
SCHUYLKILL CONSERVATION DISTRICT

2022 Annual Report



WWW.SCHUYLKILLCD.COM ~ 570-622-3742 X5

'Elephant at the Lake'
8th Annual "Give Us Your Best Shot" Photo Contest 2nd Place Winner
Photo by Mike Cardamone

*DISTRICT DIRECTORS, ASSOCIATE
DIRECTORS AND YEARS OF SERVICE*

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Scott Graver	15	Chairman
Dennis Daubert	3	Vice Chairman
Stanley Fidler	36	Treasurer
Dottie Sterner	14	Secretary
Gary Hess	9	County Commissioner
Glenn Hetherington	15	Farmer Director
Eric Leiby	7	Farmer Director
Glenn Luckenbill	16	Public Director
Russell Wagner	8	Farmer Director
Mike Begis	1	Associate Director
Chris Bentz	15	Associate Director
Jerry Bowman	1	Associate Director
Robert S. Carl	16	Associate Director
Aaron Clauser	1	Associate Director
Mandy Fitzpatrick	1	Associate Director
Frank Zukas	11	Associate Director

The Schuylkill Conservation District Board Meetings are held monthly (except August) on the third Tuesday of the month at 1:00 p.m. in the Schuylkill County Ag Center Conference Room. Meetings are advertised in local media, and on the District's website. The 2022 Financial Report is available upon request in the District office.



Meet the Staff

Jenna St. Clair	9	District Manager
Melissa Seigfried	14	Conservation Fiscal Technician
Lorie Reichert	8	Conservation Program Assistant
Porcupine Pat McKinney	33	Environmental Education Coordinator
Kyle Schutt	4	Insect Management Technician
Wayne Lehman	15	County Natural Resource Specialist
Bill Reichert	17	Watershed Maintenance Technician
Alexa Smith	5	Natural Resource Conservationist
Martie Hetherington	33	Ag Project Coordinator
Chloe Mullins	1	Agricultural Program Coordinator
Ryan Michlovsky	7	Conservation Program Coordinator
Stephanie Lubinsky	20	Conservation Program Technician
Janelle Wilde	1	Conservation Program Technician
Drew Kline	7	Parks and Recreation Supervisor
Robert Evanchalk	19	Parks and Recreation Assistant Supervisor

2022 AWARD WINNERS

CONGRATULATIONS



- Volunteer of the Year: Kim Morgan
- Educator of the Year: Kristyn Blum
- Professional of the Year: Mandy Fitzpatrick
- Media Conservationist Award: Leah Zerbe
- Forest Stewardship Award: Charles Baber Cemetary, Pottsville
- Conservation Organization of the Year: Friends of Tuscarora and Locust Lake State Parks
- Conservation Service Award - Business: clearly clean
- Conservation Service Award - Public: Michael Barner
- Youth Conservationist of the Year: Schuylkill IU 29 Work Mentor Program
- Dr. James S. Shadle Conservation Farm of the Year: Kyle and Lori Brown

2022 AWARD WINNERS



VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR: Kim Morgan - Vice President, Schuylkill County Fair, President of South Schuylkill Garden Club, and long-time 4-H leader. Kim works diligently to get many projects done.

EDUCATOR OF THE YEAR: Kristyn Blum - Kristyn is the lead contact for the annual John S. Clarke Elementary School first grade visit to Jersey Acres Farm to see dairy cows and how they are milked. Students also visit Jersey Acres' orchard.

PROFESSIONAL OF THE YEAR: Mandy Fitzpatrick - Mandy spearheads the library backpack project to connect people to nature plus supports Schuylkill On the Move among other projects. She is the Executive Director of Schuylkill County's VISION and serves as an associate director of the conservation district board too.

MEDIA CONSERVATION AWARD: Leah Zerbe - Leah writes a weekly column for the Republican Herald. Her focus is on nature with an emphasis on native plants and pollinator gardens. Her writing style maintains your interest plus she is on the Education Committee of the Schuylkill County Conservancy.

FOREST STEWARDSHIP AWARD: Charles Baber Cemetery, Pottsville - Staff and volunteers work hard to improve the forested ambience in this large area of open space in the middle of Pottsville. Events like the tribute to the first black forester Ralph Brock and Baber Day promote an interest in nature and the environment with speakers that include retired forester Frank Snyder.

