

— PA — Environment Digest

*An Update on
Environmental
Issues in
Pennsylvania*

Edited By David E. Hess, Holston & Crisci

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Senate, House Open 2005-06 Session, Growing Greener Priority

The Senate and House kicked off their 2005-06 legislative session this week with formal swearing in ceremonies and receptions for family, friends and supporters.

House Majority Leader Sam Smith (R-Jefferson) repeated the commitment of House Republicans to continue funding for the original Growing Greener program and to make sure the Green Ribbon Commission fulfills its mission of “assessing the state’s environmental programs and examining funding options.”

A new environmental initiative – an Environmental Program Accountability Act—is also to be introduced to strengthen the state’s recycling program and encourage further pollution control efforts, according to Smith.

House Minority Leader Bill DeWeese (D-Greene) and Minority Whip Mike Veon (D-Beaver) put out their priorities for the session in the form of New Year’s resolutions and included environmental funding at the top of their list--

“We resolve to continue our efforts to get the common-sense environmental and economic development standards of Growing Greener II signed into law. It is vital that we repair the damage done in the past and guarantee clean water and breathable air now and for future generations.”



Gov. Rendell orders state flags at half mast to remember [tsunami victims](#).

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On the Hill

Growing Greener Bond Won't Lead to Hazardous Sites Cleanup Fund Solution

A Republican leader in the House of Representatives took his turn this week to be critical of the way the Rendell Administration is talking about the need to shore up the Hazardous Sites Cleanup Fund. It was followed late Friday with a response from House Democrats.

In a memo to House members, Majority Leader Sam Smith (R-Jefferson) said, "There appears to be much confusion regarding the history and the fate of the Hazardous Sites Cleanup Fund (HSCA). For instance, even (over the fundamental point that) the approval of a Growing Greener Bond Issue won't lead to more funding for HSCA."

Smith's memo follows similar letters written by Senators Mary Jo White and Chip Brightbill raising concerns in December ([PaED 12/20/04](#)) in response to statements made by DEP Secretary Kathleen McGinty ([PEDigest 12/13/04](#)).

The Smith memo said in part--

"Last year, we proposed including \$10 million in the state budget for the HSCA Fund. This appropriation was removed at the insistence of the governor's budget secretary.

"The administration has reported numerous and wildly varying "ending balances" for the fund over the past several months. However, DEP Secretary Kathleen McGinty has recently stated that the expected ending balance of the fund is now a deficit of \$14 million.

"It appears that DEP's regional directors are calling House and Senate offices to let legislators know which Hazardous Sites Cleanup Fund (HSCA) sites will be affected

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by the apparent lack of money available in the fund. The administration is further raising fear in communities by saying that toxic sites won't be cleaned up, as reported by the *Bucks County Courier Times* last week: 'All active hazardous waste cleanup projects across the state would be put on hold, or scheduled to end at some point next year, according to the Department of Environmental Protection.'

"(As an aside, not surprisingly they seem to be trying to place blame for the situation on the legislature, specifically Republicans.)

"The governor wants an unfunded HSCA for leverage in his attempt to force a vote for his additional fee of \$5 on municipal solid waste, \$4 per ton on residual waste and a 15 cent fee on emissions listed on the natural Toxic Release Inventory. The administration wants this money, along with an \$800 million bond to fund the Growing Greener program.

"You know as well as I do that these collections will invariably be passed on to already overburdened taxpayers and consumers.

"The majority of hazardous industrial site cleanups are completed using private sector dollars. Under Act 2 (Brownfields), developers use large amounts of private money to clean up these sites to turn them back into productive use. DEP has consistently muddied these waters. HSCA deals with sites that are abandoned, or the owners are bankrupt and cannot pay, or become emergencies for one reason or another. Don't be confused about the definition of what qualifies to be covered under HSCA.

"In truth, even if the Growing Greener ballot question had been presented and approved last November, nothing would be done to enhance the HSCA Fund. The governor's proposal for spending the huge loan does NOT include funding for HSCA.

"The HSCA funding would come from revenue generated from Governor Rendell's desired tax increases on homeowners and businesses; therefore, funding for HSCA, from whatever source, could easily be considered separately from the bond issue. They are linked only in the mind(s) of this administration, not by any legal considerations. HSCA was never a part of Growing Greener. Watch out for the "it's not broke so let's fix it" philosophy.

"By the administration's own admission as the debt service on the bond increases, the transfer of monies to the HSCA fund will diminish and eventually disappear. So even their own "solution" is not a long-term solution.

