

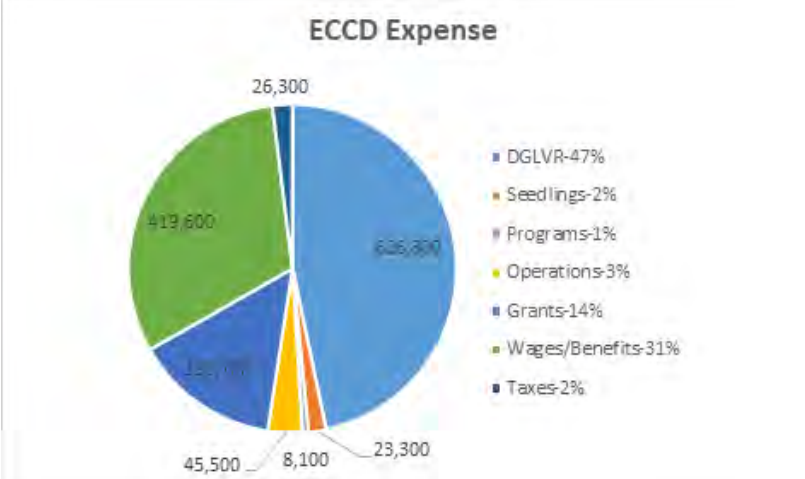
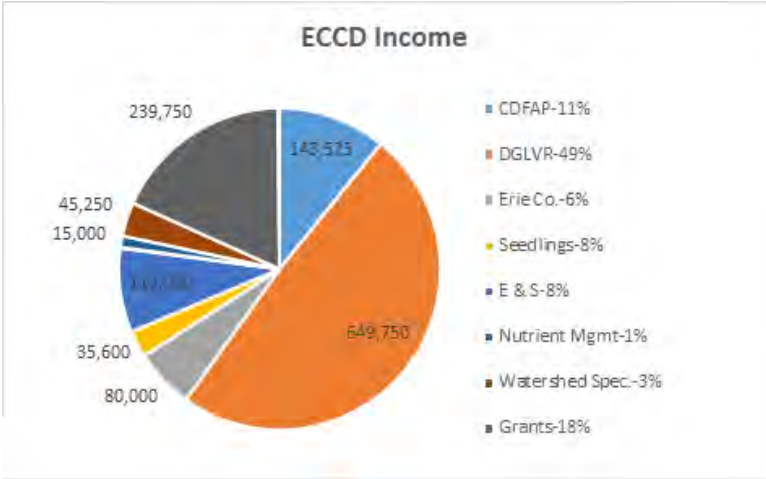


ANNUAL REPORT 2021



Erie County Conservation District Financial Snapshot

The Erie County Conservation District continues its wise use of State and Local funds to put conservation practices on the ground. Leveraging these funds is critical for new grants and the longevity of our programs. Our best resource is our people! A fantastic Staff and a dedicated Board of Directors support our goals and vision.



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.

This Annual Report is dedicated to the memory of our DEP Conservation District Field Representative, John Green.



ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

Programming returned in a hybrid format in 2021 at the Conservation District. Schools and Scouts were able to enjoy outdoor programming throughout the school year and summer, as were teacher in-service programs. The District was pleased to offer formal programming to students at local school districts, scouts, and partner with local agencies to offer further education to teachers.

- Hosted the high school county Envirothon in a hybrid format.
- Schools competed virtually at the high school level and could choose between in-person or virtually at the middle school level.
- Completed several in-person programs with local scout groups.
- Hosted summer programs for the YMCA and other local groups.
- Partnered with DEP and Penn State Extension's Watershed Steward program to offer educational opportunities for educators.
- Created an interactive QR code scavenger hunt for Headwaters Park focusing upon the Mill Creek Flood.
- Installed mobi-mats and educational signage on North East beaches.

OUTREACH NUMBERS

>300

ELEMENTARY STUDENTS

>100

MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS



CHAPTER 105 – WATERWAY MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

The Chapter 105 Program is related to the regulated waters of the Commonwealth, including wetlands and regulated floodways. The District's responsibilities under its delegation agreement with the Department consists of complaint investigation, obtaining voluntary compliance for violations, providing education and outreach to the community regarding the rules and regulations associated with the program, and the processing of the General Permits (GPs) within Erie County.

