



Helping people
use resources wisely

2019 Annual Report



Conservation Then and Now

1949
County resolution establishes the Westmoreland Conservation District

2019
County resolution establishes the Integrated Water Resources Plan

1967
Jacobs Creek Watershed project is proposed – three dams and one channel to reduce flooding in Scottdale and communities along this stream

2019
Jacobs Creek Watershed “Phase II” is proposed to reduce flooding in other parts of Scottdale and East Huntingdon Township

1972
State delegates responsibility for reviewing erosion and sediment control plans

2019
District reviews the 9,700th plan

1977
The Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act provides funding for cleaning up streams and land polluted by abandoned coal mines

2019
In 2019 alone, \$54 million is allocated to Pennsylvania and 30% of that is used for stream restoration

1983
Shared office space in St. Clair Way

2019
Barn headquarters, recently expanded

1994
Donohoe Center, a one-stop agricultural and conservation center opens to the public

2019
A larger “conservation campus,” with three buildings on eight acres

1998
 District Conservation Programs
 Erosion & Sediment Pollution Control
 Stormwater Management
 Forestry
 Agriculture/Nutrient Management

2019
 District Conservation Programs
 Erosion & Sediment Pollution Control
 Stormwater Management
 Forestry
 Agriculture/Nutrient Management
 Watershed Restoration
 Dirt, Gravel and Low Volume Road Improvement Program
 Landowner Reclamation
 Conservation Education
 Floodplain Management
 Stream Encroachments
 West Nile Virus
 Water Quality Monitoring

1998
 First Dirt, Gravel and Low Volume Road Improvement Project

2019
 More than 82 projects completed; \$1.7 million invested

2000
 Pennsylvania establishes the Growing Greener program to invest in water quality improvements.

The District undertakes the first Growing-Greener-funded project to improve water quality in Westmoreland County: \$21,000 to stabilize streambanks and create animal crossings on a farm in Mount Pleasant Township

2019
 This year alone, the District is using \$467,000 of Growing Greener funds to improve area water quality by managing stormwater in Hempfield Township, Murrysville, and Vandergrift, and by stabilizing streambanks in Latrobe

2007
 Westmoreland Land Trust established

2019
 274 acres conserved in seven Westmoreland County communities

2012
 First PennDOT mitigation project: Cherry Creek WCCC

2019
 4 PennDOT mitigation projects complete, \$840,000 invested

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Dear conservation friend,

Since 2019 marks the 70th anniversary of our District, we thought it might be nice to take a brief look back on how conservation and the people who were willing to give it a try have made life better for all of us in Westmoreland County.

Soil and farms were conservation's first focus, and the earliest message was "plow with the contour." Today, contour plowing is so universally accepted that it seems like simple common sense. But it wasn't always that way.

Most farmers in the 1940s and early 1950s were plowing straight up and down the many hilly slopes in our county, and the result was a tremendous amount of erosion.

Asking farmers to completely change the way they plow wasn't an easy sell, and it happened only because those early conservationists had the strength of character to be both persistent and persuasive. And because some local farmers were brave enough to give it a try.

As farmers saw the benefits of stabilizing their soil, contour farming began to become THE way to plow. And over the years, this one practice alone has stabilized hundreds of acres of valuable agricultural soil. Today, contour strips have been joined on the farm by an even newer way of conservation farming – no-till – that is reducing agricultural erosion even more.

The story is much the same when we look back on how area streams have become clearer, how damaged lands have been restored, and how forests once nearly stripped bare to supply our growing nation with timber are now healthy. In every one of these areas, conservationists promoted new ways of thinking...willing people put them into practice...and everyone in our community reaped the benefits.

Over these past 70 years, our staff, along with thousands of farmers, engineers, teachers, earthmovers, loggers, business people, foundation officers, and citizens in all walks of life have joined together to make major community conservation projects happen, as well as to make good conservation practices a part of their own personal, daily lives.

It has been our good fortune to always have people by our side who are willing to come together in a spirit of cooperation to work for the common good.

Thank you, one and all for 70 great years of conservation!

Sincerely,



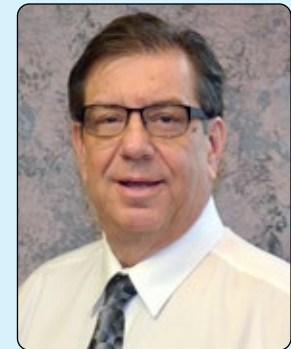
Ronald J. Rohall
Board Chair



Gregory M. Phillips
District Manager/CEO



Ronald J. Rohall
Board Chair



Gregory M. Phillips
District Manager/CEO

PROGRAM ACCOMPLISHMENTS

STABLE SOILS

RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

After three active years, residential development in the county slowed in 2019.

One project that was underway in 2019 was the grading of lots for a new phase of **the Victoria Highlands community in Unity Township**. A little more than 10 acres were disturbed for a potential 17 building lots.

Our erosion control specialist regularly inspected the site, and the contractor acted promptly to repair controls that were damaged in a summer heavy downpour.

INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

Thirty-six years after the former Jeannette Glass factory was shuttered and padlocked, bulldozers began to move remediated earth at the cleared site in December for the next generation of industry – Elliott Company’s new \$60-million testing facility.

Our senior erosion control specialist **conducted the first of many inspections on the 14-acre property**, which will ensure that sediment does not find its way into area waterways.

The site will include several stormwater retention ponds and a compressor-testing building with a foundation 25 feet deep.

Company officials are aiming to open the facility in mid 2021.

The newest addition to the county’s industrial park system, Commerce Crossing at Westmoreland, was

nearing completion at the end of the year, after several years of work to extend infrastructure, including public sewage, and to widen roads to the site in Sewickley Township.

Our senior erosion control specialist met regularly with the industrial park’s owner, the Westmoreland County Industrial Development Corporation, and the project’s contractors and engineers throughout the year to monitor progress.

He also personally visited the site every month in 2019, as work progressed to unearth building foundations from the adjacent, former-Westinghouse site and to prepare five pad-ready building parcels, each from 19-29 acres in size.

Final work to bring utilities to the \$6-million site will occur in early 2020. As this happens, and as pads are sold, our erosion control specialist will continue to be involved, monitoring earthmoving to ensure good conservation practices.

WATER, SEWAGE

The Western Westmoreland Municipal Authority continued its work to **prevent sewage overflows into Brush Creek**.

During the past three years, a new pump station was built and new sewer lines were installed in Irwin. In 2019, the new sewer line was extended from Irwin to Manor.

Part of this recent work involved earthmoving in a floodway and our senior erosion control specialist regularly inspected the active work sites to make sure that they did not add pollution to Brush Creek. He also followed up to ensure that the sites were restored properly after construction was complete.

The sewage project will continue in 2020, and planning was underway at year-end to determine the



Upwards of 225 work-site plans were reviewed during the year by our staff to make sure that measures would be put in place to control erosion and sediment.

best route for the next phase, which will replace sewage lines between Manor and Harrison City.

HIGHWAYS AND ROADS

Major earthmoving related to the **Interstate 70 improvements** continued in 2019, and **our senior erosion control specialist was very busy monitoring the large scope of work** to ensure minimal erosion and the protection of several area streams, which also were directly impacted by this construction.

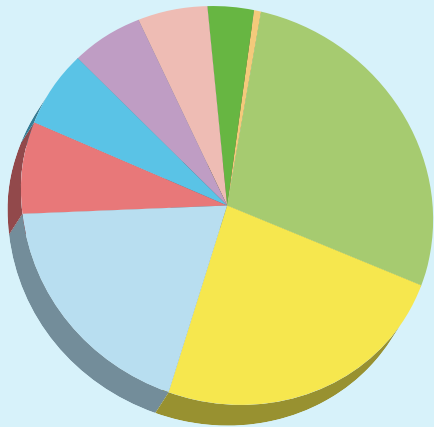
The eastbound side of the highway in the area of the intersection with Route 31 was widened, creating slightly larger traffic lanes and a new shoulder between the median barrier and the passing lanes.

This portion of the multi-year highway project also involved creating a new “diamond” configuration at the West Newton/Mount Pleasant interchange; moving a feeder road, State Route 3014 in Hunker; realigning Smithton Pike and replacing the bridge over I-70; and creating a new access road.

The project also had to relocate a portion of Lick Run and other small tributaries to Sewickley Creek to make room to widen the highway and create the

2019 Erosion and Sedimentation Control Plan Reviews

by Watershed



Loyalhanna Creek.....	62
Sewickley Creek.....	53
Turtle Creek	41
Pucketa Creek/Allegheny River	17
Kiskiminetas River.....	14
Youghiogheny River.....	13
Jacobs Creek.....	12
Conemaugh River.....	8
Monongahela River	1
Erosion and Sedimentation Control Total Plan Reviews.....	221

new off-ramp.

The banks of the streams also had to be stabilized to help absorb the flow from a new discharge pipe carrying water from the highway.

Work in 2019 also created several detention basins for managing stormwater. (Also see Clean Streams, page 9.)

Roadwork at the **junction of PA Route 31 and the Pennsylvania Turnpike in Donegal** continued in 2019, and our erosion control specialist visited the site about once each month.

She worked with the contractor to ensure that a unique design for a sediment basin was interpreted and installed correctly.

She also prompted erosion and sediment-control measures to be corrected on another basin so that they were in line with the controls approved for the site.

Work will continue on this project in 2020.

A big rainstorm in the fall caused some sediment filters to fail on a project that is **improving a 1.4-mile section of Route 356 in Allegheny Township**.

These filters are important conservation measures because they contain, reduce, and/or direct water flowing from construction sites and so help make sure that disturbed soil doesn't find its way into streams and rivers.

We worked with the contractor to increase the size of the rock filters used at the site and to make other improvements that have eliminated any additional problems.

In addition to inspecting major highway projects, such as those undertaken by PennDOT and the Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission, the District also **administers state funds for improvement projects**

on area dirt, gravel, and low-volume roads.

Although these projects do make life easier for local drivers, their primary purpose is to keep pollution out of streams.

Eroding dirt and gravel from unpaved roads, and water runoff from both paved and unpaved roads can harm the quality of local streams.

In 2019, the District helped to **improve eight dirt, gravel, and low-volume roads in Westmoreland County, and a ninth road project was underway.**

Improvements were specific to the road conditions, and included such things as drop inlets, grade breaks, underdrains, and cross pipes.

Funding for the projects was provided by allocations in 2018 and 2019 from the Pennsylvania Dirt, Gravel, and Low Volume Road Maintenance Program.

Some \$277,828 of improvements were installed on two dirt and gravel roads and six low-volume roads during the year (see map on page 28).

An additional \$92,575 is being invested on Weavers Mill Road in Cook Township, and that project is scheduled to be complete in 2020.

One of the road-improvement projects we coordinated during the year was the **second phase of work on Sugar Run Road**, beginning south of the Sugar Run Reservoir and continuing almost to the access road for State Game Lands #42 **in Saint Clair Township**.

On this half-mile section of dirt and gravel road, we monitored the installation of grade breaks, cross-pipes, underdrain, and more than 600 tons of fill to raise the road profile.

The project also included installation of a second large squash pipe (the first was installed in 2018 on the initial phase of this road-improvement project). The new 87-inch-wide, flared squash pipe gives the stream a channel under the road surface that is the



Native brook trout now have an easier time travelling in Poplar Run, thanks to a new, wide drainage pipe installed level with the streambed. The drainage pipe installation was part of work done to improve water quality along a section of Sugar Run Road.

same width as the banks of the stream itself. The previous pipe was only 30 inches wide, and so it was often overwhelmed in times of high water, giving the excess water nowhere to go but onto the road. The new, wider pipe will help prevent that.

Because both ends of the new squash pipe also are level with the bottom of the stream, it also provides easier passage for aquatic life, including trout.

Improvements to Sugar Run Road mean that there will be far less erosion, and so less road surface getting into Poplar Run, which is a Pennsylvania Wild Trout Water, a stream that supports naturally reproducing populations of trout.

The first stormwater basin ever built in Westmoreland County with funds from the Dirt, Gravel, and Low Volume Road Maintenance Program was installed in Allegheny Township in conjunction with work done to improve 200 feet of Club House Drive.

This work also marked the first time a dirt, gravel, and low volume road project was done in Allegheny Township.

Work involved replacing a deteriorating drainage pipe under a portion of Club House Drive, the Tredway Trail, and River Forest Drive.

It also involved a new and improved way to manage the spring and surface water that flows from the golf course.

