WATER **WORDS**
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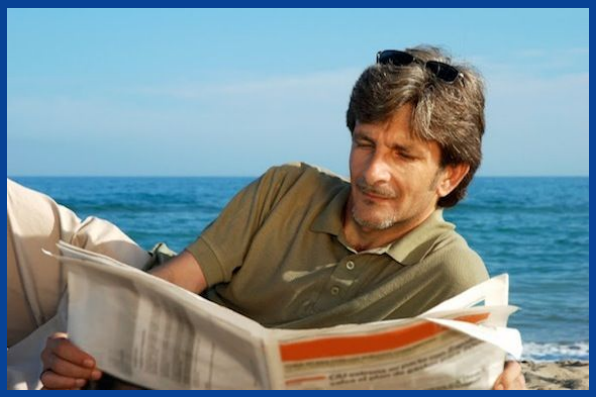

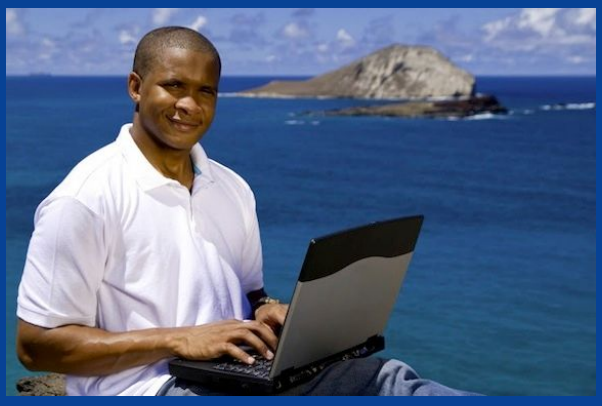

"Closing the Deal With Rural Landowners" Mentor Survey Report

Prepared for Land Trust Alliance

9/16/2018

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Overview

The Land Trust Alliance, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, Whitescarver Natural Resource Management, the Foundation for Pennsylvania Watersheds, and Water Words That Work, LLC are teaming up to bring the "Closing the Deal With Rural Landowners" training to the Chesapeake Bay.

Our goal is to develop a training course to help entry-level and mid career conservation practitioners successfully recruit and negotiate landowners' participation in practices improve water quality in the Chesapeake Bay watershed. Our method is to explore the strategies and tactics most successful conservation field staff, those who have the knack for helping private landowners come around to the idea of putting a conservation practice in place on their property.

At the outset of the project, the steering committee developed a list of 80 conservation staff working in the Chesapeake Bay watershed who are deemed to be among the leaders in the field of working with rural landowners. Water Words That Work, LLC distributed an online survey and led two online focus groups during the research phase of this project.

Survey Methodology

The project steering committee developed a list 80 conservation staff they deemed to be the leaders in the field (pun intended) for working with rural landowners. Water Words That Work, LLC drafted an online survey for review and approval by the project steering committee.

In late April and May of 2018, we circulated the survey to this list — securing 43 completed surveys. Here are the individuals who participated:

First Name	Last Name	Organization
Nancy G.W.	Baker	Pennsylvania Forest Stewards, Pennsylvania Forestry Association, Penn State Center for Private Forests
Nicole	Barth	Envision the Choptank
Gary	Berti	Trout Unlimited
Lisa	Blazure	Clinton County Conservation District
KevinL.	Brown	Bradford County Conservation District
Ryan	Davis	Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay
Grant	DeCosta	Brandywine Conservancy
Robert	Deecki	USDA/Natural Resources Cons. Service
KyleD.	Dingus	Virginia Department of Forestry
Mike	Dryden	The Nature Conservancy
Patrick	Fasano	Octoraro Watershed Association
Richard	Fitzgerald	Equity Ag
John	Goodall	Brandywine Conservancy
Cory	Guilliams	USDA NRCS
Dave	Hartman	Penn State Extension
Scott D.	Heckman	USDA-NRCS
Jim	Hershey	Producer/President- Pa-No-Till-Alliance
Kathy	Holm	NRCS
Bill	Kilby	Cecil Land Trust
Matthew	Kofroth	Lancaster County Conservation District
Joe	Lehnen	VA Dept. of Forestry
Mark	Lewis	DCNR - Bureau of Forestry
William	Little	USDA-NRCS
Jerry	Martin	Penn State Extension

First Name	Last Name	Organization
Colin	McAllister	Maryland Dept. of Agriculture
Jenna	Mitchell	Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay
Don	Moore	AET Consulting Inc
Allyson	Muth	Center for Private Forests at Penn State
Kris	Ribble	NRCS
Roger	Rohrer	LCCD - QDMA
Joe	Rossetti	Virginia Department of Forestry
Mike	Sands	Bean Hollow Grassfed & Liberty Prairie Foundation
Mike	Santucci	Virginia Department of Forestry
F. Mark	Schiavone	Berkeley County Farmland Protection Board
Natasha	Skelton	Valley Conservation Council
Ashley	Spotts	Chesapeake Bay Foundation
Alysha B	Trexler	Western Pennsylvania Conservancy
Thomas M.	Turner	John Marshall Soil and Water Conservation District
Emily	Warner	Potomac Conservancy
Trevor	Weaver	Mifflin County Conservation District

Top Findings

Our "Mentors" are experienced with a range of practices, coaching junior staff, and working with Plain Sect landowners

Our conservationists reported having the experience we are looking for:

- More than half of them reported having 15+ years of experience, and 10 more reported more than six years experience.
- About half of the mentors reported they had supervised and coached more than 7 junior field staff during this period.
- Slightly more than half (53%) report they had experience working with Plain Sect members.
- The mentors have experience with the conservation practices below:

Conservation Practice	% of Mentors Who Report Experience With It
Stream/Riparian Buffers	80%
Livestock exclusion/stream bank fencing	73%
Converting cropland to perennial grassland, shrubs, or trees	67%
No till and/or cover crops	47%
Nutrient management	47%

Mentors rate “listening” and “networking” as top skills for rookies and mid-career professionals to focus on.

We invited the mentors to assess the skills that entry and mid-level career professionals needed to focus on. They rated “listening” and “networking” among the top three for both groups.

Rookies	3-5 Years Experience
1. Actively listening to landowners about their concerns and aspirations	1. Staying organized and keeping in touch with many landowners simultaneously
2. Networking in the community and developing relationships with landowners	**2. Networking in the community and developing relationships with landowners**
3. Understanding land use practices in the area	**3. Actively listening to landowners about their concerns and aspirations**
4. Learning the ins-and-outs of the technical and financial assistance programs you can offer	4. Nudging landowners towards making a decision without coming across as pushy
5. Nudging landowners towards making a decision without coming across as pushy	5. Identifying and contacting landowners you don't have a relationship with yet
6. Identifying and contacting landowners you don't have a relationship with yet	6. Learning the ins-and-outs of the technical and financial assistance programs you can offer
7. Staying organized and keeping in touch with many landowners simultaneously	7. Understanding land use practices in the area
8. Understanding land ownership patterns in the area	8. Developing writing skills for emails and educational materials to distribute

Active Listening

Time and time again, our mentors mentioned the need for conservation field staff to listen carefully to landowners to identify their concerns. They encourage conservation field staff to pitch environmental practices first as a solution to the landowners’ problems, and to tout water quality improvements as an added benefit that seals the deal.

When asked to describe "rookie mistakes" they offered answers like these:

- "coming across as having too many strong opinions without listening enough to clientele"
- "Not listening enough to the producer; recommending practices before really know what the producer wants"
- "Be too forceful -- it is all about the landowner and their needs. Our listening skills are the MOST IMPORTANT"

When asked to self-assess what they do differently from the fair-to-middling field staff, they offered answers like these:

- "I take time to get to know the landowner and allow him/her to know and feel comfortable with me. My focus is on what the landowner wants, though I'm also honest about my/my organization's interests."
- "I listen, and I digest what I've heard, and I tailor my message to what I've heard for each person.."
- "stay humble, actively listen and ask (leading) questions versus telling people about new ideas."

Networking

Our mentors portrayed networking with landowners as a career long-habit, noting that some landowners may need years to get comfortable with a conservation technician. They described rookie mistakes using language like:

- "staying in the office. You need facetime with farmers and landowners"
- "Failing to follow through on developing relationships."

They described their own habits using language like this:

- "Network with environmentally focused agencies and organizations in the surrounding area and utilizing their talents to help further our own program."
- "foster relationships and know the area I am working in"
- "Building a connection with local ag organizations...ie FFA, Young Farmers Groups, Penn Ag, PFB etc. to enhance respect and develop a long term affect in the ag community by being an environmental advocate yet still being sensitive to each individuals goals."

Mentors see a progression for other skills

The mentors believe that incoming conservation staff should make a concerted effort to familiarize themselves with the land use practices in the area that they work — but that a few years should be enough for this. They drop the priority for this skill for mid career professionals.

They also observe that as conservationists settle into their roles, their workload will grow and the number of contacts they have to keep track of will increase. Once a conservationist has been in the field for a few years, the mentors move workload management to the top of the priority list.

Skills for Rookies to Cultivate	Skills for Mid Career Professionals to Cultivate
1. Actively listening to landowners about their concerns and aspirations 2. Networking in the community and developing relationships with landowners **3. Understanding land use practices in the area** 4. Learning the ins-and-outs of the technical and financial assistance programs you can offer 5. Nudging landowners towards making a decision without coming across as pushy 6. Identifying and contacting landowners you don't have a relationship with yet **7. Staying organized and keeping in touch with many landowners simultaneously** 8. Understanding land ownership patterns in the area	**1. Staying organized and keeping in touch with many landowners simultaneously** 2. Networking in the community and developing relationships with landowners 3. Actively listening to landowners about their concerns and aspirations 4. Nudging landowners towards making a decision without coming across as pushy 5. Identifying and contacting landowners you don't have a relationship with yet 6. Learning the ins-and-outs of the technical and financial assistance programs you can offer **7. Understanding land use practices in the area** 8. Developing writing skills for emails and educational materials to distribute

Ag Practice Benefits and Barriers

The mentors who completed this survey were keenly aware that conservation practices needed to benefit the landowners' operations, not just water quality. They described rookie mistakes using language like this:

- "Dismissing the business aspects of farming and the need for conservation to make economic sense for the farmer. A family relies on the farming business being a financial success."
- "recommending practices before really know what the producer wants"
- "telling a landowner what the law says or saying that they must do this or that."

They described their own habits using language like this:

- "We should never tell a landowner 'this is what you are doing.' instead, the first question we should ask them is 'what are your goals?'"
- "try to understand what people need to become successful with their ag enterprise"
- "Make the farmer's needs and abilities the priority ALWAYS"

To help field staff master these skills more quickly, mentors weighed in on landowners' perspective on five agricultural practices. The mentors identified benefits that the landowners would perceive, and barriers that might prevent them from choosing to adopt that practice:

Riparian Buffers

Benefits	Barriers
• Eliminates calving risk areas • Improved grazing management and herd movement • Reduces erosion • Less mowing • CREP rental payments • Meet requirements for other cost share items • Healthier herds & lower vet bills • Privacy from neighbors • Attractive (if flowering plants chosen) • Hunting/fishing	• Loss of land from production • Perceived to be unattractive, poorly groomed • Maintaining newly-planted trees • What will the neighbors think? • Some preferred riparian plants are problematic • Invasives • Maintenance of buffer or supporting infrastructure (fences, watering stations) • CREP contract length and provisions • Repairing/replacing fences

Converting Cropland to Perennial Grassland, Shrubs, or Trees

Benefits	Barriers
• Stop wasting time/money on unproductive land • Convert poor cropland to good pasture • Eventual timber harvest • CREP payments • Fewer gullies on the land • Wildlife and hunting leases	• Loss of land from production • Pride in owning productive land • What if crop prices go back up? • What will the neighbors think? • Invasives • Hard to reverse decision once the trees take root • Might shade fields • May attract wildlife that may eat crops • May have to get started in the livestock business

Livestock Exclusion/Stream Bank Fencing

Benefits	Barriers
• Eliminates calving risk areas • Improved grazing management and herd movement • Improved herd health (reducing the "fecal-oral pathway") • Livestock performs better with abundant clean water (as opposed to dirty river water) • Streambank stabilization — protects fences	• Upfront and maintenance cost for fencing and alternative watering systems • Red tape with cost share • Loss of pasture • Loss of stream access • Loss of shade • Aesthetics (weeds/invasives behind the fence) • Trees block view of pasture

No Till/Cover Crops

Benefits	Barriers
• Time/labor/gas savings (plowing, fertilizing, pesticides, etc.) • Get back in the field sooner after rain • Drought resilience, less irrigation • Improve soil health and reduce erosion • Forage crops for livestock • Fewer concerns about rocks in the field • Nitrogen/phosphorus reduction credits	• Short-term reductions in yield • Upfront investment in equipment • Upfront investment in skill development • Must purchase cover crop seed • Extra cycle of planting and harvesting • Weeds/insects

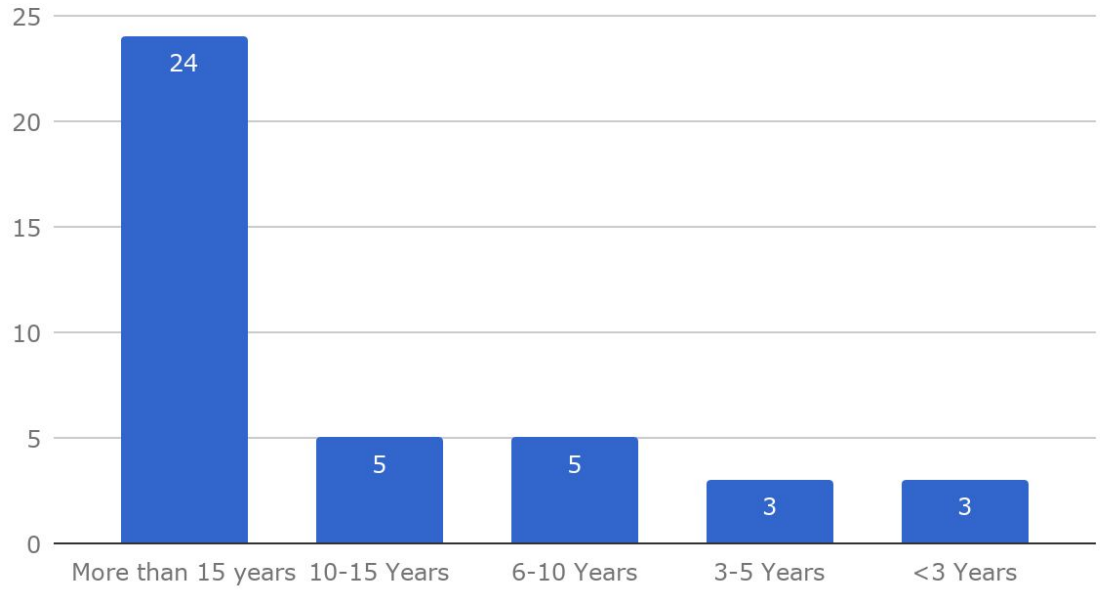
Nutrient Management

Benefits	Barriers
• Save money on fertilizer • Improved yields • Improved soil • Cost share • May be required to access other cost share/technical assistance	• Initial costs in equipment and subscriptions • Feeling forced to do it • Old habits are hard to break • Short life of nutrient management plan • Conflicting advice from fertilizer merchants • Red tape on cost share

Survey Questions

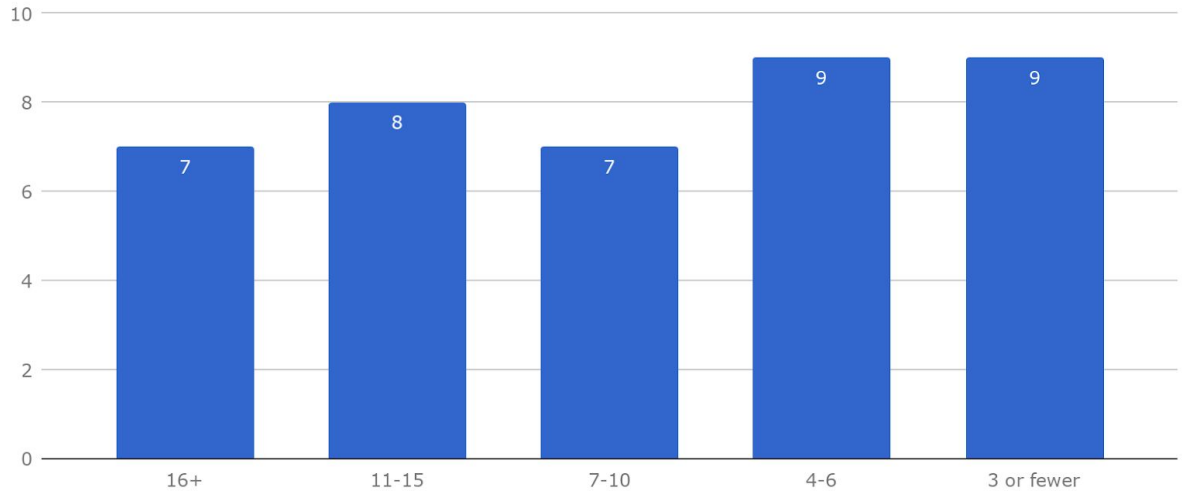
About You

How many years experience do you have with this work?



