



THE CONSERVATION DIGEST

2011 Volume 1

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Upcoming Events:

- Apr 13**
Envirothon Study Day
- Apr 14**
LCD Board Meeting
- Apr 15**
Earth Day at Nesbitt Park
- May 11**
Luzerne County Envirothon
- May 13**
LCD Board Meeting
- June 9**
LCD Board Meeting
- July 14**
LCD Board Meeting
- Aug TBA**
M.E.C.C. workshop
- Aug 11**
LCD Board Meeting
- Sept 8**
LCD Board Meeting

Conservation District Board Members Appointed

The Luzerne County Commissioners reappointed Leonard Burger of Drums and Stephen Urban of Wilkes-Barre to the Luzerne Conservation District Board of Directors. Mr. Burger has served as a Farmer Director on the board since 2004. His term will run until December 31, 2014. Commissioner Urban has served as a Director or Associate Director on the Board since 2004. Commissioner Directors serve one-year terms.

Commissioners also appointed two new members to the Board. Rebecca Lipka of Kingston Twp. was appointed as a Farmer Director and John J. Wilkes, Jr. of Jackson Twp. was appointed as a Public director on the Board. Mrs. Lipka's term will run until December 31, 2013 and Mr. Wilkes' term will run until December 31, 2014.

The Board of Directors consists of nine members, all appointed by the county commissioners, and two associate members, appointed by the board. Magistrate James Tupper swore in the newly appointed and reappointed directors at the conservation district's January 13, 2011 meeting.



From left: Burger, Lipka, Wilkes, Magistrate Tupper, and Urban

Also during the meeting, the board re-elected Timothy Ference of Conyngham as Chairman of the Board. Stephen A. Urban was re-elected as Vice-Chairman and Timothy Connolly of Kingston was re-elected as Secretary/Treasurer of the Board.



FARMERS, DID YOU KNOW?

Pennsylvania's Chapter 102 (Erosion and Sediment Control and Stormwater Management) regulations have existed since 1972; and on November 19, 2010, additions and changes to the regulations took effect.

ALL farms are required to develop and implement a written plan to minimize erosion when plowing and tilling (including no-till cropping) and for Animal Heavy Use Areas (AHUA) disturbing more than 5000 sq. ft. (for example, an updated conservation plan). Many farmers are familiar with the term Conservation Plan, which is a "written plan that identifies conservation practices and includes site specific Best Management Practices (BMP's) for agricultural plowing and tilling practices and heavy use areas."

Under Chapter 102, all agricultural plowing and tilling and AHUA's are required to implement agricultural Best Management Practices (BMP's).

If you need a plan or if you need to update your existing conservation plan, please contact the conservation district office at 570-674-3408.

Luzerne Conservation District

Board of Directors

Timothy J. Ference
Chair

Stephen A. Urban
Vice-Chair

Timothy J. Connolly, Jr.
Secretary/Treasurer

Joseph Boiwka

Leonard J. Burger, Jr.

Rebecca Lipka

Bruce Trumbower

Carl R. Urbanski

John J. Wilkes, Jr.

Associate Directors

Robert Andrews

Jack Hanish

The Luzerne Conservation District Board of Directors meet at the Conservation District office on the second Thursday of each month at 6:00 PM. The public is invited to attend.

Staff

Heather Berlew

Resource Conservation Specialist II

Keith George

Resource Conservation Specialist I

Ron Jesse

Building and Grounds

Josh Longmore

District Manager

Amber Martin

Environmental Services Technician

Shawn Rybka

Watershed Program Coordinator

Amy Salansky

Agricultural Conservation Specialist

Aaron Stredny

Environmental Services Specialist

Jennifer Verry

Secretary/Bookkeeper

Who We Are:

On February 13, 1964, out of concern for the conservation of the natural, scenic, historic, and aesthetic resources of Luzerne County, Pennsylvania, the Luzerne County Commissioners established the Luzerne Conservation District.

The Luzerne Conservation District is a local agency with responsibilities in the conservation of soil, water, and related resources within Luzerne County. The District's primary types of activities include: regulatory/voluntary compliance, technical assistance, and education/outreach. Its mission is accomplished through cooperation with landowners and land users; by working with other public and private organizations; and by increasing citizen awareness of their responsibility to be good stewards of natural resources. For more information about the District, visit www.luzernecd.org or contact us at 570-674-7991.



From the Manager's Desk...

