

— PA — Environment Digest

*An Update on
Environmental
Issues in
Pennsylvania*

Edited By David E. Hess, Holston & Crisci

March 28, 2005

House Returns, Anniversary Remembered, Passing of a Friend

The House returns to voting session next week and tentatively plans to discuss bills related to conservation easements, funding security upgrades to infrastructure, local government help to watershed associations and other odds and ends.

Discussions continue behind the scenes on Growing Greener proposals, but the Senate is not due back to voting session until April 4.

This Digest includes an updated list of pending environmental legislation for your reference as we head into a busy legislative season.

We also included background on a special anniversary - the accident at Three Mile Island- which not only made a major psychological impact on the people that experienced it, but it also had a lasting impact on how Pennsylvania and many others handle emergencies.

Lastly, we pay tribute to the passing of a friend—Fred Taylor—who was the long-time counsel to Republican Chairmen of the House Environmental Resources and Energy Committee.

Session Schedule

The House will be in voting session March 29, 30, then not until April 11.
The next voting day for the Senate is April 4.

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Thousands of snow geese, tundra swans stop over in Middle Creek. *Download the special Middle Creek photo feature at the bottom of this webpage.*

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Attachment: [Middle Creek Photo Feature - PDF](#)

On the Hill

Environmental Forum Features Presentation on Anti-Litter, Beautification

The [Joint Legislative Air and Water Pollution Control and Conservation Committee](#) April 12 Earth Day Environmental Issues Forum will feature a presentation by Julia Marano, Executive Director of Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful.

Ms. Marano will speak about [Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful](#) organization and Pennsylvania's anti-littering, community enhancement and greening, and waste handling efforts, including the upcoming Great Pennsylvania Cleanup, scheduled for April 23.

Environmental Legislation Introduced in the House and Senate

Here's an updated list of environmental legislation introduced in the House and Senate so far this year attached to this webpage. Check out these recent bills—

Environmental Education: [Senate Bill 410](#) (MJ White-R-Venango, Musto-D-Luzerne) establishing the Pennsylvania Center for Environmental Education in law.

Penalties for Illegal Dumping: [Senate Bill 309](#) (Stack-D-Philadelphia) providing for additional penalties for illegal dumping in State Parks and Forests.

Expanding Downtowns: [House Bill 965](#) (Hickernell-R-Lancaster) Expanding the Main Street Program to include residential uses.

Incentives for Coal Bed Methane: [House Bill 812](#) (Pistella-D-Allegheny) providing for tax incentives for using coal bed methane to generate electricity.

Other News

Celebrate Watershed Month “Protect Our Watersheds, Protect Our Future”



For the fourth consecutive year, May will be celebrated as [Watershed Awareness Month](#) to encourage Pennsylvanians to learn more about their local watersheds and participate in environmental activities to enhance their natural surroundings and communities.

The theme this year, "Protect our Watersheds, Protect our Future" highlights the importance of caring for our watersheds in order to ensure a healthy environment for future generations.

Throughout the month of May, volunteer community organizations, educators, and other groups are encouraged to promote the importance of watersheds at the grassroots and community levels by organizing and conducting watershed awareness activities.

To celebrate Watershed Awareness Month, participants can take part in watershed walks, water quality monitoring, streamside cleanups, and other activities already taking place in their watersheds, or they can organize an event of their own.

To find out what activities are planned in a community, or to network with others interested in planning an event, an online webpage, hosted by the Pennsylvania Organization for Watershed and Rivers, offers easy access to an event calendar, watershed news and stories, and more relating to Watershed Awareness Month.

Visit the [Watershed Awareness Month webpage](#) for the latest updates.

If you already have an event planned, be sure to register it with the online calendar to publicize your activity. Also, the online available information sheets provide some helpful hints to get you thinking about your watershed activities.

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A committee of several organizations representing watershed partners - including the [Department of Environmental Protection](#), the [Department of Conservation and Natural Resources](#), the [Susquehanna River Basin Commission](#), the [Eastern Pennsylvania Coalition for Abandoned Mine Reclamation](#), the [Pennsylvania Organization for Watersheds and Rivers](#), the [Pennsylvania Environmental Council](#), [Canaan Valley Institute](#), and the Resource Conservation and Development Council - have been working in partnership to make Watershed Awareness Month a unique opportunity for every Pennsylvanian to expand their awareness and appreciation for water resources.

For more information contact Beth Brennan of the Watershed Awareness Month Planning Committee: Pennsylvania Environmental Council, 412.481.9400 or info@pecwest.org.

