

Funding for Mushroom Farm Resource Conservationist  
Growing Greener Project #: C990003027  
Grantee: Chester County Conservation District (CCCD)

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION** Provide funding for the CCCD Mushroom Farm Resource Conservationist (MFRC) staff person to fulfill the responsibilities of the current Delegation Agreement with PADEP.

**PROJECT GOALS** Deliverables for this project were directly tied to the Delegation Agreement:

- I. Receive, process, and review Mushroom Farm Environmental Management Plans (MFEMPs).
- II. Inspect sites where new best management practices (BMPs) have been implemented and/or there is a higher pollution potential, demonstrated lack of compliance, or continuing violations.
- III. Carry out other responsibilities in the Delegation Agreement, including, but not limited to, reviewing and revising the Mushroom Manual and providing education and outreach.

**PROJECT RESULTS** The MFRC reviewed 28 MFEMPs and assisted with the implementation of 35 BMPs. The BMPs included two concrete wharfs (heavy use area protection) totaling 13,800 square feet and six waste storage facilities totaling over 220,000 gallons of storage capacity. The estimated reduction totals for the implemented plans alone are 1,980 pounds of nitrogen per year and 916 pounds of phosphorous per year.

#### **PICTURES**



*Installation of waste transfer pipes and a wastewater storage facility on the Hopkins Farm in 2023 and the DiFrancesco Farm in 2024, respectively.*

**PROJECT COSTS** \$199,680.00 for the salary of the Mushroom Farm Resource Conservationist.

**LESSONS LEARNED** The MFRC continued to address wastewater and stormwater management through plan reviews, site inspections, BMP implementation, and education and outreach without major issues. However, problems CCCD did encounter were related to the secondary environmental effects of mushroom farming on surrounding communities. Air quality concerns, phorid flies, and odor complaints were among the issues the MFRC helped respond to and address by attending public meetings and providing community outreach. The MFRC will continue outreach and financial assistance program efforts, and in 2025, is helping administer a PA Department of Agriculture grant that will assist mushroom farmers with the costs of post-harvest steaming of their growing houses in order to reduce phorid flies.

**PARTNERS** CCCD partners with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to provide technical and financial assistance for the implementation of BMPs, and is also partnering with the State Conservation Commission to implement the Agricultural Conservation Assistance Program. Other regular partners include Stroud Water Resource Center and the American Mushroom Institute.

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