

# -PA ——— Environment Digest

*An Update on  
Environmental  
Issues in  
Pennsylvania*

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Edited By David E. Hess, Crisci Associates

March 17, 2008

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[PA Environment Digest Video Blog](#)

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## **Audubon PA Tells Committee Forests Are Still Degraded By Too Many Deer - Video**

The Senate Game and Fisheries Committee held hearings this week to examine deer management issues and receive the Pennsylvania Game Commission's annual report, according to Sen. Chuck McIlhinney (R-Bucks), Majority Chair of the Committee.

Sen. McIlhinney said that the hearings gave committee members an opportunity to gather information on the effect of deer management practices and get valuable feedback from interested parties.

"These hearings offer us an opportunity to learn more about how we are working to provide a healthy, sustainable deer herd across the Commonwealth," Sen. McIlhinney said. "Managing our deer population effectively is essential so our state can continue to provide a healthy habitat for deer and abundant opportunities for sportsmen."

### **Game Commission Report**

Game Commission [Executive Director Carl Roe](#) said Pennsylvania has the second-most hunters in the nation and leads the nation in the number of days afield with 16.86 million days. Hunting is a \$3 billion-a-year industry and generates \$214 million in state and local taxes. Roe also reported that Pennsylvania had its safest hunting season in state history last year.

### **Video Blog: [Carl Roe Presents Annual Report to Committee](#)**

"Habitat is a key life requisite for all wildlife and we continue to be concerned about encroachment on wildlife habitat," said Roe. "As you are well aware, we are responsible for approximately 465 species; 429 birds and 66 mammals; with 22 threatened or endangered. Slowing the loss of wildlife habitat is critical to ensuring a future for many of our native species.

"(Through the) Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program we are putting 265,000 acres of habitat back on the ground," said Roe. "We are almost finished the upper Susquehanna Basin CREP and will soon have over 200,000 acres of farm land planned and planted that covers both the lower and upper Susquehanna River basin. The other 65,000 acres are in the Ohio River basin where we have approximately 19,000 acres planned and planted. We should complete the CREP program over the next two to three years.



Audubon's Dr. Tim Schaeffer and one of 2 deer he harvested last season.

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"Although we believe we manage our fiscal resources very responsibly, the expenses we cannot control continue to present a challenge," said Roe. "The new state labor contract that went into effect on July 1, 2007 will increase our personnel costs by an additional \$2 million the first year and at year four, 2010; the annual increase in cost will be around \$9.5 million. The total increase in personnel costs over the life of the four-year contract is over \$23 million.

"I do not want to dwell on the license cost issue, but the most common observer can see something is wrong when hunters from our neighboring states of New Jersey and Ohio can hunt as a non resident in Pennsylvania cheaper than they can as a resident in their home state.

"The 2006-07 deer harvest was approximately 361,560 including 135,290 bucks and 226,270 antlerless deer. Deer hunting continues to be a challenge in some areas, but reports are that deer are larger and antler restrictions are working," said Roe. "As we revise the deer management plan this year, we are considering two new management goals; the first is to manage the deer herd to provide recreational opportunities and the second is to improve the public's knowledge and understanding about deer and the deer management program.

"There are many ways to enjoy the outdoors and the Pennsylvania Game Commission is here to help you connect with wildlife," said Roe. "I am sure many of you have your own special wildlife moments and those in Pennsylvania are a large part due to the efforts of the men and women of the Game Commission. Our ability to provide those moments for the citizens of the Commonwealth is directly related to resources available to execute the necessary programs."

Roe added that the Game Commission would increase emphasis on communicating deer management information to hunters in the future.

[A copy of the 2007 annual report is available online.](#)

### **Audubon Pennsylvania**

[Dr. Timothy Schaeffer](#), Executive Director of Audubon Pennsylvania told the Committee there is broad scientific agreement that forests in many parts of Pennsylvania have been "decimated" by deer browsing and the Game Commission needs to base its deer management decisions on science, not emotion.

### **Video Blog: [Dr. Tim Schaeffer Calls for Science, Not Emotion on Deer](#)**

"There is broad agreement within the scientific community that forests throughout Pennsylvania are still in a seriously degraded ecological condition as a result of high deer densities and impacts," said Dr. Timothy Schaeffer. "It will take time and lower deer densities to fix these problems created by decades of attempting to satisfy the insatiable desire of some hunters for more deer than landowners, farmers, communities, and resource professionals want."

Dr. Schaeffer pointed to studies done by the independent Forest Certification Council in 2004 and the [Department of Conservation and Natural Resources](#) in 2007 showing the overabundance of deer has decimated the diversity and sustainability of the forest habitat and wildlife.

"Balancing deer impacts with healthy forest ecosystems was ranked as the most important deer management goal for Pennsylvania by a stakeholder group formed by the Game Commission in 2002," explained Dr. Schaeffer. "Independent public surveys also confirm that managing deer to promote healthy, sustainable forest ecosystems was the number one goal identified by the public generally and by hunters."

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Dr. Schaeffer noted the preliminary results of a study of the Game Commission's Deer Management Assistance Program (DMAP) shows that hunters have failed to remove even 15 percent of the study population of antlerless deer in Northcentral Pennsylvania because the deer are moving to avoid hunters.

"The consequences of not managing our deer herd based on science is evident in a recent report issued by Audubon entitled, [Common Birds in Decline](#)," said Dr. Schaeffer. "Here in the Commonwealth, we have seen a 62 percent drop in Wood Thrush numbers, and a 22 percent decline in Ruffed Grouse. Each of these species rely on habitats that have been irrefutably over-browsed by white-tailed deer outside of deer fences."

Deer cause an estimated \$90 million in crop losses and \$70 million in forest damage each year, according to the Department of Agriculture, over \$78 million in property damage from over 39,000 deer/vehicle collisions each year and are responsible for the dramatic increase in Lyme disease in the state, according to the Department of Health.

"The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania has a long history of confusing the deer management tool – hunters – with the deer management goal – that of meeting the public's economic, health, and ecological needs and expectations for deer management," said Dr. Schaeffer explaining, "We are sustainably killing more deer today than 20 years ago during a period many hunters today describe as the "good old days."

"Yet, once again there are proposals to go down the path of shortening antlerless seasons, reducing antlerless allocations, and turning hunters from deer managers operating in the public's interests to recreationists exploiting a public resource," said Dr. Schaeffer. "Most critics of the deer management program have not supported their arguments with credible science."

Dr. Schaeffer cited [a recent letter](#) by Audubon Pennsylvania, the Pennsylvania Federation of Sportsmen's Clubs and other hunting, agricultural, land management and conservation groups that urged the Game Commission to make decisions about the deer management program "in the public eye and informed by science rather than emotion."

### **Unified Sportsmen**

The Committee heard from four representatives of the [Unified Sportsmen of Pennsylvania](#): N. Charles Bolgiano, Legislative Liaison, Stephen Mohr, President, Gregory Levengood, Chairman of the Board, and James Slinisky, Consultant to Unified.

The resenterers made several recommendations to the Committee, including:

- Limiting Game Commission Board members to a four year term;
- Amend the Game law to require Commissioners to adhere not only to the scientific aspects of wildlife management, but also the social, economic and recreational aspects;
- Requiring the Governor's Office, Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, the Governor's Sportsmen's Advisory Council on Hunting, Fishing and Conservation to distance themselves from the Game Commissioner selection/removal process;
- Develop a remediation program for forest soils severely impacted by acid rain to the point that forest regeneration cannot occur naturally and have the Game Commission and DCNR admit the real culprit impacting regeneration is not deer but acid rain; and
- Supports the Legislative Budget and Finance Committee audits of the deer management program and on the income derived from timber and mineral sales on Game Lands.

**Video Blog:** [Sen. McIlhinney Asks Questions of Unified Sportsmen](#)  
[Video of the entire hearing is available online.](#)

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Sen. McIlhinney (R-Bucks) serves as Majority Chair of the Committee and Sen. Fontana (D-Allegheny) serves as Minority Chair.

The House Game and Fisheries Committee meets on March 18 to consider [House Resolution 642](#) (Levdansky-D-Allegheny) directing the Legislative Budget and Finance Committee to conduct an audit of the Game Commission's deer management program.

**NewsClips:** [State Bill on Game Commissioners Terms Concerns Some Sportsmen](#)  
[Column: On Raising Hunting License Fee](#)  
[Onorato: Deer Population Must Be Curbed](#)  
[Wayne's Mature Forests Showing Fewer Small Trees](#)

## Video Blog

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### Dr. Crawford Talks About Pharmaceuticals in PA Waters

Due to the recent interest in pharmaceuticals found in Pennsylvania's rivers and streams, [PA Environment Digest](#) is again making available a Video Blog interview with [Dr. J. Kent Crawford](#), Water Quality Specialist for the [Pennsylvania Water Science Center of the U.S. Geological Survey](#).

Dr. Crawford was the guest presenter at an Environmental Forum hosted by the [Joint Air & Water Pollution Control and Conservation Committee](#).

He spoke about a water quality study the U.S.G.S. was conducting to determine if there are pharmaceutical compounds and physician-prescribed antibiotics in Pennsylvania's ground and surface waters in November 2006.

The first phase of the project, which was funded by the Department of Environmental Protection, looked for these compounds in ground and surface water in predominantly agricultural areas and downstream from wastewater treatment plants. A second phase of the project will look at these compounds in drinking water supplies.

Dr. Crawford, who has over 30 years of experience in a variety of water quality projects, can be contacted at 717-730-6909 or send email to: [Crawford@usgs.gov](mailto:Crawford@usgs.gov).

The Joint Conservation Committee is chaired by Rep. Scott Hutchinson (R-Venango) and Sen. Ray Musto (D-Luzerne) serves as vice-chairman.

**Video Blog:** [Dr. Kent Crawford Talks About Pharmaceuticals in Water](#)

**NewsClips:** [What's In Our Water?](#)

[Drinking Water in State is Safe, Official Says](#)

[Suppliers: Local Water Safe to Drink](#)

[Local Water Authorities Respond to Investigation](#)

[Study of Drugs in Water Supply Will Take Until 2010](#)

[DEP Supports Effort to Identify Pharmaceuticals in Water Supplies](#)

## [PA Environment Digest Video Blog](#)

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- Beaver River Conservation Plan Released for Public Comment
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- Healthy Farms, Healthy Watersheds Event in the Capitol March 18
- Project Will Eliminate Dangerous Highwalls, Replace Wetlands, Protect Streams
- National Wild Turkey Federation Honors CONSOL Energy
- National Ag Day Student Essay Contest Winner From Lykens, PA
- Westmoreland County Envirothon Challenges High School Students
- Agriculture and Environment: Achieving Balance Conference June 2-3
- EPA Show Us Your Best Photo for Earth Day Contest
- Bald Eagle State Park Hosting Woodcock Festival March 28
- Celebrate Outdoor Heritage Month Starting April 4 in Somerset County
- Pirates Launch Greening Initiatives Program at PNC Park
- Study Helps Butler County Company Save \$107,000 in Energy Costs – Video Blog
- PUC Announces Plan to Transition to Market-Based Electric Rates for Penn Power
- DEP Lauds Lebanon County, PPL Landfill Gas Project, Education Center
- Keystone HELP Energy Loan Program Expanded, Training Seminars Scheduled
- Join the DCED Planning Energy Trade Mission to South Africa
- Centre County Authority Gives Out Recycling Rebates
- Recycling Markets Center Promotes Use of Recycled Glass in Onlot Systems
- PROP Sponsors Recycling Practice, Theory, Law and Public Policy Courses
- PA Waste Industries Files Suit to Halt Flow Control Ordinance in Delaware County

### In Memoriam

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### Feature

- The Nature Conservancy: Protecting Pennsylvania's Rare Underground Resources

### Grants & Awards

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

## On the Hill

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### Session Schedule

The Senate and House will return to voting session the week of March 17.

