

# SHINE A LIGHT ON

# *Conservation*



LANCASTER COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT

**2016 ANNUAL REPORT**

# CHAIRPERSON'S MESSAGE

I'm sure we've all experienced a moment in life when you've needed to grab a flashlight and shine a light on a situation to help you see the details before you. Taking a look back at 2016, Conservation District staff have been asked to 'shine a light' on conservation and highlight those details that will illustrate why we all do what we do to improve and sustain the natural resources of Lancaster County.

Adam Hartz, Ag Engineering Technician Specialist, helped me take this theme one step further finding flashlight symbolism connected to the Conservation District.

A Conservation District is able to shine a light when each part works together.

- Flashlight Case = The place where we work.
  - The state level
  - The county level
  - The Conservation District office
- Face ring = Community and the collective groups we work in.
  - The Ag community
  - Watersheds
  - Schools
  - Being part of the PA Association of Conservation Districts
- Bulb = Leadership that provides the direction forward.
  - Management within the staff
  - Board of Directors and Associate Directors
- Batteries = Resources that empower the knowledge, energy, money, etc. to do our jobs.
  - The knowledge that each member brings to the District from trainings, personal backgrounds, and life experiences.
  - Knowledge sharing with partnering agencies. (NRCS, CBF, PACD, etc.)
  - Energy – The staff energy that brings passion and ambition to make the environment better.



The Conservation District light is burning bright. You're invited to be a part of what we do. We thank you for your efforts to shine a light on conservation.

*–Ken Meck, Chairperson, LCCD Board of Directors*

## Board Members



Front Row L to R: Jay Snyder, Herb Kreider, Roger Rohrer, Richard Shellenberger  
Back Row L to R: Commissioner Craig Lehman, Sonia Wasco, Ken Meck, Don Robinson (Director Emeritus), Robert Shearer, Dan Heller

## Associate Board Members



Pictured L to R: Frank Burkhart, Robert Wagner, and Gregory Srausser  
Absent from photograph: Darrell Becker, Lisa Graybeal, Ernest Orr, Kent Weaver

## 2016 Conservation District Award Winners

Youth Conservation School Service  
Conservation Educator

Watershed Volunteer  
Conservation Service Award  
E&S Building Industry  
2016 Outstanding Cooperator  
Conservation Advocate

PA Fish and Boat Commission  
Kristen Rychener, Bucher Elementary,  
Manheim Township School District  
Dave Weidman, Jay Snyder  
Andrew Hake  
Paradise Township  
Joel & Irene Rutt Family Farm  
Raymond King



# EROSION AND SEDIMENT POLLUTION CONTROL PROGRAM

The Erosion and Sediment (E&S) Program staff is a component of the Lancaster County construction industry. The staff review plans, issue permits, perform inspections, and respond to complaints.

The year contained both goodbyes and hellos. We bid farewell to Jenna Mitchell and said hello to technicians Emily Broich and James Fricke. Evan Martin was promoted to Assistant Department Manager. The Access database that had served the E&S Department since 1994 was replaced by the Practicekeeper database. Late in the year, the E&S Department began entering permit information into the federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) recordkeeping system termed the Integrated Compliance Information System (ICIS). The Chapter 102 and 105 delegation agreements were renewed. The Chapter 105 delegation now includes complaint handling. The federal Pennsylvania State Programmatic General Permit (PASPGP)-4 was replaced by PASPGP-5.

Each year, over 1,000 acres of land in Lancaster County undergo a transformation that we call development. Some of the noteworthy development projects that started this year include Belmont, Ironstone Ranch (Star barn), Warwick Woodlands, and a PPL substation and transmission line. The Perdue soybean oil extraction facility resumed construction with the hope of completion in 2017. Signature Senior Living constructed two new Lancaster County facilities. We witnessed continued construction of swine, layer, broiler, duck, and dairy facilities; hotels, commercial, residential and medical buildings; bridges and stream restorations. The restored Speedwell Forge Lake was refilled and opened to the public.

Redevelopment has been underway in Lancaster County for some time. A few projects that shine the light on conservation by way of redevelopment are Gateway Business Park, F&M Stadium, Stockyards, Keystone Opportunity Zone, and Ranck Mill Road in Lancaster City.

While the visual image of construction is offensive to many people, a closer look under an objective light will reveal functional innovations that minimize the environmental impact of construction activity. Examples follow:



Filter sock

Silt fence forms a sediment barrier that is intended to filter sediment from stormwater runoff. If you look closely while driving past an active construction site, you will probably notice one or more sections of “giant bologna” lying on the ground. This product is termed compost

filter sock and has become a favored alternative to silt fence. The sock is comprised of compost or wood chip filler that is inserted into a tubular mesh material.

When heavy rain falls on large areas, silt fence and filter sock can be overwhelmed by the runoff. In these situations, facilities such as sediment basins and traps are used to remove sediment from stormwater runoff. Sediment basin efficiency has been



Sediment basin with a skimmer

improved with the introduction and widespread acceptance of skimmer devices.



