



Conservation Horizons

Fall/Winter 2022



Watersheds & Wildlife **4**



Archives Revisited **7**



Funding Opportunities **8**



Envirothon **9**



Wildlife Facts **10**

YORK COUNTY
CONSERVATION DISTRICT



Above: Conservation District employees volunteer to plant 700 trees for a lawn-conversion project.

Around the District

Approaching 75 Years

The York County Conservation District is fast approaching a major milestone: Celebrating its 75th anniversary in 2023. York wasn't the first district "officially" established (that honor belongs to Potter County in 1945) but York has its "unofficial" conservation roots dating back to 1937-38, and the impacts associated with the Dust Bowl. With the help of one farmer and the additional 554 petition-signing farmers, they laid the groundwork for what we have become today.

The County of York and the Conserva-

tion District have both changed a lot since then. With increases in population, economic growth, and technology, both groups have maintained the importance of conserving the county's natural resources while balancing growth. In the 1940s, residents waited for the morning/evening papers to get their information. Now, that information is widely available via social media where you can find an almost real-time listing of conservation efforts occurring within the county. The message of conservation has never been easier to disseminate to the masses.

— Continued pg. 2 —

Around the District (continued)

Throughout 2023 we will be celebrating our history by revisiting our archives of special newsletters, pictures, and firsthand accounts of the beginnings of the York County Conservation District. 2023 Conservation District events will also serve as a way for residents to look back on the history of the Conservation District and York County.

While times and technologies have changed over the years, our commitment to the improvement and protection of our environment remains steadfast. Lessons learned over our 75 year history will guide us as we continue conserving natural resources for our future.

Jeff Hill

Conservation District Manager



Above: Images from the 15th Annual Sporting Clays Fundraiser

In this Edition:

Sporting Clays Turnout.....	2
Seedling Sale.....	3
Watersheds & Wildlife.....	4
E&S Updates	6
Archives Revisited	7
BMP Funding.....	8
Support the Envirothon.....	9
Wildlife Facts.....	10
Conservation Quiz Corner	10
Ag Land Preservation.....	11
District Calendar	12
Conservation Quiz Answers	12



Record Turnout

Sporting Clays Fundraiser sees 170 participants

The 15th Annual Sporting Clays Fundraiser saw a record 170 participants this year at Central Penn Sporting Clays.

The Highest-Scoring Team Trophy was awarded to the York Ag team for the 2nd year in a row. We enjoyed a delicious lunch from Big Bob's BBQ and many participants walked away with great door prizes.

We are grateful for the support of our sponsors and we hope you will consider joining us next year!



Seedling Sale

COMING SOON

IMPROVE HABITAT.

SUPPORT CONSERVATION.

PURCHASE SEEDLINGS
from our 2023 Seedling Sale

2022 Sale BY THE NUMBERS:

- Seedlings Sold: 20,000+
- Customer Orders: +/-700

TOP 5 BEST SELLERS

- #1—Eastern white pine
- #2—Winterberry
- #3—Blueberry
- #4—Norway spruce
- #5—Persimmon

Visit yorkccd.org/shop

to learn more.



Conservation Awards

Celebrating the following:

Outstanding Partnering Organization

Codorus Chapter Trout Unlimited (CCTU): CCTU engages in a wide variety of activities to promote clean water and healthy trout habitat. From hands-on stream improvement to educational programs to community outreach and partnerships, they're always ready to roll up their sleeves and help however they can. CCTU establishes relationships with landowners and then sponsors stream restoration projects in the Codorus Creek watershed. They're currently engaged with WAY on a West Branch Codorus Creek Ecological Restoration Study.

Below: CCTU receives award



Outstanding Conservation Volunteer

Karen Ward: Karen has a true conservation ethic and her commitment to the Conservation District persists even in retirement. Karen Ward frequently volunteers her time to support the Conservation District. This past year, Karen volunteered several days to design and implement our native plant memorial garden. Additionally, every year Karen volunteers to fill crucial roles for the Envirothon competitions, Seedling Sale, and Sporting Clays Fundraiser.



Outstanding Partnering Organization

Muddy Creek Trout Unlimited (MCTU):

MCTU increases recreational fishing opportunities by improving water quality, creating riparian buffer zones, improving landowner relations, restoring streambanks, and re-introducing wild trout to the watershed where they once existed. MCTU assisted at the District's first fishing derby at Glenn Hope Agriculture. A member of MCTU serves as the Fish and Boat Commission alternative on YCCD's Dirt and Gravel Low Volume Road (DGLVR) Quality Assurance Board (QAB).

