

— PA — Environment Digest

*An Update on
Environmental
Issues in
Pennsylvania*

Edited By David E. Hess, Holston & Crisci

January 9, 2006

Condolences to the Families, Rescuers Involved in West Virginia Mine Accident



Photo by: Ted Kopas

Coal miners have a special bond, whether they're in Pennsylvania, Wyoming or China. That's why the deaths this week in the Sago Mine in West Virginia hit all of us with any connection to coal mining, and especially the Quecreek Mine Rescue, very hard.

The Sago Mine tragedy was further compounded by the "miscommunication" that occurred with the families of the miners and the media when an initial report said miners were alive when, in fact, all but one perished.

In this age of cell phones, Blackberries and 24-hour "instant" news cycles, almost nothing can prepare public officials, families or company representatives for the media crush that happens during a major accident like Sago Mine or Quecreek.

Fortunately during the Quecreek Mine Rescue, Pennsylvania had the right people in the right places, starting at the top with Gov. Schweiker, to take direct responsibility for guiding the rescue and to make sure the families of the miners and then the media got reliable information.

That's not to say communication problems didn't happen, they did, but corrections were made immediately because we knew this wasn't about us looking bad or good, it was about getting loved ones back to their families.

As difficult as it may be to realize now, good will come out of the Sago Mine tragedy that will help prevent another accident and improve our responses to the next one.

Our experience in dealing with events like floods, blizzards, tornadoes, the Three Mile Island Accident in 1979, the Beaver County crash of United Flight 427 in 1994 and Flight 93 in Somerset in 2001 helped prepare staff from the Department of Environmental Protection, other state agencies, county and local emergency responders and volunteers to respond to the Quecreek Mine Accident.

Quecreek had a successful outcome in terms of miners rescued, but it was also a success in terms of lessons learned.

The investigations following the accident resulted in fundamental changes in the way DEP regulates underground coal mining operations, the collection of old mine maps that have provided a treasure trove of new information on the location of abandoned mines, new technologies to allow drilling ahead of mining in small seam coal mines and legislation introduced as [Senate Bill 949](#) (Kasunic-D-Somerset) and [House Bill 2229](#) (Bastian-R-Somerset) to modernize Pennsylvania's deep mine safety law.

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Lessons learned from Quecreek were shared with a variety of professional groups and sister agencies in hopes of improving the preparedness of others.

We have to make sure we follow this same “lessons learned” approach with the Sago Mine Accident.

Now, though, join me in expressing our heartfelt condolences to the families of the miners who died, pray for the recovery of the surviving miner and extend your hand to say “thank you” to each and every person involved in the rescue effort.

-- **David E. Hess**

Former Secretary

Department of Environmental Protection

NewsClips: [Schweiker Says TMI's Lessons Helped PA at Quecreek](#)
[Schweiker Kept Rein on News in Quecreek Rescue](#)
[At Quecreek, Schweiker Took Control](#)
[Official Recalls Quecreek Media Control](#)
[Local Miner Recounts Quecreek as 13 West Virginia Miners Trapped](#)
[Coal Mining Fatalities Drop to Record Low in 2005](#)
[Pennsylvania Lends Hand to Help Trapped West Virginia Miners](#)

Session Schedule

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On the Hill

Senate Sets Hearing on Deep Mine Safety Legislation

The Senate Environmental Resources & Energy Committee has scheduled a hearing on legislation to improve safety in underground coal mines for January 31. An agenda of witnesses will be forthcoming.

[Senate Bill 949](#) (Kasunic-D-Somerset) is pending in the Senate and [House Bill 2229](#) (Bastian-R-Somerset) is in the House that would modernize Pennsylvania's deep mine safety law based on experiences gleaned from the Quecreek Mine Rescue and additional suggestions made by the Department of Environmental Protection.

Senate Bill 949 contains several key changes recommended in reports investigating the causes of the Quecreek mine accident, as well as other changes, including—

- Providing authority to update safety requirements by regulation without needing changes in law;
- Authorizing DEP to take enforcement actions against mine operators who violate mine safety laws, not just individuals;
- Creating a digitized mine map repository to better locate abandoned and working mines;
- Clarifying the authority of DEP during a mine rescue operation; and
- Requiring applicants for new mines to provide hard evidence of where abandoned mine workings are to avoid accidentally mining into them.

