

Lebanon County Conservation District Program Overview

Mission Statement

To protect, and promote wise stewardship and conservation of the natural resources of Lebanon County on both private and public lands; and to educate and encourage all people to share in this worthy mission.



Lebanon County Conservation District
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Updated: February 2012

Directors:

Donald Bollinger **Chairman/Public Director**
 Connie Hoffer **Vice Chair/Farmer Director**
 Robert Arnold **Treasurer/Public Director**
 Jo Ellen Litz **Commissioner Director**
 Sue Bowman **Public Director**
 Glen Krall **Farmer Director**
 Calvin Miller **Farmer Director**
 Gail Smith **Farmer Director**
 Harold Kreider **Farmer Director**



Staff:

Charles Wertz **District Manager**
 Leigh Beamesderfer **Forester/Naturalist**
 Karl Kerchner **Erosion & Sedimentation Pollution Control Specialist**
 Vacant **Erosion & Sedimentation Pollution Control Specialist**
 Angie Foltz **Natural Resources Program Specialist**
 Lynette Gelsinger **Nutrient Management Specialist**
 Stephanie Harmon **Watershed Specialist**
 Stephanie Butler **Ag Conservation Specialist**
 Mark Jackson **Strategic Watershed Action Team (SWAT)**
 Ruth Sheetz **Administrative Assistant**
 Linda Shultz **Secretary**

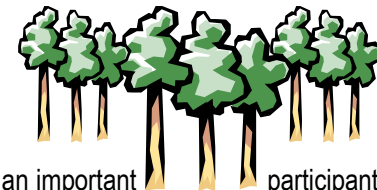


Forestry

Forestry assistance and related programs have changed in Lebanon County over the last few years. The Conservation District's role in urban forestry has become consultation rather than an active participant of inspections, enforcements, and public relations for the City of Lebanon and other local municipalities.

In addition, LCCD has property owners on the lookout for two new invasive species the Emerald Ash Borer and the Asian Longhorned Beetle. Thus far we remain pest-free of these destructive critters.

The LCCD continues to promote proper woodland management and provide available resources through newsletters and various programs. The annual tree seedling sale continues to promote the many benefits of trees both in urban and rural settings.



Recreation

The LCCD continues to be an important participant in county recreational efforts. With the cooperation of the Lebanon County Career and Technology Center, and the Quittapahilla Educational Wetlands Preserve (QEWP) committee, the development of a hands-on, educational wetland facility has become a reality. The Wetland Preserve is used for education to address Pennsylvania's Environmental and Ecology Education Standards as well as passive recreation. The site attracts a variety of waterfowl including herons, egrets, ducks, and geese. Additionally, LCCD staff serve on the steering committees for Governor Dick and The Lebanon Valley Rails to Trails, Inc.

Recreational activities have been made available through many other programs such as the Tulpehocken Creek Watershed Protection Plan and Environmental Assessment.

Together We Can Make A Difference

The Lebanon County Conservation District is taking action, and with your support to continue our vital educational and conservation programs, we can make the earth an enjoyable, environmentally sound place to live.

Dirt & Gravel Roads

Over 30 miles of unpaved, dirt and gravel roads serve rural residents in forested and agricultural areas throughout the county. If not properly maintained, these roads can become sources of runoff and pollute nearby waterways. These roads become large providers of dust and sediment, which is responsible for up to 80% of the degradation of our waterways.

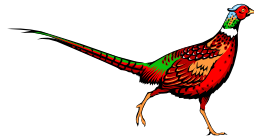
LCCD utilizes the Dirt and Gravel Roads Program to implement environmentally sound maintenance practices to reduce the amount of run-off. Minimal state and local funding has curtailed the amount of dirt and gravel road repair in our county. However, an average of one project every two years is successfully implemented in Lebanon County, including regrading and drainage improvements. To date, 120,900 square feet of dirt and gravel roads have been repaired in the county.

Wildlife Management

Many wildlife species have decreased in number due to habitat destruction. Removal of fence rows, drainage of wetlands, and suburbanization have had a serious impact on species such as the ring-necked pheasant and bog turtle.

The LCCD offers landowners cost share practices that improve wildlife habitat. The Public Law-566 Small Watershed Program has a specific fish and wildlife development component. Property owners are encouraged to set aside areas for habitat through programs such as the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP), Wetland Reserve Program (WRP), and Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP). Our District does this in partnership with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, Farm Service Agency, and the Pennsylvania Game Commission. We also have been successful in securing surplus federal property (such as the Fort Indiantown Gap railhead) to remain as open space recreation within the county.

Where possible, the LCCD helps non-profit conservancies and land trusts facilitate the purchase of wildlife habitat areas. The Cornwall Watershed area; additions to the Middlecreek Wildlife Management Area by the Wildlands Conservancy; and the Lebanon Valley/Berks County Conservancy partnership to secure the Stracks Dam bog turtle habitat, are examples of habitat involvement by the LCCD.



YOUR Conservation District

The Lebanon County Conservation District (LCCD) was organized at the request of county citizens to provide conservation of the soil, water, woodland, and wildlife resources; to assist in watershed protection and flood prevention; to preserve the tax base; and to protect and promote the health and general welfare of the people of the county.

Lebanon County was declared a Conservation District by the County Commissioners on May 23, 1949, in accordance with the provisions of the "Soil Conservation Law" of 1945, Act 217 of the Pennsylvania General Assembly.

