

NRCS Repairs Gully known as the “Grand Canyon of Morgantown”

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In Caernarvon Township, locals knew of “The Grand Canyon of Morgantown.” The name was given to the 11' x 7' gully in a hayfield on the Kevin Beiler farm. The gully site is located on the outskirts of Morgantown, Pennsylvania, in Berks County.

According to Mr. Beiler, the gully didn't begin to form until a new gas station and car dealership were constructed in 2000. Since then, water runoff from parking lots has been a continuous issue for the Beiler farm. Water is directed onto the farm via a 12-inch pipe that passes under Twin Valley Road and drains directly into his hayfield. As a result, continuous erosion caused the deep gully to form in less than nine years. The Beiler Gully ranged from five to seven feet in depth, from nine to eleven feet in width, and was 280 feet long.

Mr. Beiler contacted the NRCS Leesport field office for assistance. NRCS staff worked closely with Caernarvon Township officials to use Best Management Practices (BMPs) to repair the gully since it was determined that it would eventually lead to the degradation of Twin Valley Road.

The Beiler farm is located in Conestoga Watershed, which is part of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed. During the assessment of the farm, NRCS staff also offered to help Beiler control and treat soil erosion from animal use on the farm. Beiler applied to and received financial assistance from NRCS' Chesapeake Bay Watershed Initiative (CBWI) Program.

Through CBWI, he was able to install animal walkways, stream crossings, and stream bank fencing. CBWI provides technical and financial assistance to agricultural producers so they can implement recommended conservation practices for minimizing nutrient and sediment losses. In turn, these practices restore, preserve, and protect local water quality and the Chesapeake Bay.

The NRCS staff from Leesport Field Office, as well as technicians and engineers from Lebanon Technical Center, worked tirelessly on this project, from completing an Inventory and Evaluation assessment through construction checks and final contact requirements.

The voluntary, incentives-based conservation approach is working; the farmer has made progress in reducing sediment and nutrient losses from farm fields through conservation practice installed through the CBWI program. At this time, the gully has been returned to an established and erosion free hay field.

Participation of Caernarvon Township in this process was greatly appreciated and is a demonstration of the cooperation and teamwork of different agencies, and makes a large difference when working

together for the common goal of minimizing resource concerns. Our most crucial partner is the landowner/decision maker who invests his time, energy, and money into applying conservation practices on his farm that benefit current and future generations.



Before: NRCS employee demonstrates the massive size of the gully that formed on Kevin Beiler's farm.



After: With NRCS assistance, the gully has been returned to an established and erosion-free hay field.