

Westmoreland Conservation District

**60
YEARS**

Helping People Use Resources Wisely

September 2009

The history of conservation in Westmoreland County was written by men and women who valued the productive soils, clear mountain streams, and deep forest habitats of this Appalachian Plateau...and made it their personal responsibility to ensure that they were used wisely.

The work wasn't always easy.

Things we take for granted today – like the wisdom of plowing fields in line with the contour of a hillside – once drew mostly stares and scorn (one of the earliest Greensburg farmers who steered his plow along the contour was criticized for “destroying the neighborhood”).

The challenges were sometimes formidable.

Fewer than 100 years of careless past coal-mining practices left more than 300 miles of our county's streams polluted with iron oxide and nearly 2,000 acres covered with spoil and waste coal piles.

But the human spirit was strong and willing.

And together, with vision, effort and determination, individuals and organizations across Westmoreland County have made tremendous strides in conserving our resources...restoring past damage...and passing the conservation ethic on to the next generation.

This timetable is a synopsis of the challenges and accomplishments of the past 60 years.

No doubt, the next 60 will be even more remarkable.



Greg Phillips
District Manager/CEO
Westmoreland Conservation District

1930s



The price of unchecked consumption.

The land of opportunity becomes a land of Great Depression.

Pennsylvania's abundant natural resources – lumber, petroleum, natural gas, and coal – fuel the industrial age but have left forests deforested...lands honeycombed with abandoned coal mines... fields barren...streams polluted.



Photos courtesy USDA NRCS

1931-1934

Drought hits the U.S. midwestern and southern plains. Crops die. The over-plowed and over-grazed land has no cover.

The “black blizzards” begin.

Some 100 million acres of farmland loses its topsoil to the wind.

1935

Congress declares soil erosion "a national menace" and establishes the Soil Conservation Service. Farmers are paid to practice soil-conserving farming techniques, such as strip cropping, terracing,

crop rotation, contour plowing, and planting cover crops.

- Locally, the Soil Conservation Service selects the **Beaver Run Watershed** to demonstrate these soil-conservation practices.



Photos courtesy USDA NRCS

Some 70% of this watershed has moderate to severe erosion problems, with many hillsides simply abandoned by farmers because erosion has made them unproductive.

Through the two years of this demonstration project, some 200 farmers in this 35,000-acre area are given conservation assistance.

1936

- Farmers in the Beaver Run watershed, greatly impressed with the demonstration project, **form the “Beaver Run Soil Conservation Association.”**

Members vow to reduce erosion and promote soil-conserving practices.

All sign cooperative agreements with the Soil Conservation Service.

1936

The Soil Conservation Service publishes the soil conservation district law. It recognizes that new farming methods need to be accepted and employed by the farmers on the land rather than by bureaucrats in Washington.

If passed by the states, this law allows farmers to set up their own soil conservation districts.

