

SCHUYLKILL CONSERVATION DISTRICT

2014 ANNUAL REPORT



Photo by: Melissa Seigfried

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PEOPLE • CONSERVATION • RESOURCES

What is a Conservation District?

A conservation district is a legal subdivision of state government, responsible under state law for conservation work within its boundaries. Conservation district history is rooted in solving the soil erosion crisis of the Dust Bowl days of the 1930's. Pennsylvania first authorized the establishment of conservation districts in 1945 under Act 217.

Today conservation districts continue the "cooperative" approach in dealing with natural resource problems. Districts are experts at channeling resources from government agencies, conservation groups, and civic organizations, and putting those resources into action at the local level.

The Schuylkill Conservation District was formed in 1955 when Dr. James S. Shadle presented the County with a petition signed by County farmers. The District has evolved from an emphasis on soil conservation to one of all natural resource conservation efforts including erosion and sediment control, watershed protection, abandoned mine land remediation, environmental education, farmland preservation, farm conservation planning, outdoor recreation, riparian buffers, streambank stabilization, nutrient management, and land use.

MISSION STATEMENT: The Schuylkill Conservation District is dedicated to protect, enhance, restore, and promote the responsible use of the county's natural resources for future generations by partnering, coordinating, and fostering cooperation. This is accomplished with the assistance of public agencies, private groups, and individuals.

VALUE STATEMENT: The Schuylkill Conservation District will continue to provide professional, courteous service in a timely manner in response to natural resource related issues. The District prides itself in being a fair, cooperative, and reliable organization with a genuine commitment to natural resource conservation.

VISION STATEMENT: The Schuylkill Conservation District will strive to become a dedicated role model in conserving natural resources throughout Schuylkill County. This will be accomplished by being more comprehensive and dynamic as a cooperator, implementer, and disseminator of information to all interested parties, including public and private entities, as well as individuals.

District Directors, Associate Directors and Years of Service

Glenn Luckenbill	9	Chairman
Scott Graver	4	Vice Chairman
Stanley Fidler	27	Treasurer
Dottie Sterner	8	Secretary
F. Diane Wolfgang	11	Farmer Director
Gary Hess	3	County Commissioner
Glenn Hetherington	9	Farmer Director
Helen E. Masser	7	Farmer Director
Eric Leiby	1	Farmer Director
Barron "Boots" Hetherington	25	Associate Director
Diana Beausang	11	Associate Director
Chris Bentz	10	Associate Director
Robert S. Carl	11	Associate Director
John Usalis	8	Associate Director
Wayne Bowen	8	Associate Director
Frank Zukas	7	Associate Director
Ron Aungst	4	Associate Director
Ben Vaupel	2	Associate Director
Wayne Haas	2	Associate Director
Russell Wagner	3	Associate Director

The Schuylkill Conservation District Board Meetings are held monthly (except August) on the third Tuesday of the month at 1:00 PM in the Schuylkill County Ag Center Conference Room.

Meetings are advertised in local media. The 2014 Financial Report is available in the District Office.

Schuylkill Conservation District Staff and Years of Service

Elizabeth Hinkel	District Manager	7 years	Lorie Reichert	Conservation Program Assistant	< 1 year
Martie Hetherington	Chesapeake Bay Coordinator	26 years	Jenna Fehr	Conservation Program Coordinator	1 year
Andrea Geist	Agricultural Program Coordinator	1 year	Stephanie Lubinsky	Conservation Program Technician	13 years
"Porcupine" Pat McKinney	Environmental Education Coordinator	25 years	Christy Zulli	Conservation Program Technician	9 years
Robert Evanchalk	Parks and Recreation Supervisor	11 years	Wayne Lehman	County Natural Resource Specialist	7 years
Melissa Seigfried	Conservation Fiscal Technician	6 years	Bill Reichert	Watershed Maintenance Technician/Flood Recovery Manger	9 years

Schuylkill Acts & Impacts: A Great Success!

Alexa Kramer

**Schuylkill Headwaters Association
Education & Outreach Coordinator**

From June 7-14, 2014, ten high school students from throughout the Schuylkill River watershed embarked on a 120-mile adventure from the river's headwaters in Tamaqua all the way to its confluence with the Delaware River in Philadelphia. The Schuylkill Headwaters Association, in collaboration with Outward Bound Philadelphia and over 25 sponsors and partnering organizations throughout the watershed, piloted this first year service-learning program and made it not only an expedition to inspire watershed action, but also a great success. For eight days and seven nights, the students from Schuylkill, Berks, Montgomery, Chester, and Philadelphia counties traveled throughout the 2,000-square-mile watershed by canoe, foot, and van. Participants got to experience sleeping under the stars, as they spent the week camping or staying in basic accommodations at various parks and preserves. They also spent the week learning about an array of issues that impact water quality of the Schuylkill River. Some of these issues included 1) the legacy of coal mining on water quality; 2) agricultural impacts including erosion and manure management; 3) the role of land preservation in watershed health; and 4) the impacts of stormwater and impervious surfaces on water resources.



Throughout the week, students were encouraged to think critically about these different issues, develop important problem solving skills, and how to take a hands-on approach to find solutions for these problems.



2014 Dr. James S. Shadle Conservation Farm of the Year

Our 2014 Dr. James S. Shadle Conservation Farm of the Year is Wind Mill Farm. The farm is located in the Pine Grove area, and is owned and operated by Andrew, Dennis, and Ron Ray Daubert. Currently, the family is milking 160 Brown Swiss cows, with an additional 50 heifers housed on the farm as well.

The Dauberts have been working with the Schuylkill Conservation District for many years. In 1989, they became first Chesapeake Bay Cooperator and also the first farm to install a manure storage project under the newly established Chesapeake Bay Program. Other Bay projects include the construction of two roofed bedded pack facilities and a system to prevent and control barnyard runoff. They were also the first cooperator to develop and implement a nutrient management plan. They participated in several field trials to determine if there was any yield drop associated with using the recommended rate of less fertilizer along with their usual application of manure. Manure storage facilities allow manure to be stored and spread on fields to be utilized by crops reducing the need for commercial fertilizers. Manure spreading can be done when field and soil conditions will not be compromised by the use of heavy equipment. A manure/nutrient management plan is a process, and a set of conservation practices, used by farmers to utilize the proper amount, placement, and timing of manure and fertilizer applications. This provides the nutrients necessary to achieve crop yields, and minimizes over application, which, in turn, reduces agricultural nonpoint source pollution and protects water quality.

There has been a big push in recent years to encourage farmers to adopt no-till and cover crops to reduce erosion and improve soil health. Most farmers have only adopted these practices in the last few years, but the Dauberts saw those benefits a long time ago, as they have been doing both for 30 years.

The family has also been working with NRCS since 2010, to further enhance their operation by installing best management practices that benefit the environment. Through the CREP program, the Dauberts were able to fence the animals out of the stream, and plant riparian forested buffers in areas of their pasture. This prevents manure from entering the stream, and improves the stream channel by allowing the banks to heal. The trees provide shading to the stream, which keeps the water cool and conditions right for native cold water species. A lined waterway was also installed in the pasture to repair a gully that had formed there.

As the Daubert family expanded their operation, they outgrew the manure storage capacity that they had available. Through an EQIP contract with NRCS they were able to install a concrete liquid storage for the lactating cows, which provided them with 6 months capacity. They also installed a bedded pack storage facility for the dry cows and heifers.

