



**Kent Conservation District
Annual Report
2022**

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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PROGRAM CONTACTS

Administration

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Administrative Coordinator

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Nutrient Management

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Conservationist

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Sediment & Stormwater

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Tax Ditch/Drainage Assistance

Gene Vanderwende
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USDA

Natural Resources Conservation Service

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District Conservationist

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Conservationist

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Conservationist

Jacob Urian
Conservationist

James Dick
Program Assistant

What is the District? What does the District do?

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.

In 2022, the NACD 76th Annual Meeting: "Conservation Defined For All" was held in Orlando, Florida from February 12—15, 2022; while the Northeast regional meeting: "Strength Through Connection" was held in Cambridge, Maryland from August 28—31, 2022.



Tax Ditch and Drainage Assistance

The District employs a field coordinator 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 field coordinator responded to 140 requests for assistance on the tax ditches. The requests for assistance concerned mowing (327 miles), pipe sizing (90 pipes installed on 19 ditches), flooding, ditch bank erosion, weed wiping (26 miles on 5 ditches), seeding, tax ditch maintenance, tax ditch construction, beaver control, and requests to stake, grade and survey ditches (69,940 feet were staked and graded on 13 ditches), etc. The District's field coordinator attended only 1 annual meeting of a tax ditch association due to COVID19.

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 field coordinator before any matching funds were released.

During 2022, the 3921 funds were used as follows:

Tax Ditch Dipout (69,940 feet)	\$ 52,455
Tax Ditch Pipe Installation (90 pipes)	\$ 19,110
Tax Ditch Mowing (327 miles)	\$ 49,020
Weed Wiper Bar (26 miles)	\$ 5,220
Technical & Administrative Assistance	\$ 87,300
Brought Forward to FY-22	\$ 5,560
Total	\$218,665



Drainage project.



Drainage project.

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 field coordinator handled 119 requests for drainage assistance (tile drainage—6,215 ft.; open drainage—30,808 ft.) during 2022.

Financial Assistance

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 towards 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 \$510,000 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	32,668 Acres
Open Ditching	46,255 Feet
Tile Drainage	4,500 Feet
Large Animal Mortality	\$54,150 Dollars

The District's Conservationists completed a total of 61 annual inspections of previously installed practices to ensure the practices are continuing to work properly and



Cover Crop Project

Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program

Landowner site visits continued, but initial contacts and follow up was done virtually. There were no in-person educational, networking, or promotional events held during this time.

NRCS, FSA and the CREP coordinator worked to develop and implement a process for completing the 4 required Status Reviews needed during the life of a CREP contract. The CREP coordinator worked with NRCS to implement a plan to manage the newly released Forest Management Incentive (FMI) program.

During sign-up, 15 contracts were renewed, and 1 new contract was enrolled representing a total of 240.27 acres. Of the 15 contracts that were renewed 8 were from Kent County representing 164 acres, 2 were from New Castle County representing 16.92 acres, and 5 were from Sussex County representing 54.46. The 1 new enrollment was in New Castle County representing 4.89 acres. The 8 contracts were in the Delaware Bay watershed, 7 contracts were in the Chesapeake Bay watershed and 1 contract was in the Inland Bay watershed. The State of Delaware paid \$93,024.85 to landowners for CREP practices during the 2021 year

There were 64.3 acres of CREP that did not re-enroll; 3 from Kent County, 1 from New Castle County and 2 from Sussex County.

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 2022:

Animal Mortality Facility	9 Each
Roof Runoff Cover	22 each
Herbaceous Weed Control	98 ac
Poultry Heavy Use Area	76,238 sq ft
Cover Crop	254.4 Acres
High Tunnel	2,880 Square Feet
Water Well	1 Each
Pumping Plant	1 Each
Nutrient Management	2,046.4 acres
Soil Carbon Amendment	99.7 acres
Pasture and Hay Planting	15 acres
Irrigation Water Management	1,886.5 acres
Windbreak	1,600 ft

Sediment & Stormwater Program

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, one drainage planner and one urban conservationist. During the year the staff performed the following:

- Performed 177 detailed sediment and stormwater reviews
- Approved 70 projects
- Reviewed 118 minor subdivisions plans
- Reviewed 39 plans for the City of Dover, City of Milford, and Kent County Development Advisory Committees (DAC)
- Issued 1,288 Residential Standard Plans; 19 Non-residential Standard Plans
- Completed 855 project inspections, 1,095 residential inspections, 267 maintenance inspections and 118 temporary approvals
- Completed 3 Stormwater Maintenance District Assessments, completed 1 Stormwater Maintenance District projects and brought the total number of communities to 44.

Outreach and Education

Program staff gave presentations to home owner's and civic associations during 2022 to educate property owners on the purpose of stormwater ponds, proper maintenance procedures and the Stormwater Maintenance District Program.

As part of its educational outreach, the Stormwater Program presented the Freddie the Fish program to school aged children to educate them on how their daily activities can affect a watershed.



Misty Pines

Nutrient Management 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. The tests were performed on an area covering 199 acres.

The District's conservationists also worked with cooperators in testing manure, collecting a total of 10 manure samples: 6 chicken manure, 3 beef manure and 1 horse manure. The conservationists also completed 14 comprehensive nutrient management plans (CNMP) and nutrient management plans (NMP) covering 2,386 acres.

KCD provided cost-share for producers to plant cover crop. A total of 34,486 acres (13,681 were located in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed) were planted and inspected by the Conservationists.

Education Initiatives & Awards

Outreach Efforts

District staff participated in the following outreach activities in our continuing effort to promote environmental awareness: sponsored the NACD conservation poster contest, presented the “Freddy the Fish” environmental program at the Fairview Elementary School in Dover and attended the Smyrna School District Career Fair in Smyrna and Delaware GIS Day.



Delaware Envirothon

The District continued to support 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.

Governors Conservation Awards

The Annual Governor’s Conservation Awards were presented to the winners from Delaware’s three counties via recorded video.

The award for agricultural conservation was presented to Chris and Karen Breeding. The Breeding’s were recognized for their water quality and nutrient management efforts in Kent County.

The award for urban conservation was presented to Champions Club at Jonathan’s Landing HOA for its use of a reforestation, native species introduction and vegetative management of open space.

Conservation Poster Contest

The District sponsored the annual Conservation Poster Contest again and provided awards to winners from Kent County for the “Healthy Soil Healthy Life” themed contest.

First, second and third place winners each received a prize valued at \$50, \$25, and \$15, respectively.

