



# The District Digest



## Meet the Erie County Conservation District Staff

Meet the staff & Directors	Front
County Envirothon	2
2010 Seedling Sale	2
The Color of Green	3
News from NRCS	4
ARRA News	4
Ag BMP Project	5
Survey	5
Up Coming Events	Back

Our District currently has seven employees.

- Earl Brown—District Manager
- Gene Clemente—Resource Conservationist
- Brian Zeppenfeld—Coastal Zone Non Point Source Specialist
- Bethany Fritz—Ag Specialist
- Emily Pritchard—Environmental Education
- Joseph Hudson—Watershed Specialist
- Juliet Jones—Administrative Assistant



Left to Right: Front Row: Juliet Jones, Emily Pritchard, Bethany Fritz Back Row: Joseph Hudson, Gene Clemente, Earl Brown, Brian Zeppenfeld



## Meet the Erie County Conservation District Board of Directors

Our District Board is made up of seven voting members and two Associates.

- John Hallenburg, Jr., Chairman
- Ronald Chapman, Vice-Chairman
- George Peters, Treasurer
- Fathum Rahal, Farm Director
- Sue Moyer, Public Director
- Robert Buhl, Farm Director
- Barry Grossman, County Executive
- Robert Dowler, Assoc. Director
- LeRoy Gross, Assoc. Director



Left to Right: Front Row John Hallenburg,, George Peters, Sue Moyer Back Row: Ron Chapman, Bob Buhl, Earl Brown

## 2010 Erie County Envirothon

On May 6, 2010 the Erie County Conservation District hosted the 20<sup>th</sup> Annual Erie County Envirothon. The Envirothon is devoted to educating high school students about environmental science and natural resource management. The event emphasizes the importance of environmental sensitivity while stressing a need to achieve a social, ecological, and economic balance in life.

The event which took place at Headwaters Park attracted 17

teams from six area high schools including General McLane, North East, Fort LeBoeuf, Northwestern, East, and Seneca High School. Each team competed to receive the highest scores in the traditional subjects of aquatics, forestry, soils, wildlife and, current issue. The first place all-around winners were “Team Greenflash” from North East High School. Led by their advisor John Hallenburg, the team will advance to the

state competition at the PPL Montour Preserve in Danville.

The 2010 Erie County Envirothon was sponsored by the Erie County Conservation District, the Headwaters Park Trust, Porter Consulting Engineers, Waste Management, S.O.N.S. of Lake Erie, Northwest PA Trout Unlimited, and Wegmans. The event was supported by numerous volunteers and organizations including the PA Fish and Boat Commission, the PA Game Commission, the PA Bureau of Forestry, and the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

For more information on this national event visit the Canon Envirothon website at [www.envirothon.org](http://www.envirothon.org).



**2010 Seedling Sale**

Each year Headwaters Natural Resource Trust and the Conservation District conduct a seedling sale. The sale started in February and we accepted orders until the end of March. Seedling pick up was on the last Friday in April at Waterford Fairgrounds. This year we received 411 orders and sold approximately 25,000 seedlings.

The profit generated from the sale is being used to provide scholarships for the winning Envirothon team to attend the Conservation Leadership School. This week-long program enables students to get hands on learning in conservation, wildlife, aquatics, vegetation and leadership.

Proceeds from the sale also help to fund the annual Envirothon. We look forward to exceeding our sales in the upcoming years.

If you would like to be on the mailing list please contact the District.



## The Color of Green

The atmospheric phenomenon of green flash is, by definition, a burst of light occurring shortly after sunset or before sunrise. Rarely witnessed, it flashes a brilliant green flare visible directly above the sun. However to an elite group of individuals from North East, the term green flash means more than the conventional definition. It is a tradition of excellence, dedication, and lifelong learning.

Every spring, hundreds of high school students across the country gather to compete in county Envirothon competitions. The event is a unique and exciting program that combines hands-on outdoor experience with natural resource study. Students study to strengthening their conservation skills before testing their knowledge against peers. Teams compete to win the highest score in the Envirothon test categories of forestry, aquatics, wildlife, soils, and current environmental topic. County winners advance to the state level; state champions proceed to the Canon International Envirothon.

Setting the standards at the Erie County Envirothon has been a North East team titled GreenFlash. John Hallenburg formed the first GreenFlash team in 1991. The group consisted of five Boy Scouts from the North East area. Under his guidance, they placed third at the competition. The following year, carrying the confidence of experience and better studying techniques, the team walked away with the first place trophy. Since then, GreenFlash has lost only one additional county competition.

This year, the GreenFlash team consisted of five North East High School students. Alex Britt, Rebekah Petroff, Fallon Hall, Adam Gleischner, and Lucas Beardsley began their 2010 Envirothon season in early December. "The hardest part of Envirothon is the massive amount of information," states Britt. "It takes time and dedication." As their coach will contest, this year's team was indeed fully dedicated to the event. "I am impressed as to how they adopt the Envirothon as part of their lifestyle," said Hallenburg. In addition to after school and on weekends, the students participated in Ecology Club, volunteered for the International Coastal Clean-up, and attended Penn States' Conservation Leadership School. "My average walk in the woods is no longer just a pretty scenic walk" explains Britt. For example, "I can see, and most importantly, understand why specific trees are there."

