



Washington County Conservation District Newsletter

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2017 Washington County Envirothon

On a hot and sunny day at the end of April, teams from nine school districts in Washington County competed at the 2017 Envirothon. At the competition there were 19 teams vying for the top spot and the \$500 scholarships for each member of the winning team.

The nineteen competing teams tested their skills at five different stations. Station 1 was Forestry, where students had to identify trees, invasive species, measure the board feet in a tree and more. Station 2 was the Current Issue (which changes each year); this year's topic was Soil and Water Conservation. Students had to identify best management practices and identify USDA programs that assist farmers in conservation. Station 3 featured our Aquatics section. Students identified fish and macroinvertebrates along with boating requirements and safety. At Station 4, Soils & Land Use, students had to use Soil Guides to answer questions and identify the texture of a soil sample by feel. Finally, at Station 5, Wildlife, the students had to identify animal pelts, identify birds by their calls and more.

After a morning of competition our winning team emerged with the highest score we have had at our county competition since 2011! With a total of 390 out of 500 possible points, Canon McMillan Blue Team claimed the top prize. The students were thrilled and yelled in surprise when their school was announced. This may partly be due to the fact that their school counterpart had just been announced as the second place team (Canon-McMillan Gold Team, 2nd place with 375 points); but it was also a release after finding out that months of extra work and studying had paid off.

The final scores broke down as follows:

- Canon-McMillan Blue—390 points
- Canon-McMillan Gold—374 points
- McGuffey Gold—365 points



Canon-McMillan Blue Team

Back: Commissioner Maggi, Madi Mollico, Mikayla Bayto, Andrew Rockovich, Sandy Strosko (Team Advisor) and Ellen Rossi (EQT—sponsor)
Front: Chelsea Geist (Team Advisor), Savannah Rikeman, Jessica Rogers

The Canon-McMillan Blue team members will go on to compete at the State Envirothon Competition on May 23rd and 24th at the University of Pittsburgh—Johnstown. Good luck!

We would like to thank all of the students for their effort at the competition. Including students from Avella, Bethlehem-Center, California, Canon-McMillan, Chartiers-Houston, McGuffey,

Peters Township, Ringgold, and Washington. The District would also like to thank our generous sponsors, to assist with the program and the scholarship awards. The 2017 sponsors included, MarkWest, EQT, CONSOL Energy, Inc., PA Envirothon, and the Dormont-Mt. Lebanon Sportsmen's Club. Thanks is also extended to the Station Instructors who are listed below.



2nd Place—Canon-McMillan Gold Team

Back: Commissioner Maggi, Jeffrey Kim, Amiee Buxton, Austin Kiers, Sandy Strosko (Team Advisor), and Ellen Rossi (EQT –sponsor)
 Front: Chelsea Geist (Team Advisor), Natalie Cummings, and Pinar Garbioglu



3rd Place—McGuffey Gold Team

Back: Commissioner Maggi, Delano Bartolotto, Shane McCosby, Austin Nardi, Greg Reger (Team Advisor), and Ellen Rossi (EQT-sponsor)
 Front: Kaylyn Baker and Anja Eshbaugh

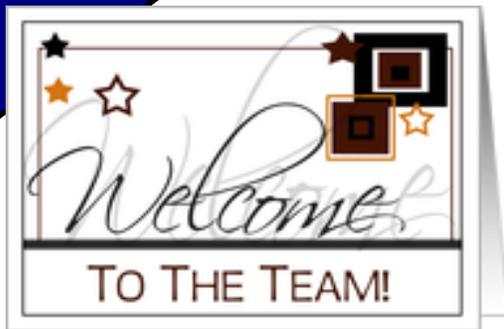
Special Thanks to the Sponsors and Individuals who assisted at this year's event:



