

— PA — Environment Digest

*An Update on
Environmental
Issues in
Pennsylvania*

Edited By David E. Hess, Holston & Crisci

December 26, 2005

Celebrate the Holiday, Your Family and Your Successes in 2005!

As you take time to celebrate this holiday season, we at *PA Environment Digest* are no different. This week and next we put together a list of the major environmental accomplishments for 2005, along with a special collection of stories showing how individuals, farmers, businesses, watershed groups, public agencies and nonprofits took positive action to improve their habitat in 2005.

We hope you enjoy them and we wish you and yours a Merry Christmas and Happy Holiday Season!

-- David E. Hess, Editor



Chickies Rock, Lancaster County

Second 2006 Improve Your Habitat Calendar

The *PA Environment Digest* is pleased to present the second of two new “2006 *Improve Your Habitat*” calendars for you to print out and use all year long.

This week’s offering presents photographs of wild and native plants by [Karen Hohman](#), a frequent contributor of photos to the *Digest*.

[Download Your Copy Here - PDF](#)
(For best results, print on photo paper.)

The second page of the file identifies the flower or plant in the photo.

I’m sure Karen would appreciate some feedback on her handiwork!

If you missed the first calendar, [Download Your Copy Here](#).



Photos: Karen Hohman

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Session Schedule

The House and Senate return to start the 2006 session of the General Assembly on January 3, but the real work does not begin until January 23. But, we can't rule out the possibility they may return earlier to address property tax relief.

On the Hill

- House-Passed Property Tax Relief Plan Includes Tax on Consulting Services

Other News

- More Utilities Answer Call to Help Pennsylvanians Stay Warm
- Energy Efficiency, Pollution Reduction Grants Help Small Businesses
- Steam Workshop Will Help Reduce Energy Costs for Manufacturers
- Green Building Workshops for Interiors, Existing Buildings Set for January
- BP, Johnson & Johnson, Others Named Low Carbon Leaders By The Climate Group
- DEP Accepting Applications for Solid Waste – Resource Recovery Dev. Grants
- York Foundation Awards Grant for Farm Preservation Work
- Goodwill Industries Receives \$200,000 Brownfields Job Training Grant
- Projects Funded to Study Rare, Declining Species and Their Habitats
- December Monitoring Matters Focuses on Invasive Species
- National Fish & Wildlife Foundation Awards \$650,000 to Restore Delaware Estuary
- New Publication on Mid-Atlantic Vernal Ponds Available from MAIA
- Play It Safe On Or Around Ice This Winter
- DEP Publishes Notice of 2006 Board and Advisory Committee Meetings

Feature: 2005 In Review Part I

- Legislative & Program Milestones of 2005

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

On the Hill

House-Passed Property Tax Relief Plan Includes Tax on Consulting Services

The property tax relief plan approved by the House this week includes a personal income tax hike and adds 18 categories of goods and services not previously taxed to the sales tax, including management, consulting and public relations services.

The plan was offered as an amendment by Rep. Scavello (R-Monroe) to [Senate Bill 854](#) (Armstrong-R-Lancaster).

The bill would increase the state income tax by .22 percent and, together with the additional sales tax revenue and revenue from slots, would result in an up to 50 percent decrease in local school property taxes for some residential property owners, according to the plan's proponents.

The Senate passed a different plan that does not expand the sales tax in [Senate Bill 30](#) last week, so the issue will not be resolved until the General Assembly returns to session in January.

In Other News

More Utilities Answer Call to Help Pennsylvanians Stay Warm

Gov. Rendell this week announced that a dozen utilities took additional steps to help vulnerable customers stay safe and warm this winter, including a commitment of \$12 million in new funds to help pay bills for low-income customers.

“I commend Pennsylvania’s utilities for answering the call to help our seniors and low-income families this winter,” Governor Rendell said. “Our Stay Warm PA initiative is about protecting our residents and making sure they stay safe and warm this winter.”

The Governor made the announcement with representatives from PECO, PPL, UGI, Allegheny Power, Rural Electric Association and PG Energy.

Other utility companies agreeing to participate in the initiative include Duquesne Light, First Energy, Columbia Gas, Dominion Peoples, Equitable Gas and National Fuel Gas.

For more information on the steps utilities have taken, visit the [Stay Warm website](#).

Energy Efficiency, Pollution Reduction Grants Help Small Businesses

The Department of Environmental Protection this week awarded 45 grants totaling \$275,000 to help small businesses cut costs, save energy and reduce pollution under the [Small Business Advantage Program](#).

State Small Business Advantage grants provide a 50 percent match of up to \$7,500 for equipment or processes that reduce energy consumption and promote pollution prevention while increasing profitability. The program has awarded more than \$1 million to more than 400 recipients across the state in the last two years.

The next grant application cycle for Small Business Advantage Program will open July 1.

[A full list of grants awarded in available online](#) and more information about the program visit the [Small Business Advantage Program webpage](#).

Steam Workshop Will Help Reduce Energy Costs for Manufacturers

A Department of Energy steam system specialist-qualification workshop is scheduled for January 24-26 at its Center Valley Pennsylvania training complex in Lehigh County.

The workshop will instruct participants in the use and application of DOE's suite of energy-saving steam system software tools including the Steam System Assessment Tool, Steam System Scoping Tool, Steam System Survey Tool, and 3E-Plus insulation tool.

