



Washington County Conservation District Newsletter

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JUNE 2015 VOLUME 45 ISSUE 2

2015 Washington County Envirothon



Canon-McMillan High School Team 1

Back Row: Jessica Kearns (CONSOL Energy), Sandy Strosko (Team Advisor), Jared Dernoshok, Jessica Francis, William Iams (WCCD Chairman), and Chelsea Geist (Team Advisor)

Front Row: Nick Fulks, Trevor Barnes, and Elizabeth Freeman

The 2015 Washington County Envirothon was held on Wednesday April 22nd at the Dormont-Mt. Lebanon Sportsman's Club. The day was challenging because students braved the cold and snow as they competed for scholarships and awards. The students knowledge is tested in five categories; Aquatics, Forestry, Soils, Wildlife, and a Current Issue. This year's current issue was Urban and Community Forestry. The school districts that competed this year were Avella, Bethlehem-Center, California, Canon-McMillan, McGuffey, Peters Township and Ringgold.

This year's winner was from Canon-McMillan High School; the first time that a team from Canon-McMillan has won the Washington County Envirothon since 1990!

The competition was tight all day, but Canon-Mac (Team 1) pulled ahead on the last testing station by 10 points. Avella's team placed 2nd and McGuffey Gold Team placed 3rd.

The five students who competed on the winning team received a \$500 scholarship. These scholarships were made possible by a generous donation from CONSOL Energy, Inc. The winning students have been granted the opportunity to represent Washington County at the Pennsylvania State Envirothon Competition at the University of Pittsburgh-Johnstown on May 19&20.

This is the 22nd year the Envirothon has been held at the Dormont-Mt. Lebanon Sportsmen's Club and it was the 3rd year that scholarships have been offered to the winning team.

The District thanks all of those involved with the program and hopes to see more schools competing in 2016!





Avella High School Team

Back Row: Travis Smith, Tyler Fraysier, Ryan Comfort
Zach Kagle, and William Iams (WCCD Chairman)

Front Row: Paige Allen and Evy Breitigan (Team Advisor)



McGuffey High School Gold Team
Left to Right: Matt Hoge, Moriah McGuier, Jarret McCracken, Greg Reger (Team Advisor) and William Iams (WCCD Chairman)
Not Pictured: Scarlett Loya and Emily Brownlee



Special Thanks to:



Dormont-Mt. Lebanon Sportsmen's Club



* Chris Bergman, *Wildlife* (PA Game Commission) * Rich Joyce, *Wildlife* (PA Game Commission) * Dan Sitler, *Wildlife*, (PA Game Commission) * Rachel Christie, *Forestry* (DCNR Bureau of Forestry) * Russell Gibbs, *Forestry* (DCNR Bureau of Forestry) * Brian Wolyniak, *Current Issue* (Penn State Cooperative Extension) * Chuck Kubasik, *Aquatics* (PA DEP) * Joe Laslo, *Aquatics* (PA DEP) Jarred Taracido, *Soils* (NRCS) * Kimberlee Moninger, *Soils*, (NRCS) * Rennie Stoy, *Soils* (NRCS)

WCCD Employees: * Matt Golden * John Hewitt * Hannah Hoblitzell * Jennifer Dann * Nathan Simon * Tom Ulrich * Clarice Munk * Beth Kahkonen * Ashley Wilmont * William Iams (Director Chairman) * Gary Stokum (District Manager)

Just For Kids!

Pollinator Match

Match the pollinator to its preferred flower.



1

A



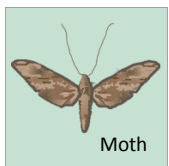
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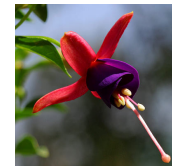
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4

D



5

E



Pollination

Pollination occurs when birds, bees, bats, butterflies, moths, beetles, other animals, water or the wind carries pollen from flower to flower or it moves within flowers.

Pollinators are insects or animals that transfer pollen from one plant to another.

Approximately 80% of all flowering plants and over three-quarters of the staple crop plants that feed humankind rely on animal pollinators

Plant Strategies for Pollination

Wind

Plants that use wind for pollination have early spring flowers. This keeps their pollen from being stopped by the leaves on the trees.

Water

This category is reserved for aquatic plants, which release their pollen into the water for dispersal.

