

— PA — Environment Digest

*An Update on
Environmental
Issues in
Pennsylvania*

Edited By David E. Hess, Crisci Associates

March 26, 2007

[PA Environment Digest Video Blog](#)

Over 150 Attend Lancaster Town Meeting on Proposal to Encourage Farm BMPs

Pennsylvania has been blessed with beautiful streams and rivers, but as a result of pollution more than 500 miles of Lancaster County waterways are on the nation's 'dirty waters' list. But more than 150 people braved rain to attend a town meeting on March 22 in Lancaster to see how they could help.

Video Blog: [Sen. Brubaker's Talks About "Setting More Seats at the Table"](#)

Video Blog: [Gary Swan, Farm Bureau, Talks About REAP and New Partnerships](#)

Video Blog: [Matt Ehrhart, CBF, Talks About Town Hall Meeting](#)

The Chesapeake Bay Foundation hosted the town hall meeting in Lancaster to discuss historic legislation that could reduce millions of pounds of pollution every year. The [Resource Enhancement and Protection Act \(REAP\)](#) proposed in the Pennsylvania legislature would provide transferable tax credits to farmers and businesses to implement conservation practices that reduce pollution.

"Passing this legislation will improve water quality in local rivers and streams, and establish Pennsylvania as a national leader in agricultural conservation," said Matt Ehrhart, CBF's Pennsylvania Executive Director. "But passage isn't certain."

Thriving, well-managed farm lands are vital to the long-term health of our rivers and streams, and to the region's economy. But farmers face skyrocketing costs and decreasing profits. Nonetheless, farmers have proven repeatedly that they want to improve water quality, but they can't shoulder the burden alone.

By installing forested buffers, fencing cattle from streams, preventing barnyard runoff, and implementing erosion control plans, farmers can better protect their farms and nearby creeks and streams, resulting in cleaner water for everyone.

Sen. Brubaker (R-Lancaster), REAP's prime sponsor in the Senate, along with Sen. O'Pake (D-Berks), said REAP is about building new partnerships between agricultural producers, environmental groups and private industry to accomplish conservation goals.

"REAP is about bringing more seats to the table," said Sen. Brubaker. "It's not about spending money, it's about making wise investments. I think people 100 years from now will think this is a wise investment."



Sen. Brubaker Address Town Hall Meeting

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Video Blog: [Sen. Brubaker’s Talks About “Setting More Seats at the Table”](#)

Glen Nephin, president of Donegal Trout Unlimited, said, “Clean streams, healthy fish and profitable farms are within our reach in Lancaster County, and the REAP program would go a long way in helping us get there.”

Gary Swan, Director of Governmental Affairs and Communications for the Pennsylvania Farm Bureau said, “Farmers want to be great stewards of the environment and they have a proud record, and we think REAP is a progressive way to advance to the next level of environmental protection in Pennsylvania.”

Video Blog: [Gary Swan Talks About REAP and New Partnerships](#)

“We need to tell our elected officials that water quality and healthy farms are important to Pennsylvania voters,” CBF’s Pennsylvania Assistant Director Kim Patten said. “This town hall meeting is an opportunity for the public to learn about the legislation and make sure that their voice is heard.”

REAP, introduced as House Bill 100 by Rep. Stern (R-Blair) and Rep. Daley (D-Washington) and as Senate Bill 690 by Sen. Brubaker (R-Lancaster) and Sen. O’Pake (D-Berks), would give farmers tax credits of up to 75 percent of the cost of installing best management practices like forested stream buffer, stream fencing and other measures.

Visit the [Resource Enhancement and Protection Act \(REAP\) webpage](#) for more information.

The Chesapeake Bay Foundation’s next REAP town meeting is March 28 in York. *(See separate article).*

NewsClip: [Officials Tout Bill to Save the Bay](#)

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Session Schedule

The Senate returns to voting session March 26 and then breaks until April 16. The House is on break and will return April 16.

[PA Environment Digest Video Blog](#)

- Go Wild! With Native Plants As You Plan Your Next Landscaping Project

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- March 28 Webcast on Internet Tools for Watershed Management

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- \$185 Million in Renewable Energy, Energy Efficiency Grants, Loans Available

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- \$150,000 Air Pollution Technology Grant to Northampton Community College
- York Town Meeting on Funding Farm BMPs Set For March 28
- Agricultural Producers, Landowners Invited to March 27 CREP Workshop
- Capital RC&D Council Sponsors Carbon Sequestration Workshop April 10
- Pennsylvania USDA-NRCS Receives \$1.4 million to Protect Farm Lands
- DRBC Announces March 27 Hearings on Proposed Plan for New York City Water
- Keystone Stream Team -- Call-for-Reviewers
- Extensive DCNR Study of Forest Vegetation Shows Deer Exacting Heavy Toll
- Comment Period Extended for Upper and Little Schuylkill River TMDL Plans
- Stocked Trout Study Gives Glimpse Into Fish Residency
- Westmoreland County Earth Day Celebration April 21 St. Vincent College
- New Public/Private Partnership Results in New Elk Visitors Center in Benezette
- PennDOT Seeks Volunteers to Expand Roadside Cleanup Effort
- Task Force Being Organized on Connecting People to Nature
- Devin Fester, Columbia County, Winner of Youth Hunter Essay Contest
- Youth Hunter Education Council Sponsors Education Challenge June 23
- Air & Waste Mgmt. Assn. Offers Environmental Ed Resources, Eassy Contest
- Dan Griffiths Appointed to DEP Energy Post
- Help Wanted – Western PA Conservancy, Countryside Conservancy

Feature

- Time is Right for Bluebird Boxes to Sprout, Box Kits Available

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

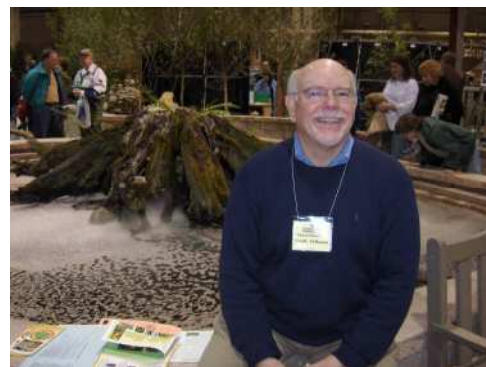
Video Blog

Go Wild! With Native Plants As You Plan Your Next Landscaping Project

Using native plants in your next landscaping project does not have to be boring and drab. Learn how you can go wild from Frank Felbaum, native plant consultant from the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources.

PA Environment Digest talked to Felbaum at the [2007 Pennsylvania Garden Expo](#) in Harrisburg earlier in the month.

The Department of Conservation & Natural Resources, the Pennsylvania Parks and Forests Foundation, the Fish and Boat Commission, the Game Commission, Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay, Audubon Pennsylvania, GTS Technologies, and landscape designer Dorteia Montaine collaborated to build an exhibit called Celebrating Pennsylvania's Native Elegance for the Expo.



Frank Felbaum

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The 65'x70' exhibit portrays Pennsylvania's indigenous plants in a formal backyard setting and incorporated conservation concepts such as rain gardens, rain barrels, compost bins, and more to complete an earth-friendly landscape.

For more information, suggested landscaping plans and plants, visit the [Garden Expo webpage](#).

Video Bog: [Go Wild! With Native Plants](#)

Link: [Audubon PA – Audubon At Home, Creating Healthy Backyard Habitats](#)

Online Training

March 28 Webcast on Internet Tools for Watershed Management

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Watershed Academy will sponsor a free webcast on [Key EPA Internet Tools for Watershed Management](#) on March 28 at 1:00 p.m..

Ansu John of Tetra Tech, Inc. will discuss EPA tools and resources that support watershed planning; management; water quality studies; training, education and public outreach on water resource issues; and the nuts and bolts of water pollution control.

Using simple screen shots and step-by-step explanations, the webcast will explain how to do queries from some key EPA water-related databases, such as water quality standards, 303(d) listed impaired waters, assessed waters, STORET (water quality monitoring) and discharge monitoring reports from permitted dischargers.

[Register for the webcast online](#).

The next free webcast will be on April 18 when Charlie MacPherson from Tetra Tech, Inc. will give a presentation on EPA's new Watershed Plan Builder Tool, which was created to provide groups with online access to an easy-to-follow watershed plan building process.

For more information, visit EPA's [Watershed Academy Webcast webpage](#).

On the Hill

On the Senate/House Agenda/Bills Introduced

The Senate will be in session the week of March 26, but the House is on break until April 16, except for committee meetings.

House

Committees: the Tourism and Recreational Development meets to consider [House Bill 221](#) (Tangretti-D-Westmoreland) providing for Historic Preservation Grants.

Senate

Calendar: [Senate Bill 356](#) (MJ.White-R-Venango) establishing the PA Center for Environmental Education in statute and [Senate Bill 637](#) (Baker-R-Luzerne) requiring Senate confirmation of the director of the PA Emergency Management Agency.

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Committees: the Appropriations Committee meets to consider [Senate Bill 355](#) (MJ.White-R-Venango) requiring additional public review of Air Quality State Implementation Plans and their publication on the Internet; and the Environmental Resources and Energy Committee holds a hearing on the nomination of Kathleen McGinty to be Secretary for Environmental Protection.

