



# ANNUAL REPORT 2019

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## District Highlight

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 a vital component of the Conservation District. Our staff works with municipalities, schools, scouts, and various organized groups and agencies. Focusing on conservation and preservation of our soil and water resources, the District strives hard each year to increase our level of outreach to the Erie community.

- Hosted the PA Farm Bureau Mobile Ag Lab – 263
- Hosted the high school county Envirothon – over 100 high school students, advisors, and volunteers
- Hosted the middle school Envirothon – over 100 middle school students, advisors, and volunteers
- Participated in the Home and Garden Expo with over 8,000 visitors, presenting workshops on rain barrels and gardens
- Participated in the Children's Water Festival at Penn State Behrend campus
- Participated in the Tall Ships Festival on the bay, demonstrating stream conservation to over 50,000



**2,868**  
ELEMENTARY  
SCHOOL STUDENTS

**520**  
MIDDLE/HIGH SCHOOL/  
COLLEGE STUDENTS

**160**  
SCOUTS

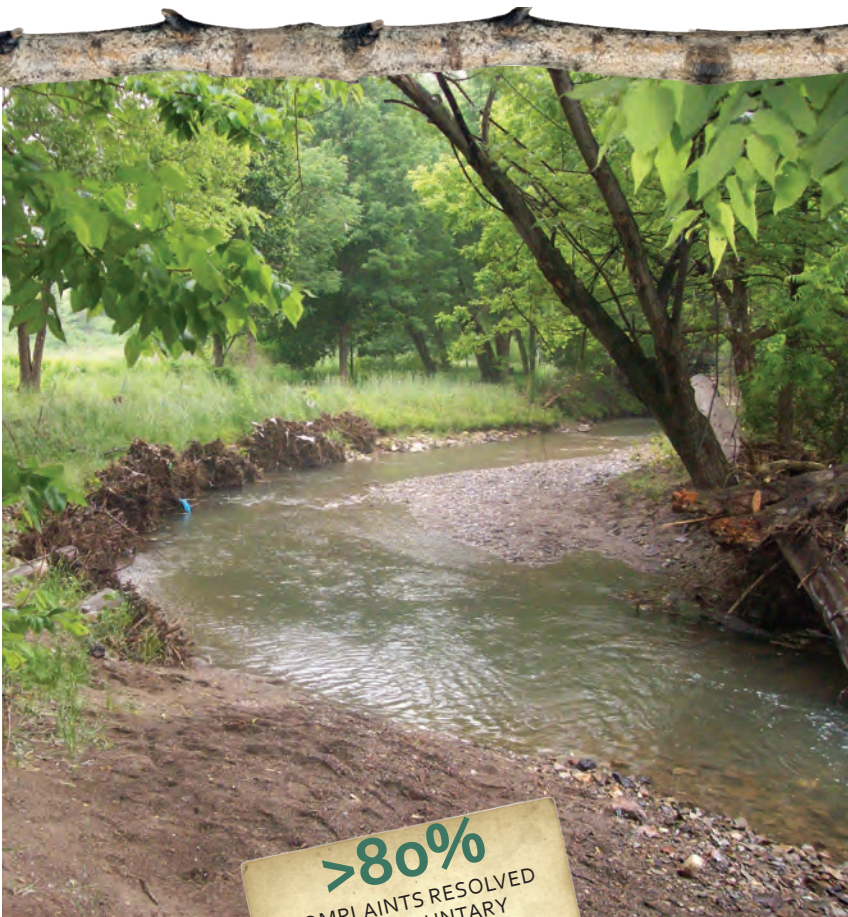
**>100,000**  
TOTAL NUMBER  
INVOLVED IN  
OUTREACH

## CHAPTER 105 – WATERWAY MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

The District's delegated responsibilities, with the Department of Environmental Protection (Department), under the Chapter 105 Program include site investigations of complaints related to potential impacts to regulated waters of the Commonwealth, obtaining voluntary compliance for any on-site violations, providing education and outreach to the community regarding the Chapter 105 rules and regulations, and the processing of the General Permits (GPs) within Erie County. The District processed over 40 GPs in 2019, related to items such as site access, utility line installation, and stabilization of streambanks.

The District investigated over 20 complaints related to Chapter 105, in 2019. The staff attempts, to the greatest extent practical, to achieve voluntary compliance for all violations. Unfortunately, doing so is not always possible and the District must then forward the case to the Department for enforcement action. This year, the District was able to achieve voluntary compliance for all but two of the investigated violations cases, which were forwarded to the Department for enforcement.

Through either organized training events, or less formal individual meetings, over 280 occurrences of assistance were provided in 2019, reaching over 700 individuals. Technical and /or administrative assistance is routinely provided to private property owners, developers, design consultants, contractors, and state and local officials.



**>80%**  
COMPLAINTS RESOLVED  
WITH VOLUNTARY  
COMPLIANCE

**200+**  
INCIDENCES OF  
ASSISTANCE



# EROSION AND SEDIMENTATION CONTROL AND NPDES PROGRAMS

The Chapter 102 program remains the longest tenured program at the District. Initially the program was solely developed to address erosion and sedimentation control related to earth disturbance sites. The intent was to minimize accelerated erosion and subsequent off-site sedimentation, including but not limited to pollution to Waters of the Commonwealth.

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

Over the years, Chapter 102 has evolved to address post construction stormwater under the National Pollution Discharge Elimination Systems (NPDES) permitting program. The primary focus being protection of receiving watercourses related to flow regime and water quality.