When animals are allowed to access pasture areas, it is common to have animal concentration areas, which can lead to manure and sediment runoff. The Dauberts NRCS project included heavy use area protection, to stabilize these areas.

The Dauberts aren't finished yet, and are continuing to look at ways to improve their operation, and lessen their footprint on the environment. Their next step is to install animal trails and walkways to further eliminate areas that are prone to erosion.

Wind Mill Farm is certainly a family run business, with three generations actively involved in it at this time. Each step they take in their conservation efforts continues to build on those that they already have in place. It is obvious that the Daubert family has a genuine concern for the environment, and understands that by caring for it, they are making these resources available for generations to come.



Front row, left to right: Doyle Dietz, The Dauberts, members of the Blue Mountain Green Club, Kathy Blasser, Arlene Deibert

Second row, left to right: Tri-Valley School District representatives, Pam Ulicny, Elizabeth Hinkel, Kurt Blazer, Derrick Ballreich, Susan Hyland, Representative Mike Tobash

CONGRATULATIONS 2014 AWARD WINNERS!

- ◆ **VOLUNTEERS OF THE YEAR:** Arlene Deibert, Klingerstown for her efforts in making sure that “The Gap” is a scenic drive between Klingerstown and Erdman.
- ◆ **EDUCATOR OF THE YEAR:** Kathy Blasser of Saint Clair Elementary/Middle School. Kathy inspires a love of learning especially about our environment through a wide range of activities that include involving the school’s Junior Honor Society, Saint Clair Up All Night, and assisting with the Bear Creek Festival.
- ◆ **PROFESSIONAL OF THE YEAR:** Susan Hyland who coordinates the Master Gardeners of Schuylkill County for her inspiration and support for this group that does much to help our county.
- ◆ **MEDIA CONSERVATION AWARD:** Doyle Dietz for his able help and talent in promoting the Norm Thornberg Youth Conservation Camp and other initiatives through his full-page Outdoor Section of the Republican Herald.
- ◆ **FOREST STEWARDSHIP AWARD:** Tri-Valley Area School District for the forestry projects and their environmental education center development.
- ◆ **ORGANIZATION OF THE YEAR:** Penn State-Schuylkill Campus students under the guidance of Leadership and Development and Community Service Coordinator Tina Rose. Projects include cleaning Landingville Marsh and the nearby Bartram Trail plus helping at Healthy Haven event.
- ◆ **CONSERVATION SERVICE AWARD—BUSINESS:** Kurt Blazer of TRC Solutions who is a consultant for PennDOT for Rt. 61 in Deer Lake. He is doing much to insure that erosion controls are implemented and that water quality is a high priority.
- ◆ **CONSERVATION SERVICE AWARD - BUSINESS:** Darrick Ballreich who is project manager for HRI Inc. who is insuring that the work on Rt. 61 is going well for conservation.
- ◆ **YOUTH CONSERVATIONIST OF THE YEAR:** Blue Mountain Green Club for the assistance that they provide in projects that include the Bear Creek Festival.
- ◆ **CONSERVATION AWARD OF PUBLIC SERVICE:** Sierra Gladfelter for her intense passion in the pursuit of numerous environmental projects including Schuylkill Acts and Impacts.



* Jenna Fehr, Conservation Program Coordinator
* Christy Zulli, Conservation Program Technician

* Stephanie M. Lubinsky, Conservation Program Technician

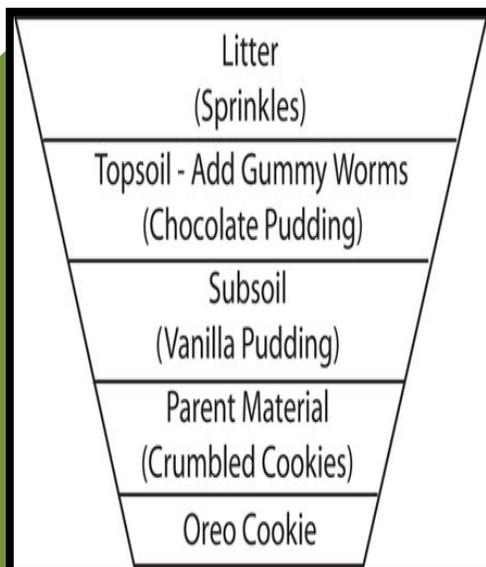
E&S UPDATES

The Erosion and Sediment (E&S) Control Program focuses on the conservation of Schuylkill County's soil and water resources. In an attempt to control sediment pollution from erosion, PA state regulations require persons proposing or conducting earth disturbance activities to develop, implement and maintain best management practices (BMPs) to minimize the potential for accelerated erosion and sedimentation and to manage post-construction stormwater.

The District provides technical assistance and reviews E&S control plans and NPDES permits for earth disturbance activities. Site inspections are conducted to ensure that E&S plans are implemented and that Best Management Practices (BMPs) are properly installed. By doing this, the District strives to meet its goal of minimizing accelerated erosion and sediment pollution to the waters of the Commonwealth as a result of earthmoving activities.

2014 E&S Year in Review

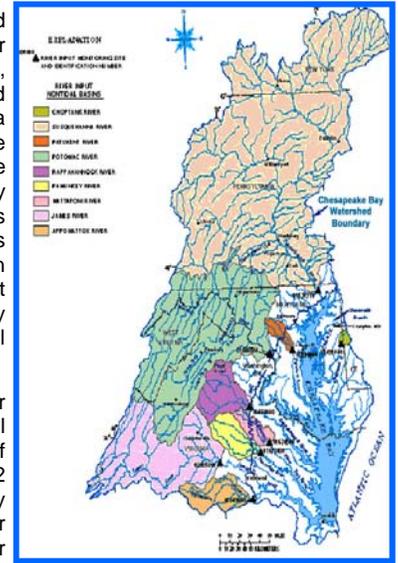
- 206 acres of earth disturbance proposed in the county
- Conducted 138 reviews of E&S plans or NPDES applications
- 40 new or renewal General NPDES Permit applications were authorized
- 5 Individual NPDES Permit applications were recommended for authorization to the DEP Northeast Regional Office
- 521 hours of technical assistance provided to engineers, landowners, municipal officials, and contractors
- Investigated 17 complaints related to earth disturbance activity
- Conducted 87 inspections at 78 different sites



Christy Zulli (center), Erosion & Sediment Control Technician, and Schuylkill Conservation District interns Megan and Kaitlin (left and right) serve "Edible Soil" dirt pudding desserts to attendees at the 2014 Bear Creek Festival.

CHESAPEAKE BAY PROGRAM By: Martie Hetherington, Chesapeake Bay Coordinator

The goal of the Chesapeake Bay Program is to reduce nutrients and sediment entering streams and waterways by the installation of best management practices (BMPs) and the implementation of nutrient or manure management plans (NMPs or MMPs). For the past 26 years, the Chesapeake Bay Program, funded by Pennsylvania's Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), has provided costshare and technical assistance through the Conservation District to agricultural operations in the Susquehanna River Watershed within the County. In 2010, the EPA formalized pollution limits, giving each state specific numeric targets for nitrogen, phosphorous and sediment pollution reductions they must achieve by 2025. The Chesapeake Bay Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) and Pennsylvania Chesapeake Bay Watershed Implementation Plan (WIP) have increased focus on Pennsylvania's Chesapeake Bay efforts and compliance with existing agricultural regulatory requirements. Conservation districts participating in the Bay Program were directed by DEP to develop a Chesapeake Bay Implementation Strategy specifically for their county utilizing selected BMPs that have been identified to be ones that provide the most benefit for the least cost. The recently mandated efforts in the Chesapeake Bay cleanup place an emphasis on compliance with clean water regulations, their enforcement and potential penalties for non-compliance.



