

# — PA — Environment Digest

*An Update on  
Environmental  
Issues in  
Pennsylvania*

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Edited By David E. Hess, Holston & Crisci

May 22, 2006

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## Primary Election Results Mean Leadership Changes in 2007

The two highest ranking Republican Leaders in the Senate lost their bids to return to the Senate in Tuesday's Primary Election due to the controversy over the pay raise, and other losses may cause changes in a variety of committee chairs in 2007.

President Pro Tempore Robert Jubelirer (R-Blair) and Senate Majority Leader David Brightbill (R-Lebanon), both lost their seats to Primary opponents setting in motion a change in Leadership for the Senate in 2007.

Sen. Brightbill is a former chair of the Senate Environmental Resources and Energy Committee where he was instrumental in passing legislation establishing Pennsylvania's award-winning Land Recycling Program, adopting major changes to the state's Air Pollution Control Act to comply with the federal Clean Air Act, creating the Small Water Systems Technical and Management Assistance Program and putting a \$350 million water infrastructure bond issue on the ballot, adding Pine Creek, the Yellow Breeches and Tulpehocken Creeks to the state's Scenic Rivers System, creating the Environmental Education Program and Fund, establishing DEP's Agricultural Advisory Board, requiring compensation for structures and the replacement of water supplies affected by underground coal mining and expanding environmental cleanup coverage under the Storage Tank and Spill Prevention Act, among other environmental legislation.

With the loss of Senators Jubelirer and Brightbill and other retirements in the Senate Republican Caucus, the remaining leaders in order of Leadership responsibilities are-- Majority Whip Jeff Piccola (R-Dauphin), Caucus Secretary Bob Robbins (R-Mercer), Caucus Administrator Mary Jo White (R-Venango), the current chair of the Senate Environmental Resources and Energy Committee, and Policy Chairman Joe Scarnati (R-Warren).

Along with pending changes in Leadership, the Senate Republican Chair of the Appropriations Committee, selected by the Caucus, will also be a new face in 2007.

The retirement of Sen. Joe Conti (R-Bucks) has already caused a change in the chairmanship of the Senate Game and Fisheries Committee who is now Sen. John Pippy (R-Allegheny).

Democrats in the Senate picked up one seat with the win by Chester County commissioner Andrew Dinniman, who replaces the late Sen. Bob Thompson.

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But retirements and loss of 11 committee chairmen in the House also means there may be a domino affect in store for committee assignments there as well.

For example, the chair of the House Game and Fisheries Committee, Rep. Bruce Smith (R-York) is retiring and the vice-chair of the Committee Rep. Teresa Forcier (R-Crawford) lost her Primary bid.

[Rep. Peter Zug](#) (R-Lebanon), who has been active on the Chesapeake Bay Commission and was prime sponsor of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Education Program Act, was also defeated.

By custom, House committee assignments are done largely on seniority, which means members with the most service generally get to pick which committees they chair.

There will be at least 44 new members of the House when it reconvenes in 2007.

Changes in leadership and committee chairs always makes navigating the General Assembly a little more uncertain.

Stay tuned for more! As one long-time observer said, “We don’t have a play in the playbook for this one.”

### Session Schedule

The Senate cancelled session for the week of May 22 and will return to session with the House on June 5

### On the Hill

- On the Senate, House Agenda
- Senate/House Bills Moving

### Other News

- PUC Expresses Concerns With DEP Mercury Rule, EQB Asks for Comments
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- PA American Water to Undertake Ecological Restoration Project
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- Audubon Sets May 27 Important Bird Area Cleanup in Harrisburg
- New Web Page Provides Important Information About Sinkholes
- Southwest PA Air Quality Partnership Rewards Park and Ride Commuters
- Two PA Groups Honored for Climate and Ozone Protection
- DCNR Says – Take A Hike! May 27- June 4

**See & Hear**

- DEP, Game Commission Host Falcon Banding Webcast May 24

**Feature**

- Part II– Smart Growth Opportunities In PA - Regional Growth and Planning Opportunities in Southwestern PA, By Jonathan R. Farrell

Go To the Watershed Awareness Month Events Section

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**On the Hill**

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**On the Senate, House Agenda/Bills Moving**

**Calendars**

The House will start with these bills of interest on its June 5 Calendar-- [House Bill 1588](#) providing for the fluoridation of public water; and [House Bill 2067](#) setting limits on state spending through a constitutional amendment, and [Senate Bill 868](#) increasing the forest land in-lieu of tax payment.

**Committees**

The Joint Legislative Air and Water Pollution Control and Conservation Committee holds another in its series of Environmental Issues Forums to hear presentation on LaFarge Alternative Energy Initiative.

**On the Governor’s Desk**

Gov. Rendell signed into law [Senate Bill 723](#) (Wenger-R-Lancaster) providing for definitions and legislative report under the Agricultural Area Security law this week.

**In Other News**

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**PUC Expresses Concerns With DEP Mercury Rule, EQB Asks for Comments**

The Public Utility Commission and citizen members of the Environmental Quality Board this week expressed concerns about the lack of justification and background studies needed to respond to objections raised about DEP’s proposed rule to reduce mercury emissions from power plants.

The comments were made as the 20-member Environmental Quality Board formally voted to ask the public and interested parties to comment on [DEP’s proposed mercury rule](#). *(A summary of other EQB actions is available in Regulations section.)*

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Bill Hall, representing PUC Chairman Wendell F. Holland on the Board, put a statement on the record saying the PUC has serious concerns about DEP's proposed rule because it has not been proven that the additional costs imposed by the rule will provide any additional health benefits.

The PUC was also concerned the rule would reduce electric generating capacity in the Commonwealth and, as a fundamental matter, asked why DEP felt it was necessary to go beyond the national mercury rule already in place.

And in a specific comment, Chairman Holland wanted the Board to know that he finds the excessive rhetoric and personal attacks on legislators (by environmentalists) that have been part of the public debate on this rule are "undesirable" and noted there are better ways to resolve differences.

During the PUC's annual [briefing on electric reliability](#) on May 24, the issue of how a Pennsylvania-only mercury rule and its potential to force the early retirement of 20 percent of the coal-fired electric generating capacity will be discussed.

Walter Heine, chairman of DEP's Citizens Advisory Council, also commented on the rhetoric and lack of having all the information needed to make a judgment on the rule in one place.

Both Heine and Jolene Chinchilli, another CAC member, suggested DEP produce what they called a "decision document" after public comments are received on the rule to put in one place the legal and environmental rationale for the rule, all the data, modeling and environmental studies used to justify the rule and respond to comments, along with the traditional comment and response document.

Heine and Chinchilli said having this kind of record is the only way to try to resolve the significant contradictions between what DEP is saying about the proposed rule and comments by labor, business and coal industry representatives.

A [coalition of labor, business and the coal industry](#) reiterated its support for legislation that would reduce mercury emissions from power plants by 86 percent and its opposition to DEP's proposed rule that they said would not provide any greater protection to the health of Pennsylvania's children, but will cost jobs and increase the cost of electricity.

"The decision Pennsylvania faces is not whether to reduce mercury emissions from power plants, but how," said Douglas L. Biden, President, Electric Power Generation Association. "Our labor, business, and coal industry coalition supports bipartisan legislation that would reduce mercury emissions by 86 percent from Pennsylvania power plants without penalizing our economy or causing significant increases in what consumers pay for electricity."

