

— PA — Environment Digest

*An Update on
Environmental
Issues in
Pennsylvania*

Edited By David E. Hess, Holston & Crisci

November 14, 2005

Ten Voting Days Left Before Christmas!

The House and Senate are now scheduled to be in voting session 10 days between now and their Christmas/New Year break.

Although the two-year session will only be half done and no legislation will die at the end of this year, a number of environmental bills are pending that could see further action. Here's a quick rundown.

Recycling Fee: [House Bill 1902](#) (Rubley-R-Chester) eliminating the sunset date on the \$2/ton Recycling Fee and requiring Recycling Performance Grants to be used for local recycling and waste reduction efforts. In the House Appropriations Committee.

Environmental Education: [Senate Bill 410](#) (MJ White-R-Venango) to establish the Pennsylvania Center for Environmental Education in law. Tabled in the House.

California Car Standards: [House Bill 2141](#) (Geist-R-Blair) which would prohibit the Department of Environmental Protection from adopting the current California vehicle emission standards is on the House Calendar for action.

Open Space Preservation: [House Bill 87](#) (Steil-R-Bucks) further authorizing local governments to preserve open space through the waiver of certain service fees. On the Senate Calendar for action.

Sewer/Water Connection Funding: [House Bill 1108](#) (Rubley-R-Chester) would establish the Water and Wasterwater Connection Funding Program within PennVEST. In the Senate Environmental Resources and Energy Committee.

Eminent Domain: There are four bills in the Senate making changes to the Eminent Domain Code in response to the U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Kelo* -- [Senate Bill 881](#)



Thank a Veteran This Veterans' Day!

**Visit Our
Professional Services Directory
Support Your Sponsors**

Please Visit
[Quad Three Group, Inc.](#)
[Environmentally Innovative Solutions, LLC](#)
[Aqua Cura](#)
in the [Professional Services Directory](#)

PA Environment Digest – Holston & Crisci

(Piccola-R-Dauphin) and [Senate Bill 897](#) (Brightbill-R-Lebanon) both now in the Senate Appropriations Committee and just arrived are [House Bill 2019](#) (Grell-R-Cumberland) and [House Bill 2054](#) (Grell-R-Cumberland).

Adopt-A-River Program: [House Bill 1051](#) (Sturla-D-Lancaster) establishing the Adopt-a-River Program in the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. Tabled in the House.

Uniform Environmental Covenants: [House Bill 1249](#) (Rubley-R-Chester) would establish uniform language in covenants relating to the cleanup of brownfield sites to protect the integrity of cleanup methods and ensure ongoing monitoring responsibilities. In House Environmental Resources and Energy Committee.

Federal Reclamation Fund: [House Resolution 382](#) a concurrent resolution urging Congress to reauthorize the Abandoned Mine Reclamation Fund is on the House Calendar. The Senate must also pass for it to be in effect.

Forestry Task Force: [Senate Resolution 137](#) (Madigan-R-Bradford) re-establishing the Forestry Task Force supported by the Joint Legislative Air & Water Pollution Control and Conservation Committee. On the Senate Calendar.

Sewage Task Force: [House Resolution 88](#) (Hutchinson-R-Venango) establishing a Sewage Management and Treatment Task Force supported by the Joint Legislative Air & Water Pollution Control and Conservation Committee. On the Senate Calendar.

Session Schedule

The Senate and House return to session on November 14.

As of now, the House session schedule for the remainder of the year looks like this:
November 14, 15, 21, 22 and December 5, 6, 7, 12, 13, 14.

On the Hill

- On the Senate/House Agenda
- House Committee to Hear From DEP on Energy Policy
- Environmental Issues Forum Features Kittatinny Ridge, Bird Area Projects

Other News

- PUC Chairman Urges Consumers Eligible for LIHEAP to Apply Now
- PUC Proposes Rules for Connecting Small Renewable Energy Generators to Grid
- Candidates Wanted for Green Advantage Construction Training in Delaware Valley
- Green Building Market Will Reach \$10-\$20 Billion Over Next 5 Years
- DOE Offers Free Energy Assessments, New Website to Promote Energy Savings
- EPA Grant to Help Reduce Diesel Emissions at Port of Philadelphia
- Watershed News Features Info on Grants, Training, Smart Growth Tools
- EPA Watershed Academy Stormwater Phase II Webcast November 16

PA Environment Digest – Holston & Crisci

- 2006 Keystone Coldwater Conference Set for February 24 & 25
- West Branch Susquehanna River TMDL Kick Off Meeting November 15
- New Water Resources Education Network Newsletter Now Online
- Drinking Water Plant Operator Training Set, Online Training Available Anytime
- Put Radon Testing On Your Fall “To Do” List
- “El medio ambiente y su salud” -- Asma
- November Environmental Education Newsletter Now Available Online
- Applications For Ralph W. Abele College Scholarships Due April 5

Feature

- Blacklick Creek Assn. Still Going Strong, 13 Watershed Projects and Counting

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

On the Hill

On the Senate/House Agenda

The House and Senate return to session on November 14 and here’s what’s on the agenda so far.

