

THE WESTMORELAND COUNTY  
SOIL CONSERVATION DISTRICT  
~~FIFTH~~ ANNUAL REPORT  
51885 1955

During 1955 the following served as directors for the Westmoreland County Soil Conservation District:

Chairman - William P. Hartman, Ligonier, Pa.  
Vice Chairman - John R. Millen, Greensburg, Pa.  
Member - Mortie Gongaware, Irwin, Pa.  
Member - Robert Torrance, Export, Pa.  
Member - Harry C. Gongaware, County Commissioner

Ford M. Frank, Ruffsedale, Pa. served as appointed secretary for the Board.

During the year Mortie Gongaware, a charter member and chairman of the board of directors for a four year period, passed away. Also during the year, Robert Torrance, another charter member of the board of directors secured a position in industry which necessitated his resigning from the board.

The Directors are appointed by the Board of County Commissioners from lists submitted by county farm organizations. They serve for a period of four years without compensation. The main responsibility of the Directors is to coordinate the conservation activities of cooperating agencies such as the Soil Conservation Service, Department of Forests and Waters, Department of Highways, Fish Commission, Game Commission, Extension Program and Farmers Home Administration in order that soil and water conservation problems in the county can be met in the best possible manner. The goal of the District Directors is to encourage all Westmoreland County Farmers to become Conservation Farmers.

The Directors feel that the best approach to soil and water conservation is by working with groups of farmers on small watersheds. By this method, results can be obtained in less time and at reduced cost.

#### HIGHLIGHTS OF THE DISTRICT

Highlights of the districts activities during 1955 follow:

As of this date there are 534 farmers developing conservation plans for their land comprising 69,100 acres, of which 117 became cooperators during 1955.

Highlights of the District (Cont'd).

The district, in cooperation with the Soil Conservation Service, was responsible for 34 news articles, 6 conservation tours, 6 demonstrations, and 4 conservation education meetings.

The farm of George Gerhard was entered in the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Conservation Contest.

The District Board held an Equipment Operators school.

Rural Life Sunday was sponsored by the District Board.

The District furnished a judge for the County Vo-Agricultural Land Judging Contest.

District board members attended the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation meeting called to formulate the County Agricultural Conservation program for 1956.

Board meetings were held monthly with representatives of cooperating agencies in attendance at most of the meetings.

FOLLOWING IS A BRIEF REPORT BY COOPERATING AGENCIES OF 1955 ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN COOPERATION WITH THE DISTRICT PROGRAM:

SOIL CONSERVATION SERVICE

	<u>Farm Plans</u>		<u>Acres</u>	
	<u>This Year</u>	<u>To Date</u>	<u>This Year</u>	<u>To Date</u>
Basic Conservation Plans (Active)	41	285	3,369	33,281
District Cooperators Plans	17	534	2,011	69,100
Conservation Surveys			34,119	109,492

THE FOLLOWING IS A COMPILATION OF SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION PRACTICES ESTABLISHED:

<u>PRACTICES</u>	<u>UNIT</u>	<u>THIS PERIOD</u>	<u>ESTABLISHED TO DATE</u>
Contour Farming	Acres	796	6,496
Cover Cropping	Acres	59	669
Strip-Cropping	Acres	675	7,064
Conservation Crop Rotation	Acres	697	4,308
Pasture Seeding	Acres	67	424
Pasture Improvement	Acres	258	2,013
Establishing Perennial Hay	Acres	82	404
Tree Planting	Acres	30	202
Hedges	L. Ft.	1,000	122,700
Closed Drains	L. Ft.	39,622	153,266
Diversion Construction	Miles	2.9	6.0
Farm Ponds	No.	4	46
Constructed Outlets	L. Ft.	2,000	9,800
Land Clearing	Acres	1	366

DEPARTMENT OF FORESTS AND WATERS, WESTMORELAND COUNTY

The Department of Forests and Waters reports the following:

1. Reforestation: Seedling distributed in Westmoreland County for 1955 amounted to a total of 207,000.

2. Insects and Diseases: No positive oak wilt discoveries made by district personnel during 1955. Two positive locations remaining from 1954 were checked and found satisfactory.

Some 100 acres or more of pole stage Scotch pine plantations or property of the Johnstown Water Company located in Westmoreland County were examined. The entire plantation was seriously affected. The Assistant Extension Forester examined same, and to date no definite decision has been reached as to the identification or control measures recommendations.

European pine tip moth affecting American red pine has been observed in Ligonier Valley in a number of locations.

