Cooperator Handbook

Conservation...Our Future Depends On It!

Chester County Conservation District
Willowdale Town Center
688 Unionville Road Suite 200
Kennett Square PA 19348
610-925-4920
www.chesco.org/conservation
This handbook is designed to help you understand what it means to be a Chester County Conservation District Cooperator.

What is a District Cooperator?  

Who can be a District Cooperator?  

What is the Chester County Conservation District?  

What agencies partner with the Chester County Conservation District and its Cooperators?  

What will the Conservation District do for you?  

What would it mean to you if every Chester County farm implemented a complete conservation plan?  

What is your role as a District Cooperator?  

Appendix  

Request for Assistance Form  

Chester County Conservation District’s Mission Statement:  

“CONSERVING SOIL FOR CLEAN WATER.”
What is a District Cooperator?

A cooperator is an individual or entity that agrees to cooperate with the Conservation District in developing and implementing a conservation plan that will be based on the proper use of land, the needs of the operation, and an agreement to maintain recommended Best Management Practices (BMPs) for the life of the agreement.

Who can be a District Cooperator?

Farmers, mushroom producers, landowners, land managers, conservancies, developers, builders and contractors are eligible to receive the various services provided by the Conservation District as District Cooperators.

What is the Chester County Conservation District?

The Chester County Soil Conservation District was created in July of 1947 by action of the County Commissioners. The mission of the Conservation District was, and is today, to provide technical assistance to farmers in implementing conservation practices. A Board of Directors was formed with four directors serving. The appointees’ names were drawn from lists provided by County-wide farm organizations, and the board was completed by the selection of one county commissioner.

The District Board has grown, with seven members currently serving. Four farmer members, two urban/public members and one County Commissioner are joined by three associate directors and serve as volunteer members. Cooperators are encouraged to contact the nearest District Board member with concerns or issues.

The Chester County Conservation District Board of Directors (As of May 2016)

Chairman: Tom Brosius, Farm Director, West Grove, PA (610) 869-8765
Vice Chairman: John Arrell, Public Director, West Grove, PA (610) 869-0202
Treasurer/Secretary: Robert Struble Jr., Public Director, West Chester, PA (610) 793-1090
Director: Michelle Kichline, Chester County Commissioner, West Chester, PA (610) 344-6100
Director: Walter T. Moore, Farm Director, West Grove, PA (610) 869-3940
Director: Brian K. Campbell, Farm Director, Kennett Square, PA (610) 444-7600
Director: Don Gable, Farm Director, Elverson, PA (484) 824-2164
Associate Director: Frank Iacobucci Jr., Havertown, PA (610) 853-0400
Associate Director: G. Pownall Jones, Kennett Square, PA (610) 388-7359
Associate Director: Lynda Farrell, Downingtown, PA (610) 269-4977
Associate Director: Robert Cantarera, Landenberg, PA (610) 932-6371

“Our land is our future.”

NATURAL LANDS TRUST
The Chester County Conservation District acts as a liaison between various local, state and federal agencies while providing leadership in addressing natural resource conservation issues to the citizens of Chester County. Through education and technical assistance, the District promotes the sustainable use of natural resources, assisting people and communities in achieving a productive county harmony with a quality environment.

The District administers delegated environmental resource programs such as Act 38 Nutrient Management, Chapter 102 Erosion and Sediment Control, Post Construction Stormwater (PCSW), National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Permitting, and other state and federal programs that have an impact on Chester County agricultural operators and other landowners.


The Chester County Conservation District:

- Provides guidance in locally led conservation
- Advocates a watershed approach in addressing natural resource issues
- Strives to sustain and conserve our natural resources
- Facilitates a strengthening of community stewardship, local accountability for sustainable development and environmental restoration, as well as the empowerment of people to make decisions
- Demonstrates professionalism and a dedication to strive for continuous improvement
- Puts quality first

The Chester County Conservation District also acts as a resource and facilitator for funding opportunities.

