

## Plant a Rain Garden — reduce stream pollution

Planting a rain garden is an easy way to reduce the amount of nonpoint source pollution entering our streams.

Storm water runoff is responsible for up to 70% of the pollution found in our streams, lakes and rivers. Impervious surfaces (ones that do not allow water to penetrate the ground) such as buildings and parking lots contribute large amounts of water to our storm drains. This water often contains many pollutants.

Rain gardens help hold this storm water and allow it to soak into the ground where many of the pollutants can be filtered out by the soil. Rain Gardens can reduce the amount of water and pollutants which enter our streams by up to 30%.

These gardens can be positioned to catch water before it runs into storm inlets on your street, or as it runs out of downspouts. A gentle sloping area (no more than a 10% slope) at least 10 feet away from your house is best. For easiest installation choose a site that is in line with the way water naturally runs off your property. Digging a swale or installing underground piping can help lead water to the garden.

Estimate the amount of area (roof top or paved area) which will drain into your garden. Gardens planted on sandy soils should be 20-30% the size of the drain area. Gardens planted on clay soil should be 60% of the drain area. **The garden should be dug into a bowl-like depression** so that excess water collects and drains slowly into the soil over several days allowing the soil to filter out pollutants.

Native plants are preferred because they tolerate a wide variety of soil and moisture condition. Remember...each garden is unique, so be creative!

Mary Ellen Noonan  
Bucks County CD

Did You Know?

Only about one percent of the earth's water is fresh water available for our use.

Help protect this vital resource.

## Let's hear it for our youth

In a world that is often derogatory toward the young people of today; I wanted to shed some positive light on our hope for the future. I recently participated in the Middletown Grange Fair, an annual tradition in Bucks County. The District has, for many years, presented a display and informational booth at the fair.

This year, our booth was located across from the 4-H Club exhibits of small animals. The dedication of these young people: to their projects, and even more importantly, their behavior during the 5 day event was absolutely amazing. The kids were polite, hard working, were available to answer questions, and brought animals out for others (young and old) to admire, touch and inquire about.

I guess my point is that programs such as 4-H can develop discipline, work ethic, pride, scientific awareness, camaraderie and working skills while at the same time providing hours of enjoyment. We don't all need to be soccer, football, baseball or basketball players. Parental and volunteer involvement are major part of 4-H, and having observed these kids over the length of the fair, I think there is much to be pleased with in today's youth.

Participation in 4-H programs can be accessed at the County level by contacting your local Penn State Cooperative Extension Office.

John Thomas  
Bucks County CD



## Field Safety Awareness

For many years Conservation District staff members have worked in the field to assist landowners with their soil conservation practices. This includes working in the proximity of farm machinery, construction equipment, steep slopes, sink hole potential, and water impoundment areas.

To enhance personal safety in these areas the Southeast Pennsylvania Association of Conservation Districts initiated a Field Safety Awareness training session for district staff.

Twenty four staff members from the conservation districts of Berks, Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Montgomery and Northampton counties, as well as the Department of Environmental Protection, attended a three-hour training session conducted by Ron Witt, Corporate Safety Training Manager of American Infrastructure located in Worcester Township, Montgomery County. Focusing on safety awareness, Ron captured everyone's attention by saying, "it's not only how accidents occur, but also why they occur."

Ron also asked the question, "if no one was injured today, did we have a safe day"? This question generated a lot of thought and revealed many topics to be discussed.

In addition to identifying specific areas of safety in the field, Ron also discussed our working culture and how perception can shape our safety strategy.

By the end of the session the participants felt they had acquired a new awareness of not only safety on the job, but safety in their daily lives. Our thanks to Ron and American Infrastructure for conducting and hosting this training session.

