

-PA ——— Environment Digest

*An Update on
Environmental
Issues in
Pennsylvania*

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[PA Environment Digest Video Blog](#)

Join Community, Watershed Groups in the 2008 Great PA Cleanup!



Join nearly 140,000 friends and neighbors from all across Pennsylvania that volunteer to remove litter and trash from roadways, parks and streambanks as part of the annual [Great PA Cleanup](#) sponsored by the Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful Alliance, state agencies and many other partners.

The entire cleanup campaign - with a special emphasis on creating [Litter-Free School Zones](#) - will run from April 19 to May 3.

Groups and event coordinators registering their events will be eligible for free disposal space for the trash they pick up and to win thank you prizes from participating sponsors. Groups must register their events by April 11 to be eligible.

Last year, more than 139,000 volunteers from all 67 counties removed 7.4 million pounds of trash from roads, parks, schools, waterways, wildlife areas and communities.

Video Blog: [Volunteers Join in 29th Street Cleanup Along Capital GreenBelt](#)

This year's initiative again includes a focus on Litter-Free School Zones, a program launched by [Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful](#), cosponsor of the Great PA Cleanup.

Participating schools agree to check the campus grounds weekly and remove litter, and also to promote and implement all campus events as litter-free events.

Groups that register their cleanup events as part of the Great PA Cleanup will be eligible for free landfill space to dispose of non-recyclable waste collected during their cleanup events courtesy of the [Pennsylvania Waste Industries Association](#) and its member companies.

Groups and coordinators who report the results of their cleanups will be eligible for thank you gift cards from a growing number of Pennsylvania businesses sponsoring the Great PA Cleanup.

The state departments of Environmental Protection, Transportation and Conservation and Natural Resources are members of the Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful alliance and partners in the Great PA Cleanup.

PennDOT supports the cleanup by providing participants with free gloves, safety vests and trash bags.

[PA CleanWays](#), a nonprofit group dedicated to fighting illegal dumping and litter, is coordinating all cleanup event registrations and collections reporting.

The [Great PA Cleanup website](#) also contains safety information, links to other cleanup organizations, a logo that can be downloaded, T-shirt iron-on transfers and posters, and lesson plans for teachers.

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Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful Inc. is supported and sponsored by a wide range of businesses, trade organizations, civic and environmental groups, and state and local government agencies. It is the state affiliate of the national [Keep America Beautiful](#) that was founded to promote litter prevention, community beautification and improvement, and waste reduction.

The following is a list of organizations sponsoring Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful and the Great PA Cleanup:

AAA Mid-Atlantic, Audubon Pennsylvania, Best Buy, Cities: Allentown, Philadelphia and Pittsburgh, Departments of Conservation and Natural Resources, Education, Environmental Protection and Transportation, County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania, GreenTreks Network, Home Depot, Institute of Scrap Recycling Industries, Keep Lancaster Beautiful, Keep Philadelphia Beautiful, Keystone Sanitary Landfill, PA CleanWays, Pennsylvania Association of Convention & Visitors Bureaus, Pennsylvania Builders Association, Pennsylvania Downtown Center, Pennsylvania Environmental Council, Pennsylvania Farm Bureau, Pennsylvania Food Merchants Association, Pennsylvania Horticulture Society, Pennsylvania Host Municipal Inspectors, Pennsylvania Landscape & Nursery Association, Pennsylvania Organization of Watersheds and Rivers, Pennsylvania Parks and Forests Foundation, Pennsylvania Resources Council, Pennsylvania Beverage Association, Pennsylvania State Association of Borough Managers, Pennsylvania State Association of Township Supervisors, Pennsylvania Waste Industries Association, Pocono Mountains Vacation Bureau, Professional Recyclers of Pennsylvania, Schuylkill Keep It Pretty, Sierra Club of Pennsylvania, Pennsylvania Landscape and Nursery Association, The Steel Recycling Institute and Waste Management Inc.

For additional information, call the toll-free Pennsylvania Recycling and Litterbug Hotline at 1-888-548-8372.

[PA Environment Digest Video Blog](#)

On the Hill

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- Conservation Districts Announce Legislator Recognition Award Winners
- PA American Water Accepting Applications for Environmental Grant Program
- Anglers Invited to Chart Future of Raystown Lake
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- Pennsylvanians Urged to Evaluate Flood Insurance Needs
- 2nd Annual Rachel Carson Sense of Wonder Poetry, Essay and Photography Contest
- BP Donates \$13,000 to Three PA Boy Scouts Councils
- Harrisburg, Pittsburgh Peregrine Falcons Make Their Online Debut This Week
- Game Commission to Provide Wildlife Workshops for Teachers
- Game Commission Reports Deer Harvest Down 11 Percent Over Last Season
- WPC Offers Land Preservation and Conservation Easements Workshop
- Exelon-EPURON Solar Center Breaks Ground on 3,700 MW Plant
- Chem-Fab Site in Doylestown Added to EPA's Superfund List
- Backyard Composting Courses to Be Offered in 50 Counties
- Protecting Pennsylvania's Historic Resources Conference May 14-16

Spotlight

- Conservation Districts Hold Capitol Legislative Day to Push Initiatives

Feature

- Western Pennsylvania Land: A Legacy for Future Generations

Grants & Awards

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

Agriculture, Environmental Groups Create a “Storm” at Capitol – Video Blog



Penn State's [College of Agricultural Sciences](#), the [PA No-Till Alliance](#) and the [Chesapeake Bay Foundation](#) participated in “College Capitol Day,” which focused on the importance of agricultural research giving farmers new tools to reduce their environmental footprint.

The event also celebrated the success of partnerships in achieving agricultural and environmental quality improvements for Pennsylvania's lands and waterways and the recently passed [Resource Enhancement and Protection Tax Credit Program \(REAP\)](#) farm conservation tax credit.

Matthew Ehrhart, Executive Director of CBF's Pennsylvania Office, introduced speakers Sen. Mike Brubaker (R-Lancaster) and Rep. Mike Hanna (D-Centre), the chairs of the Senate and House Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committees, Agricultural Secretary Dennis Wolff, Robert Steele, Dean of Penn State's College of Agriculture and Dr. Sjoerd Duiker, a Soil Management Specialist from Penn State.

Each spoke to the challenges facing Pennsylvania agriculture, and the need for collaboration among many interests.

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“Agriculture and clean water are vital to Pennsylvania’s economy, and REAP helps farmers by enabling them to protect water quality by making improvements to their farms,” said Matthew Ehrhart, Executive Director of CBF’s Pennsylvania office. “For every dollar of tax credit this year, farmers are investing almost a dollar as well, strengthening local economies across the Commonwealth.”

Video Blog: [Matt Ehrhart’s comments](#)

Rep. Hanna expressed his support for the REAP Program giving farmers a new tool to help fund farm conservation measures. He noted the proposal was a bipartisan initiative sponsored by Rep. Jerry Stern (R-Blair).

Video Blog: [Rep. Hanna’s remarks](#)

Sen. Brubaker spoke in support of the partnerships helping agriculture, as illustrated by the sponsor of the event, and the need to work cooperatively to continue the water quality improvements in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed.

Video Blog: [Sen. Brubaker’s comments](#)

Department of Agriculture Secretary Dennis Wolff also highlighted the success of the new REAP Program. He noted that over 50 percent of Pennsylvania’s row crop land was now using no-till farming measures that reduced nutrient and sediment runoff.

Video Blog: [Secretary Wolff’s remarks](#)

Robert Steele, Dean of the College of Agriculture Sciences, said his message was simple-- “we’re all in this together” and about the importance of agriculture research to give farmers more options.

Video Blog: [Robert Steele’s comments](#)

Dr. Sjoerd Duiker, of the Crop Management Extension Group at Penn State, explained the benefits of no-till farming to improve farm production and reduce nutrient and sediment runoff.

Video Blog: [Dr. Buiker’s remarks](#)

This event was part of Penn State's College Capital Day activities sponsored by the Penn State Agricultural Council and the Pennsylvania Council of Cooperative Extension Associations.

More than 160 representatives of the agricultural industry and supporters of county-based cooperative extension programs visited the capitol throughout the day to emphasize how state support for agricultural research and cooperative extension is an investment that can enhance agricultural profitability, environmental quality, food safety, healthy families, vibrant communities, and the development of renewable energy.

Link: [Rodale Institute No-Till+ Webpage](#)

Video Blog Feature

Penn State’s Rainfall Demonstrator Clearly Shows Benefits of No-Till

Illustrating the need for best management practices on farms, Penn State’s [Rainfall Demonstrator](#) literally “made it rain” in the Capitol this week.

The hands-on display demonstrated how unprotected soil can wash off the land during rain events, causing water quality problems and reducing farm productivity.



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Dr. Sjoerd Duiker, a Penn State agronomist, discussed the benefits of cover crops, good conservation and no-till planting techniques using the Demonstrator.

The Rainfall Demonstrator is a self-contained display that represents the effects of soil management practices on runoff and soil erosion potential of active farmland. It allows visitors to experience first-hand the effects of no-till systems on environmental quality.

The Demonstrator sprays water on three different examples of farming techniques: an actual sample of a field that has used no-till practices for 29 years, a tray showing reduced tillage techniques and traditional farming methods.

No-till systems include continuous mulch cover, cover crops, and diverse crop rotations. Research has shown the positive impact of these systems on soil organic matter content, soil aggregation and water infiltration, translating in improved water and air quality.

Video Blog: [Dr. Sjoerd Duiker shows benefits of no-till farming.](#)

Link: [PA No-Till Alliance](#)
[Rodale Institute No-Till+ Webpage](#)

On the Hill

Session Schedule

The Senate and House will return to voting session the week of March 31.

You can watch the [Senate Floor Session](#) and [House Floor Session](#) live online.

On the Senate/House Agenda/Bills Introduced

The Senate and House published committee schedules for next week and floor Calendars for the week of March 31—

Calendars

House (March 31): [House Bill 1078](#) (Hanna-D-Clinton) establishing the Elk Damage Fund providing for deterrent fences for deer, bear and elk and payment of claims for elk damage; [House Resolution 546](#) (George-D-Clearfield) urging Congress to investigate gas and energy prices; [House Resolution 627](#) (George-D-Clearfield) urging federal government to provide more heating assistance funding; [House Bill 2233](#) (Freeman-D-Lehigh) extending grants under the Elm Street Program beyond the original five year term; [Special Session House Bill 13](#) (Bennington-R-Mifflin) amends the Alternative Energy Portfolio Standards Act to provide for increased use of energy efficiency, extends the compliance period from 15 to 21 years and provides additional milestones for the use of alternative energy; [Special Session House Bill 16](#) (King-D-Bucks) establishing a State Energy Office; [Special Session House Bill 17](#) (McIlvaine Smith-D-Montgomery) excluding purchase price of hybrid electric vehicles from sales and use tax; [Special Session House Resolution 6](#) (Thomas-D-Philadelphia) designating the week of November 11-17 as “National Geography Awareness Week.”

