

-PA ————— Environment Digest

*An Update on
Environmental
Issues in
Pennsylvania*

Edited By David E. Hess, Crisci Associates

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[PA Environment Digest Video Blog](#)

Conservation Will Be Your Best Friend Chamber Energy Summit Told

Over 325 participants attended the state [Chamber of Business and Industry](#) Energy Summit and heard several speakers said they need to do all they can to become more energy efficient as Pennsylvania makes the transition to market-based pricing for electricity in 2010.

Several speakers provided an overview of the energy situation and how it will impact Pennsylvania, while a follow up panel provided some ideas on what businesses can do to react to the coming changes, particularly in the electricity markets.



Alternative Energy

[David Stoner](#), Vice President for Wind Energy Development for BP Alternative Energy, provided an overview of alternative energy development in Pennsylvania, focusing on wind energy, the largest segment.

BP Wind has 400 megawatts of wind projects in operation or under construction with 1,000 megawatts expected to be in operation by the end of 2008.

Pennsylvania has excellent wind resources in a number of areas, reasonable access to transmission lines and the electric market, a reasonable regulatory regime that attracts wind energy developers to the state and an alternative energy portfolio standard that requires electric utilities to purchase electricity generated from wind and other renewable energy sources, said Stoner.

A collaborative wind energy and wildlife impact policies have resulted in a model local ordinance that townships can adopt to deal with local siting issues and voluntary wildlife evaluation guidelines that help in the permit process that have been helpful in the state.

Wind energy provides significant economic and environmental benefits, including local property taxes, jobs during construction and operation, lease payments to property owners and emission-free energy that has no fuel supply.

BP Wind has a 100+ megawatt project in the development stage [in Wyoming County](#) and more projects are planned in Pennsylvania.

[BP Alternative Energy](#) includes wind, solar, biofuels, natural gas and hydrogen or low carbon energy resources. (Additional background is available in [Mr. Stoner's presentation](#).)

Public Utility Commission

Public Utility Commission Chairman Wendell Holland said between 1996 and 2008 natural gas prices increased 140 percent and coal prices increased over 55 percent,

the two main fuels used by electric generators, while Pennsylvania electric customers continued to pay 1996 prices for their electricity service.

Chairman Holland said the PUC has adopted regulations requiring a phase-in to a competitive market and the General Assembly and the Governor are looking at other steps to take. He also said the PUC would be working as well to make changes in the pricing for the wholesale electric market controlled by the PJM Interconnection.

Chairman Holland recommended businesses do all they can to reduce the consumption of electricity ahead of the rate caps coming off and to prepare to shop for the best prices from electric providers.

He pointed to the success in the Duquesne Light service territory where competition has resulted in prices for commercial customers that are typically lower than 1996 prices.

Electric Generation

Doug Biden, Electric Power Generation Association, said fuel costs make up about 76 percent of the wholesale cost of electricity, while environmental costs make up 13 percent, operation and maintenance 5 percent and congestion costs on the electricity grid are about 2 percent. Only about 2.9 percent is generator markup.

While fuel costs are a significant part of the bill, future costs for electricity will also be driven by required investments in environmental compliance for clean air and climate change requirements. The investments needed for clean air rule changes alone are in the \$50 to \$80 billion range.

Worldwide demand for electricity is also pushing construction costs for new generation capacity up significantly. For example, costs have increased about 130 percent since 2000, which means a project that cost \$1 billion in 2000 now costs \$2.3 billion.

The deregulation of Pennsylvania's electric generators in 1996 has resulted in a 9,000 megawatt increase in generating capacity, primarily through increases in the efficiencies of existing power plants and an increase in plant availability times. Capacity factors have increased from 70 percent to over 93 percent in Pennsylvania. This increase in efficiency nationwide is the equivalent of adding 26 new nuclear reactors to the generation fleet.

Electric Distribution

Michael Love, President and CEO of the Energy Association of PA, said just as important, but a little more technical than the electric rate caps coming off in 2010, are the changes being discussed to the customer class rate designs.

Every electric customer is assigned to a rate class. The changes in these class designs means, in most cases, customers who are used to the cost of electricity per kilowatt coming down with increased use, will see the cost per kilowatt hour remain the same regardless of usage. These changes will have a more profound impact than simply lifting the rate caps.

Love said the impacts on electric customers will be different in different service territories around the state. There will not be one generic rate increase, so customers will have to monitor the changes made by each utility.

Love also recommended businesses get serious about energy conservation, "not conserving is not an option." He noted that 80 percent of Pennsylvania's housing stock was built before 1979, the last energy crisis, and if policy-makers are serious about reducing the demand for electricity they have to start looking at ways of addressing this issue.

Biofuels

Rolf Hanson, Associated Petroleum Industries of PA, gave the Summit an overview of transportation fuel issues noting the dramatic increase in the cost of energy around the world. 54 percent of the cost of gasoline at the pump was the price of crude oil, 20 percent the cost of refining, 11 percent distribution and retail and 15 percent federal, state and local taxes.

Hanson said the new federal renewable fuels mandate signed into law in December has eliminated the need for state-only mandates, like Gov. Rendell has proposed. But it will also present challenges in the future as the federal goals mandate an increase in the use of renewables. The production capacity to make these fuels is simply not available and will need to be built in the future presenting an opportunity for states.

Several speakers provided participants with ideas on how they can get their businesses ready for a competitive energy market.

Angela Beehler, Wal-Mart, provided an overview of energy conservation efforts in that company, Susan Bruce, McNeese Wallace & Nurick LLP provided a guide to contracting for energy supplies and Rich Fathvon, Reliant Energy Solutions, described just a few of the many energy products available in competitive energy market states.

NewsClip: [Conserve to Cut Costs of Energy Group Told](#)

Thousands of Reasons to Visit Middle Creek Wildlife Area – Video Blog

Each year the Game Commission’s [Middle Creek Wildlife Management Area](#) on the Lebanon-Lancaster county line near Kleinfeltersville, Pa hosts hundreds of thousands of migrating geese, swans and ducks.

The waterfowl arrive in flocks through late March.

Drew Lambert, PA Game Commission, talks about Middle Creek and the record 2007 season and the year-round activities that make the Area an attraction for wildlife enthusiasts.



And learn the story behind one of the Golden Eagles displayed at the visitors’ center by tuning into this **Video Blog story:** [The Golden Eagle At Middle Creek](#).

The Middle Creek Visitors Center is open Tuesday through Saturday, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., and Sunday, noon to 5 p.m.

For updated information on current “visitors” to Middle Creek, go to the Middle Creek Wildlife Management Area webpage and checkout the webpage for its sister facility—the [Pymatuning Wildlife Learning Center](#) in Crawford County from the Game Commission’s [Watchable Wildlife webpage](#).

Video Blog: [Middle Creek Home to Thousands of Migrating Birds](#)

Link: [10 Reasons to Come to Middle Creek – Photo Special](#)

[PA Environment Digest Video Blog](#)

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On the Hill

Session Schedule

The Senate and House will return to voting session the week of March 10. The Senate and House will hold hearings on Gov. Rendell’s proposed budget in the interim.

You can watch the [Senate Floor Session](#) and [House Floor Session](#) live online.

On the Senate/House Agenda/Bills Introduced

The Senate and House published committee schedules and floor Calendars for the week of March 10—

Calendars

House (March 10): [House Resolution 546](#) (George-D-Clearfield) urging Congress to investigate gas and energy prices; [House Resolution 518](#) (Petrone-D-Allegheny) commemorating the life and contributions of Lady Bird Johnson for her leadership role in preserving its natural beauty.

The Special Energy Session Calendar includes: [Special Session House Bill 1](#) (DePasquale-D-York) establishing a grant program and authorizing indebtedness for Energy Development Authority; [Special Session House Bill 13](#) (Bennington-R-Mifflin) amends the Alternative Energy Portfolio Standards Act to provide for increased use of energy efficiency, extends the compliance period from 15 to 21 years and providing additional milestones for the use of alternative energy.

Senate (March 10): [House Bill 1281](#) (Freeman-D-Lehigh) requiring municipalities to take steps to protect the Appalachian Trail; [House Bill 1329](#) (Kessler-D-Berks) further providing for appeals and challenges to zoning ordinances; [House Bill 1330](#) (Kessler) further providing for appeals from official maps and local development ordinances; [Senate Bill 1264](#) (Boscola-D-Lehigh) providing for geologists in training; [Senate Bill 1248](#) (Rhoades-R-Schuylkill) providing for a home heating oil rebate program; [House Bill 1214](#) (Surra-D-Elk) changing the terms of Game Commissioners from eight to four years

Committees

House: Appropriations Committee Budget Hearings on the Department of Environmental Protection and the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, the Appropriations Committee **Subcommittee on Fiscal Policy** hearing on the Governor's budget proposals on renewable energy, job creation and fiscal policy in Valley Forge; the **Veterans Affairs and Emergency Preparedness Committee** holds a hearing on [House Bill 1989](#) (Wansacz-D-Luzerne) establishing the PA Flood Grant and Assistance Program in Scranton.