In addition, the District provides both technical and administrative assistance to private property owners, state and local officials, design consultants, developers, and contractors on a routine basis. This may occur through either structured training events, or more often, one on one individual meetings. In 2021, over 400 instances of assistance were provided.

Additionally, the District investigated 38 complaints related to the Chapter 105 program. While the staff attempts to achieve voluntary compliance for any violations found, it is unfortunately not always an option. When voluntary compliance cannot be achieved, the District must then forward the case to the Department for enforcement action. The District record of achieving voluntary compliance is nearly 90%.

90%
COMPLAINTS RESOLVED WITH
VOLUNTARY COMPLIANCE

>400
INSTANCES OF ASSISTANCE



CHAPTER 102 EROSION AND SEDIMENTATION CONTROL AND NPDES PROGRAMS



The District has implemented the Chapter 102 program for well over forty years. While initially the program focused solely on minimizing the potential for off-site sedimentation, especially to Waters of the Commonwealth, the program progressed in the early 2000s, to address protection and maintaining water quality via post construction stormwater, through various Chapter 102 permits.

All earth disturbances, even those that do not require a permit, fall under the scope of Chapter 102, including those associated with agricultural plowing and tilling, timber harvesting, and road maintenance.

A variety of Chapter 102 permits exist for specific projects types, including timber harvesting and roadway maintenance activities, that fall under the District's delegation. However, the National Pollution Discharge Elimination Systems (NPDES) PAG-02 General Permit (GP), for discharges associated with construction activities, is the primary permit the District is involved with on a day to day basis.

Spring of 2022 will usher in the use of new NPDES PAG-01 GP, for use on small construction projects. The permit is for use in very specific situations, and over the next few months, the District will work with the regulated community and consultants on implementing its use, as appropriate.

The District continues to work closely with local municipalities, in relation to local stormwater ordinances, to reduce permit processing times. In addition, due to the cooperative efforts with most of the local consultants, through the use of the pre-application process, the District's permit processing times remain below the Department's recommended standard.



DIRT AND GRAVEL ROAD PROGRAM - 2021

There are approximately 550 miles of dirt and gravel roads in Erie County. The maintenance of these road can be a challenge to the municipality and can present potential environmental impacts to our local waterways. The Erie County Conservation District receives funds from the State Conservation Commission to assist municipalities through the Dirt & Gravel Road Program to improve road bases, drainage systems and road surfaces.



Ditch Stabilization-Old Wattsburg Road-Union Twp



DSA Placement-Raymond Mills Road-Greenfield Twp

Dirt & Gravel Road Projects

<u>Road</u>	<u>Municipality</u>	<u>Grant Funds</u>	<u>In-Kind Funds</u>	<u>Total Project Cost</u>
Old Wattsburg	UnionTownship	\$75,000	\$20,000	\$95,000
Davis	Greenfield Township	\$154,600	\$41,725	\$196,325
Raymond Mills	Greenfield Township	\$116,425	\$48,725	\$165,150
Swailes	Waterford Township	\$71,500	\$15,000	\$86,500
Page	Venango Township	\$11,500	\$4,950	\$16,450
2021 Totals		<u>Grant Funds</u>	<u>In-Kind Funds</u>	<u>Total Project Cost</u>
		\$429,025	\$130,400	\$559,425

Pipe Replacement-Greenfield Twp



DSA Surface-Greenfield Twp



4,569
TONS DSA PLACED

2
STREAM CROSSINGS INSTALLED

2,550
LINEAL FEET OF UNDERDRAIN

4,978
TONS ROAD FILL ADDED

8
CROSSPIPES INSTALLED

LOW VOLUME ROAD PROGRAM - 2021

The Low Volume Roads program administered locally by the Erie County Conservation District concentrates on 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 program is funded by the State Conservation Commission and assists municipalities with drainage and road base issues along with stormwater solutions.