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Senate (March 31) [House Bill 1214](#) (Surra-D-Elk) changing the terms of Game Commissioners from eight to four years; [House Bill 1281](#) (Freeman-D-Lehigh) requiring municipalities to take steps to protect the Appalachian Trail; [House Bill 1329](#) (Kessler-D-Berks) further providing for appeals and challenges to zoning ordinances.

Committees

House: the Environmental Resources and Energy Committee holds a hearing to solicit testimony on proactive policies on a transition to market-based electric rates and on [Special Session House Bill 54](#) (George-D-Clearfield) providing for a temporary extension of rate caps; the House Republican Policy Committee holds a hearing on Chesapeake Bay Tributary Strategy compliance costs at Juniata College.

Bills Introduced

These environmental bills of interest were introduced this week—

Social, Economic, Recreation Impacts of Game Commission Decisions: [House Bill 2381](#) (Hanna-D-Centre) prohibits current or former employees of the Game Commission from being named commissioners and requires “In all wildlife management decisions, the commissioners shall be guided by the principles of best management practices utilizing scientific analysis supported by verifiable data with equal regard for the social, economic and recreational impacts of their decisions.”

Green Schools: [Senate Bill 1318](#) (Waugh-R-York) requiring the Department of Education to create a central clearinghouse of prototypical school facility designs, including those that incorporate green building features.

Senate/House Bills Moving

These Senate and House environmental bills moved this week--

Senate

Medical Sharps: [House Bill 1320](#) (Siptroth-D-Monroe) establishing a disposal program for home-generated medical sharps was referred to Senate Appropriations Committee.

House

State Energy Office: [Special Session House Bill 16](#) (King-D-Bucks) establishing a State Energy Office was reported from the House Appropriations Committee and is on the House Calendar for action.

LIHEAP Funding: [House Resolution 627](#) (George-D-Clearfield) urging federal government to provide more heating assistance funding was reported from the House Environmental Resources and Energy Committee and is now on the House Calendar for action.

Stormwater Planning: [House Bill 2266](#) (Steil-R-Bucks) expanding stormwater planning requirements was reported out of the House Environmental Resources and Energy Committee with a request the bill be referred to the House Local Government Committee and it was referred.

House Environmental Committee Reports Heating Assistance, Stormwater Bills

The House Environmental Resources and Energy Committee reported out legislation on home heating assistance and stormwater management legislation. The bills include:

- [House Resolution 627](#) (George-D-Clearfield) urging the federal government to provide more heating assistance funding; and
- [House Bill 2266](#) (Steil-R-Bucks) expanding stormwater planning requirements with a request the bill be referred to the House Local Government Committee.

Rep. Bud George (D-Clearfield) serves as Majority Chair of the House Environmental Resources and Energy Committee and Rep. Scott Hutchinson (R-Venango) serves as Minority Chair.

House Republicans Examine Ways to Lower Consumer Electric Bills

The benefits of allowing the marketplace to set the rates for Pennsylvania's electric industry, thereby making the industry more competitive and giving more options to consumers, was the topic of a hearing this week by the House Republican Policy Committee.

The hearing was co-chaired by Reps. Mike Turzai (R-Allegheny), chairman of the House Republican Policy Committee; Scott Hutchinson (R-Venango), Minority Chair of the House Environmental Resources and Energy Committee; and Stan Saylor (R-York), chairman of the House Republican Policy Committee's Energy Task Force.

The Republican Policy Committee held the hearing to discuss the best mechanisms to help smooth the transition from a state regulated industry to a competitive market as the rate caps are removed. All of Pennsylvania's rate caps are set to expire by 2011. Testifiers included a variety of experts from the energy industry.

House Republicans are committed to exploring all options to ease the transition to a competitive market. One option – the reduction of the Utility Gross Receipts tax – was praised by members of the panel as a creative approach that could jumpstart competition in Pennsylvania.

"We believe that one of the best ways to help consumers with rising energy costs is by cutting taxes," Rep. Saylor said. "Reducing the Utility Gross Receipts tax will put more money into the pockets of Pennsylvanians and ensure confidence in the marketplace."

"That is the most creative solution by a state that I've heard of," said [Susan Tierney](#), managing principal for Analysis Group.

Allowing the marketplace to work without government interference was a common theme among all the testifiers.

"Pennsylvania has been a leader in the nation in delivering the benefits of electric competition to millions of consumers," said [Jan Freeman](#), Exelon Generation vice president. "Competition has dramatically improved the operating performance of existing generating units and given incentive to the construction of new power generation,

including alternative energy resources. Perhaps most significant, restructuring has shifted the financial risk of construction, operation and ownership of electric generation from consumers to merchant power plan investors."

According to [Aldie Warnock](#), external affairs vice president for Allegheny Energy, western Maryland recently went through the deregulation process; he stressed the importance of consumer education. "People [in Maryland] did not even know they were under caps," he said.

"Rate caps have shielded consumers from the true cost of energy in many parts of the Commonwealth for a decade," said [Doug Krall](#), manager of regulatory strategy for PPL Electric Utilities. "As a result, the expiration of rate caps will accelerate the deployment of advanced metering systems providing for time-of-use rates, and the development of energy efficiency and conservation programs; all of which are measures that can help customers make wise energy choices, take greater control of their electricity use and achieve savings on their energy costs."

The testifiers agreed that the implementation of these measures will help residential users succeed in Pennsylvania's new competitive energy market.

"The reality is that we must develop our existing domestic resources in order to lessen the impact of rate caps and achieve true energy independence," Rep. Hutchinson stated. "Increasing our traditional base-load production is imperative for success in a competitive energy market. Additional generation is a long-term necessity to meet increasing consumer demand and mitigate the skyrocketing cost of energy."

"We need to follow through with electric deregulation which will bring competition and market forces to the supply of electricity," said Rep. Turzai. "An important reason for deregulation is that consumers will move toward conservation and demand side management that will ultimately help the environment and check consumer costs.

"There are certain items we should do to mitigate electricity price increases in changing toward a free market system, first and foremost cutting the tax on consumers' electric bills. We eliminated this tax on natural gas usage, and now we need to do the same for electric usage," he added.

Regional Compact Might Aid Fight Against Electric Corridor

House Majority Leader Bill DeWeese (D-Greene) wants the Commonwealth to join forces with other states in forming a "regional transmission siting agency."

"The federal Energy Policy Act of 2005 usurps the traditional and fundamental role of the Commonwealth and its political subdivisions to decide land use issues, including the approval and location of high voltage electric transmission lines, and subjects landowners to federal eminent domain authority," Rep. DeWeese said.

However, Congress included language in the law that gives its consent for three or more contiguous states to enter into an interstate compact to establish a "regional transmission siting agency."

"The agency would facilitate siting of future electric transmission facilities within those states and carry out the electric energy transmission siting responsibilities of those states," said Rep. DeWeese, D-Greene/Fayette/Washington. "The most important aspect of forming a compact is that member states would only be subject to Section 1221 of the law under limited circumstances."

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Rep. DeWeese is seeking co-sponsors for legislation creating the Mid-Atlantic Area National Corridor Compact Act.

He also plans to reach out to officials in other states affected by the electric transmission corridor designation, including Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Virginia and West Virginia, as well as the District of Columbia.

Earlier this week, U.S. Sen. Arlen Specter stopped by Rep. DeWeese's Harrisburg office to discuss the recent announcement by the U.S. Energy Department denying a rehearing of the transmission corridor designations.

For more information, visit Rep. DeWeese's [transmission line webpage](#).

House Hearing on Budget Yields Support for More Environmental Funding

The House Appropriations Committee this week held a special hearing on the 2008-09 budget featuring members of the House making their suggestions for budget priorities. Several legislators suggested increases in environmental funding.

Chesapeake Bay Cleanup Funding

Rep. Glen Grell (R-Cumberland) asked for state support in funding wastewater plant upgrades required by the Chesapeake Bay clean up strategy, saying the Department of Environmental Protection estimates compliance will cost \$630 million and other estimates place the cost above \$1 billion, all of which will be borne by ratepayers without state assistance.

He noted Maryland and Virginia are both helping to fund implementation of the strategies in their states. Rep. Grell asked for enactment of a \$300 million grant program, to be funded over several years. He said at least \$40 million should be appropriated this year.

Rep. Scott Perry (R-York) also urged state aid for implementing the Chesapeake Bay clean up strategy, saying if all Pennsylvanians are expected to pay for mass transit in Philadelphia, then all Pennsylvanians should be expected to help pay to clean up the Bay.

Funding Fish & Game Commissions

Rep. Dave Levdansky (D-Allegheny) urged passage of [House Bill 1676](#), which would dedicate a small portion of the sales tax revenue to the Game and Fish and Boat Commissions (0.00116 percent to the Game Fund and 0.00058 percent to the Fish Fund).

Rep. Levdansky argued these agencies are funded by license fees, however they provide services that affect all Pennsylvanians, not just hunters or anglers, such as wildlife management and establishing a protocol for the placement of wind turbines. He noted the number of hunting and fishing licenses issued by the Commissions is declining and increasing those fees will only further erode these numbers. It is time for a reliable and permanent public funding source, he stated.

Organic Farming

Rep. Dave Kessler (D-Berks) urged passage of [House Bill 2347](#), which promotes organic agriculture and helps farmers transition to organic farming. He cited the advantages of organic farming, noting that if every farmer adopted no-till practices it would sequester the same amount of carbon as removed 2-3 million cars from the roads.

He argued organic farming can save money because it reduces the need for crop insurance. Organic farming techniques can help farmers weather droughts and wet periods better, provide healthier food which will reduce health care costs.

Rep. Kessler said \$5 million would be needed for the next six years.

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Rep. Evans (D-Philadelphia) serves as Majority Chair of the House Appropriations Committee and Rep. Civera (R-Delaware) serves as Minority Chair.

NewsClip: [Lawmakers Put In Dibs for Next Year's State Budget](#)

House Environmental Committee Sets Hearing on Extending Electric Rate Caps

Rep. Camille "Bud" George (D-Clearfield), Majority Chair of the House Environmental Resources and Energy Committee, will hold a second public hearing March 26 on legislation that would extend utility generation rate caps by two years.

The hearing is scheduled for 1-3 p.m. at the Ramada Conference Center in Altoona.

"The hearing will focus on [Special Session House Bill 54](#), which would extend rate-cap protection for two years to residential, commercial and industrial customers of PPL, First Energy and PECO," said Rep. George. "Deregulation did not lower prices, and no one should swallow the utility commercials that imply that competition will bring lower or even stable electric prices."

Tentatively scheduled to testify are: Stephen L. Feld, associate general counsel, FirstEnergy Corp.; Richard Hudson Jr., state chairman, Retail Energy Supply Association; David Hughes, Executive Director, Citizen Power; Michael Messer, Industrial Energy Consumers of Pennsylvania; and Aldie Warnock, vice president/external affairs, Allegheny Energy Inc.