NewsClip: [Green Valleys 5K Run for Watershed Awareness Month](#)

March 21-25 National Flood Safety Awareness Week

NOAA's National Weather Service, [Susquehanna River Basin Commission](#) and other organizations this week marked National Flood Safety Awareness Week, March 21-25.

This 5-day designation was issued by NWS to coincide with the beginning of spring, which is the time of the year when the threat of flooding is generally the greatest - although flooding can occur any time of the year.



The National Weather Service has established a special [Flood Safety Awareness Week webpage](#) to provide access to a wide-range of information related to flooding and flood safety programs, including safety tips, and information on flood insurance programs and how to flood proof homes.

According to the NWS, more people die each year in the U.S. from flooding than any other severe-weather event, and more than half of those deaths are the result of people attempting to drive on flooded roadways and are swept away. NWS created the special [Turn Around Don't Drown program](#) to educate the public about this danger.

More than 80 percent of the 1,400 plus municipalities in the Susquehanna basin include areas that are flood-prone.

Since 1986, the [Susquehanna Flood Forecasting and Warning System](#) has provided the data used by the NWS to issue accurate and timely flood watches and warnings. The Susquehanna System is extremely cost-effective, with a benefit-cost ratio of 20-to-1. For every federal dollar invested in the Susquehanna System, \$20 are saved through reduced damages and reduced federal flood recovery payouts.

The Susquehanna System, which is credited with reducing flood damages in the Susquehanna basin by an average of \$32 million each year, performed extremely well during Tropical Storm Ivan in September 2004. Using data generated by the Susquehanna System, the NWS was able to issue near-perfect flood predictions and warnings - giving businesses and residents time to secure their property and get themselves out of harm's way before the flood waters struck.

[SRBC](#) is supporting a \$2 million appropriation request for federal fiscal year 2006. These funds, if restored, would be allocated to the NWS and the U.S. Geological Survey to maintain and operate the Susquehanna System.

NewsClip: [Funding Sought for Susquehanna Flood Warning System](#)
[Editorial: Something Has to Give](#)

West Branch of the Susquehanna Named DCNR's River of the Year

Department of Conservation and Natural Resources this week named the West Branch of the Susquehanna River as Pennsylvania's River of the Year for 2005 to celebrate the waterway's rebound from a troubled past to a promising future.



The annual designation applauds local residents, governments, non-profit and conservation organizations working to improve waterways and the quality of life in their watersheds across the state.

This year's honor also focuses on the unlimited recreational and tourism potential offered by the river as it travels more than 230 miles from near Bakerton, Cambria County, to its junction with the river's main body near Northumberland, Northumberland County.

With the one-year designation, the West Branch will be the subject of a June Rivers Month poster, and an annual River Sojourn will be sponsored by DCNR and the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay.

The West Branch Sojourn, set for June 2-6, will travel from Keating, Clinton County, to Williamsport, Lycoming County. Last year's featured river was the North Branch of the Susquehanna.

A map and guide of the "[Susquehanna River Water Trail - West Branch](#)" was recently completed by the Lumber Heritage Region of Pennsylvania, with funding from the Chesapeake Bay Gateways Network and DCNR Heritage Parks Program. The water trail is part of the Chesapeake Bay Gateways Network, a partnership system of more than 20 water trails and 120 parks, refuges, maritime museums and historic sites in the Chesapeake watershed.

For more information visit the [West Branch Susquehanna River webpage](#), [West Branch Symposium in May](#) and the [West Branch Sojourn](#) in June. Go to the [schedule for 2005 river sojourns](#) to find a trip near you.

What's a sojourn? Visit the [Pennsylvania Sojourn webpage](#).

NewsClip: [West Branch Honored as River of the Year](#)

Final TMDLs Available for 17 Streams in 12 Counties

The Department of Environmental Protection announced the availability of final Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDL) Plans for all or parts of 17 watersheds in 12 counties ([PaB 1936](#)). They include:

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Allegheny County: Moon Run
Armstrong County: Huskins Run and Limestone Run
Butler County: Blacks Creek and Seaton Creek
Clarion County: McGourvey Run
Cambria County: Brubaker Run
Clearfield County: Big Run, Surveyor Run and Little Surveyor Run
Fayette County: Newmyer Run
Indiana County: Unnamed Tributary to the Conemaugh River
Lancaster and Berks Counties: Conestoga Headwaters
Somerset County: Cucumber Run and Oven Run
Westmoreland County: Union Run and McCune Run

For a copy of the TMDL, visit [DEP's TMDL webpage](#).

