

# — PA — Environment Digest

*An Update on  
Environmental  
Issues in  
Pennsylvania*

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Edited By David E. Hess, Holston & Crisci

March 6, 2006

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## Appropriations Committees Hear of Environmental Funding “Challenges”



DEP Secretary [Kathleen McGinty](#) told the Senate and House Appropriations Committees this week her agency faces environmental funding “challenges” to keep programs like the Hazardous Sites Cleanup Program running and from federal funding cuts.

Federal funding cuts for programs Pennsylvania administers for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency like air and water quality, reductions in funding for clean water infrastructure projects and cuts in support for flood control projects were all areas Secretary McGinty pointed to that could have further impacts on DEP’s budget.

Secretary McGinty noted successes in the past year in eliminating backlogs in processing water quality permits, processing an unusually high number of oil and gas well drilling permits and in promoting brownfields redevelopment throughout the state.

Like other agency’s, DEP is projected to lose staff in the coming year, a projected 57 positions will be eliminated. That brings to 136 the number of positions eliminated since January 2003 for a total complement of 3,075 for the coming year.

In remarks before the House Committee, Secretary McGinty said DEP faces challenges in continuing to fund the Hazardous Sites Cleanup, Recycling and Storage Tank Programs this coming fiscal year.

### **Hazardous Sites Funding Ends 2007**

As part of the legislation passed last July to implement the Growing Greener bond issue, the Governor and General Assembly were authorized to take up to a total of \$50 million from the Environmental Stewardship Fund (the original Growing Greener fund) to finance the Hazardous Sites Program in fiscal 2005-06 (\$20 million) and 2006-07 (\$30 million).

Gov. Rendell’s proposed budget took the full amounts from the Environmental Stewardship Fund both years, but this temporary funding mechanism expires on June 30, 2007 and something will have to replace it.

### **Growing Greener Without Diversions**

The proposal to take monies from the Environmental Stewardship Fund in 2006-07 results in reducing dollars available for the original Growing Greener Programs by 46 percent. Restoring monies to the Fund would result in—

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- \$11.2 million more for DEP for watershed restoration, abandoned mine reclamation, oil and gas well plugging and sewage/water projects;
- \$ 7.2 million for DCNR State Parks/Forest maintenance, open space preservation and recreation grants;
- \$ 4.5 million to Agriculture for farmland preservation; and
- \$ 7.1 million to PennVest for water and sewer project grants.

**Restoring Environmental Stewardship Fund** (original Growing Greener Programs)

	<b>Proposed 2006-07*</b>	<b>With Funding Restored*</b>	<b>Difference* 46% Increase</b>
DEP	24,061	35,281	11,220
DCNR	15,505	22,734	7,229
Agriculture	9,521	13,961	4,441
PennVest	15,247	22,357	7,110
Hazardous Sites Fund**	30,000	0	
<b>Total</b>	<b>94,334</b>	<b>94,334</b>	<b>30,000</b>

\*In thousands of dollars

\*\*Authorization to take monies from Stewardship Fund ends June 30, 2007

The Environmental Stewardship Fund can also be used to pay debt service for the Growing Greener bond issue, which in 2006-07 is estimated to be \$9.6 million. The Governor’s budget proposal now calls for debt service to come out of the General Fund appropriation.

The Stewardship Fund is support by the special \$4.25/ton Growing Greener fee enacted in 2002 to fund the original Growing Greener watershed/habitat restoration programs.

**Other Funding Challenges**

The budgets for DEP, DCNR and Agriculture contain other funding challenges that were brought out in bipartisan questioning by the Senate and House Appropriations Committee this week. Among them were—

**Parks/Forests Funding Diversion:** The Keystone Recreation, Parks and Conservation Fund will not receive \$63 million in Realty Transfer Tax proceeds (one year's contribution) specifically earmarked by law for that purpose. While DCNR is making accounting and administrative changes in the program to continue to award grants at the same or higher levels, these funds were earmarked for conservation purposes.

Several members of the General Assembly noted DCNR’s regular budget line items, for example for State Park operations, have not yet been restored to 2002-03 levels.

**Recycling Fee Sunset:** Funding for Recycling Programs was cut by \$8.5 million in anticipation of the sunset of the recycling fee in 2009 (25 percent cut). [House Bill 1902](#) (R-Rubley) is pending in the Senate to reauthorize the fee.

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**Storage Tank Cleanup Fund Not Repaid:** Only \$1 million of the promised \$10 million to pay back the Underground Storage Tank Indemnification Fund, which provides cleanup insurance to thousands of tank owners, was included in the budget proposal. Without the payment it is likely the Board that oversees the Fund will have to raise the per gallon fee financing the insurance which gets passed on to consumers in higher gasoline and diesel fuel prices. In 2002, \$100 million was borrowed from the Tank Fund to help balance the budget with the promise it would be paid back over ten years.

**County Conservation District Cuts:** Members noted funding was cut \$900,000 for districts at a time when burdens are increasing to provide farmers more help developing nutrient reduction plans and with permit reviews for livestock operations, along with a \$300,000 (100 percent) cut in funding for Chesapeake Bay Education Programs

**Nutrient Management Fund Depleted:** Funding that helps certify nutrient management plan technicians and provides farmers help in reducing nutrient runoff was cut by \$986,000, and according to a study by the Joint Legislative Budget and Finance Committee, the Fund will be entirely depleted by June 30, 2007.

**Agricultural Research Cut:** a \$3 million cut in agricultural research that could help address excess manure problems and other issues.

**Growing Greener Bond Fund Expenditures**

The proposed budget includes these suggested allocations for spending the Growing Greener II bond funds for the coming fiscal year.

<b>Bond Funds</b>	<b>2005-06*</b>	<b>2006-07 (Proposed)*</b>
<b>DEP</b>		
Envir. Improvement Projects	20,847	20,000
Abandoned Mine Reclamation	0	15,000
<b>DCNR</b>		
Parks & Recreation	0	5,000
State Parks/Forests	7,000	10,000
Open Space Preservation	4,801	10,000
<b>DCED</b>		
Main St, Downtown Redevelop.	5,000	15,000
<b>Agriculture</b>		
Farmland Preservation	0	40,000
<b>Fish &amp; Boat Commission</b>	1,655	4,000
<b>Game Commission</b>	6,000	8,000
<b>County Environmental Projects</b>	4,697	15,000
<b>Total</b>	50,000	142,000
<b>Debt Service**</b>	0	9,683

\*In thousands of dollars    \*\* General Fund Appropriation

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**Links:** [Department of Agriculture Budget Testimony -- Budget Release](#)  
[Department of Environmental Protection Budget Testimony – Budget Release](#)  
[Department of Conservation & Natural Resources Budget Testimony - Release](#)

### Session Schedule

The House returns to session on March 6 and the Senate March 13. The Senate will be finishing up [budget hearings](#) over the next week.

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- TreeVitalize Display at Philadelphia Flower Show Highlights Native Trees
- Pennsylvania State Parks: The Canvas of the Commonwealth March 9-12
- EPA Calls On Industry to Reduce Chemical Use
- EPA Seeks Public Comment on U.S. Greenhouse Gas Inventory
- EPA Scientists Share Innovations with Public and Businesses
- Outdoor Lighting Workshop for Municipal Planners March 28
- Pennsylvania Land Conservation Conference April 28-29
- PA Environmental Professionals Annual Conference May 17-19
- Driving Down the Cost of Green Buildings Workshop April 4
- Stewardship for Home, Farm, Business, and Community Workshop April 8
- Southeast PA Regional Environmental Advisory Council Workshop March 11
- DEP to Hold Flood Protection Workshop March 28-30
- National Conservation Partnership, Environmental Ed. Award Nominations Due
- 2006 Shades of Green Awards for Green Design Now Being Accepted
- First Ever Southeast Regional Stormwater BMP Award Nominations Due April 17

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- Call for Nominations – Northeast Environmental Partners Awards
- Reminder - 2006 Western Pennsylvania Environmental Awards
- Youth Hunter Essay Contest Winners Honored by Game Commission
- Online Peregrine Falcon Cam Goes Live March 6
- Barn Owl Conservation Initiative Extends to Southwest PA

### Feature

- *Watershed Groups in Rural Pennsylvania Have Gone Mainstream*, By Lara Lutz, Chesapeake Bay Journal

### See & Hear

- Environmental Advisory Councils, Helping Communities Find Solutions

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## On the Hill

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### On the Senate, House Agenda

The House returns to session on March 6 and Senate hearings on Gov. Rendell's 2006-07 budget proposal will continue. Here's the rundown...

