

# Resource Development



**Association of  
Resource Conservation and  
Development Councils  
2007**

# Our Vision for Pennsylvania

**We will serve, support, and promote Resource Conservation and Development Councils by nurturing partnerships and by providing innovative and dynamic leadership. The result will be an excellent quality of life in Pennsylvania and a strengthened ability to be responsible for the environment**

## Jack M. Preston, President:

I take this opportunity to introduce the annual report of our State Association and the nine RC&D Councils that continue to work in harmony for the people of Pennsylvania. RC&D continues to give local people the ability to determine their needs and the solutions to improve their quality of life in partnership with local resources and organizations.

One of the major highlights of 2007 was the hosting of the six state Mid Atlantic Association of Resource Conservation & Development Councils' meeting in September in the Hershey area of Pennsylvania. All PA Councils, Coordinators, Employees, Officers, and Volunteers worked in harmony with the help of many partners who support RC&D. Tours of projects, successful opportunities for training, a very enlightening banquet, and great networking opportunities were major events that attendees expressed satisfaction during the annual conference.



This highlight of each of the nine councils demonstrates the diversity of the projects that councils identify, accept, and include in their plan of work. Each dollar in funding is returning seven to eight dollars in completed projects. The RC&D program utilizes their resources for a multitude of projects necessary for many rural areas that have limited resources.

In summary, I would like to personally thank the volunteer council members and staff of each RC&D Council, the citizens who took the time to get involved by writing or calling their congressional leaders, and the members of Congress who heard the message, and supported funding for the RC&D Program. As we work together with our many partners, projects vital to each community will be successfully completed. RC&D REALLY CAN AND DOES make a difference in our communities.

**KEEP UP THE GOOD WORK!**

## 2007 Officers:

- President** - Jack M. Preston (Penn Soil RC&D)
- Vice President** - Paul R. Sell, Jr. (Southeastern PA RC&D)
- Secretary** - Ron K. Beam (Capital RC&D)
- Treasurer** - JoAnn McCready (Penn Soil RC&D)
- Member at Large** - Robert Hughes (Pocono Northeast RC&D)

Gary P. Smith, Assistant State Conservationist:

As RC&D State Program Manager, I thank the Association and all its Councils for the extraordinary work that all of you do for the areas you serve. Each Council has demonstrated a unique responsiveness to the environmental and community development needs for your multi-county region. Each Council listens to the citizens and groups that advise the Council and the Councils appropriately react with an array of projects that meet those locally identified needs. For this reason, the Councils and the State Association remain strong.

As a federally funded program, NRCS continues to respond to the needs of the Councils because the agency believes in the value of what you are doing. That only comes from dedicated Council members, staff, and Coordinators who work together to make the program successful. This success would not be possible if it were not for the volunteer contributions of time from each of the Council members.

I applaud and congratulate the State Association and the Councils for all your success. In Pennsylvania, we have every reason to feel gratitude to all of you for the outstanding program you continue to develop.

## Why RC&D?

Over the years, Resource Conservation & Development (RC&D) Councils have worked on many projects adapted to the specific needs of the individual RC&D areas. Their unique ability to form partnerships with federal, state, county, and private organizations in order to accomplish specific goals and programs makes RC&Ds a leader in getting things done. Sometimes, concerns and issues are so inclusive that they cover the entire Commonwealth, and at such times the individual Councils come together to administer statewide programs. In 2007, the Pennsylvania RC&D Councils participated in the following statewide projects:

## 2007 Statewide Projects:

### **Weed Control and Wildlife Habitat Technical Assistance Project**

The nine RC&D Councils that comprise the Pennsylvania Association of Resource Conservation & Development (PARCD) Council, completed the "Weed Control and Wildlife Habitat Technical Assistance Project" during 2007. This project provided oversight and guidance on weed control and wildlife habitat to landowners enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) across the entire Commonwealth.



The Pennsylvania Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (PA CREP) is a partnership of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania to implement

conservation practices on cropland in an effort to reduce soil erosion, and thus improving water quality and improving wildlife habitat. Wildlife habitat specifically targets grassland habitats for declining grassland dependent wildlife, which includes many different species. Participants receive incentives from USDA to voluntarily enroll their lands in CREP contracts covering a period of ten to fifteen years. These participants remove cropland or marginal pastureland from agricultural production and convert the land to native grasses, forested buffers, and other habitat amendments for the benefit of soil, water, and wildlife resources. CREP is an enhanced version of the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) authorized by the Food and Security Act of 1985. CREP was later authorized under the 1996 Farm Bill and reauthorized in the 2002 Farm Bill.

Working with landowners enrolled in CREP, the Councils provided information and resources on how to address noxious and invasive weeds on their property while emphasizing the beneficial plants that improve wildlife habitat. Controlling noxious weeds is a requirement of CREP participants; however, some people have difficulty recognizing these weeds in their early and middle growth stages before the plants become fully established and more difficult to control.

While noxious weed control is important in and of itself, it is a critical component for attaining the ultimate goal of creating and maintaining high quality wildlife habitat on land enrolled in CREP. This project not only focused on weed control, but will also address how beneficial plants diversify the habitat in CREP plantings to benefit wildlife.

The Councils brought together various federal, state, and local agencies and organizations to form a Statewide Technical Steering Committee to provide assistance on the development and administration of this project. A two-tiered approach was used which, includes the development of education and outreach materials, and direct one-on-one technical assistance.



On the local level, each Council formed a project steering committee which utilized the overarching goals of CREP as well as the information and recommendations by the Statewide Technical Steering Committee. Each project developed a localized plan for their individual RC&D area. This allowed each Council the ability to develop and apply the projects deliverables to meet their unique needs. Each Council held meetings, workshops, field days, and other events allowing landowners to learn about wildlife habitat and noxious weeds. Landowners and project partners reported very positive feedback on these activities.

### **Project Statistics**

**Partners included:** USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service, USDA-Farm Services Agency, PA Game Commission, PA Department of Environmental Protection, PA Department of Conservation Natural Resources, County Conservation Districts, Penn State Cooperative Extension.

**Education/Outreach Totals:**

- Project Partners assisting RC&D = 102
- Articles/Press Releases = 14
- Newsletters Developed = 2
- Websites/Webpages Developed = 4
- Brochures/Media Developed = 31
- Brochures/Media Distributed = 158,620

**Technical Assistance Totals:**

- Workshops = 27
- Participants at Workshops = 1,079
- Field Days = 21
- Participants at Field Days = 695
- Demonstration Plots = 9
- Demonstration plot acreage = 12/2 acres
- Presentations = 42
- Field Visits with Landowners = 1,140
- Number of CREP Contracts = 995
- Acreage Receiving Technical Assistance = 33,211.3

### **Consortium for Scientific Assistance To Watersheds (C-SAW)**

Pennsylvanians' are faced with significant environmental challenges in the 21st century. To help prepare them to meet those challenges, the Consortium for Scientific Assistance to Watersheds (C-SAW) has developed and implemented a successful capacity-building model that provides watershed groups the necessary programmatic and technical assistance to effectively address local water-quality concerns across the state. The willingness of private citizens to take action to protect and restore local streams, as evidenced by the many groups looking to the C-SAW program for support, is improving water quality and preserving streams throughout the Commonwealth.

This project, first implemented in 2002, and now in its fifth round of Department of Environmental Growing Greener grants has helped groups, which include watershed associations, lake associations, municipalities, and other organizations targeting both long-term and short-term assistance as well as quality assurance/quality control needs of an area.

C-SAW is guided and administered by Pennsylvania's RC&D Councils with the help of service providers collaborating and enhancing the group's programmatic and technical skills to monitor, protect, and restore PA's waterways for the long term.