Senate: Appropriations Committee Budget Hearings on the Department of Environmental Protection, Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, the Department of Transportation and the Department of Community and Economic Development.

Bills Introduced

These bills of interest were introduced this week—

Stormwater Planning: [House Bill 2266](#) (Steil-R-Bucks) authorizing counties to regulate stormwater within watershed-based planning areas.

Mining Permits: [House Bill 2273](#) (Stevenson-R-Mercer) further providing for lands eligible for re-mining, requirements for mining operator's license and withholding mining permits.

High Gas Prices: [Senate Resolution 244](#) (Rhoades-R-Schuylkill) urging Congress and President to take action to control high gas and energy prices.

Budget Hearings Touch on Environmental Issues, DEP, DCNR Coming Up

Budget hearings in the Senate and House this week touched on several environmental issues, but the main events will come up next week when the departments of Environmental Protection and Conservation and Natural Resources appear before the Appropriations Committees.

Here are several items that came up during hearings this week--

REAP Tax Credit: Department of Agriculture Secretary Dennis Wolff, Sen. Brubaker (R-Lancaster), Chair of the Senate Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee, Sen. Gib Armstrong (R-Lancaster), Chair of the Senate Appropriations Committee, Sen. Waugh (R-York) and other members declared the first year of the Resource Enhancement and Protection Act (REAP) farm conservation tax credit program a success. The \$10 million allocation for REAP was exhausted within the first ten days the application period.

Conservation District Funding: Members of the Senate Appropriations Committee uniformly expressed concern about cuts to county conservation district funding in Gov. Rendell's proposed budget at a time when districts were being called on to do more to help implement the Chesapeake Bay Tributary Strategy and to deal with the on-farm consequences of the state's biofuels initiative.

Agriculture Secretary Dennis Wolff said the Governor is willing to re-evaluate conservation district funding levels pending year-end revenue surpluses.

Farmland Preservation: Sen. O'Pake (D-Berks), Minority Chair of the Senate Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee, expressed concern about the decrease in funding for farmland preservation that will reduce the number of farms preserved by 10,000 acres. Secretary Wolff said the prior year included funding from the Growing Greener II bond issue that is not available this year for farmland preservation.

Chesapeake Bay Cleanup: In response to concerns raised by Sen. Vance (R-Cumberland), Sen. Madigan (R-Bradford) and Sen. Wozniak (D-Cambria) about the cost of the Chesapeake Bay Tributary Strategy being borne by wastewater treatment plants and the lack of any funding in the Governor's budget for that initiative, Secretary Wolff said farmers have been doing their share as part of the cleanup effort, noting agriculture has reduced nitrogen runoff by over 25 million pounds.

Sen. Madigan said, "you have no money to help municipalities meet the Bay reduction, next you'll turn the screws on the farms and not help them, which means more farms will be lost for development."

Hazardous Sites Funding: Sen. Mary Jo White (R-Venango) accused the Rendell Administration of renegeing on its agreement to fund the Hazardous Sites Cleanup Program from the Capital Stock and Franchise Tax by not keeping the tax at 2.49 percent, rather than the reduction that was planned to 1.89 percent. [Legislation Gov. Rendell signed](#) into law last year restored the earmark for HSCA funding from the Capital Stock and Franchise

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Tax that was established by Gov. Casey in 1988. Budget Secretary Michael Masch said the HSCA funding bill was not sustainable and it took revenue from the General Fund.

Flooding: [Robert P. French](#), Director of the PA Emergency Management Agency this week reacted to comments by Rep. Scavello (R-Monroe) who said he was concerned about a 40 percent cut in the agency’s budget from 2006-07 levels. This was a particular concern because three [New York reservoirs](#) are at 100 percent capacity and could cause flooding problems this Spring along the Delaware River.

French said statewide flood mitigation programs are being developed with the Department of Environmental Protection and Delaware River Basin Commission to deal with flooding issues caused by releases from the reservoirs.

In reaction to a question from Rep. Siptroth (D-Monroe), French said his agency is working on a update of floodplain maps throughout the state, but did not give an estimate of when the work would be completed.

Energy Proposals: Both the Small Business Advocate [William Lloyd](#) and Consumer Advocate [Sonny Popowsky](#) provided comments on several energy proposals being considered by the General Assembly dealing with the transition to market-based electricity pricing, requiring utilities to develop conservation programs and the Governor’s Energy Independence Initiative.

Energy Education: [Wendall Holland](#), Chairman, Public Utility Commission, told the House Appropriations Committee that Gov. Rendell’s Office requested the PUC remove a proposed \$5 million consumer education program designed to educate the public about coming changes in electric pricing, energy conservation and electric choice. Chairman Holland said, in spite of the elimination of the program request, he and his fellow Commissioners strongly support the need for the program.

Green Investments: State Treasurer [Robin L. Wiessman](#) was asked by Rep. Dally (R-Northampton) questioned whether the Treasurer’s office recent investment of \$40 million in green companies, in part that implement a climate change action plan, fit into the agency’s “prudent person investment” rule that the Office is required to follow. Treasurer Wiessman said that policy was the “dominant and primary” assessment that guides all Treasury’s investments, but when she took office she looked at ways of improving all investment policies, including the [Keystone Green Investment Strategy](#) which guides investments in green companies.

Link: [Senate Republican Budget Hearing Summaries/Hearing Videos](#)

Sen. Brubaker Named to EPA Agricultural Advisory Committee

[Sen. Mike Brubaker](#) (R-Lancaster) announced this week that he is one of 30 citizens to be appointed to serve on a newly-formed [Farm, Ranch, and Rural Communities Advisory Committee](#) through the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Last month Brubaker was elected as Vice Chair of the Pennsylvania delegation to the [Chesapeake Bay Commission](#) at a recent



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Commission meeting.

“I commend the EPA for recognizing the important link between the environmental and agricultural communities, and I am very honored to be selected for this opportunity,” Sen. Brubaker said. “This will be an excellent chance to consider policy decisions from both perspectives and to work with some very talented and knowledgeable individuals.”

The Committee is an important part of the EPA’s ongoing effort to strengthen relations with the agriculture industry and other interested parties, and was developed as part of a comprehensive National Agriculture Strategy adopted by the EPA in May 2006. That strategy seeks to engage agriculture in cooperative, collaborative, and innovative ways, in addition to the traditional regulatory programs the agency administers.

The Committee will advise the Administrator on environmental policy issues impacting farms, ranches, and rural communities, and will operate under the rules of the Federal Advisory Committee Act.

Initially, it will focus on three issues:

- How EPA’s policies and regulations on climate change and renewable energy will affect the agriculture community, and, conversely, how the agricultural industry – through the development of renewable energy sources – can play a significant role in the nation’s ability to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions and its dependence on oil imports.
- An environmental strategy for managing waste from livestock operations that considers regulatory and voluntary approaches, and provides tools for producers to attain superior environmental performance.
- Development of a constructive approach to advancing sustainable agriculture, protecting the environment, and addressing communication between environmental and agricultural interests.

Members were selected from a pool of more than 200 applicants representing large and small farmers, ranchers, and rural communities; rural suppliers, marketers, and processors; academics and researchers who study environmental issues impacting agriculture; and environmental and conservation groups.

“I look forward to working with the other Committee members to develop solutions that benefit agriculture, the environment and the economy,” Sen. Brubaker said. The Chesapeake Bay Commission is a tri-state legislative commission which advises the General Assemblies of Pennsylvania, Maryland and Virginia in cooperatively managing the Chesapeake Bay.

Sen. Brubaker was elected to his one-year term by the members of the Pennsylvania delegation, including state Senator Mike Waugh (R-York), state Representatives Art Hershey (R-Chester), Russ Fairchild (R-Mifflin) and Mike Sturla (D-Lancaster), DEP Deputy Secretary Cathy Myers and citizen representative George Wolff. Hershey is chair of the delegation as well as of the full Commission.