Senate/House Bills Moving

These environmental bills moved in the Senate and House last week...

Chester County Land Conveyance: [Senate Bill 21](#) (Dinniman-D-Chester) removes earlier restrictions from a state land transfer in Chester County to allow the conveyance of a property to the Natural Lands Trust.

PA Environmental Ed Center: [Senate Bill 356](#) (MJ.White-R-Venango) establishing the PA Center for Environmental Education in statute was amended and reported from the Senate Appropriations Committee and is now on the Senate Calendar for action.

Air Quality Plans: [Senate Bill 355](#) (MJ.White-R-Venango) requiring additional public review of Air Quality State Implementation Plans and their publication on the Internet was referred to Senate Appropriations.

PEMA Director: [Senate Bill 637](#) (Baker-R-Luzerne) requiring Senate confirmation of the director of the PA Emergency Management Agency was reported from Senate Veterans Affairs and Emergency Preparedness Committee and is now on the Senate Calendar for action.

Bills Introduced

Several more environmental bills were introduced this week, here's the rundown...

Affected Municipality: [Senate Bill 519](#) (Boscola-D-Lehigh) Amending Act 101 to add a definition of affected municipalities for the purposes of host benefit fees.

Waste Permits: [Senate Bill 520](#) (Boscola-D-Lehigh) Amending Act 97 to require a local referendum on certain waste facility permits.

Waste Truck Penalties: [Senate Bill 521](#) (Boscola-D-Lehigh) establishing increased penalties for vehicles carrying waste that exceed weight limits.

Housing Land Bank: [Senate Bill 533](#) (Greenleaf-R-Montgomery) authorizing the establishing of land bank programs for affordable housing.

Water Recreation: [Senate Bill 565](#) (Greenleaf-R-Montgomery) establishing the Water Recreation Advisory Board and providing for a statewide inventory of water recreation opportunities.

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Bike/Jogging Path: [Senate Bill 566](#) (Greenleaf-R-Montgomery) requiring the construction of a bike/jogging path in any State Park of 1,000 acres or more in size.

Lyme Disease Education: [Senate Bill 573](#) (Greenleaf-R-Montgomery) providing for a Lyme Disease education, prevention and treatment program.

Prototype School Design: [Senate Bill 607](#) (Waugh-R-York) requiring the Department of Education to develop prototype school designs and a new system for evaluating school designs based on health, safety, environmental protection and energy efficiency.

PA Energy Development Authority: [Senate Bill 661](#) (Wozniak-D-Cambria) providing additional authority to the PA Energy Development Authority to acquire and sell alternative energy credits, establish rebate and incentive programs for alternative energy products, acquire, hold, sell, transfer and redistribute electric power, natural gas, liquid fuels and transportation fuel and deletes the \$300 million cap on outstanding debt.

High Performance Building Tax Credit: [Senate Bill 673](#) (Ferlo-D-Allegheny) Providing a tax credit for High Performance Buildings.

Solar Energy Incentives: [Senate Bill 675](#) (Erickson-R-Delaware) establishing the Solar Energy System Incentives program to provide rebates for residential solar photovoltaic systems.

Forest Regeneration: [House Bill 849](#) (Haluska-D-Cambria) requiring that 10 percent of the revenues received from timber contracts by the Game Commission be used for forest regeneration.

Excluding Hybrids from Sales Tax: [House Bill 857](#) (DePasquale-D-York) excluding hybrid electric vehicles from Sales and Use Tax.

School Building LEED Standards: [House Bill 894](#) (Leach-D-Montgomery) authorizing additional reimbursements for school building construction which meets the LEED standards.

Coal and Air Quality Tax Credit: [House Bill 898](#) (Pyle-R-Armstrong) providing a tax credit for the installation of certain air pollution control equipment on coal-burning power plants.

Development Moratoriums: [House Bill 904](#) (Freeman-D-Lehigh) amending the Municipalities Planning Code to authorize temporary development moratoriums.

Low-Income Weatherization: [House Bill 913](#) (Vereb-R-Montgomery) authorizing an evaluation of the Low-Income Weatherization Assistance Program and providing additional funding.

Overnight Facilities: [House Resolution 164](#) (Haluska-D-Cambria) directing the Tourism and Recreational Development Committee to study and make recommendations on establishing overnight facilities in State Parks.

Senate Committee to Consider Nomination of McGinty as Secretary of DEP

The [Senate Environmental Resources and Energy Committee](#) is scheduled to hold a public hearing on March 27 on the nomination of Kathleen McGinty as Secretary for Environmental Protection.

The hearing will start at 9:30 in Room 8E-B East Wing of the Capitol.

The Committee is chaired by Sen. Mary Jo White (R-Venango) and Sen. Ray Musto (D-Luzerne).

House/Senate Local Government Committees Hear Local Government Priorities

The Senate and House Local Government Committees this week held a joint “State of Our Governments” hearing for representatives of local government groups to outline their legislative priorities for the year, including environmental issues.

The House Committee is chaired by Rep. Freeman (D-Northampton) and Rep. Saylor (R-York) and the Senate Committee chairs are Sen. Regola (R-Westmoreland) and Sen. Ferlo (D-Allegheny).

[Douglas Hill](#), Executive Director of the County Commissioners Association, said counties have a role in land use planning, farmland and open space preservation, water quality and other environmental issues, as well as other matters before the General Assembly such as the [State Planning Board Report](#), alternatives to fossil-based transportation fuels, farmland and open space preservation funding, funding for water quality initiatives such as the Chesapeake Bay Tributary Strategy, and stormwater planning funding.

Specifically, Hill said counties need legislative authorization to collect a solid waste administration fee which was recently struck down as a result of a court decision [Amy Sturges](#), Director of Governmental Affairs for the PA League of Cities and Municipalities and the PA Association of Township Commissions said PLCM consistently supports efforts to revitalize urban municipalities.

She said legislation is needed that addresses urban blight, economic investment with public and private funds, smart growth that encourages reuse of existing buildings and infrastructure rather than building new, and investment in education are very important to PLCM members, noting, “Such efforts make our communities more attractive and rebuild our tax base.”

[Elam Herr](#), Assistant Executive Director of the PA State Association of Township Supervisors, said the Agricultural, Communities and the Rural Environment (ACRE) law designed to protect farmers from illegal local ordinances should be reviewed to make sure it is being used as intended to address violations of the Right to Farm and Nutrient Management Acts.

Herr also said PSATS supports voluntary participation in multi-municipal comprehensive plans and the use of positive incentives to encourage and promote joint planning and zoning, but said there should be municipal control of planning, zoning, subdivision and other land use decisions.

PSATS requested the General Assembly look at providing municipalities with additional authority to control development through the use of concurrency – timing development through the availability of public facilities—and a simplified impact fee enactment process.

[Ed Troxell](#), Director of Government Affairs for the PA State Association of Boroughs, highlighted the need for doing more to deal with stormwater and its effects on municipalities and to amend the Urban Redevelopment Law to include boroughs.

[Douglas Bowen and Thomas Gray](#), representing the PA Municipal Authorities Association, said there needs to be an improvement in the day-to-day interaction with DEP staff which they said, “too often... (we)...are viewed in an adversarial role.” “It appears to me that the level of trust, cooperation and communication between DEP and our member authorities has eroded over the years.”

PMAA asked that the General Assembly require DEP to conduct a comprehensive cost/benefit analysis that identifies the environmental benefits and economic impacts associated with new laws, regulations or policies before they are put into effect.

They also pointed with concern to the coming lifting of electricity rate caps as an issue that must deal with. They noted electricity costs are typically the third largest expenditure by water and sewer utilities after payroll and debt service.

NewsClip: [Supreme Court Lets Stand Its Garbage Fee Ban](#)

Proposed Legislation Would Allow Temporary Moratoriums on Development

To help municipalities be in a better position to manage development and land use concerns, state Reps. Bob Freeman (D-Northampton) and Bernie O’Neill (R-Bucks) are introducing legislation that would allow municipalities to impose a temporary moratorium on development when they are in the process of rewriting their land use ordinances.

The legislation is [House Bill 904](#) and has 35 bipartisan co-sponsors.

“When a region of the state finds itself in the path of development, many municipalities in that area discover that their current land-use ordinances are terribly outdated or woefully inadequate to deal with the consequences of overwhelming rapid developmental pressures. These communities are in need of a temporary ‘time out’ from development to enact appropriate land-use ordinances to better manage and guide growth and development,” Rep. Freeman explained. “The purpose of our legislation is to ensure that municipalities in the path of rapid development get the ‘breathing space’ they need to put in place more effective land use ordinances to deal with development.”

“Municipalities around the state, especially in southeastern Pennsylvania, face numerous challenges brought on by development, including increased costs for education, infrastructure and public safety,” Rep. O’Neill said. “That is why this legislation is so important, not only to taxpayers who foot the long-term costs of development, but for future generations.”



The bill would give municipalities the authority to place a temporary moratorium on development within their boundaries for a maximum of one year while they are in the process of rewriting their land-use ordinances to better cope with development. Land-use ordinances could include a comprehensive plan, zoning ordinance, or subdivision and land development ordinance.

