

— PA — Environment Digest

*An Update on
Environmental
Issues in
Pennsylvania*

Edited By David E. Hess, Holston & Crisci

January 30, 2006

Major Climate Forecast Due Next Week in Pennsylvania

On February 2, a major climate forecast will be released for Pennsylvania from that well known climate center in... Punxsutawney.

Yes, it's Groundhog Day again and Punxsutawney Phil will make his famous mid-winter prediction on whether we have six more weeks of winter or if Spring is around the corner.

The gates open on this year's 120th climate prediction event at 3:00 a.m. and the official prediction is usually made about daybreak—7:25 a.m..

If you can't be there in person for the festivities or watch it on the PCN cable channel, tune in to www.VisitPA.com to see live shots from three different webcams covering Gobbler's Knob.

Also visit the [official Groundhog website](#) and find fun things for everyone to do!



And the prediction is.....

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Session Schedule

The House and Senate return to session on January 30 and will be in for the next three weeks, excluding Groundhog Day on February 2.

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- PUC Designates Registry for Alternative Energy Credit Transactions
- GreenSense 2006 Green Building Conference Set for April 20-21
- Top 25 Green Power Users Include Five From Pennsylvania
- Sony's Mt. Pleasant Plant Joins Partnership for Environmental Priorities
- Westmoreland "Stay Warm PA" Workshop Set for January 30
- Speaker of House Announces 2006 College Scholarship Program

Feature

- No-Till Economics Can Brighten Bottom Line, *By Mark Goodson, Penn State Extension Educator, Capital Region*

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

On the Hill

On the Senate, House Agenda

The Senate and House Environmental Resources and Energy Committees have a hearing and a meeting set for January 31 and there are several environmental bills on the Senate and House calendars. Here's the rundown...

Calendars

The House starts the week with these bills on their Calendar-- [House Bill 2067](#) setting limits on state spending through a constitutional amendment; [House Bill 1902](#) eliminating the sunset date on the \$2/ton Recycling Fee and requiring Recycling Performance Grants to be used for local recycling and waste reduction efforts; and [Senate Bill 640](#) claims for taxes, water, lighting fee exclusions for donations of property.

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On the Senate Calendar is [House Bill 2054](#) that makes changes to the Eminent Domain Code in response to the *Kelo* decision; [House Bill 1114](#) expanding waste tire recycling program; [Senate Bill 1025](#) would establish a Pennsylvania Clean Car Program by adopting federal Tier II standards.

Committees

The Senate Environmental Resources and Energy Committee will hold a hearing on legislation to improve Pennsylvania's deep mine safety program and the Senate Appropriations Committee meeting to consider [House Bill 2317](#) adopting the 2005-2006 Capital Budget for flood control, Keystone Recreation and Environmental Stewardship projects.

In the House, the Environmental Resources and Energy Committee meets to consider legislation to establish an investment tax credit for alternative energy providers and create a State Energy Office within the Department of Environmental Protection.

Senate/House Bills Moving

Bills on open space preservation, adopting a state clean car program and a resolution urging Congress to reauthorize federal funding for abandoned mine reclamation were just some of the highlights of legislative activity this week. Here's a rundown.

Open Space Preservation: [House Bill 87](#) (Steil-R-Bucks) further authorizing local governments to preserve open space through the waiver of certain service fees. The bill was not amended by the Senate so it goes to the Governor for his action.

Senate

Federal Mine Reclamation Funding: [House Resolution 382](#) urging Congress to reauthorize the Abandoned Mine Reclamation Fund was amended by the Senate and adopted and now goes back to the House for a concurrence vote.

Chesapeake Bay Tributary Strategy: [Senate Resolution 207](#) urging DEP to place a nine month moratorium on implementation of the Chesapeake Bay Tributary Strategy was reported from the Senate Environmental Resources and Energy Committee and is now on the Senate Calendar for action.

State Clean Car Program: [Senate Bill 1025](#) (MJ White-R-Venango) would establish a Pennsylvania Clean Car Program by adopting federal Tier II standards was reported from the Senate Transportation Committee and is now on the Senate Calendar for action. Senators Costa (D-Allegheny) and Tartaglione (D-Philadelphia) were the only votes against reporting the bill out. **NewsClip:** [Panel Adopts PA Clean Car Program](#)

Waste Tire Recycling: The Senate Appropriations Committee reported out [House Bill 1114](#) (Yudichak-D-Luzerne) expanding waste tire recycling program and is now on the Senate Calendar for action.

Water Shutoff: [House Bill 893](#) (Semmel-R-Berks) changing procedures for shutting off water for nonpayment of sewage bills was referred to Senate Appropriations Committee.

House

Eminent Domain: [Senate Bill 881](#) and [Senate Bill 897](#) making changes to the Eminent Domain Code in response to *Kelo* were referred to the House Appropriations Committee.

Senate Committee OKs EHB's Krancer, Trib Strategy and AML Resolutions

Senate Environmental Resources & Energy Committee recommended approval of the re-appointment of Michael L. Krancer to the Environmental Hearing Board and reported out resolutions dealing with the Chesapeake Bay Tributary Strategy and federal mine reclamation funding.

[House Resolution 382](#) (Frankel-D-Allegheny) urging Congress to reauthorize the Abandoned Mine Reclamation Fund was also amended and then adopted by the full Senate. Since it is a concurrent resolution, it now goes back to the House for a concurrence vote; and

[Senate Resolution 207](#) (Vance-R-Cumberland) urging DEP to place a nine month moratorium on implementation of the Chesapeake Bay Tributary Strategy was reported out after a technical amendment and now goes to the full Senate for action.

Sen. Mary Jo White (R-Venango) chairs the Senate Environmental Committee along with Sen. Ray Musto (D-Luzerne) who is Democratic Chair.

House Hears About Energy Efficiency, Research, Alternative Fuels

Promoting energy efficiency is the quickest, cleanest way to stretch our existing energy resources, the House Environmental Resources and Energy Committee was told this week, but it often gets lost in the mix of promoting renewable and clean energy generation technology.

