



Conservation Horizons

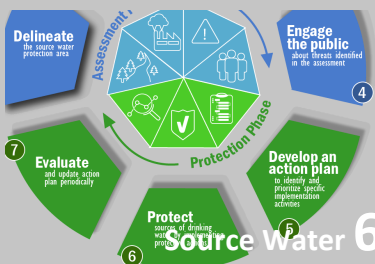
Spring 2024



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YORK COUNTY
CONSERVATION DISTRICT



Around the District

Welcoming 2024

The Conservation District welcomed 2024 at their January Board of Directors meeting by completing the reorganization duties that occur each year. The District elected its new board officers and swore in directors that were approved by the county commissioners at the end of 2023.

Rochelle Black and **Dan Innerst** were both reappointed as District Directors. Rochelle will serve as a public director and Dan a farmer director. Their terms are 4 years and will run until the end of 2027.

The District also welcomed back **President Commissioner Julie Wheeler** who was sworn in for another one year term as the County Commissioners Representative to the Conservation District Board.

We wish to thank our returning Associate Board members that have agreed to serve additional 1 year terms; **Leroy Bupp, Randy Craley, Harry Bickel, Grant Deller, Glenn Smith & Butch Jackson**. Their years of experience in their chosen fields helps in guiding and the decision-making process for the board of directors.

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Around the District (continued)

Finally, we wish to acknowledge an honor for **Jack Dehoff**. At the January board of directors meeting, Jack was recognized as Director Emeritus for the York County Conservation District.

Jack retired from the board at the end of his term in 2021. Throughout his 38 years of service to the board, Jack served on numerous state and local committees and boards relating to conservation. He spent 6 years as Vice Chairman and 12 years Board Chairman for YCCD.

Congratulations Jack!

Jeff Hill

Conservation District Manager



Below: Celebratory cake in appreciation of the service of our Board members



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Above Top: Rochelle Black and Dan Innerst are sworn in.

Above Middle: Jack Dehoff is appointed as Director Emeritus

Above Right: Commissioner Wheeler is sworn in

Seedling Sale: Now Accepting Orders

Order your seedlings from the York County Conservation District.

It's time to order from our Annual Seedling Sale!

- Deadline to Order: **March 15**
- Pick up date: **April 11** (10:00AM-6:00PM)
- All orders must be picked up at Rocky Ridge Park on April 11, 2024 (10:00AM-6:00PM)

NEW PRODUCT:

Now offering container seedlings in addition to bareroot seedlings.

Limited Quantity Available. Don't wait!

Scan here to order:



Or visit:

www.yorkccd.org/shop



Apple Tree (1 Pack)

\$25.00



Cherry Tree (1 Pack)

\$25.00



Black Raspberry (2 Pack)

\$17.00



Blueberry (2 Pack)

\$17.00



Colorado Blue Spruce (10 Pack)

\$12.00



Concolor Fir (10 Pack)

\$12.00



Douglas Fir (10 Pack)

\$12.00



Eastern White Pine (10 Pack)

\$15.00



Sedum, Dragon's Blood (50 Pack)

\$27.00



Buttonbush (1 Container Seedling)

\$8.00



Gray Dogwood (1 Container Seedling)

\$8.00



Northern Red Oak (1 Container Seedling)

\$8.00



ACA Management & Funding

Decreasing the impact of animal concentration areas

When we visit farms, we commonly see concentrated areas where farmers are housing, feeding, and breeding their livestock. Over time, facilities age, while herds expand and outgrow their space. These handling facilities were often built without considering the collection and removal of nutrients or rainwater flow.

There are several things to consider when it comes to managing these areas we call **Animal Concentration Areas (ACAs)** or **Animal Heavy Use Areas (AHUAs)**. ACAs are defined as barnyards, feedlots, loafing areas, or other similar confinement areas that cannot maintain the dense vegetation of a pasture. Pastures must be managed to minimize bare spots and maintain an average vegetation height of 3 inches. Pastures should be managed to control weeds as well.

