

**BLAIR COUNTY
CONSERVATION
DISTRICT**

**SPECIAL POINTS OF
INTEREST:**

- **Countywide Action Plan equates to BMP Funding**
- **Legislation passed to create the Agricultural Conservation Assistance Program**

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**2022
ANNUAL
REPORT**

2022 Annual Report

Seasons of Successes in 2022!

A lot of good things happened with the District in 2022. Programs and events returned in a “new normal” fashion....grants were secured.....projects were underway.... and funding for both staff and Best Management Practice design and implementation increased significantly.

District staff were busy in early 2022 getting ready to host numerous construction projects at NatureWorksPark as well as stream and conservation practices using previously acquired grant funds. Planning for spring educational programs like the annual Blair County Envirothon Competition and school field trips returned in full force. Our First Annual Earth Day Festival was held at NatureWorksPark, which gave us an opportunity to showcase the new additions at the park.

The District hosted a well attended Chamber Business After Hours at NatureWorksPark on June 23rd to kick off Summer. Over 60 participants, some of which were new to the park, were treated to a pleasant evening of interactive education and some local food treats! Summer was busy with construction of five stream restoration projects (Gillans Run on the Maple Hollow Townhouses Property, two on Spencer Run in the Carson Valley Section of Blair County, one at the Newry Lions Club on Poplar Run and one at NatureWorksPark on the Beaverdam Branch of the Juniata River). A hoop house was installed by staff and volunteers along with two trail extensions at the Park. Summer also brought good news about funding authorizations. State funding to administer delegated programs comes to Conservation Districts through the Departments of Agriculture and Environmental Resources. That funding had remained flat since the 2004-05 Budget. A significant increase was approved in the State Budget for 2022-23 going from 2.2 to 6.8 million dollars. For Blair County that equated to an increase from \$98,000 to \$203,000. July also brought news of the passage of the Agriculture Conservation Assistance Program (ACAP) Legislation as part of the PA Farm Bill which authorized 154 million dollars statewide for the administration, design and implementation of Best Management Practices on farms. Blair County will get a total of \$1.6 million dollars divided in three allocations over the next two years to complete projects. The funds must be obligated by December 2024 and spent by December 2026.

Fall was busy initiating our Cover Crop Incentive Program with funding through a Countywide Action Plan Implementation Grant as well as bidding for a grazing project using the same funds. Planning for the administration of the ACAP funds ensued and took us into the Winter season. Notification of the award of a Growing Greener Grant for design and permitting for ag practices will put us into good position once the ACAP funds arrive in 2023.

And then we roll into another year and look forward to new seasons of successes! A BIG THANK YOU to all of our many partners.

As always, call us if you have questions, follow us on Facebook to keep up to date or stop in to see us to learn about our ever growing programs and projects!



Hoop House Construction by Staff and Volunteers
Summer 2022

Plans for Compliance and Funding



Planning continues to be the first step for farm compliance and funding programs on all agricultural operations.

The District continues to write plans on a limited basis for a fee and assists landowners in preparing their own plans using the Pa OneStop Program and the Manure Management Manual as the need arises.

During 2022, the District prepared 11 Manure Management Plans representing 232 acres and **16 Ag Erosion and Sediment Control Plans** for 642 acres.

The District's delegation to review and approve Nutrient Management Plans (required for operations which

meet thresholds related to the number of animal units per acre of ground available for manure application) resulted in **7 plans and/or amendments** reviewed and approved; along with the review of **4 nutrient balance sheets** if manure is being imported to a farm.

The final and perhaps key component of planning and implementation is reporting. The District hired an intern working though 2022 to enter farm plans into the state based PracticeKeeper System. Staff are now verifying existing and functioning practices with the end goal of calculating sediment and nutrient reductions.

Blair County is tasked with reducing nitrogen pollution by 585,000 pounds. We have already met our phosphorus reductions according to state models. The District has "planned" to implement and/or report 21,000 acres of Cover Crops; 25,000 acres of Conservation or Ag E&S plans; 25,000 acres of Nutrient or Manure Management plans; 500 acres of Riparian Buffers; and 10,000 Animal Units of Manure Storage by 2025.