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

Senate Committee Meets on Trib. Strategy, Federal AML Funding, EHB Nominee

The Senate Environmental Resources & Energy Committee will meet on January 24 to consider the re-appointment of the Honorable Michael L. Krancer to the Environmental Hearing Board and resolutions on the Chesapeake Bay Tributary Strategy and federal funding for abandoned mine cleanup.

These specific bills will be considered:

- [Senate Resolution 207](#) (Vance-R-Cumberland) urging DEP to place a nine month moratorium on implementation of the Chesapeake Bay Tributary Strategy; and

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- [House Resolution 382](#) (Frankel-D-Allegheny) urging Congress to reauthorize the Abandoned Mine Reclamation Fund.

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

House Committee Sets Meeting on Greenhouse Gas Emissions

The House Environmental Resources and Energy Committee has scheduled a meeting on January 11 to discuss greenhouse gas emissions and climate change.

The January 11 meeting will be held at the Springfield Township Building in Delaware County and will feature a presentation by Dr. Richard Alley of Penn State University on the science of climate change, Dr. Adam Rose, also from Penn State, on state responses to greenhouse gas emissions and Ms. Joy Bergey of the Pennsylvania Interfaith Climate Change Campaign.

The House Committee is chaired by Rep. Bill Adolph (R-Delaware) and Rep. Bud George (D-Clearfield).

Senate/House Set Tentative Budget Hearing Schedule

The Governor's Budget Address and Senate and House Appropriations Committee hearings on agency budget proposals for 2006-07 are just around the corner. Here's the tentative schedule right now—

February 7 -

Governor's Budget Address

February 23 -

3:00 p.m. – House Budget Hearing: Department of Conservation & Natural Resources

February 27 -

2:30 p.m. – House Budget Hearing: Department of Environmental Protection

February 28 -

1:00 p.m. – House Budget Hearing: Department of Agriculture

March 1 -

9:00 a.m. – Senate Budget Hearing: Department of Conservation and Natural Resources

1:15 p.m. – Senate Budget Hearing: Department of Agriculture

March 9 -

1:15 p.m. – Senate Budget Hearing: Department of Environmental Protection

Environmental Synopsis Features Forestry Task Force, Stormwater, MTBE Issues

The December issue of the Environmental Synopsis published by the [Joint Legislative Air and Water Pollution Control and Conservation Committee](#) features an article on the upcoming work of the Forestry Task Force by chairman Rep. Scott Hutchinson (R-Venango).

It also includes articles on stormwater management, banning the use of MTBE, Great Lakes Water Quality Standards and the value of urban forests.

[Environmental Synopsis](#) is available online.

In Other News

CHEMSWEEP Offers Free, Safe Way to Dispose of Pesticide Products

Agribusinesses throughout Pennsylvania can safely dispose of unwanted pesticide products through the Department of Agriculture's CHEMSWEEP Program, the only free, safe and legal way to dispose of waste pesticides.

"Since CHEMSWEEP began in 1992, 1.5 million pounds of unwanted pesticides have been collected at no cost to the taxpayer," Agriculture Secretary Dennis Wolff said. "Before this program, there was not an appropriate way to dispose of most pesticides, and they would often sit on shelves for years. This resource is essential in our efforts to help preserve the environment."

Nineteen counties were selected to serve as collections sites for 2006 including Bedford, Blair, Bradford, Cameron, Centre, Clinton, Crawford, Fayette, Franklin, Greene, Juniata, Mercer, Monroe, Northampton, Perry, Pike, Potter, Schuylkill and Westmoreland.

Growers of any agricultural commodity and licensed pesticide applicators in agribusinesses and commercial enterprises from the designated counties are eligible to become collection sites by completing the CHEMSWEEP form.

CHEMSWEEP is funded through annual pesticide registration fees, paid by pesticide manufacturers. Participation in the program is free for the first 2,000 pounds; those disposing of waste pesticides exceeding 2,000 pounds will be billed by the Department of Agriculture.

Forms and additional information are available on the [CHEMSWEEP webpage](#).

New Commercial Manure Hauler/Broker Certification to Take Effect

The Department of Agriculture reminded commercial manure haulers and brokers that new certification requirements will take effect February 26.

The Commercial Manure Hauler and Broker Certification Law (Act 49 of 2004) requires that all owners and employees of a commercial hauler, applicator or broker firm be certified. The law also provides new requirements for concentrated animal operations (CAOs) and concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFOs).

The Department of Agriculture and the Pennsylvania State University's Cooperative Extension will facilitate educational programs to certify all applicators, brokers and haulers. Training and subject matter will be similar to the voluntary Manure Hauler Certification Program currently administered by the extension offices, but will incorporate modifications to comply with Act 49.

