



2007 STRATEGIC PLAN

The mission of the Bradford County Conservation District is to provide leadership, technical, financial, and education resources to the people, municipalities, industries, and organizations of Bradford County to develop sound natural resource management through the implementation of soil, water, and air conservation best management practices.

BRADFORD COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT 2007 STRATEGIC PLAN INTRODUCTION

The Bradford County Conservation District is a local unit of State government that was created for the purpose of providing the people of Bradford County the maximum flexibility and capability to identify the natural resource needs of the community, develop strategies to meet those needs and then to implement those strategies. The Conservation District accomplishes this mission through the coordination of Community resources with those of the local, state and federal governments, private industry and the organizations that share similar direction.

In 2006, the Conservation District was awarded a grant through the PA State Conservation Commission to formalize a strategic plan to address the accomplishment of its mission. The Board of Directors, the representatives of the Bradford County community, along with the staff of professionals, provide you this template for discussion and input, and hopefully for your support.

METHODOLOGY

This Report, presented here, builds upon the work done in the creation and achievements of an earlier Strategic Plan developed by the District in 2002. In order to best build on this earlier work, the District professional staff met in three separate “Team” retreats to accomplish the following goals:

- ⇒ Assess the progress made on the earlier plan
- ⇒ Assess current programming and “Team functionality”
- ⇒ Develop a forecast of future needs of the clientele, County and Conservation District

The three separate retreats focused on Agricultural Services and Programs, Technical Services and Programs, and District Management. A summary of these meetings is attached as an appendix.

On March 27 and 28, the District Board, staff and its invited guests met for a facilitated retreat at the Lycoming Genetti Hotel in Williamsport. The agenda included the following topics:

- ⇒ Review of the Conservation District Law and its powers and obligations
- ⇒ Overview of the 2002 District Strategic Plan and accomplishments associated with that plan
- ⇒ Overview of the finding of the District Team Visit
- ⇒ Overview of the Technical Team Retreat findings
- ⇒ Overview of the Agricultural Team findings
- ⇒ Discussion of the Watershed/Streams Program
- ⇒ Discussion of Agricultural Directions and Priorities
- ⇒ Overview of Educational Programs
- ⇒ Overview of the fiscal health of the District
- ⇒ Identification of New Strategic Initiatives
- ⇒ Development of Goals and target dates for accomplishment

As a follow-up to this session, the District continues to review and refine this document through the input of its invaluable partners. This Plan helps create the framework for the direction of the Conservation District in being responsive to the needs of its customers, the landowners of Bradford County.

SPECIAL THANKS

The Bradford County Conservation District expresses its appreciation to all that made the creation of this Plan a possibility.

- ⇒ The State Conservation Commission through the Leadership Development Committee for the funding
- ⇒ Joanne Nardone for providing valuable facilitation and guidance
- ⇒ The Board, Staff, Associate Directors, Partner Agencies and all others that have provided input, guidance and services that make the future possible.

PLAN ADOPTION

This Strategic Plan was officially adopted by the Bradford County Conservation District Board on June 6th, 2007.

2002 STRATEGIC PLAN A PROGRESS REPORT & EVALUATION

1. AGRICULTURAL BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

By 2004, the BCCD will be technically able to handle 50% of all the farmer requests for assistance within one year of their request

Secure Interns

Ongoing annual use of Interns

Conservation Planning Needs determination

Done for Towanda / Sugar Creek

Nutrient Management Planning

Still an issue due to soil tests, lack of commercial planners, project requirements

Engineering

Funding challenge

2. COMMUNITY OF FARMS

By 2003, the BCCD will have a comprehensive plan to preserve Agricultural Communities in cooperation with organizations of similar intent.

Identify Partners

Meeting held, open space guide begun

Agricultural Protection Guide

Draft nearly completed

Farmland Protection Program Local Manual

Develop Ag Coalition

No progress to date

Develop Strategy with Coalition

No progress to date

Summit on Farm Community Enhancement

No progress to date

3. STREAM STABILIZATION

By 2004, the BCCD will have Wyalusing, Wysox, Towanda, Sugar, Laning, Seeley, Schrader, Bentley, and Mill Creek Watersheds inventoried and evaluated

Develop plan / scope to accomplish

All but Wyalusing done

Inventory existing Studies

All but Wyalusing done

Utilize Interns & Volunteers to accomplish

All but Wyalusing done

Seek Funding to accomplish Intent

All but Wyalusing done

Develop District Stream Team*Done***Locate stable reference reaches & set up Monitoring***Initial efforts started, need more resources***Collect, record and develop data on local streams***Initial efforts started, need more resources***4. WATERSHED ORGANIZATIONS**