The value of the environmental services provided by Conservation District may be supplemented by State, Federal, non-government, technical, public, special needs and public funding.

“We do not inherit the earth from our ancestors; we borrow it from our children.”

Moses Henry Cass
About half of the District’s funding is obtained through State and Federal Funding. Landowners may be able to take advantage of the following funding programs through the Conservation District, including but not limited to:

- Chesapeake Bay Program
- Growing Greener Grant Program
- Nutrient Management Grant Program
- PENNVEST (PA Infrastructure Investment Authority)
- Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) Rivers Conservation Grants
- Specialty Grants such as energy and source water protection grants
- REAP Resource Enhancement and Protection Program
- EQIP Environmental Quality Incentive Program (available through NRCS)
- WHIP Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (available through NRCS)

Private Funding resources are available through:
- Chesapeake Bay Foundation
- Special Project Grants through the Chester County Conservation District

What agencies partner with Chester County Conservation District and its Cooperators?

Chester County Conservation District and its cooperators proudly partner with:

- United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)
- United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Farm Services Agency (FSA)
- Environmental Defense Fund, Center for Conservation Incentives (CCI)
- Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture (PDA)
- Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR)
- Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)
- Pennsylvania State Conservation Commission (SCC)
- Penn State Cooperative Extension
- Stroud Water Research Center
- Chester County Water Authority (CCWA)
- Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF)
- Brandywine Valley Association (BVA)
- Ducks Unlimited (DU)
- Chester County Agricultural Land Preservation Board
- Pennsylvania Association of Conservation Districts (PACD)
- National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD)
- Chester County Planning Department
- Army Corps of Engineers
- United States Fish and Wildlife Service
- Pennsylvania Game Commission
- Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission
- Trout Unlimited (TU)
- Local Municipalities
- Watershed Associations

“When the well’s dry, we know the worth of water.”

Ben Franklin
What will the Conservation District do for you?

The District will furnish technical and financial assistance in helping the farmer implement a resource conservation plan. A sample conservation plan, provided in conjunction with Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), is in the appendix of this handbook and will serve as a guide. With the assistance of NRCS, the Conservation District Board of Directors establishes local priorities and helps coordinate conservation efforts. Services offered by the District include:

- Development of conservation plans/agricultural erosion & sediment control plans
- Development of manure management plans
- Development of MFEMPs
- Technical assistance in designing and installing best management practices (BMPs)
- Administration of Act 38 Nutrient Management Program
- Administration of the Chesapeake Bay Program
- Supervision of Dirt and Gravel Roads Programs
- Review of local conservation plans for Bio Solids Programs
- Administration of Erosion and Sedimentation Pollution Control Program/Post Construction Stormwater (PCSW)
- Administration of National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Programs for Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)
- Investigation and resolution of erosion and sedimentation complaints
- Education of individuals, groups and schools through environmental programs
- Administration of State and Federal grant programs
- Development and implementation of Agricultural Land Preservation Program conservation plans

USDA's Farm Services Agency works to increase economic opportunity and improve the quality of life for rural Americans. USDA requires a conservation plan for eligibility to receive benefits. Conservation Programs administered by the Farm Service Agency include:

- Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)
- Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)
- Emergency Conservation Program (ECP)
- Stewardship Incentive Program (SIP)
- Biomass Crop Assistance Program (BCAP)

“Once it is lost, the land, like freedom, can only be regained by bitter struggle.”

Anonymous
Programs administered which require Conservation Compliance on land determined to be highly erodible land (HEL):

- Direct and Counter-Cyclical Payments
- Average Crop Revenue Election (ACRE) Program
- Non-Insured Disaster Assistance
- Farm Storage Facility Loans
- Milk Income Loss Contracts
- Farm Ownership and Operating Loan Programs
- Wool and Mohair Marketing Assistance
- Marketing Assistance Loans and Loan Deficiency Payment Programs

(Programs subject to changes in the Federal Budget)

What would it mean to you if every Chester County farm implemented a complete conservation plan?