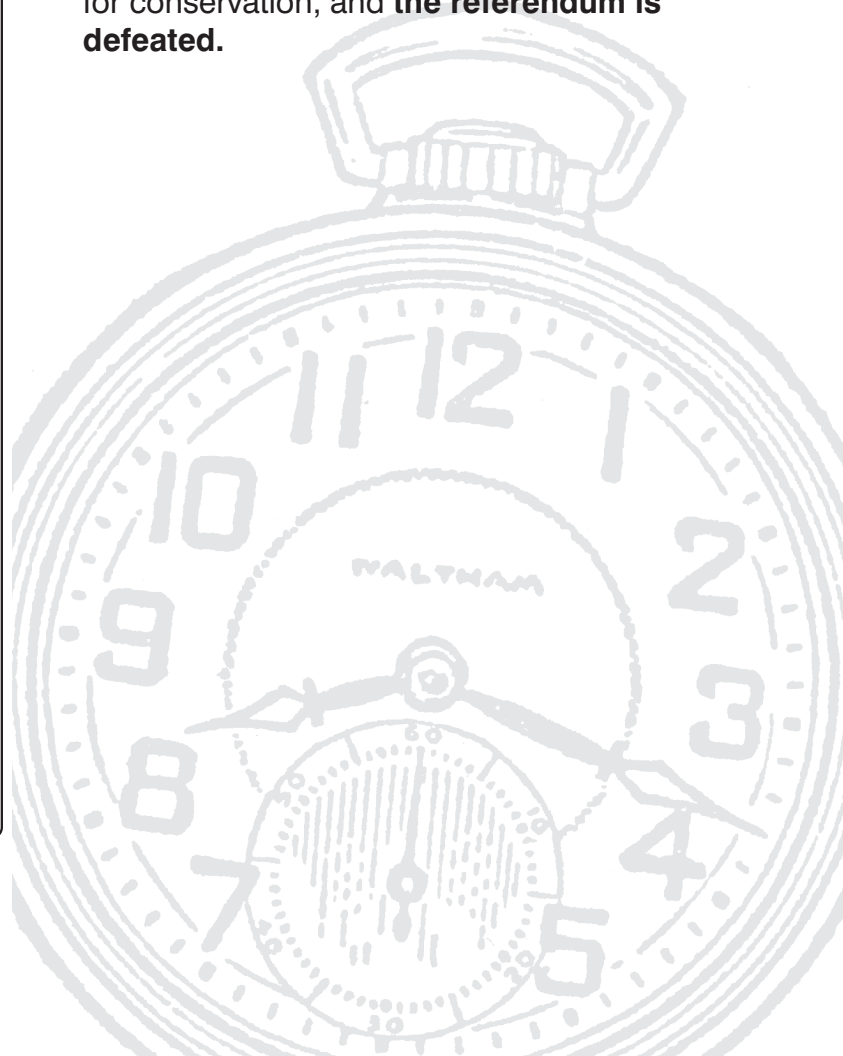
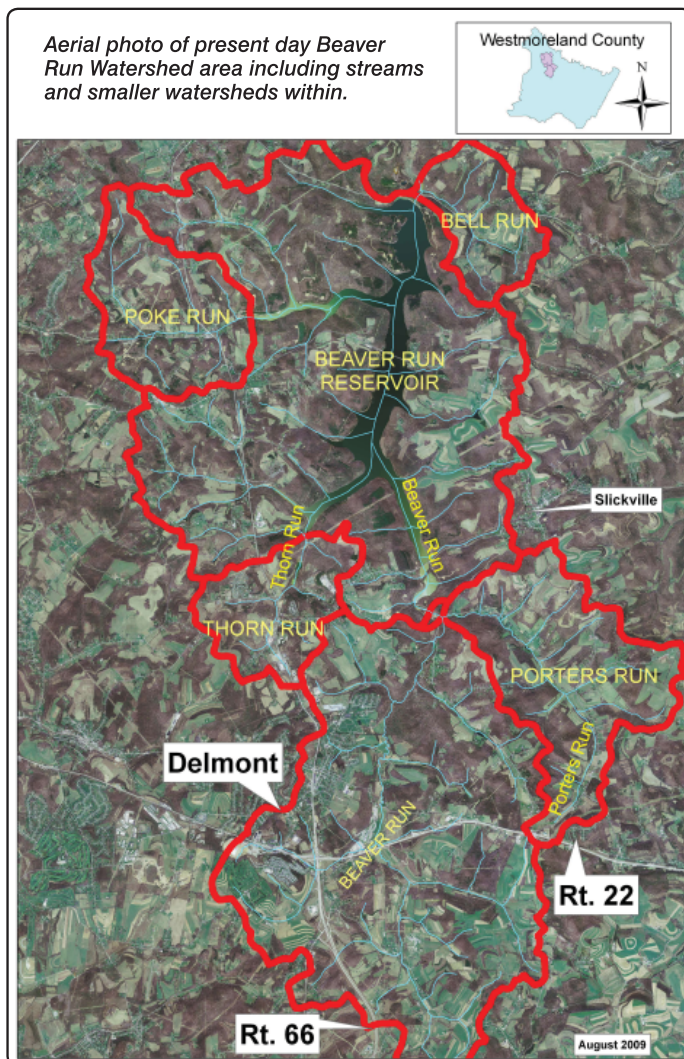
1937

Pennsylvania legislature passes the District Enabling Act, allowing local landowners to organize into districts if a majority vote in favor of the referendum.

1938

- Responding to petitions, the Westmoreland County Commissioners hold a referendum to set up a soil conservation district.

Widespread fear of a “federal dictatorship” – government intrusion into private property rights – overrides the obvious need for conservation, and **the referendum is defeated.**



1940s



Conservation becomes daily practice for many.

World War II mobilizes a nation.

People plant victory gardens, save resources to donate to war effort.

Early 1940s-1945

Few districts are being formed in Pennsylvania.

The reasons, many believe, are some of the provisions in Pennsylvania's District Enabling Act, including land-use regulations and requiring a referendum to organize districts.

Conservation leaders and state agriculture representatives develop a proposal for amending the act, and the new law – referred to as Act 217 – is passed in 1945.

The number of districts begins to grow quickly – from six (1937-1945) to twenty-seven (1945-1950).



The idea of “home rule” – districts being created by citizens at the county level – fuels their popularity.

1949

- The Beaver Run Soil Conservation Association takes the lead in forming a “Soil Conservancy District” in Westmoreland County.



At the second request of area farmers, on October 21, the Westmoreland County Commissioners unanimously pass a resolution establishing the entire county as a “soil conservation district” – the 26th county in Pennsylvania to be set up this way.

1950s



Awareness turns into action as conservation gets a foothold on farms. Suburbia is born.

Returning veterans start families, spurring the need for housing plans, more highway connections and commercial shopping areas.

The District works hard to promote interest in conservation and prove its benefits.

Farmers who become “cooperators” with the District and establish conservation plans for their land receive free technical assistance.

1950

- **The District begins operations and elects first board:** Mortie Gongaware, chairman; Robert Torrance, vice chairman; Eugene Cairns, J. Calvin Turner (County commissioner), and Robert McAleese, directors.