Citizens' Toolkit to Prevent Illegal Dumping in Parks, Forests Now Available

The Department of Conservation and Natural Resources and [PA CleanWays](#) now have available a new tool kit, 'Tools for Change,' for citizens interested in cleaning up and preventing dumpsites in state parks and forests throughout the Commonwealth.

PA CleanWays has assembled a comprehensive, easy to use guidebook that includes information on: how to begin a change process; how to navigate local government; how to organize and run a meeting; and, tips for volunteer recruitment as well as useful contact information for dozens of non-profit, state and national organizations.

Also included are a series of inspiring stories about cleanup successes. How students in Erie wrote and received a Growing Greener Grant to form a Junior Presque Isle Lake Erie Watershed Association and residents in Westmoreland County created a community partnership that kept nearly 40 tons of electronics out of local landfills.

To get a free copy of "Tools for Change," contact [PA CleanWays](#) online or call 724-836-4121.

PA CleanWays Sponsors Teacher Workshops on Environment, Ecology in June

PA CleanWays is sponsoring an environment and ecology teacher workshop on June 25 designed to encourage students to become more aware of their world, understand the impact of individual choices and actions, and to encourage them to implement change.

The program is approved for Act 48 credits.

For more information visit the [PA CleanWays Teacher Workshop webpage](#).



Small Businesses Invited to Workshop on How to Get Technology Funds

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency will host a one-day workshop on April 6 to teach small businesses how to win contracts under EPA's Small Business Innovation Research program. The agency's environmental technology needs also will be explained.

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The workshop will be held at the EPA's regional offices at 1650 Arch Street in Philadelphia and is being co-sponsored by the Temple University Small Business Development Center, Innovation Partnership and Innovation Philadelphia.

The workshop will emphasize practical, useful information on critical elements of the program, including writing winning proposals, commercialization and sources of assistance.

You may register for the workshop by calling 215-204-3856. Space is limited, so register as early as possible.

Through the [Small Business Innovation Research program](#), EPA makes monetary awards to small, high-tech firms to develop and commercialize cutting-edge environmental technologies. A small business is defined as a for-profit organization with no more than 500 employees, and the research must be conducted in the United States.

EPA solicits applications and awards contracts of up to \$70,000 to investigate the scientific merit and technical feasibility of new concepts. Companies that successfully complete this phase can compete for two-year contracts of up to \$225,000 to conduct the testing and research and development needed to commercialize the new technology or product.

All solicitations will close on May 25.

Call the EPA HELPLINE at: 800-490-9194 for more information on the program. Last year's solicitation also is available on the [Small Business Innovation Research program](#) webpage.

Grants for Wind Projects Available, Apply By March 31

The [Sustainable Development Fund](#) has announced the availability of approximately \$2 million in wind energy production incentive grants to support new wind projects in Pennsylvania that will begin commercial operation by December 31, 2005.

Applications are due in hand by noon on March 31.

The SDF will provide financial support to successful applicants in the form of wind energy production incentive payments. The production incentive, priced at 1.5 cents per kilowatt-hour, will be paid quarterly until the entire amount of the grant has been earned by the wind project.

The SDF will not commit these funds to projects that are unable to meet the 2005 deadline.

For more information visit the [SDF Wind Energy Grant webpage](#), or contact Roger E. Clark at roger.clark@trfund.com or call 215-574-5800.

Biomass Energy Project Grants Available from USDA, Deadline May 6

The U.S. Department of Agriculture announced the availability of \$14.3 million in grants for [value-added agriculture business ventures](#), with priority consideration to applications that dedicate at least 51 percent of the project costs to biomass energy.

Grant applications are due May 6.

The grants are available for the planning activities needed to establish a viable marketing opportunity for an agricultural product, such as biobased fuel or co-product, or

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to acquire working capital to operate business venture, such as a biomass energy facility, that will allow producers to better compete in domestic and international markets.

For more information visit the [Value-Added Producer Grants webpage](#).

Small Business Pollution Prevention, Energy Saving Grants to Reopen July 1

The Department of Environmental Protection announced this week the application period for its next round of [Small Business Advantage grants](#) should reopen July 1.

The Small Business Advantage Grant Program provides a 50 percent matching grant of up to \$7,500 for equipment or processes to reduce energy consumption and promote pollution prevention while helping to increase profitability for small businesses. The program is open to small business owners whose business or facility is located in Pennsylvania.

DEP announced the award of over [\\$418,000 for 90 grants](#) to businesses from this year's funds this week.

