



Beaver Tales

Summer 2021

Beaver County Conservation District

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Mission Statement

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

Raccoon Creek Streambank Stabilization Project

BCCD started construction of the Raccoon Creek Streambank Stabilization Growing Greener Grant project in Independence Township. This project will reduce erosion, reduce sedimentation, provide aquatic habitat, and improve water quality by restoring bank stability. This project uses natural stream channel design structures and habitat friendly in-stream structures. A series of five rock and log j-hook vanes with attached root wads have been installed. Live stakes will be planted in the fall to complete the project. This project will also protect a public walking trail that is located along Raccoon Creek.



Raccoon Creek Canoe Launch Parking Lot

BCCD completed an improvement to the canoe launch parking lot that is located right off of Route 151 along Raccoon Creek in Independence Township. The project was funded by the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy Canoe Access Development Fund. A 50x60 foot gravel parking lot was developed where the parking area used to be bare soil and muddy. We hope that since the canoe launch parking lot is now safe for use and inviting, that everyone will take the opportunity to enjoy it!



BCCD Adopts a Highway

Beaver County Conservation District

Board of Directors

Mike Price, Chairman

Richard Smith, Vice Chairman

Jack Manning, County Commissioner

George Sullivan, Secretary/Treasurer

Robert Guidice, Farmer Director

Jeff Lyons, Farmer Director

Wayne Harley, Farmer Director

Associate Directors

Lydian Fisher

Dominic D'Egidio

Shannon Ritmiller

Chip McCoy

District Staff

Jeff Pflug, District Manager

Georgia Miller, Finance Administrator

Hannah Ward, Watershed Specialist

Jen Linebaugh, Resource Conservationist

Heather Humbert, Environmental Educator

Richard Voytko, Agricultural Conservationist

Phoebe Prince, West Nile Virus Technician

Contact Us

156 Cowpath Road
Aliquippa, PA 15001

Phone (724) 378-1701 | Fax (724) 857-1044

Office hours: 8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
Monday - Friday

Send inquiries to:
beavercountyconservationdistrict@bccdpa.us



This spring the Beaver County Conservation District adopted a stretch of State Route 151 in Independence Township. The Adopt A Highway Program is run by the PA Department of Transportation to beautify our roads.

Twice a year, roadside litter is cleaned up by the organization which adopted the highway. On Earth Day, April 22, 2021, the Conservation District staff and directors conducted our first clean up! Forty bags of trash, some larger items and a few tires were picked up along the road side. This will improve the look of the road. More importantly, this clean up will prevent all that trash from ending up in Raccoon Creek or its tributaries which flow along the road side.



Staff and directors cleaned up trash along the roadside on Earth Day.



PennDOT placed signs along the section of State Route 151 adopted by BCCD.

Ag Corner

Annual Agricultural Gathering

On May 11, 2021, the Beaver County Conservation District held its annual Agricultural Gathering. Normally held in March, the event was moved to May this year and held outside at the conservation district pavilion. There are several goals for this event. This is an opportunity for farmers to gather for fellowship and discuss local farming issues. As always, the district presents current information regarding manure and nutrient management as well as agricultural erosion and sedimentation control. Best management practices are always on the agenda. Pesticide recertification credits are also provided to support farm operators.



The BCCD's Annual Agricultural Gathering was held at the district pavilion this year.

This year, guest speakers included a Penn State Extension Agronomy Educator discussing forage management and a Penn State Extension Educator – Water Resources, discussing pesticide safety. An NRCS Soil Conservation Technician also spoke about federal programs available to farmers. The weather was cooperative, and all enjoyed the refreshments, especially the pie!

We hope that more farmers will come to enjoy the fellowship and learn about important conservation topics next year when our annual event returns in March 2022.