If you would like more information about our agricultural programs and funding...contact Rich Huether at 814-696-0877 ext. 5. Follow us on Facebook for updates.

Region Leader in Farms Preserved

Blair County continues to lead the Central PA Region with 59 easements and 8,707 acres permanently preserved for Agriculture.....

Blair County's Conservation Easement Purchase Program was approved in 1991. The Conservation District facilitates the program for the County of Blair.

In 2022 the program preserved two farms totaling 232 acres and made an offer to a third farm for 76 acres, which will utilize Federal funds through the PA Department of Ag application to the USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service. This will be the fourth farm in Blair County where Federal funds were used. Federal funds stretch the local and state dollars and is a good fit for the right farm. Blair continues to be one of the leaders in the Central PA Region with **59 farms and 8,707 acres preserved!** To date, nearly **9.5 million dollars** has been provided to Blair landowners to ensure ag land use for perpetuity.

Blair County Commissioners allocated \$82,888 for preservation efforts in 2022, one of the highest in our region. The State threshold was maintained at \$38 million, with the resulting State funds available to Blair County listed as \$272,182. County funds continue to be matched at an average of 3 to 1. Blair County received 0.72% of the total State funds.

The average easement value (the difference between the development value and the

farmland value as determined by an appraisal) for Blair County stands at \$1,091 per acre. However, the average easement value of current purchases is closer to \$1,600/acre.

The success of the program is a tribute to the commitment of the County Board and the relationship with the County Commissioners.

Applications received by October 15th of each year are ranked to be considered for funding in the following year.

For an application, visit the District website or call Rich Huether or Donna Fisher at 814-696-0877 ext. 5.

County	# of Easements	Acres	Avg \$/Ac	Co Allocation
Blair	59 Farms	8,707Ac	\$1,091	\$ 82,888
Centre	60 Farms	8,628 Ac	\$2,340	\$112,661
Bedford	18 Farms	3,855 Ac	\$ 555	\$ 1,664
Cambria	23 Farms	3,456 Ac	\$1,036	\$ 10,000
Huntingdon	11 Farms	1,392Ac	\$1,249	\$ 5,120

Blair CAP Implementation and ACAP Funds

Agriculture is the Number One industry in Blair County and for the first time in a long time funding has matched the importance of agriculture to Blair County! The first round of **Countywide Action Plan (CAP) Implementation Funds** were received in Blair County in 2022 totaling \$166,470. A complete grazing project to include a well, watering facilities and fencing utilized a portion of the funds. The District desired to reward good practices in Blair County by providing a very popular Cover Crop Incentive Program to utilize the remaining 2022 allocation. Sixteen landowners applied for the \$25/acre incentive to plant cover crops covering 2,300 acres with a cap of just under 300 acres/landowner. Total funding commitment for the Cover Crop Incentive Program totaled \$58,000.

The **Agricultural Conservation Assistance Program (ACAP)** legislation was passed in July 2022 committing 154 million dollars statewide for agricultural best management practices. Blair County is to receive a total of 1.679 million dollars over 3 years for the administration, design and implementation of BMP's. Three allocations of just under \$560,000 will be forthcoming through the Blair County Conservation District for contracting by December 2024 and spending by December 2026.

The first criteria for funding through both these programs is PLANNING. All applicable plans (Conservation or Ag E&S Plan along with a Manure Management or Nutrient Management Plan) must be either in place prior to application or made part of the application for funding. Landowners with plans in place and implemented will score higher in the District's ranking systems for available funding.



Funding for Agricultural Practices

Available in Blair County

New funding opportunities for Blair County farms in 2022-2023

The Blair County Conservation District has funding for farm operations across the County to:

- Plant Cover Crops
- Build Waterways
- Repair Farm Lanes
- And build many more practices such as:
 - ⇒ Stabilized Barnyards
 - ⇒ Manure Storages
 - ⇒ Grazing Systems
 - ⇒ Barn Roof Gutters

For more information contact
Blair County Conservation District
814-696-0877 x 5



Funding continues to be available through a National Fish and Wildlife Foundation Grant attained by the District to minimize impacts to crop fields leading from Municipal or State road culverts and also farm lane repairs.



