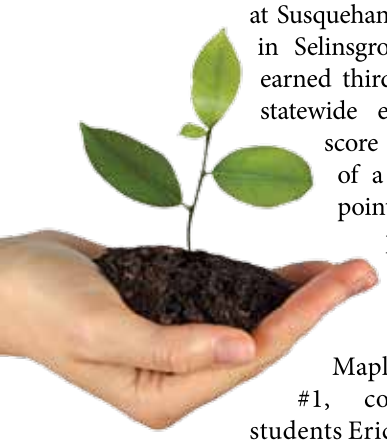
Greene County Conservation District

NEWSLETTER | JUNE 2014 ISSUE 1 | VOLUME 1

Carmichaels team wins Greene County Envirothon, places third in Pennsylvania State Envirothon

WIND RIDGE, PA – Sixty-eight high school students from Greene County's five school districts competed in the 27th annual Greene County Envirothon held Wednesday, April 30, at Ryerson Station State Park in Wind Ridge. Teams of five students tested their environmental knowledge in the areas of soils, forestry, wildlife, aquatics and the 2014 current issue, sustaining local agriculture and buying locally.

Carmichaels Team #1 won this year's competition with a score of 439.5 points out of a possible 500 points. Team members Tyler Crago, Ashley Dotson, Doug Kowalewski, Emma Lowry and Philip Mikalik and team advisor Kevin Willis represented Greene County at the state Envirothon on May 20-21 at Susquehanna University in Selinsgrove, Pa. They earned third place at the statewide event with a score of 510 out of a possible 600 points, only twelve points behind the winning team!



Mapletown Team #1, consisting of students Eric Armel, Ried Griffin, Sara Hlatky, Katelyn Kelly and Ryan Kovach and advisors Amber Burkett and Sara London, earned second place with a score of 334.

The third-place team was Carmichaels Team #2, which included students Allie Christopher, Blake Conard, Taylor Dodson, Connor Spangler and Parker Woodring and advisor Willis. The team earned 318.5 points.

The Greene County Envirothon is organized each year by the Greene County Conservation District and is funded through a grant from the Community Foundation of Greene County's Pennsylvania Education Improvement Tax Credit (EITC) program through CONSOL Energy. Each student on the winning team secured a $500 college scholarship funded by Alpha Natural Resources.

In addition to the continued financial support of Community Foundation of Greene County, CONSOL Energy and Alpha Natural Resources, other partners that made the event successful include Greene County Commissioners Chuck Morris, Archie Trader and Blair Zimmerman; Greene County Department of Economic Development; Chuck Shrump and Kevin Paul, U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service; Russ Gibbs, state Department of Conservation and Natural Resources Bureau of Forestry; William Wentzel, Greene County Conservation District; Alan Johnson and staff, Ryerson Station State Park, DCNR Bureau of State Parks; Chuck Kubasik, state Department of Environmental Protection; Mike Greiner, state Game Commission; Kameron Schaefer, Waynesburg University; Lindsey Biddle Gilkes, University of Pittsburgh Innovation Institute; and Michelle Anderson, Alpha Natural Resources.

For more information on the Greene County Envirothon, call the Greene County Conservation District at 724-852-5278.

Carmichaels Team #1 won this year's Greene County Envirothon with a score of 439.5. The Envirothon is organized by the Greene County Conservation District and funded through the Community Foundation of Greene County. All winning team members will receive a $500 scholarship from Alpha Natural Resources. Pictured, from l. to r., are Tom Headlee, GCCD board director; Michelle Anderson, Alpha Natural Resources; Jim Cowell, GCCD board director; team members Doug Kowalewski, Philip Mikalik, Tyler Crago and Emma Lowry; team advisor Kevin Willis; and team member Ashley Dotson.

