

-PA ——— Environment Digest

*An Update on
Environmental
Issues in
Pennsylvania*

Edited By David E. Hess, Crisci Associates

June 2, 2008

[PA Environment Digest Video Blog](#)

Task Force Hears Support for Fair Share Clean Water Plan – Video Blog

The [Governor's Sustainable Water Infrastructure Task Force](#) this week held public hearings on water infrastructure needs in several parts of Pennsylvania and at each one the [PA Fair Share for Clean Water Plan](#) to fund nutrient reduction efforts by wastewater plants and farmers found lots of support.

How state government is going to help sewer system ratepayers and farmers fund improvements needed to meet Chesapeake Bay and statewide nutrient reduction mandates, while also providing a mechanism that will allow for future economic growth in Pennsylvania, is the most pressing water infrastructure issue facing the state today.

At the Pittston hearing chaired by Sen. Ray Musto (D-Luzerne), the Scranton Sewer Authority, Wyoming Valley Sanitary Authority, Greater Hazleton Joint Sewer Authority and the Williamsport Sanitary Authority expressed their support for the Fair Share Plan.

The Scranton Authority alone faces \$30 million in costs to meet the new nutrient reduction standards and at the Wyoming Valley Authority the bill for nutrient removal just went to \$14.7 million.

“We will not shirk our responsibility to cleanup our water,” said Eugene Barrett, Executive Director of the Scranton Authority, “but if there is any way the state can help us it is desperately needed.”

Matt Ehrhart, Pennsylvania Executive Director of the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, provided the panel with an overview of the [Fair Share Plan](#) and the need for state government to be a partner in nutrient reduction.

Video Blog: [Matt Ehrhart Comments to Task Force](#)

At the Task Force hearing in Red Lion chaired by Rep. Stan Saylor (R-York), Mike Kyle, Executive Director of the Lancaster Area Sewer Authority, estimated their ratepayers will have to finance more than \$20 million in wastewater treatment plant improvements to meet the nutrient reduction requirements of the permit just issued by the Department of Environmental Protection.

Kyle said the Fair Share Plan would provide wastewater plants and farmers with the financial help they need to meet these new requirements.

Video Blog: [Mike Kyle, Lancaster Area Sewer Authority](#)



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Several other commentators, including John A. Klinedinst, C.S. Davidson, Inc. and James Holley, James R. Holley and Associates, noted state government has offered no financial support to meet the new nutrient reduction requirements and in some cases cut funding that did support wastewater plants.

Lamonte Garber, Senior Agriculture Program Manager with the Chesapeake Bay Foundation said the nutrient reduction requirements will benefit Pennsylvanians first by cleaning up their streams and rivers, then the Bay. He provided background on why the mandates were adopted and outlined the PA Fair Share for Clean Water Plan in more detail.

Video Blog: [Lamonte Garber on the Fair Share for Clean Water Plan](#)

The [Pennsylvania Fair Share for Clean Water Plan](#) proposes to invest \$500 million to help finance the upgrades needed by wastewater plants to meet the new nutrient reduction standards and \$390 million to help farmers install conservation practices over seven years. In both cases, local wastewater system ratepayers and farmers would shoulder half the costs of the upgrades and practices.

The proposal also calls for improvements to the state's Nutrient Credit Trading Program that will help reduce the costs of complying with these new limits by promoting wastewater plant-farmer cooperation on projects to reduce nutrients and allow for future growth and development.

The Fair Share for Clean Water Coalition includes the Pennsylvania Municipal Authorities Association, Pennsylvania Farm Bureau, Pennsylvania Builders Association, Pennsylvania Association of Conservation Districts, the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, and a growing list of 26 other environmental, business and local government groups.

Specifically for the FY 2008-09 state budget year, the Fair Share Plan would invest \$170 million in 2008-09 in several ways to reduce the financial burden on ratepayers and farms:

- \$100 million to help wastewater plants finance required improvements;
- \$50 million in direct cost share aid to farmers to install conservation practices (\$35 for REAP farm tax credits and \$15 million in cost share grants);
- \$10 million to county conservation district to expand technical assistance to farmers;
- \$10 million to restore cuts to the Department of Agriculture budget in farm programs; and
- Proposes reforms to the state's nutrient credit trading program that will help to make it a viable alternative to provide for both environmental improvements to the Bay and sufficient future sewage capacity for new development.

The next meeting of the Governor's Task Force is on June 3 in Harrisburg. (*See [Calendar of Events](#)*)

For more information on the PA Fair Share for Clean Water Plan, visit www.PaFairSharePlan.org.

NewsClips: [Hearing Focuses on PA's Water Systems](#)
[Separate Sewage Lines, Panel Told](#)
[Authorities Could Use More State Funds for Cleanup Panel Told](#)
[Legislator Hopes to Soften Blow of Chesapeake Bills](#)
[Older Water Systems Worry Wastewater Group](#)
[Editorial: Chesapeake Cleanup Help, It's About Equal Treatment](#)

Video Blog: [Remarks By Coalition Partners on the Fair Share Clean Water Plan](#)

Video Blog: [Sen. Brubaker's Remarks on Fair Share Plan](#)

Links: [Coalition Proposes Fair Share Clean Water Funding Plan, Original Announcement](#)
[16,000 Miles of Polluted Streams Add Urgency to Call for Clean Water Funding](#)
[CBF, Other Groups Ask State to Be a Partner in Chesapeake Bay Cleanup Plan](#)
[40,000 More Acres of Corn, Soybeans Increase Conservation Needs](#)
[Brubaker, Musto Say Senate Infrastructure Bill Should Be Expanded](#)
[New Federal Farm Bill Promises Aid, But PA Farmers Need \\$600 M for Cleanup](#)
[Rep. Perry, 37 Co-Sponsors Introduce Chesapeake Bay Nutrient Reduction Plan](#)
[New House Bill Opens Debate on How to Fund Nutrient Pollution Cleanup](#)
[Support for PA Fair Share For Clean Water Plan Grows, New Website Open](#)

Senate Committee to Consider Water Infrastructure Bill

The Senate Appropriations Committee meets on June 2 to consider legislation creating the H2O Water Infrastructure Program and has the opportunity to include provisions that would help sewer system ratepayers and farmers cope with the over \$1.6 billion cost of complying with federal and state nutrient removal mandates.

[Senate Bill 2](#) (Earll-R-Erie) provides \$750 million for drinking water, wastewater, flood control and high hazard dam projects. Neither this bill nor Gov. Rendell's proposed 2008-09 budget would provide funds for nutrient removal projects.

Sen. Madigan (R-Bradford) plans to offer an amendment that would make the [PA Fair Share for Clean Water Plan](#) part of the legislation.

These members of the Senate Appropriations Committee have all or portions of their districts in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed, which is the first area of the state where nutrient reduction requirements were imposed—

Senators Armstrong (R-Lancaster), Corman (R-Centre), Gordner (R-Columbia), Madigan (R-Bradford), Rafferty (R-Montgomery), Rhoades (R-Schuylkill), Vance (R-Cumberland), Waugh (R-York), Musto (D-Luzerne), Wozniak (R-Cambria) and ex-officio members Senators Pileggi (R-Chester/Delaware), Mellow (D-Lackawanna) and Scarnati (R-Jefferson/Clearfield/Potter/Tioga).

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- \$10 million to restore cuts to the Department of Agriculture budget in farm programs; and
- Proposes reforms to the state’s nutrient credit trading program that will help to make it a viable alternative to provide for both environmental improvements to the Bay and sufficient future sewage capacity for new development.

In the House, [House Bill 2441](#) (Perry-R-Cumberland) was introduced with 38 bipartisan sponsors last week to help address this issue.

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SRBC: New Federal Farm Bill Will Help Sustain Agriculture and Environment



The [Susquehanna River Basin Commission](#) this week lent its support to the changes made in the new Federal Farm Bill aimed at supporting farm conservation projects to reduce nitrogen and phosphorus pollution and sediments going into the Susquehanna River Watershed.

Paul Swartz, SRBC Executive Director, noted however, that more needs to be done by government at all levels to meet the nutrient reduction mandates in the Chesapeake Bay drainage area. His statement follows--

The passage of the Farm Bill by Congress last week truly reflects the changing face of agriculture and the ever-growing demands placed on individual farmers. In addition to filling our nation’s bread basket, we also count on our farmers to be good environmental

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stewards, who care about land conservation and apply practices that reduce the amount of nutrients and sediments reaching our waterways.

