



Northampton Notes

Northampton County Conservation District

Summer 2025

Volume 26 Issue #3



Delaware River Sojourn Participants on June 19 launching from Kittatinny Point

✨ Save the Date! 🌍

Northampton County's Annual
Envirothon Competition

 April 16, 2026
 Louise Moore Park

This year's theme: "Non-Point
Source Pollution: It begins at home!"

More details to come — mark your
calendars!

Visit our  [website](#) for more info



This is an interactive pdf! If you see text
underlined with the  link symbol, you
can click for more information.

Manager's Message

As summer fades into autumn, the seasonal changes at the Conservation District are not limited to leaves turning. As you'll see in this edition the District staff have been busy over the summer. Our new staff is working diligently on building our existing programs and getting up to speed. Of note, NCCD recently was able to re-activate it's Post Construction Stormwater Management delegation from DEP. This allows our local District Engineer to provide a more direct role in permit reviews when it comes to stormwater management, and you can find out more details in the article later in the newsletter.



Later this fall we are also planning a return of our annual Teacher Workshop. This is a frequently requested event that offers a variety of topics that can be useful for teachers to take back to their classrooms. This year's topic will be Backyard Conservation, where teachers will learn about watershed-friendly practices that they can implement at home or at their school. Look for a recap of this event in our next edition!

Welcome New Board Members



Rich Budihas was born and raised in Martins Creek, PA. He is a graduate of Easton Area High School and received his bachelor's degree in engineering from the University of Pittsburgh. After college he served on active duty in the U.S. Army in both Korea and Alaska. After his military service he worked for several chemical manufacturing companies over the course of 30 years in the areas of engineering, operations management and project management. During his business career he continued his education with an MBA from Lehigh University in Bethlehem, PA and a M.S. in Business Analytics from the University of Indiana in Bloomington, IN.

Rich was introduced to conservation and natural resource issues through his interest in fishing and involvement in Trout Unlimited. He has been a member of the Martins Jacoby Watershed Association since its founding and is currently the President of that organization. He is a Penn State Master Watershed Steward.



Richard Budihas



NCCD Receives DEP PCSM Delegation for Permit Reviews



We're pleased to announce that, as of August 15, 2025, Northampton County Conservation District's Post-Construction Stormwater Management (PCSM) Delegation has been reinstated by the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). Our delegation had been temporarily suspended on July 13, 2023, because, without a District Engineer on staff, we were unable to fulfill the terms of the delegation agreement.

In Pennsylvania, a PCSM Delegation allows the DEP to grant authority to a local entity—typically a County Conservation District—to oversee certain program functions. These functions include the technical review and approval of PCSM Plans for land development projects. This delegation enables local districts to manage day-to-day oversight and enforcement, while the DEP maintains overall supervision of the program.

With the reinstatement of our delegation, the District can once again:

- Perform technical reviews of PCSM Plans submitted by developers
- Issue approvals or denials on behalf of the DEP
- Conduct inspections to ensure that stormwater management practices are properly implemented and maintained

Delegating these responsibilities to local CCDs takes advantage of staff with specialized local knowledge and established community relationships. It also allows for more efficient program administration and timely responses to development projects in our area.



Kara's Conservation Corner

Animal Concentration Area Management

When Winter arrives, it brings with it a unique set of challenges to livestock growers; from managing frozen locks, latches, and water troughs, to navigating the freeze-thaw of pastures and the sore hooves that ensue. Animals are typically confined more in the winter, which may require manure storage. Facilities with manure storage need to ensure that there is enough space available for winter manure collection and figure out the timing of when and where to spread manure. This should all be documented in a manure management or nutrient management plan.

If animals are not confined under a roofed area the whole season, or they have loafing time outdoors each day, farmers have the challenge of managing bare soil areas, mud, and wet spots in the paddocks. Animal concentration areas (ACA's), also known as heavy-use areas, are typically found where animals congregate, such as feeding and watering areas, windbreaks, and, in warm weather, shade areas. There is substantial accumulation of animal waste, high soil compaction from hoof traffic, and loss of vegetative cover in these areas. They have high nutrient loading of phosphorous and nitrogen, and, because of the soil compaction, they act as a highway for stormwater runoff. For those reasons, ACA's are considered a resource concern which impacts soil and water quality.