CONSERVATION ORGANIZATION OF THE YEAR: Friends of Tuscarora and Locust Lake State Parks - This group is relatively new but has been very motivated and helpful with our state parks. Their fundraising efforts have been phenomenal over the past year. They planned and promoted Bark in the Park in October 2021, a pancake breakfast this past spring, and the 50th anniversary celebration of the opening of Locust Lake State Park.

2022 AWARD WINNERS



CONSERVATION SERVICE AWARD - BUSINESS: clearly clean- This company is based in Frackville and produces recyclable food trays. The company was named the fastest growing manufacturer in NEPA. It was also voted as *Best Place to Work* and also the *Best Producer of a Skook Product*.

CONSERVATION SERVICE AWARD - PUBLIC: Michael Barner - Mike is a long-time scoutmaster for Troop 624 of Orwigsburg. He encourages his troop to achieve their Eagle rank. Mike is a role model and mentor to his scouts.

YOUTH CONSERVATIONIST OF THE YEAR: Schuylkill IU 29 Work Mentor Program - Gerry Stock and Jeannie Folweiler are coordinators of this program that has significantly benefitted the Schuylkill County Fairgrounds and other places that they visit to work. This program has high school age students and serves as a way to get work experience in a team-oriented environment.

DR. JAMES S. SHADLE CONSERVATION FARM OF THE YEAR: Kyle and Lori Brown - Kyle and his wife Lori and three children own and operate a 262 acre no-till forage, grain and livestock farming operation located in the Mahantango Creek Watershed near Pitman. During the past several years, Kyle has been in the process of implementing the BMPs identified in his NRCS Conservation and 590 Plan. With technical and funding assistance from the SCD and NRCS, Kyle has installed a significant number of sediment and nutrient reducing BMPs to improve the water quality of the small stream flowing through the farm. His conservation efforts include incorporating cover crops into the crop rotation, construction of a roofed heavy use area and manure stacking for the beef, improvements to the grazing system, including exclusionary streamside fencing, off-stream watering systems, stream crossings, and stabilized animal walkways.

E&S UPDATES

*Ryan Michlovsky, Conservation Program Coordinator
Stephanie Lubinsky, Conservation Program Technician
Janelle Green, Conservation Program Technician*

The Erosion and Sediment (E&S) Control Program focuses on the conservation of Schuylkill County's soil and water resources. In an attempt to control sediment pollution from erosion, PA state regulations require persons proposing or conducting earth disturbance activities to develop, implement and maintain best management practices (BMP's) to minimize the potential for accelerated erosion and sedimentation and to manage post construction stormwater.

The District provides technical assistance and reviews E&S control plans and NPDES permits for earth disturbance activities. Site inspections are conducted to ensure that E&S plans are implemented and that Best Management Practices (BMP's) are properly installed. By doing this, the District strives to meet its goal of minimizing accelerated erosion and sediment pollution to the waters of the Commonwealth as a result of earthmoving activities.

2022 E&S YEAR IN REVIEW

- 1212 acres of earth disturbance proposed in the county
- Conducted 80 reviews of E&S plans or NPDES applications
- 20 new or renewal general NPDES Permit applications were authorized
- 7 Individual NPDES Permit applications were recommended for authorization to the DEP Northeast Regional Office
- 1301 hours of technical assistance were provided to engineers, landowners, municipal officials, and contractors
- Investigated 24 complaints related to earth disturbance activity
- Conducted 40 inspections at 27 different sites



Ag Conservation Programs

2022 PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

Schuylkill Conservation District's (SCD) Agricultural Conservation Programs provide technical and financial assistance for farmers and other land users to implement best management practices (BMPs) to reduce non-point source pollution to local streams within the county.

SCD works closely with the local office of the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Services (NRCS) to provide help to farmers in developing the necessary plans to manage their natural resources in ways that are both productive and environmentally beneficial. In the planning process, staff work one-on-one with landowners/managers to identify and solve conservation problems in ways that balance their economic goals with the needs of the natural environment.

Once the necessary plans are developed, the SCD can help identify and secure financial resources to implement BMPs through programs like the federal Farm Bill and the PA Department of Environmental Protection's Growing Greener program.

