

Ag Progress Days Natural Resource Conservation Partnership Area Has Something For Everyone

ROCKSPRING (Centre Co.) — From nutrient management, sustainable agriculture, forested buffers, conservation practices, and grazing management to worms, backyard composting, fly casting, and tattoos to snakes, soil monoliths, and backyard gardens; the Natural Resource Conservation Partnership Area of Ag Progress Days has something for everyone.

Encompassing about five acres of the 200-acre Ag Progress Days site, the Conservation Partnership area, formerly known as the Conservation Education Tent, is full of demonstrations, presentations, tours, and exhibits. Located at the end of West 11th Street, partnerships are apparent when you see that many of the exhibitors have worked together on projects putting conservation practices on the land.

"It's all about conserving and improving the resources," said one state exhibitor. And that seems to be echoed by all of the federal, state, and local agencies and private entities represented.

Tours will include a forestry tour that leads you on an easy walking trail through parts of "Penn's Woods." A grazing tour will present facts on grazing assistance programs for producers, native warm-season grasses for biofuels and carbon sequestration, wildlife and warm-season grasses. A tour will also be offered to see what forested riparian buffers can do for a stream and why they are important.

The presentation tent will be busy as usual. Federal, state, and local partners will present information on their Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program, an opportunity for farmers to protect the soil, improve water quality, and provide wildlife habitat. There will be a grazing forum where farmers can question NRCS Project Grass coordinators on what is working for most Pennsylvanians. The Dirt and Gravel Road Program, which is reducing sediment in streams as well as making neighborhoods cleaner, and a one-day

presentation featuring the "Snakes of Pennsylvania" will round out the programs.

There will be a special presentation on Wednesday from 10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. in the Alumni Pavilion. Federal, state, and private partners will present information on the specifics and benefits of the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP). Landowners will have an opportunity to ask questions of program managers and farmers who have participated in the program and found it beneficial on their land.

The main exhibition tent is full of federal, state, and local agencies as well as private organizations and they all have something for kids and adults. The Fish and Boat Commission will have a fish tank and will offer fly casting exhibitions. They are also sponsoring the "Snakes of Pennsylvania" presentation on Wednesday at 11:00 a.m.

The Natural Resources Conservation Service will have worm containers, touch boxes, tattoos, and special displays on grazing and CREP. Children can make soil profiles and teachers can learn how to make soil monoliths for use in science curriculums. Conservation professionals will be on hand to answer questions on Farm Bill programs.

The Pennsylvania departments of environmental protection, conservation and natural resources, and agriculture will have exhibits on nutrient management, farm energy, and forestry. The Pennsylvania Association of Conservation Districts will have an exhibit featuring fencing and watershed conservation. The Chesapeake Bay Foundation will focus on buffers and the

benefits they provide all Pennsylvanians. The Pennsylvania Association for Sustainable Agriculture, Pennsylvania Certified Organic, Pennsylvania Groundwater Association, Penn State Extension Service, Farm Service Agency, and others will also be part of the area.

Additional demonstration areas will show conservation practices on the ground. Looking like an outdoor shower, the USDA Ag Research Service will

have a rainfall simulator to demonstrate the benefits of analyzing field and pasture runoff, particularly as it pertains to nutrient management. Check at the exhibit for times. Several grass plantings are available to show how native plantings can help your soil health and water conservation efforts. Livestock watering equipment and fencing types are also demonstrated as well as no-till planting, injection systems, and several native grass plots.

Stop by the information booth on the main grounds or at the Natural Resource Conservation Partnership for times and details of the tours and presentations. Exhibits and demonstrations are ongoing. There is truly something for everyone.

For more information on partners or activities in the Natural Resource Conservation Partnership Area, contact Stacy Mitchell, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, (717) 237-2208.



Tillage demonstrations drew crowds at last year's Ag Progress Days.

PennAg Democrats Schedule Ag Progress Days Reception

STATE COLLEGE (Centre Co.) — The PennAg Democrats, Pennsylvania's Democratic farming organization, announced that Pennsylvania Secretary of Agriculture Dennis C. Wolff will be a featured guest at their Ag Progress Days reception, Tuesday, Aug. 19, from 7 p.m.-9 p.m. in the Board Room here at the Nittany Lion Inn.

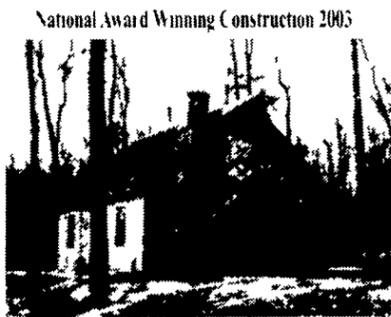
"Since his recent appointment, Secretary Wolff is already well into a long and ambitious agenda to advance Pennsylvania agriculture. We look forward to an informal discussion with him about the plans and progress," said Doug Kilgore, PennAg Democrats president. "Ag Progress Days is a great gathering point for our industry during August and we invite visitors to drop by our reception."

The annual reception at Ag Progress Days also serves as a fundraiser. Proceeds are donated to Democratic candidates with a history of supporting agriculture. The cost is \$25 per person to be paid at the door. The event includes appetizers, beverages, and a cash bar.

For more information, contact Doug Kilgore, PennAg Democrats president, at (717) 862-3117 or kilmcfarm@supernet.com.

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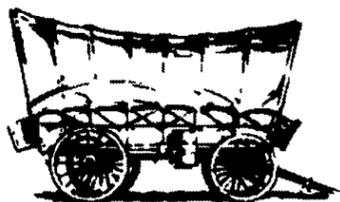
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