

Landmarks

HIGH POINTS



November 2025

Protecting Healthy Streams

Conservation districts help protect and restore our waterways for the benefit of aquatic life and the people who live, work, and play nearby. Here are some examples of how we work with landowners and communities across the county.

Creating a Passage for Aquatic Life



Poplar Run, in northeastern Westmoreland County, is a naturally reproducing trout stream and is classified by the PA Department of Environmental Protection as a High Quality stream. However, as the stream passed under Sugar Run Road, it was forced through an undersized corrugated metal squash pipe and over a four foot waterfall at the outlet of the pipe. The waterfall made fish passage impossible, and erosion from the waterfall, as well as drainage from the adjacent roadside ditch, caused sediment to enter the stream, further harming aquatic life.

District staff worked with St. Clair Township, State Conservation Commission, PA Trout Unlimited, the Center for Dirt and Gravel Road Studies, DEP Growing Greener, and Mills Excavating on a solution for this problem. They replaced the squash pipe with a 17 foot wide bottomless aluminum box culvert and restored

the natural grade of the stream, allowing aquatic life to move freely in the waterway. The larger structure also provides more space for higher stream flows, reducing the incidents of roadway flooding during heavy rain events. Additionally, contractors disconnected the roadside ditch from the stream and installed cross pipes to reduce the amount of sediment entering the stream.

Funding for this project was provided by DEP Growing Greener, Cold Water Heritage Partnership, Low Volume Road Funds, and St. Clair Township.

[Read more about the project](#)

Stabilizing an Animal Walkway



Erosion from an animal walkway within a Unity Township farm's rotational grazing system had the potential to impact the headwaters of the Sewickley Creek watershed, which is classified as a High Quality Cold Water Fishery by the PA Department of Environmental Protection.

To prevent sediment from entering Sewickley Creek, District staff worked with the farmer and project partners, including the State Conservation Commission, PA Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service, and New Foundation Contractors, Inc., on a solution. Approximately 24,000 square feet of walkway was improved using grading and fill placement. The walkway was graded to encourage stormwater to flow across its width, and four conveyor belts diversions were installed to direct water away from the surface before it has the potential to increase velocity and cause erosion. The project also included 8,628 linear feet of electric high tensile fencing to help rotate the cattle through the rotational grazing system.

Funding for this project was provided by the Agriculture Conservation Assistance Program, Environmental Quality Incentives Program, and landowner match.

[Read more about the project.](#)

Outdoor Recreation and Education



BEFORE



AFTER

In 2023, the District worked with the Sportsmen & Landowner Alliance of Murrysville (S.L.A.M.), the PA Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC), and other partners on a project to improve Haymaker Run, classified as a High Quality and Cold Water Fishery by the PA Department of Environmental Protection. Many years ago, S.L.A.M. had constructed water jack-dam structures for fish habitat and used the site for youth fishing programs. Numerous flooding events damaged those structures and a small bridge, causing severe erosion along the streambanks.

This project involved updating four water jack-dam structures with approved PFBC designs for log framed cross vanes and adding 13 single log vane deflectors, three modified muddills, one stone deflector, and two additional log framed cross vanes. Approximately 1,700 feet of the streambank was stabilized with regrading and rip-rap.

The final phase of the project was completed in 2025 when educational signage was added to the site for its use as an outdoor environmental education resource for the Franklin Regional School District.

[Read more about the project.](#)

Click on the image below to see the educational signs along the trail.



Westmoreland Conservation District

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