



FALL 2021



USDA ANNOUNCES PANDEMIC ASSISTANCE FOR TIMBER HARVESTERS AND HAULERS *SEE PAGE 10 FOR DETAILS*

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- Lisa Snider, District Director
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COOPERATING AGENCIES

- Greene County Department of Economic Development
Jeremy Kelly, Planning and Business Development Manager
- Natural Resources Conservation Service
Phil Evans, District Conservationist
- PA DCNR Bureau of Forestry
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- PA Fish and Boat Commission
Brian Guenin, SW Region Waterways Conservation Officer
- Penn State Cooperative Extension
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DISTRICT LOCATION

Our office is located on the 2nd Floor of the Ben Franklin Building at
22 West High Street, Suite 204
Waynesburg, PA 15370
Phone: 724-852-5278
gccd@co.greene.pa.us
Hours: 8:30 am to 4:30 pm Monday-Friday

The GCCD Board meets the third Tuesday of each month at 10:00 am in the Conservation District Conference Room located on the 2nd Floor of the Ben Franklin Building.



CONSERVATION DISTRICT OFFERS OPTIONS FOR FARMERS SPREADING LIME

Applying lime to pasture and hay fields is one of the simplest management decisions to make. Increasing soil pH can increase forage yields and palatability, with relatively low cost to the producer. The District maintains two lime spreaders for use by Greene County farmers.

The 4½-ton spreader does not have surge brakes, like the District's 2-ton spreader, but has more than double the capacity. It is ideal for larger meadows where steep slopes are not as much of a concern. The large capacity means that a farmer can spend more time spreading lime and less time loading lime. The 2-ton spreader remains ideal for small pastures and areas where steep slopes are a concern.

In addition to the two lime spreaders, the Conservation District also offers a seven-foot, end wheel no-till drill equipped with three seed boxes. This drill allows Greene County farmers to implement a no-till crop production system, which includes cover crops and promotes good pasture management.

No-till involves planting the seed directly into the soil without plowing, tilling or disking. Advantages of no-till practices include: reducing operator's time and expenses; promoting healthier soils through building soil structure and adding organic matter; feeding beneficial microorganisms; reducing soil loss from erosion and increasing infiltration and yields due to optimal soil conditions.

In addition to pasture sizes and slopes, farmers should consider equipment sizes and transportation as well. A 50hp or larger tractor is needed for the 2-ton spreader while the 4½-ton spreader requires a 75hp or larger tractor. Both spreaders may be towed on roads at moderate speeds (approximately 45mph). The no-till drill requires 55hp or larger tractor and a heavy-duty truck is required for transport.

All three of these implements are available for rent from Conservation District on a first-come, first-served basis. A deposit of \$50 for either spreader and \$100 for the no-till drill is required to schedule a three-day rental. For more details, please contact the Greene County Conservation District at gccd@co.greene.pa.us or 724-852-5278.



CONSERVATION DISTRICT PROMOTES STORMWATER MANAGEMENT WITH WORKSHOPS AND RAIN BARRELS

Managing stormwater is a major concern for Greene County municipalities and landowners alike. Stormwater is a leading source of water pollution in our streams. It causes streambank erosion and land loss. Stormwater also drives flooding and associated property damage. Everyone can play an important role in managing the stormwater that flows through our communities and the Conservation District has been encouraging participation.

The Conservation District has been holding stormwater workshops for several years now. This year, the District's Watershed Specialist held two evening workshops and a special day-long workshop as part of the Rain Day Festival in Waynesburg. During these workshops the specialist discusses the importance of stormwater management with participants as well as actions they can take on their own property to manage stormwater in their communities. To help them get started, the District provides them with a rain barrel free of charge. Installing a rain barrel is a great way to get started in managing stormwater.

The roofs of our homes, sheds, barns and garages shed hundreds and possibly thousands of gallons of water during a rain storm. A rain barrel collects a portion of this water and stores it for later use by the property owner. This reduces the effect of this roof on stormwater runoff but also provides a benefit to the property owner by storing a supply of water suitable for watering gardens, washing vehicles and equipment, cleaning decks and windows and a host of other household tasks.

