



Conservation Horizons

Spring 2026



Grassed Waterways 3



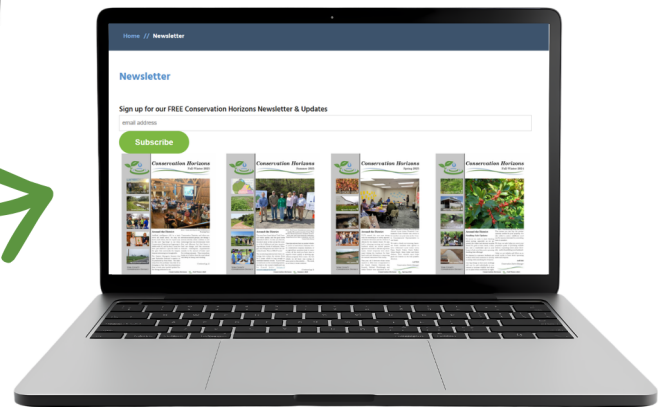
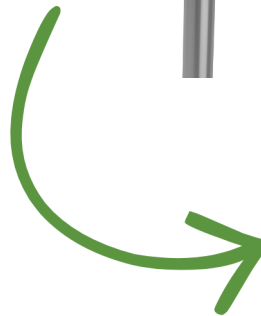
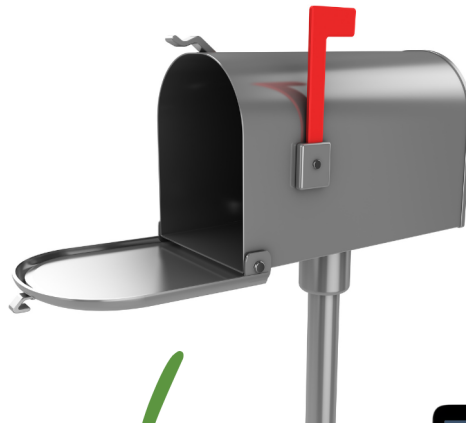
Trout Streams 4



Ag Land Preservation 5



Native Plant Sale 5



Action Required

You must take action to continue reading Conservation Horizons

Action is required if you wish to continue receiving the *Conservation Horizons* newsletter.

Due to rising costs, we will be transitioning to paperless newsletter delivery via email. If you wish to continue receiving *Conservation Horizons*, you must sign up for the email version of the *Conservation Horizons* newsletter.

The good news? It's easy to sign up to receive *Conservation Horizons* via

email, and the transition to paperless delivery will allow the Conservation District to share more timely updates on a more frequent basis. Instead of only sending three copies of *Conservation Horizons* per year, we will now be able to send the newsletter monthly or every two months.

We value our dedicated readers and we are committed to making every effort to ease the transition to paperless newsletter delivery.

On the next page we will show you how to sign up for our email newsletter in less than 60 seconds.

(Continued pg. 2)

Action Required (Continued)

Please follow these quick and easy steps to sign up for our email newsletter:

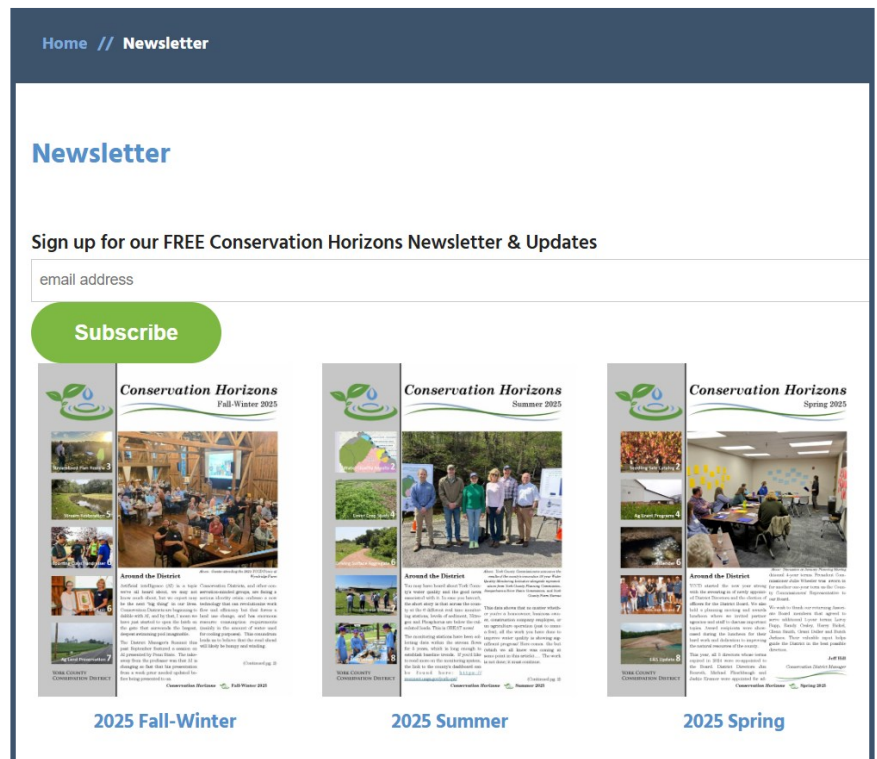
1. Open your cell phone camera and aim it at the code below:



2. A link should appear on your cell phone screen. Click the link that appears on the screen to be redirected to our newsletter website page.
3. On the newsletter website page, type your email address and click “Subscribe”
4. A pop-up message will appear confirming your subscription.

Sign up for the FREE email version of
Conservation Horizons at:

www.yorkccd.org/newsletter



Around the District

As we move into spring, it’s already clear that 2026 is shaping up to be a busy and exciting year for YCCD. The pace has been quick from the start, and our staff have hit the ground running to meet the growing needs of our partners, landowners, and municipalities across the county.

One of the most exciting aspects of the year ahead is the technological progress on the horizon—both within the District and across York County as a whole. We are preparing to adopt new tools and systems that

will improve how we collect, manage, and share data, allowing us to work more efficiently and make more informed, data-driven decisions. These advancements will strengthen our ability to protect natural resources while improving service delivery and coordination with our county and municipal partners.

At the same time, our mission remains unchanged. Whether it’s supporting conservation planning, improving water quality, assisting landowners, or collaborating on countywide initiatives, our focus continues to be on practical, on-the-

ground solutions that deliver long-term environmental benefits.

As spring unfolds, we look forward to building on this momentum, embracing innovation, and continuing to serve York County with the same dedication and professionalism our community has come to expect. We appreciate the ongoing support of our Board, partners, and residents as we move confidently into the rest of 2026.

Jeff Hill

Conservation District Manager

Grassed Waterways

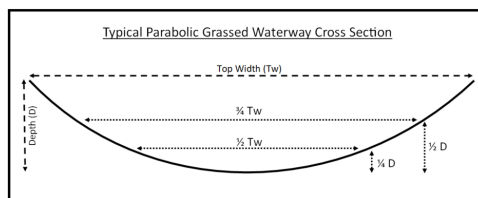
What is a grassed waterway and why are they installed?

Imagine you're driving down the road with crop fields on both sides of you and rows of corn and soybeans lining the road. Then you see random strips of grass running through the field. Why would a farmer not plant crops there? What is the point of this grass in the middle of their field? Why would a farmer want grass in the field when they could be planting crops to get a tiny bit of an extra yield there? Well, that random strip of grass is there for a reason, it has a name and a big purpose. While it might seem like a sacrifice and losing ground this grass might end up saving farmers' fields.

Those random spots of grass in fields are what we call a Grassed Waterway. According to the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Field Office Technical Guide (FOTG) a grassed waterway is "a shaped or graded channel that is established with suitable vegetation to convey surface water at a nonerosive velocity using a broad and shallow cross section to a stable outlet." That definition is a lot to digest, so a summed-up version of this would be "An area of permanent vegetation shaped to convey surface water to a stable outlet to prevent gully erosion." Now your question might be why do I need to prevent gully erosion? Gully erosion means the fields are losing valuable topsoil that is needed to grow crops. Under the PA Clean Streams Law, landowners and operators are required to prevent accelerated erosion, including gully formation, which causes sediment pollution, using Best Management Practices (BMPs), such as waterways.

