

2022 J. Roy Houston Conservation Partnership Award

Ramsey Excavating LLC



The Ramsey family — Bob, Lori, April, Austin, Sofia, Bobby, and Bailey

Thirteen years ago, when another contractor was unavailable to take on a conservation project on Mill Creek in Ligonier, Ramsey Excavating stepped in, and so began a District partnership that now has put more than a dozen conservation projects on the ground throughout Westmoreland County.

That first conservation work used log vane deflectors to stabilize streambanks in the exceptional quality waterway that supplies drinking water for some residents in Ligonier Township. Ramsey Excavating provided the equipment and operators that installed the logs and large rock, and volunteers provided the hand labor.

In the years since, the Ligonier-based company has gone on to complete a portfolio of conservation projects throughout Westmoreland County – building retention ponds at the Westmoreland



(l) Ramsey Excavating paved Misty Meadow Road in Mount Pleasant Township with diving surface aggregate. (r) In a project in the eastern part of the county, Bobby placed a flared-end section of squash pipe to carry the full width of a stream.

fairgrounds, installing fiber-reinforced sections of conveyer belt to divert water from dirt and gravel roads, removing a concrete channel along Sherrick Run in Mount Pleasant Township and replacing it with rock veins, lining the banks of Little Pucketa Creek near Valley High School with riprap, installing a squash pipe (a pipe that is the same width as the stream) under Sugar Run Road in Saint Clair Township, and regrading the Loyalhanna Creek's streambanks near the Latrobe Transfer Station.

Currently, the company is partnering with the Westmoreland Conservation District on a project to regrade and stabilize the banks of a stream in Irwin that were eroding and threatening a nearby walking trail.

“If we haven't worked with a particular conservation practice before, we study up on it and talk about the installation with the conservation district

people before the project begins,” Company Owner Bobby Ramsey said.

In fact, Bobby's willingness and ability to communicate is a key reason the company has been such an outstanding conservation partner. He knows that “what works on paper doesn't always work in the field” and so keeps in touch at every step in the job, discussing how it's going and where modifications might need to be made. “He's always willing to work together to figure out how to get the best result, to make sure all of us are on the same page, and that everyone is satisfied with the work,” said Chelsea Walker, watershed program manager for the Westmoreland Conservation District.



Ramsey Excavating placed a retaining wall along Cherry Creek, part of a larger riparian buffer project at Westmoreland County Community College in Youngwood.

Ramsey Excavating also has put its conservation knowledge to work in other jobs, including installing swales and channels in residential developments, and conveyer-belt diversions in homes with driveway washout problems. “Sometimes, with driveways, minor things can be done at a reasonable price, and they make all the difference,” Bobby said. Washouts of gravel driveways and unpaved lanes not only create a problem for the homeowner, but can contribute to water pollution in nearby streams.

The 20-year-old excavating company also has partnered with the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy on conservation projects in Westmoreland and Allegheny counties.



(l) In Irwin, the company excavated for a rain garden to capture runoff from a parking lot. (r) Ramsey's stabilization work along the banks of the Loyalhanna Creek in Latrobe.

Bobby Ramsey started and owns the company, but the whole family pitches in to make it run. His sister April handles the office and bookkeeping, mom Lori handles dispatch and dad Bob occasionally drives truck and supports in a variety of ways. Eleven-year-old Austin and nine-year-old Sofia also lend a hand. The company employs six full-time and two part-time workers.

Westmoreland Conservation District