1953

- James Torrance, of Franklin Township (now the Murrysville area), is named as the **District’s first “Outstanding Farm Cooperator”** (later called “Farmer of the Year”).

1954

- **First county-wide survey of soils begins.**

Five Soil Conservation Service soil scientists undertake this work, each walking and surveying the county, acre-by-acre.

This field work continues until 1962.



The former James Torrance farm in Franklin Township (now the Murrysville area).

1954

- The District publishes a “Program and Work Plan” for its operations, **an early version of a strategic plan.**

1956

Dutch Elm disease is identified on some trees in the Ligonier Valley.

The trees are removed.



1958

There are more than 3,900 farms in Westmoreland County, ranking it fourth in the state in the number of farms.



Early conservation district activities included contour plowing contests.

1960s



Conservation awareness expands beyond farms, to also include suburbia.

Public opinion of the need for environmental protection builds steadily.

Suburban development overtakes significant amounts of farmland and open space.

Development in Westmoreland County is greatest in Franklin, Hempfield, North Huntingdon, Penn and Rostraver townships

(note: Franklin Township later changed its name to Murrysville).

Erosion control practices, once thought to be needed only on agricultural land, are now recognized as important in suburbia, with its residential, commercial, and industrial developments as well.

1960

Westmoreland County commits land for a county park system.

The first park completed is Mammoth Park in Mount Pleasant Township.

1962

Rachel Carson, born in Springdale, publishes *Silent Spring*, awakening the nation to the dangers of pesticides and pollution.

1963

In light of changing land-use trends, Pennsylvania amends its soil conservation law to permit District directors to include one urban director in place of one farmer director.

1963, 1967

Floods of Jacobs Creek and its tributaries again cause extensive damage to Scottdale and surrounding areas.

A unique watershed-wide flood-control project is proposed.

- The District works with those who own land above the two proposed flood-control dams at Greenlick and Acme to install conservation practices, so that less sediment will wash into the dams when they are built.

1964

- The Soil Conservation Service provides space in its office for the District in these early years.

This year, both agencies move to **12 East Otterman Street, Greensburg.**

The District's operation is staffed with a clerk three days a week, Monday, Wednesday, and Friday.



Families enjoy the county's new Mammoth Park.

1965

- **Soil names and descriptions are approved** for the Westmoreland County's first soil survey.

Dutch Elm disease continues to be a threat to all American elm trees in the county.

- The District is funded through an **annual allocation from the county commissioners** of \$2,695.

Expenses this year total \$2,604.70.

1966-1967

- **The District moves** to 932 St. Clair Way, Route 30 East, Greensburg.

1967

- The District issues its **first-ever long-range plan** under the leadership of District Board Chairman Gib Hutter.

1968

- **Calvin Gerhard**, a dairy farmer in Derry, is hired as the “executive assistant” after the District becomes independent from the Soil Conservation Service.

His duties include “getting effective programs of resource conservation carried out and acquainting our vast population with the fundamentals of land and water management.”




Calvin Gerhard, District executive assistant

The first watershed association in Westmoreland County – the Turtle Creek Watershed Association – is formed; it is incorporated in 1970.

- **Ann Rudd Saxman** is the first woman to be appointed as a Westmoreland Conservation District associate director.
- **Congress approves the Jacobs Creek Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Project**, one of only a few in the entire U.S. that will address an entire watershed.
- **The Soil Survey of Westmoreland County is made available to users.**

1970s



Major environmental protection laws are passed.

Efforts to end and reverse the environmental effects of overpopulation and industrialization gain strength.

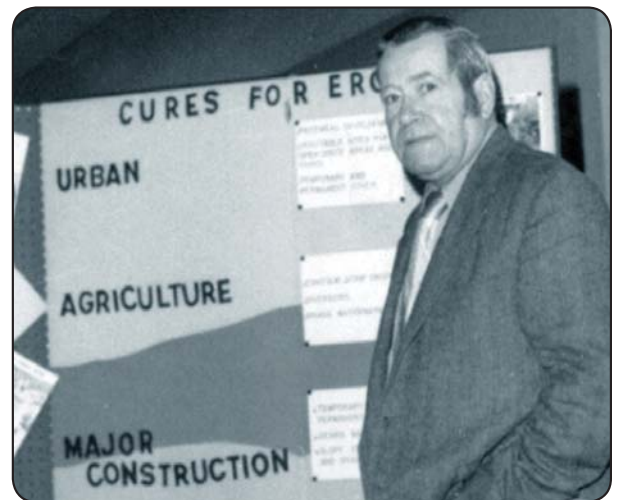
Point-source pollution (e.g. sewage and factory discharges) begins to be addressed.

There are more than 5,000 acres of abandoned, mine-damaged land in Westmoreland County.

1970

- **Elwood Leslie** becomes the District’s executive assistant; in 1976, his title is changed to executive director.

Among his accomplishments is a flood-warning system for the county.



Elwood Leslie, District executive director



Senator Gaylord Nelson announces a “nationwide grassroots demonstration on behalf of the environment” and invites everyone to participate.

