

— PA — Environment Digest

*An Update on
Environmental
Issues in
Pennsylvania*

Edited By David E. Hess, Holston & Crisci

November 27, 2006

[PA Environment Digest Video Blog](#)

Senate Elects Leaders for New Session, Hints At Priorities

Interim President Pro Tempore of the Senate Joe Scarnati (R-Jefferson) told his first news conference this week the new GOP Leadership team would be returning to Republican principles in its approach to issues next session, but did not outline a specific agenda.

Sen. Scarnati said he wanted the Leadership team to collaborate in new ways to set the Caucus agenda and work as a real team.

On reform, Sen. Scarnati (R-Jefferson) did make a point that when he ran his business he didn't start to work at noon, but at 8:00 a.m., signaling an effort to avoid the late nights and long delays that had been the hallmark of Senate (and House) operations.

Sen. Dominic Pileggi (R-Delaware), the new Majority Leader, said they would be looking very carefully at any issue that will increase taxes or increase the size of government.

The incoming Chair of the Appropriations Committee, Sen. Gib Armstrong (R-Lancaster), said his goal for the coming budget cycle is to keep the growth of the state budget to the rate of inflation.

Some of the first decisions facing the new Leadership team will be which senior staff to retain and to make committee chair assignments.

Although all but one of the Republican Leaders in the Senate are new to Leadership, Senate Democrats are returning with the same Leadership team--

Republicans

President Pro Tempore – **Joseph Scarnati** (Jefferson)

Majority Leader – **Dominic Pileggi** (Delaware)

(Need a new chair for Urban Affairs & Housing Committee)

Whip – **Jane Ori** (Allegheny)

(Need a new chair for Aging & Youth Committee)

Caucus Chair – **Mike Waugh** (York)

(Need a new chair for Agriculture Committee)

Caucus Secretary – **Bob Robbins** (Mercer) (*only repeating member in Leadership*)

Appropriations Chair – **Gib Armstrong** (Lancaster)

(Need a new chair for Banking & Insurance Committee)

Caucus Administrator – TBA

Policy Chair – TBA

Democrats

Minority Leader – **Robert Mellow** (Lackawanna)

PA Environment Digest – Holston & Crisci

Whip – **Michael O’Pake** (Berks)
Caucus Chair – **Jay Costa** (Allegheny)
Caucus Secretary – **Gerald LaValle** (Beaver)
Caucus Administrator – **Constance Williams** (Montgomery)
Appropriations Chair – **Vincent Fumo** (Philadelphia)
Policy Chair – **Richard Kasunic** (Somerset)

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

**Click Here
Professional**

Session Schedule

The Senate and House passed resolutions adjourning the 2005-06 legislative session officially on November 28, but do not plan any further voting days. They will return for the new session on January.

[PA Environment Digest Video Blog](#)

- Dr. Crawford Talks About U.S.G.S. Study of Pharmaceuticals in PA Waters
- Sen. Waugh Talks About Helping Farmers Reduce Nutrient, Sediment Runoff
- Leader of State Brownfields Initiative Retires From Senate – Sen. Brightbill
- Farmland Protection, Chesapeake Bay Advocate Retires From Senate – Sen. Wenger

On the Hill

- Bills on Governor’s Desk
- Action on Senate/House Bills

Other News

- Warwick Twp., Lititz Run Watershed Alliance Receive Honors
- Pennsylvania Farm Sends National Christmas Tree to Washington
- 2007 National Wetlands Awards Nominations Due December 15
- New Online Watershed Course for Broadcast Meteorologists Available
- See & Hear: Watershed Academy Webcast on Drinking Water and Watersheds
- Atlas Identifies Nearly 247,000 Acres of Land Conservation Needs in PA Highlands
- Elk Habitat To Be Added to Sproul State Forest
- Professor Reintroduces River Otter to Pennsylvania
- Invasive Species Plan Circulated for Final Review
- Workshop to Teach Church Personnel How to Save Energy in Harrisburg
- LEED for Neighborhood Development
- Fall Edition of EPA’s Land Revitalization Newsletter Now Online
- Colleges, Universities Challenge Each Other in RecycleMania Competition
- Allegheny County Sponsoring Environmental Poster Contest
- Pennsylvania’s Firearms Deer Season Provides Suspense, Hunting Safety Tips
- Fishing Licenses Go On Sale December 1

Feature

- French Creek Watershed, One of PA's Last Great Places

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

Video Blog

Dr. Crawford Talks About U.S.G.S. Study of Pharmaceuticals in PA Waters

[Dr. J. Kent Crawford](#), Water Quality Specialist for the [Pennsylvania Water Science Center of the U.S. Geological Survey](#), was the guest presenter recently at an Environmental Forum hosted by the [Joint Air & Water Pollution Control and Conservation Committee](#).

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

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

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

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

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

Video Blog

Sen. Waugh Talks About Helping Farmers Reduce Nutrient, Sediment Runoff



[Sen. Mike Waugh](#) (R-York), 2005-06 Chair of the Senate Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee, talks about farm stewardship and the proposed legislation creating the Resource Enhancement and Protection Act (REAP) that would give farmers tax credits for the installation of practices that reduce nutrients and sediments going into our rivers and streams.

The bipartisan Resource Enhancement and Protection Act (REAP) was introduced as [Senate Bill 1286](#) by Sen. Wenger (R-Lancaster), Sen. Waugh (R-York), Sen. O'Pake (D-Berks) and others and as [House Bill 2878](#) by Rep. Stern (R-Blair), Rep. Hershey (R-Chester) and Rep. Daley (D-Washington).

Video Blog: [Sen. Waugh on REAP](#).

Contact Sen. Waugh at: www.SenatorWaugh.com.

Links: [Chesapeake Bay Foundation Information Page on REAP](#)

Issue Notebook: [Resource Enhancement & Protection Tax Credit Proposal](#)

Video Blog

Leader of State Brownfields Initiative Retires From Senate – Sen. Brightbill



[Sen. David J. "Chip" Brightbill](#) (R-Lebanon) retired this week from the Senate after 24 years of public service.

During his career, Sen. Brightbill served as chair of the Senate Environmental Resources and Energy Committee and Majority Leader of the Senate 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.

He also helped add Pine Creek, the Yellow Breeches and Tulpehocken Creeks to the state's Scenic Rivers System, create the Environmental Education Program and Fund, establish DEP's Agricultural Advisory Board, require compensation for structures and the replacement of water supplies affected by underground coal mining and expanded environmental cleanup coverage under the Storage Tank and Spill Prevention Act, among other environmental legislation.

This video was aired on the floor of the Senate this week as a tribute to Sen. Brightbill's service to the Commonwealth.