Calendar

The House Calendar starts with these bills November 14—[House Bill 2141](#), which would prohibit the Department of Environmental Protection from adopting the current California vehicle emission standards, and [House Resolution 382](#) urging Congress to reauthorize the federal Abandoned Mine Reclamation Fund.

In the Senate, the Calendar will start the week with [House Bill 87](#) further authorizing local governments to preserve open space through the waiver of certain service fees; [House Bill 1114](#) making changes to the Waste Tire Recycling Act; [House Resolution 88](#) (Hutchinson-R-Venango) establishing a Sewage Management and Treatment Task Force; and [Senate Resolution 137](#) re-establishing the Forestry Task Force.

Committees

The House Environmental Resources and Energy Committee will hold the third of its Energy Policy information meetings on November 16. They will hear a presentation by Environmental Protection Secretary Kathleen McGinty.

In the Senate, the Appropriations will consider Senate Bills [Senate Bill 881](#) and [Senate Bill 897](#) making changes to the Eminent Domain Code in response to *Kelo*; [Senate Bill 995](#) relating to snowmobile registrations and [Senate Bill 868](#) increasing in-lieu of tax payments for forest land.

House Committee to Hear From DEP on Energy Policy

The House Environmental Resources and Energy Committee, chaired by Rep. Bill Adolph (R-Delaware) and Rep. Bud George (D-Clearfield), will hold the third of its Energy Policy information meetings on November 16.

The Committee will hear a presentation by Environmental Protection Secretary Kathleen McGinty

Environmental Issues Forum Features Kittatinny Ridge, Bird Area Projects

The [Joint Legislative Air and Water Pollution Control and Conservation Committee's](#) next Environmental Issues Forum will be held on November 14.

The Committee will welcome Paul Zeph, Project Director of Audubon Pennsylvania's [Kittatinny Ridge Project](#). Zeph will provide an overview of the Kittatinny Ridge (also known as Blue Mountain and North Mountain), which winds 185 miles through 11 counties in Pennsylvania and is an extremely important habitat area for many forms of wildlife, an important recreation corridor (it's home to part of the Appalachian Trail) and a valuable source of drinking water for thousands of Pennsylvanians.

In addition, Zeph will introduce Audubon PA's statewide "[Important Bird Area](#)" program (the Kittatinny Ridge is the state's largest IBA), and discuss how Pennsylvania's other ridges have similar value for wildlife and people.

The chair of the Joint Committee is Rep. Scott Hutchinson (R-Venango) and the vice-chair is Sen. Ray Musto (D-Luzerne).

In Other News

PUC Chairman Urges Consumers Eligible for LIHEAP to Apply Now

Public Utility Commission Chairman Wendell F. Holland this week joined Columbia Gas of Pennsylvania, Dominion Peoples, Equitable Gas, Steelers great Franco Harris and area social service agencies to mark opening day on November 7 to apply for the [Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program \(LIHEAP\)](#).

LIHEAP helps to pay heating bills for low income families regardless of the type of heat or fuel-- natural gas, heating oil, electricity or propane—as well as crisis grants to deal with emergency situations.

Low-income households may be eligible for grants under LIHEAP, administered by the Department of Public Welfare through each county. Chairman Holland commended the three utilities as true leaders for the way in which they promote LIHEAP to eligible consumers every year, as well as Greater Pittsburgh Region for the tremendous partnership of state agencies, social service organizations and community leaders supporting LIHEAP outreach.

Gov. Rendell recently announced a comprehensive [Stay Warm PA](#) program to make sure Pennsylvania's most vulnerable citizens are protected.

PA Environment Digest – Holston & Crisci

Chairman Holland said, as the cold weather approaches, it is important for Pennsylvania families who need assistance contact their local utility, call the Commission's toll-free number, 1-888-PUC-FACT or access our website

On September 9, the PUC directed electric, natural gas and water utilities to coordinate with the PUC, consumer advocates and community-based organizations to educate Pennsylvanians about changes in the law dealing with utility shut-offs.

The Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission ensures safe, reliable and reasonably priced electric, natural gas, water, telephone and transportation service for Pennsylvania consumers, by regulating public utilities and by serving as responsible stewards of competition.

For more information visit these webpages: [Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program](#), [PUC Prepare Now](#) and [Stay Warm PA](#).

PUC Proposes Rules for Connecting Small Renewable Energy Generators to Grid

The Public Utility Commission this week proposed rules governing how small alternative electric generators – who use technologies such as solar panels or fuel cells – connect to the electric distribution system and requirements for net metering.

The [interconnection standards](#) are to be used for customer-generators who wish to establish interconnection with an electric distribution company's distribution system. The interconnection procedures are designed to streamline the regulatory process and encourage manufacturers and developers to enter the market.

The [net metering requirements](#) set a standard for how electric generation suppliers and electric distribution companies meter and compensate residential or small commercial customers who generate electricity using alternative energy sources as defined in the Act.

The rules on net metering and interconnection are designed to simplify the manner in which customer-generators work with utilities. It will result in a reduction in the amount of energy required from generation plants and replace it with more environmentally-friendly energy.

AEPS requires that a certain percentage of all electric energy sold to retail customers be derived from alternative energy sources such as solar, wind, hydropower, geothermal, biomass, and demand side management resources. The law applies to both electric distribution companies and electric generation suppliers who must demonstrate their compliance on an annual basis. The level of alternative energy required gradually increases according to a 15-year schedule.

The first standards for the Act – demand management and energy efficiency – were approved in September, fulfilling a major component of implementing the Act. The Commission was obligated under the Act to issue a proposed rule on net metering and interconnection by November 30.

In order to expedite approval of Act 213 requirements, a working group, which included numerous stakeholders, was formed to meet, discuss the issues and provide feedback on the development of the standards. With some discussion already on the table, the Commission enters the rule-making phase after already receiving some feedback.

The Commission encourages parties to comment on the proposed rules. Interested parties will have 60 days to submit comments after the advanced notice of proposed rulemaking has been published in the Pennsylvania Bulletin.

For more information, visit the PUC's [Alternative Energy Portfolio Standard webpage](#).

Candidates Wanted for Green Advantage Construction Training in Delaware Valley

The [Delaware Valley Green Building Council](#) is seeking qualified faculty for its National Green Advantage Commercial Training Program. Applications are due November 18.

The training program is designed to serve the construction industry by promoting the adoption of construction practices that are more sustainable, economically viable and life enriching.

Trainers are needed for the architectural/design/academic and the construction/contractor/subcontractor programs.

The [Green Advantage Program](#) is a voluntary environmental certification program that certifies construction industry practitioners in green building practices through agreements with local U.S. Green Building Council chapters.

The program was originally established through a collaboration of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the Nature Conservancy, Science Applications International Corporation and the University of Florida.

For more information on the faculty positions, [download the online announcement and application](#).

Green Building Market Will Reach \$10-\$20 Billion Over Next 5 Years

A new report released at the [U.S. Green Building Council](#) conference this week by McGraw-Hill Construction said the environmentally responsible "green building" market will reach \$10-\$20 billion over the next five years.

The research findings presented in MHC's new Green Building SmartMarket Report show:

- Green building comprises approximately 2 percent of nonresidential construction starts in 2004, valued at \$3.3 billion;
- By 2010, the green building market is expected to be 5-10 percent of nonresidential construction starts (excluding non-building construction), valued from \$10 billion - \$20 billion;
- Over 70 percent of a representative sample of architects, engineers, contractors, and building owners anticipate sales growth from green building;
- 60 percent of architects, engineers and contractors are specifying and installing green building products in their construction projects; and
- Operating costs of green buildings expected to be between 8 and 9 percent lower than other buildings; green buildings expected to have increased values of 7.5 percent.

The report also offers recommendations and suggestions about business opportunity areas highlighted by the research. To purchase the report, please visit [Green Building SmartMarket Report webpage](#).

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

DOE Offers Free Energy Assessments, New Website to Promote Energy Savings

The U.S. Department of Energy is promoting a new [Industrial Energy Saving Teams program](#) that offers free energy assessments for qualified businesses and a new website with energy saving tips.

The application period for the first round of assessments closes December 9.