By 2004, the BCCD will be capable of providing technical and organizational development assistance to Bradford County Watershed groups

Complete watershed organization needs survey*Done and ongoing***Develop MOU with each group***Some MOUs, some actual contracts***Secure funding to meet needs***Ongoing efforts***Develop qualified team to provide services***Done***5. AIR QUALITY**

By 2004, the BCCD will develop a strategy, plan and overview of air quality issues in Bradford County

Research existing info on County air quality*Met with DEP officials***Research existing technology associated with air quality***No progress to date***Develop outreach plan***Municipal workshop held with Ombudsman Program***Seek technical & innovative technology for issues identified***No progress to date***6. EDUCATION & INFORMATION ON NATURAL RESOURCE ISSUES**

By 2003, the BCCD will develop an informational and educational strategic plan to increase public awareness of the general public of Bradford County on the conservation of natural resources and related issues by 50%

Assess current level of knowledge*Little effort to date***Review existing educational programs to determine effectiveness & appropriateness***School District Survey & Planning Project**Internal review of program needs (Ag, Streams, School)*

Maintain qualified staff to increase delivery

All staff involved in development & delivery

Determine infrastructure needs

Internal discussions, Committee needs

7. OPERATIONAL ISSUE - STOLL NATURAL RESOURCE CENTER

Done

8. OPERATIONAL ISSUE - STAFFING

Done & Ongoing

9. OPERATIONAL ISSUE - ACCOUNTABILITY

By 2003, the BCCD will have an established public evaluation system for all District Services

Green comment cards, program evaluations, new accounting system, municipal meeting (D&G)

10. OPERATIONAL ISSUE - FINANCIAL

By the dates listed, the BCCD will find the financial resources to meet the identified critical needs

Done & ongoing

2007 BRADFORD COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT STRATEGIC GOALS

I – DISTRICT OPERATIONS STRATEGIC GOALS

1. Revitalize District Committees

District Committees provide the educational and informational sharing forums that are needed to facilitate knowledgeable decisions by the District Board. Identifying needs, drafting strategies and making recommendations to the Board for action should all be done at a greater degree by the District's Committee structure. The following are considerations in revitalizing Committees and their structure:

- ⇒ Target and invite more “outside” expertise
- ⇒ Include “program users”
- ⇒ Board needs to assign issues to Committees to make recommendation to the Board

2. Determine Staffing Needs and potential methods to fund them

A professional, knowledgeable and competent staff is what makes the high level of performance by the Bradford County Conservation District possible. Finding and maintaining this staff requires a number of elements. While a good working environment and good management are to be maintained, the issue of developing a sustainable and appropriate salary compensation program is important.

Definable Milestones

<u>Milestone</u>	<u>Target date</u>
1. Revitalize and restructure the District Committee system	2008

II – STREAMS AND WATERSHEDS

1. Consider “Outside of County” project work with short-term commitments and high potential returns

The primary goals and responsibilities of the District are to provide assistance to County residents and organizations. To develop and maintain the expertise needed for addressing watershed and stream issues, the District also needs to consider the resources needed to support the team. To accomplish this, the District will consider requests from other Districts outside of Bradford County when such requests can help provide for the maintenance of the BCCD staffing

expertise. Such “outside” projects should be evaluated for ability of the District team to service the projects and length of commitment to the outside project. Outside projects interference with the service of Bradford County projects should be kept to a minimum whenever practical.

2. *Administrative time and resources devoted to grants, etc. for watershed organizations must be addressed in the grants, management plans, etc.*

County watershed groups and other organizations are increasingly looking to the District to help provide administrative assistance. This is a growing workload element for the staff as well as a potential fiscal consideration. State and Federal grant programs are continually becoming more complex and burdensome for the volunteer organizations. The District recognizes these needs and is amiable to providing assistance but needs to develop agreements with the requesting organization that will provide the resources to address them. These considerations need to be part of the District’s management plan.

3. *The District needs to work toward reviving County watershed organizations.*

Like all volunteer based organizations, the sustainability and growth of watershed organizations is a dynamic and constant process. Watershed restoration is a long term commitment and the District needs to provide the assistance and guidance needed to help sustain their efforts.

Definable Milestones

<u>Milestone</u>	<u>Target date</u>
1. Convene Watershed Councils twice a year	2007
2. Develop written criteria/policy for “outside” County project consideration	2008
3. Evaluate potential for watershed “business manager” position	2008
4. Assist every watershed group in developing watershed specific strategic and business plans	2010

III – ENERGY CONSERVATION / EDUCATION

1. *Increase the District’s ability to assist with Energy Issues*

The District should continue to support the energy coordinator position and look to possibly expand the District role in energy conservation.