Video Blog: [Sen. Brightbill Video Tribute](#)

Video Blog

Farmland Protection, Chesapeake Bay Advocate Retires From Senate – Sen. Wenger



[Sen. Noah W. Wenger](#) (R-Lancaster/Chester) retired this week after serving 30 years in the Senate and House of Pennsylvania.

Sen. Wenger was the key architect of Pennsylvania's farmland preservation law, which has permanently preserved over 1,500 farms in the Commonwealth, including 28,000 acres in Lancaster County. Pennsylvania is now the number one state in the nation for farmland preservation. He is also the owner of a 107-acre livestock and poultry farm.

In addition to serving as Chair of the Senate Agriculture and Rural Affairs and Appropriations Committees, Sen. Wenger served as a member and Chair of the Chesapeake Bay Commission and as a member of the Chesapeake Bay Program

Executive Council.

PA Environment Digest – Holston & Crisci

Most recently, Sen. Wenger was the prime sponsor of [Senate Bill 1286](#), the Resource Enhancement and Protection Act (REAP), that would give farmers tax credits for installing best management practices to reduce nutrient and sediment runoff.

He is the recipient of many awards from organizations including from the Lancaster County Conservancy, the Lancaster Farmland Trust, the American Farmland Trust, the Pennsylvania Federation of Sportsmen's Clubs and the Pennsylvania Association of Conservation Districts.

This video was aired on the floor of the Senate this week as a tribute to Sen. Wenger's service to the Commonwealth.

Video Blog: [Sen. Wenger Video Tribute](#)

On the Hill

On the Governor's Desk

These environmental bills received final approval by the Senate and House and are now on the Governor's desk for action—

Strategic Development Areas: [Senate Bill 854](#) (Armstrong-R-Lancaster) authorizes local governments and the Department of Community and Economic Development to create Strategic Development Areas subject to special taxing arrangements to encourage development was signed into law by the Governor and is now Act 151.

Regulatory Impacts: [House Bill 236](#) (Pickett-R-Bradford) requiring the review of regulations for their impact on small business by the Independent Regulatory Review Commission was vetoed by the Governor and this week the House failed to override his veto in a 108 to 83 vote (two-thirds is needed).

Preserving Open Space: [House Bill 183](#) (Ross-R-Chester) providing more local taxing options for preserving open space was given final approval and goes to the Governor for his action.

Infrastructure Security: [House Bill 854](#) (Rubley-R-Chester) establishing the Terrorism Infrastructure Disclosure Protection Act prohibiting the release of certain infrastructure records was reported from Senate Rules Committee and concurred in House amendments. The bill now goes to the Governor for his action.

One Call Program: [Senate Bill 1104](#) (Tomlinson-R-Bucks) making changes to the One Call Program was concurred in by the Senate and now goes to the Governor.

Healthy Foods, Healthy Schools: [Senate Bill 1209](#) (Waugh-R-York) establishing the Healthy Foods, Healthy Schools Program was passed by the House without amendments and now goes to the Governor for his action.

Windmill Farm Assessments: [Senate Bill 514](#) (Gordner-R-Columbia) amending the Tax Reform Act related to property tax assessments for windmill farms and other issues was

passed by the House, concurred in by the Senate and now goes to the Governor for his action.

Clean Diesel Tax Credit: [Senate Bill 1139](#) (Browne-R-Lehigh) providing a \$3,000 tax credit for a taxpayer who invests in clean diesel technology was concurred in by the Senate and sent to the Governor for his action.

Continuing Ed for Engineers, Land Surveyors, Geologists: [Senate Bill 655](#) (Madigan-R-Bradford) establishing continuing education requirements for individuals licensed under the Engineer, Land Surveyor and Geologists Registration Law was given final approval by the Senate and goes to the Governor for his action.

Action on Senate/House Bills

The House took action on these environmental bills this week...

Access to Land for Recreation: [House Bill 3007](#) (Semmel-R-Berks) limits the liability of landowners who open their property to hunting was passed by the House and was then referred to the Senate Environmental Resources and Energy Committee.

In Other News

Warwick Twp., Lititz Run Watershed Alliance Receive Honors

[Lititz Run Watershed Alliance and Warwick Township](#) in Lancaster County were recognized with the Outstanding Achievement for Nutrient Reduction by Local Government Award by the [Businesses for the Bay Program](#).



Warwick Township and LRWA have partnered with the goal of maintaining the viability of the farm economy in Lancaster County while preserving the natural resources of the Chesapeake Bay.

Through grant funding, these organizations developed a program to encourage and implement agricultural best management practices to reduce nitrogen, phosphorus and sediment running into Lititz Run, the Conestoga River, the Susquehanna River and ultimately, the Chesapeake Bay.

For more information contact: lirwin@warwicktownship.org or call 717-626-8900.

Online Video: [Lititz Run – A Community Improving Water Quality](#)
[Lititz Run – 1999 Governor’s Award for Environmental Excellence](#)

Pennsylvania Farm Sends National Christmas Tree to Washington

This year's National Christmas Tree was harvested this week in Carbon County and will be delivered to the White House on November 27, said Agriculture Secretary Dennis Wolff.

The tree was grown by Crystal Spring Tree Farm in Lehighton, the winner of the Douglas-fir competition in the [Pennsylvania Christmas Tree Growers Association](#) tree contest at the Pennsylvania Farm Show last January.

Crystal Spring went on to win at the National Christmas Tree Association's competition, earning the honor of supplying the National Christmas Tree.

"Pennsylvania is a national leader in growing Christmas trees, and this is a terrific example of our state's high-quality trees," said Secretary Wolff. "Consumers who purchase Pennsylvania-grown Christmas trees at farms and retail locations are supporting our state's economy."

Pennsylvania ranks first in the nation in the number of Christmas tree farms and ranks fourth in the nation in the number of Christmas trees cut each year and the acres of production. Pennsylvania has 2,164 farms covering 44,905 acres that produce 1.7 million cut trees each year. These farms have more than \$13.9 million in sales annually.

Crystal Spring is the newest member of the PA Preferred program, which helps consumers identify quality products grown or produced in Pennsylvania. The PA Preferred logo will be displayed on the tree as it arrives in Washington D.C.

This is the fifth year a Pennsylvania grower has presented the National Christmas Tree.

The Christmas tree is perhaps the most notable agricultural-related symbol of the holiday season. In the 1830s, Pennsylvania's German settlers displayed the first Christmas trees in America. As the custom grew in popularity, so did the state's Christmas tree industry.

NewsClip: [White House Christmas Tree Selected from Carbon County Live Christmas Trees Taking Root With Young Families](#)



2007 National Wetlands Awards Nominations Due December 15

Nominations for the [2007 National Wetlands Awards Program](#), which celebrates individuals who have demonstrated extraordinary dedication, innovation or excellence in wetlands conservation, are due December 15.