The Susquehanna River Basin Commission praises its congressional delegation for supporting the Farm Bill that includes a landmark conservation provision targeting improved water quality and quantity in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed, starting with the Susquehanna River.

In particular, the Commission thanks Congressman Tim Holden, Vice-Chair of the House Agriculture Committee, and Senator Bob Casey, member of the Senate Agriculture Committee, for their steadfast leadership as they helped shape a bipartisan Farm Bill that will help farmers meet their ever-increasing role as environmental stewards.

For the past 23 years, the Commission has been a leader in [water quality monitoring](#) in the Susquehanna River Basin. Our data tell us the amount of total nitrogen, total phosphorus and suspended sediments reaching the Chesapeake Bay from the Susquehanna River continues to decline overall. Reduced runoff from agricultural operations is undoubtedly part of that good news story.

But, we know that much more needs to be done by government, industry and farmers as we draw closer to a pending 2010 deadline by which the water quality of the Chesapeake Bay and certain tidal areas must be improved. Failure to meet the deadline could expose all the states in the Chesapeake watershed to costly, legally binding cleanup requirements.

Over the coming years, the task of reaching the Chesapeake Bay reduction targets will only get harder and more expensive, as the easier reduction programs have already been implemented. Yes, all farmers throughout the country face burdens, but with the looming 2010 deadline, the farmers in the Chesapeake watershed face an even greater one.

In recognition of this challenge, \$438 million in new funding was included within the Conservation Program provision of the Farm Bill to create the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Program. Specifically, the funds will be used to implement conservation activities on agricultural lands, including controlling erosion, reducing sediment and nutrient levels in the waterways and conserving habitat on lands considered to have significant ecological value.

This new Bay program provision also calls for special consideration to be given to agricultural operations within the Susquehanna watershed. The Commission believes it is very appropriate and sound public policy to provide this extra assistance to our Susquehanna watershed farmers as they work to balance the challenges inherent in having both sustainable agriculture and a sustainable environment.

Other key provisions within the overall Conservation Program provision include: expanding the Conservation Reserve Program to authorize 32 million acres to be enrolled between 2010 and 2012; expanding the Wetlands Reserve Program to reestablish the program's baseline funding of \$1.3 billion and extend the program through 2012; extending the Conservation Security Program to provide \$1.1 billion in new funding to enroll nearly 13 million acres a year; and strengthening the Environmental Quality Incentives Program by increasing funding by \$3.4 billion and establishing the Agricultural Water Enhancement Program to help farmers achieve water quality goals and address water quality concerns.

Those are just some of the many sweeping conservation provisions within the Farm Bill that will help our farmers and protect the environment. We, in the Susquehanna watershed, are fortunate to be represented by members of Congress, like Mr. Holden and

Mr. Casey, who have the tenacity and respect to see through completion a bill of such significance and importance to our watershed.

May Tax Revenue Collections Mean State Still on Track for \$430 Million Surplus

With May state tax collection figures now in, the Department of Revenue reported this week that while revenues were down 7.2 percent in May, year-to-date revenues are 1.2 percent over estimates.

That means the state is on track to generate a surplus in the \$430 million range by June 30 that could be used to provide much-needed funding for [clean water mandates](#) or for other programs.

Online Video Feature

Cowanshannock Creek Mine Water Used to Raise Trout

This recent [Western PA Coalition for Abandoned Mine Reclamation](#) Video Diary story takes viewers to the Cowanshannock Creek Watershed in Armstrong County where for over 20 years a dedicated group of conservationists have been using water from an abandoned mine site to raise 20,000 trout.

The Arrowhead Chapter of Trout Unlimited and the Shannock Valley Sportsmen are part of the Fish and Boat Commission Cooperative Trout Nursery Program.

For more WPCAMR Video Diaries, visit the [Abandoned Mine Posts webpage](#).

Online Video: [Something Fishy in Conwanshannock Creek Watershed](#)

Link: [Cowanshannock Creek Watershed Association](#)

On the Hill

On the Senate/House Agenda/Session Schedule/Bills Introduced

Here's what's coming up on the Senate and House agenda for next week, as well as the voting session schedule through June 30.

Session Schedule

The Senate and House will return to voting session on June 2.

House 2008 Session Days—

June 2, 3, 4, 9, 10, 11, 16, 17, 18, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, and 30

Senate 2008 Session Days--

June 2, 3, 4, 9, 10, 11, 16, 17, 18, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 30

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

Calendars/Committees

The Senate and House published committee schedules for next week and floor Calendars for June 2--

Calendars

House (June 2): [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 934](#) (Scavello-R-Monroe) authorizing counties to impose up to a \$4/ton solid waste management fee to support local recycling, anti-litter programs; [House Resolution 712](#) (Hutchinson-R-Venango) re-establishing the Forestry Task Force; [House Resolution 719](#) (George-D-Clearfield) endorsing request for federal funding for PA river basin commissions.

[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 17](#) (McIlvaine Smith-D-Montgomery) excluding purchase price of hybrid electric vehicles from sales and use tax; [Special Session House Resolution 6](#) (Thomas) designating November 15 as “Pennsylvania GIS Day” and the week of November 11-17 as “National Geography Awareness Week.”

Senate (June 2): [Senate Resolution 283](#) (Brubaker-R-Lancaster) recognizing the accomplishments of Franklin & Marshall Professors Robert Walter and Dorothy Merritts on their research into legacy sediments.

Committees

House: the Environmental Resources and Energy Committee meets to consider [House Bill 44](#) (Rubley-R-Chester) prohibiting the sale of mercury thermostats, [House Bill 328](#) (Sturla-D-Lancaster) establishing the Adopt-A-River Program within DCNR, [House Bill 454](#) (Frankel-D-Allegheny) establishing the Office of Environmental Advocate; the Tourism and Recreational Development Committee meets to consider [House Bill 1908](#) (Rohrer-R-Berks) landowner liability protection for opening lands for recreation.

Senate: the Appropriations Committee meets to consider [Senate Bill 2](#) (Earll-R-Erie) H2O Water Infrastructure Funding Program, [Senate Bill 352](#) (Robbins-R-Mercer) providing for a Low-Income Energy Assistance Program allocation of funds.

Bills Introduced

The following legislation of interest was introduced this week—

Increasing Food Costs: [Senate Resolution 337](#) (Washington-D-Philadelphia) directing the Legislative Budget and Finance Committee to study the relationship between increased food prices and growing use of corn to produce biofuels.

House Committee to Consider Mercury Thermostat, Adopt-A-River, Advocate Bills

The House Environmental Resources and Energy Committee has scheduled a meeting to consider bills that would prohibit the sale of mercury thermostats, create an Adopt-A-River Program and establish an Office of Environmental Advocate. The bills include:

- [House Bill 44](#) (Rubley-R-Chester) prohibiting the sale of mercury thermostats;
- [House Bill 328](#) (Sturla-D-Lancaster) establishing the Adopt-A-River Program within DCNR; and
- [House Bill 454](#) (Frankel-D-Allegheny) establishing the Office of Environmental Advocate.

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

Hawk Watch at Waggoner’s Gap, Opossum Lake Focus of June Vance Report

The [Audubon Hawk Watch at Waggoner’s Gap](#), along with the planned [Cliff Jones Field Station](#) there, and a recent announcement of funding to repair the Opossum Lake Dam are spotlighted on the June edition of the Vance Report.

Video Blog Feature: [Sen. Vance Visits Waggoner’s Gap](#)

Pictured in the photo are Holly Smith, Audubon PA, Walt Pomeroy, former and future Board member Audubon PA, Jean bochnowski, Interim Executive Director of Audubon PA, David Grove, Hawk Watch Volunteer, Sen. Pat Vance and Kim VanFleet, Important Bird Area Coordinator, Audubon PA.



The hawk watch is located just off Route 74 at the Cumberland and Perry County line. It is one of the most critically important flyways in eastern North America and has one of the finest hawk and raptor watching opportunities anywhere. Plans have been underway since last year to improve accessibility of the site and add educational programs.

These improvements are being done in honor of Cliff Jones, a noted conservationist who held a variety of state cabinet positions in several administrations. Jones died in May.

