

— PA — Environment Digest

*An Update on
Environmental
Issues in
Pennsylvania*

Edited By David E. Hess, Holston & Crisci

November 7, 2005

DEP Reorganizes Website, Offers New Web Address

The Department of Environmental Protection unveiled a new look and a new address for its website this week that it said would make it easier to navigate and find information.

The new site--www.depweb.state.pa.us-- is divided into four main areas – air, land, water and energy. Users who currently have bookmarked the site will need to enter the new address to re-establish their links.

The center panel of the new homepage features seasonal information on programs like the “Stay Warm PA” program and Pennsylvania’s Land Recycling Program.

Users will also find links to other Pennsylvania environmental agencies and commissions, environmental laws (PA Code and PA Bulletin) as well as links to other hot topics.

The left navigation panel of the homepage features quick links to frequently visited sites such as forms and publications, and a new feature, “DEP Programs A-to-Z,” which will help users easily locate the specific information they are seeking.

The newsroom section of the site features the latest environmental headlines from DEP’s “Daily Update” newsletter. Links to department news releases and clips from newspapers around the state are also included on this page.

The “In Your Neighborhood” section links users to a particular region of the state and the news and information for that particular area. Users can find quick contacts for DEP’s regional and local offices in this section.

Brand new to the site is a “[Just for Kids](#)” section featuring Carson P. Falcon, who helps younger visitors learn about a host of environmental topics such as energy, recycling, mining and, of course, Pennsylvania’s Peregrine falcons, which nest on the 15th Floor ledge of the Rachel Carson State Office Building in Harrisburg.

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Looking North on the Susquehanna River from [Susquehannock State Park](#), Lancaster County.

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“Just for Kids” is also where youths can build a wind tower, test their litter IQ or play the watershed game to learn more about Pennsylvania’s environment. The site also features dozens of interactive games and links to printable posters, stickers and coloring books.

Session Schedule

The House returns to session on November 7 to presumably finish work on legislation to repeal the pay raise. The Senate is technically on a 6-hour call to return to Harrisburg. Both are scheduled to be in session again starting November 14.

The House session schedule for the remainder of the year looks like this: November 14, 15, 16, 21, 22 and December 5, 6, 7, 12, 13, 14, 19.

On the Hill

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- Conestoga Wood Specialties Wins Businesses for the Bay Award
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- New Website Helps Residents Learn if They Need Mine Subsidence Insurance
- DEP Landfill Permitting Regulations Upheld By Pennsylvania Supreme Court

Feature

- A Year of Changes for Wolf Creek, Grove City, *by Anna McAnnich*

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On the Hill

On the Senate/House Agenda

The House returns to session November 7 and the Senate may come back on November 9, depending on what the House does with the pay raise issue. Otherwise both are scheduled to be in session again November 14.

Calendar

The House will start November 7 with these bills on the Calendar: [House Bill 2141](#) which would prohibit the Department of Environmental Protection from adopting the current California vehicle emission standards; and [House Resolution 382](#) a concurrent resolution urging Congress to reauthorize the Abandoned Mine Reclamation Fund.

Senate Committee Reports Waste Tire, Forestry, Sewer, ATV Bills

The Senate Environmental Resources and Energy Committee, chaired by Sen. Mary Jo White (R-Venango) and Sen. Ray Musto (D-Luzerne), reported out these bills and resolutions this week—

- [House Bill 1114](#) (Yudichak-D-Luzerne) – amendments to the Waste Tire Recycling Act;
- [Senate Resolution 137](#) (Madigan-R-Bradford) – re-establishing the Forestry Task Force supported by the Joint Legislative Air & Water Pollution Control and Conservation Committee;
- [House Resolution 88](#) (Hutchinson-R-Venango) – establishing a Sewage Management and Treatment Task Force supported by the Joint Legislative Air & Water Pollution Control and Conservation Committee;
- [Senate Bill 868](#) (Scarnati-R-Warren) increasing the in-lieu of tax payments for State Forest Land was referred to Senate Appropriations Committee; and
- [Senate Bill 995](#) (MJ White-R-Venango) amending the ATV/Snowmobile registration requirements which was referred to Senate Appropriations Committee.

House Energy Policy Meeting Focuses on Energy Efficiency, Renewables

The House Environmental Resources and Energy Committee, chaired by Rep. Bill Adolph (R-Delaware) and Rep. Bud George (D-Clearfield), held the second of its Energy Policy information meetings on November 1 to hear presentations on energy efficiency and renewable sources of energy.

Commissioner William Shane from the Public Utility Commission said the state needed to do more to encourage indigenous natural gas production in Pennsylvania, which now provides 20 percent of our needs.

He suggested streamlining the permitting process for new wells and potentially drilling for natural gas on lands owned by the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources and off the North Carolina coast.

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Commissioner Shane noted that electric customers have been shielded from the increase in the cost of fuel to produce electricity because of caps on rates, unlike in natural gas which has no caps. But, those caps will be going off at the end of 2009 and in 2010 which will mean a competitive market will exist.

The PUC is also working to encourage demand-side management and energy efficiency through a variety of programs like the Low Income Usage Reduction Program which makes homes more energy efficient, expanding the use of time-of-use metering equipment that encourages off-peak use and educating consumers about energy conservation.

Commissioner Shane said implementation of the [Alternative Energy Portfolio Standards](#) will also increase the use of non-fossil fuel for electricity production and recommended the construction of coal gasification plants to generate electricity.

Commissioner Shane was also asked what he thought of the recent proposal by the Department of Environmental Protection to develop a Pennsylvania-only rule to limit mercury emissions at power plants and he said he personally opposed the idea.

