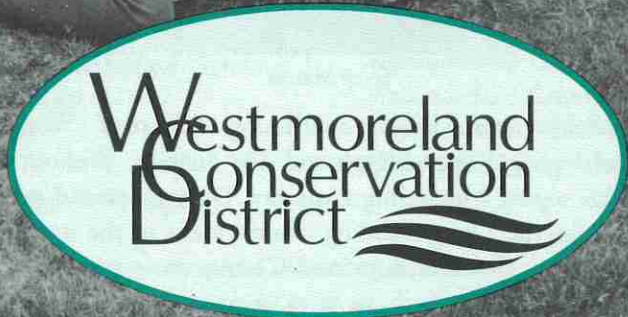
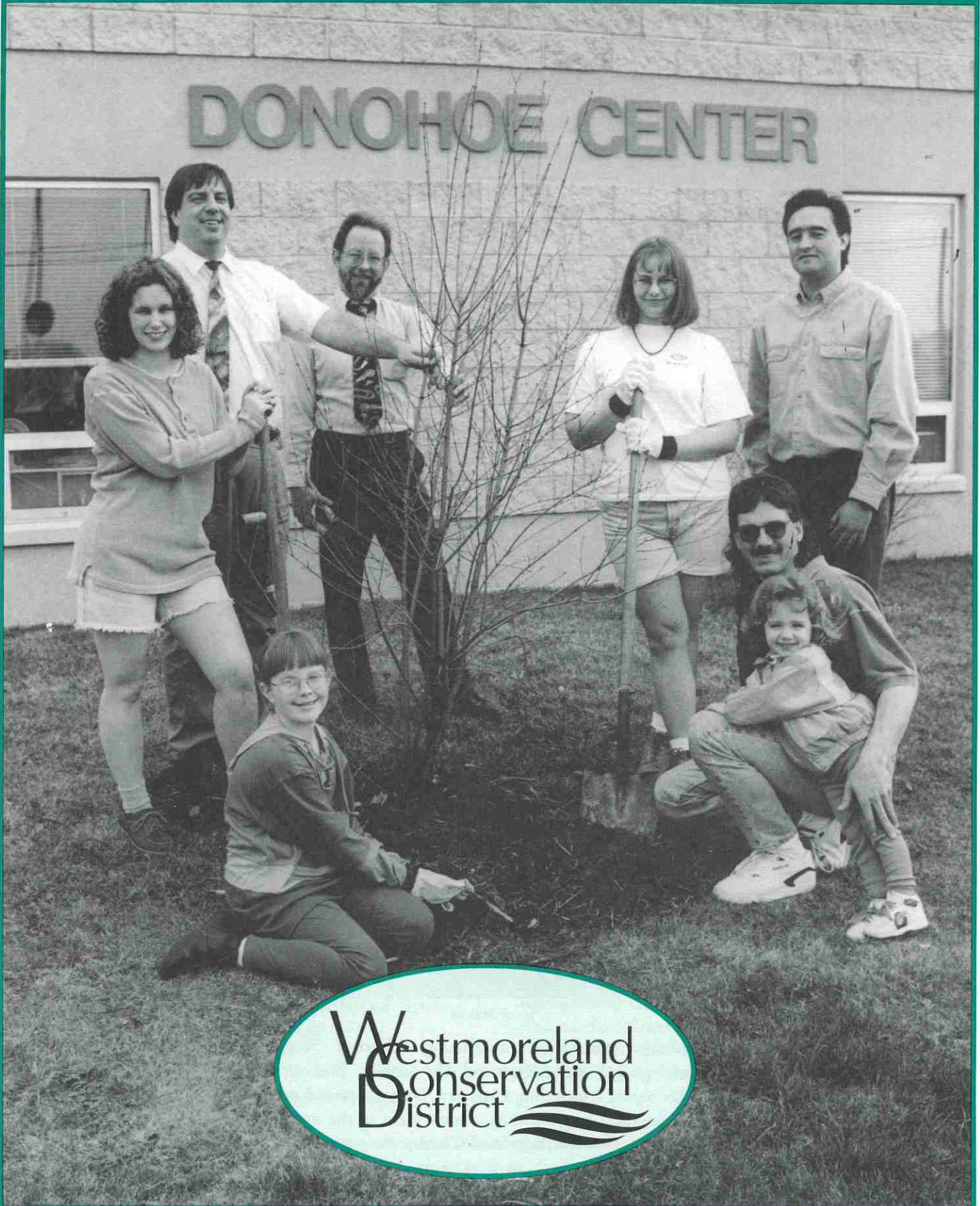


*A New Way Of Thinking*



ANNUAL REPORT 1994



e've applied a new way of thinking to the content and design of this annual report. Our goal was to use more layman's language and less acronyms so it was quicker and easier to read. And, after several years of tabloid-style reports, we've fashioned this report in a more permanent, bound format that we hope you will keep on hand.

Let us know what you think. Drop us a line at the District-- R.D. 12, Box 202B, Greensburg, PA 15601 Or call Editor Lorrie Stouffer at 412 - 837 - 5271.

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### *A Special Thank You*



Richard Vidmer



Terry Marolt



Ted Simon

The District is especially grateful for the continuing support of Westmoreland County Commissioners Richard Vidmer, Terry Marolt and Ted Simon. Without them, many of the achievements listed in this report - including Donohoe Center - would not have been possible.

We are grateful for their long-standing commitment to the quality of life in Westmoreland County.

**On the cover:** Using landscaping as a living classroom (see page 3) is just one example of the new way of thinking taking root at Donohoe Center. Volunteers and District staff helping with this effort included (standing, left to right): Erin Sopko, Greg Phillips, Dave Kindl, Kelly Sopko, Maurizio Bellucci (kneeling, left to right) Liza Kindl, Rick Eichner, Autumn Eichner

## *Mission Statement*

The Westmoreland Conservation District is dedicated to the conservation, restoration, and proper use of our natural resources.

Functioning as a unit of government, the directors and their associates commit themselves to the leadership and service required in pursuing activities beneficial to the environment.



Western Pennsylvania Conservancy Photo

## *Westmoreland Conservation District Programs*

The following are just a few of the many District conservation programs, advanced with the support of individuals, organizations, and agencies equally committed to the wise use of our natural resources.

