



# **Cameron County Conservation District**

## **2012**

# **Annual Report**



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# Conservation Education

## Who We Are

The Cameron County Conservation District (District) has been waving the Conservation Flag in this small county for 45 years. We were one of the last counties to establish a "Soil & Water" Conservation District. In 1967, the County Commissioners instituted what is today known as the Cameron

County Conservation District. With very humble beginnings and a \$445 annual budget, the District was operated from a private home. In the 1980s the Commissioners granted the District an office in the belfry of the Court House. The office has moved several times, but has been located at

the Courthouse for 10 years. Our mission remains the same as it was back in 1967 **"To prevent soil erosion, assist in flood control, protect desirable wildlife and save other resources, thereby preserving the tax base."**

## Educational Programs - For One and All

The Cameron County Conservation District (District) annually strives to spread conservation education to all walks of life and endeavors to make it a priority. Its efforts have reached from Pre-school students to those "past middle age."

The District received a grant from the Sinnemahoning Stakeholders' Committee to test springs and wells in the county and to offer educational meetings to land owners to explain their results.

### 2012 Education Programs:

Pre-school~ Program "Looking at Leaves", Spiders

1<sup>st</sup> grade-My Growing Tree, Pumpkin Circle, "Bag in the Wing" recycling

book and made "sit-upons" from tablecloths and recycled plastic grocery bags.

2<sup>nd</sup> Grade- Diary of a Spider, Vertebrates

3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Grades-Enviroscape - Hands on Point & Non-Point pollution demonstration

3<sup>rd</sup> Grade-Trout in the Classroom, 4, 5 & 6-Wild about Nature Field Day Stations; Owls, Wood Products, Native & Invasive Plants, Maggot Art and Nature Hike. "Who Grew My Soup?"; "From Soil to Spoon,"

7 & 8- H2O Olympics

9-12 -Envirothon; Soils and Land use Lesson, Bird & Frog calls Identifier,



Macroinvertebrate specimens

District Manager, Jan Hampton, served as an advisor for a Senior Project-Building Bluebird Houses and Placing them in appropriate locations.

For Educators: Grant for "Growing Up Wild" teacher workshop.

For the Community: Wrote and received several Grants to enhance a wetlands area into an Outdoor Classroom, partnering with the School District and the Cameron County Outdoor Youth Activities group.

For the Community-Grant for a Rain Barrel workshop.

## Wild Envirothon & Pennsylvania State Envirothon

The Cameron County Conservation District continued partnering with McKean County Conservation District to host the "Wild Envirothon". The "Wild Envirothon" Study Day was held at the Keating Sportsman's Club in McKean County. Various federal, state and county agencies assisting with topics students would be tested on the following week at the actual Envirothon.

The Screaming Eagles team of Paul Etchepare, Austin Smoker, Nate

Sestina, Taylor Gillette and Erin Garrigan won for the Cameron County High School. All of them were freshmen. The District received donations for food and T-shirts from John Heverly, Frog Hampton and Embassy Powdered Metals. The Screaming Eagles represented the school district at the PA Envirothon in Johnstown. It was a new, yet unique experience for them and the District hopes they will continued competing throughout their high school career.

District Manager & PA Envirothon Advisory Board Member, Jan Hampton, assisted with the state event. She was responsible for contacting Tuesday volunteers with their assignments, maps, and directions. "Everybody showed up and did an excellent job!" said Hampton. She also assisted at the state event with Registration, Traveling Judge circuit tour, certificates, Advisor Forum and any other general duty that needed done as well.



## The XXV Canon Envirothon

I want to thank the Cameron County Conservation District Board of Directors for allowing me to participate as a volunteer at the 2012 Canon Envirothon. It was an experience of a lifetime! There were 44 states and 9 Provinces that participated. It was won by a very bright team from Missouri. Along with the Testing Stations and Oral Component Competition, the Students and Advisors were treated to a PA Education Day and a trip to Knoebels. Several



field trips were offered to adults such as kayaking and Gettysburg. A daily newspaper was published featuring weather, PA Facts and the day's itinerary. I assisted in various ways: filling the 600 "Goody Bags" with many items donated by PA companies. The neat part was watching the kids' delight with all the treats inside. I also was a Team Buddy on the testing day, then I helped distribute lunches and water. This week-long event was so well planned and ran so incredibly smoothly

that it truly was a JOY to be there. Susquehanna University is a gorgeous campus and just right for the Canon Envirothon. The Co-Chairs were Lorelle Steach & Leigh Beamesderfer, who had everything running like a well-oiled ship! Many, many volunteers and the PA Advisory Board and DEP personnel completed their tasks efficiently and effectively. We have 33 PA conservation districts, 17 different environmental agencies, and numerous teachers/professors/principals/Environmental Educators – current & retired.

