

## Saving our WETLANDS

by Tom Keller

The only way to save wetlands is to get involved. If we don't get involved, many wetland areas may soon disappear from Westmoreland County.

The federal government regulates wetlands through section 404 of the Clean Water Act, which requires permits before wetlands can be developed. Pennsylvania lawmakers have also passed the Dam Safety and Encroachment Act to help protect wetlands. But, more needs to be done and it must be at the local level.

As you travel throughout Westmoreland County, keep "one eye peeled" for any dredging, filling, or placement of obstructions in wetlands. Take a minute to record what you discovered and where it's located, then report it to the proper authorities.

Another way to protect wetlands is to form citizen groups to monitor project permits and to urge stronger enforcement of regulations. Remember there is strength in numbers so get the local conservation groups and sportsmen's clubs involved. Citizen groups can challenge the issuance of permits and also spot-check wetlands to ensure developers have not initiated development without a permit. Become familiar with the federal and state officials in your area who make key decisions on wetlands. Key players are usually the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Environmental Protection Agency, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Search out other organizations dedicated to saving wetlands. Get on

their mailing list, and if possible, attend their meetings. Compare notes to see how they operate and solve problems. Take some time to "brain storm" on related topics.

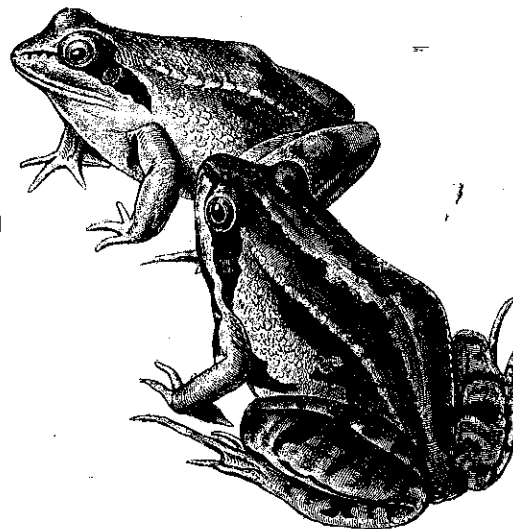
Grass root organizations can exert pressure on elected officials and land owners, and they can work to get the wetland area zoned. Once it is zoned, it would be extremely difficult to develop.

Individual citizens, whether a hunter or non-hunter, can personally help save our remaining wetlands by purchasing Federal "Duck Stamps" at local post offices. Revenues from the sale of the stamps are used to acquire or lease prime wetlands.

## Sewage and Your Well Water Supply

To protect the drinking water quality in a private well, a buffer zone must be maintained between the well and the on-lot septic system. In most cases, state and local laws require a 100 foot horizontal distance. According to the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the 100 foot distance between the disposal field and the well is adequate for the soil to eliminate bacteria from the septic system. Some communities have increased the distance to 150 feet. In addition to the horizontal distance, the positioning of the well is also important.

If the effluent from the septic system, encounters a well intake of sufficient



Above all, don't get disgusted when things don't happen overnight. Be persistent. To report suspected wetlands abuse, call:

**Bureau of Dams  
& Waterways Management..899-2377**  
**U.S. Fish & Wildlife  
Service.....(814) 234-4090**  
**Westmoreland  
Conservation District.....837-5271**

strength it can be sucked into the well. If this happens, concentrations of contaminants may rise above drinking water standards. Even though soil absorption and microbial degradation can remove most of the household waste, the disposal of hazardous materials into the septic system can present a significant threat to down-gradient wells. It is important to consider this when houses are built close together and each lot contains a private well and septic system. The possibility of contamination between wells and septic systems is increased if the well location is not considered.

Continued on page 2

# A Special Message from the Chairman



932 St. Clair Way Rt. 30 East, Greensburg, PA 15601 (412) 837-5271

Nineteen Hundred and Eighty-Seven was a year of significant progress for the Westmoreland Conservation District - a year in which everyone affiliated with the District worked hard to plan, coordinate, and promote conservation activities at the local level.

In retrospect, we can reflect upon our accomplishments. Foremost, was our successful campaign to acquire funding for an additional technician. We have also made significant progress in communicating the need for conservation through "Landmarks", our award winning newsletter. The first Landowner Reclamation Program site was completed. The Urban Stormwater Analysis Project got off the ground, and we continued the process of computerizing the office to handle the increased workload resulting from the conservation provisions of the 1985 Farm Bill.