Dormont-Mt. Lebanon
Sportsmen's Club



- * Chris Bergman, *Wildlife* (PA Game Commission) * Dan Sitler, *Wildlife*, (PA Game Commission)
- * Rich Joyce, *Wildlife* (PA Game Commission) * Russell Gibbs, *Forestry* (DCNR Bureau of Forestry) * Rachel Mahoney, *Forestry* (DCNR Bureau of Forestry) * Chuck Kubasik, *Aquatics* (PA DEP) * Joe Laslo, *Aquatics* (PA DEP) * Kim Moninger, *Soils* (USDA-NRCS) * Michal Roup, *Current Issue*, (USDA-FSA) * Gary Stokum, *Soils* (WCCD District Manager) *
- * Tom Ulrich, *Current Issue* (WCCD) * Matt Golden-WCCD * John Hewitt - WCCD
- * Jennifer Dann –WCCD * Abbigale Keefer—WCCD * Clarice Munk-* WCCD Mike Martin—WCCD * Lyndsey Burton—WCCD



New Employees

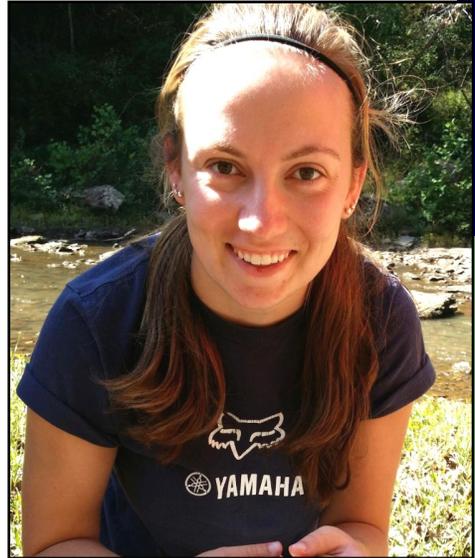
Lyndsey Burton, joined us in February as an Erosion and Sedimentation Control Technician.

Lyndsey graduated from West Liberty University in 2016 with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Environmental Stewardship and a minor in Appalachian Studies.

During her college career, she studied ecology, wildlife biology and freshwater invertebrates.

Following college, Lyndsey worked at Oglebay Good Zoo as an animal keeper prior to starting her job with the District.

In her spare time, she likes to read, hike and spend time with loved ones.



Destinee Davis is our 2017 Watershed Intern.

Destinee is currently a student at West Liberty University with a major in Environmental Stewardship and a minor in Geography. In the fall she will be entering her senior year at West Liberty University.

This summer she will be assisting the Conservation District and Watershed Alliance with various projects, such as macroinvertebrate sampling, the Datalogger project, and grant writing.

A native of Washington County, Destinee is eager to learn more about the Conservation District and gain experience.

Mike Martin, also joined us in February as an Ag Tech/E&S Tech

Mike is from Canonsburg, went to Canon McMillan High School and Waynesburg University. He graduated from Waynesburg in 2015 with a degree in Environmental Science and in 2016 with a Masters in Business Administration.

He was a member of the football team and Men's Track & Field team while at Waynesburg University.

Mike grew up on a dairy farm in Washington County that is still active today.

He enjoys hunting, fishing, weight lifting and cooking. Mike is engaged to Rose Huwe from Allison Park, PA.



DIRT & GRAVEL LOW VOLUME ROADS PROGRAM



The Washington County Dirt, Gravel & Low Volume Road Maintenance Program recently funded a project on Racoon Creek Road in Robinson Township which abuts Racoon Creek. Prior to repairs, water would pond on and along the road causing ditches and gullies to form and pushing road materials into the neighboring creek.

The road itself was also incurring damage from the lack of adequate drainage as evidenced in the potholes and ruts on the road surface. In order to remedy the drainage problems and prevent continued impacts to Racoon Creek, the installation of approximately sixteen new culvert pipes as well as French drains and French mattress was proposed in addition to resurfacing of the roadway.

Following review and approval of the project by the Quality Assurance Board (QAB) and funding approval by the District Board, a contract was put into place with the District and Robinson Township began work on the \$130,000 plus project. Following resurfacing of the road, District representatives and a representative from the Dirt and Gravel Road Center in State College visited the project site to review the improvements.

The road is hugely improved and the township and residents are happy to have a much safer and more drive-able road.



The Washington County Ag Preservation Program

100 West Beau Street, Suite 701

Washington, PA 15301

724-228-6811 / Monday—Friday 9:00 am to 4:30 pm

The Washington County Agricultural Land Preservation Board (WCALPB) is pleased to announce that from 1994 until now, **thirty-four farms covering 5,391 acres have been preserved!!** These farms represent working lands across the county which produce field crops, milk, Christmas trees, nursery stock, and a variety of livestock. On behalf of the County of Washington and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, we thank the farm families who have made this forever commitment.

