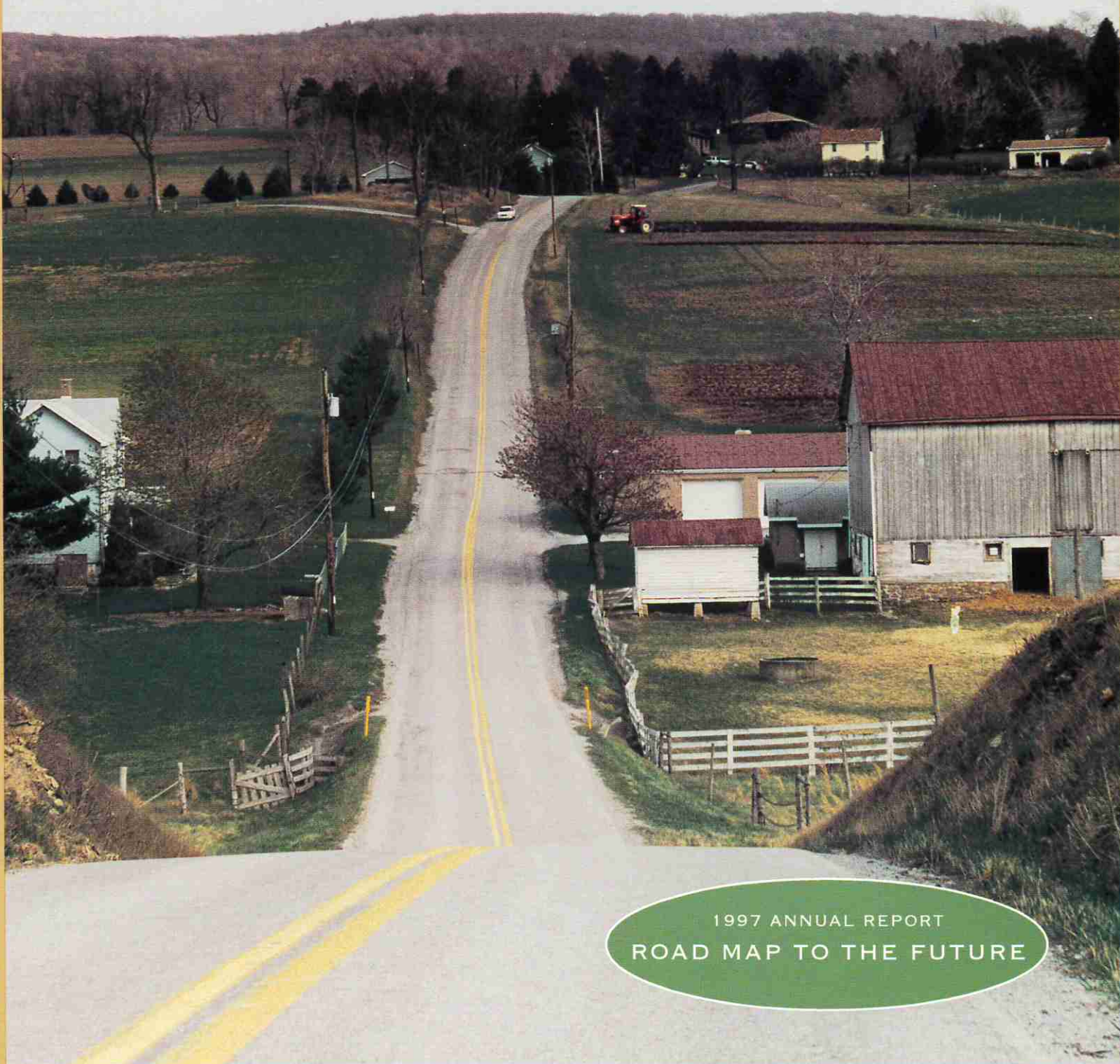


Westmoreland Conservation District



1997 ANNUAL REPORT
ROAD MAP TO THE FUTURE

Dear Friend of Conservation –

Perhaps the most significant thing we did in 1997 was to set our course for the future. Within the 40 pages of the new Westmoreland Conservation District Long-range Plan that rolled off the press in November, we mapped out our plan for caring for Westmoreland County's natural resources – its soils, forests, streams, productive farms, and sustainable communities – over the next three to five years.

Eighteen months of evaluation and analysis went into producing what is now our guidebook into the 21st century. Program by program, we took a hard look at what we do, why, and whether or not our efforts were right for both the continuing and the changing conservation needs of the people in Westmoreland County.

We asked others for direction. The Westmoreland County Commissioners, area grassroots conservation organizations such as PA CleanWays, members of the State Conservation Commission, and representatives from the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture and the US Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service and Farm Service Agency all contributed their insight and experience to what has become our road map for the future.

One of the primary directions we identified from this process is the need to serve you with fuller-faceted conservation programs, including watershed-based stormwater management plans, sustainable forestry initiatives, and formal agreements with more communities to control erosion.

Another is to undertake some new courses in conservation, such as beautifying our major highway corridors, promoting the passive treatment of mine drainage, and enhancing recreation opportunities.

But above all, the clearest message we heard was the need to offer more information to the public about conservation. This was the number one recurring theme in every area we examined, since informed individuals are more likely to assume personal responsibility for conservation, better manage the growing number of complex community issues, and design better, more resource-sensitive ways of doing things. For this reason, we set education as our primary objective.

We're already moving ahead on many of these initiatives. In fact, as you'll see in this annual report, much of our time in 1997 was spent on efforts that will help us achieve the ambitious goals of the Long-range Plan. All of the progress we have been able to achieve is directly attributable to the consistent and generous support of the county government and Commissioners Vidmer, Marolt, and Balya. We remain very mindful of this fact, and are grateful for their long-standing commitment to the quality of life in Westmoreland County.

Last year, our annual report featured Conservation Through the Four Seasons. This year, we take an even longer-range view of the future – across the threshold of the next century. As we make that journey, we hope that you will continue to stand with us as good stewards of our natural resources and promoters of the conservation ethic.

Sincerely,



J. Roy Houston
Chairman

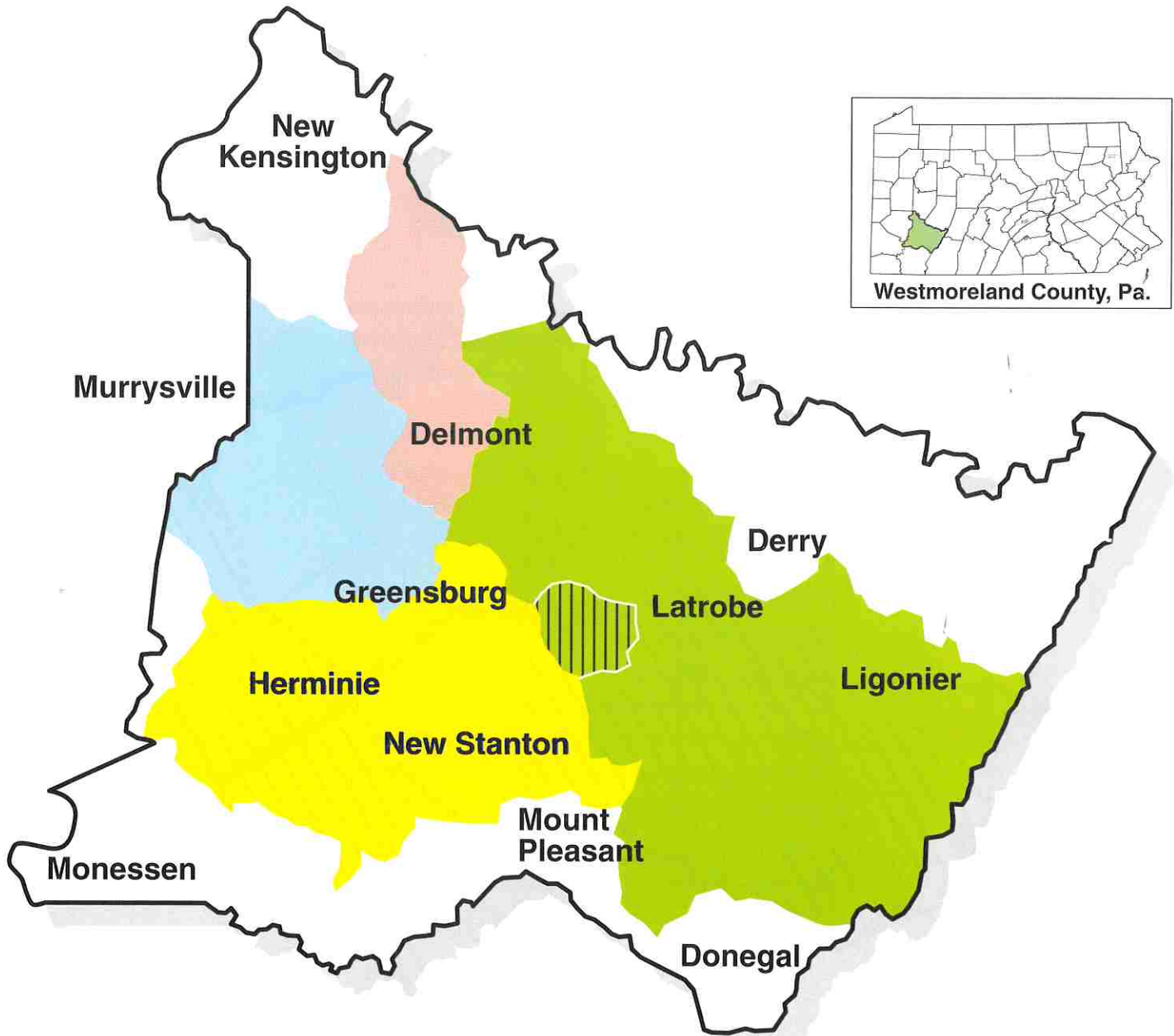
Some Facts About the new Long-range Plan


- It was issued in November 1997 after an unveiling at the District's annual awards banquet.
- It is only the third Long-range Plan that the Westmoreland Conservation District has produced since its founding in 1949.
- 7,000 copies were printed and an initial distribution was made to more than 100 key opinion leaders in the county, region, and state. This first mailing generated many positive responses and a good deal of interest in the District and its programs. The US Department of Agriculture, for instance, requested copies for each of its state partnerships in the East Region and its national headquarters, and local organizations such as the Overly Foundation are using it as a model to develop their own strategic plans.
- In addition to District funds, production of this plan was made possible through the generous support of Adam Eidemiller, Inc.; Esther E. and Stuart A. Glasser, M.D.; Mellon Bank, NA; Modal, Inc.; National City Bank of Pennsylvania; Peoples Natural Gas Company; Sony Technology Center, Mt. Pleasant; K & B Associates; National Bank of the Commonwealth; Rohadd, Inc.; Southwest National Bank of Pennsylvania; and Tri-County Engineering.
- Beyond providing our strategic direction, the Long-range Plan will help us creatively link our efforts with individuals, organizations, industries, and agencies equally committed to the wise use of our natural resources.

The plan will help us to build community support in a two-fold approach: with foundations, corporations, and businesses for financial support to supplement our primary funding from the county. . . and with grassroots organizations, other government agencies, and concerned individuals for volunteer, in-kind, and supplemental financial support. From this combination, we hope to create a broad-based synergy that will lead to a culture of responsible stewardship.

