial inspections for the Chesapeake Bay Program's fiscal year of 2019-2020. During the second half of 2020, 55 initial inspections were completed, 8 of which were able to produce the plans needed for their operation. During the late spring, the inspection list is created by randomly pulling 2 farm operations from each township. These operations are sent a letter, after July 1st, 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 can not 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 needed plans. In addition to the inspections, the District also offered educational events that included a backyard animal manure management workshop to assist landowners with creating a manure management plan for their farm. In addition, PACD mini-grant funding was applied for and received to coordinate an equipment demonstration. Both events are described within this document. We had the opportunity to attend Bonsall's spray credit meeting to introduce ourselves and programs offered to a new group of farmers. We received an on-farm technical assistance request as a result. The District provides free technical assistance to farmers when they are facing an issue that they are not sure how to fix and are seeking assistance. These issues can range from soil erosion, compaction, poor pastures, to animal heavy use areas. Assistance starts with a farm visit and proceeds with either practice recommendations being made or making the connection for the farmer to the person with the expertise level needed. In 2020, the District's Ag Resource Specialist Lauren Leinbach, successfully became a certified Conservation Planner.

Technical Assistance Efforts

The District coordinates agricultural plan development workshops each year to assist landowners and operators in achieving agricultural compliance under state regulations. Participants learn about manure management and

agricultural erosion and sedimentation planning, best management practices, and potential funding opportunities.

The District held a Backyard Animal Manure Management Plan Writing Workshop on July 14 at the Penn State Extension building. There were 9 participants representing mainly horse operations, but participants also raised goats and chickens. One operation had 3 beef finishers.

The Pennsylvania Resource Enhancement and Protection Program (PA REAP) is a State Tax Credit program administered by the Pennsylvania State Conservation Commission. 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,



The Slakes Test in action, exemplifying soil stability.



Manure Management workshop held on July 14.

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 2020, the District verified plan completeness for 9 operations as well as meeting with 2 farmers to discuss what plans they need to have in order to be eligible for REAP.

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. Three of which are 10ft wide John Deere 1590 no-till grain drills, which are primarily used for re-seeding large crop fields either to be harvested for grain, silage, or to serve as cover crops destined to be used as a green manure. This helps to keep the soil intact, improve soil water retention/infiltration, retain nutrients for the next crop to be planted, and keeps the soil biology active between primary crop harvests. The fourth no-till drill is a smaller Land Pride LP 606 with a 6ft wide grain bin that is convenient for re-seeding pastures, small crop fields, and small hayfields. While this drill can plant the same grain or cover crop seeds as the larger John Deere drills, it has an additional seed bin for planting a wide variety of light and fluffy native grasses such as Brome or Kentucky Bluegrass. In 2020, the No-till Drill Rental Program planted a total of 2,160.3 acres in no-till throughout Perry County! 812.4 of those acres were in cover crops. Towards the end of 2020, the District formed a drill committee to: review the sustainability of the drill rental program, determine annual rental rates, and establish program guidance through the creation of a Drill Program General Policy. Changes by the drill committee to the District's drill rental program include: a flat rental fee of \$10 /acre for any seed type planted, a service fee of \$30 for seed rate calibrations, and a drop fee of \$25 for renters that plant 5 acres or less with any of the District no-till drills.



Ag Resource Specialist Ben Smith hooking up one of the John Deere No-till Drills.

NRCS Partnership

During fiscal year 2020 (October 1st through September 31st), the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) staff in Perry County was comprised of two full time staff members, 2 part time employees, a partner, and a volunteer. The biggest change this year was our new Soil Conservationist, Samantha DiLorenzo, who began in April. Sam has been a huge help this year and has taken to the job well. Conservation planning highlights included writing 32 conservation plans on over 2,100 acres and documenting conservation practices applied on over 80 plans for a total of over 4,000 acres. Installation highlights consisted of the following cropland practices and enhancements; 4 acres of grassed waterways and diversions were installed to prevent gully erosion (6), 3,500 acres of conservation crop rotation/ no-till farming/ cover cropping, over 300 acres of nutrient management, 425 acres of drift-reducing nozzle use, and 175 acres of precision application technology to apply nutrients. On farmsteads and livestock operations the following conservation practices were completed; 3 waste storage facilities, multiple waste systems, over 12,000 square feet of heavy use area protection (3), and several hundred feet of underground outlet. On pastures and hay land the following grazing practices were completed; installation of 2,500 feet of fence to improve grazing operations and 15 acres of prescribed grazing. On forest land multiple contracts were completed with nearly 300 acres treated. We wrote out 16 contracts (CSP & EQIP) this year that will provide Perry County producers with over \$450,000 to treat resource concerns and improve water quality in Perry County. We are expecting another banner year in contracting with over 20 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.