### Calendars

The House will start March 6 with this environmental bill on its Calendar-- [House Bill 2067](#) setting limits on state spending through a constitutional amendment.

The Senate will start March 13 with these items on their Calendar-- [House Bill 213](#) establishing penalties for eco-terrorism; and [Senate Bill 1063](#) providing additional funding to expand the PA Small Business Development Centers.

### Committees

In the House, the Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee meets to consider [House Bill 2349](#) imposing further restricts on fireworks displays and [House Bill 1895](#) proposing a constitutional amendment to provide tax incentives for land conservation.

### Bills Introduced

The [House Bill 2474](#) (Surra-D-Elk) was introduced this week requiring additional safety equipment in underground mines.

## In Other News

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### Over 250 Attend Keystone Coldwater Conference, Focus on Habitat and Access



Habitat improvement, public access to streams and involving youth in fishing and boating activities were themes echoed by many presenters at the 2006 Keystone Coldwater Conference in State College last week.

Keynote Speaker Dr. Doug Austen, Executive Director of the Fish and Boat Commission, said his agency has refocused its efforts on habitat restoration by elevating that function to be a full division within the Commission and adding six regional restoration staff.

Dr. Austen also chairs the [National Fish Habitat Initiative](#) that is designed to galvanize support for habitat restoration throughout the United States by not only natural resources agencies, but also private industry and foundations.

Noting a significant decrease in the number of youth aged 6 to 15 engaged in fishing, Dr. Austen reviewed steps the Commission is taking to attract youngsters back, including a proposal for a [new junior fishing license](#) with the proceeds dedicated to youth education activities.

Privatization of public fishing waters is a growing concern in Pennsylvania, but at the same time Dr. Austen noted private property owners need to be engaged as a partner to promote angling and anglers need to act responsibly when on private property.

A planned statewide study of stream access supported by the Commission, the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources and the Pennsylvania Environmental Council will help the Commission identify areas where there are access problems and help prioritize access projects.

Cindy Dunn, Director of DCNR's Bureau of Recreation and Conservation, gave an overview of the agency's efforts to create a more sustainable Pennsylvania by promoting sustainable management of State Parks/Forests, promoting statewide land conservation, creating sustainable and attractive communities and doing more to connect people to the outdoors.

Dunn highlighted initiatives like [PA Wilds](#), [TreeVitalize](#), [Get Outdoors PA](#) and the [Kittatinny Ridge Project](#).

### PA's Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program Leads the Nation



More than 150,000 acres are enrolled in [Pennsylvania's Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program](#) to improve watershed quality and wildlife habitat, according to the Game Commission.

CREP has become the largest water quality-wildlife habitat partnership on farmland in Pennsylvania's history.

Pennsylvania's 265,000 allocated CREP acres, and 156,157 contracted acres (as of January 2006), lead all other states. The closest states to Pennsylvania's tallies are Nebraska with 200,000 allocated acres, and Illinois, with nearly 109,620 contracted acres.

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"The Pennsylvania CREP has enrolled more than 150,000 acres since it was started in 2000," Carl G. Roe, Executive Director of the Game Commission, said. "It's a tremendous accomplishment and likely will become as vital to our state's conservation history as the federal Soil Bank program in the 1950s and '60s."

Administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Farm Service Agency (FSA), CREP is a successful partnership involving states and the federal government in an ambitious initiative that uses monetary incentives to help conserve and rehabilitate environmentally-sensitive agricultural lands in water quality-compromised river drainages by carrying out projects that reduce erosion, restore degraded habitats and increase protections for ground and surface water.

Started in 2000, CREP is administered primarily by the Game Commission and U.S. Department of Agriculture. Pennsylvania's goal is to improve wildlife habitat and water quality, and reduce soil erosion on 265,000 acres in 59 counties, while monetarily compensating landowners for their participation.

In addition to participating landowners, hunters, trappers and anglers are direct beneficiaries of CREP, as are neighbors of program participants, bird-watchers and others who care about improving the environment.

The Department of Environmental Protection has continued to provide substantial funding for CREP through the state's Growing Greener initiatives. Many other partners - including the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, Ducks Unlimited, Pheasants Forever and the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy - have contributed to this program.

CREP started in the lower Susquehanna and Potomac river basins. In 2003 it was expanded to 23 additional counties. Less than a year later, 16 counties in the Ohio River drainage were added (\$146 million in augmented funding). Only eight Pennsylvania counties - all in the Delaware River Basin - do not participate in CREP.

Bradford County currently leads the state in CREP enrollment with more than 11,000 acres. Other counties with substantial acreage include: Columbia, with more than 9,700 acres; Northumberland, 9,600; Somerset, 7,700; and Tioga, 7,500.

More than 25,000 Pennsylvania acres - 39 square miles - of native warm-season grasses have been established under CREP. Equally significant are the more than 1,400 miles of forest riparian stream buffers that have been placed under contract.

Landowners wanting more information can call toll-free 1-800-941-CREP (2737) or visit the [Pennsylvania's Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program webpage](#) .

### **State Wildlife, Habitat Grant Applications Due April 7**

The Fish and Boat and Game Commissions issued a reminder this week that [State Wildlife Grants](#) are due on April 7 to help address conservation needs for high-priority conservation projects for endangered, threatened and at-risk species.

In 2005, the two agencies awarded more than \$1.14 million in State Wildlife Grants funding. Since 2001, Pennsylvania has received \$11.9 million through this program.

For more information, visit the [State Wildlife Grants webpage](#).

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

## Schuylkill Watershed Congress “Rain, Snow or Shine” March 4 & 5

The [2006 Schuylkill River Watershed Congress](#) will be held at Montgomery County Community College March 4 and 5.

The keynote speaker for the Congress will be Dr. Doug Austen, Executive Director of the Fish and Boat Commission.

The agenda for the Congress again includes lots of helpful presentations on topics ranging from invasive and native species, watershed restoration, watershed group organizational development, POWR’s water data system, riparian buffers, dam removal, agricultural controls and case studies of successful watershed projects.

The March 5 session will feature watershed tours to the Monocacy Hill Recreation Area, West Bullfrong Creek Riparian Buffer and the Morris Arboretum’s wetlands.

The [Schuylkill Watershed Congress](#) is organized by the [Delaware Riverkeeper](#) and supported by more than 40 nonprofit, government and businesses interested in watershed protection and restoration.

## Celebrating the Headwaters Program, Coudersport April 20

The Western Pennsylvania Watershed Program is sponsor a dinner program on April 20 at the Potato City Inn in Coudersport entitled, “Celebrating the Headwaters.”

Dr. David Allan, from the Natural Resource Department at Michigan State University will be the featured speaker with a presentation on “What you Need to Know About Streams.”

Dr. Allan is a renowned stream expert and co-author of the book, *Streams their Ecology and Life* and his research interests center on the influence of human activities on the condition of rivers and their watersheds.

Sponsors of the event include Penn State Cooperative Extension, The Western Pennsylvania Watershed Program, Potter County Conservation District, Clearwater Conservancy, and the Bucktail, Kettle Creek, Genesee, Tunungwant, Upper Allegheny, and Spring Creek Watershed Associations.

This is an excellent opportunity for fishing sportsmen, watershed association members, and landowners with streams to improve their understanding of streams.

There is limited seating for this event and registration is required. Contact Jim Clark, Penn State Cooperative Extension Office in McKean County at 814-887-5613 or send email to: [jac20@psu.edu](mailto:jac20@psu.edu) .

