



SUSQUEHANNA COUNTY
CONSERVATION DISTRICT

ANNUAL REPORT 2020



***"TO PRESERVE AND PROTECT
OUR NATURAL RESOURCES"***

OUR MISSION

"To preserve and protect our natural resources" The mission of the Susquehanna County Conservation District is to promote stewardship of the land, water, and other natural resources; to make all citizens aware of the interrelationships between human activities and the natural environment; to provide assistance for current efforts in natural resource conservation; and to develop and implement programs which promote the stewardship of natural resources; while enlisting and coordinating help from public and private sources in accomplishing this mission.

Our Vision

The Susquehanna County Conservation District will be the premier conservation organization regarded by all citizens as a leader in innovative stewardship of our natural resources. The District will effectively inspire and foster the application of natural resource conservation. With passion, the District will engage citizens and protect the environment for future generations while encouraging profitable business enterprises.

Our Core Values

The Susquehanna County Conservation District operates under the philosophy that the best way to advance the cause of conservation is to educate local citizens to become better environmental stewards. By building partnerships, providing technical assistance, and sharing information, we strive to achieve environmental compliance using common sense to build a culture of responsible stewardship.

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Board of Directors



Lillian Theophanis,
District Chairwoman



Elizabeth Arnold,
Commissioner
Director



Jim Kessler,
Farmer Director



Brian Severcool,
Farmer Director



Robert Fearnley,
Public Director



Curt Hepler,
Vice Chairman



Jack McKee,
Treasurer



Doug Wood,
Farmer Director



Bill Bayne,
Public Director



Ed Price,
Associate Director

A Message from our board of directors

Dear Reader,

The Susquehanna County Conservation District's Board of Directors would like me to convey to you our pride in the accomplishments of 2020. In particular, we take great pride in the diversity of our programs and special projects and in the expertise and commitment of our District Manager and Staff. We also want you to know about our continuing efforts to involve our many conservation partners. We acknowledge that they share in our achievements, some of which would not be possible without them. We would like to thank our nominating organizations for providing experienced and knowledgeable nominees to the board of directors, who represent the needs of Susquehanna County communities.

We hope that you will spend some time reading our annual report. You will see how we try very hard to be multi-faceted, engaging available funding sources with new approaches to old problems. The make-up of our clients cuts across economic, social, and educational lines. We assist farmers, loggers, stone cutters, schoolchildren, environmental, church and civic groups, municipalities, and state and federal government entities.

We have strong communication ties with our state legislators, our county commissioners, and our township supervisors. Through our well-established communications, we're a stone's throw away from useful advice and information from our 66 conservation district counterparts throughout the state. We communicate regularly with DEP, USDA, NRCS, and FSA staff... the people who fund and guide our programs.

This year, during the many challenges of a pandemic, we have used the most up-to-date online communications to continue providing staff services to the community and to enable the board of directors to guide the decision-making necessary to our operations.

Without useful natural resource and land use guidelines to manage and protect our natural resources, the future of our children's legacy would be in question. Wise stewardship of the land and waters has been the hallmark of our organization since its inception in 1947. May we continue to thrive in our quest for a quality way of life for the residents and visitors of Susquehanna County.

Yours in Conservation,

Lillian Theophanis, District Chairwoman



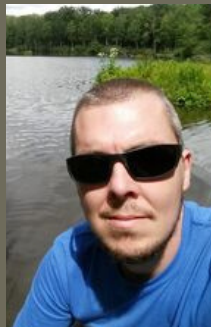
Meet Our Staff



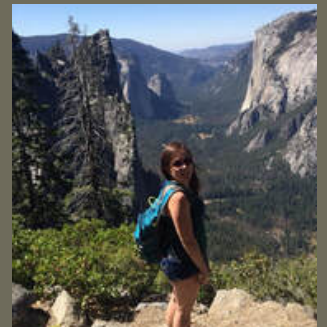
**Jennifer Ramey,
District Manager**



**Don Hibbard,
E&S Technician**



**Courtney Braunn,
Dirt & Gravel Specialist**



**Nate Harpster,
Watershed Specialist**



**David Beichler,
Chesapeake Bay Technician**



**Wayne Oakley,
No-till Specialist**



**Adrian Gregory,
Administrative Assistant**



A word from the District Manager

Greetings,

With the start of a new year already upon us, it is difficult to reflect back on 2020. As much as we would like to, 2020 was definitely a year that we will never forget. It proved to be both a challenge and a year of learning for all of us here at the Susquehanna County Conservation District.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, many of the individuals and businesses that our district assists incurred physical, mental, emotional, and financial losses. Events such as our Envirothon, Annual Seedling Sale, and Contractors' Workshop had to be canceled. Events and trainings that the staff would normally attend were postponed until further notice. Even though the district office was closed to the public and staff worked remotely throughout the year, district staff were able to assist the county through online submissions, virtual meetings, online trainings, and webinars all while keeping the staff, directors, and the public safe. As we adjusted to the "new normal" during the pandemic, the Susquehanna County Conservation District continued to move forward and make strides.

