

# ***Crawford County Conservation District***

## ***2010 Annual Report***





**The Sky's The Limit!**  
**Conserving Crawford County Resources**  
**Since 1956**

Cover Photo- Bat expert and Conservation District Environmental Educator of the Year Award winner Terry Lobdell leads a group in photographing resident bats at the Woodcock Creek Nature Center.


**Mr. Terry Lobdell** was awarded Crawford County Conservation District's Conservation Educator of the Year award for 2009. Presenting the award (in 2010) on behalf of the Conservation District, Environmental Educator Kathy Uglow praised Mr. Lobdell for his dedication in providing education to people of all ages on the natural history, habits, and value of bats. Terry has hosted a number of programs at the Woodcock Creek Nature Center on bats, where his enthusiasm and respect for the animal have impressed everyone able to attend. He has also constructed and set up a number of bat houses around the nature center, some of which are "rocket boxes" that allow people to view the bats inside. He has hosted workshops where everyone gets to make their own bat box to take home. He devotes countless hours and great energy to doing everything possible to enhance bat habitat around the nature center, and to pass on his knowledge and expertise. If you happen to see one of his programs coming up here at the Woodcock Creek Nature Center, register quickly, because Terry's programs, each different from the other, fill up fast!

**Did you know?** Bats have lived in America since the age of dinosaurs, but today rank among our most endangered species of wildlife? <sup>1</sup>

 Bats eat huge quantities of insects, many of which are harmful to agriculture.

 The little brown bat, one of our most common bats in Pennsylvania, is currently threatened by White Nose Syndrome.

 Loss of bats can be economically and ecologically disastrous.

 Do what you can! Learn more; Put up bat houses; Conserve good bat habitat; Avoid disturbing hibernating bats.

**All Photos in this report by Kathy Uglow unless otherwise specified**

**Crawford County Conservation District  
Woodcock Creek Nature Center  
21742 German Road  
Meadville, PA 16335  
(814) 763 5269**

### **OUR MISSION STATEMENT**

The mission of the Crawford County Conservation District is to protect, conserve, and restore the natural resources of the county for present and future generations by actively seeking resources and partnerships to achieve these goals through voluntary cooperation.

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<sup>1</sup> Bat Conservation International, 1996

## Crawford County Conservation District



**Above photo, from left: Crawford County Commissioner Jack Preston; District Director Greg Kedzierski; Commissioner/Director C. Sherman Allen; & Commissioner Morris Waid**

We are grateful for the help and assistance that we receive from the Crawford County Commissioners. A conservation district is guided by a district board consisting of local people who understand local issues and natural resource needs.

The Commissioners appoint those board members from a list of nominees received from county-wide nominating organizations. Over the years the Commissioners have been careful to appoint responsible District Board members who represent all geographic areas in the county and who have the vision needed to provide for the conservation of natural resources that will insure the prosperity and well being of current and future Crawford County residents. With the help of county financial and moral support, we are able to provide the services that the community requires.

### WHO WE ARE: District Directors

**Our District Directors, appointed by the County Commissioners, are your neighbors. They serve voluntarily to provide for the Conservation of Natural Resources in Crawford County.**



District Directors: (In photos, from left) Chairperson Sarah Sargent, Treasurer Heidi Moorhead, Vice-Chairman Vern Knapp; Farm Director Greg Kedzierski, Farm Director George Greig, Commissioner Director C. Sherman Allen and Farm Director Glenn Kenny.

**Who We Are: Associate Directors** : Associate Directors are appointed by the District Chairman. They are non-voting board members who contribute to district planning and projects.



Currently serving as Associate Directors are (Photos, from left): Ryan Nageotte, Andy Hyde, Robert Agnew, Roger Williams, and Rob Waddell. Also serving but not pictured: Carol Custead, Jason Pears, Dennis Rynd, Matthew Shaffer, and Lewis Walker. Associate Directors, like Directors, provide their community service voluntarily.

**Who We Are: District Staff**: The staff of the Crawford County Conservation District is charged with executing programs of the Crawford County Conservation District and providing service to the public.



Shown Clockwise from top left: Brian Pilarcik, Watershed Specialist; Kathy Uglow, Environmental Educator; Laura Dengler, Administrative Assistant; Tracey Crawford, Ag Engineering Technician; Lynn Sandieson, District Manager; Maria Anderson, E&S Technician.

### **What is a Conservation District?**

Conservation Districts are responsible for the conservation of soil, water, air, and natural resources within their counties. First formed by national legislation in the 1930s to combat the affects of the dust bowl's soil erosion, Districts are now found in every state and territory in the United States. The Crawford County Conservation District was established by the County Commissioners on February 17, 1956, after over 100 farmers signed a petition requesting that a district be formed. In Pennsylvania, Districts are subdivisions of state government as defined by Conservation District Law. They fall under the umbrella of the State Conservation Commission.