Outstanding Municipality

Fairview Township: The Township has been supportive of the Conservation District and has taken on green projects such as a rain garden installed in conjunction with Penn State Master Watershed Stewards and a lawn-to-meadow conversion that is in discussion alongside WAY. Fairview Township was key in helping the District, PACD, and DEP host a training for new E&S technicians from across the state by providing sites for the training.

Below: MCTU receives award



Watersheds & Wildlife

How Watershed Restoration Benefits Wildlife

A **watershed** is an area of land where water drains into a creek, lake, or stream. All areas where water drains meet at a larger capacity when entering rivers which then drain into bays and oceans.

York County has 11 watersheds encompassing 1,759 miles of streams that flow into the Susquehanna River and then into the Chesapeake Bay. PA has the second most miles of rivers and streams in the US and is the home to 480 species of wildlife and 113 species of native fish.

Restoring a watershed means implementing conservation efforts to restore bodies of water to their natural function. Bodies of water can change from their original state due to weather processes, industrial practices, and urbanization.

What happens to wildlife when watersheds are in bad condition?

Watersheds can be in bad condition for many reasons. In York County, the cause is often from agriculture or stormwater runoff pollution.

Fertilizer, manure, and livestock can contribute to poor water quality. On many farm operations, farmers add phosphorus, nitrogen and potassium to reach their yield goals. During storm events, excessive nutrients can flow into the water. Excess nutrients in the water can cause unhealthy algae to grow and deplete oxygen in the water.

On some farm operations, livestock can access a stream and introduce manure into the water. This hurts aquatic life and can make water unsafe for wildlife to consume.

Urban areas and storm drains also impact wildlife. Urban areas have

Below: Native trees provided by the K10 Tree Program are planted to provide habitat



many surfaces through which water cannot be absorbed, so water must drain elsewhere. When these areas experience large rain events, runoff erodes streams and damages aquatic habitat. During heavy rains, trash and pollutants enter the storm drains and damage water quality.

What can you do to help?

We can all do our part to help create better lives for fish and wildlife. Landowners with streams on their properties are the foundation of helping fish and wildlife in the public sector. Even just planting trees helps our streams! The Conservation District has opportunities for landowners to protect their natural resources while helping wildlife. If a full stream restoration project isn't for you, no worries, we can help with small projects too!

HELP-Streams—The Headwaters Environmental Legacy Program (HELP)-Streams financially assists non-agricultural landowners with stream rehabilitation, bank protection, and gravel bar removal projects.

Landowners can receive up to 75% of their total project cost, not to exceed \$5,000.

Exelon Habitat Improvement Program (EXHIP)—EXHIP provides farmers and landowners up to \$71,250 to implement best management practices, forest stream buffers and stream restoration and maintenance.

Keystone 10 Million Trees (K10)
The K10 Tree Program by the Chesapeake Bay Foundation is partnering with public and private entities to provide and plant 10 million trees at no cost to landowners. Trees create habitat and can help reduce stream temperatures to benefit aquatic life. If landowners will plant more than 300 trees, the Riparian Rangers, a program from the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay can help you plant the trees on your property.

Hannah Swartz

Watershed Technician

Farm Your Best, CREP the Rest

Most Pennsylvania farmers have at least a few acres that are hard to farm: Too steep, too rocky, too shady, etc. And if that land is prone to flood, you risk losing all your work — and your profit — on those lands in any given year.

If you are working twice as hard to earn half as much on some of your land, then maybe it's time to investigate the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP). In a nutshell, the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) pays farmers to retire and restore land that erodes easily or floods often. CREP is 100% voluntary for farmers. CREP is administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture Farm Services Agency, and many Conservation Districts in Pennsylvania can help farmers get enrolled.

The Bennett Farm in Susquehanna County used CREP to plant 1,400 trees and shrubs on 12 acres, creating forested buffers along the creek and on a hillside.

"It conserves water and topsoil and keeps our streams clean," Claude Bennett says of the pollution reduction measures, adding that he plans to do more on the farm. "It leaves the farm in better shape for my kids than when I took it."

Ed and Mary Franco in Cumberland County used CREP to reforest 1,500 feet of streambank on their farm.

"We felt strongly about trying to maintain the corridor that runs through the property in terms of wildlife and improving water quality," Ed Franco says. "I could say there is very little runoff following maturity of the buffer."