Combined with other practices like rain gardens, a landowner can hold back some of the water that falls during a storm until it has a chance to soak into the ground. The idea is that a lot of landowners within a watershed each hold back a little of the water to reduce the overall amount of stormwater runoff hitting our streams all at once. This reduces flood risk, water pollution potential and keeps municipal sewer systems from being overwhelmed.

Working with Waynesburg Borough, and receiving funding from Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the Conservation District distributed more than 50 rain barrels at no cost to Greene County landowners. Materials to construct each barrel cost about \$65 and they were easy to assemble with basic tools.

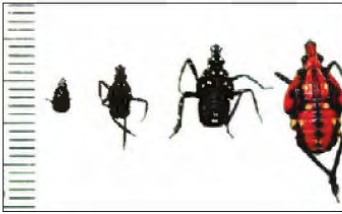
If you would like to learn more about stormwater management, rain barrels, or future Conservation District workshops, please contact the Conservation District at 724-852-5278.

Photo Caption: Watershed Specialist, Jared Zinn, at the Conservation District booth during the Rain Day festival.



WHY ALL THE BUZZ OVER THE SPOTTED LANTERNFLY?

It seems like everyone is talking about the Spotted Lanternfly nowadays. The Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture and Penn State Extension have both mounted awareness campaigns and have great information on their websites. The Conservation District has even covered it in the Newsletter more than once in the past three years. All of this coverage is because the Spotted Lanternfly is a particularly pestilent invader that has now been confirmed in Western Pennsylvania. Allegheny and Westmoreland Counties are now in the Spotted Lanternfly Quarantine Zone.



Here you see the four stages or instars that a Lanternfly nymph goes through. Note the progressive increases in size between instars and the change in coloration during the fourth instar.



Here is a closeup view of the nymph during its earlier instars.

Spotted Lanternfly are not dangerous to people but are a danger to both crops and trees. The young Spotted Lanternfly, or nymph forms, target leaves and other softer parts of plants. Trees and plants suffer from defoliation as the nymphs feed on them. Adult Spotted Lanternfly use their long, pointed mouth parts to drive through the bark of trees and feed on sap. This causes a wound on the tree that will continue to weep after the adult has moved on. This affects the tree's health and can even result in its death.



Here is a closeup view of the final nymph stage. Note the change in coloration from earlier instars.



Here is a closeup of an adult lanternfly at rest with its wings folded.



Here is a specimen of the adult with its wings spread to make the brightly-colored rear wings visible.

Spotted Lanternfly have not been shown to invade homes like Japanese Beetles or Brown Marmorated Stinkbugs. They do have indirect effects on homes and personal property related to, "sooty mold." While the adult Spotted Lanternfly feeds on the tree's sap, it excretes waste, called "honeydew." This honeydew is partially digested sap and retains a lot of sugar. Large amounts of honeydew drop from the adults as they forage on the different parts of the tree. Soon, black, sooty mold begins growing down the trunk of the tree and on anything under the tree that has come into contact with honeydew. This can damage decks, patio furniture and even homes.



Here you see the sooty mold that grows on the Lanternfly waste, or honeydew. Note the presence of ants attracted to the sap exposed by the Lanternfly.

They were first discovered in Berks County, Pennsylvania in 2014 and are thought to have first arrived in 2012. Since then, they have spread across the state. The Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture has a monitoring program in place to track the Spotted Lanternfly's spread. Spotted Lanternfly can be spread by transporting wood and wood products that contain eggs. To combat this, the Department of Agriculture has established a quarantine on these types of products from the current range of the insect.

Identifying Spotted Lanternfly is important to tracking their spread and ultimately controlling them. The species undergoes several changes throughout its life. The photos included with this article show what Spotted Lanternfly look like at various stages of their life.

Not only is it important to be able to identify a Spotted Lanternfly, it is also important to know the signs of infestation. These may include weeping wounds in the bark of tree species, other insects congregating to feed on exposed sap and the presence of sooty mold. Finally, you may see eggs of the Spotted Lanternfly on affected trees.

