

District Digest

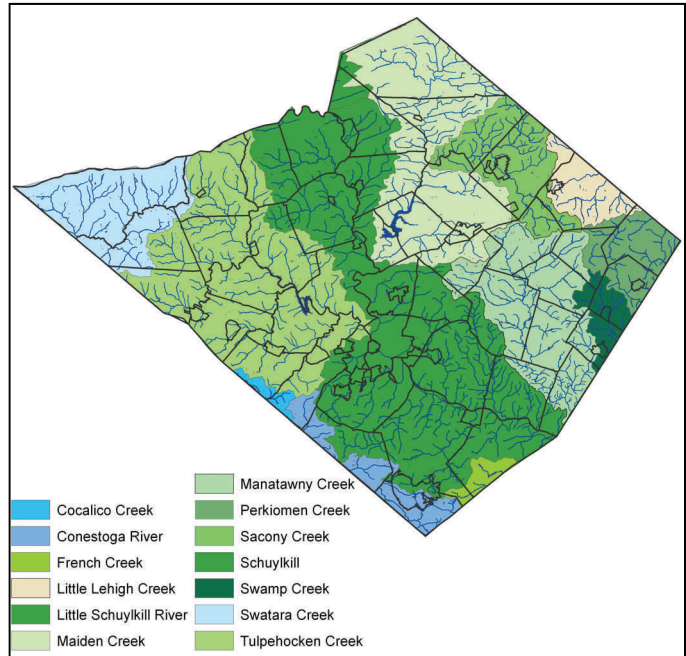
The BCCD Newsletter



**BERKS COUNTY
CONSERVATION DISTRICT**

CHESAPEAKE BAY INITIATIVE FOR PA AGRICULTURE

The Chesapeake Bay (Bay) is the largest watershed of the Atlantic Seaboard in North America, encompassing a total of six states. With a large number of agriculture heavy states contributing excess levels of nitrogen, phosphorous and sediments, pollutants attributed to severely-declining water quality, the Chesapeake Bay has become an environmental concern over the past several decades. In 2010, due to lack of progress in prior efforts to improve Chesapeake Bay water quality, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), with the assistance of the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), created a Watershed Implementation Plan (WIP) for every state that comprises the Chesapeake Bay Watershed, including Pennsylvania. Through the 2010 WIP,



The areas shaded blue have water that flows to the Cocalico, Conestoga, and Swatara Creeks and eventually into the Chesapeake Bay

the EPA has established a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) for all of Pennsylvania's major basins that outlet into the Bay.

The TMDL represents the total amount of acceptable pollutants to be deposited into the watershed from both point and non point sources. It will provide a framework of accountability for the ongoing Bay cleanup for the next 15 years, requiring progress toward meeting the TMDL every two years. Unlike past Bay restoration programs which were voluntary agreements that have failed to reach desired outcomes, the 2010 TMDL is a structured regulation signed by each state, pledging measurable improvements toward a definitive goal. By 2025, the EPA hopes to reduce the amount of nitrogen by 25 percent, a 24 percent reduction in phosphorus, and a 20 percent reduction in sediment. A 25 percent reduction of nitrogen, in Pennsylvania, would take the 108.35 million pounds recorded in 2009 and reduce it to 79.93 million pounds.

To reach the set milestones, agencies involved with the agriculture community plan to: continue implantation of existing regulatory requirements, increase compliance within the programs, improve tools used to regulate programs and focus the efforts in target watersheds.

One regulatory program that will be focused on is the Pennsylvania Act 38, Nutrient Management Law, which requires high density animal operations to carefully track manure use.

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**Berks County Conservation
District**
1238 County Welfare Road
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610-372-4657

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Agricultural Conservation Technician

M. Kathryn O'Brien

*Watershed Specialist/Env. Educator***MESSAGE FROM THE MANAGER:**

Since our last newsletter, the Berks County Conservation District (BCCD) encountered some busy months. The annual Legislative Breakfast was held on October 7, 2010 with a record crowd attending this event. The BCCD also had the support of the media from the Reading Eagle Newspaper and WFMZ Channel 69 News.

