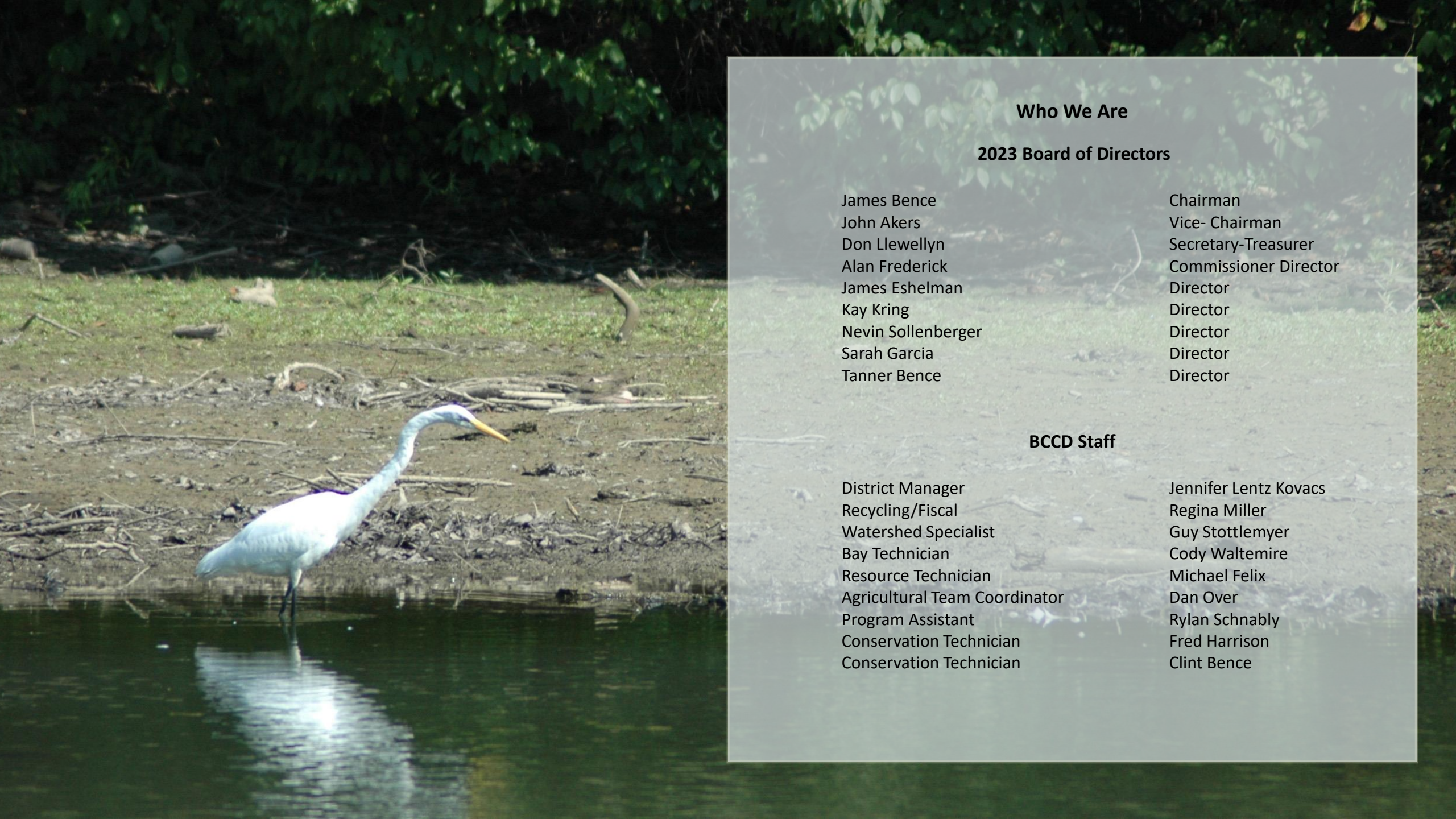




Bedford County Conservation District

Annual Report - 2023

Conserving Resources for Future Generations



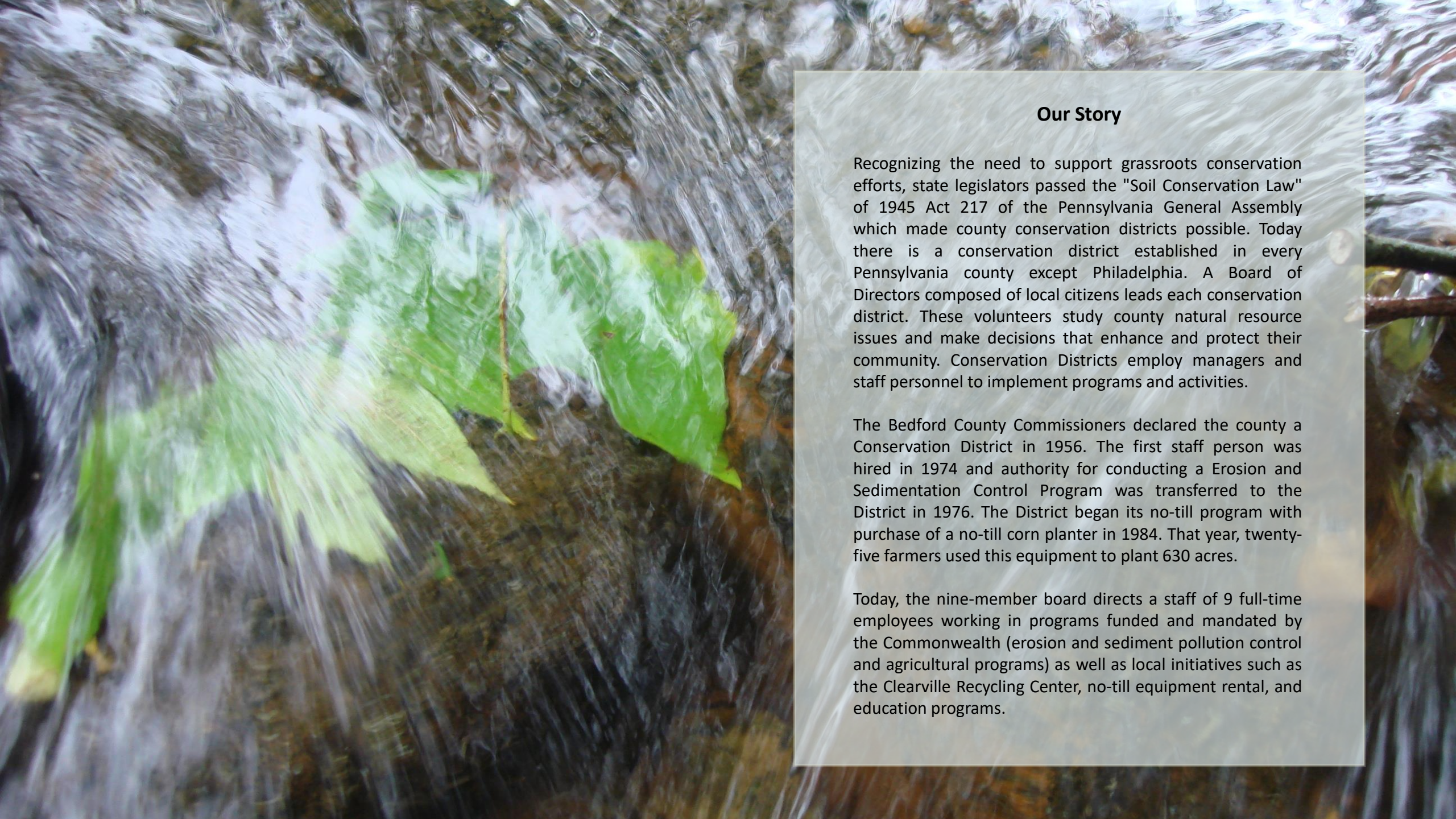
Who We Are

2023 Board of Directors

James Bence	Chairman
John Akers	Vice- Chairman
Don Llewellyn	Secretary-Treasurer
Alan Frederick	Commissioner Director
James Eshelman	Director
Kay Kring	Director
Nevin Sollenberger	Director
Sarah Garcia	Director
Tanner Bence	Director

