



Washington County Conservation District Newsletter

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FAIR DAYS—A CHALLENGE AND LEARNING EXPERIENCE



Frog toss—land on the lily pad, answer the question correctly and you get a prize!

Beth Kahkonen, Watershed Alliance Project Coordinator, instructing these young people on how to play the game. And win too!

This is how the streams flows!

Ashley Wilmont, Erosion and Sedimentation Control Technician, explaining to Fair visitors why we have a Stream Erosion Model on display and how it works.

Having Fun and learning about the Environment !



PA Dirt and Gravel Road Maintenance Program 2014 Annual Summary Report



DIRT AND GRAVEL ROAD PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Pennsylvania's Dirt and Gravel Road Program provides grant funding to local municipalities in order to reduce environmental impacts and long-term maintenance costs associated with public unpaved roads. The Program was enacted into law in April 1997 as Section 9106 of the PA Vehicle Code, with \$4 million in annual funding for "environmentally sensitive road maintenance." Each year, the State Conservation Commission allocates this funding based on identified need to County Conservation Districts. Townships and other road-owning entities then apply to their local District to address identified pollution problems using environmentally sound road maintenance practices. All grant applicants must complete a 2-day "Environmentally Sensitive Road Maintenance" training course focusing on lowering maintenance costs and reducing stream pollution.

Funding Increase for 2014-15! Dirt and Gravel Road Program funding increases from \$4M to \$20M annually, with an additional \$8M component for paved low-volume roads.

2013 Summary:

Since it began in 1997, the Program has funded a total of 2,565 local road improvement projects spanning 65 Counties and 691 municipalities across Pennsylvania. In 2013 alone, nearly \$3.1 million was spent on 167 completed worksites spanning 47 Counties and 133 municipalities. In-kind contributions from grant applicants stood at 56% for 2013, above the in-kind average of 44% seen over the past decade (although no in-kind is required). Over 14,000 pollution sites on unpaved roads have been field-identified and are awaiting funding.

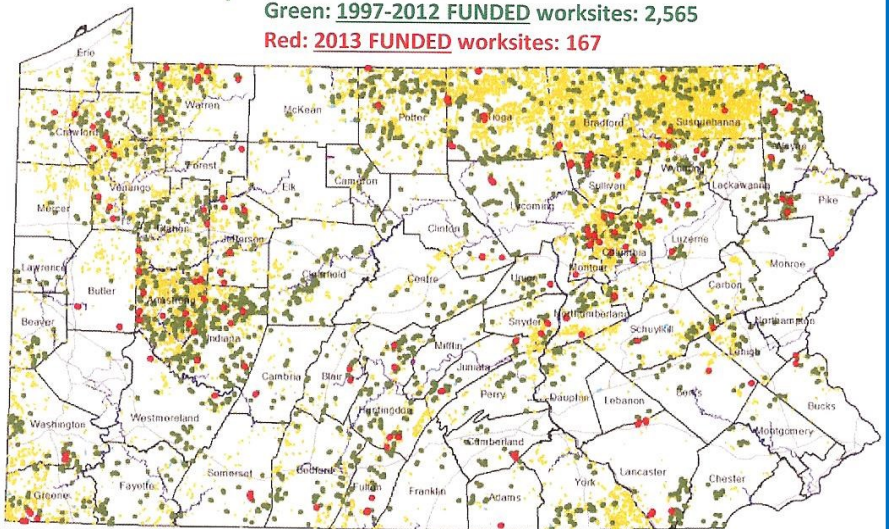
More Program info:

www.dirtandgravelroads.org

2013 Status Map: Yellow: Unfunded identified worksites: 14,195

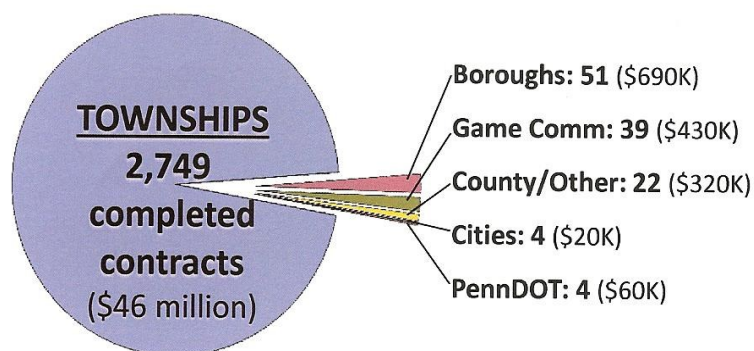
Green: 1997-2012 FUNDED worksites: 2,565

Red: 2013 FUNDED worksites: 167



Map of over 16,500 identified pollution sites on public unpaved roads statewide.