Landowners who see Spotted Lanternfly (eggs, nymphs and adults) or signs of this exotic insect should contact the Conservation District or the Department of Agriculture directly. Collecting a specimen or even a photograph is incredibly helpful. Further, The Department of Agriculture instructs landowners to destroy any Spotted Lanternfly eggs they find. One recommended method is to scrape them off the tree and immerse them in alcohol.



Lanternfly eggs laid in rows and covered with a mud-like excretion from the female Lanternfly. Not that this picture shows examples of the eggs both covered and uncovered.

Thank you for your vigilance as we face this invasive pest.

WEST NILE VIRUS UPDATE 2021

2021 started out as a slow year for the WNV program. With the dry months from June through most of August, mosquito populations for the most part were down not only here but throughout the state as well. Numbers have picked up recently, with 3 samples testing positive in our county. Those 3 samples were out of a total of 6,265 mosquitoes caught at 10 sites throughout the county as of 9/9/2021. That is a WNV positive rate of 0.048%. Less than 1% is the average, so Greene County is right on or below par with those numbers.

80% of WNV infected people show zero symptoms of the virus. Less than 20% of people show mild symptoms and less than 1% of people show severe symptoms, which are flu like with high fevers. Trapping for mosquitoes will continue throughout October; so remember, even when it cools off to be cognizant of mosquito habitats and wear bug protection. I think most of us know by now, but remember to keep gutters clean of any standing water, keep wheel barrows, bird baths, buckets, etc. free of standing water, and change water every week.

If you have any mosquito questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to contact Zack Basinger at the Conservation District office.

BROWN'S CREEK STREAMBANK STABILIZATION MAKES A DIFFERENCE IN MORRIS TOWNSHIP

The Conservation District worked with the Morris Township Supervisors on a project to stabilize heavily-eroded streambanks along Brown's Creek behind the Morris Township Community Center. Years of accelerated erosion and moved the bank further and further towards the community center's playground. This erosion also represented hundreds, if not thousands, of pounds of sediment pollution to downstream areas. Stabilizing the banks became a win-win situation. The project improved conditions at the community center by eliminating unsafe conditions and improved conditions in the stream by reducing sediment pollution and creating habitat for aquatic life.

Like many streams in Greene County, Brown's Creek is a "flashy" stream. This means that stream flows increase dramatically during and after storms and then taper off again just as quickly. It was important to ensure stabilization measures could stand up to these high flows.

The project ultimately implemented three stabilization methods. Log and stone cross vanes adjust the elevation of the stream to make it less steep. This slows water movement so that the stream still carries the water away but creates less erosive energy. Next, the banks were shaped back to be less steep and then were planted in native species. Coconut fiber matting was used to hold the banks in place until plants could establish themselves. These shaped banks allow the channel to carry more water during high flows without overtopping the banks. Finally, hemlock toe logs were anchored in place to armor the banks where the stream's energy is highest. These logs also create great habitat for fish and other aquatic life.

The project has been completed for a couple of years now and still looks very nice. This photograph was taken after a recent, heavy rain. You can see that the stabilization measures are working just as they should. Matted grass shows where higher flows filled the stream channel but didn't overtop

banks. Now that those high flows have passed, the stream has receded during normal flows. Seeing this project working great after a couple of years is very gratifying. Since this project was completed, the Conservation District has worked with other landowners to stabilize eroded streams throughout the watershed.

If you'd like to find out more about stream stabilization or need help with erosion issues, please call the Conservation District at 724-852-5278 or email the District's Watershed Specialist at jjinn@co.greene.pa.us.



HOW SWEET IT IS: FLOWERS AND BEES

LISA LEWIS

PENN STATE MASTER GARDENER GREENE COUNTY EXTENSION

We all know that potatoes have eyes, but did you know that flowers have ears?

Birds sing and frogs croak to attract mates. Chimpanzees screech and dogs bark to sound an alert. We know that plants respond to light, airborne scents and volatile chemicals, and various types of touch, but do they respond to sound? A series of experiments recently conducted both in the laboratory and in the natural outdoor growing environment suggest that plants do indeed “hear” and respond preferentially to sounds.