Mapletown Team #1 won second place at this year's Greene County Envirothon, organized by the Greene County Conservation District. Pictured, from l. to r., are Tom Headlee and Jim Cowell, GCCD board directors; team members Ryan Kovach, Sara Hlatky, Ried Griffin, Katelyn Kelly and Eric Armel; and team advisors Amber Burkett and Sara London.

Carmichaels Team #2 won third place at this year's Greene County Envirothon, organized by the Greene County Conservation District. Pictured, from l. to r., are Tom Headlee and Jim Cowell, GCCD board directors; team members Connor Spangler, Parker Woodring, Taylor Dodson and Allie Christopher; team advisor Kevin Willis; and team member Blake Conard.]

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DISTRICT LOCATION

Our office is located on the Mezzanine Level of the Fort Jackson Building at
19 South Washington Street, Suite 150
Waynesburg, PA 15370
Phone: 724-852-5278
gccd@co.greene.pa.us
Hours: 8:30 am to 4:30 pm Monday-Friday

Calling All Farmers to Invite Us to Visit their Operation

Greene County Conservation District has support to offer to our county's agricultural producers; you only need to ask. Laurel Rush, Agricultural Technician and Certified Nutrient Management Specialist, can provide educational and technical advice, help make connections with other agricultural agencies, assist with general permit applications for livestock crossings, and help with other common farm activities. She can also assist in developing a manure management plan or agricultural erosion and sedimentation control plan. The Conservation District also coordinates the Farmland Preservation Program for Greene County.

Farming has a long tradition in Greene County with many farms spanning multiple generations. Across the US, there has been a decline in farm ownership since the early 1980's. The 2012 Census of Agriculture reports that 7 million acres of farmland has been taken out of production since 2007. Many people leave the rural life for school and jobs and then find themselves returning to a farm that they haven't been involved with for many years. "Our goal is to give farmers the tools they need to sustain their operations," said Rush. "Whether you are just starting out or have been farming for years, we have something to offer to everyone."

To schedule a visit with our staff, please call 724-852-5278 or email lrush@co.greene.pa.us. We look forward to hearing from you.

Groundwater Monitoring Program Continues

Greene County Conservation District (GCCD) has undertaken a project to monitor groundwater resources throughout the county. Groundwater availability and quality are concerns for residents and municipalities throughout Greene County. In 2008, 15 of Greene County's 26 municipalities reported problems with groundwater loss, groundwater contamination, or both. Nine of these municipalities attributed these issues to coal mining and natural gas extraction activities. Since 2008, at least two additional mines have opened and at least 600 additional gas wells have been drilled. In light of extensive energy development already in place and even further development being proposed, it is increasingly important to monitor the quality of groundwater resources.

Using a simple electronic device called a CATTfish, homeowners will collect and report conductivity and temperature measurements from groundwater entering their homes through either wells or springs. Additionally we are installing 15 in-stream water monitoring devices throughout the county to monitor groundwater as it enters surface waters through seepage and subaqueous springs. This coordinated groundwater monitoring program will provide a baseline for groundwater quality; ensure early detection of potential groundwater contamination; safeguard public health; and result in swift and effective remediation.

On March 4, 2014, we issued a press release asking homeowners interested in participation in this program to contact the Conservation District. This story was picked up by various news media and we have received an encouraging response. Twenty-five first-round participants have been selected who will provide a representative sample of the county's groundwater condition. These participants were invited to an orientation and training meeting on June 5, 2014, where they received their CATTfish device.

Landowners interested in participating in subsequent rounds of this project are encouraged to contact Jared D. Zinn at the Conservation District by emailing jzinn@co.greene.pa.us or by calling 724-852-5278.

Manure Management Workshops Come to a Close

Greene County Conservation District has offered manure management planning workshops since the fall of 2013 to assist all landowners producing or handling manure to achieve compliance with PA Clean Streams Law.

Approximately 100 people have attended these workshops or scheduled a one-on-one session to complete their manure management workbook.

