



# ANNUAL REPORT 2018







## District Highlight

Often described as a hidden gem of Erie County, Headwaters Park offers visitors outdoor recreational opportunities in a location that could come as a surprise to some. The Park embraces 70 acres of forested and wetland habitat at the headwaters of Mill Creek, offering approximately three miles of hiking trail, nestled along the fringe of an industrial park and a major transportation corridor. Only six miles from the center of the “Gem City”, Headwaters Park provides enriching and educational experiences to residents in their own backyard.

Headwaters Park is embarking on a new beginning – one that was realized in 2018 which draws financial support from the PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) and the County of Erie. Funding from DCNR’s Community Conservation Partnership Program will expand the Park’s trail network and implement conservation practices, contributing positive wellness and educational experiences to park visitors.

The District underwent another fresh start in 2018 for an emerging new agriculture program called Pennsylvania Vested in Environmental Sustainability (PA VinES). With assistance from the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) and the PA Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), the District was able to expand its technical staff to assist grape growers in the Lake Erie Watershed. Growers enroll in the program by completing a self-assessment workbook and then implementing conservation practices on their farms, ultimately reducing the amount of sediment and nutrients entering Lake Erie.

Moving forward, the goal of these expansions and new beginnings is to benefit the citizens, land and waterways of Erie County. The projects the District implements and the people we impact are all “gems” on the local landscape.

In Conservation,  
Tom McClure  
District Manager

### VISION STATEMENT

The Erie County Conservation District strives to become a leading conservation organization in Erie County to provide assistance, management, and education for the wise use of our natural resources.

### MISSION STATEMENT

Erie County Conservation District is a service based organization providing for the conservation of natural resources and the creation of a healthy environment. We educate local residents, municipalities, landowners, educators, and organizations that are involved with or concerned about wise environmental stewardship.





## ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

Educational outreach is an important component to the Conservation District's service to the Erie County community. Each year our educational program goal is to reach more students, scouts, and general public to encourage curiosity and understanding about nature, conservation, and environmental stewardship. Our staff is always looking to expand programming in new, innovative directions.

- Hosted the PA Farm Bureau Mobile Ag Lab – 255
- Hosted the high school county Envirothon – 85+ high school students, advisors, and volunteers
- Hosted the middle school Envirothon – 85+ middle school students
- Participated in the Imaginarium Expotarium educating families about watersheds and watercourses
- Participated in the Children's Water Festival at Penn State Behrend campus
- Expanded the Nature Immersion program with Erie School District



**2,695**

ELEMENTARY  
SCHOOL STUDENTS

**885**

MIDDLE/HIGH SCHOOL/  
COLLEGE STUDENTS

**1,919**

COMMUNITY MEMBERS

**5,629**

TOTAL NUMBER  
INVOLVED IN  
OUTREACH





## THE CHAPTER 105 – WATERWAY MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

Under the Chapter 105 Program, the District's delegated responsibilities include performing initial complaint investigations related to potential impacts to waters of the commonwealth, community educational outreach related to Chapter 105 rules and regulations, and assistance related to the permitting process. The District provided over 250 incidences of assistance to consultants, private property owners, contractors, developers, and or state and local officials.

Recent outreach efforts have centered on the PA DEP's new electronic permitting site and associated process, that went active in the fall of 2018. While Erie County has yet to receive an electronic permit application at the time of this writing, the site was established as an effort to expedite the permitting process throughout the state. Over 60 Chapter 105 General Permits were acknowledged in 2018, in the historic hardcopy form.

The District does its best to obtain voluntary compliance to resolve violations, related to complaint investigation. In cases where voluntary compliance cannot be obtained, the District must forward the case to DEP for enforcement action. However, more than 90% of the complaints investigated by the District were resolved in house.





# EROSION AND SEDIMENTATION CONTROL AND NPDES PROGRAMS

The District continues its delegation agreement with the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) related to implementation of the Chapter 102 program. The program addresses erosion and sedimentation control related to earth disturbance sites, including, but not limited to, those associated with National Pollution Discharge Elimination Systems (NPDES) permitted sites.

All earth disturbances, including those associated with agricultural plowing and tilling, timber harvesting activities, and road maintenance, fall under the scope of Chapter 102.

In addition to erosion and sedimentation control during earth disturbances, NPDES permitted sites are also required to address post-construction stormwater management (PCSM). A variety of best management practices (BMPs) are available to permittees to achieve these means.



