

HPAI Confirmed in Indiana, Pennsylvania Stands Ready to Respond if Found Here

Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) has been confirmed in a poultry operation in Indiana. After nearly seven months since the last case was confirmed indicates that a need for vigilance exists among large and small poultry operations in Pennsylvania.

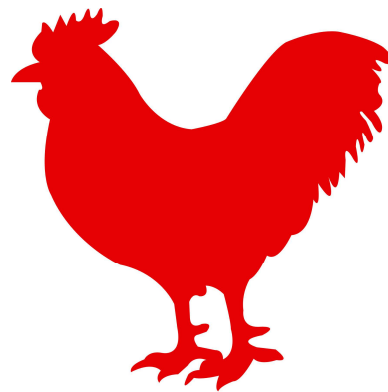
If you have chickens, ducks, geese, guineas, or other avian animals, the need continues for monitoring the health of flocks regardless of size. The Conservation District urges poultry operators to register with the PA Department of Agriculture on its website: www.agriculture.pa.gov. On the homepage, you will find a list of information on Avian Influenza, scroll down to find "Premises Registration" to register. The importance in registering is to make PDA aware of your operation and make rapid notifications in the event that an outbreak would occur near you.

The strain found in the Indiana flock, H7N8, is not the same strain that caused the outbreak in other parts of the country in 2015. There have been no known cases of H7N8 infections in humans, and birds from the infected flock will not enter the food system.

It is reminded that proper handling and cooking of poultry and eggs to an internal temperature of 165° F kills bacteria and viruses including HPAI.

While the PA Department of Agriculture and its partner agencies are prepared if the virus enters our state, it is imperative of poultry operators to develop and follow biosecurity plans and operating procedures. Operators should also become aware of the signs of Avian Influenza and monitor their flocks on a daily basis. Every farm should also have a HPAI flock plan. Flock plans address specifics of depopulation, disposal, and cleaning and disinfection methods. The Department of Agriculture has developed a work plan to assist producers with completing the USDA flock plan.

For more information on Avian Influenza, visit the Department of Agriculture's website at www.agriculture.pa.gov or the USDA's website at www.usda.gov. Information can also be obtained by contacting the Sullivan County Conservation District office or Penn State University Extension office, both located in Dushore.



FYI: Water samples are now being picked up at the conservation district office on Fridays starting February 12 by 9 AM. If you have any questions, please contact the district at 570-928-7057.

“We All Need Trees” is the 2016 Conservation Poster Contest Theme

The Sullivan County Conservation District has finalized plans for the 2016 annual poster contest for students in grades 4 through 6. We are once again pleased to have the support of both Dushore Borough and White Ash Land Association as partners in this contest.

A kick-off program will be provided to students in the elementary school to highlight the importance of trees and allow students to learn more about the benefits that trees provide to many aspects of our lives. Trees convert carbon dioxide to oxygen, they are a renewable resource for building products and heat, they provide shade to cool houses and streams, and they can provide protection from winds. Trees also provide habitat for wildlife, and their leaves are part of the food chain.

Posters will be judged and awards will be made to the top three posters for each grade level. Honorable mentions will be made to students in each grade level also. An overall winning poster will be selected to move on to the Pennsylvania Association of Conservation District’s Poster Contest in the summer.



Conservation Districts to Help Landowners Protect Streams

Bradford and Sullivan County Conservation Districts were both recently awarded \$2,500 to work with landowners to prevent pollution in our local streams, lakes, and rivers.

The mini-grant was provided through the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) Outreach Program Office (administered by the Pennsylvania Association of Conservation Districts). The CREP Program pays farmers and other landowners to conserve and enhance their land. Over 12,500 landowners in Pennsylvania have received payments since the program began.

The two conservation districts working together will use these grant funds to hire a temporary, summer Forest Technician to walk existing CREP forested stream buffer areas with landowners to evaluate tree plantings and make recommendations. This technician will be available to CREP landowners in Bradford and Sullivan Counties.

“With this funding, anyone who has planted trees in a riparian buffer or other land enrolled in the CREP program could make an appointment for a Forest Technician to visit their site and make recommendations,” said Michael Hanawalt, District Conservationist with USDA’s Natural Resources Conservation Service Towanda Field Office. “We look forward to offering this additional maintenance help to landowners enrolled in the CREP program. These field visits will happen May – August, 2016. Time will be limited so interested landowners should contact their respective Conservation District office as soon as possible to reserve an appointment slot.” The Sullivan County Conservation District can be reached at (570) 928-7057, and the Bradford County Conservation District at (570) 265-5539 ext. 6.

