



Dirt On the District

Covid-19 Update

2020 has brought about new challenges for all families and businesses in our nation. Rest assured, the Conservation District is still here for the community. This publication will illustrate ongoing and new projects throughout the county. Our technicians are in the office as needed and working from home when possible. Each staff member is available by email and phone for all the county programs, grants and projects. Plans are being made to create an exciting 2021. We look forward to seeing smiling faces next year!



Annual Nature Photo Contest

We are still accepting entries for the **2020 Photo Contest**.

Entries will be accepted until **January 15th, 2021**

In an effort to support the conservation of our district's natural resources, we feel it is important to allow the public an opportunity to showcase what they feel are

Lawrence County's finest natural resources.

To participate in the Annual Photo Contest you will find an entry form and contest rules on our website **www.lawrenceccd.org**.

All entries can be mailed or personally delivered to the Lawrence County Conservation District Office.

Due to staff primarily working remotely, it is best to call ahead if delivering photos. Please contact Jeannie Shay at 724-333-2817 for best opportunities to deliver.



Bev Martinko "Sunset Sky"



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**@Lawrence County
Conservation District**



Instagram
LCCD_DOD

2020 Nature Camp

This year's Nature Camp became a definition of success within a world of uncertainty. Our ability to plan ahead was stunted by the worldwide pandemic. Fortunately, PA guidelines allowed us to move forward keeping everyone happy and healthy. Due to said circumstances, we decided to offer only one Nature Camp to all students entering grades 3rd - 5th, with a few exceptions. We appreciate Ewing Park for allowing us to utilize the pavilions and park to host our camp week.



Monday was our "Kibbles and Twigs" day. We had Andrew Palumbo, Wild Edible Educator, give a lesson on Wild Edibles while on a hike throughout the park. Upon returning, campers were given the opportunity to sample sumac tea. Most liked the tea so much they asked for seconds. Mary Burris lead campers on a hike to identify important plants such as poison ivy and trees. Later that day we made some "Leaf Art" and created Twig Boats. The Twig Boats became a contest as to whose boat could float!



Tuesday's theme was "Things with Wings". Beekeeper - Corey Kendall, gave some important information to our campers on Bees and even brought an old bee box to show. Next, Dave and Lori Kwasnick from The Birdwatchers Store in Slippery Rock gave a Bird Identification lesson and then a birdwatching walk. Campers were taught the basics of binoculars to use during our hike. To keep with the theme, for snack campers were offered samples of Honey from Apple Castle. In the afternoon we made "Honey Bee Slime". What Fun!



"What's in Your Water?" Wednesday, started with Microbiologist, Bryan Crable Ph.D. and his lesson with microscopes. As campers viewed different samples from leaves to bugs, they came up with unique ways of describing what they saw - "stockings with a tear, pickles, bubblegum and fish scales". To enhance the experience, each camper was gifted a "Pocket Microscope" to keep. These were fun to use throughout the rest of camp week.



The afternoon was all about water. Our own Travis Gates taught campers that looks aren't everything when determining water quality. Clear water samples from various sources were tested for several components and results were surprising.

The rest of the day was spent viewing Macroinvertebrates with Mary Burris down alongside the Connoquenessing Creek. All campers had the opportunity to collect and inspect creatures from rocks. Some campers took advantage of the water and made sure to get wet.



2020 Nature Camp continued

Environmental Outreach

The District provides environmental education programs to both adult and youth audiences. The district hosts a variety of programs such as **Summer Nature Camps** but also conducts programs throughout the year by request.

To help fund educational programs, the district has an **Annual Spring Seedling Sale**. The sale is between February - March with orders being available for pick up in April.

Donations Are Needed

Consider a Donation to our **Summer Nature Camps**.

Donations of Check or Cash can be mailed in or personally delivered to the Conservation Office.

Checks payable to *Lawrence County Conservation District or LCCD*

Credit Card Payments are also accepted through PayPal – lcd@lawrenceconservationdistrict.org

Thursday was "Nature Gone Wild" day.