Erosion Control Blankets

Erosion control blankets and straw mulch protect newly seeded areas from erosion. A disturbed site where erosion control blankets have been installed is appealing to the eye. Contrasted to the dull brown of a bare earth construction

site, mulch covering implies care for the land...a bright spot for the construction industry.

Floodplain restoration is an up-and-coming alternative method of managing stormwater runoff. The method involves floodplain grading to remove accumulated sediments and to encourage improved interaction of groundwater, stream flow, and root systems. The PA DEP has thus far approved floodplain restoration for two Lancaster County sites. As the year closed, a third site was under consideration.

Marcellus shale is a deep marine sedimentary rock found in eastern North America. The natural gas contained within the shale has become a source of controversy for Lancaster County residents. The Marcellus gas play has created the demand for two large pipeline projects that will pass through Lancaster County. This year, District E&S staff devoted many hours reviewing the Erosion and Sediment Control General Permit (ESCGP)-2 permit application for both pipeline projects. The Mariner East 2 pipeline, which will convey natural gas liquids from western PA, will pass through West Cocalico Township and terminate at the Marcus Hook Industrial Complex in Delaware County. The Atlantic Sunrise Pipeline is a 42” north to south natural gas pipeline that extends from Columbia County southward for 183 miles to Drumore Twp. Construction of both lines is anticipated for 2017.

The E&S program continues to support the Lancaster County municipalities with documentation that can assist them in meeting their Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS)-4 reporting obligations.

—Nevin Greiner, Resource Conservationist

## 2016 Chapter 102/National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES)/Chapter 105 Activity

E&S Plan Reviews Performed	418
Project Acres	7542
Disturbed Acres	1622
Review Fees Collected	\$402,680
General NPDES Permits Processed	167
Ind. NPDES Permits Processed	21
NPDES Permit Fees Collected	\$108,500
Complaints Received	86
Site Inspections	802
Technical Assistance	5288
Enforcement Actions	4
Ch. 105 General Permits Issued	88

# AGRICULTURE

One of the most frequently asked questions from farmers to Ag staff at the Lancaster County Conservation District (LCCD) is, "Why?" This question persisted through 2016 as staff completed outreach efforts to nearly 290 properties in Colerain Township. Farmers were educated on their responsibility to meet the state's baseline compliance requirements. The Conservation District worked with the township to inform them about how to meet these requirements through best management practices (BMPs) set forth within conservation plans, manure management plans or nutrient management plans.

## Why do I need a conservation plan?

Conservation plans have been required by law under Chapter 102 since 1972. Conservation plans, also referred to as Ag erosion and sediment plans, are a great tool for farmers to utilize when aiming to reduce potential erosion and/or pollution on their land. These plans are written to establish the rate of tolerable soil loss for individual fields. When an established tolerable soil loss is exceeded, excessive erosion occurs as topsoil leaves the field faster than it can be rebuilt. The "rebuilding" process is a long, gradual process in which parent materials (rocks) weather and mix with decaying vegetation. Farmers are affected by erosion because their soil's profitability, or productivity, decreases as soil is lost. LCCD writes plans for farmers so they are better able to maintain or increase crop production through reduced erosion. In 2016, District Ag technicians wrote 47 plans totaling 3,475 acres to help protect the valuable topsoil of Lancaster.

## Why do I need a manure or nutrient management plan?

Manure management plans have been required by law since 1985 for all farms that have animals, and they help manage how manure generated on a farm can be efficiently used for crops. Those farms which support more than 2 animal equivalent units (or 2,000 lbs) per acre are required to have an Act 38 nutrient management plan. These are typically written as a three year plan, and they are reviewed and approved by the Conservation District. Farmers who follow these plans can confidently avoid overspreading manure which often leads to pollution of surrounding groundwater and/or surface water. This year the LCCD staff reviewed and approved 111 Act 38 plans, the highest number of plans completed in a single year thus far.



## Why should I install these best management practices?

BMPs are structures and/or land practices that work together to reduce runoff and erosion on a farm. These improvements can include structures such as waterways and terraces. They can also include practices such as conservation crop rotation and contour farming. Farmers are instructed to follow the BMPs within their conservation plans. The staff designed and implemented 112 total BMPs in 2016. These included 22 waterways (equaling 8.74 acres), 17,605 feet of terraces, 8 stream crossings, 20 underground outlets (equaling 7,872 feet) and 4,847 feet of diversion.



## Why should I build this manure storage?

Implementing a manure storage system on a farm allows farmers to safely store the manure that is produced on their farm. Manure can then be applied to fields at a later time, typically in spring or prior to fall crop planting, when crops are able to efficiently use the provided nutrients. Farmers can confidently store their manure until it is the appropriate time for spreading. LCCD helped design and implement a total of 14 manure storages this past year. The Conservation District has worked diligently throughout 2016 to give Lancaster County farmers clear direction on how to safely perform farm activities while avoiding any possible negative impacts on the environment. Meanwhile, the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection has developed their Chesapeake Bay Reboot Program which now requires the district to inspect 300 farms per year. To meet this need, the District established an Agricultural Compliance Team in August. The team has currently completed 98 inspections, and they have been well-received by our Lancaster farmers. LCCD has also hired four new technicians that recently completed their nutrient management training. They have been hard at work reviewing plans and attending trainings to prepare for the upcoming/ongoing 2017 workload. LCCD is confident that their team (seasoned and new) can work together to be sure no, "Why?" goes unanswered.