PA Offers \$500 Rebates on Hybrid/Clean Fuel Vehicles

[The Department of Environmental Protection announced](#) it will offer a \$500 rebate for residents who purchase hybrid, bi-fuel, dual-fuel or dedicated alternative fuel vehicles in 2005.

Rebates will be offered on a first come, first served basis and applications must be submitted no later than six months after vehicle purchase.

A rebate form will be made available on [DEP's Alternative Fuels webpage](#) or by contacting Cleo Arp at 717-772-8912, or by email to carp@state.pa.us.

NewsClip: [Going for the Hybrid](#)

PA Land Trust Announces Keynote Speaker for Land Conservation Conference

Martha Marks, President of Republicans for Environmental Protection, will be the keynote speaker for the 3rd Annual PA Land Conservation Conference sponsored by the PA Land Trust Association.

The PA Land Conservation Conference, which is intended to provide networking and educational opportunities for individuals involved with private and public land conservation, will be April 8 and 9 at the Netherlands Inn & Spa in Strasburg, Lancaster County. For more details, visit www.conserveland.org.

Ms. Marks will provide the keynote address on Friday evening, April 8. Marks co-founded REP America in 1995, in order to restore the conservation tradition of the GOP. She was elected president of the organization a year later. Since then, she has traveled the country spreading her message, Conservation is Conservative!.

Her presentation will focus on the importance of protecting high-quality natural areas and farmland so that they are not lost forever to development.

The Pennsylvania Land Trust Association seeks to protect Pennsylvania's special places and landscapes for today and for generations to come. To increase the quality and pace of land conservation, PALTA helps conservation practitioners improve their effectiveness, builds public understanding, and advocates for better governmental policy.

Earth Day 2005 – Special Events Scheduled

Starting this week the PA Environment Digest will start to provide a sampling of Earth Day 2005 events scheduled all over Pennsylvania, plus links to more activities. If you would like to see your event highlight, just email: DHess@HolstonCrisci.com.

NarbEarth Day Celebration April 9

The Narberth, Pa. Civic Association will celebrate Earth Day at its annual NarbEarth Day celebration on April 9, from noon to 3 pm. The event takes place at the Narberth Playground next to the Narberth Library, 80 Windsor Avenue, Narberth, Pa.

Learn about the environment from a variety of organizations including the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the Lower Merion Conservancy, and local school students who will demonstrate water testing. Enjoy the outdoors with an afternoon of food and fun and activities. The Narberth Civic Association is a non-profit, non-partisan organization promoting the civic interests of the residents of Narberth, Pa.

Great PA Cleanup! April 23

To find a Great PA Cleanup! event near you, go to the [Find an Event webpage](#). Groups still have time to register their cleanup events and be part of the fun (and hard work). Visit the [registration webpage](#).

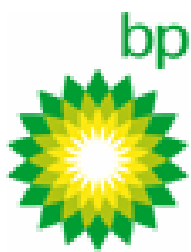
Checkout Special Events at PA State Parks

The Department of Conservation and Natural Resources maintains a calendar of special activities at State Parks that include Earth Day, cleanups and educational program. Check the [State Park Calendar webpage](#) often.

Free Backyard Composting Workshops, Composting Bins

The Penn State Cooperative Extension Service and Master Gardeners Program are again offering free workshops on backyard composting. [For a schedule see your County Extension Office webpage](#). Looking under the gardening menu choice. Those attending get 1 free composting bin. Some workshops start in April.

BP Announces Joint Development Program for Renewable Plastics



BP and [Metabolix, Inc.](#) of Cambridge, Massachusetts have agreed to a joint development program to develop renewable and biodegradable plastics.

The two-year collaboration will include BP's newly formed olefins and derivatives (O&D) petrochemical subsidiary. The agreement will research and develop grass crops containing high levels of naturally grown polymers which can be used to produce biodegrading plastic materials. A co-product of the process would be advantaged biomass material which can

be converted to energy.

BP will provide financial support for the program as well as full-time staff over the two year period. In addition, the companies will explore commercial options to exploit any technology that results from the collaboration.

BP is one of the world's largest energy companies, providing its customers with fuel for transportation, energy for heat and light, retail services and petrochemicals products for everyday items. BP Solar is also a leader in renewable energy having developed photovoltaic products and markets for a quarter of a century.

Lancaster, EPA Turn Brownfield into Roberto Clemente Park

Brownfields assessment grant funding from U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region 3 enabled the Lancaster County Planning Commission to turn a contaminated, dilapidated park in the City of Lancaster into a refurbished and modern community resource.