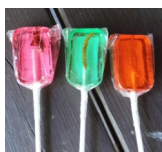
To start the day, Bryan Crable had taken swabs of 4 different samples and cultured them on a petri dish to see if anything would grow. Turns out the cell phone and river water had the most bacterial growth.

Proof positive that Hand Sanitizer works due to the lack of bacteria from the palm sample.

Our special guest was Officer Jeff Kendall with the PA Game Commission. His lesson taught campers about how wild animals end up on the Endangered Species list and what they can do to help. After lunch Jeannie Shay did a lesson on animal tracks, scat and pelts. This lesson proved useful for the matching game they were challenged with later on.



Friday "Rock Your World" geology day started with a rock and mineral identification lesson put on by Travis Gates. Campers were pretty clever at identifying the different samples.



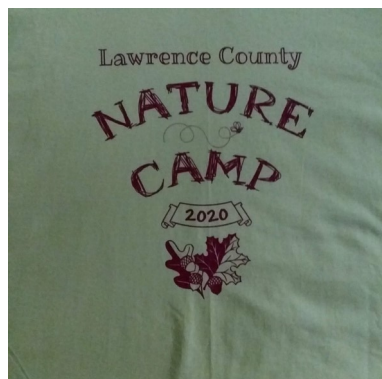
Snack time was greeted with some hesitation as a variety of Edible Bugs - crickets, meal worms, and chocolate covered ants were offered to the campers to try. About half actually braved the exotic samplings.

After our Pizza Party lunch we made baking soda and vinegar volcanos followed by a short hike lead by Travis Gates to view rock outcroppings along the trail.

Many additional lessons and crafts were incorporated throughout the week. Sprinkled in between the lessons were a handful of social distance friendly water games and down time was occupied with donated balsam wood planes and frisbees.



Be sure to check out our Facebook page for additional photos.



Special Thanks to all of our presenters and donors during camp week!!
Your time and expertise are appreciated and were a huge addition to the learning experience!

Andrew Palumbo - Wild Edible Educator

Corey Kendall - Local Beekeeper

Dave & Lori Kwasnick - The Birdwatchers Store

Bryan Crable Ph.D. - Microbiologist

Officer Jeff Kendall - PA Game Commission

Michael Joseph State Farm - Balsam wood planes
Ewing Park, Ellwood City

Monetary sponsors for 2020: Five Fillies Farm, Apple Castle LLC., Central Heating and Plumbing, Michael Joseph State Farm, Ben Franklin's Taproom - Grille - Bottle shop

SPONSORS

Five Fillies Farm
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DEP Environmental Education Grant

On June 26, 2020 the Lawrence County Conservation District was awarded a Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Environmental Education grant of \$19,999.00 to install a Green Alley on New Castle's lower East Side. Grant funds will be used to install the green alley and create educational media around the project to be presented at workshops locally and statewide.

A green alley allows water to infiltrate into the ground rather than run off and will help reduce storm water runoff volume, improve groundwater recharge, and prevent pollution from entering local streams.

In a press release, Representative Chris Sainato said "Converting these areas to 'green alleys' with the use of permeable materials transforms them into attractive spaces that absorb and filter stormwater runoff. The result is a cleaner, greener, safer environment for our residents."

The grant is part of a package of \$434,168 in Environmental Education Grants to 55 projects that will engage youth and adults in environmental justice, climate change, and/or water quality improvement, expanding their understanding of these issues in Pennsylvania and providing skills to take responsible action to protect their environment.



Update on Ag Best Management Practices

Last fall Camp Run Farms, in Perry township, started the plans for a Manure Storage in cooperation with Travis Gates, Ag Technician, through the "Slippery Rock Watershed Grant". Due to Covid-19 delays, construction just started this past July. Though the process is still in the beginning stages, they hope to pour concrete this month. With all good luck and cooperating weather, the Sturgeon family could have a useable manure tank by October.