“I am very honored to have been selected for this position by my peers,” Sen. Brubaker said. “The Chesapeake Bay Commission is a wonderful opportunity for us to address the mutual concerns of the Bay states, and I am pleased that I will have a more active role over the coming year.”

Representatives of each state’s legislature, executive agencies and citizens comprise the Commission and work together to provide information and advice on Bay issues. In addition, the Commission is a signatory to the Chesapeake Bay Agreement with the governors of Pennsylvania, Maryland and Virginia, the mayor of the District of

Columbia, and the administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. As such, it serves as the legislative arm of the Chesapeake Bay Program and is fully involved in all Bay Program policy and implementation decisions.

“Pennsylvanians play an important role in maintaining the water quality of the Susquehanna River, and ultimately, the Chesapeake Bay,” Sen. Brubaker said. “We have already made great strides to improving the watershed, and I am looking forward to working with my colleagues on the Commission to continue this progress in the future.”

Rep. DeWeese, Colleagues Seek Federal Investigation of Power Lines Law



House Majority Leader Bill DeWeese (D-Greene) and 38 of his House Democratic colleagues are supporting the efforts of U.S. Senators Bob Casey and Arlen Specter, who are requesting a U.S. Senate investigation into the implementation of the 2005 federal law that allows power lines to be built across 52 of 67 Pennsylvania counties without input from the Commonwealth or local authorities.

That law “has the potential to disrupt the fundamental balance of power between local, state, and federal governments in land use issues,” Rep. DeWeese and the others wrote in a letter this week to U.S. Sen. Jeff Bingaman, chairman of the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, and Sen. Pete V. Domenici, the committee’s ranking member.

Since early 2007, Rep. DeWeese has led the state House of Representatives’ opposition to the U.S. Department of Energy’s plan to, and subsequent designation of, most of Pennsylvania as a National Interest Electric Transmission Corridor. In April 2007, Rep. DeWeese traveled to Washington, D.C. to testify before Congress about the consequences for public and private property regarding these federal electric transmission corridors. Last month in Harrisburg, Rep. DeWeese joined Casey, local community activists and other public officials for a panel discussion on the issue.

In their letter, the state legislators conclude that the DOE decision “(1) favors the economic interests of energy companies over that of landowners, (2) ignores the will of people and communities who may favor environmentally friendly and cheaper energy alternatives and renewable energy over intrusive and perhaps unhealthy transmission lines, (3) threatens the environment, historical and cultural heritage; (4) preempts local and state governments’ fundamental and traditional power to decide land use policies; and (5) usurps the authority of states to review, approve, and locate transmission lines within their geographic borders.

“... We maintain that any plan promoting reliability of the transmission grid and homeland security that would require stringing high voltage transmission lines hundreds and hundreds of miles from generation capacity to fuel urban centers is contrary to the clean energy, renewable energy, energy efficiency, and homeland security goals espoused in the EPact 2005 and, arguably, antithetical to the concept of global warming.

“Therefore, we support the efforts of Senator Casey and conclude that a Congressional investigation and oversight of the DOE’s implementation of section 1221 is warranted. The citizens of Pennsylvania and of other NIETC States should be assured that the broad authority assumed by the DOE from its interpretation of section 1221 complies with the intent of the Congress and is in the national interest. We submit that the intent of the Congress would be better served by NIETC designations that target specific congestion

and recognize the physical laws governing electric transmission rather than massive corridors without lines of demarcation,” the letter concludes.

For more information, visit [Rep. DeWeese’s website](#).

Budget & Finance Committee Moves Ahead with Game Commission, Deer Study

The officers of the [Legislative Budget and Finance Committee](#) met this week to approve the award of a contract to study how the Game Commission handles mineral and timber leases on its lands. It also discussed a proposed audit of the Deer Management Program.

The study of the Game Commission’s mineral and timber leasing program was authorized by [House Resolution 193](#) (Haluska-D-Cambria). The Committee awarded the contract to [FORECON, Inc.](#), with offices in Smethport and Titusville, Pa.

The Committee officers also discussed the next steps in a proposed audit of the Game Commission’s Deer Management Program.

Rep. Levdansky (D-Allegheny) reported LBFC staff was working to identify potential recipients of a request for proposal the Committee would issue to do the audit based on several questions: are we killing the right number of deer, in the right places and is the program having an impact on habitat and forest regeneration?

Sen. Pippy (R-Allegheny) suggested Rep. Levdansky work with staff to develop a resolution the House Game and Fisheries Committee could consider to authorize the LBFC to do the audit. Rep. Levdansky agreed.

Committee officers also directed staff to begin work on outlining approaches to doing the projects authorized by [Senate Resolution 195](#) (Brubaker-R-Lancaster) requiring a review of the Agricultural Conservation Easement Purchase Program and [Senate Resolution 224](#) (Vance-R-Cumberland) requiring a study of the implementation costs for wastewater treatment plans subject to the Chesapeake Bay Tributary Strategy.

Sen. Pippy serves as the chair of the LBFC and Sen. Gerald LaValle (D-Beaver) as the vice-chair.

Fish & Boat Commission Provides House Committee With Annual Report

[Fish and Boat Commission](#) Executive Director Dr. Douglas Austen provided the House Game and Fisheries Committee with its [annual report](#) on February 14.

“The past several years have brought us two opening days of trout season that addresses both the climatic differences in the state as well as the challenges with our kids of busy spring weekends of soccer and baseball,” said Dr. Austen. “Through listening to our public we stock larger trout. We now have an electronic licensing system and we are implementing state-of-the-art effluent filtration in our hatcheries.

“We have also seen the emergence of an active fishing access program, a boat access grant program with nearly 50 projects either completed or in progress, a reconfigured musky program, greatly expanded emphasis on habitat, and innovative marketing strategies.



“We look to expand our understanding of the resources through a new emphasis on rivers with the Three Rivers Ecological Research Center in Pittsburgh and new staff forthcoming on the Susquehanna and Delaware Rivers.

“We have a new agency organization that will move us forward with creative ideas and a management structure designed to facilitate getting things done. We are continually looking to ensure efficiencies, conserve, enhance and protect resources, and address the needs of the angling and boating publics of the Commonwealth.”

The finances of the Commission are healthy, but Dr. Austen cautioned the impact of the recent license increase is being eroded by increased fuel, health care and other costs and by 2012-13 funding balances will be at critically low levels. The Commission did see a 1.5 percent increase in the number of fishing licenses bought last year and 2.4 percent in 2006.

Dr. Austen also promoted the idea of a youth fishing license to not only get more youth involved in fishing, but to provide the resources to expand youth-oriented fishing education and involvement programs. [House Bill 1436](#) (Gergely-D-Allegheny) would authorize the new license.

He pointed to examples in Eire and West Chester where small grants for youth programs were successful in getting hundreds of students involved in fishing.

A copy of Dr. Austen’s [annual report is available online](#).

Other News

Celebration Highlights Christina River Watershed Achievements

The [Christina Basin Clean Water Partnership](#) celebrated the completion of a three-year program to improve water quality in the Brandywine, Red Clay, White Clay and Christina watersheds with an awards ceremony this week at the Red Clay Room in Kennett Square.

The Christina Basin received a \$1 million Targeted Watershed Initiative Grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in 2003 and was the top ranked application in the United States, besting 170 other watershed applications. The grant was used to improve water quality through urban, agricultural and backyard programs in both Chester County, Pennsylvania and New Castle County, Delaware.

The awards ceremony included presentations on the results of the watershed grant and the improvements that were implemented throughout the Basin. The Chester County Conservation District, the Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control and Delaware Nature Society will highlight these improvements.

To acknowledge the partnership of landowners in making the improvements successful, the Christina Basin Clean Water Partnership honored six property owners who were involved in separate projects throughout the Basin.

U.S. Congressmen Joe Pitts and Jim Gerlach from Pennsylvania and Mike Castle from Delaware were on hand to present the recipients with their awards. Also in attendance was Deputy Secretary Cathy Curran Myers from the Department of



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Environmental Protection and Deputy Secretary David Small from the Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control.

The Christina Basin is important historically for its settlement in 1638 by the Swedes and later as the site of the Battle of the Brandywine in 1777 and the DuPont Powder Mills in 1802. The Basin's streams and wells provide up to 100 million gallons of water daily to over half a million people.

The value of the water resources in the Christina Basin which includes both Pennsylvania and Delaware, is estimated at \$100 million annually. In addition, the Basin has a growing ecotourism industry, has inspired the Brandywine School of Art, and is home to the first small watershed association in America.

For more information, visit the [Christina Basin Clean Water Partnership webpage](#).