Animals

Plants develop attractants including visual cues, scent, food, mimicry, and entrapment to have insects or animals visit their flowers.

Help pollinators by planting native plant species in your yard. Also provide a shallow water source for the pollinators and limit your use of pesticides

Flower Clues

All flowers that need pollinators have characteristics that attract specific insects or animals as pollinators.

Bees—Do not see red, but can see yellow, blue and ultraviolet. They prefer flowers with a sweet scent that are sturdy and irregular in shape.

Butterflies—Prefer brightly colored flowers that are odorless. They like their flowers clustered with a large enough area to land on while feeding.

Moths—are nocturnal and prefer flowers that are white or light colored, which are easier to see in the moonlight. They also prefer flowers with a strong smell and they hover-feed, so they do not need to land on the flower.

Birds—especially hummingbirds, have good eyesight, but poor sense of smell. They prefer brightly colored flower, especially red. Hummingbirds are also hover-feeders and do not need to land on the flowers.

Flies—are attracted to the smell of rotting meat. So flowers with a strong smell of decay attract flies.

Beetles—prefer a large cluster of flowers, strong enough to support their weight.

Welcome

New Team Member



My name is Nathan Simon. I was raised in Western Pennsylvania, just east of Pittsburgh. I was a very active child, but my favorite activities were ice hockey and spending time in the outdoors. I started playing hockey when I was four years old and twenty years later I still haven't been able to give it up. I finished my competitive hockey career in 2014 playing for the IUP Crimson Hawks.

When I wasn't playing hockey, I was wandering through the woods or waist deep in a stream somewhere. Hunting and fishing have always been the only things that hockey came second to. As I developed a passion for these things, my respect for nature and conservation also grew. I am a very avid archery hunter. Every time presents a new lesson, and to me an unmatched experience. It is by far my favorite way to spend my time.

I graduated from Indiana University of Pennsylvania (IUP) with a degree in Environmental Geography in 2014. My education at IUP was centered on environmental management. I also devoted much of my time to white-tail deer research, mainly concerning their excessive population growth and the impacts that are caused by this. I also completed many projects and studies dealing with freshwater resources and Pennsylvania streams.

I am very blessed to have been given the opportunity to work here at the conservation district and I look forward to learning and growing from it.



Beer Can Chicken

Ingredients

Serves: 10

- 1 whole chicken (about 5 pounds)
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1/4 cup [McCormick® Grill Mates® Montreal Chicken Seasoning](#)

Substitutions

- 1/4 cup [McCormick® Grill Mates® Roasted Garlic & Herb Seasoning](#)
- 1 can (12 ounces) beer

Directions 10 mins Prep time 1 hrs 30 mins Cook time

- Prepare grill for indirect medium heat (350°F to 375°F). Preheat grill by turning all burners to medium. Turn off burner (s) on one side of grill.
- Rub chicken with oil. Rub cavity with 1 tablespoon of the Chicken Seasoning. Sprinkle remaining Chicken Seasoning evenly over surface of chicken.
- Remove about 2 ounces beer and poke 2 holes in top of can. Hold chicken upright (legs pointing down) and insert opened beer can into cavity. Stand chicken in upright position on unlit side of grill. Position legs to best support chicken (similar to a tripod). Close lid.
- Grill chicken 1 1/2 hours or until cooked through (internal temperature reaches 165°F in the thigh). Remove chicken from can before serving.

Cooking tip To maintain medium heat (350°F to 375°F), keep lid closed and adjust lit burner as necessary.



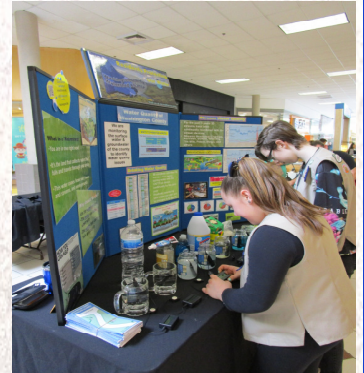
FROM THE WASHINGTON COUNTY WATERSHED ALLIANCE – Summer 2015

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 participated in multiple community events this past quarter to provide residents with informative and relevant displays, handouts, and demonstrations. We attended the Reptile Expo at the Fairgrounds, the Sportsman Show and Ag Days at the Crown Center Mall. We taught young ladies about the science behind water quality monitoring at the Girl Scout event, Science Serious and Silly. We spent the day at the Washington Field and Stream store, during their fishing season kickoff event, to talk to customers about land use impacts on streams. Finally, at W&J College's Arbor Day tree planting event, we talked to students about the importance of trees to watershed health.