- The three maps which follow were designed for the new Long-range Plan by Randy Bish, graphic artist for the Tribune-Review. Since they were developed early in the year, additional 1997 developments are noted for each.

WESTMORELAND COUNTY Special Watersheds



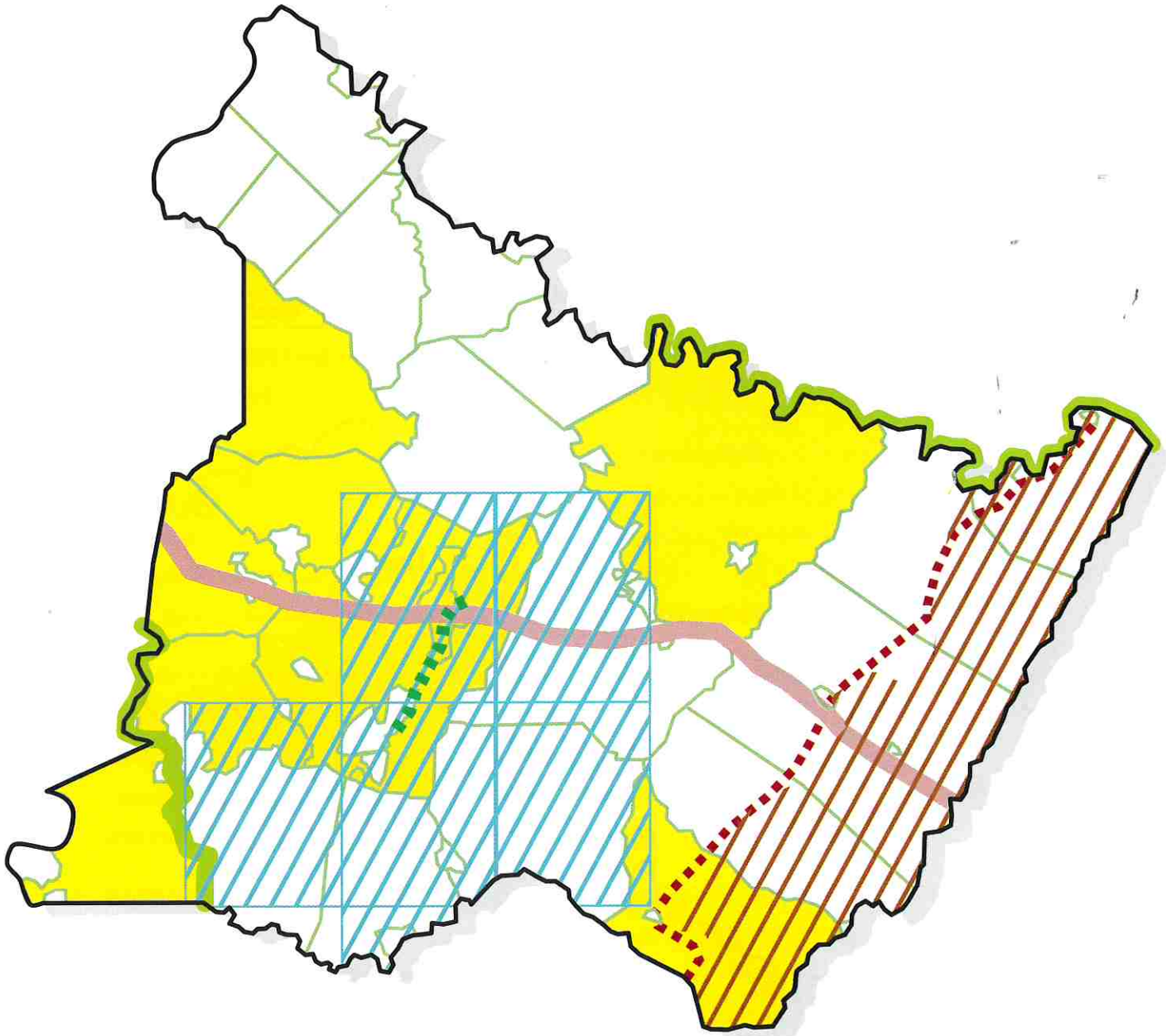
- 
Beaver Run Watershed
 This water-supply watershed is a high priority for erosion and sediment pollution control.
- 
Turtle Creek Watershed
 This model area has a comprehensive stormwater management plan for the entire watershed.
- 
Loyalhanna Watershed
 Proposed comprehensive plan for non-point source pollution control.
- 
Sewickley Creek Watershed
 Mine water remediation and other non-point source pollution control projects in conjunction with Sewickley Creek Watershed Association.
- 
Monastery Run / 4-Mile Run Watershed
 Work is underway to use wetlands as natural treatment ponds to remediate mine water discharge, eliminating 95% of the polluting iron oxide.

ADDITIONAL 1997 DEVELOPMENTS

Jacobs Creek Watershed
 The District is advising area residents on how to form a watershed association for Jacobs Creek.

WESTMORELAND COUNTY

Select Areas



Municipalities having Conservation Partnership Agreements with WCD

(Penn Twp., North Huntingdon, Murrysville, Greensburg, Hempfield, Sewickley, Rostraver, Derry Twp., Donegal Twp.)

Laurel Ridge GIS Survey
We are developing an in-depth inventory of the quantity of this area's ground and surface water resources.

Soil Survey Update
Areas where field work and digital mapping are completed.

River Conservation Projects

These projects help conserve, enhance, and restore the environmental, recreational, economic, cultural and aesthetic resources and values of a river.
(Conemaugh River Project, Yough River Trail)

Five Star Trail

A rail-with-trail project connecting Lynch Field in Greensburg with the Railroad Museum in Youngwood, in conjunction with Westmoreland County Parks Department.

Urban Corridor Planning

Enhancing the environmental and aesthetic values of selected transportation routes.
(US Route 30)

Scenic Highways

(PA Routes 711 and 381)

ADDITIONAL 1997 DEVELOPMENTS

Municipalities having Conservation Partnership Agreements

Mt. Pleasant Township, Ligonier Township

Soil Survey Update

Field work and digital mapping were also completed in a sixth area, the Slickville Quadrangle, which is directly north of the Greensburg Quadrangle.

River Conservation Projects

Through a grant from the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, a study was undertaken of the 46 miles of the Youghiogheny River from Connellsville to McKeesport in an effort to preserve the river's natural beauty while enhancing the economies of the 27 municipalities through which it flows.

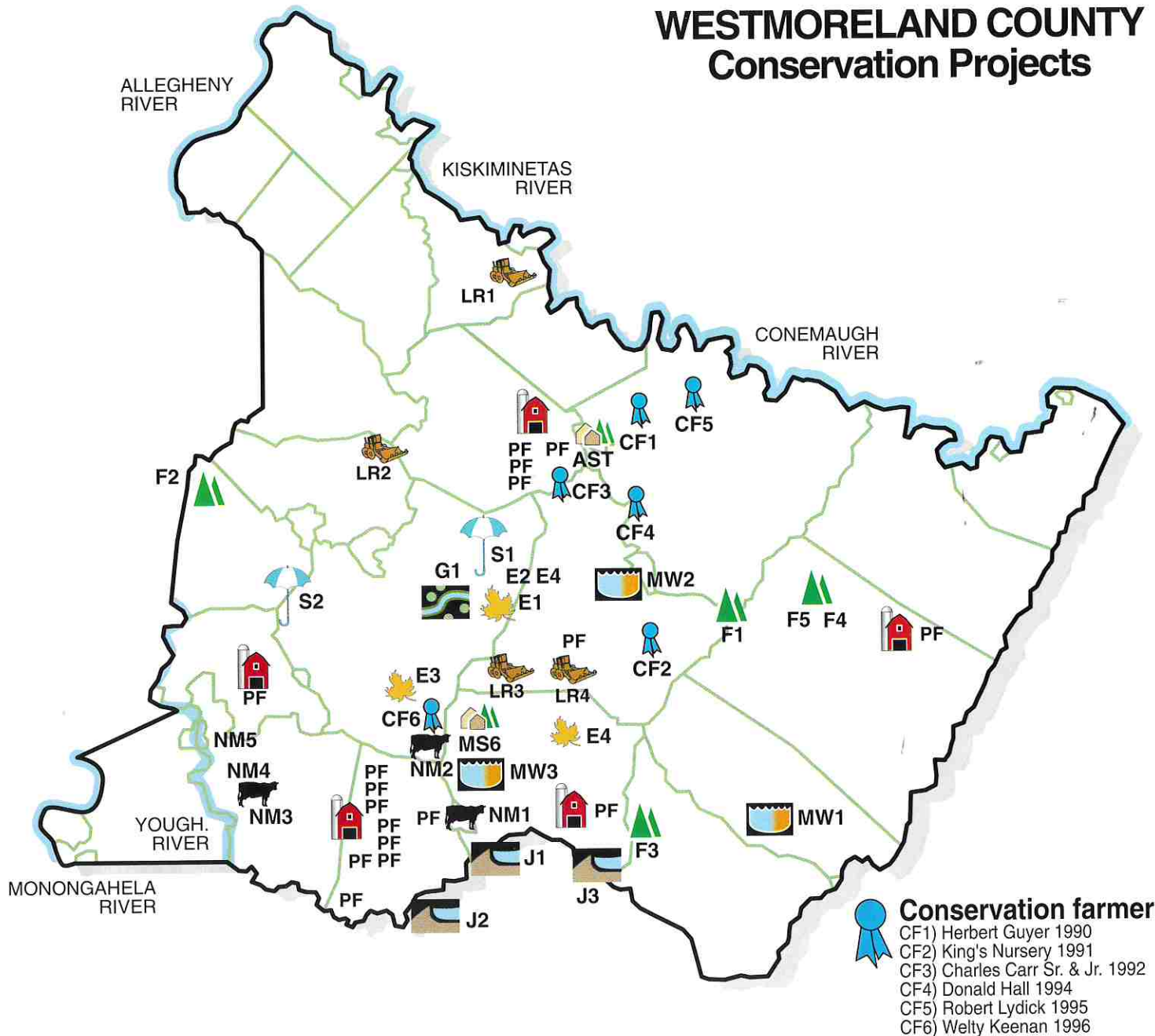
Nearly 2-1/2 miles of land along the Allegheny River in Allegheny Township were secured for what will become the Wynn and Clara Treadway Riverpark Trail.

Urban Corridor Planning

Five sites were identified in 1997 for beautification projects:

- the intersection of Rtes. 982 and 30
- the intersection of Rtes. 119 and 30
- the corridor of Rte. 22 between Rtes. 66 and 119
- Rte. 119 south of I-70, and
- I-70 at either the Monesson or Belle Vernon exit.

WESTMORELAND COUNTY Conservation Projects



Conservation farmer
 CF1) Herbert Guyer 1990
 CF2) King's Nursery 1991
 CF3) Charles Carr Sr. & Jr. 1992
 CF4) Donald Hall 1994
 CF5) Robert Lydick 1995
 CF6) Welty Keenan 1996



Stormwater Demonstration Projects

S1) Donohoe Center projects- detention pond; drainage way; infiltration swale; semi-permeable parking area
 S2) "The Legends" residential development stormwater management project, North Huntingdon



Lynch Field Streambank Demonstration

G1) Work is underway on Jack's Run in the area of Lynch Field in Greensburg to bring this section of stream back to life



Jacobs Creek Dam & Channel

This is one of the only completed flood control projects in the state. It involves one channel improvement project (Scottdale-J2) and two county dams (Acme-J3 and Bridgeport-J1).



