



WARREN COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT

4000 Conewango Avenue, Warren, PA 16365
Phone: 814-726-1441 • Fax: 814-406-0005
www.wcconservation.net

Conserving Natural Resources for our Future

Conservation Newsletter

This publication includes information about the Conservation District, various programs we oversee, educational opportunities and gives you a look at some of our projects. **If you are receiving this newsletter and no longer want to receive it please call us to be removed from the mailing list.** All photos within were taken prior to start of the COVID -19 pandemic.

Included in this issue:

Programs, Self - Guided Activities, Workshops, and Updates
2021 Summer Camp, Bits & Pieces

Winning Photo from 2020 Contest



Self - Guided Activities



Our Vision

The primary goal of the Conservation District is the protection, improvement, and conservation of the county's soil, water, and related natural resources as well as educating the community in various conservation and environmental practices and methods.

Our Mission

The mission of the Warren County Conservation District is to improve the environmental quality of Warren County by promoting the wise use, enhancement and understanding of natural resources.

Our History

The Warren County Conservation District dates back to April 12, 1948 and is governed by a board of eight directors. District staff implement programs, conservation projects, and educational events in cooperation with a number of partnering agencies and organizations.

Checkout our newly, updated website at www.wcconservation.net. It includes information on our different programs including links to necessary forms. Information includes, but is not limited to the following: applications for camps, Dirt, Gravel & Low Volume Road Program applications, and Garden Plot Rentals. The Warren County Conservation District office is located in Warren, PA at the corner of Hatch Run Rd and Conewango Avenue.

WORKSHOPS AND EDUCATIONAL HAPPENINGS TO LOOK FORWARD TO:

APRIL

Stream Dynamics Workshop - April 24th 3pm - 5pm - Continuing to raise awareness of permitting requirements, best management practices and example designs for Bank Stabilizations along the stream corridor. Locations to be announced.

Envirothon - April 29th - An Environmental Academic Competition for children in grades 7-12. This will be held virtually this year.

Storybook Walk - Come walk the Simmons Trail and read about Smokey Bear as you walk along. This will be up all month for you to enjoy.

MAY

Spring Trivia Quest - Follow the clues along Gardner Rd. and learn neat facts about nature. Remember to fill out the short survey take a prize from the treasure box!

My Pal & Me - This event will need to be registered for by calling 814-726-1441 or emailing smoore@wccconservation.net. This is the first of these events out of a series of five. Nature's Treasures will be held on Friday, May 14, 6:30 pm - 7:30pm.

JUNE

Youth Conservation Camp - June 15th - 17th

Our three-day environmental education camp for children entering grades 7-9.

Wildlife Track Detectives - This self-guided activity will take place on the Hatch Run Loop. There will be 25 pictures of animal tracks posted throughout the trail that you can match up with the animals from the list at the kiosk.

My Pal & Me - This event will need to be registered for by calling 814-726-1441 or emailing smoore@wccconservation.net. This is the second of these events out of a series of five. Skulls, Tracks, and Scat, OH MY... will be held on Friday, June 11, 6:30 pm - 7:30pm.



JULY

Environmental education camps for children entering the following grades:

Children's Nature Camp III - July 12th & 13th - Grades 5 & 6.

Children's Nature Camp II - July 15th & 16th - Grades 3 & 4.

Children's Nature Camp I - July 27th & 28th - Grades 1 & 2.

Kindergarten Nature Camp - July 29th - Kindergarteners



Creature Walk - Enjoy a walk on Hemlock Ridge to see what creatures you can find. There will be 25 pictures of creatures to spot.

My Pal & Me - This event will need to be registered for by calling 814-726-1441 or emailing smoore@wccconservation.net. This is the third of these events out of a series of five. Creek Critters will be held on Friday, July 9, 6:30 pm - 7:30pm.

AUGUST

My Pal & Me - This event will need to be registered for by calling 814-726-1441 or emailing smoore@wccconservation.net. This is the fourth of these events out of a series of five. Soil Investigators will be held on Friday, August 6, 6:30 pm - 7:30pm.

SEPTEMBER

WCCD annual photo contest submission deadline is September 17th at 4:00 pm. See Page 3 for more information.

My Pal & Me - This event will need to be registered for by calling 814-726-1441 or emailing smoore@wccconservation.net. This is the last of these events out of a series of five. This activity will be held on Friday, September 10, 6:30 pm - 7:30pm. The topic will be announced at a latter date.

OCTOBER

Walk in Penns Woods - October 3rd- Come for a walk in the woods and learn about this intricate ecosystem.

