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**Vision:** The Conservation District is the steward of McKean County's natural resources 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.

## McKean County Conservation District District Board and Staff Members

#### **Directors**

#### **Associate Directors**

Blaine Puller	Chairman-Farmer	Pete Mader
Jeff Larson	Vice Chairman-Farmer	Charlie Kirkpatrick
Cliff Lane	Secretary/Treasurer-Commissioner	Boyd Fitzsimmons
Kerry Fetter	Public	Crystal Kocjancic
Chase Miles	Farmer	John Stratton
Greg Bell	Public	Jeff Holcomb
Ken Kane	Public	Lori Coffman

#### **District Staff**

Sandy Thompson - District Manager

814-887-4025 sdthompson@mckeancountypa.org

**Adam Causer - Watershed Specialist** 

814-887-4003 accauser@mckeancountypa.org

Lindsay Trojanowski - Resource Conservationist

814-887-4002 lktrojanowski@mckeancountypa.org

Matt Siszka—Conservation Technician

814-887-4008 mjsiszka@mckeancountypa.org

Conservation District Board Meetings are held monthly, normally on the third Wednesday of the month, at 7:00 PM in the McKean County 911 Conference Room, Smethport.

#### **Nominating Organizations**

Nominating Organizations have a unique role in shaping the future of McKean County. These organizations, which must be approved by the State Conservation Commission, are permitted by law to nominate individuals to the County Commissioners for appointment to the District Board.

By providing such nominations, these groups help define membership on a Board that makes critical decisions about how we manage our growing community's natural wealth - McKean County's soils, forests, lakes, wetlands, rivers, and streams. The District is grateful to our Nominating Organizations for their continued participation and support. Contact the District for information about how county organizations can be considered for approval as Nominating Organizations.

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## Nominating Organizations

Penn State Extension USDA Farm Service Agency Association of Township Officials Bar Association McKean County Fair Association McKean County Planning Commission McKean County Historical Society McKean/Potter Farmer's Bureau Upper Allegheny Watershed Association

## McKean County Conservation District Directors & Staff Honored



#### **Steve Sherk Honored**

The Board of Directors honored Steve Sherk (pictured here with Chairman Kerry Fetter) for his 13 years of service to the District. Steve started as an Associate Director for 4 years and the remaining 9 as a public director serving as the District's Vice Chairman for 5 of those years.

The Board thanked Steve for his vision, dedication and commitment for his service as well as for his guidance and contributions that shaped and paved the path to the District's success.

L-R Sandy Thompson, District Manager, Kerry Fetter, District Director, Blaine Puller, District Chairman and Lindsay Trojanowski, Resource Conservationist.

#### **District Directors & Staff Honored**

During the McKean County Conservation District's Annual Meeting on February 24, 2022, Directors and staff were recognized for their years of service. Jeff Larson was honored for serving 5 years on the District Board. Kerry Fetter was honored for serving as Chairman for 15 years. These men, as well as our entire Board of Directors are champions of conservation as well as agriculture in McKean County. They all continue to voluntarily serve the District with diligence and dedication. Their contributions over the years have furthered the goals and accomplishment of the District as well as benefiting the citizens of McKean County.

Sandy Thompson, District Manager was honored for 15 years of service and Lindsay Trojanowski, Resource Conservationist was honored for 10 years of service. They along with all of our staff have served the District with diligence and dedication. Their contributions continue to further the goals and accomplishment of the District as well as benefiting the citizens of McKean County.



Protect, Maintain, and Improve McKean County's Natural Resources Natural Resources Committee

#### Goals:

- Implement stream restoration/riparian buffer/water quality projects while funding & resources permit (Pages 4-6).
- Provide support to implement Ag BMPs as resources and funding permits (Page 7).
- Develop cover crop strategy with partners
- Develop project-based monitoring/management (Page 8).
- Assist 3 conservation organizations
- Coordinate APIPMA group and volunteers (Page 9).
- Implementation of Dirt, Gravel & Low Volume Program (Page 10-11).
- Implement delegated programs, Chapters 102, 105 & Nutrient/Manure Management (Page 12-13).

## Goal: Implement Stream Restoration/Riparian Buffer/Water Quality Projects.

#### Streambank Stabilization/Fish Habitat Project

Two Streambank Stabilization projects were completed utilizing PA Fish & Boat Commission Sinnemahoning

### Goal Accomplishments

- Awarded \$23,625.00 from Fish & Boat
- 5 streambank/fish habitat projects.
- 7 AMD projects

Grant Program. The District secured \$23,625.00 for the McKean County Stream Restoration Program. The primary objective of the program is to maintain and enhance habitats that are important for the PA Species of Greatest Concern (SGCN) that are conserved and managed under the jurisdiction of the PFBC and are identified in the 2015 Pennsylvania Wildlife Action Plan.

The project pictured here is along a UNT to Potato Creek in Keating Township. The streambank is losing pasture, and a farm access road is threatened due to the erosion of the streambank. The project was designed to minimize erosion, build fish habitat, and create a natural balance of riffles, and pools. The structures included two -25' modified mud sills, seven single log vane deflectors, three grade control structures, and one 16' agricultural crossing. The total cost of this project was \$7,198.00.







