

CONSERVATION Clue



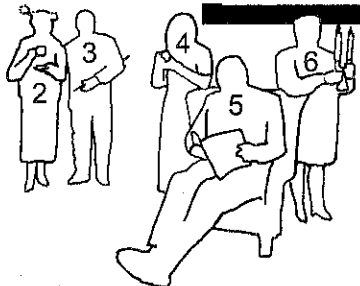
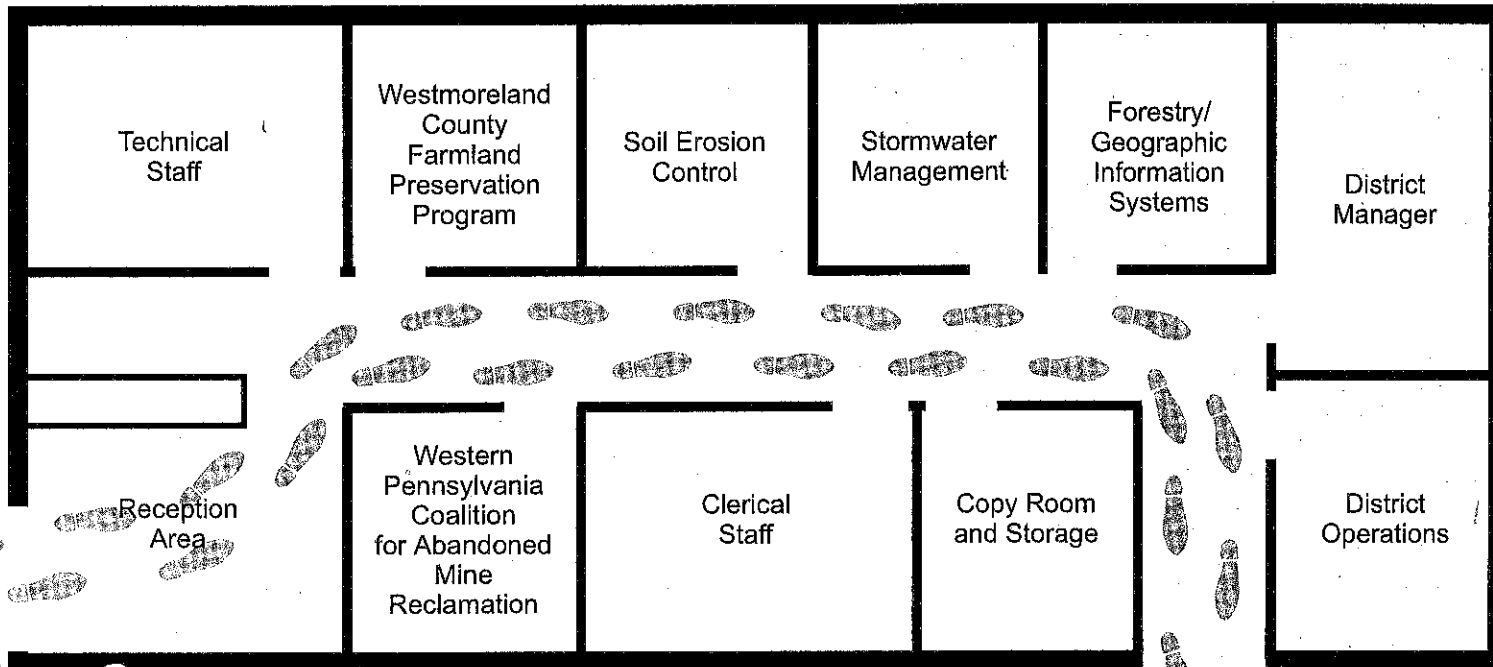
1998 District Tours

Event	Attendance
Bovard Coal Reprocessing Plant	10
Keystone State Park Mine Discharge	30
Old Home Manor Surface Mine Reclamation Project	20
Jacobs Creek Watershed Assoc/State Game Lands	15
White Thorn Creek Problem Area Assessment	6
Sewickley Creek/Brinkerton Mine Discharge	25
DEP Watershed Coordinator/Loyalhanna Watershed	8

1998 District Partnership Meetings

Event	Attendance
Jacobs Creek Watershed Organizational Meetings	60
Lincoln Highway Heritage Corridor	20
Lower Yough River Council	26
County Parks Open Space/Recreation Plan	26
Sewickley Creek/Brinkerton Partnership	18
Turtle Creek/White Valley Partnership	17
Agency Breakfasts	180

Westmoreland Conservation District Office, Donohoe Center, Greensburg, Pennsylvania



Key Characters...

1. Greg Phillips, District Manager
 2. Joanne Kitsko, Receptionist
 3. Roy Houston, District Board Chairman
 4. Lorie Stouffer, Assistant District Manager
 5. Jim Pillsbury, Hydraulic Engineer
 6. Cathy Fritz, Program Secretary

Photo by Emil Kuhar taken at Saint Joseph's Hall, Greensburg

1998 District Community Event Participation

Five-Star Trail	Oktoberfest	Western Pennsylvania Conservancy
Membership Meeting	Westmoreland County Fair	Membership Lunch
Cooperative Extension	Westmoreland Outdoor Sportsman Show	Farmland Preservation Picnic
Service Crops Fair	Regional Trail Corporation - Yough River Trail Dedication	Greensburg Garden Club May Mart
Representative		
Jess Stairs Senior Day		
Turtle Creek Watershed		
Outdoor Fun Day		

It's No Mystery...

