

TOMORROW NEWSLETTER

Washington County Agricultural Fair 2025

Round Bale Decorating Contest

The fair's round bale decorating contest tasked the WCCD staff to construct "fair food" out of a round bale of hay. Although we didn't win, we're pretty proud of our "cheeseburger" made from erosion and sedimentation materials!



From this...



To this...



To our finished product!

Fair Milkshake Stand

One of the more popular food stands at the fair is the "Milkshake Stand" where visitors can indulge in a delicious freshly made milkshake. Working in this stand has become a favorite of the staff at the Washington County Conservation District as each staff member is able to participate and try his/her hand at scooping some delectable ice cream!



Pictured from left to right is Watershed Specialist Jeffrey Kim; Resource Conservation Technician Ian Reinstadtler; Dirt, Gravel, and Low Volume Road Technician Jason Fillhart; Resource Conservation Technician Hanna Bourcier; District Manager Jennifer Dann; and Lead Resource Conservation Technician Matt Golden

Watershed Group Update



Upper Chartiers Creek Watershed Association

50 Old Hickory Ridge Road, Suite 1, Washington, PA 15301

Website: www.upperchartierscreek.org, on Facebook and Instagram

Email: Chartierscreekwa@pawccd.org

Meeting: Hybrid Meetings (In-Person and on Zoom) on the second Tuesday of each month at 7pm.

UCCWA held its first-ever Fungi Walk at Peters Lake Park, and it was a fantastic day of fun and learning! Led by Jared White, participants explored the woods in search of fall fungi—finding, picking, and identifying a wide variety of species along the way.

Looking ahead, our fall water monitoring of Chartiers Creek is starting soon. If you're interested in volunteering, we'd love to have you join us! Reach out via the email above, new volunteers are always welcome.

We're also excited to announce our Annual Meeting on December 9th. This fun-filled evening will be led by Esmee de Cortie and will feature a light dinner and an engaging group role-playing game. Designed for policy makers, nonprofit leaders, educators, and community members, the game explores collaborative climate solutions across sectors. Don't miss this chance to connect, learn, and help build a better future! To register: visit the events page at www.wcwalliance.org



Independence Conservancy- Raccoon Creek

Meeting: If you're interested in joining please contact 724-888-3303.

Independence Conservancy's "Raccoon Creek Recovery Project" has turned up an exciting find. On June 4th, scientists from Civil & Environmental Consultants Inc. found freshwater shrimp in Raccoon Creek near Independence Conservancy's canoe launch in Potter Township. Biologists from the PA Fish & Boat Commission, as well as the PA Department of Environmental Protection, confirmed that the shrimp are not castoffs from someone's aquarium. They are Mississippi grass shrimp (*Palaemonetes kadiakensis*). This is great news for Raccoon Creek's recovery, because these inch-long, nearly transparent organisms depend on clean water to survive and thrive.



You can share your own observations of natural wonders through our "Raccoon Creek Recovery" story map. We recently added an iNaturalist.org "Biodiversity Heat Map" link to record your sightings, share and discuss them with other naturalists. Check it out at independenceconservancy.org.

FALL COLORS

Leaf Pigments

Tannins
(brown)

Chlorophyll
(green)

Xanthophyll
(yellow)

Carotenoids
(orange)

Anthocyanin
(red)

The science behind the colors

During spring and summer months trees produce a green pigment, called chlorophyll, within their leaves.

During the process of photosynthesis, chlorophyll captures sunlight energy to make food for the trees.

As fall arrives with shorter days, leaves begin to receive less sunlight. To conserve energy for the winter, many trees will stop chlorophyll production and enter dormancy. The remaining chlorophyll is broken down and other beautiful colors become present.

Coloring Activity:

Color each tree leaf based on their fall leaf color!



Red Maple



Yellow Birch



Pin Oak

Washington County Conservation District
50 Old Hickory Ridge Road, Suite 1
Washington, PA 15301



1947 - 2025

Board of Directors

- William Iams, Chairman
- Jose Taracido, Vice-Chairman
- Jan Marchezak, Secretary-Treasurer
- Nick Sherman, Commissioner Director
- John Hunter
- Mike Lusk
- Ed Martin

Associate Directors

- Byron Black
- Dr. Jason Kilgore
- Chet Kreil
- Larry Maggi
- Tom Sierzega
- Jessica Ullom

