

# Elk Bugle

Volume 11 Issue 1 Spring 2023

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## Welcome, Alyson!



Alyson joined the Elk County Conservation District as a Resource Conservation Technician on March 29<sup>th</sup>, 2023. A native of Elk County, Alyson received her Bachelors of Science in Environmental Studies from Edinboro University. She previously worked at The Old Brickyard and The Brickyard Creamery.

Beginning August 2022, Alyson began volunteering as a leader for The Girl Scouts of America. In Alyson's free time she likes to read, travel, and go on hikes to see cool things.



# Who's covering that program?

With recent staffing changes some folks may find themselves wondering who is the correct contact for the various programs at the Elk County Conservation District .

Here is a list of staff, their program responsibilities, and contact info.

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## Kate Wehler

### District Manager

District Administration, Chapter 105 Stream and Wetland Permitting, Chapter 102 Erosion and Sediment Control, Dirt, Gravel, Low Volume Roads Program  
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## Maddie Stanisch

### Resource Conservation Technician

Chapter 102 Erosion and Sediment Control, Environmental Education  
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## Micaela Lefever

### Watershed Technician

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## Alyson Bevacqua

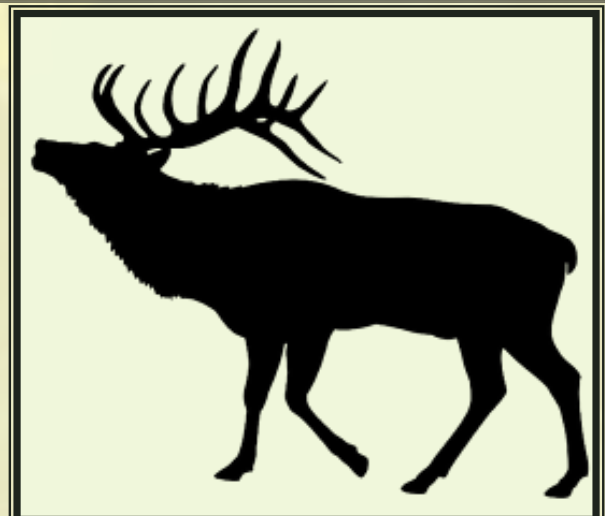
### Resource Conservation Technician

Dirt, Gravel and Low Volume Roads Program, Agriculture Activities  
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## Victoria Challingsworth

### Resource Conservation Technician

Environmental Education, West Creek Wetland Learning Center Activities, Pollinator Programs, Chapter 105 Stream and Wetland Permitting, Invasive Plant Education  
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# Conservation Districts of the Northwest Host a Consultant Workshop

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The Northwest Region of Conservation Districts teamed up to host a Consultant Workshop at the Trinity Point Church of God in Clarion County. Around 100 people attended the workshop ranging from firms located as far as Pittsburgh to State College.

The workshop began with an introduction from Dana Hannibal of Clarion Conservation District. Dana discussed updates on permitting requirements and common deficiencies seen on plans received by the Districts.

Monroe County Conservation District made the trek west to present at the workshop. Professional Engineers Michael Wilk and Drew Wagner spoke on infiltration testing, discharge points and points of interest, off-site discharge and undetained areas. There were many questions that sparked good discussion among the attendees and the presenters.

Since we were ahead of schedule, Maria of the

Dirt, Gravel and Low Volume Road Studies Program presented on stream crossings. Stream crossings are often included in designs and it is important to discuss requirements and potential issues with crossings.

Wrapping up the workshop was Monroe County's final presentation. MCCD staff discussed Post Construction Stormwater Management (PCSM) modules that are included in permit applications and Managed Release Concept (MRC) calculations spreadsheet.

The workshop was a success, with lots of great discussion and talking points.





# Elk County Awarded PACD Mini Grant for Adult Environmental Education Programs

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St. Marys, PA — The Elk County Conservation District received funding from the Pennsylvania Association of Conservation Districts (PACD) to host two adult education workshops. The purpose of these grants are to educate adults on non-point source pollution. For the soil testing workshop, the District plans to partner with NRCS. Soil health, proper soil nutrients, recommended fertilizer additions and methodology for reducing non-point source pollution during fertilizer application and tilling/planting will be discussed. Attendees will also receive a soil test kit. At the rain barrel workshop, participants will learn about stormwater stressors throughout watersheds and the actions homeowners can take to reduce their stormwater impacts to local streams and rivers. Each participating household will receive a rain barrel to install at their home.