~Jan Hampton, District Manager

## Cameron County School District's Outdoor Classroom and Nature Trail

A dream is a wish your heart makes. For several years numerous parties have thought about utilizing the wetland area located along Wheaton Hollow and the Driftwood Branch of Sinnemahoning Creek for educational purposes. There were several roadblocks that the School District, the Cameron County Conservation District and the Cameron County Outdoor Youth Activities directors took on; bite by bite, like eating an elephant! Many grants were received to tackle the "TO DO" List.

Through these grants stairs were built over the dike and the land was cleared of old cement slabs and rubbish. An access point was constructed on the Driftwood Branch of the Sinnemahoning. The committee is negotiating the design and construction of five interpretive signs for the area: Wetlands, Birds, Forestry, Invasive Species and Aquatics. Picnic tables are being constructed as part of a



Local Contractor, Mark Johnson, constructed stairs to the river access.

Senior Project. A pavilion plan is in the works.

Soon after the project was a definite reality, the school board approved honoring Gary Dubler at this site. The Conservation District will also facilitate two teacher workshops entitled: "Growing Up Wild" & "Wonders of Wetlands" to offer hands-on instruction for students to discover

the treasures that are right in front of them.

## Headwaters Conservation Partnership

The Headwaters Conservation Partnership (Partnership) was founded in spring 2012. The Partnership is comprised of major corporations, small business and individuals to create a diverse conservation funding program. The Partnership is funded by The Headwaters Charitable Trust and the Headwaters Resource

Conservation and Development Council.

The first grant round was held in fall 2012 with six north central PA county's receiving funds for seven separate projects. A total of \$15,375 grant fund were awarded, which matched over \$196,000 is total project expenses.

The Cameron County Conservation

District was awarded \$1,237.50 to match \$19,887.50 of existing funds for the outdoor classroom and nature trail project at the Cameron County School District.



# Watershed Restoration

## Streambank Restoration

The Cameron County Conservation District (District) was very busy in 2012 with streambank stabilization and fish habitat enhancement projects. Five sites were completed this year. The goal of these projects is to protect streambanks from erosion, enhance fish habitat, all while making it aesthetically pleasing.

The Benedict Stabilization is located in Plank Road Hollow. Due to flooding that occurred in 2011 the stream was very close (2-3 feet) to the Benedict household caused by major erosion. There was a worry that the next flood may destroy the house. The township road is also very close to the stream as well and had eroded as well. Bill Kcenitch of DEP assisted with this project to alleviate the problems. There is very little recreational value available on Plank Road Hollow, so it was determined that the best and easiest route to fixing the problem was to use rip rap. Large rock was placed on both sides of the stream for approximately 100 feet. This project was funded by DEP Emergency Funds.

In 2011 the District partnered with GKN on a project to fix their water intake. The cooling water intake for GKN had changed over the years so that it was necessary for them to go into the stream with heavy equipment to regrade the stream so that flowing water would enter their intake pipe. It was determined that not only was this not good for the stream but it was also very costly to GKN. The District installed a log crossvane across the 75 foot span

of Sinnemahoning Portage Creek in 2011. The project was given a year to ensure that things stayed the same and no damage could occur. This was important because this was a very risky structure for the size of stream. The structure faired very well but some very minor repairs were necessary. In 2012 with the minor repair finished it was time to run an 8" PVC pipe from the existing intake to the new location which is the downstream scour hole of the log crossvane. The pipe was laid along the stream and then attached to the arm of the crossvane. The intake is working very well and GKN is very happy as is the District because this is much better for the stream. This project was funded by the Sinnemahoning Stakeholders Committee of Headwaters RC&D.