See our website for more information on each event as it becomes available.

**Additional copies of this newsletter are available at www.wccconservation.net
and the WCCD Office at 4000 Conewango Avenue, Warren, PA.**

Bits & Pieces

Envirothon

Well, 2020 certainly was...unique. Due to Covid-19 restrictions on public gatherings, most (if not all) county Envirothons went virtual this year. Lorelle Steach, the coordinator for the Pennsylvania State Envirothon, and the Envirothon Committee did a terrific job pulling together tests for all five stations and making them available to Envirothon participants state-wide. Warren County had five students from three schools participate in this first-ever event. Scores ranged from 55 – 100% in topics including Forestry, Wildlife, Soils, Aquatics, and Current Issue (Water Resource Management).

Depending on the Warren County School District's field trip policy this spring, the 2021 event could be held in person or virtually. If 2021's event must be held virtually, we hope to

have more participation from students working in teams, as opposed to the individualized event that happened this year.

Although the 'uniqueness' of this year interrupted everyone's plans it is encouraging to see people, both students and organizers, dedicated to this event and committed to seeing it continue.



Photo Contest

WCCD will be hosting its annual photo contest. The four categories will be: Tractors, Flowers, Birds, and People in Nature. Photos must be taken in Warren County and will be accepted until September 17, 2021 at 4:00pm. Prizes will be awarded for 1st place in each category, People's Choice, and Best of Show. A People's Choice photo will be awarded in each category so please stop into WCCD and vote between September 20 - October 4, 2021. On October 7, 2020 judges will select the top three photos in each category and an overall Best of Show. For a list of rules and more information please call 814-726-1441 or go to www.wcconservation.net. Please drop off your photos to the Warren County Conservation District at 4000 Conewango Ave, Warren, PA 16365.



Art Contest

The Conservation District held an Art Contest sponsored by the Warren County Visitor Bureau. The age groups were K-2, 3-5, 6-8, and 9-12 and the theme was Healthy Forests = Healthy Communities. On April 5th, Judges will select the top three artwork submissions in each age group. The artwork will be judged on conservation message, visual effectiveness, originality, and universal appeal. There will also be a ribbon awarded in each age group for the People's Choice.



Pavilion Rental

The pavilion at the Hatch Run Conservation Demonstration Area on Hatch Run Road is available for rent for a family reunion, graduation party, birthday party, or any other type of large-group gathering. This area offers plenty of parking, picnic tables, an outdoor privy, plus the beauty of nature. Electricity is not available. Groups can bring their own grill if they wish to cook out. We also ask that you please respect this beautiful outdoor space by carrying out your garbage. The cost is \$25.00 and **reservations are required for all organized events**. Contact the District for more information or to reserve the pavilion for your next picnic or gathering.



Community Gardens

Garden plots are available this spring at the Hatch Run Conservation Area. The fee is \$25 for a 25'x25' plot. For more information contact the Conservation District by calling 814-726-1441. Rain barrels will be placed on site. We cannot guarantee the availability of water, especially during drought conditions.



Land Development and Permitting.

Before any earth disturbance activity can occur required permits and plans must be approved

Projects requiring earth disturbance or occurring near a watercourse can be subject to the above guidelines and may require special permits and approvals. Check with the Conservation District before you begin your project to obtain accurate information as to what permits are needed.

Working in or Near Water

The PA Code: Title 25 Chapter 105 Program regulates work in and around streams, wetlands and other water bodies with a focus on avoiding or minimizing impacts to water quality, flooding frequency and riparian habitats.

Do you have a project that you're itching to get done to improve the quality and beauty of your property or maybe that stream that runs through your yard? Did you know that WCCD can help you get the required permits and plans needed to get that project done right? Chapter 105 general permits can be applied for through WCCD for any work in or around waterways in Warren County. If your project is listed below, and you are under one acre of disturbance for the project, a General Permit is just what you need.

Activities covered by Chapter 105 General Permits:

- GP1- Fish habitat structures
- GP2- Small docks & boat launches/ramps
- GP3- Bank stabilization, rehabilitation & gravel bar removal
- GP4- Intake and Outfall structures
- GP5- Utility Line crossing
- GP6- Agricultural crossings or ramps
- GP7- Minor road crossing
- GP8- Temporary road crossing
- GP9- Agricultural activities



Other General Permits Reviewed by DEP

Northwest Regional Office:

GP11- Maintenance, testing, repair or replacement of water obstructions and encroachments

GP15- Private residential construction of wetlands

Joint Permits- proposed work will change, expand, or diminish the course, current or cross-section of a stream, or if the work is located in, along, or projecting into any stream, watercourse, floodway, body of water or wetland.

