



**SUMMER 2023**

## **INTRODUCTION OF ACAP: AGRICULTURE CONSERVATION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**

ACAP, or Agriculture Conservation Assistance Program, provides financial and technical assistance for the implementation of best management practices (BMPs) on agricultural operations within the Commonwealth. The Agriculture Conservation Assistance Program (ACAP) was created through the Clean Streams Fund established by the FY2022-2023 Pennsylvania Budget and is administered by the State Conservation Commission. Greene County has been awarded approximately \$500,000 over the next 3 years to reduce non-point source pollution in local streams and rivers by implementing BMPs that reduce nutrient and sediment pollution on local farms.

To be eligible, applicants must be an active farmer who owns their own land and has animals. There are a few requirements to participate in ACAP. However, these requirements will be beneficial to the farmers, many existing farmers will already have satisfied these requirements. Farmers must have a written agricultural erosion and sediment control plan or conservation plan and a manure management plan or nutrients management plan that includes the BMPs required to control nitrogen, phosphorus, and sediment. Applications must also address and abate other Agriculture Concentration Areas (ACA) on the farm. All projects must meet design and construction standards set by the SCC.

A farmer will need the following things to get started with the ACAP application:

- Schedule a pre-application site visit with GCCD
- Must have or obtain an Ag Erosion and Sediment plan (E&S) or a Conservation Plan (CP)
- If applicable, the applicant must have either a Nutrient Management Plan (NMP) or a Manure Management Plan (MMP)
- Schedule an engineering site visit

GCCD decided to embrace this program to protect and preserve local soil and water which will ensure future generations of farming in Greene County and is hopeful that this program will improve the overall health of soils and water. ACAP is a reimbursement grant that lowers the financial burden on landowners and farmers.

Applications are received on a rolling basis. **FINAL DEADLINE: JULY 2024**

For any questions, or to schedule a pre-application visit, please contact us at 724-852-5278 or [gccd@co.greene.pa.us](mailto:gccd@co.greene.pa.us) for full details on the ACAP program and assistance with the application.

## BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

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- Lisa Snider, District Director
- Lindsay Kozlowski, District Office Manager
- Zachary Basinger, Environmental Permitting Manager
- Tiffany Stewart, Watershed Specialist
- Heather Yorke, Fiscal Officer
- VACANT, Conservation Technician

# PENN STATE AGRONOMIST IN GREENE COUNTY

Justin Brackenrich, Agronomist with Penn State Extension, started in the Waynesburg office in April.

Justin grew up in the Eastern Panhandle of West Virginia, where he was involved in beef, sheep, and poultry production. Justin's draw to agriculture came from his parent's work with the WV USDA NRCS and his involvement in his local FFA.

After graduating high school, he attended Potomac State College of West Virginia University, where he studied Animal and Nutritional Sciences and Agribusiness Management. He continued to West Virginia University, where he received a Bachelor of Science in Agriculture at West Virginia University in Animal and Nutritional Sciences and a Master of Science in Plant and Soil Science, focusing on phosphorous management.

In late 2017, Justin joined the Penn State Extension Field and Forage Crop Team as an Agronomist. He was in Butler County but provided agronomic education and support to many counties in western PA. While in Butler, his focus was pasture and hay management, soybean research, wheat production, and pesticide safety.

Please reach out if you have any questions related to crop production, fertilizer or lime recommendations, herbicide applications, or general agriculture. Justin is very interested in meeting producers in the area and understanding how to serve the local agricultural community best.

Justin can be reached at [jub1489@psu.edu](mailto:jub1489@psu.edu) or **724-209-2007**

## COOPERATING AGENCIES

- Greene County Department of Economic Development  
Jeremy Kelly, Planning and Business Development Manager
- Natural Resources Conservation Service  
Sofia Arthur Colon, District Conservationist
- PA DCNR Bureau of Forestry  
Russell Gibbs, Service Forester
- PA Fish and Boat Commission  
Dorian Siebel, SW Region Waterways Conservation Officer
- Penn State Cooperative Extension  
Justin Brackenrich, Agronomy Educator
- Washington/Greene County Farm Service Agency  
Michal Roup, CED

## 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](mailto: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 Greene County Fairgrounds 4-H Building, located at 107 Fairgrounds Road, Waynesburg, PA 15370.*

# INTERNS



My name is **Adam Hobe**, I am 23 years old, from Dry Tavern. In 2019, I graduated from Jefferson-Morgan School District. Currently, I am in Graduate School at Duquesne University pursuing a Master's Degree in Environmental Science and Management with a concentration in Conservation Biology.