You can watch the [Senate Floor Session](#) and [House Floor Session](#) live online.

## On the Senate/House Agenda/Bills Introduced

The Senate and House published committee schedules and floor Calendars for the week of March 17—

### Calendars

**House (March 17):** [House Resolution 546](#) (George-D-Clearfield) urging Congress to investigate gas and energy prices; [House Bill 2233](#) (Freeman-D-Lehigh) extending grants under the Elm Street Program beyond the original five year term; [House Bill 1078](#) (Hanna-D-Clinton) establishing the Elk Damage Fund providing for deterrent fences for deer, bear and elk and payment of claims for elk damage.

[Special Session House Bill 13](#) (Bennington-R-Mifflin) amends the Alternative Energy Portfolio Standards Act to provide for increased use of energy efficiency, extends the compliance period from 15 to 21 years and provides additional milestones for the use of alternative energy.

**Senate (March 17)** [House Bill 1214](#) (Surra-D-Elk) changing the terms of Game Commissioners from eight to four years; [House Bill 1281](#) (Freeman-D-Lehigh) requiring municipalities to take steps to protect the Appalachian Trail; [House Bill 1320](#) (Siproth-D-Monroe) establishing a disposal program for home-generated medical sharps.

### Committees

**House:** the Intergovernmental Affairs Committee, Subcommittee on Information Technology meets to consider [House Bill 1304](#) (Fairchild-R-Mifflin) creating a PA Geospatial Coordinating Council ; the Environmental Resources and Energy Committee meets to consider [House Bill 2073](#) (O'Brien-D-Philadelphia) requiring retailers of pharmaceutical drugs to have in place a system for acceptance and disposal, [House Resolution 627](#) (George-D-Clearfield) urging federal government to provide more heating assistance funding and [House Bill 2266](#) (Steil-R-Bucks) expanding stormwater planning requirements with a request the bill be referred to the House Local Government Committee; the Game and Fisheries Committee meets to consider [House Resolution 642](#) (Levdansky-D-Allegheny) directing directing the Legislative Budget and Finance Committee to conduct an audit of the Game Commission's deer management program; and the House Republican Policy Committee hearing on electric rate cap mitigation.

### Senate:

**Other:** Environmental Issues Form featuring a presentation on the Northampton Generating Company co-generation plant sponsored by the [Joint Legislative Air and Water Pollution Control and Conservation Committee](#).

### Bills Introduced

These environmental bills of interest were introduced this week—

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**Organic Farming:** [House Bill 2347](#) (Kessler-D-Berks) establishing an organic farming transition program.

**LIHEAP Funding:** [House Resolution 627](#) (George-D-Clearfield) memorializing the federal government to provide additional funding to the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program.

**Molly Maguires:** [House Resolution 629](#) (Goodman-D-Schuylkill) urging the Governor to recognize the lack of due process in the 1876-1878 trials of alleged members of the Molly Maguires.

**Business Energy Savings:** [Special Session House Bill 58](#) (Boback-R-Luzerne) providing for a small business energy savings tax credit.

**Net Loss Carry Forward:** [Special Session Senate Bill 43](#) (Regola-R-Westmoreland) would increase the deductibility of a net operating loss (NOL) from 12.5 percent to 50 percent of taxable income, up from a maximum of \$3 million to \$12 million. Sen. Regola introduced the legislation noting the development of alternative energy sources and related technology is hampered by current laws limiting the ability to timely deduct from corporate tax liability for net losses, particularly for new or small businesses.

**P2, Energy Efficiency Tax Credit:** [Special Session Senate Bill 44](#) (Regola-R-Westmoreland) providing for an energy efficiency and pollution prevention tax credit.

### Senate/House Bills Moving

These Senate and House environmental bills moved this week--

#### Senate

**Heating Assistance:** [Senate Bill 1248](#) (Rhoades-R-Schuylkill) establishing the Home Heating Assistance Act for heating oil and other home heating was referred to the Senate Appropriations Committee.

**Geologists Training:** [Senate Bill 1264](#) (Boscola-D-Lehigh) providing for geologists in training was referred to the Senate Appropriations Committee.

#### House

**Renewable Energy:** [Special Session House Bill 1](#) (DePasquale-D-York) authorizing \$850 million in debt to fund a renewable energy program and a funding mechanism was passed by the House 126-74 and now goes to the Senate for action. The Senate passed their own renewable energy bill and funding mechanism in December -- [Special Session Senate Bill 1](#) (MJ.White-R-Venango).

**Medical Sharps:** The Public Health and Welfare Committee reported out [House Bill 1320](#) (Siptroth-D-Monroe) establishing a disposal program for home-generated medical sharps and is on the House Calendar for action.

**Elm Street Program:** [House Bill 2233](#) (Freeman-D-Lehigh) extending grants under the Elm Street Program beyond the original five year term was amended on the House floor and is on the House Calendar for action.

**Poultry Feed:** [House Resolution 300](#) (Bennington-D-Allegheny) urging Congress to ban the use of organic or inorganic arsenic in poultry feed was referred to the House Environmental Resources and Energy Committee.

**Lady Bird Johnson:** [House Resolution 518](#) (Petrono-D-Allegheny) commemorating the contributions of Lady Bird Johnson on beautification was adopted by the House.

### **House Catches Up to Senate in Passing Renewable Energy Bill, Funding**

The House this week passed \$850 million renewable energy bill matching action taken by the Senate in December which adopted a similar \$650 million renewable energy bill. Now the trick will be to reconcile the differences between the proposals.

The bills are [Special Session House Bill 1](#) (DePasquale-D-York) and [Special Session Senate Bill 1](#) (MJ.White-R-Venango).

Most of the substantive disagreement in the House debate came over whether to add to the state's debt by floating an \$850 million bond issue when the Commonwealth, House Republicans pointed out, was looking at a \$427 million budget surplus this year or could just run the program on a pay-as-you-go initiative with \$60 million annually from the Utility Gross Receipts Tax.

"With double-digit rate increases for electricity service pending for millions of Pennsylvanians and gasoline prices expected to reach \$4 a gallon, we need to move toward energy independence now," Gov. Rendell said. "Energy is one of the most promising sectors of the economy, and investing in new technology and innovative ideas makes perfect sense because it will attract \$3.5 billion in new private capital that will create thousands of good jobs.

"We have the opportunity now to keep Pennsylvania competitive with other states and nations as we vie for new business development projects that will create jobs for our people, keep our economy strong, diversify our energy supply, and protect our environment," the Governor said.

"We cannot and should not stand idly by and depend on the philanthropy of Middle Eastern sheiks when it comes to guaranteeing affordable energy for our homes, small businesses and industrial facilities," House Majority Leader Rep. Bill DeWeese (D-Greene) said. "These measures address our problems at the source – investing in Pennsylvania innovation and power generation while giving the men and women paying the bills the clout over how those bills are calculated."

"Pennsylvanians send \$30 billion overseas to buy energy every year – nearly \$60,000 every minute of every day – and enough is enough," House Majority Whip Rep. Keith McCall (D-Carbon) said. "We need to attack this problem from two sides, and this measure does that – saving us \$10 billion over the next 10 years.



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“We’re using more alternative energy sources based in the state like solar power, wind energy and hydroelectric, but we’re also investing in the fastest-growing industry in America by investing in research into other forms of energy. Companies doing cutting-edge research can and should be here in Pennsylvania helping to generate power and generate good-paying jobs.”

### House Energy Proposal

Special Session House Bill 1 authorizes a \$850 million bond funding that would be divided in two ways, first, \$600 million of the total bond would be allocated to the Pennsylvania Energy Development Authority and \$250 million of the total bond would be allocated to the Commonwealth Financing Authority.

The funds allocated to the Pennsylvania Energy Development Authority would be used to support the following types of projects:

- Up to \$56 million for energy related research and development;
- Up to \$44 million would be used to create a rebate program for homeowners purchasing energy efficient refrigerators or room air-conditioners;
- Up to \$200 million for a rebate and grant program for solar photovoltaic and other solar energy technologies;
- Up to \$270 million to provide grants and loans for the deployment of alternative energy, alternative fuels, and energy efficiency projects. A total of at least \$30 million is to be set aside specifically to provide grants and loans to support wind energy projects;
- A total of \$5 million is to be used to provide a loan program for homeowners to purchase energy efficient appliances or energy conservation measures;
- A total of \$25 million is to be used for pollution reduction technology projects at smaller electric generating plants; and
- A total of \$25 million for a grant program to support the construction of high-performance or “Green” buildings.

The funds allocated to the Commonwealth Financing Authority would be used to support the following types of projects:

- Up to \$50 million for loans to venture capital partnerships;
- Up to \$50 million for grants and loans to provide working capital, equipment purchases, and construction and site preparation activities; and
- Up to \$150 million for grants and loans for developing business sites to attract advanced energy.

The House has also passed [House Bill 1200](#) (DePasquale-D-York) creating a grant and loan program to encourage the use of renewable energy at the PA Energy Development Authority (but without a funding source), [House Bill 1202](#) (Gerber-D-Montgomery) that includes a renewable transportation fuels mandate and [House Bill 2200](#) (George-D-Clearfield) requiring electric utilities to reduce electric usage by 2.5 percent.

### Senate Energy Proposal

Special Session Senate Bill 1 creates a \$650 million program that would:

- \$250 million to provide: Loans to businesses and loans or grants to counties, municipalities and school districts for clean energy projects, as well as loans and grants to businesses that support alternative energy production through the Commonwealth Financing Authority. (\$210 million); Pollution control technology grants for small coal-fired power plants to comply with new state and federal regulations. (\$25 million);

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Support for research and development of alternative energy technologies, and venture capital for Pennsylvania start-up businesses to develop or expand alternative and renewable energy technologies through the Ben Franklin Technology Development Authority. (\$15 million);

- \$130 million for tax credits to increase alternative energy production;
- \$100 million for consumer grants, loans, rebates and reimbursements of up to 25 percent of the purchase and installation price for energy conservation projects;
- \$100 million to boost funding of the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP);
- \$50 million to provide loans, grants and rebates of up to 35 percent of the purchase and installation costs of solar and solar photovoltaic panels;
- \$15 million for rebates for the purchase of hybrid vehicles;
- \$5 million in loans for energy efficiency projects in low-income households; and
- The programs would be funded by earmarking revenue from the Utilities Gross Receipts Tax.

