

# PA Environment Digest

## An Update On Environmental Issues In PA

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Winner 2009 [PAEE Business Partner](#) Of The Year Award

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### **Thanks To Everyone Contributing Stories To PA Environment Digest In 2013!**

We want to thank everyone who contributed stories to the PA Environment Digest during 2013! Without sharing your accomplishments, events and award-winning performances, the Digest would have never reached our milestone of over 5,000 email subscribers!

Have a Happy and Healthy New Year!

-- David E. Hess, Editor

### **Pennsylvania's Environment - 2013 Year In Review**

2013 ended with a bang as the PA Supreme Court issued a [landmark opinion on the Act 13](#) Marcellus Shale drilling law and the application of the Environmental Rights Amendment that is likely to have implications far beyond the oil and gas industry.

But there were other major milestones, anniversaries, changes and actions in 2013 as well covered by the PA Environment Digest.

2013 saw a change in leadership at the departments of Environmental Protection and Conservation and Natural Resources with the [resignation of Richard Allan](#) at DCNR and his replacement with Ellen Ferretti. Chris Abruzzo [replaced Michael Krancer](#) at DEP in April. Both Ferretti and Abruzzo were confirmed by the Senate in December.

The Executive Directors of both the Susquehanna River Basin Commission and the Delaware River Basin Commission also announced their retirements. Long-time SRBC [Executive Director Paul Swartz](#) retired and was [replaced by Andrew Dehoff](#). DRBC's Executive Director Carol Collier [announced her retirement](#) in 2014.

Both Commissions have a significant role in regulating water withdrawals by the Marcellus Shale drilling industry and in the case of DRBC, managing the drilling moratorium that has been in place [since](#)

[December of 2011.](#)

[Carl Roe](#), who for 8 years served as Executive Director of the Game Commission, announced he would retire in January 2014.

Changes in leadership were also announced by several non-profit environmental groups, including [Harry Campbell](#) taking over at the Chesapeake Bay Foundation-PA, [Cindy Dunn](#) at PennFuture and the retirement of [David Mazza](#) in the PA Resources Council's Pittsburgh office.

In August, [Caren Glotfelty](#), a long-time leader in Pennsylvania's environmental community, announced her departure from the Heinz Endowments after serving 13 years as the head of environmental programs. She has been a significant force in supporting Pennsylvania non-profit environmental groups.

Another long-time leader in state parks and forests, [Patrick J. Solano](#), was honored for his lifetime of service by having the Environmental Education Center at Frances Slocum State Park in Luzerne County named after him.

Pennsylvania's environmental community also lost a number of environmental pioneers including [Dr. Ruth Patrick](#), [William M. Heenan](#), [Bruce Leavitt](#), [Jim Holden](#) and [Walter Lyon](#).

### **Anniversaries**

Pennsylvania celebrated the [45th anniversary of Project Scarlift](#) and mine reclamation in the Commonwealth, a York County homeschool group won with [30th Pennsylvania Envirothon](#) and we celebrated the 25th anniversary of both the [Recycling Program](#) and the [Farmland Preservation Program](#) and the Keystone Fund marked [its 20th anniversary](#).

Other anniversaries and milestones commemorated during 2013 include--

- [11th anniversary](#) of Quecreek Mine Rescue;
- [100th anniversary](#) of the 1913 flood in Sharon;
- Titusville remembers [40th anniversary of oil embargo](#);
- 80th anniversary of [Civilian Conservation Corps](#);
- [Golden anniversary](#) of Pine Grove Furnace State Park;
- [Pinchot Institute's](#) 50th anniversary; and
- A [century of elk](#) in Pennsylvania.

### **Environmental Funding**

2013 was the eleventh year in a row environmental funding has been cut, starting with the 2003-04 budget under Gov. Rendell. So far [\\$1.9 billion in environmental funding](#) has been cut or diverted over the last 11 years to balance the general state budget or to support programs that could not get funding on their own.

On the positive side of the ledger, the [\\$2.3 billion transportation funding plan](#) signed into law in November included a \$30 million increase in funding for the Dirt and Gravel Road Program and an increase in dedicated funding for the Fish and Boat Commission.

In addition, the Public Utility Commission distributed [\\$102.6 million in drilling impact fees](#) to local governments and [another \\$94.7 million](#) to state agency programs.

### **Program Initiatives/Changes/Actions**

There were other significant environmental program milestones, changes and actions in 2013, some of which are outlined here.

DEP [published a comprehensive update to Chapter 78 drilling regulations](#) in December required by Act 13 laying out new environmental protection and permitting requirements and fundamentally changing the Marcellus Shale regulatory program.

DEP also announced the [first comprehensive study](#) in the country to look at the naturally

occurring levels of radioactivity in by-products associated with oil and gas development.