The outlook for next year is promising. Current plans call for the development of a compost recycling program, formation of a County Woodland Owners Association, development of a Youth Awards Program, and an expansion of the Stormwater Management Program. For 1988, the Westmoreland Conservation District is looking forward to even more growth and more improvement as we strive to increase our programs and services for resource conservation in Westmoreland County.

J. Roy Houston  
Chairman

**conservation district** / kən-sər-  
'vā-shən dis(,)trikt / n: A  
public organization created  
under state enabling law as  
a special-purpose district to  
develop and carry out a  
program of soil, water, and  
related resource conserva-  
tion, use and development  
within its boundaries; in the  
United States usually a sub-  
division of state government  
with a local governing  
body; often called a soil  
conservation district or a  
soil and water conservation  
district.

## For a Better Westmoreland County...

The purpose of the Westmoreland Conservation District is: to focus attention on land, water, and related resource problems; to develop programs to solve them; to enlist and coordinate help from all public and private sources that can contribute to accomplishing the District goals; and to make all citizens aware of the interrelationship between human activities and the natural environment.

### Call us at 837-5271 for information on:

- Conservation Planning
- Watershed Management
- Flash Flood Warning System
- Soil Erosion and Sediment Control
- Stormwater Management
- Rural Abandoned Mine Program (RAMPS)
- Resource Conservation & Development (RC&D)
- Soil Survey
- Developers and Municipal Planning Assistance
- Agricultural Land Preservation
- Landowner Reclamation Program
- Woodland Management

# Education Pays Dividends

Conservation education can foster an awareness and appreciation for the value of our natural resources. The District's educational activities are designed to advance the wise use, protection, and enhancement of the soil, water and related natural resources.

## Highlights for 1987

**"Landmarks"** - mailed our quarterly newsletter to approximately 1,800 people.

**1986 Annual Report** - "Year of the Forest" - distributed our review of program accomplishments and priorities to approximately 1,800 people.

**Conservation Directory** distributed our listing of the federal, state, and local agencies and their responsibilities to area sportsmen's clubs, consulting engineers and the conservation-related organizations.

**Envir-Olympics** - sponsored the second annual competition at Twin Lakes County Park. Franklin Regional High School finished first at the local competition and captured second place in the state contest. The Envir-Olympics provided students the chance to prove their knowledge of forestry, soils, aquatics, wildlife, and water quality.

**National Wildlife Week Kits** - distributed information packets to area school districts.

**Stormwater Management Seminar** - hosted a meeting at which 80 engineers in attendance were updated on procedures used to calculate stormwater run-off volume, peak discharges, and storage for detention structures.

**conservation education** /kən-sər-vā-shən ej-ə-'kā-shən/n: A comprehensive concept that spans curricula from kindergarten through adult, post-graduate programs and links the subject to natural resource conservation.

**District Conservation Planning Display** - exhibited at Westmoreland County Fair, Greenawalt's Egg Festival, Energy Conservation Fair, Crops Fair, and several mall shows.

**Big Tree Survey** - conducted a survey to determine the largest tree in Westmoreland County. A cottonwood tree with a diameter of 72 inches was chosen. The entree was submitted by Blair Barthels of Smithton.

## Local Conservationists Acclaimed

The Westmoreland Conservation District's Board of Directors presented awards to the following individuals during 1987. We commend them for making a special effort to conserve our natural resources and hope that by recognizing their achievements we are able to stimulate others to contribute to the betterment of the environment.

**Merle & Betty Harr**, *Special Reclamation Award*, for their participation in the District's Landowner Reclamation Program and the reclamation of an abandoned 90 acre surface mine on their farm near Lycippus.

### 1987 Recipients

**Fred Goodman**, *Conservation Educator Award*, for the promotion of conservation education programs and the incorporation of soil and water conservation into the curriculum at Sloan Elementary School in Murrsville.