2. *Explore and implement ways to make the District “Greener”*

The District should look to it’s building and operations and evaluate ways to be more energy efficient.

3. *The District should work further to develop a County Energy Policy*

In developing such a policy, the District should consider such things as the following:

- ⇒ Municipal ordinances
- ⇒ Energy impacts on and from forestry and agriculture
- ⇒ Potential impacts (footprint) of wind farms
- ⇒ Impacts of programs on land availability

4. Explore the opportunities for agriculture's role in energy.

The impacts of energy policies, as well as the future of energy sources, both by and on agriculture are significant. The District needs to be proactive in providing information, assistance and possible facilitation of opportunities. Activities may include:

- ⇒ Sponsoring future workshops for farmers
- ⇒ Providing information on biofuels
- ⇒ Exploring better use of manure (i.e. water removal)

Definable Milestones

<u>Milestone</u>	<u>Target date</u>
1. Calculate the District's carbon footprint and implement ways to reduce it by 25%	2012
2. Transition Stoll Natural Resources Center to a "green building"	2010
3. Develop sustainable "energy coordinator" position	2009

IV – AGRICULTURE

1. Expand Farmer Educational Efforts

It is the core belief of the District, that farmers that possess the right tools and information in their possession will make sound resource management decisions. It is therefore essential that the District continue to work towards providing that information and tools. Example of such efforts include:

- ⇒ Farmer - oriented workshops
- ⇒ On - farm assistance in the form of inventories and evaluations (ACRE)

2. Preserve the District's Image as a "Safe Place" to come for assistance

The District will continue to maintain it's policy of being a location for landowners with resource problems to come to for assistance.

3. Maintain a focused, effective agricultural team and program priorities.

Agriculture and the support of farmers is a priority for the Bradford Conservation District. To achieve the goal as stated the District needs to continually assess its programs and actions to assure that it is providing the most effective and pertinent services to our agricultural community. The following considerations and/or steps are to be considered when determining and assessing District efforts:

- ⇒ Address ag workload issues through good management planning
- ⇒ Assess potential impacts of Ag programs and set priorities
- ⇒ Consider the results of the ACRE assessments
- ⇒ Cooperation among other Ag agencies is essential
- ⇒ Work with Farms that want to work with the District
- ⇒ Consider the potential influx of new types of Ag operations
- ⇒ Explore why there is a reluctance towards soil sampling by farmers?
- ⇒ Has the District become too program driven?

4. Reassess the District’s agricultural assistance priority system by 2008

Definable Milestones

Milestone	Target date
1. Develop a mitigation plan on the adverse economic impacts to the agricultural community of upland CREP in Bradford County	2008
2. Revise District Ag Assistance Priority Policy	2008
3. Develop focused, sustainable, sponsored educational and informational outreach programs	

V – KEEPING AGRICULTURE VIABLE

1. The Bradford County Conservation District, in cooperation with organizations of similar intent, will develop a comprehensive plan to preserve Agricultural Communities.

Agriculture and its associated way of life is integral to Bradford County. The District needs to continue to work with such programs such as the PA Farmland Protection Program. The District also needs to consider and explore more comprehensive and creative ways to supporting the agricultural industry in the County. To achieve this it is essential to identify other groups and organizations that have a similar goal. When developing our comprehensive plan, the following items need to be considered:

- ⇒ Identify all organizations and programs that are involved in agricultural protection and support.
- ⇒ Investigate and secure new funding for the development of agricultural protection and support programs and opportunities.
- ⇒ Convene a representatives of various agricultural protection and support organizations and programs to investigate the development of a coalition for the future of farm communities in Bradford County.

- ⇒ Develop a Strategy in conjunction with those interested groups for the future enhancement of agricultural communities in Bradford County.
- ⇒ Investigate the possibility of a summit, based in Bradford County, on the enhancement of Farm Communities.
- ⇒ Consider the growing rural / urban interface

Definable Milestones

<u>Milestone</u>	<u>Target date</u>
1. Complete the “Welcome to Bradford County” brochure	2008
2. Organize coalition of organization interested in promoting viable agriculture in Bradford County	2008
3. Develop a “coalition” strategy for agricultural viability	2009
4. Develop and secure funding for a Bradford County Agricultural Summit	2010

VI - EDUCATION

1. Develop a Comprehensive Educational Strategic Plan by 2008

The District’s outstanding educational program would benefit from a separate strategic plan to help guide the continued development and perpetuation of the program. This plan should consider the following:

- ⇒ Program packaging for soliciting potential sponsors
- ⇒ Coordination of Educational programs through all program areas
- ⇒ Adult education – selling conservation
- ⇒ Possible creation of an education center
- ⇒ Revitalizing or creating a new/increased volunteer pool
- ⇒ Tell the story of agriculture (Living History Farm?)