This is the first “Earth Day.”

The federal Environmental Protection Agency is created.

1971

- The Westmoreland County Soil and Water Conservation District **changes its name to the Westmoreland Conservation District** to reflect its growing conservation emphasis, including community and watershed issues such as flood prevention, woodland and wildlife preservation, and education.

- The District establishes the **first “Environmental Information Center” in the state.**

It is stocked with publications, slide sets, and films on conservation, all of which are available on loan to county residents.

Carol Pollock serves as center’s director.



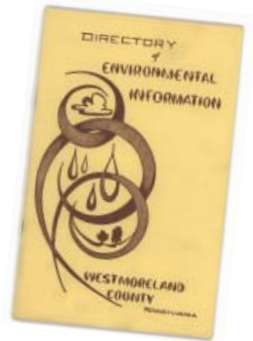
The first Environmental Information Center

- The District publishes a “**Directory of Environmental Information**,” a reference guide of conservation organization contacts and issues, which foresightedly include air pollution,

land use planning, and recycling.

10,000 copies were printed and distributed in just two years.

This directory of contacts continues to be published today.



Loyalhanna Watershed Association is formed.

1972

Pennsylvania adopts regulations for the control of erosion and sediment pollution.

- The Westmoreland Conservation District is one of the **first in Pennsylvania to implement a soil erosion and sedimentation control program.**



The federal Clean Air Act is passed.

Hurricane Agnes hits every state from Florida to New York.

The entire state of Pennsylvania is declared a disaster area.

The storm sets flood records all across the northeast, and forces new thinking about flood prevention and stormwater management.

Construction is started on the Acme and Greenlick dams, and land acquisition gets under way for the Bridgeport Dam, all of which will be part of the **Jacobs Creek Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Project.**



*Carol Pollock,
director*

Districts and county commissioners in five southwestern Pennsylvania counties apply to establish “Penn’s Corner Resource Conservation and Development Project” so they can receive federal financial and technical help with conservation projects.

1974

- **The District moves** its headquarters and Environmental Information Center and Library to a new location, 415 South Main Street in Greensburg, directly across from City Hall.

1973

- The District initiates a **flash flood warning program** for Westmoreland County. Dedicated volunteers read the rain gauges along Jacobs, Sewickley, Little Pucketa, and Loyalhanna creeks and report above-normal readings to the local 911 emergency center.



Inspecting a rain gauge

1974

- **The District moves** to a new location: 975 Old Salem Road in Greensburg.

1975

- The District and several partners develop curriculum and offer a **credit course on conservation**, "Teaching of Environmental Education in Elementary Schools," at the Twin Lakes Nature Center.

1977

The federal Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act is passed to regulate the environmental effects of coal mining in the United States.



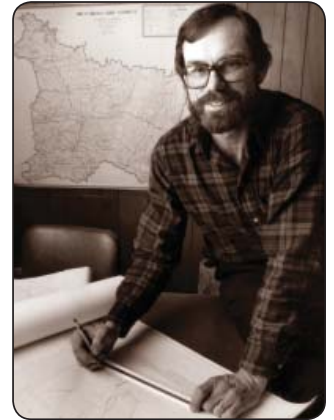
A large coal waste dump at an abandoned mine site

The law covers both active mines and the lingering effects of mines that have been abandoned.

Westmoreland County is urbanizing at the rate of 3,000 acres per year.

Wes Gordon joins the local Soil Conservation Service as the District conservationist.

He remains in this position until his retirement in 2004.



*SCS District Conservationist
Wes Gordon*

1978

Pennsylvania passes the Stormwater Management Act (Act 167) in response to the accelerated stormwater runoff from land development.

The Act requires counties to prepare and adopt watershed-based stormwater management plans, and municipalities to adopt and implement ordinances to regulate development according to these plans.



The sediment pond at the Volkswagen plant

- One of the District's **first major projects in response to urbanization** is the sedimentation pond at the sprawling 1,200-acre Volkswagen assembly plant in East Huntingdon Township.

1979

- The District celebrates its **30th anniversary**.

At a banquet at the Sheraton Inn in Greensburg, Ted Simon, chairman of the Westmoreland County Board of Commissioners, gives the welcome address...a slide show “tour of the county” is presented...and the Sweet Adelines and Cliff Baughman, organist, entertain.



Westmoreland County Commissioner Ted Simon speaks at the District's 30th anniversary banquet.

1980s



National economic difficulties close factories and family farms.

Pollution emphasis shifts to nonpoint sources and stormwater management needs grow.

Healing environmental scars – brownfields, abandoned coal mines – takes on new emphasis.

1981

- A pilot **water-conservation project** is initiated to inventory water usage in commercial, industrial, and residential sectors of New Stanton Borough.

1983

- Emil Kuhar develops the **first professional logo for the District** and the three distinctive curved lines go on to symbolize the District for more than 25 years.

1982

The Western Pennsylvania Coalition for Abandoned Mine Reclamation forms to clean up land and water damaged by past coal-mining practices in 24 counties in western Pennsylvania.



