

## **2015 The Annual Report of District Manager, David R. Rupert.....**

Our “2015 Action Plan” set forth numerous objectives that the Board wished to see fully implemented by the end of the year. As you read the individual reports of our Staff, you will be able to see how each person contributed to completion of the Annual Action Plan. The Board continued to redefine our Annual Action Plan in four main areas - Capacity Building, Technical Assistance, Resource Conservation, and Outreach and Education. Specific measurable objectives were then adopted by the District Board and assigned to the appropriate individuals or the Board as a whole for implementation. The highlights of the individual staff in the Annual Report will tell you how well those objectives were met.

In our continuing effort to build the District Capacity, several professional development opportunities were made available to the Staff, Directors, and Associate Directors. Staff meetings were conducted by the Manager on a bi-weekly basis to keep the staff informed, exchange information, and coordinate resources. The District continued to expand the Cooperator Assistance and Outreach Programs through updates to our website, informational brochures and field days, and the use of our Dayton Fair and crops night displays. The District continued to participate in the AmeriCorps program and welcomed new Corp members - Katelyn Good and Larissa Rice and said good bye to our previous member - Alex Veto who left for an employment opportunity with the Potter County Conservation District as a Watershed Specialist. The District continued to apply for Growing Greener Grants to help implement other facets of the District Program and worked to administer and close out those currently awarded grants. The District also partnered with Municipal entities to submit Growing Greener Grants and grants to the Commonwealth Finance Agency for consideration. The District continued to be represented with delegates appointed to the Pennsylvania Association of Conservation Districts, Western Pennsylvania Coalition for Abandoned Mine Reclamation, Penn's Corner Resource Conservation & Development Council, and the Dirt and Gravel Road Quality Assurance Board (QAB).

In the area of Technical Assistance, the District has provided assistance to several County organizations and Municipalities as they were striving to attain their conservation goals. The District Dirt and Gravel Road Specialist closed out work with our Municipal partners on worksites affecting their municipal roads. This year saw the major expansion of the Dirt and Gravel Road Program with a significant increase in funding and the implementation of our first Low Volume Roads projects. Specific information regarding the Dirt, Gravel, and Low Volume Roads Program may be found under the DGLVR Specialist section of the report. District Staff also worked to expand participation by local elected municipal officials in the creation and maintenance of Agricultural Security Areas (ASA's) within the County. AmeriCorps and District Staff participated in continuing to update the theme layers for public sewage and water and maintained a specific layer for Agricultural Security Area parcels. This theme layer was then given to the County for use with their GIS based tax map parcel system.

In the field of Resource Conservation, the District completed most Erosion and Sediment Pollution Control Plan reviews and conducted several of the required site inspections of active earthmoving sites within timeframes established by the Commonwealth. Specific accomplishments of our Erosion and Sediment Control Technician may be found in her specific section of the annual report. District staff participated in Southwest Project Grass and provided technical and administrative assistance to the County Agricultural Lands Preservation Board as they continued with the purchase of the fifth Agricultural Conservation Easement on the Rich Shirey farm in Redbank Township. The Farmland Preservation Coordinator will continue to work towards the purchase of developmental rights on this and other farms offered through the program as funding permits. You will find the specific accomplishments of our Agricultural Technician under her portion of the Annual Report. Work proceeded on several Watershed Restoration and Implementation Projects

In 2015, the District continued its Outreach and Education efforts. Those efforts included the County Envirothon, the Arbor Day Program, the Fruit Tree and Seedling sale, the Annual Combined Awards Banquet in conjunction with the Armstrong County Farm Bureau, complete revamping of the District webpage, publishing our Annual Report, various articles for newsletters and participation in local, regional, and statewide workshops, and our use of multi-media presentations to area groups about the natural resources of Armstrong County.

For these and the many other efforts of the District Staff, I am proud of what the Armstrong District has accomplished in 2015 and look forward to implementation of our 2016 Action Plan. The individual staff reports are also enclosed, so please review them over at your pleasure and provide us with your feedback so that we may better serve you in the future. I hope that 2016 doesn't blow by as fast as it seemed to in 2015. I know that approaching 35 years as your Conservation District Manager it seems that time goes by more quickly.

