

CONSERVATION IS PICTURE PERFECT...



Westmoreland  
Conservation  
District

2025 ANNUAL REPORT



Conservation is picture perfect! Through our work, we become stewards of the land entrusted to our care. The Westmoreland Conservation District takes this stewardship responsibility seriously, and we are hopeful that this passion shows up in all that we do. It's often said, "a picture is worth a thousand words," and our hope is that as you view this annual report, you are able to immerse yourself in our work far more than through the words that you are reading. To tell the story of what we do through mere words is nearly impossible. We have a vocation that is much better described through pictures than words.

Likely in your early school years you read about the Dust Bowl of the 1930s. It is hard to imagine what truly happened...unless we see it in a picture. That still stands true today. How could we possibly tell the story of conservation without documenting it through pictures? We possess countless reports and studies that discuss controlling pollutants such as sediment and nutrients, but an image is what truly tells the story. When we view a picture, a story is told, a project is described, and stewardship is explained with far more impact than words alone could convey.

We have always leaned on pictures to tell our story, and 2025 was an exceptional year for conservation within Westmoreland County. Many programs and grants culminated this past year to produce a record amount of on-the-ground projects. We have been especially diligent in capturing photos that tell the story, including adding aerial imagery through the use of our drone.

We trust that you will enjoy our annual report and the story it tells - a story of continued stewardship throughout our County using sound conservation practices. Now that is picture perfect!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ronald J. Rohall".

Ronald J. Rohall  
Board Chairman

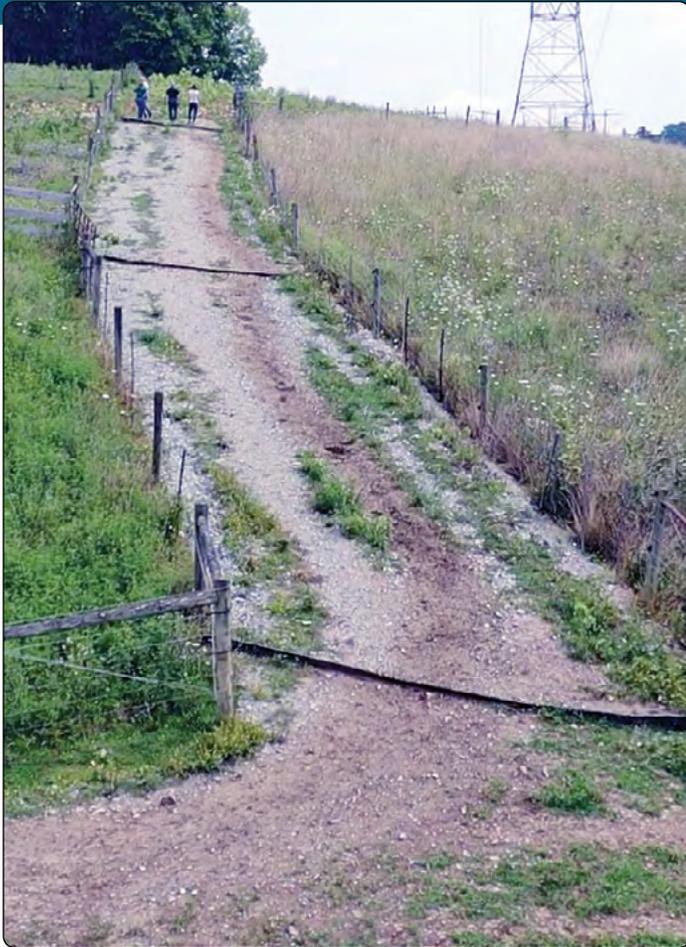
A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robert D. Cronauer".

Robert D. Cronauer  
District Manager/CEO

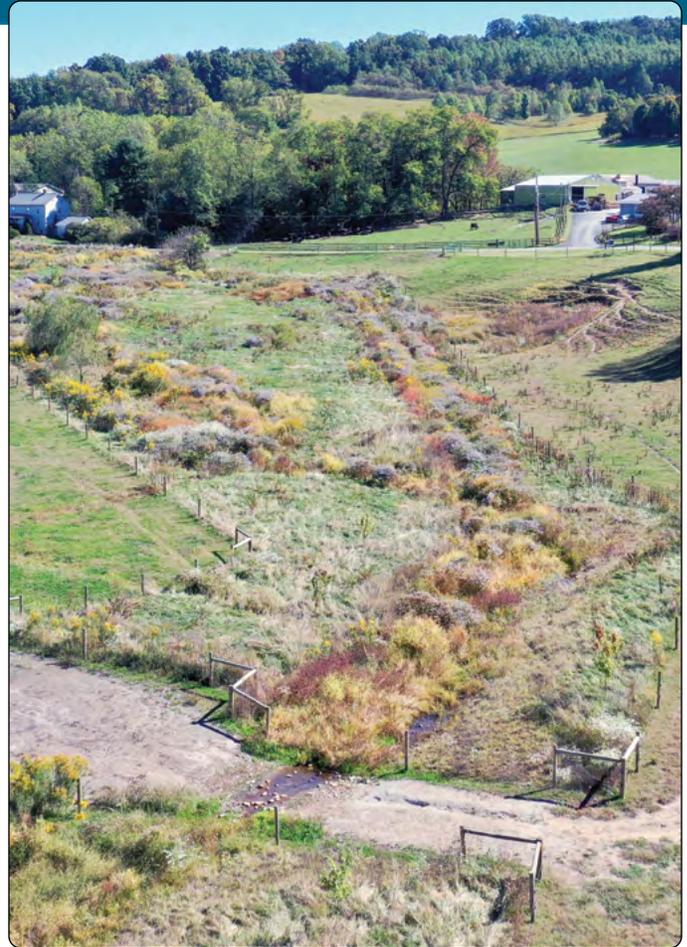
# Productive Farms



We assist farms in becoming more efficient and profitable. We provide recommendations on how to improve soil health, protect land and waterways, meet state requirements, and to learn about available cost-share funding to implement conservation improvements.



A stabilized animal walkway continues to provide a stable path for cattle to and from the barn and pastures at the Matty Farm.



Two years later at the Kitz Farm, the first ACAP project installed continues to be a success with a growing riparian buffer.

## Agriculture Conservation Assistance Program (ACAP)

The District's Agricultural Program assists farmers and landowners with developing and implementing agricultural plans to help prevent sediment and nutrient pollution to waters of the Commonwealth. The program also administers the Agriculture Conservation Assistance Program (ACAP), which provides funding for the planning and implementation of Agriculture Best Management Practices

(BMPs) that will improve water quality. The District approved four new ACAP project contracts involving animal walkways, streambank fencing, stream crossings, and a stabilized animal heavy use area. Since the implementation of the program in 2023, Non-Point Source Manager Chelsea Gross and Agricultural Conservation Technician Allie Shreffler have implemented \$793,275 of ACAP funds to improve farms within Westmoreland County.

# Conservation Success

## T. Frescura Grazing System Project

**Location:** Unity Township

**Design Features Completed:** Animal Walkway, Conveyor Belt Diversions, and Electric High Tensile Fence

**Cost:** \$167,404

**Project Partners:** Todd Frescura (landowner), State Conservation Commission, Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service, and New Foundation Contractors, Inc.

**Project Specifications/Benefits:** Approximately 12,000 square feet of animal walkway was improved with the addition of fill to reduce the walkway entrenchment and stabilized with layers of stone. An additional 12,000 square feet was improved by grading with fill placement to prevent entrenchment, then topsoiled and stabilized with vegetation. The entire length of the walkway was graded to ~4% cross slope to encourage stormwater to sheet flow across the width. Additionally, four conveyor belt diversions were installed along the walkway. The conveyor belt diversions reduce the slope length along the walkway and direct water away from the surface before it increases velocity and causes erosion. Approximately 8,628 linear feet of electric high-tensile fencing was installed to help rotate the cattle through the rotational grazing system. Best management practices were imperative to reduce the accelerated erosion and sedimentation occurring at this farm. This project was installed in the fall of 2025. It is located near the headwaters of the Sewickley Creek Watershed, which is classified as a High Quality (HQ) Cold Water Fishery (CWF) by the PA Department of Environmental Protection.



**Before:** Muddy and eroded animal walkway with runoff leading directly to a ditch near the headwaters of Sewickley Creek.



**During Construction:** Stabilizing the animal walkway and installing conveyor belt diversions.



**After:** Stabilized animal walkway with conveyor belt diversions to prevent erosion of the surface, which will prevent sediment from entering Sewickley Creek.

# Ribbon Cutting Celebration



District staff and elected officials held a ribbon cutting ceremony to celebrate the completion of a project designed to protect the headwaters of the Sewickley Creek Watershed. /-: District Non-Point Source Manager Chelsea Gross, Westmoreland County Commissioner Doug Chew, District Agricultural Conservation Technician Allie Shreffler, PA State Representative Leslie Rossi, Landowner Todd Frescura, PA Senator Kim Ward's District Director Dottie Staffen, District Manager/CEO Rob Cronauer, Contractor Raymond Hendrickson, and USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service Curtis Swiantek



Frescura farm cattle using the newly refurbished animal walkway on their way to the rotational grazing pastures.



District Non-Point Source Manager Chelsea Gross assists with planning best management practices to address soil and nutrient runoff concerns at farms.

