

— PA — Environment Digest

*An Update on
Environmental
Issues in
Pennsylvania*

Edited By David E. Hess, Crisci Associates

April 30, 2007

[PA Environment Digest Video Blog](#)

House, Senate Designate May Watershed Awareness Month

The House this week unanimously adopted [House Resolution 246](#) (Adolph-R-Delaware, George-D-Clearfield) designating May as Watershed Awareness Month.

Senators Ray Musto (D-Luzerne) and Mary Jo White (R-Venango) are expected to introduce a similar resolution shortly in the Senate.

Also passed this week in the House was [House Resolution 251](#) (Rubley-R-Chester) designating May 6 – 12 as “Drinking Water Week” in Pennsylvania.



This year’s special theme, "Reclaiming Abandoned Mines to Reclaim Pennsylvania’s Waterways" celebrates the success of the effort to reauthorize the federal Abandoned Mine Reclamation Fund fee and the steps taken by the AML Campaign, federal and state governments and watershed groups throughout the state to address Pennsylvania’s number one threat to clean water.

Here is the text of the resolution....

A RESOLUTION

Designating the month of May 2007 as "Watershed Awareness Month" in Pennsylvania.

WHEREAS, The land, rivers, streams, lakes, wetlands and groundwater resources of this Commonwealth are interconnected to form a rich mosaic of watersheds; and

WHEREAS, These treasured water resources provide citizens with clean drinking water and recreational and business opportunities; and

WHEREAS, This Commonwealth contains over 83,000 miles of rivers and streams; and

WHEREAS, There are eight distinct river basins in Pennsylvania, including Lake Erie, Ohio River, Genesee River(Lake Ontario), Susquehanna, Delaware, Potomac, Elk and Northeast/Gunpowder; and

WHEREAS, There are 104 watersheds, the basic building blocks of the natural environment, in this Commonwealth; and

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WHEREAS, Over 13,400 miles of streams and rivers in Pennsylvania are so impaired that they do not meet current water quality standards; and

WHEREAS, The Commonwealth invests enormous resources to restore and protect water, including the remediation of polluted water from 180,000 acres of abandoned coal mines and the more than 2 billion tons of coal refuse which contaminates more than 6,200 miles of streams and associated groundwater; and

WHEREAS, Abandoned mines, coal refuse and their associated polluted water discharges are the number one reason contaminated streams do not meet water quality standards; and

WHEREAS, The U.S. Congress last year reauthorized the federal Abandoned Mine Reclamation Fund fee to help provide Pennsylvania with an estimated \$1.4 billion in federal funding over the next 15 years to reclaim abandoned mines and treat abandoned mine drainage; and

WHEREAS, the AML Campaign in Pennsylvania, made up of watershed and environmental groups, the coal industry, conservation districts, state and local governments and many others, lobbied tirelessly for action on the federal Abandoned Mine Reclamation Fund fee; and

WHEREAS, The Commonwealth is committed to a watershed approach to resource management where concerned community members come together as watershed guardians to address and resolve problems; and

WHEREAS, The Commonwealth empowers and assists local watershed organizations working in partnership as watershed guardians to resolve or remediate current water quality and water quantity problems within watershed boundaries; and

WHEREAS, This watershed approach to environmental protection leads to cleaner rivers and streams, safer drinking water and greater protection of aquatic wildlife habitats; and

WHEREAS, There are more than 400 active watershed groups in this Commonwealth and new watershed groups are forming continuously; and

WHEREAS, Watershed groups have reclaimed over 5,000 acres of abandoned mines, planted over 1,500 miles of stream buffers and created or restored over 3,000 acres of wetlands since 1999; and

WHEREAS, Over 11,000 citizens are actively engaged in monitoring water quality throughout the state, in particular over 2,500 volunteers in 52 counties covered by local chapters of the Pennsylvania Senior Environment Corps; and

WHEREAS, Local watershed groups are a cost-effective investment in environmental cleanup for the Commonwealth: for every \$1 invested by the State, watershed groups have matched it with \$1.25 of their own funds, more than doubling the Commonwealth's investment; and

WHEREAS, Educational forums connecting adults and children to their watersheds, including the land, water and people, ultimately provide long-term protection for these important and valuable water resources; and

WHEREAS, The Commonwealth recognizes and celebrates the efforts of hardworking volunteers within watershed groups who improve their communities today and for future generations; therefore be it

RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives designate the month of May 2007 as "Watershed Awareness Month" in Pennsylvania; and be it further

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RESOLVED, That the theme "Reclaiming Abandoned Mines to Reclaim Pennsylvania's Waterways" celebrates the success of the effort to reauthorize the federal Abandoned Mine Reclamation Fund fee and the steps taken by the AML Campaign, federal and state governments and watershed groups throughout the state to address Pennsylvania's number one threat to clean water.

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Session Schedule

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PA Environment Digest Video Blog

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- Pittsburgh's David L. Lawrence Convention Center Proves Green Practices Impact
- Wanner Farm Digester to Generate Electric, Reduce Greenhouse Gases
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[Go To: PA Environment Digest Calendar Page](#)

Video Blog Feature

A Visit to the Tom Ridge Environmental Center, Presque Isle, Erie



Eric Obert, Associate Director of the PA Sea Grant Program, takes visitors on a tour of the [Tom Ridge Environmental Center](#) which sits at the entrance of Presque Isle State Park in Erie.

Video Blog: [A Visit to the Tom Ridge Environmental Center](#).

The Center serves as the gateway to the park, environmental education center, park office and home several state agencies, nonprofit environmental groups and the Regional Science Consortium which does active research on

environmental issues in the region. It also houses a I-Max Theatre.

Visit this unique educational resource that connects Pennsylvanians to the Great Lakes and one of the Commonwealth's richest natural treasures – Presque Isle Peninsula.

For more information, visit the [Tom Ridge Environmental Center website](#).

Video Blog: [A Visit to the Tom Ridge Environmental Center](#).

On the Hill

On the Senate/House Agenda/Bills Introduced

The Senate returns to voting session April 30 and the House May 7. Here's what's on the agenda...

House

Calendar: [House Bill 772](#) (Hershey-R-Chester) establishing the Keystone Energy and Environmental Excellence Awards program and an energy efficiency and pollution reduction initiative; [House Bill 913](#) (Vereb-R-Montgomery) establishing the Low-Income Weatherization Assistance Program; [House Bill 894](#) (Leach-D-Montgomery) authorizing

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additional reimbursements for school building construction which meets the LEED standards.

Senate

Calendar: [Senate Bill 352](#) (Robbins-R-Mercer) providing additional funds for Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program; [Senate Bill 354](#) (MJWhite-R-Venango) prohibiting the Environmental Quality Board from accepting rulemaking petitions to regulate substances not authorized by current state or federal law.

Committees: the Environmental Resources and Energy Committee meets to consider [Senate Bill 782](#) (MJWhite-R-Venango) that would increase fees on nuclear power plants and for transport escorts; and [Senate Bill 815](#) (Musto-D-Luzerne) that would amend the Storage Tank Act to extend the sunset dates on certain programs; the Appropriations Committee meets to consider [Senate Bill 105](#) (Musto-D-Luzerne) authorizing the Environmental Quality Board to hire independent counsel; the Game and Fisheries Committee holds an informational meeting on the 2006 Annual Report of the Game Commission.

Bills Introduced

Several more environmental bills were introduced this week...

Wildlife Pest Control: [Senate Bill 773](#) (McIlhinney-R-Bucks) authorizing the Game Commission to issue commercial wildlife pest control permits.

Nuclear Power Plant Fees: [Senate Bill 782](#) (MJWhite-R-Venango) increasing fees on nuclear power plants and for transport fees.

Landfill Siting: [House Bill 1123](#) (Wansacz-D-Luzerne) amends Act 101 to prohibit siting a waste disposal facility within one-half mile of a cemetery and [House Bill 1164](#) (Wansacz) requiring host municipality agreements for certain municipal and residual waste facilities in proximity to State Parks.

TreeVitalize License: [House Bill 1172](#) (McGeehan-D-Montgomery) would authorize a TreeVitalize vehicle license plate with the proceeds dedicated to the program and [House Bill 1173](#) (McGeenhan) authorizing a voluntary \$1 surcharge per vehicle registration fee with the proceeds dedicated to the TreeVitalize program.