The Kopp Stabilization was completed on the Sinnemahoning Portage Creek. This is downstream of the Lucky 7 Stabilization that was completed in 2011. The Kopp bank was 300 feet long and a 8-10 feet high shear bank that was severely eroded. A modified mudsill cribwall was installed along the eroded bank. Below the Kopp project was a railroad bridge that was very skewed from the normal flow of the stream. Several large trees and other debris had become clogged up between one of the bridge abutments and the streambank. This debris was removed to alleviate the threat of flooding and damage. This project was also funded by the Sinnemahoning Stakeholders Committee of Headwaters RC&D.

The Emporium Water

Company Stabilization was completed in Sinnemahoning Portage Creek as well. In 2011 there was a water main break where the main pipe feeding the entire town of Emporium had broken because of streambank erosion. In 2011 the water company fixed the water

main but the pipe was still exposed and there was a threat that a break could happen again. The water main is located along an old spoil dike that is on the lower end of Portage Creek. Because of the complexities of the situation it was

determined that the best route was to install large riprap around the water main and upstream and downstream of it to protect it. The District provided the funding for the cost of the stone and the water company used their own equipment and labor to repair the problem. This project was funded by the Sinnemahoning Stakeholders Committee of Headwaters RC&D.

The Embassy Streambank Stabilization is located in the Driftwood Branch of Sinnemahoning Creek. This site was approximately 400 feet long and 5-6 feet high with a severely eroded streambank. The District installed a modified mudsill cribwall along roughly 300 feet of the streambank. Upstream of the mudsill, rip rap was installed for further protection for approximately 100 feet. This project was funded by the Sinnemahoning Stakeholders Committee of Headwaters RC&D.

Not as many sites as usual were completed in 2012 though a lot was still accomplished. Roughly 1000 feet of streambank was stabilized with high quality habitat. Since 2006 the District has stabilized over 5 miles of stream in Cameron County. The District continues to do this in a low cost way and will continue to do so as long as funding is available.



Kobb Restoration Site



GKN Crossvane and Intake



## Sterling Run Restoration

The Sterling Run AMD work is finally taking a step in the right direction. Construction of the May Hollow 49 (MAYH49) site was completed in November of this year. This was an old deep mine that was the main contributor of acid loading to the May Hollow Drainage. Two vertical flow ponds and a surface flow wetland were constructed to treat the mine water. The system is online and is working beautifully. This project was funded in part by Headwaters RC&D and the Sinnemahoning Stakeholders Committee and PA Fish and Boat Commission.

The Landfill AMD Treatment System was started in 2012 and will finish winter of 2013. This is the location of the old County Dump. The dump just happened to be located in an old stripmine. Not only is there AMD issues, but also garbage leachate. Two small systems will be constructed to treat this water. Both systems are identical but because of topography it was not feasible to treat all the water into one



May Hollow 49

system. Because when the landfill was capped, there was thousands of tons of limestone added to the fill, this allows the

water that leaches

out to come out at a very high pH. What happens then is the water has a good pH and the iron drops out almost immediately but not completely. Collection ditches will collect the leachate and direct it into a precipitation basin where the iron will settle out. The water will then flow through a surface flow wetland to cleanup any remaining metals and garbage leachate. This project was funded through DEP Growing Greener County Environmental Initiative.

Two other AMD remediation projects are ready for 2013. The FIN32/33 site is the largest contributor of AMD to the Sterling Run drainage. This site will be remediated with 4 vertical flow wetlands, a precipitation basin and a surface flow wetland. The other AMD site is the PORT14 site which is the last remaining AMD entering Portable Run. This site will use 2 vertical flow wetlands and a surface flow wetland. These 2 sites are also funded under the

DEP Growing Greener County Environmental Initiative at a cost of nearly \$700,000. With the completion of all this AMD remediation the future of the Sterling Run Watershed is looking very good.