# Conservation in Progress

## J. Hoke Roofed Animal Use/Agricultural Best Management Practices Improvements - Phase I

**Location:** Mount Pleasant Township

**Design Features Completed:** Roofed Animal Heavy Use Area with Solid Manure Storage and an Access Road

**Cost:** \$730,883 (\$671,683 construction, \$59,200 engineering)

**Project Partners:** Jim Hoke (landowner), State Conservation Commission, Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Larson Design Group, and Mike Ament Construction, LLC

**Project Specifications/Benefits:** This project is located in the Jacobs Creek Watershed. Phase I was initiated in 2025, and Phase II is expected to be completed in 2026. Larson Design Group, Inc. engineered this project, inspected each phase of construction along side the District, and certified the completed roofed animal heavy use area and manure storage. Phase I included installation of a 8,320-square-foot roofed animal heavy use area with solid manure storage and 572 feet of access road.

These improvements will prevent nutrient-laden runoff from entering nearby water sources and reduce erosion and mud from carrying nutrients off site. Benefits also include keeping manure dry and contained for easier storage and preserves the nutrient value of the manure.

Phase II will include installation of electric high-tensile fence, spring developments with watering troughs, streambank fencing, streambank grading and stabilization, a livestock access watering ramp and silage leachate collection.



**Before:** Unstabilized animal concentration area and pasture access.



**Before:** Uncontrolled sediment and nutrient runoff from an animal concentration area.



Ongoing construction of the 8,320 sq. ft. roofed animal heavy use area – installation of roof trusses, concrete work, and access road completed.

## Soil Health Conference

The annual Soil Health Conference was held in January at Saint Vincent College. Topics included sustainability and grain crop production, drone use for cover crops, riparian buffers, pesticide credits, and managing cover crops, manure, and soil organic matter within an adaptive nitrogen management process. The conference committee is comprised of Southwestern PA conservation districts and representatives from Penn State Extension, the State Conservation Commission, and the Natural Resources Conservation Service. Nearly 100 participants attended the conference.



Soil Health Conference participants at a seminar.

## Pasture Walk at Todd Frescura Farm

The District, in partnership with Southwest Project Grass, facilitated a pasture walk at Todd Frescura's farm to showcase rotational grazing on a certified organic dairy farm. Forty-three farmers and agency representatives attended. Discussions included pasture management, herd health, certified organic regulations, and Todd Frescura's ACAP/ Environmental Quality Incentives Program project.



The Southwest Project Grass pasture walk at Todd Frescura's farm in Unity Township.

## Westmoreland County Farm Bureau Legislative Farm Tour

District Manager/CEO Rob Cronauer, Non-Point Source Manager Chelsea Gross, and Agricultural Conservation Technician Allie Shreffler attended the Westmoreland County Legislative Farm Tour hosted by the Westmoreland County Farm Bureau in August at the Ament Farm in Derry Township. This event provides legislators with an opportunity to learn about challenges that local farmers face in their everyday operations.

## Cover Crops

This was the first year the District implemented the Cover Crop Initiative funded by ACAP. Five cover crop contracts were executed, resulting in a total of 173.7 acres planted.

## Pennsylvania Association of Conservation Districts (PACD)

Allie Shreffler and AmeriCorps Member Jacob Levendosky volunteered at the PACD booth during the PA Farm Show in Harrisburg. Allie and Chelsea Gross also volunteered at the PACD booth at Ag Progress Days in State College. These events provided opportunities to network with other organizations and to assist farmers in accessing the resources they needed.



Allie Shreffler and Jacob Levendosky at the PA Farm Show in Harrisburg.



Chelsea Gross and Allie at Ag Progress Days in State College.

# Watershed Restoration



Our watershed program staff work with various partners throughout the county to improve water quality and clean up pollution from abandoned mine drainage and abandoned mine lands. Important program tasks include permit assistance, watershed association support, project identification and implementation, securing grants, and monitoring past and future projects.



A three-phase restoration project has been completed on Cedar Creek at Cedar Creek Park in Rostraver Township.

## **Cedar Creek PennDOT Mitigation Project**

The Cedar Creek Mitigation Project was a multi-year effort consisting of three restoration phases. Phase I was completed in 2017. The 30-foot-high cut stone bridge abutment supporting the Great Allegheny Passage trail over Cedar Creek showed severe erosion. Water from an old upstream waterwheel had undercut seven feet of the bridge foundation, resulting in an unstable support

structure. The District acted swiftly to obtain the necessary permits and designs to repair the bridge, using over 120 cubic yards of concrete to rebuild the foundation and provide streambank stabilization.

The second phase focused on improving in-stream habitat and minimizing erosion by stabilizing several sections of eroding streambanks. Phase IIA (completed in 2022) stabilized over 900 feet of eroding streambank, extending from the confluence of the Youghiogheny River upstream to a

# Ribbon Cutting Celebration



l-r: Drew Hay from Phil Hay & Sons Excavating (contractor); Westmoreland County Parks and Recreation Director Mark Katarski; District Watershed Program Manager Chelsea Patterson; District Manager/CEO Rob Cronauer; Westmoreland County Commissioner Sean Kertes' Chief of Staff Cindy Wojnar; Brian Sokol from PA Representative Eric Davanzo's office; and Westmoreland County Commissioner Doug Chew's Chief of Staff Greg Mertz attended a ribbon cutting ceremony to celebrate the completion of this multi-phase project.



District Watershed Specialist Kylie Schultz inspected the Cedar Creek streambank stabilization project during construction.



Ribbon cutting participants stop on the Cedar Creek Gorge Trail suspension bridge to look at the installed log-framed cross vane.

pedestrian bridge that crosses over to other trails within Cedar Creek Park. Best Management Practices (BMPs) installed during this phase included single log vane deflectors, stone-framed stone deflectors, root wads, rock cross vanes, modified mud sills, rip-rap, gravel bar removal, bank terracing and regrading, riparian buffer plantings, and tree trimming.

The final phase (Phase IIB) was completed in 2025. This phase was located within the 1,800-foot Cedar Creek

Gorge, beginning at the mouth of Cedar Creek and extending upstream. BMPs installed during this phase included modified mudsills, log-framed deflectors, single log vane deflectors, log-framed stone deflectors, log-framed cross vanes, and streambank grading with rip-rap. Trail resurfacing and regrading also improved public access to both the Cedar Creek Gorge Trail and the Great Allegheny Passage.

# Conservation Success

## Final Stage (Phase IIB) Cedar Creek PennDOT Mitigation Project

**Location:** Great Allegheny Passage at Cedar Creek Park, Rostraver Township

**Design Features:** Log-framed stone deflectors, modified mudsills, single log vane deflectors, log-framed cross vane with rock throat, rock cross vanes, log and debris removal, riparian buffer planting, and trail resurfacing

**Cost:** \$126,329

**Client:** Westmoreland County Parks & Recreation and PennDOT

**Project Partners:** Westmoreland County Bureau of Parks and Recreation, The Regional Trail Corporation, PennDOT, Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission, and Phil Hay & Sons

**Project Specifications/Benefits:** Phase IIB, completed in May of this year, focused on improving in-stream habitat and minimizing erosion by stabilizing several sections of eroding streambanks, totaling approximately 1,800 feet. In-stream fish habitat structures, such as single log vane deflectors, were installed to improve water quality and encourage streambank restoration. Rip-rap was added to stabilize the deflectors and root wads, and a riparian buffer was established along the stream to decrease sediment flow into Cedar Creek. Resurfacing and regrading of approximately 2,100 linear feet of trail improved public access to both the Cedar Creek Gorge Trail and the Great Allegheny Passage.



**Before:** Streambank erosion was contributing to sediment pollution and threatening portions of the trail.



**After:** Bank grading, single log vane deflectors and native tree plantings were utilized to stabilize the banks.



**After:** Several in-stream fish habitat structures were installed including the log-framed cross vane pictured here.

# Abandoned Mine Drainage Projects

## The Irwin Discharge

The District received a Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (PA DEP) Abandoned Mine Drainage (AMD)/Abandoned Mine Land (AML) grant award to complete Phase I of the Irwin AMD Discharge project in the amount of \$421,251. Phase I of the project focuses on developing a conceptual solution for treating the Irwin Discharge. This discharge enters into Tinkers Run, a tributary to Brush Creek, in the Turtle Creek watershed. It is one of the largest discharges in Pennsylvania in terms of flow and pollutant loading. Over the last decade, it has averaged approximately nine million gallons per day (6,225 gallons per minute).

In order to treat the discharge, the District must first assess the AMD loading that is occurring. This will involve creating a water sampling plan to characterize the chemistry and flow of the discharge and to identify other potential AMD pollution sources in the area. This data will be utilized to design an effective AMD treatment system to be implemented in future project phases. The District is working with PA DEP Bureau of Abandoned Mine Reclamation (BAMR) and Triad Engineering, Inc. to begin assessment of the watershed. The study will focus on gathering water quality and mine pool connectivity data.

## Bovard

In 2024, the District was awarded its first grant from the PA DEP's (BAMR) through their AML and AMD Grant



Jonathan Russick (PA DEP Bureau of Abandoned Mine Reclamation) collects water samples at the Irwin discharge, one of the largest in Pennsylvania.