Financial and other support for the CREP Outreach Program Office Mini-grant Program is provided by the Pennsylvania Association of Conservation Districts, Inc. through a Growing Greener Watershed Protection grant from the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection and with additional support from USDA-NRCS.

For more information visit Bradford County Conservation District at www.bccdpa.com; (570) 265-5539 extension 6, or Sullivan County Conservation District at www.sullcon.com; (570) 928-7057. For more information about CREP, visit www.creppa.org.

Calendar of Events

February 9	Northeast Crops Day, Wysox
February 15	Office Closed for Presidents’ Day
February 16	District Board Meeting
February 23	Crops Meeting, Ag Center Dushore
February 29	Farmland Preservation Inspections
March 8	District Board Meeting
March 16	Connect Soil To Profit Workshop, Wysox
March 21	Seedling Sale Order Deadline
March 25	Office Closed for Good Friday

Dirt, Gravel and Low Volume Roads Program Year End Wrap-up

Seven Dirt, Gravel and two Low Volume Road projects were approved by the Q.A.B. for funding for the 2015 construction season. This is the first year with the new increased allocation of monies from the State for Dirt and Gravel Roads and the new allocation of monies for the Low Volume Roads. There was one Dirt and Gravel project in Davidson Township and Fox Township, and two in Elkland Township. Cherry Township and Colley Township each had a Dirt and Gravel Project and a Low Volume Roads project. The Forks Township was funded through education monies from the program. These projects estimated approximately \$342,000.00 of work; five times the amount of previous allocations.

Forks Township's Educational project was completed on Norton Road. The project used Fish and Boat Commission structures along Lick Creek to enhance fish population and stop erosion from occurring upstream and from the bridge abutments. It was completed with the help of Boy Scout Troop 8 from Wyalusing. Other municipalities and agencies were invited to see the project being constructed and also to see the final completed project. Total cost of the project was \$10,273.37 (\$7,120.97 of education money and \$3,152.40 of in-kind contributions from the township). Davidson Township completed their project on Rhine Road. They corrected ditch problems by adding numerous cross pipes and changed the road profile. Total cost of the project was \$67,410.66 (\$35,896.96 from dirt and gravel and \$31,513.70 of in-kind). Elkland Township completed two projects, one on Sherwood Road where they completed the project by correcting the profile of the road and correcting water problems in the roadway. Total cost of the project was \$45,125.44 (\$42,125.44 from dirt and gravel and \$2,454.75 of in-kind). The other project they completed was on Parker Road. They corrected drainage problems with additional cross pipes. The total cost of the project was \$8,411.90 (\$4,035.30 from dirt and gravel and \$4,375.90 from in-kind). Fox Township ended up working on two projects. The first was the intersection of Dry Run Road and Pleasant Stream Road. They added cross pipes for drainage and stabilized ditches. The total cost of the project was \$9,117.28 (\$6,812.40 from dirt and gravel and \$2,304.88 in-kind). The second project was an "Emergency Project" on the Hoagland Branch Road. The project involved streambank protection and repairing a washout below a cross pipe that was a safety hazard. The total cost of the project was \$28,077.44, which all came from dirt and gravel. Cherry Township completed the dirt and gravel project on Art McMahan Road, where they corrected drainage problems with road profile change, underdrain, mattress, and cross pipes. They also fixed an undersized stream crossing. The total cost of the project was \$95,278.37 (\$87,145.37 from dirt and gravel and \$8,133 in-kind). The other Cherry Township project they completed was the first Low Volume Roads project in Sullivan County. The project on Drake Creek Road corrected stream bank erosion problems with the placement of rip-rap. The total cost of the project was \$19,639.22 (\$7,250.00 from low volume and \$12,389.22 in-kind). Colley Township completed a Dirt and Gravel project on Pigeon Creek Road. They fixed drainage problems with road profile change, underdrain and more cross pipes. The total cost of the project was \$66,848.16 (\$51,364.21 from dirt and gravel and \$15,483.95 in-kind). Colley Township is still working on their low volume road project. With a new policy that requires different sizing of pipes used for stream crossings, we quickly found out how big of pipes would have to be and how much more expensive they are. We will continue to work with them to complete this project.