In response to this compliance initiative, DEP mandated that all districts that receive funds for Chesapeake Bay Technician positions conduct agricultural educational/outreach site visits to all agricultural landowners within the bay area of the County. For the past several years the SCD Ag staff conducted a minimum of 100 visits each year to inform landowners of their obligations under Chapter 102 (agricultural erosion and sedimentation) and Chapter 91.36 (manure management planning). Recently updated Chapter 102 regulations require all agricultural operations to implement a conservation plan or agricultural erosion and sedimentation plan. Chapter 91.36 requires a nutrient management plan or manure management plan on all operations where manure is produced and/or utilized. Animal concentration areas (ACAs) on all livestock operations will be required to install BMPs to address sediment and manure runoff from these non-vegetated areas. Manure runoff from barnyards and feedlots must be minimized and addressed as this will now be considered a point source discharge. District staff provide technical assistance to determine and implement the BMPs needed to manage and prevent the environmental impacts from these areas.

In February 2014, DEP selected six small watersheds (one in each DEP Region of Pennsylvania) having water quality impaired by agriculture. Each of the working farms in these watersheds was to be visited by DEP during 2014. The objective of DEP's "visits" was to check for regulatory compliance and report any water quality violations. Reports were forwarded to the county conservation district. The district would work with the landowner to gain voluntary compliance and correct any water quality violations. Funding was provided to the conservation districts to assist landowners in obtaining manure/nutrient management plans, conservation plans and to install best management practices. The costshare for the program was determined to be 100%, so there was no cost for the landowner.

Starting in May 2014, a DEP compliance representative from the Northeast Regional office began the "compliance initiative" by visiting farms in the Mahantango Watershed. The Mahantango Watershed is one of six in Pennsylvania that DEP had selected to conduct agricultural compliance inspections. The Mahantango Creek is on DEP's list of impaired waterways. It is listed as "agriculturally impaired" due primarily to sediment. Due to the large area encompassed by the Mahantango Watershed, DEP divided the watershed into three sections. In 2014, DEP's area of concentration for their inspections was along the main stem of the Mahantango Creek. This year in 2015, DEP will visit operations along the Little Mahantango Creek down to the confluence with the main stem. Finally in 2016, the area from the confluence of the two streams to the county-line will receive the inspections.

In an effort to notify landowners of the new Mahantango Initiative, the SCD immediately sent letters to landowners and cooperators in that watershed informing them about DEP's visits, suggestions on documentation that might be requested and to contact the SCD with any concerns. The DEP representative completed 21 visits between May and December. No water quality violations were reported. However, farmers did contact the SCD with resource concerns that they wanted to correct on their operations. The Bay Coordinator along with NRCS personnel and the Bay Engineer have been conducting follow-up visits to determine and prioritize the resource concerns on these operations. Design work and construction was completed for a manure reception pit and a roof runoff system on a farm. Survey and design work is being completed on the following projects on 11 of the farms visited in 2014 for construction in 2015: Roofed barnyard, three roofed manure storages, storage terrace, cropland terrace and outlet, surface water control system, spring development and watering system, animal trails and walkways, diversion, streambank fencing and 7 grassed waterways.

In 2014, Chesapeake Bay Program funding was used to help sponsor a Schuylkill County Ag Day for farmers. Approximately 100 participants were provided with compliance information packets and a Weed Identification Guide procured with Special Project funding. Sessions were held to inform the participants about the new regulations. The District appreciates the collaborative efforts of NRCS and Penn State Extension staff in planning and presenting these meetings. With the assistance from Penn State Extension and NRCS, the District conducted and sponsored two manure management workshops to assist producers with writing manure management plans for their operations. The SCD continues the outreach effort to inform landowners of recent regulations and requirements in the areas of manure management and soil erosion that may impact their farming and livestock operations. Information packets and site visits are provided for new contacts.

The Nutrient Management Act 38 Legislation requires District employees writing and approving nutrient management plans to become certified plan writers and maintain their certification by attending update trainings. The Bay Coordinator provides technical assistance and information to farmers who are concerned about remaining in compliance with recent changes in regulations. The Bay Coordinator provided assistance in the review of Nutrient Plans for CAOs and CAFOS. During 2014, investigations in response to complaints were conducted relating to manure odor, manure spreading, runoff, storage and soil erosion issues.

"Special Project" funding was used to costshare four manure/nutrient management plans for landowners covering 1,552 acres of cropland. The majority of costshare programs require a landowner to have a nutrient management plan (or approved equal) in hand in order to qualify for BMP funding. These landowners were able to qualify for funding to be used towards best management practices because they had obtained nutrient/manure management plans.

(Continued on page 17)

DIRT AND GRAVEL ROAD PROGRAM

2013-2014 PROJECTS

Continued improvements - Reilly Township – Black Diamond Road
\$35,771.40



COASTAL NONPOINT POLLUTION PROGRAM

The Schuylkill Conservation District (SCD) completed its twelfth year of the Coastal Nonpoint Pollution Program (CNPP). The program, which originally began in October of 2002, has opened up new opportunities for the Conservation District to interact with the Coastal Watershed (Schuylkill River Watershed) from Schuylkill County to the mouth of the Delaware Bay.



Programs conducted on water quality testing and watershed awareness were held for the entire 5th grade class of the Hamburg Area School District.

Hamburg students received first-hand experience with water quality testing and collecting stream macroinvertebrates. Tours highlighting (AMD) impacts to the Schuylkill River Watershed were held in the spring and fall semesters for Kutztown University geology and hydrology students in 2014. The SCD assisted the Schuylkill Headwaters Association, Inc. (SHA) in conducting the “Schuylkill Acts & Impacts” a week long program highlighting various pollution issues throughout the Schuylkill River Watershed and mitigation and monitoring efforts. The SCD’s portion of the tour focused on AMD impacts and mitigation efforts in the headwaters. A tour was held for members of the Schuylkill Action Network to highlight AMD remediation efforts in the Schuylkill River Watershed.

In May, the SCD held the 13th Annual Bear Creek Festival which was attended by over 2,000 participants. During this event, the SCD educated participants on a variety of environmental themes including watershed protection and enhancement, non-point source pollution prevention, biodiversity, sustainability, toxics and pollutants in the environment. The SCD provided speakers who discussed Acid Mine Drainage (AMD) remediation, agriculture pollution prevention, non-point source pollution reduction activities for households, water conservation, agriculture education, sprawl prevention, community revitalization, and various other topics related to watershed health.