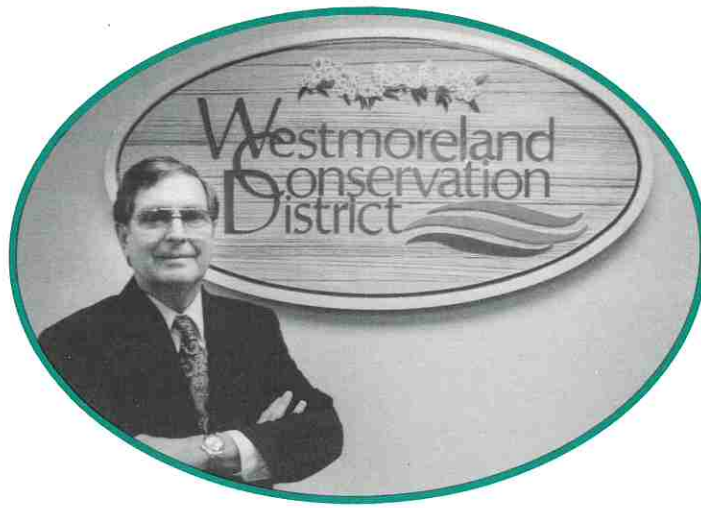
Agricultural Conservation Planning and Application  
Christmas Tree Recycling  
Conservation Education  
Farmland Preservation  
Landowner Reclamation Program  
Laurel Ridge Geographic Information System  
Leaf/Yard Waste Composting  
Newsprint Recycling  
Nutrient Management  
Resource Conservation and Development

Rural Abandoned Mine Program  
Soil Erosion and Sediment Control  
Stormwater Management  
Water Conservation  
Western Pennsylvania Coalition for Abandoned Mine Reclamation  
Westmoreland County Envirothon  
Westmoreland County Soil Survey  
Westmoreland Woodlands Association  
Woodland Management

*If any of these subjects or programs sound interesting to you, why not join us? Come to a District meeting. It's a chance to learn more about what we do and how you can be a part of the team.*

*Everyone is welcome.*

*Second Wednesday of every month, 8 p.m., Donohoe Center*



### *Dear Friend of Conservation:*

If you've been a long-time conservationist, you can see it. A steady, gradual evolution in the way people think about our natural resources. More people are embracing the principles you've long valued — recognizing that our resources are not limitless, and that each of us has a responsibility to use them with wisdom and care.

This new way of thinking is highly fertile ground for the cause of conservation. In fact, we believe we can shape our environmental future as much by encouraging individual stewardship, as by addressing the technical issues, such as reclaiming abandoned deep mine sites or controlling stormwater runoff.

Events are helping underscore our message. Growing populations and past practices have put natural resources at a premium, and challenged us to find new ways to employ their usefulness without degradation. Efforts to restore damaged land and water have become as important as efforts to preserve unblemished or special areas. And our overall approach to resource management is becoming more integrated, as experience continues to show us that all things are connected in an interdependent web of life.

This new era offers exciting opportunities for public outreach. When we inform, educate, persuade, and motivate, we can create tremendous synergy — building coalitions and expanding the effectiveness of our staff more than a hundredfold. We increase our opportunities to secure funding and critical support of all kinds. And, most importantly, we are able to undertake more services than we ever could have otherwise.

That's why our District staff focused so much of their energies during 1994 on communicating with individuals and organizations. We believe communication is fundamental to moving toward our goal of meaningful, long-term and broad-scale conservation of our community resources.

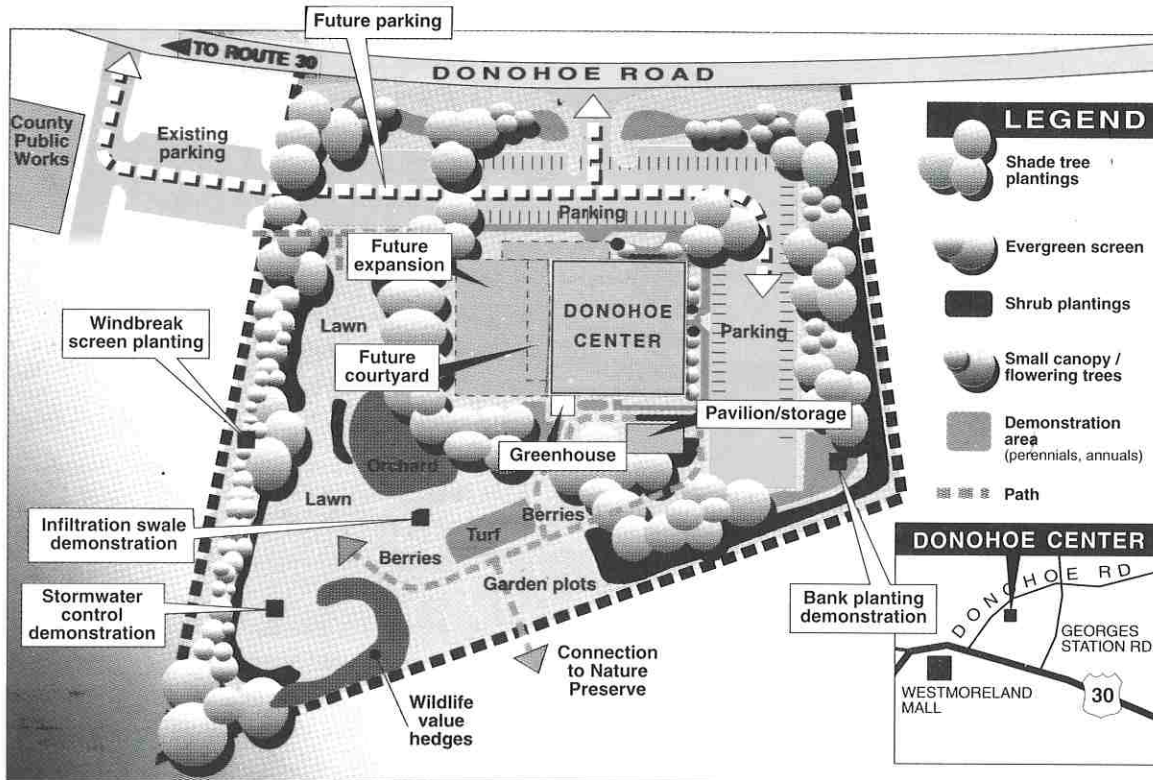
We've used the same approach in this annual report. Each section gives you a capsulated look at the conservation issues we faced in 1994, and how we are working with others to address them. If you aren't already involved, we hope this report will encourage you to join with us to be a part of the solution.