“Cliff Jones left an immeasurable impact on the Commonwealth through his work in state government and on the boards of many environmental and economic development groups,” Sen. Pat Vance (R-Cumberland) said. “As an avid birdwatcher, he took his family to Waggoner’s Gap. It is unfortunate Cliff could not see this field station to competition. The views from the hawk watch are breathtaking. I would encourage area residents to visit this treasure.”

The other segment of the program focuses on the announcement that Vance secured \$1.5 million in state funds to fix the Opossum Lake dam spillway. Leaks were discovered

in the spillway in 2005, which resulted in the lake being lowered. This funding is a key piece in moving the project forward.

“Raising funds to fix the Opossum Lake spillway in order to restore the lake to its former self have been a real collaborative effort between state and local officials and the community,” Sen. Vance said. “By securing the final piece needed, it is hoped that work will begin in late 2009 or early 2010, and this treasure will reopen in 2011.”

Sen. Vance’s show airs on Blue Ridge Communications at 6 p.m. on Tuesdays on Channel 8. Comcast Cable that serves the Shippensburg area will air the program at 4 p.m. on Thursdays on Channel 21. Comcast Cable that serves the Carlisle area will air the show at the same time but on Channel 11. York Community Access shows the program at 9 p.m. on the second Tuesday of the month on Channel 16. Finally, Comcast Cable in the Greater Harrisburg area will air the program on Channel 20 with no set time schedule.

For more information, visit [Sen. Vance’s website](#).

Other News

10th PA Abandoned Mine Reclamation Conference August 12-14 – Online Video

The [10th Annual PA Abandoned Mine Reclamation Conference](#) will be held at the Ramada Inn and Conference Center in State College August 12-14 with the theme of “Reclaiming Our Past-Shaping Our Future.”

Online Video: [See a Preview of the 2008 Conference](#)

This year, in addition to providing learning, sharing, and networking opportunities for those involved in Abandoned Mine Reclamation work, the organizing committee is proud to be doing something special to commemorate our 10th anniversary. We’ve added a new component focusing on Coal Mining Heritage and its preservation.

We’ve noticed time and again that many of the same people who are committed to restoring the environment from the legacy problems from old coal mining are equally interested and involved in the history and culture of coal mining, especially as it involves their own communities.

The conference organizing committee, comprised of individuals personally committed to the reclamation of abandoned minelands and water– some professionals, some working at the grassroots level, welcomes seasoned reclamationists, preservationists, and interested newcomers to the 2008 Conference.

The committee invites you to explore all of the opportunities afforded by the 2008 Conference including the chance to learn about what others are doing to preserve our Coal Mining Heritage.

For those needing financial assistance to attend the Conference, we have limited funding available to help. If you are a watershed group member, representing a community organization, an employee of a non-profit organization or academic institution, or other



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qualifying designation, you will have the option to apply for financial aid to attend the conference.

With only a limited amount of financial aid funds available, the Conference Committee will do its best to ensure as many people as possible are able to obtain the financial assistance they need to attend. To help us with this goal, we only ask that those who are truly in need of financial aid ask for it.

The Ramada Inn and Conference Center in State College has set aside a block of rooms at a special Conference room rate of \$81.38/night (with tax) for single or double rooms. This flat room rate is available until July 14. We suspect that guest rooms will fill up fast, so make your reservations early. Additional lodging and Ramada contact information is available on the [Conference website](#).

Incidentally, for those who are interested in viewing Abandoned Mine Drainage and Abandoned Mine Land sites and can never get enough, there will be an optional bus tour to AMD/AML sites in the State College/Philipsburg area to be held August 11 at an additional cost. The bus tour will last from approximately Noon until 5:00 p.m.

The registration process is a bit different than in years past in that you now have a suite of attendance options to choose from, in an a-la-carte manner, to match your individual need and budget.

Conference planners are still hammering out the final details on speakers, etc. so, check back to the [Conference website regularly](#).

Link: [Over 130 Attend 2007 Abandoned Mine Reclamation Conference](#)

Learn About Sustainable Living in New Television Series Available Online

The [Pennsylvania Environmental Council](#) and [MiND television](#) (formerly WYBE channel 35) have partnered to produce an educational television series on sustainability in Philadelphia - showcasing local efforts in green building, alternative energy, education, and recreation.

Television viewers will learn about sustainability topics such as LEED-certified homes and offices, environmental curriculum, wind power and riverfront recreation. Each 5-minute program features sustainability leaders and innovators who make the Philadelphia region a healthier, greener place to live, work, play and learn.

The PEC-MiND partnership formed after the success of the first Philadelphia Sustainability Awards in 2007, and three of the segments feature [Philadelphia Sustainability Award Winners](#):

- A Zero-Energy Home features Jackie O'Neil's residence, which produces all the energy needed to run the home. (2007 Winner);
- Wissahickon Charter School features the school's urban environmental education programs (2007 Finalist, 2008 Winner); and
- A Sustainable Workplace features Liberty Property Trust's One Crescent Drive, a LEED certified green corporate office building at Philadelphia's Navy Yard (2007 Winner).

Additionally, the Philadelphia Riverfronts and Trails program highlights walking, biking and paddling opportunities along the Delaware and Schuylkill Rivers. That program was included in MiND's very first broadcast hour on May 15 between 9:00 - 10:00 am.

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Finally, Wind Farming looks at Locust Ridge Wind Farm, a wind generation facility adding alternative energy options for the entire region.

All programs are also available online by clicking the links below:

- [A Sustainable Workplace](#) (One Crescent Drive);
- [A Zero-Energy Home](#) (Jackie O'Neil);
- [Philadelphia Riverfronts and Trails](#);
- [Wind Farming](#); and
- [Wissahickon Charter School](#).

Funding for these programs was provided by The Reinvestment Fund's Sustainable Development Fund and the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. Local film production company 3PPG completed the production aspects of the programs.

June 7 Cleanup Planned For Three Susquehanna River Islands in York County

Volunteers are needed to help clean up floatable debris, trash and tires from Green, Rookery and Big Islands of the Lower Susquehanna River, York County on June 7.

The river island cleanup is planned from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., weather and river conditions permitting.

The cleanup is sponsored by [Shank's Mare Outfitters](#), in partnership with the [Watershed Alliance of York](#), [PPL Corporation](#), [Republic Services, Inc.](#), [Safe Harbor Water Power Corporation](#), and [York Waste Disposal](#).

All volunteers should report to the cleanup's staging area located at the Susquehanna Boat Works Marina, Boathouse Road, Long Level, Lower Windsor Township, for sign-in, safety briefing and cleanup assignments. Pre-registration by volunteers is requested.

Long sleeved and legged work cloths, steel-shank waders or work boots, and sun hat are recommended for island workers; short sleeved and legged cloths and sun hat are suitable for shoreline duty. Trash bags, work gloves, energy snacks, bottled water, sunscreen lotion, insect repellent, and lunch will be provided to volunteers.

Weather and river conditions will be monitored from June 1 to 6; the final cleanup decision will be made Friday afternoon and posted on our website below. For cleanup weather and river conditions confirmation call Shanks Mare Outfitters at 717-252-1616.

To pre-register for the cleanup, either e-mail WAY at gpeacock@yorkccd.org or call 717-840-7430, and give your name, number of volunteers, and telephone number.

NewsClip: [Cleanup Crew Looking for Help](#)

Registration Now Open for Youghiogheny River Sojourn - July 17-20



water trail along the Yough.

[Pennsylvania's 2008 River of the Year](#) will be featured July 17 to 20 in the [Youghiogheny River Sojourn](#), which will offer a unique opportunity for an interpreted whitewater raft outing, a Family Fishing Event and three other days of paddling and an optional bike ride on the parallel Great Allegheny Passage.

The Pennsylvania Environmental Council is sponsoring the sojourn and also is developing an official

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The Youghiogheny River, known simply as the Yough or "Yawk," was selected as River of the Year by the state Department of Conservation and Natural Resources because it has remarkable scenery, its whitewater section is known around the world and it is incredibly rich in history, including a history of mining that created significant environmental degradation from which the river has mostly recovered.