Lancaster Dairy Installs System to Reduce Ammonia Emissions, Nutrients

[Bion Environmental Technologies, Inc.](#) announced this week it has signed a memorandum of understanding with a large dairy in Lancaster County to retrofit its existing dairy operation with a Bion Nutrient Management System designed to reduce ammonia emissions and nutrients in the effluent.

The installation will initially treat the manure from the main 1,400-head dairy barn, with follow-on expansions designed to capture the remaining manure from the milk house, heifers, dry cows, calves, and potentially the manure from the co-located chicken facilities.

Bion chose to undertake this project due in large part to Pennsylvania's nutrient credit trading program, which was established to provide cost-effective reductions of the excess flow of nutrients (nitrogen and phosphorus) into the Chesapeake Bay watershed (including its tributary the Susquehanna River).

Bion has worked extensively with the Department of Environmental Protection over the past year to establish a nutrient credit calculation/verification methodology that is appropriate to Bion's technology and recognizes its 'multi-media' (both water and atmospheric) approach to nutrient reductions.

Bion's comprehensive livestock waste treatment technology establishes a vital 'first of its kind' approach to the fight against excessive nutrients in the Chesapeake Bay: a verifiable reduction of ammonia air emissions that would otherwise lead to downwind deposition and a continued unregulated source of nutrients in the Bay.

Although nutrient credits have not been previously certified for ammonia reductions, based on discussions with DEP, Bion anticipates that more than 40 percent of the nutrient credits it generates at the Lancaster County installation will come from the reduction of ammonia emissions. The balance of credits will be generated from the reduction of soluble form nitrogen and phosphorus in the effluent.

Bion has already accomplished this level of ammonia reduction at the DeVries Dairy, a 1,300-head commercial dairy in Texas. The reductions were verified through independent testing and peer-reviewed by a team of scientists and engineers including representatives of several regulatory agencies. Bion will validate these reductions with the DEP during the Lancaster dairy's nutrient credit certification process.

Mark Smith, Bion's President, stated, "Bion's Lancaster County installation represents a key development in terms of establishing a structure for cost-effective multi-media nutrient management for CAFOs.

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Bion's Nutrient Management System is the only process that provides a comprehensive solution that addresses both air emissions and nutrients in the effluent from livestock facilities. "We are pleased that the Department of Environmental Protection has recognized the contribution that Bion's technology can make in the restoration of the Chesapeake Bay and other areas that suffer from excess nutrients. Programs like Pennsylvania's nutrient credit trading program provide substantial benefits to the public and the environment. As importantly, with the program, farmers can afford to install the technology."

For more information, visit the [Bion Environmental Technologies, Inc.](#) website.

11th Annual Northwest PA Grazing Conference to Be Held March 4

The Natural Resources Conservation Service, Penn State Cooperative Extension Service, Headwaters Resource Conservation and Development Council, and the Jefferson County Conservation District are sponsoring the 11th Annual Northwest Pennsylvania Grazing Conference on March 4 near DuBois.

This year's Conference will be held in the same location as last year's, the Tri County Church of God. The Tri County Church is located 1.3 miles North on Rt. 255 from Exit 101 on I-80, just east of DuBois, Pennsylvania. Registration begins at 8:00 a.m.; the conference will start at 9:15 a.m..

The Northwest Pennsylvania Grazing Conference was started ten years ago as a means to bring the latest in grazing technology to livestock producers in Northwestern and Central Pennsylvania and to provide producers with an opportunity to share and exchange ideas. Vendors and exhibitors also participate and provide information on the latest in product development.

The interest, awareness, and advocacy of grassed based agriculture continues to grow throughout the Country. Both farmers and consumers recognize the many benefits realized from livestock systems that rely on grass as the primary input. Health benefits, reduction in energy consumption and cost of production, reduction in erosion, runoff and water pollution due to less tillage, and of course the move away from big, corporate agribusiness and increased opportunities for direct marketing right off the farm.

The line-up of speakers for this year's conference bring a wealth of knowledge and year's of experience in livestock grazing management. Livestock operations based on sound grazing management can produce a profit and provide a quality lifestyle.

This year's Keynote speaker exemplifies this philosophy. Ralph Quillin is a nationally recognized speaker who has been in 28 states promoting the benefits of intensive grazing. Mr. Quillin founded and operates Kentucky Graziers, a grazing products supply business and Quillin Leather and Tack. In addition, over the past 26 years, he has managed a brood herd of 90 fall calving registered Angus on his 140 acre farm. His grazing and management systems have allowed him to do this as a part time, one man operation.

In addition, Michael Wright owner and operator of Big Horn Meats, Pittsfield, Warren County, Pa will discuss his direct marketing operation where he grazes beef, hogs, chickens, and goats. Troy Bishopp from New York will speak on why government should support grass based agriculture and how he contract grazes on abandoned land. Dr. Darrell Emmick, a grazing specialist with the Natural Resources Conservation Service in New

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York, will discuss how animal behavior can affect grazing management and how to solve environmental problems associated with small horse operations.

Other scheduled presentations will include using: “Switchgrass as a Biofuel”, “Composted Bedded Pack Livestock Barns”, “Managing Pasture Forages”, Marketing AG Products”, “Maintaining Herd Health”, and “Livestock Watering Systems”. The last session of the day will be an open question and answer period with the speakers.

For more information, call Gary Swope, Natural Resources Conservation Service, 814-375-2125 or, Headwaters RC&D, 814-375-1372 ext 4.

Regional Agricultural Program Dollars Available for Livestock Operations

The [Capital Resource Conservation and Development Area Council, Inc.](#) announced the availability of funding this week for farmers in Southcentral Pennsylvania to install various beneficial agricultural practices.

The program, called the Regional Riparian and Ag BMP Initiative, provides cost share dollars for the installation of items such as fencing, watering systems and walkways on livestock farms. Priority will be given to those that incorporate rotational grazing systems in their operations.

The project will implement rotational grazing systems, riparian buffers and other agricultural best management practices on eligible farms, with funding from the Department of Environmental Protection's Chesapeake Bay Program.

The Capital RC&D, in partnership with DEP, the State Conservation Commission, participating conservation districts and South Central PA Project Grass, will help to improve the effectiveness of agricultural riparian buffers and support the conversion of crop land to pasture. A limited number of funds will also be used for the promotion of sound conservation planning principles and practices.

The program is available within the 17-county Chesapeake Bay drainage area served by the [DEP Southcentral Region](#).

“The Capital RC&D Council is proud to be a part of the Regional Riparian and Ag BMP Initiative as a way to provide services to farmers and to encourage local waterway protection” Capital RC&D Program Manager Susan Richards said.

For more information or to apply for the RRI program, please contact your local NRCS Grazing Coordinator or Susan Richards, Capital RC&D Program Manager at 717-724-0009 or send email to: susan.richards@rcdnet.net.

Gov. Rendell Issues Sustainable Infrastructure Task Force Executive Order

Gov. Rendell this week established a high-level task force [through executive order](#) that will evaluate what is needed to ensure Pennsylvania maintains a sustainable water and wastewater infrastructure in light of continued cuts from the federal government in recent years.

Members of the task force were not yet released.

"Our water and wastewater infrastructure is aging," said Gov. Rendell.

"Pennsylvania is facing nearly \$20 billion in unmet water-related infrastructure needs, and that doesn't even take into account ongoing capital costs and expenses associated with operations and maintenance responsibilities. We need to begin developing a comprehensive plan now that supports a sustainable network of systems to protect public

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health, and ensure citizens and businesses don't lose out on the quality and dependable services they have come to expect."

A federal Clean Water Needs Survey found that Pennsylvania is facing nearly \$11 billion in unmet drinking water infrastructure needs and at least \$7.2 billion in unmet wastewater infrastructure needs.

The Governor signed Executive Order 2008-02, establishing the Sustainable Water Infrastructure Task Force, which is to analyze issues related to cost-effective and sustainable investment in the state's water and sewer infrastructure.

The task force is to consider new funding options and non-structural alternatives to capital upgrades, such as nutrient credit trading, water re-use and conservation. It is responsible for developing a report by October 1 that provides recommendations and financing options to support water-related services in the Governor's fiscal year 2009-10 budget proposal.

Members of the task force are to include representatives of the administration, General Assembly, academia, the state's Office of Consumer Advocate, as well as local government and municipal associations.

"Shrinking support from the federal government means the financial burden associated with the needed work is increasingly falling on states and local municipalities," said the Governor. "The commonwealth alone has suffered a 50 percent cut in the federal funds we had received previously to support water infrastructure. Without that needed support, our economy, environment and quality of life will suffer."

