

Bedford County Conservation District 2011 Annual Report

The Conservation District was organized in 1956, as a legal subdivision of state and local government under the authority of Act 217, to assist landowners in Bedford County with natural resource related issues, providing the technical and financial assistance to implement conservation practices on their land. There are 66 conservation districts in Pennsylvania, representing every county except Philadelphia, dedicated to conserving our soil and water resources.

A board of directors, who reside within the county, know its people, and is concerned with the local conservation issues, guides the district. The district has expanded its services and staff to serve clientele from both farm and urban communities reflecting the complex and ever changing environmental and land-use issues we face today. The District provides assistance to citizens, landowners, organizations, agencies and local governments in critical land use decisions both regulatory and non-regulatory, water quality issues, non-point source pollution abatement, and other resource related areas.

District Directors:

Chair	James Bence	Urban
Vice-Chair	Ron Stanley	Urban
Secretary/ Treasurer	Donald Llewellyn	Farmer
Commissioner	Steven Howsare	Commissioner
	James Eshelman	Farmer
	J. Allen Baker	Farmer
	Richard J. Emerick, II	Farmer
	Kay Kring	Urban
	Marcy Ladson	Farmer

Associate Directors:

John Akers John Eshelman Ron Johnson Marietta Plank Paul Stup

District Staff:

Jennifer Lentz Kovacs	District Manager
Lorelle J. Steach	PA Envirothon Coordinator
Richard Hershberger	Ag Coordinator
Darla L. Guyer	Fiscal Technician
Regina Miller	Program Assistant/Education/Recycling Coordinator
Guy Stottlemyer	Watershed Specialist
Michael Felix	Resource Technician
Cody Waltemire	Chesapeake Bay Technician
James Saylor	Equipment Handler/ Ag Conservation Technician

The Mission of the Bedford County Conservation District is to encourage stewardship and conservation of natural resources for this and future generations.

Nominating Organizations

Nominating Organizations have a unique role in shaping the future of Bedford 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 regarding how we manage our community's natural resources—Bedford County's soils, forests, lakes, wetlands, rivers and streams. The District is grateful to our Nominating Organizations for their continued participation and support.

Fort Bedford Trout Unlimited
Bedford/Blair Crop Management Association
Bedford County Township Officials Association
Woodland Owners of the Southern Alleghenies
Farm Bureau Co-Op Association

Federation of Sportsmen's Clubs
Farm Service Agency
Bedford County Farm Bureau
Ponoma Grange #24

Erosion & Sediment Pollution Control Program (Resource Technician: Mike Felix)



The district, under delegated authority from the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and the State Conservation Commission, administered the Erosion and Sediment Pollution Control Program at a Level II authority under the Chapter 102 regulations and the Pennsylvania Clean Streams Law. This involved technical review of erosion control plans for earthmoving activities, project inspections, compliance activities, complaint response and public education. The purpose of this program is to protect our land and waters from accelerated erosion and sedimentation during any earth disturbance. The district investigated 115 complaints; 63 delegated and 52

non-delegated or referred.

The scope of projects reviewed by the district can range from single building construction disturbing a minimal area to highway projects involving several acres of disturbance. The district received and processed 56 Erosion and Sediment Control Plan reviews. The reviews encompassed over 525 project acres with disturbed acres totaling 190. The district inspected 13 active project sites and 75 additional inspections.

Construction sites involving more than 1 acre of actual earth disturbance must apply for and receive a National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit for the discharge of storm water prior to commencing any earthmoving activities. The district administered the NPDES program for construction sites, processed technical review of applications and accompanying E&S plans, and inspected of permitted sites to ensure compliance with permit conditions. Individual NPDES permits are issued for those sites located in Special Protection Watersheds. In 2011 the district processed 14 General and 2 Individual NPDES permits.

Dirt & Gravel Road Program (Watershed Specialist: Guy Stottlemeyer)

The Environmentally Sensitive Dirt and Gravel Road Maintenance Program is a county level grant program that provides funds for pollution prevention projects on publicly owned dirt and gravel roads. Eligibility requirements to receive grant funding includes attending the two-day training offered by the

Penn State Center for Dirt and Gravel Road Studies. The program goal is to reduce erosion, sediment and dust pollution by providing technical and financial assistance.