The Committee heard presentations by Dr. Alan Scaroni, Director of the Energy Institute at Penn State University regarding energy research and development, Rosemary McAvoy of the Renewable Energies Council discussing alternative fuels and Christopher Lynch, Director, [Environmental Management Services](#) of the Small Business Development Center at the Wharton School regarding energy efficiency in small businesses.

Lynch, from the Small business Development Centers, noted 74 percent of all commercial electricity consumption is by small businesses, not large industries, and that half of all power used is for commercial lighting.

“If every small business started making just basic lighting technology improvements, the accumulated savings would be staggering,” said Lynch. “What’s more, lighting retrofits are typically quick, easy, and the technologies are well-proven.”

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The [Environmental Management Assistance Program](#) run by the Centers helps small businesses find energy efficiency ideas that make sense for their clients, and they do it for free.

Recently, the Center helped 39 clients save a total of over \$189,000 a year (on average per client \$4,800 a year) in energy costs with an average payback period of just 1.6 years.

Lynch made several recommendations: provide more funding for the Small Business Advantage Grants Program that helps finance energy and pollution prevention improvements for businesses and authorize on-bill financing by utilities so small business would not have upfront capital costs and can pay off the energy improvements with their energy savings each month.

“Imagine the economic, environmental and energy security benefits if the Commonwealth invested a greater amount in (the Small Business Advantage Grants Program) so more of Pennsylvania’s 906,000 small business could do what our clients have already done,” said Lynch.

Dr. Alan Scaroni told the Committee energy is the single most important problem facing humanity today as well as being the largest enterprise on Earth, surpassing agriculture and defense.

Penn State has formed the [Energy Institute](#) to coordinate energy related research in the University and provide a better platform from which to work with private industry, the U.S. Department of Energy and other public agencies.

“Many of the faculty members affiliated with the Energy Institute have established international reputations, some are earning national reputations, while others are early in their careers in the academy, but all of them are passionate about their discipline,” said Dr. Scaroni.

“The portfolio of energy research at Penn State is extensive and comprehensive,” said Dr. Scaroni. “Penn State is maintaining its strength in traditional topics in fuel science, such as coal, oil and natural gas, and in nuclear engineering, while creating new strength in contemporary energy areas such as hydrogen, fuel cells, biomass, biodiesel, wind, solar and energy efficiency.”

Dr. Scaroni pointed to two examples of research by Dr. Chunshan Song and Dr. Andre Boehman that made major contributions in producing and using biodiesel and hydrogen fuels.

One recommendation made by Dr. Scaroni was to provide additional state funding to match the increasing amount of federal funding available for energy research as a result of the recently adopted federal Energy Policy Act.

Rosemary McAvoy, CEO of the [Alternative Fuels Renewable Energies Council](#), said the lack of adequate fueling infrastructure, volatile pricing of gasoline and diesel fuels and improved vehicle fuel economy all have a major impact on the commercial market for biodiesel and other cleaner burning alternative fuels.

To overcome what she called the “chicken and egg” problems associated with alternative fuels—customers will not buy cleaner fuels unless it is conveniently available and producers will not produce it unless there are customers, McAvoy suggested creating an “alternative fuel corridor” within which refueling infrastructure can be built close to vehicle fleets and other customers.

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McAvoy also suggested creating a major consumer education and outreach campaign that promotes alternative fuels, vehicles and engines.

The next Committee information meeting on energy policy will be on February 14 when the Committee will hear remarks from the Energy Association of PA, Energy Coordinating Agency of Philadelphia and the Consumer Advocate to the Public Utility Commission.

Rep. Bill Adolph (R-Delaware) chairs the Committee and Rep. Bud George (D-Clearfield) serves as Democratic Chair.

The testimony for [Christopher Lynch, Small Business Development Centers](#), [Dr. Scaroni Penn State Energy Institute](#) and [Rosemary McAvoy, Alternative Fuels Renewable Energies Council](#) is available online.

Senate Hearing on Deep Mine Safety to Feature Mine Workers, Industry, DEP

The Senate Environmental Resources and Energy Committee will hold a public hearing on January 31 on legislation to modernize Pennsylvania's 1961 bituminous mine safety law.

Expected to provide testimony are: DEP Secretary Kathleen McGinty, former DEP Secretary David Hess, Edward D. Yankovich, Jr., International District Vice President of the United Mine Workers and George Ellis of the Pennsylvania Coal Association.



Two bills are pending in the General Assembly--

[Senate Bill 949](#) (Kasunic-D-Somerset) and the companion bill-- [House Bill 2229](#) (Bastian-R-Somerset), in the House Environmental Resources & Energy Committee.

The bills contain recommendations made as a result of [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.

Sen. Mary Jo White (R-Venango) chairs the Senate Environmental Committee along with Sen. Ray Musto (D-Luzerne) who is Democratic Chair.

NewsClip: [Sen. Mary Jo White Previews Hearing in Podcast](#)

Link: [Quecreek Mine Rescue Foundation, Somerset](#)

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House Committee Considers Alternative Fuels Tax Credit, State Energy Office Bills

The House Environmental Resources and Energy Committee will meet on January 31 to consider legislation creating a tax credit for alternative energy enterprises and to establish a State Energy Office.

[House Bill 1964](#) (Ross-R-Chester) would authorize investment tax credits for qualified alternative energy producers; and

[House Bill 2253](#) (George-D-Clearfield) would create a State Energy Office and Energy Advisory Council within the Department of Environmental Protection.

Rep. Bill Adolph (R-Delaware) chairs the Committee and Rep. Bud George (D-Clearfield) serves as Democratic Chair.

January Environmental Synopsis Now Available, Next Forum February 13

The Joint Legislative Air and Water Pollution Control and Conservation Committee [January issue of its Environmental Synopsis](#) newsletter covers radon, hazardous waste cleanup, the benefits of urban greening and much more.