District Location

50 Old Hickory Ridge Road, Suite 1

Washington, PA 15301

Phone: 724-705-7098

Website: www.pawccd.org

Email: Washcccd@yahoo.com

Hours: 8:00 am to 4:30 pm Monday - Friday

District Staff

- Jennifer Dann, District Manager
- Matt Golden, Lead Resource Conservation Technician
- Tom Ulrich, Agricultural Technician
- Jeffrey Kim, Watershed Specialist
- Ian Reinstadtler, Resource Conservation Technician
- Hayley McEvoy, Resource Conservation Technician
- Hanna Bourcier, Resource Conservation Technician
- Jason Fillhart, Dirt, Gravel, & Low Volume Roads Technician
- Susan Toth, Administrative Assistant

Cooperating Agencies

- Russel Gibbs, PA DCNR Bureau of Forestry
- Jonathan Stark, Fish and Boat Commission
- Adam Traynor, PA Game Commission
- Caroline Sinchar, Washington County Planning Commission
- Jeff Donahue, Washington County Parks & Recreation
- Michal Roup, Washington/Greene County Farm Service Agency
- Rennie Stoy, NRCS
- Jack Lee, NRCS
- Penn State Cooperative Extension

Pictures from the WCCD Display at the Fair...



The Washington County Conservation booth at the Washington County Fair is always a busy and popular place for fair attendees. This year, visitors were able to locate and identify macroinvertebrates to win prizes, and view video presentations of streambank restorations and erosion control, along with a video showing what the District engages in all year. Guests were also able to make a pollinator seed bomb to take home for planting!



*Meet the WCCD's new
Resource Conservation Technician...*

Hanna Bourcier



Hello! My name is Hanna Bourcier, and I'm excited to be joining the Conservation District as the new Resource Conservation Technician. I recently graduated in May 2024 from the University of Maryland with a B.S. in Environmental Science and Policy. In my previous roles, I gained valuable experience in aquatic biology and stream restoration. I look forward to contributing to the team and supporting Washington County's conservation efforts!

DIRT, GRAVEL, & LOW VOLUME ROADS

by Jason Fillhart, DGLVR Technician



Project Spotlight – Sugar Run Stream Crossing Low Volume Road Project – Independence Township

Project Highlights:

The Sugar Run Stream Crossing Low Volume Road Project replaced a decades old, failing bridge with a new bottomless arch culvert in Independence Township. The old, undersized, and failing bridge caused bank erosion and a large scour pool at the outfall. The new bottomless arch culvert (40'6" by 18'2" by 4'7" high) now has proper alignment and six in-stream grade control structures.

An 18" cross pipe was also installed to alleviate flood pressure near the structure. Apex Industries out of Wind Ridge, PA completed the removal of the old bridge and the installation of the new culvert in approximately five weeks. The WCCD Portion of project was \$129,100 with Township in-kind of \$65,010.88. The total project cost was \$194,110.88

Before Photos:



Looking upstream, old bridge with large scour pool



Looking downstream, old bridge with eroding banks due to improper bridge size and alignment.

After Photos:



Looking upstream - new structure with grade control structure at the bottom of the photo



Looking downstream, new structure with low flow channel and proper alignment

AGRICULTURE



It is exciting times at the Conservation District this fall. We had a busy summer with research projects, construction of new heavy use areas, and received our new aerator that is available to rent. We recently had wonderful events at the Foster Family Acres and Schilling Hill Farm. At those events, we were able to showcase the Agricultural Conservation Assistance Program (ACAP), our year 2 findings with the forage nitrogen trial, and initial results from our lime test plots.

Left: The impressive heavy-use pad constructed using ACAP funding at Foster Family Acres, owned by the Dave and Renee Dickson Family, Claysville, PA.

Right: Guests in attendance at the Ag Research Project Nitrogen Trial Field Day were given a tour of Bill and Susan Paxton's beautiful Schilling Hill Farm in Washington, PA.



The district was able to expand the rental program to include a new Bambauer 8-foot aerator. This aerator requires the use of at least a 65-horsepower tractor. The district offers a weekday rental (pickup Monday afternoon and return Thursday morning) or a weekend rental (pickup Friday morning and return Monday morning). The cost to rent the aerator is \$150 payable at pickup. The aerator loosens compacted soil which improves water infiltration. Improved infiltration means that there is more water holding capacity in the soil. Manufacturers mention that aeration improves soil biology by providing proper air to water balance. The fracturing of the soil improves root growth as well.



AGRICULTURE ... CONTINUED



Save the
Date

The 2026 **S.W. PA Soil Health Conference** will be held on **January 27, 2026**, from 9:00 am to 3:30 pm at Saint Vincent College. The day will consist of speakers discussing the benefits of cover crops, silvopasture, and pesticide credits will be available.

The 2026 **Washington County Crop Days** meeting will be held on **February 26, 2026**, from 8:30 am to 3:00 pm at Chartiers Township Community Center. The day will consist of speakers discussing the benefits of grazing cover crops, ways to reduce compaction, and pesticide credits will be available. Contact the conservation district for more information on both of these events.