The Conservation District wants to thank all the landowners who have participated in this program. We want to encourage you to continue talking to your friends and neighbors and ask them to contact the Conservation District with manure-related questions or for technical expertise. Even though our grant funding is exhausted, we will continue to distribute manure management manuals and assist landowners with plan development.

Financial and other support for this project has been provided by the Pennsylvania Association of Conservation Districts Inc. through a grant from the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection under Section 319 of the Clean Water Act, administered by the US Environmental Protection Agency.

Greene County Conervation District Helps to Make Highway Beautiful Through Adopt-A-Highway Program

Motorists travelling along Garard's Fort Road near Pennsylvania State Game Lands 223 are in for some exciting sights over the next few months. Spring is sure to bring greening trees and blooming wildflowers as well as abundant deer, turkey, and other wildlife. Equally exciting is the thing passing travelers will not see. That is roadside litter.

Roadside litter is a huge problem throughout Pennsylvania that costs taxpayers millions of dollars each year. Aside from being unsightly, litter can result in human health impacts and can cause great harm to the environment, including impacts to plant growth and injury or even death of fish and wildlife.

Greene County Conservation District annually takes part in the Adopt-A-Highway program operated by Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT). On April 23, 2014, Conservation District staff spent their first of several days collecting roadside litter along a two-mile stretch of Garard's Fort Road. Staff collected 32 bags of trash which were later transported to a disposal site by PennDOT.

PENNDOT
ADOPT-A-HIGHWAY

Healthy Soils Mean Healthy Farms

Written by: Kevin Paul,
ACES Conservation Technician

For generations, farmers and landowners have worked with their land grant universities and submitted soil samples for testing in order to obtain practical and affordable solutions to existing soil conditions as they pertain to crop or pasture production. Traditionally when referring to soil tests one thinks of soil fertility testing, a soil-management tool for farmers, homeowners, landscape contractors, golf-course superintendents, ornamental nurserymen and others interested in the fertility of their soil and in determining the optimum lime and fertilizer requirements of their crop.

In the past, soil fertility testing, when it was done, was the only tool available to landowners trying to maximize their crop production and monitor their soil's condition, and results were tailored to the crop(s) to be produced. Faced with a growing population, farmers will need to produce as much food in the next 40 years as they have in the past 500. In addition, in the US each day, prime farmland continues to be swallowed up by residential growth in the form of homes, highways, and storefronts. Demands on our soil and our population are growing; the Earth's resources are not. Essential items such as food, fiber, shelter, and fuel are all related to a single and often overlooked resource: soil.

Healthy soils are more productive soils. They also improve nutrient use efficiency, allow water to infiltrate into the ground, reduce runoff pollution, add nutrients to the food we eat, breakdown or capture pesticides and other contaminants, reduce flooding, and resist erosion more effectively. Every inch of a healthy soil contains its own little world of life. There is much that can be done to support these soil communities that go beyond traditional soil fertility testing: limiting or eliminating conventional tillage, use of cover crops and crop residues, and adaptation of proper nutrient management practices. Many soils have a water infiltration problem that in turn creates issues with runoff. If soil health is improved, the soil structure results in greater water infiltration, less runoff, reduced erosion, and may reduce the incidence of flooding and sedimentation.

Tilling the soil could be compared to an earthquake, hurricane, tornado, and forest fire occurring at the same time to our soils. Simply put, tilling is bad for the soil. Physical soil disturbance such as tillage with a plow, disk, or chisel plow that results in bare or compacted soil is destructive to soil microbes that are key to healthy and productive soils. Soil can also be disturbed chemically or biologically through the misuse of fertilizers or pesticides. Soils should always be covered by growing plants and/or their residues and soil should rarely be visible from above. This is true regardless of land use (cropland, hay land, pasture, or forage).

Managing for soil health must begin by changing the way we think about soil. For more information about soil health, please contact the United States Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service by calling 724-437-7971 extension 3.