District Highlights

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 recognized 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 year. We graciously thank the community for their continued support of this program (especially during a pandemic)!

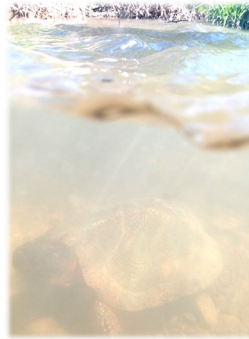
In 2020, we offered four types of conifers: Norway Spruce, Concolor Fir, Colorado Blue Spruce, and Eastern White Pine. The deciduous varieties that we offered were American Sweetgum, Red Buckeye, Sycamore, American Persimmon, Shadblow Serviceberry, and Grey Dogwood. Under the umbrella of 'Habitat Enhancers', we offered a Northeast Perennial and Annual Wildflower seed mix, a Butterfly and Hummingbird seed mix, and Purple Coneflower (Echinacea) seeds. A fan favorite, though, were the wooden Bluebird Nesting Boxes and Pollinator Hotels hand-crafted by the local West Perry FFA Chapter.

New YouTube Channel

In the spring of 2020, we literally 'dove' into our local streams to create unique virtual environmental education videos to celebrate Stewardship Week and Conservation District week here in our own backyard of Perry County. We took our SCOPE program to a whole new level in an

effort to reach our broader digital audiences. This project took us to Baken Creek during a rain storm, to a buffer planting along Montour Creek, finding macroinvertebrates while conducting a water quality analysis on

Shermans Creek, talking with our farmer friend Bill Lyons along Cisna Run, and witnessing a nesting pair of Bald Eagles on Big Buffalo Creek on the Fleisher Farm. In June, we started to branch out. We went 'out-standing in the field' and talked about cover cropping and performed soil health demonstrations on camera. These videos were also linked to our District Facebook page, having been viewed hundreds of times to date. Making these connections with nature and technology was a very productive endeavor, one we will continue to develop well into the future. Interested viewers can type Perry County Conservation District PA into their YouTube search bar.



Tree Sale Photos



A Happy Customer!

Stream-side Snapshots



Conservation District Equipment Demo Day

The District held an Equipment Demo on August 7th, 2020. Graciously hosted by Dennis Weller and family of Weller's Dairy located just outside of New Bloomfield. During this morning meeting, 3 different types of equipment were demonstrated including no-till, vertical till and sub-soiler. The no-till drills demonstrated were a Great Plains 1510HD, a Krause 5213, and a John Deere 1590. The vertical till machines demonstrated included a Case IH 330 Turbo and a Great Plains TurboMax. Each piece of equipment was run side by side in a field that recently had a small grain crop harvested. The field has been in no-till for multiple years and is an Elliber soil which is one of the deeper soils found in the county. Discussions ranged from coultter placement, to the ability to get seeds in the ground after manure application, to the potentially high disturbance levels of vertical tillage. We then took soil samples from the freshly drilled/vertical tilled areas to demonstrate how each practice impacts the soil using a table top rainfall simulator model. With just one pass of the equipment, the difference between the amount of run off and the amount of soil suspended in the run off, was obvious. The vertically tilled soil sample turned the runoff cloudy and brown, while the no-till soil sample infiltrated more rain water resulting in less runoff, and the collected runoff was significantly clearer than the tilled sample's collected runoff. Thirty nine participants were in attendance.



The Rainfall Simulator.



New Podcast

To reach a new listening audience, 'Carefully Cultivated' is the District's new podcast featuring environmental stories from local Perry County farmers and residents. During Carefully Cultivated's short lifespan in 2020, District employees discussed their specific programs, NRCS employees discussed their programs and how engineering practices interact with management practices, and Dave McLaughlin volunteered to be our first farmer interview in sharing his story of how he became a soil health advocate. Listeners can tune in to hear how county agriculture has changed over the years and to find out what was the lightbulb moment for farmers to understand the role soil health has on their farms. Also enjoy other environmental stories from local residents who live and work in our county.