"The governor has the ability to promptly transfer funds so that emergency relief for communities facing contaminated sites can begin. Anticipating the possibility of HSCA funds being depleted, Act 89 of 2002 gives the governor authority to transfer approximately \$34 million to the HSCA Fund if the expected ending balance falls below \$5 million."

In their memo, House Democratic Leader Bill DeWeese (D-Greene) and Minority Whip Mike Veon (D-Beaver) pointed to testimony presented by DEP Secretary McGinty in June to the Green Ribbon Commission saying the Hazardous Sites Cleanup Fund was facing "financial ruin" and a deficit. "The continually updated estimates of the depth of the deficit are provided by the Comptroller's Office, not DEP."

[Note: In fact all these changing numbers of the Fund surplus or deficit were given out at one time or another. It has been difficult to pin down exactly what the deficit is for members of the General Assembly as all sides point out.]

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On the objection to calling members of the General Assembly about sites affected in their district, DeWeese and Veon said, "these sites are not new. Every member of the legislature was provided a briefing book with earlier versions of the sites as part of the information the administration provided -- at the General Assembly's request -- to help inform the legislature's proposed Green Ribbon Commission about the fund, created by the Hazardous Sites Cleanup Act. Individual legislators have expressed their appreciation to DEP for the extensive efforts to keep them fully apprised and not in the dark about these important developments in their districts."

On the issue of the Governor creating leverage, the Democratic Leaders said, " In fact, the Governor's Growing Greener II initiative is the only proposal that has been put on the table to address the HSCA crisis. Specifically, the governor's initiative provides \$20 million to HSCA from a fee on toxic releases and \$45 million on average from municipal and residual waste fees. Though proposed a year ago, Growing Greener II remains the only funding source. No competing proposal has been offered."

They also pointed out that no brownfields project can move forward in the state without staff in place to handle the paperwork, some of which is paid for by the Hazardous Sites Cleanup Fund.

DeWeese and Veon also said they thought the "trigger" that would allow the emergency transfer of funds to the Hazardous Sites Fund is "broken" as DEP has said in past testimony in the General Assembly.

On the point of transferring funds for Hazardous Sites Cleanup raised by the House Republicans and Democrats, Sen. Vincent Fumo, the Democratic Chair of the Senate Appropriations Committee, also weighed in on that issue saying he supported a transfer, along with Senate Republicans, to help deal with the crisis, [PaED 12/27/04](#). In addition, at last year's budget hearing, DEP was asked to provide language to fix the trigger for transferring money, but as of yet had not provided language.

In a separate report this week, the Rendell Administration announced state revenue collections are running [\\$252.3 million ahead of projections](#).

Ironically, all parties want to fix the problem of the Hazardous Sites Cleanup Fund running out of money, they just have to figure out how-- one-year transfer, temporary fees on toxic emissions, higher fees on hazardous waste, permanent General Fund support or some combination. Meanwhile DEP employees and other projects hang in the balance with the choices made by the Administration and General Assembly.

The bottomline is expect more back and forth on this issue.

Senate Environmental Committee Takes Shape for New Session

Sen. Ray Musto (D-Luzerne) was named this week as the Minority Chair of the Senate Environmental Resources and Energy Committee. He and Sen. Mary Jo White (R-Venango), who serves as Majority Chair, will again lead the Committee.

There was one change in Committee membership. Sen. Jay Costa (D-Allegheny) will replace Sen. Wozniak (D-Cambria) on the Committee.

The other members include Senator Erickson (R-Delaware) who serves as vice Chair, along with Senators Greenleaf (R-Montgomery), Pippy (R-Allegheny), Rhoades (R-Schuylkill), D. White (R-Indiana), Stout (D-Washington) and A. Williams (D-Philadelphia).

Zug Serves As Vice-Chairman of PA Delegation to Chesapeake Bay Commission

Rep. Peter Zug (R-Lebanon) has been re-elected as vice chairman of the Pennsylvania delegation to the [Chesapeake Bay Commission](#) for the new legislative session.

The Chesapeake Bay Commission is a tri-state legislative commission that advises the General Assemblies of Virginia, Maryland and Pennsylvania in cooperatively managing the Chesapeake Bay.

In 2004 legislation sponsored by Zug -- [House Bill 2775](#) , now Act 231– was signed into law by Gov. Rendell creating a Watershed Education Program within the Department of Education to provide grants to school districts and environmental education centers to support water education efforts.

In addition to his duties on the Pennsylvania delegation board, Zug will serve on the executive committee of the Chesapeake Bay Commission.

