

# OUR MISSION IS ACTION



LANCASTER COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT

2015 ANNUAL REPORT

# CHAIRPERSON'S MESSAGE

You'll find a lot of moving pictures in this annual report. Technically, they're not "moving pictures" as in cinema; rather they reflect the Conservation District staff, volunteers, students, and board members putting Our Mission in Action. To the streams, fields, or classroom we go wherever we're asked to promote stewardship of our natural resources, and implement programs that build awareness and the conservation ethic.

The Conservation District is the local agency responsible for connecting and coordinating conservation activities throughout Lancaster County. With traditional roots in assisting agriculture, new dimensions have been added over the past 65 years to include erosion control within the building industry, watersheds, dirt and gravel road maintenance, and student education with a focus on soil and water issues. Partnerships with fellow natural resource agencies have established strength in the web of understanding that all natural resources are connected.

The true measure of our mission is the impact we have conserving natural resources and enabling others to take action. We invite you to join in the journey.

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

## Board Members



*(Back) Sonia Wasco, Roger Rohrer, Herb Kreider, Jay Snyder, Richard Shellenberger, Don Robinson, Director Emeritus.  
(Front) Dan Heller, Robert Shearer, Ken Meck, County Commissioner Craig Lehman*

## Associate Board Members



*(Left to Right) Frank Burkhart, Ernest Orr, Robert Wagner.  
Absent from Photo: Darrell Becker, Gregory Strausser, Kent Weaver, Lisa Graybeal, Stuart Herr*



*Pollinator habitat planted in an organic buffer next to cornfield.*

## 2015 Conservation District Award Winners

Outstanding Cooperator	Tom and Andrew Bollinger Family Farm
Watershed Volunteer Awards	Pat Fasano and Henry Beiler
Conservation Educator Award	Eric Snavelly, Manheim Central S D
Cooperating Agency Award	Stroud Water Research Center
Youth Conservation School Service Award	Brad Clubb, Flyway Excavating
Conservation Service Awards	Frank Burkhart, Don Robinson, and Carol Harnish
Building Industry Conservation Award	R S Brubacher and Sons

# EROSION AND SEDIMENTATION



*New Gas Pipeline*

When we flip a light switch, turn the heat up, or turn on the TV, we rarely stop to think about the energy it takes to make that happen. We often take for granted the sources of energy that we use on a daily basis, such as electricity and natural gas. In 2015, the Erosion and Sedimentation (E&S) department was actively involved in a variety of projects that shed light on the infrastructure required to provide these comforts to Lancaster County residents. The installation of new gas pipelines, the maintenance of aerial utility lines, upgrades to large electrical substations, and improvements to hydroelectric dams were just some of the infrastructure projects that occurred this year in the county. The E&S staff worked in several different roles to review, permit, and inspect the construction of these energy related projects, ensuring that the proper erosion and sediment controls were installed during their construction.

These infrastructure projects were accompanied by the continued submissions of agricultural projects, residential subdivisions, and commercial building projects to produce an increased workload for the E&S team in 2015. Compared to 2014, 2015 had a 13% increase in the number of E&S Plan reviews, a 40% increase in the number of site inspections performed, and a 21% increase in Chapter 105 general permits issued. Though the District review fee schedule remained unchanged, review fees collected in 2015 totaled \$458,275, a sharp increase from the \$346,125 collected in 2014. Though total plans were up, many projects were smaller in scope than in 2014, as total disturbed

area in the county was 2207 acres, down from 2564 acres in 2014. The increase in workload provided the opportunity to hire Samantha Gordon as a fifth E&S Technician. Samantha now covers the middle section of the county, south of Route 30, including Salisbury, Sadsbury, Bart, Colerain, Eden, Strasburg, Providence, Pequea, Conestoga, Martic, and Manor Townships. Overall, 2015 was a busy, but productive, year for the E&S team.