In the Schuylkill River Watershed, the SCD was active with AMD remediation. Monitoring of the Bell Colliery Phase 3 Optimization Project, funded through a Section 319(h) Nonpoint Source Management Grant, was completed in the summer. Monitoring showed the newly refurbished treatment system is effective at treating the low pH, highly acidic, metal laden water of the Bell Colliery Discharge. The West Branch Phase II – Design Project, funded through a Section 319(h) Nonpoint Source Management Grant, was completed in fall. This project identified additional areas of water loss along with floodplain restoration along the next 6,000 linear foot section of the West Branch Schuylkill River. SHA’s Schuylkill River Floodplain Restoration Design and Permit project, funded through a Section 319(h) Nonpoint Source Management Grant, identified, characterized, and began to permit the removal of several coal waste piles along the Schuylkill River that will also double as floodplain restoration areas. The Oak Hill Boreholes Restoration Project Feasibility Study, funded through a Growing Greener Watershed Protection Grant, continued through the past year with the consultant developing the final concept design for a treatment system for the Oak Hill Boreholes and potentially the Pine Knot Discharge. AMD monitoring continued to develop a AMD Set-Aside Program Restoration Plan in the Mill Creek Watershed through a Section 319(h) Nonpoint Source Management Grant titled Updating AMD WIPs as Qualified Hydrologic Units: Little Schuylkill River and Mill Creek Grant. Monitoring also began on West Creek through the West Creek Flow Loss Assessment and Remediation Plan, a Section 319(h) Nonpoint Source Management Grant. This project is similar to the West Branch Phase II project as it is looking to identify areas of water loss from West Creek to the underlying Oak Hill Mine Complex and design a mitigation strategy while taking into account potential increased flooding risks downstream.



2014 was another successful year for the CNPP. Through outreach and education, and continued data collection, Schuylkill County continues to address water quality on a coastal-zone scale. CNPP practices and principles will continue to be applied in 2015.

WATERSHED PROGRAMS

Wayne Lehman, County Natural Resource Specialist

The Schuylkill Conservation District (SCD) worked on various abandoned mine drainage (AMD) treatment system design, construction, and maintenance projects this past year. Extensive effort was put forth to move forward floodplain restoration projects to reduce flooding to communities in the Northern Swatara Creek Watershed. A variety of education and outreach programs were held for the public on how to protect and improve the health of watersheds throughout Schuylkill County.

Efforts continued to reduce flooding impacts to communities in the Northern Swatara Creek Watershed by the Swatara Watershed Long-term Recovery Committee (SWLRC) headed by the SCD's County Natural Resource Specialist. Work continued to design and permit the removal of a large eroding coal waste pile along with floodplain restoration on a 40 acre abandoned mine land (AML) site to reduce sedimentation and flooding in the downstream Borough of Tremont through a Section 319(h) Nonpoint Source Management Grant. The SWLRC began design on a 20 acre floodplain restoration project within the Borough of Pine Grove to reduce flooding impacts to Borough residents and businesses which was funded through a Growing Greener Grant. A Section 319(h) Nonpoint Source Management Grant was received by the SCD to retrofit the Oneida #3 AMD treatment system with the capability to automatically flush the limestone treatment cell. This retrofit will reduce treatment system maintenance costs and ensure the limestone treatment cell is flushed on a routine basis ensuring maximum treatment effectiveness of a very large flow and acidic discharge in the Catawissa Creek Watershed.



A presentation on AMD pollution and mitigation was held for the Pine Grove Area Middle School 7th grade class. Another presentation on AMD pollution and mitigation was held for the Tri-Valley High School Environmental Science class in the fall. As part of the Trout in the Classroom a presentation was held for Williams Valley School District's Science Classes as part of the trout release in the spring. During the 7th grade class field trip, students received hands on experience in water quality testing, stream habitat assessment and macroinvertebrate sampling. A macroinvertebrate collection and identification seminar/field study was held for the Pine Grove Area High School environmental science class in spring. During the Tri-Valley School District 7th Grade Class Outdoor Day a presentation was held on water pollution issues and how surface water pollution can lead to ground water pollution. Through the Sportsmen's Advisory Board, planning began for the 2015 Great American Outdoor Show to promote Schuylkill County's vast outdoor recreational opportunities. Also the Sportsmen's Advisory Board released an updated Outdoor Recreation Map this past year that highlights various outdoor activities through Schuylkill County.

Operation and maintenance of existing AMD treatment systems continued to be a large component of the Watersheds Program. Routine maintenance and monitoring is required to ensure AMD treatment systems are effectively mitigating AMD pollution thus improving water quality in a receiving stream. AMD treatment systems maintained throughout the past year were the Audenreid Mine Tunnel Discharge, Oneida #1 Mine Tunnel Discharge, Oneida #3 Mine Tunnel Discharge, Tracy Airhole Discharge and Lorberry Diversion Wells and Wetlands.

Watershed restoration, protection, and enhancement are critical components of improving and restoring the quality of life in Schuylkill County. Doing this is only possible through the development of partnerships and coalitions comprised of like-minded volunteers, organizations, and businesses. The end result of all of this is a cleaner and healthier environment and brighter future for generations to come.

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

By: "Porcupine Pat" McKinney-Environmental Education Coordinator

"Awareness leads to appreciation and actions to help the environment" is the main goal of the environmental education program. In 2014, 224 programs for 39,011 participants were presented.



A major highlight of the year was the printing of our Program Guide that promotes the vast array of educational programs for people of all ages. The guide is aligned with the state standards and lists websites for additional information.

Other items of interest for the year include the development of a trail in Albright's Woods by the Girl Scouts of McKeansburg. This project is also a collaboration with the Blue Mountain High School Green Club, the Borough of Orwigsburg and Orwigsburg Lions. The high school created interpretive signage and the scouts will be developing and re-doing the trail as it loops into the woods.

Walks through our partnership called Schuylkill On the Move were also very successful. Many thanks to hike leaders John Domalakes and Mike Centeleghe for their time and expertise in making these opportunities for people to connect with the outdoors possible. These walks are also sponsored by the Schuylkill County Visitors Bureau, Schuylkill County's VISION and the Schuylkill County Conservancy.

The Schuylkill County Envirothon received generous funding in the amount of \$2500 from the Schuylkill County Municipal Authority which shares common goals to insure that clean water is available to all residents. We also received a \$600 mini-grant – as did other conservation districts – from the PA Envirothon. Funds from the grant were slated for a new 4th place finish and also Wildlife Journals for high school teams. Gordon Food Service also graciously provided donated paper products. The event touches the lives of over 300 young people from throughout the county.

Grants totaling close to \$2,500 were provided by the Schuylkill Area Community Foundation. Funds from these grants supported the development of a new agricultural promotion banner. The banner highlights the diversity, innovation, sustainability plus the local yet global components of agri-business. Generous support for our programs was also provided by Air Products (\$2,000).

The Annual Farm Tour was a successful endeavor to showcase the agri-business industry here in our county. The tour featured the Schuylkill County Ag Museum at the county fairgrounds plus agri-entertainment at Martin's on Rt. 183. People enjoyed their corn maze. We also stopped at Anderson's Farm Market and then Long Trout Winery.

The founder of the conservation district and strong supporter of environmental education also passed away this year. Dr. James S. Shadle served 58 years on board and that is a state record for anybody serving as a board member. His leadership helped to create the program that we have today. Our annual awards ceremony includes the Conservation Farm of the Year and it will now include his name in this award title.

The Schuylkill County Green Challenge was created in partnership with Schuylkill County's VISION and corporate sponsors such as Wal-Mart Distribution Center 7030, Jeld-Wen, Lowes, and Wegmans. Sponsorships amounting to \$8,000 were awarded in both prize packages to individual students and also in the form of mini-grants to teachers. The Challenge brings together our essay and poster contests plus introduces a new conservation/environmental initiative in a competitive setting for high school students.