**Burt & Don Mulhollem**, *Outstanding Conservation Farmer Award*, for their commitment to soil, water and related resource conservation on their 125 acre dairy farm near Stahlstown. (See "Mulhollems Selected Outstanding Cooperator" on page 9)

# Soil Erosion Reduced

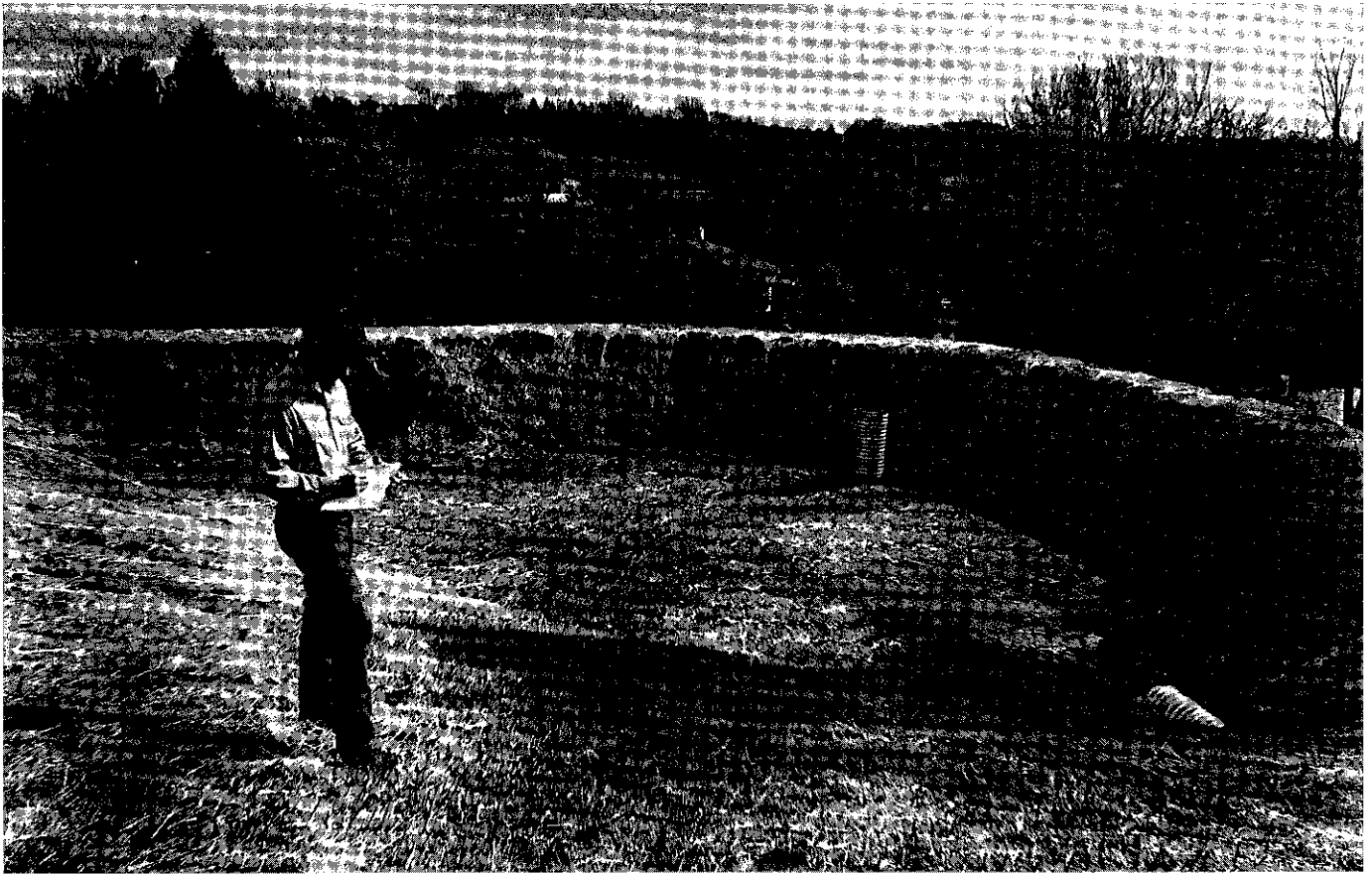


Photo - Mark Jackson

The Westmoreland Conservation District Board of Directors continued to emphasize the administration of our Soil Erosion and Sedimentation Control Program in 1987. District personnel reviewed erosion and sedimentation (E&S) control plans, responded to E&S complaints, assessed problems in the field, and worked with landowners, contractors, and engineers to obtain compliance.