See the press release below for more information!

## Pollution Control Projects Funded in Elk County

*Twenty-eight County Conservation Districts Received Funding to Promote Water Pollution Prevention Strategies across Pennsylvania*

(St. Marys, PA)— Elk County Conservation District received \$2,850 to host a rain barrel workshop and a soil testing workshop for Elk County residents.

“With this grant money, the district will have the opportunity to hold educational events for adults on topics of interest to our communities. This project will help citizens in our county do their part to make a difference for clean water and healthy soil,” said Kate Wehler (District Manager).

Education and outreach about the project is expected to begin in May of 2023 for the rain barrel workshop, and January of 2024 for the soil testing workshop. The district expects to have the project work begin no later than June of 2023 for the rain barrel workshop, which is when the District is hoping to hold this workshop. The district expects to have the project work begin no later than March of 2024 for the soil testing workshop, which is when the District is hoping to hold this workshop.

Thirty-seven projects will be funded in twenty-eight of the state’s counties. Projects include agricultural field days, rain barrel workshops, and more. For a complete listing of awarded projects, visit <https://tinyurl.com/202324NPSPProjects>.

For more information about the Elk County Conservation District or the planned project, visit <https://www.co.elk.pa.us/index.php/conservation-district-homepage> or call 814-776-5373.

Financial and other support for this project is provided by the Pennsylvania Association of Conservation Districts, Inc. (PACD) through a grant from the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection under Section 319 of the Clean Water Act, administered by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. For more information about PACD, visit [www.pacd.org](http://www.pacd.org).



We hope to see you at one of our exciting workshops!

# ECCD Hosts a BMP Workshop for Contractors

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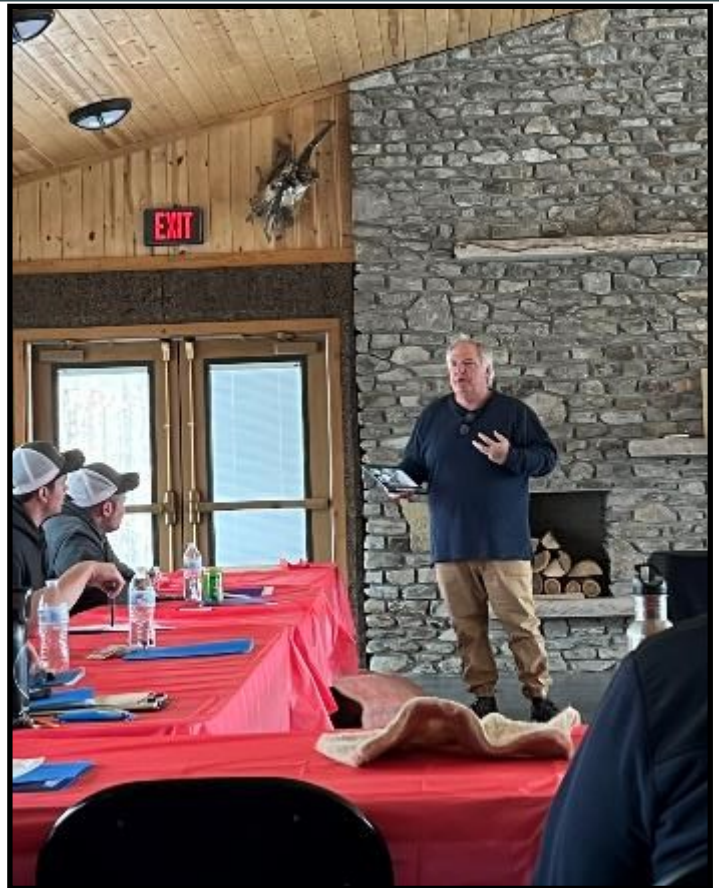
*Benezette, PA*- The Elk County Conservation District hosted a Best Management Practices workshop at the Elk Country Visitor Center.

This year's workshop focus was ABACT (Antidegradation Best Available Combination of Technologies) BMPs, which are required in special protection watersheds. A large portion of Elk County has special protection watersheds, which includes High Quality (HQ) and Exceptional Value (EV) streams and wetlands.