The Committee's next Environmental Issues Forum will be on February 13 and will include a presentation by Innovative Rail Solutions, a company distributing railroad ties made primarily from recycled waste materials.

[Visit the Committee website](#) for more information.

The Committee is chaired by Rep. Scott Hutchinson (R-Venango), with Sen. Ray Musto (D-Luzerne) serving as vice-chairman.

In Other News

Richard St. Pierre Receives Ralph W. Abele Conservation Heritage Award

Richard St. Pierre, a fisheries biologist with the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service who for the last 23 years has played a key role in efforts to restore American shad to the Susquehanna River basin, has been named the recipient of the [Ralph W. Abele Conservation Heritage Award](#) from the Fish and Boat Commission.

“Dick has made substantial and unique contributions to the very essence of the Fish and Boat Commission, that being the shad restoration program. Dick’s work is recognized world-wide as a hallmark of achievement and professionalism,” said Commission Executive Director Douglas Austen.

St. Pierre, of Millerstown, Perry County, was presented the Ralph W. Abele Conservation Heritage Award at an evening reception January 23 at PFBC headquarters in Harrisburg.



Richard St. Pierre and Commission Board President Richard Czop.

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Since 1982, St. Pierre has served as the Fish & Wildlife Service's Susquehanna River Fisheries Coordinator. In that capacity he managed and directed a complex multistate-federal-utility anadromous fish restoration program, chaired technical committees, served on fish passage advisory committees, prepared annual reports and work plans, and managed the budget and database.

He led negotiations for four settlement agreements with utility companies on shad population rebuilding, fish passage and flow issues. From 1996 to 2004, he chaired the Chesapeake Bay Program's interagency Fish Passage Workgroup and served as a member of the Bay Program's Living Resources Subcommittee.

Over the years he has taken his expertise far beyond the Susquehanna River, assisting in a Fish & Wildlife Service International Affairs program with nations such as China, Russia, Italy, France and Iceland.

In accepting his award, St. Pierre recalled numerous past experiences with Ralph Abele and credited him with establishing the federal Susquehanna River Coordinator position.

The Commission established the Abele Award to recognize citizens of Pennsylvania who have made outstanding contributions to the protection, conservation and enhancement of the aquatic resources of the Commonwealth, through one or more of the following accomplishments:

- Personally invested heavily in the long-term education of youth on conservation issues vital to an improved aquatic environment;
- Put at risk their person and livelihood to undertake public activities and positions on behalf of improving and protecting the aquatic resources;
- Led a regional or statewide environmental effort that has been recognized for its duration and success in protecting and enhancing the aquatic resources;
- Played a leading role in reclaiming and enhancing a major significant natural water resource within the Commonwealth;
- Led an effort to pass major environmental legislation for the protection, conservation and enhancement of the natural environment; and
- Brought national recognition to Pennsylvania through personal activities, actions and contributions to the aquatic resources.

The Abele Award serves as a memorial to [Ralph Abele](#) for his steadfast and courageous work in protecting and conserving our natural resources.

Past Abele Award winners include: Ken Sink, Dr. Maurice Goddard, Lenny Green, Dr. William Kodrich, Robert W. McCullough, Jr., Peter Duncan, James L. Myers, Larry J. Schweiger, Enoch S. ("Inky") Moore, Robert P. Ging, Jr., Raymond Savel, Dr. Ed Bellis, Edward Kissell and Rozell Stidd.

Ralph W. Abele served as executive director of the Fish Commission from 1972 until 1987. His goal was to protect Commonwealth waters, conserve our aquatic resources and enhance fishing and boating in Pennsylvania.

He was quoted as proclaiming "If the fish can't survive in the water, there are serious problems for man." Ralph's "Resource First" philosophy continues to guide the Fish and Boat Commission today.

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Six PA Communities Recognized for Water Quality Protection Efforts

Sixteen local governments, including six from Pennsylvania, were recognized for their dedication to protecting and restoring local waters and the Chesapeake Bay under the [Bay Partner Community Program](#).

The Pennsylvania communities include:

- Gold: Plymouth Township (Luzerne County), College Township (Centre County), City of Lancaster, South Middleton Township (Cumberland County); and
- Silver: Chester County, Borough of Lewisburg (Union County).

Since 1997, the Bay Partner Community program has recognized local governments in the Chesapeake Bay watershed for their commitment to protecting and restoring the Bay and its rivers.

Communities are evaluated on their completion of a set of programs, activities or benchmarks that protect and restore their part of the Chesapeake Bay watershed. Selection is based on the municipality's population and the percentage of benchmarks met in four categories: improving water quality, promoting sound land use, protecting and restoring living resources and habitat, and engaging the community. Gold level partners have met a higher percentage of benchmarks than silver partners.

Ten award recipients received the opportunity to apply for \$1,000 mini-grants to support the development of a local on-the-ground or community education/outreach project.

Plymouth Township will use its mini-grant to conduct a watershed field study with fourth-grade students, in partnership with the Luzerne County Conservation District and the Greater Nanticoke Area School District. The field study will allow students to create tie-dyed t-shirts with recycled acid mine drainage from local streams.

Chester County plans to improve riparian corridors at Nottingham County Park -- enhancing water quality as well as stabilizing the banks using native plant materials.

The City of Lancaster is using the grant to fund development of Binns Park using environmentally sound landscaping practices and installing informational signage and brochures.

College Township has chosen to return a portion of land to a riparian buffer for use as a demonstration site.

The Bay Partner Community Awards are sponsored by the Chesapeake Bay Program and its Local Government Advisory Committee. The Committee was created in 1988 in recognition of the critical role that the more than 1,650 local governments in the watershed play in the partnership's ability to achieve its goals.

Currently, 73 local governments are Bay Partner Communities.

For more information, visit the [Chesapeake Bay Local Government Information Network website](#).

Borough of Lititz Receives Regional Award for Environmental Performance

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency this week presented the Borough of Lititz, Lancaster County, with a regional award for excellence in operation and maintenance of its wastewater treatment facility.

