



**PERRY COUNTY  
CONSERVATION DISTRICT**

*Conserving Natural Resources for Our Future*

# 2025 ANNUAL REPORT

## 2025 Board of Directors

- Chair & Farmer Director – Marsha Snyder
- Vice Chair & Farmer Director – Lloyd Byers
- Treasurer & Public Director – Larry Gildner
- Farmer Director – Ken Martz
- Public Director – Scott Flanders
- Public Director – Shawna Swartz
- Commissioner – Bill Lyons
- Associate Director – Dave McLaughlin
- Associate Director – Jay Elsessor
- Associate Director – Bill Shilling
- Associate Director – Grant Finkenbinder

## 2025 District Staff

- Tara Collier – District Manager
- April Skethway – Office Manager
- Aaron Bollinger – Resource Specialist
- Farren Rossman – Watershed Specialist
- Lauren Leinbach – Ag Resource Lead
- Erin Ritzman – Ag Resource Tech
- Mitchell Kaufman - Ag Resource Tech

## 2025 NRCS Staff

- Kevin Morgan – District Conservationist
- Samantha Kapinus – Soil Conservationist



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## A MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD

Greetings from the Perry County Conservation District,

On behalf of the Board of Directors and staff, I am pleased to share our Annual Report and reflect on another year of service to the people, land, and waters of Perry County.

This past year, our district continued its commitment to protecting natural resources, supporting our agricultural community, and promoting responsible stewardship of our soil and water. Through conservation planning, education, technical assistance, and strong partnerships, we worked to ensure that Perry County remains productive, resilient, and environmentally healthy.

We are grateful for the dedication of our staff, the leadership of our board, and the collaboration of our partners, farmers, landowners, and community members. Your support makes it possible for us to carry out our mission and strengthen conservation efforts across the county.

As you review this report, we hope you will see the impact of our work and the importance of continued investment in conservation for future generations.

Thank you for your ongoing support of the Perry County Conservation District.

Regards,

Marsha Gray Snyder

Board Chair

Perry County Conservation District

## 2025 BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Left to Right: Jay Elsassor, Larry Gildner, Scott Flanders, Ken Martz, Marsha Snyder, Bill Lyons

Not Pictured: Lloyd Byers, Shawna Swartz, Bill Shilling, Grant Finkenbinder, and Dave McLaughlin



# A MESSAGE FROM THE DISTRICT MANAGER

Greetings,

I am pleased to introduce our 2025 Annual Report! I look forward to sharing with you District milestones, activities, and accomplishments. On the following pages, you will find the productive and quality work that the District has provided to the community despite the transitions throughout the year.

We began the year with Marsha Snyder stepping into the Board Chairperson position when Mike Clark stepped down after serving the District for 20 years! Shawna Swartz stepped in for the past year as Public Director and we were grateful to have her for a smooth transition throughout the year.

Our County Action Plan (CAP) goals are being achieved through the projects we are able to put on the ground. We had a waterway and diversion installed on Joe Haas' farm, and our first lawn conversion and buffer project has broken ground at Stonehouse Inn.

Our newest allocation of funding through the Agricultural Conservation Assistance Program (ACAP) has been in full swing and providing ample opportunities to put good conservation practices on the ground throughout the County. Over \$1,000,000 has been spent on projects that provide heavy use areas on farms, new roofs over heavy use areas, pasture work, and manure storage facilities.

Our Dirt and Gravel and Low Volume Road Programs also continue to do great work in the county. This year, in partnership with Centre Township, Newport Borough, and Watts Township we completed a project to resurface a gravel road with DSA, added much more drainage to roads in the County, and resurfaced a low volume road and added more drainage.

Additional county programs, such as the Tire Wars, Envirothon, and the County Land Judging contest have also served to not only clean up the county but engage and educate students and the public on the importance of our work. This year also saw the return of E-cycling, which collected more recyclables than in previous years! We look forward to continued outreach and even more community participation in the coming year.

This year also saw the celebration of 75 years of conservation in Perry County. We celebrated at Mowrer's Farm with a day full of fun and education. A stupendous time was had by all and we look forward to providing services for conservation within the County for another 75 years and beyond.

As you read this report, I hope the hard work and dedication of the staff is evident. I am continually thankful for the amazing staff and Board of Directors and Associates that continue to navigate the changes in programs and funding. I, too, hope that this sets the stage for a successful 2026 as we continue to work as a District and community for the conservation of our county's natural resources.