The workshop began with an introduction to Conservation Districts: what they are, why they were created, and programs covered. Many people confuse Districts with other state agencies, so it was important to provide insight on who we are and what we do.

The permitting process requires reporting different information, such as soil indices and stream designations. District staff presented on these topics.

Mike Zock of MKB Innovations wrapped up the workshop by presenting on various products offered by the company. He discussed new technology, mainly regarding silt fence and inlet filters, where the material is capable of absorbing oil and other liquids found on construction sites.



**Mike Zock, MKB Innovations, presenting on advancing BMP technology**



# Kersey Farm Reaches Century Farm Status

On April 27<sup>th</sup>, the owners of Earleyville Farm on Hayes Road in Kersey were awarded Century Farm Status. This is awarded to farms owned by the same family for 100 consecutive years. On April 27<sup>th</sup>, 1923, Giovanni Mattiuz bought the property for a total price of \$5,500. The farm raised chickens, milk cows, and a few hogs, which in 1957 were all sold or eaten and the farm was converted to a crop farm.

The current owners are Ernest Mattiuz Jr., Cecelia Mattiuz Bona, and Thomas Mattiuz. Ernest Jr. and Cecelia built their houses on the land and currently still reside there. Ernest Jr. and Cecelia's son, Micheal Bona, works on the farm daily now and Micheal Bona is the fourth generation to work on the farm.

*Congratulations to the  
Mattiuz family for this amazing  
accomplishment.*



Above— Image of Earleyville Farm on Hayes Road  
Source: Marilyn Secco newsroom@thecourierexpress.com



## ECCD Welcomes New Agriculture Conservation Assistance Program (ACAP) to the County



The Agricultural Conservation Assistance Program (ACAP) is a state funded reimbursement grant program for an individual financially responsible for an agriculture operation or an individual who lives on a property on which agricultural operation takes place. Projects that are implementing Best Management Practices (BMPs) are eligible. All applicants must have at least one of the following types of plans to be eligible: an agricultural erosion and sediment control plan, a conservation plan, a manure management plan, or a nutrient management plan. For a list of eligible BMPs, [click here](#) or visit the State Conservation Commission website. For more information on current application rounds, please see the advertisement at the end of this newsletter.



# Elk and Potter County Partner to Host a Realtor Workshop

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Realty does not typically come to mind when thinking in terms of permits—which was all the more reason to host a workshop tailored to realtors!

Elk and Potter County Conservation Districts teamed up to provide a workshop for local realty agencies to learn about permits and “red flags” on properties that could require permitting for the future landowner.

Both workshops began with an introduction to Conservation Districts and what they are, and what a “resource” is. From a stream to a wetland, a resource is an important factor to any property. Example properties were presented on and discussion was held on why there could be problems at these sites.

*Financial and other support for this project is provided by the Pennsylvania Association of Conservation Districts, Inc. (PACD) through a grant from the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection under Section 319 of the Clean Water Act, administered by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. For more information about PACD, visit [www.pacd.org](http://www.pacd.org).*



**Above— Victoria Challingsworth of ECCD and Glenn Dunn of PCCD presenting at the Saint Mary's Realtor Workshop**

**Below— Jason Childs of PCCD presenting at the Coudersport Realtor Workshop**



# Elk County Senior Envirothon

## Current Environmental Issue: Adapting to a Changing Climate

April 26, 2023-

Three schools, with a total of 40 students, participated in the Elk County Senior Envirothon competition. The competition was held at the Elk Country Visitor Center. The participating schools included Elk County Catholic, St. Marys Area High School, and Ridgway Area High School. The students were tested on aquatics, forestry, soils, wildlife, and an environmental issue category that is changed yearly. This year, the current issue topic was “adapting to a changing climate.” A Study Day was held April 3<sup>rd</sup> at the Elk Country Visitor Center as well. Local industry professionals attended this event to instruct the students on the above mentioned topics.

Team Kickin’ Grass from St. Marys Area High School won the county competition, moving on to represent the county in the 39<sup>th</sup> annual state event. Team Lettuce League took second place, also from St. Marys Area High School. There was only a six point difference between first and second place! Jamie Caskey and Emma Leithner, with the help of last year’s Envirothon winner Caleb Mattiuz, were the advisors for these teams.