In the past, municipalities were able to impose temporary moratoriums on development. However, a 2001 state Supreme Court ruling struck down the use of temporary moratoriums by municipalities because there was no statutory basis for them. Under the bill authored by Reps. Freeman and O'Neill, municipalities would have the statutory authority they need under the Municipalities Planning Code to be able to use this effective growth-management tool.

"We've all seen the consequences of poorly planned sprawl development in eastern Pennsylvania," Rep. Freeman noted. "It can lead to a dramatic loss in farmland and open space, cause intense traffic congestion, result in serious storm-water runoff problems, undercut the stability of older communities, and drastically impact the quality of life in a region. With the tool of temporary moratoriums at their disposal, municipalities will be in a position to put in place better land use ordinances to ensure sustainable growth and reduce the problems of sprawl."

Other News

PECO Takes Action Early To Meet Renewable Energy Requirements

PECO this week took the first steps in fulfilling the ambitious Alternative Energy Portfolio Standards requirements enacted in 2004, through a petition filed with the Public Utility Commission.

The company's proposal could result in the same benefits to the environment as planting more than 33 million trees, not driving about 428 million miles, or removing about 28,500 cars from the road.

The AEPS legislation requires that, by 2011, 3.5 percent of the energy consumed by PECO customers is provided through renewable resources – such as wind, methane gas and biomass. With a required 1/2 percent annual increase in its renewable requirement, by 2020 PECO must ensure that renewable resources make up a total of 8 percent of the energy consumed by customers.

PECO plans to meet its initial requirements now by purchasing the equivalent of 240 megawatts (450,000 megawatt hours / year) of alternative energy credits for five years. These credits are sold by renewable energy generators on a one to one basis each time one megawatt hour of renewable energy is produced. If approved by the PUC, PECO would be the first utility in the state to take action, continuing to demonstrate the company's environmental leadership.

"By purchasing the credits now, and banking them to meet future requirements, we can take advantage of current market prices," said Denis O'Brien, president of PECO. It is estimated that the total impact of this requirement on a customer's monthly energy bill beginning in 2011 would be less than one percent. "Acting now also helps increase the



demand for renewable energy resources and reduces our state's dependency on fossil fuels," he concluded.

By 2020, the company estimates that as much as 3.3 million megawatt hours (or 1512 megawatts) of renewable resources could be needed to meet this requirement. One megawatt is enough energy to power approximately 800 - 1,000 homes.

NewsClip: [PECO Moves to Boost Alternative Energy](#)

EPA Announces 2007 Energy Star Award Winners, 4 From PA

This week the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency gave out its [2007 ENERGY STAR Awards](#) recognizing businesses and organizations, including four in Pennsylvania, for their outstanding contribution to reducing greenhouse gas emissions through energy efficiency.

The Pennsylvania winners include:

Giant Eagle, Pittsburgh: Giant Eagle ranks 32 on Forbes magazine's largest private corporations list and is now a four-time ENERGY STAR Award winner. It received the ENERGY STAR for 19 stores in 2006, bringing its total to 116 ENERGY STAR labeled stores, or 82 percent of its store portfolio.

Giant Eagle uses a comprehensive Energy Management Program across its operations. This emphasizes energy-saving strategies and technology, benchmarking facility energy use, energy commissioning, power monitoring, and energy procurement.

Giant Eagle participated in the ENERGY STAR "Change a Light, Change the World" campaign, encouraging employees and its 150,000 customers to take the energy-saving pledge. Giant Eagle also introduced an online program called Headline News for regularly reporting energy and environmental information to all levels of the organization. Monthly utility and refrigerant loss data are combined into an index number for each site, normalized for store size, then translated into an Environmental Footprint.

One management report in Headline News lists the stores with the 20 best and worst Environmental Footprints. In addition, service vendors are measured using Key Performance Indicators against corporate standards for energy and refrigerant loss variances. Vendors have access to the system to track their own KPIs.

Gorell Enterprises, Inc., Indiana: Four-time ENERGY STAR Award winner Gorell Enterprises demonstrates that continuous improvement and innovation, with a focus on energy efficiency, can really pay off.

This Sustained Excellence Award winner boasts more than 93 percent of its total sales as ENERGY STAR qualified, a tremendous accomplishment in the window industry. Those sales didn't happen by accident—Gorell's use of ENERGY STAR as the pillar of its marketing strategy certainly had a positive effect.

Extensive efforts to label products and educate consumers using print, direct mail, point-of-purchase, and Web media prove that Gorell is committed to providing highly energy-efficient windows and doors to its customers.

In addition, Gorell emphasizes training its wide network of dealers to ensure sales representatives are knowledgeable about ENERGY STAR. Gorell's commitment to energy efficiency goes beyond sales of its products. In 2006 the company supported the ENERGY STAR "Change a Light, Change the World" campaign by encouraging employees to take the pledge and change at least one incandescent bulb to an ENERGY STAR bulb.

Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency, Harrisburg: Created in 1972, the Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency is the Commonwealth's leading provider of funding for affordable rental housing. As a program administrator, the agency sets criteria used to allocate agency funds and tax credits via a competitive application process that uses points to quantify the merits of each proposal.

PHFA made impressive and rapid progress in rewarding development projects that demonstrate a strong energy-efficiency component. In 2005 the agency began offering points to developments featuring ENERGY STAR qualified appliances and mechanical equipment.

In 2006 additional points were awarded to developments verified to meet or exceed ENERGY STAR guidelines. The agency recently announced a new demonstration program that will require all new affordable dwellings to bear the ENERGY STAR label.

Philadelphia Housing Authority, Philadelphia: In 2005 the Philadelphia Housing Authority proactively responded to spiraling energy costs by developing a plan to reduce energy consumption at all residential properties and office facilities.

One significant element of PHA's plan is an ENERGY STAR Homes demonstration project, which has begun to systematically change the way PHA builds low-income housing. This project includes 64 townhouse units that will qualify for the ENERGY STAR label and save each household an average of more than \$500 per year.

The project has also provided PHA staff, architects, engineers, and builders hands-on experience and hard data about energy-efficient construction. In 2006 the Department of Environmental Protection announced funding for a grant that will help PHA build more ENERGY STAR qualified homes.

In 2006 alone, Americans with the help of ENERGY STAR saved \$14 billion on their energy bills and avoided greenhouse gas emissions equivalent to those of 25 million vehicles.

To date, more than 2 billion ENERGY STAR qualified products have been sold, and more than 725,000 new homes and 3,200 office buildings, schools, hospitals, and public buildings have earned the ENERGY STAR label. Qualified products, homes, and buildings provide the quality, features, and personal comfort today's consumers expect.

To learn more, visit the [EPA ENERGY STAR Partner webpage](#).

\$185 Million in Renewable Energy, Energy Efficiency Grants, Loans Available

The U.S. Department of Agriculture has announced the availability of \$176.5 million in loan guarantees and \$11.4 million in grants to support investments in renewable energy and energy efficiency improvements by agricultural producers and small businesses.

Grant applications are due May 18. The deadline for loan applications as well as for loan and grant combinations is July 2.

The Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency loan and grant program was established under Section 9006 of the 2002 Farm Bill. It provides loan guarantees and grants to agricultural producers and rural small businesses for the purchase and installation of renewable energy systems or for energy efficiency improvements.

For more information, visit the energy program please go to the [Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Program webpage](#) or view the [March 22 Federal Register Notice](#).

Free Alternative and Renewable Energy Educator Workshops May, June

A series of four free workshops for educators entitled Introductory Alternative and Renewable Energy will be held in May and June co-sponsored by PPL Corp., Penn State University, [McKeever Environmental Learning Center](#) and the Department of Environmental Protection.

The workshops are set for--

- May 15 - Holtwood Environmental Center, Holtwood (in partnership with PPL Corp.);
- June 8 - Applied Science Building, Penn State University, University Park (in partnership with Penn State's Applied Research Laboratory and Center for Sustainability);
- June 14 – 15 - McKeever Environmental Learning Center, Sandy Lake (in partnership with McKeever Environmental Learning Center); and
- June 21- DEP's Southeast Regional Office, Norristown.

The workshops will be held from 8:30 a.m. – 4 p.m. (lunch and refreshments included). Teachers will be eligible for 7.0 Act 48 credit hours.

Workshop participants will learn about and explore alternative and renewable energy technologies through presentations, hands-on activities and field trips to see alternative energy technology in action.

The workshop is geared for upper elementary, middle and high school teachers and non-formal educators and is based upon Pennsylvania's Academic Standards for Environment and Ecology and Science and Technology.

This year, there will be an optional evening session on June 14 at the McKeever Environmental Learning Center from 5:30 p.m. – 9 p.m. (dinner and refreshments included). For educators who attend this optional evening session, overnight accommodations are available, as well as, 2.5 additional Act 48 credit hours.

"This workshop is designed to help educators address state mandated academic standards for environment/ecology and science/technology, while focusing on an important and pressing environmental issue," DEP's Director of Environmental Education Jack Farster said.

To register for one of the Introductory Alternative and Renewable Energy workshops, educators should contact Ann Devine, in DEP's Environmental Education and Information Center, at 717-772-1644 or E-mail adevine@state.pa.us by May 1. Space is limited. Registrations will be accepted on a first-come, first-serve basis.

