

— PA — Environment Digest

*An Update on
Environmental
Issues in
Pennsylvania*

Edited By David E. Hess, Holston & Crisci

September 4, 2006

***** FLASH FLOOD ADVISORY: PEMA Warns Residents To Be Ready *****

With heavy rain forecast for parts of the Commonwealth this Labor Day weekend, the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency is reminding Pennsylvanians to consider taking steps to protect lives and property from flooding.

Many deaths caused by flooding occur because people try to drive through water-covered streets and roads and become trapped. Follow this simple advice: [Turn Around, Don't Drown](#).

If you live in flood-prone areas, monitor stream levels and listen for weather warnings and flooding advisories from local officials.

Here are some [Flood Preparedness Tips](#) and [Flood Recovery Information](#).

NewsClip: [Ernesto's Rain Arrives in PA as Officials Prepare](#)



Conservation Districts, Tax Credits for Conservation Topics of Senate Hearing



Sen. Wenger (right) with Lamonte Garber, Chesapeake Bay Foundation

The Senate Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee held a hearing in York this week to hear comments on legislation to update the conservation district law and to provide tax credits for farm and conservation projects as part of the Committee's [Farmers First Agenda](#).

Senators Mike Waugh (R-York), Committee chair, Noah Wenger (R-Lancaster), vice-chair and Sen. Pat Vance (R-Cumberland) attended the hearing.

The Committee heard comments on [Senate Bill 1286](#) (R-Wenger, R-Waugh, D-O'Pake) the Resource Enhancement And Protection (REAP) proposal that would

establish a program to provide state tax credits worth up to \$150,000 per farm to producers who install conservation practices.

"All the discussion on the REAP proposal has been very positive so far, and I think the time is right to find sustainable sources of funding for conservation practices on Pennsylvania farms," said Sen. Waugh.

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“We have a very specific, very urgent need to fill here, and if we don’t find innovative ways to meet these needs then it will fall to the taxpayers to do it,” said Sen. Wenger. “Senate Bill 1286 is one of the innovative ways we can fill this need.”

“The (Chesapeake Bay) Foundation believes that this proposal, which would provide transferable tax credits to producers across the state to install Best Management Practices, represents a bold, first-in-the-nation step toward expanding conservation opportunities and distinguishing Pennsylvania as a leader in innovative approaches to farm-friendly environmental protection,” said Lamonte Garber, Chesapeake Bay Foundation.

“We believe Senate Bill 1286 has considerable merit,” said Walt Peetchatka, PennAg Industries Association. “PennAg has not taken a formal position as yet, but our general feeling is that this legislation has significant promise for agriculture and for agribusiness and will be of significant help in meeting our conservation and Chesapeake Bay goals.”

“Senate Bill 1286 is a promising approach to addressing the issue of financial support for BMPs,” said Marel Raub, Chesapeake Bay Commission. “By providing financial assistance to farmers in this manner, the Commonwealth will overcome a significant hurdle in the path of accelerated BMP implementation, resulting in two major benefits—improved water quality and investment in the future of Pennsylvania agriculture.”

The Pennsylvania Association of Conservation Districts previously endorsed Senate Bill 1286 and its companion [House Bill 2878](#) (Stern-R-Blair, Hershey-R-Chester, Daley-D-Washington) (*PA Environment Digest 8/7/06*)

Rendell Administration officials at the hearing shared similar views to those of Agriculture Secretary Dennis C. Wolff who said, “We agree (Senate Bill 1286) does a good job of providing financial assistance to address non-point water quality problems, but at this time we don’t support the bill because of its financial impact. This proposal should be discussed in the context of the budget next June.”

“Local Conservation Districts in Pennsylvania provide a multitude of invaluable services to our communities,” said Sen. Waugh. “They work closely with county, local, state and federal agencies to implement programs that promote stewardship and responsible use of our land, water and other natural resources.”

Some of the services the state’s 66 Conservation Districts provide are mandated by law for farmers and landowners, or are required in order to participate in other government programs.

The Committee heard comments on [Senate Bill 1323](#) (R-Wonderling), which is supported by the Pennsylvania Association of Conservation Districts (PACD). Among other changes, the bill would increase the membership of the State Conservation Commission by adding the departments of Community and Economic Development and Conservation and Natural Resources, let the Commission waive the requirement to have farm members on a county conservation district board if volunteers cannot be found, make Philadelphia eligible to have a conservation district and other changes.

“We want to ensure the bill is on the right track with respect to making necessary and feasible changes to the Conservation District Law,” said Sen. Waugh.

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Brenda Shambaugh, from PACD, Mark Kimmel, York County Conservation District, and Don McNutt, Lancaster County Conservation District presented comments on behalf of conservation districts.

Shambaugh noted the [Joint Legislative Budget and Finance Committee report](#) on districts in June of 2005 documented what districts had been saying all along—they were doing more with less.

District representative urged the Senators to provide districts with the dedicated funding they need to provide services to farmers, landowners and municipalities.

During the hearing Waugh also reflected back on the conservation-related accomplishments already realized through the Farmers First Agenda. First, Wenger and Waugh were successful in streamlining and consolidating the funding received by the State Conservation Commission for the Local Conservation Districts, the result of which is Act 110, signed by the Governor on July 7, 2006.

Through [Senate Bill 1224](#) (Wenger-R-Lancaster, Waugh-R-York), now Act 110, a special fund will be created in the State Treasury, known as the Conservation District Fund, which will serve as a repository for funds appropriated by the state for assistance to local districts and other funds that may be available to the Commission or Districts. This fund is non-lapsing and will be administered by the State Conservation Commission.

Additionally, through the leadership of Sen. Wenger in particular, funding was secured for the Susquehanna River Basin Commission to develop and implement the [agricultural consumptive water use project](#). This project promises to clean up and restore impaired waterways, as well as to meet the Commonwealth’s agricultural operators’ compliance requirements with the SRBC’s consumptive water use regulations, without further burdening the farmer.

“Overall, I am very proud of the success we have seen through the Farmers First Agenda, and after today’s hearing I am confident we will see continued success, especially with respect to conservation efforts across the Commonwealth,” said Sen. Waugh.

The following individuals testified at this week’s hearing:

- Dennis Wolff, Secretary, Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture
- Cathleen Myers, Deputy Secretary for Water Management, Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection
- Karl Brown, Director, State Conservation Commission
- Brenda Shambaugh, Government Relations/Policy Specialist, Pennsylvania Association of Conservation Districts
- Mark Kimmel, Administrator, York County Conservation District
- Don McNutt, Administrator, Lancaster County Conservation District
- Walt Peechatka, Executive Vice President, PennAg Industries Association
- Lamonte Garber, PA Senior Agricultural Consultant, Chesapeake Bay Foundation
- Marel Raub, PA Executive Director, Chesapeake Bay Commission

NewsClips: [State Considering Tax Credits to Ensure Quality of Streams](#)

Link: [Senators Waugh, Wenger Podcast on Conservation Districts CBF on REAP – Senate Bill 1286 and House Bill 2878](#)

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Session Schedule

The Senate returns to session September 19 and the House on September 25.