With the help of the USDA, Soil Conservation Service, the

District reviewed 201 E&S control plans for adequacy. To ensure plan implementation, a total of 201 on-site inspections were conducted at 67 different sites throughout the County. District personnel responded to 40 E&S complaints, only four of which were referred to other agencies. Earth disturbance permits were required on five of the sites that were in excess of 25 acres. Inspection on these sites were high priority, and were conducted at frequent intervals.

A major accomplishment was the computerization of both plan reviews and site inspections. Information was logged in a data-base using the R-Base 5000 program.

The Pennsylvania General Assembly, by way of the Department of Environmental Resources, made available \$1,000,000 to Districts in the 1986-1987 fiscal year. The Westmoreland Conservation District utilized \$21,234 of these funds. Of this total, \$12,000 was provided as cost sharing for the employment of

a District Manager, \$8,234 for the Technician, and \$1,000 in administrative assistance.

The goal of the Soil Erosion and Sedimentation Control Program is to minimize soil erosion that is accelerated by man's activities. Achieving this goal will help to save our soil resources, protect water quality and fish life, and reduce the flooding damages caused by sediment-choked streams and culverts.

**soil survey** / soil sər-<sup>1</sup>vā /n: A general term for the systematic examination of soils in the field and in laboratories; their description and classification; the mapping of kinds of soil; the interpretation of soils according to their adaptability for various crop, grasses and trees; their behavior under use or treatment for plant production or for other purposes; and their productivity under different management systems.

# Local/Federal Cooperation Key to Success

The Westmoreland Conservation District promotes the development, establishment, and maintenance of conservation plans to protect the soil, water, and related resources of the County. The United States Department of Agriculture, Soil Conservation Service (SCS), works through the District to provide conservation planning assistance and other valuable technical services to the area farmers and land users upon request.

The following presents a brief summary of the major services and conservation practices established with SCS assistance in 1987:

- Individual land users provided assistance.....517
- Land users applying on or more conservation practices.....204
- Acreage of conservation plans prepared and/or revised.....3,387
- Acreage of stripcropping established.....1,083
- Spring developments installed.....28
- Grass and rock lined waterway acreage constructed.....10
- Linear feet of diversion constructed.....10,985
- Soil erosion and sedimentation control plans reviewed.....200
- Agricultural Conservation Program referrals serviced.....141
- Pond requests serviced.....23

## In addition, SCS...

- Assisted the Westmoreland Conservation District with on-site investigation of soil erosion and stormwater related problems.
- Supplied soil survey information upon request.
- Provided technical assistance to land users that resulted in various applications of agronomic practices to reduce soil erosion. These included: conservation cropping systems, conservation tillage, pasture and hayland management, and planned grazing systems.
- Assisted farmers with planning of manure management systems.
- Assisted farmers with planning and installation of intensive grazing systems for livestock-forage management.
- Assisted farmers with conservation provisions of the 1985 Food Security Act.

## Westmoreland's Conservation Team

*Commonwealth of Pennsylvania*

**Department of Environmental Resources**

Bureau of Soil and Water Conservation

Bureau of Community Environmental Control

Bureau of Forestry

Bureau of Surface Mine Reclamation

Bureau of Oil and Gas Management

State Conservation Commission

**Department of Transportation**

**PA. Fish Commission**

**PA. Game Commission**

*Federal*

**Department of Agriculture**

Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service

Farmer's Home Administration

Soil Conservation Service

**Department of the Army**

Corps of Engineer

**Department of the Interior**

*Westmoreland County*

**Cooperative Extension Service**

**Department of Emergency Management**

**Department of Parks and Recreation**

**Department of Planning**

**Vocational and Agricultural Schools**

**Loyalhanna Watershed Association**

**Turtle Creek Watershed Association**

**Jacobs Creek Watershed Association**

**cooperation** / kō-äp-ə-rä-shən / n:

The act of working or operating together to one end; joint operation; concurrent effort or labor.

# Directors Set Priorities

Every November the District Board conducts a planning meeting to review the year's accomplishments and to set priorities for the upcoming year. The meeting also serves as a forum for everyone in attendance to discuss their thoughts concerning conservation in the Westmoreland County.

