## What are Conservation Practices?

Polluted runoff is one of the most challenging water quality issues facing rural and urban areas today.

Farm conservation practices prevent or reduce soil erosion and keep nutrients and bacteria from entering our streams and rivers.

Examples include alternative water systems, pasture division fencing, cover crops, stream and woodland exclusion fencing, vegetated streamside buffers, and nutrient management.

## Resources

**West Virginia Conservation Agency**
https://www.wvca.us/index.cfm
304-558-2204

**West Virginia Conservation Districts**
https://www.wvca.us/map.cfm

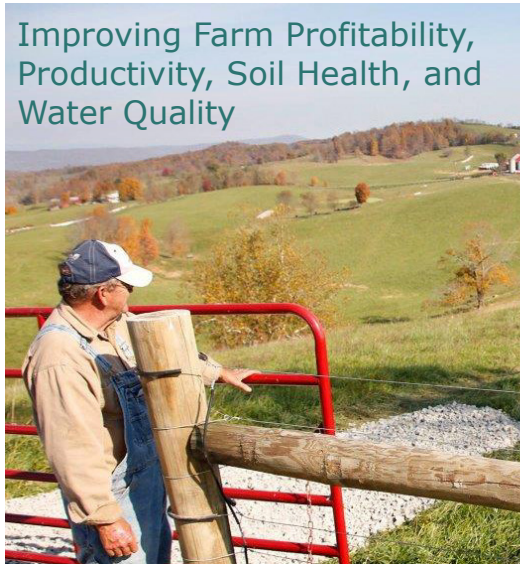
| *Conservation District* | *Phone* |
|---|---|
| Capitol | 304-759-0736 |
| Eastern Panhandle | 304-263-4376 |
| Elk | 304-765-2535 |
| Greenbrier Valley | 304-645-6173 |
| Guyan | 304-528-5718 |
| Little Kanawha | 304-422-9088 |
| Monongahela | 304-296-0081 |
| Northern Panhandle | 304-238-1231 |
| Potomac Valley | 304-822-5174 |
| Southern | 304-253-0261 |
| Tygarts Valley | 304-457-3026 |
| Upper Ohio | 304-758-2512 |
| West Fork | 304-627-2160 |
| Western | 304-675-3054 |

**West Virginia State NRCS Office**
https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/wv/contact/state/
304-284-7540

**Second Creek Watershed Based Plan**
https://dep.wv.gov/WWE/Programs/nonptsource/WBP/Documents/WP/SecondCreekWBP.pdf

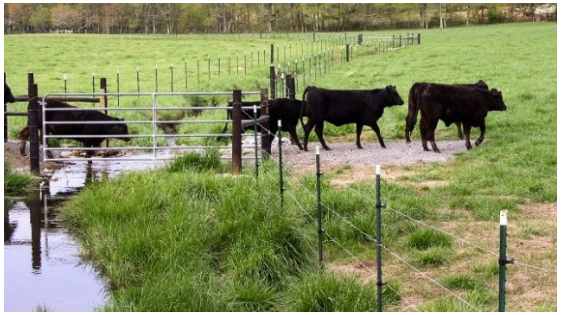
**Second Creek Case Study Information**
https://www.wvca.us/NPSP/

# Why Should I Adopt Farm Conservation Practices?




*Bill Canterbury's farm was named the 2016 West Virginia Conservation Farm of the Year.*

On average, surveyed farmers in the Second Creek Watershed reported a 21% increase in profitability due to soil and water conservation.



*Stream crossings for cows (Source: EPA)*

## Conservation Practices

Using conservation practices offers numerous benefits, including:

- Reduced costs (e.g., fuel, labor, feed, fertilizer, seed, veterinary)
- Increased profitability
- Improved soil and water quality
- Increased water infiltration/storage
- Reduced nitrogen loss

Farmers can receive financial and technical assistance to install conservation practices through programs sponsored by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and the state. These voluntary programs provide cost-share dollars and technical information on how to manage farms more sustainably.

## Case Study: Second Creek Watershed, West Virginia

Since 2009, West Virginia Conservation Agency and USDA staff have worked with more than 120 farmers to install practices that reduce runoff of sediment, nutrients, and bacteria from livestock operations to Second Creek, located in southeastern West Virginia.

### Gauging Practice Success

In 2021, project partners administered a survey of 122 Second Creek farmers who had participated in conservation cost-share programs. The survey gauged farmers' views on the financial, environmental, and other results of installing conservation practices, and it sought suggestions on how to improve the distribution of limited cost-share funding for such practices.

> Over 80% of surveyed farmers said they would recommend to other farmers that they take the time to participate in a conservation practice program.

### Survey Results

- More than 80% of farmers noticed improvements on their land and operations linked to conservation practices.
- Respondents estimated practices improved profitability of their operations by 21% on average.
- 78% said conservation practices on their farm have helped to improve production and their financial bottom line.
- 80% said the farmer-adopted conservation practices are helping to improve water quality.
- Nearly 70% said the conservation practices on their farms have helped to reduce soil erosion and pollutant runoff.
- More than half said they noticed the stream is less muddy and clears up faster after heavy rain.

## How Can I Get Started?

Contact your local conservation district or NRCS office. Contact information is provided on the back of this brochure.