Since 1980, the commission has been a catalyst for a number of important advances in Chesapeake Bay preservation efforts. The commission has developed and implemented initiatives related to fisheries management, toxics reduction, land use, agricultural nutrient management, natural resource protection and nutrient-load reduction.

Freshmen Legislators Take Seats for First Time in Harrisburg and Congress

Seventeen Freshmen legislators took their seats for the first time in Harrisburg and Congress representing the people of Pennsylvania. They include, by district—

Congress

8-Michael G. Fitzpatrick – R; 13-Allyson Schwartz – D; and 15-Charles Dent – R

State Senate

31- Patricia H. Vance – R; and 39 – Bob Regola – R

State House

4- Curt Sonney- R; 11- Brian Ellis – R; 16- Sean M. Ramaley – D; 60- Jeff Pyle – R; 65- Kathy Rapp – R; 86- Mark Keller- R; 87- Glen R. Grell – R; 89- Bob Kauffman – R; 146- Thomas J. Quigley – R; 148- Mike Gerber – D; 153- Josh Shapiro – D; and 190- Thomas W. Blackwell – D.

There are three vacancies in the State Senate to be filled by special election: District 4 – formerly held by Schwartz (D) now a member of Congress; District 16 – formerly held by Dent (R) also a member of Congress; and District 42 – formerly held by Wagner (D) now Auditor General elect. No election date has been set.

There is one vacancy in the State House – District 189 – formerly held by Kelly Lewis who resigned his seat. A special election will be held in that district on February 8.

In Other News

2005 State Farm Show Features Riverwalk, Quecreek Rescue

The 89th [Pennsylvania Farm Show](#) gets underway in Harrisburg on January 8 and will last until the 15th.

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In addition to the livestock competitions, sheep to shawl contest, farm equipment and good eats at the food court, visitors can see a variety educational displays covering farm and environmental topics.

The Department of Environmental Protection will feature a [RiverWalk display](#) illustrating good watershed management practices. The Department of Conservation and Natural Resource, Fish & Boat Commission and Game Commission will all be there with lots of information to view and take home.

A special display of the rescue capsule and other equipment used during the 2002 Quecreek mine rescue in Somerset County will also be there courtesy of the [Quecreek Mine Rescue Foundation](#).

The rescue took place on Bill and Lori Arnold's dairy farm, which for a brief time, was the center of the [largest mine rescue operation in Pennsylvania's history](#).

EPA, States, DC Announce Chesapeake Bay Cleanup Agreement

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has reached agreement with six states and the District of Columbia on a permitting approach that will [set permit limits on nutrients](#) being discharged from more than 350 municipal and industrial wastewater treatment facilities throughout the 64,000-square-mile Chesapeake Bay watershed.

These permit limits would result in the reduction of about 17.5 million pounds of nitrogen and about one million pounds of phosphorus entering the Chesapeake Bay each year, which will directly help improve water quality.

“This is a pivotal step in the cleanup and protection of the Chesapeake Bay. EPA and the states have committed to making the Bay a healthy environment where plants, fish and other aquatic life can thrive and coexist with development,” said Donald S. Welsh, regional administrator for EPA's mid-Atlantic region.

The discharge of nutrients (nitrogen and phosphorous) from wastewater treatment is one of the most serious problems affecting the Chesapeake Bay. Excessive nutrients in the Bay cause algae blooms in the water, which leads to oxygen depletion and other adverse impacts on water quality. Excessive algae growth can also block sunlight that is critical to support plant and aquatic life.

States and EPA issue permits to all wastewater treatment facilities which regulate the amount of pollutants that can be discharged into waterways after treatment. The permitting approach announced today describes a consistent basin-wide approach to issue permits that include measurable and enforceable limits for nitrogen and phosphorus.

For years, permits have required nutrient removal to achieve localized water quality standards. However, the lack of science-based and achievable water quality standards for the Chesapeake Bay has made it difficult for the states and EPA to regulate nutrient reductions needed to protect the Bay.

EPA has been working with states for several years to develop a basin-wide strategy for these nutrient permit limits. This new strategy covers the entire 64,000-square-mile watershed, and describes how states and EPA plan to develop permit limits based on the living resource needs of the Bay. States participating in the strategy include Maryland, Virginia, Delaware, Pennsylvania, New York and West Virginia and the District of Columbia.

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The Chesapeake watershed already has 100 municipal and six industrial facilities treating wastewater with nutrient removal technology to remove excess nitrogen and phosphorus. No other watershed in the country has more treatment facilities using this technology. As the permitting strategy is implemented, EPA and the states expect the number of plants using nutrient removal technology would increase to more than 350.