J. Roy Houston  
*Chairman*

# DONOHOE CENTER

A District dream five years in the making became a reality last fall when Donohoe Center officially opened for business as a one-stop conservation service center for the people of Westmoreland County.

The \$1.5-million facility is perhaps the most tangible example to-date of what teamwork among federal, state, local and private agencies can do.



Tribune Review Graphic by Randy Bish

Donohoe Center exemplifies a new way of thinking that brings together under one roof in Hempfield Township the Westmoreland Conservation District, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Rural Economic and Community Development Service, Consolidated Farm Service Agency, Penn State Cooperative Extension, and Penn's Corner Resource Conservation and Development.

The 13,600-square-foot center also offers assistance and resources for grassroots conservation organizations such as PA CleanWays, Westmoreland Woodlands, and local watershed associations. And it is one of the first centers in Pennsylvania to offer state-of-the-art distant education programs from Penn State's College of Agricultural Sciences via a satellite downlink.

Overall, the close, daily interaction among the agencies and users promises to open up creative new opportunities for cooperative projects.

Outside, the center will offer conservation services as well. Plans for the five-acre grounds include a greenhouse and demonstration areas showing different tree cultivars and grasses, natural windbreaks, garden plots, stormwater management, and an experimental unpaved area for overflow parking.

We are grateful for the hard work and commitment of so many who made this center possible, and we are anxious to explore the many benefits it promises.

## LAND RECLAMATION

The black, barren remains of abandoned coal mining deface about 5,000 acres of the land in our county. Beyond the assault to aesthetics, open pits and abandoned buildings on these sites pose problems of safety. Unchecked, water filtering through and from these wastelands compromises our ability to use it for drinking or recreation.

Residents of Tinsmill, a small town in Bell Township at the northwestern corner of the county, had lived with the black hills of coal boney for at least a generation when local landowner Nick Novosel first approached us for help several years ago.

In 1994, reclamation became a reality, thanks to the cooperative efforts of Mr. Novosel, the District, and the Natural Resources Conservation Service.



Ground breaking at the Novosel mine reclamation site: left to right, Mr. & Mrs. Nickola Novosel; Richard Duncan, State Conservation Commission; Ted Simon, Westmoreland County Commissioner; John Murtha, U.S. Congressman; Pat Stapleton, PA State Senator

An eight-acre abandoned deep mine site in North Huntingdon Township was reclaimed in 1994, and set well on its way toward becoming a wildlife habitat.

Open deep mine voids were sealed, including one which was seeping. The old strip cut was backfilled to near the original contour, and spoiled areas were planted with vegetation. Total reclamation cost of the project was \$86,000.

Landowner Joseph Hill plans additional plantings of various trees and shrubs to make the site attractive to wildlife.

A dangerous 100-foot coal silo was razed, and 29 acres of shifting, barren coal waste was stabilized and transformed to green vegetation. Perhaps one of the most exciting aspects of the Tinsmill project is that it broke new ground in how the federal government's Rural Abandoned Mine Program (RAMP) funds can be used. Previously, RAMP money had been designated only for land-associated reclamation. At Tinsmill, a portion of the \$250,000 was also used to treat some of the water affected by acid-mine drainage (the site is adjacent to Wolford Run, less than a mile from the Kiskiminetas River).

This appropriation opens the door to a more integrated approach to abandoned mine reclamation — one that addresses both land and water resources — and holds great promise for future projects.

The District hosted a tour of the successfully reclaimed Tinsmill site for technical experts and interested individuals from all over the world last April. The tour was part of the International Land Reclamation and Mine Drainage Conference and the Third International Conference on the Abatement of Acidic Drainage, which was held in Pittsburgh, and hosted by state and federal environmental agencies.

With the reclaiming of the Novosel and Hill sites last year, the District has now helped reclaim a total of 21 sites in the county since 1979.

The Natural Resources Conservation Service administers the Rural Abandoned Mine Program (RAMP), which removes public health and safety hazards from coal-mined land which was abandoned prior to August 3, 1977.

## ROADSIDE CLEANUP/RECYCLING

Many items found illegally dumped along roadsides are things that waste haulers either won't take or charge extra to pick up, including tires, appliances, and yard and leaf waste.

The District continued its strong support of PA CleanWays' effort to prevent illegal dumping and littering last year through recycling, education, and cleanup projects.

Recycling days for special items collected 19 tons of telephone books, 500 Christmas trees, 1,700 tires, and 250 vehicle batteries. A backyard composting demonstration site was set up near Twin Lakes Park to show county residents how to turn their garden and lawn waste into a free, beneficial soil amendment.

Four illegal dump sites were eliminated, and more than 250 tons of garbage were removed during major cleanups on Murrays Hill Road in St. Clair Township, Tabernacle Road in Donegal Township, and Beatty Road in Unity Township.



Tribune Review Photo

Farmer Bill Kepple spreads shredded telephone directories as animal bedding in his barn.

Fourteen additional roads were adopted for stewardship, bringing the total number of township, city, and borough roads CleanWays maintains in the county to 34.

## SOIL CONSERVATION

Erosion rates from unprotected construction sites may approach 20,000 to 40,000 times the erosion rate of farms and woodlands, or up to 200 tons per acre per year.

The rapid, increasing urbanization of Westmoreland County has stepped up the need to control erosion and sediment.

In 1994, the District took a more proactive approach to this issue. We targeted the areas most likely to experience the greatest development pressures — such as Unity Township — and met with the zoning officers and township supervisors to share concerns and lay the groundwork for cooperation.

Our meeting with Salem Township supervisors was especially important since the source of much of the county's drinking water, Beaver Run Reservoir, is in their jurisdiction. We are hopeful that our efforts will bring increased cooperation in managing sediment, which threatens this water supply by increasing the costs to treat it, and by decreasing the

capacity of the lake.

