



# INDIANA COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT

2021

**A PIVOTAL YEAR**

A scenic photograph of a forest stream with a white text box overlay. The stream flows through a lush green forest, with sunlight filtering through the trees. The text box is centered and contains the mission statement.

## **MISSION:**

Through education, technical assistance, projects, and partnerships, the Indiana County Conservation District will serve as a model in protecting and conserving natural resources to improve the quality of life and local economy for current and future generations.

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# A NATURAL HARMONY

2021 was another year of positive change and advancement for the Indiana County Conservation District. Even as our county and state worked to recover from a historic pandemic, faithful Board members, associates, and staff continued promoting the District's vision, thereby accomplishing significant goals throughout this year of unique challenges and concerns.

In July, we celebrated the completion of construction of the District's headquarters. We marked this special occasion with a ribbon-cutting ceremony for an aesthetically pleasing structure that represents much more than walls, beams, and roof. The District is a pillar of our



*Sherene Hess, ICCD Chairperson  
Indiana County Commissioner*

beautiful county, built through many partnerships within the county and around the region.

With a significant financial investment by our state legislative team and the Indiana County Commissioners, the District will continue to be a leader, serving with an eye to the future while honoring the District's past, one with a rich history of individuals who were committed in their support of farming, protecting soil and water, and educating a variety of ages about our abundant natural resources.

The years of searching for the right site, planning for the right building, and raising the needed funding have come to fruition. Currently, we have executed a myriad of environmental programs and are achieving successes that were only ideas just a short time ago.

Aldo Leopold, who was at the forefront of the conservation movement, wrote that

“conservation is a state of harmony between men and land.” His words capture what the District aims for: a natural harmony between people and the land that we cherish. Achieving that balance is a primary goal. The Indiana County Conservation District will ensure that goal is attained through targeted work with agricultural producers, developers, and community organizations to elevate the importance of soil health, clean water, and smart land use.

We are thankful for those who promoted conservation in past years as well as those modern-day individuals who contribute significantly to the movement. Current district board members invest their time and energy in the task of governing a local conservation district. Without this Board, we would not have a functioning, effective conservation district.

As Chair of the Indiana County Conservation District, I am proud to speak of their work and pledge to do all I can to make sure that the local community knows how much their investment is valued and appreciated.

Every one of our conservation district employees cares deeply about the mission and values of this conservation district. Their passionate collective concern is for helping others become responsible stewards of our precious natural resources and people. Therefore, it is my sincere privilege to be part of their work which is vital to the success of the Indiana County community.

Noted forester and conservationist Gifford Pinchot said, "Unless we practice conservation, those who come after us will have to pay the price of misery, degradation, and failure for the progress and prosperity of our day."

Thankfully the Indiana County

Conservation District staff and Board of Directors fully understand this advisory and the important role our conservation team plays in making sure that the future generations of Indiana County citizens will not suffer for misguided judgments of past practices. We nevertheless can be certain that the current leadership is working collaboratively to make sound, environmentally sustainable decisions and to provide accurate technical assistance.

I was honored and pleased to have chaired the District in 2021. As we welcome 2022, I hope my service will contribute to further growth and to a multitude of harmonious relationships fostered by this conservation district.



Sherene Hess, Chair, ICCD  
Indiana County Commissioner



## LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The year 2021 was a turning point in the history of the District. Although still dealing with the continuing effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, the District was able to push forward in a way that will forever improve the effectiveness of the agency.

This year can be considered a year of many firsts. In 2021, the District finished construction of its new base of operations, a permanent home to advance future conservation efforts. This achievement will create organizational stability and consistency, while enabling the District staff to be successful in working towards accomplishing the District's mission.



*Douglas Beri Jr., ICCD Executive Director*

For the first time in 75 years, the District completed a strategic plan. This plan involved public input surveys and participation, followed by workgroup meetings to iron out future goals, objectives, and actions. The finished product details a robust and complete approach for bringing the District forward while accomplishing the needs of the communities we serve.

In an effort to better market the District, staff worked with a videographer to develop our first "get to know us" video. It outlined our various programs and included great shots of Indiana County and the natural resources we conserve.

2021 also saw changes in staff and our Board of Directors, with new talent taking the lead to move our District forward. We hired our first District Educator to provide educational

programming to youth and adults on conserving natural resources.

2021 has been a pivotal point in the history of the Conservation District. All of these firsts enable us to continue to deliver and expand on our conservation efforts within Indiana County. Our dedicated team of staff, Board members, and Associate Directors now have new tools to help build a future that is sustainable for both the District and our county.

Kind Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Douglas M. Beri Jr." The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Douglas M. Beri Jr.  
Executive Director

# CUTTING THE RIBBON



The District's new office and Discovery Center began with a ground breaking ceremony on a cold December morning in 2019. Contractors began working on the facility shortly thereafter and continued throughout 2020, during which conditions were subject to change due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Perseverance prevailed and by July of 2021, the new building was complete. On July 22, 2021, District staff, board members, and others who were instrumental in the project cut the ribbon to officially open the new office and Discovery Center.

The new facility has given District staff an opportunity to stretch the reaches of their programs by filling educational gaps in the community in the subjects of conservation, natural resource management, and agriculture. In 2021, the District completed a master landscape design plan and procured funding to implement a variety of native plantings, community gardens, pollinator meadows, and hops. The grounds will be continually used to facilitate educational programs.



Boy Scout Troop 1029 Performing a Flag Raising Ceremony



Completed ICCD Office and Discovery Center

# DIRT/GRAVEL AND LOW VOLUME ROADS



Every year ICCD works with public road owners through the Dirt/Gravel, & Low Volume Roads (DGLVR) Maintenance Program. In 2021, ICCD funded ten road projects in seven municipalities to minimize roadway impacts on streams, while also decreasing long-term maintenance costs. In 2021, ICCD invested over \$553,000 to fund dirt and gravel road improvements and another \$135,000 to fund low-volume road improvements.

