

Center for Ag Conservation Assistance Training (CACAT)

DEP Ag Advisory Board Meeting – June 5, 2025



Jennifer Fetter

CACAT Director

Penn State Extension Water Resources
Program Leader

Center for Ag Conservation Assistance Training (CACAT)



Agriculture Conservation Assistance Program

Administered by Pennsylvania State Conservation Commission

- Formed in 2023
- Funded by the PA State Conservation Commission via ACAP
- Part of Penn State Extension
- Educational Programs and Technical Assistance



Existing and Future Workforce Development

New and Experienced Ag Conservation Professionals

- On-the-job Training

Future Ag-Con Professionals

- Undergraduate and K-12 Education

Workshops

Webinars

Videos

Career
Fairs

Guest
Presenters

Field Days

Expos

New Ag Eng
Courses

Annual Conferences



Training: Three Major Subject Areas



AGRICULTURAL LITERACY



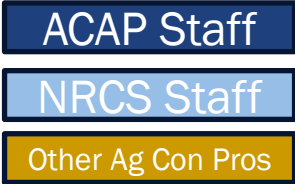
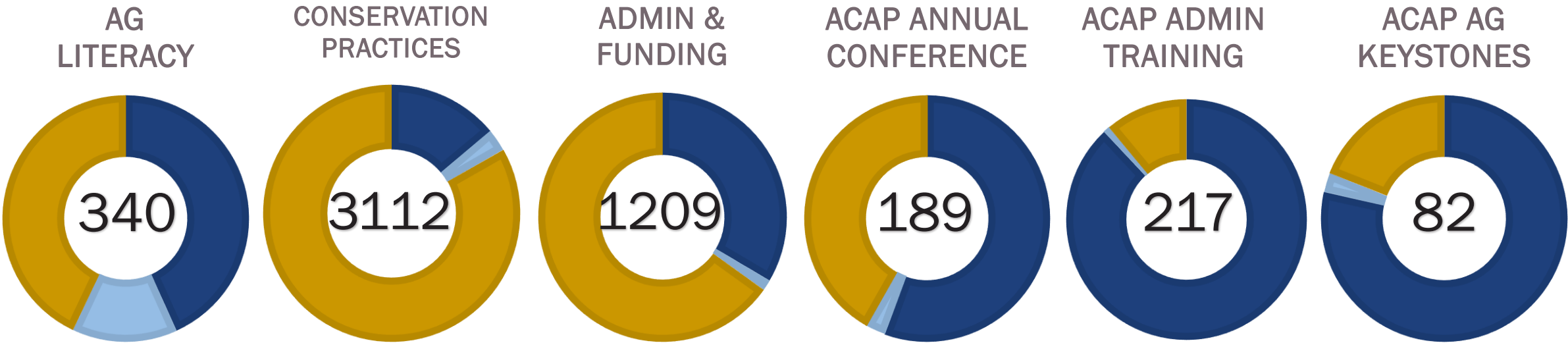
AG CONSERVATION
PRACTICES



AG CONSERVATION
FUNDING & PROGRAM
ADMINISTRATION

2023-2024 CACAT Events

44 Total Webinars, Workshops, Conferences, and Field Days



Undergraduate Education

- Two new courses in Ag & Bio Engineering Dept
- Spring, Summer, and Fall Internships
- Career Fair Recruitment and Participation
- Faculty exposure to ag conservation and local ACAP projects

New course

2025 Fall ABSM 397

Conservation-Related Agricultural Structures



Course Description

This course delves into the expanding importance of sustainable agriculture, focusing on the plan of agricultural structures that can improve livestock and crop management, reduce soil erosion and runoff, and protect stream quality. You will identify various conservation-related structures on farms, such as fence, stream crossing, roofed heavy-use area, waste storage facility, mortality composting facility, livestock watering system, and agrochemical handling facility. You will learn how to plan these structures to solve water and soil issues while meeting farmers' needs. You will gain agricultural conservation professional skills to understand how various conservation structures are planned through real-world visits and hands-on practices.

This isn't just about learning about conservation; it's about becoming a part of the solution! Join us as we explore the exciting intersection of nature and agriculture, and discover how to create a more sustainable and resilient agricultural system.

