

Wayne Conservation District  
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Wayne Conservation  
District

2023 Annual Report



## Introduction

2023 was another great year here at the Wayne Conservation District!

The District team is pretty incredible—Board, Associate Members and staff alike work together in a seamless and effective way that just gets better and better as the years go by. I would like to take the time to really thank each and every person who donates their time to us and those who choose to spend their careers here serving the greater community of Wayne County!

You will read about a variety of very successful and meaningful programs and events as you turn the pages of this year's report. We also had a stellar year in terms of landowner interactions, technical assistance, regulatory review, voluntary compliance and conservation efforts. I couldn't be more proud of the work that the District has accomplished and will continue to do in the coming year!

Speaking of the coming year...we are looking forward to what is to come in 2024. We will be launching a new program to assist farm operations with funding for approved BMPs called the Agricultural Conservation Assistance Program (ACAP). We will also be closing out our multi-year Growing Greener Nutrient Management Plan Grant that we have successfully progressed through in partnership with Pike, Monroe and Lackawanna Counties. In addition, we are looking forward to completing a large agricultural project in cooperation with Twin Brook Farms and Livestock that is utilizing a variety of funding sources. This project is truly a group effort and will be an amazing finished product.

As I fast approach the beginning of my 20<sup>th</sup> year here with the Conservation District I am still in awe of the rewarding nature of the work that we do and the services that we provide. I often find myself feeling very lucky to get to do what I love as a career and I would like to thank everyone who is a part of that.

Here's to another year of success!

Yours in Conservation,  
Jamie A. Knecht  
District Manager

## Directors

Paul Kowalczyk—Chairman  
Pete Snyder—Vice Chairman  
Walter Garing—Treasurer  
Tim Jaggars  
Andrew Weist  
Karl Eisenhauer  
Brian Smith—Commissioner

## Associate Directors

Jack Barnett  
David Mitchell  
Christina Salak  
Jim Sanders  
Matthew Shaffer



## Staff

Jamie Knecht—District Manager  
Zach Jones—Sustainable Agricultural Specialist  
Colleen Campion—Watershed Specialist (January—July)  
Keith Pierson—Resource Conservationist  
Kris Krager—Dirt Gravel and Low Volume Road Specialist  
Trevor Tochydlowski—Forest Specialist  
Vienna Newton—Watershed Specialist (October—December)  
Sylvia Thompson—Assistant Manager

**Pete Snyder informed us that he would be retiring from the Board of Directors effective the end of his term on December 31, 2023. Pete was a very dedicated and loyal Board Member to the District for many years. He began his service time as an Associate Director in February of 1992. The wisdom and level-headed guidance that Pete provided to the District during his tenor was impressive and very much appreciated by the District as a whole. We would like to thank Pete for his many years of service.**

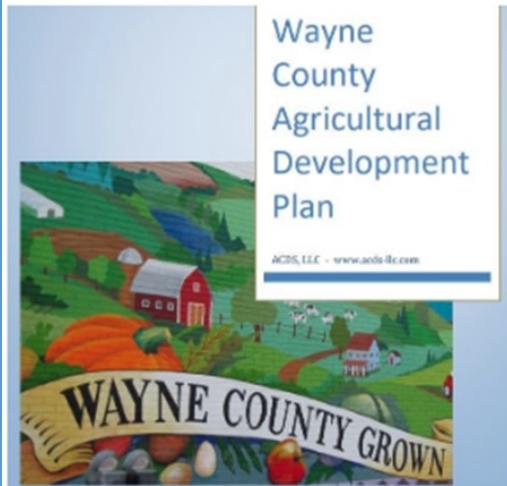
The board of the Wayne Conservation District meets on the second Wednesday of each month. Meetings begin at 9:30 am and are held at the conservation district office and via zoom.

*It is the mission of the Wayne Conservation District to assist the public in conserving Wayne County's natural resources through technical assistance and education.*

## Wayne Tomorrow!

This year the District has changed the Nutrient Management Specialist position to the Sustainable Agriculture Specialist. The time is split 50-50 with District activities and County Ag initiatives. The Wayne Tomorrow task force was created out of the county's comprehensive plan update that looked at the future of economic development in the county. Agriculture was designated as an economic development need that gave the opportunity to create an economic development plan for agriculture.

Of those outlined were a Food Locker Pilot Program, a brand for Wayne County produced goods, and an Agricultural Innovation Center.



## Chapter 102: Erosion and Sediment Control

Wayne Conservation District is delegated by the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to administer Chapter 102, Erosion and Sediment Control. Erosion, soil loss, and consequent water pollution is a serious matter that can be addressed through proper construction methods that implement Best Management Practices or BMP's. Here at the conservation district we work to preserve our resources by promoting the use of Best Management Practices through educating the public and professionals, reviewing plans and permits, and investigating complaints.