Under Special Session House Bill 54, utilities could seek rate-cap relief annually when they show significant changes in their costs. During the rate-cap extension, energy would be secured to ensure reliable service at the lowest, reasonable rates through a portfolio of long-term, short-term and spot market purchases that meet alternative-energy requirements.

"We must implement policies now that buffer Pennsylvania citizens and businesses from volatile electricity prices and prevent disastrous, double-digit rate increases," Rep. George said.

Environmental Synopsis Features E-Waste Dilemma

The March issue of the [Environmental Synopsis newsletter](#) features a discussion of the coming electric waste crisis. Other topics covered include: cellulosic ethanol production, climate change-the cost of inaction and acid rain emissions reduced.

The Synopsis is published by the Joint Legislative Air and Water Pollution Control and Conservation Committee. Rep. Scott Hutchinson (R-Venango) serves as Chair and Sen. Ray Musto (D-Luzerne) serves as Vice-Chair.

Other News

Gov. Rendell Announces Nine Winners of Environmental Excellence Award



Gov. Rendell this week recognized nine Pennsylvania businesses and organizations adopting environmentally friendly practices and technologies and

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who are working to revitalize communities, reduce pollution, and educate the public on the benefits of being good stewards of the state's natural resources.

Winners of the 2008 awards will be honored by the Pennsylvania Environmental Council at a special Earth Day celebration dinner on April 22 in Harrisburg. [Visit the PEC website](#) for more information on tickets and sponsorship opportunities.

"These businesses and organizations, large and small, all have one thing in common – they look at environmental challenges as opportunities to do things differently," said Gov. Rendell in announcing the recipients of the [2008 Governor's Awards for Environmental Excellence](#). "These awards recognize and celebrate that unique perspective and can-do spirit that makes Pennsylvania a progressive place to do business."

Any Pennsylvania business, government agency, educational institution, non-profit organization, individual, farm or agribusiness engaged in efforts to promote environmental stewardship and economic development in Pennsylvania are eligible to apply.

This year, the Department of Environmental Protection received 35 applications from businesses and organizations from across the state. The projects are judged on environmental protection, teamwork, public service, environmental education and outreach, pollution prevention, economic impact and innovative technology.

"Whether by investing in new technology, promoting conservation, or educating future generations about environmental issues, these winners show how we all benefit when we make the health of our natural resources a priority," said DEP Secretary Kathleen A. McGinty. "We applaud their conservation efforts and innovative thinking."

Winners of the 2008 Governor's Award for Environmental Excellence receive a commemorative plaque and an outdoor flag to acknowledge their commitment to environmental quality during an event at the winner's location.

The winning organizations are listed below—

Land Conservancy of Adams County Inc., Gettysburg – [The Land Conservancy](#) purchased conservation easements on 11 properties covering 1,011 acres to protect Gettysburg's public water supply. These properties border about 2.3 miles of Marsh Creek upstream from Gettysburg Municipal Authority's surface water intake, along with many miles of Marsh Creek tributaries. Protecting these properties allows the aquifers to continually recharge and helps to maintain the quality and quantity of water of the Potomac River and the Chesapeake Bay.

The success of this project has been recognized with a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region III Source Water Protection Award that credits the project as the first successful source water-based land preservation/best management practices conservation effort in Pennsylvania.

Conservation Consultants Inc., Pittsburgh – [CCI, Inc.](#) conducted a pilot program about renewable energy technologies in 10 schools in the 2006-07 school year. The renewable energy technologies program provides educators with a written curriculum reinforced with hands-on tools for demonstration purposes. Students see first-hand that renewable energy technologies are cleaner and safer alternatives to fossil fuel generation and viable solutions for western Pennsylvania. CCI developed the program after a survey of teachers showed a critical need for such curriculum.

Specific objectives for the renewable energy technologies program include students being able to: recognize various conventional and renewable energy generation options;

measure the impact these technologies have on the environment; show that renewable technologies, especially solar power and wind power, are viable technologies for Western Pennsylvania; develop ways to implement renewable energy technologies in small ways today and stimulate creativity to find solutions for the future after graduation; suggest concrete personal actions everyone can adopt to reduce air pollution; and relate particulate and mercury pollution to health risks.

ESS Energy Products Inc., Paoli, Chester County -- [ESS Energy Products](#) developed Energy Guardian Kits to eliminate heating and cooling loss through attic entrances. More energy is lost through attics than any other area of the home. While newly constructed and most existing homes have insulated and reasonably air-sealed attics, it is the entrances to the attic that are most inevitably overlooked for air sealing, insulation or both. To date, more than 1,000 Pennsylvania homeowners have one or more of the kits installed. The projected savings from installation of an Energy Guardian Kit is about \$312 per year, assuming the current cost of electricity and heating fuel. These savings provide a complete payback of the kit's purchase price in a matter of months.

Kendall Auto Parts, Erie -- [Kendall Auto Parts](#) is an automotive and truck recycling facility that has made it its mission to reduce pollution to zero; to reduce, recycle and reuse everything; and to reduce and conserve energy and water.

In addition to being built on a brownfields site, Kendall's porous parking lots are made from recycled aggregate, the landscaping materials were retrieved from construction sites, steel fencing was salvaged from demolished sites, stormwater runoff is channeled into swales and held in a retention pond, and the loading dock leveler was removed from a building that was to be demolished and reinstalled in its current location.

Inside, the building's sub-base is made from recycled aggregate, floors have radiant heat with individual temperature controls, large windows in public spaces make use of natural light, Energy Star lighting is zone switchable, and floor drains are connected to an oil/water separator before discharging the sewer. Even the furnishings in the showroom, counter area and offices are recycled or were retrieved from other facilities that were to be demolished. The glass-top tables are made from aluminum wheels and tires from new cars that were in a train wreck.

Kendall's indoor automobile recycling operation practices zero discharge of all fluids, including engine oil, gasoline, antifreeze and air conditioning refrigerants. The oil is used as a source of supplementary heat. The antifreeze is recycled by a licensed waste/water treatment company. The tires are disposed of by a licensed waste tire company and the gas that is pumped from the vehicles' gas tanks is circulated through filters and used for the company's delivery trucks.

Borton-Lawson, Wilkes-Barre -- [Borton-Lawson](#) is an engineering and architectural firm that worked in partnership with the Housing Development Corp. of Northeastern Pennsylvania, government agencies, financial institutions and community groups to spearhead the Pine Street Neighborhood Revitalization project in a three-block area of downtown Hazleton.

The 24 single-homes have highly efficient heating, cooling, ventilation, lighting and appliances. Energy-efficient construction paired with these features can provide energy cost savings of about 30 percent over standard construction. The solar electric

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(photovoltaic) systems included on the southern-sloped roofs of the residences supplement the domestic hot water heater and enables residents to produce solar energy, thereby reducing utility costs.

Additionally, through net metering, residents have the ability to transfer any energy surplus to the local utility in return for reductions in their billable energy consumption level.

Pine Street homeowners can expect to spend about \$700 a year for energy costs verses more than \$1,100 a year for owners of a traditional home built to code. In addition, ventilation heat recovery systems recapture 70 percent of the heat.

Keystone Pallet & Recycling LLC., Milton, Northumberland County -- [Keystone Pallet & Recycling](#) is a small, wooden pallet manufacturing and recycling business employing seven people, but the company has prevented more than 836 tons of wood waste from being disposed of in local landfills since its debut in 2004.

Keystone has done this by collecting used and damaged wooden pallets and then repairing and reselling the refurbished products. Keystone Pallet saves energy and prevents air pollution emissions in the process.

A major challenge for recycling businesses is finding and maintaining a steady source of raw materials to recycle. While, traditionally, that has involved driving to collect the materials, increased fuel costs coupled with long travel distances, Keystone devised an innovative way to collect more used pallets. Rather than sending trucks to multiple business locations to pick up pallets, a mobile collection unit is installed, the used pallets are collected in the unit, and Keystone picks up the unit only when it is full.

Keystone received a 2006 Small Business Advantage Grant (for the third year in a row) that was used to purchase three 53-foot portable recycling collection units. In May, two more units were purchased and Keystone now collects all of the damaged wooden pallets at 14 of its collection sites in the portable recycling collection units. It was estimated that 367 tons of wood waste was going to local landfills per year from these businesses, adding about \$8,074 in disposal costs.

These pollution prevention measures at Keystone Pallet will save 2,624 gallons of diesel fuel, amounting to \$7,272 annually in fuel savings. Additionally, 330 tons of carbon dioxide, 209 tons of sulfur dioxide and 28 tons of nitrogen oxide will be eliminated.

Heron's Eye Communications LLC, Greeley, Pike County-- As producer of the public television documentary Nature's Keepers, [Heron's Eye Communications](#) spearheaded a fundraising campaign, coordinated interview subjects and locations, and handled publicity efforts for this inspiring story of the people of one of Pennsylvania's fastest growing counties –Pike– who are taking a leadership role in land stewardship and smart growth. The film presents Pike County as a model for other communities nationwide that struggle with similar challenges.

Often called the birthplace of the American conservation movement because it was home to the Pinchot family, the documentary highlights the county's 150-year-heritage of natural resource conservation and land stewardship and examines how this legacy continues today through citizen activism in response to development pressures that have made it one of the fastest growing areas in the northeast United States.

Iron Oxide Recovery Inc., Pittsburgh, Allegheny County; and the [Sewickley Creek Watershed Association](#), Sewickley Township, Westmoreland County-- [Iron Oxide Recovery](#) and the Sewickley Creek Watershed Association became partners in 1999 when company owner Robert Hedin approached the association about supporting iron oxide recovery experiments at the abandoned Marchand Mine site in Lowber, Westmoreland County. The mine has discharged thousands of gallons-per-minute of iron-polluted water to Sewickley Creek for decades.

The collaboration has resulted in the Lowber site becoming Pennsylvania's first and only commercially successful resource recovery project. So far, the project has resulted in:

- The recovery and recycling of 4,000 tons of wet iron sludge that would have otherwise been landfilled, avoiding at least \$150,000 in disposal costs;
- Successful treatment of 1,400-2,200 gallons per minute of mine water containing 70-85 milligrams per liter of iron;
- Retention of about 400 tons of iron solids that otherwise would have ended up in Sewickley Creek and the Youghiogeny River;
- Compliance of Sewickley Creek in Lowber (downstream of the system) with the DEP's in-stream iron limit of 1.5 milligrams per liter for the first time in at least 60 years; and
- Successful incorporation of a 1.6-acre wetland into the system and creation of 13 acres of open water and wetland habitat that has already been colonized by fish, amphibians and aquatic insects, and has become a refuge for water fowl.

This treatment system can be maintained through eight hours of labor per month. Iron Oxide Recovery has taken on that responsibility and has committed to maintaining the system in the future. The company will fund its long-term maintenance with revenue produced by sludge recovery.