Program. Grant funding is provided by the Infrastructure Investments and Job Act, which has increased PA's AML Reclamation Program by \$244.9 million.

Through this funding, the District was awarded \$343,000 to design and permit the removal of 22 acres of coal refuse near the village of Bovard in Hempfield Township, across from Twin Lakes Park. The District is working with PA DEP BAMR and consultant Hedin Environmental to sample the coal refuse piles to determine the best method to amend the spoil, develop a grading plan, and obtain construction permits. The District plans to apply for construction funding for the second phase of the project through BAMR in spring 2026.



Near the village of Bovard, District Intern Faith Carulli stands in part of the 22-acre abandoned mine coal refuse area to be removed.

# Conservation Success

## Style-Rite Kitchens Streambank Stabilization Project

**Location:** City of Lower Burrell

**Design Features:** Rip-rap, streambank grading, and gravel bar removal

**Cost:** \$93,738

**Client:** Style-Rite Kitchens

**Project Partners:** Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Emergency Watershed Protection Program, Department of Environmental Protection (PA DEP), and RJL Excavating LLC

**Project Specifications/Benefits:** In April 2024, significant rainfall caused Pucketa Creek to cut a new channel and create a sharp bend that redirected the stream to the back of the Style-Rite Kitchens building. The streambank in this area was very unstable due to unconsolidated fill material. Following the large rainfall event, erosion occurred to within 18 inches of the building, also contributing to decreased downstream water quality. The District provided technical assistance and project management for this project. Funding was obtained through an NRCS Emergency Watershed Protection grant and a PADEP Office of Water Programs grant to implement streambank stabilization measures along the eroding section. R-8 sized rip-rap was placed along the section of eroding streambank to create a shallower slope and prevent further erosion. Smaller R-5 and R-3 sized stone, along with gravel bar material, was used to fill gaps between the larger rip-rap and restore the lawn area. The site was then seeded and mulched.

Overall, this project stabilized over 260 feet of actively eroding streambank utilizing approximately 1,105 tons of rip-rap. The owners of Style-Rite Kitchens can now breathe easier knowing their building and the adjacent streambanks are protected.



**Before:** Severe streambank erosion threatening the back of the Style-Rite Kitchens building.



**Before:** Aerial view showing the proximity of the erosion.



**After:** Stabilized streambank and yard area restored.

# Ribbon Cutting Celebration



Celebrating the stabilization of the Pucketa Creek streambank behind Style-Rite Kitchens in Lower Burrell, *l-r*: District Manager/CEO Rob Cronauer; Dan Long and John Negley of RJL Excavating; District Watershed Specialist Kylie Schultz; District Watershed Program Manager Chelsea Patterson; Westmoreland County Commissioner Doug Chew; Chris Tantlinger and Sydney Bacha of the Westmoreland County Department of Public Safety; Curtis Swiantek, USDA NRCS; Frank Boyd of Style-Rite Kitchens; District Hydraulic Engineer Jim Pillsbury; Mike Gasberry of Style-Rite Kitchens; Brian Schimmel, PA DEP; Linda Boyd of Style-Rite Kitchens; Timothy Peters, USDA NRCS; PA State Representative Jill Cooper; Gisela Carmenaty, USDA NRCS.



District Watershed Program Manager Chelsea Patterson and District Manager/CEO Rob Cronauer provided project specifics and before photos of the severely eroded streambank that threatened the Style-Rite Kitchens building and property.



*l-r*: District Watershed Specialist Kylie Schultz and District AmeriCorps Staff Member Emily Vogt use a cell phone to record a video session by a Stormwater Trail interpretive sign at Donohoe Center, Greensburg.

# Conservation Success

## Washington Township Exposed Sewer Streambank Stabilization Project

**Location:** Washington Township

**Design Features:** Rip-rap, streambank grading, and gravel bar removal

**Cost:** \$73,907

**Client:** Municipal Authority of Washington Township

**Project Partners:** Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Emergency Watershed Protection Program, Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (PA DEP), and Eveready Contracting

**Project Specifications/Benefits:** In April 2024, significant rainfall caused Pucketa Creek to erode around a sanitary sewer line, exposing 27 feet of the line and threatening the embankment of SR 366 (Greensburg Road). The vertical and undercut eroding streambank in this area was highly unstable with approximately 238 feet of streambank in need of repair. The District provided technical assistance and project management. Funding was secured through an NRCS Emergency Watershed Protection Program grant and a PA DEP Office of Water Programs grant to encase the exposed sanitary sewer line in concrete and implement streambank stabilization techniques along the eroding section. The exposed sanitary sewer line was encased in concrete, and R-8 sized rip-rap was placed along the toe of the slope. Smaller R-6 sized stone was used to stabilize the eroding streambank. Additionally, a section of gravel bar material was removed to maintain a uniform stream width. The site was then seeded and mulched.

As a result, the Municipal Authority of Washington Township and the adjacent landowner now have confidence that the streambanks are stabilized and the sanitary sewer is protected.



**Before:** Severe streambank erosion around exposed sanitary sewer line.



**Before:** Streambank erosion threatening SR 366 (Greensburg Road).



**After:** Stabilized streambank and yard area restored.

# Stormwater Management



We can help you manage stormwater so that it has a safe place to flow, keeping pollution out of local streams and replenishing groundwater. We can also show you how stormwater can be used to create benefits such as rain gardens and ponds that manage water and provide habitat for wildlife.



Landscape islands installed in the parking lot at the Regional Family YMCA of Laurel Highlands allow stormwater to infiltrate into the ground, rather than run off. Pedestrian walkways made of permeable pavers also allow stormwater infiltration (see pages 14-15).

A particularly heavy summer storm caused flooding in the Penn Township area in June. District staff responded to many requests for assistance, including an almost-new home which had four feet of water in the basement. The unusual nature of this storm is a reminder to all of the importance of stormwater management controls at both the land development level and also for individual homes. It is important when building a home to take measures to keep it dry. Such measures include grading the lawn area to slope away from the building and locating roof drains such that they discharge water safely away from the foundation.

## Plan Reviews and Site Visits

Hydraulic Engineer Jim Pillsbury, MS, PE and Stormwater Technician, EI Hank Bradish worked to provide technical assistance, review plans, conduct site visits, and implement projects across the county.

Hank conducted stormwater completeness reviews for National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit submissions. These completeness reviews occur prior to the technical reviews completed by Jim Pillsbury.

Completeness reviews involve ensuring all required permit information has been submitted including plan drawings, wetland determination forms, stormwater calculations, and applicable administration forms.

The majority of site visits that took place pertained to stormwater runoff concerns in private property owners' yards. After each site visit, a report was prepared with technical recommendations on how the homeowner could address the issue. Other site visits included concerns related to flooding, landslides, sinkholes, and streambank erosion. Hank also designed and oversaw a stormwater retrofit project at the Regional Family YMCA of Laurel Highlands in Mount Pleasant.

## Engineer Intern

In the spring, Hank obtained the Engineer Intern (EI) certification and now holds the title of Stormwater Technician, EI. This certification is the first major step to becoming a Professional Engineer (PE). An EI is required to gain four years of experience under a licensed PE before becoming eligible to take the PE exam.

# Conservation Success

## Regional Family YMCA of Laurel Highlands Stormwater Retrofit Project

**Location:** 490 Bessemer Road, Mount Pleasant

**Design Features:** Landscape islands, stormwater basin retrofit, channel regrading, tree and shrub planting, and permeable paver walkways

**Cost:** \$237,390

**Client:** Regional Family YMCA of Laurel Highlands

**Project Partners:** Regional Family YMCA of Laurel Highlands, East Huntingdon Township, and Roger Suter and Sons, Inc.

**Project Specifications/Benefits:** The District partnered with the Regional Family YMCA of Laurel Highlands and East Huntingdon Township to improve stormwater management at the YMCA facility in Mount Pleasant. The District implemented the design and installation of green infrastructure best management practices, including 4,700 square feet of landscape islands planted with eight trees and six shrubs. The landscape islands feature an asphalt wedge curb perimeter and multiple permeable paver walkways for pedestrian use. Several curb cuts were installed in the asphalt wedge curbing to allow stormwater to flow into the landscape islands, where it is now infiltrated, rather than becoming stormwater runoff that would contribute to flooding. An existing swale that conveys stormwater, which had filled with accumulated sediment, was maintained and regraded. Additionally, an existing stormwater basin was retrofitted to retain stormwater for a longer duration, reducing flooding and erosion downstream of the site.

Collectively, the landscape islands, channel regrading, and basin retrofit are estimated to reduce total suspended solids in the receiving stream by approximately two tons annually. The landscape islands are also capable of storing an estimated 26,000 gallons of stormwater.



**Before:** Drone photo pre-construction.



**After:** Drone photo post-construction.

# Ribbon Cutting Celebration



Celebrating the completion of the stormwater control landscape islands and permeable walkways at the Regional Family YMCA of Laurel Highlands, East Huntingdon Township, *l-r*: PA State Representative Eric Davanzo; Contractor Brian Suter; District Stormwater Technician, EI Hank Bradish; YMCA Board Member Marilee McFadden; YMCA and Jacobs Creek Watershed Representative Jack Crislip; District Watershed Program Manager Chelsea Patterson; YMCA CEO Steve Simon and District Manager/CEO Rob Cronauer



*l-r*: During the celebration, YMCA CEO Steve Simon reviews before and after parking lot drone photos held by Hank Bradish



Hank Bradish prepares for a presentation by sorting through stormwater management project installation photos that he took.