The Sojourn will be limited to 120 participants because of limited camping space and logistical issues, so register early. The general itinerary is as follows:

- July 17: park in Ohiopyle State Park and depart on a shuttle to Youghiogheny River Lake near Confluence; after safety briefing, set off on an 11-mile paddle in duckies down the Middle Yough to Ohiopyle on class I and II river that cuts through Laurel Ridge. Lunch will be provided on the river and dinner will be served at the Ohiopyle State Park campground. There will be an evening presentation on history along the Yough.
- July 18: breakfast will be served before the 8:30 check-in for a seven-mile whitewater adventure down the Lower Yough, which is class III and in high water class IV water from Ohiopyle to Bruner Run; the run will include lunch and three interpretive stops along the way to explore geologic and other features. Boaters will be shuttled to Ohiopyle State Park Campground for dinner and camping. For people who do not want to do whitewater, will have an option of bicycling on the Great Allegheny Passage. There will be an evening interpretive hike.
- July 19: boaters will drive to Dawson for a brunch at the Cochran House and a historical tour and then we will put-in at Layton for a 10-mile canoe paddle to Cedar Creek. At Cedar Creek Park campground, an early dinner will be served before a "Family Fishing Event" in which the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission will provide rods and other gear for participants. A fishing license is not required for participation. A snack will be offered later in the evening.
- July 20: breakfast will be served before a natural history hike. There will be an 11:00 am departure for a 10-mile canoe paddle with a stop at West Newton, where lunch will be served at the Trailside Restaurant. After lunch we'll return to the river to continue the paddle to Buena Vista, where there will be an optional tour of Milestone Hydroponic Greenhouse.

All registrations for the Sojourn must be made on-line through the [Youghiogheny River Sojourn webpage](#).

Agriculture Sponsors Workshops On Natural Gas Leasing Opportunities

Pennsylvania farmers can learn about natural gas leasing opportunities at two informational workshops to be held in Bradford and Tioga counties on June 10 and 11.

The programs are sponsored by the Department of Agriculture's [Center for Farm Transitions](#) and [PAgrows](#), Penn State University Dickinson School of Law, the [Center for Agricultural Law](#) and the Department of Environmental Protection.

The first workshop will be held from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m., June 10, in the Straughn Auditorium at Mansfield University, Tioga County. The second meeting will be held from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m., June 11, at the Wyscox Fire Hall, Bradford County. Attendance is free and registration is not required.

"Pennsylvania farmers face many challenges, especially when it comes to profitability, making it essential that they be aware of the potential benefits and drawbacks

of new opportunities," said Agriculture Secretary Dennis Wolff. "With the discovery of new drilling technology and the rising cost of fossil fuels, the natural gas rush in Pennsylvania is unfolding.

"Natural gas found in Pennsylvania and surrounding states has the potential to fulfill the entire nation's natural gas requirements for two years, and farmers must educate themselves about gas leasing to decide whether they want to take advantage of the opportunity."

Each two hour program in June will explore natural gas issues, including drilling and exploration, development on leased land, negotiating with gas companies and signing a lease.

An expert panel will participate in the workshops, including representatives from the Center for Farm Transitions and PAgrows, to discuss the benefits and risks associated with natural gas leasing as a profit enhancing strategy. A representative from the state Department of Environmental Protection will focus on environmental concerns, and an attorney from the Center for Agricultural Law will share information about mineral rights leases.

For more information, visit the [PAgrows website](#) or call 1-888-PA GROWS (1-888-724-7697). For more information about the [Center for Farm Transitions](#) call 1-877-475-2686.

NewsClips: [State Orders Partial Shutdown of Natural Gas Drilling](#)
[DEP Orders Partial Shutdown of 2 Natural Gas Drillers in Lycoming](#)
[Oakmont Presses to Limit Gas Well Sites](#)
[Editorial: Task Force Good Step on Natural Gas Exploration](#)

Consumers Warned to be Watchful for Undisclosed Energy "Surcharges"

[Attorney General Tom Corbett](#) is cautioning consumers to be watchful for undisclosed fees or "surcharges" that some businesses may attempt to charge in connection with rising fuel and energy costs.

"Over the past several weeks we have heard from a number of consumers who have reported businesses attempting to impose 'surcharges' to cover higher fuel or energy prices, even though those fees were never disclosed in advertised prices or contracts," Corbett said. "Consumers should carefully review contracts for disclosure information about any added fees and also check any invoices or bills for additional charges they did not authorize."

Corbett said that reports have surfaced across the country about "energy surcharges" or other related fees being added to bills involving everything from pest control services and floral deliveries to vacation packages and cruises. Consumers have been surprised by fees that were not clearly disclosed before purchases were made, or worse, fees that were added after the goods or services had already been purchased.

Corbett noted that businesses must clearly disclose any additional fees when quoting prices in order to avoid confusion or "sticker shock" when consumers get their bills.

Corbett noted that many businesses are already taking steps to inform consumers that energy or fuel prices may increase in the future and have taken steps to incorporate those increases into their regular rates - adding that rapidly rising energy prices can take a toll on businesses and consumers alike. Still, Corbett emphasized that the Attorney

General's Bureau of Consumer Protection is concerned about the impact that undisclosed fees can have on consumers who are already struggling with higher prices.

"The total price of a product or service is a key factor in any purchase, and is something that needs to be disclosed to consumers upfront," Corbett said. "Any business intending to collect an added fee for fuel or energy must disclose those charges when they advertise their prices."

Corbett urged consumers to dispute any added charges that were not disclosed in the quoted or advertised price.

Consumers with questions or problems should contact the Attorney General's Consumer Protection Hotline at 1-800-441-2555 or file an online consumer complaint using the Attorney General's website.

NewsClip: [State Warns About Energy Surcharges](#)

Six LED Traffic Signals Workshops and Training Sessions in June

Six workshops on the benefits and use of LED traffic signals will be held in Western Pennsylvania in June sponsored by the Department of Environmental Protection and the [Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission](#).

The workshops will provide an overview of LED signals and products, retrofitting existing signals and other applications of LED technology. They will be held:

- June 17: Holiday Inn Forest Hills, 915 Brinton Road, Pittsburgh;
- June 18: Holiday Inn (RIDC North), 180 Gamma Dr., Pittsburgh;
- June 19: Sewickley Country Inn, 801 Ohio River Blvd., Sewickley;
- June 23: Holiday Inn Meadowlands, 340 Racetrack Rd., Washington;
- June 24: PennDOT District Office, 825 N. Gallatin Ave. Ext., Uniontown; and
- June 27: PennDOT District Office, 2550 Oakland Ave., Indiana.

LED signals use 80-90 percent less energy than regular bulbs and last 5 to 10 times longer.

For more information contact Mary Brangan at 412-391-5590 ext. 315 or send email to mbrangan@spcregion.org by June 13.

PUC Releases Annual Report on Alternative Energy Portfolio Standards Act

The Public Utility Commission this week released the [2007 Annual Report](#) of the Alternative Energy Portfolio Standards Act of 2004 saying that two electric distribution companies and five electric generation suppliers that had compliance obligations in 2007 have met, and in some instances exceeded, their requirements.

The report was prepared by the PUC Bureau of Conservation, Economics and Energy Planning in cooperation with the Department of Environmental Protection.

Between February 28, 2007, and May 31, 2007, Penn Power, UGI-Electric and five suppliers sold 1,452,807 megawatt hours of electricity and purchased 82,877 credits to meet their obligations. The suppliers include Constellation New Energy, Dominion Retail, Sempra, FirstEnergy Solutions and Strategic Energy.

During this reporting period, 5.7 percent of electricity sold to retail customers in the two utility service areas was generated from alternative energy resources. Tier I resources, such as wind, low-impact hydro and solar energy, made up 1.5 percent. Solar photovoltaic

energy sales represented 0.0018 percent of the Tier I percentage. Tier II resources, such as waste coal, made up 4.2 percent.

The AEPS Act requires that a certain percentage of all electric energy sold to retail customers within the Commonwealth be derived from alternative energy sources. By 2021, EDCs and EGSs must supply 18.5 percent of electricity using alternative energy resources.

The percentage of Tier I, Tier II and solar photovoltaic resources gradually increases over this period. The Act applies to both electric distribution companies and electric generation suppliers, who must demonstrate their compliance on an annual basis. However, compliance with the portfolio standards is deferred until an electric distribution company's generation rate caps expire.

AEPS compliance is verified and tracked through an alternative energy credits program, in which EDCs and EGSs meet their obligations by purchasing individual credits. Each credit represents one megawatt hour of alternative energy generation.

Visit the PUC [Alternative Energy webpage](#) for more information.