Through free assessments, DOE Energy Saving Teams will work with individual facilities to identify opportunities to save energy and money, primarily by focusing on steam and process heating systems.

Interested companies can [apply for a free energy assessment online](#).

DOE has developed a series of free, informational brochures detailing “[Fifteen Tips to Help Your Plant Save Energy](#).” These materials are available by calling 877-337-3463.

For more information, visit the [Save Energy Now webpage](#).

EPA Grant to Help Reduce Diesel Emissions at Port of Philadelphia

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency this week announced a series of [grants designed to reduce emissions from diesel engines](#) used in a variety of applications as part of the [National Clean Diesel Program](#).

In Pennsylvania, the Delaware Valley Clean Air Council received a grant for \$100,000 to help retrofit cargo handling equipment at the Port of Philadelphia used in port operations.

For more information visit the [diesel grant awards webpage](#).

Watershed News Features Info on Grants, Training, Smart Growth Tools

The latest issue of [EPA's Watershed News](#) provides more than a dozen stories on new grant and training opportunities, information on new watershed tools and much more.

Topics include: soliciting input on the 2007 federal Farm Bill, environmental technology development grants, training webcasts on stormwater and eminent domain, new Smart Growth tools, summaries of recent roundtables and conferences and background on the Green Highways Forum.

Visit the [Watershed News webpage](#) to read the latest issue or subscribe by sending a blank email to watershed-news-subscribe@lists.epa.gov.

EPA Watershed Academy Stormwater Phase II Webcast November 16

EPA's Watershed Academy sponsors free monthly webcasts to provide training and information for watershed practitioners around the globe.

On [November 16 the topic will be Stormwater Phase II](#). Registration is required for this event.

The webcast includes a web-based slide presentation with a companion audio portion that can be accessed either by phone OR by streaming audio broadcast. Because of the growing popularity of these webcasts, EPA encourages participants to reserve a conference room and invite others.

PA Environment Digest – Holston & Crisci

On December 14, the webcast will feature a program on Introduction to Trading for Water Quality Protection.

Audio versions of this and past webcasts can be accessed on the [Academy's webcast webpage](#).

For example, on October 19 the Academy hosted a webcast titled Low Impact Development Strategies, Tools, and Techniques for Sustainable Watersheds. The webcast focused on how communities and institutions are using Low Impact Development techniques to meet a wide range of water resource protection and community development objectives.

EPA's Watershed Academy offers lots of different online training and seminar programs. Visit the [Academy web-based training page](#) to learn more.

2006 Keystone Coldwater Conference Set for February 24 & 25



Anyone interested in protecting and restoring watersheds, improving stream access and learning about solutions and problems in Pennsylvania's waterways are encouraged to attend the [2006 Keystone Coldwater Conference](#) in State College.

This year's theme is "Our Watersheds at Risk – Protecting Water Quality, Quantity and Stream Access."

The conference will start Friday evening with a reception and a presentation by Linda Steiner entitled, "A Fish Worth the Fight."

Dr. Douglas Austen, Executive Director of the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission, will be the keynote speaker kicking off the Saturday morning session along with Cindy Dunn from the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources.

Workshop sessions will be repeated in the morning and afternoon and they include: protecting public access, land acquisition and easements, water quality and water quantity.

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

West Branch Susquehanna River TMDL Kick Off Meeting November 15

The Susquehanna River Basin Commission will host a meeting to kick off the development of a proposed Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) report for the impaired reaches of the West Branch of the Susquehanna in Cambria, Clearfield, Centre, Clinton, and Lycoming counties.

The meeting will be held on November 15 starting at 7 p.m. in the Clearfield County Conservation District conference room, 650 Leonard St., Clearfield.

The West Branch Susquehanna River was assessed in 1996 through 2004 and was found to have impaired segments. Portions of the watershed are polluted due to acid mine drainage and the stream does not meet its protected uses.

The report will include water quality data, historical information, and information on past and current activities. It will also document any restoration efforts that have taken place or that may be planned for the watershed.

PA Environment Digest – Holston & Crisci

A TMDL is the amount of pollutant loading that can enter a waterbody so the waterbody will maintain its health and meet water quality standards. The maximum load is distributed among all sources in the watershed.

A TMDL plan includes wasteload allocations for point sources, such as permitted discharges; load allocations for nonpoint sources, such as abandoned mine drainage or agricultural runoff; and a margin of safety.