## 2025 Stormwater Plans Received

by Municipality

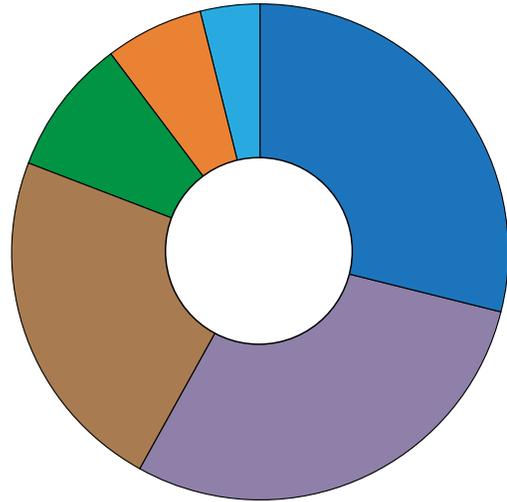
Hempfield Township.....	14
North Huntingdon Township.....	9
Rostraver Township .....	9
Penn Township .....	8
Municipality of Murrysville.....	8
Derry Township .....	7
Unity Township.....	7
Salem Township .....	5
Total of municipalities with 3 plans received or fewer .....	26

**Total 93**

## 2025 Stream Encroachment

Permits Issued

by Category



**Total 79**



A creek access ramp and interpretive sign at Hempfield Park, Hempfield Township gives children and families a chance to explore and learn about aquatic life. Various stormwater best management practices were also installed along this creek.

# Erosion & Sediment Control



Before you move earth for your building project, we can help you learn which permits you might need, identify the best ways to keep soil on your site, ensure that streams are not negatively affected, and stay compliant with current regulations during construction.



This Norwin School District stormwater basin was retrofitted with a new forebay inflow and outlet riser for more efficient stormwater and erosion/sediment control. In this photo, the freshly planted grass around the basin will help stabilize its banks.

## Norwin School District Stadium Renovations

This project related to the renovation of the stadium, along with demolition and the construction of a new grandstand with 400 additional seats as well as a new press box, meeting rooms, and other amenities.

The District assisted with retrofitting the existing stormwater basin. Additionally, a new forebay and outlet structure was installed.

## Five Star Trail Relocation

The District approved an National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit for the Five Star Trail Relocation project, which involves a total of four acres of earth disturbance and is located in both Hempfield Township and the Borough of South Greensburg. The project

consists of shifting the Five Star Trail farther away from the railroad tracks and constructing new stormwater management facilities. The project will continue into 2026.



For safety, this section of the Five Star Trail was relocated farther away from the railroad tracks.

## Haymakers Run Interceptor Rehabilitation

The Franklin Township Municipal Sanitary Authority has started work on the installation & relocation of approximately 2,550 linear feet of sanitary sewer line and the installation of new manholes. This project is located in Haymakers Run, which is designated a high quality, cold water fishery from the PA Department of Environmental Protection. An Individual NPDES permit was required for the 3.1 acres of associated earth disturbance. This project qualified for site restoration, as no new impervious area was being added as a result of construction activities. This project also required permits for the utilities to cross the stream.



Location of the sanitary sewer line crossing Haymakers Run where stream stabilization took place after the line was installed. Here 55 linear feet of the sewer line were encased in concrete.

## Derry Business Park

Work has started on the Derry Area Business Park project. This project includes construction of eight buildings



Here's a post construction view of the stormwater management bioretention basin at Derry Business Park. An amended soil mix was used for the basin bottom comprising of leaf compost, top soil, and sand. Trees and shrubs are expected to be planted.

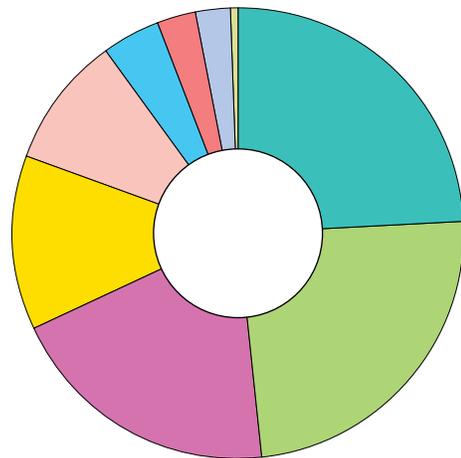
totaling 95,000 square feet and a bioretention stormwater basin treating 10 acres of drainage area. The project involves a potential of 14.28 acres of earth disturbance. As of this report, building construction will occur in the future. The bulk earthwork grading has been completed.

## Summer Grove Subdivision

This project is a proposed new residential development of single family homes located on Sarver Road in Penn Township and will comprise up to 34 acres of earth disturbance. Two stormwater infiltration basins are proposed to manage the stormwater runoff from the impervious surface added and the change of existing earth grade. A cumulative 29.46 acres of drainage will be collected by the two proposed infiltration basins.

### 2025 Erosion and Sedimentation Control Plan Reviews

by Watershed



	Turtle Creek.....	52
	Loyalhanna Creek.....	51
	Sewickley Creek.....	42
	Youghiogheny River.....	27
	Kiskiminetas River.....	20
	Jacobs Creek.....	9
	Pucketa/Allegheny.....	6
	Conemaugh River.....	5
	Monongahela River.....	1

**Total 213**



At this sediment basin for the Summer Grove residential development, the constructed slopes were stabilized with vegetation. Sediment from the construction area above settles in the pond. When the water level is high enough, water will discharge through the skimmer device. The skimmer releases water in the basin at a specific rate. It floats with the water as it rises so only the surface material is discharged during high flows. Heavier particles will drop out and settle. The skimmer rests on a stone and concrete berm. A sediment cleanout stake in front of the skimmer tells when it is time for the basin bottom to be cleaned out.

**Keystone State Park - New Park Office**

Construction of the new office at Keystone State Park began this year. The project features three distinct bioretention areas, designed to capture and manage the release of stormwater for 1.46 acres of drainage area. Approximately 3.29 acres of earth disturbance is proposed.



One of three bioretention basins composed of leaf compost, top soil, and sand. A wetland meadow seed mix will be planted here.

<b>2025 Erosion and Sedimentation Control Inspections</b>	
by Municipality	
Hempfield Township.....	32
Unity Township.....	25
Municipality of Murrysville.....	20
North Huntingdon Township.....	20
Penn Township .....	20
Derry Township .....	16
Washington Township .....	13
Rostraver Township .....	12
Allegheny Township.....	6
Bell Township.....	6
City of Lower Burrell .....	5
Salem Township .....	5
Total of municipalities with 3 inspections or fewer .....	30
<b>Total</b>	<b>210</b>



Construction progress overview of the Hempfield Township Municipal Complex and Weatherwood Park.

## Hempfield Township Municipal Complex and Weatherwood Park

The District reviewed and approved an NPDES permit for a new municipal building and a new park in Hempfield Township, involving a total of 44.8 acres of earth disturbance. The Weatherwood Park portion of the project has been mostly completed with parking, sidewalks, playground equipment, and a splash pad installed. Primary best management practices used were sediment basins and compost filter socks to help control sediment-laden runoff from leaving the site. The project will continue into 2026 to complete the construction of the municipal building.

## Mamont 138kV Power Line

In Bell and Washington Townships, CNX Gas is installing an overhead power line that begins at the West Penn Power North Washington substation and ends near MAM15 compressor station. Permanent access roads, substation pads, and stormwater management facilities are part of the project proposal. Erosion and sedimentation controls are installed to contain and stabilize the site. Of the 38.5 acres of potential earth disturbance, 1.57 acres of impervious area will be added. The impervious area will be handled by Post Construction Stormwater Management controls. Most of the site qualifies for site restoration, meaning that any earth disturbed is expected to be returned and stabilized without significant grading changes and impervious material added. This project uses multiple compost filter sock sediment traps to control erosion and sediment laden runoff. Additionally, this project uses Siltron™ fence, which is a stronger and more durable type of silt fence.



Stabilization using seeds and straw mulch on the area disturbed by the installation of Mamont 138kV Power Line.



A compost filter sock sediment trap acting as a perimeter control containing loose dirt at the Mamont 138kV Power Line disturbed area.

# Legislator Site Visit



*l-r:* District Erosion Control Specialist Jared Meharey; District Non-Point Source Manager Chelsea Gross; Developer Robert Shuster, Jr.; and PA State Representative Eric Nelson examining a Valley Green Estates project plan.



Representative Eric Nelson, Chelsea Gross, Robert Shuster, Jr., and Jared Meharey walking across the emergency spillway of the second sediment basin at Valley Green Estates.



Representative Eric Nelson, Chelsea Gross, Jared Meharey and Robert Shuster, Jr., having a discussion at the riser structure within the second sediment basin.



Jared Meharey photographs a sediment control filter sock during the construction of Weatherwood Park in Hempfield Township. This sock helps protect a natural wetland area from erosion sediment caused by the earth moving activities.

