



CONSERVATION TIMES

Newsletter of the McKean County Conservation District

2008 Issue 1

Water Researcher Gives Lecture at UPB

The McKean County Conservation District and Penn State Cooperative Extension teamed up to bring a leading water researcher to McKean County. On April 7, 2008, at 6PM at the Rice Auditorium, in Room 107 of Fisher Hall at UPB in Bradford, PA, Dr. Conrad Volz will give a presentation entitled, “Estrogenicity Levels in Three Rivers Fish are Correlated with High Densities of Sewer Overflows”.



Conrad Volz is the scientific director of the Center for Healthy Environments and Communities at the University Of Pittsburgh School Of Public Health. Volz’s research last year revealed high levels of mercury and selenium in channel catfish at Kittanning and high levels of estrogen in fish in the Allegheny River near Pittsburgh. Volz is studying the effect of sewage in the river and the presence of estrogen, antibiotics, and other material. Volz said human waste containing drugs for hormone replacement therapy and birth control is getting into the river, as are estrogen-mimicking chemicals such as laundry detergents and plastics. “We know these chemicals are having an effect on fish” he said. “There’s an increase in the level of estrogen in their bodies, and many male fish are developing eggs in their testes.”

Dr. Volz will be conducting a “control site” for his study in McKean County. The District’s Watershed Specialist, Heather McKean and Penn State Cooperative Extension’s Educator, Jim Clark will be arranging a fishing derby in McKean County on June 14, 2008 to collect enough fish from the Allegheny River to be included in the Volz research study. This is a great opportunity to get some baseline data on the fish in our area. We are going to need a lot of help from local anglers.

In addition, Heather and Jim have submitted a WREN grant application to fund a survey of how pharmaceutical drugs and personal care products are disposed of in the county and to try and develop environmentally safe options. This is a problem that requires a lot of people and agencies to solve, including law enforcement, the solid waste management industry, and the health management community.

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Meeting Water Resource Protection Regulations

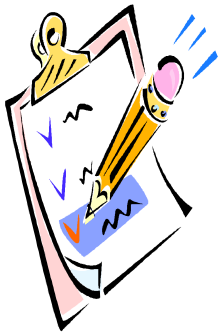
The District and the Department of Environmental Protection partnered to offer training and information about water resource protection issues that need to be addressed as community projects are developed.

The session was held on Thursday, February 21st, from 9:30 a.m.—1:30 p.m. in the Foster Township Municipal Building, 1185 East Main Street, Bradford.

Approximately 40 participants heard topics on state and federal permitting related to wetlands, streams, and ponds. Another goal of the training gave a greater understanding of floodplains and their functions, basic wetland identification, erosion and sedimentation (E&S) regulations, and preparing an E&S Plan. The session also covered proper installation and maintenance of environmental best management practices (BMPs) and Post Construction Stormwater Management Plans.

What to Include in a Small Project E&S Control Plan:

The following is an excerpt from our “Erosion and Sediment Control Guidelines For Small Projects”. For the complete guideline visit our website at www.mckeancountypa.org.



- ◆ **Existing topography** (physical features) of the site and immediate surrounding area.
- ◆ **Types of soils** on the site – refers to the County Soil Survey, available at the Conservation District or online at www.soils.usda.gov/survey.
- ◆ **A description of land use:** Describe past, present and proposed land uses and all proposed alterations to the site.
- ◆ **Location of any surface water** (streams, ponds, wetlands, springs, etc.).
- ◆ **A description of proposed E&S best management practices**, both temporary (such as hay bale barriers, silt fence, stone filters) and permanent (such as seeding and mulching, rock-lined channels, etc.).
- ◆ **The sequence of earthmoving activities:** Outline the sequence in which the earthmoving will occur, remembering that the most effective method of controlling erosion is to disturb only those areas necessary to complete a project. E&S best management practices should be in place before the site is disturbed. Disturbed areas should be permanently stabilized immediately after earth-moving is completed or temporary stabilized if delays in completing a project are anticipated.
- ◆ **A maintenance plan** for all of the E&S best management practices being used on site.

Provide a Living Filter

Did you know that your backyard woods is an important source of clean water? Even if a stream doesn't flow through your woods, the rain that falls on your land will reach a lake or stream sooner or later. The path water takes through your woods is critical. Water reaching the ground under your trees will either be absorbed into the soil or flow over the surface. Water absorbed by soil is filtered and cleaned before it slowly moves into streams and lakes. Woods absorb rain well because leaves protect the soil surface, slow the flow of water, and feed the fungi and other soil organisms that make the soil porous.