To meet state regulations for Manure Management, an ACA must be managed to:

1. **Divert clean water** flow from upslope fields, driveways, and barn roofs away from the ACA (keep clean water clean).
2. **Collect polluted runoff** or allow it to flow into a properly sized Vegetated Treatment Area



(VTA).

3. **Limit animal access** to surface waters.
4. **Minimize the size** of denuded areas.
5. Keep congregated areas (feed rings, shaded lounging areas, etc.) **as far away from water** bodies as practical.
6. **Rotate moveable structures**, such as hay rings, to minimize manure build up and accumulation.
7. **Remove manure** at least 4 times per year.

To help meet the requirements listed above, Best Management Practices (BMPs) can be designed and implemented. Some examples of BMPs include Roofs and Covers, Roof Runoff Structures (gutters & downspouts), Vegetated Treatment Areas (VTAs), and Manure Storages/Manure Stacking Pads.

YCCD has several funding options available to farmers looking to implement BMPs that address ACA requirements. Two options are the Agriculture Conservation Assistance Program (ACAP) and the Conservation Excellence Grant Program

Left: manure storage under construction

(CEG).

To be eligible to apply, you must have current and accurate plans, either a Manure Management Plan, Nutrient Management Plan, or NRCS 590 is required for operations generating or spreading manure. If you have crop ground, an Ag E&S Plan or Conservation plan is also required. The BMP needed to meet state regulations must be included in the plans. If you do not have plans but are interested in financial assistance, we can work with you to update the plans necessary to apply for funding.

Questions about funding?

Call Troy at 717-840-7430 or email tzirkle@yorkccd.org.

Melodie Tuckey



Above: Roof and cover built over an existing barnlot

Below: Gutters and downspouts installed on a barn roof



York County ENVIROTHON



Support the 2024 Envirothon Season

Consider making a financial contribution to the York County Envirothon.

Our sponsors value the positive impact that the Envirothon has on the future of conservation. The Envirothon is offered at **no cost to schools or students** thanks to our generous sponsors.

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.

Donating to the York County Envirothon has never been easier! Follow these 3 easy steps to donate in less than 60 seconds.

3 Easy Steps to DONATE:

1. **Open Phone Camera**
2. **Scan Code**
3. **Give Now**



-OR- cut out the adjacent form and mail with a check



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

-or- MAIL THIS FORM

<input type="checkbox"/> \$25	<input type="checkbox"/> \$50	<input type="checkbox"/> \$100	<input type="checkbox"/> \$250
<input type="checkbox"/> \$500	<input type="checkbox"/> \$1000	<input type="checkbox"/> \$2500	<input type="checkbox"/> \$5000

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

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

Source Water Protection Plans

Why are they important?

Where does our tap water come from?

Before we can talk about Source Water Protection Plans (SWPPs), let's discuss where our tap water comes from. There are two ways we receive water for our homes—through public water supplies or private wells. Houses located in urban and suburban communities are typically con-

nected to a public water supply, whereas houses located in more rural areas have private wells. Public water suppliers get their water from rivers, lakes, reservoirs, and groundwater. Private wells are recharged by groundwater. Both forms of water supply are directly impacted by precipitation patterns, which could impact the amount of water we use and our day-to-day living habits.