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) sign-ups under Farm Bill

EQIP is a voluntary conservation program that provides technical and financial assistance to help farmers and forest landowners implement conservation practices to reduce pollution and improve natural resources. Payment rates are based on average costs to implement conservation practices. Limited resource Farmers, Beginning Farmers and Ranchers, and Socially Disadvantaged Farmers are eligible for higher payment rates. Applications are accepted on a continuous basis. For more information contact the United States Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service at 724-4378-7971 extension 3.

Focusing on the North Fork Dunkard Fork/Duke Lake Watershed

Written by:
Jared D. Zinn, GCCD Watershed Specialist

The North Fork Dunkard Fork (NFDF) is a moderately sized stream located in Western Greene County. It begins at the convergence of Webster Run and Job Creek and drains to the Dunkard Fork of Wheeling Creek. In 1960, an earthen dam was constructed on the NFDF near what was to become Ryerson Station State Park. The resulting 52 acre lake, named for Ronald J. Duke, became the centerpiece of the park and was managed for recreation as a warmwater fishery. The NFDF/Duke Lake watershed includes portions of Richhill, Jackson, and Aleppo Townships. This watershed is mostly forested and is dominated by steep, hilly terrain and highly erodible soils (NHDPlus, 2005; Soil Survey Staff, 2014).

The principle water quality issue within the NFDF/Duke Lake watershed is non-point source (NPS) pollution (see Inset). A study of Duke Lake completed between 2000 and 2003 found poor overall water quality and classified the lake as highly eutrophic (see Inset). This was attributed to high sediment and nutrient loads entering the lake from the surrounding watershed. The study identified widespread streambank erosion driven by deforestation of riparian areas as the principle cause of NPS pollution within the watershed. Throughout the lake's 45 year life, excessive sedimentation was a recurring concern that required periodic dredging to maintain water levels (Aqualink, 2003).

Duke Lake was drawn down and drained in July of 2005 due to safety concerns surrounding the structural integrity of the dam. Reports from both the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) and the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) concluded that the structural integrity of the dam was compromised by longwall mining activities undertaken at the Bailey Mine operated by CONSOL Pennsylvania Coal Company (CPCC). After nearly a decade of litigation and negotiation, DCNR and CPCC reached an agreement in April 2013 that included plans to reconstruct Duke Lake by summer of 2017.

Given current plans to reconstruct Duke Lake, the Conservation District is more committed than ever to addressing NPS pollution issues within the NFDF/Duke Lake watershed. Our goal is to eliminate the causes of water quality problems historically experienced by Duke Lake and ensure that the rebuilt lake will have better water quality, increased biodiversity, and a greater overall aesthetic. Of course, we can't do this on our own. We need responsible landowners who care about where they live and are willing to come together as a community to collectively manage their natural resources. Throughout 2014 and 2015, we will be reaching out to landowners within the NFDF/Duke Lake Watershed and encouraging them to participate in projects designed to reduce NPS pollution and streambank erosion. Together, we can make a brighter future of the NFDF/Duke Lake Watershed.

Non-Point Source Pollution:

As water from rain and snow runs off of things like roofs, yards, farms, and parking lots, it picks up pollutants. It carries these pollutants with it as it flows into streams, ponds, and other water bodies. So what kinds of pollutants are carried by runoff? Almost anything, really – oils and metals from parking lots, excess fertilizer from farmlands, even sediment from areas of exposed soil.

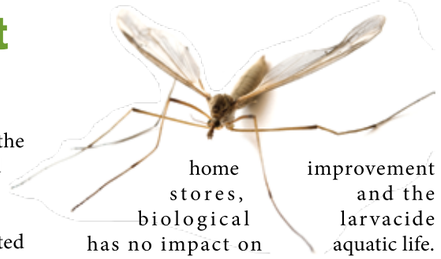
Lake Eutrophication:

We apply fertilizer to our gardens and croplands to increase plant productivity. A similar thing happens when nutrients are added to a lake, stream, or other water body. Algae and other aquatic vegetation increase productivity and use up more and more of the oxygen available in the water. Fish and other aquatic organisms are impacted and may even die as oxygen levels continue to drop.