Ownership of 2,869 Completed Contracts to Date:



Local entities that own public roads are the ones who apply for Program funding and implement projects. To date, 2,869 contracts have been completed on 2,565 separate worksites (*some sites are phased over multiple contracts or re-addressed over time*). Townships are by far the largest program participant, accounting for 96% of completed contracts, as illustrated to the left. Other public road-owning entities are eligible and have completed a limited number of projects in the past. Interest from these "non-traditional" entities is expected to grow in the coming years due to the increase in Program funding.

Map and all data based on Annual Summary Reports from Conservation Districts as of 1/15/2014.

Let's talk trash.

Cut back on **food waste and loss** to save money, improve access to food, and protect natural resources.



About **90 billion** pounds of edible food goes uneaten each year.*

That weighs **123x** the Empire State Building.

This cost consumers **\$370** per person each year.



Reduce **wasted food** in your home with simple shopping, storage, & cooking practices.

WHAT YOU CAN DO



Plan & Save

Plan your weekly menu and make a grocery list. Does the list include food that you already have at home? Buy only what you need and stay within your budget.



Be Food Safe

Shop refrigerated or frozen foods just before checking out. Transport items that spoil easily in a cooler or thermal bag and refrigerate or freeze within two hours of shopping.



Check for Quality

The dates on a food package help the store determine how long to display the product for sale. It can also help you to choose a product at its best quality.



Set Storage Reminders

Track storage times for different foods using The FoodKeeper Application. This tool will remind you when foods are near to the end of their storage date.



Be Organized

Foods are less likely to go bad when you use the older items first. Keep your pantry and refrigerator clean and organized so you can see what needs to be eaten first.



Re-purpose

Give leftovers a makeover when you reuse them in recipes. Add broccoli stems to a salad or blend overripe fruit into a low-fat smoothie. Freeze extra food.



Donate

Many shelters, food banks, and faith-based organizations will accept food donations to feed others who need a meal.



Recycle & Compost

Instead of throwing out food, create a compost bin. Don't have a yard? Your city may help you find composting or recycling options that are right for you.



*In homes and away from home eating places.
 **Protein foods include meat, poultry, fish, eggs, and nuts.

Sources:
 All sources are available at ChooseMyPlate.gov/lets-talk-trash.

Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion
 USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.
 September 2015



COVER CROPS AND NO-TILL OPTIONS

Cover crops are an important management practice to reduce soil loss and nutrient loss. They provide a canopy and residue for bare ground after a harvest. Without this, the ground would be left vulnerable to soil erosion due to water and wind. Cover crops also help with the uptake of nutrients that would otherwise run off or leach from the fields. Their root systems can also provide soil stability, added organic matter to the soil, as well as soil aeration.



Let's see what some of our local farmers did with cover crops!

Last fall we hit the road to see what types of cover crops were being planted in the county and how the District's new John Deere seeder performed.

We met with one farmer that used our new John Deere no-till drill to plant alfalfa after oats in August. His target planting rate was 15 to 18 pounds per acre, and he fertilized after planting based on the soil test recommendations. As you can see in **Figure 1**, the new stand had established well by this time. The farmer said he liked using the no-till seeder and recommended checking the actual planting rate.

Another farmer had been no-till planting cover crops for 4 years. He said he saw that the soil warmed up sooner in the spring and yields had increased. He focused on planting cover crops after a small grain in the middle of August. By planting the cover crop early he has seen better growth and performance from the tillage radish as shown in **Figure 4**. After a couple of years trying forage peas, he has turned to try Sunn Hemp. One thing he does when planting the cover crop is to alternate the crop rows (as shown in **Figure 2**) by plugging every other seed tube. There are a lot of different mixes to try, such as the option in **Figure 3**, but finding the one that works and fits your planting window is important.

If you are interested in renting the District's John Deere no-till drill to plant your cover crops and see the benefits for yourself, please contact Clarice at 724-705-7098. More information on renting the no-till drill can also be accessed on our website (www.pawccd.org) on the Ag Division page.

#1 Alfalfa planted after Oats



#2 Tillage Radishes & Sunn Hemp



#3 Tillage Radishes, Sunn Hemp & Sorghum Sudan Grass



#4 Tillage Radishes—up close



Farmland Preservation



What are the benefits of Farmland Preservation?