Most researchers agree that around 85% of plants rely on animal pollinators for reproduction. Plants use the color and shape of their flowers as well as food rewards in the form of nectar and pollen to attract pollinators. But increasing nectar production, and in particular the sugar concentration of their nectar, is costly to the plant. By being able to “hear” a pollinator nearby and increasing sugar concentration only then, plants receive more consistent benefit for the cost outlay.

A series of creative experiments conducted by researchers at The University of Tel Aviv show that plants stepped up the sugar content of their nectar by 12 to 20% within three minutes of “hearing” a recording of a bee buzzing nearby or a recording of a low frequency sound in the same range as a bees wings vibrating. There was no increased sugar in response to a higher frequency sound, to silence, or when the flowers were covered by little thin glass coverings that blocked airwaves from reaching the flower but not the rest of the plant.

The experiments showed it was the vibration of the flower petals created by the pollinator’s oscillating wings that caused the plant to up the sugar content of the nectar. It is the petals that serve as the ear for flowering plants. Plants that respond to the buzzing of a bee’s wings with sweeter nectar are visited by pollinators more frequently and for a longer time, resulting in higher reproduction rates for that plant and species of plant. The more we learn about the plants around us, the more awesome we realize they are!

Vents, M et al (2019) Flowers respond to pollinator sound within minutes by increasing nectar sugar concentration. *Ecology Letters*, 22(9), 1483-1492.

Daley, J (2019) Flowers sweeten up when they sense bees buzzing. *Smithsonian mag.com*.



GROWING AND PLANTING

Growing and planting trees and pollinator plants to restore and improve habitat has always been the main intent behind the Carmichaels Area Native Plant Greenhouse project!

The monarch caterpillars pictured below on the swamp milkweed in the NEW pollinator habitat behind the High School gym are evidence that habitat improvement is vitally important!

How exciting to help bring back the monarchs!



Students also planted various pollinator plants in this new pollinator habitat!

(*Make sure you check out all the photos below!)

Students also planted Pollinator Habitats in the mulched area outside the Cafeteria courtyard and outside the High School office.

*All pollinator habitats are planted with pollinator plants grown from seed in the Carmichaels Area Native Plant Greenhouse!



We are excited about planting our remaining pollinator plants in more pollinator habitat locations this fall—and planting a new batch in the greenhouse for spring plantings!!

^The following is a brief update of other Native Plant Greenhouse/Habitat projects and partnerships (in no particular order):

-Habitat Improvement

Thanks to Jose Taracido for supplying the seeds for our Pollinator Habitat projects! The help and guidance of Jose Taracido will continue to provide opportunities for Habitat Improvement projects around campus!



-Seedlings for Students

Thanks to Megan Patton and the 6th grade team for organizing the Seedlings for Students project through the PA Game Commission! After receiving 2000 trees, Sixth grade students worked alongside Kindergarten students demonstrating how to plant trees along our Nature Trail.

*Each Pre-K, Kindergarten student and graduating senior received trees to plant in their own backyard!

Mrs. Patton also worked with Jose Taracido to plant pollinator pots in the greenhouse.

-FarmBot

We are also excited to complete the FarmBot this year!

Again thanks to Mr. Franks and his staff for their help with the construction of the raised bed!

-Community Food Bank

We are excited to continue our partnership with the Food Bank by providing garden plants planted by Miss Ritz and Mrs. Robinson's Child Development class!

-Izaak Walton League Tree Planting

We are excited to continue to partner with the Izaak Walton League who organized a tree planting at the Game Lands!

We donated tree tubes and stakes—and manpower—for this project!

-Tree Farm Tour

We partnered with the DCNR Bureau of Forestry to plant trees at Rebecca Trigger's property through the Greene County Conservation Districts GRACE Program.

We are excited to return to the trees we planted at this local landowner's farm to participate in the Tree Farm Field Day on Saturday, September 18 from 1pm to 4pm!