**Pictures illustrate the difference that can be made through restoration. Technical assistance can be provided groups interested in how to design a restoration project.**



Before



After

### **Project Statistics**

**Partners included in Consortium:** The Alliance for Aquatic Resource Monitoring (ALLARM), Delaware Riverkeeper Network, PA Lake Management Society, Stroud Water Research Center, Inc., USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), the United States Geological Survey, Western PA Coalition for Abandoned Mine Reclamation, and Wilkes University.

Groups Assisted: 155      ▪ Consultations Provided: 1,293      ▪ Trainings/workshops Provided: 221  
Individuals Assisted: 18,780      ▪ Stream Miles Improved or Restored: 18.2

### **PA Rural Fire Protection Project**

Through a \$284,000 grant obtained by Penn Soil RC&D, all nine RC&D Councils covering the state of Pennsylvania were able to offer matching grants to local sponsors to install dry hydrants to improve rural fire fighting efforts. Dry hydrants are a non-pressurized pipe system of providing improved water accessibility from a pond or stream to improve response time in an emergency fire situation. Rural firefighters are often hampered by limited water source availability and the time it takes to fill tanker trucks. Dry hydrant installations at strategic locations throughout rural areas helps improve fire protection and may save residents money on their fire insurance.



The local RC&D furnished the dry hydrant kit for local sponsors to install in advance, but the value of the kit \$202 was matched by the local sponsor. The kit included the hydrant head, the strainer, and a metal No Parking-Fire Department Use Only sign. Up to an additional \$300 rebate per installation was available under this grant when matched by the local sponsor on a 1:1 basis. The funding which could be used to purchase pipe and fittings or hire an excavator was provided through the grant from U.S. Forest Service funds passed through the Pa Bureau of Forestry for local firefighting efforts. Participants had to match the grant provided with either cash or in-kind contributions to complete the installation. The statewide project also included educational programs to local sponsors to learn more about becoming a Firewise Community.

The heart of the rural hydrant system is the head assembly and external strainer assembly. The head assembly provides the fire department with the appropriate NST thread connection, which allows the firefighters to connect their suction hose to the hydrant system and pump water. The strainer is the intake device, which is affixed to the end of the pipe and is positioned at an optimal location in the water source.

Partners included: Pennsylvania's 9 individual RC&D Councils, PA Association of RC&D Councils, USDA NRCS, USDA Forest Service, PA Bureau of Forestry, and local Conservation Districts, volunteer fire departments, REA Electric Cooperatives, and municipalities across the state. To date the project has resulted in these accomplishments:

### **Project Statistics**

**Partners included:** 95 Different Municipalities/Townships/Boroughs  
**Installations to date:** 177 Dry Hydrant  
**Local Matching Dollars:** \$223,152.00

# Capital RC&D

## The Capital RC&D No-Till Initiative

The Capital RC&D has been supporting the promotion of a “continuous no-till system” approach for several years now. This low-cost agricultural BMP helps to maintain sediment and nutrients on land, and is being touted as one of the most effective ways to improve agricultural impacts on the Chesapeake Bay Watershed. Since 2006, the program has expanded to include the multiple projects described below. In cooperation with Penn State Cooperative Extension (Capitol Region Agronomy Team), County Conservation Districts, USDA/NRCS, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF), Chesapeake Bay Funders Network (CBFN), PA Dept. of Environmental Protection (DEP), PA No-Till Alliance to promote the increased adoption of a no-till system approach to agriculture, which reduces the sediment and nutrient loads to the Chesapeake Bay. By providing technical assistance through the “transition phase” between conventional and continuous no-till, we are hoping to reduce the risk of conversion/yield loss to the farmer.



### Lebanon County Farmer Network

We are providing education and outreach to agronomic field staff throughout the region as well as to farmers through a “mentoring” approach, by connecting experienced no-tillers with beginning ones. We now have 12 producers and 25 beginning no-tillers who are part of a growing “farmer network,” benefitting from each other’s successes (and failures) in practicing no-till methods.



**Park the Plow for Profit-** This project, in its third year, continues to provide technical assistance and education to individual producers, as well as support field days and training to agency and county staff. The program has been so successful that it is being used as a model throughout the Bay. In the nine counties covered, over 75 farms totaling more than 9,000 acres are receiving project assistance. In addition to program assistance, the Capital RC&D has a research project underway at Penn State University to study the effectiveness of no-till as a BMP.

### *Vision Statement:*

“Healthy Communities in Harmony with the Natural Environment”

## Taste of Gifts of our Region

The Capital RC&D Council is increasing local farm product and value-added agricultural sales throughout the region through marketing support to individual farmers, farming cooperatives and agricultural associations, through a regional initiative. A listing of agritourism and cultural amenities in the region has been completed, intending to strengthen the agricultural economy of the region by increasing visits to local farm markets, wineries, and farm stays and B&B's. A funding strategy for the project is being developed to provide web-based resources for consumers as well as tourism bureaus and local interests.



Through a partnership with the PA Association for Sustainable Agriculture (PASA) we are also the lead for South Central PA Buy Fresh Buy Local, a consumer awareness campaign. The intent is to promote the local farm products as well as raise awareness of the benefits of locally-produced food. The logo and materials developed for use throughout the state and country create a nationally-recognizable brand distinguishing local products. The South Central Buy Fresh Buy Local campaign released the *“Consumers Guide to Farmers Markets and Farm Stands”* in September 2007, and conducted its first regional *“Buy Fresh Buy Local Week,”* in September 2007.

### Current Projects we are working on:

- Claremont Community Gardens Project
- Big Spring Legacy Sediment Project
- Mill Creek Restoration Initiative
- Regional Riparian and Ag BMP Initiative



### Council Goals:

- ✓ Promote Regional Planning
- ✓ Recognize Water as a Regional Issue
- ✓ Conserve Open Space, Farmlands and Natural Areas
- ✓ Enhance Agricultural Sustainability and Development
- ✓ Grow the Capacity of the Capital RC&D
- ✓



Counties Served: Adams, Cumberland, Dauphin, Franklin, Lancaster, Lebanon, York

# Community Partnerships RC&D

*Pride in Community; Partnerships in Action*

## Pennsylvania Partners in the Arts

**Pennsylvania Partners in the Arts (PPA)** is a partnership between local organizations and the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts (PCA), a branch of the governor's office. Now operating in all 67 counties in Pennsylvania, PPA re-grants funds to support a wide variety of local and community arts activities. Since its creation in 1996, PPA has demonstrated enormous success and is continually rated as one of the most effective and efficient programs in the state of Pennsylvania.

Community Partnerships RC&D is currently in its eighth (8<sup>th</sup>) year of administering the program in Juniata, Mifflin, Perry, Snyder and Union Counties. The decentralized funds improve the cultural experience and quality of life for rural residents- often in underserved, economically disadvantaged areas.

To educate potential applicants, Community Partnerships RC&D conducts dozens of grant workshops across the region to educate local citizens (many of whom are under-represented artists and organizations) on the availability of PPA funds and other sources of grant funding. The workshops allow the application process to be explained in detail by Community Partnerships RC&D staff.

After the program is promoted through community outreach and media coverage, applications are submitted and organized. A volunteer arts panel is assembled with representatives of each of the five counties in the Community Partnerships RC&D area.

The panel then scores and ranks the applications based on the criteria of availability to the community, artistic merit and project management. A ranking of projects is then collated and funds are awarded based on the project's overall score. Recently, Community Partnerships RC&D distributed \$27,380 to projects in the area this July.



The project checks are presented in an awards ceremony generally held in mid-September. Legislators are on hand to formally present the checks to award recipients. Excellent media coverage for the Pennsylvania Partners and the Arts Program and Community Partnerships RC&D follows the event in regional newspapers.