Sincerely,  
Tara Collier  
District Manager



District Manager Tara Collier,  
Representative Perry Stambaugh, and  
Board Chair Marsha Snyder



# COOPERATING AGENCIES AND CONTACTS

Perry County Ag-Land Preservation Board—William Lyons, Chairman  
 Natural Resources Conservation Service—Kevin Morgan & Samantha DiLorenzo  
 Penn State Cooperative Extension—Ashley Issacson  
 Farm Service Agency—Bobbie Jo Zimmerman, CED  
 PA Fish and Boat Commission—Seth Strawser, Conservation Officer  
 PA Game Commission— WCO Scott Frederick and WCO Michael Smith  
 PA Dept. of Environmental Protection— Jessica Shirley, Secretary  
 PA Department of Agriculture—Russell Redding, Secretary  
 DCNR Bureau of Forestry—Luke Book, Service Forester  
 State Conservation Commission—Doug Wolfgang, Executive Director  
 Department of Transportation— New Bloomfield HQ  
 County of Perry Maintenance Manager— Scott Stump  
 Community Partnerships RC&D—Sam Price, Executive Director  
 Chesapeake Bay Foundation—Julia Krall, Executive Director  
 Chesapeake Conservation Landscape Council—Beth Ginter  
 Keystone 10 Million Tree Partnership—Joe Hallinan, Program Manager  
 Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful—Shannon Reiter, President  
 Capital RD&D – Ann Basehore, Executive Director  
 Herbert, Rowland & Grubic – Erin Letavic, Senior Project Manager





# NRCS

During fiscal year 2025 (October 1st through September 31st), the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) staff in Perry County was comprised of two full time staff members.

## Conservation Planning Highlights

- 20 conservation plans were written, covering over 2,000 acres.
- Conservation practices were documented on over 60 plans, totaling 1,200 implemented acres.

## Cropland Conservation Practices & Enhancements

- 2 waterways and diversions installed to prevent gully erosion
- 3,400 acres of conservation crop rotation, no-till farming, and cover cropping
- Over 900 acres of nutrient management implemented

## Farmstead & Livestock Operation Improvements

- 4 waste storage facilities completed
- Multiple waste transfer systems installed
- Over 17,000 square feet of heavy-use protection added
- Several hundred feet of underground outlets installed

## Grazing & Pasture Management

- Over 6,000 feet of fencing installed to improve grazing operations
- 8,000 feet of stabilized animal trails added

## Forest Conservation

- Multiple contracts completed, treating over 350 acres through shelterwood cutting or herbicidal spraying

## Funding & Contracts

- 10 contracts (CSP Classic, CSP Renewal, and EQIP) were written, providing over \$500,000 to Perry County producers and landowners for resource conservation and water quality improvements
- 50+ applications have been accepted, indicating another strong year for contracting

The work done by NRCS, in partnership with the Perry County Conservation District and other organizations, continues to provide significant environmental benefits for private landowners, the public, and the community in Perry County.





# STATE PROGRAMS

## Nutrient Management Program

The Nutrient Management Act (Act 38) has been in effect since October 2006. The State Conservation Commission (SCC) provides oversight for the statewide Nutrient Management Program, while local conservation districts are delegated to administer it at the county level. Act 38 requires Concentrated Animal Operations (CAOs) to develop and maintain site-specific Nutrient Management Plans (NMPs). A CAO is defined as an agricultural operation with 8 or more Animal Equivalent Units (AEUs) where the animal density exceeds 2 AEUs per acre suitable for manure application on an annualized basis.

The program's goal is to protect and maintain soil and water quality through the development and implementation of NMPs and agricultural Best Management Practices (BMPs) on livestock operations that generate, store, and/or spread manure. Examples of BMPs include:

- Certified concrete manure storage tanks
- HDPE-lined lagoons
- Roofed solid manure stacking areas
- Composting facilities
- Reinforced animal stream crossings
- Concrete barnyard areas
- Vegetated or riparian buffers between barnyards and wells or streams
- Rain gutters to divert clean water around barnyards
- Fencing to improve pasture management and prevent animals from accessing streams