The District works closely and cooperatively with local municipalities in relation to local Act 167 stormwater ordinances, to minimize duplication of efforts, and reduce permit processing times. NPDES Permit processing times remain under the Department's recommended standard operating procedures. The District strives to minimize project delays related to permitting, to the extent practical.

In an effort to reduce permitting times and expedite the permitting process, the PA DEP is currently working on an electronic Chapter 102 permit process and associated site. The electronic site is currently under construction, with the hope of going live in 2019. As always, the District will update the regulated community as additional information is provided to our office.





Creek Road Before



Creek Road During



Creek Road After

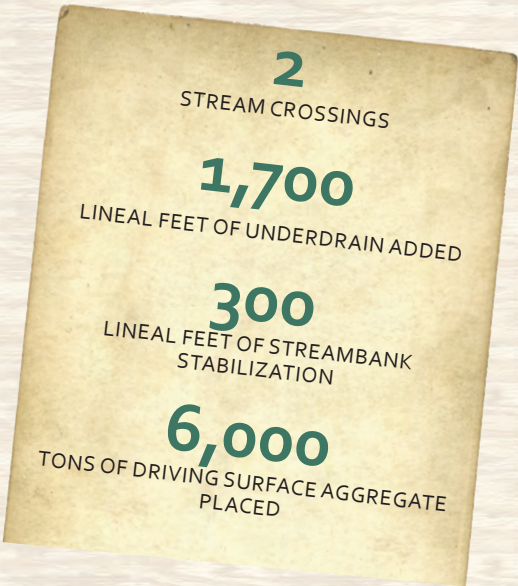
## Dirt and Gravel Road Program - 2018

There are approximately 550 miles of dirt and gravel roads in Erie County. Each mile requires a level of maintenance and can present potential environmental impacts to our local waterways. The Erie County Conservation District assists municipalities through the Dirt & Gravel Road Program by administering funds to improve road bases, drainage systems and road surfaces.

### Dirt & Gravel Road Projects

<u>Road</u>	<u>Municipality</u>	<u>Grant Funds</u>	<u>In-Kind Funds</u>	<u>Total Project Cost</u>
Buffalo	Wayne Township	\$76,000	\$22,100	\$98,100
Creek	Venango Township	\$25,200	\$-	\$25,200
Old Meadville	LeBoeuf Township	\$87,300	\$8,000	\$95,300
Storey	Greenfield Township	\$76,100	\$16,600	\$92,700
Whittaker	Elk Township	\$85,900	\$2,800	\$88,700
<b><u>2018 Totals</u></b>		<b><u>Grant Funds</u></b>	<b><u>In-Kind Funds</u></b>	<b><u>Total Project Cost</u></b>
		\$350,500	\$49,500	\$400,000

### Storey Road Pipe







1  
19' PLATE ARCH STRUCTURE STREAM  
CROSSING

300  
LINEAL FEET OF UNDERDRAIN

10,000  
SQUARE YARDS OF NEW ROAD SURFACE

**Stormwater  
Management**



**Mayfair Drive**

**Mayfair Drive**

## Low Volume Road Program - 2018

The Low Volume Roads program administered locally by the Erie County Conservation District concentrates road improvement efforts that provide an environmental benefit on paved, concrete or tar and chip roads with a daily traffic count of less than 500 cars. This funding can assist municipalities with drainage and road base issues along with stormwater solutions.

### 2018 Low Volume Road Projects

<u>Road</u>	<u>Municipality</u>	<u>Grant Funds</u>	<u>In-Kind Funds</u>	<u>Total Project Cost</u>
Maplecrest	McKean Township	\$26,700	\$116,600	\$143,300
Old Meadville	LeBoeuf Township	\$40,000	\$ 6,8000	\$46,800
Van Camp	McKean Township	\$80,000	\$ 70,000	\$150,000

<u>2018 Totals</u>	<u>Grant Funds</u>	<u>In-Kind Funds</u>	<u>Total Project Costs</u>
	\$146,700	\$193,400	\$340,100

**VanCamp Road**

**VanCamp Road**





# PA VinES

## “Pennsylvania Vested in Environmental Sustainability”



2018 saw a significant expansion of the PA VinES program administered by the District to grape growers in the Lake Erie Watershed. PA VinES is a voluntary program that promotes sustainable viticulture practices through a grower Self-Assessment Workbook. After the participant completes the workbook, they are eligible to apply for Growing Greener grant funds to install best management practices (BMP's) on their operation, such as streambank stabilization, cover cropping and stabilized access roads.