Earth Disturbances

The PA Code: Title 25: Chapter 102 Erosion and Sediment (E&S) Control Plans, Permits, and NPDES Permits regulates Earth Disturbance Activities and Best Management Practices (BMP) of those activities.

If your project's area of earth disturbance is:

A. Under 5,000 sq ft: State Regulations note that these sites are still required to install, implement and maintain BMP's to minimize accelerated erosion and sedimentation. These E&S plans are not required to be approved by the District.

B. Over 5,000 sq ft - 1 acre (43,560 sq ft): Requires a written E&S Plan to be reviewed and approved by the District. The approved plan should be available on site, implemented and maintained for the duration of construction.

C. 1 acre or more of earth disturbance: Will require a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit. These NPDES permits are reviewed and approved by DEP's NW Regional Office.

- Individual NPDES - projects taking place in special protection watersheds will need an Individual Permit.
- General NPDES - all other projects that meet NPDES criteria but are not in a Special Protection Watershed.
- Also an approved, stamped, signed and dated COPY of the E&S plans must be kept on site for both Individual and General NPDES Permits.

D. Timber Harvest or Road Maintenance Activity:

- Over 5,000 sq ft of earth disturbance will require an E&S Plan to be written and available on site. BMP's need to be installed, implemented and maintained but the E&S plan does not need to be approved by WCCD.
- 25 acres of earth disturbance or more will require an E&S PERMIT to be submitted to the District for review and approval.

Dirt, Gravel, and Low Volume Roads Program

Grant Applications are due November 5, 2021.

Since the creation of the Dirt & Gravel Roads Program (DGR) in 1997, the Warren County Conservation District has funded the improvement of over a hundred work sites in various municipalities in Warren County, totaling over \$6 million spent on local roads. The goal of this program is to create a more environmentally and economically sustainable dirt & gravel roads network in the state of Pennsylvania through education, outreach and project funding.

In Pennsylvania, non-point source pollution is responsible for 88% of all impaired streams. The dust and sediment pollution resulting from the poor maintenance of the more than 27,000 miles of dirt and gravel roads in the Commonwealth has been shown to be a large contributor to this pollution.

For more information about the program and the different practices used you can visit The Penn State Center for Dirt, Gravel, and Low Volume Roads Studies website at <http://www.dirtandgravel.psu.edu/index.html>. Municipalities may contact the Warren County Conservation District Manager, Heather Wilcox for an application package and to schedule a site visit.



Multiple cross pipes on the Stillwater Creek crossing on Stoddard Road proved to be an issue and eventually led to increased flooding. The failing pipes eventually had to be partially removed and the road closed to the public.

After multiple visits and careful evaluation, it was determined that a 50 foot prefabricated bridge structure was the best solution for this crossing. The Stillwater can now freely flow under Stoddard Road.



Manure Management & Nutrient Management Plans

All facilities or properties that have animals that produce manure or apply manure to crop fields and pastures must have a written **Manure Management Plan (MMP)**. This includes livestock and poultry operations, small hobby farms (sheep, goats, llamas, etc.) and horse owners. You can write your own Manure Management Plan and you need to have it available on site. The Warren County Conservation District (WCCD) staff can assist you in writing your plan.

Nutrient Management Plans (NMP) are required for larger operations that have two or more Animal Equivalent Units (AEU's) per acre of suitable land for manure application AND a minimum of eight AEU's. AEU's are the amount of animal body mass present on the operation for 365 days (one year). WCCD staff can assist you with this calculation. NMPs need to be written by a Certified Nutrient Management Plan Writer and reviewed by a Certified Nutrient Management Plan Reviewer.

Manure and Nutrient Management Plans are required by Pennsylvania law and are intended to eliminate the possibility of water contamination. This requirement supports the Pennsylvania State Law Environmental Rights Amendment which states, in part, "The people have a right to clean air, pure water, and to the preservation of the natural, scenic, historic and esthetic values of the environment."

Even if a plan wasn't required, managing manure nutrients is beneficial to animal operations by providing valuable fertilizer to growing crops and building the soil with organic matter. Not only will this improve your soil quality and possibly your crop yield, it could also save money by reducing the need for commercial fertilizer. In short, having a Manure Management Plan for your operation is simply a good idea. For more information on Nutrient and Manure Management Plans, contact Watershed Specialist Jean Gomory at jgomory@wccconservation.net.