The State Conservation Commission provides oversight and statewide administration through support from the Penn State Center for Dirt & Gravel Road Studies. Locally, an appointed Quality Assurance Board, comprised of representatives from the Conservation District, Natural Resource Conservation Service, and the PA Fish & Boat Commission, adopts appropriate operational procedures and standards, reviews eligible applications and makes recommendations to the Conservation District board for funding approved road projects.

Through 2010, the program expended over \$30 million on more than 1900 completed contracts statewide, with in-kind support from project participants averaging over 37% during that period. In Bedford County to date, over \$500,000 was allocated to 60 projects with over \$250,000 of in-kind contributions from township and PA Game Commission participants.



The CDWS administers technical aspects of the Dirt and Gravel Road Maintenance Program. During 2011, projects were completed on Lewis Road in Londonderry Township and on Harbor Mountain Road in Broad Top Township. These projects improved 0.5 miles of unpaved road where sediment was impacting county streams with program costs of \$7985 and in-kind contributions from the townships of over \$15,000. Two projects on Maple Run Road in Woodbury Township were approved for funding in 2011 with projected program costs of \$35,735, but the township has not yet started construction.

Environmental Stewardship and Watershed Protection Grant Program (Watershed Specialist: Guy Stottlemeyer)

In 2011, the Conservation District Watershed Specialist (CDWS) assisted the PA Department of Environmental Protection with water quality sampling on Shawnee Lake as part of an investigation into the causes of recent algal/cyanobacteria blooms on the lake. The final report for the assessment conducted by Princeton Hydro was issued in late 2011 and a public meeting was held to present the results and discuss scenarios for potential remediation projects. The CDWS continues to work with the DEP and the DCNR to identify funding sources for installation of BMPs. The Conservation District agriculture staff plans to conduct outreach visits to farms in the watershed.

The CDWS is assisting the Bobs Creek Stream Guardians with several projects. One that began early in 2010 is the stream monitoring above and below a Marcellus shale gas well in southern Blair County very near Bobs Creek. The CDWS formats and distributes the data collected from the in-stream sondes that measure pH, temperature, and conductivity every 15 minutes. The Stream Guardians have also been active in working to improve in-stream habitat on Bobs Creek and its tributaries. Two projects were completed in 2011 on the main stem of Bobs Creek that improve fish habitat but also have stabilized stream banks to halt accelerated erosion. Additionally, CDWS assisted the Stream Guardians with the completion of their Coldwater Conservation Plan for Wallacks Branch, producing the maps for the report and editing and formatting the final product.

The CDWS submitted a proposal for Growing Greener funding to continue the habitat improvement work on Wallacks Branch and a grant was awarded for \$13,182.00 for construction, which will begin in August 2012.

The stream assessment work proposed in 2010 to evaluate several recovering streams in Broad Top Township, once polluted by abandoned mine drainage, for possible removal from the impaired stream list, was approved by the PADEP at reduced funding levels. A restructuring of the proposal includes participation by Trout Unlimited's AMD Technical Assistance Program to collect water quality samples for analysis by the PADEP lab in Harrisburg. The CDWS collected benthic macroinvertebrate samples in December 2011 and identified these to genus level for inclusion in the report for stream assessment. The Bedford County CDWS, as well as township personnel, also assisted TU staff with locating the monitoring sites during their first sample collection.