On the Hill

- On the Senate/House Agenda

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Other News

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- Chesapeake Bay Meaningful Watershed Education Grants Due October 15
- River of Words Educator Workshop Set for November 4
- Wild About Fish Educator Workshop September 27 in Carbon County
- FallinPA.com Features Live Webcams, Foliage Reports, PA Fall Roadtrips
- State Parks Open for Early Goose Hunting September 1
- Pennsylvania Wilds Discovery Weekend Offers Outdoor Adventure
- Latest State Parks and Forest Foundation Tag Features Bobcat
- Help Wanted: Recycling Markets Center Looking for New Executive Director

Opinion

- From Environmental Activists to Active Environmentalists – Today’s Environmental Movement, *By David E. Hess, Former Secretary, Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection*

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

On the Hill

On the Senate/House Agenda

The House Local Government Committee will hold a meeting next week to consider [House Bill 2063](#) providing for multi-municipal Planning Code implementation agreements.

In Other News

Land Trust Assn. Conservation Easement Assistance Program Grants Available

The Pennsylvania Land Trust Association reminded land conservation organizations they can apply any time for [Conservation Easement Assistance Program grants](#) through the Association.

CEAP grants provide a range of help to land conservation organizations in pursuing their goal of permanently preserving land, including—

- Completing conservation and trail easements: up to \$6,000 per project (\$5,000 if not based on PALTA model);
- Amending and restating older easements: up to \$6,000 per project (\$5,000 if not based on PALTA model);
- Establishing or updating baseline documentation: up to \$2,500 per project; and
- Installing signs on eased properties: up to \$700 per project.

For more information, visit the [Conservation Easement Assistance Program webpage](#).

New Federal Pension Protection Act Offers Incentives for Land Preservation

In the odd way of politics, the new [Federal Pension Protection Act](#) helps protect family farms, working forests, wildlife and water with added tax benefits, but only through 2007, according to the [PA Land Trust Association](#).

Provisions in the law expand tax benefits for families who enter into agreements to conserve their land. These agreements, often called conservation easements, protect special places and natural resources while keeping land in private ownership.

U.S. Senator Rick Santorum wrote and championed the Act's conservation provisions in Congress. Thanks to his hard work, the generosity of conservation-minded landowners, and the efforts of charitable conservation organizations, more of the forest, family farms and other special places that make Pennsylvania great will be protected for present and future generations.

Conservation agreements establish conservation goals for a property and set limitations on uses of the property to achieve these goals. The landowner keeps control of the property subject to the limits. The agreement is tailored to the character of the property, the wishes of the owner and the purposes of the participating conservation organization.

For example, an agreement might prohibit construction within 200 feet of a stream but allow it everywhere else. Another agreement might support farming and building a residence but forbid any other development. Another might allow sustainable timbering but restrict most other uses. The agreement applies to present and future landowners, protecting the land forever.

With the new tax provisions, federal law now works much better for folks who conserve their valuable land for the benefit of all. (For tax purposes, the value of a

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conservation easement is the difference between the land's value with the easement and its value without the easement.)

Previously, a family earning \$50,000 a year who donated a \$1 million conservation easement could take a total of \$90,000 in charitable deductions distributed over six years. The new law allows that same family to use \$400,000 in deductions over 16 years - a substantial improvement. If the landowner qualifies as a farmer, they might receive up to \$800,000 in deductions for their million dollar gift for the public good.

Donations and partial donations that meet IRS requirements can take advantage of the federal tax benefits. However, the decision to enter a conservation agreement is not just about tax benefits. (A landowner can still make more money by selling their land for development.) A conservation agreement is about conserving natural resources and places that matter for our children.

Fifty charitable conservation organizations working in communities across the Commonwealth have partnered with landowners to conserve 150,000 acres of forest, farm and community open space using conservation agreements.

The enhanced tax benefits are only available through 2007, so now is the time for conservation-minded landowners to act.

For more information, visit the [Federal Pension Protection Act webpage](#).

CBF Asks Court to Overturn Ruling Allowing Development on Preserved Land

To ensure that protected land cannot be developed, the Chesapeake Bay Foundation has asked the Pennsylvania Supreme Court to overturn a lower court decision allowing the Ephrata Area School District to build a road on farmland preserved with a conservation easement. The CBF brief supports Lancaster County's appeal of the decision.

"If left standing, the lower court decision would set a dangerous precedent and could roll back farmland and open space preservation across the state," CBF's Pennsylvania attorney Matt Royer said.

The school district wants to build a road across the protected farmland to access a proposed new school building. As holder of the conservation easement, the county objected to construction of the road.

The issue has been in the courts since 2004, when the school district argued that it does not need to obtain approval from the county prior to acquiring the property and building the road. The Lancaster County Court of Common Pleas ruled in favor of the county, holding that prior approval is required by law, but that ruling was later reversed by the Commonwealth Court. In May 2006, the county appealed to the Pennsylvania Supreme Court.

"Conservation easements are important tools to preserve farmland," Royer said. "The county, as holder of the easement, cannot be left without a say in whether construction may occur on preserved farmland. The law clearly gives easement holders that say, and to rule otherwise would declare open season on preserved farms and open space throughout Pennsylvania."

CBF has a longstanding partnership with farmers and farm organizations throughout the Commonwealth, and works with farmers to ensure healthy, profitable farms. CBF supports farmland preservation programs as critical to vitality of the

agricultural economy, as well as to the protection of water quality in local streams, rivers, and ultimately the Chesapeake Bay.

PA Sustainable Agriculture Assn. Hosts Harvest Celebration, Fall Harvest Dinners



The [PA Association for Sustainable Agriculture](#) will hold [two special dinners](#) on September 15, the annual Harvest Celebration Dinner in Harrisburg at the Whitaker Center for Science and the Arts and the Fall Harvest Dinner at the Carnegie Science Center in Pittsburgh.

Both dinners will feature food tasting events using local foods that showcase the exceptional seasonal foods being grown in Pennsylvania through sustainable agricultural techniques.

For a complete menu and to take advantage of the limited number of reservations available, go to the [Harvest Celebration and Fall Harvest Dinner webpage](#).

Cove Manure Digester Receives Grant for Pilot Test

The Cove Area Regional Digester recently received a grant from the Chesapeake Bay Commission to conduct a 60-day Pilot Test of the proposed technology for the regional manure digestion and treatment facility to be located in Martinsburg, PA.

This state of the art facility will be instrumental in the capture and removal of over 1,000,000 lbs. of nitrogen that reaches the Chesapeake Bay Watershed annually and provides a centralized solution to the complex problem of agricultural waste handling.

The goals of the pilot test are: Verification of Design Values – Verification of the technologies that are recommended for the CARD project and to evaluate the specific design criteria. Economic Evaluation – Design Values from Pilot Testing can predict ultimate operational costs. Public Relations – A Pilot Test allows the public, regulators, and government officials to view the project components and provides valuable opportunities to deal with issues such as odors, safety, and reliability.

“The CARD project is currently utilizing data from other types of projects, which is why it is extremely important to conduct a pilot study with the actual raw materials that will be placed into the digester to determine actual operational costs” said Randy Stoltz, Chairman of the Cove Area Regional Digester.

The test pilot is expected to begin Fall 2006 and will operate for approximately 60 days.

“Given the unique nature of this project and pilot testing, the CARD project staff will be giving tours to government officials, regulators, municipal wastewater facility personnel, and the local community.” said Julie Dick, Executive Director of the Cove Area Regional Digester.

With a site for the project secured, and site feasibility evaluation and development underway, the CARD project is moving forwards with the anticipation of beginning final design upon completion of the pilot testing.

“The announcement of the Chesapeake Bay Commission grant brings us closer to the day when odors are minimized, groundwater protected, resources totally utilized and agriculture sustained in the Morrisons Cove region of Blair County, Pennsylvania” stated Ron Donlan, Vice Chairman of the Cove Area Regional Digester.