With the passage of Act 149, the Farmland Preservation Act, amending the Ag Security Area Law, County governments are permitted to preserve farmland through the purchase of agricultural conservation easements (ACE). ACE's provide the right to say no to development through a permanent deed restriction on the farm deed. Zoning may not change the use of preserved lands, as ACE is a perpetual deed covenant. The ACE program has created permanent farming neighborhoods across the County devoted entirely to commercial agricultural production.

The WCALP Office additionally conducts annual reviews of lands voluntarily enrolled by landowners into Municipal Ag Security Areas, under the provisions of the Agricultural Area Security Act of 1981 (Act 43). The benefits include; the protection from municipal nuisance ordinance which may unreasonably restrict normal farming practices; protection from eminent domain or condemnation relating to state funded projects; and finally ASA enrollment is a requirement for easement purchase by the county or state.

Landowners interested in preserving their farmland may contact the Washington County Planning Commission at 724-228-6811. We are located in the Courthouse Square Building at 100 West Beau Street, Suite 701 Washington PA 15301.





FROM THE WASHINGTON COUNTY WATERSHED ALLIANCE—Spring/Summer 2017

Washington County Watershed Alliance

Website: Visit us at www.wcwalliance.org or our Facebook page for more information on our activities.

Meetings: The meetings are the first Tuesday of the month at the Washington Co. Conservation District office - 2800 North Main St., Suite 105, Washington, PA 15301. Meetings are open to the public and begin at 7:00 pm.

Raffle: The WCWA along with the Chartiers Creek Watershed Association are holding a Watershed Raffle. Prizes include one \$500 gift to field and stream or one of two \$200 gift cards. Tickets are on sale until July 5th. Tickets are one for \$6 or 2 for \$10—stop by our office to get yours!

Annual Meeting: The 5th Watershed Alliance Annual Meeting was held on Tuesday March 7th at the Washington County Conservation District Office. We had a full house with over 40 people in attendance. Those who joined us were briefed on the Watershed Alliance and Watershed Association accomplishments and treated to a delicious dinner. Look to join us next year in March for our 6th Annual Meeting!

Watershed Road Map: Join the WCWA in 2017 and receive a free Watershed Road Map! These road maps highlight the watersheds in Washington County, Trout stocked fishing areas, recreational areas, and special water protection areas in the county.

Stream Monitoring Project: There are currently 24 sites being monitored around the county. This year, 2017, is the 6th year of our program, which we hope to continue for years to come!



Chartiers Creek Watershed Association

www.upperchartierscreek.org; email: chartierscreekwa@pawccd.org; [facebook.com/upperchartierscreek](https://www.facebook.com/upperchartierscreek)

Meetings - The ChCWA meets at 7:00 pm on the second Wednesday of each month at the WCCD Office- 2800 N. Main St., Room 105, Washington, PA.

Stream Monitoring: Monitoring for the spring is nearing completion. More sampling will be done this fall!

Wetlands Walk: Boy Scout Pack 1017 and their families studied macros collected from Chartiers Creek, learned about wetland soils and invasive plants, and collected litter. The event was led by Dr. Jason Kilgore of W&J College. Thank you to all who participated and helped clean up our wetlands!

Chartiers Creek Kayak: ChCWA will join Venture Outdoors and Paddle Without Pollution for a free paddle and cleanup on Canonsburg Lake on Sunday morning June 11. Sign-up must be done online at www.ventureoutdoors.org. See the activities calendar. This event is rated "moderate difficulty".

Canonsburg Lake: The Save Canonsburg Lake Committee held its third annual partnership with Canon Mac and Peters HS's environmental classes and the PFBC on May 2. PFBC brought canoes and taught each student water safety and canoe paddling. Students also cleaned up trash around the lake.





Canon-Mac Art Contest: “Water in Our Future” ChCWA Student Art Contest: Hannah Chop of Canon-McMillan High School won the \$100 First Prize for her entry, “The Problem in Our Water.” (Prize sponsored by Budd Baer Auto)

Hannah with her prize winning art

Buffalo Creek Watershed Association

www.buffalocreekwatershed.org; email: buffalocreekwa@gmail.com

Meetings: BCWA meetings are held the second Thursday of each month, 7:00 pm at the Buffalo Twp. Municipal Bldg.