Throughout 2022, the SCD worked with landowners to install the following BMPs on several different operations:

- 40' x 40' roofed swine mortality compost facility
- Roof runoff system that will prevent water from entering an ACA and animal walkway on a dairy operation
- Stormwater management system to prevent field and farm access road erosion
- 50' x 80' roofed manure stacking area for beef operation



Dirt, Gravel & Low Volume Road Program

THE PURPOSE OF THE DIRT, GRAVEL, AND LOW VOLUME ROADS MAINTENANCE PROGRAM IS TO CREATE A BETTER PUBLIC ROAD SYSTEM WITH A REDUCED ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT. THE PROGRAM FOCUSES ON “ENVIRONMENTALLY SENSITIVE ROAD MAINTENANCE PRACTICES” THAT REDUCE THE IMPACT OF ROAD RUNOFF AND SEDIMENT TO LOCAL STREAMS, WHILE REDUCING LONG TERM ROAD MAINTENANCE COSTS. ANY STATE OR LOCAL PUBLIC ENTITY THAT OWNS AND MAINTAINS PUBLIC ROADS IS ELIGIBLE TO APPLY FOR FUNDING, SUCH AS TOWNSHIPS, BOROUGH, CITIES, COUNTIES, PA GAME COMMISSION, PENNDOT, PA FISH & BOAT COMMISSION.

ACT 89 OF 2013 INCREASED FUNDING TO THE PA DIRT AND GRAVEL ROAD MAINTENANCE PROGRAM FROM \$5M TO \$35M ANNUALLY AND EXPANDED THE PROGRAM TO LOW-VOLUME SEALED OR PAVED ROADS WITH LESS THAN 500 CARS PER DAY. THIS FUNDING INCREASE MADE OVER \$300,000 AVAILABLE ANNUALLY IN SCHUYLKILL COUNTY TO CREATE A BETTER PUBLIC ROAD SYSTEM WITH A REDUCED ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT AND REDUCED LONG-TERM MAINTENANCE COSTS.

APPLICATIONS FOR FUNDING ARE ACCEPTED YEAR-ROUND. APPLICATIONS ARE REVIEWED AND RANKED AFTER SEPTEMBER 1ST EACH YEAR TO AWARD FUNDING. SEE THE WEBSITES BELOW FOR MORE INFORMATION.

DIRT & GRAVEL ROAD PROJECTS 2021-2022

WEST PENN TOWNSHIP - MANTZVILLE ROAD - \$28,784.40
REILLY TOWNSHIP - BLACK DIAMOND ROAD - \$20,742.00
PINE GROVE BOROUGH - WALTERS STREET ALLEY - \$16,283.00
PINE GROVE BOROUGH - BERRY ALLEY - \$19,667.00
NORTH UNION TOWNSHIP - BUNKER HILL ROAD PHASE 2 - \$28,784.40

LOW VOLUME ROAD PROJECTS 2021-2022

WEST PENN TOWNSHIP - MANTZVILLE ROAD - \$51,520.00
DEER LAKE BOROUGH - MAPLE BOULEVARD - \$67,042.00

For more information, visit:

www.schuylkillcd.com/departments/dirt,-gravel-and-low-volume-road-maintenance-program

Donaldson Culmbank/Good Spring Creek Floodplain Restoration Project



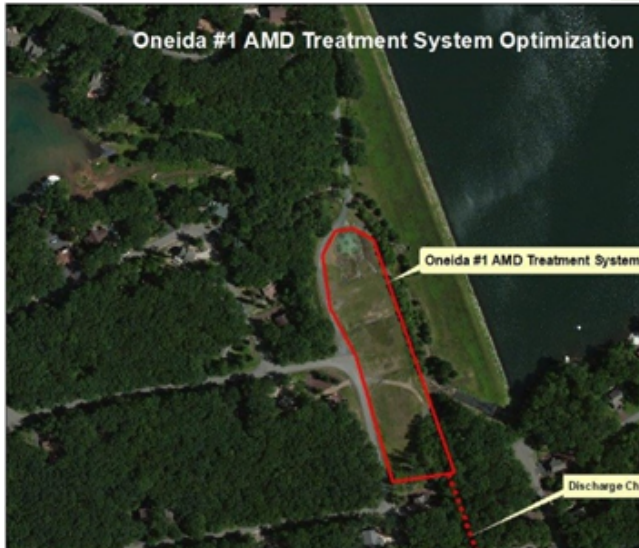
- Located in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed
- Removed 600,000+ cubic yards of coal refuse
- 4,600 linear feet long
- Reclaimed five abandoned mine pits
- Created 18 acres of floodplain and wetlands
- Reduced sedimentation in Good Spring Creek
- Alleviate downstream flooding in Tremont Borough
- AML Pilot Project Grant
- \$8,478,000.00