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For more information on the project, or to arrange a tour of the pilot testing, please contact the following contacts: Julie Dick, Executive Director, Cove Area Regional Digester, 814-793-0090 or send email to: CoveDigester@earthlink.net ; Jason Wert, PE, Sr. Project Manager, HRG, Inc. Engineers, 814-238-7117 or send email to: jwert@hrg-inc.com .

Link: [The New Math of Energy Production: Cows + Manure = Gas + Electricity](#)

Deadline for Federal EQIP Energy Cost Assistance Grants Extended

The deadline for completing environmental projects to qualify for the [Environmental Quality Incentives Program](#) energy cost assistance has been extended until December 29, according to Craig Derickson, State Conservationist.

"Farmers have put various conservation practices on hold because of the recent increases in the cost of energy," said Derickson. "As part of our commitment to help mitigate the impact of high energy costs on agricultural producers, this cost adjustment and time extension will lessen the impact of energy prices on farmers, while protecting our natural resources."

Prior to this week's announcement the deadline for completion of the EQIP projects was September 1 to receive the incentive payment for EQIP projects that have been delayed due to increasing energy costs.

The one-time payment adjustment applies only to participants who signed EQIP contracts in 2004 or earlier and will only be paid for practices that are completed between March 1 and December 29. Projects must be completed and adhere to NRCS standards and specifications before payments can be made.

The 15 percent payment increase will focus on a select list of specific practices that have escalated in price by 20 percent or more because of rising energy costs and to practices most affected by increased costs in construction materials such as concrete, steel and plastic pipe. Participants must contact their local field office to determine which practices may be eligible for the payment increase.

Administered by USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service, EQIP is a voluntary conservation program for farmers and ranchers that promotes agricultural production and environmental quality. EQIP offers financial and technical assistance to participants who implement structural or management practices on eligible agricultural land.

For more information, visit the [EQIP webpage](#).

Pennsylvania Doubling its Purchase of Green Electricity

Gov. Rendell this week announced the Commonwealth has doubled its green electricity purchase to 20 percent from 10 percent.

Through modifying its existing contract with Community Energy Inc., the Commonwealth will purchase 200,000 megawatt hours a year, or 20 percent of state

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government's electricity, from renewable sources such as wind and hydroelectric energy, all at a premium rate of only 0.34 cents per kilowatt hour.

The enhanced purchase makes Pennsylvania the largest state purchaser of green electricity and ranks Pennsylvania number 12 on the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Top 25 Green Power Partners list.

"Pennsylvania's leadership on energy is unmatched," said Brent Alderfer, Community Energy's chief executive officer. "The latest purchase of clean energy continues to drive progress and sets the benchmark for other states. Pennsylvania's commitment to action points the way to a secure, clean energy future nationally."

The contract calls for electricity that is generated 40 percent from wind power and 60 percent from hydroelectric sources. Both produce electricity with zero emissions of air pollution.

The 200,000 megawatt hours of renewable energy represent avoided emissions of 951 tons of sulfur dioxide, 271 tons of nitrogen oxide and 123,410 tons of carbon dioxide. Sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxide contribute to acid rain, fine particulate pollution and regional haze, and nitrogen oxide is also a key component of smog. Carbon dioxide is one of the most potent greenhouse gases.

NewsClip: [State Doubling Green Electricity Purchases](#)

EPA Becomes First Federal Agency to Be Powered By 100% Green Energy

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has closed a deal making it the first federal agency to purchase renewable energy, or "[green power](#)," equivalent to 100 percent of its annual electricity needs.

The agency signed a contract with 3 Phases Energy Services to purchase more than 100 million kilowatt hours (kWh) in renewable energy certificates, effective September 1. The arrangement extends annual green-power purchases to more than 190 EPA facilities nationwide.

This green-power purchase brings the agency total to nearly 300 million kWh per year, which is equivalent to 100 percent of the electricity EPA uses nationwide annually. It is enough electricity to power 27,970 homes for a year.

On an annual basis, EPA's total green power purchases offset more than 600 million pounds of carbon dioxide — roughly the amount 54,000 cars emit during a year. EPA worked closely with the Defense Energy Support Center on this latest green power procurement.

The contract, which continues through September 30, 2007, supports the development of wind farms in California, South Dakota, Oklahoma, and Wyoming.

As the first federal agency to purchase 100 percent renewable energy, EPA continues to be an active partner in the agency's own [Green Power Partnership](#), a voluntary public-private program that promotes renewable energy.

Alternative Energy Educator Workshop Set for October 11

Educators are invited to a free "Introducing Alternative Energy" workshop on October 11 at the [Wildwood Lake Sanctuary](#) and the Benjamin Olewine III Nature Center in Harrisburg.

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The Department of Environmental Protection and Dauphin County Parks and Recreation are sponsoring the free workshop which will be held from 8:30 a.m. – 4 p.m.

The workshop is designed for middle and high school teachers, homeschoolers and non-formal educators providing environmental education to middle and high school age students.

Participants will explore alternative energy technologies, including solar, wind and biofuels and learn about recycling and energy conservation for schools through presentations, hands-on activities and a field trip to observe alternative energy technology in action.

The workshop is based upon Pennsylvania's Academic Standards for Environment and Ecology and Science and Technology and participating teachers are eligible for 7.0 Act 48 credit hours.

"This workshop is designed to help teachers to meet state teaching requirements or standards in their classrooms, while focusing on an important and pressing environmental issue," said Jack Farster, director of DEP's Environmental Education and Information Center,

To register for the workshop, contact Ann Devine, in DEP's Environmental Education and Information Center, at 717-772-1644 or e-mail adevine@state.pa.us by September 27. Space is limited, so registrations will be accepted on a first-come, first-served basis.

BioCycle Hosts Renewable Energy From Organics Recycling Conference in October

[BioCycle Journal](#), based in Emmaus, Pa is hosting its [Sixth Annual BioCycle Conference on Renewable Energy From Organics Recycling](#) in Minneapolis, Minnesota, on October 30, 31 and November 1.

This Conference, organized by the editors of BioCycle, Journal of Composting and Organics Recycling, brings together project managers, policy makers, investors, technology and system providers, utilities, consultants, farmers and researchers.

Agenda topics focus on latest developments in advanced systems, operations at innovative projects, economic and energy generation performance, and public policies that are helping to fund development.

Conference highlights include: Bioenergy-Based Local Economies; Energy Independence With Organics Recovery; Global Warming Realities and Solutions; European Experiences, Market Realities; Building Plants in the Midwest; Policies and Feedstocks for Energy Generation; Anaerobic Digestion of Industrial, Municipal Waste; Opportunities Growing in Commercial Biomass Use; Anaerobic Digester Performance on Farms; Business of Biofuels; Creating Bioproducts and Renewable Energy. Technologies and systems to be covered include anaerobic digestion for municipal, industrial and agricultural waste streams; ethanol and biodiesel production; combined anaerobic digestion and composting; gasification; hydrogen production; and fast pyrolysis (bio-oil).

Speakers include public and private sector renewable energy project managers from around North America, biofuels experts, energy market development specialists, and policy makers from state and local governments.

The knowledge, resources and practical experience that these speakers bring to conference sessions will accelerate the learning curve of all participants — and provide

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invaluable connections to people committed to reducing reliance on fossil fuels through their projects, policies, technologies and services.

Conference cosponsors include: USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service; Environmental And Energy Study Institute; Focus On Energy; Great Lakes Biomass Regional Partnership; Minnesota Pollution Control Agency; Hennepin County; Minnesota Project; NRG Processing Solutions/Specialized Environmental Technologies, Inc.