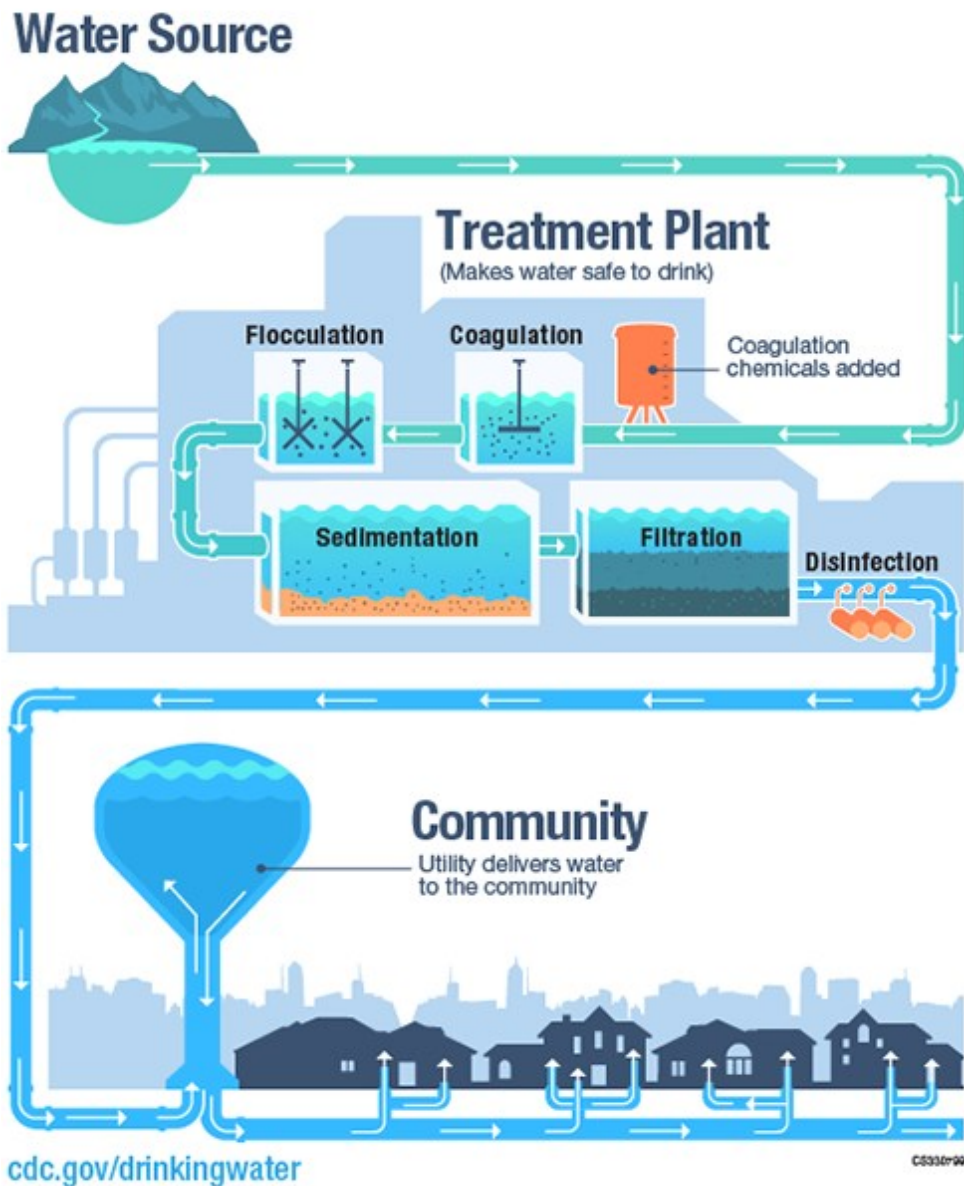
What happens to water before we drink it?

Water authorities work with Pennsylvania's Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) when choos-

ing their water source(s). The source water undergoes testing by the water authority, DEP, and non-profit and citizen science organizations to ensure that the water is safe to extract, cost-effective to treat, and ultimately safe to drink. It's expensive to treat public water because it undergoes a thorough cleaning process in a water treatment plant and must meet stringent regulations before it can be used in homes with public water connections. Therefore, the cleaner the water entering the water treatment plan, the easier and more cost-effective it is to clean. Some pollutants are more difficult to extract than others. Sources of pollution include:

- Sediment from construction sites, stream bank erosion, and eroding dirt/gravel roadways
- Nutrients from agricultural practices
- Chemical pollutants from factories
- Effluent from combined sewer systems, etc.

Unlike public water, well water undergoes a simple cleaning process before it's used in rural homes. The water is pumped into homes and treated with a water filtration system, making it easier and quicker to clean. Unlike public water systems, private drinking wells are not regulated or maintained by government entities, meaning landowners are responsible for testing and maintaining the quality of their well water. Commonly tested contaminants include coliform bacteria, nitrates, and dissolved solids. Landowners with private wells can contact a Pennsylvania certified water testing lab to get their water tested and visit DEP's website for more information.



