



Elk Bugle

Volume 8, Issue 4

Winter 2020-21

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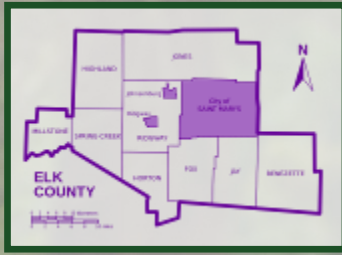
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Elk County Upcycled Art

Here at the Elk County Conservation District we enjoy all holidays, but Earth Day is one of our favorites. That's because it celebrates something we love, The Earth! This year Earth Day is extra special because it falls during Conservation District Week and we're going to celebrate! We hope you'll celebrate with us!

There are many ways to show your love for the Earth. You could pick up garbage, plant a tree, start recycling or get creative and enter our **Elk County Upcycled Art Project!** You can enter by bringing a creative piece of art made from recycled/ upcycled materials to the Conservation District Office by April 19th! There will be 3 age groups, elementary school, middle-high school and college-adult. We'll have some exciting prizes for the winners of each category! See the flyer at then of the Elk Bugle for more information or to print and share with friends!





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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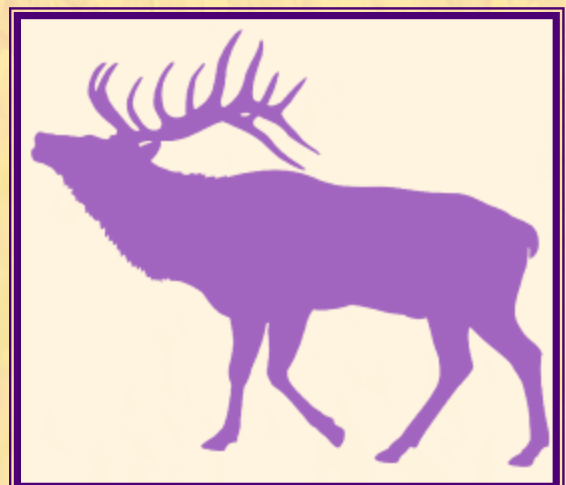
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Welcome Travis Wingard

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The Conservation District was excited to welcome the new Master Watershed Steward (MWS) Coordinator, Travis Wingard! Travis has taken on the MWS coordinator role for Elk, Cameron, McKean and Potter Counties. The MWS program is run through Penn State Extension and is a statewide program which focuses on aquatic education and water quality understanding and improvements. Travis has initiated outreach and is currently training his first round of stewards from the 4 county region.

Travis is an Elk County native and draws his experience from a background in education, conservation, and industry. He has a B.A. in English-Writing from University of Pittsburgh and a Masters of Education in Curriculum and Instruction from Bloomsburg University. Pairing this experience and education with a love for the outdoors, hiking, and backpacking makes Travis an excellent choice for the Master Watershed Steward Coordinator position!

If you are interested in learning more about the Master Watershed Steward Program contact Travis at tw5160@psu.edu.



New MWS Coordinator, Travis Wingard, hikes the Teaberry Loop in the Quehanna Wild Area





Test your Nature Knowledge

PAGE 4

Who doesn't love a quiz!? Take this chance to test YOUR nature knowledge.

Good Luck!

Answers can be found at the bottom of page 13!

1.) How many species of Mammal live in Pennsylvania?

- A.) 35
- B.) 84
- C.) 66



2.) What is Pennsylvania's State Flower?

- A.) Rhododendron
- B.) Mountain Laurel
- C.) Black Eyed-Susan

3.) What type of water body is considered nature's natural filtration system?



4.) How many miles of rivers, streams, and creeks does Pennsylvania have? (Hint: Only Alaska has more)

- A.) 4,000 miles
- B.) 135,000 miles
- C.) 86,000 miles

5.) Why is sediment a harmful pollutant?

- A.) It is harmful to fish gills
- B.) It fills in important habitat
- C.) Sediment degrades water quality
- D.) All of the above





Elk County Attractions

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This winter has been a tough one. The weather has been harsh and Covid restrictions have limited our ability to do many activities which typically break up the winter monotony. Now that spring has sprung and winter's icy grip has eased, it's the perfect time to head outdoors.

We don't have to travel far to find lovely locations to explore, Elk County has plenty to offer!

Check out this list for some new ideas or perhaps some old favorites that may have slipped your mind!