A copy of the agreement is available on the [Mid-Atlantic State NPDES webpage](#).

NewsClips: [Discharge limits for Chesapeake announced](#)
[States Agree to Cut Nutrient Flow to Chesapeake Bay](#)

Study Confirms Watershed Approach to Water Quality Best In Southwest

A comprehensive, watershed-based approach is needed to effectively address water quality problems in southwestern Pennsylvania, says a new report from the [National Academies' National Research Council](#) (NRC) entitled, "[Regional Cooperation for Water Quality Improvement in Southwestern Pennsylvania](#)."

The report outlines a technical framework called the Three Rivers "Comprehensive Watershed Assessment and Response Plan" (CWARP) to deal with these problems, and suggests ways to better unify and coordinate the region's efforts. Currently, water planning and management in southwestern Pennsylvania is highly fragmented; federal and state governments, 11 counties, hundreds of municipalities, and other entities all play roles, but with little coordination or cooperation.

The NRC report affirmed the findings of the April 2002 report "[Investing in Clean Water](#)," compiled by the Southwestern Pennsylvania Water and Sewer Infrastructure Project Steering Committee, that documented the region's water quality issues.

The NRC study was commissioned by the [Allegheny Conference](#) at the request of the Steering Committee. The Richard King Mellon Foundation, the Heinz Endowments, and other area foundations provided the necessary financial support.

"Creating a cooperative regional effort will be challenging, but southwestern Pennsylvania's water planning issues need to be addressed on that scale, using a comprehensive approach that takes into account multiple uses, needs, and impacts, such as water supply, habitat protection, recreation, and future development," said Jerome Gilbert, chair of the committee that wrote the report, and a consulting engineer in Orinda, Calif. "The region's waters have long been an important asset, but for the area to reach its full potential in terms of recreational use of the rivers and riverbank development, it is important to clean up the waters further and meet standards for water quality."

The committee was asked to assess the region's water quality problems and recommend ways that multiple jurisdictions could work together to solve them.

The most pressing water quality problem with the potential to cause human health problems is microbial contamination from improperly managed human wastewater, says the report. In the region's main rivers -- the Allegheny, Monongahela, and Ohio -- stormwater and sewer overflows during wet weather appear to be the major contributors.

In many tributaries, microbial water quality does not meet standards even in dry weather, the report adds, which suggests contamination from failing septic systems. Livestock management practices in rural areas are likely adding pathogens to streams as well, though scarce data made it impossible to determine how much, the committee said.

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In addition to biological contaminants, acid drainage from abandoned coal mines continues to pollute area streams, though this water quality problem is broader than southwestern Pennsylvania and is being addressed by existing state and federal programs.

A pervasive lack of adequate data hampered the committee's ability to fully evaluate and prioritize the region's water quality problems and their adverse effects, the report says. For example, there is no evidence that southwestern Pennsylvania has experienced any recent disease outbreaks as a result of poor water quality, but significant gaps in public health monitoring prevented a thorough assessment. Efforts to collect more data on water problems -- and to use it to inform decisions and measure progress -- should be made as the region works to implement solutions, the committee said.

As a first step toward improving its waters, southwestern Pennsylvania should improve the use of its existing infrastructure. To this end, the committee strongly recommended that all of the watershed's wastewater collection systems comply with EPA's Capacity, Management, Operations, and Maintenance (CMOM) policy or a similar program.

The report's proposed approach should be used to plan and implement further improvements. CWARP's five-step framework could be used to identify and assess water problems, model their progression, formulate alternative strategies for addressing them, and implement strategies in an adaptive, flexible way. This will ensure that the region will get the most benefit from dollars invested in water quality improvement. The report explains in detail how CWARP could be implemented in southwestern Pennsylvania, but it could also be used as a model for other regions, as many of the problems and challenges addressed in this study can be found around the country.

In southwestern Pennsylvania's case, CWARP should be applied at each of four "scales": the river basin, the metropolitan (multicounty) region, rural areas, and the urban core. For each scale, the report suggests institutional structures to help unify the municipalities' various efforts to improve water quality. The Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission, for example, is probably the best choice to lead water planning for the metropolitan region. But that commission would need to broaden its representation, the committee said, and should establish a Three Rivers Regional Water Forum to include representatives from local governments, the private sector, academia, and environmental organizations -- in short, any group that would play some role in implementing CWARP.