The Alliance also conducted its first Bi-Annual Cleanup on May 16th in downtown Canonsburg. The cleanup took place in cooperation with the Borough of Canonsburg and was part of the Great American Cleanup and Keep PA Beautiful efforts. WCWA will organize a second cleanup in the fall.

Recent educational programs offered by the Alliance include Water. "Water Everywhere" homeschool program at Mingo Park, "Macros" at Mingo with Cub Scout Troop 1305, and "Monitoring Water Quality" with Crossroads 4H Club at the fairgrounds.

A New pilot education program has been created and launched this spring with two classes at Chartiers-Houston Junior and Senior High School. The "Watershed Passport Program", as it is called, outlines activities for students to explore and document their natural environment. Stamps are given for completed activities and experiences are shared with their teachers and the Alliance through photos, essays, and participation in community events. **If you have an adult or youth group, or class for whom would like the WCWA to do an educational program, please contact Beth Kahkonen at bethk@pawccd.org or 724-503-4785.**

Stream Monitoring Project: After the long, icy winter, many data logger devices have been dislodged or buried in the streams. This Spring was spent making repairs and re-installed the devices so they continue to collect stream data for the fifth year. 18 locations are being monitored with an additional 7 to be added this summer.

Groundwater Monitoring Project: Residents with private wells and springs continue to monitor their water quality and contribute to a historic record of the groundwater quality of our county. This project will reach 2 years of data collection by July. We will maintain this project as long as households continue to participate. Thank you to those who participate.



Raccoon Creek Watershed Association

RCWA Joins Independence Conservancy: Members of the RCWA recently voted to recognize Independence Conservancy as the 501c3 nonprofit organization representing the Raccoon Creek Region. Since many of RCWA's members also belong to the Conservancy, the union of the two groups is a logical step forward. The Conservancy's service area includes not only the Raccoon Creek, but Mill Creek, King's Creek, Harmon Creek and the small watersheds flowing into West Virginia. Although the RCWA no longer exists on paper, the same dedicated volunteers will continue to work for clean water, recreation opportunities, outdoor education, open green space and abandoned mine reclamation in the Raccoon Creek Region. The Conservancy's board of directors welcomes those who might wish to serve in a leadership capacity to call Executive Director, Vicky Michaels, at 412-973-4499 to learn more about volunteering and leadership opportunities.



20D Watershed Conservation Plan: On May 27th the Conservancy, in partnership with the Washington County Conservation District and BioMost, rolled out the finalized 20D Raccoon Region Conservation Plan. Almost three years in the making, the highlights of this Plan were featured at a public open house at the Raccoon Creek State Park historic Recreation Hall. Dozens of people enjoyed a fine spring afternoon in the Park, learning about what makes the Raccoon Creek Region a great place to live, work and play. The 20D Plan is available on Independence Conservancy's web-site at <http://www.independenceconservancy.org/news-projects/20d-plan>.

Chartiers Creek Watershed Association-

www.upperchartierscreek.org; email: chartierscreek-wa@pawccd.org; 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.

Rain Garden Project: Habitat for Humanity has planned a rain garden project to manage stormwater at the site of two new homes in North Franklin Twp. ChCWA volunteers will assist with the planting later this year.

Outreach: Members participated in Washington County Ag Days and the Eco Expo at Washington and Jefferson College this spring. The Annual Wetlands Walk in the North Franklin Wetlands was led by Dr. Jason Kilgore, Associate Professor of Biology, W&J.

Stream Monitoring: This year is the 14th year of stream monitoring in Chartiers Creek. Chemicals and macroinvertebrates were sampled this spring at four sites. This summer bacterial sampling will be conducted for the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (PADEP) Bureau of Water Quality Standards and Facility Regulation. The results of the sampling will be used for the Recreational Use Assessment of streams in Pennsylvania. In addition, methane gas sampling will be conducted for a Penn State research project if funding is obtained.

Save Canonsburg Lake: Restoration work is still awaiting the issuance of state and federal permits.

Buffalo Creek Watershed Association

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

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: Members engaged in several spring trash cleanup activities in collaboration with *Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful* : Railroad Street in Claysville, Buck Run

Road, Camp Buffalo Road, and Dog-Run Road.