Biorefinery Zones: [House Bill 1175](#) (Mann-D-Lehigh) would establish Keystone Biorefinery Opportunity Zones to facilitate the development of renewable fuels.

Solar Energy Systems: [House Bill 1176](#) (Leach-D-Montgomery) would amend the Growing Greener Bond Fund to support the installation of residential solar energy systems and to support an education program.

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Water Resource Sponsorship: [House Resolution 245](#) (Gibbons-D-Beaver) urging PennVEST and DEP to establish a task force to study the feasibility of implementing a water resource restoration sponsorship program which restores streams and wetlands in conjunction with improvements and repairs to wastewater treatment systems.

Other Senate/House Bills Moving

Here's a quick rundown on other bills moving this week...

Senate

Energy Assistance: [Senate Bill 76](#) (Tomlinson-R-Bucks) establishing the Home Energy Assistance Act to provide matching public funds to hardship funds contributed by stockholders, employees and ratepayers of home energy providers was referred to the Senate Appropriations Committee and [Senate Bill 352](#) (Robbins-R-Mercer) providing additional funds for Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program was reported from the Senate Public Health and Welfare Committee and is on the Senate Calendar for action.

Sewer Lateral: [Senate Bill 176](#) (Pippy-R-Allegheny) authorizing the use of public funds to pay for the repair of lateral sewer lines was referred to the Senate Appropriations Committee.

Rulemaking Petitions: [Senate Bill 354](#) (MJWhite-R-Venango) prohibiting the Environmental Quality Board from accepting rulemaking petitions to regulate substances not authorized by current state or federal law was moved up and is on the Senate Calendar for action.

Independent Legal Advice: [Senate Bill 105](#) (Musto-D-Luzerne) authorizing the Environmental Quality Board to retain independent legal advice was re-referred to the Senate Appropriations Committee.

House

Lyme Disease: [House Resolution 227](#) (Rubley-R-Chester) declaring May as “Lyme Disease Awareness Month” in Pennsylvania was adopted by the House.

Arbor Day: [House Resolution 189](#) (Marsico-R-Dauphin) recognizing April 27 as “Arbor Day” in Pennsylvania was adopted by the House.

Watershed Awareness Month: [House Resolution 246](#) (Adolph-R-Chester) designating May as “Watershed Awareness Month” in Pennsylvania was adopted by the House.

Drinking Water Week: [House Resolution 251](#) (Rubley-R-Chester) designating May 6 – 12 as “Drinking Water Week” in Pennsylvania was adopted by the House.

Landowner Liability: The House Game & Fisheries Committee amended and reported out [House Bill 13](#) (Readshaw-D-Allegheny) limiting liability of landowners in connection with opening their lands for hunting and recreation.

Nuclear Power Plant Fees: [House Bill 496](#) (George-D-Clearfield) that would increase fees on nuclear power plants and for transport escorts was amended to make it identical to the companion [Senate Bill 782](#) was reported from the House Environmental Resources and Energy Committee.

Mine Safety: [House Bill 483](#) (Bastion-R-Somerset) creating the Mine Families First Program to provide assistance to families involved in mine rescue incidents was reported from the House Environmental Resources and Energy Committee.

Green School Buildings: [House Bill 894](#) (Leach-D-Montgomery) authorizing additional reimbursements for school building construction which meets the LEED standards was reported from the House State Government Committee with a request that it be re-referred to the House Education Committee and is now on the House Calendar for action.

House Environmental Committee Moves Mine Safety, Reactor Fees Bills

The House Environmental Resources and Energy Committee this week reported out bills to create the Mine Families First Program and to increase fees on nuclear power plants, including:

- [House Bill 496](#) (George-D-Clearfield) that would increase fees on nuclear power plants and for transport escorts was amended to make it identical to the companion [Senate Bill 782](#); and
- [House Bill 483](#) (Bastion-R-Somerset) creating the Mine Families First Program to provide assistance to families involved in mine rescue incidents

The Committee is chaired by Rep. Bud George (D-Clearfield) and Rep. Scott Hutchinson (R-Venango).

Governor Gives Senate More Time on McGinty, DiBerardinis Nominations

Gov. Rendell this week agreed to give the Senate more time to consider his nominees to head the departments of Environmental Protection and Conservation and Natural Resources, after the Senate said it needed answers to questions about grants given out by the agencies.

The Senate did take action on other Rendell cabinet appointments, including Dennis Wolff to be Secretary of Agriculture.

Both Senate Majority Leader Dominic Pileggi (R-Delaware) and Minority Leader Robert Mellow (D-Luzerne) agreed the delay was needed since both nominations were on their last day for consideration before Gov. Rendell agreed to withdraw and then resubmit the nominations to give the Senate more time.

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The Senate questions revolved around grants given to organizations that employed the spouses of DEP Secretary Kathleen McGinty and DCNR Secretary Michael DiBerardinis.

The Senate asked the Governor to obtain an Ethics Commission determination on the issues and if the opinion is received by May 4, Senate Leadership promised a vote on the nominations by May 8.

In the case of Secretary McGinty, a grant was given to the Pennsylvania Environmental Council for a project involving the nutrient credit trading pilot project in the Conestoga River Watershed in Lancaster County, a small portion of which-- \$3,747-- was paid to Dr. Karl Hausker, Secretary McGinty's husband and an economist, for an economic analysis of the credit market.

"PEC has a longstanding record of receiving and delivering high quality results for grants from both private foundations and public agencies; we have received grants awarded on a competitive basis from several state agencies under both Republican and Democratic Administrations. We receive these grants because of the excellent work that PEC does with its partners on projects in every region of the state," said Brian Hill, President & CEO of the Council. "This is a case of someone kicking up dirt, calling it smoke, and asking for others to find fire. There is no smoke and no fire."

Secretary DiBerardinis' wife, Joan Reilly, runs a parks program for the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society, which received \$1.5 million to implement part of the TreeVitalize Program that encourages tree planting in the five-county Philadelphia area.

The Rendell Administration said while both Secretaries approved the final grant award recommendations, but agency staff selected the winners in a competitive process.

In the case of the DEP grant, the Pennsylvania Environmental Council and DEP have a historic relationship on many types of projects from brownfields to watershed protection that transcends several Administrations, Republican and Democratic. (*See [grant background](#) released by the Rendell Administration.*)

Sen. Mellow commented that he thought the Senate would ultimately approve both nominations.

NewsClips: [Rendell Agrees to Give Senate More time on Cabinet Votes](#)
[Rendell Officials Face Questions About Tax Disputes, Grants](#)

Hanna Creates Animal Deterrent and Damage Fund

Rep. Mike Hanna (D-Clinton/Centre) has re-introduced legislation that would increase deterrent fencing for wild animals and establish an elk damage compensation fund.

[House Bill 1078](#) would increase the funding for and number of deterrent fences for deer, bear and elk and establish an Elk Damage Fund to reimburse people for property damages caused by elk. The Department of Agriculture and the Game Commission would be responsible for implementation of the program.

Under current law, there are regulations and assistance for deterrent fencing, but there are no specific regulatory standards for the elk deterrent project or a specific fund allocated to pay for it.



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“This legislation is needed because of the substantial crop damage caused by elk in parts of the state,” Rep. Hanna said. “It’s been very frustrating for farmers and other landowners who have had to cope with the damage to their property and the financial losses that have resulted.

“The fencing would prevent the elk from destroying crops and prevent farmers from taking the matter into their own hands and shooting the elk. It would also greatly reduce the number of deer, bear and elk crossing roadways, where they can be a major safety hazard to drivers.”

Rep. Hanna introduced the bill during the previous legislative session. It is currently under consideration in the House Game and Fisheries Committee.

Senate Committee to Consider Storage Tank, Nuclear Power Plant Fee Bills

The Senate Environmental Resources and Energy Committee will meet May 1 to consider legislation to raise fees on nuclear power plants and to change the Storage Tank Act. The bills include:

- [Senate Bill 782](#) (MJWhite-R-Venango) that would increase fees on nuclear power plants and for transport escorts; and
- [Senate Bill 815](#) (Musto-D-Luzerne) that would amend the Storage Tank Act to extend the sunset dates on certain programs.

The Committee is chaired by Sen. Mary Jo White (R-Venango) and Sen. Ray Musto (D-Luzerne).