A rock-lined channel was created and now directs this water into a new stormwater basin. The basin holds the water long enough for sediment to drop out before allowing it to flow through the new pipe and into the Allegheny River.

These new features improve water quality, which is a leading goal of the Dirt, Gravel, and Low Volume Road Maintenance Program.

RECREATIONAL DAM

A two-year project to **reconstruct the dam at Donegal Lake** was essentially completed in 2019, and our erosion control specialist regularly inspected this seven-acre work site during the year to ensure minimal erosion and impact on nearby Fourmile Run.

The original earthen dam was built in 1967. The new dam contains both earth and rolled concrete.

Our inspections will continue in 2020, as there are plans to create some additional parking, a boat ramp,



Donegal Lake's new, reconstructed dam and spillway. The long black expanses of cloth are in place to limit the amount of erosion. Grass also was sown at the site to act as another erosion-control measure.

and a trail at this popular recreation site.

ENERGY

In February, construction of the **Mariner East 2 pipeline** in Derry Township resulted in an **inadvertent return**, which is when the fluid used to lubricate the underground drill makes its way through natural crevices in the earth to the surface of the ground.

Because of the potential for this fluid to then pollute nearby waterways, the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection has regulations for how these returns must be managed.

Our erosion control specialist was on-site to monitor the clean up of this fluid, which was done properly.

The Mariner East 2 pipeline project in Westmoreland County is essentially complete, except for the area around Loyalhanna Lake. At the end of the year, the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection was reviewing the company's plans to drill under this popular recreation area.

A smaller, 16-inch pipeline, part of the **Mariner East 2 pipeline** project, was completed from Delmont eastward across Westmoreland County during the year, as was restoration of a few "sunken ditch" areas

where the larger 20-inch pipeline had been installed in 2017.

It takes about a year for soil to settle after a pipeline is installed and sometimes when it does, there is a need to add more topsoil and fill to bring the trenched area back to the level of the surrounding ground. It is then seeded and mulched.

Our erosion control staff monitored these areas and ensured that the backfill work was done with proper erosion and sediment controls.

SERVICES

Thirty-seven project coordinators/engineers requested **pre-construction meetings** with our technical staff during the year.

These meetings are especially valuable for large or complex projects, and offer a chance to review the project specifics after development plans are approved and just before earthmoving begins.

They help ensure that the work will be done in compliance with permits and regulations such as the Pennsylvania Clean Streams Law and so reduce the potential for violations.

Ten project coordinators/engineers requested a **meeting to have their permit paperwork checked by our administrative staff, and their plan initially assessed by our technical staff.**

We introduced this new service in 2018 as an additional help for those who need a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permit for their project.

If the technical comments our erosion control and stormwater staff offer in this one- to two-hour meeting are incorporated, the likelihood that a plan will be approved on first submittal increases significantly.

And if our administrative staff determine that the permit application is complete, the applicant can

leave the meeting with a Completeness Letter.

Eight municipalities renewed their Conservation Partnership Agreements with us in 2019: Derry Township, the City of Greensburg, Hempfield Township, Irwin Borough, the City of Latrobe, Ligonier Borough, Ligonier Township, and North Huntingdon Township.

These documents of mutual understanding outline how we can work together to protect and conserve the area's natural resources.

We held a **roundtable discussion, focusing on the impact of 2018's record rainfall, for area municipal officials** in late January.

Specifically, we discussed responsibilities and jurisdictions related to cleaning debris from streams, maintaining stormwater facilities, and addressing landslides.

We also distributed No Mow riparian buffer signs to interested municipalities.

Some 40 people attended.

2018's unprecedented rainfall left many unpaved driveways, farm lanes, and access roads washed out and marred by ruts.

We **hosted a workshop with Brandywine Conservancy in Laughlintown in March to explain how to repair and maintain gravel driveways and unpaved lanes.**

Our watershed specialist offered tips on making cost-effective repairs and preventing repeat problems.

Reducing runoff from unpaved driveways is a good conservation practice. It helps to keep sediment and other pollutants that can compromise water quality out of nearby streams.

We debuted a new education series during the

year: Lunch and Learn.

Once each month from October through December, we encouraged folks to come to the barn, bring their lunch, and learn about some of the new erosion-control and stormwater-management products that may be useful in their work.

Vendors used the 90-minute sessions to present information on new conservation-related products, including inlet protection, concrete pavers, and reinforcement mats, explaining how to install them correctly and how they work.

2019 Erosion and Sedimentation Control Inspections

by Municipality

Unity Township	50
Ligonier Township	38
Penn Township.....	29
South Huntingdon Township.....	29
Salem Township.....	26
Hempfield Township.....	25
North Huntingdon Township	23
East Huntingdon Township.....	17
Rostraver Township.....	17
Municipality of Murrysville.....	14
Donegal Township.....	12
Fairfield Township.....	9
New Stanton Borough	8
Municipalities with six inspections or fewer	48

Total Inspections..... 345

CLEAN STREAMS

The local work group that formed to address problems in the **Sulphur Run Watershed** formally approached the Army Corps of Engineers and requested a study of this watershed, which includes the Lincoln Road area of Latrobe, where severe flash flooding in 2018 badly damaged a number of homes and businesses.

The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection in late 2018 awarded a \$250,000 grant for stormwater management improvements in the Sulphur Run Watershed, which includes parts of both the City of Latrobe and Derry Township.

District stormwater staff are providing technical assistance for this project.

Our work to day-light a channel that runs through the former Jeannette Glass site was completed in 2019, and quickly proved its value during a July 11 rainstorm that flooded other parts of the city.

The water in this channel, which at one time was connected to Old Bull Run, is now mostly stormwater that drains from about 32 acres in downtown Jeannette.

Years ago, this water had been buried in a six-foot-diameter underground brick tunnel, a then-common practice on industrial sites.

We liberated it from that small underground tunnel, brought it to the surface of the ground, and opened up a 40-foot-wide channel for it to flow in. It was the extra capacity of this new channel that gave the July 11 rainstorm runoff a place to go.

In the past, a storm of the intensity of the one on July 11 would have created too much fast-flowing water for the six-foot tunnel to handle, and so, with nowhere else to go, the water would have backed up



A water course, channeled for decades inside a brick tunnel under six feet of dirt (left photo), was opened up and brought to the surface in a new, 40-foot-wide channel that helps reduce local flooding in Jeannette (right photo).

into nearby basements.

Because of the new day-lighting work, the water had a channel wide enough to hold it until it slowly infiltrated into the ground or was able to reach Brush Creek. Nearby houses and townhouses stayed dry.

As part of our work at this site, we also used earth excavated during the day-lighting to make landscape mounds and create a buffer area planted with more than 80 trees, 200 shrubs, and wildflowers.

This landscaping improves aesthetics, adds habitat, and saved on the cost of the project because the excavated earth didn't have to be trucked off-site.

Our hydraulic engineer provided assistance to the City of Jeannette for another, upcoming project to help control flooding on Brush Creek.

He provided information to municipal officials on how to stabilize the streambanks, remove debris, and maintain the flood-control project after it is put into place in the next few years by the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection.

The creation of a three-acre wetland in Chestnut Ridge Park near Acme Dam was completed during the year.

Work on the wetland began in 2018 as a way to mitigate the impact of major highway construction at the intersection of PA Route 31 and the Donegal interchange of the Pennsylvania Turnpike.

Six small wetlands already existed in the park, which is in the same watershed (Jacobs Creek) as the highway project. For this project, the small wetlands were connected to form one large one.

Accomplishing this was a major undertaking that required obtaining many permits, removing some 400 truckloads of dirt from the site, and planting more than 700 mature trees and shrubs.

Vehicle access to the eastern side of the lake also was needed for this project but didn't exist, so a two-lane entry road was created from County Line Road. A small paved parking area also was created. Both make this side of the lake more accessible and are

now able to be used by visitors coming to fish, boat, or enjoy this county park.

Our staff monitored the wetland and related projects frequently to ensure that all were done according to plan and with minimal impact on the natural resources.

The wetland is on property owned by the Westmoreland County Bureau of Parks and Recreation, and the project was funded by PennDOT.

2019 Stormwater Plans Reviewed
by Municipality

Hempfield Township.....	37
Penn Township.....	33
Derry Township.....	29
Ligonier Township.....	28
Unity Township.....	26
Washington Township.....	21
North Huntingdon Township.....	20
Salem Township.....	19
Donegal Township.....	18
Mount Pleasant Township.....	17
South Huntingdon Township.....	16
East Huntingdon Township.....	12
New Stanton Borough.....	12
Sewickley Township.....	12
Rostraver Township.....	11
Municipalities with eight plan reviews or fewer.....	41
Total Stormwater Plans Reviewed	352

(See page 4 for information on the Route 31/ Donegal Turnpike Interchange project, and page 17 for information on monitoring.)

We came up with a new approach to managing stormwater on a site in Murrysville after discovering it was filled with natural springs from the unprecedented rainfall in 2018.

We were able to adapt our original stormwater management plan to move the installation of the proposed pipe and stormwater basin to a different, dryer location.

Before this project, stormwater runoff from the First Presbyterian Church flowed unchecked down a steep slope, carving a 10-foot gully as it went, and carrying the soil into Haymaker Run, a stream with high water quality.

Now, it runs instead through an underground pipe and into the new basin where it is held, allowing pollutants to drop out, and then slowly released.

Water quality in Crabtree Creek has suffered for decades from coal-mine drainage and the lack of a sanitary sewer system in the small, namesake village it flows through.

The stream also is prone to flooding, including one recent incident in which the volunteer fire department was not able to respond to calls because the roads were impassable.

Our stormwater management staff **helped municipal officials obtain a permit to remove sediment and debris from the creek during the year**, which should lessen flooding by creating a clearer channel for stormwater to flow through.

They also attended meetings with legislators and an ad hoc taskforce to discuss additional measures for improving the stream, which flows through parts

of Salem, Hempfield, and Unity townships.

Over the course of several decades in the 1980s and 1990s, the Jacobs Creek flood control project was built – three dams and a channel, which combined to significantly reduce flooding along this stream in Scottdale, Everson, and surrounding areas.

And although the scope of this project was one of the largest in the United States at the time it was built, it did not include certain upstream tributaries of Jacobs Creek.

These tributaries – which pick up soil, debris and speed as they travel down the steep slopes of East Huntingdon Township – have contributed to the frequent flooding of homes in adjacent parts of Scottdale, putting some 25 homes under direct threat of flooding and about 100 more at risk for basement flooding.

In 2019, representatives from the District, the National Resources Conservation Service, the Borough of Scottdale, and East Huntingdon Township **jointly applied for funding from the federal government to address this problem.**

The application was approved and funded for Phase I of the project, which is a study of conditions upland of the flood-prone area and of tributaries of Jacobs Creek, including Anderson Run, Stauffer Avenue, and Little Sherrick Run. It is estimated that the study will take about a year and a half to complete. It will be conducted by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Our stormwater staff visited **flood-prone sites in Ligonier Township and Ligonier Borough and worked with these municipalities and their engineers toward relieving some water issues** near Mill Creek in Darlington and near the Compass Inn in Laughlintown.

We provided technical resources and information and attended planning meetings. We also used the Integrated Water Resources Plan (see following item this page) to provide information for engineering studies, design work, and so on. At year-end, planning on this project was continuing.

Stormwater retention basins, like most everything else, have a shelf life, and for the past few years we have been **helping municipalities upgrade these important community infrastructures** that capture rainwater runoff and slowly release it.

During 2019, we worked with the Municipality of Murrysville to retrofit seven of its municipal stormwater basins, thanks to a \$64,620 grant from Pennsylvania's Growing Greener program.

The grant originally was for six basin retrofits. But thanks to careful management, we were able to complete seven.

Improvements were tailored to each basin, and included riser modifications, flow path adjustments, and vegetation management.

Murrysville has experienced significant residential and commercial development since many of its basins were originally built, and the seven new upgrades will help manage the increased runoff.

We were able to undertake some **needed stormwater management work in the lower parking area of the GreenForge building**.

Eighteen parking spaces were repaved with a permeable concrete block system that allows water to infiltrate. The remainder of the parking spaces and the driving lane were milled and repaved with asphalt in a way that allows them to drain into the parking lot's permeable spaces.

A trench drain also was installed near the eastern entry doors of the building.



The District received the Governor's Award for Environmental Excellence in Pennsylvania for a two-part educational video on stormwater basins. Accepting the award for the District were Chelsea Walker, second from left, and Ron Rohall, far right.