"Today the Board asked for public comments on the DEP rule and we intend to take the opportunity to tell them that for the past year neither DEP nor any other group presented any information to show there would be any increase in health benefits from the rule DEP proposed over the legislation we support," said Donald Siegel, International Vice President, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers. "On the contrary, DEP's proposed rule is a lose, lose, lose for Pennsylvania."

"The DEP rule will mean the loss of good-paying jobs as power plants are prematurely retired and power plant owners are forced to buy coal from other states, all for no demonstrated increase in health benefits," said Edward D. Yankovich, International Vice President, United Mine Workers of America.

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“The risk of power plants switching to coal mined in other states is very real,” said George L. Ellis, President of the Pennsylvania Coal Association. “If DEP’s rule is adopted, power generators may have no choice but to consider switching to out-of-state coal and Pennsylvania would lose good-paying jobs.”

“The premature retirement of Pennsylvania’s coal powered generating capacity and the forced investment of \$1 billion in pollution control technology for no discernible health benefit as a result of DEP’s rule can’t help but increase the cost of electricity for businesses and homeowners in the Commonwealth,” said Gene Barr, Vice President Political and Regulatory Affairs, Pennsylvania Chamber of Business and Industry.

Among the issues raised by the coalition about the DEP rule are:

**No Greater Protection of Children’s Health:** Neither DEP nor any other group has presented any information showing any net positive health benefits to children’s health from adopting DEP’s proposed rule. In fact, modeling by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency shows there is virtually no difference in mercury deposition in Pennsylvania between the legislation supported by the coalition and eliminating all mercury emissions from all U.S. power plants.

**Higher Consumer Electricity Costs:** Older, smaller Pennsylvania power plants representing 20 percent of the state’s coal generating capacity are at risk of early retirement under DEP’s proposed rule which would result in the loss of jobs and markets for Pennsylvania coal. Closing these plants would also increase electricity prices as the supply of electricity decreases, a concern raised by PJM, operator of the regional electric grid. It will also result in the increased use of scarce and expensive natural gas as a replacement fuel for coal, further raising the cost of electricity to Pennsylvania consumers.

**No Incentive for Early or Over-Control of Emissions:** DEP’s proposed rule offers no incentive for early reductions of mercury emissions, and no incentive to over-control emissions because DEP proposes to just take credits for any over-control made by power plants and give them to other plants, including competitors, that may not comply with the mercury rule. This system is simply unfair in Pennsylvania’s competitive electricity market.

Ninety percent of Pennsylvania’s generating capacity is already on track to install advanced air pollution control equipment that will reduce mercury and other air pollution, according to DEP.

**Increasing Pollution from Other States:** Because Pennsylvania is part of a large competitive electric power market, power is bought and sold across a 13 state area and the lowest price wins. DEP’s Pennsylvania-only rule will not only force the early retirement of coal plants here, but increase costs for Pennsylvania power plants. The rule could act as an economic incentive to expand generation in other states that do not have the same restrictions as the DEP rule in areas to our west and south and as a result increase air pollution coming into Pennsylvania.

**No Alleged Hotspots:** No information was presented by DEP or any other group identifying any mercury hotspots around Pennsylvania’s power plants. In fact, studies by

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the Brookhaven National Laboratory attempting to specifically identify “hotspots” by measuring mercury deposition around existing power plants, including one in Pennsylvania, determined there is no evidence “hotspots” exist. Another study around Steubenville, Ohio demonstrates that mercury emissions travel 400 miles or more.

**Mercury in Sensitive Populations:** The U.S. Centers for Disease Control conducted a nationwide study of women of childbearing age, infants and young children which did not find a single case where mercury levels approached those required to cause adverse health effects.

A 160 pound individual would have to eat 22.8 pounds of catfish or 15.5 pounds of freshwater trout a week, each week for 70 years or more before any health consequences from mercury are observed, according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s Benchmark Dose Limit.

According to the Department of Environmental Protection, the health risk from mercury is indirect. The risk comes from eating fish that contains mercury, not from inhaling mercury in the air around us.

The coalition supports bipartisan state legislation (Senate Bill 1201 and House Bill 2610) that would make Pennsylvania part of the national mercury emissions reduction program, the first mercury reduction program by any country, and require Pennsylvania power plants to reduce mercury emissions by 64 percent by 2010 and by a total of 86 percent by 2018.

The coalition supporting the proposal includes the:

- United Mine Workers of America;
- International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers;
- Pennsylvania Coal Association;
- Electric Power Generation Association;
- Pennsylvania Chamber of Business and Industry;
- Pennsylvania Chemical Industry Council;
- Associated Petroleum Industries of Pennsylvania; and the
- Pennsylvania Manufacturers Association.

A third Senate Environmental Resources and Energy Committee [hearing has been rescheduled for June 6](#) (from May 24) due to a change in the Senate’s session schedule.

The purpose of the hearing will be to recall DEP Secretary Kathleen McGinty for further questioning about her apparent misrepresentation of both the position of the United Mine Workers of America and the Pennsylvania Coal Association on a mercury regulation, as well as the timing of when the Secretary learned of these positions.

**NewsClips:** [Senator White to DEP – Stop the Dishonesty](#)  
[DEP Statements “Outrageous, Misleading and Offensive”](#) United Mine Workers of America President Roberts Says  
[PA Coal Association Sets Record Straight; Calls DEP Testimony Untrue](#)  
[United Mine Workers of America Letter to Gov. Rendell](#)  
[Toxicologist Says Women, Children Not At Increased Risk Eating Fish](#)  
[Bipartisan Bill Will Reduce Power Plant Mercury Emissions by 86%](#)  
[Labor, Business, Coal Industry Coalition Supports Bipartisan Mercury Bill](#)

[House Environmental Committee Hears Comments on Reducing Mercury](#)

**PUC Begins Discussion on Options When Electricity Price Caps Come Off**

The Public Utility Commission this week established a process for discussing the issues and possible policy action that would mitigate potential future significant increases in electricity prices when price caps come off in 2009 and 2010.

"Combating potentially significant electricity price increases at the expiration of rate caps approved under electricity restructuring proceedings presents difficult policy choices," said Commissioner Terrance J. Fitzpatrick in his motion initiating the discussion. "However, these choices will not get easier by waiting until the reality of higher prices is upon us. While we cannot predict with certainty the future course of energy prices, a number of factors are currently pushing up prices for all forms of energy. By beginning to prepare now, it is clear that we will have many more tools to combat the social and economic impacts of a significant increase in electricity rates."

Commission Chairman Wendell F. Holland said, "We must begin in earnest the conversations about how to best protect the public interest as the transition period to full retail competition ends. We must all work together to develop a plan to alleviate future shock for electric consumers and add stability to electric prices. At the same time, we must work to educate consumers about energy prices and the need for conservation measures so that they may begin to prepare now for volatile energy costs."

Commissioner Bill Shane said in a statement, "There are other elements at work in the wholesale energy market which will cause 'competitive' wholesale electric charges to be even higher than they are at the present time. I am sure that the vast majority of Pennsylvania's consumers know little or nothing about these elements. They will continue to look to this Commission for answers and solutions as they have in the past."