Since I was young, I had respect for our natural world but a career in environmental science was not something I considered before graduating high school. The summer after graduation, I bought several books on Pennsylvania flora and foraging. I attribute these books to the change in my career path as they invigorated my love of nature and being outdoors.

My parents have played a major part in my journey to get here, their push to pursue what I love and unwavering support in all that I do. My uncle also played a large part as he helped to spark my passion for learning and our natural beauty of Greene County and the surrounding areas. In the future, I would like to protect our waterways and land so that our county can stay biologically diverse and safe for all who live here.

I would like to thank all of the wonderful people here at the Conservation District for giving me this fantastic opportunity to work alongside them. Even in my brief time here, I have learned so much that will always carry with me.



Hi! I'm **Carly Whyte**! I'm a recent graduate of Waynesburg Central Junior/Senior High School. I am the daughter of Cliff Whyte and Rebecca Johnson. I plan to attend West Virginia University to attain a degree in Animal and Nutritional Sciences.

My hobbies include being active in the Greene County 4-H program and being a member of the Waynesburg FFA

Chapter. I show highly competitive market lambs across the state every weekend while also showing them at my county fairs. I've been showing lambs since 2014 and have added many other 4-H animal projects to my list of animals I have shown. This includes market steers, market hogs, and market goats. One of my favorite things to do is to help teach sheep showmanship and fitting to younger exhibitors.



My name is **Ben Shaner**. I am a 2023 graduate of West Greene High School. Since I moved to West Greene I've enjoyed being out in the woods, which had sparked my interest in conservation; however, I never thought I would have a career in

it. I am planning on attending Waynesburg University in the fall to study Business Finance. In my free time, I enjoy hiking, metalworking, stilt walking, and riding the unicycle. My goal in life is to one day own and operate a successful riding stable.

# WELCOME NEW DISTRICT STAFF



Heather Yorke started with the Conservation District on December 27, 2022 as Fiscal Officer. Heather has been a county employee since June 2021 transferring from the Planning and Economy Development department. She has a lot to learn about the GCCD programs and is excited to be a part of the team.

Heather's free time is spent with her family most of which live within 15 minutes of her home in Jefferson that she shares with her husband, Greg and their three fur babies.



Tiffany Stewart is the new Watershed Specialist for the district. She will provide technical assistance on agricultural issues for Greene County producers. She will provide technical and grant assistance on projects that will improve watershed organization development and the quality and quantity of the Commonwealth surface and groundwater resources. In addition, Tiffany will conduct watershed assessment and motoring of the

Watershed of Greene County. As part of her job, she will provide outreach and education to the residents of Greene County on protect and conserving water sources. Lastly, she will assisted with administrating the new statewide ACAP program to the farmers.

Tiffany graduated from Waynesburg University in 2021 with a bachelor's in Forensic biology and a minor in Biology. Her minor in biology focused more on environmental biology. Although Tiffany does not have an agricultural background, she is passionate about preserving and protecting our environment. She looks forward to starting her career in the district where she resides. Tiffany is ready to continue her education, expand her agricultural knowledge, and meet the agricultural community.

When Tiffany is not working, she loves spending time with her husband exploring the great outdoors, and traveling. She loves camping, biking, hiking, and all things plants. One of her favorite hobbies is baking for her loved ones.

# CARMICHAELS TEAM WINS GREENE COUNTY ENVIROTHON

DILLINER, PA – The 35th Greene County Envirothon competition was held at Hunting Hills on Wednesday, April 26th. Sixty high school students from Greene County's four school districts competed in this year's event.

At the Envirothon, five-member teams participate in a series of field station tests that focus on five topic areas – soils and land use, forestry, wildlife, aquatic ecology, and environmental issues. The theme for the 2023 event was "Adapting to a Changing Climate."