The CDWS was involved in environmental education activities that included: county Envirothons for elementary, junior, and senior high students, two watershed field days at the Bedford Middle School, a stream ecology, fly fishing, and fly tying program for campers at Blue Knob State Park, and Conservation District newsletters. Assistance was again provided to classes from Allegany College of Maryland conducting studies on county streams. The CDWS also manages content and updates to the Conservation District website, www.bedfordcountyconservation.com



The CDWS also coordinates with Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful (formerly PA CleanWays, Inc.) and Keep Bedford County Beautiful (formerly PA CleanWays of Bedford County) to identify and remove illegal dumps that threaten water quality, recreation, public safety, and wildlife in Bedford County. During 2011, KBCB projects included the Sweet Root Road adoption cleanup, the 10th annual Bobs Creek cleanup in April 2011, a beautification/landscaping project at the site of the new disabled access fishing pier/canoe and kayak launch on Koon Lake in Cumberland Valley Township, and the annual Bedford County Stream Sweep in September. Many partners contributed to the success of the Stream Sweep, during which litter was collected from the Raystown Branch in Bedford Township, Snake Spring Township, Everett Borough and West Providence Township. These include REI, the Bobs Creek Stream Guardians, Fort Bedford Trout Unlimited, the Bedford County Conservation District, Bedford Borough, the Bedford chapter of the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, Thomas Subaru, Walmart, Sheetz, American Rivers and Penn DOT.

Environmental Education (Environmental Education Coordinator: Regina Miller)

Environmental education programs are offered to all age levels, including kindergarten through high school students, youth, scout, and various adult groups.

Conservation news, program and resource information are promoted through the district's Conservation Notes newsletter that is shared with over 1200 county educators, residents, farmers, county leaders, and various organizations.

This year Bedford County held its twenty-sixth Envirothon for students in grades nine through 12; its twenty-third event for students in grades seven and eight; and its eighteenth event for students in grades five and six. The events were held at Shawnee State Park and were a huge success with more than 300 students participating. The winners from the Sr. High event participated in the State Envirothon, placing 12th. The Pennsylvania Envirothon hosted 65 five-member teams at Susquehanna University,



Shikellamy State Park.

Bi-Annually the Conservation District hosts a tree seedling sale. Thousands of trees are distributed to county residents. The profits benefit conservation education programs at the district, including Bi-annual Arbor Day presentations offered to all school districts within Bedford County. The students watch an Arbor Day video, participate in a group discussion/question period, and receive a white pine tree seedling.

The district offers a \$500 scholarship in honor of the late Glen Beach and his contributions in conservation tillage, funded through the No-Till Rental Equipment Program. The district also administers the William Plank Memorial Scholarship fund that is an annual \$500 scholarship. The scholarships are available to undergraduate college students in the field of agriculture, environmental studies, soils, or natural resources. Scholarships will be awarded on the basis of academic merit, curriculum of study, quality of the written essay and career goals that are consistent with the BCCD mission

Pennsylvania Envirothon (Pennsylvania Envirothon Coordinator: Lorelle Steach)

In 2011, more than 300 high-school students representing 65 counties participated in the twenty-sixth Pennsylvania Envirothon. The event was held at the Susquehanna University and Shikellamy State Park on May 24 & 25. The Pennsylvania Envirothon is the outcome of 67 county competitions that take place during the months of April and May and involves more than 15,000 teenagers throughout the Commonwealth.

The Envirothon is a competition that challenges students to think critically about the natural world and their role in it. It's a competition that helps students develop the thinking skills they will need for a lifetime of finding balanced solutions to complex issues, such as how to encourage economic development and still preserve open space.

Teams were evaluated by practicing environmental professionals in five areas of study: soil/land use, forestry, aquatic ecology, wildlife, and current environmental issues.

Awards were presented to the 10 teams scoring the greatest number of points. For the past seven years, the Envirothon awarded scholarships totaling over \$9,000 for 15 students on the top three teams. The Hershey Company and EXCO PA sponsor the scholarships. To date, we have awarded \$62,000 in scholarships to more than 100 students.

The state winning five-member team from Penncrest High School honored Pennsylvania with a thirteenth place finish at the 2011 Canon Envirothon. Winners were announced during closing ceremonies of the weeklong North American environmental education competition held at Mount Allison University in Sackville, New Brunswick and sponsored by Canon U.S.A. More than 265 teenagers from 45 U.S. states and eight Canadian provinces studied environmental issues and resource conservation, while competing for a share of more than \$125,000 in Canon scholarships and prizes.

The Pennsylvania Envirothon sponsors and partners include many of Pennsylvania's corporations, conservation districts, and various state and federal agencies/organizations.