## PROJECT SPOTLIGHT

### Washington Township, Brewer Road



Before



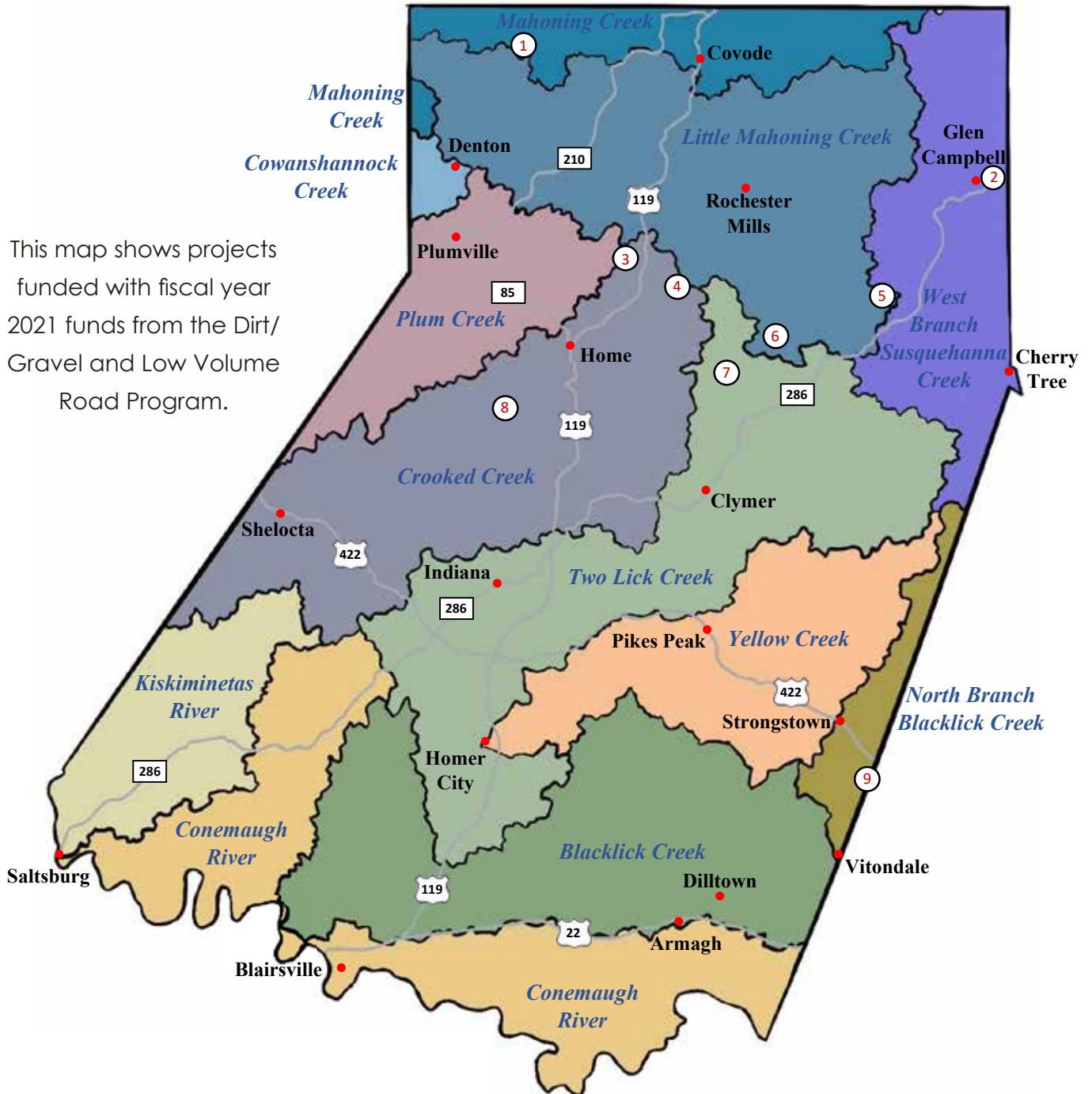
After

Brewer Road was a classic dirt and gravel road project. It suffered from insufficient drainage and severe road entrenchment. On the entire project site, there were only two crosspipes that routinely plugged with debris because the road was lower than surrounding earth. To fix the roadway concerns, the Township worked with a contractor to raise the entire road profile with nearly 3,400 tons of fill in order to put in six new crosspipes and upsize the two existing crosspipes. Now, the roadway has enough stormwater infrastructure to handle heavy rain and annual leaf drop. This is a great example of how a capital investment in a road can reduce maintenance costs for decades. The project was funded with \$95,284 from ICCD Dirt and Gravel grant funds and \$2,481 in township in-kind contributions.



# 2021 DGLVR PROJECTS

This map shows projects funded with fiscal year 2021 funds from the Dirt/Gravel and Low Volume Road Program.



- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1. West Mahoning Township, North Point Park Road | 6. Grant Township, Magnolia Road           |
| 2. East Mahoning Township, Pollock Road          | 7. Green Township, Pear Road               |
| 3. East Mahoning Township, Decker's Point Road   | 8. Rayne Township, Chambersville Hill Road |
| 4. Grant Township, Lentz Road                    | 9. Buffington Township, Red Mill Road      |
| 5. Glen Campbell Borough, Graham Street          |  |

## Dirt/Gravel and Low Volume Roads

# PROJECT SPOTLIGHT

### Green Township, Two Lick Hill Road

Two Lick Hill Road runs between South Branch of Two Lick Creek and a large wetland, making it a logistically difficult site. During heavy rains, the roadway acted as a dam and would overtop due to high groundwater table and insufficient drainage through the entire section of road. The watershed is considered high quality and has a native trout population, making it a great fit for dirt and gravel road grant funds. To fix the roadway concerns, the township worked with a contractor to drastically increase drainage through the roadway.



*Before installing stream crossing*

### Roadway Driving Surface



*Before*



*After*



Building the stream pipe



Installing french mattress



After installing stream crossing

## PROJECT SUMMARY AND RESULTS

The project included replacing a three-foot stream pipe on an unnamed tributary to South Branch Two Lick Creek with a 14-foot box culvert, improving a wetland crossing pipe with a four-foot squash pipe (previously 24 inches), and installing a 158 square yard French mattress in between the two. Green Township also worked with the adjacent landowner in order to install three stabilization structures for high flow events.

