



# The District Digest

## Environmental Education Updates

Enviromental Ed. Updates	Front
High School Envirothon	2
Middle School Envirothon	2
Trout Run Implementation Plan	3
Walnut Creek	3
Act 167	4
Cascade Creek	4
Seedling Sale	5
Learning Garden & Compost Park	5
REAP Update	5
Conservation Farmer Award	6
FSA update	6
Pictures	7
Up Coming Events	Back

Despite our soggy spring, the education programming has been very busy! Along with our annual programs, such as the Envirothon and many local Earth Day events, we have added several new events. We hope to continue these events each year and broaden our outreach to the Erie Community!

This spring, ECCD hosted a photo essay contest for elementary students. Children were invited to send in a photo and short essay describing “Signs of Spring.” Our winner is second grader Elena Halmi from Edinboro Elementary! Her class won an afternoon visit from ECCD full of environmental games and activities. Please see our website to view a gallery of entries!

We have also been approved for several grants to support and expand our education outreach. The DEP has funded a grant to build a community garden and compost park here at Headwaters Park. The garden and park will break ground this summer and begin its first year with the help of local schools. This project is open to the public; anyone interested in participating in the garden this year or in years to come, please contact our office for more information.

A second grant funded by PACD will allow us to host a “Homeowners Conservation Workshop” to be held in October 2011. Please check back and visit our website for more detailed information and times.

For more information about ECCD’s educational programs or events, please contact Kristen Currier at 825-6403 or [kcurrier@erieconservation.com](mailto:kcurrier@erieconservation.com)



## 2011 High School Envirothon

The 2011 High School Envirothon arrived on a sunny, cool morning here at Headwaters Park, along with over 100 students and advisors. Nineteen teams competed on May 5<sup>th</sup>, representing the following school districts:



North East, Fort LeBoeuf, Wattsburg, Northwestern, Millcreek, Erie, and General McLane. The students had worked for months preparing for the event, studying the five focus subjects: Forestry, Soils/Land Use, Wildlife, Aquatics, and the 2011 Current Issue, Salt and Freshwater Estuaries. Students completed exams as a team, proctored by local agencies such as the DCNR, Fish and Boat Commission, PA Game Commission, and NRCS. The day finished up with a picnic lunch provided by Headwaters Park Trust NRC and the award ceremony. The 2011 High School Envirothon Winner is North East High School's team, "Greenflash." Team members are Cody Johnson, Adam Gleishner, Zach Hyman, Caden Greenwall, and Lucas Beardsley.

## 2011 Middle School Envirothon

A new event held this year was the 2011 Middle School Envirothon ! We had tremendous support for our inaugural year, hosting 17 teams at Headwaters park on May 12<sup>th</sup>. Again the weather co-operated and over 80 students and advisors were able to take advantage of this opportunity. The Middle School competition retains the same concept as the high school competition, following the five focus subject format. However, in addition to the students completing short exams as a team, they were also able to engage in hands-on activities at each rotation. Local agencies volunteering their time include: PA SeaGrant, the Erie Zoo, DCNR, and a representative from Mercyhurst College. Students were also challenged with presenting an oral presentation on a current issue in the environmental field. The 2011 Middle School Envirothon Winner is Fairview team "Red." Other school districts that participated in the event include North East, Fort LeBoeuf, the Erie School District, and Perseus House. Team "Red" members are Jordyn Sanner, Nolan Green, Sam King, Alex Robinson, and Anna DiStefano.