*Rich Kadwill  
Montgomery Co. CD*

## Pilot Project – An Example in Delaware County

As most of us have seen, the proposed Pilot Project has been the subject of much debate over the past year. Introduced to the Conservation Districts by Berks County last year, the program's main focus is to have involvement from the engineer, the contractor and District throughout the planning process. While the program does have some good concepts, other aspects brought opposition, particularly in our region of the state. However, when the opportunity arose to test out the Pilot Program here in Delaware County, we took it. Not surprisingly, the outcome has not been good.

The site we used in our trial is a rather large site for Delaware County — approximately 75 acres. During the technical review, questions arose about how feasible the sequence of construction was going to be once site work began. This is where we decided we would give the Pilot Program a try. A meeting was held with both the contractor and the engineer. In fact, multiple meetings were held, the end result being a phased project with a handful of basins, many swales, and very specific limits of disturbance.

We sent this site to enforcement after the first inspection. Limits of disturbance were not followed, and erosion and sediment controls were not properly installed and functioning.

So what went wrong? Wasn't the goal of the Pilot Program to avoid situations like this? Well, most of the issues we had with this particular site were in regard to the actual meetings themselves, which are at the heart of the Pilot Program. With multiple parties involved, as well as multiple plan reviews and meetings, discussions during the plan review process are inevitably interpreted differently among those present. Attendees may only recall certain points discussed during a meeting, which can later be used in an enforcement conference to confuse the issues. People can be very convincing in meetings, and if by some chance a particular issue does not make it in writing on the plan, it may be difficult to recall how a decision was reached a year later when problems occur on site, leading to the "he said-she said" debates. We as District staff may be accused of being too picky when sitting in a meeting with an engineer and a contractor discussing basin calculations for a half hour. There is a large assumption that all contractors will be able to predict problems prior to site work beginning. However, this is not the case, and just because they are involved does not rule out the possibility of revisions. And let's face it, when the contractor is selected for a project, they are anxious to get started — and are likely to say anything to get the plan approved.

This is our example of how the Pilot Program worked in Delaware County. Obviously, many variables influence how smoothly the program runs — issues that are not so easily resolved. All sites that are reviewed under the Pilot Program will clearly not turn out like ours, but this case did not leave us too excited to try it again.

*Bridget Thompson  
Delaware County CD*



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## Shoreline Planting

The North Branch of the Neshaminy Creek is one of Bucks County's most valued waterways. Not because it is of exceptional value, or its pristine conditions, but because it is both the headwaters of the Neshaminy Creek (Bucks County's largest watershed, at 236 square miles), and because its water is delivered to over 1 million homes each day.

The North Branch receives water pumped from the Delaware River at Point Pleasant, PA to help supply residents in Bucks and Montgomery Counties. The water travels west, and is deposited into Lake Galena. There it is stored and used by North Penn/North Wales Water Authorities. Lake Galena is also the setting for one of Bucks County's busiest parks, Peace Valley. The Lake was originally created to provide flood control along the Neshaminy Creek, one of 8 flood control structures in the County.

The North Branch is actually not in great shape. In fact, many sections of stream are on the PA DEP's 303d list of impaired waterways. Luckily, for everyone, there is the North Branch Watershed Association. Formed in 2000, the watershed association works to improve water quality within the North Branch Neshaminy Creek. The group is strongly supported by the Bucks County Conservation District, the North Penn/North Wales Water Authorities, and the two municipalities that the creek traverses, Plumstead, and New Britain.

This October the North Branch Watershed Association will complete its second riparian planting project along the shoreline of Lake Galena. The group will plant 360 trees and shrubs, approximately 1 acre of plantings, along the banks of The North Branch as it enters Lake Galena.

The group is taking advantage of Pennsylvania Horticultural Society's new TreeVitalize program. The TreeVitalize mission is; *to develop a public private partnership, through regional collaboration, to address the loss of tree cover in the five-county Southeastern Pennsylvania region.* TreeVitalize provides funding for plant material to those with streambank in need of riparian buffer. The basic requirements of the program are a 25% in-kind match from volunteers, and that reimbursement can only occur after the site is 100% complete.