The program covers initiatives on a regional, state and local level, and their efforts to educate the public and surrounding communities about the value of wetlands, the programs that are available to protect and restore wetlands, and the value of cooperation among grassroots organizations, educational organizations, private landowners, and government agencies lead to the successful protection of wetland resources.

National Wetlands Awardees must show how individuals can and do make a difference in one of six categories: Education and Outreach; Science Research; Conservation and Restoration; Landowner Stewardship; State, Tribal, and Local Program Development; and Wetland Community Leader.

PA Environment Digest – Holston & Crisci

The winners in each category will be honored in a ceremony on Capital Hill in May 2007. The awards program is co-sponsored by the Environmental Law Institute, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Natural Resources Conservation Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, USDA Forest Service, NOAA Fisheries, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and the Federal Highway Administration.

For more information about the National Wetlands Awards or to submit a nomination, [please visit the Award website](#) or call 202-939-3247.

New Online Watershed Course for Broadcast Meteorologists Available

A new on-line course, [Watersheds: Connecting Weather to the Environment](#), provides a unique opportunity for American Meteorological Society Seal holders and certified broadcast meteorologists to learn more about watersheds and earn credit toward their continuing education requirements.

The course is a primer on how weather events relate to the health of a watershed, and how the public can take simple actions to protect watershed health. The online curriculum, while intended for meteorologists, is also highly useful for land use managers, teachers, community leaders, and others interested in learning more about watersheds. It contains a collection of graphics that make it easy for meteorologists and others to explain watersheds visually.

The course is now available on the Cooperative Program for Operational Meteorology, Education and Training distance learning website and was developed by NEETF and COMET through a grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

The course complements an on-going effort by NEETF called [Earth Gauge](#), which provides environmental tips appropriate to the three-day forecast for 55 television markets and more than 80 participating meteorologists, reaching 130 million viewers. These tips are written and designed to allow weather broadcasters to integrate them into their on-air weather reports.

The effort is part of a broader initiative to promote broadcast meteorologists as “station scientists” who can expertly cover environmental and science content.

For more information, contact Sara Espinoza at the National Environmental Education and Training Foundation at: espinoza@neetf.org.

See & Hear

Watershed Academy Webcast on Drinking Water and Watersheds

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s Watershed Academy is sponsoring another in its series of free webcast seminars on November 29 called, "[Integrating Drinking Water into Watershed Protection](#)"

The seminar will feature Beth Hall, U.S. EPA’s Office of Ground Water and Drinking Water, Sheree Stewart, Drinking Water Protection Coordinator, Oregon Department of Environmental Quality; and Christopher Crockett, Manager of Watershed Protection, Philadelphia Water Department.

The program will provide a primer on public water supplies and the recently completed source water assessments mandated by the 1996 Safe Drinking Water Act.

PA Environment Digest – Holston & Crisci

Source water is untreated water from streams, rivers, lakes or underground aquifers that is used to provide public drinking water and to supply private wells.

While the source water assessments have been completed, responsibility for implementing protection measures resides at the state, local and utility level.

Instructors will discuss how they have integrated source water protection into their programs by using technical assistance, partnerships, tools available through the Clean Water Act and other programs, and by collaborating with watershed and smart growth efforts.

The seminar will be held from 1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

For more information and to register, visit the [EPA Watershed Academy website](#).

Atlas Identifies Nearly 247,000 Acres of Land Conservation Needs in PA Highlands

The [Appalachian Mountain Club](#), [Highlands Coalition](#), and [The Trust for Public Land](#) this week released the “[Pennsylvania Highlands Conservation Atlas](#),” a resource for prioritizing land conservation opportunities in the 1.4-million-acre Pennsylvania Highlands region.

Of the 246,992 acres identified as the highest priority Conservation Areas in the region, which extends from the Delaware River to the Maryland border, 85 percent are unprotected and at risk of development.

The Pennsylvania Highlands Conservation Atlas combines, for the first time, science-based data on land ownership, natural resources, and recreational assets with a participatory approach to conservation planning, including input from state and local government officials, local land trusts, and outdoor recreation groups.

The Atlas identifies 11 high-priority Conservation Areas in 13 counties where outstanding resource values—such as clean water, unfragmented forest, and endangered and threatened animal habitat—overlap with stakeholder priorities for trails, greenways, and open space. These areas include the Conewago Mountains in York County; Whiskey Springs Uplands in Cumberland and York Counties; and South Mountain Faces in Adams County.

A key component of the Atlas is a PA Highlands Greenway Map that identifies interconnecting corridors between priority Conservation Areas to support plant and animal biodiversity, providing a vision for a connected greenway through the PA Highlands.

The Conservation Atlas was created by AMC, the Highlands Coalition, and TPL to assist state and county agencies, local officials, and land trusts throughout the state in setting land conservation priorities. This is particularly important as new land conservation funding for the region becomes available through the federal Highlands Conservation Act. Pennsylvania is nationally among the states with the most rural land lost to development.

The Highlands Conservation Act, which the U.S. Congress signed into law in 2004 to authorize new funding for conservation projects in the Highlands, authorized Congress to spend \$100 million over 10 years for land protection in the broader four-state Highlands region in Pennsylvania, New York, New Jersey and Connecticut.

It is expected that at least \$1 million will be appropriated for 2007, with some of the funds going toward the protection of the Oley Hills.

The Pennsylvania Highlands Greenway Planning Project was a shared effort between the AMC and the Highlands Coalition, with input from federal agencies, state, county, and local government, and citizens’ organizations.

PA Environment Digest – Holston & Crisci

Funding was generously provided in part by grants to The Trust for Public Land from the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources and grants to the Appalachian Mountain Club from the [William Penn Foundation](#).

For more information, visit the [Pennsylvania Highlands Conservation Atlas webpage](#).

NewsClip: [Highlands Atlas Determines Which Woodlands to Save](#)

Elk Habitat To Be Added to Sproul State Forest



Nearly 1,400 acres of prime elk habitat is being added to Sproul State Forest in Clinton County. The land purchase will pave the way for the [Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation](#) and DCNR to work with the Department of Environmental Protection and Trout Unlimited to [clean up several acid mine discharges](#) into [Kettle Creek](#), a tributary of the West Branch of the Susquehanna River.

“Our organization has worked in partnership with DCNR in Pennsylvania for nearly 20 years, and our long-standing relationship is a conservation success story that we intend to build upon in the years ahead,” said Peter J. Dart, Elk Foundation President and CEO.

The Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, a non-profit, wildlife conservation organization based in Missoula, Montana, has worked closely with DCNR and other partners in Pennsylvania to establish and enhance elk habitat in The Pennsylvania Wilds - one of the most beautiful and undisturbed regions east of the Mississippi River.

The [Pennsylvania Wilds](#) contains about 2 million acres across 12 counties in the north central part of the state, and is home to a thriving herd of more than 700 elk.