The Roberto Clemente Park in Lancaster features a new walking path and a state-of-the-art baseball diamond for use by youth leagues and the general public - a fitting tribute to Clemente, a Pittsburgh Pirate, the first Latino admitted to the National Baseball Hall of Fame and a humanitarian who died while directing an earthquake relief mission to Nicaragua in 1972.

A sign at the park acknowledges EPA and other organizations for their assistance. A ribbon-cutting is planned for May, 2005 featuring several well-known professional baseball players and members of the Clemente family from Puerto Rico.

Workshops Set for Auto Recyclers Interested in Recycling Mercury Switches

Six workshops are being held across the state to interest auto recyclers in recycling [mercury switches](#) found in cars and other vehicles.

The Department of Environmental Protection, AERC Recycling Solutions, Bethlehem Apparatus Co. Inc., Clean Air Council, Institute of Scrap Recycling Industries, Pennsylvania Automotive Recycling Trade Society (PARTS) and Steel Recycling Institute are partnering to invite automobile recyclers to participate in Pennsylvania's Mercury Switch Removal Program.

The workshops will be held—

- March 28 at DEP's Northwest Regional Office, 230 Chestnut St., Meadville, Crawford County.
- March 28 at Penn State University's Rackley Building in State College, Centre County.
- March 29 at Beechwood Farms Nature Preserve, 614 Dorseyville Road, Pittsburgh.
- April 25 at DEP's Northeast Regional Office, 2 Public Square, Wilkes-Barre, Luzerne County.
- April 26 at Montgomery County Fire Academy, 1175 Conshohocken Road, Conshohocken, Montgomery County.
- April 27 at the Lower Paxton Township Building, 4254 Prince St., Harrisburg, Dauphin County.

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

First Egg! And Not From the Easter Bunny!

Sharp-eyed watchers of the [FalconCam](#) were rewarded this week with the first egg produced by the Peregrine Falcons nesting on the Rachel Carson Building in Harrisburg. *(the brown egg is pictured in the nest)*

Apparently the new male was a match for the female that has produced a clutch of eggs in each of the last nesting seasons since 1999. Continue to watch online to see how many eggs the female will lay this year.



For the Birds—Bluebirds and Snow Geese

Here are two stories about birds and birdwatching that caught our eye this week.

Middle Creek Snow Geese: For those who took the trip to the Game Commission's Middle Creek Wildlife Management Area in Lebanon County over the last few weeks, you saw thousands of migrating snow geese, tundra swans and other visitors. If you missed the action, download our special [Middle Creek Photo Feature - PDF](#)

Building Bluebird Houses: Nesting activities begin early for the beautiful and beneficial eastern bluebird, a member of the thrush family and a voracious insect eater that can bring a splash of color and a song to many homesteads, according to Dan Brauning, Game Commission Wildlife Diversity Section supervisor.

Grasslands and large open areas near forest edges are ideal bluebird habitat. Since bluebirds will not nest in woods or deep shade, place boxes in open areas with scattered trees, away from buildings. Pastures, large lawns, cemeteries and golf courses are good locations. Bluebirds prefer close-cropped grasslands with limbs, wires or other perches from which to spot insects.

For more information, visit the [Eastern Bluebirds webpage](#) on the PA Game Commission website and you can also connect with the [Bluebird Society of Pennsylvania](#).

NewsClips: [Compilation of state bird atlas underway](#)

Help Wanted - Recycling Markets Center Director

The Recycling Markets Center, a non-profit organization associated with Penn State University, is seeking candidates for Executive Director.

The Center is looking for an experienced service-oriented individual with demonstrated knowledge and expertise in recycling programs; creative vision, and the ability to think innovatively and strategically, and possess dynamic leadership abilities.

A Master's degree or equivalent knowledge with five years related experience is required. Experience related to recycling market development, waste management,

business and economic development, technology assistance, business financing, and/or environmental policies and programs is strongly preferred.

To apply, send a copy of a cover letter, resume and references to: Executive Director, c/o Mrs. Barbara Hundertmark, Penn State Capital College, 777 W. Harrisburg Pike, Box SDEP, Middletown, PA 17057-4898. Penn State is committed to affirmative action, equal opportunity and the diversity of its workforce.

Taking Positive Action

PNC Bank Takes Environment into Account

Creating a bank that is both friendly to customers as well as the environment is no small feat. But PNC Bank in Pittsburgh, with nearly 800 bank branches and 23,000 employees nationwide, has made integrating its business practices with environmental responsibility a top priority.

