

— PA — Environment Digest

*An Update on
Environmental
Issues in
Pennsylvania*

Edited By David E. Hess, Holston & Crisci

June 26, 2006

***** Due to Extended Legislative Session, Next Week's Digest May Be Late *****

Just a little heads up that next week's PA Environment Digest may be later than usual because the Senate and House plan to be in session through Friday (or whenever the budget gets done).

Senate Passes Bipartisan Proposal to Reduce Mercury Emissions 40 to 10

By a vote of 40 to 10, the Senate this week passed [Senate Bill 1201](#) (MJ.White-R-Venango, Musto-D-Luzerne) that would reduce mercury emissions from power plants by 86 percent by 2018.

"Today's vote demonstrates the Senate's commitment to protecting the public's health -- especially among our most vulnerable citizens and the unborn -- in a balanced manner that protects jobs, minimizes the impact on electric bills, and preserves our generating capacity," said Sen. White.

The Senate plan is an alternative to a mercury reduction plan proposed by the Department of Environmental Protection that opponents said could result in the premature retirement of 20 percent of Pennsylvania's coal-fired generating capacity, the elimination of family-sustaining jobs and increases in the cost of electricity for no added benefit to protecting public health or the environment. (See *Regulations for more on the mercury rule.*)

The legislation is supported by a labor/business coalition that includes: the United Mine Workers of America, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, Pennsylvania Conference of Teamsters, Pennsylvania Coal Association, Electric Power Generation Association, Pennsylvania Chamber of Business and Industry, Pennsylvania Manufacturers



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Association, Pennsylvania Chemical Industry Council and Associated Petroleum Industries of Pennsylvania.

“This bill will require power plant owners to invest hundreds of millions of dollars in advanced clean air controls to reduce mercury emissions, covering 90 percent of the power plants in Pennsylvania, according to DEP,” said Edward D. Yankovich, International Vice President, United Mine Workers of America. “Installing these controls means these plants could continue to burn Pennsylvania coal and help protect mine worker jobs.”

“Studies show there is virtually no difference between adopting this legislation and zeroing out all mercury emissions from all power plants in the U.S.,” said Donald Siegel, International Vice President, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers. “80 percent of the mercury consumed by Americans comes from ocean and saltwater fish that would not be affected by reducing U.S. utility mercury emissions.”

In fact, power plants in Pennsylvania already have reduced mercury emissions by 33 percent from 1999 to 2004, according to the federal Toxics Release Inventory, and yet this significant reduction did not even register on the state’s Mercury Monitoring Network, according to DEP.

These results demonstrates clearly that mercury is coming from a variety of sources, not just local power plants, and the Senate/House plan is the only proposal that facilitates Pennsylvania’s participation in a national program to reduce mercury emissions.

“The risk of power plants switching to coal mined in other states is very real, because Pennsylvania coal has twice the mercury content of coal from other states,” according to George L. Ellis, President of the Pennsylvania Coal Association. “If this legislation is not adopted, power generators will have no choice but to consider switching to out-of-state coal with a much lower mercury content and our jobs will go with it.”

Link: www.PaEnergyNews.com

Session Schedule

The Senate and House return to session on June 26 until whenever...

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- PUC Releases Report on Market Conditions for Pike County Light & Power
- DCNR Survey Shows Deer Numbers Vary Widely in 460,000+ Acres of Woodlands

See & Hear

- Watershed Specialists Are Making A Difference

Feature

- Audenreid Treatment Project Dedicated, Will Clean Up 34 Miles of Catawissa Creek

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

On the Hill

On the Senate, House Agenda

Here's what will be on the Senate and House agenda when they return to session on June 26.

Calendars

The House will start with these bills of interest on its June 26 Calendar—[Senate Bill 940](#) which would set aside up to \$200,000 per year from the Agricultural Conservation Easement Purchase Fund to reimburse Land Trusts for expenses incurred in acquiring agricultural conservation easements; [House Bill 2067](#) setting limits on state spending through a constitutional amendment, [Senate Bill 868](#) increasing the forest land in-lieu of tax payment, and [House Bill 1588](#) providing for the fluoridation of public water.

Committees

In the House, the Environmental Resources and Energy Committee meets to consider [House Bill 2619](#) establishing a Mine Families First Program to provide assistance to families involved in mine rescue operations and [Senate Bill 594](#) establishing the Dormant Oil and Gas Act to create trusts for prior oil and gas well owners.

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In the Senate, the Appropriations Committee meets to consider [Senate Bill 1224](#) creating the Conservation District Fund; the Community and Economic Development Committee meets to consider [Senate Bill 1232](#) establishing the Historic Preservation Incentive Grant Program; and the [Senate Environmental Resources and Energy Committee](#) holds a public hearing on tritium at landfills and meets to consider [House Bill 1195](#) that makes changes to the program to help underground tank owners upgrade tanks.

Senate/House Bills Moving/Introduced

Several environmental bills moved this week. Here's the rundown....

Senate

Capital Budget Bill: [House Bill 2317](#) (Feese-R-Lycoming) establishing the 2005-2006 Capital Budget for flood control, Keystone Recreation, Environmental Stewardship projects was amended and reported from Senate Appropriations and passed by the Senate. It now moves to the House for a concurrence vote.

Mercury Emissions: [Senate Bill 1201](#) (MJ.White-R-Venango, Musto-D-Luzerne) that would reduce mercury emissions from power plants by 86 percent by 2018 was passed by the Senate and now moves to the House where it was reported into and out of the House Rules Committee.

Storage Tanks: [House Bill 1195](#) (Yudichak-D-Luzerne) that makes changes to the program to help underground tank owners upgrade tanks was referred to Senate Environmental Resources and Energy Committee.

Funding Sewer Laterals: [House Bill 1108](#) (Rubley-R-Chester) establishing a program within PennVEST to repair or replace private sewer laterals was referred to Senate Appropriations.

House

Mine Families First: The House Veterans Affairs and Emergency Preparedness Committee reported out [House Bill 2619](#) (Bastian-R-Somerset) establishing the Mine Families First Program and then referred to the Environmental Resources and Energy Committee.

Open Space Bond: [House Bill 2793](#) (Petri-R-Bucks) proposing a \$150 million bond issue for voter approval to fund open space preservation and flood hazard mitigation projects was reported from House Local Government Committee, referred to and out of House Rules Committee and then to House Appropriations.

Purchasing Flood Hazard Properties: [House Bill 2795](#) (Petri-R-Bucks) authorizing the Commonwealth and local government to purchase property subject to flood hazards was

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reported from House Local Government Committee, referred to and out of House Rules Committee and then to House Appropriations.

Disaster Assistance: [House Bill 2794](#) (Petri-R-Bucks) establish a disaster assistance program to provide low-interest loans to victims of natural and manmade disasters was reported from the House Veterans Affairs and Emergency Preparedness Committee and then referred to the House Rules Committee.

Conservation District Funding: [House Bill 2742](#) (Hershey-R-Chester) establishing a Conservation District Fund to simplify county conservation district funding was reported from the House Environmental Resources and Energy Committee with a request to refer it to House Appropriations Committee.

Bills Introduced

Several environmental bills of interest were introduced this week. Here's the rundown...

Open Space Bond: [House Bill 2793](#) (Petri-R-Bucks) proposing a \$150 million bond issue for voter approval to fund open space preservation and flood hazard mitigation projects.

Disaster Assistance: [House Bill 2794](#) (Petri-R-Bucks) establish a disaster assistance program to provide low-interest loans to victims of natural and manmade disasters.

Purchasing Flood Hazard Properties: [House Bill 2795](#) (Petri-R-Bucks) authorizing the Commonwealth and local government to purchase property subject to flood hazards.

First Refusal of Mineral Rights: [Senate Bill 1229](#) (Wozniak-D-Cambria) providing for a right of first refusal to surface rights owners when mineral rights are to be transferred.

Historic Preservation Grants: [Senate Bill 1232](#) (Piccola-R-Dauphin) establishing the Historic Preservation Incentive Grant Program.

Emergency Response Grants: [Senate Bill 1236](#) (D.White-R-Indiana) establishing the Volunteer Emergency Service Partnership Grant Program.

Senate Acts to Restore Some Environmental Funding Cuts, But Long Way to Go

This week the Senate took time to strip out almost all the amendments the House added to the budget bill ([House Bill 2499](#)) taking it back to its original form, essentially this year's budget with just a few additions, but with none of the additional spending recommended by the Governor.

On the positive side, this move restores many of the environmental funding cuts recommended by Gov. Rendell in his budget request in February, but the budget is a long way from being finished.

The Senate and House are due to work right up and possibly through the June 30 deadline for adopting a new state budget next week.