Swope Valley Run Streambank Stabilization Project



- Stabilized 300 linear feet of stream
- Protected a single family residence
- Reduced sedimentation in Swope Valley Run
- Located in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed
- CAP Project
- \$82,749.00

Oneida #1 AMD Treatment System Optimization - Design



- High priority mine discharge
- Flow 1,600gpm, pH 4.4, acidity 11.3 mg/l, Al 1.7 mg/l
- Current system 20+ years old, nearing treatment life end
- Designed new treatment system when old system fails
- Section 319(h) Nonpoint Source Management Grant
- \$80,000.00

Long Run Riparian Buffer Improvement Project



- 3.7-acre area along Long Run (Delaware Watershed)
- Mechanically removed invasive species
- Planted 222 native trees
- Planted 148 native shrubs
- Funded by a DCNR Riparian Buffer Program grant
- \$30,505.33



Schuylkill Acts & Impacts (SAI) is a weeklong watershed expedition along the 120-miles of the Schuylkill River, from its headwaters in the anthracite coal lands of Schuylkill County to its confluence with the Delaware River in Philadelphia. Students from all 5 counties in the watershed come together to experience first-hand the impact of human development on water quality through guided tours, fieldwork, and water sampling with professional mentors. Throughout the week, students study the impact of legacy coal mining on water quality, agricultural impacts including erosion and manure management, the role of land preservation in watershed health, and the impacts of stormwater and impervious surfaces on water resources. Recreation and fun are also part of the week, as the students kayak sections of the Schuylkill River and camp in state parks and nature preserves throughout the watershed.

In 2022 we returned to our normal program format of 6 days with overnight camping. We welcomed an exceptional group of 14 high school students from July 31 through August 5, 2022. Highlights of the trip included a tour at the No. 9 Coal Mine, a visit to a dairy farm that ended with a homemade ice cream treat, assisting with a freshwater mussel research project in Philadelphia, and of course kayaking and swimming in the Schuylkill River! At the conclusion of the week, students have gained a thorough understanding of different water quality issues in the watershed and ways they can get involved in conservation work in their own neighborhoods.

Without partnerships, this trip would not be possible. We extend our sincerest thanks to all the individuals, organizations, and everyone else involved in making this a life-changing experience for the student participants!





Schuylkill County Envirothon was held in person this year and was well-received. Pine Grove High School won at the county level and then competed at the PA Envirothon. First place results in each division were:

First place High School "Scientists:" Pine Grove "Hunting Farmers"

First place Middle School "Investigators:" Saint Clair "Boogie Bears"

First place Elementary School "Snoops:" Pine Grove "Team 2"

The county event continued to be sponsored by the Schuylkill County Municipal Authority. We thank them for their support!

Wildlife Day Camp

Summer wildlife day camps were held at Sweet Arrow Lake County Park, Albright's Woods, and Valley View Park. Thanks to local recreation folks for helping to administrate these camps.



Each year the district works with the Sweet Arrow Lake Conservation Association to sell seedlings.

Proceeds benefit lake programs. Volunteers assembled and distributed in a safe and sanitary way at pickup.



Social media outlets such as Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and accessnepa.com were used to get the word out. Look for my blog postings called Quills at www.republicanherald.com Type Porcupine Pat to access all other outlets.

You will also read my monthly column called "Naturally Speaking" in the South Schuylkill News.



The Weston Pavilion and Dr. James S. Shadle Nature Center provided a variety of programs and exhibits during fair week.



Lakefront Fest was a new event held at Sweet Arrow Lake. A number of programs and exhibitors made this event a decent success for a first-time event. A highlight was a presentation by Peggy Hentz of Red Creek Wildlife Center who spoke about her research on cottontails. Musician Jay Smar played tunes to add good ambience!

Agricultural Land Preservation

Chloe Mullins, Agricultural Program Coordinator

The Schuylkill County Agricultural Land Preservation program had another successful year in 2022. It was the County program's 32nd year. The county program added one property to the list of preserved farms, bringing the County's running total to 115 farms. The 115th farm was the Halabura Partners farm, which encompasses 143.66 acres in West Brunswick Township. To date, there are 115 farms in Schuylkill County that are preserved in perpetuity, covering a little over 11,839 acres.