The Elk Foundation purchased the land and conveyed the title to DCNR and will be managed by DCNR’s Bureau of Forestry’s Sproul State Forest.

“The partnership of the Elk Foundation and DCNR to clean up the acid mine discharges from the Kettle Creek property is a winning scenario for Clinton County and the many communities in the county that depend on hunting and recreation to boost their economies,” said Clinton County Commissioner Harold “Bud” Yost.

Yost, who considers Clinton County a “gateway” to The Pennsylvania Wilds, said the land acquisition and subsequent mining clean-up will not only benefit elk, deer, bear, turkey, small game species, and other wildlife that inhabit the property, it will improve the quality of fishing on Kettle Creek, a trout stream that has been growing in popularity in recent years.

“The Kettle Creek acquisition is a major step in our long-term effort to protect high quality habitats for elk and other wildlife and to open lands for hunting and other forms of recreation,” said Rawley Cogan, lands program manager for the Elk Foundation. An estimated 10,000 hunters visit Sproul State Forest every year, Cogan said, adding that the area is also becoming a destination for other forms of recreation, such as hiking, canoeing, kayaking, and wildlife viewing.

In March, the State of Pennsylvania’s DEP awarded the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation \$1.35 million in Growing Greener II funds to eliminate dangerous cliffs and spoil piles at the former Kelley Estate, a 4,200-acre acquisition completed by the Elk

Foundation, [North Central Pennsylvania Conservancy](#), DCNR and Pennsylvania Game Commission in 2000 in West Keating Township in Clinton County. The Elk Foundation is administering the grant and is working with the Department of Environmental Protection, the Clinton County Conservation District and the consulting company, New Miles of Blue Stream, to complete the project.

A 1995 study supported by the Wild Resource Conservation Fund found that wildlife watching in Pennsylvania generated nearly \$1.8 billion in economic activity each year, and the popularity of elk is a key attraction.

“This is an important opportunity to add to and protect some of the most rugged and remote forest land in Pennsylvania,” said Department of Conservation and Natural Resources Secretary Michael DiBerardinis.

“As stewards of the park and forest lands in the Pennsylvania Wilds that are becoming a growing destination for outdoor recreationists, we thank the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation and our other partners for this opportunity to provide food and habitat for wildlife, clean up and protect the resource and offer the best outdoor experience possible to our visitors so that they understand the role we all play in the future of our natural resources,” Secretary DiBerardinis said.

Sprout State Forest currently encompasses more than 300,000 acres of forest land located in western Clinton and northern Centre counties.

“The Kettle Creek property is an excellent acquisition that will allow the state to conduct aggressive acid mine drainage reclamation,” said Clinton County Rep. Mike Hanna (D-Centre).

“The partnership between the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation and the State of Pennsylvania illustrates the effectiveness of diverse groups collaborating to achieve common goals that will benefit the citizens of our state for generations to come,” Rep. Hanna said.

The Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation is a nonprofit organization dedicated to ensuring the future of elk, other wildlife and their habitat. In Pennsylvania, the Elk Foundation has conserved or enhanced nearly 14,000 acres of wildlife habitat, and has worked with its partners to complete 126 conservation projects with a value of nearly \$8 million.

To learn more visit www.elkfoundation.org or call 800-CALL-ELK.
(Courtesy of [DCNR's Resource newsletter](#).)

Professor Reintroduces River Otter to Pennsylvania



[Tom Serfass](#) grew up in the Poconos region of Pennsylvania, and saw first-hand the impacts of sprawl development on the wildlife he loved. So it wasn't surprising that he returned to the Pocono region to begin one of the most successful reintroduction programs in the country—bringing the nearly extinct river otter back to a large swath of Pennsylvania.

As a professor at East Stroudsburg University, and later Penn State and Frostburg State University, Serfass has been the architect of the river otter reintroduction effort in Pennsylvania and a consulting biologist for reintroduction efforts across the country and worldwide.

Prof. Tom Serfass release
otter in Juniata River.
Game Commission Photo

PA Environment Digest – Holston & Crisci

He and his program are also long-time recipients of numerous grants from DCNR's Wild Resource Conservation Program, which has supported the otter reintroduction effort over the years. Serfass came to DCNR last month as the featured speaker of the monthly Rachel Carson Lecture Series on environmental issues.

Over the course of the 20th century, river otters—once ubiquitous across Pennsylvania—began a serious decline due to over-trapping and poor water quality. Without the small fish and crayfish otter depend on for their primary food sources, otters could no longer survive in the wild.

Serfass and a team of assistants captured wild otters still living in the Ponoco region, along with otters captured in the Adirondacks, and kept them healthy and inoculated over the winter for releases into the wild beginning in the mid-1990s.

Initially, otters were released in Tionesta, Loyalsock and Pine Creeks in northwestern Pennsylvania, and have since been released in central and southwestern parts of the state, including the Youghiogheny watershed. Today, the otters are thriving and moving across the state on their own.

“We made a lot of mistakes, but we always adhered to a rigorous protocol and we always looked at ethical issues,” explained Serfass.

One of the first issues to arise was the concern that fishermen across the state would resent the reintroduction of a carnivorous species that competed for fish. Serfass and his graduate students conducted research to determine what otters were really eating in the wild. They analyzed otter droppings to find that otters primarily concentrated on slow-moving fish like creek chub, not prized trout that anglers would favor.

They also discovered that crayfish made up a huge part of the otter diet. Once they were able to share this information with anglers, their objections to the re-introductions stopped, explained Serfass.

“We had up to 200 people watching some of these releases,” he explained.

Today Serfass and his graduate students are working on monitoring the released otters' movements across Pennsylvania to see how rapidly their numbers are increasing, to follow their dispersal patterns, and to learn more about the family and individual behaviors of this highly secretive and nocturnal animal.

Graduate students like Emily Just spend their time analyzing otter “latrine” sites to determine numbers of otters visiting, leaving scents and how they interact as family groups. Serfass said he hopes DCNR can help in future years recruiting volunteer monitors and continuing support for the research.

Links: [River Otters in Pennsylvania – Game Commission](#)
[Get A River Otter License Plate for Your Vehicle](#)

(Courtesy of [DCNR's Resource newsletter](#).)

Invasive Species Plan Circulated for Final Review

The Governor's Invasive Species Council is now circulating a [final draft aquatic invasive species management plan](#) for review and consideration by the Council, according to Sarah N. Whitney, Chair of the Council's AIS Management Plan Committee.