Should you have any questions about our annual report, or any of the District Programs, please stop by our office, call me at 724.548.3425 or email me at [drrupert@co.armstrong.pa.us](mailto:drrupert@co.armstrong.pa.us)

### **Erosion & Sedimentation Technician I**

**Chris Cramer - [clcramer@co.armstrong.pa.us](mailto:clcramer@co.armstrong.pa.us)**

**Phone: 724-545-3626**

### **EROSION & SEDIMENT POLLUTION CONTROL PROGRAM (E&SPC)**

The Armstrong Conservation District (ACD) administers the Pennsylvania Clean Streams Law, Chapter 102, the Erosion and Sediment Pollution Control (E&SPC) Program through a signed delegation agreement with the Department of Environmental Protection, Bureau of Water Quality Protection. The ACD has been a Level III District since 1988. Level III Districts review E&S plans, perform field inspections on earth

disturbance sites, investigate complaints, and take enforcement action under the PA Clean Streams Law.

Under this program, all earth disturbance activities must develop, implement, and maintain a plan to minimize accelerated erosion and sediment pollution.

New permit review procedures went into effect on December 14, 2012. With these new proposed changes to the E&SPC Program and the NPDES Permitting System, the Armstrong Conservation District (ACD) had another busy year for 2015.

Some of the activities for the past year have been:

1. E&SPC plans were received for 165 new and revised plans for district review, public reviews, environmental reviews, prime farmland reviews, DEP issued permits, and informational purposes.
2. Reviews were completed on 36 E&S plans received in this office.
3. E&S plan reviews were conducted on a total of 1097 acres with a total of 644 acres of disturbed earth.
4. Assistance was given in the review of 4 prime farmland reviews.
5. Environmental reviews were completed on 6 proposed projects.
6. NPDES permits were received, processed, and reviewed for 5 new General and 0 Individual Permits.
7. New district cooperator agreements were received for 5 landowners.
8. Received and investigated 15 complaints relating to erosion and sedimentation.
9. Technical assistance was given to 415 persons during the year.
10. Conducted 72 inspections on earthmoving sites to make sure plans were properly implemented, controls were installed, and sequences were being followed according to submitted and approved plans.
11. Terminated 8 permitted projects that were completed during the year.
12. A Legislative Breakfast Meeting is held annually and attended by State Senators,  
State Representatives, County Commissioners, District Directors, Associate Directors, Cooperating Agencies, PA Farmers and District Staff to inform the Legislators and public of the goals and accomplishments of the Armstrong Conservation District.

There were 4 Enforcement actions taken in 2015 with penalty fees of \$6,250.00 for earthmoving projects within the county that did not properly stabilize before leaving the sites.

Erosion and sediment control project plan review fees are evaluated every 3 years to determine if an increase is necessary for the plan reviews. The Armstrong Conservation District Board of Directors increased the review fee per acre to \$175 per acre that became effective July 1, 2014. All other fees remained the same.

Training and update events are held yearly in State College for District personnel on these changes. Webinars are also conducted throughout the year on the changes and updates. Workshops are held on a regular basis for contractors, earthmovers, consulting engineers, surveyors, and others who prepare E&S plans and NPDES permits to keep them updated on changes to the regulations and newest developments on the PA Stormwater Manual and Post Construction Stormwater Management (PCSM).

An informational booklet entitled "A Guide to Developing an Effective Erosion and Sediment

Pollution Control Plan for Small Projects" has been prepared and handed out to interested earthmoving contractors. The purpose of this booklet is to give guidance in developing an Erosion and Sediment Pollution Control Plan for small grading projects that do not necessary need to have a permit obtained for the earthmoving work as long as it meets certain criteria.

The workload of the District Technician has remained relatively constant in the past few years.

### **ONGOING PROGRAMS**

#### **SOIL STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM**

Since the early 1960s, through the Soil Stewardship Program, the ACD has offered educational materials to the county churches, schools, libraries, and interested groups to aid them in celebrating the weeklong event in soil and water conservation. In 2015, the ACD filled requests for several churches and schools and/or classrooms. These church requests were for bulletin covers, bulletin inserts, litanies, children's activity sheets, and bookmarks.