To find out more about the North Branch Watershed Association's planting event, see their website at <http://www.northbranchwatershed.org>. To learn more about Pennsylvania Horticultural Society's TreeVitalize program, contact your County Conservation District, or visit their website at <http://www.treevitalize.net>.

*Gretchen Schatschneider  
Bucks County CD*

## Late Night Reading —



I received a copy of an article written by Andrew Reese published in *The Journal for Surface Water Quality Professions Stormwater*. Voodoo Hydrology is the name of the article. A quote from Dr. Tom Debo, late of Georgia Tech, is indicative of the tone of the article.

"I love urban hydrology. They can never prove you are wrong, only inconsistent."

The article provides the best perspective I have read on urban hydrologic practice. The article briefly looks at the three icons of current hydrologic practice: the Rational Method, the SCS method, and the 80% total suspended solid (TSS) removal standard.

Mr. Reese does imply that nature of urban stormwater hydrologic designs is akin to black magic. I found the article well written, and understandable for both the lay and technical person. I encourage anyone who is involved in stormwater management to obtain and read the article. The information it contains may help you better understand the design issues.

The article appears in the July/August 2006 issue. Or you can read it on the web at <http://www.stormh2o.com/sw.html>.

*Dan Greig  
Chester County CD*

Joseph Toth

Michael Toth



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## Annual Chapter 102 Training for district staff

If you tried calling any of the conservation district offices on September 26-28, you most likely did not get to talk to any of the staff. Conservation district staff was in State College, attending the Annual Chapter 102 Training conducted by PADEP.

Items that *Conservation and You* readers may be interested covered a wide range of subjects. I will attempt to inform you of the important and/or controversial topics.

PADEP unveiled a draft of four Department Initiatives for Stormwater to improve the Post Construction Stormwater Management Permitting Process. A backlog of permits in the PADEP Northeast Regional office is the catalyst for the Initiatives.

- Initiative #1 encourage the use of the Simultaneous Review Process for E/S and Post Construction Stormwater Reviews.
- Initiative #2 Expedited Permit Review where applicants have a Municipal or County Conservation District Approval of PCSM plan and that Plan has been sealed by a PE who has attended BMP Manual training.
- Initiative #3 Development of New General Permits and Clarification of Existing General Permits
- Initiative #4 Third Party Assistance - Development of a Solicitation for Engineering Service.

Currently the Chester County Conservation District performs simultaneous reviews for E/S and PCSWM Plans in approximately 90% of NPDES Permits submitted. Delaware, Chester, and Bucks CCDs have an expedited review process and policy. All of the SEPA conservation district attempt to facilitate a quick review for single-family residences. Adding additional General Permits would not make much difference in Chester County. Forty-seven percent of the County area is considered Special Protection Watersheds, which require Individual Permits. Hiring of 3<sup>rd</sup> party engineering assistance should only be used where and when PADEP cannot complete plan reviews in a timely manner.

Training in the use of the PA Stormwater Manual will begin in November and continue into the early part of 2007.

*Dan Greig  
Chester County CD*

## Establishing Drainage Areas to Traps and Basins

A current trend on multiple construction sites is the failure of contractors to establish drainage areas to sediment traps and basins. This would include implementing all erosion and sedimentation controls on the E&S plan, to maintain proper flow of sediment-laden water, to their respective control facilities. Let me now list a few examples of where I see a need for improvement.

One particular site had built and stabilized their sediment basin, but at the same time failed to construct the swale that would convey that water to the basin. This wouldn't have been so bad had they not already disturbed and graded the drainage area in question. That leaves an area wide open for sediment pollution. This all goes right back to the importance of adhering to the sequence.

On another site the basin was constructed, but the berms below each inlet were not installed, which are necessary to direct runoff into the outlet. Instead, the sediment-laden water bypassed those inlets and ended up polluting the stream.