The Perry County Conservation District is delegated to administer the Pennsylvania Nutrient Management Program locally. Currently, the District oversees 18 Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs) and 25 CAOs. Responsibilities include reviewing and approving NMP amendments, conducting status reviews, investigating complaints, maintaining technician certification, and providing community education and outreach. In 2025, the District received 20 NMPs for triennial review and approval, including 9 CAFOs and 11 CAOs, with status reviews conducted during plan visits. This year, our two former Agricultural Resource Specialists, Mitchell Kauffman and Erin Ritzman, along with District Manager Tara Collier, completed their Nutrient Management certification process trainings, attending multiple trainings such as *Managing Manure Nutrients*, *Storm Water and Soil Loss*, and a *Plan Writing Workshop*. Following provisional certification, Mitchell and Tara began writing and reviewing Nutrient Management Plans. To achieve full certification, planners must review two NMPs and write one NMP over three years.

## Chesapeake Bay Program

The Chesapeake Bay Program was established by the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to promote and facilitate the implementation of conservation Best Management Practices (BMPs) within the Bay watershed in support of Pennsylvania's Watershed Implementation Plan. Through this delegation agreement, the District provides technical assistance, assists with REAP applications and associated BMP verifications, conducts farm inspections to ensure required agricultural plans are in place, processes complaints, and delivers educational outreach and workshops.

The District is delegated to randomly inspect 37 farms across the county. During these inspections, staff verify the presence of a current manure management plan when manure is applied and either an Agricultural Erosion and Sediment Control (Ag E&S) Plan or an NRCS Conservation Plan for cropland disturbance. If a farm does not have the required plans, operators are given 90 days to obtain them from a qualified plan writer or develop them independently. The District successfully completed all 37 inspections for the 2024–2025 program year and is approximately halfway through inspections for the 2025–2026 program year.



## Erosion & Sediment Control Program

Pa. Code Title 25 Chapter 102 was created to require persons proposing or conducting earth disturbance activities to develop, implement and maintain BMPs to minimize the potential for accelerated erosion and sedimentation during construction and plan for post construction stormwater management. Through a delegation agreement with the Department of Environmental Protection, the Perry County Conservation District reviews Erosion and Sediment Control Plans (E&S Plans). Each E&S plan is reviewed for technical adequacy under Chapter 102 requirements. A Federal regulation that works in conjunction with the State E&S program is the Chapter 92 National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Program. This regulation requires earth-moving activities disturbing one acre or more to obtain an NPDES permit which is reviewed by the District.

In 2025, 12 Erosion and Sediment Control Plans were reviewed and approved and 16 NPDES Permits were processed. The District conducted 13 construction site inspections with a total of 91 technical assistance contacts and 16 complaints investigated.

## Dirt & Gravel, Low Volume Road Program

The Perry County Conservation District partners with the State Conservation Commission (SCC) and the Penn State Center for Dirt and Gravel Road Studies to improve roads to reduce pollution that directly impacts Perry County's streams. Since 1997, Perry County has been allocated \$2,000,944 on Dirt and Gravel Road (DGR) projects and \$956,140 on Low Volume Road (LVR) projects.

Funding is provided through yearly allocations by the SCC and distributed to each qualified County based on potential workload. The District then distributes the funds to eligible municipalities. Eligibility depends on meeting project criteria and the program requirement, that each municipality have a current employee(s) working directly on the project that has attended the two-day Center for Dirt and Gravel Roads Environmentally Sensitive Maintenance Training.

At a Quality Assurance Board (QAB) meeting in late 2024, the Board voted to reintroduce stream crossings for the DGLVR program in the County. District staff attended the Stream Crossing Training and have become certified to install stream crossings within the County. One stream crossing has been identified and initial measurements were taken on Frog Hollow Rd. in Juniata Township.

During 2025, two Dirt and Gravel Low Volume Road projects were completed, while one was still under construction and another was contracted. Centre Township completed the project on Boose Rd. by installing driving surface aggregate, following raising the road profile and installing pipes for break up surface water flow. Watts Township installed additional cross pipes to increase drainage on Blacksnake Rd. This project is awaiting a General Permit for completion. Newport Borough installed their first Low Volume Road project with the District on N. Front St. This project replaced an outdated stormwater system, increased drainage on the road, directed groundwater flow, and resurfaced the road. A streambank stabilization project on Pond Rd. in Juniata Township is upcoming. Overall, these projects reduced the sediment and dust entering Perry County's streams while leaving each road more drivable and easier to maintain.