*–Evan Martin, Erosion Control Technician*

## 2015 Chapter 102/National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES)/Chapter 105 Activity

E&S Plan Reviews Performed	638
Project Acres	10261
Disturbed Acres	2207
Review Fees Collected	\$458,275
General NPDES Permits Processed	139
Ind. NPDES Permits Processed	18
NPDES Permit Fees Collected	\$102,000
Complaints Received	86
Site Inspections	1102
Technical Assistance	2959
Enforcement Actions	0
Ch. 105 General Permits Issued	115



*New Solar Panels Installed*

*Improvements made to Holtwood Dam.*



# AGRICULTURE

“Mission in Action”... is there any better topic to be able to showcase the efforts of the agriculture staff?

The District's agriculture technicians are widely regarded as the best group of technicians in the state, with their knowledge, ability, and forward thinking. This group's influence has had great impacts in Lancaster County. In 2015, that influence made its way beyond Lancaster County. Technicians were nominated and approved as Chesapeake Bay sub-committee members, attended state meetings, made presentations locally, and played an integral part in future water quality improvements. The District's Practice Keeper database which illustrates conservation practices in place throughout the county continued to gain traction, as other conservation districts and state conservation organizations signed on to be on the cutting edge of data recording. This would have been enough to warrant a handshake and job well done; however, we were just getting started!

The District's agriculture technicians managed to carry and successfully navigate through a diverse workload. From the education and outreach efforts conducted in the Earl and East Earl townships, to the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) Altria grant that was developed to help tobacco farmers obtain Conservation Plans, technicians were busy.

108 Conservation/Ag Erosion and Sedimentation Plans were written for over 5,400 acres. 94 Nutrient Management Plans were reviewed and approved. Cost share programs, including Exelon, PPL, Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP), and Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP), provided support for the installation of best management practices.

2015 was a banner year on all accounts, and the setup for 2016 is nothing short of being historic.

Best Management Practices totaled more than 140 practices installed including the following.

- 13 Waste Storages
- 25 Grassed Waterways covering more than 14 total acres.
- 10 Terraces adding to over 12,000 total feet.
- 14 Underground Outlets that support more than 3,900 feet.
- 6 Stream Crossings.

*No till tobacco*

*—Jeff Hill, Ag Program Manager*



*Heavy use area that animals can stand on with manure storage below*



## Best Management Practices

BMP	Number	
Waste Storages	13	
Grassed Waterways	25	>14 acres
Terraces	10	>12,000 ft
Underground Outlets	14	>3900 ft.
Stream Crossings	6	

*Ag technician reviews conservation plan*



# PLAIN SECT OUTREACH



*No till planter available for farmers to borrow*

Dennis Eby, the Lancaster County Conservation District Plain Sect Outreach Coordinator, was involved with many activities. Highlights from several 2015 activities are included in this article.

Back in 2013 Dennis got involved with Eastern Lancaster County (ELANCO) Source Water Protection Steering Committee. The group developed different committees: home owners, industrial, and agriculture, with agriculture being the most active. The agriculture group sponsored a farmer meeting with Ray Archuleta, Conservation Agronomist with Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), as the speaker at Shady Maple, December 2013. With nearly 400 ELANCO farmers in attendance, much of the success of that meeting was related to an Old Order Mennonite, Aaron Hurst's involvement and support.

Lancaster Farmland Trust received a grant to do small workshops throughout the winter of 2015 in the ELANCO area. A pesticide meeting, two manure workshops, and two no-till workshops were held at Aaron's farm supply store in Terre Hill. Aaron was instrumental in getting most of the farmers to attend just as he had years before. At the second manure workshop, the Old Order Mennonite group in attendance requested that the Lancaster County Conservation District (LCCD) hold a Manure Management Plan workshop at Aaron's store, at which they could complete an official Manure Management Plan. A date was set and several weeks later the LCCD Agriculture Technicians held the workshop with 25 farmers in attendance, representing 1,000 acres in the ELANCO area. Twelve of those farmers requested Agriculture Erosion and Sedimentation Plans.

