



Beaver Tales

Spring 2021

Beaver County Conservation District

Commonly Asked Questions: Chapter 105

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Watershed Projects	2
Ag Corner	3
Tick Talk!	4
The Seeds of Spring	5
DGLVR No-till Drill Upcoming Events	6

Mission Statement

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

What is your role in all of this?

The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection delegates the conservation districts within the state of Pennsylvania to handle certain responsibilities. The Beaver County Conservation District is currently delegated under Chapter 105 to review permits and investigate complaints relating to the crossing or encroachment of wetlands and waterways. The District handles everything from a position of "Voluntary Compliance." As our Mission Statement reads, "The Beaver County Conservation District provides leadership in natural resource management through outreach, education, and technical assistance." We are here to work together with you to create a solution for whatever the issue at hand may be.

What are some indicators that may show a wetland is present on my property, and what does this mean for me?

There are three conditions an area must meet to be considered a wetland. The first is that the land, at least part of the year, must support mainly hydrophytes, or water-loving plants. The second is that the ground must be made up of mostly hydric soil. The third condition is the presence of water periodically throughout the year. There are many activities that may not occur in a wetland without special permits from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, including placing fill in a wetland, levee construction, mechanized land clearing, land leveling, and dam construction. The final takeaway for any landowner is: When in doubt, give us a call, and we can steer you in the right direction!

I am planning on putting in a new driveway and want it to cross the creek in my backyard. I also hoped to do some bank stabilization along the creek, as there is a lot of erosion occurring. What do I need to do to stay in compliance?

First, I would recommend calling or coming into the District's office to talk to us about your plans. In this example, there are multiple things the homeowner would need. Starting with the driveway, if the earth disturbance in this process is to be greater than 5,000 square feet, then an E&S plan would need to be written and kept on site. If the earth disturbance is to be greater than one acre, then a Chapter 102 permit would be needed. There would also need to be active BMPs in place to keep sediment from running into the stream, AND, depending on the quality of the stream, special BMPs may be required. Depending on the situation, some examples of BMPs may be compost filter socks, straw bale barriers, or silt fence. From the Chapter 105 side of things, a GP7 would be required to cross the creek, and a GP3 would be required to stabilize the banks of the creek; these are permits that would be issued by the Conservation District.

These are just a few examples of questions we may receive, but in any situation, we at the District are here to help you. Please feel free to reach out to us at any time!

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

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



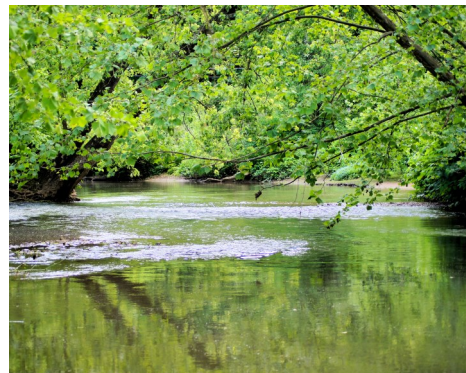
Watershed Projects Around Beaver County

Raccoon Creek Streambank Stabilization

This summer, the Beaver County Conservation District is implementing a Growing Greener Grant project that will stabilize a section of streambank and provide habitat for aquatic animals. This project will protect hiking trails on the Beaver County Conservation District property that are used by the public and for environmental education programs held at the district.

Raccoon Creek Streambank Remediation Phase 2

Also, the Beaver County Conservation District received a Growing Greener Grant to implement a project that will stabilize a section of streambank along Raccoon Creek. The structures being used will also provide habitat for aquatic animals. This project is a continuation of a stabilization project, that was completed by Allegheny County Conservation District.



Canoe Launch Parking Lot

The Beaver County Conservation District received a grant from the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy's Canoe Access Development Fund to improve an existing parking lot that is bare soil and often muddy. This canoe launch parking lot is located along Raccoon Creek off of Route 151 in Independence Township. The improvement of this parking lot will increase outdoor recreation opportunities for the public.



Interpreting a Soil Report

Soil testing provides key information needed to make wise soil fertility management decisions. Once you get the results back from your soil test, what do they mean? Many labs provide soil testing, and there are differences between them. This article will summarize some of the key items provided in a common soil test lab report. The fine print on your soil test report can also provide more information.

Too little of a nutrient will cause below optimum crop growth and too much of a nutrient is a waste of your money and can lead to pollution in our waterways.