Other News

DEP Releases Chesapeake Bay Tributary Strategy Implementation Documents

The Department of Environmental Protection this week released two new documents supporting efforts to implement Pennsylvania’s Chesapeake Bay Tributary Strategy that deal with NPDES permitting and sewage facility planning.

The first provides a strategy for addressing implementation of the Tributary Strategy in Sewage Facilities Planning under Act 537. Municipalities must evaluate alternatives in a manner that recognizes the need for compliance with the cap loads for Total Nitrogen and total Phosphorus.

The second document contains DEP’s approach in implementing NPDES permitting for point source discharges in the watershed. New effluent limits for NPDES permits for point sources are needed to meet new water quality standards promulgated by Maryland in August 2005. The effluent limits are being based on annual mass loads for nitrogen and phosphorus for point source facilities in the watershed, in relation to wastewater flows.

[Copies of the documents are available online.](#)

PA Landscape and Nursery Assn. Highlights Arbor Day, Supports REAP

Members of the [Pennsylvania Landscape and Nursery Association](#) delivered live silver maple trees to each House and Senate member as a way to celebrate Arbor Day and to spread the word about the proposed [Resource Enhancement and Protection Act](#) (REAP).



Chad Forcey, PLNA's Director of Government Relations, and Jim MacKenzie, from Octorara Nursery who donated the trees, organized volunteers to package and deliver them to the desk of each legislator.

PLNA has endorsed REAP, which would provide transferable tax credits to farmers who install best management practices like forested stream buffers, as a "win-win for Pennsylvania."

"The Department of Environmental Protection's own estimates are that an additional \$175 million per year is needed for agriculture conservation measures in Pennsylvania's Chesapeake Bay watershed alone," said Forcey.

"REAP would enable the Commonwealth to clean up thousands of miles of impaired waterways statewide, provide cleaner drinking water supplies to communities and support Pennsylvania's agricultural community in a significant way.

"(REAP) is bipartisan, pro-farmers, pro-business and pro-environment. A broad coalition of groups including the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, the Pennsylvania Farm Bureau, the Pennsylvania State Grange and the Pennsylvania Environmental Council support REAP.

"Through this innovative mechanism, REAP would create a new conservation partnership between the public and private sector."

Pennsylvania's \$5.6 billion landscape, nursery and retail garden industry employs over 75,000 people. The nursery and floriculture segment of agriculture represents the largest cash crop and fastest growing sector of agriculture in the Commonwealth.

For more information, visit the [PLNA website](#), [Arbor Day](#) and the [REAP](#) webpages.

Video Blog: [Rep. Stern Describes Effectiveness of Live Tree Program](#)

Nearly 50 Attend Town Meeting on Helping Farmers Install Conservation BMPs

The Chesapeake Bay Foundation, the Pennsylvania State Grange, Pennsylvania Farm Bureau and other partners held a town meeting on April 26 at the Progress Grange Hall in Centre Hall, PA to talk about a proposal to provide farmers tax credits to install best management practices to reduce nutrient and sediment runoff called the [Resource Enhancement and Protection Act](#).



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Matt Ehrhart, PA Director of CBF, was joined by Rep. Jerry Stern (R-Blair), the prime sponsor of REAP in the House, LeDon Young, Progress Grange Master, and Gary Swan, PA Farm Bureau, at the meeting to rally farmer, environmental and other citizen support for the proposal.

See comments from each speaker on the *PA Environment Digest Video Blog*:

Video Blog: [LeDon Young, Progress Grange Master Hosts REAP Town Meeting](#)

Video Blog: [Rep. Stern Describes Background, Need for REAP](#)

Video Blog: [Gary Swan, PA Farm Bureau, Talks About PFB Support for REAP](#)

Video Blog: [Matthew Ehrhart, CBF, Urges Citizens To Make Their Voice Heard](#)

Nearly 175 miles of Centre County streams are listed on the nation's "dirty waters" list, but not only are streams at risk, many of Centre County's agricultural operations are struggling.

This year Pennsylvania's legislators have an historic opportunity to reduce pollution, protect the Commonwealth's waterways and strengthen our economy by giving farmers better tools to reduce nutrient and sediment runoff.

REAP, introduced as [House Bill 100](#) by Rep. Stern (R-Blair) and Rep. Daley (D-Washington) and as Senate Bill 690 by Sen. Waugh (R-York) and Sen. O'Pake (D-Berks) would give farmers tax credits of up to 75 percent of the cost of installing best management practices like forested stream buffer, stream fencing and other measures.

Pennsylvania has over 13,400 miles of rivers and streams that do not meet water quality standards and REAP is another tool that can help reduce pollution going into these streams and help the Commonwealth meet its commitment to cleaning up the Chesapeake Bay.

So far over 250 people have attended a series of town hall meetings the Chesapeake Bay Foundation sponsored to educate farmers, watershed groups and other interested citizens on this important issue.

Visit the [Resource Enhancement and Protection Act \(REAP\) webpage](#) for more information.

NewsClip: [Editorial: Tax Credit Program Would Cut Bay's Farm Pollution Legislators Work for Bigger Farm Bill Share](#)

Pleasant Hills Middle School Students Plant Peters Creek Stream Buffer

Over 40 students from the [Pleasant Hills Middle School](#) in Allegheny County worked to help protect the Peters Creek Watershed by planting a riparian buffer zone along a 300-foot section of the stream on April 27.

Many streams throughout western Pennsylvania have eroding stream banks that contribute to an overall decline in water quality. Riparian buffer zones are areas of vegetation along stream banks that help to stabilize soil and filter out pollutants from surface runoff before they enter waterways.

The students' work will augment a model stream bank stabilization carried out by Jefferson Hills Borough in 2005. As Phase I of an on-going stream bank restoration project, Jefferson Hills Borough regraded the same section of stream bank by utilizing natural stream bank stabilization methods.

According to Justin Wagner of [Gateway Engineering](#), the lead engineer for this project, two rock vanes were placed at the beginning of a curve to deflect the energy of the stream away from the bank and into the center of the channel. Behind each vane, a pool of

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water collects and sediment from this slow-moving water is deposited and further stabilizes the stream bank.

The Pleasant Hills Middle School students will complete this effort by planting the riparian buffer zone.

This project is part of a program designed by the Pennsylvania Resources Council called “Schools Working for their Watershed Program” which provides a community service opportunity to middle and high school students.

In addition to the community service work, students participate in a two-session educational program on watersheds and riparian buffer zones. Through the educational program, students will develop a thorough understanding of riparian buffer zones and the role they play in maintaining watershed health.

By participating in both the classroom instruction and the restoration work, students will have the opportunity to apply classroom instruction to a real life situation.

The project has been a collaborative effort by a number of regional organizations. Funding for this project was funded by the [Pennsylvania Resources Council](#), the [Western Pennsylvania Watershed Program](#) and Jefferson Borough.

Funding from WPWP was used to cover project planning and the educational program. Jefferson Hills Borough contributed funding for the purchase of plants, shrubs, trees and landscaping materials. The planting day was coordinated by Gateway Engineering and PRC.

Peters Creek Watershed Association is utilizing some of their available funding through the [Water Resources Education Network](#) for the design and installation of an educational sign at the site. High school students from the Student Conservation Association assisted the middle school students during the planting day.

For more information, contact Christine McHenry-Glenn at 814-432-2324 or send email to: cglenn@prc.org.

Passive Treatment Systems in Slippery Rock Watershed Yield Black Glaze

Fifteen passive treatment systems have been constructed in the [Slippery Rock Creek Watershed](#) to combat the effects of approximately 30 abandoned mine discharges that degrade the stream.

These passive treatment systems remove dissolved metals from the water using natural materials such as limestone and compost. The metals form solids that are collected in the system.

The sooty black mineral formed within the limestone beds of some passive treatment systems is called todorokite, which contains about 50 percent manganese. Participants in the Slippery Rock Watershed Coalition are in the process of developing methods to recover this manganese ore.

Manganese, in the form of the materials collected from the mine drainage, is commonly used as a colorant in different glazes for pottery. When local potter Robert Isenberg of [The Pottery Dome](#) in Mercer, PA was approached by Slippery Rock Watershed Coalition participant Kyle Durrett with the concept of using some of the recovered manganese in his pottery glazes, he was immediately interested.