1984

- **Greg Phillips** is named as the District's third-ever manager.

1985

Willie Nelson, Neil Young and John Mellencamp organize the first Farm Aid concert to raise awareness about the loss of family farms and to raise funds to keep farm families on their land.

- One of the District's objectives this year is to begin to solicit **Memorandums of Understanding** from municipalities to ensure that it will be notified of earthmoving projects.
- The District successfully petitions the county to **increase the number of directors on its board from seven to nine** because of the size of the county in population (sixth largest in Pennsylvania) and geographic area (eighth largest).

The increase becomes effective in January 1987.

One of the new directors is a farmer; the other, an urban representative.



District Manager Greg Phillips

The current issue this year is "solid waste management."

- The District **begins publication of a newsletter.**

The premier issue is mailed in August to 1,800 addresses.



- The District begins **computerizing its office** with the purchase of a Tandy 3000 HD personal computer featuring a 20-mega byte hard disk drive.



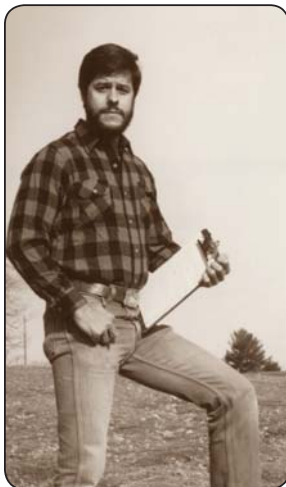
The District's first computer

- The District establishes a **"Trees of Distinction"** program to document trees in the county that are notable because of their age, size, history, or location.

1987

The Landowner Reclamation Program allows interested persons in Westmoreland County to reclaim abandoned mine lands on their property for the amount of forfeited bonds.

- Westmoreland Conservation District is the **first district in the state to award a project** under this program. It is on the Merle and Betty Harr property near Lycippus.



Tony Quadro, the District's environmental control officer

- **Tony Quadro** is hired as the District's environmental control officer.

1986

- The first Westmoreland County **"Envir-Olympics"** (later known as Envirothon) is held at Twin Lakes Park.

Derry Area High School takes top prize in this competition where high school teams test their knowledge of the natural world.



Farmer Merle Harr restored this field from an abandoned mine site under the Landowner Reclamation Program.

1987

- Westmoreland and Allegheny county conservation districts and the Turtle Creek Watershed Association begin work on **the area's first watershed-wide stormwater management plan**, focusing on the Turtle Creek Watershed.

1988



District Hydraulic Engineer Jim Pillsbury

- The District hires a hydraulic engineer, Jim Pillsbury, to **implement the first stormwater-management program offered by any conservation district in Pennsylvania.**

A national Envirothon competition is established. High school teams that win at the county level now can progress to state and national competitions.

Act 101, The Municipal Waste Planning, Recycling, and Waste Reduction Act is signed into law.

- The District responds by forming a committee to explore the **creation of a county-wide composting program.**

Westmoreland Woodlands Improvement Association is formed to promote conservation-oriented woodlot management.

- The District establishes a **Forestry Demonstration Area** in the Loyalhanna Gorge.



1990s



Citizens become increasingly engaged in conserving, protecting, and restoring natural resources.

Locally, an unprecedented number of grassroots organizations are formed to address farmland protection, litter cleanup, recreation, and the specific needs of three of the county's major watersheds.

1990

Westmoreland County Agricultural Land Preservation Program is established to conserve and protect agricultural lands.



The Lyman Stoner farm in Ruffs Dale was the first farm to be preserved through the Westmoreland County Agricultural Land Preservation Program.

PA Cleanways is formed by citizens in Hempfield Township to clean up and discourage illegal dumping.



The Environmental Protection Agency adopts the first regulations requiring permits for stormwater discharges from industrial and construction sites.

- In response, the number of stormwater management plan reviews and site inspections done by the District increases dramatically.

1991

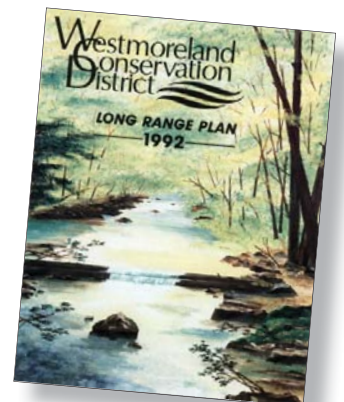
Sewickley Creek Watershed Association is formed.

- District board elevates forestry to full program status.

Work this year includes developing 9 management plans, inspecting 12 timber-harvest sites, holding a workshop, distributing seedlings, and beginning work on a forest-management demonstration area.

1992

- District issues **second long-range plan** in its history.



1994

Mountain Watershed Association is formed.



Donohoe Center ribbon-cutting ceremony front (l-r) County Commissioners Terry Marolt, Richard Vidmer, and Ted Simon; back (l-r) J. Roy Houston, John Lohr, Jim Kelly and John Boyle.

Donohoe Center – a one-stop agricultural and conservation service center – opens.