Two More Energy Management Workshops For Businesses in Lancaster, Pittsburgh

The Department of Environmental Protection is accepting reservations for the final two [energy management workshops](#) for businesses in Lancaster June 3 and in Pittsburgh on June 12.

The final two workshops will be held from 8 a.m. to noon in these locations:

- June 3: Lancaster County Career & Technology Center, 432 Old Market St., Mount Joy, Lancaster County; and
- June 12: SMC Business Councils' George Westinghouse Science & Technology Center, 1382 Beulah Road, Pittsburgh.

The free workshops will help employers of all sizes improve energy conservation and efficiency practices and help their companies improve their bottom lines. Business owners will receive information on energy-supply options and learn how to identify energy-saving opportunities and develop an energy action plan.

The workshop will also offer attendees information on financial and technical resources that are available for energy-efficiency upgrades, including easily implemented, cost-effective changes for manufacturing facilities.

More than 250 people have attended five similar workshops in other parts of the state and evaluations of the programs by the participants have been very favorable.

The workshops are sponsored by DEP's [Office of the Small Business Ombudsman](#) in partnership with business and economic development groups, local government organizations, and institutions of higher education. Funding for the energy management workshops is provided through a U.S. Department of Energy grant.

DEP's Office of the Small Business Ombudsman provides assistance to small businesses needing help with environmental issues and helps owners realize the potential cost savings of pollution-prevention and energy-conservation strategies.

For more information or to register visit the [energy management workshops webpage](#) or contact DEP at 717-783-8411.

PPL \$600 Million Scrubber Project at Power Plant Leads to Drywall Plant



[PPL](#) this week celebrated the completion of a \$600 million project to put advanced air pollution control equipment on its Montour Power Plant in Danville that will result in reducing sulfur dioxide, mercury and particulate emissions.

The byproduct produced by the scrubber is a synthetic gypsum which will be used by [United States Gypsum Co.](#) to manufacture drywall at a \$180 million manufacturing facility across the road from the Montour plant in Washingtonville. The drywall plant is expected to create 150 permanent jobs for the community

surrounding the plant.

"Today we're celebrating a major investment in Pennsylvania's environment, economy and electricity infrastructure," said William H. Spence, PPL's executive vice president and chief operating officer. "Equipped with the most advanced pollution controls available in the industry, PPL's Montour plant is among the cleanest coal-fired power plants in the country.

"PPL's investment is also helping ensure the long-term viability of a generating plant that produces more than 10 billion kilowatt-hours a year of safe, dependable and increasingly needed power for Pennsylvania business, industry and residents," Spence said.

He said the scrubbers will remove at least 97 percent of sulfur dioxide from plant emissions. As a co-benefit, the scrubbers will also reduce mercury and other materials - contributing to significant improvements in environmental performance.

"Since its start in 2004, this project has created many benefits, even beyond what it will do to improve air quality," Spence said. "This project has provided hundreds of construction jobs, will provide about 30 permanent new jobs at the Montour plant to operate and maintain the scrubbers and related equipment, and has created an innovative economic development opportunity through the recycling of a byproduct into something valuable."

"PPL's investment in the scrubbers demonstrates that what's good for the environment also can be a good way to spur economic development in the community," Spence said.

Thursday's event foreshadows the completion of a similar scrubber project at PPL's Brunner Island power plant in York County, Pa. The first of Brunner Island's scrubbers is scheduled to begin operating in late 2008 and the second in the spring of 2009.

The scrubbers and other environmental improvements at Montour and Brunner Island represent a combined \$1.6 billion investment by PPL in environmental upgrades for its coal-fired power plants. The scrubbers represent the second-largest construction project in PPL history, trailing only the construction of the Susquehanna nuclear plant near Berwick, Pa.

Montour Unit 1 began commercial operation in 1972; Unit 2 came on line the following year. Each unit has 769 megawatts of generating capacity. The plant also has a 15-megawatt auxiliary unit for a total of about 1,552 megawatts of generating capacity.

NewsClip: [\\$600 Million Plant Online](#)

[PPL Completes \\$600 Million Improvement in Montour Plant](#)

Lehigh Valley/Berks County Air Quality Partnership Emphasizes Mass Transit Use

With Pennsylvania implementing new federal air quality guidelines that are more protective of public health, the [Lehigh Valley/Berks County Air Quality Partnership](#) is urging residents to help avoid air quality action days by using mass transit during the summer ozone season.

DEP Northeast Regional Director Michael Bedrin emphasized that using public or alternative transportation means cleaner air and more money saved for riders.

"Public transportation is a convenient, common sense approach to reducing the smog-forming air pollution that can make it difficult for some people to breathe," said Bedrin. "Also, with gasoline prices at record levels, opting for mass transit or carpooling makes economic sense, as well."

Bedrin's comments came on the heels of an event earlier today by the Lehigh Valley/Berks County Air Quality Partnership at the [Lehigh/Northampton Transportation Authority's](#) Allentown Transportation Center to open the 2008 ozone season.

Ground-level ozone, a key component of smog, is formed when pollution from vehicles, industry, consumer products and power plants "bakes" in the hot, summer sun, making it difficult for some people to breathe. Particulate matter, which is airborne dust or small soot particles, can also cause health problems for children or the elderly with respiratory problems, as well as the general population.

The goals of the Lehigh Valley/Berks County Air Quality Partnership are to increase the public's understanding on the impact of air pollution, provide alerts on days with high air pollution, provide health effects information and guidelines to prevent or reduce exposure, and encourage voluntary actions to reduce air pollution emissions, especially on ozone action days, or days when the air is expected to be unhealthy to breathe.

The partnership, in conjunction with local media such as WFMZ-TV, disseminates information when action days are forecast for the region. Using DEP meteorological data, the partnership informs people about the predicted ozone levels and any precautions that need to be taken.

In addition, the partnership and DEP are releasing daily forecasts on air pollution caused by particulate matter, commonly called PM 2.5.

DEP is again committing resources to offer the public free LANTA bus rides on ozone action weekdays. The department, in conjunction with the partnership and LANTA, have sponsored the Ride Free on Ozone Action Days program during the summer for the past seven years.

This year, there will most likely be more ozone action days declared because DEP has adopted the new ozone air quality index scale that the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency released in March. EPA's new ozone standard changes the 8-hour ozone standard from 85 parts per billion to 76 parts per billion.

Once available funds have been exhausted for the Ride Free program, the department will notify local residents and request that they continue to use LANTA's system or try alternative transportation, such as walking or cycling, during the rest of the summer ozone season.

The Lehigh Valley/Berks County Air Quality Partnership is a coalition of individuals, businesses, governments and community groups that educates the public about

the dangers of ground-level ozone and particulate matter, and encourages people to take voluntary actions to reduce their contributions to air pollution.

"We appreciate the assistance and cooperation from the partnership, LANTA, WFMZ-TV and the residents of the Lehigh Valley in our combined efforts to improve the air quality and respiratory health in the region," said Bedrin.

The partnership has also developed a [new blog](#) for detailed activities and cross links to other air quality related sites or for more information visit the [Lehigh Valley/Berks County Air Quality Partnership webpage](#).

NewsClip: [Funding for Free LANTA Rides is Going Up in Smoke](#)

DEP Joins Other States in Suit Against EPA for Adopting Weak Ozone Standards

Department of Environmental Protection announced this week that it has joined a coalition of states and cities in lawsuit against the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for adopting air pollution standards that do not protect public health and the environment, but lead to greater levels of smog.

The lawsuit includes: California, Connecticut, Delaware, Illinois, Massachusetts Maryland, Maine, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Oregon, Rhode Island, New York City, and the District of Columbia.

In March, the EPA acted against the specific recommendations of the Clean Air Scientific Advisory Committee—the agency’s independent science advisors—and adopted two new, substantially weaker standards for regulating ground-level ozone pollution, commonly referred to as smog.

“The EPA and the Bush administration have again chosen politics over science, adopting air pollution standards that are not as strong as they could be, and are less protective of the public’s health and the environment,” said DEP Secretary Kathleen McGinty. “It is unfortunate that states need to petition the courts to force EPA to carry out its mission to protect American citizens and the quality of the air we breathe.”

The federal Clean Air Act requires EPA to regularly review and update primary and secondary national ambient air quality standards every five years. The primary standard defines the maximum amount of smog concentrations that can be in the atmosphere before causing public health harms such as chronic lung disease, asthma attacks and premature death in some cases.