Grazing - a Viable Alternative for Steep Slopes



Cover Crops for Conservation and Soil Health

Erosion Control and NPDES Permitting



Compost Filter Sock is often installed at the downslope perimeter of an Earth Disturbance Activity and should be maintained until the site is stabilized

The Blair County Conservation District is delegated duties related to public information, plan review, permit issuance, complaint handling and inspections

associated with earth disturbance activities in Blair County.

Did you know....All earthmoving activities over 5,000 square feet are required to have a written Erosion Control Plan. Cropland requires an E&S or Conservation Plan as do Timber Harvesting sites. Written plans are to be maintained on site and implemented. It is also important to note that many local municipalities have within their ordinances, the requirement of plan review and approval as part of their

final land development authorizations.

Sites involving a disturbance of 1 (one) acre or more are required to obtain an NPDES permit prior to commencement of the project. NPDES permits are authorized and/or processed by the District.

There was no shortage of workload related to development projects in 2022. Numbers remained consistent with previous years.

In 2022, **16 General and 9 Individual Permits** (located in High Quality Watersheds or with discharges to Special Protection Waters) were processed and/or approved. In association with those permits and including projects of less than 1 acre, a total of **88 Erosion and Sediment (E&S) Control Plans** were reviewed and

approved based on the State's Chapter 92 and 102 Regulations. Processing times in Blair County average **30 calendar days** for General NPDES Permits and **9 calendar days** for E&S Plan reviews.

Thirty-two complaints were logged and **52 inspections** were conducted at earthmoving sites and the pipeline project. Over 100 technical assistance contacts were provided to individuals, municipalities, consultants, developers and contractors.

Remember, planning and permitting should be done prior to the commencement of the earthmoving activity. Contact Tyne Blazier or Devon Weyant at 814-696-0877 ext. 5 if you are planning an earth disturbance project or observe sediment issues related to construction sites.



ISC Continues to Design and Implement Pollution Reduction Projects

Since 2012, the Intergovernmental Stormwater Committee (ISC) of Blair County has been collaboratively combining resources regarding the MS4 Program. This past year the ISC continued implementing the Blair County Collaborative TMDL and Pollution Reduction Plan (PRP). This Plan encompasses a series of projects that will **reduce a total of 1.4 million lbs./yr. of sediment** within the Chesapeake Bay Watershed over the course of 5 years. With estimated costs determined in 2018, the ISC has

contributed annually to both project and administrative funds. To date the ISC has completed a total of 26 projects that are reducing 781,198.96 lbs./yr. of sediment within Beaverdam Branch, Frankstown Branch, and Little Juniata Watersheds. This year the ISC continued their partnership with Trout Unlimited and have two stream restoration and bank stabilization projects planned for implementation in 2023 reducing an additional 45,777.6 lbs./yr. of sediment. In addition, Land Studies was brought on to assess the Beaverdam Branch for a potential Floodplain Restoration Project which the ISC hopes to fully construct by 2025.

The creation of Local and State Partnerships with the ISC has led to **new and innovative ideas/projects, developed educational platforms, enhanced recreational and habitat opportunities, and ultimately is improving the health of Blair County's and the Chesapeake Bay Watersheds.** For more information contact Chelsey Weyant at 814-696-0877 ext. 5 or email cweyant@blairconservationdistrict.org. You can also visit the newly updated Cleanblairwater.org website for more information on Blair County Watersheds and Stormwater.

(right) Students from Bishop Guilfoyle plant trees at the Newry Buffer Project on Poplar Run



Municipalities by the Numbers.....