### **How is the District Administered?**

The guiding principal behind Conservation Districts is that local people are best suited to identify and protect the natural resources in their areas. The Conservation District is administered by a local board of 7 Directors who are nominated by county-wide organizations and appointed by the County Commissioners to serve four-year terms. Board members serve their communities voluntarily. They set the policy and the goals and objectives of the Conservation District. The District staff is charged with carrying out the conservation district's program.

### **Nominating Organizations**

As stated above, county-wide organizations approved by the State Conservation Commission nominate community leaders with a conservation ethic to serve as Directors on the Conservation District. The County Commissioners then appoint candidates from the list to serve four-year terms as Directors on the District Board. We are grateful to our nominating organizations for their help in providing us with a strong, committed Board of Directors.

Our nominating organizations are: Crawford County Cooperative Extension Service; Crawford County Farm Bureau; Crawford County Pomona Grange; League of Women Voters, Meadville; Crawford County Farm Service Agency; Titusville Area Chamber of Commerce; Cochranon Cooperative Association; Crawford County Holstein Club; and DairyLeas Co-Op Association.

**District Annual Awards & Dinner Meeting**The Crawford Conservation District held its Annual Luncheon Meeting on February 18, 2010 at the Conference Center at the Days Inn, Meadville.



Our speaker was beekeeper Charlie Vorisek, who spoke on the value of honeybees and the joys and challenges of being a modern day beekeeper. Charlie has donated a visible bee hive to the Woodcock Creek Nature Center which is a major attraction to visitors.

Director **Sarah Sargent** served as Master of Ceremonies for the dinner, where Awards were presented to the following people for their outstanding accomplishments in Conservation: The District's **Conservation Farmer of the Year** award for excellence in Conservation Farming was awarded to **Craig , Karen, and Jason Hayes of Hay-Lo Farms**. The award, presented by **Jody Lasko**, District Conservationist for the Natural Resources Conservation Service, is granted by the Conservation District to a farm operation that has done an outstanding job of installing Conservation Best Management Practices to conserve soil and protect water quality.



Mark Lewis, DCNR Forester, presented the Mr. and Mrs. David of forest stewardship they



Bureau of Forestry Service Outstanding Forester Award to Yasenchack for the wonderful job have done on their property.



The Conservation District also awarded a Conservation Innovator Award to the Bortnick Farm, for their groundbreaking work in using a methane digester on their dairy farm. Photo left: District personnel touring the generator on the Bortnick farm. Photo Right: Donald and Ann Bortnick receiving the award from District Director George Greig (In left of photo.)

# Conservation Education

## Woodcock Creek Nature Center



### Programs at the Woodcock Creek Nature Center

The Crawford County Conservation District runs the Woodcock Creek Nature Center and Stainbrook Park, both located just north of Meadville on German Road in Woodcock Township. The District offers year-round educational programs for the public at the center, and keeps the park open in the summer for the enjoyment of Crawford County residents and visitors.

Kathy Uglow, Environmental Educator for the Conservation District, is responsible for setting up a wide variety of programs at the Nature Center. To see our current schedule of events, please check out the District's web site at: [www.crawfordconservation.com](http://www.crawfordconservation.com), or call Kathy at the Nature Center. (Kathy is shown at left doing Earth Day activities at the Nature Center.)



Almost all of the District's programs are offered free of charge. If you would like to attend a program, please call to reserve your spot! In 2010, we offered 48 education programs at the Nature Center and had approximately 775 attendees. Listed below is a sampling of the programs offered.

- *"Incredible French Creek"* (Andy Walker)
- *"Backyard Sugaring"* (Laura Dengler, Mark Lewis)
- *"Healthy Homes, Healthy Children"* (Allegheny College students)
- *"Great Backyard Bird Count"* (Sarah Sargent)
- *"Snowshoe Stomp and Tromp"* (Allegheny College Outing Club)
- *"Ice Fishing"* (Chad Foster)
- *"American Beavers"* (Ryan Nageotte)
- *"Freshwater Mussels"* (Darran Crabtree)
- *"Purple Martins"* (John Tautin)
- *"Big Trees"* (Mark Lewis)
- *"Come on and Take a Free Ride", "Bike Repair for Youth," and "Bike Repair for Adults"* (Ben Masters)
- *"Making a Nature Journal"* (Kathy Uglow)
- *"Nature Journaling"* (Kathy Uglow)
- *"Bee Friendly Gardening"* (Bertha Mesearch)
- *"Aquaponics Field Trip to Allegheny College"* (T. J. Eatmon)
- *"Build Your Own Composter"* (Gloria Kelly)



Ice fishing!



