

— 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](#)

York Town Meeting on Funding Farm BMPs Attracts Nearly 50 Participants

Nearly 50 people came to the Chesapeake Bay Foundation's 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 \(REAP\)](#).

So far over 200 people have attended local town meetings sponsored by the Bay Foundation to educate farmers, watershed groups and other interested citizens on this important issue.



Also attending and giving remarks were Sen. Mike Waugh (R-York), a sponsor of the legislation, Rep. Ron Miller (R-York), York County Commissioner Doug Kilgore (D) and Gary Swan, PA Farm Bureau.

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, a bipartisan initiative introduced first 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.

Video Blog: [Rep. Stern Talks About Challenges Faced by Farmers, REAP](#)

"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.

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

Video Blog: [Sen. Waugh Talks About REAP and Challenging Budget Year](#)

Video Blog: [Rep. Miller Talks About the Need Farmers Have for Support](#)

Video Blog: [Com. Kilgore Talks About How REAP is Part of the Solution](#)

Video Blog: [Farmer Ron Wood Encourages Farm Conservation](#)

NewsClips: [Bill Promises Cleaner Water](#)

[Strong Support for Proposal to Help Farmers Improve Waterways](#)

[REAP Gathers Momentum](#)

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Session Schedule

The Senate and House return to voting session April 16.

[PA Environment Digest Video Blog](#)

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- New Forest Education Program Geared Toward Young Students
- First Falcon Egg Arrives in Harrisburg, More to Follow (We Hope)
- DEP Accepting Composting Infrastructure Development Grant Applications
- Schools Invited to Enroll as Litter-Free School Zones Program
- Lower Susquehanna River Sweep Cleanup Set for June 2-3
- What Are You Doing for Earth Day in April? Here Are Some Suggestions

PA Environment Digest – Crisci Associates

- Studies Identify Troubled Communities Statewide, Make Recommendations
- Deadline Extended to Apply for Low-Income Home Energy Assistance
- PA Biomass Working Group to Hold First Meeting April 16-17
- Heffner Appointed Director of DEP's Policy Office

Spotlight

- Nation's New Thirst for Ethanol Could Leave Chesapeake Bay With Hangover, *By Karl Blankenship, The Chesapeake Bay Journal*

Environmental Heritage

- Three Mile Island, March 28, 1979 at 3:53 A.M.

Feature

- Game Commission Issues Springtime Alert: Do Not Disturb Young Wildlife

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

Video Blog

John Quimby Receives CBF Educator of the Year Award

John Quimby, the adult leader of [Expedition Susquehanna](#), received the 2006 Chesapeake Bay Foundation's Environmental Educator of the Year Award during a special ceremony on March 24.

The award was presented by Don Baugh, Vice President of Environmental Education for the Chesapeake Bay Foundation.

Brett Pifer, a Future Farmers of America member from Bradford County and other students who were part of Expedition Susquehanna, talked about the role John Quimby played on the trip and its value to them.

A retired entomologist, Quimby uses his knowledge of nature and the river to teach students about river and forest ecology in classes and trips throughout Pennsylvania.

Expedition Susquehanna included 11 high school students, all members of the Future Farmers of America, as they made a 30 day trip down the Susquehanna River from the river's origin at Cooperstown, NY to the Chesapeake Bay.

Along the way, students stopped to learn about how mine drainage and agricultural runoff affects the river, the lifecycle of the rare hellbender salamander and the flora and fauna in around the Susquehanna.

The ceremony also included a preview of the upcoming WVIA – Wilkes-Barre documentary on the Expedition that will aired on WVIA starting April 18.

Video Blog: [John Quimby Issues Challenge on Environmental Education](#)

Video Blog: [Don Baugh Talks About Why Quimby Received the Award](#)

Video Blog: [Brett Pifer Talks About Quimby's Role and What He Learned](#)



Online Training

New Penn State Extension Online Pond, Lake Management Class Begins April 4

In response to the ever-increasing number of phone calls and emails asking for assistance with pond and lake management, the Penn State Cooperative Extension Service has created a 12-week [online pond management course](#).

This course is divided into six chapters focusing on common pond management concepts. Participants access online resources and fill out worksheets which are returned to the course instructors for feedback.

The class begins April 4 and continues into June.

[Download an online brochure](#) for more information.

On the Hill

On the Senate/House Agenda/Bills Introduced

The Senate and House will return to session April 16, except for committee meetings...

Senate

Committees: the Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee holds several of its Listening Sessions in Pittsburgh, Waymart and Lebanon;

Other Meetings: the Independent Regulatory Review Commission meets to consider EQB Final New Source Review Air Quality Regulation.

Senate/House Bills Moving

These environmental bills moved in the Senate last week. The House was not in voting session, but the Tourism and Recreational Development Committee did move legislation...

PA Environmental Ed Center: [Senate Bill 356](#) (MJ.White-R-Venango) establishing the PA Center for Environmental Education in statute was passed by the Senate and now moves to the House for consideration.

PEMA Director: [Senate Bill 637](#) (Baker-R-Luzerne) requiring Senate confirmation of the director of the PA Emergency Management Agency was passed by the Senate and sent to the House for consideration.

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 amended and reported from Senate Appropriations and passed by the Senate. It will now be sent to the House for its action.

Historic Preservation Grants: [House Bill 221](#) (Tangretti-D-Westmoreland) establishing a Historic Preservation Incentive Grant Program was amended with a technical change and reported from the House Tourism and Recreational Development Committee.

Overnight Accommodations: [House Resolution 164](#) (Haluska-D-Cambria) directing the Tourism and Recreational Development Committee to make recommendations on overnight facilities at State Parks was reported from the House Tourism and Recreational Development Committee.

Bills Introduced

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

Landowner Liability: [Senate Bill 497](#) (Robbins-R-Mercer) encouraging landowners to make land and water areas available for public recreational purposes.

Building Energy Standards: [Senate Bill 672](#) (Pippy-R-Allegheny) requiring certain buildings that receive state funding to Energy Star and high performance building standards.

Geographic Center: [Senate Bill 695](#) (Greenleaf-R-Montgomery) requiring the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources to find the geographic center of the Commonwealth.

Farm Conservation: [House Bill 100](#) (Stern-R, Daley-D) establishing a tax credit program to farmers for installation of best management practices.

Historic Preservation Grants: [House Bill 943](#) (Frankel-D-Allegheny) establishing a Historic Preservation Grant Program.

Senate Committee Reports Nomination of McGinty as Secretary of DEP

The Senate Environmental Resources and Energy Committee held a hearing this week on the nomination of Kathleen McGinty as Secretary for Environmental Protection and unanimously reported her nomination to the full Senate.

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

Secretary McGinty was asked a number of questions before the Committee voted on her nomination, including:



Landfill Moratorium: In response to a question from Sen. White on whether DEP supported a moratorium on issuing new or expanded landfill permits, Secretary McGinty said she thought the agency has “all the appropriate tools” it needs to deal effectively with regulating landfills, noting her agency had approved some permits and rejected others based on their potential harms and benefits.

Mine Safety Legislation: Sen. Musto expressed his support for updating mine safety legislation saying he was glad to see representatives of mine workers and the coal industry working together on the proposal, but asked when DEP would have its comments on the proposal. Secretary McGinty said they were still several weeks away from completing a review, but thought its review would be finished by mid-April.

Updating mine safety legislation was one of the recommendations resulting from the investigations surrounding the [Queecreek Mine Rescue](#) in 2002.

Water Resources Planning: Secretary McGinty told Sen. Musto she thought the agency would meet the March 2008 deadline to complete a [statewide water resources plan](#) as required by Act 220, including what she called some very sophisticated hydrogeologic tools.

COALs Program: Sen. Rhoades (R-Schuylkill) received assurances from Secretary McGinty that the [COALs Program](#) that promotes community action to combat dumping and littering in rural areas will continue and be expanded.

Scientific Capacity: Sen. Erickson (R-Delaware) asked if DEP had the scientific expertise it needed to develop regulations based on the latest science, adding the recent experience with DEP's proposed mercury rule indicated it was not adhering to the latest body of knowledge available on the topic, but rather picked only the portion it liked to justify the rule. Secretary McGinty differed with the Senator saying she thought they had looked at the science as part of developing the rule and that DEP had the scientific staff it needed to make decisions.

Recommendation on PUC Chairman: Sen. White asked if Secretary McGinty had ever made a recommendation to Gov. Rendell that Public Utility Chairman Wendell Holland not be reappointed based on his comments on DEP's proposed mercury rule. Secretary McGinty noted Holland voted for the rule (*after expressing concerns a both [the proposed](#) and [final stages](#)*) and said she could not comment further on personnel issues without the permission of the Governor.

When asked if she intended to serve the entire four year term, Secretary McGinty said that was her intention, although she does get job inquiries from time to time.

Online video of the hearing [is available on the Committee's webpage](#).