Plan and permit numbers are tracked by the County as well as by the Municipality. Complaints and inspections also are identified by municipality with copies of all correspondence provided to the specific municipality where the issue has occurred. The District appreciates the close working relationship that we have with our Blair County municipalities and we strive to keep them informed of our activities. As you can see in the table below, the workload is spread across the county with some obvious higher density townships where more development occurred in 2022. Many of our Boroughs are “built out” and earth disturbances may be limited, unless there would happen to be grading to clear lot(s). The large acreages in Hollidaysburg Borough and Snyder Township are related to the DeGol Industrial Center and the Sandy Ridge II Wind Project. Inspections are conducted in response to complaints or as routine inspections on permitted or active earth disturbance sites.

Municipality	# Plan Reviews	Individual NPDES	General NPDES	Total Disturbed Acres	Complaints	Inspections
Allegheny	6	0	2	15.3	3	8
Antis	11	1	1	97.4	4	5
Blair	6	1	0	7.5	1	2
Catharine	0	0	0	0	2	2
Frankstown	7	1	1	10.8	5	5
Freedom	3	0	1	3.1	1	1
Greenfield	4	2	0	41.5	0	0
Huston	1	0	0	0.5	0	0
Juniata	0	0	0	0	1	0
Logan	13	1	5	34.7	4	6
North Woodbury	5	1	0	12.8	1	1
Snyder	8	2	0	214.9	3	9
Taylor	0	0	0	0	0	0
Tyrone	0	0	0	0	3	2
Woodbury	2	0	0	1.2	1	0
City of Altoona	11	0	0	5.1	3	7
Bellwood Borough	0	0	0	0	0	0
Duncansville Borough	3	0	1	3.8	0	0
Hollidaysburg Borough	4	0	4	103.9	0	0
Martinsburg Borough	1	0	0	0.9	0	0
Newry Borough	0	0	0	0	0	0
Roaring Spring Borough	1	0	0	0.5	0	4
Tyrone Borough	2	0	1	3.6	0	0
Williamsburg Borough	0	0	0	0	0	0

Spotlight on the DGLV Road Program



**\$100,000 Allocated for
Dirt & Gravel Roads**



**\$84,590 Allocated for
Low Volume Roads**

The DG&LVR program continues to address sediment pollution from undermanaged roads and drainage facilities on Dirt & Gravel Roads and paved Low Volume Roads (less than 500 vehicles per day). Conservation Districts administer the program and are locally led by a Quality Assurance Board (QAB) in each County. Local People solving Local Issues!

Funding for the program remained strong, Blair County received **\$184,590** for administration and projects in 2022/23. Program funds must be committed and spent within two years of allocation to maximize funds; thus it is important that both the municipalities and the District have a strong commitment to the projects that are chosen.

Miller Road in Logan Township, a Low Volume Road project was completed in 2022. Just over **\$42,000** in LVR funds was spent to control stormwater along 460 feet of the road through a series of inlets and pipes. The Township provided a match of in kind labor for another \$16,000.

Planning, along with the Center for Dirt and Gravel Roads, was completed on Igou Road in Antis Township. Construction is slated for 2023.

Any Blair County municipality that has received training in the Environmental Sensitive Maintenance (ESM) of Roads within the last 5 years is eligible for funding. To date, Blair County has funded **65 sites for \$1,719,175 over 22 miles of roads**. We encourage all to become trained and get involved!

Blair County held a watch session for local municipalities to participate in the ESM Webinar last January at the Logan Township Municipal Building with 10 staff in attendance. Blair County is also hosting an in-person ESM training event at the Altoona Grand Hotel on June 13 and 14, 2023.

A training stipend of \$50/day/person is available to municipal officials or staff that participate in the ESM training from the Blair QAB.



**Drainage Project
Miller Road
Logan Township**

For more information, a funding application or [to find an in-person or virtual training session near you](#) contact Chelsey Weyant at 814-696-0877 ext. 5. Or visit the Center website at dirtandgravel.psu.edu

Certificate of Appreciation - 2022



Annually the District recognizes Individuals, Organizations, and/or Farms for service and achievements that support the District Mission to protect, preserve and enhance our natural resources through technical assistance and education. In 2022, we recognized retired USDA, NRCS employee Robert Clauto at our annual banquet held in October.

Rob's work for the previous 30 years in the Hollidaysburg Field Office led to the planning and implementation of countless BMP's aided by literally millions of dollars in funding. A job well done by a real team player!