Minewater Remediation Projects

MW1) Friedline Mine
 MW2) Monastery Run
 MW3) Wilson Run



Interpretive/Education Areas

(all except arboretum, in conjunction with Westmoreland County Parks Dept.)
 E1) Ann Rudd Saxman Nature Park; Donohoe Center Arboretum
 E2) Backyard Composting Demonstration Area
 E3) Sewickley Creek Wetlands
 E4) Twin Lakes/Mammoth parks (Envirothon)



Nutrient Management Projects

NM1) Barnyard stabilization
 NM2) Barnyard stabilization
 NM3) Stream crossing/rotational grazing
 NM4) Heavy-use protection/rotational grazing
 NM5) Roof run-off management



Preserved Farmland (PF)



Forest Stewardship

F1) Loyalhanna Gorge Forestry Demo Area
 F2-F5) Landowners with Forest Stewardship Plans: Beck, Stairs, Glasstetter, Bowman



Strip-mined Land Reclamation

LR1-LR4) Landowner reclamation projects: Stover, Gramlich, Greensburg Sportsmen, Harr



Alternative Sewage Treatment Demonstration

AST(Ackerman subdivision)

ADDITIONAL 1997 DEVELOPMENTS

Minewater Remediation Projects

Studies, which ultimately should lead to water cleanup projects, began on the following sites.

Turtle Creek Watershed: Brush Creek in the Penn Township/North Huntingdon area, Turtle Creek in the Murrysville/Delmont area, and Lyons Run in the Murrysville area.

Sewickley Creek Watershed – Brinkerton discharge in Mt. Pleasant Township

Interpretive/Education Areas

To augment the existing "education campus" of Ann Rudd Saxman Nature Park and the Donohoe Center demonstration areas, the concept of a resource center for conservation education began to be explored.

Conservation Farmer

Rick and Tim Pounds, Pounds' Turkey Farm, Allegheny Township, 1997

Nutrient Management Projects

Rotational Grazing Systems — Hempfield Township (2), Salem Township, Derry Township, South Huntingdon Township

Preserved Farmland

Unity Township – 103-acres just three miles from the Westmoreland County Airport

DESTINATION

Stable Soils

When the people of Westmoreland County disturb the earth to plant crops or build new homes, erosion can become a major problem.

Erosion on farms means the loss of valuable, food-producing ground. Erosion on unprotected construction sites and logging operations can wash as much as 200 tons of soil per acre into nearby streams. What was once beneficial soil then becomes our county's greatest water-pollutant by volume, smothering aquatic life, promoting flooding, and reducing recreational opportunities on the water.

The challenge is to develop partnerships with farmers, earth-moving contractors, developers, engineers, loggers, and homebuilders in the county, so that they have the information and technical assistance they need to incorporate good erosion-control practices.

DIRECTIONS FROM THE LONG-RANGE PLAN

- Encourage more municipalities – especially those with the greatest development pressures – to enter into signed agreements to cooperate with the District in controlling erosion from earth-moving activities.
- Develop close working relationships with cooperating municipalities.

- Sponsor erosion-education programs for developers, contractors, homebuilders, farmers, and the general public.

DISTANCE COVERED IN 1997

WE REVISED AND UPDATED our long-standing Memorandum of Understanding document into a new Conservation Partnership Agreement that ensures that the signing municipality works in conjunction with the District on natural resource related issues.

Some of the new conditions in the agreement include: required submissions of erosion and sediment pollution control plans to the municipality and the District, and suspension of building and grading permits by the municipality for sites that are in repeated violation of the Clean Streams Law.

IN ADDITION TO ONE-ON-ONE meetings with municipal officials throughout the county, our program specialist/forester discussed the new Conservation Partnership Agreement with a group of 35 members of the Westmoreland County Association of Township Supervisors in mid-March.

As a result of these efforts, we secured signed agreements with two new municipalities in 1997 — Mt. Pleasant and Ligonier townships — and renewed agreements under the new conditions with North Huntingdon, Murrysville, and Penn townships.

Our goal is to continue to encourage all municipalities, but especially those areas in the county facing the greatest development pressures — such as Unity and Salem townships — to enter into Conservation Partnership Agreements with us.

FOR THE FIRST TIME IN FIVE YEARS, the District, in mid-July, increased the fees it charges for reviewing erosion and sediment pollution control

plans. Our board made this decision because of increasing operating costs and the growing demand for District services.

Fees for reviews of plans involving disturbance of two or more acres increased 20%. This monetary increase, coupled with an increase in the number of earth-moving activities in the county, brought nearly \$10,000 of increased revenue to the District in 1997.

This increase is important because it directly helps to support the District's technical staff who work on our erosion-control program, and adds diversity to our overall funding sources.

Almost without exception, our clients have been very understanding and accepting of this necessary increase in fees, which brought our rates more in line with those charged by other Conservation Districts.

Our board did not increase the fee for reviewing smaller earth-moving plans or logging plans, and retained the many non-fee services the District provides, including: consultations on erosion and sediment pollution control, and stormwater management plans; advice to municipalities on stormwater management plans; pre-construction meetings; consultations on woodlot management and forest road plans; and site visits.

EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

DISTRICT PERSONNEL LOGGED more hours in the field than ever this year, increasing the number of meetings with developers, engineers, loggers, and earth-moving contractors on their project sites before the work begins to discuss the specific erosion controls and stormwater management needed. . . and then following up with more inspections of the site once the projects got underway. This stepped up effort is already paying results, with better erosion controls on sites where we've had pre-development meetings.

WE INCREASED INTEREST in our erosion-control education program by tailoring workshops to specific groups involved in earth-moving activities in the county, and by bringing in experts such as Larry Larese, director of the Westmoreland County

Planning Department, and contractors John and Ron Brentzel to help us plan these events and to be the featured speakers.

Our February workshop for earth-moving contractors brought 50 attendees, and 30 developers came to an all-day District-sponsored workshop on site planning in November. (See Healthy Forests, page 11, for information on loggers workshops held in 1997.)

THE DISTRICT JOINED the Sewickley Creek Watershed Association and others to launch a community volunteer effort to stabilize the badly eroded banks of Jack's Run as it flows through Lynch Field, Greensburg's primary recreation center. Area residents make some 400,000 visits to Lynch Field's facilities each year.

With rocks, an innovative coconut fiber log, and hundreds of small plants, the volunteers stabilized about 200 feet of the streambank in their first work session in April. In October, they stabilized an additional 250-foot section with rocks, log deflectors, seeding, and matting.

This project, funded by the Heinz Foundation and others, holds the streambank in place while providing shelter for wildlife, improving fish habitat, and enhancing the aesthetic appeal of this portion of the Sewickley Creek Watershed. The Lynch Field Partnership volunteers will continue to work on sections of the streambank for the next several years.

In the meanwhile, this project also is serving as an outdoor classroom for Greensburg Salem Middle School and area college students.



Conservation measures like this rock channel and basin help control the loss of soil on construction sites such as this one in North Huntingdon Township.

TECHNICAL STAFF ACTIVITY

• Erosion & Sedimentation Plan Reviews	258	• Engineers Assisted	216
• Stormwater Management Plan Reviews	115	• Dam Safety & Encroachment Activities	152
• Erosion & Sedimentation Site Inspections	594		
• Other Visits	320		
• Technical Activities	506		

DESTINATION

Healthy Forests

After years of moderate activity, logging is on the increase in forests and woodlots throughout the county. One of the greatest dangers of improper logging is erosion. Heavy logs dragged across the ground remove its protective vegetative cover and loosen the soil, allowing rain to then easily transport it into our waterways.

Improper logging can also upset the forest's delicate balance in other ways, such as creating future stands of poor-quality timber, destroying habitat, and spoiling recreation areas and natural beauty.

The challenge is to help the individual woodlot owners – who own about 86% of the county's 331,700 wooded acres – responsibly manage their valuable timber resources, and to insure that municipal officials and the logging industry support good sustainable forestry practices.

DIRECTIONS FROM THE LONG-RANGE PLAN

- Encourage municipalities to enter into signed agreements to share information about timber-harvesting and to require work sites to have a plan for controlling erosion before the logging begins.
- Continue to develop and promote good forestry demonstration areas, including the 148-acre Loyalhanna Gorge Forestry Demonstration Area

in Derry and Ligonier townships and the free public arboretum on the grounds of our headquarters, Donohoe Center.

- Expand outreach and education for loggers. Place special emphasis on the Sustainable Forestry Initiative's training programs.

DISTANCE COVERED IN 1997

IN 1997, WE FORMED our first-ever Forestry Advisory Committee. Members included Dave Williams, district forester, PA Bureau of Forestry; Tom Fitzgerald, service forester, PA Bureau of Forestry; Paul Haddock, forester, Brown Timber and Land Company; Rich Naugle, owner, Champion Lumber Company; and Ron Rohall, consulting forester and District board member.

This group has been valuable in helping us refine the focus of our forestry efforts, and was particularly instrumental in our ability to undertake a series of Sustainable Forestry Initiative workshops. (See Education and Outreach below.)

EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

WE RECEIVED A \$3,000 GRANT from the U.S. Forest Service for the Loyalhanna Gorge Forest Demonstration project near Kingston Dam. The money, which was administered through Penn's Corner RC & D Charitable Trust, will be used to add an entrance sign and to make improvements to the parking area in this outdoor classroom where loggers, woodlot owners, and others can come to see the effects of various techniques for harvesting and regenerating standing timber.

THE LOGGING COMMUNITY was the focus of our newest and most comprehensive outreach effort in 1997, when we introduced a series of training workshops in conjunction with the Sustainable Forestry Initiative of Pennsylvania.

From June through November, three of the five courses in the Sustainable Forestry Core Curriculum were offered – “Environmental Logging,” “Logging Safety,” and “Certified First-aid and CPR Training” – and drew nearly 100 timber harvesters, forest practitioners, and foresters. Participants at the Environmental Logging workshop learned how to develop a timber-harvest plan, discussed considerations during and after the harvest (such as how to control erosion), and reviewed regulatory requirements. The remaining two courses in the series will be offered in 1998.