We've seen quite a few changes in the way we do soil and water conservation in Pennsylvania in the past several months. Most of the changes have been from the top down. In 2009 President Obama signed an Executive Order requiring the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to step up its efforts to compel the states to clean up the Chesapeake Bay. They did this by developing a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) for pollutants entering the Bay's watershed. EPA has been calling this TMDL a "pollution diet". It sets limits for the amounts of pollutants – specifically nutrients (phosphorus and nitrogen) and sediment – that the Bay and its tributaries can handle while still meeting water quality standards mandated by the federal Clean Water Act.

Once EPA established the Bay TMDL, they required the states within the Bay watershed to develop Watershed Implementation Plans which detail how they will meet the pollution reduction requirements. After several attempts, the PA Department of Environmental Protection finally completed a plan that was accepted by EPA. The plan includes changes to the way various environmental programs are implemented. Some of those programs include the Chesapeake Bay and the Erosion & Sediment (E&S) Control Programs administered locally by our office. You'll see articles in this newsletter discussing some of those changes, such as the revisions to the Chapter 102 E&S regulations and an increase in efforts to help agricultural producers in compiling with E&S and manure management requirements.

It seems that things are not settled regarding the Chesapeake Bay TMDL and the resulting state-level changes that have occurred. We are hearing about changes to the way we administer programs, along with challenges that are coming from the regulated community. I suspect that it will be a while until we know how this will all play out. Regardless, one thing will remain consistent; your conservation district will continue working hard to take federal and state level decisions and requirements and apply them in ways that are best for our local people and natural resources. That's what we've been doing for nearly fifty years.

~ Josh Longmore

2012 Luzerne Conservation District Banquet Raffle

And the Lucky Winner's are...

Kyle & Jessa Williams

Attendees at this year's Annual Banquet were given the chance to enter to win 2 FREE tickets to attend the 2012 Banquet and 2 FREE Cream of the Crop game chances. The drawing was held on April 4th.

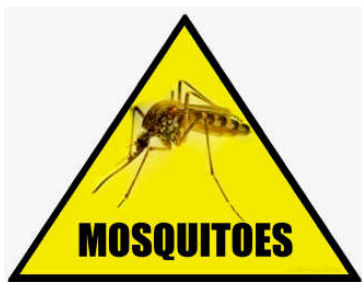
Congratulations Kyle & Jessa!

West Nile Virus Control Program

2011 begins the Luzerne Conservation District's 2nd year implementing the West Nile Virus Program in Luzerne County. 2010 was a successful year, treating scores of breeding sites and finding 18 WNV-positive samples inside Luzerne County, 13 of those in August. This year, the focus for the program will again be an aggressive proactive surveillance and treatment of mosquito larvae throughout Luzerne County. Eradicating mosquitoes in the larval stage, will help keep adult populations down. The larval surveillance will focus on historical breeding areas and other ephemeral, stagnant water puddles, ponds, ditches and artificial containers. Adult surveillance will follow in order to monitor the larval treatments and resident mosquito populations. The WNV Program staff will also collect birds (only Corvids, Raptors and Blue Jays) that are without an obvious cause of death and have been dead less than 48 hours. Program staff will determine if the bird will be collected for tracking purposes and their eligibility for virus testing.

It is extremely important not to touch a dead bird with your bare hands! Instead use gloves, shovel, or a plastic bag when handling dead birds! Dead Birds Should Be Reported to our Office:
Luzerne Conservation District (570) 674-7991.

The types of mosquito traps currently being used by Luzerne Conservation District Staff are pictured below: At left is a *Gravid Mosquito Trap* and at right is a *Light Trap/CO₂ Trap*. If you see these important surveillance tools in your community, please do not disturb them.



Here are a few practices you can apply at home to reduce your exposure to West Nile Virus and the resident mosquito population:

- Get rid of standing water where mosquitoes can breed. Any container with over ½ inch of standing water for 3–7 days can hatch out mosquitoes.
- Dispose of, regularly empty, or turn over any water holding containers on your property such as tires, cans, toys, flower pots, tarps or trashcans.
- Drill holes in the bottom of recycling containers that are left outdoors.
- Make sure roof gutters drain properly and water doesn't stand in them.
- Change the water in birdbaths at least once a week.
- Turn over plastic wading pools and wheelbarrows when not in use.
- Keep swimming pools, outdoor saunas and hot tubs clean and properly chlorinated; remove standing water from pool covers.
- Eliminate or drain any standing water that collects on your property.
- Remind or help neighbors to eliminate mosquito breeding sites.
- Fix any holes in your screens and make sure they are tightly attached. Make sure window and door screens are "bug tight."
- Stock ornamental ponds with fish which will consume mosquito larvae.
- Use mosquito repellents containing DEET when necessary and follow label directions and precautions carefully, especially with children!
- Horse Owners are encouraged to contact their veterinarian for more information on the Equine WNV Vaccine.