\$150,000 Air Pollution Technology Grant to Northampton Community College

The Department of Environmental Protection this week awarded a \$150,000 grant to the [Electrotechnology Application Center](#) at Northampton Community College in Bethlehem, Northampton County.

The Center helps small businesses, principally manufacturers, implement new electron beam technology to reduce air pollution.

The Small Business Demonstration of Air Pollution Control Program grant will fund demonstrations of state-of-the-art technologies using electron beams to reduce



emissions of volatile organic compounds, or VOCs, that are used in heating, drying, coating and curing processes.

Lab tests show electron beam technology can destroy many VOCs and do so using less energy than other methods. This grant will test the applicability of electron beams in actual factory environments.

Controlling these emissions is particularly important to companies using paints and other coatings on various manufactured products. Volatile organic compounds are precursors to the formation of ground level ozone which can cause breathing difficulties for people with existing conditions such as asthma, and can exacerbate other health problems.

The [Electrotechnology Application Center](#) is the only not-for-profit organization in Pennsylvania that has an operating mission to help small businesses reduce VOC emissions to comply with federal and state government air quality standards.

York Town Meeting on Funding Farm BMPs Set For March 28



On March 28, the Chesapeake Bay Foundation will sponsor a town hall meeting in York to discuss how Pennsylvania can encourage farmers to install best management practices on farms through the proposed [Resource Enhancement and Protection Act \(REAP\)](#).

This year Pennsylvania's legislators have an historic opportunity to reduce pollution, protect the Commonwealth's waterways and strengthen our economy by giving farmers better tools to reduce

nutrient and sediment runoff.

REAP, introduced as House Bill 100 by Rep. Stern (R-Blair) and Rep. Daley (D-Washington) and as Senate Bill 690 by Sen. Brubaker (R-Lancaster), Sen. O'Pake (D-Berks) and Sen. Mike Waugh (R-York) would give farmers tax credits of up to 75 percent of the cost of installing best management practices like forested stream buffer, stream fencing and other measures.

"I applaud the REAP initiative because it will be a benefit to both farmers and the environment," said Vice Chairman of the Senate Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee, Sen. Mike Waugh.

Pennsylvania has over 13,400 miles of rivers and streams that do not meet water quality standards and REAP is another tool that can help reduce pollution going into these streams and help the Commonwealth meet its commitment to cleaning up the Chesapeake Bay.

The March 28 town hall meeting will be held at the Good Will Fire Company #1, 1 South Main Street, Jacobus, PA. The meeting will begin at 6:30 p.m.

This is one of a series of town hall meetings the Bay Foundation is sponsoring to educate farmers, watershed groups and other interested citizens on this important issue.

RSVP to Trudy Uffleman by sending email to: REAP@cbf.org.

Visit the [Resource Enhancement and Protection Act \(REAP\) webpage](#) for more information.

Video Blog: [REAP Promotes Clean Drinking Water](#)

Video Blog: [Stern Sponsors Innovative Approach to Reduce Nutrients](#)

Video Blog: [Daley on Water Quality Challenges Faced by Farmers](#)

Video Blog: [Helping Farmers Help the Environment](#)

Video Blog: [Help Farmers Help the Environment –Senate Ag Committee](#)

Agricultural Producers, Landowners Invited to March 27 CREP Workshop

Agricultural producers and landowners are invited to a workshop on the [Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program](#) hosted by Crawford and Erie county FSA, NRCS, Western PA Conservancy, and Conservation District offices.

The forum will be held from noon to 3:30 p.m. at the American Legion Post 381 in Cambridge Springs, PA. Pre-registration is appreciated, but not required.

The purpose of the program is to inform interested landowners about the CREP program, as well as answer questions about sign up, eligible practices, potential rental payments, etc. The forum will include presentations on the ins and outs of CREP, herd health benefits, and financial benefits to landowners.

The Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program is a voluntary land retirement program that helps agricultural producers protect environmentally sensitive land, decrease erosion, restore wildlife habitat, and safeguard ground and surface water.

The program is a partnership among producers; tribal, state, and federal governments; and, in some cases, private groups. CREP is an offshoot of the country's largest private-lands environmental improvement program - the Conservation Reserve Program.

For more information call 814-825-6403 in Erie County or 814-336-2127 x2 in Crawford County.

Capital RC&D Council Sponsors Carbon Sequestration Workshop April 10

The Capital RC&D Council is sponsoring a workshop for Mid-Atlantic RC&D Council Coordinators, members and partners to learn more about the carbon trading market, as well as to hear about what several RC&D Councils have done to develop their potential as service providers/aggregators to their constituents.

The workshop will take place on April 10 from 9:30 a.m. until 3:45 p.m. at Penn State Harrisburg in Middletown, PA.

For more information, contact Susan Parry, Coordinator, Capital Resource Conservation and Development Area Council, Inc., 108-109 Church Hall, Penn State Harrisburg, 777 West Harrisburg Pike, Middletown, PA 17057. Office Phone: 717-948-6633 or send email to: susan.parry@pa.usda.gov .

Pennsylvania USDA-NRCS Receives \$1.4 million to Protect Farm Lands

USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service State Conservationist Craig Derickson has announced the availability of nearly \$1.4 million to protect farmland in Pennsylvania through the [Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program](#) in fiscal year 2007.

Proposals are due April 27.

"Preserving Pennsylvania's prime agricultural lands helps ensure a vibrant future for American agriculture," said Derickson. "Once protected by conservation easements,

this land will be shielded from development pressure and continue to support our safe and abundant food supply."

NRCS is seeking proposals from local governments, non-governmental organizations, state agencies and federally recognized tribal groups interested in working together to acquire conservation easements on farms and ranches. The Pennsylvania NRCS State Office must receive proposals by 5:00 p.m. on April 27, 2007. NRCS is expected to announce final project selections in June.

Since the program's inception in 1996, FRPP has contributed to protection of more than 38,000 acres of farm land in Pennsylvania. FRPP protects productive agricultural land by purchasing conservation easements to limit conversion of farm and ranch lands to non-agricultural uses.

In this voluntary program, NRCS provides up to 50 percent of the appraised fair market value of the conservation easement; State and local entities are required to contribute at least a 25 percent cash match.

For other eligibility and application requirements, visit the [Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program webpage](#) or contact Martha Joseph, Pennsylvania FRPP State Program Manager at 814-796-6760, ext. 114.

DRBC Announces March 27 Hearings on Proposed Plan for New York City Water

The [Delaware River Basin Commission](#) will hold two hearings on March 27 to give the public an opportunity to provide feedback on the proposed Flexible Flow Management Plan for operation of the three New York City Delaware Basin reservoirs.

The public hearings will take place at 2:30 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. at the Lake Wallenpaupack Environmental Learning Center, PPL Drive (off Route 6), in Hawley, Pa. An informational meeting will be held at 1 p.m. at the same location. The 6:30 p.m. hearing will open with a brief informational presentation prior to the receiving of public comments.

The proposal would establish a FFMP for the Cannonsville, Pepacton, and Neversink reservoirs for multiple objectives, including water supply and drought mitigation, management of the reservoir tailwater fisheries and other habitat needs, and spill mitigation. The proposed FFMP was submitted to the DRBC by the five parties to the U.S. Supreme Court Decree of 1954, which include Delaware, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, New York State, and New York City.

"The DRBC may modify diversions, releases, rights, conditions, and obligations established by the decree, provided that the five decree parties unanimously consent to such modifications," DRBC Executive Director Carol R. Collier said. "The commission, however, does not have the authority to independently make such modifications."

The DRBC and decree parties have previously modified the decree to respond to fluctuating hydrologic conditions and evolving priorities since the commission was created in 1961. Two such modifications now in effect – the three-year interim fisheries protection program and a temporary spill mitigation program – are set to expire on May 31.

A central feature of the current fishery management program has been the creation of reservoir storage "banks" to be used for narrowly defined purposes under specific hydrologic and temperature conditions at certain times of the year.

The proposed FFMP would largely eliminate the use of banks and base releases instead on reservoir storage levels, resulting in larger releases when water is abundant and

smaller releases when storage is at or below normal. This approach would more closely approximate natural flows and provide more gradual transitions from higher to lower releases, which has been a concern voiced in the past by Upper Delaware anglers.

The proposal's spill mitigation component is intended to reduce the likelihood that the three reservoirs could be full and spilling coincident with a major storm or thaw.

Written comments will be accepted until April 6 and should be mailed to: Commission Secretary, DRBC, P.O. Box 7360, 25 State Police Drive, West Trenton, NJ 08628-0360. Comments also may be faxed to "Attn: Commission Secretary" at 609-883-9522 or emailed to paula.schmitt@drbc.state.nj.us. All written comments should include the name, address, and affiliation (if any) of the commenter.

The proposed FFMP and directions to the public hearings/meeting, along with additional information, can be found on the [Delaware River Basin Commission website](#).

Keystone Stream Team -- Call-for-Reviewers

The [Keystone Stream Team](#) Guidelines Revision Workgroup is seeking assistance from Watershed Association members in their revision of the Natural Stream Channel Design Guidelines for Pennsylvania Waterways.

The workgroup is seeking three watershed association representatives willing to review the revised guidelines and provide comments and suggested changes.