Isenberg feels that making good use of the recovered manganese is a worthwhile endeavor. The largest request for this new glaze has come from the [North Country](#)

[Brewing Company](#) located in downtown Slippery Rock, PA to make mugs for its annual “Mug Club” event.

The North Country Brewing Company has a yearly “Mug Club” where patrons can purchase one of 300 handmade mugs that they can use as their own personal mug that resides at the brewery. Each mug holds slightly more than one pint and is unlike any other mug in size, shape and glaze.

North County Brewing supports many local grassroots organizations and is graciously donating 5 percent of the profits from sales of the new mugs to the Slippery Rock Watershed Coalition to benefit long-term maintenance on the passive treatment systems in the watershed. These highly anticipated new mugs will be available soon. They are sure to go fast so don’t wait until they are gone!

The [Slippery Rock Watershed Coalition](#) would like to thank [North Country Brewing](#) for the generous support and [The Pottery Dome](#) and Robert Isenberg for helping to promote this truly green technology. (*reprinted from The Catalyst, April 2007*)

DEP Invites Comments on Draft Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Plan

The Department of Environmental Protection is inviting public comment on a draft [Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Plan](#) covering the Delaware and Lake Erie coasts.

The plan will provide an assessment of priority land conservation needs and provide guidance for selecting land conservation projects within the State for nomination to National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration for funding.

Comments are due May 28.

For more information, go to the [Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Plan webpage](#) or contact Jeff Dewey at 717-772-5619 or send email to: jdewey@state.pa.us.

Workshop on Invasive Aquatic Species Set for May 24-25 in Philadelphia

The [John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge](#) in Philadelphia is hosting a workshop on using Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point analysis to help control invasive aquatic species.

HACCP planning is a methodology adapted from the food industry to identify risks and focus procedures to prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species during a variety of aquatic field activities.

Biologists, technicians, hatchery and aquaculture staff would find this workshop very useful.

The workshop is free and the registration deadline is May 14.

For more information, contact Michael Goehle, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 716-691-5456, x 32 or send email to: Michael.Goehle@fws.gov.

New, Improved Water Quality Modeling Tool Released By EPA

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has released a new version of its acclaimed watershed management program, making it easier to use and more readily available.

“[Better Assessment Science Integrating Point and Nonpoint Sources](#)” (BASINS) is a multipurpose system that integrates environmental data, analytical tools, and modeling programs. BASINS will help regions, states, and local agencies develop cost-effective

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approaches to watershed management and environmental protection. BASINS 4.0 is a valuable tool for watershed and water quality-based analyses, including developing total maximum daily load (TMDL) allocations.

Unlike earlier releases, BASINS 4.0 runs on non-proprietary, open source, free geographic information system software, making the tool universally available to anyone interested in the system. Prior versions required users to purchase costly GIS software to run the BASINS system.

Once installed on a personal computer, BASINS 4.0 gives users access to large amounts of point and non-point source data, which they can use to assess or predict flow and water quality for selected streams or entire watersheds.

More information, visit the [BASINS 4.0 webpage](#).

PA Cleanways Announces Litter Hawk Youth Award Program Winners



[PA CleanWays](#) announced the winners of this year's [Litter Hawk Youth Award Program](#) that gives children and teens a chance to illustrate their concern about littering and illegal dumping prevention, recycling, proper disposal, beautification, and stewardship through visual arts, language arts, and community outreach activities.

The winners of this year's program are:

Age group 10 and Under: Visual Arts Category: Lindsey Grove, Somerset County; Language Arts Category: Brianna Burkey, York County; Community Outreach: Autumn O. Elmer, Philadelphia County

Age Group 11-18: Visual Arts Category: Robin Siegenthaler & Katie Deardorff, Centre County; Language Arts: Joy Best, Philadelphia County; Community Outreach: Sally Jane Petre, Union County

PA CleanWays received over 100 entries from 90 individuals in 10 counties throughout the state. Entries were judged on creativity and the project's ability to convey the chosen theme. Winners in the 10 and under age group received gift cards in the amount of \$75, winners in the 11-18 age group received gift cards in the amount of \$100.

This program was developed by PA CleanWays with support from the Department of Environmental Protection. PA CleanWays is a nonprofit organization that helps people who are ready to take action against illegal dumping and littering in their communities.

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

Poetic Justice for One Illegal Dumper in Westmoreland County

On April 21, [PA CleanWays of Westmoreland County](#) and the Sewickley Creek Watershed Group targeted an illegal dumpsite at Rt 31 West Newton exit and Interstate 70 for cleanup.

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Volunteers from the groups and the public works department from South Huntingdon Township worked to remove 21 tons of various household trash, shingles and other construction debris from this site.

Later in the week, as one of the public works department employees who helped with the cleanup was on their way to work, he noticed a dump truck stuck in the mud at the site that was just cleaned up. They called the State Police and the township.

Apparently this person was in the process of dumping a new load of shingles on the site that had been cleaned only four days before.

According to Scott Painter from South Huntingdon Township, the dumper was fined by the State Police, the Department of Environmental Protection, South Huntingdon Township and had to pay to have his dump truck towed. (*Thanks to [Shannon Reiter](#), PA CleanWays, for sending this in.*)

Bring Your Hard to Recycling Items to PRC Collection Event May 12

On May 12 the [Pennsylvania Resources Council](#), [Appliance Warehouse](#) and [Verizon](#) are inviting the public to drop off tires, scrap metal, major appliances, ink cartridges, and cell phones for recycling.

The event will be held at the Appliance Warehouse, 523 Bingham Street, Pittsburgh between 10:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m.

Not to be confused with household hazardous waste, “hard to recycle” materials include such things as tires and major appliances.

Everything is free to drop off except tires. There is a \$1 fee for tires without rims and a \$2 fee for tires with rims (cash only please). Tires must be 18” or smaller. Scrap metal includes aluminum, brass, copper, steel or iron.

Examples of items accepted include storm doors (without the glass windows), plumbing fixtures, and metal shelving. PRC will not accept metal products with vinyl or cloth attached. Additionally, PRC will not accept propane tanks or other compressed gas cylinders.

Major appliances acceptable for drop off include refrigerators, air conditioners, washers and dryers. All freon will be removed safely by certified EPA technicians. Any brand of ink or toner cartridge and all cell phones, including cell phone batteries and chargers, may be dropped off. No rotary phones or regular telephones will be accepted.

By dropping off appliances and ink cartridges, PRC will benefit from two separate fundraising programs through Appliance Warehouse and ATM Laser.

For every appliance dropped off, Appliance Warehouse will make a donation to support PRC’s litter and graffiti prevention efforts in the community. Similarly, by recycling ink cartridges, PRC will raise needed funds through a fundraising program with ATM Laser, a local company that recycles and refurbishes ink cartridges.

All cell phones dropped off will be sent to Verizon Wireless as part of its HopeLines program. Through the HopeLines program, the company focuses primarily on putting wireless services to work to combat domestic violence.

The remaining 2007 “hard to recycle” collections are slated for July 14 and September 8. These collections provide individuals with an alternative to landfilling products that can be recycled into new, useful products. Scarce landfill space is then saved for items that cannot be reused or recycled.

For more information call 412-488-7490 x243 or visit the [Pennsylvania Resources Council website](#).

So What Did You Do on Earth Day? Look at What Springside School Did

[Springside School for Girls](#) in Philadelphia has an active academic program for students from Kindergarten through twelfth grade, but their list of Earth Day activities this year looks like something a lot more advanced!

Here's just a partial list of their Earth Day activities—

- Elementary students planted 40 native trees and ferns and did trail cleanup work in Fairmount Park with Volunteer Coordinator David Bower in the section of the Wissahickon Creek adjacent to the school;
- Fifth grader Natalie Kapp took second place in the Philadelphia Water Department's "Clean Water Begins and Ends with You" drawing contest;
- Eighth grade students are building a miniature solar-powered car and focusing class time on energy production and climate change;
- Ninth grader Natalie Smith's Science Fair Research Project on global warming won first place and is going to the state competition in May; and
- Students in Environmental Science pick an environmental issue and do research on that issue over the entire semester as part of the Young Naturalist Awards Program.