To improve contaminated water overall, best management practices (BMPs) can be implemented. BMPs mitigate pollution by retaining and redirecting water, absorbing excess nutrients, and holding sediment in place. Examples of BMPs include:

Watersheds: installing/maintaining riparian buffers, stabilizing stream banks, planting trees, and fixing roadways, etc.

Agriculture: updating and implementing agricultural erosion & sediment control plans and manure management plans, etc.

Industrial Sites/Buildings: implementing and maintaining BMPs such as compost filter socks, storm-water basins, street sweeping, etc.

What is a Source Water Protection Plan?

A Source Water Protection Plan (SWPP) is a plan municipal authorities develop to keep sources of drinking water clean and uncontaminated. SWPPs discuss the goals of the plan, the watersheds within the community, the water sources, recommended actions (e.g. plans for emergencies, new source water areas, municipal actions/ordinances), and much more.

SWPPs were created under Pennsylvania's Source Water Assessment & Protection (SWAP) Program, which was developed under the Safe Drinking Water Act of 1996. The SWAP Program was designed to delineate source water areas and identify the susceptibility of nearby contaminants located near the source water area. Just because there are contaminants located within the source water area, it doesn't always mean the contaminants are polluting the source water. A great example of this is a gas station. Gas stations have



storage tanks buried underground. It's uncommon for the tanks to leak, but when they do, they pollute the soil and potentially the ground water. For this reason, gas stations are considered potential contaminant locations.

How Can You Get Involved?

Goals for SWPPs include creating a committee as well as educating and involving the public. The meetings may occur on a monthly or quarterly basis and are open to the public. The meeting participants consist of a Chairman/Chairwoman, several Board members from the municipality, representatives from surrounding townships/boroughs, Borough council members, representatives from the County Conservation District and Planning Commission, and concerned citizens. One of the main issues with participation within these meetings in many municipalities is lack of citizen involvement.

To successfully execute projects and plans, all stakeholders must be involved and actively participating. This allows concerns to be heard, innovative ideas to be generated, issues to be acted upon, and communities to be benefitted. Furthermore, joining a local watershed organization, participating in SWPP committees and local government meetings, and volunteering during stream improvement projects improves the quality of our source water and water resources. It's imperative to care about the health of our waterways because it directly impacts the quality of our drinking water, our own well-being, and the well-being of future generations.

Kendra Boyle

Watershed Restoration Specialist

Covering the ACAP Cover Crop Program

Last fall, YCCD initiated a cost share program for cover crop planting. The program is funded by the ACAP grant and was open to any participant who wanted to plant late summer/fall cover crops. Not ever administrating a program quite like this, the District wasn't sure what to expect! The planting deadline has now passed, and District staff have been out talking to farmers who participated while they are also verifying planted acres. We thought that this article would be a great opportunity to share some of our observations:

- We were excited by the response to the program. Over 12,000 acres were contracted for cover crop planting. One requirement of the program is that the cover crops cannot be harvested. That means every acre of cover crops

Above: multi-species cover crop planted via drone over standing corn

Below: multi-species cover crop including sorghum and 10+ other species planted into wheat stubble



planted will ultimately be utilized to build soil organic matter.

- Another criteria for participation was that the applicant must have appropriate plans that are current and accurate (Ag Erosion and Sediment, Conservation, Nutrient Management, Manure Management, and/or 590). Some individuals who considered participating were ineligible as they did not have plans. Having plans is an ongoing discussion that staff has with individuals, as these plans are a state requirement, and thus not having them

does exclude individuals from participating in many opportunities. As plan writing is a process, this is a golden moment to remind everyone to determine if they have the necessary plans for their operation. If you are not sure, please reach out to the District and we can help you determine your plan needs.