2020 Capital RC&D Fall Cover Crop Survey

In November of 2020, three members of the ACES NRCS staff conducted the Capital RC&D Fall Cover Crop Survey within Perry County. Their team observed 538 crop fields total, documenting that 295 of those fields were planted in cover crops. The rate of fall cover cropping within the county was reported as 54.8%.

In the past few years, Perry's percentage rates reflect how soil moisture and weather patterns impacted the planting window for cover crops. In 2016, survey results showed a rate of 52.8% (a relatively normal year). In 2018, the amount of rainfall was significant resulting in a delayed soybean and corn grain harvest, which impacted the cover crop planting rates. Perry County's survey result was 18.9% that year.



A nice cover crop growing in sunny November conditions.

County-wide Action Planning

An integral part of Pennsylvania's Phase 3 Chesapeake Bay Watershed Implementation Plan is the development of individual County Action Plans (CAPs). The Tri County Regional Planning Commission is working with a consultant to develop both Dauphin and Perry County Action Plans. The Conservation District is supporting this effort as our CAP is developed throughout 2021, as the preliminary process began in October of 2020. We will be in need of volunteers willing to review elements of the CAP and provide feedback. The announcement requesting volunteers (representing all that Perry County has to offer) are invited to review the plan was sent out in our 2021 District Winter Newsletter. Reviewers may include, but are not limited to, those within our county who are involved with agriculture, business, construction, landowners, municipalities, and education. The planning process will assess the scope of water quality issues in Perry County, consider current initiatives and practices, and develop a plan to meet the pollution reduction goals for Perry County set by the Department of Environmental Protection. We are looking forward to continuing this effort to reduce water pollution in Perry County!

District Outreach & Education

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, posting to social media, and conducting presentations as requested. With the use of our new Youtube Channel, Podcast, and virtual presence online we were able to conduct 59 mass outreach activities with the potential of reaching over 116,750 individuals in 2020.

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

Perry County routinely performs technical assistance throughout the year. In 2020, 139 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 2020, DGLVR Newsletters were sent out in both spring and fall reminding municipalities of upcoming ESM Trainings and to generate interest in submitting potential project applications. The District continues to encourage all municipalities to meet on-site to fully assess potential project sites.

Newsletters

The District's winter newsletter included a promotional ad for the annual District Tree Sale, a friendly reminder about winter manure spreading, an article on the future of farmland preservation in Perry County, a short outline on the nutrient management requirements for organic poultry on pasture, and how to navigate through odor management plans in Pennsylvania. Also included were announcements for the District's new soil health bucket, how to join the Perry County Grazing Group, how to schedule a visit with the Farm Service Agency (FSA) at the District office, and our calendar of upcoming events and workshops. The Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) also submitted their announcements for accepting EQIP applications and a funding opportunity for small grazing operations.

The District's summer newsletter included how the District will continue to operate under COVID-19 guidelines, Perry County was added to the spotted lanternfly quarantine area and an outline list on how to stop the spread of this pest, the announcement of Mary Lou Moyer's retirement and the hiring of April Skethway to serve as the new administrative assistant, updates to the no-till drill rental program, a short article on how to control herbaceous weeds in your neck of the woods, an article titled applause for pollinators, an informational graphic explaining streambank protection and rehab on a budget, an announcement for the District's equipment demo day, and the conservation learning circle for women. Also included was an update from NRCS on their new hire Samantha DiLorenzo, Soil Conservationist.

The SCOPE Project

We got our feet wet with Susquehanna University this summer where we set out to document and monitor eastern hellbender activity within Shermans Creek. We must have turned over hundreds of rocks all the way from Toboyne Township to South-west Madison Township without any luck. We did, however, find giant hellgrammites, water snakes, wood turtles, small catfish, and witnessed birds of prey swooping down into the water attempting to catch a fishy meal. Although we were 'skunked' by this giant salamander, we had a blast getting to know the creatures that live and thrive here.



Hellbender Defenders—Scope volunteers and Susquehanna University students join forces to track down Pennsylvania's State Amphibian in Shermans Creek.

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 2020, the traditional activities within the Envirothon program both at the county and state levels came to a screeching halt and re-evaluation had to take place in a relatively fast manner. Envirothon training sessions are usually held during the month of March and our competition is usually held the first week of May, which was right in the heat of the lockdown with schools, Districts, and Agency staff having to work from home. It is a sincere understatement that all of this felt very strange, but with the assistance from the PA State Envirothon Board, virtual station questions were created and students could login and test their knowledge individually from their home computers for fun and try to win some really neat prizes. Everyone involved with the program agreed that it was better to have the virtual stations than doing nothing at all in an effort to keep the spirit of the Envirothon alive while we all needed to stay separated.