Clean Water If soil does not absorb rain as fast as it falls, water will run over the surface, erode the soil, and carry sediment to a stream or lake. Sediment is the most serious pollutant your backyard woods can produce. Roads and trails, especially those that cross a stream, and uncontrolled livestock access are the two most common causes of soil erosion and water pollution. Both activities compact soil spaces and remove the leaf layer. Roads and trails can be installed so they do not deliver soil to streams or lakes, and livestock should be excluded from the woods or limited to short periods of time.



Your woods can help clean water polluted by other land uses, such as cropland, roads and trails, lawns, and pastures. As water moves over the surface from other land uses, it sinks into the soil in your woods, depositing soil particles on the surface. As the polluted water moves through the soil, tree roots and the millions of organisms living in the soil act as a "living filter," removing excess nutrients and harmful chemicals from the water before it reaches groundwater or surface water. If you have a stream or lake on your land, the best thing you can do to prevent water pollution is to plant or maintain trees and other vegetation as a buffer between the water and other land uses. Lawns are ineffective buffers because of their shallow roots.

Taking Action By taking a few simple steps, you can ensure that your backyard woods will continue or improve its production of clean water. For example:

- ◆ Keep the woods you have and plant more trees.
- ◆ Keep livestock out of your woods, or limit their time there.
- ◆ Cover trails and roads with wood chips or gravel, especially on steep sections or on approaches to stream crossings.
- ◆ Be sure that water flowing off roads and trails enters your woods rather than going directly into a stream or a ditch that flows into a stream.
- ◆ Maintain at least a 30- to 100-foot wide tree buffer next to any water on your property.
- ◆ Properly dispose of chemicals, oil and gas.

Water is Life

The District encourages you to think about your personal responsibility to be a good steward of the natural resources, including water, during its annual Stewardship Week celebration. The National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) has proclaimed April 27 to May 4, 2008 as Stewardship Week with the theme Water is Life.

The Earth's water is in constant motion in the process known as the hydrologic (water) cycle. There is no beginning or end to the hydrologic cycle. Water available to users can change due to the cycles of weather and changes in water quality. Throughout time, the same water has been transferred into the Earth's atmosphere and dropped on land again where it follows the water cycle through plants, soil, water bodies, animals and clouds.

That means the water we use today is the same water that was here when dinosaurs roamed the land.



What can we do? Become aware of water quality and quantity in your community. Understand how watersheds work. We all live in a watershed. Watersheds are the places we call home, where we work and where we play. Everyone relies on water and other natural resources to exist. What you and others do on the land impacts the quality and quantity of water and our other natural resources. Managing the water and other natural resources is an effective and efficient way to sustain the local economy and environmental health.

The District is a member of the National Association of Conservation Districts (www.nacdnet.org) which oversees the Stewardship Week program. Stewardship Week is one of the largest national annual programs to promote conservation. NACD represents the nations 3,000 conservation districts, which were established to encourage resource conservation across the country.

“Each of us needs to take steps to invest in understanding the importance of water in our everyday life,” said NACD CEO Krysta Harden. “Water is not a renewable resource. Education in your community and schools will benefit all citizens, for years to come as they gain a better appreciation of the importance of water resources. Conservation districts are working with local communities to address water quantity and quality issues in every county in America.”

For information about Stewardship Week and conservation, contact the District. You can visit www.nacdnet.org to learn more about NACD and Stewardship Week.

West Nile Virus

Know about West Nile Virus

West Nile virus (WNV) now is present in most of the United States. Generally, WNV is spread by the bite of an infected mosquito. Mosquitoes become infected with the virus when they feed on infected birds.

Adults are at the highest risk

People over age 50 have the highest risk of becoming seriously ill when they get infected with WNV. But, people of all ages can become ill.

Prevent serious disease

WNV affects the central nervous system and can be very serious. Some people who get infected with WNV develop a polio-like paralysis or severe diseases, such as West Nile encephalitis and West Nile meningitis—inflammation of the brain or the area around the brain. These severe diseases usually require hospitalization and can be life altering, even fatal. However, most people who get infected with WNV do not have any symptoms. Some people develop a less severe illness called, “West Nile fever.” This illness usually goes away and generally does not require Medical treatment.