Greene County Conservation District Continues West Nile Virus Program

Greene County Conservation District has elected to continue monitoring for West Nile Virus this year. The Conservation District is funding the program and has hired Nathan Ribar, of Waynesburg, as a summer intern to oversee the program.

As the mosquito season begins, there are many things you can do to protect yourself from West Nile Virus and other insect-borne illnesses. For starters, with the rainy spring season coming, you should look to keep any containers that can hold water empty, clean, or turned over. These include but are not limited to: buckets, wheel barrows, cans, tarps, gutters, barrels, etc. Also, you can never underestimate the power of bug spray. I know it has been a long winter and we are all enjoying this warm weather, but a simple application of bug spray can sometimes mean all the difference. Another mosquito deterrent and control is the use of common biological larvacide. These products should be available at local home improvement stores, and the biological larvacide has no impact on aquatic life.



Over the course of the spring, summer, or fall, if anyone has any concerns or complaints of mosquitoes, please don't hesitate to call the Conservation District. We can come out to monitor and take some samples of the mosquitoes in your area as well as have them tested for West Nile Virus. Enjoy the warm weather and if you have any questions, please call 724-852-5278.

From Trash to Garden

We are all familiar with the cardboard tubes that signify the end of a roll of toilet paper or paper towels. We recently ran across an ingenious idea to reuse these tubes rather than let them fill our waste baskets and trash cans. The folks at Environmental Conservation Guide (www.environmentalconservationguide.com) suggest using them to get an early start on the growing season. Many Greene County residents garden and could benefit from this simple strategy to reuse these tubes.

The thin cardboard of the tubes functions similarly to the peat pots used in greenhouses and gardens across the country. They recommend storing the tubes till it is time to start your plants for the year then cutting the tubes in half, filling them with potting soil, and placing them in a tray or baking sheet. Planting your seeds in these small, biodegradable containers allows you to get a head start on the growing season while making it very easy to transplant them to your garden, container and all, when the regular growing season begins.

For more information, check out the full article at Environmental Conservation Guide http://environmentalconservationguide.com/?p=160

Spotlight on an Invasive Species

Japanese Knotweed (Polygonum cuspidatum), also called Japanese Bamboo, Mexican Bamboo, and Fleeceflower, is an exotic, invasive species that is currently present in all but nine US states and all but six Canadian provinces (USDA, NRCS, 2014). As the name indicates, Knotweed is native to Asia and was introduced to North America as an ornamental plant sometime during the latter half of the nineteenth century. Knotweed stands can grow as high as 12 feet and form dense canopies. Knotweed's mottled green-brown stems grow to about one inch in diameter and are jointed and hollow, superficially resembling bamboo. Its leaves are large and heart shaped and small white sprays of flowers form late spring through early fall (Miller et al. 2010).

In its native ranges, Knotweed is an early succession species, meaning that it is one of the first to recolonize an area after disturbance. Knotweed can fulfill this role because of a hearty rhizome system. Rhizomes are stems that instead of growing vertically, up through the soil, grow laterally, branching out underground and spreading the plant to new areas. Even a very small piece of Knotweed rhizome can establish a new colony very quickly. This trait makes Knotweed ideal to colonize disturbed areas in Asia. Unfortunately, it also makes it very difficult to control in North America.

Knotweed's rhizome system enabled it to quickly escape ornamental plantings in North America and become invasive. In addition, Knotweed's growth form contributes to its invasive nature. Once established, Knotweed grows quickly, forming a dense canopy that very little light penetrates. Other species, often valuable native species, cannot become established without light. By shading these species out, Knotweed has less competition for nutrients and other resources (Van Driesch & Van Driesch, 2004).

