

TOMORROW NEWSLETTER

2023 ENVIROTHON COMPETITION WINNERS

1st
Place



Canon
McMillan



On April 27th, 2023, Washington County Conservation District held its Annual Envirothon Competition. The event was held at Dormont-Mt. Lebanon Sportsmen's Club. Multiple schools across the county participated in this year's event. The team that placed 1st was from Canon McMillan High School. The 2nd runner-up was a team from Avella High School and the 3rd runner-up was a team from California High School. Teams that also participated were Fort Cherry High School, Bethlehem Center High School, and Ringgold High School.

Envirothon is an event for high school students from 9th-12th grade to compete in environmental topics. Each team has a chance to win prizes and scholarships to further their education. This event helps to create interest in our youth to become better stewards of the environment. Each team goes through various testing stations, which include Wildlife, Aquatics, Soil/Land Use, Forestry, and Current issues- adapting to a changing climate. The event offers meaningful contact with various agencies, Fish & Boat Commission, Game Commission, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Local Watershed groups, and the Bureau of Forestry. We want to thank all the schools, staff, and sponsors for supporting this year's Envirothon Competition. Our sponsors were Range Resources, Washington Wild Things, Laurel Communities LLC, and Dormont-Mt. Lebanon Sportsmen's Club.



Summer Intern

Levi Jordan

Welcome

Levi Jordan is a senior at Pennwest University of California (Calu). Levi will be graduating in Fall 2023 with a bachelor of science degree in Fisheries and Wildlife Biology and a minor in Sociology. After graduation, he plans to pursue a career with the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission or another related organization. He was a quad athlete in high school, continued his career to play college soccer, and now is a coach for 3 different soccer teams in Washington County. Levi feels incredibly accomplished to have continued school after a life changing surgery that took place in 2020. Levi loves to be outside exploring nature, fishing, and traveling to Tennessee with his wife.



50 Old Hickory Ridge Rd, Suite 2,
Washington, PA 15301
Phone: 724-222-3060 Ext. 2



Maps for Acreage Reporting are Available.

Maps are now available at the Washington-Greene County FSA Office for acreage reporting purposes. If you wish to receive your maps by e-mail, please call our office or email Jody Palmer at jody.palmer@usda.gov.

Please see the following acreage reporting deadlines for Washington-Greene County:

- **June 15, 2023:** Spring Seeded Small Grains
- **July 17, 2023:** Corn, Soybeans, CRP, Perennial Forage, Hemp and all other crops
- **August 15, 2023:** Beans, Cabbage

In order to maintain program eligibility and benefits, you must file timely acreage reports. Failure to file an acreage report by the crop acreage reporting deadline may cause ineligibility for future program benefits. FSA will not accept acreage reports provided more than a year after the acreage reporting deadline.

Producers are encouraged to file their acreage reports as soon as planting is completed.

AGRICULTURE



Hopefully by the time everyone is reading this article, hay production will be in full swing, and the crops have been planted. I would like to thank all the participants that attended one of our workshops held this spring. We received a lot of great feedback and have started the planning process for fall field days and other events. Stay tuned for more information on upcoming events by checking out our website or subscribing to our e-newsletter.

During the past year, I conducted multiple status reviews for both Nutrient Management and Manure Management Plans. Discussion occurs around the portion of record keeping and what records are needed. To stay in compliance with the regulations you must maintain two types of records. First, the worksheets completed as part of the development of the Manure Management Plan. Second, you must maintain records to demonstrate that the Manure Management Plan has been implemented. Two of the most important records to keep are the crop yield and manure application. The manure application records include the manure group, crop group, application rate, field identification, and date of application. For the crop yield records, they should include field identification, crop group, date harvested, yield goal, and actual yield. These records should be kept for a minimum of three years and must be made available to DEP or the county conservation district upon request. The Manure Management Plan Workbook contains optional blank reporting forms that you can use to document that you are properly implementing the manure management plan requirements. Farmers can also use their existing recordkeeping system if it includes the same information as in the sample recordkeeping documents.

Another requirement is that your manure spreader must be properly calibrated. Manure spreader calibration requires reliable estimates of both the amount applied and area covered. There are two common calibration techniques. The swath or load-area method involves measuring both the amount of manure in a typical spreader load and the land area covered by applying one load of manure. While this method can be used for all manures, it is the best method for liquid manure applicators. The tarp or weight-area method involves weighing the manure spread over a small surface and computing the amount of manure applied per acre. This method is the best method for solid manure applicators. The Penn State Agronomy facts sheet #68 is available and provides specific instructions on calibrating your manure spreader.