WNV SYMPTOMS

Symptoms of severe illness include:

- ◆ Severe headache
- ◆ High fever
- ◆ Stiff neck
- ◆ Mental confusion
- ◆ Muscle weakness
- ◆ Tremors (shaking)
- ◆ Coma
- ◆ Paralysis

SEE YOUR DOCTOR IF YOU DEVELOP ANY OF THESE SYMPTOMS

PROTECT YOURSELF AND

- ◆ Avoid mosquito bites
- ◆ Clean up breeding sites
- ◆ Help your community



Agricultural Security Areas (ASA)

Purpose

The Agricultural Security Area program began in 1981 as a tool for strengthening and protecting agriculture in Pennsylvania. Farm landowners, working together, initiate the process of establishing such Areas in which agriculture is the primary activity. Participating farmers are entitled to special consideration from local and state government agencies, and other “nuisance” challenges, thus encouraging the continuing use of the land for productive agricultural purposes.

Agricultural security areas are intended to promote more permanent and viable farming operations over the long term by strengthening the farming community's sense of security in land use and the right to farm. Agricultural security areas are created by local municipalities in cooperation with individual landowners who agree to collectively place at least 250 acres in an agricultural security area.

Who Should Participate

Landowners with the following eligible property:

1. Noncontiguous farm parcels must be at least 10 acres in size. The farm tracts needed to create a new 250 acre or larger agricultural security area do not have to be under the same ownership or even be located in the same municipality. The Agricultural Area Security Law (Act 43 of 1981) allows for the creation of joint municipality agricultural security areas.
2. The property should be viable agricultural land. Cropland, pasture, and woodland can all be included in an agricultural security area.
3. At least 50% of the land should be in Soil Capability Classes I-IV, as defined by the county soil survey.
4. The property must be zoned to permit agricultural uses.

Registration

The process of establishing an Agricultural Security Area is initiated by petition of owners productive farmland totaling at least 250 acres. The land to be included must have soils conducive to agriculture and be used for production of crops, livestock, livestock products, horticultural specialties and timber.

In McKean County there are two municipalities that have created an ASA and they are Keating Township with 2,689 acres in 1995 and Liberty Township with 3,548 acres in 1989. Contact the District for more information on the program.

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Upcoming Events

The McKean County Conservation and various partners are planning the following events for 2008. The details for these events are not final so please stay tuned for more information.

April 24 **E&S for OGM & Environmental Logging**—Moose Lodge, Port Allegany— Penn State Extension, Hancock Forest Management and McKean and Cameron Conservation Districts will be giving presentations on Chapter 102, 105 and Chapter 93 regulations, proper preparation of an E&S plan, which includes a site visit to prepare an E&S plan, and proper implementation of BMPs.

May 6 **The “Wild” Envirothon**—an event to be held at the Keating Sportsman’s Club in which the students from McKean and Cameron Counties in grades 9-12 participate as a team of five and travel through five testing stations on Aquatics, Forestry, Wildlife, Soils & Land Use and this year’s Current Event Topic is Recreational Impacts on the Environment. The county winner at the local event will go on to the State Competition to be held on May 19-20 at the Penn State Main Campus in State College.

May 8 ***Value of Watersheds Seminar**— UPB—The Stroud Water Research Center, the PA Fish & Boat Commission and District Staff will be on hand to give presentations on Aquatic Ecology, What is a Watershed, the impact of non-point and point source pollution and stream-bank stabilization practices. The seminar will run from 9:30 AM—2:30 PM and lunch will be provided.

May 9 ***Volunteer Monitoring Workshop**—Location to be announced. This workshop will be for those interested in becoming a volunteer stream monitor. Act 48 credits will be available.

May 17 ***Horseman’s Expo**—The P.M Saddle Club and the District are co-sponsoring the event to be held at the McKean County Fairgrounds from 9:00 AM—5:00 PM. There will be a chicken barbecue from 3-6 PM and a Tack Auction at 6:00 PM. The Expo will have educational stations that include West Nile Virus, Nutrient Management, Pasture Renovation, Bio-Security and CART update, Nutrition and Feed, Hoof Care, Massage Therapy and Talk with the Doc & Equine Shot Clinic. The event will also include riding clinics throughout the day as well as vendors .