Thank You Rob!!

(L to R) Donna Fisher, Rob Clauto, Commissioner Bruce Erb

Stream Projects and Studies Continue

Five streambank stabilization projects were completed with multiple partners and funding sources across Blair County in 2022.

All of the projects were designed and permitted through by the **Trout Unlimited Non-Point Source Technical Assistance Program**. Two were located in the Spencer Run Watershed (Carson Valley Area); one was located in the Maple Hollow section of Gillans Run; one was located at NatureWorksPark along the Beaverdam Branch of the Juniata River and finally one was completed on the Newry Lions property along Poplar Run which also involved a riparian buffer planting. Funding was received from **DCED, Keystone Community Funds; Intergovernmental Stormwater Committee; National Fish & Wildlife Foundation; and DCNR, Watershed Forestry Program through the Western PA Conservancy**. Construction was completed by **DirtWorks by Johnston** from East Freedom on all the projects except the Newry Lions Site where construction was completed by our Local John Kennedy Chapter of Trout Unlimited.

Also funded by the DCED, Keystone Communities Grant, three watershed studies were initiated. A study of Gillans Run leading into Duncansville was completed but unfortunately little impacts to flood elevation within Duncansville were shown when modeled with upstream storage options. A study of an Unnamed Tributary to Brush Run as it runs along Hawthorne Street south of Lakemont was completed and it was determined that additional information was needed to further define the watershed and provide quantitative details for potential projects. A Phase 2 Study for Hawthorne Street was authorized. Finally, work began with field assessment and a review of the RT 22 Corridor and drainage within the Spencer Run Watershed.

The District also continues to conduct water sampling at several sites throughout Blair County with locations often associated with stream restoration projects to monitor sediment reductions realized by our projects. Questions related to our stream stabilization initiatives can be directed to Tyne Blazier or Chelsey Weyant by calling 814-696-0877 ext. 5.



**Maple Hollow Townhouse Property
Gillans Run Streambank Stabilization Project**



**Streambank Stabilization and Stream Access
at NatureWorksPark
Beaverdam Branch of the Juniata River**



**Yohn Property
UNT to Spencer Run Streambank Stabilization Project**



**UMH Properties (Cross Keys)
Spencer Run Streambank Stabilization Project**

Education and Outreach 2022

The Blair District resumed in-person trainings and events in 2022!! In addition, the district made the education position full time starting in January 2022.

Blair County Conservation District Educator, J.T. Bandzuh, became a regular guest at story times, Science Sleuth Wednesdays, Science Saturdays and more.

A build-your-own container garden workshop was held in anticipation of Mother's Day weekend and a DIY Bird Feeder program was offered at local libraries. What's Hatching another popular library program resumed but switched from Chickens to Butterflies.

Wetlands, Woods and Meadow field trips were hosted again at the Grace Nature Trail (formerly Albemarle) outside of Tyrone.

During the summer, the District partnered with the Altoona Curve to provide exhibitors for their Mountain City Thursday Night games



throughout the season. Each game had a different natural resource and conservation theme.

The Blair County Conservation District hosted both annual **Earth Day and Fallfest at NWP** in April and September, respectively. The events aimed to be an immersive educational experience for the entire family.

The annual Land Judging Competition

aimed at FFA students saw participation from Bellwood-Antis, Central and Williamsburg Chapters. The event was hosted by Hemlock Lane Farm outside of Williamsburg and the 80 students also had a discussion of the 5,000 hog facility located at the farm.

Finally, the winter season always brings our Wreath Making Workshops hosted at the local libraries. Seven Blair County Libraries and over 150 people participated in 2022.

The District asked J.T. to make outreach through social media a priority for both the District and NatureWorksPark. Followers to both Facebook pages increased dramatically in 2022.

J.T. left our employ at the end of the year to pursue education at the University Level. Call or email Lisa Haas or follow us on Facebook for updates on programs and activities planned in 2023.

Blair County Envirothon



First Place Winner - Williamsburg HS "Team #1"

Hosted on a cold and blustery April day at NWP, eleven teams from 5 school districts competed in the annual event.