Carmichaels Team # 1 won this year's competition with a score of 426 points out of a possible 470. Team members Alex Lawrence, Sophia Zalar, Spencer Conard, Faith Willis, and Emma Bates, with team advisor Kevin Willis, represented Greene County at the PA Envirothon on May 23rd and 24th at Camp Mt. Luther, Mifflinburg, PA. Out of 63 teams from across Pennsylvania, Greene County's team from Carmichael high school placed 3rd overall!! The team had the second-highest score of all teams in the State Forestry Station with 93 points, second highest Soils score of 84, the third-highest Wildlife score of 92, 4th highest Oral Presentation score with 91.3, 5th highest Current Issue score with 61, and the 6th highest Aquatics score with an 82 for a total score of 503.3 points for the competition. Each team member received a \$500 scholarship.

Second Place was Mapletown Spotted Gars who earned 353 points and consisted of Grant Murin, Emil Enoff, Hannah Knutsen, Alexis Perry and Trenton Brown and their advisor Amber Burkett.

The third-place team was Carmichaels High School Team # 2 who earned 329 points, which included Landon Brown, Abigail Cuppett, Olivia Mata, Allie Miller, Levi Krampy and advisor Kevin Willis.

The Greene County Envirothon is organized each year by the Greene County Conservation District and is funded through donations and grants from various businesses, agencies, and individuals. Thank you to the following that improved our competition – EQT Corporation, Greene Team Pellet Fuel Company, LLC, Hunting Hills, Bankson Engineers, and First Federal of Greene County.

Each student on the first-place team secured a \$500 college scholarship funded by donations from donors and the Greene County Conservation District.

In addition to the continued financial support of sponsors, other partners that made the event successful include Greene County Commissioners Mike Belding, Betsy McClure, and Blair Zimmerman; Sofia Arthur, U.S.D.A. NRCS; Russell Gibbs and Michael Doucette, PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources Bureau of Forestry; Dorian Seibel, PA Fish and Boat Commission, Brandon Bonin and Tanner Hazlett, PA Game Commission and Greene County Development Office Jeremy Kelly and Kyle Lamb. The Conservation District would sincerely like to thank Roy, Sally, Raz and Johnna Sisler for the use of their facility at Hunting Hills for the day.



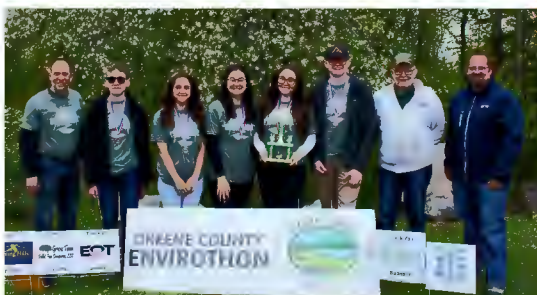
## 1<sup>ST</sup> PLACE

**L to R:** Kevin Willis, Advisor; Alex Lawrence; Sophia Zalar; Spencer Conard; Faith Willis; and Emma Bates; William Wentzel, GCCD Director; Dustin Teagarden, EQT Corporation



## 2<sup>ND</sup> PLACE

**L to R:** Amber Burkett, Advisor; Grant Murin; Emil Enoff; Hannah Knutsen; Alexis Perry and Trenton Brown; William Wentzel, GCCD Director; Dustin Teagarden, EQT Corporation



## 3<sup>RD</sup> PLACE

**L to R:** Kevin Willis, Advisor; Landon Brown; Abigail Cuppett; Olivia Mata; Allie Miller; Levi Krampy; William Wentzel, GCCD Director; Dustin Teagarden, EQT Corporation

# COLORING CONTEST WINNERS

WAYNESBURG, PA – In honor of Conservation District week, April 23-29th, the Greene County Conservation District announced the winners of their annual coloring contest that was open to pre-k students within Greene County. The contest promoted the start of Conservation Week and introduces children to soil and water conservation and the importance of healthy soils and clean water. This year a total 36 entries were received by the district. Each of the three winners received a new bicycle and helmet compliments of the Conservation District.