The District works closely with local municipalities, in relation to local stormwater ordinances, to minimize duplication of efforts and reduce permit processing times. NPDES Permit processing times remain below the Department's recommended standard operating procedures. Much of this can be attributed to the cooperative efforts with many of the local consultants in the pre-application process.

The end of 2019 ushered in a newly issued General Permit and associated revised Chapter 102 NPDES permitting procedures. We continue to work diligently to assist the regulated community in this transmission.

Over the past year, the District provided program assistance on more than 700 occasions, to a variety of individuals in the community, including municipalities, private property owners, developers, and consultants. Over 80 E&S plans were approved and 35 NPDES permits were processed.



## Cronin Road Drainage Brooks Road Stabilization Plum Road Fill

### Dirt and Gravel Road Program - 2019

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>
Cronin	Waterford Township	\$44,000	\$222,500	\$266,500
Weeks Valley	Venango Township	\$162,000	\$6,400	\$168,400
Plum	Greenfield Township	\$56,900	\$15,400	\$72,300
Finn	Greenfield Township	\$36,900	\$4,100	\$41,000
Brooks	Franklin Township	\$15,800	\$300	\$61,100
<b>2019 Totals</b>		<b><u>Grant Funds</u></b>	<b><u>In-Kind Funds</u></b>	<b><u>Total Project Cost</u></b>
		\$315,600	\$248,700	\$564,300

#### Weeks Valley Before



#### Weeks Valley After



# Low Volume Road Program - 2019

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.



**Horseshoe Road Before**



**Horseshoe Road After**

## 2019 Low Volume Road Projects

<u>Road</u>	<u>Municipality</u>	<u>Grant Funds</u>	<u>In-Kind Funds</u>	<u>Total Project Cost</u>
Koman	Franklin Township	\$128,900	\$35,100	\$164,000
Greene	Greene Township	\$50,000	\$ 10,000	\$60,000
Rick	McKean Township	\$20,100	\$ 10,300	\$30,400
<b>2019 Totals</b>		<b><u>Grant Funds</u></b> \$199,000	<b><u>In-Kind Funds</u></b> \$55,400	<b><u>Total Project Costs</u></b> \$254,400

**Koman Road Before**



**Koman Road After**





2019 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.



Clover Hill finished retention project

**2019 Program Highlights:**  
 workbooks distributed to vineyard owners  
 acres of cover crop planted  
 feet of stabilized access roads installed  
 repaired stream crossing  
 water collection structures installed  
 one-on-one site visits with vineyard owners

Rain barrels and gutters



Stormwater diversion



Stormwater retention basin





Order Preparation

## Seedling Sale

Our 2019 Seedling Sale was again a success, with all proceeds directly benefitting our Environmental Education programs and the care and maintenance of Headwaters Park. Along with several new varieties of seedlings and seed mixes to choose from, the selection has expanded to include several additional species such as horseradish, lilac, and perennials. Also new in 2019 was the opening of our online store and acceptance of credit cards, expanding the ability of our patrons to choose their method of payment and orders. We expect the success to grow in the coming years and to utilize the proceeds to enhance our growing educational programs and continue implementing Headwaters Park's Master Site Plan.



# HEADWATERS PARK

Headwaters Park extended its outreach in 2019, hosting its first annual Easter Egg Hunt in the Park and a Poinsettia Sale in December! With the new board assembled, progress has begun toward organizing regular supporters of the Park's vision and mission. Great strides were made in 2019 also in the DCNR C2P2 grant to expand our trail system into the wetlands, expand our rain garden, and create a Nature Play Area with a renovated and updated Community Garden. Staff and patrons are anxiously awaiting 2020!

## Accomplishments in 2019 include:

- Hiring of seasonal intern for the summer months
- Completing the design and beginning the bid process for our trail and facility expansion
- Hosted over 100 children for the first annual Easter Egg Hunt within Headwaters Park
  - Offered a holiday Poinsettia Sale to support educational and outreach efforts
- Resurfaced bridges with non-slip material; worked with Eagle Scout Hudson Heberlein in the creation of a boardwalk within the vernal pool trail

## Thank You to our Donors!

*Kathleen Bowden  
Teresa Catherine  
Scott Eberle  
Tom McClure  
Patti and Charles Myers  
Natalie Waddell Rutter  
Tom Erdman  
Amanda Shreve  
Brian and Linda McNamara  
Susan Moyer  
Deborah Phillips  
Erica Redmond  
Frances Rosiak*

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.





## 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 completed a \$425,000.00 Ag BMP Cost Share grant to assist landowners with installing BMPs on their farms. Over the course of the grant the District was able to assist nine landowners with installing thirteen BMP's on their property. These included a two large covered heavy use / feeding area and manure storage, two alternative watering sources, streambank fencing, three small heavy use areas, and an improved heavy use area and feeding pad, a milkhouse waste system, and three access lanes. The District is now working on a \$200,000 grant for project to begin in 2020 and also applied for another large Growing Greener Grant to install two very large sand manure systems. If granted work would begin in late 2020.

The District has been very successful with reducing erosion and sediment on properties using the Growing Greener Grant funds and hope to continue in the future.



## BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2019

John Hallenburg, Jr. - Chairman  
Sue Moyer - Vice Chairman  
Bob Buhl - Treasurer  
Amanda Shreve - Secretary  
Kathy Dahlkemper - Erie County Executive  
Deborah Phillips - Farm Director  
Dean Curtis - Farm Director  
Francis Surovick - Farm Director  
Bonita Herman - Associate Director  
Brian McNamara - Associate Director  
Scott Rastetter - County Council Liaison  
Carl Anderson - County Council Liaison - Alternate  
John Green - DEP Field Representative

## CONSERVATION DISTRICT STAFF 2019

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