- Many of the participants have planted cover crops for years. This cost-sharing opportunity resulted in many of these producers going to the next level. For example, if one previously planted a single species, with cost-sharing, that individual may now have planted a multi-species mix. Another example of going to the next level is if the past practice was to plant the cover crop after the cash crop was harvested, now (with a cover crop planting deadline) the cover crop may have been broadcasted into a standing cash crop that was not yet harvested. Many of these management decisions were new for the operators, and it will be interesting to see the outcome this spring.



- Because the late summer was dry, corn maturity was delayed. This delayed corn grain harvest. In many instances, farmers were cutting their full season beans before shelling corn. If the farmer intended to plant a cover crop in the corn ground (and did not sign up the soybean ground), they struggled to get those corn acres planted. Lesson learned: we will encourage the enrollment of more acres from a variety of crops, in case harvest timing does not go as planned.
- A lot of cover crop acres were broadcasted (either with a drone or a spreader cart). Because of the dryer than normal October, we have observed that the broadcasted seed was slow in germination.



The program requires that the cover crop provide >25% ground cover by March 15. In the latter part of March, District staff will be surveying fields to ensure that this requirement is fulfilled. At that time, we will also meet with participants to discuss their experiences, the pros and cons, their (considered) successes and dis-

appointments, as well as what they would and would not do again. Hopefully, in the next newsletter we will be able to share some of those findings with you. Meanwhile, while you are driving through York County in the coming weeks, see if you can spot fields planted in cover crops!

Troy Zirkle

Resource Conservation Specialist II



Left: wheat drilled as cover crop into corn that was shelled

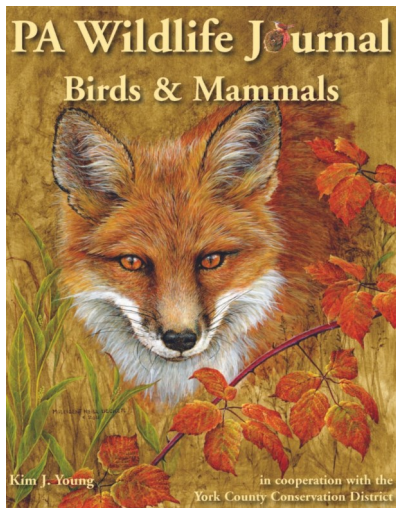
Below Left: radish/oat mix drilled into wheat stubble



Above Right: rye drilled into corn that was shelled

Below Right: wheat broadcast into corn silage incorporated with a vertical till disc

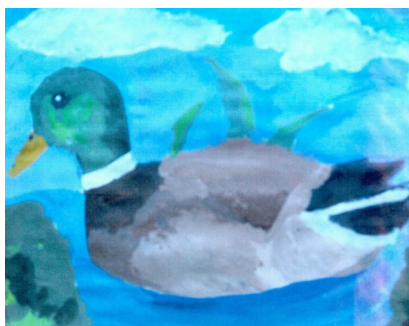




Wildlife Facts

Mallard

- “The mallard is perhaps our most recognizable bird and has the **largest breeding range** of any bird in the United States.”
- “Mallards prefer **shallow water** for foraging and dense vegetation for nesting.”



- “Drakes undergo their annual “**eclipse**” molt, during which they resemble the hens in color. Because they are flightless while they molt, the drab plumage helps them camouflage from predators, just as it helps the hens stay hidden while incubating her eggs.”



Conservation Quiz Corner



Are you smarter than an Envirothon 5th Grader?

Answer the following to find out!

1. Moles are considered _____, meaning they are physically adapted for burrowing.
2. What is the largest river that is entirely in the United States that drains to the Atlantic Ocean?
3. What do you call the study of tree diseases?
4. What is the only PA fish species to appear on both the state and federal list of threatened and endangered species?
5. What federal law was designed to protect critically imperiled species from extinction?