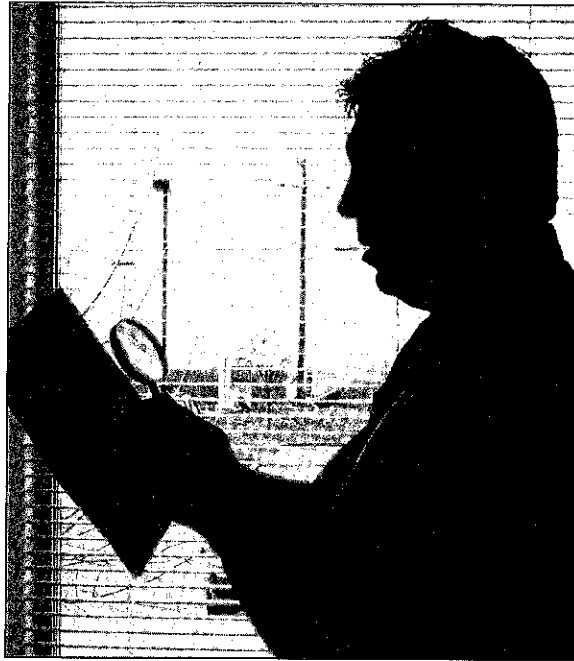
how we can compare life at the conservation district to a good game of *Clue*™. The Westmoreland Conservation District staff at times seems to function as detectives, gathering clues and solving environmental mysteries... often with the valuable assistance of volunteers and professionals in the conservation movement. Is there suspense and intrigue? Well, not always, but we are assured that each day can bring new characters (partners) and additional plots (projects) as we all work toward common goals.

Thanks to the clues found in science and an understanding of human nature, conservation detectives are solving many environmental mysteries. Armed with knowledge, a deep concern, public education, manpower and money, the "crime rate" is falling throughout Westmoreland County. Streams are being cleaned up, erosion is being reduced, and forest and storm water management practices are becoming realities.

Area farmers are no longer alone in solving the mysteries. Urban and suburban "gumshoes" (our partners) have joined the movement, forming a broad-based team capable of winning the on-going "Game of *Clue*™." How they play this very important game is outlined in the following annual report.

The mission we have set about to solve...the conservation, restoration, and proper use of our natural resources...is like a great mystery novel. Many of the same elements may appear... great heroes and heroines, red herrings (clues that may throw you off the path), projects which require years to complete... and lend themselves to the ultimate goal...a "happy" ending.

As we look back over the year, several "cases" stand out as significant to the District. Leading the "exhibits" was the progress toward the dream of the **Center for Conservation Education** located behind Donohoe Center. A dedication ceremony at **Monastery Run** was an important element of the major project undertaken by the Loyalhanna Creek Mine Drainage Coalition. The District held numerous educational



A Westmoreland Conservation District "detective" stands ready to solve a case.

workshops in many of its program areas - several of these are highlighted in the following report. District "detectives" took fundraising to an enhanced level as new grants and private support became available. And the first pieces of the puzzle to our **50th Anniversary Celebration** began to fall into place.

The year would not be complete without mentioning and thanking the **Westmoreland County Commissioners** for their very generous support in all aspects of "*The Case of the Westmoreland Conservation District*". They continue to play an integral part of an important partnership formed fifty years ago.

So get out your reading glasses, grab a glass of warm milk, and settle in to read a good page-turner. Let's attempt to solve this mystery together....

—Westmoreland Conservation District Staff

The Case of the Mysterious Orange Water



Congressman John Murtha, Chuck Meyers (BAMR), and Brother Norman Hipps, (St. Vincent), release the first flow of water into Wetland #1 at St. Vincent College.

The Scene:

Four Mile Run near Latrobe

The Weapons:

Passive wetland treatment techniques, government grants, and a coalition of educators, conservationists, experts, and those who care

The Characters:

Loyalhanna Creek Mine Drainage Coalition, Saint Vincent College, National Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Department of Environmental Protection Bureau of Abandoned Mine Reclamation (DEP-BAMR), Western Pennsylvania Coalition for Abandoned Mine Reclamation (WPCAMR), Loyalhanna Watershed Association, Hedin Environmental, McKenna Foundation, Conservation District and many others

The Plot:

Reduce abandoned mine drainage pollution into Loyalhanna Creek

Our Story:

It wasn't at the stroke of midnight, but during the middle of a beautiful fall day. Officials looked at the trio of wetlands covering 20 acres and commended the results of the nearly \$2 million Monastery Run project begun five years ago by a broad-based coalition determined to tackle the problems of drainage seeping from abandoned mines and polluting the Loyalhanna Creek.

The dedication ceremonies, which included speakers Congressman John Murtha and State Conservationist Janet Oertly of the *NRCS*, were held at both wetlands located off of Beatty Road near Saint Vincent. Wetland 1 is an 8.5-acre, \$500,000 project of the *DEP BAMR*. Wetland 2 is a 7.5-acre project undertaken by NRCS at a construction cost of \$162,000.

The dedication of the final two wetlands followed the sixth annual Monastery Run Symposium held earlier that day in the college amphitheater, which featured several technical presentations.

The goal of the Monastery Run Project is to restore the water quality of Loyalhanna Creek, which is designated as a high priority on Pennsylvania's degraded watershed list.

Old Home Manor Mystery



Scenic view from reclaimed Old Home Manor site.