This work was funded through a grant from the Colcom Foundation, and a major in-kind donation of materials, equipment, and services by Adam Eidemiller, Inc.

In partnership with PennDOT, we came up with a suggestion for a **beneficial way to manage the stormwater runoff that will be created when PennDOT rebuilds and widens State Route 981** between Mount Pleasant and Norvelt.

Stormwater management practices, added to the grounds of Mount Pleasant High School, will not only do the job for the new roadway, but also manage stormwater from the school campus (which has never had any stormwater management) and eliminate the need to condemn property along the route for building detention ponds.

The Mount Pleasant School Board, the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, and

PennDOT have all approved the plan.

Our hydraulic engineer **reviewed plans for the next phase of the I-70 improvement project, the Yukon-Madison interchange**.

This was the single largest plan he reviewed in terms of both disturbed area and the number of stormwater control features.

(Also see Stable Soils, page 4.)

We held a question-and-answer session in February and two public hearings to **get input on the draft Integrated Water Resources Plan** we released in 2018. The plan suggests best practices for managing our county's water resources.

Municipal officials, county planning staff, sewer and water authority personnel, local watershed association members, local and state politicians, and the members of the general public were among those invited

to review the draft plan and provide comments.

Suggestions from these meetings, such as the suggestion to include a discussion of the impact of fracking on local water resources, were incorporated and a revised document was submitted to the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection for review.

DEP comments, which were heavily weighted toward providing more information for communities classified as falling under the Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System, were received in November and were being addressed at year-end.

The Integrated Water Resources plan is a living document, which will be reviewed again in five years and updated as needed. Its development is funded by the Richard King Mellon Foundation.

The Westmoreland County Commissioners approved and adopted the Integrated Water Resources Plan as part of the public review process.

A model stormwater ordinance that the plan contains was covered under that action.

The ordinance applies to new development in the county, and is designed to help solve existing runoff problems.

Once the ordinance is formally adopted by the municipalities, we expect to see more science-based stormwater-management plans, which will benefit all area citizens with improved water quality and reduced likelihood of flooding.

We updated the digital home of the Integrated Water Resources Plan, westmorelandstormwater.org.

Our conservation programs technologist used Google Analytics' statistics to make this site more responsive. He also reformatted and updated the interactive elements to improve users' experience and search engine availability.

The Integrated Water Resources Plan is a guide for good stewardship of our water resources. It was developed by a community partnership that looked deeply into the ways we use water throughout Westmoreland County, the impacts of those uses, and things that can be done to ensure that these important resources are responsibly managed.

The District was selected as one of **18 statewide recipients of the 2019 Governor's Award for Environmental Excellence in Pennsylvania** for a two-part educational video on stormwater basins.

The video explains how to assess how well a basin is functioning, and how to retrofit it if needed to handle increased runoff and/or meet new standards for water quality (basins also capture sediment and debris, keeping them out of streams and rivers).

The video is available on the District's website as well as being a resource on the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection's Clean Water Academy.

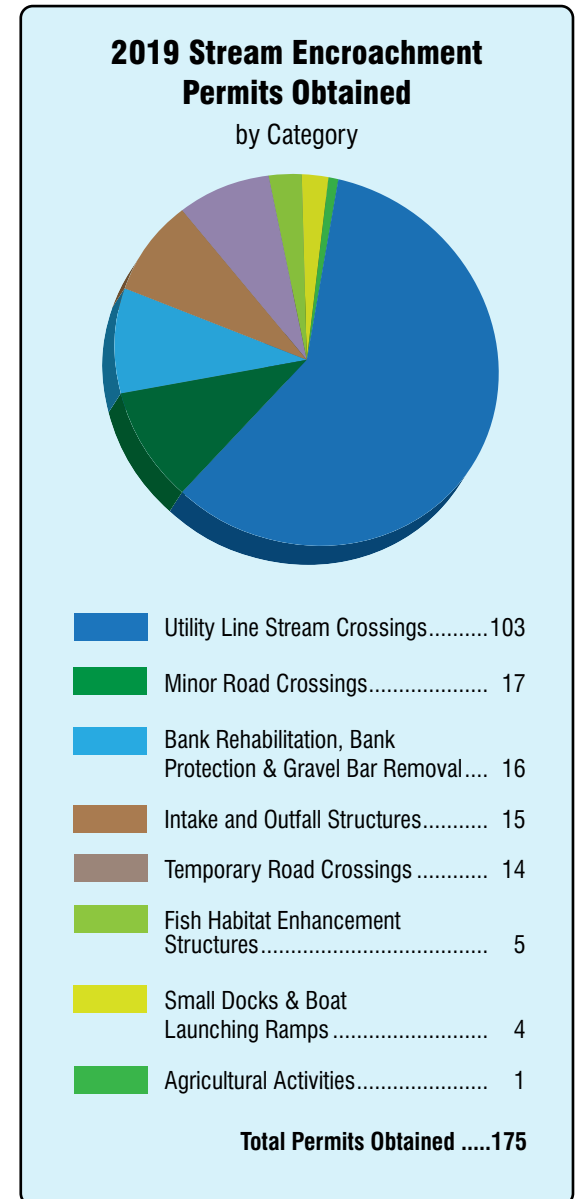
A case study of how an erosion and sedimentation plan works in the field, information for MS4 communities, how to design for PennDOT, and updates on programs of the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection were some of the presentations at our **2019 Engineers' Workshop** in March.

Our two featured presentations were on landslides and stormwater management from a municipal perspective.

For the first topic, we focused on the factors that influence landslides and how to minimize the potential for slope failure.

For the second, we featured a presentation about a city-wide green infrastructure program in Lancaster.

The full day of information was offered twice to accommodate some 380 attendees.





The Next Generation Farm Summit featured a variety of resources for farmers, including speakers discussing organizations such as The Pennsylvania Agricultural Ombudsman Program (left photo)...information on certifying agencies such as PCO for organic farms (middle photo)...and companies able to assist with labeling and marketing ag products (right photo).

PRODUCTIVE FARMS

Westmoreland County farmers showed their strength of character in responding to the few complaints received by our nutrient management/agricultural conservation technician.

When told of the reported problems, such as erosion from their farm impacting a local stream or manure causing a problem for a neighbor, half of the 10 farmers contacted immediately asked, “How do I fix it?” One even had the problem resolved the very next day.

The 10 agriculture-related complaints received by our office during the year were split about evenly between issues related to erosion and issues related to manure. Nine were resolved by year-end.

The remaining complaint will be resolved in 2020, and needs that extra time because the time of year was not right for implementing the fix (planting grass requires the right season to germinate and grow).

In addition, one complaint that had been carried into the year from 2018 was also resolved.

The District assumed responsibility for respond-

ing to agricultural complaints in 2012. This work previously had been done by the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection.

Two of the three Growing Greener conservation projects that we were prepared to implement on area farms in 2019 were deferred until 2020.

One, for a stream crossing on two adjacent farms along Turtle Creek, had to be postponed due to the continuing wet weather. The other, for a manure pit on an organic dairy farm in Salem Township, was deferred due to a death in the family. Both projects are now planned for 2020.

The third Growing Greener project, which would have involved an animal walkway, a riparian buffer, gutters and downspouts on the barn, and a number of other conservation improvements on a small farm on the edge of the Borough of Delmont, has encountered a number of significant technical issues and so the funding may be transferred to another agricultural project in the same watershed, Beaver Run.

Our nutrient management/agricultural conservation technician provided personalized assistance to

farmers throughout the year.

He made 48 visits to local farms, met with 38 individuals who came to the District to discuss the specifics of their agricultural operation, and responded to some 125 phone calls for conservation assistance. These numbers have averaged in this range for several years.

A board review of the District’s agricultural complaint policy resulted in some minor adjustments, including adjusting the number of board members on the agricultural complaint committee from five to three, and making some slight administrative revisions to the procedure used to respond to complaints.

Since the sale of the GreenForge building on our campus to the county Industrial Development Authority several years ago, **GreenForge, Inc.**, the nonprofit established to provide property management services for the building, has adapted the way it advances the District’s mission.

In 2019, the nonprofit turned its focus to **supporting ways to make area farms more viable and,**

toward that end, received a \$100,000 loan from the Westmoreland County Industrial Development Corporation that was used to purchase two planters and two harvesters for use by area farmers, beginning with those licensed to grow hemp. The planters can also be used by area vegetable farmers in the future.

The year started out with a bright outlook for hemp. A Pittsburgh company, Commonwealth Alternative Medicinal Options, had opened a hemp processing plant near New Stanton in 2018, and was planning to expand the number of acres of hemp it grew from 50 in 2018 to about 300 in 2019.

Unfortunately, by the end of 2019, things had changed dramatically. The nationwide supply of hemp out-paced the demand for one of its key products, CBD oil, and Commonwealth Alternative Medicinal Options went bankrupt.

Although this is a disappointing start to GreenForge, Inc.'s efforts to support local agriculture, it is already investigating new avenues of opportunity (see page 24).

We conducted five workshops during February and March on how to prepare a manure management plan.

Sixteen area farmers attended and prepared these documents for their properties, which represent a combined total of 640 acres.

In addition, we joined with the Fayette County Conservation District to host a two-evening **workshop for farmers on how to prepare an erosion and sedimentation control plan** for their farm.

Six area farmers attended.

The District works with farmers so that they have the plans they need for their operation.

Any farm that generates or imports manure needs to have a plan for managing it.

Likewise, farms that plow and till soil (including

with no-till practices) and farms that have bare areas created by animals (such as exercise lots), must have an agricultural and erosion sedimentation control plan to reduce erosion.

Precision farming technologies was one of the relevant topics addressed at the **annual Southwest Pennsylvania Soil Health Conference**, held on February 1.

Cover crop strategies, digital tools in a changing fertility environment, grazing plan specifics, and updates from the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture also were presented.

Some 120 area farmers attended.

The District sponsors and coordinates the event.

Some 80 people participated in this year's **Next Generation Farm Summit** in June.

This is the second year we've hosted this free, day-long event that brings together speakers, resources and information to help farmers and would-be farmers learn about new ways to make their operations viable.

Some of the topics presented included: Using the Internet to Make Sales, Poultry Processing, Organic Farming: How to Get There, and What You Need to Know to Operate a Small Farm.

Organizations and companies represented at the event included: AgChoice Farm Credit, American National Insurance Company, CAMO, Food21, GreenForge Inc., Kiva Pittsburgh, National Young Farmers Coalition, Penn State Extension, PA Agricultural Ombudsman Program, Pennsylvania Association for Sustainable Agriculture (PASA), PA Certified Organic, PA Department of Agriculture, PA Veterans Farming Project, Project Grass, U.S. Department of Agriculture Farm Service Agency, U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development, and Republic Food Enterprise Center.

Event sponsors were the Appalachian Regional Commission, Republic Food Enterprise Center, Food21, and the Pennsylvania Agricultural Ombudsman Program.



Agriculture continues to be Westmoreland County's number one industry, and one of the many ways the District supports it is by hosting an annual conference on soil health.

HEALTHY FORESTS

Our forester is working with a property owner to **help restore the health of some 30 wooded acres** of a 191-acre farm her family has owned for several generations near I-70 in South Huntingdon Township.

The property had been farmed and harvested and those areas, some of which are steep, have since become covered with brush and invasive plants.

Our forester prepared a Stewardship Plan for the property several years ago and has been advising the landowner on how to implement it. To date, she has planted trees, installed protective shelters, and sprayed to eliminate invasive plants on three acres that were previously pasture.

She plans to work next on a 22-acre, previously harvested portion of the property, where multiflora rose (*Rosa multiflora*), various exotic bush honeysuckles (*Lonicera spp.*), and Japanese stiltgrass (*Microstegium vimineum*) have taken hold.

Our forester's experience with regenerating a portion of the woods in Ann Rudd Saxman Nature Park that also had many of these invasive plants (see page 14) will be especially valuable in making improvements on this property.

Six landowners contacted us to request an exam of their woodlot and a brief plan for managing it.

Our forester visited each property, which included a total of 317 acres from locations in Donegal (100 acres), Derry (27 acres), South Huntingdon Township (40 acres), and Penn Township (150 acres).

The brief management plan provides general recommendations on the best way to steward a particular property. It is based on an inventory of the trees found there, the types of soils, and the different types



Signs were installed in Ann Rudd Saxman Nature Park as part of a three-year improvement effort.

of wooded stands.