—Adam Hartz, Ag Engineering Technician Specialist

## Best Management Practices

BMP	Number	
Grassed Waterways	22	=8.74 acres
Terraces		=17,605 ft
Underground Outlets	20	=7,872 ft.
Stream Crossings	8	

# WATERSHEDS

2016 was one of the busiest years for the Conservation District's Watershed Program in recent memory. In addition to the countless educational programs conducted throughout the year, the many watershed meetings coordinated through the Watershed Specialist, and the countless water monitoring activities carried out, the Watershed program was also busy conducting 4 large scale stream restoration projects throughout the county. All of these efforts focused on improving not only local water quality but improving overall water quality in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed as well.

Two stream restoration projects were completed through funding provided to the District from the Exelon Corporation. One was along the East Branch of the Octoraro Creek in Sadsbury Township on a local horse farm. The other was along the Little Cocalico Creek in West Cocalico Township in a neighborhood park in Reinholds. Both projects involved reshaping fragile or failing stream banks, installing instream fish habitat improvement devices, and then planting a 35 foot riparian buffer around the stream system to complete the project. These two projects alone totaled more than 3,000 linear feet of stream work, over 2,000 feet of stream bank fencing, and nearly 8 acres of riparian buffer implemented on impaired stream reaches in Lancaster County.



Recent stream restoration project on Cocalico Creek.



Recent stream restoration project on Mill Creek.



Two additional stream restoration projects were completed this year through funding provided by the Conservation Fund to local watershed associations. The Conservation District's Watershed Specialist acted as project coordinator for these projects for the all-volunteer watershed associations. One was along the Mill Creek on the border of Leacock and Upper Leacock Townships and the other one was along the Big Beaver Creek on the border between Providence and Strasburg Townships. Both of these projects were completed on Plain Sect farms in each watershed. Once again, unstable failing stream banks were targeted for restoration work, along with creation of instream habitat areas for two trout stocked waterways. To complete each project a riparian buffer of at least 35 feet was established within the new stream bank fencing area. The projects totaled more than 6,400 linear feet of stream work, nearly 10,000 feet of installed stream bank fencing, and over 10 acres of riparian buffer planted on two impaired streams in the county.

Four stream projects may not seem like a lot, but for a small watershed program department these goals are huge in a county with over 690 miles of impaired waterways. Add in the additional work being done by local volunteer watershed organizations, outside agencies, municipalities and many others and one can see that Lancaster is making progress to improve local water resources. 'One Stream at a Time' we are all making a difference.

—Matt Kofroth, Watershed Specialist

# DIRT & GRAVEL/Low Volume Roads Program

## Highlights

After a year of change for the Dirt & Gravel and Low Volume Road Programs in 2015, 2016 allowed the program to settle into a process and fund some new innovative projects while also staying true to the programs goals of “Better Roads, Cleaner Streams.” Both programs saw continued growth with new municipalities entering the program from both rural and suburban areas of the county. Regardless of where the participants were from in Lancaster County, the core values of the program still came through: Environmentally Sensitive Maintenance of Dirt & Gravel and Low Volume Roads to protect local water resources.

In 2016, the Program had two separate grant rounds for municipalities, one for Low Volume Road projects in February and one for Dirt and Gravel Road projects in August. The Low Volume Road Program saw 10 municipalities requesting funds for 15 Low Volume Roads totaling more than \$420,000. The program ultimately funded 6 municipalities for 19 Low Volume Road projects totally more than \$253,000 (see project funding list below). Within the Dirt & Gravel Road program 4 municipalities requested funds for 6 Dirt & Gravel Road projects throughout the county totaling more than \$136,000. The program awarded 5 municipalities over \$71,000 for 5 Dirt & Gravel Road projects (see project funded list).

Lancaster County’s Dirt & Gravel and Low Volume Road Programs are implementing significant countywide Environmentally Sensitive Maintenance Projects that are improving local water quality for the better. Look for this to continue well into the future.

–Matt Kofroth, Watershed Specialist

## Low Volume Road Projects Funded in 2016

Municipality	Road	Awarded
Bart	Gibble Hill Road	\$90,000
Rapho	Pinkerton Road	\$9,948
Drumore	Fishing Creek Hollow Road	\$13,961
Lancaster City	Morton Lane	\$42,937
Lancaster City	Alley 8NW	\$18,755
Rapho	Wisgarver Road	\$6,360
Earl	Snyder Road	\$56,873
Elizabeth	Lake View Drive	\$4,166
Rapho	Bricker Road	\$10,490

## Dirt & Gravel Road Projects Funded in 2016

Municipality	Road	Awarded
Fulton	Peters Creek Road	\$11,750
Drumore	Fishing Creek Road/ Fern Glenn Drive	\$30,000
Elizabeth	Segloch Road	\$2,000
Little Britain	Camp Road	\$25,000
Elizabeth	Pumping Station Road	\$2,500



Before

Before and After pictures of the Scott Road, Little Britain Township, Dirt & Gravel Road project completed in 2016.