As you continue to read through this report, you will notice that one thing is certain, the passion and the drive of the staff here within our district is something that the residents of Susquehanna County can be proud of. The dedication to fulfill obligations and projects is at the forefront of our priorities. With the help and assistance from our partnering agencies, county commissioners, and board of directors, our conservation district strives to maintain our mission to preserve and protect the natural resources of Susquehanna County.

From myself and the staff here at the district, we wish you a safe and healthy 2021 as we move forward during this ongoing pandemic.

Yours in Conservation,

Jennifer Ramey, District Manager



EROSION & SEDIMENT

The Conservation District is delegated by the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to administer the Chapter 102 Erosion and Sediment Control Program. Chapter 102 regulations require that Best Management Practices (BMPs) are utilized during earth disturbance activities in order to minimize sediment pollution.



Infiltration berm



Rock-lined swale

IN 2020, DISTRICT STAFF PERFORMED 67 E&S CONTROL PLAN REVIEWS, PROCESSED 7 GENERAL NPDES PERMITS, 1 INDIVIDUAL NPDES PERMIT, 2 ESCGP-3 PERMITS AND RESPONDED TO 20 COMPLAINTS.



New Brooklyn Township building

Dam Safety and Waterway Management

The Chapter 105 program regulates work in and around streams, wetlands, and other water bodies with a focus on avoiding or minimizing impacts on water quality, flooding frequency, and riparian habitats. Under a delegation agreement, the District administers DEP General Permits for various types of work in waterways; including wetlands and stream crossings, fish habitat structures, streambank stabilization, boat ramp and dock installation, intake and outfall structures, and utility line crossings. District staff investigate complaints and provide regulatory and permitting assistance.



IN 2020, DISTRICT STAFF ISSUED; 8 DOCK PERMITS, 13 BANK REHAB, BANK PROTECTION & GRAVEL BAR REMOVAL PERMITS, 2 INTAKE AND OUTFALL PERMITS, 2 UTILITY LINE STREAM CROSSINGS PERMITS, 8 MINOR ROAD CROSSING PERMITS, 3 TEMPORARY ROAD CROSSING PERMITS, AND RESPONDED TO 26 COMPLAINTS.

Chesapeake Bay

The Chesapeake Bay Program is a cooperative effort involving all of the jurisdictions in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed, with a goal to reduce nutrient and sediment pollution by 2025. Pennsylvania is critical in this effort as 50% of the freshwater to the Chesapeake Bay flows from the Susquehanna River. Landowners provided 20% or more of the cost of best management practices.

The majority of the projects are heavy use area protection, water control structures, spring developments, and other BMPs.

Manure Management

Do you own Livestock? The Department of Environmental Protection requires you to have a manure management plan even if it's one horse, goat, sheep, or chicken in your backyard. The Susquehanna County Conservation District can help you develop one. In 2020, technicians at the district inspected 78 farms and 34 Manure Management Plans were created.



DIRT & GRAVEL ROADS

The mission of the Dirt & Gravel Road Program is to implement environmentally sensitive maintenance practices to reduce the adverse effects of a road on the environment. The projects provide long-term environmental benefits to Pennsylvania streams while improving the public road system.



Herb Button Road Culvert Replacement

**SCCD'S DIRT & GRAVEL
ROAD PROGRAM FUNDED
11 PROJECTS ACROSS
THE COUNTY IN 2020**



Rip-rap stabilization
along a DG project



Driving Surface Aggregate
(DSA) placement

Ag Land Preservation

The Farmland Preservation Easement Purchase Program was developed to strengthen Pennsylvania's agricultural economy and to protect prime farmland from being lost. The program enables state and county governments to purchase conservation easement through a joint fund of state and county money. The Susquehanna County Conservation District administers the Agricultural Land Preservation Program for Susquehanna County. To be eligible, farms must be located in an agricultural security area; be contiguous acreage of at least 50 acres; 50% of soils available for agricultural production must be class I through IV; the land must contain 50% harvested cropland, pasture or grazing land and must be part of a normal farming operation generating farm income.



THE JAMES ROBERTSON
FARM WAS THE 36TH
FARM TO BE PRESERVED.
6700 TOTAL ACRES HAVE
BEEN PRESERVED IN
SUSQUEHANNA COUNTY.