Call-for-Reviewers will also be sent to all DEP Watershed Managers and Watershed Specialists. Please contact Peter Petokas directly if you have questions at petokas@lycoming.edu or 570-321-4006.

Extensive DCNR Study of Forest Vegetation Shows Deer Exacting Heavy Toll

Preliminary findings from ongoing, extensive [state forest studies](#) of the effect of white-tailed deer populations on woodland regeneration show habitat damage is the heaviest in the north central and Pocono Mountains areas of the state, Department of Conservation and Natural Resources Secretary Michael DiBerardinis said this week.



"Like our past surveys from the air, this unprecedented study on the ground of what deer eat, or browse, is proving to be an invaluable tool in understanding deer densities and distribution in our state forestlands, and it is guiding future DCNR efforts to ensure forest regeneration and healthy habitat," said Secretary DiBerardinis.

"And, like those aerial counts, these browse-study findings are just a single snapshot in time, incapable of documenting whether forest habitat health is improving or declining. They will, however, provide a meaningful baseline to compare in future trend analyses."

The browse studies, which were conducted last year and covered almost 90 percent of the state forest system, showed findings the secretary deemed "troubling."

"Across the entire state forest system, less than 25 percent of the 41,650 plots showed desirable regeneration, and almost 45 percent of the plots lacked any new, woody

growth," Secretary DiBerardinis said. "The problem is more acute in the state's north central 'big woods' section where almost 50 percent of the study plots show no woody regeneration and only about 20 percent desirable regeneration. The most severely browsed habitats were documented in the north central and Pocono regions of the state.

"For these reasons, it would be premature to draw any conclusions that would support an increased deer herd, even in areas where we observed relatively low-browse damage," Secretary DiBerardinis said.

The secretary applauded the commitment of Bureau of Forestry personnel from 19 of the state's 20 state forest districts who undertook the browse studies during early spring in 2006.

"Never has there been an undertaking of this magnitude in which data from 1,600 miles of transects was entered into the bureau database for analysis," said DiBerardinis. "These researchers are foresters first, but they also are hunters and naturalists and all are dedicated to restoring forests to a healthy level where deer and other wildlife have sufficient food and cover."

"We will use this detailed vegetation analysis in conjunction with past aerial surveys to help guide our management decisions and adjust our efforts to steer hunters to certain state forest areas in the 2007-2008 hunting season," Secretary DiBerardinis said.

Transects, which are lines for ecological measurements, were spaced two miles apart. They were sampled by visiting vegetative plots every 200 feet, recording woody species, and assigning a browsing category to that species at that plot. Also, presence or absence data was recorded for "desirable" and "undesirable" woody vegetation at every plot.

Woody plants include trees, shrubs and vines. Woody plants dominate the vegetation wherever conditions are favorable for plant growth. Deer feed on the leaves, twigs and buds of these plants.

Other survey findings include:

- Data gathered aided in development of a preliminary deer-browsing preference index for woody species observed, which will help guide future monitoring efforts and provide browse intensity indicators;
- Across the state, the proportion of plots with desirable regeneration (24.45 percent) and lack of woody regeneration (44.45 percent) indicate browsing has not been suppressed long enough for a widespread regeneration response;
- Identifying browsing impact from lowest to most severe, the Forest Districts ranked as follows: relatively lightly browsed with better regeneration - Lackawanna, Buchanan, Michaux, Tiadaghton, Tuscarora, Gallitzin, and Cornplanter; relatively moderately browsed with less regeneration - Moshannon, Susquehannock, Rothrock, Forbes, Bald Eagle, and Tioga; relatively severely browsed with poor regeneration - Weiser, Kittanning, Wyoming, Sproul, Delaware and Elk; and
- Monitoring will should continue to locate other areas of continued excessive browsing where deer harvests should be increased, and these efforts will be coordinated in the State Forest Management Plan.

Details on the 2006 state forest deer browse study, visit [DCNR Deer In Pennsylvania's Forests webpage](#).

Comment Period Extended for Upper and Little Schuylkill River TMDL Plans

The Department of Environmental Protection [published notices](#) extending the comment periods on the Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) Plan for the Upper Schuylkill Watershed and the Little Schuylkill Watershed.

In both cases, public comments are now due March 30.

For more information contact James Andrews, DEP, 570-621-3118 or send email to: jameandrew@state.pa.us and go to [DEP's TMDL webpage](#).

Stocked Trout Study Gives Glimpse Into Fish Residency



Anglers counting down the days to the [opening of trout season](#) and their first crack at the bigger trout being stocked this year by the Fish and Boat Commission can count on finding fish.

A [study conducted last spring](#) on trout residency in the days following stocking indicates that for the vast majority of waters, hatchery trout distribute themselves within proximity of the stocking site.

The 2006 study involved 135 stream sections that were evaluated using electrofishing at randomly selected stocking sites 10-20 days after stocking and the start of the open season. (Electrofishing is a common fisheries survey process which passes a mild electric current through water, drawing in fish so that they can be evaluated.) The intent of the study was to determine the percentage of the stocked trout remaining within 300 meters of the stocking points.

In all, 259 samples were taken and scored as excellent (>90 percent recaptured), good (75 percent - 89.9 percent), fair (40 percent - 74.9 percent), poor (19 percent - 39.9 percent) or very poor (<9.9 percent). The results: 72 percent of the sites studied held numbers of trout that were excellent, good or fair.

That should be reassuring news for trout anglers, says Tom Greene, Coldwater Unit Leader for the PFBC. “We don’t want all trout staying right at the stocking point, nor do we want them traveling too far. Seeing the number of fish we collected within 300 meters of stocking sites is a good indication that we’re getting an appropriate amount of dispersal on most stocked waters,” said Greene.

Not surprisingly, streams that had a great number of fallen logs, undercuts banks and boulders with few erosion problems tended to provide higher recapture rates than waters without those habitat features. However, there was enough variability in the recapture rates in these streams that fisheries biologists say habitat structure factors alone were not the only things affecting how many trout stayed within the sampling sites. In fact, the study suggests that no single variable appears to determine how many trout stay near the point of release.

While seven sub-basins sample showed no poor or very poor sites, Greene said that excellent to very poor sites occurred throughout the state. “There was no discernable pattern of trout re-captures rates on a statewide basis,” he said.

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For example: In sub-basin 9, a drainage that is part of the West Branch of the Susquehanna River basin, four of nine sites showed poor recapture rates. However three sites there had recapture rates in excess of 90 percent.

In attempting to look for patterns, the Commission cross referenced its finding on the percentage of fish recaptured with variables in stocking such as water temperatures, pH and total alkalinity between hatcheries, truck tanks and the receiving streams. No significant influences were found. Factors such as transportation time from hatcheries to the water the numbers of stops made along the way or the density of trout in each tank showed no significant differences.

Likewise, the Commission found no single factor that would explain the relative absence of stocked trout in those waters that returned poor or very poor recapture rates. Streams in sub-basin 8 of the West Branch of the Susquehanna River had relatively low recapture rates. Of the eight sample sites in sub-basin 8, six were below the 40 percent recapture rate. A portion of sub-basin 4 (the upper North Branch of the Susquehanna River basin) also showed localized poor trout recaptures. Those sub-basins are known to be vulnerable to acid precipitation and pH has been observed to be a factor affecting trout residency. However, that relationship was weak based on the 2006 data.

In 2007 Commission biologists will continue to study trout residency, but will concentrate on revisiting the waters sampled in 2006 that had low recapture rates. If results from the 2007 data suggest that changes in the stocking program on some streams are needed, options could include stocking trout just prior to opening day or stocking only during the open season.

Daryl Pierce, a Commission biologist who was lead author of the 2006 study report, said the collection of additional data will give fisheries managers more information to consider. “Even if a sample site had poor or very poor retention of stocked trout in 2006, this does not imply that the entire stream or even the section is poor water for trout or trout fishing. Our sample sites encompass a relatively small distance, when given some of the sizes of the sections that we stock; the planted trout might just have simply moved to the nearest pool that was outside of our sampling area.”

The ongoing study of stocked trout residency is part of an agency strategic initiative to re-engineer trout fishing opportunities. Improvements such as consolidating special trout regulation programs, stocking of larger hatchery trout, providing specific details on stockings during the open season and an earlier opening day in those areas of the Commonwealth that warm sooner in the spring are all results of this process.

"Trout stocking is one of the most valued services the Commission provides to anglers. So making sure we get the best possible recreational use for the millions of adult trout we are producing is essential. Evaluating when, why and where trout move after stocking will have a direct impact on how we manage stocked trout going into the future," said Dr. Doug Austen, PFBC Executive Director.

[The complete study is available online.](#)

Westmoreland County Earth Day Celebration April 21 St. Vincent College

More than 80 organizations are participating in [Westmoreland County's Earth Day](#) celebration at St. Vincent's College on April 21 from noon until 5:00 p.m.

The celebration will feature live shows, educational displays and lots of other activities in the Robert S. Carey Center and the college auditorium.

For more information, visit the special [Westmoreland Earth Day webpage](#).

New Public/Private Partnership Results in New Elk Visitors Center in Benezette

Gov. Rendell this week announced a partnership with the [Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation](#) that will create the largest elk watching and conservation education center in the eastern United States in Benezette Township, Elk County.