The Senate has also passed [Special Session Senate Bill 22](#) (Tomlinson-R-Bucks) that includes an incentive program for the use of biofuels in transportation and [Special Session Senate Bill 36](#) (MJ.White) that includes a biodiesel mandate.

The portion of the energy package related to transitioning from electric rate caps to a competitive electric market has seen a number of hearings, but no action was taken by the full Senate or House. The bills include [House Bill 1201](#) (George-D-Clearfield) and [Senate Bill 1134](#) (Tomlinson-R-Bucks)

Other energy-related legislation is also likely to be considered that is not part of the primary Energy Independence Package.

For example, [Special Session House Bill 5](#) (M.Smith-D-Montgomery) establishing High-Performance Green Building Tax Credit Program, [House Bill 894](#) (Leach-D-Montgomery) increasing state reimbursements for school buildings built using green technology, [Special Session House Bill 8](#) (Leach-D-Montgomery) providing an exclusion from Sales Tax for fluorescent bulbs, [Special Session House Bill 11](#) (Parker-D-Philadelphia) providing an exclusion from Sales Tax for Energy Star appliances and [House Bill 690](#) (Cohen-D-Philadelphia) creating a plug-in hybrid vehicle task force were all passed the House and are now in the Senate and [House Bill 656](#) (Bastian-R-Somerset) allowing preserved farms to lease property for the development of wind farms is still in the House.

**NewsClips:** [Borrowing \\$850 Million for Clean Energy Passes House](#)  
[Borrowing \\$850 Million for Clean Energy](#)  
[Energy Policy for State Picks Up Steam](#)

### **Kessler Organic Farming Bill Would Boost Farmers' Income, Environment**

Rep. David Kessler (D-Berks) has introduced bipartisan legislation—[House Bill 2347](#)--that would help farmers who want to convert to organic agriculture. Participation would be entirely voluntary. "A great way to preserve farmland is to make farming more profitable," Rep Kessler said.

Rep. Kessler has been meeting for eight months with staff of the Rodale Institute, located in northern Berks County, to help develop this legislation. The institute is a worldwide authority on organic farming.

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"Organic food is the fastest-growing sector of the food industry and provides a net return to farmers as much as two to three times higher than for conventionally raised farm products," Rep. Kessler said. "I have visited livestock and crop farms ranging from 100 to 300 acres that switched, and once they got through the transition period, those farms became more profitable. Their profit margins went up because no-till farming uses less fuel and organic farming eliminates the need for chemicals and pesticides.

"Organic farming produces 35 to 70 percent higher yields in drought conditions, and it can also produce a small reduction in flooding – organically farmed land can absorb more water since it retains more pockets of air.

"If every farm in Pennsylvania used organic no-till practices, it would have a carbon-sequestering effect equal to taking 2 to 3 million cars off the roads. In addition, no-till farmers can qualify for another source of income -- payments for sequestering carbon -- which at least one Berks County farmer is already receiving," Rep. Kessler said.

"All of these gains benefit the farmers' bottom line and the environment, including Chesapeake Bay cleanup efforts. There are organic agriculture opportunities in Pennsylvania – for example, some organic dairy farmers in Pennsylvania have to get organic hay shipped from out-of-state to feed their cows."

Rep. Kessler said the bill will include a program to reimburse producers for their transition costs and losses such as a temporary drop in yields, which would allow them to convert thousands of acres from conventional to organic farming.

"In the first two to four years, farmers who switch typically see lower yields, but as the soil returns to a more natural state, their yields are the same as before, or better," he said. "And by boosting farm income, we would also boost efforts to preserve farmland in fast-growing parts of Berks County and other areas of Pennsylvania."

As secretary of the House Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee, Kessler is arranging with Chairman Mike Hanna (D-Clinton) to bring the committee to Berks County on April 10 for a hearing on the bill.

Last month, Kessler testified before the House Appropriations Committee in favor of the pending legislation. He was joined by Dr. Timothy LaSalle, chief executive officer of the Rodale Institute, who told the committee that 27 years of research by Rodale has shown that putting organic matter back in the soil can help farmers to match or outproduce conventional farming.

Kessler said Minnesota, Vermont and Wisconsin are among several states that already have adopted legislation to promote organic farming.

### **House Environmental Committee Considers Heating Assistance, Drug Disposal Bills**

The House Environmental Resources and Energy Committee will meet March 18 to consider legislation on home heating assistance, safe disposal of pharmaceuticals and stormwater management legislation. The bills include:

- [House Bill 2073](#) (O'Brien-D-Philadelphia) requiring retailers of pharmaceuticals to have in place a system for acceptance and disposal;
- [House Resolution 627](#) (George-D-Clearfield) urging federal government to provide more heating assistance funding; and
- [House Bill 2266](#) (Steil-R-Bucks) expanding stormwater planning requirements with a request the bill be referred to the House Local Government Committee.

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Rep. Bud George (D-Clearfield) serves as Majority Chair of the House Environmental Resources and Energy Committee and Rep. Scott Hutchinson (R-Venango) serves as Minority Chair.

### Environmental Issues Forum Features Waste Tire Derived Fuel

The March 17 Environmental Issues Forum will feature a presentation by Northampton Generating Company which uses waste tires for fuel.

Dan Traynor, Environmental Manager for NGC will brief the [Joint Legislative Air and Water Pollution Control and Conservation Committee](#) on providing renewable energy from scrap tires by utilizing Tire Derived Fuel in its Circulating Fluidized Bed boiler.

The Department of Environmental Protection permitted NGC to use TDF as a supplemental fuel in 2007 which has the potential to consume over 20 million tires a year, which if realized, would dramatically improve the market for scrap tires and boost the clean-up of waste tire piles in the state.

NGC's plant also consumes over 600,000 tons a year of waste anthracite coal to generate about 110 megawatts of clean and efficient electricity. NGC has reclaimed over 200 acres of abandoned mine land and received a Department of Interior National Award for Excellence in Reclamation and a Pennsylvania Governor's Award for Environmental Excellence.

The Forum will be held in Room 205 at noon.

Rep. Scott Hutchinson (R-Venango) serves as Chair of the Committee and Sen. Ray Musto (D-Luzerne) serves as Vice-Chair.

### Other News

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#### PEC Unveils Building Green: Overcoming Barriers in Philadelphia Report

The Pennsylvania Environmental Council released a new report, [Building Green: Overcoming Barriers in Philadelphia](#), that identifies obstacles to green building in Philadelphia and recommends solutions to dissolving those barriers.

The report identified the lack of political will and strong leadership as the greatest barrier to Green Building in the city.

While Philadelphia has been ranked the 8th most sustainable city in America by [SustainLane US](#) (2006), the rankings showed how poorly the city stacks up in categories such as Air Quality and City Innovation (green public policy); in Green Building and Recycling, Philadelphia ranked among the lowest in the nation. Building Green is one of the responses to the weaknesses cited in the SustainLane City Rankings.

The report also acknowledges the many incremental steps taken by green champions throughout city government and the private development community to green city buildings and infrastructure.

Changing the ways we design, build and operate our buildings and infrastructure is the most powerful way we can address the environmental challenges facing the city and the planet. Green buildings improve human health and productivity and make good economic sense.

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In the United States, buildings account for 76 percent of all electric consumption, 48 percent of greenhouse gas emissions and 40 percent of landfill waste. Buildings consume 40 percent of all our natural resources.

Benefits of green building include:

- Children educated in green classrooms score 20 percent higher on standardized tests;
- Every green public school saves enough money to pay for two teachers;
- Green offices experience productivity gains as high as 17 percent;
- Green homes are selling faster than conventional homes;
- Green building strategies have a 20 to 1 return on investment;
- Green buildings lease faster and command higher rents; and
- Recovery times for patients in green hospitals is often cut in half.

Building Green research is a compilation of one year's worth of data collection through focus groups conducted by a team of researchers led by past President of the US Green Building Council Chair, Sandy Wiggins. The team heard from respondents in all segments of the building trades, development community and public officials.

[Building Green: Overcoming Barriers in Philadelphia](#) is available online.

**NewsClips:** [PA Environmental Council Gives Philadelphia Green Blueprint](#)  
[Philadelphia Explores Options to Begin Building Green](#)  
[Philadelphia Gets Poor Marks on Being Green](#)

### Public Invited to River Conservation Planning Meeting March 19

The [York County Conservation District](#) invites the public to attend an informational meeting to learn about the Lower Susquehanna River and Mason-Dixon Tributaries [River Conservation Plan](#) on March 19.

The meeting will be held from 7:00 to 9:00 pm, at the York County ANNEX, York Pa.

A Rivers Conservation Plan is a valuable conservation planning tool that addresses watershed-based strengths and weaknesses and analyzes threats and opportunities for conservation and preservation along stream corridors.

The Plan directly benefits local landowners, elected officials, watershed groups, and other stakeholders helping them to make the wisest choices for conserving and preserving our natural resources.

Additionally, the plan will help increase the public's awareness and knowledge of their watersheds, positively influence individual attitudes and behavior favoring environmental stewardship and watershed protection, and improve grant funding opportunities for local and regional community projects, including land acquisition, planning, design, construction and management of stream corridors and wetlands.

A presentation will be given about the River Conservation Planning process and geographic area of stream corridors along the Susquehanna River and Mason-Dixon Line, of York County, followed by a question and answer session. Bring your concerns and issues and questions to us for consideration and inclusion.

The Lower Susquehanna and Mason-Dixon Rivers Conservation Planning project is sponsored by the York County Conservation District. This project is being funded through a grant provided by the Department of Conservation and Natural Resource's Community Conservation Partnership Program and Growing Greener.

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Seating is limited to the first 60 persons registered. Dress casual. Light refreshments will be served.

To pre-registration for the meeting, contact the York County Conservation District at 717-840-7430 or send e-mail to: [yorkccd@yorkccd.org](mailto:yorkccd@yorkccd.org) and give your name, number attending, and telephone number or e-mail address.

For more information about the Rivers Conservation Planning area, visit the [York County Conservation District](#) .

### Beaver River Conservation Plan Released for Public Comment



With an eye toward the future of the Beaver River, the Pennsylvania Environmental Council has released a draft [Beaver River Conservation and Management Plan](#) for the entire river corridor.

The Beaver River is beloved by many and has been a central force in the history of communities along its banks. Those who live, work, and play on the river know it better than anyone. For this reason, public input has been and continues to be extremely important to the creation of a final Rivers Conservation Plan.

Assessments of the area's sensitive natural resources, land use, and infrastructure patterns, historical flooding, and public policies form the basis of the plan. From this information, a range of projects and policies are outlined for regional stakeholders.

Some recommended actions include: cleaning up illegal dumpsites along the river, promoting development within existing infrastructure service areas, and creating safe river access locations.

The plan, created as part of the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources' Rivers Conservation Program, addresses local and regional conditions and concerns about the river while embracing a variety of conservation initiatives.

A public comment period is open for individuals to respond to the draft plan. Comments may be mailed to the Pennsylvania Environmental Council at its Pittsburgh Office at 22 Terminal Way, Pittsburgh, PA 15219.