Protect, Maintain, and Improve McKean County's Natural Resources Natural Resources Committee

#### Streambank Stabilization/Fish Habitat Project

This second project pictured here was along Potato Creek in Norwich Township. The soils along the streambank here are very sandy which lead to a high amount of erosion. This was leading to high sedimentation loads into the stream, and large amounts of property belong lost as well.

The project was designed here to minimize both the sedimentation loading and the streambank erosion as well as maximize the fish habitat. A 100' modified mud sill was installed to eliminate the erosion and maximize fish habitat. The total project cost was \$6,590.00

These projects as well as the ones located on page 6 were designed in a manner to work with the stream and what it is trying to do, if possible instead of working "against the flow." It was also important to increase the value of the habitat and utilize more natural techniques. The foundation of these projects were



to utilize logs that average 6 to 12" in diameter of either larch or hemlock species. Rebar rods are used to pin the logs together and to secure the logs to the stream bottom.

The type of structure will vary depending on what the stream is trying to do. Deflectors narrow the existing stream channel, which causes a scouring and deepening effect along the outer face of the device, creating habitat along the edges of the device.

Mud sills provide excellent overhead cover best suited for lower gradient streams with steep, eroded banks. They provide stream bank stability and create a stable undercut bank effect for fish cover. For more information go to PA Fish & Boat Commission's "Habitat Improvement for Trout Streams" publication <a href="https://www.fishandboat.com/Resource/Documents/habitat improve trout.pdf">https://www.fishandboat.com/Resource/Documents/habitat improve trout.pdf</a>.



## Goal: Implement Stream Restoration/Riparian Buffer/Water Quality Projects.

#### Newell Creek Stream Restoration Projects

The District secured funding through the DEP Growing Greener Program to design, permit and construct two streambank stabilization/fish habitat projects. The DEP Growing Greener Program focuses on sub watersheds of the Allegheny River.

Both of these projects were along Newell Creek (CWF) and on agricultural operations. It is vital that we are able to reduce the sedimentation loads by stabilizing the streambank, and installing exclusionary fence along the stream to keep the animals out of the stream.

The first farm pictured right was dealing with streambank erosion, property loss due to cattle in the stream and on the streambank, and high sedimentation/nutrient loading into Newell Creek.

The project was designed to reduce the erosion and sedimentation loads, and eliminate the majority of the nutrient loading. One 70' modified mud sill, 2 grade control logs, 30' of saw-tooth deflectors, one 16' wide agricultural crossing, and 8,260' of exclusionary fence.

The total project cost was \$24,386.00



The second farm pictured left was dealing with streambank erosion, property loss due to horses in the stream and on the streambank, and high sedimentation loads into Newell Creek.

The project was designed to protect the streambank, reduce erosion, and create necessary fish habitat. A 120' modified mud sill was designed and constructed.

Along with that, 4,771' of exclusionary fence was installed to keep the horses out of the stream,

Total project cost was \$18,324.00

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### Goal: Provide support to implement Agricultural BMPs

#### **Goal Accomplishments**

- Conducted agricultural site visits
- DEP Growing Greener Grant to work with 4 landowners.
- Announcement of Agricultural Conservation Assistance Program (ACAP).
- Provided project oversight for implementation of Ag. BMPs.

#### **Upper Allegheny BMP Project**

The McKean County Conservation District has been awarded six Growing Greener Grants over the past 13 years for the implementation of agricultural best management practices.

The grants focused on the sub-watersheds of the Allegheny River, Lillibridge, Two Mile, Annin Creek, Newell Creek and Barden Brook to not only protect but to restore these sub-watersheds to "attaining" status on DEP's Integrated List of All Waters. The District

has directed over \$ 2 million in Growing Greener funds to multiple landowners for nutrient management planning, installation of vital agricultural best management practices, restoration of streambanks and creation of acres of forested riparian buffers.

Pictured here is the most recent project, a roofed heavy use area and manure stacking pad on a beef operation along Annin Creek in Annin Township.

The construction of the building greatly reduced sediment and nutrient runoff into Annin Creek by eliminating the large animal concentration area (ACA). An ACA is an area where animals congregate for food, water and shade that no longer sustains vegetation.

The total cost of the construction or the project was \$215,629.00 with \$32,344.25 of in-kind from the operator.



### Goal: Develop Project-Based Monitoring/Management

#### Monitoring of Hamlin & Railroad Run AMD Projects

The District was awarded \$971,413 through two Growing Greener Grants; \$40,000 through the Foundation for PA Watersheds and \$15,266.62 through Lyme Timber Company for the implementation of acid mine remediation practices in the watersheds of Hamlin an Railroad Run.