YORK COUNTY
CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Conserving Natural Resources for our Future

Board of County Commissioners

Julie Wheeler, President

Scott Burford, Vice President, Doug Hoke

Board of Directors

Directors:

Julie Wheeler - Commissioner

Travis Sherman - Chair

James Rexroth - Vice Chair

Michael Flinchbaugh - Treasurer

Rochelle Black - Asst. Treasurer

Dan Innerst, Jackie Kramer,

Doug Goodlander, James Elliott

Associate Directors:

Leroy R Bupp, Randy R Craley, Harry Bickel,
Grant Deller, Glenn Smith, Butch Jackson

Directors Emeritus:

Keith Eisenhart, Jack Dehoff

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, Director—(717)840-7400—yorkcountypa.gov

2401 Pleasant Valley Road, Suite 101, Room 145, York, PA 8AM-4:30PM



The 2024 year is off to a wet, windy, and cold start. What better time to come in and meet with our staff to discuss preserving your farm! Time is winding down as we approach the February 15th, 2024 deadline to apply for preservation. There is still time to apply! Your application must be received or post marked by February 15th, 2024. All applications received after the deadline will be reviewed for the next application round. The next application round will be in 2026, as we have a two-year ranking cycle. This means that farms that apply in 2024, will be selected for preservation in 2024 and 2025.

In December of 2023, the York County Agricultural Land Preservation Board voted to raise the CAP from \$3,000 to \$3,500 per acre. This change was approved by the State Board and will be in effect for the 2024 application round. This should be a welcome change for those apply-

ing for preservation.

The preservation process can feel overwhelming or daunting at times. Like most programs, there is a process for preserving a farm, and that process takes time. YCALPB staff is available to assist you through this process. Staff will qualify each farm that applies, visit each of those farms to determine the farm's eligibility in relation to the conservation plan and field practices, rank each qualifying farm, and then present those rankings to the York County Agricultural Land Preservation Board. The board considers the amount of funding available and selects farms in order of their ranking score until funds are depleted for the year. After a farm is selected, settlement can take up to 24 months, depending on the easement complexity, survey work needed, and mortgages or liens present. Likely, a farm selected in 2024 will be preserved in 2025 or 2026. All good things in life take time, and

preservation is one of those things. Just getting selected for preservation can take time, years, or even decades. I recently held settlement with a farm family that applied and re-applied for over 20 years. This settlement was a great feeling for all. It can take time to preserve your farm, but once preserved, it will forever be preserved as a farm.

Thinking about Preservation? Call us to set up an appointment - we will sit down with you, review your farm and application, review our program with you, and address any outstanding items that are needed prior to the 2024 application deadline.

CALL (717)840-7400

Watershed Education Workshop

How YCCD Can Help Landowners' Properties

JOIN US for a FREE workshop geared towards landowners who want to learn more about:

- How changing streams impact property
- Funding opportunities available to help improve property
- Factors impacting water quality

When:

Event 1: April 1, 2024, 6:30-8:30pm

Event 2: April 3, 2024, 6:30-8:30pm



Where:

Event 1: West Manchester Township Fire Department Social Hall (2190 Carlisle Rd, York, PA)

Event 2: Red Lion Community Center (190 S Charles St, Red Lion, PA)

Registration REQUIRED

Scan to REGISTER today:





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

“Every day you may make progress. Every step may be fruitful. Yet there will stretch out before you an ever-lengthening, ever-ascending, ever-improving path. You know you will never get to the end of the journey. But this, so far from discouraging, only adds to the joy and glory of the climb.”

- Winston Churchill

Stay Connected.

Support Conservation.



(717) 840-7430

yorkccd.org

Hours: 8:30AM-4:30PM

Monday-Friday

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YCCD Calendar

March 2024

March 14 YCCD Board Meeting
March 15 Seedling Order Deadline
March 28 DGLVR QAB Meeting
March 29 Office Closed

April 2024

April 1..... Watershed Workshop
April 3..... Watershed Workshop
April 4..... YCCD Board Meeting
April 11..... Seedling Sale Pick Up

May 2024

May 9..... YCCD Board Meeting
May 27..... Office Closed

June 2024

June 13..... YCCD Board Meeting
June 20..... DGLVR QAB Meeting



*Conservation Quiz Corner Answers: (1) fossorial (2) Susquehanna River
(3) forest pathology (4) shortnose sturgeon (5) Endangered Species Act of 1973*