As always, the conservation district is available to assist with any questions relating to nutrient management regulations and assistance in completing your manure management manual. Feel free to contact us at any time. Thanks, and we hope to hear from you!

For more information on any of the WCCD Agricultural programs, contact Agricultural Technician, Tom Ulrich, at 724-705-7098.

A poster for the Washington and Greene County Conservation Districts Engineering Workshop. The background is a dark, textured surface. The title "Washington and Greene County Conservation Districts Engineering Workshop" is in bold white and yellow text. Below the title, details are listed: "DETAILS: WCCD and GCCD Staff Presentations, DEP - Mining Program Speakers, Army Corps of Engineers, USFW-IPAC Tool, Q & A Period, Certificate of Attendance Awarded". Information is listed: "INFORMATION: November 5, 2025, 10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m., Registration begins at 9:30 a.m., Lunch will be provided, Please register by October 31, Register at www.pawccd.org, \$40 registration fee per attendee, Chartiers Twp. Community Center, 2013 Community Center Drive, Houston, PA". A "CONTACT US" button with a right arrow is shown. Below it, a phone icon with "724-705-7098" and a globe icon with "WWW.PAWCCD.ORG" are displayed. At the bottom, it says "Registration is now open at www.pawccd.org". Two circular images show a river and a construction site.

**Washington and Greene County
Conservation Districts
Engineering Workshop**

DETAILS:
WCCD and GCCD Staff Presentations
DEP - Mining Program Speakers
Army Corps of Engineers
USFW-IPAC Tool
Q & A Period
Certificate of Attendance Awarded

INFORMATION:
November 5, 2025
10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.
Registration begins at 9:30 a.m.
Lunch will be provided
Please register by October 31
Register at www.pawccd.org
\$40 registration fee per attendee
Chartiers Twp. Community Center
2013 Community Center Drive
Houston, PA

CONTACT US →

724-705-7098 WWW.PAWCCD.ORG

Registration is now open at www.pawccd.org

Join the Washington County Conservation District and the Greene County Conservation District, as they present the 2025 Engineering Workshop on Wednesday, November 5, 2025, at the Chartiers Township Community Center.

Registration is now open at www.pawccd.org.

Washington County Farmland Preservation

WASHINGTON COUNTY MARKS MAJOR MILESTONE: OVER 50 FARMS PERMANENTLY PRESERVED

Washington County has reached a significant conservation milestone, celebrating 53 preserved farms encompassing a remarkable 7,800 acres of vital agricultural land.

This achievement is more than just a number; it represents 53 stories of commitment and 53 acts of optimism. Preserving these farms is a testament to the foresight, generosity, and hard work of countless individuals, ensuring more fresh, local food for our communities, more open spaces for wildlife, and a stronger agricultural economy for Washington County.

A Day of Speakers and Gratitude

The celebration commenced with a farm tour of Bill and Judy Iams' farm, preserved in 2015. The official program followed, featuring Trinity High School Seniors Caden Miller and Katherine Drezewski singing the National Anthem. The event hosted a distinguished list of speakers, including Craig Sweger, the first Chairman of the Ag Preservation Board; Bill Iams, the current Chairman; County Commissioners Nick Sherman and Larry Maggi; and special guest PA Secretary of Agriculture Russell Redding.

Secretary Redding emphasized the profound nature of the landowners' "forever decision," underscoring the vital state and county partnership necessary to honor the intentions of preserved farms. The core purpose of the day was to thank the landowners for their selfless decision to preserve their land through an easement. Program Administrator Caroline Sinchar stated, "We understand the deeply personal nature of these decisions, and we want to express our heartfelt gratitude for your trust, your foresight, and your unwavering dedication to the land you cherish. This is not merely a transaction; it's a profound gift to future generations."

Honoring Foundational Efforts

The celebration also recognized the program's founding members: Louise Midla, Craig Sweger, Bill Sember, and Gary Stokum. Their foundational efforts were instrumental in building the Farmland Preservation program, and their contributions are woven into its success today. This milestone is a true collaboration among several supporting agencies, including current and previous board members, County Commissioners, the Bureau of Farmland Preservation, and the Conservation District.

Looking Ahead

As Washington County looks to the future, the work continues. There are still many valuable farms to preserve, and new challenges and opportunities will undoubtedly arise. The community is encouraged to "continue to work together to ensure that Washington County remains a place where agriculture grows and our working farms are protected forever."

Landowners interested in preserving their farm can contact the Washington County Planning Commission at 724-228-6811, email sincharc@co.washington.pa.us, or find details online: <https://www.washingtoncopa.gov/planning/farmland-preservation>.

What a great day for agriculture in Washington County!