Four property owners contacted us about **enrolling their woodlots in the state's Clean and Green program**, which encourages land to remain forested by providing owners with a property tax reduction.

Part of the process of enrolling in the program requires identifying the type of trees growing on the property, and so our forester visited each site during the year, traveling to Penn Township, Derry, Mount Pleasant Township, and North Huntingdon to walk the property and provide this information.

All four properties were accepted in the program, adding nearly 140 acres to those in Westmoreland County already enrolled in Clean and Green.

The market for timber is down and so we did not

see as much harvesting in Westmoreland County in 2019 as we have in the past.

Our forester **participated in 14 pre-plan meetings in 2019 with those planning to do a timber harvest**, a decrease from the five-year high of 20 in 2018.

These one-hour pre-plan meetings are a way to help harvesters with permit applications and ensure that adequate erosion and stormwater controls will be in place on a site before any work begins.

All timber harvests are required to have a written plan, outlining how erosion and sediment will be controlled on the site.

Our forester **reviewed 25 such plans** during the year, the same number as in 2018.

Fourteen of these plans were discussed and found to be adequate during pre-plan meetings, and so were

able to be approved that day.

Our forester was part of a committee that **made revisions to the “Timber Harvest Operations Field Guide,”** a resource that includes information such as how to design skid roads and landings; special management considerations related to ponds, seeps, and wetlands; and how to retire a timber-harvest site.

The resource was initiated by the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection and the Sustainable Forestry Initiative of Pennsylvania.

It will be available on the District’s website.



The **Westmoreland Woodlands Improvement Association** celebrated its 30th anniversary on April 18.

During the year, this active association sponsored a number of interesting programs, including ones on the Spotted Lantern Fly, Utility Rights of Way in Forests, and raptor migration on Chestnut Ridge. It also hosted field trips to the Ames sawmill in Donegal Township and Forbes State Forest, and a field day on woodland regeneration.

The District provides administrative support for this organization, which encourages good management of woodlands.

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

The third year of work in Westmoreland County’s Ann Rudd Saxman Nature Park included **improvements to some 1,200 feet of the trail,** from the parking area through the Donohoe Center property, and then into the park to the first bridge.

When the trail enters the park, it gets steeper. It also had a steep side slope in places that made walking especially challenging for some people, such as those with hip issues.

For this portion of the trail, we were able to level out the side slope and resurface it with a combination of dust and stone that also helps resist erosion.

This three-year project was funded by Dominion Foundation (\$15,000), the Community Foundation of the Alleghenies (\$5,000), and the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (\$29,500).

We are hoping to obtain new funding and partnership support to continue monitoring and maintenance work in the 60-acre park in 2020.

Ann Rudd Saxman Nature Park is a natural woodland just about one mile from Westmoreland Mall.

A cleanout of three of the six manmade ponds at Lowber did not occur in 2019 as planned because the mound of iron oxide previously removed from this passive wetland treatment system had to be removed first.

We are hopeful that this work will be done in 2020, and have funding from a Growing Greener grant to do so.

The good news at Lowber in 2019 is that a trail around the ponds was officially opened to the public. The trail is a loop, 8/10ths of a mile long, and accessible via a gravel parking area and steps that

were added in 2015. A grant from the Pennsylvania Environmental Council helped to make the trail possible.

We helped **Bolivar get a new kayak launch in 2019, and West Newton to have the funds to improve its existing one.**

Access to rivers is not only important to those looking for recreation, but to the economy of the towns that offer it as well.

In Bolivar, a \$40,000 grant from the Community Foundation of Westmoreland County and a \$4,000 grant from the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy were used to expand the parking lot near the launch area, install fencing around adjacent ball fields and tennis courts, and install poles for future lighting and security.

When a proposed project to put a boat launch on Sewickley Creek fell through due to site restrictions on the original location, we were able to convince the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy to transfer the grant money to West Newton so that it could upgrade its existing river access. That work is scheduled to be complete in 2020.

Emergency repairs we did in 2017 to stabilize a bridge carrying the Great Allegheny Passage over Cedar Creek brought to light **the need for additional repairs to the stream in this area of Cedar Creek Park.**

Our watershed technician **prepared a plan and conceptual design** that will improve stream conditions, safeguard the foundation of the bridge abutment from further damage, and reduce erosion.

It includes re-grading the stream’s slopes so they are more stable, adding multi-log vane deflectors and a modified mud sill, and removing the rest of the concrete from an old water wheel upstream so that the full width of the stream’s channel is restored.



Recreational trails continue to be popular and add to the vitality of our region. One of the newest is the Westmoreland Heritage Trail, which is being constructed in several phases, including this recent one where trees are being planted.

Our watershed technician is now looking for partnerships and funding to implement the improvements, which will repair about 2,000 feet of stream.

We received a **\$3,000 environmental education mini-grant from the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection to develop a pollinator garden** on our campus.

Pollinators – bees, butterflies, birds, and more – are vital to the lifecycle of many agricultural crops that we depend on for food, medicines, and fiber.

A previously disturbed area near the tree-lined entrance to Ann Rudd Saxman Nature Park was prepared for planting in 2019, and a mix of regionally native wildflower seeds was sown.

We also became a member of Westmoreland Pollinator Partners, a newly formed group of more than 15 area

organizations that promotes the value of these gardens.

In 2020, we plan to purchase some mature plants to add to our pollinator garden and provide information for visitors about it.

We continued to provide support to area trails and watershed associations during the year.

GREAT ALLEGHENY PASSAGE

Our watershed technician and AmeriCorps service member **helped accurately locate mile markers on the Great Allegheny Passage** by walking it with a surveyor's wheel.

They started near West Newton and ended just past Kennywood Park, a distance of some 10 miles, placing survey markers and flags as they went.

WESTMORELAND HERITAGE TRAIL

We continued our work of **helping to stabilize slopes** ahead of construction of the next sections of the Westmoreland Heritage Trail.

In 2019, we added riprap and planted trees in six areas along the proposed path, which parallels Turtle Creek.

Funding for this work was previously provided by the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (Mariner East 2 pipeline penalty) and the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. In 2019, additional funding was supplied by the Westmoreland County Bureau of Parks and Recreation.

In August, an additional 3.4 miles of trail, from Roberts Trail Access in Murrysville to Lincoln Avenue in Export, opened to the public.

KISKIMINETAS WATERSHED ASSOCIATION

The \$4,000 grant we helped the Kiskiminetas Watershed Association apply for in 2018 was received and used to **make improvements to a primitive canoe access point along the Kiskiminetas River** in East Vandergrift Borough Park.



As water quality in the Kiskiminetas River improves, the number of recreational canoeists and boaters grows. To provide better access to the river and reduce erosion, we worked with the local watershed association to install a hard-surface ramp to the water.

The money from the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy and volunteer effort helped to transform a grass trail to the river into a less-erosion-prone crushed stone path, make some small upgrades to the parking lot, and install several signs.

SEWICKLEY CREEK WATERSHED ASSOCIATION

For Sewickley Creek Watershed Association, our visual communications specialist designed and produced two large informational signs explaining the benefits of the bat boxes and the bluebird homes

installed along the Five Star Trail.

One sign is located near the Youngwood train station (near the bat boxes) and the other, closer to South Greensburg (near the bluebird boxes).

Some 100 high school students from 10 area high schools participated in the 2019 Westmoreland County Envirothon on April 29 at Twin Lakes Park in Greensburg.

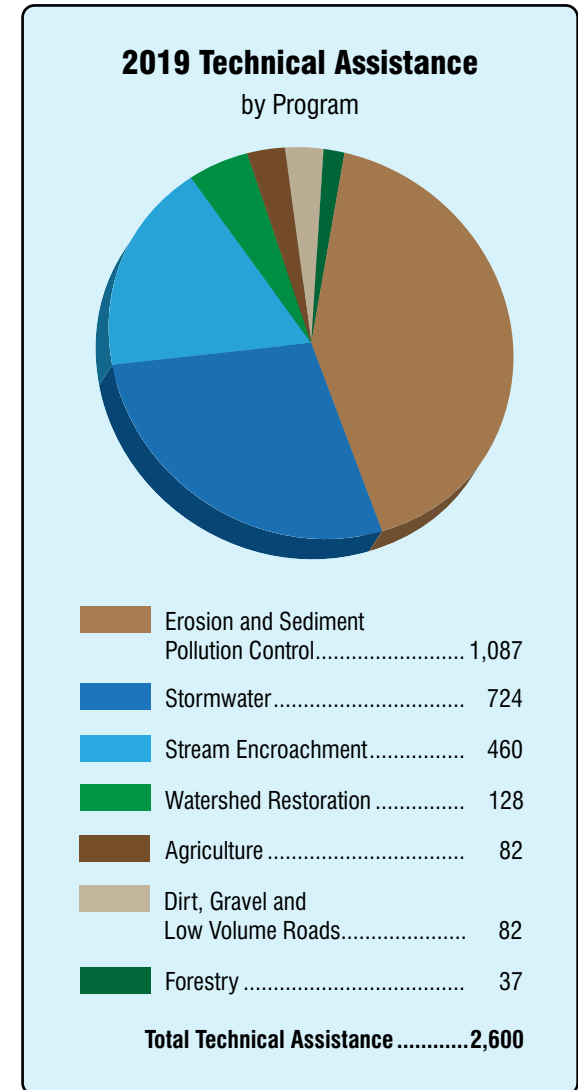
Topics in the academic competition included forestry, soil and land use, aquatic ecology, wildlife, and a current environmental issue, which this year

was agriculture and the environment – knowledge and technology to feed the world.

As part of the event, students also heard a presentation by the District’s West Nile virus technician on mosquitos – including how they are monitored, controlled, and ways to reduce their habitats – as well as preventative measures to take to protect against tick-borne diseases.



First-place winners in the 2019 Westmoreland County Envirothon were the Yough Senior High School team of (l-r) Drake Croushore, Mason Brunson, Alex Kohuth, Tyler Trayter, and Cameron Hopkin. Kneeling is the team advisor, Greg King.



SCIENTIFIC MONITORING

2019 was the **fourth year of our pioneering efforts to gather real-world data on the effectiveness of conservation measures.**

All the sensors we had installed to monitor best management practices and area streams were live and running during the year, continuously providing data from sites in Youngwood, Murrysville, Mount Pleasant, Hempfield Township, and other locations around the county.

In the field, we did some planned maintenance, replacing three data loggers with updated hardware, and physically relocating some of them above historic flood levels.

Volunteers from Trout Unlimited, the Loyalhanna Watershed Association, and the Sewickley Creek Watershed Association helped us replace sensors and relocate some of the data loggers to locations where they are less vulnerable.

Our conservation programs technologist has been working with Python, a programming language, **to help parse the enormous amount of conservation data** we are receiving from our field monitors and to translate it into a meaningful narrative.

Currently, we are receiving information on rainfall, electrical conductivity, stream depth, and soil moisture every five minutes from our sensors in the field, resulting in several thousand points of data each day.

We are very happy with the quality of the monitoring program we have invested in and the support available for it.

We continued to **monitor three of the PennDOT mitigation projects we have recently been involved**



Scientific field data is one of the newest tools we have to promote the benefits of conservation. We are gathering real-world information on how conservation measures, such as this stormwater basin in Murrysville (left photo), function. We also are gathering data on how area streams behave, which will help municipalities deal with issues such as flooding.

with: Cherry Creek as it flows through Westmoreland County Community College, Sherrick Run as it flows near U.S. Route 119, and a section of Jacobs Creek near Bridgeport Dam.

Each site will be monitored for a total of five years, with monitoring ongoing at Cherry Creek through 2021, Sherrick Run through 2022, and Jacobs Creek through 2022.

We will begin monitoring the Acme Dam project (see page 7) in 2021. Because it is a wetland, monitoring of this site will continue for 10 years.

Our West Nile virus technician **regularly collected mosquito samples at 65 locations throughout the county** during the mosquito season (early May – early October).

She forwarded these samples to the state Department of Environmental Protection, which tested them for the West Nile virus.

Of the Westmoreland County samples tested, only three were positive for the virus. In 2018, 98 samples collected from our county tested positive, most likely due to the extremely wet weather that summer.

Mosquitos breed in water.

No humans in Westmoreland County tested positive for West Nile virus during the year. In 2018 and 2017, one person in our county tested positive.

Although our West Nile virus technician **did not encounter any birds in need of testing during her work in 2019**, we continued our partnership with Wildlife Works, Inc., a wildlife rescue service in Youngwood, as an additional way to monitor our area for West Nile virus.

