



# ANNUAL REPORT

2024



# Beaver County Conservation District Mission Statement

THE BEAVER COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT WAS ESTABLISHED BY RESOLUTION #213 ON AUGUST 3, 1961 FOR THE CONSERVATION OF THE SOIL AND SOIL RESOURCES IN BEAVER COUNTY AND FOR THE CONTROL AND PREVENTION OF SOIL EROSION. IT'S MISSION IS TO PRESERVE MORE NATURAL RESOURCES AND TO PROMOTE AND PROTECT THE HEALTH, SAFETY, AND GENERAL WELFARE OF THE PEOPLE OF BEAVER COUNTY AND TO PROVIDE TECHNICAL SERVICES TO IMPROVE RESOURCE MANAGEMENT FOR THE BENEFIT OF BOTH FARMERS AND URBAN RESIDENTS.

*The Beaver County Conservation District provides leadership in natural resource management through outreach, education, and technical assistance.*

# Beaver County Conservation District Board of Directors

## **2025 Board Of Directors**

Wayne (Chip) McCoy Jr., Chairman  
Dominic D'Egidio, Vice Chairman  
Jack Manning, County Commissioner, Director  
Alex Schreiber, Secretary/Treasurer  
Robert Guidice, Director  
Michael Price, Director  
Richard (Rick) Smith, Director  
Sam Kuhlber, Associate Director

## **2024 Board Of Directors**

Michael Price, Chairman  
Wayne (Chip) McCoy Jr., Vice Chairman  
Jack Manning, County Commissioner, Director  
Alex Schreiber, Secretary/Treasurer  
Robert Guidice, Director  
Dominic D'Egidio, Director  
Richard (Rick) Smith, Director  
Sam Kuhlber, Associate Director



# Beaver County Conservation District Staff

Jeff Pflug - District Manager  
Hannah Ward - Assistant Manager  
Sarah Barnett - BCALPB Admin/Resource Conservationist  
Shannon Ritmiller - Resource Conservationist  
Lindsey Shepler - Environmental Educator/Watershed Specialist  
Phoebe Prince - West Nile Virus Technician/DGLVR Technician  
Rachel Galloway - Resource Conservationist  
Sara Benzio - Agricultural Conservationist  
Kendra Schreck - Agricultural Conservationist  
Morgan Lee - Resource Conservationist  
Melinda Muehlbronner - Resource Conservationist Mentor



# Partnership Agencies

## **United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resource Conservation Service**

Sydney Feits, District Conservationist  
625 Evans City Rd, Suite 102  
Butler, PA 16001  
Phone: 724-482-5282  
Cell: 724-372-4948

## **United States Department of Agriculture Farm Service Agency**

Ed Huston III, Acting County Executive Director  
625 Evans City Road, Suite 103  
Butler, PA 16001  
Phone: 724-482-4800 Ext. 2

## **Pennsylvania State University Cooperative Extension**

1000 3<sup>rd</sup> Street, Suite #3  
Beaver, PA 15009-2026  
Phone: 724-774-3003

## **Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission**

Jeremiah Allen, WCO  
236 Lake Road  
Somerset, PA 15501  
Phone: 814-445-8974

## **Department of Environmental Protection Southwest Regional Office**

400 Waterfront Drive  
Pittsburgh, PA 15222-4745  
Phone: 412-442-4000

## **Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Department of Transportation**

Cheryl Moon-Sirianni, District Executive  
45 Thoms Run Road  
Bridgeville, PA 15017  
Phone: 412-429-4863

## **Beaver County Board of Commissioners Beaver County Courthouse**

810 Third Street  
Beaver, PA 15009  
Phone: 724-728-5700

## **Department of Conservation and Natural Resources**

Bureau of Forestry  
District #8 Clear Creek  
158 South Second Avenue  
Clarion, PA 16214-2404  
Phone: 814-226-1901

## **Pennsylvania State Conservation Commission**

Karl G. Brown, Executive Director  
2301 North Cameron Street  
Harrisburg, PA 17110-9408  
Phone: 717-787-8821

## **Pennsylvania Game Commission**

Mike Yeck/Madison Pugh, Game Wardens  
P.O. Box 141  
Beaver, PA 15009  
Phone: 724-238-9523

