



# The Elk Bugle

Volume 3, Issue 2

Summer 2016

## Saint Marys Envirothon Team Wins County Envirothon 2nd Year in a Row

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Above: Saint Marys High School 1st Place Team

### Saint Marys, PA—

For a second year in a row, the Saint Marys High School won the Elk County Envirothon, returning to the State Envirothon competition May 24-25 at the Susquehanna University.

The Saint Marys team improved substantially at the State Envirothon from 51st place in 2015 to 30th place in 2016. Congratulations Saint Marys!

At the county Envirothon, students competed in soils, forestry, aquatics, wildlife,

and the 2016 current issue, invasive species. Volunteers from cooperative agencies ran the stations and graded the tests so that students would have the results after lunch.

Johnsonburg High School placed 2nd and Elk County Catholic placed third at the county Envirothon. Johnsonburg High School received the high score in wildlife and received PA Game Commission patches from the WCO's.

A special thank you to the Saint Marys Sportsman's

Club for allowing the District to host the Envirothon on their grounds, DCNR Toby Herzing for running the forestry contest, WCO's Wagner, and Edminson for running the Wildlife contest, and PA Fish and Boat Officer Tom McMann for running the aquatics contest. Eli Heferle from the Department of Environmental Protection ran the current issue station, and John Greene from DEP calculated the scores. Thank you to everyone who made the 2016 Envirothon a success!

# We are MOVING!

## **Saint Marys, PA–**

The Elk County Conservation District will be moving in July to Saint Marys. Our new address will be 850 Washington Street, Saint Marys, PA. We will be in the new Elk County Recycling Building across from Osram Sylvania.

All phone numbers and contact information of District staff will remain the same. Please be patient with the District as we complete our move from Ridgway to Saint Marys!

Thank you!





## Elk County Conservation District Educates Students at the West Creek Wetlands Learning Center

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**Saint Marys, PA-** On Thursday May 12, Elk County Catholic Middle School Students visited the West Creek Wetlands for a field trip hosted by Elk County Conservation District Staff.

Students broke up into 3 groups and traveled the wetlands in stations. Students learned about wetland basics, starting with what a wetland is. Students also learned about wetland soils, wetland wildlife, and wetland plants and characteristics. In the groups students saw first hand wetland plants, hydric soils, and signs of wildlife such as birds and beaver chews.

After all 3 sessions, groups competed in a wetland jeopardy game to test their knowledge. And the winning team won bird box kits to take home.

Thank you to all students for your participation, it was a great day for all of those involved.

See more photos on page 10!



Above: Elk County Catholic Middle School students and teachers pose for a picture with Elk County Conservation District Staff.



Above: Watershed Specialist Kim Bonfardine walks students along the path showing students plants found in a scrub-shrub wetland.

# Elk County Conservation District Upcoming Events

Please "Like" our Facebook Page, and keep checking in for updates and registration information for our upcoming "Clays for Conservation"!

If you have questions regarding this event, please contact Kate Yetzer, at

[kyetzer@countyofelkpa.com](mailto:kyetzer@countyofelkpa.com)



## Pull!



Your calendar up and save the date!

## Elk County Conservation District 2nd Annual Clays for Conservation Shooting Event!\*

**What:** Wobble Trap (2 rounds, 50 birds)

**When:** Sunday, July 17th 2016

**Where:** St. Marys Sportsmen's Club

**Why:** Raise money for environmental educational programs throughout Elk County

**Who:** Contact, Kate Yetzer at [kyetzer@countyofelkpa.com](mailto:kyetzer@countyofelkpa.com)

\*More details to follow soon!



## WE WANT YOUR PHOTOS!



Calling all photographers! We want your photos! Join the Elk County Conservation District for the 1st Annual Photo Contest. CASH prizes will be awarded. Any age or level is encouraged to submit photos. Photos must be from Elk County, and may be of wildlife, scenery, agriculture, rivers, and more. All photos must be submitted by August 1, 2016!

Please "like" our Facebook Page, or visit our website for rules and more information.



Contact Kim Bonfardine @ [kbonfardine@countyofelkpa.com](mailto:kbonfardine@countyofelkpa.com) for more information or questions.





