McKean County Conservation District

CONSERVATION TIMES

Spring/ Summer 2026

Bradford Bees Place 9th at PA Envirothon

Congratulations to the Bradford Bees on an outstanding achievement — finishing 9th at the Pennsylvania Envirothon! Your hard work, teamwork, and dedication truly paid off, and your community is proud of everything you accomplished.

A very special recognition goes to Jan Russell for her incredible leadership and commitment to student success. Since 2015, she has guided a "Bradford Bees" team to the local competition every single year and has helped lead the team to the state competition 10 out of 11 years. That level of consistency, passion, and mentorship is remarkable and has made a lasting impact on so many students.

Thank you, Bradford Bees and Jan, for representing your school and community with excellence. Your dedication to environmental education and teamwork continues to inspire others. Great job, Bees!

Inside This Issue:

Legislative Luncheon	2
"Wild" Envirothon	3
No-Till Drill Rental	4
Monarch Butterfly Adventure	5
HHW and Electronics Collection	6
BMP Spotlight: Compost Filter Socks	7
Need A Manure Management Plan	8

Annual Legislative Luncheon

On Friday May 1st, the district hosted its annual Legislative Luncheon, bringing together local, state, and federal representatives with conservation partners, agricultural leaders, and community stakeholders to discuss key natural resource priorities and initiatives.

The luncheon provided an opportunity for open dialogue on conservation efforts across McKean County, including soil and water conservation programs, watershed protection, agricultural best management practices, and environmental education initiatives. The event briefly highlighted previous accomplishes but mostly focused on 2026 goals and projects bringing to light the need for a funding increase districts across the Commonwealth.

District staff highlighted ongoing projects and shared updates on how conservation programs are supporting landowners, farmers, and municipalities throughout the county. Adam Causer, Watershed Specialist for the district discussed stream bank restoration projects, ACAP projects, and additional support for those programs is garnered through state grant money, such as PA DEPs Growing Greener Grant. Lindsay Trojanowski, Resource Conservationist, discussed the PA Dirt Gravel and Low Volume Road program. Lindsay explained the efficiency of the program and how it can not only improve our local roadways, reduce roadway hazards, and have major savings long-term. Katelynn Decker, Conservation Technician discussed the increase in permitting and large-scale projects within McKean County. Sandy Thompson, District Manager, broke down the district's funding and resources that help the District function at the capacity it does. She also discussed the district's extensive education program for the youth and adults of McKean County. Attendees engaged in discussions with District staff on current environmental challenges, including funding for conservation programs, infrastructure needs, and strategies to protect water quality and natural habitats for future generations.

After presentations from the district staff the event switched gears and moved into a Farmers Panel. Four local McKean County farmers made up the panel and discussed their operations, how funding through the district's ACAP program have helped implement practices for their operation, and how this has helped them not only become more efficient farmers, but more environmentally conscious farmers.

The event ended with District Board Member, Cliff Lane, highlighting Conservation Districts and the challenges they face at the National Level.

“Wild” Envirothon

Photo Left: Overall winners of the “Wild” Envirothon, The Bradford Bees. L-R, Jan Russell (Team Advisor), Cecily Bell (Team Captain), Emmy Kemick, Jake Whitlow, Joe Bukowski,

High school students from across McKean and Cameron County gathered on Thursday, April 30th to test their environmental knowledge and skills at the annual Envirothon, also known locally as the “Wild” Envirothon at the McKean County Fairgrounds in Smethport PA. Over 100 students participated in the event from both Cameron and McKean Counties. That group included students from Cameron County High School, Bradford Area High School, Kane Area High School, Otto-Eldred High School, Port Allegany High School, and Smethport Area High School.

The annual “Wild” Envirothon is an outdoor academic competition that challenges teams of five students to demonstrate their understanding of natural resource topics, including aquatics, forestry, soils and land use, wildlife, and a current environmental issue. The 2026 Pennsylvania Envirothon Current Issue is "Non-Point Source Pollution: It begins at home!". Participants rotate through a series of hands-on testing stations, where they apply classroom knowledge to real-world environmental scenarios.

Partners helping to make the day possible included DCNR Bureau of Forestry, PA Game Commission, USDA Natural Resources & Conservation Service, Penn State Extension, The McKean County Planning Commission, as well as staff and volunteers from the Cameron and McKean County Conservation Districts.