## **Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture**

226 Donohoe Road  
Greensburg, PA 15601  
Phone: 724-832-1073

## **Pennsylvania Association of Conservation Districts**

Brenda Shambaugh, Executive Director  
5925 Stevenson Ave, Suite A  
Harrisburg, PA 17112  
Phone: 717-238-7223 Ext. 103

THE BEAVER COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT WORKS TOGETHER WITH THE NATURAL RESOURCE CONSERVATION SERVICE, PENNSYLVANIA STATE UNIVERSITY EXTENSION OFFICE, PENNSYLVANIA FISH & BOAT COMMISSION, PENNSYLVANIA GAME COMMISSION, DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION, DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION OF NATURAL RESOURCES, PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION, MUNICIPALITIES, SCHOOLS, AND MANY BEAVER COUNTY AGENCIES/GROUPS CONCERNING CONSERVATION AND LAND USE PLANNING, FARMLAND PRESERVATION, CROP/FIELD DAYS, WILDLIFE, AQUATICS, ENVIROTHONS, TREE SALES, PLANTINGS, COUNTY PROGRAMMING AND SOIL EROSION.



# Agricultural Conservation Assistance Program (ACAP)

KENDRA SCHRECK

SARA BENZIO



In 2024, the Beaver County Conservation District proudly completed two major projects under the Agricultural Conservation Assistance Program (ACAP), demonstrating our ongoing commitment to supporting local farmers with sustainable and environmentally-friendly agricultural practices.

## **Bonzo Farm**

The Bonzo Farm project featured several key improvements aimed at enhancing water management and livestock care:  
New fencing, pumping plant, watering facility, and livestock pipeline.

These enhancements promote better pasture management, protect nearby water bodies, and improve overall farm productivity.

ACAP Grant Award: \$22,496.00

EQUIP Contract: \$27,504.00

## **Perkins Farm**

The Perkins Farm project focused on improving water accessibility and livestock management:

New livestock pipeline and watering facility.

These improvements have helped Perkins Farm enhance its operational efficiency while reducing the environmental impact on local water resources.

ACAP Grant Award: \$11,463.60

EQUIP Contract: \$63,589.00

## **Ongoing ACAP Projects**

Wright Brothers Dairy LLC – we are leveraging ACAP Funds, Growing Greener Grants, and PENNVEST to complete this project.

ACAP Grant Award: \$529,500.00

Growing Greener Grant Award: \$307,280.00

PENNVEST: \$1,377,000.00

Lewis Family Farms – we are leveraging ACAP Funds and Growing Greener Grants to complete this project.

ACAP Grant Award: \$232,300.00

Growing Greener Grant Award: \$16,925.00

Above Pictures: Bonzo Farm ACAP Project (left) and Perkins Farm ACAP Project (right)



# Dirt, Gravel, and Low Volume Roads Program

HANNAH WARD



The Beaver County Conservation District's Dirt, Gravel, and Low Volume Roads Program made significant strides in 2024, completing three major projects that improved local infrastructure while protecting water quality and reducing erosion.

## **McKinley Road, Big Beaver Borough**

This project included the installation of 13 new cross pipes and the replacement of 5 existing cross pipes, ensuring better drainage and reduced runoff. Additionally, 200 feet of under drain was added to address water infiltration, and a shallow road grind was completed to stabilize the road surface. The total project value was \$113,048.09, enhancing both road safety and environmental conditions in the area.

## **9th Ave/Laurel Alley, Freedom Borough**

The Freedom Borough project focused on improving drainage with the installation of 388 feet of under drain, a 110-foot rip-rap swale for erosion control, and 3 new drop boxes to manage stormwater. These improvements increase ditch stability, reduce sediment runoff, and enhance road stability. The project was completed with a total investment of \$106,185.40.

## **Ben Venue Road, Marion Township**

Improvements to Ben Venue Road included the addition of 924 tons of road fill, installation of 4 new cross pipes, and the replacement of 2 aging cross pipes. Road surface stabilization and ditch improvements were also completed to manage water runoff and extend the road's lifespan. This comprehensive project, valued at \$75,108.13.

The total combined project value for 2024 was \$294,341.62.

