

THE WESTMORELAND COUNTY
SOIL CONSERVATION DISTRICT
SEVENTH ANNUAL REPORT
1956

During 1956 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 -- Dewitt W. Rugh, Slickville, Pa.
Member -- Charles Kepple, New Alexandria, Pa.
Member -- Jay Kromer, County Commissioner
Member -- Joseph Kim, Irwin, Pa.

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

Do to the urgency of his other activities, John Millen felt that he could not contribute sufficient time and leadership to the district; therefore, he resigned from the board in August. In September the County Commissioners appointed Joseph Kim to fill the vacancy created by Mr. Millen's resignation.

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.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE DISTRICT

Highlights of the districts activities during the year 1956 follow:

As of this date there are 553 farmers developing conservation plans for their land comprising 71,253 acres, of which 19 became cooperators during 1956.

The district, in cooperation with the Soil Conservation Service was responsible for seven (7) news articles, two (2) conservation tours, six (6) conservation demonstrations and eleven (11) conservation education meetings.

Highlights of the District continued.

The district held an equipment operators meeting. Twelve (12) private contractors were represented at the meeting. Specifications and methods of construction and installation of practices were discussed. After the meeting the directors compiled a list of approved operators who are cooperating with the district. This list is now available to all District Cooperators.

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

The farm of William P. Deeds was entered in the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Conservation Contest.

The District was represented at the Annual meeting of the Pennsylvania Association of Soil Conservation District Directors.

District board members attended the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation meeting called to formulate the 1957 Agriculture Conservation program.

Board meetings were held monthly with one or more cooperating agencies representatives at every meeting.

FOLLOWING IS A BRIEF REPORT BY COOPERATING AGENCIES OF 1956 ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN COOPERATION WITH THE DISTRICT PROGRAM.

SOIL CONSERVATION SERVICE, WESTMORELAND COUNTY

	<u>Farms</u>		<u>Acres</u>	
	<u>This Year</u>	<u>To Date</u>	<u>This Year</u>	<u>To Date</u>
Basic Conservation Plans (Active)	20	305	2,876	36,157
District Cooperators Plans	19	553	2,153	71,253
Conservation Surveys		990	13,343	122,835

Soil Conservation Service Report continued.

THE FOLLOWING IS A COMPILATION OF SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION PRACTICES ESTABLISHED ON DISTRICT COOPERATORS FARMS;

<u>PRACTICES</u>	<u>UNIT</u>	<u>ESTABLISHED</u>	
		<u>THIS PERIOD</u>	<u>TO DATE</u>
Contour Farming	Acres	638	7,234
Cover Cropping	Acres	57	726
Strip Cropping	Acres	636	7,700
Conservation Crop Rotation	Acres	972	5,380
Pasture Seeding	Acres	192	616
Pasture Improvement	Acres	294	2,307
Establishing Perennial Hay	Acres	24	428
Tree Planting	Acres	43	245
Hedges	L. Ft.	24,250	146,950
Closed Drains	L. Ft.	70,916	224,282
Diversion Construction	Miles	5.2	11.2
Farm Ponds	No.	1	47
Constructed Outlets	L. Ft.	0	9,800
Land Clearing	Acres	33	399

In addition to the amounts listed above the following was established on Non-District Cooperators for the A.C.P.: 185 Acres of Strip Cropping, 57,031 Feet of Closed Drains, and 6 Farm Ponds.

/s/t/ JOHN R. NEHODA,
Work Unit Conservationist,
Soil Conservation Service

DEPARTMENT OF FORESTS AND WATERS, WESTMORELAND COUNTY

The Department of Forests and Waters reports the following:

Our records indicate only 10,000 seedlings planted under the A.C.P. for 1956 in this county. Eight thousand of this number are considered to be on farms signed under the S.C.S. cooperative soil management program. It is felt that this figure will increase substantially under the Soil Bank Program.

As far as we knew there are no farm woodlot T.S.I. (Timber Stand Improvement) work in progress under the A.C.P. practice payment program in Westmoreland County. Records show one such project in Allegheny. We are interested in seeing the T.S.I. payments made available to forest farmers as well as woodland owners. In order to do this it will be necessary for the A.S.C.P. Committee to make suitable recommendations to their State Committees.

Trees distributed in Westmoreland County in 1956 totaled 225,000. This number should double for 1957, and possibly triple for 1958.

Our field men report frequent observations concerning dead Chestnut oak timber in Somerset, Westmoreland, and northern Fayette Counties. This condition is felt to be the result of the pit making oak scale. It is a serious situation. Results are constantly observed by the men now working steadily on state and private forest management.

Dutch Elm disease has been spotted at Idlewild Park and locations in Ligonier Valley. Affected trees at Idlewild have been removed but other trees are thought to be affected.

No positive oak wilt situations have been recorded for Westmoreland County during 1956. Old affected sites have been checked.

European pine tip moth attacks on Red Pine is observed frequently. This pest is spreading. It is considered serious in the western section of Allegheny and northern Fayette Counties. It has been observed in the Ligonier Valley area. It may be a factor in the Red pine Christmas tree situation. This bug can be controlled by spraying, however, two applications are considered advisable. The spray must be applied at just the right time in order to kill the emerging insect.

