

God's Country Chronicle

Newsletter of the POTTER COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Watershed Work

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The Reitter Property Project, located on the Ellisburg Branch Genesee River, consisted of 5 Single Log Vanes and 1 Multi Log Vane, protecting the bank and providing cover for fish. Work was completed by Alfred state operators and funded through Western PA Conservancy Mini Grant Funding.

The National Fuel Project, located on First Fork of the Sinnemahoning, consisted of 2 Root Wads, 2 Channel Block Structures, and 3 Multi Log Vanes. The project was funded privately and totaled \$29,998.65.



The Childe Property project, located on First Fork of the Sinnemahoning, involved 5 Sections of Mudsill and 6 Single Log Vanes. The project totaled \$15,241 and was funded through the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission. 20 willows were also planted at the project site and provided by the Keystone 10 Million Trees Partnership.

The Brookland Club Project, located on Pine Creek, involved 3 Multi Log Vanes and 2 Log Framed Stone Deflectors. The project was funded privately and totaled \$6,708.



The White Property farm lane improvement project totaled \$22,355 and was funded through Chesapeake Bay Action Plan funding. This project involved 500 feet of farm lane stabilization, which helps prevent runoff and pollution to streams.



Dirt and Gravel / Low Volume Roads Program

Project Highlights

Homer Township was awarded funding for Phase 2 and Phase 3 of the Southwoods Road project. Combined, these phases included 10 new pipe installations over 3.4 miles of road. All pipes were outfitted with head walls and end walls and R5/R6 outlet erosion protection where needed. A 6" loose lift of limestone driving surface aggregate was then paver-placed across the project length totaling 7,467 tons. These last two phases of the project follow 30 cross pipe installations, 9,435 tons of road fill, and a stream crossing replacement completed through previous projects. The grand total in DGLVR Program funding was \$726,169.33 with \$65,306.61 in in-kind contributions to improve 4.7 miles of Southwoods Road.



Hebron Township – Carpenter Road

Carpenter Road existed as a paved road through the project section. Pavement conditions were poor due to the road's location across a wetland with insufficient drainage, leading to road base issues. A 96-foot-long French mattress was installed across the road to allow wetland flow to travel through the road while providing a sound road base. One new cross pipe was installed and one existing pipe was replaced and relocated. A failing 6-foot round steel stream crossing was replaced with a 19'x6'-1" aluminum box culvert with a full invert. Three constructed rock riffles were placed through the affected stream section to provide grade control and restore the stream's natural slope. A streambed with low-flow channel and bank margins was placed inside the new structure to restore stream connectivity and facilitate aquatic organism passage. Reclamation of the outlet scour hole was achieved through the addition of root wad and modified mudsill crib habitat structures. Blacktop was removed from 436' feet of the road. 2A road fill was then grader-placed at an average depth of 8" followed by paver-placement of driving surface aggregate at a depth of 6".



Agriculture

No-Till Equipment Final Acreages

Our no-till equipment can be rented by any farmer of Potter County or the surrounding area. The goal of the program is to provide an accessible option for no-till planting, which is a proven method for maintaining soil health and optimum productivity. Our drills include a John Deere 1590, Great Plains 1006, and a John Deere 7000 corn planter. During the 2021 planting seasons, total combined acreages came to **591.9**. The acreages used in each major Potter County watershed is broken down in the table below.

	Chesapeake Bay Watershed	Genesee Watershed	Upper Allegheny Watershed
Combined no-Till Implementation	187	259.5	145.4