SRBC and the Department of Environmental Protection are interested in obtaining recent stream water quality data, historical information to help describe the watershed, and information regarding watershed restoration projects and plans. The department will consider all information submitted and any pertinent information will be included in the final report.

If you cannot attend the kick-off meeting, but have information you would like to share, please contact: Beth Dillon, SRBC, 1721 Front St., Harrisburg; e-mail bdillon@srbc.net or phone 717-238-0426, ext. 114.

A final public meeting will be held at a location in the watershed after the report is written. There will be an opportunity for public comment on the draft TMDL report. The date and location of the meeting will appear in the PA Bulletin and in the local paper.

New Water Resources Education Network Newsletter Now Online

The new issue of the [Water Resource Education Network newsletter](#) is now available online from the Pennsylvania League of Women Voters.

This month's issue features stories on a new Source Water Protection Educator with the Brodhead Creek Regional Authority, new books, videos, CDs and other education resources available on groundwater and surface water education and information on upcoming conferences and workshops.

To get your own update by email from the Water Resources Network, visit the [WREN Email Signup webpage](#).

Drinking Water Plant Operator Training Set, Online Training Available Anytime

The Pennsylvania Section of the American Water Works Association is sponsoring a series of specialized training sessions on December 12, 13 and 14 for drinking water plant operators.

The workshops will cover topics like effective emergency response, distribution, disinfection, maintenance management, electronic safety and maintenance, cross connection control and the PA One Call System.

A schedule of classes, locations and registration information is available [online through the PAWWA website](#) (scroll down the page).

Put Radon Testing On Your Fall “To Do” List

With the weather turning chilly, it's time for the list of fall chores. And right up there along with installing the storm windows and getting the heating system checked, should be testing the radon levels inside your home.

PA Environment Digest – Holston & Crisci

Radon is the number one cause of lung cancer among non-smokers, according to U.S. Environmental Protection Agency estimates. Overall, radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer. Radon is responsible for about 21,000 lung cancer deaths every year. About 2,900 of these deaths occur among people who have never smoked.

Radon comes from the natural breakdown of uranium in soil, rock and water. It is harmless when dispersed into outdoor air. But when it becomes trapped inside buildings, it can be harmful at elevated levels. It typically moves up through the ground to the air in your home through cracks and other holes in the foundation. This means any home can have a radon problem, whether it is new or old, well-sealed or drafty, with or without basements.

Conducting a radon test is the only way to know if you and your family are at risk of radon because you can't see it, smell it, or even taste it. Fall and winter are the best times to conduct a test because doors and windows are sealed tight against the cold, which ensures a more accurate radon reading.

Radon test kits are easy to use and inexpensive. They are available at any hardware store or home center.

For best results, EPA recommends that the radon test be conducted in the lowest livable level of the home, such as the basement, during the colder months of the year. Tests can also be taken during other times of the year if windows and doors have been closed for 12 hours prior to testing.

EPA recommends that houses with radon levels of four picocuries or more of radon should be vented to prevent accumulation of the gas indoors. A variety of methods can be used to reduce radon in homes. Sealing cracks and other openings in the foundation is a basic part of most approaches to radon reduction. EPA does not recommend the use of sealing alone to limit radon entry. Sealing alone has not been shown to lower radon levels significantly or consistently.

In most cases, a system with a vent pipe and fan is used to reduce radon. These "sub-slab depressurization" systems do not require major changes to your home. They prevent radon gas from entering the home from below the concrete floor and from outside the foundation.

The cost of making repairs depends on how your home was built and the extent of the radon problems. Most homes can be fixed for about the same cost as other common home repairs like painting or having a new hot water heater installed. The average price for a contractor ranges from \$500 and \$2,500.

[Radon remediation contractors](#) are required to be certified by the Department of Environmental Protection, so be sure to check them out.

To learn more, visit the [Radon information webpage](#) or call 1-800-23RADON

“El medio ambiente y su salud” -- Asma

El asma es una enfermedad respiratoria crónica que puede afectar la calidad de vida de millones de estadounidenses. A pesar de que no hay cura para esta enfermedad todavía, el asma puede ser controlada a través de tratamiento médico y el manejo de los factores que provocan ataques de asma.

La EPA está comprometida con educar a los hispanos y a todos los estadounidenses sobre el asma para que todos sepan en qué consiste esta enfermedad, cómo el medio

PA Environment Digest – Holston & Crisci

ambiente puede influir a los pacientes de asma y cómo se pueden manejar los factores que provocan los ataques de asma.