A new no-till rental transplanter, funded by a National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) grant finished a busy planting season on August 24, planting the last plot of broccoli. Six growers used the planter for vegetables including broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower,

and pumpkins totaling 14.5 acres. 18 farmers used it to plant no-till tobacco for a total of 31.5 acres. A few pumpkin and tobacco producers had to be turned away because the planter was in use. In comparison, in 2014 the older model rental planter was used by 3 farmers for tobacco with a total of 6 acres and 7 vegetable growers used it for 14 acres. Dennis coordinated and transported the planter throughout the 2015 planting season. In addition, two no-till, conventional side-by-side tobacco plots were planted. The one plot was at an Altria burley tobacco trial location and members of the Altria corporation who sponsored the rental transplanter held an afternoon field day at that location in July. Dennis along with Jeff Graybill, Penn State Extension Agronomist, participated with about 40 growers in attendance. At the second location, Dennis and Jeff held a low cost, morning field day, in early August, with 12 growers in attendance, several coming from Northumberland County.

Assisting farmers to develop Manure Management Plans has become an increasing popular activity for Dennis. 32 plans were completed during 2015. Completing a manure management plan for a farmer includes an hour long presentation from a laptop computer, usually taking place in the farmhouse kitchen. This presentation covers all the Pennsylvania manure hauling guidelines. Next information is gathered about cropping rotation and manure spreading timing and rates. The plan is then completed at the Conservation District office and delivered back to the farmer, making sure the farmer understands all aspects of the plan.

The focus for 2016 Plain Sect outreach will be all about what farmers can do to improve the quality of water in the many streams of Lancaster County.

*—Dennis Eby, Plain Sect Outreach Coordinator*

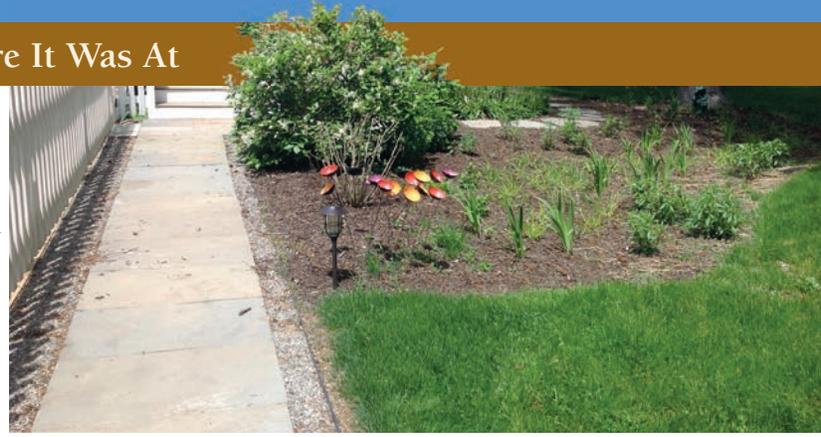
*Farmers participate in no till planter field day*



# WATERSHEDS:

## Green Stormwater Infrastructure Was Where It Was At

One of the largest projects the District's Watershed Program was involved with in 2015 was the project management and oversight of the \$400,000 Little Conestoga Watershed Partnership Initiative Grant from the National Fish & Wildlife Foundation. "The Little Conestoga Partnership: A Community Watershed Approach to Stormwater Management" was a collaborative partnership project focused on addressing stormwater issues in a highly suburban/urban watershed. The project was innovative in its approach, scope, and expected outcomes. The approach sought to embrace the region's agricultural heritage by promoting the lessons of successful farm leaders in the watershed who have adopted conservation practices through conservation planning, nutrient management, and implementation of best management practices (BMP), and showcase these successes as a model for urban/suburban landowners. The planning/cost share model that has worked well in agriculture was brought to the urban/suburban landscape, incentivizing adoption of nutrient management on turf acreage and green infrastructure stormwater practices on urban/suburban lands.



