

Bedford County Conservation District 2013 Annual Report

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

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	John Akers	Farmer
Secretary/ Treasurer	Donald Llewellyn	Farmer
Commissioner	Kirt Morris	Commissioner
	James Eshelman	Farmer
	J. Allen Baker	Farmer
	Ron Stanley	Urban
	Kay Kring	Urban
	Richard J. Emerick, II	Farmer

Associate Directors:

Nevin Sollenberger	John Eshelman
Ron Johnson	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 Stottlemeyer	Watershed Specialist
Michael Felix	Resource Technician
Cody Waltemire	Chesapeake Bay Technician
Dan Over	Nutrient Management Specialist
James Saylor	Ag Conservation Technician, Equipment Handler

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 97 complaints; 43 delegated and 54

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 32 Erosion and Sediment Control Plan reviews. The reviews encompassed over 377 project acres with disturbed acres totaling 139. The district inspected 49 active permitted project sites and 75 additional inspections.

Construction sites involving 1 or more 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 2013 the district processed 8 General and 1 Individual NPDES permits.

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

The Environmentally Sensitive Dirt and Gravel Road Maintenance Program is a county level grant program that provides funds for stream pollution prevention projects on publicly owned dirt and gravel roads. Eligibility requirements to receive grant funding include 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 from unpaved roads 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.

From 1997 through 2012, the program allocated \$60 million to fund 2427 projects statewide, with in-kind support from project participants averaging 48% during that period. In Bedford County, through 2013, over \$546,187 in program funds was allocated to 66 projects with about \$273,000, or 50%, in-kind contributions by township and PA Game Commission participants. This work has reduced erosion and sedimentation pollution from 28 miles of unpaved roads in Bedford County.

The CDWS administers technical aspects of the Dirt and Gravel Road Maintenance Program; assisting municipal participants with applications for funding and with employing best management practices and proven techniques that create stable, easily maintained roads that protect water quality as well as ensuring that the work funded is accomplished in compliance within program guidelines. During 2013, funding was allocated for continued work on Maple Run road in Woodbury Township that would include installation of Driving Surface Aggregate (DSA), but this work could not be completed during 2013 because of scheduling conflicts and application of the DSA will take place during 2014. A project on O'Neal Road in Southampton Township was completed resulting in significant improvement to both drainage and driving surface at this challenging project site (photos with this article are from O'Neal Road project completion survey).



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

The stream habitat improvement project on Wallacks Branch of Bobs Creek that was completed in August 2012 required surveying to monitor the effects of the installed devices and this work was begun in May of 2013 with the assistance of an intern, Amanda Henry a student at Shippensburg State University, who worked with the CDWS on this and other projects during the late spring and early summer. Funding was secured by the CDWS through a Coldwater Conservation Partnership Implementation Grant to install additional fish habitat and stream bank protection devices on Wallacks Branch in 2014.

The CDWS was involved in environmental education activities that included: county Envirothons for elementary, junior, and senior high students, programs for Everett Elementary 6th Grade Environmental Field Days held at the Shawnee State Park, Bedford Elementary 4th Grade Environmental Field Day on the Raystown Branch at the school's Environmental Learning Center, an aquatic macroinvertebrate program for kids at the Mountain Top Bible Camp, and stream ecology, fly fishing, and fly tying programs for campers at Blue Knob State Park. The CDWS also manages content and updates to the Conservation District website, www.bedfordcountyconservation.com and contributes articles to Conservation District newsletters

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 2013, KBCB projects included the Sweet Root Road adoption cleanup, the 12th annual Bobs Creek cleanup in April 2013, and a small litter cleanup project along Weber Lane in Bedford Township. Other KBCB projects included a small stream buffer planting along Bobs Creek in partnership with Fort Bedford Trout Unlimited and the Conservation District and a restoration with expanded planting of the beautification and buffer project at the Koon Lake access pier and launch.



In a partnership between the Conservation District and Keep Bedford County Beautiful, a native plant nursery was established at the District's equipment shed/recycling center. Initially, the nursery contained only potted trees and shrubs but plans for 2014 include adding herbaceous perennials. These plant materials will be available to project partners and other non-profits such as watershed groups for restoration plantings and for beautification projects on public lands. Funding to jump-start this project came through an REI Stewardship Fund grant.

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-seventh Envirothon for students in grades nine through 12; its twenty-fourth event for students in grades seven and eight; and its nineteenth 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 21st. The Pennsylvania Envirothon hosted 65 five-member teams at Juniata College, Huntingdon, PA. 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. The William Plank Scholarship was awarded to Kendyl Hassler.