Depending on the certification level required, training will be available in a classroom setting or through a workbook developed by the Department. All commercial manure haulers and brokers will be required to take an examination as part of the training and certification process.

Classroom training opportunities will be offered on the following dates and locations beginning at 8 a.m., with the examination being offered at 4 p.m. Pre-registration is strongly recommended.

- Jan. 25 – Leesport, Berks County Agricultural Center
- Jan. 30 – Leesport, Berks County Agricultural Center (Exam only – 9 a.m.)

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- Jan. 31 – Indiana, Rustic Lodge
- Feb. 1 – Meadville, Crawford Cooperative Extension office
- Feb. 3 – Indiana, Indiana Cooperative Extension office (Exam only – 9 a.m.)
- Feb. 7 – Meadville, Crawford Cooperative Extension office (Exam only – 9 a.m.)
- Feb. 8 – Lancaster, Lancaster County Farm and Home Center
- Feb. 9 – Williamsport, Holiday Inn
- Feb. 15 – Lancaster, Lancaster County Farm and Home Center (Exam only – 9 a.m.)
- Feb. 16 – Quarryville, Solanco Fairgrounds
- Feb. 17 – Shippensburg, Premier Events
- Feb. 17 – Montoursville, Dept. of Agriculture, Region 2 office (Exam only – 9 a.m.)
- Feb. 23 – Carlisle, Cumberland Cooperative Extension office (Exam only – 9 a.m.)

Concentrated animal operations, concentrated animal feeding operations and voluntary participants exporting manure from their operation must also comply with new regulations, such as:

- Utilizing a certified hauler or broker for the transport and land application of manure exported from their operation;
- Providing a nutrient balance sheet to those farms importing manure for land application; and
- Maintaining export, transport and land application records of manure used at an importing operation.

For more information, visit the [Commercial Manure Hauler and Broker Certification Program webpage](#) or contact the Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Plant Industry at 717-787-3568 or 717-772-5218.

Pennsylvania Farm Show Offsets CO₂ Through Local Methane Project

This year's [Pennsylvania Farm Show](#) will offset its total carbon emissions by purchasing energy from a Pennsylvania family dairy farm methane energy project operated by [NativeEnergy](#). You can do your part too at the Farm Show through the CoolDriver program.

Energy to heat the Pennsylvania Farm Show Complex and power lights and equipment comes from fossil fuel sources, which means energy for the Farm Show will also produce about 298 tons of carbon dioxide (CO₂) pollution.

Show organizers, in cooperation with the Departments of Agriculture and Environmental Protection have arranged for clean energy from a Pennsylvania dairy farm methane project to be put onto the grid to offset the global warming impact of energy used to power the Show. The impact will be the same as powering the Show with renewable energy or taking more than 2,580 cars off the road for a week.

"The Commonwealth is actually contributing directly to the construction of new renewable energy generators here in Pennsylvania, so this is truly a win-win-win situation for Pennsylvania, the family farms, and the environment," says Native Energy President & CEO Tom Boucher.

The major source of farm show-related CO₂ will come from travel activities, is designed to help drivers follow the Farm Show's lead and neutralize emissions generated by their trucks, SUVs, cars, buses, and trailers.

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NativeEnergy's first on farm methane-generated electricity project is located on the [Schrack Family Dairy Farm](#) near Loganton, Pennsylvania.

While at the Farm Show, drivers can offset the CO2 from 500 miles of driving for \$5 through CoolDriver, a new program from renewable energy company [NativeEnergy](#) and nonprofit partner Clean Air - Cool Planet. Contributions support new Pennsylvania family dairy farm methane projects and the Chesapeake Bay Foundation's Save the Bay campaign fund.

PA Farm Bureau Hosts Alternative Energy Forum at Farm Show

The Pennsylvania Farm Bureau will host an alternative energy forum at the Farm Show in Harrisburg on January 12.

The forum will feature four speakers--

10:00 a.m. – Ethanol – Scott Welsh, Penn-Mar Corporation.

10:30 a.m. – Wind Power – Brian Cocca, Community Energy Inc.

11:00 a.m. – Soydiesel – Dan Sharrer, Soy Energy.

11:30 a.m. – Anerobic Manure Digestion – Robb Meinen, Penn State Extension.

The forum will be held in Conference Room B of the State Farm Show Complex which is upstairs in the Main Hall.

