



COLUMBIA



CONSERVATIONIST

COLUMBIA COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT
702 SAWMILL ROAD, SUITE 103, BLOOMSBURG, PA 17815
570-317-9456 www.columbiaccd.org facebook.com/columbiaccd

2023 ANNUAL REPORT *Issue 26*

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Don Edwards, *Chairman, Farmer Director*
Doug Brown, *Vice-Chairman, Public Director*
Debbie Jarrard, *Farmer Director*
Dennis LeVan, *Farmer Director*
Joan McCarty, *Public Director*
Brian Sokol, *Farmer Director*
Chris Young, *Commissioner Director*

STAFF

Nancy Beyer, *District Manager*
Aaron Eldred, *Roads and Watershed Specialist*
John Esslinger, *Agricultural Conservation Technician*
Abby Frey, *Watershed and Education Specialist*
Beth Marie Gensemer, *Administrative Coordinator*
Gary Rinehimer, *Agricultural Conservation Specialist*
Steven Wanner, *Erosion Control and Compliance Specialist*

ASSOCIATE DIRECTORS

Tonya Boston-Sagar Ed Lease
Jeff Giger Jessica Lehman

Contact Nancy at 570-317-9477 if you are interested in serving as an associate director.

MISSION STATEMENT

To lead the citizens of Columbia County in sustainable use of our shared agricultural and natural resources through partnerships, education, and technical assistance, in order to assure the best quality of life for future generations.

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Workers pour the floor of a manure storage structure funded by a National Fish and Wildlife Foundation grant, Benton Township

DISTRICT NEWS

CONTACT: Nancy Beyer 570-317-9477 nancy.beyer@columbiaccd.org

2023 HIGHLIGHTS

The district completed many conservation projects in 2023 to improve agriculture operations, public roads, erosion control for construction projects, and protect local stream water quality. Several environmental education events, conferences, workshops, field days, and camps were also held.

Staff changes continued in 2023. We welcomed two interns: summer college intern, Gavin McBride, and high school intern Brooke Kelty. Gary Rinehimer joined our team in June, replacing Patrick McCarthy, to cover Ag and Chesapeake Bay work. Owen Kiess also joined the district in June to coordinate the new ACAP program, but left in November. Gary Rinehimer and John Esslinger are administering the ACAP program. We wish all the best to Patrick and Owen. Other staff changes included two weddings and name changes. Abby Sieg is now Abby Frey and Nancy Corbin is now Nancy Beyer.

Gary and his family own Rinehimer Farms and Farm Market in Nescopeck. He has over 35 years of farming experience, worked in the cattle industry, and served as general contractor for construction at his farm. We are happy to have Gary on board!

Thank you to our great staff who work everyday to improve water quality and protect natural resources, whether through their own programs, or as a team effort. Of course we could not do it without support from our Board of Directors, volunteers, and our partners at the local, county, state, and federal levels.



Staff at Water Ed Day, L-R: Aaron Eldred, Nancy Beyer, Abby Frey, Steven Wanner, Gary Rinehimer, Beth Gensemer, Brooke Kelty, and Owen Kiess



Staff at the holiday meeting/party, L-R: Aaron Eldred, Gary Rinehimer, Beth Gensemer, Nancy Beyer, Abby Frey, Steven Wanner, Brooke Kelty, and John Esslinger



Board Directors at the holiday meeting/party, L-R: Brian Sokol, Ed Lease, Jessica Lehman, Jeff Giger, Doug Brown, Denny Levan, Debbie Jarrard, Joan McCarty, Tonya Boston-Sager, and Don Edwards