School requests were for booklets for K-8 and 37 Educator Booklets. This program will be offered again for 2016, but all request will need to be filed on line through NACD's website.

#### **TOPOGRAPHIC MAP SALES**

The Armstrong Conservation District has been a dealer for topographic quadrangle maps since

1981. The District currently stocks all Armstrong County 7.5 minute quadrangle maps at a cost

of \$6.00 each and county topographic maps at \$8.00 each. Other maps can be ordered upon request.

**2016 Annual Report  
Agricultural Conservation Technician / Nutrient Management  
Specialist Jessica Schaub**

I coordinate the Armstrong County Agricultural Land Preservation Program, review Nutrient Management Plans, and perform fieldwork as an Agricultural Conservation Technician. I also coordinate the Armstrong County Envirothon, Annual Tree & Seedling Sale, and act as the Coordinator for the Armstrong County Animal Response Team. You can contact me by phone at 724-545-3628 or email me at [jjschaub@co.armstrong.pa.us](mailto:jjschaub@co.armstrong.pa.us)

### **Nutrient Management**

Armstrong County has 8 agricultural operations that have current Act 38 approved Nutrient Management Plans for a total of 3,600 managed acres. I am currently working with 4 farmers in Manor, West Franklin, North Buffalo, and Kiskiminetas Township to develop and/or update their Nutrient Management Plans.

A farm is required to get an Act 38 Nutrient Management Plan if they are a Concentrated Animal Operation (CAOs). CAOs are defined as operations where the animal density exceeds two animal units per acre on an annualized basis (AEU). An AU is defined as 1,000 pounds of animal live weight. However, farms with less than 8AEUs are not required under this law to have an approved Act 38 Nutrient Management Plan regardless of the animal density on the farm.

### **Manure Management**

Every farm in Pennsylvania that land applies manure, whether they generate the manure or import it from another operation, is required to have a written Manure Manual Plan. For farms not defined as Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs) or Concentrated Animal Operations (CAOs), Manure Management Plans can be prepared by the farmer. Manure Management Plans do not have to be submitted for approval but must be kept on the farm and made available upon request to DEP or the local county conservation district.

Pennsylvania Chapter 91.36 addresses pollution control and prevention at agricultural operations. Chapter 91.36 refers to the DEP Manure Management Manual (MMM) as containing standards for development of a Manure Management Plan. The MMM is available to assist farmers to develop a written Manure Management Plan.

The Armstrong Conservation District will host a Manure Management Workshop on March 22 for farmers in Armstrong County. I will continue to work individually with farmers to create Manure Management Plans and hold workshops in the County as needed.

### **ACT Program**

I work with the NRCS staff at the Conservation District to assist producers and landowners with implementing Best Management Practices on their land. Funds from the PA Growing Greener Program, REAP, and other federal programs have provided cost-share incentives to farmers wishing to install Best Management Practices.

The Armstrong Conservation District is continuing to help farmers install best management practices (BMPs) in the Campbell Run Watershed (DEP Growing Greener Grant). Campbell Run Farms installed streambank fencing, riparian forest buffer, and a stream crossing. We are currently working on designing other agricultural BMPs for their operation. Howard Boarts will install his Heavy Use Area (HUA) with manure storage, stream crossings, and streambank fencing this year.

In 2015, the Armstrong Conservation District was awarded 1 Growing Greener Grants to install BMPs on the Ron Baker Farm in the Roaring Run Watershed. The agricultural BMPs could include up to 1 Heavy Use Area with Manure Stacking Facility, Watering Facility, Stream Crossing, Streambank Fencing, Riparian Forest Buffer, and an Act 38 Nutrient Management Plan. We received **\$88,555** in funding for this project through the DEP Growing Greener Grant.

The Armstrong Conservation District applied for a Growing Greener Grant for the 2015 application round for the Garrett's Run Watershed. We are currently working with 2 farmers in the watershed to install agricultural BMPs.