As we enter fall, it is important to find the best location for the ACA. Decide how you might manage it during the season and minimize the area impacted by it. Here are a series of questions to consider when locating your ACA:



Animal Concentration Area (photo credit: Penn State)

-Is the ACA sited as far from surface water, wellheads, sinkholes, groundwater seeps, and wetlands as possible? A high and dry spot is ideal; site it as far from sensitive areas as possible.

-Can clean rainwater be diverted from the area (gutters/downspouts/underground outlets, a diversion)? Diverting rainwater helps keep clean water clean and prevents nutrient runoff.

-Is the runoff water treated downhill from the ACA (vegetated buffer, or well managed pasture with 3+ inches of grass

growing?) A treatment area reduces the negative impacts of the ACA on surface water quality.

-Will manure be collected from this area and stored for a period? If yes, locate stockpile in a high and dry area (away from sensitive areas) and cover with a secured tarp or under a roof

*-How will the ACA be remedied once the growing season begins? Think of what you will be planting there and where the animals will be housed as the area recovers. It is important to keep the animals off the area as long as possible for the grass to grow and roots to establish. **Continued on page 7***



Community Roots: Summer Highlights and Staff Updates



Despite the summer heat and rain, Northampton CCD staff have been out and about at community events!

On June 18th, Monroe County Conservation District organized a River of the Year Festival for the Delaware River in Minisink Park. Watershed Specialist Paige Strasko attended and set up a joint table with the Watershed Coalition of the Lehigh Valley, and President of the Tobyhanna Creek Tunkhannock Creek Watershed Association, with some cool new handouts from the District! Paige also helped with the Delaware River Sojourn in Northampton County on June 19th, shown on the cover page.

July 22-26 was the Plainfield Farmer's Fair where Agricultural Conservation Specialist Kara Hasko and Paige Strasko set up the District's display. There were pamphlets and resources available at the Fair about the District's educational services and agriculture information for farmers and families in attendance. July 26, Paige assisted the Borough of Bath and the Master Watershed Stewards with a rain barrel workshop for Borough residents. On July 27th, Kara and Paige were at Easton Urban Farm's Squash Fest to support the urban farm community and connect with residents about farming and programs the District offers county residents.

In August, Paige was interviewed by a Nazareth High School student for his new environmentally focused podcast- Nazareth Green Pulse. Check it out if you get a chance! Lastly, from August 12-16th, the Conservation District had an informational table and display at the annual Blue Valley Farm Show in Bangor. Educational information was available for attendees, similar to Plainfield Farmer's Fair. Keep an eye out for the District at more local events, and let us know if there is an event in Northampton County you would like to see us participate in!



Did you know?

Over 75% of flowering plants rely on pollinators—including many of our fruits and vegetables. Planting native wildflowers supports both pollinators and biodiversity in your watershed!



What Fall Means for Your Local Ecosystem



There are many ways that we can observe the seasons changing aside from temperature. With fall on its way, we'll start to see leaves changing and falling, some animals preparing to hibernate, and less noise from summer insects. These changes are natural and are an important part of various plants and animals getting ready to survive the winter months.

When trees drop their leaves, it isn't just a beautiful sight; it's also an essential part of the season. Fallen leaves that cover the forest floor help return needed nutrients to the soil. Important insects such as bees, beetle species, butterflies, moths, and even some amphibians all rely on leaf litter to nest during winter. But in cities and suburbs, fallen leaves behave differently.



When leaves pile up on streets and sidewalks, rain washes them into storm drains. They can lead to clogged pipes and add too many nutrients — like nitrogen and phosphorus— to the water. These types of nutrients can cause a few different problems:

- Algae blooms that lower oxygen in the water, stressing fish and insects.
- Blocked stream channels that change water flow, leading to erosion or localized flooding.
- Habitat smothering for aquatic insects like stoneflies and craneflies, which are key to the food web.