Bill Prindle from the [American Council for an Energy Efficient Economy](#) said promoting energy efficiency is the “fastest and cheapest way” to deal with Pennsylvania’s energy problems.

Unlike the 1970s, today’s energy crisis is not about supply, Prindle said, it’s about how much energy can be delivered on a daily and yearly basis at what cost. That means looking at the demand-side of the energy marketplace can have a real impact, particularly at peak use times.

Prindle said states like New York and New Jersey have each spent over \$100 million a year to promote energy efficiency, and Pennsylvania has not even come close.

Roger Clark, Manager of Technology and Policy for the [Sustainable Energy Development Fund](#) said for the goals of the Alternative Energy Portfolio Standard to be met, Pennsylvania has to build regional and local clean energy markets.

The Committee's next Energy Policy information meeting will be November 16 and scheduled to provide remarks is Department of Environmental Protection Secretary Kathleen McGinty.

Senate/House Bills Moving Last Week

Legislation moved this week involving land trusts, downtown relocation, the recycling fee, eminent domain and more. Here are the details...

Horse Boarding Farms: [House Bill 619](#) (Hershey-R-Chester), which expands the state Farmland Preservation Program to land used for boarding, training or riding horses, was signed into law as Act 61.

In the Senate

Low-Income Energy Assistance: [House Bill 1539](#) (Nickol-R-York), which would provide more funding for low-income heating assistance this winter, became the vehicle for the repeal of the legislative, judicial and executive pay raise this week and as a result

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bounced back and forth between the House and Senate over that issue. The bill is now in the House for action.

Land Trust Reimbursements: [Senate Bill 940](#) (Waugh-R-York) which would set aside up to \$200,000 per year from the Agricultural Conservation Easement Purchase Fund to reimburse Land Trusts for expenses incurred in acquiring agricultural conservation easements was passed by the Senate.

Eminent Domain: [Senate Bill 881](#) (Piccola-R-Dauphin) and [Senate Bill 897](#) (Brightbill-R-Lebanon) making changes to the Eminent Domain Code in response to *Kelo* were reported from the Senate State Government Committee and referred to Senate Appropriations Committee.

In the House

Animal Composting: [House Bill 1413](#) (Caltagirone-D-Berks) establishing a tax credit for qualified animal recycling facilities and limited tax exemptions was passed by the House.

Eminent Domain: [House Bill 2019](#) (Grell-R-Cumberland) and [House Bill 2054](#) (Grell-R-Cumberland) amending the Eminent Domain Code to deal with the U.S. Supreme Court's *Kelo* decision on eminent domain was passed by the House.

NewsClips: [Eminent Domain Bill Wins Approval](#)

America Recycles Day: [House Resolution 494](#) (Rubley-R-Chester) designating November 15 as [America Recycles Day](#) was passed by the House.

Radon Awareness Month: [House Resolution 495](#) (Rubley-R-Chester) designating January 2006 [Radon Awareness Month](#).

PA GIS Day: [House Resolution 499](#) (Fairchild-R-Mifflin) designating November 15 as Pennsylvania GIS Day.

Lehigh Wet Weather Study: [House Resolution 368](#) (Reichley-R-Berks) urging the Corps of Engineers to look into wet weather problems in the Little Lehigh Creek Watershed in Berks and Lehigh Counties was passed by the House.

Recycling Fee Extension: [House Bill 1902](#) (Rubley-R-Chester) extending the \$2 per ton recycling fee and requiring that Section 904 Recycling Performance Grants be spent on efforts to promote recycling and waste reduction was referred to the House Appropriations Committee.

California Car Standards: [House Bill 2141](#) (Geist-R-Blair), which would prohibit the Department of Environmental Protection from adopting the current California vehicle emission standards, was referred into and reported from House Appropriations.

Penalties for Littering: [House Bill 659](#) (Crahalla-R-Montgomery) increasing penalties for scattering rubbish was referred to House Appropriations Committee.

Bills Introduced

Appliance Rebate: [House Bill 2152](#) (McIlhinney-R-Bucks) establishing an energy-efficient appliance rebate program.

In Other News

First Environmental Bond Grants for Brownfield, Watershed, Energy Projects

Gov. Rendell this week announced the first 140 grant awards from the environmental bond issue approved by voters in May totaling \$65 million in 50 counties. Projects included measures to clean up rivers and streams, improve parks, revitalize abandoned industrial sites and protect open space and preserve farmland.

Participating in the announcement were Environmental Protection Secretary Kathleen McGinty, Lebanon County Commissioner Jo Ellen Litz and Andrew McElwaine, President and CEO of the Pennsylvania Environmental Council.

In addition to the individual project announcements, the Governor said all 67 counties will now be able to apply for \$90 million, allocated on a county-by-county basis, for eligible environmental projects under the County Environmental Initiative Program.

Each county will receive a list of already pending grant applications from the departments of Environmental Protection, Conservation and Natural Resources, Community and Economic Development, Agriculture and the Pennsylvania Infrastructure Investment Authority from which they can choose projects or counties can add their own.

The individual project announcements fall into several categories including:

- \$31.5 million to upgrade state parks and improve state forests;
- \$14 million to clean up acid mine drainage, other water quality improvements and watershed grants;
- \$9.7 million to clean former industrial sites;
- \$3 million to upgrade our water and sewer infrastructure;
- \$3.7 million for open space protection;
- \$2.2 million to use mine water as an economic resource; and
- \$700,000 to remove impacts from dams.

The largest investment, \$7.7 million, is going to conservation districts that administer the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program, which pays farmers to take land along streams out of production to help decrease agricultural related run-off into major waterways that feed into the Chesapeake Bay.