Springdale was also the first school in the city to recycle all paper, plastic, glass, metal and cardboard under a program sponsored by [RecycleBank](#). Weekly recycling efforts have resulted in recycling over 75 tons of material.

For more information, contact Gretchen Harrison, Springdale School, 215-247-7200 x 7131 or send email to: gharrison@springside.org.



Third graders Maya Jones, Emily Swan, and Kayla Melcher help Fairmount Park's Volunteer Coordinator David Bower plant trees and ferns.

Lehigh University Among EPA P3 Award Winners

A student project from [Lehigh University](#) that will try to find a way to safely dispose of sludge with high levels of toxic arsenic was one of the university projects funded under the U.S. Environmental Protection [P3: People, Prosperity and Planet Student Design Competition for Sustainability Program](#).

This national competition, sponsored by EPA's Office of Research and Development, enables college students to create sustainable solutions to environmental problems through technology innovation. These sustainable solutions must be environmentally friendly, efficiently use natural resources and be economically competitive.

Each P3 award includes funding up to \$75,000 that gives the students an opportunity to further develop their designs and move them to the marketplace.

For more information, visit the [P3 Award Winners webpage](#).

DCNR Warns of Spring Wildfire Danger

The same forests cloaked in wet snow and soaked by heavy rain just one week ago are becoming tinder dry, prompting a call for increased vigilance in this season of rapidly changing weather and [rising fire dangers](#) in the state's wealth of woodlands.

"Yes, snow did recently cover much of northern forests' floor and, thankfully, rainfall has been abundant across the entire state, but spring is a very fickle season with ever-changing weather," Department of Conservation and Natural Resource Secretary Michael DiBerardinis said. "A recent string of several dry, sunny, windy days has seen forest fire dangers climb rapidly."

Bureau of Forestry records show weather conditions figured in at least 35 field, brush and forest fires reported across the state last weekend. A 70-acre fire in Lehigh County and a 25-acre blaze in Lackawanna County were among the largest.

"Though forests are a renewable resource, they quickly can be endangered by acts of carelessness," Secretary DiBerardinis said. "People cause 98 percent of wildfires. A mere spark can touch off a devastating forest blaze during dry periods when conditions are especially ripe for wildfires."

While there is a lack of green foliage in the spring, DiBerardinis cautioned that scant rainfall and sunny, windy days may increase the chance of forest and brush fires.

Nearly 10,000 acres of forestland in the state are burned by wildfires each year, and nearly 85 percent of all fires in Pennsylvania woodlands occur during the months of March, April and May. Almost all of these fires threaten people and their homes, as well as wildlife.

"Public understanding and appreciation of our forestlands are powerful wildfire-prevention tools," Secretary DiBerardinis said. "Precautions must be taken so that we can continue enjoying Pennsylvania's millions of acres of woodlands, from the smallest suburban grove to sprawling mountain tracts."

Wildfires are so named for their rapid spread through bare vegetation when dry, windy conditions prevail. They are especially troublesome in the spring when wind, dry weather, direct sunlight through bare trees and the abundance of dead undergrowth all can lead to rapid fire spread. March, therefore, is viewed as the beginning of wildfire season, the most common time of the year for such fires.

State forestry officials urge landowners to use extreme caution when burning trash and debris — one of the most common causes of wildfires — and obey local open-burning bans. Residents are advised to create "safe zones" around homes and cabins by removing leaves and other debris from the ground and rain gutters; stacking firewood away from structures; and trimming overhanging branches.

Campers and other state forest visitors are reminded open fires are forbidden on state forestland when the fire danger is listed as high, very high, or extreme.

DCNR's Bureau of Forestry is responsible for the prevention and suppression of wildfires on the commonwealth's 17 million acres of private and state woodlands. The bureau maintains a fire-detection system, and works with fire wardens and volunteer fire

departments to ensure they are trained in the latest advances in fire prevention and suppression.

For more information, visit [DCNR's Forest Fire Protection webpage](#) or call the Bureau of Forestry at 717-787-2925.

Shiple Energy Brings BioHeat to Customers, Launches Shiple Green Team

"Green" is in the air at Shiple Energy and they want you to know about it. [Shiple Energy](#) has made a commitment to increase environmental awareness throughout Central Pennsylvania.

With the recent addition of BioHeat and its introduction of the Shiple Green Team, an energy educational resource, Shiple Energy is working hard to help consumers learn more about renewable and more efficient energy options such as BioHeat.

What is BioHeat? BioHeat is an environmentally friendly fuel that comes from everyday products like soybeans, which in turn helps to support our nation's farmers and reduce our dependence on foreign oil.

"Our goal at Shiple Energy is to be on the forefront and do our part raising awareness on the importance of energy conservation," said Brian Kottcamp, president of Shiple Energy. "It's important that we as a company continually look for ways to reduce our dependence on foreign oil. The fact that BioHeat is also a renewable energy source is a win-win for our community."

Thinking of switching to BioHeat?

- BioHeat produces the same satisfying heat as "regular oil" at no additional cost to Shiple customers;
- Modifications do not have to be made to the burner or tank system in your home and no additional equipment is required; and
- Officials at the U.S. Department of Agriculture estimate that if everyone in the Northeast with an oil furnace used BioHeat, 50 million gallons of regular heating oil could be conserved.

Look for the Shiple Green Team to be spreading the word about BioHeat's benefits as well as energy conservation tips to your community over the next few months. The Green Team will be making appearances at local outings -- parades, fairs, sporting events and more - handing out treats and spreading goodwill.

If there is an event you would like the Shiple Green Team to attend, please contact Katie Jones at 717-848-4100 or by emailing kjones@shipleenergy.com to check on availability.

For more information on the benefits of BioHeat, visit the [Shiple Energy website](#).

Pittsburgh's David L. Lawrence Convention Center Proves Green Practices Impact

The [David L. Lawrence Convention Center](#), which is certified with a Gold LEED rating by the U.S.Green Building Council and maintains the distinction as the first "green" convention center, is the meeting, convention and exhibition industry's greatest proponent of green practices - and the convention center's programs and partnerships are proof.

Since the 1.5 million square foot building opened in 2003, the convention center's staff and visitors have focused on environmental health and safety factors with particular emphasis on the three R's: Recycling, Reusing and Reducing.

PA Environment Digest – Crisci Associates

In the past 19 months, the green practices at the DLCC have yielded the following results:

Recycle

- Approximately 203,940 pounds of paper and cardboard have been recycled which translates into conservation of approximately 1,727 trees and 713,790 gallons of water;
- The 8,860 pounds of glass and plastics recycled at the convention center save enough energy to burn 147 100-watt light bulbs for one year; and
- Through the recycling of 1,500 pounds of wooden pallets, the center conserved the amount of wood necessary to construct 75 new pallets.

Reuse

- The David L. Lawrence Convention Center's water reclamation system treated and re-used 5.08 million gallons of water which is enough water to run 103 households annually or 325,333 individual dishwashers.

Reduce

- The building's natural ventilation system, which eliminates the need for artificial heating and cooling, was in operation for 58 event days representing 33 percent of the Exhibit Hall event days.

Levy Restaurants, the official food service provider of the DLCC, has embraced and initiated green functions into its operations as well. Levy uses products that are biodegradable, compostable and disposable as part of their standard food and beverage functions. Examples of their initiatives include:

- Cups and plates are made of PLA - Poly Lactic Acid - a resin derived entirely from natural corn starches and is 100 percent annually renewable and fully compostable;
- Flatware is made of compostable potato starch;
- The packaging components of boxed lunches are 100 percent compostable including the box, napkins, cookie bag, flatware, sandwich and salad containers; and
- No trans fat fry oil is used in its food preparation; its oil is soy-based which is healthier and can be disposed of into the convention center's water reclamation system.

Additionally, Levy Restaurants is committed to helping the convention center's guests eat healthier and fresher food while reducing the need for "long-haul" fruits and vegetables from other parts of the country. They are participating in the Pennsylvania Association for Sustainable Agriculture and the "Buy Fresh, Buy Local" programs that work with Pennsylvania farmers and consumers to promote growing and purchasing locally-grown food.

Levy and the convention center are in the design phase of construct a hydroponic greenhouse in the facility to grow its own produce and herbs. Levy has used the convention center's outdoor roof-top planters for two years to grow herbs and vegetables.