For more information and to register, visit the [“Renewable Energy From Organics Recycling” Conference webpage](#).

Household Hazardous Waste Collection Nets 35,000 Pounds of Waste

The [Southwestern Pennsylvania Household Hazardous Waste Task Force](#) household hazardous waste collection last Saturday resulted in collecting over 35,000 pounds of household hazardous waste in Butler County, and more events are planned.

Three more HHW collections are slated for September 23 in Westmoreland and Venango counties and on October 14 at Brady’s Run Park in Beaver County.

Since the Task Force’s first collection in mid-2003, the group has provided 10,085 Western Pennsylvania residents an opportunity to safely, responsibly, and economically dispose of nearly 900,000 pounds of household hazardous waste, while becoming more educated consumers.

According to the Task Force, [Household Hazardous Wastes](#) are those wastes produced in our households that are hazardous in nature, but are not regulated as hazardous waste, under federal and state laws. Each person in Pennsylvania produces an average of four pounds of HHW each year for a total of about 25,000 tons/yr. statewide.

Included are such items as oil-based paints and paint related products, pesticides, pool chemicals, drain cleaners, and de-greasers and other car care products. Such consumer waste products, if carelessly managed can, create environmental and public health hazards.

For detailed information about these collection events, visit the [Southwestern Pennsylvania Household Hazardous Waste Task Force webpage](#) or call 412-488-7452.

Free Test Kits, Oil Tank Cleanup Services Available Until September 8

Flood victims who wish to take advantage of free water well testing kits should contact the Department of Environmental Protection’s regional offices prior to September 8.

The department began providing the free kits after the June floods to homeowners with a private well system to ensure they have access to safe drinking water.

The department also will continue to offer free pumping and removal services for flooded or damaged home heating oil tanks in affected areas. Residents or local officials who call before September 8 can make an appointment for DEP staff and a contractor to come to the home for cleanup.

Proper handling of home heating oil is essential to prevent soil and groundwater contamination that could linger long after flood waters recede.

Individuals with questions or concerns about the test kits or cleanup should contact the Department of Environmental Protection regional office in the area: [Southeast Regional Office](#), 484-250-5900; [Northeast Regional Office](#), 570-826-2511; [Southcentral](#)

[Regional Office](#), 717-705-4741; [Northcentral Regional Office](#), 570-327-3636; [Southwest Regional Office](#), 412-442-4000; or [Northwest Regional Office](#), 814-332-6945.

For copies of the fact sheet and more flood recovery information on re-entering and cleaning homes and businesses, cleaning up home heating oil, reporting spills and other environmental emergencies, contact the nearest DEP regional office or visit [DEP's Flood Recovery webpage](#).

92.7 Percent of Wild Trout Caught Are Released by PA Anglers



Photo: PA Trout

Two newly-released Fish and Boat Commission/Penn State University studies found that the state's trout anglers have high catch rates and high release rates as well. In fact, most trout caught in Pennsylvania's waters are released, in turn extending and improving recreational fishing opportunities.

The studies examined separately angler use patterns and economic values associated with Pennsylvania's [trout-stocked streams](#) in the spring of the year and [wild trout streams](#) mid-April through Labor Day weekend.

While there were differences in the two fisheries, there were distinct similarities as well – the high rates of anglers practicing catch and release chief among them.

Anglers fishing stocked trout streams in the spring caught, on average, slightly more than one trout per hour fished; 63.1 percent of those fish were subsequently released.

During the course of the legal fishing season on wild trout waters, average catch rates varied from around one fish every two hours for brook and brown trout on large streams to nearly two brook trout per hour on small streams.

An amazing 92.7 percent of wild trout were released.

“In evaluating fisheries, we consider average catch rates of one trout for two hours of fishing time as ‘good.’ The fact that both wild trout fisheries and stocked waters averaged, and in many cases far surpassed, this measure is exciting. Perhaps even more intriguing is the fact that so many trout are being released once caught. Logic suggests that there is a strong connection between these two findings,” said Fish and Boat Commission Executive Director Doug Austen.

“For instance, during the spring study period for stocked streams, the study data indicates anglers caught 6.7 million trout. This catch figure is 1.5 times the number of trout stocked in these same waters. A portion of the additional catch rate can be attributed to the presence of some wild or ‘holdover’ stocked trout. The fact that nearly two-thirds of caught fish were ‘recycled’ by being returned to the water is an even more significant contributor to the high catch rates we documented.”

An estimated total of 80,098 angler trips were made on Pennsylvania's wild trout streams during the regular trout season in 2004. By stream size, 57.5 percent of the angler trips were made on large streams and 42.5 percent of the angler trips were made on small streams. Over the course of the survey period angler effort averaged 239 angler hours per mile on large streams and 44 hours per mile on small streams.

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PFBC sampling work indicates there are approximately 600,000 legal-size wild trout in Pennsylvania waters. Anglers caught an estimated total of 343,240 trout on wild trout streams and released 92.7 percent.

Only about 25,000 trout were harvested on all wild trout streams during the 2004 survey period. Anglers harvested a very small number (9 per mile) of the legal size trout available on wild trout streams (221 per mile).

An estimated 2,124,821 angler trips were made on Pennsylvania's stocked trout streams during the first eight weeks of the regular trout season (April 16 – June 12, 2005). Approximately 21.3 percent of the angler trips (452,220 trips) to stocked trout streams were made during the opening weekend of regular trout season.

Concentrated angler pressure, not surprisingly, dropped precipitously after the opening weekend. Angler effort was calculated at 171.9 angler hours per day per mile of stream on opening weekend and 16.8 angler hours per day per mile of stream for the remainder of the survey period after opening weekend.

Angling on stocked trout streams contributed over \$65.7 million to Pennsylvania's economy during the first eight weeks of the regular trout season in 2005. Angling on stocked trout streams also supported 1,119 jobs in Pennsylvania.

Angling on wild trout streams contributed over \$7.16 million to Pennsylvania's economy during the regular trout season in 2004. Angling on wild trout streams also supported 105 jobs in Pennsylvania.

NewsClip: [Pennsylvania Trout Anglers Big on Recycling, Fish That Is](#)

Share Your Vision for the Connoquenessing Creek Watershed in September

The team preparing the watershed conservation plan for Connoquenessing Creek in Allegheny, Beaver, Butler, and Lawrence counties is inviting residents to public meetings in September to share your future vision for the watershed.

The meetings will be held on

- September 12 at the Butler Junior High School cafeteria from 7:00 pm to 8:30 pm;
- September 14 at the Harmony Museum's Stewart Hall from 7:00 pm to 8:30 pm;
- September 19 at the Ellwood City Borough auditorium from 7:00 pm to 8:30 pm; and
- September 27 at the Mars Public Library Community Room from 6:00 pm to 7:30 pm.

The watershed conservation plan, which is being developed by Western Pennsylvania Conservancy in cooperation with the [Connoquenessing Watershed Alliance](#), local municipalities, agencies, and individuals, will be developed through a locally-driven planning process, which create a vision for the watershed community.

The plan focuses on the natural resources (land, water, and biological), cultural resources (historical and recreational), and socio-economics of the watershed, and makes recommendations based on public input to conserve or enhance its valuable assets.



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The goals of the Connoquenessing Creek Watershed Conservation Plan are to actively engage the watershed community while addressing water-quality concerns, promote sound planning, protect the cultural and historical resources of this diverse rural-urban watershed through education and recreation opportunities, and to acknowledge the relationship between humans and their environment.