- It is the **new home of the District** and the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service, Farmers Home Administration, Soil Conservation Service, Westmoreland County/Penn State Cooperative Extension, Westmoreland County Agricultural Land Preservation, and Resource Conservation and Development.

Two additional locations in Westmoreland County are reclaimed this year through the **Rural Abandoned Mine Program**.

Since 1979, this federal funding has helped to restore 21 sites in our county where land or water was damaged by past coal mining.

1995

PA CleanWays of Westmoreland County is named the county's official recycling organization.

1996

Nature Park is expanded by 10 acres, gently



At the dedication of Ann Rudd Saxman Nature Park (l-r) Greg Phillips, Amy Emili, Alice Meadow and Eleanore Pearson.

improved, rededicated, and named for area conservationist Ann Rudd Saxman, thanks to a partnership effort that raised nearly \$40,000 from 50 separate donors.

1996

Work is complete and a dedication ceremony held for the **Jacobs Creek Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Project**.

This unique project – that includes Bridgeport, Acme, and Greenlick dams and a specialized channel at Scottdale – is one of only a few in the entire U.S. that address an entire watershed.

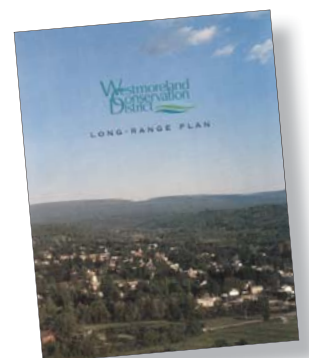


Groundbreaking is held for the Five Star Trail.

The first leg of this hike/bike trail will connect Lynch Field in Greensburg and Hillis Street in Youngwood.

1997

- The District issues its **third-ever long-range plan** – a guiding document for caring for the natural resources that help fuel county businesses...that produce the food and drink for our tables...and that provide recreation and quality of life.



Work begins to **update the county's soil survey**.

Soil and land characteristics determine much of the future of our county – where development

will take place, where the best farm soils are, where land of special value exists.

Work begins on the **one of the largest land-restoration projects** ever undertaken in this region, a 135-acre abandoned coal-mining site in Ligonier and Fairfield townships.

Old Home Manor abandoned mine site



Before reclamation



After reclamation

The Pennsylvania State Conservation Commission establishes the Dirt and Gravel Road Program.

It provides maintenance funds for unpaved roads that contribute to dust and sediment pollution.



Wetland #3 at Saint Vincent College

At Saint Vincent College, the first passive wetland begins cleaning water from an abandoned-coal-mine discharge near Monastery Run.

In 1998, two additional wetlands are added to the treatment site, and the three wetlands combined cover slightly more than 19 acres.

1998

- After years of working one-on-one with area citizens, the District begins to build a formal education and outreach program by **breaking ground for a new education center/headquarters**.



Breaking ground for the District's new education center/headquarters are (l-r) Pete Skrjic, J. Roy Houston, Claude Petroy, and Richard Vidmer.

- The District makes its **first allocations under the Dirt and Gravel Road Program.**

Some \$30,000 is shared by Donegal, Fairfield, and Salem townships for projects that improve dirt and gravel roads in their high-quality watersheds.

1999

- The District launches its **first web page.**

Jacobs Creek Watershed Association is organized.

- The District celebrates its 50th anniversary with a year-long series of events that include tours, a special tree planting, and a family celebration and barbecue.



(l-r) Directors Frank Skacel, Sr., Dorothy Stoner and Gib Hutter cut an anniversary cake.



Erosion and Sedimentation Program Administrative Assistant Kathy Fritz

2000s



Knowledge of the environment becomes a fundamental part of public education.

Record numbers of conservation projects are put on the ground.

Awareness is growing that empowering citizens with education is the best way to ensure conservation.

The state's Growing Greener program spurs large numbers of locally led conservation projects, featuring the best and newest technology.



Disassembling the barn in Penn Township.



Setting a main beam at the new Donohoe Center location.

2000

- The District's planned education center/head-quarters will be a 120-year old barn, relocated from Penn Township.

A **barn-raising ceremony** is held for the structure at its new location on the Donohoe Road in Hempfield Township and Amish

craftsmen raise the first wall of timbers.

The Smart Growth Partnership of Westmoreland County is formed to help address issues related to sustainable growth and development.

Parks Horizons: Westmoreland County's Comprehensive Plan for Parks, Recreation and Open Space is adopted by the Board of Commissioners, and the Westmoreland County Parks and Recreation Citizens Advisory Board is created.



Photo courtesy Westmoreland County Parks

Mountain Watershed adopts a comprehensive, step-by-step plan for restoration of the Indian Creek Watershed.

When its Kalp Treatment System comes online in 2007, nine miles of the main stem of Indian Creek is restored.

2000-2004

The state's Growing Greener program invests more than \$4 million in Westmoreland County's land and streams.



2001

- The District begins to **involve significantly more volunteers**, creating citizen advisory committees that support its technical programs and organizational efforts, such as public relations and fundraising.

2002

Pennsylvania adopts academic standards for environment and ecology, establishing benchmarks that define what all students should know about these subjects.