Advocacy: The Association met with State Representative Jim Christiana to discuss major conservation related issues within the watershed/county; submitted written testimony to the *Citizens Advisory Council* regarding the intent to pipe water overland from Wheeling Creek WS into the high quality streams within the BCWS; and, submitted written testimony at the DEP public hearing regarding Oil and Gas regulations.

Education: In addition to participating in the February *Sportsmen's Association Expo*, and the March *Field & Stream Fishing Kick-Off Event*, members hosted a public education program called: "Mammals of PA and Their Adaptations," presented by the PAGC Wildlife Officer, Rich Joyce.

Grant Award/Monetary Gifts: The BCWA was awarded a *WPC Dominion Mini-Grant*, a monetary gift from *Field & Stream*, a generous contribution from *Buffalo Township*, and two public memorial donations.

Summer Projects/Activities Plan: A number of upcoming summer activities being planned; including: more stream and roadside cleanup projects; water quality monitoring including macroinvertebrate sampling and certified chemical analysis; collaboration with WPC in a stream stabilization and tree-planting project; pursuit of reclamation of the Dutch Fork Lake back access road; and collaboration with the Center for Coalfield Justice related to ACT 54, and with the Southwestern PA Environmental Project related to county air quality concerns.

Ten Mile Creek Watershed Association

www.tenmilecreekwatershed.org

Upcoming Meetings: The meetings of the TMCWA are held at the Log Cabin Fence Company meeting room; the next meeting will be held on Monday June 29th.

Paddle Cleanup: TMCWA hosted a cleanup event on May 16th, where over a thousand pounds of litter and illegally dumped debris were removed from Ten Mile Creek. Paddle Without Pollution and volunteer Paddle Without Pollution water warriors paddled in canoes and kayaks along a 3 1/3 mile stretch of the creek. They strapped various items to their boats such as a satellite dish, carpeting, computer printer, mattress box spring, car parts, fishing line, pots/pans, plastic bags, Styrofoam, and tires. TMCWA disposed of the items by separating the trash from the recyclables which were taken to a recycling center; the tires were taken free by a local tire company.

This is the 3rd year TMCWA has partnered with Paddle Without Pollution. Both groups look forward to helping keep our creek clean, healthy, and scenic!





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.

Cleanups: Members of the UWCWA participated in local activities in the region associated with the Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful Great American Cleanup from March 1 to May 31st. Activities included the annual East Finley and West Finley Townships Clean Up Days in early May. Several thousand pounds of trash were collected from local residents for disposal at county landfills and other disposal facilities and litter cleanup activities along roadways to prevent further degradation of watershed streams.

Water Withdrawals: UWCWA members have also been working with local residents and the PA DEP to address concerns associated with withdrawals of water resources from the watershed by local industry and air quality issues associated with unregulated gas emissions at well sites in the region.

Watershed Warriors: Participation in the UWCWA Watershed Warrior Program is being promoted as a 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 include hiking and biking, wildlife watch, and nature journaling and photography.

Dirt, Gravel and Low Volume Road update: Spar Street

-Matt Golden

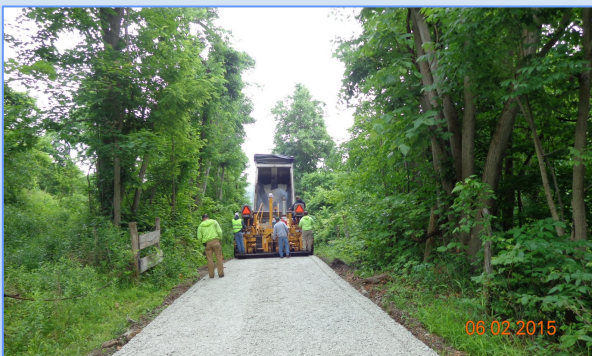
On June 2nd, Driving Surface Aggregate (DSA) paving began on Spar Street in Dunlevy Borough. The Conservation District Dirt and Gravel Road Coordinator, Ashley Wilmont and E&S Technician Matt Golden, were on site throughout the project to answer questions and observe the placement. Twenty-two truckloads of DSA totaling over 450 tons were used to pave approximately 1200' of Spar Street. The borough contracted the placement of DSA with El Grande Industries of Monessen. The DSA was placed with a paver to a depth of 8" and then compacted to 6 inches using a vibratory roller. Moisture is a critical factor when placing DSA as it will not compact to the maximum density if it is placed when it is too dry. Following the placement of the DSA the borough will stabilize the road edges and ditches in order to complete the project. Once the project is complete the District's Quality Assurance Board (QAB) will conduct an inspection of the road to ensure that the requirements of the Dirt and Gravel Roads Program have been satisfied.



