

# 2012

## Jefferson County Conservation District ANNUAL REPORT



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## About the Conservation District

The county was declared a District by the Jefferson County Board of Commissions in October, 1946, in accordance with the provisions of the "Soil Conservation Law" of 1945, Act 217, of the Pennsylvania General Assembly. The Jefferson County Conservation District was formed at the request of farmers and others in the county who were interested in the conservation of soil and water resources and land use planning. The District is a subdivision of state government and is administered by a seven-member Board of Directors. The current District Board is composed of three farmer directors, three urban directors, and one County Commissioner. Currently there are four full-time staff members. The County Conservation District, through delegation agreements with the PA Department of Environmental Protection and the PA Department of Agriculture, administers many environmental programs in Jefferson County. Some of the programs that the District staff works with include the following: Erosion and Sediment Pollution Control program, Chapter 105 Stream Encroachment, Dirt & Gravel Road, Nutrient Management, Ag Conservation Technical Assistance, and sponsoring the Jefferson/Clarion County Envirothon. The Conservation District also provides administrative duties for the Jefferson County Sewage Association and the Greater Jefferson Area Council of Governments. The following information will highlight the District's programs and activities in 2012.

## Program Administration

Funding for District staff and programs comes from several sources. The State Conservation Commission receives funding from the Department of Environmental Protection and the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture for technical assistance and staff funding. Jefferson County and the Jefferson County Sewage Association also provide funding for staff and administrative expenses.

## E&S/NPDES

### Chapter 102/NPDES

The Erosion and Sediment (E&S) Pollution Control Program operates under a delegation agreement with (PADEP), Pennsylvania Code Title 25, Chapter 102 of the Pennsylvania Clean Streams Law. At the local level, the Conservation District is responsible for specific program activities enforcing Chapter 102 and controlling erosion and sediment control for all types of earthmoving activities. Through combined efforts to ensure water quality standards and minimize sediment pollution to the Waters of the Commonwealth, in 2012 the Conservation District:



Shaun Wessell, Watershed Technician

- Reviewed 40 E&S Control Plans for Chapter 102 Compliance.
- Conducted 89 site inspections in an effort to obtain voluntary compliance.
- Recommended 4 Individual NPDES Permits to DEP to be issued.
- Issued 9 General NPDES Permits.
- Issued 2 ESCGP-1 for Oil & Gas Activities > 5 acres (transmission lines on Compressor Station)

## **Chapter 102/NPDES (Cont'd)**

The regulations included in Chapter 102 were revised in November, 2010. Sites that will disturb over one acre of land are now required to obtain an "NPDES Permit for Stormwater Discharges Associated with Construction Activities." This permit requires a detailed plan to address both sediment and erosion during construction and the long term impacts of stormwater from the site after construction. Several types of activities such as road maintenance, timbering and agricultural plowing and tillage are exempt from this permit but need to meet other requirements including having a written plan to control erosion from the site. In some cases, other types of permits may be required and this must be evaluated on a case by case basis.

For agriculture, the regulations state that the owner and the operator of the agricultural operation are jointly responsible for the development and implementation of an erosion and sediment control plan (E&S plan) that minimizes the potential for accelerated erosion and sedimentation from agricultural plowing and tillage activities. One new requirement is to address sediment generated on animal heavy use areas. (An animal heavy use area is any area where animals are concentrated to the extent that the surface of the area is not able to maintain adequate vegetation that will prevent erosion and sedimentation.) Also new is the requirement that additional controls be considered for areas adjacent to streams.

Fully implemented conservation plans prepared by a certified plan writer meet the requirement for an E&S Plan if they address all these areas of concerns. There are also several documents available to help landowners prepare plans for simple operations on their own.

Although agricultural plowing and tillage operations are exempt from obtaining permits for these activities, it is important to realize that this exemption does not include the construction of building and other support facilities on the farm. These types of earth disturbances are subject to the same permitting requirements as any off-farm activity.

## **Chapter 105 – Dam Safety and Encroachments Act**

This state delegated program provides oversight of work in and around streams, wetlands and other bodies of water that has a potential to impact water quality, increase flooding or degrade riparian habitat. The District registers PA DEP General Permits, which authorize certain types of work including: Fish Habitat Enhancement; Small Docks & Boat Ramps; Streambank Stabilization; Utility Line or Minor Road Crossings of streams or wetlands.