After 10 years when the District first conducted an assessment of the streams, seven Acid Mine Drainage (AMD) projects were installed in the Hamlin Run and Railroad Run Watersheds in Norwich Township. These watersheds drain into Potato Creek, a high-quality cold-water fishery stream that is currently impaired by AMD. The goal of this watershed restoration effort was to take the acidic mine water drainage and the surface water from the Headwaters of the Watersheds and increase the alkalinity as well as reduce the metal load entering the main branches of Hamlin and Railroad Run. The projects also utilized 4,850 tons of high calcium limestone. Water samples will be taken on a monthly basis from this point forward to continue to show improvement in Hamlin and Railroad Run.

Project Sampling Results for the AMD Projects																
	Date	Flow	Cond	Ph	Alk	Acid	Fe	Mn	Al	SO4						
		gpm	μS		mg/L CaCO3		mg/L CaCO3		mg/L CaCO3		mg/L CaCO3		mg/L CaCO3mg/I		/L	
RR18D	5/19/10	214	27	4.9	4	6	0.21	< 0.02	0.13	7						
RR18D	6/7/22			7.9		-21.8	.252	<.01	.108	4.47						
RR 19D	5/19/10	13	847	2.8	ND	152	6.90	2.08	6.34	110						
HR 12D	5/19/10	90	107	4.4	ND	15	0.11	0.59	1.28	37						
HR 12D	6/7/22			7.9	ND	-72.2	<.1	<.01	.115	33.19						
HR 08D	11/16/10	22	78	4.2	ND	13	< 0.04	< 0.02	0.93	28						
HR08D	6/7/22			8.0	ND	-61.4	<.1	.014	.179	25.23						
HR 06D	5/19/10	55	54	4.4	0	9	< 0.04	0.17	0.20	14						
HR 06D	6/7/22			8.0	ND	-58	<.1	<.01	.712	20.84						
HR 25D	4/29/10		166	4.0	ND	37	0.26	1.35	0.30	67						
HR 25D	6/7/22			7.9	ND	-47.4	<.1	<.01	.245	48.84						
HR 35D	5/4/10	16	134	4.2	0	37	0.28	0.86	4.27	48						
HR 35D	6/7/22			7.8	ND	-58	<.1	<.01	.127	83.86						

All five of the projects in Hamlin Run combined are removing 0.1lbs/day iron, 65lbs/day hot acidity, 1.1lbs/day aluminum, and 0.6lbs/day manganese.



Protect, Maintain, and Improve McKean County's Natural Resources Natura Resources Committee

### **Goal: Coordinating APIPMA Group and Volunteers**

#### **Treatment of Japanese Knotweed**

The Tionesta watershed has exceptional scenic, ecological and economic values that are being degraded by non-native invasive plant species. Current known infestations of Japanese knotweed in all of the Tionesta Creek watershed are considered 'satellite' infestations as they are typically small.

In 2019, the District received \$25,000 through the PA Dept. of Agriculture (PDA) to initiate a coordinated, across boundary approach to treating the small, widespread infestations of Japanese Knotweed within the Tionesta Watershed.

2022 is the third year that we have worked with 23 landowners within the Tionesta Watershed that were treated. The picture at the top is from 2020 and the picture below that is from 2022.





#### **Treatment of Goatsrue**



Goatsrue is impacting the scenic, ecological, and economic values in the Upper Allegheny River watershed. The plant is also toxic to livestock (in pasture or hay). In 2019, the District received \$25,000 through the PA Dept. of Agriculture (PDA), for treating known goatsrue infestations.

2022 is the third year that we have worked with 34 local landowners to treat, and monitor goatsrue infestations. An additional \$10,000 was secured through the PA Department of Agriculture (PDA) for a third year of treatment. Pictured here is Forecon treating Goatsure.

In 2022, the District received an additional \$10,504 from the USDA, Forest Service to continue and expand our treatment of Goatsrue not only in McKean County but in surrounding counties as well.



Protect, Maintain, and Improve McKean County's Natural Resources Natural Resources Committee

#### Goal: Implementation of the Dirt, Gravel, and Low Volume Road Program

#### **Goal Accomplishments**

- District staff were on site for construction of (2) DGR projects and (2) LVR projects. Site visits with municipalities for potential 2022 projects.
- 19 of the 22 municipalities ESM certified.
- Hosted a remote ESM certification class with 13 people in attendance.
- Staff represented the District on the state DGLVR Policy & Planning Committee.

The McKean County Conservation District provides hands on technical assistance to all eligible entities in regards to the PA Dirt Gravel and Low Volume Road Program. The McKean County Conservation District offers assistance in developing a work plan that will best alleviate any negative stream impacts caused by nearby roads while reducing road maintenance cost and increasing road longevity.

The primary issues addressed are road drainage, roadbed elevation, sub-base materials, and surface material. These all keep water off the roadway and eliminate the erosion of road surface material into local streams. Local municipalities and state agencies that maintain dirt and gravel roads and low volume roads with less than 500 vehicles per day are eligible to receive fund-

ing. However, to be eligible for the program, the participant must first attend a two-day training session for "Environmentally Sensitive Maintenance of Dirt and Gravel Roads". To be eligible, projects must employ "environmentally sound" maintenance practices and products to correct pollution problems related to the roadway.