## Montgomery Senior Environment Corps Highlights Water Education Programs



Montgomery County Senior Environment Corps volunteers, in cooperation with the North Penn Water Authority, recently conducted eight Nonpoint Source Pollution/Source Water Protection education sessions for youth and adult organizations.

Using PowerPoint slides, the [EnviroScope](#) surface water simulator, enVision groundwater simulator and simple experiments to demonstrate causes, effects, and



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solutions to non-point source pollution, the sessions explored the ways everyone can protect and conserve water.

The program gave the over 126 attendees a firm understanding of non-point source pollution, water conservation, the earth's water supply, the water cycle, watersheds, surface water principles, benefits of clean water and defined things the attendee can do to help reduce pollution and conserve resources.

Montgomery County Senior Environment Corps volunteers also conducted two streamside Water Quality Monitoring Testing and Macroinvertebrate Identification education sessions for Junior Girl Scouts, Brownies and their parents at the Hatfield Township Scout cabin facility.

The program gave the attendees hands-on experience in basic water related environmental activities and provided a look at the impact non-point source pollution and point source pollution has on their environment. It reinforced the non-point source pollution and water conservation presentation and gave the attendees a better understanding of a watershed and why it is important to protect it.

Volunteers view these educational programs as a way to inform the public about the importance of water as a valuable resource that not only needs to be protected, but also conserved for use by future generations.

They feel that their programs make people aware of the need to look at water as a natural resource, not something that comes out of their faucet when they want it. And, that if that resource is not protected and conserved, there will be devastating impacts to this and future generations.

The Montgomery County Senior Environment Corps is a part of a statewide program created by [DEP's Citizens' Volunteer Monitoring Program](#) and the Environmental Alliance for Senior Involvement.

The PaSEC uses standardized protocols to assess physical, chemical, and biological indicators in streams. This data can be used as a screening tool to determine where further study is needed and the success or failure of restoration efforts.

The data is housed in a database that includes an open component with fields for a limited number of parameters and can be used by other volunteer monitoring groups not following the PaSEC's standardized protocols.

For more information on the PA Senior Environment Corps, visit the [Environmental Alliance for Senior Involvement webpage](#).

### **Grants Help Expand Dirt and Gravel Road Maintenance Program**

The [Center for Dirt and Gravel Road Studies](#) announced the receipt of two grants that will help expand its environmentally sensitive road maintenance practices program designed to reduce sediment and nutrient runoff from dirt and gravel roads.

The first project will focus on preventing sediment and nutrient pollution from farm lanes and field access roads in the Kishacoquillas Valley Watershed in Mifflin County. Under a three-year \$430,000 grant, the Center will partner with the Mifflin County Conservation District to develop and implement customized maintenance plans for private farming operations.

The second project, funded by a \$118,000 grant from Chesapeake Bay Commission and the Department of Environmental Protection, will conduct field evaluations of several

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dirt and gravel road maintenance practices like road re-surfacing, shallow cross pipe installations and filling road profiles.

Pennsylvania's Dirt and Gravel Road Program has completed over 1,500 road maintenance improvement projects in the past eight years and worked with 65 county conservation districts and more than 500 municipalities.

For more information on training opportunities, funding and technical assistance, visit the [Center for Dirt and Gravel Road website](#).

### Soil Maps Available Online for 57 PA Counties

The [National Cooperative Soil Survey](#) with USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service has made soil survey maps available online, including 57 of Pennsylvania 67 counties.

Visitors can go to the Web Soil Survey and follow three easy steps to generate soil maps, tables, and reports that can be printed or saved as PDF files.

For more information, visit the [National Cooperative Soil Survey website](#).

### Montgomery County Conservation District Receives Grant for BMPs

[Montgomery County Conservation District](#) received a \$23,504 grant from the Department of Environmental Protection to demonstrate best management practices on Little Neshaminy Creek.

Joining in the grant presentation was Sen. Greenleaf (R-Montgomery).

The conservation district will partner with Mary, Mother of the Redeemer Church and School; Saint Francis Ecology Council; and the [Delaware Riverkeeper Network](#).

This project will re-establish hydrology, plantings and function of an existing wetland; enhance the size and quality of a riparian buffer by removing invasive and planting indigenous species of plants; retrofit an existing stormwater detention basin; educate parishioners, school faculty and students about nonpoint source pollution and stormwater management; and provide outreach to targeted parishioners, faculty, students, township representatives and local citizens.

### Agriculture Establishes Fertilizer Committee, Including Compost, Manure

The Department of Agriculture this week named members to a newly created Fertilizer Advisory Committee to help share information, research, technology and regulation of fertilizer. The group includes representatives from compost and organic fertilizer industry.

The committee plans to address the following key issues:

- Quality Control Initiatives - Assuring proper production, processing and testing of fertilizers and their components through newly applied methods based on research and study;
- Byproduct Fertilizers - Discussing and reviewing new byproduct fertilizers to ensure safe productive use of the materials;
- New Proposed Regulation - Anticipating industry regulation and working with elected officials to affect positive change;

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- Program Improvements - Creating a web-based business and information system for fertilizer producers, distributors and consumers; and
- Counter-terrorism – Devising protection systems to combat the potential illegal acquisition and misuse of anhydrous ammonia and ammonium nitrate that may be obtained from Pennsylvania processing facilities and distribution centers.

The committee consists of representatives of production agriculture, agricultural research, turf maintenance, manufacturing and nutrient management, and include representatives from Ag Recycle, Inc. which produces organic soil supplements, the State Conservation Commission that deals with nutrient management issues, the Pennsylvania Environmental Council and the Department of Environmental Protection.

For more information about the Fertilizer Advisory Committee, contact John Breitsman at 717-772-5215, or [jbreitsman@state.pa.us](mailto:jbreitsman@state.pa.us).

### Homeowners Guide to Stormwater Management Now Available

The Philadelphia Water Department Office of Watersheds has just published a “[Homeowners Guide to Stormwater Management](#)” as part of its “Clean Water-Green City” initiative.

Homeowners can play an important role in keep streams clean by properly maintaining vehicles, building a rain garden or installing a rain barrel.

This 32-page Guide has tips on environment-friendly vehicle maintenance, lawn and garden care, pet waste, vehicle washing, tree planting, caring for backyard streams, winter de-icing, container gardens, rain barrels, rain gardens, creating a wildflower meadow, dry wells and infiltration testing.

Download a copy of [Homeowners Guide to Stormwater Management](#) or visit the [Watershed Information Center website](#) maintained by the Philadelphia Water Department.

### Alliance for Chesapeake Bay 2006 River Sojourns Youth Art Contest

The Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay has announced its [annual Youth Art Contest](#) designed to showcase what the watershed’s rivers mean to students.

Entries must be postmarked by April 1.

Throughout June and July 2006, the Alliance will coordinate week-long paddling Sojourns on four of the Bay’s largest tributaries – the Susquehanna, Potomac, Patuxent and James Rivers.

The winning entry will be featured as the logo for the 2006 River Sojourns and will be used on commemorative sojourn t-shirts distributed to sojourn participants. The winner, along with one parent or guardian, will receive a t-shirt and be invited on a 2 night, 3 day paddling segment on one of the 2006 sojourns. Two runner-ups will be awarded one day passage on a 2006 sojourn.

The art contest is open to all elementary, middle and high school students.

Submissions should be made on white paper and may be created with watercolors, acrylics, crayons, markers, colored pencils, pastels or other flat media without text. Pictures should be colorful 8.5 x 11 inch images that depict the spirit of the sojourn down the major Bay’s rivers.

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Entries should be sent to: Sojourn Art Contest, Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay, 3310 Market Street, Suite A, Camp Hill, PA 17011. Please include name, address, telephone number, school, grade, and date of birth on the back of the submission. There is a limit of one submission per person.

For sixteen years, the Alliance has worked with local river conservation organizations across the watershed to hold river sojourns that celebrate the rich history, culture and ecology of the rivers that make the Chesapeake Bay unique.

This year the [Susquehanna Sojourn](#) will be held from June 14 to 22 starting in Berwick and ending at Safe Harbor.

