



Potter County Conservation District



*2016
STRATEGIC PLAN*

Potter County Conservation District 2016 Strategic Plan

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INTRODUCTION:

Pennsylvania's conservation districts were established in 1945 when the General Assembly passed the Soil Conservation District Act, Act 217 of the General Assembly commonly known as the Conservation District Law. For over 55 years the state's 66 conservation districts have served as leaders, addressing local natural resource concerns at the county level. The county conservation districts work to help people and communities take care of the natural resources in their area including soil, water, wildlife, trees and other plants. Using natural resources wisely helps to insure their availability well into the future.

County conservation districts operate under the belief that conservation works best when local people, those who live and work in the area, play an active role in managing their natural resources. Because conservation districts are familiar with local issues they are able to manage the resources of a particular area.

Conservation districts stand ready to offer technical assistance and educational guidance to land owners and managers, local governments, teachers, students and people from every walk of life. They can provide information and help on matters such as reducing soil erosion, protecting water quality, or preventing hazardous situations such as floods.

Conservation districts work to better the community as a whole. They help citizens identify available natural resources and establish plans for their wise use. Because conservation districts have established a solid network of available human resources, they frequently work cooperatively across county and state lines.

County conservation districts are efficient and effective. They work with private citizens, partner with state and federal government agencies and facilitate the work of many private organizations and other conservation districts. The Pennsylvania Association of Conservation Districts, Inc. provides the collective voice for conservation districts at the state and national level.

Conservation districts were initially established to promote the value of conserving soil and water to farmers. Today's districts have evolved; their areas of interest and expertise involve almost every area of natural resource conservation imaginable.

The Potter County Conservation District was declared a District by the Board of County Commissioners on November 28th, 1945 and became the Commonwealth's first Conservation District. Today, the Potter County Conservation District is administered by a board of seven (7) Directors – Four (4) farmer directors, two (2) public directors, and one (1) County Commissioner. Directors are appointed by a developed list of nominating organizations. Four (4) associate directors are also involved with the functions of the District. Six (6) staff people conduct the day to day operations of the District. These positions include a District Manager, Administrative Assistant, Resource Conservationist, Agricultural Conservation Technician (ACT Tech), Watershed/Nutrient Management Technician, and a Dirt and Gravel Roads/Low Volume Roads Project Specialist.

The primary goal of the District is the development, improvement and conservation of the County's soil, water and related resources as well as educating the community in various conservation and environmental practices and methods.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

Earl Brown – Chairman, Public Director

Phil Lehman – Vice Chairman, Farmer Director

Leroy White – Treasurer, Farmer Director

Jon Blass - Alternate Treasurer, Farmer Director

Doug Morley - Commissioner Director

Stan Hess - Public Director

Kevin Smoker - Farmer Director

ASSOCIATE DIRECTORS:

Dr. Pete Ryan

Robert Volkmar

David Saulter

Sarah Johnson

STAFF:

Jason Childs, District Manager

Jared Dickerson, Watershed/Nutrient Management Technician

Glenn Dunn II, Resource Conservationist

Rob Thompson, ACT Technician

Alexander Veto, LVR/DGR Project Specialist

Mary Davis, Administrative Assistant

WHO WE ARE:

The Potter County Conservation District is a political subdivision of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania who aims to be a leader in promoting the stewardship of our natural resources to current and future generations. The district prides itself on being a grassroots, boots on the ground, organization who works with the cooperation of the farming community, environmental community, governmental entities and agencies, as well as the general public as a whole to implement projects and programs within Potter County.

BENEFICIARIES:

The clients of the Potter County Conservation District's services are the citizens, landowners, homeowners, businesses, local governments, visitors, schools, volunteers, and future generations of Potter County.

PHILOSOPHY:

The Potter County Conservation by taking a grassroots, boots on the ground role in local conservation strives to be a leader to help coordinate programs and information between the District and other governmental agencies to educate and guide development to manage and improve the environment.

VISION:

The Potter County Conservation District is dedicated to establishing innovative conservation practices with leadership and education through partnership with the community we serve. It is our goal to foster stewardship of our natural resources by inspiring current and future generations to preserve the legacy of conservation.

MISSION:

The Potter County Conservation District will provide leadership to ensure the protection of the natural resources of Potter County through project implementation, educational programs, technical assistance, and by fostering public and private partnerships.

PLAN DEVELOPMENT:

The Potter County Conservation District held a series of four meetings beginning on April 5th, 2016 and concluding on May 3rd, 2016 to develop a new Strategic Plan. The sessions were facilitated by Penn State Extension staff Don Tanner and Neal Fogle. The sessions were attended by approximately 20 individuals representing Conservation District Directors and staff; cooperating agency representatives; and representatives from the District's nominating organizations.