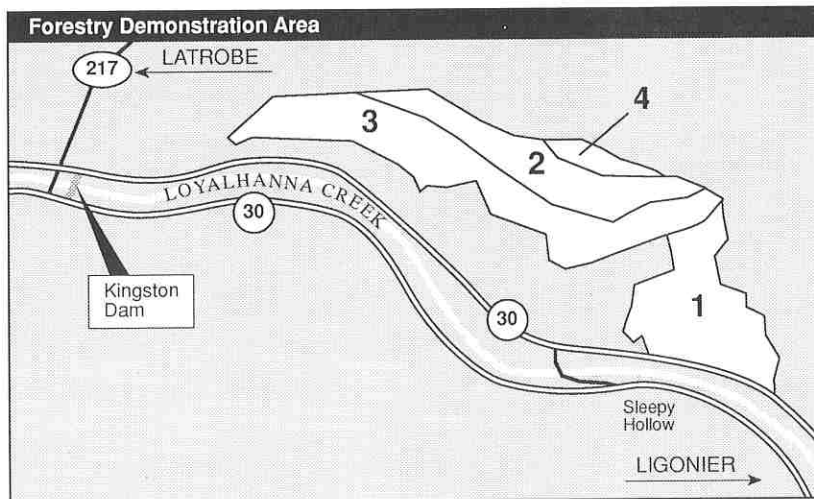
High lumber prices in 1994 brought an increase in timber harvesting all across the county and, with it, a record increase in the number of erosion and sediment control inspections we conducted on these sites.

Loggers likewise submitted an all-time high number of erosion-control plans to the District for review in 1994 — 15, as opposed to only 5 in 1993. We are encouraged that this increase shows an overall willingness to cooperate with the District and to voluntarily comply with erosion control rules.

As we have done with municipal officials on urban development sites, we plan to increase our communication and education efforts with the timber-harvesting community in 1995.

# WOODLAND MANAGEMENT

With forests covering more than 50% of Westmoreland County, it is important that we strike a balance in the way we manage the many benefits they offer us -- recreation, timber, improved water quality and control, wildlife habitat, plant propagation, and scenic beauty.



Tribune Review Graphic by Randy Bish

## Loyalhanna Gorge Forestry Demonstration Area

- Section 1 — thinning and salvage
- Section 2 — salvage and regeneration cutting
- Section 3 — salvage and improvement cutting
- Section 4 — control area; no cutting

In a project which eventually will encompass 148 wooded acres near Kingston Dam, the District and other conservationists continued last year to experiment with techniques for harvesting and regenerating standing timber. The Loyalhanna Gorge Forest Demonstration project is designed to show that proper forestry practices can benefit the environment.

Work in the first of four areas was completed last year (see map). Poor quality trees were thinned out, and some light salvage work was done to open the area to sunlight and speed natural regeneration. Work also began in areas 2 and 3, which were more severely damaged by the gypsy moths several years ago and so will require more extensive salvage work.

Education and public information efforts continued to pay dividends last year. We saw a large increase in the number of loggers who came to the District for help in controlling erosion on their work sites. More private woodlot owners as well sought advice on managing their property for resource protection and long-term benefit.

We also continued to promote the planting and maintenance of trees throughout the

county. We distributed some 4,000 pine, spruce, crabapple and hawthorn seedlings free-of-charge to interested groups and individuals.

## TREES OF DISTINCTION

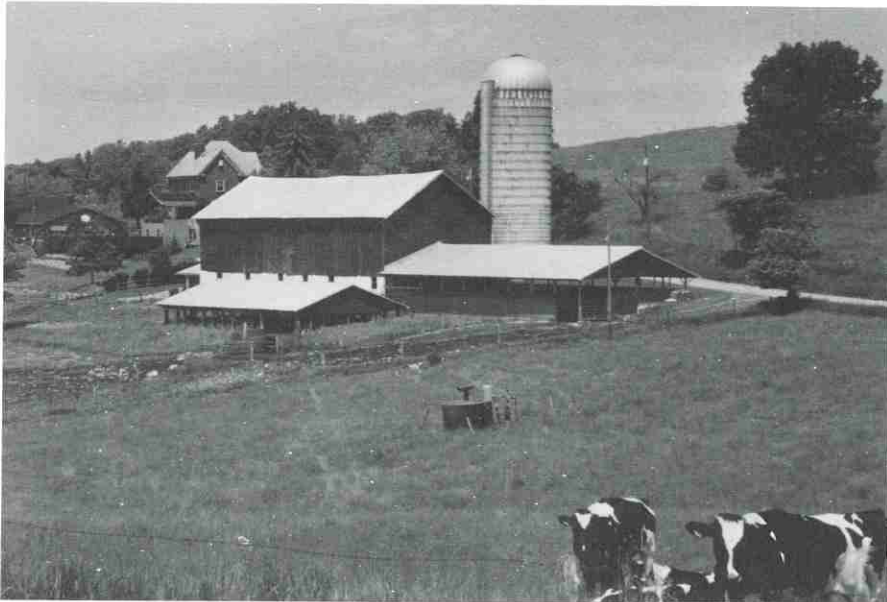
Our "Trees of Distinction" program, which recognizes trees of significance (determined by such factors as age, size, history, or range) growing in the county, enrolled several new trees in 1994.

- \* **Red Oak in North Huntingdon**, submitted by Richard, Susan, and Ky Zizan  
This is a significant tree because it is a large double-stem specimen that has a combined circumference of 67 inches
- \* **Bald Cypress in Ligonier Township**, submitted by Victor Smith  
This tree is significant because it is growing outside of its normal, southern U.S. range. It also is the largest known specimen in the county, with a 32-inch circumference.
- \* **White Ash in Penn Township**, submitted by Mildred Legerski  
The 50-inch circumference of this tree makes it the largest known specimen in the county.
- \* **Catalpa in Donegal Township**, submitted by Robert Summersgill  
This is the largest known specimen in the county — circumference, 52 inches.
- \* **Hackberry in Sewickley Township**, submitted by Bertha Janitor  
At 37 inches, the circumference of this tree makes it the largest known specimen in the county.
- \* **Red Oak in Norwin**, submitted by the Norwin Elks Lodge.  
The three stems of this tree make it unique. Combined, their circumference totals 78-1/2 inches.