The Commission voted unanimously to begin a process that may lead to the development of policies to mitigate higher electricity prices. Most Pennsylvania electricity consumers are paying capped generation rates and will continue to do so until the end of 2009 or 2010.

Recent events in Pennsylvania, Maryland and Delaware have shown that consumers of electricity can be exposed to sudden dramatic price increases when long-term generation caps expire. The long-term caps were agreed upon during state restructuring proceedings.

An en banc hearing to consider the ideas and perspectives of consumers, competitive suppliers, utilities and others is scheduled for June 22, 2006. Written comments on the issues should be filed with the Commission by June 15, 2006. The Commission may use the information gathered during this process as a basis for action.

The Commission identified some options to address the potential significant increases, including the possibility of phasing in higher energy prices over several years. One option includes gradually raising retail prices prior to the expiration of the rate caps and setting aside the additional money collected, plus interest and using it to reduce the magnitude of retail price increases when the caps expire.

The Commission said it is looking for comment on that idea plus other creative approaches that may assist in addressing potential significant price increases. The



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Commission also asked those who wish to participate in the process to address specific topics such as actions needed to:

- Educate consumers;
- Encourage conservation;
- Reduce peak demand for electricity;
- Consider alternatives for avoiding abrupt, large price increases;
- Review issues concerning programs to assist low-income customers; and
- Review interplay with the wholesale energy markets.

In his statement, Commissioner Shane also asked that the following issues be addressed: use of multiyear contracts for default energy service supplies; impact of hourly default service rates; identify solutions to system congestion; and estimating the marginal cost of air conditioning in July, August and September.

[The text of motions and statements are available online.](#)

### PA Energy Development Authority Proposes Project Financing Guidelines

The Pennsylvania Energy Development Authority published draft project financing guidelines for alternative and renewable energy project funded by the Authority for public comment on May 20. ([Formal notice.](#))

Comments on the plan are due July 19.

The draft guidelines outline the Authority's policy goals, generating operating principles and investments priorities.

[The guidelines are available online.](#)

For more information, visit the [PA Energy Development Authority webpage.](#)

### Geisinger Medical System Becomes New EPA H2E Partner

The Geisinger Health System has joined [Hospitals for a Healthy Environment](#) (H2E) as a Partner and is committing to setting priorities and goals to reduce its environmental impact on patients, workers, and the surrounding community.

Geisinger, which is based in Danville, Pa., has three hospitals, 50 clinics, and 20 other facilities located in 38 of Pennsylvania's 67 counties, and employs approximately 10,000 people.

Geisinger is nearly mercury-free, and its current priority is reducing municipal and infectious waste.

[A list of other Pennsylvania H2E Partners is online.](#)

### Small Business Reduces Hazardous Waste/Energy Costs \$35,000 a Year

KMA Remarketing Corp. in Dubois, Clearfield County, refurbishes used medical equipment and through its efforts on pollution prevention, reduced its annual cost for energy and disposing of hazardous wastes by \$35,000 a year.

The Pollution Prevention Assistance Account loan program helped KMA Remarketing save money by reducing the amount of paint, primer, thinner and solvent required in their painting operation. The company will use the funding to install new High Volume Low Pressure (HVLP) spray guns and spray booth.



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The project will also reduce its hazardous waste disposal costs and improve the efficiency of their painting operation. The project will also allow the company to have an increase in production because the change in process eliminates the reworking of finished parts due to overspray.

In addition, the company projects annual savings of 2,446 MCF (thousand cubic feet) of natural gas as well as a reduction in labor and rework costs. Combined, these savings are projected to save the company approximately \$35,375 annually. The company has projected that the payback will be approximately 1 year.

For more information, visit the [Pollution Prevention Assistance Account webpage](#) or contact Gene DeVecchio at 717-772-8951 or by sending e-mail to [gdelvecchi@state.pa.us](mailto:gdelvecchi@state.pa.us).

### PA American Water to Undertake Ecological Restoration Project



Pennsylvania American Water is launching an [ecological restoration initiative](#) on the grounds of its suburban Pittsburgh solids dewatering plant, on Becks Run Road in the Carrick neighborhood of the City of Pittsburgh.

The project aims to better balance a portion of an urban ecosystem by eliminating non-native or invasive plant species and replacing them with plants, trees, and shrubs native to the region.

Invasive species, left unchecked, can imbalance an ecosystem by eradicating plants that birds and animals rely on for food and shelter. Utilizing native trees, flowering plants and shrubs will help to restore natural habitats and provide sustenance for wildlife, such as wild turkey or rabbits.

The display garden bed, on the company's property along Becks Run Road, will be one of the most visible components of the project. Native plants, trees, shrubs and wildflowers in this display garden will add beauty and visual interest, inherent to Penn's Woods, along a busy urban thoroughfare.

Native plants require less maintenance and grooming and should grow heartily since they thrive in local soil and can weather successfully the local climate. The roots of the plants will also aid in controlling soil erosion, which presents pollution threats for waterways.

“American Water has developed a program to encourage incorporating habitat diversity on any of the existing company properties,” said the project coordinator, Pennsylvania American Water Quality Specialist Tom Trok, who works at the Hays Mine facilities.

“The project at the Hays Mine Plant is a response to this program. Complementing the obvious benefits of helping to balance the ecosystem in our own small way, the project will demonstrate the creative possibilities for ecological urban landscaping,” said Trok.

Pennsylvania American Water is working with Darrell Frey, owner of Three Sisters Farm in Sandy Lakes, Pa., who is providing guidance on the native plant selection and garden design at the Becks Run site. Frey's knowledge of native plants is extensive.

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At Three Sisters Farms, Frey and his staff propagate or ecologically harvest all the native plants that are sold. Ecological harvest rescues native plants from roadside ditches, flood plains or other areas where the plants would have been endangered.

Another important, but less publicly visible, component of the ecological restoration is the plantings of wildflower beds on hilly slopes that surround Pennsylvania American Water operational facilities and a raw water settling basin on the property. These native wildflower beds will begin an attempt to reverse the invasion of non-native species, such as Japanese knotweed, which have been growing on the slopes.

The plantings will beneficially use a approximately a five-acre portion of a nine-acre parcel of land, owned by the company, to further restore the local ecosystem so that it can be more in balance with what nature intended for western Pennsylvania.

Pennsylvania American Water will also be contributing its award-winning and Department of Environmental Protection-approved water treatment residual material for use as a soil amendment in the beds.

The water treatment residual material is similar to topsoil and consists of the silt and sediment from the Monongahela River raw water and harmless by-products from the water treatment process. The fertile nature of the residual material makes it an excellent soil amendment medium for revegetation and to other earthwork activities.

Pennsylvania American Water's residual program has been honored with the Governor's Award for Environmental Excellence.

"Pennsylvania American Water is committed to being a good environmental steward and views this ecological restoration project as an opportunity to provide nature with a helping hand in re-establishing itself amidst urbanization and to aid in protecting the waterways that impact the source of drinking water for our communities," said Pennsylvania American Water Communications and Corporate Responsibility Specialist Phil Cynar. "It's a privilege—and the right thing to do—to utilize the resources available to Pennsylvania American Water—to protect and preserve a small portion of the planet that we call home."

Volunteers from Pennsylvania American Water and the Pennsylvania Resources Council will plant the display garden and begin seeding the wildflower slope garden beds on June 2.

