

Bucks County  
Conservation District

2024 Annual

# REPORT

OVER 60 YEARS IN PURSUIT OF ENVIRONMENTAL EXCELLENCE







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# 2024 MANAGER'S MESSAGE

Welcome to the Bucks County Conservation District Annual Report. Thank you for spending some time reading about our goals and accomplishments for 2024. I hope that you enjoy learning something new about the services BCCD provides to our county residents. I am very proud of the thoughtfulness and effort made by our Board of Directors and our staff to meet our program goals, and our mission of resource protection.



The BCCD Board began the year strongly with the early adoption of a new Board of Directors Succession Plan. Development of this plan was a months long effort. The goal of our plan is to ensure that the BCCD maintains a full complement of engaged and informed Board of Directors who provide a variety of skills to support our organization and its staff.

In early 2024, the Pennsylvania Lake Management Society (PALMS) honored the Bucks County Conservation District by awarding us their Outstanding Organization award (photographed above). This award recognized our “valuable contributions to the science of Pennsylvania lake and watershed management in 2023”. We are deeply appreciative of this recognition and are motivated to continue our efforts with renewed spirit.



Throughout the course of 2024 BCCD was lucky to welcome several new faces to our staff and board. Both Christian DiSimone and Joslyn Tomlinson joined our newly updated Environmental Protection Specialist team this past year. They show great passion and ability for the position and mission of the district.

BCCD also welcomed two new Associate Directors to our board. Theresa Bentley, a long-time public servant who completed countless beneficial projects for Bucks County as an Environmental Planner for the Bucks County Planning Commission, and Dr. Jacklyn Fiola, Assistant Professor of Soils & Environmental Science with Delaware Valley University. I am personally looking forward to working with both for years to come.

The last item that I will highlight as I reflect on 2024, is the yearlong undertaking to execute the renewal and issuance of several hundred NPDES General Permits. The enormity of this task is difficult to describe. I would like to take the opportunity to personally thank and congratulate the administrative team of NPDES Permit Coordinators and our Receptionist for a job well done. These three people shouldered the bulk of this effort on behalf of the entire BCCD. Everyone on the staff did what was possible to support and assist, but this process would not have been successful without the full dedication of our administrative staff.

Please, enjoy the BCCD 2024 Annual Report.

Sincerely,

BCCD District Manager, Gretchen Schatschneider



# BOARD OF DIRECTORS

## **Directors:**

David Wolfinger

*Chairman*

John Frederick

*Vice Chair*

Robert J. Harvie, Jr.

*Commissioner Director*

Peter Stampfl

*Treasurer*

Dwight L. Ely

*Farmer Director*

Joel Roney

*Farmer Director*

Kellie McGowan, Esq.

*Public Director*

## **Associate Directors:**

Brett Ely

*PFK Mark III*

Broc Sandelin

*Delaware Valley University*

Jacklyn Fiola

*Delaware Valley University*

Evan Stone

*Bucks County Planning  
Commission*

Lisa Braud

*Hollow House Farms*

Robert Loughery,

*Nehemiah Development Company,  
Inc.*

Theresa Bentley

*Happily Retired from a Long  
Career in Environmental  
Regulation*

*The BCCD is a legal subdivision of state government and is administered by a Board of Directors composed of four farmer members, two public members, and one county commissioner member, all of whom serve without pay. The Directors work with all individuals, organizations, and agencies interested in soil and water conservation, land use planning, watershed protection, and flood prevention in the broadest sense to secure their assistance and support in planning and carrying out District programs.*



# OUR TEAM

**Gretchen Schatschneider**, District Manager

**Marilyn Laurelli**, Receptionist, RTK Officer, and Board Secretary

**Amanda Sandor**, Environmental Protection Specialist

**Chris Cook**, Environmental Protection Specialist

Chris left the District in April of 2024 to accept a position of Watershed Specialist at Delaware County Conservation District.

**Christian DeSimone**, Environmental Protection Specialist

**Jason Maurer**, Environmental Protection Specialist and Education Specialist

**Joslyn Tomlinson**, Environmental Protection Specialist

**Kevin Mault**, Environmental Protection Specialist

**Richard Krasselt**, Environmental Protection Specialist II

**Tori Jones Long**, Environmental Protection Specialist

Tori left the District in November of 2024 to pursue other opportunities.