### Snowshoeing!

- "Basic Maps" (Brian Pilarcik)
- "Flower Pounding" (Kathy Uglow)
- "Summer Tree ID" (Mark Lewis)
- "Wildflowers Walk" (Lynn Sandieson)
- "Inside the Hive" (Charlie Vorisek)
- "Nature Scavenger Hunt" (Laura Dengler, Kathy Uglow)
- "Fall Foliage" (Mark Lewis)
- "Bat Rocket Boxes" (Terry Lobdell)
- "Making Pressed Flower Bookmarks" (Kathy Uglow)
- "Fall Afternoon Bird Walk" (Sarah Sargent)
- "Safe Cleaning Products" (Melissa Dengler)
- "Curious About Conifers" (Mark Lewis)

- "Family Fishing" (Chad Foster)
- "Snakes" (Stephanie Feineigle)
- "Dragonflies and Damselflies" (Darran Crabtree)
- "Night Bat Count and Walk" (Terry Lobdell)
- "Preserving Program" (Janice Ronan)
- "Backyard Chickens" (Tracey Crawford, Maria Anderson, William Yockey)
- "Create an Herbarium" (Tracey Crawford, Maria Anderson)
- "Basic Compass" (Brian Pilarcik)



### Snakes!

- "Creating Cards" (Kathy Uglow)
- "Crafting Holiday Ornaments" (Maria Anderson, Tracey Crawford)
- "Rags 2 Riches" (Elizabeth Ozorak, Emily Burnett)

### In-School or Other Educational Outreach Programs/Projects:

- Did *Enviroscape* presentations for three groups of fourth graders at Cochran Elementary School.
- Did *Recycling Relay* program with the Maplewood 7<sup>th</sup> grade in April.
- PA Virtual Charter School field trip at Stainbrook Park in May. Partnered with Chad Foster.
- Did presentations at Conneaut Lake (K, 1, 2), Saegertown (K --stream walk, 1, 2) and West End (2) Elementary Schools.
- Presented "*Watersheds*" in-school programs (Dec. 8) for Saegertown Kindergartens.



### Building a Composter

- Presented at two Lion's Club luncheon meetings. One on *Big Trees* with Mark Lewis and one on *Geocaching*.
- Partnered with Valesky's, Tops, and H&H Grocery Stores and the Saegertown and Second District Elementary Schools to offer the third annual "*Earth Day grocery bag project*." 450 bags were designed.
- Presented two public programs at the Cambridge Springs Library--one on *Rain Barrels* with Tracey and one on *Watersheds*.
- "*Outdoor Trash Talking*" program at the Pymatuning Sportman's Club Youth Field Day on June 26. There were about 200 youths at the field day.



- "*Groundhog Day Celebration*" event at Nature Center in February. Wilford then ran for Grand Leprechaun in the Meadville contest in March.
- Attended three Kiwanis luncheon meetings and presented on *Maple* (Laura ), *Big Trees* (Mark), *Geocaching* (Kathy). Also spoke briefly at the Farmer's Appreciation luncheon.
- Gave a presentation about the Nature Center and our education programs to Professor Eatmon's Environmental Education class from Allegheny College.
- Offered a "*Treeific*" program for Northwest PA Woodland Association with Mark Lewis on August 14.

### "Ring around the Willow" at the Treeific Program

- Presented "3R's" program and planted a tree with girl scouts on May 10.
- Set up a display for the Creek Connections Symposium.

- Installed a display on “Don’t Rush to Flush” at the Crawford County Fair.

Additional projects/programs

- Envirothon and Envirothon training
- The Conneaut Lake Rain Barrels workshops in May and August. (Lynn Sandieson, Brian Pilarcik, Kathy Uglow)
- The *Dig into Soils Nature Camp*



**Birding with Sarah Sargent**

- Some Displays in Nature Center in 2010
- New addition—Bat observation box that can be raised and lowered to view the bats inside the box

- New addition -- Field Guides display with various field guides available for purchase
- New addition--Activity Bag Kits for visitors to check out and use outside at the Nature Center (Tracey’s project)
- New addition--Aquaponics system and a craft that reuses CDs to make ornamental fish
- Proper Disposal of Pharmaceuticals display in bathroom!
- Wildlife and Habitat
- Carniverous Plants bulletin board
- Birds and birdsongs
- Spiders
- Deer
- Tree and Leaf Identification
- PA Flora and Fauna
- Forest Management
- Butterflies
- Animal tracks plaster footprint casts and sand play area
- Freshwater Mussels
- Display on how long it takes for different materials to decompose
- Various touch board quiz topics (pharmaceutical disposal, groundhogs, butterflies, etc.)
- Green Wrapping display
- Live Christmas Trees display

**Additional Nature Center Activities**

**Self-guided Tree Identification Walk** - The Nature Center and adjoining Stainbrook Park has a self-guided tree identification walk set up by Mark Lewis of the DCNR Bureau of Forestry. There are trail keys in the Nature Center, and you may also access the trail key on the District’s web site, [www.crawfordconservation.com](http://www.crawfordconservation.com).



**Bat Houses** - Bat expert Terry Lobdell has established a number of bat houses (**see photo, cover, of Terry showing one of the houses at a Nature Center Program**) around the Woodcock Creek Nature Center. Our winged companions keep troublesome insects under control naturally. Bat houses are also for sale at the Nature Center.

**Native Plant Gardens** - The outside of the WCNC features native plant gardens as well as bird feeders. The natural setting provides a good spot to view wildlife.