Secretary McGinty's [opening statement is available online](#).

Senate Passes PA Center for Environmental Education Bill

[Senate Bill 356](#) (MJWhite-R-Venango), that would establish the [Pennsylvania Center for Environmental Education](#) in state law, was passed unanimously by the full Senate this week and sent to the House for consideration.

The Pennsylvania Center for Environmental Education is a statewide environmental education resource for state agencies, county conservation districts, educators and nonprofit organizations based at Slippery Rock University in Butler County.

Pennsylvania Center for
Environmental Education



Service Education Research

The PCEE was established 10 years ago by Executive Order. Sen. White's legislation would amend the Environmental Education Act to establish the PCEE in statute, strengthening its status among state programs and ensuring more stable funding.

"The PCEE is an important teaching aid. It generates and inventories research related to environmental education, maintains an Internet-based environmental resources network, and provides training and education opportunities for educators and citizens," said Sen. White, who chairs the Senate Environmental Resources and Energy Committee. "Given that the state has set environment and ecology curriculum standards that students must meet in kindergarten through grade 12, the PCEE should be able to count on stable support."

Senate Bill 356 would establish a PCEE governing board, ensuring it remains focused on environmental education issues, said Sen. White.

"Slippery Rock University has done a great job with the Pennsylvania Center for Environmental Education. It is truly a statewide resource, making learning tools available to teachers, home-school parents and students via the Internet and newsletters. Senate Bill 356 would make certain that this information continues to be available," said Sen. White, who worked closely with Gov. Rendell to ensure he would support the measure.

The bill now moves to the House for consideration.

NewsClip: [Schuylkill Center for Environmental Education Seeks Full-Time Educator](#)

Rendell Oil Tax Has Unintended Impacts on Renewable Fuels, Domestic Energy

The Senate Transportation Committee this week heard testimony that Gov. Rendell's proposed oil company profits tax may have unintended, negative impacts on the development of renewable fuels and domestic oil and natural gas development in Pennsylvania.

[John Kulik](#), PA Petroleum Marketers and Convenience Store Association, said the draft legislation includes "wholesale distributors" which would capture hundreds of small and medium-sized businesses in the state and all their business profits, not just profits related to the sale of petroleum products.

Kulik noted an unintended consequence of the proposal would be to tax the very distributors Gov. Rendell is counting on to make significant investments in facilities to distribute renewable fuels, including biodiesel and gasoline containing ethanol. Taking millions of dollars away from the distributors would leave little room for investing in the infrastructure that would make renewable fuels viable in the state.

Gasoline supplies may also be an issue in some areas of the state, in particular the Southwest, because environmental regulations require a special blend of gasoline there. If it becomes more expensive generally to ship product into Pennsylvania because of this new tax, there could be supply issues as refiners ship product to states where it is cheaper to do business.

[Stephen Rhoads](#), President of the PA Oil and Gas Association, said the proposal would also cover the hundreds of small oil and natural gas producers in the state and take up to \$99 million away from rural areas to fund mass transit in the more urban areas creating a new battle ground between urban and rural Pennsylvania.

Rhoads also noted the proposed tax would not be a stable source of income for mass transit because revenues and profits are tied in large measure to the price of oil and natural gas, both of which have fluctuated significantly over the last 10 years.

Rhoads said another unintended consequence of the tax proposal would be to decrease investment in developing Pennsylvania and domestic energy supplies at a time Gov. Rendell and others are promoting homegrown energy resources.

Acting Revenue Secretary Thomas Wolf appeared before the Committee to defend the tax, but said clearly the state cannot just tax big oil companies legally, but had to pick an industry sector involved in the sale of vehicle fuel, heating oil and propane, whether they drill for it, refine it or deliver it.

In response to questions about companies leaving Pennsylvania and gasoline prices increasing, Acting Secretary Wolf said he thought there would be some increase in prices, but the market would work to correct any temporary increases.

Sen. Madigan (R-Bradford), Republican Chair of the Committee, concluded the hearing by saying, “We have a major problem because this tax is being sold by the Governor as a tax on big oil companies when it’s really going to hit producers and distributors.”

NewsClips: [Rendell’s Proposed Oil Tax Debated](#)
[Senators Warned About Impact of Rendell’s Oil Tax](#)

Sen. Brubaker Introduces Senate Bill to Improve Farm Conservation

In a continued effort to balance the needs of farmers with the responsibility to protect the environment, Sen. Mike Brubaker (R-Lancaster) has introduced Senate Bill 690, which will provide tax credits to those who invest in proven conservation practices.

The bill is co-sponsored by Sen. Mike O’Pake (D-Berks) and Sen. Mike Waugh (R-York) and was introduced first in the House as [House Bill 100](#) by Rep. Jerry Stern (R-Blair), Rep. Peter Daley (D-Washington) and Rep. Art Hershey (R-Chester).

“Farmers across the Commonwealth face the challenges of complying with changes to nutrient and sediment management practices on a daily basis, which often means upgrading their equipment and the way in which they do business,” Sen. Brubaker said. “However, they need the right tools and funding to be able to make improvements and still maintain viable businesses.”

The [Pennsylvania Resource Enhancement and Protection \(REAP\) Tax Credit Program](#) will provide transferable tax credits for installing proven and cost-effective best management practices to reduce pollution and sediments coming from farms. These practices include improvements to barnyards, pastures and riparian corridors, development and implementation of nutrient management plans, remediation of legacy sediments and other approved practices.

Tax credits will be available for personal and corporate income tax, the Capital Stock and Franchise Tax, and Sales and Use Tax. Qualified applicants will receive a tax credit of 25 percent to 75 percent of the project cost, depending on the practice implemented. Other elements of the program provide that tax credits may be sold to other entities and for business or individual sponsorship of a project installed by a landowner. Tax credits may be carried over for a maximum of 15 years.



“Tax credits are already being used to encourage the growth and progress of business in other industries with success, so it makes sense to extend their use to the agriculture industry as well,” Sen. Brubaker said.

Sen. Brubaker also indicated that the tax credits will benefit not only farmers, but the environment and ultimately every citizen in the Commonwealth and the Chesapeake Bay watershed as well.

“Under the 2000 Chesapeake Bay Agreement, Pennsylvania and the other states that are part of the Agreement must reduce nutrient and sediment pollution going to the Chesapeake Bay by more than 38 million pounds by 2010,” Sen. Brubaker said. “This will go a long way to cleaning up the watershed and to move the Bay off the U.S. Clean Water Act’s list of impaired waters.”

“REAP provides an outstanding opportunity to improve water quality and address the needs of Pennsylvania producers,” said Matt Ehrhart, PA Executive Director for the Chesapeake Bay Foundation. “This proposal already has broad, bipartisan legislative support, as well as the endorsement of the agricultural, sportsmen, and environmental communities.”

“The creation of the REAP program would be a win-win situation for farmers and the environment, and I plan to continue looking for other innovative ways that we can provide these types of benefits to the Commonwealth,” Sen. Brubaker added.

The REAP legislation was introduced by former Sen. Noah Wenger, whose district Brubaker now represents, in 2006.

For more information, visit [Sen. Brubaker’s website](#).

NewsClips: [Bill Promises Cleaner Water](#)

[Strong Support for Proposal to Help Farmers Improve Waterways](#)

Conservation Districts Hold Capitol Lobby Day, Recognize Sen. Wenger

The [Pennsylvania Association of Conservation Districts](#) held a [Capitol Day](#) where over 200 participants discussed the need to obtain consistent and sufficient funding for conservation district activities and staff, amendments to the Conservation District Law, and landowner liability legislation.

PACD also announced former Sen. Noah W. Wenger was recognized as the recipient of the [2006 PACD Legislator Recognition Award](#). PACD presents this award to a legislator whose outstanding efforts have helped further the activities and accomplishments of the PACD or Pennsylvania’s 66 county conservation districts.

“These issues are vital to Pennsylvania’s Conservation Districts,” said Victor Cappucci, President of the PACD. “We spoke with our friends in the PA General Assembly explaining the importance of these legislative initiatives.”

Susan Marquart, Executive Director of PACD, added, “The focus of our Capitol Day luncheon is to bring forth ideas and generate enthusiasm for our concerns. This successful event is an extension of an ongoing dialog between the Conservation Districts and our elected leaders.”

Some of the legislative highlights included:

Funding Needs for Conservation Districts: A review of the Operation and Structure of County Conservation Districts released on June 7, 2005 by the Legislative Budget and Finance Committee concurs with the position of the Pennsylvania Association of

Conservation Districts that Pennsylvania's conservation districts are under funded. The study recommends that the state should pay 50 percent of the costs for certain conservation district staff positions. Additionally, 30 conservation districts are currently administering the Chapter 105 program without a state appropriation. Funding is needed to reimburse those districts and to expand the program to other counties.