With the settlement over the Norfolk Southern sodium hydroxide (NaOH) spill in 2008 the Sinnemahoning Stakeholders Committee of Headwaters RC&D has had 5 rounds of funding in 5 years. The Committee just recently had the 5<sup>th</sup> round where \$150,000 was given out. In over 5 years we \$700,000 dollars in grants have been awarded and this money has helped leverage several million dollars. Projects funded include AMD restoration, streambank stabilization/fish habitat enhancement, dump cleanup, education, land acquisition, assessment, and trail development.

It has been a successful year in Cameron County. A lot of work is slated for 2013. On top of the other AMD remediation projects there is also roughly \$150,000 of streambank work slated for the upcoming year. So the District will be VERY busy in 2013 with over \$950,000 of work to be completed. The District is happy to be able to do such great work and hope to continue to do so for many years to come.

## Sinnemahoning Invasive Plant Management Area

The Sinnemahoning Invasive Plant Management Area (SIPMA), one of the few Cooperative Weed Management Areas in the Mid-Atlantic, was busy in 2012. This program is mostly funded by a grant from the US Forest Service.

### Project Work:

Invasive plant treatments funded by the US Forest Service were located in Potter and southeastern Cameron County. About 10 miles of creek (the First Fork and Freeman Run, as well as some miscellaneous upland sites) were sprayed for Japanese knotweed in Potter County.

About two miles of creek side sprayed for Oriental bittersweet. SIPMA began working on treating the tree of heaven populations in Driftwood, and there is a small goatsrue population on Hwy 120 near Driftwood that was hand pulled.

SIPMA partners also worked on controlling Japanese knotweed, glossy buckthorn, and mile-a-minute vine.

### Outreach:

The SIPMA partners attended meetings in March, June, October and December. The coordinator submitted articles about invasive plants to two local papers and the Northern Central Forest Landowners Association



newsletter.

A local artist designed a logo for the SIPMA.

Electronic and visual outreach projects were to improve the SIPMA website, and create a SIPMA Facebook page. SIPMA also created educational posters, and put them and brochures on display at Sinnemahoning State Park, Elk Visitor Center, Sizerville State Park, and Susquehannock, and Elk State Forest Offices.

The SIPMA coordinator developed outreach materials for a booth at Weekend in the Wilds, and gave a short presentation at the Cameron County Dirt & Gravel Roads workshop.

## Bucktail Watershed Association

In March, the annual Driftwood Branch stream cleanup, prior to the annual canoe / kayak race, was held in partnership with other local entities. In March and April, pre-emergent herbicide was applied by Vegetation Managers Inc. to mile a minute (MAM) vine on the Gerg and Weir properties. This work was ongoing into August. In July, the BWA staffed a booth at the Arts Fest, and outreach included crayfish races. Over the summer, one interpretive sign on the rail trail and four watershed signs, along major roads entering the watershed were erected. Grants from the Mee Foundation, Growing Greener, Sinnemahoning Stakeholders Committee, and the Western PA

Conservancy were applied for to work on mile-a-minute and Japanese knotweed control.

In the early fall, knotweed control efforts included 170 cooperative landowners in Potter and Cameron Counties. Knotweed work was done from the village of Cameron upstream into the Driftwood Branch headwaters and tributaries (Portage Branch, Four Mile Run, Cook's Run, Clear Creek and West Creek) and included some 40 miles of stream bank.

Concerning stream monitoring, Board member Stan Hastings gathered data at 40 to 60 points from various streams in the watershed. The Susquhanna River Basin Commission now has four continuous monitoring stations in Hunts Run, West Cr.,



Portage Cr., and Hicks Run. It is hoped that yet another will be established in Sterling Run.

The BWA partnered with the Cameron County School District, Cameron County Conservation

District and Cameron County Outdoor Youth Activities, utilizing a grant from the Mee Foundation, to establish a nature trail, stream access, signage, picnic tables, and a gazebo in honor of Gary Dubler, with work now in progress.

Finally, "Driftwoodstock", a BWA outreach event, was held in Aug. with 40 to 50 attendees. Future endeavors of this type will need to be fine-tuned to hopefully achieve our desired goals of more watershed awareness and the recruitment of new BWA participants.