*Permeable walkway and rain garden project*

Accomplishments from the Little Conestoga Watershed Partnership Included;

- The creation of a state-of-the-art geospatial database that allows the Lancaster County Conservation District to track and record agricultural, watershed, and stormwater best management practices in a more efficient manner for reporting, assessing, and an overall holistic view of conservation happenings in Lancaster County.
- Nearly 8,000 *Homeowner's Guide to Stormwater* publications were distributed to residents in the Little Conestoga Watershed to help them create stormwater management plans for their properties. This number does not count the nearly 1,000 views of the YouTube video that residents watched about the guide and how to use it, or the countless participants that completed the guide online through the web based application, or the 30 or so residents that took part in the Train-the-Trainer Workshops that walked participants through the guide.
- Over 25 highly visible properties within the watershed had stormwater plans created for them and over 60 stormwater best management practices were implemented on these properties through the innovative Healthy Watershed Stormwater Incentives Cost Share Program which allowed not only great projects to be showcased but educated local landscape professionals on small but effective stormwater BMP installation.
- A Sustainable Stormwater Solutions Cost Benefit Analysis Report that highlighted cost effective ways to reduce nutrient and sediment loads on a regional approach for select projects in the Little Conestoga Watershed while still highlighting smaller scale residential projects.
- Finally, the creation of a Little Conestoga Watershed Action Plan document that the local watershed alliance can use as a stepping stone to future water quality improvement projects throughout the watershed. In addition, municipalities can use this plan as a tool in their MS4 permitting requirements and Chesapeake Bay Pollution Reduction Plan. The community and county can use the action plan as a template for development of similar plans throughout Lancaster County.

*—Matt Kofroth, Watershed Specialist*

### *Volunteer riparian buffer planting and project sign*



# DIRT & GRAVEL/Low Volume Roads Program



Above: Pinkerton Road Before. Right: Pinkerton Road After

2015 was a year of changes for the Dirt & Gravel and Low Volume Roads Program in Lancaster. The program was granted an incredible funding increase in 2015, a huge influx of new municipalities became interested in the program, new ideas were explored, and the start of a new aspect of road maintenance entitled Low Volume Roads. Within all of these changes, the program still came down to the core of its values: environmentally sensitive maintenance of Dirt & Gravel and Low Volume Roads in order to protect local water resources, and that has not changed. In 2015 the Program sponsored two separate grant rounds for municipality applications, one for Low Volume Road projects in February and then one for Dirt and Gravel Road projects in August. The Low Volume Road Program involved 9 municipalities requesting funds for 18 Low Volume Roads totaling more than \$800,000. The program ultimately funded 8 municipalities for 13 projects totaling more than \$198,000 (see project funding list). 6 Municipalities requested funds for 11 Dirt & Gravel Road projects throughout the county totaling more than \$182,000. The program awarded 6 municipalities over \$80,000 for 8 Dirt & Gravel Road projects (see project funding list). The bottom-line is that the Lancaster County Dirt & Gravel and Low Volume Road Program has adapted to change very well and has implemented countywide significant environmentally sensitive maintenance projects that ARE improving local water quality. Look for this to continue well into the future.

## Low Volume Road Projects Funded in 2015

Municipality	Road	Awarded
Fulton	Goat Hill Road	\$7,000
Bart	Heyberger Road	\$15,000
Rapho	Pinkerton Road	\$13,091
Providence	Hopkins Mill Road	\$5,183
Lancaster City	Alley 156	\$21,396
Lancaster City	Alley 142	\$34,760
Rapho	Wisgarver Road	\$7,783
Lancaster City	Hand Avenue	\$24,434
Lancaster City	Reynolds Avenue	\$26,774
Rapho	Shelly Road	\$4,443
West Lampeter	Otsu Road	\$6,735
Upper Leacock	Hess Road	\$6,769
East Lampeter	Bowman Road	\$25,000

## Dirt & Gravel Road Projects Funded in 2015

Municipality	Road	Awarded
Fulton	Arcadia Trace Road	\$5,000
Drumore	Fishing Creek Road/ Fern Glenn Drive	\$15,000
Elizabeth	Segloch Road	\$1,350
Little Britain	Pine Grove Road	\$25,000
Little Britain	Scott Road	\$15,000
Eden	Hess Road	\$15,000
Elizabeth	Pumping Station Road	\$1,800
Sadsbury	Buck Hill Road	\$2,000



Conservation District staff setting up for tree sale pick up

# TREE SALE

The 41<sup>st</sup> Annual Lancaster County Conservation District Tree Seedling Sale distributed 25,400 items filling 482 orders. Co-chairs Sallie Gregory and Matt Kofroth worked with a dedicated committee to plan and implement the successful event. Conservation District staff teamed up with Natural Resources Conservation Service staff and a group of volunteers to fill orders. Hosted at the Farm and Home Center Auditorium, the event also included educational displays from the Bureau of Forestry and the Lancaster County Solid Waste Management Authority. Free samples of compost were made available to customers courtesy of Manheim Township composting.