Amendments to the Conservation District Law: Conservation districts administer a wide array of delegated and contracted state programs with a number of funding sources. To update and strengthen Act 217, and continue to meet the conservation needs of the Commonwealth, two major enhancements were suggested as amendments to the Conservation District Law: increasing the capacity of districts to deliver locally led conservation; and further defining and strengthening the State Conservation Commission.

Dedicated Funding for the Conservation Districts: PACD is talking with members of the General Assembly and the Rendell Administration concerning dedicated funding for conservation districts. As was referenced above, the Legislative Budget and Finance Committee report recommends that the General Assembly strive to meet the State Conservation Commission's policy of 50 percent funding for the district managers and technicians. Districts are continuously undertaking more responsibilities and program implementation with less funding. By instituting a dedicated funding source, districts will be guaranteed a funding base and Pennsylvania citizens will be guaranteed continuing technical assistance to further their land stewardship activities.

Landowner Liability: PACD is promoting legislation strengthening current landowner liability law to protect landowners who invite individuals onto their land for recreational purposes. A recent Lehigh County civil court case (*Burns v. Wetzel*) involved a hunting accident in which a farmer was held partly liable for the acts of a hunter that was invited onto his property. While the case was ultimately settled out of court, it accentuated the necessity of landowner protection. Recently introduced legislation, [House Bill 13](#) (Readshaw-D-Allegheny) and [House Bill 74](#) (Harhart-R-Lehigh), enhance current landowner safeguards.

For more information, visit PACD's [Capitol Day webpage](#).

Environmental Synopsis Online, Joint Conservation Committee Annual Report

The latest issue of the [Environmental Synopsis](#) published by the Joint Legislative Air and Water Pollution Control and Conservation Committee is now available online.

The Committee also released its [2006 Annual Report](#).

This issue of the *Environmental Synopsis* features several articles on recycling, climate change, the amount of grain need to produce ethanol and future energy needs.

The next speaker for the Joint Committee's Environmental Issues Forum will be Julia Marano, Executive Director of Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful on April 16.

The [Joint Committee](#) is chaired by Rep. Scott Hutchinson (R-Venango) and the vice-chair is Sen. Ray Musto (D-Luzerne).

Other News

Conservation Districts Recognize Farmers Working to Protect Chesapeake Bay

The [Pennsylvania Association of Conservation Districts](#) this week announced that Curry Wagner of Hummelstown, Dauphin County, and Ron and Catherine Kittle of Bradford County, have been named recipients of the 2007 Pennsylvania Chesapeake Bay Clean Water Farm Awards.

PACD will recognize these award recipients on July 17 in Scranton during PACD's annual conservation awards program. To further acknowledge their accomplishments, the landowners will receive certificates and large "Clean Water Farm Award" signs to erect on their properties.

The Clean Water Farm Award, initiated in 1986, recognizes farmers within Pennsylvania's portion of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed, who manage their daily farm operation while keeping a watchful eye on water quality. The farms' conservation plans address issues that help control potential pollutants such as eroded soil, pesticides, and fertilizers from entering streams or groundwater supplies.

Curry Wagner and his family operate a broiler and beef cattle operation while farming about 60 acres. The Wagner family implements many Best Management Practices (BMPs), a combination of practices determined to be the most effective, practical means of reducing pollution.

They participated in the Dauphin County Conservation District's Chesapeake Bay Program and incorporated such BMPs as roof runoff management, water control structures and underground outlets to improve the barnyard.

The Wagner farm works closely with a crop consultant to balance rates of commercial fertilizer and manure use on the fields. They also implement an Integrated Pest Management Program and work closely with conservation partners to insure that all fields are covered by conservation plans.

Recipients Ron and Catherine Kittle own and operate a 200 plus acre farm in Bradford County that includes a dairy herd of 48 cows and 33 heifers and calves. The Kittles have used a no-till system of crop production for the past 18 years. The no-till system allows the operator opportunities to spread manure without adversely impacting the environment.

In addition to practicing no-till, the Kittles are advocates for this conservation practice on other farms and serve as a resource to farmers new to the practice. They also implement crop rotation and contour farming practices to reduce soil erosion and storm water runoff. Ron and Catherine were recently selected as Bradford County's Outstanding Conservation Cooperators.

Recipients of the annual Chesapeake Bay Clean Water Farm Award are nominated by county conservation district staff. This annual award program is coordinated by the Pennsylvania Chesapeake Bay Education Office.

The awards are sponsored jointly by the Department of Environmental Protection's Chesapeake Bay Program and the Department of Agriculture to recognize farmers who implement BMPs.

The [Pennsylvania Chesapeake Bay Education Office](#) conducts numerous activities promoting the theme, "We All Live Downstream."

Proposed Federal Bill Would Increase Funding for Farm Conservation

Legislation introduced this week in Congress would provide a historic level of new federal funding to Chesapeake Bay restoration efforts, and has the potential to reduce tens of millions of pounds of nitrogen, phosphorus, and sediment pollution annually.

The legislation, introduced by Rep. Chris Van Hollen (D-MD), Rep. Robert C. “Bobby” Scott (D-VA), Rep. Wayne Gilchrest (R-MD), and Rep. Tom Davis (R-VA), would provide an additional \$200 million or more in conservation funding to the region’s farmers. If passed, it will fulfill the federal government’s share of funding necessary to meet the 2010 nitrogen reduction goal for agriculture.

“With the impending 2010 deadline looming large, some have said that removing the region’s rivers and the Chesapeake Bay from the ‘dirty waters’ list is an impossible goal,” said CBF President William C. Baker. “This legislation challenges that culture of failure and demonstrates that with bold leadership, it is possible to implement the roadmap to restoration that Bay scientists have laid out.”

The Chesapeake’s Healthy and Environmentally Sound Stewardship of Energy and Agriculture Act of 2007, or CHESSEA Act, will direct additional Farm Bill funding toward water quality improvement and farm viability in watersheds like the Chesapeake - with recognized nutrient pollution and water quality degradation, agreed-upon multi-state commitments to address that pollution, and identified restoration plans and goals.

“Congress must demonstrate the political will--backed by funding -- to restore the Chesapeake Bay,” said Congressman Van Hollen. “This bill is designed to serve as a roadmap to accelerate the pace of the Bay’s cleanup and increase the conservation funding for farmers in the Bay watershed. The Chesapeake Bay is a natural resource critical to our economy, culture, and heritage. I am committed to protecting this national treasure.”

If passed, CHESSEA will provide: more money for conservation practices, such as streamside buffers; greater access to “green payments;” funding support for development of manure-to-energy systems; and greater technical assistance in conservation planning and implementation.

“The Chesapeake Bay is a national treasure, and a national model of how sound science can guide regional partnerships to restore water quality,” Baker said. “The sticking points have always been leadership and funding. This bold, new proposal is a demonstration of leadership, that when matched by state and local dollars, would fully implement the agricultural conservation practices required to achieve the 2010 goal.”

The Chesapeake Bay Foundation is also working at the state level to provide farmers with additional resources to install best management practices. According to the Department of Environmental Protection, there is a need for over \$215 million for agricultural conservation projects in the Chesapeake Bay drainage area alone in Pennsylvania. Only \$45 million is being spent now to meet those needs.

“CBF is fighting for funding for farm conservations practices at the national and state level,” said Matthew Ehrhart, Director of the Pennsylvania Office of CBF. “Here in Pennsylvania we’re supporting a bipartisan initiative called REAP (Resource Enhancement and Protection Act), introduced by Rep. Jerry Stern and Sen. Mike Brubaker, that would give tax credits to farmers for installing best management practices to reduce nutrient runoff and sedimentation.”

The bipartisan proposal was introduced first as [House Bill 100](#) by Reps. Jerry Stern (R-Blair), Peter Daley (D-Washington) and Art Hershey (R-Chester) and as Senate Bill

690 by Senators Mike Brubaker (R-Lancaster), Mike O’Pake (D-Berks) and Mike Waugh (R-York).

For more information, visit CBF’s [Farm Bill](#) and [REAP](#) webpages.

NewsClip: [Calculating Pennsylvania’s Efforts to Restore Chesapeake Bay](#)

Grants Announced for Innovative Mine Drainage Treatment Projects

The Department of Environmental Protection this week awarded \$559,472 to four innovative mine drainage treatment projects intended to develop cost-effective ways to treat the thousands of mine discharges and acidic seeps.

Funds for the innovative mine drainage treatment projects come from the Growing Greener II initiative.

The grant awards include:

Pennsylvania State University - \$186,392 to develop a passive pretreatment technology for high-flow acid mine drainage discharges that exploits natural biological low-pH Fe(II) oxidation. This “aeration terrace” mimics the physical features of natural iron mounds, where oxidation has been measured to be most rapid. The project will be located at the Hughes Borehole in Portage, Cambria County which discharges up to 3,000 gallons per minute of highly-acidic high-metal content mine drainage into the Little Conemaugh River.