DISTRICT YEAR-END RECAP

CONTACT: Nancy Beyer 570-317-9477 nancy.beyer@columbiaccd.org

2023 PROJECT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- **500+ staff site visits** throughout Columbia County to assist landowners and farmers
- **\$587,500 of road projects** completed or contracted to reduce stream pollution for **10 municipalities**
- **\$590,000 ACAP** ag improvements, 7 projects
- **1,700 acres** bio nutrient application
- **1,000 acres** cover crops planted; **500 ac** planted green
- Assisted in the completion of **20 REAP applications** totaling over **\$1.02 Million** in tax credits
- **2 Ag projects** for livestock barnyard/manure storage
- **3 cropland conversion** projects for **75 acres**
- **23,500 acres** of BMP verifications
- **21 stream permits** issued for responsible work in our streams; **17 NPDES** permits issued for **870 project acres** with **445 acres** of disturbed land
- **3,200 linear ft** of streambank restored - 5 projects
- **30+ education and outreach programs** reaching thousands; **3 college scholarships**
- **11,000 trees** planted via 10 Million Trees Program
- **6 acres** riparian buffer; **30 acres** pollinators planted
- **40 Spotted Lanternfly traps** distributed

GRANTS RECEIVED

CAP Grants

\$145,000 Nutrient/Sediment Reduction

County EDCDI Grant

\$35,000 Catawissa Twp Debris Removal

DEP Environmental Education

\$5,000 Downspout Planters in Berwick Borough

PACD NPS Mini-Grant

\$2,000 Rain Barrel Workshop at Rohrbach's

Northcentral PA Conservancy

\$36,550 West Side Grove Stream Structures

\$15,500 Shaffer Stream Structure

\$6,000 Bloom Skeet Club (repairs from 2022)

Donations

\$7,300 Envir. Ed. Events and Workshops

\$5,600 Kocher Park: Jacques Weber/Friends of KP

Additional Grant Funds/Project Donations

\$130,000 for various Ag and stream projects

Thank you to our staff, directors, volunteers and partners who collaborate on these projects to promote soil health and water quality!

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE CCCD 2023 AG BANQUET AWARD RECIPIENTS!



The district presented the Broyan Family of Faihopity Farms with the R.J. Campbell Award, Cooperator of the Year. The Broyan's dedication to ag and conservation practices improve water quality, protect natural resources, and create a positive impact on the community and local economy.

Presenting the award to Broyan's Fahopity Farms, L-R: Nancy Beyer, CD Board Chair Don Edwards, Chris Broyan, and Ben Broyan



The district presented Denise Bosworth with the Environmental Education Achievement Award. Denise's commitment to agrieducation to promote agriculture and conservation provide affordable education opportunities including a summer learning series, workshops, and an Ag Camp. Denise also wrote a children's book about life on a farm.

Presenting the award to Denise Bosworth, L-R: Brent Sokol(FFA), CD Education Chair Doug Brown, Denise Bosworth, Katie Dingle (FFA), and Nancy Beyer

AGRICULTURE PROGRAMS AND OPPORTUNITIES

CONTACT: Gary Rinehimer 570-317-9468 gary.rinehimer@columbiaccd.org

ACAP PROGRAM/PROJECTS BEGIN IN 2023 WITH MORE IN 2024

The Agriculture Conservation Assistance Program (ACAP) assists farmers and landowners with funding for the design and construction of ag practices that reduce nutrient and sediment losses from their farms. ACAP is funded through the Clean Streams Fund, administered by the State Conservation Commission (SCC), and delegated to conservation districts for local administration. Project applications are ranked based on SCC criteria to optimize positive impacts:

- Meet Countywide Action Plan goals
- Reduction of nitrogen, phosphorus, or sediment
- Practices must be included in conservation plans
- Projects near surface waters and water supply sources are given priority

ACAP applications are due June 17, 2024. Contact Gary Rinehimer to determine if your project is eligible for funding and for technical assistance with your project application.

2023 ACAP projects included an access road and fencing in Locust Township as well as a Heavy Use Area (HUA) in Roaring Creek Township. Projects planned for 2024 include a HUA and manure storage structure, fencing and off-stream watering, grazing improvements, silvopasture, and grass waterways, totaling \$985,000.



Completed Heavy Use Area with ACAP and CAP funding, Roaring Creek Township

TWILIGHT GRAZING TOUR AT GREENE KITCHEN FARM

The district coordinated a DEP-funded grazing tour in September at Greene Kitchen Farm, Montour Township. Owner, Joshua Greene, guided visitors through his newly-planted silvopasture, which integrates trees and forages in a pasture for the benefit of livestock and vegetation. The silvopasture project included fencing, a watering system, and tree plantings funded by a DEP Countywide Action Plan grant. Joshua shared his vision for the farm, grazing tricks and techniques, and love for what he does.



