

PA Environment Digest

An Update On Environmental Issues In PA

Edited By: David E. Hess, Crisci Associates

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Drilling Fees Fund More Than \$28.5 Million Environmental, Recreation Projects

Gov. Tom Corbett Friday announced the [Commonwealth Financing Authority](#) approved more than \$28.5 million in funding to support mine drainage treatment, watershed restoration, recreation, abandoned well plugging and flood mitigation projects from the Marcellus Legacy Fund.

Act 13 drilling fees have funded a total of \$28,854,560 in projects under these programs--

- Abandoned Mine Drainage, Abatement & Treatment-- \$5,272,694
- Watershed Restoration and Protection-- \$5,686,048
- Water Quality Data-- \$500,000
- Greenways, Trails and Recreation-- \$16,460,533
- Orphan or Abandoned Well Plugging-- \$225,000
- Flood Mitigation-- \$710,285

[Click Here](#) for a list of Act 13-funded projects under these programs.

“We established these programs to ensure a portion of the funds collected goes back to local communities to support environmental enhancement and conservation programs,” said Corbett.

Abandoned Mine Drainage

The [Abandoned Mine Drainage Abatement and Treatment Program](#) provides grants for projects which involve the reclamation of abandoned mine lands to treat AMD, new AMD site remediation and the repair of existing AMD project sites.

The program also supports the operation and maintenance of current AMD remediation sites through the establishment of a trust fund to ensure ongoing maintenance and monitoring of water quality is achieved.

The 12 approved AMD abatement and treatment projects are located in Allegheny, Bedford, Blair, Butler, Centre, Clarion, Clearfield, Clinton, Elk, Jefferson, Indiana, Northumberland, Schuylkill, Somerset, Venango, Tioga and Westmoreland counties totaling \$5,272,694.

Watershed Restoration & Protection

The [Watershed Restoration and Protection](#) program funds projects, which restore and maintain

restored stream reaches impaired by the uncontrolled discharge of nonpoint source polluted runoff. Projects will be funded with the goal of removing the streams from the Department of Environmental Protection's Impaired Waters list.

The 32 approved watershed restoration and protection projects are located in Bedford, Centre, Chester, Cumberland, Dauphin, Delaware, Elk, Greene, Lancaster, Lehigh, Philadelphia, Potter, McKean, Montgomery, Northampton, Schuylkill, Union and Westmoreland counties totaling \$5,686,048.

Abandoned Well Plugging

The [Orphan or Abandoned Well Plugging](#) program funds projects to plug abandoned and orphaned wells with the potential to cause health, safety or environmental concerns. Two projects were approved in Allegheny and Washington counties totaling \$225,000.

Baseline Water Quality Data

The [Baseline Water Quality Data](#) program funds statewide projects that involve water sample collection and analysis to document existing groundwater quality conditions on private water supplies near natural gas extraction. The two approved Baseline Water Quality Data projects are located in Bradford and Lycoming counties totaling \$500,000.

Flood Mitigation

The [Flood Mitigation](#) program funds statewide projects authorized by a flood protection authority, the Department of Environmental Protection, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service or identified by a local government for flood mitigation.

The four approved flood mitigation projects are located in Blair, Bucks, Lackawanna and Northumberland counties totaling \$710,285.

Greenways, Trails and Recreation

The 116 approved greenways, trails and recreation projects were approved under the [Greenways, Trails and Recreation](#) program totaling \$16,460,533.

The project are located in Allegheny, Armstrong, Beaver, Berks, Bucks, Butler, Cambria, Carbon, Chester, Clarion, Columbia, Cumberland, Dauphin, Delaware, Elk, Erie, Fayette, Greene, Huntingdon, Indiana, Lackawanna, Lawrence, Lehigh, Luzerne, Mercer, Mifflin, Montgomery, Monroe, Northampton, Northumberland, Philadelphia, Schuylkill, Snyder, Susquehanna, Washington, Wayne, Westmoreland, Wyoming and York counties.

Act 13, which Corbett signed into law in 2012, authorized counties to impose an impact fee on unconventional natural gas wells.

To date, the fee has generated more than \$400 million that is benefitting every Pennsylvanian. The majority of the revenues are distributed to local governments where drilling is taking place, with the remainder of the money used for statewide initiatives.

The programs are administered jointly by the Department of Community and Economic Development, the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, and the Department of Environmental Protection, under the direction of the CFA.