## FUNDING SOURCES AND PROJECT COSTS

\$112,872.34 — ICCD Dirt & Gravel Road grant funds

\$1,097 – Green Township in-kind contributions

# Dirt/Gravel and Low Volume Roads PROJECT SPOTLIGHT

## Grant Township, Magnolia Road

Magnolia Road was a traditional dirt and gravel road project. This road suffered from insufficient drainage and a poor-quality clay road base that rutted every wet season. Magnolia Road was a high priority for the District to fund because it drains to an unnamed tributary to the Little Mahoning Creek, a high quality stream. To fix the roadway concerns, Grant Township worked with a contractor to address stormwater, groundwater, and road base issues. This is a great example of quality DGLVR improvements to Indiana County rural road infrastructure. Phase Two of the project is scheduled for 2022 to cap the fill (slate rock) with a limestone aggregate.



Before



After

### PROJECT SUMMARY AND RESULTS

The project included replacing four existing crosspipes (mostly rusted out steel), adding seven new crosspipes to break up stormwater flows, installing 420 feet of underdrain to catch springs off a strip-mined area, capping the clay base with 2,840 tons of fill and raising the road to shed water, and significantly improving the small stream crossing from an 18-inch pipe to a nearly six-foot wide squash pipe. The stream pipe was installed to mimic the natural conditions of the stream and was filled with streambed material through the entire pipe.

### FUNDING SOURCES AND PROJECT COSTS

\$82,218.75 — ICCD Dirt/Gravel Road grant funds

\$17,843.24 — Grant Township in-kind contributions



## **VISION:**

The Indiana County Conservation District is a trusted leader in influencing environmental improvements and innovations, while stimulating county-wide economic viability through natural resource management and education. We envision an informed and engaged public that works toward an economically and environmentally sustainable future.

# AGRICULTURE

Agriculture is a key cornerstone of the foundation of the District. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Indiana County has 951 farms that comprise a total of 148,288 acres, with 58% being used for crops compared to 42% for livestock, poultry, and other products. Even with the ongoing impacts of the COVID-19 Pandemic, the District continued to provide technical assistance to agricultural producers in the county.

In partnership with the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), the District provided technical assistance and program availability visits to farmers throughout the county regarding drought management, best management practices, soil health, and funding assistance. Additionally, several farm visits were conducted to provide manure management assistance and Resource Enhancement and Protection Program (REAP) application guidance.

Farming remains one of the most important industries in Indiana County. The District continues to serve our farming community by implementing best management practices to reduce soil and nutrient loss, thereby making the farm more profitable while cleaning up our streams in the process.



This operator is experiencing major runoff issues that are creating a gully (pictured above), eroding soil and allowing sediment to reach a nearby stream. As a temporary measure, the farmer has placed hay bales to try and slow the speed of water. ICCD is working with the farmer to create a permanent solution that will allow him to utilize the pasture.



Pictured above is a crop field next to Crooked Creek that is being washed away by an eroding streambank. ICCD staff visited the site with NRCS representatives to evaluate potential solutions. Fixing this issue will require miles of streambank stabilization.

## Agriculture

# PROJECT SPOTLIGHT

## Urban Agriculture



*Before*



*After*

As one strolls through the grounds of Mack Park, the colorful flowers of the pollinator meadow nod in the gentle summer breeze. It is an escape into serenity, one that offers abundant opportunities for watching butterflies and bees enjoying the lush garden of blooms. It is easy to observe the success of 2020's Phase One of the meadow project since the completion of its planting and its natural progression to Phase Two.

In 2021, Phase Two of the Urban Agriculture Grant focused on planning and providing educational outreach activities. The continuation of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2021, however, posed additional challenges for in-person community outreach workshops. To overcome these challenges, the District created a webinar series designed to educate participants on the general topic of gardening. The first in the series was "Backyard Conservation" which informed property owners on how to best implement conservation practices. "Starting a Community Garden," the second webinar, focused on the benefits of having a local community garden. The third webinar in the series, "Ramping Up for Spring: Garden & Soil Conservation," helped participants learn about the process of preparing ground for gardening. "Multi-Purpose Flower Gardens and Rain Garden Basics" was the final webinar in the

series, and it was produced in cooperation with the Mercer County Conservation District. These interesting and informative webinars have been uploaded to the District's YouTube channel for easy access for anyone hoping to improve their gardening skills. With the accomplishment of Phase Two, the District proved its versatility to educate the public beyond traditional in-person workshops with the production of these webinars.

As COVID restrictions eased, the District participated in additional outreach opportunities by conducting a pollinator tour at Yellow Creek State Park, a butterfly ID workshop, and a pollinator family fun event at the Indiana Community Gardens. All events were well attended and included community participants from a wide range of age groups.

According to Executive Director Doug Beri Jr., these virtual and in-person workshops help ICCD work toward achieving several of their urban agricultural goals: "We need to not only create community gardens but also teach people in underserved communities how to garden and how to use the produce that they harvest. Our staff is working to increase the District's presence and role in urban agriculture in Indiana County."



## PROJECT SUMMARY AND RESULTS

- District staff partnered with the Indiana Community Garden at Mack Park to create a 5,812 square foot pollinator meadow to serve as a community demonstration while supporting pollinator habitat and increasing crop yields for existing edible garden plots.
- District staff held three Urban Agriculture webinars focused on backyard conservation in 2020 and 2021. Participants learned how to prepare gardens for the winter, as well as the purposes and progress of riparian buffers in the region. Over 60 participants attended the webinars or viewed the recordings.

## FUNDING SOURCES AND PROJECT COSTS

\$28,769.92— National Association of Conservation Districts

## PROJECT PARTNERS

Indiana County Conservation District, Indiana Community Garden, National Association of Conservation Districts, Mack Park



# PROJECT SPOTLIGHT

## Poverty Hill Farm, West Wheatfield Township



Before



After

Visitors to the peaceful yet stunning scenery of Buttermilk Falls will notice the improved clarity of the flowing water thanks to the restoration techniques used on Hires Run. The project's expected environmental results are the prevention of an estimated 8.6 tons of sediment from entering Hires Run each year.

By applying best management practices, ICCD was able to stabilize the streambanks and reduce erosion and nutrient loading from livestock operations. Specifically, restricting cattle from nearby Poverty Hill Farm from having access to the stream resulted in countless immediate benefits to overall improvement of the water quality and health of Buttermilk Falls. The project also included the planting of a forested riparian buffer which will provide continued protection for the health of the stream for years to come.