The organization agreed to take a swab sample of any bird we brought in. These samples would then be tested by the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection.

West Nile virus maintains itself in nature by cycling between mosquitoes and certain species of birds. If an infected mosquito bites a bird, the virus amplifies within the bird. Then, if an uninfected mosquito bites the same bird, it becomes infected.

When notified of a potential breeding ground for mosquitoes – such as a residential swimming pool

that is filled with water but not being maintained – our West Nile virus technician worked with the local municipality to remedy the situation.

In all, she responded to and helped resolve 23 of these situations.

2019 was the first full year **we monitored the population of blacklegged ticks, also known as deer ticks, in Westmoreland County.** It also was the first time that nymphs, in addition to adults, were collected.

From May through August, our West Nile virus technician collected samples each week of the nymph population at two recreation sites in two different municipalities.

In October, she collected adult ticks from four such locations.

All samples were forwarded to the state Department of Environmental Protection for testing.

Ticks collected in the summer were tested for evidence of three common diseases that may be caused by a tick bite: Lyme disease, human babesiosis, and human granulocytic anaplasmosis.

Adults collected in the fall were tested for Powassan virus and *Borrelia miyamotoi*.

The nymphal stage of the blacklegged tick causes the most tick-borne illness in Pennsylvania. Part of the reason is the tick's small size – about the size of a poppy seed – which makes it harder to discover on the human body.

At the time this publication was going to press, results of the Westmoreland County tick samples were still pending.

The blacklegged tick was almost nonexistent in Pennsylvania in the 1960s but now is the state's dominant tick species.

For the second year in a row, we sponsored a **special tire recycling event with Westmoreland**



As part of the West Nile Virus program, our technician set mosquito traps (left photo) and collected tick specimens (right photo) in various locations throughout Westmoreland County. Collections from both efforts were sent to the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection for analysis.

Cleanways and Recycling.

Area citizens took advantage of the reduced recycling fee and brought nearly 650 scrap tires for recycling to this special April event, an increase of more than 35% over 2018.

Scrap tires can cause pollution problems when the oils and chemicals and heavy metals they contain break down and then leach into the soil and nearby

waterways.

Plus, while the tires are lying on the side of the road or in a back yard, they collect water – rain and melting snow – making them a favorite breeding ground for mosquitos.

In fact, just one tire can be home to hundreds of mosquitos, increasing the threat of West Nile virus and other diseases that mosquitos may carry.

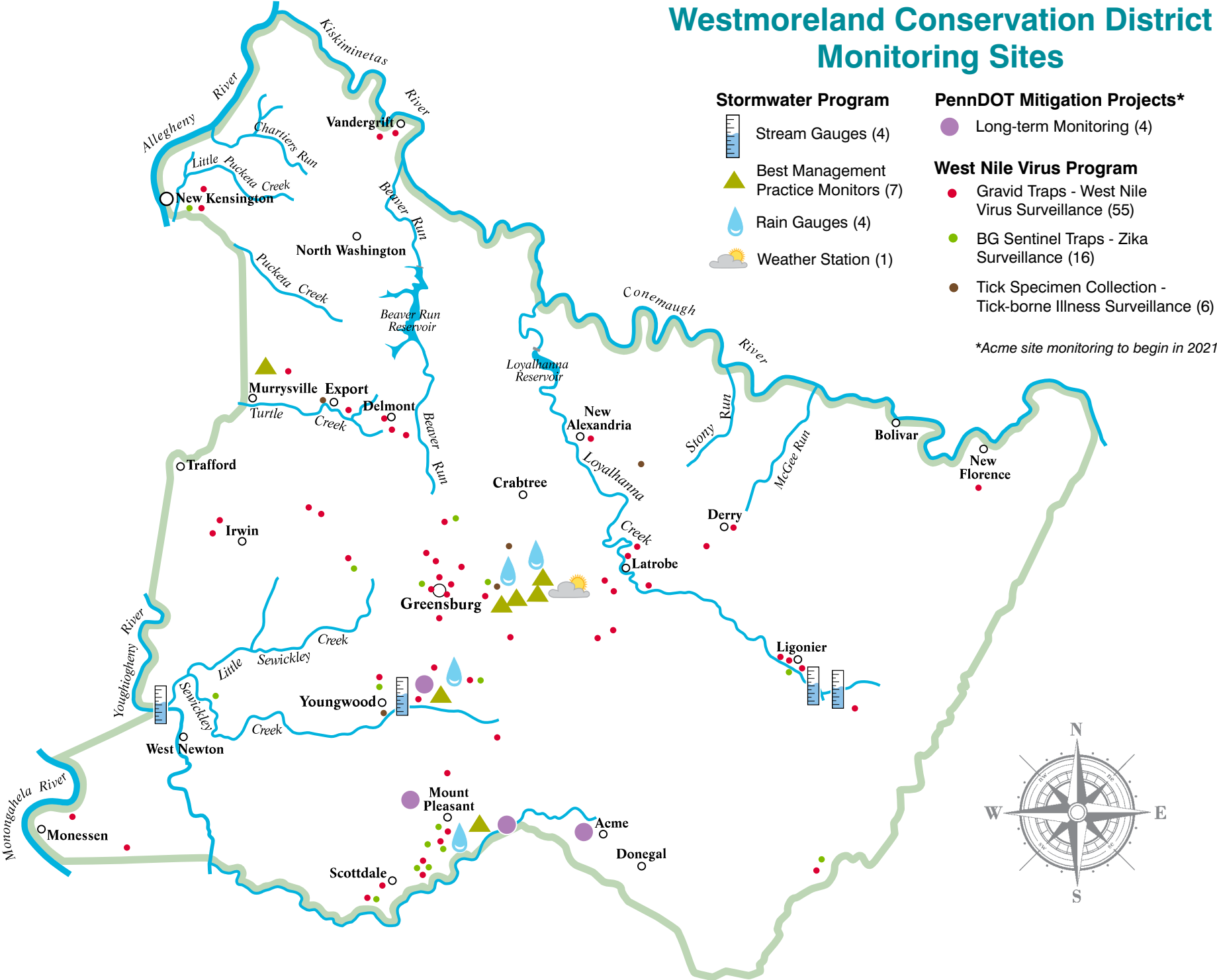
Education is a key focus of the West Nile virus program, and our technician **provided information at five community events during the year.**

She made presentations and talked one-on-one with citizens at the Westmoreland County Envirothon, Earth Day at Winnie Palmer Nature Reserve, the Conservation School sponsored by the Westmoreland County Sportsmen's League, the Westmoreland Fair, and a meeting of members of Trout Unlimited.

She also was interviewed by the Tribune-Review for a feature article on the program, and the difference between mosquitos and crane flies.



Westmoreland Conservation District Monitoring Sites



..... ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The **budget allocation** we received from Westmoreland County in 2019 was the same as it was in 2018, while the state’s contribution increased very slightly due to the formula it uses to determine the amount allocated to each county from the Act 13 (Impact Fee) imposed on unconventional gas wells.

Private foundation grants, year-end donations, and sponsorships in 2019 helped us undertake a number of important initiatives (see pages 26-27).

For instance: donations from the **Community Foundation of Westmoreland County and the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy** allowed us to enhance a boat launch area in the Borough of Bolivar (see page 14).

A **year-end fundraising appeal, an initiative we began in 2017, raised some \$7,800** from individuals, organizations, and small businesses.

Money raised through this effort will be used to plant trees and native understory shrubs in Ann Rudd Saxman Nature Park and several specimen trees at the arboretum on our conservation campus (see page 29).

Sponsorships, largely provided by businesses, helped us to produce our annual report and conservation directory, as well as to host the Envirothon and Partner Breakfast (see page 29).

Peoples Natural Gas, for instance, continued to generously sponsor our annual awards reception.

We **established a separate, restricted budget account for the funding we receive to monitor mitigation sites** (see page 17).

Currently, we are monitoring three PennDOT

mitigation projects, each for a total of five years. In 2021, we will begin monitoring the PennDOT mitigation project at Acme Dam, and that work will continue for 10 years because it is a wetland.

As these projects have increased in size and cost, the District has received more money for monitoring them.

We plan to draw this money over a period of years

to help fund a staff position.

We **implemented a number of recommendations from the audit** we conducted in 2018, including instituting a procedure in which our District manager reviews and signs off on the vendor list (quarterly), as well as on each payroll semi-monthly.

Additionally, our Board chairman reviews and signs off on our District manager and assistant District manager’s credit card invoices.

We instituted these additional internal controls in our ongoing effort to ensure that our accounting and auditing practices are comprehensive and strong.

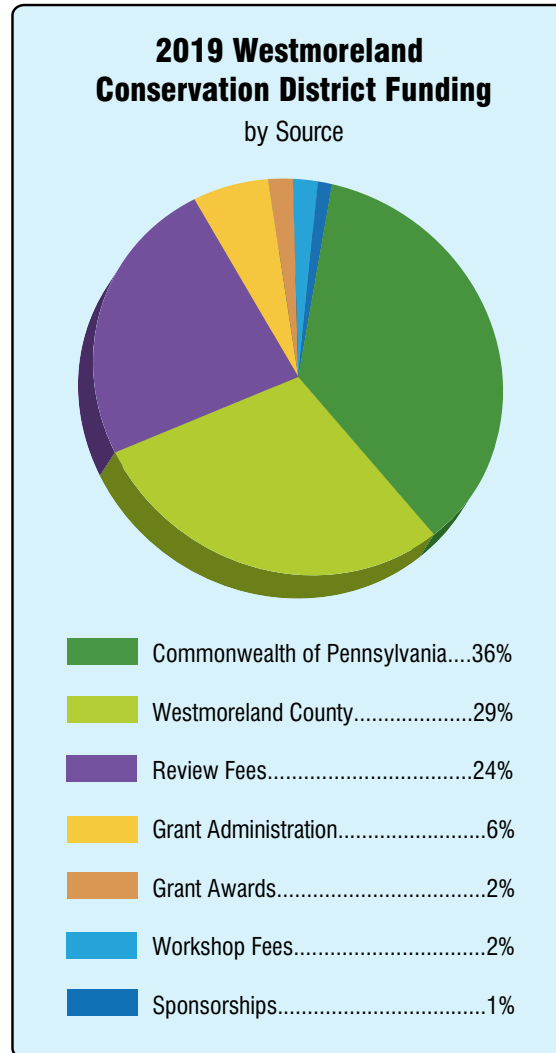
Westmoreland County’s new **Comprehensive Plan** was officially adopted by the commissioners in late December 2018, and in 2019 **our board passed a resolution supporting it.**

The Comprehensive Plan establishes broad goals to keep our county a vibrant place to live and work.

The plan identifies seven core objectives, and 38 strategies for making them happen. It also identifies partners who can help implement the strategies. The District is the implementation partner for the strategy to “Improve & Sustain Water Resources.”

We were able to achieve some of the key actions toward this strategy during 2019, including much of the work we did toward finalizing and adopting the Integrated Water Resources Plan (see pages 9-10) and our initial efforts toward resolving flooding in the Sulphur Run (see page 7), Crabtree Creek (see page 8), and Jacobs Creek watersheds (see page 8).

In 2018, the Bayer Center for Nonprofit Management at Robert Morris University helped us undertake



a comprehensive assessment of our information technology, including an inventory of our current capacity and identification of our needs.

Three of the top areas that emerged from that work – **the need for specialized computer equipment for two of our most-demanding computer users, and the need to update both our website and firewall – were addressed in 2019.**



As we gather and process a volume of scientific data from conservation sites, and provide more sophisticated in-house services, including GIS mapping, website development, and preliminary project site design, the demands on our computer technology have escalated.

Our conservation programs technologist drew from his experience and consultation with outside experts to **identify the most relevant computer software** programs needed for our work – including AutoCAD and an update to Adobe Creative Cloud – and **the computing power needed to run them.**

From his recommendations, we invested in a new desktop workstation for his work. It has an Intel Xeon 16-core processor and one of the most advanced graphic cards available. These capabilities will help us with data analytics, multithread processing for GIS functions, and developing complex maps and drawings for projects.

We also invested in a new computer workstation for our visual communications specialist. This

solid-state computer has both the capacity and memory needed to work with very large graphic design files and to process information quickly.

In addition, we subscribed to Adobe Creative Cloud, which gives access to that full suite of creative software for desktop and mobile devices, and includes file syncing and sharing, free storage space, and a number of other important functional benefits.

We **undertook a major redo of our website** in 2019, with the goals of making it more responsive in quickly providing the information visitors want, and more functional on both wide screen monitors and mobile devices.