The Education Committee of the conservation district welcomed a new initiative that is available for people of all ages. The district is now sponsoring, along with the Schuylkill County Conservancy, the "Give Us Your Best Shot" Photo Contest.

Monetary prizes will be awarded plus recognition will be given to two grand prize winners. The popularity of digital technology and photography laid the groundwork for this new educational endeavor.

The 20th Annual Schuylkill County Youth Field Day was held at the Friedensburg Fish and Game Association grounds. Almost 90 boys and girls between 10-15 years old plus many parents from throughout the county participated in this educational and fun program. The district cooperates with the Schuylkill County Sportsmen's Association to make this event possible.

The Norm Thornburg Youth Conservation Camp was again successful with 26 young people participating. This three day, two night camp focuses on outdoor recreation and environmental education and is another cooperative endeavor with the Schuylkill County Sportsmen's Association.

"Seedling" News Journal continues to bring news and information in a green and cost-effective on-line format. It is seen as an important source of locally-led conservation news. If you know anyone who would like to receive our news journal, please contact us at porcupinepat@yahoo.com.

By visiting www.co.schuylkill.pa.us and clicking on the butterfly, you will learn about what is offered at Sweet Arrow Lake County Park. The conservation district provides environmental programs on-site that were wildly received.

Sweet Arrow Lake County Park was also the setting for the first annual "Angling for Miracles" fundraiser at the county park to benefit the Children's Miracle Network. It was held in April and raised funds to benefit CMN.

Soil and Water Stewardship Week materials were distributed to schools throughout the county. Booklets promoting Schuylkill County created by the Schuylkill County Visitors Bureau were distributed to many numbers of program participants.

The annual tree seedling sale – now in cooperation with the Sweet Arrow Lake Conservation Association - was a success and worked out well with Penn State Master Gardeners assisting. A number of seedlings were sold and Schuylkill County is greener for it!

The Bear Creek Festival was also held in May and proved again to be a very popular event. Many hands on activities were made available for people of all ages. Look for our festival to be held again this May at the Schuylkill County Fairgrounds.



AGRICULTURAL LAND PRESERVATION

Andrea K. Geist, Agricultural Program Coordinator

The year 2014 was another successful year for the Schuylkill County Agricultural Land Preservation Program as we continued to work towards our goal of protecting our county's productive farmland while safeguarding our rich agricultural heritage. In 2014 the development rights to the Glenn Hetherington and Gary and Amy Anderson farms were purchased, bringing the total farms preserved in Schuylkill County to 96. In addition, three farms were selected by the Schuylkill County Agricultural Land Preservation Board (SCALPB) for easement purchase. Two of these farms were also approved by the State Board and will likely go to closing in early 2015. One of these farms was presented at the October 16, 2014 State Board meeting, which also served a celebration for Pennsylvania reaching the 500,000 acres preserved milestone. Pennsylvania currently leads the nation in Farmland Preservation.



To date, there are 96 farms in Schuylkill County that are preserved in perpetuity encompassing approximately 10,287 acres. Approximately 93 farms comprising just over 7,500 acres were included in the 24th ranking round. That is a decrease of 2 farms from the 2013 ranking. One farm was selected for purchase using leftover funds from 2013. This farm was presented to the State Board during the 500,000 Acre Celebration, where Pennsylvania met the milestone of 500,000 acres of farmland preserved since the beginning of the program. Pennsylvania currently leads the nation in number of acres preserved. The top two farms from the 2014 ranking were also selected for easement purchase. One of these farms was approved by the State Board in December, and the other is waiting on a small portion of funding that will be made available in 2015.

The biggest obstacle that continues to hold the program back is available funding. The average funding over the last few years typically only allows for two farms to be preserved each year. However, every farm that is preserved is a victory that benefits us all, and every dollar of funding gets us closer to our goals. The continued support of the County Commissioners is greatly appreciated and we would like to thank them, as they have assisted us in getting together the funding necessary to keep the program going. We are very dedicated to this program, and are doing what we can to keep preserving our county's precious farmland.

With limited funding and a large waiting list comes the need to prioritize, which requires an effective and efficient ranking system. The Board decided that parts of the current ranking system were outdated and no longer worked as they should, beginning a long re-evaluation of the county's FLESA ranking system. This discussion also sparked the need to develop a mission statement for the program, clearly defining how the Board is to prioritize farms for easement purchase. The changes made to the FLESA ranking system will go into effect for the 2015 ranking round. The Board will meet in January 2015 to finalize the changes made to the FLESA ranking system, and again in April 2015 to decide the next round of easement purchases.

Ten new applications were received in 2014, demonstrating the continued interest throughout the county in this valuable program. Nine of these new applications met the minimum requirements for the program and will be ranked for the 2015 funding year, which will be the 25th round since the program began. The new applicants show that the program is still very popular among producers in the county.

Urban sprawl is a problem that is very real and continues to threaten Schuylkill County's agricultural land. Unfortunately, it seems to be increasing, especially in the southern and eastern portions of the county. The Schuylkill County Agricultural Land Preservation Program is one way we can combat the loss of productive farmland, and anyone interested in the program should contact Andrea Geist at (570) 622-3742 x112 for an information packet and application.

ACT 38 - NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

Andrea K. Geist, Agricultural Program Coordinator



In 2014, the Conservation District received eleven nutrient management plans for review. Three of the plans were for new operations, and the remaining plans were 3-year updates for existing operations, which are required by the PA Act 38 regulations. One of the new plans was an out of county NMP reviewed for the new Agricultural Program Coordinator's certification process. Two operations were CAFOs, six were CAOs and three were volunteer operations (VAOs).

Schuylkill County currently has 19 farms with nutrient management plans. Six of these farms are CAFOs, twelve are CAOs, and one is a volunteer. All of these farms are regulated by the Act 38 Nutrient Management program. A volunteer operation is not considered a concentrated animal operation, and therefore is not required to have an Act 38 approved Nutrient Management Plan, but the operator has chosen to have one. All CAFOs are required to be reviewed and permitted by DEP, and have additional regulations that they must follow. All farms regulated by Act 38 are also required to have an up-to-date Ag Erosion and Sediment Control Plan to comply with Chapter 102 Erosion and Sediment Control regulations. For most farms, this requirement is covered by an NRCS Conservation Plan.

The SCD is delegated by the State Conservation Commission (SCC) to administer the Act 38 Program. This delegation now includes the Chapter 91 Manure Management Program. Unlike Act 38, which regulates larger farms, Chapter 91 includes all operations, big or small, that raise livestock or utilize manure. This includes operations with just a few animals, equine facilities, and 4-H project animals. The updated Manure Management regulations, and associated new standard Manure Management Plan format, have led to a decrease in registered Act 38 volunteers. Many of the former VAOs have decided instead to have a Manure Management Plan developed for their operations. These plans are easier to manage, because they do not have to be updated every 3 years. Even though the updates are not required, the manure management plans are very thorough and a good tool for farmers to use.

All farms in Pennsylvania are also regulated by the Chapter 102 – Erosion and Sediment Control program. Farms that utilize plowing and tilling (including no-till) activities in fields and pastures, as well as any farms with animal heavy use area over 5,000 sq. ft. are required to have an agricultural erosion and sediment control plan. Conservation plans developed by NRCS meet the Ag E&S requirements, as long as they are current and meet the tolerable soil loss.