**July 17– Clays for Conservation.**

Fundraiser for youth  
environmental education  
programs @ Saint Marys Sportsmen's Club

**July 25– Elk County Conservation District  
Board Meeting**



**August 1– Elk County Photo Contest  
Entries Due**

**August 8-13-Elk County Fair Booth**

**August 20-21-Elk Expo, Benezette, PA**

\*We will be presenting Fred the Fish, an environmental education lesson geared towards children.

**September 5– Labor Day Holiday, Office  
Closed!**

**September 24-Les Haas Memorial Trail  
Run, Ridgway, Pa  
Start Training !**



## Blue Bird Box Update

As of June 15, 2016, the 8 blue bird boxes that the Saint Marys Ecology Club installed at the West Creek Wetlands had the following inhabitants:



Above: Eastern Blue Bird

- 1 active house wren nests with eggs
- 1 house wren nest without eggs
- 1 chickadee nest with eggs
- 1 tree swallow nest under construction
- 2 tree swallow nests with eggs
- 2 tree swallow nests with hatchlings



Tree Swallow



Black Capped Chickadee



House Wren



Tree Swallow on bird box built by Saint Marys Ecology Club at the West Creek Wetlands

The House Wren, Chickadee, Tree Swallow, and Eastern Bluebird are all native species to Pennsylvania and Elk County. For many years, the Eastern Bluebird populations have been declining. One of the prime reasons for the decline is due to competition for habitat and nesting sites from other non-native bird species. The main culprits are the European Starling, and the House Sparrow. To encourage Bluebird to nest in your Bluebird boxes consider the following:

- Clean bluebird boxes each year prior to spring
- Face bluebird box opening away from prevailing winds
- Place boxes in open field areas, 4-6' high on a fence post, in direct sunlight
- Erect boxes early (prior to spring season), to give bluebirds a chance to nest, prior to other birds arriving.



European Starling



English House Sparrow



## Elk County Conservation District

Courthouse Annex  
300 Center Street  
P.O. Box 488  
Ridgway PA 15853

Phone: (814) 776-5373  
[www.co.elk.pa.us/conservation](http://www.co.elk.pa.us/conservation)

### Staff

**Steven Putt, CPESC**  
District Manager

**Kim Bonfardine**  
Watershed Specialist

**David Stubber**  
Solid Waste Enforcement

**Diane Myers**  
Secretary

**Kate Yetzer**  
Resource Conservation  
Technician

**Amanda Murdock**  
Resource Conservation  
Technician

### Directors

**Russ Braun**  
Chairman

**Mike Hovatter**  
Vice-Chairman

**Matt Quesenberry**  
Commissioner

**Ray McMinn**  
Farmer Director

**Andy Sorg**  
Farmer Director

**Joe Labant**  
Public Director

**Jerry Olsen**  
Public Director

**Jim McClusky**  
Associate Director

**Toby Neal**  
Associate Director

**Ron McMinn**  
Director Emeritus



Above: Top left: WCO Wagner, PA Fish and Boat Officer McMann, DCNR Forester Toby Herzing, ECCD District Manager Steve Putt, and WCO Ediminson.

Left: 3rd Place Team from Elk County Catholic

Below: Second Place Team from Johnsonburg High School

Thank you for your participation  
in the 2016 Envirothon!