A reminder that 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 either 50%, 75%, or 90% of total project cost as state tax credits for up to \$250,000 per agricultural operation in a 7-year time-frame. The amount of tax credit available to a recipient is dependent on the type of BMP implemented.

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. Feel free to contact us at any time. Thanks, and we hope to hear from you!

Tom Ulrich

Learning to be Better Stewards: Resources & Best Practices



By: Byron Black, Associate Director

When my wife and I started down the path to being better stewards for our land, we really did not know much about what we should do, who we could ask for help, and what resources are available to small landowners like us. After a long military career, we have been back on the farm for nearly five years now and have learned a lot during that time. With a little research we found that there are many organizations that are willing to come out to your property (most at no cost) to give you advice and to help you succeed. If you are starting out, several that we found particularly helpful in improving our stewardship knowledge and learning about resources to help us are:

PA Dept. of Conservation and Natural Resources, (DCNR) Service Forester

(<https://www.dcnr.pa.gov/Conservation/ForestsAndTrees/ManagingYourWoods/Pages/default.aspx>)

USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS)

(<https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/>)

Audubon Society's Certified Backyard Habitat Program (<http://aswp.org/pages/backyard-habitat-program>)

All gave us really practical advice to help us be better stewards, addressing both things to consider as well as things to avoid. The Service Forester and NRCS also helped us with valuable cost-sharing programs to help fund the work we needed to do. For instance, the Keystone 10 Million Trees Program (<https://tenmilliontrees.org>) is a terrific source of free trees you can plant.

Best Practices / Lessons Learned:

- Pollinator meadows are the most needed habitat in SW PA as most fields and yards are harvested or mowed. Rather than mowing meadows every year, consider mowing them every 2 to 3 years so birds and wildlife can use them for food and shelter.
- Plant native species as they are essential foundations to healthy ecosystems.
- Diversify, diversify, diversify! 15 years ago, our forest was largely made up of ash trees which the emerald ash borer devastated, which opened the forest canopy up allowing highly invasive species to get established. Plant a wide variety of native trees and shrubs to minimize the impacts of future threats to your forest.
- Protect newly planted trees and shrubs from deer browsing and invasives which can shade them out or strangle them. Young trees and shrubs will need tree tubes or cages to protect them for the first few years.
- Leave snags and brush piles for wildlife as they provide shelter for many species of birds and mammals. Brush piles also discourage deer browsing of young trees growing up in them.
- If you discover new species of invasive species on your land, hit them early and hard to eradicate them before they have the chance to establish themselves and spread.
- Build trails to access remote areas of your land so that you can easily get there to see what is happening in your woods.
- Curve your trails to provide cover for small animals (reducing the line of sight for predators).
- If your property has extensive invasive species, getting started can seem daunting. Work on manageable sections where you can succeed. Appropriate herbicide use may help promote a healthier ecosystem by reducing invasive species.
- Take before and after pictures of your projects to remind you of the progress you are making. They help document your progress and can show that you are making things better. Plus, they can show others your successes.
- Use trail cameras to record shy and nocturnal wildlife. You may be amazed at the variety of wildlife in your woods and fields!
- Invite partner participation. As noted above, your Service Forester, Game Warden, State Wildlife Biologist, Audubon Society, and many others are terrific sources of expertise and can help you identify resources to help.
- Use apps such as iNaturalist (<https://www.inaturalist.org/home>) to identify what species (animals, plants, and fungi) are on your land. It can also help you identify which are invasive.
- Continue your education – Penn State Extension (<https://extension.psu.edu/>) has an incredible range of high-quality courses that are free or low cost. We have taken scores of courses and have learned about subjects ranging from how to make maple syrup, to tick ecology, to identifying and understanding the impacts of deer on our property, to planning to transfer property to future generations.
- Share what you learn to help others be better stewards too!

You can start any time. Even if you have a small plot, you can make a difference for the wildlife, the ecosystem and yourself. Have fun!

DIRT, GRAVEL, & LOW VOLUME ROADS



GET FUNDING FOR YOUR LOCAL ROADS!