Act 38 Nutrient Management (Ag Team Coordinator: Richard Hershberger)

Nutrient Management Planning

The Act 38 Nutrient Management Plan program has implemented a standardized plan format that must be utilized by all plan writers. The computerized format takes into account nitrogen, phosphorous, and potassium in the plan. Nutrient applications are now balanced for either nitrogen or phosphorous that is

applied through fertilizer and manure applications. Soil tests are required on every field at least once every three years. Manure analysis must be taken for each major manure group annually.

There are four farms in Bedford County that are required to follow these regulations. These farms are CAOs (concentrated animal operations) and/or CAFOs. Farms of this size are likely exporting manure to other farms crop fields. These importing farms are also required to develop a planning process to account for the manure being applied to their fields. There are more than 30 farms in the county that receive manure from these large operations. Nutrient plans or balance sheets must be developed to show where, when, and how much manure is being applied to these fields. District personnel continue to work with farms importing poultry manure from out of county CAOs. These farms are also required to develop balance sheets and maps for the fields receiving this manure. District personnel assisted in the development of many of these plans.

All farmers are encouraged to have nutrient plans developed for their farming operation. Approximately 20 farms in the county have volunteer plans written to help them balance their nutrient needs. By adopting these plans farms are eligible for various programs that help implement best management practices that reduce soil and nutrient runoff.

Farms that are importing manure from any CAO and/or CAFO are required to develop balance sheets that show where this manure is being utilized. The number of landowners that import manure from poultry operations in other counties has been steadily increasing. These balance sheets are reviewed and kept on file at the district office.

One other new element of nutrient planning was including horse operations under these regulations. Landowners that have at least 8 animal equivalent units or 8000 pounds of horses and have more than two animal equivalent units per acre to spread manure are regulated under this program and must develop a nutrient management plan for the operation.

Nutrient Management Plan Reviews

District personnel review nutrient management plans that are written by certified individuals from private industry, certified landowners, and district personnel from other counties. These plans are reviewed to make sure they meet the requirements of The Pennsylvania Nutrient Management Law and then approved by the local conservation district. The plans reviewed during the year included several Concentrated Animal Operations and volunteer landowners interested in applying for funds to install BMPs.

District personnel also reviewed nutrient plans and nutrient balance sheets that were developed for importing farms. This planning process is required for farms importing manure from CAOs in the county as well as those importing manure from farms across the state.

Annual status reviews are conducted on the counties CAO farms and nutrient management grant recipients each year. These status reviews help to keep these farms current with the new regulations and help to head off any problems that may develop.

Nutrient Management Grant Program

This program is available to landowners that have an approved nutrient management plan with recommended best management practices (BMPs) listed in the plan. There are financial guidelines that must be met to qualify for this program. Applications may be obtained from your local conservation district or from the State Conservation Commission. At this time there is no funding for this program.

AgriLink Loan Program

The AgriLink Program provides low interest loans for the construction and implementation of BMPs listed as part of an approved nutrient management plan. District personnel provided information to interested landowners on this program and helped several apply for this funding. At this time there is no funding for this program.

Equipment Rental Program



The Bedford County Conservation District currently implements an equipment rental program. The District feels that no-till planting is essential in reducing erosion and nutrient runoff from farmland. The program started with one no-till drill, but has currently expanded to include eight no-till drills, nine no-till corn planters, four damp lime spreaders, and four pieces of liquid manure equipment. This equipment is owned and maintained by the District and is delivered to landowners to operate.

Planting conditions in the spring and fall of 2011 were the wettest we have experienced in some time. The wet spring caused many farmers to change their crop rotations and plant crops that could be established later in the spring and summer. The drills were delivered 74 times to landowners to plant approximately 1,100 acres of cropland this past spring. The primary crops planted are alfalfa and mixed hay, small grains, and soybeans. There were 84 deliveries in the fall to plant an additional 400 acres of alfalfa and grass hay. Approximately 2,500 acres of cover crops were planted on corn stubble fields in the county. This equipment plays an important role in implementing the required components of many conservation plans.