*Congratulations!*



Elk County Envirothon First Place Team– Kickin’ Grass

### 1<sup>st</sup> Place Team: Kickin’ Grass (SMAHS)



Liam Brem, Tylor Hansen, Maura Caskey, Kara Hanslovan and Caitlin Blessel

### 2<sup>nd</sup> Place Team: Lettuce League (SMAHS)

Matthew Wehler, Jenna D'Amore

Killian Ramsey, Rosa DePrater and Shannon Kaiser



Elk County Envirothon Second Place Team– Lettuce League





Students use binoculars to identify a cardinal as part of the wildlife exam.



Students work together in their teams to complete the aquatics exam.

*Thank you to everyone who helped to support our  
Envirothon!*

A special thanks to our sponsors:

Domtar  
Eastern Sintered Alloys  
Metco Industries  
Rebco  
Quala-Die

*Thanks to the Benezette Hotel for providing lunch for this event!*





# Elk County Junior Envirothon

*Bendigo State Park, Johnsonburg, PA*— On April 19<sup>th</sup>, students from Elk County schools met to challenge one another during the Junior Envirothon Competition. This competition is locally-based and was created by the Elk County Conservation District to help prepare students in grades 6-8 for the Senior Competition, which they can participate in during high school.

This year, Junior Envirothon students were tested on topics of Aquatics, Forestry, Wildlife and Soils. As part of the forestry exam, students focused on the spotted lanternfly. The spotted lanternfly is an invasive plant hopper, native to China, that has been making its way across the state. The students learned the threat of this species and how important it is to stop the spread.

Overall, 7 teams for a total of 28 students from the St. Marys Area Middle School and Elk County Catholic Middle School participated in the event. Team Fruit Salad, from SMA Middle School, took first place for the second year in a row! Second place was awarded to team The Lorax, also from SMA Middle School.

## ***Congratulations to our winning teams!***



### **1<sup>st</sup> Place Team: Fruit Salad (SMAMS) (left)**

Kay Gabler, Peyton Kline,  
Bryce Gausman & Allison  
Pociask



### **2<sup>nd</sup> Place Team: The Lorax (SMAMS) (right)**

Nico Assalone, Kai  
Caskey, Violet Eckels &  
Carson Hoffman



# Spring has Sprung at the West Creek Wetlands!

## Are you interested in volunteering in your community?



If you answered yes, consider lending a hand this summer at the West Creek Wetlands! Located on West Creek Road in St. Marys, the West Creek Wetland Learning Center (WCWLC) is open to the public and boasts a pavilion, native pollinator beds, a walking trail, and wetland viewing dock. The Elk County Conservation District manages the property on behalf of the County and as with anything, the management takes time and work! We can always use extra hands. Now that spring is here and the snow is gone, it's time to get out and get things in order for the summer season. We'd love for you to be a part of that! If you are interested in volunteering at the West Creek Wetlands, please reach out to Victoria at [vchallingsworth@countyofelkpa.com](mailto:vchallingsworth@countyofelkpa.com) or (814) 776-5373.

## Raising Awareness about the Importance of Stormwater and Wetlands

Back in 2020, the District began the "Upstream Art" project. As part of this project, a series of murals were painted around Elk County. These murals were painted near storm drains to raise awareness about stormwater. The murals have messages encouraging people to be mindful of what they put down the drains, as this water is not treated prior to flowing into our streams.

As the result of this project becoming such a big hit, Chris from Cam-Ron Video Productions reached out and wanted to do a story about the Upstream Art project and the West Creek Wetland Learning Center.

Since stormwater and wetlands go hand in hand, it was a great opportunity to educate people on how important wetlands are for water filtration, habitat, and so much more.

If you are interested in learning more about the

Upstream Art project or the West Creek Wetland Learning Center, the Kaleidoscope episode can be found [here](#). Kaleidoscope is a 30

– minute weekly news magazine that covers west central Pennsylvania and beyond, and features a new person, place or thing each week.





# Yeah, We Recycle That!

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People are always amazed to find what a large and diverse number of items the **Elk County Community Recycling Center** takes for recycling. With such a wide variety, aside from the traditionally thought of plastics and aluminum, we want to feature an item each edition to educate our community about all the incredible services available to them!

We are quickly approaching the time of the year where bug spray and sunscreen are a must! You may be wondering, are these items recyclable? While these items can be thrown in your household trash, it is always good to recycle when possible!



Commonly, sunscreen and bug spray come in aerosol cans or plastic containers.