The public is also invited to provide comments in person at a public meeting on April 1. The meeting will be held from 5:00 to 7:00 PM at the Beaver County Human Services Building on 8th Ave., in Beaver Falls.

Comments from public meetings and an Advisory Committee were used to develop this list of projects for the study area.

The final version of the plan will be based on comments received before May 1.

The draft plan was produced by the Pennsylvania Environmental Council with the assistance of a diverse Advisory Committee including representatives from municipal governments, elected officials, economic development organizations, and recreational interests.

Electronic copies of the draft plan can be found in municipal offices and on the [website of the Pennsylvania Environmental Council](#). Electronic copies of the plan are available by calling 412-481-9400.

## **Healthy Farms, Healthy Watersheds Event in the Capitol March 18**

[Penn State's College of Agriculture](#) will hold a special “Healthy Farms, Healthy Watersheds” event in the East Wing Rotunda at the Capitol in Harrisburg on March 18 at 10:30 to demonstrate how good tillage and crop production techniques can improve water quality.

As part of the program Agriculture Secretary Dennis Wolff, Sen. Mike Brubaker (R-Lancaster) Majority Chair of the Senate Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee and Rep. Mike Hanna (D-Clinton) Majority Chair of the House Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee will talk about how research, education and innovative policies must all work together to achieve profitable agriculture and healthy watersheds.

Penn State's Rainfall Demonstrator will literally “make it rain” in the Capitol as part of the program demonstrating how improved tillage can improve water quality. Dr. Sjoerd Duiker, a Penn State agronomist, will present the exhibit which will run all day from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Matthew Ehrhart, Executive Director of the [Chesapeake Bay Foundation's Pennsylvania Office](#), will provide introductions for the event.

## **You and Your Family Are Invited to a Special World Water Day Event on March 22**

Join the [The Nature Conservancy](#), the [Chesapeake Bay Foundation](#), [Paxton Creek Watershed Association](#), [Blue Mountain Outfitters](#) and others for a special [World Water Day](#) event on March 22 at the [Whitaker Center in Harrisburg](#).

These groups have organized a special event to help draw attention to the issue of clean water. Kids can try on authentic whitewater kayaking gear and pose for a photo, take the Water Conservation Challenge, create their own magnets with conservation tips, and more from noon to 4:00 p.m.

Also that day, Whitaker will be launching a new Imax film dedicated to the theme of water and conservation—the Grand Canyon Adventure: River at Risk-- a 3D film that splashes onto the giant screen in Select Medical IMAX Theater at Whitaker Center.

This new 3D film is the captivating story of the worldwide water crisis and the great drought now plaguing the American Southwest. Audiences will join a team of explorers on an exhilarating Colorado River whitewater adventure as they seek important answers about water conservation.

From the journey's launch at Lee's Ferry to the world-famous Lava Falls rapids, from the turquoise waters of Havasu Falls to the scorched river delta in Mexico, a riveting cinematic celebration of water—and what each of us can do to make a difference.

## **Project Will Eliminate Dangerous Highwalls, Replace Wetlands, Protect Streams**

More than 5,000 feet of dangerous highwalls that scar an abandoned mine site in Beaver County will be removed under a reclamation project funded by the Department of Environmental Protection.

The highwalls, some of which are 80 feet in height, pose a threat to public safety DEP said in announcing the \$1.7 million project at the Darlington Lake Northwest site, which was abandoned around 1952.

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Approximately 107 acres of abandoned mine land will be planted with a mixture of tall fescue, red top, birdsfoot trefoil and perennial ryegrass on the shallow slopes. A mixture of tall fescue, crown vetch and perennial ryegrass will be planted on the steeper slopes.

Nearly 7,000 trees will be planted on the site, including black cherry, northern red oak, white ash, red maple and eastern white pine. The reclamation work also will replace a 0.6-acre wetland, and build a 2,100-foot permanent swale to handle stormwater runoff in the Little Beaver Creek watershed.

The watershed contains McCautry Run and the North Fork of Little Beaver Creek, both rated as high-quality cold water fisheries. The grasses and trees planted on this site will prevent erosion from damaging the streams.

The Darlington Lake Northwest abandoned mine reclamation project is funded by \$950,000 from the state's Growing Greener II program. The remaining \$750,000 comes from Pennsylvania's share of the federal Abandoned Mine Lands program. The program directs money to states that have abandoned mine lands to reclaim, and is funded by a tax on current mining activities.

Pennsylvania will receive \$27.6 million from the program for 2008, up to 30 percent of which can be used for treating abandoned mine drainage that makes streams uninhabitable for fish and other aquatic life.

**NewsClip:** [Beaver County Mine Reclamation to Cost \\$1.7 Million](#)

### **National Wild Turkey Federation Honors CONSOL Energy**

[CONSOL Energy Inc.](#) was recently honored by the [National Wild Turkey Federation](#) with its Energy for Wildlife Corporate Achievement Award. The award recognizes corporations that demonstrate outstanding efforts to improve wildlife habitat and promote conservation and the country's hunting heritage.

The award was presented to [CNX Land Resources, Inc.](#), a CONSOL Energy company, during the NWTF's annual Convention and Sport Show in Atlanta in February.

Energy for Wildlife is a membership-based certification program for all energy companies with the primary goal of enhancing wildlife habitat on company-managed, -owned or -influenced lands. These lands include power line and gas rights of way, plant sites, woodlands and other properties.

CONSOL is also a Centurion Corporate Life Sponsor of the NWTF, and is currently working with the Federation to write and implement management plans on select properties. During the last 10 years, the company has allocated 50,000 acres of wildlife habitat to states for public access, and donated more than \$50,000 for the purchase of conservation equipment.

Dennis Fredericks, manager - conservation properties accepted the award on behalf of CONSOL Energy. "Together, CONSOL and the NWTF are doing a lot of good things, not only for wild turkeys, but other species as well," Fredericks said.

"CONSOL Energy has always supported the NWTF's conservation programs," said Jay Jordan, NWTF's Energy for Wildlife Program Coordinator. "The folks at CONSOL have made great partners as we work together for wildlife. We're proud to have them on our team, and we look forward to continued success together in the future."

**NewsClip:** [CNX Land Resources Wins Energy for Wildlife Award](#)



## National Ag Day Student Essay Contest Winner From Lykens, PA

The [Agriculture Council of America](#) announced this week the national 2008 Ag Day Essay Contest winner is Katlin Wiest, an eighth-grader at Upper Dauphin Middle School in Lykens, Pa.

ACA called upon seventh- to 12th-grade students nationwide to submit original essays of 450 words about the importance of agriculture in the United States. Under the theme “Agriculture – Bigger Than You Think,” students were encouraged to focus their essays on the broader scope of agriculture, showcasing the diversity of today’s American farms.

Though row crops and livestock are still very much a part of the foundation of the industry, agriculture today has multiple touch points in our daily lives and many career opportunities.

Wiest was named the national winner of the 2008 contest during the Ag Day event held at the USDA Whitten Building Patio. Wiest read her essay to industry representatives, members of Congress, federal agency representatives, media and others at the Celebration of Agriculture dinner in Washington, D.C.

The following is an excerpt from her essay:

“Agricultural products are used by each of us every day. When our alarm clocks ring in the morning, they are most likely made of a plastic derived from corn or soybeans. We then go to our closets and pick out our cotton clothing to wear. Next, it’s breakfast. We grab the carton of milk and the box of eggs, which come from dairy and poultry farms.

“Soon, we hurry out the door to a vehicle powered by ethanol. At lunch, we open our lunch bags to pull out a bologna sandwich with cheese, lettuce and tomatoes. At home, we make dinner, honey-glazed ham with beans, and sugar cookies for dessert. Everything we eat is an agricultural product. As the day ends, we crawl under our wool blankets and go to sleep not thinking that the many things we did today involved agriculture.”

“This year’s topic showcased the diversity of American agriculture. It was great to see the depth of knowledge today’s youth have about the agricultural industry,” said Gerald Tumbleson, president, Agriculture Council of America. “Katlin’s essay highlighted the many areas of agriculture that people encounter on a day-to-day basis.”

Ag Day is a nationally coordinated program that envisions consumers, young and old, talking about agriculture. The contest is sponsored by CHS Inc., The Council for Agricultural Science & Technology, High Plains Journal, National Association of Farm Broadcasting, National Agri-Marketing Association, Country Living Association and McCormick Company.

This is the 35th anniversary of National Ag Day. The goal of the ACA is to provide a spotlight on the agriculture, food and fiber industries the first day of spring (National Ag Day), not only to help consumers understand how food and fiber products are produced, but to celebrate accomplishments in providing safe, abundant and affordable products.

For more information and to see a list of the 2008 state winners, visit the [Agriculture Council of America website](#).

## Westmoreland County Envirothon Challenges High School Students

On March 19, students from area high schools will be at the [Westmoreland Conservation District](#), questioning the experts, analyzing natural history items, and otherwise taking in

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all the information they can to prepare themselves for the 2008 Envirothon, which is just six short weeks away.

This high-energy “training event” is designed to give the students a preview of the kinds of questions they’ll face in the actual environmental-based competition, where they’ll be asked to answer questions on forestry, soil, wildlife, aquatic environments, and an annual challenge subject, which this year is “Recreational Impacts on the Natural Environment.”

The training event begins at 5 p.m. with dinner, followed by the training, which should start about 6 p.m. and continue for the next several hours.

Fourteen Westmoreland County schools are planning to send teams to the [Envirothon competition](#), which this year will be held on May 5 at Twin Lakes Park.

As of March 12, Derry Area Senior High School, Greensburg Central Catholic High School, and the Westmoreland Enrichment Classes are planning to send their student teams to the training event. The teacher/advisor for The Kiski School team also is planning to attend. It is likely that other schools will register for the training as well.

An average of 70 students participate in the Envirothon each year. The Westmoreland Conservation District has sponsored this academic event for the past 22 years.

A number of cooperating agencies assist the Westmoreland Conservation District in hosting the county Envirothon, including: The Game Commission, the DCNR Bureau of Forestry, the Natural Resources Conservation Service, the Westmoreland County Bureau of Parks and Recreation, Carnegie Museum of Natural History’s Powdermill Nature Reserve, and Penn State Cooperative Extension Westmoreland County.

### **Agriculture and Environment: Achieving Balance Conference June 2-3**

The College of Agricultural Sciences at Penn State University is hosting a conference on June 2-3 in Harrisburg entitled, “[Agriculture and the Environment: Achieving Balance](#).”

New strategies for addressing old problems are urgently needed to deal with environmental issues in the agricultural community. Join the Department of Agriculture, Penn State College of Agricultural Sciences and leaders from throughout Pennsylvania’s agricultural and environmental community to become a part of the solution.

The conference is designed to tap the collective wisdom of those who are engaged in farm and natural resource management in identifying the opportunities for improving the state’s water quality.

This two-day conference will bring together the state’s foremost experts to identify opportunities and solutions for better stewardship of the land and waters for which we have responsibility. This is a new and innovative approach which engages participants directly in the problem solving process.

For more information and to register, visit the [Agriculture and the Environment: Achieving Balance webpage](#).