The primary standard must provide an adequate margin of safety, as the science advisors' recommended standard did. The secondary standard defines the smog concentrations that can be in the atmosphere before damaging public welfare by reducing crop productivity and harming plants and animals.

On May 20, during a congressional hearing on EPA’s new eight-hour ozone standards, the Oversight and Government Reform Committee revealed that the agency succumbed to pressure from White House officials to ignore the recommendations of the agency’s Clean Air Scientific Advisory Committee and adopted a weaker secondary air pollution standard.

Since 1995 Pennsylvania has take action in the form of petitions and court action to force EPA to deal with ozone pollution issues, like the interstate transport of ozone, that affect Pennsylvania, including against the Clinton Administration.

For more information, visit DEP’s [Ozone Standard webpage](#).

Diverse Coalition Urges Federal Action on Bill to Cut Climate Changing Emissions

Representatives from business, faith, and sportsmen's groups joined public health officials this week in calling on Pennsylvania's U.S. Senators to support a bill in Congress that would reduce carbon emissions and take steps to curtail climate change.

A debate on the Climate Security Act is scheduled to begin June 2 with a vote expected in the upcoming weeks.

"Stopping global warming is not only vital for the environmental future of our planet, it is important for businesses and jobs here in Pennsylvania," said Gary Sheehan, Regional Operations Manager for [SunTechnics Energy Systems, Inc.](#) "Using domestic rather than imported energy sources and finding innovative ways to use clean renewable resources to keep businesses and our economy growing here at home."

Speaking in Philadelphia's Love Park in front of a crowd of children, parents, and other supporters, representatives of various faiths talked about the need to protect the planet for future generations.

"People of all faiths recognize we cannot destroy our world, which is God's creation," said Rabbi Shawn Zevit of the [Jewish Reconstructionist Federation](#). "It is our duty to protect what has been given to us, make sure God's abundance and beauty in nature is available for our children, and to teach our children about their responsibility to care for our planet."

Rabbi Zevit was joined by Sister Mary Hamm of the Sisters of Saint Joseph in Philadelphia.

The bi-partisan Climate Security Act, co-sponsored by Senators Joe Lieberman (I-CT) and John Warner (R-VA), would require reductions of carbon emissions, primarily responsible for global warming, by 2 percent a year through 2050. Though scientists say we need to reduce our carbon emissions by approximately 80 percent by 2050 if we are to avoid adverse impacts from a warming planet, the Climate Security Act is a strong first step in the right direction with its mandatory emission reductions.

The bill would spur job creation by rewarding innovations in the marketplace to reduce pollution. A cap and trade policy would allow companies that cannot economically reach their required pollution reduction numbers to buy credits from other firms that exceed their mandated cuts.

"The rising cost of energy is straining our economy, and traditional fossil fuel energy resources are increasingly scarce, expensive and impacted by international political volatility," said Joseph Otis Minott, [Clean Air Council](#) Executive Director. "We need new approaches to meet our growing energy demands with solutions that protect our environment. Passage of the Climate Security Act will send a clear signal that will ultimately jumpstart America's entrepreneurial forces and allow the market to develop innovative and sustainable solutions for a cleaner, safer future."

New investments in clean energy such as wind, solar, and other renewable sources are already creating new, quality jobs for Pennsylvanians. In 2006, the renewable energy and energy efficiency industries generated 8.5 million jobs and nearly \$970 billion revenue in America.

"William Penn called his land Penn's Woods almost 330 years ago because of the natural beauty he saw here," said John Johnson, a sportsman and member of the [Valley](#)



[Forge Chapter of Trout Unlimited](#). "Today, millions of Pennsylvania sportsmen and visitors enjoy this great outdoors for many different activities. But, sportsmen are already seeing alarming changes in wildlife habitat which will threaten hunting, fishing, camping, and just enjoying the outdoors if we don't stop global warming."

Every year, sportsmen spend \$3 billion in the Pennsylvania and support some 50,000 jobs. Nearly 80 percent of sportsmen polled in the state recognize climate change is happening and there is an urgent problem that needs immediate action. So far, 63 Pennsylvania hunting and fishing groups, fly shop owners, and sportsmen's guides have joined over 700 other groups from all 50 states in sending a letter to PA Senators and other elected officials in Congress urging immediate action on global warming.

"Higher temperatures from global warming affect us all by increasing ozone pollution, another name for smog," said Walter Tsou, former Philadelphia City Health Commissioner. "Ozone is a very harmful pollutant created by vehicle and factory emissions that is exacerbated by the heat and damages lung tissue. Even a healthy person may experience chest pains, nausea, and pulmonary congestion when exposed to high levels of ozone."

"The time is now for us to take action to stop global warming," added Sheehan. "And the time is now for Pennsylvania citizens to contact PA Senators and urge them to support the Climate Security Act, for the environmental protection and economic well being of our state."

Hershey Golf Collection Courses Enroll in Audubon International

The four courses in the [Hershey Golf Collection](#) have enrolled in the highly respected Audubon International program that will lead to each of the Hershey layouts being certified as an [Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary](#).

The commitment to the program normally is about one year per course, which translates into a 2011 completion date for the Hershey project. The Hershey Golf Collection consists of 63 holes of golf - from historic, tour-tested layouts at Hershey Country Club (East Course and West Course), to the challenging bluffs of Hershey Links, to the family-style nine holes at Spring Creek Golf Course.

Following a site assessment of each course, the subsequent steps are environmental planning on wildlife and habitat management, chemical use reduction and safety, water conservation, water quality management, and outreach and education. The assessment process has begun on the East Course, which includes identification of the many types of birds that inhabit the area.

The award-winning Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program is designed to recognize and support golf courses that have worked to meet specific standards that ensure a high degree of environmental quality for humanity and wildlife. Audubon International currently recognizes 20 Pennsylvania golf courses in the Certified Cooperative Sanctuary Program.

"Audubon certification confirms our commitment to high standards of environmental management," said Ned Graff, director of golf for the Hershey Golf Collection. "This is a particularly good match for Hershey because the Audubon certification symbolizes our longstanding philosophy."

Throughout the Hershey Golf Collection, there are thriving habitats for numerous species of birds, deer, fox and other animals, as well as wetlands that include lakes and

streams. Hershey Entertainment & Resorts, which manages the courses, will create additional unowned areas throughout each golf course to provide more natural areas for various animals.

"We've already been doing many of the things that are required," said Mark Malasavage, director of golf course maintenance for the Hershey Golf Collection. "Being certified will help make people be more aware that our golf courses actually create habitat and take care of the environment."

The West Course is to be the last to go through the certification process, since it will be undergoing a complete restoration and renovation project starting this fall. The course is scheduled to reopen in spring 2010.

Link: [Pennsylvania Audubon](#)

Game Commission Extends Comment Period on Fisher Management Plan

The Game Commission this week said it has extend the comment period on its proposed [Fisher Management Plan](#) until June 11, due to a technical problem with the agency's website.



"We are seeking public comment on the draft fisher management plan to ensure the resulting final management plan considers the thoughts and concerns of Pennsylvanians about this species," said Calvin W. DuBrock, Game Commission Bureau of Wildlife Management director. "As written, the plan is science-based, progressive and promotes responsible management. We're interested in hearing from Pennsylvanians who would like to offer comments, and to see if we've missed something or if they share our management vision for the future.

"Unfortunately, due to a technical error, we did not receive any of the public comments submitted through the website link prior to May 19. We're sorry for this inconvenience if you've already submitted your thoughts, and welcome you to resubmit your comments."

Developed by Dr. Matthew Lovallo, agency Game Mammals Section supervisor, the fisher management plan provides a comprehensive and current summary of fisher biology; historic and current status in Pennsylvania; population recovery; economic significance; public interest; and regional population and harvest management approaches. The plan also provides supporting objectives and strategies to achieve species-specific goals related to: population monitoring; habitat assessment; population enhancement; and development and implementation of a harvest management program.

Public comments on the agency's fisher management plan will be accepted until June 11, [via the website](#) or by mail to: Fisher Management Plan, Pennsylvania Game Commission, 2001 Elmerton Avenue, Harrisburg, PA 17110-9797.