Soil: The Food-Growing Factory

Many people may regard soil as simply a nuisance, dirt under their fingernails or on their shoes that needs to be washed off. Soil, however, is more than just dirt. It is a living, thriving ecosystem that is critical to our food supply. Here's a challenge for you; name one food that doesn't come from the soil. The first thing you might think of is beef. Cows don't grow from soil after all; however, what do cows eat? Grass. Where does grass come from? Soil. Without good soil to grow good grass, can we have healthy cows to make good hamburgers? No. Think of some of your favorite foods; I bet you can't name any that don't originate from the soil.

Healthy soil is full of life. The tunneling, ingesting, and excretion of soil by earthworms add nutrients and air space to the soil. Castings (the end result of the earthworm digestive system) contain calcium, magnesium, nitrogen, phosphates, and potash (potassium). It also contains microbes and organisms that help plants absorb nutrients from the soil.

Fungus and bacteria also contribute to healthy soil. Mycorrhizal fungi attach to the roots of plants. The fungi receive energy and nutrients from the roots and the roots receive improved access to water and some nutrients from the soil through the fungi. Bacteria recycles nutrients and water in the soil which improves soil structure. This leads to better water retention which can be a big help during dry years.

All food webs, and all life on earth, is rooted in the soil. Healthy soil leads to healthy plants, and healthy plants lead to a stable food supply.





2021 Conservation Camp Where the Wild Things Are

Come learn about the wild things that live in the water and the trees, in the soil and among the leaves. We will follow the tracks to Where the Wild Things Are. Walk the trails then find some fish, salamanders and the ever-popular macroinvertebrates. You will make a craft that you can take home while you get to know your fellow campers and make some new friends. The dates & age groups are listed below for the different summer camps being held.

- June 15-17, 2021 for children entering 7th-9th grades - Youth Conservation Camp (YCC)***
- July 12-13, 2021 for children entering 5th-6th grades - Children's Nature Camp (CNC III)***
- July 15-16, 2021 for children entering 3rd-4th grades - Children's Nature Camp (CNC II)***
- July 27-28, 2021 for children entering 1st-2nd grades - Children's Nature Camp (CNC I)***
- July 29, 2021 for children entering Kindergarten - Kindergarten Nature Camp (KNC)***

Applications are available online at www.wcconservation.net or at the office. There are potentially scholarships available to offset the cost of camp registration. For more information please call 814-726-1441 or stop in at 4000 Conewango Ave, Warren, PA 16365. **Space is limited so sign up early.**

Self-Guided Activities:

In 2020 we had numerous self guided activities. There was a Wild Rock Walk where you were given hints to find rocks painted with animals on them and facts about the animals on the back. We had two different Trivia Quests, this is a number of candy cane looking pipes strapped to the trees along the trail in which there are questions to answer. We also had an invasive species walk where you could walk the trail and read about different invasive species that are in Warren County.

In 2021 the Warren County Conservation District will be offering some new family oriented self-guided activities at the Hatch Run Trails. To start off the year we have a Tree ID trail set up on Hatch Run Loop. Numbered wooden squares are attached to different trees along the trail. You can match up the number with the tree ID sheet found at the kiosk and learn some facts about that species. We also have a bird scavenger hunt set up on Hemlock Trail and Gardner Road with QR codes on orange paper attached to trees along the trails. Scan the codes with the camera of your cell phone. When you scan the QR codes it will take you to a website that will show you photos of the bird, recordings of the bird's call and other cool information.

We will be having more self guided activities throughout the year. The information for all of the self-guided activities found on the Hatch Run Trails will be located at the Hatch Run Kiosk and on our website at www.wcconservation.net.



Conservation Education Newsletter

Warren County Conservation District
4000 Conewango Avenue

NON-PROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
WARREN, PA
16365
PERMIT NO.

OR CURRENT RESIDENT



Warren County Conservation

Board of Directors

Barry VanOrd , Chairman
Dave Trimpey , Vice Chairman
David Manning, Treasurer
Dave Miller, Past-Chairman
Benjamin Kafferlin, Commissioner
Larry Upton
Cindy Paulmier
Richard Smith, Associate Director

Conservation District Staff

Heather Wilcox, District Manager
Brianna Osborne, District Technician
Jean Gomory, Watershed Specialist
Sherry Moore, Conservation Program Assistant
James Marquis, Hatch Run Conservation Assistant
Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)
Laura Ayers, District Conservationist
USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer,
and lender

Board Meetings are held the third Tuesday of each month, 7:30pm at

4000 Conewango Avenue, Warren, PA