CREP helps landowners with projects like these in two ways. First, the CREP program reimburses much or all of landowners' costs to restore the land. Then, CREP pays a guaranteed annual rent for up to 15 years. This can allow a farmer to focus their efforts on their own best land. Many farmers use their rental payments to help lease more productive land to make up for the acres taken out of production.

If projects like these pique your interest, check out www.CREPPA.org. This website provides a user-friendly introduction to the program, with case studies, payment scenarios, and other information that can help you decide if CREP is a good fit for your farm. And you can schedule a consultation with a nearby CREP planner in just a few clicks.

Below: CREP photo courtesy of CREPPA.org



York County Open Space and Land Preservation Program in Year 3.

Marcellus Shale Legacy Funds Now Included

The land has always been important to York County. Land protection was always a priority but land preservation efforts lacked predictable, dedi-

cated funding. In 2019, the County Commissioners passed a resolution that formalized the York County Open Space and Land Protection Committee and dedicated funding (0.1 mil in the County budget) to preserve open space.

The goal of the open space funding is to meet the benchmark of protecting an average of 2,500 acres of open space annually. This funding supports the work of the York County Agricultural Land Preservation Board, Farm and Natural Lands Trust, York County Parks and the Conservation District.

Another key component of this funding is the York County Open Space Grant Program., which is open to York County municipalities and non-profits. In 2021, it provided funding to two new land acquisition projects (Franklintown Borough/Archie Hess Municipal Park and Nixon County Park expansion), the continuation of two projects (Susquehanna National Heritage Area/Susquehanna Discovery Center and Spring Grove Municipal Park). Funding set aside for planning or ordinance updates was provided to the Southern York Region Comprehensive Plan.

The County's Marcellus Shale Legacy Funds are now included as part of this grant cycle to assist applicants with planning, acquisition (for recreational or conservation or land damaged or prone to flooding), development, rehabilitation and repair of greenways, recreational trails, open space, natural areas, community conservation and beautification projects, community and heritage parks and water resource management. York County places priority for this funding on development, rehabilitation, and repair projects.

Introducing YCCD's New Voluntary Streamlined Plan Review Process

and Updated Fee Schedule

On September 1, 2022 the new **YCCD Erosion & Sediment Control (E&S) & Post-Construction Stormwater Management (PCSM) Program Services Fee Schedule, Rules, & Guidelines** went into effect.

Voluntary Streamlined Plan Review Process

One of the most noteworthy additions to the fee schedule is the new **Voluntary Streamlined Plan Review Process (VSPRP)**.

The VSPRP is intended to accelerate the issuance of *eligible* paper-based general NPDES permit applications as a reward to applicants who:

- 1) Submit good quality applications that meet or exceed Chapter 102 regulatory requirements
- 2) Have no documented significant Chapter 102 violations on their existing projects located within York County at the time of the permit application submission.

There is **no additional Fee for District Services** for those electing to use the VSPRP.

For project applications qualifying for all eligibility criteria, the District will make a good faith effort to approve coverage under the general NPDES permit within 30 business days of receipt for applications having no incompleteness comments and

no technical deficiency comments. The District will also make a good faith effort to approve permit coverage within 60 business days for applications that have 10 or less minor incompleteness comments and 15 or less minor technical deficiency comments when the revised application has been resubmitted within 5 business days with all deficiencies resolved. In turn, the District will review the resubmitted application and plans within 5 business days of receipt.

For project applications not electing to participate in the Voluntary Streamlined Plan Review Process or not qualifying for all the eligibility criteria, the application will be reviewed within the timeframes allotted by the District's Chapter 102 Delegation Agreement with PA DEP and/or the most current PA DEP Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs).

Post-Construction Stormwater Management (PCSM) Plan Reviews

A second significant change to the fee schedule is the addition of in-house Post-Construction Stormwater (PCSM) Plan reviews for applicable projects.

The District engineer will conduct a technical (engineering) review of PCSM plans required for all individual NPDES permit applications and

for general NPDES permit applications that involve:

- **25 acres or more of earth disturbance over the life of the project**
- **Managed Release Concept (MRC)**
- **Discharges to offsite non-surface waters**
- **Voluntary or required riparian forest buffers**

An additional PCSM plan Review Fee for District Services will be required for projects that receive a PCSM technical review.