# FARMLAND PRESERVATION

**A**gricultural easements are an important safeguard to assure that our most fertile food-producing acreage is not developed, but stays in agricultural use where it can benefit the farmer and consumer alike.



Productive farmland throughout the county contributes economically and aesthetically to the overall quality of life.

In 1994, an easement was gained on 170 acres of the Weaver/Frye dairy and crop farm in Ligonier Township. Funding was provided by a partnership of the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy, the Loyalhanna Watershed Association, and the Westmoreland County Agricultural Land Preservation Board. This kind of networking with other organizations committed to protecting farmland, open space, and natural resources, is an important step in the growth of the Farmland Preservation Program.

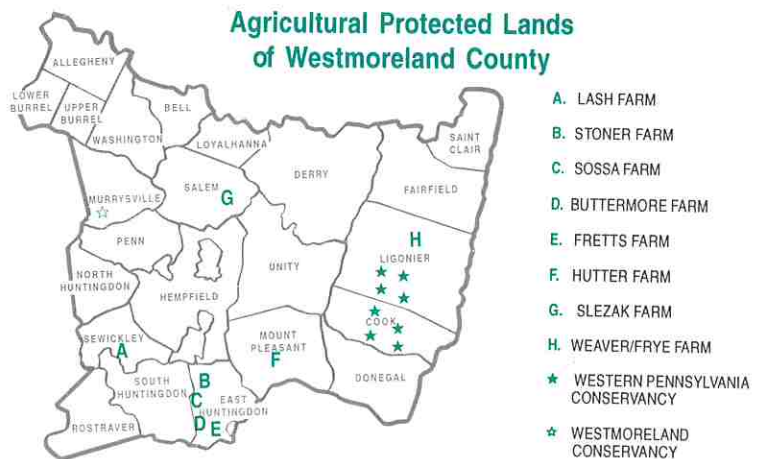
The first easement purchase in the north-central part of Westmoreland County was made last August at the Frederick Slezak farm, located in Salem Township. Two hundred twenty-four acres of this hog and crop farm were placed under perpetual easement. An important, additional significance of this easement is that it may help open the door for other such arrangements in the area, particularly south of the Slezak farm, which is rich in productive agricultural land.

With these two easements, a total of 1,206 agricultural acres in Westmoreland County

have been protected forever.

In addition to benefiting all residents, easements are very personally significant to farmers because they offer an alternative way to generate the revenue needed to keep the farm operating. Money to fund easement purchases comes from a variety of sources, including private contributions from businesses, individuals, and corporations. Last year these contributions amounted to \$18,620. The Westmoreland County Commissioners contributed an additional \$100,000 to the easement purchase fund in 1994, and

have indicated their strong commitment to our efforts by increasing that amount to \$110,000 for 1995. The annual allocation of funds from the Commonwealth was \$833,486.



In March of 1994, The Gilbert Hutter Family, co-owners of the Hutter Farm Dairy in Mt. Pleasant Township, were recognized for their long-term commitment to the preservation of Westmoreland County agriculture. The Hutters placed their 282.4-acre farm under protection of an agricultural land conservation easement through the county and commonwealth's Farmland Protection Program. This easement will insure that this valuable land remains in agricultural use forever.

## IMPROVING WATER QUALITY

The orange color of the Loyalhanna Creek near Latrobe is more than unsightly. It is a sign of iron oxide, an element from nearby abandoned deep mines, which has profoundly reduced aquatic life in the 21-mile stretch from the mouth of Monastery Run to the creek's confluence with the Conemaugh River.



Pollution from deep coal mines often enters our streams in an identifiable spot, such as this location, called the Bubbler. This 600-gallon-per-minute artesian flow is the largest single mine water discharge into Four Mile Run. Standing near this Saint Vincent College Site are: left to right Brother Norman Hipps, O.S.B., Saint Vincent College provost; Greg Phillips, district manager, Westmoreland Conservation District; Dr. Caryl Fish, assistant professor of chemistry, Saint Vincent College; Wes Gordon, district conservationist from the Natural Resources Conservation Service, and Mark Killar, regional coordinator of the Western Pennsylvania Coalition for Abandoned Mine Reclamation.

As part of the Loyalhanna Creek Mine Drainage Coalition, the District moved closer last year to helping implement a unique remedy to improve water quality and restore aquatic life to a portion of the Loyalhanna Creek severely affected by pollutants from abandoned deep coal mines.

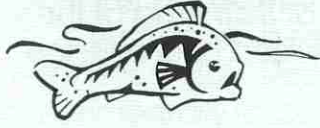
Funding proposals were written and submitted to the federal and state government to construct passive wetland systems along Four Mile Run. The wetlands will act as natural treatment ponds, holding the polluted ground water long enough for the iron to settle out, before it joins Monastery Run which then feeds into the Loyalhanna Creek.

Flow measuring devices were installed last summer and water tests were conducted to

determine the extent of mine contamination. Biological surveys were taken to establish baseline data and to help "quantify" the problem. Our goal is to develop the specific wetland design during the summer of 1995 and to begin construction in the spring of 1996.

Beyond its benefit to local water quality, this project has the potential to grow a new local industry. Area companies, agencies, and educators are developing expertise with passive wetland "technology" as they work in this natural laboratory along the Loyalhanna, and this research and development can be applied to similar sites nationally and internationally.

**Some 2,500 miles of Pennsylvania's streams are affected by acid mine drainage that kills aquatic life and renders it unfit for drinking or recreation.**



Efforts to clean up acid mine drainage got a significant boost last year from a federal government grant which will provide nearly \$1,000,000 over three years for projects in 21 counties, including Westmoreland, and the hiring of a regional coordinator, Mark Killar. Mark is now working out of the Conservation District's office in Donohoe Center.

Area watersheds continued to make progress with stream cleanup projects during 1994. The Sewickley Creek Watershed Association

cleaned up some abandoned mine discharges. The Turtle Creek Watershed Association renewed its efforts to address the mine discharges which led to the cancellation of trout-stocking in that creek, established a subcommittee on acid mine drainage abatement, and initiated an effort to involve schools. The Loyalhanna Watershed Association continued its efforts on the Monastery Run project as well as clean-up work at Laurel Run at Powdermill Nature Reserve, Rector.