Boose Rd. in Progress



Boose Rd. After



# DISTRICT PROGRAMS

## No-Till Drill Program

The District maintains four no-till drills available for rental by Perry County residents who actively practice no-till farming. These drills support soil health, improve water retention, and promote sustainable crop and pasture management.

- Two 10-ft John Deere 1590 no-till grain drills (85 HP minimum) and one 12-ft Esch 5612 no-till drill (100 HP recommended) are ideal for reseeding large crop fields, whether for grain, silage, or cover crops used as green manure. They can also be used to plant or reseed large pastures and hay fields. No-till planting helps maintain soil structure, improve water infiltration, retain nutrients for subsequent crops, enhance soil biology, and reduce weed pressure.
- One smaller Land Pride 606 no-till drill (6-ft wide, 40 HP minimum) is designed for pastures, small crop fields, and hay fields. In addition to planting the same grain or cover crops as the larger drills, the LP606 features an extra seed bin for planting light, fluffy native grasses such as Brome or Kentucky Bluegrass.

In 2025, the District's No-Till Drill Rental Program supported 1,490 acres of no-till planting across Perry County, helping local producers implement soil-conserving practices and improve long-term agricultural sustainability.





# OUTREACH AND EDUCATION

## Presentations & Displays

Each year, we aim to connect with the community and provide education related to our mission by participating in community events, providing field and in-classroom demonstrations, submitting press releases to the local newspapers, conducting presentations as requested, and posting to social media. During 2025, we were able to provide several trainings and host multiple field workshops for students. Every year we attend the Perry County Fair to make more connections and share new information with the community. This year we highlighted technical and financial assistance programs for landowners and upcoming events in our display! Our continued goal is to reach more people in Perry County through education opportunities.



District Staff at the Perry County Fair





## Envirothon

The District sponsors the Perry County Envirothon competition each spring, which is open to all students in grades 9 through 12. The winning County team also gets sponsored to travel and compete at the State Envirothon. “The mission of the PA Envirothon is to provide students with the knowledge and tools necessary to address the natural resource challenges of today’s world.” On Monday, April 28<sup>th</sup>, the Perry County Envirothon welcomed 147 students from Greenwood, Susquenita, West Perry, and Newport High Schools to Lake Heron Retreat & Campground for a full day of hands-on environmental education and team competition. Students worked in teams to test their knowledge across five core subject areas: wildlife, aquatics, soils and land use, current environmental issues, and forestry. The Envirothon promotes teamwork, problem-solving, and a deeper understanding of natural resource conservation, helping prepare the next generation of environmental stewards.



This year’s top team was The Snow Weasels from Greenwood High School, made up of Ben Brinser, Brodie Woodard, John Bradshaw, Noah Weller, and Sorcha Moreland. The team earned the highest score of the day and will go on to represent Perry County at the 2025 Pennsylvania State Envirothon later this month. The event also featured a t-shirt design contest, which drew 26 submissions from students across the county. Lila Kretzing of West Perry High School was selected as the winner for her original design, which was featured on the official event shirts. The Perry County Conservation District extends its



sincere thanks to Gail, owner of Lake Heron Retreat & Campground, for hosting the event. Gratitude is also extended to the dedicated teachers, advisors, and volunteers who made the day possible by supporting students



and facilitating the event’s educational stations. The Envirothon continues to be a valued annual tradition in Perry County, encouraging academic excellence, collaboration, and environmental awareness among local youth.



## Land Judging

The District serves as the coordinator and sponsor of the county-wide Land Judging Competition, held each fall for students in grades 9 through 12. Land judging sites are selected on a rotating basis with local farmers. This event provides students with a hands-on learning experience, allowing them to evaluate soil composition, determine the best use for the land, and select appropriate Best Management Practices (BMPs). After completing a short test, the student with the highest score is named the Perry County Land Judging Winner.

On Wednesday, November 5<sup>th</sup>, students from all four school districts, West Perry, Greenwood, Susquenita, and Newport High Schools, gathered at Brummer Farm outside of Millerstown for this year's competition. A total of 77 students participated in the event, which featured five educational stations covering various agricultural and environmental topics. The Demo and Test Pits allowed students to identify soil components such as surface texture, land slope, depth to mottling, and surface stoniness. Kevin Morgan, NRCS District Conservationist, and Lauren Leinbach, the Ag Program Lead at PCCD, led the Demo Pit. Test Pit #1 was led by District Board