Our plan is to have the new site launched in early 2020.

The last significant revision of the site was in 2011, when we switched to the WordPress content management system.

We were able to **dramatically enhance the effectiveness of our firewall**, a network security system

that controls and monitors incoming and outgoing network traffic.

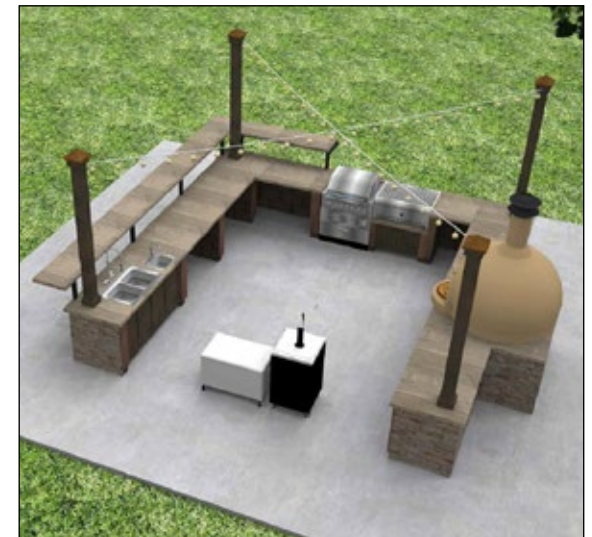
This barrier helps prevent malicious outside forces from hacking into our computer system.

Also during the year, we interviewed and **selected a new information-technology consultant**, upgraded to Windows 10, and hard-wired our Internet access, making it more secure.

When the county engineer **estimated the cost of our outdoor kitchen**, based on a preliminary design of the structure and the additional construction criteria required by the county, the cost proved to be significantly higher than our original budget.

Consequently, we worked with the county architect to redesign the project, including making it more of an addition to an existing pavilion, rather than an all-weather structure.

The county plans to put the revised, pavilion-addition design out for bid in 2020, and we



Renditions of the proposed outdoor kitchen, showing its position near the existing Eric Oesterling Pavilion on our campus (left photo), and its features, which include a brick pizza oven.



The Conservation Farmer of the Year award was given to forest stewards Lewis and Kate Lobdell (left). Presenting the award were (l-r) District Board Members Ron Rohall and Bill Doney.



Guests at the awards reception enjoyed a display of late 1940s automobiles.

hope to have it completed by summer.

To-date, we have raised \$166,000, which we believe should be enough for the revised project.

The final element of our plan to **unify the campus frontage** along the Donohoe Road – monument signs – was completed at the end of the year.

Associate Director Reid Crosby assisted our staff with the design and he manufactured the unique metal signs for both Donohoe Center and GreenForge.

Lewis and Kate Lobdell were named the 2019 Conservation Farmers of the Year (Forest Steward) and the Westmoreland Woodlands Improvement Association received the 2019 J. Roy Houston Conservation Partnership Award.

The awards were given at our annual Awards Reception in September.

The Lobdells are a different kind of farmer. Their

‘crops’ are trees and their goal is not food production but a healthier and more diverse forest; one that supports native flora and fauna for the long term.

Lewis and Kate have been farming, or in more traditionally used terms, stewarding, forest land in Ligonier, Cook and Unity townships for more than 20 years.

They have been working toward their goal systematically, following the guidance of several Forest Stewardship Plans prepared over the past 15 years by the District and a wildlife management plan prepared by the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

The Westmoreland Woodlands Improvement Association, a group of nearly 100 area citizens who share an interest in caring for trees, forests, and woodlots, celebrated 30 years of helping private forest owners be good stewards of these valuable natural resources in 2019.

The group provides an important conservation

service, as 91% of the woodland in Westmoreland County is privately owned.

The all-volunteer, non-profit Westmoreland Woodlands Improvement Association sponsors lectures, field trips, and workshops on the variety of forest-related topics that members are interested in, and the public is always welcome to attend.

The J. Roy Houston Conservation Partnership Award is **sponsored by Peoples Natural Gas.**

In addition to recognizing outstanding conservationists, our 2019 annual Awards Reception **celebrated the 70th anniversary of the District.**

DJ Pete Highlands played music from the 1940s and 1950s at the September event, and visitors could examine the 1946 and 1948 Nash automobiles in the parking lot.

Large, colorful posters documenting the District’s milestone accomplishments and many partners over



The Westmoreland Woodlands Improvement Association received the 2019 J. Roy Houston Conservation Partnership Award. Accepting for the woodlands group were (l-r) Fred Lau and John Hilewick. Presenting the award for the District were Board Members (l-r) Emil Bove and Kim Miller.



We updated the popular conservation guidebook that helps people reduce, reuse, and recycle. It is available in printed and digital versions.

the past seven decades also were on display.

Peoples Natural Gas is the Award Reception's major sponsor.

Also to mark the District's 70th anniversary, we **updated, expanded and reissued the "Things You Can Do To Conserve Westmoreland County" booklet.**

Hard copies are available in the District office and an electronic version is available on the website, westmorelandconservation.org.

BOARD AND ASSOCIATES

Reappointed to our board of directors during 2019 were Kim Miller (public director; four-year term), Fred Slezak (farmer director; four-year term), and Ted Kopas (county commissioner; one-year term).

Reappointed as associate directors were Reid Crosby, John Hardiman, Larry Larese, John Lohr,

William Mihalco, Robert Pore, John Turack, and Keith Walters.

Each is appointed for a two-year term, expiring December 31, 2020.

Associate directors are nonvoting members of our board.

Five new associate directors were appointed in 2019: Jay Bell, Kathy Fritz, Larry Gasparato, William Roberts, and Thomas Sierzega, Jr.

Jay is an owner of Bella Terra Vineyards, a 17-acre boutique winery in the Ruffs Dale/New Stanton area. In addition to his interest in viticulture/winemaking, Bell has experience and interest in stormwater management and woodland management (the Bella Terra property includes trees that are several-hundred years old).

Kathy is an environmental services division assistant at the Markosky Engineering Group, Inc.

She previously served for more than 33 years as technical programs administrator for the conservation district and has extensive knowledge of the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection's regulations.

Larry is retired from the Pennsylvania Infrastructure Investment Authority (PENNVEST), and has been involved during his career with more than 1,000 infrastructure projects, including those related to water, sewer, stormwater, brownfields, and abandoned mine drainage.

William is community development director in Penn Township. He has a strong background in floodplain management, and is a member of the Pennsylvania Association of Building Code Officials, the American Planning Association, and the Association of State Floodplain Managers.

Tom is recently retired as the district conservationist with the United States Department of Agriculture's

Natural Resources Conservation Service. He has been involved with soil conservation and several conservation districts in Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia for more than 40 years.

Associate board members are volunteer, non-voting members of the conservation district's board of directors. They are appointed to a two-year term.

STAFF

District Manager **Greg Phillips** was appointed to the **Board of Directors of Food21**, a nonprofit established in 2018 to grow our regional food economy.

His efforts with this organization are especially focused on bolstering local farms and agriculture, which was a founding principle of the conservation district and a key component of Westmoreland County's recent Comprehensive Plan (see page 20).

To that effect, he is hoping to pilot several new agricultural initiatives in Westmoreland County – growing barley for the craft beer industry, a larger-scale meat processing facility, and year-round growing facilities.



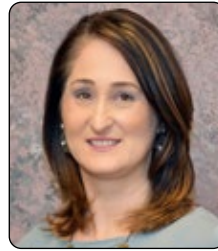
Justin DeCarlucci

Our stormwater program was fully staffed in 2019, with the **hiring of Justin DeCarlucci** as conservation programs technologist.

He will provide technical support, including data management, GIS mapping, and CAD design and drafting. He also will manage the field monitoring instrumentation for our technical, education, and

outreach programs.

Justin is a 2014 graduate of Kent State University with a BA in architecture.



Tammy Woodward

Our erosion control specialist/compliance officer decided not to return to work after her maternity leave in March. Thanks to an ongoing program of cross-training, we were able to fill her position internally, **promoting our former West Nile virus program technician.**

Subsequently, the virus monitoring position was filled internally by our **former technical programs secretary**, and we hired Tammy Woodward from the outside to fill the **secretarial** slot.

Tammy brings a wealth of experience to the position, including related work with the Private Industry Council of Westmoreland/Fayette County, Hempfield Area School District, and Penn Center Management Corporation.



Alyssa Harden

Changes also occurred with our two AmeriCorps service member positions.

Alyssa Harden, who had been with us in this capacity for two years, was promoted to watershed technician.

And Kodie Rearick, who came on board in 2018 and split her time between the District and the Westmoreland Land Trust, left to take a position closer to her home. Kodie's half-time position with the District was not filled.

AmeriCorps is a federal program in which members spend up to a year volunteering with a nonprofit, school, or community organization. They can receive a student loan deferment, limited health benefits, and a monetary award for education in addition to receiving on-the-job training in their field of interest.

Two interns joined us during the year.

Hank Bradish, an environmental engineering major from Geneva College, spent his second summer with us, helping with the development of the Integrated Water Resources Plan and with the monitoring program.

Joe Maier, a biology major from the University of Pittsburgh, was with us from January through May. Joe created a Google map of area farmers' markets, helped with various events, and also helped with the development of the Integrated Water Resources Plan.

In 2019, the first two District staff members graduated from and a third staff person began the **Westmoreland County Chamber of Commerce's Leadership Westmoreland Program.**

Our watershed program manager and erosion control specialist/compliance coordinator graduated in May from the nine-month program, which promotes greater awareness of our community, offers opportunities for networking, and fosters leadership skills.

Our watershed specialist began the program in September at a weekend retreat, and will attend one

full-day session each month through May of 2020.

Our watershed technician **completed the 55-hour core training for the Pennsylvania Master Naturalist Program**, a relatively new statewide program that helps people learn more about their natural world.

The 13-week training program covered a variety of topics, including botany, ornithology, entomology, and geology, with content focused on the specifics of our location in Pennsylvania – the Appalachian forests.

Classroom lessons and field trips made up the bulk of this training.

Our watershed technician is currently working to complete the other first-year requirements of the program – an additional eight hours of advanced training and 30 hours of volunteer service – and expects to graduate in the fall of 2020.

To maintain Master Naturalist status, she will be required to attend additional training and provide volunteer service each year.

OUTREACH

We **emailed our events calendar and a quick summary of conservation news four times during the year.**

We also published and distributed a detailed annual report.

We **hosted a Partner Breakfast** again at the conclusion of the year.

More than 80 of our conservation partners joined us for this buffet breakfast and informal opportunity to network, share ideas, and plan for the future.

We created a number of posters for display at the event, showcasing various milestones and recognizing key partners over the 70 years since the District was founded.

The Partner Breakfast was sponsored by Gibson-Thomas Engineering.

Financial Statement

Concise Statement of Financial Position

Combined Funds - December 31, 2019

ASSETS

Cash	\$ 1,174,878
Grants Receivable	\$ 265,209
Capital Assets	\$ 175,032
Prepaid Expenses	\$ 16,030
Total	\$ 1,631,149

LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS

Current Liabilities	\$ 172,675
Net Assets	\$ 1,335,236
Long Term Liabilities	\$ 123,238
Total	\$ 1,631,149

Concise Statement of Activities

Combined Funds - Year Ending - December 31, 2019

SUPPORT

Westmoreland County	\$ 671,685
State Grants	\$ 1,348,216
Administrative Services	\$ 289,980
Consulting, Planning & Fees	\$ 454,046
Room Rental/Interest	\$ 11,035
Unclassified Operating Revenues	\$ 19,158
Grants & Contributions	\$ 205,515
Special Projects/Intergovernmental	\$ 42,282
Total	\$ 3,041,917

EXPENDITURES

General Conservation	\$ 1,768,631
Specific Projects	\$ 1,142,704
Capital Outlays	\$ 68,350
Other	\$ 60,400
Total	\$ 3,040,085
Excess of Revenue	\$ 1,832
Proceeds of Long Term Debt	\$ 33,913
Net Change in Fund Balance	\$ 35,745
Fund Balance - Beginning	\$ 1,186,432
Prior Period Adjustment	\$ 69,486
Fund Balance - End	\$ 1,291,663

Above and Beyond Projects

To do conservation projects that are needed in Westmoreland County, but that are “above and beyond” our funded, mandated duties, we seek out nontraditional sources of funding.