Targeted students from

- ☐ Biological Engineering
- ☐ Agricultural & Biorenewable Systems Management
- ☐ Environmental Resource Management
- ☐ Forest Ecosystem Management
- ☐ Civil Engineering
- ☐ Other relevant majors who interested in ag conservation

What you can expect from the course


- ✓ **Field trips**
Real-world visiting of conservation structures and practices
- ✓ **Hands-on experience**
Practical practices using AutoCAD
Developing conservation plans
- ✓ **Industry connections**
Networking with industry professionals, including engineers and specialists, to gain insights into potential career paths.



Practice Approval System (PAS)

A path for PA's conservation district employees to design, review, and approve conservation practices that **do not** require certification by a registered professional engineer under the applicable laws or regulations of PA.

A partnership of SCC, CACAT, and selected Contract Engineer (HRG)



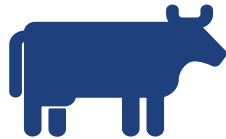
Framework for training, approval, and tracking of qualified conservation professionals working under this system.

PAS Certification Packages

Current



Watering
Systems



Grazing
Management

Future



Barnyard
Stormwater



Cropland
Stormwater

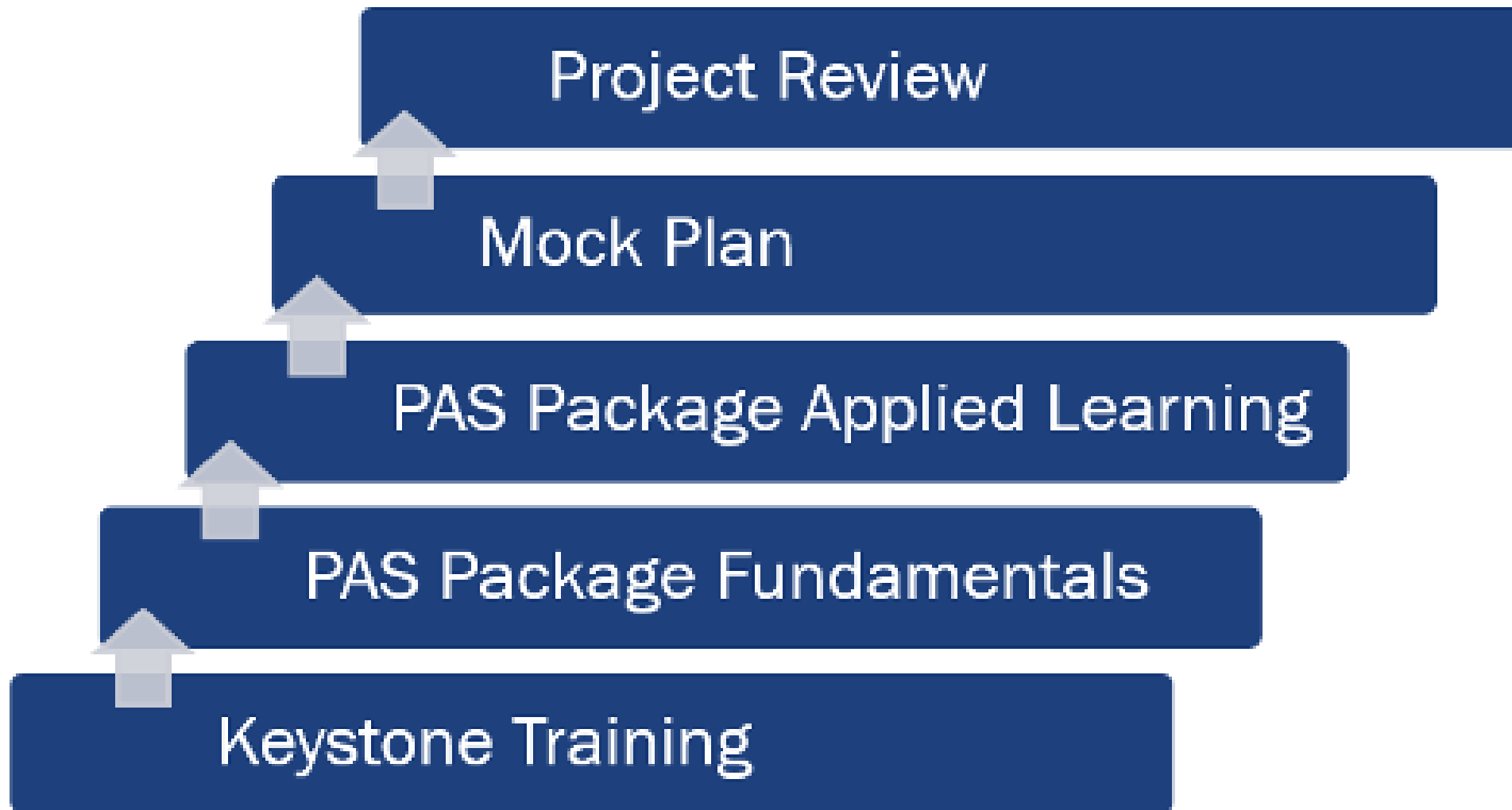


Cropland
Practices



Stream
Corridor

PAS Certification Process



Emergency Temporary Approval for PAS



PennState Extension

Do you have current or previous NRCS JAA for the requested conservation practices?

☐ Yes

☐ No



PennState Extension

Technical Assistance



Site Visits

Post-application visit for projects with little previous planning



ACAP Project Proposals (I&Es)

Moving a project application to a project contract



Practice Design Services



Project Checkout Services

Includes bidding to project certification

Engineering Assistance Request Program (EARP)

extension.psu.edu/centers/cacat/acap/engineering-assistance-request-program-earp

Salesforce - Enterpris... Extension Professional... LISTSERV 16.0 - LISTS... Google Maps Events ACAP Technical Assist... ACAP Admin



PennState Extension

Center for Agricultural Conservation Assistance Train

How to Enroll or Submit a Project?

To help us best assist you, please complete the short project survey linked below.

[Submit EARP requests](#)

