

LEHIGH COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT

FALL 2014 NEWSLETTER

VISIT OUR NEW WEBSITE!

In September, the District launched a new website. Visit www.LehighConservation.org to see the latest news, updates, and upcoming events!



Welcome our newest Resource Conservationist

SEAN ANLAUF joined the District in October as a Resource Conservationist. His duties will include reviewing Erosion and Sedimentation Pollution Control (E&SPC) Plans, conducting site visits, and addressing complaints related to earth disturbance activities from construction sites. Sean graduated from Penn State University with an Associates Degree in Wildlife Technology and received a Bachelors Degree from East Stroudsburg University in Environmental Studies. Before joining the District, Sean worked at the Monroe County Planning Commission as the Environmental Planner. He was in charge of the Annual Water Quality Study and the Agricultural Land Preservation Program. The District is happy to add Sean to the Water Quality team.

PLEASE JOIN US IN WELCOMING SEAN!



Municipal Winter Pollution Prevention

Article submitted by Kevin Frederick, Resource Conservationist

Preventing stormwater pollution is a year-round objective for municipalities! Winter pollution prevention strategies can be achieved through implementing a sound snow/ice removal program. When snow or ice is in the forecast, de-icing chemicals are spread across roads, sidewalks, and driveways. After weeks of spreading, pollutants build up within snowpacks, roadside gutters, ditches, and channels. With each thaw, de-icing chemicals and other trapped pollutants wash directly into our waterways. In urban areas, substantial portions of the annual pollutant load to streams can come from snowmelt and early spring rainfall events.



Municipalities can use the following tips to help reduce this pollution:

- Use alternative de-icing compounds such as calcium chloride (CaCl₂) and calcium magnesium acetate (CMA)
- Designate "salt-free" areas on roads adjacent to streams, wetlands, and resource areas
- Reduce use of de-icing compounds through better driver training, equipment calibration, and careful application
- Sweep accumulated salt and grit from roads as soon as practical after surface clears
- Store de-icing compounds on sheltered, impervious pads located at least 100 feet away from streams and floodplains
- Dump snow in pervious areas where it can infiltrate
- Stockpile snow in flat areas at least 100 feet from streams or floodplains
- Plant snow dump areas with salt-tolerant ground cover species
- Remove sediment and debris from snow dump areas each spring
- Conduct intensive street cleaning in early spring to remove particulates on road surfaces

SUPPORT THE 2015 LEHIGH COUNTY ENVIROTHON BY ATTENDING OUR BOOK FAIR ON NOVEMBER 22, 2014!!

Join us from 10AM - 2PM on Saturday, November 22nd at Barnes & Noble located at the Promenade Shops in Center Valley to support the **Lehigh County ENVIROTHON!** Participate in a scavenger hunt, make your own sock puppet or bookmark, and enjoy various story times FREE of cost! Can't attend our Bookfair? Visit BN.COM/bookfairs to support us online from November 22nd to November 27th by entering Bookfair ID # 11484433 at checkout. **A percentage of ALL sales will go towards the 2015 LEHIGH COUNTY ENVIROTHON!** Contact Laura Hopek for questions at (610) 391-9583, ext. 25 or LHopek@LehighConservation.org





Scott Alderfer and a volunteer plant a tree at Camp Olympic Park.

The Lehigh County Conservation District, Wildlands Conservancy, and the Little Lehigh Chapter of Trout Unlimited recently completed an assessment of the Little Lehigh Creek which revealed gaps in the shade tree canopy. Gaps allow the hot summer sun to warm the naturally cool, spring-fed creek. When the stream's water temperature rises during the hot summer months, trout are less likely to survive to spawn in the stream in the fall.

The Little Lehigh Chapter of Trout Unlimited was awarded \$5,100 by the Coldwater Heritage Partnership as part of a riparian buffer improvement project to keep fish in the Little Lehigh Creek cool during the summer months.