**Erik Gunstensen**, Chapter 102/NPDES Permit Coordinator

**Susan Seykot**, Chapter 102/NPDES Permit Coordinator

**Karen Ogden**, Watershed Specialist

**Logan Freed**, Administrative Assistant and Conservation Specialist

**Morgan Ladner**, DGLVR Program Administrator

**Ryan Herstine**, Agricultural Conservation Technician

**Carly Seldow**, Agricultural Conservation Technician



# 2024 NEW STAFF

## Logan Freed

### Administrative Assistant and Conservation Specialist

Logan graduated from Delaware Valley University with a B.S. in Conservation and Wildlife Management and a minor in Media and Communications. She interned with BCCD throughout the summer of 2023, and transitioned to full time in January of 2024. Her responsibilities increased to support the district with administrative tasks, while continuing her work on watershed and conservation projects.

In her free time, Logan enjoys spending her time with her partner, hiking with their dogs, and challenging herself to learn new hobbies.



## Christian DeSimone

### Environmental Protection Specialist

Christian, a 2024 graduate of Penn State University with a degree in Environmental Systems Engineering, began his role as an Environmental Protection Specialist in May 2024. His responsibilities include reviewing NPDES permit applications, evaluating Erosion and Sediment Control Plans, and conducting site inspections for municipalities in Bucks County.

Christian, an avid outdoorsman who enjoys hunting and fishing, grew up in Bucks County, where he developed a strong appreciation for its natural beauty. He is passionate about preserving the area's environment and ensuring it remains a place for others to enjoy.





## Joslyn Tomlinson Environmental Protection Specialist

Joslyn began her time with BCCD in 2024 as an Environmental Protection Specialist. She is currently in training. Her responsibilities will include reviewing applications for NPDES permits, Erosion and Sediment Control Plan reviews, and conducting site inspections. Joslyn is a graduate of Texas Tech University's College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources. After graduation she took a position with the Texas Department of Transportation, Lubbock District as an Environmental Specialist.

Joslyn is married to Steve and together they have three daughters, Athena, Amara and Avery. She spends her free time as a Search and Rescue K9 handler with her K9 partner, Chi Rho.

