



CONSERVATION TIMES

ANNUAL BMP TOUR

Fall 2022

Inside This Issue:

Project Showcase	2
Tour of Acid Mine Drainage Projects	3
Electronics & HHW Collection	4
District Purchases No-Till Drill	5
Planning Commission Municipal Workshops	6
Maintaining Your Stream When do you need a Permit?	7



The District held its Annual BMP Tour to showcase water quality projects and partnerships. The tour kicked off with an overview of National Fuel’s most recent projects throughout the area.

Participants then boarded a bus to visit an Agricultural Best Management Practice (BMP) project on Newell Creek, Eldred, PA. The recently completed roofed heavy use area/manure stacking facility, streambank stabilization and agricultural crossing were funded through a PA DEP Growing Greener Grant awarded to the District.

The next stop of the tour was to another site along Newell Creek. This project included the installation of 36 streambank stabilization/fish enhancement structures to stabilize 1,300 feet of the streambank, funded by a PA DEP Growing Greener Grant awarded to the District.

The last two stops of the tour were for the participants to learn about the partnership between PRISM Glass Recycling, Erie Management Group, Ardagh Glass Packaging, RecycAll, McKan Trucking and the District to create a county-wide glass collection program. There are numerous collection locations across McKean County that are free for residents to deposit their glass bottles and jars. The glass is collected and trucked by McKan Trucking for processing at RecycAll and then to the Ardagh glass plant in Port Allegany to make new bottles and jars.

Financial and other support for this project is provided by the Pennsylvania Association of Conservation Districts through a grant from the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection under Section 319 of the Clean Water Act, which is administered by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

PROJECT SHOWCASE



Low Volume Road Project Corydon Township Wolf Run Road

Corydon Township submitted an application for consideration of funding through the District's Low Volume Road Program during our sign-up period in 2021.

The unstable road bank was causing maintenance issues for the township constantly eroding and filling the ditch, causing sedimentation to an unnamed tributary to Willow Creek, a well-known high quality wild trout watershed. The steep slope of the bank also was a safety issue making it difficult for those driving to see on-coming traffic.

The project was approved for funding by the QAB and the District Board. The township recently completed the project by excavating a stepped back shelf along the eroded road bank to lessen the slope and decrease the erosion rate. The newly sloped bank was seeded with a native pollinator mix specific to steep slopes and erosion prevention. In reducing the slope of the bank there will be less erosion and the amount of sediment pollution being washed into the road side ditch was significantly decreased. This project also gives drivers a better line of site, making the road much safer for all who travel on it.



Grant request = 19,000

In-kind amount = 4,189.00

Total Project = \$23,189.00

Tour of Acid Mine Drainage Projects

The District held a tour to showcase the recent completion of AMD projects on July 15th. Participants of the tour started with a lunch at the Norwich Township Community Fire Hall and then a brief history of the area was provided by Chairman Blaine Puller. The participants then car pooled into the hills of Crosby to view the AMD projects in Railroad and Hamlin Run.

Railroad & Hamlin Run are located in Norwich Township. The watersheds have a total area of 5.7 square miles. They are both a tributary to the East Branch Potato Creek, which forms Potato Creek at the confluence with the West Branch Potato Creek. Potato Creek is a major tributary to the Allegheny River. These streams flow from a part of McKean County that contains economic coal reserves and has a history of mining activity.

The watersheds are largely forested and do not contain any towns or villages. The dominant land uses are forestry and recreation. Ninety-five percent of the watershed is owned by Lyme Timber Management. The remaining 5% is owned by the Pennsylvania Game Commission. No active mines exist in the watershed. However, historic surface mining operations created open pits and water filled impoundments. According to the PA DEP Integrated List, both watersheds are impaired due to acid mine drainage and is also impacted by acid deposition.

The implementation of these projects will result in buffered in-stream water conditions that would protect approximately two miles of Railroad Run and 2.9 miles of Hamlin Run against episodic acidification. These modest changes could have significant ecological benefits in this poorly buffered watershed.

Through continued monitoring by the District, it will show continued improvement to the water quality of the streams that will eventually change the quality of the streams from being impaired.

Financial and other support for the tour was provided by the Pennsylvania Association of Conservation Districts through a grant from the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection under Section 319 of the Clean Water Act, administered by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.