Stream Restoration Inc. - \$157,153 for feasibility analysis of combining and conveying abandoned underground mine discharges at the Erie, Langeloth and Francis mines to a single location in Washington County. Treatment of the combined discharges will be more cost-effective at one facility, rather than four and relocation of the discharges will restore approximately six miles of stream in the Raccoon Creek Watershed. A power plant under construction in the area may be able to use and treat the water, thus eliminating the need to build and maintain passive treatment systems. Future use or treatment of the relocated discharge will restore approximately 26 miles of Raccoon Creek.

Western Pennsylvania Coalition for Abandoned Mine Reclamation - \$182,595 to test a new type of low-cost aeration system with low energy requirements. The technology has the potential to improve performance at existing aerobic settling ponds, decrease the size of new installations and increase the amount of solids captured. The system will be tested at sites in Westmoreland and Allegheny counties.

Broad Top Township, Bedford County - \$33,332 to evaluate the effectiveness of steel slag as a cost-effective means of neutralizing acidity and removing heavy metals from mine drainage. The steel slag will come from a currently unusable industrial site, thereby helping to clean up that site as well.

Pennsylvania has more than 180,000 acres of unmarked shafts, unstable cliffs, water-filled pits and abandoned equipment and buildings remaining from when mining was largely unregulated prior to 1977. More than two billion tons of waste coal piles exist statewide. Some 6,200 miles of rivers and streams are polluted or degraded by acid mine discharge.

Get Early-Bird Rates for PA's Volunteer Water Monitoring Summit

There is still time to get early-bird discount registration for the upcoming Pennsylvania [Statewide Summit for Volunteer Watershed Monitors](#) – WATER: Watershed Actions Toward Environmental Rewards.

The summit will be held on May 4-5 at the Eisenhower Conference Center in Gettysburg. By registering early (before April 10), you save \$15 on registration costs for the two-day summit (\$75 vs. \$100 after April 10). You can also register for one day at a cost of \$40.

The summit offers plenary presentations, concurrent sessions and hands-on workshops. A special showing of the Emmy-award winning film, *Knee Deep* will take place on May 4. This film follows the monitoring efforts of the Center-in-the-Park Senior Environment Corps as they monitor the Monoshone Creek in Philadelphia.

On May 5 the agenda includes a presentation by Linda Green, a nationally known advocate for volunteer monitoring and director of the volunteer lake monitoring program at the University of Rhode Island.

Concurrent tracks will cover Restoration and Protection, Volunteer Program Management and Sustainability, Monitoring Nets and Boats (technical stuff) and Making Monitoring Matter: Government 101.

Hands-on workshops will be offered both Friday and Saturday afternoons and will cover macroinvertebrate monitoring, habitat assessment, water chemistry and lake monitoring. Each workshop will be capped at a maximum of 20 participants so pre-registration is required (see registration form).

Meet new people, network and exchange information as well as learn new things. For more information, visit the [Summit webpage](#) or call 717-244-6248.

PA Water Works Association Annual Conference April 24-27 in Hershey

The [PA Chapter of the American Water Works Association](#) will hold its annual conference in Hershey on April 24-27.

The conference will feature workshops and training sessions (many for DEP training credit) of interest to waterworks operators, consultants and public officials involved in drinking water and wastewater systems.

This year's conference will also attract a broader audience because both the PA Chapter and the Chesapeake Section of AWWA have joined together to hold the conference.

For more information on the technical and social programs, exhibit space and more, visit the [AWWA Conference webpage](#).

Erie Source Water Protection Workshop to Be Held April 12

The Pennsylvania League of Women Voters [Water Resources Education Network](#) is hosting a special source water protection workshop on April 12 from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. at the Tom Ridge Environmental Center, 301 Peninsula Dr., Erie

Municipal officials, water system operators, community planners and watershed group representatives would benefit from the workshop where participants will learn how they can better protect their communities' water supplies from contamination.

There will be presentations on how communities can prevent contamination by assessing their water sources, making informed decisions about land use and open space preservation, and involving the public as a partner in protection.

The workshop is underwritten by the Department of Environmental Protection.

“Increasingly, we see drinking water sources threatened by contamination,” said Kelly Burch, Director of DEP’s Northwest Office. “Technological advances have improved the ability of public water systems to effectively treat most contaminants. However, there are limitations to technological fixes, which is why it is more important than ever to prevent contamination by protecting our water sources.”

Pre-registration is required, but because DEP is underwriting the workshop, there is no fee to attend.

Register online at the [Drinking Water Wise website](#) or contact WREN Program Manager Julie Kollar by sending email to: juliekwren@verizon.net or call 267-468-0555.

What Do Exceptional Value, High Quality Stream Classifications Mean?

A new publication by the Pennsylvania Campaign for Clean Water outlines how the High Quality and Exceptional Value stream designations affect things like land development, sewage infrastructure, stormwater management, logging, agriculture, mining, and several other land-use impacts.

“Effects of Special Protection Designation” is available on the Coldwater Heritage website under the [Resource Links](#).

Printed copies can be requested from the Pennsylvania Campaign for Clean Water at 215-640-8800

Presentation on Fish Enhancement Structures Set for April 18 in Harrisburg

David Keller, from the Fish and Boat Commission’s Habitat Management Section, will do a presentation on fish enhancement structures on April 18 from 1:30 to 3:30 at DEP’s [Southcentral Regional Office](#) in Harrisburg.

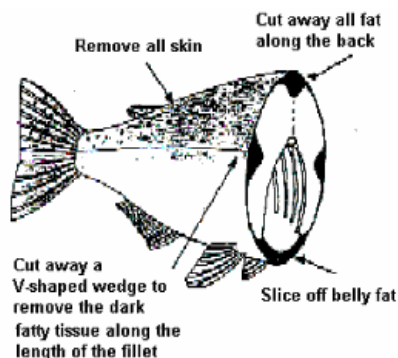
The presentation will focus on the types and design of fish enhancements structures and how to fill out the GP-1 Fish Enhancement Structures general permit and other information related to the topic.

For more information contact Allyson McCollum, DEP, at 717-705-4808.

Anglers Encouraged to Follow Guidelines for Eating Trout They Catch

With the March 31 opening of trout season in 18 counties, the Department of Health and the Fish and Boat Commission this week reminded anglers that fresh trout can be part of a healthy, balanced diet when consumed according to [recommended guidelines](#).

Fish are high in protein and are a valuable source of vitamins, minerals and beneficial oils that are low in saturated fat. Trout are especially high in vitamin B-12 and omega-3 fatty acids, which



improve cardiovascular health and brain development in children.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration, American Heart Association and other nutrition experts recommend eating up to 12 ounces, or 2-3 servings, of fish per week; except for certain large ocean fish.

Because exposure to high levels of various chemicals can increase certain health risks, the state conducts regular sampling and testing of wild fish, as well as hatchery trout released to Pennsylvania streams. This testing enables the commonwealth to make both general and specific recommendations.

All sport-caught fish in Pennsylvania are subject to a one-meal-per-week consumption advisory. This limit is especially recommended for pregnant and breast-feeding women, women of childbearing age and children. In some instances, testing of wild fish in specific areas suggests they should be eaten less often, or in rare cases, not at all.

More detailed consumption recommendations vary based on specific test results. For instance, trout raised at Pennsylvania's eight hatcheries are regularly screened for polychlorinated biphenyls. In 2007, tests have shown no need for additional special guidelines for eating these fish.

Pennsylvania's 2007 trout season begins at 8 a.m. on March 31 for 18 counties in southeastern and parts of south central Pennsylvania, and on April 14 for the entire state. For more information, including the location of trout fishing waters, select the 'Fishing' link from the Fish and Boat Commission's homepage.

The 18 counties in which Trout Season will open on March 31 are: Adams, Berks, Bucks, Chester, Cumberland, Dauphin, Delaware, Franklin, Juniata, Lancaster, Lebanon, Lehigh, Montgomery, Northampton, Perry, Philadelphia, Schuylkill, and York. Mifflin County is also listed as part of the Regional Opening Day, but for East Licking Creek only.

Anglers can find more detailed recommendations in the Pennsylvania Fishing Summary Booklet issued when a PA fishing license is purchased. Recommendations can also be found on the Department of Environmental Protection [Fish Consumption webpage](#).

NewsClip: [Trout Season: New Angles](#)

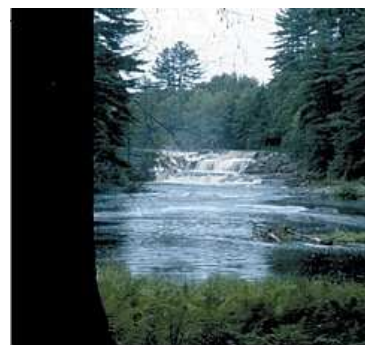
Wildlands Conservancy Seeks Nominees for Friend of the Lehigh River Award

The [Wildlands Conservancy](#) is seeking nominations for the 2007 Friend of the Lehigh River Awards. The deadline for nominations is May 1.