# Agricultural Conservation

## 9th Annual Agriculture Producers' Meeting

The Cameron County Conservation District (District) hosted the 9th Annual Agriculture Producers' Meeting in February. The District partnered with the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), the Farm Service Agency (FSA), and the State Conservation Commission - Nutrient Management Program (SCC). This year the District was able to provide manure sample kits and soil sample kits to participants who were interested from the local Penn State Extension Office in Emporium.

LouAnn Swope, NRCS, provided an update on NRCS's Conservation Planning Services.

Under Chapter 102, the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), requires an Agriculture Erosion and Sediment Control Plan (Ag. E&S) to be written for operations that plow, till or have disturbance (i.e. animal heavy use areas) areas that total 5,000 sq. ft. or more. A conservation plan can meet many of the Ag. E&S requirements, though it is up to the operator to ensure they ask for them to be included in their conservation plan. The District encouraged operators to review their plans and determine if the plan need updated or added to.

Jamie Ulrich from the SCC, provided an update on the Resource Enhancement and Protection (REAP) Program. REAP is a program that allows operators and business to apply for tax credits in exchange for Best

Management Practices, on agricultural operations that will enhance farm production and conserve natural resources. Ulrich also cover the proper procedure for taking a manure sample.

Dave Stratton, FSA, provided an agency update on Farm Service programs. The meeting concluded with a networking sessions between farmers and agencies to speak one on one regarding technical and financial assistance for those interested.



## NRCS - Program Implementation

The Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) partnered with three operations in Cameron County in 2012 to improve their efficiency, natural resource impacts and animal well being.

The Little Red Barn Farm improved fencing for the second part of their grazing system for their alpaca farm.

The  
Lyon



*Little Red Barn Farm -  
Fencing Project*

Family Farm completed work on their grazing operation for animal trails and walkway.

The Grovanz Farm completed work on watering system improvements, that include a new spring development, two new watering areas, a new underground outlet to an existing pond. The water system improvements also greatly reduced water runoff to an access road that was upgraded and stabilized.

Overall these projects have improved the operations efficiency and will help



*Lyon - Lane  
Improvements*

reduce sediment impacts on natural resources.

The Cameron County Conservation District would like to thank NRCS District Conservationist, LouAnn Swope, and the three farms for their investments in the county.



*Grovanz Stabilized Access Road*



## Manure Management Workshop

The Cameron County Conservation District (District) and the Elk County Conservation District (ECCD) partnered with the Pennsylvania Association of Conservation District and the Department of Environmental Protection to host a workshop on the revised Manure Management Manual



*Participants working on their manure management plans.*

which went into effect in October 2011.

The revisions dictated what is required in a manure management plan.

A plan is required for any operation using or generating manure. The workshop cover the manual revisions, Chapter 102 updates and the PA One Stop website to create

maps. The workshops goal was to allow participants to develop a plan while at the workshop with the assistance with presenters.

Jamie Ulrich from the State Conservation Commission, presented on the manure management manual and the creation of a management plan. Steve Putt, ECCD District manager, covered the Chapter 102 session and Kate Morgan, District Conservation Resource Technician covered the PA One Stop Program.

## 15th Annual Northwest PA Grazing Conference

The Cameron County Conservation District (District) continued to support the Northwest PA Grazing Conference by sponsoring interested Cameron County farmers to attend the conference. The District sponsored



*Participants exploring the vendor room.*

two farmers who both are long time beef grazers.

2012 marked the 15th conference which focused on "The Nature of Grazing." The keynote speakers included Ray Archuleta

and Troy Bishop. Archuleta is a NRCS Agronomist from Greensboro, NC. Bishop is a 25 year veteran of grazing bringing an everyday practical approach from his New York State operation.



# Erosion and Sediment Control & Dam Safety and Waterway Management

## Chapter 102

2012 was the fourth year the Cameron County Conservation District (District) held the Chapter 102 Level Two delegation. There was a slight drop in plan reviews this year, but this also marked a drop in non-compliance sites. The District received one NPDES permit, which is average for rural Cameron County.

The District partnered with Potter and Tioga County

Conservation District's to host an ACF Environmental - Geosynthetics for Sediment Control, Erosion Prevention and Stormwater Management training in January. The workshop provided a great introduction to Best Management Practices for large and small earth disturbance projects and storm water management.