House Committee Meets on Mine Families First, Oil & Gas Leases

The House Environmental Resources and Energy Committee meets to consider legislation to care for families with mine workers involved in accidents and on oil and gas leases. The bills include:

[House Bill 2619](#) (Bastian-R-Somerset) establishing a Mine Families First Program to provide assistance to families involved in mine rescue operations; and

[Senate Bill 594](#) (MJ White-R-Venango) establishing the Dormant Oil and Gas Act to create trusts for prior oil and gas well owners.

Senate Committee Sets Hearing on Tritium at Landfills, Considers Tank Bill

On June 28 the Senate Environmental Resources and Energy Committee will hold a public hearing on levels of tritium in municipal waste landfills.

Tritium, a radioactive variation of the chemical element of hydrogen, is most commonly found in illuminated exit signs.

Representatives from the Department of Environmental Protection, the Nuclear Information and Resource Service (a private organization from Takoma Park, MD) and a landfill operator will provide testimony to the Committee.

The Committee is also set to consider [House Bill 1195](#) (Yudichak-D-Luzerne) that makes changes to the program to help underground tank owners upgrade tanks in a meeting June 26.

For more information, visit the [Senate Environmental Resources and Energy Committee webpage](#).

New Member of Senate Environmental Resources Committee Named



<mailto:adinniman@chesco.org> Sen. Andrew Dinniman (D-Chester) was sworn into office this week to replace the late Sen. Robert Thompson. At the same time he was named to the Senate Environmental Resources and Energy Committee, replacing Sen. Fontanna (D-Allegheny).

Sen. Dinniman served four terms as a Chester County Commissioner and is a professor at West Chester University holding a doctorate in Education from Penn State University.

He has been active in the Green Valleys Association, the Brandywine Valley Association, the West Caln Sportsmen's Club and other civic and community organizations.

For more information, visit [Sen. Dinniman's website](#).

Joint Committee Survey Charts Attitudes About Litter, Roadside Beautification

A survey sponsored by the [Joint Air and Water Pollution Control and Conservation Committee](#) found 90 percent of those surveyed were bothered by the amount of litter along Pennsylvania's highways and 53 percent felt roadside beautification projects would help bring jobs to the state.

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Questions about litter and roadside beautification were included by the Committee in the 2006 Mansfield University Statewide Survey.

70 percent of those surveyed felt that more public education and stiffer fines were needed to address the litter problem in the state.

An overwhelming number of participants said they noticed roadside gardens and landscaping—72 percent—while a majority found them to be "average" – 55 percent.

However, 53 percent felt an improvement in roadside beautification projects would help bring jobs to the state.

For more details, download the [June 2006 issue of Environmental Synopsis](#).

For more on what you can do to prevent litter and encourage beautification, visit www.KeepPaBeautiful.org.

In Other News

Groups Rally to Support Santorum Bill to Restore Mine Reclamation Funding

Conservation, mining and labor groups along with officials from the Rendell Administration joined U.S. Senator Rick Santorum to announce their support for federal legislation that would restore federal funding for abandoned mine reclamation.

Sen. Santorum's bill will deliver an unprecedented \$1 billion to Pennsylvania alone over sixteen years to clean up abandoned mine land sites-- abandoned strip mines; spoil piles, mine entries; and mine shafts.

"I cannot emphasize the importance of this legislation to Pennsylvania. Today we stand on the North Shore and look out at Point State Park and we can see the progress that has been made due to cleanup and land reclamation funding. This is just a sample of what we hope to see in the hundred of communities and thousands of acres across our state," said Sen. Santorum. "This bill will bring an unprecedented amount of funding to Pennsylvania and will sustain multi-year planning for abandoned mine land cleanup. It will also help to create local jobs that will stay in Pennsylvania."

Statewide there are a total of more than 184,000 acres of abandoned mine lands and 4,000 miles of biologically dead rivers and streams due to mine pollution. It is estimated that 1.4 million Pennsylvanians live within one mile of an AML site.

Scott Roberts of the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection; John Dawes, Chairman of the Pennsylvania AML Campaign; Dennis McGrath, President/CEO of Western Pennsylvania Conservancy and Matt Miller, United Mine Workers Special Asst. to Vice President Ed Yankovich all offered remarks at the press conference in support of the legislation.

"Pennsylvania, more than any state in America, urgently needs Congress to enact the AML Program reauthorization bill that Senators Santorum and Specter are sponsoring," said John Dawes, Chairman of the Pennsylvania Abandoned Mine Lands Campaign. "On behalf of hundreds of coalfield communities and watershed groups, I'd like to thank our Senators, because at a time when Congress was on a fast track to pass a bill that would have really hurt Pennsylvania, Senators Santorum and Specter persuaded Senate leadership to support a much better approach that will deliver more than a billion dollars in guaranteed minimum funding to Pennsylvania, so we can really get the worst of the abandoned mine damage cleaned up."

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This bill will also pay for healthcare costs of orphan mine workers. Due to a decline in the number of employers contributing to the healthcare plans of orphan beneficiaries (employees from mine companies that have folded or declared bankruptcy), the current structure for financing these benefits is no longer sustainable.

“I would like to take this opportunity to thank Senator Santorum and Senator Specter, and Senators Rockefeller and Byrd from West Virginia for their diligent effort in supporting and leading the charge in introducing S. 2616,” said Matt Miller, Special Assistant to the International Vice President of District II United Mine Workers of America, Ed Yankovich. “The Congress of these United States needs to pass this legislation as soon as possible and honor its commitment made by President Harry S. Truman in 1946, which guarantees lifetime health benefits to the retirees of the United Mine Workers of America.”

The following organizations have also expressed support for S.2616: Western PA Watershed Program; Western PA Conservancy; Pennsylvania Environmental Council; Alleghenies Watershed Network; The Community Foundation; Western PA Coalition for Abandoned Mine Reclamation; Eastern PA Coalition for Abandoned Mine Reclamation; Audubon Society; Watershed Assistance Center; Mountain Watershed Association; Bio-Most; PA Association for Conservation Districts; Stream Restoration Inc.; Independence Marsh Foundation; Federation of PA Sportsmen; Allegheny Land Trust; The Stream Team; Bureau of Abandoned Mine Reclamation; Department of Environmental Protection; United Mine Workers; PA Trout Unlimited; POWR--Pennsylvania Organization for Watersheds and Rivers; and Hedin Environmental.

[S.2616](#) has the support of bipartisan cosponsors including Senators Arlen Specter (R-PA), Robert Byrd (D-WV), John Rockefeller (D-WV), Kent Conrad (D-ND), Paul Sarbanes (D-MD) and Chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee, Thad Cochran (R-MS).

Sen. Santorum is hopeful that bringing attention to this legislation now will help bolster more bipartisan support from other states.

NewsClip: [Senator Pushes Bill for Mine Reclamation](#)
[Santorum Seeking \\$1 Billion for Mine Cleanup](#)
[Santorum Stresses Importance of Mine Reclamation Legislation](#)

DEP Says ‘Stay Out/Stay Alive’ From Abandoned Mines, Quarries

stay OUT
stay ALIVE

Mines and Quarries are not Playgrounds

The Department of Environmental Protection this week unveiled its updated “[Stay Out/Stay Alive](#)” webpage to increase awareness about the dangers of trespassing on abandoned and active mines and quarries. 27 people have been killed in abandoned mines in 18 counties since January 2000.

DEP has partnered with the U.S. Mine Safety and Health Administration, other state agencies and the active mining industry to promote the “Stay Out/Stay Alive” campaign --- a national effort designed to inform the public, particularly young people, about the dangers of abandoned and active mines.

The site also includes links to the “[Stay Out/Stay Alive](#)” site operated by MSHA, other mining states and mining-related organizations.

For more information, visit the [Stay Out, Stay Alive webpage](#).

Engineering Technical Assistance Program Celebrates Five Year Anniversary

This summer is the five year anniversary of the [Engineering Assistance Program](#) operated by the PA Association of Conservation Districts that's designed to help watershed and other groups develop and implement watershed restoration plans and projects.

Engineering technical assistance is provided through eight different engineering services-- inventory and evaluation, topographic survey, soils investigation, design and specifications, construction quality assurance, technical reviews, training and watershed assessment.

The Program has been extremely successful because it offers assistance to conservation districts, watershed associations, and other eligible recipients, who may not otherwise have access to these services.

PACD can provide engineering technical assistance for projects that include agricultural best management practices, stream restoration and treatment of abandoned mine drainage.

During the past five years, the Program has completed 305 individual environmental improvement projects for hundreds of local organizations with an estimated value of \$14.2 million dollars.

The program, which is a partnership effort between the PACD and the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, began in 2001 with the receipt of a Growing Greener grant to provide engineering technical assistance. In 2004, the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service provided matching federal funds for engineering technical assistance for the implementation of comprehensive nutrient management plans.