This award annually recognizes individuals, groups, organizations, businesses, institutions, governmental bodies, and others who deserve to be recognized for their commitment to the Lehigh River.

"For the past ten years, we have bestowed this honor upon those who cultivate appreciation, advance knowledge, and demonstrate responsible stewardship and use of the Lehigh River and Lehigh River valley," says Chris Kocher, Wildlands Conservancy president.

Last year's winners were Jim Clauser, district manager of the Carbon County Conservation District; Charlie Brown, retired Director of Parks and Public Property in Bethlehem; and members of the non-profit Ironton Rail Trail organization.



“The actual award is a beautifully engraved river stone that has been shaped by the river itself,” says Kocher.

This year’s awards will be announced during the 11th Annual Lehigh River Sojourn, being held June 23 – 27.

In order to nominate an individual or organization, prepare a one-page summary of the nominee’s accomplishments and justification for receiving the award, along with the contact information of the nominee and the group or individual making the nomination.

Send nominations to 2007 Friend of the Lehigh River Award Nomination Committee, c/o Wildlands Conservancy, 3701 Orchid Place, Emmaus, PA 18049.

First Falcon Egg Arrives in Harrisburg, More to Follow (We Hope)

The [female falcon nesting](#) on the ledge of the 15th floor of the Rachel Carson State Office Building in Harrisburg laid her first egg at around 10:30 a.m. on March 25.

The female will continue to lay eggs for the next several days until a full clutch of 3 to 5 is complete.

This is the eighth year the female has produced eggs. The first six years, she produced a clutch of four eggs. Last year, she produced five eggs.

The eggs will begin hatching in early May and the young falcons will begin to "fledge" or take their first flight in June.

[Online Video Link](#)

NewsClip: [Peregrine Falcons Trying to Nest Atop Reading Building](#)



Link: [Pittsburgh Peregrine Falcon Nest](#)

New Forest Education Program Geared Toward Young Students



Penn State's School of Forest Resources and the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources are teaming up to offer a new [Junior Forest Steward Program](#) to teach youth about forests and the concept of forest stewardship.

“Pennsylvania youth often know very little about the forests and natural areas that cover the state,” said Sanford Smith, Penn State Cooperative Extension natural resources and youth-education specialist, and the creator of the Junior Forest Steward Program.

"We believe this new educational initiative will get kids excited about, and interested in, Penn's Woods," Smith said. "We're targeting youths 8 to 12 years old."

To request copies of the Junior Forest Steward publication, contact Penn State's Forest Resources Extension Office at 814-863-0401 or toll-free at 800-235-9473.

For more information, visit the [Junior Forest Steward Program webpage](#) or contact Sanford Smith at 814-865-4261. (*Reprinted from [DCNR Resource](#) newsletter.*)

DEP Accepting Composting Infrastructure Development Grant Applications

The Department of Environmental Protection is [now accepting applications](#) for Composting Infrastructure Development Grant Program.

Applications are due June 28.

For-profit business entities and nonprofit organizations are eligible for grants on a competitive basis to increase the quantity of yard and/or food wastes collected and processed in this Commonwealth.

The Department will award grants of up to \$100,000 to any one project. \$450,000 is available to fund projects.

Additional consideration will be given to applications that are developed in consultation with the [Pennsylvania Recycling Markets Center](#) 717-948-6660

The municipal waste stream in Pennsylvania consists of over 30 percent organic materials that could be recycled and diverted from the waste stream and managed by composting. Composting of organic wastes helps to lessen the burden on landfill capacity and creates a beneficial soil conditioner that can be marketed.

Applications for the 2007 program may be obtained by contacting Charles Scheidler, Bureau of Waste Management, 717-787-7382 or by sending email to: cscheidler@state.pa.us.

DEP said grant applications will be available on the [Composting webpage](#).

Schools Invited to Enroll in Litter-Free School Zones Program

Something new and exciting is happening in Pennsylvania this spring! Just in time for Earth Day, all Pennsylvania schools and school districts are being invited to join the new [Pennsylvania Litter-Free School Zone Program](#).

The program is being sponsored by the [Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful](#) organization and the Department of Environmental Protection and is being administered with the help of the [Pennsylvania Resources Council](#).

The Litter-Free Schools Zones Program is designed to encourage students to keep their school grounds litter free and to raise the public's awareness of litter via a "Litter-Free School Zone" sign to be placed outside the school.

The sign will be provided once the school enrolls with a simple agreement, pledging to patrol the school grounds once per week, keeping a tally of trash and recyclables collected, and striving to make school events as litter-free as possible.

"The examples set by the schools in our communities are important," said Barley Van Clief, who serves as a contact the program. "With this new program, the schools can help encourage students and the surrounding community to care for their school yard, their own backyards, the local neighborhood and the global community. The Litter-Free School Zone project is an opportunity to develop a school-wide stewardship ethic, and also to set an example for the community."

The appearance of litter on the ground – no matter how it got there – reflects an aura of disrespect, disrepair and neglect. Regular maintenance is critical because one instance of litter encourages more litter to accumulate in the same area.

The Litter-Free School Zone program strives to resolve the issue of littering in two ways:

- **Clean-Up:** Remove existing and deposited litter as soon as possible after it appears, so that further littering will be less likely to occur; and
- **Prevention:** Create a sense of understanding, caring and responsibility -- often described as environmental stewardship -- in our children so that they will not think of littering as an acceptable behavior in their world.

The ultimate goal is a cleaner, more beautiful community, with a strong sense of civic pride. As more students participate in the Litter-Free School Zone, we hope that there will soon be less litter to clean up. As residents drive past the signs and see the clean schoolyard, they also will be less inclined to deposit litter.

School administrators and teachers are urged to visit the [Litter-Free School Zones webpage](#) to learn about the program and sign up online. They can also refer questions to Barley Van Clief 610-353-1555 ext 221 or send email to: vanclief@prc.org.

NewsClip: [Schuylkill Center for Environmental Education Seeks Full-Time Educator](#)

Lower Susquehanna River Sweep Cleanup Set for June 2-3

The [Lower Susquehanna Riverkeeper](#), Stewards of the Lower Susquehanna, the [Watershed Alliance of York](#), and PPL are sponsoring a [Lower Susquehanna River Sweep Cleanup](#) event on June 2-3.

Organizers of the effort hope to attract hundreds of volunteers in Lancaster and York counties to conduct river and streamside litter and trash cleanups.

Groups and volunteers interested in participating should contact Michael Helfrich, Lower Susquehanna Riverkeeper, 717-779-7915 or send email to: lawsusriver@hotmail.com.

What Are You Doing for Earth Day in April? Here Are Some Suggestions

Earth Day, April 22, is an opportunity to demonstrate that environmental responsibility is everyone's responsibility. There are a number of simple everyday choices that people can make to help protect the environment and here are some suggestions from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency--

[Reduce Your Carbon Footprint:](#) Do you know what your carbon foot print is? EPA's interactive climate change webpage has a personal carbon calculator and information on ways individuals can reduce their greenhouse gas emissions.

[Save Energy:](#) EPA's Energy Star webpage is the great place for consumers to find energy efficient products that are good for the environment and their wallets. Search this site to find the latest information on energy efficient electronics, lighting and cooling systems.

[Use Water Efficiently:](#) Visit EPA's WaterSense webpage to learn how efficient products and smart water choices can save money and help protect our nation's water supply.

For more ideas, visit [EPA's Earth Day webpage](#) and the [Great PA Cleanup! Earth Day Webpage](#)

NewsClip: [Schuylkill Center for Environmental Education Seeks Full-Time Educator](#)

Studies Identify Troubled Communities Statewide, Make Recommendations

Three new studies are sounding a warning bell for Pennsylvania municipalities and the state as a whole: without major changes in the structures and laws that govern municipalities and the way they are financed, and unless communities are empowered to work more closely together, their fiscal and physical integrity is at grave risk and the state's economy will continue to struggle in the coming decades.

The independent studies released by three major research institutions concurrently this week through the [Campaign to Renew Pennsylvania](#) are:

- an assessment of the fiscal health of Pennsylvania municipalities by the Pennsylvania Economy League, called "Structuring Healthy Communities;"
- an update of the 2003 "Back to Prosperity" report, entitled "Committing to Prosperity," prepared by the Brookings Institution for The Campaign to Renew Pennsylvania; and
- "Strengthening Rural Pennsylvania," a policy brief on rural issues authored by a team of researchers from The Pennsylvania State University.

All three reports conclude that on the downside, the lack of 21st century tools puts Pennsylvania communities under stress and unable to restore and maintain their prosperity and quality of life. Municipal revenues are declining as a result of slow-growing or even shrinking populations, high-quality jobs are waning, and the local tax base is declining.

The result is that many communities are unable to provide the services and infrastructure required for economic growth.