The Governor noted that this is not the only planned announcement of environmental grants. He said additional open space grants, administered by the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, will be announced this winter. The Department of Environmental Protection also will soon open its round of Growing Greener I and Growing Greener II grants.

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And the Department of Agriculture is working with counties to identify state funds needed to match county funds for farmland preservation grants. That announcement is expected in the spring.

A complete [list of individual projects funded](#) is available online.

New Environmental Bond Grant Funds Watershed Project Repairs Statewide

The [Western Pennsylvania Coalition for Abandoned Mine Reclamation](#) received a \$350,000 environmental bond grant to fund a program to make emergency repairs to restore existing watershed restoration projects funded by the original Growing Greener Program.

While the program is not yet up and running, visit the [Western Pennsylvania Coalition for Abandoned Mine Reclamation webpage](#) and watch for more information in the future.

DEP to Hold Public Meetings on Proposed Nutrient Trading Program

The Department of Environmental Protection this week announced two public meetings for the purpose of collecting public input on [Pennsylvania's Nutrient Trading Program](#).

These meetings are being co-sponsored by the Department's Citizens Advisory Council and the Pennsylvania Association of Conservation Districts Inc. and will be facilitated with the help of the Pennsylvania Environmental Council.

Both meetings will begin at 6 p.m. on:

- November 14 -- Days Inn, 240 South Pugh St., State College
- November 15 -- Dauphin County Conservation District, 1451 Peters Mountain Rd., Dauphin

Interested individuals from agriculture, wastewater treatment facilities, industrial plants, developers, conservation districts, watershed association and environmental groups are invited to attend the above meetings to provide input concerning the department's proposed guidelines.

For more information, visit the [DEP Nutrient Trading Program webpage](#) or call the Water Planning Office at 717-772-4785

Open Rivers Initiative Grant Applications Due January 13

The [NOAA Open Rivers Initiative](#) is now accepting applications to fund projects to remove dams and other barriers in streams and rivers through January 13.

Projects funded through ORI grants should have strong on-the-ground habitat restoration components that foster economic, educational, and social benefits for citizens and their communities in addition to long-term ecological habitat improvements for NOAA trust resources.

Funding of up to \$6,000,000 is expected to be available for the ORI Project Grants competition in FY 2007. The NOAA Restoration Center within the Office of Habitat Conservation will administer this grants initiative, and anticipates that typical awards will range from \$50,000 to \$250,000 per project. Although a select few may exceed this range, project proposals requesting over \$1,000,000 will not be accepted or reviewed.

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For more information, visit the [NOAA Open Rivers Initiative webpage](#).
NewsClip: [Chesapeake Bay Region Leads Nation in Dam Removals](#)

Capital Region Senior Environment Corps Wins Watershed Protection Award

The Cumberland County-based water monitors of [Pennsylvania Senior Environment Corps](#) -- Capital Region were awarded the Watershed Protection Award by the Cumberland County Conservation District.

Bill Apgar received the award on behalf of the monitors. Also in attendance were Dianne Martin, Retired and Senior Volunteer Program of the Capital Region's West Shore Area Coordinator, and Carol Oman, RSVP's Executive Director.

As one of the original PaSECs founded in 1998 as a joint project of the Departments of Environmental Protection and Aging along with the [Environmental Alliance for Senior Involvement](#), the volunteers continue to excel in working with the results of their "study design" to determine where their water monitoring effectors will produce the greatest results in protecting their watershed.

A study design is a monitoring program plan that guides volunteers in determining why they are monitoring, who they want to use their data, what monitoring protocols they will use and what quality assurance measures they will need to employ to produce data that is credible to their intended data users.

DEP's [Citizens' Volunteer Monitoring Program](#) provides technical assistance to PaSECs and all other volunteer monitoring groups on the study design process.

Over 450 Attend Premier of "Looking to the River" Documentary by WVIA-TV

Over 450 people from up and down the Susquehanna River in Pennsylvania attended the premier of the WVIA-TV's documentary about the cultural, economic and environmental history of the Susquehanna River November 4 in The Campus Theater in Lewisburg.



"In the classic storytelling tradition, [Looking To The River](#) seeks to convey ideas that entertain and enlighten," said A. William Kelly, President and CEO of WVIA, a public television station in Pittston. "We hope that after you watch the film, you will better understand and appreciate its affect on all our lives, and the possibilities it holds to define our future. Most importantly, we hope the documentary compels you in some way to participate in the nurturing of the Susquehanna River."

"This is the first step in a series of programs on WVIA that will advocate the importance of the river to the quality of life in our region and the health of the Chesapeake Bay," said H.W. "Skip" Wieder, of Geisinger Health Systems and chair of the

[Susquehanna River Heartland Coalition](#). "One objective of the project is to reintroduce the river to residents in the region to connect them to this great resource."

The documentary is one of the first to examine issues primarily from the perspective of the Middle, West and North branches of the Susquehanna River.

Looking To The River will air on WVIA December 2 at 9:00 p.m., December 6 at 8:00 p.m., December 10 at 6:00 p.m. and December 11 at 3:00 p.m. It is also expected to be shown on local public television stations in Pennsylvania through the Pennsylvania Public Television Network. Check local listings for times in your area.

As part of a regional education initiative, the Sunbury Daily Item and Danville News newspaper published a special section in their October 15 editions they called *Susquehanna – A Special Report on the River*. The report provided background information on the river resource as well as the environmental and economic challenges it faces.

For more information, visit the [Looking To The River webpage](#) and download the special [Looking To The River theatrical premiere program](#). The premiere program includes a list of the sponsors that made the documentary possible.