Our Watershed Specialist's goal is to promote the stewardship of the water resources of Susquehanna County by coordinating watershed conservation projects and informing and assisting the general public. The general public includes individuals, businesses, private organizations, and government entities within the watershed conservation. The Watershed Specialist is responsible for providing technical, informational, and organizational assistance that will improve watershed organization development and the quality and quantity of the Commonwealth's surface and groundwater resources. The watershed specialist is a resource to both the public and private sectors.



Holleran Hill Tree Planting Project

THE HOLLERAN HILL TREE PROJECT PLANTED 200 SUGAR MAPLE, RED MAPLE, AND WHITE OAK TREES WITH THE PARTNERSHIP OF THE K10 PROGRAM.

Growing Greener

In 2020, the Susquehanna County Conservation District administered Growing Greener Grants that implemented agricultural Best Management Practices (BMP's) on three farms throughout the county. Grant funding totaling \$57,191 was used to construct a concrete Heavy Use Protection Area (HUAP), a concrete barnyard, and a watering system on separate farms. These projects will help improve water quality by reducing the number of nutrients and sediments leaving agricultural settings and entering local streams.

NO-TILL

The Susquehanna County Conservation District offers the No-till Program to area farmers and landowners. The program's purpose is to prevent soil degradation and erosion from wind and water by encouraging the planting of crops with no-till equipment and the use of fall cover crops while discouraging the use of conventional tillage practices. Soil disturbance caused by tilling increases soil loss by erosion and hardpan layer formation due to soil compaction.

Using tillage also decreases infiltration, water holding capacity, and soil fertility. Many non-farmers also take advantage of the no-till program as a best management practice for wildlife habitat and quality deer management.



**IN 2020, 662 ACRES OF
COVER CROPS WERE
PLANTED, AND OUR
NO-TILL EQUIPMENT
PLANTED 1,152 ACRES
OF CROPS.**

The district has six pieces of equipment available for rent. Equipment available includes; three no-till corn planters, two no-till seeders, and one interseeder. Our No-Till specialist will deliver the equipment to your farm and assist in setting up the equipment. When finished with the equipment, our no-till specialist will return to move the equipment to the next operation.



EDUCATION & PUBLIC OUTREACH

Rain Barrel Workshop

Did you know that the average roof collects 1,000 gallons of rainwater for every inch of rain? Rainwater from downspouts often drains onto driveways, sidewalks, or other paved surfaces and is not able to soak into the ground. Water rushing over these hard surfaces picks up pollutants along the way, which then enters our streams. This water run-off can cause flash flooding and erosion, lower water quality, and harm aquatic habitats.



Rain barrel donation to
Ira Reynolds Park

**11 SUSQUEHANNA
COUNTY RESIDENTS
RECEIVED A FREE RAIN
BARRELS FOR
PARTICIPATING IN OUR
WEBINAR AND SURVEY.**

Conservation Corner Radio Broadcast

The SCCD has a radio segment called Conservation Corner which covers a variety of topics including; events, wildlife, district programs, environmental topics, and interviews. The Conservation Corner radio broadcast airs every Thursday at noon on WPEL. The radio show is also streamed on Spotify and Itunes. You can also visit our website to listen to archived broadcasts. 42 shows aired live in 2020.



District staff educating the public at Ag Day

AG Day took place March 6, 2020 at Elk Lake School. This was the 31st year that this event has taken place. AG Day covers all aspects of the Agricultural Industry. The Conservation District is honored to part of such a great event.

NRCS

The USDA-NRCS Montrose Field Office personnel administered Farm Bill Programs focusing on the Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) and Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP). We provide technical support for the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP).

In the fiscal year 2020, NRCS Susquehanna County received 44 EQIP applications and was able to write contracts for 5 of the applicants totaling \$431,016. The contracts funded included: 1 Livestock for \$418,707, 3 Forest Management Plans (FMP) contracts for \$6,137, and 1 Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan (CNMP) for \$6,172. We also had 4 CSP applications and one became CSP contracts for \$ 13,879.



Ain Welmon, District Conservationist,
inspecting CREP plantings

THE NRCS STAFF PARTICIPATED IN A DIVERSE VARIETY OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS IN 2020. THE EFFORTS INCLUDED USDA, NRCS, FSA HAVING DISPLAYS AT MANY COUNTYWIDE EVENTS SUCH THE SPRING WOODS WALK, CROP DAY, AG DAY, AND STUDY DAY. PRESS RELEASES WERE PUBLISHED IN LOCAL NEWSPAPERS AND NRCS WAS INVOLVED IN TWO RADIO BROADCASTS.



NRCS staff working with Susquehanna County landowners

USDA-NRCS Staff



Ain Welmon,
District Conservationist



Deborah Basalyga,
Soil Conservation
Technician

DEP- Regional office field staff



Shane Kleiner,
Watershed Manager



Peter Tarby,
Chesapeake Bay
Field Representative
(Retired)