Several businesses and jobs are retained and local quality of life improved as a result of Community Partnerships RC&D's arts funding programs which have re-granted nearly \$500,000 to area artists and organizations over the course of the partnership.

### Mission:

The mission of Community Partnerships RC&D is to address the long term needs of the Community by promoting arts, culture, and asset-based/sustainable use of human and other natural resources

# The Great Chip Drop

The first annual New Year's Eve celebration The Great Chip Drop was held last year on December 31, 2007 in Lewistown, Pennsylvania.

The event was an extreme success as 4,000 plus Central Pennsylvania revelers showed up for the celebration to ring in the New Year. The joyous crowd gathered in the square and Historic Courthouse for entertainment of all kinds. Local businesses and eateries held special hours to stay open during the event. Vendors lined the streets. The night reached its climax as a giant replica bag of hometown favorite Hartley's Potato Chips dropped from the sky at midnight. Fireworks and cheers welcomed 2008.

Publicity for the event was also widespread, as The Great Chip Drop was reported on by ABC Radio New York, Channel 8 WGAL, Channel 27 WHTM, Channel 10 WTAJ, Harrisburg Patriot, Altoona Mirror, Lewistown Sentinel, County Observer, WCHX, WMRF, and even made national news on ABC's Good Morning America as a new traditions story.



The community embraced the event as business leaders, individuals and volunteers donated time, effort and money toward putting on the celebration. A local volunteer fire company, United Rescue manned the ladder truck that suspended the giant replica potato chip bag nearly 100 feet in the air. The fire company's involvement was especially appropriate as Lewistown is the site of the State Fire Academy.



Hartley's Potato Chips and Community Partnerships RC&D distributed 1,000 free bags of chips to celebrating citizens. Lewistown Mayor Deb Bargo led the crowd in a countdown to the New Year as a hometown favorite Hartley's Potato Chips bag dropped. The event was a great example of a community coming together to celebrate their cultural identity.



Serving: Juniata, Mifflin, Perry, Snyder, and Union Counties

**23 North Main Street, Lewistown, Pennsylvania 17044**  
**717.248.4901**  
**[cpartnerships@cpartnerships.com](mailto:cpartnerships@cpartnerships.com)**

# Endless Mountains RC&D

## Pine Creek Oral Histories and Education Project



In 2004, Endless Mountains RC&D Council used a grant from the PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) Community Conservation Partnership Program, to work with several local partners to develop the *Pine Creek Watershed Rivers Conservation Plan*. The project involved identifying the biological, cultural, recreational and land use resources in the Pine Creek watershed and developing recommendations on how to maintain, improve and restore the watershed. The Pine Creek watershed covers 289 square miles, parts of four counties and includes 29 municipalities. As a result of this rivers conservation plan, the entire watershed is now listed on the Pennsylvania Rivers Registry. (The complete plan is available at [www.pinecreekwatershedrcp.org](http://www.pinecreekwatershedrcp.org))

The planning process involved extensive public input and took four years to complete. There was a need for general leadership and facilitation, so as a regional non-governmental, non-profit entity, Endless Mountains RC&D was asked to take on the role of project facilitator and grant administrator.

Since the group conducted the research, wrote the plan and designed and implemented the public participation processes themselves, a unique bond formed between members. This has led to many of these members serving on the more formal Pine Creek Watershed Council.

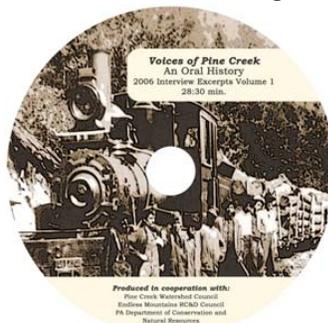
In addition to building a sense of ownership writing the plan themselves, also saved money. This allowed the group to use the remaining planning grant funds to initiate an early implementation project. This early implementation project was the first phase of the *Pine Creek Oral Histories and Education Project*. This phase involved interviewing 23 people using high definition video. The 26 hours of raw video footage has been edited down to a 28 minute DVD featuring individuals who have either lived, worked and/or recreated

in the Pine Creek watershed. All of the interviewees were given the opportunity to talk about their lives growing up in the watershed, their family and school life, recreational experiences, working in the watershed and the changes they have seen in their lifetime.

Another unique feature to this project was the interest of a Rural Sociology graduate student from Penn State University who used the interviews and census data to compare trends in population, scientific data with personal perspective to the changes that occurred in the watershed over time. An in depth analysis of the information was successfully presented and defended in the student's master's thesis titled: *"The Pine Creek Experience: The Role of Change and Perception of Change Toward Understanding Carrying Capacity of a Watershed and It's Communities"*. Segments of the oral history interviews and the master's thesis are both available on the Pine Creek Watershed Rivers Conservation Plan website at [www.pinecreekwatershedrcp.org](http://www.pinecreekwatershedrcp.org).

The Endless Mountains RC&D Council and the Pine Creek Watershed Council are offering the DVD for sale for \$15 per copy. All proceeds from the sales will be put back into the project to continue a long-term oral histories initiative.

The RC&D Council recently received a second grant from DCNR to complete a second round of interviews. It is anticipated an additional 20 people will be interviewed, and a second DVD highlighting aspects of life living in the watershed will be produced. The Pine Creek Watershed Council's Cultural Resource Committee is responsible for coordinating this project. The Committee hopes to secure funds to allow additional interviews with young people and young adults who either live or recreate in the watershed. The unedited, raw footage collected for this project has the potential to be the foundation of a longer documentary-style video in the future.



### Project Accomplishments:

- 23 People Interviewed
- 26 Hours of Raw Video Footage
- 300 DVD's Produced

## **CURRENT PROJECTS:**

**Rotational Grazing Systems/Conversion to Grassland, Implementation Grant for Northeast PA**  
Endless Mountains RC&D Council in partnership with Pocono Northeast RC&D and Northeast Chapter of Project Grass is working with 15 landowners to install either grazing best management practices and/or solar or wind-powered water pumping systems for rotational grazing systems. The Council has received an Energy Harvest grant to convert 360 acres of cropland to pasture and to install 10 solar or wind-powered water pumping systems throughout the Project GRASS Northeast and RC&D Council Areas.

**Project Accomplishments:** 360 Acres of Cropland to Pasture, 10 Solar-Powered Water Systems Installed

### **Proactive to Flooding Education Program**

Endless Mountains RC&D Council in partnership with the county Conservation Districts in the region hosted 3 Flood Summits in the region. The Summits provided education and informational exchanges opportunities for more than 250 municipal officials from more than 50% of the municipalities in the region. This successful project has set the stage for a long-term proactive to flooding education initiative. The Council has plans to continue this educational program focused on municipal officials to enable them to make better decisions in their areas and working with landowners.

**Project Accomplishments:** 3 Flood Summits, 250 Municipal Officials Educated

### **Other Projects:**

- Woodland Resource Adventure Camp
- Weed Identification and Management DVD
- Park the Plow for Profit: The Endless Mountains RC&D No-till and Cover Crop Transition Program
- Energy Conservation Audits and Education Program

### **Council Goals:**

- Watershed and Stream Management Protection
- Agricultural Sustainability
- Public Education and Awareness of Natural Resource and Community Development Opportunities and Issues
- Recreation and Tourism
- Sustainable Forestry
- Small Business Development

***"The Endless Mountains Resource Conservation and Development Council will lead a diverse group of stakeholders in the sound conservation and stewardship of the region's natural resources. The Council will promote the rural quality of life and its economic stability through organizational efforts, education of communities, technical expertise, and sponsorship of projects."***



Counties Served: Bradford,  
Lycoming, Sullivan, Susquehanna,  
Tioga and Wyoming



### **Endless Mountains RC&D Council**

RR#5, Box 5030-D, Towanda, PA 18848-9354 \* Phone: 570-265-5288 ext. 5

[www.endlessmountainsrcd.org](http://www.endlessmountainsrcd.org)

# Headwaters RC&D

## Shade Tree Inventory in Elk County Underway Benefiting Four Municipalities

Headwaters Resource Conservation and Development Council is undertaking an inventory of the street/shade trees in the City of Saint Marys, the Boroughs of Ridgway and Johnsonburg, and the community of Wilcox in Jones Township. A PL 106-393 Title III grant from the Elk County Board of Commissioners to Headwaters RDC Council has provided the resources needed for the project. The formal title of the grant is “Elk County Tree Evaluation, Enumeration and Management”. The project is funded with a \$50,000 grant from the Elk County Board of Commissioners.



