

Our Team:

2024 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*

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

2024 Staff:

Hunter Bednarczyk, *Conservation Coordinator (E&S)*
Keith George, *Conservation Coordinator (MDC/E&S)*
Heather Graham, *Conservation Coordinator (E&S)*
Lauren Holder, *Conservation Specialist (MDC & Edu/Outreach)*
Deborah Josuweit, *Office Administrator*
John Levitsky, *Watershed Specialist*
Joshua Longmore, *Executive Director*
Jennifer Merryman, *Agricultural Conservation Specialist*
Michael Schlauch, *Conservation Coordinator (Ag & Roads)*
Michael Skokoski, *Conservation Technician (MDC)*
Frank Semanski, *Building & Grounds Keeper*

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:

Esther Ermlick, *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**

2024 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 eleven 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

2024

Celebrating 60 years of grassroots leadership and local natural resource stewardship



LCD Board Chairman Jay Wilkes (left) and Executive Director Josh Longmore (right) display a Certificate of Recognition of the district's 60th anniversary from the State Conservation Commission

In 1964, the Luzerne County Commissioners established the Luzerne Conservation District in response to interest from landowners and citizen concern for the conservation of the natural, scenic, historic, and aesthetic resources of the county.

Over the past 60 years the district has partnered with numerous individuals, organizations, municipalities, and agencies to engage in countless efforts and implement on-the-ground projects to accomplish the goal of improving local lands and waterways throughout the county.

District board and staff members are committed to continue working hard to achieve our shared mission of conserving our local natural resources for the benefit of the people and environment of Luzerne County well into the future.

Funding brought to the county for direct conservation efforts in 2024: **\$2,074,584**

Annual Program Accomplishments

- Authorized **76** NPDES Permits & approved **27** other Erosion & Sediment Control Plans for construction activities
- Responded to **82** complaints related to soil and water issues
- **534** permit application/plan reviews and **178** site inspections for earth disturbance activities in Luzerne County
- Preservation of the **39th** and **40th** farm in Luzerne County through administration of the county's Farmland Preservation Program, bringing the total preserved farmland to **4,160 acres**
- Completed **2** roofed manure storage and animal heavy use area stabilization projects on farms in Hollenback & Nescopeck Townships using **ACAP & PENNVEST** funds
- Funded **910 acres** of multispecies cover crops & helped farmers implement federally-funded conservation projects on **1,500 acres** of farmland
- Assisted **5** agricultural producers with **REAP** Tax Credit Applications
- Provided **\$114,969** in municipal grants along with technical services for **6** projects for pollution reduction and road improvement of local dirt, gravel, and low-volume paved roads
- Responded to over **200** mosquito complaints, set **721** mosquito traps with **91,296** mosquitos collected for testing for mosquito-borne diseases, and conducted **42** pesticide spray operations and **247** mosquito larvae control treatments



Manure storage project in Hollenback Township



LUZERNE
CONSERVATION DISTRICT

*Serving the people and conserving the natural
resources of Luzerne County for 60 years*



CERTIFICATE OF RECOGNITION

awarded to the

Luzerne Conservation District

for 60 Years of Service and Dedication to the Conservation of Natural Resources
in Luzerne County.

July 18, 2024

Russell C. Redding
Russell C. Redding, Secretary
PA Department of Agriculture

Jessica L. Shirley
Jessica L. Shirley, Acting Secretary
PA Department of Environmental Protection

Douglas M. Wolfgang
Douglas M. Wolfgang, Executive Secretary
State Conservation Commission