The Armstrong Conservation District helped 3 farmers fill out REAP applications in 2015/2016 for a total of **\$27,450.00** in tax credits in West Franklin, North Buffalo, and East Franklin Townships. I am also currently working with a farmer in Boggs Township. The Resource Enhancement and Protection (REAP) Program allows farmers and businesses to earn tax credits in exchange for "Best Management Practices" (BMPs) on agricultural operations that will enhance farm production and protect natural resources. Eligible applicants may receive between 50% and 75% of project cost as state tax credits for up to \$150,000 per agricultural operation.

### **Armstrong County Agricultural Land Preservation Program**

The Armstrong County Agricultural Land Preservation (ACALP) Board consists of seven board members that reside in Armstrong County; Bill Kronen, Ed Dilick, Paul Stubrick, Spurgeon Shilling, Terry Bowser, Marlene Kammerdiener, and Troy Goldstrohm.

The purpose of the program is to protect viable agricultural lands by obtaining agricultural conservation easements, which prohibit the development or improvement of the land for any use other than agricultural production. This program provides up to \$2,000/acre compensation to landowners in exchange for them to voluntarily give up the right to develop their private property.

The ACALP Board and the County Commissioners purchased 4 agricultural conservation easements from the following landowners; Suzanne and Edgar Bruce (Burrell Township), Meredith Patterson (Kiskiminetas Township), Scott Morrison (South Buffalo Township), and George and Marsha Kepple (Sugarcreek Township) for a total of 370 preserved acres. The ACALP Board is currently working on purchasing an agricultural conservation easement from Richard Shirey for 116.11 acres located in Redbank Township.

### **Armstrong County Animal Response Team**

The Armstrong Conservation District is working with the Armstrong County Emergency Management Agency and the PA State Animal Response Team (SART) to develop a County Animal Response Team in Armstrong County. The Pennsylvania State Animal Response Team (PA SART) was created through a private-public partnership to serve as a unifying network of organizations, businesses, federal and state government agencies, and individuals that supports the prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery for emergencies affecting animals. Because disaster response needs to happen at a local level, PASART builds County Animal Response Teams (CARTs) across the state.

The goals of the CART program are to facilitate a rapid, coordinated and effective response to any emergency affecting animals and to minimize the economic impact of emergencies affecting animals. One example of the role of a CART would be in the event of a large scale evacuation where homeowners would not be permitted to keep their pets with them at temporary shelters. CART would coordinate with local emergency managers to activate holding areas to temporarily house pets during the evacuation. CART would also be called out to help rescue livestock in an emergency such as a flood, barn fire, or a livestock trailer that overturned on the highway.

In 2008, ACART received a corral trailer, a 7 x 16 utility trailer, and a generator from PASART. In 2009, we received a \$500 purchase order from PASART to purchase emergency care and supplies for displaced pets. PASART also provided us with 30 animal cages and a large animal rescue glide. In 2010, ACART received 15 dog/cat collars, 20 dog leads, 2 Ketch-All poles, and 1,000 identification collars/bands. In 2011, ACART received \$383 from PASART to purchase emergency care and supplies for livestock. ACART also received a livestock rescue sling. In 2012, ACART purchased rope, livestock halters, swine panels, and sorting poles. All of the items that came from PASART were provided using funding from the federal Dept of Homeland Security, as awarded to them by PEMA. ACART Volunteers donated medical and office supplies in 2012. We received 2 small animal glides from PASART in 2014.

ACART was activated by 911 for the first time in 2012, once in 2013, 5 times in 2014, and 6 times in 2015. In order to succeed, we need volunteers who are willing to donate their time and services to help animals at the local level. Participation in the program is completely voluntary and training is available through PASART. If you are interested in volunteering your time or resources, please contact me at 724-545-3628 or e-mail [jjschaub@co.armstrong.pa.us](mailto:jjschaub@co.armstrong.pa.us). For more information on PA SART or to register to become a volunteer, please visit [www.pasart.us](http://www.pasart.us).

