

2014 ANNUAL REPORT SOIL HEALTH FOR A BETTER FUTURE

New Castle
Conservation District

Our 70th Year

Healthy Soil Key to Farming Success

Robert L. Emerson, Chair

Across the country, there is a renewed emphasis on the importance of healthy soil. A healthy soil is the building block of any farm operation. For the suburban homeowner, soil health is important for growing gardens and maintaining a healthy lawn. Protecting the soil prevents erosion and improves water quality.



New fencing to rotationally graze Boer goats through four pastures



Watering device for the goats

Kathy Klein and wish her well in her future endeavors. We welcomed new Board member Dee Durham

and Cooperative Extension agent Dan Severson who serves as Secretary to the Board.

In 2014, the District Board celebrated three New Castle County "neighbors" for their notable conservation choices:

The Governor's Conservation awards were presented to Filasky's Produce for their stewardship of the family farm and to the University of Delaware for the innovative conservation design of a new building on campus. The District's annual Cooperator-of-the-Year award went to



Rested pasture ready for grazing

Norman and Gwen Pierce for the various conservation practices that have positively changed their goat raising operation.

The District family bid farewell to Board member

As we look forward to 2015, the District will continue to promote the importance of healthy soils and the continual need for education, technical assistance, and financial assistance to help farmers, homeowners, and community leaders install conservation practices on the land.



Norman and Gwen Pierce
2014 Cooperator of the Year



Alan Brangman, V.P. of Facilities, Real Estate, and Auxiliary Services at the University of Delaware (left) for the 2014 Governor's Urban Conservation Award

Five Dike Rehabilitation Projects Completed Coastline Now Protected from Storms

The District administered three million dollars in contracts for the rehabilitation of five aging and damaged dikes along the Delaware River. Besides the two shown, work was completed on Broad Marsh Dike, Gambacorta Marsh Dike, and Army Creek Dike.



Section of Buttonwood Dike



Section of Red Lion Dike



Cindi Filasky for Filasky's Produce - 2014 Governor's Agriculture Conservation Award Recipient

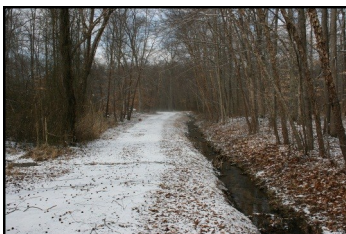


The District provides the services of three drills/seeders for a rental fee. They are a John Deere 1590 drill, a Great Plains drill, and a Brillion SS-8 Seeder. All three pieces of equipment were used to plant 708 acres of crops, hay, or pasture renovation.

Four keys to soil health are:

- ◆ Minimize soil disturbance
- ◆ Energize with diversity
- ◆ Keep the soil covered
- ◆ Maximize living roots

In Fiscal Year 2014, farmers participating in the cover crop program protected 6,343 acres of cropland from potential soil erosion and loss of soil nutrients.



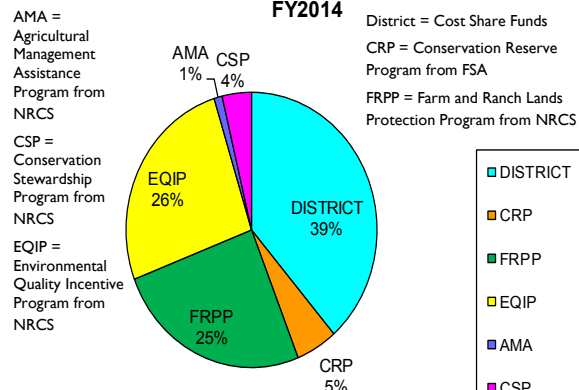
Pencader Tax Ditch inspected after winter mowing



