

The Life and Times of Craig Bingman

Craig began his work with the Snyder County Conservation District under the title Executive Assistant on October 1, 1977. There was a total staff of 2-3 people and NO computers. At that time the only programs that conservation districts administered were the erosion and sedimentation control program, school programs, gypsy moth spray program and cooperator visits. Shortly thereafter the stream encroachment permit delegation (Chapter 105) was added for stream crossings, bridges, ponds, bank stabilization, etc.

Craig was on the original Envir-Olympics board. Because of a conflict with the name Olympics, the program was re-named. Craig came up with the name Envirothon, and in fact helped coordinate the first state event in 1984 at Shaver's Creek. Craig served on the PA Envirothon board for over 30 years, serving as chair for one year and vice chair for the first National Envirothon at King's Gap in 1988.

Craig is considered the "pond guy" for the county. He makes visits to landowners who want to build a pond, repair a pond or fill one in. He also makes visits to sites when wetlands may be impacted, and assists landowners with filling out stream encroachment permits.

Under Craig's direction, the nature trail at the Selinsgrove Center was established. The Trail of Trees was constructed in 2016 and features 25 full color plates identifying the trees along the ½ mile trail. A grant was obtained to extend the trail by .8 mile. The district manages 340 acres at the center, and Craig works closely with the Middlecreek Valley Antique Association to ensure proper upkeep and maintenance. The district rents acreage to the MVAA for their festival, 45 acres to a local farmer and currently has 43 acres enrolled in the CREP program. He has also assisted with Boy Scout projects such as nature trails at Walker Lake and Faylor Lake.

Craig has been doing the Gypsy Moth Spray Program since 1978. The program is sporadic and is needed only when the caterpillar makes its presence every 4-5 years. Craig is also a kind of the go-to guy for the public to bring in insects and weeds for ID.

The computer geek for the office is Craig. He maintains the computers and keeps the internet and network running. He is known to be searching for new technology, and always looking for a bargain at Federal Surplus in Harrisburg.

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Craig was instrumental in the purchase of the district's office as well as the landscaping and purchase of the district sign. He also purchased the first district owned vehicles.

Craig won 1st place state awards in 2000 and 2003 for the District's Annual Report – 2nd place in 1992. He was awarded the Honorary State FFA Degree in 1992 and 1998 and Honorary Chapter Farmer Degree in 1992.

Before the staff grew in number, Craig administered the Chesapeake Bay Program, Dirt and Gravel Roads Program, Ag Land Preservation Program, Erosion & Sedimentation Control Program, as well as the environmental education programs.

Always an innovator, Craig helped to create the first AgroForestry and Spotted Lanternfly Workshops, and he tried to introduce trending plants to the district tree sale including ginseng seed, mushroom logs, pawpaw, persimmon, ice plants, hardy geranium, and kiwi. He enjoyed building bat boxes for sale and other outdoor equipment for the office or nature trail.

Craig is known for always trying to promote the district by distributing logo caps, shirts, coats, and other advertising items.

It is his fervent hope that a strong relationship should always be kept with local farmers and municipalities. They are the backbone of this county. Keeping in touch with cooperating agencies is vital to making district programs work effectively as well.

Craig acknowledges that none of these accomplishments would be possible without a dedicated and caring staff.