



Fall Newsletter



724-852-5278

gccd@co.greene.pa.us

www.co.greene.pa.us/gccd

22 West High Street, Suite 204

Waynesburg, PA 15370

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- PA Fish and Boat Commission
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- Penn State Cooperative Extension
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DISTRICT LOCATION

2nd Floor of the
Ben Franklin Building at
22 West High Street
Suite 204

Waynesburg, PA 15370

Phone: 724-852-5278

gccd@co.greene.pa.us

Hours: 8:30 am to 4:30 pm Monday-Friday

The GCCD Board meets the third Tuesday of each month at 10:00 am in the Conservation District Conference Room located on the 2nd Floor of the Ben Franklin Building.



Carmichaels Team Wins Pennsylvania Envirothon, Takes home Third at International Event



The Carmichaels Envirothon Team won the Pennsylvania State Envirothon for the second consecutive year and had the opportunity to represent Pennsylvania at the 2019 NCF-International Envirothon competition in Raleigh, North Carolina!

The Pennsylvania Envirothon team from Carmichaels Area High School in Greene County was in FIRST place before the final presentation with a score of 567.17 out of 700 possible points making them First Round NCF-International Envirothon CHAMPS!! Following the final presentation, the team received Third Place in the world! The team was awarded a scholarship of \$5000 (\$1000 each) for this third place finish out of 53 teams from the United States, Canada, and China. They also received a plaque, medals, and a gift basket from Cabot Cheese.

The team had the second highest Forestry score with an 87 out of 100 (high score was an 88), the second highest Soils score with a 64.5 (high, 69), fourth highest Wildlife score with an 88 (high, 93.5), fifth highest Aquatics score with a 91.5 (high, 96.5).

The Carmichaels Envirothon team would like to thank those who helped them reach this amazing accomplishment! Shell Oil Company and DEP provides funding to the Pennsylvania Envirothon for transportation to the NCF-Envirothon. Chevron provided all of the funds necessary for training field trips and other resources leading up to the competition. Additional donations in the way of funding along with professional assistance was provided by Carmichaels Area Board of Education, administration, faculty and staff, Pennsylvania Envirothon, Greene County Conservation District, Chevron, GreeneTeam Pellets, Dominion, EQT, Contura Energy, Windridge Engineering Company, Civil and Environmental Consultants, Inc, The Gateway Engineers, PA Soil and Rock, Inc, Bankson Engineers, SPK Engineering and ESI (Environmental Solutions & Innovations), First Energy, Harry Enstrom Chapter of Izaak Walton League, Greene County Commissioners, Representative Pam Snyder, Senator Camera Bartolotta, Penn State Cooperative Extension, Hunting Hills, West Virginia University, California University of Pennsylvania, Jennings Environmental Center, Ohiopyle State Park, NRCS, DCNR Bureau of Forestry, PA Fish and Boat Commission, PA Game Commission, Rivers of Steel RiverQuest, Southwest PA Woodlot Owners Association, Growmark, PA Environment Digest, First Student, along with many other companies, agencies, and individuals. Our entire community has rallied behind our team which has been such an encouragement! We appreciate everyone's support! Thank you to all!



There's a new 'Warden' in town!

My name is Christopher Bence and I am a recent graduate from our State Game Warden academy and newly stationed in Greene County. I have had the pleasure to meet many of the great people around this beautiful county and the opportunity to hold programs and speak to many schools and clubs. If you would like to contact me, have any questions or concerns, would like a program or have information on poaching, violations or criminal activity please contact me. If you or anyone you know would like to reach me, please do so at my office number (724) 238-9523.

As we are racing toward autumn and hunting seasons, I wanted to take this opportunity to give some important information.

New regulations

- Eliminated the requirement to wear **fluorescent orange** at any time while archery hunting for deer, bear or elk. This eliminates all overlap periods when archery hunters were required to wear varying amounts of fluorescent orange while moving or post orange material while in a fixed position.
 - The regulations also eliminate the requirement for fall turkey hunters to wear **fluorescent orange** material.
- Fluorescent orange** is still required for all early firearms seasons for deer and bear.