The Scene:

An abandoned strip mine site in Fairfield & Ligonier Townships

The Weapons:

Bond forfeiture monies and federal funds provided by the *Office of Surface Mining's Abandoned Mine Land Program*

The Characters:

A bankrupted mining company

The Plot:

Reclaiming scarred lands after surface mining

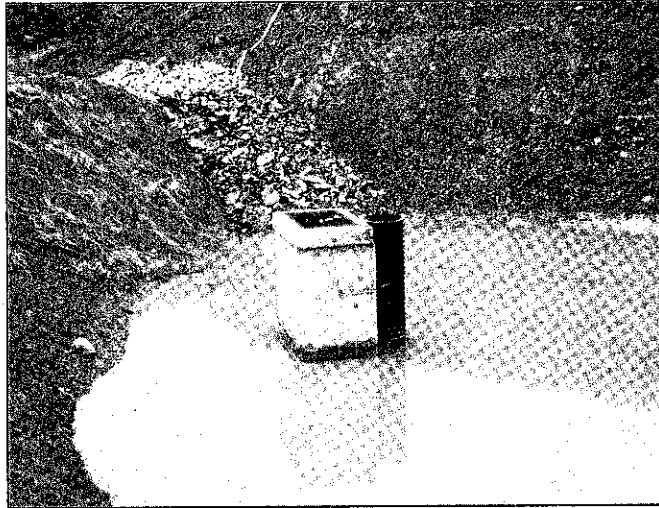
Our Story:

The previously farmed abandoned surface mine was a mess. The 143-acre Old Home Manor strip mine was abandoned in October of 1979. The site was unsuitable for farming and plagued with dangers, including steep spoil piles, impoundments to be dewatered and an 80-foot vertical high wall. In addition to losing its productivity, the land posed safety concerns for area residents and for the all-terrain vehicle enthusiasts it attracted. The sleuths arrived on the scene in April of 1995 after Ligonier Township Supervisor Grover Binkey contacted the District. He voiced the landowners' safety concerns and also told of garbage being dumped and occasionally set on fire. Chief Detective Greg Phillips took one look at the case and handed it over to "inspector" Kathy Fritz for project coordination with the local contacts. A public meeting was held in June of 1995 followed by extensive planning and design work in cooperation with **BAMR**. Two bulldozers worked 20 hours a day, seven days a week and finally, in October of 1998, the case was closed with a celebration consisting of landowners, politicians and those who care about the environment.



The Mystery of The Missing Inspectors

Sediment basins allow mud to settle out of runoff before discharge to a stream.



The Scene:

Construction sites all over Westmoreland County

The Weapons:

Silt Fence and straw bales

The Characters:

Conservation District technical staff

The Plot:

District technical staff spends much time on erosion and sediment control

Our Story:

Of all the stories of missing persons that the detective had investigated over the years, none was more fascinating than one which began in the early months of '98. To begin with, there was the dirt on the District's carpet. The cleaning staff complained that they had to shovel the rug before using the vacuum sweeper. They had preserved samples ...red clay from the hills of Murrysville, rich brown forest loam from the Chestnut Ridge, deep brown clods of topsoil from the county's center...a myriad of colors and textures. The second clue was the accumulation of 11,384 miles on the District's vehicles. Even though the District's vehicles were often missing from Donohoe Center, the parking lot was usually full of cars driven by engineers and developers visiting the office for seminars, pre-construction meetings, and technical assistance. In 1998, over 217 people visited for technical assistance, and 125 attended our seminars. The District's secretary was seen nearly every day dispatching plan review letters from the Post Office. The final piece of the puzzle was the 425 erosion control inspection forms used during the year. Pondering these clues, the answer came to the detective: The missing District technical staff members were in the field, doing inspections and site visits, following up on the hundreds of plans they had reviewed and the requests for assistance they received.

District Technical Staff Activity 1998

Erosion & Sedimentation Plan Reviews	239
Stormwater Management Plan Reviews	95
Erosion & Sedimentation Site Inspections	425
Other Visits	246
Technical Activities	538
Engineers Assisted	217
Dam Safety & Encroachment Activities	140

The Case of the Flourishing Forest

The Scene:

Three-hundred thirty-two thousand acres of productive and beautiful forestland in Westmoreland County. Forestry is one of the County's top industries with an increasing demand for timber products, habitat, recreation and watershed protection.

The Weapons:

The District's Woodland Management Program, stewardship plans, riparian buffer plantings, seedling protection, logger and landowner training programs, and forest management planning and advice

The "Villains":

Improper timber harvesting practices such as diameter limit cutting and high grading, unplanned logging road layout, giving no thought to regeneration, erosion control, habitat improvement or aesthetics, and not using professional forestry advice

The Plot:

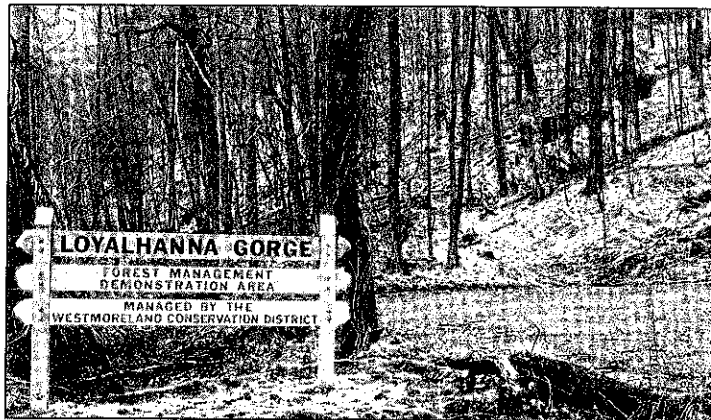
If not managed properly, the resource could suffer. Productivity could drop. The high quality water emanating from the forested ridges to the east could suffer. Wildlife habitat could be reduced.