Members of AMERICORPS (domestic Peace Corps) have joined the general effort by helping to evaluate and analyze mine water discharges throughout Westmoreland and several surrounding counties.

And a new Clean Streams Initiative from the Office of Surface Mining promises to increase efforts to address the water quality problems that stem from abandoned mines.

## N U T R I E N T S

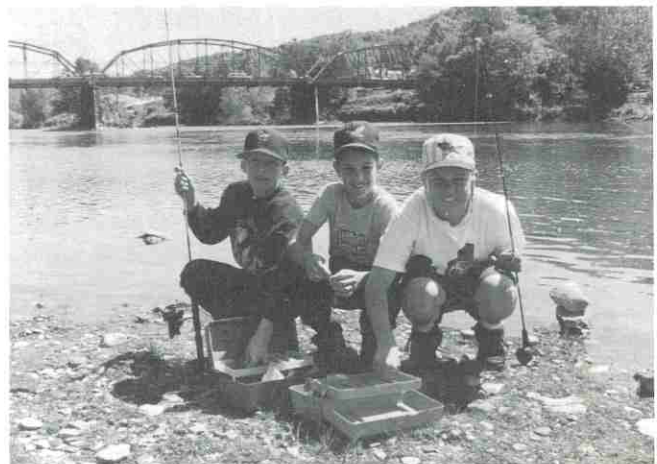
**A**lthough deep-coal-mine drainage and sewage are the most evident problems, other activities may also contribute to watershed pollution. Fertilizers, manure, pesticides and herbicides, if washed into our streams, could hinder our efforts to restore water quality.

Last summer, 30 randomly selected farmers from Westmoreland County and 17 others from Fayette County were surveyed to determine if the business of agriculture might be adversely affecting the Mid-Youghiogheny River watershed.

The 278,000-acre watershed — bounded approximately by Greensburg (north), Dunbar (south), Acme (east), and Perryopolis (west) — was divided into smaller areas, each identified by primary land use: forest, farmland, or livestock production. Water samples were taken in each area at times during the year that coincided with fertilizing, growing, and harvesting activities.

The survey found that 14 of the watershed's 23 divisions — those with the highest concentration of animals — had the greatest potential to degrade the watershed. The Welty Run drainage area, which includes Mammoth County Park, had the highest pollution potential.

Findings from this study resulted in funding for a three-year pilot nutrient-management program. A field technician will join us during the spring of 1995 and work with farmers in seven area watersheds to manage soil, chemicals, manure, and animals in a way that limits their effects on the watershed.



Fishing along the Youghiogheny River near West Newton.

## RESOURCE IDENTIFICATION

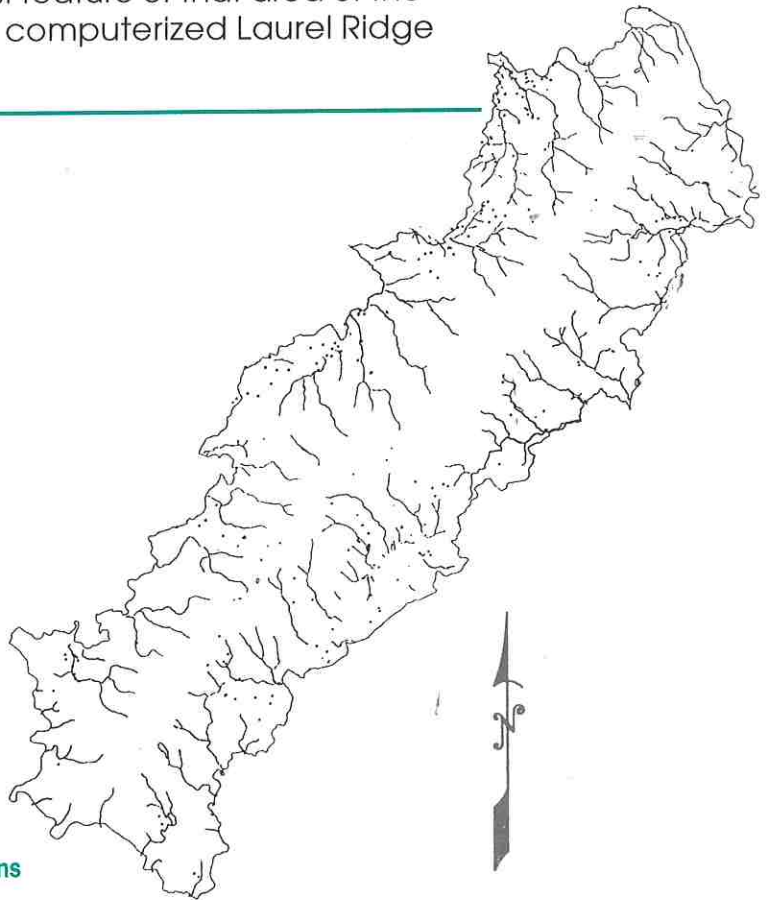
An inventory of water resources on Laurel Ridge was begun in 1994, and will be the latest feature of that area of the county to be added to our computerized Laurel Ridge Geographic Information System.

Having computer access to water resource information will help municipal planners, water authorities, developers and private citizens determine whether the groundwater resources of particular areas of Laurel Ridge will support further development.

The water resource information complements other data about the ridge already on the sophisticated computer system, including its streams, roads, topography, and geology.

The soil digitization in Westmoreland and Fayette counties was completed in 1994, and, thanks to a grant from the state, we plan to continue to expand the system to include such additional information as coal-seam data and property boundaries.

The computerized Laurel Ridge Geographic Information System illustrating stream and well locations



## CONTROLLING STORMWATER RUNOFF

When the sky unleashes more water than the ground can absorb, the excess will run off. Some of it finds its way destructively into the basements of our homes. Some of it damages our community wealth by eroding roadsides, carrying pollutants into our water supply, undermining bridge foundations and filling streams with sediment.

Stormwater management continued to be a key emphasis of District activities in 1994. We reviewed a total of 88 stormwater management plans for development projects that ranged from a small ice cream stand to a sizable strip mall anchored by a national discount store.

We visited more than 120 locations and provided technical assistance to requests concerning individual flooding problems, wetland identification, and erosion control. Because of the interrelated nature of

stormwater management and erosion control, our staff in these areas worked closely together.