**Interactive Displays** are always available at the Woodcock Creek Nature Center, and the displays are always changing. Some shown in 2010 were: A Touch Screen Environmental Quiz computer, Wetlands, Stormwater, Pervious Concrete, Integrated Pest Management, Insects, Freshwater Mussels, Energy Conservation, “Animal Groups” (touch board display), animal tracks display and play area, Maple Displays, Tree and Leaf Identification, Butterflies, and Birds and Birdsongs.

In addition to the displays, lots of free educational materials are available at the Nature Center for people of all ages and interests.

**Visible Bee Hive** – In 2009 we received a busy addition to the nature center – a live bee colony! Thanks to Charles Vorisek, who donated the bees, and the Meadville Kiwanis Club, who donated the “visible” hive, visitors to the nature center can observe bees coming and going right behind the glass panel of their hive structure – which has been built right into the wall of the Woodcock Creek Nature Center. Intern Mary Ann Mennano crafted a display to help explain some of the bees’ behavior. We spent the summer in awe of the hard working little insects as we watched them pollinate the flowers around the nature center.




**The Pete Yeager Memorial Nature Trail** – In 2009, using funds from the Peter A. Yeager Memorial fund and the Meadville Kiwanis, District staff blazed a nature trail that leads from the Woodcock Creek Nature Center down to Stainbrook Park. Featuring meadow, forest, and streamside habitats, the trail has many areas on it that highlight natural areas, and makes a nice transition from the Nature Center to the park.

### Nature Camp



In 2010 The Crawford County Conservation District presented its first Summer Nature Camp!

**Dig in  to SOIL!** The camp ran for three days and was available to children ages 5-8. For a cost of \$25, students were introduced to the world of soils through hands on activities, hikes, games, stories and crafts. Each day began at 9:00 am with an ice breaker game and a short fun filled lesson on soil. Students were then able to get out and go on rock walks and soil hikes. Snack time (*dirt dessert, of course*) was followed by crafts including making sand vases, dirt shirts, soil crayons and soil paint. Each day ended with a

story time and time for lunch. On the last day, campers and their families were treated to a picnic at Stainbrook Park. Participants not only took home their dirt shirt, a soil scoop and a photo CD, they gained an appreciation for soil, new friends and great memories.

**New Bird and Wildlife Viewing Blind** – In 2010, Eagle Scout candidate Salim Khalife designed and built a bird and wildlife viewing blind on the Pete Yeager Nature Trail near the Nature Center. The new blind will allow visitors to quietly observe birds at a feeder without disturbing them.



Salim had help from his grandfather, James Johnston, and friends Ron Johnston, Lance Johnson, Gary Carr and Jon Johnson. Donations were received to cover the more than \$500 of material costs. The new wildlife blind is open during daylight hours. Salim is a member of Saegertown Boy Scout Troop 254, which is in the French Creek Council.

## **Kayak Ecotours**

**Summer Kayak Ecotour Program** – During the summer and fall of 2010 the District Watershed Specialist assisted Linda Armstrong of Pymatuning State Park with 5 kayak ecotour programs on area lakes and marshes. Participants had the opportunity to try out loaner kayaks from the park, as well as see wildlife, listen to presentations, and make new friends. This was the second year for the kayak ecotour program. A new twist to the project was the addition of a GPS paddle and a night paddle to observe the Perseid meteor shower.

## **Envirothon**

For the third year running, the District hosted an Envirothon Training Day on April 28, 2010 for interested High School Students. The training was held at the Woodcock Creek Nature Center. Thanks again to all the agency folks who turned out to help, and to the dedicated teachers who are serving as Envirothon Advisors.



**(Pictured at left) -PA Game Commission’s John McKellop teaches about wildlife at the 2009 Envirothon Training Day**

The 2010 Crawford and Mercer County Envirothon, sponsored by the Crawford and Mercer County Conservation Districts, was hosted by Pymatuning State Park near Jamestown.

The event tests students’ environmental knowledge in five categories: Wildlife, Soils, Forestry, Aquatics, and a current issue, which was on “Biodiversity in a Changing World” this year. Students from grades 9 through 12 represent their schools on five-person teams that can answer questions collectively as they rotate through challenging resource “stations”.

One hundred and thirty-two students forming twenty-seven teams from twelve area High Schools showed up to compete in the Envirothon on Wednesday, May 5<sup>th</sup>, 2010.

The event was held along the shores of Pymatuning Lake in sunny, 65 degree weather. In addition to the conservation districts, support and prizes were provided by the DCNR Bureau of Forestry, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission, Pennsylvania Game Commission, DCNR Bureau of State Parks, and the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection.



**The Conneaut Lake High School Dobsonfly Larvae High School Team won first place for Crawford County.**

**First Place in Crawford County was won by the “Dobsonfly Larvae” of Conneaut Lake High School.** Coached by faculty advisor Rebecca Dobson, the team consisted of Kaitie Rowles, Paige Peterson, Jeremy Howe, and Chris Munoz.