Funding for the plan is provided by the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources Community Conservation Partnership Program.

For more information, please contact Carla Ruddock at the [Western Pennsylvania Conservancy Freshwater Conservation Program](#) at 724-459-0953 ext. 107 or send email to: cruddock@paconserve.org.

First Ever Lake Erie Sojourn Set for September 8-10



The first ever [Lake Erie Sojourn](#) will be held September 8-10 starting at the Lake Erie Bluffs State Park in Erie County.

Open to kayak enthusiasts who will have the chance to participate in an eco-paddling experience unlike any other. The three-day, three-night expedition will explore the many natural resources and recreational opportunities exclusive to Erie and the surrounding area. Kayak from Lake Erie Bluffs to Presque Isle to Shade's Beach.

Overnight camping, campfires, reception, meals, paddling and nature programs, outdoor concert, and more! Single day and night rates are available.

To register or for more information, visit the [Lake Erie Sojourn webpage](#), phone: 814-835-8069 or send email to: lakeeriesojoirn@lea.earthforce.org

Middle Creek Wildlife Area to Host Wildfowl Show September 16-17

The Game Commission's [Middle Creek Wildlife Management Area](#) will host its 20th Annual Middle Creek Wildfowl Show on September 16-17. The event will be held from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. each day.

Admission is free, but donations are graciously accepted and benefit the Wildlands Preservation Fund to preserve wild lands. Middle Creek is along Hopeland Road, two miles south of Kleinfeltersville, on the Lebanon-Lancaster county line.

The show features wildfowl carvings, artwork, collectibles and carving supplies from more than 60 vendors.

Retriever demonstrations will be at 10 a.m. and noon on September 16, and at 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. on September 17. Two different retriever clubs will display their dogs' abilities, both with water retrievals, and upland retrievals.

Decoy competitions will be held at 1 p.m. on Saturday, and winners will be announced at 4 p.m. Pennsylvania State Duck and Goose Calling Championships will be held at 2 p.m. on Sunday.

Food vendors will be selling throughout the show. For further information or directions, call 717-733-1512.

Stream Restoration Workshop to be Offered in Meadville September 13



The [Western Pennsylvania Conservancy](#) and its partners will host a [French Creek watershed](#) streambank restoration workshop September 13 to discuss funding opportunities for landowners addressing streambank erosion and revegetation projects.

Workshop topics include informative sessions regarding stream mechanics (how a stream functions) soft stabilization (grading and vegetative plantings), and hard stabilization (stone and log devices). By better understanding stream stabilization techniques and water flow, a long-term and environmentally friendly solution to common stream-related problems can be achieved.

The workshop will be held from 7 p.m.-9 p.m. at the Penn State Cooperative Extension office in Meadville. Time will be set aside for a question and answer period. Refreshments will be provided. The workshop is open to the general public, especially landowners looking for solutions to their streambank problems.

To RSVP, contact Western Pennsylvania Conservancy's Ryan Nageotte at 814-739-9991 and visit the [WPC Freshwater Conservation Program webpage](#).

Chesapeake Bay Meaningful Watershed Education Grants Due October 15

Pennsylvania Chesapeake Bay School District is offering \$2,500 Mini-grant program. Funding provided through the Federal B-WET Mini-grant Program.

Applications are due October 15.

This Grant application is being directed by the Department of Education and administered by the Pennsylvania Association of Conservation Districts, Inc.

Each school-based project must be part of the school district's curriculum and must be standards based. Projects need to identify how they will work with students to accomplish a Meaningful Bay Experience. Partners are encouraged, but not mandatory.

For more information, contact Kathleen Banski, Director of Administration/ Education, Pennsylvania Association of Conservation Districts, Inc., 717-238-7223. Fax: 717-238-7201 or send email to: kathleen-banski@pacd.org.

River of Words Educator Workshop Set for November 4

There will be a [River of Words \(ROW\)](#) Workshop for educators on November 4 to introduce participants to this international art and poetry program focusing on ways to incorporate nature and the arts into their own work with children.

The [Pennsylvania Institute for Conservation Education](#) has been designated as Pennsylvania's ROW coordinator.

Nature has always been the greatest source of inspiration for artists and poets since humans began drawing animals on the walls of caves. The natural world as seen through the eyes of its children is heartening, humbling, fresh, often life-affirming, and sometimes disturbing.

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Using ROW program materials, learn techniques and tools to interest K-12 children in expressing their view of nature through words and images. This program can culminate in having your students compete in a national poetry contest.

Tuition for the program is \$100 and includes K-12 curriculum guide, ROW resources, instruction, and Act 48 credit hours.

You can download a catalog with 2006 class listings and registration/scholarship information at [Pennsylvania Institute for Conservation Education website](#).

Link: [Conservation Institute Revives Natural Science/Natural History Education](#)

Wild About Fish Educator Workshop September 27 in Carbon County

The Fish and Boat Commission and [Carbon County Environmental Education Center](#) will offer a Wild about Fish Workshop for teachers and other educators on September 27.

The workshop will take place from 9 a.m. – 5 p.m. It will include a “hands-on” stream study (fishing licenses will not be required). Participants will receive a Project Wild Aquatic curriculum guide suitable for K – 12th grade, PA-specific lesson plans, posters, PA Fishes book and other great resource materials.

Traditional and non-traditional educators will be eligible for eight Act 48 hours. The \$25 fee covers the cost of materials (T-shirt), food and beverages. Lunch will be provided by CCEEC. Space is limited to 25 participants. (15 minimum)

For more information or to register, please contact the [Carbon County Environmental Education Center website](#) at 570-645-8597 or email at cceec@ptd.net or jeanniecarl@yahoo.com .

FallinPA.com Features Live Webcams, Foliage Reports, PA Fall Roadtrips

Planning a fall foliage roadtrip? Check out Pennsylvania's www.FallinPA.com, it's one of the nation's most complete fall foliage websites with roadtrip itineraries, live interactive webcams and features to help plan a getaway.

Weekly fall foliage reports will be added to the site in early September to provide visitors with updates on peak viewing times.

Known for its stunning fall landscapes and three distinct foliage zones, Pennsylvania offers one of the longest windows of opportunity to view fall foliage in the Northeast, leaving more time to take a roadtrip across the state and watch the leaves change. Each foliage zone is highlighted on the site with several customized itineraries covering a variety of interests.

Fall is also an opportune time to check out one of Pennsylvania's unique fall festivals, like the 42nd Annual Apple Harvest Festival in Arendtsville (just 20 minutes from Gettysburg) October 7, 8, 14 and 15. The festival features apple products, live country music, arts and crafts, antique autos, steam engines, orchard tours and plenty of food.

For more information about fall in Pennsylvania, including all of its fairs and festivals, go to www.VisitPA.com or call 800-VISITPA.

State Parks Open for Early Goose Hunting September 1

Pennsylvania State Parks again will allow Canada goose hunting during the state's early season beginning September 1 and running through September 25.

Hunters should contact individual park offices for starting dates and other details. Some parks are closed to hunting. Also, with the early-season starting date falling just before the busy Labor Day holiday, some parks will not allow hunting until September 5, the day after Labor Day.

Sportsmen's groups interested in volunteering for waterfowl habitat improvements and other projects in state parks should contact their local state park manager.

Non-migratory Canada goose populations have increased drastically in recent years, causing crop damage and nuisance problems in residential neighborhoods. Park visitors often complain about goose excrement on state park beaches and other facilities, and water quality at some state parks has been adversely affected.