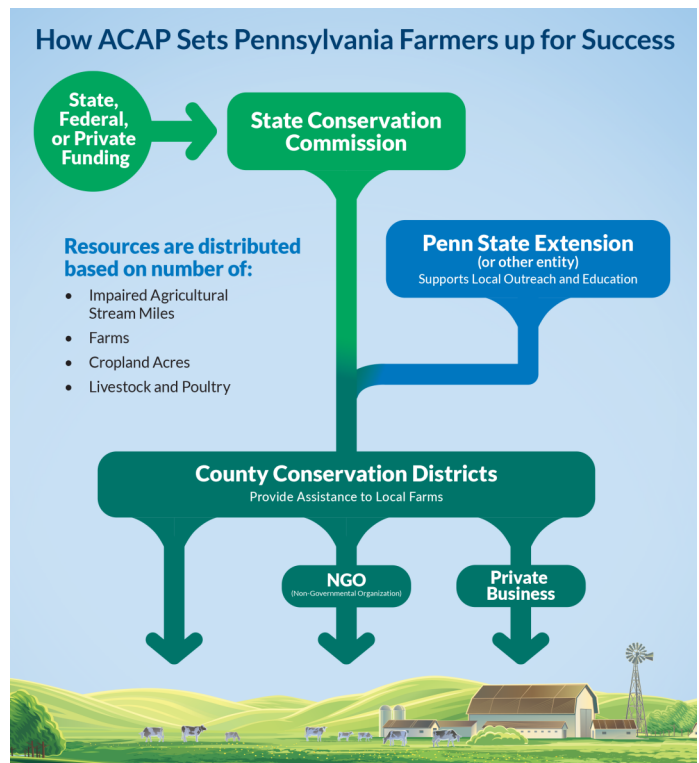
New Funding on the Horizon: ACAP

Included in the 2022/23 Pennsylvania State Budget was the dedication of \$154 million to the Agricultural Assistance Program (ACAP). This is a brand-new program, and the funding comes from federal stimulus money. The program is designed to help farmers implement environmental best management practices on their farms, and is expected to function very similarly to the highly successful Dirt and Gravel Low Volume Roads Program.

The State Conservation Commission is tasked with administering the funds at the state level. Each county conservation district within Pennsylvania will have the opportunity, if they choose, to administer their apportionment of the funds at the local level. Apportionments were determined based on number of agriculturally impaired stream miles, number of livestock or poultry, number of crop acres, and number of farms based on the 2017 Ag Census. Districts will be responsible to solicit applications, implement projects, and disperse funds to qualifying projects within their respective county.

Potter County will receive up to a total apportionment of \$1,281,946.67 to implement projects throughout the entire county. This funding must be committed to projects by December 31, 2024 and spent by December 31, 2026. Some examples of possible projects include, cover crops, stream bank exclusion fencing, rotational grazing systems, farm access/field access road improvements, Ag stream crossings, manure injection, manure storages, and other common BMPs that reduce nutrients and sediment to our waterways. The District's Land Use Committee will be meeting on December 6, 2022, at 9:30 AM to further discuss details of the program.

This is an exciting opportunity and the District looks forward to working with our agricultural community to make this a highly successful and beneficial program.



Education and Outreach

The summer of 2022 saw a record of 15 education events in three months, including four public library programs, five summer camp lessons, five community events/workshops of various topics, and one new youth fly fishing event. The attendance during these events totaled 476 participants. While we have annual education events, the District also works to be present in the community year-round for education and outreach events. If you have a group in need of a presenter or conservation-related activity, contact educator Emily Shosh at 814-320-4017.



Left, Emily shares a stream macroinvertebrate program at the Coudersport Arboretum. Center, PCCD office educational turtle Myrtle made her debut during one of our library programs. Right, PCCD manager Jason Childs presents during the natural resources day at Leadership Potter County.

Invasive Species Work

This Fall, the Susquehannock Trail Club, Susquehannock State Forest, and the District partnered to protect around 9 acres of Hemlock trees in Cross Fork from the invasive pest Hemlock Woolly Adelgid (HWA). HWA is an aphid-like invasive insect that kills hemlocks, the Pennsylvania state tree and a very important stream shade tree. Thermal conditions of streams is greatly influenced by vegetation and overhead cover, so the loss of these trees may negatively effect temperature and overall stream health. The District thus organized a grant application through the Foundation for Pennsylvania Watersheds to cover CoreTect tablets, which can protect hemlocks from HWA for up to 5 years with it's slow release to the tree. Three Susquehannock Trail Club members were present to help treat this site. Funding was acquired through a Foundation for Pennsylvania Watersheds Grant. Additionally this summer, the District organized nearly 3 acres of invasive Goat's Rue treatment, 2 acres of poison hemlock treatment, and 2 acres of Mile-a Minute treatment across the county.



