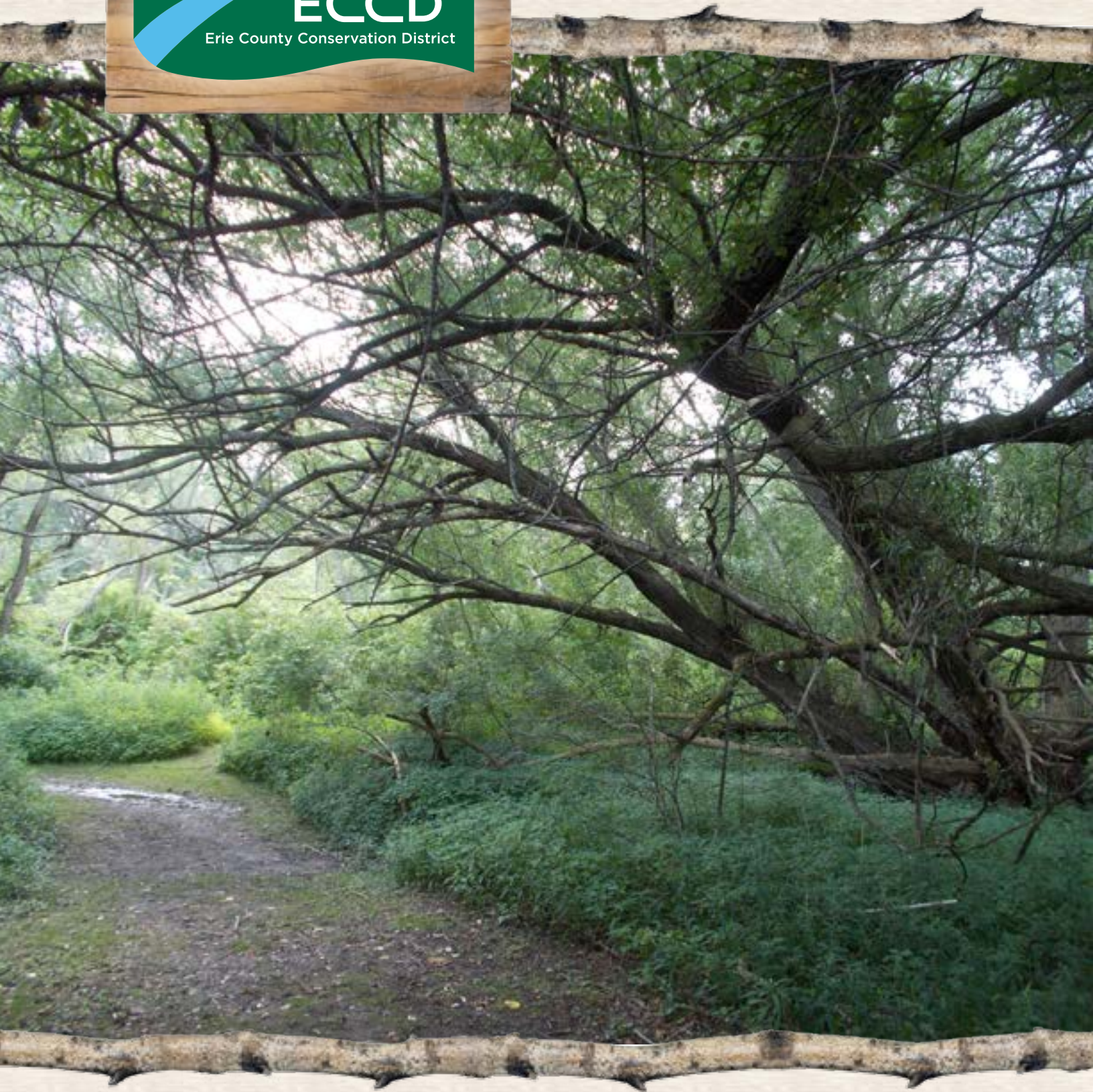




ANNUAL REPORT 2014





YEAR IN REVIEW

The Erie County Conservation District has experienced a year of diverse responsibilities and growth. The District is striving to develop a Master Site Plan for the care and enhancement of Headwaters Park, where nearly 7,000 people engage in educational and family structured environmental events.

The District is preparing to administer a yearly grant of \$458,000.00 to minimize sediments entering our Lake Erie and French Creek Watersheds. Pennsylvania's legislature in the fall of 2013 approved funding for each of the Conservation Districts across the state to establish environmentally sensitive practices to enhance the quality and quantity of Pennsylvania's most valuable resource, our water. This appropriation will support road projects that will minimize road sediments, stabilize road surfaces and disconnect road run off from our streams and wetlands. Townships, boroughs, and cities can all apply for grants on a competitive basis once they attend a two day workshop. The Erie County Conservation District is ultimately the first contact utilized by the residents of Erie County to access information to protect our two most important resources - our water and our soil.

Sincerely,

Earl J. Brown
District Manager

DISTRICT HIGHLIGHTS

After 32 years of hard work and dedication George Peters has retired from the ECCD Board of Directors. George has served the District in many ways over the years, the latest being the District treasurer. He will be greatly missed at the meetings and all the District functions. George has agreed to stay on the Board as an Associate Director, we wish George well in his "retirement".





ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

The District education program continues to grow each year, extending its outreach to all ages.

- Hosted the PA Farm Bureau Mobile Ag Lab – 300+ students
- Hosted the high school county Envirothon – 130+ high school students
- Hosted the middle school Envirothon – 75+ middle school students
- Participated in TREC Youth Training Days for students
- Worked with the Glenwood and Eastside YMCAs for summer programming – 350+ campers
- Worked with the Erie County Master Gardeners to host the 2014 PumpkinWalk – 3,000+ visitors
- Scheduled regular school programming throughout the year
- Continued work with Eagle Scouts and their projects along with partnering with both Mercyhurst and Gannon University to collaborate on student projects and programs such as Gannon's Environaut water quality programs on Lake Erie.