For more information contact: Deborah Rudy, Susquehanna Sojourn Coordinator, by sending email to: [drudy@acb-online.org](mailto:drudy@acb-online.org) or calling 717-737-8622.

### **NASA Educator Conducts April 19 GLOBE Land Cover Workshop**

The [PA NASA Educator Resource Center](#) will conduct a GLOBE Land Cover Program workshop on April 19 at the Carnegie Museum of Natural History in Pittsburgh.

The workshop is sponsored by the Pennsylvania NASA Space Grant Consortium.

The day's activities will include hands-on, inquiry based activities with the GLOBE Land Cover program, conducted by NASA-trained presenters. A special mid-day focus is on the completion of the Lewis & Clark Commemorative Voyage, 2003-2006. The new education component of the PRSCT Lewis & Clark website will be introduced, and land cover in the region will be compared, using 1803 and 2003 as comparison points.

The workshop includes a guided tour of Carnegie Museum of Natural History's display of animals which exemplify those noted in the journals of Lewis and Clark.

All participants will receive a copy of the color poster published by the Museum that covers the geology of the Lewis and Clark Trail in beautiful detail.

All teachers will receive GLOBE supplies along with related NASA resources including: Sun-Earth Day "Eclipse in a Different Light" materials. (Sun-Earth Day 2006 is March 29) Early registration is recommended since space is limited. There is a \$20 registration fee.

To register, contact program coordinator Jane Konrad at [konrad@pitt.edu](mailto:konrad@pitt.edu) or call 412-648-7315; fax 412-648-7081.

### **TreeVitalize Display at Philadelphia Flower Show Highlights Native Trees**

"Plant a Native Tree!" is the theme for the [TreeVitalize](#) exhibit at the Philadelphia Flower Show, March 5-12.

The 500-square-foot TreeVitalize exhibit will feature demonstrations on how to plant, prune and water trees. Visitors will also have the opportunity to receive seed packets containing Northern Red Oak acorns that were gathered by volunteers in Pennsylvania's forests and packaged by the Pennsylvania Conservation Corps at DCNR's Penn Nursery near State College.

Because native trees are well suited to the region, they don't have to be watered as much. They are also naturally more resistant to disease, pests, and physiological disorders, and are an integral part of the larger biological community providing food and shelter for insects and wildlife.

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TreeVitalize recommends planting one of 10 recommended native trees in southeastern Pennsylvania—

**Serviceberry**, *Amelanchier laevis* (Small tree with showy white early spring flower and edible berries); **American Hornbeam**, *Carpinus caroliniana* (Small tree with a smooth, sculpted, muscular appearing trunk); **Sugar Maple**, *Acer saccharum* (Excellent ornamental tree for large open areas); **Black gum**, *Nyssa sylvatica* (Medium-sized tree with brilliant red autumn foliage); **Northern Red Oak**, *Quercus rubra* (Large shade tree that produces acorns enjoyed by wildlife); **River Birch**, *Betula nigra* (Rapid grower with attractive light-colored peeling bark); **White Oak**, *Quercus alba* (Large shade tree that produces choice acorns for wildlife); **American Beech**, *Fagus grandifolia* (Handsome medium-sized tree with smooth gray bark); **Eastern Redbud**, *Cercis Canadensis* (Small tree with bright rose-colored flowers in early spring); or **Tulip Poplar**, *Liriodendron tulipifera* (Large tree – tallest of the eastern hardwoods – and rapid grower).

TreeVitalize partners include the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society, the Department of Environmental Protection, Aqua Pennsylvania, Philadelphia Eagles, PECO, U.S. Forest Service, Pennsylvania Horticultural Society, Morris Arboretum, William Penn Foundation, Pennsylvania Landscape and Nursery Association, Penn State Cooperative Extension, Fairmount Park Commission, and county and local governments.

For more information, visit the [TreeVitalize website](#).

### **Pennsylvania State Parks: The Canvas of the Commonwealth March 9-12**

The artistic and natural beauty of Pennsylvania's state parks will be featured in five vignettes at the Pennsylvania Garden Expo's "Art in the Garden" at the Farm Show complex in Harrisburg, March 9-12.

The Department of Conservation and Natural Resources' 5,000-square-foot exhibit will include art work by Nancy Mendes, featuring five state parks, including Ricketts Glen in the northeast part of the state, Hickory Run in the Poconos, Black Moshannon in the north central Pennsylvania Wilds region, Presque Isle along the shores of Lake Erie, and Jennings Environmental Education Center in Butler County.

Also highlighted in the exhibit, "Pennsylvania State Parks: The Canvas of the Commonwealth," co-sponsored by the Pennsylvania Parks and Forests Foundation, will be the many species of native plants that can be found in the environments at each of the five featured state parks.

Visitors can walk a boardwalk through the exhibit and read about native plants in information provided by the Pennsylvania Parks and Forests Foundation, Game Commission, Fish and Boat Commission, Audubon Pennsylvania and the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay.

Children will be able to color in coloring books that feature the five state parks, with Crayons donated by Binney & Smith in Easton.

Online reservations for an overnight stay at a State Park are also available at [www.visitPAparks.com](http://www.visitPAparks.com).

## **EPA Calls On Industry to Reduce Chemical Use**

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency unveiled the [National Challenge Commitment for Priority Chemicals](#), a collaborative initiative to shrink industrial use of 31 priority chemicals.

The challenge commitment seeks a 10 percent decrease in the use of one or more of the chemicals over three years at government and industrial facilities throughout the country.

The national challenge is sponsored by two EPA programs, the National Partnership for Environmental Priorities and the National Environmental Performance Track. Becoming an environmental priorities partner and implementing the challenge commitment can be the first step for companies to become full Performance Track members.

The National Partnership for Environmental Priorities is a voluntary program that encourages government and private industry to reduce the use of priority chemicals in products and waste. Priority chemicals are chemicals that are persistent in the environment, accumulate in living organisms, and toxic if released.

Since 2002, environmental priorities partners have removed more than 800,000 pounds of priority chemicals from the environment and have commitments to remove an additional 2 million pounds.

An earlier program offered by EPA with a goal of reducing the use of [17 target chemicals by 50 percent](#) resulted in the reduction of the target chemicals by over 800 million pounds from 1988 to 1996, and a year earlier than projected

Performance Track is a voluntary program that recognizes facilities for their commitment to effective environmental management, sustained record of compliance, commitment to measurable goals, and transparency to the public. Performance Track members set goals in different categories, including material use, energy use, or air emissions.

For more information, visit the [National Challenge Commitment for Priority Chemicals](#) and the [National Partnership for Environmental Priorities](#) webpages.

## **EPA Seeks Public Comment on U.S. Greenhouse Gas Inventory**

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is seeking public comment on a draft report that analyzes the sources of greenhouse gas emissions.

The report, "[Inventory of U.S. Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Sinks: 1990-2004](#)," will be open for comment for 30 days.

EPA prepared the annual report in collaboration with experts from multiple federal agencies. The major finding in the draft report is that overall emissions during 2004 increased by 1.7 percent from the previous year. This increase was due primarily to an increase in carbon dioxide emissions associated with fuel and electricity consumption.

Total emissions of the six main greenhouse gases in 2004 were equivalent to 7,075 million metric tons of carbon dioxide. These gases include carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, hydrofluorocarbons, perfluorocarbons, and sulfur hexafluoride. Fossil fuel combustion was the largest source of emissions, accounting for 80 percent of the total.

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Overall, emissions have grown by 15.8 percent from 1990 to 2004, while the U.S. economy has grown by 51 percent over the same period.

After responding to public comments, the United States will submit the final inventory report to the Secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, fulfilling its annual requirement as a party to the international treaty on climate change. The treaty, ratified by the United States in 1992, sets an overall framework for intergovernmental efforts to tackle the challenge posed by climate change.

For more information, visit the [Greenhouse Gas Emissions webpage](#).

### **EPA Scientists Share Innovations with Public and Businesses**

More than 130 scientific patents of technologies that benefit the environment can now be viewed at the new U.S. Environmental Protection Agency [TechMatch website](#).