## Trout Run Implementation Plan

The implementation plan for Trout Run has taken its first steps forward. The Erie County Conservation District (ECCD) has received grants to enact a completed plan, which will help improve water quality within the water course. Trout Run was chosen because it is a state-listed impaired waterway, and also because of its large role in the trout nursery waters. On June 15, 2009, a public meeting was held at the Fairview Township Building for concerned members of the public liv-

ing within the watershed. The meeting was a large success and many members of the community made the pro-active choice to help pave the way for a successful implementation. ECCD carried out several site visits with private landowners to provide feedback, helpful tips, and to rank the properties for grant funding. In the near future, ECCD is planning to hold a septic system workshop on how to properly maintain and care for a septic system. Other future plans include implementing

streambank restoration on private properties for erosion control, installing agricultural best management practices to help reduce the amount of sedimentation, improvement of stream flow and reduction of nutrients from fertilizers. Through continuous monitoring of the water course, we can evaluate overall water quality and can ensure a healthy stream for many years to come.



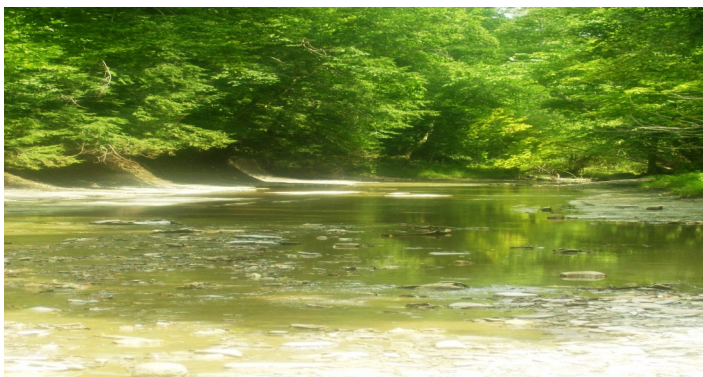
Erosion along Trout Run

## Walnut Creek

Walnut Creek was chosen as a priority watershed for the Northwest Region due its ties with the steelhead fisheries, ability to supply Lake Erie with freshwater, and recreational activities taking place within the stream. The Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) conducted a comprehensive assessment on the environmental conditions. Issues that were identified include loss of wetlands, elevated levels of pathogens, and limited groundwater resources used for drinking water. It was discovered that an increase in stormwater runoff and pollutant loading was low-

ering the populations of aquatic insects, which in turn had lowered the local fish population in the creek. In 2007, it was apparent that a gauging station was needed to help collect the appropriate data to support further assessments. Gauging stations are facilities used to automatically monitor streams, wells, lakes, canals, reservoirs, and/or other water bodies. Instruments at this station collect information such as stream flow velocity, temperature, pH, dissolved oxygen and turbidity. Partners who helped fund this project include S.O.N.S of Lake

Erie, Steelhead Association, Sea Grant, and others. This addition to the creek is able to provide more accurate information for monitoring the stream quality and will help pave the way for any upcoming steps that must be taken to improve the stream.



## ACT 167

Stormwater has been a current issue on the rise for many municipalities across the United States. To help control and deter the affects of stormwater, Pennsylvania enacted a stormwater management program, commonly known as ACT 167 in 1978. Stormwater management involves the control of water that runs off a land surface from rain, melting ice, or snow. Due to the increase of development over the past few decades, construction of impervious surfaces like roofs and parking lots increase the volume and the rate of runoff. When the stormwater flows over these impervious surfaces, it absorbs all the harsh chemicals that lie on the road and can even pick up fertilizers and pesticides that are commonly used on lawns or farms. Once the stormwater reaches a river or stream without a riparian zone, any toxins within the water will seep into that body of water. A large surge in rainwater can cause an increase in flow, which can quickly erode away streambanks and sediment. Currently, Erie County officials are working on a stormwater management plan to help reduce the amount of runoff by identifying areas of concern and designing a plan of action. There are simple measures that can be taken by residents to reduce the amount of stormwater runoff, such as not mowing right up to streambanks. If a vegetative buffer is left around the bank, then plants and trees will act as a filter to slow down the entry of the stormwater and remove a great deal of chemicals in the process.