More information about the [garden's specifications can be found online](#).

### **Yellow Breeches Creek Watershed Conservation Plan Finalized**

The Department of Conservation and Natural Resources [published the final Yellow Breeches Creek Watershed Conservation Plan](#) in Adams, Cumberland and York Counties.

The [Conservation Plan is available online](#) and by contacting the [Yellow Breeches Watershed Association](#).

### **EPA, Agriculture Host Water Quality Trading Conference in Pittsburgh**

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Department of Agriculture will co-host the [second annual Water Quality Trading Conference](#) in Pittsburgh on May 23-25 with the theme, "Implementation at the Watershed Level."

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The conference is expected to draw over 500 attendees, including federal and state water officials, land-use managers, economists, conservationists, and international trading experts.

The conference examines the fundamentals and mechanics of trading and focus on examples of trading programs around the country. It will highlight the economic and environmental benefits of trading, explore the opportunities and challenges associated with developing and implementing trading programs, and encourage discussion on the future of trading.

EPA Administrator Stephen L. Johnson will deliver a keynote address. Other keynoters invited include James Connaughton, chairman of the White House Council on Environmental Quality; USDA Secretary Mike Johanns; and Secretary Katie McGinty, of the Department of Environmental Protection.

Scott Van de Mark from the Pennsylvania Environmental Council and Suzie Greenhalgh from World Resources Institute will give a presentation on the [Conestoga River Reverse Auction](#) held last year in Lancaster County.

For more information and to register, visit the [Water Quality Trading Conference webpage](#).

### Only Two PA Watersheds Data System Workshops Left

Two free workshops sponsored by the PA Organization for Watersheds and Rivers remain for anyone interested in learning more about the PA Watersheds Data System.

The workshops will be held:

- June 17 at Duquesne University, Pittsburgh from 10 a.m. – 12 p.m. in Fisher Hall, Room 328 (RSVP by June 14).
- July 8 at Keystone College, Wilkes-Barre from 10 a.m. – 12 p.m. in Harris 109 (RSVP by July 5)

Since January, POWR has held six PA Watersheds Data System workshops for 70 attendees representing 49 conservation organizations, state agencies, and academia throughout the state.

Feedback has been positive, and attendees have noted its ease-of-use and the convenience of being able to share data with folks inside and outside of their group. Data availability and sharing was one goal of the PA Watersheds Data System.

POWR has worked to build this warehouse of data up to over 174,000 records of data. This number will nearly quadruple in the next few months, however, with the addition of data from the Environmental Alliance for Senior Involvement (EASI) database.

The other purpose of the PA Watersheds Data System is to serve as a tool for watershed groups to help them store and manage their data. A significant portion of the data currently housed in the Data System is from volunteer watershed organizations.

Volunteers have made up the majority of attendees to the six workshops held thus far. POWR is still looking to get more people involved, both as data-uploaders and as data-viewers.

RSVP to Angie McCracken, POWR, [amccracken@pawatersheds.org](mailto:amccracken@pawatersheds.org).

## Wild Resource Conservation Program Schedules Grant Workshops

The [Wild Resource Conservation Grant Program](#) has scheduled a series of eight workshops across the state to encourage applications.

WRCP, founded in 1982 to help conserve Pennsylvania's unique and critical wildlife, plants and other sensitive species, will accept applications through June 30 for work to be performed between January 2007 and June 2008.

Eligible applicants include counties, municipalities, non-profit organizations, educational institutions, conservation districts and municipal authorities.

Representatives from WRCP will be available at eight pre-application workshops from 9 a.m. to noon across the state on the following dates:

- May 24, Ramada Inn, 1 Sheraton Dr., Altoona;
- May 30, Holiday Inn Conference Center, 7736 Adrienne Dr., Brenigsville;
- May 31, Radisson Hotel, Valley Forge Convention Center, 1160 First Ave., King of Prussia;
- June 13, Holiday Inn, 100 Pine St., Williamsport;
- June 14, The Inn at Nichols Village, 1101 Northern Blvd., Clarks Summit;
- June 19, Four Points Sheraton Pittsburgh North, 910 Sheraton Dr., Mars;
- June 20, Holiday Inn, routes 80 and 68, Clarion; and
- June 29, Holiday Inn East, 4751 Lindle Rd., Harrisburg.

For an application and instructions, visit the [Wild Resource Conservation Program's 2006 grant application webpage](#)

## Fish Commission Offers “Take Me Fishing” Times Three



Have a little free time on your hands? Grab a friend or family member and try some free fishing. Thanks to the Fish and Boat Commission the only thing you'll spend is some quality time together.

The PFBC has designated Saturday, May 27, and Sunday, June 4, as [Fish For Free Days](#) in the Commonwealth. Fish For Free Days allow anyone – not just license holders or youth under the age of 16 – to legally fish in Pennsylvania. From 12:01 a.m. to 11:59 p.m. on both days, no fishing license is needed to fish in Pennsylvania's waterways.

Fish For Free Days provide an opportunity for active anglers to introduce a friend or relative to the lifelong sport of fishing. Best of all, it's a good time and a fun way to spend a day with the entire family.

The May 27 Fish For Free Day was specifically designated to coincide with the Memorial Day weekend, a traditional time for families to gather, and the unofficial start of many outdoor recreational activities in the state. The June 4 date is part of the observation of [National Fishing and Boating Week](#), June 3-11, 2006.

“No other activities can bond a family together quite like fishing and boating. It's a great way for families to have fun, create new memories and spend quality time together. We invite young and old alike to Fish For Free and discover just how much fun it can be.

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Fish For Free Days provide the perfect chances to get started,” said PFBC Executive Director Douglas Austen.

Not sure where to begin? No problem. To make it even easier to get started – or restarted – in fishing, the PFBC has scheduled dozens of free family fishing programs throughout the spring and summer.

To find an event near you, visit the “[Start SMART](#)” section of the PFBC’s website.

The PFBC also offers a number of [tackle loaner sites](#) throughout the state where basic fishing tackle may be borrowed free of charge any time of year.

**Link:** [Engaging Pennsylvania’s Youth in Fishing’s Future](#)  
[Join PA League of Angling Youth](#)

### Philadelphia One of Four Sustainable Communities Showcased in PBS Project

The Pennsylvania Horticultural Society’s [Philadelphia Green Program](#) is being featured in an upcoming PBS TV special airing on stations in State College, Philadelphia and Pittsburgh.

Philadelphia’s story, hosted by actor and resident David Morse, features the volunteerism of the Philadelphia Horticultural Society’s Philadelphia Green program; the success of Somerton Tanks Farm, the City water department’s pilot program in urban agriculture; a guided tour of New Kensington, where a community development group is transforming blight; a visit to Norris Square Park, where a community center provides an oasis; an overview of Mayor Street’s Neighborhood Transformation Initiative; and a look at the beauty of Fairmount Park.

This episode, Philadelphia: A Holy Experiment, will air on public television stations around the country. In Pennsylvania, it will be shown in State College on May 19; Philadelphia on May 25; and Pittsburgh on July 16.

The entire PBS series, [Edens Lost & Found](#), is produced by Harry Wiland and Dale Bell and focuses on four cities - Los Angeles, Chicago, Philadelphia and Seattle, where bold strategies are being employed to address urban forestry, watershed management, public art, waste disposal, green architecture and mass transit alternatives.