The PA Municipal Authorities Association reported the federal funds were cut \$43 million over the last three years while the General Assembly and the Rendell Administration cut funding for wastewater plants over \$324 million over the last six years.

"While I've called on Congress to restore these valuable funds, we must take steps to ensure we have reliable systems in place that deliver dependable services," said Governor Rendell. "The high-level task force I'm establishing through this executive order will focus on finding solutions to Pennsylvania's drinking water and wastewater system needs, either through new funding sources or cost-effective, non-structural alternatives.

"Pennsylvania needs a comprehensive strategy to ensure the long-term sustainability of its water infrastructure. Without one, our ability to tackle the serious environmental and economic infrastructure challenges facing our communities will be jeopardized."

Gov. Rendell's 2008-09 budget request contains no new funds to implement the Chesapeake Bay Tributary Strategy that will impose costs of up to \$1 billion on wastewater treatment plants. (*Pa Environment Digest 2/25/08*)

NewsClips: [Bucks Sewer Officials Say State Help is Needed](#)
[Editorial: Math Makes Bay Cleanup Funding Priority](#)
[Editorial: Farmers Prove Pollution Progress Attainable](#)
[Scientist Tells Crowd Bay Needs a Cleanup](#)
[Lawmaker Calls for Sewage Plant Upgrade Grants](#)
[Chesapeake Cleanup May Cost State's Residents](#)
[Discussion Highlights Divisive Debate Over Chesapeake Cleanup](#)
[PA Towns Stress Over Their Costs for Chesapeake Bay Cleanup](#)
[Bay Cleanup Costs Loom for PA](#)
[Sticker Shock Over Bay Cleanup](#)
[Millions Needed for Chesapeake Bay Sewage Treatment](#)

Chesapeake Bay Program Has Redesigned Website

The [Chesapeake Bay Program](#) has redesigned its website to provide the public with more useful, timely information about the Bay and the partnership that works for its restoration.

New offerings include a new resource library full of photos, maps and publications, increased search capabilities, expanded and updated bay content and data. Its new "get involved" section, offers many ways people can interact with the bay: from joining a local watershed group to engaging in bay-friendly practices at home, school and work.

[Stop by for a visit.](#)

PA Geologists Offer Management of Karst Groundwater Resources Seminar

On March 26 the PA Council of Professional Geologists will offer a seminar in Harrisburg on the Hydrogeology and Management of Karst Groundwater Resources at the Holiday Inn East. The course has three goals:

- Provision of a fundamental understanding of karst hydrogeology systems, their unique nature, importance and vulnerability to contamination while clarifying why karst aquifers require special investigation methods;
- Presentation of the most important methods for finding groundwater in karst systems and characterizing its movement and quality - including methods from geology, hydrology, hydrochemistry and microbiology, as well as the use of tracers, geophysics and modeling; and
- Discussion of innovative approaches to karst groundwater protection and management applicable to Pennsylvania, the Eastern US, and globally.

Guest faculty include: Dr. Nico Goldscheider, Centre for Hydrogeology (CHYN); University of Neuchâtel, Switzerland, Dr. Timothy Bechtel, University of Pennsylvania and Enviroscan, Inc. and Eric Conrad, P.G., PCPG Executive Director

[Download a brochure](#) and go to the [PA Professional Geologists website](#) for more information.

Fish & Boat Commission Funds Pittsburgh Boating Project

The Fish and Boat Commission is set to receive \$1.35 million in federal funding through the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service's [Boating Infrastructure Grant program](#). BIG provides federal funds for projects designed to accommodate transient, recreational motorboats that are 26 feet or longer.

The BIG funds awarded to the Fish and Boat Commission will be used to construct transient boat docks along the South Shore Riverfront Park in Pittsburgh. The facility will consist of a 525-foot tie-up facility for transient boaters and day dockage uses for up to 17 large, non-trailerable boats.

"This is the first time the Fish and Boat Commission was successful in securing federal funding of this magnitude through the nationally competitive part of the BIG program," Fish and Boat Commission Executive Director Dr. Douglas Austen said. "It's a very good project for Pennsylvania's boating program that will positively impact tourism and local economic activity in the Pittsburgh area for years."

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The BIG funding provided for the South Shore Riverfront Park project is just a small part of a larger multi-million dollar redevelopment effort by the Urban Redevelopment Authority of Pittsburgh.

DEP to Host Waste Management Seminar in Butler March 13

Representatives of companies that generate hazardous or residual waste can learn more about waste handling regulations during a March 13 seminar in Butler sponsored by [DEP's Northwest Regional Office](#).

The session will be held from 8:45 a.m. until 12 p.m. at the [Community Development Corporation of Butler County](#), 112 Woody Drive, and it will be hosted by the Department of Environmental Protection.

“Businesses owners and operators have a lot to follow and the goal of the seminar is to help make industrial waste handling regulations easier for managers to understand,” said DEP Regional Director Kelly Burch. “We will cover everything from proper disposal of general plant trash to hazardous waste.”

Other topics to be discussed include emergency response plans, employee training, record keeping and storage requirements.

Pre-registration is required as seating is limited. There is no registration fee.

Those who wish to attend should contact Cindy Fry by March 7 at 814-332-6848 or via fax at 814-332-6117.

Gov. Rendell Calls on Congress to Extend Renewable Energy Tax Credits

Gov. Rendell this week called on Pennsylvania's Congressional Delegation to support an eight-year extension of the renewable energy production and investment tax credits, saying a failure to do so would put thousands of jobs at risk and imperil the nation's security.

The U.S. House of Representatives could vote soon on a proposal to extend the production tax credit by three years and the investment tax credit by eight years. Long-term extensions—rather than the 1- to 2-year extensions that have been enacted previously—are necessary to assure companies eager to invest billions of dollars that the nation is committed to developing and advancing the use of clean, renewable technologies.

Gov. Rendell's letter follows:

Pennsylvania's renewable energy production industry has experienced tremendous growth since 2004, but the prospect of losing the federal investment and production tax credits available to these projects could undermine our potential for additional jobs and a more secure homeland.

The Commonwealth has attracted more than \$1 billion in private economic investments since enacting the Alternative Energy Portfolio Standards Act in 2004. These projects have created 3,000 jobs for our hardworking men and women in manufacturing, research and development, operations and maintenance, transportation and construction positions. Many of these jobs are in the solar and wind sectors.

In Pennsylvania, as in other states, many renewable energy companies are considering new projects that will create similar jobs, but firms are unwilling to commit

the billions of dollars these projects promise because of the uncertainty associated with the renewable energy tax credits. Pennsylvania alone, according to a recent study by the American Wind Energy Association and the Solar Energy Industries Association, stands to lose nearly 2,000 jobs by the end of 2009 if these credits are not renewed. Nationwide, job losses could exceed 116,000—many of which could affect the declining U.S. manufacturing sector.

The renewable energy tax credits are a valuable tool in diversifying our energy supply and moving us closer to energy independence. The tax credits help to level the playing field by making renewable energy projects financially viable and competitive with conventional sources. If we can spur the development of solar, wind, geothermal and biomass technologies, we can help meet our nation's energy needs while reducing our dependence on foreign oil, which is heavily subsidized. Simply put, our country's continued appetite for imported petroleum is putting America's interests at risk.

I urge you to support the long-term extension of the renewable energy investment and production tax credits. The proposed eight-year extension now before Congress will provide stability and reassurance to the market that the United States is committed to renewable energy technologies. That kind of commitment will lead to good-paying jobs, stronger national security, and a brighter future for America.

New Web Multimedia Portal Launched at EPA.gov

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency this week launched its new web multimedia portal: www.epa.gov/multimedia. The multimedia portal is EPA's one-stop location for environmental video, audio/podcasts, and photography.

The portal also includes interactive features such as "Ask EPA" and the Deputy Administrator's blog, "Flow of the River". Another feature called "EPA in Action" goes behind-the-scenes; following the diverse jobs performed by the EPA workforce and examines some of the most pressing environmental issues facing our nation today.

Viewing video is integrated into the site using flash player, while photos of events and EPA work will be posted in a series of online galleries. Users may also subscribe to several podcast series or select from a number of individual podcasts featuring EPA experts and senior officials.

This new multimedia portal is an important resource for the public, journalists, academia, local governments and the environmental community. The portal will help increase awareness of important news items through an intuitive, media-rich focus, rather than through traditional electronic print.