Electronics & Household Hazardous Waste Collection



The District hosted an electronic and household hazardous waste collection on July 28th at the Bradford Airport.

Working with Noble Environmental, an industry leading environmental services company headquartered in Pittsburgh, PA., The collection was set up as a drive-thru event.

Originally scheduled from 3:00 pm to 7:00 pm, due to the overwhelming response, the timeframe was extended from 2:00 – 7:00 pm with each time slot triple booked. This was done to help as many McKean County residence properly dispose of their electronics and household hazardous waste.

There were 250 vehicles at the collection event with

- * 1,974 # of Household Hazardous Waste
- * 710 # of universal waste
- * 5,327 # of paint
- * 1,876 # of freon containing devices
- * 23 # of propane
- * 19,205 # of televisions/monitors
- * 8,656 # of non-video display electronics

A special thank you to the Bradford Regional Airport for allowing us to use their facility for the event.

Look for more recycling events in 2023.



DISTRICT PURCHASES NO-TILL DRILL

The District recently purchased a Great Plains 10' No-Till Drill that will be available for rent by landowners within McKean County. The District will be implementing a no-till/cover crop program. In the near future, McKean County landowners will be able to utilize the District's new grain drill.

The main benefits of no-till farming include:

- * Improved soil health
- * Decreased equipment costs
- * Reduced fuel costs
- * Lower labor costs
- * Lower dust levels
- * Less erosion
- * More water conservation

Landowners can utilize a no-till drill to:

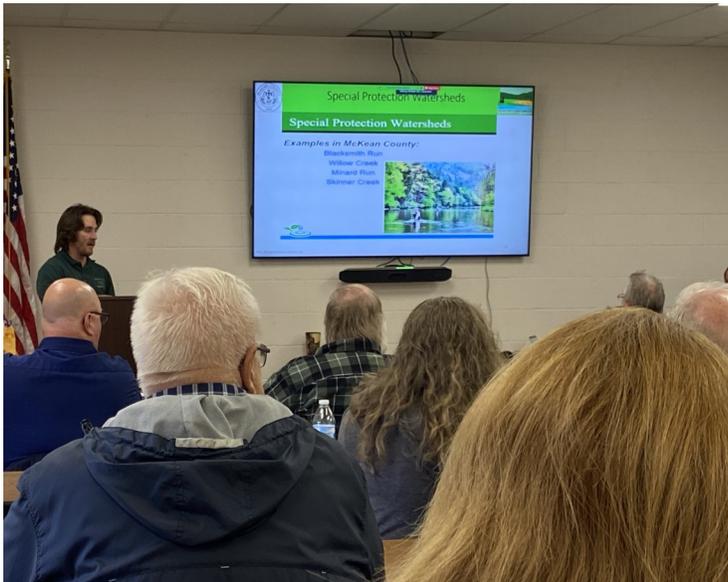
- * Establish a cover crop after harvesting corn silage
- * Rotate or convert annual crop land to hay or pasture
- * Improve hay or pasture
- * Establish legumes (i.e. soybeans) or cereal grains without primary tillage
- * Cover Crops.

Farmers traditionally till to break up soil and prepare seedbeds. Over time, tillage can degrade structure and create highly compacted soils that seemingly "need" to be tilled before spring planting. Plant cool-season cover crops to reduce compaction, build organic matter, and hold your soil in place. Make sure to pick a cover crop species or mix that compliments your cash crop. If you're starting with a highly-compacted field, use cover crop species that are meant to break up compaction.

For more information on the District's new No-Till Drill program, contact Adam Causer, Watershed Specialist at 814-887-4003 or accouser@mckeancountypa.org.



PLANNING COMMISSION MUNICIPAL WORKSHOPS



During the month of September, the McKean County Planning Commission held two educational workshops on the County's Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance (SALDO). The purpose of these workshops was to educate and provide a shared understanding about the County's SALDO process to include the steps involved, the role of the various review entities, and the documentation/approvals needed to finalize the Subdivision or Land Development.