How many years experience do you have with this work?

How many rookie or mid-career field staff have you mentored, coached, supervised, or trained over this time?

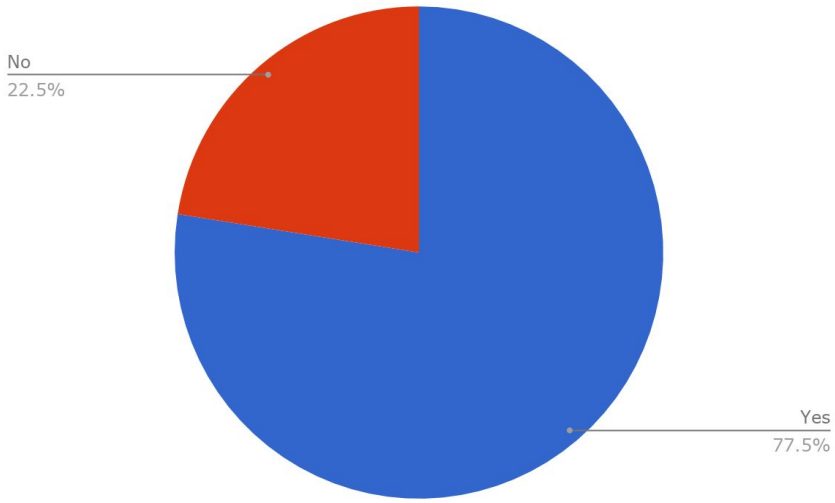


How many rookie or mid-career field staff have you mentored, coached, supervised, or trained over this time?

Experience With Conservation Practices

Stream and Riparian Buffers

Have you worked with more than 5 landowners on stream/riparian buffers?



In your experience, how are riparian buffers beneficial to a landowner? Other than environmental benefits, what's in it for them?

- ag production benefits (herd health/reduced vet bills, rotational grazing, less wasted input costs, increased produce yield from pollinators), wildlife (game and nongame), aesthetics, recreation (fishing, hunting, picnicking, picking berries, etc), financial gains (via CRP or buffers that produce marketable goods)
- Better herd health, better milk production, less veterinarian bills, more habitat in the future for hunting and fishing.
- Buffers provide wildlife habitat, can provide a source of income (depending on the program), can be a beautiful area if maintain properly, and they can provide/be a gateway to additional financial assistance to install infrastructure on the farm to improve grazing (additional cross fencing, stream crossings, and watering systems).
- Certain practices provide monetary compensation
- Depending on their willingness to accept program funding it could be a way to generate capital for the farm. Yearly CREP rental payments could offset the loss of productive land. Some program also off voucher dollars to help fund various conservation BMP's on the farm.
- Doing what they know is the right thing to do.
- First interior fence for grazing management

- Flooded or poor producing ground that is hard to farm can be used in order to supplement the cost of having that ground.
- For farmers spreading manure, having a 35'+ buffer allows them to spread manure on a larger portion of the crop field and makes management easier since they don't have to split crop nutritional needs between separate manure and fertilizer applications. If the family likes birding, then sometimes you can talk about the benefits of improving habitat and bringing in more birds.
- Herd health, water quality, hearing frogs
- herd health/biosecurity; good PR via highly visible practice; good neighbor policy; on-site recreation opps like deer hunting, fishing, picnic area, etc.; CREP rent and BMP vouchers (CBF, SWRC, Lancaster Co. Clean Water Partners now offer); score higher on EQIP/RCPP rankings/required for some funding options
- I have to add the caveat for these questions, that I work at a state level and have conducted research on this and other practices. Benefit landowner - protect land, wildlife habitat, protect stream. What's in it for them - most people have a stewardship ethic - they want to do what's good for the land, they just don't always know what that is. Doing well by their land is a important driver.
- Improved livestock health, a means to implement some grazing practices, like, fence, water, crossings, etc.
- Improving wildlife habitat, restoring the trees they have seen removed from the stream corridor (they recognize the change from their youth),
- It is unique to each individual landowner. Every riparian buffer I have helped to install is tailored to landowner interest in some way. I have installed/designed buffers for aesthetic purposes (beauty), natural ecosystem restoration, bird watching, firewood harvest, tree crops, tree sap production (syrup), fish habitat enhancement, etc. Some landowners also understand the environmental benefits and do it for the same reasons we do. Some understand the benefits of livestock exclusion and improved heard health and see the buffer as a way to reduce veterinary costs and somatic cell count. Others see the buffer as a contract requirement to get the "high cost" BMPs like manure storage tanks or concrete barnyards.
- Landowners often appreciate the cost-share funding (typically through NRCS or local conservation districts) for fencing & off-stream livestock water troughs that tends to go along with buffer projects. These amenities allow for easier management of livestock and pastures, and off-stream watering options generally provide cleaner water for animals, which keeps them healthier and reduces medical expenses for the landowner. Landowners who enjoy attracting wildlife to their properties often appreciate riparian plantings, particularly those with flowering plants or masting trees.

- Many landowners buy into the stream health aspects of riparian buffers. Also, non-traditional forest products, wildlife habitat for game species, and the general "feel good" part of replanting forest buffers.
- More interesting life on the farm, more recreational activities. Higher social status
- Protects streambank, protects fences, reduces disease in downstream animals, buffers make good neighbors
- Riparian buffers are beneficial in terms of cooling streams, contributing to habitat for fish, birds, wildlife and other stream critters; they save soil by stopping its downward trajectory. They provide shade for livestock and wildlife. Hopefully with better upland management, the buffer isn't a last resort for stopping erosion. I honestly can't separate a buffer from environmental benefit. Buffers provide shade for livestock, but hopefully that livestock is excluded from the streams/rivers.
- Riparian buffers can improve herd health by providing cattle with a cleaner water supply via wells and watering troughs. Additionally the riparian buffers can help farmers avoid future, mandatory environmental regulations that may be more costly to the farmer - especially if cost-sharing funds are not available. Also, there is the public perception that the farmer is doing the "right thing" by reducing sediment loss from their land and improving the water quality for all who live down stream.
- The help work the farm into separate fields for an overall grazing plan. They like the waterers that come along with fencing out the streams. The improve aesthetics and habitat- many farmers remember these areas as being brushy when they were kids, and they want it to be that way again.
- They love that fact that they are doing something good for the environment that will benefit their home waters. They want to leave their natural resources in a better condition.
- Ultimately, the benefits are dependent on the landowner's goals. If you are establishing riparian buffers in open land, then the benefits to the landowner have to derive from their goals and a benevolent motivation, because it is usually at some financial cost to them, and it likely makes land unavailable for production, whether crops, hay, or pasture. Similarly, if talking about streamside management zones in a forested setting, if their goal is habitat, water quality, or aesthetic-related, then it is easy to articulate the benefits and they are generally receptive. If their goals emphasize income derived from timber harvesting, then the benefits are less apparent because that activity will likely be restricted. Regardless, acknowledging that there will be some "cost" to the landowner - either in establishment or lost production - is key to articulating the benefits.
- wild life enhancement, cleaner water

- Wildlife habitat for hunting, travel corridors for wildlife, food source for both farmer and wildlife, herd health, aesthetics, love of trees, bird habitat,
- Wildlife habitat which may offer whitetail and wild turkey hunting in the future. Also there is a significant aesthetic value with flowering species.
- wildlife value and increased property laues
- Yes, benefits are mainly environmental/water quality and it's being able to convey to a landowner it's the right thing to do...being a steward..... But there are obviously or can be recreational, aquatic and wildlife benefits. I also see buffers as one component but also try educate/inform them of the importance/benefits as a result of have good soil health practices on cropland and pastures prior to. If infiltration rates are increase and runoff minimized coupled with buffers major water quality will be made.
- Yes, they are financially beneficial through CRP / CREP. They assist in reducing erosion along waterways and ditches. The secondary wildlife benefits are very important to some land owners.

In your experience, what do landowners object to when considering a riparian buffer?

- "losing" land that is in production, aesthetics, "source of weeds", maintenance, reduced visibility, social pressures to keep farm "clean", general resistance to change, risk involved with any change to ag production
- They are most concerned with the loss of pasture ground, most farmers have a high capacity of dairy, and the loss of meadow is a concern. They are more inclined to fence once they understand the rental payment process for acres that are fenced
- They can take up productive land, they can be unsightly with weeds and invasive brush if not properly maintained, they can take away valuable shade from livestock, they can be costly to maintain, the supporting infrastructure (fences, stream crossings, watering systems) can be costly to operate and maintain, they don't agree with financial assistance program rules (planting densities of trees, no mowing, cost share rates, etc.).
- Taking agricultural land out of production, thus loss of revenue
- Without a doubt I hear these every time I present a buffer opportunity: #1-"when we are doing the dishes and we look out the kitchen window we do not want to see an overgrown jungle." and #2-"i cant see myself taking this land out of production. I need every square inch I can get."
- The loss of usable pasture land if the buffer is too wide by their standards.
- Expense, maintenance, invasive plants, crossings for cattle
- Rules in stipulation for management of the ground and the overall lack of control they appear to have on the ground.

- Sacrificing tillable/pasture land that is often flat and high quality soil. Most plain sect families keep very tidy farms and they do not like having areas that are grown up and look messy/unkept.
- loss of land, Not as "clean" a landscape, upkeep costs
- maintenance expectations; "messy" look; can propagate weeds; loss of production area (probably overstated for most)
- Loss of viewshed, messiness of the buffer
- The tree maintenance, by far, and being tied to a long gov. contract.
- Weed pressure, maintenance issues related to their survival, they like the "open" or "maintained" look.
- Landowners often cringe at setback requirements or are concerned with taking land out of "production". This is why we often tailor the buffer to their interest to show them that the buffer can have value to them. Landowners also do no like the "messy" look of the riparian buffers. To address this concern we actively engage in management of the buffer with them, we also suggest mowing the edges of the buffer to make it look more "tidy". Finally, landowners do not like complicated contracts and paper work. To address this concern, we have a variety of buffer programs available to allow for all types of riparian buffer installations.
- In approximate order of frequency/importance: 1) cost of riparian fencing and alternative water sources for livestock, 2) loss of productive farmland (or difficulty in moving livestock after fences are built), 3) fear/expense of having to rebuild riparian fence after floods (this is often associated with # 2-, in that the wider the buffer, the less chance of flood damage but greater the loss of pasture or hay ground), 4) loss of the view to the river/stream, and 5) perspective that "wild" riparian areas look messy and unkempt. (People do sometimes change their minds, though. One of my landowners was totally against buffers at first and is now proud to show his off.)
- How much acreage they have to give up. Even though the buffer acreage is far less productive, they still want every bit of acreage. The other objection is post-planting maintenance. Occasionally it is obstructed access to the stream the object to. They want to see the water.
- Cost for exclusion fencing and alternative access to water.
- Loss of access to water, loss of pasture, loss of nutrients
- The invasive species and weeds that creep in and are prevalent and hard to manage. They don't like the way buffers look, typically; some landowners like a more park-like, clean look down to the stream or river. They bristle at the restrictions on managing buffers -- not being able to go in at particular times, not

using particular herbicides close to waterways, some people like the idea of flash grazing which is generally prohibited.

- A few of the strongest objections is a loss of agricultural land, the possible maintenance requirements of the buffers - especially the fencing, and for some farmers, the "messiness" of the natural system that is found in the buffer areas.

- They don't care for the tree tubes. In some cases they don't like giving up the grazing land. They object to planting trees that will eventually fall on the fences. It seems shrub buffers would be very popular.

- Landowners object to the having all of their access denied because of the buffer. However, they are happy if they still can have access to a part of it for agricultural or recreational reasons. They don't seem to like the thought of a pine buffer, such as loblolly pine. While it is a monoculture and some don't like it aesthetically, they don't understand that over time this pine forest will convert to hardwoods. Most pines are pioneer species that are relatively short lived in tree terms and as they are maturing bring up a diverse hardwood forest underneath. So essentially you can plant loblolly way cheaper than hardwoods and utilize one of the fastest growing trees that will quickly take over the buffer providing benefits and eventually the pines will yield to longer lived hardwoods that have developed in the intermediate light conditions underneath the full sunlight loving pines. Landowners still object to pine even though in the long run they will benefit the buffer and provide diversity. I would think that by planting pines at a fraction of the cost of hardwoods would be attractive, but there seems to be a social paradigm against it even though the science says its there. Its a lot better to plant a variety of hardwoods in their eyes.

- In the case of open land, they run the gamut. Initially, it is usually some combination of cost, lost production, or loss of access to water for their livestock. It has been my experience that the range of objections increase if cost share is involved. There is also a reluctance to obligate themselves to maintenance of the buffer and fencing, and I have experienced situations in which the landowner objects either to the "strings" attached the funding, or the idea that the government has an interest in their property through the requirements. In the case of SMZs, it is generally the loss of income from potential timber harvesting.