The Little Lehigh Chapter of Trout Unlimited, with assistance from the Lehigh County Conservation District, Girl Scout Troop 690 of Macungie, Boy Scout Troop 131 of Wescosville, Venture Crew 575 of Mertztown, the Penn State Extension's Master Watershed Steward Program, and Lower Macungie Township staff planted 90 potted trees and 100 live stake trees at 6 locations along the Little Lehigh Creek in Lower Macungie Township.

Trees that were planted included eastern cottonwood, silky dogwood, and elderberry. Cottonwood trees were funded by the TU grant, while the elderberry and silky dogwood trees were funded by a donation from the Lower Macungie

Trout Unlimited is a national conservation organization that was formed in 1959 and currently has approximately 400 chapters throughout the United States. The group's mission is to conserve, protect and restore North America's coldwater fisheries and their watersheds.

FARMERS AND LANDOWNERS ARE ENCOURAGED TO APPLY FOR REMAINING FARM CONSERVATION TAX CREDITS

Pennsylvania farmers can improve their management practices and conservation equipment, and landowners can restore their waterways with \$5 million in tax credits still available through the Resource Enhancement and Protection (REAP) program!

REAP provides tax credits to agricultural producers who install Best Management Practices (BMPs) or make on-farm no-till equipment purchases that will reduce soil erosion and sedimentation in Pennsylvania's streams and rivers. Producers may receive tax credits of up to \$150,000 per agricultural operation for 50-75% of the total project cost. Farmers can use the credits incrementally for up to 15 years to pay their state income tax or they can elect to sell the credits.

Landowners who are interested in stream restoration projects and/or riparian buffers are also eligible to apply for tax credits. Landowners can receive tax credits for up to 75% of a project's cost.

Farmers who are also working with the United States Department of Agriculture — Natural Resource Conservation Service (USDA-NRCS) Environmental Quality Incentives Program, or with any other funding source, can use REAP to offset their out-of-pocket expenses.

Private investors may act as a sponsor by providing capital to producers as a project is approved in return for tax credits.

Any individual or business subject to taxation under Personal Income Tax, Corporate Net Income Tax, Bank Shares Tax and others, are eligible to participate in REAP.

Applications for the 2014-2015 REAP program are available at www.pda.state.pa.us/REAP

Contact Damian Painter, Agricultural Resource Conservationist at the District for assistance at 610-391-9583, ext. 26 or DPainter@LehighConservation.org

Let it RAIN!

The Lehigh County Conservation District (LCCD), in partnership with Parkland School District (PSD), Keystone Consulting Engineers, Inc. (KCE), and South Whitehall Township (SWT) received funding from the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (PA DEP) Environmental Education (EE) grant and Penn State University on behalf of its Penn State Public Media to support the Water Blues - Green Solutions local reporting initiative to install rain gardens in vacant courtyards located at Orefield and Springhouse Middle Schools. Also, funding was received from the Captain Planet Foundation (CPF) to implement a Bird Exploration program, which enabled the Watershed Specialist to purchase and install a bird bath, bird feeder, and bird house in the rain gardens.

Rain gardens help control stormwater runoff from surrounding rooftops and sidewalks, while serving as a living laboratory for students. Students will be able to study the native wildlife, birds, bumblebees, and beneficial insects that are attracted to the plants, which also provide a food source and serve as shelter for these species.

We want to thank KCE for conducting the infiltration tests, SWT for donating their time and equipment, and Upper Macungie Township (UMT) for providing mulch.

With assistance from the Watershed Specialist, students and staff helped design the layout of the rain gardens, plant 150 native shrubs and flowers, and add finishing touches to the gardens.

Project partners would like to thank Lehigh Valley Home & Garden Center, Tall Timbers Nursery, Dan Schantz Greenhouse, Best Line Equipment, Plantique, Herbeins, Edge of the Woods, and 4 Seasons Nursery for their discounts and donations.

Article submitted by Laura Hopek, Watershed Specialist



BEFORE: Mowed lawn in a vacant courtyard at Orefield Middle School



AFTER: Rain Garden with 77 native plants and 3 bird features

Emmaus & Upper Milford Joint Environmental Advisory Council

What's an EAC? Why Participate?