The Schuylkill County Agriculture Land Preservation Board (SCALPB) also selected the next farm for easement purchase in 2021. The SCALPB is anticipating that this farm will be presented to the State Board for approval sometime in 2022.

The 32nd ranking round included 72 farms comprising just over 5,929 acres. There is also a list of interested applicants kept on file who do not currently meet all the criteria required for eligibility in the program. The most common criteria that applicants failed to meet was the inclusion in an established Agricultural Security Area, or ASA. The Agricultural Land Preservation program was derived from the Agricultural Area Security Law, and enrollment in an ASA occurs at the local municipality level. The ASA has three main functions: it's a prerequisite for applying for the county agricultural land preservation program, it provides protection from local nuisance ordinances relating to normal farming practices and provides additional protection in certain cases of eminent domain. These applications that did not meet the minimum requirements for eligibility were not included in the 2022 rankings. However, these applicants can always be reconsidered in future ranking rounds once all the criteria for eligibility are met.

Seven new applicants were received in 2022, demonstrating the continued interest throughout the county. These new applicants will be ranked for the 2023 funding year, which will be the 33rd round since the program began. The new applicants show that the program is still very popular among farmers in the county.

While there is no shortage of interested applicants, the biggest obstacle that continues to hold the program back is available funding. The average funding over the last few years typically allows for only one or two farms to be selected for easement purchase. However, every farm that is preserved is a victory that benefits us all, and every dollar of funding gets us closer to our goals. The continued support of the County Commissioners is greatly appreciated, and we would like to thank them, as they have assisted us in getting the funding necessary to keep the program going. We are dedicated to this program and are doing what we can to keep preserving our county's precious farmland.

Urban sprawl is a problem that is very real and continues to threaten Schuylkill County's agriculture land. Unfortunately, it seems to be increasing, especially in the southern and eastern portions of the county. The Schuylkill County Agriculture Land Preservation program is one way we can combat the loss of productive farmland.

Anyone who is interested in the program should contact Chloe Mullins at (570)622-3742 x3325 for an information packet and application.

Continuing the growth of Parks and Recreation

Visitors continued taking advantage of the major improvements to facilities at Sweet Arrow Lake County Park in 2022. Park visitors were estimated to be over 50,000 for the year. The Clubhouse and other rental facilities are truly unique and desirable for a wide range of activities. The park saw a resurgence of events and rentals to meet and surpass pre-COVID numbers of scheduled events and revenue. During 2022, about \$44,000 worth of income was derived from paid building rentals which was an all-time high.

Roughly 14,000 people attended functions and programs at the Clubhouse and Pavilions. The average number of facility uses was 6.4/week for a total of 336 scheduled uses for the year. These statistics are the highest the park has ever totaled.

An additional \$3,645 was earned from canoe and kayak rentals in 2022, from 443 people renting from the park concession. 30 individuals rented boat mooring spots for an additional \$1,200. Boat rental usage, revenue, and mooring were all slight increases from 2021.

It is estimated that there was about 50,000 park visitors which included fishermen, boaters, hikers, geocachers, and disc golfers. It is believed that the ability to offer a wide variety of experiences and recreation opportunities at little-to-no-cost, brings more park visitors to Sweet Arrow Lake year after year. Many community members took advantage of the trails, water activities, and open space.

Although the major phases of construction are complete, the Park is constantly being improved. At the end of 2016 the County was awarded a construction grant for the development of the Waterfall Parking Lot. Construction on the project was completed at the end of 2019. This project resulted in a resurfaced parking lot, a large pavilion with attached kitchen for rentals, bathhouse and upgraded utilities. After finally having a full season of use, the Waterfall Pavilion was rented a record 39 times in 2022. The Waterfall Pavilion has become a major asset to the park and it is anticipated to be used even more heavily in the future.

Other major park improvements in 2022 include an upgraded air conditioning system in the Clubhouse.

This project was made possible by a generous donation from the Friends of Schuylkill Parks and Recreation. A shrub nursery was installed at the park's Overlook area. This fenced in area will hold about 90 shrubs of native species to be used for 'live stake' plantings along stream banks in the area. This project was done in conjunction with the Berks County Master Watershed Coordinator.