It's time to start thinking about potential projects for the spring of 2024! The upcoming DGLVR grant round will be open for applications starting June 1, 2023, and will remain open until August 31, 2023. If you know of any potential projects within your Municipality or require technical assistance in designing your project, contact the DGLVR Technician Jordan Whitmer at jwhitmer@pawccd.org or call (724) 705-7098 Extension 211.



Short Cut Road Drainage project, April 2023. Poor road drainage along the roadway caused yearly maintenance required to keep the road open during the wet season. Pictured is the outlet of one of the 9 new cross pipes being installed along with 10 ditch outlets to manage stormwater more efficiently.

NEED YOUR ESM CERTIFICATION? WE HOPE TO SEE YOU IN AUGUST!

In person ESM trainings:

- August 16 & 17 (Washington County) – Wednesday/ Thursday
 - Location: DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Pittsburgh-Meadow Lands, 340 Racetrack Road, Washington, PA 15301
 - Room Block: DoubleTree by Hilton @ \$134/night, valid until July 15, 2023. Phone: 724-531-6200

To register for these courses, go to the Penn State Website, dirtandgravel.psu.edu, go to the "Education/Training" drop down menu and click "ESM Course". Then click "in person ESM Training" and scroll down to the green "Register Here" button.

2023 AWARDED PROJECTS:

Dirt and Gravel Roads:

Short Cut Road, Independence Township
\$122,000.

Klages Road, Donegal Township \$148,000.

Dutch Fork Lake access improvements, PA Fish and
Boat \$35,658.54

Low Volume Roads:

Pogue Road, Donegal Township
\$65,000.

Jordan Whitmer

NPDES PERMITTING STEPS

A National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit requires constant work and communication between applicant, consultant, conservation district (CD) and the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). When considering development of a site, it is important to recognize all the steps that need to be taken before, during, and after a permit is issued.

1	<p>PRE-APPLICATION MEETING:</p> <p>One of the most important steps of an NPDES permit is the pre-application meeting held with the CD and the DEP. A pre-application meeting is important not only for the applicant to explain the project to DEP/CD, but also for DEP/CD staff to verify eligibility, minimizing the likelihood of a DEP/CD finding of ineligibility. Upon receipt of a PAG-02 Notice of Intent (NOI), CD administrative staff will assign an NPDES Permit Number, review and process applicable fees and ensure the NOI is complete.</p>
2	<p>COMPLETENESS REVIEW:</p> <p>A completeness review is required to determine if needed to conduct a technical review are present and complete. A list of comments or missing information from submission will be compiled into an Incompleteness Letter and sent to applicant where they are allotted several days to address the completeness comments.</p>
3	<p>TECHNICAL REVIEW:</p> <p>The technical review of an NPDES permit is the lengthiest part of the permitting process. The reviewer will examine all E&S documents, plan drawings and details of the project. This includes soils report, geotechnical report, wetland determinations, grading standards, etc.. Conservation Districts may consult DEP throughout the technical review about aspects of the proposed project. Most of the projects submitted go through one Technical Deficiency Letter (TDL) before all comments are addressed and the permit is approved. There is constant communication between the reviewer, applicant, consultant and sometimes DEP that could take weeks or months to resolve.</p>
4	<p>ROUTINE INSPECTIONS:</p> <p>For the life of the permit, routine inspections will take place by the CD to check for sediment pollution discharge from site and to confirm maintenance of the erosion & sedimentation controls. Nearing expiration date or completion of site the applicant will contact the CD to start the Notice of Termination (NOT) process. Project should be in compliance, reflect approved plan drawings and be permanently stabilized before a project can be terminated.</p>

WCCD is non-PCSM delegated and therefore only reviews the E&S portion of a permit. If an NPDES Individual permit comes through WCCD, the stormwater PCSM plan is reviewed and issued by the DEP. When an NPDES permit, General or Individual, is approved the applicant will receive an Authorization to Discharge Letter, Permit Coverage Approval Letter and publication in the PA Bulletin.

If you have any questions on the submission, review, inspection or NOT processes please contact the Washington County Conservation District where our E&S Technicians are more than willing to assist you. Please visit our website for program resources and a list of our upcoming events.