For more information, visit the [Steam Workshop announcement](#).

Green Building Workshops for Interiors, Existing Buildings Set for January

The U.S. Green Building Council is sponsoring workshops on January 18 in Philadelphia on interiors (along with the Delaware Valley Green Building Council) and January 26 for existing buildings in Rockville, MD.

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The [January 18 workshop](#) hopes to attract building owners, tenants, designers and others to learn about the LEED green building requirements for interiors.

The [January 26 workshop](#) will cover green building costs and benefits, technical requirements to meet the LEED standards and review relevant case studies.

For more information on green buildings in Pennsylvania, visit these websites: [Delaware Valley Green Building Council](#), [Green Building Association of Central Pennsylvania](#) or the [Green Building Alliance](#).

BP, Johnson & Johnson, Others Named Low Carbon Leaders By The Climate Group

The Climate Group recognized BP as one of ten Low Carbon Leaders of the Decade and Johnson & Johnson as having the largest single percentage reduction in greenhouse gas emissions over the last year in a recent ceremony.

Other companies with Pennsylvania facilities, including Alcoa, Bayer, GE, Siemens and International Paper, were also given recognition.

BP and its CEO Lord Browne were given several honors including Leader of the Decade, Low Carbon Corporate Governance Leader and Low Carbon Champion.

The results of this leadership include—

- BP: met greenhouse gas reduction targets 9 years ahead of schedule - 16 percent reduction in CO₂, \$650 million in energy efficiency projects (1990-2001);
- Alcoa: 26 percent reduction (1990-2003) saving \$100 million annual energy costs;
- Bayer: 63 percent reduction (1990-2004) saving €700 million in energycosts since 1990;
- Johnson & Johnson: 14.8 percent reduction in greenhouse gasses (140,091 tons) in one year;
- GE: for its Ecomagination initiative;
- Siemens: for its eco-efficient renewable energy systems, high efficiency storage systems; and
- International Paper: for 7th place in one year greenhouse gas emission reductions – 6.5 percent.

For the details, visit [award winning accomplishments](#) and [The Climate Group](#) webpages.

DEP Accepting Applications for Solid Waste – Resource Recovery Dev. Grants

The Department of Environmental Protection is accepting applications through April 6 for [Solid Waste and Resource Recovery Development Grants](#).

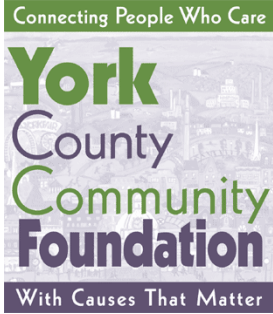
DEP is particularly interested in projects to implement unique and innovative curbside collection programs for food waste that present environmentally sound alternatives to landfilling.

Eligible applicants include counties, municipalities and municipal authorities.

For more information, view the [grant announcement online](#) or contact a DEP Regional Planning and Recycling Coordinator.

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

York Foundation Awards Grant for Farm Preservation Work



The [York County Community Foundation](#) this week awarded its largest grant ever -- \$120,000-- to fund a three-year initiative to educate local officials on the importance of protecting agricultural land and to create an agriculture preservation program for municipalities.

The [Farm & Natural Lands Trust of York County](#) and the [Pennsylvania Environmental Council](#) accepted the grant for this groundbreaking collaborative venture at the John and Paige Smith Animal Education Center. The initiative will achieve greater municipal participation in farmland preservation by focusing on education and the economics of land preservation.

“This grant is so important because it speaks to the agricultural priorities of the [YorkCounts Commission](#). This important work will advance the YorkCounts agenda measurably in the next three years,” said Susan Barry, President of York County Community Foundation.

“After researching the needs of the agriculture community for a year, the Committee is tremendously excited about the resources brought to the table by this collaborative venture,” said Linda Davidson, chair of the Agriculture & Land Preservation Advisory Committee of the Community Foundation.

Brian Hill, interim president and CEO of the Pennsylvania Environmental Council, added that “Today we have an extraordinary opportunity and partnership — funders, local experts and an organization with statewide and national capabilities all working together to protect one of this region's irreplaceable resources: farmland.”

Jackie Kramer, executive director of the Farm & Natural Lands Trust of York County, said that the grant “addresses one of the important findings of the Future of Agriculture study conducted by the York County Agriculture Business Council and Penn State Cooperative Extension. The study found farmers felt there was a need to educate non-farmers and municipal officials regarding the economics of agriculture, land preservation, and farming practices.”

The grant is funded by The Robert R. Anderson Family Fund of the Community Foundation, the remarkable legacy of Isabel C. Anderson, a woman who wished to inspire the preservation of farming and farmland in York County. It was established with a \$1 million gift from the estate of Dr. Anderson, Mr. Anderson’s daughter and a Temple University professor who returned regularly to her beloved family farm in Lower Chanceford Township.

Founded in 1961, York County Community Foundation is a permanent community endowment — built by gifts from individuals, families, organizations and businesses — dedicated to enhancing the quality of life for all of York County’s citizens now and for generations to come. York County Community Foundation has assets of \$42 million.

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Goodwill Industries Receives \$200,000 Brownfields Job Training Grant

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency this week announced the selection of Goodwill Industries of Conemaugh Valley Inc. to receive a \$200,000 [brownfields job training grant](#).