Soil pH is one basic piece of soil fertility information. Most soils in Beaver County are naturally acidic and some normal farming practices can lower pH. The optimum pH for most crops grown in Beaver County is about 6.5. A soil test will identify your current pH and recommend how much limestone is needed to raise the pH to optimum for your desired crop.

Nitrogen (N) is a crop nutrient which fluctuates constantly in the soil based on temperature, biological activity and other factors. Standard soil tests do not test for this volatile nutrient. Recommendations for nitrogen fertilizer are provided and are based on crop requirements for your selected crop. There are specialized tests which can provide more detailed information on nitrogen in the soil and plants. Too much nitrogen can cause pollution in our waterways.

Phosphorus (P) is an important nutrient which can be a serious pollutant in waterways if over applied to crops. Fertilizer recommendations are provided to optimize crop yield, yet not cause pollution or waste your money.

Potassium (K) is another important nutrient commonly found on a standard soil test. Fertilizer recommendations are provided to optimize crop yields.

Magnesium (Mg) is an important nutrient commonly found on soil test results. A serious imbalance of magnesium in forage crops can cause disease in grazing animals. Fertilizer recommendations are made to optimize crop yields.

Depending on the lab, other nutrients may be included on a soil test report including Zinc (Zn), Copper (Cu) and Sulfur (S). Sulfur is currently the focus of much attention. Over many decades this nutrient was provided through deposition from coal fired power plants and other sources. Since this nutrient is no longer provided free of charge due to cleaner air, farmers will need to focus more on this nutrient. Low soil sulfur levels may not provide for optimum crop yields.

Soil testing is good for the environment and good for your wallet. Why pay for fertilizer if you do not need it to optimize crop growth. You may see your excess nutrients polluting your farm pond or stream. If your crop yields are not what you expect, soil testing may find the cause. The Conservation District can assist farmers starting a soil testing program on the farm. We also assist farmers in interpreting the results of their soil test. Contact the District for assistance.



A properly collected soil sample can provide a wealth of information on the nutrients found in a crop field or even in your vegetable garden.

Tick Talk!

It is Springtime! The birds are chirping, the plants are growing, and the ticks are here. Ticks become active in warmer weather and only need around 40-degree Fahrenheit temperatures and sunny days to get on the move. This is a good time to remind everyone about how ticks work to help keep everyone safe as the warmer days approach. Ticks find a host by using a tactic called “questing”. This is when they climb to the top of a grass blade or other vegetation and reach their little legs out until a host happens by and they crawl on for a ride. Ticks find hosts by detecting an animal’s breath, odor, body heat and even moisture and vibrations.

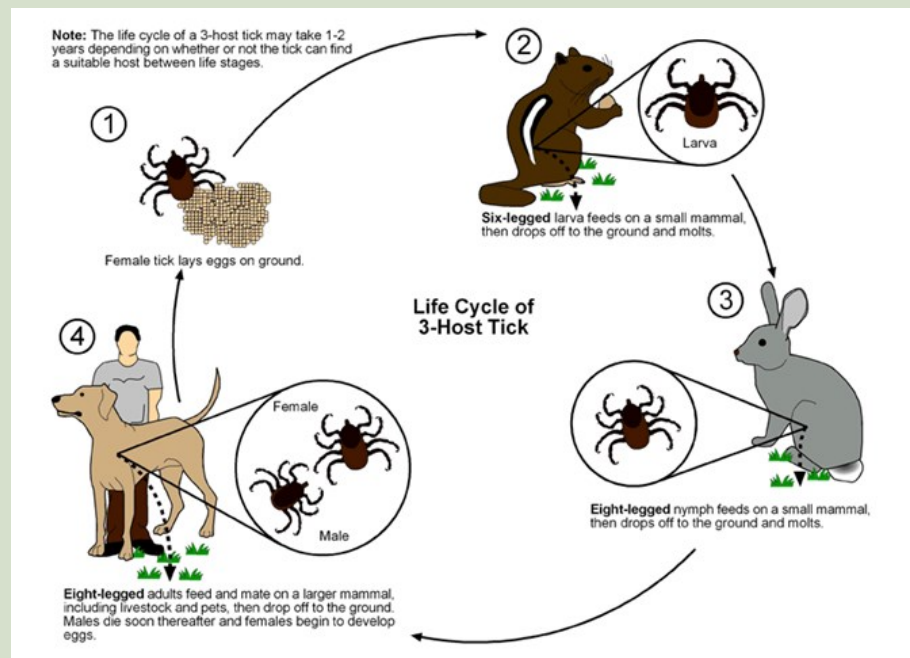


Courtesy of CDC: James Gathanay and William Nicholson

Once they have found a host, it can take up to 2 hours before they decide to take a blood meal. When they find a good spot and take a “bite”, their saliva acts as an anesthetic which is a reason they can sometimes be unnoticed at first. Ticks can stay attached and feeding for up to several days before they are fully engorged and release/fall off the host.