A recent Growing Greener grant from the Department of Environmental Protection will continue this program into the next calendar year.

The PACD engineers and engineering technicians that provide services are based in the four Technical Center offices of the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service located around Pennsylvania.

For more information, visit the [PACD Engineering Assistance webpage](#).

Erie Agrees to Install Hydrogen Bioreactor at Wastewater Treatment Plant

The City of Erie signed an agreement this week with [NanoLogix, Inc.](#) for the construction and operation of a prototype hydrogen bioreactor at the city's wastewater treatment plant.

NanoLogix is a nanobiotechnology company based in Sharon engaged in the development and commercialization of technologies for the creation of hydrogen utilizing hydrogen bioreactors.

This project will utilize the proprietary intellectual property of NanoLogix in conjunction with the participation of faculty members and students from Gannon University.

Mitchell S. Felder, M.D., CEO of NanoLogix, Inc., stated that, "We are very enthusiastic about exploring the enormous potential for converting wastewater into hydrogen. The Erie Wastewater Treatment Plant treats between 30-40 million gallons per day from the sewer system. There are thousands of plants throughout America. Success in this arena could greatly alleviate American dependence upon foreign energy sources."

Joe Sinnott, Esq., the Mayor of Erie, added, "We are proud to have the City of Erie in the forefront of the technological fight for American energy independence. Our collective success could permanently change the worldwide energy paradigm."

For more information, visit the [NanoLogix, Inc.](#) website.

Expedition Susquehanna Hits the Water!



Tasha and Kisha love their new hellbender.

[Team Susquehanna](#) hit the water this week in Cooperstown, NY, launching what will become a once-in-a-life-time event for 12 Pennsylvania high school students.

Expedition Susquehanna is a 30-day adventure down the Susquehanna River from New York to Maryland. By the time the team reaches the Chesapeake Bay they will have traveled over 400 miles, seeing both the pristine and the polluted Susquehanna, as well as talking to citizens about restoration efforts underway.

This is the second expedition being sponsored by the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, the first was held last year on the James River in Virginia. The Expedition is offered through CBF's highly successful environmental education program which offers daily, weekly, and bi-weekly educational experiences for students and teachers throughout the Chesapeake Bay Watershed.

In Pennsylvania, CBF's Susquehanna Watershed Education Program, runs educational programming 8 months per year, getting hundreds of students and their teachers out on to the Susquehanna River and local waterways.

"We're very excited about this expedition. It's going to offer educational opportunities that our students could not find anywhere but on the river," said Matthew Ehrhart, Pennsylvania CBF Executive Director."

The Expedition Susquehanna crew is made up of high school students from 9th to 12th grade who are active members of FFA. FFA is nationally known for its work in developing leadership skills in young adults through agricultural education, and CBF offers the nation's largest environmental education program. Taken in tandem, these strengths provide a background that will hone the young leaders' knowledge of agriculture and the environment, two of the region's most pressing issues.

During the first week of the journey, Team Susquehanna will explore the headwaters in Cooperstown, NY, paddle into Pennsylvania, take a 2-day excursion into World's End State Park for fly-fishing, snorkeling, and water quality studies, and then paddle their way into the Meshoppen area.

The public can follow this exciting journey through a website created just for the trip. The site offers interactive maps, video and audio clips, photo galleries, and journals submitted by the students.

To follow the journey and find out what the students are learning, visit the [Expedition Susquehanna webpage](#).

NewsClips: [State College Teen Canoes to Explore Susquehanna's Ecology](#)
[Susquehanna Expedition Paddles Into Bradford County](#)

Watershed Art Contest Winners Announced By Pennsylvania American



Grand-prize winner, Kerri Silbaugh (center), poses with (L to R) fifth-grade teacher Carol Elliot, mother, Cathy Silbaugh, and school principal, Mrs. Richtner.

Pennsylvania American Water announced the winners of its 5th Annual Protect Our Watersheds Art Contest for fifth-grade students across the Commonwealth this week.

The grand-prize winner is Kerri Leigh Silbaugh, a fifth-grade student at John F. Kennedy Elementary School in Washington. She will receive a \$500 educational savings bond for her winning entry.

In addition, her winning design will be printed on thousands of “Bloomer” cards that Pennsylvania American Water will distribute. “Bloomer” cards are biodegradable, seed-filled cards that can be planted to produce a variety of wildflowers.

Congratulations are also extended to first-place winners Rachel Mary Sowinski from St. Jude School, Mountaintop, in eastern Pennsylvania and Geoffrey Weiss, a student at St. Valentine School in Bethel Park in western Pennsylvania. First-place winners will receive a \$500 savings bond.

Second-place winners are Kelsey Williams, Memorial Elementary, Hanover Township, in eastern Pennsylvania, and Samantha Herrington, St. Valentine School, Bethel Park, in western Pennsylvania. Second-place winners will receive a \$250 educational savings bond.

“The art contest is a fun and creative way for students to learn about the importance of protecting a most valuable natural resource: water,” said Dan Warnock, president, Pennsylvania American Water. “These students are the future stewards of our land and resources, so it’s critical that we help to increase their understanding of the impact humans have--positively and negatively--on our watersheds and ultimately on our drinking water sources.”

The contest provides an opportunity for students to utilize their creative and artistic talents while learning about the importance of protecting our watersheds for future use. The contest also serves as a springboard for teachers to introduce or elaborate on a water curriculum.

Entries were judged on creative vision, artistic talent, understanding of watershed protection and the ability to communicate that message. All students who entered the contest will receive certificates of achievement for recognizing the importance of protecting Pennsylvania’s watersheds.

Winners were selected from nearly 260 entries received from Pennsylvania American Water service territories, with two finalists recognized in both the eastern and western regions of the state and one state grand-prize winner. The theme for the art contest was Protect Our Watersheds.

In her description of her artwork, Miss Silbaugh wrote, “...all artwork carries a message. Watershed/water resource protection is important to me because all living things need clean water to live and stay healthy. I’ve tried to carry out this message in my artwork by showing that clean water creates a healthy environment for all living things.”

[Images of the winning pieces are available online.](#)

2006 Schuylkill River Outreach Team Begins Camp Program

During the week of June 26th to June 30th, the Schuylkill Conservation District will be hosting the third annual Schuylkill River Outreach Team (SROT) summer camp program.

The SROT is composed of nine students between the ages of 15-17 from throughout Schuylkill County. The Team will spend one week learning about and helping to improve the health of the watersheds in Schuylkill County.

For five days and four nights, the SROT will sleep beneath the stars and learn in a classroom with no walls. The SROT will travel throughout Schuylkill County for daylong projects and will stay each night at a different location in the county.

Tom Davidock, program coordinator, says, “There is no better way to learn about nature than to live it and experience it first hand.”

Participants will get involved in hands-on projects to improve the watershed and will share their weeklong experiences with others through a countywide public education project.

The students will participate in projects including building a stream table and kestrel box at Locust Lake State Park, canoeing down the Schuylkill River, installing fish habitat structures in West Creek near Llewellyn, and developing an environmental education plan for Sweet Arrow Lake County Park.

Area sponsors, including the Schuylkill Headwaters Association, Schuylkill County Conservancy, Schuylkill Sportsmen’s Association, Schuylkill County Trout Unlimited, Bear Creek Environmental Area, Northern Swatara Creek Watershed Association, Tri-Valley Watershed Association, Sweet Arrow Lake Conservation Association, Volunteers for Argall, Wiconisco Creek Watershed Association, and the Catawissa Creek Restoration Association have made the SROT possible.

For more information please contact Tom Davidock, Schuylkill Conservation District, at 570-622-4124 ext. 120 or email tdavidock@co.schuylkill.pa.us or visit the [Schuylkill Watershed Conservation Plan webpage](#).

New EPA WaterSense Program Saves Dollars and Makes Sense



[WaterSense](#), a new water efficiency program launched by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, will educate American consumers on making smart water choices that save money and maintain high environmental standards without

compromising performance.

The WaterSense program aims to raise awareness about the importance of water efficiency, ensure the performance of water-efficient products and provide good consumer information.

The WaterSense label will be easily identified on products and services that perform at least 20 percent more efficiently than their less efficient counterparts. Manufacturers can certify these products meet EPA criteria for water efficiency and performance by following testing protocols specific to each product category.

In addition, products will be independently tested to ensure EPA specifications are met. These products will be available to families and businesses early next year.

Visit the [WaterSense webpage](#).

Coatesville's Charlie Root Receives EPA National Award

Charlie Root of East Fallowfield Township this week was awarded the National Remedial Project Manager Award for excellence in community involvement from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Root received the award at the National Association of Remedial Project Managers conference in New Orleans, La., for his work with the community at the Palmerton Zinc Superfund site in Palmerton, Pa.