# Dirt, Gravel & Low Volume Roads



This program provides competitive funding to improve sections of unpaved and low-traffic roads, making them more passable for drivers and less prone to erode and create sediment in the streams that run nearby.



District Water Resource Specialist Kelly Brestensky conducting the annual Dirt Gravel and Low Volume Roads Quality Assurance Board meeting to evaluate and rank program applications.

## Improving Roads and Streams

The Dirt Gravel and Low Volume Roads (DGLVR) program provides funding to municipalities and other entities to reduce sediment pollution to streams while improving the quality of low-volume (low-traffic) unpaved public roads. For this grant round, the District received 13 applications - five for dirt and gravel roads and eight for low volume roads. The total requested amount during this application period exceeded \$540,000 for both dirt and gravel and low volume projects.

## Funded Projects and Training

Eight projects were approved and funded, encompassing seven different municipalities. Of the eight approved projects, six projects were low volume road projects totaling over \$274,000 and two were dirt and gravel road projects equally over \$128,000. Seven projects were completed in 2025 that included work on Brinker Road in Mount Pleasant Township; Todd Farm Road in Rostraver

Township; Orlo Lane in Hempfield Township; Sugar Run Road in St. Clair Township; Aukerman Road in Donegal Township; Hidden Valley Road in Ligonier Township; and Chestnut Street in Youngwood Borough.

The seven projects that were completed this year received over \$293,000 in grant funding; this total does not include the municipal in-kind match, which exceeded \$204,000. The remaining approved projects received extensions and will be completed in 2026. Combined grant funding and municipal in-kind contributions totaled over \$498,000 invested in road projects.

In addition to the program's road projects, Water Resource Specialist Kelly Brestensky conducted multiple trainings and workshops including a Driveway Workshop, an Environmentally Sensitive Road Maintenance Refresher, and a DGLVR Application Workshop.

Kelly also received her Remote Pilot License to operate a drone. Kelly is able to utilize the drone for aerial photos for various District projects and inspections.

# Conservation Success

## Hidden Valley Road Dirt and Gravel Road Project

**Location:** Hidden Valley Road, Ligonier Township

**Design Features:** Driving Surface Aggregate (DSA), crosspipes, and underdrain

**Cost:** \$193,172

**Client:** Ligonier Township

**Project Partners:** Ligonier Township and The Center for Dirt and Gravel Road Studies

**Project Specifications/Benefits:** Prior to the project, the ditch line along this gravel road directed stormwater runoff right into Fourmile Run. Additionally, water pooled in the ditch line due to the existing underdrain not functioning properly. Runoff was also eroding multiple private access roads, contributing additional sediment to the stream.

As part of the project, crosspipes were installed and the existing underdrain was replaced. Broad-based dips were also installed along the private access roads to divert runoff from the roadway. Hidden Valley Road was also resurfaced with DSA.

The newly installed and replaced drainage features help divert runoff away from the ditch line. By directing runoff away from the roadway, the amount of maintenance required by the township is greatly reduced, saving both time and money.

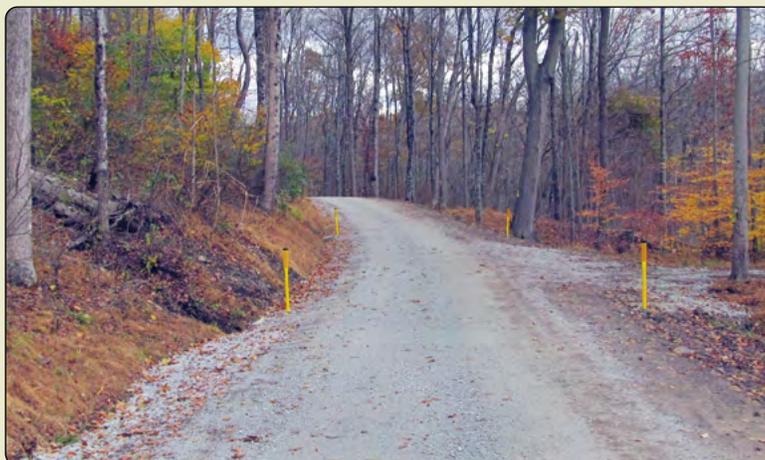
The addition of DSA will better resist natural wear from vehicle traffic, further reducing long-term maintenance needs.



**Before:** Narrow roadway with little to no drainage.



**Drone photo of driving surface aggregate (DSA) being installed.**



**After:** New drainage and DSA.

# Conservation Success

## Sugar Run Road Stream Crossing Improvement Project

**Location:** Sugar Run Road, St. Clair Township

**Design Features:** Bottomless Aluminum Box Culvert, stream channel restoration, stream-bank stabilization, grade breaks, and crosspipes

**Client:** St. Clair Township

**Cost:** \$222,860

**Project Partners:** St. Clair Township, PA Department of Environmental Protection (PA DEP) Growing Greener, PA Trout Unlimited, The Center for Dirt and Gravel Road Studies, and Mills Excavating

**Project Specifications/Benefits:** Prior to the project, the existing corrugated metal squash pipe was undersized, resulting in a four-foot waterfall occurring at the outlet of the pipe. This waterfall impeded aquatic passage upstream of the culvert. Poplar Run is a naturally reproducing trout stream, making upstream fish passage crucial. In addition to the undersized pipe, the roadside ditch discharged directly into the stream, adding sediment that negatively affected aquatic organisms living in the stream.

As part of the project, the squash pipe was replaced with a seventeen-foot-wide bottomless aluminum box culvert. Three new crosspipes were also installed to disconnect ditch drainage from directly entering the stream.

The new box culvert reestablished stream continuity, allowing aquatic organisms to move freely both upstream and downstream. With the natural grade of the stream restored, erosion caused by the waterfall at the outlet of the former pipe was eliminated, reducing the amount of sediment entering the stream. The previously undersized crossing also contributed to roadway flooding during large rain events. The new, larger structure now allows high flows of water to pass freely through the crossing.

Disconnecting the ditch line flow through the installation of crosspipes further reduced the amount of sediment entering the stream.



**Before:** Pipe outlet waterfall impeding aquatic organism passage.



**During Construction:** A drone photo shows the roadway being excavated for the new structure.



**After:** Stream reconnected allowing aquatic organism passage.

# Ribbon Cutting Celebration



Celebrating the installation of an aluminum box culvert on Sugar Run Road, St. Clair Township, *l-r*: District Water Resource Specialist Kelly Brestensky; Penn State Center for Dirt and Gravel Road Studies Dave Creamer; Harshman Civil Engineering Group, LLC Rich Rush; State Representative Leslie Rossi; Wayne Mills of Mills Excavating; St. Clair Township Supervisor Dennis Rudnik; PA Fish and Boat Commission SGT. Frank Mehalko and Waterways Conservation Officer Matt Kauffman; Brandon Mills of Mills Excavating; State Senator Joe Pittman's Field Representative Gina Jones; District Manager/CEO Rob Cronauer.



*Center l-r*: Kelly Brestensky showcasing the project to State Representative Leslie Rossi.



District Water Resource Specialist Kelly Brestensky is our licensed drone operator. She takes aerial videos and photos of our conservation projects.

# Mosquito & Tick Monitoring



Our program regularly monitors and collects samples of mosquitoes and ticks. They are tested for various pathogens, and our staff takes control measures when needed to protect and educate the public.



Mosquitos collected during sampling.

## The Program

Our program monitors mosquito populations throughout the county and tests them for potential viruses. We use science-driven decision-making practices to suppress vector-borne diseases and improve the quality of life for our county's residents. Our practices include monitoring, public education, mosquito habitat reduction, and the use of biological and chemical controls, when needed, to decrease the occurrence of vector-borne diseases.

## Monitoring Results

This year, 29 of the monitoring sites we sampled had mosquitoes that tested positive for West Nile virus. These sites were located in the following areas: New Kensington (10 sites), West Newton (5 sites), Hempfield (5 sites), Derry Township (2 sites), Latrobe (2 sites), Rostraver (2 sites), Murrysville (1 site), Jeannette (1 site), and Scottsdale (1 site).

One monitoring site in New Florence Borough contained mosquitoes that tested positive for Jamestown Canyon virus.

In 2024, 15 monitoring sites contained mosquitoes that tested positive for West Nile virus and 1 monitoring site where mosquitoes tested positive for Jamestown Canyon virus. The vast increase in mosquito positives was likely due to 2025 having more rainfall than the year prior.

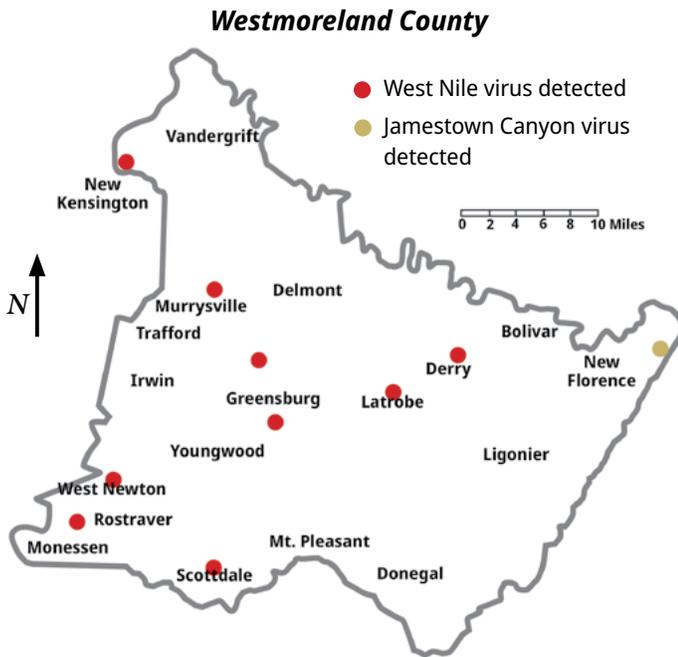
## Mosquito Control

Our staff conducted 58 control events this season. Fifty-five of these events targeted mosquito larvae using biological control methods. Biological control methods are used in areas where there may be artificial containers that cannot be easily dumped out or in more natural areas (i.e. floodplains) that may be breeding mosquitoes.