The largest improvement project of the year was completed on the inlet stream and NE section of the park. A project headed by the Schuylkill Conservation District resulted in roughly a mile of streambank stabilization and flood plain restoration. This project will have many lasting positive effects on the park.

These improvements include easier access for recreation and fishing, decreased sediment being deposited in the lake proper, improved fish and wildlife habitat, and a new parking lot for increased hiking and fishing access.

Finally, a grant was awarded to the County and Parks and Recreation Department by DCNR at the end of 2022 for the acquisition of a new County park. The new property is a wooded area located in Friedensburg, known as Frog Hollow. It is envisioned to become an extension of the County Park System and will offer a new area for passive recreation for the public.

Events and happenings

2022 saw a robust public event calendar as the first full post-COVID season. Annual programs were well attended with great success such as Groundhog Day, Fire and Ice Festival, Family Fun Fishing and Mentored Youth Fishing Day, Seedling Sale, Memorial Day and 4th of July concerts, and the Schuylkill Conservation District awards were held with great success. The Sweet Arrow Lake Conservation Association, Lutheran Diakon, and Friends of Schuylkill Parks and Recreation were key partners in procuring, presenting, and paying for the many programs at the Park. Other park programs that were able to be hosted included programs on Native Americans, Astronomy, Botany, Dinosaurs, and live music.

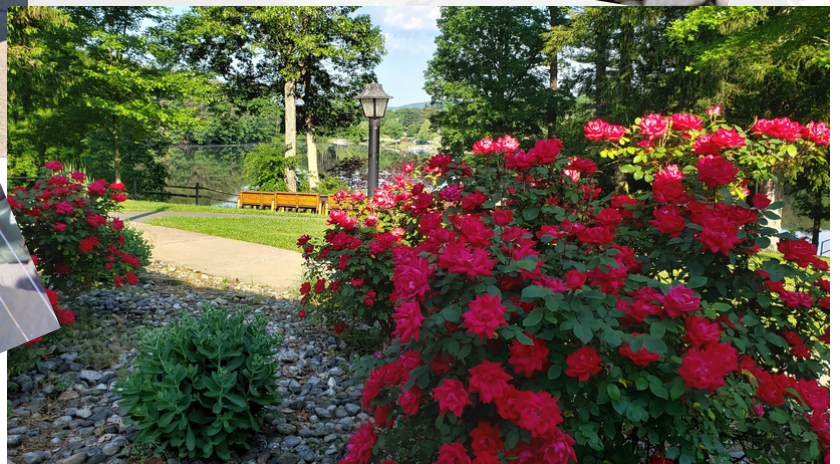
Parks and Recreation

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<u>Sweet Arrow Lake Facilities Usage</u>	2020	2021	2022
Business Meeting	18	25	35
Class Reunion	0	0	0
Educational For Profit	0	0	0
Educational N/P	1	1	5
Waterfall Pavilion	0	29	39
Large Pavilion	16	38	30
Small Pavilions	4	8	4
Co. Agency/Affiliation	3	3	5
Public Event	42	58	82
Small Party	30	55	80
Wedding Rehearsal	2	15	23
Wedding	3	19	33
Number of Uses	119	251	336
Income \$	\$7,060.00	\$29,075.00	\$44,180.00
Persons Attending Rentals	3,751	10,291	14,245
Avg. Number Uses Per Week	2.3	4.8	6.4
Avg. Uses Per Event	31.5	41	42.4

SWEET ARROW LAKE COUNTY PARK



Insect Management Program

Kyle Schutt, Insect Management Technician

The Insect Management Program is a combination of two programs, the Mosquito-Borne Disease Control Program and the Spotted Lanternfly Control Program. The Mosquito-Borne Disease Control Program aims to reduce the risk of West Nile Virus, reduce nuisance mosquito populations, and provide surveillance of tick populations at public areas. The Spotted Lanternfly Control Program aims to educate the public and assist in control efforts to help alleviate the burden of this pest.