The Allegheny County Sanitary Authority (ALCOSAN), which is largely responsible for managing wastewater for the City of Pittsburgh and 82 surrounding communities, should re-evaluate its draft long-term plan for controlling sewage and stormwater overflows, in light of the recently completed municipal consent orders initiated by EPA to enforce compliance with the Clean Water Act; ongoing negotiations regarding an ALCOSAN consent decree; compliance with CMOM; and information from CWARP as it is developed in the future.

The CWARP framework is recommended for the development of ALCOSAN's final control plan and similar documents because of the data limitations and technical and institutional complexities that exist in southwestern Pennsylvania, the committee said. ALCOSAN and other wastewater treatment providers should investigate decentralized and innovative alternatives such as storing and treating overflows at remote locations or in nearby abandoned mines -- as is currently being evaluated by the Township of Upper St. Clair. A first step toward any of these options would be development of a system for

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real-time control of overflows -- a method that uses software to monitor, model, and manage flows.

Financing water quality improvements will not be easy given the magnitude of the problems, the report acknowledges. In choosing among strategies yielded by the CWARD process, organizations should let cost-effectiveness be their primary guide.

NewsClip: [Consolidate Region's Sewage Management, Study Says Study Recommends Regional Approach in Southwest PA](#)

PennVEST Publishes Funding Priority List for Wastewater Projects

The Pennsylvania Infrastructure Investment Authority published its [2004-05 funding priority list](#) for wastewater projects [for public comment this week](#).

Comments on the priority list should be sent to the Administrative Services Section, Division of Municipal Financial Assistance, Bureau of Water Supply and Wastewater Management, 10th Floor, Rachel Carson State Office Building, P. O. Box 8466, Harrisburg, PA 17105-8466, (717) 787-6744, amaisano@state.pa.us .

No deadline was given for submitting comments.

Comments Invited on Proposed TMDLs in 10 Counties

Public comments were invited this week on total maximum daily load plans for watersheds in 10 counties across the state.

Aylesworth Creek, Lackawanna County: DEP and the Susquehanna River Basin Commission will hold a public meeting January 25 in Dickson City to discuss the proposed TMDL. Comments due March 9. Contact: Chuck Yingling, 717-783-2958.

Bear Run, Clearfield, Indiana and Jefferson Counties: DEP and the Susquehanna River Basin Commission will hold a public meeting February 7 in Rossiter to discuss the proposed TMDL. Comments due: March 9. Contact: Chuck Yingling, 717-783-2958.

Bens Creek Watershed, Cambria County: DEP will hold a public meeting January 18 in Portage to discuss the proposed TMDL. Comments due: March 9. Contact: Tom Pongrac, 814-472-1900 or tpongac@state.pa.us .

Curleys Run, Grimes Run and Sandy Creek, Clearfield County: DEP and the Susquehanna River Basin Commission will hold a public meeting February 2 in Karthouse to discuss the proposed TMDL. Comments due: March 9. Contact: Chuck Yingling, 717-783-2958.

Dents Run, Elk and Cameron Counties: DEP and the Susquehanna River Basin Commission will hold a public meeting February 3 in Benezette to discuss the proposed TMDL. Comments due: March 9. Contact: Chuck Yingling, 717-783-2958.

Grassy Island Creek, Lackawanna County: DEP and the Susquehanna River Basin Commission will hold a public meeting January 25 in Dickson City to discuss the proposed TMDL. Comments due: March 9. Contact: Chuck Yingling, 717-783-2958.

Lackawanna River, Lackawanna, Luzerne, Susquehanna and Wayne Counties: DEP and the Susquehanna River Basin Commission will hold a public meeting on January 25 in Dickson City to discuss the proposed TMDL. Comments due: March 9. Contact: Chuck Yingling, 717-783-2958.

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Lick Run, Clearfield County: DEP and the Susquehanna River Basin Commission will hold a public meeting on January 27 in Clearfield to discuss the proposed TMDL. Comments due: March 9. Contact: Chuck Yingling, 717-783-2958.

Powderly Creek, Lackawanna County: DEP and the Susquehanna River Basin Commission will hold a public meeting on January 25 in Dickson City to discuss the proposed TMDL. Comments due: March 9. Contact: Chuck Yingling, 717-783-2958.

Spring Run Watershed, Cambria County: DEP will hold a public meeting on January 18 in Portage to discuss the proposed TMDL. Comments due: March 9. Contact: Miles Baird, 814-472-1900 or email: mbaird@state.pa.us .

Wilson Creek, Lackawanna County: DEP and the Susquehanna River Basin Commission will hold a public meeting on January 25 in Dickson City to discuss the proposed TMDL. Comments due: March 9. Contact: Chuck Yingling, 717-783-2958

For more information and a copy of the proposed TMDLs, visit [DEP's TMDL webpage](#).