Second place was won by the Titusville High School “Barracudas”, comprised of Laurie Hopkins, Laura Lee, Dylan Huffman, and Melissa Hopkins. Their faculty advisor is Trish McKellop.

Third Place honors were won by “Greco’s Geckos” Team from Saegertown High School, coached by faculty advisors Chris Greco and Philip Young. Team members are Brittni Schlosser, Becky Hyde, Steph Miller, Kelsey Shoop, and Marin Sandieson.

Cambridge Springs High School's "Hellbenders", comprised of Brigid Winsor, Nichole Pierce, Michaela Noble, Kelsey Moyer and Brandon Weber, took Honorable Mention (4<sup>th</sup> Place). They are coached by faculty advisor Meghan Dragosavac.

"Greco's Gecko's" of Saegertown won additional awards for achieving the best scores in the Soils, Forestry, and Current Issue categories. Conneaut Lake's Dobsonfly Larvae took the top prize in Aquatics, and the Titusville "Barracudas" were the best in Wildlife.

The "Dobsonfly Larvae" won the right to represent Crawford County at this year's State Envirothon. All expenses for the trip to the state competition were paid for by the Crawford County Conservation District's Environmental Education Fund, funded by our tree sale. Our thanks to the Pennsylvania DCNR Bureau of State Parks, and to Linda Armstrong in particular, for hosting us at Pymatuning State Park. A big THANK YOU goes out to our co-hosts, the Mercer County Conservation District. We would also like to thank the USDA Soil Conservation Service (Jody Lasko, Cheryl Panciera); the DCNR Bureau of Forestry (Mark Lewis); our PA DEP Field Representative, (John Green); the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (Chad Foster); and the Pennsylvania Game Commission (Mario Piccarilli, Don Chaybin, and Lawrence Hergenroeder) for all their help and dedication.

### **COMMUNITY WATERSHED INVOLVEMENT**

*The Crawford County Conservation District worked to provide watershed education to various schools, watershed associations, community groups, workshops, etc. Some of the most notable events were:*

**Pymatuning Lake Clean Up** - On November 4th the District worked with Linesville High School, Pymatuning State park, Crawford County Senior Environmental Corp, Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, and the Pennsylvania Environmental Council to coordinate the 4<sup>th</sup> annual clean up of the Pennsylvania portion of the Pymatuning Lake shoreline. A group of 64 students picked up trash from access points along the shoreline including boat launches and beach areas. The students also covered shoreline areas where accessible.



**Stormwater Workshop for Municipal Officials** – On October 27<sup>th</sup> the District worked with Crawford County Planning Commission, Pennsylvania Environmental Council, and Meadville Area Water Authority to coordinate an education workshop for municipal officials and public works staff. The workshop included classroom presentations as well as a walking tour of Allegheny College to look at innovative stormwater BMP's.

### **Riparian Restoration Efforts**

**Saegertown, Maplewood, and Cambridge Springs High Schools** – On April 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup>, 2010 nearly 300 students from Penncrest School District completed a project on Kinter Hill Road, near the Erie County border. The students planted 2390 conifers, 640 hardwoods, and 200 livestakes on a property donated to Penncrest.

**Maplewood High School**– On May 4<sup>th</sup> nearly 80 MHS students planted 200 hardwoods, 50 conifers, 1,200 livestakes, and 500 potted shrubs along Gravel Run on the Landis farm. The project was part of a larger streambank fencing project that had been completed on the farm earlier in the summer.



**Linesville High High School**– On April 20<sup>th</sup> 60 LHS students planted a screen of nearly 100 native trees and shrubs at the entrance of the Linesville Campground of Pymatuning State Park. 50 of the trees were balled and burlap trees at least 4 ft tall. In addition to the planting, the students also did a litter sweep of the north end access points. The students also pulled enough invasive garlic mustard to fill several large garbage bags.

**Cochranton and Titusville High Schools**– On April 29<sup>th</sup> Nearly 120 students from CHS and THS planted 110 hardwoods, 100 livestakes, and 755 potted shrubs along Federal Run on the Keim farm. This project was part of a larger riparian fencing project completed later in the summer of 2010.

**Maplewood High School**– On October 6<sup>th</sup> 25 students from MHS returned to the Hart farm near Cochranton to repair and replace defective shelters installed on that farm in 2008.

### **Erosion & Sediment Control Program**

Maria Anderson, Erosion and Sediment Control Technician for the Crawford County Conservation District, reviewed 40 Erosion & Sediment Control Plans in 2010. She also issued 30 General Permits. The District collected \$4700.00 in Erosion and Sediment Control Review fees, and \$1250 in NPDES Clean Water Fund permit processing fees. One Individual NPDES Permit and 3 General NPDES permits were issued. Maria responded to 22 citizen complaints related to Chapter 102 issues and 11 complaints related to Chapter 105 concerns. She performed over 38 inspections related to erosion and sediment control and 17 inspections related to encroachments, and provided technical assistance to 53 individuals in E & S (Chapter 102) and to 62 people for encroachments (Chapter 105). (Inspections of sites related to complaints are not included in the totals.)