Waterways can be natural or constructed. Natural waterways use existing depressions that are maintained in vegetation. They can be installed by farmers by stopping tillage or spray equipment in a naturally low portion of the field and then starting on the other side. This is why another name for a natural waterway is a "plow skip". For a plow skip to be considered a natural waterway it must meet the minimum size of 20ft in width and 0.4 ft in depth. Constructed waterways are engineered using site specific conditions to determine a calculated size. In PA, we typically design them with a parabolic cross section, like a bowl, see figure. The advantage of parabolic shape versus other shapes, is that it allows for more surface area in the cross section, spreading out the flow of water. When installing a waterway, you want to ensure there is positive drainage. Meaning you want the water to flow into the waterway and not run down the sides of it. After grading to the correct shape, they should be planted with a sod-forming grass and mulched to protect the seed and soil. Ideal timing for construction would be in the spring or late summer/early fall.

Constructed waterways are more expensive when it comes to designing and installing them, but a designed waterway can be eligible for funding programs. These programs include Agricultural Conservation Assistance Program (ACAP) and Conservation Excellence Grant (CEG). If the waterway is a planned BMP in your Agricultural Erosion and Sediment plan



or Conservation Plan, then one of these funding programs can possibly be used to help cost share BMP construction. These programs are administered by the York County Conservation District and if you're interested in funding a waterway get in contact with us.

You can't just install these waterways and forget about them though; you do need to keep up with them. They must maintain adequate capacity and good grass to function properly, which means inspecting them annually and after storm events and repairing as needed. They will also need to be mowed periodically to control weeds and woody vegetation. Agricultural activities should happen perpendicular to the waterway, and waterways are not intended to be used as fields lanes. So, next time you're driving and see those random grass spots in the fields you can remember that they are called Grassed Waterways and know they are there for a reason.

Brittany Brooks

Ag Resource Conservation Specialist



PA Trout Season is Upon Us

How can you help keep our streams clean?

Each year, the end of winter and the start of trout season bring excitement to waterways across Pennsylvania. Locally, stocked trout streams provide great opportunities for anglers of all ages to get outside and enjoy time on the water. With increased use comes a shared responsibility to keep these streams clean and welcoming for everyone.

Simple actions by visitors can go a long way toward preventing litter, reducing erosion, and maintaining stream health. Keeping these areas in good condition helps ensure a positive experience for anglers and protects public resources.

Simple Ways to Be a Good Stream Steward

Pack it in, pack it out. Take all trash, fishing line, and bait containers with you when you leave. Even small items such as wrappers, cigarette butts, and used soft plastic baits can create hazards for wildlife.

Watch where you walk. Try to avoid walking in areas showing heavy wear from foot traffic. If mud is beginning to replace grass or riparian vegetation, consider accessing the stream at a different location. This helps prevent further bank and riparian area erosion.

Park responsibly. Avoid parking close to streambanks, as this can damage riparian areas and contribute to erosion.

Protect streamside habitat. Avoid removing or manipulating streamside vegetation or overhanging



limbs. While they can make casting more challenging, they provide important habitat for wildlife. Leaf litter from these areas also supports aquatic insects, an important food source in the stream ecosystem.

Clean your wading equipment. If you fish multiple creeks or waterways, rinse and dry your gear between trips. This helps prevent the spread of invasive species that can hitchhike on boots and equipment.

Practice safe fish handling. If you plan to catch and release, consider using a rubber-coated landing net and forceps to minimize handling time. Keep fish in the water as much as possible and avoid dragging them onto the bank, which can damage their protective slime layer. Pinching barbs on hooks can also reduce injury and make releases easier.

The York County Conservation District continues to work with municipalities, landowners, and community partners help improve local waterways that provide recreational opportunities, like trout fishing, by supporting projects that increase the following:

- Cold water: Forested stream buffers provide shade that

keeps water temperatures low.