Seven local Watershed Associations participated in the sale as a fundraiser for their individual groups. Over \$750 was refunded to these associations. Two FFA Chapters also participated this year as a fundraiser for their chapters. 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

## Tree Sale Review

Totals	2013	2014	2015
Total Seedlings	22,500	23,200	25,400
Total Order	469	433	482
Total Receipts	\$30,215	\$30,995	\$32,524
Total Expenses	\$25,746	\$25,897	\$26,371
Total Funds Raised	\$4,469	\$5,098	\$6,153

# CONSERVATION EDUCATION

Conservation Education has a mission that learning is always in motion for all ages throughout Lancaster County. Sallie Gregory, Education Coordinator, provided 98 programs to 5,946 residents. 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.

Partnering with the Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) education department, Sallie presented a teacher training relating agriculture to high school design teams made up of science, technology, and math teachers. A second teacher training was coordinated with CBF for high school teachers who advise Senior High Envirothon teams. 94 Teachers participated throughout the summer.

The Conservation District was able to employ two summer interns. Leslie Weller and Francesca Formica both did incredible jobs during the internship preparing for their senior year in college. Leslie and Francesca provided support for Education Programs such as teacher trainings, Oregon Dairy Family Farm Days, and Youth Conservation School. They also assisted Watershed Programs including stream and fish surveys, as well as grant and GIS reporting. Their support in the office and in the field was a wonderful asset for the District.

The Lancaster County Junior Envirothon, an academic environmental contest for students in grades 3-6 was held at the

The Lancaster County Senior High Envirothon was hosted by the Conservation District with 8 high schools represented by 96 participants with 20 teams of students. Warwick High School placed first and represented the county at the State Envirothon, placing 15th. Three of the five students on the winning team were former Youth Conservation School students. The Envirothon programs involve a team effort of teachers and parents along with Conservation District staff, volunteers, and generous donations from corporations and individuals.

## Senior High Envirothon Results (Schools are able to enter 3 teams)

- 1<sup>st</sup> – Warwick
- 2<sup>nd</sup> – Warwick
- 3<sup>rd</sup> – Garden Spot
- 4<sup>th</sup> – Penn Manor
- 5<sup>th</sup> – Garden Spot



## Hempfield High School students visit Roger Rohrer (LCCD Director) farm

The 37<sup>th</sup> Lancaster County Youth Conservation School (YCS) was held July 19-25 with 27 students: 9 females and 18 males. A total of 1,072 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. Dedicated volunteers, many took vacation from full time work or left summer employment to spend the week with students providing teaching and leadership. Sonia Wasco volunteered as Co-Director. The leadership team is made up of an extraordinary group of volunteers.

Students continued a stream project on Middle Creek installing three log deflectors following new safety guidelines by the PA Fish and Boat Commission. Flyway Excavating donated materials and equipment. Jenna Diehl, 2015 Conservation District Scholarship Recipient, presented about falconry to the large crowd at the Sponsor Night Venison Dinner. The Conservation School program is designed as a holistic rigorous field school. This year, the students met our challenges and excelled at working in groups. Joe Good, sponsored by Mt. Joy Sportsmen Association received the Outstanding Student award and will receive a full scholarship



Interns Leslie and Francesca talk to students at Oregon Dairy Farm Days

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, North Museum, 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 invasive species. Eleven schools representing 7 school districts developed 39 teams with 185 students participating.