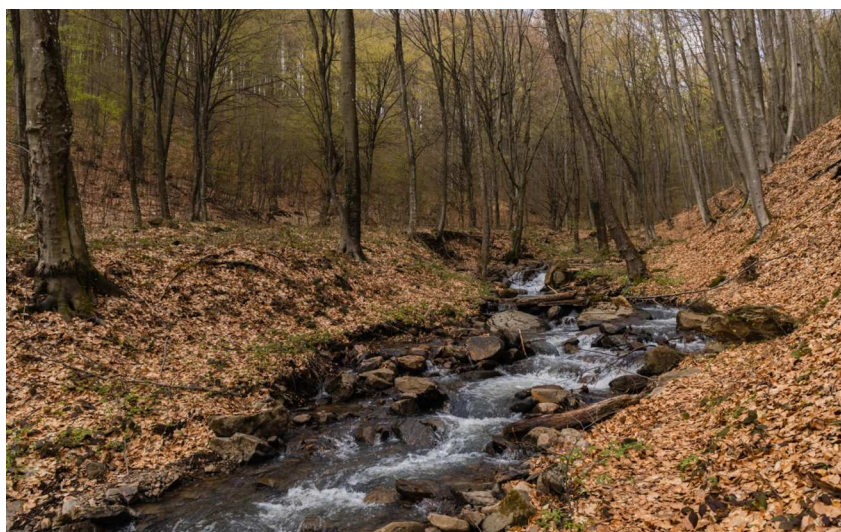
Why is this such a problem if there are more leaves in a forest than what is on a street tree? The difference between the two is time. Leaves break down in the forest naturally over time and aren't all washed into the stream. However, in more developed areas, storm sewers take leaves and other debris directly into the stream. This funnel effect creates possible spikes in nutrients and other pollution such as road salt, vehicle fluids, and litter. To learn more about leaf litter and stormwater, check out the link below for a USGS study on stormwater management through leaf collection.

Although issues may arise in urban and suburban areas, there are positives to the change of seasons too. Cooler fall and winter temperatures allow water to hold more dissolved oxygen, which helps fish and aquatic insects survive colder temperatures. With fewer leaves on trees, more sunlight can reach streams, supporting plants and aquatic species that rely on light. Seasonal leaf fall also provides important food and shelter for insects and wildlife in forests and natural areas. These seasonal shifts remind us that while they can cause challenges in developed landscapes, they are also an essential part of the natural cycle.

As we enjoy the crisp air and colorful scenery, we can also do our part to keep local waterways healthy. Simple actions like composting leaves, mulching them into your lawn, or leaving them where they fall in your yard can make a big difference. Together, we can appreciate the beauty of fall while protecting the streams that flow through our communities.

Check out the links below for more information on season changes and leaf litter.

- [Leaf Litter and Stormwater Study - USGS](#)
- [Leaf Pack Network - Stroud Water Research](#)
- [Autumn Phenology Notes - Penn State Extension](#)





Backyard Erosion and Sediment Control

Does the photo to the right look familiar? Many homes may experience similar water issues to the downspout shown, but the average homeowner can play a significant role in managing erosion and sediment on their property simply by paying close attention to their gutter and downspout systems. Proper implementation of these systems is a powerful first step, as they are the primary defense against concentrated stormwater runoff that can wash away soil and create costly damage. By directing water away from vulnerable areas, homeowners can effectively prevent erosion at its source and contribute to the health of local waterways.



Things to Consider:

Assess the Drainage Path: Before altering or installing anything, observe the natural flow of water during a heavy rain. Identify where water from the downspout is currently going and where it could safely be directed. The goal is to move water at least 3-6 feet away from the foundation and onto a stable, vegetated area or a purpose-built drainage feature.

Splash blocks (concrete or plastic) are a simple, short-term solution for spreading water out at the base of the downspout.

Maintain slope: For above-ground extensions, ensure the pipe has a gradual downward slope (at least a quarter inch per foot) to allow water to flow freely and prevent it from pooling.

Avoid Paved Surfaces: Do not direct water onto a driveway or sidewalk, as this can cause slippery conditions in winter and increase discharge velocity.

Vegetated Area: Direct the water onto a lawn or garden area that is not a steep slope. The plants and soil will absorb the water, decreasing and possibly preventing runoff.

Splash Pad/Riprap: For areas with limited vegetation, install a rock-lined splash pad or a small section of riprap at the end of the extension. This will safely dissipate the energy of the water and prevent it from carving a trench in the lawn.

Underground piping is the most permanent solution, but it requires more work. It involves burying the pipe and directing the water to a dry well, rain garden, or a safe outlet point

By following these steps, a homeowner can effectively redirect stormwater away from their foundation and prevent it from causing damaging erosion and sedimentation on their property. Be sure to consult a professional if you're unsure of what the best steps would be for your specific lawn. For more information and tips on backyard erosion controls and rain garden construction, visit Penn State Extension's site to read their [Rain Garden Resources](#) article.



