

For Immediate Release
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Pennsylvania Conservationists Recognized

(Harrisburg, PA) – The Pennsylvania Association of Conservation Districts (PACD) annual conference was held in State College, PA. Several conservationists were recognized during the awards luncheon on July 18, 2024.

“Pennsylvania’s 66 conservation districts and their partners are dedicated to ensuring clean water and healthy soil for future generations. Today, we pause to celebrate the exceptional efforts of some of these remarkable individuals,” said Brenda Shambaugh, PACD Executive Director. “Congratulations to all on this well-deserved recognition.”

The 2024 PACD honorees are as follows:

Legislator Leadership Award

This award is presented to legislators recognized for their outstanding efforts to further the activities and accomplishments of the state's conservation districts or PACD on a statewide basis.

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**State Representative Barbara Gleim, Nominated by Cumberland County
Conservation District**

State Representative Gleim has been a big supporter of the Cumberland County Conservation District and all conservation districts over the years that she has been in office. Representative Gleim has attended several county Envirothons speaking with the students, teachers, and district staff about the natural resource issues in Pennsylvania. She was a speaker at the conservation district's field day and she has attended the annual awards picnic. She has fought hard to get state funding restored to the level that was needed to maintain the level of professionalism expected by conservation district staff. In addition to serving in the House, she is co-owner and operator of Hayman Farms, the family farm that she and her husband continue to work growing hay and raising Hereford beef.

President's Award

Selected by PACD Executive Board President, this award is given, at the discretion of the President, to an individual, organization, or agency in recognition of their outstanding efforts that have resulted in furthering the accomplishments of PACD.

Amy Brown, Director of Programs & Operations, PACD

President Dennis Beck selected Amy Brown, PACD's Director of Programs & Operations, to receive the PACD President's Award. President Beck stated that he wanted to recognize Amy, "for her hard work and dedication in leading the Association through some challenging financial times." Through this recognition, President Beck not only honors Amy's accomplishments but also acknowledges the critical role she plays in driving PACD towards its mission with integrity and excellence.

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Ann Rudd Saxman Conservation District Director Excellence Award

This award is given to a conservation district director or associate director for their outstanding volunteer efforts, which have furthered the activities and accomplishments of conservation districts on a statewide basis.

Charles Duritsa, Vice-Chairman, Westmoreland Conservation District and PACD Secretary

Charles Duritsa dedicated several decades to conserving resources in Pennsylvania. He is retired from the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection and currently serves as vice-chairman at the Westmoreland Conservation District. Charles previously served as PACD President, 1st Vice President, and currently serves as Secretary. He was a former Chairman of the Westmoreland Land Trust, Vice President of the Turtle Creek Watershed Association, member of the Board of Directors of the Rivers of Steel National Heritage Corporation, and Chairman of the Ohio River Basin Consortium for Research and Education. Charles Duritsa is a distinguished figure in the field of environmental conservation, with a career spanning several decades dedicated to safeguarding Pennsylvania's natural resources.

Conservation District Employee Excellence Award

This award is given to a conservation district employee for their outstanding efforts that have furthered the activities and accomplishments of conservation districts on a statewide basis.

Vincent McCollum, Cumberland County Conservation District

Vincent McCollum started at the District in 1997 and held several positions before his current position as assistant manager. Vince is very involved with the Pennsylvania Envirothon and organizes an annual golf tournament to raise funds for scholarships. He is a statewide Erosion & Sedimentation training instructor for DEP assisting newly hired technicians willing to learn from seasoned employees. Vince also testified alongside

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PACD at the PA House Environmental Resources and Energy Committee concerning the Erosion Control/NPDES permitting program.

Conservation District Trash Champion

Conservation districts were challenged to compete to see who could collect the most trash during the months of April and May.

Westmoreland Conservation District collected 11 tons of trash! In April and May, District staff picked up trash along two roads for a total of 1.5 miles. They collected 32 bags of trash, 6 tires, and 1 TV, for a total of 650 lbs of trash. Staff also held a tire recycling event that collected 870 tires totaling 21,750 lbs.

Instagram Photo Contest

During Conservation District Week, PACD hosted an Instagram Photo Contest.

Lancaster County Conservation District posted fun and creative photos of conservation districts at work during Conservation District Week.

Conservation District Employee Service Recognition Awards

The Conservation District Employee Service Recognition Awards recognize conservation district employees for their years of dedication to conserving Pennsylvania's natural resources.

30 Years of Service

- John Dryzal, District Manager, Cambria
- Mark Stockley, Resource Conservation Supervisor, Cambria

35 Years of Service

- Dave Stoner, District Manager, Franklin

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45 Years of Service

- Tammie Robinson, Office Administrator, Indiana

For more information about the work of the state's 66 conservation districts, visit

www.pacd.org. You can also follow PACD on Facebook at

<https://www.facebook.com/PAConservation>.

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The Pennsylvania Association of Conservation Districts, Inc. (PACD) is a non-profit organization whose guiding values include: Sustainable Resource Conservation; Integrity, Local; Education and Outreach; and Partnerships. PACD primarily serves as the collective voice for Pennsylvania's 66 county conservation districts. For more information about PACD, visit www.pacd.org.