Jenna Waller

Spring 2023 Watershed Groups



The Washington County Watershed Alliance

50 Old Hickory Ridge Road, Suite 1, Washington, PA 15301

Website: www.wcwalliance.org, on Facebook and Instagram

Email: info@wcwalliance.org

Meetings: Hybrid Meetings (In-Person and on Zoom) on the First Tuesday of each month at 7:00pm.

Please contact us for the link to the meetings. All are welcome to attend.

Group Update

WCWA is celebrating its 25th Anniversary! During that time we've brought over \$1.5 million in grant funding to Washington County, educated thousands of students and adults about watershed issues & water quality and hosted dozens of cleanups that have removed tens of thousands of pounds of garbage from our local environment. WCWA is wrapping up a strategic planning process funded by the Washington County Community Foundation. Now's the perfect time to join WCWA as a member, donor, nonprofit partner, or corporate sponsor!

Find out more at our website: WCWalliance.org



Upper Chartiers Creek Watershed Association

50 Old Hickory Ridge Road, Suite 1, Washington, PA 15301

Website: www.upperchartierscreek.org, on Facebook and Instagram

Email: Chartierscreekwa@pawccd.org

Meeting: Hybrid Meetings (In-Person and on Zoom) on the second Tuesday of each month at 7pm.

Group Update

Springtime has been busy in the Upper Chartiers Creek Watershed. In April we completed our spring water monitoring and started an erosion study in Chartiers Creek. The end of April saw another fantastic wetlands walk and talk with Dr. Jason Kilgore from W&J College although this year it ended with a bit of a twist as participants also helped with a litter cleanup of the wetlands.

As the year moves into summer, you'll be able to find us at Canonsburg Lake for a birding walk at Mingo Creek Park for a program, and back in Chartiers Creek for an electrofishing study. We hope to see you out and about in the watershed enjoying all it has to offer.



Buffalo Creek Watershed Association
P.O. Box 408 Claysville, PA 15323, USA
Website: www.buffalocreekwatershed.org

Meeting: In-person on the second Thursday of each month at 6pm

Group Update

The group collected 23 bags of trash in April and they are planning to collect more in the future. Dr. James Wood presented the results of the watershed survey in a public meeting in May. The group hopes to host a public outdoor movie "The Lorax" at Dutch Fork Lake.



Independence Conservancy- Raccoon Creek

Meeting: If your interesting in joining please contact 724-888-3303.

Group Update

Independence Conservancy will hold its fall series of community tire collections at three locations, one of which is new. The Conservancy is pleased to welcome Mount Pleasant Township as a program partner in our ongoing effort to offer legal, accessible, and affordable disposal options for waste tires and scrap wheels. All events are held on Saturday mornings from 9 AM to 12 Noon. Fees are \$4 each for passenger car and light truck tires up to 18" off-rim; \$5 if on-rim. Events are at Mount Pleasant Township Road Department on September 16th, Brighton Township Road Department (Beaver Co.) on September 30, and Hookstown Fair Grounds (Beaver Co.) on October 7



Ten Mile Creek Watershed Association

Meeting: If your interesting in joining please contact
tmcwa@wcwalliance.org

Group Update

The Group participated in two major cleanups in the watershed: along Horne Run Road on April 6, sponsored by WCCD, Range Resources, W&J, and Marianna Borough, where over eight tons of trash & tires were collected; and in West Bethlehem Township on April 22 along Ten Mile Road and Ten Mile Creek, with ~20 volunteers collecting 70 tires and 30 bags of garbage in anticipation of the May 13 Regatta, where TMCWA will have its first live community event of the season. The group has been busy working on a new email address an social media platforms. The very talented Jessica Wright has created 10 mile creek maps , checkout TrueMapping.com. Check it out on our web age and at our live events, and follow us on Facebook for upcoming events and interesting bits regarding TMCWA.

Thank You, McGuffey FFA



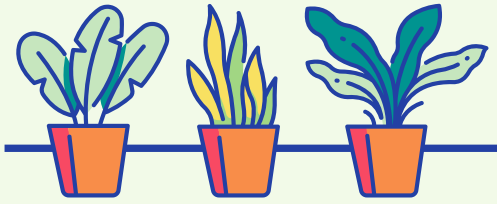
McGuffey FFA members did a beautiful job on the landscaping around our building.