Riparian habitats, or streamside areas, have been especially impacted by Knotweed invasion. Breaks in overstory canopy, or gaps between trees around streams, allow Knotweed a foothold in these areas. Once established, Knotweed displaces native plants that are important for the ecology of these riparian habitats. It increases streambank erosion, reducing the health of our streams and the aquatic species that live in them. It reduces habitat quality for wildlife species that rely on these riparian habitats.

Control of Knotweed, once established, is difficult and requires a long-term commitment to preventing reestablishment. Typical methods include foliar sprays and mechanical removal of rhizomes. Establishment of native vegetation is recommended to avoid reestablishment of Knotweed (DCNR, 2014; Miller et al. 2014).

References:

DCNR. 2014. *Invasive Plants in Pennsylvania: Japanese and Giant Knotweed* (http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us/cs/groups/public/documents/document/dcnr_010254.pdf, 7 May 2014)

Miller, J.H., E.B, Chambliss, N.J. Loewenstein. 2010. *A Field Guide for the Identification of Invasive Plants in Southern Forests.* General Technical Report SRS-119. Asheville, NC. United States Department of Agriculture, Forest Service. 126 p.

Van Driesche, J & Van Driesche, R. 2004. Nature out of Place: *Biological Invasions in the Global Age*. Island Press, 377p.

USDA, NRCS. 2014. The PLANTS Database (http://plants.usda.gov, 7 May 2014). National Plant Data Team, Greensboro, NC 27401-4901 USA.

Becky's Recipe Box

Strawberry Bread

Ingredients:

- 2 cups fresh strawberries
- 3-1/8 cups all-purpose flour
- 2 cups white sugar
- 1 tablespoon ground cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1-1/4 cups vegetable oil
- 4 eggs, beaten
- 1-1/4 cups chopped pecans

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees F (175 degrees C). Butter and flour two 9 x 5-inch loaf pans.

2. Slice strawberries and place in medium-sized bowl. Sprinkle lightly with sugar, and set aside while preparing batter.

3. Combine flour, sugar, cinnamon, salt and baking soda in large bowl; mix well. Blend oil and eggs into strawberries. Add strawberry mixture to flour mixture, blending until dry ingredients are just moistened. Stir in pecans. Divide batter into pans.

4. Bake in preheated oven until a tester inserted in the center comes out clean, 45 to 50 minutes (test each loaf separately). Let cool in pans on wire rack for 10 minutes. Turn loaves out of pans, and allow to cool before slicing.

Recipe found on Allrecipes.com (http://allrecipes.com/Recipe/Strawberry-Bread/Detail.aspx?prop24=etaf) accessed 5/13/2014

Southwest Pennsylvania Woodland Owners Association Upcoming Schedule

The Southwest Pennsylvania Woodland Owners Association (SWPWO) was formed in 2000 as an organization of individuals dedicated to sound woodland management practices. It continues to promote these values through education and outreach. Events are open to both members and the general public and there is no cost for participation in events. For further information, please visit the SWPWO website at http://busybeaver.cs.pitt.edu/swpwo/index.php.

UPCOMING EVENTS

June 14, 1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. ***A Short Hike on the Historic Warrior Trail***

Llew Williams, long time Director of the WTA, will give a brief history of the ridge Indian trail that connects the Mon & Ohio Rivers, and lead us on a casual, informational hike that promises points of view. *Meet at the Warrior Trail headquarters in Fordyce.*

August 9, 1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. ***Visit to Hunting Hills Sporting Clays***

We will bulls-eye wildlife habitat development. Hunting Hills was founded in 1967 by Roy and Sally Sisler. It operates 750 acres of wildlife conservation land. We will tour the habitat development sites on this property. Join us for a look at what it takes to manage land for wildlife. *Meet at Hunting Hills, 229 Hunting Hill Rd, Greensboro, PA 15338. Tour begins at 1:00 p.m.*

September 17, 7:00 p.m.