## Cascade Creek

The Cascade Creek project has restored approximately 500 feet of stream channel, a portion of which runs through Frontier Park located in the city of Erie. The banks along the creek had suffered severe erosion, which is not only a threat to the stream's health, but also to visitor safety. Several major goals were established to help improve the quality of the stream including channel stabilization, habitat and recreation restoration, educational outreach, and monitoring. Channel stabilization was met by installing a plunge pool at the end of the stream which helped to reduce stream velocity. With the velocity of the stream lowered, the water will flow at a slower rate and less sediment will be pulled from the streambank. Habitat restoration was completed by restoring the riparian buffer zone. The riparian buffer zone that was installed is made up of lush, deep rooted vegetation. This buffer will absorb the stormwater runoff that can potentially carry harmful chemicals or pesticides. The riparian zone will also deter park enthusiasts from cutting down the bank, which can help the streams bank remain stabilized along with the deep rooted vegetation that was planted. Stream monitoring has played an important and valuable role on the road to recovery. There are continuing restoration efforts to restore an additional 1,500 feet. Students from local Erie schools will monitor the stream's water quality. This will give the students a chance to experience hands-on learning in environmental education. With hopes of engaging the public, signs were placed along the bank to help educate members of the community on the restoration efforts.



**BEFORE**



**AFTER**

## Learning Garden & Compost Park

The Erie County Conservation District has been awarded a Department of Environmental Protection Environmental Education Grant to fund a Community Learning Garden and Compost Park! The Garden and Park will be built here at ECCD behind the Resource Center for use in environmental programming and public education of agriculture and gardening. Plans include a variety of raised beds, including a low-tunnel bed, a straw-bale bed, concrete block - framed bed, and beds raised and framed for wheelchair accessibility. Our working compost park will feature a 3-bin system, pit system, tumbler, tiered-tire system, and vermicomposting. We will be working with the Harborcreek school system in the 2011-2012 school - year to raise our first crop and harvest! It is our hope and intent that the Erie community and agencies will take advantage of the Learning Garden and Compost Park to explore various manners of home gardening and composting in a hands-on, fun, and relaxing way. The beds and park will be built this summer, followed by our first plantings at appropriate times throughout the fall, winter, and spring season. For more information about becoming involved with the Learning Garden, please contact Kristen Currier at 825-6403 or [kcurrier@erieconservation.com](mailto:kcurrier@erieconservation.com).

## Seedling Sale

Every year the District employees help Headwaters Trust with their annual seedling sale. Orders are accepted throughout February and March. Orders are picked up on the last Friday in April at the Waterford Fair Grounds. The revenue gathered from the sale is used to fund the Envirothon and provide scholarships to students. This year we received 312 orders, which resulted in thousands of seedlings being planted throughout Erie County.

Headwater Trust uses the money raised to pay the expenses for the Erie County winning Envirothon team to participate in the Conservation Leadership School. The Conservation Leadership school is a week long program held at Penn State University where students learn about conservation practices through hands on experience and gain valuable leadership skills.

The District and Headwaters Trust was pleased with the success of this year's sale and has good expectations for the 2012 sale.



## ATTENTION FARMERS REAP UPDATE

### WHAT IS REAP?

The Resource Enhancement and Protection (REAP) Program allows farmers and businesses to earn tax credits in exchange for "Best Management Practices" (BMPs) on agricultural operations that will enhance farm production and protect natural resources.

The program is administered by the State Conservation Commission (Commission) and the tax credits are awarded by the Pennsylvania Department of Revenue.

Best Management Practices include, but are not limited to; Nutrient Management Plan, Ag. E&S Plan and/or Conservation Plan development. BMPs for ACAs and barnyard runoff, stream bank fencing, forested riparian buffers, manure storage systems, alternative manure treatment practices, filter strips, grassed waterways, and no till planting equipment.

Applications will be accepted starting August 1<sup>st</sup>, but can be postmarked by July 28<sup>th</sup>. If you are interested in the program please contact Bethany Fritz at 825-6403 for more information and an application.