Joshua Greene and his son, Owen, demonstrate their temporary fencing technique.

CCCD AWARDED GRANT FOR COVER CROP CRIMPING

The district applied for 2023 DEP Growing Greener grant funding to defray the cost of custom cover crop crimping. Columbia County farmers can contact Gary Rinehimer to signup for custom cover crop crimping by experienced operators at a substantial rate reduction. Signups will occur in 2024. Crimping services will be conducted in 2025.

Other grant-funded opportunities for ag landowners:

- Bio nutrient product reimbursement
- CAP grant for nutrient reduction practices
- Cover Crop reimbursement
- Loan equipment: Aerway
- Planting Green reimbursement
- Pollinator reimbursement
- REAP tax credit
- Subsidized crop consultant services

ROAD PROJECTS SAVE TIME, MONEY, & PROTECT WATER RESOURCES!

CONTACT: Aaron Eldred 570-317-9478 aaron.eldred@columbiaccd.org

Purpose: Sediment and aggregate from rural roads have a large impact on our streams. The CCCD receives annual funding available to municipalities through the State Conservation Commission's (SCC) Dirt, Gravel, and Low Volume Road Program (DGLVR). Columbia County municipalities can apply for funding to help rehabilitate public roads that are negatively affecting our local streams!

Eligibility & Training: Projects must meet environmental requirements to be considered for funding. Projects must negatively impact a stream and reduce environmental impacts. Environmentally Sensitive Maintenance (ESM) training is required, and permits, if needed, must be obtained. Training is required and available. Call the District to schedule a site visit and begin the application process!

2023 DGLVR Projects Contracted

Parks Road, Benton Twp (DG)
Phillips Road, Greenwood Twp (DG)
Woodland Drive, Greenwood Twp/
Millville Borough (DG)
Campbell Road, Jackson Twp (DG)
Morrison Road, Mt. Pleasant Twp (DG)
Maple Lane, Sugarloaf Twp (DG)
Queen City Rd, Cleveland Twp (LV)
Hill Road, Fishing Creek Twp (LV)

2023 DGLVR Projects Completed

Creekside Ln - Phase II, Beaver Twp (DG)
Campbell Rd, Cleveland Twp (DG)
Campbell Rd, Franklin Twp (DG)
Mourey Dr, Hemlock Twp (DG)
W. Maple Dr, Main Twp (DG)
Yost Hollow Rd, Briar Ck Twp (LV)
Mountain Rd, Catawissa Twp (LV)

2023 PROJECT HIGHLIGHT— YOST HOLLOW ROAD, BRIAR CREEK TWP. (LV)

Briar Creek Township received funding to replace two 4' diameter pipes that frequently flooded, overtopping the road. The concrete encased, undersized pipes were just downstream of the confluence of Briar Creek, a wild trout stream, and an unnamed tributary to Briar Creek. The force of water exiting the pipes caused scouring of the streambanks and a 4' deep hole. Low Volume Road and DCED funds were used to design and install a 19'-6" wide bottomless concrete arch to replace the existing pipes. The plan also included significant stream restoration—the construction of riffles, pools, streambed and streambanks throughout the new structure to provide passage for aquatic life and to reconnect the upstream and downstream stream segments. The site will see less flooding and sedimentation to Briar Creek and less maintenance for Briar Creek Township.



CREATING BETTER ROADS AND CLEANER STREAMS!

WATERSHED HAPPENINGS

CONTACT: Abby Frey 570-317-9491 abby.frey@columbiaccd.org
CONTACT: Aaron Eldred 570-317-9478 aaron.eldred@columbiaccd.org

DISTRICT STAFF GAIN EXPERIENCE CONSTRUCTING STREAM STRUCTURES

Abby and Aaron are a dynamic watershed specialist team that successfully completed five stream projects in 2023. They leverage funding, coordinate project materials and construction, and physically work on the installations. The district partners with agencies and organizations for design and construction oversight services, including PA Fish and Boat Commission, DEP, Northcentral Pa Conservancy, Trout Unlimited, U.S. Fish and Wildlife, and Keller's Small Stream Solutions.