The local event was sponsored by: Altoona Kiwanis, Intergovernmental Stormwater Committee, Leighty's Boot Outlet, Keller Engineers, Inc. and the Blair Conservation District.



Above - Second Place Winner - Altoona Area HS "Red Maples"



Left - Third Place Winner - Altoona Area HS "White Pines"

Turtles Join the District



**Welcome Betty, to your
New Blair County Home**

The Blair County Conservation District acquired three new “staff” in Spring 2022 - Betty and Rip (Box Turtles) and Woody (Wood Turtle). Centre Wildlife Rehabilitation gifted the District three turtles to be used for educational purposes.

A Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission Possession Permit for amphibian and reptile educators is required and was obtained. An indoor habitat was created for the winter months and a turtle enclosure built at

NatureWorksPark which mimics their natural habitat is utilized as the weather permits. Much was learned about turtle care, food choices and habitats in a short amount of time!

The turtles were on the road to schools, libraries and special events as requested almost immediately upon their arrival. They will continue to be used as ambassadors of healthy waterways.



**Woody enjoys some of his
favorite foods**

To learn more about the turtles or to schedule a visit from the turtles contact Lisa Haas at 814-696-0877 ext. 5 or email lhaas@blairconservationdistrict.org.

Wood Turtle (*Glyptemys insculpta*)

The wood turtle is an endangered species of North America with a range along the northern East Coast to the Great Lakes. Wood turtles reach a length of 5.5 to 8 inches and weigh 1.5 to 2.5 pounds.

Eastern Box Turtle (*Terrapene carolina carolina*)

The Eastern box turtle is a vulnerable species of North America ranging from Maine to northern Florida and as far west as Texas and Oklahoma. Eastern box turtles reach a length of 4.5 to 7 inches and weigh up to 2 pounds. Like wood turtles, box turtles also hibernate during winter.

Annual Poster Contest

Also on hiatus for the last several years, the Blair County Conservation District welcomed back participation in the Annual Poster Contest. The theme for 2022 was “Healthy Soil Healthy Life.” Numerous entries were received and cash prizes were awarded to 1st, 2nd and 3rd place entries in each grade category. Winners were recognized at the District’s Earth Day Event!

Winning posters at the local level are submitted to the PA Association of Conservation Districts with the possibility of reaching a national event.

The 2023 event with the theme being “One Water” is underway with a submission deadline of April 7, 2023.



What's Happening at Bedford Street



NatureWorksPark®



New Trail added to Edible Buffer Area at NatureWorksPark

There is always something new at **NatureWorksPark!**

2022 was a year of construction projects at the Park aimed at improving the user experience.

Two new trail stubs were added to encourage visitors into our completed Riparian Buffer Area in two locations - one leading to the Edible Buffer (located opposite the small pavilion) and the second leading to our Wooded Wildlife area and stream access point, partially funded through a grant from the Southern Alleghenies Planning and Development Commission.

Stormwater drainage was addressed at the large pavilion by tying two of the downspouts to the wetland area. This not only solved some erosion issues on the trail but also added some water to the wetlands to help sustain the area in the dryer months, also funded thru SAP&DC.

A streambank restoration project was completed on several sections of the Beaverdam Branch of the Juniata River designed by Trout Unlimited and built with funds from the ISC and NFWF to stabilize eroding streambanks and reduce sediment and nutrient loading to the stream. Along with that project, a stabilized access point to the river, funded in part through a grant from the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy, was installed. The

access is under the powerlines and accessible by the trail stub near the large pavilion.

A Hoop House, partially funded through a PDA Urban Ag Grant, was constructed near the barn which will serve to enhance our on site growing and urban agriculture programming. Check in 2023 to see what's growing!

Two Little Free Libraries were installed at the park - one intended for little kids books and one for big kids books. Keller Engineers, Inc. and Stiffler McGraw & Associates donated the libraries.

Finally, a seasonal outdoor habitat was created by staff for our resident turtles. Check out the Turtle Taj Mahal created by Rich, J.T. and Joshua!

