1972
ANNUAL REPORT

WESTMORELAND COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT

CONSERVATION DISTRICT

WESTMORELAND COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT is a subdivision of Pennsylvania State Government responsible under state law for conservation work within our county boundaries. Districts are governed by a seven-man Board of Directors appointed by the County Board of Commissioners. Districts are organized for the public welfare of the people of Westmoreland County to provide for conservation, land resource planning, watershed protection and flood prevention, and recreational area development. The District promotes conservation by cooperation with federal, state, and local governments and their various agencies, and with business and civic organizations and private individuals. It improves the environment through legislation and conservation education.

Appreciation is expressed to the Westmoreland County Board of Commissioners – Mrs. Dorothy Shope, James R. Kelley, and Robert G. Shirey for their support and encouragement and to the cooperating agencies, organizations, and individuals whose personnel and facilities helped further conservation in Westmoreland County.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

J. Roy Houston ..... Chairman
Frank E. Skacel ..... Vice Chairman
Robert G. Shirey ..... County Commissioner Director
Edward A. Rinkhoff, Jr. ..... Treasurer
Gilbert Hutter ..... Director
Alex J. Smith ..... Director
Boyd E. Wolff ..... Director

ASSOCIATE DIRECTORS

Father Firmin Beyer
Kenneth B. Cyphert
Charles DeNunzio
George E. Evans
Milan Martinisko
Mrs. John L. Pollock
Mrs. Harry S. Saxman
Mrs. George Shupe
Joseph E. Simon
Alex J. Smith
Mrs. John Turnage
Wm. H. Walker, Jr.

Ford M. Frank, District Secretary; Elwood J. Leslie, Executive Assistant; Marge Copeman, Administrative Secretary; Joan Zuricane, Secretary.

* * *

Westmoreland County residents are invited to become Associate Members of the Conservation District. Members strive to emphasize positive ways of preserving the environment. Cost is $1.00 per person or family or $5.00 for an organization. Memberships are renewable each year.

COVER PICTURE – We were not able to identify the exact location of this trout stream, however, it is in Westmoreland County.

SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION

The United States Department of Agriculture, Soil Conservation Service, and the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service provided technical and cost-share assistance in planning and establishing: 932 acres of stripcropping; 88,807 feet of tile drains; 15,468 feet of diversions, 15 acres of grassed waterways; 13 ponds; and 17 spring developments during 1972.

Conservation cropping systems, cover cropping, pasture and hayland planting and renovation, and crop residue use were included in the agronomic practices applied to aid in conserving soil and water and eliminating pollution.

Twenty-three landowners received technical assistance in developing soil and water conservation plans for their land during the year. The U.S.D.A., Soil Conservation Service provided direct planning assistance to the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Resources, Pennsylvania Game Commission, and Pennsylvania Fish Commission in the development of resource conservation plans for state-owned forest and gamelands, Keystone and Linn Run State Parks and Lake Donegal in Westmoreland County.

Pictured at left – Results of Hurricane Agnes, Jacks Run, Route 119, south of Greensburg.

WATERSHED PROTECTION AND FLOOD PREVENTION

During 1972 construction was started on the Acme and Greenlick impoundment reservoirs of the Jacobs Creek Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Project and land acquisition phases were started for the Bridgeport site.

A request was submitted for planning assistance to develop a watershed project for Jacks Run-Sewickley Creek under the Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Act (Public Law 566).

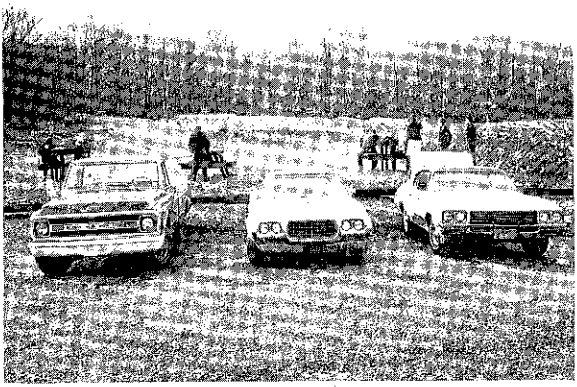
Loyalhanna and Turtle Creek Watershed Associations were involved in erosion and sedimentation recommendations and educational programs. The District assisted 83 individuals in organizing their efforts to form the Jacobs Creek Environmental Watershed Association. Voluntary leadership by local people promoted public understanding of watershed protection and flood prevention.

WOODLAND IMPROVEMENT

The quality of existing woodland has been materially improved through the use of proper woodland management. The Bureau of Forestry, Department of Environmental Resources, distributed 90,000 forest tree seedlings in Westmoreland County. Twenty acres of existing timber stands and 50 acres of woodland were improved during 1972. Wise management of this great natural resource is insured through understanding and knowledge of forestry by county residents. Broad programs of conservation education are aimed at helping to insure present and future benefits from our county's woodland.

