2014
Annual Report
The Kent Conservation District’s mission is to put each acre of land to the use for which it is best suited and to economically develop and improve our environment to its highest potential according to sound planning and conservation practices.

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Conservationist

Sediment & Stormwater

Jared C. Adkins, P.E.
Program Manager

Tax Ditch/Drainage Assistance

Gene Vanderwende
Survey Technician

USDA
Natural Resources Conservation Service

Marianne Hardesty
District Conservationist
Kent Conservation District (KCD) is a governmental subdivision of the State of Delaware authorized by state legislation in Title 7 of the Delaware Code, Chapter 39 and responsible for conservation work within Kent County. There is a conservation district in each county in Delaware. KCD functions to focus attention on land, water and related resource problems; to develop programs to solve the problems; to enlist and coordinate help from public and private sources to accomplish the District goals; and to increase awareness of the relationship between human activities and the natural environment around us. It is the Board of Supervisors’ responsibility to plan and direct the District programs, to coordinate the help of other governmental agencies, to assign priority to requests for conservation technical assistance from private landowners, and to serve as a community clearinghouse for information services. The KCD Board meets monthly and all meetings are open to the public.

Much of the Districts’ effectiveness is due to their ability to work with local, state, and federal agencies to solve local environmental problems. KCD enters into agreements (memorandums of understanding) with cooperating agencies and organizations that outline the obligations of each party and the assistance available. KCD operations are supported by federal, state and local governments and private individuals. The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and Delaware’s Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control (DNREC) both provide technical leadership to KCD. Additional cooperating agencies include: the University of Delaware’s Cooperative Extension Service, the USDA Farm Service Agency, the Delaware Department of Agriculture (DDA), and the First State Resource Conservation and Development Council (RC&D).

KCD receives an annual allocation from the State of Delaware administered through DNREC, which is used to cost-share with landowners for environmentally sound improvements of their land. This funding also provides a portion for personnel and administrative costs to run the program. KCD also receives funding from the State of Delaware and Kent County to address the needs of the tax ditch systems within Kent County. Additional funding is received through special conservation grants and equipment rental.

Employees within KCD provide technical, administrative, and clerical support to district programs. At times, Earth Team Volunteers assist with carrying out the District’s conservation programs. KCD works directly with farmers, landowners, and municipalities on the following types of challenges: water quality protection; stormwater management; aquifer protection; land use planning; erosion and sediment control on land undergoing development, farmland, critical areas and public lands; flooding problems; wetlands protection; soil survey information; and sustainable agriculture.

State and National Associations

Delaware’s conservation district supervisors have a statewide organization known as the Delaware Association of Conservation Districts (DACD). DACD, a voluntary, non-profit alliance, provides a forum for discussion and coordination among the districts as they work to ensure the wise use and treatment of our State’s natural resources. The 3,000 conservation districts across the nation belong to NACD, the National Association of Conservation Districts. NACD’s primary goal is the conservation, orderly development, and judicious use of the nation’s resources.

Both of these organizations make the effort of conservation districts more effective by providing a vehicle through which conservation districts can band together to promote their causes at the state and national levels. Each year District board members, the District Coordinator and the Administrative Coordinator attend the NACD annual meeting and the NACD Northeast regional meeting to partake in educational sessions, hear updates from national partners, and to network with other district professionals from across the nation.

The 2014 annual meeting, themed Conservation: Locally Grown, Nationally Known, was held in Anaheim, California; while the Northeast regional meeting was held in Newport, Rhode Island. General and breakout sessions featured topics such as water quality, climate change, energy issues, Farm Bill updates and more.
Heavy Equipment
Use of the District's equipment enables the equipment crew to work with our cooperating landowners to establish new conservation practices and/or enhance existing practices on their lands. During 2014, the equipment was utilized for a total of 2,478.5 hours. The District owns the following heavy equipment: two hydraulic track excavators; two bulldozers; a farm tractor with loader; three pickup trucks; one low-boy tractor trailer; one backhoe; one ten-wheel truck with a dump body which pulls a trailer used to move equipment; one six-wheel dump truck; and one ATV for seeding.

No-Till Equipment
The District currently owns two Great Plains no-till drills, one of which can be used to plant native grasses. The drills are rented to our cooperators on a first-come-first-served basis. They are delivered to the farm, and our technician works with the cooperator to ensure that the equipment is functioning properly and to the satisfaction of the cooperator. During 2014, 43 different landowners planted 756 acres of small grains and three landowners planted 8 acres of native grasses.