During the session the facilitators reviewed the current role of the Conservation District by conducting an organizational assessment. During the process the current Vision and Mission statements were reviewed and updated.

A SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities & Threats) Analysis was performed. Our external opportunities and threats were also reviewed as they pertained to political, economic, social, and technological environment. Participants also identified what major trends or forces of change can be expected during the next 2 to 5 years.

Through these exercises six goals were established. A portion of the 3rd session and a majority of the 4th and final session were held among the Directors, staff, and cooperating agency representatives to determine the objectives and action steps for each of these objectives.

Approval: On this 7th day of June 2016, the Potter County Conservation District Board of Directors hereby approved by resolution this Strategic Business Plan.

Board Chair (signature)

District Manager (signature)

Date

Date

HOW PRIORITIES WERE CHOSEN:

The identification of the key issues affecting the District was derived through a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis. This useful method allowed the group to think about the issues currently facing the District as well as the issues the District would likely face in the future; and identify whether they are strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and/or threats. This listing provides a useful framework for understanding these issues and for developing a plan for building on strengths, resolving weaknesses, taking advantage of opportunities, and minimizing threats.

The ideas in the SWOT analysis are the groundwork for developing the District's vision and mission statements, set and prioritize goals and objectives, and create action plans to implement these goals and objectives.

GOALS

A. Personnel and Office Administration

B. Soil Conservation

C. Water Quality

D. Land Use

E. Educational Outreach

F. Public Relations

GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND ACTION STEPS

Goal A: Personnel and Office Administration.

Objective #1: To align personnel skills and attributes to fulfill District goals by empowering employees through training and accomplishments recognition and Board support.

Action Step	Who will do it?	By When?
Review and evaluate each position for cross training/dual responsibilities.	Staff/Personnel Committee	Fall 2016
Continue to provide training for staff and support accreditations.	District Manager/Board of Directors	On-going/annually
Have staff present on their programs at Board meeting on a rotational basis. Each staff would report 3 times annually.	Staff/Personnel Committee	4 th Quarter 2016
Provide an internship. (paid or unpaid)	District Manager	Summer 2017

Objective #2: Utilizing space effectively and evaluate resources to support growth.

Action Step	Who will do it?	By When?
Long term. Establish a committee to evaluate current office space and recommend options.	District Manager and Board	1 st quarter 2017
Short term. Explore rental storage options – District assets (equipment, files)	District Manager	October 2016

Objective #3: Evaluate our committees to align with our strategic plan.

Action Step	Who will do it?	By When?
Review existing committees and make adjustment to obtain goals.	District Manager and Board	4 th quarter 2016
Create job description for each committee.	District Manager	1 st quarter 2017

Goal B: Soil Conservation

Objective # 1: Chapter 102/105 – Minimize erosion impacts through education, assistance, planning, Plan reviews and approval, and implementation of BMPs.

Action Step	Who will do it?	By When?
Continue to provide or assist in at least 2 E&S/Soil and Water Workshops.	Glenn/Resource Conservationist	On-going / yearly
Increase plan reviews and assistance by 5 per year.	Glenn/Resource Conservationist	On-going / yearly

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Objective # 2: Dirt and Gravel Roads – Increase the amount of road stabilized through DGR by 5% over 5 years.

Action Step	Who will do it?	By When?
Educate Municipalities by hosting a minimum of 2 training opportunities per year.	DGR/LVR Project Specialist (Alex)	Present/5 years
Insure project implementation of all DGR/LVR projects awarded.	DGR/LVR Project Specialist (Alex)	2-5 years

Objective # 3: Increase the use of agricultural BMPs.

Action Step	Who will do it?	By When?
Increase the use of no-till management by encouraging producers to purchase their own no-till equipment.	Producers, NRCS, No-till Alliance, PSU Extension	3 years / On-going
Assist at least 25 producers to obtain Ag Erosion and Sedimentation Plans.	ACT Technician (Rob), Nutrient Management Technician (Jared)	2 years
Increase cover crop implementation by increasing acreage by 5%.	ACT Technician (Rob)	5 years

Goal C: Water Quality

Objective #1: Restoration of streams and riparian corridors.

Action Step	Who will do it?	By When?
Obtain grant funding by applying for a minimum of 3 grants per year.	Staff and District Manager	Annually
Increase volunteer participation by recruiting 2 new organizations.	Watershed Specialist (Jared)	5 years
Increase the amount of stream restoration projects. (8 per year minimum)	Watershed Groups, PFBC, Landowners, Watershed Specialist (Jared)	5 years
Encourage the use of buffers (riparian) by planting various native tree species on 1/3 of completed projects and at a minimum of 1 other site annually.	Watershed Groups, PFBC, Landowners, Watershed Specialist (Jared)	On-going

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Objective # 2: Expand effectiveness of water monitoring efforts.