NewsClip: [Growing Greener Grant Presented to Cleanup Sewickley Creek](#)

The Southeastern Pennsylvania Regional Household Hazardous Waste Program Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Montgomery and Philadelphia counties -- [Household hazardous waste coordinators](#) from southeastern Pennsylvania first met in 1997.

The individual counties signed a three-year intergovernmental agreement allowing residents from one county to participate in another county's collection event. In 2006, this agreement was extended for an additional three years through 2009. As a result, in 2006-07, residents in the five-county region had 48 opportunities to responsibly dispose of hazardous waste.

Each county runs its own program as it pertains to billing. As such, a request for proposal was issued to contract with one household hazardous waste vendor guaranteeing 24 annual events to the winning vendor, giving the counties the benefit of a "volume discount." Improvements are made with each successive three-year program. Language has been added to allow local recyclers to arrive at the end of the day and to harvest such items as lead acid batteries and cardboard, which results in cost avoidance for the program.

In 2006, the Southeastern Regional Household Hazardous Waste Program held 24 collection events in separate locations within the five counties and 22,656 residents participated. Through these events, 981 tons (nearly 2 million pounds) were collected. The southeastern region is the first region in the state to try an intergovernmental agreement as a successful way of disposing household hazardous waste. Meeting monthly and sharing information, this program continues to improve while holding down costs.

Environmental Results

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The [295 winners](#) of the Governor's Environmental Excellence Awards from 1997 to 2003 have saved over \$1.6 billion, eliminated 3.9 billion gallons of wastewater, 249 million tons of air pollution, 266 million tons of solid waste and saved 346 million kilowatt hours of electricity.

Past Winners

Past winners of the Governor's Environmental Excellence Awards are available online: [2007 Winners](#), (no 2006), [2005 Winners](#), [2004 Winners](#), [2004 Winners](#), [2003 Winners](#), [2002 Winners](#), [2001 Winners](#), [2000 Winners](#), [1999 Winners](#), [1998 Winners](#), [1997 Winners](#), and [1996 Winners](#).

You can also be inspired by the good work of the winners of the Governor's Watershed Stewardship Awards for [2002](#) and [2001](#).

Rebounding Youghiogheny River Named DCNR's River of the Year

Conservation and Natural Resources Secretary Michael DiBerardinis this week named the Youghiogheny River as the Commonwealth's River of the Year for 2008.

The designation recognizes the watershed's shift from a threatened past to a promising recreational future and its role in Western Pennsylvania history.

"While it is recovering from serious degradation from mine drainage, the Youghiogheny remains fragile and in need of ongoing improvements and protection from new sources of pollution," said Secretary DiBerardinis. "Scores of partners working to preserve, protect and enhance this great resource have pumped new life into the river and the many communities surrounding it."



Popularly known as the "the Yough," the river flows north 132 miles from its origination in Maryland to its mouth at McKeesport.

Before emptying into the Monongahela River south of Pittsburgh, the more than 70-mile section of the Youghiogheny River in Pennsylvania drains 1,250 square miles in Somerset, Fayette, Westmoreland and Allegheny counties.

"The Yough is steeped in rich national and industrial history, surrounded by towns where George Washington camped during the French and Indian War," said Secretary DiBerardinis. "The greatest mineral resource in American history, the Pittsburgh Coal Seam, is centered in the Yough's corridor. Now it's being rediscovered by a new breed of travelers - anglers, canoeists and rafters who brave its whitewater, and hikers trekking along the Great Allegheny Passage as it parallels the river for nearly 70 miles."

Boasting a 150-foot-wide waterfall, the river is the focal point of the 19,000-acre Ohiopyle State Park, which attracts more than 1.5 million visitors a year. The river's whitewater attracts 100,000 boaters each year for the thrill of rapids that can be run all summer with releases from Youghiogheny River Lake.

DCNR's "River of the Year" designation honors local residents, governments, non-profit and conservation organizations working to improve waterways and the quality of life in their watersheds across the state.

With this year's designation, the Youghiogheny River will be the subject of a Rivers Month poster to be issued in June.

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To help celebrate, the Pennsylvania Environmental Council will revive the "Yough River Sojourn," which had been held for several years in the late 1990s and early 2000s. A sojourn is a water-based journey for canoeists, kayakers and others to raise awareness of the environmental, recreational, tourism and heritage values of rivers.

The sojourn will offer several days of canoeing, whitewater rafting and bicycle riding on the parallel Great Allegheny Passage, along with environmental education and interpretation opportunities.

For more information, visit the [Ohiopyle State Park webpage](#) and the [PA River Sojourn webpage](#).

NewsClips: [Yough River Cleanup Lauded](#)
[Op-Ed: The Yough is Worth Protecting](#)

Link: [The Youghioghny River Trail](#)

Nominations Accepted for 2008 Friend of the Lehigh River Award

Nominations are now being accepted for the Friend of the Lehigh River Award given annually by [Wildlands Conservancy](#) in acknowledgement of individuals, groups, organizations, businesses, institutions, governmental bodies, and others who deserve to be recognized for their commitment to preserving, protecting, restoring, and enhancing the Lehigh River and the Lehigh River valley.

The deadline for nominations is May 2.

“This award recognizes those individuals or organizations that make stewardship of the Lehigh River a top priority. The award winners are dedicated not only to maintaining the beauty of the river, but understand the importance of this natural resource for the present and future generations,” said Christopher Kocher, president of Wildlands Conservancy.

Nominations can be submitted by a one-page summary of the nominee’s accomplishments and justification for receiving the award. Contact information of the nominee and the group or individual making the nomination should be included.

This year’s award winners will be announced during the 12th Annual Lehigh River Sojourn, being held June 20 – June 25. A small reception will be held on June 23 at the Triboro Sportmans Club.

Send nominations to Friend of the Lehigh River Award Nomination Committee, c/o Wildlands Conservancy, 3701 Orchid Place, Emmaus, PA 18049.

12th Annual Lehigh River Sojourn Set for June 20-25

The [12th Annual Lehigh River Sojourn](#) sponsored by the Wildlands Conservancy will be held from June 20 to June 25.

This five-day trip stretches from the rapids of Upper Lehigh Gorge and will end at Hugh Moore Park, Easton. The trip includes whitewater rafting, canoeing, and kayaking. Participants have the option of registering for one or multiple days. Proceeds benefit Wildlands Conservancy.



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Registration fees include camp site, shuttle service, catered meals, educational programs and entertainment. Registration costs for the trip: Members of Wildlands Conservancy – Day 1 (rafting) - \$85, Days 2 & 3 - \$55/day, Day 4 & 5 - \$50/day; Non-members – Day 1 (rafting) - \$95; Days 2 & 3 - \$65/day, Day 4 & 5 - \$60/day. Canoe, paddles and Personal Floatation Devices (PFDs) are available for rent through Wildlands Conservancy for \$12 per person/per day. Sojourners provide their own camping equipment. Pre-registration is required.

The Safety crew is supervised by Northeast PA Kayaking School and is comprised of members from the Lehigh Valley Canoe Club and National Canoe Safety Patrol. Rafts and safety guides are provided by Pocono Whitewater Adventures on Day 1 of the trip.

The Lehigh was the [2007 River of the Year](#) in Pennsylvania.

For more information, contact Elizabeth McKinney, Development Manager, at 610-965-4397 ext. 26 or visit [Lehigh River Sojourn webpage](#).

Conservation Districts Announce Legislator Recognition Award Winners

The [Pennsylvania Association of Conservation Districts](#) this week announced Sen. Roger Madigan (R-Bradford) and Sen. Michael Waugh (R-York) were this year's winners of the PACD Legislator Recognition Award.

The PACD presents this award to legislators whose outstanding efforts have helped further the activities and accomplishments of the PACD or Pennsylvania's 66 county conservation districts.

Sen. Roger Madigan, who is retiring at the end of this year, has been a leader in the agricultural and environmental community all of his life. The Senator's work representing conservation districts has had an enormous impact on conservation related issues throughout the Commonwealth.

He has hosted Stream Bank Erosion Roundtable discussions providing the opportunity for conservation district representatives to discuss local environmental issues with state and federal officials. He has sponsored hand-on tours of environmental issues including reclaimed mine land and acid mine drainage treatment facilities, and established the State's Environmentally Sensitive Maintenance of [Dirt and Gravel Roads Program](#).

The Sen. Madigan also proposed legislation to establish a task force studying renewal and management of Pennsylvania's forests, and was a catalyst in starting a watershed initiative in his district.

Sen. Madigan is a strong supporter of agricultural and environmental youth programs and has earned the respect of his peers and his constituents through a lifetime of commitment to agriculture and the environment.

Sen. Michael Waugh has been a long-time ally to Conservation Districts and their programs to promote environmental stewardship throughout his legislative career. Especially active in promoting environmental education, Sen. Waugh hosted an environmental education forum for York County teachers, providing them with information and access to ecological resources for education programming.

Sen. Waugh is a Commissioner on the [Chesapeake Bay Commission](#), whose goal is to clean up pollution, restore habitats and protect fish and wildlife in the Chesapeake Bay. He also serves on the Board of Directors of the future Farmers of America (FFA) Foundation, and the Farm Show Commission.

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Sen. Waugh has sponsored or co-sponsored numerous legislative proposals to benefit the agricultural and environmental communities. His legislative initiatives include sponsorship of the [REAP program](#) – a tax credit program for conservation initiatives, promoting renewable alternative fuel funding, funding for the Agricultural Conservation Easement Purchase Program, promoting the Agriculture Education Loan Forgiveness Program, and co-sponsoring legislation to provide a single, non-lapsing fund to the state's conservation districts. This legislation was part of a Farmers First Agenda promoted by Sen. Waugh.

Larry Kehl, PACD President stated, "I am honored to present Sen. Madigan and Sen. Waugh with the PACD Legislator Recognition Award. Their numerous contributions to agriculture and the environment over the years have benefited all Pennsylvania citizens."

PA American Water Accepting Applications for Environmental Grant Program

Pennsylvania American Water announced it is now accepting applications for its [Environmental Grant Program](#) to support innovative, community-based environmental projects that improve, restore or protect watersheds and community drinking water supplies.

The deadline for applications is April 11.

The company will award grants of up to \$10,000. The program is designed to support diverse types of activities, such as watershed cleanups, reforestation efforts, underground tank inspection programs, biodiversity projects, streamside buffer restoration projects, wellhead protection initiatives and hazardous waste collection efforts.

"Every individual and community has the ability to positively impact our water supplies and watersheds," said Kathy L. Pape, president, Pennsylvania American Water. "We encourage municipalities, schools, environmental organizations and civic groups to consider their impact and to apply for a grant."

To qualify, a proposed project must be: located within Pennsylvania American Water's service area; be completed between June 1 and November 1; and be a new or innovative community initiative or is a significant expansion to an existing program.

Projects will be judged based on several criteria including clarity of project goals and projected impact, nature and strength of collaboration with other community and/or municipal organizations, evidence that the project will provide sustainable environmental results after the Pennsylvania American Water's funding ends.