The Palmerton Zinc site is located in the area of a former zinc smelting operation. Prior to Root's involvement, the site had been one of EPA's most contentious. The cleanup plan required sampling of 1,700 properties. Of these 220 homeowners needed to have their yards excavated, and 30 required interior cleaning to protect them from lead contamination.

"We made the effort to actually be involved in the community, to be there often and meet with people in a less structured, more flexible setting. In addition to the regularly required public meetings, we had lots of meetings with local groups to help them understand the process," said Root.

EPA and the main private party responsible for the cleanup set up a joint field office in the community where people could go and get information about the site and the cleanup operation. Phones were staffed on a regular basis. In addition, the responsible party produced a video showing residents what to expect.

"Having this kind of presence showed that EPA was concerned, and helped to build goodwill in the community. Once the cleanup plan was determined and the time frame was met, people began to see light at the end of the tunnel," Root said.

Root, 39, is a graduate of Coatesville High School. He received a bachelor of science degree from Millersville University where he had a co-op assignment to EPA during his junior year.

He has worked at EPA for 16 years, the last 12 as a Remedial Project Manager overseeing Superfund site cleanups, including the AIW Frank site in Exton, the Malvern TCE site and the Old Wilmington Road site in West Caln Township.

He served as president of the EPA employees association from 2002 to 2005 promoting morale and social activities for the agencies workers and remains a board member. He is also the coordinator of the EPA social softball league.

Charlie has two children, a daughter Kristen, 16, and a son John, 12. His wife Barbara also works at EPA.

Charlie currently spends his free time coaching his son's little league team. In addition, he serves as treasurer of the Wellington Hunt Homeowners Association.

Compost/Recycling Yard Waste-- Reduce Waste, Save Money

American homeowners spend hundreds of hours a year mowing, clipping, raking, and landscaping to keep yards healthy and our property attractive.

Unfortunately, landscaping practices produce huge amounts of waste. So much in fact, that yard waste is second only to paper in the municipal solid waste stream. By following a few simple waste reduction practices, you can not only improve your lawn and garden, but also the environment.

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For a list of practices specific to our region, see the [U.S. EPA's Mid-Atlantic Region's Green Landscaping guide](#).

To save space in landfills, prevent waste, and reduce gases associated with climate change, many local governments have banned yard waste from their waste disposal programs. Pennsylvania's Municipal Waste Planning, Recycling and Waste Reduction Act requires all households and commercial, institutional and municipal establishments in larger communities to separate leaf and yard waste for collection and/or composting.

Yard waste is a major expense for municipal waste programs, which pass the costs on to residents and businesses. Composting organic wastes is typically much cheaper than disposing of them in a landfill or resource recovery facility, where the statewide average disposal cost is \$54 per ton.

In addition, most waste – even organic waste – can take years to decompose in a landfill. In fact, researchers have unearthed whole vegetables and readable newspapers that have been buried in landfills for decades.

More than 30 percent of Pennsylvania's municipal waste stream is yard waste, food waste and other organic material that could be recycled and composted, rather than being added to landfills. Nearly 2 million tons of yard waste such as leaves, grass clippings and brush are produced in Pennsylvania each year.

Until 1988, much of this yard waste went into Pennsylvania landfills or was burned. By diverting organic wastes from disposal, the useful lives of landfills in Pennsylvania could be extended as much as 30 percent.

Landfills also can produce methane gas, which is a major contributor to climate change, and incinerated yard waste produces carbon dioxide, another gas associated with climate change. Alternatively, composting organic wastes returns natural resources to productive use as mulch or soil amendments.

Compost not only adds nutrients to soil, it also increases the ability to retain moisture – an important benefit in times of drought.

To learn more, visit [DEP's Compost webpage](#) or [EPA's Greenscape webpage](#).

Hard to Recycle Collection Event in Pittsburgh July 15

Take advantage of the July 15 collection event for [hard to recycle](#) materials at [Construction Junction](#) in Pittsburgh from 10:00 to 2:00.

For the fifth consecutive year, the Pennsylvania Resources Council is hosting a series of collections for cell phones, tires, computer equipment, large appliances, and latex paint.

The collections, slated for July 15, and September 16, help teach the importance of recycling and waste reduction. All materials collected at these events will be recycled, refurbished, or disposed of responsibly.

PRC is offering a one-stop drop off for these items at a reduced cost for what individuals would normally pay for disposal of these materials. PRC is accepting cash only-no checks or credit cards, please. See the fees below.

- Tires: \$1 without rims. NEW THIS YEAR: \$2 with rims. Tires must be 18" or smaller;
- Latex Paint: \$1/can (up to a gallon) or \$1/gallon for cans over a gallon;
- Appliances: Air conditioners \$15; Other freon items \$10; Stoves, washers, dryers and other large appliances \$5 NOTE: Individuals may drop off only appliances at

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Appliance Warehouse, (523 Bingham Street - South Side) during the same timeframe for the same fees; and

- Electronics: CPUs, monitors, VCRs, DVD players, stereos \$5; Mice and keyboards \$1; Cell Phones are FREE, courtesy of Verizon Wireless; Complete computer system (including CPU, monitor, mouse, and keyboard) \$10; Printers - small \$10, large \$15; Televisions up to 19" in size \$15; 20" and up \$20.

Participant fees are subject to change.

Phone books, mixed paper, cardboard, plastic bottles (#s 1-5) and aluminum and metal cans will be accepted at no charge on collection day.

For more information call 412-488-7490 x243 or visit the [PRC Hard to Recycle webpage](#).

Sen. Williams Applauds DuPont Grant to Cobbs Creek Environmental Center



Sen. Anthony Williams (right) and Carole Williams-Green (2nd from left), founder of Cobbs Creek CEE Center.

Corporate partners are catching the vision of the [Cobbs Creek Community Environmental Education Center](#), said state Sen. Anthony H. Williams (D-Philadelphia).

This week Sen. Williams attended a check presentation by the DuPont Marshall Lab site, which offered a \$10,000 grant for the center and its mission.

The center, located just off a busy thoroughfare in West Philadelphia, is more than a haven for naturalists; it is one of the few centers of its sort in the nation, providing intense, hands-on environmental study for urban students, teachers and residents.

“This grant helps us come that much closer to developing a generation of scientists of color, of conscious individuals who will be knowledgeable about environmental policy and its potential impact on every community,” Sen. Williams said.

The Philadelphia Marshall Laboratory funding specifically addresses support for CCCEEC’s award-winning, 6-week Park Management Program for Youth (PMPY).

The program involves a half-day of outdoor environmental restoration work (stream studies, community gardens and trail development) followed by a half-day of classroom work that helps students aged 14 to 18 understand the interrelated activities of the outdoors. The program serves as a partnership for other environmental organizations, businesses and government agencies, bringing a wide range of information, expertise and career development.

“We believe that the DuPont Community Fund is the perfect vehicle to achieve the goals of training our children in the tenants of environmental excellence,” said Dr. Martin Breucker, site director of the Marshall Lab.

This grant is one of more than 100 projects worldwide being supported in 2006 by the DuPont Community Fund, a program that has provided more than \$2 million for innovative programs that address community sustainability in the areas of social progress, economic success and environmental excellence.

Dr. Breucker said that he looks forward to future opportunities for partnering between DuPont and the Cobbs Creek Environmental Center, as did Williams.

“When we speak of partnerships, the relationship being forged between DuPont and the CCCEEC stands to provide the model for civic corporate engagement, and investment in our collective future,” Williams added.

For more information, visit the [Cobbs Creek Community Environmental Education Center website](#).

Keith Williams, Hercules Cement, Receives R. Emmet Doherty Clean Air Award



Keith Williams
(2nd from left)

Keith Williams, a Penn State engineering graduate, and environmental manager for the Hercules Cement Co. in Northampton County received the R. Emmet Doherty Clean Air Award in a ceremony this week.

The Department of Environmental Protection, American Lung Association of Pennsylvania and Women’s Club of Allentown teamed up to present the 36th Annual R. Emmet Doherty Clean Air Award.

“Keith is committed to improving air quality in the Lehigh Valley and promoting the efforts of the [Air Quality Partnership](#) to inform residents about how they can reduce pollution,” DEP Northeast Regional Air

Quality Manager Thomas DiLazaro said during the ceremony.

“His enthusiasm and hard work as chairman of the Air Quality Partnership of Lehigh Valley/Berks County over the past three years make him a worthy recipient of this year’s R. Emmet Doherty Clean Air Award,” DiLazaro said.

The award recognizes the efforts of a local business, organization or individual in improving air quality in the greater Lehigh Valley. First presented in 1970, the award is named in honor of R. Emmet Doherty, former director of the Lehigh Valley Pollution Control District who monitored air quality and championed air pollution reduction during his 19 years of service.