The goal of the plan is to minimize the harmful ecological, economic and human health impacts of AIS through the prevention and management of their introduction,

PA Environment Digest – Holston & Crisci

expansion and dispersal into, within and from Pennsylvania. Specifically, the Plan has these objectives—

- Provide leadership and coordination for AIS issues in Pennsylvania among local, state and federal agencies and organizations, and ensure that state policy effectively promotes the prevention, early detection and control of aquatic invasive species in Pennsylvania. Establish coordination and provide leadership within the Mid-Atlantic and Great Lakes October 31, 2006 4 regions in order to address AIS issues more effectively, including prevention, advanced warning and concerted efforts in drainage basins shared across state lines;
- Identify vectors and mechanisms and minimize the introduction and spread of aquatic invasive species into and throughout Pennsylvania;
- Detect new introductions of aquatic invasive species in Pennsylvania before they have a chance to become established in the ecosystem;
- Develop a system for early response to eradicate or contain target species before the species can become permanently established;
- Monitor and inventory existing infestations of aquatic invasive species in Pennsylvania;
- When feasible, control and eradicate established aquatic invasive species that have significant impacts in Pennsylvania. Reduce the harmful effects resulting from AIS infestations by managing those that cannot be eradicated;
- Increase research efforts on AIS species, issues and impacts to support AIS management, control and eradication in Pennsylvania; and
- Educate the general public and people involved in the business, trade, research and government sectors about AIS issues so that they do not facilitate the introduction or spread of AIS species.

[A copy of the Invasive Aquatic Species Plan is available online.](#)

For more information contact Sarah Whitney, who is with the Pennsylvania Sea Grant Program, by sending email to: swhitney@psu.edu or calling 610-304-8753.

Workshop to Teach Church Personnel How to Save Energy in Harrisburg

The Episcopal Diocese of Central Pennsylvania will hold its second annual Energy Cost Reduction Workshop from 10 a.m.- 1 p.m., December 2 at St. Stephen's Episcopal Cathedral, 221 North Front St., in Harrisburg.

Andrew Rudin, experienced energy management consultant to many churches, will present specific, concrete approaches to reduce energy bills for church buildings.

Rudin has conducted numerous energy reduction studies for thousands of buildings owned by congregations, and helped them protect their limited budgets. Like last year's successful workshop, this workshop will provide real life solutions that can help reduce energy costs.

This is an ecumenical workshop open to all faiths. It will include a discussion of the universality of belief in stewardship of God's creation.

An optional tour of [St. Stephen's energy efficient green school building](#) will follow the workshop.

RSVP by sending a note to Anne Yellott c/o the Diocese of Central Pennsylvania, P.O Box 11937, Harrisburg PA 17108 or send email to: ajyellott@paonline.com.

Please include a check to the Diocese of Central Pennsylvania for \$20 to cover lunch and expenses.

LEED for Neighborhood Development

The U.S. Green Building Council, the Congress for the New Urbanism, and the Natural Resources Defense Council have come together to develop [LEED for Neighborhood Development](#), a rating system that will integrate the principles of smart growth, urbanism, and green building into the first national standard for neighborhood design.

Where other LEED products focus primarily on green building practices, with only a few credits regarding site selection, LEED for Neighborhood Development will emphasize smart growth aspects and neighborhood design of development while still incorporating a selection of the most important green building practices.

Guided by the [Smart Growth Network's ten principles](#) of smart growth and the [Charter for New Urbanism](#), it will include compact design, proximity to transit, mixed use, mixed housing type, and pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly design. In short, LEED for Neighborhood Development will create a label which could serve as a concrete signal of, and incentive for, better location, design, and construction of neighborhoods and buildings.

Resources available through this program include:

- **LEED for Neighborhood Development Rating System Preliminary Draft Document.** This draft of the LEED for Neighborhood Development Rating System is not final, and will likely be revised significantly before it is used for the pilot program. A Fact Sheet for this initiative is also available.
- **LEED for Neighborhood Development Public Health Report.** This report comprehensively summarizes the relationship between how our communities are designed -- land use, design character, transportation system, and density -- and a series of public health outcomes such as physical activity, traffic crashes, respiratory health and mental health.

This is one of the first reports that not only summarizes the impact of the built environment on public health topics but also discusses how this information can be translated into positive changes to the built environment.

For the latest information, visit the [LEED for Neighborhood Development webpage](#).

Fall Edition of EPA's Land Revitalization Newsletter Now Online

The Fall edition of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Mid-Atlantic Region's quarterly electronic newsletter [Land Revitalization Update](#) is now available online.

The Update relates news, resources and policies impacting cleanup and reuse of contaminated properties. Cleanup and reuse are mutually supportive goals since contaminated property reuse reduces sprawl and protects green space.

It is also distributed via e-mail to stakeholders interested in the cleanup and redevelopment of contaminated properties in the mid-Atlantic region.

For more information, visit [EPA Region 3's Land Revitalization webpage](#).

Colleges, Universities Challenge Each Other in RecycleMania Competition



[RecycleMania](#), a competition among colleges and universities to see which schools can collect the most recyclables over a 10-week period, is now inviting more schools to the competition.

The competition will run from January 28 to April 7, 2007.

By promoting waste reduction and environmental stewardship among students in a competitive way, RecycleMania hopes to increase student involvement in recycling.

More than 50 universities have been contacted via e-mail inviting their recycling coordinators to participate.

RecycleMania is organized and operated by university recycling coordinators and endorsed by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's [WasteWise program](#) and other organizations.

For more information on how your school can join, visit the [RecycleMania website](#).

Allegheny County Sponsoring Environmental Poster Contest

The [Allegheny County Health Department](#) is sponsoring its eighth annual environmental poster contest for students in grades 6-8. The deadline for entries is February 16.

The theme of this year's contest is "Shedding Light on Mercury" and intended to help students learn about the harmful health effects of mercury, its sources in the environment and how to reduce human exposures.

Winners will be announced in conjunction with Earth Day celebrations next April. Teachers who would like to have their classes participate in the poster contest should contact the Health Department for details.

For additional information, please call the [Allegheny County Health Department](#) at 412-687-ACHD or send an email to Jayme Graham at jgraham@achd.net.

Pennsylvania's Firearms Deer Season Provides Suspense, Hunting Safety Tips



Anticipation is building and excitement will be in the air for the November 20 opening day of the upcoming deer firearms season - November 27 through December 9, but the Game Commission reminds hunters to hunt safely.

The Game Commission reported deer may be plentiful in some areas and difficult to find in other areas, but added there is a good number of heavy-antlered bucks afield.

"When you reduce deer populations as we have in recent years in Pennsylvania, deer hunting is tougher," said Cal DuBrock, Game Commission Bureau of Wildlife Management director. "Deer are harder to see and harder to find. Pre-season scouting and remaining alert on stand are more important than ever in the approaching season.

"For some Pennsylvanians, decreased deer densities are welcome news. For others, they are not. But our deer population is stable in most areas and our antlered buck harvests over the past two years have been a 50-50 mix of yearlings and older deer. Pennsylvania's

PA Environment Digest – Holston & Crisci

bucks are getting older and hunters are seeing the difference afield. As recently as five years ago, more than 80 percent of the antlered buck harvest was yearlings.

