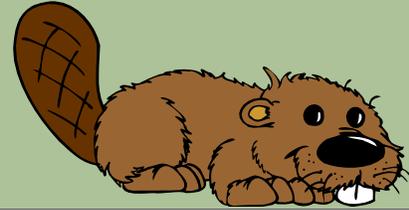


BEAVER TALES



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. Its mission is to preserve natural resources and protect and promote 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 farmers and urban residents.

In this issue:



Watershed Updates
page 2

Ag Corner
page 4

Dirt and Gravel
Road Update
page 5

Environmental
Education
Page 6

West Nile Program
Update
page 7

Dates to Remember
page 7



A beautiful evening at Marshall Pond for the pond workshop. We learned about aquatic plants and pond maintenance from Susan Boser, Water Resources Coordinator at Penn State Extension.

Thirty-five people learned about using rain barrels and rain gardens to control stormwater at this workshop. Participants received a free rain barrel kit.



July is Lake Awareness Month

This is the ideal time to set aside a week, a day or even just an hour to celebrate your favorite lake, pond or reservoir by participating in one or more of the following activities, according to the Pennsylvania Lake Management Society: Assist with volunteer monitoring activities in your watershed, go boating, kayaking, canoeing or fishing. You could also organize a family day at a local lake or pond, go swimming or organize a lake or watershed clean-up event.

They Did It Again!

Central Valley High School Wins the Beaver County Envirothon

The team, Free Soil Party, from Central Valley Area High school, beat out seventeen other teams to become the winner of the 2018 Beaver County Envirothon. They were also the winners of the 2017 Beaver County Envirothon. Team members are: Kevin Kennelly, Sean DeWeese, Jon Katherine, Ned Mitrovich and Isaac Johnsen. Brian Emler is the team advisor. At the Envirothon, five-member teams participate in a series of field station tests that focus on five topic areas – soils and land use, aquatic ecology, forestry, wildlife, and environmental issues. The 2018 current environmental issue focused on “The Benefits of Grassland and Pastureland Management.” The competition was held at Bradys Run Park on May 9, 2018.

The team represented Beaver County at the 35th Pennsylvania Envirothon state competition which was held at Susquehanna University and Camp Mount Luther on May 22 and 23, 2018. High school students from 66 Pennsylvania counties participated in this year’s event. The Beaver County team placed 12th. Pennsylvania Envirothon and Shell provided financial support for the event.



Left to right: Sean DeWeese, Isaac Johnsen, Ned Mitrovich, Jon Katherine and Kevin Kennelly



Partners include PA Game Commission, PA Department of Forestry, PA Fish and Boat Commission and the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

The team, Poppin Porcupines, from Western Beaver Junior High School took home the first place trophy at the Junior Envirothon level.



Ag Corner

What is a pasture?

A pasture provides forage for grazing livestock. One definition of a good pasture is an area with vegetation at least three inches high with minimal bare spots throughout the growing season. Two key questions for pasture management include:

- ◇ What nutrients are in the soil and available for the forage crop to use?
- ◇ Am I managing the forage well with the main tool for management (grazing animals)? Conducting soil tests of pastures can provide information on the nutrients available to plants. This will allow the farmer to make educated decisions regarding inputs of nutrients and lime. Managing the number of animals and the timing of grazing affects forage production. Rotational grazing can maximize forage production by moving animals on a regular basis to allow forage to rest and regrow before being grazed again. Over the season, livestock obtain more forage from the pasture. In a well managed pasture soil erosion can be reduced and water quality in nearby streams can be improved. Well managed pastures improve the bottom line! The conservation district can assist farmers with soil testing and development of a grazing plan.

Soil Testing

How acidic is the soil on your field? How much phosphorous is available to your crop? These questions and more can be answered with a simple soil test. Knowing the nutrients available to your crop can provide the information needed to make cost effective decisions to optimize crop yields. Adding the optimum amount of nutrients to your soil also can reduce nutrient loss to nearby streams, improving water quality. Fertilizer is not cheap! Use a soil test to determine what you need. The district can assist farmers with development a soil testing program.