Dutch Fork Lake: With the help of friends and especially Boy Scout Troop 1031, the members of the Buffalo Creek Watershed Association prepared for Earth Day and the opening of trout season by clearing the litter and trash from Lake Road and the Dutch Fork Lake area.

Presentation: At the May 11 meeting, BCWA hosted the South-west Pennsylvania Environmental Health Project which provided information and interventions for environmental health needs for families, especially those with properties leased for natural gas drilling or those who live near well sites, compressor stations, or pipelines.

McGuffey Trout in the Classroom: BCWA is pleased to announce that it will be sponsoring a Trout in the Classroom project for McGuffey High School’s Vo-Ag program. Providing the opportunity for students to raise trout and then release them into local waters will be a valuable educational experience.



Giving their time and lending a helping hand:

Wyatt Coburn, Dawn White, Mitchell White, Kyle Dietrich, Mary Grey, Larry Helgerman, Kathy Voigt, Ken Maglietta. Not pictured Chet Krcil, Jay Dutton, Mike Zajac, Jack Dewar, and Donna Riggle.

Ten Mile Creek Watershed Association

www.tenmilecreekwatershed.org

Upcoming Meetings: The next meeting for the TMCWA will be held on Monday June 26th. Please meet at the Log Cabin Fence Company meeting room at 9:00am.

Facebook: The TMCWA has created a Facebook page, find us and keep up to date with volunteer items and meeting dates.

Upper Wheeling Creek Watershed Association

www.upperwheelingcreek.org

Upcoming Meetings: The July Meeting will be held on June 28th, due to the 4th of July holiday. The Upper Wheeling Creek Watershed Association meets quarterly on the first Wednesday of January, April, July, and October at 10 AM at the East Finley Township Building, 1394 East Finley Drive (Rte, 231).

Enlow Fork Wildflower Walk: On Sunday April 30 the Wheeling Creek Conservancy (Greene County) hosted the annual Enlow Fork Wildflower Walk, which focuses on the natural beauty, especially the spectacular displays of Blue-eyed Marys, of the Enlow Valley on State Gamelands 302.

This year the group emphasized and honored the work of the Association for Rural Conservation, which in 1979 began a campaign that prevented the valley from being flooded from a dam. The celebration featured an early morning bird walk with the Ralph K. Bell Bird Club, a wildflower walk, information tables, good food and raffles.

A representative from Fayette County Sheriff’s Search & Rescue was present to answer questions about getting lost and what to do.

Members of the BCWA and the UWCWA participated in the event, which occurs the last Sunday in April or the first Sunday in May, so mark your calendars for next year.



Straight from the Ag Office

by Tom Ulrich



This winter I had the opportunity to attend the Appalachian Grazing Conference and other grazing related programs. One take away message out of the many gained during all of the programs was the focus on utilization rate. Utilization rate is the percentage of actual pasture forage consumed and is increased as grazing pressure is increased.

Two factors that influence utilization is the number of paddocks and the frequency in moves. In a continuous grazed low stock density pasture the utilization rate is only 35%. By implementing a rotational grazing system with a 4 day paddock rotation the utilization rate doubles to 70%. By adding more paddocks you will have more frequent moves and a longer rest period for the grass to recover from the previous grazing.

A big benefit of this increase in utilization could include increased animal stocking rate which would equal improved profit. By increasing the grazing pressure the forage selectivity decreases which can reduce the need to clip or mow pastures. The best results are when the livestock graze half of the available forage in a paddock. This allows the forage to quickly recover and regrow. Other benefits include improved nutrient management, and increase pasture health.



A Reminder Pennsylvania still offers the

Resource Enhancement and Protection (REAP) Program which allows farmers to earn tax credits for implementing "Best Management Practices" (BMPs) on agricultural operations that will enhance farm production and protect natural resources. The program is administered by the State Conservation Commission (Commission) and the tax credits are awarded by the Pennsylvania Department of Revenue. Eligible applicants may receive between 50% and 75% of project costs as state tax credits for up to \$150,000 per agricultural operation. The amount of tax credit available to a recipient is dependent on the type of BMP implemented.