3. Fire Prevention and Suppression: During 1955 twelve fires were recorded in Westmoreland County and burned over some 337 acres of forest land. The educational program relating to this subject received usual attention through administrative organizational meetings, talks and fire educational literature distribution.

4. Public Relations: An exhibit was prepared especially for use at the county fair at Idlewild Park.

Requests for timberland examinations are frequently received. Farm woodland management is encouraged and tree farming memberships recommended.

When farmer contacts are experienced a point is made to speak highly of Soil Conservation Service farm planning under the district program.

/s/t/ E. W. BEATTY,  
Assistant Forester,  
Dept. of Forests & Waters.

PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF HIGHWAYS, WESTMORELAND COUNTY

In order to establish vegetative cover and prevent soil erosion on slopes that have been disturbed by Highway construction, it is the policy of the Highway Department to seed, mulch, and where necessary, plant with shrub or vines; all these disturbed areas. In addition to this Roadside Development which is done immediately following construction, the Department tries to maintain the turf which has been established on slopes in past years. Since the soil involved is usually a sterile subsoil, periodic top dressings of lime and fertilizer are necessary.

The following is a list of materials used in this work for the year 1955, by Department Forces and on Contract basis:

6,375 lb. Grass Seed  
294 ton Mulching Hay  
16.6 ton Fertilizer  
11.9 ton Agricultural Lime  
31,250 Vines, Roses, Seedlings

s/t/ N. G. BELL,  
District Engineer,  
District 12, Pa. Dept.  
of Highways.

PENNSYLVANIA GAME COMMISSION, WESTMORELAND COUNTY

As a cooperating agency of the Westmoreland Soil Conservation District, the Pennsylvania Game Commission reports the following field activities during 1955, relative to Soil Conservation and a better land use program.

1. Distributed 29,500 conifer and walnut seedlings to 41 farmers to reforest and improve wildlife habitat on approximately 28 acres not suitable for agricultural operations.

2. Distributed 12,000 multiflora rose seedlings to three (3) farmers to reduce soil erosion and improve wildlife habitat by establishing living fences.

PENNSYLVANIA GAME COMMISSION (Cont'd).

3. Clear cut woodland borders 30 feet wide totaling 8800 lineal feet adjoining crop land to increase production and improve wildlife habitat. Area cut - 6.6 acres.

Please note that the above activities were confined to the six (6) cooperative Farm-Game Projects sponsored by the Pennsylvania Game Commission within the county.

s/t/ G. L. NORRIS,  
Supervisor, Southwest Division,  
Penna. Game Commission.

VOCATIONAL AGRICULTURE AND VETERANS FARM TRAINING PROGRAM,  
WESTMORELAND COUNTY

Active participation in the Conservation Program in Westmoreland County has been the order for vocational agriculture and the Veterans' Farm Training Program this year. As you know, we have 13 departments of vocational agriculture comprised of about 600 boys, and the Veterans' Farm Training Program which consists of about 16 G.I.'s. Both of these groups continued to make numerous field trips in order to assist and acquaint farmers with first hand information on the soil conservation program as it is being conducted by our County Soil Conservation District under the able direction of our district committee. This year eight of our schools are using the lesson program as outlined by the Soil Conservation people. These lessons have been very valuable in assisting the carrying out of projects and also in making soil science more interesting. The area agricultural adviser and the county superintendent's office express their thanks to the staff and committee of the soil conservation districts in Westmoreland County. Their interest in our schools and their desire to be of assistance in helping us to put across the lessons in conservation are commendable.

s/t/ RAY E. SEAMENS,  
County Adviser,  
Agriculture Education

## WESTMORELAND COUNTY AGRICULTURAL STABILIZATION AND CONSERVATION

Our program's purpose is to provide assistance to aid individual farmers in protecting and improving their land and in conserving water. Following is a report of assistance granted to Westmoreland County Farmers for materials ordered through the Conservation Program and Assistance on other practices under the 1955 program:

### MATERIALS

8,322 tons of Limestone in Bulk  
2,725 tons of Limestone in Bag  
2,303 cwt. of 20% Superphosphate

This figure includes only materials ordered through the program. It does not include conservation practices which materials are supplied by the farmer and the government assumes part of the cost-sharing.

### PRACTICES

646 acres of Strip-Cropping  
14,875 ft. of Field Diversions  
81,416 ft. of Tile Drainage  
3,730 ft. of Sod Waterways  
7 Farm Ponds  
3 Spring Developments

Technical practices are only those completed under the supervision of the Soil Conservation Service.

/s/t/ LEVI B. SILVIS,  
Chairman,  
Agricultural Stabilization  
and Conservation.