Above Images: Ben Venue Road before (left) and after (right)



# West Nile Virus Season Summary

PHOEBE PRINCE



From April through October, sites within Beaver County were surveyed for adult and immature (larval and pupal) mosquitoes. Any adult mosquitoes captured were tested for specific mosquito-borne viruses. Sites were chosen in areas with standing water likely to be mosquito habitat, including artificial containers like tires, sewage treatment plants, and floodwater areas. Mosquito trapping was prioritized in areas with a higher human population or nearby public parks. Sites were located throughout Beaver County municipalities. Beaver County surveillance collected over 42,200 mosquitoes in gravid traps, over 2,500 in BG Sentinel traps, and over 1,600 larvae/pupae in samples.

In 2024, 4 different diseases were tested for in Beaver County mosquitoes: West Nile Virus, St. Louis Encephalitis, Jamestown Canyon Virus, and La Crosse Virus. All adult mosquito's tested for La Crosse Virus, Jamestown Canyon Virus, and St. Louis Encephalitis returned a negative result. We ended the season with 91 samples testing positive for West Nile Virus in mosquitoes within Beaver County. The county reported 0 human cases in 2024.



# Chapter 102/105 Report

JEFF PFLUG



Beaver  
Feb 2<sup>nd</sup>



The Chapter 102 and Chapter 105 Programs at the Beaver County Conservation District had a productive 2024! We welcomed two new team members: Morgan Lee and Shannon Ritmiller, who are now serving as Resource Conservationists. Morgan is managing the 105 and 102 permitting, while Shannon is focused on Complaint Inspections and Permitted Site Inspections for both Chapters. This year, the District successfully processed 47 PAG-02 permit renewals. Additionally, Beaver County Conservation District was accepted into DEP's Individual Permit Pilot Program, designed to expedite the issuance of Individual Permits. Our team has been diligently providing technical assistance and enhancing our procedures and outreach initiatives. Our aim is to better serve our communities and safeguard the Waters of the Commonwealth. We are continuing to standardize our Practice Keeper reporting to effectively analyze trends related to complaints, permit reviews, and inspections. Throughout 2024, the 102/105 Staff has held technical assistance meetings with applicants, promoted the program through outreach efforts, participated in Bootcamp trainings, and helped community members navigate the relevant laws for their properties.

## **Chapter 105 Accomplishments:**

Permits acknowledged - 24

Complaints investigated, including follow-ups - 30

## **Chapter 102 Accomplishments:**

Permits acknowledged - 38

E&S Plans submitted for review - 24

Individual Pilot Program applications - 2

PAG-02 Renewals -47

NOT Submissions - 29

Permitted site inspections - 37

Total complaints investigated, including follow-ups (including complaints on permitted sites) - 50



# 2024 Education Report

LINDSEY SHEPLER



Education at BCCD had a great year in 2024! We attended and hosted a total of 37 events throughout Beaver County for the year. Some events were on our grounds and included field trips, hiking tours, and scout troop programs. Other events were in the community such as the fairs, Maple Syrup Festival, and school science events.

We hosted our annual Envirothon competition in Beaver County in April 2024 and had a total of 6 school districts participate and 127 students from within those 6 district.

In October 2024 BCCD partnered with Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) and the Beaver Valley Intermediate Unit (BVIU) to host a Meaningful Watershed Education Experience (MWEE) at Raccoon Creek State Park. The event was put on for teachers to come and learn about ways to include watershed education tools in their own classrooms and allowed them to network with watershed education professionals around the county.