Street trees or shade trees are those trees and tall shrubs that grow within the municipality’s right-of-way, generally defined as the space between the sidewalk and the curb. In addition, trees in public use areas such as parks and public play areas are eligible for an inventory. Privately owned or corporate trees are not included in the inventory effort. Once a municipality knows what they have, then the municipality can better manage the resource. For the four municipalities in this project, specific management recommendations will be provided. Further, Headwaters will sponsor public workshops dealing with the results of the inventory. Urban trees provide many values for the municipality, including shading, improved real estate values, and wildlife habitat.

The City of Saint Marys has an existing shade tree inventory but it is ten years old and lacks many data items that the current inventory will provide. The other three municipalities lack any inventory of their shade trees. An additional service to the municipalities is that storm drains and fire hydrants will be located by global positioning (GPS) for GIS mapping.

For this project, the iTree computer program was selected. The iTree program was developed by the U. S. Forest Service and its partners and is a free program. The data is entered into a handheld computer that makes downloading of the data for interpretation easier and faster. Dr. Hank Webster, a retired biologist, is managing the project for Headwaters RCD Council. Before starting the inventories, Webster met with appropriate municipal officials and members of shade tree commissions or committees. The goals of the project were explained and issues such as safety were answered.

At the start of June, Smith and Bembenic began the inventories. Each street tree is given an unique identification number and is identified as to species, using Latin and common names. Each tree, storm drain, and fire hydrant were located using a handheld GPS device that allows their unique location to be mapped. The latitude-longitude location is cross-referenced with the street address. The height and circumference of each tree is measured and recorded. The health of the tree and risks are assessed including the crowns of the tree, the tree trunks, utility line conflicts, and sidewalk conflicts. Any management recommendations are noted. Management recommendations could be to trim damaged or dead limbs, raise the crown, or even to remove the tree. Ample digital photographs will augment the numerical and text data. Locations that lack trees but could support trees are also recorded and go into the management recommendations. The position of fire hydrants and storm drains provide further benefits to the municipalities.



*J.R. Smith (left) and Tim Bembenic (right) measuring a tree in Saint Marys as part of an inventory of shade trees in Elk County*

The grant is for two years but the field inventory work will be completed in the 2008 summer season. This will allow for data interpretation, presentation of workshops, and report preparation during the following months. Mr. Scott Sjolander, Urban and Community Forestry, Penn State Cooperative Extension in Crawford County, will assist with the development of the public workshops which will increase public awareness on the importance of their urban trees and will provide training for certified arborists. All data, salient photographs, and management recommendations will be included in final reports submitted to each municipality. The final reports will also provide information on possible funding sources. Urban forests even exist in rural counties but require accurate data if the resource is to be properly managed.

**Citizens benefited - 23,112**

**Jobs created -3 seasonal**



*Working together to provide innovative leadership through projects and partnerships that develop or enhance sustainable cultural, environmental, and economic well-being...*

## **Sinnemahoning Endowment Fund**

Waterways and wetlands in McKean and Cameron counties that were damaged in a June 2006 lye spill will benefit from a landmark settlement between the commonwealth, Norfolk Southern Corp. and Norfolk Southern Railway Company. The projects will help re-establish the natural resources of Cameron, Elk, McKean, Clearfield and Potter counties so residents can again enjoy the recreational and sporting opportunities that were available before the spill.

Under the agreement, \$3.2 million dollars will go directly to the Headwaters Resource Conservation and Development Council Inc. to support projects in the Sinnemahoning Portage Creek Watershed, and the Driftwood Branch of the Sinnemahoning Creek Watershed.

Within the council, a stakeholders committee consisting of local public representatives, county

officials and state agency delegates will evaluate potential environmental projects for future funding. The stakeholder committee will meet in January to finish identifying the projects that may qualify for endowment support.

The June 2006 spill occurred near Gardeau, Norwich Township, McKean County, and wiped out fish and aquatic life in Big Fill Hollow and an 11-mile segment of Sinnemahoning-Portage Creek, which is designated as an exceptional value and wild trout stream. It also affected the fisheries in the Driftwood Branch of Sinnemahoning Creek. The effects of the spill were observed as far as 30 miles downstream from the derailment site, with much of the impact in Cameron County.



Serving the following Counties: Cameron, Centre, Clearfield, Clinton, Elk, Jefferson, McKean, and Potter Counties

# Penn Soil RC&D

## The Allegheny GeoTrail- A Regional Tourism Project benefiting ten Pennsylvania Counties

Penn Soil RC&D is partnering with the Oil Region Alliance of Business, Industry, and Tourism to develop and implement The Allegheny GeoTrail, an innovative new concept to increase tourism benefits in a ten county area of north western and north central Pennsylvania. The project utilizes the growing interest in a relatively new outdoor sport for people of all ages called Geocaching to provide increased tourism benefits to ten counties which comprise the Allegheny National Forest and its gateway communities. The project is funded by a \$234,200 grant from the U.S. Forest Service.

Within the north western and north central part of Pennsylvania, you will find more than two million acres of public lands set aside for natural resource management and the public's enjoyment. The ten county project area (Cameron, Clarion, Crawford, Elk, Forest, Jefferson, McKean, Potter, Venango, and Warren counties) includes the Allegheny National Forest, a portion of the PA Wilds Region, and encompasses several State Heritage Areas, and the Oil Region National Heritage Area.

Teeming with wildlife, beautiful scenic views, and historical attractions, the area offers unlimited recreational and educational opportunities.

Geocaching is an entertaining outdoor adventure game for Global positioning System (GPS) users, in which the participants seek out hidden geocaches by navigating to certain GPS coordinates provided by the person who hid the cache. The coordinates are obtained from a website on the internet and downloaded into a GPS unit. Participating in a cache hunt is a good way to take advantage of the features and capabilities of a GPS unit, but it is also a great way for someone to navigate their way to find noteworthy attractions and hidden areas that might not be readily found by those casually passing by.

Geocaching combines the love of the outdoors, hiking, sightseeing, wildlife watching, and nature study with the innovative electronic gadgetry of a GPS to result in a high tech treasure hunt enjoyed by young and old alike. More and more people are spending their free time, weekends, and vacations geocaching. The Allegheny GeoTrail is actually a network of roads that will carry visitors across the ten county region in pursuit of special hidden geocaches which contain a special self-inking stamp that participants will use to validate their Allegheny Trail Passports. Project volunteers in each county have placed between 10-20 Allegheny GeoTrail geocaches for participants to seek which will bring visitors into close proximity of tourism destinations and special attractions of each county. Participants must find a minimum of six of the GeoTrail caches to get their passports validated and are rewarded with a specially minted Allegheny GeoTrail commemorative coin specific to each county. The coins tend to be highly sought after collector items by avid geocachers.