1.) Twin Lakes Recreation Area-Wilcox, PA

GPS: 41.613197374612, -78.7582887020

Looking for a place to take the whole family? Consider Twin Lakes! The lake is great for young children just learning to fish, or folks with mobility issues. There is a lovely walking trail around the lake and grills are available for use during your next family picnic. For more information visit the *Friends of Twin Lakes ANF* Facebook Page



2.) Bendigo State Park –Glen Hazel, PA

GPS: : Lat. 41.53168 Long. -78.62849

State parks are an incredible resource that offer endless opportunities to recreate outdoors. Check out Bendigo's Eagle Trail for a fun weekend hike or just enjoy a lunch after a walk along the Clarion River!



3.) Brush Hollow Trailhead-Allegheny National Forest

GPS: 41.54142346058756, -78.7893228898274

We'd be remiss if we didn't mention the ANF on our list of outdoor recreation locations. With numerous trail heads and seemingly endless acres of forest to explore, the ANF has something to suit most people's interests. While the boundaries extend far beyond those of Elk County, Brush Hollow trail head is a great place to begin your excursions.



PLANT THIS, NOT THAT!

There are hundreds of plant options to fill our gardens and landscaping. Sometimes it's hard to make the right choices as many ornamental plants are imported and can be invasive to our area. This list includes some common ornamental plants that aren't good for Pennsylvania, but are still sold at lawn and garden shops. Instead you can try some of the beneficial native plants that are also attractive and eye appealing.



One of the most common landscaping plants is **Japanese Barberry**. Imported from Japan in the late 1800's Japanese Barberry has taken over many forests in the PA, especially in the southern half of the state. The seeds are spread by birds and deposited in new locations by their droppings. They are also a favorite location for ticks. They retain humidity, allowing ticks to be active longer. Not to mention the spiny, densely grown branches make ideal habit for mice and other tick carrying rodents.

So, what can you plant instead of Japanese Barberry that will be comparable in size and appearance?



Black Chokeberry— Boasting fragrant creamy spring flowers and berry clusters enjoyed by songbirds and gamebirds, chokeberry makes a lovely alternative. It is also known for its flaming orange-red fall foliage.



Northern Bayberry— This medium sized shrub is deer resistant and tolerant to acidic soils and road salt, making it a nice plant for a yard border. Note that these shrubs are dioecious, meaning female plants must be pollinated by a nearby male in order to produce berries.



Winterberry— With vibrant red berries that are held all winter long, this small shrub makes an excellent replacement for barberry and adds a festive pop of color to the holiday season!

PLANT THIS, NOT THAT!

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Japanese Spirea— Is a small deciduous shrub that has little rosy-pink flowers. Because of its compact size and pretty flowers, it has become a common landscape ornamental. The trouble is that Japanese Spirea grows rapidly, quickly spreads and chokes out natives. Even after removal there is often a substantial seed bank in the soil, which can make restoration challenging.

So, what can you plant instead of Japanese Spirea that will be comparable in size and still have lovely flowers?



Virginia Sweetspire— With flowing white “bottle-Brush” shaped flower clusters and the ability to grow well in wet conditions, Virginia Sweetspire is certainly a versatile replacement



New Jersey tea— With bright pinkish white flower clusters and compact size, New Jersey Tea is easy to grow and does well in a variety of soil conditions. Its resilience and attractiveness make it a great option!



Birchleaf Spirea— While in the same family, this native Spirea has all the desirable traits of Japanese Spirea, like flowers and small size, without the negative effects! Only growing 2-3 ft tall this native is a lovely addition to any garden.

These are just a few examples of common ornamentals that have escaped the well groomed landscaping and are invading our roadsides, forests, and fields. Next time you are looking to increase your home’s curb appeal or re-vamp your garden, consider avoiding nasty

non-natives and opt for a more environmentally-friendly, native, plant, which can be just as pretty and offer some ecological value to pollinators and other wildlife!

**Why did the
gardener quit?**

**Because his celery
wasn't high**



Acid Mine Drainage Workshop

PAGE 8

We've all heard of Acid Mine Drainage before, but what is it really? This is your chance to find out! The Elk County Conservation District is teaming up with the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy to put on an Acid Mine Drainage (AMD) Workshop. The workshop will discuss what AMD is, how it forms, and how it affects our stream health. We will also cover different methods and styles of remediation.

Interested in signing up?

See the flyer on the last page of the Elk Bugle for registration details! The workshop is free, but has limited space due to COVID-19 concerns.



Grid-Scale Solar in Elk County

What is grid-scale solar? Grid-scale solar is large solar arrays that feed electricity into the transmission grid. This is not to be confused with simple solar panels that one may see on a rooftop.