With bigger projects came new challenges for the program and the municipalities involved. Bidding, prevailing wages and new policies all made things more interesting. Overall, there were \$263,282.37 of Dirt Gravel, and Low Volume Road Maintenance Program funds and \$79,807.78 of in-kind funds used to help eliminate stream pollution caused by runoff and sediment from our local roads. The goal of the Program is to create a more environmentally and economically sustainable low volume road network through education, outreach, and project funding which is exactly what happened this past year.

2-Day ESM Training Coming to Sullivan County in October

Penn State's Center for Dirt and Gravel Road Studies is going to hold the 2-day Environmentally Sensitive Maintenance (ESM) course at St Francis of Assisi Hall in Mildred on October 19 & 20, 2016. Anyone involved in maintenance of unpaved and/or low volume roads will benefit from the practices taught in this course that are designed to reduce sediment pollution and long term road maintenance costs. **In order to be eligible to apply for program funds, the person in charge of work plan development and project implementation from the road-owning entity must have attended the training within the past five years.** Personnel who have previously attended the training can also become re-certified by attending an Annual Maintenance Workshop (RE-certification only, must have attended ESM training in the past). The course runs from 8 am to 4 pm each day and includes a continental breakfast and lunch. The course is free to municipal, county and state agencies involved. All out-of-state and private companies must pay a fee of \$395.00. For more information, contact the Conservation District or go to www.dirtandgravelroads.org and click on ESM Registration.

SOIL HEALTH WORKSHOP

The Conservation District partnered with Penn State Extension to provide a Soil Health and Nutrient Management Workshop on December 15, 2015. The workshop focused on improving soil health through various conservation field practices and highlighted the benefits of sound nutrient management.

The workshop featured discussions provided by Mark Madden, PSU Extension, Dr. Sjoerd Duiker, PSU Soil Management Specialist, Mike Hanawalt, USDA-NRCS District Conservationist, and Corey Richmond, District Chesapeake Bay/Nutrient Management Technician. The workshop also included a panel discussion of local farmers to discuss how they reached higher levels of Soil Health and Nutrient Management. The panel included Kevin Potter, Ron Kittle, and Matt Ahern.

Attendees had the opportunity to learn what Healthy Soil is, Soil Health and crop production, and witness a demonstration on water retention in various soils from various tillage practices. The group also learned about issues within the Chesapeake Bay watershed in regards to where PA is at in meeting goals, fertility management, soil sampling, manure sampling, and spreader calibration practices.

26 area farmers participated in the day long workshop. Lunch, materials and expenses were provided for by the Sullivan County Conservation District.



Envirothon Season Is Fast Approaching

The 2016 Envirothon competitions are soon approaching and students are busy studying topic information for the events. The Envirothon is North America's largest Natural Resource Competition and test the knowledge of high school students in Aquatics, Soil and Land Use, Wildlife, Forestry, and a current issue topic. Students are provided an extensive list of learning objectives and resources and then are tested through written and hands-on applications.

The 2016 current issue, decided by Ontario, Canada, the 2016 host to the North American Envirothon, is "Invasive Species: A Challenge to the Environment, Economy, and Society." This topic alone will be a challenge for students as they are also responsible to understand the four other topic areas. The students are always up for a challenge and this year will be no different.

Students from Sullivan County High School will compete at the County Envirothon, which is held with Lycoming County, on April 26th. Top teams for each county will then move on to the PA Envirothon being held at Susquehanna University and Camp Mount Luther where they will face even tougher competition. The winning team for Pennsylvania will travel to Trent University in Peterborough, Ontario for the North American event.

The Sullivan County Conservation District provides funding for the county Envirothon event and covers the cost of registration fees and t-shirts for a team to compete at the PA Envirothon.



PennState Extension

FREE BEEF PRODUCERS MEETING

FEEDING AND FINISHING CALF-FED DAIRY STEERS

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 2, 2016, 1:00 P.M. - 3:30 P.M.

PROGRESS AUTHORITY EDUCATIONAL CENTER, 1 ELIZABETH STREET, TOWANDA, PA 18848



LEARN MORE ABOUT THE GROWING MARKET DEMAND FOR FINISHED CALF-FED HOLSTEIN STEERS.

FEATURED SPEAKERS INCLUDE:

JIM HOGUE, AGRI-BASICS, INC.

