

Techniques to Promote Streambank Buffers to the Plain Sect Community



Christian E. Strohmaier
Chester County Conservation District
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- The Plain Sect community can be found in western and northern sections of Chester County.
- Many are old order Amish communities and more conservative.
- Some will accept government money, some will accept it if it passes through another organization, and some will decline it totally and pay for it themselves.
- It is important to get to know the cultural customs of your client.



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- Begin by meeting with the local bishops to explain the program components, delivery, funding, expectations and anticipated/required accomplishments.
- Employ a bishop to go with you who will advocate the program.

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- We participated in a workshop with two bishops who described for us the customs and cultural expectations – and how the English should approach/do business with the Amish.
- Discuss any limitations with your funding advisor, pass through opportunities, and delivery challenges.

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- Knock on doors and talk to the farmer. One on one is the best – not with the crew or staff or intern, and always ask if this is a good time to talk with them.
- Explain the benefits of fencing and buffers to the herd and farm – reduced hoof disease, lower veterinarian costs, cleaner water for the cows to drink, reduced erosion of pasture and cropland, and be prepared for the buffer width question and how to address your expectations/requirements.

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- Be happy with the width of buffer that the farmer will allow. Cost share programs, if they use them, do little to replace the pasture or cropland lost in the buffer.

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- Review plant list, species selection, and size with the farmer. Oak acorns taint the milk; black cherry leaves are toxic (1 lb of leaves eaten can kill a 400 lb. cow); dogwood have delicate spring flowers and beautiful berries in the fall that are ideal for birds; sycamore is a good shade tree for livestock; silver maple grows quickly.
- Ask if they would be willing to have their family plant the trees at \$1 a tree? Flag the site to indicate where to plant a tree/shrub and what species should go where. Quality control is really important if they provide their own labor.

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- Location, location, location – have a good demonstration site that is located on a regularly traveled road, i.e. on the way to church.
- Make sure it is maintained and “kept” – minimal invasive species or “weeds.” with upright tree tubes. Clearly specify maintenance responsibilities of the farmer. If it is important for appearances – schedule some maintenance work with your own staff or interns.

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- Word of mouth is the greatest form of communication – the key to real success is getting one neighbor or brother or cousin to tell another neighbor, brother, or cousin. They will promote from within and will soon be calling with a request for assistance.
- For more information, please contact, Chester County Conservation District and speak with **Christian E. Strohmaier, Assistant Manager,** 610-925-4920 X 122 or cstrohmaier@chesco.org

Penningtonville Meadows, Atglen





Emmanuel Esh, Bryson Road, Knights Run W

Emmanuel Esh, Bryson Road, Knights Run, W



Emmanuel Esh , Bryson Road, Knights Run W



Dennis Bush, Bryson Road, Knights Run E

Christian E. Strohmaier, Chester County Conservation District
cstrohmaier@chesco.org