No-till Drill For Rent

The Beaver County Conservation District owns an 8' Truax FLEXII 812RD No-Till drill that is available for rent to interested farmers in Beaver County. The purpose of the drill rental program is to encourage and assist farmers in implementing no-till crop production systems, including cover crops, as well as promote good pasture/forage management. Reducing tillage can improve soil health and farm economics.

Renting this drill provides farmers with a low-cost opportunity to try no-till planting and determine if it can be an asset to their farm management. More information is available on our website or you can contact the District's Agricultural Technician.

Richard Voytko ~ Richard.Voytko@bccdpa.us ~ 724-378-1701

All farms tilling greater than 5,000 sq. ft. must have an erosion and sedimentation plan (Conservation Plan). All farming operations that land apply manure need to develop and implement a manure management plan. Call the Conservation District to get detailed information and support developing your plans.

Tree Planting in Bradys Run Park

The Beaver County Conservation District cooperated with a host of other organizations to plant 50 trees in Bradys Run Park this spring. These trees were planted to memorialize and honor loved ones. These trees will add generations of beauty to the park.

The non-profit Bags and Blessings Charity was the driving force behind this project. Other cooperating organizations included the Beaver County Commissioners, Dept. of Public Works, Dept. of Recreation and Tourism and Lake Forest Gardens.

The conservation district provided technical assistance with this endeavor. The district provided information regarding tree species selection, spacing and planting guidance. The district manager also provided additional project coordination.

These new trees will replace old and dying trees along the walking trail in the park. Trees in the park have many environmental benefits. The trees will benefit wildlife in the park by providing habitat. These new trees will absorb carbon dioxide and release oxygen. Trees filter air pollution and cool the park on hot sunny summer days.



Jeff Pflug, District Manager, stands next to a tree recently planted at Brady's Run Park.

Decades from now, these trees will still provide beauty and environmental benefits to the community. Plans are in the works to continue planting new trees in the park, expanding the joy and benefits trees bring to park visitors and the environment.

If you are interested in purchasing trees for Phase 2 and future phases, please go to bagsandblessings.org for more details.

Ten Reasons to Visit the Conservation District Environmental Center Grounds

There are many reasons to visit the conservation district environmental center grounds. Here are just ten reasons to visit this summer.

1. Walk the trails
2. Bird Watching
3. Observe the beautiful wildflowers
4. Walk your dog
5. Check out the frogs and turtles in the old farm pond
6. Enjoy a picnic at the pavilion
7. Fish along Raccoon Creek.
8. Visit on horseback
9. Take pictures of nature
10. Check out the native plants in our rain garden.



Beaver County Conservation District
will be hosting:

April Claus:

Reptiles and Amphibians of PA



Friday, July 16th, 2021 @ 7:00PM

Environmental Education Center:

156 Cowpath Road, Aliquippa, PA 15001
(Independence Township)

Join us for a family-friendly learning experience with live animals and discover some of the native reptiles and amphibians which call Pennsylvania their home!

Public programs at the District are **offered for free**, but **donations are always appreciated** to help fund future educational events.

Mosquito Identification, meet the Asian Tiger Mosquito!!



Summer is upon us and mosquitoes are buzzing. There is one mosquito that can really be a nuisance, the Asian Tiger Mosquito.

The Asian Tiger Mosquito (*Aedes albopictus*) is a little different from other mosquitoes because they are active during the day and love to bite humans. They are easy to identify because their coloration is black with white stripes but sometimes hard to see because they are a smaller mosquito. They are found in shady, protected areas and can breed in small amounts of water. They love to breed in artificial containers like tires, bottle caps, plastic containers, flowerpots, vases, etc.

They prefer to live near homes and more urban settings and do not fly very long distances. During the summer months they can develop from egg to adult in 7-10 days. It is important to check around your property and remove any standing water which can be breeding areas. Identifying squiggly and dumping out larvae and pupae stops them from becoming adults.



Larvae



Larvae in dipping sample



Pupae

Do not give mosquitoes a home! Dump it! Drain it! and have a safe and happy summer!