Under the Federal Technology Transfer Act of 1986, government agencies may patent and license inventions, which assist new ideas from government laboratories to enter the marketplace. Entrepreneurs can view and license EPA technologies to develop new products that offer both environmental protection and economic growth.

For example, EPA's National Vehicle and Fuel Emissions Laboratory in Ann Arbor, Mich., has patented several inventions related to hybrid motor vehicles, that could result in greater fuel mileage in new vehicles manufactured in the U.S.

TechMatch includes third-party independent analyses of the commercial potential of the technologies, information on in-house research, and links to the full U.S. Patent and Trademark Office description of each patent. Technologies that have been assessed to have particularly high market potential are also featured.

TechMatch was developed by EPA in coordination with the West Virginia High Technology Consortium Foundation.

For more information, visit the [TechMatch website](#).

### **Outdoor Lighting Workshop for Municipal Planners March 28**

The [Pennsylvania Outdoor Lighting Council](#) and Department of Environmental Protection are sponsoring a workshop entitled, "Outdoor Lighting: Planning Issues for Municipalities" on March 28.

The program will help define good and bad outdoor lighting, showcasing equipment to help reduce glare and light pollution, and provide tools for communities to protect themselves against irresponsible lighting practices. There will also be an important discussion on the elements of an effective lighting ordinance and the process of getting such an ordinance enacted and enforced.

The workshop will start at 7 p.m. and is being held in the Upper Merion Township Building, 175 West Valley Forge Road in King of Prussia, Montgomery County.

Although the program will focus mainly on the needs of municipal officials, it is open to interested members of the general public as well.

To register, contact Jim McTish at 484-250-5180 or by sending email to [jmctish@state.pa.us](mailto:jmctish@state.pa.us) or visit the [Pennsylvania Outdoor Lighting Council website](#) for more information.

### **Pennsylvania Land Conservation Conference April 28-29**

The [2006 Pennsylvania Land Conservation Conference](#) will be held April 28-29 in State College.

Stephen J. Small, a leading authority on private land protection, will provide the keynote address on Friday evening with a message focusing primarily on current and national issues impacting conservation.

Be sure to look for specialized session tracks on: Conservation Easements, Conservation Planning, Fundraising, Stewardship and Farmland Preservation.

For more information, visit the [2006 Pennsylvania Land Conservation Conference webpage](#)

### **PA Environmental Professionals Annual Conference May 17-19**



The [Pennsylvania Association of Environmental Professionals](#) will hold their annual conference on May 17-19 in State College and the theme this year is “[Career Development for Pennsylvania’s Environmental Professionals](#).”

The conference features tracks for: Career Development, Regulatory Updates, Pollution Prevention/Energy Efficiency, and Endangered Species.

The Conference Keynote Speaker will be Edwin Pinero, President Bush's Federal Environmental Executive and the former Deputy for Pollution Prevention and Compliance Assistance for the Department of Environmental Protection.

A new feature of this year's program will be "Traveling Workshops" that include site visits to the I-99 Acid Rock Drainage Remediation Site, a first hand look at the cutting edge stormwater BMPs in place at Penn State's new Visitor's Center, and a tour of the Penn State Nuclear Research Reactor.

For more information, visit the [PAEP 2006 Conference webpage](#).

### **Driving Down the Cost of Green Buildings Workshop April 4**

The [Green Building Alliance](#) is sponsoring a workshop on driving down the cost of constructing green buildings in Pittsburgh on April 4.

The workshop will provide building industry professionals with the skills, tools and the knowledge needed to successfully deliver projects that can be certified under the LEED green building standards.

[Download a brochure on the workshop.](#)

### **Stewardship for Home, Farm, Business, and Community Workshop April 8**

The [Center for Environmental Sciences at Millersville University](#) will host a “Environmental Stewardship for Home, Farm, Business and Community” workshop on April 8 on its campus near Lancaster.



## **PA Environment Digest – Holston & Crisci**

This workshop is designed to provide practical information that individuals and communities can use to become better environmental stewards. The goals are to emphasize the positive aspects of good environmental stewardship and provide all participants with information that they can use in their homes, farms, businesses, schools, and within their communities.

A concurrent environmental program for children (K-6) will be available based on the numbers and grade levels of those who plan to attend.

The workshop is also sponsored by PPL Corporation in cooperation with the [Lancaster County Conservation District](#) and [Keep Lancaster Beautiful](#).

The deadline for registration is April 3.

Information and registration forms are available at [Millersville University Center for Environmental Studies website](#).

### **Southeast PA Regional Environmental Advisory Council Workshop March 11**

Environmental Advisory Council members from Southeast PA are invited to a special regional conference in Bryn Mawr on March 11.

The conference is co-sponsored by the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources and the William Penn Foundation.

The agenda includes sessions on financing stormwater management plans and projects, regional updates by DCNR and DEP staff, battling invasive species, stormwater facility retrofits and conserving the PA Highlands.

For more information, [download the conference brochure](#) or go to the [EAC Network website](#).

### **DEP to Hold Flood Protection Workshop March 28-30**

The Department of Environmental Protection is sponsoring a Flood Protection Workshop to be held at the [Fernwood Hotel and Resort](#) in the Poconos on March 28- 30.

The workshop will focus on lessons learned from the devastating levee failures that occurred in New Orleans as a result of Hurricane Katrina, as well as the damages that occurred here in Pennsylvania from Hurricane Ivan.

Presentations will include hurricane and river flood forecasting by the National Weather Service, the levee failures in New Orleans by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, a panel on levee closure structures by operators here in Pennsylvania and an impending flood checklist by New York Department of Environmental Conservation.

The workshop will also focus on operation and maintenance issues such as concrete repair and vegetation control. Several municipal sponsors will provide case studies of successful flood project upgrades funded by DEP's grant program.

A bus tour of the flood levee system of Stroudsburg and East Stroudsburg is planned followed by a recognition dinner. Vendors of flood protection related materials from flap gates to boom mowers have been invited to set up displays during the workshop.

The annual workshop provides a great opportunity for municipal sponsors of flood protection projects to receive training, share information and learn the about the latest levee safety issues.

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For more information, contact Ray Zomok at 717-787-7433 or send email to [rzomok@state.pa.us](mailto:rzomok@state.pa.us).

### **2006 Shades of Green Awards for Green Design Now Being Accepted**

The Green Building Alliance is now accepting applications for the [2006 Shades of Green Awards](#) through March 28.

The Shades of Green Leadership Awards are designed to highlight the efforts of distinctive persons in Western Pennsylvania who have contributed to the region's environmental transformation through green leadership within the built environment.

The awards are not for individual "brick and mortar" projects, but for the people driving programs, policies initiatives and/or efforts that are leading our region towards a "greener" economy.

For more information and an application, visit the [2006 Shades of Green Awards webpage](#).

### **First Ever Southeast Regional Stormwater BMP Award Nominations Due April 17**

The [Stormwater BMP Recognition Program](#) is seeking nominations for its 2006 awards program to recognize innovative stormwater management best management practices in Southeastern PA.

Nominations are due April 17.

Project like rain gardens, green roofs, infiltration swales, treatment wetlands and other stormwater management systems based on nature's best designs will be recognized in Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Montgomery and Philadelphia counties.

The program was created by the Office of Watersheds-Philadelphia Water Department, Delaware Valley Green Building Council, Montgomery County Conservation District, DEP, Pennsylvania Environmental Council and the Villanova urban Stormwater Management Partnership.

For details and an application, visit the [Stormwater BMP Recognition Program webpage](#) or contact Tiffany Ledesma Groll at [tiffany.ledesma@phila.gov](mailto:tiffany.ledesma@phila.gov) or call 215-499-3756.

**Link:** [Homeowners Guide to Stormwater Management](#)

### **National Conservation Partnership, Environmental Ed. Award Nominations Due**

International Paper and The Conservation Fund will provide national recognition and \$10,000 cash grants to two conservation/environmental education leaders at an awards ceremony in Washington, D.C., this summer.