Left to right: Director of the Washington County Planning Commission Jason Theakston and Planning Administrator Caroline Sinchar



PA Secretary of Agriculture Russell Redding presents Bill Iams with a commendation of 50 Preserved Farms in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Photo credit: WJPA



PA Secretary of Agriculture Russell Redding, Washington County Planning Administrator Caroline Sinchar, and Chairman of the Farmland Preservation Board Bill Iams. Photo credit: WJPA



Washington County Commissioner Nick Sherman addressing the attendees at the celebration held at The Barn at Ike's Place.



Left to Right: Washington County Commissioner Larry Maggi, PA Secretary of Agriculture Russell Redding, Washington County Planning Administrator Caroline Sinchar, and Farmland Preservation Board Chairman Bill Iams.

CHAPTER 102 - EROSION AND SEDIMENTATION AND CHAPTER 105 - GENERAL PERMITTING

You may have heard the term “100-year storm” on the news or The Weather Channel and assumed it refers to a storm that only happens once every 100 years. Perhaps you heard this term during the storms Hurricane Ivan brought to the area in 2004, bringing 5.95 inches of rain to the Pittsburgh area in a two-day span. It’s a common misconception- but not exactly the right interpretation.

A 100-year storm refers to a storm event that has a 1% chance of occurring in any given year, not one that happens once per century. While rare, that means it’s entirely possible for two 100-year storms to occur within the same week!

It’s also important to note that a 100-year storm doesn’t automatically result in a 100-year flood. Flooding depends on several other factors beyond rainfall amounts.

The extent of rainfall coverage across the watershed, the soil’s saturation level before the storm begins, and the type of ground cover all play a role in determining whether a storm leads to flooding. A brief but intense rainfall over saturated ground may cause more flooding than a longer, lighter storm over dry soil.

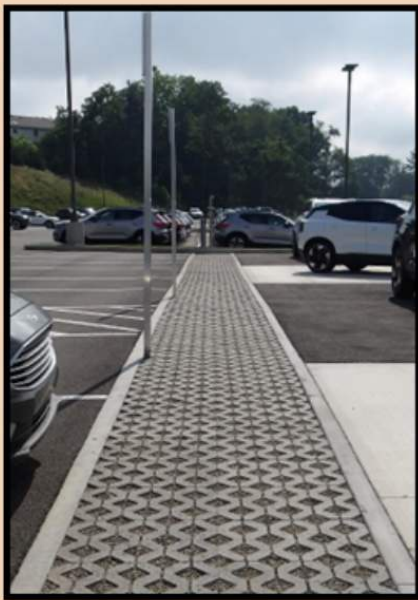


Stormwater Control Measures (SCMs) are often designed around the 2-year storm (2.38 inches in 24 hours, in Washington County, PA). Focusing on volume reduction techniques for smaller storms, such as infiltration practices, can provide additional benefits during various sized storm events. If properly designed and constructed, these techniques not only manage the volume from small storms but can also reduce peak runoff rates during larger storms. Stormwater Management Ponds are a common way to control runoff from storm events and reduce the resulting impacts of increased runoff (see above image). When stormwater is allowed to infiltrate into the ground, it reduces both the volume and speed of runoff, helping to protect downstream waterways and reduce streambank erosion.

CHAPTER 102 - CHAPTER 105 . . . CONTINUED

For areas that are characterized with large amounts of impervious (parking lots, driveways, buildings, etc.), most precipitation gets directed into storm sewer systems during storm events. For large enough events, this can overwhelm a stormwater system which leads to storm drains and culverts backing up. This is a concern for areas experiencing rapid development.

Urban development has a significant impact on stormwater. The figure to the right depicts increased runoff volumes from impervious surfaces vs. woodlands during various sized storms. Paved surfaces and storm sewer systems convey water much more quickly than natural landscapes. This means that not only is there more runoff, but it also moves faster, which increases the risk of erosion and downstream flooding.



A key goal of effective stormwater management is to slow down the movement of water across a site. In Washington County, porous pavement has been utilized to increase infiltration in urban developments, such as in the image to the left.

When stormwater runoff volume and rate increase during small storm events, stream channels begin to change. Because the stream is flowing at deeper depths more often, the stream will try to accommodate these higher, more frequent flows by eroding stream banks or cutting down channel bottom. This is why managing smaller, routine storms is critical. In many cases, strategies that focus on controlling runoff quantity also help improve water quality. Infiltration-based SCMs filter pollutants, recharge groundwater, and help restore a more natural water cycle.

Ultimately, effective stormwater management is not just about preparing for the rare, headline-making storms. It's about designing systems that address the storms we experience most often. By focusing on managing the frequent smaller storms, such as the 2-year event, we can protect our natural waterways and improve our stormwater design approaches.