Resident Canada geese have been among the suspected cause of high fecal coliform counts at some Pennsylvania state park beaches, forcing swimming restrictions during peak usage periods.

Many state parks have taken measures, including anti-goose fencing and or the use of loud noisemakers, in an attempt to deter the waterfowl, or scare them away.

The Pennsylvania Game Commission and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service again have authorized the early goose hunt. Sunday hunting is not permitted in Pennsylvania. A statewide eight-goose daily bag limit, and a 16-bird possession limit will be in effect.

All Game Commission rules and regulations governing the early Canada goose season will apply at state parks. Additional details can be obtained from the Game Commission by writing Game Commission, 2001 Elmerton Ave., Harrisburg, PA 17110-9797, or by calling 717-787-4250.

Persons with disabilities wanting to hunt geese in the early season should contact specific state parks for further information. Park phone numbers can be obtained by calling 1-888-PA-PARKS, or visiting the [DCNR's State Parks website](#).

Pennsylvania Wilds Discovery Weekend Offers Outdoor Adventure



Wishing for an end of the season adventure to remember on cold winter days? How about an exciting Discovery Weekend at a Pennsylvania State Park that includes tagging butterflies, studying owls and night sky investigation?

The Department of Conservation and Natural Resources is offering a Discovery Weekend package September 22-24 at

Sinnemahoning and Cherry Springs State Parks in the 12-county, northcentral Pennsylvania Wilds region.

The Discovery Weekend is family oriented, and will be limited to 12 to 15 people. The weekend includes a hands-on monarch butterfly migration tagging program at Sinnemahoning State Park in Cameron County, and a saw-whet owl study and night sky

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investigation with telescopes at Cherry Springs State Park in Potter County. Cherry Springs has some of the darkest skies in the eastern United States.

All meals Saturday and breakfast on Sunday are included, as well as transportation between locations.

The package can be done with accommodations at the Frosty Hollow Bed and Breakfast in Coudersport. The package is \$386 for two adults and two children age 4-12 with accommodations, and \$238 without accommodations.

The goal of the [Pennsylvania Wilds initiative](#) is to increase outdoor recreation and heritage tourism across north central Pennsylvania consistent with responsible stewardship of the region's public lands. The Pennsylvania Wilds covers Cameron, Clarion, Clearfield, Clinton, Elk, Forest, Jefferson, Lycoming, McKean, Potter, Tioga and Warren counties.

Information and registration materials are available by calling [Lyman Run State Park](#) at 814-435-5010 or email at lymanrunsp@state.pa.us.

If you need an accommodation to participate in park activities, contact the Bureau of State Parks at (888) PA-PARKS (voice) or 711 (AT&T Relay Services).

Latest State Parks and Forest Foundation Tag Features Bobcat



Artwork depicting a McKean County bobcat is featured on the newest commemorative tag now available to residents and visitors who would like to show their support for the 12-county northcentral region known as the Pennsylvania Wilds.

Sponsored by the [Pennsylvania Parks and Forests Foundation](#), the sale of this second in a series tag is designed to generate revenue and raise awareness of the more than 1.5 million acres of state forest and game lands, 27 state parks and the darkest skies in the eastern United States in the Pennsylvania Wilds.

"These tags are a great way for everyone to show support for our natural systems and the beautiful and wild area in the northcentral region that's becoming a growing destination for outdoor recreationists," Department of Conservation and Natural Resources Secretary Michael DiBerardinis said. "The donation supports programs and improvements in the Pennsylvania Wilds, making the commonwealth a better place to live, work and enjoy."

The tags will be sold for a minimum \$5 donation at the 17 park and 8 forest district offices located in the Pennsylvania Wilds, or are available from PPF.

The bobcat depicted on the tag is a colored-pencil sketch drawn from an original photograph of a McKean County bobcat taken by Rocky Holland of Eagle-Eye Photography. Cameron County artist Nelson Haas, a retired state trooper and avid outdoorsman, donated the work that has been converted into the tags.

A portion of the money raised will be used for improvements and other projects in state parks and forests. PPF is statewide nonprofit organization committed to the protection, promotion and enhancement of state parks and forestland.

"This is an ongoing program, so collectors can look for new tags each year," PPF President Marci Mowery said. "The tag program not only provides a way for people to show their support for their Pennsylvania natural heritage, but also celebrates the talented artists found in the state."

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The Pennsylvania Wilds tag is sponsored by [Woolrich](#), well known maker of sportswear, blankets, accessories and home furnishings inspired by the outdoor lifestyle in Woolrich, Clinton County.

"Woolrich is delighted to be part of this conservation effort in a region so close to our company's own heritage," said Woolrich Director of Marketing and Media Timothy Joseph. "Woolrich's relationship with the people and the wild areas of Pennsylvania's northern woodlands stretches back almost two centuries. Like the Pennsylvania Parks and Forests Foundation, we believe in the importance of natural areas and public land for today, as well as for future generations. We are proud to work with PPF and DCNR as partners in this important initiative."

The first tag in the park series was issued in March and depicts an original watercolor of Pine Grove Furnace State Park in Cumberland County. It is available at parks statewide.

For details, visit the [Pennsylvania Parks and Forest Tag Program webpage](#).

Help Wanted: Recycling Markets Center Looking for New Executive Director

The [Pennsylvania Recycling Markets Center](#) announced the resignation of Warren J. Weaver, its President and Executive Director, and has begun a search for his replacement.

Mr. Weaver was instrumental in assembling a superb quality staff, and in implementing excellent systems and procedures for the RMC that will serve it well in addressing the needs within the Commonwealth to create new markets for recycled materials.

During its first year of operation, PA RMC assisted companies in attaining nearly \$1,000,000 in economic benefits. These benefits include over 2,200 tons of materials recycled and diverted from Pennsylvania's waste stream and \$247,000 of costs avoided by Pennsylvania companies.

"The PA RMC has shown that it could ramp up in short order and have a positive impact on the Commonwealth's economy and environment. It has done a remarkable amount of work in a short period of time", said RMC Board Chair Joanne Shafer.

The primary objectives of the RMC are to increase the private sector's ability to realize market development opportunities directly, to identify and address inefficiencies in the marketplace and work with the demand side of manufacturing in the Commonwealth to achieve greater diversion from disposal.

A nationwide search for an Executive Director will begin immediately.

Opinion

From Environmental Activists to Active Environmentalists –

Today's Environmental Movement

By

David E. Hess

Former Secretary

Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection

Note: These remarks were delivered at the [8th Annual Pennsylvania Conference on Abandoned Mine Reclamation](#) August 25 in State College.

I want to take a minute right at the beginning to thank the organizers of this Conference, let's give them a big round of applause...

Over 200 people are gathered here in one place to share expertise, tell "war stories" and share that feeling only watershed folks have-- that what you are doing today will benefit you, your children and many generations to come.

And you are not alone.

The [Coldwater Conference](#) this year attracted over 250, the [Schuylkill River Congress](#) another 200, the [West Branch Symposium](#) over 160, the [Ohio River Watershed Celebration](#) registration is near 700 for their September cruise.

By some counts there are over 580 community-based watershed organizations in Pennsylvania (there were just 125 or so before the original Growing Greener Watershed Program) and 11,000 volunteers in the [Senior Environment Corps](#) and watershed groups regularly doing water quality sampling.

And our numbers are growing.

Johnstown just had its [first annual Riverfest](#) to celebrate the success they've had in cleaning up the Stonycreek and Conemaugh Rivers, river sojourns last year attracted more than 14,000 participants and spectators.