Black Bear Season Changes:

- **BLACK BEAR, ARCHERY (Statewide):** Oct. 28-Nov. 9. Only 1 bear may be taken during the license year
- **BLACK BEAR, MUZZLELOADER (Statewide):** Oct. 19-26. Only 1 bear may be taken during the license year.
- **BLACK BEAR, SPECIAL FIREARMS (Statewide):** Oct. 24-26, Junior and Senior License Holders, Disabled Person Permit (to use a vehicle) Holders, and Pennsylvania residents serving on active duty in U.S. Armed Services or in the U.S. Coast Guard only. Also included are persons who have reached or will reach their 65th birthday in the year of the application for a license and hold a valid adult license, or qualify for license and fee exemptions under section 2706. Only 1 bear may be taken during the license year

Deer Season Saturday Opener (November 30th)

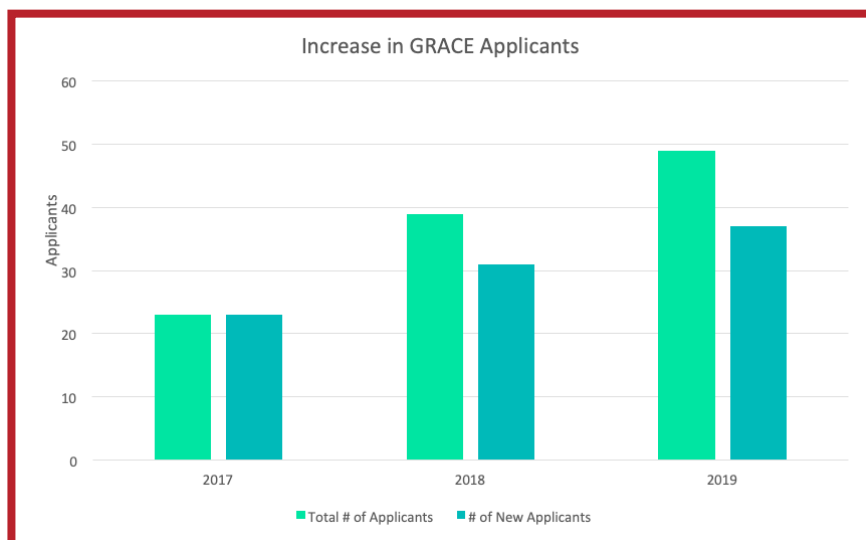
- **DEER (Antlered Only)** WMUs 1A, 1B, 2A, 2C, 2D, 2E, 2F, 2G, 2H, 3A, 3B, 3C, 3D, 4A, 4B, 4C, 4D, 4E, 5A and 5B: Nov. 30-Dec. 6. One antlered deer per hunting license year. (Holders of valid DMAP antlerless deer permits may harvest antlerless deer on DMAP properties during this period.)



Photo: Officer Bence & Officer Chaybin along with 3 Mercer County Deputy Game Wardens recover a head from a poached white-tailed deer.

Seeking a few good men/women!

Anyone interested or possibly interested in a career as a State Game Warden or as a part time Deputy State Game Warden please contact me, as we are going to be starting Deputy State Game Warden Training in a few months. Contact me at (724) 238-9523 and we can discuss either of these opportunities or to schedule a ride-along and see what its like a day in the life of a PA Game Warden.

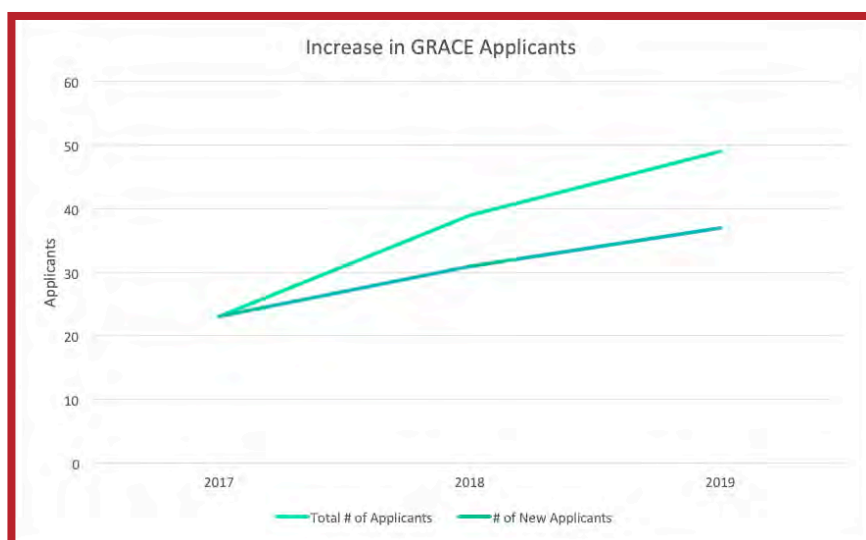


Throughout the summer, the GCCD has been accepting applications for our GRACE Program (Greene County's Reinvestment in Agriculture: Cost-Share Enhancement Program). Through the GRACE Program, we are able to offer technical and cost-share assistance for Greene County's farmers to improve their operations in ways which promote soil and water conservation.