You are invited to participate in the annual planning of work of the LCCD at the November planning meeting and throughout the year. At a time when the state and federal governments are returning control of programs to the grassroots level, your District is poised more than ever through our unique structure to empower local people in conserving our natural resources. Meetings are held the first Thursday of every month (except August) at the Lebanon Valley Agricultural Center. Remember, it's **YOUR** District and only **YOU** can make it work.

Environmental Education & Community Outreach

One of the best ways for the LCCD to ensure the continued wise use of our natural resources is to educate people. The LCCD offers environmental education programs to public and private schools, scout troops, and various civic organizations. Summer teacher workshops demonstrate ideas and methods for incorporating agricultural and environmental concepts into the classroom and existing curricula.



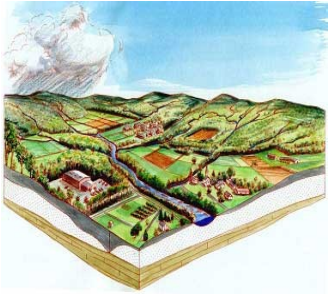
The LCCD also sponsors the annual Envirothon. The Envirothon is an environmental competition for elementary, middle, and high school students throughout Lebanon County. Schools compete for the title in a contest challenging their skills in the areas of wildlife, soils, aquatics, forestry, and a current environmental issue. The Envirothon is one of our most comprehensive and successful environmental education outreach programs. The LCCD also offers programs on soil and other conservation related topics to local schools.

Literally thousands of Lebanon County residents are touched by the LCCD's environmental education programs every year through newsletters, seminars, scholarships, programs, and community involvement. We strive to teach people respect for the environment.

Watershed Outreach

Healthier watersheds have become a local and national priority. The LCCD is well mobilized to seek funding to improve conservation of soil and nutrients which in turn protects our water quality and quantity.

The LCCD serves as a beneficial resource to our numerous watershed and conservation organizations. Serving as a liaison to the “Grass Roots” organizations is fundamental when it comes to enhancing and preserving the watersheds of Lebanon County. LCCD supports the initiatives of the local conservation and watershed organizations. This includes technical assistance, watershed planning, watershed protection, and educational programs. The LCCD participates in organizational activities such as stream assessments, stream monitoring, stream cleanups, and riparian buffer plantings (tree and shrub plantings). The LCCD also serves on various committees such as the Swatara Creek Sojourn planning committee. The LCCD also provides information such as grant opportunities, technical assistance availability, and notice of educational workshops to the local watershed organizations, municipalities, and planning commissions.



Research on the Chesapeake Bay indicates nutrient loading of the Susquehanna River is our state’s major contribution to the Bay. Our goal is to reduce Pennsylvania nutrient loading to the Susquehanna River (contributing 50% of the fresh water to the Bay) improving the quality of the Bay water.

The LCCD’s Implementation Plan seeks assistance for rural and urban landowners to decrease nutrient runoff and conserve soil and water by implementing Best Management Practices (BMPs). These BMPs may include, but are not limited to, barnyard runoff systems and manure storages, streambank fencing and stabilization, no till farming, grassed waterways, water gardens, rain barrels, pervious paving, and alternative stormwater control measures.

The Public Law 566 Small Watershed Program offers similar benefits to landowners along the Tulpehocken Creek in the Delaware Watershed. The LCCD coordinates work with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and the Berks County Conservancy to provide cost-shared resources in this watershed.

Grant funding, such as the Commonwealth’s Growing Greener Program, and the Federal 319, program have made watershed funding available to Districts and local organizations interested in improving their watersheds. The LCCD has been successful in securing funding for more technical agricultural BMPs such as barnyard improvements, mortality composting, and animal waste storages. In addition, LCCD has provided critical assistance to local watershed organizations whom have stressed less technical measures such as stream bank fencing and plantings.

Nutrient Management

Studies performed on the Chesapeake Bay and other local bodies of water indicate a need for improved manure and fertilizer management to prevent the collapse of the estuarial environment. Cost share programs administered through the LCCD are available to landowners to help alleviate the financial burden of installing conservation techniques. There are a variety of options such as manure storages and conservation farming methods that can be used to reduce nutrient pollution from natural and commercial sources. The LCCD assists landowners with nutrient management plans and provides guidance to local governments on nutrient management topics such as the state’s Nutrient Management Act 38 and the federal government’s Concentrated Animal Feeding Operation Program.



Farmland Preservation

Since 1991, the LCCD has administered the local Agricultural Land Preservation Program for the Farm Preservation Board. Thus far, more than 139 farms totaling over 16,358 acres of the County’s farmland have been preserved **permanently** for future food production and quality of life. In a world where the annual percent population growth now exceeds percent food production increases, farms will become very important to maintaining the world’s most safe and affordable food supply.

Soil Conservation, Erosion, and Pollution Control

Soil erosion from agricultural and non-agricultural sites degrade crop production and surface water quality. Sediment from erosion is the largest pollutant by volume in Pennsylvania. It fills rivers, lakes, and reservoirs and carries harmful nutrients that upset natural ecosystems.



The LCCD assists landowners in developing conservation plans and with installing practices, such as contour-strip cropping, which slows surface water runoff and can reduce erosion by up to 50%. The LCCD also works with the development community to minimize the potential of accelerated erosion and sedimentation on construction sites by reviewing plans and inspecting sites for compliance with state laws.

When National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permits are required, (areas disturbing more than 1 acre of ground) the LCCD assists the landowner with permit processing.