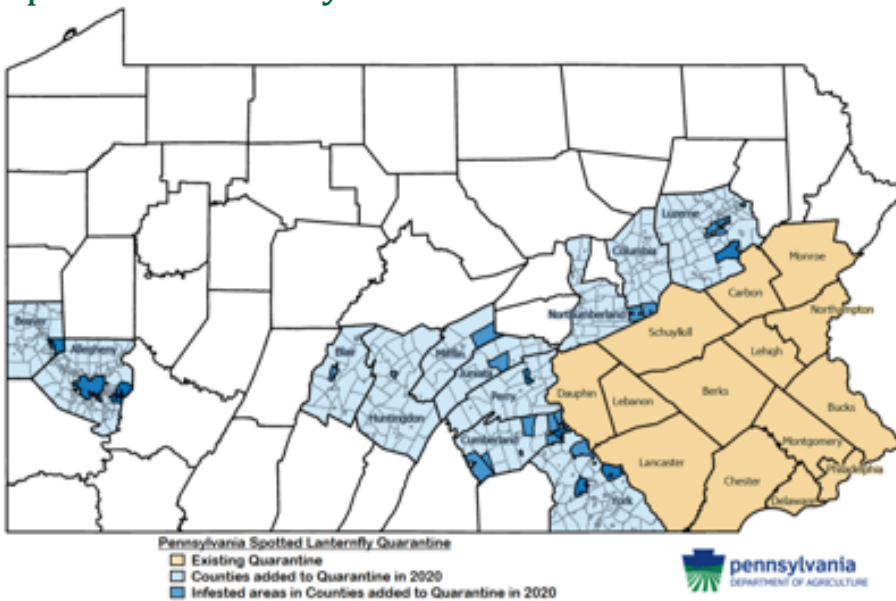
Land Judging

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 appropriate best management practices. In 2020, the District did not host the competition. In an effort to digitize District resources and cater to the school districts' virtual classroom experience, we decided to create a Soil Demo Pit video with our local friends at NRCS and incorporated it into our new YouTube Channel. In this video, Kevin Morgan-NRCS and Kristie Smith-District Watershed Specialist go through the procedures, demonstrations, and hands-on skills that directly relate to evaluating soil and the land capability classes during the annual Perry County Land Judging Competition. The step-by-step techniques are shown to provide guidance to students so they may familiarize themselves with the terminology and different components to consider when evaluating land and soil. Seen in this video is Martz Farm located in Duncannon, PA. We want to thank Ken Martz, who is one of our District Board Members, and his family for graciously hosting this video project. Our camera operator was Lauren Leinbach, District Ag Resource Specialist.



Kevin Morgan, NRCS and Kristie Smith, PCCD conduct a virtual Soil Demo Pit lesson on Martz Farm in Duncannon.

Spotted Lanternfly Outreach



Bad Bug—The Spotted Lanternfly made its appearance in Oliver Township, Duncannon Borough, and Marysville Borough this year.

In March of 2020, Perry was one of the many counties that were added to the extended spotted lanternfly quarantine zone now covering almost half of Pennsylvania. Here at the District, we utilized our large office window that overlooks Main Street of New Bloomfield to display the 'Stop the Spread' information consisting of 1) Check: Do a sight inspection of all vehicles and outdoor equipment before and after travel or transport. 2) Squash: Know the life stages. Scrape egg masses off of trees and structures, squash immature and adult insects immediately. 3) Report: Call the hotline Mon-Fri between the hours of 8am and 5pm (1-888-422-3359). This information was also sent out within the 2020 District Summer Newsletter and posted to our District Facebook page.

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. We experienced many changes this year, one of them being how we served residents in the county with their electronics recycling needs. In January of 2020, it was arranged that Perry residents could take their items to Dauphin County's Recycling facility as we were now incorporated into a regional recycling program with Vintage Tech. This was, and still is, a great resource opportunity. The next big change was how we accomplished a local waterway clean-up. In previous years, we always hosted our efforts on the Juniata River but it just wasn't an option in 2020 due to the lack of grant funding and limiting of group activities. However, we saw the need for Shermans Creek to



November—Pick Up PA

A local yoga group spent a day cleaning up the truck pull-off along rt.322 in Newport. We commend them for their efforts!

get some necessary attention and with all of the outdoor recreation taking place it was a perfect opportunity to create some awareness. A press release was published in the local newspaper asking all kayakers, canoers, and fishing enthusiasts to lend a helping hand and clean up Shermans Creek one piece of trash at a time on an individual basis.