This mainly involves applying for competitive grants from the state and federal governments, and from foundations and organizations. How successful we are in winning these grants is a major factor in determining how many “above and beyond” conservation projects we can do.*

Sometimes, we also receive nontraditional funding from consulting fees or contracts for “above and beyond” projects.

In 2019, we had a total of \$1,635,445 from all sources of nontraditional funding in-hand, and were using it to put 15 “above and beyond” conservation projects in place in our county.** These projects are shown as numbers 1 through 14 on the map on the next page.

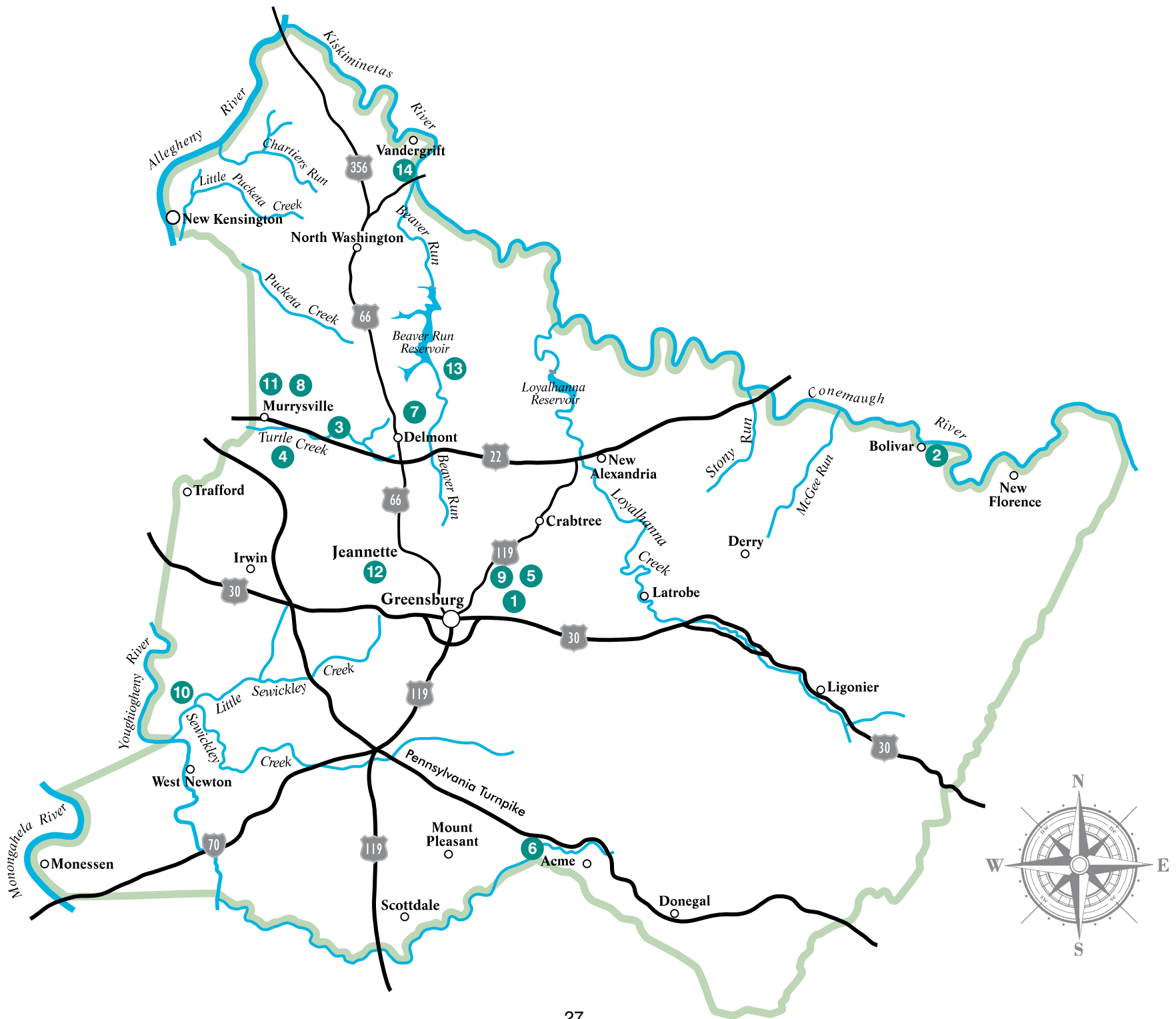
In addition to the numbered projects, there was one other “above and beyond” project – the Integrated Water Resources Plan – that is not numbered or shown on the map because it is a countywide effort. This project also is listed below, and discussed in more detail on pages 9-10.

In the following list, all projects are funded by competitive grants (shown with the dollar amount of the award and the funding source), unless indicated otherwise by Consulting Fee Project, Contract Project, or Private Donation.

* Most of these grants are awarded directly to the District. Some are awarded to a partner agency that we work with on the particular project.

** Some of the “above and beyond” projects are multi-year efforts.

- | | | | |
|---|--|---|---|
| <p>(not numbered)
Integrated Water Resources Plan*
Management of Water Resources
Countywide
\$300,000 Richard King Mellon Foundation</p> | <p>3 Westmoreland Heritage Trail
Streambank Stabilization
Municipality of Murrysville
\$62,000 PA Department of Environmental
Protection*</p> | <p>7 Rebitch Beef Farm* ‡
Agricultural Best Management Practices
Borough of Delmont
\$15,655 Growing Greener</p> | <p>12 Former Jeannette Glass Site*
Channel Day-lighting
Partnership with Westmoreland County
Industrial Development Corporation
City of Jeannette
Consulting Fee Project: \$20,000</p> |
| <p>1 Ann Rudd Saxman Nature Park*
Stewardship Plan Development and
Implementation
Hempfield Township
\$29,500 PA Department of Conservation
and Natural Resources
\$15,000 Dominion Foundation
\$ 5,000 Community Foundation for
the Alleghenies</p> | <p>4 Idle Creek Boarding Stables and
Jeff Graham beef farm* ‡
Agricultural Best Management Practices
Export
\$22,965 Growing Greener</p> | <p>8 Municipal Stormwater Basins*
Retrofits – Seven basins total**
Municipality of Murrysville
\$64,620 Growing Greener</p> | <p>13 McQuaide Dairy Farm* ‡
Agricultural Best Management Practices
Salem Township
\$80,000 Growing Greener</p> |
| <p>2 Bolivar
Boat Launch and Park Enhancements
Partnership project with the municipality
of Bolivar
\$40,000 Community Foundation of
Westmoreland County*
\$ 4,000 Western Pennsylvania
Conservancy</p> | <p>5 GreenForge Stormwater Improvements
Trench drain, asphalt and permeable paving
Hempfield Township
\$125,000 Colcom Foundation*
\$ 23,205 Adam Eidemiller, Inc.
\$ 500 Tresco Paving Corporation</p> | <p>9 Pollinator Garden
Habitat creation
Hempfield Township
\$ 3,000 Pennsylvania Department of
Environmental Protection Environmental
Education Mini-grant</p> | <p>14 Kiskiminetas River*
Canoe Access
Partnership Project with Kiskiminetas
Watershed Association
East Vandergriff Borough
\$4,000 Western Pennsylvania
Conservancy</p> |
| | <p>6 Acme Dam*
Wetland Improvements
Chestnut Ridge Park
Contract Project: \$481,000 PennDOT
mitigation funding</p> | <p>10 Lowber Treatment System
Iron Oxide Recovery and Trail Loop
Lowber
\$171,000 Growing Greener*
\$ 6,000 Pennsylvania Environmental Council</p> | <p>*Funding awarded in a prior year. Work
began, continued, or was completed in 2019.</p> <p>‡ Funding awarded in a prior year.
Implementation has been deferred until 2020.</p> <p>**Original grant was for six basins. Careful
management allowed us to retrofit seven.</p> |
| | <p>11 First Presbyterian Church of Murrysville
and Murrysville Volunteer Fire Company*
Stormwater Best Management Practices
Municipality of Murrysville
\$103,000 Growing Greener</p> | | |



2019 Dirt, Gravel, and Low Volume Road Maintenance Projects

These projects are put in place under a standing District program. They are funded annually by the Dirt, Gravel, and Low Volume Road Maintenance Program.

The Pennsylvania legislature established this program to eliminate stream pollution caused by water runoff and sediment from unpaved roads.

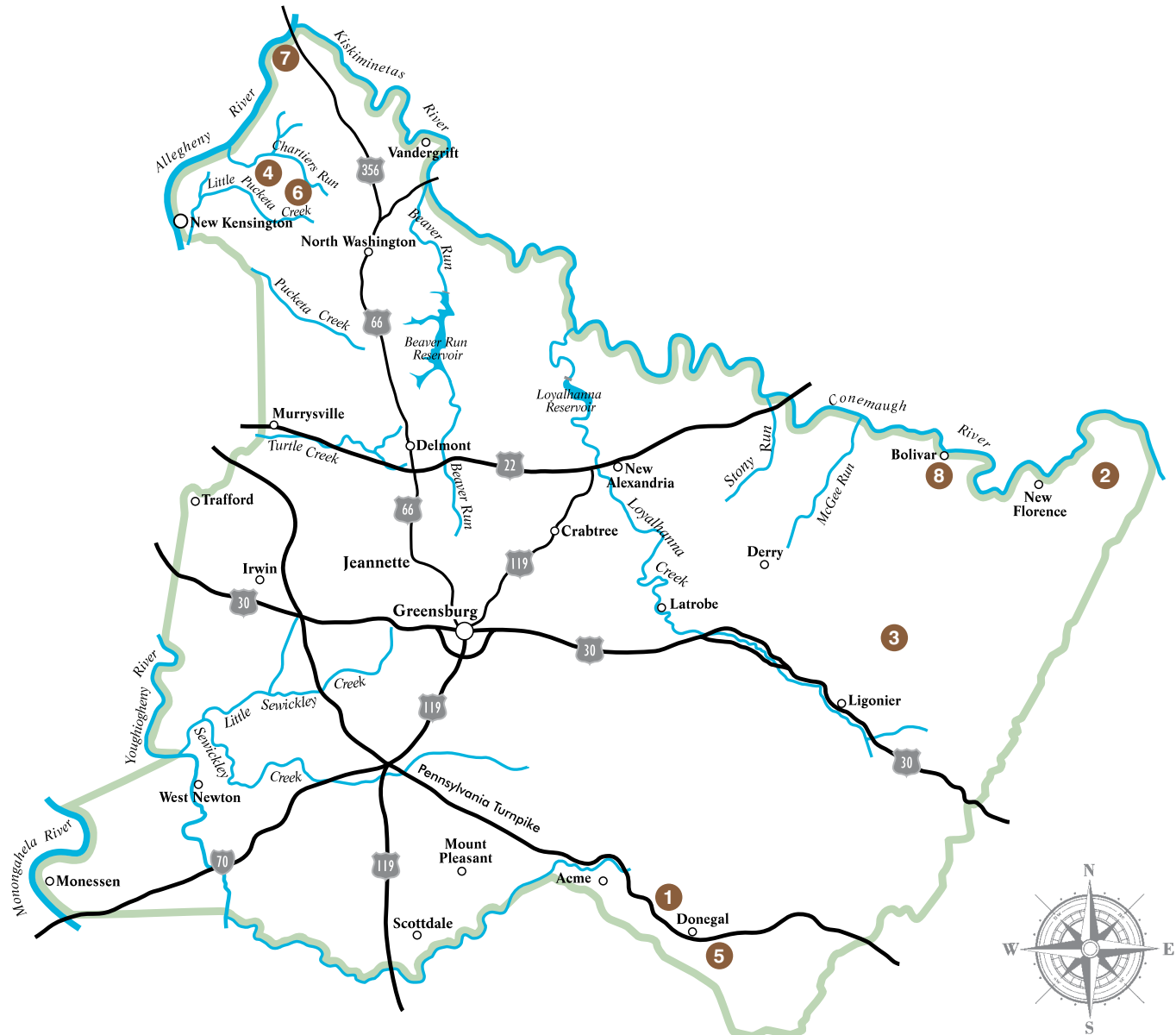
Money for this program is allocated to conservation districts by the State Conservation Commission, based on the number of miles of dirt, gravel and low-volume roads in a given county.