## Junior Envirothon Results

- 3<sup>rd</sup> grade 1<sup>st</sup> place – Reidenbaugh Elementary
- 4<sup>th</sup> grade 1<sup>st</sup> place – Reidenbaugh 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

## Junior and Senior High Envirothon Donations

- |   |                         |
|---|-------------------------|
| The Hershey Company                     | Retnew Associates       |
| Lancaster County Bird Club              | Conestoga Graphics Inc  |
| Optimist Club of Lancaster              | Pepperidge Farms, Inc.  |
| Monica Barber DVM                       | Donegal Trout Unlimited |
| Federated Sportsmen of Lancaster County | Ludgate Engineering     |

to the PA Wildlife Leadership Academy along with an invitation to return as a Junior Counselor.

In the fall, students from Lancaster and Lebanon parochial schools participated in a School Enrichment Experience (SEE) hosted by the Conservation District and Pennsylvania Game Commission. The SEE program enabled the group of students to become immersed in learning about owls, conservation concerns, and conservation efforts by farmers and homeowners to support the diverse populations and habitat needs of owls.

This sampling of conservation education happenings in 2015 illustrates the many avenues of learning meant to develop citizens willing to take action based on a cultivated conservation ethic.

–Sallie Gregory, Education Coordinator

Students dissect owl pellets during SEE program



# OMBUDSMAN PROGRAM

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 provides workshops, publications, or training opportunities to fill educational needs of farmers, municipalities and agency staff.

The Ombudsman Program “in action” might be tricky to capture.

Some days, “action” occurs on the phone, educating neighbors about their agricultural neighbor, or handling fly complaints. The Ombudsman, Shelly Dehoff, also spends time creating brochures, which requires a lot of time in front of the computer. She reads zoning ordinances to check if the wording is favorable to agriculture, and then suggest actions that farmers may take. These daily duties wouldn’t make engaging photos. However, that’s not to say the work doesn’t create results. If she can de-escalate a neighborhood situation, or help smooth out a concern between a farmer and a municipality, then her day is active enough.

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 explanation or to be attained in new and creative ways.

In 2015, 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 verification visits for Lancaster Ag Preservation easements under Lanc. Ag Preserve Board direction
- Created a “Manure Spreading in PA” brochure for statewide distribution with “do’s and don’ts” for manure application
- Created a “Manure Sampling and Spreader Calibration” brochure for statewide distribution explaining the importance of these actions
- Overhauled the “Livestock and Poultry Mortality Disposal in PA” brochure for statewide distribution
- Provided educational input to municipalities, farmers and Conservation Districts regarding land use, ordinances and permitting issues, neighbor relations issues, etc.
- Agriculturally-related fly complaint response coordination in Eastern PA (21 complaints in 2015)

## Special Project in 2015:

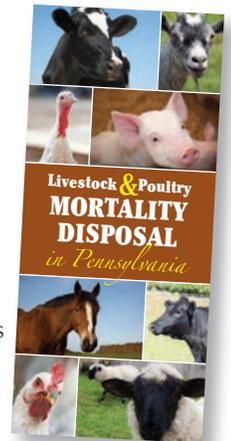
To help tell the positive story of agriculture, the Ombudsman assists the Lancaster County Agriculture Council as a Project Manager coordinating the first annual “Lancaster County Ag Week”. This included presenting the positive story of agriculture through the Lancaster Farming newspaper, Lancaster Newspapers and the Lancaster Chamber. She organized the week accentuating the diversity and impact of agriculture in Lancaster County and beyond. This inaugural 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
- Chamber-sponsored Ag Industry Banquet
- “Denim and Pearls” dinner event featuring Lancaster County foods
- promotions and specials of Lancaster County foods in local grocery stores, delis, restaurants and bakeries
- debut of a new video entitled, “Lancaster County Agriculture, So Much to Celebrate!”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hYIAtWdI-vU>



*Ag Week media kick off presentation*



*Ag Week Denim and Pearls dinner*

*—Shelly Dehoff, Ombudsman*

# NRCS



*NRCS staff in the field.*

Through customer service, partnerships, and technical excellence, the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) chief mission is to “Help People Help the Land”. In 2015, NRCS staff, alongside our conservation partners, once again focused on putting that mission into action in order to get valuable conservation on the ground in Lancaster County.