#### **Hutchins Loop DGR Project—Sergeant Township**

This Dirt and Gravel project is in Sergeant Township. This section of Hutchins Loop impacts the water quality of Rocky Run, a cold water wild trout fishery. Hutchins Loop is an entrenched road, lacking adequate crosspipes and stabile outlets for water to get off road surface. There is also spring seeps in the road and a constant flooding of a stream crossing due to beaver activity that adds to the drainage issues.

The scope of work includes:

- Place 6,505 tons of road fill to raise the road profile and allow for sheet flow in areas
- Install (4) 15" plastic crosspipes, (3) 18" plastic crosspipes
- Install 640 linear feet of underdrain
- Install a French mattress to alleviate issues from roadbase spring seep
- Install a high water bypass to provide an area for the water to escape the roadway when the stream floods due to beaver activity

The grant request amount was: \$215,580.00 In-Kind township contribution was: \$14,097.38

Project Total: \$229,677.38



#### Wolf Run Road, Low Volume - Corydon Township

As shown in the top picture, there was a severely eroded high dirt bank on Wolf Run Road The eroded road bank was excavated out and stepped back to lessen the slope and decrease the erosion rate (shown in middle picture).

The newly sloped bank was seeded with a native pollinator mix specific to steep slopes and erosion prevention (shown in the picture below).

This project will help to reduce the amount of sediment that was reaching Willow Creek, a high quality wild trout stream. In reducing the slope of the bank there will be less erosion and the amount of sediment pollution that was being washed into the road side ditch will be greatly decreased. Sloping the road bank back also allowed for a safer roadway by greatly increasing the line of visibility for drivers.

The total grant amount provided by the Conservation District was \$11,750.00 which was matched with inkind contributions from the township totaling \$4,842.00 for a total project cost of \$16,592.00.







## Goal: Implement delegated programs-Chapter 102, 105, Nutrient / Manure Management

#### Chapter 102 (Erosion & Sedimentation) Plans & Permits

#### **Chapter 102 Overview**

- 19 E&S Plans reviewed
- 9 NPDES Permits received
- 48 Technical Assists
- 8 Complaints received

Erosion Control In Our Forest and (2) Municipal Workshops Held The District is delegated by the DEP to implement the Erosion and Sedimentation Pollutant Control Program (Chapter 102) to be sure plans and permits are in place and sites practices to prevent erosion and sedimentation pollution from leaving disturbed sites. The Required Output Measures are to review NPDES Erosion & Sediment Control General permits (ESCGP), Erosion & Sedimentation Plan reviews, handling complaints, providing technical assistance, site visits and inspections and providing educational programs.

Projects with more than 5,000 square feet of earth disturbance, but less than 1 acre, should prepare an Erosion & Sedimentation Plan with appropriate management practices to prevent erosion. Projects involving more than one acre of earth disturbance require NPDES Permits. There are General and Individual NPDES Permits, depending on the watershed affected. These permits are submitted to either the Conservation District (General) or PA DEP (Individual). Oil and gas activities (e.g., exploration, production, processing, treatment operations or transmission facilities) involving 5 or more acres of earth disturbance, an E&S permit (ESCGP-3) is required under Pennsylvania's Clean Streams Law for these activities over the life of the project.





Installation of National Fuel's FM120 and completion/stabilization of the FM100 Compressor Station

#### Chapter 105 (Dam Safety & Waterway Management) Permits

The District is delegated by the PA Department of Environmental Protection to oversee and review certain permits for construction, stream encroachment, and timber projects. The permit required depends on the location, area of land disturbed, and type of project.

Any work in or near a stream requires a permit to prevent pollution and or changes the watercourse. Any encroachment or disturbance of a waterway such as a new bridge or stream crossing requires a Chapter 105 General Permit. Projects requiring General Permits include bank rehabilitation, stream bank protection, gravel bar removal, bridge construction or replacement, stream crossings for agriculture or forestry, docks or boat launches, and utility line crossings. District responsibilities include General Permit review, handling complaints, and providing technical assistance for Chapter 105.

#### **Chapter 105 Overview**

- 25 Chapter 105 General Permits Acknowledged
- 24 Technical Assists
- 3 Complaints

Erosion Control In Our Forests Workshop Held



## **Chapter 91 Manure Management and Act 38 Nutrient Management Overview**

- 2 Nutrient Management Plans Approved
- 14 Site Visits

Winter Farmer's Meeting Held



Amanda Murdock, NRCS District Conservationist presenting during the Winter Farmer's Meeting

#### **Nutrient/Manure Management Programs**

The District has a cooperative agreement with PA Department of Environmental Protection and State Conservation Commission for the development of Chapter 91 Manure Management Plans and Act 38 Nutrient Management Plans for farmers with livestock.

The Conservation District provides technical assistance to farmers and can help them to obtain funding for agricultural best management practices. All farms generating manure are required to have a management plan. Two NM Plans and associated E&S plans, approved by the Board, were funded through our existing Growing Greener Grant as part of the implementation of the BMPs on their operations.