Stream Keepers Youth Fly Fishing Education Event



The District partnered with members of the God's Country Chapter and the Seneca Chapter of Trout Unlimited, as well as Kim Lott of Sinnemahoning State Park, to host the first Stream Keepers event in Potter County. This included a day of fly casting and fishing, Stream health and vegetation assessments, stream velocity calculations, and fly tying. The event is designed to fulfill some or all of certain scout patch requirements in a well-rounded, experiential way. Participants not only completed patch project requirements, they received free Pennsylvania Trout Unlimited memberships and monthly magazines, plus some helpful fishing and outdoor gear to take home. Responsible hunting and fishing as a conservation practice is something the District aims to promote, and that message was part of the Stream Keepers program. Thanks specifically to presenters Kim Lott, Dominic Petruzzi, Carl Sprouse, and several members of the God's Country Chapter of Trout Unlimited. We also thank the Austin Costello Sportsman's Club for hosting the event at their fantastic facility.

Potter County Summer Camp Programs

Every summer, the District is happy to assist with both 4H Summer camps and the annual Potter County Junior Conservation School. This year, we taught during two 4H camps, one held at the Saulter's Preserve and another held at the Penuel Camp in Eldred, PA. Both 4H camps involved a benthic macroinvertebrate lesson to a cumulative amount of 80 students. The Junior Conservation School, is annually held at the Black Forest Conservation Club as well as off site at state parks, land development project sites, and other environmental remediation sites around the area. The District assisted with Archery, Soils Class, Watersheds and Wetlands, Invasive Plants, as well as facilitating a tour of the Big Level Wind windmill project. For more information on how to sign up for any of these camps mentioned, contact us or educator Spencer Gee at our local Penn State Extension office!

Pictured Right, students conclude the Watersheds and Wetlands class by learning about the composition of all water on earth, a tiny fraction of which is readily available as drinking water.



Trailblazers Community Service and Invasive Plant Control



This summer, the county youth Trail Blazers program partnered with the Potter County Conservation District and the Susquehannock Trail Club to complete trail maintenance at the Coudersport Elementary School nature trail and wetlands boardwalk. Supplies and instruction for trimming bushes and grass was provided by Emily Shosh of the Conservation District. Emily also explained the importance of controlling invasive honeysuckle shrubs, which are abundant on the trail. Being that the surrounding area is superb habitat for birds, the Trail Blazers also constructed bird nesting boxes which will be placed in the Spring. These nesting boxes were funded by the Susquehannock Trail Club and were sourced through the Pennsylvania Game Commission's Howard Nursery. By next spring, the group hopes to work with the Coudersport Elementary maintenance crew to replace some of the boardwalk planks and railings and clear more invasive shrubs to control their spread.

NEW FISHING EQUIPMENT LOANER PROGRAM

Try out spin cast rods OR fly fishing rods and gear for FREE!

Available Items:

- Fly rods and reels, case included
- Loaded lanyards (line clippers, tippet, forceps, floatant)
- One box of locally made flies
- Spin cast fishing rods and reels, rod holder if needed
- Tackle boxes (forceps, line clippers, extra swivels, bobbers, sinkers, hooks)

These items are free, but MUST be checked out and returned during our normal business hours, at our office at 107 Market Street, Coudersport PA.

*Need extra instruction?
Contact us to schedule a
basic lesson!*

POTTER COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT



New this year is our fishing gear loaner program, where you can borrow bait fishing and/or fly fishing equipment for free from our office! This equipment was made possible through a Fish and Boat Commission R3 rant applied for by Trout Unlimited's Women, Diversity, and Inclusion committee, which PCCD Educator Emily Shosh serves on. These loaner kits are now scattered throughout Pennsylvania for any one to try. Thankfully our fly fishing kits were stocked with handmade fly donations from the God's Country Chapter of Trout Unlimited.

Land Development

Erosion and Sedimentation Control Plans (Chapter 102) are required for all Earth Disturbance activities over 5000 square feet. The goal for this program is to help decrease accelerated erosion by land development / earth disturbance activities. Disturbance of any kind has the potential to discharge into waters of the Commonwealth.