If you have multiple ACAP projects, submit one survey per project.

We look forward to supporting your conservation work!



PennState Extension

ACAP Outreach Assistance



ACAP PROMOTIONAL TOOL
DEVELOPMENT



SUCCESS STORIES (PRINT
AND VIDEO)



EXHIBITING AT FARMER
EVENTS (IN PARTNERSHIP
WITH DISTRICTS)



TARGETED WATERSHED
PROJECT IDENTIFICATION
AND OUTREACH

<https://www.youtube.com/@pascc2301/playlists>

Ag Conservation Events, News, and Job Postings

Current Ag Conservation Job Postings in PA

[Conservation Education and Field Specialist - ACCD](#)

May 12, 2025

To apply, please email a cover letter, resume, and three references to resumes@accdpa.org. The position will be reviewed on a rolling basis.

[Communications Coordinator- Pike CCD](#)

May 12, 2025

Latest News



MAY 5, 2025

Pennsylvania's ACAP Program Works for Farmers With Conservation Project Plans

[Read More](#)



APRIL 25, 2025

Congratulations to the Agricultural Conservation Assistance Program Award Recipients

[Read More](#)



APRIL 23, 2025

Ag Conservation Con 2025: Three Days of Learning, Laughter, and Leadership

Upcoming Training and Events

Tue
MAY
27



Conservation Cornerstone: Environmentally Sensitive Maintenance Webinar

May 27, 2025
Virtual

Thu
JUN
12



ACAP Practice Approval System: Grazing Management Fundamentals

June 12, 2025
State College, PA

Tue
JUN
24



Conservation Cornerstone: Pennsylvania Right to Farm Laws

June 24, 2025
Virtual

Fri
JUN
27



Understanding Pennsylvania's Clean & Green Program: County Level Administration

June 27, 2025
Online

Receive news, information on upcoming events and funding, and the monthly e-newsletter

[Sign-up](#)

GIS Tool Development

support.agconservation.psu.edu

ACAP
Agriculture Conservation Assistance Program
Administered by Pennsylvania State Conservation Commission

PennState Extension
The Center for Agricultural
Conservation Assistance Training

Call Email ACAP Tool Support

The Agriculture Conservation Assistance Program (ACAP) provides financial and technical assistance for the implementation of best management practices (BMPs) on agricultural operations within Pennsylvania. ACAP projects are tracked by entering spatial and financial data into a geographic information system (GIS) and the ACAP Reporting Tool.

GIS Tools FAQ Tutorials Documents



Questions?



PennState Extension