Goodwill Industries will train 40 people, providing skills for them to gain employment in the clean up and redevelopment of brownfields.

Goodwill Industries will work in partnership with the Pennsylvania Highlands Community College and the Greater Johnstown Career and Technology Center. Courses will be offered in environmental geology, hazardous site worker training, environmental sampling and monitoring, hazardous materials management, and mobile equipment safety and handling.

The grant was one of 12 grants announced nationally which teach environmental cleanup skills to people living in low income areas near brownfield sites. Since 1998, EPA has awarded \$17.3 million in brownfields job training grants. More than 2,600 people have completed the training and over 1,600 have obtained jobs in the environmental field, earning an average wage of \$13 per hour.

The [Brownfields Job Training Program](#) gives people in brownfields-affected communities skills to obtain employment in the environmental field, so that they benefit from brownfields redevelopment.

Projects Funded to Study Rare, Declining Species and Their Habitats



Eastern Hellbender Salamander

Using more than \$880,000 from the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service’s [State Wildlife Grants Program](#), the PFBC is engaging in projects to study and manage rare or declining species and their habitats.

“What we learn about species like hellbenders and mussels is important in itself, but expanding our knowledge about these animals can have larger implications for humans as well,” said PFBC Executive Director Dr. Doug Austen, “Many animals are sensitive to changes in habitat, water and air quality, and thus can

be good indicators of environmental health. The condition of fish and wildlife populations is often an early indicator of pollution that affects us all.”

Among the State Wildlife Grants Program projects being administered by the PFBC are:

Amphibians & Reptiles

Based upon recommendations from the Pennsylvania Biological Survey, Amphibian and Reptile Technical Committee and Commission staff, a list of 23 “at-risk” species has been developed for study. These species are considered of special concern because of one or more of the following factors: changing habitat conditions, over-collection, and lack of information about their populations. The primary focus of this study will be seven species: the eastern hellbender, marbled salamander, spotted turtle, shorthead garter snake, smooth earth snake, mountain earth snake and Kirtlands snake.

These surveys will: assess the present status of these species; determine habitat types and regions within the state utilized by these species; make recommendations for

species conservation; and set priorities for future conservation related research on amphibians and reptiles in Pennsylvania.

The two-year study will be conducted by Shippensburg University and is scheduled to be completed by the end of June 2007.

Distribution of the Eastern Hellbender

The hellbender (a large salamander) lives and reproduces in streams and rivers containing suitable habitat such as large, flat rock slabs. In Pennsylvania, the hellbender occurs in tributaries of the Susquehanna River, the Ohio and Allegheny Rivers. Aside from tributaries where hellbender populations are known to occur, river populations have not yet been identified, due to the difficulty of surveying deep, swift, and murky river environments.

This project will help: identify shallow and deepwater stream reaches within the project area where hellbender populations occur; assess habitats that support and sustain healthy hellbender populations, along with a list of unoccupied stream reaches possessing habitat features potentially suitable for hellbenders; establish long-term monitoring of hellbender populations; and compile comprehensive, detailed, and meaningful information useful in the development of a hellbender management and conservation plan for the Susquehanna River West Branch watershed, and potentially for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

The 2.5-year project will be conducted by Lycoming College and is scheduled to end in March 2008.

Conservation of Rare Herpetofauna

The Natural Diversity Section of the Fish and Boat Commission conducts rare species reviews for commercial and residential development projects that occur within the Commonwealth. The PFBC develops recommendations for developers to avoid adverse impacts to rare and endangered species.

This project will develop capacity to assist the Section in performing these reviews. Project reviews and consultations will focus mainly on high profile herpetofauna, including the bog turtle, eastern massasauga, red-bellied turtle, and timber rattlesnake.

The timber rattlesnake is hunted in Pennsylvania, but little is known about the impacts of hunting and development on the species. Many states in the northeast and northern Midwest report this species as rare, threatened, endangered, and declining or extirpated. With this study, data will be collected and analyzed, and reports from licensed rattlesnake hunters, observations at “rattlesnake roundups” and directed surveys will be assessed.

Inventory of extant and historic occurrences, as well as conservation and management plans for other prioritized species of special concern, including high priority species such as the bog turtle will also be developed. Records for special concern species (rare, threatened, endangered and candidate species) will be collected and processed and conveyed to PA Natural Diversity Inventory data management staff. Benefits of this study include: development of Conservation/Management Plans to guide PFBC activities and justify approaches.

This two-year study will be conducted by the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy in conjunction with the PFBC.

Rattlesnake Management

The population of the Massasauga rattlesnake has been declining in Pennsylvania, and a comprehensive conservation and management plan is needed to stop, and ultimately reverse, this trend. These conservation efforts must address the current primary causes of decline (habitat loss and human persecution).

This project will develop and implement a pilot conservation plan focusing on Massasauga rattlesnake habitat restoration, alteration, and maintenance rooted in regionally specific natural history data garnered from an on-going telemetry project. The main objective of this project is to conduct a habitat restoration pilot study and draft a preliminary conservation and management plan.

The Western Pennsylvania Conservancy is currently conducting a range determination study and telemetry project. Information garnered from the telemetry study will be used to supplement the main objective of this proposal, devising a preliminary conservation plan and a pilot study focusing on habitat restoration.