- loss of land for crop or animal use

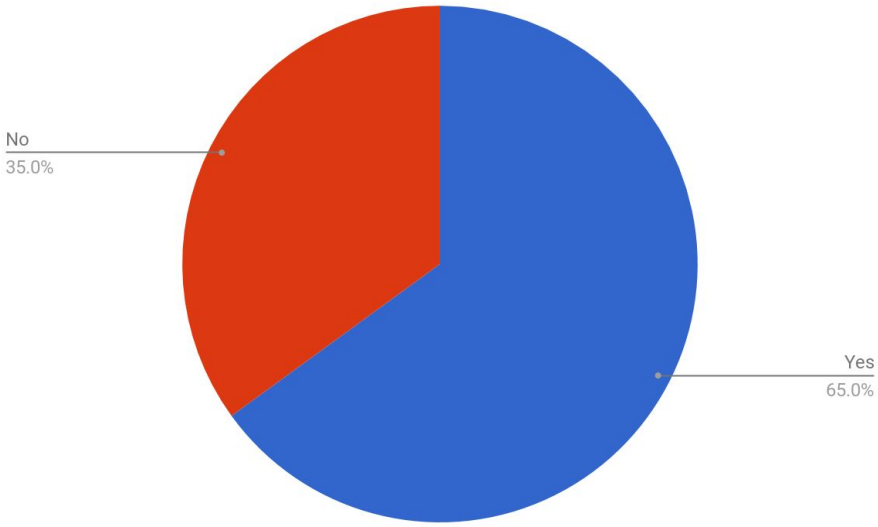
- They have concerns about the look of the space. It may seem too messy or wild for them. Mowing restrictions can cause issues if the buffer is in a federal program where mowing is limited. Farmers don't want certain herbaceous or woody vegetation on their farm or in their fields and its hard for them to see buffers with those plants. Staghorn sumac is beneficial for wildlife and encouraged in a buffer but farmers hate them.

- The management of invasive species and overall maintenance.

- maintenance involved and look of the buffer
- maintenance of the buffer itself, fence, dealing specifically invasives and perception of future debris in stream causing flooding. If not managed properly they are not aesthetically pleasing to them.
- It depends on the type of buffer. Tree / Shrub (forest - 391) buffers are difficult to till again - once the contract expires, controlling natural succession is difficult and many unwanted species often dominate. Herbaceous (390 / 393) buffers - controlling woody growth is a problem and unwanted or non-program species can dominate.
- Taking ag. land out of production.

Converting Cropland

Have you worked with more than 5 landowners to convert cropland to perennial grassland, shrubs, or trees?



In your experience, how is converting cropland to perennial grassland, shrubs, or trees beneficial to a landowner? Other than environmental benefits, what's in it for them?

- wildlife value
- When a farmer is tying to produce a yield in an area that is not economically feasible, converting that area into a buffer that will offset the finical difference is the direction that farmer should entertain.
- There is a huge wildlife benefit with providing cover from predators and enhancing carrying capacity of deer and turkey to offer huntable populations.
- Several have converted because of organic farming and others have converted to tree farming.

- See answers to Land Use Practices: Stream/Riparian Buffers #2, just without herd benefits
- recreation, aesthetically pleasing, grazing opportunities, wildlife/pollinator benefits....
- Not a lot of financial benefit. This was mostly done through the CREP program when the incentives were more appealing. Now it is a harder sell. If the land is marginal or less productive it can be easier.
- much as before; swap their worst crop ground for rental payment and vouchers;
- Many dairy farmers are considering raising beef; converting cropland to permanent grazing paddocks is the best management for beef. What's in it for them: less tractor time, less fuel used, less need to spread manure.
- Main reason is financial - CRP/CREP. Typically, less productive cropland can be taken out of production with minimal input costs. Cost share is important and a significant incentive. Observant land owners and farmers do observe reduced erosion and far less gully formations. Gullies are difficult to repair, hard on equipment and reduce tillable ground.
- less maintenance once established, biodiversity, I think they enjoy seeing warm season grasses throughout the year. Increase in wildlife, and if they are interested better hunting ground
- Increase soil productivity
- If they own grazing livestock, they benefit from converting to grasslands by establishing more capacity for grazing.
- If there is a 35 ft. riparian buffer they can spread manure up to that point versus out to the required 100 ft. set backs. Areas around a stream can be hard to farm, they lay wet, difficult to get equipment in. Farmers are starting to realize that certain areas on a farm do not need to be cropped.
- I go back to my previous response about establishing riparian buffers;. The benefits are landowner goal-driven - again, they can be habitat, aesthetic, or water quality motivated. If they take a substantial amount of land out of production, there has to be an initial reason or motivation they are considering it, and their goals for doing so outweigh leaving the land in production. Some will afforest open land for income benefits, but again, this is usually due to a drop in crop prices or something like the tobacco buy-out and they are looking for a replacement land use.
- Herd health, taking that marginal acreage (either crop or pasture) that is always troublesome to get production out of and use it for something useful, non-traditional forest products.
- grazing often gives better financial returns than cropping on marginal ground

- Good Stewardship, meeting best management, less maintenance if in high erosion areas
- Educating farmers on what is most efficient way to utilize ground to make the most cost benefit ration of their operation. Working with farmers to see if conversion is really the most effective way to utilize their ground. Being honest and up front with the benefits and drawbacks generally is the best way for them to adopt a practice like this. Getting farmer to just install the practice is generally a bad idea. Understanding a practice and how it fits into the operation and what results the farmer might expect is important. Most importantly not taking a vested interest in a particular practice as a conservationism is most important for farmers because it narrows their input as well as making less of their idea/plan.
- Depending on the program, financial compensation
- Can provide additional needed forage for hay or grazing. Trees can provide wildlife habitat or be a potential income source for future generations.
- buffers to minimize runoff
- Better animal health, reduced cost of production, overall better aesthetics on the farm, provides and opportunity for next generation on the farm to get involved in grazing and livestock mgmt. in a low cost way.
- As with any conservation plan or practice the first question must be : "ok Mr. Landowner, tell me your goals and vision for your farm." After listening to the goals you could discuss ways that converting cropland could help meet his goals for management/labor savings, grazing options, erosion control or wildlife habitat.
- As previously indicated, one of the main advantages of the conversion of crop land to buffers is to avoid future mandatory environmental regulations. Most riparian buffer contracts also include alternative watering systems for livestock which provide a more reliable, healthier watering regime for the cattle.
- again - stewardship ethic. People get the idea of conservation and doing well by their land. How we convey that and tap into that ethic is our job to figure out.

In your experience, what do landowners object to when converting cropland to perennial grassland, shrubs, or trees?

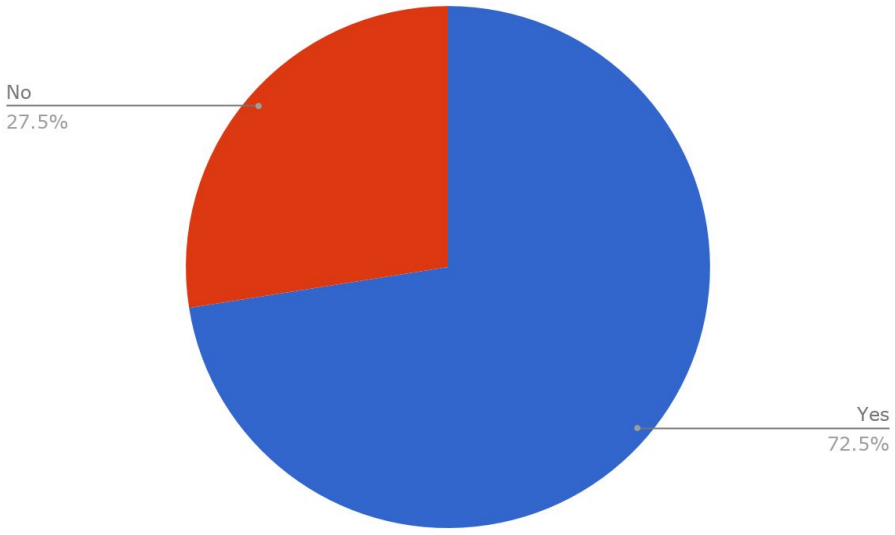
- taking productive land out of production
- They object to not wanting to convert ag land into grassland. It deals with legacy farming. The pride of not wanting to see what generations have farmed changed into non-farmland, even if that option is more finical and logical.
- Will I be able to provide all the required maintenance as outlined in the contract? And what if cash crop prices go way up again like they did 5 years ago?
- The value of land is too high to stop row crop farming.

- See answers to Land Use Practices: Stream/Riparian Buffers #2, just without herd benefits
- taking land out of production, again the maintenance and possible invasives if not managed correctly
- They see that it is a one way change in land use. Once the trees are established, it will not be in crops again. The loss in productive land is difficult to accept unless they are able to justify it from another interest. (i.e. Wildlife benefits for better hunting)
- losing crop ground is tough - we'll only get the really marginal stuff in most circumstances
- They have managed pasture, hay, and crop land the same way for years; this is a new learning curve for them and a different management style.
- Program specific species are often difficult to establish and invasive species are difficult to control. Woody growth in herbaceous buffers. Unwanted species in woody buffers.
- treating invasive species at the inception of the conversion. Time spent applying mechanical and chemical maintenance until the root masses are established to reduce invasive species. Programs that provide funding and expertise regarding invasive species control are more desirable
- Requires 2 sets of machinery
- Potential for shrubs and trees to get out of control and become a problem. There is a lot of past history with various shrub and tree species eventually becoming a problem for landowners. ie. multiflora rose, autumn olive, etc.
- They are afraid of shading their fields. Also they have concerns about encouraging wildlife habitat in the middle of a crop area. They are afraid of crop damage from deer or other wildlife. Agronomic weeds may be a concern.
- See my previous answer about what they object to when establishing buffers, sans the concern for alternative water sources or fencing. But relatedly, some landowners I have worked with who are thinking about afforesting open land object to livestock exclusion, or if cost share is involved, their flexibility to convert back to ag land.
- How much acreage they have to give up. Even though the buffer acreage is far less productive, they still want every bit of crop field or pasture area. The other objection is post-planting maintenance.
- If landowners dont already have experience with livestock they are hesitant to add enterprises.
- loss of land, loss of view shed, upkeep, invasives

- Conservationist are the biggest obstacle to overcome for landowner. To many conservations have little drive in finding the best practice to solve the issue the producer wants to solve and more in following programmatic or agency cookie cutter sales pitches of the ideal fix for that agencies interests.
- Loss of productive farmland and revenue
- Losing valuable cropland and losing production (feed or income). They don't like program rules.
- loss of land for production purposes
- They perceive it as taking away cropland that they need to make and income or feed their livestock. Many times they have very little knowledge of grazing and pasture mgmt. They see the start up cost of fence, water, lanes as cost prohibitive.
- Mindset or lack of education and understanding about the practice. Most may consider weed pressure to be a large obstacle as well.
- Sometimes farmers see this loss of cropland equating to a loss of farm revenue. Other farmers see the riparian area as "unmanaged land" that is messy and unsightly.
- messiness, loss of control

Practice #3: Livestock Exclusion/Stream Bank Fencing

Have you worked with more than 5 landowners on livestock exclusion/stream bank fencing?



In your experience, how is livestock exclusion/stream bank fencing beneficial to a landowner? Other than environmental benefits, what's in it for them?

- To a landowner - healthier livestock, protection of a buffer they may have established.
- This helps keep the streambanks stable; much less erosion. Many pasture fence systems are jeopardized due to eroding banks.
- They like that they are improving water quality and doing the right thing. Also, its healthier for their livestock. In some areas the social circles look down on people that do not have exclusion fencing so they are "keeping up with the Jones".
- They don't have to look in the woods and ditches for animals, especially during calving season. Helps them better control the grazing of their animals and forage. fences on the edge of a field are easier to maintain than fences through the woods.
- These stream exclusions and resulting alternative watering systems have been proven to improve herd health, animal weight gain and subsequently higher revenues when selling the herd.
- That can be a different answer for each farm. You have to know the farm, know the operator, know what their goals are, and know what issues he is having with the current setup. Sometimes they don't even know the issues they are having until you "get them there". You are asking my opinion, so I will give it to you. This is a SALES process and no one makes big decisions like this without knowing how it affects THEM. It is not saving the Chesapeake Bay. it is not saving the river or the stream. It is about, "how does this affect ME". What do I get out of it? When you can give them good answers (in their mind) about what you can do for them, then they will change things. This is the same for all questions asked before this, and quite frankly, all questions we ask ourselves every day. What's in it for me? To answer this question- less flies maybe (which carry disease), less feet and leg problems, better growth and health of cattle, better looking facilities, less mastitis (disease), more diverse wildlife using that area now (deer, rabbits, birds), cleaner water for cows to drink (health again). these are the things that come directly to mind. I am sure there are many others, but you just have to know how to seize that opportunity when it presents itself in a conversation with the landowner.
- Somewhat of a repetition, but the increase in herd health ,higher milk production, less expenses for veterinarian treatments for Mastitis, Johnes disease, teat damage, and other water born diseases. Cows drinking from wells rather than the stream are also healthier
- See previous question. Mostly herd health and less hassle of wrestling cows out of the water/mud.
- See answers to Land Use Practices: Stream/Riparian Buffers #2

- much as before; also is a great start toward a rotational grazing system - often programs can do alternative water, all the stream fences, crossings. Only limited cost needed to further subdivide paddocks if there's lots of streams.
- It keeps livestock from drinking unclean water, keeping them healthy, free from scours, bacterial infections, etc.; can save calves if they get stuck and drown in mucky waterways.
- It improves animal health. Also could be coupled with programs to help generate capital for the farm. Would be planned in combination with a stabilized stream crossing.
- It assists in sectioning the property into separate grazing fields and comes along with waterers. They often speak about appreciating the aesthetics of the forest there, especially with flowering trees and shrubs.
- In Maryland it is the law
- improves herd health, recreation, can assist with possible compliance issues
- improves herd health
- I basically answered this in a previous question. Fencing can make livestock rotation easier, which therefore makes pasture management easier. Off-stream watering sources tend to provide cleaner water for livestock, which reduces medical expenses and increases growth rates and milk production rates.
- herd health, that translates to better profits, water quality, golden rule
- Herd health, clean drinking water for the animals. Stream bank fencing can be used in a grazing system. There can be a monetary benefit. Rental payment may be given with certain programs or its a requirement in ranking for EQIP.
- herd health
- Healthier livestock, makes it easier to manage livestock, can be an opportunity to install additional infrastructure on the farm to provide for better management on the farm (fences, stream crossings, watering systems).
- healthier herds, less disease and health issues, being a better neighbor, can allow fish and fishing, legacy to grandchildren
- Health of the livestock.
- exclusion is required by Maryland law
- Education is the main driver in stream bank fencing. There is no one thing that is going to benefit any one farmer. Going and talking to farmer about all the benefits and drawback will let him choose if he thinks the practice is useful. Simply putting a practice in because you have convinced him for a year of all the uses you see to him while thinking about driving agency narrative will result in fencing a few years

that may and usually results in a worse resource concern that that is currently being addressed,

- better aesthetics & recreational opportunities, improved social status in community
- At trainings we often talk about improved herd health issues by excluding livestock from the stream, but most farmers don't see this as a big benefit. Honestly, most farmers do not see the benefit of streambank fencing. They are usually convinced to do it as a trade off for getting assistance with some other BMP on the farm.
- As mentioned in the buffer section, some landowners understand herd health benefits such as reduced costs on veterinary bills or reductions in somatic cell counts in milk. In our area, cattle often prefer water from alternative watering sources such as springs or wells as opposed to water from the stream. If we can provide a better water source as part of the fencing project, the farmers see this as a benefit. Some landowners also recognize the marginal production of stream side/wet pasture areas and do not mind having cattle excluded from these areas. Additionally, as part of these exclusion fencing projects we often improve pasture health by designing/installing rotational grazing systems or other pastureland BMPs as part of the fencing project.
- Animal health, it is an opportunity to install some grazing related practices like crossing, watering systems, fencing, etc. This is often the start to a grazing system.