Washington County Conservation District can provide more information on pastures and the REAP program. The district also participates in Southwest Project Grass whose purpose is to promote improved pasture systems and rotational grazing systems for better forage production, quality, and utilization. As always the Conservation District is available to assist with any questions relating to nutrient management regulations and assistance in completing your manure management manual.





Farm Service Agency



2800 North Main Street, Suite 1, Washington, PA 15301
Phone: 724-222-3060 Ext. 2 Fax: 855-847-3602

2017 Acreage Reporting Dates

In order to comply with FSA program eligibility requirements, all producers are encouraged to visit the Washington/Greene County FSA office to file an accurate crop certification report by the applicable deadline.

November 15, 2016	Apiculture, Fall Forage Seeding, PRF/Perennial Forage, Fall-Seeded Small Grains
January 15, 2017	Apples, Grapes, Peaches, Pears
June 15, 2017	Spring Barley, Spring Forage Seeding, Spring Oats, Rye, Triticale, Spring Wheat
July 15, 2017	All Other Crops
August 15, 2017	Beans, Cabbage

The following exceptions apply to the above acreage reporting dates:

If the crop has not been planted by the above acreage reporting date, then the acreage must be reported no later than 15 calendar days after planting is completed.

If a producer acquires additional acreage after the above acreage reporting date, then the acreage must be reported no later than 30 calendar days after purchase or acquiring the lease. Appropriate documentation must be provided to the county office.

If a perennial forage crop is reported with the intended use of "cover only," "green manure," "left standing," or "seed," then the acreage must be reported by July 15th.

Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) policy holders should note that the acreage reporting date for NAP covered crops is the earlier of the dates listed above or 15 calendar days before grazing or harvesting of the crop begins.

For questions regarding crop certification and crop loss reports, please contact the Washington/Greene County FSA office.

Enrollment Period for 2017 Safety Net Coverage Continues Through Aug. 1

Producers on farms with base acres under the safety net programs established by the 2014 Farm Bill, known as the Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) or Price Loss Coverage (PLC) programs, can visit their local FSA office to sign contracts and enroll for the 2017 crop year. The enrollment period will continue until Aug. 1, 2017.

Since shares and ownership of a farm can change year-to-year, producers on the farm must enroll by signing a contract each program year.

If a farm is not enrolled during the 2017 enrollment period, the producers on that farm will not be eligible for financial assistance from the ARC or PLC programs for the 2017 crop should crop prices or farm revenues fall below the historical price or revenue benchmarks established by the program. Producers who made their elections in 2015 must still enroll during the 2017 enrollment period.

The ARC and PLC programs were authorized by the 2014 Farm Bill and offer a safety net to agricultural producers when there is a substantial drop in prices or revenues for covered commodities. Covered commodities include barley, canola, large and small chickpeas, corn, crambe, flaxseed, grain sorghum, lentils, mustard seed, oats, peanuts, dry peas, rapeseed, long grain rice, medium grain rice (which includes short grain and sweet rice), safflower seed, sesame, soybeans, sunflower seed and wheat. Upland cotton is no longer a covered commodity. For more details regarding these programs, please contact the Washington/Greene County FSA Office.

Save Time – Make an Appointment with FSA

Producers are encouraged to call the Washington/Greene County FSA office to schedule an appointment to ensure maximum use of their time and to make sure FSA staff is available to tend to their important business needs. Please call the FSA office ahead of your visit to set an appointment and to discuss any records or documentation that might be needed during your appointment.



Introducing Client Gateway

Conservation Client Gateway is a new NRCS secure web application that provides individual landowners and land users the option to request conservation technical and financial assistance from NRCS. Through the Client Gateway, you will be able to:

- Request help on a natural resource issue or request a conservation plan on your property
- Apply for financial assistance to help solve your natural resource issues in your conservation plan
- Review and sign your conservation plans and practice implementation schedules
- Electronically sign key documents, such as financial assistance conservation program applications and contracts
- Document and report completed conservation practices and contract items
- Request and track payments due to you for completed and certified contract items
- Request updates (e.g. address, e-mail, phone number) to your customer profile information



What type of information will I see in Client Gateway?