### **EPA Show Us Your Best Photo for Earth Day Contest**

The U. S. Environmental Protection Agency is sponsoring a “[Show Us Your Best](#)” Earth Day Photo Contest. Entries are due March 24.

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Has your community organization cleaned up a stream? Have you enjoyed a day in the woods? Has a wild animal ever sparked your imagination?

If you've caught anything like those moments in a photo, share it with EPA! EPA wants to see how you would show EPA's mission to protect human health and the environment.

Send your best photos in three categories: enjoying the environment, protecting the environment and nature and wildlife

To encourage participation and provide maximum public access, the contest will be hosted on the photo sharing site [www.Flickr.com](http://www.Flickr.com). People around the world are encouraged to enter.

Finalists will be announced on April 1 and on April 22 (Earth Day) the winners will be announced. Finalist and winning photos will be featured on EPA's website.

[Full details about the contest are available online.](#)

### Bald Eagle State Park Hosting Woodcock Festival March 28

The declining American woodcock and vanishing habitat the migratory game bird needs to survive will be highlighted at a public program March 28, at [Bald Eagle State Park](#), Centre County.

The American Woodcock Festival will feature speakers from 5 to 8 p.m. representing the [Ruffed Grouse Society](#), [State College Bird Club](#), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources.



The event, now in its third year, will include a tour of woodcock habitat and observation of the popular game bird's courtship flights.

"Bald Eagle State Park is the site of one of the most intensive woodcock, songbird and native habitat restoration projects in the state," said DCNR Secretary Michael DiBerardinis. "It is very rewarding to showcase this partnership with the Ruffed Grouse Society and others to aid the woodcock, ruffed grouse and many rare and declining songbirds that nest at the park."

The festival is an attempt to focus public attention on declines in American woodcock populations and other species that share their habitat.

Sponsors include the Ruffed Grouse Society, DCNR's Bureau of State Parks, and Penn State University's [Recreation, Park and Tourism Management Department](#).

Based at the park's Environmental Learning Classroom, the festival will offer displays and discussion of park habitat management; bird dog demonstration walks; a land management machinery demonstration; bird walks; and children's crafts. The program will close with a walk to observe the woodcock's mating display.

Drawn to moist soils rich in earthworms -- the birds' staple food -- breeding woodcock are found in large numbers on Bald Eagle's 5,900-acres near Howard, Centre County.

Birding enthusiasts describe the woodcock's aerial courtship display as one of the most fascinating spectacles in nature. Biologists will attempt to capture a woodcock with mist nets during its courtship display so festival participants can get a close look.

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DCNR's partners in the park's habitat management efforts have included the Ruffed Grouse Society, Game Commission, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation, [National Fish and Wildlife Foundation](#), International Paper, California University of Pennsylvania, [Pennsylvania Parks and Forests Foundation](#), and Penn State University.

For more information, call the Bald Eagle State Park Office at 814-625-2775 or Ruffed Grouse Society Biologist Mark Banker at 814-867-7946.

### **Celebrate Outdoor Heritage Month Starting April 4 in Somerset County**

There is no better time for the celebration and preservation of our natural and cultural heritage than April, the first full month of Spring! Join the Kiski-Conemaugh Stream Team and Natural Biodiversity as they open [Outdoor Heritage Month](#) in Somerset.



Outdoor Heritage Month is a local celebration in conjunction with [Earth Day](#), [National Arbor Day](#), [National and Global Youth Service Day](#), and the National Wildlife Federation's [National Wildlife Week](#) that reconnects communities to the rich natural heritage of the Allegheny Mountains.

Though it is a locally based event, Outdoor Heritage Month is part of a global effort to connect volunteers with service opportunities, promote civic engagement, and mobilize youth to serve their communities.

Many area partners will be involved, including conservation districts, public officials, watershed associations, and more. With events aimed to please both children and adults, Outdoor Heritage Month gives everyone an opportunity to join forces for the preservation and improvement of our local environment!

For more information and for details on the April 4 opening ceremonies, visit the [Outdoor Heritage Month webpage](#).

### **Pirates Launch Greening Initiatives Program at PNC Park**

The Pittsburgh Pirates this week announced the launch of the club's new greening initiatives program which has been branded "[Let's Go Bucs. Let's Go Green.](#)"

The program integrates greening initiatives, sustainable business practices and educational outreach. The Pirates were joined at the announcement by City of Pittsburgh Mayor Luke Ravenstahl and Allen Kukovich, Southwest Regional Director from the Office of Gov. Rendell.

The program's launch marks the beginning of a dedicated effort by the Pirates and their PNC Park partners CB Richard Ellis, ARAMARK and Levy Restaurants to be more environmentally conscious and to strengthen their collective commitment to go green when possible moving forward, according to Bob Nutting, Pirates Chairman of the Board.

"We are not launching this program because 'going green' is a popular trend. We are doing it because it is the right thing to do," said Nutting. "The measures being put into place at the ballpark will have an immediate positive impact. These initiatives not only make sense for the environment, but they make good business sense as well. This is

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another example of our systematic approach to improve our operations, both on and off the field."

In the months following Nutting assuming control of the ballclub in January of 2007, the Pirates conducted a detailed, exhaustive review of their operating procedures at the ballpark. To identify additional opportunities to become more environmentally conscious, the club proactively enrolled the help of the Washington D.C.-based National Resources Defense Council, a nationally recognized authority on environmental studies.

The results of the club work with the NRDC which are at the core of the "Let's Go Bucs. Let's Go Green." program.

Elements include a robust recycling program at PNC Park that will capture the more than 760,000 plastic bottles and aluminum cans that are distributed during the baseball season. The club will place 180 recyclable containers, including 90 contour bottle-shaped receptacles, throughout the ballpark with the program's logo.

The Pirates will also capture other discarded bottles and cans through collections by game day staff at the end of each game. Cleaning crews known as the "Green Team" will then conduct a separate sweep of the ballpark to pick up all remaining recyclable goods prior to the daily cleaning of the ballpark.

Beginning with the 2008 season, both of PNC Park's concessionaires, ARAMARK and Levy Restaurants, will be using corn-based beverage cups. The companies will also eliminate most of the non-biodegradable materials that were being used in utensils, plates, napkins and food carriers to serve fans in years past.

All paper used in the ballpark, including in the Pirates front office, will be more environmentally friendly, including all bathroom paper products and office paper, including copy paper, team stationary and business cards. The club will eliminate its use of about 33,000 Styrofoam cups each year, encourage all of its employees to print on both sides of paper when possible, separate office trash in order to recycle all dry waste paper products, and print its various publications on FSC certified paper.

The Pirates are also taking steps to make the ballpark more energy efficient by installing motion detectors in 86 specific locations, using the lowest voltage lights possible in ballpark signage and switching to more energy efficient bulbs moving forward.

"The 'Let's Go Bucs. Let's Go Green.' program is a way that we can utilize our position within the greater-Pittsburgh community to raise awareness of this important issue," said Pirates President Frank Coonelly. "We hope that our program will appeal to our fans and area businesses by demonstrating how these green initiatives can be simple activities that any business or household can do."

Part of the program is the planned educational outreach by the club, including in-ballpark promotion. In addition to the hard-to-miss contour bottles, the club will be showcasing the program through various ballpark signage as well as public service announcements from Pirates players on the video board. The club will also promote various program initiatives moving forward on the club's official website, Pirates.com, in its various publications and during game broadcasts.

"I have a tremendous amount of respect for the Pirates organization and what they are pushing to accomplish," said Allen Hershkowitz, Senior Scientist, NRDC. "Having worked closely with Bob and the leadership team in the months since they first approached our organization, the club's strong commitment to being an industry leader of environmentally intelligent operations is quite clear. This program is an important, high

profile step forward for Pittsburgh and Major League Baseball more generally. The Natural Resources Defense Council applauds this wonderful work."

**NewsClip:** [Pirates Swing for Fences Environmentally](#)

### **Study Helps Butler County Company Save \$107,000 in Energy Costs – Video Blog**

Armstrong Cement, a Portland Cement and Mortar manufacturing company in Butler County, has documented energy savings of \$107,000 a year thanks to a Pollution Prevention/Energy Efficiency study conducted by the [Electrotechnology Application Center](#) and [PennTAP Partnership](#).

**Video Blog:** [Armstrong Cement Saves \\$107,000 in Energy Costs](#)

All of the energy savings opportunities recommended in a 2005 study involving the compressed air system were implemented in 2006 at a cost of \$108,500. These include repairing leaks, elimination of compressed air for material blow off, replacement of thermostatic drain valves with demand type, no-waste drains, installation of a blower to replace compressed air in a particular application, reduction of compressor air pressure and installation of sensor controls.

Reports show these implementations resulted in an estimated 2,520,000 kWh/yr. reduction in electric power consumption, from a previous 42,000,000 kWh/yr. The corresponding indirect reductions in power plant emissions are estimated to be 3,000,000 lb./yr. in carbon dioxide, 6,800 lb./yr. nitrogen oxide, and 31,000 lb./yr. sulfur dioxide, translating to an overall cost savings of \$107,000 per year.

The Energy Management Institute located at the Electrotechnology Application Center at Northampton Community College provides manufacturing companies with the skills necessary to effectively manage energy efficiency through reductions in energy consumption and costs.

EMI performs investment-grade energy, pollution prevention, and process assessments for industrial and large commercial clients; offers distance learning courses on energy management and process heating; evaluates the technical and economic feasibility of renewable energy installations, combined heat and power; and a variety of other services.

For more information, contact Pete Roberts, EMI Manager, at 610 861-5367 or send e-mail to: [pbroberts@etctr.com](mailto:pbroberts@etctr.com) or visit the [Electrotechnology Application Center](#) and [PennTAP Partnership](#) websites.

### **PUC Announces Plan to Transition to Market-Based Electric Rates for Penn Power**

The Public Utility Commission this week approved a new default service plan for Pennsylvania Power Company that will transition customers to market-based electric rates in its service territory.

The Commission voted 3-1 to approve a plan that provides customers with reasonable default service rates and removes certain barriers to competition for each of the major customer groups. Several parties participated, including the company, consumer advocate groups and multiple electric generation suppliers.

Under the plan, Penn Power will rely on the competitive wholesale market for one and two year purchases of energy to obtain power for the company's default service customers. The new generation rates will be effective from June 1, 2008, to May 31, 2011.

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On December 20, 2007, the Commission approved all aspects of an original settlement, except the procurement approach for residential customers. The Commission remanded the case to the Office of Administrative Law Judge and directed parties to consider a portfolio approach for residential customers. Upon review of the certified record that resulted from remand, the Commission approved the procurement approach presented in the original settlement for residential customers.

Commission Chairman Wendell F. Holland noted [in a statement](#) that while Penn Power's Default Service Program is operating, "all parties can continue to monitor the markets and gather data to determine whether a portfolio approach with a substantial spot market position would operate as well as the more conservative approach."

[In a statement](#), Commission Vice Chairman James H. Cawley said, "the parties have been especially helpful in shedding light on how we balance the sometimes conflicting goals of ensuring reasonable default service rates for consumers, while removing barriers to further development of true competition among energy providers."