Renewable Agricultural Energy Council Outlines Projects

The [Governor's Renewable Agricultural Energy Council](#) outlined a series of projects it would like to undertake this year as well as organized into six subcommittees.

Among the projects for this year are: developing model methane digesters for farms of varying sizes, inventorying successful renewable energy projects/operations, creating a library of proven technologies and business models, developing a comprehensive list of funding sources, forming a buyer/seller consortium for biodiesel products and becoming active in supporting local agricultural renewable energy projects around the state.

The agency updates during the meeting included one from the Natural Resource Conservation Service which said they still have funding available for projects like on-farm digesters, soy oil extraction, geothermal and other renewable energy production under [Section 9006 of the federal Farm Bill](#). ([Click here](#) for PA contact information.)

Environmental Protection Secretary Kathleen McGinty reported on efforts to implement the Alternative Energy Portfolio Standard, activities of the PA Energy Development Authority and noted that DEP supports state legislation to ban the gasoline additive MTBE, in part, to will help create new markets for biofuel products like ethanol in Pennsylvania.

Agriculture Secretary Dennis Wolff noted that this year's Farm Show in Harrisburg will feature a special [Pennsylvania Energy Harvest display](#) that will educate farmers and the public about native sources of renewable energy and help to connect companies interested in generating energy on farms with the farmers who can provide those resources.

The next meeting of the Council is expected to be in March.

PA Capacity to Produce BioDiesel Could be at 40 Million Gallons by End of 2006

The Department of Agriculture this week said two biodiesel plans are making final preparations to produce their products -- Keystone BioFuels in Shiremanstown and Agra Biofuels LLC in Middletown.

Keystone has converted the former Quaker Oats factory in Shiremanstown to produce 1 million gallons of biodiesel a year.

The \$2 million facility, built with Hawaii-based Pacific Biodiesel as a strategic partner, will use virgin soy oil originating mostly from Pennsylvania farmers as feedstock.

The plant has existing rail access, but most of the product is expected to be sold locally to Independence Biofuels Inc., which along with affiliated heating oil marketer Worley & Obetz, opened a 30,000 gal/day in-line blending system for direct blending of biodiesel with heating oil. The system was set up at the Highspire terminal near Middletown on the Buckeye Pipeline.

Currently, Independence Biofuels brings in the equivalent of about 1 million gal/yr of biodiesel from out-of-state producers as far away as Iowa to fulfill its biodiesel needs.

Agra Biofuels LLC anticipates its new Middletown plant should be up and running this month with a capacity to produce about 3 million gallons per year.

These and other Pennsylvania projects are expected to bring online enough capacity to produce 40 million gallons of biodiesel fuel a year by the end of 2006, according to the Department of Environmental Protection.

Water Resources Education Network Grant Applications Due April 3

The Water Resources Education Network of the League of Women Voters is now accepting [applications for source water and watershed protection grants](#) of up to \$5,000 per project through April 3.

Partnerships of local or regional organizations in Pennsylvania such as watershed associations, civic groups, community water systems, governmental entities (including municipal authorities), and other public interest organizations are eligible.

Educational projects that raise awareness about protecting the community's drinking water source and/or preventing nonpoint source pollution in the watershed that provides local government involvement and encourage behavior change may be funded.

For more information, visit the [WREN Grant webpage](#) or send email to wren@pa.lwv.org or call 800 692-7281 ext 10.

EPA Publishes Handbook for Developing Watershed Plans

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency this week published a draft version of its [Handbook for Developing Watershed Plans](#) for public comment.

Comments are due June 30 and should be addressed to watershedhandbook@epa.gov.

EPA is making this draft document widely available with the purpose of having it used and tested by a variety of watershed partnerships, whose advice will be considered in developing the final version.

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The 414-page handbook is designed to take the user through each step of the watershed planning process: watershed monitoring and assessment, community outreach, selection and application of available models, best management practices, effectiveness data bases, implementation, feedback and plan adjustment.

The handbook is intended to supplement existing watershed planning guides that have been developed by agencies, universities, and other nonprofit organizations. This handbook is more specific than other guides about quantifying existing pollutant loads, developing estimates of the load reductions required to meet water-quality standards, developing effective management measures, and tracking progress once the plan is implemented.

[The draft Handbook is available online](#). Free copies are also available from the National Service Center for Environmental Publications (EPA 841-B-05-005) by calling 800-490-9198 or e-mail ncepimal@one.net.