-Tree and Pollinator Habitat plantings with plants grown from seed in our Native Plant Greenhouse

Thanks to Russ Gibbs, DCNR Bureau of Forestry Service Forester for providing seeds and acorns for our tree planting projects.

Environmental Science and Junior Envirothon students have planted trees and pollinator gardens in various locations:

Ferncliff Peninsula at Ohiopyle, Ohiopyle Visitor Center, Jennings Environmental Center, Wanna-B-Park, National Tree Farm award winning Burnham Tree Farm, numerous Alpha Energy Wetland Habitat restoration areas, Ryerson Station State Park, California University of Pennsylvania, Audubon at Beechwood, and many other locations with more to come in the future!



These are just a few of the numerous ways that the Native Plant greenhouse is being utilized--(I'm sure I missed a bunch!!)

We are constantly looking for additional partnerships to not only benefit the community, but also provide our students excellent learning experiences!

A special thank you goes out to all of those who utilize the greenhouse for various partnerships and projects!



We are certainly indebted to the Community Foundation EITC grant committee and Bettie Stammerjohn, along with Toyota Tapestry grant, among other funding sources.

We would be remiss if we didn't acknowledge the support and dedication provided by David Franks, Carl Sanner, John Krysack, Dave Demniak, Gary Syrek, Bob Kowalewski, and all of the maintenance team along with Lew May and Frank Lukacs, who originally constructed the greenhouse, all of whom have played a vital role in construction, renovation, upkeep and maintenance of this unique project that has had and will continue to have an impact on our students and our community!

We certainly couldn't do any of this without you!

We are looking forward to continuing to upgrade and advance the greenhouse so it can continue to be utilized by our school and community!

Thanks for all your support!!

Kevin

Kevin Willis
Carmichaels Area

-Greenhouse Manager

Thanks to Emily Capule for all of her help and guidance in managing our greenhouse and laying out the Pollinator Habitat in the courtyard of our Lavin's Media Center that is flourishing this summer!

We are excited to continue to partner with her this year!

-Greenhouse Partnership

Thanks to Fred Clark Nursery for supplying our soil, plants, and expertise for all of our projects!

-Additional partnership opportunities

We would welcome the opportunity to continue partnerships with the Town and Country Garden Club and Flenniken Library!



**Farm Service
Agency**



**50 OLD HICKORY RIDGE RD, SUITE 2
WASHINGTON, PA 15301
PHONE: 724-222-3060 EXT. 2**

USDA ANNOUNCES PANDEMIC ASSISTANCE FOR TIMBER HARVESTERS AND HAULERS

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is providing up to \$200 million to provide relief to timber harvesting and timber hauling businesses that have experienced losses due to COVID-19 as part of USDA's Pandemic Assistance for Producers initiative. Loggers and truckers can apply for assistance through USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) July 22 through Oct. 15, 2021. The Pandemic Assistance for Timber Harvesters and Haulers program (PATHH) is administered by FSA in partnership with the U.S. Forest Service.

The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021, authorized this critical assistance for the timber industry. Timber harvesting and hauling businesses that have experienced a gross revenue loss of at least 10% during the period of Jan. 1 and Dec. 1, 2020, compared to the period of Jan. 1 and Dec. 1, 2019, are encouraged to apply.

Program Details

To be eligible for payments, individuals or legal entities must be a timber harvesting or timber hauling business where 50% or more of its gross revenue is derived from one or more of the following:

- Cutting timber.
- Transporting timber.
- Processing of wood on-site on the forest land (chipping, grinding, converting to biochar, cutting to smaller lengths, etc.).

Payments will be based on the applicant's gross revenue received from Jan. 1, 2019, through Dec. 1, 2019, minus gross revenue received from Jan. 1, 2020, through Dec. 1, 2020, multiplied by 80%. FSA will issue an initial payment equal to the lesser of the calculated payment amount or \$2,000 as applications are approved. A second payment will be made after the signup period has ended based upon remaining PATHH funds.

The maximum amount that a person or legal entity may receive directly is \$125,000.