"No other meeting facility in the world can offer its convention, exhibition and event planners as well as its visitors a comparable 'green' experience," said Mark Leahy, general manager of the David L. Lawrence Convention Center. "We take great pride in knowing that the design and engineering of the convention center along with our recycling, reuse and reduction efforts are helping to keep our environment viable for future generations."

The [David L. Lawrence Convention Center](#) is owned by the Sports and Exhibition Authority of Pittsburgh and Allegheny County and managed by Philadelphia-based, SMG.

Wanner Farm Digester to Generate Electric, Reduce Greenhouse Gases

Officials from The Wanner Farm, a 600 head dairy operation in Lancaster County, announced it has received funding from the [Sustainable Energy Fund](#) of Central Eastern Pennsylvania to complete the installation of an anaerobic digester to process dairy manure and generate electricity for dairy operations and possible resale to the power grid.

In July, construction is expected to be completed on an anaerobic digester that will convert animal waste to electricity at a rate of 1 million kilowatt hours per year. At that rate, it is enough to provide green electricity to approximately 40 houses in the PPL power grid for one year. In addition to providing “green” or renewable energy, the project will result in the creation of renewable energy credits and carbon credits.

“The Sustainable Energy Fund is pleased to partner with the Wanner Farm to finance an anaerobic digester for the production of green electricity, reduction of greenhouse gases, improved manure handling, reduced odor generation, and to provide bedding material for the dairy herd. These projects are a natural fit with the SEF’s mission of developing and investing in economically viable, energy related projects that promote environmentally sound and sustainable energy use,” said John Forsythe, SEF Project Manager.

Manure digesters are beginning to make financial sense for livestock producers, particularly during a time when locating and creating alternative energy sources have gained national and state focus. Aside from turning manure from a waste product into a renewable energy source, digesters are one way for large concentrated feeding operations to meet the environmental and public pressures of managing manure.

“The SEF of Central Eastern Pennsylvania is leading the way in efforts to create a diversified energy base by investing in technologies that will promote renewable energy and assist the agricultural community to manage manure wastes more efficiently”, stated Jennifer Hopkins, President of the Sustainable Energy Fund.

In addition to funding from the Sustainable Energy Fund, the Wanner Farm received an Energy Harvest Grant from the Department of Environmental Protection, and a Section 9006 Grant from the United States Department of Agriculture.

According to the farmer, Mr. Alfred Wanner, “programs like these help a farmer with the upfront costs of installing an anaerobic digester. As a farmer, I’m always interested in environmentally friendly projects. My up front capital requirements were reduced and I am able to recapture my investment in electricity cost savings over time.”

The Wanner farm is a family farm in operation since 1840. The Wanner farm provides dairy product to Land O’Lakes and Hershey Chocolates, among other brands. CNN produced a news piece on renewable energy and interviewed Mr. Wanner and John Forsyth of the Sustainable Energy Fund. The clip is supposed to be aired on CNN during the next week.

For more information, visit the [Sustainable Energy Fund website](#).

Energy Efficiency Workshop for Local Officials Set for May 24

Local officials are invited to a May 24 Energy Efficiency Workshop at the Westmoreland County Conservation District Education Center in Greensburg.

The free workshop will be held from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. and will feature presentations on guaranteed energy savings contracting, energy conservation at sewage and

drinking water plants, benefits of biodiesel for local governments, lighting efficiencies, windmills and solar panels and much more.

For more information send email to: Christie Sebek at: Christie@wcdpa.com or call 724-837-5271.

Peregrine Falcons and Osprey Return to Three Mile Island

Peregrine falcons and osprey have returned to their nests this spring at the Three Mile Island Generating Station in Londonderry Township, Dauphin County.

The peregrine falcon nest is on the Unit 1 reactor building and has produced young peregrines. The osprey nest is atop a meteorological tower and, for the first time, a second pair of osprey has nested south of the plant.

This spring marks the sixth straight year that the peregrines have nested at TMI and the fourth year for the osprey.

The peregrine falcon is widely known as the world's fastest flying bird. In Pennsylvania, peregrines nested on rocky cliffs overlooking the Delaware and Schuylkill rivers until about 1950. This species declined during the mid-1900s in the United States primarily because of DDT contamination.

The peregrine falcon is listed by the Game Commission as an endangered species. Over the past six years, the falcons at TMI have produced about a dozen offspring.

The Osprey is a fish-eating bird that is more than 20 inches long with a five and half foot wingspan. It has mainly white underparts and head, apart from a dark mask through the eye, and fairly uniformly brown upperparts.

Three Mile Island has notified the Game Commission and Department of Environmental Protection of the presence of the birds.

There are currently 20 nesting pairs of peregrine falcons present in Pennsylvania. Besides the pair on the reactor, pairs are present on several river bridges in the Philadelphia area, and in Harrisburg, Wilkes-Barre and Pittsburgh. The recovery of the peregrine is one of wildlife conservation's major success stories.

Southwestern PA Smart Growth Conference Set for May 18

“Focusing Growth for Regional Prosperity” will be the theme of the Seventh Annual [Southwestern PA Smart Growth Conference](#) in downtown Pittsburgh on May 18.

Attendees will hear progress reports and provide input to the on-going work of the three Smart Growth Community Committees—Leveling the Field for Redevelopment, Promoting Regionalism and Funding Public Transportation.

This year’s conference picks up from past conferences in serving again as a public comment session to the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission’s process for updating the region’s Long Range Transportation and Development Plan.

The keynote speaker will be Don Chen from [Smart Growth America](#).

The conference is presented by the University of Pittsburgh Institute of Politics, Sustainable Pittsburgh, Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission, Regional Coalition of Community Builders, Pittsburgh Partnership for Neighborhood Development and the Department of Community and Economic Development with additional support by the Richard King Mellon Foundation and The Heinz Endowments.

To register call 412-258-6642 or send email to info@sustainablepittsburgh.org .

Gaito Named to DEP's Office of Community Revitalization and Local Government

The Department of Environmental Protection this week announced the appointment of Jill Gaito as Deputy Secretary DEP's Office of Community Revitalization and Local Government Support.

Since August of 2006, Jill has served as the Acting Deputy Secretary in the Office of Community Revitalization and Local Government Support and has demonstrated her ability to manage this critical area of the department.

Prior to this, Jill served as the Director of the Brownfields Action Team in the Office of Community Revitalization and Local Government Support where she contributed to the success of many brownfield and redevelopment projects throughout Pennsylvania.

She was employed at Gannett Fleming for 11 years in a variety of technical and management positions before joining the department in January 2005. Jill functioned as the National Risk Assessment Leader for TerraSure Development, LLC, an affiliate of Gannett Fleming that provides guaranteed fixed price remediation to facilitate the economic recovery of environmentally impacted properties. She also worked as technical operations manager for Laboratory Resources Inc. and as a project manager at NUS Environmental Corp.

Gaito holds an MBA from Robert Morris College and a BS in Chemistry from Gannon University.

Help Wanted: 10,000 Friends of Pennsylvania

The non-profit group [10,000 Friends of Pennsylvania](#) is seeking a new President and CEO to lead the alliance of organizations and individuals from across the state committed to land use and investment policies that strengthen Pennsylvania's communities.

[Details are available online.](#)

Feature

Shaver's Creek Uses New Academic Partnerships to Extend its Offerings

After 30 years of outreach, research and education, [Shaver's Creek Environmental Center](#) is coming out of the woods, so to speak.

From summer day camps, to the Outdoor School, to the annual Birding Cup event, to the Raptor Center (with 20 birds of prey), the center is already on the map when it comes to attracting the public on all-things outdoor. Now, a series of initiatives exemplifies a new level of engagement at Shaver's Creek, with added opportunities for the center's many loyal constituency groups -- Penn State undergrads, schools, youth and the community.

"Things have been evolving at Shaver's Creek, and we have a very good foundation from which we can express what we do so well," said Mark McLaughlin, director of Shaver's Creek.

PA Environment Digest – Crisci Associates

That foundation has served as an inspiration for many. For example, when Ellen Will, assistant program director, conducted a study of more than 200 former Shaver's Creek interns, she found that the Shaver's Creek experience helped shape their career choices and outlooks on the environment, with almost 70 percent going on to work in an environmental or educational field.