The Lancaster County Field Office was fortunate to see an increase in conservation funding through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) in the 2015 fiscal year, subsequently allowing staff to develop a greater number of conservation financial assistance contracts. We ended the year with an additional 38 contracts for just under \$1.8 million dollars in federal funds. In addition to the obligation of funding for new projects, staff worked closely with farmers to survey, design, and implement conservation practices on 127 existing active EQIP contracts. The most common practices installed were grassed waterways, cropland terrace systems, livestock watering systems, stabilized livestock walkways, silage leachate systems, waste storage facilities, and barnyard runoff systems. In total, just over \$1.5 million in federal funds were distributed to farmers to minimize soil erosion and improve water quality in Lancaster County.

A continued interest in the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) also brought additional funds to the county. Five farmers with land previously enrolled in the program made the decision to re-enroll their land for another five years and five additional farmers signed contracts to enroll new acres into the program. Through these CSP contracts, farmers will implement conservation enhancements such as mixed or deep rooted cover crops, GPS targeted spray technology or precision application of nutrients, drift reducing or low pressure nozzles on spray equipment, addition of nitrogen inhibitors to fertilizers and plant tissue testing for nitrogen management. By the end of the fiscal year just over 6,000 acres of farmland in the county were enrolled in a total of 24 CSP contracts.



*NRCS staff in the field.*

Continued partnership with the US Fish & Wildlife Service (FWS) maintained interest in the special bog turtle initiative of the Wetland Reserve Easement (WRP & WRE) program. This easement program focuses on preserving and restoring bog turtle wetland habitat in Pennsylvania. To date approximately 302 acres on 10 properties are enrolled in perpetual easements and landowners are working closely with NRCS and FWS to permanently restore wetland habitat by controlling noxious and invasive vegetation within the easement areas.

While much focus is put on projects funded through NRCS conservation programs, we always need to recognize the great conservation work that many farmers choose to implement on their own. Requests for technical assistance alone from the NRCS and Conservation District staff never seem to falter and though at times it can be a struggle to keep up with the demand, staff work extremely hard to continue to assist producers with their conservation goals whenever possible.

Lastly, NRCS staff continued to focus outreach and education efforts on soil health and the role it plays in the success and sustainability of Lancaster County farming. Staff attended several outreach events hosted by our conservation partners and frequently used the table top soil health demonstrations to reinforce their message. In addition to soil health education and outreach it also became an emphasis of the NRCS staff to increase outreach efforts to potential Hispanic and Latino farmers that may exist within the county. Our goal as an Agency always being to ensure that our customer service and technical assistance is available to all producers, no matter the size or type of their operation. These efforts included one of our Soil Conservationists participating in two radio interviews on a local Hispanic radio program to discuss soil erosion, water quality and technical and financial assistance available through NRCS and our partners. These radio interviews were also recorded and then aired on a local Hispanic television program.

Moving forward into the 2016 fiscal year, we'll continue our efforts to further the mission of NRCS helping people help the land. By reaching out to both existing and new customers as well as looking for new and innovative opportunities to work cooperatively with our conservation partners we will help ensure that Lancaster County continues to be a leader in conserving natural resources in Pennsylvania and beyond.

*—Heather L. Grove, NRCS District Conservationist*



# Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program

The field staff who work with the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) riparian buffer practice can be out in the field or on a farm several times during the program sign up process, the certification of the practice or project, and the life of the contract to make sure the practice is staying within the guidelines of the program. When an interested landowner contacts the Farm Service Agency to begin the process for a CREP contract, field staff will visit the site to confirm a field or riparian area is eligible for the program. A potential riparian buffer area should be un-forested land within 180 feet of a stream or seasonal spring. Pasture land, cropland, even idle areas not covered by 30% trees and shrubs are eligible.

After the landowner decides what they would like to enroll in CREP and it is deemed eligible, field staff begin the process of putting together a CREP conservation plan for the practices being enrolled or funded through CREP. Landowners that own livestock are required to install fence along the perimeter of the riparian buffer area to keep the animals out of the buffer area during the life of the contract. A watering facility and livestock crossings are also parts of the riparian buffer practice. Staff from the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) survey and design these practices for a buffer planting.