The reports also note, however, that the potential to modify this and other stark trends rests with continued systemic policy reform at both state and local levels. The reports recommend changes that modernize traditional approaches to Pennsylvania governance.

The Economy League, which analyzed municipal revenue from 1970 through 2003, found a systemic decline in the fiscal health of communities statewide. This decline cuts across all types of municipalities, in rural, suburban and urban areas, and in all regions of the state. It already impacts more than half of Pennsylvanians where they live, and without new tools for community leaders, it's only a matter of time for the rest of the state.

The Brookings update shows that since 2000, the Commonwealth is experiencing a continuation of trends reported in the original report albeit with marginal improvements.

These trends include slow growth, population loss in older places and replacement of high-quality jobs with jobs of low wages and low quality.

The Penn State study determined that similar concerns worry rural Pennsylvanians -- including a lack of inter-municipal coordination and cooperation, a change of employment base and lack of jobs that pay a living wage, the out-migration of young people, an aging population, the need for workforce development, and an inequitable local tax structure.

"These three studies constitute a clear and loud warning," said Todd Vonderheid, director of strategy for The Campaign to Renew Pennsylvania (RenewPA), which sponsored the Brookings update. "While there has been significant improvement in job creation and targeted investment during the Rendell Administration, the realities of the 21st century demand that our communities are healthy and able to invest in themselves and

in most instances that requires inter-governmental collaboration. But outdated state laws tie the hands of our local governments."

"If we don't empower our local governments to work more effectively, if the state doesn't give them the tools they need to collaborate, then we're doomed to see a steady decline in the fiscal health of our communities, as we can't seem to outgrow these structural problems. And as the Economy League report indicates, no municipality is immune to that kind of decline," Vonderheid said.

The Economy League study shows that municipalities are having an increasingly difficult time providing the services that residents need and expect, and that this fiscal distress is often inevitable under the laws that apply to local governments.

The analysis identified several stages that municipalities follow toward fiscal distress. While new development brings prosperity with low taxes, what often follows is increasing demand for services, along with increasing tax rates and service fees to fund them. Next comes reductions in non-core services, then reductions in core services, and finally loss of tax base and distress as households begin to "vote with their feet" by relocating, often to newer and more prosperous areas.

"The cycle of fiscal decline is exacerbated by the fact that municipal governments do not have the tools required to break it. Current limitations on the manner in which municipalities can increase revenue and on the amounts they can raise have tied the hands of municipal leaders. Our local governments need the state to take action to relieve these restrictions," said Stephen Stetler, The Pennsylvania Economy League Inc.'s executive director. "The recommendations in these reports provide hope that the current trends can be reversed with the cooperation of state and municipal leadership."

The original Brookings study, completed in 2003, was a comprehensive analysis of statewide growth and development trends. The update, while recognizing some positive developments, such as increased in-migration to the state, new urban revitalization, and job creation, confirms that Pennsylvania still is barely growing, that older communities continue to hollow out, and that the transitioning economy is still lagging.

"Pennsylvania has made significant progress in recent years," said Mark Muro, director of policy at Brookings' Metropolitan Policy Program, "but these three studies each show that there is more work to be done if Pennsylvania's communities are to reverse the current trends." Muro pointed to ongoing work by the administration of Governor Ed Rendell to empower local government, make reinvestment in existing communities a priority and to invest strategically in promising industry clusters, but noted the need for additional work, particularly by the General Assembly, to enact systemic long-lasting change.

Among other findings, the report notes that:

- Although it remains the sixth largest state, Pennsylvania's population growth remains among the slowest in the nation -- 1.2 percent, which ranks the state 46th in population growth. However, the state has seen a shift in migration patterns. Between 2003 and 2005, the state had a net in-migration of 9,600 people.
- Cities and boroughs continue to "hollow out" while outlying communities grew. Second-class townships grew by 5.9 percent between 2000 and 2005, while cities lost 3.3 percent of their population. However, there was an up-tick in housing permit activity in cities and boroughs: a 22.5 percent increase in the number of permits issued between 2000 and 2004 compared to between 1995 and 1999.

- Employment growth is slow compared to the nation -- 1.1 percent between 2000 and 2006 compared to 3.3 percent nationwide. However, there were some improvements in that the ranking of job growth jumped from 45th in the 1990s to 37th between 2000 and 2006. The metropolitan areas of Allentown, State College and Lancaster had the fastest job growth in the state, while Williamsport, Erie and Pittsburgh lost jobs.
- In light of these continuing trends, the Brookings report assessed the state's progress on key policy fronts, recognizing "progress to date" and sketching the "way forward."
- On local government reform, Brookings hailed the State Planning Board for proposing a reform agenda, and encouraged the General Assembly to enact legal changes to make inter-governmental cooperation on service provision easier.
- On prioritizing reinvestment, the report commended the Rendell Administration's Keystone Principles that prioritize investment in existing communities, and urged further work to ensure that public investments support the needs for established areas.
- And on economic revitalization, the report applauded the state's recent initiatives to identify high-promise industry clusters and match training efforts to employer needs, and suggested further work to make clusters the central tenet of economic and workforce development.

The Penn State study revealed that the trends -- both positive and negative -- impact communities of all sizes throughout the state.

"Sometimes we have a tendency to think of rural areas as being separate from urban and suburban areas, and we make decisions about each in a public-policy vacuum," said Ted Alter, Penn State professor of agricultural, environmental and regional economics. "We need to recognize that policy changes often create a domino effect that does not stop when it gets to rural Pennsylvania."

The issues rural Pennsylvanians identified as most critical are parallel to those of residents of more densely populated communities. Yet, rural development policy has tended to focus on specific economic segments, rather than address the complexity of rural communities.

The report outlines a place-based policy approach that works to leverage a region's unique assets, encourages regional cooperation among local governments and between the public and private sectors, and takes a more holistic view of economic development.

For the reports, regional profiles and more information, please visit the [Campaign to Renew Pennsylvania website](#). RenewPA is an initiative of 10,000 Friends of Pennsylvania.

NewsClips: [More than Half of PA Towns in Trouble](#)
[Outdated Laws Hurt State's Economic Growth](#)
[PA's Health is Better, Slightly](#)
[Editorial: New Studies Paint Gloomy State Picture](#)

Deadline Extended to Apply for Low-Income Home Energy Assistance

Cash and crisis grants for the [Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program](#) will be available to eligible households through April 13, the Department of Public Welfare announced this week.

This is the second extension of the application deadline since the LIHEAP program opened last November.

PA Environment Digest – Crisci Associates

The federally funded LIHEAP program helps low-income households pay for a variety of home heating fuel sources and furnace repairs during the winter months.

Cash grants are designed to help families pay their home heating bills and are based on household income, family size, fuel type and heating region. This year, a family of four with an annual income of up to \$30,000 can qualify for assistance.

In addition to verification of income and household size, applicants must provide a recent energy bill or a statement from their fuel provider stating the type of fuel they use and their customer status.

Crisis grants are approved for families with heating emergencies, such as mechanical breakdowns or unexpected fuel shortages. In most counties, individuals seeking crisis grants should contact their county assistance office.

Residents of the nine counties listed below are encouraged to directly contact the agencies that operate the crisis component in their areas:

- Allegheny – Allegheny County Department of Human Services, 1-800-851-3838;
- Carbon – Carbon County Action Committee, 610-377-6400;
- Centre – Central PA Community Action Agency, 814-765-1551, or Millheim Family Service Center, 814-349-5850;
- Lackawanna – Scranton-Lackawanna Human Development Agency, 570-963-6836;
- Lancaster – Community Action Program of Lancaster County, 717-299-7301;
- Luzerne – Commission on Economic Opportunity of Luzerne Co., 570-826-0510;
- Philadelphia – Department of Licenses and Inspections, 215-686-2590;
- Wyoming – Commission on Economic Opportunity of Wyoming Co., 570-836-4090;
- and
- York – Community Progress Council of York County, 717-846-4600.

To learn more about applying for heating assistance, contact the LIHEAP hotline at 1-866-857-7095, Monday through Friday or visit the [DPW Energy Assistance webpage](#).

PA Biomass Working Group to Hold First Meeting April 16-17

The [PA Biomass Working Group](#), a collection of businesses, universities, government agencies, foresters, economic development partners and environmental advocacy groups working to promote biomass energy production, will have its first meeting April 16-17 in St. Mary's, Elk County, at the Red Fern.

The agenda will include developing a biomass inventory, native grass planting/harvesting, biomass densification, multi-fuel residential heating and a tour of Advanced Recycling.

Financial support for the Working Group is provided by the [West Penn Power Sustainable Energy Fund](#).

For more information, visit the [PA Biomass Working Group website](#).

Heffner Appointed Director of DEP's Policy Office

DEP Secretary Kathleen McGinty this week announced the appointment of Kelly Heffner as director of DEP's Office of Policy.