Treasurer and NRCS volunteer Larry Gildner, while Test Pit #2 was run by Aaron Bollinger, the Resource Specialist at PCCD. Students also learned about cover crops and no-till drilling with a demonstration by Erin Ritzman and Mitch Kauffman, Ag Resource Specialists at PCCD. Eli DePaulis, PA Game Commission Field Forester, was a special guest and presented on the Game Commission, wildlife management, and the forestry program. The Farm Talk was presented by farm owner Pete Brummer. At the conclusion of the event, the top three winners were announced: Shelby Wagner (3rd Place, Newport High School), Addison Otstott (2nd Place, Newport High School), and Maddy Mashtare (1st Place, West Perry High School). We extend our gratitude to Pete Brummer and his family for generously hosting this event on their beautiful farm. A special thank you also goes to Linda Byers and her fellow Perry Valley Grange members for preparing an excellent lunch for all attendees.





## Field Day and 75 Year Celebration

On Saturday, August 2<sup>nd</sup>, the District's 2025 Field Day had it all — beautiful weather, great company, and over 70 attendees — making this 75th Anniversary celebration one to remember! The event was held at Mowrer's Farm in Elliottsburg and brought together farmers, landowners, partners, and community members for a day of learning, networking, and celebration. From hands-on learning sessions to catching up with friends and



neighbors, the day was filled with energy and enthusiasm as we shared conservation and agricultural practices with our community. This milestone was also recognized with a House Citation, along with special remarks from Representative Perry Stambaugh and Doug Wolfgang (PA State Conservation Commission). It was a true honor to have them join us in recognizing 75 years of conservation success in Perry County.

The Field Day featured eight expert speakers leading six educational sessions, offering practical, real-world information to producers and landowners. Session topics included:

- **Selecting Livestock for Grazing Systems: Identifying Functional Beef Cattle and Sheep** – *Dave Hartman*  
This session focused on how to select livestock that are capable of functioning successfully in a grazing-based system, helping producers improve efficiency and herd performance.
- **Tying Nutrient Cycling, Manure Utilization, and Soil Health Together** (2 NM credits available) – *Rob Meinen*  
This presentation reviewed nitrogen and phosphorus cycling, with a strong focus on manure nutrient utilization and its connection to long-term soil health.
- **Solar Systems in a Grazing Operation** – *Titus Martin and Suzette Truax*  
Participants learned how solar energy can be incorporated into grazing systems, including a real-world look at the innovative solar-powered watering system in use at Mowrer's Farm.
- **Grazing Cover Crops** – *Josh Ramsburg and Ben Peckman*  
This session shared real-life experiences and benefits of grazing cover crops and how this practice can improve soil health and forage availability.
- **High-Intensity Grazing and Nutrition** – *Bob Boyce*  
Bob Boyce explored the benefits of high-intensity grazing and its impact on cattle nutrition, pasture management, and overall herd health.
- **How to Introduce Precision Agriculture into Your Operation** – *Robbin Campbell*  
Participants learned the basics of precision agriculture and digital record keeping using John Deere technology and the Operations Center platform, with practical applications for farms of all sizes and equipment ages.

Participants also had the opportunity to tour on-farm conservation practices, observe innovative grazing infrastructure, and engage directly with conservation district staff and partner agencies. These hands-on experiences helped connect research-based practices to real-world applications.

A huge thank-you goes to all of our sponsors, partners, and presenters who made this celebration possible.



Their continued support keeps events like this thriving and allows the District to provide meaningful education and outreach opportunities. This Field Day not only celebrated 75 years of service, but also strengthened community relationships and renewed our shared commitment to conservation for generations to come.





## Bulb Sale

Due to recent staff transitions, the District hosted a spring flower bulb sale in conjunction with our free tree giveaway to help raise funds in support of environmental education efforts, timed to coincide with the Easter season. A total of 62 flower bulbs were sold.



## Keystone 10 Million Trees

“Clean Water Grows on Trees” is the Chesapeake Bay Foundation’s slogan for this statewide initiative designed to support partners in expanding local community tree plantings. Planting trees helps reduce air pollution and improve water quality across Pennsylvania. This year, the District hosted two free tree giveaways: one in April, during which of 675 trees were distributed, and one in October, during which 300 trees were distributed. The October giveaway was our final event, as the Keystone 10 Million Trees Partnership reached its goal of planting 10 million trees.