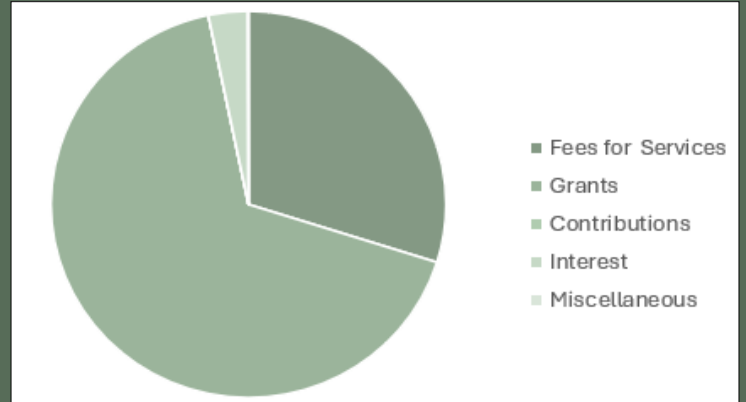




# 2024 FINANCIALS

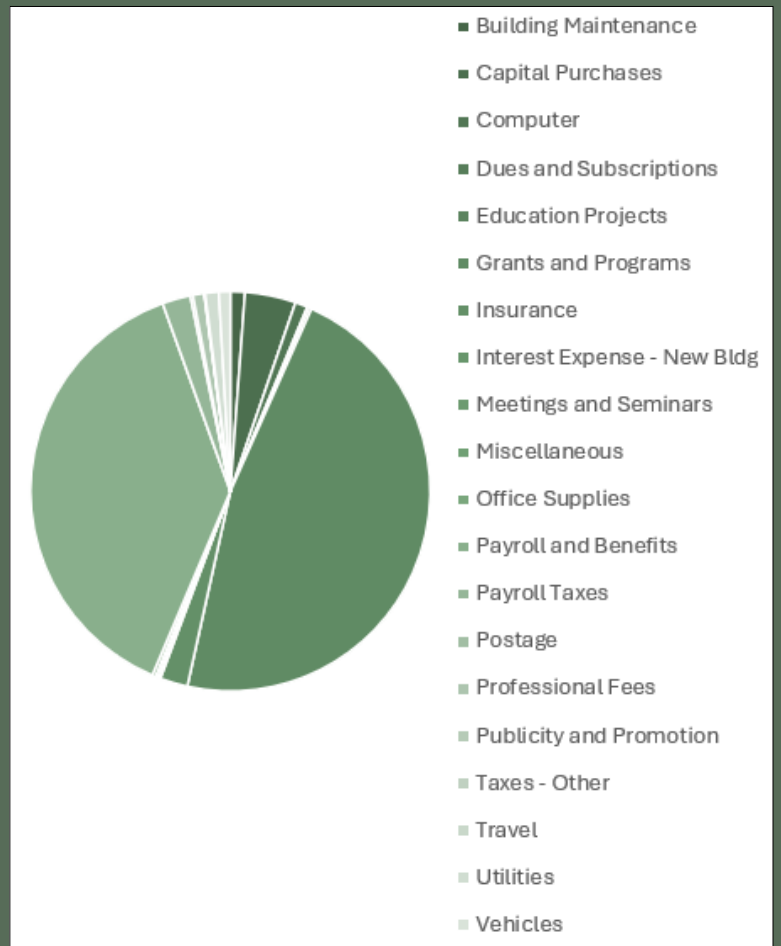
## Revenue:

Fees for Services	\$1,067,580.00
Grants	\$2,392,511.00
Contributions	\$309.00
Interest	\$115,007.00
Miscellaneous	\$1,704.00
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$3,577,111.00</b>



## Expenses:

Building Maintenance	\$29,950.00
Capital Purchases	\$105,421.00
Computer	\$25,640.00
Dues and Subscriptions	\$4,469.00
Education Projects	\$5,088.00
Grants and Programs	\$1,198,200.00
Insurance	\$57,241.00
Interest Expense - New Buidling	\$3,487.00
Meetings and Seminars	\$3,470.00
Miscellaneous	\$3,954.00
Office Supplies	\$6,919.00
Payroll and Benefits	\$975,397.00
Payroll Taxes	\$58,553.00
Postage	\$5,530.00
Professional Fees	\$23,152.00
Publicity and Promotion	\$843.00
Taxes - Other	
Travel	\$1,285.00
Utilities	\$28,060.00
Vehicles	\$23,586.00
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$2,560,245.00</b>



**Excess of Revenues over Expenses**

**\$ 1,016,866.00**



# Chapter 102 – Erosion and Sediment Control

2024 was, as always, a busy year for BCCD Environmental Protection Staff in enforcing PA Code Title 25, Chapter 102 regulations relating to erosion and sediment pollution control and administering Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection programs in that field.

BCCD staff had new permit applications to review and site inspections of active projects to conduct. We were also gearing up for the overall renewal of the PAG-02 General NPDES permit, which required a lot of coordination and additional work for our staff.

Included are a couple of selected photographs from 2024, displaying some of the issues BCCD field staff face and handle during inspections.



*Shown above, sediment-laden water was being discharged off this site without proper filtration. The receiving creek was only several yards away through the tree line. BCCD worked with the site contractors to get this issue addressed immediately to prevent further pollution.*



*The photo above was taken at the same site on the same day as the photo above. The black bag is a device used during dewatering operations to filter sediment out of pumped water. It was clear upon close inspection that the discharge hose was not securely installed, leading to the pollution event shown above.*



# Dirt, Gravel & Low Volume Roads Program 2023—2024

Pennsylvania's Dirt Gravel and Low Volume Roads (DGLVR) Program provides grant funding to local road -owning entities for road and environmental improvements on unpaved and low volume paved roads.

2024 was a year of playing catch up for the DGLVR program. Only 2 projects were funded this year because most of the grant money was previously spent. Additional projects are lined up for 2025 construction.

This year, Bucks County received:

Dirt & Gravel Roads	Low Volume Roads
\$100,000.00	\$198,251.00

## Low Volume Road Projects:

Two new low volume road projects were contracted in 2024. These projects sit adjacently and are both located in Springfield Township.