Pennsylvania Envirothon (Pennsylvania Envirothon Coordinator: Lorelle Steach)

2013 Pennsylvania Envirothon

In 2013, more than 300 high-school students representing 64 counties participated in the 30th annual Pennsylvania Envirothon. The event was held at the Juniata College, Huntingdon County on May 21 & 22. The Pennsylvania Envirothon is the outcome of 66 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 ten years, the Envirothon awarded scholarships totaling over \$9,000 to 15 students on the top three teams. Pennsylvania's county conservation districts sponsor the scholarships. To date, we have awarded \$80,000 in scholarships to more than 120 students.

The state winning five-member team from York Homeschool honored Pennsylvania with a ninth place finish at the 2013 North American Envirothon. Winners were announced during closing ceremonies of the weeklong North American natural resource education competition held at Montana State University, Bozeman and sponsored by Canon U.S.A. More than 270 teenagers from 47 U.S. states and ten Canadian provinces and territories studied natural resource issues and resource

conservation, while competing for a share of more than \$100,000 in scholarships and prizes.

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

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

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. Since the requirement of Manure Management plans the number of volunteer plans has dropped. There are still 3 farms in the county that 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.

Manure Management Planning

All farms generating or using manure must have a Manure Management Plan (or Nutrient Management Plan). This includes very small (one horse) operations and operations without any animals as long as manure is spread on site. DEP has developed a Manure Management Plan Workbook that contains the forms needed to develop a plan. The plan can be written by the farmer. There is no submission required but the plan must be kept on site and available upon request by DEP or county conservation staff. Bedford County Conservation District staff delivered more than 150 work books to operations in the county in 2013. District staff also conducted workshops and visited operations assisting several farmers in writing their plans.

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 nine no-till drills, nine no-till corn planters, five damp lime spreaders, and one liquid manure spreader. This equipment is owned and maintained by the District and is delivered to landowners to operate.

Planting conditions in the spring and fall of 2013 was about average with some wet spells in the spring. The drills were delivered 102 times to landowners to plant approximately 1,850 acres of cropland this past spring. The primary crops planted are alfalfa and mixed hay, small grains, and soybeans. There were 113 deliveries in the fall to plant an additional 200 acres of alfalfa and grass hay. Approximately 2650 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.

Eighty six landowners utilized the no-till corn planters to plant 2,313 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, one in 2008 and 2011. With the increase demand for this equipment another spreader was purchased in the spring of 2013. These spreaders will spread various types of lime as well as poultry litter. Over 2,900 tons of lime was spread by 38 landowners 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 were sold this spring. The tank spreader is equipped with flotation tires and hydraulic brakes. It requires a minimum 120 horsepower tractor to safely operate. This equipment is used by about a dozen farms in the county.

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)



During the 2013 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 revised 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 2013 Special Project Funding Program Allocation, requested \$56,150 for the implementation of BMPs which included: cover crop assistance program (\$45,500), a no-till radish cover crop program(\$10,150) and a roof runoff control project(\$500).

The total amount of funding that was allotted to Bedford County was \$47,670 (\$37,020 for cover crop assistance, \$10,150 for no-till radish program and \$500 for the roof run-off project). A majority of the allocated dollars were utilized in the agriculturally impaired Yellow Creek watershed of Bedford County. Additional Best Management Practices implemented included Act 38 nutrient management plans and no-tilled fall cover crops.

The Conservation District also conducted multiple meetings throughout the county to update farmers on the new manure management and agricultural erosion and sedimentation regulations, and assist completing the manure management manual. There were 6 half day workshops performed in the county to give the updates on the new regulations and 1 full day workshops to assist county farmers with writing their own manure management plans. The informational meetings were attended by 72 county farmers, and the full day workshops resulted in 5 farmers completing a manure management plan.



The Bedford County Conservation District staff also completed 179 farm visits in 2013. These farm visits were designed to give farmers an update on the new manure management and agricultural erosion and sedimentation regulations and to answer any questions they may have.

Agriculture Conservation (Agricultural Conservation Technician: Jim Saylor/Dan Over)

The ACT position attends Nutrient Management and NRCS Boot Camp 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 & II 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 and easement monitoring field inspections. There are currently 15 enrolled farms totaling 2845 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 Recorders Office.

Recycling Activities (Recycling Coordinator: Regina Miller)

The Bedford County Conservation District Clearville Recycling Center recycled 180 tons of material during 2013. 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 and jugs, aluminum cans, bi-metal cans, clear glass, brown glass, green glass, oil, antifreeze and electronic materials. The Bedford County Conservation District offered special mobile 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 2013 the Tri-County Solid Waste program offered seven commingled drop-off bin 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 319 tons of recyclables were collected from the drop-off bins in 2013. The Tri-County recycling program also held a Hazardous Waste collection event in the Fall, collecting over 8,960 lbs of material.