To maximize the use of available funds, the CCCD utilized its own staff to implement stream projects when partnering organizations were unavailable to complete installation. Contractors were hired to operate heavy equipment, and district staff were the boots on the ground, or in the water, doing the installation work, like drilling and pinning logs with rebar. A huge thank you to the Montour County Conservation District (MCCD) for their staff's help in implementing projects as well. We value our great partnership with MCCD on conservation programs and projects.

A notable stream project of this year was the stabilization of the banks at Kocher Park, the District's public nature park. It was completed at the end of December by U.S. Fish and Wildlife and funded through various public and private sources.



Abby pinning logs with rebar on a section of modified mudsill.



Aaron drilling holes to pin face logs together on a section of modified mudsill.



Before and after images of a section of Fishing Creek in Benton Township. 520 linear feet of modified mudsill and a 50-foot wide buffer were installed this summer.

DISTRICT HOSTS PERMITTING WORKSHOP FOR DEVELOPERS

CONTACT: Steven Wanner 570-317-9469 steven.wanner@columbiaccd.org

On December 13th, the CCCD hosted a workshop for local developers. The goal of the workshop was to review the basics of chapter 102 and 105 regulations and permit requirements associated with construction projects. The district also identified techniques to avoid violations and permit deficiencies. 10 industry professionals from several different companies attended the workshop. Presentation topics included an overview of common deficiencies with permitting, E&S plans and NPDES applications, common issues on 105 general permits, and common E&S and PCSM deficiencies found during inspections. Examples of permit documents and different Best Management Practices (BMPs) were discussed along with maintenance techniques that could save time and project costs. Examples of common BMPs include Rock Construction Entrances, Compost Filter Sock, Erosion Control Blanket, Sediment Basins, Rain Gardens and Infiltration Basins. Attendees were given the opportunity to ask questions and discuss problems they may have had on previous projects in a group setting. If you have any questions on permitting, feel free to contact Steven Wanner.



BMP example: Rock Construction Entrance

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION PROJECT HIGHLIGHT

CONTACT: Abby Frey 570-317-9491 abby.frey@columbiaccd.org

SMALL STEPS TAKEN TOWARDS REACHING BIG GOALS

To help meet sediment and nutrient reduction goals for both the County's Countywide Action Plan (CAP) and Berwick Borough's Pollution Reduction Plan as required by their MS4 permit, Berwick and the CCCD partnered to install downspout planters in Berwick.

The CCCD received \$5,000 through a DEP Environmental Education grant to cover project costs. The Borough maintenance staff are building the planters over the winter months, so that they are ready for installation in Spring 2024. All of their time is being utilized as match towards the grant.

Local businesses and homeowners signed up to receive planters at the November Borough Council meeting where Abby presented information on the project and how downspout planters can help abate stormwater issues. It is estimated that 15 planter boxes will be constructed utilizing grant funds. The hope is that this project will lead to more stormwater reduction projects in the future with other MS4 communities to collectively work on our county reduction goals. Together, many small steps to reduce stormwater pollution will make big impacts toward reaching water quality improvement goals.



Staff members from Berwick Borough's maintenance department construct a downspout planter prototype in December.

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

CONTACT: Abby Frey 570-317-9491 abby.frey@columbiaccd.org



The Envirothon is a hands-on, environmental, problem-solving, competition that provides team building and leadership experiences for students. Each year, high school and middle school students from Columbia, Montour, Northumberland, Snyder and Union counties compete at our Susquehanna Valley Regional Envirothon competitions. The winning high school team from each county goes on to compete at the PA State Envirothon competition. Students are tested on aquatics, forestry, soils, wildlife, and a current topic. The current topic for 2023 was Adapting to a Changing Climate. Abby Frey is now the PACD Representative on the PA State Envirothon Board.

2023 ENVIROTHONS

The Susquehanna Valley Regional High School Envirothon competition was held on April 25th at the Shikellamy State Park Marina. Team winners from each county were Central Columbia, Susquehanna Valley Homeschoolers, Line Mountain, Lewisburg, and Danville. Central Columbia won first place overall. Central finished 18th out of 63 teams at the state event!