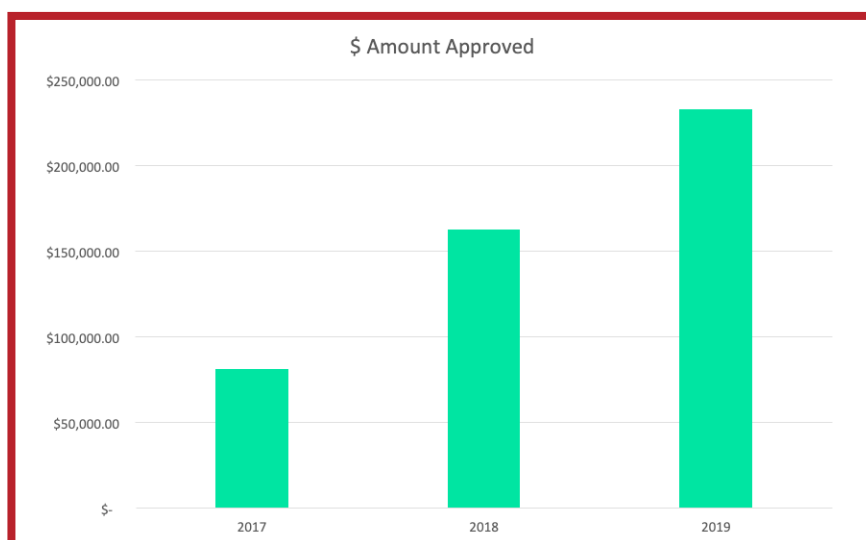
Some of the practices which we can offer assistance for are:

- 1.) Applying lime
- 2.) Applying fertilizer
- 3.) Livestock Fencing
- 4.) Watering systems and
- 5.) Forestry practices

Offering assistance with these different practices is intended to improve the viability and value of Greene County's farm land for the present and future.



This is our 3rd year of running this program and we have seen a very significant increase in the number of applicants from year to year. The first year our total number of applicants was 23 which jumped the next year to a total of 39 applicants—31 of them being first-time applicants. This year, we received a total of 49 applications—37 of them being first-time applicants—and every application was approved by the GCCD Board during our September board meeting.



We are excited about the expansion of our program and are hoping to continue increasing the number of participating farmers and landowners. Many of our applicants have heard about this program by word-of-mouth so if you or someone you know might be interested in learning more about the GRACE Program, please contact Ben or Sara at the Greene County Conservation District Office. The application period for 2019 has ended but we will be continuing the program next year.



Waynesburg University Freshmen Help manage Invasive Species

Approximately 50 freshmen students from Waynesburg University joined with the Conservation District on August 24th as part of the University's Day of Service. Using a variety of hand tools, students worked to remove invasive species such as Bush Honeysuckle, Multiflora Rose and Wild Grape from the nearby Thistle Tree Farm.

Formerly a sheep and cattle farm, the Thistle tree farm has about 70 acres of forested land with about thirty acres of a mixture of plantations and early successional forests. The Thistles have planted more than 3,400 trees to develop their tree farm. The Thistles are founding members of the Southwestern Pennsylvania Woodlot Owners Association. The farm became a Stewardship farm in 2001 and joined the American Tree Farm System in 2012. They were awarded the Outstanding Forest Conservationist award in 2011 by the Conservation District and in 2015, they were awarded the Pennsylvania Outstanding Tree Farmer of the Year award by the American Tree Farm System.

This was a great opportunity for students to be exposed to an aspect of land stewardship that they may not have been aware of before. Pennsylvania has a rich history of forestry and forest products remain a large part of the Commonwealth's economy. Students served their community while gaining on-the-ground experience with forestry practices and invasive species management. They also had an opportunity to get to the know the Thistles and learn about the application of forest management and ecological principles.

Mobile Environmental Display

Conservation District Brings Mobile Environmental Display to the Greene County Fair

The Conservation District Board of Directors arranged to host the “H2Oh! On the Go,” Mobile Environmental Display at the 2019 Greene County Fair. The Mobile Environmental Display is the result of a partnership between the Armstrong County Conservation District and the Carnegie Science center. It is a traveling exhibit that includes ten interactive installations modeled after the Science Center’s “H2Oh! Why Our Rivers Matter” exhibit. Each exhibit allows visitors to engage, experiment and learn about water and the role it plays in our lives. Conservation District staff and Directors welcomed visitors and discussed water quality in Greene County.