### EROSION AND SEDIMENTATION CONTROL ACTIVITIES

With over 94% of Wayne County draining to special protection watersheds a written Erosion and Sediment Control Plan is required to be developed and present on any sites on which earth disturbance are occurring. Non-special protection watersheds which are less than 6% of Wayne County require a written plan be present on sites with over 5,000 square feet of disturbance. Any earth disturbance 1 or more acres in area as part of a common plan of development requires an NPDES permit from the PA DEP. Erosion and sediment control permits are also required for timber harvest or road maintenance activities with 25 or more acres of disturbance. Our staff works diligently to educate those involved in construction and earth disturbance about the regulations. Many projects with proper planning can be kept under 1 acre, and we can provide guidance on applying for NPDES permits for work over 1 acre.

## Chapter 105

Work within surface waters, waterways, or wetlands can have a significant effect on ecology, water quality, and even cause flooding. Most work in the waterways and wetlands is regulated by the state and or federal government to minimize or eliminate these impacts. Through our delegation agreement under Chapter 105 with the PA DEP we help facilitate responsible work in or near surface waters by being available for guidance and reviewing General Permit applications. Many smaller projects such as docks, boat ramps, minor road or utility crossings, ag crossings, etc. can be permitted through General Permits in our office. We also investigate complaints and work with the PA DEP and the US Army Corps of Engineers to get violations resolved frequently through education and voluntary compliance.

## 102 and 105 Education, Outreach, Changes and Updates

### Education and Outreach:

*Wayne County Earthmovers Workshop:* we hosted a half day Earthmoving Workshop at the district with presenters from PA DEP, Pike County Conservation District, and our staff. We covered Forestry, Chapter 102, 105; DEP presented on Common Plan of Development, and Pike County Conservation District had a great presentation on Wetlands.

*Camp Managers Webinar:* a 102/105/wetland centered webinar presentation with the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) to a group of Wayne County campground managers.

**Camp Maintenance Training:** Presented in person to a large group of camp maintenance managers and staff at Lake Bryn Mawr Camp with USACE about chapter 102, 105, and wetlands as it pertains to camp operations. We have over 30 camps in Wayne County, each camp often has hundreds of acres and a maintenance staff with heavy equipment, presenting to them all at once was a great opportunity to reach people who do a significant amount of work in Wayne County.

We also conducted radio interviews and provided education and information to several other businesses and organizations. Throughout the year we provided numerous technical assistances and site visits. If you would like to look into having us present at your organization or business, or just have a question please give us a call at 570-253-0930 and we'd be glad to see how we can help!

**Fee Schedule:** In 2023 we developed a new fee schedule which took effect January 1, 2024. The new fee schedule was updated so we can continue to provide adequate service to the residents of Wayne County under our delegated programs.

**E-permitting:** In 2023 we received 2 General Permit submissions and 2 NPDES Individual Permit applications through the Greenport.

**PCSM and E&S Manuals:** PA DEP is working on updating the PCSM and E&S Manuals. The DEP has also been working on increasing efficiency on various aspects of permit submission and review. We will keep abreast of changes as they occur and are finalized.

**Staffing:** Since 2020 we've had a progressive increase in various development, especially NPDES permit submissions which require significant staff time in meetings, reviews, and ongoing inspections. We have posted the open Resource Conservationist position and are in the process of returning to a two technician team to maintain the quality of services in Wayne County.



<b>102: Erosion and Sediment Control</b>	
Individual NPDES Applications	14
Renewals	2
Notices of Termination	1
Major Modifications	2
Minor Modifications	3
E&S Plan Reviews	37
<b>105: Waterways and Wetlands</b>	
Small Docks/Boat Launches	20
Shoreline Stabilizations	6
Utility Crossings	4
Minor Road Crossings	3
Total General Permits:	33
<b>Complaints &amp; Inspections</b>	
Complaints Received	47
Inspections	58

## **Growing Greener Grant to Fund the Northeast Region Nutrient Management Plan Reimbursement Program**

The Wayne Conservation District was awarded a grant in 2020 through the Department of Environmental Protection's Growing Greener program that is being used to implement a reimbursement program for Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plans (CNMPs) for farmers in the northeast region. These plans are intended to identify best management practices farmers can use to mitigate their negative impact on nearby water resources by reducing nutrient runoff. Having these plans makes many farmers eligible for grant funding to implement these practices on their farms in the future. At the end of 2023, there were over forty contracted landowners enrolled in the program, each with CNMPs in progress – from Wayne County, Pike County, Lackawanna County, and Monroe County. The Wayne Conservation District will continue to Contract with motivated and eligible operators through July of 2024.