BCCD Staff

District Manager	Jennifer Lentz Kovacs
Recycling/Fiscal	Regina Miller
Watershed Specialist	Guy Stottlemeyer
Bay Technician	Cody Waltemire
Resource Technician	Michael Felix
Agricultural Team Coordinator	Dan Over
Program Assistant	Rylan Schnably
Conservation Technician	Fred Harrison
Conservation Technician	Clint Bence



Our Story

Recognizing the need to support grassroots conservation efforts, state legislators passed the "Soil Conservation Law" of 1945 Act 217 of the Pennsylvania General Assembly which made county conservation districts possible. Today there is a conservation district established in every Pennsylvania county except Philadelphia. A Board of Directors composed of local citizens leads each conservation district. These volunteers study county natural resource issues and make decisions that enhance and protect their community. Conservation Districts employ managers and staff personnel to implement programs and activities.

The Bedford County Commissioners declared the county a Conservation District in 1956. The first staff person was hired in 1974 and authority for conducting a Erosion and Sedimentation Control Program was transferred to the District in 1976. The District began its no-till program with purchase of a no-till corn planter in 1984. That year, twenty-five farmers used this equipment to plant 630 acres.

Today, the nine-member board directs a staff of 9 full-time employees working in programs funded and mandated by the Commonwealth (erosion and sediment pollution control and agricultural programs) as well as local initiatives such as the Clearville Recycling Center, no-till equipment rental, and education programs.

Programs

Erosion and Sediment Control/NPDES Program

The goal of the Erosion and Sediment control (E&S) and the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) programs is the protection of water resources. Through the implementation of these programs, the District strives to minimize accelerated erosion and sedimentation resulting from earthmoving activity. The District is given the authority to administer the E&S and NPDES programs by the PA Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). Program staff activities include conducting plan reviews, site inspections, complaint investigations, holding workshops and processing NPDES permits.

Nutrient Management

The District participates in Pennsylvania's ACT 38 Program (Nutrient Management) as a Level 2 delegated District. The State Conservation Commission (SCC) delegates the tasks of writing and reviewing Nutrient Management Plans and inspecting ACT 38 participating farms for compliance. Nutrient Management Plans aid farmers by identifying a plant's nutrient needs, and therefore the plans continue to be the best tool to help farmers prevent pollution by over application of manure, while maximizing crop yields. Pennsylvania encourages every farm to consider the benefits of a Nutrient Management Plan to be written, approved, and implemented. If you have interest in obtaining an ACT 38 Nutrient Management Plan, please contact the District and we can discuss options to have it written.

Dirt, Gravel, and Low Volume Road Program

The DGLVRP provides training and funding to municipalities and other owners of local roads to make improvements to both un-paved and lightly used paved roads that will reduce sediment pollution to nearby waterways. Township supervisors and roadmasters work with BCCD staff to create work plans to address drainage and stability issues with roads that impact streams. The municipalities then apply for funding through the Conservation District.

Recycling

The BCCD Recycling Coordinator manages the Tri-County Solid Waste Recycling Drop-Off Program for Bedford County with bins at the Bedford Township building, Broad Top Township building, Everett Church of the Brethren, the Napier Township building, and Sandy Run Landfill. The Coordinator also acts as liaison between the County, Solid Waste Authority and DEP, securing funds to operate the drop-off bins and the Clearville Recycling Center.



Programs (cont)

Environmental Education

Bedford County Conservation District Staff present various educational programs for elementary and middle school students throughout the year at the request of educators. BCCD also provides educational displays at the Bedford Farmer's Market and Bedford County Fair. Educational topics that include: agriculture, watersheds, wildlife, recycling, native plants, and pollinators. BCCD provides educational materials to county schools in preparation for the Envirothon.

The Conservation District manages events for the annual Bedford County Envirothon. Tests for Senior High students (grades 9 – 12) are provided by the State Envirothon. This event qualifies the Bedford County winning team for the state-wide competition. Bedford County also sponsors events for middle school/elementary (grades 5 – 6) and junior high (grades 7 – 8). Tests for these events are created by BCCD staff.