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.

Dirt, Gravel and Low Volume Roads Update

Four projects are underway in the county this summer.

Greene Township began construction on a Low Volume Road stream crossing. This project started with a temporary road being installed so that three twenty-four inch pipes could be removed from the stream bed. Footers were poured for the new structure to sit on, then the stream crossing structure was bolted together and placed onto the new foundation. Finish work is still in progress.



Darlington Township is working on a Dirt and Gravel Road site.

Fifteen new cross pipes were installed, and three hundred feet of underdrain were installed to properly remove water from the road surface. The road surface will be milled then a product called DSA will be placed by a paver then rolled and compacted on one mile of the project. The Township will chip and seal the remaining mile of road surface.



Independence Township will begin a Dirt and Gravel road project shortly. They will be replacing rusted cross pipes and adding new pipes, then they will regrade and compact the road surface.

Darlington Borough will be entering into a contract for a Low Volume Road Project in which drainage will be handled with new box culverts and piping. Work will begin later this summer.

Environmental Education with the District Spring & Summer 2018

This spring brought heavy rains to the District's wetlands, along with some unique learning opportunities for students. While participation from elementary schools was lower this year than during the previous spring, we saw several new groups visit our facilities. We had a number of new preschool classes come to learn about wetland animals and to experience nature firsthand. We also had some new scout groups schedule programs on wetlands as well as lessons on forestry and habitat management. Leaders of returning groups saw how this year's spring storms impacted our property, and some visitors enjoyed learning about flood impacts mere hours after the waters had receded. Thankfully, most groups had clear skies for their wetland hikes, and only a few had to deal with a sprinkling of rain.



Weather impacts, such as late cold spells and frequently turbid waters, decreased opportunities for macroinvertebrate studies and delayed the hatching of tadpoles and emergence of froglets and toadlets. The students didn't seem to mind, however, as there was still plenty of mud along the trails for them to search for animal tracks. Wildlife sightings included bald eagles, osprey, great blue herons, green herons, red-winged blackbirds, mallards, softshell and snapping turtles, muskrats, frogs, and deer.

To counter the decrease in spring visitors, this summer has included more classes. We joined with the Carnegie Library of Beaver Falls to teach kids about water pollution and what they can do to help prevent it. We also joined the local Girl Scouts at this year's Twilight Camp, presenting to them information on Pennsylvania bats.

Heather Humbert
Environmental Educator

No-till Drill For Rent

The Beaver County Conservation District has purchased 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 management. Reducing tillage can improve soil health and improve 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 farm management. More information is available on our website or contact the district's agricultural technician.

Dates to Remember

July 28, 2018

Summer Wildflower Hike

10:00 AM, BCCD Environmental Center

August 3, 2018

Rare, Threatened and Endangered Plants

5:00 PM, BCCD Environmental Center

August 28—September 1, 2018

Big Knob Fair

September 14, 2018

Manure Hauler Meeting/Certification

9:00 AM—12:00 PM, BCCD Environmental Center

West Nile Virus Update

The West Nile Virus Surveillance Program has joined the Beaver County Conservation District. We monitor and treat areas for West Nile Virus and notorious mosquito breeding sites within Beaver County.

This year has been a particularly aggressive mosquito season due to high precipitation and high temperatures and humidity. So far this summer we have had four positive mosquito pools for West Nile Virus throughout the county and we still have more summer to come.

We encourage everyone to be vigilant and remove any standing water from their property. Remember to clean birdbaths out every week and remove any containers that may hold water after a rain event.

We also encourage everyone to protect themselves by wearing mosquito repellent and wearing long sleeved shirts and long pants while working outdoors during peak mosquito activity.

We will continue our surveillance throughout the summer and wish everyone a fun, safe summer!!