Esta página Web contiene respuestas a preguntas frecuentes sobre el asma, enlaces con información adicional tanto del sitio Web de la EPA como de otras entidades conocidas acerca fuera de epa.gov, enlaces informativos de cómo el asma puede afectar la salud de los niños, y enlaces de información acerca de varios estudios de salud ambiental hispana.

[“El medio ambiente y su salud” Asma](#)

November Environmental Education Newsletter Now Available Online

The November issue of the [EE Connections newsletter](#) from the Pennsylvania Center for Environmental Education is now available online.

Here’s a quick rundown on the topics included in this issue--

PCEE News: Second Environmental Education Survey in Planning Stage, PCEE Prepares Support Materials for Module III, "Teaching About Environmental Issues;"

General EE News: Gov. Rendell Named ' Conservationist of the Year,' Communities Honored for Groundwater Protection Efforts, Environmental Features are Making Today's Homes Greener, Guidelines of Excellence, A Resource You Can Use;

K-12 News: Crawford County Students Learn Watersheds, Project Food, Land and People Juniata Valley Charcoal Iron Heritage, Children's Environmental Literature, Environmental Ethics Video Series, Terrain for Schools;

Higher Education: University of Pennsylvania's Institute for Environmental Studies, Five More Pa. Universities Join Higher-Ed Environmental Consortium, Slippery Rock University Presents the First Biodiesel Revival;

Professional Development: Public Meetings to Discuss Conservation of Pa Highlands, Ecological and Environmental Learning Services; and

Grants: 2006 DEP Environmental Education Grants, 2006 EPA Environmental Education, Grants, 2006 Young Naturalist Awards, EPA EE Grant Program.

To get your own copy of EE Connections by email, go to the [online sign-up form](#). For more information, visit the [Pennsylvania Center for Environmental Education website](#).

Applications For Ralph W. Abele College Scholarships Due April 5

High school seniors have until April 5 to submit applications for a [Ralph W. Abele Conservation Scholarship](#) of up to \$1,000.

The Abele Scholarship was formed in 1991 as a living memorial to [Ralph W. Abele](#) who provided extraordinary leadership to the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission and to Pennsylvania’s conservation movement.

Abele scholarships are considered for students giving a priority to seniors or graduates of the Greenwood Area School District in Perry County, second preference to residents of Perry County and children of employees of the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission and then other residents of Pennsylvania.

Applicants must be admitted to or enrolled in an approved institution of higher learning with a stated objective of studying one of the environmental disciplines at the undergraduate or graduate level.

A written application is required and the scholarship selection will be based on an applicant's potential, his or her interest in conservation education and demonstrated commitment to conservation.

For more information, contact Joe Greene, Treasurer, Ralph W. Abele Scholarship Fund, by sending email to: JGreene62@comcast.net .

Feature

Blacklick Creek Assn. Still Going Strong, 13 Watershed Projects and Counting

It's tough to start a watershed association, just ask Bob Eppley of the [Blacklick Creek Watershed Association](#) in Cambria and Indiana counties. But, the rewards are worth it.

"One of our first projects was an acid mine drainage conference and a mine owner heard me on the radio talking about mine drainage problems," said Bob Eppley, President of Blacklick. "He came storming into the meeting wanting to see the S.O.B. that was talking bad about mine operators!"

"Thanks to someone else, it didn't come to blows," said Eppley. "But you know, that same mine operator later donated land and helped us with one of our mine treatment projects"

The Association started in the 420 square mile Blacklick Creek Watershed in 1993 and now boasts about 150 members.

The watershed has 270 miles of streams polluted by 90 discharges from more than 300 coal mines and 170 coal refuse piles.

The Association has so far completed 13 mine drainage treatment and reclamation projects in the watershed, has a regular water sampling program staffed by volunteers and works with many diverse partners to do their projects. Some of those partners include the DEP, Game Commission, Fish & Boat Commission, county officials, township officials, conservation districts, Indiana University of Pennsylvania students and faculty, utilities and coal mining companies.

The group is now completing the [Laurel Run 2 project](#) in a tributary to the Blacklick that will treat the second of two large abandoned deep mine discharges. Re-mining operations, mining that recovers coal left behind from previous mining and reclaims the land to modern standards, successfully stopped two other discharges in the Run.



**Exposing the Mine Opening
Look for the Special Photo Feature**

PA Environment Digest – Holston & Crisci

“In the 1920s Laurel Run was a native brook trout stream with a beautiful waterfalls, until deep and surface mines came and turned the stream acid and orange,” said Eppley. “Two years ago we finished the project to treat the first discharge with Stream Restoration, Inc. and in May we started the Laurel Run 2 project.”