In 2007, the company's [Environmental Grant Program awarded](#) more than \$31,000, which was shared among five recipients: Berks County Conservation District, Hallstead Borough (Susquehanna County), Pennsylvania Environmental Council -- Northeast Regional Council, South Park Township (Allegheny County) and the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy.

Grant application forms and additional information can be found at the [Environmental Grant webpage](#). Applications must be mailed to American Water, 1025 Laurel Oak Road, Voorhees, NJ 08043. Attn: Kristin Ferguson.

Anglers Invited to Chart Future of Raystown Lake

The Fish and Boat Commission and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers are asking anglers who fish Raystown Lake in Huntingdon County to participate in an [angler logbook program](#).

The agencies are asking anglers who fish Raystown Lake to obtain an official volunteer angler logbook and record specific information about their fishing trips. Fish and Boat Commission biologists will use the data collected from the logbooks to gain a better understanding of the fishing activity that occurs at the lake. This information will be included with biological assessments in shaping fisheries management plans, including stocking plans, for the 8,300-acre impoundment.

To participate, volunteers can obtain an official logbook, record their catches for each fishing trip during the period of January 1 to December 31 and return their logbooks by January 30, 2009.

The logs are easy to fill out by following the simple instructions included with each book. Any personal information provided, including species and catch rate information, is strictly confidential. However, summaries of combined species catch rates for all logbooks submitted will be reported at the conclusion of the study.

Interested anglers can help the Fish and Boat Commission and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers maintain and enhance fishing opportunities at Raystown Lake by obtaining a logbook at one of several locations – the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Ranger Station at Raystown Lake, the Huntingdon County Visitors Bureau, participating local bait dealers, the [Fish and Boat Commission website](#), or by mail at: Raystown Lake Log Book Survey, John Frederick, Fish and Boat Commission, 844 Big Spring Road, Newville, PA 17241, 717-776-3170 or send email to: johfrederi@state.pa.us.

EPA Settlement with Upper Southampton Includes Pharmaceutical Education

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency this week announced a proposed settlement with [Upper Southampton Sewer Authority](#) in Southampton, Bucks County, Pa., for violations of the Clean Water Act.

As part of the settlement, the authority will conduct an awareness campaign to encourage proper collection and disposal of unused pharmaceuticals in order to help protect drinking water sources. The campaign will include preparing and distributing materials to institutional customers such as local hospitals, retirement communities, and schools about the proper disposal of prescription drugs.

"This settlement is extremely timely given recent information about pharmaceuticals in drinking water. While there is no evidence that trace-amounts of pharmaceuticals in drinking water causes a health threat, we all need to do what we can to make sure our water remains healthy to drink," said Donald S. Welsh, EPA Regional Administrator for the mid-Atlantic region.

The settlement resolves unpermitted sanitary sewer discharges to Mill Creek from 2002 through 2006. The estimated cost of the pharmaceutical project is \$10,800. Under the settlement, the authority will also pay a \$16,200 penalty.

The proposed settlement will undergo a 40-day comment period before becoming final.

For more information, visit EPA's pharmaceuticals in [drinking water webpage](#).

Pennsylvanians Urged to Evaluate Flood Insurance Needs

The Insurance Department this week reminded Pennsylvanians that the arrival of Spring is a good time to consider buying [flood insurance](#) to protect their homes and businesses. With more than 50,000 miles of rivers, streams and creeks, Pennsylvania is among the most flood-prone states in the nation.

"Flooding can happen at any time of year and in almost any area," said Acting Insurance Commissioner Joel Ario said. "Because standard homeowners insurance policies do not include coverage for flood damage, consumers should consider whether it makes sense for them to purchase flood coverage. And, because coverage takes effect 30 days after a flood policy is purchased, it's not a decision that can be put off until water begins to rise."

Flood insurance is available to homeowners, renters and businesses. A standard flood insurance policy, which pays for direct physical damage to your insured property, has an average premium of approximately \$500 a year.

Premiums for flood insurance will vary, depending on risk level for a flood loss, the amount of coverage, the type of coverage needed and the deductible level. The contents of a home are not covered under a standard policy, but for an additional premium, you also may purchase additional coverage for your personal property.

"Coverage for basements, crawlspaces and ground-level enclosures on elevated homes is limited," Commissioner Ario added. "So if your home has these spaces, be sure to ask your insurance agent about any restrictions in your policy."

Many of Pennsylvania's communities are built on floodplains, according to the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency. Nationwide, flooding caused an estimated \$45 billion in property damage between 1991 and 2000, according to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Flood insurance can be purchased from any Pennsylvania insurance producer licensed to sell property/casualty insurance, and is backed by the Federal Emergency Management Agency's national flood insurance program.

The Insurance Department also publishes a free brochure – "[Are You Ready if a Disaster Strikes?](#)" – that provides strategies for consumers whose homes and businesses might suffer weather-related property damage.

To obtain the brochure or request more information, visit the [Insurance Department website](#) or call any of the department's Bureau of Consumer Services' regional offices: Harrisburg – 717-787-2317; Philadelphia – 215-560-2630; or Pittsburgh – 412-565-5020.

2nd Annual Rachel Carson Sense of Wonder Poetry, Essay and Photography Contest

The [U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Aging Initiative](#), in partnership with [Generations United](#) and the [Rachel Carson Council Inc.](#), are inviting submissions for its Second Annual [Rachel Carson Sense of Wonder](#) Intergenerational Poetry, Essay and Photography Contest.

The deadline for entries is June 16.

Rachel Carson is considered to be the founder of the contemporary environmental movement through her landmark book, *Silent Spring*. Its publication is credited with reversing the nation's



pesticide policy.

Using the title of another of Carson's books, "*The Sense of Wonder*," the contest is seeking submissions from intergenerational teams "that best express the "Sense of Wonder" that you feel when observing the sea, the night sky, forests, birds, wildlife, and all that is beautiful to your eyes."

"Through this contest, we are inspiring the youngest and oldest among us to appreciate wonders and beauty of the natural world," said EPA Administrator Stephen L. Johnson.

"We experience a sense of wonder at every point in our lives, whether as children or older adults. The contest's intergenerational message exemplifies a long history of environmental work bridging the generations which goes back to the first Earth Day," said Donna Butts, executive director of Generations United. "We are delighted to again co-sponsor this important contest."

The contest's intergenerational approach reflects Carson's desire to have adults share with children a sense of wonder about nature and help them discover its joys. Entries must be intergenerational involving a team of persons related or unrelated and describe the intergenerational project and how this project brought the team in touch with the natural world.

A panel of expert judges will select finalists. The winners in each category will then be determined by the public, who will have an opportunity to vote on-line in July and August for their favorite submission in each category: photography, essay, and poetry. Winners will be announced on the EPA Aging Initiative Web site in October during Children's Health month.

Carson wrote that she would endow every child with "a sense of wonder so indestructible that it would last throughout life." However, "if a child is to keep alive his inborn sense of wonder, he needs the companionship of at least one adult who can share it, rediscovering with him the joy, excitement, and mystery of the world we live in."

The contest seeks to spur and instill that same sense of wonder among all generations.

For more information, visit the [Rachel Carson Sense of Wonder webpage](#).

BP Donates \$13,000 to Three PA Boy Scouts Councils

[BP America](#) recently donated more than \$13,000 to three Pennsylvania Boy Scout Councils for use on environmental projects. Each of the three councils – Northeastern Pennsylvania Council, Minsi Trails Council, and Moraine Trails Council – will receive a donation of \$4,525.

"BP is pleased to provide the Boy Scouts with funds to be used on projects that will benefit the environment, the scouts involved and the citizens of Pennsylvania," said Shawn Croucher, Environmental Business Manager with Atlantic Richfield, a wholly-owned BP subsidiary.

The contributions are to be used to assist in funding environmental projects by scouts in these three councils. These projects may come from a variety of programs, including Eagle Scout Projects, council camp improvement projects or William T. Hornaday Award projects.

The only criterion is that a project must result in a direct positive benefit for the environment or wildlife, or the public's ability to enjoy these experiences.

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Examples of projects for consideration include those focused on erosion control or re-vegetation near sensitive areas such as stream banks; construction or improvement of nature trails; “The Goose Pond Scout Reservation, owned and operated by the Northeastern Pennsylvania Council (Moosic), will greatly benefit from this grant,” according to Tom Slavicek, Scout Executive.

“The money will be invested in the on-going camp improvement environmental projects during the summer camp season this year. We expect to have over 1,200 campers attending Goose Pond this summer. We really appreciate BP America’s generosity and applaud their innovative approach and commitment to help preserve the environment.”

The BP donations emanate from a creative, cooperative and voluntary [Multi-Site Agreement](#) with the Department of Environmental Protection. The MSA sets targets and goals that guide the cleanup of petroleum-impacted retail sites and bulk storage facilities.

Under the MSA, when certain targets are exceeded with respect to moving sites and facilities toward cleanup, BP provides donations to one or more environmental initiatives approved by the DEP.

Previous donations were used to cleanup an old tire dump in 2004; install a solar array on the Governor’s residence in Harrisburg; and install a solar array on the DEP building in Norristown (outside Philadelphia).

“BP is proud to sponsor Boy Scout projects in these three councils that will benefit the environment,” Croucher said. “It might seem a bit unconventional to support environmental projects this way, but it’s another example of BP’s innovation when it comes to finding creative ways to solve complex issues.”

Harrisburg, Pittsburgh Peregrine Falcons Make Their Online Debut This Week



Spring is in the air and the [two Peregrine falcons](#) nesting on the ledge of the Rachel Carson Building in Harrisburg will again provide an intimate look at how the recovering species raises a family through online video. Their first egg should arrive around March 25.

A pair of nesting falcons can also be seen on the [Gulf Tower in Pittsburgh](#), sponsored by the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy.

The Department of Environmental Protection and the Game Commission will hold a special [Peregrine Falcon Educator’s Workshop](#) on April 3 in Harrisburg.

A pair of falcons has nested on the Rachel Carson Building since 1998 when the first photos and online video fascinated the world, attracting over 35 million page views in the early days of their nesting.

“The response we receive from this Webcast is phenomenal every year,” said DEP Secretary Kathleen McGinty. “Last year, the falcon page was viewed more than 3 million times. It’s amazing to see and read the comments visitors from around the world have left. We’ve received questions and feedback from viewers in America, Canada, Europe, New Zealand—basically, from every corner of the planet. And the interest is coming from adults and classrooms where teachers and students are following the progress of these falcons and learning about the ways they can protect their habitats.

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“By seeing the falcons’ progress up close, we can appreciate how our actions have a very real and direct impact on the wildlife and environment around us.”

In each of the past two years, the female falcon has laid a “clutch” of five eggs. The eggs should begin to hatch around Mother’s Day, May 11, and the young falcons, or “fledglings,” will begin to take their first flights around Father’s Day, June 15.