In total, forty-seven members of the community attended consisting of Municipal Officials, Engineers, Surveyors, and Attorneys. Panelists from multiple organizations presented to include McKean County Planning/GIS, McKean County Tax Assessment, McKean County Conservation District, Erb Inspections, PA DEP, and PennDOT. Attendees were informed on 911 Addressing, County Subdivision and Land Development Process, Uniform Construction Code, Highway Occupancy Permits, Act 167, and Ch. 102 (Erosion & Sediment Control).

Matt Siszka, Conservation Technician for the Conservation District (pictured above), gave a presentation on the requirements of Chapter 102 and Chapter 105. Some basic requirements of Chapter 102:

If your project:

- * Has less than 5,000 square feet of earth disturbance, it is not necessary to have a written plan on site but erosion and sediment control best management practices (BMPs) are still required.
- * Has more than 5,000 square feet of earth disturbance, a written E&S plan is required to be on site and implemented. Approval through the District is not required, unless re-quested through a local entity
- * Has more than 1 acre of earth disturbance and is not in a special protection (EV, HQ) watershed, a General NPDES Permit is required to be submitted for approval to the District.

Has more than 1 acre of earth disturbance and is in a special protection watershed, an Individual NPDES Permit is required to be submitted for approval to the District.

For more information on the Chapter 102 requirements, reach out to Matt Siszka at 814-887-4008 or mjsiszka@mckeancountypa.org.

MAINTAINING YOUR STREAMS WHEN DO YOU NEED A PERMIT?

The District is a great resource for guidance on when a permit may be needed when working in your stream. We can offer you technical assistance with stabilizing your streambank, help you through any permit requirements and in some cases acknowledge permits.



These actions will need permits:

- * Building or replacing a bridge, culvert, ford crossings, temporary crossings
- * Utility line stream crossings
- * Stream Enclosures
- * Redirecting the flow of a stream,
- * Streambank stabilization installing riprap or retaining walls
- * dredging the stream or removing a gravel bar
- * Outfall structures—pipe out letting to a stream
- * Creating a dike or placing fill along the streambank

No permit is required when:

- * Removing manmade materials, such as litter and construction debris from the stream, banks and riparian areas. Does not include gravel bar removal or dredging.
- * Removing woody debris, such as trees, logs or brush, from the stream while you are standing in the streams, using hand-held equipment. Cutting trees off at the stump (keeping the stumps helps stabilize the bank).
- * Removing woody debris from the stream while you are standing on the bank, using heavy equipment, so long as it remains on the bank.
- * Channel cleaning at permitted bridges or culverts limited to 50 feet upstream and downstream of crossing.
- * All debris, material and gravel must be safely relocated out of the floodplain to an upland area that is not a wetland.

Good Rules of Thumb:

- * Maintain bridges and culverts so they work as planned when flooding occurs. Without periodic operation and maintenance of these structures to maintain free-flowing passage, conditions often worsen.
- * Removing debris from the stream channel should generally be done in a way that avoids altering the stream channel or banks, including vegetation.
- * Root systems hold soil in place and keep it from eroding. Keeping vegetation intact and increasing vegetative cover, especially trees, is the best way to reduce erosion of streambanks and loss of property in the long term. A simple first step is to stop mowing streambanks.

For further information on permitting requirements or assistance working on your stream, contact the District or access our website at www.mckeanconservation.com.

Directors

Blaine Puller - Chairman
Jeff Larson - Vice-Chairman
Cliff Lane-Commissioner-Secretary/Treasurer
Kerry Fetter - Public
Chase Miles - Farmer
Ken Kane - Public
Greg Bell—Public

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The McKean County Conservation District was organized at the request of the County residents. The County was declared a District by the board of County Commissioners on August 19, 1959, according to provisions of the Soil Conservation Law of 1945, Act 217 of the General Assembly, as amended.

The primary goal of the District is the development, improvement, and conservation of the County's Soil, water and related resources as well as educating the community in various conservation and environmental practices and methods.

The District is administered by a board of seven Directors—three farmer members, three public (non-farmer) members and one County Commissioner. District Directors are appointed by the County Commissioners from a list of names submitted by countywide nominating organizations. The Commissioners also designate one of their members to serve as a Director.

Vision: The Conservation District is the steward of McKean County's natural resource and embraces environmentally responsible decisions.

Mission: The Conservation District provides leadership and stewardship to ensure the protection and sustainability of McKean County's natural resources by fostering public and private partnerships.