The goal of the program is to reduce the environmental impact of the approximately 10,000 acres of vineyards in the county by limiting the amount of sediments and excess nutrients that enter our Lake Erie tributaries.

### **Topics within the Self-Assessment Workbook:**

- Vineyard Soil and Erosion Management
- Nutrition Management
- Vineyard Management
- Weed Management
- Integrated Pest Management (IPM)
- Pesticide Management

### **2018 Program Highlights:**

- 37 workbooks distributed to vineyard owners
- 495 acres of cover crop planted
- 820 feet of stabilized access roads installed
- 1 repaired stream crossing
- 4 water collection structures installed
- 40 one-on-one site visits with vineyard owners







## Seedling Sale

2018 Tree Seedling Sale profits provide Erie County students with environmental education opportunities. The opportunities include programs for pre-K through college, various scout programs, and the annual Envirothons.

On April 27, 2018 the Erie County Conservation District conducted the 37th annual seedling sale to benefit educational programs. The money from this sale is used to support scholarships for the winning team to attend the Conservation Leadership School held at Penn State University each summer. The proceeds of the sale also help support the high school team that attends the state Envirothon competition and various educational programs and experiences for the public.

- Approximately 290+ orders were filled
- Over 16,000 seedlings were sold
- Program profit totaling \$8,462.90. Thank you!





# HEADWATERS PARK

Each year, the staff at the Conservation District look to the Strategic Plan and the Master Site plan to guide the goals of the year. Headwaters Park is always a project the staff looks forward to working on, envisioning a future for the Park and watching it develop over time into reality, for both current patrons and future visitors.

## Accomplishments in 2018 include:

- Hiring of seasonal intern for the summer months
- Awarded a DCNR Community Conservation Partnership Program grant for \$234,200 to expand, maintain, and improve the Park
- Acquired over 150 mounts, skins, and skulls from the PA Game Commission to create public educational displays for the renovated Natural Resource Center opening in 2019

### Thank You to our Donors!

*Allan Belovarac  
Priscilla Hamilton  
Thomas Kennedy  
Tom McClure  
Patti Myers  
Michael Rutter  
Brian Sherman  
Sarah Streeper*

All donations directly benefit our environmental education programming and care and maintenance of Headwaters Park. Through the generosity and support of our donors, the Trust is able to continue offering this unique treasure to the community. Please visit our website for more information on how to support Headwaters NRC Trust and the Park.



## Memorial Tree Trail

Our new program is a unique way to memorialize or honor a friend or relative. Several trees have been planted in the fall of 2018 to initiate our program and memorialize special people in our community. These trees are native to Pennsylvania and add value to the natural beauty and habitats of Headwaters Park.





## AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITIES

The District has three agriculture programs. They include the Nutrient Management Program (NMP), Manure Management Program (MMP), and the Agricultural Conservation Technical Assistance Program (ACT). These programs provide assistance to farmers and landowners and help meet the goals of the agriculture program at the District. Bethany Fritz, the Ag Specialist, is available to assist farmers and landowners with their concerns. Several workshops and meetings are also hosted throughout the year as well as one on one assistance.

The Agriculture programs in Erie County provide:

- Assistance with all concerns related to agriculture
- Assistance to farmers with writing their manure management plans
- Assistance to farmers and landowners with nutrient management planning
- Assistance to farmers and landowners with planning and implementing best management practices (BMP's)
- Technical assistance to minimize soil erosion for landowners and farmers
- Assistance to farmers and landowners with conservation planning

## GROWING GREENER GRANT

The District continued to utilize their Ag BMP Cost Share grant to assist landowners with installing BMPs on their farms. In 2018 the District was able to complete several projects. These include a large covered heavy use / feeding area and manure storage, an alternative watering source, streambank fencing, two small heavy use areas, and an improved heavy use area and feeding pad.

The grant will now be finished in the summer of 2019. The District is working with several farmers to install BMP's within the French Creek, Conneauttee and Eastern Erie County watersheds.





## BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2018

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John Green - DEP Field Representative

## CONSERVATION DISTRICT STAFF 2018

Tom McClure - District Manager  
Gene Clemente - Technical Resources Manager  
Kristen Currier - Environmental Educator  
Bethany Fritz - Agriculture Specialist  
Joseph Hudson - Watershed Specialist  
Amanda Shreve - Office Manager  
Brian Zeppenfeld - Coastal Zone Specialist  
Ryan Nageotte - VinES Field Technician