2. Revitalize the District’s Education Committee

3. Plan for the increased use of County Parks in Educational programming

Definable Milestones

<u>Milestone</u>	<u>Target date</u>
1. Establish a Volunteer Pool of at least 25 individuals	2010
2. Increase education staffing by 1 full time equivalent	2009
3. Develop Education Strategic Plan	2008
4. Formalize the structure for a Volunteer Corp	2008

VII – FLOODPLAIN MANAGEMENT

1. The District should explore the expansion of its role in floodplain management

Bradford County has, and continues to experience, significant impacts on its communities from the flooding of its rivers and streams. Recognizing that these floodplains are areas that naturally flood, is an important awareness that needs to be communicated to our municipalities and landowners. Flooding is a natural occurrence and in itself does not cause damage. It is the placement of structures and infrastructures in these flood prone areas that creates the potential for damage. The District can take a pro-active stance to help prevent these damages by considering the following actions:

- ⇒ Assist municipalities with ordinance development
- ⇒ Assist and promote the development of riparian management plans
- ⇒ Promote non-Ag riparian buffers
- ⇒ Take a proactive approach to community education on the cause and effect of flooding and the relationship to stormwater management

Definable Milestones

<u>Milestone</u>	<u>Target date</u>
1. Visit every municipality to discuss their floodplain ordinances, uses, problems, etc.	2011
2. Develop and hold a series of educational outreach efforts	Annually

VIII – DISTRICT MANAGEMENT

1. Develop a Management Transition Plan by 2009 that considers the management structure of the District over the next 3 to 5 years

The Bradford Conservation District has experienced unprecedented growth and expansion over the last decade. While it has managed to keep pace with the management of the “business” of running a growing operation, there needs to be a long term look at the future requirements to continue its success. This plan should also consider the impacts of future management changes as retirements approach. Consideration for such a plan must include the following:

- ⇒ Providing time for management to conduct program analysis and looking at the “big picture” needs as a primary objective
- ⇒ Consider the possibilities of a business manager position
- ⇒ Consider the possibility of a development officer position
- ⇒ Evaluate the changing roles of team managers and the possibilities of adding more teams

2. Develop long - term fiscal management objectives

The District Board and Management Team needs to determine the long term fiscal management goals of the District. Examples of the questions that need to be answered by these objectives include:

- ⇒ How much does the District need to operate?
- ⇒ What are the long - term fiscal goals?
- ⇒ What are the defined uses for funding?

Definable Milestones

<u>Milestone</u>	<u>Target date</u>
1. Develop Management transition plan	2010
2. Develop a set of fiscal management objectives for the District	2008
3. Develop and implement an improved staff and board evaluation and individual development system	2008

AGRICULTURAL TEAM RETREAT NOTES

12-07-06

TEAM ASSESSMENT

- ✓ Good Team Structure and Communication
- ✓ Could use even more Communication in the form of updates, etc.
 - More communication from Manager and Team Leader
 - Include Mark Madden on Ag Team electronic distribution list
- ✓ Some interaction with Tech Team would be helpful
- ✓ Need improvement in accountability and deadlines
 - Keep minutes of Team meetings (nothing elaborate – bullets) & distribute to all on Ag Team list
 - People shouldn't be sensitive to questioning of status on deadlines – part of keeping on track
- ✓ Great internal review / approval of work and projects
- ✓ Good internal scope of expertise on Team
- ✓ Great people
- ✓ Need to keep working on improving Team expertise
 - Use of IDPs
- ✓ Improvements in prioritization needed
 - Review on a regular basis (quarterly?)
- ✓ Need to maintain FOCUS
- ✓ Important to consider the individual needs / professional growth / capabilities / career goals when deciding on Team goals and directions

CRYSTAL BALL CONSIDERATIONS

- ⇒ Nutrient Management Program
 - New / updated plan reviews (90+/-)
 - Conservation Planning needs
- ⇒ Odor Regulations and possible delegation
- ⇒ Manure Hauler Regulations and testing
- ⇒ New Targeted Watershed
- ⇒ Biosolids
- ⇒ Training and Certification
- ⇒ Engineer