Adams Electric Will Own First Plug-In Hybrid Electric Utility Vehicle

[Adams Electric Cooperative](#), Gettysburg, Pa, will be the first utility in the United States to own and operate a Plug-In Hybrid Electric Vehicle bucket truck.

"To our knowledge," says Steve Rasmussen, Adams Electric's CEO/general manager, "no other utility has such a material-handling vehicle. That makes Adams Electric a national leader in efficiency and environmental investment. Because final assembly was done in York, Pennsylvania, it also lays the groundwork for a Pennsylvania-based service center for this technology."

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When at a job site, batteries can power all boom hydraulic functions of the aerial bucket truck as well as the climate control system for a full work day, without the use of the diesel engine. This means reduced noise from engine idle and elimination of any emissions while in battery mode. The hybrid bucket truck has a stock diesel engine and stock transmission.

DUECO, Incorporated, in conjunction with ODYNE Corporation, the leading developer of advanced Plug-In hybrid electric vehicle technology has developed the PHEV propulsion system for the vehicle that minimizes fuel use and emissions found in a typical aerial lift truck.

The batteries require an eight-hour charge time. When the truck returns to the garage at the end of a work day, it is plugged into a three-phase, 240-volt outlet. The batteries recharge during off-peak hours using lower-cost electricity. The system can also be recharged at any point with the conventional diesel engine. The system provides the fuel efficiency and emission enhancements typical of a hybrid vehicle, while the truck is traveling to and from the work site.

Fuel cost estimates for the new hybrid bucket truck are half those of a non-hybrid truck. The ability to recharge the batteries at off-peak times offers significant savings. In addition to the hybrid features of the PHEV bucket truck, the bucket can be lifted two extra feet after the boom is in place; it has a 55-foot vertical bucket reach, a 36-foot horizontal bucket reach and a 12-foot telescopic extension on the upper boom; the bucket can rotate around the boom 90 degrees; and the jib can lift 1,000 pounds. The total payload of the vehicle is 7,500 pounds.

Since its early days, the cooperative's rural roots meant promotion of energy conservation and environmental stewardship. Now the co-op has a visible method of spreading the word, with a unique hybrid color scheme and signage. The new bucket truck, a rolling billboard with an essential job function, will be a daily reminder of efficiency and conservation in the communities it serves.

Adams Electric Cooperative is a non-profit, member-owned electric utility serving over 30,000 homes, farms and businesses in the counties of Adams, Cumberland, Franklin and York.

NewsClip: [Adams Electric to Buy Hybrid Truck](#)

Emission Reduction Credit Application Amnesty Period to Expire in May

The Environmental Quality Board published regulations in May 2007 that included a one-year amnesty period for the submission of [emission reduction credit](#) applications for emission reductions generated from stationary or mobile air contamination sources between January 1, 2002, and May 19, 2007.

This amnesty period will end on May 19.

A facility owner or operator that missed the deadline to submit an ERC Registry Application to generate emission reduction credits for criteria pollutants or their precursors, such as nitrogen oxides and volatile organic compounds, may submit a complete ERC Registry Application to the DEP by May 19.

Eligible actual emission reduction techniques include the shutdown of stationary sources or facilities, permanent curtailment of production or hours of operation at a facility or the installation of new technology, materials or process equipment that is not required by the Clean Air Act, the Air Pollution Control Act or regulations adopted under the acts.

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Emission reduction credits, expressed in tons per year, may be created by a facility owner or operator if emission reductions for criteria pollutants including carbon monoxide, sulfur oxides, particulate matter (PM10 or PM2.5) and the ozone precursors, volatile organic compounds and nitrogen oxides, are permanently reduced to a level below that required to comply with regulatory requirements.

The emission reduction credits would be certified and registered to offset emission increases from proposed major new or modified stationary sources that are subject to new source review permitting regulations.

For credible emissions reductions generated after May 19, 2007, an ERC Registry Application must be submitted to the department's regional office where the emission reduction credit-generating source is located within two years of the initiation of an emissions reduction technique.

For deactivated sources or facilities, the owner or operator of an emission reduction credit-generating source or facility must submit to the department either a maintenance plan in accordance with 25 Pa. Code Section 127.11a (relating to reactivation of sources) or a written request within one year of deactivation of the source or facility to request preservation of the emissions in the inventory.

If the owner or operator of a deactivated source decides not to submit either a maintenance plan or request to preserve emissions in the inventory, the owner or operator of the emission reduction credit-generating source must submit an ERC registry application within one year of the initiation of an emissions reduction used to generate emission reduction credits.

Since 1994, the owners and operators of more than 201 facilities have submitted ERC Registry Applications. DEP has certified a total of 27,658.7 tpy of NO_x, 13,079.1 tpy of VOCs, 1195 tpy of PM10 and 43,025 tpy of SO_x credits.

The department has approved 161 separate requests for trading of a total 9,244.53 tpy of NO_x credits and 5,470.04 tpy of VOC credits, which have been used to meet offset requirements for new source growth.

Currently, there are 4,865 tpy of NO_x ERCs, 6206.76 tpy of VOC ERCs, 28,314 tpy of SO_x ERCs and 778 tpy of PM10 ERCs available in the registry for use as emission offsets or for "netting" at an existing facility. Certified emission reduction credits may also be traded for emission offset purposes.

For more information, visit [DEP's emission reduction credits webpage](#).

Expanded Access to Regulatory Documents Now Available Online Thru IRRC

The [Independent Regulatory Review Commission](#) announced new interactive features and [subscription services](#) for regulations are now available on its website.

All regulatory documents, including proposed and final regulations, public comments, legislative comments and the Commission comments and publications, are now available through the website and are keyword searchable.

Subscribers are encouraged to sign-up through the IRRC website for user-specific automatic e-mail notifications of new documents relating to regulations.

Executive Director Kim Kaufman said, "The public has come to expect that information should be open and readily available. We invite anyone with an interest in regulations to explore the new features on the IRRC website, including our email notification services."

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IRRC was created by Act 181 of 1982 (the Regulatory Review Act) to provide oversight and review of all proposed and existing rules and regulations issued by all departments, boards, commissions, agencies or other authorities of the Commonwealth, excluding the legislature, Fish and Boat Commission and Game Commission, and any court, political subdivision, or municipal or local authority.

The IRRC also acts as a clearinghouse for complaints, comments and other input regarding regulations. A copy of the agency's [February newsletter](#) is now available online.

DCNR Acquires 34-Acre Tract to Expand Lackawanna State Park

Hailing what he termed a "perfect example of strong partnerships in action," Department of Conservation and Natural Resources Secretary Michael DiBerardinis this week applauded acquisition of a 34-acre tract that expands the adjoining Lackawanna State Park in Lackawanna County.

"This acquisition is made possible through the commitment of the Countryside Conservancy which has a long history of actively preserving and protecting open space around Lackawanna State Park," Secretary DiBerardinis said. "A bucolic mix of pond, rolling fields and mixed hardwood forest now is new parkland thanks to this perfect example of strong partnerships in action."

Popularly known as the Trostle Pond tract, the new parkland is among more than 750 acres in and around the Tunkhannock Creek watershed preserved by the conservancy since its formation in 1994. The group is committed to water and open space protection in Lackawanna, Susquehanna and Wyoming counties.

"Countryside Conservancy was instrumental in protecting the land prior to DCNR's purchase," Secretary DiBerardinis said. "Had it not been preserved through conservancy efforts, there was a good chance this land would have been developed."

Extending Lackawanna State Park's northern border in Benton Township, Lackawanna County, the land acquisition buffers and protects park habitat, including watersheds feeding Lackawanna Lake and Tunkhannock Creek.

"This is a terrific outcome for us and for the park," said Mary Felley, executive director of Countryside Conservancy, which transferred ownership of the tract to DCNR in late January. The transfer price of \$226,000 was funded by Growing Greener II.

Lackawanna State Park's 1,411 acres just north of Scranton are the keystone of the four-park Lackawanna State Park Complex in Lackawanna, Wayne and Susquehanna counties. The park hosts year-round environmental education programs; ice fishing is popular on its 198-acre Lackawanna Lake. Other parks within the complex are: Prompton, 972 acres, Wayne County; Archbald Pothole, 153 acres, Lackawanna County; and Salt Spring, 400 acres, Susquehanna County.

For more details on the Trostle Pond acquisition and Lackawanna State Park, call the park office, 570-945-3239.

Help Wanted: PA Certified Organic Program

The Pennsylvania Certified Organic Program is seeking candidates to fill positions for assistant certification director, organic inspector/coordinator, organic inspector, and certification specialist. [More information available online.](#)

Feature

The Central Appalachians – The Nature Conservancy’s Four State Initiative

It would take more than a camera with a panoramic lens to capture the complete picture of the [Central Appalachian Mountains](#) which span West Virginia, Maryland, Virginia and Pennsylvania.