District agricultural staff also conduct field days to inform county farmers of new methods and equipment to support production with less impact on our streams and rivers.

Watershed Programs

Watershed Specialist duties include: working with local watershed groups, educational programs for schools, grant-writing for projects, coordinating stream projects, water quality monitoring, and managing the DGLVR Program. Watershed activities conducted by the program assistant in 2023 include assessing stream crossings (culverts and bridges) to identify barriers to fish passage and working with members of the Ridge and Valley Streamkeepers on landowner outreach to identify improvement project opportunities.

Equipment Rental Program

To promote no-till agriculture and cover crops, the Conservation District has available for rental six no-till corn planters, nine no-till seed drills, and three damp lime spreaders. Four of the corn planters are John Deere 1750 4-row (30- or 36-inch rows) and there are two Pequea Plant Master 612 six row planters.

2023 By the Numbers

The District's no-till drills were used to plant a total of 3879 acres, including 2340 acres of cover crops, 328 acres of early fall planting and 1136 acres of spring planting.

Corn planters logged 1659 acres and lime spreaders placed 2587 tons of lime and 113 tons of poultry manure.

Chesapeake Bay Program farm inspections totaled 97 in 2023.

The District reviewed 5 nutrient management plans that were approved by our Board of Directors. In 2023, 13 on-site status reviews were conducted on 10 ACT 38 participating farms to ensure the practices outlined in each farm's plans were being implemented.

Erosion & Sediment Pollution Control Program tallied: 19 pre-construction meetings, 30 new plan reviews, and 37 revised plan reviews with 382 total project acres. Additionally, 11 General and 1 Individual NPDES permits were issued, 22 complaints investigated, and 248 site inspections of permitted sites, DEP referrals and other earth-moving sites. Planned and permitted sites totaled 204 disturbed acres.

The District's Dirt, Gravel and Low Volume Road Program allocation for 2023-2024 was \$261,969 for unpaved road projects and \$177,767 for paved low volume roads. Previously funded projects completed in 2023 include DSA for Mock Ridge Road in Lincoln Township (\$114,131.24), 2 phases on Clark Road in Liberty Township (\$160,406.78) and a LVR project on Valley Church Road in Broad Top Township (\$74,174.53). Unpaved road project contracts approved in 2023 include DSA surfacing for both Clark Hill Road in West Providence Township (\$41,860) and for Buckeye Road in Napier Township (\$81,455). Low-volume paved projects approved were Mt. Rose Beach Road in Hopewell Township (\$96,710) and Blackburn Road in Napier Township (\$46,288.48).

The Tri-County Solid Waste Recycling Drop-Off Program collected over 280 tons of recyclables in 2023 at the five drop-off bin locations. The Conservation District's Clearville Recycling Center collected over 200 tons of sorted recyclables.

The 2023 Envirothon events included the 36th annual Senior High event for the county, the 34th event for grades 7 and 8, and the 29th event for grades 5 and 6. More than 300 students participated in 2023.

BCCD had a seedling sale in 2023 after two years of hiatus due to Covid-19 and supplier issues. Twelve species of native trees and shrubs were offered, 63 orders were received and over 4500 seedlings were distributed.