Conservation Trivia:

Which of these backyard features is most helpful to pollinators?

- A) Bird feeders
- B) Bee hotels
- C) Windchimes

Answer on the back page!

The Washington Soil Series

A Soil Worth Saving



The Washington Soil Series is the most productive soil and is the foundation of many agricultural activities in Northampton County. The soil series in the county extends in a wide band from Northampton Borough and Bethlehem on the west to Sandt's Eddy/Mud Run and South Easton on the east. Large areas also occur south of South Mountain in Saucon Valley and Stout's Valley. Although much of the area has been developed over the years, many of the remaining undeveloped areas are farmed for corn, soybeans, hay, or used as pasture.

The Washington Series, also referred to as Washington silt loam formed on nearly level to gently rolling uplands from frost-churned glacial till and weathered limestone. Many of the common sinkholes throughout the Lehigh Valley have formed in Washington soils due to dissolution of the limestone parent material and soils collapsing into the voids when hydrology is altered or at seemingly random times.

If properly managed and treated, Washington soil can produce 125 bushels/acre of corn and 55 bushels of wheat, which makes it the most productive soil in Northampton County. The soils are so productive because the topsoil layer is a silt loam with high available moisture capacity and has a very high soil loss tolerance. The soils are well drained but continue to hold moisture, even through short droughts. In fact if you drive from Blue Mountain south through the shaly section of the county in a dry period, you may see wilted corn until you descend into the limestone valley where corn will still be bright green, stout and healthy.

Although the Hazleton series is Pennsylvania's official state soil, we soil lovers in the district believe the Washington Series should be a strong runner up. Every employee in the District strives to conserve all soil types and work hard to prevent erosion, whether it be at construction sites or in farm fields.

Photo: A Northampton County Envirothon student examines the Washington Soil Series in Bethlehem Township



Animal Concentration Area Management (continued)

Animal Concentration Areas should be included in your manure management plans and nutrient management plans. If they are larger than 5,000 square feet, there should also be an agriculture erosion and sediment control plan (E&S plan), as required by Pennsylvania DEP. There are financial assistance programs to help improve heavy-use areas/ACA's on farms and reduce impacts on soil and water quality. There are also programs which reimburse farmers for Nutrient Management and Erosion & Sediment Control Plans. Please [contact the District](#) for more information.



(photo credit: Gutter Tech Enterprise)



Upcoming Events

Lehigh Valley Watershed Conference

On Tuesday,
October 14th,
the Watershed
Coalition of the
Lehigh Valley
(WCLV) will be
holding the
10th Lehigh
Valley



OCTOBER 14, 2025 • BETHLEHEM, PA

Watershed Conference at the Ben Franklin Institute. It
will be a full day of educational talks for people of all
backgrounds. For more information, visit the WCLV's
[website](#).

Teacher Workshop



This October, NCCD will be
holding our annual Teacher
Workshop to provide
continuing education to local
teachers and give them a
chance to get out in the field!
This year's topic is Backyard
Conservation where we will get
to learn about recycling,
composting, and so much
more! Check out our [website](#)
for more updates.

Conservation Trivia Answer

B) Bee Hotels! (and
other pollinator friendly
plants/habitats)

For more fun facts and
trivia questions like
this, check out our
Facebook page [here](#)
and give us a Like and
Follow!



District Directors

Joel Geiger, Chairman
Brian Fulmer, Vice Chairman
Jeffrey Keifer, Farmer Director
Will Carpenter, Treasurer/Public Director
Richard DiFebo, Farmer Director
Jeff Warren, County Council Director
Rich Budihas, Public Director

Associate Directors

Positions open!

District Staff

Nate Pritchard, District Manager
Meara Hayden, PE, District Engineer
Jonathan Fox, 102 Program Coordinator
James Lawrence, Conservation Specialist
Nick DiPaolo, Conservation Specialist
Walter Stremouchow, Conservation Specialist
Alexis Krukovsky, Conservation Specialist
Paige Strasko, Watershed Specialist
Kara Hasko, Agricultural Conservation Specialist
Carrie Cevicelow, Clerical Specialist

[District Board meetings](#) are open
to the public and are being held
virtually and in person on the second
Tuesday of each month at the Lower
Nazareth Township Building Suite 110,
623 Municipal Drive, Nazareth PA.

Conservation District office hours are
Monday through Friday, 8 am to 4 pm