- Makes farming more affordable for future generations.
- Assures affordable and accessible food and energy supplies while simultaneously helping to protect our national security.
- Keeps the demand for public services and the taxes needed to support these demands lower.
- Encourages soil and water conservation of Washington County's natural resources.
- Preserves farm culture.
- Preserves quality of life through protection of open space, aesthetics, watershed, recreation and wildlife.

Does my farm qualify?

- Must be enrolled in your township's agricultural security area consisting of 500 acres or more.
- Must be contiguous acreage of at least 50 acres in size unless the tract is at least 10 acres in size and is either used for a crop unique to the area or is contiguous to a property previously preserved with an agricultural conservation easement.
- Must contain at least 50% of soils which are available for agricultural production and are of Land Capability Classes I through IV, as defined by the Soil Surveys published by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service.
- Must contain the greater of 50% or 10 acres of harvested cropland, pasture or grazing land.

The property must meet all four requirements to qualify. If you are not clear about any of these factors, please call for clarification.

How long will my farm be preserved?

The farm is preserved through a **perpetual** agricultural conservation easement. Simply put, the preservation is permanent.

When my farm is preserved, does the county own my farm?

No, you still have all the rights as the property owner to sell, lease, or manage your land as you see fit, as long as the terms of preservation (Deed of Easement) are being followed.

How do I sign up for the program?

Qualifying farms can apply by filing an application obtained from the Washington County Planning Commission. Applications are accepted until **December 31, 2015**.

Caroline Sinchar

Washington County Planning
Commission

100 West Beau Street, Ste. 701

Washington, PA 15301

724-228-6811

sincharc@co.washington.pa.us



FROM THE WASHINGTON COUNTY WATERSHED ALLIANCE — Fall 2015

Washington County Watershed Alliance

WEBSITE: Please visit us at www.wcwalliance.org for more information on our activities.

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

Outreach and Education: The Alliance offered several education programs for youth this past summer. Children attending the County Parks and Recreation Insect Camp participated in Bee Pollinators, where they learned types of pollinators, tried out the waggle dance with a pollination game, and sampled honey from different countries. Miniature Marvels of the Water, a program designed to teach children about Plankton, was offered to three groups during the summer; children in the Parks and Rec program, at Camp AGAPE summer camp, and members of the Crossroads 4H group collected samples from local lakes and viewed the findings under microscopes. Pictured here are a few examples of what they found.



During Peters Twp. summer camp, the Alliance offered the Water Water Everywhere program where children played a series of games to learn about water resources, use, and conservation. Finally, homeschool children learned about properties of water and the water cycle during a program at Mingo, The Incredible **Journey** of a Water Drop.

The new pilot education program, the Watershed Passport Program, was completed by seventh grade students at Chartiers-Houston at the end of the school year. The program was well received and will be repeated again this year. Photos and written works from students in the program can be viewed on our website. The program will be proposed to additional local schools this fall as part of a collaborative program with W&J Community Engagement.



The big outreach event of the season was of course the annual Washington County Agricultural Fair. The Alliance and its member watershed associations manned a booth with displays and information for fair goers. New this year, was the Frog Toss game for kids to teach them about our water resources.

*If you have an adult or youth group, or class, for whom you would like the WCWA to do an educational program, please contact us at:
info@wcwalliance.org or 724-503-4785.*

Stream Monitoring Project: The Alliance finally received its PA DEP Growing Greener contract and has begun work on stream data analysis, chemical sampling, and expansion of the monitoring sites. Currently there are 19 sites being monitored for the fifth consecutive year. Five new sites will be added this fall. LandStudies has been contracted to perform the analysis of the data set from the first 3-4 years; their report will be complete this fall.

Groundwater Monitoring Project: This project has come to its official end this summer after 2 years of data collection of private groundwater sources by residents of the county. Results will be kept for historic record and for future comparisons, and CMU and Cal U will continue to work with and analyze the data generated by this project.

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.

Save Canonsburg Lake: State and Federal permits have been issued for restoration work. Value engineering is underway to adjust the construction plans and specifications to fit the budget. Construction is expected to begin next year.

Canonsburg Lake Paddle: Venture Outdoors and ChCWA with the Canonsburg Lake Committee sponsored a joint paddling event on October 4. Participants learned about the restoration project and were lead on a guided tour of the lake using V.O. kayaks or their own.

