

Spring/Summer 2023

### CONSERVATION WORK RECOGNIZED AT 2023 GOVERNOR'S CONSERVATION AWARDS

New Castle County's Departments of Community Services and Public Works have been recognized by the state of Delaware and Delaware Association of Conservation Districts for the Governor's 2023 Agriculture Conservation Award. This award recognized the conception and construction of a new manure storage building at Carousel Park and Equestrian Center. NCCD nominated the County and project for this award.

The manure storage building is an essential component of the Equestrian Center's nutrient management program. The building allows for covered storage of the horse manure generated by the 26 riding horses and the 11 New Castle County Police Mounted Patrol Cydesdales. The covered storage and concrete pad combine to protect and improve water quality at the Center, which is located in the White Clay Creek Wild and Scenic River Watershed. The White Clay Creek is a source of drinking water in northern New Castle County. The Delaware office of the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service designed the building and concrete



L to R; Kasey Taylor—State Conservationist at USDA NRCS; Lisa Boren Ogden—Deputy Secretary at DNREC; Michael Popovitch—NCCD Ag Planner; Ann Baldwin—Project Engineer at USDA NRCS; Mike Harris and Mike Clendaniel, PE both from NCC Dept of Public Works; Carla Geiersbach and Jane Rattenni, both from NCC Dept. of Special Services; Kevin Donnelly, NCCD Coordinator; and Gwen Pierce, NCCD Board Supervisor.



L to R: Eric Rabe, PE; Darryl C. Jones, PE (both from Steinele Construction Engineers—a division of Vandemark & Lynch; and Don Yannick of Castle Construction of DE, who installed the project.

pad and prepared construction and engineering plans. NCCD handled the advertising, bidding, and supervision of the project. The contractor was Jeff Bartsch Trucking and Excavating, Inc. from Townsend, DE. The project was jointly funded by NCCD and the County. NCCD

provided \$23,800 of Conservation Cost Share funds and \$80,000 of Resource Conservation and Development funds. The County contributed \$8,000.

The Urban Conservation Award recognized the community of The Terraces in Rockland Mills. A badly deteriorating 30-year old creosoted and salt-treated timber retaining wall was replaced with an engineered, pre-cast modular block retaining wall. This improved management of stormwater run-off coming in from up slope and eliminated erosion of the steep slopes that eventually reach the nearby Brandywine River, the primary drinking water source for the City of Wilmington. Stormwater run-off was severely impacting vehicles,

parking areas and residential units. The Condo Association provided \$50,000 of project funding. Senator Laura Sturgeon and the Delaware General Assembly's Joint Capital Improvement Committee provided an additional \$50,000 of funding. NCCD provided \$400,000 of Resource Conservation and Development funding to the project.



## URBAN AGRICULTURE PROGRAM UPDATE

This spring, through an Urban Ag Agreement with USDA NRCS, we launched the “New Ground Growers Series (NGSS).” This pilot program offers free, accessible, and flexible training to urban growers through a series of online webinars, hands-on workshops, and volunteer work days at urban farms throughout New Castle County. Topics for these sessions range from practical skills such as seed starting, container gardening, and integrated pest management (IPM) to administrative tasks such as farm financing, volunteer management, and USDA NRCS programs. Our summer intern, Kirbyanne Yoder, will assist with evaluating the program for future implementation.

The Delaware Food and Farm Coalition held the 3rd “Ready, Set, Grow” resource and networking fair in March and is preparing an urban agriculture policy brief for the City of Wilmington to consider during its upcoming comprehensive zoning code review. The Coalition has begun preparations to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the Urban Ag session, part of Delaware Ag Week, in January 2024.

NGGS participants listen to Kyle Brolis, Farm Manager at the Food Bank of Delaware as he discusses intercropping of vegetable plants in the hoop house.



### 2023 Urban Ag Cost Share Projects

- Food Bank of Delaware (raised bed teaching garden)
- Maple Lane Elementary School (perimeter garden fence)
- New Castle County Rt. 9 Library (hydroponic towers)
- Odyssey Charter School (greenhouse)
- Resurrection Parish (raised bed repairs)
- The ORCHARD community garden (raised beds)
- Delamore Place Garden (front infrastructure)
- Wilmington Friends School (composting system)
- Wilmington Manor School (new garden)



Presentations and outreach were done at the Tanger Arboretum in Lancaster, PA, the City of Wilmington

Earth Day Celebration, the UD Ag Day event, the Bellevue Farms Seed Swap, and a live interview on the DE TV Good Morning Wilmington program.



Future site of Wilmington Manor E. S. garden



New beds at Resurrection Parish

## COST SHARE PROVIDES CONSERVATION ASSISTANCE

The conservation cost share program provides financial and technical assistance for ag and urban project

implementation. Priorities include cover crop to protect and improve groundwater and improve soil health and individual urban/suburban drainage improvement projects.



L to R: cover crop, pasture re-seeding underway and edge of driveway underdrain system





## URBAN WATER MANAGEMENT UPDATE



Left to right: A deteriorating timber wall was replaced with a new concrete wall in the community of Drummond Ridge. For landowners in Westover Chase, an existing drainage way was improved with a catch basin and the swale lined with riprap, a type of stone used for erosion control.



Lower end after clearing



Lower end completed

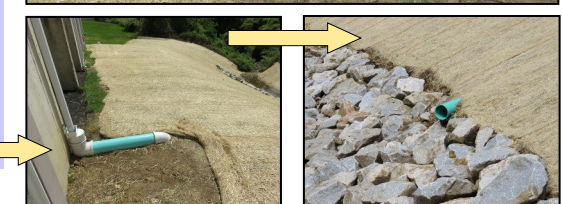


Lower end after clearing



Upper end completed

An upper and lower section of a severely eroding channel in Berkshire off Limestone Road was repaired by re-grading the channel and lining with riprap, a stone used for erosion control. A drainage system was installed behind a section of townhomes and directed to a protected outlet down the slope behind the affected homes.





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**NCCD Board of Supervisors from left to right:**  
Nick Adams—Secretary (NCC Ag Extension Agent)  
Richard Morris—Vice Chair  
Gwen Pierce—Treasurer  
Robert Emerson—Chair  
Mike Harris—represents County Executive Matt Meyer  
Brandon Yerkes—Member  
S. R. Smith—Member  
Two Associate Board positions are currently vacant.

### Odyssey Charter Student Wins National Poster Contest



Rick Mickowski presents Sameera Kuricheti with a \$200 check from the National Association of Conservation Districts. Teacher Christina Baldwin shares in the excitement.



### Wilmington Charter Team Wins the 2023 Delaware Envirothon



Charter School of Wilmington Team A members Mukta Kantak, Tiffany Situ, Zavior Brown, Dhriti Tattari, and Amber Wong.

## EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

Spring and summer is always a busy time for education and outreach events. Some of these included the following:

- The Youth Environmental Summit.
- The 4-H Day Camp during spring break and during summer camp in June.
- Ag Day at the University of Delaware.
- White Clay Creek Fest.
- The Delaware Association for Environmental Education Conference (DAEE)
- Summer outreach at the Glasgow Park, Bellevue Farms and Carousel Park Farmer's Markets.
- NCCD sponsored the Youth Environmental Summit, the DAEE Conference and the Delaware Technical and Community College Science Fair.



NCC 4-H Science Day Camp Activity



District display at Ag Day



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