Schuylkill River Heritage Recognizes Partners for Preservation, Water Trail Efforts

The [Schuylkill River Heritage Area](#) presented awards to five of its partners in recognition of their achievements in preserving the cultural heritage of the area.

The five partners recognized by the SRHA included:

- **Tamaqua Save Our Station** and the Borough of Tamaqua, for 20 years of hard work, dedication and unwavering commitment to the restoration of the 1874 Philadelphia and Reading Railroad Tamaqua Train Station. The station was officially opened to the public in August 2004, housing a restaurant, visitors' center and shops, and becoming a key to the revitalization of downtown Tamaqua.
- **Oley Township Board of Supervisors and Historical Architectural Review Board**, for designating the entire township of Oley as a local historic district, in recognition of the value of the township's architecture. The township was among the first areas of Pennsylvania to be settled in the 18th century, and its buildings and landscape make it a wholly unique place in the United States.
- **Mill at Anselma Preservation and Educational Trust**, for restoration and preservation of a 1747 mill in Chester Springs and working to have it designated a National Historic Landmark. The mill is an outstanding and rare example of an 18th Century custom gristmill with an unparalleled combination of 18th, 19th and 20th Century machinery found in no other mill in the United States.
- **Manayunk Development Corp. and the Fairmount Park Commission**, for refurbishment of the Manayunk Canal Towpath, a critical link in the Schuylkill River Trail. The partners recognized the historical value of the Schuylkill Navigation System, and successfully worked to preserve the canal and its towpath for recreational use, installing lighting, fencing and beautiful landscaping.
- **Schuylkill Canal Association and Upper Providence Township**, for reopening Lock 60 of the Schuylkill Canal, in the village of Mont Clare. The partners worked for the last 24 years to preserve, restore and interpret Lock 60 and its associated structures.

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Once one of the busiest locks in the 19th Century Schuylkill Navigation System, Lock 60 is now the only operational lock in the entire system.

The Schuylkill River Heritage Area also received recognition at the event. Paul Sanford, director of stewardship for the [American Canoe Association](#), honored the SRHA for its recent designations as a National Recommended Water Trail and Water Trail Champions for 2005.

The Schuylkill River Heritage Area was presented with a certificate by Sanford for its recent designations by the American Canoe Association. The SRHA became one of only 12 water trails throughout the United States and Canada to receive the first-time ever designations.

As a Nationally Recommended Water Trail, the SRHA has earned the right to use a special ACA seal of approval in maps, signs, and other printed materials related to the [Schuylkill River water trail](#).

The recommendation assures paddlers that the trail has met certain requirements, including public access points; maps, guides, signage or a website of reasonable quality; and printed materials that communicate low-impact ethics for trail users.

Five Communities Receive Flood Hazard Mitigation Funding

The Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency announced five communities will receive \$2.8 million [Flood Hazard Mitigation](#) funding to help them reduce the loss of life and property damage in the event of future flooding.

The communities include:

- Blair County, Altoona City - \$1,311,750;
- Butler County, Harmony Borough - \$166,500;
- Dauphin County, Lower Swatara Twp. - \$130,710;
- Lackawanna County, Old Forge Borough - \$952,690; and
- Wyoming County, Tunkhannock Twp. - \$288,900.

The Hazard Mitigation Grant Program is funded at a 75 percent federal share and a 25 percent non-federal share.

Nearly 1,000 properties have been mitigated at a cost of \$100 million so families could move out of harm's way. Priority for hazard mitigation entails acquisition and relocation of structures from hazard-prone areas; retrofitting, such as flood proofing or seismic retrofits to protect structures from future damage; and structural hazard control, such as debris basins or floodwalls.

The Hazard Mitigation Grant Program is a federal grant program administered by PEMA and made available after each federal disaster declaration.

For more information regarding the [Hazard Mitigation Grant Program webpage](#).

Pitt Laboratory Earns Gold Green Building Designation

The U.S. Green Building Council this week presented the gold LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) rating to the University of Pittsburgh's [McGowan Institute for Regenerative Medicine Laboratory Building](#).

Pitt Chancellor Mark A. Nordenberg accepted the award from USGBC board member Rebecca L. Flora, executive director of the Pittsburgh-based [Green Building Alliance](#).

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Currently, Pitt is the only university in Pennsylvania to have received the gold award. Across the Commonwealth, only 13 buildings including the David L. Lawrence Convention Center have been so designated. Nationwide, 96 buildings have reached the gold level.

“We are very grateful to the U.S. Green Building Council for recognizing and rewarding our McGowan Laboratory Building in such a meaningful way,” said University of Pittsburgh Chancellor Mark A. Nordenberg. “The University of Pittsburgh has a long-standing commitment to environmental quality and sustainability. That commitment is reflected in pioneering educational programs such as our School of Engineering's Mascaro Sustainability Initiative, this award-winning construction project, and other initiatives. In terms of both public and economic health, it is hard to imagine a more compelling story than this one—a facility that is cutting-edge in terms of its environmentally friendly features, built on an abandoned steel mill site, dedicated to the development of life-saving medical technologies, and supporting 100 local jobs.”

To earn the gold rating, the McGowan Laboratory Building achieved 29 points on the LEED scale, and its most notable green features include:

- reuse of the site of a former industrial brownfield;
- a 5,000-gallon underground storage tank that collects rainwater to be used for toilet flushing and drip irrigation, reducing the flow of storm water into Pittsburgh's rivers;
- state-of-the-art heat recovery systems to reduce energy use and increase the efficiency of outside air spaces;
- use of a large volume of locally manufactured or fabricated materials; and
- extensive availability of alternative transportation, including bicycle racks, preferred spaces for carpoolers, and accessibility of public transit.