WILDLIFE HABITAT IMPROVEMENT

The Pennsylvania Game Commission continued Wildlife Habitat Improvement on their lands during 1972. Conservation programs such as border cuttings, browse cutting and planting on farm lands contribute to sustaining adequate game populations. Deer, rabbit, squirrel, pheasants, turkey, and grouse are among the species of wildlife which make hunting one of the most popular forms of outdoor recreation in Westmoreland County. During 1972 an additional 900 acres of game lands were purchased in Westmoreland County making 74,748 acres of land available for public hunting through game lands, farm game projects, and the 1, 2, 3 safety zone program. Four hundred thirty-two landowners received 44,400 seedlings and assistance in establishing many acres of border cuttings.



Pictured at left is the Rifle Range on Game Lands 42.

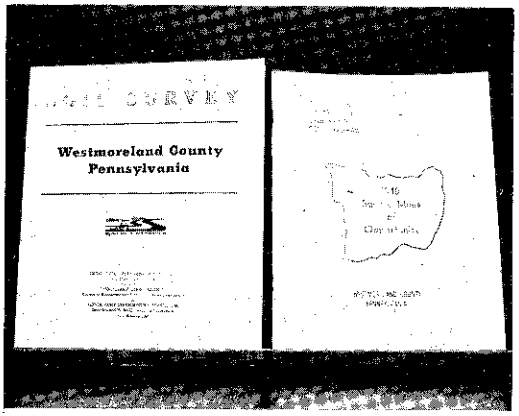
A new attraction to the hunters of the area has been the completion of a new rifle and pistol range on Game Lands 42 near New Florence.

Sportsmen's groups united into an effective force for the continued protection of our natural resources and conservation awareness by education.

County streams and lakes were stocked with fish by the Pennsylvania Fish Commission. Of the 386 water pollution cases investigated by the State, only 59 are still pending in litigation. Ten county farm ponds were stocked with fish from the Department of Interior during the year.

RESOURCE PLANNING IN URBAN AREAS

Land use planning is the process by which decisions are made on future land use over extended time periods. Studies should be made on use and disposition of land to determine suitability for industry, commercial use, residential use, agriculture, recreation, or green space. The well-being of present and future generations should be protected by preserving natural scenic areas; providing for open space and parks; and making proper use of flood plains. Correct land use planning by state and local governmental units, with citizen participation, will prevent waste and lead to harmonious utilization of plans.



Pictured left to right: Soil Survey contains data that can be applied in selecting sites for roads, ponds, buildings, or other structures; in managing farms and woodlands; and in appraising the value of tracts of land for industry, agriculture, or recreation.

Long Range Program sets forth District Objectives over a period of time and proposals to approach these goals.

The Westmoreland County Conservation District, U.S.D.A., Soil Conservation Service, and the Westmoreland County Department of Planning continued to give technical resource data to upgrade the quality of the environment.

Resource Planning in Urban Areas for 1972 included: 1) Technical assistance for subdivision developers and zoning applications. 2) Prepared and distributed to local municipalities a "model" floodplain ordinance and offered technical assistance in floodplain management. 3) Reviewed proposed highway corridor locations. 4) Erosion and sediment control guidelines in local ordinances. 5) Soil and water management inventory and evaluations prepared for 42 units of land undergoing development. 6) Preparation of application for Sewickley Creek-Jack's Run Flood Control Project. 7) Providing inventories and evaluations of resource data to planning commissions and local and state government agencies.

ROADSIDE CONSERVATION AND BEAUTIFICATION

Approximately 223,862 square yards of highway rights-of-way were seeded and mulched on slopes for the prevention and control of soil erosion along and adjacent to highways. Eighty thousand square yards of grass areas were revitalized and 44 evergreens and flowering shrubs installed for screening and beautification.

CONSERVATION BENEFITS FOR WESTMORELAND COUNTY

Westmoreland County Conservation District, along with 65 other Districts in the State, experienced the transition stage from a voluntary soil erosion program to a mandatory one in 1972. The District's role in the Soil Erosion and Sedimentation Control Program was broadened to encompass distribution and review of all applications for land use disturbance permits. Amendment to the basic Soil Conservation Law for the State eliminated Soil and Water from the District's name and provided for increased urban membership on the board when conditions justify the action.

Due to public awareness of the conservation of our natural resources and accelerated programs, the District was forced in 1972 to move to more spacious quarters. The new location is directly across from City Hall and houses a complete Environmental Information Center and Environmental Library. The Environmental Information Center continued to attract nationwide recognition during 1972. The Center, the first of its kind, has been used as a model for Conservation Districts throughout the United States. The recently published Directory of Environmental Information supplemented text material in many colleges throughout the State. More than 4,000 pieces of material on all phases of the environment provided information to county residents.