"Pennsylvania's wild elk herd, the largest in the Northeast, brings more than 75,000 visitors to the [Pennsylvania Wilds](#) each fall," Gov.

Rendell said. "This new center will give us additional opportunities to reach out to new visitors, give them a wonderful outdoor experience and share the story of the conservation efforts that have restored the elk herd, and many other natural and wild areas in Pennsylvania."

A 30-year partnership agreement with the foundation, one of the country's premier conservation organizations, will result in the construction of the 7,000-square foot facility that will include interpretive exhibits, wildlife trails and viewing blinds, year-round restrooms and parking for cars and buses.

Under the partnership agreement with the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, the commonwealth will provide \$5 million in Public Improvement Project funds for construction of the center. The foundation will initially invest \$2 million for the land purchase and the center's exhibits in addition to committing an estimated \$5.6 million over 30 years for the operation of the facility.

"The Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation recognizes the need for individuals to experience wildlife and wild places," said Peter J. Dart, president and CEO of the Montana-based Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation. "The new visitor center will provide the opportunity to educate a broader audience about habitat conservation and Pennsylvania's wild elk. All of us at the Elk Foundation value our partnership with the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and look forward to continuing our work in Pennsylvania's elk country."

During the past year, site planning and market feasibility studies for the center were completed. Completion of the center's design is expected by the end of this year. Construction completion is projected for spring 2009.

The Pennsylvania Wilds covers Cameron, Clarion, Clearfield, Clinton, Elk, Forest, Jefferson, Lycoming, McKean, Potter, Tioga and Warren counties.

For more information on the [Pennsylvania Wilds](#) and the [Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation](#).



PennDOT Seeks Volunteers to Expand Roadside Cleanup Effort

PennDOT is expanding its already successful adopt-a-highway program and is calling on volunteers to participate in this year's "[Great Pennsylvania Cleanup](#)" on April 21.

The adopt-a-highway program started in 1990 and now has some 7,100 participating groups and organizations. Participating groups agree to adopt a section of a roadway for two years and collect litter on it at least four times a year. According to PennDOT, more than 17,000 miles of state roads are currently adopted.

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"[Adopt-a-highway](#) makes a huge difference in Pennsylvania's ability to keep its highways as free from litter as possible," said PennDOT Secretary Allen D. Biehler, P.E. "We thank these groups for their participation and welcome new volunteers to this worthwhile effort."

PennDOT encourages its adopt-a-highway volunteers to do one of the four cleanups on the same day as the Great Pennsylvania Cleanup.

The annual cleanup is the largest, state-administered, volunteer effort in the nation. Last year, 132,000 volunteers joined in the litter pick-up effort and gathered more than 312,000 bags, or 6.7 million pounds, of trash. PennDOT provides volunteers participating in the annual cleanup with orange safety vests, work gloves and garbage bags.

While adopt-a-highway groups concentrate on removing trash from Pennsylvania roads, Great Pennsylvania Cleanup volunteers agree to remove litter from wherever they choose, such as roads, parks, streams or playgrounds.

PennDOT estimates it spends about \$11.5 million annually in personnel and material costs to remove roadside litter.

Groups interested in adopting a section of highway are encouraged to contact their local PennDOT county maintenance office and ask for the adopt-a-highway coordinator, or visit the [Adopt-a-highway webpage](#) or the [Great Pennsylvania Cleanup](#) webpages.

Task Force Being Organized on Connecting People to Nature

One outcome of the [Governor's Outdoor Conference](#) this week was the announcement by Gov. Rendell that he is appointing a task force to organize and coordinate five statewide public meetings to present findings from the conference and solicit additional ideas and recommendations about keeping people connected to nature.

The task force will be co-chaired by Fish and Boat Commission Executive Director Dr. Douglas Austen and Caren Glotfelty, who directs the Heinz Foundation's Environment Program.

"The Outdoor Conference was the first step toward addressing disturbing trends that indicate the bond between our citizens and our bountiful natural resources is weakening," Gov. Rendell said. "We realize that we have only begun the work to solve these issues with this three-day conference, so we are committing to follow up the conference by engaging the public in a broader dialogue.

"I am expecting that information gleaned from the conference and the post-conference meetings will be incorporated into a final report with recommendations for action and be presented to me by the end of this year," the Governor said.

The public meetings will be held in late spring in Erie, Harrisburg, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh and Scranton.

"The conference participants did an excellent job laying a foundation for a broader conversation about protecting and enhancing our natural heritage and relationship with the outdoors," Gov. Rendell said. "These issues have the potential to impact so many things, including children's health, the vitality of our rural areas, our quality of life and the future of the state's billion-dollar hunting industry."

Approximately 300 people, including policy makers, business representatives, sportsmen's groups, conservation organizations and representatives of the health and education sectors, participated in the first-of-its-kind Governor's Outdoor Conference in State College.

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The conference included panel discussions around issues, trends and impacts on the first full day, and interactive workshops that explored solutions on the second day.

The [conference website](#) will provide full access to the information presented at the conference once it is processed. Online forums will continue to provide opportunities to engage in a discussion about improving connections between Pennsylvanians and the outdoors.

NewsClip: [PA Officials, Industry Leaders Stress Outdoors Participation](#)

Devin Fester, Columbia County, Winner of Youth Hunter Essay Contest

Devin D. Fester, of Bloomsburg, Columbia County, is headed for summer school and, unlike most youngsters facing that task, he just can't wait to get started. Fester, 16, is the grand-prize winner of the Pennsylvania Game Commission's 2006 Youth Hunter Education Essay Contest.

[Fester's essay is available online.](#)

As the top entry, Fester was awarded a scholarship to the Safari Club International's Apprentice Hunter Camp at the Indianhead Ranch in Del Rio, Texas. Safari Club International Region 25 (Pa. chapters) donated the grand prize.

First prize honors went to Andrew M. Straw, 16, of Curwensville, Clearfield County. He will receive a .50 caliber Traditions muzzleloading rifle.

Finishing second through fourth place were: Chase J. Miller, 13, Berlin, Somerset County, who was awarded a Garmen etrex GPS; Benjamin L. Sell, 14, Coopersburg, Lehigh County, who was awarded a limited-edition Buck Knife; and Jason R. Pollock, 15, Clarks Summit, Lackawanna County, who was awarded a Sightron 10x42 binoculars.

First through fourth place prizes were donated by: Traditions, Grice Gun Shop of Clearfield, Buck Knives and Sightron, respectively.

The theme for the 2006 contest was: "What will hunting be like in the future?"

Every contest entrant received a Game Commission "Working Together for Wildlife" embroidered patch. Winners were recognized at the January meeting of the Board of Game Commissioners in Harrisburg.

The Essay Contest is open to youngsters who are Pennsylvania residents, have successfully completed a hunter-trapper education course and possess a current hunting or furtaking license.

Details for the 2007 Essay Contest will be included in the 2007-08 Pennsylvania Digest of Hunting and Trapping Regulations, a future edition of Pennsylvania Game News magazine and on the [Game Commission's website](#).



Devin Fester (2nd from Left), Carol Roe, Game Commission E.D., Thomas Boop, President of Board, Philip Luckenbaugh, Education Division

Youth Hunter Education Council Sponsors Education Challenge June 23

The [Pennsylvania Youth Hunter Education Challenge Council](#), with the support of the Game Commission, will hold the 22nd Pennsylvania Youth Hunter Education Challenge on June 23, at Scotia Range on State Game Land 176, just outside State College, Centre County.

Following the selection of the Pennsylvania team, a practice weekend will be held on July 7-8, at the Southern Clinton County Sportsmen's Club to prepare to go to the NRA's Whittington Center for the International Youth Hunter Education Challenge to be held July 23-27.

Anyone planning on going to the International Event will be welcome at the practice weekend. Individuals and teams of five young people from 11- to 18-years-old are welcome to compete at the State Event.

For more Information please contact Charlie Fox at 570-297-4642, (fax) 570-297-5131, or send email to: eef@epix.net , or visit the [YHEC website](#).

Air & Waste Mgmt. Assn. Offers Environmental Ed Resources, Eassy Contest

The Pittsburgh-based [Air & Waste Management Association](#) is offering its award-winning [Environmental Education Resource Guides](#) and other environmental learning tools to K-12 classrooms -- a perfect science curriculum addition for Earth Week studies.

"Understanding the science behind environmental challenges is the first step to solving environmental problems," said Adrienne Carolla, A&WMA Executive Director. "We have invested our knowledge and expertise in these classroom tools, which are designed to inspire a new generation of environmental professionals."

Each EERG includes approximately 15 lessons with clearly stated educational objectives, background information, and activities that can be integrated into general science, language arts, math, social studies, and other classroom topics.

The series is designed to develop critical thinking skills including observation, comparison, analysis, and problem solving. Lesson plans were written and field-tested by classroom teachers. In addition, the content has been extensively reviewed for technical accuracy by A&WMA members and other leading experts.

In total, the award-winning series includes four modules each on air quality and non-point source pollution, organized by grade level. Air quality lessons for grades 6-8 are available in French and Spanish, and non-point source pollution for grades 6-8 is available in Spanish.

The [Environmental Education Resource Guides](#) are available online.