*U.S. Representative John Peterson, PA (5<sup>th</sup> District) displays an Allegheny*

*GeoTrail plaque containing the ten participating county coins.*

The project is expected to generate an estimated \$400,000 in annual tourism benefits to the regional economy and has already generated the following benefits to the region in the first nine months that the project was active:

- Recreational Sites Created - 150**
- Visitor Days Increased - 8,500**
- People Benefited from New Technology - 500**
- Citizens Served - 5,000**
- Publications Distributed - 10,000**
- Educational Programs Conducted - 5**
- Attendance at Educational Events - 1,000**

## Penn Soil RC&D Partners with Allegheny Outdoor Club and others to create Big Bend Bird Viewing Area at Kinzua Dam



First Energy Plant Manager Tom Groff presents a donation of \$20,000 to Penn Soil RC&D project partners working together to improve recreational facilities at the Big Bend Visitors Center in Warren County.

The partners are working together to construct a handicapped accessible nature trail and bird viewing platform along the bank of the Allegheny River downstream from the Kinzua Dam.. The project estimated to cost \$65,000 has received grants from First Energy Corporation, PA Lumber Heritage Region, The U.S. Army Corps. of Engineers, and The Warren Foundation.

## Penn Soil RC&D sponsors Tri-State Tillage Conference

The 11<sup>th</sup> annual Tri-State Tillage Conference was held in West Middlesex, PA to provide the latest educational information to agricultural producers and to agencies and businesses that serve producers. One Hundred fifty-two people from Pennsylvania, Ohio, and New York attended the conference to learn more about no till farming methods, reducing erosion, saving energy, and managing nutrients.

The following benefits were generated from this project:

- Agricultural lands benefited by project - 11,643**
- Businesses Benefited from New Technology - 100**
- Educational Programs Conducted - 5**
- Attendance at Educational Events - 152**
- Brochures Distributed - 500**

## Value Added Dairy Project

Penn Soil RC&D has been very active in promoting value added opportunities to improve economic opportunities for dairy farmers. The Council has partnered with several other organizations including the PA Association for Sustainable Agriculture (PASA), the Penn State Women in Agriculture Network (WAGN), and the Munnell Run Farm Foundation to co-sponsor our third basic cheese making event, a two day class in Mercer County.

The two-day class was designed for novice cheese makers and those considering starting a farmstead cheese business. Melanie Dietrich- Cochran taught participants about milk quality, ingredients used in cheese making, processes for making a variety of cheeses, techniques and requirements for aging cheese, and how to establish a business as a farmstead or artisan cheese maker.

Twenty-one people attended the course to learn about basic milk and cheese chemistry, the art of aging cheese (affinage), and how to design and operate cheese making business. This was a “hands-on” class, which gave participants the chance to actually make cheeses.



- Educational Program Conducted - 1**
- Attendance at Educational Events - 25**
- Businesses Benefited - 21**
- Informational Media Produced - 100**



Counties Served: Clarion, Crawford, Erie, Forest, Lawrence, Mercer, Venango, and Warren

# Penn's Corner RC&D

## Pennsylvania Grassland Evaluation Contest

Penn's Corner sponsors a statewide Grassland Evaluation Contest each year. The contest is open to high school age 4-H and FFA students. Its' purpose is to provide outreach and education to youth on the value and benefits of grazing and agriculture as a whole, while also offering college scholarships to members of high scoring teams. The contest consists of four sections 1) grassland condition, 2) plant identification, 3) soils interpretation, and 4) wildlife habitat. The judging site is a typical pasture or area used for livestock grazing. A scenario with landowner goals for livestock and wildlife production is provided at the Contest site. Appropriate soil survey information, aerial photos, maps, and score cards are also provided.



Members of the first place team receive a \$500 college scholarship. Second place team members receive a \$250 college scholarship and the highest scoring individual receives a \$500 college scholarship. Also, first place teams are eligible to compete in the Mid-America Grassland Contest in Missouri. This year, 18 teams (66 students) from all across Pennsylvania participated in the contest. Since the Contest began in 2003, Cambria County 4-H has taken first place every year and this year was no exception. The second place team was North Fayette Area FFA from Fayette County and the Montgomery County 4-H Livestock team placed third. The highest scoring individual award went to Jenifer Veneskey, a member of the Cambria County 4-H team.



The contest is funded primarily through donations. For the past five years, Kencove Fence has sponsored the Highest Scoring Individual Award and Conservation Districts and agricultural organizations across the state have shown their support by making contributions. The Pennsylvania Forage and Grassland Council is also a great partner and supporter of the Contest. They play an integral role in the funding and administration of the scholarships. Over the past five years, a total of \$17,500 in college scholarship funds have been awarded to students on the first and second place teams.

## Solar Powered Livestock Watering Systems

Solar powered water pumps are a very promising technology that can reduce fuel consumption on livestock farms and make it cost effective and practical for livestock to harvest their own feed on pasture. Today's livestock grazers use intensive rotational systems that increase forage utilization while maintaining the regenerative capabilities of their forages. They use much more fencing to maximize forage consumption by livestock on small paddocks. However, the most limiting factor to optimum use of this system is the availability of water. Since it is cost prohibitive to run water lines or electricity to the far reaches of most farms, it is necessary to find alternative ways to develop water supplies in these remote areas. The use of solar power has great potential in Pennsylvania to enhance our ongoing grazing management program.



Penn's Corner and the Southwest Project Grass Chapter received a Pennsylvania Energy Harvest grant in the amount of \$100,000 to install solar powered watering systems on grazing farms in the southwest Project Grass service area. Producers received 75 percent cost share up to a maximum of \$6,300 per system. A total of 15 solar pump watering systems were installed in the Project Grass Southwest Chapter area and are working successfully and the program participants are pleased with the projects. Many environmental successes were achieved such as installing 29,456 feet of stream bank fence, improving 829 acres of grazing land, demonstrated emission reductions, and saving an estimated 879 tons of soil per year. The following more specifically describes these environmental successes:

### Farmer Savings

130.2 kwh \* \$0.08 per kwh = 12 months \* \$15 per month service charge = \$190.42 per year per system

### Emissions Reductions per system

According to the emissions calculator at <http://cleanerandgreener.org/resources/calculators.htm>, the estimated yearly pollution reductions from using solar power instead of grid tied power are:

CO <sub>2</sub>	274 pounds
NO <sub>x</sub>	1 pound
SO <sub>2</sub>	2 pounds
Hg	4 mg



*Enhancing the area's natural resources and building strong communities by fostering regional partnerships, securing resources, and delivering needed services*

### Counties Served:

*Allegheny, Armstrong, Beaver, Butler, Greene, Indiana, Fayette, Washington & Westmoreland*

# Pocono Northeast RC&D

## Reconditioning/Reconstruction of the Orchard Limestone Drain

Abandoned mine drainage (AMD) is the leading source of non-point source pollution within Pennsylvania and the Northern Swatara Creek Watershed. Historically, the Swatara Creek Watershed has been historically degraded to the point that the main stem of Swatara Creek at the town of Ravine had been devoid of aquatic life even as recent as 1990.

The Orchard Limestone Drain is one of several treatment systems that the watershed installed to reduce the amount of pollutants entering the Swatara Creek



Watershed. The Orchard Limestone Drain was originally constructed in 1995 to treat the water from the Orchard Discharge. The Orchard drain had worked very effectively for several years, but over time the water quality of the effluent of the drain has been dropping. The water leaving the treatment system is not as good as it once was, which is in part due to the amount of limestone used to initially construct the system being reduced significantly. The system is also showing signs of clogging or plugging with iron hydroxide sediment and short-circuiting as a result of this sediment. The water is not being as effectively treated as it once was.