The following priorities are on the District's agenda for 1988:

## Soil Erosion and Sedimentation Control Program

- Emphasize program implementation
- Revise and publish the District's Erosion Control Manual
- Utilize the computer database for program administration
- Issue news releases to publicize program compliance
- Sponsor a workshop on erosion control rules and regulations
- Maintain site inspections at 200 or more per year
- Obtain state certification for the District Technician  
Committee members: Smith, Houston, Quadro

## Stormwater Management Program

- Activate the District's Stormwater Committee
- Employ a second technician
- Provide information to urbanized municipalities
- Assist the County with the Turtle Creek Stormwater Study  
Committee members: Kemerer, Gordon, Churbock, Phillips

## Conservation Planning and Application

- Publicize the 1985 Farm Bill
    - a.) Use "Landmarks" newsletter
    - b.) Organize regional meetings to periodically update farmers
- Committee members: Skacel, Buttermore, Hutter

## Special Projects

- Complete projects funded by the State Conservation Commission
    - a.) Analyze Urban Stormwater Run-Off
    - b.) Produce Landowner Reclamation Program Publicity Piece
    - c.) Computerize Erosion & Sedimentation Forms
    - d.) Organize Woodland Owners Association
- Committee members: Paxton, Quadro, Phillips

## Resource Conservation Trust

- Organize effort to form Trust
- Sponsor a roundtable conference for all cooperating agencies  
Committee members: Walters, Wenk, Saxman, Phillips

## Landowner Reclamation Program

- Contact potential participants
- Sign agreements for reclamation of two additional sites  
Committee members: Smith, Phillips

## Publicity

- Publish and distribute "Landmarks"
  - a.) Revise the newsletter mailing list
- Compile a District slide show
- Develop "Certificates of Recognition"
- Develop a general information publicity piece
- Solicit local business leaders to sponsor "Landmarks"  
Committee members: Houston, Jackson, Wenk, Keller

## Youth Award Program

- Develop a program to recognize local youth  
Committee members: Jackson, Walters, Stefl, Fritz

## Conservation Education

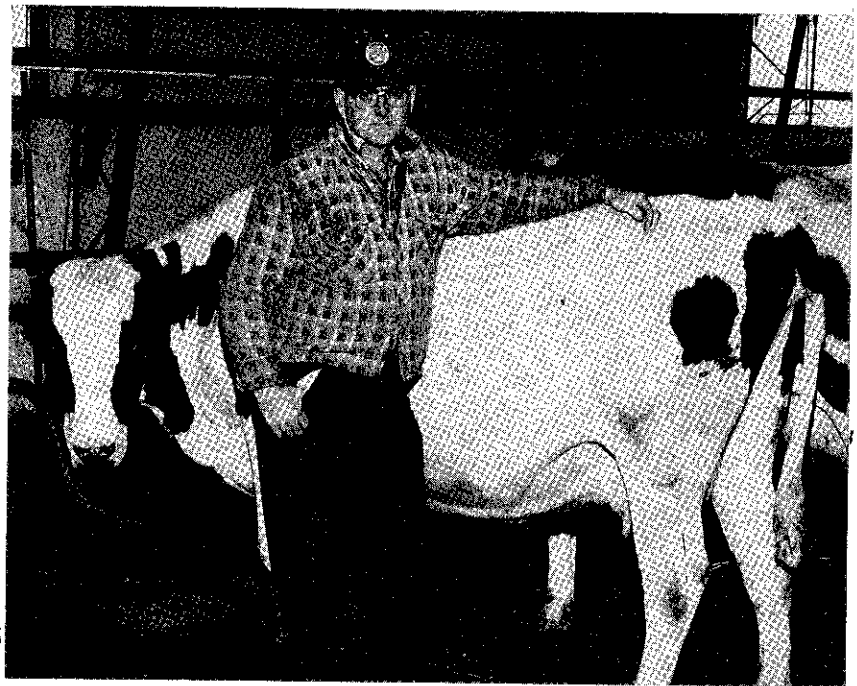
- Promote and participate in local/state Envirothon
- Provide speakers upon request
- Distribute educational materials  
Committee members: Smith, Walters, Stefl, Fritz

**concern** /kən-ˈsɜrn/vb:  
to relate to ; to be the  
business of: involve  
engage, occupy.

# Mulhollems Selected Outstanding Farm Cooperators



Don Mulhollem holding newborn lamb.



Burt Mulhollem with favorite cow #31.

Photo - Tom Keller

On a picturesque farm in a broad valley at the foot of Laurel Ridge in Donegal Township, Burt Mulhollem pondered the question. "How did we get involved in conservation? Let me think. I know...we were looking for ways to cut expenses on the farm when Bill Kelly of the Cooperative Extension Service told us about a new kind of pasture management."