Aside from the existing programs, the BCCD secured a delegation agreement for 2011 with the Department of Community and Economic Development to provide Floodplain Ordinance reviews for 50 municipalities throughout Berks County. I view this assistance as a great opportunity for the BCCD to forge and/or strengthen our partnership with our municipalities. Two very good tools developed for 2011 to aid with accomplishing the core mission of the BCCD are the Strategic Plan and Annual Work Plan. Both plans are dynamic and may need to be revised as necessary. That is why BCCD staff and external partners (as applicable) will meet throughout the year to set measurable goals, review and revise set goals as needed. As for myself, I will be focusing on tightening the bolts with our programs and overall internal/external relationships. I have already embarked on pursuing further leadership/management development and enjoy interacting with other Conservation Districts throughout the state to learn and share different ideas.

With new regulations adopted and those on the horizon, the remainder of 2011 will be quite interesting to see how and if things will unfurl within the development, agricultural, and municipal sectors here in Berks County. The message to these sectors is that the BCCD will be there to assist them with compliance requirements in a practical and cost efficient manner.

All in all, the beginning of 2011 is on the up and up for the BCCD and things will only get better.

Sincerely,

Joe Crea
District Manager

**The Berks County Conservation District will be having
its annual Tree Seedling Sale this April!**

Although the deadline to order your tree seedlings has passed. Feel free to stop at Fisher's Soil Stone & Stuff (2718 Bernville Rd, Reading) to purchase the seedlings that we will have for sale!

April 14th 11:00am-6:00pm

April 15th 9:00am-6:00pm

April 16th 9:00am-12:00pm.

Please Note: the seedlings are on a "first come, first served" basis.



CHESAPEAKE BAY INITIATIVE *CONTINUED*

Article Continued from Page 1

Agencies will be enforcing compliance more stringently, with the DEP taking a larger role in enforcement. In addition Chapter 102 regulations affecting agricultural activities have also been expanded. Chapter 102 is the section in the Clean Streams Act that regulates earth disturbance activities through erosion and sediment control practices. It has recently been updated to require all farming operation that disturbs over 5,000 square feet of earth through tilling or animal concentration areas to obtain and Agriculture Erosion and Sediment Control Plan, or a Farmland Conservation Plan.

Approximately 10% of Berks County, roughly 56,000 acres of land, is located in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed. Although only a small portion of the county, the Bay Watershed region is an agricultural intensive area. The Berks County Conservation District (BCCD) has administered the DEP's Chesapeake Bay Program since 1984. The Chesapeake Bay Program focuses on providing technical and financial assistance to farmers for implementation of agricultural best management practices that address nutrient and erosion issues affecting surface water quality. With the recent public and regulatory focus toward restoring the bay through meeting the EPA TMDL, the Berks County Conservation District has began an initiative to increase outreach and education to Bay farmers. BCCD believes an effectively implemented conservation plan is the primary tool in helping farmers address nutrient and

erosion issues that may ultimately contribute to nitrogen, phosphorus, and sediment entering the Chesapeake Bay. A conservation plan documents nutrient and erosion issues and prescribes reasonable and effective best management practices to properly address each concern. Conservation plans are also beneficial in documenting progress toward meeting the EPA TMDL, as implementation of best management practices can help to quantify nutrient and sediment reductions.

-Submitted by: Stephanie Drzal and Rosalynd Orr

Best management practices such as planting winter cover crops helps to retain nutrient and sediments on cropland. The cover crops pictured were supported through the Chesapeake Bay Special Projects Program in Berks County



AG CENTER CORNER

The Penn State Cooperative Extension will be hosting a **Cover Crop Walk and On-Farm Manure Injection Demonstration** in early April 2011. Watch for more info coming soon! For more information contact Penn State Cooperative Extension at 610-378-1327

The USDA- Farm Service Agency would like to remind you of these important deadlines:

June 1, 2011– Deadline to sign contracts for 2011 for the Direct and Counter-Cyclical Payment Program (DCP)

June 15, 2011 – Deadline to report small grain acres (oats, wheat, barley and rye)

July 15, 2011 – Deadline to report all other planted acres (corn, soybeans, hay and CRP/CREP)

For more information contact the Farm Service Agency at 610-478-7158 Ext: 2



EROSION AND SEDIMENT CONTROL UPDATE

The Berks County Conservation District received a large influx of Erosion and Sediment Control (E&S) Plans and Post-Construction Stormwater Management (PCSM) plans just prior to November 19, 2010 in response to new regulations. We are now working our way through most of the revisions, approvals, and all the necessary paperwork that accompanies many of these projects. We are also gearing up for the spring construction season and **two upcoming Berks County Conservation District sponsored training events (see the enclosed advertisements and Calendar of Events for more info)**. A recent blast of warmer weather is helping to melt away the remaining snow and many of us in the office have Spring Fever. After a long winter of paperwork, I am anxious to get back out into the field to conduct site inspections, help to educate Contractors and Developers on recent changes to regulations, and get some fresh air.