Our Story:

The District is committed to reaching the large, diverse group of woodland owners and municipal officials in the county with information and technical assistance to help manage timber resources. The District works with forestry organizations and agencies such as the state *Bureau of Forestry, the Stewardship and Tree Farm programs, the Sustainable Forestry Initiative, and the Westmoreland Woodlands Improvement Association.*

During 1998, the District completed 13 woodland management plans for private forestland owners. These plans

provide advice on a stand by stand basis on how to manage the woodlot to best meet the owners' objectives. Advice on how to have a timber sale is often included. One Forest Stewardship Plan was completed during the year. The Stewardship Plan is a much more detailed plan which provides an in depth analysis of each management unit in the woodlot. Detailed management recommendations are provided for a 10-year period. The riparian buffer program continued in partnership with the *DCNR, Bureau of Forestry*, and provided more than 12,000 seedlings. We continued to partner with the *Sustainable Forestry Initiative* of PA to hold three workshops for timber harvesters. The workshop topics included: Sustainable Forestry, Environmental Logging, and CPR and First Aid. Over 45 loggers attended these meetings, and 6 of these have completed the requirements for certification in that program. William Rea of Cook Township finished second in the state for the *Maurice K. Goddard Award* given to owners implementing outstanding forest management. In 1998, more than 3,000 tree shelters were sold, 15 new Trees of Distinction measured, 3 new trees planted at the Donohoe Center arboretum, 2 Tree Farm inspections conducted, 200 students instructed in forestry at Camp Soles, and the parking area was completed at the *Loyalhanna Gorge Forestry Demo Area.*



A piece of this puzzle is located at the Loyalhanna Gorge Forestry Demo Area.

Water, Water Everywhere...

Stormwater "infiltrates" the District's reception area.



The Scene:

The District office on Donohoe Road

The Weapon:

A big mop

The Characters:

A soggy engineer and a harried receptionist

The Plot:

The engineer attempts to solve stormwater problems in a personal way

Our Story:

It was a dark and stormy day. The wind whistled over the roof of Donohoe Center, and the rain beat noisily against the windows. The door banged open, and the receptionist looked up, startled. The engineer slogged into the office, water pouring from his clothes. Joanne, the District's Girl Friday, shrieked and lifted her feet as a wave of muddy water ran under her desk and washed against the file cabinet. The engineer began to wring his jacket out over the typewriter, prompting another outcry from the woman. "Stop! Stop!" she cried...but it was too late. The man's sodden hat was now watering the fax machine. "If you want to ruin something, ruin the telephone!"

she begged. But the engineer was gone now, his mud-caked shoes squashing down the hallway. "What are you trying to do, soak up all the stormwater by yourself?!?" she yelled after him, shaking her fist. But he was gone down the hall, disappeared into his office with the one thing he had managed to keep dry...a donut, carefully hidden inside his coat.

There are many times when the District engineer does get wet in his job. His duties take him out in all kinds of inclement weather as he attempts to solve the county's flooding and stormwater problems. In 1998, the engineer made close to 100 site visits related to stormwater management...from investigating complaints to checking the construction of new facilities. Many complaints of flooding are highly localized...the runoff from one street may cause problems for another below it. Other stormwater problems are larger, perhaps on a regional basis. Our attempts to resolve these problems must always be cooperative, because the state law gives us no enforcement authority over stormwater. But if the municipality, the land-owners, and the affected people can get together, the District's technical expertise can suggest many solutions to runoff problems.

In the office, the Hydraulic Engineer reviewed over 80 stormwater management plans last year. These plans are designed to offset the increase in runoff caused by the conversion of natural land into streets, parking lots, and roofs. Designers calculate the amount of runoff and then plan to control it, perhaps with a detention pond, or an underground tank, or with landscaping and site features designed to infiltrate and slow runoff in a natural way. The District engineer works with engineers and developers before the design process begins to help them to make good land use decisions. He also checks the designs and makes his recommendations for improvement. As the site is being built, he will often visit with the designer and the municipality to check its progress. If any problems arise after the stormwater system is complete, our engineer will help to resolve them. In 1998, over 100 engineers were assisted in these ways by the damp, donut-eating district employee.

Education and Volunteers Solve Big Case



Volunteers Harold Grey and Carol Pollock lend expertise to gardens.

The Scene:

Center for Conservation Education, Ann Rudd Saxman Nature Park, Donohoe Center demonstration areas, and backyards throughout the county

The Weapons:

Workshops, public relations, sweat, donations, and an arsenal of dedication

The Characters:

Knowledgeable leaders and hundreds of volunteers

The Plot:

Educating, assisting and motivating county residents

Our Story:

This case began with the District's 1997 Long-range Plan, which made conservation education our prime goal. Although farmers have set an inspirational example for years by implementing conservation practices, District "detectives" observed a need for getting the conservation message across ... especially among young people and landowners. Thus, the Donohoe Center grounds, Ann Rudd Saxman Nature Park, and the proposed Center for Conservation Education are becoming the county's "conservation campus." Chief detective Greg Phillips said, "When we give landowners the information and resources they need to nurture the resources that are in their immediate care, we are doing more to promote conservation and insure a positive future than our staff could ever do alone, even if we worked 24 hours a day."

During 1998, District staff worked to spread the conservation message — through workshops on erosion control for homebuilders and elementary school classroom talks, and by distributing free conservation publications and sponsoring demonstrations of good conservation practices, such as composting. Volunteers such as Ryan Gordon who created a map of the arboretum, intern J.R. Myers who landscaped the Donohoe Center grounds, and *master gardeners* Carol Pollock and Harold Grey who planted the area under the Nature Park sign and around Ann Rudd Saxman's memorial led the way. An army of scouts, donors, educators, gardeners, county employees, and wildlife enthusiasts are solving this case.