Market & Increase Awareness of Conservation District Programs & Functions: and provide Educational Outreach Education & Outreach Committee

#### Goals:

- Distribute Conservation Information.
- Prepare District Exhibits and Presentations.
- Conduct Conservation Education Programs. (Page 15-18)

#### **Goal: Distribute Conservation Information**

#### **Goal Accomplishments**

- 3 issues of the "Conservation Times' Newsletter sent electronically to over 690 people.
- Created an Ag. newsletter "Farm Chatter" sent to 65 landowners.
- 24 News Releases
- 56 Facebook posts reaching 2,500 people
- 4 Displays set-up and manned

The McKean County Conservation District continually strives to help the public identify the organization as a local entity to help protect, conserve, and educate about our natural resources. It is important for the public to understand the Conservation District's many responsibilities in the county. Press releases, social media, website, exhibits, programs, and a variety of publications are all tools utilized to reach the goals in this objective.

#### **Publications and Press Releases**

A variety of publications and outreach through traditional and digital methods are utilized. Publications are available in digital formats or as paper copies. The District's newsletter "Conservation Times" was published to the website and an email link was distributed to newsletter recipients.

A newsletter targeting farmer/landowners "Farm Chatter" was developed and sent by mail. Educational and program brochures and flyers were kept updated with current information and staff. Press releases were submitted and the District's website and Face Book page were maintained.

#### **Goal: Exhibits and Presentations**

The District prepared and staffed exhibits at the McKean County Fair and at the Senior Expos in Bradford and Kane. Exhibits provide the public with information about District programs and projects, and information guiding them with tools to protect our natural resources.



Market & Increase Awareness of Conservation District Programs & Functions: and provide Educational Outreach Education & Outreach Committee

#### **Goal: Conduct Conservation Education Programs**

#### **Goal Accomplishments**

- 3 issues of the "Conservation Times' Newsletter sent electronically to over 690 people.
- Created an Ag. newsletter "Farm Chatter" sent to 65 landowners.
- 24 News Releases
- 56 Facebook posts reaching 2,500 people
- 4 Displays set-up and manned
- 17 Youth Educational Programs reaching 1000 students
- 6 Adult Educational Programs reaching 195 people

Education & outreach programs promote responsible stewardship of natural resources and are an integral part of the District's vision and mission. Presentations reached a variety of audiences: school children, farmers, municipal employees, civic groups, and others.

#### **My Growing Tree Program**

The District spent the last two weeks of April celebrating Arbor Day by presenting the "My Growing Tree" program to youth including all the first or second grade students in each of the public schools. There was 500 red oak seedlings handed out to the students along with a poster that included charts to enable the students to monitor their own height as well as the growth of their tree. Support for this year's program was provided by the Department of Environmental Protection's 2021 Environmental Education Grants Program."

Stan Hess, Retired Service Forester and Chris Beaver from DCNR, Bureau of Forestry, Commissioner Cliff Lane and staff members from the District spoke about the importance of Arbor Day and how trees help to protect and improve our water resources. Students learned about the water cycle and the different ways trees help decrease pollution in streams by providing a protective barrier called a riparian buffer and by stabilizing streambanks with their roots.

Students learned the parts of the tree. Presenters also discussed how to plant a tree and did an activity that illustrates how forests are renewable which points out cutting trees is not bad when practiced in a sustainable manner. The program finished with the students reciting a pledge to conserve our natural resources and to work for a cleaner and healthier McKean County.



Lindsay Trojanowski, District Resource Conservationist at Kane Elementary School.



Market & Increase Awareness of Conservation District Programs & Functions: and provide Educational Outreach Education & Outreach Committee

#### Forest Health for Clean Water Programs

The District was awarded an Environmental Educational Grant through DEP to deliver education programs to McKean County students. The goals of the program include increasing environmental awareness among youth; appreciation of natural resources and healthy ecosystems; teaching methods to complete stewardship projects; encouraging critical thinking, issues investigation, and decision-making skills; leading and encouraging actions to improve watersheds and stream health among students.

To reach these goals, the Conservation District provided educational programs, such as the My Growing Tree Program (see page 15) and hands-on learning programs. The overall arching theme was environmental stewardship, healthy forests, watersheds, and ecosystems, and the role of citizens in actions that help their local community and environment.

The Students throughout the county were exposed to the basic knowledge of the role of forests and trees in a watershed. Living in a predominantly forested county, this is important information. This program recognizes our students will be future citizens, with the potential to preserve forests functioning as watershed filters and protection.

The students learned:

- Importance of trees and their impact on watersheds.
- Non-point source pollution and how human activities can change both the amount and quality of water in streams.
- Watersheds and how they feel clean water and watershed health could be impacted by climate change.
- Developed troubleshooting skills and thought about environmental problems particularly related to non-point source pollution. If the forest is replaced with parking lots or driveways, rainwater can flow more quickly as surface runoff to streams, which may cause flooding.