The Pocono Northeast RC&D administered and implemented an Office of Surface Mining, Appalachian

Clean Streams Initiative Grant for the reconditioning/reconstruction of the "Orchard Limestone Drain" project. The project replaced the original anoxic limestone drain with a larger drain that measured 30 feet long by 12 feet wide by 4 feet deep. The newly constructed drain includes a piping manifold in the bottom of the drain that brings the discharge water in through the piping to flow up through the limestone and out of the top of the drain into a rock-lined channel. The rock-lined channel conveys the treated water back into the original discharge channel. The piping manifold is also used to backflush the anoxic limestone drain into a flushing pond where iron oxide that is precipitated out of solution can be deposited so it does not reenter the receiving stream. The backflushing of the system is automated using an AgriDrain Smart Drain System. The Smart Drain System is powered by a solar panel which provides the energy for the system to automatically flush the anoxic limestone drain at various intervals. This flushing will help to reduce clogging within the drain from iron oxide or other precipitants being removed by the system. The treatment system is continually monitored by the project partners to evaluate the improvements and effectiveness of the system. The way the system is designed should significantly reduce the amount of iron hydroxide sediment build up within the system, and potentially act as a template for the removal of iron precipitants. The project was completed in August 2007 and the average water chemistry of the discharge and treatment system effluent from August 2007- March 2008 was as follows:

**Raw Mine Discharge-- pH= 4.9, acidity= 30.1 mg/l, alkalinity= 2.1 mg/l, and total iron= 7.0mg/l**  
**Treatment System Effluent-- pH= 6.7, acidity= -12.4 mg/l, alkalinity= 34.7 mg/l, and total iron= 1.9 mg/l**



*The Pocono Northeast Resource Conservation & Development Council is a community resource providing expertise in resource management and development throughout a ten county area of Northeastern Pennsylvania. The Council is committed to the preservation and protection of natural resources within a framework of economic growth.*

## Solar and Wind Powered Water Pumping Systems for Rotational Grazing Systems

Intensive rotational grazing systems maximize forage utilization while maintaining the regenerative capabilities of forages. The greatest limiting factor to optimize the use of this system is the availability of water. Intensive grazing systems can be competitive from a production stand point only if an adequate water supply is available in or near each paddock. Since it is cost prohibitive to run water lines or electricity to the far reaches of most farms, it is necessary to develop water supplies in these remote areas. A very promising technology and the focus of this project is the use of solar pumps to charge underground reservoirs (tanks) which in turn will supply drinking water to livestock in the paddocks. The use of solar or wind power, in lieu of diesel and other fossil fuels, as part of our ongoing intensive grazing management program will allow a livestock producer to put water within their grazing system where it is needed.



The RC&D Council received a DEP Energy Harvest Grant for implementing the “Solar and Wind Powered Water Pumping Systems for Rotational Grazing Systems” project. The Council partnered with Endless Mountains RC&D, Project Grass Northeast, and NRCS on the project resulting in the successful design and installation of 12 solar and 1 wind powered water pumping system throughout the 13 county Project Grass Northeast area. The water systems installed in the region are as follows: Tioga County-2 systems; Bradford County- 3 systems; Wayne County- 3 systems; Susquehanna, Lackawanna, Wyoming, Sullivan and Columbia County each have one watering system installed. All of the systems installed have reduced the amount of fuel consumed on each of the farm, KWH of renewable electricity being generated, improved water quality through prevention of erosion, better nutrient management, and more water infiltration/uptake. A summarization of the total project results are as follows:

<b>Gallons of Fuel Saved:</b>	<b>2,733</b>
<b>Miles per Year by Farm Equipment Saved:</b>	<b>2,074</b>
<b>KWH produced:</b>	<b>1,087</b>
<b>Acres converted to Grazing (improved water quality):</b>	<b>303</b>



The educational/outreach component of the project was a large success as well. The 2006 Annual Pennsylvania Statewide Project Grass Conference was held in October 2006 at PennCollege in Williamsport. The conference highlighted rotational grazing practices as part of the two-day event, which included a presentation on the project and how renewable energy can assist with expanding and improving upon current grazing systems. Attendance at the conference was just under 200 people.

Other educational success includes the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Northeast PA Grazing Conference: *Making Green with Green: Direct Marketing Your Pasture Raised Products*, which included a discussion on the project and how renewable energy alternatives were an option for landowners to increase savings on the grazing operation. The Northeast PA conference had over 175 people in attendance.

### Current Projects we are working on:

- ◆ Pennsylvania Fuels for Schools...and Beyond Program
- ◆ Forest Management & Wildlife Habitat Initiative
- ◆ Biomass & Renewable Fuel Developing Utilizing Pelletized Grasses

### Council Goals

- ▶ Land & Water Conservation
- ▶ Resource & Energy Conservation
- ▶ Community Resource Development
- ▶ Nonprofit Organization & Management



*Serving the Following Counties: Columbia, Lackawanna, Luzerne, Monroe, Montour, Northumberland, Pike, Schuylkill & Wayne*

**1300 Old Plank Road, Mayfield, PA 18433 \* Phone: 570-282-8732 ext. 4 \* Fax: 570-281-5379**

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# Southeastern PA RC&D

## Weed & Wildlife Management on CREP Land

The Southeastern PA Resource Conservation & Development Council helped Berks and Chester farmers/landowners enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP). They learned to better identify and correctly control noxious weeds. The CREP participants also learned which “weedy” plants to let grow because of their beneficial value to wildlife.

This special technical assistance project included hiring weed specialists for farm visits, sponsoring evening workshops, and providing all CREP participants with weed and wildlife reference materials.

Thanks to SEPA RC&D efforts, over 2900 acres were scouted for Pennsylvania’s 13 noxious weeds. Approximately 140 farmers/landowners were visited and provided one-on-one technical assistance.



Two evening workshops were held on CREP farms. The programs included demonstrations of proper chemical application methods, safety clothing and equipment, CREP field tours, and Q&A sessions.

All the CREP participants received a packet of reference materials and local contacts to help them to better manage their CREP acreage.

A survey completed at the conclusion of the project showed that 85 % of respondents felt the on-site technical assistance visits were helpful. 91% had implemented or had planned to implement the recommendations made during the CREP visits.

Project partners included USDA Farm Services Agency, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, Penn State Cooperative Extension Service, and PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources Bureau of Forestry.



The CREP participants were also given recommendations for managing their CREP acreage for wildlife. Habitat management is critical to restoring wildlife, particularly bird populations in both counties.



*The mission of the Southeastern PA RC&D Council is to improve the quality of life for people in the region by promoting programs that conserve and enhance the area’s natural and community resources*

## Local Municipalities Working Together

Water quality improvement has led six municipalities to partner with the Southeastern PA Resource Conservation and Development Council.

The Eastern Delaware County Council of Governments is a group of small older urbanized communities. Individually they are faced with meeting the technical and financial requirements of the environmental programs: Municipal Separate Storm Sewers Systems (MS4) and the Total Maximum Daily Loading (TMDL) Programs. These programs are to protect and restore local watersheds.

In partnership with the Southeastern PA RC&D Council, the group is trying to determine if there are activities, permits, services, and purchases that could be done jointly in order to save time and money.



To help fund the project, the SEPA RC&D Council sought and was awarded a \$273, 000 by the Environmental Protection Agency. The Council is also applying to the William Penn Foundation for an additional \$210,000 to support the project's efforts. The University of Maryland Environmental Finance Center has been hired to assist the group with the project.

The project goals include collecting stormwater cost data from the participating municipalities, selecting an operational model, developing and adopting legal agreements, hiring a Stormwater Manager, and implementing a joint project.



*Serving:  
Berks, Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Lehigh,  
Montgomery, and  
Northampton Counties*

## Innovative and Niche Farming

In May of 2007 the Southeastern PA Resource Conservation and Development Council sponsored a day long workshop to discuss unique farming operations and opportunities that exist for creative agricultural entrepreneurs. Approximately 50 people attended meeting.



Attendees included staff members of federal and state legislators, County Commissioner, local farmers, farmers from Central Pennsylvania and Maryland, and representatives of other non-profit organizations.