After

Better  
Roads  
Cleaner  
Streams

# ANNUAL TREE SEEDLING SALE

The 42<sup>nd</sup> Annual Lancaster County Conservation District Tree Seedling Sale included 25,800 plants and trees filling 474 orders. A dedicated committee of Conservation District staff teamed up with fellow co-workers and Natural Resources Conservation Service staff along with several volunteers to fill orders. Hosted at the Farm and Home Center Auditorium, a first year Day of Sales table was popular. The day of sales table included several perennial and tree varieties adding over \$2,000 to the total funds raised of \$7,257. Free samples of compost were made available to customers courtesy of Manheim Township composting.

Six local Watershed Associations participated in the sale as a fundraiser for their individual groups. Over \$500 was refunded to these associations. Manheim FFA and Manor FFA also participated this year as a fundraiser for their chapters, earning back 20% of all sales. Nearly \$300 was refunded to their chapters.

The investment in the Tree Sale allows the Conservation District to continue valuable education programs relating to watersheds, wetlands, and conservation practices.

–Sallie Gregory and Matt Kofroth, Co-Chairs



# PLAIN SECT OUTREACH

“Shine a Light on Conservation” is a great way to describe the work of Dennis Eby, the Plain Sect Outreach Coordinator. 2016 involved Manure Management Plan farm visits from Ephrata to Peach Bottom and from Gap to Drumore and many farms in between. A total of 51 plans were written. A side benefit for writing Manure Management Plans (MMPs) was that five of those farmers applied for Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) assistance to help them build new manure storages. In addition to writing plans, Dennis helped coordinate four Manure Management Plan workshops in Mount Airy, New Holland, Manheim, and Kirkwood. The farmers attending the workshops represented approximately 4,000 acres of cropland.

This was the second year for the new Penn State no-till transplanter, funded by a Lancaster County Conservation District (LCCD) National Fish & Wildlife Federation (NFWF) grant in 2015. 28 farmers in Lancaster, Chester, York, and Lebanon counties used the transplanter to plant 65 acres of tobacco. Dennis coordinated and transported the planter throughout the planting season. In addition, Joe’s Machinery, Willow Street, built two planters like the Penn State planter and they were both available to rent. These transplanters planted an additional 100 acres of no-till tobacco and vegetables. This was seen as a leap forward in the adaption of no-till tobacco.

As in the past the Plain Sect Outreach Coordinator spoke at and took the LCCD display to many farmer meetings. This involved 21 PowerPoint presentations during the winter months and the display at another 14.

For years the farmers of Lancaster County have done many conservation projects on their farms without any government funding and these projects were not given credit in the Chesapeake Bay cleanup model. This included projects and practices like manure storages, barnyard work, stream fencing, stream buffers, cover crops, and no-till planting. A survey of Chesapeake Bay watershed farms was initiated as part of the PA Bay Restoration Strategy in late winter and spring. Dennis encouraged the farmers



at all the winter meetings to fill out and return the survey. To “Shine a Light on Conservation” more than 25% of Lancaster County farmers returned the survey. Penn State University is still working on the best management practices numbers for individual counties.

With the help of a grant, some new items have been added to the options available for the displays that showcase the work of LCCD for 2017. A 17” tablet makes it easy to have a continuous running PowerPoint at trade show events like the New Holland Vegetable Day and the Keystone Pork & Poultry Expo. New table covers help to better identify the LCCD display. The focus at winter meetings for 2017 will center on practical things that can be done around a farmstead to improve groundwater quality.

*–Dennis Eby, Plainsect Outreach Coordinator*

# CONSERVATION EDUCATION



Just as a light does not shine without a spark; Jacques Cousteau reminded us “We cannot talk about conservation without first talking about education”. The District Education program included 6,612 participants who attended 226 programs. The Lancaster County Conservation District Conservation Educator presentations addressed the PA Science/Technology, and Environment and Ecology Standards featuring natural resources, watersheds, water conservation, and soil. Lessons and presentations regarding the wise use of our natural resources took place in the classroom and in the field.

2016 lit up with a new education slogan, “a Healthy Bay Takes Root in Trees”. The power of trees to improve water quality and stabilize soil was highlighted in a calendar resource for teachers published with support from an Atlantic Sunrise Community Grant. Lessons and the calendar were then linked *continued on next page*

# CONSERVATION EDUCATION CONTINUED

to the District website so that teachers can use the lesson resources with a few simple clicks.

The District Educator partnered with the Library System of Lancaster County and visited each of the county's 17 community based libraries. Participants may have come to presentations to learn about spiders, vertebrates, and water that we eat, however; they were also introduced to the mission and purpose of the Conservation District.