JIM WILL OUTLINE PRODUCTION AND MARKETING PRACTICES FOR DAIRY BEEF

JOHN TYSON, PENN STATE AG ENGINEER

JOHN WILL DISCUSS CONVERTING BANK BARN OR FREE STALL BARN INTO FEEDING CENTERS FOR DAIRY STEERS

DAVE HARTMAN, PENN STATE LIVESTOCK TEAM

QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

PLEASE RSVP TO JEANNETTE AT 570-265-2896, JAV17@PSU.EDU OR FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:

DAVE HARTMAN, PENN STATE EXTENSION LIVESTOCK TEAM, AT 570-316-6514, DWH2@PSU.EDU



PennState
College of Agricultural Sciences



extension.psu.edu

The Pennsylvania State University encourages qualified persons with disabilities to participate in its programs and activities. If you anticipate needing any type of accommodation or have questions about the physical access provided please contact Dave Hartman at 570-316-6514. This publication is available in alternative media on request.

SULLIVAN COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT 2016 SPRING SEEDLING SALE

<p>Proceeds Benefit Conservation District Educational Programs</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 10px;"> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>DECIDUOUS</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Red Oak Sugar Maple Red Maple</p> <p style="text-align: center;">10/\$9.00 25/\$22.00 50/\$42.00</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Minimum 10 of each species!</p> </div> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Evergreens</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Norway Spruce Colorado Blue Spruce Douglas Fir Scotch Pine</p> <p style="text-align: center;">25/\$15.00 50/\$29.00 100/\$54.00</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Minimum 25 of each species!</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>SEMI-DWARF APPLES</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Northern Spy Granny Smith Jonathan Honey Crisp</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>DWARF APPLES</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Yellow Transparent Sheepnose</p> <p style="text-align: center;">\$16.00/ Tree or 2/\$31.00 10 / \$130.00</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">SEE BACK FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 10px;"> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>NATIVE/WILDLIFE/STREAM</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Tulip Poplar Sawtooth 'Gobbler' Oak Red Bud American Cranberry Silky Dogwood Black Chokeberry Winterberry Witchazel</p> <p style="text-align: center;">10/\$15.00 or 25/ \$32.50 Minimum 10 of each species!</p> </div> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>WILDFLOWER SEED</u> NORTHEAST ANNUAL & PERENNIAL MIX</p> <p style="text-align: center;">\$3.00/ OZ. \$23.00 / ½ lb. \$44.00 / lb. (1 oz covers approx. 200 square feet)</p>
<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Blueberries</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Blueray Blueberry or Duke Blueberry</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Grapes</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Seeded – Concord or Seedless – Reliance \$8.00/Each 3/\$22.50 Mix and Match</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Strawberries</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Seascape 25/per bundle - \$6.00</p> </div>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>ORDER DEADLINE</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;">MARCH 21, 2016</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Payment must accompany order.</u> Quantities limited – Orders received first, filled first.</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>PICK-UP DATE</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;">APRIL 16, 2016 9:00 A.M. – 12:00 Noon <i>@Cherry Township Municipal Building on S.R. 87 SOUTH.</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">DOUBLE CHECK ORDERS AT PICK-UP.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">No guarantees or refunds on seedlings AFTER PICK-UP.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Questions? (570) 928-7057</p>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 10px;"> <p style="text-align: center;">* Soil Test Kits \$9.00 each *</p> </div> <p style="text-align: center;">Blue Bird Box - \$10.00 Wood Duck Box - \$25.00</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>TWO-YEAR FERTILIZER TABLETS</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;">10 Tablets /\$3.00 100 Tablets /\$25.00</p>

Please Print Name: _____ Email: _____
 ADDRESS: _____ Home/Cell Phone: _____

CITY, STATE, ZIP: _____ Local Phone: _____

ITEM DESCRIPTION	QUANTITY	PRICE	TOTAL

Please send this form with your check or money order to:
 SULLIVAN COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT
 9219 Route 487, Suite B
 Dushore, Pa 18614

Questions??
Call (570) 928-7057

or
PaPlants ID: QOQBN4
NL/16

adm@sullcon.com

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 + 6% PA SALES TAX _____
 SUBTOTAL _____
 DONATION FOR EDUCATION PROGRAMS _____
 AMOUNT ENCLOSED _____

Donations are now being accepted for our educational programs. Please feel free to round up to the next whole dollar.