Workshops were held to highlight various ways a multifunctional buffer can be managed and utilized; such as growing brambles for home growers to developing a cut-flower business to using native plants for dyes. To provide on-

going outreach to park visitors, signage that includes QR codes was installed, which will allow visitors to open educational videos that will enhance their understanding of the buffer areas as they stand within the buffer. Funds for the signage came in part from the Pennsylvania Association of Conservation Districts CREP grant.

A series of Rain Barrel Painting workshops were also held at the park during the summer.

Reservations resumed for the pavilions in 2022; however, the pavilions and park are always open without reservations if you are willing to share your space.

We were pleased to report that the **park averaged 1,200 visitors per month** from March through September 2022 with the most visitors shown in April totaling 1,750! Total year numbers approached 12,000 visitors!

Another thanks to the Master Gardeners of Blair County for their Pollinator Garden, beautification plantings and upkeep throughout the park. Special Shout Out to the Blair County Highway Department and the Blair County Prison for mowing and general cleanup at the Park.

Stay in touch by visiting **Natureworkspark.org** or **following us on Facebook** or contacting Lisa Haas, Conservation Education Specialist at 814-696-0877 ext. 5 or email lhaas@blairconservationdistrict.org.

We've only just begun to explore the possibilities at NatureWorksPark. We hope that you enjoy it as much as we do.



Turtle Habitat at NWP

Staff Recognition and New Staff Hired



Chelsey Weyant - 5 Years of Service

One staff anniversary was recognized in 2022. **Chelsey Weyant has been with the Conservation District for 5 years, starting in August 2017.** Chelsey was hired to serve as the Stormwater Coordinator hosted by the District and working to support the Intergovernmental Stormwater Committee. Chelsey has also accepted duties related to the Watershed Specialist position and the Dirt, Gravel and Low Volume Road program serving the more urban municipalities. Chelsey received a 5 years of service certificate from the Pennsylvania Association of Conservation Districts and was recognized at the October District Banquet.

New Staff Hired

Devon Weyant as a Resource Conservation Technician for the E&S/NPDES Program

Lisa Haas as the Conservation Education Specialist

Both Stephen Beach, Resource Conservation Technician and J.T. Bandzuh, Conservation Educator pursued other job opportunities outside of the District in 2022. We thank both gentlemen for their service and wish them the best of luck!

Devon Weyant was hired to fill the open position of Resource Conservation Technician in May 2022. Devon comes to us with a degree in Biology with a specialization in Environmental Studies; as well as construction experience related to material and water testing.

Lisa Haas was hired in February 2023 as the Conservation Education Specialist. She comes to the district with a degree in Horticulture and 20 years experience in the Agriculture industry. Most recently Lisa served and will continue to serve as the Master Gardener Coordinator for Blair County where she honed her skills as an educator. Lisa has already been involved with plantings and programming at NWP as part of those duties.

We are excited to welcome both Devon and Lisa to our team!



Meet the Rest of the Team

Donna Fisher, District Manager started with the District in 1985 as an Ag Technician and became the District Manager in 1987.

Rich Huether, Ag Conservation Specialist started in June 2000.

Beth Futrick, Ag Ombudsman and Resource Coordinator started for the second time in 2008.

Bonnie Young, Administrative Coordinator began her career with the District in March 2018.

Tyne Blazier, Resource Conservation Technician/Watershed Specialist started in January 2019.

Joshua Stoehr, Resource Conservation Technician started also for the second time in December 2021.

Hope Long, served as an intern throughout the summer of 2022 as a Data Input Specialist specific to Ag Plan and BMP reporting for the Countywide Action Plan. Hope is scheduled to graduate from the University of Pittsburgh Johnstown campus in May 2023 with a Degree in Biology and Environmental Studies and with a GIS Certificate.