The DEP Citizens Advisory Council made a [series of recommendations](#) to DEP on improving public participation in the agency, including [asking the public directly](#) for ideas on improving the process for developing regulations and policy development.

In response to the Council's recommendations, DEP established an online [Public Participation Center](#) to make it easier for the public to learn about what issues are in front of the agency and how they can get involved.

DEP also started a biweekly online newsletter distributed by email, something the agency [had not done for at least 8 years](#).

In another important court decision, Commonwealth Court ruled the City of Reading may [no longer charge a recycling fee](#) to support its city-run recycling program putting in doubt the fees charges by other municipalities and counties, including the cities of Pittsburgh and Philadelphia.

Other milestones, changes and actions of note--

- A Federal Court turns back a [challenge to Chesapeake Bay cleanup standards](#), but decision was appealed;
- DEP [finalizes air quality permit criteria](#) for Marcellus gas well sites;
- An [Independent review of DEP's Oil and Gas Program](#) says the program well managed;
- The [Center For Sustainable Shale Development](#) is formed to provide independent certification of drilling best practices;
- Drilling fees fund more than [\\$28.5 million in environmental, recreation projects](#);
- Attorney General [files criminal charges](#) against XTO Energy drilling company;
- Gov. Corbett [urged DRBC to finalize drilling rules](#);
- The William Penn Foundation announced the creation of a [new vision for the Delaware Watershed](#).
- The [Stroud Water Research Center forms Watershed Restoration Group](#) to ensure water quality;
- The [Academy Of Natural Sciences](#) in Philadelphia leads regional watershed protection efforts;
- REAP farm conservation tax credit reduces over [half million pounds of nitrogen](#);
- PA's [biggest Chesapeake Bay cleanup challenge](#): 609 million pounds of sediment;
- EPA agrees [Lower Susquehanna River](#) is not impaired at this time;
- DEP proposes [Nutrient Trading Program changes](#);
- [Rediscovered technology](#) makes mine drainage treatment more effective, less costly;
- DCNR, CONSOL agreement to [repair mining damage to Ryerson Station State Park](#);
- Corbett [urges EPA to take action to protect Pennsylvania](#) Air Quality;
- DEP Secretary takes steps to [end 10-year information drought](#);
- 18 States, PA: [EPA cannot dictate greenhouse gas standards](#) for existing power plants;
- The update of Pennsylvania's Climate Change Plan [moves to completion](#);
- EQB accepted a [petition from a 19-year old](#) on setting greenhouse gas reduction goals in PA;
- [Coal production is projected to drop 25 percent](#) and gas production to increase 800 percent in Pennsylvania by 2017;
- 95 percent of [DEP permits reviewed on time](#), backlog of permits cleared;
- Keep PA Beautiful [completes statewide county illegal dump](#) survey;
- Lancaster County [preserves 100,000th acre of farmland](#); and
- Game Commission film celebrates [Bald Eagle restoration success](#).

### **Analysis And Opinion In 2013**

The PA Environment Digest published a number of articles and op-ed pieces on environmental issues in 2013. Here is a sampling--

- [Mid-Year Budget Briefing Will Shape Future Decisions](#)
- [Commitment To Restoring PA Watersheds Changed Fundamentally Before, After 2003](#)
- [Have You Thought About How State Government Spends Your Money?](#)
- [Growing Leaner: Shrinking Commitment To The Environment Over Last 10 Years](#)
- [Ironic Statement By Former DEP Secretary Hanger On Krancer's Leaving](#)
- [Landmark Court Opinion Turns Environmental Regulation In PA Upside Down](#)
- [Why Do We Need To Protect Endangered Species And Wild Trout?](#)
- [Striking The Appropriations Balance With The Endangered Species Coordination Act](#)
- [PA Chamber, Industry Coalition Urge Passage Of Endangered Species Changes](#)
- [Legal Experts Support Attorney General's Action Against XTO Energy](#)
- [Road to Recovery Isn't A Road, It's A River, West Branch Sees Big Improvements](#)
- [Climate Change And The Chesapeake Bay Watershed](#)
- [Pennsylvania Must Shift To Renewables](#)
- [Keep Pennsylvania Moving On Rail Trails](#)

**NewsClips:**

[Letter: Act 13 Ruling Hurts Business Climate](#)

[Op-Ed: PA Supreme Court Strikes A Blow For Environment](#)

[Editorial: Use Gas Ruling For Further Improvement](#)

[Top 10 Stories Of 2013, Pooling Law, Major Layoffs](#)

[2013's Ups, Downs In Drilling Boom](#)

[StateImpact: Top 10 Stories Of 2013 Part II](#)

[StateImpact: Top 10 Stories Of 2013 Part III](#)

[StateImpact: Top 10 Stories Of 2013 Part IV](#)