Scholarships Available for Watershed Protection Institute

The [Watershed Protection Institute \(WPI\)](#) is an intensive, interactive five day program designed to train watershed leaders on practical watershed and site planning techniques to protect the health of less developed watersheds. The next Institute will be March 28 - April 1 in Shepherdstown, WV.

For more information contact either Rebecca Winer or Chris Swan at 410-461-8323 or visit the [Watershed Protection Institute webpage](#). (*courtesy [Watershed Alliance of York County](#)*)

Chesapeake Bay Journal Unveils Updated Website

The [Chesapeake Bay Journal](#) unveiled a new website in December that makes it easier to read current news stories, find old ones and share articles with others.

The new site contains all of the material from the print edition and allows users to customize its appearance, including the size of the type, to make articles easier to read. In addition, new options allow people to get printer-friendly versions of material or to directly e-mail article links to friends from the web site.

When articles are displayed, they also contain links to related stories that appeared in earlier editions. And, an improved search engine does a better job of finding articles in the paper's 11-year database.

For the first time, the site gives people a chance to sign up to receive an e-mail notification when each new issue goes on line. People may continue to sign up online to receive the paper edition as well. They can also get both e-mail notification, and the print edition if they wish.

It also provides new opportunities for other web sites to display Bay Journal content by using its new "really simple syndication" feeds.

The site also contains an archive of Bay Journal Radio programs, which features interviews with newsmakers from around the Bay.

Wanted: Senior Volunteers Interested in Water Quality

The York County Senior Environment Corp is looking for volunteers to help with water monitoring in York County streams. Volunteers are also needed for education programs, publicity and other positions.

Water monitors spend 2 to 5 hours a month testing water of local wadeable streams. No prior experience is needed and all testing equipment and training are provided. Volunteers work to improve the community's environment and to provide water quality information for an online database.

You are invited to attend a presentation at the Yorktown Senior Center, 509 Pacific Ave, York, on January 15 from 10:00 to 11:30 a.m. The center is located in the Faith United Church of Christ. Call Barry Stump, 717-244-2089 for additional information.

Find other chapters at the [Senior Environment Corp webpage](#).

Green Building Tour Set for January 28 in Pittsburgh

The Green Building Alliance will hold the first of several tours planned for this year to highlight green buildings in the region. The “[Case Study Tour](#)” of the first building—the Senator John Heinz Pittsburgh Regional History Center-- will be held on January 28 from 3:30 to 4:30.

For more information contact Karen Puff at 412-431-0709 or email: karenp@gbapgh.org .

Solar Grant Program Now Accepting Applications

Residential, business and institutional customers in the [PECO Energy service territory](#) can now take advantage of a grant program to help with the costs of installing solar energy systems.

The Sustainable Energy Fund is offering grants up to \$25,000 for qualifying photovoltaic electric generating system installations.

To find out more, visit the Solar Energy Grant Program webpage or email the program administrator at SolarPV@TRFund.com, call 215-635-0900.

To see and hear more about solar energy, visit [GreenTreks Television](#).

Environmental Education Council Meets on Feb. 1-2

The Environmental Education Council will hold a two-day meeting in Harrisburg on February 1 & 2 to evaluate pre-application letters received by the Department of Environmental Protection for Environmental Education Grants.

The second day agenda will include discussions on: Environment & Ecology Standards Alignment Model, Assessment Study, Non-Formal Environmental Education – Role of the Conservation Districts, Grants Program, Funding Opportunities, Agency Programs, PAEE Status, Biodiversity Curriculum, Higher Education Initiative and Chesapeake Meaningful Bay Experience.

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The meeting will be held at the PaTTan Center, 6340 Flank Drive – Suite 600, Harrisburg.

For more information contact [Patricia Vathis](#), Environment and Ecology Advisor, Department of Education, 717-783-6994.

DCNR Seeks Comment on White Clay Creek Preserve Plan

The Department of Conservation and Natural Resources is seeking public comment on natural resource management plans for White Clay Creek Preserve, a 1,255-acre Chester County tract bordering the Delaware state line.

DCNR staff will be available to discuss the park's natural resources management plans 6:30 - 8 p.m., February 3, at London Britain Township Building, Landenberg. The public is invited to attend.

Park staff will discuss the proposals, answer questions and take comments. The draft resource management plans for the preserve discuss how its natural resources will be managed. Future management objectives are based on scientific and technical data.

