

BUTLER COUNTY



AGRICULTURAL LAND PRESERVATION BOARD

2024 Annual Report

**Butler County Office of Farmland Preservation
124 West Diamond Street
P.O. Box 1208
Butler, PA 16001**

*WORKING TOGETHER TO PRESERVE OUR AGRICULTURAL HERITAGE
AND SUSTAIN OUR FUTURE*

CREDITS

BOARD OF BUTLER COUNTY COMMISSIONERS



Leslie A. Oshe, Chairman
Kimberly D. Geyer, Vice-Chairman
Kevin E. Boozel, M.S., Secretary

CHIEF OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING—MARK GORDON

2024 AGRICULTURAL LAND PRESERVATION BOARD

Kenneth L. Moniot, Chairman
Bill Duncan, Vice-Chairman
Larry Baumgartel, Treasurer
Rob Burr, Secretary
John Allen
Eugene Bergbigler
Luke Fritz
Gordon Marburger
Alvin Vogel
Commissioner Kimberly D. Geyer, Ex Officio

Office of Farmland Preservation Staff Person: Sheryl Kelly

RESOURCES



<https://www.butlercountypa.gov/156/Farmland-Preservation>

*If viewing online, logos are
clickable links to web pages.



<https://www.pa.gov/agencies/pda/plants-land-water/farmland-preservation.html>



<https://www.pafarmland.org/>

<https://pafarmlink.org/>

Pennsylvania Farm Bureau

<https://pfb.com/>



<https://farmland.org/>



Cover Photo—Gilliland Farm—Connoquenessing Township

OVERVIEW

Butler County's Agricultural Land Preservation Program began in 1996 under the authority of Pennsylvania's Act 43 of 1981 under Section 914.1—the Agricultural Conservation Easement Purchase Program. With the first farm being preserved in 1997, the program currently boasts the preservation of seventy-seven (77) Butler County farms comprised of over 7,793 acres of high quality soils. This viable, rich farmland will be preserved in perpetuity, available to assist in future food production needs.

The Agricultural Land Preservation Board oversees the easement purchase program and is comprised of nine volunteer community members that are appointed by the Board of Butler County Commissioners to serve three year terms. As required by law, four of the Board members are active resident farmers, one is a municipal representative, one is a commercial / industrial / residential building contractor, and three are “at-large” residents of Butler County.

Not only does the Board oversee the county-wide easement purchase program, but they also administer the Clinton Township-County-State cooperative easement purchase program using Clinton Township transfer of development rights (TDR) funding, the first program of its kind in western Pennsylvania. The County Board's Vice-Chairman Bill Duncan, who is also a Clinton Township Supervisor, serves as the county's liaison for Clinton Township's Agricultural Land Preservation Program.



Pizor Farm—Worth Township

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

It is the purpose of this program to protect viable agricultural lands by acquiring agricultural conservation easements which prevent the development or improvement of the land for any purpose other than agricultural production and related agricultural activities. Further, it is the purpose of this program to:

- ◇ Encourage landowners to make a long-term commitment to agriculture by offering them financial incentives and security of land use.
- ◇ Protect normal farming operations in agricultural security areas from incompatible non-farm land uses that may render farming impractical.
- ◇ Protect normal farming operations from complaints of public nuisance against normal farming operations.
- ◇ Assure conservation of viable agricultural lands in order to protect the agricultural economy of this Commonwealth.
- ◇ Provide compensation to landowners in exchange for their relinquishment of the right to develop their private property, maximize agricultural conservation easement purchase funds and protect the investment of taxpayers in agricultural conservation easements.

PRESERVED FARM PHOTO HIGHLIGHTS

Flinner Farm—Muddy Creek Township



*At a preserved farm in
Slippery Rock Township*



Foertsch Farm—Jefferson Township



Pizor Farm in Worth Township



McGowan Farm—Prospect Borough



Thurber Farm—Clearfield Township



Kradel Farm—Buffalo Township



2024 ACHIEVEMENTS, OUTREACH and ACTIVITIES



1. **Application Round**—Applications for the 2024 round of funding were received from January 1st through the 31st. There were five (5) new applications to add to the thirty-two (32) non-funded applications held over from 2023, resulting in 3,584 acres in application. From those applicants, the top two highest scoring farms from the county-wide program were chosen for easement purchase consideration. With one

farm deciding to drop out of the program, the Agricultural Land Preservation Board (BCALPB) moved ahead by the end of 2024 with two more farms on the list. Those farms are currently in process for possible easement purchase and will include over 235 acres, spending approximately \$617,196 on the easement purchases not including incidental costs such as appraisal, survey, etc.