DEP Publishes Final TMDLs for 62 Watersheds in 25 Counties

The Department of Environmental Protection this week [published notice](#) it has finalized Total Maximum Daily Load plans for 62 watersheds in 25 counties (*PA Bulletin page 77*).

Here's a list of the TMDLs finalized by county location—

Montour Run - Allegheny	Kratzer Run - Clearfield
Moon Run - Allegheny	Anderson Creek - Clearfield
Raccoon Creek - Allegheny/Beaver/Washington	Amos Branch - Clinton
Burgetts Creek - Allegheny/Beaver/Washington	Birch Island Run - Clinton
Limestone Run - Armstrong	Little Birch Island Run - Clinton
Huskins Run - Armstrong	Middle Branch Big Run - Clinton
Long Valley Run - Bradford	Daguschahonda Run - Elk
Seaton Creek - Butler	Iron Run - Elk
Blacks Creek - Butler	UNT Trout Run - Elk
Spring Run - Cambria	Dents Run - Elk/Cameron
Bens Creek - Cambria	Newmyer Run - Fayette
Elk Creek - Cambria	Aylesworth Creek - Lackawanna
Brubaker Run WS - Cambria	Powderly Creek - Lackawanna
S Br Blacklick Creek - Cambria/Indiana	Wilson Creek - Lackawanna
Logway Run - Centre	Lackawanna River -
Sterling Run - Centre	Lackawanna/Luzerne/Susquehanna/Wayne
North Fork Beech Creek - Centre	Otter Run - Lycoming
McGourvey Run - Clarion	Mill Creek - Schuylkill
Big Run - Clearfield	Muddy Branch Creek - Schuylkill
Surveyor Run WS - Clearfield	W Branch Schuylkill River - Schuylkill
Little Surveyor Run - Clearfield	Cucumber Run WS - Somerset
Curleys Run - Clearfield	Oven Run - Somerset
Deer Creek - Clearfield	Loyalsock Creek - Sullivan/Lycoming
Woods Run (Moose Run) - Clearfield	Tioga River - Tioga
Grimes Run - Clearfield	Brush Creek - Westmoreland
Hartshorn Run - Clearfield	McCune Run - Westmoreland
Lick Run - Clearfield	Getty Run - Westmoreland
Fork Creek - Clearfield	Monestary Run - Westmoreland
North Branch Upper Morgan Run - Clearfield	Fourmile Run - Westmoreland
North Camp Run - Clearfield	Saxman Run - Westmoreland
Sanbourn Run - Clearfield	Union Run - Westmoreland
Little Anderson Creek - Clearfield	

For more copies of the final TMDLs, visit the [DEP TMDL webpage](#) or contact Dorothy Harris by sending email to: doharris@state.pa.us or calling 717-772-5807.

Fish & Boat Commission Accepting Applications for Boating Facilities Grants

The Fish and Boat Commission is encouraging county and municipal governments interested in the planning, acquisition, development, expansion, or rehabilitation of public boating facilities to apply for funding through the [Boating Facility Grant Program](#).

Applications are due June 30.

The program is designed to help local governments provide or improve public recreational boat access facilities in their communities that are open and available for general public use. Private businesses, non-profit, not-for-profit organizations and service clubs are not eligible for direct funding but are encouraged to partner with their local government for funding.

Applicants can seek grants for site acquisition, project design and engineering, development, expansion and major rehabilitation of recreational boat access facilities. Activities must benefit and directly support public recreational boating.

Eligible projects must be constructed on public lands owned in “fee simple” by the project sponsor or where ownership is less than fee simple interest, ownership rights must provide for permanent control of the property commensurate with the proposed development.

Eligible construction projects include: boat ramps, courtesy floats, restrooms, access roads, parking areas, landscaping in direct relation to access development, transient tie-up floats, and signs.

Successful applicants must agree to provide a 25 percent grant match and be willing to enter into a long-term agreement to keep the facility open to free public use for its useful life. The PFBC will give priority funding consideration to applicants that provide more than the required 25 percent match, thereby reducing the total amount of grant funds required to complete the project.

For more information, visit the [Boating Facility Grant Program webpage](#).

Susquehanna Smallmouth Bass Symposium January 21

The Fish and Boat Commission is inviting anglers and others with an interest in the management of [smallmouth bass](#) in the Susquehanna River to a free public meeting beginning at 1 p.m. January 21 at agency’s headquarters, 1601 Elmerton Avenue in Harrisburg.

The symposium will touch upon subjects such as fish disease, fish population monitoring results, trends in consumptive water use and water quality trends.