Persons unable to attend the February 3 meeting may submit written comments up to 30 days after the meeting. Comments will be accepted through March 7, and should be directed to Jeff Johns, Resources Management Section, Bureau of State Parks, Rachel Carson State Office Building, 400 Market St., P.O. Box 8551, Harrisburg, PA 17105-8551; (717) 772-0242.

Pennsylvanians with disabilities who would like to attend the resource management meeting and require an auxiliary aid, service or accommodation, should also call this number.

Copies of the preserve's draft management plan are available for public review at the following locations:

- Landenberg Post Office, 645 Penn Green Road, Landenberg
- The Landenberg Store, Landenberg and Penn Green roads
- Kemblesville Post Office, 1 Municipal Lane, Kemblesville
- Bayard Taylor Library, East State St., Kennett Square
- London Britain Township Building, 81 Good Hope Road, Landenberg

In 1984, the DuPont Company donated land to Pennsylvania and Delaware for the purpose of preserving the area's diverse and unique plant and animal species, and rich cultural heritage. Today, these lands form the bi-state White Clay Creek Preserve, the only land designated as a preserve in Pennsylvania's Bureau of State Parks.

For more information on White Clay and Pennsylvania's other 116 state parks, telephone 1-888-PA-PARKS from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Saturday; or visit the [White Clay Creek Preserve webpage](#).

Fish & Boat Commission Sets Clinics for Ice Fishing

For those interested in learning more about this sometimes overlooked form of fishing, the Fish and Boat Commission is partnering with other organizations to offer ice fishing instruction.

Also checkout the Commission's [ice fishing safety webpage](#).

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If you think of ice fishing as only sitting on a sheet of ice, braving bone-numbing winds and staring anxiously into a slushy hole, ice fishing doesn't sound very tempting. However, it's an incredibly productive way to catch fish – and big ones at that – and “hard water angling” takes on a whole new appeal.

So just how effective can ice fishing be? Ice anglers caught two recent state record fish – an 8 lb. 14.8 oz. chain pickerel and a 35 lb. northern pike. Now that's appealing.

Six ice fishing clinics are scheduled. Participants will learn basic ice safety, get an explanation of the different types of ice fishing gear and some practical lessons in various ice fishing techniques. Don't have any ice fishing gear? That's okay, just bring yourself. Equipment may be provided by the PFBC or the event sponsor. Interested participants are encouraged to call ahead.

For more information on individual events, interested participants should call the number indicated after each listing.

- Winter Festival at Black Moshannon State Park, Centre County, January 22, beginning at 1 p.m. 814-342-5960
- Snowfest at R.B. Winter State Park, Union County, January 30, noon – 4 p.m. 570-966-1455
- WinterFest at Nescopeck State Park, Luzerne County, February 5, 10 a.m.- 4 p.m. 570-403-2006
- Winter Fun Fest at Pymatuning State Park, Crawford County, February 5, 9 a.m. – noon & February 6, noon – 3 p.m. 814-336-2426
- Winter Family Fun Day at Parker Dam State Park, Clearfield County, February 6, noon - 3 p.m. 814-765-0630
- SMART Ice Fishing Skills Clinic & Derby at Moon Lake County Park, Luzerne County, February 5, 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. 570-735-6303.

Most State Parks Open for Winter Goose Hunting

The Department of Conservation and Natural Resources this week announced that most of Pennsylvania's state parks will be open for the extended resident Canada goose-hunting season in January and February. As some parks are closed to hunting, hunters should contact individual park offices for specific information.

The extended Canada goose season will run January 15, through February 15, with a daily limit of five birds. Goose hunting will be open during this period at state parks with hunting areas, provided the parks are in the regions of Pennsylvania open to the extended goose season.

A significant growth in the non-migratory Canada goose population has drawn complaints of crop damage and nuisance problems in residential neighborhoods. Many state parks also are seeing the effects of non-migratory geese overpopulation and have taken measures, including anti-goose fencing and the use of loud noisemakers, to scare them away.

High concentrations of Canada geese and their droppings often are linked to high fecal coliform counts at Pennsylvania's state park beaches, causing swimming restrictions during peak usage periods.

PA Environment Digest – Holston & Crisci

The Pennsylvania Game Commission (PGC) and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service have authorized the extended resident goose hunt. Areas of the state excluded from the hunt include a portion of Crawford county in Northwest Pennsylvania encompassing Pymatuning State Park, and a large section of Eastern Pennsylvania that includes 21 state parks: Tuscarora; Hickory Run; Big Pocono; Lehigh Gorge; Beltzville; Jacobsburg; Samuel Lewis; Locust Lake; Delaware Canal; Ralph Stover; Nockamixon; Tyler; Evansburg; Ridley Creek; Marsh Creek; French Creek; Nolde Forest; Susquehannock; Neshaminy; White Clay; and Fort Washington. Canada goose hunting season ends in this portion of Eastern Pennsylvania on Thursday, January 20.