We enjoyed meeting new landowners who were interested in supporting the Keystone 10 Million Trees Partnership and helping move Pennsylvania closer to its long-term tree-planting targets. We also appreciate the strong community support that made these events successful.





# WATERSHED INITIATIVES

## Keep Perry County Beautiful

### Tire Wars

Our annual Tire War event was held on Saturday, October 25<sup>th</sup>, and it was a very successful event! With help from several volunteers, Mahantango Enterprises, and the Tyrone Township Supervisors we were able to collect 586 tires! This amounted to 12.67 tons of tires. Thank you to all who helped and participated in this year’s event. With the community’s effort, we made a difference in preventing illegal dumping! We were not able to conduct our annual Juniata River Clean-up, but we intend to have it next year! Please reach out to the Conservation District if you are interested in volunteering.



### Electronic Recycling

For the first time since 2019, the District successfully brought back an Electronic Recycling event. Held on Saturday, April 19<sup>th</sup> at the Perry County Fairgrounds in Newport, the event saw a record-breaking turnout, with 22,876 pounds of electronics collected from 118 vehicles, totaling 785 individual items.

A sincere thank you goes out to the 14 volunteers who generously donated their time to make this event run smoothly. We also extend our appreciation to the following municipalities for their financial support, which helped keep this event affordable for our community:



- Bloomfield Borough
- Centre Township
- Duncannon Borough
- Greenwood Township
- Howe Township
- Juniata Township
- Millerstown Borough
- Oliver Township
- Rye Township
- Saville Township
- Spring Township
- Tuscarora Township
- Tyrone Township
- Watts Township



# COUNTY ASSISTANCE

## Farmland Preservation

Farmland Preservation had a strong and productive year in 2025. We completed three easements totaling 466.16 acres. Notably, two of these farms were donated, further solidifying Perry County’s position as the #1 county in Pennsylvania for donated preserved acres. In addition, the District continued advancing three additional easements toward settlement, representing another 430 acres that are moving closer to preservation.

Looking ahead, we see the opportunity to continue expanding this program. To date, we have received 19 applications for the 2026 program year. We will continue accepting applications through March 6, 2026. The Farmland Preservation program also received additional funding this year, which will allow us to preserve more acres and continue advancing our mission.

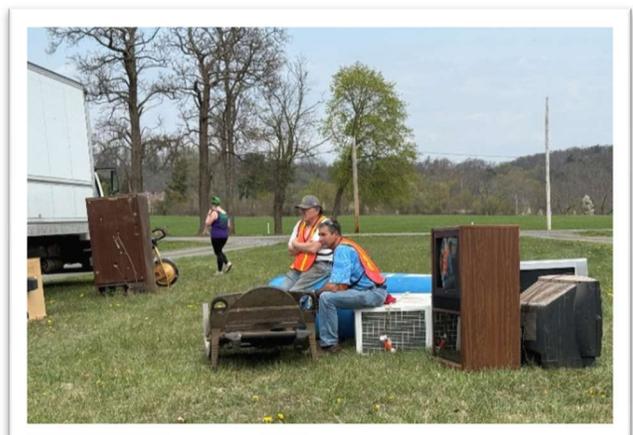
In 2025, we also celebrated a significant milestone. Jason and Rhonda Saylor preserved an additional farm, bringing their total preserved acreage to over 655 acres — the most preserved acreage by any landowners in Perry County. Their continued commitment represents an outstanding example of land stewardship and long-term agricultural preservation.



The Saylor Family has preserved over 655 acres, the most by any landowner in Perry County.

## Recycling & Municipal Solid Waste

The District serves as the Recycling Coordinator for the County. Grants are processed to obtain State support for educational outreach and program assistance. The PA Department of Environmental Protection is the cooperating agency. The local municipalities that have maintained a regular recycling service for their residents are Marysville Borough, Duncannon Borough, Wheatfield Township, Rye Township, and the DCNR Bureau of Forestry Office located in Toboyne Township. Our Keep Perry County Beautiful affiliate also organizes special collections each year. Sylvester’s Services Inc. continues to work with several municipalities with its buy-a-bag deposit service. The District provides Solid Waste Planning and oversight for the County. Currently, we are drafting the 2026 Solid Waste Municipal Plan. The Conservation District Solid Waste Advisory Committee started meeting in 2024 to discuss changes and updates that could be implemented in the new Solid Waste Plan and held three meetings in 2025. Administrative support is offered on an as needed basis to municipalities who create and implement their own ordinances. In 2024, the total tonnage of recycling collected in Perry County was reported as 12,524.72 tons.