Photos started coming in from all

over the county and we documented 500+ pounds of 'junk' was properly disposed of! We wanted to highlight this great accomplishment, so we created an album on our District Facebook page and featured all of the photos that were sent in. It was a wonderful thing to see!

A few KPCB volunteers also got involved with a riparian buffer planting that took place at the Hidden Valley Boy Scout Camp just outside of Loysville in late July. If you want good work done quickly, summon our KPCB volunteers! The details of this project are referred to on the next page.

As for our annual Tire War, it seemed like the odds were against us, but we pushed through. It turned out that Mifflin and Perry Counties were the only affiliates hosting events, due to obvious circumstances, but the volunteers were willing and the residents who brought in tires were extremely grateful.

We express our gratitude to everyone who shared their time with and participated in our events this year. Great things will always happen when a community comes together.



Summer—Shermans Creek Clean Up Challenge

Volunteer Fred Neely and his grand-daughters enjoying kayaking and stream cleaning!



September—Tire War

'Loads' of appreciation go out to Oliver Township and our strong Keep Perry County Beautiful volunteers for making this event a success despite all the challenges... we collected 366 tires!



December—ChemSweep Collection

The District joins forces with the PA Dept of Ag, MXI, and Tyrone Township successfully disposing of 1,500 pounds of pesticides and herbicides properly.

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.

Things got pretty crazy in 2020 and babysitting 180 seedlings on your back porch for 3 months is no easy task! Kristie worked with the K10 distribution team and Octoraro Nursery in order to secure trees, shrubs, and shelters for a planned buffer planting at the Hidden Valley Boy Scout Reserve along Shermans Creek. Boy scout Christian Snouffer and his family helped to organize these efforts with the District and our KPCB volunteers in the pursuit of his William T. Hornaday Conservation Project Award. There were several community partners that got involved, including Tuscarora Hardwoods that donated a load of mulch!



Shoveling Our Way to Success— 4 hours and 180 plants later, a buffer is born!

PP&L Community Roots Program

Since 2017, the District has arranged for 'promotional tree giveaways' to our friends and neighbors through this awesome program sponsored by PP&L. This is always a great opportunity to help our county landowners get their own stream-side buffers started in manageable quantities on a seasonal basis.

We use the Lynn Sheaffer Dum Memorial Park in Elliottsburg as our site for the distribution, as this serves dual purposes. It creates awareness for the park while we work to reforest the property and volunteers can show up on their own schedule to help with the planting process. We are always looking for volunteers!



The Dream Team—Ben Smith, Jane & Larry Shull, Kristie Smith, and Lauren Leinbach at the Lynn Sheaffer Dum Memorial Park (in Elliottsburg) where they just planted 165 trees and shrubs along the park's swale connecting it to the established buffer.

County Assistance

Farmland Preservation

In 2020, Perry County obtained two Agricultural Conservation Easements which added 293 acres to the Perry County Farmland Preservation Program. The Doug & Piper Sarver Farm is a crop and livestock operation located within the Ag Security Area of Greenwood Township. This farm contains 93.78 acres selected for easement purchase and was ranked first out of 26 applications in 2019. This cattle and crop operation is located in Perry Valley, a strong agricultural community with many other previously preserved farms nearby. Mr. and Mrs. Sarver accepted a joint purchase between State and County Program funds and the farm was preserved on July 13th, 2020. The Carol Stahl Farm is a 200 acre crop operation nestled within Shermans Valley with close proximity of many other previously preserved farms in both NE Madison and SW Madison Townships. The Deed of Easement was fully executed on August 20th, 2020. Mrs. Stahl was personally recognized for her generous donation at the October 2020 State Farmland Preservation Board meeting. Since the start of the program, Perry County has reached a total of 9,854 acres of farmland permanently preserved for agricultural production.



Preserved— Doug & Piper Sarver with Perry County Farmland Preservation Board Chairman, Jonas Stoltzfus.



A Birdseye View— The Carol Stahl Farmstead.

Recycling

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 county recycling options rely heavily on the township sites and their supporting groups. The municipalities, dedicated volunteers, the County of Perry, KPCB, and local businesses all work together to provide convenient recycling opportunities to our residents. In 2019, a total of 1,501.10 tons of materials (glass, plastic, paper, cardboard, aluminum, mixed metals, electronics, and leaf/yard waste) from both residential and commercial operations were collected and reported within the county.