Tamarack Road Bank Stabilization - Waterford Township



Before

During

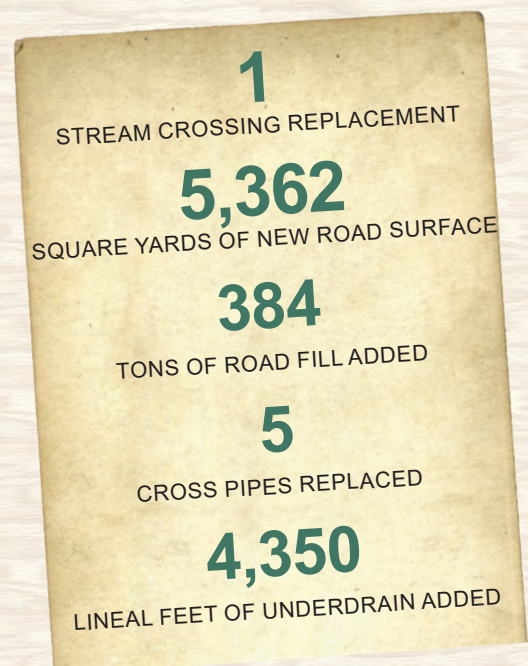
After

Low Volume Road Projects

<u>Road</u>	<u>Municipality</u>	<u>Grant Funds</u>	<u>In-Kind Funds</u>	<u>Total Project Cost</u>
Jones	Greene Township	\$10,100	\$0	\$10,100
Tamarack	Waterford Township	\$27,525	\$ 7,300	\$34,825
Van Camp	McKean Township	\$27,500	\$24,500	\$52,000
Sherman	Elk Creek Township	\$90,000	\$10,550	\$100,550
<i>2021 Totals</i>		<u>Grant Funds</u> \$155,125	<u>In-Kind Funds</u> \$42,350	<u>Total Project Costs</u> \$197,475



Sherman Road
Tile Drainage - Elk
Creek Township

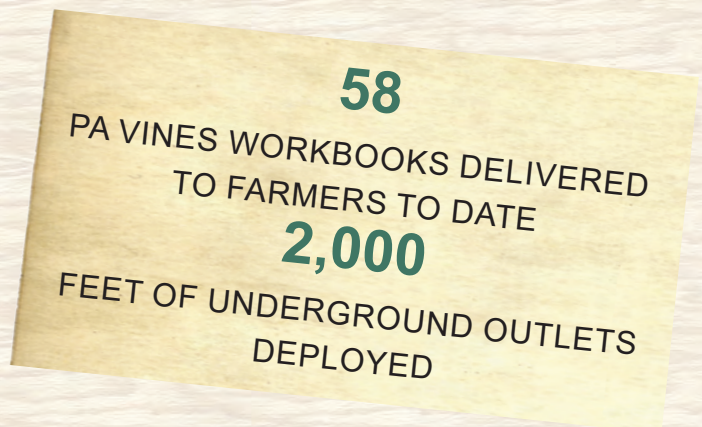
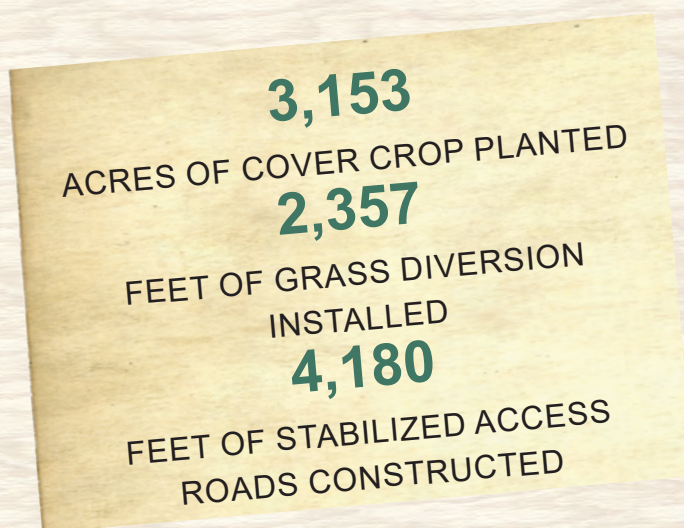


VINES PROGRAM 2021



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.

In 2021, the District received another growing greener grant providing the program with an additional \$250,000 to assist grape growers in the Lake Erie Watershed in their quest for environmental sustainability.



In addition, there are several designs completed and ready for the 2022 construction season, including a large stream restoration project on 12 Mile Creek (pictured to the right).



FEATURED PROJECTS



ReLeaf Project

The District is a proud partner of the Lake Erie Arboretum at Frontier Park's (LEAF) Project ReLeaf. ReLeaf is LEAF's strategic initiative to educate, inspire and empower residents of Northwest Pennsylvania to positively impact the threat of climate change by planting trees. ReLeaf proposes to plant 275,000 trees in Erie County, one for each citizen of the county. The District works to support this program by volunteering and providing technical support to ReLeaf, finding planting sites, educating the public about the program, donating trees, and more.