L to R: Addison Roberts, Hailey Henry and Ella Patton

**ADDISON ROBERTS, AGE 5,**  
Parents Jennifer and Brian  
Roberts of New Freeport

**ELLA PATTON, AGE 5,**  
parents Zack and Kayla  
Patton of Graysville

**HAILEY HENRY, AGE 4,**  
parents Garret and Bethany  
Henry of Carmichaels

**Congratulations to all winners and  
thank you to all participants.**

# POSTER CONTEST WINNERS

WAYNESBURG, PA - In honor of Conservation District Week, April 23-29th, the Greene County Conservation District announces winners of their annual poster contest that was open to all Greene County students in kindergarten through the eighth grade. The contest highlighted the National Association of Conservation District's 2023 theme, "One Water."

Eighteen students from across the county participated in the contest. Contests like this promote interest in the environment, sciences, arts, and other disciplines. Each first-place winners' posters will automatically be entered into the statewide contest held by the Pennsylvania Association of Conservation Districts. Winning posters were awarded cash prizes for participation in the amount of \$100 first place, \$75 second place and \$50 for third place.

## **In the 7th – 8th grade category, the winners were:**

1st Place – Sofia Gooden, CGSD Junior High School, daughter of Paul Gooden

2nd Place – Paige Borovichka, CGSD Junior High School, daughter of Kristy Borovichka

3rd Place – Liam Shipman, CGSD Junior High School from MBM, son of Lacey Shipman

## **In the 4th – 6th grade category, the winners were:**

1st Place – Payton Duncan, from PA Distance Learning Charter School, daughter of Lainey Duncan

2nd Place – Julianna Kirsch, Waynesburg Central Elementary School, daughter of Melissa Kirsch

3rd Place – Lily Giles, Carmichaels Area School District, daughter of Christina Antonelli

## **In the 2nd- 3rd grade category, the winner was:**

1st Place – Harper Shaffer, Waynesburg Central Elementary School, daughter of Ashton Shaffer

2nd Place – Elodie McGowan, Waynesburg Central Elementary School, daughter of Jillian McGowan

## **In the K-1st grade category, the winner was:**

1st Place – Grant Patton, West Greene Home Schooled, son of Kayla Payton

2nd Place – Henry McGowan, Waynesburg Central Elementary School, son of Jill McGowan



Payton Duncan



Elodie McGowan, Julianna Kirsch, Henry McGowan and Harper Shaffer

# BLACK VULTURES MOVING IN, CAUSING PROBLEMS FOR GREENE COUNTY FARMERS

Turkey Vultures can often be seen soaring through the skies of Greene County. The Turkey Vulture's size and their resemblance to predatory raptors, like eagles and hawks can be intimidating but they are not dangerous to people or livestock. Turkey Vultures do not hunt or kill. Instead, they exclusively eat carrion, or dead animals. While they may not win any beauty contests, these large birds fulfill a valuable role in our local ecosystem. Think of them as members of nature's recycling team. Native Americans referred to the Turkey Vulture as the, "Peace Eagle" and even their Scientific name, *Cathartes aura*, means "cleanser."

The Black Vulture is considered more of a Southern bird and is less common in Pennsylvania than Turkey Vultures. Black Vulture populations have been moving North, though, and reports of them in Pennsylvania are growing. Greene County farmers have already reported problems with them harassing livestock. Unlike Turkey Vultures, the Black Vulture does hunt and kill for food. This is particularly concerning for farms with young livestock and homes with small pets. Black Vultures are known to attack young livestock, pecking at soft areas like the eyes. Several Black vultures can kill small livestock like calves or sheep. They can also kill and carry off small pets like cats and smaller dogs.

Part of the challenge is trying to control Black Vultures without impacting Turkey Vultures, and the valuable job they perform. The key is positive identification. Turkey Vultures are slightly larger and have a longer wingspan. Also pay attention to the color of the bird's head. Immature Turkey Vultures have a gray coloration on their head which gives way to red in adulthood. A Black Vulture's head is always black. There are also differences in plumage. The Turkey Vulture is mostly brown with the bottoms of the wings and tail being gray. The Black Vulture is predominantly black with smaller silver patches on the underside of the wings. Behavior is a key determinant as well. Turkey Vultures may be found on farms consuming dead livestock or afterbirth from calving but they will not harass livestock. Black Vulture's on the other hand will be much more aggressive and will cause livestock to act defensively.