Kaitlin McDonald, the District's summer intern brought new ideas to District programming and did an outstanding job assisting both the Education program and the Watershed program. She appreciated the diversity of challenges and opportunities assisting in fish surveys, stream restoration projects, a teacher training, and the Youth Conservation School. With her help the District was able to collect evaluation data using *Kahoot!*: a collection of questions involving players in a web based social and game like learning environment. She also expanded an award program honoring students at Conservation School. Kaitlin was a great asset to the District during her short stay over the summer.

Educational programming is supported in various ways. The Extraordinary Give, the largest one day of giving in Lancaster County was truly extraordinary in 2016. More than \$3,400 was raised in support of Lancaster County Envirothons and Youth Conservation School.



Lancaster County Junior Envirothon

## Lancaster County Envirothons

The Lancaster County Junior Envirothon, an academic environmental contest for students in grades 3-6 was held at the Lancaster County Central Park in May. The event is organized by a planning committee made up of the Lancaster County Conservation District, PA Game Commission, Lancaster County Parks and Recreation, and the Lancaster County Bird Club. Teachers and parents organized students in teams of 5 to demonstrate their natural knowledge at 4 stations relating to forest ecosystems: mammals, trees, birds, and pollinators. Eleven schools representing 6 school districts brought 38 teams with 190 students participating.

### Event Results

3<sup>rd</sup> grade 1<sup>st</sup> place – Bucher Elementary

4<sup>th</sup> grade 1<sup>st</sup> place – Doe Run Elementary

5<sup>th</sup> grade 1<sup>st</sup> place – Landis Run Intermediate

6<sup>th</sup> grade 1<sup>st</sup> place – Landis Run Intermediate

The Lancaster County Senior High Envirothon was hosted by the Conservation District included 8 high schools, 96 participants with 19 teams of students. Warwick High School placed first and represented the county at the State Envirothon placing 32<sup>nd</sup>. The Envirothon programs involve a team effort of teachers and parents

along with Conservation District staff, volunteers, and generous donations from corporations and individuals. Hempfield High School and Solanco High School participated this year after many years. Both schools supported new teachers to the program. All of the students who competed in the Senior High event had also participated in the Junior Envirothon program. Collaborating with John Chibirka, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), three soil study videos were produced and made available through You Tube for teachers and students. The videos were favorably received. The impact was visible at the contest when students were able to make soil ribbons based on watching the videos.

Event Results (Schools are able to enter 3 teams)

1<sup>st</sup> – Warwick      3<sup>rd</sup> – Hempfield      5<sup>th</sup> - Hempfield

2<sup>nd</sup> – Penn Manor      4<sup>th</sup> – McCaskey

## Lancaster County Youth Conservation School

The 38<sup>th</sup> Lancaster County Youth Conservation School (YCS) was held July 24-30 with 20 students: 4 females and 16 males. A total of 1,092 student graduates have completed the program. The school is a cooperative partnership of the Lancaster County Conservation District and the Federated Sportsmen of Lancaster County. Federated Sportsmen along with community organizations sponsored student tuitions for the week. The Northern Lancaster County Game and Fish Protective Association closed it grounds to open the Conservation School (one of the warmest weeks of the school program ever). Sonia Wasco volunteered as Co-Director. An incredibly dedicated group of volunteers provided leadership for the students. Each volunteer stepped away from summer jobs and full time work to give their time to the program.

Seven days goes by quickly, however, it also seems just long enough for students to dive into new interests, build friendships, and try new things. The majority of students this year were 15-16 years old who worked exceptionally well together demonstrating tolerance and acceptance which made for a great week of learning.

Along with traditional elements of the school program such as archery, firearm safety, canoeing, survival, orienteering, and streambank restoration, student field trips visited the International Water Company and the Ephrata Water Filtration Plant. These experiences illustrated a global perspective of bringing clean water to third world countries or natural disasters through solar power and locally how stream water and groundwater combine to bring drinking water to one Lancaster County community.

The study focus for the week centered on "Open Space Is Not Free": Middlecreek Wildlife Management Area. Students looked at differing perspectives along with different agencies and organizations. Exploring the visitor center and touring the property revealed the diversity of this unique property. They developed a funding plan working as a group and presented their ideas to a panel of conservation minded individuals at the conclusion of the program.

Conservation School, Envirothons, and District presentations never dim the light on learning.

–Sallie Gregory, Education Coordinator



Youth Conservation School



# OMBUDSMAN PROGRAM

To “shine a light on” what the Ombudsman Program does, would require a pretty far-reaching spotlight, because of the broad nature of the program. Some days the light would focus on a phone, educating neighbors about their agricultural neighbor, or handling fly complaints. Some days the light would shine on a computer, where educational brochures for statewide distribution are created. Bright light actually makes reading a zoning ordinance easier, while checking if the wording is favorable to agriculture, and then suggesting actions that farmers may take. The light shines when the Ombudsman Program can de-escalate a neighborhood situation, or smooth out a concern between a farmer and a municipality.

The Ombudsman Program is a proponent of:

- \* farmers being good neighbors and proactively managing their farms to limit potential nuisance situations
- \* non-farm neighbors understanding and respecting agriculture
- \* municipalities supporting agriculture through ordinances and actions
- \* contractors and farmers following good conservation practices

These are not new concepts, but when a new situation arises these “old” concepts sometimes need explained or attained in a new light.