"Although hunters may not see a lot of deer in drives or on stand in many areas, the potential to shoot a large-bodied, rack buck is better than it has been for some time in Pennsylvania," DuBrock said. "But that doesn't mean you will, or that you'll even see one. It just means those bucks, which tend to be craftier than yearlings, are out there somewhere. They represent a considerable challenge and taking one is quite an accomplishment."

The buck harvest historically has been a barometer for Pennsylvania's deer population trends. During the 2005-06 license year, hunters took 354,390 deer - including 120,500 antlered bucks. In 2004-05, the buck harvest was 124,410. The similarities in the buck harvest over the past two years are indicative of a stable deer population, because the season structure for hunting bucks didn't change and hunter effort for bucks is relatively consistent through the seasons.

Over the past few years, increased antlerless license allocations and antlerless harvests have helped decrease the size of deer populations in many areas. The Game Commission manages deer with antlerless licenses, which are used by hunters to help remove adult females from the population. Over the past two years, the Game Commission has reduced antlerless allocations to maintain stable deer numbers in many Wildlife Management Units. The number of licenses allocated - and sold - strongly influence a WMU's deer harvest. So, too, can hunter access and weather.

"Antlerless deer license allocations over the past two years have been designed to keep deer populations in most WMUs stable as we evaluate the effect of recent deer population reductions on deer health, habitat health, and deer-human conflicts," explained Dr. Christopher Rosenberry, agency Deer Management Section supervisor. "Over the past year, we have implemented deer management measures with which we can evaluate and manage each WMU individually.

"Our objective is to manage a healthy and productive deer herd that provides recreational opportunities and acceptable ecological impacts and human conflicts. Of course, that's no easy task, and surely one that will always be influenced by Pennsylvania's changing landscape. But we strive to do the best job possible with the resources we have. We are committed to providing sound deer management recommendations."

Hunters shouldn't expect to see a dramatic change in deer numbers when they head afield, largely because whitetail populations aren't prone to big annual population swings, either from hunting pressure or as a result of increased recruitment. The deer populations many hunters are seeing afield are the result of successive years of increased antlerless allocations and antlerless harvests. Over the past two years, allocations were designed to stabilize deer numbers in most WMUs, excepting those with Special Regulations Areas, where efforts to increase the harvest remain strong.

"Our reduced deer population is not bad for Pennsylvania," emphasized DuBrock. "It's better for deer health, better for our forested areas and better for landowners whose properties are damaged by deer populations. But please understand that the Game Commission is working to restore a balance between deer and their habitat and reduce conflicts in the process. We are not trying to drop deer populations any further than they are in most WMUs, and if measures of deer health and habitat improve, could actually allow them to increase in future years.

PA Environment Digest – Holston & Crisci

"Whitetails are important to Pennsylvanians, wildlife conservation and the state's economy. The Game Commission cares about the concerns of hunters and other stakeholders, and strives annually to manage deer as professionally and sensitively as possible. In recent years, many difficult decisions have been made in deer management to ensure the future of our wildlife resources, and the results of those decisions have caused some dissatisfaction. But having healthy deer and healthy habitat is fundamental to the deer management program. Hopefully, we are enduring the worst and improvements will be seen in local herds and habitat and reductions in ongoing conflicts in the future."

The larger proportion of 2.5-year-old bucks in the deer population is the direct result of antler restrictions, which were started in Pennsylvania in 2002. Designed to increase the percentage of older bucks in the deer population by protecting yearlings, antler restrictions again will limit the taking of bucks in all Wildlife Management Units in the upcoming season. Consult page 57 of the 2006-2007 Pennsylvania Hunting and Trapping Digest for additional details on restrictions. All antler points - with the exception of the main beam tip - must be at least one inch in length to be legal.

Today, whitetail bucks are bigger and smarter, and that means hunters face greater challenges afield. Most welcome those circumstances. But it can be a humbling experience, especially when the actions of other hunters further educate and influence the movements of older bucks. Therein lies the challenge. Strategy is important, as are patience and time afield. The rest, is up to the buck!

"Every hunter knows that a variety of factors influence where deer will be when the firearms season opens," DuBrock said. "And that can change within hours after daylight as deer respond to hunter movements or pressure. If you cannot put yourself in a location where deer come to you, then it's probably best that you go to them. Still-hunting and organized drives are both time-proven ways to take whitetails. Remember, changing your approach can make a difference. In fact, it may be one of the best ways to improve your chances."

Preseason scouting is always worth the time. Try to locate the general areas deer are using in mid-November, and then fine-tune your efforts to choose hunting locations closer to the start of season. If you're hunting on state lands that receive considerable hunting pressure, try to select locations in thick cover, particularly in areas loaded with mountain laurel/rhododendron and hemlock or scrub pine. If you're familiar with deer escape routes in your hunting area, concentrate on hunting near those outlets on high-pressure hunting days such as the first two days of season, and both Saturdays.

The best hunting day of the firearms deer season historically has been the first day, because of the large number of hunters participating on the opening day. Last year, 33 percent of the overall firearms harvest (45 percent of antlered bucks) was taken on the opener. The second best day was the first Saturday, followed by the second Saturday and the second day (first Tuesday). Combined, these four days accounted for about 70 percent of the two-week firearms season harvest in 2005.

"Deer season isn't over after the first two days," emphasized Rosenberry. "Last year, only about 40 percent of all hunters who harvested a deer in the firearms season got theirs on the first or second day. There's plenty of opportunity for those who stay with it."

Hunters are reminded they must wear 250 square inches of fluorescent orange material on the head, chest and back combined at all times while afield. They also are advised that it's illegal to hunt, chase or disturb deer with a firearm within 150 yards of any occupied building without the occupant's permission.

PA Environment Digest – Holston & Crisci

All hunters who take a deer must fill out their harvest tag and attach it to the deer's ear before moving the carcass. The tag can be secured to the base of the ear with a string drawn very tightly, if the hunter plans to have the deer mounted. Cutting a slit in the ear to attach the tag will require additional work by a taxidermist.

The harvest report card - provided with every license sold - must be mailed to the Game Commission within 10 days after taking the deer. Hunters who lose or misplace a deer harvest report card are urged to use or copy the big game harvest report card found on Page 33 of the 2006-2007 *Pennsylvania Hunting and Trapping Digest*, which also is provided to all license-buyers.

It is illegal to use a vehicle to locate game; to have more than 25 people in a hunting party; or to use portable two-way radios to alert hunters about the presence or approach of game.

Hunting Safety Tips

In 2005-06 deer hunting seasons, 18 persons were involved in hunting-related shooting incidents, according to Pennsylvania Game Commission statistics. Two incidents resulted in fatalities; 6 were self-inflicted.