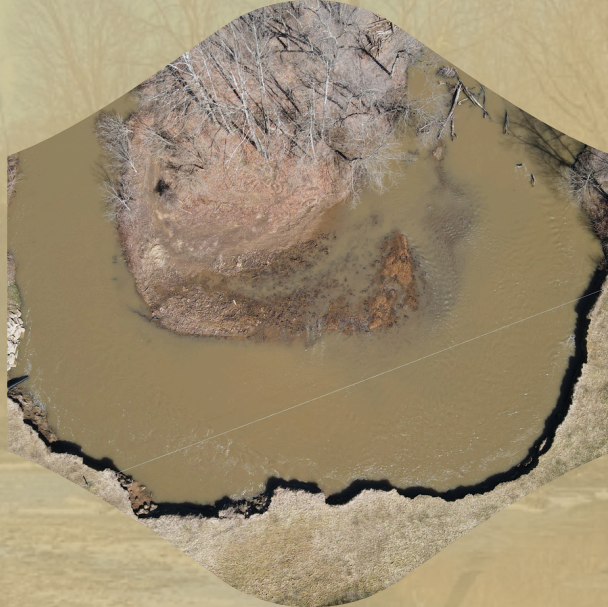
BCCD once again partnered with the Beaver County Sportsman's Conservation League to host 2 days of Conservation Camp at the BCCD grounds. 42 kids from around Beaver County ages 13-15 spent a week in June learning about all things conservation related. They spent 2 days at BCCD; one day they learned all about different breeds of hunting dogs, dog training, and ethical hunting practices. The second day they learned about the importance of habitat for wildlife species, they learned about pollinators and why they are important for a balanced ecosystem, and they learned about stream quality and the delicate macro invertebrates in each stream that tell the stories of health within the streams.



# 2024 Watershed Report

LINDSEY SHEPLER

Right: Raccoon Creek  
streambank stabilization  
before project completion



Left: Raccoon Creek  
streambank stabilization  
after project completion



In 2024 BCCD was awarded 2 Growing Greener Grants through Pennsylvania DEP. One grant was for the Wright Brother's Dairy Farm for \$307,280.00 and one for the Lewis Farm for \$16,295.00. Both projects will be under construction in 2025.

BCCD completed a stream bank stabilization project on Raccoon Creek in Independence Township in September of 2024. Funds for this project came through a Growing Greener Grant that was previously awarded.

BCCD also applied for 2 additional Growing Greener grant projects, one Ag BMP project for the Kraus Farm and one streambank stabilization project for North Fork Little Beaver Creek.



# **Beaver County Ag-Land Preservation**

**SARAH BARNETT**

As we move into 2025, we want to take a moment to reflect on the growth of the program over the past year. We appreciate the hard work and dedication of Beaver County's farming community. Without your willingness to make a long-term commitment to agriculture, our program would not be possible.



**AS OF DECEMBER 31ST, 2024, THE BEAVER COUNTY AGRICULTURAL LAND PRESERVATION PROGRAM HAS PRESERVED 4,116.808 ACRES ON 41 FARMS ACROSS THE COUNTY.**

In 2024, our program received a total of \$860,535.41 from the State and County for Conservation Easement Purchases. Our Administrator, Sarah Barnett worked with the County Board and State to completely overhaul and update our Program Guidelines.

We worked with the local municipalities and with the Beaver County Planning Commission to verify all parcels enrolled in the Agricultural Security Area Program and update the County Map. Major changes to the Program include simplifying our Ranking Procedures and reducing subjectivity in the Ranking Process, removing the Cap on the Per Acre price for Easement Purchases, removing the need for deposits for appraisals, requiring updated applications yearly, a new non-refundable \$200 fee for applications, making the Program Guidelines more user friendly and more. We successfully acquired a new team of professionals to speed the process of preserving farms. With our newly created Work Instructions and updated team of professionals, we have successfully shortened the average time from application to closing on an Easement Purchase from 24 months to 12 months, meeting the goal set in 2023. We closed on the Steffler LLC (107.52 acres), Swick (91.38 acres), and Foley (84.07 acres) farms, and worked to start the process for three additional farms. Looking forward to 2025, we intend to capitalize on our momentum. Depending on budgetary constraints, we are poised to clear our entire backlog of farms from our wait list by the fourth quarter. This potential for a clean slate is exciting, as it will open the door for a host of new farms to apply to the program and continue the work started over 30 years ago. We are grateful for the support from our community as we continue to better the Program for future generations.

**Thank you to the County Commissioners, Elected Officials and our farming community for your continued support and partnership with the Beaver County Agricultural Land Preservation Program.**



# 2024 Tire Collection Report

PHOEBE PRINCE



The 2024 Beaver County Vector-Borne Management Program tire collection was held on Saturday April 13, 2024, at the Beaver County Conservation District. We would like to sincerely thank the citizens who participated in reducing mosquito habitat in Beaver County and making this year's event such a great success! We collected over 1,000 tires and eliminated prime breeding sites for mosquitoes within the county.

We would also like to thank all the volunteers who helped sling tires this year. Without the help of volunteers, the tire collection would not be possible! Thank you for all your hard work and dedication.