The Ombudsman Program is available to help Conservation Districts, farmers, municipalities, and concerned citizens minimize or eliminate controversy sparked by agricultural operations, and therefore enable agriculture to be viable in those areas. The Program also creates workshops, publications, or training opportunities to fill educational needs of farmers, municipalities and agency staff.



Legislative and community members receiving instructions on how to plant trees in a vegetative buffer along Muddy Run in Intercourse during Ag Week 2016.

In 2016, the Ombudsman in Eastern PA, maintained involvement in many work groups, wrote text and arranged photos for assorted publications, developed pro-active educational sessions, and offered others involved in contentious situations liaison or facilitation services. Examples include:

- \* Lancaster County Agricultural Council
- \* Lancaster County Coalition for Smart Growth
- \* South Central Task Force Agriculture Subcommittee
- \* Farm monitoring for Farm and Ranchland Protection Program (FRPP) under NRCS direction
- \* Farm verification visits for Lancaster Ag Preservation easements under Lanc. Ag Preserve Board direction
- \* Began creating “The Time is Now” brochure for statewide distribution stressing action to get farmers into baseline compliance with PA ag-related regulations.
- \* Revised and had new version printed of Ag BMP Guide for distribution among farmers

- \* Working with mushroom industry related to education about mushroom phorid flies in southeastern PA
- \* Overhauled the “Livestock and Poultry Mortality Disposal in PA” brochure for statewide distribution
- \* Began partnering with Centers for Dairy and Beef Excellence to offer Ag Erosion and Sediment plan writing workshops to help farmers be in compliance with baseline requirements in PA
- \* Provided educational input to municipalities, farmers and Conservation Districts regarding land use, ordinances and permitting issues, neighbor relations issues, etc.
- \* LCCD committees and annual events
- \* Agriculturally-related fly complaint response coordination in Eastern PA (20 complaints in 2016)



FFA members and the community at a Showcase Event of the Lampeter-Strasburg High School FFA Chapter, recognized by the PA Department of Agriculture for its excellent work. The event stressed the countless and varied careers available in the agricultural and food industries.

Special Projects in 2016:

To shine a positive light on agriculture, the Ombudsman assists the Lancaster County Agriculture Council as a Project Manager. In 2016, Shelly worked with Lancaster Barnstormers to offer an “All Star” Farm Show event, which highlighted agriculture as the #1 industry in Lancaster County to local fans and traveling teams during the “All Star” baseball game. Shelly also coordinated the efforts of the Ag Council, Lancaster Farming newspaper, Lancaster Newspapers and the Lancaster Chamber, to organize the 2<sup>nd</sup> annual “Lancaster County Ag Week” accentuating the diversity and impact of agriculture in Lancaster County and beyond. This week-long event featured daily and/or weekly events, such as:

- \* careers in agriculture and the food industry
- \* economic impacts of agriculture
- \* agriculture as part of the solution to water quality improvement
- \* behind-the-scenes tours of agri-businesses
- \* “Denim and Pearls” dinner event featuring Lancaster County foods
- \* hands-on opportunity for the public to help plant a vegetative buffer along a stream in Gordonville

—Shelly Dehoff, Ombudsman



Attendees at the “Denim and Pearls” dinner event featuring Lancaster County foods, hosted by Pheasant Run Farm B&B in Marticville



# NATIONAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE

There's a light shining on the Chesapeake Bay...and to be more specific, a light shining on Lancaster County and the effect that activities in the county have on the Bay. It's a big, bright, shining spotlight. While some may see this as a negative, as a way to only identify all the work that has yet to be done, I think it's best to see it as an opportunity. It's an opportunity for the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), our partners and customers to continue to shine a light on the conservation efforts that have taken place during the last year and the decades before.

The Lancaster Field Office was once again fortunate to see an increase in 2016 in federal financial assistance dollars through our various conservation programs. In fact, in an effort to boost conservation opportunities for producers in the county and clearly demonstrate the agency's commitment to assisting producers in the Chesapeake Bay watershed, several pots of additional funding were directed to Lancaster County by NRCS Headquarters late into the fiscal year. With the addition of 51 new contracts, the Field Office closed out the fiscal year with a total of 123 active financial assistance contracts.

NRCS Conservation Program	# of 2016 Contracts	Contract \$s Obligated
EQIP	36	\$2,296,030
RCPP	2	\$466,807
CSP	10	\$269,740
WRP/WRE	3	\$45,846
TOTAL	51	\$3,078,423

As we all know though, it doesn't just end with writing conservation plans and obligating funding in a contract. Staff continued to work non-stop with producers to survey, design and construct conservation practices from previous year projects. Staff also provide assistance to producers looking to try out new ideas, technologies and initiatives such as implementing mixed cover crops into their rotations, utilizing advanced nitrogen tests like Pre-sidedress Soil Nitrate Test (PSNT) and Corn Stalk Nitrate Test (CSNT) to more efficiently manage their nutrients, establishing pollinator habitat to improve production and reduce the use of pesticides. Through all these efforts Lancaster County producers received almost \$1.6 million in financial assistance dollars for the implementation of practices. Keep in mind, that doesn't even begin to cover all the great work that producers in the county choose to do on their own.