"Two people heading out to enjoy time afield and the excitement of deer hunting died last year," noted Keith Snyder, Game Commission Hunter-Trapper Education Division chief. "Sixteen others wrestled with the trauma of being shot, and a dozen others for shooting someone. These unfortunate and tragic situations always result from poor gun handling, or hunters making poor shooting decisions.

"We encourage all deer hunters to hunt responsibly and to positively identify their quarry as legal game before squeezing the trigger. If you're not sure, please don't shoot. Be safe and demand that others who hunt with you hunt safely, too."

A breakdown of the hunting-related shooting incident causes was as follows: victim in line-of-fire, 7; unintentional discharge, 4; mistaken for game, 2; sporting arm in dangerous position, 2; hunter slipped/fell, 1; sporting arm defective, 1; and hunter dropped sporting arm, 1.

Hunters who participate in organized drives are asked to be especially careful when afield and to plan drives that won't place members at risk. Drivers, standers and flankers all need to know when they may shoot and in which direction it is safe to shoot. Hunt plans should define predetermined zones of fire. All hunters must wear at least 250 square inches of fluorescent orange clothing; it's the law and it improves the ability of other hunters to see them.

Hunters who are heading afield alone are reminded to let a family member or friend know where they'll be hunting and when they're expected to return. Leave a map that marks your hunting location(s). Take a cell-phone just in case you need to call for help.

Hunters who plan to hunt in tree-stands are advised to use a fall-restraining device from the moment they leave the ground until they return to it. A full-body safety harness is preferred, but any fall-restraining device is better than none. Hunters also should use a hoist rope to raise and lower their hunting equipment; don't climb with a firearm or pack.

Some personal safety tips for hunters to consider while afield include:

- Always control the muzzle of your firearm. Point it in a safe direction and keep it under control at all times;
- Handle every firearm as though it were loaded. Check any firearm you hold to see if it is loaded. Any time firearms change hands, keep the actions open. Also, remember that it is illegal to have a loaded firearm in, on or leaning against your vehicle;

PA Environment Digest – Holston & Crisci

- Be sure of your target and what's beyond. Never shoot at a flash of color, sound, shapes or anything you "think" is a deer until it is plainly visible and you can positively identify it. Never shoot at a sky-lined deer or any time you are not certain what lies beyond your target;
- Keep your finger off the trigger until ready to fire. Never walk about with your finger inside the trigger guard. Insist that everyone in your hunting party handles their firearm safely;
- Never "scope" anything but your intended target. If you need to confirm something moving through the brush or field, use binoculars, not your rifle scope;
- Always carry a whistle; matches or lighter and tinder; and some first-aid materials for emergencies;
- Carry a compass and a topographic map and know which direction you need to travel in if you become disoriented;
- Wear layers of clothes so you can adjust to changes in temperature or weather. Wearing too much could cause you to overheat and perspire; too little leaves you cold and shivering. Both will make you uncomfortable and can affect your judgment and accuracy and
- When moving about before dawn, don't load your firearm until you reach your deer stand and until legal shooting hours.

For more information, visit the Game Commission's [Deer Management Program webpage](#).

NewsClip: [Morning File: Deer Danger](#)
[Editorial: Hunting Safety](#)

Fishing Licenses Go On Sale December 1



The calendar may say otherwise, but for anglers the New Year is just days away. That's because 2007 Pennsylvania Fishing Licenses go on sale December 1.

Not only are the 2007 licenses available in December, they're also valid immediately at the time of purchase. In essence, buying a Pennsylvania fishing license in December is like getting an extra month at no additional fee.

It's easy to take advantage of this "baker's dozen" of months of fishing fun. To purchase a license from the convenience of your own home, simply fish the Fish and Boat Commission to go "[Get Your Fishing License](#)."

You can then complete your transaction online and print out a valid license on a home printer.

Don't worry if you haven't fished for a few years and don't remember every rule. Issuing agents hand out a free [Summary of Pennsylvania Fishing Regulations and Laws](#) with each license purchased. This same information is available online.

A few things to know up front: a valid Pennsylvania license is required for anglers 16 years of age and older. Additional permits may also be required, such as a trout/salmon stamp for those fishing for trout or a Lake Erie permit for anglers fishing in Lake Erie, Presque Isle Bay or their tributaries. A combination Lake Erie/Trout Stamp is also available at a discounted price as compared to purchasing the two permits separately.

“At pennies a day, it’s hard to beat an annual fishing license.

Of course the real value of a Pennsylvania fishing license is the full year's worth of fun with friends and family on some of the best fishing waters around,” said PFBC Executive Director Doug Austen. “With more than 83,000 miles of rivers and streams and some 4,000 lakes and ponds across the state - not to mention 470,000 acres of Lake Erie - there are great fishing opportunities close by for everyone.”

One thing that won’t be available December 1 is a new on-demand license issuing system currently being developed for the sale of Pennsylvania fishing and hunting licenses. The vendor developing the system, which will move the license-buying process into the technological age, is still working on the electronic backbone required to make the system work seamlessly.

“The Pennsylvania Automated Licensing Service will be a great step forward when it is activated. Because the system will simplify the license purchasing process for anglers and agents and provide the Commission with better tools to understand our customers, we’re very anxious for it to be implemented. However, we will not authorize it to go live until we are completely satisfied that it will provide the best benefits for everybody,” Austen said.

The PFBC expects that the vendor developing the system will be ready for the peak license sales period in late winter/early spring. Until that time, the traditional paper-based licenses will continue to be issued.

More than just a permit to fish, a fishing license is a direct investment in Pennsylvania's aquatic resources. Unlike most state agencies, the PFBC receives no General Fund tax dollars to operate its programs. Instead, the PFBC relies on revenues from the sale of fishing licenses and boat registrations to provide fisheries management, stocking, habitat improvement and law enforcement for the anglers and boaters of the Commonwealth.

Feature

French Creek Watershed, One of PA’s Last Great Places



Imagine vibrant waters where native fish break the surface to feed at first light, where dense forests line the banks of brooks and streams, where clear, cool waters rush over clusters of native freshwater mussels.

Just inland from Lake Erie, such a special place exists. [French Creek](#), one of the state’s and the region’s most pristine watersheds, boasts a rich, irreplaceable natural heritage, which The Nature Conservancy recognized by designating it one of the Last Great Places in 1993.

For more than a decade, the Conservancy has been working in both Pennsylvania and New York to protect this special place. Most recently, we made our first direct acquisition of land along the mainstem of the famed French Creek in Pennsylvania, a parcel that includes forest, floodplain and an impressive 2,000 feet of river frontage. This

PA Environment Digest – Holston & Crisci

milestone will help ensure this special place remains wild and pristine for generations to come.