ReLeaf knows that trees improve water, air, and soil quality. They improve quality of living for humans and animals, lower crime, and raise property values. To this date, ReLeaf has planted 7,343 trees. The District is pleased to add the total sales from the 2021 Seedling Sale and Educational Fundraiser of 7,261 to this amount, for a new total of 14,604.

To volunteer, donate, or request trees, visit www.releaferie.org. Scan the QR code for a quick message from Tom Ridge about the importance of ReLeaf!



Seedling Sale

Sales from our seedlings directly benefit our environmental education program, Envirothon, and Headwaters Park. Thank you for your support!

~375
ORDERS FILLED

~11,000
SEEDLINGS SOLD

\$12,435
PROGRAM PROFIT

Stream Water Monitoring

The District is proud to recognize the efforts of the Pennsylvania Lake Erie Watershed Association (PLEWA) towards their new stream monitoring program. Through a successful Consortium for Scientific Assistance to Watersheds (C-SAW) grant submitted by the District to Stroud Water Research Center (Stroud), PLEWA has received technical support, education, guidance, and sampling equipment from the Alliance for Aquatic Resource Monitoring (ALLARM) at Dickinson College.

PLEWA has worked throughout the past year with project partners to develop a rigorous and scientific monitoring program, prioritizing sampling locations, refine sampling techniques to maintain scientific accuracy, and worked with local universities to spearhead the robust data gathering program. To this date, project support provided by Dickinson College alone exceeds \$7,500 invested in the Erie community. The District is proud to support community-driven conservation and education efforts. Scan the QR code for a message from ALLARM on how water quality testing is done.



HEADWATERS PARK

Headwaters Park expanded its trail system in 2021, reaching out through the wetlands to the eastern portion of the Park. As always, the mission to bring conservation and preservation ideas to the public continued through a new scavenger hunt, social media hints and updates, and both in-person and virtual programming. Staff are so pleased to offer the public new ADA parking spaces in our lower parking lot, offering improved access to our trails and Nature Play Area/Community Gardens.

Accomplishments in 2021 include:

- A new self-guided hike using QR codes focusing on the Mill Creek Flood
- Completing the trail expansion, rain garden expansion, and ADA accessible parking spaces
- Worked with the DEP and Penn State Watershed Stewards for educational programming
- Worked with an Eagle Scout to add several ADA picnic tables in our Nature Play Area

Thank You to our Donors!

*Jennifer Fox
Kathleen Bowden*

*Daniel Drabic
Patti Myers*

*Anitra Gates
Thomas Kennedy*

Conor Marr

Peter and Elizabeth Oven

Steven Ropski

Ruth Speice

Lynette Straite

Peter Tibbetts

Roxanne Tonn

Natalie Waddell-Rutter

Rod and Judy Troester

Numerous anonymous donors

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 goals of the three Agriculture program's in Erie County are to assist farmers and landowners with planning and implementing Best Management Practices, assist with concerns related to animal agriculture and manure management, implement the Nutrient Management and Manure Management programs, and provide technical assistance to minimize soil erosion for landowners and farmers.

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 implement Best Management Practices in 2021 using a \$200,000 grant that will end in 2022. This year's projects included approving an ACT 38 Nutrient Management Plan for a large dairy farm and installing drip-line drainage along with a much-needed manure storage at a large horse stable.

The District has had much success with reducing erosion and sediment on properties using the Growing Greener Grant and hope to continue utilizing this funding source in the future.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2021

Francis Surovick - Chairman
Deb Phillips - Vice Chair
Bob Buhl - Treasurer
Amanda Shreve - Secretary
Kathy Dahlkemper - Erie County Executive
John Hallenburg, Jr. - Public Director
Dean Curtis - Farm Director
Julie Leonard - Public Director
Bonita Herman - Associate Director
Brian McNamara - Associate Director
Scott Rastetter - County Council Liaison
Mary Rennie - County Council Liaison - Alternate
John Green - DEP Field Representative

CONSERVATION DISTRICT STAFF 2021

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
Ryan Nageotte - VinES Field Technician
Brian Zeppenfeld - Coastal Zone Specialist