Pondering Mysterious Powdermill



Education workshop facilitator, Theresa Rohall at Powdermill

Our Story:

In the dark, deep woods near Rector, it was clear to *Powdermill Nature Reserve* Coordinator of Education Theresa Rohall that she had her work cut out for her. She had undertaken a task that might scare the faint-hearted. She was about to take a "hands-on" approach to the newly emerging environmental education program in development at the Westmoreland Conservation District.

Early in 1998, Theresa facilitated a workshop at Powdermill Nature Reserve for the District staff that broadened our awareness of education and enlightened those attending about their role in this important endeavor. This workshop served as a backdrop to the development of our environmental education program which should be fully implemented by the end of 1999... and prepares the way for the planned Center for Conservation Education behind Donohoe Center.

The Scene:

Powdermill Nature Reserve

The Weapons:

Professional environmental instructor, enthusiasm

The Characters:

Theresa Rohall and District Staff

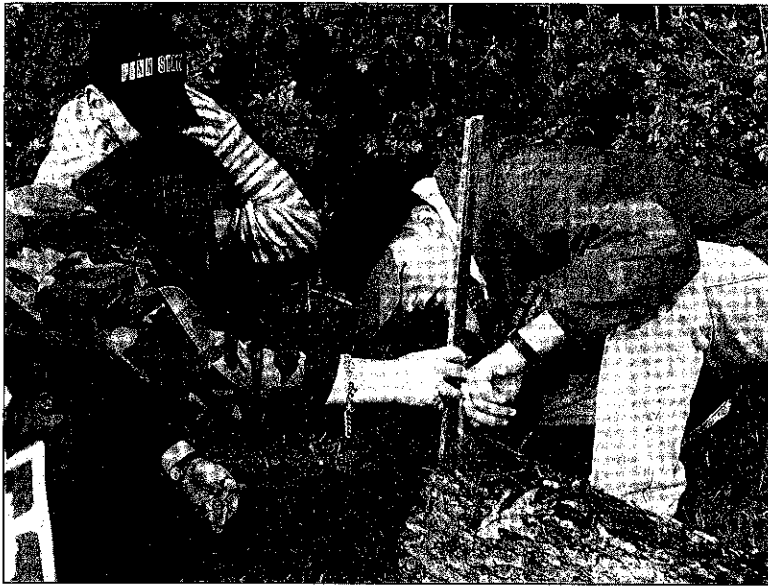
The Plot:

District staff becomes aware of their ability to educate the public

1998 District Training

Event	Attendance
DEP Regional Roundtables	66
DEP Solid Waste Managers Roundtables	33
Lancaster Conservation District Information Exchange	20
NRCS/District Technical Training	34

Ten Little Indians (Envirothon Teams)



An Envirothon team testing at the Forestry Station.

The Scene:

Scenic Mammoth County Park

The Weapons:

The knowledge of aquatics, forestry, soils, wildlife, and watershed stewardship

The Characters:

Burrell, Franklin Regional, Greensburg Central Catholic, Greensburg Salem, Hempfield, Kiski Area, Laurel Valley, Mount Pleasant, Norwin, and Yough High Schools

The Plot:

The Westmoreland County Envirothon title is up for grabs and with it, the chance to advance to the state and national Envirothons

The "Villains":

Franklin Regional High School. They have won the coveted first place award every year since 1987

Our "Partners in Crime" (the sponsors):

Super-Valu, Allegheny Power, Innovative Environmental Services, Beckwith Machinery Co., Jackson Graphics, Westmoreland County Sportsmen's League, and Westmoreland County Bureau of Parks

The Witnesses:

The agency representatives including Tom Fitzgerald, *Bureau of Forestry*; Joe Stefko, *PA Game Commission*; Theresa Rohall, *Powdermill Nature Reserve*; Wes Gordon, *Natural Resources Conservation Service*; and Bob Ventorini, *Western Pennsylvania Coalition for Abandoned Mine Reclamation*

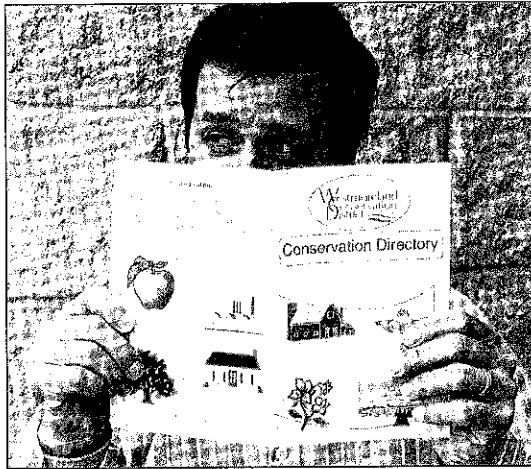
Our Story:

All participants (fifty high school students) were winners in the 1998 Envirothon. Top honors went to the "villains" again...Franklin Regional High School; second place went to Kiski Area High School, and Hempfield Area High School captured third place.

Participants were treated to a program by *Wildlife Works, Inc.* Executive Director, Beth Shoaf, on wild animal rehabilitation. Everyone received a complimentary tee-shirt featuring the *Pennsylvania Association of Conservation District's* mascot, Jake the Otter.

It's no mystery that the goal of the Envirothon is for the participants to become more environmentally aware, action-oriented adults.

The Riddle of the Educated Interns



The WCD Conservation Directory is read by a mysterious figure.