The current female has laid eggs here since 2000 with two different males, the second having been introduced in 2005 after the original male was discovered injured the previous year.

Pennsylvania’s Peregrine falcon population has increased since the early 1990s as a direct result of reintroduction efforts such as the one at the Rachel Carson State Office Building. There are more than a dozen pairs of Peregrine falcons nesting at locations across the state.

While their numbers are improving, Peregrine falcons remain an endangered species in Pennsylvania. In the early 1900s, there were about 350 pairs of nesting Peregrines in the state.

So far, the nest at the Rachel Carson State Office Building has produced 34 eggs. Of those, 32 hatched producing 16 males and 15 females (the sex of one nestling hatched in 2006, the runt of the clutch, could not be determined). Of these, 19 falcons survived—10 males and nine females.

For more information, visit [DEP’s Falcon webpage](#) and sign up for special FalconWire updates via email and the [Gulf Tower in Pittsburgh](#).

Link: [Game Commission Peregrine Falcon webpage](#)

Game Commission to Provide Wildlife Workshops for Teachers

The Game Commission this week announced a pair of wildlife education workshops for educators, scout and youth group leaders in April.

The two programs, both of which are Act 48 approved for educators, will cover the topics of Pennsylvania Biodiversity and WILD About Elk.

Theresa Alberici, Game Commission Wildlife Conservation Education specialist, facilitates and administers Project WILD, which is one of the most widely-used conservation and environmental education programs among educators of students from kindergarten through 12th grades.

These workshops, which are part of the series of Advanced WILD and PA Songbird workshops provided by the Game Commission, will be held at the Game Commission's Middle Creek Wildlife Management Area along Hopeland Road, two miles south of Kleinfeltersville, Lebanon County.

Following is a summary of the programs, both of which are free of charge—

Pennsylvania Biodiversity: On April 1, Game Commission and Carbon County Conservation District will host a workshop featuring the brand new "Pennsylvania Biodiversity" supplement to "Windows on the WILD." This program will help educators prepare students to explore the diverse ecosystems of Pennsylvania and discover the importance of biodiversity in the everyday world. For registration, please contact Jeannie Carl, at the CCEEC, 151 E. White Bear Drive, Summit Hill, PA 18250, by calling 570-645-8597 or fax 570-645-8499.

WILD about Elk: On April 10, the Pennsylvania Game Commission and Lehigh Zoo will sponsor "WILD about Elk," a very popular Project WILD workshop, that takes a close look at Pennsylvania's largest member of the cervid family. Once extirpated from the Commonwealth, a thriving elk herd of roughly 700 animals roams a portion of northcentral Pennsylvania. As part of this workshop, participants will view elk at this zoo. To register, contact Janet Berry Enos, Lehigh Valley Zoo, P.O. Box 519, 5150 Game Preserve Road, Schneeksville, PA 18078, 610-799-4171 (ext. 238), or email her at jberry-enos@lvzoo.org.

Additionally, space still is available at "WILD in the City" educator's workshop featuring the Peregrine Falcon, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., April 3. The workshop is being hosted by the Game Commission, Department of Environmental Protection and ZOOAMERICA at the DEP headquarters in the Rachel Carson State Office Building, Harrisburg.

The workshop will address the natural history, reintroduction and the current status of peregrine falcons in Pennsylvania, and include activities that can be used to help address state education standards.

Features of the workshop included a presentation by Dan Brauning, Game Commission Wildlife Diversity Section Supervisor, and Dr. Art McMorris, Game Commission ornithologist and lead peregrine falcon biologist in the state. Brauning spearheaded the peregrine reintroduction program in Pennsylvania.

To register for "WILD in the City," educators should contact DEP's Environmental Education and Information Center at 717-772-1644 or send email to: adevine@state.pa.us by March 27.

Game Commission Reports Deer Harvest Down 11 Percent Over Last Season

The Game Commission this week reported that [hunters harvested](#) an estimated 323,070 deer in the state's 2007-08 seasons. That's down 11 percent from the previous seasons' harvest.

Hunters took 109,200 antlered deer in the 2007-08 seasons, down 19 percent from the previous license year's harvest of 135,290. Also, hunters harvested 213,870 antlerless deer in 2007-08, a five percent drop from the 226,270 antlerless deer taken in 2006-07.

"What stands out most when looking over the harvest data is the difference in the opening day deer kill of the two-week firearms season," said Dr. Christopher Rosenberry, Game Commission Deer Section Supervisor. "Report cards sent in by hunters show the antlered deer harvest on the opening day, November 26, dropped more than 50 percent from 2006. Daily harvests for the rest of the two-week season, November 27-December 8, were similar to 2006.

"The firearms season's opening day antlerless deer harvest also dropped nearly 50 percent from 2006. However, the antlerless harvest throughout the remainder of the two-week season increased and, in due course, erased some of the opening day's harvest shortfall."



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Based on past year's results, Rosenberry noted that it wasn't surprising that the drop in opening day harvests had a larger effect on the antlered harvest than the antlerless harvest.

"Historically, a majority of the antlered deer harvest occurs on opening day, whereas the antlerless harvest is typically more evenly distributed across the entire two weeks," Rosenberry said.

Bureau of Wildlife Management personnel currently are working to develop antlerless deer license allocation recommendations for the April Board meeting. Calvin W. DuBrock, Game Commission Bureau of Wildlife Management director, said that in addition to harvest data, the staff will be looking at population trend data, deer reproduction data, forest regeneration data, input from five new Citizen Advisory Committees, and hunter survey results.

Harvest estimates for 2007-08 seasons are based on 124,569 usable harvest report cards (40,482 antlered; 84,087 antlerless) returned by hunters to the Commission and 25,400 deer (7,338 antlered; 18,062 antlerless) examined by Game Commission personnel in the field and at processors.

For an explanation, visit the agency's [deer harvest estimating procedure webpage](#). A peer-reviewed article published in the Journal of Wildlife Management (2004) about the agency's deer harvest estimating procedure, [is also available online](#).

Deer harvests by wildlife management units [is available online](#).

NewsClip: [Hunters Kill 323,070 Deer, Down 11 Percent](#)

Link: [Audubon PA Tells Committee Forests Still Degraded By Too Many Deer – Video](#)

WPC Offers Land Preservation and Conservation Easements Workshop

The [Western Pennsylvania Conservancy](#) is offering a comprehensive workshop for landowners and WPC conservation partners entitled, "Understanding Land Preservation and Conservation Easements," at two locations.

Attendees will learn about the critical role of conservation easements in permanently protecting land. They also will learn how easements are developed and held, and how to work with a land trust to protect the conservation value of their property.

"Land preservation and conservation easements are topics many people have heard about, but have had little opportunity to learn about. This workshop offers the opportunity to learn about these topics and ask questions about how they are applicable in specific situations," said Nick Pinizzotto, Senior Director, Freshwater Conservation.

The workshops, which will be led by WPC staff experts in water and land conservation, are planned for: April 22 at the Mercer County Penn State Cooperative Extension office, 463 North Perry Hwy, Mercer, PA 16137 (just north of Mercer on Route 19); and April 29 in Indiana County at the Rustic Lodge in Indiana, at 2199 Oakland Ave, Indiana, PA 15701.

Registration for both dates opens at 6:30 p.m. with the workshops starting at 7 p.m. and ending by 8:30 p.m.

All landowners seeking a means to protect their land, as well as WPC partners whose conservation objectives include protecting and restoring the environment, are encouraged to attend. The workshops are free and open to the public; however, space is

limited. All attendees will receive preservation literature, and have the opportunity to speak directly with the presenters.

Funding for this event was provided by the Department of Environmental Protection and the Growing Greener Grant Program.

If possible, please RSVP at least one week prior to the event date to Mike Holiday at 724-459-0953 x 110 or send email to: mholiday@paconserve.org.

Exelon-EPURON Solar Center Breaks Ground on 3,700 MW Plant

Construction officially got underway this week on the \$20 million Exelon-EPURON Solar Center that will feature 16,500 solar panels on a 16.5-acre tract of land adjacent to Waste Management's GROWS Landfill.

Upon completion, the solar plant will annually produce approximately 3,700 megawatt hours of power, which is enough to meet the energy requirements of approximately 400 homes. At this output, emission levels of carbon dioxide and sulfur dioxide that directly contribute to pollution and acid rain will be reduced by the equivalent of planting 33 acres of trees every year or taking more than 440 cars off the road each year.

The facility is owned by EPURON LLC, a subsidiary of the world's largest solar integration company, Conergy AG, which has its North American headquarters in Pennsylvania. Another Pennsylvania-based Conergy subsidiary, Conergy Systems USA—formerly SunTechnics—will build the solar center.

“We are pleased to begin construction of the largest East Coast solar energy facility, and the fourth largest in the U.S.,” said Arndt E. Lutz, EPURON general manager. “This project will be the first of many in Pennsylvania that will help meet the Alternative Energy Portfolio Standard that the commonwealth had the vision to implement. It is our goal to develop and build solar energy in Pennsylvania for many years to come. We would like to express our thanks to the Governor, state legislature, Exelon and Waste Management for making this project happen.”

“When this facility is up and running—likely by September or October of this year—it will be among the largest in the country, and certainly the largest east of Arizona,” said Gov. Rendell during groundbreaking ceremonies. “This project embodies the commitment we've made to renewable energy in the Commonwealth.”

[Exelon Generation Company LLC](#) made an important financial commitment to the project through a 20-year power purchase agreement for the energy produced, recognizing the environmental importance of solar energy, according to Kenneth Cornew, president of Exelon Power Team.

“Exelon recognizes the importance of minimizing the amount of greenhouse gas emissions associated with electricity production,” said Cornew. “We are an industry leader in this area. Our fleet emits less greenhouse gas than any other large electric generation company, but we all need to do more to reduce our carbon footprint and meet America's future energy needs. This is why Exelon is proud to be a partner with the governor, the state legislature, Epuron, and Waste Management in bringing the benefits of one of the nation's largest solar power projects to Pennsylvania and the region.”

Chem-Fab Site in Doylestown Added to EPA's Superfund List

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency this week added the [Chem-Fab site](#), located in Doylestown, Bucks County, to the Superfund National Priorities List.

The NPL is a national list of sites where contaminants have impacted or might impact public health or the environment. NPL sites undergo a thorough investigation to determine the full nature and extent of the contamination prior to the cleanup by EPA or the responsible parties.

Chem-Fab operated an electroplating facility on the site from 1965 to 1978 and a metal processing plant there from 1965 to 1994. Groundwater beneath the former Chem-Fab facility and adjacent properties is contaminated with trichloroethene and hexavalent chromium. TCE was used as an industrial solvent and is considered to be a probable human carcinogen. Concentrations of TCE exceeding federal drinking water standards were detected in residential and municipal wells within one-half mile of the site.

EPA and the Department of Environmental Protection have been working together to address groundwater issues at the site. In 1991, EPA connected eight residential wells and two businesses to a public water supply due to contamination of their wells. A public water supply well was also closed due to the presence of contamination.