The results of this project will serve the overall purpose of helping to create a successful comprehensive conservation and management plan to maintain viable populations of this species.

This two-year study will be conducted by the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy, and is scheduled to be completed by June 2008.

Mussel Species

Freshwater mussels are considered among the most imperiled aquatic organisms in North America and their populations are threatened by degradation and loss of habitat as well as various types of pollution.

Some species of mussels are generally long-lived, with individuals surviving for several decades. As a result, these organisms serve as a good indicator of water quality and habitat conditions in our rivers and lakes. Two of the highest priority species that will be studied under this project will be the northern riffleshell and clubshell mussel.

This project will be responsible for compiling existing data and conducting new scientific surveys, data entry, and data analysis. With these existing and new data, management plans for mussels can be prepared and reviewed. These plans will provide recommendations on approaches for protecting these species and their habitats. This project will also make recommendations on development projects occurring statewide that may have the potential to adversely impact rare and endangered freshwater mussel species.

The three-year project will be conducted by Western Pennsylvania Conservancy in conjunction with the PFBC, and is scheduled to be completed in September 2008.

Mussels in the Allegheny River

Many freshwater mussels are long-lived and thus can serve as an indicator of water quality and habitat conditions. On the lower Allegheny River mussel surveys will be conducted on Pools 6, 7, and 8. Information collected by these surveys will aid state and federal agencies with monitoring and restoration strategies of these unique organisms.

This project will improve the knowledge of regionally and globally-imperiled freshwater mussels. Many freshwater mussels in the Allegheny watershed are either federally endangered and/or species of concern in Pennsylvania.

The information from this study will aid monitoring and restoration efforts for imperiled freshwater mussels in the Allegheny River watershed. Associated habitat information will benefit the public as well as resource managers from various agencies.

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This study will provide: maps of instream habitats, a comparison of sampling methods for mussels in large rivers, maps of rare and endangered mussels in the Allegheny River, and a comparison of the results of different sampling methods.

The two-year study will be conducted by Western Pennsylvania Conservancy and completed in September 2007.

Dam Removal on Pennypack Creek

The Fish and Boat Commission is coordinating the improvement of fish passage and stream habitat over the entire 22 miles of Pennypack Creek, and several of its tributaries, in southeastern Pennsylvania.

A tributary of the Delaware River, this work on Pennypack Creek is a partnership with the Department of Environmental Protection, Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, City of Philadelphia's Fairmount Park Commission, Montgomery County Department of Parks, Philadelphia Water Department, Aqua Pennsylvania, NOAA/Fish America Foundation, NOAA/American Rivers, Friends of Pennypack Park, Pennypack Ecological Restoration Trust, Southeast Montgomery County Chapter of Trout Unlimited, and others.

This project will result in improvement of fish passage and stream habitat through the removal of Spring Dam and the Old Huntingdon Pike Bridge, both which impair stream habitat and act as a barrier to fish migration.

This project will re-open over 9 miles of spawning habitat by providing passage at two barriers to fish migration and contributing to the restoration of "state endangered" hickory shad and other "priority" migratory species including American shad, blueback herring, alewife, and American eel as well as river game and non-game fishes – important natural and historic resources for the citizens of Philadelphia and the Commonwealth.

This project will also protect public and private property by reducing the occurrence of flooding, stabilizing stream banks, restoring riparian vegetation, and removing owner liability. This project is an excellent example of how private, city, county, state, and federal interests can work collectively to develop and achieve a common goal.

This two-year project is scheduled to be completed by December 2007.

American Eel Inventory

Due to recent declines in the abundance of the American eel, the species is being considered as a federal candidate for threatened or endangered status. Little is known about population and habitat use, due to the complicated life history of this species, which spends part of its life in the ocean and in freshwater.

This project will document the presence or absence of early stage American eels in selected Pennsylvania named tributaries to the Delaware Estuary and will greatly expand our knowledge of American eel habits and abundance in Pennsylvania in these waters. This information can be used as a baseline for: determining American eel abundance, in evaluating permit applications, in prioritizing dam removal projects, and in determining the need for fish passage facilities.

This study will be conducted by the Academy of Natural Sciences and run from March 2006 through July 2007.

Species Distinctiveness & Genetics in PA Fishes

Genetic diversity is important at many levels, but especially for determining differences between species, and differences between populations of the same species.

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This project will address urgent conservation issues of rare fishes in Pennsylvania, and will address immediate issues of conservation concern for those species.

This research will establish standards, communicate protocols, and recommend best management practices for use of molecular information involving issues of species status or the distinctiveness of Pennsylvania populations. Understanding basic methods for molecular study of Pennsylvania wildlife, and integrating those methods directly into strategies for management, protection, and conservation of special concern species in the state, is an important first step in leveraging available technology to meet management objectives of both State and Federal agencies.

The results of this research will have immediate and lasting impact on comprehensive conservation planning by state agencies.

This 1.5-year project is being conducted by the Carnegie Museum of Natural History and is scheduled to be completed by June 30, 2007.

All the projects support the goals of the Commonwealth's draft State Wildlife Action Plan. The plan, developed jointly by the PFBC and the Pennsylvania Game Commission is currently being reviewed by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service.