In the area of planning, our hydraulic engineer continued to serve as a member of the City of Greensburg's ordinance development committee.

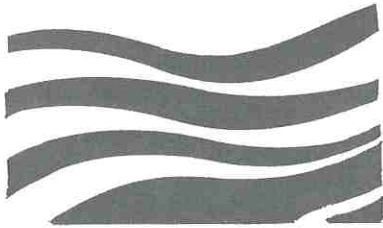
The last major step in a flood-control project in the Jacobs Creek watershed was completed in 1994. An estimated \$4 million worth of improvements -- including construction of two bypass channels to convey floodwater around the existing stream -- were made along the channels of Jacobs Creek and Stouffer Run near Scottdale.

# EDUCATION

**W**estmoreland County's environmental future depends not just on the efforts of the District and others like it, but on the way each person who lives here interacts with his or her environment every day. Residents must have the information they need to make environmentally responsible choices.

The District reached out to thousands of county residents, regional decision makers, and conservation associations from across the country during the year.

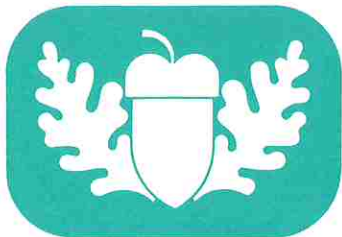
Through formal programs and informal person-to-person discussions, we focused attention on specific land, water, and related resource problems and worked to build coalitions to help solve them.



## SOIL CONSERVATION/STORMWATER MANAGEMENT

In April, we held a workshop for all county municipal officials on erosion control and stormwater management.

Contractors joined us for a workshop in October to discuss a number of important erosion-control items, including permitting, planning, new plans for handling construction site contaminants, and identifying wetland indicators.

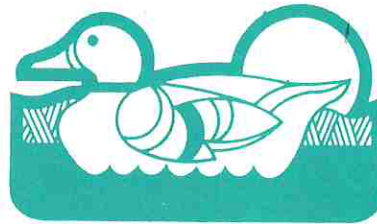


## WOODLAND MANAGEMENT

We planted the first trees last fall in what will be a 100-tree living classroom on the grounds of our new Donohoe Center. Homeowners, nursery workers, and others can come to the arboretum to see and learn about urban forest cultivars.

In the spring of 1995, we will plant the remainder of the trees and explore ways to link the new arboretum with nearby County Nature Park. Penn's Corner assisted with the planning, funding, and implementation of the Landscape Master Plan for Donohoe Center.

A Timber Sale Workshop drew more than 55 people interested in forest planning, stewardship, and harvesting. The District sponsored the workshop in cooperation with Penn State Extension and the PA Bureau of Forestry.



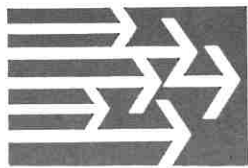
## WETLANDS

The District played an important role in the public education effort for the new Sewickley Creek Wetlands Interpretive Area, located near the southern end of the Amos K. Hutchinson Bypass (Toll Route 66).

We encouraged the Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission to design this 6.5-acre replacement wetland with paved trails, accessible parking, and an observation area so that it encourages public use. And we were instrumental in having the wetland incorporated into the county park system in 1994.

With a coalition led by the Sewickley Creek Watershed Association, we began to develop a series of brochures that will encourage self-guided exploration of this unique ecosystem.

Our hydraulic engineer gave two special seminars on wetlands during the year, one to gifted students at Hempfield Township's Stanwood Elementary School and one to the Greensburg-Salem Middle School Camp Soles program.



### DECISION MAKERS

Our education efforts included communicating the overall vision and purpose of the District with key public officials.

State senators and legislators joined us twice during 1994 for our first Legislative Breakfasts. Formal presentations by District staff, directors, and associate directors at the meeting in March were complemented by the November opportunity to tour our new facilities and talk one-on-one about specific issues. Both events were well-received and helped each of us develop a better understanding of how we can work together.

Thanks to a grant from Agway, we developed a new brochure, "Be a Team Player!"

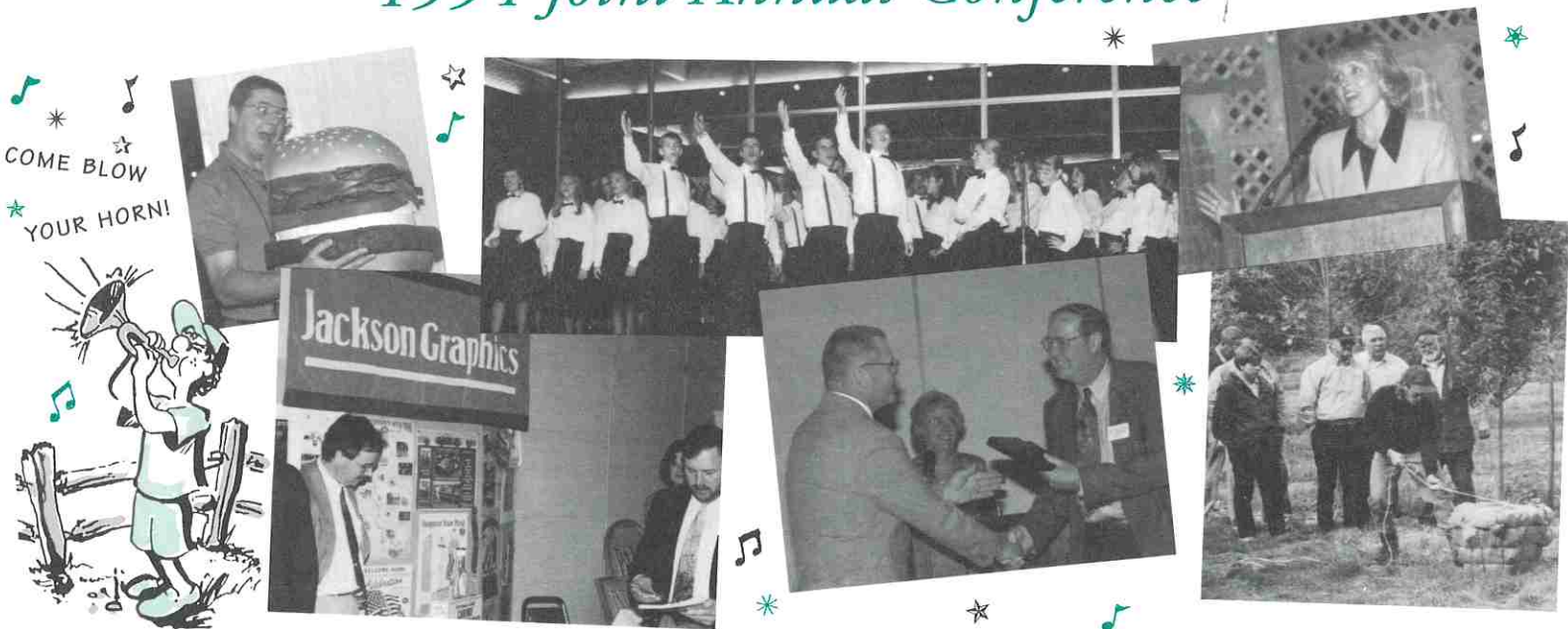
which we used throughout the year to encourage others to join with us and support conservation initiatives.