From 1994 to 1995, EPA removed and disposed of 117 drums of wastes and an additional 8,400 gallons of liquid waste under the Superfund removal program.

For more information, visit EPA's [Chem-Fab webpage](#).

Backyard Composting Courses to Be Offered in 50 Counties

The Penn State Cooperative Extension, in partnership with the Department of Environmental Protection, will hold [backyard composting education workshops](#) in 50 counties beginning in April.

The goal of the backyard composting program is to promote the recycling and reuse of yard trimmings, leaves, grass, kitchen scraps and other organic materials. County Extension agents and [Master Gardener](#) volunteers in each participating will teach the workshops.

Participants in the workshops receive a free composting bin (1 bin per household).

To date this program has offered nearly 600 workshops in 64 counties and over 20,000 composting bins have been distributed.

To see if your county is offering workshops this Spring, visit the [Backyard Composting webpage](#).



Protecting Pennsylvania's Historic Resources Conference May 14-16

[Protecting Pennsylvania's Historic Resources](#) brings together the Ninth Annual Byways to the Past Conference and the Thirtieth Annual Heritage Partnerships Conference for the first time in Harrisburg May 12-16.

The joint conference is sponsored by Preservation Pennsylvania, the Department of Transportation, the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, the Department of

Conservation and Natural Resources, the Federal Highway Administration, and the Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission.

Sessions will feature a wide variety of preservation, transportation, land use, and environmental topics, and will include speakers and moderators with regional and national reputations. The conference will be preceded by a variety of pre-conference workshops.

For more information and to register, visit the [Protecting Pennsylvania's Historic Resources webpage](#) or contact Mindy Crawford, at [Preservation Pennsylvania](#), by sending email to: mcrawford@preservationpa.org or call 717-234-2310.

Spotlight

Conservation Districts Hold Capitol Legislative Day to Push Initiatives

The [Pennsylvania Association of Conservation Districts](#) held a Capitol Legislative Day and luncheon this week in Harrisburg to focus attention on key legislative issues important to conservation districts across the Commonwealth.

Over 200 participants attended the event, including representatives from county conservation districts and members of the House and Senate. Gov. Rendell was the keynote speaker for a legislative luncheon.

Several legislative issues were discussed including the need to obtain consistent and sufficient funding for conservation district activities and staff, amendments to the Conservation District Law, and future renewable energy projects.

"These issues are vital to Pennsylvania's Conservation Districts," stated Larry Kehl, President of the PACD. "We spoke with our friends in the PA General Assembly explaining the importance of these legislative initiatives."

Susan Marquart, Executive Director of PACD, added, "The focus of our Capitol Day luncheon is to bring forth ideas and generate enthusiasm for our concerns. This successful event is an extension of an ongoing dialog between the conservation districts and our elected leaders."

Some of the legislative highlights included:

Funding for the Conservation Districts: A review of the Operation and Structure of County Conservation Districts released on June 7, 2005 by the [Legislative Budget and Finance Committee](#) concurs with the position of the Pennsylvania Association of Conservation Districts that Pennsylvania's conservation districts are under funded.

The study recommends that the state should pay 50 percent of the costs for certain conservation district staff positions. Additional funding is also necessary for the Nutrient Management Program that provides technical assistance through conservation districts for the responsible implementation of the Commonwealth's Nutrient and Odor Management Law. Adequate funding for this program is essential to the agricultural community and the public to ensure the viability and success of the program.

Amendments to the Conservation District Law: Conservation districts administer a wide array of delegated and contracted state programs with a number of funding sources. To update and strengthen Act 217, and continue to meet the conservation needs of the Commonwealth, two major enhancements were suggested as amendments to the Conservation District Law: increasing the capacity of conservation districts to deliver

locally led conservation; and further defining and strengthening the State Conservation Commission. (Note: [Senate Bill 1020](#) (Wonderling-R-Montgomery))

Dedicated Funding for the Conservation Districts: PACD is talking with members of the General Assembly and the Administration concerning dedicated funding for conservation districts. As was referenced above, the [Legislative Budget and Finance Committee report](#) recommends that the PA General Assembly strive to meet the State Conservation Commission's policy of 50 percent funding for the district managers and technicians. Conservation districts are continuously undertaking more responsibilities and program implementation with less funding. By instituting a dedicated funding source, conservation districts will be guaranteed a funding base and Pennsylvania citizens will be guaranteed continuing technical assistance to further their land stewardship activities.

Energy Initiatives: PACD distributed a paper entitled, "Achieving Pennsylvania's Energy Independence Goals While Strengthening Conservation in Pennsylvania; [The Critical Role of Pennsylvania's Conservation Districts](#)." This report shows that conservation district technical services will be increasingly necessary as emphasis on bio-fuel production alters farm operations and the need for updated and improved conservation plans. PACD is recommending an additional \$10 million allocation for the next five years to assist the Commonwealth in becoming a leader in renewable energy resources.

Speaking to conservation districts this week, Gov. Rendell agreed there will be environmental impacts associated with planting crops used to make biofuels saying, "Planting more corn and the increased farming activity associated with it has caused concern among some that our water quality will be impaired. We recognize these concerns, and have used our resources wisely to help farmers avoid practices that could have negative impacts on the environment."

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

Link: [Gov. Rendell Touts Cellulosic Ethanol Technology](#)

Feature

Western Pennsylvania Land: A Legacy for Future Generations

In its first 75 years, the [Western Pennsylvania Conservancy](#) left an important legacy for Western Pennsylvania by permanently protecting some of our most cherished natural places.

In January 2008, WPC heralded its next 75 years with a set of land acquisitions that are the largest in a decade. The [75th Anniversary Acquisitions](#) include several parcels in five counties and permanently protecting 11,300 acres.

The purchases were made possible through a \$14 million grant from the [Richard King Mellon Foundation](#) and \$6.5 million from the Department of Conservation



Southern Clarion River

and Natural Resources.

They reflect the organization's steadfast commitment to land conservation – and our belief that this work is more critical than ever in an era confronted by the challenges of poorly planned development and habitat loss for native plants and animals.

The purchases were completed by WPC's Land Conservation and Stewardship team, which was formed under a new associate vice president, Greg Socha, in late 2007 to focus exclusively on land conservation.

A central operation of WPC since the organization's founding, land conservation activities have enabled WPC to protect nearly 225,000 acres of natural lands throughout Western Pennsylvania. Many of these acquisitions have become parks, public forests and gamelands, set aside for the enjoyment of people and the protection of natural resources, for all time.

The Land Conservation and Stewardship team is focused on maximizing WPC's impact in this area – to help safeguard our drinking water sources, provide havens for endangered wildlife, and provide beautiful recreational areas for those who visit the region or call it home.

The [Spring issue of Conserve Magazine](#) focuses on WPC's work in land conservation – the latest acquisitions, the most noteworthy projects over the years, and the critical roles that volunteers and partners play in the organization's success.

Southern Clarion River/Laurel Hill Creek Forest

From the Seneca Point overlook, the Clarion River cuts through a steep-sided valley that is blanketed with trees and continues as far as the eye can see. A walk through the valley's dense woods reveals oaks, maples, hemlocks, white pines, and occasional chestnuts.

Overhead, a bald eagle may even make a star appearance. The river below is home to trout and smallmouth bass, a boon to anglers and a reflection of the health of this treasured waterway.

This 3,300-acre stretch of secluded land along the Clarion River south of Cooksburg, Pa., called the Southern Clarion River Forest, was further protected in January 2008 by the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy as part of our 75th Anniversary Acquisitions. The WPC purchase includes 1,600 acres of land and 1,700 acres of timber rights. Previously a mix of public and private ownership, the land is now completely publicly owned for a variety of recreational uses. It had been identified as a high priority by WPC due to its significant conservation value as well as its scenic beauty.

Also purchased in the first phase of the 75th Anniversary Acquisitions is the Laurel Hill Creek Forest – a 2,300-acre parcel in Somerset County known for its stunning views as well as its conservation significance.

Laurel Hill Creek Forest includes more than three miles of frontage on Laurel Hill Creek, a high-quality fishery and tributary to the Youghiogheny River. Now permanently protected, this land connects to a large forest block, creating a broad swath of uninterrupted forest that shelters native plants and animals. It includes a state-designated exceptional-value stream, Sandy Run.

After the purchase, WPC transferred the majority of acres it protected in this first phase of the 75th Anniversary Acquisitions to The Department of Conservation and Natural Resources Bureau of Forestry. The Southern Clarion River Forest became a part of Clear Creek State Forest, while Laurel Hill Creek Forest has been added to Forbes State Forest. The transfer to the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources ensures that

these lands will be permanently conserved and available to the public for hunting, fishing, camping, hiking and other outdoor activities.

The purchases are also expected to result in economic benefits – both through boosts to local tourism industries and through increased payments to impacted counties and townships, due to legislatively increased payments in lieu of taxes on lands owned by the Commonwealth.

Bennett Branch Forest

In Elk and Clearfield counties, a 5,300-acre hardwood oak forest presented the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy with a rare conservation opportunity.

This forest, characterized by steep slopes that descend from a high plateau, serves as home to elk, bears, turkey and deer. A network of streams there feeds into the Bennett Branch, an important tributary of Sinnemahoning Creek that has been impacted by acid mine drainage. Once a favorite hunting and recreation area, this property has been closed to the public for more than a decade.

WPC acquired this parcel in February 2008 in the second phase of its 75th Anniversary Acquisitions and named it the Bennett Branch Forest. The purchase gives WPC the chance to restore and sustainably manage this high-priority forest corridor in order to improve water quality, better support native plants and animals – and open the land to the public once again.

“We have the opportunity to conserve this great forest and play a role in improving the watershed in order to protect a complete system,” said Greg Socha, WPC’s associate vice president of land conservation and stewardship.

The Bennett Branch Forest has been a priority conservation target for WPC because of the importance of its watershed, as well its large tracts of forestland and its protected habitats for native animals and plants. The Western Pennsylvania Conservancy intends to retain ownership of a portion of this land, 1,470 acres, in order to carry out numerous environmental improvements there.

“We’ve been involved in efforts to restore the Bennett Branch watershed for several years. As a result of the purchase of Bennett Branch Forest, we can launch a multifaceted plan for improvement,” said Socha. Projects there will improve water quality, address land problems related to past mining practices, as well as support reforestation and habitat improvement.

The majority of acres purchased by WPC in this second phase of the 75th Anniversary Acquisitions will be transferred to the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources Bureau of Forestry to become part of Moshannon State Forest. DCNR intends to permit a variety of recreational activities there, including hiking, camping and hunting.

In addition, an 80-acre parcel in Clearfield County will be transferred from the owner to the Department of Environmental Protection, which will build an acid mine drainage treatment plant to improve the Bennett Branch Creek.