Our staff, along with the PA Department of Environmental Protection's (PA DEP) biologists, conducted three adult mosquito chemical control events. Chemical control events are conducted at monitoring sites that have a high number of infected mosquitoes. They are conducted to reduce the human population's risk of being bitten by an infected mosquito.

## Complaints

Throughout the monitoring season, residents of the county can submit complaints to our office regarding mosquitoes. In 2025, eleven residents submitted their concerns to our staff. Each of these sites were visited, control methods were applied as necessary, and the residents were given information on how to protect themselves and reduce mosquito habitat.



## Tire Recycling

Mosquito Monitoring/Conservation Technician Chrissy Edwards-McCune and Mosquito Monitoring Technician Emily Vogt organized a tire recycling event held at Westmoreland Cleanways and Recycling and offered residents a \$2 discount off the regular tire recycling fee. This event helped to reduce the mosquito population by cutting down on the number of tires left out in the environment. Mosquitoes can utilize items such as discarded tires, which collect rainwater and provide ideal breeding sites. A total of 545 tires were recycled. This brings the total to 4,991 tires recycled since the District began its tire recycling events in 2018.



Filling a truck with collected tires to be recycled.

## Tick and Mosquito Education

Our program participated in 13 educational events this season. We started off in the spring by teaching Southmoreland School District 7th graders a very in-depth lesson plan on mosquito and tick-borne diseases. The students participated in a fun pop quiz at the end of the lessons where they could win prizes. They also “picked ticks” (small foam balls) using tweezers off of animal pelts. Additionally in the spring, our program taught 80 Norwin School District second graders how to protect themselves from mosquito and tick bites. The students then made mosquitoes out of pipe cleaners and pompoms and also “picked ticks” from animal pelts.

Later in the summer, staff taught children of various ages at five Penn Township/Trafford Borough Parks during their playground programs. Kids learned about how to protect themselves from mosquito and tick bites. Staff also taught the same program to children from the Sewickley Township Library reading group.

Other outreach during the season included attending the Irwin and Ligonier Farmers Markets, The Westmoreland Fair, and the Trafford Youth Fishing Derby.



Students pick small foam balls representing ticks from an animal pelt.

# Legislator Site Visit



*l-r:* State Representative Brian Rasel joins Emily Vogt and Chrissy Edwards-McCune collecting mosquito samples at a ballfield in Trafford.



Showing Representative Rasel a mosquito specimen.

To end the season, we met with Representative Brian Rasel and educated him about the mosquito and tick monitoring that we do within the county. Brian helped our staff pull the mosquito traps and identify what was inside them. He also learned how to eliminate mosquito habitat and protect himself from tick and mosquito bites.



The District designed and produced these "Fight The Bite" stickers to distribute at programs and displays.

## Tick Monitoring

Our staff conducts nymphal tick monitoring within the county in public use areas to determine the distribution, prevalence, and expansion of tick populations.

We use a large piece of felt and drag it for approximately 100 meters along different types of tick habitat (i.e. along trails, leaf litter, and tall grasses). If any ticks are found, they are collected and sent to the PA DEP's state lab to be identified and tested for various diseases.

This year, the following ticks were collected: 45 Black legged tick nymphs, 2 Blacklegged tick larvae, 2 Longhorned tick larvae, and 1 Longhorned tick adult.

Ticks sent to the lab this year tested positive for *Borrelia burgdorferi* (Lyme disease) and *Anaplasma phagocytophilum* (Anaplasmosis).

Last year, the following ticks were collected: 1 Blacklegged tick larvae and 14 Blacklegged tick nymphs. Ticks sent to the lab last year tested positive for *Borrelia burgdorferi* (Lyme disease) and *Anaplasma phagocytophilum* (Anaplasmosis).

Please visit the PA DEP's Vector Management website for more information: <https://www.dep.pa.gov/Business/ProgramIntegration/Vector-Management/Pages/default.aspx>



Tick specimens are collected by dragging a cloth on the ground.

## Spotted Lanternflies

The District was granted \$7,500 from the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture to purchase and distribute Spotted Lanternfly educational and outreach materials across the county. Throughout the year, we distributed the materials to several libraries and handed them out during presentations to various school groups. The District hopes that by educating the public on the Spotted Lanternfly, we can promote accurate knowledge on how to reduce their populations, how to properly identify them in their various life stages, and explain why it is important to control them.



These informative spotted lanternfly cards are printed on a rigid plastic and can be used to scrape egg masses.



Chrissy Edwards-McCune uses a magnifier to examine a specimen.

# Education & Outreach



*Explore, engage, act!*

Our events, publications, and demonstration projects help people learn about conservation and put what they learn into practice.



Derry Area High School, *l-r*: Timmy Miller, Charli White, Melody March, Hermione Lehosky, and Chaeli Kennan

## **Educational Focus**

The District provides educational information about natural resource conservation and best management practices to thousands of people in southwestern Pennsylvania each year. We use a multi-faceted approach to conservation education because people access and retain information in different ways. Some educational events are held in a traditional classroom-style setting, while others are held outside either walking along a stream or pedaling along a bike trail. Other information is presented in digital format (video, website, social media) or as printed media (brochures, signage, reports). The goal is always to provide current information about resource conservation

and best management practices to the audiences who need it and in the format that is best suited for them.

## **Municipal Roundtable**

The annual Municipal Roundtable event provided updates to 36 participants from 17 different communities on conservation topics that impact their residents, including stormwater issues, streambank erosion, mosquito monitoring, and agricultural projects. District staff highlighted completed projects from around the county and discussed opportunities for partnering with us. Attendees also learned about the PA One Call Program and heard about potential partnering opportunities with other

organizations in the county, including the Penn State Master Watershed Steward Program.



Technical Programs Administrator Christie Sebek presenting at the Municipal Roundtable.

## Engineers' Workshop

Our annual Engineers' Workshop continues to be one of our largest events, attracting nearly 400 participants from 14 different counties. In addition to regulatory updates, participants learned about stormwater management, erosion and sediment control in the field, abandoned mine remediation, and engineering in agriculture. They also had the opportunity to talk with several vendors showing off the latest products in stormwater management and erosion control.

## Envirothon

Seventeen teams from 10 local high schools competed at the Westmoreland County Envirothon in April. This annual event, held at Twin Lakes Park, tested students' knowledge about wildlife, forestry, land use, aquatics, and this year's current issue topic – forest stewardship in a changing climate. The winning teams were Derry Area High School (first place), Norwin High School team 2 (second place),

and Southmoreland High School team 2 (third place). The Westmoreland County Envirothon was sponsored by Somerset Trust Company. This was the second year in a row that Derry won the event and earned the right to represent Westmoreland County at the state competition, which was held in Windber, Somerset County. District staff members Education Programs Coordinator Jen Novak, Technical Programs Administrator Christie Sebek, and AmeriCorps Member Jacob Levendosky volunteered at the state event by grading station tests and guiding students to the various testing locations.

## Pedaling for Conservation

The annual Pedaling for Conservation Bike Ride took 26 participants on a leisurely ride on the Great Allegheny Passage from West Newton to Cedar Creek. Along the way, riders stopped for presentations by John Patterson, from Tetra Tech, who talked about the planned reclamation of a large coal refuse pile and abandoned mine drainage



Pedaling for Conservation participant Jill Jackson learns about the Banning abandoned mine drainage site along the Great Allegheny Passage near West Newton.



A panorama photo shows the capacity crowd during an Engineers' Workshop session at Fred Rogers Center, Saint Vincent College.



District Board Secretary Emil Bove, who originated the idea for the District's Pedaling for Conservation bike tours and leads them, takes a selfie with the Great Allegheny Passage tour group by the Youghiogheny River at Cedar Creek Park in Rostraver Township.

along the trail; Eric Hader, from the Youghiogheny Riverkeeper, and Colleen O'Neil, from the Mountain Watershed Association, who talked about the water quality of the Youghiogheny River and their water sampling program; and Kylie Schultz who talked about the recently completed streambank stabilization project along Cedar Creek just before it enters the Youghiogheny River. The bike ride was led by District board member Emil Bove.

### **Middle & High School Programs**

Our staff provided educational programming about water quality and District programming to nearly 300 middle and high school students. Whether demonstrating non-point source pollution using the EnviroScape or welcoming high school students to tour our office, our staff share their expertise in natural resource conservation with future environmental stewards and potential natural resource professionals.