The District's new education center/headquarters

- The District **concludes its largest-ever capital fundraising campaign**, successfully raising nearly \$1 million to create its new barn education center/headquarters. The entire District staff moves in.

2003

- The Stormwater Trail**, a series of interpretive stations highlighting ways to capture, conserve, and reuse rainwater, is created around the District's headquarters.
- A **Hall of Honor** is established to posthumously recognize the men and women who have made significant and long-term contributions to the conservation ethic in Westmoreland County.



Gib Hutter, a model conservation dairy farmer in Mount Pleasant Township and long-time District director, is the first inductee.

- The District names its **first conservation education coordinator**.



Gib Hutter

2004



No-till planting saves soil, energy, and time.

- The District and partners sponsor the **first no-till conference in southwestern Pennsylvania**.
86 farmers attend.
- The District receives a major grant from the U.S. Department of Education to **fund a dedicated education staff**.



(l-r) District Vice Chairman Ron Rohall and District Chairman J. Roy Houston receive education funding from U.S. Senator Rick Santorum

- **Paul Heyworth**, long-time conservation advocate and local journalist, is inducted into the District's Hall of Honor.



Paul Heyworth

Hurricane Ivan brings record rainfall to Westmoreland County.

Although many flooding problems result, the combined effect of hundreds of efforts to manage stormwater over prior years most likely averted even greater damage.

2005

Pennsylvania voters overwhelmingly pass Growing Greener II, a \$625 million bond referendum for conservation that brings \$3.1 million for Westmoreland County's natural resources.



Millen family members prepare to cut the ribbon at the dedication of the John Millen soil-education exhibit.

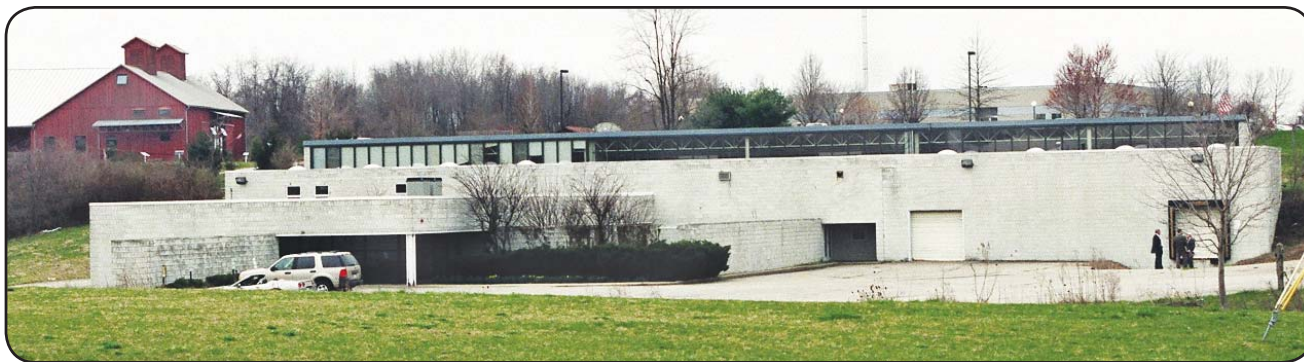


John Millen

- The District unveils a **soil-education exhibit**, and becomes one of only a few places in Pennsylvania where the public can see an interpretive display of our most basic natural resource.

The exhibit is named in honor of pioneering soil conservationist and former District Board Chairman **John Millen**.

- **20th anniversary of the Westmoreland County Envirothon.**
- **The District launches the GreenForge project** – transforming a vacant commercial building into an efficient and practical demonstration of green building practices and an incubator for conservation organizations.



GreenForge before rehabilitation

- The District's Annual Awards Banquet features something new: **an entire meal made with local food.**

The local-food meal becomes a tradition, with a changing variety of local producers featured each year.

- **Frank E. Skacel, Sr.**, former District Board treasurer and Director Emeritus, and **Elwood Leslie**, past District manager, are inducted into the District's Hall of Honor.



Frank Skacel, Sr.



Elwood Leslie

With citizen input, Westmoreland County adopts a vision and plan for future growth, "The Westmoreland County Comprehensive



Former University of Pittsburgh at Greensburg President Dr. Frank Cassell offers support for the Westmoreland County Comprehensive Plan at a Westmoreland County Board of Commissioners meeting.

Plan," and sets retaining the county's rural character as its top priority.

2005

PA CleanWays' Westmoreland County Chapter incorporates as Westmoreland Cleanways.

PA CleanWays continues its mission to fight illegal dumping and littering across the Commonwealth.

2006

- More than 300 people come to the District's **first-ever "Sustainable Energy Field Day"** to learn about energy efficiency and green building.



Penn State Cooperative Extension in Westmoreland County Director Gary Sheppard conducts a session at the first Sustainable Energy Field Day.

- **Ann Rudd Saxman**, former District associate director, creator of the Directory of Environmental Information, and champion of Nature Park, is inducted into the District's Hall of Honor.