CURRENT PROJECT / PROGRAM OBLIGATIONS

PROJECT/PROGRAM	TIME NEEDS	DUE DATE	LEAD
AG Preservation Program ❖ <i>Ranking of current sign ups</i>	.5 yr	<i>January 07</i>	Tony
Nutrient Management Delegation ❖ Review plans (12+ yr.) ❖ Service complaints ❖ Education Outreach ❖ <i>Annual farm reviews (15+ yr.)</i>			Dixie
Chesapeake Bay Program ❖ <i>Planning and technical goals</i> ❖ Special Projects ▪ <i>Driveways (2)</i> ▪ <i>Wetlands (5 acres)</i> ▪ <i>Farms (3)</i> ▪ <i>Streams (6)</i> ❖ Engineering / NRCS	.75	<i>June 07</i> <i>June 07</i> <i>June 07</i> <i>June 07</i> June 07	Nate & Terry Nate Dixie Nate ?? Team Rob
<i>North Branch Towanda Creek</i>		<i>February 07</i>	John
ACRE County		June 08	Terry
<i>ACRE Joint</i>		<i>June 07</i>	Mike
<i>Land Preservation Guide</i>		<i>May 07</i>	Dixie
Park the Plow	???	???	Terry
Nutrient Trading	???	June	???
Rivers Conservation Plan	???	December 07	Mike
West Nile Virus	.5	December 07	John
Walk – Ins	???		All

Bold / Italicized = high priority

TECHNICAL TEAM RETREAT NOTES

1-25-07

TEAM ASSESSMENT

- ✓ Good Team Structure and Communication
- ✓ Could use more quality assurance in the form of a “second set of eyes” on construction projects
- ✓ Could use a more organized approach to preparing for projects

CRYSTAL BALL CONSIDERATIONS

- ⇒ Stormwater
 - Post construction requirements under Chapter 102
 - ACT 167 and County wide stormwater ordinance
- ⇒ Stream Work
 - Internal (Bradford County)
 - County Initiative (\$300,000 worth of work)
 - Saterlee Creek (\$204,000 worth of work)
 - Sugar Creek (\$125,000 worth of work)
 - Stephen Foster (in-lake restoration)
 - Watershed assistance (annual)
 - Trout Unlimited activities
 - External (outside Bradford County)
 - Game Commission
 - Upper Susquehanna Coalition
 - Other Counties in PA
- ⇒ Dirt and Gravel Roads Reassessment
- ⇒ Municipal Services
 - Stormwater
 - Driveways
 - Floodplains
 - Permit Assistance
 - Education
- ⇒ Chapter 102/105
 - New regs
 - Ag
- ⇒ Energy
- ⇒ Forestry

CURRENT PROJECT / PROGRAM OBLIGATIONS

PROJECT/PROGRAM	TIME NEEDS	DUE DATE	LEAD
<i>Dirt and Gravel Roads Program</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ 4 Projects for 2007 ❖ Annual sign-ups ❖ Sign-up evaluations ❖ Contracts developed by December ❖ 1 ESM Workshop ❖ 2 meetings ❖ QAB ❖ Technical support for Municipalities 		April May December April	
<i>Chapter 102 Program</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ 20 NPDES (monthly inspections) ❖ Complaints investigations (20+) ❖ Plan reviews (35+) 		ongoing	
<i>Chapter 105</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Complaint investigations (30-40) ❖ General Permits (150+) 		ongoing	
<i>County Stream Initiative</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ 79 Applications ❖ 25 sites to design/construct ❖ 6 sites to design/construct for CBP 		June 2008	
<i>Towanda Creek – 1 design/construct</i>		June	
<i>Laning Creek - ?</i>		June	
<i>Sugar Creek</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ 3 constructions ❖ 1-4 designs 		June ?	
<i>PA Game Commission</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Schrader Creek #8 construction 		June	
<i>Beaver Brook construction</i>		?	
<i>Pipe Creek construction</i>		?	
<i>Stream Monitoring – 15 sites</i>		ongoing	
<i>Wysox Creek – 2? Design/construct???</i>		June?	
<i>Wyalusing Creek – 1 design/construct</i>		?	
<i>Stephen Foster Lake</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Lake / Watershed monitoring ❖ In – Lake restoration study 			
<i>Stream Soil Samples</i>		Summer 07	
<i>Rivers Conservation Plan – mapping, management alternatives</i>		December	
<i>Education</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Field Days ❖ 2 ESM for Streams ❖ 3 day FGM ? 			