We do everything possible to provide quality plants for you at pick-up. Plants become your property upon pick-up. Due to conditions beyond our control we cannot guarantee survival or provide a refund after plants are picked-up. Double check your order at the front table.

Thank you for your order.

Deciduous

Red Oak – (2-0) 10-14" seedlings. It has a fast growth to 75'. It will grow in wet areas, best in rich soils in full sun. It will tolerate urban conditions. It is a very valuable timber tree.

Sugar Maple – (2-0) 20-40" seedlings, can grow to 75'. It does not do well in wet areas. Native, provides products from sap in the spring.

Red Maple – (2-0) 5-10" seedlings, can grow to 75'. Does not do well in wet areas. Native to the area, provide products from sap in the spring.

Evergreens

Norway Spruce – (4-0) 10-24" seedlings, can grow to 150', 6' in 6-7 years. Good for Christmas trees, timber and windbreaks. Thrives in ordinary soils: needs good moisture to keep green color. Space 6' apart.

Colorado Blue Spruce – (4-0) 8-16" seedlings, can grow to 100' and should reach 6' in 8-9 years. Silvery blue needles. It likes most soils and average sun. It does not like wet soils. It is great for Christmas trees.

Douglas Fir – (4-0) 10-24" seedlings, can grow to 60'. It grows fastest in light, well-drained soils and full sun. It is America's largest timber producer. It is a very popular Christmas tree.

Scotch Pine – (3-0) 7-14" seedlings, good as a Christmas tree. Fast, straight symmetrical growth; compact growth habit, requiring minimum shearing.

Semi-Dwarf Trees

Two year tree pruned to a 5/8" to 3/4" branch, 4'-6' high
Most require two different varieties for proper pollination.

Apple Trees

Northern Spy – Crisp, tender all-purpose. Blooms late, avoiding most late spring frosts. Ripens in late October. Superior winter apple.

Granny Smith – Green heavy bearing. Tart flavor really lasts, and stays fresh all winter and spring, good all-purpose apple. Ripens late October.

Jonathan – Medium sized red fruit with little white flecks. The apple will have a flattened top and bottom. Blooms in early April. Diploid. Ripens in October. The tree is smaller compared to other apple trees, but bears heavy young crops. It is self-fertile but it is best when it is cross pollinated with other varieties. Exposure to full sun. It is an excellent for eating and cooking and making good pies.

Honey Crisp – Crisp sweet, and juicy. Ripens Mid-September.

Dwarf Apple Trees

3/4" to 7/8" 5'-6" high

Most require two different varieties for proper pollination
Maturity at 10-12 ft.

Yellow Transparent - Large fruit is pale greenish-yellow. Flesh is cream colored, crisp, fine-grained juicy and tart. It ripens early and excellent for sauce. It does not store well. Blooms in early May.

Diploid. Ripens in late July to early August. It is a hardy tree with an upright growth habit and bears young. Likes full sun.

Sheepnose – Large fruit with a conical shape that resembles a sheep's nose. The red skin often will darken to a purplish-black. The flesh is firm yellow and rich. It is an excellent dessert apple. It blooms in early to mid-May. Diploid. Ripens in mid-September. The tree has spreading growth habit. It likes full sun.

Number of 2 Year Fertilizer Tablets per Size Plant

1 Tablet - All seedlings, transplants

2 Tablets - Container grown plants, roses

1 Tablet - For each 1/2 inch trunk diameter, large trees & evergreens

Tablets are 10 grams each, 20% Nitrogen, 10% Phosphoric Acid, 5% Potash.

TABLETS SHOULD NOT TOUCH ROOTS.

Blueberry Bushes

Thrive almost anywhere in acid soil; in alkaline soils, add aluminum sulfate. Plant two different varieties for best results. Like full sun.

2-3 year, 12" - 18"

Blueray – Recommended for the northeast. Highly flavored fruit. Very productive bushes, free from disease. Ripens early to Mid-July.

Duke – Known for extremely large fruit, ripens Mid-July.

Grapes

Concord (Seeded) - Tops for jams, juice and wine. Slightly smaller fruit ripens mid-September.

Reliance (Seedless) - A red seedless variety having medium to large sized clusters of berries. Skin is tender and flesh has a melting texture with excellent flavor. Vines are vigorous and the variety is to be very winter hardy. Ripens three weeks prior to Concord.