Stream Monitoring: This summer, bacterial sampling was conducted for the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (PADEP) Bureau of Water Quality Standards and Facility Regulation at 10 sites in Little Chartiers Creek. The results of the sampling will be used for the Recreational Use Assessment of streams in Pennsylvania. In addition, methane gas samples were collected for a Penn State research project. This fall sampling of macroinvertebrates and chemicals will be done at the standard stations and samples will be collected for methane gas. Volunteers are always needed.

Rain garden project: ChCWA directed unused funds from the 2014 Dominion Grant to buy plants and trees for a Habitat for Humanity rain garden project to manage storm water at the site of two new homes in North Franklin Township.

Buffalo Creek Watershed Association

www.buffalocreekwatershed.org; email: [buffalocreekwa@gmail](mailto:buffalocreekwa@gmail.com)

Upcoming Meetings: The BCWA meetings are held on the second Thursday of each month at 7:00 pm at the Buffalo Township Municipal Bldg.

Cleanup Projects: Purchased bright safety vests with "BCWA," and grabbers to enhance litter pick-up convenience and safety of volunteers/members engaged in road-side cleanup activities.

Advocacy: Prepared/Presented written testimony on the Proposed Stream Protection Rule at a public hearing held by the U.S. Office of Surface Mining and Reclamation in Pittsburgh, September 10. Participating in a series of meetings conducted by *Center for Coalfield Justice* the first of which was "What the Frack" with residents discussing the impact of NGA activities on their health; the next meeting will be a wine tasting and letter- to- the-editor writing party with *Friends of the Harmed*, *Clean Air Council*, and the *Protect Our Children Coalition*.

Education: Purchased three "Speck" air monitoring devices as part of a BCWA and *Southwest PA Environmental Health Project* collaborative venture with interested county municipalities.

- Working with the *SWPEHP* to provide *Carnegie Mellon University CREATE lab* "Cattfish" indoor water monitoring devices to members and residents of the Buffalo Creek Watershed.
- Cohosting with the Buffalo Township Supervisors, an Air and Water Monitoring Information Public Outreach Program 7-9 pm, October 8 at the Buffalo Township Municipal Building
- Participated in the *CCJ* public education program, *Landscape Today: Community Impact Summit*, September 12 at Washington & Jefferson College.
- Represented the BCWA at both the Washington County fair and the West Alexander Fair with a display and educational information

Dutch Fork Lake: Conducted visual assessment and water sampling in response to report of a fish kill at Dutch Fork Lake.

Ten Mile Creek Watershed Association

www.tenmilecreekwatershed.org

Upcoming Meetings: The organization meets quarterly, on the first Monday of January, April, July, October, 9:00am at Log Cabin Fence Company.

Paddle Cleanup: Ten Mile Creek Watershed and Paddle Without Pollution Water Warriors removed more than 1000 pounds of litter, tires, and illegally dumped debris from Ten Mile Creek in May. Items found included a satellite dish, a toaster, a computer printer, part of a park bench, a mattress box spring, building materials, downspouts, tarps, a carpet, and dozens and dozens of cans and bottles at an illegal dumpsite which had been used for years.

Keep PA Beautiful Grant: Ten Mile Creek Watershed Association was awarded a grant for community projects in West Bethlehem Township and Morris Township. The projects will help focus on the "Prevent It" initiative through Keep Pa Beautiful. The funds will be received for various improvement projects such as a town planter and flowers in West Bethlehem Twp. that will complement a newly installed sign, and mulch and shrubs for Morris township for their playground area.

Upper Wheeling Creek Watershed Association

www.upperwheelingcreek.org

Upcoming Meetings: The UWCWA meetings are held on the first Wednesday of January, April, July, and October, 10:00 am at the East Finley Township Building.

Wetlands Presentation: The group will present an educational program, "Wetlands Presentation," at East Finley Park, Templeton Pavilion, on Saturday, October 24, beginning at 9 am. The program is free and the community is invited to learn the how and why of wetland development. Speaking will be Mike Shema from Civil & Environmental Consultants, Inc. to discuss wetland creation and stream bank restoration; East Finley Park area has prime examples of both of these projects. Jennifer Dann, Watershed Specialist from the Washington County Conservation District, will give a presentation on macroinvertebrates and their identification.

Watershed Warriors: Participation in the UWCWA Watershed Warrior Program is being promoted as an summer activity that encourages area youth to become involved in conservation efforts in their own backyards and neighborhoods. Certificates acknowledging conservation awareness are awarded upon completion of self-directed activities that

A Winning Photo taken

Presented by Watershed Specialist Jennifer Dann at the PACD Watershed Conference!