The Keynote Speaker was from the Pennsylvania Association for Sustainable Agriculture. Other speakers included PA Women's Ag Network, County Farmland Preservation Administrator, Ag Loan Coordinator, and Pennsylvania Association for Sustainable Agriculture, agency representatives, and innovative farmers.

During breaks and lunch, attendees viewed displays and received handouts.

One of the greatest needs mentioned was for a small mobile processing facility in the region. This would help small farmers prepare raw ag goods for sale and create value added products.

Attendees also discussed ways local municipalities can support and encourage startup agricultural operations.



# Southern Alleghenies RC&D

## Return of the Greater Johnstown Watershed Association

The Greater Johnstown Watershed Association (GJWSA), one of the regions oldest watershed organizations, was once a regional force in restoring the City of Johnstown in the aftermath of the 1977 Flood. With the help of the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, the Southern Alleghenies Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Council and local partners, the GJWSA has become a new organization with a renewed focus on community development and a desire to involve the public in decisions that affect the quality of life in the region. GJWSA was originally formed in June of 1982 to focus public attention on the water quality problems associated with stormwater-runoff and acid mine drainage and to promote the water-based recreation potential of the Stonycreek, Little Conemaugh and Conemaugh Rivers and their tributaries. The organization serves a large geographic area including 12 sub-watersheds which flow through Greater Johnstown, which is a predominantly urban area with rural headwaters.



Recent improvements in water quality, spearheaded by groups such as the Stonycreek Conemaugh River Improvement Project (SCRIP) and the Wells Creek Watershed Association have renewed public interest in the recreation potential of both the Stonycreek and the Little Conemaugh Rivers. Environmental education, storm water management, public river access and the need for creative economic development opportunities are just a few of the issues the GJWSA hopes to work with community leaders to address. The association has an ambitious agenda for its coverage area, including several feasibility studies for mine drainage



treatment projects on Solomon Run and the Inclined Plane (Mine 72) Discharge and improvements to the Rock Tunnel Treatment System. GJWSA worked with Natural Biodiversity Inc., the Kiski-Conemaugh Stream Team and other partners to develop and deliver public outreach activities including the Johnstown Water Festival and the regional Outdoor Heritage program and

initiated an ambitious membership drive with a mailing to over 42,000 residents in the region.

Through the leadership of the Cambria County Conservation District, NRCS, Keystone Economic Development Corporation, the RC&D Council and the Southern Alleghenies Conservancy, the watershed association is being restructured to focus on urban community issues and needs. GJWSA has many partners and collaborators in this effort and has received financial support from the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, Western Pennsylvania Watershed Program and the Community Foundation for the Alleghenies to pursue its organizational goals. Donated technical assistance from the USDA NRCS, the University of Pittsburgh Johnstown Campus, Pennsylvania Highlands Community College and several local engineering firms provided the association a strong local match. The resurgence of public involvement in the Greater Johnstown area is a direct result of NRCS and the RC&D Council's outreach efforts to underserved populations in the region.

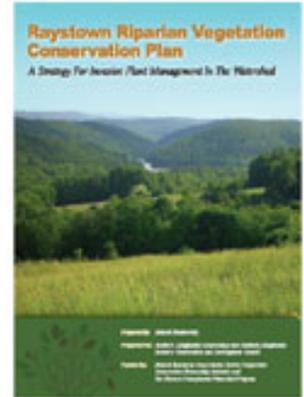


*"To improve the quality of life and preserve the heritage of Pennsylvania's citizens and future generations by: conserving land containing significant natural, cultural, and recreational resources; restoring and enhancing resources; and assisting public and private organizations with conservation projects."*

## Raystown Riparian Vegetation Conservation Plan

SA RC&D Council Area-Wide Project

The Raystown Riparian Vegetation Conservation Plan is an area-wide project of the Southern Alleghenies RC&D Council and the Southern Alleghenies Conservancy, in partnership with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Natural Biodiversity and the Juniata Clean Water Partnership. The purpose of the project is to develop a watershed-based action plan for invasive species control in the 964 sq. mile Raystown Branch of the Juniata River by compiling information from involved partners and field study into a set of recommendations for invasive plant control. Natural Biodiversity was contracted to create a comprehensive management plan that was designed to prevent the spread of invasive plants and noxious weeds that are threatening the Raystown Watershed.



The Raystown Riparian Vegetation Conservation Plan focuses on minimizing invasive plant impacts, conserving biodiversity, and restoring wildlife habitat within the watershed. Much of the credit for the success of the plan is due to productive public input meetings, an involved planning committee, and cooperation of many private landowners. The plan identifies best management and control practices, early detection, and rapid response systems to prevent alien plant species from becoming established in the study area and will include known invasive species locations, recommended methods of control, potential sources of funding for implementation of controls, and integrated pest management methods.

The project was funded with a Cooperative Conservation Partnership Initiative (CCPI) grant received from NRCS in June 2006. Landowners in the watershed who are currently participating in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), Conservation Reserve



Enhancement Program (CREP), or the Conservation Securities Program (CSP) were contacted by Natural Biodiversity staff to request volunteer participation in the assessment portion of the project. Individual management plans were prepared for participating landowners that will assist them in future decision-making. The Raystown Riparian Vegetation Conservation Plan was approved as an area-wide RC&D project in July 2004 and completed in the summer of 2007. The 118-mile Raystown Branch drains the largest area and is the longest tributary of the Juniata River in south-central Pennsylvania. It begins in the Allegheny Mountains of Somerset County and drains almost 1,000 square miles before joining the main stem of the Juniata River at Huntingdon. The Raystown Riparian Vegetation Conservation Plan can be viewed online at the following address: <http://www.naturalbiodiversity.org/raystown>.

### ***Project accomplishments:***

- 31 landowners were provided with technical assistance
- Plan were prepared that will benefit 2,869 acres of land in the study area
- Assessments were conducted to identify the presence of 13 PA noxious weeds and 22 invasive plants



Serving the following Counties:  
Bedford, Blair, Cambria, Fulton, Huntingdon, and Somerset

# The Mid-Atlantic Association of RC&D Councils comes to Pennsylvania

**Annual Meeting – Grantsville – September 16-19, 2007**



The Pennsylvania Councils, coordinated locally by the Capital RC&D, played host to the six (6) state associations that make up the Mid-Atlantic Association of Resource Conservation & Development Councils at their Annual Meeting. Over 150 people attended the conference.

Besides the outstanding programs and training, members attended the annual Mid-Atlantic Awards Dinner and Annual Association Meeting. The Keynote dinner, which was also open to the public, featured a nationally recognized speaker, Dr. Hanoch McCarty, co-author, of the *Chicken Soup for the Soul* book series.



A highlight of the evening festival and barbeque was “Mid-Atlantic RC&D Geo-Bingo,” as members learned how the world of satellites and global positioning systems has been combined with outdoor recreation to create a high tech treasure hunt called geocaching.