The final phase of the project was to install an educational sign in the parking lot. The goal with this sign is to provide visitors to Buttermilk Falls with information on keeping water clean. The improved water quality of Hires Run and Buttermilk Falls attest to the success of this project. It is important for ICCD to ensure that Indiana County's streams are clean and healthy for our communities. As conservationist John Muir stated, "The sun shines not on us, but in us. The rivers flow not past, but through us."

### FUNDING SOURCES

\$88,152 — Department of Environmental Protection Mariner East 2 Pipeline Penalty Funds

# WATERSHEDS

A watershed is an area of land that drains into a common body of water. Everyone lives in a watershed! Indiana County has an abundance of flowing freshwater; however, much of it is plagued with pollution. The District works to address sources of pollution, including abandoned mine drainage, sediment, and nutrients. Every year the District conducts watershed assessments, develops implementation plans, oversees restoration projects, provides capacity-building technical assistance to watershed organizations, and conducts public education and outreach events.

In 2021, the District provided technical assistance to Indiana County's eight watershed associations, as well as the Ken Sink Chapter of Trout Unlimited and Conemaugh Valley Conservancy. We also worked to plan several future projects and were awarded over \$131,000 from the Department of Environmental Protection's Growing Greener Plus program to assess the Upper Two Lick Watershed and an additional \$80,000 from the U.S. Office of Surface Mining to cover construction costs associated with the Lucerne 3A Passive Treatment System.



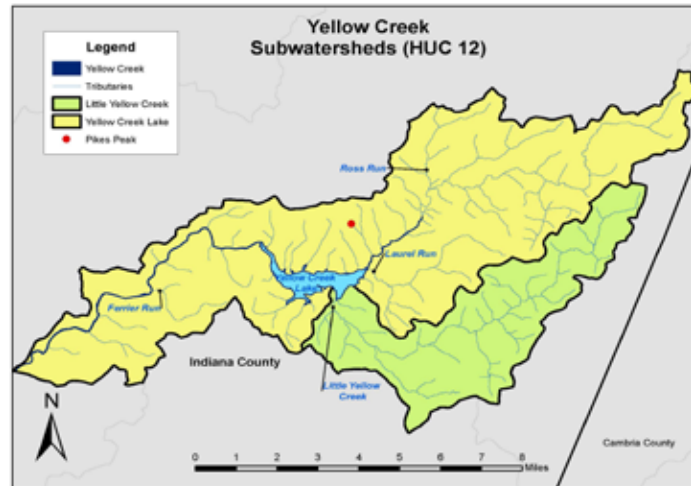
## Watersheds

# PROJECT SPOTLIGHT

## Yellow Creek QHUP

"Nature is always lovely, invincible, glad, whatever is done and suffered by her creatures. All scars she heals, whether in rocks or water or sky or hearts." - from *John of the Mountains: The Unpublished Journals of John Muir*, (1938), p. 337. The quality of the Yellow Creek watershed has suffered from the pollution of abandoned mine drainage (AMD) over many years. As a result of high acidity levels and heavy metal concentrations, streams in this watershed have been devoid of macroinvertebrates and other aquatic life.

A team of staff and volunteers have conducted quarterly water sampling events throughout the watershed to determine sources of AMD pollutants and the severity of impairments. Hedin Environmental is currently working to compile this data and provide a detailed assessment of the watershed's health. Once completed, ICCD will use the water quality assessment to develop a remediation plan designed to restore Yellow Creek's natural vitality and ability to sustain a variety and abundance of aquatic life.



Map of Yellow Creek Watershed



Yellow Creek Lake

## FUNDING SOURCES AND PROJECT COSTS

\$83,624— Department of Environmental Protection Growing Greener Plus

## PROJECT PARTNERS

Blacklick Creek Watershed Association, Indiana County Conservation District, PA Department of Environmental Protection, Saint Francis University Center for Watershed Research and Service, Conemaugh Valley Conservancy, Pennsylvania Mountain Service Corps AmeriCorps, Hedin Environmental, Indiana University of Pennsylvania, Indiana County Chapter of Pennsylvania Senior Environment Corps.

# PROJECT SPOTLIGHT

## Lucerne 3A/Waterworks Treatment System

No one steps in the same river twice. Philosophers and writers alike have acknowledged the fact that change happens in life. Seasons change. People change. Streams change. The overall goal of the Lucerne 3A passive treatment project is to purposefully change and thereby improve the quality of stream water entering Two Lick Creek.

The major root of the problem, located at the site of the Waterworks Conservation Area, is where the Lucerne 3A abandoned mine discharge flows into Two Lick Creek. Years ago, a lime doser treatment system was installed and, although it has reduced abandoned mine drainage (AMD) pollution, this system has posed considerable maintenance and financial challenges.



Lucerne 3A Discharge



Lime Dosing Silo



Settling Pond

Since the Lucerne 3A abandoned mine discharge is a significant source of pollutants, District team members collaborated with Stream Restoration, Inc., to determine another feasible solution. The result was a water rehabilitation system that utilizes a series of passive treatment ponds. The series of settling ponds are designed to collect contaminated AMD sludge and is expected to be a more effective method in reducing heavy metal contaminants before the discharge enters Two Lick Creek.



Two Lick Creek

Once it is fully operational, the Lucerne 3A Waterworks Passive Treatment system promises to fulfill ICCD's goal of creating a cleaner Two Lick Creek, potentially impacting an impressive 6.5 mile stretch of the creek. The return of healthy water will ripple with countless benefits for the viability of aquatic organisms and fish, and for outdoor enthusiasts and anglers who enjoy all that Two Lick Creek has to offer. Yes, the water quality of the Two Lick will never be the same; it will be changed – for the better!

## PROJECT SUMMARY

- Pre/Post Water Quality Monitoring
- Final Design and Permitting
- Remove existing system and install new passive system containing two vertical flow ponds and an anerobic wetland.

