

2008 Annual Report

Chester County Conservation District

"Sharpening the Pencil"

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MANAGER'S MESSAGE

DAN GREIG

Like so many other organizations, we distribute pencils at public events to advertise District contact information. The pencil is green and the imprint states, "Conservation is a good investment." If you look at it closely, you will see that it is made of discarded United States currency that has been recycled into an enjoyable promotion. These days, no one can afford to waste money – old and discarded vs. crisp and new. Conservation is a great investment on many levels – it has financial benefits for your business and operation, and it ensures that our natural resources are present to pay out future dividends. That is the entire reason why conservation districts were created. The crisis of the Dust Bowl in the 1930s made it clear that we could not live without the conservation of our soil and water. Today, we face a crisis of economics. As surely as we made it through the Dust Bowl, we will make it through this as well. In 2008, the Chester County Conservation District (CCCD) concentrated on an internal review of services and operations to meet the challenges of reduced budgets and lost funding opportunities. The goal was to create a strategy to conserve staff time and resources, yet provide necessary services in the urban, agriculture and watershed communities. We sharpened our pencil and examined opportunities to rethink, reduce, reuse, and recycle. This one-page annual report is our attempt to conserve resources and explore new ways to advertise and implement our services. If you would like more information on our projects and services, please visit the newly redesigned website (see Administration Team). It is bigger, better, and brighter providing visitors with program information, CCCD forms and document downloads, links to other websites, and the latest news from the Chester County Conservation District.

ADMINISTRATION TEAM - In October we launched a new look to our website www.chesco.org/conservation.

The redesign provides a colorful, informational, and organized user-friendly electronic environment. The website is an economic benefit to the District by reducing fax machine use, staff time, and mailing costs with its direct document downloads. Maureen Ford, Administrative Support, spearheaded a staff committee to gather the information while working with the county webmaster in design, set up, and implementation. It took a year to create and sharpen the redesign, but we knew a good website benefits a tight budget and the bottom line. In addition, the Administrative Team welcomed Michelle Burkhart as General Clerk for administrative support.

URBAN TEAM - We could get a sense of the economy status by the number of erosion and sediment control plans that were submitted for review in 2008. By mid-year fewer plans were submitted; however, the year end number of on-site inspections was higher than in previous years. The number of residential submissions was reduced, but supplemented by commercial and gas utility line expansion plans. These pipeline meetings and plan reviews obligated three staff members, including a review by the District Manager. The 2008 team accomplishments remained impressive with the falling market: 542 plan reviews completed, 175 NPDES permits processed, 101 complaints addressed, and, most impressive of all, 1553 on-site inspections completed. Also, the Dirt and Gravel Road program successfully completed a project that improved .75 miles on Mt. Olivet Road in Franklin Township. In addition, the Urban Team welcomed the return of Joseph S. Sofranko as an Urban Resource Conservationist. He possessed a wealth of conservation information and knowledge of municipal government operations. His previous experience with the District minimized new employee training, thus enabling CCCD to maintain productivity with no serious backlog due to the new focus on energy utility transmission line right-of-ways.


AGRICULTURAL TEAM - The agricultural community was also feeling the economic squeeze, particularly with fluctuating fuel costs. In response, farmers were increasingly adopting strategies, such as no-till, that are fuel efficient and profitable. In 2008, the popularity of the District's no-till equipment program increased substantially with a full season of rentals. A total of 58 Amish and English farmers used the no-till equipment on 719 acres. The District partnered with the Brandywine Valley Association to purchase a second horse drawn no-till corn planter for use in the Honey Brook area, located in the upper Brandywine watershed. Other accomplishments included 29 new conservation plans written for farms entering the Agricultural Land Preservation (ALP) program and 77 best management practices (BMP) installed on farms in the ALP program. In the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), four wastewater collection projects were completed on mushroom operations. In the Red/White Clay PL566 program, five projects were completed and another four were initiated. Unfortunately, 17 contracts to install BMPs were lost due to expired agreements and the elimination

of federal funding for the PL566 program. In addition, the Agricultural Team welcomed Chadd Sober as an Agriculture Resource Conservationist with responsibilities in nutrient management.

WATERSHED TEAM - The Crabby Creek restoration, with funding from William Penn Foundation and PADEP Growing Greener II, was completed with great success. The CCCD and the Valley Creek Restoration Partnership completed 1450 feet of restoration on Crabby Creek in Tredyffrin Township by creating an entirely new stream channel. In addition, four urban stormwater BMPs will be installed in the creek headwaters to control volume and runoff, and a toolkit was published to help other watershed organizations accomplish urban stream restoration. In Avondale Borough, a second watershed project was completed with the construction of seven mushroom shaped wetlands for water quality improvement to Trout Run, a headwater to the White Clay Creek (Wild and Scenic designation). These two projects, in particular, were publicized statewide through electronic newsletters and websites. The toolkit – *Crabby Creek Methodologies Assessment and Planning Report* – can be downloaded by going to the education link on our website and clicking on publications.

ENVIROTHON - Thirteen high school teams and seventeen middle school teams competed in April at Hibernia County Park for the Senior/Middle School Envirothon. A total of 150 students from sixth to twelfth grade tested their knowledge on the environmental topics of aquatics, forestry, soils, wildlife, and the 2008 current issue - Recreational Impacts on the Natural Environment. Chester County is one of the few districts that also provides two elementary days of the Envirothon experience. In 2008, 290 elementary students competed from schools across the county, bringing the total number of students participating in the 2008 Envirothon to 440.

Our champion supporters (donating \$1,000 or more) this year included:

 Cedar Knoll Builders  Iacobucci Homes  Pennsylvania-American Water Company

Their contributions provided students with T-shirts, trophies, services, and educational material and programs for the event.

CHESTER COUNTY CONSERVATION CAMP - 2008 saw the greatest attendance ever at the camp with 44 students. Margaret Van Gilder, Executive Director, was honored at the 50th Anniversary event of the Chester County Parks and Recreation Department for her outstanding work with youth in environmental education and outdoor recreation.

HONORS FOR A CONSERVATION CHAMPION - DAN GREIG, CLAYTON M. HOFF CONSERVATION AWARD



The Brandywine Valley Association (BVA) presented Daniel Greig, CCCD District Manager, with their highest award, the Clayton M. Hoff Conservation Award. The award honors the memory of the association's first executive vice president who is also generally acknowledged to be the founder of the small watershed movement in America. It was the first time that the award had been given in 18 years. Bob Struble, BVA Executive Director, in presenting the award said, "For 60 years we have always had a friend in the conservation district, and for the past 30 years, Dan has been a strong and effective champion for conservation in the Brandywine watershed." The award was presented in October at BVA's annual meeting.

Vision

An effective conservation program recognized for local leadership in natural resources conservation by assisting people in communities to achieve a productive county in harmony with a quality environment.

2008 District Directors

Tom Brosius, Chairman
Jack Arrell, Vice Chairman
Robert Struble, Jr., Secretary/Treasurer
Terence Farrell, Commissioner/Director
Brian Campbell, Director
Walt Moore, Director
Harold Kulp, Director
Frank Iacobucci, Jr., Associate Director
G. Pownall Jones, Associate Director
Lynda Farrell, Associate Director
Christopher Andes, Associate Director

Mission

To provide leadership in addressing natural resource conservation issues by promoting the sustainable use of those resources to the citizens of Chester County through education and technical assistance.