AmeriCorps Staff Member Jacob Levendosky hosts a conservation education table at Valley School of Ligonier.

## Summer Intern

We were fortunate to welcome a summer intern with funding from the Experience Works Plus! Internship program provided by the Workforce Investment Board of Westmoreland and Fayette Counties. The program matches young adult interns with local organizations that can provide them with relevant career experience in their field of study. Interns work 320 hours over an 8-12 week period and are paid directly by the Workforce Investment Board. This year, we welcomed Faith Carulli, a Hempfield High School graduate attending Coastal Carolina University. During her time here, Faith helped with road clean-ups, accompanied staff to site visits, prepared project fact sheets, and created a video on recycling, among other activities.



Technical Programs Secretary Tammy Woodward and Intern Faith Carulli assisting with a Beaver Run trash clean-up.

## Promoting Pollinators

The District continues to promote the importance of our pollinators as a participant of the Westmoreland Pollinator Partners. Our pollinator meadow was featured as a stop on the Garden Gaze Tour, which encouraged the public to visit pollinator gardens throughout the county.

## Publications and Outreach

The District produced four issues of its Landmarks newsletter and five issues of the Moosletter. These electronic newsletters share information about the District's projects and programs as well as other events and resources to help people address their natural resource concerns. We also provide information on our Facebook and YouTube pages. The public can sign up for the Landmarks Highpoints newsletter on the District's website.

Our 2024 Annual Report showcased highlights and accomplishments from our 75th Diamond Anniversary

year. Readers were invited to "find the District Diamonds" – short fun facts scattered throughout the report. The cover featured a painting by local artist Nancy Rusbosin. Titled, "Houston 2024" it featured the historic stone water trough and pump in front of the District headquarters. The painting was the first award winner in the District's first ever Plein Air Artists' Paint Out and Exhibition held that year. Plein Air Artists work with their subjects in plain view.

The Westmoreland County Conservation Directory received several major updates including a new format, simplified listings and fresh photos. This new version was published online and printed commercially with the intent of it lasting a few years, saving the work and expense of updating it annually.



The District invited local partners and legislators to participate in ribbon cutting ceremonies dedicating a variety of completed conservation projects. This gave them the opportunity to see our work in person and learn more about District programs. There were a total of seven events at different locations. The participating legislators enjoyed getting out and talking face to face with those involved at each site. Visual Communications Specialist Mark Jackson took group photos at the ribbon cuttings and visits. Each legislator later received a color print memento showing the importance of conservation teamwork.

## PICTURE PERFECT!



Visual Communications Specialist Mark Jackson reviews a photo he took on the District's professional digital camera.

# Awards & Recognitions



Celebrating conservation achievements inspires and energizes the continued innovative wise use of our natural resources.



Team Award presentation at the ACAP Conference /r: Jennifer Fetter of Penn State Extension; District Manager/CEO Rob Cronauer; Non-Point Source Manager Chelsea Gross; Agriculture Conservation Technician Allie Shreffler; District Board Chairman Ron Rohall and Doug Wolfgang of the State Conservation Commission

## The District Receives Team Collaboration Award at the Agriculture Conservation Assistance Program (ACAP) 2nd Annual Conference

Chelsea Gross, Allie Shreffler, Rob Cronauer, Chrissy Edwards-McCune, and Ron Rohall attended the 2025 ACAP conference in Harrisburg. This three-day event hosted by Penn State Extension's Center for Agriculture Conservation Assistance Training and the State Conservation Commission (SCC), included networking opportunities, farm visits, workshops, and presentations. The District received the ACAP Team Collaboration Award, which honors a conservation district team demonstrating outstanding teamwork, collaboration, and cooperation leading ACAP projects to success. These staff members have consistently offered support and assistance to coworkers and ACAP applicants.



## 2025 District Conservation Farmer of the Year Award

Terry Matty was recognized as the District's 2025 Conservation Farmer of the Year. Terry has been farming nearly his entire life, beginning in the 1960s while balancing high school and later an engineering career with Walworth Valve Company and Westinghouse. Although he earned an engineering degree from the University of Pittsburgh, farming remained his true passion, and he continued working evenings and weekends on the land. When the farmer he worked for retired in the 1970s, Terry purchased the cattle and equipment and began leasing farmland, eventually buying his own. Today, Matty Farms spans approximately 480 acres across three farms in South Huntingdon Township. The operation includes about 35 beef cows, calves, finishing cattle, and bulls, along with a horse boarding business serving 28 boarders. The farm also produces corn, soybeans, hay, and pasture for livestock.

Matty Farms is a true family operation. Terry's brother, Tom, and Tom's family play key roles in managing the horse boarding facility, beef sales, hay production, and horse training, reflecting strong family ties and a shared work ethic.

Terry is also deeply committed to conservation. Named the Westmoreland Conservation District's Conservation Farmer of the Year in 2007, he has implemented practices such as rotational grazing, no-till and minimal tillage, pasture management near surface waters, and nutrient-managed manure application. He has partnered with NRCS to install a liquid manure storage tank and recently worked with the District's Agriculture Conservation Assistance Program to stabilize a severely eroded animal walkway, improving pasture health and reducing runoff.

Through decades of farming and stewardship, Terry Matty demonstrates that conservation and successful agriculture go hand in hand.



Award presentation with l-r: Tom Matty; 2025 Conservation Farmer of the Year Terry Matty; District Director Fred Slezak and Associate Director Richard Ebert.

## 2025 District Conservation Partnership Award

Attorney John Ward was recognized with the District's 2025 J. Roy Houston Conservation Partnership Award. John's appreciation for conservation began in childhood while growing up in Oakmont, where summers were spent exploring the woods near Plum Creek. Those early experiences fostered a lifelong respect for nature that later shaped both his career and community involvement. After graduating from Duquesne University School of Law in 1972 and serving two years of active military duty, John began practicing law in Westmoreland County in 1974. Over the decades, he became a trusted legal advisor to many of the region's conservation partners, building a strong working relationship with the District. His legal work has spanned commercial and industrial development, eminent domain, real estate transactions, municipal authorities, and estate planning.

John has represented organizations such as the Redevelopment Authority of Westmoreland County and the Westmoreland County Industrial Development Corporation, often assisting with large land acquisitions

for infrastructure projects. Throughout this work, he has consistently sought a balance between economic progress and environmental stewardship, valuing collaboration with District staff to help projects succeed while protecting natural resources.

Though he rarely seeks recognition, John has provided essential legal support to numerous nonprofit organizations. He helped the Westmoreland Land Trust achieve nonprofit status and continues to assist the Turtle Creek Watershed Association, including finalizing a complex land acquisition that enabled construction of one of Pennsylvania's largest mine drainage treatment systems. He has also supported regional trail development by securing easements throughout Westmoreland and Allegheny counties.

To the District, John Ward has been more than an advisor — he has been a steadfast partner and advocate for conservation. His generosity, clarity, and commitment have made a lasting impact, and the District was honored to recognize him for his dedication to preserving Westmoreland County's natural resources.



l-r: Pat Ward; 2025 J. Roy Houston Conservation Partnership Award recipient John Ward, Esq.; District Board Treasurer Kim Edward Miller and Director Jay Bell.

## Conservation District Trash Champions

For the second year in a row, the District won the Conservation District Trash Challenge. Each year, conservation districts are challenged to pick up as much trash as possible during the months of April and May, with the district that picks up the most trash within their county named the winner. This year, District staff collected 132 bags of trash and 521 tires, totaling 15,665 pounds of trash removed! As a reward, the District once again gets to hold on to the silver trash can trophy. Additionally, new this year, the District was awarded \$500 from Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful.



District Staff members hold on to the coveted Pennsylvania Association of Conservation Districts (PACD) Trash Challenge Award, l-r: Hank Bradish, Allie Shreffler, Kelly Brestensky, Chrissy Edwards-McCune, Emily Vogt, Jacob Levendosky and Kylie Schultz.

## District AmeriCorps Member's Video Wins Top Statewide Award

Short videos are an important education tool. The Pennsylvania Association of Conservation Districts (PACD) recognizes conservation districts undertaking the hard work that goes into video production with the annual Conservation District Video Awards.

For the 2024 PACD Video Awards, which were presented in February 2025, District AmeriCorps member Jacob Levendosky submitted the video "Streambank Stabilization Resources for Homeowners Guide Part 1 - Understanding Streambank Erosion and Sediment Pollution". Jacob produced the video in-house at the District in late 2024. It was the first of a series of four videos, the remainder of which were completed in 2025. Jacob's video ended up winning the first place award.

District Staff members were able to enjoy watching the awards program and presentations via a Zoom webcast

from Harrisburg. During the webcast, Jacob was able to answer questions about producing the first place video.

This series can now be enjoyed on the Westmoreland Conservation District's [YouTube Channel](#).



Above: AmeriCorps Staff Member Jacob Levendosky working on the District video "Streambank Stabilization Resources for Homeowners Guide Part 1 - Understanding Streambank Erosion and Sediment Pollution".



Left: First in a series of four videos, it won first place in the 2024 PACD Video Awards. The awards were judged and presented in early 2025.

## PICTURE PERFECT!



The Westmoreland Conservation District was established in 1949. This 1940s era Argus C3 film camera held by District Manager/CEO Rob Cronauer was typical of the cameras used to document conservation work at the time.