- Greenwood Drive, Springfield Township, Contract amount \$120,064.85
- Lakeview Drive, Springfield Township, Contract amount \$123,000.80



*Photographed above and to the left are large areas of water ponding on Greenwood Drive.*



Greenwood Drive connects to Lakeview Drive and collects water flowing from the joining street. There is a small body of water adjacent to these roads where a high amount of water flows down steep slopes behind the row of houses. This leads to ponding on the road and flooding in the neighboring houses.

New swales and piping were installed along the road and a new road pitch was created so all the water drains away from the road and houses.



*Photographed above is an area on Lakeview Drive that houses were at risk from flooding due to road surface and drainage issues.*

*Photographed below shows the close proximity of the body of water to the road surface.*



**Three Mile Run Rd, East Rockhill Township, Contract amount: \$20,614.60**

Three Mile Run Road is a popular location for many adventure seekers in Bucks County because it runs directly next to Lake Nockamixon. In conjunction with DCNR, East Rockhill Township has signed a contract to fix major drainage issues right next to the Lake.

The sharp dead end corner of Three Mile run Rd has a steep hill, many old and failing pipes and lots and lots of drainage.



This LVR project will install new cross pipes, drop boxes, inlets and outlets, a new wide and shallow swale leading to the lake, and overall new stabilization in all the ditches and outflow areas. This project is something that the Township and DCNR have been planning for years and has a great environmental benefit.

Construction was planned to start in 2024, but was held up due to a PNDI hit for an endangered turtle species. A small window of time is now allowed to complete this project so we do not disturb this species' breeding months. Construction is now planned for Spring of 2025.



*Photographed above is the steep hill of Three Mile Run Road.*

Bucks County Conservation District is always looking for more applicants and eligible projects within the County to work towards the DGLVR program's goal of better roads and cleaner streams. To be eligible for DGLVR program funding, a representative from the local entity applying must attend an environmentally sensitive management training (ESM) once every five years. For more information on the DGLVR program, possible sites to be funded in the future, or the required ESM training, please contact Bucks County Conservation District's Dirt & Gravel/ Low Volume Road Administrator Morgan Schuster at [mschuster@buckscdd.org](mailto:mschuster@buckscdd.org).



*Photographed above is the sharp dead end corner of Three Mile Run Road.*



# Agricultural Conservation

The Bucks County Conservation District's agricultural program has had another busy year! Lots of manure management plans, conservation plans, designs, and construction checks for addressing various manure and erosion resource concerns on agricultural lands were completed over the past year! These many projects have assisted our farmers improve sustainability on their operations, while also helping to protect our county's many natural resources.

## Act 38 Nutrient Management

BCCD administers Pennsylvania's Act 38 Nutrient Management program. Farms with an annualized animal density of 2,000lbs per acre or more are classified as Concentrated Animal Operations (CAOs) and are required to have a current nutrient management plan. Bucks County has 10 CAOs (concentrated animal operations) and 1 CAFO (concentrated animal feeding operations); most are equine farms.

## Outreach/Education

BCCD's Ag Conservation Technicians (ACTs) have attended several trainings and workshops over the last year to better serve the farmers of Bucks County. In summer they attended a statewide ACAP conference in State College, where they met with many other Conservation Districts and went to in-person trainings about pasture forage, livestock facilities, technology in ag, and more. They also met local farmers and chatted about the water infiltration display at the Middletown Grange fair.

In fall, Carly attended a training at Penn State Hazleton to review principles of biosecurity and identifying resource concerns. In late winter, Carly attended a training called Selling A Sustainable Future, giving tools to handle conflict resolution and selling best management practices and updates to farmers.



In winter Ryan led a joint training with Montgomery County at the annual Farmer Pesticide update meeting to discuss best management practices and trouble-shooting resource concerns for farmers.

Ryan has attended many trainings this year as he pursues conservation planner certification, this includes an engineering technician workshop, various soil/pasture trainings, Conservation Bootcamp Level II, and Certified Conservation Planner Level III.