19 General Permits for water obstructions and encroachments were acknowledged. 18 Chapter 105-related complaints were investigated. Information and technical assistance is available concerning permit and other requirements associated with Chapter 105 Regulations.

## **Act 167 Stormwater Management**

The Jefferson County Conservation District has entered into working agreements with 24 Municipalities in Jefferson County to implement the Jefferson County Act 167 Stormwater Management Plan by providing assistance to these Municipalities with enforcement of their Stormwater Ordinances.

In 2012, 153 stormwater plans were reviewed by either Conservation District staff or Geo-Tech Engineering for compliance with the municipal ordinance.

### **Dirt and Gravel Roads Program**

Each year \$4 million is directed from the state motor vehicle license fund to prevent dust and sediment pollution by employing environmentally sound maintenance of dirt and gravel roads. Each county's allocation is based on the number and condition of dirt and gravel roads in the county. Jefferson County receives nearly \$ 38,000.00 each year. \_\_\_\_\_ contracts with municipalities were signed in 2012. Projects in \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_ Townships were completed.

In order to be eligible for these funds, at least one member of a municipality or eligible agency must complete a two day training program given by Penn State's Center for Dirt and Gravel Roads. To find the next training date or for more information, visit the Center for Dirt and Gravel Roads web site at <http://www.mri.psu.edu/centers/edgrs/> or call the District's Program Coordinator, Shaun Wessell, at 849-7463.

### **Nutrient Management Program**

In July Megan Whitlatch joined the District Team as Nutrient Management Specialist/Agriculture Conservation Technician. Megan is a graduate of Clarion University and Slippery Rock College. Megan helps area farmers to comply with state regulations relating to agriculture.



The Nutrient Management Act (Act 38) requires all Concentrated Animal Operations (CAO's) to develop, submit, and implement a **Nutrient Management Plan**. A Nutrient Management Plan (NMP) considers existing soil nutrient levels and nutrients needed for achieving crop yield goals. The NMP accounts for manure generated on the farm and determines a proper application rate. The NMP calculates the quantity and location of additional nutrients needed. The NMP may also recommend practices to reduce soil loss and prevent nutrients from contaminating surface and ground water.

A written **Agriculture E&S Plan** is required for any agricultural plowing or tilling over 5,000 square feet, including no-till cropping, and for animal heavy use areas such as barnyards, feedlots, loafing areas, exercise lots, etc. The Agriculture E&S Plan must include cost-effective and reasonable best management practices (BMPs) to minimize the potential for accelerated erosion and sedimentation. A Conservation Plan that meets the state regulatory requirements, often prepared with the help of the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), may be used in place of an Agriculture E&S Plan.

A written **Manure Management Plan** is required for every farm that produces or applies manure. This includes small (one horse) operations. A Manure Management Plan addresses manure application setbacks from streams, drinking water supplies, and sinkholes as well as winter manure spreading. An approved Act 38 Nutrient Management Plan may be used in place of a Manure Management Plan.

The Jefferson County Conservation District conducted two workshops in 2012 to assist with writing an Agriculture E&S Plan or a Manure Management Plan.

### **Noxious & Invasive Weed Survey**

Over the past three years the Conservation District has partnered with the Headwaters Resource Conservation & Development and the Natural Resources Conservation Service to conduct noxious and invasive weed surveys. Focusing on properties that had been enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP), farm visits were made by the District Technician to provide landowners with educational tools to help them identify and control noxious and invasive weeds as well as information on beneficial plants for wildlife and wildlife habitat.

## **Special Projects/Grants**

### **Watersheds**

Phase IV of the Sugar Camp Run Discharge as a Municipal Water Supply began in 2012. Funding provided through a grant from The Pennsylvania Infrastructure Investment Authority (PENNVEST) is being used to construct a treatment system to treat 3,000 gpm of mine water from Sugar Camp Run in Sykesville Borough for commercial use. The Conservation District is working with Sykesville Borough and Winner Environmental, LLC to investigate the possibility of further treating the mine water for potable uses.



Sugar Camp Run Discharge



Maelstrom Oxidizer Treatment System

The original Conifer Treatment System was built in 1998. The water chemistry changed in 1999. The ferric iron & aluminum in the discharge led to premature plugging of the ALD. In 2003 and 2004 rehabilitation efforts were made. Still, the system was providing very little or no treatment. A project to regrade the limestone in the ALD, and fill a portion of the settling pond with limestone to create a large limestone bed (FeAlMn bed pronounced Fel-al-men) was completed in July, 2011. The Conservation District has entered into a Working Agreement with the Redbank Creek Watershed Trust to provide continued monitoring and maintenance on the system.