Why now & why PA? The why now question is being primarily driven by current government policy and regulatory requirements. PA has a target goal of having 10% of our electricity generated in-state by solar by 2030. We're currently between 0.24%-0.5%. As far as why PA? Pennsylvania has good availability of open, often no longer used, farmland. You might be thinking about how cloudy it often is here, which is true, however as these systems become more and more efficient, that is less and less of a factor. The readily available access to transmission lines and infrastructure also makes PA more enticing than other states.

How does this process work? The process for solar development goes through 5 basic stages, starting with initial review by PJM. PJM is the regional transmission organization that coordinates the movement of wholesale electricity. Before a company can work on permits or other construction related details, PJM must first verify that they will be able to connect to the grid, if the solar facility is approved.

What does this mean for Elk County? Elk County currently has 3 projects in the PJM queue. Each of these projects is in a different stage of the process, beginning with 1. Each of these projects is equal in their anticipated energy generation with 20 Megawatts being proposed and in size, with each anticipated to be ~120 acres. The furthest along of these projects is the "Paper City-Wilcox 46 kV." The District and DEP have not yet seen any permit documentation for this project, but according to PJM, it is proposed to be located between Wilcox and Clermont in Jones Township.



Time to Cast a Line

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The start of fishing season is upon us, before we know it the creek will be full of folks looking to wet a line, and hook into a trophy trout! If you are looking for information on PA Trout Stocking for Elk County check out the Fish and Boat Commission's stocking schedule online at https://fbweb.pa.gov/stocking/TroutStockingDetails_GIS.aspx

Also, before you hit the stream in 2021 it's always wise to check for any changes to fishing regulations in your area! You can find updates to regulations and other news at <https://www.media.pa.gov/Pages/Fish-and-Boat-Commission.aspx>

Can you ID these PA Fish!?

On a *scale* of 1 to 10 how *fin-tastic* are you at identifying Pennsylvania fish? Put your skills to the test and let's find out!



1.) Brown Trout 2.) Yellow Perch 3.) Channel Catfish 4.) Large-mouth Bass

The Power of Pollinator Education



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St. Marys, PA- The Elk County Conservation District has been working diligently to put on pollinator education programs for all the 1st and 2nd grade classrooms in elk county! This project is part of a two phase grant through the Headwaters RC&D Foundation.

Phase one involved the planting of pollinator habitat at the West Creek Wetland Learning Center. We planted 5 modestly sized pollinator gardens along the walking trail, which weaves throughout the wetlands. These gardens include a variety of native plants pollinators favor such as Mistflower, Wild Bergamot, Aster, Purple coneflower, bigleaf lupine and more! If you are interested in mixes for your own backyard we purchased the “Deer Resistant Meadow Mix” and “Butterfly and Hummingbird Garden Mix” from Ernst seeds. Come out in late May through June to see these beauties bloom!

Phase two of the project involves 20 classes from local schools raising butterflies in their classrooms! The students have been reading books about pollinators, learning about butterfly lifecycles and coming to understand why pollination is important. The butterflies that the classrooms raise will be released during a series of release evenings, held in May, at the West Creek Wetland learning Center. Complications due to Covid-19 made field trips difficult, so we adapted to the situation and scheduled release nights, one for each school. The parents can bring their student to if they feel comfortable. This still allows for an educational, fun trip to the wetlands but also allows the choice for each family. The wetlands is a great location because it is an outdoor facility with a walking trail for families to spread out! Students and their family will visit educational stations and watch the butterflies they raised be released into the pollinator gardens!



What's the gardeners favorite
novel?
War and Peas.



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!



Used Motor Oil (no mixes)

Motor Oil, of all kinds (**no mixes**), is just one of the many items the **Elk County Community Recycling Center** accepts. If you change your oil at home and don't know what to do with your used oil consider bringing it to the Elk County Community Recycling Center. **Remember the oil cannot be mixed.** If you have mixed oil you can bring it to the 2021 Hazardous Waste Collection on Saturday August 28th. Recycling services are free to Elk County residents, but donations are always appreciated to help ensure the continuation of these great services!

