

BARRON PROJECT FIELD DAY

On Wednesday October 11, 2017 the Barron Project Field Day was held in Somerset County. The weather that morning included the heaviest rain that the area had received in over a month. Approximately 20 people, including farmers, conservationists, and agency personnel withstood the wet conditions and attended the event.

The Barron Project consists of many stream corridor improvements and agricultural best management practices. Construction began in August of 2016 and was completed in October of 2016. R.C. Newman of Somerset was the contractor for this project. Funding for the construction of this project came from the PA Department of Transportation. The project was administered by the Somerset Conservation District. Financial support for the Field Day was provided by Somerset County Farm Bureau.

The Barron Project is located along Mountain View Road in Jefferson Township. Keith Barron is the farm operator. The project extends approximately 2200 linear feet along Laurel Hill Creek and approximately 660 linear feet along an unnamed tributary. The elevation in the project area is approximately 2010 feet above sea level. Soils in the project area include Atkins and Cavode. Land use in the project area consists of riparian buffer, pasture, and woodland.

Pasture area improvements include the installation of:

- Approximately 4,300 linear feet of streambank fence
- Approximately 660 linear feet of division fence – which created 3 paddocks
- 1 solar-powered fence charger
- 1 rock-lined stream crossing for equipment
- 3 rock-lined stream crossings for cattle
- Approximately 700 linear feet of waterline
- 2 Watering facilities
- Approximately 150 linear feet of animal trail & walkway

Streambank improvements include:

- Streambank grading
- Rock-lined streambank areas
- Cross vanes, Log vanes, and Root wads
- Approximately 2,400 live stake shrubs
- Approximately 1,500 tree seedlings
- Permanent seeding

Informational speeches were given by:

- Keith Barron gave an overview of the farm operation and the improvements he has seen from the project.
- Len Lichvar spoke about the wide range of activities of the Somerset Conservation District.
- Mike Holbay spoke about assistance programs available through the USDA Farm Service Agency
- Rhandee Weicht spoke about technical and financial assistance that USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service provides
- J. B. Harrold spoke about grazing system management
- Tom Croner spoke about the mission and activities of Somerset County Farm Bureau

After a break for lunch, the rainfall subsided, and the group did a walking tour of the project site. J. B. Harrold, Grazing Specialist for the USDA NRCS, gave a detailed demonstration on several ways to provide water to livestock on rotationally grazed pastures. During the tour, the group was able to view photographs of the project site prior to construction. The group got a close-up look of the improvements along the streambank. During the riparian buffer tour, Shustrick discussed the condition of the stream bed and banks prior to the project. Large sections of stream bank had exposed soil, sluffing banks, and a mud laden stream bed, all of which were created by tree removal and mismanaged grazing practices. He talked about the species of trees and shrubs that were planted and how they are suited for the riparian setting, by being able to withstand wet conditions and eventually will provide shade for the stream. Additionally, he explained the different types of in-stream structures that were

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installed in the stream, why they were needed and how each device functions by altering the flow path of the stream and protecting banks from erosion and providing habitat for fish and aquatic life. The structures assist with realigning the stream channel and maintaining a natural shape and flow path which will allow the stream to transport sediments and the stream banks to revegetate. The group was able to walk through and measure the riparian buffer zone. The group was able to view the stream crossings which included evidence of high water flows and animal usage.

There are many more opportunities for projects such as this that benefit both the farmer/landowner as well as the natural resources throughout Somerset County.

If you want to discuss this subject in more detail or discuss a specific situation on your operation or property, please contact Somerset Conservation District employees:

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To learn more about the Somerset Conservation District visit: www.somersetcd.com