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The award honors the staff involved in the day-to-day operations of the facility, and recognizes local officials for their commitment to maintain and protect their community's environment. The authority is receiving the award in the "medium-advanced" category, which consists of facilities that treat between one and 10 million gallons of sewage per day.

"Many significant improvements in our nation's water quality can be attributed to better wastewater treatment. This award recognizes the outstanding job that people at Lititz are doing in that regard to protect the environment," said Donald S. Welsh, regional administrator for EPA's mid-Atlantic region.

EPA reviews data and inspects the facilities to determine the winners of this award. Award recipients are selected for their performance in complying with wastewater discharge permits, maintenance management, laboratory practices, personnel training, and public awareness needs.

Nominations for 2006 Western Pennsylvania Environmental Awards Due March 17

Nominations for the 2006 Western Pennsylvania Environmental Awards, sponsored by the [Pennsylvania Environmental Council](#) and [Dominion](#), will be accepted through March 17.

Community groups, schools, volunteers, businesses, government officials, projects, organizations, individuals, or programs are eligible to receive a Western Pennsylvania Environmental Award for their efforts to enhance the environment of western Pennsylvania.

A total of five awards will be presented in the areas of Community (which includes a variety of eligible nominees), Education, and Business at a special dinner in May.

An independent panel of judges will evaluate all nominations.

In honor of each awardee, the sponsors will make a \$1,000 donation to a nonprofit organization of the awardee's choice that provides environmental benefits to Western Pennsylvania.

Nomination forms are available by sending a request by email to: awards@pecwest.org or calling the Pennsylvania Environmental Council at 412-481-9400.

Construction Junction Shows Off Ability to Sell Recycle Building Materials



Howard Wein, president of Construction Junction, Secretary McGinty, and Deb Elliot, former President of CJ

[Construction Junction](#), Western Pennsylvania's first nonprofit retail store designed to sell used and surplus building materials, was visited by DEP Secretary Kathleen McGinty this week in Pittsburgh.

The tour gave the store the opportunity to show off the thousands of valuable building supplies it has for sale that would otherwise be thrown away in a landfill.

27,000 tons of useable building materials go into landfills in Allegheny County every year. Construction Junction works with contractors, stores and others to take donations of the items and then offer them for resale to the public.

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Each year 2,000 doors, 1,000 windows, 1,200 cabinets, hardware, molding and hundreds of other items are sold at Construction Junction.

For more information on how to donate items or for a list of items in stock, visit the [Construction Junction website](#) or call 412-243-5025.

Construction Junction is an independent project of the [Pennsylvania Resources Council](#).

Mercury Collection Efforts Reclaimed 1,451 Pounds Of Mercury in 2005

The Department of Environmental Protection this week announced that its six regional offices collected 1,451 pounds of mercury in 2005 through a variety of collection strategies aimed at reducing the dangers posed by the neurotoxin to people and wildlife.

Since 1997, DEP's six regional offices have collected almost 17,000 pounds of elemental mercury from schools and homes.

Interestingly, this is more mercury than is emitted by Pennsylvania's coal-fired power plants in one year and the mercury collected in 2005 is more mercury than those same power plants will emit annually by 2018 when the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's mercury emissions reduction rule is fully implemented.

Liquid elemental mercury is most commonly found in homes in thermometers, thermostats and barometers. At schools, elemental mercury may be found in containers in laboratories and thermometers and blood-pressure gauges in nurses' offices.

Mercury is not dangerous when sealed inside these devices and containers; however, exposure can result if the devices and containers are broken or improperly disposed of. By reducing the amount of elemental mercury in the public's hands, the chances of human exposure to mercury vapors, or of spills to the environment, are lowered.

DEP collections ensure that the mercury is recycled by a reputable company, rather than disposed of in a municipal waste landfill. Mercury can be particularly harmful when products containing mercury are spilled, discarded in drains or incinerated as waste.

Once mercury is released into the air it will fall back to the ground in rain and snow, contaminating soils and water bodies. Bacteria in aquatic ecosystems can convert mercury to organic methylmercury --- a potent neurotoxin --- that builds up in organisms and becomes more concentrated as it travels up the food chain, where it can accumulate in the tissues of fish and shellfish.

Consumption of contaminated fish is a significant health concern leading to fish consumption advisories in most states, including Pennsylvania.

For more information, visit DEP's [Mercury webpage](#).

EPA Helps Schools and Child Care Facilities Reduce Lead in Drinking Water

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency this week released a specialized toolkit to encourage school officials and child care facilities to reduce lead in their drinking water.

The "[3Ts for Reducing Lead in Drinking Water at Schools and Child care Facilities Toolkit](#)" contains materials to implement a voluntary Training, Testing, and Telling strategy.

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Testing water in schools and child care centers is important because children spend a significant portion of their days there. The "3Ts Toolkit" explains how to test for lead in drinking water; report results to parents, students, staff, and other interested parties; and take action to correct problems.

Steps in the program include:

- Collecting information on school drinking water and identifying assistance to implement a school lead control program;
- Developing a plumbing profile;
- Developing a drinking water testing plan;
- Testing the facilities' drinking water for lead;
- Correcting problems when elevated lead levels are found; and
- Communicating with the school community about a school lead-control program.

EPA developed the toolkit in conjunction with nongovernment organizations and several federal agencies including the U.S. Department of Education, whose Safe and Drug-Free School Coordinators will help promote and distribute the package to schools.

Visit the ["3Ts Toolkit" webpage online](#) or printed copies of the toolkit will be available through the Water Resource Center at 800-832-7828 and through the Safe Drinking Water Hotline at: 800-426-4791.

Villanova Receives Grant to Study Reducing Pharmaceuticals in the Environment

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency announced the award of a \$101,125 pollution prevention grant to Villanova University this week to study what can be done to reduce the presence of pharmaceuticals in the environment.