### **The Environmental Learning Center**

The Armstrong Conservation District regularly assists with programs and events held at The Crooked Creek Environmental Learning Center. The ELC is a multi-use facility

originally built and operated by the United States Army Corp of Engineers. The Armstrong County Educational Trust now operates the ELC with guidance from the ELC Steering Committee, of which the Armstrong Conservation District is a member.

The ELC works closely with schools to provide environmental education. The overnight accommodations attract scouts, church groups, and clubs for weekend retreats and workshops. Groups like the Armstrong County Master Gardeners and 4H Homeschoolers use the facilities for meetings and classes. Businesses and are welcome to use the ELC as well for meetings and workforce development. The ELC is available year round to any organized groups or businesses.

For more information, visit the ELC website at [www.crookedcreekelc.org](http://www.crookedcreekelc.org) or contact Program Coordinator Dennis Hawley by phone at 724-763-6316 or by email at [elcaet@windstream.net](mailto:elcaet@windstream.net).

### **Armstrong County Envirothon**

The 10<sup>th</sup> Armstrong County Envirothon was held at the Crooked Creek Environmental Learning Center on April 29, 2015. Eleven teams of high school students from Apollo-Ridge High School, Ford City High School, Kittanning Senior High School, Leechburg High School, Lenape Tech School, and West Shamokin Jr. Sr. High School competed against each other in the event.

The Envirothon is designed to give students an opportunity to acquire and demonstrate their knowledge of environmental resources and their connection to each other and human activities. The students are challenged in the areas of aquatic ecology, forestry, soil / land use, wildlife, and a current environmental issue. The 2015 current environmental issue was "Urban Forestry."

Technical expertise was provided by the following individuals: Kristi Niekamp (PA Fish & Boat Commission) at the Aquatics station; Gary Fajak and Rod Burns (PA Game Commission) at the Wildlife station; Laurel Hoffman (Kittanning NRCS) at the Soils and Land Use station, Dr. Holly Travis (IUP) at the Current Issue station; and Gary Gilmore (DCNR) at the Forestry station.

Financial sponsors of the 2015 Envirothon are the Cowanshannock Creek Watershed, Crooked Creek Watershed, Arrowhead Chapter of Trout Unlimited, Bankson Engineers Inc., Roaring Run Watershed, J. H. Hickman Surveying, and Apex Energy, LLC. Ford City Subway donated lunches to the students and volunteers.

The Kittanning High School winning team represented Armstrong County at the Pennsylvania State Envirothon at University of Pittsburgh Johnstown and Windber Recreation Park on May 19 and 20, 2015.





1<sup>st</sup> Place- Kittanning Sr. High School ("Squatches")

Left to Right: Meg Toy, Jacob Ehrenberger, Nathan Goldner, David Sarokon, and Alyssa Burdett



2<sup>nd</sup> Place- Lenape Tech ("Lenape Warriors")



Left to Right: Jacob Good, Andrew Hamilton, Haley Buckley, Greg McClafferty, and Abbey Laux



3<sup>rd</sup> Place Team-Lenape Tech (“Lenape Blackhawks”)

Left to Right: Chance Cobbett, Sam Woodside, Ben Shaffer, Nick Hawkins, Trevor McCann

The next Armstrong County Envirothon will be held on April 28, 2016 at the Crooked Creek Environmental Learning Center. Competitors must be enrolled in grade levels 9 through 12 or equivalent home education program ranking. Teams comprising of five students are tested in the five subject areas including aquatics, forestry, soils, wildlife, and a current issue. A new current issue subject is chosen each year.

If you are a business or an individual and would like to donate to the Envirothon, please contact Jessica Schaub at 724-545-3628 or e-mail [jjschaub@co.armstrong.pa.us](mailto:jjschaub@co.armstrong.pa.us). For more information about the Envirothon, please visit [www.envirothonpa.org](http://www.envirothonpa.org).

### **Annual Fruit Tree and Seedling Sale**

As a service to the area landowners, the Armstrong Conservation District conducts an annual fruit tree and seedling sale in April. The fruit trees and seedlings offered each year are dependent on the availability at the nurseries.