Seventy landowners utilized the no-till corn planters to plant 2,200 acres of corn and sorghum. The planters are set up to plant 30" and 36" row spacing. Seven of the planters are equipped with dry fertilizer hoppers and two with liquid fertilizer tanks. Management decisions made when no-tilling corn need to be made 6 to 12 months ahead of planting. Adequate herbicide, lime, and nutrient applications are critical components to making no-till work.

Two damp lime spreaders were purchased in 2004 and a new spreader was made available in 2008. With the increase demand for this equipment another spreader was purchased in the spring of 2011. These spreaders will spread various types of lime as well as poultry litter. Sixty-five landowners spread over 4,000 tons of lime during the year.

An additional 4,300-gallon liquid manure tank was added in 2009. This tank is located in Friends Cove and for use by the farmers in this area. The tank is housed and maintained on a farm in the Cove and farmers pick up and deliver the tank themselves. The twelve landowners using this tank have signed an agreement with the Conservation District and reviewed the use and safety instructions. The other liquid manure equipment consists of two 3,250-gallon tank spreaders and one 32' multi-purpose pump. The tank spreaders are equipped with flotation tires and hydraulic brakes. They require a minimum 120 horsepower tractor to safely operate. The pump can be used in either straight walled pits or earthen lagoons with sloped sides. They have hydraulic controls to operate the mechanical parts of the pump. More than twenty farms in the county use this equipment.

Landowners are required to use this equipment in an environmentally sound manner. Conservation plans and nutrient plans are critical components of making sound environmental decisions. Soil testing and manure analysis are recommended to those who use the equipment.

Chesapeake Bay Program (Chesapeake Bay Technician: Cody Waltemire/Richard Hershberger)

During the 2011 calendar year, the Bedford County Conservation District's Chesapeake Bay Program has further reduced sediment and nutrient run-off into the Chesapeake Bay. In accordance with the district's 2006 County Implementation Plan, the Chesapeake Bay Program, through the installation of Best Management Practices (BMPs), continues to address sediment and nutrient losses, from agricultural operations, as its highest priority. The Bedford County Conservation District, through the 2011 Special Project Funding Program Allocation, requested \$47,000 for the implementation of BMPs which included: nutrient management planning, no-till corn incentives, cover crop assistance program and a cropland conversion to a rotational grazing system. Of the \$47,000 requested \$4,000 was for nutrient management planning, \$3,000 was for no-till corn incentive payments, \$32,000 was for the cover crop assistance program and \$8,000 was for the rotational grazing system. The total amount of funding that was allotted to Bedford County was \$39,000. The only request that was denied was for the rotational grazing system. A majority of the allocated dollars were utilized in the agriculturally impaired Yellow Creek watershed of Bedford County. Best Management Practices implemented included no-tilled crops and no-tilled fall cover crops.



In 2011, Chesapeake Bay Special Project Funds focused on the implementation of no-till BMPs throughout the county. Through these funds, the district was able to purchase, repair, and maintain no-till rental equipment for Bedford County producers. Approximately 6200 acres of crops were no tilled in Bedford County through the use of the district's rental equipment in 2011. Chesapeake Bay Special Project Funds were also used to implement 2700 acres of fall cover crop in Bedford County. Through the district's 2011 Cover Crop Assistance Program, approximately 1900 acres of corn silage stubble received a fall no-tilled cover crop.

The Executive Order released in 2010 by the Federal Leadership Committee for the Chesapeake Bay, and the resulting Watershed Implementation Plan, WIP, prioritized agricultural outreach visits. We conducted educational visits with area farmers to fulfill the requirement of 150 farm visits on an annual basis.

Agriculture Conservation (Agricultural Conservation Technician: Jim Saylor)

The ACT position attends Nutrient Management and NRCS Boot Camp II trainings. The Nutrient Management certification program is administered by the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture in consultation with the State Conservation Commission. The program certifies nutrient management specialists to write and review nutrient management plans that meet the requirements of the Nutrient Management Law, Act 38. The educational component of the nutrient management program is coordinated by the PA Department of Agriculture in cooperation with the State Conservation Commission, Penn State Cooperative Extension, PA Department of Environmental Protection and USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service. The program provides opportunities for nutrient management specialists to attend certification courses as well as a variety of other courses and workshops focused on nutrient management topics.