Villanova will carry out a project to prevent pharmaceutically-active chemicals from entering the environment. Under the direction of Dr. Rominder Suri, director of the Villanova Center for the Environment, the project will identify ways to better manage how prescription and non-prescription pharmaceuticals are discarded from university dormitories. Additionally, the project is developing technology to reduce pollution by preventing pharmaceutically-active chemicals from leaving municipal wastewater treatment plants.

"Villanova's project is significant because it gives us a head start at working on ways to effectively reduce pharmaceuticals in the environment while continuing to learn more about this emerging environmental issue," said Donald S. Welsh, EPA's mid-Atlantic regional administrator. "Although EPA is funding this project, the results of Villanova's work can be useful for other universities that are voluntarily taking steps to reduce pollution on their campuses as their commitment to improving the environment."

"The leadership of EPA in tackling this problem is exemplary and commendable," said Suri. "They are recognizing the problem and are taking steps to protect the environment and human populations while at the same time helping the industry by developing treatment technologies and innovative waste minimization approaches."

For the last 10 years, scientists have been measuring pharmaceutical contamination of lakes, streams, and groundwater. Traces of drugs, excreted by people and livestock, have been found in numerous water sources. Many of these chemicals are "hormone mimics" and interfere with the reproductive system of aquatic organisms. They can have a

detrimental effect on the local ecology and sensitive human populations, such as pregnant women, children or the elderly.

The grant comes from EPA's source reduction and pollution prevention program that supports efforts to reduce or eliminate pollution as well as innovations to develop pollution prevention projects of general interest.

Visit the [EPA Pollution Prevention webpage](#) for information on pollution prevention.

New Website Helps Land Conservation Organizations Assess Their Effectiveness

The [Pennsylvania Environmental Council](#) is pleased to announce the launch of [Sharing Stewardship](#), a website designed to help land conservation organizations assess the effectiveness of the land protection efforts.

There is a growing awareness in the land conservation community that permanence of land conservation rests, not with acquisition of lands, but with what follows acquisition: the dedication of organizations to maintain long-term stewardship of protected lands.

Over the past five years, the Pennsylvania Environmental Council has been working with land trusts in Western Pennsylvania to promote community-driven conservation, ensure better stewardship strategies, and support sustained protection of natural resources.

Through these partnerships, PEC has created a set of assessment tools and documents which have become the basis of the Sharing Stewardship website.

In addition to making the tools available, there is also an interactive Forum on the website that allows for discussion of related issues.

Visit the [Sharing Stewardship website](#) for more information.

Game Commission Adds 400+ Acres, Including Important Bird Area

The Pennsylvania Game Commissioners this week approved five proposals that will increase the State Game Lands system by more than 418 acres. They include two land purchase agreements, one donation and two land exchanges.

The purchases and exchanges include—

Centre County: a 223.7-acre parcel of land in Ferguson and Halfmoon townships, which is an indenture into SGL 176 for \$974,000. Acquiring this large indenture will ensure greater protection for the Barrens, as it is known locally.

The Barrens area has been identified as an Important Bird Area by Pennsylvania Audubon, as an Important Mammal Area by the Mammal Technical Committee of the Pennsylvania Biological Survey and as a Biological Diversity Area in the "Centre County Heritage Inventory" prepared by the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy.

Centre County: a 100-acre parcel of land and a right-of-way in Marion Township, which adjoins SGL 323 for \$176,336, with a plus or minus five percent allowance based on appraisal. This tract will provide additional access to this portion of SGL 323 along Bald Eagle Mountain from the south off Route 26.

McKean County: a donation of two parcels in Eldred Township that adjoin SGL 301. The tracts are being purchased by Dominion Transmission Inc., as required compensatory mitigation by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for wetland impacts associated with constructing a pipeline and will be deeded directly to the Game Commission.

The two tracts, comprised of 35.82 acres and 37.56 acres, include 50 acres of wetlands: 35 acres of forested wetlands; 10 acres of emergent wetlands; and five acres of scrubshrub wetlands. In addition to the existing wetlands on SGL 301, the new parcel consists of a rare stand of trees comprised of balsam fir, swamp white oak and black ash.

Huntingdon County: In the Carbon Township a land exchange involving a 22-acre tract adjacent to SGL 67 for a six-acre portion of the existing game lands.

Adams County: In the Huntingdon Township a land exchange involving a 30.8-acre tract that will help protect an important wetlands restoration project on State Game Lands 249 in exchange for two portions of the existing game lands totaling 18.2 acres.

To make donations toward purchasing future State Game Lands, visit the [Wildlife Donations area](#) of the Game Commission website.

NewsClip: [Purchases Add Game Lands in Centre County](#)

POWR Stream Signage Project a Success, Over 4,000 Placed

The [Pennsylvania Organization for Watersheds and Rivers](#) completed a three-year project to coordinate the placement of signs at 4088 stream crossings throughout Pennsylvania.

The purpose of the project, which was funded by a grant from the Department of Environmental Protection was to make people aware of streams, which play an essential role in Pennsylvania's environmental, social and economic vitality.

"DEP was pleased to sponsor the Stream Signage project because we believe the signs are a simple and effective way of raising awareness of water resources, and awareness is the first step in stewardship," said DEP Secretary Kathleen A. McGinty.

"POWR thanks PennDOT and the Resource Conservation & Development Councils for making the project a success," said Judy Jordan, POWR's Executive Director. She said that highway safety and the sheer number of different authorities that must participate in a project of this magnitude presented special challenges.

POWR worked closely with Penn DOT and the RC&Ds, who in turn coordinated with 450 municipalities to complete the installations. In all, 45 counties and over 1,500 roadways received stream identification signs at road crossings where the public may never have been aware that they were driving over a waterway.

Although it is difficult if not impossible to measure the effects on viewers, these stream signs have garnered public attention.

"Thanks to the Stream Signage Program, I have become more aware of the streams, both in my community and in other parts of the state. Realizing my proximity to these waterways heightens my interest and brings to light the effects I could have on them," said Katie Ferree, of the Conococheague-Antietam Creeks Watershed in Franklin County.