* These workshops received financial and other support through the Pennsylvania Association of Conservation Districts through a grant from the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection under Section 319 of the Clean Water Act, administered by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Horseman's Expo- May 17, 2008 McKean County Fairgrounds, Route 46S, Smethport, PA

Sponsored by P.M. Saddle Club, Inc. & McKean Co. Conservation District

The P.M. Saddle Club, Inc. will be hosting a Horsemen's Expo on Saturday, May 17, 2008. There will be educational & riding clinics throughout the day. We welcome vendors who would like to set up a table in the 4-H Center (\$10.00 fee for table space). There will be a stallion alley and also horses for sale. If you have a stallion or a horse for sale, please call 814-887-4121 or 814-642-9457 to reserve a stall (space is limited-so call early). **If you will be bringing a horse for shots or dentistry, please call to reserve a time slot.**

	4-H Barn	Arena	Horse Barn	4-H Center
9:00 – 5:00			Stallion Alley & Horses for Sale (\$10.00 stall fee)	Vendors – (\$10.00 table space) Food – McKean Co. Exchange Club
9:00 – noon	Talk with the Doc & Equine Shot Clinic - Dr. Sally Fowler Coggins, 4/1* and rabies - \$60.00 *5/1 – additional \$15.00 West Nile Virus - \$24.00 Coggins & rabies - \$45.00			
9:00 – 10:00	West Nile Virus and Nutrient Mgt. – Heather McKean & Carol Riedmiller - McKean County Conservation District			
9:00 – 10:30		Gaming Clinic - \$10.00 to ride in clinic (Call to reserve)		
10:00 – noon	Equine Dentistry – Jeff Kulzer \$75.00			
10:30 – 12:00	Pasture Renovation – Dr. Darrell Emmick – USDA NY State Grazing Land Mgt. Specialist	Trail Clinic - \$10.00 to ride in clinic (Call to reserve a riding spot)		
12:00 – 2:00		Riding Clinic (Showmanship, Equitation, Patterns) - \$10.00 to ride in clinic (Call to reserve a riding spot)		
12:00 – 1:00	Bio-Security & C.A.R.T. Update – James Clark--Penn State Coop Extension			
2:00– 3:00	Nutrition & Feed – Pat Bryan – Kalmbach Feeds			
3:00 – 4:00		Cutting/Reining Demonstration – Ray Dart & Katie		
4:00 -	Hoof Care – Dale Bennett			
4:30 – 5:00	Massage Therapy – Kathy Wilcox			
3:00 – 6:00				Chicken Barbecue - PM Saddle Club
6:00 - ?				Tack Auction – Watson's Tack Shop

Open Horse Shows: May 25; June 22; July 27; September 7
Team Pennings: May 10; June 7; July 12; September 20

Gaming Shows: May 9; June 6; July 11; September 19
Special Gaming Show: Saturday, September 6

Directors

Kerry Fetter—Chairman
 Jim McKean—Vice Chairman
 Bob Harris—Secretary/Treasurer
 Cliff Lane—Commissioner
 Larry Stratton—Farmer
 Charlie Irons—Farmer
 Ernie Hand—Public

Associate Directors

Bob Butters
 Blaine Puller

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Vision: The McKean County Conservation District will encourage all citizens to adopt a way of life which results in conserving, protecting, and practicing the wise use of our natural resources.

Mission: The McKean County Conservation District will provide leadership, education, and guidance to ensure the wise use and protection of our valuable natural resources.

MCKEAN COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT
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www.mckeancountypa.org

The McKean county Conservation District was organized at the request of the County residents. The County was declared a District by the board of County Commissioners on August 19, 1959, according to provisions of the Soil Conservation Law of 1945, Act 217 of the General Assembly, as amended. This Act gives districts broad powers to provide services, employ and manage staff, charge fees for services, own and manage property, and authorizes Commonwealth agencies (including Counties) to cooperate with District in carrying out programs.

The primary goal of the District is the development, improvement and conservation of the County's Soil, water and related resources as well as educating the community in various conservation and environmental practices and methods.

The District is administered by a board of seven (7) Directors—three (3) farmer members, three (3) public (non-farmer) members and one(1) County Commissioner. District Directors are appointed by the County Commissioner from a list of names submitted by countywide nominating organizations. The Commissioners also designate one of their members to serve as a Director.