“Higher education is a critical economic sector for Western Pennsylvania, both as an industry and as an engine of economic development. As one of very few university buildings in the state to be certified green, the University of Pittsburgh is taking a leadership role in proving that progress can be green. The University's McGowan Institute is a promising example of green building on a brownfield, illustrating our region's success—one that we hope signals a trend-in environmental transformation,” said Flora.

From the beginning, Pitt envisioned the building as part of its commitment to sustainability, and with the assistance of IKM architects, the Urban Redevelopment Authority, and financing from the Heinz Endowments, the R.K. Mellon Foundation, and the William G. McGowan Charitable Fund, the project was designed to the LEED rating.

The LEED award is given only after a rigorous evaluation process and rewards the extent of sustainable building practices employed in design and construction. The LEED Green Building Rating System is a voluntary, consensus-based national standard for developing high-performance, sustainable buildings.

The building, at 3025 E. Carson St. in Pittsburgh's South Side, is a 45,200-square-foot, two-story building approximately three miles east of downtown Pittsburgh on a former LTV steel site. The building holds office and laboratory space for more than 100 scientists, researchers, and staff developing such cutting-edge medical breakthroughs as artificial hearts and lungs and other life-saving devices. The McGowan Laboratory Building helped launch the economic revitalization of the East Carson corridor of Pittsburgh's historic South Side.

For more information, visit the [McGowan Center for Regenerative Medicine webpage](#) and the [Green Building Alliance](#).

NewsClip: [Pitt Green Lab Site Has a Golden Formula](#)

Keystone Profiles, Ltd. Saves Over \$41,000 a Year in Energy, Waste Costs

Keystone Profiles, Ltd. of Beaver Falls is a manufacturer/supplier of precision cold drawn products that reduced its annual operating costs by over \$41,000 by becoming more energy efficient and reducing waste with the help of a [Small Business Pollution Prevention Assistance Account](#) loan.

Keystone used the state funding to install a new process tank and insulate their existing process tanks and steam pipes. The company projects annual savings of 1,090 MCF (thousand cubic feet) of natural gas. A new temperature control valve will help reduce the amount of steam required to heat the process tanks. Labor and maintenance costs will also be reduced.

The company also projects saving \$5,000 for the purchase of potassium permanganate, sulfuric acid, hydrochloric acid and degreasing agents, and a savings of \$10,000 in hazardous waste disposal costs for these materials.

Combined, these projects are projected to save the company approximately \$41,600 annually. The company has projected that the payback will be 3.4 years.

The loan program is available to any small business owner whose pollution prevention/energy efficiency project. The business must have 100 or fewer full-time employees.

The loan must be used to purchase or upgrade equipment, or to implement a process change, that reduces or reuses raw materials on-site, reduces the production of waste at the source or significantly reduces energy consumption. Equipment and processes that focus on recycling or pollution control (scrubbers, filters, dust collectors, etc.) are ineligible for the loan.

The project must have a payback period less than or equal to the term of the loan and the expected benefits must extend beyond the term of the loan. The maximum loan amount is \$100,000 with a 2 percent interest rate and a maximum term of 10 years.

Since its inception in 1999, DEP has received 109 loan applications totaling more than \$5.0 million.

For more information, visit the [Small Business Pollution Prevention Assistance Account](#) webpage or contact Gene DeVecchio at 717-772-8951 or send e-mail to gdelvecchi@state.pa.us.

Conestoga Wood Specialties Wins Businesses for the Bay Award

[Conestoga Wood Specialties Corp.](#) of East Earl, Lancaster County was awarded an Outstanding Achievement Award for Pollution Prevention in the Large Business Category at the [Businesses for the Bay](#) annual meeting November 3.

The Businesses for the Bay Program recognizes communities, businesses and other organizations working to prevent pollution, reduce waste and energy costs in the Chesapeake Bay drainage area.

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Conestoga is a leading cabinet component manufacturer whose largest waste stream generated from factory operations is wood waste. The amount of this waste was significantly reduced by investing in laser technology (to make cuts that generate less waste) and recycling or reusing wood waste in the form of cattle bedding, woodstove pellets, composite decking material or as a generic fuel source.

Cosmetically imperfect “paint grade” material is also made available to customers for those who want the performance that natural wood offers but don’t need perfect-looking wood components for certain applications. This helps reduce the total amount of lumber needed in manufacturing.

In addition, the company introduced a new “Zero-Pack” program to limit the amount of paper products used in shipment and reuses skids. Corporate policy views wood waste as an asset to be managed rather than as a waste for disposal.

In 2004, Conestoga recycled or reused over 20,000 tons of sawdust; 14 tons of scrap wood; 75 tons of cardboard and paper; over 40 tons of scrap metals and encourages facility-wide recycling of oil, light bulbs, batteries and computer monitors.

The company recovers an average of 4,000 gallons of solvents annually-effectively eliminating over 7 tons of VOCs each year (3,500 gallons of this reduction was considered to be hazardous waste).

All employees receive initial and annual environmental awareness training. This training is enhanced by “green boards” throughout the plant where various environmental topics are posted for review.

In 2004, Conestoga hosted an “environmental day” for a local school district where children interfaced with employees who talked about all aspects and benefits of working with wood. Conestoga also paid the transportation costs for inner-city children to participate in a summer camp at Nolde Forest in Cumru Township, Berks County. The camp focused on educating children about environmental responsibility while gaining an additional appreciation for the natural setting.