## FUNDING SOURCES

\$491,515 - PA Department of Environmental Protection Growing Greener Grant Program

\$80,000 - U.S. Office of Surface Mining WCAP Program

\$18,000 - Foundation for PA Watersheds

## PROJECT PARTNERS

Indiana County Conservation District, Blacklick Creek Watershed Association, Foundation for PA Watersheds, Ken Sink Chapter of Trout Unlimited, PA Department of Environmental Protection, U.S. Office of Surface Mining.

# PERMITTING

An economically important program at the District is permitting. Pennsylvania Chapter 105 (Water Obstruction & Encroachments) and Pennsylvania Chapter 102/National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) are the two programs in which permits are issued through the District office. Keeping permitting at the local level ensures that applications are processed in a timely manner, allowing important development projects to move forward on schedule, which drives sustained economic development in the county. In 2020, the District processed 62 total permit applications in both program areas.

## Permitting Chapter 105

### Water Obstruction and Encroachment

*Pennsylvania's Dam Safety and Encroachments Act (25 PA Administrative Code Chapter 105):*

Every year, the District processes dozens of permit applications for activities that may impact a waterway such as a stream, wetland, floodway, or other body of water. This is crucial to ensure that projects do not have negative impacts on waterways while reducing flood risk.

- Chapter 105 General permits are needed for any work that impacts a stream.
- This type of work includes construction, stream crossing culverts, retaining walls, fish habitat structures, agricultural crossings, utility line crossings, and other obstructions and encroachments.
- Chapter 105 general permits protect and prevent aquatic ecosystems and wetlands from any threats that these encroachments may present, such as sedimentation and barriers to aquatic organism passage.



*Unpermitted stream crossing that was installed correctly*

#### Acknowledged Chapter 105 Permits

- **GP1: 3** (fish habitat enhancement structures)
- **GP2: 1** (small docks and boat launching ramps)
- **GP3: 3** (bank rehab/protection, gravel bar removal)
- **GP4: 2** (intake/outfall structures)
- **GP5: 39** (utility line stream crossing)
- **GP7: 6** (minor road crossing)
- **GP8: 8** (temporary road crossing)
- **GP9: 1** (agricultural activities)

## Permitting

# Chapter 102 - NPDES

## Earth Disturbance

### *Erosion and Sediment Control Program (25 PA Code Chapter 102)*

Pennsylvania Chapter 102 and Federal National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) regulations exist to reduce the impacts of development on waterways. Sediment is the leading cause of pollution in waterways with accelerated erosion from human use of land making up 70% of the total sediment deposition in rivers, streams, lakes and reservoirs.

Best Management Practices (BMPs) are required to be installed and properly maintained on construction sites. Two of the most commonly used BMPs are compost filter sock and silt fence. BMPs are used to filter sediment from storm water that may leave the site and prevent it from entering the waters of the Commonwealth. Conservation districts issue NPDES permits and inspect BMPs on construction sites.

In 2021, the Indiana County Conservation District processed 10 NPDES permit applications which included projects for Pennsylvania Electric Company Glory Substation Expansion, Texas Eastern Transmission, LP Conemaugh River Crossing Project, New Florence Dollar General, Josephine Dollar General, PennDOT - S.R. 0422 Mentch Bridges, Peoples Natural Gas Indiana Shop Lot, Modwash Indian Springs, Highridge Water Authority SR 56 Waterline Extension, Highridge Water Authority SR 217 Waterline Extension, White Township Municipal Authority SR 286 East Sanitary Sewer Extension and Pump Station, and the Saltsburg Dollar General.



*Non-functioning Rain Garden*



*Rock Construction Entrance*



*Silt Fence*

# EDUCATION

Education is one of the most important components of the District's operations. The District does both adult and youth education which includes hosting manure management workshops, trainings for municipal officials on road maintenance practices, urban agriculture workshops, environmental workshops, and, most notably, the Junior and Senior County Envirothons.

## 2021 Senior Envirothon (Spring)

Accept a Natural Challenge! That's what the Indiana County Conservation District invites county students to do each year at the annual Envirothon. However, due to COVID-19 restrictions, teams participated in a virtual event in 2021. Utilizing online meeting platforms and social distancing, students worked together to compete in the 2021 Sr. Envirothon. Twenty-one teams from Blairsville, Hilltop Baptist Homeschool Co-Op, Homeschoolers for Christ Co-Op, Homer Center, Indiana, Marion Center, Penns Manor, Purchase Line, Saltsburg, and United High Schools, participated in the competition.

Five member teams were challenged in a series of tests that focused on aquatic ecology, forestry, soils and land use, wildlife, and a current environmental issue, which was "Water Resource Management – Local Control and Local Solutions."

First place was earned by the Homeschoolers for Christ Co-Op, and second place went to Hilltop Baptist Homeschool Co-Op. Placing third was Marion Center's Bee Hive Five. The Home Schoolers for Christ Co-Op advanced to compete against teams from counties across Pennsylvania. Indiana County's Homeschoolers for Christ



*Homeschoolers for Christ Co-op  
Andy Bertolion, Bergen Spencer, Joseph Pumford  
Lily Shilling, and Elizabeth Bruner*

Co-Op team comprised of Andy Bertolino, Elizabeth Bruner, Joseph Pumford, Lily Shilling, and Bergen Spencer was among those who qualified to participate in the oral presentation. These outstanding students eventually placed 15th overall in the state competition.

Each of the five members of the winning team was awarded a \$500 David S. Frick Envirothon Education Grant from ICCD to be used toward post-secondary education. Students in Indiana County have earned an impressive \$36,500 in Envirothon education grants since the grant program began.



# 2021 Junior Envirothon (Fall)

Seventy-five students comprising 15 teams from Indiana County schools participated in the virtual Junior Envirothon competition. Students represented the following homeschool and public school districts: Hilltop Baptist Homeschoolers Co-Op, Homeschoolers for Christ Co-Op, Homer Center, Penns Manor, Purchase Line, and United.

ICCD staff and agency partners created and uploaded video lessons on "Succession" on ICCD's YouTube channel. On competition day, teams were provided with links to the videos, and then, after watching each video lesson, students would complete an online test about each lesson.