If you purchased an aerosol can, the Recycling Center can accept these items anytime. If you have a plastic container that is empty and is a type of plastic they accept, you can bring this in anytime as well. If you have a plastic container with bug spray or sunscreen left, these items will have to be saved for the annual household hazardous waste collection coming up on August 26th this year from 9-12!



The **Elk County Community Recycling Center** is located at:

850 Washington Street

St. Marys 15857

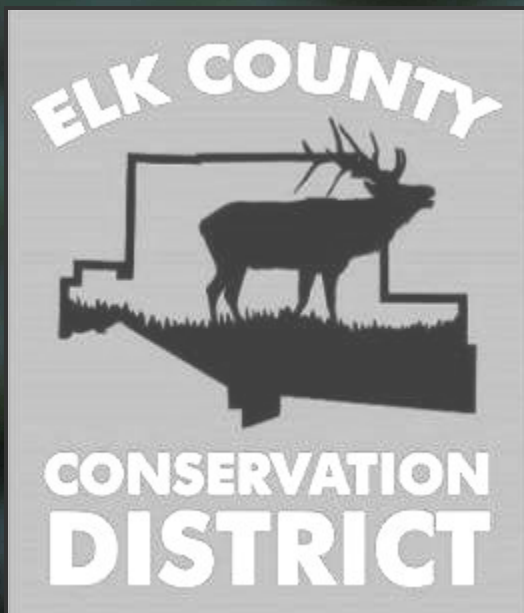
Ph.: (814) 776-5373

**Hours of Operation:**

**Monday: 10-2**

**Wednesday: 12-7**

**Friday: 10-2**



## **Elk County Conservation District**

### **Elk County Community Recycling Center**

850 Washington Street

Saint Marys, PA 15857

(814) 776-5373

### **Directors**

**Mike Hovatter-** Chairman

**Russ Braun—** Vice-Chairman

**Joe Daghir-** Commissioner

**Ray McMinn-** Farmer Director

**Andy Sorg-** Farmer Director

**Joe Labant-** Public Director

**Tom McMann—** Public Director

**Jerry Olson—** Associate Director

**Jim McCluskey-** Associate Director

**Chris Smith—**Associate Director

### **Staff**

**Kate Wehler, CPESC —**District Manager

**Alyson Bevacqua—**Resource  
Conservation Technician

**Maddie Stanisch—**Resource Conservation  
Technician

**Victoria Challingsworth—**Resource  
Conservation Technician

**Micaela Lefever—**Watershed Technician

**David Stubber—**Solid Waste Enforcement

**Carole Johnson—**Secretary



Follow us on Facebook at:

**Elk County (PA) Conservation District**



Please Join Us For:  
Elk County Conservation District's  
**Rain Barrel Workshop**



**Tuesday, June 20<sup>th</sup>  
5-6 pm  
at  
The Elk County  
Conservation District Office**

**Cost is \$10.00 per household  
& includes 1 rain barrel**

**Space is limited to 20 participants,  
so register today!**

**\*Participants will be required  
to show proof of rain barrel  
installation by July 7, 2023\***

To register, please contact **Micaela** at **814-776-4609** or **mlefever@countyofelkpa.com** or  
register in person at  
**Elk County Conservation District and Recycling Center**  
**850 Washington Street**  
**St. Marys, PA 15857**

**\*Attendees must be a resident of Elk County. One rain barrel per household.**



*Financial and other support for this project is provided by the Pennsylvania Association of Conservation Districts, Inc. through a grant from the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection under Section 319 of the Clean Water Act, administered by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.*



**The Elk County Conservation District is now accepting  
Agricultural Conservation Assistance Program (ACAP)  
applications for the Summer of 2023!**



Up to \$200,000 may be awarded to ACAP projects this year. Eligible projects may include: streambank fencing, animal heavy use areas, manure stacking pads, rooftop gutters, etc. All applicants must have at least one of the following; an agricultural erosion and sediment control plan, conservation plan, manure management plan, or nutrient management plan.

**\*If applying for ACAP funding, please contact us to schedule a pre-application meeting!**

Applications are due **August 21<sup>st</sup>** by **4:00PM**. They may be mailed or dropped off at the Conservation District office, located at 850 Washington Street, St. Marys, PA 15857.

**Contact Alyson Bevacqua at (814) 776-5388 to request an application or to set up a meeting!**