*Ryan, one of our ACTs, taking surveys to verify the distance and grade of a tile drainage.*

Our ACTs have also directly provided technical assistance to local farmers, created brochures to easily discuss cost assistance programs available, participated in tree plantings with the office, and distributed free trees to farmers. They have had many opportunities to engage with other conservation professionals. They attended DEP Summer Round Tables, multiple Farm Forward events to help support local agriculture and conservation efforts, and attended discussions with local elected leaders to advocate for sustainable agriculture systems.



*Carly, one of our ACTs, taking surveys to verify the depth of a tile drainage.*



## Agricultural Conservation

BCCD continued its efforts in conservation planning and implementation. BCCD was granted funding for a Section 319 grant, administered by the US EPA, to implement best management practices relating to manure management on a dairy farm. With the rapidly decreasing number of dairy farms left in Bucks County, it is important to the BCCD to support & assist our remaining dairy farmers through our conservation efforts.



*The photo above shows streambank fencing from one of the ACAP funded projects.*



*The photo above shows a grassed waterway from one of the ACAP funded projects.*

In addition, BCCD's ACTs continued their partnership with the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) to assist farmers with technical and financial assistance to plan, design, and implement BMPs on their farms through their programs.

Currently, BCCD is assisting about 15 different farms who are voluntarily seeking assistance on planning and implementing BMPs. This includes structural (grass waterways, terraces, animal heavy use area protection, and manure storages) or non-structural (no-till, cover crops, prescribed grazing, and nutrient management).



BCCD offers residents access to the PA REAP tax credit program, which offers farmers tax credits to get agricultural plans updated, best management practices implemented, and conservation equipment (such as no-till planters & precision nutrient application equipment) purchased.

Our Ag Technicians had 4 REAP contracts this year. We have seen great success offering the Ag Plan Reimbursement Program grant to farmers writing nutrient management plans and manure management plans; it gives 80% of the total cost back as a cash grant.



*Carly, one of our ACTs, is measuring the depth of erosion in a cropland gully from seeps, a huge resource concern .*

BCCD currently has eight Ag Plan Reimbursement Program contracts! We have assisted farmers with the Agri-Link program, which provides farmers with low interest loans to implement practices contained in one of their agricultural plans as well.

BCCD is now in the third year of the Agricultural Conservation Assistance Program (ACAP) and has been seeing an influx of projects applied for and accomplished thanks to this grant. All money from the initial allocation was allocated before 12/31/2024 successfully, to be spent by 12/31/2026.

We're happy to report that in September 2024, Pennsylvania passed an additional \$35.7 million to be given to the ACAP grant and Bucks county received an installment of \$615,424. We are projected to receive additional allotments from the state to continue installing these projects! We currently have 14 contracts signed and we've given \$778,961 to farmers for projects so far.



# WATERSHED PROGRAMS

## Lake Luxembourg

Due to unforeseen circumstances, a significant portion of the wetland plugs did not survive the 2024 growing season. In response, BCCD staff and volunteers took action to address the issue. They replanted the affected areas with new wetland plugs. To better ensure survival rates, the team staked the new plugs into the bottom of the pool, and repaired and reinforced the existing goose and carp fencing.

This effort aims to continue to restore the wetland ecosystem and improve Lake Luxembourg's water quality by tackling sediment and nutrient buildup.



*Volunteers working to replant the Conservation Pool.*

## Monitoring

With assistance from Penn State Master Watershed Stewards, BCCD successfully deployed and operated 3 continuous monitoring devices in the Core Creek watershed for the second year.

This data will help determine if water quality goals for the watershed have been met. BCCD also completed the final year of quarterly data collection the newly naturalized retention basin at a Lower Southampton industrial complex.



*BCCD staff and volunteers collecting data at one of the collection sites.*

Additionally, BCCD spent the summer monitoring for harmful algal blooms (HABs). Each year, Pennsylvania has increased reports of HABs. BCCD sampled two lakes this year; Lake Galena and Lake Luxembourg. These samples were sent to a DEP laboratory for analysis and posted on the public bulletin if HABs were noted to be found.

### Paddle with a Purpose

The 14th annual Paddle with a Purpose was held in July, drawing 65 volunteers over two days. After more than a decade of mechanical and chemical treatments, the changes in the lake are significant.