All lessons in the video series focused on the theme of succession. For example, the Current Issue station focused on biodiversity and its impact on succession. The Aquatic Ecology station featured stream order and how stream succession takes place due to the confluence of waterways. The Forestry station taught students about forest succession from stand initiation to steady state. The Soils and Land Use lesson taught students about how soil is transformed through succession from lava to soil. Lastly, the Wildlife station taught students about how ecological succession affects wildlife.

In the seventh-grade category, students from Marion Center School District earned first place; Penns Manor, second; and United Blue, third. In the 8th grade category, United White earned first place with second place going to Homeschoolers for Christ Co-Op, and third to United Blue.



United White Team Testing



United White Team



Education

# 2021 Envirothon



## Thank You, Financial Contributors

Thanks to the generous outpouring of community support, the Indiana County Conservation District was able to raise \$5,350 to support the 2021 Junior and Senior Envirothon competitions, as well as the David S. Frick Scholarship Fund. Without this support, we would not be able to make the Indiana County Envirothon such an invaluable community educational program!

### FOUNDATION SUPPORT

- Bork Family Fund, Community Foundation For The Alleghenies

### CORPORATE SUPPORT

- Gibson-Thomas Engineering Co., Inc.
- J.H. Hickman Surveying LLC - Mecall Services
- Elderton State Bank
- Catalone Pipe & Supply Co.
- Lias Tire, Inc.
- Stiffler, McGraw and Associates, Inc.
- Keller Engineers, Inc.

### COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION SUPPORT

- PA Envirothon
- Indiana County Farm Bureau
- Blacklick Creek Watershed Association
- Dilltown Sportsmans Club
- Crooked Creek Watershed Association
- Indiana Moose Lodge # 174

### INDIVIDUAL SUPPORT

- Sherene Hess, Cindy Rogers, Joe and Arlene Yackuboskey, Edward and Sherrill Kuckuck, Charles and Regan Houser, Susan Bowers, Douglas M. Beri Jr., Jim Resh, Herbert Pollock, Vincent Receski, Tammie Robinson, Donald and Florence Bothell



# STRATEGIC PLANNING

The Indiana County Conservation District (ICCD) Board of Directors and staff identified the need to undergo a strategic planning process. In its history, ICCD had never developed a strategic plan prior to this effort, and organizational leaders felt such an endeavor was necessary to identify the goals and vision for the District's programming.

The five-year strategic plan identifies the District's priorities and lays out its steps to achieve the goals. The plan was created through a facilitated strategic planning process that involved the District's Board of Directors, leaders, staff, stakeholders, and community.

ICCD contracted with Rita Graham of Coleman-Graham as the facilitator to guide the District through the planning process. The steering committee, comprised of directors, associate directors, and staff worked with the facilitator throughout the planning process and monitored the progress of the effort.



*Stakeholder Meeting*

The steering committee conducted seven meetings to work on the various phases of the planning process. Survey Monkey was used to conduct an online public survey to solicit input on critical resource issues and the role of the District in the community. An organizational assessment was conducted using staff and board surveys, and a facilitated stakeholder meeting was held on July 13, 2021.

The plan that was developed is intended to be a living document. The District's mission and its responsibilities include areas that are subject to rapid change in today's world. Conservation, technology, and forms of communication are just a few examples. As the District fulfills its role and adapts to change, this document will serve as a guide, helping to keep the District focused and providing markers by which it can measure its progress toward meeting its goals and mission.

Funding for this project was made possible in part through a \$1,500 grant from the Pennsylvania Association of Conservation Districts.



*Stakeholder Meeting*



# FRIENDS

## of the Indiana County Conservation District

In 2021, ICCD formally created the Friends of the Indiana County Conservation District organization, which will eventually be incorporated into a 501c3 non-profit organization. Through fundraising, outreach, network development, and other capacity-building activities, this organization supports the environmental, recreational, and economic development efforts of the Indiana County Conservation District. Several of the current efforts are detailed below.

### Thank a Farmer Dash

Every year, on the Saturday before Thanksgiving, Friends of ICCD holds the Annual Thank a Farmer Dash to raise money to support the Cambria & Indiana County Farmer Fund which provides small grants to agricultural producers for business plan development and sustainable practices. The 2021 race was held on November 20th, with 28 participants.



2021 Race Day Participants



### Green Drinks

What is Green Drinks Indiana? It's a recurring networking and happy hour on the fourth Wednesday of every month at 5:30 p.m. Each month, the event is held at a different location and benefits a different, local, environmentally friendly or "green" project or organization. The vibe is informal, fun, and the aim is for you to meet like-minded locals while supporting a great cause! No RSVP needed —just come!

## Education Center Fund

We are currently looking for donations to support the development of our grounds and discovery center for educational purposes. Financial contributions support plantings, community gardens, wildlife care, an environmental library, and educational programs. Non-cash contributions of conservation and agricultural books and taxidermy are also being accepted.



ICCD Community Gardens



ICCD Memorial Trees

## Memorial Trees

The Indiana County Conservation District Memorial Tree Program offers participants an opportunity to honor a loved one or to remember a special event by donating a tree to be planted on our education center grounds. These trees will serve purposes for forestry and native plant education while providing critical habitat for local wildlife. Growing for hundreds of years, trees are a long-lasting, living memorial or tribute.

## Envirothon Scholarships

Help us reach our annual grant award goal of \$2,500! Tax-deductible contributions to this fund support \$500 grants to each member of the winning team of the Indiana County Senior Envirothon. We are partnering with the Community Foundation for the Alleghenies to administer our grant fund.