Supplemental hands-on materials in a loanable kit were also offered. These resources will provide basic lessons on watersheds and the importance of forested watersheds and can be utilized by upper elementary, middle, or high school grade levels. Support for these programs were provided by the Department of Environmental Protection's 2021 Environmental Education Grants Program."



Smethport Students utilizing the District's "Watershed Wonders" hands-on loanable kit.

Market & Increase Awareness of Conservation District Programs & Functions: and provide Educational Outreach Education & Outreach Committee

#### 'Wild' Envirothon



The Bradford Bees Envirothon Team, Overall winners of the "Wild Envirothon. L-R Amber Eschrich, Mary Bukowski, Tripp Hoover, Tim Mulcahy and Steven Williams.

The 'Wild' Envirothon was held on Thursday, May 5, 2022 hosted by the Veterans Memorial in Port Allegany. The event included teams from both Cameron and McKean Counties.

During this hands-on competition, students may be asked to measure a tree...identify a frog or toad call...or determine soil erosion potential according to a soil survey. They work as a 5-member team to answer questions, and use their critical thinking to find solutions to reality-based situations.

Partners helping to make the day possible included DCNR Bureau of Forestry, PA Game Commission, USDA Natural Resources & Conservation Service, Penn State Extension, McKean County Court of Common Pleas, Casella Waste Management of PA 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, International

Waxes, Collins Pine Company, Upper Allegheny Watershed Association, Zook Motors, Lafayette Township, Team Minard Screen Printing & Embroidery, Seneca Trout Unlimited, American Refining Group, Inc., Allegheny Hardwood Utilization Group, Pine Haven Vet Clinic, Kessel Construction Company, Veteran's Memorial of Port Allegany, Emporium VFW Auxiliary Post 6221, North Point Contracting, Solveson Contracting, Embassy Powdered Metals, Cameron County Outdoor Youth Activities, May Hollow Sportsmen, Emporium Vets club, McKean County E-Sales, Emporium Food Market, J. Ream Engineering, Sinnemahoning Sportsman Association, L&M Lumber, and Emporium Moose Lodge #368. Financial support was also provided by PA Enviro-

thon.

The overall Winning Team and first place McKean County: Bradford Bees (pictured above). Second place McKean County team: Bradford Crayfish – Abigail Barton, Sydney Hamer, Lucas Caruso, Lillian Erickson, Isabella Rhoades. Third place McKean County: O-E Squirrels, from Otto Eldred-Nathan Schuessler, Sarah Beaver, Brooke English, Hailey Farr, Gavin Silvis.

The Bradford Bees went onto the PA Envirothon May 25 and placed 8th overall (pictured here).



Market & Increase Awareness of Conservation District Programs & Functions: and provide Educational Outreach Education & Outreach Committee

#### **Rain Barrel Workshop**



The District partnered with the Bradford Sanitary Authority and Penn State Extension to host a free rain barrel workshop. Participants learned about rain barrels and rain gardens, watershed basics and the impacts of stormwater from Danielle Rhea with Penn State Extension.

Adam Causer (pictured here), Watershed Specialist with the District and representatives from the Bradford Sanitary Authority, Steve Disney, Don Hayden, Daniel Yeager and Mitch Hayden were on hand to assist the participants with building their own rain barrel to take home. The Bradford City residents also learned how they could reduce their stormwater fee.

Financial and other support for this program is provided by the Pennsylvania Association of Conservation Districts through a grant from the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection under Section 319 of the Clean Water Act, administered by the U.S. Environmental Protection

#### **Planning Commission Municipal Workshops**

During the month of September, the McKean County Planning Commission held two educational workshops on the County's Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance (SALDO). The purpose of these workshops were to educate and provide a shared understanding about the County's SALDO process that

included the steps involved, the role of the various review entities, and the documentation/approvals needed to finalize the Subdivision or Land Development.

In total, forty-seven members of the community attended consisting of Municipal Officials, Engineers, Surveyors, and Attorneys. Panelists from multiple organizations presented to include McKean County Planning/GIS, McKean County Tax Assessment, McKean County Conservation District, Erb Inspections, PA DEP, and Penn-DOT. Attendees were informed on 911 Addressing, County Subdivision and Land Development Process, Uniform Construction Code, Highway Occupancy Permits, Act 167, and Ch. 102 (Erosion & Sediment Control).

Matt Siszka (pictured here), Conservation Technician for the Conservation District, gave a presentation on the requirements of Chapter 102.