Ridgway H.S  
Johnsonburg H.S  
Saint Marys H.S  
Elk County Catholic H.S

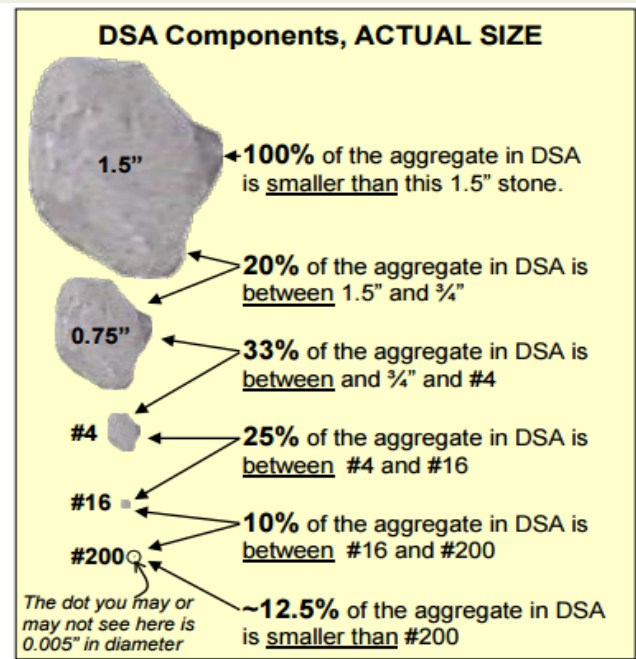


## Dirt and Gravel Road Program Update

**Harrisburg, PA-** The State Conservation Commission and Center for Dirt and Gravel Roads recently upgrade the DSA or Driving Surface Aggregate Standard. **DSA must be tested prior to delivery to a project by an independent lab that is not affiliated with the source quarry. Conservation District Staff, Center for Dirt and Gravel Road Studies, or State Conservation Commission made obtain the sample to be tested.** The following requirements must be met. : (the below information is from the State Conservation Commission).

**A. Gradation:** The required sieve sizes and allowed ranges, determined by weight, for DSA components are shown in Table I.

Sieve Size	Percent Passing
1.5"	100
0.75"	65 – 95
#4	30 – 65
#16	15 – 30
#200	10 – 15



**Figure 1.** The specification is well graded from large pieces that give support, all the way down to the "fines", rock particles less than 1/300<sup>th</sup> of an inch. The illustration above shows the actual sizes of a "midline" or average DSA specification (roughly to scale when printed on 8.5" x 11" paper).

**B. Abrasion Resistance:** The loss of mass (LA Abrasion) shall be less than 40%. Determine the resistance to abrasion using the Los Angeles Abrasion test, ASTM C131.

**C. pH:** Aggregate shall be in the range of pH 6 to pH 12.45 as measured by ASTM D4972.

**D. Moisture:** Upon delivery to the site, material shall be well mixed and placed at optimum moisture content or up to 2% below that value as determined for that particular source. The optimum percentage moisture is to be determined using Proctor Test ASTM D698, Procedure C, Standard. Aggregate provider is encouraged to perform moisture testing prior to loading material for delivery.

**E. Plasticity:** Material shall not exceed a Plasticity Index (PI) of 6. The laboratory test required for these results is ASTM D4318 – Standard Test Method for Liquid Limit, Plastic Limit, and Plasticity Index of Soils.



**Soundness:** Determine the percentage of mass (weight) loss of each fraction of the coarse aggregate maximum weighted percent loss allowed is 20%. The Conservation District may accept aggregate failing the soundness test if it can be demonstrated that the material has a satisfactory service record.

**G. Aggregate:** All DSA shall be derived from natural rock formations that meet program specification for abrasion resistance, pH and freedom from contaminants.

**H. Fines:** If fines need to be added to the aggregate to meet DSA gradation requirements, the added material passing the #200 sieve must be derived from rock material that conforms to program specifications. No mineral clay or silt soil may be added. The amount of particles passing the #200 sieve shall be determined using the washing procedures specified in PTM No. 100.

**I. Mixing:** DSA shall be properly mixed and at the proper moisture content before it is loaded onto the transport vehicles

## **Upcoming Projects**

**Jones Township-** Instanter Road– Low Volume Road Project

**Horton Township–** Oyster Run Road Phase 2– Dirt and Gravel Project

**Jay Township–** Spring Run Road– Dirt and Gravel Road Project

**Pennsylvania Game Commission–** Middle Fork Road– Dirt and Gravel Road Project

## **Completed Projects:**

### **Fox Township, Squab Hollow Road—Low Volume Road Project**

Replaced existing box culvert after obtaining a GP-11 from DEP. Reinforced box culvert and installed concrete end walls and head walls. Topped with limestone. Below is a photo of the completed project showing the same side of the culvert before and after it was improved.



**Before**



**After**



# The West Creek Wetland Learning Center



The West Creek Wetlands features a pavilion with tables to accommodate students and visitors. In addition, a board walk platform (Left) is featured on the wetland, and signage along the path explaining wildlife and plants found in wetlands. The West Creek Wetland is a scrub-shrub wetland. A scrub shrub wetland is mainly woody vegetation, often stunted by hydric conditions. Other types of wetlands include bogs, forested, and emergent wetlands.



# Characteristics of a Wetland



Water



Hydric Soils: Note the "Rust" color in the soil above. And the grey color. These are both indicators of a hydric wetland soil.



Shallow root systems



Hydric vegetation such as sedges, rushes, and cattails.



Right: Signs of wetland wildlife. To the right is a beaver chew found at the West Creek Wetland Learning Center.