Students participating in Sr. Envirothon

**For more information on how to contribute to any of our funds, visit our webpage at:**

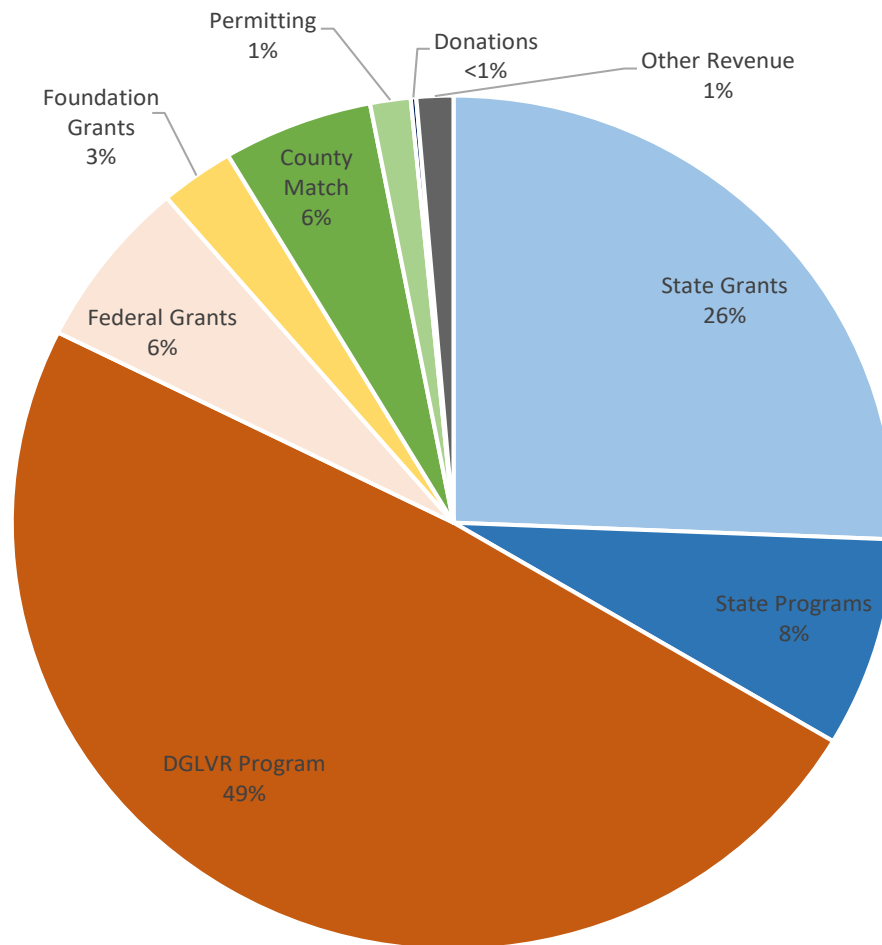
**<https://www.iccdpa.org/friends-of-iccd>**

**Contributions to any of our funds are tax-deductible.**

# FINANCIALS

The Indiana County Conservation District is not only focused on being good stewards of the environment, but also on being good stewards of financial and taxpayer resources. We ensure the maximum amount of funding goes to on-the-ground projects and programs. This enables us to deliver exceptional program results that make Indiana County a better place to live, work, and play.

## District Income



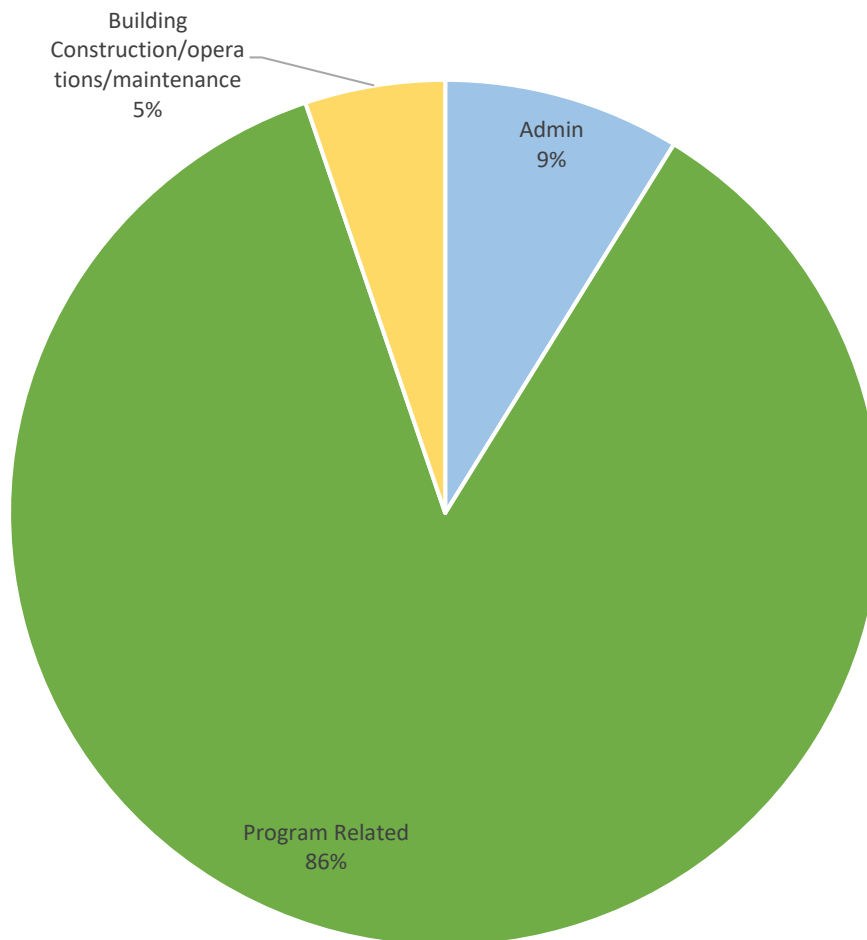
**\$1.66  
Million**

In 2021, the District brought in over \$1.66 million in funds from outside the county, comprised of money from various regional, state, and federal programs and grants. This money directly benefits Indiana County residents through implementation of conservation projects and programs.

# 9%

In 2021, only 9% of District expenditures were for administrative overhead costs. If following the Charity Watch metrics, this would grant us an A+ rating. This rating metric is given when less than 10% of funds are used for administrative overhead. This shows the District has remained committed to being a responsible steward of taxpayer resources.

## District Expenses



In 2021, **for every \$1.00 of county funds contributed, the District brought in \$17.20 in matching funds** from state, federal, and regional programs that would otherwise not have benefited Indiana County. This is a \$3.70 increase in return on investment from 2020. Investment in the Indiana County Conservation District is a great investment in Indiana County!