Heffner most recently has served as an executive policy specialist in DEP's Policy Office where she has developed policy, regulations and guidance. In particular, she has

functioned as the policy liaison for all water related policy matters and has provided input to legislative committees regarding the interpretation of policy recommendations.

Prior to this appointment, she was the chief of the Permitting Section in the Division of Waterways, Wetlands and Stormwater Management where she supervised professional staff who were responsible for the development of program guidance, policies, regulations, and permitting processes.

Heffner began her career at DEP as a water pollution biologist and provided technical expertise to central and regional office staff and served as an expert on wetlands matters. She also worked for five years in the private sector as a project manager and biologist for RMC Environmental Services.

Heffner holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Environmental Science from East Stroudsburg University.

Spotlight

Nation's New Thirst for Ethanol Could Leave Chesapeake Bay With Hangover

By Karl Blankenship
The Chesapeake Bay Journal

Note: This article is an excerpt from the full article which appears in the [April Chesapeake Bay Journal](#).

With a sudden boom in ethanol to help slake the nation's thirst for transportation fuel, farmers are finding that corn has more in common with gold than just its color.

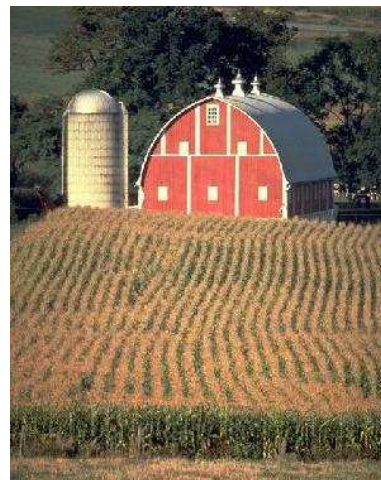
Corn prices in the region have doubled since late last year, hitting more than \$4 a bushel. As a result, farmers everywhere are weighing how much to plant. How they answer that question could have huge ramifications for the Chesapeake Bay.

While corn prices have spiked before, the increase has been temporary. This time, the U.S. Department of Agriculture is projecting prices to be more than \$3.50 a bushel for years as demand for ethanol grows here, and abroad.

The ethanol boom creates a complex set of winners and losers. While increased corn prices is great news for grain farmers, higher feed prices are hammering many dairy, poultry and hog operations.

Another loser could be the Chesapeake.

If 1 million additional acres of agricultural land in the Bay watershed were converted into corn production, it could increase nitrogen runoff by roughly 15 million pounds a year, especially if farmers choose to convert idle land, hay fields, and pastures—all low-runoff uses—to corn, according to rough estimates by Tom Simpson, a soil scientist with the University of Maryland's College of Agricultural and Natural Resources.



That would negate a quarter of the annual nitrogen reductions in the Bay watershed since 1985. Reducing the amount of nitrogen and phosphorus, which fuel algae blooms in the Bay, is the focal point of Chesapeake cleanup efforts.

High prices may also discourage participation in some conservation programs. For instance, programs that pay farmers to turn crop land into streamside buffers are less attractive when that land could produce \$4-a-bushel corn. “I think there is going to be a lot of fence-row to fence-row activity in the next few years,” said Jim Pease, an agricultural economist at Virginia Tech.

For the most part, decisions driving ethanol production are being made by political and economic factors at the national scale. Water quality concerns have barely been raised as a side effect of using corn to supplement the nation’s fuel supply. “This is not a matter of what we in the watershed are going to do to water quality,” Pease said. “It is a matter of what is going to be done to us.”

It’s not just an issue for the Bay. Curbing nitrogen pollution—which stimulates excessive algae growth in saltwater—is a goal for most coastal areas around the nation and many parts of the world. Officials are considering a 30 percent nitrogen reduction goal for the Mississippi basin, which drains half of the country, including the Midwest Corn Belt, to relieve a summertime oxygen-starved “dead zone” in the upper Gulf of Mexico.

Demand for corn is increasing pressure to take land out of the USDA’s 2-decade-old Conservation Reserve Program, which pays farmers “rent” to take marginal and environmentally sensitive lands out of production. Hunting and wildlife groups have called CRP the “holy grail” of wildlife conservation, as it provides more habitat for birds and other species than all of the national wildlife refuges combined.

In February, leading agricultural groups petitioned the USDA, asking that it allow 27 million of the 36.7 million acres of land in the Conservation Reserve Program be withdrawn without penalty and returned to production to help meet the demand for corn. A decision is expected later this year.

But with pressure to place land in production, it will be more difficult to set streamside buffers aside as filter strips to protect waterways from runoff. State tributary strategies, which guide Bay cleanup efforts, call for more than 570,000 miles of forested stream buffers, and 237,000 miles of grass buffers.

Through 2005, only 8 percent of the forest buffer goal and 22 percent of the grass buffer goal had been met. Officials say closing the gap will only get more difficult. “I’m happy for the farmers to see the \$4 (per bushel) corn because that could preserve some agriculture in the state,” said Russ Perkinson, of the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation. “But that’s another side effect.”

Brian Snyder, executive director of the Pennsylvania Association for Sustainable Agriculture, said higher grain prices may encourage more dairy farmers to switch to grass-based operations. Dairy farms that rely on pastures rather than imported food typically produce less milk, but can be more profitable as they have lower operating costs because they need less equipment and grain. Also, their milk often commands premium prices.

Intensive grazing operations also tend to produce less nutrient runoff. “It will push many farms that may have been on the edge already to try grass-based systems,” Snyder said.

But the real hope is in cellulosic ethanol. Many see the short-term boost in corn production as part of a transition to ethanol from other products within a few years.

The catch: Technology to produce cellulosic ethanol remains largely a research issue. Corn-based ethanol technology has existed ever since the first still; people like Jack Daniels made a living making it. Creating ethanol from switchgrass and other cellulosic material require an added step to convert plant fibers into sugars that are more easily fermented. While several methods exist, they are not cost competitive with corn-based ethanol and gasoline.

But with the booming demand for renewable fuels, research money is pouring into cellulosic ethanol. The U.S. Department of Energy earlier this year announced grants to back six cellulosic refineries. The plant being built in Clearfield County, PA, will also have a cellulosic research operation.

Nonetheless, some are concerned that once the infrastructure for corn-based ethanol is established, transitioning to cellulosic ethanol will be difficult.

“What worries me is that people are continuing to focus on the ethanol from grain,” said George Wolff, a longtime Pennsylvania agricultural consultant who has been active in Bay issues. “I don’t think the acreage is here to do it. There are a lot of dreamers out there thinking they can do it, but I think we ought to be concentrating on how can we take care of the ethanol from biomass.”

Reprinted with permission from the [April Chesapeake Bay Journal](#).

Environmental Heritage

Three Mile Island, March 28, 1979 at 3:53 A.M.

At 3:53 a.m., March 28, 1979, the cascading failures of valves, pumps, gauges and reactor operators combined to produce the worst accident in the U.S. commercial nuclear power industry.

The accident occurred at the Three Mile Island nuclear power plant Unit 2 near Middletown, a few miles downstream from Harrisburg. For 48 hours, the reactor was dangerously out of control.



Anyone living in and around T.M.I. remembers exactly where they were on March 30 when they heard Gov. Dick Thornburgh order all preschool children and pregnant women within five miles of the plant to evacuate and later everyone within 10 miles to close their windows and stay indoors. Seven thousand people were evacuated and perhaps a hundred thousand more fled.

A hydrogen bubble formed in the reactor bringing it very close to exploding. Within a few days, scientists reduced the size of the bubble. The cooling down process, however, took a month and the radioactive plant would take years to decontaminate.

Though no lives were lost in the accident, the uncertainty and fear it caused gave people a new sense of vulnerability. The day after the accident, 35,000 protesters in Hanover, West Germany, chanted, "We all live in Pennsylvania."

In contrast, Unit 1 at Three Mile Island has operated successfully since it first began commercial operations in 1974 producing electricity for Pennsylvania and the Mid-Atlantic region.

As a result of the accident, emergency planning and response programs at the local, state and federal level were dramatically improved around nuclear plants and state efforts to monitor radiation and provide direct oversight at these facilities also underwent significant changes.

Here are remembrances from that day by two of the people who were touched in unique ways by the accident–

- [Thomas M. Gerusky](#), Director of the Bureau of Radiation Protection at the then-Department of Environmental Resources on March 28, 1979, and was in charge of the state's technical response to the accident; and
- [James M. Seif](#), former Secretary of the Department of Environmental Protection, and in 1979 administrative assistant to Gov. Dick Thornburgh.