"As a bank we recognize the importance of wise investments and that the integration of green principles into our business practices enhances the value we deliver to customers, shareholders, communities and employees," says Neil Hall, CEO of regional community banking at PNC. "Good environmental sense makes good economic sense."

PNC has begun an ambitious effort to ensure new branches meet U.S. Green Building Council standards. The bank already has 10 environmentally friendly buildings, with plans to build at least 90 such branches with even more rigorous standards. PNC would be the first U.S. company to employ a "volume build" strategy for green buildings.

Features of these buildings include:

- Window walls: These feature a "four-element assembly" with two sheets of glass sandwiching two sheets of film. Layers isolate extreme temperatures, keeping the building cool when it's hot outside and viceversa.
- Masonry walls: Pre-cast polymer material allows branches to be quickly and economically built. They are manufactured off-site, resulting in less construction waste.
- Interior: Countertops are made of recycled paper and sustainable wood. Cabinetry is made of wheat board, a byproduct of wheat processing, instead of plywood, while the use of rubber flooring and steel is also sustainable as is recycled content in carpeting, wall covering and fabric for furniture.

"Customers are proud to do business with a socially responsible company and communities favor new construction and economic growth with minimal impact on local resources," says Gary Saulson, director of corporate real estate at PNC. "We also see improvements in the health and well-being of employees. In one PNC-green building, employee satisfaction was higher and retention improved 50 percent."



[PNC Firstside Center Pittsburgh](#). Silver LEED green building rating.

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The construction cost of a "green branch" is the same as a traditional branch. However, construction time is four to five weeks faster, resulting in a 75 percent reduction in waste. The bank has also contracted to store and recycle material that would normally go to a landfill. Also:

- Daylight maximizes natural light without creating interior glare or heat; natural light both saves energy (7 percent energy reduction) and provides greater comfort for customers and employees.
- Solar energy photovoltaic panels on the roof capture and convert sunlight to energy, providing 10 percent of building energy.
- Water collected from the roof will be used to flush toilets, decreasing waste water by more than 50 percent and overall water consumption by 40 percent.

The environmentally friendly approach will be housed inside branches designed by Gensler, the world's largest architectural firm.

More Info: [PNC Firstside Center Case Study](#)

Penn State/EPA Tout Benefits of Green Roofs

Working under an EPA Office of Research & Development and Regional Applied Research Effort Program cooperative agreement, researchers at Penn State University reported preliminary findings that green or vegetated roofs reduce pH in rainwater and, to a lesser extent, nitrates.

These findings should be of interest to the Mid-Atlantic region's acid rain plagued area.

The research has already spurred local interest in green roof construction in the region, including Swarthmore College. Vegetated "green" roofs conserve energy, reduce and delay peak stormwater flows, increase roof longevity, reduce heat island effect, provide wildlife habitat, and are aesthetically pleasing.

For more information, visit the [Penn State Center for Green Roof Research](#).



Feature

Remembering the Accident at Three Mile Island – 26 Years Later

The accident at Three Mile Island nuclear power plant on March 28, 1979 is one of those events that you remember where you were and what you were doing when it happened. Just like September 11 or the bombing of Pearl Harbor on December 7.

For those of us in the Harrisburg area, the fear and uncertainty brought about by this event was the most significant impact, not the release of any radiation into the environment.



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The changes and improvements brought about by the accident were fundamental and sweeping in the way we approach nuclear safety and emergency management since then.

Every major natural and manmade emergency since Three Mile Island, including the events surrounding September 11 and the Quecreek Mine Rescue, benefited from the lessons learned during the accident at TMI.

Three Mile Island earned its own official historical marker from the Pennsylvania Historic and Museum Commission on the 20th anniversary of the accident in 1999. It says—

NUCLEAR ACCIDENT AT THREE MILE ISLAND: On March 28, 1979, and for several days thereafter – as a result of technical malfunctions and human error – Three Mile Island’s Unit 2 Nuclear Generating Station was the scene of the nation’s worst commercial nuclear accident. Radiation was released, a part of the nuclear core was damaged, and thousands of residents evacuated the area. Events here would cause basic changes throughout the world’s nuclear power industry.

For perspectives on the accident, we put together a series of links to comments by individuals who had prominent positions in state government during the events of 1979.

Also included is a link to the 20th anniversary program on the accident that featured presentations by Dr. Harold Denton, formerly with the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Dr. Robert Long who was manager of generation at TMI for its previous owner General Public Utilities, former Middletown Mayor Robert Reid, Dr. Clifford Jones who was Secretary of the Department of Environmental Resources at the time and several other speakers.