The recent changes in the Chapter 102 regulations is already having a direct effect on construction personnel. For instance, on NPDES permitted sites, a “licensed professional” will need to be onsite for critical stages of Stormwater Best Management Practices (BMP) installation. Upon termination of the permit, the licensed professional must submit a final certification statement along with “Record Drawings” (often referred to as As-built drawings) indicating the BMPs have been installed per the plan drawings and that all plan changes are accepted construction practices. The new requirement for licensed professional oversight is already having a beneficial outcome as proper installation and function of the BMPs are becoming more common. We also hope that the licensed professional oversight requirement will provide an educational opportunity for Developers and Contractors as well.

Despite the mixed reactions on the recent Chapter 102 changes, it is becoming obvious that the end result will be better runoff water quality from construction sites in the future. This will also benefit downstream recreational activities, reduce water treatment needs for drinking water sources and help to provide a better quality of life for all of us.

-Submitted by: Eric Konzelmann, CPESC, CPSWQ



56th Annual Equipment Operators Workshop

Tuesday, April 12th, 2011

at the Berks County Agricultural Center

Check-in 7:30 AM

Presentation 8:00 – 12:00 PM

Breakfast Provided

Topics include: New Chapter 102 Regulations,
Chapter 105 and Inspections.

Registration Fee is \$20 per person.

No Refunds and Space is Limited.

Payment must be received
by March 28th, 2011.

Please Contact Berks County Conservation District
at 610-372-4657 Ex. 5



BERKS COUNTY
CONSERVATION DISTRICT



Berks County Master Gardeners
invite you to a



PLANT SALE

WITH A DIFFERENCE

Friday, May 6, 2011
12:00 to 7:00 p.m.

Sat., May 7, 2011
9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.



*Hanging baskets for
Mother's Day*

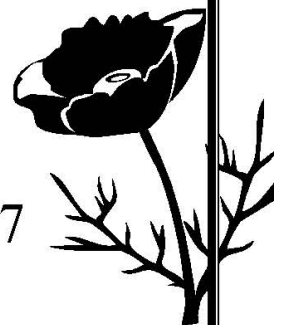
**RAIN or
SHINE!**

*Perennials, shrubs, herbs,
vegetables, ornamental grasses*

*Select group of trouble-free, drought-resistant annuals
for all-summer bloom.*

*Wide variety of quality plants
Free literature and gardening advice*

Berks County Agricultural Center
1238 County Welfare Road, Leesport, PA
For more information, call 610-378-1327



ENVIROTHON UPDATE

Each spring season, Berks County high school and middle school students compete in the *Berks County Envirothon*. The high school teams compete for the chance to go to the state-wide event where schools from all corners of Pennsylvania vie for the chance to move on to the international competition. There, the winning team must go up against the best from the United States and Canada for recognition and college scholarships.

Originally developed in 1979, the *Envirothon* has become the most popular high school environmental knowledge competition in North America. Although, only high schools go on to compete in state and international competitions, the Envirothon has become so popular that middle schools are participating in informal Envirothon Competitions.

The Berks County Envirothon has existed long enough to witness 8th graders go on from college into successful environmental & agricultural careers. But college & environmentally related careers are not the only goals of the Envirothon. Teamwork, friendship, study skills, nature appreciation, and critical thinking are all part of the program. The benefits speak for themselves--the Envirothon works!

Both the high school and middle school competitions are administered by the Berks County Conservation District with the aid of many cooperating agencies such as: the PA Game Commission, PA Fish & Boat Commission, DCNR Bureau of Forestry, and the Natural Resource Conservation Service.

2011 Envirothon Dates have been set!

Senior: May 5th
Junior: May 10th

Both events will be at
Nolde State forest.

For more information about the
Envirothon, please contact
Kate O'Brien at 610-372-4657.