In addition to presentations from PFBC fisheries biologists, speakers will include representatives from the Department of Environmental Protection, the Susquehanna River Basin Commission and the United States Geological Survey. A question and answer session will follow the formal presentations.

Smallmouth bass have long been the most prized gamefish in the Susquehanna River and the waterway is widely regarded as one of the top – if not the best – riverine

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smallmouth fisheries in the nation. Public interest in issues related to smallmouth bass management in the river was heightened in the summer of 2005 when biologists and anglers noted unusual numbers of distressed or dead juvenile smallmouth in various locations throughout the Susquehanna watershed.

The PFBC concluded the affected fish were suffering from Columnaris disease, an infection related to a common soil and water bacteria *Flavobacterium columnare* (columnaris). Columnaris disease is considered a secondary infection brought on by environmental or nutritional factors that stress fish, weakening their ability to cope with the bacterial agent.

Since the announcement that it had pinpointed the type of fish disease affecting young smallmouth, the PFBC has been working with partner agencies like DEP, USGS and SRBC to look at factors such as river flow, weather trends and general water quality issues that, combined, may have contributed to the higher-than-usual occurrence of Columnaris in juvenile smallmouth. The Commission also has compiled additional data related to young-of-the-year smallmouth abundance and long-term trends for adult populations. These subjects will be the focal points of the public meeting.

Because of an expected high interest, those who desire to attend the event are being asked to [pre-register online](#) at the PFBC's website or by calling 717-705-7810.

Invasive Species Program Set for March 15 at Shippensburg University

“Containing Invasives: Closing Pandora” is the theme for the March 15 annual environmental conference sponsored by DCNR's Kings Gap Environmental Education and Training Center and Shippensburg University.

Invasive species are wreaking havoc as they displace natives and compromise the biodiversity of our state, country, and planet. Increased travel and expansion in global trade are the main culprits in the rapidly escalating rate of invasion, with costs being high.

The early registration fee of \$30 will include lunch, break, and all registration materials. Full-time students may register for \$15.

For registration information, contact Kings Gap at 717-486-3799 or e-mail kingsgapsp@state.pa.us.

Manufactured Soils Conference February 22-23 in State College

The Professional Recyclers of PA and the Penn State Cooperative Extension Service are holding the [fourth annual Pennsylvania Manufactured Soils Conference](#) in State College on February 22 and 23.

This year's theme is “Building Soils for Water Quality Enhancement.”

The program includes five workshop sessions on these topics: manufactured soils for water quality improvement at the watershed scale, policy & regulation, the science of manufactured soils, marketing and economics and manufactured soils and integrated water management.

For more information, download the [fourth annual Pennsylvania Manufactured Soils Conference brochure](#).

DEP Citizens Advisory Council Publishes Winter Newsletter

The Citizens Advisory Council to the Department of Environmental Protection this week published its [winter 2005 newsletter](#).

The newsletter chronicles Council actions over the last year to take positions or offer comments on a variety of issues—nutrient trading, mercury emissions, Act 54 mine subsidence program, new source air quality review and the clean vehicles program.

The Council also invited local environmental groups to update their listings in the state's Conservation Directory.

[The newsletter is available online.](#)

Fish and Boat Commission Looking for Board of Director Candidates

The Governor's Advisory Council for Hunting, Fishing and Conservation this week announced it is looking for a qualified candidate to serve on the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission's District 6 board of directors, which is comprised of Adams, Cumberland, Dauphin, Franklin, Lancaster, Lebanon, Perry and York counties.

Applications will be accepted until February 3.

The qualified candidate will serve an eight-year term and replace Howard E. Pflugfelder of New Cumberland, Cumberland County, whose term expires next month.

Candidates will first interview with the fish and boat subcommittee of the advisory council and will be rated not only on responses, but also on both professional and volunteer experiences with fishing, boating, stream restoration and other conservation activities. Gov. Rendell will select the final candidate. The Senate must confirm the Governor's nominee.

All commissioners serve without compensation, but do receive travel reimbursement.

Anyone interested in applying should send a resume and detailed cover letter to Robb Miller, Governor's Advisory Council for Hunting, Fishing and Conservation, Rachel Carson State Office Building, 400 Market St., 7th Floor, P.O. Box 8767, Harrisburg, Pa. 17106-8767.

Feature

Urban Oasis: The Overbrook Environmental Education Center

By Linda Dottor, [Community Design Collaborative](#)

Most entrepreneurs sizing up a former quarry near 61st Street and Lancaster Avenue saw strip retail in its future. But not Jerome Shabazz, Executive Director of JASTECH Development Services.