Save the Date

**Washington County Conservation District
Engineering Meeting
November 1, 2023**

**Agenda to include DEP updates, permit updates,
and guest speakers.**

Photosynthesis



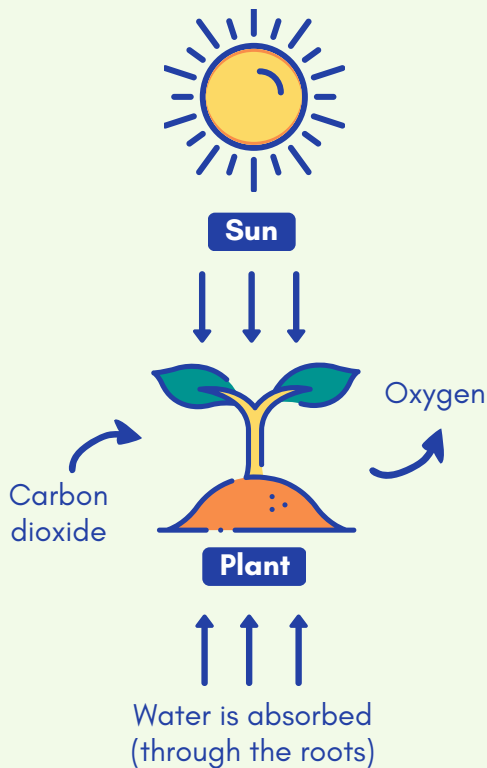
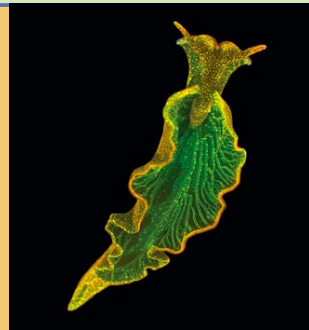
Photosynthesis is a natural process where trees and plants use energy from the **sun** and carbon dioxide from the **air** to make the **food** they need to live and grow.

Chlorophyll

The pigment that gives plants their green color and helps in the process of photosynthesis by absorbing sunlight.

Did you know?

There are organisms other than plants that can do photosynthesis. Such as algae and the **emerald green sea slug**.

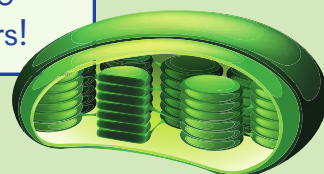


True or False!

1. Plants are the only living things that can do photosynthesis. _____
2. Sun and carbon dioxide from the air are crucial for making food using photosynthesis. _____
3. Plants make their own water using the sun and air. _____
4. Plants give out carbon dioxide to the air. _____
5. Photosynthesis is the reason we can live and breathe on this planet. _____
6. Chlorophyll only helps the plant become green and nothing else. _____

Wait there's more!

Just like humans have organs for specific functions, plants have organs called **chloroplasts**, this is where photosynthesis actually occurs!



Washington County Conservation District
50 Old Hickory Ridge Road, Suite 1
Washington, PA 15301



1947 - 2023

Board of Directors

- William Iams
- John Hunter
- Don Logue
- Mike Lusk
- Larry Maggi, Commissioner Director
- Jan Marchezak
- Jose Taracido

Associate Directors

- Byron Black
- Jason Kilgore PhD
- Tom Sierzega
- Jessica Ullom

District Location

50 Old Hickory Ridge Road, Suite 1

Washington, PA 15301

Phone: 724-705-7098

Website: www.pawccd.org

Email: Washcocd@yahoo.com

Hours: 8:00 am to 4:30 pm Monday - Friday

District Staff

- Jennifer Dann, District Manager
- Matt Golden, Lead E&S Technician
- Tom Ulrich, Agricultural Technician
- Alexis Blake, Watershed Specialist
- Ian Reinstadtler, Resource Conservation Technician
- Jenna Waller, Resource Conservation Technician
- Jordan Whitmer, Dirt and Gravel Roads Technician
- Kelsey Montozzi, Administrative Assistant

Cooperating Agencies

- Russel Gibbs, PA DCNR Bureau of Forestry
- Jonathan Stark, Fish and Boat Commission
- Adam Traynor, PA Game Commission
- Caroline Sinchar, Washington County Planning Commission
- Jeff Donahue, Washington County Parks & Recreation
- Michal Roup, Washington/Greene County Farm Service Agency
- Rennie Stoy, NRCS
- Phil Evans, NRCS
- Penn State Cooperative Extension