

# CONSERVATION *Showcase*

## **Maret WRP Wetland Restoration**

**Cumberland Co, PA  
September 2013**

Timothy and Sherri Maret own a 46 acre farm near Newburg, Pennsylvania. Tim is a professor of biology at Shippensburg University and wanted to conserve the wetlands on their property and improve the habitat to attract a diversity of wetland wildlife species.

Their property borders the Conodoguinet Creek and is directly across the creek from 2,500 acres of upland and wetland habitat on State Gamelands. The lower fields on the farm were ditched and drained decades ago to enable agricultural production, which led to a monoculture of plant species over most of the fields and sediment and nutrient runoff to the waters of the Conodoguinet Creek.

In 2010, Tim contacted the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to find out how he could best restore the natural plant communities and wildlife habitat on his farm. As a herpetologist, Tim's focus is on increasing the abundance and diversity of reptiles and amphibians on the farm along with increasing the use of the lower fields by migratory birds. In 2012, the Marets enrolled almost 30 acres of their farm into a permanent easement through the Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP). However, the land presented resource concerns such as degraded wetland habitat, wet soil conditions in the cropland, and sediment and nutrient runoff into the Conodoguinet Creek.

Construction of a low berm, installation of a ditch plug, and excavation of potholes and diverse microtopography was planned to address these resource concerns. These projects will help improve the quality of Conodoguinet Creek by decreasing sediment and nutrient runoff from the farm, and restore the hydrology and native wetland plant communities, which will create diverse wetland habitat and increase opportunities for the landowners to enjoy open space and wildlife observation on their farm. The landowners will use the project as an outdoor classroom for biology and ecology students from Shippensburg University, and held their first wetland restoration training as soon as the construction equipment left the site this summer.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service assisted with the project design, permits and approvals, and construction, and the Cumberland County Conservation District assisted with construction inspections. Construction and reseedling of excavated areas was completed in June and July 2013. Native grasses will be planted in Spring 2014 and the existing riparian forest will be expanded by additional tree planting.

Before restoration in early spring



Before restoration in winter



Layout of large berm



Stockpiling topsoil



Inside berm after construction



Pothole after construction



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