The Scene:

Westmoreland Conservation District Office, Donohoe Center grounds and demonstration areas, and Ann Rudd Saxman Nature Park

The Weapons:

Knowledge and an intense desire to gain experience

The Characters:

Jennifer Lenhart, J.R. Myers and Christine Youngbauer (all Penn State students)

The Plot:

College students descend on the District searching for hands-on learning experience

Our Story:

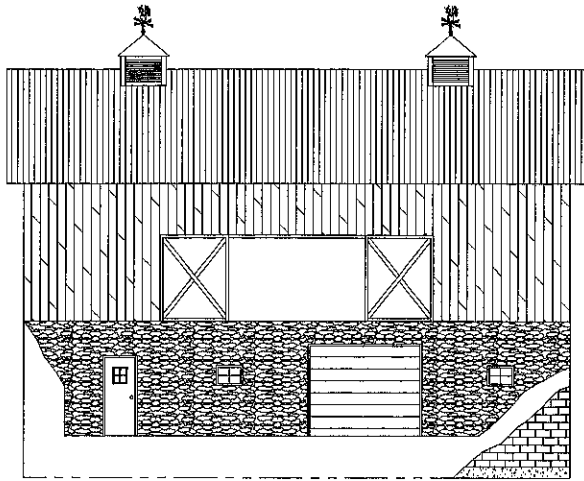
The District and *NRCS* staff and were mysteriously (and ably) aided by three ambitious and talented young people during the summer of 1998.

Lending her services as a Public Relations intern, Jennifer Lenhart of Bolivar gave valuable assistance to the production of an issue of *Landmarks*, produced the much-requested "Conservation Directory," which is a listing of addresses and phone numbers for our cooperating agencies, and initiated the first-ever PowerPoint computer slide show highlighting district programs and staff for display at the County Fair.

J.R. Myers of Latrobe completed several projects on the Donohoe Center grounds. They included the design and installation of flowerbeds at the entry sign, directory and mailboxes; a mowing plan for the grounds; Nature Park trail oversight in cooperation with local Boy Scout Troop #465, Laurel Hills District; assistance with clearing and beautification of the grounds in preparation for the check presentation by *Allegheny Power*; and preliminary plans for the beautification of *Westmoreland County* Courthouse Square.

We were pleased to have Christine Youngbauer of New Alexandria back for a second summer working out of the *Natural Resources Conservation Service* office with Wes Gordon. She completed her internship by assisting Larry Stokum, Conservation Technician, with surveying local farms and preparing final check notes on the wetlands at Monastery Run; updating and maintaining the *NRCS* database; and assisting district staff with inspections.

The Phenomenal Fundraising Saga



Computerized rendering of the Center For Conservation Education.

The Scene:

The mystery of fundraising isn't a "Who dunnit" but a "How are we gonna do it?"

The Weapons:

Skillful writing, patience with endless forms, computers, and dealing with people

The Characters:

Greg Phillips, Bob Teeter and crew, directors, associate directors, staffers, and a lot of generous people

The Plot:

Raise more than \$200,000 from additional sources for a wide variety of projects

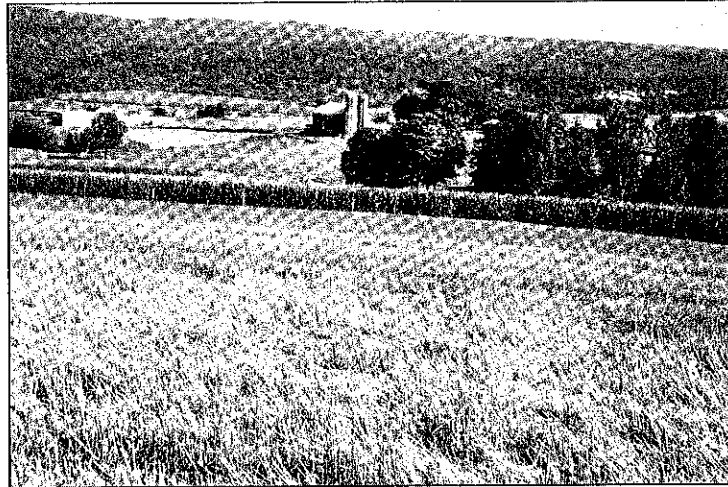
Our Story:

Veteran fundchaser Greg Phillips was concerned as usual. "There are so many important conservation projects that need to be addressed in our county," he groaned, as

he looked over the "cases" listed on a long scroll of paper that trailed off under his desk and down the hall. "New projects like the Soil Survey that relate to our core mission of conserving the county's streams, soils, forests... and new initiatives like education that are critical to developing the conservation ethic. We're fortunate to have the strong support of the County Commissioners. But the only way we're going to begin to do all that needs to be done is to find some new sources of funding." With help from outside consultants, the District was able to receive seven Westmoreland-County-specific grants last year, totaling \$211,759. This money was distributed through *Penn's Corner Resource Conservation & Development Area* and allowed the District to undertake or enhance a variety of projects:

- A long-time District dream of creating a Center for Conservation Education began to take shape last year thanks to a total of \$76,667 donated by *Allegheny Power*, the *Katherine Mabis McKenna Foundation*, and several private individuals.
- A highly visible 6,000-flower highway beautification project at the intersection of Route 30 and Greengate Road in Hempfield Township was made possible by \$12,700 in gifts.
- Development information on Westmoreland County's woodlands was generated by a \$10,000 *US Forest Service* grant to conduct a woodland inventory.
- The Westmoreland County Soil Survey is being updated with the help of a \$9,000 grant from the *USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service*.
- The Loyalhanna Gorge Forestry Demonstration Project received a \$3,000 grant from the *US Forest Service*.
- A riparian buffer along Four Mile Run in Unity Township was restored with \$392 from the *Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay*.
- A \$100,000 infusion from a *Department of Environmental Protection* consent agreement will be used to undertake projects to clean up mine drainage in the *Sewickley Creek Watershed*.