As chairman of the Lehigh Valley/Berks County Air Quality Partnership, Williams has continued the Ride Free on Ozone Action Days program with the Lehigh and Northampton Transportation Authority (LANTA). Bus rides on LANTA’s Lehigh and Northampton county routes are free when DEP air quality meteorologists forecast an Ozone Action Day.

Seven air quality action days were forecasted with eight days exceeding federal standards in the Lehigh Valley/Berks County region in 2005. There were three forecasted days with eight exceeding federal levels the year before.

DEP, the regional air quality partnership and LANTA sponsor the Ride Free program, which has been operating since 2001. In 2002, LANTA realized a 54 percent increase in its number of riders, as well as a significant reduction in ozone-producing automobile traffic.

Williams also coordinated Air Quality Nights at Reading Phillies games and a gas-can exchange program so that enabled more than 600 area residents to obtain free, low-vapor containers when they turned in their old gas cans.

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Williams also is working with WFMZ-TV to develop a “Haze Cam,” which will highlight current levels of particulate pollution in the area and provide viewers with comparisons of good and bad air quality conditions. This feature would augment WFMZ’s daily ozone and particulate forecasts.

The Lehigh Valley/Berks County partnership is a coalition of individuals, businesses, governments and community groups that informs the public about the dangers of ground-level ozone and encourages residents to take voluntary actions to reduce their contributions to air pollution.

Ground-level ozone, a key component of smog, is formed when pollution from vehicles, industry, consumer products and power plants “bakes” in the hot, summer sun, making it difficult for some people to breathe. Particulate matter, which is airborne dust or small soot particles, can also cause health problems for children or the elderly with respiratory problems, as well as the general population.

The partnership disseminates information about “Ozone Action Days,” or days when the air is expected to be unhealthy to breathe. Using DEP meteorological data, the partnership predicts ozone levels and broadcasts any precautions that need to be taken.

In addition, the partnership and DEP are disseminating daily forecasts on air pollution caused by particulate matter, commonly called PM 2.5. Unlike ozone, particulate matter pollution can occur year-round. These particles can get deep into the lungs and cause significant health problems.

PM 2.5 has been determined to be most closely associated with health effects related to increased hospital admissions and emergency room visits for heart and lung disease, increased respiratory symptoms and disease, and decreased lung function.

The particles come from a wide range of sources --- from power plants, industry, cars, trucks, buses, wood stoves and forest fires. Some particles are released when fuels are burned; others form in the atmosphere from reactions between gases released from power plants and factories.

For more information on ozone, visit the [Air Quality Partnerships webpage](#).

Valesky’s Market Earns Energy Star Award

Valesky’s Market, an independent family-owned grocery store in downtown Meadville, Crawford County, scored near the top in a federal energy audit and received an [Energy Star award](#) for reducing energy use and improving efficiency.

Garth Valesky says it is difficult to estimate the store’s total energy savings because the business has continuously expanded. However, he says the cost to heat the 28,000-square-foot market is approximately the same as it would be to heat an average-sized home.

“As independent business owners, we always have been very motivated to reduce our costs – and originally, that was the driving force when we rebuilt refrigeration units, installed new compressors and upgraded lighting,” Garth Valesky said. “We have been able to take advantage of energy-saving improvements offered by new technology.

“Over the years, our perspective has expanded as we became more aware of the environmental benefits of reducing energy consumption,” Garth Valesky continued. “My brother and I are glad to know that our business decisions are helping to protect the environment, especially in reducing greenhouse gases.”

The Valeskys are exploring new projects, including the possibility of adding of skylights that track the sun's movements.

For more information, visit the [Energy Star webpage](#) or DEP's [Energy webpage](#).

Sustainable Fund Finances First “Green” Affordable Housing Development

The [Sustainable Energy Fund of Central Eastern Pennsylvania](#) has provided funding for the Commonwealth's first “green” affordable housing development, specially designed for energy efficiency and with earth-friendly materials.

Petersburg Commons, a \$2.1 million project located in Penn Township, Perry County, Pa., consists of 14 energy-efficient, townhouse-style units, targeted for purchase by first-time homebuyers with low to moderate incomes.

It was developed by the Perry Green Building Housing Corporation, part of the Housing and Redevelopment Authorities of Cumberland County.

The project benefited from a \$1 million linked deposit provided to the Perry Green Building Housing Corporation by The Sustainable Energy Fund, an Allentown-based, non-profit, private organization dedicated to renewable energy, clean energy technologies and energy conservation.

Through a creative financing arrangement, The SEF helped Perry Green Building Housing Corporation to secure a very low interest rate on their construction loan, thus significantly reducing interest charges and total construction costs for the project.

The homes were designed to be, at minimum, 50 percent more energy-efficient than similar, conventionally built housing – and are likely to exceed that with proper homeowner maintenance, according to the Office for Planning and Architecture of Harrisburg, architect for the project. Homeowners can expect to realize the most dramatic savings in heating costs, specifically: between 85 and 90 percent.

“The SEF was proud to support this project and hopes its success will spur similar projects throughout Pennsylvania,” Dr. Rex A. D’Agostino, SEF President and Executive Director, said at the ribbon-cutting celebration for the homes held in early June. “The energy-efficient design means these homeowners will significantly reduce their energy costs and usage. It proves that going green really can help save green.”

“Support from SEF was crucial to this project’s success,” said Jack Berger, Special Assistant for Project Development for the Cumberland County Redevelopment Authority. “It allowed us to allocate more resources towards the greening of the project by reducing expenses for construction loan interest.”

In addition to using high-efficiency heating and air conditioning systems, the homes feature an innovative “windowed cupola” roof design that allows the sun’s rays to filter in to provide heat in the winter or create a chimney-like airflow to facilitate ventilation throughout the townhouses in the summertime.

Each unit also is equipped with Energy Star certified appliances, as well as energy-efficient light fixtures and water systems.

With a “green” building design that meets the U.S. Green Building Council’s Leadership Energy Efficient Design criteria, Petersburg Commons also is environmentally conscious.

Local sources for building materials were used wherever possible, thereby reducing energy required for transport to the site. Recycled products were heavily used, and

construction waste was significantly minimized: more than 75 percent of construction waste was diverted from landfill disposal through scrap product recycling or re-purposing for alternate uses.

Each home is simply but attractively landscaped using earth-friendly materials. Roofs are constructed from high-recycled content steel and should last 100 years.

Petersburg Commons is among the many clean energy initiatives supported by The Sustainable Energy Fund. Founded in 1999 by the Pennsylvania Utilities Commission, The SEF promotes, develops and invests in clean energy initiatives to benefit residential, commercial, institutional and industrial customers within the PPL energy service territory and beyond.

For more information, visit: [Sustainable Energy Fund of Central Eastern Pennsylvania website](#).

PUC Adopts Net Metering Rule for Alternative Energy Portfolio Standards

The Public Utility Commission this week adopted net metering standards which govern how small alternative electric generators – who use technologies such as solar panels or fuel cells – connect to the electric distribution system and how they are compensated for generation they provide into the electric utility distribution system.

“By finalizing the net metering standards, the Commission takes another significant step toward enhancing the state’s energy and economic development future while promoting environmentally friendly electric generation,” said Commission Chairman Wendell F. Holland. “We will continue to move forward with the implementation of the Alternative Energy Portfolio Standards Act to create a better environment and economy for Pennsylvania.”

“Allowing farmers to fully participate in net metering through the use of biodigesters provides them with an important economic opportunity as well as an environmental one,” said Commissioner Bill Shane. “Our action today liberalizes the rules on biodigesters to allow places such as Brookside Dairy in Indiana County to have the opportunity to fully contribute to our electric distribution system.”

The net metering requirements set a standard for how electric generation suppliers and electric distribution companies (EDC) meter and compensate residential or small commercial customers who generate electricity using alternative energy sources as defined in the Act.

The standards outline rules such as:

- EDCs will reimburse customer-generators the full retail rate for each kilowatt-hour produced by the customer during a billing period; and
- At the end of the billing period, the EDC shall compensate the customer-generator if they deliver more kilowatt-hours than they used in that billing cycle.

The standards also provide opportunities for small businesses to combine separate meters used within a single operation. This will primarily benefit commonly owned and operated farming operations.

The rules on net metering are designed to simplify and regulate the manner in which customer-generators work with utilities. It will result in additional options for consumer to take control of their energy requirements using environmentally-friendly energy.

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The Alternative Energy Portfolio Standards Act generally requires that a certain percentage of all electric energy sold to retail customers be derived from alternative energy sources such as solar, wind, hydropower, geothermal, biomass, and demand side management resources.

The law applies to both electric distribution companies and electric generation suppliers who must demonstrate their compliance on an annual basis. The level of alternative energy required gradually increases according to a 15-year schedule.

For more information, go to the [PUC's Alternative Energy webpage](#).