This year, we collaborated again with tire recycler Liberty Tire and filled a 53' semi-trailer with tires. Liberty Tire recycles the tires collected to become products such as athletic surfaces, equine infill and pavers, garden mulch, and construction materials.

BCCD's tire collection is partially funded through a grant with the PA DEP Vector-Borne Management Program which enables us to offer a discount to the citizens of Beaver County. Participants are able to remove unwanted tires from their properties and remove tires from the environment that are a breeding habitat for mosquitoes in our neighborhoods.

The event also offers education and public outreach on mosquitoes and ticks and the diseases they can carry. We distribute educational information regarding mosquitoes, West Nile Virus, and the benefits of personal protection during outdoor activities. We offer activity books for the kids, mosquito dunks to reduce mosquitoes in areas of standing water that cannot be removed, tick kits to carry while enjoying outdoor activities, and other information and helpful hints.

Thank you again to all who participated in this year's event! For more information on mosquitoes or West Nile Virus, please contact us at Beaver County Conservation District



# 2024 Tree Sale Report

HANNAH WARD



The Beaver County Conservation District is pleased to announce the success of its 2024 Tree Sale. The sale was held on Saturday, April 27th at the Beaver County Conservation District in Independence Township. Thank you to everyone that purchased trees and hope to see you next year!

We sold 955 native trees, 80 fruit trees, 57 bags of wildflower seed mix, 41 bags of compost and 113 azaleas and rhododendrons. The compost is produced and provided by the Beaver County Department of Sustainability and Waste Management.

We hope to increase our sales next year to promote and foster native tree plantings throughout Beaver County!

If you would like to be added to our Tree Sale mailing email list to receive a tree sale order form please email [hannah.ward@bccdpa.us](mailto:hannah.ward@bccdpa.us) or call 724-378-1701 ext. 211



# 2024 Scout Projects

LINDSEY SHEPLER

The Beaver County Conservation District has had several scout troop projects installed on our grounds this year. These projects have added to the beautification of our grounds as well as expanding our education opportunities.

Our first big project this season was completed by Girl Scout Troop 28823. The troop worked together to install a Purple Martin birdhouse on our main office lawn. Surrounding the birdhouse itself they put in a pollinator garden and educational signs. A second part of their project included a website about pollinators and purple martins. The website talks about the importance of pollinator gardens and the role those pollinators have in keeping the Purple Martin population around. To view the Troop's Purple Martin house and pollinator garden in person, stop out to our grounds! To view their website, visit this link  
<https://sites.google.com/view/pollinatorparadise/homepage>



A second project completed this year was an Eagle Scout Project that was done by Thomas Short of Troop 414. Thomas replaced 12 bluebird houses around the District grounds with fresh brand new ones. The previous houses were old and in need of repair. Thomas's project included new posts, boxes, and pole protectors to keep snakes from being able to climb the posts into the houses, therefore preventing them from stealing the eggs from the nests. These new houses added a fresh look to the landscape, and the bluebirds sure loved them this year! Come out and walk our grounds to see the new houses in person.



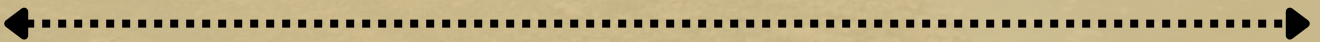
# 2024 Scout Projects

LINDSEY SHEPLER

The Beaver County Conservation District has had several scout troop projects installed on our grounds this year. These projects have added to the beautification of our grounds as well as expanding our education opportunities.

Right; A chimney swift tower was installed by eagle scout Cody Roper. It is right beside our pavilion at our office. Come check out the tower and keep an eye out for chimney swifts this spring!

Thank you, cody!



Left: New trail markers have been installed around the District main loop walking trail. These signs were an eagle scout project completed by David Hola.

Thank you, david!



# BCCD New Staff in 2024

2024 saw the addition of 4 new staff members to the team at BCCD. Welcome to the team, all!

Hi, my name is Morgan Lee! I am eager to begin my career as the new Resource Conservationist at Beaver County Conservation District. In this role, I will be working to protect water and soil quality within the District. I want to help improve and preserve the natural resources within the county.