In your experience, what do landowners object to when considering livestock exclusion/stream bank fencing?

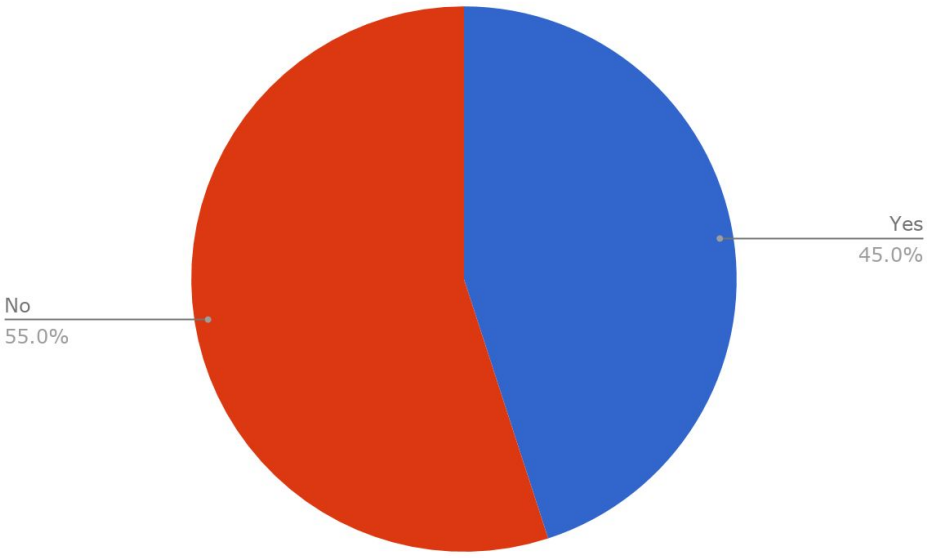
- There are two big ones in my experience. First is the long term cost/obligation on them to maintain the fencing, especially if cost share is involved to establish it. The second main objection is that fencing out livestock requires that alternative water sources be established - another cost and maintenance obligation. Some object to the fencing standard if cost share is involved, but this is not huge, given the generosity of cost share programs.
- Less pasture to use.
- Losing access to their stream.
- Maintaining the fence into the future due to trees falling on them or flooding, visually breaking up the landscape, they believe livestock need shade, natural water that is there all year especially during drought or power outages. And they always pushback on the amount of land lost behind the fence.
- Without a doubt - fence maintenance is the biggest issue.
- Water supply, which can easily be fixed, and aesthetics. That is the tough one. Sometimes losing that piece of land for production, but it is not usually a lot of land, and it is usually not very productive. Especially if it is in really rough shape. That means they really aren't losing anything, in that aspect.

- maintenance, at the beginning of the installation until trees are established. Programs that fund maintenance of invasive species, spraying around tree shelters to prevent root damage from meadow voles, are essential. The plan sect communities like "neatness" they do not like to see what they call "hairy" areas along their stream. So at least a three year period of professional maintenance I believe is an important component of stream bank fencing
- Same as previous question. They always want to give up as little as possible. They would rather put in 15 corner fence structures than straighten the fence out and give up more acreage.
- See answers to Land Use Practices: Stream/Riparian Buffers #2
- if built too close to creeks or on too large creeks, fence stability is an issue (flooding/bank erosion); maintenance; loss of production
- They object to having to pay to put back fence that may be taken out in flash floods because it's expensive. They object to what they consider setbacks too wide and far away from the streams; they object to lack of flexibility with setbacks that don't fit with the geography/layout of their farm.
- maintenance of area between the stream and the fence. taking land out of production. we need to discuss if this is the only watering source for the animals. if so, we need to plan alternative watering facilities.
- Trees eventually falling on the fence.
- concern of weeds growing inside the fence
- maintenance, invasives take over, loss of pasture...
- maintenance of the fencing of the long term
- See Riparian Buffer answer for full response. Generally, cost of the fencing, difficulty in moving animals from place to place, and concern about needing to rebuild fence that's damaged by seasonal flooding.
- costs of installation, upkeep, change of use, view it as a taking
- Maintenance with fencing due to flooding or controlling vegetation along the fence. Historically speaking landowners feel that cows want to be in the stream, their grandparents or parents didn't exclude livestock why should they change? Some people think that livestock help decrease bank erosion (I don't agree).
- maintenance, crossings
- They can take away valuable shade from livestock, they can be costly to maintain, the supporting infrastructure (fences, stream crossings, watering systems) can be costly to operate and maintain.

- loss of water supply, fence maintenance, keeping electric fences electrified.
- Maintenance of fencing and trashy weed growth.
- the cost and red tape involved
- Agency rules and standards that may or may not be justified. A standard 35 foot buffer when the producer has very good grazing management in the pasture with great grass and no real resource concern would not need 35 buffer. Policies as a whole are meant for good but tend to sway good conservation.
- cost of fencing and alternative sources of livestock water
- Potentially limiting water access points and shading for the animals along the stream if there are mature trees. Having to maintain the fence and the risk of trees falling on it. Having the buffer area grow up and look untidy.
- Landowners often object to the loss of pasture acreage or the messy look. Some also are concerned with maintaining the fence. To address these concerns we design the area inside the fence (buffer) to have some type of value to the landowner and actively engage in management of the fence and created buffer with the landowner (mowing, herbicide, fencing maintenance, etc.). Some again are concerned with complicated contracts or taking government money (Plain Sect).
- Fear of not having water for cattle when power is out, too much work, lack of knowledge about the positive benefits and funding for streambank fencing.

Practice #4: No Till and Cover Crops

Have you worked with more than 5 landowners on no till and/or cover crops?



In your experience, how are no till and/or cover crops beneficial to a landowner? Other than environmental benefits, what's in it for them?

- They build organic matter in the soil which make the soil more productive and tolerant of drought. They reduce erosion of valuable soil resources
- They are great for soil health and sustainable farming
- Soil health is increased by enhancing soil livestock. Earth worms and millions of soil species thrive with living cover in the off season. This enhances mineralization during growing season which offers free nutrition to the commercial crop being grown.
- reduced cost, better water retention, two forage crops per year per acre
- recover unused nutrients and save topsoil
- No-till requires less equipment time and fuel. Continuous no-till and cover cropped fields have improved soil structure, nutrient cycling, higher organic matter, and higher water infiltration rates. During wet periods, the farmers can usually get back into the fields quicker. Reduced soil erosion and less picking of field stones.
- No-till reduces labor and machinery expenses and fuel use. Cover crops have many potential benefits to a cropping program. Cover crops can be used for grazing or stored forages.
- Less time in the field, no need for plowing, eventually they see that yields through no till ultimately equal conventional plowing. Obviously there is less run off.
- In Bradford County, not having to pick rocks anymore. That may not work in other places, but it sure does here. Not having to have monstrous equipment, time savings, fuel savings, being able to get on the land much earlier, less equipment, less erosion (for the people that actually really see it),
- improved soil health, increased water infiltration
- Improved infiltration, improved water use efficiency, increased OM, reduced comm. nutrients, drought resilience, ability to deal with wet soils, increased biodiversity, improved yields, improved weed mgmt., possible alternative crop in the rotation, improved aesthetics/landowner relationships, reduced use of pesticides, to many positives to list them all
- Financial benefit of enrollment. Organic matter credits. Nitrogen credits for legumes. Reduced wind & water erosion. Water holding capacity increases, making crops less susceptible to drought. Irrigation usage is not as frequent or necessary. Reduced wear and tear on equipment, reduced fuel cost.
- economically-less fertilizer, eventually eliminating insecticides, fungicides, reduced herbicide..weed management, improves soil health, infiltration...

- Cycle nutrients, protect soil
- Can increase crop yields overtime, makes soils more resilient (better nutrient holding, better water retention, less likely to compact). Can reduce operation costs (reduction of tillage, less fertilizer, less pesticides).
- better soil health, less pesticides and herbicides, less nutrient application costs
- Basic economic benefits of efficiency are usually the most well received. However overall letting the producer know there are downfalls and what to expect in those downfall is more greatly received.

In your experience, what do landowners object to when considering no till/or and cover crops?

- How to manage weeds, insects and manure. misconception of yield reductions. I always ask the farmer to give no-till at least three years to make sure the yields are where they were before the conversion.
- Those that can, do transition. It is really about transitioning to that type of farming equipment. Most understand the benefits.
- I haven't had much negative response to no till or cover crops. I think they have becoming a more profitable and common sense practice in the farming community.
- It does take specialized equipment and more management to be a competitive notill farmer...commitment to success.
- weed control, manure incorporation
- lack of time to get done in the fall
- The cost of purchasing no-till planting equipment, increased use of herbicides, costs of cover crop seed.
- No-till: some farmers still think that soil needs to be 'worked'. Cover crops: expense of buying seed, time to get it planted, killing the cover crop in spring before planting.
- The need at first to use additional chemicals to control weeds in their fields. I do not believe farmers are complaining about cover crops any more, as they have seen the benefits
- they still think there is a yield loss, and there can be if not done right. There is a notion that it takes 3-5 years into no till before it really starts working right. how do we get through those 3 years? Also, that is a huge change and no one likes change. Especially if you are 60+ years of age and this is the only way you have ever done it your entire life. It is the only thing you know.
- change... lack of education

- Cost and lack of knowledge about the systems approach and how to implement it. Much of a farmers information comes from commercial sources like sales people , company reps. etc. and their focus is not on soil health. That is not wrong there products have positive uses, however, we need more education and outreach to farmers about soil health practices and a better way to integrate this information into networks they already trust, like sales people, etc. It is difficult to get farmers to come see soil heath speakers because often times farmers don't have a sense of why they would want to come listen to a soil health speaker, or they think if they heard one they that is enough. Best to call and talk about this.

- No-till seed drill and turbo-tills can be expensive. Sometimes, the financial gain is not worth the cost of seed and planting. Seed companies are enforcing patent protections on their seed, which prevents the farmer from saving seed for cover crop, even though the cover crop is not harvested.

- need to still do tillage, cost and idea of planting a cover crop for not cash grain return...

- Hard to get a stand, equipment is expensive

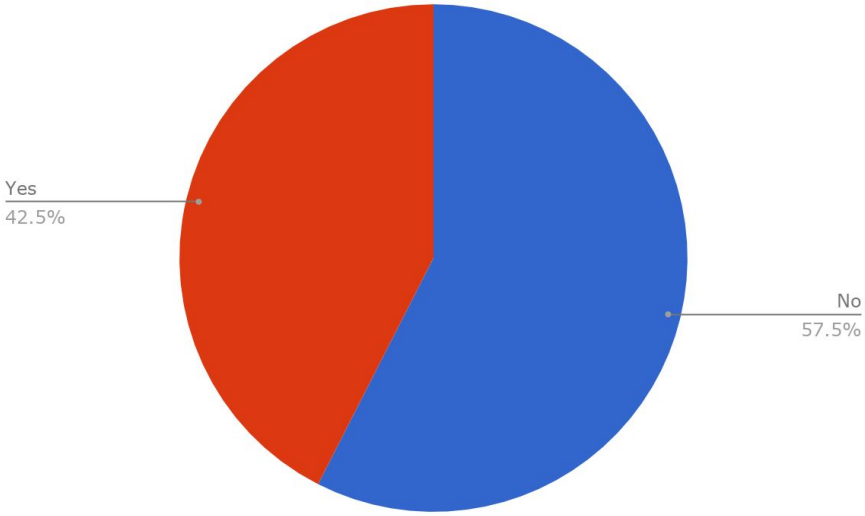
- Some producers just can't give up recreational tillage because they have the equipment and they feel that they have to use it every so often. Fear of pests (slugs) in no-till and cover crops situations.

- transition costs, feel the need to "turn" the soil, don't feel that farming is a one size fits all business.

- Poor overall knowledge from conservationist that don't understand farming practices and overall cash and crop cycles. To often the farmer is sold the good points of no till and cover crops without the downfalls and it puts conservationist into groups such as equipment dealers and fertilizer sales reps. When we are really not in those groups however a lot of time it is hard to tell the difference with pushing farmers or selling conservation to farmers.

Practice #5: Nutrient Management

Have you worked with more than 5 landowners on nutrient management?



In your experience, how is pasture management beneficial to a landowner? Other than environmental benefits, what's in it for them?

- Allows for better herd health and more robust pastures
- Better use of their grazing system.
- Better weight gains on calves, body condition on cows and soil productivity
- Can increase pasture/forage production. Makes it easier to work with livestock and to get in.
- Farmers can see that over grazing results in almost bare ground. Also the amount of grass needed seems to be less with the current feeding regiments in the barns today. A crop consultant should also work with farmers on the benefits of perhaps rotational grazing, and avoiding animal concentration areas.
- herd health, more productive pasture, easier potential to make more money from meat/milk or go organic, less need for expensive machinery and labor-intensive crop production
- herd health, reduced feed costs, compliance issues, economics.....
- I work in conjunction with the NRCS office when it comes to pasture management. It is important for farmers to know what kind of forage they have in the pasture. If they put in a buffer with rental payment, its good for them to compare the rental payment versus what that part of the pasture gives the herd in a year.

- Improved animal heath, lost cost production, improved soil heath, provides an opportunity for young farmers to get involved in animal ag. , it may provide an value added marketing opportunity for farm products.
- Increased animal growth, HUGE increases in pasture yield, letting cows distribute the manure across more land without you having to do it mechanically, managing growth/species in the pasture
- Increased feed value and healthy area for livestock.
- increased productivity of pasture and reduced impact of flies and internal parasites
- Managing the pasture can make it more productive over the long term.
- optimize forage production for livestock
- Pasture management is the other side to riparian buffer loss. We can amend the loss of riaparian grazing by increasing the benefits of pasture management.
- Pasture management is very beneficial to the landowner. A properly designed pasture system reduces feed costs by maximizing forage. Having cattle on pasture also improves foot health as opposed to keeping them in a heavy use area or feed lot.
- Proper pasture management can drastically increase the amount of forage available to the animals, improve soil health, reduce feeding costs, and potentially have higher weight gains.
- They want good forage and this is solid way to build a good grazing system
- to me, this goes hand in hand with installing a riparian forested buffer. I challenge the landowners to think about the remaining productive pasture ground (not in the buffer) and lets find ways to amend it to have as high or higher production prior to the buffer. things like simple grading, seeding, soil sample, fertilizing, etc have all proven success.
- Understanding and education of pasture ecology is important to the benefits as well as downfalls of good pasture management. Once again farmers need to be educated not sold on fixes by folds who have not worked the land they are consulting on.