We sold 280 fruit trees and 3,500 seedlings for in 2015:

**Apple:** Autumn Gala™, Aztec Fuji™, Ginger Gold® Yellow Transparent, Zestar!™

**Pear:** Blake's Pride, Potomac, Golden Russet®Bosc, AC™ Harrow Sweet

**Nectarine:** Carene, Redgold

**Peach:** Blazing Star, Gloria, Julyprince

**Seedlings:** Arrowwood Viburnum, Black Walnut, Chokecherry, Colorado Blue Spruce, Eastern

White Pine, English Oak, Northern Bayberry, Norway Spruce, Sweet Crabapple, and White Flowering Dogwood.

The Armstrong Conservation District also provides an annual donation of evergreen seedlings to all the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade students in Armstrong County. These total over 900 seedlings distributed. We would like to thank Mr. Steve Misera and his students from Lenape Tech Natural Resources Department for all of their help to package the trees. The Annual Tree Sale and Arbor Day distribution would never be successful without their support and assistance. Thank you!

If you would like to receive an order form or if you would like to offer any purchase suggestions for next year, please contact Jessica Schaub at the Armstrong Conservation District Office at 724-545-3628.

### **Dirt, Gravel & Low Volume Roads Specialist**

**Gregg Smith** - [agsmith@co.armstrong.pa.us](mailto:agsmith@co.armstrong.pa.us)

**Phone: 724.545.3610**

The Dirt Gravel & Low Volume Roads Specialist is responsible for administering the Dirt, Gravel & Low Volume Roads Program (DGLVR) within the County. After serving the District as an AmeriCorps volunteer, I accepted a position as the DGLVR Specialist. I have a degree in Civil Engineering Technologies and have been certified as a DGLVR Specialist through multiple trainings and workshops. I work with applicants to develop plans for projects and assist with the logistics of project work whenever possible. I am responsible for keeping all records of projects and maintaining an inventory of all completed and current work sites using a GIS system. Project inspections are done prior to work starting, during construction and when site work is completed. A portion of the annual DGLVR Program funding is required to be used for Training & Education purposes. The District applies these Training and Education funds toward demonstration construction projects and the purchase of equipment for the

municipalities to borrow. This policy allows us to provide additional monies toward ESM construction and place more ESM techniques onto the roadways.

### **Dirt, Gravel & Low Volume Roads Program (DGLVR)**

A statewide program passed into law in 1997, as Section 9106 of the PA Vehicle Code. The program was established to reduce sediment and dust pollution by utilizing Environmentally Sound Maintenance (ESM) practices generated by unpaved roads. A local Quality Assurance Board (QAB) consisting of members from the PA Fish & Boat Commission, Department of Conservation and Natural Resources and the District review and score project proposals then recommend which projects should be funded by the District. The District makes grants to the municipalities to perform ESM work on the roads. To be eligible for these grants, an employee or official responsible for performing the maintenance for the municipality must attend a two day training workshop on ESM practices. The attendee remains qualified to participate in the program for five years before additional training is required. In 2015 the program began to allow ESM work on paved or tar and chipped roads with daily traffic counts of 500 or less vehicles per day. This allowed the district to fund 7 additional projects. The 2015 funds enabled the District to perform ESM practices on 30 roads, perform a soil stabilization slide repair, demonstrate a road reclamation process, exhibit daylighting a roadway through selective tree trimming and purchase a leaf blower for the municipalities to use for cleaning road ditches. To date, the program has assisted local municipalities apply these ESM practices on 83.5 miles of roadway by installing:

- 769 cross pipes
- 20 stream culverts
- 32,500 feet of piping
- 158,000 feet of under drains
- 274,000 sq. ft. of ditch stabilization
- 350,000 sq. ft. of bank stabilization
- 1,210,000 sq. ft. of vegetative management

### **2016 DGLVR Season**

Twenty three municipalities have been offered grants to complete DGLVR projects in the 2016 construction season totaling \$801,000.00. The leaf blower which was purchased in September 2015 was a huge success and was used continuously through January 2016 thanks to the mild winter weather we received. The District is making upgrades to the equipment based on suggestions from the municipalities and the machine will be placed back into service in the spring. Demonstration projects are in the planning stages and will be announced at a later date. Additional information about the DGLVR Program can be found on the Armstrong Conservation District website.