“We’re delighted to protect French Creek, one of Pennsylvania’s aquatic treasures,” says Bill Kunze, The Nature Conservancy’s state director in Pennsylvania. “In addition to its ecological importance, protection of this property marks a renewed emphasis on our conservation work in the western part of the state.”

Darran Crabtree, director of conservation science for the Conservancy in French Creek, says, “Every acre of land we protect helps maintain the pristine waters of French Creek. This property, which includes streamside forests, will help safeguard countless aquatic species. This acquisition is especially ecologically valuable because of its proximity to some of the best rare mussel and fish habitats on Earth.”

Adds Crabtree, “Protecting this parcel helps us tackle threats to this natural area, including inappropriate development. Keeping the land intact and untouched helps us safeguard riverbank stability and healthy riparian forests. Development increases sediment and nutrient runoff, which lowers water quality and impacts the rich variety of aquatic life found here.”

A major tributary to the Allegheny River, French Creek appears much as it did centuries ago when George Washington followed the river before the French and Indian War. Its rich waters are home to more freshwater fish and mussels than any other waterway in the northeastern United States. An astonishing 28 species of native mussels and 86 species of native fish are found here, both indicators of the health and high quality of the watershed. As such, it is possibly the only river in the entire Ohio drainage whose ecosystem remains this intact, with many mussel species in French Creek and the Allegheny River representing the best remaining populations available.

“Freshwater mussels indicate the health and quality of the waters,” says Crabtree. “In this particular section of French Creek, there are still significant populations of northern riffleshell, a federally endangered freshwater mussel. This species, along with others such as clubshell, has disappeared from approximately 95 percent of its original range throughout the East and Midwest.”

Complementing and nourishing French Creek’s rich waters are relatively intact streamside or riparian forests, which offer critical protection to the aquatic species, plants and animals found here. Wooded areas also help offer “ecosystem services” to human beings by acting as natural filters for runoff and sediment and helping to maintain high water quality. In addition these riverside woodlands create a migratory funnel for neotropical birds such as cerulean warbler on their way to Lake Erie and beyond. The watershed contains Pennsylvania’s largest wetland and most of the natural glacial lakes found in northwestern Pennsylvania.

Recent research on French Creek’s range of aquatic species and ecological health is refreshingly positive. Species inventories in the watershed indicate that the river and its tributaries are not only holding their own, but in some cases they’re improving. Based on these findings, the Conservancy will use French Creek as a benchmark against which the success and health of other watersheds can be measured both in Pennsylvania and beyond our borders.

Funding for this newest acquisition comes, in part, from a generous grant from The Gott Family Foundation.

PA Environment Digest – Holston & Crisci

Conservation at French Creek also recently received a tremendous boost with the creation of the \$1.5 million Bonnie and Joe Kies Land Acquisition Fund, one-third of which will be restricted to the French Creek Watershed.

The Kies fund will provide a one-to-one match for any public or private funds, substantially increasing the fund's overall conservation value. We are extraordinarily grateful to the Kies family for the generosity and leveraging power of this gift.

Link: [The French Creek Project](#)
[The Places TNC Protects in Pennsylvania](#)

Reprinted from [Penn's Woods](#), Fall/Winter 2006, The Nature Conservancy

Quick Clips

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

[Highlands Atlas Determines Which Woodlands to Save](#)
[Greensburg-Pittsburgh Rail Lines Inch Closer to Reality](#)
[Group Collects Pedal Power to Help Energize Communities](#)
[Nature: Songbirds Find Perch in Game Land 156](#)
[Diversifying the Forest](#)
[Wildlife Food Average or Better this Fall](#)
[Breakfast Bag Littering Leads to Trouble](#)
[Renewable Energy Brings New Opportunities](#)
[Green Power Requires Too Many Greenbacks](#)
[Greene County Coal Waste Plant Clears First Hurdle](#)
[Ethanol Plant Plans Met with Skepticism](#)
[AG Equipment Manufacturer Promotes use of Biodiesel](#)
[Editorial: COALS Program Worthy of State Attention](#)

Watershed NewsClips

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

[Chester Waterfront Continues to Grow](#)
[Coalition Wants to Utilize Town's Best Asset](#)
[Sunbury to Host Flood Protection Workshop](#)

Regulations

No new regulations were published. [Pennsylvania Bulletin – November 25, 2006](#)

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 published a final policy on determining reclamation bond amounts for coal refuse areas and a revised proposed policy on [nutrient and sediment reduction credits](#). (*See PA Bulletin November 25*)

Final: DEP ID: 563-2504-001 Conventional Bonding for Land Reclamation--Coal. This guidance, issued under the authority of the Surface Mining Conservation and Reclamation Act (52 P. S. §§ 1396.1--1396.19a) and the Coal Refuse Disposal Control Act (52 P. S. §§ 30.51--30.66), describes the regulatory and statutory requirements for determining bond amounts.

Draft: DEP ID: 392-0900-001 Trading of Nutrient and Sediment Reduction Credits--Policy and Guidelines. This guidance provides revisions to the Interim Final Trading of Nutrient and Sediment Reduction Credits--Policy and Guidelines (Interim Final Policy), published at 35 Pa.B. 5451 (October 2005).

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

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

Calendar of Upcoming Events

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

- **November 30** – [Independent Regulatory Review Commission](#) meets to consider EQB Regulation 7-397 Newtown Creek Stream Redesignations and Department of Agriculture 2-150 Commercial Manure Hauler & Broker Certification. 14th Floor Conference Room, 333 Market St., Harrisburg. 10:30.
- **December 1** – [State Planning Board meeting](#). Room 105 Rachel Carson Building. 10:00 a.m.
- **December 4** – DEP [Cleanup Standards Scientific Advisory Board](#) meeting. Room 105 Rachel Carson Building. 9:30.
- **December 12** – **CANCELLED**. [Coal and Clay Mine Subsidence Insurance Board meeting](#).
- **December 12** – **CANCELLED**. [Laboratory Accreditation Advisory Committee](#) meeting
- **December 14** – [Coal and Clay Mine Subsidence Insurance Board meeting](#). 14th Floor Conference Room, Rachel Carson Building, Harrisburg. 10:00.
- **December 19** - [DEP public hearing](#) on Greene County Ozone Implementation Plan.
- **December 19** – [DEP public hearing](#) on Ozone Implementation Plan for Reading.

[DEP Calendar of Events](#)

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

[Environmental Education Workshop/Training Calendar](#)

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

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

Helpful Web Links

[PA Environment Digest Video Blog](#)

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

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

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

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

Stories Invited

Send your stories about environmental issues, programs and positive actions to *PA Environment Digest* - DHess@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.

Supporting Member PA Outdoor Writers Association

PA Environment Digest is a supporting member of the [Pennsylvania Outdoor Writers Association](#).