PUC Hears Options to Mitigate Electric Prices Increases When Caps Come Off

The Public Utility Commission this week heard from consumer advocates, businesses, environmental groups and industry experts on actions that could mitigate potential future significant price increases in electricity prices when price caps come off.

Most Pennsylvania electricity consumers are paying capped generation rates and will continue to do so until the end of 2009 or 2010. Recent events in Pennsylvania, Maryland and Delaware have shown that consumers of electricity can be exposed to sudden dramatic price increases when long-term generation caps expire. The long-term caps were agreed upon during state restructuring proceedings.

“Today is a first step. It will not be the only step. This Commission will continue to address this energy crisis aggressively, responsibly and in a timely manner,” said [Commission Chairman Wendell F. Holland](#) in a statement. “It is up to all of us to prepare now to protect our customers from the brunt of possible price spikes. By evaluating the possible policy actions that would mitigate prices for consumers, this Commission is acknowledging what is going on around us and preparing now.”

Commission Vice Chairman James Cawley said: “Competitive markets don’t happen on their own. They take work on the part of the utilities, electric generation suppliers, consumer advocates, and this Commission. Today we begin that process, moving forward by bringing all parties to the table to better address consumer education requirements, develop strategies to remove barriers to retail choice and implement default service pricing that reflects prevailing market prices.”

[Commissioner Bill Shane](#) said in a statement: “Today we begin a process of balancing how we expose customers to the realities of current market prices with the availability of competitive electric generation suppliers. I believe the purpose of regulation is to enable capitalism to live up to its own pretensions and rhetoric I believe markets are useful allocative tools, not objects of worship. Markets can fail and be manipulated. That’s something we must keep in mind as we move through this process.”

Commissioner Kim Pizzigrilli said: “Our hearing today begins our dialogue on this important and complex topic that will require a great deal of consideration and debate. I look forward to working on this matter so as to ensure that the public interest is protected as we transition into a fully competitive market. With that said, today's testimony, the filed comments and the reply comments, which are due on July 20th, will serve to assist the Commission in addressing these challenges.”

Commissioner Terrance Fitzpatrick, who sponsored the motion that initiated this process, said: “Combating potentially significant electricity price increases at the expiration of rate caps approved under electricity restructuring proceedings presents

difficult policy choices – choices that will not be any easier if we wait until the reality of higher prices is upon us. By engaging all of the stakeholders in this process, the Commission will have a wide knowledge base to draw from in advance of any possible action. Pennsylvania is in the position of having some additional time to address this important issue for most consumers. By preparing now, this Commission can best fulfill its duty to protect the public interest.”

Commissioner Fitzpatrick pointed to several examples of rates shocks after caps were removed—Pike County Light and Power Company customers experienced a 70 percent increase in electric rates, Delmarva Power Company in Delaware increased rates by 59 percent and in Maryland Baltimore Gas & Electric increased rates 72 percent.

[Commissioner Fitzpatrick outline a series of questions](#) the PUC asked participants to address: educating consumers, encouraging conservation, reducing peak demand for electricity, consider alternatives for avoiding abrupt, large price increases, assistance for low-income customers and to review interplay with wholesale energy markets.

Four panels of witnesses presented testimony during the hearing from the perspective of consumers, utilities, electric generation suppliers and alternative energy interests. Here’s a sampling of the comments offered from a variety of perspectives—

[Office of Consumer Advocate:](#) Electric distribution companies should have available a portfolio of resources including long-term and short-term contracts, supply-side and demand-side resources, renewable and non-renewable resources as well as spot market supplies to mitigate the impact of price caps coming off.

“The OCA recognizes that developing a portfolio of resources will not necessarily produce lower rates. A portfolio of very expensive resources will be a very expensive portfolio. A portfolio approach, however, will almost certainly reduce volatility and rate shock over time. Unfortunately, our own residents and businesses in Pike County already have seen the results of a flawed transition process.”

[Rendell Administration:](#) The Department of Environmental Protection made several recommendations, including establishing a publicly-owned Pennsylvania Power Authority to provide low-cost power just like the New York Power Authority formed in the 1930s, establish demand-side management initiatives, including new programs for demand and energy efficiency, allow long-term contracts for power purchases, diversify generating resources to reduce the number of hours natural gas-fired units set prices in the PJM regional power grid and investigate PJM’s locational marginal pricing model for setting prices.

[Electric Power Generation Association:](#) Electric generators noted the PJM 2005 State of the Market Report showed that net revenues have not been sufficient to cover the fixed costs for new generation entering the PJM market and that fuel costs are driving higher electricity costs in the PJM system.

In addition, the cost of complying with current and future environmental regulations will result in the retirement of existing generating capacity leading to higher prices for coal-fired electricity and greater use of expensive natural gas.

“Headlines about significant increases in electricity rates in some states that have retail competition don’t tell the whole story. Electricity rates are not rising due to

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competition. This is evidenced by the increases in electric rates in traditionally regulated states.

“In PJM, for example, average spot market wholesale electricity prices rose by more than 35 percent in 2003, 11 percent in 2004, and 37 percent in 2005, driven mostly by higher natural gas and other fuel prices and environmental costs. In 2005, natural gas prices in the PJM region were 46 percent higher than in 2004.

“As the rate caps expire, electricity prices paid by retail customers are catching up and starting to reflect market prices. That isn’t to say that customers haven’t benefited from restructuring. Public reports show that when current prices are adjusted for fuel increases, customers have saved billions of dollars as a result of competitive markets and restructuring.”

PJM Interconnection: In addition to discussing pricing issues and models, PJM said the ability to bring less expensive power from one area to another in the regional electricity grid was a critical factor in pricing electricity in the wholesale and retail markets. A number of bulk electric transmission line projects were now being proposed to bring cheaper electricity from the western part of PJM to the load centers of the East where the siting of new generation is increasingly difficult.

PJM also pointed to new demand-side programs that will help reduce electricity demand at peak usage times.

PA Food Merchants Association: PFMA stressed the need for helping small businesses reduce energy use and encouraged the PUC to adopt a program that allows “on-bill financing” for energy efficiency improvements with power providers.

Industrial Energy Consumers of PA: IECF pointed to the fact that even with rate caps, the cost of electricity for industrial consumers has increased from 25 to 100 percent since 1996 in many areas of the state and that Pennsylvania’s retail electricity market has not achieved lower prices, better service and innovation. They recommended a revamping of the PJM pricing model for electricity.

PennFuture: PennFuture noted that the cost of electricity today, in contrast to other forms of energy is a bargain. They pointed to the experience of Duquesne Light where rate caps cap off, but so did stranded cost charges to pay for nuclear power plants, when compared to 1996 rates expressed as 2006 dollars.

PennFuture recommended requiring each utility to file transition plans, renew funding for all sustainable development funds and for the PA Energy Development Authority to encourage renewable energy generation, launching a professional well-funded consumer education program on conservation and energy supply options, requiring utilities to install equipment to allow customers to change usage in real time in response to electricity demand and cost, fund a low-income usage reduction program and utilities should honor rate cap commitments and consumers should honor stranded cost recovery agreements.

The complete list of those providing testimony include: Office of Consumer Advocate, [Office of Small Business Advocate](#), Allegheny County, PJM Interconnection,

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L.L.C., Industrial Energy Consumers of PA, PennFuture, United States Steel Corporation, Edison Electric Institute, Energy Association of Pennsylvania, Allegheny Power, Duquesne Light Company, PECO Energy Company, PPL Electric, Utilities Corporation, Constellation NewEnergy, Inc., Direct Energy Services, LLC, Electric Power Generation Assoc., Hess Corporation, National Energy Marketers Assoc., Retail Energy Supply Assoc., Reliant Energy Inc., Strategic Energy, LLC, Department of Environmental Protection, TBG Consulting, Citizen Power, Customized Energy Solutions, Ltd., PV NOW and [Small Business Development Centers](#).

[Copies of testimony are available online.](#)

To keep track of this issue, go to the PUC website and [search for documents](#) under Docket No. M-00061957.

PUC Releases Report on Market Conditions for Pike County Light & Power

The Public Utility Commission this week [released a report](#) on its staff's fact-finding inquiry into the competitive electric market in the Pike County Light & Power service territory.

“Issuing this report for public consumption does not represent the end of Commission action on this matter, but rather we will continue to move forward because as I have said before I am not willing to abandon these customers,” said Commission Bill Shane. “This Commission will use the contents of this report to determine what additional corrective steps need to be taken in order to assure that Pike County Power's customers have access to effective competition.”

The Commission voted unanimously to release the report that answers a series of 14 questions designed to help gather information regarding the enhancement of the competitive electric market in the PCLP service territory.

The report details the answers to those questions provided by various interested parties including the PCLP, the Office of Consumer Advocate, the Office of Small Business Advocate, Retail Energy Supply Assoc., Constellation Energy Group Companies and a coalition of industrial consumers. The report was prepared by the Commission's Law Bureau.