In your experience, what do landowners object to when considering pasture management?

- Time input. Lack of understanding about how to really manage it.
- They see the start up cost of fence, water, and lanes as too high, they have a lack of knowledge of the how to graze livestock, they underestimate the ability of pasture to raise health, high producing livestock. They see it as loosing valuable cropland that they need for income or to feed livestock. Again as with soil health there are not a great deal of commercial sources of information about grazing,

farmers get much of there information from ag. sales people. A great deal of livestock research is done with confinement systems. Confinement is ok too, we just need to provide more education and outreach to allow farmers to weigh alternatives.

- They object to conservationist. They object poor education and short sighted education that is explained incoherently or incompletely. Who goes to a car dealer and is just told a particular car is right for them not based on price but only based upon the salesman's 1 minute experience with you that he can not direct you on what choice you should make.
- They are used to doing things the same way, changes of any kind are often challenging for the plain sect community. (especially id Dad, or Dad in law still owns the farm) younger farmers are less resistant to change. They need to see some proof of benefits before committing to a more precise pasture management plan
- there is considerable effort in keeping good records. they need to put effort in to get good results
- The need to move cattle to different paddocks.
- the cost to benefit ratio may not be worth it for them to consider the change
- Stream exclusion, having to reduce stocking densities, more work, fear that it will be a chore to have to move livestock around.
- Some farmers do not want to take the time to move animals between the paddocks.
- Often times landowners do hesitate to invest the time in pasture management. Many farmers see the pasture as an exercise lot or summer housing. Everybody wants a nice pasture, but few are willing to change their current management or buy into the effort needed to improve the pasture and maintain it. Ultimately, few are willing to invest the time and effort needed to maintain a healthy pasture system. (example: taking cattle off pasture when it is too wet or forage is grazed too short or moving cattle from one pasture to the next at the right time).
- maintenance of fence, management change to move fence, livestock, costs to implement...fence, pipelines, waters
- Increased management inputs.
- In Bradford County, just plain laziness as far as I am concerned. I want to have animals, and it is my "right", but I don't want to have to do anything with them. I want to turn them out and I want them to take care of themselves. I want to invest as little time as I can with them. I don't want to have to move them from pasture to pasture. I have to split it all up with fence, etc. Maybe, if we build fence for them, and new technology can open new gates for them remotely, they would do a better job.

- I don't know if they are objecting but unfortunately at times pasture management is low on the priority list. Again I rely heavily on NRCS.
- Fences are hard to maintain is the only complaint I have heard.
- cost of additional fencing for rotation of pastures
- change, perception of increased labor requirements
- change in general, not sure how it works, more grazing often means less animals, risk associated with any ag operation change
- can be very time intensive (need to move the animals a lot)

Practices Overall

In your opinion, which farm and forest management practices offer the best "bang for the buck" in improving water quality?

- Only my opinion - cover crops and well-managed pasture. I have no expertise or experience in forest management.
- Soil Heath System practices such as cover crops, crop rotation changes, no-till, nut. mgmt., adaptive grazing, grass filters, buffers. (system, not stand alone practices)
- First a conservation plan. Then implementation of recommended BMP's. A manure management plan. No till, cover crops,Followed by stream bank fencing(if there is a creek on the farm). If there are woods on a plain sect property they often want to clear the land for more tillable ground. As a DCNR Forest Stewardship Professional , I recommend managing their woodlots as a crop, and apply sound forestry practices. This is challenging in the plain sect outlook, but some have applied some sound forest management techniques.
- livestock exclusion and a buffer behind it----hands down
- Streambank fencing
- Structurally-concrete manure storage with barnyard sloping to the storage, Headquarter storm water BMP's, roof runoff controls, riparian forested buffers, waterways. agronomic-contour farming and no-till
- No-till, Cover Crops, Stream Exclusion, Pasture Management, Animal Waste Management Practices in areas with dense livestock concentrations.
- First off, we need to eliminate all direct discharge barnyard runoff to streams. Streambank fencing is a big bang for the buck and it's a shame that we cannot mandate this practice due to political influence that was inserted into the Clean Streams Law. This legislature needs to be updated to remove this clause/exception. Improving soil health (no-till and cover crops) has huge long-term potential for

improving water quality by reducing the amount of runoff and the fertilizer needed to grow crops.

- 1. Riparian Buffers and Livestock Exclusion Fencing (with associated stream crossings, watering facilities, and walkways) are the most cost effective way to improve water quality. 2. Cropping Practices (cover crop, not till, conservation tillage, etc.) with associated waterways and plow skips and Pasture Management Systems are the next most cost effective BMPs for water quality. 3. Stormwater BMPs, especially on farms with infrastructure located near the stream (curbing, gutters, diversions, etc.) are the next most cost effective BMPs. 4. Finally nutrient management or manure related BMPs (roofed heavy use areas, manure storages, etc.) are the most expensive BMPs by far, but are part of the complete water quality improvement package.
- definitely buffers, tree and shrub establishment
- Eliminating polluting animal concentration areas!!!
- cover crops- or stream exclusion/buffers (if conditions are really bad)
- Riparian buffers, cover crops, no-till
- Getting riparian forests into the condition they need to be is the best. This means fencing cattle and other stock away from streams, allowing the forest to repair itself, and replacing the wood/structure into the streams to allow natural processes to filter and use the remaining 'natural' level of nutrient the aquatic life need to flourish. This not only filters farm run off, but allows critters to adapt to the changing conditions afforded by a more natural setting. The shade created by buffer forests reduces temperature and increase the capacity to withhold oxygen, which in the Chesapeake Bay is the objective for reducing nutrients (to increase the dissolved oxygen content of the Chesbay).
- The riparian buffer work necessitates the need to install alternative water supplies strategically located on the farm to reduce impact. The design of the alternative waterers will have an impact on the stream/spring systems that supply the water and this impact needs to be managed as well. The riaparian buffer and the water supplies go hand in hand,
- Nutrient plans are especially helpful for the chicken farmers and industrial feed lot operators. The concentration of nutrients needs be managed.
- nutrient management and cover crops
- improved pasture management and stream exclusion
- riparian forest buffers
- Need to take a holistic approach, once the whole farm is evaluated chip away

In your opinion, are any farm and forest management practices overrated for improving water quality? If so, which ones?

- yes: narrow buffers along the stream without any planting of trees. It is still an improvement, but I do not think it provides significant benifits in the long term
- Riparian Forest Buffers!
- prohibition of grazing in CREP lands
- Odor management plans. vegetated treatment areas for barnyard runoff. experience has told me to not design/install these systems. within 2-3 years most of these systems fail. operation and maintenance is high and is generally a low priority for upkeep from most farmers.
- Nutrient/Manure management plans
- Nutrient management plans.
- Nutrient management and Resource Management Plans. They are paper and paper does not change the resource. Too many plans are written for a program and not a resource. And as far as RMPs go, many are being written on land (no-till cropland) that is not a resource concern
- not that their overrated but need to be considered along with soil health practices in cropland, pastures...
- Not for the farm and i'm not familiar with the forest practices
- None are overrated, just some practices cost more then others so we need to work with the landowners to develop the plan and then assist in finding the resources to achieve them.
- Manure Storages and HUAP/ farmstead practices, when they are installed as stand alone and not as part of a nut. mgmt./soil heath mgmt. system. If manure is stored 6 months per year and the farmstead is cleaned up and then the manure is applied to land that has erosion, lack of cover, compaction, increased runoff, lack of buffers/filters, etc. the value of these practices is highly diminished. The high cost of the farmstead practices are not as effective. The crop and pasture land where manure is applied in the watershed has more potential to improve water quality by implementing soil health and erosion control practices on it then by focusing heavily on farmstead practices. There are more acres of crop and pasture land then farmsteads, much of the crop and pasture land has compaction, erosion, increased runoff, and lack of infiltration. Please do not take me to say that Storage/HUAPs are not good practices, that is not my intent. I just think we need to develop a method of prioritizing the really critical ones and spend more time and effort getting water to infiltrate on crop and pasture land in the watersheds so we don't have to deal with excessive polluted runoff at the stream, river, lake, bay level.

- manure incorporation
- legacy sediment removal can be very valuable, but I feel it gets hyped up and viewed as the ultimate BMP. I've seen many planners do a bit of sediment removal projects to satisfy conservation requirements and then do no more, while the same amount of money could've been used to establish hundreds of acres of riparian forest buffers, which provide so much more benefits to the landscape.
- In my experience, each has their place. Unfortunately some are way more expensive than others. If anything I would say more focus should be put on the lower cost BMPs and the high cost BMPs should only be implemented in cases that demonstrate the most need or the most water quality benefit. I think barnyard collection systems with manifold treatment structures and irrigation heads are overrated (maintenance nightmares). They could be avoided or replaced with roofed structures or mulch filters/wood chip bioreactors.
- I really don't have any opinion on that.
- I am sure there are some, but right off the top of my head I couldn't come up with one. I even asked some counterparts, and they said the same thing. I will say this, I have seen some studies where it was shown that complete exclusion from a stream was not the best answer (for stream health), and it had some other negative benefits also (invasives). Now, it does need to be managed correctly, and most people will not do that without a heavy hand really leaning on them all the time. Fencing them out, but allowing for some (flash) grazing to be done, would have some major benefits. Control of invasives, net decrease in nutrients (I would think) in the soil around the stream-and then leaking into the stream, aesthetics, and probably some more.
- Cannot afford to maintain boundary fences much less interior fence

Mentoring

Imagine you are mentoring a rookie (<3 years experience) conservation field staff person. Which TOP THREE of these skills do you want them to develop first:

Skill	# of Votes
Actively listening to landowners about their concerns and aspirations	32
Networking in the community and developing relationships with landowners	25
Understanding land use practices in the area	22
Learning the ins-and-outs of the technical and financial assistance programs you can offer	15
Nudging landowners towards making a decision without coming across	6

as pushy	
Identifying and contacting landowners you don't have a relationship with yet	5
Staying organized and keeping in touch with many landowners simultaneously	5
Understanding land ownership patterns in the area	3
Being the bridge between the landowners goals and mitigating their impacts on the land	1
Developing writing skills for emails and educational materials to distribute	1
Understanding the preferred communication styles of their audiences	1
Actively listening to landowners about their concerns and aspirations	1
Understanding land ownership patterns in the area	1

What “rookie mistakes” do new conservation field staff tend to make?

- We should never tell a landowner "this is what you are doing." instead, the first question we should ask them is "what are your goals?" we should present options for the farmer to select and if they say no we should be prepared to present other alternatives. we must marry the landowners goals with what we know current regulations are. this will ensure that what we plan on paper will get installed in the field. implementation for compliance that meets the sustainability and profitability goals of the farmer.
- We get too focused on specific aspects of conservation and focus on the tech. details before we take the time to listen and build a relationship with the farmer/landowner. If we do not build a good relationship/trust with our customers we will not have successful conservation on the ground.
- too enthusiastic about new options, poor ability to sit and listen (and hear) to landowners
- Thinking they know more than they do. It takes a while to build the capacity to listen to someone with a different perspective. Don't BS your way through it- if you don't know, admit it and tell them you will get the answer. Listen to the farmer or landowner and tenured staff.
- Thinking they are some kind of authority or expert in a field. They don't fully understand what they are there to do. They are there to listen, learn, and understand. Then they can spread knowledge and experience they have after the have done the other things.
- Thinking that their "expert" knowledge will convince landowners to follow their "dictums"

- think they know/understand more than they do, don't take time to plan things holistically, don't know all the options available, can be too pushy and un-grounded
- They often don't have an agriculture background and so don't understand farming or how to work with farmers. Also, they often try to push/peddle conservation programs to farmers.
- they get to solutions without understanding what they are trying to solve.
- They don't fully understand how to make the information practical for a landowner to make an informed decision. You have to be good at reading people and gauging their interest. Additionally, you have to gauge their style of learning so you can custom tailor your delivery of technical assistance and programs to benefit them.
- "They come across as "know it alls" or "I know better than you" - or some form of that like "My view is the ONLY way to view a situation". Huge, huge mistake, and guilty as charged early in my career. That will shut the door on things quickly, especially if they are not rooted in the area/community. That is probably the biggest mistake I made, and I see.
- Lack of empathy, or really trying to understand a landowner's situation/goals, combined with a lack of appreciation for a landowner's knowledge, interests and experience. Then presenting solutions or recommendations as binary options, rather than problem-solving. To be understood, you have to seek first to understand. To be respected, you first have to show respect.
- Failure to have command of the facts. Know the practices. Know the pros and cons of them. Many rookies, myself included, see themselves as the ultimate authority on things rather than a source of credible, unbiased information to help a landowner make an informed decision about their land.
- Presenting recommendations in a context of how they will benefit the bigger picture, society at large, or some form of that, especially when the landowner is expressing some reluctance or concern - rather than articulating how the practices will benefit them personally. Need to consciously make it about them and their situation, not society's.
- Talking at a landowner
- Talk too much, listen too little. Under prepared for a visit, do your homework before you go out to talk to a landowner. Also, never "pretend" to know an answer. Admit when you do not know and then go find the answer.
- Taking on any project that comes to them without setting up conservation priorities first and then being proactive toward a conservation goal
- Sticking to "book knowledge" regardless of individual variations on specific farms. Always applying the same practice in the same way. Each property has unique qualities, and their willingness to listen to the farmer (who will always have better

"knowledge" about their piece of ground , should allow them to have some leeway in management practices to be implemented

- staying in the office. You need facetime with farmers and landowners
- Rookie Mistakes: 1. Thinking that farmers are excited to do this - most are not; 2. The failure to recognize that each farmer probably has a unique set of needs and concerns when it comes to establishing riparian areas; 3. Be honest and straight-forward from the very beginning about costs and program requirements; 4. Be sure to advise farmers that maintenance WILL be needed for the riparian buffers to become established and succeed,
- Pretending that they know information when they really don't have much experience. Not being willing to listen to the farmers and learn from them. Poor communication skills.
- Organizing important documents related to easements
- Offering too much advice (particularly if unsolicited) or telling landowner information he/she already knows (appearing to be a "know-it-all"); talking too much about his/her own conservation goals and not listening enough to the landowners' goals; providing too much information at once (I am still guilty of this one!). Not being on time (or early).
- Not working to understand the culture of the local producers first.
- Not taking enough time to understand practices in the area and where landowners are coming from before explaining programs/practices that are offered.
- not listening; feeling like they need to have answers when best answer may be "I don't know, but will find out"
- Not listening to the landowner. Having an agenda before you even show up. Be patient.
- Not listening enough to the producer; recommending practices before really know what the producer wants
- Not giving realistic expectations to landowners regarding what they can expect from tree plantings and other practices. Not fully preparing them for follow-up work needed.
- Not asking for assistance. Not compromising. Not willing to consider potential solutions that may not specifically conform to requirements. Important to 'think outside the box'. Not staying organized. Not able to manage time effectively.
- Lack of field experience. Not knowing how talk to landowners and not knowing the programs well enough to sell them.
- lack of experience

- "Informal approach on the first contact - feels disrespectful to the older generations.
- We are working with the people who own the resource we're trying to influence - we may have to settle for good; we're not always going to get to "right" or "best" for the resource because people have different values and expectations they hold for their land."
- I think people new to the field are quick to speak up and be an "authority" immediately instead of listening to staff that have been in the county longer. New staff need to know that they are working with landowners/farmers who have more experience working on the land and in the fields and they need to really listen and understand their landowners. Being able to listen to the farmer. If you don't know the answer to something ask questions. No one assumes you should know everything.
- I haven't mentored too many yet, but in general I would think they concentrate on knowing and pushing programs. That is what we are supposed to do, right? find a place to spend the money, and get it done. We forget to tell the landowner what they get out of it. Even after it is done, it is a lot harder to manage any negative things that may have come out of it, if, in the back of your mind you are thinking "I did this because the government wanted me to and they pushed me into it". if he is thinking "I did this because I get X out of it", the negatives things are easier to manage around.
- have not develop good listening skills, being respectful not arrogant
- Get locked into current programs without understanding the practices that protect the environment.
- Failing to recognize the breadth of experience and knowledge the landowner brings to the conversation and discounting the landowners care and concern for their land.
- Failing to follow through on developing relationships.
- Don't build a relationship before trying to push a practice
- Do not listen to landowners, too focused on program standards
- coming across as having too many strong opinions without listening enough to clientele
- assume all property owners are environmentalist and care about water quality

Imagine that same rookie after 3-5 years on the job. Which THREE of these areas do you expect are most likely to still need improvement?