The MED includes 10 stations that demonstrate the properties of water, the concept of a watershed, how water and soil interact, soil erosion concepts, a greater understanding of aquatic species and other topics. Activities include the “frozen raindrop,” which allows participants to freeze a rain drop in place; the “Drag race,” which explores the effects of drag on objects in water and the “Virtual Watershed”, which allows visitors to make their own hills and valleys before unleashing virtual rain to see how water behaves.

“The Mobile Environmental Display was made possible through the generosity of the COLCOM Foundation. The Colcom Foundation’s primary mission is to foster a sustainable environment to ensure quality of life for all Americans by addressing the major causes and consequences of over population and its adverse effects on natural resources.

The Armstrong Conservancy operates a charitable trust with a mission is to establish and deliver programs of the highest quality that enable the protection of land through education, purchase, easements, and by partnering with individuals and organizations having similar goals.

The EQT Foundation, through a partnership with the Armstrong Conservancy, provided a grant to assist with the purchase of a towing vehicle for the Mobile Environmental Display. This vehicle is powered by Pennsylvania-produced, clean-burning, compressed natural gas. The EQT Foundation was established by EQT Corporation, one of the region’s leading energy producers, and is committed to the social and economic vitality of our operating regions. The EQT

Foundation believes in meaningful engagement with the communities it calls home, and takes great pride in the role as both a responsible and responsive corporate citizen. The EQT Foundation has developed strong partnerships with a variety of nonprofit organizations to enrich the diversity and viability of our communities, sustain the principles of continuous learning and focus on environmental protection efforts.”



Rain Barrel



Conservation District Distributes Rain Barrels to Manage Stormwater

The Conservation District recently held a series of workshops and events focused on the importance of stormwater management and designed to empower landowners to reduce stormwater runoff by using rain barrels.

Unmanaged stormwater runoff is important as it drives water pollution and aquatic habitat degradation, leads to more frequent and more severe flooding and causes concerns for communities and municipalities. For example, an average sized roof may shed more than five hundred gallons of water during a moderate rain storm.

A rain barrel collects a portion of this water and stores it for later use by the property owner. This reduces the effect of this roof on stormwater runoff but also provides a benefit to the property owner by storing a supply of water suitable for watering gardens, washing vehicles and equipment, cleaning decks and windows and a host of other household tasks.

Working with Waynesburg Borough, and receiving funding from Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the Conservation District distributed 50 rain barrels at no cost to Greene County landowners. Materials to construct each barrel cost about \$50 and they were easy to assemble with basic tools.

If you would like to learn more about stormwater management, rain barrels, or future Conservation District workshops, please contact the Conservation District at 724-852-5278.

Tax Credits

Tax Credits Available for Farmers

State Conservation Commission is now accepting applications for the Resource Enhancement and Protection Farm Conservation Tax Credit Program (REAP). REAP offers tax credits to farmers installing agricultural best management practices (BMP) or purchasing equipment that will reduce sediment and nutrient pollution of nearby streams.

Passage of the Pennsylvania Farm Bill in June authorized \$13 million dollars in tax credits for the 2019-2020 program year. It also expanded eligibility and increased tax credit caps to as much as 90% for some practices. Eligible practices now include conservation and manure management plans and remediation of legacy sediments. Even some maintenance costs of previously installed BMP are now eligible.

For more information on REAP, contact Joel Semke by phone at 717-705-4032 or by email at: jsemke@pa.gov. More information may also be found on the PA Department of Agriculture's web site (https://www.agriculture.pa.gov/Plants_Land_Water/StateConservationCommission/REAP/Pages/default.aspx).

Blaine Cunningham



Hello, I am Blaine Cunningham a 2019 graduate from Jefferson-Morgan High School. I enjoy nature, and hunting and fishing are my go-to activities. Immediately after graduation I started working here at the district as an intern. So far, I have been assigned to conduct surveillance for the West Nile Virus Program and the Tick Collection Program. I also had the opportunity to become certified in the Environmentally Sensitive Maintenance Program, which qualifies me to inspect roads that are involved in the county's Dirt & Gravel and Low Volume Roads program. I also visited local farms and accompanied the staff on plenty of inspections. I really enjoy working with the staff and with all the programs that benefit Greene County.

West Nile

West Nile Virus and Tick Surveillance 2019

By: Blaine Cunningham

2019 was a slower year compared to last year for West Nile Virus (WNV) surveillance. Traps were set weekly starting at 9 sites though the county, mostly sewage treatment plants. The mosquitoes that are most common to carry WNV (*Culex pipiens* & *Culex restuans*) are attracted to the sewage smell.