That was 1985. Today, Burt and his son Don are beginning to realize the benefits of the Voison pasture management system that was introduced to them by Carl Beabes of the Soil Conservation Service. The Voison system is based on timely rotation of livestock through a series of small paddocks. The Mulhollems have divided their farm into 15 one acre paddocks.

Burt stated, "We have been able to graze the pastures from mid-April through October. That resulted in quite a feed savings. I would recommend the Voison pasture management system to any farmer."

Some of the other conservation practices that the Mulhollems have incorporated into their 125 acre farm operation include: 37 acres of stripcropping, 2,000

feet of subsurface drainage, five spring developments, and one agricultural waste facility. They also cooperated with the District to host several field days on rotational grazing at their farm.

*Congratulations* from the Westmoreland Conservation District to Burt and Don Mulhollem for being selected as our Outstanding Conservationists!

**pasture management** / 'pas-  
chər 'mān-ij-mənt/n: The  
application of practices to  
keep pasture plants growing  
actively over as long a  
period as possible so that  
they will provide palatable  
feed of high nutritive value;  
to encourage the growth of  
the desirable grasses and  
legumes while crowding  
out weeds, brush and in-  
ferior grasses.

## Reclamation Increases Productivity

Local leadership helps to encourage the reclamation, development, and wise use of abandoned mined lands. The District cooperates with federal and state agencies to reduce hazards to public health and safety, eliminate soil erosion, and improve water quality through reclamation.

A new approach to address reclamation in Westmoreland County was instituted in 1987. The Landowner Reclamation Program allows interested persons to reclaim abandoned mine lands on their property for the amount of forfeited bonds. The program utilizes the statutory authority of the Conservation District Law to convey the

bond money through the District to individual land-owners. One project was completed in 1987 and plans were initiated to reclaim two additional sites.

During the year, Directors and staff continued to participate in the Western Pennsylvania Coalition for Abandoned Mine Reclamation. The Coalition, comprised of 23 member counties representing Western Pennsylvania, is an organization of volunteers who lobby and present testimony before legislators, maintain association with conservation organizations, and promote the need for reclamation of abandoned mine land.

**reclamation** /rek-lə-'mā-shən/n: The process of reconverting disturbed lands to their former uses or other productive uses.

## A Word of Thanks

We want to express our appreciation to the Westmoreland County Commissioners and the State Conservation Commission for their financial support. Their generosity has enabled us to maintain, strengthen and expand our programs for natural resource conservation.

Photo - Emil Kuhar



Westmoreland County Commissioners left to right : Terry R. Marolt, Ted Simon, Richard F. Vidmer.

## Public Encouraged to Attend District Meetings

The District is administered by a Board composed of five farmer directors, three public directors, and one County Commissioner. The Board convenes at least once a month to plan, prioritize, and supervise the implementation of programs. Regular meetings are scheduled to begin at 8:00 p.m. on the fourth Wednesday of each month. They are held at the Peoples Natural Gas Company in Greensburg.

**conservation** / kən-sər-'vā-shən / n: The protection, improvement, and use of natural resources according to principles that will assure their highest economic or social benefits for man and his environment now and into the future.



# Who/What is a Cooperator??

by Kathleen Fritz

A cooperator is someone who has requested help with the development of a conservation plan for their land. The following is a list of new cooperators:

- Stephen N. Tower.....153 acres - Washington Twp.
- James W. Ludvik.....126 acres - Mt. Pleasant Twp.
- Donald R. Momyer.....84 acres - S. Huntingdon Twp.
- Curtis Piper.....300 acres - E. Huntingdon Twp.
- Stitt Property.....57 acres - Donegal Twp.
- J. David Schober.....20 acres - Cook Twp.
- Yukon Lions Field & Rec. Center.....6 acres - S. Huntingdon Twp.
- Shaver Farm.....172 acres - Hempfield Twp.
- Robert Bogle, Sr.....90 acres - Derry Twp.
- Latrobe Country Club.....110 acres - Unity Twp.
- Nancy Gearhard.....56 acres - Murrysville

If you are interested in protecting your natural resources, call the District to request your own conservation plan. Assistance is available free of charge.