### **Dirt and Gravel Road Program**

The District is in its 13<sup>th</sup> year of providing funds to townships “to improve the rural transportation network.” The goal of this program is to protect the waterways of the county and improve water quality by redirecting and reducing runoff from dirt and gravel roads. The program also helps townships make a more stable and durable road surface, reducing potholes, dust, and maintenance. Townships with personnel who have received Dirt and Gravel Road training submit projects for road improvements which are then ranked and recommended for approval by a Quality Assurance Board (QAB) as funds permit. The Crawford County Conservation District Board issues final project approval. The overall program is administered by the State Conservation Commission.

The Crawford County Conservation District provided technical assistance to Athens, Beaver, Greenwood, Randolph, Richmond, Summit, Wayne, and Woodcock Townships in 2010. The following Dirt and Gravel Road Projects were completed in 2010:

- Athens Township, Dewey and Three Bridges Roads (Begun in 2008) - \$34,779.76

- Beaver Township – Philadelphia Road \$33,183.92
- Greenwood Township – McMichael Road- \$31,150.00
- Randolph Township – Shaffer Road - \$6,341.26
- Summit Township – Gibson Park Road - \$39,185.68.
- Wayne Township – Shaffer Road - \$49,814.37
- Woodcock Township – German Road – First Full Depth Reclamation Project - \$36,210.32



**E&S Technician Maria Anderson shows off a successfully completed Dirt and Gravel Road Project during the District’s 2009 Conservation Tour**

### **Agricultural Best Management Practices and Conservation**

In Crawford County, it takes 500 years to form just one inch of fertile topsoil. We all rely on that topsoil to produce our food, and family farmers strive to pass their property on to their children in the most productive condition possible. Soil washed into streams is soil lost from a farm for generations, and a source of pollution in the water. Helping landowners conserve their soil has therefore always been an important objective of the conservation district.

Crawford County comprises 1013 square miles of land area. Of the 88,441 people who live in Crawford County, sixty-six percent live in the country, while 34% live in the urban areas. Agriculture is one of our most important sources of income, with the average value of agricultural products per farm exceeding \$41,000.00 per year. Most Crawford County farms are family farms that have been and will be passed down from generation to generation.

Installing agricultural best management practices to save soil and protect water quality can often be a simple matter of employing good management techniques. Sometimes, though, the job requires the installation of best management practices, such as roof runoff systems to divert clean water around barnyards, fencing to keep pastures from becoming overgrazed, establishment of stable access roads, fencing cattle out of streams to prevent streambank erosion, and installing Milkhouse wastewater filtration systems. These kinds of practices benefit everyone by protecting water quality, but they can be expensive. To help farmers achieve their conservation goals, the conservation district utilizes grants from several sources to provide cost-share funding for the agricultural producer.

We are grateful for the grant opportunities provided to us and commend the agricultural producers who worked with us to help achieve conservation goals that will benefit present and future generations of county citizens.

## Agricultural Conservation Planning and Best Management Practices Installed

### 2010 Program Participants

#### Conservation Accomplished with the Crawford County Agricultural Best Management Practice II Growing Greener II Grant

**Robert Abbot Farm** - Spring Development

**Andy Yurcak Jr.** – 1795 feet of Fencing

**Yurcak LLC** – 1 Spring Development; 1 Water Trough

#### ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY INCENTIVES PROGRAM (EQIP)

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) is a voluntary federal program administered by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) that can provide technical and financial assistance to landowners to address conservation problems on their farm and forestland. All contracts that include animal waste storage or treatment facilities require a comprehensive nutrient management plan to be developed and implemented. Likewise, operations on non-industrial private forestland require the implementation of a forest management plan.

The following conservation practices were installed in 2010 under the USDA's EQIP Program:

- **Guy Dunkle** : 2 Stream Crossings; 4 Water bars; 4 acres of Brush Management and Critical Planting; .5 acre Wetland Wildlife Management
- **Todd Kantz**: 2485 feet of fencing
- **William Long**: 1 Roof Runoff project
- **John Kunz**: 575 Feet of Animal Trail; 639 feet of fencing; 1 roof runoff project
- **Roncaglione Farm**: 1 Grassed Waterway; 1600 feet of Fencing
- **Rynd Home Farm**: 3995 feet of fencing; 1 Spring Development; 1 Water Trough; 1 Stream Crossing; 1 Grassed Waterway
- **Chris Shearer**: 1 Water Control Structure; 1 Roof Runoff Project; .2 acre of Heavy Use Area

#### The following farms signed up for Cover Crop & Residue Management under the EQIP Program:

**Allen Farms; Blood Farm; Jerry Beary; Rand Eels, Janet Heffernan; Mike Huya, Jr.; Todd Kantz; William Roncaglione; Rynd Home Farm; Urbanick Dairy; Robert Waddell; James Zakostelecky**

Prescribed Grazing

William Long

CTA

John Sperry

### **Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP)**

This program provides landowners with technical and financial assistance to develop and improve high quality habitat that supports wildlife populations of national, state, and local significance. The following landowners participated: **James Bartkus; Richard Coburn, James Foulk, Dan Lasko, and Mike Worley**

**Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)** – The Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program is a USDA program that provides financial and technical assistance for landowners to manage their land enrolled in CREP for wildlife and conservation benefits and to control certain noxious weeds on the contract acreage.