A book, 4-hour PBS documentary series, DVD, set of teaching tools and a grassroots movement were produced as companion educational tools.

For more information about the series, the DVD, companion book or community action guides, visit the [Edens Lost & Found website](#).

### Time Is Running Out to Apply for Community Greening Award

The [Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful Alliance](#) is sponsoring a Community Greening Award this year to recognize individuals, groups, local governments and businesses who care for public space plantings that beautify their communities.

Site nominations will be accepted through June 30.

A panel of evaluators will visit each nominated site during the summer and review them for the variety of plants, horticultural practices, use of space and maintenance.

The Community Greening Award project partners include the [Pennsylvania Resources Council](#) and the [Pennsylvania Horticultural Society](#).

For more information [download the Nomination Form](#).



### **Audubon Sets May 27 Important Bird Area Cleanup in Harrisburg**

The banks of the Susquehanna River in the Harrisburg area are part of the Sheets Island Archipelago [Important Bird Area](#), so [Audubon PA](#) is hosting a clean-up event for the Midtown Harrisburg Waterfront area May 27th from 8 am to 1 pm.

The event will take place between Forster and Division Streets in Harrisburg, from the river's edge up to Susquehanna Street. All participants should meet in Riverfront Park at Front and Kelker Streets, where clean-up materials will be available and volunteers will have an opportunity to look through a spotting scope to see wading birds and other species that use the river.

Harrisburg's Riverfront Park is part of the Susquehanna River Birding and Wildlife Trail, and volunteers will receive a gift copy of the Trail guide.

For more information or to register for the event, please contact Stacy Small, Audubon PA Director of Bird Conservation, at 717-213-6880 ext. 22, or send email to [ssmall@audubon.org](mailto:ssmall@audubon.org)

### **New Web Page Provides Important Information About Sinkholes**

The Department of Environmental Protection has developed a new webpage that provides important [information about sinkholes](#).

Sinkholes are a problem in Pennsylvania that affect public health and safety as well as stream and groundwater quality.

The webpage is educational and informative, answering questions such as what causes a sinkhole, what to do when sinkholes emerge, or who to call for help.

For more information, visit the DEP [Sinkhole webpage](#) or download [DCNR's Sinkholes in Pennsylvania publication](#).

### **Southwest PA Air Quality Partnership Rewards Park and Ride Commuters**

In observance of National Air Quality Awareness Week, the [Southwest Pennsylvania Air Quality Partnership, Inc.](#) and Krispy Kreme Donuts served breakfast to more than 300 commuters who use the Port Authority of Allegheny County's University Boulevard Park and Ride in Moon Township this morning.

"The rising price of gasoline has many regional commuters looking for an alternative to their daily drive to and from the office," Southwest Pennsylvania Air Quality Partnership Chair Lee Ann Briggs said. "Using transit can help commuters save money as well as cut down on air pollution. Today, we are rewarding those commuters who are doing their share for clean air by using the Port Authority of Allegheny County's park and ride system."

Pittsburgh radio station Y 108 helped to host the breakfast event. Port Authority offered tours of its new hybrid-electric bus.

Driving a car is one of the biggest contributors to ground-level ozone or smog, and summer time is our smoggiest season. During the hot summer season, air quality pollutants bake in the sun to cause ground-level ozone. On a day when the ground-level ozone is high, the elderly, young and people with asthma or emphysema, are at risk for more respiratory problems.

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“National Air Quality Awareness Week is a great time to reiterate the environmental benefits of public transportation,” Port Authority Chief Executive Officer Dennis Veraldi said. “Each of the Port Authority’s 900 full-size buses can take the equivalent of 60 cars off the road, thereby significantly reducing emissions.

“Our buses meet or exceed strict federal emissions standards and will operate even cleaner this fall with the use of ultra low-sulfur diesel. Port Authority also is committed to testing alternative fuels and is currently operating six hybrid-electric buses that reduce emissions and noise while increasing fuel efficiency.”

Regular car maintenance and tune-ups, changing the oil, and checking tire inflation can improve gas mileage and cut fuel costs for commuters. Proper maintenance can reduce car emissions by more than half. Emissions from one poorly maintained vehicle can equal that from 25 properly functioning cars!

The Southwest Pennsylvania Air Quality Partnership offers the following tips to help commuters conserve energy and improve air quality:

- Try to limit daytime driving and minimize “cold starts” by combining trips and errands so the catalytic converter on your car stays warm. Most vehicle emissions occur within the first few minutes of engine operation, when the converter is cold and inefficient.
- Reduce unnecessary car engine idling by parking your car and walking into a building rather than going through the drive through lane;
- Refuel after dark to prevent some of the resulting gasoline vapors from becoming smog. Avoid spilling gasoline and stop when the pump shuts off automatically;
- Avoid carrying unnecessary items in the trunk. Extra weight decreases the gas mileage. Reduce drag by placing items inside the car, not on the roof rack;
- Avoid high speeds. Mileage can be increased by about 15 percent by driving 55 mph, rather than 65 mph;
- Keep tires properly inflated and aligned. Periodic wheel alignments and keeping tires inflated to their maximum recommended pressure will help increase gas mileage; and
- Carpool, take a bus, walk or ride a bike just one day a week for a year, and you’ll save about 1,200 miles in a typical commute and about \$455 in total driving costs.

Ridesharing can mean a shorter ride on the High Occupancy Vehicle lanes too.

Following these suggestions is particularly important on an Air Quality Action Day when ground-level ozone levels are expected to be high.

Look for more energy conservation tips for your home, car or business for the busy summer season ahead, by visiting the [Southwest Pennsylvania Air Quality Partnership, Inc. website](#) or call 412-396-1550 or 1-800-333-7688. While at the website, sign up to receive the free daily Air Quality forecast on your e-mail!

### Two PA Groups Honored for Climate and Ozone Protection

Two Pennsylvania organizations were among the [23 individuals, organizations and companies](#) from around the world that the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is recognizing for their efforts to protect the Earth's climate and stratospheric ozone layer.

Mobile Air Conditioning Society Worldwide, Lansdale, was named a winner of EPA’s 2006 Climate Protection Award. The Ozone Hole Website, Pocono Pines, was named a winner of the 2006 Stratospheric Ozone Protection Award.



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Last year, the winners of the climate protection award and the stratospheric protection award collectively purchased more than 1.5 million megawatt hours of green power to avoid burning fossil fuels. They also generated wind and solar power onsite, increased energy efficiency, recycled refrigerants, and slashed the use of ozone-depleting substances and greenhouse gases.

EPA has honored 495 individuals and organizations from 40 countries since the annual stratospheric ozone protection awards began in 1990. Subsequently, EPA focused special attention on the reduction of greenhouse gases and protection of the Earth's climate when it began the climate protection awards in 1998 and has recognized 122 individuals and organizations from 16 countries since then.

[A list of the 2006 Ozone Award Winners are available online.](#)

### DCNR Says – Take A Hike! May 27- June 4

Pennsylvanians will have almost 100 ways to "take a hike" during [Pennsylvania Hiking Week, May 27 to June 4](#).

"Sometimes we don't even think about the vast amount of greenways, parks, forests and trails that we have in Pennsylvania," said Michael DiBerardinis, Department of Conservation and Natural Resources secretary. "By showcasing the many ways we can walkabout in the state during Hiking Week, we show everyone the tremendous opportunities there are to get outdoors and enjoy nature."