This addition to the farm will bring great benefits to both the farmer and surrounding environment. Instead of needing to spread manure weekly, which results in over application, the farm can now spread twice a year in spring and fall. Proper application will result in less runoff of nutrients from the manure into local waterways. The farm will gain the benefit of saving time and money. — Additional photos will be posted to social media as the project is completed.

If you would be interested in Agriculture Best Management Practices for your farm, please contact Travis Gates at 724-656-2473 or tgates@lawrencecd.org



2020 Western Pennsylvania Environmental Award Winner

Kenneth J Rice Sr., The Lawrence County Conservation District's Urban Steward award winner for 2019 was recognized with a 2020 Pennsylvania Environmental Council (PEC) Western Pennsylvania Environmental Award for his work in creating the Lower East Side Community Garden.

The nomination was submitted by Mary Burris, LCCD Watershed Specialist, who worked closely with Rice to install an Edible Rain Garden at the Lower East Side Community Garden in 2019. Support letters from Disability Options Network (DON) who is working on a multimillion-dollar revitalization project in New Castle's Lower East Side neighborhood, and Rice's employer, and TriCounty CleanWays who recognized Rice as Volunteer of the Year for 2019, provided support for the well-deserved honor.



*Rice standing next to the new South Side Community Garden Sign
Photo Pete Siriani – New Castle News*

“Through his efforts and those of his volunteers, approximately seventy families have received free produce from the garden — fruits and vegetables produced without chemical fertilizers, irrigation systems, or manure spreading and requiring no transportation. Soil is being fortified with compost produced onsite, eliminating the need for chemical fertilizers and reducing the amount of debris that might otherwise be going to a landfill.”

New Castle News – June 27, 2020

Rice has since helped transform the site of the former Pollock Street Elementary school into the South Side Community Garden where the District is installing a dry creek and rain garden this year.

In recognition of his achievements, Rice will receive \$5,000 from Dominion Energy and the Pennsylvania Environmental Council (PEC) to use to further invest in the project.

The Western Pennsylvania Environmental Awards recognizes and honors outstanding achievements of organizations, businesses, and individuals in a wide range of environmental initiatives throughout the region and pays tribute to those that have demonstrated a commitment to environmental excellence, leadership, and accomplishment in their respective fields.

Dirt, Gravel and Low Volume Roads Program

This year the District has continued to work with several of the municipalities here in the County to continue our joint efforts for better roads and cleaner streams.

Earlier this summer our office in cooperation with Shenango Township continued work on Chewton West Pittsburg Road. Shenango Township Municipal forces installed new drainage cross pipes on the next section of road and plans to install the program's specialized aggregate blend called DSA in the next few weeks. The work completed by the municipal forces provided better management of the stormwater on the road discharging it in a stable fashion to the vegetation along the roadway. The new pipes helped to minimize the erosive force of the stormwater on the road surface and within the ditches. All of this work will result in a roadway that will need less maintenance in the future.

Currently, all of the permits and arrangements have been finalized to complete the stream culvert replacement on Lakewood Neshannock Falls Road. Hickory Township working with Sonntag Excavating will be our partners in the installation of a bottomless arch culvert. Improvement of this structure will allow better stream flow under the roadway which has been problematic for the Township. Backing up of water and constant erosion of the outlet motivated the change of the culvert. Using a "bottom less" structure will give us the opportunity to create a natural stream bottom through the pipe.