Award nominations are being accepted through April 17.

The [International Paper Conservation Partnership Award](#), in its 18th year, is presented annually to an individual who has achieved significant results in the protection of habitat through a cooperative relationship with a business or company.

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By demonstrating that a healthy environment and a healthy economy are not mutually exclusive, this person leads in a conservation effort benefiting the environment and encourages others to form similarly productive alliances with businesses.

Nominees must have achieved significant results in the protection of terrestrial or wetland habitats in the United States and demonstrated the positive value of cooperative partnerships between business and the conservation community.

Last year's 2005 IP Conservation Partnership Award went to Alan Hutchinson. Since 1997, Alan has led the Forest Society of Maine, located in Bangor, Maine, in the development of conservation projects protecting nearly 400,000 acres of the state's forests. His ability to bring diverse interests together in a true sense of partnership to achieve conservation goals is having a lasting impact.

The [International Paper Environmental Education Award](#), in its 12th year, is presented annually to an educator who has developed an innovative approach to environmental education that significantly improves student comprehension of environmental issues, fosters an understanding of the link between environmental protection and economic growth, demonstrates leadership and inspires achievement.

Potential candidates are elementary or secondary school educators or university faculty or staff members.

Last year's 2005 IP Environmental Education Award went to Mike Town. Through his leadership at Redmond High School in Duvall, Wash., Mike established an interdisciplinary study program for 10th and 11th grade students performing at low levels. The unique program, now known as Pathfinder, provides meaningful learning experiences for students with learning disabilities. Under Mike's leadership, graduation rates of pathfinder students doubled from previous rates.

For more information, visit the [online Award Nominations webpage](#).

### Call for Nominations – Northeast Environmental Partners Awards

The Northeast Environmental Partners are now accepting nominations for the Sixteenth Annual Environmental Partnership Awards and the Twelfth Annual Thomas P. Shelburne Environmental Leadership Award.

The deadline for nominations is June 15.

The Awards, sponsored by Pennsylvania Environmental Council's Northeast Office, Wilkes University, NEPA Alliance, PPL, Procter & Gamble Paper Products Company and the departments of Environmental Protection and Conservation and Natural Resources, annually recognize the achievements of individuals or organizations that, through partnerships, have achieved excellence in environmental protection or conservation in NEPA.

The Awards are open to any group, individual, company, program, or organization whose work has had a positive impact on the environment in Northeastern Pennsylvania's following counties; Bradford, Carbon, Lackawanna, Luzerne, Monroe, Pike, Schuylkill, Sullivan, Susquehanna, Wayne and Wyoming.

The Thomas P. Shelburne Environmental Leadership Award is in its twelfth year and recognizes an individual who stands out for his or her long-term commitment to environmental quality through inspirational leadership, dedication and commitment to partnering.

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Over the years, the program has honored individuals and groups involved in agriculture, forestry, business, industry, education, science, environmental awareness, community service, and government, among others.

Visit the [2006 Environmental Partnership Awards webpage](#) to download a nomination form or contact the Northeast Pennsylvania Environmental Council office at 570-718-6507 for more information.

### Reminder - 2006 Western Pennsylvania Environmental Awards

There's still time to send in nominations for the Western Pennsylvania Environmental Awards Program sponsored by the [Pennsylvania Environmental Council](#) and [Dominion](#).

Nominations must be submitted by March 17.

Community groups, schools, volunteers, businesses, government officials, projects, organizations, individuals, or programs are eligible to receive a Western Pennsylvania Environmental Award for their efforts to enhance the environment of western Pennsylvania. A total of five awards will be presented in the areas of Community (which includes a variety of eligible nominees), Education, and Business.

In honor of each awardee, the sponsors will make a \$1,000 donation to a nonprofit organization of the awardee's choice that provides environmental benefits to western Pennsylvania.

Nomination forms are available by calling the Pennsylvania Environmental Council at 412-481-9400 or emailing [awards@pecwest.org](mailto:awards@pecwest.org).

For more information on awards dinner, visit the [May 25 Dinner webpage](#).

### Youth Hunter Essay Contest Winners Honored by Game Commission

James W. Oswald, of Sinking Springs, Berks County, is headed for summer school and, unlike most youngsters facing that task, he just can't wait to get started.

Oswald, 14, is the grand prize winner of the junior division (ages 12-15) of the Pennsylvania Game Commission's 2005 Youth Hunter Education Essay Contest.

As the top entry in the junior division, Oswald was awarded a scholarship to the Safari Club International's Apprentice Hunter Camp at the Indianhead Ranch in Del Rio, Texas. Safari Club International Region 25 (Pa. chapters) donated the grand prize.

First prize honors in the junior division, went to Matthew R. Martin, 15, of New Holland, Lancaster County. He will receive a .50 caliber Traditions muzzleloading rifle.

Finishing second through fourth place in the junior division were: Zachary T. Zatko, 13, Lower



James W. Oswald (center), (from left to right): Carl G. Roe, Game Commission executive director; Philip Luckenbaugh, Game Commission Hunter-Trapper Education Division; Oswald; Craig Kauffman, Safari Club International; and John J. Riley, Board of Game Commissioners.

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Burrell, Westmoreland County; Andrew M. Straw, 15, Curwensville, Clearfield County; and Jared I. Smith, 15, Rome, Bradford County.

Due to an insufficient number of entries in the senior division (ages 16-18), prizes were awarded for first through third this year.

Jeremy D. Horning, 17, Denver, Lancaster County, was the first prize winner of the senior division. He also will receive a .50 caliber Traditions muzzleloading rifle.

Finishing in second and third places in the senior division were: Ronald J. Brynarsky III, 16, Ephrata, Lancaster County; and Julie M. Vavreck, 16, Erie, Erie County.

The theme for the 2005 contest was: "How I support wildlife conservation."

Prizes in both divisions include: second place, Sightron 8x42 binoculars; third place, "Successful Hunting" KP book set; and fourth place, Buck Knives limited edition knife.

First through fourth place prizes were donated by: Traditions, Sightron, KP Books and Buck Knives, respectively.

Every contest entrant received a Game Commission "Working Together for Wildlife" embroidered patch. Winners were recognized at the January meeting of the Board of Game Commissioners in Harrisburg.

The Essay Contest is open to youngsters who are Pennsylvania residents, have successfully completed a hunter-trapper education course and possess a current hunting or furtaking license.

Watch for details for the 2006 Essay Contest on the [Game Commission website](#).

### Online Peregrine Falcon Cam Goes Live March 6



The online webcam showing the [peregrine falcon nest](#) on the Rachel Carson Building in Harrisburg will go live on March 6. And what viewers may see is competition between the falcons and a large red-tailed hawk for the same home territory.

"The falcons have become a regular feature of the Harrisburg skyline and FalconCam has become an annual tradition for millions of online viewers each year," DEP Secretary Kathleen A. McGinty said.

"Last year's season was in jeopardy when the female falcon lost her longtime mate after an injury. A new mate showed up, surprising viewers and bird watchers, and three young falcons hatched from the nest," McGinty said. "This year's scenario should be just as fascinating as the female fights off the intruder to maintain her turf. The live Webcam gives viewers a front row seat to all of the action as it unfolds."

A redtail hawk, presumed to be a female due to its large size, has claimed a park at the Capitol Complex as its prime hunting ground. This female hawk has been spotted atop the Education Building at 333 Market St., a spot often used as a perch by the peregrine female. Earlier this year, the female peregrine sat atop the adjacent church steeple, and the two exchanged some vocal threats.

Peregrine falcons are very territorial and will aggressively defend the airspace near their nests. Their range is about 30 miles with their nest in the center of their range. They do not like other falcons within 3 miles of their nest site. Fights to the death are not

uncommon, but more typically falcons will fly in such a way as to display superiority and steer a challenger away from the nest's "no-fly zone."

Based on last year's timing, the female Peregrine falcon should begin to lay eggs sometime this month. Last year, the first of three eggs was laid March 25. The eggs began hatching on May 3 and the young falcons began to fledge, or take their first flight, in June.