Action Step	Who will do it?	By When?
Obtain funding for monitoring by exploring grant options and donations from OGM companies etc.	District Manager / Watershed Specialist	Annually
Develop and screening process / data management system	Watershed Specialist (Jared)	3-5 years
Investigate and implement new processes/protocols.	Watershed Specialist (Jared)	5 years

Objective # 3: Increase education about water quality related issues.

Action Step	Who will do it?	By When?
Obtain funding by applying for 2 grants per year.	Watershed Specialist (Jared) and District Manager	Annually
Conduct at least 5 youth education programs about water quality (chemistry and biology) and riparian buffers per year.	Watershed Specialist (Jared)	Annually
Conduct at least 3 adult education programs about water quality and riparian buffer benefits.	Watershed Specialist / District Manager	Annually
Hold a stream workshop.	Watershed Specialist (Jared) / Watershed Associations	3 years

Objective # 4: Strengthen cooperation of townships and municipalities within the LVDGR program within 5 years.

Action Step	Who will do it?	By When?
Develop District website to provide technical assistance and illustrate high priorities.	DGR/LVR Project Specialist (Alex) / District Manager	3 years

Goal D: Land Use

Objective # 1: Obtain a commitment for one farm in the farmland preservation program in the next three years.

Action Step	Who will do it?	By When?
Train staff	Administrative Assistant and District Manager	1 year
Promote and host an educational	Administrative	2 years

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meeting for farmland preservation for 10 participants and obtain 3 applicants.	Assistant and District Manager	
Hold a signup period for farmland preservation.	Administrative Assistant	3 years
Rank and commit to find the highest ranking application.	Administrative Assistant	4 years

Objective # 2: Aid in the development of manure and nutrient management, conservation plan and Ag Erosion and Sedimentation plans (and ensuring implementation) for 45 producers in 3 years.

Action Step	Who will do it?	By When?
Identify 45 producers without manure and Ag E&S plans.	Chesapeake Bay Technician(s) / District Manager	2017
Assist 45 producers to write any or all of the required manure management, Ag E&S, or conservation plans.	Chesapeake Bay Technician(s) / District Manager	2018
Ensure and assist with the implementation of developed plans.	Chesapeake Bay Technician(s) / District Manager	2019

Objective # 3: Encourage the adoption and use of no-till cropping systems in Potter County by increasing no-till acres by 300 acres.

Action Step	Who will do it?	By When?
Promote and host at least 3 field days, demonstration plots, and/or workshops to 50 producers.	ACT Technician, NRCS, Field and Forage agent	2018 (continuous)
Create a ranking program for use of district no-till equipment. (Preference given to new no-till adopters)	ACT Technician	August 2016
Hire a part time employee to transport and setup no-till equipment on as needed basis.	Personnel Committee, District Manager, new employee	August 2016
Find and promote grant and other funding sources to implement no-till.	ACT Technician and NRCS	2018

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Goal E: Educational Outreach

Objective # 1: Hold 10 Ag adult educational events in the next 3 years.

Action Step	Who will do it?	By When?
Hold Ag-stravaganza and Crops and Planting Clinic annually.	Staff, PSU Extension, NRCS, speakers	Annually
Hold or assist in 2 soil health events.	Staff, PSU Extension, NRCS, speakers	3 years
Hold or assist in 2 soil health events.	Staff, PSU Extension, NRCS, speakers	3 years

Objective # 2: Increase public education.

Action Step	Who will do it?	By When?
Develop, fund, and host a riparian buffer workshop.	Staff (Watershed Specialist and ACT Technician)	1 year (Continuous)
Host a Low Volume Road specific workshop.	DGR/LVR Project Specialist and District Manager	2-3 years

Objective # 3: Expand technical education by generating and administering a website that can broadcast current projects while providing a resource for future projects.

Action Step	Who will do it?	By When?
Purchase Tablets for field data collection	District Manager	2 years
Implement a Field Data collection system	District Manager staff, and County GIS Director	3-5 years
Develop online map utilizing ArcGIS Online and new District website	District Manager, Staff, and County GIS Director	5 years

Objective # 4: Promote youth education.