Festivities planned by the DCNR and the [Keystone Trails Association](#) during the fifth annual event will take place in parks, forests, cities and towns across the commonwealth. The last Saturday of Hiking Week coincides with National Trails Day, which is June 3.

Some of the activities taking place during Pennsylvania Hiking Week include

- Night hikes to look for nocturnal creatures;
- Hikes to learn about birds, bats, snakes or bugs;
- History and interpretive walks led by local specialists;
- Hikes to spectacular vistas or through wildflowers and interesting geologic settings;
- Hikes for people with young children or dogs; and
- Accessible hikes for people with disabilities in southeastern Pennsylvania.

All of the scheduled hikes have leaders and include a variety of lengths and difficulties -- from easy strolls to strenuous treks.

For more information, visit the [Pennsylvania Hiking Week webpage](#) or the [Keystone Trails Association](#).

### See & Hear

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#### DEP, Game Commission Host Falcon Banding Webcast May 24

The Department of Environmental Protection and the Game Commission will hold their annual Peregrine Falcon banding event on May 24 and will webcast the event live from the [Harrisburg Falcon webpage](#).



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The event will be held from 12:30 p.m. to 2 p.m. on May 24, in the Rachel Carson State Office Building's auditorium in Harrisburg.

Although not a public event, DEP is inviting midstate teachers, non-formal educators and students to attend where biologists will weigh and band the newly hatched nestlings, called eyases.

When the falcon eggs hatch, the young falcons will “pip” through their shells, after which the female will eat the shells to clean the nest and regain calcium. On May 24, biologists will retrieve the young peregrines from the nest located on the 15th Floor of the Rachel Carson State Office Building.

Students and teachers will witness the biologists placing an alphanumeric metal band around the left leg each of the eyases' with a falcon-specific code. The band code will be used by wildlife officials to monitor the birds once they leave the nest. In addition, a U.S. Fish and Wildlife band will be placed on the eyases' right leg registering each on a federal banding database.

This banding is a unique opportunity for teachers and students to witness firsthand wildlife management techniques to reintroduce and monitor endangered species in the Commonwealth.

For more information, visit the [Harrisburg Falcon webpage](#).

**Link:** [Falcon Focus - GreenTreks](#)  
[Video of Past Falcon Banding Events](#)

## Feature

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### **Part II– Smart Growth Opportunities In PA Regional Growth and Planning Opportunities in Southwestern PA By Jonathan R. Farrell**

Listed on the wish list of most every state's natural resource management reports, whether formal plans and assessments or informal agendas, is the need for more coordinated regional planning. It is no mystery why more careful regional planning is viewed as the fix of so many broken land use and resources management programs.

Decades of data collection and analysis have clearly charted the trend: sprawling, low-density suburban development voraciously filling the space between urban cores and the rural countryside; residential developments further from traditional job centers; center-less towns and cities; and an increasingly protracted utility and transportation infrastructure.

The problem often centers around growing metropolitan areas and is a regional problem irrespective of municipal boundaries, but authority is often local, not regional—thus the common invocation of regional planning as that which works but is not done.

In many states, municipalities rather than counties are vested with much of the power for land use planning and regulation by the state. Local development, planned or not, that is uncoordinated across municipalities can lead to problems at the regional scale. And with almost any problem with spatial dimensions, control of the whole depends entirely on communication and coordination between the parts.

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Regional planning means simply cooperation but is exceedingly difficult in practice. Municipalities must not view themselves as policy islands, but rather as neighboring development units within a *region* that is experiencing similar development pressures. Regional planning then coordinates local planning and development activities in municipalities and counties that are in the same sphere of influence.

Real estate developers, like most raw forces in the American economy, must be monitored and managed in order to limit impacts on limited natural resources and ensure efficiency and stability in the providence of public utilities and services to new developments.

Pennsylvania is a Commonwealth government and much authority for land use control has been vested to local governments by the state through enabling legislation in the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC). This model of governance is most effective in close-knit, centralized communities where residents readily participate in local government decisions and are informed and responsive to community affairs and needs—e.g., small self-sufficient agrarian communities. It does not work very well in modern suburban Pennsylvania.

Most suburban and newly developed rural areas lack traditional town centers around which a land use plan can take shape. Development often occurs at such a rate that land use regulations are outdated and seldom enforced until an issue is obvious. Most residents of new residential developments work outside their municipality and are not involved with their local government. Older residents who may have concerns over land development in their community are unable to articulate these concerns because of the lack of a formal public planning process.

Official local planning commissions function to systematize, publicize, and personalize decisions regarding land development to members of the community. Public hearings, comprehensive plans, development review, and other elements of a formal planning process reify decisions for residents who might have viewed development as a “natural” consequence. Once the decision-making process becomes more transparent, residents begin to see land development as an investment—good or poor—in their community with real costs and benefits to the individual at stake.

In Pennsylvania, different regions have experienced a maturing of land use planning activities at different levels and times. While only 56 percent of municipalities in southwestern PA have planning commissions, compared to over 90 percent in south-central and southeastern parts of the state, according to a 2003 report by the Brookings Institute.

The reaction of local communities to excessive or poor development is far along in south-central and southwest Pennsylvania where sprawl has reached such levels that communities have “learned their lessons” and considered planning. Planning commissions then propose and update comprehensive plans, and zoning and SALDOs are employed to enforce the comprehensive plan.

Community awareness and action in these cases was reactionary. Residents, landowners, and officials perceived an obvious need for planning, land use regulation, and open space preservation—but it is really not “planning” if done in hindsight.

Planning general consists of four principal elements or tools—planning commissions, comprehensive plans, subdivision and land development ordinances

(SALDOs), and zoning ordinances. If a municipality chooses to use one of these tools, it does so as prescribed and in accordance with the Municipalities Planning Code.

In Pennsylvania, the use of all four of the land use planning tools are not mandated for municipalities, but all subdivisions and development projects must be approved by the county if not the municipality. In this way, counties are the most basic filter for development review in Pennsylvania. County land use regulations are limited to municipalities that do not have their own regulations. On the other hand, municipal land use regulations and plans, where they do exist, have primacy over any county regulations.

Thus the slight paradox of planning authority in Pennsylvania: counties are required by state law to complete comprehensive plans, but these county comprehensive plans are largely advisory at the municipal level where planning can be the most detailed and effective. Furthermore, county comprehensive plans and regulations are often so general as to have little steering effect on how development proceeds at the local level.

If a municipality chooses to enact a plan, Section 301(c) of the MPC mandates that the county planning agency or a designated agency (usually regional planning agencies) review and comment on “whether the municipal or multi-municipal comprehensive plan remains generally consistent with the county comprehensive plan.”

While this seemingly promotes consistency in planning between municipalities and between municipalities and counties, the effort is unavailing because the municipality is not required to change their plan in response to the county’s suggestions. On the contrary, county planning agencies are required to adopt changes to their comprehensive plans if proposed by municipalities according to MPC Section 302(d).

Similarly, regional planning agencies like the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission (SPC), which often have the most resources and a holistic perspective of development needs and trends, are advisory bodies with worthy mission statements but little real regulatory authority.