In addition, when road construction is in the rough grading phase, please remember to install earthen diversion berms behind the inlets and compact the fill to avoid a blowout. The purpose of this practice is to get the water to inlets not in the sump condition. A rule of thumb: when one small piece is missing, your control device is not complete.

Becoming familiar with your erosion and sediment control plan is a must. Even when you neglect something that may seem trivial, the end result can lead to sediment pollution and possible enforcement action from DEP. Maintaining a good working relationship with the conservation district is beneficial since we can help when conflicts arise in the sequence. As always, the last thing that we want is for your site to be sent in for an enforcement action. Where it is feasible, we want to help you maintain voluntary compliance and keep the sediment on your site and out of the streams.

*Kevin Boyle  
Delaware County CD*

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## Large development project presents challenges

Apple Cross Development is a major project proposed in East Brandywine Township, Chester County. The project consists of 618 acres and includes an 18-hole golf course with clubhouse, 655 dwelling units, community center, maintenance facility.

This project is one of the largest projects that the Chester County Conservation District staff has reviewed. We have reviewed golf course projects in the past but never one with a housing development constructed simultaneously. Earth moving for construction of a golf course is usually extensive and sometimes appears to be – in geographical terms – terra forming.

Some of the challenges the designer, developer and the conservation district overcame were:

- Extensive environmental features such as wetlands.
- Highly erodible soils.
- Extensive area of disturbance both in size and duration.
- Sheer massiveness of the project.
- Coordination of numerous local governmental agencies and the municipality that were involved in the review process at the same time.

Numerous planning and conceptual meetings were held by the developer and the consultant with district staff, prior to a permit and plan submission

The purpose of the meetings were to:

- Provide an overview of the project.
- Discuss potential construction sequences.
- Identify potential stormwater management, Erosion, and Sediment Control BMPs.
- Identify the review and permitting process for the project.

In October of 2005, the district received the first plan submittal for the project. Usually one individual on the district staff reviews plans. For this plan, staff formed a team of three to assist with the review process. At the conclusion of the first review, the team made approximately 150 comments that were included in the district review letter. This may look like a tremendous number of comments. If one puts it in the context of the size of this project, then the number of district comments is more acceptable.

The district staff reviewed an additional submission through the spring and summer of 2006. We are in the process of what the district and the developer hopes is the final review, then the NPDES Permit will be sent to the PADEP SERO office for permit issuance.

Some of the BMPs that were proposed and accepted by the conservation district are but not limited to:

- Use of polymer blocks to better control sediment removal in the basins.
- Limiting the duration of area disturbance by aggressive temporary or permanent seeding and mulching.
- Sequence and timing of construction.
- Riparian Buffer establishment.
- Minimal wetland or stream crossings
- Infiltration beds
- Bio-Infiltration swales.
- Requiring engineering as-built confirmation be provided for the major BMPs.
- Hiring of an on-site builder representative to conduct routine inspections and assist the conservation district staff when we are onsite.

The staff involvement in this project is in the beginning stages. After the permit is issued, it is estimated that the project will be under some construction/ earthmoving for five or more years.

Even with a trained developers employee on site, district staff will be conducting numerous inspection for compliance over the next several years. I believe that the cooperation with the developer, plan preparer and district staff will make this a successful project. I also believe that all parties involved learned a lesson in dealing with large-scale projects.

Dan Greig  
Chester County CD



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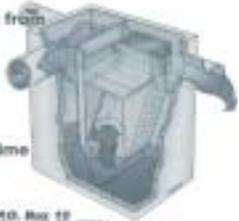
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## Enforcement Actions in Bucks County

June through August 22, 2006

Bedminster Square .....	\$ 15,750.00
Prime Properties, Lot #7 .....	10,500.00
Stone Manor Corp. Center .....	1,400.00
Nestlewoods .....	5,250.00
Gary Bentz .....	3,250.00
Mearns Road Business Campus .....	10,000.00
Sokoloski SFH .....	1,000.00
M. J. Connolly .....	2,500.00
Bridgetown Knoll .....	4,050.00
Heritage Creek .....	4,250.00
Streamview .....	11,000.00
Penndel Bowling Center .....	2,500.00
Clabbers SFH .....	3,000.00
New Britain Corporate Center .....	1,800.00

John Thomas  
Bucks County CD

## Follow the Checklist for plan reviews in Bucks

A common complaint regarding plan reviews is “you didn’t tell us that you needed that, and now I have to resubmit.” In an effort to simplify the review process, our staff has been instructed to use the checklists that are available on pages 138-143 in the *Erosion And Sediment Control Program Manual*.