We continue documenting our projects today using digital cameras for quality photos and insightful videos.

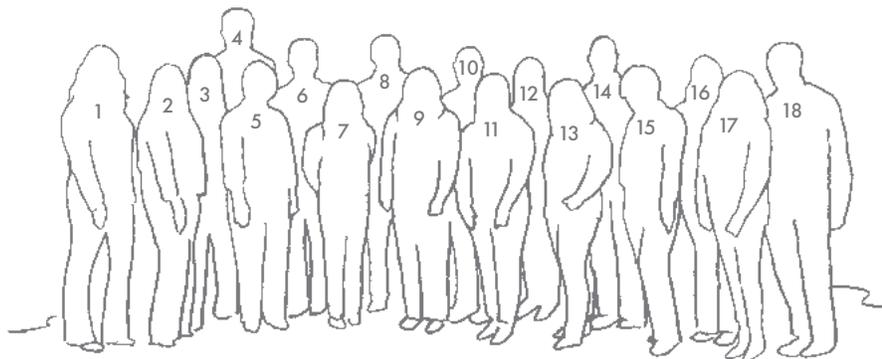
# Working Together



Teamwork is the key to success in just about anything. The District is fortunate to have the support of amazing people and partners. They all bring something to the table, which helps everyone use our resources wisely.



Westmoreland Conservation District Staff



1. Kelly Brestensky, Water Resource Specialist;
2. Christie Sebek, Technical Programs Administrator;
3. Tammy Woodward, Technical Programs Secretary;
4. Jim Pillsbury, MS, PE, Hydraulic Engineer;
5. Laura Guskiewicz, Accounting & Human Resources Administrator;
6. Jared Meharey, Erosion Control Specialist;
7. Chelsea Patterson, Watershed Program Manager;
8. Ryan Peckheiser, Erosion Control Specialist;
9. Emily Vogt, AmeriCorps Member;
10. Hank Bradish, Stormwater Program Technician, EI;
11. Allie Shreffler, Agricultural Conservation Technician;
12. Kylie Schultz, Watershed Specialist;
13. Christina Edwards-McCune, Mosquito Monitoring/Conservation Technician;
14. Rob Cronauer, District Manager/CEO;
15. Jen Novak, Education Programs Coordinator;
16. Chelsea Gross, Non-Point Source Manager;
17. Tammy Marsh, Administrative Assistant;
18. Mark Jackson, Visual Communications Specialist

## Leadership Westmoreland

As part of its development efforts, the District provides tuition for staff to attend Leadership Westmoreland, a nine-month program sponsored by the Westmoreland County Chamber of Commerce. This offers program participants a chance to network with professionals from a variety of businesses and organizations throughout the county and to learn more about key aspects of the community and build leadership skills. This year, the District's attending staff member was Stormwater Technician, EI Hank Bradish, who will become the District's sixth graduate.

## AmeriCorps

Emily Vogt is the District's newest AmeriCorps member. A May 2025 graduate from the University of Pittsburgh, Emily holds a B.S. in Natural Sciences as well as a certificate in Community Health Assessment. While at the University of Pittsburgh, she dedicated her time to giving back to the community through various service activities benefiting the Pittsburgh area, including trash clean ups. Prior to being selected as the District's AmeriCorps member, Emily worked as the District's first Seasonal Mosquito Technician during the 2025 season. Emily is excited to continue working with the District.



## The District's Recycling Program

This is the second year of the recycling program at the District. All of the District's recycling is transported to Westmoreland Cleanways and Recycling in Greensburg. The District recycled 90 boxes of paper, 719 cardboard boxes, 60 garbage bags of plastic containers, 270 glass bottles, 14 garbage bags of aluminum cans, and 508 plastic bags.

The District also recycled miscellaneous items including batteries and Christmas lights.

## Pennsylvania Association of Conservation Districts (PACD)

The Pennsylvania Association of Conservation Districts (PACD) elected a new slate of officers during its annual meeting on July 16, 2025. Westmoreland Conservation District Board Secretary Emil Bove will now additionally serve as PACD's President.



## District Board Transitions

### Remembering Bill Doney

Westmoreland Conservation District Director Bill Doney passed away peacefully on November 14, 2025. He served as a Westmoreland Conservation District Director for 25 years.



Bill was born in West Newton in 1940 and began farming in South Huntingdon Township in 1966. He was recognized as the District's Conservation Farmer of the Year in 2000.

A lifelong educator and public servant, Bill taught at the Baldwin-Whitehall School District for 37 years and was a founding member of the West Newton Ambulance Service. He also was a first responder for the Turkeytown Volunteer Fire Department for 25 years.

Bill and his wife Donna volunteered for many years hosting the Current Events Station at the annual Westmoreland Conservation District Envirothon competition for high school students.

We will miss Bill's thought-provoking wisdom and wonderful sense of humor.

### Welcome Todd Frescura

Todd Frescura is the District's newest Board Member. His family operates a 100-acre organic dairy farm located in Latrobe, PA. The family owns approximately 60 Ayrshire and Milking Shorthorn cattle.



The Frescuras have been supporters of conservation dating back to the mid-1990s when Todd's grandparents, Thelma and the late Roy Kemerer, placed the farm in an agricultural conservation easement to protect the land from being developed in the future. The farm, originally purchased in 1948 by Roy, started out as a conventional dairy farm. Roy served on the District Board for many years. Todd purchased the farm in 2008 and began the process to transition the farm to an organic dairy farm in 2010 due to a combination of factors such as rising seed prices, increases in cost of fertilizer and herbicides and a decrease in milk prices. The family has promoted conservation practices for several decades, which has been especially important since the farm is located within the High-Quality portion of Sewickley Creek.

The Frescuras stay busy – in addition to farming, Todd is a school bus driver and is a committee member of the county's Farm Service Agency office.

# Financial Report

## 2025 Income

Federal Funding .....	\$ 130,735 .....	3%
State Funding .....	\$1,271,318 .....	31%
County Funding .....	\$ 711,900 .....	17%
State Grants .....	\$ 318,913 .....	8%
Grants & Contributions .....	\$ 664,987 .....	16%
Fees for Services .....	\$ 645,634 .....	15%
Program Administration .....	\$ 250,528 .....	6%
Education .....	\$ 51,207 .....	1%
Other .....	\$ 135,635 .....	3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$4,180,857.....</b>	<b>100%</b>



## 2025 Expenses

Operations .....	\$1,707,400 .....	48%
Grants .....	\$1,802,846 .....	51%
Education .....	\$ 29,537 .....	1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$3,539,783.....</b>	<b>100%</b>

## Thanks to our Public Officials who Allocate District Funding

State funding supports many of the core conservation programs we offer, including programs delegated to us by the state in agriculture, post-construction stormwater management, erosion and sedimentation control, dirt,

gravel, and low volume roads, and other programs.

County funding has been instrumental in helping us attract significant additional dollars for conservation improvements throughout Westmoreland County.



### Pennsylvania State Legislators Representing Westmoreland County

- Representative Jill Cooper
- Representative Eric Davanzo
- Representative Abby Major
- Representative Eric Nelson
- Representative Brian Rasel
- Representative Leslie Rossi
- Senator Joe Pittman
- Senator Patrick Stefano
- Senator Kim Ward



### Westmoreland County Commissioners



Westmoreland County Commissioners  
l-r: Douglas W. Chew, Sean Kertes, Ted Kopas

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Westmoreland Conservancy

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Jay Bell



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Todd Frescura



Paul Sarver



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William Mihalco

Nicole Miller

William Roberts

Theresa Gay Rohall

Thomas Sierzega

Joshua Spano

John Turack

# Advisory Committees



These committees are made up of community volunteers, District board members, associate board members, and staff members. We very much appreciate all the volunteers who provide their professional expertise and give their time to help develop and sustain the District's programs.

## Agriculture

Jay Bell  
Emil Bove, PLS  
Gisela Carmenaty  
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Rob Cronauer  
Rich Ebert  
Dana Flowers  
Todd Frescura  
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## Agriculture Compliance

Jay Bell  
Rob Cronauer  
Rick Ebert  
Todd Frescura  
Chelsea Gross  
Kim Edward Miller  
Allie Shreffler  
Fred Slezak

## Communications

Andrea Halfhill  
Mark Jackson  
Lauren Jones Titterington  
Janette Novak-Mitchell  
Madison Raviart

## Dirt, Gravel and Low Volume Roads Program

Kelly Brestensky  
Matt Kauffman  
Ronald Rohall  
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Chelsea Patterson  
Daniel Wilson

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## Government Relations

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Commissioner Douglas W. Chew  
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Ronald Rohall  
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## Technical Programs

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Hank Bradish  
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Christina Edwards-McCune  
Kathleen Fritz  
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Bill Utzman, PE  
Chelsea Patterson  
Damon Weiss, PE  
Tammy Woodward

**Westmoreland Conservation District  
2025 Annual Report Team**

*District Staff members -*

Rob Cronauer, Christina Edwards-McCune,  
Mark Jackson, Tammy Marsh and  
Consultant Andrea Halfhill.

Sincere thanks to the entire District Staff  
for their contributions to this year's report  
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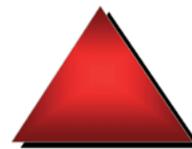
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