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

850 Washington Street

St. Marys 15857

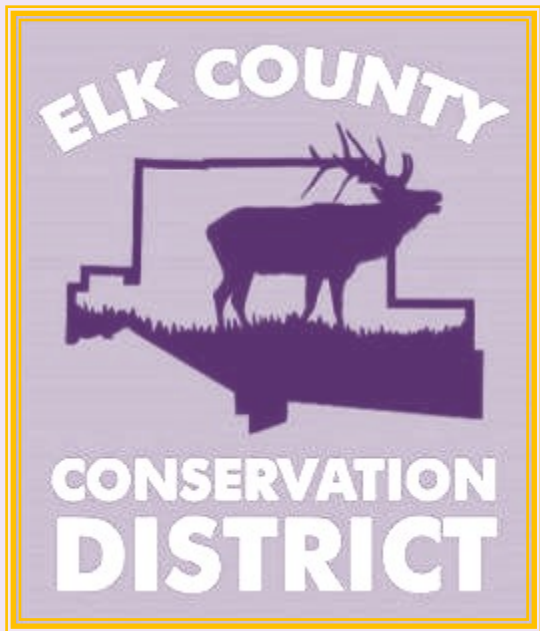
Ph.: (814) 776-5373

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

Russ Braun- Chairman

Mike Hovatter- Vice-Chairman

Joe Daghir- Commissioner

Ray McMinn- Farmer Director

Andy Sorg- Farmer Director

Joe Labant- Public Director

Chris Smith— Public Director

Jerry Olson— Associate Director

Jim McCluskey- Associate Director

Staff

Kate Wehler, CPESC —District Manager

Ryan Grimm—Resource Conservation Technician

Taylor Gillette—Resource Conservation Technician

Victoria Challingsworth—Resource Conservation Technician

Evan DeLong —Watershed Technician

David Stubber—Solid Waste Enforcement

Diane Myers—Secretary



Follow us on Facebook at:

Elk County (PA) Conservation District



Quiz answers: 1: C(66), 2: B(Mountain Laurel), 3: Wetlands, 4: C (86,000 Miles), 5: D (All of the above)

2nd ANNUAL CONSERVATION CUP 2021

***All proceeds benefit the Elk county Conservation District
Scholarship and environmental education***



JUNE 5

SATURDAY | 2021

Bavarian Hill Golf Course

REGISTRATION 9:00AM
SHOTGUN START 10:00AM

mail registration

850 Washington St
St. Marys Pa 15857
814-776-5388

\$70 | **\$50**
NON-MEMBER | MEMBER

Prizes

Skill Prizes
50/50
Chinese Auction
Cash Payout

email

registration to

rgrimm@countyofelkpa.com



Elk County Upcycled Art



Enter your upcycled art for a chance to win!

Do you love to create? Want the chance to share your creative vision with the community? Then this is for you! Earth Day is fast approaching, and this year the **Elk County Conservation District** is hosting the ***Elk County Upcycled Art*** Competition.

Create an art piece using upcycled and recycled materials and enter it in the contest. Items such as paint and glue may be used, but remember the goal is to upcycle and recycle! Consider using bottles, cans, newspaper, or magazines! Additional points for using more than one type of recycled material!

How to Enter:

Bring your art piece to the
Elk County Conservation District Office
850 Washington Street, St. Marys
by **4PM Monday April 19th** to be
entered in the judging.

There will be 3 age groups

- Elementary School
- Middle-High School
- College-Adult
-

PRIZES AWARDED!

**You could win Greenhouse gift cards, prize
baskets, terrarium kits and more!**

*one creation per person. Entry is free. Winners will be
announced on our Facebook page—Elk County (PA)
Conservation District on Earth Day April 22nd.





Acid Mine Drainage Education Workshop



Acid Mine Drainage, commonly called AMD, is an issue that impacts stream health in our region. It's a term many of us know, or have heard in passing. Most of us have likely seen a red-orange stream such as the one pictured here. If you are interested in learning more about Acid Mine Drainage, how it forms, and different methods used to treat Acid Mine Drainage then this workshop may be for you!

The **Elk County Conservation District**, in conjunction with **The Western Pennsylvania Conservancy**, is hosting an AMD workshop for any interested members of the community. After a morning session learning about AMD we will tour an AMD treatment facility in Elk County for the afternoon!

When: Wednesday, June 23rd
9am-3pm

Where: Elk County Visitor Center,
ECCO Building Benazette PA

How: Contact Victoria from the Elk County Conservation District to register **(814) 776-5373** or **vchallingsworth@countyofelkpa.com**

*Registration is free but due to Covid-19 space is limited and registration is required. Participants will be expected to observe Covid-19 protocols. This event will be held rain or shine. Please dress appropriately, we will be outdoors at times. Lunch will be provided. Participants will drive their personal vehicles to the AMD site, located approx. 15 min from the Visitor Center, and leave from there at the end of day.