[In a dissenting statement](#), Commissioner Tyrone J. Christy said, "considering the circumstances of this proceeding, adoption of the inflexible full requirements approach will result in excessive premiums to ensure price certainty and will close the door to the participation of several suppliers."

The 1996 electric competition law requires electric companies, or a Commission approved alternative supplier, to provide default electric generation service to customers who have not selected an alternative generation supplier. This is commonly called default service or provider of last resort service.

The default service prices for electric generation service are required to reflect "prevailing market prices," according to the law. Customers do have the right to choose an electric generation supplier other than Penn Power.

The generation rates for the state's electric customers were capped as a result of the settlement agreements reached during the state restructuring proceedings. Electric generation prices are not set by the PUC, but rather are set by the wholesale market, over which the PUC has no jurisdiction. Penn Power's caps expired December 31, 2006. The existing default service plan for the company expires June 1, 2008.

**NewsClip:** [PUC Judge Gives Nod to PPL Rate Transition Plan](#)

### DEP Lauds Lebanon County, PPL Landfill Gas Project, Education Center



Following an award from the federal government, the Department of Environmental Protection this week heralded the work of a [Lebanon County landfill and PPL Renewable Energy](#) for their partnership to harness renewable energy that is helping power local communities and businesses while educating the public.

The project was recently named a National Community Partner of the Year by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. The innovative display at the county landfill demonstrates the power of renewable energy from landfill gas, a wind turbine and solar panels.

The [Greater Lebanon Refuse Authority](#) project uses a 3.2 megawatt landfill gas-to-energy project, along with a 2,000 watt wind turbine, and a 1,000 watt solar array to generate power and demonstrate the benefits of renewable energy resources.

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The facility has already hosted more than 2,000 students, teachers and community groups. It provides classroom where generators are visible through soundproof windows, displays all power production from the three renewable energy resources live, on a screen within the classroom, and demonstrates the cost-effectiveness of renewable energy resources to industrial and institutional facilities.

The reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from the Lebanon project is the equivalent of planting about 38,000 acres of trees, removing 26,700 vehicles from the road, or avoiding the use of 323,600 barrels of oil annually.

Pennsylvania is home to nearly 46 active landfill gas projects, including seven that produce high-Btu (British Thermal Unit) pipeline quality gas, 25 that collectively generate more than 110 megawatts of electrical power, and 14 that provide fuel for thermal use in businesses. Total landfill gas use statewide is estimated at 42,951 million cubic feet annually, which reflects the nearly 70 percent of current state landfill gas that is captured.

According to the EPA's environmental benefits calculator, this level of capture is equivalent to eliminating emissions from 1.9 million cars or planting 2.7 million acres of trees. The Commonwealth's landfill gas projects, combined, provide energy the equivalent of 22.7 million barrels of oil, or enough to displace almost 1 billion gallons of gasoline—enough to heat 614,000 homes for a year.

In 2006, DEP was honored as the EPA Landfill Methane Outreach Program's state Partner of the Year.

For more information, visit the [Landfill Methane Outreach Partnership webpage](#).  
**NewsClip:** [3 PA Landfill Gas to Energy Projects Recognized by EPA](#)

### **Keystone HELP Energy Loan Program Expanded, Training Seminars Scheduled**

The Keystone Home Energy Loan Program ([Keystone HELP](#)) is being expanded to accommodate loans up to \$35,000 for renewable energy improvements such as solar and geothermal, as well as Home Performance with Energy Star "whole house" improvements and energy audits.

HVAC, remodeling and energy contractors are also invited to one of [seven regional sales training seminars](#) for new and existing Keystone HELP contractors.

This program expansion complements the core Keystone HELP product which is lower rate unsecured financing from \$1,000 to \$10,000 for Energy Star rated heating, cooling, windows, insulation and other improvements.

Keystone HELP is a unique public-private partnership designed to make affordable energy efficiency available to all Pennsylvanians. Administered by AFC First Financial Corporation of Allentown, and offered through a network of over 600 Pennsylvania contractors, the program is principally supported by the Pennsylvania Treasury Department.

In the first two years of the program nearly 2,000 Pennsylvania homeowners utilized Keystone HELP to make energy efficiency improvements to their homes.

"I am thrilled that PHFA and AFC First have partnered to expand Keystone HELP," Treasurer Robin L. Wiessmann said. "Making this program more accessible means that even more Pennsylvania families will be able to take out low-interest loans to reduce their energy costs through the installation of high-efficiency appliances."



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The Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency has named AFC First a statewide Local Program Administrator and Lender for energy improvements under its Renovate & Repair Program.

"The combination of the lower rate unsecured energy efficiency loan program we are able to offer through the support of the Pennsylvania Treasury Department and the larger secured loans for renewable and whole house improvements through our partnership with PHFA truly gives Pennsylvanians a full range of low cost financing options for making their home more energy efficient," said Peter Krajsa, President of AFC First.

The PHFA Renovate & Repair (R&R) Loan is a new addition to PHFA's array of mortgages. The program's main goals are to:

- Prevent homeowners from becoming victims of unscrupulous lending practices, such as high interest rates and fees; more money borrowed than needed; or pre-payment penalties, etc;
- Help Homeowners prioritize their home repair spending so that the work that they get done is what their home really needs; and
- Provide additional funding to improve Pennsylvania's aging housing stock in partnership with today's homeowners.

Homeowners and homebuyers can use R&R loans to pay for all kinds of home repairs, such as roof replacements or plumbing upgrades, as well as home improvements including but not limited to updating kitchens and baths or adding new decks.

The best feature of the Renovate & Repair Loan is that it provides much more than a loan -- it provides peace of mind in knowing that the right home repairs are done and were completed in a timely manner with quality workmanship.

Local Program Administrators provide independent home evaluations, and as needed, assistance with finding contractors and overseeing them so that homeowners can feel confident that they are getting quality work at a quality price.

The opportunity to combine PHFA's R&R's program with the Keystone HELP initiative is an exciting merger for Commonwealth citizens.

Brian Hudson, PHFA's Executive Director states that "our Agency is committed to providing funding for commonwealth homeowners to make their homes a healthy, comfortable place to live. The partnership with the Treasury and AFC First greatly enhances our ability to reach more homeowners throughout the state."

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

### **Join the DCED Planning Energy Trade Mission to South Africa**

The Department of Community and Economic Development is recruiting for a special energy trade mission to South Africa in June that could create new business opportunities for Pennsylvania suppliers of power generation, transmission and distribution equipment.

South Africa's sustained economic expansion and increasing demand for power is causing serious, long-term energy shortages, including rolling power blackouts throughout the country. DCED's Office of International Business Development learned that South Africa's lone electric firm, Eskom, is planning to spend nearly \$55 billion over the next five years to upgrade electrical generation, transmission, and distribution. In addition, many private firms and households are looking for their own solutions.

"The current energy situation in South Africa provides Pennsylvania firms with a timely opportunity to build market share in one of Africa's largest and fastest growing

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economies," said DCED Secretary Dennis Yablonsky. "As economic growth has outpaced the country's ability to supply all its energy needs, there's no better time for Pennsylvania companies to introduce their products and services into the market."

The trade mission is scheduled for June 23-27. Participants will receive a customized itinerary of meetings with prospective buyers, representatives and government officials in Johannesburg; Mpumalanga (South Africa's coal and electrical generation center); Kwa-Zulu Natal (a major port logistics center of Africa); and Durban, South Africa's second largest city.

Pennsylvania's trade representative in Johannesburg has identified specific interest in fossil, nuclear and specialty coal-power generation companies; electrical transmission and distribution equipment; alternative energies including biofuels; energy conservation equipment; natural gas generation; and supply technologies.

Participation is limited to 10 companies. The participation fee is \$500 (participants are responsible for travel and lodging costs); opportunities for financial assistance from DCED to help offset the cost may be available to qualifying companies.

The application deadline is May 16.

For more information, contact Peter O'Neill at DCED's Center for Trade Development email to: [peoneill@state.pa.us](mailto:peoneill@state.pa.us), or call 717-214-5453.

**NewsClip:** [South African Trade Mission Presents Opportunities for PA \(1998\)](#)

### Centre County Authority Gives Out Recycling Rebates

Due to good recycling market conditions in 2007, especially corrugated cardboard and aluminum, the [Centre County Solid Waste Authority](#) is giving recycling rebates back to its haulers and municipalities for their efforts in reducing the amount of waste sent to local landfills.

This year, the authority is giving back \$144,195 in recycling rebates as a thank-you to its customers who have helped to make Centre County a leader in the recycling industry. This amounts to \$15 per ton for every ton of recyclables delivered to the authority's facility during 2007.

Some of the authority's customers have elected to donate the money back to the authority to help offset costs of free special collections, such as household hazardous waste and the authority's permanent E-Cycle collection site.

"The Centre County Solid Waste Authority would like to thank all of its customers for their business and hope the markets as well as recycling volumes continue to grow in 2008," Centre County Solid Waste Authority Education Coordinator Amy Schirf said.

For more information, call 814-238-7005.

### Recycling Markets Center Promotes Use of Recycled Glass in Onlot Systems

Representatives from the [Pennsylvania Recycling Markets Center](#) recently briefed members of the [Pennsylvania Association of Sewage Enforcement Officers](#) about efforts to reduce barriers to using manufactured recycled glass sand in onlot sewage treatment systems.

In 2003, DEP approved the use of manufactured recycled glass sand in the construction of onlot sewage systems. Producers of manufactured recycled glass sand

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must have the product tested by an AASHTO/ASTM certified commercial soil testing laboratory to assure that it conforms to the specified onlot sewage aggregate requirements.

Approximately 25,000 onlot sewage systems are installed annually in Pennsylvania. Assuming half of these systems are elevated mound construction utilizing 80 – 150 tons of material each, the result is statewide annual green builders demand between 1 million and 2 million tons.

To expand this green builders practice to the construction and recycling industries, the Recycling Markets Center will continue diversified and sustained statewide promotional efforts in the practice of constructing manufactured recycled glass sand mounds.

Over the last 5 months, the Pennsylvania Recycling Markets Center deployed 9 markets development consultations throughout the Commonwealth, outreaching to over 140 contractors, designers, and SEOs combined.

The Recycling Markets Center can provide a free 18 minute DVD presentation of the installation process in addition to a list of Pennsylvania manufactured recycled glass sand producers.

Headquartered at Penn State Harrisburg with satellite offices near Pittsburgh, the RMC can be contacted at 717-948-6660 or visit the [Pennsylvania Recycling Markets Center website](#). The center is supported in part by grant funds from the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection.

### **PROP Sponsors Recycling Practice, Theory, Law and Public Policy Courses**

The [Professional Recyclers of Pennsylvania](#) is sponsoring a series of three courses designed to help recycling practitioners meet their professional certification requirements.

The courses include: April 9-10: Recycling 101 – Recycling Practice & Theory, April 30: Recycling & The Law and May 1: Recycling & Public Policy.

The courses will all be held at the Centre County Solid Waste Authority facilities in Bellfonte, Pa.