Buffer plantings take place in the spring and fall of the year when native trees and shrubs are in dormancy. The planting along with livestock crossings and streambank fencing are all installed closely together for ease of reimbursement through the program. Field staff will be on site to flag the fence, NRCS will complete pre-construction



*Field staff at riparian buffer site visit*

meetings for crossings, watering facility, and NRCS will also be on site during installation. Once the planting contractor is at the farm, the field staff will make sure the planting contractors are planting to specifications of the program and the landowner.

After the project is completed, field staff visit the site at least once a year to monitor the trees and shrubs. This allows for suggestions to the landowner. Riparian buffer contracts are required to complete post planting care which includes a herbicide application around the trees and shrubs to control competition unless an organic site. The site needs prior approval for the herbicide and then a certification visit. Any time a landowner calls with questions or concerns field staff are available to help. Contracts can be set for either 10 or 15 years and during the time field staff can visit the buffer as needed. Towards the end of the contract the Chesapeake Bay Foundation offers free Arbor Day Seedlings for buffers where there may have been mortality and the survival is below the required 70% survival rate for the program.

*—Ashley Spotts, Restoration Specialist*



LANCASTER COUNTY  
CONSERVATION DISTRICT

## 2015 Financial Report

### INCOME

County Funding	243,047.95
Program Contracts	970,721.41
LCCD Grant Administration	155,820.80
Fee Income	599,638.00
Sales Income	32,475.52
Interest Income	3,190.29
Activity Income	21,422.29
Grant Income	662,378.66
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>2,688,694.92</b>

### EXPENSE

Staff Salary	1,332,797.83
Employee Benefits	410,015.37
Travel Expenses	30,799.71
Meeting Expenses	19,953.60
Supplies	14,778.80
Communication Costs	20,892.30
Postage and Meter Rental	5,709.84
Office Rent	72,642.77
Equipment and IT Support	37,436.55
New Vehicles	43,688.00
Administrative	44,682.63
Miscellaneous	1,232.91
District Activities	35,666.04
BMP/Grant Projects	308,736.08
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>2,379,032.43</b>

### 2015 NET CHANGE IN CASH ASSETS

General Operations & Reserve *	-195,682.66
E&S Department	140,425.13
Activities	15,837.90
Grants	349,082.12
<b>Net Change</b>	<b>309,662.49</b>

*\* Due to the 2015 State Budget Impasse, the Conservation District borrowed \$271,000 from an unassigned reserve account and took action to secure a \$500,000 line of credit (LOC). The LOC was not needed, however the District Budget and Finance Committee agreed to maintain the LOC as a back-up funding source in light of ongoing budget issues at the state level.*



## Lancaster County Conservation District Staff

### Administration

Christopher Thompson, *Administrator*  
Gerald Heistand, *Business Manager*  
Paula Harnish, *Administrative Secretary*  
Roberta Hartz, *Sec./Receptionist*

### Erosion and Sedimentation

Nate Kurtz, *Department Manager*  
Nevin Greiner, *Resource Conservationist*  
Samantha Gordon, *Erosion Control Tech*  
Evan Martin, *Erosion Control Tech*  
Jenna Mitchell, *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 Conservation Tech*  
Justin Furnia, *Ag Conservation Tech*  
Andy Hake, *Ag Conservation Tech*  
Greg Heigel, *Ag Conservation Tech*  
Jenn Ledwich, *Ag Conservation Tech*  
Keith Lutz, *Ag Conservation Tech*  
Kevin Lutz, *Ag Conservation Tech*  
Steven Reiff, *Ag Conservation Tech*  
Dennis Eby, *Plain Sect Outreach*

### Education and Outreach

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



*Looking through the lens of the Total Station.*

## USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

Heather Grove, *District Conservationist*  
Gary Ballina, *Civil Engineering Tech*  
Omer Brubaker, *Soil Conservationist*  
Wendy Coons, *Soil Conservation Tech*  
Dayanna Estades, *Soil Conservationist*  
Mark Myers, *Soil Conservationist*  
Melissa Piper-Nelson, *Program Assistant*  
Ashley Spotts, *Restoration Specialist-CBF*

## 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.*