General Permit (105) Regulations are required for construction, operating, modifying, enlarging, or abandoning any dam or water encroachment. An encroachment is defined as any structure that may have an effect on the course of a body of water, including wetlands.

The Conservation District provides technical assistance to these developers and their activities. In our third quarter of 2022 alone (July through September), the District assisted in 16 various projects, ranging from minor stream crossings to the Berger Lake Dredging in Galeton, pictured below in process.



Sustainable Forestry Initiative Workshop

On Thursday, October 6th, 2022 the Potter County Conservation District participated in “Erosion Control in Our Forests” - a Sustainable Forestry Initiative workshop for foresters, loggers, logging contractors, and private forest land-owners. The event provided SFI credits and was held at both the Cameron County Rec Center and on field sites within the Lyme Timber Properties. The event was also held with the support and expertise of several speakers and organizations, including the Elk, McKean, Cameron, and Tioga County Conservation Districts. In total, 25 attendees were present, and topics covered included erosion prevention/102/105 permitting, planning harvests, stream crossings, and post-timbering BMP’s. Financial and other support was provided by the Pennsylvania Association of Conservation Districts.



Partnering Organizations and Agencies

Questions about timber sales on your property, forest health, or invasive species in the forest?

DCNR Bureau of Forestry – **NEW:** Marshall Hamilton, Service Forester – marshamlt@pa.gov/814-274-3600

Questions about State Parks?

Visit <https://www.dcnr.pa.gov/StateParks>

Need soil or water test kits? Questions on food plots and cover crop recommendations?

Penn State Extension – Nicole Santangelo Thompson, Agronomy Educator—nls18@psu.edu/814-274-8540 ext. 102

Questions on wildlife, hunting, deer populations, or beaver dams?

PA Game Commission – **NEW:** Blaine Groshek, Game Warden, NC Region Office, 1566 Route 44, Jersey Shore, PA (570) 398-4744

Questions on fishing, boating, trout stocking, and aquatic invasive species?

PA Fish and Boat Commission – **NEW:** Thomas J. Watson III, Waterways Conservation Officer, Bureau of Law Enforcement, NC Region Office, 595 East Rolling Ridge Drive, Bellefonte, PA. (814) 359-5250

Need to report a Spotted Lanternfly sighting?

Contact the PA Department of Agriculture - 1-888-422-3359 **OR** use the reporting portal at <https://services.agriculture.pa.gov/SLFReport/>

Crossing a stream, or have questions about pond maintenance and construction?

Call PCCD's Resource Conservationist, Glenn Dunn II at 814-320-4013/g.dunnii@pottercd.com

Need info on floodplains for property planning?

Visit PAFloodRisk, a service of Penn State, FEMA, and PEMA to view maps at <https://pafloodrisk.psu.edu/home/>