Shaver's Creek is seeking to build on that impact, with an intensified effort to partner with Penn State academic departments. These new partnerships aim to create opportunities for students to gain teaching experience, leadership skills and environmental knowledge, in addition to college credit.

"We have had a long relationship with the College of Health and Human Development, but we are also working to establish opportunities for students in engineering, landscape architecture, architecture and horticulture, to name a few," said McLaughlin.

Robert Burkholder, associate professor of English, has worked with Shaver's Creek on his Penn State Wilderness Literature Field Institute, a course that combines backpacking, white water rafting and rock climbing with the reading and interpretation of literature.

"In 2000, when I initially had the idea of teaching a literature course wrapped up in an adventure, Shaver's Creek, and specifically Mark McLaughlin, were there to not only support and help but also to help teach the course," said Burkholder. "Since then I have used Shaver's Creek to help with freshman seminars, summer seminars for high school teachers and interdisciplinary graduate seminars, and whatever I have done with them has benefited from their enthusiasm, knowledge and professionalism."

Last year, Shaver's Creek hosted 29 different courses -- an increase of 18 percent from the previous year; 657 Penn State students from 45 different majors in 13 of Penn State's academic colleges took credit classes; 310 noncredit programs served the needs of 9,643 students.

Another new scholarly activity focuses on nature writing. In the recently launched Shaver's Creek Ecological Reflections Project, two visiting authors are invited each year to the center to reflect and write about eight designated spots.

The writings are being collected in a journal that will grow each year -- with the intention of continuing for 100 years. The inaugural authors were Ian Marshall, Penn State Altoona professor of English and environmental studies, and author and naturalist Scott Weidensaul. Weidensaul has written more than two dozen books on natural history, including the Pulitzer Prize finalist "Living on the Wind: Across the Hemisphere with Migratory Birds."

Weidensaul said of the project: "I was really drawn to the idea by the timescale of it -- the idea of observing a piece of the landscape over the course of multiple human lifetimes. By its very nature, this project will produce a fuller understanding of how the landscape at Shaver's Creek changes with time."

In addition to expanded relations with scholars and academic colleges, Shaver's Creek is serving as a connector for other, like-minded Penn State organizations. McLaughlin recently initiated the formation of the Museum Group, a committee comprised of representatives from the All-Sports Museum, Palmer Museum of Art, Frost Entomology Museum, Matson Anthropology Museum, Earth and Mineral Sciences Museum, Center for Sustainability and Pasto Agricultural Museum.

The goal of the Museum Group is to collectively provide some strategic vision to each other's activities. "We're hoping to share resources, explore grant opportunities and basically help each other out," said McLaughlin.

And for Pennsylvania kindergarten to fifth-grade teachers, Shaver's Creek worked with WPSU to produce a [new iWonder series](#), which provides standards-based environmental lessons to use in the classroom.

Long before the release of Al Gore's "An Inconvenient Truth," and before advertising giant JWT added "environmental causes" to its list of "70 Things to Watch in 2007," Shaver's Creek has championed eco-friendliness. Summer day campers are required to bring no waste lunches; injured birds of prey are tended; and visitors can learn about watershed life cycles and how to reduce their carbon footprint.

Recently, the center has stepped up its effort to promote skills for minimizing the public's impact on the outdoors. Last year it became an organizational partner of the Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics, an international organization dedicated to inspiring responsible outdoor recreation through education, research and partnerships. A team of master educators and trainers is available to set up discussions or workshops for community groups.

Also, to encourage more walk-in visitors, Shaver's Creek made two important enhancements: It reopened its wetlands boardwalk, a helical pier that provides an up-close and personal view of wetlands wildlife, and it eliminated its entry fee.

"After we made that change, walk-in visitors increased by 50 percent," said McLaughlin. In 2006, the center had 6,100 visitors; membership also shot up 16 percent.

For more information, visit [Shaver's Creek Environmental Center](#).

Feature

Are You Ready? Neotropical Birds are Coming North, Black Bears Have Emerged from Hibernation

By Joe Kosack

Wildlife Conservation Education Specialist
Game Commission

Winter has finally let go of the Commonwealth and, according to the Game Commission, [neotropical songbird migrations](#) are underway, and [bears](#) are on the prowl. Wild turkeys have resumed gobbling, and hummingbirds will soon be back.

Spring is making up for lost time, and that stubborn chill in the air finally is gone.

Spring is Pennsylvania's annual renaissance. It marks the start of increased animal activity, the emergence of plants and leaves, the return of exciting nighttime noises and the coming of warmer air. It is a time to take notice; to stop, look and listen; to take it all in.

"Our countryside is teeming with life, and Pennsylvanians can expect to see and hear more in their yards and afield as spring continues to progress," said Cal DuBrock, Game Commission Wildlife Management Bureau director. "It's a great time to be outdoors, but it's also a time to consider make adjustments to your property to reduce its appeal to unwanted wildlife and to heighten its attractiveness to desirable species.

"Few people, for instance, want their properties to be bear magnets, because bears can be destructive and somewhat intimidating. But many residents are interested in putting

out hummingbird feeders and keeping their seed feeders and suet out to pull in migrating rose-breasted grosbeaks and possibly, a red-headed woodpecker. Compromises can be made to limit the unwanted and attract spring's more popular species. But it does take some planning, and often requires additional expense and effort."

People who have been using seed feeders and ground-feeding over winter always tend to attract grackles - often accompanied by red-winged blackbirds, starlings and cowbirds - at this time of year. They will quickly dominate your feeding area and yard if you don't intervene. Chasing them works for a little while, but if you keep feeding, they will adapt quickly to your chases by flying into nearby trees and waiting for you to go back inside. They are intelligent birds.

What works is shutting down feeding operations until they move on - usually a two-week or so wait - or switching seeds. Grackles love black-oil sunflower seeds, millet and shelled or cracked corn. Switching to thistle and safflower, and suspending your suet cake holder so starlings and grackles cannot land on it to eat also will help.

Another problem that emerges each spring for bird-feeders is black bears, that is, if you're in black bear range, which includes the majority of Pennsylvania's 67 counties. Bears come out of hibernation seeking big caloric meals. The more protein, the better. Of course, black-oil sunflower seeds and suet can satisfy that hankering. And bears hone in on those feeder commodities in the spring like a parched camel heading for a desert oasis.

Link: [Things To Do To Avoid Attracting Bears](#)

"If you live in bear country, and you've had a visit in the recent past, you're surely susceptible to another bear feeder raid," said DuBrock. "If you haven't seen a bear on your property in some time and want to feed bears, consider putting out inexpensive feeders. Then, if a bear returns, your loss won't be as expensive."

When bears keep coming back to your property in the spring, the only recourse may be to pull your feeders for a month or so. Even then, though, there's no guarantee bears won't return to your place, or your neighbor's. That's why spring bird-feeding is always a tough decision for some people, especially those who have lost expensive feeders to bears. And, yes, bears have already been hitting feeders this spring in Pennsylvania.

Early spring is a great time to experiment with placing fruit offerings out for songbirds. The cooler air keeps fruit from spoiling quickly. Halved oranges stuck on a corn-spike feeder are capable of pulling in northern orioles, catbirds and woodpeckers. Raisins placed in a tray feeder will draw everything from bluebirds and robins to mockingbirds and cardinals. Scarlet tanagers are partial to watermelon.

Another group of neotropicals that currently is leaving its southern wintering grounds to nest in Pennsylvania or further north is warblers. Primarily consummate insect-eaters, during migration warblers will eat orange halves, peeled bananas, baked goods, suet, peanut-butter and mealworms. These offerings may be used singly or combined anytime from mid April to mid May. After that, the migration is pretty much over, and those warblers remaining in Pennsylvania have a substantial supply of insects at their disposal.

In spring, songbirds such as rose-breasted grosbeaks, rufous-sided towhees, mockingbirds and brown thrashers will come to feeders, particularly those offering black-oil sunflower seeds and suet. Grosbeaks and towhees prefer the sunflower seeds; grosbeaks perch to eat and towhees typically scratch around on the ground below the feeder.

Thrashers eat both sunflower seeds and suet, and scratch for their meals. They have a penchant for popped popcorn. Thrashers prefer backyards with forsythia bushes, other shrubs or forested coverage. Mockingbirds will eat suet, so long as they can find it.