The NRCS Boot Camp I courses are taught by specialists working in the Crop Management Extension Group of Penn State University and USDA-NRCS. The training introduces inexperienced conservation workers on common forage and field crops in Pennsylvania, the basics of forage and crop production, integrated pest management (including weed, insect and disease management), and soil management.

The course emphasizes hands-on activities in the field, in order to articulate to participants the balance producers have to strike between environmental, economic, and agronomic considerations.

The ACT position also assists the District with the Equipment Rental and Chesapeake Bay programs.

Agricultural Land Preservation (District Manager: Jennifer Kovacs)

The Bedford County Agricultural Land Preservation Board administers a farmland preservation program for purchasing and accepting donations of agricultural conservation easements to preserve the most productive soils in Bedford County. The district assists the Bedford County Agricultural Land Preservation Board with Level I services by providing nutrient planning, conservation planning assistance and evaluate growth and best management practice installation. In addition, the district schedules and conducts annual field reviews of each easement with twelve easement monitoring field inspections completed for more than 2200 preserved acres. The district promotes efforts to support the growth and existing agricultural communities through program promotion and outreach.

The district also assisted the Bedford County Planning Commission to develop and update a centralized Agricultural Security database. This is a GIS program that maps all of the properties in the county, for each township, that have enrolled their property as an Agriculturally Secure Area through their township. Data entry is verified through Registers and Records Office.

Recycling Activities (Recycling Coordinator: Regina Miller)



The Bedford County Conservation District Clearville Recycling Center recycled 140 tons of material during 2011. The collection facility is open six days a week from 9:00am to 4:00pm. Items collected were newspaper, office paper, junk mail, Magazines, cardboard, plastic bottles, plastic ag bags, plastic bail wrap, aluminum cans, bi-metal cans, clear glass, brown glass, green glass, oil, antifreeze and electronic materials.

The Bedford County Conservation District offered special collection days. During the second Saturday of each month county residents can bring plastic, glass, cans, paper, and cardboard to the South Woodbury Township Building from 9:00am to 1:00pm. The District also partners with local school districts by supplying bins and hauling for wastepaper at Bedford, Everett, and Chestnut Ridge School Districts.

In 2011 the Tri-County Solid Waste program offered seven drop-off bins locations within the county recycling 18 different materials. Activities at the recycling drop-off bins are coordinated between the county coordinator, the municipalities and the site sponsors, who include: Bedford Township, Broad Top Township, and Everett Church of the Brethren, United Church of Schellsburg, Londonderry Township, King Township and the Sandy Run Landfill. Residents may recycle their newspapers, office paper, magazines, shredded paper, junk mail, paper bags, cardboard boxes, pizza boxes, food boxes, paper towel rolls, paperboard packaging, aluminum/steel cans, aerosol cans, plastic bottles, and green/clear/brown glass bottles at any of the green drop-off containers. Over 306 tons of recyclables were collected from the drop-off bins in 2011. The Tri-County recycling program also held a Hazardous Waste collection event in the fall, collecting over 9,000 lbs of material.

In addition to the drop-off programs, a variety of other recycling activities included: Grant writing for in-school recycling and special collection events.

Gypsy Moth Suppression Program (Gypsy Moth Surveillance Coordinator: Darla Guyer)

The purpose of the Gypsy Moth Surveillance Program is to protect forested residential and recreational areas and certain other high-use areas from serious gypsy moth damage. It was not designed to prevent or retard the spread of the gypsy moth, or to control it in uninhabited forestlands. Surveys for gypsy moth egg masses indicated low densities statewide. No requests for treatment in 2011 were submitted to the Bureau of Forestry by counties or other cooperators. In addition, recent state budget cuts have eliminated funding for the gypsy moth suppression program. If gypsy moth population increases follow past outbreak cycles, we expect gypsy moth populations to rebound by 2012.