*Volunteers paddling to pull Water Chestnut.*

BCCD prioritized searching for both seeds and plants in shallow areas, yet only 37 bags of Water Chestnut were pulled.

### Lawn to Habitat Conversions

BCCD was awarded funding to complete lawn to habitat conversions through a PACD grant. This funding was used to establish 3.5 acres of upland woodland and meadow in the North Branch Neshaminy Watershed. Volunteers planted over 500 trees in the headwaters of North Branch Neshaminy Creek. The District will continue to educate the public on the importance of naturalizing areas.



*Karen, the Watershed Specialist, standing next to a lawn to habitat conversion within the North Branch Neshaminy watershed.*



# EDUCATION & OUTREACH EVENTS

## Workshops & Tabling Events

Throughout 2024, BCCD participated in multiple workshops and tabling events, with a target of educating both the public and professionals about BCCD's role in Bucks County, watersheds and stormwater management, and more.



*BCCD staff talking to the public over the stream table.*

## Pollinator Garden

In Spring of 2024, BCCD partnered with Friends of the Poquessing Watershed to complete the pollinator garden project at School Lane Charter School in Bensalem.

In Fall of 2023, students prepared an island of turf grass in the center of their parking lot, by layering cardboard, leaf mulch, and arborist chips. The following spring, students planted the site with native plants, designed to be engaging and interactive with a goal of creating an outdoor education space for the students.



*Students and teachers watering the pollinator garden.*

## Keystone Ten Million Trees:

Working alongside Penn State Master Watershed Stewards, BCCD received and distributed over 2,000 trees in the Fall of 2024.

Volunteers planted these trees in municipal open space, county, parks, and backyard riparian buffers. The conservation community is grateful for the continued grant support of Keystone Ten Million Trees partnership, a program of the Chesapeake Bay Foundation.

### 1st Annual BCCD Seed Swap

In February of 2024, BCCD hosted our first annual seed swap. One of our Agricultural Technicians, Carly Seldow, lead this seed swap and shared her knowledge on gardening with both native and fruit/vegetable plants. With a goal of doing this annually, we hope to engage with the local community.



*Photographed above is the BCCD Seed Swap.*

### Native Species Day—Legislative Event

BCCD hosted a Native Species Day Legislative Event to bring the conservation community and our legislative representatives together. There were about 50 attendees (municipal EACs and NGOs) and about eight Offices of Representatives present. With an enthusiastic and engaging crowd, the conservation community used the neutral space as a place to network and express the ongoing challenges of the conservation field. There seemed to be a demand for future events, and a need for collaboration among the municipal EAC's and non-governmental organizations.



*Photographed above is the gathering at the Native Species Day - Legislative Event.*



# ENVIROTHON COMPETITION

The 2024 Envirothon competition was held April 24th at Delaware Valley University. This venue provides the students hands-on, in-field examples of each station; forestry, aquatic ecology, wildlife, soils and land use, and current issues. The current issue for the 2024 Envirothon was “Renewable Energy for a Sustainable Future”, focusing on the environmental, economic, and social benefits of renewable energy.

Congratulations to Central Bucks South, who won our local county Envirothon! This team continued on to place 27th at the state competition, and improved their scores in most categories.

Thank you to all teams who put in the hard work to join us each year at our local Envirothon. Thanks to PA Envirothon for their effort in putting together the Envirothon event. BCCD thanks all our volunteers, agency partners, and partners at Delaware Valley University for their participation in an event focusing on environmental science topics.



*Photographed above shows students working to complete a station at the local Bucks County Envirothon Competition. Leading the station are two Pennsylvania Game Wardens.*



# SOCIAL MEDIA CONTENT

Period: January – December 2024

Total Reach:  
45,599

Content Interactions:  
1,617

Traffic to Page:  
3,757

Follows:  
138

## Overview

To keep the Bucks County community informed with up-to-date environmental information, the Bucks County Conservation District maintains an active presence on Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube. A few BCCD staff members manage social media tasks, creating content that includes local environmental events, volunteer opportunities, educational materials, and more.