He envisioned the scrubby brownfield site as the Overbrook Environmental Education Center—complete with native plantings, outdoor biology labs, and “green” architecture.



Jerome Shabazz, Executive Director of JASTECH Development Services

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“Most environmental centers are in parks or natural areas. This one will be on a commercial corridor—you can’t get any more urban than that!” he says.

JASTECH is entering its third year of teaching environmental studies at Overbrook High School using a curriculum inspired by Overbrook’s natural history, development patterns, and industrial past.

The Overbrook Environmental Education Center is the next step in JASTECH’s efforts to change how urban kids view their surroundings.

Shabazz says, “I like to use the term “oasis”, particularly for children. The center will be a refuge from the harsh texture and grit of an urban environment and offer a different environment that expands their imaginations. It will demonstrate what the area was originally like... and teach urban dwellers that you too can become a catalyst for creating more spaces like this.”

A “Green” Environmental Education Center

After Shabazz acquired the quarry site, he approached the Community Design Collaborative for preliminary design assistance.

The Collaborative organizes volunteers from the design professions to provide pro bono preliminary design services to nonprofit organizations in greater Philadelphia.



Shabazz wanted to explore the potential for a LEED-certified environmental center.

“LEED” stands for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, a building rating system that promotes sustainable design and construction. Projects can earn credits—and a Silver, Gold, or Platinum certification—by conserving natural resources and improving the environment through choice of location and development practices, water and energy usage, and building materials.

The Collaborative’s multidisciplinary project team developed a series of alternatives and quickly ruled out one alternative—renovating an existing building as the permanent home for the environmental education center. The mechanical system was not efficient enough to salvage, the footprint did not meet the long-term needs of the teaching program, and the structure could not support a green roof.

Michael J. Paul, a structural engineer volunteering on the project, recalls, “You primarily gain LEED credits from materials and the use of resources. Reuse of the building would have yielded the largest number of credits, but was not ultimately the best decision.”

The volunteer team moved on to “Plan B.” Volunteers Todd Woodward and Tavis Dockwiler worked closely on conceptual designs for the new building and site improvements.

“The natural environment and built environment, when sustainable design is done well, are integrated,” explains Woodward. Conceptual plans for the two-acre site include a new environmental education center, an existing building to be leased as retail or office space, off-street parking, outdoor bio-labs and restored natural areas.

Built-In Learning Opportunities

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Both the center and the site incorporate built-in opportunities for children and adults to learn about sustainability.

Students will study the heat island effect by comparing temperatures on the center's green roof with conventional roofing or measuring stormwater runoff from different parts of the parking lot, which will be surfaced with a combination of porous pavers and asphalt.

The wooded slope at the back of the site will be restored with multiple layers of native plantings to teach homeowners about native landscapes and offer new models for landscaping backyards or community gardens.

Shabazz even sees the construction of the center as a learning opportunity. Kids will observe the nuts and bolts of development process—soil work, reclamation work, and survey work. “Sometimes we look at the goal, but I look at the process—whether the process itself is meaningful and tells us something about where we are going,” he says.

Next Steps

The Collaborative's volunteers set JASTECH on the right path, and also helped Shabazz establish relationships with firms who could help him move forward. Following the Collaborative's preliminary design assistance, JASTECH hired Rolf Sauer & Associates and Susan Maxman & Partners for additional services; each firm had staff members on the Collaborative's volunteer team.

Rolf Sauer and Associates and F. X. Browne, Inc. are currently providing design development and construction documentation for Phase 1: a bio-retention system for the courtyard/parking area, an urban garden on the slope at the rear of the site, a green roof, and outdoor bio-labs in the six concrete storage bins left over from the site's quarry days.

Shabazz expects to put the project out to bid this fall.

The work is being funded in part through grants from the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection's Growing Greener Fund and the US Environmental Protection Agency.

The following organizations also provided technical assistance and grants to develop JASTECH's curriculum and environmental education center: Architects in Education Program, Fairmount Park Commission, Friends Central School, National Forestry Department, Overbrook High School, Penn State Cooperative Extension, Pennsylvania Coastal Zone Management Program, Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, Philadelphia Commerce Department, Brownfield Redevelopment Program, Philadelphia Water Department, Office of Watersheds US Environmental Protection Agency, White Dog Café, and the New Profiteers Business Plan Project.