Strawberries

Seascape – Everbearing and cold hardy.

Native/Wildlife/Stream Enhancement

Tulip Poplar – (2-0) 10-28" seedlings. can grow to 150'. Rapid growth in light well drained soils. Very valuable hardwood timber.

Sawtooth Oak – (2-0) 15-30" seedlings. Fast growth to 70 feet. Tolerates most soils. Space 20 feet apart for best acorn production. Should produce within 7-10 years. Excellent for WILDLIFE.

Red Bud – (2-0) 8-18" seedlings. Flowers are perfect reddish purple in bud opening to a rosy pink with purplish tinge in early spring. Very effective as a mass planting. Leaves 3-5 inches long and wide.

American Cranberry – (3-0) 10-22" seedlings. Shrub that can grow to 12 ft. Red berries provide food for birds, excellent wetland species.

Silky Dogwood – (3-0) 10-24" seedlings. A good plant for stream banks. Grows up to 9ft tall. Red barked twigs in winter. Spring pruning will force young shoot growth.

Black Chokeberry – (3-0) 15-30" seedlings. Height 3 to 5 feet. Spread 10 feet. Native to eastern United States. Single white flowers in late May. Purplish-black berries in fall. Fall color wine red. Good for naturalizing, a fast screen, food for wildlife. Very adaptable species will grow on dry sandy hillsides. Good wetland plant.

Winterberry – (3-0) 8-18" seedlings. It is a good wetland plant. It likes acid soils and a native to the area. 5-10 plants should be planted, only female plant produces berries. It is ATTRACTIVE TO WILDLIFE.

Witchazel – (3-0) 10-24" seedlings. Small tree or tall shrub is often multi-trunked, usually grows 10-15 ft. tall but can reach 35 ft. in height. Large, crooked, spreading branches form an irregular, open crown. Floral display of witch hazel is unique. Its fragrant, yellow flowers with strap-like, crumpled petals appear in the fall, persisting for some time after leaf drop. Lettuce-green, deciduous leaves maintain a rich consistency into fall when they turn brilliant gold. Bark is smooth and gray.

Northeast Perennial & Annual Wildflower Mix

9% Comflower, Lance Leaved Coreopsis; 8% Perennial Blue Flax; 6% Wallflower, Bigleaf Lupine; Sulfur Cosmos; Corn Poppy; Plains Coreopsis; 5% Ox Eyed Daisy; Dame's Rocket; Black Eyed Susan; 4% Purple Coneflower; Bachelor's Button; 3% Annual Gaillardia; 2% Annual Baby's Breath; 2% California Orange Poppy; Grey Headed Coneflower; 1% Brown Eyed Susan; Wild Bergamot.

Pennsylvania Unveils Comprehensive Strategy to Improve Water Quality in state and Chesapeake Bay Watershed

Strategy recognizes two key, co-equal goals for success: clean water and viable farms

Elizabethtown, PA – After 30 years of work that has prevented millions of pounds of pollutants from reaching Pennsylvania’s waterways and the Chesapeake Bay, the commonwealth continues to face immense pressure from the federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to improve water quality. In order to meet those obligations, Pennsylvania today unveiled a comprehensive strategy to “reboot” the state’s efforts to improve water quality in the commonwealth and the bay.

The new plan, developed jointly by the Pennsylvania departments of Agriculture, Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR), and Environmental Protection (DEP), as well as the State Conservation Commission brings new focus to the state’s efforts to help protect the Chesapeake Bay while emphasizing the need for balance and resilience. The strategy relies on a mix of technical and financial assistance for farmers, technology, expanded data gathering, improved program coordination and capacity and – only when necessary – stronger enforcement and compliance measures.

“This is an important issue to the future of agriculture in Pennsylvania and throughout the watershed, and must be managed to achieve the co-equal goals of having both clean water and viable farms,” said Agriculture Secretary Russell Redding. “The agriculture industry is responsible for contributing three-quarters of the total nutrient reductions expected of states by 2025. That’s a sizeable sum, and no small task, but we know there are countless farmers who are doing their part. Part of the problem is that Pennsylvania is not getting full credit for the work we are doing. This plan sets out to rectify that, plus give those farmers who need help or encouragement the incentives to assist them. We all have a role here and agriculture stands ready to be part of the solution.”