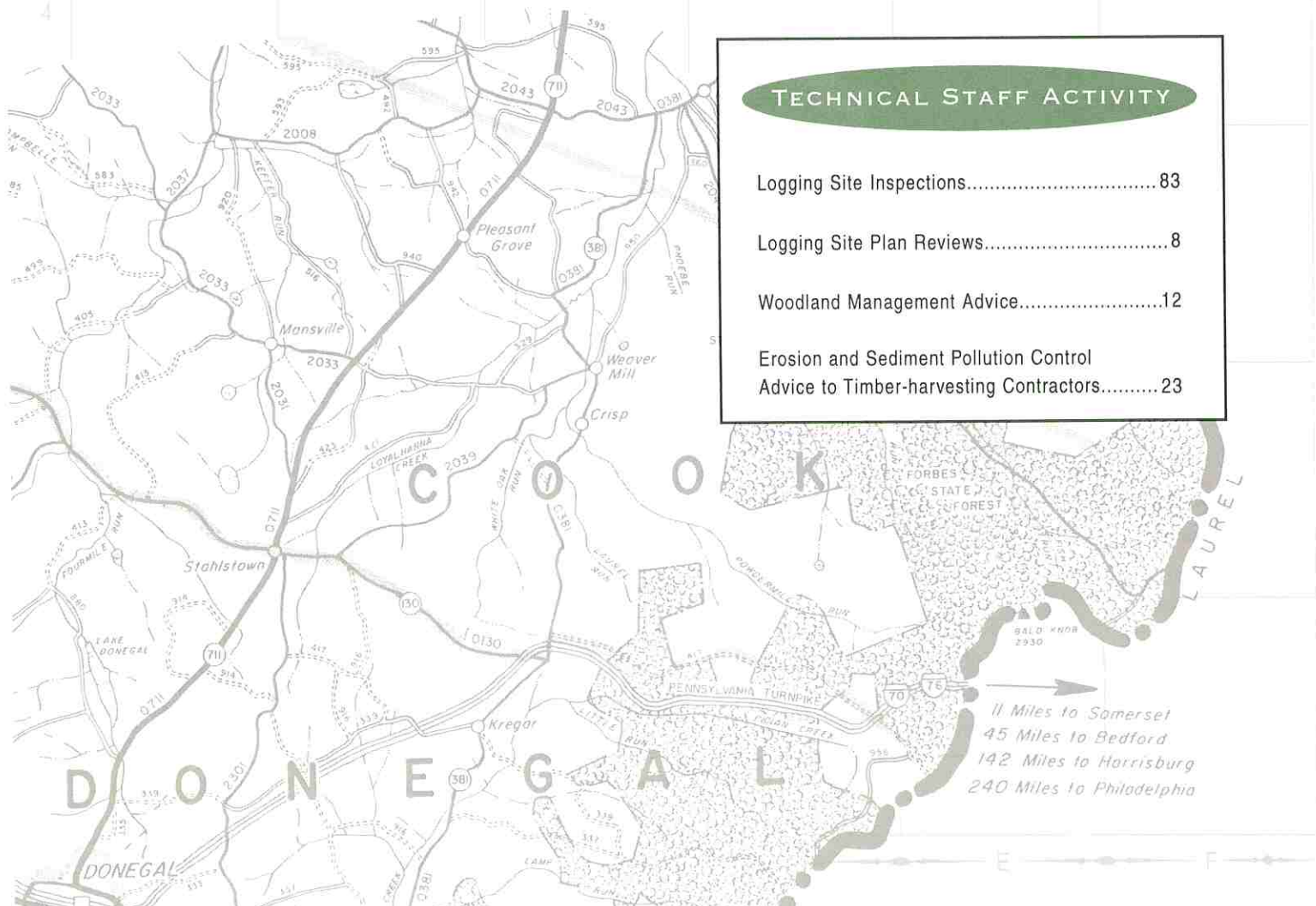
When they complete their required workshops, participants will receive a Pennsylvania Sustainable Forestry Trained Professional certificate. To maintain this status, they must then attend one additional course each year.

WE ENCOURAGED THE GENERAL PUBLIC to take a closer look at trees and appreciate their value last fall by publicizing our Trees of Distinction pro-

gram. The campaign resulted in a great deal of media attention – including a lead article and color photograph on the front page of the Tribune-Review’s Local section, and a spot on the KDKA evening news. It also generated a high volume of calls from people all over the county who told us about trees they felt were noteworthy because of their age, size, growth characteristics, or connection to history.

Of the newly nominated trees we had assessed by the end of 1997, 10 met the criteria to be added to the county’s official Trees of Distinction list, which now stands at 56 trees.

SEVERAL TREES WERE ADDED to our free public arboretum at Donohoe Center during 1997, and we received a commitment from Allegheny Power to annually provide several trees and wood chips for landscaping.



TECHNICAL STAFF ACTIVITY	
Logging Site Inspections.....	83
Logging Site Plan Reviews.....	8
Woodland Management Advice.....	12
Erosion and Sediment Pollution Control Advice to Timber-harvesting Contractors.....	23

through a grant coordinated by Project Grass, a group that promotes the economic and environmental benefits of grazing.

The program, administered through the Westmoreland Conservation District, provided a total of \$8,551 to these landowners.

THE DISTRICT HOSTED A MEETING to discuss local non-point source pollution problems last January. Representatives from the public and private sector attended the working session and identified the Loyalhanna Watershed as the focus of its first clean-up effort.

Non-point sources – residential lawns, parking lots, bare streambanks, construction and logging sites, abandoned coal mines, and farm fields – are a significant cause of water pollution. Some studies say they may be responsible for as much as 65% of all water pollution (as opposed to industrial sources, which account for 9%).

IN MAY, A GROUP OF conservation-minded citizens proved that a stormwater detention pond doesn't have to be just a tall chain link fence around a square hole in the ground.

At the new Legends housing development in North Huntingdon Township, they created a demonstration project that blends naturally with the environment and uses no fencing. Some 35 teenagers from Adelphoi Village group homes in Latrobe and Saltsburg helped District staff and Joe Stefko of the Pennsylvania Game Commission plant seedlings of streamcoke-willow, mugo-pine, and white spruce in and around the development's stormwater pond. They also installed a wood duck box in the pond to further enhance the habitat for wildlife.

This model project was approved and promoted by North Huntingdon Township, and has been talked about in many other municipalities in the county as being a mandatory portion of subdivision planning ordinances.

TWO MAJOR STEPS IN CLEANING UP the Loyalhanna Creek occurred last year – the first of three wetland systems was constructed, and the

"Bubbler," a 600-gallon-per minute artesian flow carrying pollution from underground coal mines, was rerouted into this unique passive treatment area.

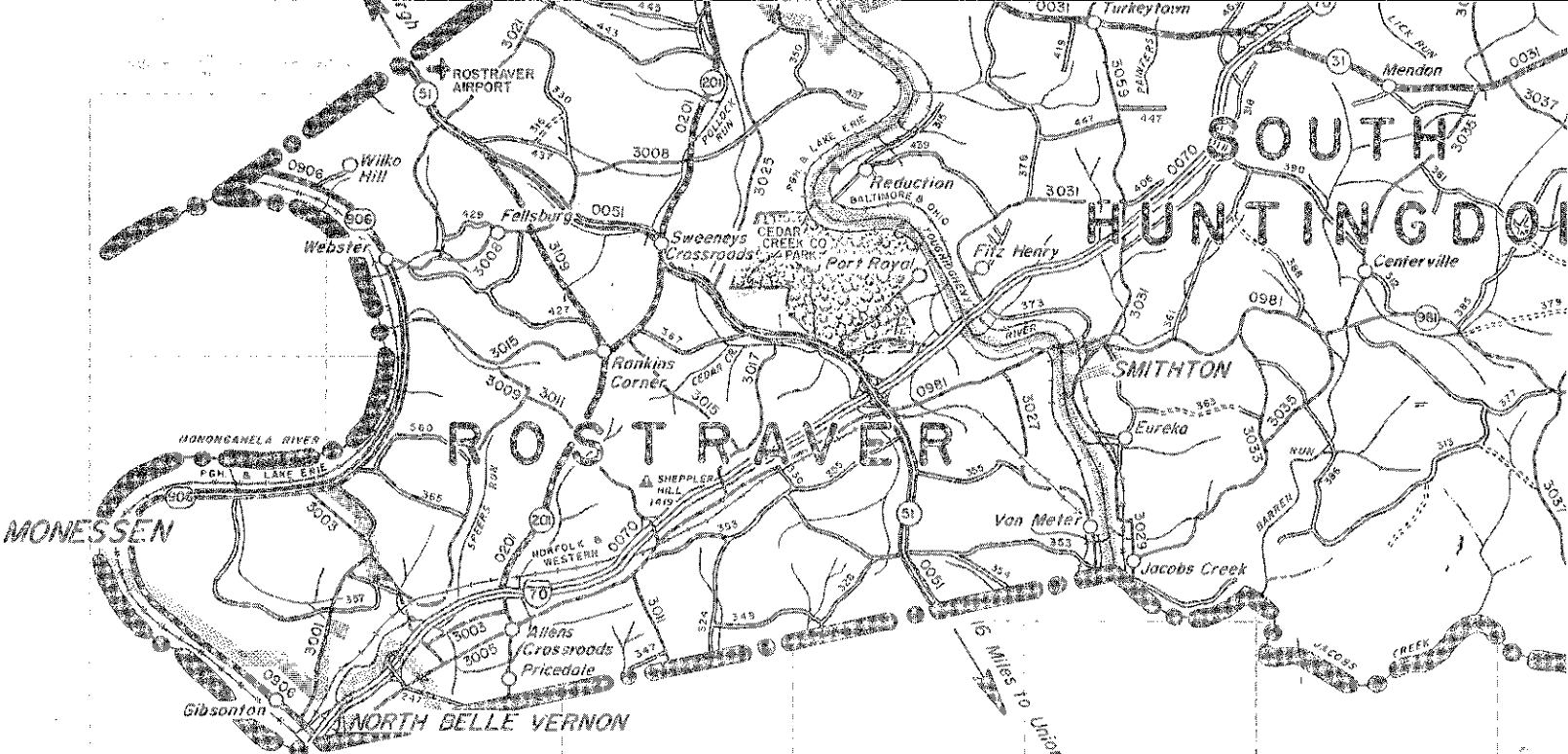
As the water slowly moves through the cells of the treatment area, its pollution drops dramatically – from a high of 90.3 parts per million in the first cell . . . to less than .3 parts per million when it empties from cell five into nearby Four Mile Run. This dramatic improvement in water quality is visually striking, because the color of the water changes from brilliant orange to pale orange to clear as it travels through the cells.

Scientists estimate that, depending on the water's flow, between 260 and 520 pounds of iron oxide is contained every day by this natural treatment facility, which also removes manganese.

The District is part of the Loyalhanna Creek Mine Drainage Coalition, which consists of some 50 public and private organizations, and is leading this clean-up effort.

FARTHER UP THE LOYALHANNA CREEK in Cook Township, another biologically dead stream is being brought back to life. For decades, water has been seeping into Laurel Run from the old Friedline coal mine, making the stream highly acidic and adding high concentrations of acids and dissolved metals, including dissolved aluminum at levels 80 times greater than the lethal threshold for fish.

In October 1997, a coalition that includes the Westmoreland Conservation District, the Western Pennsylvania Coalition for Abandoned Mine Reclamation, the Loyalhanna Watershed Association, the Natural Resources Conservation Service, and Powdermill Nature Reserve began to turn that polluted legacy around by installing a hybrid SAPS (Successive Alkalinity Producing System) to clean up this discharge. The system is successfully removing about 99% of both the polluting iron and aluminum, and is helping to change the pH toward neutral along two miles of this mountain stream. It is anticipated that this cleanup should result in a return of brook trout to this once high-quality watershed.



IN WESTMORELAND COUNTY, the Turtle Creek Watershed also benefited from the efforts of our sister organization, the Western Pennsylvania Coalition for Abandoned Mine Reclamation. WPCAMR worked with Turtle Creek Watershed Association to obtain a \$300,000 grant from the Army Corps of Engineers for a study of stream quality on Brush Creek, Turtle Creek, and Lyons Run. The study, which eventually should lead to cleanup of the streams, is scheduled to begin in the spring of 1998.

WPCAMR also was instrumental in recommending that a developer's \$75,000 required replacement project be directed to Lyons Run, one of the major polluting tributaries of Turtle Creek, where it would make a greater positive impact on water quality, instead of putting it at the original site of the stream enclosure.