The middle school regional competition was on May 9th at the Montour Preserve. Lewisburg Middle School won first place overall. Three of the top five overall teams and three of the four station winners were Columbia County schools!



Photo (above): Central Columbia HS regional winning team, L-R: Kirk Seesholtz (advisor), Rebecca Lehman, Laura Deroba, Thanh Ho, Katie Dingle, Riley Church, and Doug Brown (advisor).

Photo (left): Nancy Beyer and Benton's Team A after giving them their third place medals.

Thank you to our 2023 County Envirothon sponsors:

Briar Creek Association for Watershed Solutions,
Catawissa Creek Restoration Association, Fishing Creek
Watershed Association, Bloomsburg Elks Lodge 436, First
Columbia Bank, Fishing Creek Sportsmen's Association,
Native Creations Landscaping, Roaring Creek Egg Farm,
Roaring Creek Valley Conservation Association,
Sons of the American Legion Post 273

YEAR - ROUND EDUCATION AND FUN

Staff stayed busy this year providing education and outreach all year long. Spring brought many annual events like Women in Ag, Envirothons, the plant sale, Southern's First Grade Nature Day, plus additional events like the Rain Barrel Workshop at Rohrbach's. The summer months were busy with various camps, workshops, and even lessons at local Vacation Bible Schools for kids, plus some fun for adults, like a Soil Health Field Day, and fun for the whole family at the 2nd Annual Susquehanna Valley Watershed Festival. Fall included our annual Water Ed Day at Briar Creek Lake Park for over 275 8th graders with the help of almost 50 volunteers. Additionally, Abby gave a lesson on soils to all 150 fourth graders at Central Columbia Elementary School to help teachers implement the new Meaningful Watershed Educational Experience curriculum. Steven, Abby, John and Gary all held workshops on various topics during the cold winter months to close out a full 2023 education schedule.

Students utilizing the stream table with Dr. Jen Whisner at Water Ed Day.



UPCOMING ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION & OUTREACH

CONTACT: Beth Gensemer 570-317-9456 beth.gensemer@columbiaccd.org

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR 2023 SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS!



Rebecca Lehman
Central Columbia
Edgar Fenstermacher Scholarship



Maggie Stauder
Southern Columbia
Lavere McClure Scholarship



Heather Cecco
Southern Columbia
Maryruth Wagner Scholarship

2024 SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS ARE DUE APRIL 12, 2024

Edgar Fenstermacher Scholarship - \$500

Senior pursuing a degree in agriculture

Lavere McClure Scholarship - \$500

Senior pursuing a degree in education focused on ag or science

Maryruth Wagner Scholarship - \$500

Senior pursuing a degree in environmental/natural sciences

Conservation Leadership School - 2 \$300

Students that completed 9th grade. One week session on natural resource issues, conservation, and wildlife. Two \$300 scholarships toward tuition - sign up with a friend!

ANNUAL EARTH DAY POSTER CONTEST—TWO STATE WINNERS FROM COLUMBIA CO.



PA state winner for K-1st
Grades, Aiden German,
German Homeschool



PA state winner for 7th—9th
Grades, Olivia Greene,
Greenestar Academy

The annual Earth Day Poster Contest promotes using art and science to learn about watersheds. The 2023 theme was One Water. Congratulations to Aiden German (Kindergarten) and Olivia Greene (9th Grade) who both won first place at the state level!

2024 EARTH DAY POSTER CONTEST

Deadline: April 26, 2024

Theme: May the Forest be with You



Thank you to Farmer Moofy for continued sponsorship of cash prizes and corn certificates!