Ann Rudd Saxman

- **District communications are named best in the United States** by the National Association of Conservation Districts.

District communications received the same honor in 1997.

2006-2009

- The District joins with the Loyalhanna Watershed Association, Western PA Conservancy, Forbes Trail Chapter of Trout Unlimited, and PA Fish and Boat Commission to **construct 18 bank-erosion remediation structures in the upper Loyalhanna Creek Watershed.**

2007

Mill Creek, Loyalhanna Watershed



Before streambank stabilization



After streambank stabilization

The Westmoreland County Commissioners create the Westmoreland Land Trust to conserve land of special value to the community.

The Lowber abandoned mine drainage treatment site is dedicated.

This system not only removes iron oxide from Sewickley Creek and the Youghiogheny River, but also demonstrates how to turn this water pollutant into a beneficial use as a pigment for paint.



Harvesting iron oxide at Lowber.



Pressing and drying



Stained with Lowber Red.

Photos courtesy Sewickley Creek Watershed Association

Federal officials allocate more than one billion dollars (collected under the Surface Mining Control and reclamation Act from fees on current coal-mining operations) for remediation efforts in Pennsylvania, thanks to the effective lobbying efforts of the District and its partners.

2007

- **The first tenants** – the United States Department of Agriculture's Rural Development and the Western Pennsylvania Coalition for



Rural Development employees move into their new offices at GreenForge.

Abandoned Mine Reclamation – **move into GreenForge.**

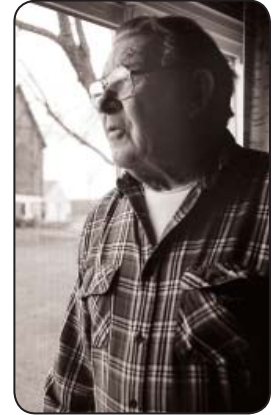
- For the first time in three decades, **the District foregoes its annual banquet.**

Financial demands of the GreenForge project – coupled with the increased number of conservation activities, including Growing Greener projects – necessitate the difficult decision.

2008

- **Long-standing flooding problems along Little Pucketa Creek take the first steps toward resolution** when the District forms a partnership to find and fund solutions.
- **The green rehabilitation of GreenForge is complete.**

- A record number of conservation friends – 300+ – join us when **our Annual Awards Banquet returns.**
- **P. Roy Kemerer**, one of the longest-serving District volunteers in history (19 years combined service as an associate and District Board member), is inducted into the District's Hall of Honor.



P. Roy Kemerer

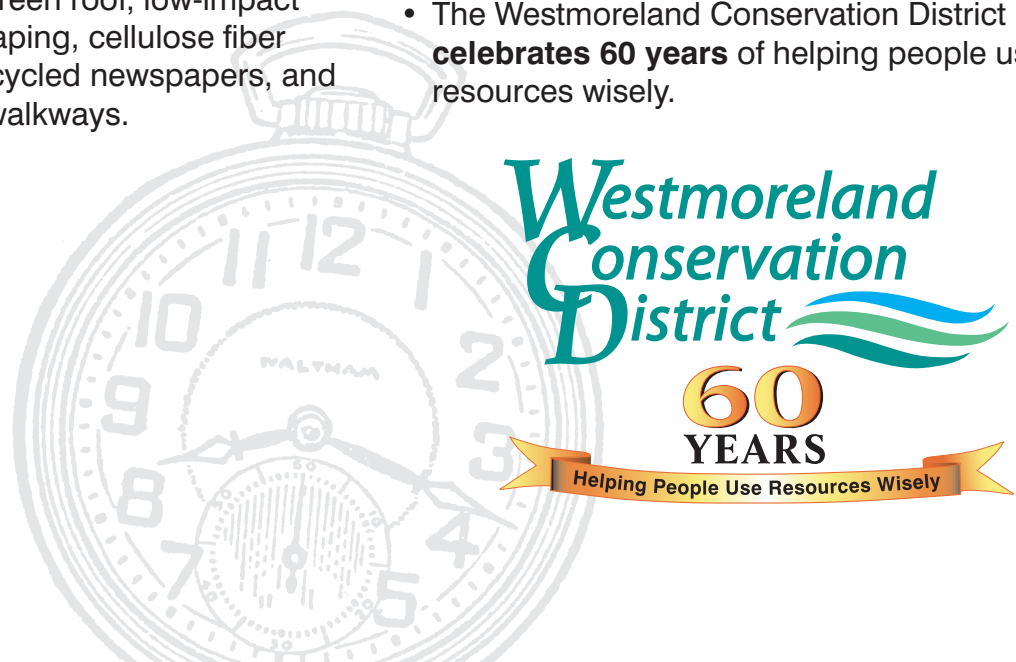


GreenForge after rehabilitation

This unique building features a solar array, geothermal system, green roof, low-impact design, native landscaping, cellulose fiber insulation made of recycled newspapers, and permeable concrete walkways.

2009

- The Westmoreland Conservation District **celebrates 60 years** of helping people use resources wisely.





BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Westmoreland Conservation District

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