IN THE SEWICKLEY CREEK WATERSHED, WPCAMR helped develop and build a weir to measure the amount of flow coming from an abandoned coal mine discharge at Brinkerton. This is a significant source of pollution, which dumps more than 600,000 pounds of iron a year into Sewickley Creek. WPCAMR is working with the US Department of Energy to collect the flow data, which will help determine the best type of treatment to be used.

AT THE WILSON RUN DISCHARGE, WPCAMR, Sewickley Creek Watershed Association, the Natural Resources Conservation Service, and others worked together to install a detention baffle. The baffle works in conjunction with a Department of Energy aerator to help clean the stream by keeping the water in the pond longer so the iron will settle out. In 1997, the clean-up system removed about 110,000 pounds of iron from this Sewickley Creek Watershed stream.

THE WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA Coalition for Abandoned Mine Reclamation was selected as a Three Rivers Environmental Awards finalist in the Community— Environmental Organizations category for the 16 projects it has under way to halt abandoned mine drainage in our region's waterways.

EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

THE DISTRICT HELPED County Commissioner Tom Balya host the first-ever Westmoreland County workshop to discuss the critical problem of contaminated waste leaking into our waterways from old or inadequate septic systems.

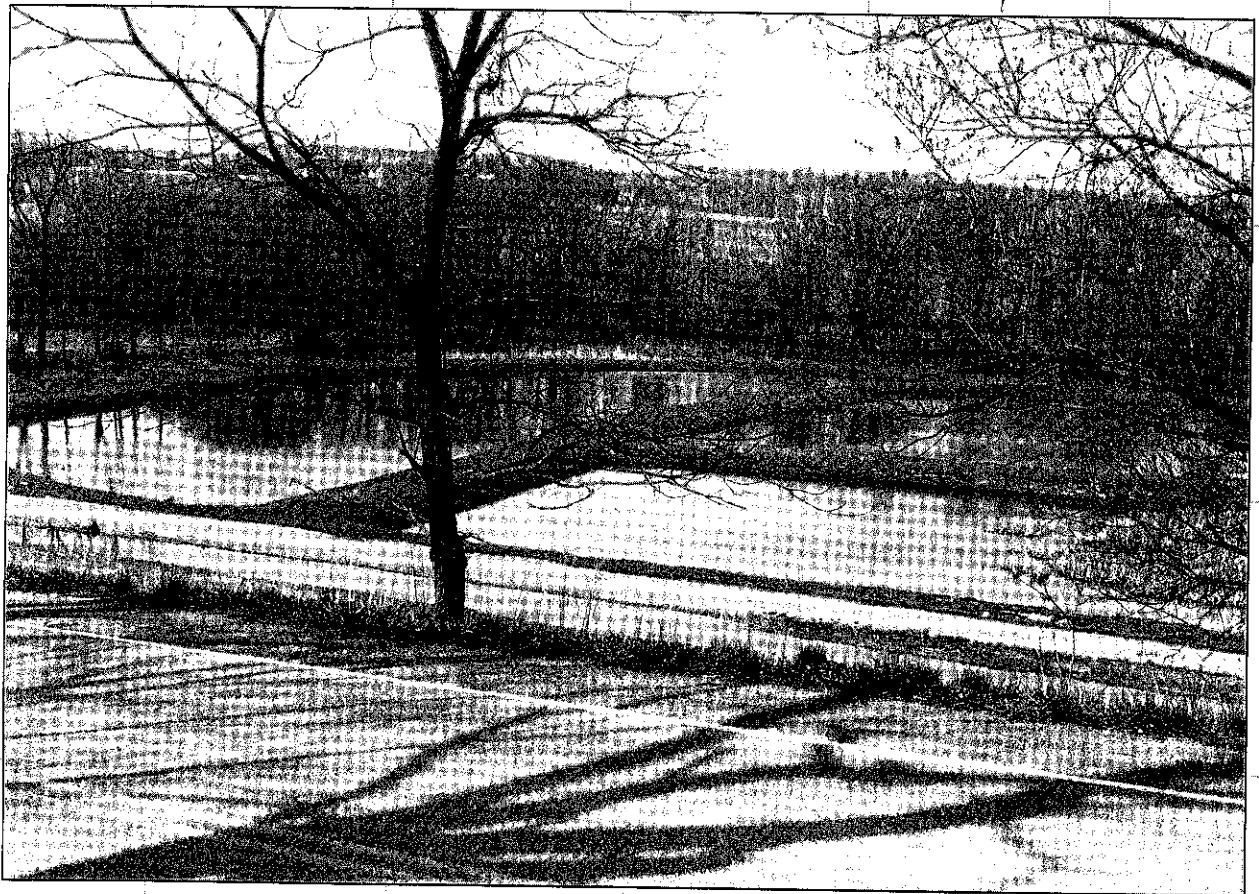
This is a major problem for our county, which has one of the largest rural populations in the state and a very high percentage of clay soils that don't pass a perc test.

The standing-room-only audience of 111 that came to the workshop last May included township supervisors, sewage enforcement officers, real estate agents, loan officers, waste water design engineers, planners, legislators, county officials, and environmental organizations with an interest in planning, designing, financing and installing on-lot sewage treatment systems.

Among others, they came to hear Deputy Secretary Hugh Archer present DEP's position on alternative waste water technologies . . . a panel of experts explain alternative technologies that are appropriate for this region . . . and a session on financial assistance to fix problem areas.

THE DISTRICT HOSTED a satellite downlink conference for engineers interested in stormwater quality and wetlands in August. Panelists gave information on the latest in water-quality practices for stormwater systems and discussions focused on using wetlands to treat stormwater. Thirty engineers attended this morning educational event.

IN LATE APRIL, the District hosted elementary students from Christ the Divine Teacher School in Latrobe to a conservation learning experience in their own backyard. At Saint Vincent Lake, we introduced them to basic conservation principles, visited a wetland area, and showed how conservation actions were cleaning up the mine drainage in Monastery Run. Helping us make the presentations were staff from the Western Pennsylvania Coalition for Abandoned Mine Reclamation and Powdermill Nature Reserve.



Part of the effort to clean up Monastery Run, this man-made wetland works by exposing the water to air and holding it in one place long enough for the orange iron oxide pollutant to drop out.

DESTINATION

Productive Farms

Although agriculture is still the county's number one industry in terms of gross dollar product, its presence is diminishing. The number of farms has decreased by 25% and the total number of acres being farmed has dropped by 50% since 1950.

As pressure for land escalates and prices for farm products such as milk drop, many Westmoreland County farmers are faced with a daunting choice: sell their land for development or find new ways to keep their operation financially viable.

The challenge is to insure that farming can be an efficient and profitable operation in Westmoreland County by helping farmers install cost-effective conservation methods, by creating and supporting a market for their products, and by purchasing easements to protect their land from development.

DIRECTIONS FROM THE LONG-RANGE PLAN

- Work with farmers, other agencies and organizations to establish a strategic plan for agriculture in the county.
- Work one-on-one with farmers, providing technical assistance for all aspects of conservation planning for their operations.
- Solidly support the county's Farmland Preservation Program.

- Promote more public awareness, understanding, and appreciation for the important contribution agriculture makes to our communities.

DISTANCE COVERED IN 1997

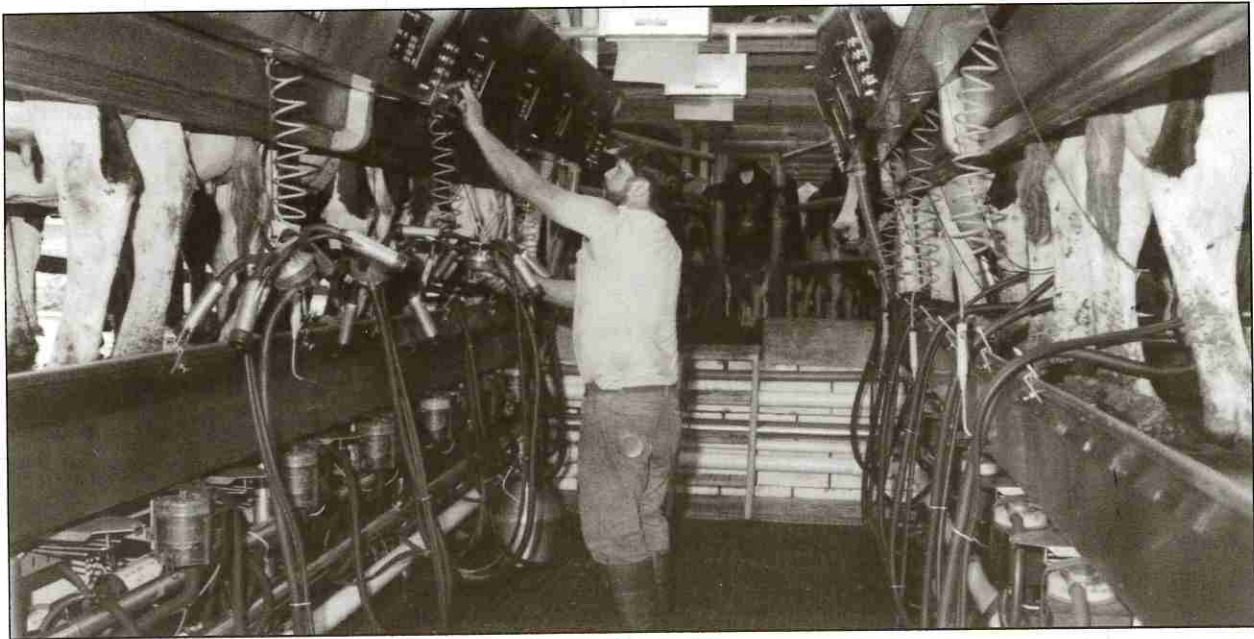
"COOPERATING FOR SUSTAINABILITY," a satellite teleconference, was presented at Donohoe Center on April 2 as a first step in a joint effort to develop a strategic plan for agriculture in the county. The program discussed ways to keep farming viable by increasing profitability.

OUR COOPERATING AGENCIES, the USDA Farm Service Agency and Natural Resources Conservation Service, helped enroll 24 farm producers in the new Environmental Quality Incentives Program last year. EQIP committed a total of \$145,000 toward the installation of new conservation practices on these farms over the next five years. Applications were accepted in the

Mid-Yough Watershed, a designated priority area for the program, and countywide as part of a multi-state pool area. Each enrolled farmer will receive from the government a share of the cost of installing new conservation practices such as barnyard stabilization projects on their sites. In addition, NRCS will assist them with technical advice and guidance.

Also last year, 44 participants received a total of \$118,397 in cost-share payments under an interim EQIP program, which was temporary open until the regular EQIP took effect.

FSA'S CONSERVATION RESERVE PROGRAM paid \$134,443 to 56 landowners to protect 2,330 acres of fragile land – land designated as highly erodible or environmentally sensitive by the USDA. By encouraging farmers to plant vegetation or to install riparian buffers, this program protects valuable soil and improves water quality.



Conservation measures, easement purchases, and state-of-the-art equipment like this milking parlor all are important steps in the effort to keep agriculture a viable industry in our county.

IN 1997, FSA CONTINUED TO MAINTAIN the enrollment of more than 700 Westmoreland County farms and more than 90% of the county's eligible cropland in the Production Flexibility Program. PFP guarantees participants an annual market transition payment for up to seven years in exchange for compliance with a USDA-approved conservation system on all of their land.

THE NATURAL RESOURCES Conservation Service provided assistance to farms throughout the county last year on rotational grazing, barnyard stabilization, contour strip-cropping, grass waterways, spring developments, stream corridor management and other such projects.