DIRT AND GRAVEL ROADS

- 1 Rock Canyon Road**
Donegal Township
Fourmile Run Watershed
- 2 Sugar Run Road**
Saint Clair Township
Conemaugh River Watershed

LOW VOLUME ROADS

- 3 Berkley Road**
Ligonier Township
Loyalhanna Creek Watershed.
Funding for this improvement was allocated in 2018. Improvements were made in 2019.
- 4 Kunkle Road**
City of Lower Burrell
Little Pucketa Creek Watershed
- 5 Thompson Road**
Donegal Township
Indian Creek Watershed
- 6 Taymer Drive**
City of Lower Burrell
Little Pucketa Creek Watershed
- 7 Club House Drive**
Allegheny Township
Allegheny River Watershed
- 8 Fourth Street and Walnut Street Extension**
Bolivar Borough
Conemaugh River Watershed



2019 Donors

Special Projects

BENEFACTOR

\$10,000 to \$99,999

Adam Eidemiller, Inc.

The Community Foundation
of Westmoreland County

a. r. glance

Penn State Cooperative Extension

FRIEND

\$2,500 to \$4,999

Western Pennsylvania Conservancy

PARTNER

\$500 to \$999

Tresco Paving Corporation

DONOR

Up to \$249

Justin DeCarlucci

Sponsors

BENEFACTOR

\$10,000 to \$99,999

Peoples Natural Gas

PARTNER

\$500 to \$999

Adam Eidemiller, Inc.

Apex Energy

Aquatic Edge

Gibson-Thomas Engineering

Pennsylvania Envirothon

Smithfield Support Services Corp.

ASSOCIATE

\$250 to \$499

Markosky

Pleasant Unity Supply

Wetland Boot Camp

The Wilson Group

DONOR

Up to \$249

Deluzio & Company, LLP

Esken Landscaping

Fahringer, McCarty, Grey, Inc.

Victor P. Regola & Associates, Inc.

James J. Stossel, MBA

Westmoreland Land Trust

Annual Appeal

FRIEND

\$2,500 to \$4,999

Robert Pore

PARTNER

\$500 to \$999

Creekside Hill Farm

Charles and Judy Duritsa

Lewis and Kate Lobdell

Western Pennsylvania Region of the
Antique Automobile Club of America

ASSOCIATE

\$250 to \$499

William and Donna Doney

Richard Herd

Richard Kacin, Kacin Companies

Bill and Kathy Mihalco

Greg and Leanne Phillips

John and Ann Starr

Jay and Mary Lou Tarara

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Up to \$249

Wayne and Eileen Baughman

Laura Blood

Emil Bove

Bill and Sandra Finley

Lawrence Gasparato

Traci and Ken Halleck

Ron and Paula Korber

Terrence Matty

Larry and Diane Myers

Reverend Jeremiah T. O'Shea

Nancy Page

Jim and Sarah Pillsbury

Gary Sefchok

Silvis Group Inc.

James J. Stossel

Sucevic, Piccolomini and Kuchar Engineering

Nevin and Judy Ulery

Funds raised in this year's annual appeal will go toward planting trees and native shrubs in Ann Rudd Saxman Nature Park and several specimen trees in the conservation campus arboretum.

Thank you to our state legislators and county commissioners, who allocate funding every year for the District.

State funding supports many of the core conservation programs we offer, including programs delegated to us by the state in agriculture, post-construction stormwater management, erosion and sedimentation control, and dirt, gravel, and low volume roads.



Pennsylvania State Legislators Representing Westmoreland County

- Rep. Bob Brooks
- Rep. Eric Davanzo
- Rep. Frank Dermody
- Rep. George Dunbar
- Rep. Eric Nelson
- Rep. Joseph A. Petrarca, Jr.
- Rep. Mike Reese
- Rep. Ryan Warner
- Sen. James R. Brewster
- Sen. Joe Pittman
- Sen. Patrick Stefano
- Sen. Kim Ward

County funding has been instrumental in helping us attract significant additional dollars for “above and beyond” conservation improvements throughout Westmoreland County (see pages 26 - 27).



Westmoreland County Commissioners



Westmoreland County Commissioners
Gina Cerilli, Esq., Sean Kertes, Douglas W. Chew



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Charles Duritsa
Vice Chairman

Conrad Donovan
Treasurer

Kim Edward Miller
Secretary

Emil Bove, PLS

William Doney

County Commissioner Douglas W. Chew

Paul R. Sarver

Fred J. Slezak

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Reid Crosby

John Hardiman

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Kathleen Fritz

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Theresa Gay Rohall

Thomas Sierzega

John Turack

Keith Walters

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Assistant District Manager/Technical Programs Director/Forester

Karen Barnhart
Fiscal Administrator

Sandra Dzendzel
Director of Administration

Mark Jackson
Visual Communications Specialist

Sandra Donovan
Receptionist/Administrative Assistant

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Hydraulic Engineer

Kathryn Hamilton, PLA
Landscape Architect/Stormwater Technician

Justin DeCarlucci
Conservation Programs Technologist

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Chelsea Gross
Erosion Control Specialist

Robert D. Cronauer
Watershed Program Manager

Chelsea Walker
Watershed Specialist

Alyssa Harden
Watershed Technician

Daniel Griffith
*Nutrient Management Specialist/
Agricultural Conservation Technician*

Andrea Halfhill
*West Nile Virus Program Technician/
Conservation Technician*

Christie Sebek
Plans and Permits Coordinator

Tammy Woodward
Technical Programs Secretary

Educational Staff

Janette Novak-Mitchell
Education Program Coordinator

ADVISORY COMMITTEES

These committees are made up of community volunteers, District board members, associate board members, and staff members. We very much appreciate all the volunteers who provide their professional expertise and give their time to help develop and sustain the District's programs.

AGRICULTURE

Wayne Baughman
Gisela Carmenaty
William Doney
Daniel Griffith
Dustin Heeter
Anne Hong
Kim Edward Miller
Gregory Phillips
Jason Pontillo
Robert Pore
Betty Reefer
Laurel Rush
Paul Sarver
Paul Shaffer
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John Turack
David Uhrinek

DIRT, GRAVEL AND LOW VOLUME ROADS PROGRAM

Robert Cronauer
Alyssa Harden
Ronald Rohall
Paul Shaffer
Chelsea Walker
Daniel Wilson

EROSION CONTROL COMPLIANCE

Charles Duritsa
Kim Edward Miller
Anthony Quadro

FORESTRY

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Mike DiRinaldo
Tom Fitzgerald
John Hilewick
Anthony Quadro
Ronald Rohall

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Commissioner Douglas W. Chew
Charles Duritsa

Ronald Rohall
Fred Slezak

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Emil Bove, PLS
Lucien Bove, PE
Kevin Brett, PE
John Campfield
Daniel Carpenter
Robert Cronauer
Justin DeCarlucci
Christopher Droste, CESCO, CESC
Kathleen Fritz
Lawrence Gasparato
Chelsea Gross
Andrea Halfhill
Alyssa Harden
Kathryn Hamilton, PLA
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Jason Rigone
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Ronald Rohall
Christie Sebek
Thomas Sierzega
Doug Siler
Tamira Spedaliere
Chelsea Walker
Tammy Woodward

Helping people
use resources wisely

Conservation Through the Years



1949

Westmoreland Conservation District **founded**.



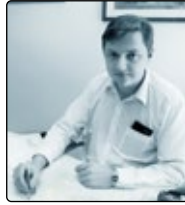
District issues its **first formal strategic plan** under the leadership of its volunteer board.

1967



1972

District becomes **one of the first in Pennsylvania** to implement a soil erosion and sediment control program.



1988

District implements **the first stormwater management program** offered by any conservation district in Pennsylvania.



District helps to form the **Sewickley Creek Watershed Association**.

1991



1994

District relocates with like-minded agencies into a **new, agricultural and conservation service center, Donohoe Center**.

1954

District publishes a "Program and Work Plan" for its operations, an early version of a **strategic plan**.



1971

District establishes **the first "Environmental Information Center"** in the state, and its resources are available on loan to all county residents.



District is the **first in the state to award a project under the new Landowner Reclamation Program**, in which property owners can reclaim abandoned mine lands on their property.

1987

District joins with the Allegheny County District to begin work on **the region's first watershed-wide stormwater management plan**, focusing on the Turtle Creek Watershed.



1990

District helps to form the **Westmoreland County Agricultural Land Preservation Program** to conserve and protect farmland.

1992

District issues its **second strategic plan**.



1996

District initiates **first public fundraising campaign**, raising \$40,000 from 50 donors for improvements to Ann Rudd Saxman Nature Park.



District issues its **third strategic plan**.

1997



1998

District breaks ground for a new **\$1.5 million education center/headquarters building**, funded with \$1.29 million in private donations.

1999
District helps to **reorganize the Jacobs Creek Watershed Association**.



2001

District **engages significantly more volunteers** by creating citizen advisory committees to support its technical programs and organizational efforts, such as public relations.



2003

District creates a **conservation educator position**.



2005

District helps to **develop Westmoreland County's first-ever Comprehensive Plan**.



District creates **first demonstration green roof in Westmoreland County**, and first demonstrated use of permeable concrete for sidewalks.

2006-2008



2008

District **builds a coalition to address long-standing flooding problems along the Little Pucketa Creek** in Lower Burrell and New Kensington.

2007



District helps to **launch the Westmoreland Land Trust**.

Federal officials **allocate more than one billion dollars to remediate historic coal mine pollution in Pennsylvania**, thanks to effective lobbying by the District and its partners.

2009

District launches a **major stormwater management project in Mount Pleasant Borough** that ultimately creates 28 rain gardens on residential, commercial, and municipal sites.



2010



J. Roy Houston, board chairman for 40 of the 61 years the District has been in existence, passes away. We lose a treasured friend, a trusted adviser, and one of the greatest champions conservation in Westmoreland County has ever known.



Ron Rohall, a member of the District board since 1993, and vice chairman since 1998, is named chairman of the District board.



2012

The **J. Roy Houston Conservation Partnership Award** is established, thanks to Peoples Natural Gas, and given for the first time to the Westmoreland County Commissioners, past and present, who have provided consistent support for the District's programs.

J. Roy Houston is inducted into the District's Hall of Honor.

2013

A five-year effort to **improve water quality in the Stony Run Watershed** in Derry Township – formerly one of the highest in Westmoreland County in the amount of sediment and nutrient pollution – is completed.

Seven farms receive a total of nearly 40 separate conservation improvements.



The District enters into a formal agreement with the Westmoreland County Industrial Development Corporation in which **that organization takes over management of GreenForge**, further enhancing that building's operating independence from the District.



The District **assumes responsibility from the state for reviewing post-construction stormwater management plans**, which are required of any project that disturbs more than one acre of ground.



The District **assumes responsibility from the state for the West Nile virus monitoring program** in Westmoreland County.

2017

The District's "*Sustaining Conservation*" campaign is **successfully closed out**, raising some \$1.7 million to help enhance client services, create practical conservation demonstrations, gather science-based data, create a county-wide Integrated Water Resources Plan, and build new partnerships.

Ten priority watersheds, representing about 50% of Westmoreland County, are totally or partially modeled to **gather data for the county-wide water resources plan**.

The **first-ever AmeriCorps service member joins the District's staff**.



2019



A **three-year effort to improve Ann Rudd Saxman Nature Park** is completed. Invasive plant species are controlled on 12 acres, a portion of the treated area is fenced to keep browsing deer out, 400 native seedlings are planted in protected tubes, and trail improvements are made.

2015



2014

State-initiated **changes to the Dirt and Gravel Road Maintenance Program become effective, adding significant funding and increasing the number and/or types of municipal road improvement projects possible**. By improving roads, particularly those near high-quality streams, this work improves water quality.

The Westmoreland County allocation for fiscal year 2014-2015 is \$423,000. The previous fiscal year allocation was \$28,000.

Dorothy Stoner, a retired Unity Township dairy farmer who served on the District board for 12 years and as an associate director for three years, **is inducted into the District's Hall of Honor**.



2016

The District takes the **first steps toward scientifically monitoring existing stormwater management practices**. Twenty sensors and two rain gauges are installed throughout our eight-acre conservation campus.

The **final conservation improvement in the McGee Run Watershed project** – an innovative, aerated composting system – **is installed** on a horse farm.



2018

A "Next Generation Farm Summit" is held to **explore emerging trends in agriculture** and ways to make today's farm operations successful.

Al Barnett, who for more than 25 years represented area sportsmen to our board, **is inducted into the District's Hall of Honor**.



The **first-ever, county-wide Integrated Water Resources Plan** – suggested best practices for managing our county's resources – **is adopted** by the Westmoreland County Board of Commissioners.



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website: westmorelandconservation.org • email: wcd@wcdpa.com