2. **77th Farm**—In June 2024, Butler County had its 77th farm approved for easement purchase by the Pennsylvania Agricultural Land Preservation Board. Butler County now has over 7,793 acres of rich farmland preserved for agricultural use in perpetuity.

3. **Inspections Completed**— In 2024, required biennial inspections were completed on nine (9) state-funded farms along with the annually-required inspection of the county's three (3) federally-funded farms. The Preservation Office is now working to stagger inspections on the county's 77 farms so that they are distributed more evenly as the number of easements grows annually.

4. **Powell Farm Planning Committee**—Chairman Ken Moniot of the BCALPB served on the Powell Farm Steering Committee. This 71.25 acre former dairy farm was acquired by Cranberry Township and the steering committee was formed to determine how best to move forward with agricultural production on the farm while adhering to all requirements of the farm's Deed of Easement and legal requirements under amended Pa. Act 43, Section 914.1.

5. **Guideline Review**— The BCALPB began reviewing the guidelines for Butler County's Easement Purchase Program since recertification is required by state law in 2026.

6. **Assistance**—Staff provided as-needed assistance, education and referrals to local farmers, municipal officials and the general public including such activities as:

- Developing and updating information on the county web site;
- Assisting municipalities with various requests including their municipal Agricultural Security Area information;
- Assisting the Butler County Planning Commission with Agricultural Security Area submission reviews in accordance with the provisions of Pa. Act 43 of 1981;
- Periodically making presentations of the accomplishments of the BCALPB and the Easement Purchase Program to various county civic groups and at events;
- Participating in trainings and events offered by the Pennsylvania Dept. of Agriculture, Office of Farmland Preservation, the Pennsylvania Farmland Preservation Association and National Ag. Law Center.



Cooper Farm—Brady Township



Taggart Farm, Worth Township

2024 PROGRAM FUNDING

FUNDING SOURCE

General Fund	\$	207,977.00
Clinton Township Contribution	\$	40,000.00
Total 2024 County Certification	\$	247,977.00



State Grant	\$	575,864.23
State Match	\$	330,642.12
Redistributed Funds	\$	18,879.92
Total 2024 State Allocation	\$	925,386.27

TOTAL 2024 COUNTY AND STATE FUNDING	\$	1,173,363.27
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FOR MORE INFORMATION

The Butler County Office of Farmland Preservation can be found on the Butler County website at:

<https://www.butlercountypa.gov/156/Farmland-Preservation>

(Includes program information, County Guidelines, application and web links)

Office Location and Contact Information:

124 West Diamond Street, PO Box 1208, Butler, PA 16001
 Phone (724) 284-5305 Email skelly@co.butler.pa.us

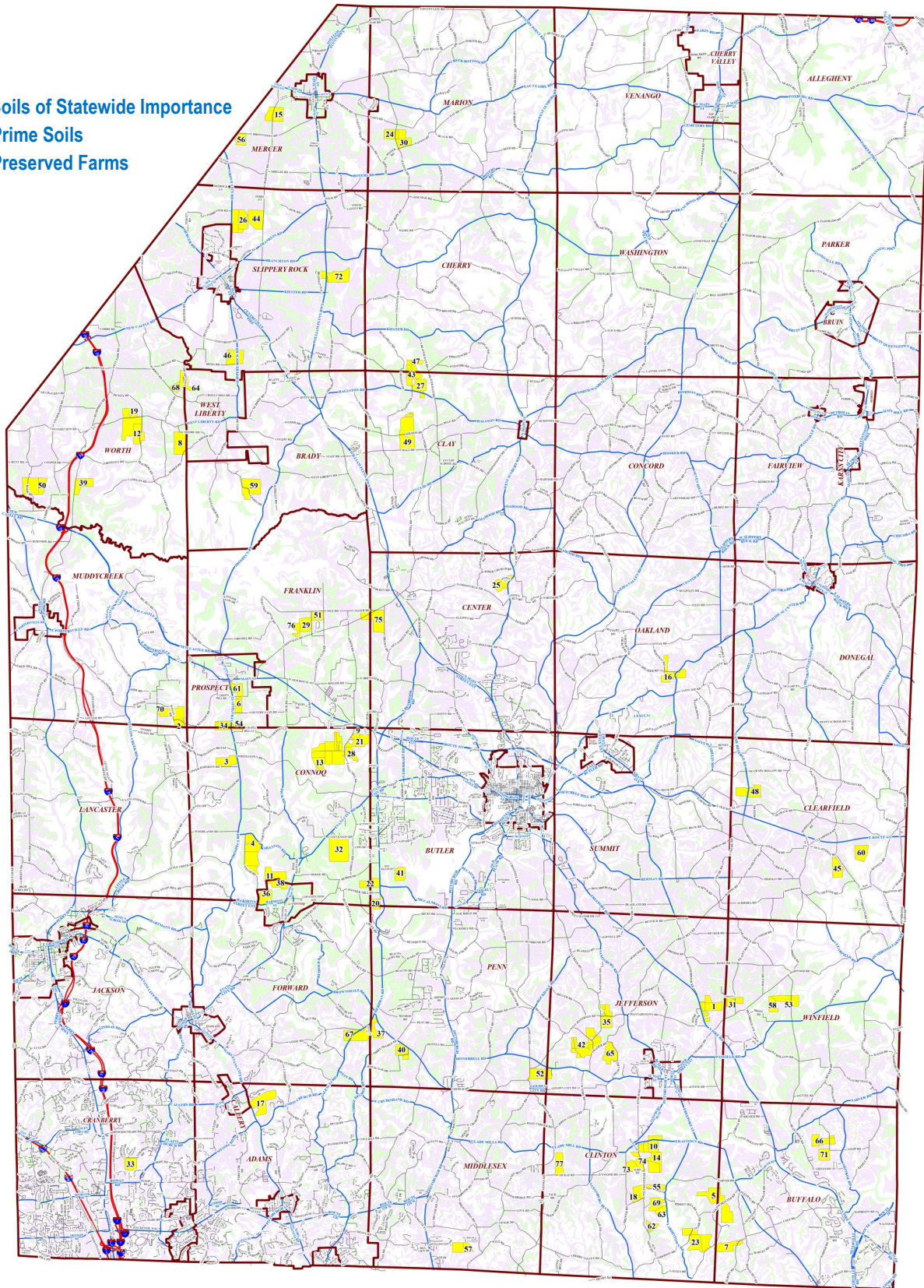
BY THE NUMBERS—PRESERVED ACREAGE BY MUNICIPALITY

Adams	161.140
Brady	164.430
Buffalo	250.210
Butler <i>(includes one farm partially in Connoq. and one farm partially in Penn)</i>	186.565
Center <i>(includes one farm partially in Franklin)</i>	249.820
Clay <i>(includes one farm partially in Cherry)</i>	451.670
Clearfield	283.051
Clinton <i>(includes one farm partially in Buffalo)</i>	1121.738
Connoquenessing Twp.	1189.024
Connoquenessing Boro. <i>(includes one farm partially in Connoquenessing Twp.)</i>	145.890
Cranberry	71.250
Forward	132.420
Franklin	171.620
Jefferson <i>(includes one farm partially in Winfield)</i>	551.423
Marion	140.260
Mercer	170.010
Middlesex	88.290
Muddy Creek <i>(includes one farm partially in Lancaster)</i>	164.930
Oakland	118.980
Penn <i>(includes one farm partially in Jefferson)</i>	255.870
Prospect Boro <i>(includes two farms partially in)</i>	233.450
Slippery Rock	523.060
Winfield	182.430
Worth <i>(includes one farm partially in West Liberty)</i>	785.870
TOTAL AS OF DECEMBER 2024	7793.401

Reed Farm in Slippery Rock Township

2024 MAP OF BUTLER COUNTY PRESERVED FARMS

- Soils of Statewide Importance
- Prime Soils
- Preserved Farms



1 Thiele	8 Pizor	15 Stuchal	22 Nicklas	29 Misera	36 Graham	43 Burgoon	50 Carfaglia	57 Farm Kings LLC	64 Taggart	71 Kradel
2 Jesteadt	9 Metrick	16 Dean	23 Goldschetter	30 Linton	37 Hixon	44 Lange	51 Graham	58 Kennedy	65 Foertsch	72 Hartzell
3 Burr	10 Allen	17 Marburger	24 Linton	31 Garfield	38 Rader	45 Bergbigler	52 Dwinell	59 Cooper	66 Riddle	73 Allen Lot 2
4 Gilliland	11 Rader	18 Allen	25 Holbein Enterprises	32 Daubenspeck	39 Morvink	46 Hartzell	53 Kennedy	60 Thurber	67 Maple Shade Farm	74 Allen Lot 3
5 Goldschetter	12 Cooper	19 Cooper	26 Reed	33 Powell	40 Kennedy	47 Burgoon	54 Charles McGowan Trust	61 McGowan	68 Pizor	75 Graham
6 Griffin	13 Ragan	20 McCormick	27 Burgoon	34 Colteryah	41 Andler	48 Bergbigler Family L P	55 Kathy B Allen Farm Preservation Trust	62 Greenspace #1	69 Allen (John/Andrew)	76 Misera
7 Thompson	14 Sebak	21 Lesney	28 Pawkowicz	35 Foertsch	42 Vadnal	49 E and J Webb LLC	56 Jordan	63 Greenspace #2	70 Flinner	77 Edwards