**In 2010, (CREP) Plans were developed for the following properties:**  
**Jim Bartkus; Dan Herrick; Richard Kemerer; Dan Kozalla; Greg Shuttleworth; and Mike Worley**

### **CRAWFORD COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL VOLUNTEER STREAMBANK RESTORATION PROGRAM II**

- **Darrel Landis Farm**– 1 Stream Crossing
- **Linesville Creek Restoration** – 150 feet of Streambank Stabilization

### **Volunteer Streambank Tree Planting Program**

- **Luka & Melanie Krneta** – 1 Stream Crossing, 973 feet of Streambank Fencing, and 1250 Trees and Shrubs Planted by **Conneaut Lake High School Students**
- **Eli Keim Farm** – 1 Watering Facility and 728 feet of Streambank Fencing; 865 Trees and Shrubs Planted by **Titusville High School Students**
- **Darrel Landis Farm** – 1950 Trees and Shrubs planted by **Maplewood High School Students.**

### **STUDENT RIPARIAN FENCING & PLANTING**

- **Andy Yurcak Jr.** – 2807 feet of stream fencing and 3 stream crossings.
- **Yurcak LLC** – 3903 feet of stream fencing
- **Pymatuning State Park, End of the Road Campground** – 44 Balled and Burlapped trees and 50 Shrubs planted by students from **Linesville High School.**
- **Penncrest Planting, Kinter Hill** – 3030 Trees and Shrubs planted by students from **Cambridge, Maplewood, and Saegertown High Schools.**

## NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT

In 2010, the following farmers were able to develop or update their Nutrient Management Plans.

**Jim, Gary, and Tom Akam; Gordon and Jason Blood; Robert & Eric Dersch; Dean Horne; Todd Kantz; John and Chad Kunz; Bill Long; Ronald McCorkle; Ben Troyer; Robert Waddell; and Robert Wright.**

The Conservation District receives funding from County, State, and Federal Sources. It also depends on local fundraising efforts.

## Crawford Conservation District 2010 Financial Report

### Expenditures

Staff salary, Travel & Training	\$339,918.49
Director Travel & Training	108.00
Office Building/Nature Center & Park Operations	19,303.82
Office Expenses/Utilities/Bond/Audit/Computer/Ins.	31,004.32
County Ag Easement Program	10,408.20
Grant and Work Projects	293,426.20
District Reimbursement to County	65,689.00
Miscellaneous	24,946.74
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURES</b>	<b>\$784,804.77</b>

### Incomes

Crawford County Commissioners	\$333,502.15
State Conservation Commission	109,206.63
Grants/Work Projects	377,730.99
Miscellaneous	80,469.81
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>\$900,909.58</b>

# ***Sustaining Healthy Farm Economics***

## FARMLAND PRESERVATION

Crawford County's number one industry is agriculture. Crawford County residents are used to being surrounded by beautiful fields, farms, and forests, and having a land base that is capable of providing the fruit, vegetables, meat, dairy, grain, wood products, and maple syrup for the community. That scenario is changing. Because of the automobile, people can now easily move out of town. With the financial pressures on farms today, some find it easier to sell the family farm as real estate for development rather than to continue in farming. Crawford County is no stranger to this trend. Between 1987 and 1997, farm acreage went from 236,481 to 207,215, a loss of nearly 30,000 acres. During that decade, the number of farms in the county also

decreased from 1,281 to 1,069. Although statistics are not yet available, the trend appears to have accelerated since 1997, with farms going into bankruptcy and parcels being sold off for non-agricultural uses. Some of the best farmland is being lost to other uses.

The Crawford County Ag Land Preservation Program was established to insure that the best agricultural land in the county can stay in farming. On December 16, 2004 the State Agricultural Land Preservation Board approved the Crawford County Agricultural Land Preservation Program. Under the program, a farmer may choose to keep his property in agriculture and receive payment for the difference between the property's value as a farm and its value for development. The farm still belongs to the farmer, and he may use the payment for whatever he wishes. Pennsylvania leads the nation in the number of agricultural acres saved in this way; assuring that there will be sufficient land base to produce food and fiber locally for coming generations.

Crawford County's Agricultural Land Preservation Board members are appointed by the Crawford County Commissioners. The CCALP Board is chaired by Jack P. Lynch, Scott Preston is Vice Chairman, Richard Deiss is Secretary, and John Tautin serves as Treasurer. Richard Ferguson is a contractor-member; Richard Rendulic and Dennis Hindman are farmer members, and Ronald Staab is an associate member. Board members serve voluntarily.