The SCD is not a regulatory agency. Our goal is to provide technical assistance and information to the agricultural community in order to help reach voluntary compliance. Anyone that has an agricultural operation, large or small, that is unsure of whether or not they are in compliance with these regulations can contact the SCD for assistance.

The District thanks all county livestock operators who have cooperated by complying with the Act 38/Chapter 91 and Chapter 102 regulations. Improvement of our water quality is the goal of this program, and your hard work is very much appreciated.

Schuylkill County Agribusiness Committee

Andrea K. Geist, Agricultural Program Coordinator

Mission Statement: The Agribusiness Committee advocates for agriculture through education and communication in addition to providing services that celebrate the agricultural community of Schuylkill County.

The Schuylkill County Agribusiness Committee was formed in 2009, with the purpose of helping promote and support local agriculture, and to inform the non-agriculture community about its importance. The number of people that have little to no concept of where their food comes from or how it is produced is on the rise. The Agribusiness Committee is hoping to change this trend.



Agriculture and Outdoor Recreation and Tourism continue to 'flip flop' as the #1 and #2 industries in Schuylkill County. Of course they are very dependent on each other, as they both depend largely on the natural resources of the County. Farmers are very concerned about maintaining the County's natural resources, because without healthy soil and water, it would be impossible to produce safe and abundant food supply.

The mission of the Agribusiness Committee is to promote our local farms and products, while providing agricultural education to the public. In 2014, much of the Committee's focus was geared towards the Committee's new marketing program concept, called Schuylkill County Grown.

The idea for the Agribusiness Committee's "Schuylkill County Grown" marketing concept was inspired by the PA Preferred marketing program. PA Preferred is successful and well known because the majority of Pennsylvanians want to buy and consume local products, therefore supporting local economies. We believe that same desire to buy local and support local could be just as strong at the county level.

The county based program is still in the earliest stages of development. So far, the committee has discussed elements such as the logistics of the county, what commodities to include, and what the goals and objectives of the program are. The program will be used to promote agricultural awareness and education as well as to support the local economy.

The program will be used to market agricultural products grown in Schuylkill County and get these commodities from local producers right to local consumers. Commodities that are in their raw form, such as fruits, vegetables, and trees will be the initial focus of the program. The idea is to start small and simple, and as time goes on we'll learn what works well and be able to branch out to include other commodities. The next step will be getting input from local producers and business so we can tailor the program to meet local interests.

While the marketing program is still in the early planning stages, the Agribusiness Committee has begun fundraising efforts to raise money and awareness of the concept. The Committee is currently holding a T-shirt sale where the shirts feature the logo for the Schuylkill Chamber Agribusiness Committee on the front with the words Schuylkill County Grown "stamped" on the back. The shirts can be purchased and picked up at the Schuylkill Conservation District.

This year also marked the third very successful year for the Schuylkill County Farm Tour. The 2014 tour had 45 participants. The bus tour took participants to various agribusinesses throughout Schuylkill County. These included Martin's Farm Market – Schuylkill Haven, Anderson Farm Stand – Friedensburg, Schuylkill County Ag Museum – Auburn, and Long Trout Winery – Auburn. Passengers learned about each business, and even had a chance to buy local produce and wine along the way. Another farm tour is being planned for 2015, but if you want to buy local and can't wait until then, please take time to check out the Schuylkill County Farm Market map. It can be found online at the Schuylkill County Visitor's Bureau website, at www.schuylkill.org or from Penn State Schuylkill County Extension at <http://extension.psu.edu/schuylkill>. The map lists the location of each participating farm market, as well as information on what they grow, hours of operation and driving directions.

The Agribusiness Committee is busy planning events for 2015 and beyond. It is open to anyone interested, and those interested in joining the committee can contact the Schuylkill Conservation District at (570) 622-3742 ext. 117 for more information. The Committee meets at the Schuylkill Chamber of Commerce, Union Station, Pottsville.

Parks and Recreation

Robert Evanchalk, Parks and Recreation Supervisor



Continuing the growth of Parks and Recreation

Visitors continued taking advantage of the major improvements to facilities at Sweet Arrow Lake County Park in 2014. Visitorship was up again and estimated to be over 40,000 visits for 2014. The Clubhouse is truly a unique and desirable facility for all kinds of activities.

For 2014 over \$27,000 worth of income was derived from building rentals. Almost 17,000 people attended functions and programs at the Clubhouse and Pavilions. The average number of building uses was .929 /day for a total of 339 uses for the year.

Sweet Arrow Lake County Park Rental Comparison

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Business Meeting	34	30	26	33	26
Class Reunion	0	0	0	0	0
Educational For- Profit	2		2	1	1
Educational Non-Profit	6	11	6	9	5
Other	4	3	10	2	0
Pavilion	17	36	50	37	39
Waterfall Pavilion **	2	3	13	9	20
Co. Agency/Affiliation			13	11	28
Public Event	71	70	105	75	81
Small Class reunion	1	5	2	5	5
Small Party or Meeting	96	101	83	87	85
Wedding Rehearsal			20	20	21
Wedding	22	24	23	22	28
Number of uses	255	283	353	311	339
Income \$	\$20,568.00	\$23,996.25	\$26,491.50	\$25,888.75	\$27,414.50
Number persons attending rental functions	12,735	14,486	16,510	16,285	16,960
Ave. Number uses per week	4.9	5.4	6.8	6.0	6.5
Average uses per day	0.699	0.775	0.967	0.852	0.929

An additional \$4,120 was earned from canoe and kayak rentals in 2014. This is almost double the income for 2013. 514 people rented boats from the park concession. Sixteen individuals rented boat mooring spots for an additional \$640.00

It is estimated that about there were about 40,000 park visitors which includes fishermen, boaters, hikers, geocachers, and disc golfers.

The park not only provides an affordable rental facility, but it also provides fishing, hiking, boating and the whole natural experience in general. Most of the enjoyment can be had at no cost.

Although the major phase of construction was completed, the Park is constantly being improved.

A new well was drilled and a new pump and tank installed. The old well could not keep pace with the increased demands of the many visitors to the Park.

We were fortunate to have a crew from Juvenile Probation spend time in the Park and accomplish a lot of necessary tasks such as trail maintenance and landscape work.

Lakefront Trail from the Clubhouse along the shoreline was re-graded and surfaced for an additional 1,210 in 2013. The total length of hard surfaced trail is nearly one half mile. This greatly improved the walking surface and the trail has been receiving a lot of use. Construction of a much needed bridge on Lakefront Trail began in 2014 and will be completed in early 2015. This will improve access to the remaining natural surfaced one mile of trail.

Big Dam Trail saw increased use in 2014. This trail extends one mile from Kutz Road all along Upper Little Swatara Creek to the junction of Sweet Arrow Lake Road and Wolfes road.

For the second time, the Bald Eagles that have been frequenting Sweet Arrow Lake for several years, had a successful nest. Two eaglets were hatched. The eaglets were seen flying and appeared in good health.

Events and happenings

Over 30 different public events and programs were held at the Park in 2014. Special programs were varied and designed to cover just about any area of interest. They included bird walks, programs on mammals, reptiles and amphibians, trees, rocks, dancing, history and even a dinner theater. Annual fun programs such as Groundhog Day and the 4th of July were held with usual success. The Sweet Arrow Lake Conservation Association and Diakon were key partners in procuring, presenting and paying for the many programs in the Park.