LOCAL EVENTS SCHEDULED

CONTACT: Beth Gensemer 570-317-9456 beth.gensemer@columbiaccd.org

REALTORS WORKSHOP

for permit and development requirements

March 13, 2024

9:00 - 10:00 AM

Ag Services Building, Lower Level
702 Sawmill Road, Bloomsburg

RSVP by March 6 to
steven.wanner@columbiaccd.org

Workshop Highlights:

- Regulations and permits pertaining to work the buyer/seller may wish to have done around streams and wetlands
- Maintenance requirements of stormwater practices
- How landscaping and curb appeal affect stormwater runoff



WOMEN IN AGRICULTURE AND CONSERVATION



MARCH 20, 2024 • 9:00AM - 2:30PM

St. Luke Lutheran Church

9 St. Luke's Way, Bloomsburg

Registration/Breakfast at 8:30am

- Farm Highlight: Folks Butterfly Farm
 - Pollinator activity during lunch
- Agroforestry's 5 practices to enhance herd health
- Farm succession and legal considerations Part II
- Ag project highlight and various options for Columbia County farmers

*\$10 Registration - Please RSVP by March 11th
at 570-317-9456*

Light Breakfast and Hot Lunch

**Thank you to our sponsors: Journey Bank and
Horizon Farm Credit**



**March 30th, 2024
at Kocher Park**

Located off S.R. 487 near Lightstreet

10:00am - 2:00pm

**GOOD WATER
=
GOOD FISH**

What better way to celebrate PA trout season than
with some fishing, food, and family fun?!?

Grab a youth and bring them on out for
Mentored Youth Day!



COLUMBIA COUNTY
CONSERVATION DISTRICT



**FISHING CREEK SPORTSMAN'S
ASSOCIATION**

FCWA
FISHING CREEK WATERSHED ASSOCIATION

*Fishing Licenses and Trout Permits required for all
adults/mentors

*All youth (under 16) must possess a Mentored Youth Fishing
Permit (free) OR a Voluntary Youth Fishing License (\$2.97)
from the PA Fish and Boat Commission

ANNUAL AG BANQUET

THURSDAY, APRIL 11, 2024 @ 6:00PM

Join us to celebrate the farming community at
the Columbia - Montour Vo-Tech High School

.....
Call the CCCD to purchase your tickets

\$20/ticket

Please RSVP by March 25

570-317-9456
.....



It is a fun night of great food, friends, door prizes,
award recognitions, and entertainment!



COLUMBIA COUNTY
CONSERVATION DISTRICT





Join us in celebrating the 75th anniversary of the Conservation District! Keep an eye out for special events throughout 2024 to highlight conservation accomplishments, volunteers, staff, directors, and projects over the past 75 years.

2024 NATIVE PLANT & TREE SEEDLING SALE NOW IN PROGRESS!

Scan the QR code to download a copy of the 2024 Catalog and the 2024 Order Form.

Order Deadline:
Return order forms and payment to the CCCD by **February 29th!**

If you don't have access to a computer or printer, a copy of the order form will be in the Press Enterprise in early February. It will run on a Thursday and the following Saturday.



Why NATIVES:

- Native plants require less maintenance like fertilizers, pesticides or watering.
- Native plants are critical to pollinators and crop production.
- We offer native varieties not typically available at retail stores and nurseries.
- Non-native evergreen and fruit trees are also available.

Pre-Order Deadline: February 29th
Last name orders A-L pickup: May 2nd
Last name orders M-Z pickup: May 3rd
Remaining Preorders + Public Sale: May 4th

Sale proceeds support environmental education in Columbia County!

COLUMBIA CONSERVATIONIST
Columbia County Conservation District
702 Sawmill Road, Suite 103
Bloomsburg, PA 17815

NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION
U.S.POSTAGE PAID
BLOOMSBURG, PA 17815
PERMIT No. 147

CURRENT RESIDENT OR



Frank W. Kocher Memorial Park

Enjoy Kocher Park & Johnson Flats - your local creekside nature experience!
1519 State Route 487 Orangeville, PA



Photo: Kids exploring macroinvertebrates at Outdoor Adventure Camp held at Kocher Park in June.

The conservation buffer projects at Kocher Park and Johnson Flats, including the removal of invasive species, planting of pollinator meadows, native trees and shrubs were completed this summer. Streambank stabilization work was completed at the end of December.

Check our website or Facebook for upcoming events

March: Good Water = Good Fish

June: Fish 'n' Fun

June-July: Summer Day Camps

Summer/Fall: Community Hikes

Be a Friend of Kocher Park!

*A Leave No Trace park
maintained by volunteers, donations, and grants*