



## Conservation Districts Slated To Receive Much-needed Funding Increase

Pennsylvania's conservation districts will **receive an additional \$6.8 million for environmental needs across the state**, legislators and the governor agreed recently when setting a new state budget.

"It is the largest investment in the environment that the state has made in two decades at least," said House Appropriations Majority Chairman Stan Saylor.

The increased allotment will help ensure that conservation projects to improve water quality and reduce flooding are put in place.

These projects will benefit both urban and rural areas, including local communities and area farms.

"We are very pleased that state lawmakers and the governor are investing these additional funds in the critical environmental efforts provided by conservation districts," said Westmoreland Conservation District Board Chair Ron Rohall.

The State Conservation Commission has determined that the increase will be divided among the state's 66 conservation districts. It will amount to an increase of \$115,000 for each district, including Westmoreland.

Conservation districts have not had an increase in state funding allocations since 2004, yet they are tasked with carrying out certain state programs, including controlling erosion and sediment, monitoring stream encroachments, providing technical assistance to farmers, and promoting both nutrient and manure management.

The new budget allocations will help districts that have had to resort to deficit spending to provide the services local residents need. It will now provide a larger share of the cost of salaries of key staff, helping to retain the trained personnel who direct and provide these services.

In the case of Westmoreland, these staff are the district manager, assistant district manager, and nutrient management specialist.

"The state increase brings the shared cost of these salaries more in line with the original intent of how conservation districts were designed to operate, which is with 50% of the costs provided by the state and 50% provided by the county," said Greg Phillips, Westmoreland Conservation District manager/CEO.

The work conservation districts do directly supports economic development... facilitates new transportation and infrastructure...encourages local agriculture...and safeguards public health. [See our 2021 annual report for more information about the work of conservation districts.](#)

### Westmoreland Conservation District

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