## 2010 Conservation Farmer Award

The 2010 Conservation Farmer of the Year award was presented to Doug and Melanie Meabon at our annual meeting in February. Their farm is a 500 plus acre dairy operation. They milk approximately 125 head of Holstein cows and raise several different crops. In their spare time they also make maple syrup. In working with the NRCS and the District The Meabons have installed an overwhelming amount of Best Management Practices to improve water quality and the overall production of the farm. The practices include animal trails, heavy use areas, manure transfer system, silage leachate treatment, stream bank fencing, spring development, nutrient management, crop rotations, and milk house waste irrigation system. If you ever travel by the farm you may see it way up in the field spraying out. These are just a few of the practices. We know there are many more that they have utilized.

The farm was originally started by Doug's Grandparents, eventually being passed along to his parents and then to Doug. Today Doug and Melanie, along with their daughter Beth, manage the operation together.

The Meabons continue to utilize many conservation practices to insure that the farm is around for generations to come. Doug and Melanie are quick to work with the Conservation District and NRCS to improve the farm and to take advantage of the programs and information that is available. Congratulations on their conservation efforts and their award!



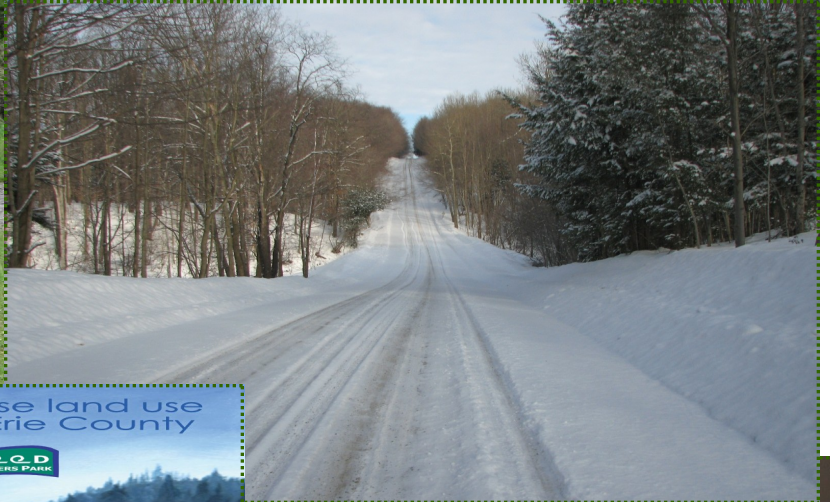
## Farm Service Agency Update

The Farm Service Agency wants to remind perennial fruit producers to file their annual crop reports by July 15th on their grapes/ orchard fruit/ berries. This will alleviate the late file fee being assessed should a disaster program be implemented at a later date. Filing your crop report with FSA also assists loss adjusters as the adjusters request your crop reports and aerial photos of your farms from this office when processing an insurance claim.

Vegetable and fruit producers who had Noninsured Assistance Program (NAP) coverage in 2010 on their noninsurable crops are reminded to submit their 2010 production by July 15, 2011. If not received by the deadline, a zero production will be entered which in turn, reduces your actual production historical yield (APH). APH's may be used when determining future disaster payments.

For further information, please contact your local FSA office at 814-796-6760 Ext 2.









## Erie County Conservation District

1927 Wager Road  
Erie, PA 16509

Phone: 814-825-6403  
Fax: 814-825-6033  
E-mail: [eriecons@erieconservation.com](mailto:eriecons@erieconservation.com)  
[www.erieconservation.com](http://www.erieconservation.com)

Non-profit Org.  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Waterford, PA  
Permit No. 41

**Headwaters Park is now a member of Erie Community Foundation's Nonprofit Partnership! Please consider donating to Headwaters Park on August 2<sup>nd</sup> during the "Erie Gives" fundraiser. See [www.eriegives.org](http://www.eriegives.org) for more details!**

### **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.*

### **Up coming Events**

August 1, 2011 REAP applications due

October 1, 2011 Homeowners Conservation Workshop - Check website for more detail

### **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.*

*Promoting Wise land use Throughout Erie County*