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Demand for the stream signs continues. Five municipalities noticed the signs and contacted POWR to submit requests after the three rounds of manufacturing and installation had been completed and the funds expended.

For more information about the PA Stream Signage project, please contact Judy Jordan at 717-234-7910 or jjordan@pawatersheds.org.
(courtesy [Watershed Weekly](#))

New Tool for Determining Cause of Ecological Harm to Rivers and Streams

To improve the nation's waters, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency this week released a new web-based tool, the [Causal Analysis/Diagnosis Decision Information System \(CADDIS\)](#), which simplifies determining the cause of contamination in impaired rivers, streams and estuaries.

More than a thousand U.S. water bodies have been identified as impaired, and in many cases, the cause is unknown. There are many possible sources of pollution such as industrial waste, municipal sewage, agricultural runoff, naturally occurring minerals in rock and sand, and biological materials.

Before restorative or remedial actions can be taken, the cause of impairment must be determined. By helping to find the source of contamination, state and local organizations will be better able to implement the Clean Water Act.

CADDIS provides a standardized and easily accessible system to help scientists find, use and share information to determine the causes of aquatic impairment. Causal analyses look at stressor-response relationships, meaning the effect of a specific substance or activity (stressor) on the environment. Typical water stressors include excess fine sediments, nutrients, or toxic substances.

CADDIS was developed by EPA scientists through partnerships with EPA programs and regions, as well as states and tribes.

The version of CADDIS released this week is the first of three. Future versions will include modules to quantify stressor-response relationships, and databases and syntheses of relevant literature on sediments and toxic metals.

[CADDIS is available online.](#)

Understanding the 2006 Growing Greener Program Workshop February 3

The York County Conservation District's Watershed Program is holding a workshop on Understanding the 2006 Growing Greener Program on February 3.

With the passage of Growing Greener II legislation, there are some substantial changes to the application and funding processes you should know about as you prepare your watershed grant proposals. The District's Watershed Specialist will be on hand to answer your questions.

Bring your 2006 Watershed Grant Application Package with you. The deadline for applications to the Department of Environmental Protection is March 3.

The workshop will be held at the York County ANNEX, from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m.

If you have any questions, contact Gary Peacock, Watershed Specialist, by sending email to gpeacock@yorkccd.org or calling 717-840-7430.

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For more information on the Growing Greener II Program and applications, visit the [Growing Greener webpage](#).

Water System Security Workshop Set for February 21

The [PA Section of the American Water Works Association](#) is offering an important water infrastructure security workshop on February 21 in Mayfield.

The workshop is designed to provide water systems with guidance on retrofitting existing facilities to create better physical security. The course is worth six DEP continuing education credits.

Contact Mike Snyder at 717-774-8870 or email mikesnyder@paawwa.org for more information.

Workshops to Help Municipalities With Sewage System Issues In Northwest

The Department of Environmental Protection this week announced a series of five training workshops in mid-February focusing on sewage facility reporting and planning.

The workshop will be offered at five locations from 9 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.:

- February 13: DEP's Northwest Regional Office, 230 Chestnut St., Meadville, Crawford County.
- February 14: The Tom Ridge Environment Center on Peninsula Drive in Erie, Erie County.
- February 15: Garden Gate Restaurant, 1029 New Castle Road, Prospect, Butler County.
- February 16: The Kane Fire Hall on Poplar Street in Kane, McKean County.
- February 17: The Clarion Free Library, 644 Main St., Clarion, Clarion County.

The workshop will review Chapter 94 regarding Municipal Wasteload Management regulations, which were enacted in 1977 in response to increasing reports of overloaded sewage facilities.

Certified wastewater operators are eligible to receive four Continuing Education Credit Hours for attending.

Workshop participants are asked to arrive at 8:30 a.m. The workshops are free. Lunch will not be provided.

To register for one of the workshops, contact Katelyn McKibben at 814-332-6942, by fax at 814-332-6121, or send email to kamckibben@state.pa.us.

For more information on sewage-related topics, visit DEP's [Sewage and Sewage Disposal webpage](#).

PUC Designates Registry for Alternative Energy Credit Transactions

The Public Utility Commission this week designated a registry for alternative energy credit transactions and also asked for public comment on additional standards and processes under the [Alternative Energy Portfolio Standards Act](#).

The Commission designated PJM Environmental Services, Inc.'s Generation Attribute Tracking System (GATS) as the credits registry. GATS is a regional, internet-

based information system that tracks the environmental attributes of generation and supports reporting, compliance and verification requirements under AEPS.

Use of GATS will be evaluated on an ongoing basis to ensure the Commission is utilizing a cost-effective system that best satisfies the AEPS requirements.

The Commission also adopted a tentative order that proposes standards and processes for qualifying alternative energy systems and certifying alternative energy credits as required under AEPS.

The order will allow for a 30-day comment period from the date of publication. The Commission will publish the order in the Pennsylvania Bulletin. Following the comment period and a review of the comments filed, the Commission will issue a final order on the standards and processes.

AEPS took effect on February 28, 2005, and requires that a certain percentage of all electric energy sold to retail customers be derived from alternative energy sources such as solar, wind, hydropower, geothermal, biomass, and demand side management resources.

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

More information about the implementation of AEPS, visit the [PUC's Alternative Energy Portfolio Standards webpage](#).

GreenSense 2006 Green Building Conference Set for April 20-21

Mark your calendars! The 2006 GreenSense Conference, sponsored by the Green Building Alliance in Pittsburgh, is set for April 20 and 21.

This year GBA is teaming up with the National Association of Industrial and Office Properties to host this third annual conference targeted toward building owners, developers, facility managers, brokers and financiers who want to learn more about the competitive advantages of green building and operation.

For more information, watch the [Green Building Alliance website](#).

Top 25 Green Power Users Include Five From Pennsylvania



The [2006 Green Power Top 25](#) list released this week by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency included five organizations in Pennsylvania that are part of EPA's [Green Power Partnership](#).