According to the MPC, regional planning agencies can offer technical assistance to counties and municipalities regarding planning activities, mediate conflicts between counties and municipalities, and review comprehensive plans for consistency between counties or municipalities in the same region. Yet again, counties and municipalities are under no obligation to follow their recommendations.

This administrative and jurisdictional incongruity that needs to be overcome—or altered—in order to get smart growth in Pennsylvania. Reforms of the MPC like the Growing Smarter amendments in 2000 have allowed some progress toward multi-municipal planning by removing some of the red tape required to allow municipalities to share planning authority, but few of these reforms have had a meaningful impact in southwestern PA.

The Governor's Center for Local Government Services and the Department of Community and Economic Development and organizations like the PA Association of Township Supervisors and the PA Association of Boroughs are now in place to provide support and guidance for local planning activities in Pennsylvania—though their help will only come through a request from local actors.

If empowered with the right authority and resources for outreach to local governments, regional planning authorities like the SPC in partnership with non-profit organizations specifically focused on smart growth (10,000 Friends of Pennsylvania, Allegheny Land Trust, Sustainable Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania Environmental Council,

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Center for Rural Pennsylvania, etc.) and the supporting organizations and offices mentioned above, would be the obvious entities to promote and coordinate the use of progressive land use planning and regulation. In the absence of a strong regional planning agency, local ad hoc planning partnerships between municipalities are likely to be the direction of any progress.

Today, southwestern Pennsylvania has the opportunity to establish proactive land use policies to plan for and manage rapid development in still relatively rural areas. Many local comprehensive plans are in dire need of updates, and model ordinances with proven records of effectiveness are waiting to be adopted. This requires cultivating an awareness of the issue and potential solutions before the problem, lowest-common-denominator development, is obvious. Since much of the sprawl in southwestern PA is occurring outlying rural areas, these are the communities that should be targeted in any such initiative.

Of course, this is easier said than done. Outreach and education of municipal officials is a start—but then again, their participation in any program is voluntary because municipalities are under no obligation under the law to plan or pass land use ordinances. Therefore any interaction towards the goal of changing land use policies in southwestern Pennsylvania must involve a “leveling” of local interests; explanation of the opportunities and incentives that exist for land use planning and regulation by local governments and landowners. This might include cultivating interest around very practical concerns such as lowering long-term costs to the community for public infrastructure, controlling property taxes and assessments, and increasing community attractiveness to investors who might build to increase employment.

There is currently a treasure chest of tools available through the Municipalities Planning Code for local governments interested in planning to promote economical and environmentally sound development, or “open space development” as it is sometimes called. In many cases these tools and techniques involve changing or adding options to conventional ordinances in order to make them more flexible in allowing or requiring land conservation amid development.

Subdivision and Land Development Ordinances (SALDOs) do this by manipulating lot arrangement, size, and shape of subdivisions to maximize conserved natural resources as well as directly requiring the dedication of open space or specific landscape requirements in development plans. So-called conservation zoning creates new protective zoning districts for areas of special interest such as floodplains, steep slopes or open space. Stricter development regulations then may be designed for those areas.

Other techniques, like transfer of development rights and planned residential development, are more involved and—if they are to work well—require extensive collaboration with developers, not to mention a fairly sophisticated understanding of land use planning concepts by municipal officials. Yet communities interested in employing these programs can certainly obtain assistance from the organizations mentioned above.

Resources and information about these and other tools have been made available online at PennSCAPEs, a website developed by the Hamer Center for Community Design Assistance at Penn State’s School of Architecture and Landscape Architecture, and at the PA Municipalities Planning Code website given below.

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*Jonathan R. Farrell* is a student in the School of Forest Resources, Pennsylvania State University. You may contact him at: 412-400-8755 or send email to: [JRF289@psu.edu](mailto:JRF289@psu.edu) .

For more information, see these links:

[PennSCAPES](#)

[Hamer Center for Community Design Assistance](#)

[Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code – Made Easy!](#)

[A Primer on Local Government Fragmentation and Regionalism in the Pittsburgh Region](#)

[“Little boxes” – limited horizons: A study of fragmented local governance in](#)

[Pennsylvania: Its scope, consequences, and reforms.”](#) Brookings Institute, Center on Urban and Metropolitan Policy

### Quick Clips

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

[Nature’s Top Teacher](#)

[Biology Students to Plumb Creek for Bacteria](#)

[Heavy-Duty Recycling Effort Earns Teacher Grant](#)

[Rendell, Fumo, Street Discuss Delaware Riverfront](#)

[New Farm Preservation Program Takes Root in Lehigh County](#)

[Open Space Measure Passed by Voters](#)

[Open Space Initiatives Get Voters’ Approved](#)

[Town Caught Between Progress, Preservation](#)

[DEP Takes Part in Cutting Edge Radon Research](#)

[\\$20 Million in Recycling and Composting Grants Awarded](#)

[Letter: Townships Offered Environmental Help – Audubon PA](#)

[Somerset County Spotlights Renewable Energy Tree Project](#)

[Going Solar](#)

[Lean, Green and Sensible Tour de Sol](#)

[PA Puts Cormorants on Hit List](#)

### Watershed NewsClips

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

[Going to Battle for Brook Trout](#)

[Lesson Learned in What Not to Do for Fish](#)

[Friends of Opossum Lake Organize](#)

[Crabtree Creek in Crisis](#)

[Wetland Trail Unveiled in Pocono Summit](#)

[Schuylkill River Sojourn to Kick Off June 3](#)

[Smart Boating, Clean Waters Campaign in Southeast](#)

[You Might Be Pricing Arks, But Drought Watch Continues](#)

[Rainy Weather Can’t Wash Away Drought Watch](#)

[Indiana County Catching Up in Rainfall](#)

[New Study Underway of Prescription Drugs in Drinking Water](#)

## Watershed Awareness Month Activities

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This special Calendar section is devoted to activities going on in and around Watershed Awareness Month in May. If you have events to add, send them to:

[DHess@HolstonCrisci.com](mailto:DHess@HolstonCrisci.com).

### Beaver County

- **June 3** – [Tire Collection Events](#) at various locations around the county starting at 9:00 a.m. at all locations.

### Clinton County

- **May 20** – Join Clinton County CleanScapes and DCNR to remove flood debris from the Torbert Island Natural Area. Contact Project Director Elisabeth Lynch by sending email to [elynch@clintoncountypa.com](mailto:elynch@clintoncountypa.com) for more information.

### Erie County

- **May 20** – 4th Annual Bike Around the Bay event for Earth Force youth program, 10, 30 and 50 mile routes - all proceeds go to Earth Force youth program – Call 814-835-8069 or [bab@lea.earthforce.org](mailto:bab@lea.earthforce.org)
- For more information on Erie County events, send email to: [ssmith@lea.earthforce.org](mailto:ssmith@lea.earthforce.org).