Spotted Lanternfly Program and Funding



Blair County was added to the quarantine list for Spotted Lanternfly in 2020 and although the sightings were not overwhelming in 2022, it is obvious that the insect is prevalent throughout the County. A **\$10,000 education and outreach grant** was received by the District in 2021/22 to conduct workshops and continue distributing resources related to the need for permits and control of this invasive insect. Workshops were held in 2022 with the assistance of the Master Gardeners and included the distribution of circle traps to participants for their attendance. Traps and signage were also installed at NatureWorksPark. Additional workshops and outreach events are planned for 2023. Penn State Extension has taken a lead on education and outreach materials. Visit their website for more information **or to report a sighting.**

<https://extension.psu.edu/spotted-lanternfly>



Resource Conservation Since 1966

1407 Blair Street
 Hollidaysburg, PA 16648
 Phone: 814-696-0877 ext. 5
 E-mail: bcd@blairconservationdistrict.org
www.blairconservationdistrict.org
www.natureworkspark.org



2022 Conservation District Board

Jim Biddle, Chairman
 Blaine Smith, Vice-Chairman
 Gary Long, Secretary/Treasurer
 John Morrow
 Alan Gearhart
 Cindy Bigelow
 Commissioner Bruce Erb

2022 Conservation District Staff

Donna Fisher, District Manager
 Bonnie Young, Administrative Coordinator
 Rich Huether, Ag Conservation Specialist
 Beth Futrick, Ombudsman/Resource Coordinator
 Chelsey Weyant, Stormwater Coordinator/WS
 Tyne Blazier, Resource Conservation Technician/WS
 Steve Beach, Resource Conservation Technician
 Joshua Stoehr, Resource Conservation Technician
 Devon Weyant, Resource Conservation Technician
 J. T. Bandzuh, Conservation Education Specialist
 Hope Long, Intern - Data Input Specialist
 Lisa Haas, Conservation Education Specialist (2023)

Conservation District Funding

The Blair County Conservation District receives funding from several sources to include: Local, State and Federal dollars through grants and contracts.

Annual allocations are received from the Blair County Commissioners through the General Fund and the PA Departments of Agriculture and Environmental Protection.

Conservation districts across the Commonwealth continue to receive funds via Act 13 Legislation related to the Marcellus Shale Development in Pennsylvania. Impact fees are collected from the industry and a portion of those funds are distributed to the Conservation Districts through both the Public Utilities Commission (PUC) and the State Conservation Commission (SCC).

PUC funds in 2022 were received as a block grant in the amount of \$67,123 per conservation district across the Commonwealth. The PUC funds in Blair County continue to be allocated for the development of the District Property on Bedford Street and NatureWorksPark.

The SCC funds are distributed in base amounts plus a calculated portion of Unconventional Well Counts per county. Thanks to the Legislature and the Departments of Agriculture and Environmental Resources, a significant increase was received for district staff and administrative costs in the State 2022/23 Budget. Blair County received \$202,881 (double the amount received in the 2021/22 budget). These funds are utilized to cost share salaries and administrative expenses (both for the District and Farmland Preservation Program).

Continuing in 2022, the District held an agreement with the Intergovernmental Stormwater Committee (ISC) to employ a Coordinator and facilitate the operation of the committee. Nine municipalities and the County of Blair make up the ISC. The agreement with the ISC outlines their contribution of up to \$100,000 annually for administration through 2023. The District budgeted \$56,500 toward staff expenses in 2022.

The County of Blair contributes 21.0% of District revenues, the State 35.2%, the ISC 6.9% and District Fees, Reserves and Misc. 12.5% of the operating budget. Grants are budgeted at \$200,000 or 24.4% but often exceed budgeted amounts.

2022 General Fund Budget

Expenses:

Salaries/Benefits	\$496,078
Rent/Insurances/Audit	\$ 38,600
Operating Expenses	\$ 52,400
Payment to County	\$ 33,000
Project Grants	\$200,000
Total Expenses	\$820,078

Revenues:

Beginning Balance	\$ 35,000
County Commissioners	\$171,860
E&S/NPDES Fees	\$ 27,000
State Program Funds	\$289,373
Grants	\$200,000
ISC for Staff Expenses	\$ 56,500
Blair CWF/Reserve	\$ 29,995
Misc. Revenue Sources	\$ 10,350
Total Revenues	\$820,078