Different species of ticks have different life cycles. One of the common ticks in Pennsylvania, the black legged tick (which is known to carry Lyme Disease) has a 3-host life cycle.

The black legged tick usually feeds on small mammals first, such as chipmunks and white footed mice. White footed mice are known to carry the pathogen that is associated with Lyme Disease. If the tick feeds on an infected mouse and then feeds on another host, it can transmit the pathogen to that new host and transmit disease.



The best way to stop the transmission is by using protective measures whenever enjoying outdoor activities where ticks may be present.

- Wear long sleeves and long pants, with pants tucked into socks.
- Use Repellent with DEET or other EPA approved repellents.
- Always check for ticks when returning indoors (do not forget to check pets too!)
- Remove clothing and shower once returning from the outdoors.

Have a safe, happy, healthy spring!!

The Seeds of Spring

Heather Humbert, Environmental Educator

With snow melting and days getting warmer, people begin thinking about plant buds turning into spring flowers and trees growing new leaves. Farmers are already hard at work on their preparations for planting, and seed supply companies sent out catalogues to their mailing lists at the beginning of the year. As the season continues to change, gardening supply sales will show up in advertisements geared towards the everyday consumer, giving people extra incentive to get outside and enjoy the warming weather.

Regardless of whether a person lives in a rural or urban setting, raising plants can be an enjoyable hobby, and it can also offer an excellent opportunity to teach children about nature and life cycles. The Conservation District offers kits for two different elementary school programs focused on plants. The first is the Birth of a Tomato program for third grade students, and the second is the Birth of a Tree program for fourth grade students. These programs are offered to Beaver County elementary schools, both public and private. Participating school districts receive seeds and Jiffy peat pellets for each student, plant growth charts, and instructions for their classes. Students plant the seeds and track plant progress on the charts, comparing their seed's growth to their classmates' seeds.

Although the District is offering these programs again this spring, we anticipate Covid-mitigation procedures may discourage some of our regularly-participating schools from signing up to receive the kits if their students are learning virtually. Even if this is the case, parents can still lead their kids through a similar project at home and expand it to include various seeds of their choosing. Both District-facilitated programs allow students to track how many days it takes for their seeds to reach various growth stages, such as the seed cap appearing, cotyledons appearing, and first true leaves appearing. Students also record plant height every two days. An at-home project can allow for the same data-tracking and recording, and by planting additional seeds in multiple peat pellet cups, students can compare different seedlings to each other.

Once project seedlings are too big for their peat pellet cups, they can be transplanted to a pot or planter (or a garden plot if the weather permits by then). Students can continue to observe their plants throughout the summer, and if it is a tomato or other fruit/vegetable plant, parents can also take the project a step further and include meal preparation and cooking to the lesson. Covid may have changed how we do many things this past year, but introducing kids to the nature of plants is one lesson which can be done anywhere.



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.

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.

Funded Dirt, Gravel, and Low Volume Roads



Three low volume road projects and one dirt and gravel road project have been approved and will be completed in 2021. The low volume road projects are located in New Sewickley Township, Darlington Borough, and Darlington Township. The dirt and gravel road project is located in Hanover Township. This is in addition to the stream crossing project in Vanport Township. In total the District will support DGLVR with \$247,960.51 in 2021.

If you are a municipality in Beaver County that is thinking about doing some work on your gravel or low volume roads, contact the District about the Dirt Gravel and Low Volume Roads Program.

Upcoming Events

National AG Day

March 23, 2021 11:00AM-8:00PM

Beaver Valley Mall

Maple Line Cleanup

March 27, 2021 8:00AM-4:00PM

Brady's Run Lodge - 526 Bradys Run Road, Beaver Falls PA 15010

Envirothon

April 7, 2021

Tree Sale

April 24, 2021 9:00AM-1:00PM

Brady's Run Lodge - 526 Bradys Run Road, Beaver Falls PA 15010

Agricultural Gathering

May 12, 2021

BCCD—156 Cowpath Road, Aliquippa PA 15001

Manure Management Plan Writing Workshop

May 19, 2021

BCCD— 156 Cowpath Road, Aliquippa PA 15001