At this week's meeting, the Commission also provided clarification that its April 29, 2006, actions to waive some rules for Electric Generation Suppliers applied to all suppliers operating in the PCLP territory. The actions were designed to encourage increased participation in the service territory by EGS. The waivers addressed areas such as switching rules, rescission periods, exchange and release of customer information, bill format and supplier licensing.

In August 2005, the Commission approved PCLP's Default Service Implementation Plan, which included procedures necessary to implement default service (for customers when alternative providers are not available) and establish Provider of Last Resort rates for all customer classes.

In October 2005, PCLP implemented this plan by purchasing power via an auction which led to about a 70 percent rate increases for electric customers. On April 29, 2006, the Commission certified the results of a retail aggregation bidding program for the PCLP service territory that provided a modest savings for consumers.

For more information and a [copy of the report](#), visit the [PUC website](#).

DCNR Survey Shows Deer Numbers Vary Widely in 460,000+ Acres of Woodlands

The Department of Conservation and Natural Resources completed an [aerial analysis of white-tailed deer populations](#) that shows deer densities on surveyed lands are highly variable.

The study began in mid-February and used an infrared-camera-equipped plane that flew over 464,100 acres of, primarily, state forest and game lands targeted by DCNR and the Game Commission.

"The average densities for lands we surveyed ranged from 8- to 18-deer-per-square-mile. However, within our survey blocks, we found some areas where there were no deer, and others where densities reached 55-, 70- and even 126-deer-per-square-mile," DCNR Secretary Michael DiBerardinis said. "This year's aerial surveys largely confirm what we found last year, and will serve as a valuable tool as we continue to better understand deer densities and distribution to help guide efforts to ensure forest regeneration and healthy habitat."

"Quantifying deer densities is important to gauging our progress toward balancing deer populations with available habitat, but a healthy forest is our main indicator for success," said DiBerardinis. "Once our forest managers see habitat recovery and no longer need deer fences to consistently regenerate the forest following timber harvests or natural disturbances, we will know we're beginning to reach our goals."

"It is important to remember that these aerial counts represent those deer sighted on a particular parcel, on a given day and time," said Game Commission Executive Director Carl G. Roe. "The figures represent the minimum number of deer that were present, which then can be used to calculate a minimum density for the area."

"While we can't use aerial counts to make deer management decisions across entire wildlife management units, we do believe that these counts can help in demonstrating deer dispersion at the time of the flights and provide another source of information to help us understand deer and their activities," Roe added.

Roe noted that the Game Commission relies on more than just the number of deer when determining the direction of its deer management program. "Our deer management program is guided by three management goals: manage for a healthy deer herd; ensure healthy habitat for all wildlife; and reduce human-deer conflicts," Roe said.

Sections of five state forest districts and six state Game Lands were surveyed in aerial flights continuing into early spring. Results are being compared to on-the-ground measures of deer density and habitat conditions to provide a clearer picture of deer impact on forest ecosystems. DCNR conducted extensive analyses of habitat conditions across 2.1 million acres of state forestland in February, March and April of this year.

"We will use the aerial data in conjunction with detailed vegetation analysis to help guide our management decisions and adjust our efforts to steer hunters to certain state forest areas in the 2006-07 hunting season," DiBerardinis said.

Targeted acreage for aerial analysis included the Game Commission's doe and fawn mortality study areas, Tuscarora State Forest, and portions of state forests enrolled in the Game Commission's Deer Management Assistance Program (DMAP), which allows landowners to target specific areas for additional antlerless deer harvest, enabling hunters to kill more than one deer in designated areas when properly licensed.

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The survey's scope also was broadened to include, for the first time, private woodlands in McKean County, where sportsmen had met with Gov. Rendell to request the study include sections of the Kinzua Quality Deer Cooperative. The effort involved hunters, land managers and owners intent on improving deer, wildlife habitat and forest management.

DCNR's contractor also flew an area of approximately 35,000 acres located in northwest Delaware and southeast Chester counties - that includes Ridley Creek State Park - which has been, historically, impacted by high deer densities. Conservation organizations are working with landowners to protect the remaining natural habitats in this highly developed area and are looking at various approaches to address the overabundant deer problem. The data will help identify deer densities across the area and help develop a model for future efforts to measure and control deer in this type of environment.

The 2006 flights over state forestland showed the highest average deer density surveyed was 18-deer-per-square-mile in Susquehannock State Forest's DMAP No. 28, near Austin, Potter County. The lowest, 8, was recorded in Tioga State Forest's DMAP No. 44, near Leonard Harrison State Park, Tioga County.

The second highest average was Moshannon State Forest's DMAP No. 305, near Clearfield, Clearfield County, with 16-deer-per-square-mile.

"In reviewing these figures it's imperative to know these aerial surveys detect the minimum, over-wintering densities on one specific night in February, March or April, when the flights were flown," said Merlin Benner, DCNR wildlife biologist. "Depending on a given area's habitat condition, deer herd health, sex ratio and reproductive success, densities could be 10 to 50 percent higher during fall hunting seasons."

Details on the 2006 aerial study, including state forest tracts surveyed and photos, as well as other information on deer, visit the [DCNR Aerial Survey webpage](#).

See & Hear

Watershed Specialists Are Making a Difference

Watershed Specialists that work for county conservation districts are part expert, part organizer and part cheerleader for individuals and groups all across the state that are interested in protecting and restoring their watersheds.

Get a first-hand look at what they can do for you in this unique video and webpage produced by the GreenTreks Network.

Visit "[Watershed Specialists Are Making A Difference](#)" and see for yourself.

Visit the [Professional Services Directory](#) and [Events Calendar](#)

Feature

Audenreid Treatment Project Dedicated, Will Clean Up 34 Miles of Catawissa Creek



Ed Wytovich
Catawissa Watershed Association

Over 150 people attended the dedication for the \$2 million [Audenreid Mine Tunnel Discharge Treatment Project](#) along the Catawissa Creek in Schuylkill County last weekend.

Ed Wytovich, Catawissa Creek Watershed Association, was joined at the dedication by Schuylkill Commissioner Robert Carl, Sen. Rhoades (R-Schuylkill), Rep. Argall (R-Schuylkill) and representatives of a variety of the agencies and partners that made the project possible.

The passive treatment system, the largest in Pennsylvania and possibly the United States, will treat over 12 million gallons of water a year and will restore about 34 miles of

the Catawissa Creek. It is the first time in 75 years clean water was restored to this portion of the Catawissa Creek.

The project was conceived by the Catawissa Creek Restoration Association, but accomplished by a host of partners that include: Schuylkill County Conservation District, Columbia County Conservation District, Butler Enterprises, Paragon Adventure Park, Blue Nob Rod & Gun Club, East Union Township, DEP-Pottsville District Mining Office, DEP-Bureau of Watershed Management, DEP-Bureau of Abandoned Mine Reclamation, Eastern PA Coalition for Abandoned Mine Reclamation, U.S. Department of the Interior-Office of Surface Mining, Susquehanna River Basin Commission, Pennsylvania Association of Conservation Districts, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Fish & Boat Commission, Hedin Environmental, Rettew Associates, Schuylkill County Board of Commissioners, Columbia County Board of Commissioners, and James T. O'Hara, Inc.

The innovative system utilizes new technologies and design features to treat the high flows of the discharge.

The discharge water is diverted into a series of three, 12 feet high and 120 feet wide, circular concrete treatment cells filled with limestone. Once inside these cells, the discharged water reacts with high calcium limestone, which raises the pH of the water and cause the metals to precipitate out of solution.

Each treatment cell contains about 4,600 tons of limestone and provides about two hours of retention time.

The system must be flushed extensively and frequently in order to manage the accumulation of aluminum hydroxide solids and keep them out of the stream. About every two hours, the treatment tanks will be flushed by a series of automatic siphons into a large settling pond to receive the aluminum precipitate. The water will then flow into a second settling pond to provide final polishing before it is returned to the creek.

Funded primarily through an EPA Section 319 Grant, the project was completed in December and has undergone its shakedown since then.

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Barb Bartusik, a grandmother with her granddaughter in tow, told participants that she learned to swim in the Catawissa when she was a girl. Coming to the dedication she remembered her father said that he did not think he would live to see the Creek cleaned up. Ms. Bartusik said she thought it was a fitting tribute to her late father that the treatment system be dedicated on Father's Day weekend

This project fulfills the promise in the motto of the Catawissa Creek Restoration Association very well—"Catawissa Creek – Soon to Be a World Class Trout Stream."

For more information visit the [Audenreid Project blog online](#).