I was raised in North Carolina and moved to Pennsylvania four years ago where I fell in love with the scenery. I graduated from Pennsylvania State University with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Forest Ecosystem Management. Since graduating, I have helped remove invasive plant species from the Western Pennsylvania Forests. My lifetime goal has always been to connect both people and the environment, and I look forward to achieving that goal with this new position. My hobbies include hiking, fishing, reading, and being crafty. I look forward to working with my new team at the Beaver County Conservation District and helping better the community.



My name is Shannon Preininger Ritmiller. I have been walking the BCCD grounds daily since 2020 with my best furry friends, Max & Josie. A simple Facebook post thanking whoever cut the grass on the trails introduced me to District Manager Jeff Pflug. I started attending some of the Board meetings and became very interested in what the Conservation District does. Little did I know that 4 years later I would become an employee. After 23 years working criminal court in Beaver, the opportunity came my way to change careers.

I have lived most of my life in Independence Township and raised my daughter here. I am now a grandmother to my 6 year old granddaughter, Allison, who is the sunshine of my life.

In my free time I enjoy hiking, kayaking, running 5ks with some girlfriends and going to the gym; basically doing anything but sitting still! I also enjoy watching the Pittsburgh Steelers & Penguins.

I am excited to be a part of this wonderful team!





# BCCD New Staff in 2024

2024 saw the addition of 4 new staff members to the team at BCCD. Welcome to the team, all!



My name is Kendra Schreck, and I am very excited to be a part of the team here at the Beaver County Conservation District. I will be taking on the role of one of the new Agriculture Conservationists. I will be working with farmers and landowners to provide technical assistance for all types and sizes of agricultural operations.

I am originally from Venango County where I grew up on a beef and crop operation. I was an active member in my county's 4-H program. I also showed my livestock projects at jackpot shows, and the Pennsylvania Farm Show. After high school I obtained a bachelor's degree in environmental science from Penn State. I have past job experience working for the USDA Farm Service Agency, and the PA DCNR. I am very passionate about conservation and agriculture, and I am eager to collaborate and contribute to this group.

Outside of work I enjoy helping my younger cousins with their livestock projects, raking hay, camping, mowing grass, archery and upland hunting. I also love spending time with my black lab Stormi.

Hello! My name is Sara Benzio and I am thrilled to be joining the Beaver County Conservation District team as one of the new Agricultural Conservationists. In this role I will be providing farmers and landowners with agricultural assistance pertaining to manure and nutrient management programs, conservation planning, and erosion/sedimentation control to improve water quality. I hope to connect with producers and help them get the most out of their operation by utilizing Best Management Practices and financial assistance programs. I look forward to working with my fellow Ag Tech Kendra and using my skills to improve agriculture operations across Beaver County.

I am a lifelong Beaver County resident and currently reside in Ohioville Borough. I attained my Bachelor of Agricultural Science Degree from Penn State University where I majored in Animal Science with a minor in Wildlife and Fisheries Science. I have past job experience interning with Penn State Extension in Beaver County where I assisted with county-wide educational content and helped provide opportunities for low-income and "food-desert" communities access to fresh, locally grown dairy, meat, and produce. I also have experience working as a shipping and export coordinator for a cattle reproduction and genetics company in central PA. I have long desired to combine my two great passions of agriculture and conservation into a career, and I am excited to join the district and serve my home county!

Outside of work, I enjoy hunting and fishing, camping, reading, and painting. Within the last 3 years I have also really enjoyed birdwatching and photographing wildlife.





# 2024 Special Thanks

BCCD would like to thank all the many volunteers that helped out with events and around the grounds in 2024!! The volunteers that helped with the tire collection day and tree sale, the Envirothon volunteers, the county fair volunteers, and the volunteers from Gateway Rehab Center that come almost every Friday morning and help keep our grounds in top shape. We couldn't do it without any of you! If you are interested in volunteering for events with BCCD please reach out!





# 2024 Special Thanks

BCCD would like to thank the organizations that donated to our 2024 education program! These donations allow us to put on our annual Envirothon event and assist in paying for Envirothon awards, t-shirts, food, and more. They also provide assistance in funding displays and education materials for public programs, equipment and materials for school field trips and resources for in-school education programs. Thank you for supporting conservation education in Beaver County!!