Other Changes

Additional changes to the Fee Schedule include the following:

- Updated District Service Fees Tables.
- The addition of Appendix A for projects choosing to use the Voluntary Streamlined Plan Review Process
- Updated Application for District Services that incorporates the changes to the Fee Schedule.

To access the updated Fee Schedule, updated Application for District Services, and information on the Voluntary Streamlined Plan Review Process, please visit our website at www.yorkccd.org. Should you have any questions, please contact the District's E&S Department at (717) 840-7430.

Tiffany Crum

Resource Conservationist



28

The Gazette and Daily, York, Pa.,

COUNTY

Wednesday Morning, March 23, 1949

900 County Farms Have Been Aided By Soil Program

District conservationist says 99 per cent of all farm land in county still needs some kind of conservation work. Ten-year history of program is outlined.

Over 900 York county farms have been aided by the soil conservation program of the U. S. Department of Agriculture since the work began in 1939, according to Melvin Blish, district conservationist.

However, Blish stated that 99 percent of all farm land in the county still needs some kind of conservation work, such as pasture and woodland treatment, contour stripping and drainage.

"The program has sold itself," Blish declared, disclosing that requests are coming in daily from farmers seeking aid in their work.

History Of Program

In August of 1935, the soil conservation service set up a demonstration area in the Glen Rock section. In 1938, farmers residing outside of the demonstrational area requested assistance and under the 1937 State law, the enabling act was set up.

Soil Conservation Program Has Helped These Farms—



The Gazette and Daily, York, Pa.,

COUNTY

Wednesday Morning, March 23, 1949

The Same Farms Before Soil Program 10 Years Ago



area east of York as they appear today after contour strip cropping, diversion ditches, tree planting and woodland improvements made by the Soil Conservation service of the United States Department of Agriculture.

before the soil practices were put into effect 10 years ago.

(1) Charles Beaverson; (2) Joseph Lehman; (3) Joseph Stewart; (4) Michael in Hellam, Lower Windsor, Springettsbury and Windsor townships.

"Shown are a number of farms located in a four-township area east of York as they appear (March 1949) after contour strip cropping, diversion ditches, tree planting and woodland improvements"

As we near the Conservation District's 75th Anniversary, we look back at progress made to conserve York County's natural resources.

These images highlight changes to local fields from 1939-1949 as farmers began to adopt conservation practices in York County.





Left: Animal walkways permit animals to move from one area to another while limiting them from 'environmentally sensitive' areas. If this BPM is in your plan, it could be eligible for funding.

Ag E&S). Some plans can be written by the landowner and/or the operator, while other plans need to be written by a certified specialist. Knowing which plan your operation needs can be confusing, and the Conservation District can help you figure out the specific plans that are needed for your situation.

All plans have the goal of protecting water quality. This includes both surface water and ground water. Plan writers are trained to identify conditions that do not meet state requirements for water quality protection. If inadequate conditions to protect water quality are present, the plan writer will include corrective measures in the plan. These corrective measures are termed Best Management Practices (BMPs). When properly implemented, BMPs will enhance water quality and allow the land owner and operator to be in compliance with PA state requirements.

We know that some BMPs may be expensive to install. Fortunately, the Conservation District has several funding programs available that may help share in the cost of implementing the needed BMP(s). One cost-share program, the Conservation Excellence Grant (CEG), has been oper-



Above: In some situations, short term field stacking is permitted. If your plan calls for a permanent manure storage structure, it may be eligible for funding.



Above: Grassed waterways help control erosion in crop fields. If your plan requires installation of a grassed waterway, it may be eligible for funding.

Funding Available

For planned BMPs

Since the early 1970's, PA DEP has developed water quality regulations with the goal of protecting PA's waters. For landowners or operators, these regulations (in part) mean that:

- If you are tilling 5000ft² or more of land for crop production, you need to have a written plan Agriculture and Sediment Plan (Ag E&S). This crop production includes: row crops, vegetables, fruits, hay, nursery crops, and wildlife food plot.
- If you have animals, and the animal activity has created Animal Heavy Use Areas (AHUA) of 5000ft² or more, you need to have a written Ag E&S plan. An AHUA is defined as an area that is not possible for stable and dense pasture vegetation to grow because of the animal activity.
- If you have animals and apply or export their manure, or if you are importing manure you must have a written Manure Management Plan (MMP).

Plans are required because they are the 'blueprint' to minimize soil erosion and sedimentation that pollute water. Some plans deal exclusively with manure management (i.e.-MMP), while others focus more on cropping and soil stewardship (i.e.-

ational for several years. Another cost-share program, Agriculture Conservation Assistance Program (ACAP), should be available soon.