**Members of the Crawford County Agricultural Land Preservation Board, (above, from left) Jack P. Lynch, Chairman; Scott Preston, Vice Chairman; Dick Deiss, Secretary; John Tautin, Treasurer; Rick Rendulic, Board Member.  
Not Shown: Dennis Hindman; Richard Ferguson, Board Members. Ronald L. Staab, Associate Board Member**

In the spring of 2008, The Crawford County Ag Land Preservation Board purchased Agricultural Easements on 115.6 acres of the Lloyd and Phyllis Gerber Farm and 194.8 acres of the Douglas Coulter Farm, both in East Fallowfield Township. In 2009, the program received substantial help from the Crawford County Commissioners and the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture in the form of a Community Environmental Incentive (CEI) Growing Greener II Grant for \$200,000.00. This grant expanded the pool of money for easement purchases available in the County, allowing the board to purchase the easements on 438 acres of the Al and Betty Hart farm in Wayne Township. Altogether, 748.4 acres of Crawford County farmland have been preserved so far.

## CONSERVATION PARTNERSHIPS

### USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)



Jody Lasko (seen left, teaching soils to an Envirothon team), Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is the Supervisory District Conservationist for West Field Team 1 covering Erie, Crawford, Mercer and Lawrence counties. She is stationed in Meadville.

2010 marked the 75th anniversary of the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and the beginning of the federal commitment to conserving natural resources on private lands. The Service was originally established by Congress in 1935 as the Soil Conservation Service (SCS). In addition, formal recognition of the first conservation district in North Carolina on August 4, 1937, established a method for the Service to assist farmers in conservation districts.

- A summary of Agricultural “Best Management Practices” (BMP’s) installed through NRCS and CCCD cooperation is located in the “Ag BMP’s and Conservation” section of this Annual Report (Pages 15-17).

In NRCS Fiscal Year 2010, cooperative efforts with the Crawford County Conservation District (CCCD) resulted in:

- Conservation Plans written on privately owned lands
- Conservation practices installed to benefit over 5,000 acres.
- USDA Farm Bill contract payments for Agricultural, Wildlife, and Forestry Best Management Practices
- NRCS Earth Team Volunteer work, including student riparian plantings,
- public educational outreach,
- field visits to farmers and other private landowners providing technical assistance and advice
- Local Workgroup meeting held to obtain multiple agency/organization input into ranking criteria for NRCS Farm Bill Contracting process.

**(Right) NRCS’s Cheryl Panciera presents a prize for the “Best in Soils” category at the 2010 Envirothon**



## PA DCNR BUREAU OF FORESTRY

**Service Forester: Mark Lewis**

Photo, below: Forester Mark Lewis doing a Tree ID walk at the Woodcock Creek Nature Center.



### **Insect & Disease Update**

**Emerald Ash Borer** seems to be the talk of the insect front in Pennsylvania. Although the quarantine for movement of firewood and ash wood products has been expanded throughout the state, there is still a danger of spreading the insect through firewood movement. Use only local firewood to prevent further movement of this pest. Ash markets continue to be strong and now may be the time to take a

close look at your merchantable ash. **Cytospora canker** of spruce and **Diplodia blight** of 2-needled pines continues to spread through the area. These are common diseases of non-native species. One more reason to go native when choosing trees and shrubs for planting.

### **Tree Planting**



We continue to plant trees throughout the county on riparian waterways. This year we are into our 11<sup>th</sup> year of school riparian projects. We now utilize students from every school district in the county and from seven different schools. Funding for these riparian planting projects is slated to continue into 2013! If you have a potential project site, contact the DCNR Forestry office or the Crawford Conservation District. To date we have

planted more than 30,000 trees along Crawford County waterways.

### **Timber Stand Improvement (T.S.I.)**

Timber Stand Improvement is accomplished by thinning out existing timber stands. Removing low value trees to create more room for high quality individuals can jump-start a timber stand into increased production. The wood generated by these cuts is harvested for firewood or left to decay and be reintroduced in the nutrient cycle of the forest. The Bureau of Forestry marked 74 acres of TSI throughout Crawford County. Cutting grapevines out of timber stands can also lead to increased forest productivity.

## **Timber Sales**

Timber prices have rebounded slightly in the region. Markets are fairly strong for oak, cherry, and both soft and hard maple. Remember that competitive bid is the best way to get the most out of your timber and that a timber sale should be planned carefully. State Service Foresters are available to walk your woodlot with you and provide information regarding proper timber harvesting, timber sale contracts, and silvicultural treatments. Don't use Diameter Limit cutting when having a timber sale. It is detrimental to your woodlot and your pocketbook! Use a professional forester for all timber harvests to safeguard your investment.

## **Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection**

Our special thanks to John Green, Field Representative for the Northwestern Pennsylvania Region of DEP. John serves as a liaison between the District and DEP, and assists us with many projects, including riparian buffer planting, tree seedling sales, the Envirothon, education programs, inter-agency communication, and training.



**Field Representative John Green at a Crawford County Conservation District Board Meeting**