## **AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITIES**

### **No Till Program**

The 2023 planting season was successful with over 80 acres seeded.

### **Cover Crop Program**

The cover crop program was approved again with over 300 acres of bare ground from annual crops covered and protected from erosion. The district will reimburse 75 percent of seed cost. This total came out to \$11,117.53. That is on average \$37.05 per acre. There was no acreage fee charged for using the district seeder.



The District approved the purchase of a new seeder for the 2023 season. The new addition has enhanced the ability to have more acreage seeded and have a more accurate seeding. The new Drill is a 10 foot John Deere 1590.

### **ACAP Program**

The Agricultural Conservation Assistance Program (ACAP) was created through the Clean Streams Fund established by the FY2022-2023 PA State Budget. This program provides financial and technical assistance for the implementation of BMPs on agricultural operations in the state of PA. Wayne County received \$1,173,662.85 for the program which will end in 2026. The hope is that this program will become consistently funded so that we can work with as many operators as possible looking into the future of agriculture in Wayne County.

## North Eastern PA Maple Producer's Association Annual Tour

The self-guided Maple Tour persists as a staple in the Wayne Conservation District's annual forestry-based activities. New and familiar sap houses continue to participate in this late winter outing, ranging anywhere from recreational Sugar Makers like *Sticky Dog Sap House* to 20,000 + tap operations such as *Pocono Mountain Maple*. A full spectrum of possibilities gives participants a wonderful educational opportunity to not only learn about the industry but also explore their own options for making maple sugar products. It's fun for all ages and a great way to welcome Spring and all the beauty that comes with it.

### Forestry Training, Education, and Promotion

The Wayne Conservation District continues to promote sustainable forestry practices through in-house events and partnership efforts with groups such as Wayne Tomorrow, the Professional Forest Industry Association, and the Northern Tier Hardwood Association. Aside from the standard activities such as the Seedling Sale, K10 Distribution, and Woodsmen's Competition, the Wayne Conservation District hosted events such as the Mushroom Inoculation Workshop, which sought to teach landowners about non-timber forest products through the process of growing your own mushrooms. Boy Scout Troops were another heavy focus during the warmer months, bringing about walks centered on tree identification, invasive species management, and general forestry practices. And, of course, the Wayne Conservation District continues to spread forestry information through environmental events such as Varden Conservation Day, Canal Fest, and landowner workshops.



### Perry Westgate Memorial Scholarship

The 2023 winner was Marshall Davis.



From left: Karl Eisenhauer, Tim Jaggars, Paul Kowalczyk, Marshall Davis, Walter Garing

Marshall graduated from Western Wayne High School and is continuing his studies at Bloomsburg University. His field of study is Professional Geology. Marshall thanked the board for their support. The board wished Marshall well in his future endeavors.

## Dirt, Gravel and Low Volume Roads

The construction season for 2023 was very productive. The weather cooperated and we were able to complete some very environmentally sound projects this year. The supply chain issues we experienced in the previous year could only slightly be felt this year. In general, everything that was needed to complete projects could be found, and waiting times were at a minimum. However, prices are up and that is making it difficult to finance as many projects in one construction season like we have in the past. Projects are getting very expensive and we are faced with financing fewer projects because our yearly allocation does not go as far as previous years. The price of Driving Surface Aggregate is still coming in at around \$22.00 a ton, put in place.

This year we completed four Dirt and Gravel jobs as well as two Low Volume Road projects that we had issued grants for. A new, thirty-five foot spread footer bridge was installed across a stream crossing on Weiland Road in Damascus Township.

Grist Mill Road in Damascus Township was completed. This project was in addition to the stream crossing structure that was placed last year. This project was approximately 4,811 feet long. Seventeen new crosspipes were placed, 6,100 tons of fill was added to raise the road and 3,058 tons of DSA was placed, as well as fifty foot paved aprons where the road meets the highway. In Preston Township, Leech Creek Road was completed. This project was approximately 6,667 feet long. Thirty new crosspipes were added, two existing crosspipes were replaced, 6,889 tons of fill material was added to raise the road profile, and 4,889 tons of 2A modified was placed as the driving surface. In South Canaan Township, Daniels Road has finally been completed. Because of the scope and size of this project, this was an ongoing project for approximately three years. One of the longest spread footer bridges ever funded by the Dirt and Gravel Road Program, a span of 65 feet, was placed over the stream crossing on this road.

For Low Volume Road projects, in Damascus Township, Plank Road was completed, and Edward Road was 80% completed. Edward Road will be finished up in the spring of 2024. The repair of these two roads will greatly benefit the homeowners of the Dexter Development. To alleviate flooding and erosion, these two projects received new drainage pipes, concrete drop boxes, and drainage swales, ditches, and driveway pipes to eliminate the flow of water that was washing the road away and into the stream at the bottom of the hill.