Tax Ditch and Drainage Assistance
The District employs a survey technician whose main responsibility is to assist with the tax ditch program in Kent County. DNREC’s Division of Watershed Stewardship provides assistance in tax ditch planning and organization. There are 75 tax ditch systems in the county, totaling 708 miles of channel. The District's survey technician responded to 165 requests for assistance on the tax ditches. The requests for assistance concerned mowing (307 miles), pipe sizing (43 pipes installed on 14 ditches), flooding, ditch bank erosion, weed wiping (53 miles on 11 ditches), seeding, tax ditch maintenance, tax ditch construction, beaver control, and requests to stake, grade and survey ditches (94,170 feet were staked and graded on 16 ditches), etc. The District's survey technician attended the annual meetings of 37 tax ditch associations.

Matching Funds for Drainage Projects
To maximize the efforts of providing a beneficial drainage system for county residents, the Kent County Levy Court and the State of Delaware provided the District with a total of $150,000 to be used for the construction of new tax and public ditches and the maintenance of existing tax ditches. These funds were used in conjunction with tax ditch funds to perform the necessary work. After the work was completed, the projects were inspected by the District's surveying technician before any matching funds were released. During 2014, the 3921 funds were used as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tax Ditch Dipout (87,120 feet)</td>
<td>$ 65,340</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tax Ditch Pipe Installation (43 pipes)</td>
<td>$ 12,110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tax Ditch Mowing (307 miles)</td>
<td>$ 30,620</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weed Wiper Bar (87miles)</td>
<td>$ 17,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical &amp; Administrative Assistance</td>
<td>$ 80,723</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brought Forward to FY-14</td>
<td>$ 40,343</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$246,636</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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At times the District is called upon to assist landowners with their drainage concerns that do not fall under the Sediment & Stormwater or Tax Ditch programs. These requests for assistance concern flooding problems, ditches that need cleaning out, erosion problems, etc. The District’s survey technician handled 104 requests for drainage assistance during 2014.
The State of Delaware, and USDA’s Natural Resources Conservation Service and Farm Service Agencies provided technical and financial assistance through cost-sharing programs to cooperating landowners for the installation of conservation practices. Cost-sharing through the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) enabled the District to continue work toward the reduction of non-point source pollution (NPS). Additional funding from the State of Delaware and Kent County Levy Court also allowed the district to continue a community drainage and resource development program.

**Conservation Cost Share Program**

The General Assembly provided $450,000 in cost share funds, which were utilized by different cooperating landowners. Projects implemented emphasized water quality, water management, and erosion/sediment control. Funds were allocated for the practices below:

- **Cover Crops**: 22,321 Acres
- **Open Ditching**: 3,050 Feet
- **Field Drainage Tiling**: 1,682 Feet
- **Poultry Heavy Use Area Protection**: 18 Each
- **Large Animal Mortality**: $61,050 Dollars

The District’s Conservationists completed a total of 433 annual inspections of previously installed practices to ensure the practices are continuing to work properly and do not need any maintenance.

**Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program**

The Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) provides cost-share funding for the installation of conservation practices on marginal cropland to improve water quality and enhance wildlife habitat. A total of 9 contracts were signed on seven farms.

CREP cost-share funds in the amount of $4,340 were obligated to cover the estimated costs for establishing the practices. Rental payments of $165 or $225 per acre per year are paid on each contract for a period of 10 or 15 years. The practices cover 184.4 acres and are broken down as follows:

- **Hardwood Tree Planting**: 117.4 Acres
- **Wildlife Upland Habitat**: 25.5 Acres
- **Shallow Water Area for Wildlife**: 31.7 Acres
- **Filter Strips**: 9.8 Acres
- **Poultry Heavy Use Area Protection**: 68 Each
- **Irrigation Water Management**: 1,018 Acres
- **Nutrient Management**: 1,342 Acres
- **Pest Management**: 1,687 Acres
- **Waste Storage Facilities**: 13 Each
- **Windbreak**: 1,542 Feet

**Environmental Quality Incentive Program**

Funding provided through the Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) is used for implementing water quality practices. The following practices were implemented during 2014:

- **Dead Bird Composters**: 11 Each
- **Fencing**: 2,000 Feet
- **Poultry Heavy Use Area Protection**: 68 Each
- **Irrigation Sprinkler Systems**: 0 Acres
- **Irrigation Water Management**: 1,018 Acres
- **Nutrient Management**: 1,342 Acres
- **Pest Management**: 1,687 Acres
- **Waste Storage Facilities**: 13 Each
- **Windbreak**: 1,542 Feet
The Kent Conservation District has been the delegated agency in Kent County for the Delaware Sediment and Stormwater (S&S) Program since its inception in July 1991. The District is responsible for plan review and approval, construction inspection, and maintenance inspection for all construction projects within the County. The Stormwater staff included the program manager, one plan reviewer, two engineering inspectors, a part-time engineer, and an urban conservationist. During the year the staff performed the following:

- reviewed 32 plans for the City of Dover Development Advisory Committee (DAC);
- reviewed 20 plans for the Kent County Development Advisory Committee (DAC);
- reviewed 80 detailed sediment and stormwater plans, of which 75 were approved;
- reviewed 55 plans for minor subdivisions;
- issued 821 general permits; 168 temporary general permits; 5 commercial general permits, and 5 utility general permits; and
- completed 652 project inspections; 733 certificate of occupancy inspections; 84 temporary occupancy inspections; and 60 annual maintenance inspections.