Nolde Forest Environmental Education Center Sustainable Energy Committee 2011 Annual Energy Conservation Tour

Learn how

- to use a watt meter to help you reduce your electricity use
- to be creative with financing and materials for renewable energy projects
- two homeowners monitor performance of photovoltaic (solar electricity) and solar hot water systems
- to set up whole-house monitoring

Meet: Nolde Forest Environmental Education Center
When: Sat. April 16, 8:45 a.m. – 3:45 p.m.

\$15.00 fee covers pre-tour program, tour, lunch, & bus transportation. REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED. Lunch buffet at Kutztown University—learn about their green initiatives.
Program is held rain or shine. For more information, call Nolde Forest EE Center weekdays 8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m., 610-796-3699 or e-mail noldeforestprogramstaff@state.pa.us



CAN YOUR GARDENING BE MORE GREEN?

It is hard to imagine, but your green thumb could be greener! If you are looking to become more environmentally friendly and enjoy gardening, then a rain garden maybe for you. A rain garden is a planted depression that allows rainwater runoff from impervious areas (like roofs, driveways, walkways, parking lots, and compacted lawns), the opportunity to be absorbed. This allows water to soak into the ground rather than flowing towards storm drains and nearby streams.

By allowing water the chance to be absorbed into the ground, you are preventing water pollution in your community! For example, when water flows over our driveways and roads, the water can pick up various types of pollutants (such as dirt, motor oils, and other chemicals). Rain gardens can slow the rate at which the water is travelling and the plants in the garden will help with the absorption process. Also, rain gardens can be designed for specific sizes, soils and climates!

Native plants, which are plants that are more tolerant of one's local climate, soil, and water conditions, are highly recommended for rain gardens because they generally do not require fertilizers. (This means more savings for you in both time and money!). Keep in mind that the native plants chosen should be plants that can tolerate wet conditions. Check out the enclosed catalog for the Berks County Conservation District's Annual Tree Seedling Sale. We are featuring a rain garden mix! Also, be sure to visit the Berks County Master Gardener's Sale where you can receive expert advice on your plant selection!

If you are interested in learning more or if you have questions about rain gardens, then please contact Kate O'Brien at the Berks County Conservation District at 610-372-4657.

-Submitted By: Kate O'Brien



Rain gardens, just like the one at the Berks County Conservation District's office, like to be wet! Rain gardens do not promote mosquito populations. Most water should be drained from your garden in 48 hours; on the other hand, it can take up to a week for a mosquito egg to mature.

DON HARTMAN CONSERVATION LEADERSHIP CAMP

The Berks County Conservation District is pleased to announce that we, along with the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources—Nolde Forest Environmental Education Center, will be hosting the Don Hartman Conservation Leadership School at Alvernia University in June 2011. This week-long residential school, is designed to not only acquaint interested Berks County high school students with the field of natural resource conservation, but also to encourage and develop leadership skills that will last a lifetime!

If you are or know of a high school student that resides in Berks County and are interested in the School, then please visit our website at www.BerksCD.com/education or call 610-372-4657.

Want to receive this Newsletter electronically?

Visit: <http://berkscd.com/education/newsletter>



CALENDAR

March	16th 25th 28th 30th	7:30-Noon 5:00PM 6:30PM 1:00PM	Riparian Buffer Workshop Order Deadline for Tree Seedling Sale 2011 Annual Banquet BCCD Board Meeting	Berks Agricultural Center Fleetwood Grange Berks Agricultural Center
April	12th 14-16th 27th	7:30AM-Noon 1:00PM	Equipment Operators Workshop Tree Seedling Pickup BCCD Board Meeting	Berks Agricultural Center Fisher's Soil Stone & Stuff Berks Agricultural Center
May	5th 10th 25th	9:00AM-2:00PM 9:00AM-2:00PM 1:00PM	Berks County High School Envirothon Berks County Middle School Envirothon BCCD Board Meeting	Nolde State Forest Nolde State Forest Berks Agricultural Center
June	27th– Jul 1st 29th	1:00PM	Don Hartman Conservation Leadership School BCCD Board Meeting	Alvernia University Berks Agricultural Center
July	27th	1:00PM	BCCD Board Meeting	Berks Agricultural Center
August	15-16th 31th	1:00PM	BCCD Teacher Workshop BCCD Board Meeting	Berks Agricultural Center Berks Agricultural Center



BERKS COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT

1238 County Welfare Road
Suite 200
Leesport, PA 19533

**Tree Seedling Sale
Catalog inside!**