From May 6th – September 29th, our office conducted the surveillance and ended the year with a total of 2 positive mosquito samples of West Nile Virus (WNV), much better than last year with a reported 31 positives. That being said, less than 1% of all mosquitoes carry West Nile Virus. 80% of people have no symptoms if infected with West Nile Virus. Normally, children and the elderly are the ones that show symptoms (flu symptoms).

Tick drags were also added this year, in search of nymph ticks (Second Stage of Ticks life). To find them we used white felt to drag, the ticks would then attach themselves to when we walked by. The drags were conducted throughout the county's game lands almost every week on sunny days. Luckily there were not many nymph ticks as they are common carriers of Lyme Disease, remember to check yourself after leaving the wood during the summer.

Mosquitoes get the virus from biting infected birds, then transfer it with their next blood meal. WNV cannot be transferred by human to human contact, but can be transferred with a blood transfusion if infected. If you see a suspicious dead game bird (Hawk, Crow, Owl, etc.), this could be an indicator for WNV. You can contact our office if you find a suspicious dead game bird and if found soon enough, can be sent to be tested.

With the wet spring and summer that we endured, it wasn't a shock that mosquito numbers were high this year. It doesn't take much water to produce them, a bucket with 1 inch of water can produce over 1,000 mosquitoes a week. This is an example that can take us back to the best way to fight mosquitoes and WNV, Prevention! If you can prevent the mosquitoes from breeding nearby, you will have a much better chance of not getting bit. Keep the gutters clean, get rid of old tires, dump out and turn over any buckets, wheel barrows, change the water in bird baths every week, anything that can hold water should be investigated. Also, when practical, wear long sleeves and use bug spray. When looking for bug spray, check the labels to see what percentage of "DEET" is in them. The higher the percentage, the better it will work. Some of the sprays have up to 25% DEET or higher.

Even though mosquito and WNV were low all over the county this year, it was still a successful year. No human, bird, or veterinary cases were reported in Greene County. To sum this all up, I'll leave you with the final lab result positives across the state:

- Mosquito samples: 2 positives
- Humans – 0 positives
- Bird – 0 positives
- Veterinary – 0 positives

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Pick Up Locations:

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40 Legion Street Republic, Pa 15475

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Conservation District Offers Options for Farmers Spreading Lime

Applying lime to pasture and hay fields is one of the simplest management decisions to make. Increasing soil pH can increase forage yields and palatability, with relatively low cost to the producer. The District maintains two lime spreaders for use by Greene County farmers.

The new 4½-ton spreader does not have surge brakes, like the District's 2-ton spreader, but has more than double the capacity. It is ideal for larger meadows where steep slopes are not as much of a concern. Its large capacity means that a farmer can spend more time spreading lime and less time loading lime. The 2-ton spreader remains ideal for small pastures and areas where steep slopes are a concern. Offering these two different spreaders gives farmers more options to manage their forage with lime.

In addition to the two lime spreaders, the Conservation District also offers a seven-foot, end wheel no-till drill equipped with three seed boxes. This drill allows Greene County farmers to implement a no-till crop production system, which includes cover crops and promotes good pasture management.

No-till involves planting the seed directly into the soil without plowing, tilling or disking. Advantages of no-till practices include: reducing operator's time and expenses; promoting healthier soils through building soil structure and adding organic matter; feeding beneficial microorganisms; reducing soil loss from erosion and increasing infiltration and increasing yields due to optimal soil conditions.

In addition to pasture sizes and slopes, farmers should consider equipment sizes and transportation as well. A 50hp or larger tractor is needed for the 2-ton spreader while the 4½-ton spreader requires a 75hp or larger tractor. Both spreaders may be towed on roads at moderate speeds (approximately 45mph). The no-till drill requires 55hp or larger tractor and a heavy-duty truck is required for transport.

All three of these implements are available for rent from Conservation District on a first-come, first-served basis. A refundable deposit of \$50 for either spreader and \$150 for the no-till drill is required to schedule a three-day rental. For more details, please contact Ben Schweiger at the Greene County Conservation District at bschweiger@co.greene.pa.us or 724-852-5278.





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Our Mission

It is the mission of the District to commit to protection, stewardship, and conservation of the County's natural resources to ensure a wise balance between the protection of the environment and the benefit of the landowners of the County.

It is the District's belief that conservation works best when people living and working in the local area work together to manage their natural resources collectively. Valuable partnerships are formed when diversity is brought into the conversation and decision-making process. Our office is a conservation-oriented organization that offers a wide variety of expertise and knowledge. The District staff can assist with questions related to permitting, offer guidance on planning for farming, and assist landowners with various natural resource related topics.