NRCS OF WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA captured a prestigious Three Rivers Environmental Award last year for helping a number of river clean-up groups in the battle against abandoned mine drainage. These local initiatives have had a significant, positive impact on this regional problem.

ALTHOUGH PENNSYLVANIA'S Nutrient Management Law was passed in the spring of 1993, the regulations did not become effective until Octo-

ber 1, 1997. When that happened, Westmoreland County signed a delegation agreement with the state to assume certain duties, including education and technical assistance of the program. With the responsibility comes funding for a half-time staff person.

IN 1997, FOUR WESTMORELAND County farms totaling 415 acres were preserved for agricultural use only in perpetuity through the Farmland Preservation Program.

One of the new farms was the first ever to be preserved in Unity Township – the 103-acre Roy Kemerer farm just three miles from the Westmoreland County Airport.

Another easement, on the Donald and Eleanor Suter dairy farm in East Huntingdon, was unique in that it was purchased using only county funds. This approach was used because the farm's size – 36 acres – was less than the minimum 50-acre size required for state funds. The Suter farm is important because it is adjacent to the highly productive 115-acre Edward Sossa crop farm, which was preserved in 1995.

The new additions bring the total Westmoreland

County farmland preserved to 2,356 acres since the program purchased its first easement in 1993.

THE NUMBER OF Westmoreland County farms applying for easements in 1997 reached an all-time high. Development pressures and falling milk prices are causing more farmers to consider easements. Unfortunately, even with the continued financial support of the county, there are only enough funds to preserve about 10% of the acres submitted for consideration.

FPP is exploring a variety of alternate funding sources. In 1997, the program wrote several successful proposals for government grants and conducted a local fundraising campaign that brought a total of \$23,840 from donations and government matching funds.

Also in 1997, thanks to Senator Santorum's Farms for the Future bill, Westmoreland County received its first-ever award of federal funds — \$64,500 — for the Farmland Preservation Program.

WESTMORELAND COUNTY'S Farmland Preservation Program administrator assisted neighboring counties during the year in their efforts to establish farmland preservation programs.

EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

THE DISTRICT SPONSORED an all-day conservation education event for local farmers in July. Forty people joined us to discuss various conservation practices, and to learn more about livestock health, nutrient management planning, pastures and soil fertility. Various practices were evaluated in terms of their effectiveness on individual farms and their benefit to the environment. After this morning discussion session, participants toured a local farm where they saw barnyard stabilization, a stream crossing, and rotation grazing in practice.

THE DISTRICT HELPED the Farmland Preservation Program create the county's first-ever Farm Market Map last year. The map identifies the locations of 33 farmers' markets, roadside markets, and

year 'round markets throughout the county, offering everything from certified organic produce to kolbasi; farm fresh eggs to chocolate milk; and raspberries to lamb.

The map was available to the public at both organizations' displays at the Westmoreland County Fair, at various offices in Donohoe Center, and was mailed to 4,200 area homes and businesses as an insert in the fall issue of the District's newsletter Landmarks.

A YEAR-LONG PUBLICITY CAMPAIGN resulted in increased media coverage of farm issues throughout the county. In particular, the Tribune-Review gave agriculture exceptional attention in April when a feature story we supplied on the Farmland Preservation Program became front-page news. In September, a mailing of our new Farm Market Map prompted the Tribune to develop a major article on local farm markets that filled the entire front page of the Food section, plus a quarter of the following page. The daily Tribune-Review has a circulation of about 95,000.

THE PREMIER ISSUE of our new nutrient management newsletter, The Conservation Advantage, rolled off the press early in the year. This semi-annual mailing to more than 500 regional farmers featured best practices and conservation information.

THANKS TO A SUCCESSFUL GRANT from Penn's Corner RC&D Charitable Trust, Westmoreland County's Farmland Preservation Program was able to create a new statewide newsletter for the Pennsylvania Farmland Preservation Association. Two issues of the newsletter were produced and distributed during 1997.

FPP also continued its local publication, the Westmoreland County Farmland Preservation News, distributing two issues during the year to a mailing list of more than 800 agricultural producers.

DESTINATION

Sustainable Communities

As more people discover the pleasing quality of life in Westmoreland County, they will put more pressure on our land, water, infrastructure systems, and recreation facilities. They will consume more of our natural resources and man-made materials, and they will generate more waste.

The challenge is to insure that we are making informed decisions about our limited resources and using them wisely . . . that we are providing the elements such as vital recreation areas that contribute to quality of life . . . and that we are responsibly managing the waste we produce.

DIRECTIONS FROM THE LONG-RANGE PLAN

- Build a Geographic Information System and update the Soil Survey as tools to insure wise land-use decisions in the county.
- Encourage beneficial re-use of our natural and man-made resources.
- Develop quality centers of commerce and recreation.
- Help promote a personal conservation ethic in the citizens of our county.

DISTANCE COVERED IN 1997

PROGRESS IN OUR EFFORT TO DEVELOP a county-wide Geographic Information System last year included purchasing a Pentium II® 300-megahertz computer and Microsoft™ Windows® NT™ software, both of which will allow us to more efficiently input the great amount of data this project requires.

Westmoreland County's Farmland Preservation Program applied for and received an \$8,800 Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture grant, which will be used to develop GIS data for local farm site evaluations, and may be tailored for use in conservation planning with the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

Our program specialist/forester and FPP's county administrator attended a week-long training session at Penn State on ArcView, which is a desktop geographic information system that can reveal patterns and trends not visible with text files and databases. ArcView provides tools for querying, editing, and analyzing information linked to geographic locations and for developing maps.

IN 1997, WE BEGAN the long-awaited work of updating the county's Soil Survey. This important planning document has not been revised since 1968, and the actual field work of evaluating the type and condition of our county's soils has not been done since the mid-1950s.

An accurate soil survey is a vital tool, used by farmers to get the most out of their fields; by engineers and land use planners to determine if a parcel is suitable for development; by prospective land purchasers to compare characteristics of different pieces of ground; and by officials to prioritize the agricultural value of farms for the Farmland Preservation Program.

Having our Westmoreland County Soil Survey

updated, and digitized (i.e., put in a computer format) will increase its usefulness and help insure that we are making the best use of our land.

In 1997, our part-time soil scientist, working with a representative from the Natural Resources Conservation Service, was able to digitize a little more than 11% of our county's 665,600 acres. Together, they also dug and sampled 36 soil pits and conducted 32 transects, which is an activity where they walk across a piece of ground and take soil samples.

In late April, their work underwent an initial Field Review by the US Department of Agriculture. The USDA had very positive comments on how they were interpreting and naming soils and on how efficiently the process was going.

WORK GOT UNDER WAY IN MAY on one of the largest land-restoration projects ever undertaken in this region, a 135-acre abandoned coal-mining site in Ligonier and Fairfield townships. Soil was reclaimed, spoil piles eliminated, and a dangerous 90-foot vertical high wall covered. The site had been scarred since the turn of the century from deep coal-mining and since the 1970s from subsequent strip-mining.

The reclamation is being undertaken as a project of the Bureau of Abandoned Mine Reclamation, with funding provided by bond money and a nationwide surcharge on coal production. It is expected to be completed in the spring of 1998.

DURING THE YEAR, our sister organization, the Western Pennsylvania Coalition for Abandoned Mine Reclamation, presented information to the Murrysville Planning Commission that will lead to reclamation and possible re-use of two parcels of land – one, which is about 20 acres near the headwaters of Stell's Run, and another, which currently is a dangerous 25-foot vertical high wall off Italy Road.

SEEING THE NEED TO ENHANCE and preserve the landscape along some of Westmoreland County's

highway corridors, we sponsored a meeting in April, which led to a partnership of the District, the County Planning Department, and the Greensburg Garden Center. The group identified five pilot sites for beautification efforts, and began a dialog with the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy about extending that organization's highway floral bed project into our county.

On a related front, the District also continued to work with the national group Scenic America. We helped them develop a staff position to coordinate scenic byway efforts in the Laurel Highlands, and promote a beautification project for the east entrance to the city of Greensburg from Route 30.

These initiatives are vital elements in the county's continuing effort to encourage quality economic development . . . promote awareness of our scenery . . . foster community pride . . . and instill a sense of appreciation for our scenic/environmental assets.

SOLID PROGRESS WAS MADE last year in the continuing effort to revitalize Nature Park, a 60-acre natural area just one mile from Westmoreland Mall. Enhancements included an 800-foot crushed limestone trail; a bulletin board; a park sign and planter box filled with flowers and maintained by the Penn State Master Gardeners; a memorial area to Ann Rudd Saxman, the woman so instrumental in the park's creation and preservation; a survey of the trails by AmeriCorp; a guiding philosophy and management plan for the park; and inventories of the park's natural resources, including its soils, aquatic life, stormwater pond, and geology. In addition, the Westmoreland County Bird Club began inventorying the bird population, the Botanical Society of Westmoreland County began recording the seasonal wildflowers, and consulting forester Bill Paxton inventoried the forest resources.

Other new additions last year were a brochure explaining the complementary features of Donohoe Center and Nature Park (the brochure is available at the trail head), and a framed collage honoring Ann Saxman that was donated by Carol Pollock and

2

3

4

5

6

7

hangs in Donohoe Center, near the glass doors overlooking the park.

MORE THAN FOUR OF THE SEVEN MILES of the new Five Star Hiking/Biking Trail that ultimately will connect Lynch Field in Greensburg to Westmoreland County Community College in Youngwood were completed in 1997. The District is a partner in this exciting new recreation project, and in a similar project along the Yough River corridor.

We also were instrumental in helping to secure 2.4 miles of land along the Allegheny River in Allegheny Township for what will become the Wynn and Clara Treadway Riverpark Trail.

THE DISTRICT CONTINUED TO FACILITATE the work of PA CleanWays by supporting its initiatives to promote recycling and roadside cleanups, and by administering the organization's operating funds.

OUR ASSOCIATION WITH the Penn's Corner RC&D Charitable Trust allowed us to use that organization's non-profit status last year to raise funds for a variety of special projects, including expanded efforts to beautify major highway corridors, and the production of our Long-range Plan.

EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

A NEAR-CAPACITY CROWD of more than 120 people braved a chilly fall rain to attend the first-ever Conservation Tour on the Laurel Highlands Railroad on October 24. This was an opportunity for county leaders and interested citizens to get to know the District better and to get a unique, firsthand look at a variety of landmark conservation projects in the southwestern part of our county, including: the Scottdale Channel, a major regional flood control measure that, just that May, tamed the fury of a 25-year rain storm with no damage to property or threats to life in this area of Jacobs Creek; the scars from abandoned coal mines and the variety of projects under way to revitalize those damaged lands and waterways; and the county's newest recreation initiative, the Five Star Trail.

Westmoreland Conservation District staff was joined by representatives from PA CleanWays, the Sewickley Creek Watershed Association, the Farmland Preservation Program, the Western Pennsylvania Coalition for Abandoned Mine Reclamation, and the Five Star Trail. Each gave the audience some insight into their projects.

During the 1-1/2-hour journey, each participant was treated to refreshments that reflected the conservation projects they were seeing, including bottled water, courtesy of LeNature's, Latrobe, representing Clean Streams; and a Golden Delicious apple, courtesy of Hillside Orchards, Mt. Pleasant, representing Productive Farms.