The draft [Pennsylvania State Wildlife Action Plan](#) is available on the Game Commission's website.

December Monitoring Matters Focuses on Invasive Species

The December issue of Monitoring Matters published by the Keystone Watershed Monitoring Network puts the spotlight on invasive species identification and eradication.

Learn what invasive species are, how to use volunteers in an invasive species eradication program, methods for controlling purple loosestrife, how to prioritize invasive species control along with online resources for more information.

This issue also includes information on the PA Watersheds Data System and a revamped PA Senior Environment Corps water monitoring database.

To download your copy, go to the [Monitoring Matters webpage](#) (*right click on the link and "save target as" for a faster download*).

National Fish & Wildlife Foundation Awards \$650,000 to Restore Delaware Estuary



The [National Fish and Wildlife Foundation](#) announced the award of \$650,000 in grants to 29 local nonprofit organizations and governments to fund conservation projects under the [Delaware Estuary Grants Program](#).

Major funding for this grant program comes from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, BP Foundation, William Penn Foundation, and the ConocoPhillips SPIRIT of Conservation Program.

The \$650,000 will be leveraged by an additional \$2.5 million raised by the recipient agencies and organizations, bringing a total of \$3.1 million to conservation projects to restore the Delaware Estuary watershed.

"The BP Foundation is pleased to be a major sponsor of the Delaware Estuary Grants Programs," said Patricia Wright, President, BP Foundation. "We're proud that the

PA Environment Digest – Holston & Crisci

projects funded last year have already shown tangible results. We believe this year's projects can have a sustaining positive effect on the ecological health of the estuary."

"When foundations, public agencies, and private companies work together on a program like this, the result is not only increased funding for conservation, but a demonstration of a shared vision for the Delaware Watershed. We hope that this program will show other public and private funders that through collaboration, they too can play a meaningful role in conserving our region's environmental resources," said Feather O. Houstoun, president, William Penn Foundation.

Now in its third year, the Delaware Estuary Grants Program has awarded 87 grants, providing over \$1,735,000 of federal and private funds that was leveraged with an additional \$6.5 million in matching funds raised by grantees. Projects will achieve significant conservation outcomes, including:

New Publication on Mid-Atlantic Vernal Ponds Available from MAIA

The Mid-Atlantic Integrated Assessment partnership issued a new publication—[*An Introduction to Mid-Atlantic Seasonal Pools*](#) this week it hopes will promote a better understanding of vernal pools.

Seasonal pools, or vernal ponds, provide important ecological functions in the Mid-Atlantic region. The booklet serves as an introduction to their functions and provides tools for exploring them.

The [Mid-Atlantic Integrated Assessment](#) is a partnership of federal, state and local governments, academic institutions and nonprofit groups conducting research, monitoring and assessments throughout the Mid-Atlantic region.

For more information, visit the [Mid-Atlantic Integrated Assessment](#) website.

Play It Safe On Or Around Ice This Winter

With this week's "official" start of winter, the Fish and Boat Commission issued some common sense [safety tips for those on or around ice](#).

Wintertime activities such as ice fishing, skating, hockey, snowmobiling, cross country skiing and sledding take place near frozen water, so it's important to remember to play it safe when playing on or around ice.

Here are some quick tips from the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission for [staying safe around ice](#).

DEP Publishes Notice of 2006 Board and Advisory Committee Meetings

The Department of Environmental Protection published its [annual schedule of board and advisory committee meetings for 2006](#).

Feature - 2005 Year in Review Part I

Legislative & Program Milestones in 2005



Photo: Bruce Golden

Passage of the \$625 million environmental bond issue by over 60 percent of voters and the accompanying implementing legislation by the General Assembly reallocating existing environmental funding were clearly the major legislative highlight of 2005.

But the General Assembly also passed legislation that authorized more local funding for watershed associations, provided funding for DEP's Storage Tank regulatory program and established an alternative to local regulation of farming activities.

The year also saw a number of major program and policy initiatives starting from scratch or being implemented from legislation passed last year, including regulations implementing the Alternative Energy Portfolio Standards, a proposed Pennsylvania-only rule limiting mercury emissions, the release of Chesapeake Bay Tributary Strategy and an interim final Nutrient and Sediment Trading Policy, proposed adoption of the California vehicle emission standards, a major state land use policy initiative, the swearing in of a new Attorney General with a strong environmental enforcement policy, utilities making major investments in pollution controls and much more.

Here's a quick rundown on the environmental legislation passed and some major actions taken on the policy and program side in 2005.

Environmental Legislation Passed

Growing Greener II Ballot Question: [House Bill 2](#) (Quigley-R-Montgomery) authorizes a \$625 million environmental bond issue question to be put to voters on May 17 was Act 1 of 2005.

Environmental Bond Implementation: [House Bill 3](#) (Quigley-R-Montgomery) implementing legislation for the \$625 million environmental bond issue and reallocating funding from the Environmental Stewardship Fund is Act 45.

Watershed Assn. Funding: [House Bill 136](#), [House Bill 266](#) and [House Bill 267](#) (Fleagle-R-Franklin) authorizing local government funding of watershed associations were signed by the Governor and are now Acts 11, 13 and 14

Scenic Byway: [Senate Bill 721](#) (Lemmond-R-Luzerne) designating a portion of Route 6 in Wyoming County and Route 92 in Susquehanna County a scenic byway is Act 35.