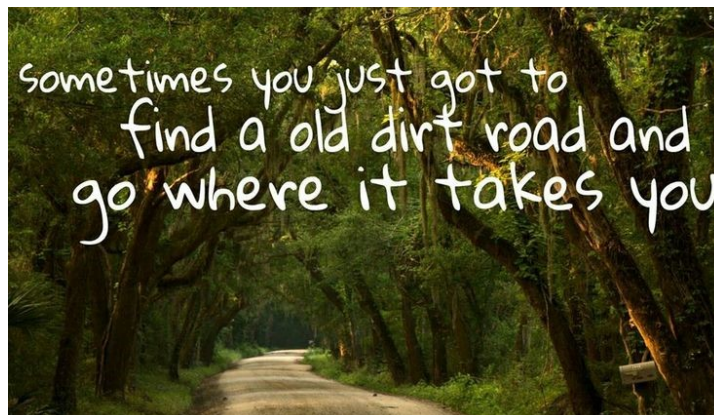
In addition to the work in Shenango and Hickory Township, Becca Naber - District Technician, worked collaboratively with RAR Engineering, and Center Staff to finalize design of two stream crossings, cross pipe installation, road filling and off right of way improvements with Mahoning Township on Evergreen Road. The project will go to construction in mid-October of this year. Improvements made to the road will benefit both the residents of Mahoning Township and the environment, future erosion of the road surface will be minimized. Along with the stormwater management, two stream crossings plagued by undersized culverts will be replaced. Larger, more appropriately sized by pipes will allow for healthier segments of these waterways.



Hickory Township's municipal road crew worked diligently to "build" the arch portion of their new stream crossing in August.

Our office would like to encourage any and all municipalities who are interested in projects for the 2021 construction season to get in touch with our office and attend one of the upcoming trainings available at little or no cost through the Center for Dirt and Gravel Roads. Center staff is working hard to meet the current challenges and is offering the opportunity complete the training required through online sessions.

<https://www.dirtandgravel.psu.edu/education-and-training/esm-course/remote-online-esm-trainings>.



Chapter 102

Erosion and Sediment Control

Title 25, Chapter 102 of PA Code requires those conducting earth disturbance activities to develop, implement and maintain best management practices (BMPs) to minimize the potential for accelerated erosion and sedimentation (E&S).

When Are Permits Needed?

Permits are needed for the following activities:

- Construction activities with earth disturbance greater than or equal to 1 acre requires **National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES)** permit coverage, not including agricultural plowing or tilling, animal heavy use areas, timber harvesting activities or road maintenance activities.
- Timber harvesting and road maintenance activities involving 25 or more acres of earth disturbance requires an **E&S Permit**.
- Oil and gas activities (e.g. exploration, production, processing, treatment operations or transmission facilities) involving 5 or more acres of earth disturbance requires an **E&S Permit**.
- Other activities involving 5 or more acres of earth disturbance not identified above require an E&S permit.

Visit our website www.lawrencecd.org to download LCCD's E&S Pollution Control Plan Fee Schedule. For more information regarding the permitting process, visit the Department of Environmental Protection's website at www.dep.pa.gov.



When Are E&S Plans Required?

Erosion and sedimentation (E&S) plans are required to be submitted:

- With NPDES and E&S Permit applications.
- For earth disturbance projects involving 5,000 square feet to 0.99 acres.
- When applying for a Ch.105 Water Obstruction and Encroachment General Permit.
- For timber harvest involving less than 25 acres.

Kid's Corner!!