DISTRICT STAFF TOOK the conservation message on the road in the other direction — to Murrysville — in late February. We met with the Murrysville Council and Planning Commission to show how we can help them manage growing development and their natural resources, and to offer input to the comprehensive plan that community was developing.

ELEVEN GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS attended or were represented at our Annual Legislative Breakfast on April 4. PA Senator Allen Kukovich, PA Representatives Jess Stairs and Tom Tangretti, and attorney William Jay Ober (who subsequently was named a Westmoreland County Common Pleas Judge) were among those who got a firsthand look at District activities from presentations by each of our staff members, Board Treasurer Ron Rohall, and Farmland Preservation Board Chairman Donald Fretts.

Also attending were representatives of US Congressmen Frank Mascara and John Murtha, US Senator Rick Santorum, PA Senator Richard Kasunic, and PA Representatives Herman Mihalich, Joseph Petrarca, and James Casario, Jr.

At the end of the meeting, there was a clear consensus of the need to do more to clean up the pervasive mine water problem here in southwestern Pennsylvania.

FIFTY HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS from 10 area schools spent the better part of May 5 at Twin Lakes Park, exploring a soil pit, measuring trees, testing water samples, and analyzing the pros and cons of pesticide use as part of the Envirothon. This was the 12th consecutive year the District has sponsored this educational event where students test their knowledge of the environment. New this year was a printed event program, which included information on the history of the event, past winners, and the names of the students and advisors participating in the 1997 competition.

In the competition, the team from Franklin Regional took first place; Kiski Area took second; and Derry Area placed third. Also competing were five-member teams from Belle Vernon, Burrell, Greensburg Salem, Hempfield, Mt. Pleasant, Norwin, and Yough high schools.

As county Envirothon champs, Franklin Regional went on to compete on the state level at the Pennsylvania Envirothon on May 28 and 29 at Shawnee State Park, Bedford County. Of the 55 teams competing, Franklin Regional captured a very respectable third place.

We used the new Envirothon program as part of a follow-up mailing to principals of county high schools that did not participate in the event, in an effort to encourage them to become involved next year.

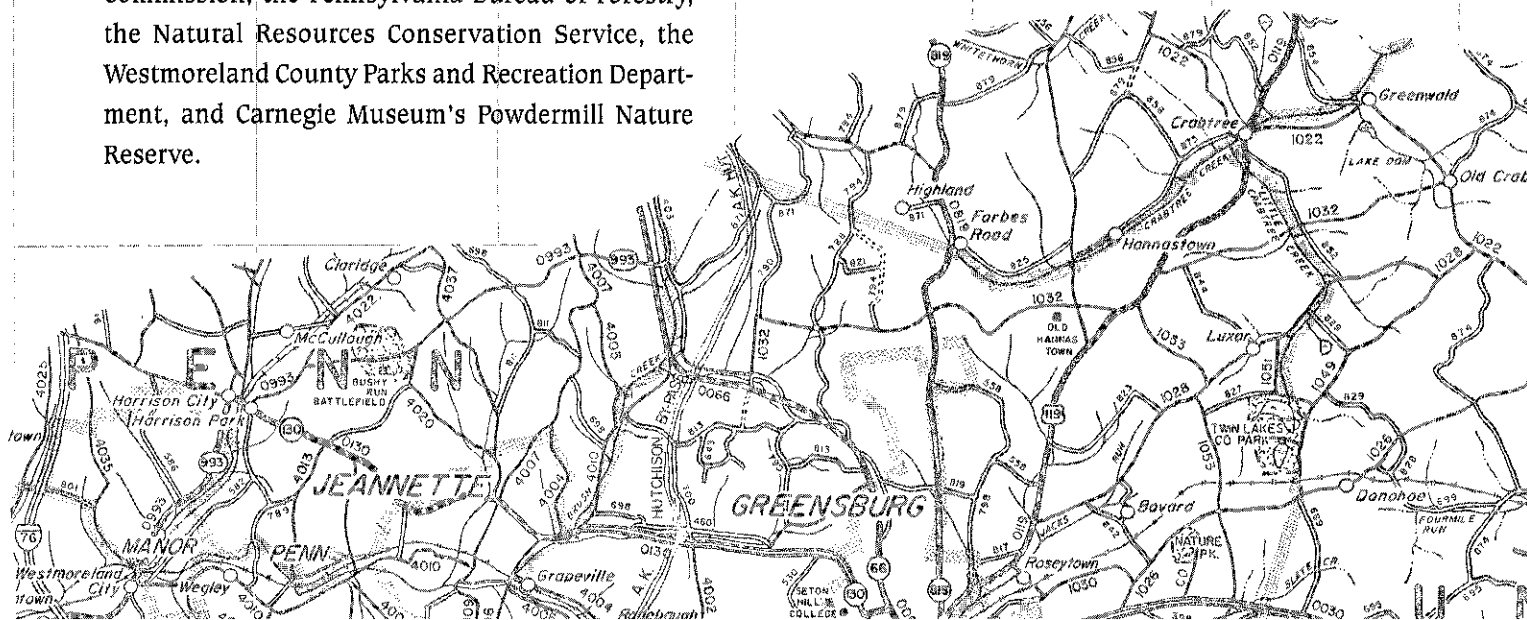
A number of cooperating agencies assisted the Westmoreland Conservation District in hosting the county Envirothon, including: the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture, the Pennsylvania Game Commission, the Pennsylvania Bureau of Forestry, the Natural Resources Conservation Service, the Westmoreland County Parks and Recreation Department, and Carnegie Museum's Powdermill Nature Reserve.

Major corporate underwriters of the 1997 Envirothon were: Innovative Environmental Services, Latrobe; Waste Management of Laurel Valley, Scottdale; and Shop 'n Save, New Stanton. Beckwith Machinery Company, Murrysville, and the Westmoreland County Sportsmans League provided additional financial support, and Catalyst Graphics and Jackson Graphics donated in-kind services.

DISTRICT STAFF ALSO SUPPORTED the national Envirothon competition, which was held in Johnstown, PA last August. Our program specialist/forester served as committee chair for the Forestry Station and District staff helped with registration, programs, signs and activities. The Envirothon originated in Pennsylvania in the spring of 1979.

WE PROVIDED INFORMATION from our Geographic Information System to help participants at the Summer Institute in Watershed Restoration understand more about how this tool can be used in resource management. The four-week institute is built on the on-going effort to restore water quality on Monastery Run. It is designed for college students and elementary and secondary teachers, and sponsored by Saint Vincent College and the Environmental Protection Agency.

LANDMARKS, Westmoreland Conservation District's quarterly newsletter, was named best in the nation last fall by the National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD). Judges called *Landmarks* a "beautiful newsletter with great artwork,



strong photos, and extremely readable copy."

The publication focuses on conservation activities across Westmoreland County, including the clean up of area streams; agricultural news; effective approaches to stormwater management, erosion control, and forestry; the county's Farmland Preservation Program; and special projects such as highway beautification and the revitalization of Nature Park.

Landmarks is distributed free-of-charge to more than 4,200 conservation-minded households and businesses.

OUR 1996 ANNUAL REPORT, "Celebrating the Four Seasons," was issued last spring and used the classical music of Vivaldi as the backdrop against which to feature a full year of conservation activities, season by season. We also used the "*The Four Seasons*" as a continuing theme all through 1997 by featuring it in our display at the Westmoreland County Fair, at our annual awards dinner, and in each quarterly issue of *Landmarks*.

We helped to keep interest in the theme and in conservation high by regularly holding contests in which we gave away CDs of Vivaldi's classical music masterpiece, "*The Four Seasons*."

THE DISTRICT'S DISPLAY at the Westmoreland County Fair in August featured an original 14' x 5' mural by Latrobe artist Greg Kuhar. The mural, which continued the District's 1997 theme of Conservation Through the Seasons, featured a single farm scene on four panels. The portion of the scene on each panel was drawn to reflect a single season – the first, early spring planting; the second, the growing crops of summer; the third, the autumn harvest; and the fourth, the stillness of winter.

Action Hardware and Home Center in the Latrobe 30 Shopping Plaza generously donated some of the materials used for the mural.

ONE HUNDRED TWENTY FIVE PEOPLE joined us at our 1997 Awards Banquet, held on November 13 at the Four Points Hotel in Greensburg. That

evening, we paid tribute to some of the many people who have been instrumental in promoting the cause of conservation in Westmoreland County.

Pounds' Turkey Farm, was named as Outstanding Farm Cooperator. Since 1935, the Pounds family has been growing and processing turkeys on their farm in Allegheny Township. Second-generation brothers Rick and Tim Pounds now run the business that was started by their father Harry. They also carry on his successful conservation practices of contour strip-cropping, grass waterways, and sub-surface drains . . . and have added new ones — including minimum tillage techniques and an environmentally sound method of wastewater disposal — on their 195-acre property.

Also honored at the awards dinner were:

- Outstanding Conservation Volunteers
Harold Grey & Carol Pollock
- Outstanding Conservation Organization
The Westmoreland Conservancy
- Outstanding Conservation Partner
Adam Eidemiller, Inc.
- Outstanding Service Award
Harry Meyer
- Certificates of Appreciation: Bill Paxton, Penn State Extension Master Gardeners, City of Greensburg/Lynch Field Volunteers, Beverly Sullenberger, Imogene Fink, Shirley Tosh, Christine Youngbauer, Jim Pillsbury

Also at the banquet, the Westmoreland County Agricultural Land Preservation Board recognized retiring Board Members William W. Buttermore, Sr. and Lysle S. Sherwin, both of whom were charter members of the board, serving since the program's inception in 1990.

The Western Pennsylvania Coalition for Abandoned Mine Reclamation recognized Mark Killar for his outstanding service to the effort to clean up and restore mine-damaged lands and water.



Commercial corridors can be scenic, too, as volunteers such as these in New Kensington prove by planting beds of flowers.



DESTINATION

Quality Client Service

Our history of working one-on-one with farmers to design conservation programs for the specific needs of their farm has made us very sensitive to the unique needs of our customers, which today include developers, engineers, contractors, woodlot managers, and conservation-minded citizens, in addition to all types of agricultural producers.

We are constantly looking for new ways to improve the quality of our programs, to be more responsive to customer needs, to do a more effective job by combining our resources with those of other like-minded organizations, and to maintain the personal contact that has been the hallmark of our organization for nearly 50 years.

DISTANCE COVERED IN 1997

IT GOT EASIER THAN EVER for the public to find us in late October, when the finishing touches were put on a brand new, permanent "Donohoe Center" sign at the vehicle entrance to our building.

A coordinating directory, listing the specific agencies located inside Donohoe Center, is located near the front door of the building. The new signs and enhancements were made possible through the generous donation of the Katherine Mabis McKenna Foundation.

DISTRICT RECEPTIONIST JOANNE KITSKO and Secretary Tammy Ross recorded more than 3,350 telephone messages for our staff during the year. They and District staff also served more than 700 walk-in visitors during the year, a 16% increase over 1996.

In all, more than 10,000 people came to Donohoe Center last year for meetings or to obtain the services of the Westmoreland Conservation District, the USDA's Rural Development, or one of the other family of agencies that share headquarters in this one-stop conservation service center.

WE EXPANDED OUR OFFICE computer networking capabilities in 1997 by upgrading our system to Microsoft™ Windows® NT™. The new system gives us the capability for inter-office e-mail, scheduling, improved database management, and better integration of software.