Skill	# of Votes

Staying organized and keeping in touch with many landowners simultaneously	21
Networking in the community and developing relationships with landowners	21
Actively listening to landowners about their concerns and aspirations	17
Nudging landowners towards making a decision without coming across as pushy	15
Identifying and contacting landowners you don't have a relationship with yet	12
Learning the ins-and-outs of the technical and financial assistance programs you can offer	12
Understanding land use practices in the area	8
Developing writing skills for emails and educational materials to distribute	4
Understanding land ownership patterns in the area	3
Developing phone and voicemail skills	2
Understanding land use practices in the area	2
Continue to learn basic practices outside you field of work. Designs and other despilines such as fence install or advances in no till drill technologies.	1
Developing plans with realistic activity accomplishments planned over the time period of the plan	1
Not trying to only push conservation programs/sell practices.	1

In your opinion, what do you do differently from the fair-to-middling conservation field staff?

- I am a private consultant. people pay for our work and our time to be on their farm. I need to be efficient, informative and provide a value to them. we cannot compete with free services that Conservation Districts can provide so we need to provide high quality planning in a short amount of time and as low a price as possible. there is no substitute for experience. we are very fortunate we have several staff members who have worked with NRCS and CD's who have a lot of experience and can provide high quality planning advise to our clients. I specifically work with the Amish and plain sect. this wonderful opportunity may take a another page to write about.
- I have a farming background (worked on farms, own/operate a farm) I have a diverse background in many areas of conservation, specifically soil health/grazing/livestock related topics. I take time to build relationships that allows me to plan each farm based on that particular landowner's needs.

- stay humble, actively listen and ask (leading) questions versus telling people about new ideas.
- Not sure. But I do give them respect, and I make efforts to build lasting relationships.
- Not give them so much confidence from trainings by peers that we are to sell practices. Give employees more planning based training without the use of practice emphasis.
- I listen, and I digest what I've heard, and I tailor my message to what I've heard for each person... a "canned" talk will not convince someone to act.
- As a wildlife biologist, I come from a different perspective than many others who may have a background in environmental science or agronomy. I see conservation issues through the lens of natural resource management, where use is an important part of sustainable management. Plus I have a strong knowledge of the wildlife that restoration will encourage, which is of interest to many landowners. I also grew up in the poor, rural south, and am adept at having genuine conversations with people from similar backgrounds. On that note, when I'm in the field I push myself 100% until the job is done, whether that's for an hour or from predawn to sundown. This physical work ethic isn't always common in conservation professionals, but is respected by farmers. I feel that I've earned a lot of respect this way, which goes far in ag communities.
- I don't push programs on people and I don't try to rush people into programs. I tell the truth (the good, the bad, and the ugly) about conservation practices. I also build relationships with all of my clients.
- Lead
- I'm great at reading people and thinking ahead about what deliverable information I need to get to them to help them apply conservation practices.
- "Wow. Let me start by saying that I consider myself typical or average - I am no better or worse than any other conservation professional. I am just going to list things that I try to bring to, or credos to live by in every interaction. I don't know if it differentiates me from anyone else, but it is how I operate. They are in no particular order, just as they come to my head.
- Humility - I don't know everything, and many people I work with have much more experience and knowledge than me. My knowledge and experience make me no better than anyone else; just older. If I don't know something, I am not afraid to admit it, and seek the answer. I am not any smarter or talented than anyone else; I am just driven for those around me to succeed.
- Empathy - I always try to put myself in the other's situation and see it from their perspective. I seek to understand what is motivating their desires and views.

- Respect - I think this goes along with empathy. I respect everyone as a human being. To get respect, you have to give it, so I value others' wishes, views and opinions, even if they are different than mine.

- Teachable moment - I treat every interaction, regardless of who it is with - a colleague, a child, a landowner, a superior - as a two-way teachable moment. I view every interaction as an opportunity to share information in both ways. If a landowner is resistant to something I have to offer, then I take a step back, seek to understand where they are coming from. I try to learn something from every interaction, as there are a lot of people smarter than me out there or with a different perspective than mine. I embrace what did not work, and am willing to share those, as much as what did work.

- Relationships - I always try to remember that it is about people and relationships, and put them first. It is not about the program or practice. I always remember that I am in public service and the people business.

- Problem-solving - I try not to see situations as a binary situation, but seek mutually agreeable solution.

- I try to live by the four agreements - don't take things personally, be impeccable with my word, do my best in everything, and give others the benefit of the doubt.

- I try to approach everyone and ever situation with enthusiasm and optimism. I see my role as one to inform, educate and assist.

- Achieving results in the field takes time. By keeping a consistent message you will develop the trust of the community and that leads to success with the landowners.

- Go the extra mile. Important to communicate well with the landowner, this includes initial meetings, planning and contracting, design, implementation, and project followup/maintenance. It is also important to be available and to respond in a timely manner, be organized and on time. Do your research and be prepared, and when you don't know...find an answer. Often you need to go beyond the "program" minimum requirements. Don't just do the paperwork and complete the job, develop and maintain the relationship.

- I think I have a good combination of skills -- I have applied my conservation science/planning background toward a tangible outcome of conservation, instill trust with local landowners, willing to do the detail work as well as the big picture planning, work at creating good long-lasting conservation partnerships, creative at finding funding

- I convey to the farmer, that I am "agriculturally challenged" and I encourage them to tell me what they think their needs are. I also try to steer them in the right direction for technical services: Either governmental, or private. Following up to let them know I specifically care about them and their family. If they are doing better financially, and their livestock and their family are healthier, and making more profit, the odds of sustainability for an individual farmer is greatly enhanced.

Although more time consuming: to me it is one farm at a time. I always tell the farmer I do not want to see the wife pulling down the shades when I pull my car into their driveway, to return to their farm. I want to be welcomed by the whole family.

- put boots on the ground and respond to farmers needs
- Reinforce the basics previously stated; Query them as to how successful they have been when working with landowners; Assist them in expanding their effectiveness; Ask them what they need to do their job better.
- I have good communication skills and often call as well as send a letter to communicate with the farmers. I do not use regulatory jargon when communicating and try to use simple terms and terminology that the farmers use. I have taken the time to build relationships over the last 10 years and build trust.
- organize important documents related to easements!
- I center discussions around the landowner's goals, and I take time to get to know the landowner and allow him/her to know and feel comfortable with me. My focus is on what the landowner wants, though I'm also honest about my/my organization's interests. I'm forthcoming with details the landowner may not like, and I answer questions honestly, even if the answer is likely to be unpopular. I ask questions (but not too many) about the property or the operation about which I have genuine curiosity. This gives the landowner a chance to teach me something, and that builds mutual respect and a feeling of team work. (The questions/curiosity must be genuine, though. If it's forced, it won't work.) If we disagree on how to handle something, I remind the landowner that I work for a conservation organization and can't negotiate on some things (I'm honest about my interests), but I try hard to address the landowner's concerns/goals (we are "on the same team"). Also, when I am meeting someone over 60 or farmers of any age, I show up 10 min early. I'm directly on-time for everyone else, and if I have to be late, I call to notify.
- Connect with farmers as a partner in decision making rather than a salesman. Building a connection with local ag organizations...ie FFA, Young Farmers Groups, Penn Ag, PFB etc. to enhance respect and develop a long term affect in the ag community by being an environmental advocate yet still being sensitive to each individuals goals.
- Understand the concerns of the landowner and connect those concerns with the resource concerns on their farms. Try to stay flexible over time with what can be accomplished on their land.
- I'm not in the field directly, so not sure my thoughts help much.
- Network with environmentally focused agencies and organizations in the surrounding area and utilizing their talents to help further our own program.
- Discuss management styles with landowners

- Build rapport with landowners, identify which landowners are likely to follow through and which aren't.
- I listen more than I speak. I go out of my way to assist and I arrange my schedule for the convenience of the farmer / land owner. I do my best to develop potential solutions that are win - win. I'm firm and direct, when it really matters.
- I create a trusting friendship with each landowner, which carries a long way in a community. That friendship and trust will come up in a phone call between neighbors, which will lead to me receiving a call asking about a BMP, which turns into a sit down conversation at a new landowners kitchen table, and then possible enrollment into a program.
- listen to farmers experiences
- I work at a different level than most conservation field staff. I often envy their more strong local connections with their audiences.
- I think after 3 years of being in the field in the same county the field staff person should know how their county, land practices, and they should be comfortable with their farmers. But to me listening to a landowner will always be really important.
- Concentrate on how it affects THEM. I would prefer to never hear the slogan "we all live downstream" again. That means (to me) that I am concerned with people that live downstream from me, and I need to be concerned with everything upstream also. We can only change ourselves, and we will only make decisions based on "what is in it for me?" For this reason, I choose to focus on what the landowner is going to get out of it. also, by doing this, you develop trust. Think about yourself. how do you make decisions? Do you deal with people you don't trust? and do you make decisions on what is best for your neighbors?
- good listening skills, develop relationships, trying to understand the landowners perspective, their job, what they vale
- Not sure.
- Working understanding of agriculture. If I could recommend one thing for every developing land conservationist, it would be to intern on a true working farm for an extended period of time and develop an understanding of agriculture business practices and markets in addition to studying conservation practices.
- Being a farmer, I have learned from experience.
- I am also working in the ag field so I have a connection not many conservation staff have
- Triangulate and raise
- try to understand what people need to become successful with their ag enterprise

- foster relationships and know the area I am working in

In your experience, how important are the following factors in PREVENTING a landowner from closing a deal with you?

Factor	Combined "Most" and "Very" Important
The Cost	33
Loss of land from production	28
The program doesn't meet their needs	27
They don't hit it off with you personally	26
They lose interest as the process drags out	23
They object to the red tape	22
Objections from family, business partners, or neighbors	21
The project is too much for them to handle	20
Competing priorities and distractions	19
Concern about liability or exposure to lawsuits	6

How do you get past landowners' concerns about getting tangled up with environmental regulations and enforcement?

- as a consultant that they are paying for our services I feel it is part of my job to act as a buffer on their behalf. let us work through the regulations and enforcements. it is what we do. obviously, we need to build a relationship with each landowner to get to that point for them to trust us to do that for them. I don't like to start my talks on the farms with regulations. I feel it is necessary to inform them of current laws and regs and that I wouldn't be doing my job for them if we didn't talk about with them about the regs. most landowners have an elevated conservation conscience when it comes to getting into compliance so they just need a friendly nudge to get them going in the right direction
- I try to not focus on that and make the process as simple and well planned out as possible to avoid them getting frustrated.
- make them comfortable that you understand their concerns and that you have their back
- Don't expose them to that part of the practice, We do the work to make sure that is not an issue
- Education is the key component and not making promises or expectations to a producer that things will ever go smoothly or easily.
- I go to bat for them at the state and middle management level (paarticularly with NRCS); I facilitate getting accurate answers for their questions.

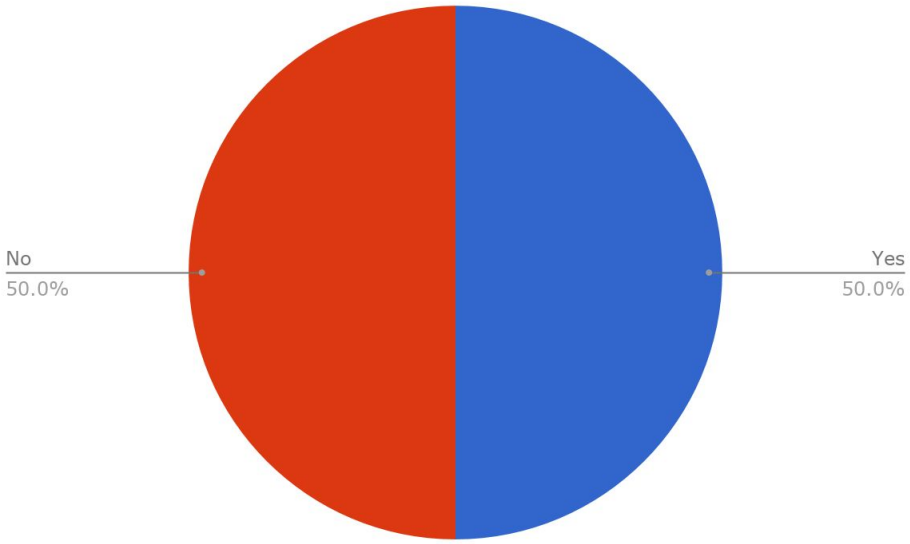
- I am often offering help in this arena; by working with me regulators are less likely to stop by.
- Tell them the truth about the programs! I put it all out on the table for them to see. It is all about building trust with the landowners. If they trust you, they will believe you when you tell them the ins and outs of the programs and will take your advice.
- We do the hard work for them.
- Clearly explain them what the expectations are for regulations and where they fit into it.
- "What I don't do is minimize or ignore them. The quickest way to diminish your credibility is for a landowner to get ambushed or unknowingly get caught up in the boondoggle of a program that you recommended.
- I try to explain the obligations to them, and to us as an agency, as best I can, with examples if possible. I also make sure that they understand what will happen if they do not meet the obligations. Then I make sure that they know we are there to help them and ensure their success and satisfaction. The last thing I want is for someone to fail or have a bad experience."
- We act as the facilitator for that.
- Often I explain to the landowner that we are here to help, not to get you in trouble. If you have environmental problems and are willing to fix them, we will help you find a solution. If anyone gives you grief in the process send them to us.
- We are very fortunate in Maryland. The programs have been successful for decades with no major complications to landowners, so landowners come to us with a sense of comfort about established programs. The programs have a good reputation and landowners within the community talk to each other and have not much concern about regulations and enforcement.
- We establish a relationship with the church leaders in the Amish community. We often visit with them to let them know what we are doing, so if there are objections from their church members, they can say that we have discussed our outreach with them. Study hard to understand the different government programs and their contractual agreements. If I do not know an answer, I go to somone who has a better technical knowledge than me. Rely on past farmers who we have worked with to convey their experiences with environmental regulations. Try hard to get the facts straight.
- explain things and answer their questions
- Convey to them that most likely environmental regulations will become costlier and more restrictive in the future - the sooner they install a buffer/fencing and the quicker it begins to function, the less regulations they may face in the future.