But for a snapshot, climb with Bill Kittrell to the top of Virginia’s 4,229-foot Warm Springs Mountain. Scrawny pitch pines at the mountain’s rocky peak offer a faint smell of turpentine, and their stunted growth allows the sun to warm your face. “You have a 360-degree view for miles,” says Kittrell, director of conservation programs for the Conservancy in Virginia. “What I see, perched atop that mountain, is this vast, undulating landscape of rich forests with an extraordinary mosaic of greens created by the variety of trees—oak and pine trees, yellowwood and basswood.



O’Conner Reservoir,
Moosic Mountain Preserve

“Then, you look down at your feet and see all these herbs and other small plants, like Gray’s lily, that have evolved to live here,” he adds. If you were standing atop that mountain with Kittrell, you might also hear the raspy cry of hawks as they circle the mountaintop, or the sounds of thousands of migratory birds, either nesting in the forest or passing through.

The scene is repeated up and down the stony spine of the Appalachians as they begin near Pennsylvania’s Moosic Mountain, northeast of Scranton, and continue south through the Dolly Sods Wilderness in West Virginia and Maryland’s Green Ridge State Forest to Virginia’s Shenandoah Valley and beyond.

In these forests and barrens, barred owls, bobcat, black bear and fisher also thrive in a variety of forest types filled with unusual plants, many of which are found nowhere else on Earth. The forests shelter cool headwater streams that provide clean water to larger rivers like the Susquehanna, Potomac and Rappahannock, sources of drinking water and recreation for millions of people in the East. The Central Appalachians also harbor mountain ponds, bogs, barrens and numerous caves, all of which provide unusual natural communities for many species.

The rugged topography and varied geology, the range of altitude, and the fact that the area was never covered by glaciers have led to plant and animal diversity that is matched in very few places on the planet, explains Nels Johnson, director of conservation programs for the Conservancy in Pennsylvania.

“More variety in species of trees, flowers and shrubs, and as a result more species of everything else—birds, mammals, butterflies,” Johnson says.

Central Appalachian Threats

Some of these rare features and species are found in the many Conservancy preserves throughout the region: Cranesville Swamp, which straddles the West Virginia and Maryland border, the Warm Springs Mountain Preserve in Virginia, and Pennsylvania’s Aitkin Cave. But these places can’t stand on their own if they become isolated by threats such as unrestrained development.

And such threats are increasing.

With major East Coast cities just a few hours away, the mountains are popular for second home development.

West Virginia has the fastest rate of second home development in the continental United States, explains Rodney Bartgis, the state director of the Conservancy in West Virginia. “Vacation homes bring deforestation, roads, invasive species and other problems,” Bartgis says.

In addition to development concerns, the region is central to the nation’s energy debate. Many parts of the region already suffer damage from coal mining. Fossil fuel alternatives, such as wind, could play a large role here, because the ridge tops of the Central Appalachians offer abundant wind—often in areas that also are critical to conservation. And there are several proposals to extend new power lines from the energy-hungry East to the coal-burning power plants of the Midwest—cutting transmission corridors through the heart of the mountains.

“It’s important for us to use all the information we have available to inform decision makers about where potential conflicts are, to minimize the conservation impact,” says Johnson.

Looming large on the horizon is the changing climate, high on the list of threats because of the profound way in which climate change can affect the rarest species, Kittrell says.

“Some of these plants and animals are already just hanging on to the tops of the mountains—they won’t be able to keep a toehold if it warms up too much. They’ll have no place to go.”

Cross-Boundary Solutions

In recent years, the Conservancy’s work has become more focused and collaborative as scientists in the four Central Appalachian states have recognized the common themes and are working together across state lines toward similar goals.

Several states are working with the U.S. Forest Service and state forest managers to change forest management practices to focus more on diversity and to introduce controlled fire to forest communities that depend on it. They’re lobbying to increase state funding for forest protection, and to develop policies to fight nonnative invasive species and insects—pests that target native forest species.

In some states, the Conservancy is targeting unique natural communities that harbor unusual species. In Pennsylvania, the Conservancy has recently focused on protecting a 50-mile band of vernal pools along South Mountain. These intermittent wetlands, which form in spring and usually disappear by late summer, are significant strongholds for amphibians that are some of the world’s most threatened species, including a halfdozen species of salamanders that breed only in these pools.

Other Pennsylvania projects include protecting and restoring barrens at the tops of ridges, and working with nearby states to assess and protect the most valuable and vulnerable caves in the ecoregion.

The challenges facing the region are great, but by working with partners, we can protect the complex diversity of the Central Appalachians for nature and people of the East.

And while the stakes are high, the payoff could be huge, says Donnelle Keech, Allegheny Project director for the Conservancy’s Maryland chapter.

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“The Central Appalachian region is a little slice of wilderness at the doorstep of one of the most populous places on Earth,” says Keech. “This is a last stand for wilderness.”

Reprinted with permission from [The Nature Conservancy PA Penn’s Woods newsletter](#).

Grants & Awards

This section gives you a heads up on upcoming deadlines for grants and financial assistance as well as nominations for awards and other recognition programs. **NEW** means from last week—

- **March 12**— [PEC Western PA Environmental Awards](#)
- **March 17**— [Community Action for a Renewed Environment Grants](#)
- **March 21**— [Society of Women Environmental Professionals Grants](#)
- **March 31** – PAEP [Karl Mason Environmental Award](#).
- **March 31**—[DEP Host Municipality Inspector Grants](#)
- **March 31**—[Pa CleanWays Litter Hawk Youth Award Program](#)
- **April 1**— [Write On! Wetlands Challenge Student Competition](#)
- **April 2** – [WREN Water Resources Education Project Grants](#)
- **April 4**— [Schuylkill River Heritage Area Mini-Grants](#)
- **April 25**— DCNR [Community Conservation Partnerships Program Grants](#)
- **May 1**— [PA CleanWays’ Sue Wiseman Student Scholarship](#)
- **May 20** – PennVEST [Infrastructure Loans/Grants for April 15 Meeting](#).
- **June 20**— DEP [Section 902 Recycling Development Grants](#)
- **NEW**. [RC&D Grants for Improving Livestock Operations](#)
- **September 20**— [Fish & Boat Commission Boating Facilities Grants](#)

[Go To: PA Environment Digest Calendar Page](#)

Quick Clips

Here’s a selection of NewsClips on environmental topics from around the state

[Op-Ed: Plan for Taking Action on Climate Change](#)

[Study Observes Insects to Explain Climate Change](#)

[Environmental Movement Finds a Place in Marketing/Promotional Plans](#)

[Toxic Chemical Pollution Declined in 2006](#)

[Lehigh County Looks to Keep Trexler Preserve Green](#)

[SEPTA’s New Theme: Go Green](#)

[LCTA Looking Into Adding Green Buses](#)

[For Week, They Won’t Take Out the Trash](#)

[KC School District Moving Ahead with Wetlands Lab](#)

[Two Institutions Are Living Laboratories of Environmentalism](#)

[Lower Makefield Considers Green Building Standards](#)

[Green Is Official Color of New PSU Buildings](#)
[Golf Courses Go Green](#)
[Governors: Black Coal Must Be Part of Green Energy Debate](#)
[Editorial: Be Realistic About Rates for Electricity](#)
[Manure-to-Energy Plant Could Increase Size of Duncannon Borough](#)
[Editorial: Duncannon Project Shows Project Siting is Lacking](#)
[DEP Demands More Information on Planned Somerset County Wind Farm](#)
[Op-Ed: Rigorous Standards Permit Wind Energy Development](#)
[Editorial: Weigh the Impact of Windmills](#)
[Firms Seek Natural Gas in Columbia County](#)
[Montour Eyed for Natural Gas Drilling](#)
[Editorial: Review Laws on Methane Gas Drilling](#)
[Geologic Feature is Battleground of Mining vs. Preservation](#)
[NRC to Discuss Review of License Renewal for TMI](#)
[Cumberland County to Help Fund Waggoner's Gap Project](#)
[Conservancy Organizes Ridge Preservation](#)
[Pennsylvania Producing Big Bucks](#)
[Hunters Support Game Commission](#)
[Wild Pheasants on the Rise in PA](#)
[PA Bat Cave Escaping White Nose Die-Off Plaguing Northeast](#)
[Communities Set to Pass Draft Pilot Growth Plan](#)
[Editorial: Cumberland Seeks Order in Development](#)
[Fulton County Discusses How to Keep Rural Community](#)
[Delaware Highlands Conservancy Hopes to Preserve 10,000 Acres](#)
[Towns Must Update Open Space Plans](#)
[Fulton County Forum to Discuss Land Preservation](#)
[Montco Gives Open Space Extension](#)
[Allegheny Forest Management Plan Gets Hard Look](#)

Watershed NewsClips

Read a sampling of NewsClips on watershed topics from around Pennsylvania.