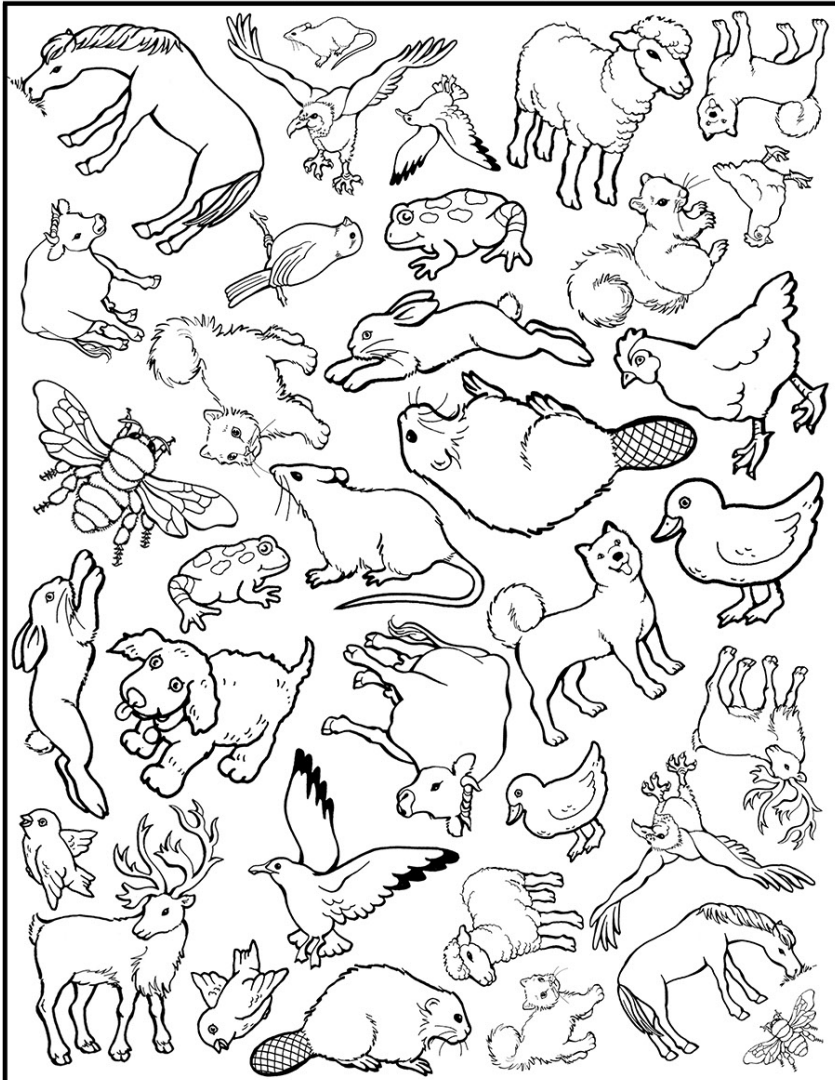
Fun Facts Learned at Nature Camp

- Great Horned Owls will prey on Skunks and other small owls, including Barn Owls.
- A deer fawn is born Unscented for the first few weeks of it's life. This is one way Mother Nature protects a fawn from predators.
- One lead fishing sinker in a fish can kill a Bald Eagle if consumed.
- The NFL is studying woodpecker tongues to create better helmets for players.



Animal Pair Off

Most of these animals have a match. They will be exactly alike, but may be rotated, flipped, or resized. Three of the animals don't have a match. Can you figure out who they are?



Why is grass so dangerous?

- **Because it's full of blades!**

What runs but never walks?

- **Water!**

How do trees get on the internet?

- **They Log In!**

What kind of paper do mosquitos like?

- **Scratch Paper!**

What type of haircuts do bees get?

- **Buzz Cuts!**

What do you call a cow on a trampoline?

- **A Milk Shake!**




It's why I'm here.

Your home and car are more than just things. They're where you make your memories – and they deserve the right protection. I get it. It's why I'm here. **LET'S TALK TODAY.**

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The Lawrence County Conservation District Board of Directors and Staff would like to thank 2020 Sponsors for their generous donations. Education efforts are made possible with your support and help sustain our organization and benefit the community we serve. Our goal is to educate and promote interest in the conservation of our natural resources to all community members.

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Becca Naber	District Technician
Travis Gates	Agriculture Technician
Mary Burris	Watershed Specialist
Jillian Court	E & S Technician
Jeannie Shay	Outreach/Education Technician

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Contact us for rates!

Jshay@lawrenceccd.org

The "Dirt on the District" is emailed quarterly to over 400 individuals and businesses in Lawrence County and is published on our social media outlets.



Help our Facebook Grow!!

Invite your family and friends to "Like" our page as we strive for 900 Followers before January 2021!!!



**LAWRENCE COUNTY
CONSERVATION DISTRICT**