Your community's Environmental Advisory Council (EAC) is a group of dedicated volunteers appointed by the local community to provide advice on environmental issues, assist decision-makers on environmental projects, and build awareness of the important environmental issues that impact our community. Volunteers are needed to help at special events, take on new projects, and generally build greater awareness of the important work that is needed to protect and preserve our natural resources. The Emmaus & Upper Milford Joint EAC needs new members and volunteers! Look for them on Facebook, or contact them at eacinfo@uppermilford.net to learn how you can get involved!

Winter Tip – Responsible Salting: Protect your driveway AND the environment!

With winter coming, you will see salt on steps and driveways. Remember that salt breaks down concrete, hurts plants, and pollutes waterways.

Try to follow these tips:

- Shovel snow when it's fresh - it's easier and less ice will form
- Use just enough salt to break up the ice so you can shovel it off
- Consider an alternative ice melt like calcium chloride - it is better for the environment



FARMLAND PRESERVATION NEWS

21,000 Acres of Farmland Preserved in Lehigh County

The Lehigh County Farmland Preservation Program had settlement for the preservation of three farms in October, bringing the County's preserved farmland total to 21,127 acres. There are now a total of 255 farms that have been protected with perpetual agricultural conservation easements in Lehigh County. All three of these new preserved farms are located in Heidelberg Township:

1. Thomas and Sally Hoffner, 29.5 acres
2. Mark Heintzelman, Jr., 93.9 acres
3. LeRoy and Michele Bachman, 34.3 acres

Pennsylvania Celebrates the Preservation of 500,000 Acres of Farmland

On October 16, 2014, Pennsylvania reached an unprecedented milestone by preserving its 500,000th acre of farmland through the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program. A celebration was held at Finchbaugh's Orchard in York County where the 500,000th acre was approved for preservation by the State Agricultural Land Preservation Board. Pennsylvania continues to lead the nation in farmland preservation, as no other state in the nation has reached this preserved farmland acreage total.

New Applications Being Accepted

The farmland preservation office is currently accepting new applications. The next deadline for applying is March 31, 2015. Call Jeff Zehr at 610-391-9583 ext. 15 if you would like an application form or if you would like to learn more about the program.



Leaser Lake Update

A very small spring seep developed at the base of the dam early this year, resulting in a partial drawdown of the lake. The area was excavated and a concrete retaining wall was constructed (shown to the right), with perforated PVC pipe within the structure, to allow for the spring to run without impairing the integrity of the dam breast.

Repairs have been completed and the lake is on its way to being filled. Depending on precipitation amounts, hopefully the lake will be filled to capacity by next summer.

Fingerling bass, perch, catfish, and musky that were stocked last year have grown rapidly in one year. There is a large population of baitfish available in the lake which helped with the rapid growth of the fingerling fish. Largemouth bass are now 10-14 inches and muskies are 20-24 inches in length. Additional fingerling stockings were conducted again this year, with supplemental stockings scheduled for the next two years to achieve various year classes of fish within the lake. Trout will again be stocked in March for the opening day of trout season. Until June of 2016, only trout may be taken from the lake. All other fish are catch and release only.

The lake has been very popular with non-powered watercraft such as kayaks and canoes. Next summer, take a drive and spend some time on the water or around the lake. A very nice hiking trail, marked with blue Liberty Bells, marks the way around the lake.



Article submitted by Lee Creyer, Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission Waterways Conservation Officer

2014 District Staff

William McFadden, District Manager
Cammy Kiechel, Office Manager
Kim Zieger, Lead Resource Conservationist
Kevin Frederick, Resource Conservationist
Laura Hopek, Watershed Specialist
Garrett Cook, District Engineer
Holly Kaplan, Resource Conservationist
Kevin Castro, Resource Conservationist
Sean Anlauf, Resource Conservationist
Damian Painter, Ag Resource Conservationist

2014 Board of Directors

Mary Ellen Snyder, Chairwoman
Daniel Hunsicker, Vice Chair
Robert Souder, Secretary/Treasurer
William Erdman
Bill Royer
Robert Schmidt
Geoff Brace
2014 Associate Directors
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