Action Step	Who will do it?	By When?
Continue to sponsor and support youth field days including: My Growing Tree, Conservation Field Days, Envirothon, Potter County Junior Conservation Camp, etc.	District Manager, Board, and Staff, Service Forester, other cooperating agencies	Continuous
Revamp the Farm and Forest Tour event for all Potter County 7 th graders.	District Manager and Watershed Specialist, Service Forester	2 years

Goal F: Public Relations

Objective # 1: Increase public awareness of what the District offers through programs, technical assistance and education.

Action Step	Who will do it?	By When?
Create a new District website that is more user-friendly and interactive.	District Manager / Web Designer and Server	1 year (fall 2017)
Write current issue newspaper articles to submit to local newspapers/media every quarter.	Staff and District Manager	1 year (summer 2017)
Explore 2 new means to share information about District activities and programs.	District Manager and Staff	2 years
Attend 1 new venue per year and maintain current presence at county events over the next 5 years.	District Manager and Staff	Annually over the next 5 years.

CONTINUING EVALUATION AND MONITORING OF THE PLAN:

The Strategic Plan is being implemented employing constant communication with the individuals and agencies which support the District on an annual basis. This will help maintain good partnerships and ensure continued support from inside and outside the District. **This plan will be reviewed quarterly at the monthly board meeting by the District Board of Directors, Manager, and Staff over the first 18 months beginning September 2016. After this time the plan will be reviewed every 6 months, and on an as needed basis.**

DISTRIBUTION

The Strategic Plan will be distributed to the Potter County Commissioners (Doug Morley, Paul Heimel and Susan Kefover), Cooperating Agencies and Nominating Organization (listed below) as well as to those who make a request.

COOPERATING AGENCIES

STATE CONSERVATION COMMISSION - Karl Brown, Executive Secretary
PENNSYLVANIA ASSOCIATION OF CONSERVATION DISTRICTS (PACD) – Brenda Shambaugh – Exec. Director
DEP, WATERSHED MANAGEMENT – Vacant - Field Rep.
FARM SERVICE AGENCY - Dave Stratton - Executive Director
NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE – Vacant - District Conservationist
PENN STATE EXTENSION - Don Tanner- Extension Director
POTTER COUNTY PLANNING/GIS COMMISSION – Will Hunt - Director
PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE –
DCNR - BUREAU OF FORESTRY – Christian Nicholas - District Forester
PA FISH & BOAT COMMISSION - Vacant - WCO
PA GAME COMMISSION:
William Ragosta - WCO
Mark Fair - WCO

NOMINATING ORGANIZATIONS

Dairy Herd Improvement Association	Rhoda Lent 681 Brookland Road Coudersport, PA 16915
Potter County Cooperative Extension	Don Tanner 7 Water Street Coudersport, PA 16915
Upper Allegheny Watershed Assoc.	Frank Weeks PO Box 146 Coudersport, PA 16915
God’s Country Chapter of Trout Unlimited	Dr. Peter Ryan 820 RT 49 Coudersport, PA 16915
Potter County Holstein Club	Jack Thomas 8 Lehman Rd Ulysses, PA 16948
Genesee Headwaters Watershed Association	Stephen Richard PO Box 145 Genesee, PA 16923

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Tioga-Potter Farmers' Association	Jon Blass 943 Brookland Road Coudersport, PA 16915
Potter County Pomona Grange	Herb Sallade 256 Cherry Springs Road Coudersport, PA 16915
Potter County Federation of Sportsmen's Club	Paul Lilja 2514 Dividing Ridge Road Coudersport, PA 16915
Farm Service Agency	David Stratton 103 Market Street Coudersport, PA 16915
Potter County Fair Association	Marsha Prince RR 1 Box 250 Shinglehouse, PA 16748

LIST OF ACRONYMS:

CD –	Conservation District
DM –	District Manager
RC –	Resource Conservationist
QAB –	Quality Assurance Board for Dirt & Gravel Road Program
BMP –	Best Management Practice
E&S –	Erosion & Sediment
NPDES –	National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System
DGR -	Dirt & Gravel Road Program
OGM –	Oil & Gas Mineral Development
NM –	Nutrient Management
SCC –	State Conservation Commission
DEP -	Department of Environmental Protection
DCNR-	Department of Conservation of Natural Resources
DCED –	Department of Community & Economic Development
PACD –	Pennsylvania Association of Conservation Districts

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- PDA – Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture
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- PFBC – Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission
- PGC – Pennsylvania Game Commission
- FSA – Farm Service Agency
- NRCS – Natural Resources Conservation Service
- UAWA – Upper Allegheny Watershed Association
- GHWA - Genesee Headwaters Watershed Association
- FFWA - First Fork of the Sinnemahoning Watershed Association
- WPC - Western Pennsylvania Conservancy
- KCWA - Kettle Creek Watershed Association