Volunteers on the project include: Todd Woodward, AIA, Architect, Susan Maxman & Partners; Erin Powers, Intern Architect: Susan Maxman & Partners; Tavis Dockwiller, Landscape Architect, Rolf Sauer and Associates; Michael Paul, PE, Structural Engineer, Thornton-Tomasetti Group; Dean Sherwin, Cost Estimator CCM; Ted Dillon, Energy Analyst, Scott Wagner, Energy Analyst both from the Energy Coordinating Agency.

Jerome Shabazz can be contacted by sending email to: jgshabazz@aol.com or by calling 215-519-8532.

Quick Clips

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

[Outdoors: Children Need to Learn About Nature](#)
[Conservancy Group in Marshall Renamed to Reflect Role](#)
[Reading Wildlife](#)
[Audubon Isn't Just for the Birds](#)
[Somerset District Considers Green Energy - Populars](#)
[Media Library Installs Solar Panels](#)
[Farm is Cultivating a Frying Plan](#)
[January is National Radon Action Month](#)
[State Ends Relocation Program for Centralia Mine Fire Victims](#)
[19 Hospitals Agree to Distribute Radon Test Kits](#)
[Surveillance Cameras Catch Litterbugs in the Act](#)
[SAVE Students Sponsor Tree/Cardboard Recycling Program](#)
[Lake Erie Allegheny Earth Force Students Making a Difference](#)

Watershed NewsClips

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

[Trout Unlimited Looks to Reel in Permit for Treatment System](#)
[Partnering for Pollution Cleanup on Loyalhanna](#)
[EPA's New Proposed Wet Weather Policy for Wastewater Discharges](#)

Regulations

No new regulations published this week.

[Pennsylvania Bulletin – January 7, 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 this week [published a notice](#) extending the comment period on a proposed policy on the reuse of treated wastewater.

Draft: DEP ID: 362-0300-009. Reuse of Treated Wastewater Guidance Manual. The comment period for draft technical guidance document #362-0300-009, originally

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advertised at 35 Pa.B. 6835 (December 17, 2005), is extended from January 17, 2006, to March 17, 2006. This manual provides guidance to domestic sewage treatment plant operators and other parties who are interested in implementing a beneficial wastewater reuse project.

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

- [DEP's Annual schedule of board and advisory committee meetings for 2006](#)
- [No Cost Environmental Training Courses Online January/February](#)
- **January 9** – [DCNR Snowmobile and ATV Advisory Committee](#) meeting Room 105 Rachel Carson Building, Harrisburg. 9:00.
- **January 10** – [Invasive Species Presentation](#) – PA Sea Grant Lake Erie. Presque Isle State Park, Erie.
- **January 10** – [Southwest PA Air Quality Partnership annual meeting](#). Pittsburgh.
- **January 11** – House Environmental Resources & Energy Committee informational meeting on [greenhouse gas emissions and climate change](#). Springfield, Delaware County.
- **January 11** – [PA Energy Development Authority](#) meeting (rescheduled from December 16) Room 105 Rachel Carson Building, Harrisburg. 10:00 a.m.
- **January 12** – Forestry Task Force Meeting (Joint Legislative Conservation Committee) in State College.
- **January 13** – NRCS [Know Your Soils Using Web Soil Survey Net and Audio Conference](#).
- **January 17** – **CANCELLED**. Environmental Quality Board meeting.
- **January 19** – [Rachel Carson Forum on Nutrient and Sediment Credit Trading](#).
- **January 19** – Green Building Association of Central Pennsylvania “[Escape Cabin Fever Reception and Seminar](#)” Harrisburg.
- **January 23** – Mid-Atlantic Renewable Energy Coalition presents Judy Wicks, founder White Dog Café, on Local Living Economics, 3:00, Glasbern Inn, Fogelsville. Info: Julie Thomases, jthomases@yahoo.com
- **January 24** – Senate Environmental Resources & Energy Committee meets to consider consider the re-appointment of Michael L. Krancer to the Environmental Hearing Board and [Senate Resolution 207](#) (Vance-R-Cumberland) urging DEP to place a nine month moratorium on implementation of the Chesapeake Bay Tributary Strategy and [House Resolution 382](#) (Frankel-D-Allegheny) urging Congress to reauthorize the Abandoned Mine Reclamation Fund in Room 8E-A, 9:30.

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- **January 24** – House Environmental Resources & Energy Committee informational meeting on [energy policy](#).
- **January 31** – Senate Environmental Resources & Energy Committee hearing on legislation modernizing Pennsylvania’s deep mine safety law.

[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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