# WHO WE ARE

## District Staff



### **Pictured From Left to Right**

- Taylor Hudzicki, Intern
- Tamathy Stage, PMSC AmeriCorps Member
- Marisa Matlin, Agriculture Specialist
- Samantha Dull, Resource Conservation Technician
- Nancy Clawson, Office Assistant
- Tammie Robinson, Office Administrator
- Douglas Beri Jr., Executive Director
- Brooke Russick, DGLVR Program Specialist
- Monica Lee, District Educator
- Robert Sabo, Watershed Specialist
- Tyler Chapman, PMSC AmeriCorps Member

### **Not Pictured**

- Nola Barton, PMSC AmeriCorps Member
- Anna McGonnell, PMSC AmeriCorps Member
- Curtis Swiantek, Agriculture Specialist





# WHO WE ARE

## District Board



### Pictured From Left to Right

- Scott Overdorff, Former Director
- John Somonick, Associate Director
- Sherene Hess, Commissioner Director
- Gregg VanHorn, Rural Director
- Beth Marshall, Rural Director
- Richard Stumpf, Public Director
- Janis Long, Public Director
- Cindy Rogers, Associate Director
- Ted Kuckuck, Former Director
- Rod Ruddock, Former Commissioner Director
- Thomas Beresnyak, Associate Director

### Not Pictured

- Vincent Receski, Rural Director
- Aaron Simpson, Rural Director
- Craig Andrie, Associate Director
- Karin Eller, Associate Director
- Sara King, Associate Director



# 2022 PERSONNEL

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**SHERENE HESS**

*CHAIRPERSON / COMMISSIONER*

**RICHARD STUMPF**

*VICE-CHAIRPERSON / PUBLIC*

**AARON SIMPSON**

*TREASURER / RURAL*

**JANIS LONG**

*PUBLIC DIRECTOR*

**GREGG VANHORN**

*RURAL DIRECTOR*

**CRAIG ANDRIE**

*RURAL DIRECTOR*

**VINCENT RECESKI**

*RURAL DIRECTOR*

## ASSOCIATE DIRECTORS

**DOYLE FREEMAN**

**ALYSHA TREXLER**

**CINDY ROGERS**

**JOE YACKUBOSKEY**

**JOHN SOMONICK**

**SARA KING**

**THOMAS BERESNYAK JR.**

**HUNTER OVERDORFF**

## DISTRICT STAFF

**DOUGLAS M BERI JR.**

*DISTRICT MANAGER*

**TAMMIE ROBINSON**

*OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR /  
ENVIROTHON COORDINATOR*

**NANCY CLAWSON**

*OFFICE ASSISTANT*

**MONICA LEE**

*District Educator*

**BROOKE RUSSICK**

*DGLVR PROGRAM SPECIALIST*

**Marisa Matlin**

*AGRICULTURE CONSERVATION  
SPECIALIST*

**SAMANTHA DULL**

*RESOURCE CONSERVATION  
TECHNICIAN*

**ROBERT SABO**

*WATERSHED SPECIALIST*

**Anna McGonnell**

*PROJECT ASSISTANT / PMSC  
AMERICORPS MEMBER*

**Nola Barton**

*EDUCATION AND OUTREACH  
COORDINATOR / PMSC AMERICORPS  
MEMBER*

# 2021 PERSONNEL

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**Beth Marshall**

*Vice-Chairperson/Farmer*

## District Staff

**Curtis Swiantek**

*Agriculture Conservation Specialist*

# CONTACT US

**INDIANA COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT**

435 Hamill Road  
Indiana, PA 15701

724-471-4751

[info@iccdpa.org](mailto:info@iccdpa.org)

[www.iccdpa.org](http://www.iccdpa.org)



# 2021 PHOTO MONTAGE



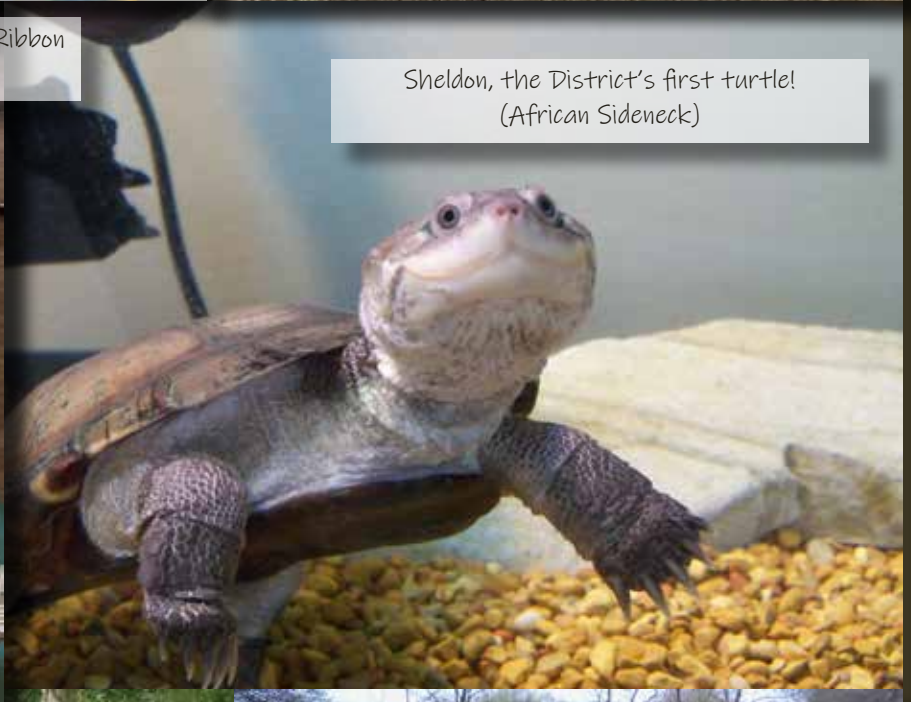
United Elementary students participating in a Turkey Talk program



Participants in ICCD's 2021 Educational Bus Tour learning about the Stupic Farm Project



The awesome food spread for ICCD's Ribbon Cutting Ceremony



Sheldon, the District's first turtle!  
(African Sideneck)



Constructing a stream crossing on Weirs Run in Burrell Township



Riparian buffer planting, totaling 3/4 of an Acre, at Mother Earth Farm



Indiana County Conservation District  
435 Hamill Road  
Indiana, PA 15701

[www.iccdpa.org](http://www.iccdpa.org)

<https://www.facebook.com/iccdpa/>