Municipal Solid Waste

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 2020, outreach was conducted by phone and email to rebuild the list of members who are interested in serving on the Solid Waste Advisory Committee (SWAC) for the upcoming 2025 Solid Waste Plan revision. The reported Perry County municipal waste tonnage collected was 13,302.8 tons.

Awards & Recognition

Years of Service

Each year, the District Board recognizes members who have provided outstanding leadership and dedication. This year, Dave McLaughlin was recognized for his five years of service on the Board. Dave is a valuable resource for all things no-till, soil health and District finance related. We frequently seek his advice, opinion, and guidance knowing we will get asked tough questions and in turn a well thought out response. Dave's ability to adapt to the conference call Board meetings is also to be commended as his tractor is often our Board meeting background 'music'. Thank you Dave for your willingness to share your time, farm, and talents. It is greatly appreciated!



Dave McLaughlin, District Board member, at the District's Equipment Demo Day.

Volunteer of the Year

Charles Dean Hench is a local resident of Loysville where he is an active beekeeper. He began volunteering with our affiliate in 2017, where he joined our Juniata River Clean-up crew. Since then, Charles has logged 21 hours with Keep Perry County Beautiful and he keeps coming back for more! In addition to participating in the river clean-ups, Charles is also a landowner hosting a 'Conservation of Little Brown Bats in Perry County' Project, agreeing to mount a large bat house on one of his outbuildings. This project effort was led by a local boy scout, Christian Snouffer, in the fall of this year. Charles also lent a helping hand by volunteering at our most recent ChemSweep collection that took place in early December at the Tyrone Township building in Loysville. Charles is a very nice man, always has an interesting story to tell, and is very knowledgeable about the environment and wildlife. He is a blast to work with and very deserving of this award! He says "I enjoy the fellowship with other volunteers having a similar goal to improve our environment." 2020 brought with it a wide-variety of challenges that affected our community, but I can honestly say that working side-by-side with our dedicated group of volunteers made our continued efforts to improve our corner of the world that much easier.



Charles 'Dean' Hench receiving his award from KPCB Coordinator Kristie Smith.

Digging Into The District Archives

When you can't do anything new, it's a great opportunity to look back and reflect to see how far you've come, figuratively and literally! In 2020, we had the time to organize, label, and sort hundreds of old photographs, slides, and files that had been boxed up and neglected for the last 20 years since things went digital. Seeing the finished collection, in chronological order from 1951 through 1999, really painted a picture of how the District has transitioned throughout the decades, but the core mission and unique programs have remained the same. We would like to give credit to Bill Briggs, Jim Bistline, and Tom Balthaser for their photography work when they were associated with the District. Without their fingers on the shutter button, all of these pictures would not exist.

To give our readers a little bit of history, Perry County became the 27th Soil Conservation District in PA on January 8, 1951. It was the first District to be set up in the Juniata Valley. It all started on April 3, 1950 with a public meeting in the New Bloomfield courthouse when Miles Horst, Pennsylvania's Secretary of Agriculture at that time, spoke to a room of 240 farmers. Now here we are, 70 years later, still conserving Perry County's natural resources and helping our community navigate through the conservation challenges we are faced with today.

As 2020 was also Perry County's Bicentennial year, having been separated and claimed independent from Cumberland County in 1820, we thought it would be fitting to highlight and celebrate this milestone with a showcase of historical photos here in our Annual Report that exemplify our programs that are still going strong and that have withstood the test of time.

Looking forward, we here at the District have our eyes on the future and are waiting patiently for the opportunity to get back out there and engage with our community safely. In the meantime, we hope you enjoy this little trip down memory lane!



1962 Land Judging—Vo-Ag teacher Garry Olier (right) congratulating Harold Miller of Susquenita High School for taking 1st place in the Cumberland Perry Land Judging Contest.



April 1, 1964 Tree Seedlings—Jacob Sitlinger of the PA Game Commission (left) is seen with Bill Briggs of the Soil Conservation Service inspecting tree seedlings made available to Districts to improve wildlife habitats and to distribute to cooperators with conservation farm plans.



1966 Conservation Award—The District Director John Johnson (right) presents farmers of Landisburg Elwood Comp and his son Oscar Comp with their Conservation Award sign.



1976 America's Bicentennial—The District float 'A Pioneer Farm Family' seen here in a parade through the town of Blain.

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