For more information, visit the [PROP Calendar of Events](#) or contact Amy Carlotto, Education Director, by calling 814-742-7777 or send email to: [azuckett@proprecycles.org](mailto:azuckett@proprecycles.org).

### **PA Waste Industries Files Suit to Halt Flow Control Ordinance in Delaware County**

The [Pennsylvania Waste Industries Association](#) and the National Solid Wastes Management Association this week asked the U.S. District Court for Eastern Pennsylvania to enjoin Delaware County and the Delaware County Solid Waste Authority from implementing a new "flow control" ordinance governing all municipal solid waste generated in the county.

The flow-control ordinance -enacted only 10 days ago without proper statutory notice and scheduled to become effective today-would replace a free- market system of waste disposal and processing by requiring all county- generated municipal waste be disposed only at county-designated facilities.

In a complaint filed today by the Philadelphia-based law firm of Drinker Biddle & Reath LLP, PWIA and NSWMA argued that the new ordinance violates the Commerce Clause of the U.S. Constitution and that county officials bypassed mandatory state

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statutory provisions governing waste plan revisions, including prior approval by the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection.

The U.S. Supreme Court in April 2007 ruled that a flow control plan that directed all waste in a particular region to government owned and operated disposal facilities as part of a purely public system did not interfere with constitutionally protected interstate commerce. The court said the fact of government ownership and operation of such facilities was "constitutionally significant" and justified flow control as a public benefit under those circumstances.

But PWIA and NSWMA maintain the court's decision does not apply in this case because the waste disposal and processing facilities involved in Delaware County's new "flow control" ordinance are not publicly operated, and are part of an overall waste services system that is "predominately" private, not public.

Tim O'Donnell, president of the PWIA, said association members began receiving copies of the newly enacted ordinance late last week, without even the benefit of a cover letter of explanation.

"Compliance with this new ordinance would require substantial operational changes by our members that would be difficult to manage on such short notice" O'Donnell said, "and in the long run the lack of competition would mean higher disposal costs for everyone, including the consumer."

According to state Act 101, solid waste plans are supposed to be "developed and implemented in an open and public manner" and the county involved is to "provide written notice to municipalities within the county when plan development or plan revision begins." The law says one of the purposes of the planning process is to "ensure a full, fair and open discussion of alternative methods of municipal waste processing or disposal."

PWIA and NSWMA argued in their complaint that county officials "entirely side-stepped [the] comprehensive planning process mandated by state statute" and that the "utter lack of planning accompanying this significant change poses threats to the safe and orderly collection and disposal of municipal solid waste generated in Delaware County, starting today."

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

### **In Memoriam: Environmental Pioneer Dr. Paul Hess Passes**



One of Pennsylvania's environmental pioneers, Dr. Paul W. Hess, 84, of Hershey, Pa, passed away March 11 after a long illness.

Dr. Hess served on numerous environmental boards and committees, including the state Environmental Quality Board, DEP's Citizens' Advisory Council, the Air and Water Quality Technical Advisory Committee, and Solid Waste Advisory Committee.

He was also active in the American Industrial Hygiene Association, the PA Chamber of Business and Industry Environmental Affairs Committee, the Chocolate Manufacturers Association Environmental and Safety Committee, and the National Food Processors Association (now called the Food Processors Association) Environmental Affairs Committee.

He received Power Magazine's Environmental Protection Award and the Pennsylvania Resources Council Award. Dr. Hess also served as chairman of the Derry

Township Municipal authority and was an adjunct professor in Environmental Pollution Control at Penn State Harrisburg.

Professionally, Dr. Hess retired from the Hershey Foods Corporation (The Hershey Company), where he worked as Director of Environmental Affairs. Dr. Hess joined Hershey Foods in 1969 to develop the company's first environmental management programs, which included a variety of recycling, pollution prevention, water resource management and energy conservation programs. He continued to serve the company in that capacity until his retirement.

He also served as the chairman of the Department of Biology at Lebanon Valley College.

In addition to his Ph.D. research, Dr. Hess conducted significant research in experimental landfill operations, flooded limestone quarry fish culture programs, solid waste management and industrial noise exposure. He published numerous papers and articles related to his extensive research.

“It was my privilege to work with Paul during his many years of service, both at Hershey Foods and on DEP’s advisory committees,” said former DEP Secretary David Hess. “His advice and common sense approach to environmental issues helped shape the state’s major air, water and waste programs over the last 35 years. He was a true environmental pioneer who let science guide public policy.”

Dr. Hess had a bachelor’s degree in naval science from the United States Merchant Marine Academy, a Master’s Degree in zoology and a Ph.D in physiology, both from the University of Delaware where he conducted research on shark physiology and open bay ecology.

A retired captain in the United States Navy, Dr. Hess served in World War II, seeing action including the battles of Iwo Jima and Okinawa. He also served in the Korean War.

The family is requesting memorial contributions be made to the Organ Fund, One Masonic Drive, Elizabethtown, Pa 17022. Friends can also [sign an online guest book](#).

## Spotlight

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### Toyota Donates Prius Hybrid for Raffle Supporting PA Environmental Council

Toyota Motor Sales, U.S.A., Inc. has donated a 2008 Prius hybrid car to be one of several prizes in [this year’s raffle fundraiser](#) to support the Pennsylvania Environmental Council.

The second prize is a seven night stay in Naples, Florida and third prizes include Pennsylvania getaway packages.

A limited number of raffle tickets will be sold—999—at \$50 each. Your entry automatically entitles you to receive a one-year complimentary PEC membership and a subscription to the PEC newsletter along with regular email updates and bulletins, if you are not currently a member of PEC.

Winners will be drawn on June 26. [Complete rules and regulations are available online](#).



Purchase tickets by contacting: Cyndee O'Malley, PEC Central Office, by calling 717-230-8044 x21 or send email to: [comalley@pecpa.org](mailto:comalley@pecpa.org).

## Feature

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### The Nature Conservancy: Protecting Pennsylvania's Rare Underground Resources



In a cave, 40, 50, a hundred feet beneath the Earth's surface, a deep, penetrating silence fills the 54-degree, moist void.

At least that's the way it is until we human outsiders click off the headlamps and the flashlights, and wait quietly for our sense of sight to release its hold and allow our ears to assume the dominant role in sensory input. As that happens, we begin hearing the drips of water, the occasional squeak of a bat, the

delicate sounds of the life of the cave.

And in those soft sounds live the exclamation points that gently highlight the importance of [The Nature Conservancy's](#) new effort to catalog the caves of the Central Appalachians and set conservation priorities among them.

Staff throughout the region have been developing a region-wide database of known cave systems, drawing on existing sources such as cave society and natural heritage lists, and creating a process for defining cave systems in the region. Combined with existing information about the rare species that inhabit caves, the congregated knowledge will allow the Conservancy to set cave conservation priorities for the region.

"Each of the states in the region has some cave work that they've done, but none of us have worked systematically across the region," explains Nels Johnson, director of conservation programs for the Conservancy in Pennsylvania.

In Pennsylvania, for example, the Conservancy has conserved the half-mile of [Aitkin Cave](#) and the surrounding 43 surface acres in Mifflin County as the Richard O. Rowlands Preserve, made possible by and named for the longtime conservationist from Scotland who later lived in State College. It has also conserved Hartman Cave in the Cherry Valley Preserve in Monroe County.

"Aitkin Cave is a good example of the kind of cave we're interested in conserving, because of all the bat species in there," says Johnson. The cave serves as a winter home for the extremely rare Indiana bat, the rare small-footed bat, the rare Keens bat, the little brown bat and the big brown bat.

The most recent hibernation census of the bats in the cave by biologists from the Pennsylvania Game Commission, in February 2006, documented the return of Indiana bats after an absence of nearly a decade and a doubling of the number of little browns to about 3,500.

That's an extremely strong showing, according to Conservancy Fire Specialist and Land Steward George Gress, particularly considering that "bats are one of those species that take a long time for the population to increase, because they only have one pup per year."

Pointing to the massive population decline that the insect-eating, plant pollinating bats in general are thought to have experienced over the past century, Johnson praised the “incredibly important ecosystem service that’s being provided by that cave.”

In addition, a rare cave isopod—a shrimplike creature—is found in the underground streams of the cave.

“We have an interest in seeing the caves protected and not vandalized,” says Johnson. “Many of these caves are sensitive to temperature, humidity and bacteria. In some cases, even a few people a year can have an impact,” even if those limited visitors do no intentional vandalism. (The two Conservancy caves in Pennsylvania are open only under special arrangement during the nonhibernation part of the year, May through August.) “And we do know that caves get closed by landowners over liability issues,” he notes.

In the Central Appalachians, explains Dr. Scott Bearer, forest ecologist for the Conservancy in Pennsylvania, with experience researching bats in the state, the conversion of agricultural areas to residential development often leads to bulldozing or dynamiting cave entrances by the new owners.

“If you close it at the wrong time [of year], you could kill an entire colony of bats,” he says. In addition, says Johnson, “caves are usually formed by water that runs through the limestone formation,” meaning that such “wet solution caves” have a critical and direct connection to shallow groundwater and can be deeply impacted by water pollution or diversion. Each cave faces specific threats determined by its physical circumstances.

A remote cave distant from a roadway generally won’t experience much vandalism. A cave surrounded by agriculture might face issues of water quality.

No one is certain how many caves face each of the possible threats, because “the caves that have been inventoried are a small fraction of what’s out there,” says Johnson. Beyond working with willing landowners to secure conservation purchases and easements following the initial prioritization of the caves, the accompanying education and outreach efforts will pay dividends with private owners as well.

“If most landowners knew more about the value of their cave and the benefits it generates, they would do the right thing” and choose alternatives to complete closure, says Johnson.

For those landowners, for the bats and other cave-dwelling creatures, for the public that draws benefits from caves and their inhabitants, Bearer says, setting the cave priorities for the region will help the Conservancy to see “where we should be focusing our work.”

Caves Are Home to the World’s Rarest Species Bats probably are the creatures that first spring to mind on those rare occasions when one thinks about creatures that live in caves.

Mirroring lay society, most scientific inquiry into cave creatures also has focused on the vertebrate species—the bats and the wood rats—with much less attention paid to the invertebrates—the isopods and the amphipods.

Further complicating the situation, nonflying, cave-dwelling species are often found in just a single cave or cave system, because “while the caves may be connected locally, they’re not connected regionally,” notes Johnson.

And experts in those lesser-known species, even in their basic identification, can be as rare as the species themselves.

“There are many species waiting to be identified with very few experts in their identification,” says Johnson. For example, the only man who can precisely identify one group of isopods (crustaceans), is believed to be a 78-year-old scientist in Japan.

Reprinted with permission from The Nature Conservancy's [Penn's Woods newsletter](#).