1,661

ELEMENTARY
SCHOOL STUDENTS

847

MIDDLE/HIGH SCHOOL/
COLLEGE STUDENTS

494

COMMUNITY MEMBERS

6,502

TOTAL NUMBER
INVOLVED IN
OUTREACH





THE CHAPTER 105 – WATERWAY MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

The District's duties under the Chapter 105 delegation agreement include education and assistance related to the rules and regulations associated with the PA Code. Additional duties include the review and acknowledgment of Chapter 105 General Permits (GPs), associated with minor encroachments such as stream crossings and streambank stabilization, as well as the inspection of permitted sites and complaint investigation.

- Processed 56 Chapter 105 General Permits
- Investigated 36 complaints
- Inspected 16 permitted sites
- Provided 300+ individuals with education and/or assistance through structured training events or individual meetings

EROSION AND SEDIMENTATION CONTROL AND NPDES PROGRAMS

The District continues to administer the Chapter 102 program, related to erosion and sedimentation (E&S) control, including the National Pollution Discharge Elimination Systems (NPDES) permitting program.

The program involves providing education and routine assistance to municipalities, property owners, and consultants, as well as reviewing plans and issuance of appropriate permits.

- Approved 101 Erosion and Sedimentation plans
- Processed 37 NPDES permits
- Primary activities under the 102 program:
 - Education & outreach
 - Routine site inspections
 - Complaint investigation
 - Compliance achievement
 - Technical & administrative assistance
 - E&S plan & technical review

TROUT IN THE CLASSROOM

Middle and High School students in Erie County are raising trout from egg to fingerling, thanks to innovative public teachers and their partnership with the Erie County Conservation District. The statewide program, Trout in the Classroom, "is an interdisciplinary program in which students in grades 3-12 learn about coldwater conservation while raising brook trout from eggs to fingerlings in a classroom aquarium", according to the TIC website.

Two schools have partnered with ECCD for this project, Wattsburg High School with educator Paul Semrau and North East Middle School with teacher Ian Williams. ECCD staff has worked with both groups throughout the ongoing project, from the arrival of the eggs through the fingerlings release in late spring. Students care for the fish daily, feeding them, monitoring water quality, and recording data.

Both schools have individualized their program to suit their schools' needs. Wattsburg incorporated litter sweeps and invasive species control. North East is beginning an aquaponics program with the fish tank, and also monitoring the health of the stream in which the fish are to be released. We look forward to assisting these schools in the future with their projects.



CROOKED CREEK FISHERIES PROJECT

The Erie County Conservation District is proud to be an advocate for stream restoration and fish habitat improvement in the Crooked Creek watershed. ECCD contacted the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation to express support for the project, as well as to offer educational outreach following completion of the project. A rock and log fish ramp was installed at the intersection of Crooked Creek and Springfield Road. Erosion and down-cutting, attributed to the bridge structure had previously prevented fish passage into the headwaters of Crooked Creek. An educational article with additional project details and milestones, is available in the semi-quarterly District newsletter.





HEADWATERS PARK MASTER SITE PLAN

Headwaters Park is the District's 70 acre expanse of diverse natural resources and the focus of efforts to educate residents about sustaining local land and water resources. In 2012, ECCD applied for grant funding to create a Master Site Plan for the Park to continue its public service while maintaining the Park's natural integrity.

Working with Environmental Design Group to create the Master Site Plan, staff from ECCD have spent the past two years accumulating information and current data on the health of the Park, including:

- Public meetings to gather input
- Wildlife inventories
- A Forest Management Plan
- A wetland delineation
- A park boundary survey
- Weekly water quality data collection of Mill Creek

The District is enthusiastic about the progress of the Plan and looks forward to the final product. The efforts and thoughts of all involved are greatly appreciated, and patrons should anticipate continued and improved care, maintenance, and overall quality of Headwaters Park in the future.





AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITIES

The District has three agriculture programs at this time. They are the Nutrient Management Program (NMP), Manure Management Program, 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. Our Ag specialist is Bethany Fritz; she is available to assist farmers and landowners with their concerns. She also hosts several workshops and meetings throughout the year.

FARMLAND PRESERVATION

The District is still involved with the Farmland Preservation program in Erie County. The program provides funds for the purchase of conservation easements from owners of quality farmland. This will allow more farmland to stay in agricultural use for perpetuity.

- 58 farms and approximately 7,730 acres are preserved in Erie County.
- Three farms for a total of 520 acres were preserved in 2014

GROWING GREENER GRANT

The District finalized an Ag BMP Cost Share grant to assist landowners with installing BMPs' on their farms.

- A large manure storage was completed in 2014
- Total amount of BMP's installed was \$322,660.00

BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2014

John Hallenburg, Jr. – Chairman
Ronald Chapman – Vice Chairman
George Peters – Treasurer
Bob Buhl – Farm Director
Tom McClure – Farm Director
Sue Moyer – Public Director
LeRoy Gross – Associate Director
Kathy Dahlkemper – County Executive
Edward T. DiMattio – County Council Liason
John Green – DEP Representative

CONSERVATION DISTRICT STAFF 2014

Earl J. Brown – District Manager
Gene Clemente – Technical Resources Manager
Brian Zeppenfeld - Coastal Zone Specialist
Bethany Fritz – Agriculture Specialist
Juliet Jones - Administrative Assistant
Kristen Currier - Environmental Educator
Joseph Hudson - Watershed Specialist