Please enjoy these links:

[20th Anniversary Program](#)

[Reactor?](#)

By James M. Seif

Former Administrative Assistant to Gov. Thornburgh
and the Secretary of the Department of Environmental Protection

[It’s a Biggie!](#)

By Thomas M. Gerusky

Former Director, Bureau of Radiation Protection, DER

[Historical Accounts & More Background](#)

[Three Mile Island Today](#)

To learn more about Pennsylvania’s environmental history, visit the [Pennsylvania Environmental Heritage webpage](#).

3 New Historical Markers Remember People, Places in PA Environmental History

The Historical and Museum Commission this week announced the placement of 27 new blue and gold historical markers. Three of those markers commemorate people or places in Pennsylvania’s environmental history—

Chatham College – One of the first liberal arts colleges for women, founded in 1869. Alma Mater of environmentalist [Rachel Carson](#). (Allegheny County)

Wildwood Park – Part of the “City Beautiful” movement, the park provided flood control and recreation. (Dauphin County)

George Herman Wirt – The state’s first professional forester, he was the director of the State Forestry Academy and Chief Forest Fire Warden. (Franklin County)

PHMC maintains more than 2,000 historical markers across the Commonwealth. Information on how to nominate a person, place or event for a state historical marker is available on the state [Historical Marker webpage](#).

In Memoriam: Fred Taylor

This week we learned of the passing of Fred Taylor, long-time counsel to the House Environmental Resources and Energy Committee for the Republican Caucus.

Fred started with the House of Representatives in 1977 and steadily worked his way into the confidence of Leadership with his practical approach to solving problems. Those early assignments lead him to become Counsel to the Environmental Committee where he served through 2001.

But Fred was more than a series of dates on a resume to those of us who worked environmental legislation on Capitol Hill. He was a friend, mentor and someone who could work easily with members from both sides of the aisle.

Name any piece of major environmental legislation in the last 20 years, and you’ll see some of Fred’s handiwork—Safe Drinking Water Act, Radiation Protection Act, Municipal Waste Planning, Recycling and Waste Reduction Act, Hazardous Sites Cleanup Act, Storage Tank and Spill Prevention Act, scenic rivers designations, Phosphate Ban Act, Rails-to-Trails Act, bond issues for infrastructure improvements and farmland preservation, coal, non-coal mining regulation, Land Recycling, Environmental Stewardship (Growing Greener), Water Resources Management, Sewage Facility Act changes, Air Pollution Control Act, Guaranteed Energy Savings Act, Waste Tire Recycling Act and much more.

Like many “old timers” he was around to visit and re-visit issues, offering a depth of knowledge and understanding that was unmatched.

He also served on the Environmental Quality Board, which adopts all of the regulations and major policies for the Department of Environmental Protection, as well as



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many other advisory committees over the years. You could always count on Fred to chair a public hearing for the Board when no one else would.

Fred had a personal interest in the Chesapeake Bay, in part because he had a summer house on the Bay for many years. He worked in many different ways to keep the Bay on Pennsylvania's environmental agenda.

But what he did best was solve problems, for constituents, for House members, for DEP and for Governors. As an attorney, he loved to jump into issues, learn all about them, and then offer this tweak or that amendment to make things work better. His ability to draft legislation was legendary.

His expertise on environmental issues also lead him to be active in the American Legislative Exchange Council and the National Conference of State Legislatures where he was involved in drafting model legislation for other states to adopt based on his experiences in Pennsylvania.

When Fred retired in 2001 to fight cancer, we lost a huge reservoir of knowledge and experience on the environment. But we weren't surprised to see him come back and take on advisory committee assignments and act as a "senior advisor" as we tackled water resource and other legislative issues in 2002.

It was difficult for Fred to retire, but he did it with the grace and practicality he always exhibited during his career. He always wanted to be in the game, part of the action.

When you look at a clean stream, or a brownfield being redeveloped, clean water coming out of your tap, visit a State Park or go boating on the Bay, think of Fred Taylor, one of those behind the scenes guys that helped make it all possible.

Fred will be missed.

There will be a memorial service for Fred Taylor on April 12 at 1:00 in Fellowship Hall at the Camp Hill Presbyterian Church, 101 N. 23rd Street.