Bio-retention pond at new store in Townsend

Agricultural Programs

**New Castle Conservation District
Agriculture Program Funding 1.3 Million
FY2014**



Top Practices in 2014

Cover Crop - 6,343 acres
Fencing - 5,470 feet
Field Border - 7 acres
Filter Strip - 6 acres
Grade Stabilization Structure - 6
Heavy Use Protection Area - 5
Integrated Pest Management - 3,266 acres
Irrigation Systems - 12 acres
Nutrient Management - 1,936 acres
Ponds - 3
Seasonal High Tunnels - 2
Subsurface Drains - 1,594 feet
Underground outlet - 2,996 feet
Waste Storage Facility - 4
Windbreak/Shelterbelt - 1,570 feet



Conservation Cost-Share Program for Agriculture

There were 65 cost-share applications approved during FY 2014 for agricultural projects. These included 48 applications for cover crop, 12 for water quality projects, one each for erosion control and water management, and one special project for an irrigation pond. Funds were also set aside and used for

dead animal disposal. Some of the funded practices included manure storage, pasture fencing, pasture renovation, drainage tile, roof gutters



for farm structures, and grassed waterways with protected outlets to fix gullies and stop soil erosion.



Fencing for beef cattle

Technical Assistance to Landowners

The District provides assistance in many forms. District staff investigated 220 calls for assistance during the past fiscal year. Some of this assistance leads to applications for assistance through the Conservation Cost-Share Program.

The District survey crew

provides technical assistance for water management projects. Technical and financial assistance is provided on a case by case basis to the tax ditch organizations. The District is the delegated agency to assist 10 communities with meeting the requirements

of the state Sediment and Stormwater Program.



Equipment demonstration



Water Management Program



Drainage project at 5th and Franklin Street in Wilmington



Re-grading an existing swale in Summit Bridge Farms



Existing drainage easement cleaned out and lined with riprap in Breezewood II



Drainage channel partially piped and upper end protected with stone for landowner in Piermont Woods near Newark



Slotted trench drain in driveway of a property in Crestfield, North Wilmington



Healthy soils are essential to our survival. They keep valuable nutrients on the land, where they should be, and out of our streams, lakes, and rivers. They trap and store carbon. Healthy soil is the foundation of sustainable agriculture. We owe our existence to our living and life-giving soil. The projects that are implemented by our farmers and the conservation projects in the urban and suburban areas help to conserve and protect this vital natural resource.

The District's water management program awarded 40 project contracts in FY 2014 with 33 projects constructed and 40 projects receiving final inspections.

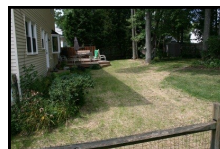
Conservation Cost Share Program in Urban Areas



Trail erosion fixed at Tatnall School off Barley Mill Road

There were 22 approved applications for urban projects. Most were for water

management and erosion control projects. There was also one urban forestry project and two special projects. Most projects involve resolving a drainage issue on the property or stopping soil erosion.



Community open space tree planting in Ballymeade

Backyard re-graded



Erosion fixed in Red Lion Estates



Wall installed to stabilize slope

New Castle Conservation District

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

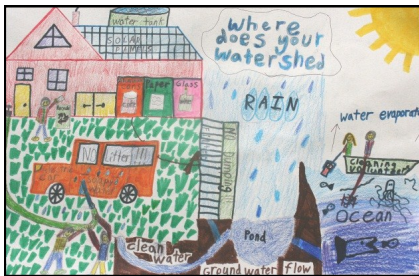
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Richard Morris	Member
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Michael Harris	NCC Executive Rep.
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Eason Li, a student at The Independence School, was the County, State, and National Winner in the conservation poster contest sponsored by the National Association of Conservation Districts along with the Delaware Association of Conservation Districts and NCCD.



EDUCATIONAL OUTREACH



The District participated in many outreach events including Del Tech Earth Day, Ag Day at the University of Delaware, the Christina School District



STEM Expo, The Delaware State Fair, White Clay Creek Fest, Penn Farm Arbor Day, Elsmere Community Garden Open House, Make A Splash



Water Festival, and the Delaware Envirothon program. Educational materials were promoted at the DAEE Environmental Education Conference.



Charter School of Wilmington



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