Sweet Arrow Lake is not the only park in the County. The Bartram Trail is considered by some to be a linear park. Obtaining access to certain sections of the trail to make it contiguous has been slow in coming about. The relatively new trailhead in Landingville is adding to the access to the trail. Work is proceeding and once some hurdles are overcome, many new miles of trail will open up. In the meanwhile, several miles of trail north of Hamburg and a beautiful section along the Schuylkill River near Auburn certainly deserves a visit.

Without the help of the many volunteers, the park system would not function. I am extremely grateful for their commitment.

NRCS

Pottsville Field Office

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) provides technical assistance to protect and improve the soil, water, air, plant, and animal resources of Schuylkill County. The service is provided through a Cooperative Working Agreement between the Schuylkill Conservation District and NRCS.

During 2014, NRCS staff worked with Schuylkill County farm operators to develop 45 conservation plans, addressing 2,810 acres. In addition, Andrea Geist with the Conservation District completed 31 plans covering 379 acres. Pheasants Forever Biologist Jim Kauffman assisted the NRCS Field Office by completing 3789 acres of CREP plans for 31 landowners.

The decisions made by the operators of these lands will benefit the general public through reduced sedimentation of waterways, improved soil health, and greater infiltration of storm water.

The NRCS also provides financial and technical assistance for the installation of a variety of Best Management Practices (BMP's) through several Farm Bill programs, specifically the Environmental Quality Incentives Program, and the Agricultural Management Assistance programs. In 2013, 17 new contracts valued at over \$561,000 were obligated in Schuylkill County through these programs.



Another program available to producers is the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP.) CSP is a voluntary conservation program that encourages producers to address resource concerns in a comprehensive manner by improving, maintaining, and managing existing conservation activities; and undertaking additional conservation activities, called enhancements. CSP is available on private agricultural lands and non-industrial forest land. The program provides equitable access to all producers, regardless of operation size, crops produced, or geographic location. In 2014, 4 CSP contracts covering 1,943 acres were awarded in Schuylkill County, totaling \$243,875 for the 5 year life of these contracts.

Some of the BMP's that were installed on Schuylkill County farms during 2012, both through Farm Bill Program contracts and with technical assistance from NRCS, include: contour farming, cover crops and cover crop mixes, conversion to a no-till cropping system, diversions, fencing, grassed waterways, heavy use area protection, herbaceous weed control, Integrated Pest Management (IPM), micro-irrigation system installation, irrigation mainline, seasonal high tunnels, underground outlet, waste storage facility, and wetland restoration.

Sweet Arrow Lake County Park



Photos by Robert Evanchalk - Eagle photo by Tom Jobe

Chesapeake Bay Program (Continued from page 7)

In order to provide more costshare dollars to assist with the cost of installation of agricultural BMPs, the Bay Program has the flexibility to "piggy-back" with other costshare programs such as EQIP and the Growing Greener Grant program. The scope and the estimated costs of these projects can be prohibitive to some farmers interested in installing BMPs. While some of these other programs provide costshare monies they do not have the resources to offer the design, technical and nutrient management assistance available in the Bay Program.

The Bay Coordinator conducts construction checks, provides quality assurance and technical assistance during the construction of Bay related projects, NRCS projects (EQIP and CREP), projects receiving ARRA monies and watershed Acid Mine Discharge (AMD) projects. Construction inspections were conducted on these complete projects in the Bay Watershed in 2014:

- 1 liquid manure reception pit
- 1 roof runoff system
- 1 roofed heavy use area protection – beef
- 1 roofed manure stacking facility - beef
- 1 roofed bedded pack facility – beef

The District received a Growing Greener Grant to implement BMPs on an equine operation. Assistance was provided for planning, surveying, and BMP designs. Projects on this operation include a roofed manure stacking pad, streambank fencing and heavy use area protection.

The Oneida #3 and Audenreid AMD systems are located in the Catawissa Watershed. Repairs and adjustments are needed to on the Audenreid Mine Discharge System that was installed in 2005 in order for the system to function. The Bay Coordinator is a member of the technical steering committee that provides project oversight on these systems. The Coordinator also actively participates in the planning and the presenting of the annual Bear Creek Festival and the Schuylkill County Envirothon.

The Resources Enhancement and Protection Program (REAP) allows farmers and businesses to earn tax credits in exchange for "Best Management Practices" (BMPs) on agricultural operations that will enhance farm production and protect natural resources. The program is administered by the State Conservation Commission (SCC) and the tax credits are granted by the Pennsylvania Department of Revenue. Participants must complete an application and are required to have sections of the application "verified" by the Conservation District stating that they have a current conservation plan and a nutrient management plan. The Bay Coordinator assisted farmers with verifying their applications.

The Schuylkill Conservation District recognizes that there are still many farms that may require the "traditional" BMPs such as manure storages and barnyard runoff controls and will continue to offer technical assistance to livestock farmers in the Mahantango (including Pine and Deep Creeks), Wiconisco, Catawissa, Swatara, and Mahanoy Creek watersheds who are interested improving water quality through manure and nutrient management, installing best management practices, or streambank fencing. The District is willing to assist qualifying landowners in obtaining grants and costshare monies from other funding sources. The Bay Program has a year-round sign-up so farmers can enroll in the program at any time.

**DCNR-BUREAU OF FORESTRY**

Frank P. Snyder

Service Forester for Carbon and Schuylkill Counties

The closing of 2014 brings the completion of years of work in developing a conservation plan for the Hawk Mountain Scout Reservation. Hawk Mountain Scout Reservation is a scout camp located on the north side of the Blue Mountain near Summit Station in Schuylkill County.

This summer scout camp is 670 acres in size or just over a square mile of contiguous forests. The camp includes approximately 25 campsites and pavilions, shotgun, rifle, and archery ranges, two swimming pools, two mess halls, about 4.5 miles of dirt roads, and 5.6 miles of hiking trails. Over 5,500 youth use the camp annually. Definitely, this camp is a premiere destination for many youth in the Pennsylvania and surrounding states.

Originally when I first joined the Hawk Mountain Council's conservation committee I thought that developing a plan would be a piece of cake. However, our committee toiled with the concept of what a conservation plan should be and do. Boy Scouts of America provided little guidance in what a plan should include and many of the sample plans provided did not address the major interests or concerns of conservation in the scout camp.

Over a year or two, our committee worked diligently in creating policies on recycling, controlling invasive insects and plants, harvesting timber and fuel wood, determining an appropriate number of campfire rings and size of campfires permitted in camp, and promoting "Leave No Trace" concepts to youth and leaders. Annual inspections of the camp were conducted identifying: erosion and sedimentation issues, dead and high risk trees to be removed, and invasive plants, to name a few. Our efforts provided a great start in resolving some of the conservation issues but did not produce a conservation plan.

As our vision of a conservation plan became more apparent, a table of contents was formulated with the notion that a plan should be like an automobile operator's manual. A manual to help the owner become familiar with components and accessories, how to use it safely, and maintaining its life during ownership. We were out of the gate!

Property resources were inventoried to determine their condition, and what actions need to be taken to enhance those resources while providing a great place for youth to strive in a natural environment. This comprehensive inventory evaluated the aesthetic quality of the property, recreational opportunities including camping, hiking, shooting sports, individual extreme sports offered in camp, the water resources including the creeks, streams, wetlands and lake, and environmental education opportunities available during summer camp. A detailed study of the woodlands was conducted that evaluated the health and sustainability of the forests.