This second phase of WPC’s 75th Anniversary Acquisitions is expected to result in economic benefits to area counties and townships, due to increases in area tourism and to legislatively increased payments in lieu of taxes on state lands.

Link: [75 Years of Western Pennsylvania Conservancy Land Conservation](#)

Grants & Awards

This section gives you a heads up on upcoming deadlines for grants and financial assistance as well as nominations for awards and other recognition programs. **NEW** means from last week—

- **March 21**— [Society of Women Environmental Professionals Grants](#)
- **March 24**—[EPA Show Us Your Best Earth Day Photo Contest](#)
- **March 31**—[DEP Stormwater Management Administration Grants](#)
- **March 31** – PAEP [Karl Mason Environmental Award](#).
- **March 31**—[DEP Host Municipality Inspector Grants](#)
- **March 31**—[Pa CleanWays Litter Hawk Youth Award Program](#)
- **April 1**— [Write On! Wetlands Challenge Student Competition](#)
- **April 2** – [WREN Water Resources Education Project Grants](#)
- **April 4**— [Schuylkill River Heritage Area Mini-Grants](#)
- **April 11**—**NEW**. [PA American Water Environmental Grant Program](#)
- **April 25**— DCNR [Community Conservation Partnerships Program Grants](#)
- **May 1**— [PA CleanWays’ Sue Wiseman Student Scholarship](#)
- **May 2**—**NEW**. [Friend of the Lehigh River Awards](#)
- **May 2**—[DCNR Volunteer Forest Firefighter Grants](#)
- **May 16**—[DEP Growing Greener Watershed, Flood Protection Grants](#)
- **May 20** – PennVEST [Infrastructure Loans/Grants for April 15 Meeting](#).
- **June 16**—**NEW**. [Rachel Carson Sense of Wonder Contest](#)
- **June 20**— DEP [Section 902 Recycling Development Grants](#)
- [RC&D Grants for Improving Livestock Operations](#)
- **September 20**— [Fish & Boat Commission Boating Facilities Grants](#)

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

Quick Clips

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

[Wyoming Seminary Teacher Inspires Students to Excel](#)

[Nature Workshop Focuses on Writing for Children](#)

[US Steel Reaches Clean Air Agreement with Allegheny County](#)

[Air Fails National Smog Test](#)

[Williamsport City Hall Goes Green](#)

[LED There Be Light](#)

[More Trash Becomes Recyclable in Allentown](#)

[Workshop: Environmental Covenant, Stimulus for Business](#)

[PA National Leader in Growth of CO2 Emissions](#)

[Op-Ed: Wildlife is Feeling the Heat](#)

[Op-Ed: Nuclear Energy Makes Nation Freer and Cleaner](#)

[Geothermal Energy Can Cut Energy Use, Greenhouse Gases](#)

[Solar Project Breaks Ground in Bucks](#)
[Deal to Connect Wind Turbine, P&G Site in Wyoming County](#)
[Unraveling Confusion About Alternative Energy Vehicles](#)
[Editorial: Lack of Wind Siting Protocol a Basic Flaw in State Proposal](#)
[Taking the Sting Out of Your Electric Bill](#)
[Rendell Says Developing Cellulosic Ethanol Tech is Key](#)
[Interest in Gas Leases, Drilling Means Headaches for Local Officials](#)
[Proposals for Allegheny County Park Improvements](#)
[North Allegheny an Island Out of Time](#)
[Rails to Trails Project Receives New Funding](#)
[Upscale Eco-Tours Bring New Revenues to State Parks](#)
[Land Preservation a Good Investment, Expert Says](#)
[Delaware Highlands Conservancy Cited for Success](#)
[Five Hotspots for Wildflowers](#)
[South Lebanon Farms Preserved](#)
[Speakers Chastise City Over Billboard Approval](#)
[Editorial: Pittsburgh Council Calls for Billboard Pause](#)
[Flight 93 Families to Buy Piece of Land for Memorial](#)

Watershed NewsClips

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

[Yough River Cleanup Lauded](#)
[Op-Ed: The Yough is Worth Protecting](#)
[Bay Foundation Asks EPA to Speed Chesapeake Bay Cleanup](#)
[Bay Issue Just One That Needs Addressing](#)
[Editorial: Bay Group Calling for Faster Process](#)
[Growing Greener Funding Adjusted by County](#)
[Water As a Resource Highlighted at Recent Schuylkill Congress](#)
[Paxton Creek Woes May Hit Taxpayers](#)
[Land Critical to Water Health](#)
[Wastewater Idea Earns Top Science Fair Award](#)
[Drinking Water Will Be Tested for Byproducts](#)
[DEP Responds to Water Series](#)
[Preventing Waterways From Choking](#)
[Swim to Mark Clean Presque Isle Bay](#)
[Streamside Property Workshop Coming Up](#)
[Carbon Protects Groundwater Resources](#)
[Dam Removal a Chance for Study](#)
[Still No Decision on Susquehanna River Water for Southern Adams](#)
[Editorial: Forget About Damming Susquehanna](#)
[DEP Amends Allegheny River Dredging Permit to Minimize Impact](#)
[Swans, Snow Geese Stage Annual Show](#)
[Laurel Hill Creek: Almost a River](#)
[Pennsylvania Towns Hit with Sticker Shock](#)
[Septic Systems Must Be Inspected](#)

[Kanjorski Gives Up Plan to Dam Susquehanna
Flood Could Bring Floods to Philadelphia Region
Reservoirs Vex Delaware River Flood Victims
St. Patrick's Day Flood Killed 60 in 1936](#)

Regulations

The Department of Environmental Protection [published a corrective amendment](#) to proposed water quality standards regulations, proposed revisions to the 8-Hour Ozone Nonattainment Area Plan for [Clearfield-Indiana](#) and [York-Adams](#) and final regulations were published relating to [siting landfills in proximity to airports](#).

[Pennsylvania Bulletin – March 21, 2008](#)

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 draft guidance](#) on site suitability and alternatives analysis for onlot sewage disposal.

DEP ID: 362-2207-001. Act 537 Program Guidance; Site Suitability and Alternatives Analysis Guidelines for New Land Development Proposing Onlot Sewage Disposal. This guidance provides a consistent and systematic approach for Department staff to follow when reviewing planning submission site suitability and alternatives analysis information submitted to the Department under the Sewage Facilities Act (Act 537) and Department regulations. Comments due: April 21.

[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. **NEW** indicates new from last week.
[Go To: PA Environment Digest Calendar Page](#)

- **March 25**—**NEW**. House Republican Policy Committee hearing on Chesapeake Bay Tributary Strategy compliance costs. Brumbaugh Academic Center, Juniata College. 1:00.

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- **March 25**—**CANCELLED**. DEP [Cleanup Standards Scientific Advisory Board](#) meeting. Next scheduled meeting is July 16.
- **March 26**—House Environmental Resources and Energy Committee hearing to solicit testimony on proactive policies on a transition to market-based electric rates and on [Special Session House Bill 54](#) (George-D-Clearfield) providing for a temporary extension of rate caps. Ramada Conference Center, Altoona. 1:00.
- **March 26**—DCNR [Conservation and Natural Resources Advisory Council](#) meeting. Room 105 Rachel Carson Building. 10:00.
- **March 28**—[PA Energy Development Authority](#) meeting. Room 105 Rachel Carson Building. 10:00.
- **March 28**—[Lehigh Valley Watershed Conference and Shad Symposium](#). Holiday Inn, Fogelsville. Information, send email to: rkennedy@lehighconservation.org.
- **March 29**—[PennFuture’s Annual Watershed Conference](#). Chadd’s Ford.
- **March 31**—**NEW**. House Game and Fisheries Committee meets to consider [House Resolution 642](#) (Levdansky-D-Allegheny) directing the Legislative Budget and Finance Committee to do an audit of the Game Commission’s Deer Management Program. Room G-50 Irvis Building. 12:30.
- **April 1**—Senate Environmental Resources and Energy Committee informational briefing on DCNR’s natural gas leasing policy. Room 8E-B. 10:30.
- **April 1**—**NEW**. House Tourism and Recreational Development Committee meets to consider [House Bill 2035](#) (Seip-D-Berks) establishing the Pennsylvania Heritage Area Development Program and [House Bill 2043](#) (Haluska-D-Cambria) establishing the Snowmobile and All-Terrain Vehicle Act. Room 205 Ryan Building. 9:00.
- **April 1**—[DEP Environmental Justice Advisory Board](#) meeting. Room 105 Rachel Carson Building. 8:30.
- **April 1-2**—The Pennsylvania Chamber of Business and Industry 2008 [Environmental Regulations & Technologies Conference](#). Eden Resort Inn & Suites, Lancaster.
- **April 2**—**NEW**. House Environmental Resources and Energy Committee meeting on [Senate Bill 949](#) (Kasunic-D-Somerset) updating the Bituminous Coal Mine Safety Act. Room 140. 9:00.
- **April 3**—House Game and Fisheries Committee meets to hear the annual report of the Game Commission. G-50 Irvis Building. 9:00.
- **April 10**—**NEW**. House Transportation Committee hearing on diesel truck idling. Room G-50 Irvis Building. 9:30.
- **April 10**—House Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee hearing on [House Bill 2347](#) (Kessler-D-Berks) establishing the Organic Agriculture Development Act. Oley Valley Fair Centre, Oley, Pa. 1:00.
- **April 14**—[PA Infrastructure Investment Authority](#) meeting. Dixon University Center, 2986 N. Second St., Harrisburg. 10:00.
- **April 15**—PA Infrastructure Investment Authority meeting. (*notice*)
- **April 17**—Sewage Task Force, [Joint Legislative Air and Water Pollution Control and Conservation Committee](#) meeting. Penn Stater, State College. 10:00.
- **April 18**—PEC [Water Trail Working Session Conference](#).
- **April 18**—**NEW**. DEP [Coal and Clay Mine Subsidence Insurance Board](#) meeting. 10th Floor Conference Room, Rachel Carson Building. 10:00.

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- **April 19**— Protecting Our Headwaters Streams and Wetlands-What You Can Do. Cedar Crest College, Allentown. 10:00-3:00. Contact: Barbara Benson, 610-282-33611 or send email to: barbarabenson@bensonsails.com .
- **April 30**—**NEW**. House Tourism and Recreational Development Committee hearing on [House Bill 1908](#) (Rohrer-R-Berks) relating to liability for opening private lands to recreation. Patton Volunteer Fire Company, Patton. 10:00.
- **May 13-15**—[PA Water/Wastewater Association](#) annual conference. Valley Forge.
- **May 28**— [Western Pennsylvania Environmental Awards Program](#). Pittsburgh.

[DEP Calendar of Events](#)

[Environmental Education Workshop/Training Calendar](#)

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

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

You can watch the [Senate Floor Session](#) and [House Floor Session](#) live online.

Helpful Web Links

[PA Environment Digest Video Blog](#)

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

[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@CrisciAssociates.com or go to www.PaEnvironmentDigest.com .

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