Mosquito Identification, meet the common House Mosquito!



During the summer when we are out in our yard in the evening, we may hear that familiar buzz of a mosquito in our ear. It is probably the common Northern House Mosquito.

The common house mosquito (*Culex pipiens*) is one of the most established mosquitoes in Pennsylvania. It is a concern because it is a vector of diseases like West Nile Virus. They are medium in size (4-10 mm) and brown in coloration and are most active during dawn and dusk. They are found in urban areas and are sometimes found in homes looking for a bloodmeal, hence the name. To help keep mosquitoes from entering your home, it is important to check to make sure windows and doors are screened properly and screens are free of rips and tears.

This mosquito likes to lay their eggs in stagnant water from organic water to polluted water and can be found wherever water is left standing. Puddles, ponds that aren't aerated, artificial containers like tarps, barrels, birdbaths, tires, and clogged gutters on homes. During the summer months mosquitoes can develop from egg to adult in 7-10 days. Removing mosquito breeding sites around homes helps reduce the risk of getting bitten and reduces the risk of exposure to West Nile Virus.

A few tips for protection and minimizing exposure are to wear light-colored long-sleeved shirt and pants and use EPA approved insect repellent during outdoor activities when mosquitoes are most active.

Tire Collection

Our first tire collection event was a great success! We had such an amazing response; a total of 1,153 tires were collected! These tires will be recycled into products like garden mulch, athletic surfaces, and equine pavers. With less tires in the neighborhoods of Beaver County, it will reduce mosquito habitat and the risk of diseases that mosquitos transmit like West Nile Virus. Thank you to everyone who participated and to our volunteers that helped with the event!



The Bluebirds are Back

The conservation district has had several bluebird nesting boxes on the grounds for many years. However, they have not been well used in recent years. They were placed on the grounds to provide nesting sites for this native cavity nester. A lack of suitable nesting sites and competition with non-native birds had diminished bluebird populations in the 1900s. These boxes need regular maintenance to be of optimum value to bluebirds. Non-native invasive house sparrows find these nest boxes to their liking, thus taking the boxes over and preventing native bluebirds from nesting. This year the district stepped up management of these nest boxes. Non-native house sparrows were prevented from nesting in the boxes. The boxes are now available for bluebirds and other native species such as the tree swallow. These native species have quickly returned! So the next time you visit the conservation district environmental center keep an eye out for our native bluebirds and other cavity nesting birds!



Photography by CeeCee Photography on the BCCD grounds.



For the first time in many years the district has also placed nesting structures for native purple martins. A beautiful native swallow. You can see the nesting structures on the pole near the old farm pond. Purple martins have very specific nesting requirements. Although no martins nested here this year, we hope to one day have a colony of purple martins nesting on the grounds: eating mosquitos and bringing more beauty to the environmental center.

Chapter 102: What is an E&S?

The Chapter 102 program works to control accelerated erosion and sediment laden runoff. One may venture to ask, “Why do we care about E&S control?” Well, not everyone may realize this, but sediment pollution is the most common pollutant in our waterways, with accelerated erosion making up 70% of the total sediment pollution. This pollutant has many detrimental effects on the waters of the commonwealth, all the way from the bottom of the food chain to the water we drink and swim in. Sediment laden runoff will carry a variety of pollutants with it, such as heavy metals, pesticides, and nutrients, including Nitrate and Phosphate. The pollutants absorbed by this sediment can then work their way in at the bottom of the food chain, resulting in biomagnification, with higher concentrations of these pollutants accumulating in the organisms at the top of the food chain. We as humans are no exception to this rule. As if this isn’t enough to demonstrate the problem, there is also the immediate affect sediment pollution has on the everyday existence of the organisms in the waterways. Fish gills can become clogged from sediment polluted water, aquatic organisms which hunt by site can no longer catch food due to turbid water, and a lack of sunlight penetrating the water deprives aquatic plants of light needed for photosynthesis. The die-off of these plants then takes away a food source for herbivorous aquatic organisms, which in turn affects each organism up the food chain. In relation to direct human activity, sediment polluted water can increase the cost of public drinking water treatment or result in water supplies which are harmful for consumption. Lastly, as sediment is carried downstream, this results in further erosion along the banks of the stream, as well as an altered flow path within the stream, sometimes causing property damage. To sum up the above paragraph, E&S control is important. At the District, we are here to make sure that, regardless of the project size, it is being done in the best possible way to minimize the effects of earth disturbance activities. Some of the ways we do this are by reviewing permits directly relating to earth disturbance activities, informing the public on BMP options for their projects, and ensuring that an E&S plan is on site when necessary. If you have any questions regarding E&S control, please contact the District, as we’d be happy to assist.