GreenFlash placed first in the 20<sup>th</sup> Annual Erie County competition scoring a total 424 points out of 500. The title earned them a spot at the 2010 Pennsylvania Envirothon where they competed against 67 teams from across the state. Pennsylvania is recognized nation-wide as having one of the most difficult and competitive state Envirothon competitions. In fact numerous Pennsylvania teams, GreenFlash included, that have advanced to the Canon International Envirothon have won the entire competition. This year's GreenFlash team courageously battled their way into the third place spot at the state event. Even without advancement, the team had much to be proud of. "The best part of Envirothon is hearing my coach say 'good job'," says Petroff. "When you know your stuff, and he can see it, that's the best feeling."

The knowledge and experience gained through the Envirothon goes beyond high school. Seniors Britt and Petroff will be attending Allegheny College in the fall, majoring in environmental science and biology, respectively. Hall, capitalizing on her skills gained through volunteering and teamwork is entering the AmeriCorps program. Past GreenFlash team members also credit their high school Envirothon experiences to their career choices. They include six professional foresters, three geologists, and a wildlife biologist, marine biologist and past president of the Sierra Club.

As rare as the chances of seeing an atmospheric green flash is the rarity of dedication found in those students both past and present that represent the GreenFlash team. Together they form a tradition of excellence that goes well beyond the Envirothon competition and into a lifelong commitment of environmental stewardship and continued friendship.

Emily Pritchard

Envirothon Coordinator-Erie County

## News from the Natural Resource Conservation Service

Pennsylvania NRCS is assisting with the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) by focusing technical and financial assistance on priority watersheds. Private landowners within these watersheds are encouraged to utilize this assistance to implement conservation activities that will benefit the Great Lakes ecosystem. Through GLRI, financial assistance is available through the NRCS Environmental Quality Incentive program (EQIP) and the Wildlife Habitat Incentive program (WHIP). The resource concerns identified include non-point source pollution from agricultural activities, degradation of wildlife and aquatic habitats, terrestrial invasive species and loss of farmland. The priority area will be the Lake Erie watershed. Contact the Waterford NRCS field office at 814-796-6760 if interested.

## American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA)

In 2009 the Erie County Conservation District (ECCD) received a grant from the ARRA funding to do a Low Volume Road Stormwater Project. The District chose seven dirt roads in six Municipalities to participate. The Municipalities included: Elk Creek, Washington, Conneaut, Waterford, LeBoeuf, and McKean Townships. The roads were chosen because they cut across or were very near stream and flowing wetlands. The roads were high maintenance issues because of their unstable road surface, their inability to support present traffic loads and runoff that was concentrated in parallel road ditches conveyed sediment directly to stream and wetlands.

The initial work involved extensive drainage which utilized additional cross pipes, ditch outlets, subsurface drainage, and French mattresses, through the bank pipes, grade breaks, and belt diverters. When this work was completed the process of Full Depth Restoration was performed on each road. This process includes milling the road, adding Portland cement, and relaying the surface. The road is then sprayed with a sealer. The whole project should be completed late summer of 2010. Once the road is completed the surface runoff and sediment loss will be greatly reduced. Also the dust from the road will be reduced because of the cement and sealer.





## Agricultural Best Management Practices Program

Erie County Conservation District continues to utilize the funding that was acquired through two Growing Greener Grants to launch a program to implement agricultural best management practices (Ag. BMPs) with local landowners. We have 20 landowners currently enrolled in the program and hope to implement over 40 Ag BMPs in the Lake Erie and Ohio River watersheds. In 2009, several Ag BMPs were implemented through this program that include manure storages, waterways, roof run-off controls, fencing, subsurface drainage, and heavy use protection areas. These practices are beneficial to the environment by helping reduce soil erosion and nutrients from entering our waterways. We will continue with these efforts in 2010 and 2011. We are working with additional farmers to implement more Ag BMP's.



### WE WANT YOUR OPINION!

This is our first newsletter and we want your opinion. The District is trying to keep you informed of what is happening in Erie County and we want to know what you would like to see in the future newsletters.

Please take the time to answer the following questions and return them to the District at 1927 Wager Road, Erie, PA 16509 or email your answers to [bethanyfritz@erieconservation.com](mailto:bethanyfritz@erieconservation.com)

1. How did you receive the newsletter?

Email      Mail      Website      Other \_\_\_\_\_

2. Is the length of the newsletter suitable?

3. What types of articles would you like to see in the newsletter?

4. Is there anyone you know that would like to receive our newsletters? Please provide their contact information.

5. Do you have any other suggestions or comments for the District?



Erie County Conservation District

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**Up coming Events**

- July 21, 2010** Teacher Workshop  
Project Food, Land and People
- July 22, 2010** Teacher Workshop  
Agriculture in the Real World
- August 2010** –Public program –Night Hike  
Watch for date
- September 21, 2010** Taste of Harvest
- September 25, 2010** International Coastal  
Cleanup - ECCD at Erie Bluffs 9-Noon
- September 28 - 29, 2010** Dirt & Gravel Roads  
2010 Maintenance Workshop
- October 6, 2010** No Till Field Day
- Jan. - Feb. 2011** Agricultural Schools

**Mission Statement**

*Erie County Conservation District is a service based organization providing for the conservation of natural resources and the creation of a healthy environment. We educate local residents, municipalities, landowners, educators, and organizations that are involved with or concerned about wise environmental stewardship.*

**Vision Statement**

*The Erie County Conservation District strives to become a leading conservation organization in Erie County to provide assistance, management, and education for the wise use of our natural resources.*