Grass Fed Cows



Rainfall simulator

It's essential to our mission and important to our staff to keep local producers aware of the technical and financial assistance opportunities available through our agency. It's not that uncommon to come across a producer in the county that doesn't know about the services provided by NRCS and the Conservation District. In our efforts to further improve the health of the Bay we need to continue to do outreach to our ag community about conservation opportunities that exist in the County. NRCS field staff participated in multiple education and outreach events throughout the year, at both the State and Local level in order to do so.

Moving forward, we hope to extend our efforts to all corners of the county. PA NRCS has committed \$4 million dollars in financial assistance dollars to Lancaster County in 2017. With that, we all have our work cut out for us. Only through collaborative efforts with our conservation partners can we meet the needs of our customers. We should continue to shine the spotlight on the great work that's been done in the past, and use those projects as an example to others farmers that are just beginning to consider their role in the clean-up of the Bay. There are so many opportunities out there for us at this time. By reaching out to both our existing and new customers, we can certainly continue to be leader in natural resource conservation in PA and throughout our country.

—Heather L. Grove, NRCS District Conservationist

NRCS Conservation Practice	Extent Installed
Waste Storage Facilities	13 no
Diversions	4,060 ft
Fence	23,941 ft
Grassed Waterways	18.2 ac
Heavy Use Area Protection	.9 ac
Trails & Walkways	1,762 ft
Stream Crossings	12 no
Terraces	32,886 ft
Watering Facilities	15 no
Waste Transfer System	11 no
CREP Riparian Forest Buffer	101 ac
WRP/E Wetland Restoration	34.5 ac





## 2016 FINANCIAL REPORT

Shine the light on Conservation using the CREP program. The Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) is now in its 17<sup>th</sup> year and the program continues to shine and be extremely beneficial to landowners, water quality, and wildlife habitat just to name a few. 2016 and the beginning of 2017 like the past few years have been busy with new interest from landowners and new sign ups in the program. Not only does the riparian buffer practice continue to be popular but several landowners and farmers have contacted Jenna Emore from Pheasants Forever to enroll high erodible cropland into the program. Enrolling highly erodible land was part of the original program when CREP started in 2000 and was discontinued in 2006. These practices have been recently added back into the CREP program. Landowners have the option of planting native warm grasses, native cool grasses, introduced cool season grasses, and even upland wildlife habitat which has a native tree and shrub component on steep farm ground with a slope of 8% or higher.

Program interest has increased tremendously the past few years due to an increase of landowners becoming concerned with water quality, herd health, and wildlife habitat. There are also other organizations in Lancaster County promoting CREP buffers in combination with the installation of best management practices.

Lancaster County is shining because there have been 29 new CREP plans written in the past year. There is a total of 130.9 acres of riparian buffer and 41.5 acres of grassland or wildlife habitat practices that have been or will be implemented soon. New buffers are being planted in watersheds all over Lancaster County. The acreages range from an acre to 12 acres of riparian buffer and an acre to 24 acres for the highly erodible practices. The work our farmers and landowners are doing in conjunction with the CREP program is outstanding.

*–Ashley Spotts, Restoration Specialist, Chesapeake Bay Foundation*



Native warm season grass with a riparian buffer in the background both enrolled in the CREP program.

### INCOME

County Funding	242,062.56
Program Contracts	1,286,029.00
LCCD Grant Administration	178,309.15
Interest Income	8,544.11
Fee Income	540,273.61
Sales Income	37,668.64
Activity Income	19,174.22
Grant Income	635,663.72
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>2,947,725.01</b>

### EXPENSE

Staff Salaries	1,418,987.56
Employee Benefits	438,702.24
Travel Expenses	28,346.38
Vehicle Purchases	27,335.00
Meeting Expenses	16,913.49
Supplies	18,548.25
Communication Costs	22,150.25
Postage and Meter Rental	7,529.06
Office Rent	74,830.07
Equipment and IT Support	58,320.74
Administrative	39,965.78
Miscellaneous	1,738.02
District Activities	49,216.34
BMP/Grant Projects	483,451.82
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>2,686,035.00</b>

### 2016 NET CHANGE IN CASH ASSETS

General Operations & Reserve	67,163.61
E&S Department	35,861.38
Activities	6,773.92
Grants	151,891.10
<b>Net Change</b>	<b>261,690.01</b>

## Reboot Recap: Cultivating Compliance

Pennsylvania's Comprehensive Strategy to Improve Water Quality in the state and the Chesapeake Bay Watershed was unveiled in 2016. This Reboot Plan had co-equal goals for success: clean water and viable farms. It relied on creating a "culture of compliance" for the farming community and Conservation Districts. The new strategy required farm verification visits to ensure farmers had the state required Ag Erosion & Sedimentation plan and if applicable a Manure Management Plan. The State Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) also obligated Districts to comply by securing a significant portion of funding to District staff completing these visits.