## **AmeriCorps**

**Katie Good - [krgood@co.armstrong.pa.us](mailto:krgood@co.armstrong.pa.us)**

**Phone: 724.545.3658**

My name is Katie Good and I'm serving my second term as a Pennsylvania Mountain Service Corps (PMSC), (a local initiative of AmeriCorps) member at the Armstrong Conservation District.

This National Service Movement engages thousands of Americans of all ages and backgrounds in a domestic Peace Corps. Members serve their communities in the areas of education, environment, public safety, and human needs and receive a living stipend, educational monies, and a wealth of experience. Located in Southwest and South Central Pennsylvania, PMSC provides service opportunities through nonprofit or government organizations across a 16,000 square mile region.

I started out as a 300 hour intern in December of 2014 and I am now currently serving a fulltime internship that started August of 2015. My service consists of assisting the conservation district staff with their job duties and community service work as well. I work closely with the Watershed Specialist and our Agricultural Technician/Nutrient Management Specialist out in the field and in the office. My work ranges from helping out in the office to taking samples in the stream.

### **Armstrong Conservation District Support**

This year, 2015, the AmeriCorps members were in charge of holding a food drive and collecting money donations during our Annual Awards Banquet. We collect a few boxes of perishable items and raised a lot of money. I also volunteered my time for the Conservation District by managing our table at the Dayton Fair and get noticed by the community by talking about our program and handing out flyers. Another AmeriCorps member and I are also putting a presentation together of some of the projects the Conservation Districts have done and it will be shown during the Legislative Breakfast at the Belmont Complex.

### **Water Quality Monitoring**

The Armstrong Conservation District's Watershed Specialist program has a continuous water monitoring devices called data loggers. These loggers give us information of the waters conductivity, level, and temperature. We also have a pH reader as well that tells us the pH, conductivity, temp, and total dissolved solids. The positives of using both is the ability of being accurate with our monitoring systems. Our water sampling consist of Alkalinity and Chloride to determine if the water is acidic. All of this sampling determines whether a stream is healthy enough to support aquatic life.

### **Watershed Activities**

Along with our data logger program I have also provided assistance to our Watershed Specialist, David Beale on many tours and help on project permits and photographing his progress on the projects. I have ran PNDI Environmental Reviews for many of these projects and also wrote out contracts for each I have been able to assist with. These

projects include, Ring (Ingram site), Shay, Laurel Road, Lee Lake, Attinger, and Huling Run. I've assisted with two tours one consisting of Lenape Tech and the other Divine and Redeemer to come out to the Ring site and learn about the structures put into the stream. I also was fortunate to witness a Trout in the Classroom field trip and many trout releases. Lastly, I have put much time into helping Beale with his permit application for Huling Run. I have helped him with a timber count for timber on the project property and I also have been monitoring the stream quality with our data loggers and keeping track of collecting that data. Huling Run is in Washington County and it is an AMD site. The purpose of this project is to install a treatment system to clean of the discharge coming from the abandoned mine.

### **Fall Conservation Tour 2015**

This year I got to be a part of the Annual Conservation District Fall Tour. The tour consists of all Conservation District employees, board members, county elected officials, and partnering organizations to show the projects done and what the district has been involved with. For our first stop we visited the Megnin Stave Mill and learned how staves are produced. Then we drove out to the Armstrong Rails to Trails to hike and learn about the history of the trail. For our last stop we drove back to Rayburn Township for a Dirt and Gravel Road project. This project was done on Hayes Road and it consisted of the reclamation of the road. I took photographs and made a video out of all of them.

### **Agricultural Activities**

I have spent most of my time out in the field with our Nutrient Management Specialist assisting with her projects. I was present at the time the Bostonia Farms manure storage system project began and ended. I've helped Jessica and John Bohonak with surveying for the construction of the Bostonia project and have also taken many pictures. I have volunteered to help with the county 2015 Envirothon competitions and designed the 2016 Envirothon t-shirts. I also assisted Jessica in the trees and seedling distribution for the tree sale and for the 3<sup>rd</sup> graders of Armstrong County for Arbor Day. I have also provided support and assistance in multiple Nutrient Management workshops and programs. Lastly I have developed PowerPoints for ACART trainings and have assisted in ACART calls and emergencies.