- I try to help them as much as possible with the paperwork and plans. I communicate that everyone needs to do their part to meet environmental goals and compliance.
- Not part of our focus
- Probably most important is rapport between the landowner and the conservation professional. If the landowner trusts the person she's dealing with, she tends to trust the organization behind that person. (Never mind that that's not logical; that's how people seem to operate.) Second- and this one does stand the test of time- is ensuring that the landowner understands the agreement he/she is going to sign. I work in conservation easements, so I help the landowner think through a wide variety of activities/land uses he/she may want to do in the future, to make sure we allow for that in the easement. We also go carefully through the text that explains enforcement and the legal actions the land trust is entitled to take to make sure landowner understands it and has plenty of time to ask questions and mull it all over. I also strongly recommend that landowners have their own legal counsel review the document and discuss it with them.
- Convincing them that change is inevitable. If you can't accept change maybe farming is not for you. Regulations and enforcement is now the new normal. Embrace it or find another career. "The best defense is a good offense"....an example of a good offense would be an implemented ag e and s plan, nutrient plan, and new installed riparian buffer.
- If they believe in the final outcome of the practices and plan they are installing and following, then as long as they follow the rules, install and manage correctly, there won't be a problem.
- Typically our projects are bringing farms into compliance with PA's fairly strong regs. That fear is larger by comparison, so this is not a barrier for most.
- When we visit a property we try and coordinate with federal, state, and county agencies to meet all at the same time. Whatever questions and concerns the landowner has, they can most likely be answered by one of those agencies. It also lends credence to the message when you hear it from more than one source.
- Discuss why we are recommending those practices and how implementing those practices will help keep them in compliance.
- I've not encountered this concern.
- This can be very difficult. It's very important they initially understand what they are agreeing to. The big problem is the regulations change over time and what may have been permissible historically, now could be a violation. There are cases where the state and federal government have reinterpreted contracts and sued for repayment. These actions, although few, make land owners & farmers very nervous.

- I take that burden off their shoulders by handling that aspect of each project.
- work with them in correcting the issues before DEP, EPA and conservation district staff knock on their door.
- Tap into their stewardship ethic - they often can see a way through.
- In the county I work in some farmers will sit back and watch other guys install buffers, enroll land in a program, etc.. If their neighbors are successful then you will have more interest in the program. A lot of guys have started to understand its the right thing to do and would rather do it now voluntarily then wait till they are required.
- TRUST. Education.
- develop a trust, being open and honest...others past projects in the area not providing any names, word of mouth is the best form of outreach or it could be damaging as well
- Identifying the benefits to them and their operation.
- Consultative sales, listen to their needs and help them to the conclusion that the pain is worth the gain. Listen more than you talk. Show understanding about their concerns and recognize the efforts they have already made to be good stewards.
- Most farmers understand the need for these programs.
- Listening to the concerns and respecting them helps to build trust, if trust can be earned then normally the concerns are reduced
- Ask them if they think what is proposed by the government they should be doing anyway?
- they need to trust that you can lead them through it without problems
- explain that everyone has to do it. Part of doing business in today's society

Plain Sect Landowners

Do you have significant experience working with Plain Sect landowners?



In your experience, how do family dynamics in Plain Sect households differ from other landowners?

- You'll meet only with the men. Keep it simple. Keep it honest. Keep the BS to a minimum. Be ready for the tough questions on how the project benefits them specifically. Be patient as you may not get an immediate answer.
- yes
- usually the male is making most of the decisions.
- They don't differ as much as one may think. The wife is almost always around the house and there are usually a lot of children. A Plain farm is almost always going to remain one, for the foreseeable future, so they are often very invested in the long-term sustainability of the operation to a further extent than their English neighbors.
- The wife does not voice her opinion or appear to have much influence on decision making. If the farmer is older, he may need to consult and involve younger sons in the decisions.
- The farmer is definitely in charge of the family. In a plain sect household, the woman typically manage the yard and the gardens, while the farmer manages the fields (except when harvesting is being done, then everyone is involved with getting crops in.) We once had a grant where we delivered "recipe cards" to the wives. The entire grant was written by female staff, and an Amish teacher. So often we only ask the wives,"where is the farmer" we decided to ask the farmer" where is the

wife?" then we delivered the recipe cards that included heirloom seeds, raised bed gardens, and other things the women who wrote the material thought most important. I believe we gave the wive's a feeling of more importance, I cannot say that every farmer was happy. but he paid attention to what we were doing.

- The elders often have more influence over younger landowners.
- The different groups vary. For some Mennonites, church leadership can bar participation (rarely for Amish), and its not a family decision. For many Amish, including wives in decisions is routine (not as much for Mennos).
- Several generations can be involved in these decisions.
- roles are quite different with these households and specifically beyond that would be the involvement of their church/bishop...
- Not a lot of difference however they resist contracts with government agencies. Also they are a bit more challenged with buffer maintenance than English. Limited tractor, mower, sprayer, and atv options.
- No electricty
- Mostly work with the Male directly (however the wife is usually there and listening)
- More conservative
- I think this is too general. One needs to be aware of the family dynamic in any situation. In Plain Sect households, one should be cognizant of gender dynamics, but careful to recognize and respond to what is presented when you are establishing your relationship with the family.
- I have found that each person is different and to treat them as a groups instead of individual it the biggest mistake you make.
- family hierarchy. grandpap down to dad down to son. that's the order. if we want to get work done of the farm we must get the blessings of each. their has been a noticeable acceptance recently with the next generation of Amish landowners. more proactive with conservation work.
- decisions are primarily from the adult male of the farm or groups of farmers sticking together with a group decision
- "Before answering this...one thing that must be understood is that the term "Plain Sect" covers a lot of different groups. There is no one answer to this question in regard to Plain Sect there is still a lot of variation. In Mifflin County we have Byler Amish, Peachey Amish, Nebraska Amish, Halderman and Beachey Amish, Gospelighters, Car Amish, Amish Mennonite, Mennonite, etc... and the list goes on. So when I answer here, I will be referring to our buggy Amish (Byler, Peachey, and Nebraska) in majority.

- Generally speaking the Plain Sect household is very traditional; the man is the head of the house. They typically have many children and only attend school though the eighth grade. The community conforms to the rules of their religion and the church. They are taught right and wrong, things are very black and white...not a lot of "gray" area is tolerated. "

- A lot of Plain Sect landowners involve more of the family in the decisions or the maintenance of the practice. Kids will help maintain the buffers if they are still in school or if they work on the farm. Husbands and wives do make decisions together like English farmers.

In your experience, are Plain Sect landowners reluctant to accept government funding? How have you addressed that?

- Utilize programs and funding sources that are local. If you can link to an organization or individual that they have heard of and trust, it will go a little easier.

- most do not

- not necessary, depends on the farmer. There are ways around the funding obstacles (going through a non-profit or another avenue)

- Many, but not all, are. To address this, we offer programs that are grant-funded. Because we're a nonprofit, they don't seem to care much about where the money came from before it was given to us.

- The acceptance of funding varies widely with Bishops/churches. Some are very willing to take funding and others not. If they are not willing, it is almost impossible to change their mind even after making a plea directly to the Bishops as to the importance of the project and the public good.

- Yes, they prefer to pay for things on their own, they are reluctant to accept any government cost sharing as in their opinion, many think of it as a "handout" meaning they are getting money for not doing anything. They also sometimes believe that they are "giving their farm over" to the government, and will loose control. Although we have never seen that. With more farmers using government cost sharing(including some church leaders) this is becoming less of a challenge today

- Look for sources of funding that are not government related or identify less expensive options to correct problems.

- Just a low % of Amish in SC PA. More commonly an issue with plain Mennos. We usually have non fed funds in excess of those who are concerned about it. State revolving fund and state grants don't drag in federal contracts. Sometimes just being an NGO is enough - if they don't want to know where funds are from. Really runs the gamut. in PA, federal legistlators recently just clarified that taking fed funds will NOT put at risk the Amish exemption from social security payments, so that should help (if the concern was real, not an excuse).

- Yes, by channeling the funds through a NGO.
- yes, most are but there are many that do. One of the conservation districts I work with have an active associate director member who has and supports government funding.
- There are many non-gov options to get the conservation on the ground. CBF, Alliance for C Bay, LFT, etc.
- Yes....they sometimes need permission to accept funding from the bishop
- yes. Case by case. Sometimes they come around other times you have to look for other resources
- Yes focus on the economic return
- Yes, but it does depend on the specific church group. Many see tax credits differently from cost share programs. Knowing the group and seeking support from the church elders early in the process is important. Also, keeping in mind this is a very business savvy group of people and making sure the program addresses the needs of their business is key.
- Funding is generally the last thing I talk about and in my conversation its usually a yes/no answer and then we move on with that.
- in 2001 I would not even present funding options to plain sect. I knew the answer was no. in 2018 there is not enough program dollars around to help with the interested Amish landowners. In spring 2018 I met with an Amish steering committee member and discussed current regulations and funding program opportunities. he was very aware of this dynamic. I left that meeting feeling as though I got his blessing to present these funding options to each interested Amish farmer.
- seems like some are and some aren't
- The Plain Sect are reluctant to accept any things non-Plain Sect, and especially anything to do with government. They are very skeptical about anything we (Conservation District) have to offer, and frankly don't feel they need it.
- The best way to address this has been to find common ground. Some Plain Sect are easier to talk with than others. Often I try to establish a relationship first and go from there. We do not sell a program to them, we try to sell the practice or idea and they can experiment with it for themselves. I have learned not to try and convince them of our methods and specifications but rather to encourage their own ideas on solving environmental problems. Our best successes so far in Mifflin County have come from technical assistance and relationships. As the younger generation ages, we may have more opportunity for implementation. "
- I have a large amount of Amish landowners who have signed up for EQIP/CREP funding. I think Mennonite landowners can be more hesitant to accept funding for

projects on the farm. That is just my experience in my county. Some landowners would prefer to receive funding from non government sources but I think it depends on the person or perhaps church group/location in the county.

Do you have thoughts on how conservation professionals can work through churches and bishops to reach Plain Sect landowners?

- You almost always have to have an "in". Someone that has worked with the plain sect community or done the same practices you're proposing to lend credence to you project.
- It is mostly driving farm lanes and gaining their trust
- More important would be establishing relationships within the community and the elders
- We haven't done that, but instead work through ag consultants and municipal supervisors to make initial connections in communities
- On some issues, it is very beneficial to work with the bishops. It has been easy for me to schedule meetings with these folks and they have usually been very receptive to the conversation.
- They should partner with non profit organizations who "pose less of a threat" in the opinion of the church leaders. We know who the bishops are for all of our church district in our watershed. However, we keep that information confidential. With careful questioning and not imposing district staff can also learn who the leaders are. Again I have been out for 19 years,, so it is a daunting tack, but well worth it
- This is a critical piece. Need to identify bishops and build relationships and partnerships with them.
- It varies widely and they should talk to interested farmers in those communities. Business leaders may advise differently than church leaders, and tend to be more progressive.
- The conservation professionals need to develop a relationship with the church officials and build trust. It is currently being done in this watershed.
- have been able to develop personal and professional relationships with them by working with many plain sect farms, some of which were involved with compliance issues
- Build on success stories. There are already some success stories out there in different Amish neighborhoods to build on. Share examples in new areas of the county to get exposure.
- Community meetings, with the bishop being present for that

- As you work within a district, they will seek you out. As trust is achieved a more dynamic relationship can form
- Initiatives need their support
- This would be my preferred approach. If you get the church to provide input and embrace a program on the front end, you've overcome a major hurdle.
- No I think the biggest experience I have had is that once people see benefits the demand will take care of itself.
- see last few sentences above
- you have to find out who that leader is and approach them to sit down and talk
- "Conservation professionals must be careful with this. To use the church as a method to get conservation on the ground is shady business. It seems like the a linear process for the outsider...but it is NOT!!! and again we have over 25 church districts in Mifflin County alone!!!!
- The best thing is to be aware of the church leaders and structure and respect them (know who you are talking to)! Let them know who you are and what you are doing. Most of our work is with the individual farmers. In fact we have been told by the Bishops that we should go talk to the farmer not them...(even though the Bishop is watching). It is hard to explain all the nuances, but to keep it simple be respectful of the farmer, the church, and the leaders. A Plain Sect liaison is ideal (talk to Pat Fasano and the Octoraro Watershed Association) if you are trying to work with the Amish...but they are hard to come by."
- There is a Plain Sect Coordinator for our county who has contacts with church groups and bishops. Since what I do is voluntary I don't reach out to specific church groups or bishops. There are grants in certain watersheds in the county that have been more focused on Plain Sect farms.

Do you have thoughts on other partners that conservation field staff might work through to reach Plain Sect landowners?

- See above.
- see above answer
- Conservation District staff, CREP biologist, water authorities
- Offer programs that are flexible, reasonable, and optional. It takes a while for a landowner to decide to make a change, so let them know what's available to help them meet their goals and be ready to quickly move forward when they express interest. If you do a good job they'll talk to their neighbors, church members, and family, and the work will take off from there.
- Crop consultants, seed dealers, etc.

- Private Technical service providers. The Lancaster Farmland Trust. the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay, The Chesapeake Bay Foundation, Stroud Water Research, Private funding organizations, local municipalities.
- Establish "demo" farms and sites and the word will spread through the community.
- This isn't particular to Plain - working through trusted persons is always useful. Vet, crop consultant, etc.
- Watershed associations and Plain Sect business owners
- Centre and Clinton County Conservation District have and continue to be very successful working with Plain Sect landowners. Our agency continues to partner very well with conservation district.
- Ag lenders at Bank of Bird in Hand, Fulton Bank, Ephrata National and UniVest and other banks that have a significant Amish investment. These banks have annual customer meetings in the winter. Get a 15 minute "exciting" presentation prepared and invite yourself to be on their agenda to get your message across...pitch it as an opportunity. Maybe have a speaker from Team Ag or Red Barn talk with you about opportunities that exist now.
- conservation district
- A continued presence in an area is the best way to create channels for dialogue. If there are other organizations (grange, equestrian, etc) that work in the area, reach out to them to get the lay of the land
- Meet to explain the conservation initiatives
- We work closely with ag suppliers and service providers. They are trying in any way they can to support their customers' businesses and this may include conservation programs if structured well.
- Be a good educator because in my experience the community word of mouth is close and will spread if you don't know what your doing.
- I have been and continue to be involved with Amish field days, pasture walks and fishing trips to the Bay with Amish leaders. Word of mouth travels very fast with the Amish. if we do a good job with a neighbor the next Sunday at church someone will ask him who did his project and we believe we did a good enough job that the Amish neighbor will recommend us for his project.
- Many extension agents have had a pretty good working relationship with Plain Sect audiences. As an extension agent, I have tried to open some doors for conservation agency folks to talk with Plain Sect farmers or groups of farmers.
- Partners can help it just depends on who has the experience locally. If you bring partners in who have an established relationship with the Plain Sect community and try to have them sell your product it is obviously strange. Spend time on

relationship building...be honest and respectful....it is a long road...there is no simple solution.