This year, visitors to the homepage can choose which format they prefer to view the live video stream --- Windows Media for broadband viewers and a dial-up version in Real Player. The addition of Windows Media should improve access to the site in times of high traffic.

The live video of the falcons will continue through the end of June.

For more information and to sign up for email alerts about activities surrounding the falcon nest, visit the [Peregrine Falcon webpage](#).

### **Barn Owl Conservation Initiative Extends to Southwest PA**



The Game Commission is expanding its [Barn Owl](#) Conservation Initiative into its Southwest Region by seeking information about active and historic barn owl nest sites.

The primary objective of this program is to locate and monitor barn owl nest sites and distribute nest boxes to interested landowners with suitable habitat to help reverse the population decline of this species.

Barn owls are medium-sized owls with a white face surrounded by a heart-shaped border. They typically have a white belly and a darker, tawny back. In Pennsylvania, barn owls primarily are associated with open grasslands such as meadows, hayfields, and fallow croplands. Open grassland habitat is essential for barn owls because meadow voles, which make up about 70 percent of their diet, are their primary food.

Barn owls also eat other rodents such as mice, rats, and shrews. In rare instances, when rodents are locally rare, barn owls may occasionally take small birds, such as starlings and red-winged blackbirds, that roost in open habitats. Because a typical family of barn owls will eat about 3,000 rodents over the course of the breeding and nesting season, barn owls are exceptionally valuable to farmers.

As their name implies, barn owls commonly nest in structures such as barns, silos and abandoned buildings. Barn owls will also nest in natural cavities such as holes in trees, rock crevices, and even burrows in riverbanks.

To determine if you have a barn owl on your property, look in barns, silos, abandoned buildings and below possible roost sites for regurgitated owl pellets, which are dense pellets of undigested fur and bone about one to two inches long. Also, after dark, listen for long hissing shrieks, which are very different from the typical "hoots" of most owls.

The Game Commission is specifically looking for information about barn owl activity in Allegheny, Armstrong, Beaver, Cambria, Fayette, Greene, Indiana, Somerset, Washington or Westmoreland counties, but welcome information for other counties as well."

If you have barn owls nesting on your property or would like to know how you can help conserve Pennsylvania's barn owls, contact Tammy Colt, Southwest Region Wildlife Diversity Biologists at 724-238-9523 or by mail to 4820 Route 711, Bolivar, PA 15923.

**NewsClip:** [Game Commission Sets In as Barn Owls Dwindle](#)

## See & Hear

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### Environmental Advisory Councils, Helping Communities Find Solutions



[Environmental Advisory Councils](#) are helping over a hundred communities in Pennsylvania find solutions to environmental problems.

Councils are typically a group of interested citizens appointed by local elected officials to advise them on the protection, conservation, management and promotion and use of natural resources.

Municipalities form Councils under a specific law—Act 148 of 1973.

What do Councils do? Find out by going to the special [EAC Network website](#) and listen to Council members tell you about projects in their communities.

You can also find out how to form an EAC, the resources available to help you become an active member and how to join the EAC Network Listserv to connect you to others with similar interests.

The EAC Network is a project of the [Pennsylvania Environmental Council](#) and the website is produced by the [GreenTreks Network, Inc.](#)

**Special Event:** [Southeast PA Regional EAC Conference March 11](#)

## Feature

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### Watershed Groups in Rural Pennsylvania Have Gone Mainstream

By Lara Lutz

Chesapeake Bay Journal



**Susquehanna River  
at Williamsport**

Local watershed organizations are influencing community dynamics—and the nature of environmental stewardship—in rural Pennsylvania, according to a research team at Pennsylvania State University.

The Center for Rural Pennsylvania commissioned the study of rural watershed organizations, which drew on 27 in-depth interviews and questionnaires completed by 172 watershed organizations across the state.

“We got into this because we realized that community watershed organizations were really

proliferating across the state.” said faculty member and researcher Frank Higo. “There are literally hundreds of them, and we didn’t know that much about them.”

The study found that the role of watershed groups reached beyond the stream corridors. By working with conservation districts and forging new partnerships, the organizations not only support water resources, but community development as a whole.

In preparation for the study, researchers identified 580 community watershed organizations in rural Pennsylvania. They examined a subset of the organizations to better understand the characteristics, partnerships and the factors that help them to be effective in the local context.

Researchers found great diversity, but also a number of common threads.

Watershed groups in rural Pennsylvania vary widely in organizational age. Forty-four percent formed within the last 10 years, with more than 100 using grants from the state’s Growing Greener program. But nearly 25 percent formed before 1980.

Water quality concerns were a leading cause for the groups’ formation. But a number of concerns ranked fairly equal as secondary causes, including environmental education, habitat, recreation, land use planning, mining impacts, agricultural impacts and water supply.

Sportsmen were often among the organizations’ founders.

“Hunting and fishing groups, like Turkeys Unlimited and Trout Unlimited, were often the catalyst for getting these groups started. They got to talking among themselves and established a common interest,” said faculty member Kathryn Brasier, who also collaborated on the study.

Researchers also found that watershed organizations in rural Pennsylvania have gone mainstream, in what they describe as a notable “shift in strategic thinking.”

“These groups actively distance themselves from the conventional image of environmental activism,” said Richard Stedman, also a member of the faculty and research team. “They don’t want to be seen as radicals on the fringe of their communities.”

The relatively smaller size of rural communities makes it especially difficult to be productive through a confrontational or divisive approach.

Instead, groups build support through community education and hands-on projects that show positive results for their watersheds. Most raise community awareness through letter-writing campaigns, public meetings and media interviews. They focus on voluntary conservation practices and changing attitudes through environmental education with citizens and students.

They avoid politics, and spend relatively less time trying to influence regulations and policy. Only two mentioned using litigation.

In the words of one study participant, today’s watershed leaders are “active environmentalists,” rather than environmental activists.

This approach allows the organizations to maintain relationships with diverse groups and act as legitimate facilitators on public issues.

“But they aren’t shrinking violets,” Brasier said. Watershed organizations work closely with local, regional and state agencies to address problems. When they find regulatory violations, they report them.

“They are also vocal in talking to legislators, and they speak out at DEP (Department of Environmental Protection) meetings. They stand up for what they believe in, but in multiple ways—not just with bulldozers and briefs,” Brasier said.



## PA Environment Digest – Holston & Crisci

Many local watershed organizations also affect their communities in ways that reach beyond environmental concerns. By working well with citizens and local governments, they create positive relationships and a network of people who want to be active in their communities. This network can be especially effective in rural settings, where one strong network can influence multiple aspects of the community.

“Community watershed organizations can have a variety of impacts within a community beyond water quality. They also contribute to leadership development and awareness of other issues like land use and how the community all fits together,” Brasier said.

In several cases, watershed organizations have spawned efforts to address public health and recreation issues.

“I’ve been struck by the number of people who, because of their interests and learning through the watershed organizations, have sought out workshops on their own and started teaching other people. One in particular started learning about mine drainage and ended up going to Australia to give a presentation,” Brasier said.

The study also showed that education was one of the “most visible and oft-cited” roles for community watershed groups. They offer a “holistic vision of environmental quality” that taps both the ecological and social significance of local waterways. Along with presentations for adult community groups, watershed organizations work closely with local schools on curriculum and field studies.

“Watershed organizations are providing teachers with resources, like watershed models, and giving students a very hands-on experience of their local resources that the schools couldn’t offer themselves,” Brasier said.

Government programs were by far the most common funding source for rural watershed organizations. Growing Greener topped the list. Sixty-four percent had applied for Growing Greener grants, and 52 percent had received them.

Most organizations weren’t familiar with private foundations and very few had applied to them for funding. Approximately 10 percent had received grants from five of the state’s best-known private funders. Only 5 percent had applied for funding from the Chesapeake Bay Small Watershed Grants Program. Twenty-two percent hadn’t heard of it at all.