1. Your Conservation Plans associated with an active NRCS Financial Assistance Conservation Program contract (e.g., Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), or the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)).
2. Your Conservation Plans that are active (not completed) and have been reviewed and, or updated since January 1, 2014, but are not associated with an NRCS Financial Assistance Conservation Program contract (e.g., EQIP, CSP).
3. Your NRCS Financial Assistance Conservation Program applications submitted during the current fiscal year (e.g., October 1, 2015 – September 30, 2015).
4. Your NRCS Financial Assistance Conservation Program contracts that are active.
5. Your NRCS Financial Assistance Conservation Program contract payments for completed and NRCS-certified contract items, dated October 1, 2011 or later.

What type of information is not provided in Client Gateway?

1. You will not be able to see your NRCS Financial Assistance Conservation Program contracts that have been canceled or terminated.
2. You will not be able to see your NRCS easement program agreements.

You will not be able to see your Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) agreements.

Just For Kids!

Lightning

During a storm, colliding particles of rain, ice, or snow inside storm clouds increase the imbalance between storm clouds and the ground, and negatively charge the lower reaches of storm clouds. Objects on the ground, like steeples, trees, and the Earth itself, become positively charged—creating an imbalance that nature seeks to remedy by passing current between the two charges.

Ever seen electrical sparks jump across a space? It's like that, but WAY bigger.

Lightning is an electrical discharge caused by imbalances between storm clouds and the ground, or within the clouds themselves. Most lightning occurs within the clouds.

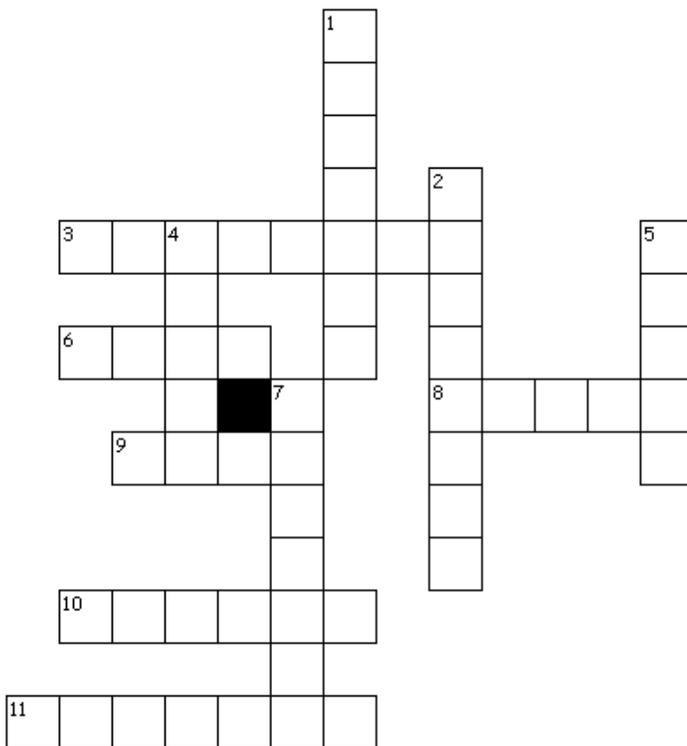
Cloud to Ground Lightning:

Lightning begins with a negative charge 'stepping down' from the clouds (giving lightning its jagged look). When it reaches 150 feet off the ground a positive charge reaches up from the ground and the two meet. The negative charge surges downward at 136,000 mph and the bolt of light races upward at 200,000,000 mph!



Lightning is extremely hot at 54,000 degrees Fahrenheit — roughly five times hotter than the surface of the sun!

Lightning Cross Word Puzzle



There are approximately 3 million lightning strikes around the world each day. This total includes cloud-to-ground, cloud-to-cloud, and cloud-to-sky lightning.

Across

3. Charge at the ground level
6. Lightning is ___ times hotter than sun
8. Lightning can strike
9. Lightning bolts are this wide
10. Don't have to see these to be struck
11. Safest place to be during a storm

Down

1. State with most strikes
2. Charge at the bottom of clouds
4. Record times person has been struck
5. Don't be on here when a storm hits
7. Lightning's big sound

Across: 3)Positive, 6)Five, 8)Twice, 9)Inch, 10)Clouds, 11)Indoors
Down: 1)Florida, 2)Negative, 4)Seven, 5)Water, 7)Thunder

Washington County Conservation District

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