Outreach and Education

The urban conservationist gave presentations to home owner’s and civic associations during 2014 to educate property owners on the purpose of stormwater ponds and proper maintenance procedures.

Additionally, the Freddie the Fish program was presented to school aged children to educate them on how their daily routine activities can affect a watershed.

Stormwater staff assisted DNREC by participating in a mock pre-construction meeting as part of the Certified Construction Reviewer training.

Sediment & Stormwater Program

The District, in cooperation with the University of Delaware Cooperative Extension Service, again offered pre-sidedress soil nitrate tests (PSNT) to all interested corn growers in Kent County. Use of this test can result in economic savings and reduce the chance of groundwater contamination by nitrates. A total of 104 samples were tested covering 4,457 acres. The District's conservationists also worked with cooperators in testing manure as well. Last year, one dairy, one horse, two beef, and ten poultry manure samples were tested.

The conservationists also completed 8 nutrient management plans and 13 comprehensive nutrient management plans covering 1,252 acres.
Governors Conservation Awards
On April 23, 2014 Governor Jack Markell presented the 18th Annual Governor’s Conservation Awards to winners from Delaware’s three counties during a ceremony proclaiming April 26 through May 3 as Soil & Water Stewardship Week in Delaware. The award for agricultural conservation in Kent County was presented to poultry farmers Bruce B. Clark and Bruce Clark II of Kenton. The Clark’s were recognized for the installation of a concrete t-wall manure storage structure, dead bird channel composter, and heavy use area protection areas.

Charles “Chaddy” Reed, II of Teal Construction, Inc. of Dover was selected as the urban award winner for Kent County. Teal’s attention to detail to ensure projects such as Waters Edge, Longacre Village, and Laureltowne Subdivisions remained in compliance going above and beyond the approved Sediment and Stormwater plans.

Conservation Poster Contest
The District sponsored the annual Conservation Poster Contest again and provided awards to winners from Kent County for the “Dig Deeper: Mysteries in the Soil” themed contest. First, second and third place winners each received a prize valued at $50, $25, and $15, respectively. Lake Forest NE student Stephanie Strachar won the Grade 2-3 category, Calvary Christian Academy’s, Charles Washington, won the Grade 4-6 category, Dover HS’s, Sarah Cole, won the 7-9 category and Polytech Zachary Strachar won the 10-12 category.

Delaware Envirothon
The District again supported the Envirothon, a problem-solving, natural resource education program for high school students. The competitive nature of the program motivates students to expand their knowledge of natural resources and realize their responsibility as stewards of our natural resources. The students answer written questions and conduct hands-on investigations of environmental issues in six categories: air quality, aquatic ecology, forestry, soils/land use, wildlife, and the current issue that changes each year. The 2014 current issue was Sustainable Agriculture/Locally Grown. Students must also give an oral presentation solving an environmental problem. Fourteen teams competed. Representing Kent County were teams from Polytech High School, Caesar Rodney High School, and St. Thomas More Academy. Honors for the Kent County teams were as follows:

Polytech High School FFA earned the $300 Ernest J. Zimmerman Memorial Grant for their 2nd second place finish, These prize monies are to be used by the advisor to purchase educational supplies for use in the classroom.

Pictured below are students competing in the 2014 Delaware Envirothon program competition.
KCD Annual Barn Dance Fundraiser—Delaware Envirothon

The Kent Conservation District held 15 Barn Dances annually from 1998 to 2012. Participants at those events raised a total of $157,689 in net proceeds that KCD donated directly to support the Delaware Envirothon.

For 2013 and 2014 KCD took a break from the events to recharge their batteries before planning the next event in 2015. These events are not possible without the dedication of KCD staff, Board, volunteers and community. It is only through the dedication of all of these parties that the events are successful. The District greatly appreciates those who volunteer, those who provide financial support, and those who donate auction items, food or other items to the events.

The Delaware Envirothon, which runs solely on donations solicited each year, is a competitive problem-solving, natural resource challenge for high school age students. Funds raised through any KCD Barn Dance will be used to provide training opportunities throughout the year, to host the state competition held in April, and to send the state winning team to the North American competition.

**MARK YOUR CALENDARS!**

The next Barn Dance will be held at the Harrington Fire Hall on Friday, October 9, 2015.

302-741-2600, Ext. 3  www.kentcd.org  302-741-0347 Fax

Kent Conservation District
800 Bay Road, Suite 2
Dover, DE 19901

All District programs are available on a nondiscriminatory basis.