While the range of funding sources was narrow, there was breadth in the number and types of partnerships that rural watershed organizations develop. The majority of those surveyed had between three and nine organizational partnerships, mostly with state and local governments, colleges and other nonprofit organizations. Twenty percent reported 10 or more partnerships.

Together, they are building strong environmental coalitions at the county and regional levels. Watershed coordinators, employed by the county conservation districts, have nurtured these networks and introduced environmental groups to one another.

“They are learning and depending on each other, with a real recognition of common problems and common solutions and a more efficient use of resources,” Stedman said. “The more successful groups are the ones that are better partnered.”

Definitions of success vary widely among rural watershed organizations because their settings and goals are different. But several common features emerged among the more effective organizations—commonalties that had no direct connection to the size or structure of the organizations.

Researchers found that the more effective groups pay very close attention to organizational development. They develop broad-based advisory boards and use strategic planning to set goals and create community support.

They also form around a more comprehensive concern for their watershed, rather than a single triggering event. This prevents interest from fizzling out after the urgent problem is addressed.

The more effective groups also worked with a sponsoring organization for guidance on technical issues, funding resources and organizational development.

“You can’t overstate the importance of the DEP and the watershed coordinators in the conservation districts, and how they have helped these groups over a period of time to achieve success,” Higdon said.

Higdon said that one of most gratifying findings of the study is that civic life, rather than dying out, may be taking on a new form. In many cases, rural watershed organizations are leading the way.

“After so many face-to-face interviews with groups all across the state, in all the major watersheds, it was clear just how important water resources are to these communities and to their community identity,” Higdon said.

“These people have lived there for years, fished there and hunted there, and they’ve watched the watershed change. Watershed organizations were formed with help from the state and the local conservation districts, but they were generated locally. It’s the people themselves who are passionate about these resources and make the choice to spend time protecting them.”

#### Progress in Pennsylvania

Local watershed organizations in Pennsylvania play a vital role in community education as well as on-the-ground stream restoration. In recent years, local projects supported with funds from the Growing Greener program have:

- Planted more than 188 miles of streamside buffers;
- Restored 4,200 acres of wetlands;
- Reclaimed more than 2,000 acres of abandoned mines;
- Plugged 770 abandoned oil and gas wells; and
- Supported the assessment of 153 watersheds.

*Lara Lutz* is a writer and editor who lives on the South River in Mayo, MD.

Article reprinted with permission from the [Chesapeake Bay Journal](#), March 2006 issue.

## Quick Clips

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

[Reducing Deer Herd Helping Habitat to Recover](#)

[Old Pieces of Industry May Go at Bethlehem Steel Site](#)

[CMU Center to Assist with Brownfield Work](#)

[Green Convention Center Lures Green Group](#)

[Concrete Construction Offers Energy Savings](#)

[I-95 on Fast Track to Become East’s Hydrogen Highway](#)

[Outdoors Group Puts Warm-Up After Hike](#)  
[Gypsy Moths Return](#)  
[Preservationists Name Gettysburg Among Threatened Battlefields](#)  
[Second Power Line Proposed Across PA](#)  
[Spencer: The Sky is Falling, And It's Filled with Mercury](#)

## **Watershed NewsClips**

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

[Upper Potomac Roundtable Conference to Highlight Watershed Restoration](#)  
[PA Stream Project Showing Signs of Success](#)  
[Cherry Valley Preservation Efforts Move Forward](#)  
[Editorial: Conserving, Replenishing and Protecting Our Natural Resources](#)  
[Demand for Organic Food Growing Faster Than Domestic Supply](#)  
[Editorial: Creative Design Keeps Pristine Streams Clean](#)  
[Innovative Water, Sewer Project Grants Awarded](#)  
[Flood Control Grants in Jefferson, Lackawanna, Montour, Somerset and Westmoreland](#)  
[Drinking Water Gets a Drug Test](#)  
[Bay Journal Celebrates 16 Years of Publication](#)

## **Regulations**

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The [Independent Regulatory Review Commission](#) will consider the State Conservation Commission's final Nutrient Management regulation at its meeting on March 23.

[Pennsylvania Bulletin – March 4, 2006](#)

**Comment Deadlines:** [Technical Guidance \(DEP website\)](#)

[Copies of Proposed Regulations \(DEP website\)](#)

[Status of Regulations, 6-Month Calendar \(DEP website\)](#)

## **Technical Guidance & Permits**

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The Department of Environmental Protection [published final guidance](#) on repairing potable water storage tanks.

Final: DEP ID: 383-2125-109. Guidance for Using the Modified Minor Permit Amendment for Repainting the Interior of a Potable Water Storage Tank. This technical guidance document establishes procedures for public water supply systems to follow if they wish to obtain a modified minor permit amendment to repaint the interior of a potable water storage tank.

[For copies of Draft Technical Guidance \(DEP website\)](#)

[For copies of Final Technical Guidance \(DEP website\)](#)

## **Calendar of Upcoming Events**

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Upcoming conferences, meetings, workshops, plus links to other online calendars. Meetings are in Harrisburg unless otherwise noted. [Go To: PA Environment Digest Calendar Page](#)

- [DEP's Annual schedule of board and advisory committee meetings for 2006](#)
- **March 6** – DEP [Air Quality Technical Advisory Committee](#) meeting to discuss proposed mercury regulations. Room 105 Rachel Carson Building. Harrisburg. 9:00.
- **March 7** – House Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee meeting to consider [House Bill 2349](#) (Scavello-R-Monroe) imposing further restricts on fireworks displays and [House Bill 1895](#) (Fairchild-R-Union) proposing a constitutional amendment to provide tax incentives for land conservation. Room 148 Main Capitol. 10:00.
- **March 7** – **CANCELLED** - [DEP Laboratory Accreditation Advisory Committee](#) meeting. Next scheduled meeting June 6.
- **March 9** – **CANCELLED** - [DEP Solid Waste Advisory Committee](#) meeting due to the lack of agenda items from DEP. The next scheduled meeting is May 11.
- **March 13** – Governor's Renewable Agricultural Energy Council meeting. Room 105 Rachel Carson Building. 10:00.
- **March 13** – [DEP Citizens Advisory Council](#) and [Air Quality Technical Advisory Committee](#) to discuss proposed mercury regulation. Southcentral Regional Office, 909 Elmerton Ave. Harrisburg. 9:00.
- **March 14** – House Agricultural and Rural Affairs Committee meets to consider [Senate Bill 940](#) (Waugh-R-York) further providing for the Land Trust Reimbursement Program and [Senate Bill 723](#) (Wenger-R-Lancaster) providing for definitions and legislative report under the Agricultural Area Security law. Hearing Room 2, North Office Building. 10:15.
- **March 15** – [Joint Legislative Budget & Finance Committee](#) meeting to consider reports on Game Commission compliance with strategic plan. Hearing Room 3, North Office Building. 10:00.
- **March 15** – **CANCELLED** - [DEP Radiation Protection Advisory Committee](#) meeting has been [rescheduled for June 15](#).
- **March 16** – House Republican Policy Committee hearing on alternative energy. Room 140 Main Capitol Building. 10:00.
- **March 17** – **CANCELLED** - [DEP Air Quality Technical Advisory Committee](#) meeting.
- **March 21** – House Republican Policy Committee hearing on DEP Regulatory Process and Economic Development. Room 140 Main Capitol. 1:00.

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- **March 23** – [Independent Regulatory Review Commission](#) meeting to consider final Nutrient Management regulation. 14<sup>th</sup> Floor Conference Room, 333 Market St., Harrisburg. 10:30.
- **March 31** – Pennsylvania State Planning Board meeting. Room 105 Rachel Carson Building. 10:00.
- **April 18-19** - [Chamber Environmental Conference and Trade Show](#). Camp Hill (near Harrisburg).
- **April 28-29** – [PA Land Conservation Conference](#). State College.

### [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

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[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

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Send your stories about environmental issues, programs and positive actions to **PA Environment Digest** - [DHess@HolstonCrisci.com](mailto:DHess@HolstonCrisci.com) or go to [www.PaEnvironmentDigest.com](http://www.PaEnvironmentDigest.com) .

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