The **Complete Plan Checklist** is used to determine if an erosion and sediment control plan includes all required elements. This checklist is intended to serve as a tool to determine whether an erosion and sediment control plan addresses all eleven items required by Section 102(4)(b)(5). It need not be included as part of the plan submittal; but, by presenting the information in that format, the review process will proceed more expeditiously.

The **E&S Control Plan Technical Review Checklist** is used to determine the technical adequacy of an erosion and sediment control plan. This checklist is to be used by the reviewing agency to ensure the erosion and sediment control plan meets the requirements of Chapter 102 and the standards of DEP’s Erosion and Sediment Pollution Control Program Manual.

By approaching your plan development process with these checklists in mind, you should expect a better outcome.

By now you are saying, “But it’s the NPDES paperwork that holds me up.” With regard to this aspect, it is strongly recommended that you call Sandy Tucker or Rene’ Moyer with any questions regarding administrative matters prior to making the submission.

John Thomas  
Bucks County CD



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# Chester County Conservation District welcomes new Urban Resource Conservationists

The Chester County Conservation District gained four new Urban Resource Conservationists over the last six months.

**Jordan Perry** recently graduated from Temple University with a B.S. in Community and Regional Planning and Environmental Studies.

**Matt Miller** received his B.S. this spring in Agronomy and Environmental Science from Delaware Valley College.

**Ben Drover** hails from Shippensburg University with a B.S. in Geoenvironmental Studies and worked for AmeriCorp at the Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge Wildlife before returning east and joining the team.

**Jim Demchak** has roots in Chester County as a graduate of Bishop Shanahan High School and West Chester University with a B.S. in Geography and Planning.

Gaye Lynn Criswell, Urban Team Leader says, “ We are very happy to have these guys as part of our Urban Team. They certainly got their boots wet during the great rains of June 2006 - and they pulled us through with renewed enthusiasm!”



(l to r) Jordan Perry, Ben Drover, Jim Demchak, and Matt Miller

## Conservation Products & Services Directory updated

Southeastern PA RC&D Council, in cooperation with the County Conservation Districts, is producing an updated Conservation Products and Services Directory. This directory will be distributed to over 3,500 residents, contractors, engineers and municipalities. It will serve as a reference for locating the products and services needed to complete construction on environmental projects. It will be handed out on jobsites, during office visits and by request through the mail.

Seventy regional providers of conservation products and services have placed ads in this directory. Seven Regional County Conservation Districts and three Department of Environmental Protection Agency Regional Offices will be listed.

For a cost of \$7.50 (postage and handling), you can request a copy of the Conservation Products and Services Directory. Call 215-453-9527 ext. 5 to order your copy.



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**Quarter Page** (3½" x 4½" – vertical) \$125/issue

A 10% discount is offered for inserting an ad in two or more issues. Ad deadline for the Winter issue is December 15, 2006. Send your check payable to the Delaware County Conservation District and camera-ready copy to Ed Magargee, Delaware County Conservation District, Rose Tree Park - Hunt Club, 1521 N. Providence Road, Media, PA 19063; Phone (610) 892-9484.

**CONSERVATION & YOU** is published by the Bucks, Chester, Delaware and Montgomery County Conservation Districts in cooperation with the PaDEP, Bureau of Waterways, Wetlands and Erosion Control. For advertising information, call (610)892-9484.

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