-Before paving



-DSA: 8 inches (left),
compacted to 6 inches (right)



DSA Paving underway



After DSA placement.

Attention Horse Owners!

The Washington County Conservation District will be offering a great opportunity for horse owners and operations to attend a two-evening workshop that focuses on environmentally sound farm management practices for horse facilities, from one-horse farms to large equine operations. The Equine Environmental Stewardship Program will cover topics such as forage growth and management, weeds and toxic plants, water quality, soil fertility management, pasture management, and manure and nutrient management. The program is a two-part workshop series that will be held on the following dates:

July 22nd 6:00 pm to 9:00 pm
& July 29th 6:00 pm to 9:00 pm

The deadline to register for the program is July 15th. There is also a registration fee of \$20 per attendee, which includes attendance to both workshops, refreshments, and a notebook filled with educational materials and tools. The notebook includes materials such as a soil test kit, the booklet "Common Weed Seedlings of the North Central States," a manure management manual, pasture evaluation tools, and much more!

Please contact Hannah Hoblitzell at the Washington County Conservation District BEFORE sending in your registration fees so your name can be placed on the registration list. Registration is limited. Our telephone number is: 724-206-9446, or Hannah can be reached by email at: ehoblitzell@pawccd.org. The registration fee needs to be mailed or dropped off to us at:

Washington County Conservation District
2800 N Main Street, Suite 105 , Washington, PA 15301

The Washington County Conservation District is working with Penn State Extension Equine in order to bring the Equine Environmental Stewardship Program to the area.

Financial and other support for this project is provided by the Pennsylvania Association of Conservation Districts, Inc. through a grant from the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection under Section 319 of the Clean Water Act, administered by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.



Southwestern Pennsylvania Woodland Owners Association



July 18—Summer Tour (Saturday) - Day in the Woods at Becketts Run Woodlands

Description: SWPWO members, Raul Chiesa and Janet Sredy have been awarded 2014 PA Tree Farmers of the Year. The program will showcase all the hard work that they have accomplished in their woods. Meeting location and times will be in the July newsletter.

August 8—Summer Tour (Saturday) - Tour of Pittsburgh Botanical Gardens

Description: We will have a group tour of this fairly new natural wonder in Pittsburgh. They have transformed an old strip mine into five woodland areas: Appalachian plateau, cove forest, eastern European woodlands, English woodlands, and Asian woodlands. There is also an historic farmstead on the property. SWPWO members will enjoy a private tour, learn about the history of this important ecological site, and hear about plans for its on-going development. Special emphasis will be on the Garden's efforts to create and manage its diverse woodlands. The cost of this tour is \$10 each and advance registration is required.

[\[Website\] busybeaver.cs.pitt.edu/swpwo](http://busybeaver.cs.pitt.edu/swpwo)

September 16—Meeting (Wednesday) - Vehicle Safety in the Woods

Gary Micsky, Sustainable Agriculture/ Natural Resource Educator of Mercer County, Penn State Extension—**Description:** Mr. Micsky will discuss how to safely use tractors, utility vehicles and ATV's in your woodlot. Most of these vehicles were not built for use in woodlots- but these vehicles certainly are handy around the tree farm and many of us have them. Learn how to safely handle these vehicles for typical chores on your woodlot.

Time: 7:00PM - 9:00PM—Place: Washington County Conservation District, Washington, PA

September 19—SWPWO Field Day & Picnic (Saturday)

SPRING HAS SPRUNG

BY EMILY "HANNAH" HOBLITZELL

and pastures seem to be growing at a rapid rate. One evaluation that can be useful during the grazing season is your pasture estimated dry matter yield. Estimated dry matter yield can help you calculate how many animals a pasture can handle and for how many days. This evaluation along with yearly records can help management decisions to help improve the pastures as well.