REMEMBER WATER SITTING LONGER THAN 3 DAYS CAN PRODUCE MOSQUITOES!

2011 Annual Awards Banquet

The Luzerne Conservation District held its Sixth Annual Awards Banquet on Saturday, February 26, 2011 at the Genetti Hotel & Conference Center in Wilkes-Barre. With more than 170 people in attendance, the banquet featured a silent and live auction, games of chance and raffles. Many local businesses and artists donated merchandise and original works of art for the event.

The proceeds from the banquet benefit the District's conservation education and outreach efforts by helping to support our ongoing programming to local homeowners, municipalities, educators, students, and the public through workshops, newsletters, special events, and community programs.

The Luzerne Conservation District took the opportunity to recognize the outstanding conservation efforts of local community members by presenting the 2011 Annual Awards at the banquet. The following award recipients were recognized for their efforts in the conservation of Luzerne County's natural resources:

Stanley M. Sowa, Jr. Conservationist of the Year Award



Brian Oram (left) accepts the *Stanley M. Sowa, Jr. Conservationist of the Year Award* from District Manager, Josh Longmore (right).

Lewis Rinehimer Conservation Farmer Award



Joseph Donnelly (left) accepts the *Lewis Rinehimer Conservation Farmer Award* from District Manager, Josh Longmore (right).

Erosion & Sediment (E&S) Professional of the Year Award



Joe Calabrese (center) accepts the *E&S Professional of the Year Award* from District Manager, Josh Longmore (left) and Resource Conservation Specialist II, Heather Berlew (right).

*Conservation Educator
Award*



Robert Bonczewski (left) accepts the *Conservation Educator Award* from District Manager, Josh Longmore (right).

*Watershed Stewardship
Award*



Chris Denmon (left) accepts the *Watershed Stewardship Award* from District Manager, Josh Longmore (right)

*2010 Luzerne County
Envirothon Award*



Thomas Hood, President (left), on behalf of the first place students at **MMI Preparatory School**, accepts the *2010 Envirothon Award* from District Manager, Josh Longmore (right).

*Luzerne County Fair Queen
Recognition*



The Luzerne Conservation District took this time to recognize the 2010 Luzerne County Fair Queen, **Callie Grey**.

Congratulations to our 2011 award recipients on a job well done!



E&S Regulatory Changes

Last November, the PA Environmental Quality Board amended the state regulations relating to erosion and sediment control and stormwater management (Chapter 102). The regulatory changes incorporate the Federal Clean Water Act "Phase II" National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit requirements for stormwater discharges associated with construction activities. A few of the changes include:

- Any earth disturbance activity, other than those related to oil & gas development and agriculture, must have an NPDES Permit if an acre or more of land is disturbed.
- NPDES permit fees were increased to the following: General Permits = \$500 + \$100/acre disturbance fee; Individual Permits = \$1,500 + \$100/acre disturbance fee
- Preconstruction meetings are now required for any NPDES-permitted project and must include permittees, co-permittees, operators (contractors), and licensed professionals involved in developing the plans for the project.
- A municipality or county which issues building or other permits must notify DEP or the conservation district within 5 days of receipt of an application for a permit involving an earth disturbance activity consisting of 1 acre or more.
- Erosion & Sediment Control Plans (or up-to-date Conservation Plans) are required for agriculture-related earth disturbance activities including plowing, tilling and animal heavy use areas.
- 150 foot riparian buffers are required for NPDES-permitted projects in special protection watersheds.
- If project construction will cease for more than 4 days, the site must be temporarily stabilized to protect against erosion and sedimentation.
- Long term operation and maintenance responsibilities for stormwater management practices must be addressed, with the responsible parties identified when the project is completed.
- Multiple changes and clarifications were made regarding Post Construction Stormwater Management planning.

Applicants with specific questions can contact the District's Erosion & Sediment Control Program staff at (570) 674-7991.

The new Chapter 102 regulations can be downloaded here: http://www.pacode.com/secure/data/025/chapter102/025_0102.pdf

SOIL TESTING INCENTIVE PROGRAM

Luzerne Conservation District's Chesapeake Bay Soil Testing Incentive Program offers reimbursement of soil testing kit costs. Once the Conservation District receives a copy of the results from Penn State Extension, the costs of the kits may be reimbursed to the landowner.

This program is designed as a soil-management program for producers. Penn State samples each for water PH, Mehlich, buffer lime requirement, and for phosphorus, potassium, magnesium, and calcium by the Mehlich 3 (ICP) test.