Conestoga also created an Environmental and Community Outreach Team to help manage its community efforts. The company donates trees to cities in the region as part of its Urban Forestry Initiative to help enhance the urban canopy. This program stresses education on the care and benefits of trees. More than 60 trees were planted in Lancaster and Reading in 2004 alone. As of May, 2005, the company had already donated an additional 60 trees to the greater Philadelphia area.

Conestoga also promotes the use of environmentally-friendly species, such as Lyptus, a plantation-grown, non-rainforest wood that replenishes itself every 15-20 years. When this wood is harvested, new growth comes from the existing trunk which avoids soil erosion.

Future environmental plans at the company include establishing an environmental grant program for local schools, additional tree plantings with Habitat for Humanity and working with local schools to develop nature habitats.

For more information, visit the [Businesses for the Bay webpage](#).

Deadline Extended for 2005 Governor’s Environmental Excellence Awards

The deadline to submit applications for the [2005 Governor’s Award for Environmental Excellence](#) has been extended to December 19.

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The award is open to any Pennsylvania business, governmental agency, educational institution, nonprofit organization, individual or farm that has created or participated in the development of a project that promotes environmental stewardship and economic development in the state.

Eligible projects for 2005 Governor's Award for Environmental Excellence must have been completed between August 1, 2004, through July 31, 2005. The project categories for consideration include, but are not limited to: Environmental Technology Innovation; Pollution Prevention and Resource Efficiency; Community Revitalization; Environmental Education and Outreach; Watershed Stewardship; Mine Safety; and Clean Energy Innovations and Environmental Market Development.

Projects will be evaluated on the following criteria: environmental protection, teamwork, public service, environmental education and outreach, pollution prevention, economic impact and innovative technology.

To download an application, visit the [2005 Governor's Award for Environmental Excellence webpage](#).

New Website Helps Residents Learn if They Need Mine Subsidence Insurance

Property owners will be able to quickly check a new website to see whether their property is above or near an abandoned mine, and if it is they can get information instantly on how they can protect their property with mine subsidence insurance.

Coal has been mined underground in Pennsylvania for more than 200 years and the workings extend throughout 43 of the state's 67 counties. More than 1 million homes in Pennsylvania sit atop abandoned mines.

[Mine Subsidence Insurance](#) is a nonprofit fund administered by the Coal and Clay Mine Subsidence Insurance Board and the Department of Environmental Protection that pays claims if property is damaged by mine subsidence.

The insurance premium is about \$1 for every \$1,000 of coverage up to \$250,000. Coverage is available to both residential and commercial buildings and there is a senior citizen discount for those older than 65.

Since the mine subsidence insurance program was created in 1961, it has paid more than \$20 million in claim repairs.

The website enables residents to view maps of municipalities in Allegheny, Butler, Blair, Cambria, Clarion, Fayette, Greene, Indiana, Washington and Westmoreland counties where mine subsidence problems are more frequent.

Residents in unlisted municipalities or other counties can complete an online, site-specific request form for the same information, or they can call the MSI help desk at 1-800-922-1678 to find out if their property is at risk. The help desk is open from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Mine subsidence insurance is also available through some homeowners' insurance agents.

For more information, visit the [Mine Subsidence Insurance Program website](#).

DEP Landfill Permitting Regulations Upheld By Pennsylvania Supreme Court

The Pennsylvania Supreme Court has upheld Department of Environmental Protection regulations that went into effect in 2000 and 2001 which require landfill operators to show proposed landfill construction or expansion will generate social and economic benefits that clearly outweigh potential environmental harms.

During the permitting process, a harms-benefits test looks at the balance between the impact of a landfill on the surrounding communities and any environmental, social and economic benefits gained from a proposed facility. The analysis is the initial screening mechanism for landfill permit reviews conducted before a full technical review.

Two landfill operators, Eagle Environmental II LP and Tri-County Industries Inc., had argued that the harms-benefits test was beyond the authority of the Solid Waste Management Act and the Municipal Waste Management Planning, Recycling and Waste Reduction Act. They also argued that requiring benefits to outweigh environmental harms was unconstitutionally vague and beyond the state’s police powers.

In rejecting these arguments, the Pennsylvania Supreme Court held the following:

- Consideration of economic and social harms and benefits is within the authority of the acts;
- The concept of a balancing test is common and practiced by businesses everyday and the concepts of harms and benefits are easily understood; and
- In keeping with the state’s police powers, a determination of a project’s inherent harms and benefits is reasonably necessary in order to determine whether a potentially dangerous project should be granted a permit in a heavily regulated industry.

For more information, visit DEP’s [Municipal Waste webpage](#).

Feature

A Year of Changes for Wolf Creek, Grove City

by Anna McAnich

A lot can happen in a year... and it has for the section of Wolf Creek that flows through Grove City, Butler County.

In the summer of last year, removal of Grove City Borough’s two dams was still in the planning stages. Now, both are gone.

The history of Grove City and the history of the dams are intertwined; both were built to power mills more than 200 years ago, before Grove City was Grove City.

The original “Lower Dam” was built by Valentine Cunningham, one of the founders of Grove City, while the “Upper Dam” was built by his brother-in-law James Graham.

The Upper Dam remained in its original location, just upstream of the Route 208 bridge over Wolf Creek. At some point, the Lower Dam was removed and rebuilt just downstream of the Main Street bridge over Wolf Creek.



Removing Upper Dam on Wolf Creek

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After having been purchased by the Borough, the Lower Dam was converted to generate power for the Borough in 1908. Around this same time, the pool behind the Upper Dam was used as a recreational area. In fact, for a time it boasted a steamboat that took passengers on a ride from the dam, around “third island,” and back.