The year of 1972 saw the establishment of a "Community Self Help Flash Flood Warning Program" for Westmoreland County. The District, in cooperation with Civil Defense assisted by the National Weather Service, developed this program in areas where flooding is too flashy to permit forecasting by routine procedures. The program provides assistance to local communities in preparing a plan to warn of possible sudden flooding. This program will give local authorities sufficient time to take the necessary action to minimize danger to lives and property. Many municipalities were assisted by the District in establishing flood plain ordinances in areas susceptible to flooding and encouraged flood plain insurance programs.

Congressman John H. Dent spoke at the testimonial luncheon to honor retiring Directors Paul A. Heyworth and DeWitt W. Rugh. Rugh of Saltsburg was cited for 16 years of dedicated conservation service. Mr. Heyworth was presented a Legislative Citation from the Commonwealth by Representative Amos Hutchinson for Outstanding Conservation Service to the Citizens of the Commonwealth. Boyd Wolff of New Alexandria and Alex Smith of Greensburg joined the Conservation District as Directors in 1972.

An Exploring Division Charter was granted to the District who, for the first time, sponsored a 12-member troop in Conservation (BSA). Under the supervision of the Junior Board of District Directors, stream clean-ups and anti-litter drives provided a splendid opportunity for communitywide festivity. Both these groups broke away from usual daily routines by conducting meetings at the Nature Center located at Twin Lake Park.

County Commissioners and Districts representing five southwestern Pennsylvania counties combined their efforts in establishing an application for the area to be combined as Penn's Corner Resource Conservation and Development Project. As a result more technical and financial help can be secured from the Federal government for natural resources development in the five-county area.

DISTRICT OPERATIONS

Services were provided to over 1,400 landowners during the year. With assistance from the District's Cooperating Agencies services were provided to municipalities, home builders, developers, shopping centers, industrial centers, and school districts. Cooperating agencies and private organizations joined with the District in the Annual Conservation Show at Greengate Mall. Widespread recognition of Soil Stewardship Week and Earth Day was prevalent in the county. Blaine Hutter, winner of the County Plowing Contest, took honors in the State Competition. Turtle Creek and Loyalhanna Environmental Watershed continued to protect and develop the natural resources of their watersheds and Jacobs Creek Watershed Association was granted a charter. Work was started on the $150,000 Recreational and Flood Prevention Dam at Acme and preliminary studies were completed at the Bridgeport site.

Marion Dotterway, Westmoreland County Conservation Queen, was crowned State Environmental Queen. As representative of the State Association of Conservation District Directors, Inc., Queen Dotterway toured the Farm Show as part of the Governor's preview party.

Pictured at left: Pennsylvania Environmental Queen, Marion Dotterway, presents Governor Milton Shapp a token basket of products derived from Pennsylvania soils as Secretary of Agriculture James McHale observes.

COOPERATING AGENCIES

The following local, state, and federal agencies are playing a vital role in assisting the Westmoreland County Conservation District: Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Resources - Bureau of Forestry, Health Department, State Conservation Commission; Pennsylvania - Department of Transportation, Fish Commission, Game Commission; U.S. Department of Interior; U.S.D.A. - Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service, Farmers Home Administration, Soil Conservation Service; Westmoreland County - Cooperative Extension Service, Department of Parks and Recreation, Planning Department, and Vocational Agricultural Schools.

Sincere appreciation is expressed to county individuals and organizations who contributed time and effort to improve the economic health and physical environment and to encourage agricultural, business, industrial, and recreational development.

CONSERVATION AWARDS

Several County residents received Conservation Awards in 1972. Chuck DeNunzio, Derry, was honored as the Outstanding Conservationist of the Year. Mrs. John (Carol) Pollock, R.D., Latrobe, was presented the Outstanding Achievement in Conservation Award. Jesse M. Stairs, R.D., Acme, received the Outstanding Farm Cooperator Award. Ken Reed, Derry, accepted the Outstanding Conservation Organization for 1972 Award on behalf of the Future Farmers of America. Dr. William Shea, Westmoreland County Community College, was named Outstanding Conservation Educator. Dave Saul and Joe Obenski of the Soil Conservation Service were cited for Outstanding Service in Conservation. The Outstanding Contribution to Conservation Award went to the Chesamac Garden Club, Greensburg.

Below, left to right: Joe Obenski, Jesse M. Stairs, Chuck DeNunzio, Mrs. Donald Little (Chesamac Garden Club), Mrs. John Pollock, Dr. William Shea, Ken Reed, and Dave Saul.

WESTMORELAND COUNTY
CONSERVATION DISTRICT
415 South Main Street
Greensburg, Pennsylvania 15601