## Grants & Awards

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This section gives you a heads up on upcoming deadlines for grants and financial assistance as well as nominations for awards and other recognition programs. **NEW** means from last week—

- **March 17**— [Community Action for a Renewed Environment Grants](#)
- **March 21**— [Society of Women Environmental Professionals Grants](#)
- **March 24**—**NEW**. [EPA Show Us Your Best Earth Day Photo Contest](#)
- **March 31**—[DEP Stormwater Management Administration Grants](#)
- **March 31** – PAEP [Karl Mason Environmental Award](#).
- **March 31**—[DEP Host Municipality Inspector Grants](#)
- **March 31**—[Pa CleanWays Litter Hawk Youth Award Program](#)
- **April 1**— [Write On! Wetlands Challenge Student Competition](#)
- **April 2** – [WREN Water Resources Education Project Grants](#)
- **April 4**— [Schuylkill River Heritage Area Mini-Grants](#)
- **April 25**— DCNR [Community Conservation Partnerships Program Grants](#)
- **May 1**— [PA CleanWays' Sue Wiseman Student Scholarship](#)
- **May 2**—[DCNR Volunteer Forest Firefighter Grants](#)
- **May 16**—[DEP Growing Greener Watershed, Flood Protection Grants](#)
- **May 20** – PennVEST [Infrastructure Loans/Grants for April 15 Meeting](#).
- **June 20**— DEP [Section 902 Recycling Development Grants](#)
- [RC&D Grants for Improving Livestock Operations](#)
- **September 20**— [Fish & Boat Commission Boating Facilities Grants](#)

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

## Quick Clips

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

[New Air Rules Breathe Down Necks of Counties](#)

[Allegheny County Can't Meet New Smog Standards](#)

[So Much for Lehigh Valley Meeting Pollution Standard](#)

[DEP Responds to New Federal Ozone Standards](#)

[Rendell Highlights Links Between Good Jobs, Green Jobs at Conference](#)

[Farm Fights Global Warming, Earns Some Cold Hard Cash](#)

[Plants Warm Up to Climate Change](#)

[A Global Need for Grain That Farms Can't Fill](#)

[Energy Saving Idea May Have Seek Better Times](#)

[Editorial: Give Green Light to Going Greener](#)

[University Offers Sessions on Making Greener Buildings](#)



[Local Schools, Business Team Up on Environmentally Friendly Venture](#)  
[Winds of Change, Home Wind Mills](#)  
[McGinty Lauds Lebanon, PPL Landfill Gas Project](#)  
[PUC Judge Gives Nod to PPL Rate Transition Plan](#)  
[Senate to Weigh DOE's Power to Overrule States](#)  
[Power Corridor Generates Concern](#)  
[Editorial: Pennsylvanians Disregarded in Electric Line Corridor Decisions](#)  
[Settler's Cabin Botanic Garden Plan Undermined](#)  
[Editorial: Protect the Appalachian Trail](#)  
[Preserving a Jewel: Todd Nature Reserve](#)  
[Lehigh Valley Has Fewer Farms, But More Options](#)  
[PA Grand Canyon Vista: One Hike That's Well Worth Trip](#)  
[Montgomery County Recycling Winners](#)  
[RecycleMania Hits DeVal Campus](#)  
[State Bill on Game Commissioners Terms Concerns Some Sportsmen](#)  
[Column: On Raising Hunting License Fee](#)  
[Onorato: Deer Population Must Be Curbed](#)  
[Landscaping for a Healthy Environment](#)  
[Earth, Wind and Hire](#)  
[Learning to Like the Eco-Friendly Life](#)  
[EPA to Issue Positive Report on Cleanup](#)

## **Watershed NewsClips**

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

[Snyder County Award Winners Work to Control Runoff](#)  
[Trout Unlimited Receives Four Growing Greener Grants](#)  
[Four Lancaster Growing Greener Projects Funded](#)  
[Acid Mine Drainage Still Our Top Water Worry](#)  
[Seeking a Clean Bay, Strong Economy](#)  
[Workshop Focuses on Chesapeake Bay Initiative Game Plan](#)  
[Editorial: Lack of State Support Makes Municipal Sewage Updates Difficult to Sell](#)  
[Editorial: Lawsuits and Sewage Plants](#)  
[Get Your Well Water Tested During Ground Water Awareness Week](#)  
[Back Mountain Trail Along Toby's Creek Growing](#)  
[RiverWalk Makes Old New Again](#)  
[Don't Flush Pills, State Official Says](#)  
[Suppliers: Local Water Safe to Drink](#)  
[Local Water Authorities Respond to Investigation](#)  
[Study of Drugs in Water Supply Will Take Until 2010](#)  
[What's In Our Water?](#)

## **Regulations**

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The Environmental Quality Board [published proposed changes](#) to Radiological Health and Radon Certification Fees for public comment. The Fish and Boat Commission published proposed changes to the [Class A Wild Trout Waters](#) and [Classifications of Wild Trout Streams](#).

[Pennsylvania Bulletin – March 15, 2008](#)

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](#) a draft guidance document on compliance procedures in the Mining Program and final guidance documents in the Drinking Water and Land Recycling Program (details below), an update of the Certified Emission Reduction Credits Registry ([Pa Bulletin pg. 1300](#)) and [notice of](#) bond rate guidelines for land reclamation bonds.

Draft: DEP ID: 562-3900-402. Citizens' Requests: Receiving, Tracking, Investigating, Appealing and Filing. This document revises the procedures for the investigation of complaints relating to coal and industrial mineral mining activities and the use of explosives.

Final: DEP ID: 383-3310-409. Pennsylvania Drinking Water Information System (PADWIS) Violation and Enforcement User's Manual. This manual provides uniform instructions and protocol for the use of the online Safe Drinking Water Program violation and enforcement information system that is a major subsystem of the PADWIS.

Final: DEP ID: 253-0300-100. Pennsylvania's Land Recycling Program Technical Guidance Manual--Section IV General Guidance Substantive revisions were proposed to Pennsylvania's Land Recycling Program Technical Guidance Manual--Section IV General Guidance and were advertised for public comment at 37 Pa.B. 4261 (August 4, 2007).

[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. **NEW** indicates new from last week. [Go To: PA Environment Digest Calendar Page](#)

- [Revised Meeting Schedule for DEP Certification Program Advisory Committee](#)
- [Revised Meeting Schedule for Water, Wastewater Systems Operators Board](#)
- **March 17—NEW.** House Intergovernmental Affairs Committee, Subcommittee on Information Technology meets to consider [House Bill 1304](#) (Fairchild-R-Mifflin) creating a PA Geospatial Coordinating Council. Room 121 East Wing. Call of Chair.
- **March 17—** House Republican Policy Committee hearing on electric rate cap mitigation. Room G-50 Irvis Building. 10:30.
- **March 17—**Environmental Issues Form featuring a presentation on the Northampton Generating Company co-generation plant sponsored by the [Joint Legislative Air and Water Pollution Control and Conservation Committee](#). Room 205 Ryan Building. Noon.
- **March 18—NEW.** House Environmental Resources and Energy Committee meets to consider [House Bill 2073](#) (O’Brien-D-Philadelphia) requiring retailers of pharmaceutical drugs to have in place a system for acceptance and disposal, [House Resolution 627](#) (George-D-Clearfield) urging federal government to provide more heating assistance funding and [House Bill 2266](#) (Steil-R-Bucks) expanding stormwater planning requirements with a request the bill be referred to the House Local Government Committee. Room G-50 Irvis Building. 9:00.
- **March 18—NEW.** House Game and Fisheries Committee meets to consider [House Resolution 642](#) (Levdansky-D-Allegheny) directing directing the Legislative Budget and Finance Committee to conduct an audit of the Game Commission’s deer management program. Room 39 East Wing. Off the Floor.
- **March 18—CANCELLED.** Environmental Quality Board meeting.
- **March 19—** Capital Region Water Board Meeting. Susquehanna River Basin Commission Building. 1:00. Contact: Cindy Rock, [Cindy.L.Rock@comcast.net](mailto:Cindy.L.Rock@comcast.net) or call 717-633-7959.
- **March 20— Rescheduled.** House Game and Fisheries Committee meets to hear the annual report of the Game Commission. G-50 Irvis Building. 9:00.
- **March 25—**CANCELLED. DEP [Cleanup Standards Scientific Advisory Board](#) meeting. Next scheduled meeting is July 16.
- **March 26—NEW.** House Environmental Resources and Energy Committee hearing to solicit testimony on proactive policies on a transition to market-based electric rates and on Special Session House Bill 54 (George-D-Clearfield) providing for a temporary extension of rate caps. Ramada Conference Center, Altoona. 1:00.
- **March 26—NEW.** DCNR [Conservation and Natural Resources Advisory Council](#) meeting. Room 105 Rachel Carson Building. 10:00.
- **March 28—NEW.** [PA Energy Development Authority](#) meeting. Room 105 Rachel Carson Building. 10:00.

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- **March 28**— Lehigh Valley Watershed Conference and Shad Symposium. Holiday Inn, Fogelsville. Information, send email to: [rkennedy@lehighconservation.org](mailto:rkennedy@lehighconservation.org) .
- **March 29**— [PennFuture’s Annual Watershed Conference](#). Chadd’s Ford.
- **April 1**—**NEW**. Senate Environmental Resources and Energy Committee informational briefing on DCNR’s natural gas leasing policy. Room 8E-B. 10:30.
- **April 1**— [DEP Environmental Justice Advisory Board](#) meeting. Room 105 Rachel Carson Building. 8:30.
- **April 1-2**— The Pennsylvania Chamber of Business and Industry 2008 [Environmental Regulations & Technologies Conference](#). Eden Resort Inn & Suites, Lancaster.
- **April 3**— **NEW**. House Game and Fisheries Committee meets to hear the annual report of the Game Commission. G-50 Irvis Building. 9:00.
- **April 10**—**NEW**. House Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee hearing on [House Bill 2347](#) (Kessler-D-Berks) establishing the Organic Agriculture Development Act. Oley Valley Fair Centre, Oley, Pa. 1:00.
- **April 14**—[PA Infrastructure Investment Authority](#) meeting. Dixon University Center, 2986 N. Second St., Harrisburg. 10:00.
- **April 15**—PA Infrastructure Investment Authority meeting. (*notice*)
- **April 17**— Sewage Task Force, [Joint Legislative Air and Water Pollution Control and Conservation Committee](#) meeting. Penn Stater, State College. 10:00.
- **April 18**—PEC [Water Trail Working Session Conference](#).
- **April 19**— Protecting Our Headwaters Streams and Wetlands-What You Can Do. Cedar Crest College, Allentown. 10:00-3:00. Contact: Barbara Benson, 610-282-33611 or send email to: [barbarabenson@bensonsails.com](mailto:barbarabenson@bensonsails.com) .
- **May 13-15**—[PA Water/Wastewater Association](#) annual conference. Valley Forge.
- **May 28**— [Western Pennsylvania Environmental Awards Program](#). Pittsburgh.

### [DEP Calendar of Events](#)

### [Environmental Education Workshop/Training Calendar](#)

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

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

You can watch the [Senate Floor Session](#) and [House Floor Session](#) live online.

## **Helpful Web Links**

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### [PA Environment Digest Video Blog](#)

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

### [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@CrisciAssociates.com](mailto:DHess@CrisciAssociates.com) or go to [www.PaEnvironmentDigest.com](http://www.PaEnvironmentDigest.com) .

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## Supporting Member PA Outdoor Writers Association

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