EPA's Green Power Partners are now purchasing more than 4 million megawatt hours of renewable energy, an increase of nearly 100 percent since the end of 2004.

Green Power Partners in Pennsylvania include Johnson & Johnson (#4), Staples (#15), FedEx Kinko's (#19), University of Pennsylvania (#21) and the State Government of Pennsylvania (#25).

The 2006 Top 25 green power purchasers are buying enough energy to power more than 300,000 homes a year, which is also comparable to removing the emissions of nearly 400,000 cars from the road annually.

Green power is electricity generated from environmentally-preferable renewable resources such as solar, wind, geothermal, biogas, and low-impact biomass and hydro

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resources. Green power accounts for nearly two percent of America's electricity supply, but voluntary purchasing of renewable energy is accelerating renewable energy development.

For more information, visit the [Green Power Partnership webpage](#).

Sony's Mt. Pleasant Plant Joins Partnership for Environmental Priorities

The Sony Electronics facility in Mt. Pleasant, Westmoreland County, has enrolled in the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's [National Partnership for Environmental Priorities](#) making a commitment to voluntarily reduce emissions of 31 priority chemicals.

The Sony plant manufactures television and other electronics and is committing to recycle lead-containing frit paste from their cathode ray tube manufacturing process instead of sending it to a hazardous waste landfill.

The waste frit paste will be sent to a Sony sister facility across the street to be recycled and incorporated into their glass manufacturing process.

For more information on how your company can join, visit the [National Partnership for Environmental Priorities webpage](#).

Westmoreland "Stay Warm PA" Workshop Set for January 30

More than 300 Westmoreland County nonprofit organizations, whose mission it is to help low-income families and senior citizens, were invited to a "Stay Warm in PA" workshop on January 30 to hear about services available to help with winter heating issues.

The workshop will be held in the Commissioner's Hall of Westmoreland County Community College starting at 8:30 a.m. and will run to noon.

Representatives from the Department of Public Welfare's Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), Columbia Gas, Allegheny Power and Conservation Consultants Inc. will provide information on energy assistance, weatherization programs and low-cost ways to conserve energy and save money.

The workshop is sponsored by Columbia Gas.

To learn about assistance programs, weatherization resources and energy conservation ideas, visit www.StayWarmPA.com.

Speaker of House Announces 2006 College Scholarship Program

Speaker of the House John M. Perzel (R-Philadelphia) this week announced applications are now available for the 2006 Pennsylvania House of Representatives' Scholarship Program and the deadline to apply is April 14.

Two scholarships will be awarded and any college-bound Pennsylvania public or private high school senior planning to attend a Pennsylvania college, university, or career school full time and has a minimum 3.0 grade point average may apply.

Applicants will be evaluated on leadership qualities, commitment to their community, financial need and an essay question.

The House Scholarship Program is independently administered by The Foundation for Enhancing Communities, a central Pennsylvania community foundation designed to stimulate philanthropy and enhance the quality of life in the community.

The House program is funded by donations from organizations and individuals, including former and current House members, as well as proceeds from various special events, like the Speaker's Ball.

For information, visit the [Pennsylvania House of Representatives Scholarship Program website](#).

Feature

No-Till Economics Can Brighten Bottom Line

By Mark Goodson

Penn State Extension Educator, Capital Region



No-till seed drill. [Cedar Meadow Farm](#), Holtwood, PA.

Increasing fuel prices, scarcity of labor, and flat markets have producers scratching their heads and sharpening their pencils. No one is looking forward to their spring fuel bills. Some are considering continuous no-till as a management practice that can increase their return on investment by lowering fuel, labor and equipment input costs.

In late 2005, the Pennsylvania No-till Alliance developed a technique to document the actual time, fuel and equipment savings that a Pennsylvania farmer could expect to realize by adopting no-till as compared to traditional tillage systems utilizing plow, cultipack, chisel and disk. The findings are remarkable.

Farmers practicing continuous no-till can expect to spend one-half to one-third the time and fuel preparing and planting their spring crops compared to conventional and conservation tillage.

The No-Till Alliance economic workgroup, composed of producer and agency partners, analyzed an actual single-operator 650 grain production enterprise in south-central Pennsylvania. The No-Till Alliance was interested in illustrating the economic benefits of continuous no-till over conventional tillage systems. They were not disappointed.

In addition to significantly lower fuel consumption in the no-till system, the study demonstrated important improvements in timeliness efficiencies. Many of today's crop production operations can be labor-stressed in the spring and in the fall during field preparation, planting and harvesting seasons.

This study demonstrated that producers can not only lower their fuel and equipment costs, they can also lower the field time required to complete spring and fall planting to allow more timely manure spreading, optimum planting, and timely harvest for high quality forage.

The no-till economics workgroup considered the following factors: number of days available for spring work, tillage and no-till equipment width, working speed, horsepower

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needed and fuel required for conventional, conservation and no-till systems. Acres per hour and gallons of fuel per hour were calculated for each operation in each system.

In every calculation, no-till practices decrease these costs of production by 50% to 70%. The fuel savings are comparable to those calculated by the [USDA NRCS Energy Estimator online](#).

The workgroup plans to fine-tune the techniques used in this study and develop spreadsheet tools that can be used to compare the economics of tillage techniques on any commercially productive crop operation in Pennsylvania.

The farm that served as the model for this study is a 650-acre grain operation owned and operated by Russell McLucas of McConnellsburg. Partners in the study were Penn State Capital Region extension educators Mark Goodson and Matt Harsh, PA Department of Environmental Protection's Jay Braund, Capital RC&D coordinator Susan Parry and USDA NRCS-PA economist Colleen Tenny.

Farmer cooperator and PA No-Till Alliance board member Russell McLucas presented the results of this study at the Southern Allegheny Resource and Conservation District and Pennsylvania Southwest Regional meeting of the Pennsylvania Association of Conservation Districts in October 2005. In January 2006, McLucas presented the findings at the 14th Annual No-Till Conference in St. Louis, MO.