The District spent nine months and about 350 combined staff hours attending meetings at the federal, state, and local levels helping to develop the new policies. The Lancaster County Conservation District (LCCD) created a Compliance Team that was tasked to complete our Ag Team's collective goal of completing

300 visits per year. After several DEP initiated delays, a finalized agreement was signed by the LCCD Board of Directors at the August Board meeting. The Conservation District sent a letter to 300 random farmers we didn't have in the District database and the team began scheduling farm visits in early September. By December 31, 99 visits were completed finding that nearly 50% had the required plans. Of the remaining operators, 45 had taken steps toward acquiring their plans by the end of the 90 day grace period. Five farmers failed to take any action to produce a plan and they were forwarded to DEP for follow up actions. The Compliance Team will need to complete 200 more visits by the July 1 deadline before identifying and visiting the next round of 300 farms. After four months, the Conservation District has been able to make significant strides forward moving previously unreached operators in the right direction and cataloging the practices and improvements of those who were already there.

*–Chris Thompson, Administrator*

## Board of Directors

Kenneth Meck, *Chairman*  
Robert Shearer, *Vice Chairman*  
Daniel C. Heller, *Treasurer*  
Herb Kreider  
Roger Rohrer  
Richard Shellenberger  
Jay Snyder  
Sonia Wasco  
Craig Lehman, *County Commissioner*  
Donald M. Robinson, *Dir. Emeritus*

## Associate Directors

Darrell Becker  
Frank R. Burkhart  
Lisa A. Graybeal  
Ernest M. Orr, Jr.  
Gregory Strausser  
Robert E. Wagner  
Kent Weaver

## District Advisors

John Beiler  
James E. Hershey  
Matthew J. Mack  
David D. Miller  
Kenneth M. Rutt  
Kathleen V. Schreiber  
Deb Seibert  
Alfred Wanner Jr.  
Matthew Young  
Cynthia Zawrotuk

## Lancaster County Conservation District Staff

### Administration

Christopher Thompson, *Administrator*  
Gerald Heistand, *Business Manager*  
Paula Harnish, *Administrative Secretary*  
Beverly Parmer, *Sec./Receptionist*  
Holly Shaub, *Sec./Receptionist*

### Erosion and Sedimentation

Nate Kurtz, *Department Manager*  
Nevin Greiner, *Resource Conservationist*  
Samantha Gordon, *Erosion Control Tech*  
Evan Martin, *Erosion Control Tech*  
Emily Broich, *Erosion Control Tech*  
Jim Fricke, *Erosion Control Tech*  
Suzanne Kopp, *E & S Secretary*

## Agriculture

Jeff Hill, *Ag. Program Manager*  
Kevin Seibert, *Ag Compliance Coordinator*  
James Saltsman, *Ag Eng Tech Spec*  
Adam Hartz, *Ag Eng Tech Spec*  
Kent Bitting, *Professional Engineer*  
Kate Bresaw, *Ag Compliance Insp*  
Justin Furnia, *Ag Compliance Insp*  
Greg Heigel, *Ag Conservation Tech*  
Keith Lutz, *Ag Conservation Tech*  
Kevin Lutz, *Ag Conservation Tech*  
Steven Reiff, *Ag Conservation Tech*  
Maddie Klein, *Ag Conservation Tech*  
Eric Knoll, *Ag Conservation Tech*  
Leslie Weller, *Ag Conservation Tech*  
Dennis Eby, *Plain Sect Outreach*

## Education and Outreach

Matthew Kofroth, *Watershed Specialist*  
Sallie Gregory, *Education Coordinator*  
Shelly Dehoff, *Ag/Public Liaison*

## USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

Heather Grove, *District Conservationist*  
Kefeni Kejela, *Soil Conservation/District Conservationist*  
Gary Ballina, *Civil Engineering Tech*  
Omer Brubaker, *Natural Resource Specialist*  
Dayanna Estades, *Soil Conservationist*  
Mark Myers, *Soil Conservationist*  
Sally Barnes, *Soil Conservation Tech*  
Melissa Piper-Nelson, *Program Assistant*  
Ashley Spotts, *Restoration Specialist-CBF*  
Jeff Sholly, *TAG Engineer*  
Jenna Emore, *Wildlife Biologist, Pheasants Forever*

## Vision Statement

The Lancaster County Conservation District will be the premiere conservation organization regarded by all citizens as a leader in the innovative stewardship of our natural resources. We will be a source of up-to-date technical assistance to address environmental concerns and a central clearinghouse providing credible, current information and education regarding the environment. We will coordinate environmental protection for future generations while encouraging profitable business enterprises.

**The mission** of the Lancaster County Conservation District is to focus on the **stewardship** of land, water, and other natural resources; to make all citizens **aware** of the interrelationships between human activities and the natural environment; to provide **assistance** for current efforts in natural resource conservation; to develop and implement **programs** which promote the stewardship of natural resources; and to enlist and coordinate help from public and private sources in accomplishing this mission.



## LANCASTER COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT

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All photos within this report provided by LCCD and NRCS.