

Conservation Efforts Recognized

The Lancaster County Conservation District recognized outstanding efforts in natural resource conservation this spring at the District's 71th Awards Banquet at the Farm and Home Center, Lancaster.

The 2024 Outstanding Cooperator of the Year Award was presented to The Oberholtzer Family Farm of Clark and Marissa Oberholtzer located in Peach Bottom, Fulton Township. This distinction is given to a farm operation that has a well-developed working relationship with the Conservation District and partnering agencies such as USDA-NRCS, and has demonstrated a commitment to conserving the natural resources on their farm. Over the past 5 years since owning the farm, Clark has done just that; implementing over 5,100 feet of piped-outlet terraces, 2,600 feet of associated pipe work, 1,100 feet of grassed waterways, and 9.5 acres of a riparian buffer with the USDA-CREP program, totaling 1,800 native trees and shrubs planted on the property. Clark Oberholtzer has gone above and beyond to conserve the natural resources on his farm for generations to come, making him the best recipient of this year's award.

The 2024 Soil Stewardship Award went to Lloyd King, Salisbury Township. This award is presented to a member of the agriculture community to recognize their commitment to conserving soil and water on their farm. Mr. King operates a dairy farm that he started 15 years ago, where he milks 70 cows and manages heifers and calves. He manages his herd by rotationally grazing them on 22 acres of lush pasture. He manages his pastures in a system that can graze all his cows while maintaining dense vegetation year-round. Mr. King's well-managed pastures are a good demonstration of conserving natural resources on his farm.

The Watershed Department awarded the 2024 Watershed Project Award to Mr. Simeon Esh, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Unique Excavating, Donegal Trout Unlimited, and Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay. Each partner contributed a key role in a stream restoration project on the Conowingo Creek. Their collaboration from landowner's approval to securing a grant to installing the project helped make the restoration successful. In total, the project restored 3000 feet of aquatic habitat and created 4.5 acres of riparian buffer thanks to their efforts.

The Erosion & Sedimentation Department presented the 2024 Building Industry Resource Conservation Award to the Walnut Street Extension project and its key stakeholders including High Associates, RETTEW, and Kinsley Construction in recognition of their commitment to meeting the regulatory requirements of Chapter 102, demonstrating clear and consistent communication, and joining in the work of conserving the soil and water resources of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

Jennifer Trout and Joshua Haupt, teachers at Ephrata Middle School were honored with the Conservation Educators Awards. They were recognized for their dedication to personal and professional development about environmental literacy and their creative connections to engage students in local real world water quality topics about stormwater and watersheds. They are outstanding role models to the students they work with building better citizens and caretakers of our environmental resources.

The Lancaster County Conservation District is pleased to recognize these outstanding conservation efforts making a difference and sustaining a future for Lancaster County's natural resources.