## Chapter 105

The Cameron County Conservation District (District) has held the Chapter 105 delegation since 2009. In summer 2012 DEP implemented a Permit Decision Guarantee (PGD) Policy that affected the timeline District's and DEP use to review Chapter 105 permits.

The PGD sets timelines for permit reviews, but allows strict completeness requirements for permit submissions, which makes the review process more streamlined and allowing for a quick response on permit decisions.

The District saw a lower number of general permits in 2012, similar to the

|                                  |             |
|----------------------------------|-------------|
| Training Events                  | 4           |
| Event Participants               | 103         |
| Technical Assistance             | 27          |
| Media                            | 3           |
| Initial Plan Reviews             | 15          |
| Follow-up Plan Reviews           | 18          |
| Project Acres                    | 1,457       |
| Disturbed Acres                  | 11          |
| Plan Review Fees Collected       | \$ 1,650.00 |
| NPDES Fees Collected             | \$ 500.00   |
| GP2                              | 1           |
| GP3                              | 3           |
| GP4                              | 1           |
| GP5                              | 3           |
| GP7                              | 3           |
| GP8                              | 2           |
| Complaints Delegated / Inspected | 10          |
| Sites Inspected                  | 29          |
| Total Inspections                | 39          |

trend seen in Chapter 102 plan reviews.

Even with the review process changes the District feels that the Chapter 105 delegation is an important service to offer Cameron County.

## Dirt and Gravel Roads

### Dirt and Gravel Roads - Environmental Sensitive Maintenance

The Cameron County Conservation District and the Elk County Conservation District partnered with the Center for Dirt and Gravel Roads Studies to present a two day Environmental Sensitive Maintenance Training in Emporium. The training course is specifically designed for anyone responsible for maintaining unpaved roads. It focused on simple and effective

techniques to implement long-term solutions for maintenance and pollution problems stemming from unpaved roads.

Attendees included township supervisors, road masters, and DCNR forest personnel. Thirteen chapters are presented ranging from "natural system" influences to driving surface aggregate. Instructors from the Center share real world experience and are willing to share what has worked



Dave Creamer, DGR Instructor

and hasn't worked for them. Each participant is provided with a packet of materials to take home as a reference guide.

Tanya Meyer, Sinnemohoning Invasive Plant Management Area coordinator provided a short presentation on common invasive species found on roadsides, riparian areas and spoil piles. She also provided attendees with materials on plant management and treatment methods.



## Cooperating Agencies

### **USDA, Farm Service Agency**

Dave Stratton  
103 Market Street  
Coudersport, PA 16915  
814-274-8411 Ext. 104

### **USDA / NRCS**

Lou Ann Swope  
478 Jeffers Street  
Dubois, PA 15801  
814-375-2125 Ext. 113

### **PA Fish & Boat Commission**

Bill Crisp  
RD # 1 Box 238  
Emporium, PA 15834  
814-486-2657

### **PA Game Commission**

Colleen Shannon - Land Manager  
RR # 2 Box 538A  
Grampian, PA 16838  
877-887-7674

### **Headwaters RC&D Council**

Matt Marusiak, Chairman  
109 North Brady Street, 2nd Floor  
Dubois, PA 15801  
814-503-8653

### **Cameron County Outdoor Youth Activities**

Don Bickford  
174 Nickler Road  
Emporium, PA 15834  
814-598-0381

### **DEP**

Bill Kahler  
208 West Third Street, Suite 101  
Williamsport, PA 17701  
570-327-3782

### **DCNR, Bureau of Forestry**

Toby Herzing  
258 Sizerville Road  
Emporium, PA 15834  
814-486-3353

### **Penn State Cooperative Extension**

Don Tanner  
P. O. Box 1504  
Smethport, PA 16749  
814-887-5613

### **SIPMA**

Tanya Meyer, Coordinator  
P.O. Box 123  
Emporium, PA 15834  
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### **Bucktail Watershed Association**

Steve VanEerden, Chair  
P.O. Box 123  
Emporium, PA 15834  
bucktailwatershed@yahoo.com

### **Cameron County Commissioners**

Phil Jones, Glen Fiebig, Jim Thomas  
20 East Fifth Street  
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