The event was sponsored by McKean and Cameron County Conservation Districts, McKean County Fairgrounds, American Refining Group, The International Group, Inc., Casella Waste Management, Upper Allegheny Watershed Association, Zook Motors, Lafayette Township, Dresser Utility Solutions, Kiwanis Club of Bradford, Kane Elks Lodge, Kane Save A Lot, Team Minard Screen Printing & Embroidery, McKean County E-Sales, Kessel Construction Company, Pine Valley Nurseries, Miller-Raffaele VFW Auxiliary Post 6221, North Point Contracting, Solveson Contracting, Cameron County Outdoor Youth Activities, May Hollow Sportsmen, Cameron County Vet’s club, Emporium Food Market, J. Ream Engineering, Sinnemahoning Sportsman Association, Emporium Hardwoods, and IUE-CWA Union Workers of G.E. Motor Coils of Emporium.

The overall Winning Team for McKean County was the Bradford Bees – Cecily Bell, Emmy Kemick, Autumn Neumann, Joe Bukowski, Jake Whitlow lead by their Advisor, Jan Russell. This year the Bradford Bees won four out of the five stations, Wildlife, Aquatics, Forestry, and Soils ,for an overall score of 439 points. Second place McKean County team was the Mighty Massasuga from Smethport Area High School with an overall score of 371 total points – Madelyn McKean, Hannah Taylor, Nick Learn, Fisher Szuba, Mara Ours lead by their Advisor Kelly Tarbox. The third place winners was the Tufted Titmouses also from Bradford Area High with a total score of 367 – Lillian South, Willow Vibbert, Sydney Saffran, Isaac Wallace, and Baylee Stark, led by Advisor Rich Bierbower.

A huge thank you to the McKean County Fairgrounds for hosting the Study Day and Envirothon, our station presenters, the teachers, and the students for making this a great day.

Need a No Till Drill?

$12.00 per acre or $24.00 per acre if used on conventional tilled ground

RENT ME

Free use of up to 30 acres if planting non-harvested cover crop

Landowners will pay a $25.00 delivery fee within McKean County

Spring is upon us, which means it is the perfect time to think of your no-till seeding needs! Our district has a Great Plains 10' No-Till Drill to rent by landowners in McKean County.

Why No-Till?

* Improve soil health
* Decrease equipment costs
* Less erosion

What can be Planted?

* Improve hay/pasture
* Establish cover crops

Please contact the District to schedule a rental date. Upon delivery, a lease/rental agreement will need to be signed by the landowner. The district can help with any setup of the equipment.

Contact the District's Watershed Specialist, Adam Causer, at (814) 887-4003 or at accauser@mckeancountypa.gov to schedule your use of the drill today!

Join Us on a Monarch Butterfly Adventure!

Last year, the McKean County Conservation District tried something new by raising monarch butterflies—and it was such a success that we're excited to share the experience with the entire community this summer!

Over the coming weeks, we'll be raising monarch butterflies from tiny eggs to caterpillars, chrysalises, and finally, beautiful butterflies ready to take flight. It's an amazing transformation, and we invite you to follow along every step of the way.

We'll be sharing photos, videos, fun facts, and behind-the-scenes updates on the District's Facebook page so you can experience the monarchs' incredible journey with us. Whether you're a longtime nature enthusiast or simply curious about these fascinating pollinators, there's something for everyone to enjoy.

Our butterfly project will also be part of the six-week Outdoor Science Adventure hosted by the Northwinds Leadership Club. During the program, the District will present a hands-on lesson about pollinators and monarch butterflies, followed by a special butterfly release. Participants will discover why pollinators are so important, learn how healthy habitats support wildlife, and explore the outdoors through fun, interactive activities. We hope this experience inspires the next generation of conservationists while giving children a chance to witness one of nature's greatest wonders firsthand.

As our monarchs grow, we'll keep you updated on their progress and announce the date of our community butterfly release. We hope you'll join us—online and in person—as we celebrate the remarkable life cycle of the monarch butterfly and the important role these pollinators play in our environment.

We can't wait to share this journey with you!!

McKean County
PENNSYLVANIA

DRIVE-THRU RECYCLING EVENT

Where & When

Saturday, July 25, 2026

8:00 am - 12:00 pm

212 Airport Road,
Lewis Run, PA 16738

REGISTRATION REQUIRED

Accepted Items & Rates

TVs & Monitors – $0.70/lb.
All Other E-Waste - $0.50lb.
(computers, laptops, printers, phones, tablets, gaming devices, microwaves, cords)
Paints and Stains – $0.85/lb.
All other Chemicals – $1.20/lb.
(automotive, workshop products, flammables, cleaning, lawn & pool products)
All types of Bulbs and Batteries – $0.95/lb.
Freon containing devices - $0.37/lb.
(window AC units, mini fridges, dehumidifiers)
All Sizes of Propane Tanks - $7.50/unit

BATTERIES & BULBS

ELECTRONICS

PAINTS & STAINS

AND MORE

412-567-6566 www.nobleenviro.com

NOBLE ENVIRONMENTAL SPECIALTY RECYCLING

BMP Spotlight: Compost Filter Socks—Nature's Solution to Cleaner Water

Have you ever noticed long, tube-shaped barriers filled with dark, compost-like material lining the edge of a construction site? Those are compost filter socks, and they're one of Pennsylvania's most effective erosion and sedimentation best management practices (BMPs).

