

Our Team:

2023 Board of Directors:

John J. Wilkes, Jr., *Chair*
John P. Hanish, Jr., *Vice-Chair*
Tracey Chonko, *Secretary-Treasurer*
Leonard J. Burger, Jr.
Thomas Herbert
Gary Moyer, Sr.
Gregory Wolovich

Associate Directors:

Timothy Ference, *Emeritus*

2023 Staff:

Hunter Bednarczyk, *E&S Conservation Specialist*
Keith George, *Special Projects Coordinator*
Heather Graham, *E&S Program Coordinator*
Lauren Holder, *MDC Program Technician*
Deborah Josuweit, *Office Administrator*
Jennifer Lauri, *Agricultural Conservation Specialist*
Morgan Lancenese, *MDC Program Technician*
John Levitsky, *Watershed Specialist*
Joshua Longmore, *Executive Director*
Michael Schlauch, *Ag & Roads Conservation Specialist*
Frank Semanski, *Building & Grounds Keeper*

The Luzerne Conservation District Board of Directors holds monthly meetings on the third Thursday of each month at either noon or 6:00 PM at the district's office. The public is welcome to attend. Please check the website for the start time of specific meetings.

Our Programs:

- **Erosion & Sediment Pollution Control** – provides review, permitting, inspections, and voluntary compliance technical services for earth disturbance activities
- **Agricultural Conservation** – provides technical support to plan and implement conservation practices on agricultural lands, including farmland preservation through conservation easements
- **Watershed Stewardship** – provides technical support to plan and implement watershed conservation efforts
- **Dirt, Gravel, & Low-volume Road Environmental Improvement** – provides technical support & grant funding to aid public road owners in implementing environmental improvement projects
- **Mosquito-borne Disease Control** – conducts surveillance and control activities to reduce the threat of mosquito-borne diseases
- **Conservation Education & Outreach** – Each of the district's programs seeks to not only "put conservation on the ground", but they also have a component of education and outreach with the goal of establishing a conservation ethic among the citizens of Luzerne County.

Our Partners:

Cooperating Agencies and Personnel:

Partnerships are an extremely important part of successful natural resource stewardship. The district worked with many individuals and organizations to accomplish our shared conservation goals. The following individuals worked closely with the district staff and board:

Andrew Kears, *District Conservationist, USDA NRCS*
Caitlin Skibiell, *Conservation District Field Representative, PA DEP*

We also have numerous partners within the following agencies:

PA Association of Conservation Districts
PA Department of Agriculture
PA Department of Conservation & Natural Resources
PA Department of Environmental Protection
PA Fish & Boat Commission
PA State Conservation Commission
Penn State Center for Dirt & Gravel Roads Studies
Penn State Cooperative Extension
Pennsylvania Game Commission
Pocono Northeast Resource Conservation & Development Council
USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

Nominating Organizations:

The following organizations have been approved by the State Conservation Commission to nominate people to serve on the Luzerne Conservation District Board of Directors. Nominations are given to the Luzerne County Council, and council appoints district directors from the names provided:

Anthracite Scenic Trails Association
Bloomingdale Grange #536
Greater Wyoming Valley Audubon Society
League of Women Voters, Luzerne County Chapter
Luzerne County Farm Bureau
Luzerne County Federation of Sportsmen
Northeastern Pennsylvania Herpetological Society
PA Environmental Council, Northeast Office
Penn State Cooperative Extension, Luzerne County Board
North Branch Land Trust
Western Pocono Chapter of Trout Unlimited
Luzerne County Historical Society
USDA Farm Service Agency, Luzerne County Committee



**LUZERNE
CONSERVATION DISTRICT**

2023 Annual Report

Conserving land and water resources in Luzerne County by promoting public awareness, providing technical assistance, and encouraging regulatory compliance.

325 Smiths Pond Road
Shavertown, PA 18708
570-674-7991
www.luzcd.org

About Us

We are a local agency responsible for soil and water conservation programs within Luzerne County. Our primary types of activities include implementing conservation projects, providing technical assistance, conducting education/outreach, and encouraging voluntary compliance with environmental regulations.

We accomplish our mission through cooperation with landowners and land users and by working with other public and private organizations to increase citizen awareness of the responsibility to be good stewards of our natural resources.

As one of the sixty-six county conservation districts in Pennsylvania, we are involved in developing local programs and implementing on-the-ground practices to protect the soil and water resources of Luzerne County. The district is led by a seven-member board consisting of community volunteers and a member of Luzerne County Council. Currently, the district has nine staff members who carry out the agency's day-to-day operations. It is the goal of the board and staff to implement programs that best serve the specific needs of the natural resources and people of Luzerne County.

More Work to Do

- Provide ongoing natural resource conservation assistance to state and federal partners and Luzerne County municipalities, landowners, & land users
- Implement ongoing and new conservation projects on farms and along streams, wetlands, and lakes
- Coordinate the preservation of more Luzerne County farms through the Farmland Preservation Program
- Provide multiple educational opportunities to promote the stewardship of our natural resources

2023 Project Highlight: Barchik Farm Agricultural BMP Project



In 2023, the Luzerne Conservation District, along with our partners at the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and the PA Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), undertook a project on the Barchik farm in Fairmount Township to address a lack of proper manure storage and livestock shelters that was causing manure impacts to surface and ground water. Another concern on the farm was overgrazing in environmentally sensitive pastureland which was further contributing to water quality issues.

Work included the development of a Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan and completion of a Heavy Use Area/Waste Storage Facility along with grazing practices and decommissioning approximately 20 acres of pastureland through two Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) contracts.

Funding brought to the county for direct conservation efforts in 2023: **\$1,853,449**

Program Accomplishments

- Authorized **48** NPDES Permits for construction activities, with an average approval time of 98 business days
- Responded to **103** complaints related to soil and water issues
- **270** Erosion & Sediment Control Plan Reviews and **200** site inspections for earth disturbance activities in Luzerne County
- Preservation of the **37th & 38th** farms in Luzerne County through administration of the county's Farmland Preservation Program, bringing the total preserved farmland to **4,009** acres
- **14.6** acres of trees planted to establish riparian buffers to protect streams and reforest abandoned farmlands
- Assisted **4** agricultural producers with REAP Tax Credit Applications
- Completed **3** roofed manure storage and animal heavy use area stabilization projects on farms in Fairmount, Huntington, & Franklin Townships
- Provided **\$662,650** in municipal grant payments along with technical services for **10** projects to reduce sediment pollution from and improve storm water management, drainage, & road base/surfaces on local dirt, gravel, and low-volume paved roads



Hollow Road Dirt & Gravel Roads Program project in Conyngham Township