Some of the general criteria for both of the programs include:

- The BMPs (for which funding is desired) must be included in the written plan(s). Being included in a plan is an indication that the BMP is needed to meet state regulations. Written plans include Ag E&S plan, MMP, Conservation Plan, or Nutrient Management Plan
- Plans must be current and accurate to consider the BMP(s) eligible for funding. Each BMP will be ranked to establish priority for funding.

The decision for BMP eligibility and the funding level is determined by the Conservation District staff and Board of Directors.

If you have questions about these programs, please contact Troy Zirkle (tzirkle@yorkccd.org) or Mark Flaharty (mflaharty@yorkccd.org).

Troy Zirkle

Resource Conservation Specialist

York County ENVIROTHON



Donate to the York County Envirothon

Support the next generation of conservation leaders.

Each year nearly 1,000 students participate in the York County Envirothon at no cost thanks to the generous support of our sponsors.

Our sponsors value the positive impact that the Envirothon has on the future of conservation in York County. We hope you will consider supporting the York County Envirothon this season!

Call 717-840-7430 to speak with the Envirothon Coordinator about sponsor opportunities.

Michael McKelvey

York County Envirothon Coordinator



Right: \$250+ Sponsor signs at the Envirothon

Below: \$500+ Sponsors get their logo on the Envirothon T-shirts

DONATE ONLINE at yorkccd.org/education/envirothon/donate

-or- **MAIL THIS FORM**

☐ \$25 ☐ \$50 ☐ \$100 ☐ \$250
☐ \$500 ☐ \$1000 ☐ \$2500 ☐ \$5000

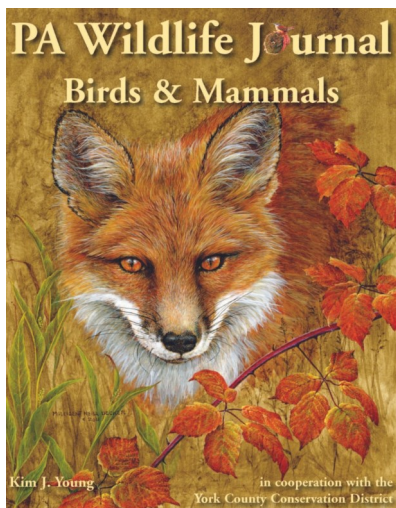
Name: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Please make checks payable to:
York County Conservation District
2401 Pleasant Valley Rd.
York, PA 17402





Wildlife Facts

White-tailed Deer

- “They are **ruminants** because they have a **four-chambered** stomach, similar to a cow. Ruminants can eat quickly in the open and then retreat to a sheltered area to chew their cud, an adaptative strategy for avoiding predators.



- “The buck should grow and shed a **new set of antlers every year.**
- “The **pointed end** of the track points in the direction the deer moves.
- “**Hollow** winter hairs provide excellent insulation against the cold.”
- “Biologists can look at the **teeth** to tell whether the deer is a fawn, youth or an adult.



Conservation Quiz Corner



Are you smarter than an Envirothon 5th Grader?

Answer the following to find out!

1. Which PA salamander goes through a life stage where it is orange with black-bordered red spots on its back?
2. How many gallons of sap does it take to make one gallon of pure maple syrup?
3. What secretive, river-dwelling species is PA's largest mustelid?
4. What do you call the shape that is left behind on the twig when the leaf is pulled off or falls off?
5. What fast-flying, colorful PA duck nests in tree cavities?

Check your answers on page 12



YORK COUNTY
CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Conserving Natural Resources for our Future

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Doug Hoke, Vice President, Ron Smith

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Wildlife Facts includes excerpts & illustrations from the

PA Wildlife Journal: Birds & Mammals

written by Kim Young & York County Conservation District

PA Wildlife Journal focuses on Pennsylvania's birds & mammals. It's highlighted with professional artwork, photographs, and illustrations from hundreds of students across Pennsylvania and the United States. This unique book can be enjoyed by students of wildlife and casual readers.

The text includes the historical and current biology of the many species found in Pennsylvania.