Specific recommendations were developed for each resource to ensure that they are enhanced, even under all of the demands of a highly managed camp organization. The inventory coupled with these recommendations created the conservation plan.

Besides providing sustainable benefits, the conservation plan provides a guide to help the scouts accomplish the objectives of stewardship in the care and use of their camp. One of my expectations as a service forester is that this plan becomes a template for other scout camps in the country to use in developing a conservation plan and helps them care for their camp.

In addition to having an official BSA Conservation Plan, Hawk Mountain Scout Reservation complies with the standards and benefits of the US Forest Service's Forest Stewardship Program; the American Forest Foundation's American Tree Farm System and may be eligible for the US Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) cost share programs.

So keeping with the analogy of the automobile operator's manual, this plan will ensure that this shiny new productive property will continue to cruise smoothly into the future for generations to enjoy!

If you need help to care for your property or would like more information concerning forestry, please feel free to contact me! Best wishes to all in 2015! frsnyder@pa.gov



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Schuylkill Conservation District

**Growing Greener
2014 Grant Awards**

- ◆ Dandelion Farm - Best Management Practice Installation - \$144,000
- ◆ Mine Pool Treatment System Expansion - \$293,898
- ◆ Swatara Creek Floodplain Restoration - \$300,700
- ◆ Oneida #3 AMD Treatment System Optimization - \$157,505
- ◆ West Creek Flow Loss Assessment and Remediation Plan - \$302,006



Schuylkill County 4-H Program

Briana Shealer, 4-H Coordinator



Interested in animals? How about bugs? Or, have an eye for photography? These are just some of the many interests that a young person could find in 4-H.

Originally formed as an agricultural organization, 4-H still battles the perception that it's mainly focused on farming. But the organization has many chapters in urban areas and now teaches young people public speaking, provides STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) education, and encourages community involvement. (Koebler, 2011) 4-H is a community of seven million young people around the world learning leadership, citizenship, and life skills.



The program is a volunteer-based organization that allows young people to learn by doing - and, in 4-H, they can do just about anything that interests them. The 4-H experience begins by choosing a project which interests them from the more than 275 different projects offered in Pennsylvania! Some of the most popular projects offered in Schuylkill County are:

- * Animal Science (livestock, equine, & poultry)
- * Gardening
- * Entomology
- * Sewing
- * Cooking
- * Wildlife
- * Embryology
- * Photography
- * Crafts



There are currently 9 traditional 4-H clubs in Schuylkill County and a partnership with Avenues to provide the Therapeutic Riding Program. This year 4-H in Schuylkill County reached over 1,200 youth ages 5-18. The program is proud to have 55 screened volunteers and school teachers who helped guide our 4-H members and students through projects and activities this year. Additionally, Schuylkill County 4-H members participated in numerous activities and events such as 4-H Leadership Conference, 4-H Capital Days, 4-H Camp Shehaqua, 4-H State Days, 4-H Achievement Night, the Schuylkill County Fair, the

Southeast Regional Shooting competition, and numerous county, district and state animal shows and events.



We are excited to announce that the Peiffer Family Fund for 4-H Science programming by the leadership and generosity of the late Mrs. Rosemarie Peiffer has taken off and is assisting in expanding our 4-H program. This past year the 4-H Program was able to hire a 4-H Assistant who provided summer science programming to over 70 youth. Also, during the current school year the program assistant has been able to provide afterschool 4-H science programming in four school districts. The topics that our afterschool programming is focusing on are water science, wildlife, robotics and rocketry. Thank you again to Mrs. Peiffer for her generous support and dedication to the Schuylkill County 4-H Program and the youth in our county.



During the Spring, 4-H offered three ethics and quality assurance sessions for the livestock, dairy, equine and poultry members. One hundred and eighty (180) 4-H and FFA members attended these workshops. During the sessions, members were educated on proper animal care to improve animal well-being, reviewing & updating a quality management plan annually, and current animal topics, such as selecting your 4-H project animal.

Membership is open to young people ages 5 to 18 and do not need to be residents of Schuylkill County. 4-H members can also look beyond the local club and can participate in county-wide activities, make new friends, and broaden their horizons. Some activities include:

- * Camping
- * Officer Training
- * County Fair
- * Fundraisers
- * Community Service Projects
- * Tours and Trips

You can find out more information about joining a 4-H club in Schuylkill County or volunteering your time by contacting Briana Luckenbill at the Schuylkill County Extension Office. The 4-H Program is currently looking at expanding the program by opening new 4-H Clubs. Clubs may meet year round or during a short period of time throughout the year. The Extension office is located in the Schuylkill County AG Center, Pottsville. Contact Briana at 570-622-4225 or visit: <http://extension.psu.edu/schuylkill>

Websites to visit!

DIRT AND GRAVEL ROAD PROGRAM:

WWW.DIRTANDGRAVELROADS.ORG

SCHUYLKILL ON THE MOVE: WWW.SCHUYLKILLONTHEMOVE.COM

FRIENDS OF SCHUYLKILL PARKS & RECREATION:

WWW.SWEETARROWLAKEPARK.COM

SALCA: WWW.SWEETARROWLAKE.COM

NRCS: WWW.NRCS.USDA.GOV

USDA: WWW.USDA.GOV

DCNR: WWW.DCNR.STATE.PA.US

SCHUYLKILL CONSERVANCY:

WWW.SCHUYLKILLCONSERVANCY.ORG

PENNSYLVANIA ASSOC. OF CONSERVATION DISTRICTS:

WWW.PACD.ORG

SCHUYLKILL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE:

WWW.SCHUYLKILLCHAMBER.COM

SCHUYLKILL COUNTY VISION: WWW.SCHUYLKILLVISION.COM

SCHUYLKILL COUNTY VISITORS BUREAU: WWW.SCHUYLKILL.ORG

PENN STATE AG EXTENSION:

WWW.SCHUYLKILL.EXTENSION.PSU.EDU

PENNSYLVANIA ASSOC. OF ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATORS:

WWW.PAEE.ORG

FARM SERVICE AGENCY: WWW.FSA.USDA.GOV

Please visit our website!

www.schuylkillcd.org

BEAR CREEK FESTIVAL

Sunday, May 17, 2015
12 pm to 4 pm
Schuylkill County Fairgrounds

Fun & FREE for the whole family!
FREE ADMISSION—FREE ACTIVITIES
FREE PARKING



Celebrating all things
Environmental
OUTDOORS
NATURAL
Agricultural
in Schuylkill County

Like us on Facebook for #BearCreek2015 updates:
Schuylkill Conservation District
www.schuylkillcd.org 570-622-3742 Ext. 5



- Build Your Own Birdhouse by Home Depot ▪
- Hoverball Archery by Sportmen's Assoc. & Advisory Board ▪
- Paint a Flower Pot ▪ "Edible Soil Profile" Dirt Pudding ▪
- Schuylkill County Trout Unlimited's Fishing Derby ▪
- Horse & Wagon Rides ▪ Kiddie & Antique Tractor Pulls ▪
- DEKKA-HAUS German Shepherds Demonstrations ▪
- Live Animal Presentations by Red Creek Wildlife Center ▪
 - Live music, corn bins, clowns, petting zoo, lizards, flower seeds, worm tunnels.....AND MUCH MORE! ▪



*Visit all the stops on our
TREASURE HUNT for a special prize!*