Applying for Assistance

Loggers and truckers can apply for PATHH beginning on July 22 by completing form FSA-1118, Pandemic Assistance for Timber Harvesters and Haulers Program application, and certifying to their gross revenue for 2019 and 2020 on the application. Additional documentation may be required. Visit farmers.gov/pathh for more information on how to apply.

Applications can be submitted to the FSA office by mail, fax, hand delivery, or via electronic means.

UNUSUAL CATERPILLAR DAMAGING CROPS IN GREENE COUNTY

The Conservation District and other agencies have received calls regarding turfgrass and crop damage related to the Fall Armyworm. This pest can be incredibly destructive to both crops and lawns. In fact, it gets the name armyworm from its habit of moving across an area like an army spreading destruction in its wake. It is not uncommon for landowners to find large swaths of their lawn brown and lifeless after the Fall Armyworms move through.

The Fall Armyworm is a caterpillar that is native to North America although it is uncommon in Pennsylvania. The Armyworm is a temperate species and cannot survive Pennsylvania's winters. They generally overwinter in southern states like Florida and Texas. They do migrate northward throughout the year but rarely reach Pennsylvania. It is thought that these current infestations are driven by recent storms carrying the moths further north than usual.



A mature Fall Armyworm caterpillar (*Spodoptera frugiperda*). Photo by Russ Ottens, University of Georgia, Bugwood.org



Corn infested with Fall Armyworm caterpillars. Photo by John C. French Sr., Retired, Universities: Auburn, GA, Clemson and U of MO, Bugwood.org

The Armyworm causes damage to plants by feeding on leaves. This caterpillar affects a wide variety of plants as it is known to impact over 80 different species. These include, alfalfa, barley, Bermudagrass, buckwheat, cotton, clover, corn, oat, millet, peanut, rice, ryegrass, sorghum, sugarbeet, Sudangrass, soybean, sugarcane, timothy, tobacco, wheat as well as sweet and white corn.

Armyworm life cycles may take between 30 and 60 days depending on temperatures and they may have multiple generations in a single year. It is thought that the Armyworms currently in Pennsylvania will only complete one generation due to colder temperatures as we move into winter. For this reason, it is not likely that Armyworms will become an established pest. Controlling Armyworm populations can be accomplished with insecticides and some pathogens following product guidelines.

Armyworms go through various stages of development. Earlier stages are small, greenish with a black or orangish head. Later stages become more brownish and develop white lines along the length of its body. Later stages also exhibit an upside-

down "Y" on the Armyworm's head. They generally will not be longer than an inch and a half even at maturity. During their earlier stages, the Armyworm mostly eats at night and hides under leaf litter and soil during the day. Later stages will eat during both the day and night. Once mature, the caterpillar will form a cocoon just below or on the surface to undergo metamorphosis into a moth.

The information in this article comes from two sources: an article about the Armyworm invasion, written by Mary Jo Gibson and found on the Penn State Extension website (<https://extension.psu.edu/fall-armyworm-invasion>) and from the University of Florida Featured Creatures website (https://entnemdept.ufl.edu/creatures/field/fall_armyworm.htm). Both contain more detailed information on the Armyworm and its control.

CONSERVATION DISTRICT WELCOMES NEW COOPERATORS

Cooperating landowners are really the backbone of everything the District does to ensure soil health and protect water quality. District programs like GRACE and the Water Quality Mini-Grant provide technical and financial assistance but it is ultimately the landowner who decides to act. Their commitment to stewardship not only improves their own property but benefits their entire community. The Conservation District is proud to welcome twenty-four new cooperating landowners.



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Waynesburg, PA 15370

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OUR MISSION

It is the mission of the District to commit to protection, stewardship, and conservation of the County's natural resources to ensure a wise balance between the protection of the environment and the benefit of the landowners of the County.

It is the District's belief that conservation works best when people living and working in the local area work together to manage their natural resources collectively. Valuable partnerships are formed when diversity is brought into the conversation and decision-making process. Our office is a conservation-oriented organization that offers a wide variety of expertise and knowledge. The District staff can assist with questions related to permitting, offer guidance on planning for farming, and assist landowners with various natural resource related topics.