This year, the Wayne Conservation District had approximately \$472,625.00 allocated for Dirt and Gravel Road projects, and approximately \$96,753.00 for Low Volume Road projects.



The completed bridge structure at Weiland Road in Damascus Township



The finished, 65 foot long, spread footer bridge at Daniels Road in South Canaan Township

## Stream, Lake, and Pond Technical Assistance

Throughout the year, the Wayne Conservation District provides landowners with a variety of technical assistance regarding water resources. Whether it is an invasive species growing in your private pond, a stream bank erosion issue following a high water event, or a lake association looking for advice on overall aquatic health we can make recommendations and/or provide contact information for other appropriate professionals in the field. During 2023, the District assisted several landowners and residents with these types of inquiries.



## 2023 Pike/Wayne Envirothon

The 2023 Pike/Wayne Envirothon competition was held on Wednesday, April 26<sup>th</sup> at the Wallenpaupack Environmental Learning Center in Hawley, Pa. Participating schools from Wayne County included Honesdale High School and Western Wayne High School. Schools representing Pike County included Delaware Valley High School and Wallenpaupack Area High School. Teams compete to demonstrate their overall knowledge in the areas of Forestry, Soils and Land Use, Wildlife, Aquatic Ecology, and this year's Current Issue for the event was Adapting to Climate Change. The first place team for Wayne County was from Honesdale High School and the winning team overall was the "Unbearables" from Delaware Valley High School. Both went on to represent Pike and Wayne Counties at the PA Envirothon competition.



## New Conservation District Watershed Specialist Contract

A new grant agreement was entered with DEP pertaining to the new CDWS contract. The reimbursement amount for this position has increased from \$45,250 annually to \$50,250 annually. The term of this grant agreement commenced on July 1, 2023 and will continue through June 30, 2026.

## New Watershed Specialist

The District had a very dedicated employee resign from her position in July of 2023. Colleen Campion, our Watershed Specialist, went on to work for the PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources Bureau of Forestry. We wish her much luck in her new position and thank her for many years of excellent service to the Conservation District!

In October of 2023 we on-boarded our new Watershed Specialist, Vienna Newton. Vienna comes to the District with a lot of enthusiasm for the conservation field and soon to have her Bachelor's Degree in Environmental Science with a concentration on Natural Resources and Conservation. Vienna is a wonderful addition to the team and we are lucky to have her!



## FORESTRY ACTIVITIES

## Frost Damage

Forest health is very rarely dictated by a singular event and is often the product of a culmination of biotic and abiotic influences. While this may be generally true, some exceptions have a profound, widespread impact. A late mid-May frost had a substantial negative effect on numerous species, specifically Oak and fruit-bearing crop trees. Many panicked calls were received from those distressed over what were assumed to be dead trees and abnormal fruiting behavior. Fortunately, despite being incredibly stressful, a late frost such as the one we received in May is far from the end of life for a healthy tree. Defoliation, whether from a pest or environmental events, typically takes two to three consecutive years before having fatal consequences.

## Spotted Lanternfly

Spotted Lanternfly remains in limited numbers in Wayne County, with reports coming few and far between. As of the summer of 2023, the majority of sightings still seem to result from hitchhikers rather than populations established through breeding/egg masses. Tree of Heaven (*Ailanthus altissima*), the host tree of the Spotted Lanternfly, also appears to be in limited numbers throughout most areas of Wayne County, including those that are more urbanized. A walk in Honesdale in late summer failed to identify any egg masses, Tree of Heaven, or signs of Spotted Lanternfly activity. Even areas of the county that are closer to the epicenter, which typically experience more out-of-state tourism due to attractions like Lake Wallenpaupack, have a limited number of reports.



## 10 Million Tree Partnership

Having officially partnered with the 10 Million Tree initiative for over a year, the Wayne Conservation District is responsible for successfully distributing over 7,000 seedlings to County Residents. With both a successful Spring and Fall distribution and a thorough understanding of our role as a staging district, advertising for the program is underway in an attempt to continue expanding the service. As of Spring 2024, the District is set to distribute 6,000 containerized species in May, complete with shelters, stakes, twist ties, and bird netting. The relationship with the K10 Program has proven to be an incredible resource for landowners and their forests, one that will continue until the goal has been reached.

## Wayne County 39th Woodsmen's Competition

Due to the lack of participation, the 39<sup>th</sup> annual Woodsmen's Competition was postponed until 2024. In an attempt to reenergize competition interest, participation forms will be sent out well before the competition, and events will be restructured to help consolidate time and keep things moving quickly.