“Pennsylvania has not met the EPA’s requirements to reduce water pollution under the requirements of federal court orders and regulations,” said DEP Secretary John Quigley. “The Wolf administration is working to focus and increase resources and technical assistance, reinvigorate partnerships, and create a culture of compliance in protecting Pennsylvania’s water quality, and by virtue of that, the quality of the Chesapeake Bay.”

“Of the many best management practices that improve the quality of waters and habitats in the Chesapeake Bay watershed, the single best may be the restoration of riparian forest buffers along stream banks to provide critical barriers between polluting landscapes and receiving waterways,” DCNR Secretary Cindy Dunn said. “We are renewing our focus on increasing forest buffers in Pennsylvania by developing a comprehensive approach to provide funding, training, and outreach to farmers and landowners.”

The new plan is in response to the federal Clean Water Act, court orders and regulations finalized by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in December 2010 that impose a total maximum daily load, or TMDL, that require Pennsylvania to reduce annual discharges of nitrogen, phosphorous and sediment entering the bay watershed in order to meet water quality standards by 2025.

The administration’s comprehensive strategy centers around six elements:

- Put high-impact, low-cost Best Management Practices (BMPs) on the ground, and quantify undocumented BMPs in watersheds impaired by agriculture or stormwater.
- Improve reporting, record keeping and data systems to provide better and more accessible documentation.
- Address nutrient reduction by meeting EPA’s goal of inspecting 10 percent of farms in the watershed,

ensuring development and use of manure management and agricultural erosion and sediment control plans, and enforcement for non-compliance.

- Identify legislative, programmatic or regulatory changes to provide the additional tools and resources necessary to meet federal pollution reduction goals by 2025.
- Obtain additional resources for water quality improvement.
- Establish a Chesapeake Bay Office to coordinate the development, implementation and funding of the commonwealth's Chesapeake Bay efforts.

Redding noted the administration has been actively engaging stakeholders as it developed this plan, and it has sought additional resources from the federal government, such as through the United States Department of Agriculture's Regional Conservation Partnership Program. The administration has been engaging with EPA, conservation districts and institutions of higher education, including Penn State's College of Agricultural Sciences to discuss the most effective water quality improvement strategies. The administration has also been working with farm organizations to assist in capturing on-the-farm data of best management practices on farms throughout the Chesapeake Bay watershed. Capturing this data is essential to Pennsylvania receiving full credit in the EPA's model, which is used to measure progress toward pollution reduction goals.

DCNR's Bureau of Forestry will lead an effort to work with numerous agencies, partners and landowners to expand forest buffers along waterways in the commonwealth.

Between 1985 and 2013, Pennsylvania has made significant strides, reducing yearly nitrogen loads by more than 11.5 million pounds, phosphorous by 1.46 million pounds, and sediment by nearly 434 million pounds. These reductions – the result of more than \$4 billion being directed toward Chesapeake Bay restoration during that period through loan and grant programs -- equate to a 25 percent reduction in phosphorous, a six percent reduction in nitrogen, and a nearly 15 percent reduction in sediment.

Despite this progress, achievements to date have been deemed insufficient by the EPA to meet water quality expectations, as reported by the federal government's most recent interim evaluation, released in June 2015. According to that assessment, Pennsylvania is on target to meet its 2017 TMDL goal for phosphorus, but significantly behind targets for nitrogen and sediment reductions. Excess phosphorus, nitrogen and sediments are the leading causes of bay degradation, and Pennsylvania is one of six states obliged to achieve nutrient reduction goals.

The state must reduce nitrogen loads by another 31.4 million pounds, phosphorous by an additional one million pounds, and sediment by another 648 million pounds by the TMDL's 2025 target.

Because of Pennsylvania's lack of attainment in meeting interim goals, last month, the EPA advised DEP that it was withholding \$2.9 million in funding, and will consider taking additional actions that increase the federal agency's role in inspections, permitting and compliance, if progress is lacking.

More than half of Pennsylvania's land area drains into the Chesapeake Bay, with the Susquehanna River being the largest tributary in the watershed. The Susquehanna River provides 90 percent of the freshwater that flows into the upper bay region and half of the total flow into the entire estuary.

For more information on Pennsylvania's Chesapeake Bay Program, visit www.dep.pa.gov and search "Chesapeake Bay Program."

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Edward Patchkoski Retires

Ask Ed Patchkoski if conservation works, and you're likely to get an unqualified thumbs up.