A compost filter sock is a mesh tube filled with specially prepared compost that is placed along slopes, around disturbed areas, or near stormwater flow paths. As rainwater flows across a construction site, the filter sock slows the water down, allowing sediment to settle out while filtering pollutants before they can reach nearby streams, wetlands, or storm drains.

Unlike traditional silt fences, compost filter socks allow water to pass through while trapping sediment. The compost inside also helps filter nutrients, oils, and other contaminants, making them an environmentally friendly option for protecting water quality.

For compost filter socks to work effectively, they must be installed on the contour of the land, securely anchored, and routinely inspected. After heavy rain events, accumulated sediment should be removed when it reaches about one-half the height of the sock, and any damaged sections should be repaired or replaced.

Compost filter socks are just one example of how simple, practical solutions can make a big difference in protecting our natural resources. By reducing erosion and keeping sediment out of our waterways, they help preserve healthy streams, improve water quality, and support the fish and wildlife that call them home.

The next time you pass a construction project and see one of these long, compost-filled tubes, you'll know it's doing more than blending into the landscape—it's helping protect Pennsylvania's water, one storm at a time.

Want to learn more? If you're planning an earth disturbance project or would like more information about compost filter socks, Pennsylvania's Chapter 102 Erosion and Sediment Control regulations, or permitting requirements, the McKean County Conservation District is here to help.

Please contact the District at 814-887-4008 or kadecker@mckeancountypa.gov, or visit www.mckeanconservation.com for additional permitting information and resources. Our staff is happy to provide educational and technical assistance to help landowners, contractors, and developers comply with Pennsylvania's Clean Streams Law while protecting our local waterways.

Need a Manure Management Plan? We're Here to Help

Did you know that every agricultural operation that land-applies manure, generates manure, or keeps livestock in Pennsylvania are required to have a written Manure Management Plan—even if they don't need a permit?

The McKean County Conservation District is available to help farmers develop these plans at no cost. Our staff works one-on-one with landowners to create practical, easy-to-follow plans that meet Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) requirements while protecting our local streams, rivers, and groundwater.

A Manure Management Plan outlines how manure and agricultural runoff will be stored, handled, and applied to fields in a way that minimizes the risk of water pollution. Proper planning not only helps farms stay in compliance with state regulations, but also protects valuable nutrients, improves soil health, and supports the long-term sustainability of agricultural operations.

Whether you're raising livestock, keeping a few horses, or operating a larger farming operation, it's important to know if a Manure Management Plan is required for your property. Our staff can answer your questions, explain the requirements, and assist you through the entire planning process.

The Conservation District is committed to working with the agricultural community by providing technical assistance, education, and conservation solutions that benefit both farmers and our natural resources.

If you have questions about Manure Management Plans or would like assistance developing one for your farm, please contact the McKean County Conservation District at 814-887-4017 or slcarlson@mckeancountypa.gov. You can also visit www.mckeanconservation.com to learn more about our agricultural and conservation programs.

We're here to help you protect your farm, your operation, and Pennsylvania's water resources for future generations.

Directors

Jeff Larson - Chairman
Chase Miles - Vice-Chairman
Cliff Lane--Secretary/Treasurer
Tom Kreiner—Commissioner Director
Ken Kane - Public
Kerry Fetter - Farmer
Jeff Holcomb - Public

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www.mckeanconservation.com

The McKean County Conservation District was organized at the request of the County residents. The County was declared a District by the board of County Commissioners on August 19, 1959, according to provisions of the Soil Conservation Law of 1945, Act 217 of the General Assembly, as amended.

The primary goal of the District is the development, improvement, and conservation of the County's Soil, water and related resources as well as educating the community in various conservation and environmental practices and methods.

The District is administered by a board of seven Directors-three farmer members, three public (non-farmer) members and one County Commissioner. District Directors are appointed by the County Commissioners from a list of names submitted by countywide nominating organizations. The Commissioners also designate one of their members to serve as a Director.

Vision: The Conservation District is the steward of McKean County's natural resource and embraces environmentally responsible decisions.

Mission: The Conservation District provides leadership and stewardship to ensure the protection and sustainability of McKean County's natural resources by fostering public and private partnerships.

Our resident Killdeer