The Conservation District recommends that farmers and pet owners keep an eye out for Black Vultures on their property. The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) Wildlife Services has resources to assist farmers with managing Black Vultures on their farm. Contact their Western Office at 724-238-7320 to learn how to harass Black Vultures into leaving or even killing them under a permit in some cases.

[https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Turkey\\_Vulture](https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Turkey_Vulture)  
[https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/black\\_vulture](https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/black_vulture)



*Black Vulture at rest.*



*Black Vulture in Flight.*



*Turkey Vulture at rest.*



*Turkey Vulture in Flight.*

## 2023 SPRING TIRE CLEAN UP

The Greene County Conservation District held a spring tire clean up on May 17, 2023 at the Greene County Fairgrounds. Registration was required and each registrant could bring up to 20 tires with a disposal fee of \$1.00 each. A total of 1,617 tires have been collected from Greene County residents and were sent to a tire recycling plant to be used for rubber mulch and a variety of other uses. We are hoping to have one more clean-up event before the end of the year.

Tires are the number one breeding spot for mosquitoes. The warm water and protective cover provide the perfect habitat to complete the mosquito life cycle. Collecting these tires hopefully played an important role in making a dent in decreasing the county's mosquito population.

Funding was provided by the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection's Mosquito-Borne Disease Control Grant and the disposal fee from registrants. We will continue to plan for bigger and better tire recycling events!



# GREENE COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT ENCOURAGES RESIDENTS TO “FIGHT THE BITE”

In partnership with the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, the Greene County Conservation District kicks off the 2023 tick and mosquito surveillance season. While most insects provide beneficial effects, such as being part of the food web or acting as pollinators for plants, ticks and mosquitoes can become biting nuisances or more importantly transmit diseases that can make you sick. Each week the District collects environmental samples of tick and mosquito populations from our communities to assess disease transmission potential. Communities with mosquito and tick populations showing elevated disease risks are proactively targeted with control measures and personal protection education. Additionally, The PA Department of Environmental Protection uses the data we collect to publish seasonal risk values throughout Commonwealth. Funding for the collection, testing and control of tick and mosquito populations is supported through a grant provided by the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection.



If you see Greene County Conservation District biologists collecting insects this season by dragging a white cloth along the edge of local parks or setting mosquito traps, this is being done to measure the risk of tick and mosquito populations transmitting diseases in Greene County. While our agency actively monitors tick and mosquito populations, all residents in our community have a shared responsibility to reduce habitat for these insects. We encourage the reduction of standing water and the creation of a tick-safe zone around your property.

As we spend more time outdoors, the CDC and Greene County Conservation District recommends the following steps to prevent bites from mosquitoes and ticks:

- Insect repellent, when used properly, can keep mosquitoes and ticks off your skin. Now we recommend using repellents that are EPA approved that contain DEET, picaridin, or oil of lemon eucalyptus, and adults should help apply repellents to children under 12.
- Wear long-sleeve shirts, long pants, and socks to keep bugs off your skin.
- Perform daily tick checks after being outdoors, even in your own yard. Inspect all parts of your body carefully, including your armpits, scalp, and groin. Remove ticks immediately using fine-tipped tweezers.
- Early morning, late afternoon, and early evening are peak biting times for mosquitoes that spread West Nile virus. It's especially important to use repellent if you're outdoors at these times.
- Mosquitoes lay their eggs in water, even in small containers. Walk around the outside of your home at least once a week and empty any water that's collected in toys, pet food and water bowls, birdbaths, buckets, and other objects. Check under bushes and other hard-to-see places. Get rid of old tires and other objects that can collect water.
- Create a tick-safe zone around your home. For example: remove leaf litter and clear grasses and brush around your home and the edge of the lawn, and place mulch between lawns and wooded areas to keep ticks off the places you work and play the most.
- Check for and repair holes in window and door screens.
- Avoiding mosquitoes and ticks doesn't mean that you have to stay inside, in front of the TV. Work and play outside, but remember to apply an effective repellent to exposed skin and clothing.



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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.