Sediment Basins

-Matt Golden

We have all seen the ponds that are constructed on large earth moving projects. These ponds are called sediment basins. They are an important Best Management Practice (BMP) for treating runoff from construction activities and help to reduce sediment pollution.

A basin is a settling pond built on a construction site to capture eroded soil that is carried away during runoff events. They are designed to protect the water quality of nearby streams, rivers or lakes from sedimentation caused by accelerated erosion. The sediment-laden runoff is captured and allowed to settle before it is discharged.

In Pennsylvania sediment traps are used to capture runoff from drainage areas of 5 acres or less, while a basin can be used to capture and treat larger drainage areas. Basins must be designed by an engineer using guidelines found in the Erosion and Sediment Pollution Control Program Manual. The manual serves as a guide for the amount of runoff volume a basin is required to have or how much sediment storage capacity is needed. There is also a limit on how quickly a basin can dewater, in most cases a minimum of 2 days but no longer than 7 days. The time it takes to dewater will influence how effective the sediment removal is.

Accumulated sediment will eventually need cleaned out once the sediment level reaches the elevation prescribed in the E&S plan. This maintenance schedule is followed throughout the construction process. Once the earthmoving is complete and the site has been fully revegetated, the basin is no longer needed to control sediment from the site.

Often sediment basins are converted into permanent stormwater management features that must be remained with the site forever.





Farm Service Agency



2800 North Main Street, Suite 1, Washington, PA 15301

Phone: 724-222-3060 Ext. 2

Fax: 855-847-3602

USDA Announces Conservation Incentives for Working Grass, Range and Pasture Lands

Beginning Sept. 1, farmers and ranchers can apply for financial assistance to help conserve working grasslands, rangeland and pastureland while maintaining the areas as livestock grazing lands.

The initiative is part of the voluntary Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), a federally funded program that for 30 years has assisted agricultural producers with the cost of restoring, enhancing and protecting certain grasses, shrubs and trees to improve water quality, prevent soil erosion and reduce loss of wildlife habitat. In return, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) provides participants with rental payments and cost-share assistance. CRP has helped farmers and ranchers prevent more than 8 billion tons of soil from eroding, reduced nitrogen and phosphorous runoff relative to cropland by 95 and 85 percent respectively, and even sequestered 43 million tons of greenhouse gases annually, equal to taking 8 million cars off the road.

The CRP-Grasslands initiative will provide participants who establish long-term, resource-conserving covers with annual rental payments up to 75 percent of the grazing value of the land. Cost-share assistance also is available for up to 50 percent of the covers and other practices, such as cross fencing to support rotational grazing or improving pasture cover to benefit pollinators or other wildlife. Participants may still conduct common grazing practices, produce hay, mow, or harvest for seed production, conduct fire rehabilitation, and construct firebreaks and fences.

With the publication of the CRP regulation today, the Farm Service Agency will accept applications on an ongoing basis beginning Sept. 1, 2015, with those applications scored against published ranking criteria, and approved based on the competitiveness of the offer. The ranking period will occur at least once per year and be announced at least 30 days prior to its start. The end of the first ranking period will be Nov. 20, 2015.

To learn more about participating in CRP-Grasslands or SAFE, visit www.fsa.usda.gov/crp or consult with the local Farm Service Agency county office.

2016 Acreage Reporting Dates

In order to comply with FSA program eligibility requirements, all producers are encouraged to visit their local county FSA office to file an accurate crop certification report by the applicable deadline.

The following acreage reporting dates are applicable for Washington and Greene Counties:

November 15, 2015: Apiculture, Fall Forage Seeding, Perennial Forage, Fall-Seeded Small Grains

January 15, 2016: Apples, Grapes, Pears

June 15, 2016: Spring Barley, Spring Forage Seeding, Spring Oats, Rye, Triticale, Spring Wheat

July 15, 2016: All other crops; including CRP

August 15, 2016: Beans, Cabbage

The following exceptions apply to the above acreage reporting dates:

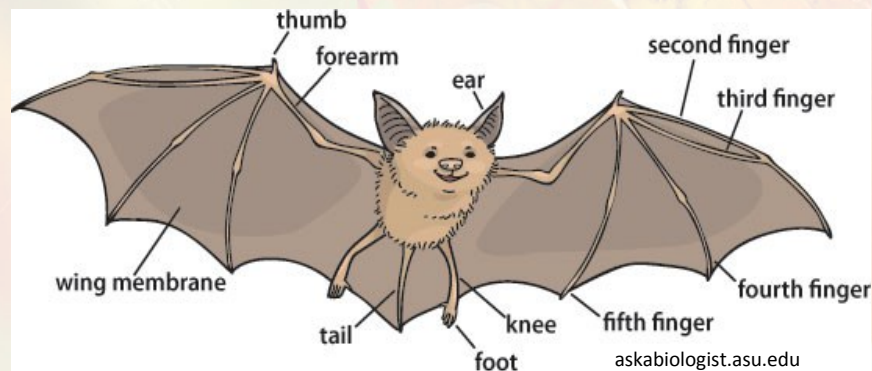
If the crop has not been planted by the above acreage reporting date, then the acreage must be reported no later than 15 calendar days after planting is completed.

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.

Just For Kids!

BATS



Bats are the only true flying mammal on earth (flying squirrels only glide). They eat mainly insects or fruit and are found everywhere except the Arctic, Antarctic and some islands. There are 9 bat species that live in Pennsylvania:

- ▶ Big Brown Bat
- ▶ Little Brown bat
- ▶ Indiana Bat (endangered)
- ▶ Silver-haired Bat
- ▶ Eastern Pipistrelle
- ▶ Northern Long-eared bat (Threatened)
- ▶ Small Footed Bat
- ▶ Hoary Bat
- ▶ Red Bat



Indiana Bat -
Endangered Species

Bats can eat approximately
1,000 insects an hour!

E L T K G F V M K P E H D S K U M I L W R W Z X C
F C O H F V T R G I K I N P R Q J S A I V S Q X R
Q R H P G E M K E Q Q B O C Y S O Q M N B J U O Q
H F U O S S Q A D E R E G N A D N E M G I C O A F
Q U M I L O Q T V P D R N P A L Y J A S U S A T Q
H A U U T O C C O F Q N O X Q H G X M D T T T C F
L T G L W C C L N V L A O Y L K L C Q T Q Y D N X
T A H P I S L A V V F T Q U J Y U L E J G Z Y G I
X C N C C I B F T A Q I U N F Z C S J S R B K P K
V M P R N U Q J B I E O N X T C O L O N Y C L X R
K W V A U F B K T A O N Z C W F J A S Y V B V F I
Q U T L Q T I F W N F N E H X V J V F G E I K W D
J O V J P F C R A K T S G P U S S R M V Q E N T I
R Z M S B F V O V Q N G W J E K J M J N C A P G X
V Q B Y W M V Y N I D I T A B T C I A C Y D O T P

Find the following batty words!

Bat	Nocturnal	Roost
Mammal	Wings	Endangered
Fruit	Echolocation	Colony
Insect	Pollinator	Hibernation

How You Can Help Bats:

- Build a bat house
- Plant a night garden (plants that attract insects in the evening) Plant ideas: evening primrose, white jasmine, mint, and lemon balm.
- Do not disturb bats in hibernation; stay out of caves and known roost areas in the winter.

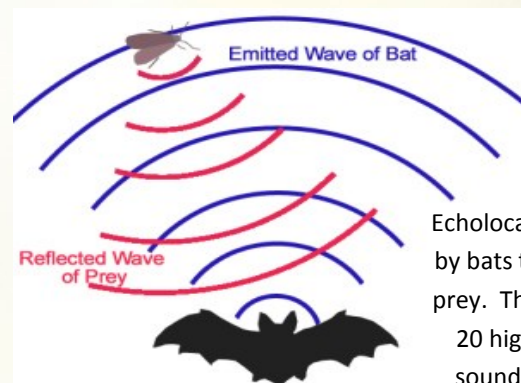


White-nose syndrome



www.huffingtonpost.com

Caused by a fungus that infects the bats and interrupts their hibernation and hydration abilities. It has reached 25 states and 5 Canadian Provinces. It spreads easily from bat to bat. Work continues on finding a way to help the bats overcome this fungal disease.



Echolocation is used by bats to find their prey. They emit 10-20 high-pitched sounds/second.

Washington County Conservation District

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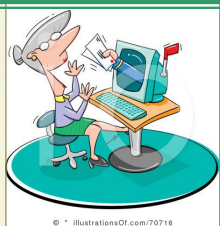
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Please let us know if you would like our newsletter to come to you via e-mail.

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