Freezing Storage Tank Fees: [Senate Bill 722](#) (Musto-D-Luzerne) extending the sunset date for the small heating oil storage tank cleanup program, making tank registration fees

PA Environment Digest – Holston & Crisci

permanent for a period of four years and authorizing transfer of administrative funds to DEP upon USTIF Board Approval was signed by the Governor and is Act 36

ACRE Proposal: [House Bill 1646](#) (Hershey-R-Chester) providing a process for appealing local ordinances in conflict with the Right to Farm Act was signed into law and is now Act 38

Infrastructure Security Projects: [House Bill 612](#) (Rubley-R-Chester) authorizing funding for water and sewage system security projects signed into law as Act 61.

Sewage Task Force: [House Resolution 88](#) (Hutchinson-R-Venango,) establishing a sewage management and treatment task force and directing the Joint Legislative Air and Water Pollution Control and Conservation Committee

Low-Income Energy Help: [House Bill 1539](#) (Nickol-R-York) to provide emergency heating assistance to low-income households was signed into law as Act 81.

Tributary Strategy: [House Resolution 539](#) (Nailor-R-Cumberland) urges the Department of Environmental Protection to delay implementation of the Chesapeake Bay Tributary Strategy for nine months to allow time for the agency to meet with stakeholders and determine the cost and economic impact of compliance strategies was passed unanimously by the House December 14.

January

[EPA, States, DC Announce Chesapeake Bay Cleanup Agreement](#)

[Rendell Unveils Pennsylvania's Chesapeake Bay Tributary Strategy](#)

[Attorney General Corbett Promises Aggressive Environmental Enforcement](#)

[Colleges, EPA, DEP Sign Environmental Self-Audit Agreement](#)

[PA Partnership Forming to Promote No-Till Conservation Practices](#)

['Green Highway' Certification Promoted By Transportation, EPA Region III](#)

[DCNR Adds Rivers to Conservation Registry](#)

[EPA's List of Most Energy Efficient Buildings Nears 2000](#)

February

[PA Members Report on Cost-Effective Bay Cleanup Methods](#)

[Report on ATV/Snowmobile Grants Program Released](#)

[Three New River Conservation Plans Approved by DCNR](#)

[Fish Commission Mourns the Loss of Leon H. Reed](#)

[PA Joins EPA, Other States In Clean Energy-Environment Partnership](#)

[Hay Creek Added to PA Rivers Conservation Registry](#)

[PPL Invests \\$630 Million in Voluntary Pollution Controls](#)

March

[DEP Budget Cuts "Run Deep," Push Is On For Growing Greener II](#)

[DCNR Looks at Inns, Lodges, Expanding PA Wilds, Wind Energy Opportunities](#)

[New Watershed Resource Guide Available, DEP Sets Workshops](#)

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[DEP Will Not Accept Land Recycling Requests for Cleanups on Agricultural Land](#)
[Forest Lands Beautification Program Cleans Up 33 Dumps, 287 Tons of Trash](#)
[Bruce Mansfield Power Plant to Upgrade Pollution Controls, Reuse Facilities](#)
[2004 Winners of the Governor’s Environmental Excellence Award](#)
[West Branch of the Susquehanna Named DCNR’s River of the Year](#)
[Citizens’ Toolkit to Prevent Illegal Dumping in Parks, Forests Now Available](#)
[3 New Historical Markers Remember People, Places in PA Environmental History](#)
[In Memoriam: Fred Taylor](#)

April

[BP Solar Panels Provide Backup Power In Governor’s Residence](#)
[Pennsylvania League of Angling Youth Turns 25 Years Old](#)
[U.S. Senate Acts to Extend Federal Abandoned Mine Reclamation Fund](#)
[Pennsylvania Colleges & Universities Increase Wind Energy Commitment](#)
[PECO, Aqua America, GlaxoSmithKline Make Wind Power Commitments](#)
[Penn State Creates New Environment and Natural Resources Institute](#)
[PA Recycles Record 4.4 Million Tons in 2003](#)
[300,000 acres+ Preserved at Farmland Preservation Board Meeting](#)
[Special Section: Growing Greener Bond Question on May 17 Ballot](#)
[Environmental Secretaries for 4 Governors Endorse Growing Greener Question](#)
[Healthy Lawn Care, Landscaping Education Campaign Launched](#)
[10 Year Anniversaries for Land Recycling, DEP Website](#)
[Funding Directed to Small Business Energy Efficiency, P2 Equipment Grants](#)

May

[Landmark Clean Air Interstate Rule Took Effect This Week](#)
[Over 60% of Voters Approve Growing Greener Ballot Initiative](#)
[Over 300 High School Students Participate in PA Envirothon Competition](#)
[Financing Will Revitalize Four Business Sites Around the State](#)
[Cong. Peterson Introduces AML Fund Reauthorization Legislation](#)
[DRBC Establishes New Rule to Reduce PCB Levels in the Delaware River](#)