The Toby Creek Watershed Association dedicated the [Blue Valley Mine Drainage Treatment and Fish Culture Station](#) that uses treated mine water to raise trout and are nearly finished with a 40 year effort to cleanup the entire watershed.

The folks on the Catawissa Creek in Schuylkill County just dedicated the [Audenreid Mine Tunnel Treatment system](#) that will clean up 34 miles of stream. Fish are already returning to parts of the stream for the first time in 75 years.

Over half the restoration work needed in the [Dents Run Watershed](#) has been finished or is under contract to be finished. All of the 250 acres of mine land restoration will be completed in 2007.

And just this week, they found shrimp in the [Monongahela River.... Shrimp!](#) Do you know how incredible that is?

Over the last year there were a variety of new initiatives to promote restoration and reach out to educate the public on the watershed problems and solutions.



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Exelon joined with the Schuylkill River Heritage Area and the Delaware River Basin Commission to create a [new watershed project grant program](#).

The Fish and Boat Commission formed a new division dedicated to habitat restoration and provided new funding for projects.

The [Rising Nation River Journey](#) organized by the Lenape Indians just finished traveling down the Delaware meeting watershed groups along the way to share ideas and reinforce the connection between the upper and lower Delaware.

A team of 12 high school students, members of Future Farmers of America, just completed a [30-day, 400 mile trip](#) down the Susquehanna organized by the Chesapeake Bay Foundation.

“[Looking to the River](#)” a documentary by WVIA in Pittston and encouraged by the Susquehanna River Heartland Coalition, looked at water quality issues in the Middle, West and North Branches of the Susquehanna.

The Kettle Creek Watershed Association and its efforts were featured in a WPSU-TV documentary “[Water: an Endangered Resource](#).”

Local artists, the Luzerne County Conservation District, the federal Office of Surface Mining and watershed groups collaborated to put on “[Anthrascapes](#)” the first art show incorporating iron oxide pigment recovered from mine drainage treatment plants around Wilkes-Barre.

And who can forget the [Bassmasters Tournament](#) highlighting how great the fishing is NOW around Pittsburgh. And they recently announced the [Tournament is coming back in 2008!](#)

Of course, if you were regular readers of [Watershed Weekly](#) by PA Organization for Watersheds and Rivers and [www.PaEnvironmentDigest.com](#), you’d know all that! (Was that a commercial?)

This just touches the tip of the iceberg in terms of what watershed groups are doing in every corner of Pennsylvania and I apologize for the many groups and activities I left out.

You represent today’s environmentalists— dedicated to positive action, collaboration and education to achieve your goals.

You may have seen the study of watershed groups put out by the [Center for Rural Pennsylvania](#) in December, but I think the results are worth repeating here because it tells us how important you really are to protecting our environment today.

Penn State did the study and surveyed over 580 watershed organizations in 2002 and these were just some of their findings—

- Groups believe strongly in collaboration and cooperation to get environmental action, not protesting or litigation and use their relationships and networks to facilitate action;
- The typical watershed group felt that solutions to water quality problems lie at the level of the individual and education aimed at changing the attitudes of people and their actions;
- By working with local citizens and local governments, they demonstrate that the community has the capacity and the power to enact changes. They create energy and momentum around environmental issues and community activism in general;

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- The typical watershed group is run by volunteers with a core group of 10 to 12 people who help manage the organization and they have about 50 members. A majority of groups have an average of at least six other major partners;
- Water quality concerns were a leading cause for the groups' formation, but environmental education, habitat, recreation, land use planning, mining impacts, agricultural impacts and water supply. Sportsmen were often among the organizations' founders;
- 44 percent formed within the previous 10 years, with more than 100 using grants from the state's Growing Greener program, but nearly 25 percent formed before 1980; and
- The study concluded that watershed groups: empower local residents, develop local leaders, provide examples of successful community organizations, compliment other state and local environmental programs, get results, play an essential role in promoting the environment, and act as environmental advocates. ([*“Watershed Groups Have Gone Mainstream in Rural PA”*](#))

I think one term from the report sums it up nicely – watershed folks think of themselves as “active environmentalists” not “environmental activists.”

In 1968, when Gov. Schaeffer signed into law Project 500 that dedicated \$500 million in bond funds for primarily mine reclamation and doing an inventory of mine reclamation needs, the approach to spending those funds was much different.

On the project side, the old DER and its predecessor would come in, do the project and leave. There was very little connection to the local community in most cases.

What's the difference today? You are!

You bring local knowledge and a commitment to cleaning up and keep your own watershed clean that can't be duplicated.

How important are you? Just in terms of stretching state funding alone, you are invaluable-

- For every \$1 the state gives you, you provide a \$1.25 match. Since 1999 that means the state invested \$172 million in projects and you brought another \$215 million to the table; and
- Lately your contribution has grown even further with funding shifts. Just this week [Chesapeake Bay Small Watershed Grants](#) were announced and the local project match more than tripled the grant funds offered-- \$748,100 in grants, to \$2,229,689 in match.

And the results? Thousands of acres of abandoned mine lands reclaimed, Hundreds of miles of streams cleaned up, and a feeling that people want to keep it that way.

We do have some challenges, but we also many opportunities ahead.

While 83 percent of Pennsylvania's assessed streams meet water quality standards, there are over 4,645 miles still impaired by mine drainage.

We need to [reauthorize the federal Abandoned Mine Reclamation Fund](#) to continue that stream of money coming to Pennsylvania – you'll hear more on that tomorrow from John Dawes.

On the state level, the Governor and state legislators must find at least \$40 million to permanently fund Hazardous Sites Cleanup Program in 2007-08. For the last two years

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that money was coming from the Growing Greener Fund, so the issue of how to fund watershed restoration projects will be front and center in the General Assembly.

New legislation just introduced – [Senate Bill 1286](#) and [House Bill 2878](#) – would create a [Resource Enhancement and Protection Tax Credit Act](#) to give farmers and landowners state tax credits for installing best management practices and forested stream buffers will probably move this Fall.

DEP is set to complete stream assessments and most TMDLs (Total Maximum Daily Load) Plans for all the watersheds in Pennsylvania at some point next year. So next comes the hard part—actually implementing those plans.

DEP can't do it all alone because it will require lots of local effort to do restoration projects, education and building partnerships. Who best to do that but watershed groups?

I would strongly encourage you to become involved in these issues and help determine your own destiny.

Many times watershed groups are too busy doing their projects and dealing with issues in their own watersheds. That's your strength.

But sometimes, you have to lift your chin up and look ahead. This is one of those times.

If you don't get involved, someone else will be telling you what to do or worse, you will not have the resources to continue the good work you've started.

By being part of a watershed group you took your destiny in our own hands, that's what I'm asking you to do here.

It is as simple as that.

As someone who wore a tie-dyed T-shirt at the first Earth Day in 1970, I know how valuable it was to be an environmental activist in those days.

But, we've all grown up and so has the environmental movement.

To me you represent today's real environmentalists.

I continue to be amazed and proud of the work that watershed groups do all across the state and take every opportunity I have to get out there and look at all the good stuff that's being done in the real world and share it with others.

The partnerships, the creative solutions to problems that no one has solved in a 100 years and the ability to just get stuff done is tremendous!

Keep up the great work! And keep being [Active Environmentalists!](#)

Thanks for the opportunity to be with you today!

David E. Hess served as Secretary for Environmental Protection under Governors Ridge and Schweiker from 2001 to 2003. He can be contacted at DHess@HolstonCrisci.com.