High School Essay Contest

As part of its centennial celebration, A&WMA is also sponsoring a high school essay contest for students in grades 9-12. Participants are asked to focus on the theme, "The Next 100 Years: Women's Contributions to Environmental Sustainability," choose a woman who has made a contribution to the environment, and compose an essay on how her work may benefit the environment in the next 100 years.

Three copies of each essay should be sent to A&WMA High School Essay Contest, c/o Pamela Heckel, 488 Compton Rd., Wyoming, OH 45215-4115, by May 4. Winners at each grade level will receive \$100, to be awarded at a ceremony during A&WMA's annual meeting June 26-29 in Pittsburgh.

[A&WMA](#) also offers environmental tip calendars, information booklets and fact sheets.

Dan Griffiths Appointed to DEP Energy Post

DEP Secretary Kathleen McGinty this week announced the appointment of Dan Griffiths as the director of DEP's Bureau of Energy, Innovations and Technology Deployment in the Office of Energy and Technology Deployment.

Most recently, Griffiths served as senior analyst in the Pennsylvania Office of Consumer Advocate. During his tenure at the Office of Consumer Advocate he represented consumer interests through various PJM committee assignments as well as before the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. He also developed departmental policy related to renewable energy as well as distributed and demand-side resources.

Over the course of 18 years in the public sector, he served in a variety of positions at the Public Utility Commission. Specifically, he was a Commissioner's energy assistant, and manager for planning and research in the Bureau of Consumer Services.

Griffiths' experience in the private sector includes working as vice president of corporate development for New Energy Ventures where he managed the business-to-business activities with utility distribution companies located in the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic regions. He also worked as a senior consultant for Customized Energy Solutions where he focused on working with retail generation suppliers, utilities and end-users regarding the competitive retail electricity business.

Finally, he was the director of operations for the Energy Cooperative Association of Pennsylvania where he was responsible for managing the daily operations of that energy retailer.

Help Wanted –Western PA Conservancy, Countryside Conservancy

The Western Pennsylvania Conservancy is seeking an inventory ecologist and the Countryside Conservancy is looking to hire a land protection specialist. Here are the details:

The [Western Pennsylvania Conservancy](#) has a full-time, contract-funded opening for an inventory ecologist. The primary emphasis of this position is to conduct County Natural Heritage Inventories throughout Pennsylvania.

The position will be based at the Pittsburgh office of the Pennsylvania Natural Heritage Program, which is housed at the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy. Work will focus primarily on western Pennsylvania counties, but may include work in eastern counties as well.

Duties will include interpreting remote imagery, compiling information sources, conducting field surveys of significant sites, recording and analyzing information from site visits, mapping site locations, writing final reports and presenting findings to the public.

A minimum of a bachelor's degree in botany, ecology, field biology, conservation, or related field, plus experience; masters degree preferred. Suitable applicants should have a strong background in plant taxonomy and be able to demonstrate familiarity with Pennsylvania and/or mid-Atlantic/Midwest regions' flora and fauna and natural

community classification. Must have experience involving intensive field studies and ecological research techniques.

Facility with GIS and experience in the use of databases needed. Position requires the ability to traverse rugged terrain, spend long hours out-of-doors on extended field excursions, and travel to work in remote locations within Pennsylvania.

Interested applicants should send a resume, cover letter and salary expectations to: Western Pennsylvania Conservancy Senior Director, Human Resources, Box R, Mill Run, PA 5464 nbassett@paconserve.org.

The [Countryside Conservancy](#), a land trust based in La Plume, PA and working in Lackawanna, Susquehanna and Wyoming Counties, seeks a hard-working, motivated individual with experience in land conservation, natural resources or a related field to coordinate its land protection and stewardship work.

The Land Protection Specialist will work with landowners, colleagues and Board members to develop, manage and close land-protection projects, and initiate new projects in priority areas. He or she will also lead the Conservancy's easement stewardship activities, including landowner communications and easement monitoring.

This is a full-time, salaried position for an individual with solid knowledge of natural resource and land issues, strong computer skills, and excellent organizational, interpersonal and communication skills. For a full job description, please contact the Executive Director at cconserv@epix.net.

Feature

Time is Right for Bluebird Boxes to Sprout, Box Kits Available

Despite winter's cold grip on the weather, Game Commission officials note that nesting activities begin early for the [eastern bluebird](#), a member of the thrush family and a voracious insect eater that can bring a splash of color and a lyrical song to many homesteads.

"Now is the time to clean, repair or put up new homes for eastern bluebirds, which have long been the displaced darlings of Pennsylvania's spring, as well as the poster bird for what can go wrong when people introduce non-native species to a new area," said Dan Brauning, Game Commission Wildlife Diversity Section supervisor. "Bluebirds suffered considerable losses in the twentieth century due to introductions of house (English) sparrows and European starlings to America in the 1800s. Further complicating the bluebird's plight, particularly in Pennsylvania, has been the loss of open spaces to development or reforestation."

Pennsylvania's bluebird population was probably its strongest ever in the late 1800s and early 1900s, before starlings and house sparrows became too plentiful. It was the period just after large sections of the Commonwealth's forests had been logged off and a



Game Commission Photo

time when farms covered about two-thirds of the state. Pennsylvania's human population was half what it is today. Combined, that translated into lots of open space - preferred habitat and limited competition with other cavity nesters.

The Game Commission regularly campaigned for bluebirds by encouraging Pennsylvanians to consider getting involved in conservation projects to make the state a friendlier place for them.

The agency's Howard Nursery, near Milesburg, has been manufacturing bluebird nest boxes and box kits for more than a quarter century. Each year, about 9,000 boxes are manufactured there and sold or provided to Pennsylvanians to help bluebirds. That annual influx of new nest boxes helps to ensure Pennsylvania remains a "keystone state" in bluebird conservation.

"That bluebirds currently nest in all of Pennsylvania's 67 counties is directly related to the tens of thousands of Pennsylvanians who showed interest in bluebird conservation and doing something more for wildlife in their yards and fields over the past 50 years," explained Brauning. "But we should not consider the bluebird's comeback a done deal, because their existence seems destined to hinge on the continued involvement of people who care about the species. If people stop putting out nest boxes for bluebirds, there undoubtedly will be serious repercussions."

The Game Commission has a limited supply of bluebird nesting boxes and kits for sale at its Harrisburg headquarters and Howard Nursery.

"These bluebird boxes enable Pennsylvanians to fulfill their desire to help wildlife in a natural way," said J. Carl Graybill Jr., agency Bureau of Information and Education director. "We will have the boxes and kits on sale in the lobby of the Commission's Harrisburg headquarters for the next two weeks, or until supplies are sold out.

"Building nesting boxes is a great project for individuals, families or civic organizations interested in wildlife. These box designs are proven to attract bluebirds and other species, including tree swallows and house wrens."

Bluebird boxes and kits sell for \$7. Boxes have already been constructed and are ready for placement. Kits include pre-cut wood, nails, screws and directions on how to assemble and where to place nesting boxes. Shipping costs for nesting boxes, either completed or in kits ready to build, are \$5 for one and \$6 for two.

"The bluebird boxes offered by the Game Commission include an opening that is the prescribed one-and-one-half inches in diameter," Graybill said. "This precludes most starlings from being able to enter. However, house sparrows still may be able to enter the boxes. If you can confirm that house sparrows are using the box, the nest should be removed immediately."

Boxes should be erected three to five feet above the ground and facing a nearby tree or fence where young birds can safely land on their initial flights from the box. To reduce predation and competition from other species, no perch should be placed on the box; bluebirds do not need one.

Countless Pennsylvanians already are involved in bluebird conservation, because they enjoy seeing bluebirds, or simply would like to lend a helping hand to a songbird that could use all the help it can get. Most have bluebird nest boxes in their yard; others maintain bluebird nest box trails. Casual conservationists probably account for the biggest share of this ongoing outreach effort. They also sometimes put nest boxes in locations that simply won't do much for bluebirds.

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"People frequently ask the Game Commission why bluebirds won't use a nest box they've placed in their yard," said Doug Gross, Game Commission ornithologist. "More often than not the reason is the box was placed in an undesirable location. People often mistakenly place nest boxes in places where they'd like to see them, rather than locations that satisfy bluebirds. Most bluebirds spend the winter near their nest box and forage on wild fruits and berries. Competition for nest boxes begins in winter and can feature male bluebirds rolling around in the snow, fighting over a territory.

"A box is best placed on a post - not a tree trunk - four to six feet off the ground in direct sunlight. Preferred locations are open backyards, meadows, pastures, near fencerows or agricultural fields, and around cemeteries or athletic fields. Boxes placed too close to houses and other buildings, waterways and wetlands, or forested and brushy areas will attract nesting competitors and predators, especially house wrens."

Of course, it should be pointed out that a bluebird nest box used by any species other than a house sparrow - starlings can't access the entrance of a properly-constructed bluebird nest box - is still a box that's serving wildlife and helping to fill a habitat deficiency. If helping bluebirds is your objective, then place or relocate your nest box in an area where there will be limited nesting competition and predator problems, and where bluebirds are more apt to find it. If you're reusing a box, remove old nesting materials from inside before hanging it. Otherwise, recognize its worth to other wildlife and place it where it'll do some good.