Attachments: [Audenreid Dedication Photo Feature - PDF](#)
[Audenreid Project Fact Sheet – PDF](#)
[Project Under Construction Photo Feature - PDF](#)

NewsClips: [Mine Drainage Treatment System Aims to Put Fish Back in Catawissa](#)
[Catawissa Creek Gets a Boost](#)

Quick Clips

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

[River Sweep Collects 12 Tons of Trash](#)
[Volunteers Pick Up Trash Along Allegheny River](#)
[Op-Ed: Want Lower Taxes? Stop Sprawl](#)
[Teens to Learn Outside Lessons](#)
[Powdermill Camps Winging It](#)
[Shuttered School Might Get New Life](#)
[Pennypenny Trust Eyeing 66-Acre Tract](#)
[Greenway Plan Approved](#)
[Bucks County Forming New Open Space Task Force](#)
[Native Plants Nursery Seeks to Eradicate Invasive Varieties](#)
[Penn's Epic Plans for Riverfront](#)
[Op-Ed: Buying Hybrid is About More Than Money](#)
[Power Play – Electricity Rate Caps](#)
[State Reduces Power Consumption 6%](#)
[Sun's Energy Fuels Motor for Solar Boat Competitors](#)
[Engineers Recommend Mill Hall Elementary Use Geothermal Heating](#)
[Seven States in Bidding War for Next-Generation Power Plant](#)

Watershed NewsClips

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

[Most PA Waterways Get Good Grades](#)
[Juniata Sojourn – Discovering a Treasure](#)
[Senator Pushes Bill for Mine Reclamation](#)
[Santorum Seeking \\$1 Billion for Mine Cleanup](#)

[Santorum Stresses Importance of Mine Reclamation Legislation](#)
[Mine Drainage Treatment System Aims to Put Fish Back in Catawissa](#)
[Catawissa Creek Gets a Boost](#)
[State College Teen Canoes to Explore Susquehanna's Ecology](#)
[Susquehanna Expedition Paddles Into Bradford County](#)
[Brady's Lake Rebuilding in Progress](#)
[\\$1 Million Grant for Delaware River Watershed Study](#)

Regulations

The Department of Environmental Protection this week published a Pennsylvania-only mercury emissions reduction rule for comment, a notice correcting the Water Quality Toxics Management Strategy and a notice soliciting information on two stream redesignations in Lycoming and Bucks counties. Here are the details....

DEP this week published its [proposal for a Pennsylvania-only rule to reduce mercury emissions](#) from power plants for public comment. Three hearings have been scheduled and comments are due August 26.

The public hearings will be held:

- July 25, in Conference Rooms A & B at DEP's Southwest Regional Office at 400 Waterfront Dr. in Pittsburgh, Allegheny County. 1 p.m.;
- July 26, in Room 105 at DEP's headquarters in the Rachel Carson State Office Building at 400 Market St. in Harrisburg, Dauphin County. 1 p.m.; and
- July 27, in the Delaware Room at DEP's Southeast Regional Office at 2 E. Main St. in Norristown, Montgomery County. 1 p.m..

Individuals who want to present testimony at a hearing should contact the DEP by calling 717-787-4526 at least one week in advance of the hearing to reserve a time. Oral testimony is limited to 10 minutes per witness.

Witnesses should submit three written copies of their testimony to the chairman at the hearing. Organizations are limited to designating one witness to present testimony on their behalf at each hearing.

DEP [published a notice making a correction](#) in the Water Quality Toxics Management Strategy Statement of Policy (*PaB page 3117*)

DEP also [published formal notice](#) soliciting information in connection with the redesignations of Antes Creek, Lycoming County and Gallows Run, Bucks County.

[Pennsylvania Bulletin – June 24, 2006](#)

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 notice of proposed changes](#) to guidance documents covering bonding for land reclamation, water vending and hauling and other documents related to the water supply program as well as the [availability of General Operating Permit](#) for Natural Gas, Coal Bed Methane or Gob Gas Production or Recovery Facilities.

DRAFT: DEP ID: 563-2504-001 Conventional Bonding for Land Reclamation--Coal. This guidance describes the regulatory and statutory requirements for determining bond amounts. It also establishes bond rates and the process for determining the bond for land reclamation. Comments due: July 24.

DRAFT: DEP ID: 383-2126-303. Public Water Supply Manual--Part III; Bottled Water, Bulk Water Hauling, Water Vending Machines and Retail Water Facilities. This guidance was developed for bottled water and vended water systems, retail water facilities and bulk water hauling systems. Comments due: July 24.

DRAFT: DEP ID: 562-4000-102. Increased Operation and Maintenance Costs of Replacement Water Supplies. This guidance document describes the process the Department will use to determine the bond amount needed to assure permanent payment of increased operation and maintenance costs for replacement water supplies. Comments due: July 24.

DRAFT: DEP ID: 383-2100-109. Treatment of Groundwater Under the Direct Influence of Surface Water (GUDI) Sources at Noncommunity Water Systems and Small Community Water Systems. This guidance establishes alternate disinfection treatment design standards that may be used by noncommunity water systems and small community water systems that provide treatment of groundwater under the direct influence of surface water (GUDI) sources. Comments due: July 24.

[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](#)

- **June 26** – Senate Appropriations Committee meets to consider [Senate Bill 1224](#) (Wenger-R-Lancaster) creating the Conservation District Fund. Rules Committee Room. Off the Floor.

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- **June 26** – Senate Environmental Resources and Energy Committee meeting to consider [House Bill 1195](#) (Yudichak-D-Luzerne) that makes changes to the program to help underground tank owners upgrade tanks. Rules Meeting Room. Off the Floor.
- **June 26-27** – [DEP Citizens Advisory Council meeting](#). Best Western University Inn, Indiana, PA. 7 p.m. and 9:30 a.m. respectively.
- **June 26** – Governor’s Renewable Agriculture Energy Council meeting. Room 309 Agriculture Building. 10:00.
- **June 26** – Senate Community and Economic Development Committee meets to consider [Senate Bill 1232](#) (Piccola-R-Dauphin) establishing the Historic Preservation Incentive Grant Program. Room 8E-A East Wing. 1:30.
- **June 27** – House Environmental Resources and Energy Committee meets to consider [House Bill 2619](#) (Bastian-R-Somerset) establishing a Mine Families First Program to provide assistance to families involved in mine rescue operations and [Senate Bill 594](#) (MJ White-R-Venango) establishing the Dormant Oil and Gas Act to create trusts for prior oil and gas well owners. Hearing Room 1, North Office. 9:00.
- **June 27** – **CANCELLED**. DEP Stormwater Manual Oversight Committee meeting.
- **June 28** – [Senate Environmental Resources and Energy Committee](#) public hearing on tritium at landfills. Senate Majority Caucus Room. 9:00.
- **June 28** – DCNR [Conservation and Natural Resources Advisory Council](#) meeting. Room 105 Rachel Carson Building. 10:00.
- **July 5-6** – **CANCELLED** – DEP Mining and Reclamation Advisory Board meeting.
- **July 6** – [Independent Regulatory Review Commission](#) meets to consider regulations setting Building Energy Conservation Standards and changes to Emissions Inspection Program regulations. 14th Floor Conference Room, 333 Market Street. 10:30.
- **July 10** – [Southwest PA Air Quality Partnership](#) meeting. Schenley Park at Camp David Lawrence Pavilion. Pittsburgh. 11:30 to 1:30.
- **July 12** – DEP [Mining and Reclamation Advisory Board meeting](#). DEP California District Mining Office, California, PA. 1:30.
- **July 12** – **CANCELLED**. DEP Water Resources Advisory Committee meeting.
- **July 19** – [Governor’s Invasive Species Council](#) meeting. Agriculture Building, 2301 N. Cameron St., Harrisburg.
- **July 25** – [DEP Stormwater Manual Oversight Committee](#) meeting. Room 105 Rachel Carson Building. 10:00.
- **August 29** – **CANCELLED**. State Board for Certification of Water and Wastewater Systems Operators conference call.
- **September 13** – [DEP Water Resources Advisory Committee](#) meeting. Room 105 Rachel Carson Building. 9:30.
- **September 19-20** – [State Board for Certification of Water and Wastewater Systems Operators](#). 10th Floor Rachel Carson Building. 10:00 and 8:30 respectively.
- **October 31-November 5** – [National Historic Preservation Conference](#). National Trust for Historic Preservation. Pittsburgh.

[DEP Calendar of Events](#)

[Watershed Events](#)

(courtesy [PA Organizations for Watersheds & Rivers](#))

[Environmental Education Workshop/Training Calendar](#)

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

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

Helpful Web Links

[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@HolstonCrisci.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 Holston & Crisci and the public. Holston & Crisci is a Harrisburg-based government and public affairs firm whose clients include Fortune 500 companies and non-profit organizations. For more information on Holston & Crisci call 717-234-1716.

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Visit the [Professional Services Directory](#) and [Events Calendar](#)