



## **2019 Year in Review**

Each Autumn as we wrap up our fiscal year (Oct. 1-Sept. 30), Capital RC&D staff reflects on the collaborations, work product, and overall impact of the organization within the Capital RC&D footprint and throughout the state. New program development and projects that span more than one fiscal year are difficult to quantify within a “snapshot”, but seeing the completed components and the results of finished projects helps to demonstrate the ways Capital RC&D works toward achieving its vision of, “A clean, healthy region that preserves and conserves natural and community resources and uses resources for responsible/sustainable economic development.”

In 2019, Capital RC&D spent \$1,147,400 on programming within Pennsylvania, in addition to providing ongoing administrative support for the PA Grazing Lands Coalition (PA-GLC) and fiscal sponsorship for the South Central PA Harvest Hub and Carver’s Secret Garden. We also launching a multi-year soil health study of cover crop grazing and partnered with the Chesapeake Bay Foundation and others on a Mountains to Bay grazing project to support conversion of crop land/extensively grazed land to rotational grazing. Additional highlights include:

- Support for 655 CREP-enrolled acres through technical consultation with 24 landowners
- Biennial survey of annual conservation practices in 31 counties
- Production of Four High Tunnel Management Webinars
- Two Food Waste Reduction Webinars
- Eight videos for farmers and landowners about on-farm composting, grazing, and high tunnel soil health
- Financial support for seven Agroforestry Webinars.

These resources and copies of 2019 e-newsletters, the launch of which was another 2019 milestone, are available at [capitalrcd.org](http://capitalrcd.org). We look forward to providing project and partner updates throughout 2020 and wish you a happy new year!

## **What’s happening at Capital RC&D?**

### **CREP Habitat Benefits Video Release**

In Pennsylvania, the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) protects soil and water resources through conservation practices implemented on over 150,000 highly erodible acres throughout the state. The installed practices that include streamside buffers, appropriate landowner-

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selected upland native/cool season/legume grass plantings, and field border and marginal pasture habitat plantings, also serve to provide excellent wildlife habitat. Capital RC&D's latest video, Exploring the Wildlife Habitat Benefits of Pennsylvania's CREP Acreage, focuses on why these practices are important and how they support wildlife throughout the state.

In the video, Stefan Karkuff, Farm Bill Biologist with Pheasants Forever notes that, "A lot of our



Stefan Karkuff examines a CP-2 Permanent Native Grass field.

grassland nesting birds have declined in Pennsylvania in the past 30, 40 years due to loss of habitat, and they really do respond to the presence of these fields. Deer, Turkey, some of our larger animals, they can dash through a corn field, no problem. But smaller birds, insects, amphibians, they really are the ones that are gaining the most from the wildlife corridor habitat that CREP creates." The contiguous habitat CREP provides is important but even small sections of enrolled acreage provide nesting or thermal cover and food sources that ensure the success of individual wildlife species.

Thomas Keller, Wildlife Research Biologist at the PA Game Commission, joins Karkuff in

discussing additional upland grass or native plant based practices benefitting game and non-game species. The video also includes interviews with Ryan Davis, Chesapeake Forests Program Manager with the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay, and Greg Wilson of Trout Unlimited, Donegal Chapter, who focus on the benefits of forested riparian buffers on land and through improved water quality.

The video and other resources for CREP enrolled farmers and landowners, including links to additional federal, state, and organizational resources, is available at [capitalrcd.org/CREP](http://capitalrcd.org/CREP). The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service funded and provided technical support for this video.

## Capital RC&D Partner Spotlight

### South Mountain Partnership, 2020 Speaker Series

Since 2006, the South Mountain Partnership has collaborated with agencies, educational institutions, non-profit organizations, private businesses and citizens within Adams, Cumberland Franklin, and York counties to foster connections while promoting and conserving the resources of the South Mountain region. Events highlighting the work of partners, a mini-grant program, and the annual South Mountain Speaker series are examples of how the partnership accomplishes its goal. Capital RC&D has received many benefits from our association with the partnership and is excited to collaborate to host the upcoming South Mountain Water Workshop, Municipalities and Watershed Groups Working Together for Greater Impact.

The South Mountain Water Workshops are the focus for the 2020 Speaker Series. This three part series

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started in December with the Tri-County Watershed Association Meeting, continues with the January 9th workshop, Municipalities and Watershed Groups Working Together for Greater Impact, and concludes on March 27th with the POWR Regional Water Workshop.



Conservation District Watershed Specialists, Joe Hallinan (Adams Co.) and Tammy Piper (Franklin Co.), address attendees during the Dec. 3rd Tri-County Watershed Meeting. (Photo Courtesy of South Mountain Partnership)

Municipalities and Watershed Groups Working Together for Greater Impact is co-hosted by Capital RC&D and the South Mountain Partnership, and takes place at Dickinson College in Carlisle, PA from 2:00-6:00 PM. The meeting is free and open to all, but local watershed associations and municipalities are encouraged to attend.

Topics include County Watershed Implementation Plans (WIPs), Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) plans, effective collaborations, and discussion about local activities. Speakers from throughout the Capital RC&D and South Mountain region include Kelly Kurtas (South Middleton Township), Rebecca Davis (Lower Allen

Township), Phil Wolgemuth and Andy Stottlemeyer (Borough of Chambersburg), Lisa Beatty (Conodoguinet Watershed Association), Ed Myers (East Pennsboro Township), and Claudia Peet (MACWell).

These workshops are funded in part by a grant from the Chesapeake Bay Funders Network, Chesapeake Bay Trust, National Fish and Wildlife Federation, US Environmental Protection Agency, and the Chesapeake Bay Program.

To learn more about the South Mountain Partnership, the South Mountain Water Workshop Series, or to register for Municipalities and Watershed Groups Working Together for Greater Impact on January 9th, visit: <https://southmountainpartnership.org/south-mountain-water-workshop-series>

If you were unable to attend the December 3rd Tri-County Watershed Association Meeting and would like to learn more about topics discussed or review distributed materials, visit <https://www.capitalrcd.org/tri-county-handouts-page.html>



Lori Glace, Watershed Specialist with Cumberland Co. Conservation District speaks at the Tri-County Watershed Meeting. (Photo courtesy of South Mountain Partnership)



## Upcoming Dates

January 9, 2020	Capital RC&D Council Meeting; Lebanon County Conservation District
January 9, 2020	South Mountain Water Workshop: Municipalities and Watershed Groups Working Together for Greater Impact , Dickinson College; Carlisle, PA
January 16, 2020	Franklin County Graziers Grazing Conference 2020; Chambersburg, PA
January 22-23, 2020	PA Assoc. of Conservation Districts and State Conservation Commission's Annual Meeting; State College, PA
January 23, 2020	Lebanon County Grazing Network Winter Meeting; Shaefferstown, PA
January 28-30, 2020	Mid-Atlantic Fruit and Vegetable Convention; Hershey, PA
February 5-9, 2020	PA Assoc. of Sustainable Agriculture (PASA) Annual Conference; Lancaster, PA
March 6, 2020	York Co. Conservation District, Manure Management Plan Workshop; York, PA
March 27, 2020	South Mountain Water Workshop: POWR Regional Water Workshop; Mechanicsburg, PA

*For additional details about these and other Capital RC&D and partner events, visit the Events page at [capitalrcd.org](http://capitalrcd.org)*