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#### Goals:

- Identify current needs of public & natural resources
- Analyze existing fiscal capabilities and grant writing resources. (Page 19-20)
- Seek funding for staff to administer programs on the local level. (Page 19-20)
- Engage legislators and build a connection with Governor & federal legislators (Page 21-22)
- Monitor & implement the District's plans 2019-2023
- Build on our leadership at the local, state & national level. (Page 23)
- Promote, improve and implement new recycling initiatives throughout the County. (Page 24)

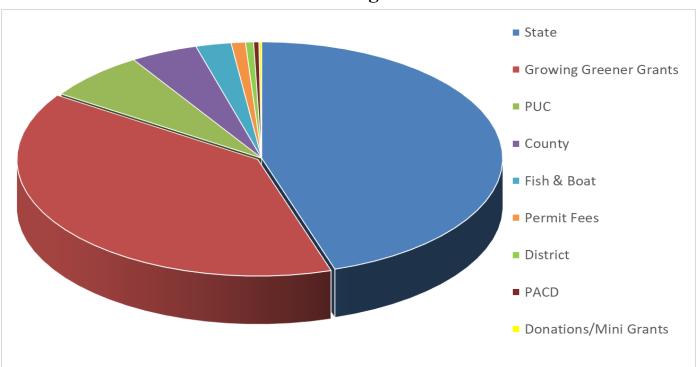
## Goal: Analyze Existing Fiscal Capabilities and Grant Writing Resources. Goal: Seek Funding for Staff to Administer Programs at the Local Level.

#### **Goal Accomplishments**

- Secured \$10,504 through US Forest Service for funding Goatsrue Treatment.
- Implementation of 14 different grants and programs
- Funding proposals for stream crossing and watershed assessment projects.

The District staff implemented, administered and monitored 14 different grants and programs. Below and on the next page is a breakdown and description of these grants and programs.

### **2022 Funding Sources**



For every dollar the County contributes to conservation the County receives \$22.12 in return.



McKean County Conservation District
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2022 Funding Sources					
Program		Amount	Source		
Dirt, Gravel & Low Volume Road Program	\$	298,346.00	State		
Erosion & Sedimentation Program (Chapter 102)	\$	16,225.00	State		
E&S Review Fees	\$	5,370.00	District		
Nutrient Management Program	\$	15,000.00	State		
Agricultural Conservation Technician (ACT) Program	\$	16,225.00	State		
District Manager Funding	\$ \$	22,350.00 45,000.00	State County		
Clean Water Permitting Program - Chapters 102 & 105	\$	9,500.00	Permit Fees		
Act 13 Unconventional Gas Well Fund	\$	67,123.00	PUC		
Act 13 Unconventional Gas Well Fund	\$	55,890.00	State		
Growing Greener Grants – Watershed Specialist	\$	45,250.00	Growing Greener		
Growing Greener Grants – Ag BMP Projects	\$	345,182.00	Growing Greener		
PACD - Mini-Grant - Adult Education Programs	\$	3,500.00	PACD		
Environmental Education Donation & Grants	\$ \$	3,000.00 1,875.00	State Donations		
Fish & Boat - Habitat Restoration Projects	\$	23,625.00	Fish & Boat		
Invasive Plant Initiative - Treatment of Goatsrue & Japanese Knotweed	\$	21,700.00	State		
TOTAL Income	\$	995,161.00			

Income Source	Amount	% of Income
State	\$ 448,736.00	45%
Growing Greener Grants	\$ 390,432.00	39%
PUC	\$ 67,123.00	7%
County	\$ 45,000.00	5%
Fish & Boat	\$ 23,625.00	2%
Permit Fees	\$ 9,500.00	1%
District	\$ 5,370.00	0.5%
PACD	\$ 3,500.00	0.4%
Donations/Mini Grants	\$ 1,875.00	0.19%

Develop Resources to Sustain & Enhance the Conservation District and Our Natural Resources.

District Resources Committee

## Goal: Engage legislators and build a connection with Governor and federal legislators

#### **Goal Accomplishments**

- Hosted a Legislative Luncheon
- Participated in (2) of Representative Causer's Senior Expos
- Hosted (2) Tours.

#### **Legislative Luncheon**

The District met with legislators to discuss the impact of completed projects and the necessity for additional funding in the FY 22-23 State budget.

Topics discussed included: the District's implementation of various projects having a positive impact to our waterways. These projects showed our landowners and municipalities practices to restore and improve our waterways and roads. Several organizations were vital to the success of the projects including Hancock Forest Management, Lyme Timber Management, Trout Unlimited, Center for Dirt and Gravel Road Studies, municipalities, DEP, PA Fish & Boat Commission, Headwaters RC&D Council, State Conservation Commission, National Fish & Wildlife Foundation, Dyne Excavating and the Port Allegany and Kane Volunteer Fire Companies.

Also discussed was the fact that Conservation Districts across the Commonwealth have been running on the same allocation from DEP and the Department of Agriculture since FY 2004-2005. There has not been an increase in funding but there has been a significant increase in the required output measures. A request and discussion was held on doubling the line items in the budgets for DEP and Department of Agriculture.

The District's primary goal 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. Many of the programs held throughout 2021 were highlighted during the meeting; showing the significance of educating the community about the importance of conserving resources and keeping communities safe environmentally



Develop Resources to Sustain & Enhance the Conservation District and Our Natural Resources.