Quick Clips

[Editorial: Pennsylvania Can Ride the Wind](#)

[\\$8 Million Power Plant Unveiled at Exeter Landfill](#)

[TerraPass project helps buy renewable energy](#)

[School Buses Powered by Natural Gas Log 6 Million Miles](#)

[State considers wind farms on forest land](#)

[Goal: Make Abundant, Clean Coal](#)

[Montour Finds Rare Birds, Bugs](#)

[Township Appoints Members to New Environmental Advisory Council](#)

[Air Settlement Expected to Benefit Region](#)

[Trails Expect Heavy Summer Traffic After Tough Season](#)

[West Rockhill Twp. Adopts Plan for Growth](#)

[Landscape Designer Wins National Recognition for Growing Greener Project](#)

[Environment Uniting Left and Right](#)

Watershed NewsClips

[Report Outlines Principles for Building to Protect Watersheds](#)

[Watershed's Recovery is a Fish Story Come True](#)

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[Stream Signage Program Produces Results in 2005](#)
[Watershed Workshop Draws Dozens to Learn About Stewardship](#)
[New signs mark Westmoreland County waterways](#)
[Watershed Group Reaches Trash Deal](#)
[Logging will support Satterlee Creek Environmental Center](#)
[Rodale Institute Receives Grant to Study How to Lock Up Soil Nutrients](#)
[Lancaster Conservation District Honors Farmers, Educators, Other Award Winners](#)
[Bucks Conservation Districts Announces Award Winners](#)
[Penn State/Natural Lands Trust Study Bog Turtles in Chester County](#)
[Toby Creek study in spotlight](#)
[High School Students Study Steelhead Habitat](#)
[Bay Work Could Cost a Bundle](#)

Regulations

The Department of Environmental Protection published two notices correcting formal policies previously published in the PA Bulletin dealing with the Water Quality Toxics Strategy and the Independent Regulatory Review Commission published its disapproval notice of the explosives regulations.

[Water Quality Toxics Strategy – Great Lakes Requirements](#)
[Water Quality Toxics Strategy – General Provisions](#)

The Independent Regulatory Review Commission published its [disapproval order for the final-form regulations covering storage of explosives](#).

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

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

Technical Guidance & Permits

The Department of Environmental Protection [published notice of](#) a proposed General Plan Approval/Operating Permit for [Landfill Gas-Fired Simple Cycle Turbines](#).
Comments due in 45 days.

[For copies of Draft Technical Guidance](#) [For copies of Final Technical Guidance](#)

Calendar of Upcoming Events

- Penn State Cooperative Extension & Master Gardeners Program are again offering free workshops on backyard composting. [For a schedule see your County Extension](#)

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[Office webpage](#). Looking under the gardening menu choice. Those attending get 1 free composting bin.

- **March 29-April 1** – [PA Rural Water Association Annual Conference](#). State College.
- **March 31** – House Insurance Committee meets to consider [House Bill 243](#) (Semmel-R-Berks) establishing a Floodplain Insurance Assistance Program.
- **April 5** – [Fifth Goddard Forum: Putting the Market to Work for Conservation](#). Harrisburg.
- **April 6** – House Environmental Resources & Energy Committee informational meeting on PA Forest Products Industry, sustainable forestry.
- **April 6-7** – PA Bar Association [Environmental Law Forum](#).
- **April 6-8** – [Stormwater Management in a New Age – Understanding the Physical Processes and Analytical Tools](#). State College.
- **April 8-9**: [PA Land Conservation Conference](#). Strasburg.
- **April 10-16** – [National Environmental Education Week](#).
- **April 13-14**- [Source Water Protection Workshops](#) in Greensburg and Oil City.
- **April 19-20**: PA Chamber [Environmental Laws and Regulations Conference](#).
- **May 3-5** – [Annual Conference](#), Pa Section-American Water Works Association in Valley Forge.
- **May 5-6** – [PA Greenway and Trail Summit](#). Mechanicsburg.
- **May 6-7** - West Branch Susquehanna Restoration Symposium -_Location: Penn Stater Conference Center Hotel, State College, PA _Contact: Amy Wolfe at 570-726-3118 or awolfe@tu.org

DEP Calendar of Events

Watershed Events

(courtesy [PA Organizations for Watersheds & Rivers](#))

Environmental Education Workshop/Training Calendar

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

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

Helpful Web Links

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

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

Contributions Invited

Send your stories about environmental issues, programs and positive actions to **PA Environment Digest** - DHess@HolstonCrisci.com or go to www.PaEnvironmentDigest.com .

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PA Environment Digest is edited by David E. Hess, former Secretary Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, and is published as a service to the clients of Holston & Crisci and the public. Holston & Crisci is a Harrisburg-based government and public affairs firm whose clients include Fortune 500 companies and non-profit organizations. For more information on Holston & Crisci call 717-234-1716.

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