Game Commission rules and regulations regarding the season will apply. Information on the rules and regulations can be obtained by writing the PGC at 2001 Elmerton Ave., Harrisburg, PA 17110-9797, or by calling (717) 787-4250. Persons with disabilities who wish to participate in the hunt should contact the specific state park for further information. Park phone numbers are available by calling 1-888-PA-PARKS, or by visiting the [State Parks webpage](#).

Quick Clips

[The Promise of Green Energy](#)

[Diesel Exhaust Limits Considered in Allegheny County](#)

[Camp Takes Children on Trek Through Nature](#)

[New Coal Plants Bury Kyoto](#)

[Dead bats puzzle wind turbine operators](#)

[White Clay Creek Nature Preserve Beckons Adventurers](#)

[For Society, Counting is for the Birds](#)

[Editorial: New Year Let's Cleanup Pittsburgh](#)

Taking Positive Action

[Westmoreland Honors Farm and Forest Conservation Families of the Year](#)

[Shaver's Creek Programs Receive National Recognition](#)

[Nominations for Nonprofit Innovation Awards from Central Penn Business Journal](#)

PA Environmental Professionals Accepting Nominations for Karl Mason Award

Nominations are now being accepted for an organization and individual that exhibits excellence in environmental management for the [2005 Karl Mason Award](#).

Nominations are due February 25.

Karl Mason served the Pennsylvania Department of Health from 1952 until his death in 1966. He was regarded as the Commonwealth's first environmental administrator. The Karl Mason Award was created to commemorate his vision of a strong, well-managed environmental program.

PA Environment Digest – Holston & Crisci

Stewardship of the Karl Mason Award rests with [Pennsylvania Environmental Professionals Association](#), and anyone may submit nomination for this award to the Association.

The Award is given to a Pennsylvania person, organization, or project that has made a significant contribution to the betterment of Pennsylvania's environment, exemplifying Karl Mason's vision.

For more information visit the [Karl Mason Awards webpage](#).

Watershed NewsClips

[Organizational Development Training Notebook Available from POWR](#)
[Chester Authority Adopts New Model Stormwater Ordinance](#)
[Citizens' Agenda for Rivers Unites Rivers Movement](#)
[Notebook: Area waters among those to see changes](#)
[Mining sludge for industry just might pan out](#)
[York County Foundation Awards \\$113,550 in grants](#)
[Remembering the Delaware River Flood of 1955](#)
[Groundwater Guardians Reorganize in Carbon County](#)
[Signs Help Protect Waterways](#)

Regulations

January EQB Meeting Features Mercury Emissions Petition, Explosive Rules

The [Environmental Quality Board meets on January 18](#) to consider final form regulations on [explosives storage](#), a rulemaking petition on setting Pennsylvania's own [mercury emissions standards](#) for power plants and a [petition to redesignate Fishing Creek](#) in Lancaster County.

[Delaware River Basin Commission Hearing on Water Quality Rules](#)

[Biennial Review of Fees for Geologists, Engineers, Landscape Architects](#)

[Pennsylvania Bulletin – January 9, 2005](#)

Comment Deadlines: [Regulations](#) [Technical Guidance](#)

(Note: DEP no longer publishes a combined comment deadlines page.)

[Copies of Proposed Regulations](#)

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

Technical Guidance & Permits

No new technical guidance published.

[For copies of Draft Technical Guidance](#)

[For copies of Final Technical Guidance](#)

Calendar of Upcoming Events

- **January 12** – CANCELLED: DEP [Water Resources Advisory Committee](#) meeting.
- **January 18** – House returns for non-voting session
- **January 18** – [DEP Citizens Advisory Council](#) Meeting
- **January 18** – CANCELLED: DEP [Technical Advisory Committee on Diesel-Powered Equipment](#) (used in mining). Next meeting April 19.
- **January 18** – [Environmental Quality Board](#) meeting.
- **January 24** – First day of voting session for Senate & House
- **February 1** – Governor’s Budget Address
- **February 2** – [Groundhog Day](#)

[DEP Calendar of Events](#) [Watershed Events](#)

Helpful Web Links

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

[DEP Press Releases](#) [DEP Advisory Committee Meetings & Agendas](#)

Contributions 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 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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