The Case of the Farsighted Farmers



Best management practices include the entire farm operation.

The Scene:

Farms in Westmoreland County

The Weapons:

Streambank fencing, riparian buffers, conservation plans, and nutrient & water management

The Characters:

Conservation-minded farmers, District staff, NRCS, Farmland Preservation Program

The Plot:

Stopping muddy barnyards and overgrazed pastures from creating erosion through a seminar providing farm owners and operators with ideas to increase profits through better land management

Our Story:

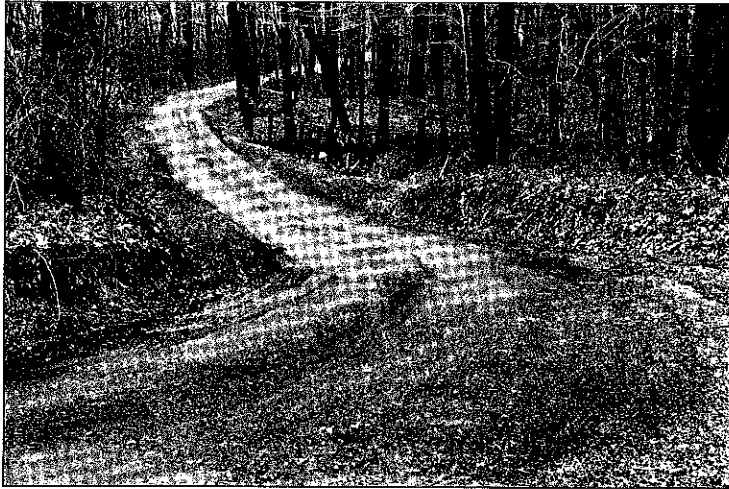
The door creaked open... The lights flickered on... Slowly, but surely, people began to enter the room... It wasn't long before approximately thirty farmers from the area had gathered at Donohoe Center for a program designed to explain the benefits of management plans for farmland water, nutrients, woodlots, milkhouse water, and information on conservation plans and farmland preservation. An interesting fact about this particular workshop is that all the "masterminds" involved were employees of agencies housed in Donohoe Center.

With this new knowledge in hand those attending were able to leave with the ability to go back to their farms and formulate a long-range, land management plan. Their ultimate objectives (and solutions to the case) are to improve water quality on and below their land, and increase the profitability of their agricultural operations.

1998 District Presentations

Event	Attendance
Chromo Glass Alternative Sewage System	25
Allegheny Power Stewardship Team	12
Eco Flow Alternative Sewage System	17
Greensburg Middle School - Camp Soles	200
Indiana County Conservation District Legislative Breakfast	20
PA CleanWays	15
Masonic Lodge	35
R.K. Mellon Elementary School	110

The Case of Dirt and Gravel Roads



Crooked Run Road, Salem Township, crosses a tributary to Beaver Run.

The Scene:

Exceptional value and high quality watersheds with sedimentation problems

The Weapons:

Environmentally sensitive Best Management Practices

The Characters:

Municipal supervisors and roadmasters, Dirt and Gravel Roads Task Force, State Conservation Commission (SCC), DEP, a District director, the PA Fish and Boat Commission, and Natural Resources Conservation Service

The Plot:

Fight sediment pollution to streams in high quality and exceptional value watersheds caused by unstable dirt and gravel roads

Our Story:

The “interrogation” began with two public meetings which were attended by township supervisors, road crews, and agency staff from five southwestern Pennsylvania counties. They were drilled with questions during the intense two-day sessions.

The “interrogation” had proven fruitful. Over 70 municipal officials who had been “cross-examined” were now known to be “the Good Guys”. They had gathered all the clues about the mystery of the dirt and gravel roads.

The clues were enough to initiate action by the “Good Guys”. The townships of Donegal, Fairfield, and Salem were given funding to pursue the “suspects” (dirt and gravel roads) in their high quality watersheds. The District distributed \$30,000 to stabilize roads with cross drains, rocklined ditches, protected outlets and seeded side slopes. Ensuing investigations and projects with other townships will be funded. The “suspects” will no longer be left to spoil the watersheds of these areas. Officials from fifteen municipalities have been trained and certified to fight against the “suspects”.

District technical staff and agency representatives continue to investigate the damage in many watersheds. Funding has been provided by the State Legislature through the *State Conservation Commission*. The District will be working diligently with state and local officials to obtain more funding and get additional projects on the ground in Westmoreland County.



Sleuths Gather to Receive Instruction

The Scene:

New home construction

The Weapons:

Silt fence, rock entrances, straw bales, sedimentation ponds, diversions and common sense

The Characters:

Contractors and subcontractors, Conservation District, *O.C. Cluss Lumber, Westmoreland County Homebuilders Association*

The Plot:

Hold a workshop to educate homebuilders on how to implement and maintain erosion controls at their sites. Make them aware of the problems with sediment pollution and to explain the advantages of keeping their sites looking good.

Our Story:

On February 25th, 1998 thirty contractors came to Donohoe Center seeking answers for their erosion control woes. District staff, along with Curt Johnson from the *Westmoreland County Homebuilder's Association*, and Chuck Charrie from *Manor Borough & REALCO, Inc.* offered varied perspectives on this topic. Some of the topics included in the program were the following: working with the Conservation District, erosion control rules & regulations, basic erosion and sediment pollution controls, and municipal code and real estate outlook. There was also a presentation by *Rugby Building Products* on a relatively new drainage improvement product called 'Form-A-Drain'. The half-day session left the contractors well informed about what needed to be done and how they could do it. *O.C. Cluss Lumber & Home Center* and *Westmoreland County Homebuilders Association* co-sponsored the workshop. The Homebuilders Association was instrumental in planning the workshop, and conveying the District's philosophy toward cooperative solutions to environmental problems.