The project involves filling in and grading a 290 foot long, 60 foot highwall as well as building two treatment ponds to treat water coming from a mine seal that blew out in 1970. The ponds use a relatively new sulfate reducing bacterial technology. The 160 acre project was funded by a \$287,000 grant from the Department of Environmental Protection’s Bureau of Abandoned Mine Reclamation.

“We partnered with Robindale Energy Services, Inc. who is bringing in alkaline fluidized bed coal ash from the [Seward Power Station](#) free of charge to fill in the highwall,” said Eppley. “It works out well for them because they then carried abandoned strip pit coal refuse from the nearby State Game Land No. 276 to Seward to burn.”

About 22,000 tons of ash will be needed to fill in the highwall area that is now about two-thirds full. The project is expected to be complete later in November.

The Laurel Run 2 project should restore the final three miles of the stream down to the main stem of Blacklick Creek.

“We also just finished another project with Robindale Energy Services, Inc. and DEP Bureau of Abandoned Mine Reclamation near Vintondale along the Ghost Town Trail that involved hauling out about 65,000 tons of coal refuse on 4.5 acres and filling in a 160 foot deep mine shaft and several hazardous concrete abandoned coal cleaning pits with beneficial alkaline ash,” said Eppley.

Why do people like Bob Eppley take on this huge challenge? He explains it this way...

“I was born and raised in Western Pennsylvania’s coal and steel country. My father and grandfather Eppley worked in the mills. My maternal grandfather worked in the coal mines - having begun as a teenage shaft digger.

“Where I grew up, most of the streams were orange, much of the terrain was black and often the sky was grey. Even so, I learned to appreciate clean streams, fishing and water.

“When I got a chance to attend college (and then grad school) I decided never to return to the coal regions except as a visitor. However, after a layoff from a large technology firm in New York State and after some medical problems, my wife and I decided to return to the area to secure recovery and employment.

“Seeing the streams and dumps again spurred my interests in environmental science. For the next 35 years, I was employed by industries associated with mining and electrical generation. However, I began to do environmental consulting on the side. I also was given the opportunity to teach chemistry at the college level as an adjunct evening faculty member. During that stint, I presented a section on "Water in the Environment".

“In 1994 after another corporate layoff, I was asked to join the newborn Blacklick Creek Watershed Association. As a fisherman with environmental interests, I joined and soon was inducted into leadership in the organization. My environmental science consulting continued and meshed well with watershed projects. I was designated Project Manager for BCWA remediation projects.

PA Environment Digest – Holston & Crisci

“Projects have grown both in size and difficulty. Many have resulted in significant successes in remediation and restoration of streams, refuse piles and abandoned mine areas.

“My backgrounds in chemistry, geosciences and management have given me an opportunity to provide services useful in environmental projects. Approximately 60 percent of my present efforts are volunteer.

“The Laurel Run 2 Project is an opportunity to at least get one complete stream in the Blacklick Creek watershed restored to pre-mining, historical conditions.”

Stories like these are repeated often across Pennsylvania and it’s one of many reasons watershed organizations have grown from less than 100 to over 400 since the start of the original Growing Greener Watershed Restoration Program in 2000.

Work like this is not only personally rewarding, but Blacklick Creek Watershed Association has won recognition as well. In 2003, the Association was awarded the Governor’s Award for Environmental Excellence.

Keep up the great work out there!

For more information, visit the [Blacklick Creek Watershed Association webpage](#).

Attachment: [Laurel Run 2 Photo Feature - PDF](#)

Quick Clips

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

[PA Wilderness Act Pioneer Howard Zahniser Biography Published](#)
[Pittsburgh to Buy Trees for Low Income Neighborhoods](#)
[Op-Ed: Pittsburgh Needs a Green Roof, Thomas Hylton](#)
[Conservation Consultants Center Gets LEED Gold](#)
[PennVEST Funds \\$28 Million in Water, Wastewater Projects](#)
[DEP Awards Household Hazardous Waste Collection Grants](#)
[New Online Tool Helps Find Solutions for Leftover Paint](#)
[Engineering Firms Honored by Carbon County Conservation District](#)
[Voters Approve, Disapprove Open Space Measures in Pike & Monroe](#)
[Open Space Referendum Defeated in Schuylkill County](#)
[Buttermilk Hill Easements to Protection 600 Acres +](#)
[Wind Turbine Keeps Power On During Outage](#)
[Solar Energy Key to Sustainable Future](#)
[Hatfield Power Plant to Get Scrubbers](#)
[Local Input Guides Conservation Efforts – Highlands Area](#)
[PUC Urges Consumers to Apply for LIHEAP](#)