Tours of various sites in Lancaster, Lebanon and Schuylkill counties allowed attendees to experience programs and projects that the RC&D's were instrumental in assisting, partnering, and/or implementing within Pennsylvania. The projects and programs highlighted on the tours along with the diverse partnerships developed by the RC&D's include:

The “northern” tour took attendees into Schuylkill County to view different and diverse RC&D projects that addressed all four of the RC&D Elements of land management, land conservation, water management, and community development. RC&D Projects and Programs included:

- **Dry Hydrants- Rural Fire Protection** project is to assist rural communities, municipalities, and fire companies to improve their fire fighting capabilities by utilizing natural water sources within their areas.
- **Stormwater Management & Education Initiative** was also discussed in the goals of the project were the development of a website, Stormwater Management Handbook, and workshops to educate people on stormwater management. Handbooks were provided/distributed to the 347 municipalities within the 10 County RC&D Area.
- **Agricultural Best Management Practices & No-till Agriculture** were discussed along with the various efforts of the RC&D to assist with the promotion and implementation of BMP's within the RC&D Area to reduce soil erosion and sedimentation, reduce stormwater runoff, improve nutrient management, and improve water quality.
- **Weed Control/Wildlife Habitat Technical Assistance** program worked with landowners enrolled in CREP by providing information and resources on how to address noxious and invasive weeds on their property while emphasizing the beneficial plants that improve wildlife habitat. This unique project offered opportunities for landowners to ask questions, seek advice and gain a better understanding of how and why to control noxious and invasive weeds on their property while improving wildlife habitat at the same time.
- **Biomass and Renewable Fuel Development Utilizing Pelletized Grasses and Utilization of Biomass at the Benton Area School District** were discussed and both projects are very closely tied together. The pelletized grasses project focuses on the fabrication and demonstration of a mobile pelletizing unit that will pelletize native grasses for

direct energy and combustion use. Pocono Northeast RC&D is assisting the Benton Area School District with the installation of a biomass heating system utilizing native grass pellets and other biomass as the feedstock for the heating system which will allow local farmers to produce the biomass to supply the school.

- ***Pennsylvania Fuels for Schools & Beyond Program*** started by Pocono Northeast RC&D in November 2006 is a statewide biomass energy-use initiative promoting local renewable resources to provide reliable energy for Pennsylvania schools and businesses. The program will provide many opportunities for the expansion of the forest and agricultural resources and industry within PA which will include low grade wood and dedicated energy crops.
- ***Reconditioning the Orchard Limestone Drain*** was started after the original drain constructed in 1995 to treat the polluted water from the Orchard Mine Discharge stopped functioning. The project resulted in the reconstruction of the Orchard Limestone Drain and improved water quality to over 2 miles of stream.
- ***Iron Oxide Resource Recovery*** is looking for opportunities to develop value-added opportunities to utilize the metals associated with abandoned mine drainage. By identifying these value-added opportunities this may be a way to assist with cleaning up the streams, but also to provide financial capitalization for these cleanup efforts.
- ***AML Reauthorization***, which amends the 1977 Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act (SMCRA), extends the AML Program for at least 15 years and will triple AML funds PA receives from reclamation fees collected from every ton of coal produced in the United States.

The “southern” tour took attendees into Lebanon and Lancaster Counties to view different and diverse RC&D projects that addressed all four of the RC&D Elements as well in the following projects/programs:

- ***Park the Plow for Profit & Lebanon County Farmer Network*** is a Regional initiative, in cooperation with the numerous partners to promote the increased adoption of a no-till system approach to agriculture, which reduces the sediment and nutrient loads to the Chesapeake Bay.
- ***Weed Control/Wildlife Habitat Technical Assistance & South Central Project Grass*** are projects that focus on agricultural producers enrolling in South Central Project Grass which provides education on rotational grazing systems on the farm, and technical assistance from the RC&D on identifying and controlling noxious weeds while enhancing wildlife habitat as part of CREP.
- The ***Quittapahilla Educational Wetland Preserve*** was started in 2003 as an educational project for the Career and Technology Center, which owns the land. The local community had no other wetland ecosystem resource available for educational purposes, so the construction of boardwalks made it useable and accessible for the area’s educators.
- ***Claremont Community Gardens Program’s*** goal at Claremont Nursing and Rehab Center in Cumberland County is to develop a multi-dimensional horticultural program, to promote mental health and wellness for residents and the community at large, through a series of therapeutic gardens.
- ***PA Stream Sign Program*** is focused on raising awareness, connect people to their watersheds, and encourage the protection of water resources. A sign was placed along roadway bridge crossings at designated waterways. The blue and white informational signs now identify 1,500 waterway crossings throughout the state.
- ***Dry Hydrants- Rural Fire Protection*** project intends to assist rural communities, municipalities, and fire companies to improve their fire fighting capabilities by utilizing natural water sources like streams and farm ponds.
- ***Taste the Gifts of Our Region- SC PA Agritourism Guide*** encompasses data collection for a guide to agritourism and cultural amenities in the Capital RC&D region. The final product will highlight local agricultural business and tourism opportunities, intending to strengthen the agricultural economy of the region by increasing visits to local farm markets, wineries, and farm stays and B&B’s.
- ***SouthCentral Buy Fresh Buy Local*** is a cooperative effort where Capital RC&D has partnered with the PA Association for Sustainable Agriculture (PASA) to lead this consumer awareness campaign in south central Pennsylvania. The intent is to promote the consumption of local farm products as well as raise awareness of the benefits to individuals and communities associated with buying locally-produced food.
- The ***Gettysburg Farm-to-chef Network*** is striving to both increase demand and availability of locally produced farm products. The program seeks to organize and train small scale farms to better serve and connect with local demand for their products and also expand the consumer marketing program supporting locally grown products.

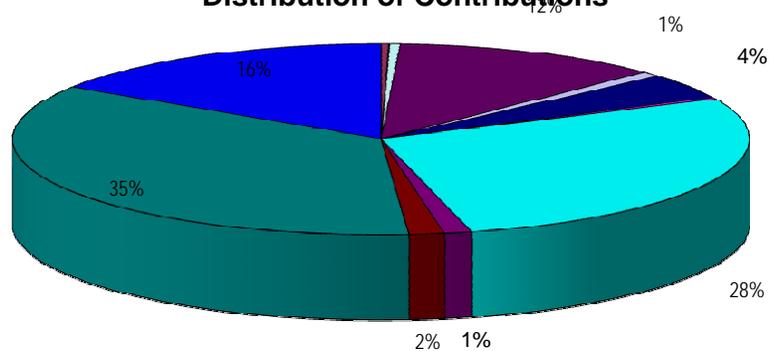
**RC&D Project Partners on the aforementioned projects include:** *USDA-NRCS, USDA- Farm Services Agency, US Dept. of Interior Office of Surface Mining, United States Geologic Survey, County Conservation Districts, Municipalities, Fire Companies, USDA Forest Service, PA Dept. of Environmental Protection, PA Game Commission, PA Dept. Conservation & Natural Resources, Penn State Cooperative Ext, Watershed Associations, Chesapeake Bay Foundation, PA League of Women Voters, Eastern PA Coalition for Abandoned Mine Reclamation (EPCAMR), Pheasants Forever, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF), Chesapeake Bay Funders Network (CBFN), PA No-Till Alliance, PA Organization for Watersheds and Rivers (POWR), and Penn DOT*



USDA-Agricultural Research Service	\$144
USDA-Agricultural Marking Service	\$20,311
USDA-Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service	\$2,300
USDA-Forest Service	\$29,204
USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service	\$745,800
Department of Defence	\$200
Department of Education	\$1,500
Department of Interior	\$52,644
Environmental Protection Agency	\$273,180
Corporation of National and Community Service	\$18,025
Tribal Government	\$300
State Government	\$1,756,168
Local Government	\$76,201
Soil and Water Conservation Districts	\$97,251
Non Government Organizations	\$2,226,718
Other	\$998,648
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$6,298,594</b>

PA RC&D's have leveraged more than \$5 for every \$1 of RC&D Program Funds

**Distribution of Contributions**



- USDA-Agricultural Research Service
- USDA-Agricultural Marking Service
- USDA-Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service
- USDA-Forest Service
- USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service
- Department of Defence
- Department of Education
- Department of Interior
- Environmental Protection Agency
- Corporation of National and Community Service
- Tribal Government
- State Government
- Local Government
- Soil and Water Conservation Districts
- Non Government Organizations
- Other

**RESOURCE CONSERVATION and DEVELOPMENT AREAS  
PENNSYLVANIA**



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