In the 1970s, the Upper Dam was also purchased by the borough, along with a portion of the pool behind the dam. Neither dam was officially being used when the decision to remove them was made by the Borough Council.

Liability insurance for the dams was an issue, and the Upper Dam was in poor repair. In addition, the removal of the dams help to restore the natural pattern of the streams they are built across. These patterns include migration of fish upstream, migration of nutrients downstream, and maintenance of proper water temperature and dissolved oxygen level in the stream (water within the dam pool is warmer than that within the moving stream and contains less dissolved oxygen).

PennDOT offered to include removal of the Upper Dam in a project to replace the Route 208 bridge. When difficulty in including the dam’s removal in the bridge project was encountered, PennDOT removed the dam themselves.

[American Rivers](#), a national nonprofit organization dedicated to protecting and improving the quality of the nation’s waters, provided funding to remove the Lower Dam and restore the former dam pool of the Upper Dam. Funding also came from a Growing Greener grant they had been awarded by the Department of Environmental Protection for dam removal and subsequent restoration activities.

The Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission created the removal plan for the Upper Dam and facilitated the provision of additional funding for the Upper Dam restoration and Lower Dam removal through the Natural Resources Conservation Service’s [Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program](#). They also provided match funding for a portion of the available WHIP funds.

Beran Environmental Services, Inc. (BESI) provided bids for the permitting and removal of the Lower Dam and the restoration efforts at the Upper Dam and was awarded both contracts.

Work on the Upper Dam began with conversation with the Borough of Grove City about what they would like to see on the land that would again be dry after the dam’s removal.

At first, a natural area to be used as a park was proposed, but when it became clear that the main channel of Wolf Creek would separate the park from public access, it was decided to plant native trees and shrubs with known wildlife value in the area.

Instead, the park would be created on adjoining land owned by Pine Township, who had been considering developing a walking trail along Wolf Creek. Somehow, melding the two projects seemed like an excellent idea.

PennDOT removed the Upper Dam in September of 2004. The removal started a flurry of activity that involved the implementation of projects long planned by BESI.

In October, a community clean-up occurred that focused on removing refuse from both the former dam pool and the future park area. Members of the community and students from Grove City College supplied the labor force.

Mekis Construction Corporation (contracted for the bridge replacement) spread gravel to form a parking area off Route 208, and six bluebird boxes were placed by the Mercer County Coordinator of the Bluebird Society of Pennsylvania.

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Shortly before Thanksgiving, the Boy Scouts of America, the Girl Scouts of the USA, and other members of the community offered their time to clear the trail that had been designed by employees of BESI.

After a rest for the winter, the still-developing park again became a center of activity this spring. An observation deck was built with funds provided by the Grove City Rotary Club and ALCOA, and the Grove City Environmental Club volunteered to help mount three Wood Duck boxes within Wolf Creek Park.

One stormy Saturday morning in April, an estimated 50 volunteers arrived at the Upper Dam to plant 5,750 native trees and shrubs within the former dam pool area; work which was completed in just over five hours.

These volunteers consisted of representatives from the Grove City Rotary Club, ALCOA, the Boy Scouts of America, the Girl Scouts of the USA, Grove City College, the Grove City Area United Way, Pine Township and Grove City Borough municipalities, and others from the community.

Most recently, Sonntag Excavating, Inc. was sub-contracted to remove the rubble from the dam from where it had been piled against Wolf Creek's banks during the dam's removal, and BESI completed a crib wall and installed rootwads to defend the streambank immediately adjacent to the newly-installed observation deck.

The bank was eroding due to the new flow patterns caused by the dam's removal and a nearly 90 degree turn made by Wolf Creek just upstream of the observation deck.

These activities were funded by American Rivers and WHIP.

In the spring, areas will be sown with wildflower seed, funded by WHIP, and planted with wildflower plugs, funded by the Rover City Rotary Club, to attract butterflies to the park. Future plans, if funds can be raised, include the installation of picnic tables, a boardwalk through a wetland, footbridges over tributaries crossed by the trail, and a bat condo.

Work on the Lower Dam permitting began with a survey of the area by Chamberlin Surveying, continued with creation of a removal plan (complete with an approved Erosion and Sediment Control Plan) by BESI, and concluded with receipt of an approval letter from the DEP's Bureau of Dams and Waterways.

The dam had been repaired once before, in the 1950s, and a small section of the dam had been removed to de-water the pool.

Following completion of the repairs, a metal plate had been installed in the cut to restore the integrity of the dam. Between the arrival of the remnants of Hurricanes Frances and Ivan in the fall of 2004, the plate was removed to again draw down the pool. This allowed approximately one year for sediments behind the dam to stabilize prior to removal.

Because removal of the abutments could create a stability problem, not to mention one of them is a portion of the former mill building that has been converted to Cunningham Memorial Park, it was decided to leave them, and a small slice of the dam immediate adjacent to each one.

Cutting between the portion of dam that was to remain and the portion that was to be removed seemed to be the best way to keep things clean and simple.

Due to the existence of a plunge pool downstream of the dam and the thickness of the dam, Pitt services Center was sub-contracted to use a wire saw to complete the work. To use the wire saw, a hole must first be drilled at the lowest end of the cut. Bob Beran removed some of the sediment from behind the dam to allow access. The saw body was

then clamped to the dam wall and an industrial-grade diamond-coated wire was threaded through the hole, across the top of the dam, and around the saw. The ends of the wire were attached to form a loop, and the saw was started. It moves the chain in a circle and creates tension, slowly pulling the wire through the dam.