Conifer Treatment System Fe/Al/Mn bed



Treatment System outfall

## **Watersheds (Cont'd)**

North Fork Watershed Association

## **Environmental Education**

### ***Jefferson-Clarion Envirothon***

The 2012 Jefferson-Clarion County Competition was held at the Jefferson County Fairgrounds, on Thursday, May 3, 2012. This year's Envirothon included 13 teams from five schools from Jefferson and Clarion Counties.

Punxsutawney High School won 1st Place in the Jefferson-Clarion Envirothon competition and travelled on to the State Envirothon. On May 22-23, 2012, the State Envirothon was held at the University of Pittsburgh-Johnstown. Winners of the State competition advanced to the national Canon Envirothon.

From July 22-27, 2012, Pennsylvania hosted the 25th annual Canon Envirothon at Susquehanna University, Selinsgrove, PA. Teams came to the area from nearly every US state and Canadian province/territory, numbering close to 600 students, teachers, and others. What a great way for Pennsylvania to celebrate the Envirothon's 25th anniversary by coming back to where it all began!!!

### ***Earth Day***

Clarion University held an Earth Day Celebration at Cook Forest State Park where 119 high school students from Jefferson and Clarion Counties rotated to stations on Soil and Agriculture, Watersheds, Groundwater, Reptiles/Amphibians, Estuaries, Soil Conservation and Acid Mine Drainage. Staff from the Conservation presented information on Soil and Agriculture.

### ***C.G. Johnson 4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Envirothon***

A total of 138 students from 6 classrooms participated in the Annual 4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> Grade competition. In 2012, 1st Place went to \_\_\_\_\_ class. This competition has been created to provide a learning session, along with testing at each of the stations. There were activities in the areas of Agriculture, Acid Mine Drainage, D.B. Pests, Water, Recycling and a nontesting station. Each station included an instructional period where the students listened to a presentation and completed a short quiz on what they learned.

### ***Farm Safety Day***

In May, 450 second grade students attended Farm Safety Day, sponsored by Penn State Extension, at the Jefferson County Fairgrounds. Students rotated to presentations on Ag Awareness, Sun Safety, Gun Safety, Drug & Alcohol, Animal Safety, and Hidden Hazards.

### ***Brockway Field Day***

On May 26<sup>th</sup>, 125 sixth grade students converged on Clear Creek State Park for a Field Day arranged for by the PA Game Commission. Throughout the day the students learned about their environment. Representatives from the Conservation District presented information on Soil and Agriculture.

***Cloe Lake Watershed Education***

Punxsutawney High School students learned about the watershed where they live by attending a field day at Cloe Lake near Punxsutawney, PA. The curriculum included identification of macroinvertebrates, and testing the chemical and physical parameters of Jackson Run. This annual event allows students to compare the changes in Jackson Run from year to year.



### **2012 Board of Directors**

Chairman – Herb Landes  
Vice-Chairman – Porter Duvall  
Secretary/Treasurer – Allen Campbell  
Commissioner – Paul Corbin  
Public Director – Tom McFarland  
Farmer Director – Theresa Shick  
Farmer Director – Jack Corbin

### **Associate Directors**

Bill Keown	Terry Shields
Jerry Chamberlin	Andrew Laska
George Miller	Laura Lynn Yohe
Richard Bowser	Rusty & Claire Orner
Doug Catalano	Chris Mitterer
Matt Ferut	Todd Beers

### **Staff Members**

District Manager – Deborah Wilson  
Administrative Assistant/  
Environmental Ed Coord. – Melissa Buck  
Watershed Specialist/  
Resource Technician – Shaun Wessell  
Nutrient Mgmt Specialist/  
Ag Conservation Technician – Megan Whitlatch

Visit our Website:

[www.jeffersonconservation.com](http://www.jeffersonconservation.com)



## **Mission Statement**

The Mission of the  
Jefferson County  
Conservation District is to  
preserve natural resources  
and protect/promote the  
health, safety and general  
welfare of the people of  
Jefferson County and  
to provide technical services  
to improve resource  
management for the benefit  
of farmers and  
urban residents.