

Dedicated to Soil and Water

Water Management



NEW CASTLE CONSERVATION DISTRICT

2022 Annual Report

Conservation in a Changing Climate

The Conservation District has assisted farmers and homeowners with technical and financial assistance to install conservation practices for 78 years. There have been dry years and wetter than normal years. Now, changing temperatures and more intense storm events require adapting to a new normal. Conservation practices that protect the soil like cover crops are needed more than ever and homeowners are dealing with excess water due to compacted soils and more frequent and heavier rainfall events. Solutions can be as simple as a swale in a backyard or a complex slope stabilization project involving large concrete blocks. Whatever the situation, the District stands ready to assist residents of New Castle County with their conservation concerns.



District Coordinator Kevin Donnelly with Jeff and Joyce Bartsch

The 2022 Governor’s Conservation Awards were presented to Jeff Bartsch of Townsend for the Agriculture Award and to the Simonds Garden Civic Association for the urban conservation award.

Jeff and Joyce till 585 acres of land in Delaware and Maryland planting cover crops and managing drainage. As a contractor, Jeff provides maintenance services for tax ditch groups. The Simonds Garden Civic Association worked with the District to install new drainage infrastructure in their community.



Jaywanne Saunders and Javiar Paula from the Simonds Gardens Civic Association



Richard Weldon and Norman Pierce

We remember the loss of two board supervisors, Norman Pierce in spring 2022 and as we went to press, past board member Richard Weldon, who served from the 1980’s to the early 2000’s.

Patrick Family Named Cooperators of the Year for 2022



Bruce and Beth Patrick

The Patrick family (Bruce and Beth and children Michaela, Jacob, and Suzannah) began farming in 2005 and over the years have diversified their 400 acre farm operation while implementing conservation practices. Angus beef and Duroc-Berkshire hogs are raised for sale along with hay, small grains, corn, and soybeans. They have worked closely with the District to plant cover crops on their fields and installed grassed waterways and protected outlets to control soil erosion. With our partners at USDA NRCS, the Patrick’s

have implemented a number of conservation practices including a manure storage structure and a heavy use concrete pad for manure management and many others.



Manure storage structure

The Patrick’s host a Fall Festival on the farm and offer educational experiences by taking farm animals to

local schools, petting zoos, and other events. Congratulations on this well deserved honor!



Protected field outlet



Grassed waterway into a drainage structure

Conservation Cost Share Program Highlights

For FY 2022, the District processed 81 cost share applications. 14 were for urban agriculture projects, 13 were for ag and urban conservation practices, and 54 were for the cover crop program. In the fall of 2022, the applications for cover crop totaled 57 producers for 12,982.55 acres of which 10,516.51 acres were planted.

From left to right: thick growing cover crop on Middletown area farm, stream protected from erosion for landowner in the Greenville area, and a new horse manure storage structure at Carousel Park.



Old manure structure on left and new structure on right.



USDA NRCS Agricultural Program Highlights

Funding provided through the Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP)/Agricultural Management Assistance (AMA) is used for implementing water, air, soil, energy, and plant quality practices. The following practices were implemented during 2022:



Animal waste structure

Selected Conservation Practices

Animal Mortality Facility	1 Completed
Roof Runoff Cover	2 Completed
Herbaceous Weed Control	893 Acres
Cover Crop Acres Planted	2,783.5 Acres
Fencing for pasture	1,522 Feet
Nutrient Management	664.7 Acres
Pasture and Hay Plantings	17.6 Acres
Irrigation Water Management	358 Acres

The total amount of dollars obligated on FY 2022 EQIP/AMA payments were \$ 353,740 for 10 EQIP contracts and two AMA contracts to improve resources to New Castle producers/landowners.

Data provided by James Dick with USDA NRCS

Technical Assistance Highlights

District staff provided technical assistance with drainage issues to 138 landowners for calendar year 2022. With compacted clay soils many landowners experience soggy yards due to flow from roof downspouts and gushing basement sump pumps. The survey crew provided technical information and construction layout for 54 projects. The District handles Sediment and Stormwater Program requests for 10 municipalities in New Castle County. Assistance is provided to the 26 tax ditch groups in New Castle County.