### SCHOOL STUDENTS

High school students from eight county school districts took part in the annual Envirothon competition to test their knowledge about Pennsylvania's natural resources. The team from Franklin Regional School District bested the field, followed by teams from Derry Area and Hempfield Area, which placed second and third respectively. Envirothon activities test students' knowledge of soils, wildlife, aquatics, forestry, and a current issue which in 1994 was acid rain.

Our hydraulic engineer is helping to prepare the conservationists of tomorrow through his contributions to curriculum development for Westmoreland County Community College's Environmental Technician program.

## 1994 Joint Annual Conference



Our District seized the opportunity as hosts of conservation's largest annual education event last year — the Joint Conference of the Pa. State Conservation Commission and the Pennsylvania Association of Conservation Districts — to emphasize with our peers the need for communication.

Nearly 300 people attended the four-day October conference at the Greensburg Sheraton. A conference highlight was the Communications Expo — demonstrations and displays staffed by experts on computers, cameras, printing, silkscreening, education, and public relations — to show districts creative ways to use communication to publicize their activities and build support.

As a direct result of the information from this conference, two state conservation districts have improved their computer systems.

Technical issues were addressed at the conference as well. An airplane tour showed participants key conservation sites, including reclaimed abandoned mine areas and some of the most productive farmland in the county. A tour of the Loyahanna Watershed spotlighted this trout haven and the work of one of the state's most successful watershed associations.

Susan Davies, WTAE-TV weather anchor and news reporter, served as master of ceremonies for the awards banquet and presented the Ann Rudd Saxman Conservation Volunteer Award to 25-year Westmoreland Conservation District volunteer Paul Heyworth.

# PERSONNEL NEWS

## STAFF DEVELOPMENT



A three day Total Quality Management seminar in November reaffirmed for District technical and clerical staff the importance of communication both internally and with our many clients. Sessions helped us identify the many different customers we serve-- some of which we already knew and others, such as co-workers, that we may never have thought of in just that way. We learned how to determine each customer's expectation of service, how to respond in a way that meets those expectations, and the importance of communicating continually.

Individual District staff members also attended a number of specialized seminars in their respective areas of expertise.

## APPOINTMENTS

Blaine Hutter, co-owner of the Hutter Family Dairy in Mt. Pleasant Township, was appointed to serve on the Westmoreland County Agricultural Land Preservation Board by the County Commissioners. His experience and knowledge of good farming practices will be a valuable asset to our program.



Kathleen Fritz became the full-time Erosion Control Program Administrator. She accepts permit applications, tracks permit progress, and performs the clerical duties for the program.

Michael Jennewine joined the Donohoe Center team last year as Environmental Technician to do water quality work on abandoned mine site discharges. He graduated from California University of Pennsylvania last May with a B.S. in secondary biology education, and has expertise working as a lab technician and assistant in that school's Micro Biology Laboratory.



Lori Whalen became our permanent part-time Secretary/Receptionist in January 1994. Lori, a secretarial science graduate of Bradford School, brings 17 years experience to our office.



Mark Killar was named Regional Coordinator for the reclamation of Abandoned Mine Lands and treatment of Acid Mine Drainage, and Executive Director for the Western Pennsylvania Coalition for Abandoned Mine Reclamation. Mark is a summa cum laude graduate of California University of Pennsylvania, where he earned a masters in geography and regional planning. He will be coordinating a 21-county effort to reclaim land and water affected by abandoned deep coal mines.

## RETIREMENTS



William Buttermore retired in 1994, after serving as a District director for 20 years. Bill is the owner and operator of Fern Springs, a 206-acre dairy farm in East Huntingdon Township. He also owns a grain, lime, fertilizer, and chemical distributorship.

Joseph Obenski, conservation technician with the U.S. Department of Agriculture Greensburg Field Office, retired on January 6, 1995. Joe had more than 40 years in government service, with the last 35 of those spent as a conservation technician in Westmoreland County.

One of his first tasks in the county was survey chief for the topographical survey of the Bridgeport Dam in Jacobs Creek watershed near Scottsdale. He also surveyed, designed, and laid out many farm ponds, diversions, waterways, spring developments, and thousands of acres of contour strips.

Joe and his wife, Dorothy, reside at RD #3, Box 399R, Greensburg. (See the enclosed issue of *Landmarks* for a special feature on Joe, written by co-worker, Betty Reefser.)





## ON THE HORIZON

*O*ur goal for 1995 and beyond is to enhance the District's existing programs and implement new ones. We are excited by the prospects of what can be accomplished, particularly with the new Donohoe Center resource and with pending new additions to our staff.

Increased efficiencies also should result from the reorganization of the Department of Agriculture, which reshaped some of our closest cooperating agencies -- the Natural Resources Conservation Service (formerly Soil Conservation Service), Consolidated Farm Service Agency (formerly Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service), Rural Economic and Community Development Service (formerly Farmers Home Administration).

As we look to the remainder of 1995 and beyond, some of the major projects the District plans to especially emphasize include: analyzing our progress and focusing our direction by updating our long-range plan; incorporating environmental education increasingly in everything we do; and updating a valuable but dated resource, the county-wide soil inventory.

Western Pennsylvania Conservancy Photo

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### WESTMORELAND CONSERVATION DISTRICT

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