There are many tools and electronics that you could use to get this value. The pasture grazing stick is one tool to collect this information. The pasture grazing stick measures your plant density based off a dot system. With the number of dots you can then estimate the dry matter yield per inch based off the type of grass variety. The dry matter per inch is then multiplied by the available length of the forage. As a reminder per the Chapter 91 Manure Management regulations that to be considered a pasture it has to have dense vegetation and maintain a minimum average height of 3 inches during the growing season.

Ways to increase your pasture yields can consist of taking soil samples to determine the nutrient requirements, applying lime, providing pastures with adequate rest for regrowth of the forage species, reseeding your damaged pastures or pasture areas, and maintaining a diversity of forage. By increasing your pasture density, you are also helping to reduce weeds. The weeds cannot compete with the dense forage vegetation. By having diversity within your pastures, it can extend the availability of forage for your livestock.

When you encounter damaged pastures or pasture areas, it can be very beneficial to reseed those areas. It is important to allow for proper establishment of the grasses and/or legumes before grazing on those areas in order to prevent damaging them again. Two options for reseeding those areas are through no-till and by frost seeding. Also, remember that when reading your soil sample results that the lime requirement is based on 100% Calcium Carbonate Equivalent (CCE).

Actual application rate might vary based on what type of lime you purchase and its CCE value. A lower CCE percent will require more pounds per acre to be applied.

The Conservation District participates in Southwest Project Grass, whose purpose is to promote the improvement of pasture systems and rotational grazing systems in order to have better forage production, quality, and utilization. Available through Southwest Project Grass are the Grazier's Notebook as well as pasture grazing sticks. Southwest Project Grass also has field days available for farmers to see other operations and gain information from presenters. There will be a Southwest Project Grass Conference this year in Indiana County on October 13th.

More information will soon be available on the field day soon.

You can visit their website at www.swprojectgrass.com to watch for more updates. The Washington County Conservation District can provide more information on using the pasture grazing stick, increasing your pasture yields, as well as Southwest Project Grass.



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 until 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



Farm Service
Agency



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

Phone: 724-222-3060 Ext. 2 Fax: 855-847-3602

USDA Reminds Farmers of 2014 Farm Bill Conservation Compliance Changes

The 2014 Farm Bill implements a change that requires farmers to have a Highly Erodible Land Conservation and Wetland Conservation Certification (AD-1026) on file. For farmers to be eligible for premium support on their federal crop insurance, a completed and signed AD-1026 certification form must be on file with the FSA. The Risk Management Agency (RMA), through the Federal Crop Insurance Corporation (FCIC), manages the federal crop insurance program that provides the modern farm safety net for American farmers and ranchers.

Since enactment of the 1985 Farm Bill, eligibility for most commodity, disaster, and conservation programs has been linked to compliance with the highly erodible land conservation and wetland conservation provisions. The 2014 Farm Bill continues the requirement that producers adhere to conservation compliance guidelines to be eligible for most programs administered by FSA and NRCS. This includes most financial assistance such as the new price and revenue protection programs, the Conservation Reserve Program, the Livestock Disaster Assistance programs and Marketing Assistance Loans and most programs implemented by FSA. It also includes the Environmental Quality Incentives Program, the Conservation Stewardship Program, and other conservation programs implemented by NRCS.

Many FSA and Natural Resource Conservation (NRCS) programs already have implemented this requirement and therefore most producers should already have an AD-1026 form on file for their associated lands. If an AD-1026 form has not been filed or is incomplete, then farmers are reminded of the deadline of June 1, 2015.

When a farmer completes and submits the AD-1026 certification form, FSA and NRCS staff will review the associated farm records and outline any additional actions that may be required to meet the required compliance with the conservation compliance provisions.

FSA recently released a revised form AD-1026, which is available at USDA Service Centers and online at: www.fsa.usda.gov. USDA will publish a rule later this year that will provide details outlining the connection of conservation compliance with crop insurance premium support. Producers can also contact their local USDA Service Center for information. A listing of service center locations is available at offices.usda.gov.

2015 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 all Pennsylvania counties:

May 31, 2015: Nursery

June 15, 2015: Spring Barley, Spring Forage Seeding, Spring Oats, Rye, Triticale, Spring Wheat

July 15, 2015: All other crops and CRP

August 15, 2015: 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.

Washington County Conservation District

2800 No. Main Street, Suite 105

Washington, PA 15301

724-705-7098

E-Mail

724-249-2519 fax

washcood@yahoo.com

Website: www.pawccd.org

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