The Department of Forests and Waters beginning January 1, 1956 started a full time forester under the Cooperative Forest

DEPARTMENT OF FORESTS & WATERS REPORT CONTINUED.

Management Program. The C.F.M. is concerned with improving cutting practices on private lands. This program now includes the Counties in the southwestern part of Pennsylvania. It is going satisfactorily in Westmoreland, Fayette, and Somerset Counties. A second C.F.M. forester is expected to be employed to cover Greene, and Washington Counties beginning March 1, 1957.

Our District #4 forest fire prevention and suppression program is a constant procedure to improve the suppression organization and to educate the public concerning the destructive results of forest fires. Favorable weather during the spring of 1956 resulted in only 4 fires recorded, burning over a total of 18 acres. There were 9 fall fires with a total burn of 201 acres.

s/t/ V. M. BEARER,
District Forester,
Pennsylvania 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 shrubs or vines, all those disturbed areas. In addition to this Roadside Improvement, which is done immediately, or as soon as possible 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 1956, in Westmoreland County, by Department Forces and on a Contract basis:

3,656 lb.	Grass Seed
110 ton	Mulching Hay
7 ton	Fertilizer
20 ton	Ground Agr. Limestone
63	Deciduous trees B & B
34	Flowering trees B & B

Pennsylvania Department of Highways report continued.

36	Evergreens	B & B
11,045	Vines	- 2 yr No. 1
15,250	Shrubs	- 18" - 24"
2,500	Seedlings	- Age 1-3

This report is for all materials used in the year, 1956, by Department Forces, on 100% State Projects and Federal Projects under contract to outside concerns doing work for the Department of Highways.

/s/t/ RALPH H. LIGHTNER
for N. G. BELL,
District Engineer
District 12

PENNSYLVANIA GAME COMMISSION, WESTMORELAND COUNTY

In cooperation with the Westmoreland Soil Conservation District relative to better land use practices, the Pennsylvania Game Commission respectively reports the following field activities:

1. Distributed 25,800 conifer seedlings to 44 farmers to reforest approximately 25 acres not suitable for agricultural operations.
2. Distributed 11,000 multiflora rose seedlings to 7 farmers to reduce soil erosion, by establishing approximately 11,000 lineal feet of hedge fences.
3. Clearcut woodland borders 40 feet wide, totaling 3600 lineal feet adjoining cropland to increase crop production and improve wildlife habitat - area cut - 3.5 acres.
4. 2 acres of pasture improved by liming, fertilizing and mowing, mainly to provide feed for wildlife.

The above activities were confined to the six (6) Co-operative Farm-Game Projects sponsored by the Pennsylvania Game Commission within the County.

Pennsylvania Game Commission report continued.

On State Game Lands #42 and on the Loyalhanna Flood Control Area, 27 Acres of pasture were improved by liming, fertilizing and mowing, mainly to provide food for wildlife. Also, 6200 conifers and 7,000 various shrubs were planted on the Loyalhanna Flood Control Area to reforest and reduce soil erosion.

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

VOCATIONAL AGRICULTURE AND VETERANS TRAINING PROGRAM, Westm'd. Co.

Prospective future farmers and young farmers have found out that Soil Conservation is profitable. They found out one can make a thousand dollars extra on a 160 acre farm by contouring, strip cropping, and terracing. Soy beans went up 13% on a farm planted on the countour. One hundred sixty million people live from the top six inches of our soil. Yet it is estimated that where erosion is not controlled, as much as 15 tons of soil per acre are lost each year. These young farmers in Westmoreland County realize the importance of soil conservation and are taking an active part in the program. Our F.F.A. chapters are putting on soil conservation demonstrations and invite the surrounding farmers to watch and participate in the program. During the last year, eight such demonstrations have been held. Each school has included soil conservation in its program of work as well as the Veterans Training Classes. The cooperation of the Westmoreland County Soil Conservation District Directors and the Soil Conservation Service Staff are greatly appreciated by all the Agriculture Teachers of our schools and Veterans Trainers, as well as the Area Agricultural Adviser and the County Superintendent of Schools. Their help in putting across the lessons in conservation in our classes is commendable.

/s/t/ RAY E. SEAMENS
Area Adviser,
Agricultural Education

WESTMORELAND COUNTY AGRICULTURAL STABILIZATION AND CONSERVATION.

Following is a report of assistance to Westmoreland County farmers for materials ordered through the Conservation Program and assistance on other practices under the 1956 program.

MATERIALS

2,559 tons of limestone in Bag
8,261 tons of limestone in Bulk
2,300 cwt. of 20% Superphosphate
1,636 cwt. of 0-20-20
370 cwt. of 5-10-10
397 cwt. of 0-25-25
120 cwt. of 0-15-30
1,328 cwt. of 10-10-10

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

677 acres of strip cropping
27,655 feet of field diversion
127,947 feet of tile drainage
7 farm ponds

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

Our program's purpose is to provide assistance to aid individual farmers in protecting and improving their land and in conserving soil and water.

SOIL BANK

The following are the number of farms that have participated in the Soil Bank Program:

1956 Acreage Reserve ---1
1957 Acreage Reserve ---46

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