The man who has served as Wyoming County's federally designated District Conservationist since May of 1983 stepped down at the end December.

Patchkoski's love for the outdoors started in scouting, and he readily admits that unlike most of the people he initially served, he did not grow up on a farm.

With his dad a World War II veteran and mother a seamstress, Patchkoski grew up in the South Scranton/Moosic area and very much stayed close to the enduring values of family, which served him well in understanding why family farmers he would later serve stayed so close to the land.

He achieved the pinnacle of scouting by becoming an Eagle Scout in his teens, and by the early 1970's, he signed up for a Youth Conservation Corps program that essentially hooked him on the environment, and helped him see his role in helping to sustain it.

Patchkoski noted recently that he enrolled in Keystone College's environmental science program run by Howard Jennings, and then went on to Penn State University's main campus for a program in environmental resource management.

He said his first job was with the Lackawanna County Conservation District, and later went to Susquehanna county, then Westmoreland County in the western part of the state before settling down in Wyoming County.

Patchkoski said he quickly learned that what had been taught from a textbook often bore little resemblance to what he faced in the field, and he realized that in order to succeed he would have to acquire some of it through a great deal of self study.

"What's been so unique about my job is I've been able to work hands-on with private landowners, many of them farmers, in seeing how the soil can work for them," Patchkoski said.

"There's never been a dull moment, and each day presents itself with new challenges," he added, noting that later in the day he would be visiting with a farmer who was concerned about a gas pipeline coming through that would disrupt some drain tile which had been put in years earlier so the farmer's dad could successfully farm a field.

And, so it goes.

Although hired by the federal government initially to do a job through the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Soil Conservation Service which provided technical assistance in controlling water and wind erosion of the soil, Patchkoski said that role changed in 1994 when a newly named agency—the Natural Resources Conservation Service—was directed to improve, protect, and conserve natural resources working with state and local agencies that had a similar mission.

He noted that his job was essentially still the same but rather than just deal with a landholder's isolated problem he—and those he served—were more mindful of the impacts a single action might have on the bigger picture, usually downstream.

And, despite being paid by the government, Patchkoski said he has never seen himself as a bureaucrat, but rather as field technician ready to help facilitate what today are known as 'best practices' in the areas of soil science, water quality and ecological restoration.

He readily acknowledges though that there have been moments where some farmers have seen him as an interloper, even though he says he's really just there to help.

Patchkoski makes it clear that what he does is without regulatory power such as might be mandated by the federal Environmental Protection Agency or the state Department of Environmental Protection.

“There is good and bad with every project,” he said, and acknowledged that a constant across his nearly one-third of a century in Wyoming County—which is dissected by the Susquehanna River and criss-crossed with creeks and streams—is flooding.

“The truth is money becomes available post-disaster,” he said, and “You’re suddenly presented with a new set of priorities with how to best manage the natural resources in front of you.”

He remembers vividly two projects he played an advisory role in and that was the rehabilitation of two former housing developments that led to municipal parks “which we enjoy today without thought of the upheavals face just a generation earlier.”

He said lots of people go to Riverside Park and Lazybrook Park today and enjoy them for their recreational value, as they should.

Another project he likes to point to is the Kiwanis Wyoming County Fairgrounds where this past summer a very extensive effort was unveiled employing gutters placed onto seven buildings to capture rainwater into an underground reservoir. Tanks holding a combined 15,000 gallons of water, are available for non-potable use, like washing down the animals.

In the past the runoff from the various roofs often left a considerable amount of mud on the fairgrounds not to mention animal waste that got washed into nearby wetlands changing their ecological character.

Patchcoski acknowledged such projects are not cheap with initial seed money coming from private donors, including gas companies.

“The truth is we’re all in this together,” Patchcoski said, “and need to be mindful of the bigger picture.”

He said that the biggest thing he will miss when Jan. 1 rolls around is the people.

“The best part of my job is the people I’ve had the privilege to work for,” Patchcoski said.

“Conservation never sleeps. It is a 24-7 task that demands our very best.”



On Friday evening January 15th, Ed was surrounded with friends, family, farmers, and co-workers at a retirement celebration. The picture to the left shows Ed being presented with a citation from the House of Representatives by Representative Karen Boback. Ed served Sullivan County as the District Conservationist for many years prior to Sullivan County being served by Bradford County and Mike Hanawalt.



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