Strategies for Managing our Forests from Three SWPWO Members

Woodland owners have long lists of management tasks to complete on their grounds. We all manage our time and efforts differently depending on many factors including ages of your children, whether you're working or retired, resources available, experience, etc… In this program you will hear strategies of how three SWPWO members go about managing their tree farms. This is a good forum to pick up tips and tricks for your own management plans and to learn about resources available to help you. *Meet at the Old Concord Presbyterian Church, Washington County.*

September 20, 1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. ***Boots on the Ground Look at Woodland Practices***

At the Perkey farm, we will tour the results of successive crop tree thinning and sites where Forestry assistance programs were utilized. At the Thistle farm, the topics will be tree planation establishment and deer protection measures. *Meet at the Greene County Fairgrounds, Waynesburg, PA.*

Farmland Preservation Update

The Greene County Farmland Preservation Program is heading into its 9th year with three farms in two townships preserving 321 acres of farmland.

The Charles A. and Thelma S. Harry crop farm is the program's fourth agricultural easement. Located in Morgan Township along Route 188, this 165 acre farm has been in the Harry family for 200 years. Accepted by the PA Bureau of Farmland Preservation in December 2013, the final easement documents were just recorded at the end of April. This brings our County total to 483 eased acres in three townships.

"It takes many steps to get through an easement, but when your goal is preserving the family farm, it is worth all the effort." said Mr. Harry.

Applications for 2014 have been suspended, but if you are interested in submitting an application in the future or just have questions, please contact Laurel Rush at 724-852-5278 or lrush@co.greene.pa.us.

Greene County
Conservation District

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Greene County Conservation District

Promoting Soil and Water Conservation in Greene County Since 1956

The Eastern Coyote

The Pennsylvania Game Commission reports that coyotes have been sighted in Pennsylvania since the 1930's, and populations have been increasing since the 1980's. They can now be found throughout Pennsylvania and every other state east of the Mississippi. There is a common myth that the Game Commission has introduced the Eastern Coyote, but this is not the case.

Coyotes are fairly distinctive. The Game Commission describes coyotes as larger than foxes (adult males are 45-55lbs and females weigh 35-40lbs) and lists their distinctive characteristics, including black lines running up and down the front legs and a cylindrical-shaped, low-hanging, tail. They further identify four pelt colorations: Tri-Color (described as being similar to a German shepherd), red, blonde, and dark brown.

Contrary to what most people believe, coyotes normally don't run in packs, but the Game Commission reports that they do seasonally travel in family units. They will travel together until the breeding season occurs in fall to mid-winter. Coyotes usually steer clear of people and will usually leave the area at the first sign of a human. They will wait until the cover of darkness and movement has slowed to come into closer contact with human-habitable areas in search of food, but rarely show aggression. Though coyotes are small and rarely have confrontations with people, these animals are the second-largest predator in Pennsylvania (behind the black bear), and they do deserve our respect.

The Game Commission classifies coyotes as opportunistic predators that will feed on small animals, including rodents, small game, fawns, and even adult deer. A fawn study conducted in 2000 and 2001 on the Quehanna Wild Area and in Penns Valley (near State College) concluded that predators accounted for almost half of all fawn mortalities in the study.

Black bears and coyotes were nearly equal in the number of fawns they killed, and together, black bears and coyotes accounted for two-thirds of all predator mortalities. After compiling this data, fawn survival was comparable to similar geographic areas and did not adversely impact the deer population's ability to replenish annual losses from hunting, predation, and other limiting factors. Also, there hasn't been any evidence that coyotes are killing a significant number of healthy adult deer in PA.

All information comes from the Pennsylvania Game Commission publication, Shedding Light on the Eastern Coyote, which can be accessed online at, http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt?open=514&objID=598430&mode=2