## Key Highlights

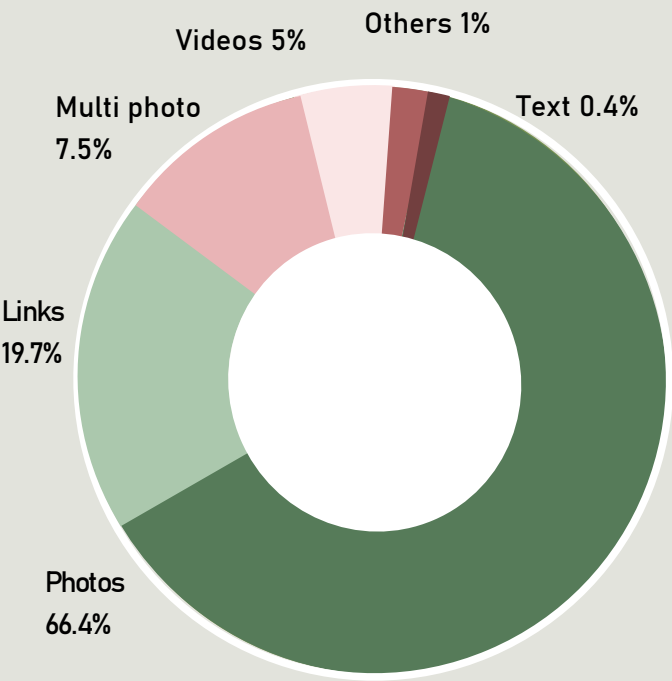
This page's infographics show the combined reach, engagement, and demographics of our Instagram and Facebook pages. Compared to last year:

- Total reach, engagement, and page traffic increased from 2023
- Meta's new tracking shows 12,179 total content views on Instagram and Facebook since September 2024
- BCCD has resumed sharing content on our Youtube.

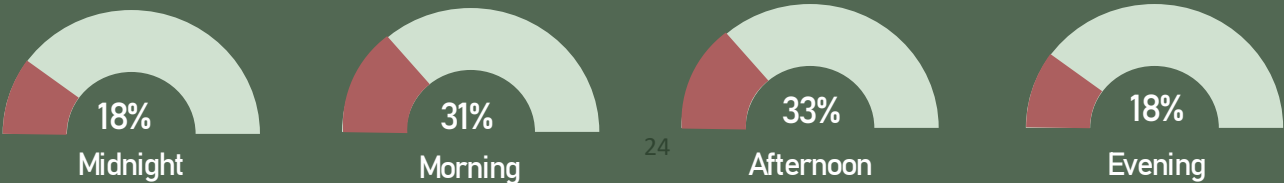
## Challenges

One of our main challenges is creating and scheduling social media content. Producing regular content in advance would help us stay organized and ensure consistent posting. To enhance community education and outreach, we aim to build a strong and engaging social media presence.

## Post Interactions by Media Type:



## Peak Engagement Times:





# THE BUZZ ON 2024



## Mill Creek Preserve Meadow Conversion

The BCCD Natural Resources Committee awarded \$15,000 to Warrington Township to be used in their ecological restoration project at Mill Creek Preserve. Twenty four acres of permanently preserved open space will be revitalized from fallow fields into a thriving wildflower meadow!



## Father's Day Fishing Derby

On a sunny Sunday in June, local families joined BCCD at Peace Valley Park to participate in our annual catch-and-release fishing derby. Children between 5 and 15 years old competed for prizes - as well as bragging rights! The catch of the day was a whopping 11 1/4 inch Largemouth Bass.



## Keeping Bucks Beautiful

BCCD team building events include biannual Adopt-a-Highway cleanups and riparian buffer restoration efforts such as live staking and tree plantings.



## Winter Charity Drive

Each year during the holiday season, BCCD collects donations for a local cause. The recipient of donations in 2024 was A Woman's Place (AWP) of Doylestown. AWP has supported victims of intimate partner violence in Bucks County since 1976.















## OUR MISSION

**TO PROVIDE FOR THE WISE USE,  
MANAGEMENT, AND DEVELOPMENT OF  
THE COUNTY'S NATURAL RESOURCES**

**Bucks County Conservation District  
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18901-5550  
(215) 345-7577**

**[www.bucksccd.org](http://www.bucksccd.org)**

**Facebook and Instagram: (@bucksccd)**

**Youtube:  
(@buckscountyconservationdis8859)**