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#### **AMD & BMP Tours**



The District held two tours to show-case the recent completion of water quality projects and partnerships. Participants of the AMD tour, pictured here, visited the recently completed AMD projects which started with a lunch at the Norwich Township Community Fire Hall and then a brief history of the area was provided by Chairman Blaine Puller. The participants then car pooled into the hills of Crosby to view the AMD projects in Railroad and Hamlin Run.

Railroad & Hamlin Run are located in Norwich Township. The watersheds

have a total area of 5.7 square miles. They are both a tributary to the East Branch Potato Creek, which forms Potato Creek at the confluence with the West Branch Potato Creek. Potato Creek is a major tributary to the Allegheny River. These streams flow from a part of McKean County that contains economic coal reserves and has a history of mining activity.

The District held its Annual BMP Tour to showcase water quality projects and partnerships. The tour kicked off with an overview of National Fuel's most recent projects throughout the area. Participants then boarded a bus to visit an Agricultural Best Management Practice (BMP) project on Newell Creek, Eldred, PA. The recently completed roofed heavy use area/manure stacking facility, streambank stabilization, pictured below, and agricultural crossing were funded through a PA DEP Growing Greener Grant awarded to the District. The next stop of the tour was to another site along Newell Creek. This project included the installation of 36 streambank stabilization/fish enhancement structures to stabilize 1,300 feet of the streambank, funded by a PA DEP Growing Greener Grant awarded to the District.

The last two stops of the tour were for the participants to learn about the partnership between PRISM

Glass Recycling, Erie Management Group, Ardagh Glass Packaging, RecycAll, McKan Trucking and the District to create a county-wide glass collection program. There are numerous collection locations across McKean County that are free for residents to deposit their glass bottles and jars. The glass is collected and trucked by McKan Trucking for processing at RecycAll and then to the Ardagh glass plant in Port Allegany to make new bottles and jars.

Financial and other support for the tours was provided by the Pennsylvania Association of Conservation Districts through a grant from the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection under Section 319 of the Clean Water Act, administered by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.



Develop Resources to Sustain & Enhance the Conservation District and Our Natural Resources.

**District Resources Committee** 

#### Goal: Build on our leadership at the local, state & national level

Directors and staff are encouraged to participate in various planning functions and committees at the local, regional, state and national level to provide input. Directors participated in 34 meetings and staff participated in 45 meetings.

Presently, District staff and directors serve on numerous local and regional committees such as Penn State Extension's Donald J. Comes Leadership Team, Sinnemahoning Stakeholders Committee, Allegheny Plateau Invasive Plant Management Area, the PA Wilds Climate Change Network, and the Headwaters Resource Conservation and Development Council.

At the state level, staff members and Director Cliff Lane serve on the Dirt, Gravel & Low Volume Road Policy & Planning Committee, PACD Committees (District Employees, Operations, & Ways & Means), PACD Executive Board and the PA Invasive Species Council.

Nationally, Cliff Lane was sworn-in (pictured here) as a member of the National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) Executive Board representing the North East at the 2023 Annual NACD Meeting. During 2022 he served as the Vice Chairman of the NACD Northeast Region and Pennsylvania's representative to the NACD and served on various NACD committees. District Manager Sandy Thompson serves as the Vice President of the Northeast Conservation District Employees Association, an alternate on the National Conservation District Employees Association (NCDEA), and committees associated with the NCDEA.



2023 NACD Executive Board Members—L-R Karl Jensen, Northern Plains Region, Ryan Britt, North Central Region, John McAlpine, South Central Region, Franklin Williams Southeast Region, Cliff Lane, Northeast Region, Josh Smith, Southwest Region, Michael Aguon, Pacific Region

Develop Resources to Sustain & Enhance the Conservation District and Our Natural Resources.

District Resources Committee

### Goal: Promote, Improve and Implement New Recycling Initiatives Throughout the County.



#### Electronics & Household Hazardous Waste Collection

The District hosted an electronic and household hazardous waste collection on July 28th at the Bradford Airport. The Conservation District worked with Noble Environmental, an industry leading environmental services company headquartered in Pittsburgh, PA.

The collection was set up as a drive-thru electronic and household hazardous waste event. Due to the overwhelming response, the timeframe was increased by an hour with each time slot triple booked. This was done to help as many McKean County residence properly dispose of their electronics and household hazardous waste.

There were 250 vehicles at the collection event with over 30,000 lbs. of electronics and 8,000 lbs. of household hazardous waste.

#### **Glass Collection Program**

In early 2022, Prism and Ardagh Glass Packaging joined forces to create a color-sorted drop-off program for glass recycling across McKean County. A first of its kind partnership, Ardagh invested in containers and hauling equipment, whereby glass material from the drop-off locations makes its way back to the Port Allegany facility as furnace-ready cullet.

At the end of the year, Prism bowed out of the partnership and two new partners came on board, Glass Packaging Institute and Glass Recycling Foundation. Containers are managed by these new partner, serviced by McKan Trucking, and glass is processed at RecycAll, just one mile from Ardaugh.

Presently there 7 collection stations throughout McKean County available for use by the public that collected about 45,000 lbs.