Once one cut was complete, Joe Puryear of Puryear Excavating attached a hydraulic hammer to his excavator and began to remove the dam. The hammer is rested on the dam, and with rapid up-down movements strikes the concrete, breaking it apart. In this manner, the dam was removed in layers working from side-to-side and top-to-bottom.

As pieces from the dam were chipped away, Beran used his excavator and posi-track to move debris into the plunge pool, which was estimated to be between five and ten feet deep prior to removal of the dam.

Four days later, the dam was gone and Wolf Creek flowed more freely through Grove City than it had done for approximately two centuries.

Attachment: [Wolf Creek Dam Removal Photo Feature - PDF](#)

Story by Anna McAnnich, reprinted with permission from The Catalyst, [Slippery Rock Watershed Coalition](#).

NewsClip: [Chesapeake Bay Region Leads Nation in Dam Removals](#)

Quick Clips

[RecycleBank Pitches Recycling Program That Will Save Money and Earth](#)

[Rendell Supports Bear Creek Wind Farm](#)

[Beaver County Conservation District Dedicates New Office](#)

[Cumberland County Launches Open Space Program](#)

[An Experiment with Suburban Housing in Urban Areas](#)

[Over 350 Volunteers Plant 100 Trees on Powelton Ave](#)

[Op-Ed: Energy Crisis May Teach Us to Conserve](#)

[PA Leads Nation in Deer – Car Crashes](#)

Watershed NewsClips

[Draft PA Nutrient Trading Policy Would Let Wastewater Plants, Farmers Trade Credits](#)

[Chesapeake Bay Region Leads Nation in Dam Removals](#)

[Federal Mine Reclamation Funds to PA Could Triple](#)

[Mine Reclamation Site Dedicated in Memory of Greg Chulick](#)

[Beaver County Mine Reclamation Project Moves Ahead](#)

[Re-Mining of Area Including Mile Pit Approved](#)

[Trout Unlimited, OSM Collaborate to Restore Abandoned Mine Lands](#)

[New Equations Benefit Stream Restoration Efforts in PA, MD](#)

[Growing Water Use, Unchecked Development Threaten Future Supplies](#)

[Communities Explore Regional Approach to Watershed](#)

[Montour County Wading Through Stormwater Plan](#)

[Grant Will Help 300 Creek Neighbors Get A Lift](#)

[New U.S. House Delaware River Task Force Formed](#)
[Rare Fish Species Seen in Allegheny River](#)
[Susquehanna Riverkeeper Takes on Big Responsibility](#)
[5 Entryways Would Honor the Wyoming Valley's Rich History](#)
[Flood-prone Town Struggles to Tame River](#)
AP Susquehanna River Series—
[Beauty and Romance of the Susquehanna River](#)
[Despite Rebound, Susquehanna Faces New Threats, Nagging Old Ones](#)
[Ferryboat Capture's Susquehanna's Romance](#)
[Growing Water Use, Unchecked Development Threaten Future Supplies](#)

Regulations

Delaware River Basin Commission published [notice of hearing on proposed changes to Water Supply Charges and Comprehensive Plan](#) related to certificates of entitlement.

[Pennsylvania Bulletin – November 5, 2005](#)

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 notice of changes to the noncoal mining compliance policy and a minor revision to coal exploration requirements.

Final: DEP ID: 562-4180-102. Noncoal Compliance/Enforcement Procedures. This document describes the methods to be utilized by the Department for citing violations at all noncoal mining operations, including blasting activities related to noncoal mining.

Final - Minor Revision: DEP ID: 563-2000-102. Coal Exploration. This draft guidance outlines the requirements and procedures for the review and approval of notices of intent and requests for permit waivers for coal exploration activities.

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

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- [Notice of November meetings of DEP Water Resources Regional Committees.](#)
- **November 7** – CANCELLED – [DEP Certification Program Advisory Committee meeting.](#)
- **November 8** – [DCNR Snowmobile and ATV Advisory Committee meeting.](#)
- **November 14** – DEP Nutrient Trading Public Meeting, Days Inn, 240 South Pugh St., State College.
- **November 15** – DEP Nutrient Trading Public Meeting, Dauphin County Conservation District, 1451 Peters Mountain Rd., Dauphin.
- **November 15** – CANCELLED – [Environmental Quality Board meeting.](#)
- **November 16** – House Environmental Resources & Energy Committee Energy Policy information meeting to hear from DEP Secretary Kathleen McGinty.
- **November 16** – PA Environmental Council Awards Dinner. Harrisburg
- **November 16** – [DCNR Citizens Advisory Council meeting.](#)
- **November 16** – [State Board for Certification of Water and Wastewater Systems Operators meeting.](#)
- **November 17** – [DEP Small Water Systems Technical Assistance Center Advisory Board meeting.](#)
- **November 17** – PA Resources Council Awards Dinner. West Conchohocken.
- **November 17** – House Health & Human Services Committee hearing on [House Bill 1369](#) (Sturla-D-Lancaster) relating to powers and responsibilities during a public health emergency.
- **November 18** – [Wildlands Conservancy Annual Dinner/Auction.](#) Macungie.
- **December 1** – Independent Regulatory Review Commission meeting to consider the Environmental Quality Board's Environmental Laboratory Accreditation regulations.

[DEP Calendar of Events](#)

[Watershed Events](#)

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

[Environmental Education Workshop/Training Calendar](#)

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

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

Helpful Web Links

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

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

[DCNR Resource Magazine](#) [DCNR Press Releases](#)

[Fish & Boat Commission Press Releases](#) [Game Commission Press Releases](#)

Stories Invited

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

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Visit the [Professional Services Directory](#) and [Events Calendar](#)