Mowed tax ditch ROW



Sump discharge causing ponding, soggy conditions in a residential backyard off Old Baltimore Pike.



Stormwater pond behind a warehouse in a New Castle area industrial Park.

NCCD RC&D Program Drainage Highlights

95 projects were started with 79 projects completed in calendar year 2022. They ranged from small back-yard drainage projects to a few larger projects costing hundreds of thousands of dollars. RC&D projects are funded in coordination with State Senators and Representatives from New Castle County.



From left to right: drainage system installed in Penarth and a drainage project below a church parking lot off Foulk Road to an adjacent house lot in Chatham.

Wilmington and Western Railroad bridge debris removal was funded by a FMEA grant through New Castle County



The District administered a contract to demolish a deteriorating timber retaining wall in the Rockland Mills condominium community off Rockland Road. Drainage from up slope and rotting timbers were causing the wall to collapse. An interlocking stone wall was installed to stabilize the embankment.

Urban Agriculture Highlights

The District provided financial assistance to 14 urban agriculture/community garden cost-share projects. Other highlights for 2022 include:

- ◆ Holding a grant writing workshop and the “Ready, Set, Grow” resource and networking fair.
- ◆ Did an interview on the Horizon Farm Credit Advocate podcast, presented at both the northeast region and national conference of the National Association of Conservation Districts and presented on behalf of the Delaware Urban Farm and Food Coalition (DEUFFC) at the Delaware Council on Farm and Food Policy annual meeting. Completed and launched the DEUFFC website and hosted the community garden Golden Gourd Awards.
- ◆ With the assistance of a summer intern, completed an Urban Agriculture Asset Inventory.



New tool storage shed for a community garden near Newark



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The New Castle Conservation District is an equal opportunity employer and provider.

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Robert Emerson - Chair

Richard Morris - Vice Chair

Gwen Pierce - Treasurer

Carrie Murphy - Acting Secretary

Brandon Yerkes - Member

S. R. Smith, III - Member

Mike Harris

(representing County Executive Matt Meyer)

Julian Pellegrino resigned from the Board. We thank him for his years of service.

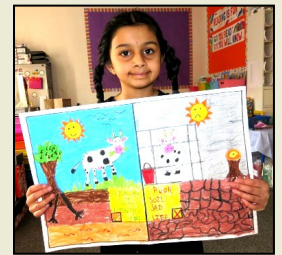
The District is a yearly sponsor of the Delaware Envirothon, an environmental program and competition for high school students. The Charter School of Wilmington was the 2022 state champion.



2022 Conservation Poster Contest

Odyssey Charter School Student Wins National Award

Poster contest winner Sameera Kuricheti from Odyssey Charter School took 1st place in New Castle County, 1st place in the State of Delaware, and 1st place at the national level judging through the National Association of Conservation Districts. Congratulations to Sameera!



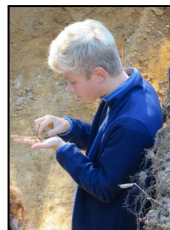
Other 1st place poster contest winners were: Nicol Yu (North Star Elementary School), Fatima Bamba (Tarbiyah School), Khadija Farooq (Tarbiyah School), Mariana Fernandez (St. Mark's High School), and Caitlyn Magalon (Delcastle Technical High School). The winning posters can be viewed on the District's website under the education section.



Education and Outreach to Youth and the Public

The District provided education and outreach at a number of events. Those events included:

- ◆ The Youth Environmental Summit (YES)
- ◆ Del Tech Science Fair
- ◆ Shad Fest in Brandywine Park
- ◆ The Delaware State Fair
- ◆ Glasgow and Bellevue Farmers Markets
- ◆ The Delaware Envirothon
- ◆ Make A Splash Water Festival in Dover
- ◆ Newark Center for the Creative Arts Earth Day Event



Soil Workshop



Make A Splash event and Newark CCA Earth Day event