- Clean gravel: Reducing sediment runoff protects macro invertebrate habitat and spawning areas where trout lay eggs.
- Stable streambanks: Restoration projects prevent erosion that can smother habitat.
- Natural flow: Healthy floodplains and connected channels support aquatic life year-round.

Whether you're out on opening day or visiting a local stream later this season, a little extra care helps keep these waters clean and enjoyable for everyone. The York County Conservation District appreciates the community's continued interest in our local waterways and the role they play in outdoor recreation.

Chris Tanczos

Watershed Specialist



Top: Trout caught from local waterway

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



Greetings from the York County Agricultural Land Preservation Board! Our Preservation office consists of 3 staff members, and the board consists of 7 volunteer board members. We are continually looking to improve efficiency within the office, to better serve York County citizens, and we're currently working through our Data Retention and Records storage project. This project includes things like organizing and filing physical and digital data, reviewing data sources to ensure accuracy, and understanding what we have and how long things are relevant for. It's quite the project, but we are getting close to the finish line! Thank you to my staff and board for all of the help and hard work on this endeavor.

We (I think) made it through a snow covered and cold few weeks here, just in time for our 2026 easement application round. Our staff is currently working with the 64 applicants that submitted applications for the 2026 –

2027 easement application round. Of the 64 applicants, 35 are first time applicants and 29 are returning applicants. I want to highlight the dedication that applicants show for farmland preservation; we have applicants that just submitted for preservation a month ago, and we have applicants that have been faithfully submitting applications since 1999, that's 27 years! I like to share that preservation can be a process, a lengthy process, and just this year, we preserved one family farm in Glenville that first applied for preservation in 2003! That is dedication, and I'm glad to work with people like that.

I am very excited to report that, with our annual funding allocation from the county and state, and with some funds still available from 2025, that the board has approximately \$5.47 million to spend on easement purchases this year! We are looking forward to qualifying, ranking, and se-

lecting farms in the late spring or early summer months!

Lastly, by the time you are reading this, you'll have missed our 2026 application deadline! But don't be too discouraged, because we are ALWAYS accepting applications for farmland preservation. The earlier you submit an application, the earlier we can begin reviewing it. Our next application deadline will be February 15th, 2028, but please do not wait until 2028 to give us a call! We are here to help walk you through the application process, discuss your options, and ensure you have all of the required items that you need to qualify for our program! It can take more than a year to obtain a conservation plan, and it can take 6 months for Ag Security enrollment. Give us a call!

Native Plant Sale

York County Master Gardener Program

- Saturday, May 9, 2026
- 8:30 am – 1:30 pm
- John Rudy Park – Pavilion Area
- 400 Mundis Race Road, York PA 17406

The York County Master Gardeners hold an annual Native Plant Sale for the community.

There will be a variety of local native

plant nurseries selling plants, and educational displays and speakers sharing information about the importance of native plants.

The event will include community organizations, children's activities, and a food truck as well.

Master Gardeners have partnered with the York County Food Bank and attendees are invited to bring non-perishable food items to donate to support food access for York County community members in need.





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

Stay Connected

Support Conservation



(717) 840-7430

yorkccd.org

Hours: 8:30AM-4:30PM
 Monday-Friday

Change of address? Wish to unsubscribe?

Email yorkccd@yorkccd.org
 Sponsor info & advertisement of services
 in this newsletter provided without any
 implied endorsement from YCCD.

YCCD Calendar

March 2026

March 10.....DGLVR QAB Meeting

March 12.....YCCD Board Meeting

April 2026

April 3.....Office Closed

April 9.....YCCD Board Meeting

May 2026

May 14.....YCCD Board Meeting

May 25.....Office Closed

June 2026

June 11YCCD Board Meeting

June 23DGLVR QAB Meeting



**YORK COUNTY
 CONSERVATION DISTRICT**

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, Gary Peacock, Lisa
 Smith

Directors Emeritus:

Keith Eisenhart, Jack Dehoff