June

[Waugh & Wenger Unveil Major Agricultural Initiative, Manure Use Technologies](#)
[Pennsylvania’s 10 Years of Success in Addressing ‘Brownfield’ Sites](#)
[Joint Budget-Finance Committee Releases Evaluation of Conservation Districts](#)
[Documenting Stream Channel Erosion – Bigger Problem Than Originally Thought](#)
[American Shad Continue to Increase in Susquehanna River](#)
[New Report on Building Financially Sustainable Recycling Programs](#)
[In Memoriam: PRC Mourns Loss of Jim Kane \(1929-2005\)](#)

July

[Environmental Bond Bill Passes, Existing Environmental Funding Reallocated](#)
[PA Environmental Professionals Support Environmental Heritage Project](#)
[Pennsylvania Game Commission’s Ross Announces Retirement](#)
[2004 Mine Reclamation Report to General Assembly Now Available](#)

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[DEP Introduces Online Training Center for Water Plant Operators](#)
[Fish & Boat Commission's Austen Leads National Fish Habitat Effort](#)
[DCNR Announces Improvements to State Park Reservation System](#)
[DEP Publishes New Public Participation Policy for Permit Reviews](#)
[Amount of Out-of State Waste Disposed in PA Decreases, In-State Up](#)
[Natural Stream Channel Design Guidelines Available from Keystone Stream Team](#)
[Partners Providing 'Better Models' Book to Inspire Ideas for Livable Communities](#)
[Somerset County Recognizes Flight 93 Memorial Design Project](#)
[Quecreek Mine Rescue Anniversary Focuses on Preserving History](#)
[Act 46 Increases Reimbursement for Districts Building Green Schools](#)
[Pennsylvania Student Team Wins 2005 Canon Envirothon](#)
[Ohio River Watershed Celebration Attracts 800 Participants, Awards Presented](#)
[Pennsylvania Welcomes World to Pittsburgh for Bassmaster Classic](#)
[PA Habitat: Fairmount Park Named 82nd Pennsylvania Important Bird Area](#)

August

[Northeastern Pollution Prevention Roundtable Partners with Env. Professionals](#)
[DEP Takes More Steps to Implement Chesapeake Bay Tributary Strategy](#)
[Discarded Equipment Containing Mercury Now Managed as Universal Waste](#)
[Water Credit Trading Moves Forward with Reverse Auction on Conestoga](#)
[New Nutrient Limits Placed on Lancaster City Treatment Plant](#)
[Chesapeake Bay Program Aims to Enhance Urban Tree Canopy](#)
[New Report Shows Credit Trading Program Reducing Air Pollution in Eastern U.S.](#)
[Regulations: EQB OKs Development of PA-Only Mercury Limits](#)
[Ross J. Huhn - Longest Serving Fish & Boat Commissioner Passes](#)
[A Variety of Opinions on Mercury Emissions from Power Plants](#)

September

[Pennsylvania Sends Relief Help, Steps Taken to Ease Potential Fuel Shortage](#)
[New Handbook on Community-Based Watershed Protection](#)
[Drinking Water Plant Performance Shows Improvement, Areas Needing Work](#)
[Draft Policy to Designate Critical Water Planning Areas Available for Review](#)
[President to Name PA's Jarrett to DOE Assistant Secretary Post](#)
[Soy Energy, Inc. Becomes Part of Agriculture's PA Preferred Program](#)
[Juniata Watershed Survey Shows Streams in Good Health, But Problems Remain](#)
[Cleaner Energy Winner in PECO Energy Merger Settlement](#)
[SRBC Presents the Northern Lancaster County Groundwater Study](#)
[Juvenile Bass Population Up 25% Despite Mortalities from Infection](#)
[Farms In Chesapeake Bay Watershed In Precarious Position](#)
[President Names PA's Stickler Head of Federal Mine Safety Program](#)
[Reisinger Named Director of DEP's Bureau of Waste Management](#)
[Groups Call On Congress to Clean Up Streams Polluted By Abandoned Mines](#)
[DEP Asks for Comments on Interim Nutrient, Sediment Trading Policy](#)
[Consortium Formed to Buy Diesel Fuel Made from Waste Coal at Schuylkill Plant](#)
[Bills Announced to Strengthen Mine Safety, Resulting from Quecreek Accident](#)

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October

[State Forest Again Certified as “Well Managed” Using Sustainable Techniques](#)
[Motorists Expected to Save \\$57 Million Over 5 Years on Emissions Inspections](#)
[Bills to Increase Environmental Penalties Proposed by Reichley, Attorney General](#)
[Appalachian Land & Conservation Donates Viewshed Easements to DCNR](#)
[Stay Warm PA Initiative to Address Rising Heating Costs, Website Offers Tips](#)
[Pittsburgh Mayor Appoints Clean Pittsburgh Commission Members](#)
[New Book Outlines Documented Benefits of Coal Ash for Mine Reclamation](#)
[Growth, Resource Conservation Principles Released by Rendell Administration](#)
[PA CleanWays Open Your Eyes to Litter – In a Watershed Book Available](#)
[Attempts Made to End Emissions Inspection, Prohibit California Car Standards](#)