- Higher crop yields per acre
- More food for people
- Greater income for farmers as well as businesses
- Reduced flood damage
- More uniform supply of water for industries
- Cleaner water to drink
- Greater recreational facilities; better hunting and fishing
- A more productive and more beautiful Chester County...for us and future generations

What is your role as a Cooperator?

As a Cooperator, Chester County Conservation District will represent you provided that you adhere to the responsibilities you accept when becoming a cooperator. Included in these responsibilities are:

- Ensuring that farming is kept viable by protecting the natural resources of Chester County
- Implementing and maintaining your conservation plan, nutrient management plan, mushroom farm environmental management plan and/or funding program contract
- Contacting the Conservation District and/or proper authorities in the case of a pollution event
- Maintaining your best management practices or BMPs (waterways, manure management facilities, stream bank fencing, terraces, constructed wetlands, barnyard storm water control measures, stabilization measures) pre and post construction
- Properly maintaining the overall appearance and general condition of your farm
- Working with your neighbor to resolve environmental issues
- Remembering to respect that we all live downstream
- Notifying the Conservation District if there are major changes in your operation

“A nation that destroys its soils destroys itself.”

Franklin D. Roosevelt
Conservation Plan

APPENDIX

Natural Resources Conservation Service
601 Westtown Road  Suite 381 P.O. Box 2747
West Chester, PA 19380-0990
(610)696-0396

John Doe
1052 Park Road
Anywhere, PA 1974
Coop. jbec4020

Conservation Plan

**SAMPLE**

(Page 1 of 11)

Crop

Tract: 2975

CONSERVATION CROP ROTATION

Plant crops as specified below. Crop(s) listed below as least erodible may be planted more frequently without modifying the conservation plan. Contact NRCS if any changes in crops, tillage, and or residue levels are desired.

Follow a rotation approximating 4 years of corn and 4 years of hay. Hay is the least erosive crop and may be grown more often.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Field</th>
<th>Planned Amount</th>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Applied Amount</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>30.9 ac.</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>30.9 ac.</td>
<td>Dec-1-2001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>10.1 ac.</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>10.1 ac.</td>
<td>Dec-1-2001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>41.0 ac.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>41.0 ac.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CONTOUR FARMING

Continue all farming operations on the contour as nearly as possible. Continue to farm in two strips across the general field slope.

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COVER AND GREEN MANURE CROP

Establish a cover crop to provide ground cover when crop residues have been removed and winter soil protection is needed. For management refer to the Conservation Practice Sheet for Cover Crops. Seed a cover crop of rye or other winter grain following harvest of corn for silage.

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SOILS MAP

Legend

Scale
1 Inch 660 Feet

USDA
I am interested in the proper use and development of the natural resources located on this property. Therefore, I am requesting assistance from the District for an inventory and evaluation of the natural resources and the alternatives available from the development of these resources. I will also cooperate with the agencies that provide assistance to the District in the preparation of this information. I hereby grant permission for staff of the District and any assisting agencies to access the property as needed for this purpose. This agreement may be terminated upon written notice by the Cooperator or the District.

Cooperator Signature  (Please sign)  Date

### CONTACT INFORMATION:
- Mailing Address:
  - 
  - 
  - 
- Telephone: ___________________________ (home)
  - ___________________________ (cell)
- Email: ___________________________

### PROPERTY INFORMATION:
- Property Address:  o Same as Mailing Address
  - 
  - 
  - 
- Township: __________________________ # of Acres: ______
- Type of Enterprise: __________________________ (Dairy, Beef, Mushrooms, etc.)

### CONSERVATION NEEDS:
- Stormwater Management  o 
- Nutrient Management  o 
- Barnyard Runoff Control  o 
- Surface Water Control  o 
- Sediment Reduction  o 
- Erosion Control  o 
- Waste Management  o 
- Other  o 
  - 

### HISTORY WITH DISTRICT:
- Have you already spoken with District staff?  o Yes o No
- If yes, staff name: ___________________________

### DISTRICT APPROVAL:
- CCCD Board Member Signature  Date
~NOTES~