This is a cost effective program that helps reduce pollution of local waterways that eventually drain into the Chesapeake Bay while increasing the overall health and productivity of your crop land. A consultation is necessary to determine eligibility.



Please contact Amy Salansky at the District office today for more information about this great program @ 674-7991.

Local District Conservationist Retires

The Luzerne Conservation District honored Richard Maculaitis at the February 10, 2011 Board of Directors meeting for his retirement.

Maculaitis retired after 35 years of service as District Conservationist with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. Josh Longmore, District Manager, presented Maculaitis with a plaque for his dedication and years of service as a partner with the Conservation District.

We wish Rich a happy and healthy retirement!



Maculaitis (left) is congratulated by LCD Board of Directors Chairman, Timothy Ference (right).

Toby Creek Streambank Restoration Project

The approximately 36-square mile Toby Creek watershed is notable for the heavily-urbanized strip along the main stem Toby Creek, extending from the community of Dallas near the headwaters, through Shavertown, and finally through Luzerne, Kingston and Edwardsville at the lower end of the basin. The stream has been largely channelized and relocated to alternating sides of the valley through much of this 9-mile long urbanized stretch. Hidden by buildings and deeply entrenched in most locations (and completely covered in others), the stream is generally invisible in most of this area. Along with the sealing of large areas with roofs, roads and parking areas, the straightening and hardening of Toby Creek, and especially the elimination of its floodplain, through this long section has greatly aggravated the impact of high stream flows.

While the sub-basins of Trout Brook, Huntsville Creek and Brown's Creek are much less developed, these areas are now beginning to urbanize. Unfortunately, an increase in the area of impervious surface accompanying expanding development in these areas portends an increase in the occurrence and magnitude of high stream flows, especially where all of these flows gather in the middle and lower part of the watershed.

The negative effects of this legacy of land use change in the Toby Creek Watershed has been amply demonstrated during the severe storms of the last several years, most recently in late June of 2006, when this area, along with much of the rest of the mid-Atlantic region, experienced a major rain event. This storm, which was not associated with a hurricane, has been characterized as a 200-year magnitude event in parts of the region by the National Weather Service. Up to 15 inches of rain fell over a four day period in some areas and the resultant flooding was widely considered the worst in the region since that associated with Hurricane David in 1979.

Before this last major storm, channels throughout the watershed were already eroded and therefore vulnerable to future extreme events. As a consequence, the storm caused severe damages in many places but especially along the developed main stem. Downtown Luzerne was especially hard hit, at least in part because it is at the lower end of the watershed and because it is just below the water gap in Larksville Mountain, where the stream is steep and flow is pinched by the canyon and by the highway (SR 309) routed through this narrow gorge.

Luzerne Conservation District obtained Growing Greener program funding for the design, permitting and construction of stream channel repairs at the most critical site described above Luzerne Borough. The Toby Creek Main Stem Construction Project was a great success. The district was able to realign the monies for on the ground BMPs by utilizing the Pennsylvania Association of Conservation Districts engineering program and use the monies that were allocated for design and permitting for permitting fees, project oversight for construction of some of the BMP recommended by engineers on Toby Creek Main stem project and to stabilize two thousand linear feet of stream that contributed mass sediment loads to Susquehanna River system. The project also helped protect many homes and businesses in this section that otherwise would not be protected from the erosion during storm events.



BEFORE



AFTER



**LUZERNE
CONSERVATION DISTRICT**

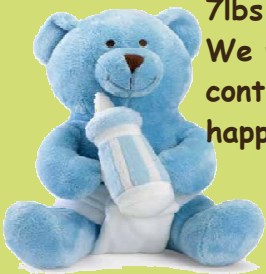
325 Smiths Pond Road
Shavertown, PA 18708

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U.S. POSTAGE PAID
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DALLAS, PA

The Luzerne Conservation District is a not-for-profit, local agency whose mission is to conserve land and water resources in Luzerne County by promoting public awareness, providing technical assistance, and encouraging regulatory compliance.

Baby Jesse has arrived!

Congratulations to Heather & Ken Berlew on the birth of their first child. Jesse was born just over 7lbs on December 29, 2010. We wish the Berlew's continued health and happiness.



Coming Soon!

3rd Annual M.E.C.C. Workshop

This fall, the Luzerne Conservation District will host its 3rd annual M.E.C.C. workshop for municipalities, engineers, and contractors in Luzerne and surrounding counties. The purpose of this workshop is to provide the latest information on soil and water issues & environmental requirements.

Details on this event TBA.

Please visit our website: www.luzernecd.org or call 570-674-7991 for more information on current and future educational opportunities.