Dirt, Gravel and Low Volume Roads

Three of the four funded projects have started construction for the 2021 construction season. Two low volume projects and one dirt and gravel roads project. There is the installation of crosspipes, underdrain, box culverts, end walls, and many more exciting improvements happening. If you have a dirt, gravel or low volume road that needs repairs in your municipality, we are still accepting applications.



The Dirt Gravel and Low Volume Roads (DGLVR) Program provides local road owning entities with grant funding for road and environmental improvements on unpaved and low-volume paved roads. The Beaver County Conservation District administers and implements this program at the county level with the goal to create a more environmentally and economically sustainable dirt and low volume road network within the county.

If your municipality has a road you think is eligible and are interested in finding out more about applying, please contact us .

Chapter 105: What is a Special Protection Watershed?

Special protection waters are those classified as High Quality (HQ) or Exceptional Value (EV). These classifications aren't just for streams, but they also serve for the wetlands within those watersheds. Generally, the water chemistry of an HQ watershed is such that it surpasses the concentrations needed to support aquatic life and recreational use. In addition to water chemistry, it is necessary to take a look at the biological composition of an HQ watershed. Biological assessments are used to evaluate the physical habitat, aquatic macroinvertebrate and fish communities of the surface water. The findings of such assessments should verify the presence of a high-quality aquatic community. The aquatic communities found in HQ watersheds are considered sensitive species in comparison to those that may be found in watersheds classified as Warm Water Fishery (WWF). This sensitivity means that the aquatic communities found in HQ watersheds are more susceptible to pollutants of all types, be it agricultural runoff, thermal pollution, sediment pollution or turbidity. For this reason, it is very important to preserve the integrity of such watersheds.

To be classified as an Exceptional Value (EV) watershed, the watershed must meet the same requirements as are defined for HQ. In addition to meeting the above requirements, EV watersheds must meet at least one of the unique EV criteria, some of which have been listed below in accordance with 93.4b of the Pennsylvania Code, Chapter 93 Water Quality Standards:

1. The water is located in a National wildlife refuge or a State game propagation and protection area.
2. The water is located in a designated State park natural area or State forest natural area, National natural landmark, Federal or State wild river, Federal wilderness area, or National recreational area.
3. The water is an outstanding National, State, regional or local resource water.
4. The water is a surface water of Exceptional recreational significance.
5. The water is designated as a "wilderness trout stream" by the Fish and Boat Commission following public notice and comment.

As you are probably learning, it is very important to maintain the quality of these watersheds. There are some projects that are unable to be permitted within a Special Protection watershed; here at the District, we can help you determine if your project falls into this category. Likewise, if you are having trouble figuring out what watershed you are in, we would be happy to assist you in this search. Please feel free to reach out to the District if you have any questions or concerns regarding projects in a Special Protection watershed.

Upcoming Events

Reptiles and Amphibians of PA

July 16, 2021 at 7:00 PM

More information on page 5

PA No-Till Alliance Summer Soil Health Field Days

July 21 and July 23

Registration form and more information can be found at beavercountyconservationdistrict.org