The best time to erect a bluebird box is right now. The earlier a nest box is placed afield or in a yard, the better its chances are of attracting bluebirds. Males - the more vibrantly-colored ones - start shopping for nest boxes in early to mid March. After attracting a female, they build a nest in the box. In late April - and often again in mid June - the female lays eggs. Some pairs nest three times a year.

"Although Pennsylvania's bluebird population appears to be stronger today than any time over the past 50 years, the species surely needs to remain in the public's eye to ensure its well-being and that it continues to prosper," emphasized Gross. "Probably nothing reinforces the need for bluebird nest boxes more than seeing bluebirds scrapping with house sparrows over a box. It's a sight that inspires people to get a nest box and help make a difference locally. So please do put out nest boxes, and put them where they can help. Please encourage your neighbors to do the same. It can be a neighborhood project that leads to conservation of other species, including those that are more rare than the bluebird."

Game Commission Wildlife Conservation Officers also use the bluebird box program as a way to help younger Pennsylvanians connect with wildlife. In Jefferson County, WCO Michael Girosky launched a bluebird box program with schools in his district in 1995, and has seen the program grow every year.

"Currently, I use more than 300 bluebird box kits each year and the demand is growing," WCO Girosky said. "In 2005, every fifth grader in the Punxsutawney area was provided this program, including those in the Punxsutawney School District, the parochial schools and the Punxsutawney Christian School, as well as those being home-schooled. "I have also received requests from the remaining two elementary schools in my district, C.G. Johnson and Sykesville, which are part of the DuBois School District. I have conducted programs for cub scouts/boy scouts, girl scouts and even an adult group and have more requests for next year."

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WCO Girosky noted that this program has been the most successful educational program in this district.

"Teachers and PTAs call to request it, and I hear more positive feedback about this program than any other activity I am involved in," Girosky said. "I have high school students telling me how they have continued to maintain and build more boxes on their own just because they were introduced to the bluebirds way back in the fifth grade.

"I will attempt to continue this program as long as possible because it not only gives the children a outstanding and unique opportunity to learn about and help the bluebirds; it is the best program that I have found to bring the Game Commission into the classroom on a neutral subject that all can agree on and shows us in the best light to the kids, parents, teachers and administration of the schools in the community."

The availability of bluebird box kits, and instruction on their construction and placement to school districts is extremely limited given the agency's current financial situation. All requests will receive consideration.

The [Bluebird Society of Pennsylvania](#), as well as the [North American Bluebird Society](#), have done much to promote bluebirds and the species' never-ending need for nest boxes. Their websites offer a variety of features that will familiarize interested landowners with ways to make their properties more attractive to bluebirds.

The [Game Commission's Bluebird webpage](#) offers additional information on bluebirds, as well as nest box plans.

The Game Commission's headquarters is at 2001 Elmerton Ave., just off the Progress Avenue exit of Interstate 81 in Harrisburg. To check on availability of bluebird boxes or kits, please call the Game Commission's Harrisburg office at 1-888-888-3459.

For more information on purchasing boxes or kits at the Howard Nursery, contact Cliff Guindon at the Howard Nursery, 197 Nursery Road, Howard, (Centre County) PA 16841, telephone 814-355-4434. Hours of operation are Monday thru Friday 7 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Quick Clips

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

[Pottsgrove Students Want Community to Get Green](#)

[Illegal Dump Sites Eyed for Cleanup by PEC](#)

[Outdoors: Peters Twp. Seeking Answer to Deer Dilemma](#)

[Opinions Split on Deer Management](#)

[Figures Up in Deer Kills from Last Season](#)

[Deer Kill Up 2% in 2006-07](#)

[PA Officials, Industry Leaders Stress Outdoors Participation](#)

[The Eagle Has Landed](#)

[200 Years Later, the Philadelphia Eagles](#)

[The Eagles Have Landed in Middle of a Flap](#)

[Conference Explores How to Get Young People Outdoors](#)

[Feuding Peregrine Falcons Stage a Fight to the Finish](#)

[Nesting Falcons Could Cause Problems for River Common Project if Disturbed](#)

[Outdoor: Guard Prepares new Stony Valley Proposal](#)

[Guard Proposes Revised Range Plan](#)

[Conestoga Greenway Might Open This Fall](#)
[Lake Trails Offer Challenges, and Some Provide Surprises](#)
[Schuylkill Planners Back Ethanol Plant](#)
[Editorial: A New Natural Gas Boom Is Welcomed Here](#)
[Up On the Green Roof](#)
[PSU Energy Usage Strategy Progresses](#)
[Air Products Taking Hydrogen Fueling to a New Level](#)
[Hybrids Spur Myths Among First Responders in Uniontown](#)
[Rendell Warms to Solar Power](#)

Watershed NewsClips

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

[Officials Tout Bill to Save the Bay](#)
[Once a Year, Volunteers Gather at Deer Creek in Indiana Township](#)
[Nutrient Management Has Improved State Official Says](#)
[Pitt Grad Wins \\$1 Million for Water Filter Invention](#)
[Bucks County Forms to Protect Watershed](#)
[Warren Commissioners Talk About Distributing Growing Greener Funds](#)
[Hundreds Signing Up for Easton Shad Fishing Tourney](#)
[Required Sewage Upgrades to Meet Bay Standards to Cost Millions](#)
[Official Says Disorganized Development Worsens Flooding](#)
[Op-Ed: Water System Cooperation Aids Goal of Regionalism](#)
[Op-Ed: Stormwater Everywhere](#)
[Op-Ed: American Eel Needs Protection to Revive Sinking Population](#)
[Wyoming County Uses Growing Greener Funds for Emergency Watershed Work](#)
[Luzerne County Wants Better Way to Battle Runoff](#)
[Bucks County Task Force to Study Delaware River Flooding](#)
[Watershed Project Priorities Reshuffled](#)

Regulations

The Environmental Quality Board published proposed changes to the Air Quality Program concerning the [streamlining of the permit process](#) for construction, modification and reactivation of sources.

[Pennsylvania Bulletin – March 24, 2007](#)

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

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

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

Technical Guidance & Permits

The Public Utility Commission published formal notice of its [statement of policy on default electric service in retail markets](#) related to the transition to a competitive marketplace and a notice implementing [new requirements on infrastructure security](#).

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

- [Only Three More Watersheds Data System Workshops Remain](#)
- **March 26** – Senate Appropriations Committee meets to consider [Senate Bill 355](#) (MJ.White-R-Venango) requiring additional public review of Air Quality State Implementation Plans and their publication on the Internet. Room 461. 12:30.
- **March 27** – Senate Environmental Resources and Energy Committee hearing on the nomination of Kathleen McGinty to be Secretary for Environmental Protection. Room 8E-B East Wing. 9:30.
- **March 28** – House Tourism and Recreational Development meets to consider [House Bill 221](#) (Tangretti-D-Westmoreland) providing for Historic Preservation Grants. Room 39 East Wing. 10:00.
- **March 28** – [DCNR Conservation and Natural Resources Advisory Committee](#) meeting. Room 105 Rachel Carson Building. 10:00.
- **April 4** – **CANCELLED**. [DEP Cleanup Standards Scientific Advisory Board](#) meeting. Next scheduled meeting September 19.
- **April 5** – Independent Regulatory Review Commission meeting to consider EQB Final New Source Review Air Quality Regulation. 14th Floor Conference Room, 333 Market St. 10:30.
- **April 5-6**: [Preparing for the Storm: Stormwater Solutions for PA Communities](#). State College.
- **April 12** – House Consumer Affairs Committee informational meeting on water and wastewater utilities. Room G-50 Irvis Building. 9:30.
- **April 13** – Senate Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee Listening Session on Issues Affecting Agriculture and Rural PA. The Lemon House, Allegheny Portage Railroad, 110 Federal Park Road, Gallitzin. 10:00?
- **April 13-15**: [PA Assn. Environmental Educators “No Child Left Inside”](#) Conference. Wilkes-Baree.
- **April 16** - [Environmental Issues Forum](#), Joint Legislative Air and Water Pollution Control and Conservation Committee featuring Julia Marano, Keep PA Beautiful. Room 205 Ryan Building. Noon.

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- **April 26** – [Joint Conservation Committee](#) Forestry Task Force meeting. Celebration Hall by Hoags, 2280 Commercial Blvd., State College. 10:00.
- **April 27-28:** West Branch Susquehanna Restoration Symposium III. Genetti Hotel. Williamsport. Contact: Amy Wolfe at 570-726-3118 or send email to: awolfe@tu.org .
Video Blog: [Amy Wolfe Talks About Restoring the West Branch](#).

[DEP Calendar of Events](#)

[Watershed Events](#) (courtesy [PA Organization for Watersheds & Rivers](#))

[Environmental Education Workshop/Training Calendar](#)

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

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

Helpful Web Links

[PA Environment Digest Video Blog](#)

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

[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 .

PA Environment Digest is edited by David E. Hess, former Secretary Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, and is published as a service to the clients of Crisci Associates and the public. Crisci Associates is a Harrisburg-based government and public affairs firm whose clients include Fortune 500 companies and non-profit organizations. For more information on Crisci Associates call 717-234-1716.

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