### Monroe County

- **May 20** – [Tobyhanna Creek/Tunkhannock Creek Watershed Association](#) Wetland Trail Ribbon Cutting. Pocono Mountain West High School. 10:00 a.m. Contact: 570-643-2001 or send email to: [mlord@ptd.net](mailto:mlord@ptd.net) .
- **May 20** – [Aquashicola Pohopoco Watershed Conservancy](#) Open House. Polk Township Park (Rt. 534 in Kresgeville). 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Contact 610-681-4873 or send email to: [info@apwc-pa.org](mailto:info@apwc-pa.org) .
- **May 21** – Bank and Stream Life in Our Watershed Program by [North Pocono CARE](#). Learn how you can help to preserve this heritage by visiting the Thornhurst Volunteer Fire & Rescue Company Annual Auto, Truck and Motorcycle Show. 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Contact: 570-472-3274 or send email to: [NPCARE@att.net](mailto:NPCARE@att.net) .
- **May 27** – [Broadhead Watershed Association](#) River Ramble III. Pick up your map and directions and set off on this self-guided tour of creeks and other waterbodies in the Broadhead Watershed. An “after-Ramble” gathering is planned at 4:30. Meet at the Barrett Friendly Library in Mountainhome at 1:00 p.m. Contact: 570-839-1120 or send email to: [broadheadwater@enter.net](mailto:broadheadwater@enter.net) .

### Philadelphia County

- **May 23** – [Saylor Grove Wetland Dedication](#), Philadelphia Water Department. Lincoln Dr. & Wissahickon Dr. and Rittenhouse Ave, Philadelphia. 6-8:00 p.m. Contact: [Tiffany.Ledesma@phila.gov](mailto:Tiffany.Ledesma@phila.gov) 215-499-3756.



### Schuylkill County

- **May 21** – Bear Creek Festival: 12PM – 4PM at the Schuylkill County Fairgrounds, Rte 895 Summit Station, PA. The 5th Annual Festival provides live entertainment, hands on activities for children, great food, watershed educational programs and great family fun! Call 570-622-4124x113 or e-mail Porcupine Pat at [porcupinepat@yahoo.com](mailto:porcupinepat@yahoo.com)

### York County

- **May 22**– What’s the Big Deal about Invasives? Workshop, 7-9 pm at ANNEX, sponsored by MAEscapes  
For more information on York activities is available from Gary Peacock, York Watershed Specialist, by sending email to: [GPeacock@Yorkccd.org](mailto:GPeacock@Yorkccd.org) .

## Regulations

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The Environmental Quality Board approved several regulations for public comment this week, the [Delaware River Basin Commission](#) published a number of changes to its water quality regulations and to requirements for preventing discharges of toxic pollutants and the Independent Regulatory Review Commission issued [comments on the Alternative Energy Portfolio Standards regulations](#) proposed by the Public Utility Commission.

The [Environmental Quality Board](#) this week approved proposed regulations for public comment on reducing mercury emissions from power plants, blasting regulations for entry ways, changes to coal mine reclamation fees and accepted a petition for study redesignating Gallows Run in Bucks County.

[Pennsylvania Bulletin – May 20, 2006](#)

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

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

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

## Technical Guidance & Permits

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The Department of Environmental Protection [published proposed guidance](#) on surface water filtration, medical x-ray equipment and standardized biological field collection methods.

Draft: DEP ID: 383-0810-106. Summary of Key Requirements for Surface Water Filtration. This guidance applies to public water systems using surface water sources or groundwater sources under the direct influence of surface water. Comments due: June 19.

Draft: DEP ID: 291-3350-001. Monitoring and Reporting Methodology for Individuals Occupationally Exposed to Medical X-rays While Wearing Protective Apparel. This

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guidance document applies to the reporting of occupational exposure resulting from diagnostic X-ray procedures and presents alternate ways to determine doses to individuals who receive exposure from medical X-ray radiation, while wearing protective apparel (that is, a protective apron or protective apron and thyroid shield). Comments due: June 19.

Draft: DEP ID: 391-3200-015. Standardized Biological Field Collection and Laboratory Methods. This guidance provides the established procedures to collect and process aquatic biological field data for lake and stream surveys. Comments due: June 19.

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

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

### Calendar of Upcoming Events

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

- [Notice of Regional State Water Plan Advisory Committee meetings.](#)
- **May 20** – Dauphin County Community Recycling Event. HACC Parking Lot. 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 a.m.
- **May 22** – Joint Legislative Air and Water Pollution Control and Conservation Committee Environmental Issues Forum to hear presentation on LaFarge Alternative Energy Initiative. Room 205 Ryan Building. 12:00.
- **May 24** – House Education Committee informational meeting on flu pandemic preparedness. Hershey Medical Center, Lecture Room B. Hershey. 1:00.
- **May 24** – Public Utility Commission annual briefing on electric reliability. 3rd Floor Executive Chambers Keystone Building. 1:00.
- **May 24** – DCNR [Conservation and Natural Resources Advisory Council](#) meeting. Room 105 Rachel Carson Building, Harrisburg. 10:00.
- **May 26** - DEP [Chesapeake Bay Tributary Strategy Steering Committee](#) meeting. Room 105 Rachel Carson Building. 10:00 to 1:00.
- **June 6** – **Rescheduled to This Date.** Senate Environmental Resources and Energy Committee hearing on reducing mercury emissions from power plants. Room 8E-A East Wing. 9:15.
- **June 6** – **CANCELLED.** DEP [Storage Tank Advisory Committee](#) meeting. The next scheduled meeting is September 19.
- **June 6** – Senate Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee meets to consider [Senate Bill 1209](#) (Waugh-R-York) establishing the Healthy Farms & Healthy Schools Program. Room 156 Main Capitol. 10:30.
- **June 8** – House Game & Fisheries Committee public hearing on legislation to increase Game Commission license fees -- [House Bill 2600](#) -- the basic adult resident hunting license would be raised from \$19 to \$29; [House Bill 2601](#) would increase the fee to

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\$34 and both bills would also establish a \$10 pheasant stamp and a \$5 turkey stamp with the proceeds to be used solely for the maintenance and operating of programs for preserving and encouraging the hunting of these species in Pennsylvania; and [House Bill 2602](#) would create a \$20 conservation stamp for individuals who use state game lands for any purpose. The proceeds from the stamp would be deposited into state Game Fund. Room 140. 9:30.

- **June 12** – [Joint Legislative Air and Water Pollution Control and Conservation Committee](#) Environmental Issues Forum – Jim MacKenzie, [Octoraro Native Plant Nursery](#) “Going Native – Opportunities for Using Native Plants in Pennsylvania.” Room 205 Ryan Building. 12:00.
- **June 13** – **CANCELLED**. DEP [Sewage Advisory Committee Regulations Subcommittee](#) meeting.
- **June 14** – **CANCELLED**. DEP [Sewage Advisory Committee](#) meeting.
- **June 19** – USDA – U.S. Senator Rick Santorum Renewable Energy Conference. Farm Show Complex, 2nd Floor VIP Room 9:00-3:00. Contact Vince Murphy, 717-237-2181 or send email to: [Vincent.Murphy@pa.usda.gov](mailto:Vincent.Murphy@pa.usda.gov) .
- **June 26** – Governor’s Renewable Agriculture Energy Council meeting. Room 309 Agriculture Building. 10:00.
- **July 19** – Governor’s Invasive Species Council meeting. Agriculture Building, 2301 N. Cameron St., Harrisburg.
- **October 31-November 5** – [National Historic Preservation Conference](#). National Trust for Historic Preservation. Pittsburgh.

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

#### [Watershed Events](#)

(courtesy [PA Organizations for Watersheds & Rivers](#))

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

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

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

### **Helpful Web Links**

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

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

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

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

## Stories Invited

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

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