### **Erosion and Sediment Activities**

I have spent some of my time out in the field with Chris Cramer to attend pre-construction meetings and also help with site inspections. Most inspections and complaints were logging sites out on Cherry Run and Spring Church area. The last inspection I went on with Chris was the Keystone Power Plant out in Elderton off of 210. I accompanied her as well to a few trainings.

### **Dirt, Gravel, and Low Volume Roads Program**

A big part of the Conservation District is DGLVR program. This program consists in the maintenance and funding for the municipalities of Armstrong County. This program assists in the help of preventing stream pollution caused by runoff and sediment from the township's public roads. The Conservation District receives money each year to give

out to the townships to perform this specific road maintenance. This funding covers the cost of much more because the labor and equipment is provided by the municipalities. The biggest investment of 2015 was the purchase of the Buffalo Turbine. We purchased a buffalo turbine to help maintain roadways and clear ditches and culverts from debris and leaf build up. This machine is a big replica of a leaf blower but can blow the leaves off the roads and up hills with more ease because of its power. With the help of the turbine townships will no longer struggle to clean and maintain their roadways come spring time. This also reduces the sediment that builds up in culverts and the clean culverts reduces the sediment runoff into streams that would be created if the townships had to dig out the leaves in the spring time.

### **Crooked Creek Environmental Learning Center**

A big part of our environmental education is the use of the Crooked Creek Environmental Learning Center. We educate children through weekend events, field trips, summer camps, and geo caching. High school students who have environmental knowledge can compete in the envirothon hosted every spring by the Conservation District. The winning high school team gets to move on to compete with other county winning teams in the state (noting my senior year of high school I got to be that winning team). AmeriCorps members assist in the educational field trips by separating kids into groups and teach them about forestry, aquatic macroinvertebrates, taking them on walks to point out plant life, and involve them in the geocaching. The ELC educates students K-12 and most of my times spent teaching was with 4<sup>th</sup> graders from Armstrong School District schools. All these give them a big aspect of the environment and the children learn so much. In the end if they had fun then that lets us know that they indeed learned something. I have also attended many Crooked Creek steering committee meetings and volunteered a work day where we cleaned up the learning center and fix anything that needed replaced.

### **2016 Canoe Sojourn**

The Environmental Learning Center and the Armstrong Educational Trust Foundation, with the volunteering of us AmeriCorps Interns our working together to put together a 4 day canoe/kayak event. This event will take place on Mahoning creek, Crooked Creek, and the Kiski River. Along with the event will be educational programs and tours of Armstrong County. This is the 19<sup>th</sup> annual and still going strong.

### **Roaring Run Watershed Association (RRWA)**

The Director of Roaring Run, John Linkes on several occasions comes along with me how to five different streams in Armstrong County (two being located on Roaring Run) to collect data logger consisting of water quality information.

### **Training Events**

Due to my assistance with every district staff member I was able to attend many events and trainings. Last year I attended my first PACD/SCC Winter Meeting at State College. Along with the winter meeting I also attended the Watershed Specialist meeting in October with David Beale and the Chapter 102/105 training in State College with Jess, Greg, and Chris. Lastly, I was able to attend a survey training and complete two days of

dirt and gravel/low volume road training. I recently attended Jessica's Manure Management workshop and will be assisting her with the upcoming Crep Meeting.

### **Martin Luther King Jr. Day Food Drive**

Part of an AmeriCorps duty is to give back to the community and that's where our service is needed. In order to celebrate Martin Luther King Jr. Day AmeriCorps held a Food Drive. This is a major holiday the Cooperation for National Service likes to emphasis service. The food drive consisted of 6 volunteers (2 being AmeriCorps) and we collect \$73 and two medium Lowes boxes filled with perishable food items. Our food drive was located at the Kittanning Shop N' Save and the donations went to the Armstrong County Community Action Food Bank.