Experience Nature; Wildlands Conservancy's Bike & Boat Summer River Trips

Looking for a new activity for the summer? Work schedule have you crammed for time? Join other Lehigh Valley residents by participating in [Wildlands Conservancy's](#) Bike and Boat program.

These one-day trips take participants on a paddling trip down the Lehigh River and some trips offer the opportunity to bike along the canal trail. The program is an educational and recreational activity designed to promote conservation and responsible stewardship of the Lehigh River watershed's natural resource for people of all ages. Each trip has a unique theme and explores different and exciting sections of the river.

All trips are open to the public and are \$30.00 per participant (canoes, bicycles and safety equipment are provided). Kids under 10 years old, who can sit in the center of a canoe, are free. Pre-registration is required. 2008 Summer Schedule:

- June 15, 1:00 p.m. - Bethlehem to Wilson Avenue Paddle, Register by 6/10;
- July 18, 6:00 p.m. - Full Moon Evening Bike & Boat, Register by 7/14;
- July 26, 9:00 a.m. - Bowmanstown to Walnutport Bike & Boat, Register by 7/22;
- August 23, 10:00 a.m. - Allentown to Wilson Avenue Paddle, Register by 8/18;
- September 20, 10:00 a.m. - Allentown to Bethlehem Fall Bike & Boat, Register by 9/15; and
- October 18, 9:00 a.m. - Bowmanstown to Treichlers Fall Foliage Paddle, Register by 10/13

For more information, or to register, please contact Kevin Fister, outdoor recreation manager, at 610-965-4397, ext. 35. Private programs are arranged as requested.

Spotlight

Pennsylvania's Prevailing Wage Law Raises Abandoned Mine Reclamation Costs By 25 Percent

By Andy McAllister, Watershed Coordinator



The Pennsylvania Prevailing wage has been on the minds of the Abandoned Mine Reclamation Community for some time now. As funding levels continue to drop and watershed groups and conservation districts look for creative ways to stretch their shrinking reclamation dollar, the issue of prevailing wage forcing higher project costs has begun to come to the forefront.

The current Pennsylvania Prevailing Wage Act enacted in 1961 requires that all workers on a “public work” project must be paid the prevailing wage determined by the Department of Labor and Industry. ” Public work” means construction, reconstruction, demolition, alteration and/or repair work other than maintenance work, done under contract and paid for in whole or in part out of the funds of a public body (in other words all state and/or taxpayer funds) where the estimated cost of the total project is in excess of twenty-five thousand dollars (\$25,000).

PA Environment Digest – Crisci Associates

To better understand the Commonwealth's Prevailing Wage, we need to understand the original Federal legislation that spurred the creation of Prevailing Wage Acts within Pennsylvania and other states. The Davis Bacon Act (the Federal prevailing wage act), enacted in 1931, is the brainchild and namesake of two Northeastern politicians; Senator James Davis (R) Pennsylvania and Representative Robert Bacon (R) New York.

According to reports, the impetus for creating such legislation revolved around preventing contractors from the Southern U.S. from bringing their cheaply paid labor up North to successfully compete for Northern jobs against Northern contractors who paid their workers a higher wage. Remember, the country was slowly climbing out of the Great Depression and jobs were at a premium.

In the end, the Act was meant to "level the playing field" between contractors who performed federal government jobs throughout the country with the main rationale being that a Federal Prevailing Wage would stimulate economic growth. The language of this federal statute was sufficiently ambiguous to require clarification in 1935 before it could be effectively enforced. The Act was modified again in 1964 to include fringe benefits.

Because the U.S. Constitution's Tenth Amendment constrains the federal government's ability to dictate contract terms for state government projects, state and municipal governments were required to institute their own prevailing wage laws, if they chose to do so.

After Davis-Bacon was enacted, many states began the process of creating their own prevailing wage acts, popularly known as "Little Davis Bacons". State prevailing wages were initially set up to protect local wage rates and foster a better qualified work force. Not all states have chosen to go this route however. States such as Virginia have no state prevailing wage act, preferring instead to allow public construction work costs and wages to be whatever the market will bear.

By 1969, 41 states and the District of Columbia enacted prevailing wage laws. But, despite the promise of economic advantages touted by proponents of the prevailing wage laws, beginning in 1979 there were widespread efforts to repeal existing prevailing wage laws. Changes in the dominant political philosophy and government budgetary difficulties are often cited as the cause of the repeal movement. Between 1979 and 1988, nine states repealed their prevailing wage laws. Florida was the first to repeal its legislation, followed by Alabama in 1980. Utah was the third state to repeal, but only after vetoes from its governor. Arizona repealed its statute in 1984, followed by Idaho, Colorado and New Hampshire in 1985.

Currently, 29 states have a prevailing wage act and while some states have chosen to repeal their prevailing wage acts over the years, others have decided to retain Prevailing Wage but provide for exemptions, sometimes temporarily. In 1997 a bill was passed in Ohio which exempted school construction from their state prevailing wage but required a study be performed to assess the effects of this exemption upon the construction cost, quality, and wages. After the exemption expired, the Ohio Legislative Service Commission in 2002 concluded that there was no negative effect on the construction industry and reported a cost savings of 10 percent. The State of Florida instituted a similar exemption which saved them 15 percent.

In Pennsylvania, the minimum wage rates listed by the PA Dept. of Labor and Industry have been updated yearly along with the cost of fringe benefits since the enactment of the law in 1961. This wage rate is in large part determined by the union scale rate, which according to reports constitutes less than 23 percent of Pennsylvania's

construction industry. However, the project cost threshold that dictates whether a project must comply with the state Prevailing Wage, has NEVER been updated since 1961 and still remains at \$25,000. Apparently, no mechanism had been put into place in 1961 to adjust the threshold to account for inflation.

Upon further examination, a \$25,000 threshold in 1961 dollars, if adjusted for inflation, would be a whopping \$172,000 in 2007 dollars. This is quite a difference, a difference that has not gone unnoticed by members of the Abandoned Mine Reclamation community.

The potential for cost savings for AMR projects priced below this revised threshold is obvious—some put the cost savings figure at 25 percent. Of course for the AMR community, cost savings ultimately translates to more systems on the ground and more streams cleaned up.

While the particular reason for lack of inflation adjustments in the original threshold amount remains unclear, the end product for AMD construction projects is that recipients of public funding have to comply with the PA Prevailing Wage Act for projects that cost more than \$25,000—a figure that is easily exceeded by virtually every single AMD project.

With funding streams shrinking and project costs skyrocketing, watershed groups, conservation districts and other members of the AMR community are becoming even more cost-conscious than ever before.

In a subsequent issue of [Abandoned Mine Posts](#), we will take a look at some proposed legislative changes that are afoot in Harrisburg which would bring equity to this 47 year old problem and we'll talk about ways for the AMR community to make their voices heard.

This article is just one of the dozens on [Abandoned Mine Posts](#) produced by the [Western PA Coalition for Abandoned Mine Reclamation](#). WPCAMR also produces Video Diaries to spotlight issues and projects of interest to Pennsylvania's mine reclamation community.

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—

- **June 13**— [EPA Clean Diesel Program Grants](#)
- **June 13**— [Game Commission State Wildlife Grants](#)
- **June 15**— [Merck Wissahickon Creek Water Quality Improvement Grants](#)
- **June 15**— [EPA Region 3 Environmental Achievement Awards](#)
- **June 15**— [Northeast Environmental Partners Environmental Awards](#)
- **June 16**— [Rachel Carson Sense of Wonder Contest](#)
- **June 20**— [DEP Section 902 Recycling Development Grants](#)
- **June 20**— [DEP PA Energy Harvest Grants](#)
- **June 20**— [DEP Biofuels Subsidy Grants](#)
- **June 20**— [PEDA Innovative, Advanced Renewable Energy Grants](#)
- **June 20**— [PEDA Duquesne Energy Efficiency, Renewable Energy Grants](#)

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- **June 30**—[DEP Energy Use Reduction Grants](#)
- **June 30**—[Dept. of Agriculture Healthy Farms, Healthy Schools Grants](#)
- **June 30**—[DCNR Wild Resources Conservation Grants](#)
- **June 30**—[Appalachian Renewable Energy, Energy Efficiency Grants](#)
- [RC&D Grants for Improving Livestock Operations](#)
- **July 18**— [DEP Composting Infrastructure Development Grants](#)
- **August 29**—[DEP Local Government Greenhouse Gas Reduction Grants](#)
- **September 20**— [Fish & Boat Commission Boating Facilities Grants](#)
- **September 24**— [Coca-Cola, NRC Recycling Bin Grants](#)
- **October 15**—[PPL Project Earth Environmental Education Grants](#)
- **October 31**—[PA Resources Council Lens On Litter Photo Contest](#)