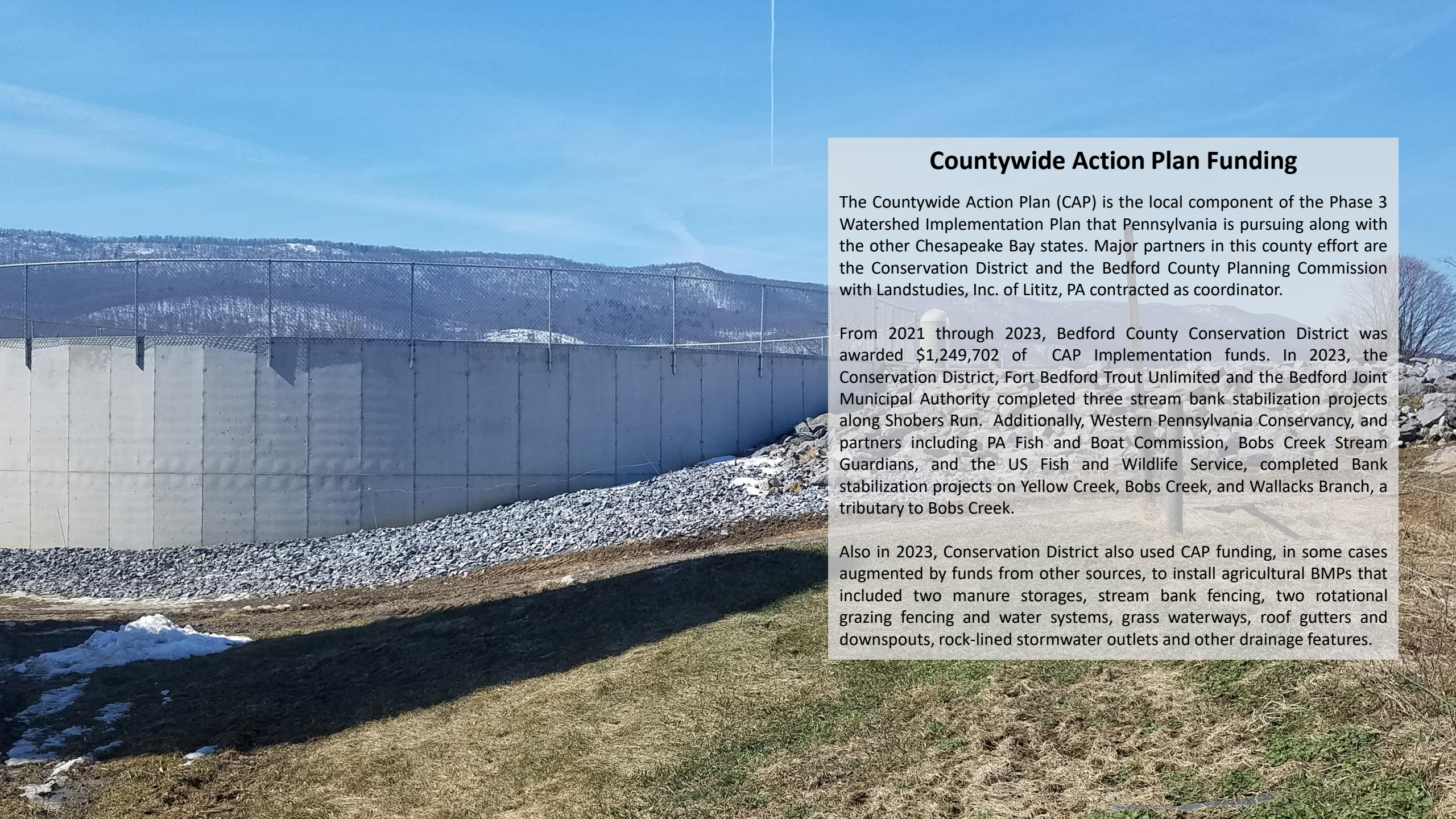


Agriculture Conservation Assistance Program

The Agricultural Conservation Assistance Program (ACAP) is a new state program being administered by the State Conservation Commission. The ultimate source for these funds is from the federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), of which the Pennsylvania legislature obligated some of these funds for the ACAP program. ACAP funds were divided across Pennsylvania, with funding amounts determined by a variety of factors. Bedford County is set to receive a total of \$3.504 million, which is the 11th highest allotment in the state. Funds are obligated over three years; 1/3 of the funding in each year. Each yearly funding allotment must be obligated for projects and spent within two years. All funding should be exhausted by June 30, 2026. For Bedford County, this means we will receive roughly \$1.168 million each year for three years. Of this total, 6% can go towards program administration and 14% can go towards internal engineering and technical assistance. An additional 10% can be used for private consultant engineering, if needed. This funding is available for all farmers within the county - there is no requirement to be within a certain watershed. There are general guidelines for project eligibility and there are existing templates for farmer applications, project rankings, and contracts for farmers.