The Pennsylvania No-Till Alliance is a non profit organization with a farmer board of directors. Membership costs \$25 per year and is open to all.

For more information, contact Susan Parry by sending email to: susan.parry@pa.usda.gov at the Capital RC&D or call 717-948-6633.

Mark Goodson can be contacted by sending email to: mwgl@psu.edu

Note: The Pennsylvania No-Till Alliance [will hold its next meeting](#) on March 15 in State College at the Ramada Conference Center.

Link: [Farm Equipment Rental Program Helps Promote No-Till Farming](#)

Quick Clips

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

[Radio Collars Indicate Hunters Weren't Finding the Deer](#)

[Hunters Disagree with State of Deer](#)

[Long-Running Audubon Bird Count Still Going](#)

[Legal Issues Arise with Monroeville Billboard Law](#)

[Farmland Preservation – a Personal View](#)

[Op-Ed: Wind Farms Would Jeopardize Birds, Forests](#)

[Venango Reconsiders Environmental Inventory](#)

[Allegheny Trail Longest “Main Street“](#)

[Demand for Energy Audits Rises with Fuel Costs](#)

[DOE Offers \\$100 Million for Hydrogen Fuel Cell Research](#)

Watershed NewsClips

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

[Quittie Not Ready for Trout Study Says](#)

[Rallying to Rescue a Waterway](#)

[Up the Creek With a Plan](#)

[Stormwater Ordinance Will Protect County Waters](#)

[Delaware Spill Doesn't Deter Shad Tournament Organizers](#)

[PennVEST Approves \\$31 Million for Water Projects](#)

Regulations

The Environmental Quality Board published final regulations covering environmental laboratory accreditation. (*PA Bulletin, page 465*) **NewsClip:** [New Lab Regs.](#)

[Pennsylvania Bulletin – January 28, 2006](#)

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

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

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

Technical Guidance & Permits

The Department of Environmental Protection published a proposed [General Air Permit for human or animal crematories](#), a [correction to a previous notice](#) on technical guidance and new proposed guidance on resolving erosion and sedimentation and NPDES violations.

DRAFT: DEP ID: 363-4000-002. Standards and Guidelines for Identifying, Tracking and Resolving Violations for: Erosion and Sediment Control Program, National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Stormwater Construction Program, Dam Safety Program, Waterways Management Program, and Wetlands Protection Program. Comments due February 27. (*PA Bulletin, page 447*)

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

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

Calendar of Upcoming Events

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

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- [DEP's Annual schedule of board and advisory committee meetings for 2006](#)
- [Notice of Delaware, Lower Susquehanna Water Resources Committee meetings](#)
- **January 30** – Senate Appropriations Committee meeting to consider [House Bill 2317](#) (Feese-R-Lycoming) 2005-2006 Capital Budget for flood control, Keystone Recreation, Environmental Stewardship projects. Rules Committee Room. Call of the Chair.
- **January 31** – Senate Environmental Resources & Energy Committee hearing on legislation modernizing Pennsylvania's deep mine safety law and [Senate Bill 949](#) (Kasuni-D-Somerset). Room 8-EA Capitol Building. 9:00.
- **January 31** – House Environmental Resources & Energy Committee meeting to consider [House Bill 1964](#) (Ross-R-Chester) would authorize investment tax credits for qualified alternative energy producers; and [House Bill 2253](#) (George-D-Clearfield) establishing a State Energy Office and energy advisory council within the Department of Environmental Protection.
- **January 31** – DEP [Statewide Water Resources](#), Critical Water Planning Area Subcommittee meeting. 12th Floor, Rachel Carson Building, Harrisburg. 10:00.
- **February 2** – House Game and Fisheries Committee meeting to hear presentation of the Fish & Boat Commission's annual and Growing Greener reports. Room 60 East Wing. 9:30.
- **February 7** – Governor's Budget Address. **NOTE:** Gov. Rendell has requested his Budget Address be moved to February 8 in deference to those who may be traveling the previous weekend (read "going to the Super Bowl").
- **February 8** – House Environmental Resources & Energy Committee will hold a public hearing on [House Bill 2141](#) (Geist-R-Blair) and adopting the California vehicle emission standards for Pennsylvania. North Office Building, Hearing Room 1. 9:00.
- **February 9** – House Game and Fisheries Committee meeting to hear presentation of the Fish & Boat Commission's annual and Growing Greener reports. Room 60 East Wing. 9:30.
- **February 13** – [Joint Legislative Air & Water Pollution Control and Conservation Committee](#) Environmental Issues Forum featuring a presentation by Innovative Rail Solutions, a distributor of railroad ties made from recycled materials. Room 205 Ryan Building. Noon.
- **February 14** – House Environmental Resources & Energy Committee informational meeting on Energy Policy to hear remarks from the Energy Association of PA, Energy Coordinating Agency of Philadelphia and the Consumer Advocate to the Public Utility Commission. North Office Building, Hearing Room 1. 9:00.
- **February 23** – House Environmental Resource & Energy Committee informational meeting to understand the general, scientific, environmental, health and economic issues associated with reducing mercury emissions from power plants. North Office Building, Hearing Room 1. 10:00.
- **February 23** – House Appropriations Committee budget hearing for the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. Room 140. 3:00.
- **February 27** – House Appropriations Committee budget hearing for the Department of Environmental Protection. Room 140. 2:30.

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- **February 28** – House Appropriations Committee budget hearing for the Department of Agriculture. Room 140. 1:00.
- **March 1** – Senate Appropriations Committee budget hearing for the Department of Agriculture. Senate Majority Caucus Room. 1:15.
- **March 2** – Senate Appropriations Committee budget hearing for the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. Senate Majority Caucus Room. 10:30.
- **March 9** – Senate Appropriations Committee budget hearing for the Department of Environmental Protection. Senate Majority Caucus Room. 1:15.

[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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