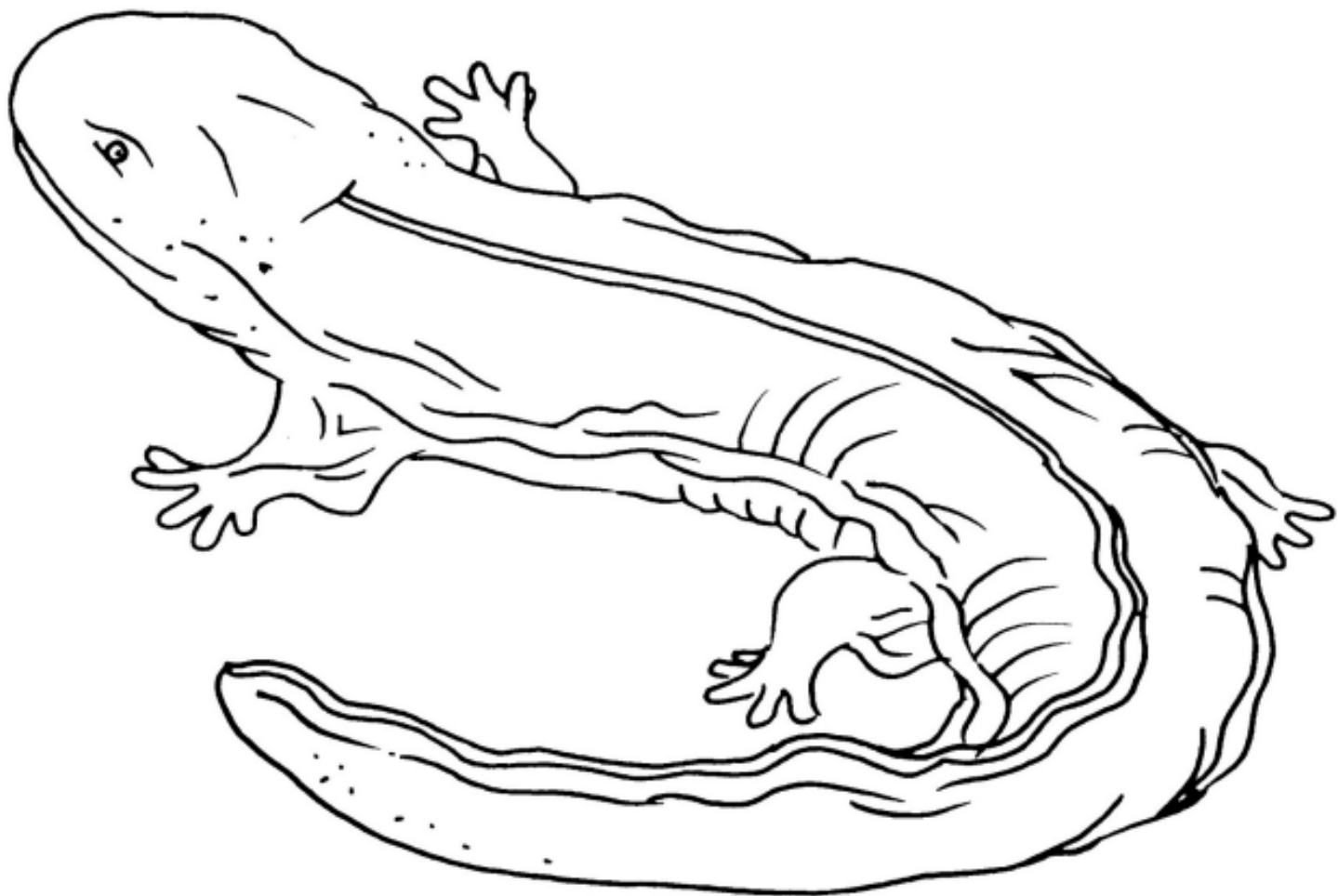
Need information on mapping, tax parcels, and county planning?

Contact the Potter County Planning and GIS department at (814) 274-8290 x229



PA's Amphibian and Reptile Coloring Series

Eastern Hellbender



All About Me: I am a Hellbender, a member of the Giant Salamander family. We are Pennsylvania's official state amphibian! We can grow from 11 to 20 inches long. People long ago believed we had a venomous bite, but that's not true. We are completely aquatic and nocturnal. We are usually gray in color, but some of us are brown or even black. Our belly is light in color. Sometimes we have black spots on our backs and sides. Our bodies and heads are flattened. Several flaps of wrinkled skin hang along our lower sides. We have tiny eyes. We start out with external gills that we lose when we reach four or five inches in length. You may see gill openings on adults. Our legs are short and stout. Our tails are flat and rudderlike to help us swim. We are found in the Susquehanna and Ohio River watersheds; but we don't live in the Delaware River watershed. We live in fast-moving, mid-sized streams and the channels of clear rivers. We prefer habitat with plenty of boulders, large stones, snags and other large, loose debris. We take refuge beneath this cover by day, coming out to forage for food at night. We eat crayfish, snails, aquatic insects, and worms.

POTTER COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT

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Phil Lehman, *Vice-Chairman*
Jon Blass, *Treasurer*
Stan Hess, *Alternate Treasurer*
Barry Hayman, *Commissioner Director*
Chris Robbins, *Farmer Director*
Jeff Cady, *Farmer Director*

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LV / DGR Project Specialist
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Associate Directors

Peter Ryan
Betsy Long
Bart Ianson
CC Felker
Don Heiner



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.

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.