WE INCREASED OUR VISIBILITY in the community by introducing new jackets and ball caps with the District logo. Both made-in-America items are forest green with white lettering. They are being worn on- and off-the-job by staff, and by more than 100 members of the general public who purchased them at our booth at the Westmoreland County Fair or through our newsletter, *Landmarks*.

Our new District "Naturally Delicious" Cookbook, featuring 225 recipes, also was a hit, with more than 130 copies sold in 1997.

All items will continue to be for sale through 1998.

In the miles ahead . . .

With our destinations clear and our detailed map in hand, we should be able to make considerable progress in 1998 in each area of caring for the resources of Westmoreland County.

Yet even as we're moving forward, we're also planning to spend a lot of time looking in the rearview mirror in 1998...revisiting our beginnings in preparation for our 50th anniversary celebration in 1999.

With one foot in the past, and the other about to step into the new millennium, 1998 should be a very interesting time to be involved in conservation in Westmoreland County. Won't you join us?

If you are interested in joining us in caring for our county's soils, streams, forests, farms, and communities, please contact us (see back cover).

Administrative and Personnel Matters

DISTRICT BOARD OFFICERS ELECTED in 1997 were: J. Roy Houston, chairman; P. Graydon Long, vice chairman; Ron Rohall, treasurer; and P. Roy Kemerer, secretary. Each serves a one-year term.

Harry Meyer, recently retired program specialist with the Department of Environmental Protection, was named as our newest associate director last fall.

District Board Treasurer Ron Rohall was elected secretary of the Pennsylvania Association of Conservation Districts' Executive Board.

DISTRICT MANAGER GREG PHILLIPS serves as Treasurer for the Five Star Trail project. Last year, he also was appointed to the Board of the Regional Trail Corporation, which is working on similar hiking/biking projects in our county as well as in Allegheny and Fayette counties.

JIM PILLSBURY, our hydraulic engineer, passed – with flying colors – the very challenging Pennsylvania state exam to obtain his professional engineer's license, adding distinction and increased credibility to his work as the District's hydraulic engineer.

MARK KILLAR, regional coordinator of the Western Pennsylvania Coalition for Abandoned Mine Reclamation, is serving as chairman of Resource Extraction, one of the teams working to rewrite

Pennsylvania's nonpoint source pollution plan. He also is a director for several local watershed groups, including Mountain Watershed and Sewickley Creek Watershed associations.

Bob Ventorini, WPCAMR's watershed coordinator, is an associate board member of the Turtle Creek Watershed Association.

Both men were instrumental last year in helping to establish a counterpart organization to theirs in the eastern part of the state (the Eastern Pennsylvania Coalition for Abandoned Mine Reclamation).

BETTY REEFER, county administrator for the Farmland Preservation Program, was elected secretary of the Pennsylvania Farmland Preservation Association and selected to serve on Westmoreland County's newly formed Comprehensive Recreation and Open Space Steering Committee.

TAMMY ROSS joined the District staff in March as secretary to handle the growing need for administrative support on the District's new and existing programs.

WITH HELP FROM the County Commissioners' Coordinator John Pallone and attorney Pat Iezzi, we revised the District's employee handbook last year. All employee job descriptions were also reviewed and standardized.



Board of Directors & Associate Directors

CHAIRMAN

J. Roy Houston

Appointed to the Board in 1968; elected Chairman in 1973

Former Executive Director, Westmoreland Economic Development Corporation; past President, Central Westmoreland Chamber of Commerce; past President and Life Member, Murrysville Volunteer Fire Dept.

VICE CHAIRMAN

P. Graydon Long

Appointed to the Board in 1990; elected Vice Chairman in 1994

Board Member, Westmoreland County Fair; Council Member and Planning Commission Member, New Stanton borough; Member, Westmoreland County Cattlemen's Association; Executive Committee, Penn State Cooperative Extension Service, Westmoreland County.

TREASURER

Ronald Rohall

Appointed to the Board in 1993; elected Treasurer in 1996

Consulting Forester. Board Secretary, Loyalhanna Watershed Association; Secretary, Pennsylvania Association of Conservation Districts Executive Board; Member, Society of American Foresters; Member, Westmoreland Woodlands Improvement Association; Volunteer, Powdermill Nature Reserve.

SECRETARY

R. Paul Kemerer

Appointed to the Board in 1988; elected Secretary in 1995; served as Associate Director from 1982-1988

Owner and Operator of a 102-acre dairy farm in Pleasant Unity. Chairman of Governmental Relations Board, Westmoreland County Farm Bureau; Region V Vice President, Pennsylvania Young Farmers and National Young Farmers; Leader of 4H dairy club for Mt. View agricultural projects.

DIRECTOR

Albert Barnett

Appointed to the Board in 1990

Retired Plumber/Pipefitter, Kennametal Inc. Board Member, PA CleanWays; Board Member and Day Chairman, American Red Cross; past President and Board Member, Westmoreland County Sportsmen's League.

DIRECTOR

Conrad Donovan

Appointed to the Board in 1996

Auditor, Sarp & Company and part-time Beef Cattle Farmer. President, Westmoreland County Cooperative Extension Association; Treasurer, Westmoreland County Cattlemen's Association; Secretary, Derry Lions Club; Committee Member, Ducks Unlimited, Westmoreland County Chapter.

DIRECTOR

Terry Marolt

Appointed to the Board in 1989

Westmoreland County Commissioner since 1987. Vice Chairman, Westmoreland Industrial Development Corporation; Board Member, State Judicial Education Board and State Association of County Commissioners; Board Member, Minor Judiciary Education Board; active with the Rotary, Fort Ligonier Association, Ligonier Valley Historical Society.

DIRECTOR

Dorothy Stoner

Appointed to the Board in 1995

Farmer, Dairyman, and Owner of a 120-acre dairy farm in Unity Township, where she does all the business and financial work for the farm, including payroll and taxes, in addition to being in charge of the dairy's youngest calves. Former 10-year Committee Member, Farmers Home Administration.

DIRECTOR

Keith Walters

Appointed to the Board in 1994; served as Associate Director from 1982-1994

Farmer, Dairyman, and Owner of the 175-acre Walters Dairy Farm in New Alexandria. Director, Westmoreland Dairy Promotion Board; past Director, Westmoreland Farm Bureau; Member, Pennsylvania Dairy Herd Improvement Association; Member, Congruity Presbyterian Church.

DIRECTOR EMERITUS

Frank E. Skacel

Appointed to the Board in 1969; elected Treasurer in 1975; retired from Board in 1996, and named Director Emeritus the same year.

Owner and Operator of a 160-acre grain and beef farm in Derry Township; Board Member and Treasurer, Farmland Preservation Program; Member of the Cattlemen's Association of Westmoreland County; Member, Millwood Sportsmen.

ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR

Robert Ackerman

Named Associate Director in 1993

Environmental Tree Farmer and retired Chemical Engineer. Vice President, Westmoreland Woodlands Improvement Association; Treasurer, Penn West Conference, United Church of Christ; Dom Care Provider, Area Agency on Aging, Westmoreland County.

ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR

Mark Jackson

Named Associate Director in 1987

Graphic Designer and Owner of Jackson Graphics. Past President, Westmoreland Arts and Heritage Festival; Public Relations Committee Member, Pennsylvania Association of Conservation Districts (PACD) and Boy Scouts of America, Westmoreland/Fayette Council; recipient of PACD's first "Ann Rudd Saxman Volunteer of the Year" award.

ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR

Thomas Keller

Named Associate Director in 1988

Executive Director, Sewickley Creek Watershed Association. Board of Directors, Pennsylvania Sportsmen For The Disabled, Inc. and former Managing Editor of that organization's newsletter; former Board Member, Mental Health Association in Westmoreland County; published freelance writer.

ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR

William Kotsenas

Named Associate Director in 1993

Retired Senior Engineer, Westinghouse Electric Nuclear Fuel Division. Member, Sewickley Creek Watershed Association, Western Pennsylvania Conservancy, Pennsylvania Native Plant Society, and Keystone Carvers; past President and current Member, Botanical Society of Westmoreland County.

ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR

Harry Meyer

Named Associate Director in 1997

Retired Program Specialist/Field Representative, Pennsylvania State Conservation Commission. Farmer and woodlot owner in South Fayette Township. Associate Director, Beaver, Lawrence, and Washington county conservation districts; Contributing Member, the Pennsylvania Association of Conservation Districts.

ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR

Theresa Gay Rohall

Named Associate Director in 1994

Coordinator of Education, Powdermill Nature Reserve, Carnegie Museum of Natural History. Member, Loyalhanna Watershed Association and Pennsylvania Alliance For Environmental Education; Coordinator, Holy Trinity Parish Folk Group and Prison Music Ministry.

ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR

Dr. William Shea

Named Associate Director in 1973

Retired Microbiologist and former College Professor at Washington and Jefferson College and Westmoreland County Community College (WCCC). Developed and taught the Conservation and Environmental Technology program at WCCC; past Council Member of Penn's Corner Research Conservation and Development; past Volunteer, Boy Scouts of America.

ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR

Sue Wiseman

Named Associate Director in 1992

Part-time Executive Director of state organization of PA CleanWays, and President and part-time Public Relations Director of the Westmoreland County chapter. Newsletter editor, Sewickley Creek Watershed Association; Advisory Board, Wildlife Works; Volunteer Coordinator, First Baptist Church of Greensburg.

The District provides support for both the Farmland Preservation Program and the Western Pennsylvania Coalition for Abandoned Mine Reclamation, and cooperates with these organizations on a number of resource protection projects. Both organizations are guided by volunteer Boards.



Board of Directors

Donald C. Fretts, *Chairman*

Lysle Sherwin, *Vice Chairman*

Hilary Schramm, *Treasurer*

William W. Buttermore

Blaine E. Hutter

James Mathews

Richard Pounds

Richard Comp

Robert Shuster



Board of Directors

Dick Rossman, *President*

Gary Stokum, *Vice President*

Terry Miller, *Secretary*

Roby Grose, *Treasurer*

Mission


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, associates, and staff commit themselves to the leadership and service required in pursuing activities beneficial to the environment.

Programs

District programs range from science-based conservation efforts to serving as a clearing house for public information and education.

- Agricultural Conservation
- Arboretum
- Backyard Composting
- Corridor Planning
- Education
- Energy Conservation
- Envirothon
- Farmland Preservation
- Flood Control Projects
- Forest Management
- Geographic Information System
- Land Reclamation
- Loyalhanna Gorge Forestry Demonstration Area
- Monastery Run Clean-up
- Natural Resource Inventories
- Nutrient Management
- Pennsylvania Resources Magazine
- Rails to Trails
- Recreation
- Recycling
- Resource Conservation and Development
- Rural Abandoned Mine Program
- Soil Erosion and Sediment Control
- Soil Survey
- Stormwater Management
- Stream Encroachments
- "Waste-to-wealth" Beneficial Use Development
- Water Conservation
- Watershed Restoration/Planning
- Western Pennsylvania Coalition for Abandoned Mine Reclamation
- Wetlands

We work with many other like-minded agencies, organizations and individuals – some of whom are mentioned in this report – to advance the conservation ethic. If you are interested in a conservation subject not included here, we can help by referring you to the appropriate agency for more information.

Westmoreland
Conservation
District 



Phone: 724-837-5271 • Fax: 724-837-4127

email: wcd202b@aol.com

Donohoe Center, R.D. #12, Box 202-B,

Greensburg, PA 15601-9217