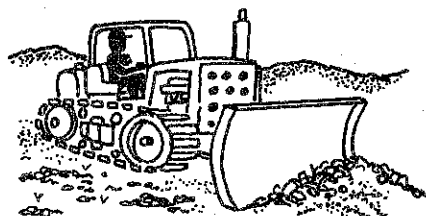
## District to Employ Engineer by Greg Phillips

The District recently received funding, in the form of a supplemental budget appropriation, to hire an Engineer to assist with our expanding Stormwater Management Program.

His/her responsibilities will include: providing technical consultation to the District staff in the areas of stormwater management and soil erosion and sedimentation control; preparing

reclamation plans; and assisting with the Turtle Creek Stormwater Management Study.

Applicants must have a Bachelors Degree in Civil Engineering, Agricultural Engineering, or related environmental resource management field awarded by an accredited College or University. Resume and references accepted until April 30, 1988.



## Yukon Surface Mine Reclamation Project Funded

Environmental Resources Deputy Secretary James R. Grace announced an award of a \$30,667 contract to reclaim an abandoned strip mine in South Huntingdon Township.

The contract was awarded to Luzerne Land Corporation of Neville Island, PA. The project involves clearing, grubbing and grading an estimated 3.1 acres and seeding 9.2 acres. The project is expected to start at the end of February and be completed in late August.

The site is located on the south side of Township Road 449 approximately 4,500 feet east of its intersection with Township Road 970.

## Board Elects Officers

An Election-of-Officers was conducted at a District's January Board Meeting. Roy Houston was elected Chairman, while Gib Hutter was elected Vice Chairman. Frank Skacel will serve as Treasurer and Bill Buttermore as Secretary. Congratulations to the new officers.

## Introduce A Friend To Landmarks!

Do you have a friend who is interested in conservation? Perhaps they would enjoy receiving *Landmarks*, the official newsletter of the Westmoreland Conservation District. *Landmarks* is published quarterly and is available free of charge. Please use this coupon to send in his or her name and address for our mailing list.

If you have moved, please send us a current address.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Mail Coupon to:

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## Board of Directors

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GILBERT HUTTER  
*Vice Chairman*

FRANK E. SKACEL  
*Treasurer*

WILLIAM BUTTERMORE  
*Secretary*

ALEX J. SMITH  
*Director*

TED SIMON  
*Commissioner-Director*

DIANNE B. WALTERS  
*Director*

BILL PAXTON  
*Director*

PAUL ROY KEMERER  
*Director*

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PAUL HEYWORTH

MRS. ANN RUDD SAXMAN

DR. WILLIAM SHEA

MRS. GEORGE SHUPE

SCOTT CHURBOCK

MARK JACKSON

BONNIE WENK

KEITH WALTERS

TOM KELLER

## Staff

GREGORY M. PHILLIPS  
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LINCOLN STEFL  
*Administrative Secretary*

ANTHONY P. QUADRO  
*Environmental Control Officer*

KATHLEEN A. FRITZ  
*Secretary*

GREGORY CIRONI  
*District Technician*

## U.S.D.A., Soil Conservation Service

### Staff

WESLEY M. GORDON  
*District Conservationist*

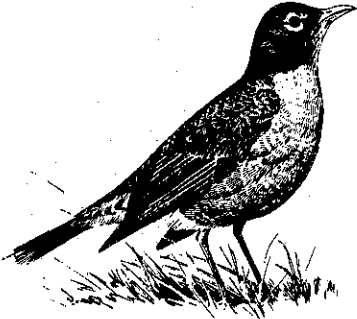
JOE OBENSKI  
*Soil Technician*

LARRY STOKUM  
*Soil Technician*



## Remembering a Conservation Leader

by Greg Phillips



Elwood Leslie, the former District Manager of the Westmoreland Conservation District from 1971 to 1986, passed away this winter.

Elwood will be remembered as a productive individual who had a tremendous impact on the environment of Westmoreland County. He encouraged farmers to adopt conservation practices, preached conservation to municipal leaders, helped to create a flood warning system, and was one of the first to promote water conservation

and recycling. He organized the District's Erosion Control Program so that it became a model for other districts and was recognized as a leader in conservation throughout Pennsylvania.

Over the years, those who worked with Elwood came to know him as a dedicated conservationist and a professional in the truest sense of the word. There are few in our work who possess his knowledge and are so highly regarded. We shall sincerely miss him.

Westmoreland  
Conservation  
District

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