## Technical Assistance

The District provides free technical assistance to farmers addressing issues such as soil erosion, compaction, poor pastures, and animal heavy-use areas. Assistance typically begins with a farm visit, followed by practice recommendations or referrals to specialists as needed. Several technical assistance requests led to ACAP applications and contracts, while others were resolved through guidance provided over the phone.

### ACAP

In 2022, Pennsylvania established the Agricultural Conservation Assistance Program (ACAP) through the Clean Streams Fund legislation. This state program is administered by the State Conservation Commission (SCC) and delegated to County Conservation Districts. In 2025, the District managed 10 active contracts totaling \$2,843,505.80. There was a diversity of BMP's installed on a variety of operations. There were heavy use areas that went in on a beef and a dairy heifer operation. Both of these operations also installed grazing practices in conjunction with the heavy use area. There was a roof installed over an existing concrete solid manure stacking area as well as a new roofed solid manure stacking facility. This year saw the completion of a project that was multiple years in the making to get a liquid manure storage and handling system installed on a local dairy operation. There are several projects that are midway through construction as well including several heavy use areas and grazing projects.

## County-Wide Action Plan

### Cover Crop Incentive Program

The Cover Crop Incentive Program (CCIP) generated strong interest for the 2025–2026 crop year, with a total of 3,209 acres enrolled across Perry County. Applications received this past fall were divided into three tiers based on seed mix and planting dates:

- Tier 1: 772 acres with a minimum five-species seed mix planted between August 1 and September 15. Incentive rate: \$70 per acre, totaling \$54,024 in funding.
- Tier 2: 640 acres with a minimum three-species seed mix planted between September 15 and October 30. Incentive rate: \$50 per acre, totaling \$32,015 in funding.
- Tier 3: 1,799 acres with a single-species winter small grain planted any time after August 1. Incentive rate: \$30 per acre, totaling \$53,966 in funding.

The grand total for County-Wide Action Plan funding amounted to \$140,005.

Verification of cover crops will take place in late March, and farmers are reminded that cover crops cannot be terminated prior to April 1. Soil cover, including crop residue and live cover crop, must reach at least 50% during this period. Incentive payments will be distributed following verification.

The District plans to continue offering CCIP for another one-year term during the 2026–2027 crop year. Producers interested in participating are encouraged to contact the District in the spring for updated application documents for new enrollments or re-enrollments. Funding allotments will be determined based on overall participation.



## Agricultural Projects

One agriculture project was completed in 2025 with CAP funds:

1. Grassed Waterway – A grassed waterway with two diversions was installed on a farm field at Joe Haas’s farm in Tuscarora Township. The project was completed in the fall of 2025. The total CAP funds amounted to \$21,561.05 to complete this project.

## Watershed Projects

One watershed project was completed in 2025 with CAP funds:

1. Riparian Buffer – A riparian buffer was installed along Montour Creek at Stonehouse Farm and Inn in Spring Township as part of a two-phase project. This phase of the project was completed in the fall of 2025. The second phase is expected to be completed in the spring of 2026. The total CAP funds amounted to \$16,489.35 for the riparian buffer installation.



Riparian buffer at Stonehouse Farm

## STAFF UPDATES

### Farewells and New Hires

In June, Erin Ritzman moved from Watershed Specialist to Ag Resource Specialist. This opened a spot on the team. Farren Rossman joined us in August as our new Watershed Specialist. She has many years of experience and we are happy to have her on board!

In November, Mitch Kauffman, our Ag Resource Specialist and No-Till Drill contact, left the District to pursue his wildlife dreams at the PA Game Commission. We will miss him and wish him all the best!

Shortly after Mitch, Erin Ritzman, our Ag Resource Specialist and Chesapeake Bay contact, left the District for 4H endeavors. We know this is Erin’s passion and wish her well on this journey!

Finally, in January, Aaron Bollinger, our E&S and DGLVR Tech, left the District.

We are currently searching for our newest members for the team. We look forward to building a team for the upcoming year.

### Board Members

Shawna Swartz stepped into a Director position throughout 2025 to help us through our transition with Mike Clark’s absence. Marsha Snyder moved into Board Chairperson and has been a huge help to the District as we navigate many changes. We appreciate all our Board members and the time they spend serving the County and helping with District events.



# 2026 Contact Information



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