- Counties with a large amount of Plain Sect could benefit from a local Plain Sect outreach coordinator. This could be a district position. I think sometimes the best way to reach Plain Sect landowners is if you do a good job with their neighbor. I have several farms with buffers and they are on a stretch of stream. The first landowner did it and then the downstream neighbors followed.

Bringing it all together, how do you change your approach when you are working with Plain Sect landowners vs. other landowners?

- Not appreciably. Other than being more patient for an answer, the approach is the same. You HAVE to show them the benefits (monetarily or ecologically) for them to be interested. Be flexible in your approach. Have answers to questions.
- drive farm lanes and explain what and why
- Not a different approach but more of a slower approach because you are trying to establish a relationship and know what their thought process is before you start pitching your ideas out to them.
- Our approach is pretty similar, but we know that we won't reach Plain landowners in conventional ways. They can have a stronger sense of community than English farmers, which is a huge asset and opportunity.
- You need to speak simply and more slowly and not use acronyms and bureaucratic jargon. When writing letters it is also important to keep the language simple and easy to understand. Try to use the same terms that they use. It may take more time and more conversations to convince them to install a practice. I don't offer my hand for a handshake unless they make the motion to shake hands.
- I have employed the practice of an "Amish Liaison" since 2001. I had visited many farms alone with little success. Then I thought of the advantage of having an experienced older retired Amish farmer visit farms with me. We had to find ways to pay them through grant funding, or they would continue to do the work they were doing at home. I was blessed to have Henry Beiler from Leola serve as my first Amish Liaison for 12 years. Henry was one of the first Amish farmers to preserve his land with the farmland trust and the Lancaster county Agricultural reservation board. Henry also "knew everybody" and was greatly respected. We spent countless "non billable " hours talking about non farm issues, and proving we cared about the farmers family and all of the other challenges we all face. He once quote to me "a farmer, is not just a farmer" I have had 4 additional Liaisons work with me since Henry needed to be at home in 2012. To say the Liaison concept was a "watershed moment" for me is a great understatement. I would like to share more about the Liaison concept at a later time. Too much to write in this initial survey

- Simply understanding to the best of my ability the Plain Sect community and world view.
- Not lots different. Know your client, know their needs, know how what you're offering can help. Relationships are key. Figure out mutual persons of trust. If the particular community has not had much past dealings with conservation staff, it may go slow but know the progress will be important.
- You have to be very direct and build trust.
- Again, being respectful with anyone requesting our assistance but especially how and when one views certain holidays based on their religion, not wanting to accept government funding but willing to receive technical assistance.
- Do you want your family to be farming successfully in 20 years in Lancaster County? Raise your hand now to get financial support from non-government entities to ramp up your farm to the current requirements needed while funding is available!
- Do they have electric or not really changes things.
- When you visit their farm they are always working, join in and talk while you work. Bring maps of their farm. And remember English is their second language, talk simply but affectively
- Listen, listen and then listen some more. Do not talk so much
- Same skill set, listen to the needs/wants of the landowner, find practical ways that you can work together for shared gains. Extend courtesy and respect to their knowledge of the land and pay close attention to the business aspects.
- In some respects understanding there limitations with technology and some cultural difference. But overall be respectful and listen and observe and bring your knowledge to them.
- it took me 17 years to figure this out and I feel as though I am still learning. I would definitely not send a "rookie" out to an Amish farm alone. I believe I have built up Amish equity and how accrued Amish farm cred. haha. Unfortunately, I have also witnessed a bias the Amish have towards female planners.
- Again, listen to their thoughts and opinions. Understand where they are coming from. Not really different than with other landowners. However, it can work well to talk to Plain Sect farmers as a group.
- "In a lot of ways the approach is the same. I am honest and respectful with everybody I work with and that goes a long way.
- If anything is subtly different with the Plain Sect, it is that I am aware of their customs, holidays, and the persons role in the community. I often try to speak less and listen more...especially with Amish. I often slow down my pace of conversation

and keep my conversations brief and to the point. I also try to speak plainly, not a lot of acronyms and "fancy" terms. Most of all I am patient and calm and I am there more for the conversation than to complete a task."

- I am very respectful at any farm that I go to. I am not sure I have a different approach from Plain Sect farm vs. Non Plain Sect. I try to talk about people they know and people I grew up with that they might know. I think being from the county and having Plain Sect friends and family in the area can be beneficial. I try to really help my landowners and if I don't have answers to questions I get them answers. You have landowners from all walks of life who are easy and wonderful to work with and then some who you just don't get along well with and when it comes down to it I don't think it matters if they are Plain Sect or not.

Parting Thoughts

Is there any advice that you received earlier in your career that has been helpful to you over the years? If so, what was it?

- Your farmer know whats best for his ground. Education will help him realize it much faster then telling him what is best for his farm.
- You are not expected to have all of the answers. Instead know how to ask the right questions and who to go to for help with answers
- Yes and actually even before my career, was blessed to be raised by good parents and around some great role models; teachers, coaches and agency mentors who were humble, confident, lead by example, great listeners, respectful to anyone and understood what being a good steward is all about....
- Underpromise and overperform. If you don't know the answer, say so and then follow-up.
- Triangulate and raise
- there is no substitute for experience. it will take a conservation professional 1.5 years to fully grasp this profession. you just need to go out and see things. plan things. talk with landowners, contractors, excavators, townships and learn as much as you can. be a sponge. throw in the programs, partners, government agencies and the social aspect of landowners and it is a continuous evolving cycle.
- Stay persistent and never give up
- Number one - be a listener, be willing to spend time with them. Hear what the farmers are telling you and try to answer their questions and concerns. If you do not know the answer to a question, make a note and tell them that you will find the answer and let them know - make sure that you get back with them. #2 Talk to them on their level. Do not overwhelm them with technical jargon and program details. #3 Work as a team, visit as a team. If there are partners involved

(USDA-NRCS/SWCD/NGO) make sure that you present a consistent project narrative.

- Not really. I pretty much had to figure it out on my own!
- No really.....just do the right thing always
- Never assume they you know everything, if you don't know an answer, ask someone who might. Be honest and respectful.
- My technical expertise does not trump your life experience with the land. Don't presume - value. Listen well; listen to learn. Collaborate; don't tell.
- My parents were both teachers; they taught me to listen intently and carefully, to act only when I had full information...both knowledge of the subject and knowledge of the person I was interacting with.
- Many items too numerous to type here.😉
- Maintain good working relationships with property owners
- Listen. It's more about what they have to say than what YOU have to say. You've got to be interested in the landowner's operation as a whole rather than just your specific part. Whether its a farmer or any other landowner, listen.
- listen, be humble
- Listen more than you talk, whenever possible. Ask careful questions, Realize that every farmer is different, even if their religious beliefs are similar. Be patient when necessary, and push when the door opens. Constantly ask the Liaisons questions about the plain sect culture when we are driving to the next farm
- I come from the sales world. I believe everything comes down to a sale. you sell yourself for the job you want. you sell yourself to your mate. Etc. We really need to look at this transaction as a sale also. Focus on the "customer". if they have good buy-in, everything works better. They also understand what they are getting out of it, not just saving the Chesapeake Bay.
- Good communication is essential in whatever career or sector you are working with. I think the young professionals have not had the proper communication training as part of their formal education. There are a lot of people with poor writing skills. We are losing the art of verbal communication and instead are relying more on letters, email, and texting. The plain sect community still rely on strong verbal communication.
- Focus on solving the resource concerns and conservation outcome that works for the landowner over time. You can't do everything at once; be patient. You never know what you discuss today may have implications in the future.
- Find a mentor and learn from them.

- Experience is the best way to communicate. Sharing the "Good and Bad"
- Enjoy your work it shows.
- Don't Rush People into Conservation Projects! Rome wasn't built in a day and conservation projects take proper planning to be implemented successfully. Also, money doesn't get conservation on the ground. It is good people that farmers/landowners trust, with the help of money, that get conservation on the ground. Also, I was taught to be sure to provide sound technical advice on conservation practices and make sure that farmers/landowners implement them correctly and don't cut corners. If practices are not implemented correctly, they can fail and cause the farmer/landowner to not want to complete other conservation practices in the future. Also, they will let their friends and family know about it.
- Don't push too hard and go slowly.
- Don't always think that you need to address 100% of the problem. Be happy with getting 75-80% of the problem corrected.
- Do your homework, listen to people, try to learn from people that have been doing your job for a while, and like what you do or get another job.
- Difficult to please everyone. It's fine to say 'No' and be firm, you will earn respect for being honest. Know your programs and the limitations. It's fine to seek help and ask for advice. Photos can be your best tool for clarity and explanation.
- be truthful. Don't promise something you can't deliver. If it doesn't work for the landowner pick up the pieces and head to the next property.
- Be honest and responsive to landowners
- be honest and be a good guy.
- Be careful about selling programs vs. helping producers reach their own goals.
- An early mentor was always agitated with bureaucracy and unnecessary complication. Ironic, considering he was an career-long NRCS employee. But I learned from him to keep things as simple and smooth as possible, and to not be afraid to lean on the private sector if you need things done quickly and efficiently.
- A few things:
    - Treat others as you would like to be treated.
    - Never be afraid of the consequences of always telling the truth, being forthright, and doing the right thing. That has proven to be a very solid foundation for everything else!
    - Your job is to provided an environment for learning, growth, and success.

    - Do your best, don't take things personally, be impeccable with your word, and give others the benefit of the doubt
    - 80/20 - listen 80, talk 20, not sure I always hit this mark, but I think it matters
- 1. be respectful 2. the best way to sell a practice/design is to make them think it was their idea
- 1 Someone is always listening be mindful of what you say. 2 Just because it can be done with a computer does not mean it should be done with a computer.
- Farmers are always early, so you need to be, too.
- Assume that no one wants to read what you write. (So make it easy.)
- Be yourself; be genuine.

Is there anything we didn't ask you that you think is important to share with us?

- Yes technical and financial should be as far apart as possible for young conservationist. I fell as thought it tends to make them bad conservationist. because some of the more big ticket and overall flashy practices tend to either do more harm then was originally there or they just don't progress in knowledge and management past the installation.
- no
- no
- I and most of my work is generally secondary to the programs you're interested in. SWCD and NRCS staff generally deal closer with the landowners on fencing and farm plan projects and handle most of the landowners concerns and red tape. Most of the time the VDOF gets invited in just for tree planting near the end of the process.
- America has too few farmers to feed 9Bill by 2050. Stop arguing about which production system is the best. we will need every garden and every commercial grower.
- willing to discuss in future talks
- I think the questions in th survey were well designed and I hope the answers are beneficial.
- There should always be initial and regular trainings for field reps. Doing so will help improve their technical and program knowledge and enable them to more effectively and confidently increase participation in these conservation practices.

- I think it is important to showcase what cooperating landowners have done so that people can see it and talk with them. People often come away with the thinking that they might be interested in cooperating too.
- No
- I can't think of anything off hand but that doesn't mean I won't think of something after I submit this form. I wish I could write underneath the below question, I am not great with conference calls, I can be shy and I don't always speak up but willing to help where I can. Thank you for sending this out. If you need me to explain anything I will.
- I suspect I work with a different set of landowners from the majority of your "customers"; they are already forest landowners, generally those who care about their land but don't have the knowledge or skills to actively care for it... these forest landowners are already motivated. In addition, they generally are not reliant on their land for a major part of their income. I also work with women who are forest landowners... a growing group who have quite a different set of needs and motivations.
- For the record, I have never been employed by a "Conservation" organization. I have been an advocate for conservation for many years. I used my contacts while in my career as an Ag Banker and also as a parting farmer to encourage producers to move toward compliance. Now that I'm retired from banking and am a full time farmer I have a bit more time to advocate. I tried to answer the questions in the survey based on my experiences working with both plain and English operators.
- When dealing with any landowner, remember that even though it may be the 10th, 50th, or 100th project that YOU'VE done...it's most likely the 1st one THEY'VE done.
- "It is becoming more challenging to get funding to pay for the extra time it takes to have one on one farm visits, with a Liaison.
- It is difficult to explain to funders that the plain set community rarely responds to mailings, an the are often to busy to attend meetings. you cannot email them. You can leave a message sometimes for them, but nothing substitutes being on their farm. They are often not home, or busy in the field, so sometimes it takes 3 or 4 visits before you have a chance to have an in depth discussion with a farmer. It takes at least 3 or more times the hours to get to talk to a plain sect farmer than to an "English" farmer. That is what plain sect farmers call non plain sect farmers."
- I am sure you have heard enough. :) It is trust, understanding the customer, and giving them what they want. The one key we didn't get to is how you get them there. That is key, and it is about asking the right questions to lead them to where you want them to go without them knowing they are being lead. It is always the best idea if it is THEIR idea.

- I think it is important to teach farm etiquette when arriving at a farm (especially a plain sect farm). It is always important to go to the house first and speak with the women to ask the whereabouts of the person you are looking for. Do not just automatically start wandering through the buildings and farmstead looking for the person. It is also important to start conversations with a smile on your face and an easy going, laid back approach. This first impression often sets the tone for future conversations and interactions.
- I didn't answer some questions because I didn't have direct experience, but have indirect experience on some of those items.
- What biggest conservation concern in your opinion? Here is my answer: Lack of education about natural resources. It amazes me how little people know about forest management and the ecosystem services they benefit from everyday. People don't know that we can ecologically harvest the forest and it be good for it! People don't have a connection to the land to care about issues, such as water quality within the Bay.
- The hiring of additional agency staff will not fix the Chesapeake Bay
- N/A
- 20 years ago, it took a DNR biologist 3 years to put in a stream buffer.
- No.
- participate in state deliberations about programs. There are a lot of people that do not spend time in the field that make policy they should not be left to their own devises.. They need pushback before it become a program.
- I believe it is very important to cooperate and communicate with the SCDs on any projects or initiatives. It is very important to clearly state what organizations you are representing and what your objectives are.
- N/A
- No
- Unclear what assumptions are made about ag consultants vs. agency personnel. in our area, there's a lot of work done by consultants who are credible and connected with farmers.
- A factor that's at play with any landowner outreach is geography. The farmers (Plain Sect and otherwise) in western PA that I worked with were dramatically different than those in southeastern PA. Just a thought.

Would you be willing to participate in a conference call with other “mentors” to brainstorm around these topics?