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

Quick Clips

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

[Smart Growth Recognizes Excellence in Westmoreland County](#)

[A Natural Garden Look Requires Planning- Audubon](#)

[Its Open Season on Hogs Gone Wild](#)

[Peregrine Preservation](#)

[Sounds of the Cicadas](#)

[Biting Reality: Tick Population on the Upswing](#)

[Waste Find Way to Public Land](#)

[Wal-Mart Grant Promotes Electronics Recycling in Clearfield](#)

[New Recycling Partnership Benefits Animals](#)

[Mural About Environment Is a Community Effort](#)

[Cranberry Commits to Going Green](#)

[Chester Development Continues with RiverWalk](#)

[Editorial: Gettysburg, Other Landmarks Face Threats](#)

[City's Carbon Footprint](#)

[Pittsburgh Adopts Green Vehicle Policy for City Fleet](#)

[Editorial: Don't Let Uncertainty Rule Out Steps on Climate Challenge](#)

[Editorial: Global Warming Battles, Eating Their Own](#)

[Farm Bureau Pushes Biodiesel on Behalf of Soybean Producers](#)

[Geothermal Energy Gains Momentum](#)

[Conservation Could Save Township \\$27K](#)

[Oil Boom Makes Chicken Manure a Favored Fertilizer](#)

[Editorial: Energy, What We Can Do](#)

[Editorial: Bioweed Questions](#)

[DEP Orders Partial Shutdown of 2 Natural Gas Drillers in Lycoming](#)

[State Orders Partial Shutdown of Natural Gas Drilling](#)

[Oakmont Presses to Limit Gas Well Sites](#)

[Editorial: Task Force Good Step on Natural Gas Exploration](#)

[Entrepreneurs Plan to Use Mines for Geothermal System](#)

[Editorial: Bill Limits Development Along Appalachian Trail](#)
[Pittsburgh Celebrates Reopening of Point State Park](#)
[Bradford Authority Approves Tuna Valley Trail Funding](#)
[Editorial: Activist Reaches Compromise on TMI](#)
[Loan Helps Another Dentist Cut Waste, Energy Costs](#)
[Loan Helps a Philadelphia Dentist Cut Waste, Energy Costs](#)
[State Warns About Energy Surcharges](#)
[Migrating Shad Decrease in Susquehanna River](#)

Watershed NewsClips

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

[Berlin Students Release Trout Into Stonycreek](#)
[South Park Students Take Trout From Classroom to Creek](#)
[Middle School Students Study Watersheds](#)
[Students Learn How They Can Affect Water Quality](#)
[Battle Over Hammer Creek Takes Dramatic Plot Twist](#)
[Lehigh River Making Remarkable Recovery](#)
[Susquehanna River Commission: Mine Drainage Needs to be Fixed](#)
[Demand for Water Expected to Double in Susquehanna Basin](#)
[Ecosystem Nearing Completion at High School](#)
[Editorial: Don't Be a Hick, Clean Up the Crick](#)
[Work Begins on Kettle Creek Pavilion](#)
[Popularity of Kayaking Grows in Pittsburgh](#)
[Grant Will Help Fight Sediment in Tioga County Watershed](#)
[Hearing Focuses on PA's Water Systems](#)
[Separate Sewage Lines, Panel Told](#)
[Authorities Could Use More State Funds for Cleanup Panel Told](#)
[Legislator Hopes to Soften Blow of Chesapeake Bills](#)
[Older Water Systems Worry Wastewater Group](#)
[Editorial: Chesapeake Cleanup Help, It's About Equal Treatment](#)
[Seeking Flood Relief in Harrisburg](#)
[Pottsville Seeks New Route to Reclamation](#)
[Delaware Flood Victims to Make Case to Rendell](#)
[More Cash to Flood-Proof Neshaminy Properties](#)
[Cove Farmers Consider Joining Manure Project](#)

Regulations

The Department of Environmental Protection published notice the City of Philadelphia's [ambient air monitoring plan](#) is available for public comment. The Independent Regulatory Review Commission published comments on the [PUC's Energy Conservation](#) regulations.

[Pennsylvania Bulletin – May 31, 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 final guidance this week on [underground storage tank liners](#).

DEP ID: 257-3120-001. Evaluation of Underground Storage Tank Liners. Both State and Federal regulations require that internally-lined underground storage tanks with no other means of corrosion protection be inspected 10 years after the lining installation and re-evaluated every 5 years thereafter.

[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](#)

- **NEW.** [Revised Schedule of meetings for DEP Solid Waste Advisory Committee, Recycling Fund Advisory Committee.](#)
- **June 2—NEW.** Senate Appropriations Committee meets to consider [Senate Bill 2](#) (Earll-R-Erie) H2O Water Infrastructure Funding Program, [Senate Bill 352](#) (Robbins-R-Mercer) providing for a Low-Income Energy Assistance Program allocation of funds. Rules Committee Room. Off the Floor.
- **June 3—NEW.** House Environmental Resources and Energy Committee meets to consider [House Bill 44](#) (Rubley-R-Chester) prohibiting the sale of mercury thermostats, [House Bill 328](#) (Sturla-D-Lancaster) establishing the Adopt-A-River Program within DCNR, [House Bill 454](#) (Frankel-D-Allegheny) establishing the Office of Environmental Advocate. Room G-50 Irvis Building. 10:00.
- **June 3—NEW.** House Tourism and Recreational Development Committee meets to consider [House Bill 1908](#) (Rohrer-R-Berks) landowner liability protection for opening lands for recreation. Room 205 Ryan Building. 9:30.
- **June 3—**[Governor’s Sustainable Water Infrastructure Task Force](#) meeting. Room 105 Rachel Carson Building. 9:30.
- **June 5—**DEP Board for Certification of Water and Wastewater System Operators. Rescheduled to a conference call. Contact: Cheri Sansoni 717-772-5158 or send email to: csansoni@state.pa.us .

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- **June 6**—DEP [State Water Plan Statewide Water Resources Committee](#) Subcommittee on Policy and Integration meeting. Room 105 Rachel Carson Building. 9:00.
- **June 9**—Joint State Government Commission Task Force meeting on the Kilbuck Township Landslide pursuant to [House Resolution 897](#). Room 108 Finance Building. 12:00.
- **June 10**—DEP [Air Quality Technical Advisory Committee](#), Ad-Hoc Subcommittee on Monitoring Technical Work meeting. 10th Floor Training Room, Rachel Carson Building. 9:00.
- **June 11**—**NEW**. [Joint Legislative Budget & Finance Committee](#) meets to discuss the impact of slots gaming on PA Lottery sales. Hearing Room 1, North Office. 10:00.
- **June 12**—**NEW**. [Susquehanna River Basin Commission](#) meeting to consider water resources projects. Holiday Inn Elmira-Riverview. 8:30. ([meeting notice](#))
- **June 16**—Environmental Issues Forum, hosted by the [Joint Air and Water Pollution Control and Conservation Committee](#), presents a program on the services provided by the [Pennsylvania Technical Assistance Program](#) (PennTAP). Room 205 Ryan Building. Noon.
- **June 17**—[Environmental Quality Board](#) meeting. Room 105 Rachel Carson Building. 9:00.
- **June 24**—DEP [Small Systems Technical Assistance Center Advisory Board](#) meeting. Room 105 Rachel Carson Building. 10:00.
- **July 9**—**CANCELLED**. DEP Water Resource Advisory Committee meeting. Rescheduled for July 22.
- **July 15**—House Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee hearing on the Clean and Green Program. G-50 Irvis Building. 1:00.
- **July 22**—DEP [Water Resource Advisory Committee](#) meeting. Room 105 Rachel Carson Building. 1:00.
- **September 18**—Joint Conservation Committee Sewage Management and Treatment Task Force. Penn Stater Conference Center, State College. 10:00.

[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 .

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 Crisci Associates and the public. Crisci Associates is a Harrisburg-based government and public affairs firm whose clients include Fortune 500 companies and non-profit organizations. For more information on Crisci Associates call 717-234-1716. All rights reserved.

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