NewsClips: [Editorial: Interest Renews in Expansion of Nuclear Power](#)
[TMI Watchdog Group Marks 30th Anniversary](#)
[TMI Watchdog Turns 30](#)
[TMI Alert to Celebrate 30th Anniversary](#)

Links: [DEP's Three Mile Island Heritage webpage](#)
[Three Mile Island Alert, Inc.](#)

Feature

Game Commission Issues Springtime Alert: Do Not Disturb Young Wildlife

Whether hiking in the woods, driving through the countryside or simply enjoying nature, outdoor enthusiasts encountering wildlife, especially young wildlife, are encouraged to leave the animals alone and not remove them from the wild.

"Being outdoors in the spring is an enjoyable way to spend time and learn more about nature," said Calvin W. DuBrock, Game Commission Bureau of Wildlife Management director. "In the coming months, it will become common to find young deer, rabbits, birds, raccoons or other wildlife that may appear to be abandoned. Rest assured that in most cases, the young animal probably was not abandoned and the best thing to do is not disturb it."

DuBrock noted many adult animals tend to forage for food and bring it to their young. Also, wildlife often relies on a natural defensive tactic called the "hider strategy," where young animals will remain motionless and "hide" in surrounding cover while adults draw the attention of predators or other intruders away from their young.

"While it may appear as if the adults are abandoning their young, in reality, this is just the animal using its natural instincts to protect its young," DuBrock said. "Nature also protects young animals with camouflaging color and by giving them little scent to avoid being detected by predators."



"Wild animals are not meant to be pets, and we must all resist our well-meaning and well-intentioned urge to want to care for wildlife. Taking wildlife from its natural settings and into your home may expose or transmit to people or domestic animals wildlife diseases. Wildlife also may carry parasites - such as fleas, ticks or lice - that you wouldn't want infesting you, your family, your home or your pets."

To emphasize his point, DuBrock noted that in 2003, a Crawford County woman picked up two young raccoons along Canal Road between Hartstown and Conneaut Lake, and took them home with her. They had been found along the road where a female raccoon had apparently been killed by a car. One of the young raccoons appeared sick, so the woman contacted the Game Commission and a Wildlife Conservation Officer went to her home. A few days later, the animal tested positive for rabies, and the woman had to begin the post-exposure shot regimen.

"This is just one example of what we hear every year; people having to subject themselves to treatment for possible exposure to rabies," DuBrock said. "In nearly all cases, people's well-meaning and well-intentioned actions still require that the animal be put down in the interest of protecting public health."

According to the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture, there were 505 reported rabies cases in 2006, an increase from the 406 reported cases in 2005. The highest number of reported rabies cases was 611, which was recorded in 1990.

Protecting public health from exposure to disease is only one of the concerns, noted Rich Palmer, Game Commission Bureau of Wildlife Protection acting director.

"Protecting public safety also is an important matter for the Game Commission to consider when faced with situations in which people have removed wildlife from the wild," Palmer said. "Habituation to humans is a serious concern, as wildlife that loses its natural fear of humans can pose a public safety risk."

To emphasize his point, Palmer noted that, last November, a 1.5-year-old, six-point antlered deer attacked and severely injured a Clinton County couple.

"Our investigation discovered evidence and testimony that a family who lived near the victims had illegally harbored and fed the deer as a fawn, and had continued to do so up until the time that it attacked the victims," Palmer said.

"This particular incident was the subject of numerous news stories around the state, as well as the focus of two news releases issued by the Game Commission, in our attempt to warn people of the possible dangers associated with feeding wildlife."

In addition, Palmer noted that it is illegal to take or possess wildlife from the wild. Under state law, the penalty for such a violation is a fine of up to \$1,500 per animal. The couple who fed the deer in the Clinton County case were found guilty by a district justice and ordered to pay a fine of \$300 plus court costs.

"Under no circumstances will anyone who illegally takes wildlife into captivity be allowed to keep that animal," Palmer said. "While residents love to view wildlife and are very compassionate, they must enjoy wildlife from a distance and allow nature to run its course."

Palmer also pointed out that, under a working agreement with state health officials, any "high risk" rabies vector species confiscated must be euthanized and tested rather than relocated. Though any mammal may carry rabies, species identified in the agreement are: skunks, raccoons, foxes, bats, coyotes and groundhogs.

"Except for some species of bats, populations of all other rabies vector species are thriving," Palmer said. "Therefore, to protect public health and safety, it only makes sense to put an animal down for testing, rather than risk relocating a potentially rabid animal." DuBrock said it always is wise to avoid wild animals and even strange domestic pets because of the potential rabies risk.

"Animals infected with rabies may not show obvious symptoms, but still may be able to transmit the disease," DuBrock.

People can get rabies from the saliva of a rabid animal if they are bitten or scratched, or if the saliva gets into the person's eyes, mouth or a fresh wound. The last human rabies fatality in Pennsylvania was a 12-year-old Lycoming County boy who died in 1984.

Quick Clips

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

[Deer Taking Heavy Toll on PA's Forests](#)
[300 Year Old Tree to Be Taken Down](#)
[PA Farmers Say They Have to Uproot](#)
[EAC Network Rewards Wallace Woodlands Efforts](#)
[Chesco Philanthropist Donates 568 Acres for Open Space](#)
[Another Dentist Reduces Energy, Environmental Costs](#)
[Simple Things Can Stop Global Warming](#)
[Editorial: Global Warming](#)
[Op-Ed: Climate Act Would Hurt State's Economy and Workers](#)
[Students Complete to Design Solar Home](#)
[Council is Aiming for Cleaner Energy](#)
[Going Green in Ways Big and Small](#)
[Being Green Doesn't Take a Lot of Green](#)
[Op-Ed: Local Businesses Should Go Green](#)
[Chester County Hospitals Going Green](#)
[State College Gets Green Ranking](#)
[Dickinson College Tracks Trash](#)
[Dickinson School of Law Plans Green Building](#)
[Adams Electric Officials Expect Rate Hikes](#)
[Free Composters Come With Classes](#)
[Illegal Garbage Dumping Holds Back Monroe County Recycling Efforts](#)
[Lebanon County Officials Back Regional Planning](#)
[Lower Merion OKs Initiatives to Preserve Open Land](#)
[DEP Waste Transportation Safety Program Improvements](#)
[Wind Company Defends Project](#)
[Wind Turbines a Big Issue for Small Towns](#)
[Editorial: Interest Renews in Expansion of Nuclear Power](#)
[TMI Watchdog Group Marks 30th Anniversary](#)
[TMI Watchdog Turns 30](#)
[Power Line Gets Negative Reaction](#)
[Peregrine Falcons Trying to Nest Atop Reading Building](#)

[Erie National Wildlife Refuge Going Native, Plant Wise](#)

Watershed NewsClips

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

[Schuylkill Center for Environmental Education Seeks Full-Time Educator](#)

[Physician Honored for Watershed Work](#)

[Bill Promises Cleaner Water](#)

[Strong Support for Proposal to Help Farmers Improve Waterways](#)

[REAP Gathers Momentum](#)

[Amy Wolfe, Trout Unlimited, Streams Still Need Help](#)

[Mill Creek Watershed Project to Make Creek Safe for Brown Trout](#)

[Recommendations Made on Clarion River Project](#)

[Students, Residents Join for Creek Cleanup](#)

[Conservancy Hopes to Revive Connoquenessing Creek for Canoeists](#)

[Landowner Issues Impact Access to Streams](#)

[Editorial: Let's All Help Push Acid Mine Cleanup Initiative](#)

[Allegheny Forest to Tighten Regulations on Wells](#)

[DRBC Flexible Flow Plan Worries River Town Residents](#)

[As Flood Walls Age, Towns Must Find Money for Repairs](#)

[Saving the Bay Could Cost Sewer Plants](#)

[Elevated Arsenic Found in Some Northern PA Water Wells](#)

[Trout Season: New Angles](#)

Regulations

No new regulations were published this week.

[Pennsylvania Bulletin – March 31, 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 Department of Environmental Protection [published formal notice](#) of the 2007 new source set-asides for nitrogen oxide emissions.

[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](#)
- **April 3** – Senate Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee Listening Session. Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank, 1 N. Linden St., Duquesne. 10:00.
- **April 4** – Senate Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee Listening Session. Salvation Army Camp Ledore, Waymart. 11:00.
- **April 4** – **CANCELLED**. [DEP Cleanup Standards Scientific Advisory Board](#) meeting. Next scheduled meeting September 19.
- **April 5** – Senate Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee Listening Session. Lebanon County Conservation District, 2120 Cornwall Road, Lebanon. 9:30.
- **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 12** – DCNR [Snowmobile and ATV Advisory Committee](#) meeting. Room 105 Rachel Carson Building. 9:00.
- **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. 12:45
- **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.
- **April 17** – **CANCELLED**. Environmental Quality Board meeting. Next scheduled meeting is May 16.
- **April 26** – [Joint Conservation Committee](#) Forestry Task Force meeting. Celebration Hall by Hoags, 2280 Commercial Blvd., State College. 10:00.
- **April 27** – Senate Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee Listening Session. Berks County Agricultural Center, 1238 County Welfare Road, Leesport. 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 .

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