"One of the biggest challenges in drawing spring birds is placing your feeders where birds just passing through can find them," DuBrock said. "It's best to place your feeders or offerings near cover in spring, because birds are more apt to be in shrubs and trees.

"Yards with established feeders have an edge over others because they already have birds, and birds attract birds. Appropriate habitat and habitat diversity also will make your property more attractive, as will a backyard pond or small stream, or birdbath. Water is a time-proven bird magnet."

The general location of the pond/birdbath should be in a low-traffic area of the yard and devoid of hiding places for housecats. Limit or eliminate the bath's exposure to sun, which will keep the water cooler - and less prone to evaporate - and fresher. It's also best to avoid placing water sources - or feeders - near large picture windows, to reduce bird take-off and in-flight collisions. Birds cannot see glass and often are drawn to window reflections of the horizon and other birds.

Ruby-throated hummingbirds also will be returning to Pennsylvania in late April or early May. May 1 is the "get your feeder(s) out" date, but it probably won't hurt to start a little earlier in counties along the Mason-Dixon Line, or if warmer air chases the arctic chill that has left the Commonwealth unseasonably cold this April.

Hummingbird feeders should be filled with a solution containing one part granulated sugar and four parts water. The mixture should be boiled and cooled before filling a feeder reservoir. Store any unused feed mixture in the refrigerator until it's needed. Commercial feed mixtures also are available. Honey should not be used in feeders; it ferments.

Hummingbird feeders should be placed in a somewhat shaded area near a flower bed by suspending it with string from a tree branch or homemade stand. Smear petroleum jelly on the string to keep ants from reaching the feeder. If the feeder fails to attract birds, move it, or place a few more in the yard.

Backyard bird-feeding in spring can provide plenty of surprises and help residents become better acquainted with the species that visit or reside on their properties. It can be exciting and entertaining, an educational and engrossing experience. But just remember, bird feeders are appealing to everything from hummingbirds to black bears. That translates to rewards and risks. You have to decide if it's worth it.

Quick Clips

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

[Audubon Exhibit at Ned Smith Center – Winging It](#)

[Teen is Years Beyond Youth in Protecting Environment](#)

[Multi-County Earth Day Educates Students](#)

[Editorial: Great PA Cleanup Shows We All Have a Part to Play](#)

[Alle-Kiski Valley Residents Come Together to Clean Up](#)

[Taking a Child Fishing Always a Fun Time](#)

[Editorial: Celebrate Earth Day, Promote Smart Growth](#)
[Bridgeville Brownfield Complex Proposed](#)
[Legislator Takes PGC to Task Over Deer Management](#)
[Notebook: Commission OKs Increased Deer Harvest](#)
[Lawmakers Debate Deer Management](#)
[Bills Might Cut State Reliance on Oil](#)
[School District Launches Hybrid School Bus](#)
[Editorial: Climate Change](#)
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[Editorial: A Warming Twist](#)
[How Eager Are We to Fight Global Warming?](#)
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[Herons Find a Home](#)
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[Power Is Blowin' in the Wind](#)
[Gamesa Pushing Public Forums](#)
[USDA Announces \\$19 Million Available for Renewable Energy Grants](#)
[Power Rate Surges Haven't Hit Pittsburgh Yet](#)
[Feds Push New Power Lines in California, Mid-Atlantic States](#)
[DeWeese Draws Line on Power Line Project](#)
[Energy Expo Spotlights Ways to Lower Usage](#)
[A Dim Future for Standard Lightbulbs](#)
[Library to be Eco-Friendly Beacon to Community](#)
[Rehabbing a Green Home in Philadelphia's Inner City](#)
[Green Housing Residents Keep More of Their Green](#)
[Pittsburgh Stores encourage Customers to Recycle Plastics](#)
[Group Questions DEP's Handling of Suit, Permit](#)
[Allegheny County Buys Link to Hiking, Bike Trail](#)
[Slow But Sure, Bike Allegheny Trail Nears Completion](#)
[Black Fly Program to Include More Counties](#)

Watershed NewsClips

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

[Sojourns, Ready Set Paddle!](#)
[Fish Agency Approves Two Easements](#)
[Editorial: Transferable Tax Credit Program Would Cut Bay's Farm Pollution](#)
[Students Create Public Service Announcement on Stormwater](#)
[TU Chapter Finds More Volunteers](#)
[NY Reservoirs Seen Holding Key to Flood Control on Delaware](#)
[Conservation Group Concerned About Delaware River](#)
[Lawrence County Recognized for Flood, Pollution Steps](#)
[Chesapeake Bay Out of Shape](#)
[Wetlands Fest to Mark Centennial of Wildwood Trails](#)
[Wildwood Lake to Celebrate Centennial](#)
[McKean Conservation District Hopes for More Funding](#)

Regulations

The Department of Environmental Protection published the [proposed Clean Air Interstate Rule](#) for comment and a [notice of a proposed change](#) to the ozone nonattainment area designation for the State College and [Cambria County](#) areas. The Allegheny Health Department published notice of a hearing on its [Clean Air Plan](#).

[Pennsylvania Bulletin – April 28, 2007](#)

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

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

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

Technical Guidance & Permits

No new guidance documents were published this week.

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

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

Calendar of Upcoming Events

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

- **April 30** – **CANCELLED**. Senate Community, Economic & Recreational Development Committee hearing on Governor’s Energy Independence Initiative and DCED budget with Secretaries Yablonsky (DCED) and McGinty (DEP). Hearing Room 1, North Office. 9:00.
- **April 30** – Senate Appropriations Committee meets to consider [Senate Bill 105](#) (Musto-D-Luzerne) authorizing the Environmental Quality Board to hire independent counsel. Room 461. 12:30.
- **May 1** – Senate Environmental Resources and Energy Committee meets to consider [Senate Bill 782](#) (MJWhite-R-Venango) that would increase fees on nuclear power plants and for transport escorts; and [Senate Bill 815](#) (Musto-D-Luzerne) that would amend the Storage Tank Act to extend the sunset dates on certain programs. Room 8E-B East Wing. 9:30.
- **May 1** – Senate Game and Fisheries Committee informational meeting on the 2006 Annual Report of the Game Commission. Room 8E-A, East Wing. 11:30.
- **May 1** – DEP [State Water Plan Statewide Water Resources Committee](#), Critical Water Planning Area Subcommittee meeting. 10th Floor Rachel Carson Building. 10:00.

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- **May 8** – House Game and Fisheries Committee meets (agenda TBA). Room 205 Ryan Building. 9:00.
- **May 10** – [Delaware River Basin Commission](#) meeting to discuss, among other topics, the status of the [Flood Mitigation Task Force Report](#). West Trenton, NJ.
- **May 11** – **CHANGE**. DEP’s [Delaware Regional Water Resources Committee](#) will [convene on its alternate location](#): Wissahickon Valley Watershed Association, 12 Morris Road, Ambler. 9:30.
- **May 14** – Senate Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee Listening Session. Mercer County Conservation District, 747 Greenville Road, Mercer. 10:00.
- **May 15** – Department of Community and Economic Development [public hearing](#) on the state Weatherization Assistance Program. Conference Room 4W-1, 4th Floor, Keystone Building. 10:00.
- **May 17** – **CANCELLED**. DEP [Small Water Systems Technical Assistance Center Advisory Board](#) meeting. Next scheduled meeting is August 16.
- **May 21** – Environmental Issues Forum. [Joint Air and Water Pollution Control and Conservation Committee](#) meets to hear a presentation on the federal Abandoned Mine Land Fund. Hearing Room 2, North Office. 12:00.

[DEP Calendar of Events](#)

[Watershed Events](#) (courtesy [PA Organization for Watersheds & Rivers](#))

[Environmental Education Workshop/Training Calendar](#)
(courtesy [PA Center for Environmental Education](#))

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

Helpful Web Links

[PA Environment Digest Video Blog](#)

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

[DEP Press Releases](#) [DEP Advisory Committee Meetings & Agendas](#)

[DCNR Resource Magazine](#) [DCNR Press Releases](#)

[Fish & Boat Commission Press Releases](#) [Game Commission Press Releases](#)

Stories Invited

Send your stories about environmental issues, programs and positive actions to **PA Environment Digest** - DHess@CrisciAssociates.com or go to www.PaEnvironmentDigest.com .

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