[Editorial: Math Makes Bay Cleanup Funding Priority](#)
[Editorial: Farmers Prove Pollution Progress Attainable](#)
[Scientist Tells Crowd Bay Needs a Cleanup](#)
[Lawmaker Calls for Sewage Plant Upgrade Grants](#)
[Chesapeake Cleanup May Cost State's Residents](#)
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[Bay Cleanup Costs Loom for PA](#)
[Sticker Shock Over Bay Cleanup](#)
[Millions Needed for Chesapeake Bay Sewage Treatment](#)
[Athens Borough: Council Approves Bay Sewer Rate Increases](#)
[State Senate Candidates Weight in on Chesapeake Bay, Taxes](#)
[Meetings Focus on Septic System Maintenance](#)
[Local Group Wants to Reclaim Large Tract of County Land](#)

[Groups Seeks to Save Fry's Run](#)
[Study to Check Health of the Allegheny River](#)
[Lake Wallenpaupack Water Quality Improves](#)
[Editorial: Swatara River Runs Through It](#)
[How About Way Down Upon the Swattie River?](#)
[Trout Trucks Begin Rolling in Midstate](#)
[Flood Protection Proposal Would Cost Homeowner](#)
[Editorial: Full Upper Delaware Reservoirs Leave Little Buffer Against Flooding](#)
[Environmentally Friendly: Schuylkill AmeriCorps Volunteer](#)
[Lake Erie Water Quality Data No Longer Accurate](#)
[Rendall Halts Fish & Game Commission Board's Act to Remove Austen](#)

Regulations

The Department of Environmental Protection published [notice of proposed changes](#) to Air Quality Transportation Conformity requirements and [notice of proposed changes](#) to Scranton/ Wilkes-Barre 8-Hour Ozone Maintenance Plan.

The Independent Regulatory Review Commission [gave notice](#) that a final Environmental Quality Board regulation making changes to Radiological Health requirements was submitted for review.

[Pennsylvania Bulletin – March 1, 2008](#)

Comment Deadlines: [Technical Guidance \(DEP website\)](#)

[Copies of Proposed Regulations \(DEP website\)](#)

[Status of Regulations, 6-Month Calendar \(DEP website\)](#)

Technical Guidance & Permits

No new guidance documents were published this week.

[For copies of Draft Technical Guidance \(DEP website\)](#)

[For copies of Final Technical Guidance \(DEP website\)](#)

Calendar of Upcoming Events

Upcoming conferences, meetings, workshops, plus links to other online calendars. Meetings are in Harrisburg unless otherwise noted. **NEW** indicates new from last week.
[Go To: PA Environment Digest Calendar Page](#)

- [Revised Meeting Schedule for DEP Certification Program Advisory Committee](#)
- [Revised Meeting Schedule for Water, Wastewater Systems Operators Board](#)

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- Watch budget hearings on PCN on cable or [online through your computer](#).
- **March 1-2**— [Schuylkill Watershed Congress](#). Montgomery County Community College, Pottstown.
- **March 3**— Senate Appropriations Committee Budget Hearing – Department of Environmental Protection. Hearing Room 1, North Office Building. 3:00.
- **March 3**— [2008 Philadelphia Sustainability Awards Program](#). Philadelphia Flower Show.
- **March 4**—House Appropriations Committee budget hearing – Department of Environmental Protection. Room 140. 9:00.
- **March 4**—House Appropriations Committee budget hearing – Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. Room 140. 10:00.
- **March 4**— Senate Appropriations Committee Budget Hearing – Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. Hearing Room 1, North Office Building. 9:00. (PCN Live Coverage)
- **March 4**— Senate Appropriations Committee Budget Hearing – Department of Transportation. Hearing Room 1, North Office Building. 1:15. (PCN Live Coverage)
- **March 5**—[DEP Cleanup Standards Scientific Advisory Board](#) Risk Assessment and Vapor Intrusion Subcommittees meeting. 12th Floor Conference Room, Rachel Carson Building. 10:00.
- **March 6**— **NEW**. House Appropriations Committee Subcommittee on Fiscal Policy hearing on the Governor’s budget proposals on renewable energy, job creation and fiscal policy. Valley Forge Military Academy, Wayne. 10:00.
- **March 6**— Senate Appropriations Committee Budget Hearing – Department of Community and Economic Development. Hearing Room 1, North Office Building. 1:15.
- **March 6**—House Veterans Affairs and Emergency Preparedness Committee holds a hearing on [House Bill 1989](#) (Wansacz-D-Luzerne) establishing the PA Flood Grant and Assistance Program. Council Chamber, Scranton. 10:00.
- **March 8**— [Southeast PA Environmental Advisory Council Conference](#). Villanova University, Villanova.
- **March 11- Agenda Change**. House Intergovernmental Affairs Committee meets to consider [House Resolution 567](#) (Petri-R-Bucks) directing the Legislative Budget and Finance Committee to study intermodal transit in southeastern PA. Room 302 Irvis Building. 8:30.
- **March 11**— Senate Game and Fisheries Committee information meeting on the Game Commission’s Deer Management Program. Hearing Room 1, North Office Building. 11:00.
- **March 17**— House Republican Policy Committee hearing on electric rate cap mitigation. Room G-50 Irvis Building. 10:30.
- **March 17**—Environmental Issues Form featuring a presentation on the Northampton Generating Company co-generation plant sponsored by the [Joint Legislative Air and Water Pollution Control and Conservation Committee](#). Room 205 Ryan Building. Noon.
- **March 18**—**CANCELLED**. Environmental Quality Board meeting.

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- **March 19**— Capital Region Water Board Meeting. Susquehanna River Basin Commission Building. 1:00. Contact: Cindy Rock, Cindy.L.Rock@comcast.net or call 717-633-7959.
- **March 20**—**NEW**. House Game and Fisheries Committee meets to hear the annual report of the Game Commission. G-50 Irvis Building. 9:00.
- **March 28**— Lehigh Valley Watershed Conference and Shad Symposium. Holiday Inn, Fogelsville. Information, send email to: rkennedy@lehighconservation.org .
- **March 29**— [PennFuture’s Annual Watershed Conference](#). Chadd’s Ford.
- **April 1**—**NEW**. [DEP Environmental Justice Advisory Board](#) meeting. Room 105 Rachel Carson Building. 8:30.
- **April 1-2**— The Pennsylvania Chamber of Business and Industry 2008 [Environmental Regulations & Technologies Conference](#). Eden Resort Inn & Suites, Lancaster.
- **April 17**— Sewage Task Force, [Joint Legislative Air and Water Pollution Control and Conservation Committee](#) meeting. Penn Stater, State College. 10:00.
- **April 18**—PEC [Water Trail Working Session Conference](#).
- **April 19**— Protecting Our Headwaters Streams and Wetlands-What You Can Do. Cedar Crest College, Allentown. 10:00-3:00. Contact: Barbara Benson, 610-282-33611 or send email to: barbarabenson@bensonsails.com .
- **May 13-15**—[PA Water/Wastewater Association](#) annual conference. Valley Forge.
- **May 28**— [Western Pennsylvania Environmental Awards Program](#). Pittsburgh.

[DEP Calendar of Events](#)

[Environmental Education Workshop/Training Calendar](#)

(courtesy [PA Center for Environmental Education](#))

[Senate Committee Schedule](#) [House Committee Schedule](#)

You can watch the [Senate Floor Session](#) and [House Floor Session](#) live online.

Helpful Web Links

[PA Environment Digest Video Blog](#)

[Daily NewsClips](#) [Daily DEP Update](#) [GreenTreks Network](#)

[DEP Press Releases](#) [DEP Advisory Committee Meetings & Agendas](#)

[DCNR Resource Magazine](#) [DCNR Press Releases](#)

[Fish & Boat Commission Press Releases](#) [Game Commission Press Releases](#)

Stories Invited

Send your stories about environmental issues, programs and positive actions to *PA Environment Digest* - DHess@CrisciAssociates.com or go to www.PaEnvironmentDigest.com .

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