Available for purchase on: **amazon**

York County Ag Land Preservation Program

Eric Naylor, Assistant Director—(717)840-7400—yorkcountypa.gov
2401 Pleasant Valley Road, Suite 101, Room 145, York, PA 8AM-4:30PM



40 of 56 applications received in the 2022 application round qualified for the program. Earlier this year, the York County Board of Commissioners, alongside a state match, allocated a combined \$4,822,034 for use in 2022. YCALPB selected 14 farms to be appraised for easement purchase. YCALPB uses a 24-month application cycle, so farms that qualified and ranked but were not selected are next to be selected in 2023.

Our next application round deadline is Feb. 15, 2024. Staff are available to meet and review prospective applications for the 2024 round. We recommend scheduling a meeting with staff to review your application prior to the Feb. 15, 2024 deadline. The conservation plan/manure management requirement is the #1 reason that farms do not qualify for the program. Every farm must have a conservation plan or Ag E&S plan current to the operator and operation at the time of preservation. In addition, every farm that generates or spreads manure is required to have a manure management plan or nutrient management plan. Staff

will visit each application and assess the farm and those plans. Significant conservation concerns are the #2 reason that farms do not qualify for the program, such as barnyard runoff issues, gully erosion, or manure storage issues. Those issues must be corrected prior to a farm qualifying and being selected for preservation. The #3 reason that farms do not qualify for the program is that they are not enrolled in their township's Ag. Security Area (ASA). Your farm must be properly enrolled in every municipality that it is located in. If the farm straddles two municipalities, it must be enrolled in both municipalities ASA. Our office can help assist you with the ASA process.

YCALPB continues to use grant funding through American Farmland Trust (AFT) to educate citizens and farmers on Soil Health. We added a section to our webpage with materials on improving soil health. YCALPB assisted York County Planning Commission (YCPC) with an Ag Field Day in July, at Izaak Walton League, by bringing in professionals and farmers to discuss soil health.

YCALPB plans to resume the annual public meeting this year. The 2022 Public Meeting is scheduled for Thursday, Dec. 8, 2022 (7PM) at 2401 Pleasant Valley Road, York, PA 17402, Room 148. Please watch for a postcard with meeting details in the next month or so. This is a great opportunity to learn about the York County Agricultural Land Preservation program, eligibility requirements, and conservation laws. YCALPB staff, along with Eric Samus of USDA-NRCS and Mark Flaharty of YCCD plan to speak.

Patty McCandless will retire in November 2022 after over 32 years serving YCALPB and the Ag community. Since 1990 when Patty was hired, the YCALPB has preserved 320 farms on over 46,000 acres in York County. Patty will retire knowing the program is well-funded today by the current Board of Commissioners. Thank you, Commissioners Julie Wheeler, Ron Smith, and Doug Hoke. A special thank you to the volunteer Ag Land Preservation Board Members who have served the program over the past 32 years to provide the dedicated leadership to develop a successful farmland preservation program for York County. 🐾

Proclamations

Honoring service to York County's Natural Resources

Commissioner Wheeler presented proclamations to Mark Flaharty and Leroy Bupp at our September Board meeting.

Mark Flaharty received a proclamation in celebration of his 35th anniversary with the Conservation District. Mark has provided conservation planning and technical assistance to countless farm operations. His efforts have helped establish the Conservation District as an ally to York County's farmers while maintaining excellent cooperation with federal partners like NRCS.

Leroy Bupp received a proclama-



tion in celebration of his farm's 50 years using no-till practices. Leroy is an Associate Director on the Conservation District Board and a founding member of the PA No-Till Alliance.

Above: Commissioner Julie Wheeler and YCCD Board Chairman Travis Sherman present a proclamation to Mark Flaharty.



Conservation Horizons
York County Conservation District
2401 Pleasant Valley Road
Suite 101 Room 139
York, PA 17402

“Despite all our accomplishments,
we owe our existence to a six-inch layer of topsoil
and the fact it rains.”- Paul Harvey

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Monday-Friday

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YCCD Calendar

November 2022

Nov. 8..... Office Closed
Nov. 10..... YCCD Board Meeting
Nov. 11..... Office Closed
Nov. 24..... Office Closed
Nov. 25..... Office Closed

December 2022

Dec. 9..... YCCD Board Meeting
Dec. 15..... DGLVR QAB Meeting
Dec. 26..... Office Closed

January 2023

Jan. 2..... Office Closed
Jan. 12..... YCCD Board Meeting

February 2023

Feb. 9..... YCCD Board Meeting



*Conservation Quiz Corner Answers: (1) eastern red-spotted newt (2) 40 gallons
(3) river otter (4) leaf scar (5) wood duck*