Conservation Excellence Grant Program

The Conservation Excellence Grant (CEG) program is a State Conservation Commission (SCC) effort to provide financial and technical assistance for implementing Best Management Practices (BMPs) on agricultural operations in high-priority locations through grants, loans, and tax credits. Through 2023, Bedford County has been received over \$1.5 million. In 2023, \$204,336 was awarded to a farm in the Shaffer Creek watershed for waste storage, drainage features and an access road, and \$54,000 to a Dunning Creek watershed farm for a roofed waste storage, roofed heavy use area, drainage features and animal trail.



Countywide Action Plan Funding

The Countywide Action Plan (CAP) is the local component of the Phase 3 Watershed Implementation Plan that Pennsylvania is pursuing along with the other Chesapeake Bay states. Major partners in this county effort are the Conservation District and the Bedford County Planning Commission with Landstudies, Inc. of Lititz, PA contracted as coordinator.

From 2021 through 2023, Bedford County Conservation District was awarded \$1,249,702 of CAP Implementation funds. In 2023, the Conservation District, Fort Bedford Trout Unlimited and the Bedford Joint Municipal Authority completed three stream bank stabilization projects along Shobers Run. Additionally, Western Pennsylvania Conservancy, and partners including PA Fish and Boat Commission, Bobs Creek Stream Guardians, and the US Fish and Wildlife Service, completed Bank stabilization projects on Yellow Creek, Bobs Creek, and Wallacks Branch, a tributary to Bobs Creek.

Also in 2023, Conservation District also used CAP funding, in some cases augmented by funds from other sources, to install agricultural BMPs that included two manure storages, stream bank fencing, two rotational grazing fencing and water systems, grass waterways, roof gutters and downspouts, rock-lined stormwater outlets and other drainage features.



Project Spotlight: Shobers Run Sediment Reduction and Habitat Improvement – Phases Two and Three

Work resumed on the Shobers Run project area in 2023 with Phase Two completing work at the large mud-sill installed during Phase One (see photos below). Phase Three (photos above) moved upstream from the Phase One location to install 7 root wads, 4 log-framed rock deflectors, 1 large mud-sill, and a multi-log vane. More can be found at the CAP Projects page on the BCCD website.

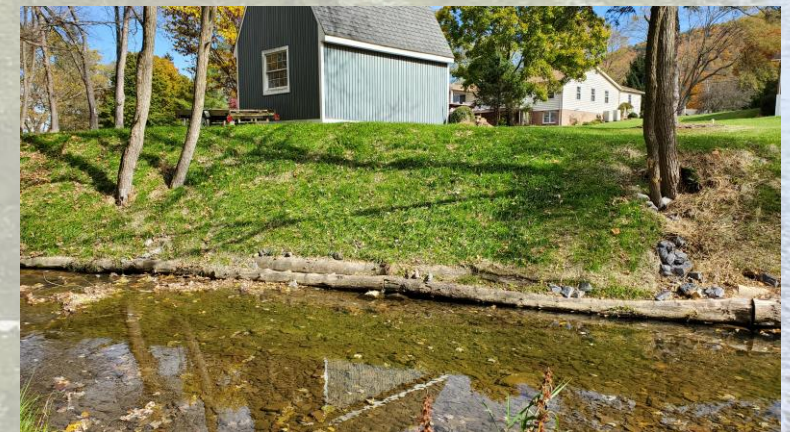
January 2020



August 2021 (Phase One Complete)



October 2023 (Phase Two Complete)





Nominating Organizations

The members of the District Board of Directors are appointed by the County Commissioners to serve four year terms, selected from a list of candidates provided by county organizations designated by the SCC. The approved nominating organizations in Bedford County are:

Bedford County Farm Bureau
Bedford County Farm Bureau Co-op
Bedford County Township Officials Association
Farm Service Agency
Fort Bedford Trout Unlimited
Woodland Owners of the Southern Alleghenies
Bedford County Township Officials Association

Contact

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