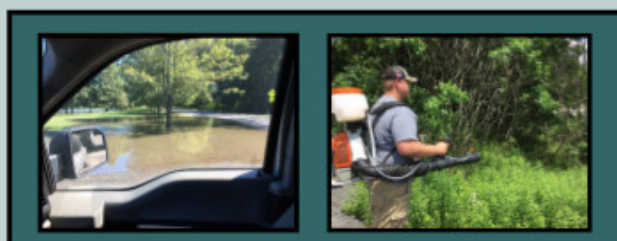
Mosquito-Borne Disease Control Program



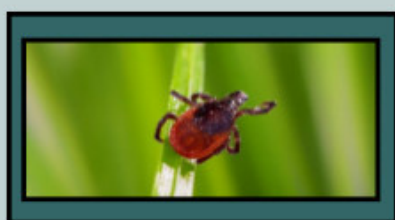
Gravid/BG traps used for surveillance of mosquito populations, 364 traps were set in Schuylkill county. 19 out of 234 samples tested positive for West Nile Virus.



153 larval dips were collected from sites throughout Schuylkill county. Annual tire collection received 5.4 ton of tires.



10 adult sprays performed. 54 larval treatments were performed at breeding sites.



38 tick drags were performed at 4 unique locations to assess tick populations. In total 24 ticks were collected (13 Adult Ixodes Scapularis, 6 Larval Ixodes Scapularis, 5 Adult Dermacentor variabilis).

Spotted Lanternfly Control Program



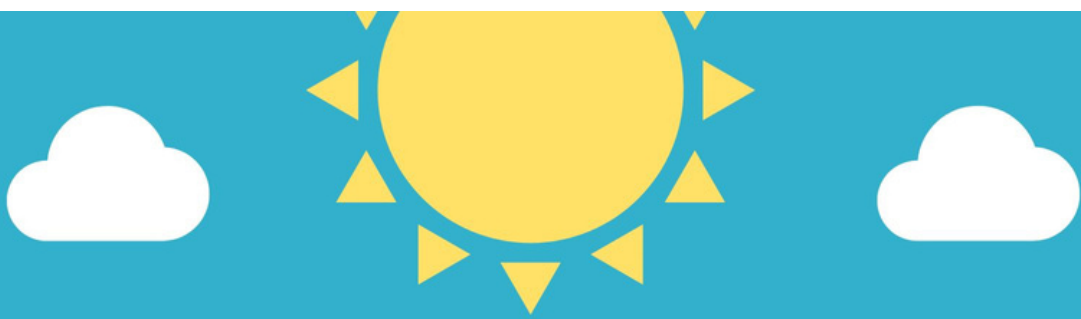
A combination of outdoor and online formats were used to educate the public on damage caused by Spotted Lanternfly and integrated pest management strategies for dealing with this pest.



Tree bands and circle traps were distributed to the public for use on private land.



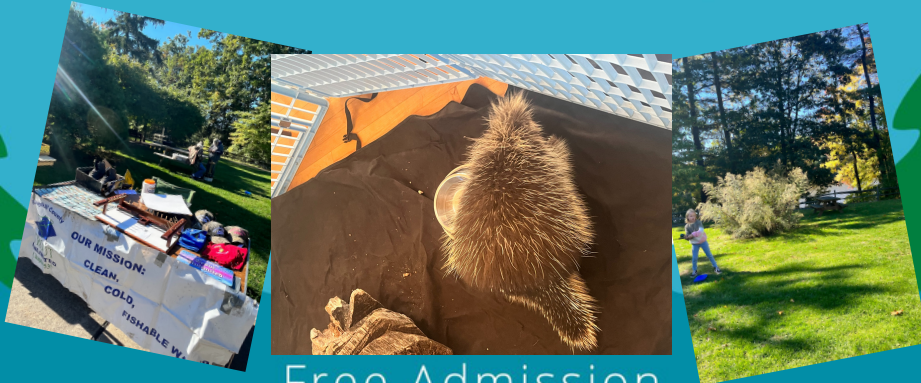
Tree of Heaven sites were logged into the Imap Invasive database. Site assessments were performed at possible treatment sites.



SCHUYLKILL CONSERVATION DISTRICT

LAKEFRONT FEST

Celebrate the outdoors in Schuylkill County
at Sweet Arrow Lake County Park



Free Admission

Free Parking

Free Activities & Entertainment

Support Local Food Vendors & Fundraisers

FOLLOW US ON FACEBOOK

WWW.SCHUYLKILLCD.COM



SAVE THE DATE!

Lake Front Fest

Sunday, October 15, 2023

11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Sweet Arrow Lake County Park