Quick Clips

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

[Snyder County Firms Up Growing Greener Projects](#)

[Mellon Money Saves Millions of U.S. Acres](#)

[Conservancy Eyes Bear Run Reserve](#)

[Berks Preservation Program Adds 1,786 Acres](#)

[Pike, Monroe New York City's Newest Suburbs](#)

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[PA Considers Mandatory Life Jackets on Boats](#)
[Solar Energy is Flaring Up](#)
[Ethanol Demo Held at Wayne/Pike County Fair](#)
[Building Getting the Green as More Are Going Green](#)
[\\$275,000 Invested to Redevelop Former Pittsburgh Industrial Site](#)
[Penn Power's Rates to Rise When Cap Expires](#)
[University of Pittsburgh to Host Global Health/Environment Conference](#)
[Lawmakers May Not Agree on Mine Safety Bill in Fall Session](#)
[\\$1.5 Million Grant to Prevent Mine Subsidence on School Property in Beaver County](#)
[Emerald Takes Top Prize a Mine Rescue Contest](#)
[Flight 93 Victims, Memorial Efforts to be Honored in PA](#)

Watershed NewsClips

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

[Floods Force 250 From Homes in Venango County](#)
[DEP Awards \\$500,000 in Flood Protection Grants](#)
[USDA Announces \\$2.2 Million in Emergency Conservation Funding for PA](#)
[Pending Federal Legislation Provides More Mine Reclamation Funding](#)
[River Conservation Plan Finalized, But People Must Put It Into Action](#)
[West Branch Susquehanna Conservation Plan in Public's Hands](#)
[More Time Needed for Work Related to Cleanup of Chesapeake Bay](#)
[Conservation District: Ask Before You Alter a Stream](#)
[Creek Sweep Targets Pollution](#) or [Creek Sweep Cleans Up Presque Isle](#)
[\\$4.2 Million Awarded to Reclaim Lackawanna County Abandoned Mine](#)
[Tunkhannock & Bowmans Creeks to Get Work](#)

[Update: What's Going On With PA Watersheds Data System?](#)

Regulations

DEP Unveils Preliminary Changes to Mercury Emissions Reduction Rule

At a joint meeting of three advisory groups this week, the Department of Environmental Protection unveiled its [preliminary recommendations](#) for changes to its proposal to reduce mercury emissions from coal-fired power plants in response to public comments.

Members of DEP's Citizens Advisory Council, Air Quality Technical Advisory Committee and DEP's Mercury Rule Work Group attended.

DEP has so far counted over 10,934 comments submitted on the rule, but the overwhelming number were form letters, postcards and emails sent in response to mass solicitations from environmental groups.

DEP provided a very general overview of the comments and then outlined several preliminary changes it said it was considering to the rule, including:

- Counting mercury reductions as a result of coal washing as part of meeting the mercury rule;

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- Allowing generating plant owners who replace or re-power their facilities to keep the mercury allowances they create to use with the new plants;
- Allowing plant owners to average their mercury emissions across multiple power plants they own in Pennsylvania to comply with the cap on mercury emissions (they must still meet the 80 and 90 percent reductions in Phase I and II of the rule); and
- Removing the preference for bituminous coal from the rule due to a concern about constitutionality.

DEP has not changed its opposition to incorporating a cap-and-trade provision in the final recommended rule in spite of the voluminous comments it received suggesting that provision be included saying, “It is a policy decision.”

DEP also said the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency submitted comments saying it could not approve DEP’s mercury rule as written without making changes, including removing the exception DEP had proposed for Integrated Gasification Combined Cycle clean coal plants from the Phase I mercury reductions.

DEP expects to be in a position to share a final draft rule and its special Record of Decision document it was required to produce by the Environmental Quality Board with the [Air Quality Technical Advisory Committee](#) at their meeting on September 11 and with the [DEP Citizens Advisory Council](#) on September 19.

The final recommended rule is set to go to the [Environmental Quality Board](#) at its October 17 meeting.

[DEP’s presentation](#) from this week’s meeting is available online.

Mercury is an indirect threat to health. According to DEP, there is no health threat from breathing in mercury in ambient air. The health threat is from eating fish that may contain mercury deposited in water and ingested by the fish in their food chain.

NewsClip: [92.7 Percent of Wild Trout Caught Are Released by PA Anglers](#)

The Department of Environmental Protection published [proposed regulations governing mine opening blasting](#). Comments are due: October 2.

[Pennsylvania Bulletin – September 2, 2006](#)

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

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

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

Technical Guidance & Permits

There were no new guidance documents published this week.

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

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

Calendar of Upcoming Events

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

- **September 6** – DEP [Section 111\(d\) hearing on plan to control mercury emissions](#) from power plants in Pittsburgh, Harrisburg and Norristown.
- **September 6** – House Local Government Committee meeting to consider [House Bill 2063](#) (Boyd-R-Lancaster) providing for multi-municipal Planning Code implementation agreements. Room 205 Ryan Building. 1:00.
- **September 11** – [DEP Air Quality Technical Advisory Committee](#) meeting on mercury emissions reduction rule. DEP Southcentral Regional Office. 9:00.
- **September 12** – House Environmental Resources and Energy Committee informational meeting on reducing mercury emissions from power plants. Room 205 Ryan Building. 11:00.
- **September 12** – Joint Air and Water Pollution Control and Conservation Committee first meeting of the Sewage Management and Treatment Task Force pursuant to House Resolution 88. Empire A Room, Hershey Lodge and Convention Center. 12:30.
- **September 12** – **CANCELLED.** [DEP Laboratory Accreditation Advisory Committee](#) meeting. Next scheduled meeting is December 12.
- **September 13** – **CANCELLED.** [DEP Water Resources Advisory Committee](#) meeting. Room 105 Rachel Carson Building. 9:30.
- **September 15** - DEP [Small Systems Technical Assistance Center Advisory Board](#) work group meeting on emergency notification. 10th Floor Conference Room, Rachel Carson Building. 9:00.
- **September 19** – Environmental Quality Board meeting. Room 105 Rachel Carson Building. 9:00.
- **September 19** – [DEP Citizens Advisory Council](#) meeting on mercury emissions reduction rule. Room 105 Rachel Carson Building. 11:00.
- **September 19-20** – [State Board for Certification of Water and Wastewater Systems Operators](#). 10th Floor Rachel Carson Building. 10:00 and 8:30 respectively.
- **September 28** – Joint Air and Water Pollution Control and Conservation Committee meeting of Legislative Forestry Task Force. Senate Room, Penn Stater Conference Center Hotel, State College. 10:00.
- **October 13** - [DEP Water Resources Advisory Committee](#) meeting. Room 105 Rachel Carson Building. 9:30.
- **October 17** –**RESCHEDULED to a Conference Call.** [State Board for Certification of Water and Wastewater System Operators](#).
- **October 31-November 5** – [National Historic Preservation Conference](#). National Trust for Historic Preservation. Pittsburgh.
- **November 20** – Environmental Issues Forum, Joint Air and Water Pollution Control and Conservation Committee featuring J. Kent Crawford, USGS, to discuss the emerging contaminants project. Room 205 Ryan Building. Noon.
- **December 12** – **CANCELLED.** [Coal and Clay Mine Subsidence Insurance Board meeting](#).

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- **December 14** – [Coal and Clay Mine Subsidence Insurance Board meeting](#). 14th Floor Conference Room, Rachel Carson Building, Harrisburg. 10:00.

[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.

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