Watershed NewsClips

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

[Editorial: Proper Use of Growing Greener Funds?](#)
[Editorial: River’s Future Cloudy](#)

[Editorial: Susquehanna River Should Be Enjoyed and Preserved](#)
[Remake of John Smith Boat to Go on Susquehanna Tour](#)
[McCoy Dam Removal to Begin in Spring](#)
[Jacobs Creek Watershed Association Producing Results](#)
[Art, Stormwater Controls Come Together in Nine Mile Run](#)
[Canton Students Create Riparian Zone](#)
[Smith Students to Evaluate Stream Health](#)

Regulations

No new regulations were published this week.

[Pennsylvania Bulletin – November 12, 2005](#)

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

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

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

Technical Guidance & Permits

The Department of Environmental Protection [proposed changes to two policies](#) related to considering local comprehensive plans and zoning ordinances in making permit and funding decisions.

DRAFT: DEP ID: 012-0200-001. Policy for Consideration of Local Comprehensive Plans and Zoning Ordinances in DEP Review of Permits for Facilities and Infrastructure. The Department permit review process considers, and under certain conditions relies upon, comprehensive planning and zoning ordinances in the decision-making process for authorizations related to facilities and infrastructure as required by the acts of 67, 68 and 127 of 2000. Comments due: December 12.

DRAFT: DEP ID: 012-0200-002. Policy for Consideration of Comprehensive Plans and Zoning Ordinances in DEP Review of Grants and Funding for Facilities and Infrastructure. This policy was developed to promote sound land use planning and development by considering comprehensive plans and generally consistent zoning ordinances in Departmental decision-making processes for grant and funding decisions related to facilities and infrastructure. Comments due: December 12.

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

- [Notice of State Conservation Commission 2006 meeting and conference call dates.](#)
- **November 14** – Senate Appropriations will consider Senate Bills [Senate Bill 881](#) (Piccola-R-Dauphin) and [Senate Bill 897](#) (Brightbill-R-Lebanon) making changes to the Eminent Domain Code in response to *Kelo*; [Senate Bill 995](#) (MJ White-R-Venango) relating to snowmobile registrations and [Senate Bill 868](#) (Scarnati-R-Warren) increasing in-lieu of tax payments for forest land.
- **November 14** – DEP Nutrient Trading Public Meeting, Days Inn, 240 South Pugh St., State College.
- **November 15** – DEP Nutrient Trading Public Meeting, Dauphin County Conservation District, 1451 Peters Mountain Rd., Dauphin.
- **November 15** – CANCELLED – [Environmental Quality Board meeting.](#)
- **November 16** – House Environmental Resources & Energy Committee Energy Policy information meeting to hear from DEP Secretary Kathleen McGinty.
- **November 16** – [PA Environmental Council Awards Dinner.](#) Harrisburg
- **November 16** – [DCNR Citizens Advisory Council meeting.](#)
- **November 16** – [State Board for Certification of Water and Wastewater Systems Operators meeting.](#)
- **November 17** – [DEP Small Water Systems Technical Assistance Center Advisory Board meeting.](#)
- **November 17** – PA Resources Council Awards Dinner. West Conchohocken.
- **November 17** – [Rachel Carson Forum – Practical, Renewable Options for Homeowners and Small Business.](#) 12:00.
- **November 18** – [DEP Mercury Rule Work Group meeting.](#)
- **November 18** – [Wildlands Conservancy Annual Dinner/Auction.](#) Macungie.
- **December 1** – Independent Regulatory Review Commission meeting to consider the Environmental Quality Board's Environmental Laboratory Accreditation regulations.
- **December 3** – [Energy Cost Reduction Workshop for Houses of Worship.](#) Harrisburg.

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

[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@HolstonCrisci.com or go to www.PaEnvironmentDigest.com .

PA Environment Digest is edited by David E. Hess, former Secretary Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, and is published as a service to the clients of Holston & Crisci and the public. Holston & Crisci is a Harrisburg-based government and public affairs firm whose clients include Fortune 500 companies and non-profit organizations. For more information on Holston & Crisci call 717-234-1716.

All rights reserved.

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