November

[DEP Reorganizes Website, Offers New Web Address](#)
[First Environmental Bond Grants for Brownfield, Watershed, Energy Projects](#)
[New Environmental Bond Grant Funds Watershed Project Repairs Statewide](#)
[New Website Helps Residents Learn if They Need Mine Subsidence Insurance](#)
[DEP Landfill Permitting Regulations Upheld By Pennsylvania Supreme Court](#)
[PUC Proposes Rules for Connecting Small Renewable Energy Generators to Grid](#)
[\\$14.4 Million in Watershed Restoration Grants Announced](#)
[Chesapeake Bay Shows No Improvement Over Last Year](#)
[EPA Releases Performance and Accountability Report for Fiscal Year 2005](#)
[Seven of 10 Open Space Funding Ballot Questions Pass in Pennsylvania](#)
[Andrew McElwaine Leaving PA Environmental Council](#)
[Nicholas Selected as Wild Resource Conservation Director](#)
[Abitibi-Consolidated Expands Service to Encourage Paper Recycling](#)
[Ches-Mont Disposal, RecycleBank Team Up to Offer Recycling Services](#)
[PA Plants 4 Times More Stream Buffers Than Maryland, Virginia Combined](#)
[PA Restores 3 Times More Brownfields Than Virginia, Maryland Combined](#)
[Gilius Named Director of DEP’s Bureau of Oil and Gas Management](#)

December

[BP Forms BP Alternative Energy Low Carbon Power Business](#)
[Five States, District Agree on 2007 Farm Bill Conservation Agenda](#)
[Chesapeake Bay Council Outlines Surplus Nutrient, Manure Management Strategy](#)
[Pennsylvania Updates Fish Consumption Advisories](#)
[EPA Celebrates Birthday and 35 Years of Environmental Progress](#)
[Carl Roe Named to Head Game Commission](#)
[Kim Nelson to Leave Environmental Protection Agency CIO Position](#)
[Wyonna Coleman, West Brownsville Environmental Activist, Passes](#)
[The Nature Conservancy - Celebrating 50 Years in Pennsylvania](#)
[Senate Holds Hearing on DEP’s California Car Vehicle Emission Limits Proposal](#)
[Watershed Groups Are “Active Environmentalists,” Not “Environmental Activists”](#)
[EPCAMR Testifies Before U.S. House on Watershed-Based Mine Reclamation Needs](#)
[PA Signs Agreement to Improve Health, Economic Vitality of Great Lakes](#)
[PA Watersheds Data System Is Now Live](#)

Quick Clips

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

[Northern Tier Solid Waste Authority Moves Ahead with Greenhouse Plans](#)
[Companies Recycle Phone Books](#)
[Not all Hunters Manage Deer Herd](#)
[Op-Ed: State's Deer Herd Experiment Isn't Working](#)
[22,300 Acres of Farmland Preserved in 2005](#)
[Conservancy Seeks Protection for Rockview Lands](#)
[Op-Ed: Let A Thousand Installers Bloom – Solar Energy Industries Association](#)
[Growth Industry – PA Has Most Christmas Tree Farms](#)
[Utilities Eye Value of Hybrid Vehicles](#)
[Street Turns Up Heat on Saving Energy](#)
[Give Back Valley Forge Rendell Says](#)
Personnel Changes: [DEP Northeast Regional Office Promotions](#)

Watershed NewsClips

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

[Fisherman's Cove Foundation Preserving Allegheny River Watershed](#)
[Lindsay Farm Streambank Restoration Project Underway in Bucks County](#)
[Monocracy Creek Project Receives Grant](#)
[Public Gains Access to Watershed Info \(POWR\)](#)
[Cider Mill Dirt and Gravel Road Project Completed](#)
[Contract Awarded to Complete Centre County Reclamation Project](#)
[Chesapeake Bay Flow Limits are Rescinded](#)
[State to Limit Discharges into Susquehanna River](#)
[New EPA Wet Weather Policy May Cost Ratepayers](#)
[NOAA's Emerging Scientists Project Joins Chesapeake Bay Office](#)

Regulations

The [Environmental Quality Board this week](#) approved proposed regulations for comment on New Source Review of air pollution sources and the Storage Tank Program. The Public Utility Commission published formal [notice of their proposed policy statement implementing the Alternative Energy Portfolio Standards](#). Comments are due January 23.

[Pennsylvania Bulletin – December 24, 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 [final guidance on sinking shafts and slopes for underground mines](#).

[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](#)

- [DEP's Annual schedule of board and advisory committee meetings for 2006](#)
- **January 3** – [Renewable Agricultural Energy Council](#) meeting Room 105 Rachel Carson Building, Harrisburg. 9:00 am.
- **January 10** – [Southwest PA Air Quality Partnership annual meeting](#). Pittsburgh.
- **January 11** – House Environmental Resources & Energy Committee informational meeting on [greenhouse gas emissions and climate change](#). Springfield, Delaware County.
- **RESCHEDULED to January 11** – [PA Energy Development Authority](#) meeting (rescheduled from December 16).
- **January 12** – Forestry Task Force Meeting (Joint Legislative Conservation Committee) in State College.
- **January 13** – NRCS [Know Your Soils Using Web Soil Survey Net and Audio Conference](#).
- **RESCHEDULED to January 19** – [Rachel Carson Forum on Nutrient and Sediment Credit Trading](#).
- **January 19** – Green Building Association of Central Pennsylvania “[Escape Cabin Fever Reception and Seminar](#)” Harrisburg.
- **January 24** – House Environmental Resources & Energy Committee informational meeting on [energy policy](#).

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 .

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

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