1998 District Workshops	
Event	Attendance
Alternative Sewage Treatment Satellite Downlink	45
Urban Best Management Practices	104
Loyalhanna Watershed Non-Point Source Projects	35
Nutrient Management	25
Riparian Buffers	45
St. Vincent Summer Institute	21

The Ghostly Nashville Sound



Greg Phillips, Lorrie Stouffer, and Roy Houston pose with newsletter award plaque.

The Scene:

Nashville, Tennessee

The Weapons:

Landmarks and a busy district

The Characters:

Roy Houston, Conrad Donovan, Ron and Theresa Rohall, Lorrie Stouffer, Greg Phillips

The Plot:

Directors and staff attend the 1998 NACD Annual Meeting and sit in on workshops, receive awards, and interact with conservationists from across the nation

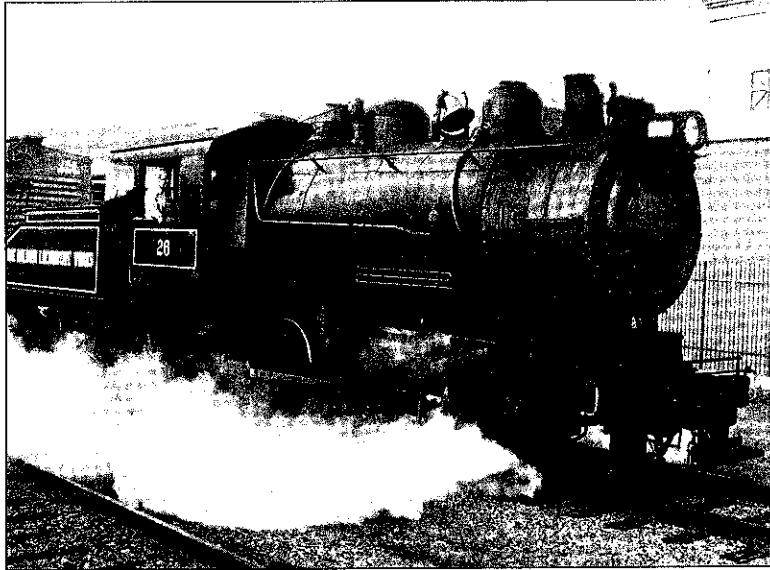
Our Story:

The ghostly strains of Minnie Pearl and Hank Williams, Jr. drifted across the deserted Ryman Auditorium stage. As conservationists from across the country toured the former auditorium of the Grand Old Opry, memories of country legends came to mind.

Such was the setting as WCD Directors and staff journeyed to Nashville, Tennessee in February to attend the 52nd Annual Meeting of the *National Association of Conservation Districts*. Highlights included a very informative keynote address during the opening ceremonies by Dr. Lowell Catlett, on "New 'Knowledge Food' World"; educational workshops on locally led conservation, innovative fund-raising programs, and the effective Backyard Conservation Program; and the very entertaining humorist Jerry Clower. During the NACD Awards Luncheon, Lorrie Stouffer accepted the first place award in the NACD/Equipment Manufacturers, Inc. District Newsletter Contest for *Landmarks*.

It was also a special moment for our directors and staff to be present as our friend, William Lange from Lackawanna County, received the NACD Special Service Award. (Later in the year district Chairman Roy Houston won the *Pennsylvania Association of Conservation District's (PACD)* William Lange Urban Conservation Award.)

The Orient Express Conference Case



Conservationists went "all-aboard" for a scenic train ride.

The Scene:

The Radisson Hotel, Scranton, PA

The Weapons:

Communicating knowledge, listening and interacting with fellow conservationists

The Characters:

Roy Houston, Ron and Theresa Rohall, Thelma and Roy Kemerer, Helen and Al Barnett, Greg Phillips, Lorrie Stouffer, Tony Quadro, Mark Jackson and Paul Heyworth

The Plot:

Westmoreland Conservation District Directors and Staff attend annual meetings, take a ride on the "Orient Express" – the Steam Town National Park Locomotive Excursion – and contribute to the four-day program

Our Story:

Although Agatha Christie was not in attendance on the Orient Express, district personnel did join their counterparts from across Pennsylvania in three days of meetings and workshops at the *Pennsylvania Association of Conservation Districts* and *State Conservation Commission's* 51st Joint Annual Conference in Scranton, PA. Paul Heyworth, Associate Director, assisted in a productive workshop on the PACD Public Relations Handbook, which he had originally designed and recently updated. Lorrie Stouffer joined Joanne Nardonne from the *Department of Environmental Protection* in an interactive program on employee handbooks and personnel policies. The Annual Awards Banquet concluded with our own Chairman Roy Houston receiving the William Lange Urban Conservation Award.

Annual Awards Banquet Fetes Deserving Conservationists

The Scene:

Four Points by Sheraton, Greensburg

The Weapons:

Awards, a hearty meal, an entertaining and informative speakers

The Characters:

Honored guests

The Plot:

District staff and Board of Directors conspire to give tribute to volunteers and those who have had a significant contribution in natural resource conservation

Our Story:

It was a dark and stormy night... No, wait a minute. The door creaked open... No, that's not quite right either. Actually, amid friends and laughter, the District staff and board of directors gathered in early November to honor individuals and groups who have made contributions in various areas of natural resource conservation in our county.

Following the theme for the evening... "Road Map to the Future,"...the agenda included a light-hearted look at the cartoon "Cross Country Detours", and was highlighted by the congenial banter of Masters of Ceremony Conrad Donovan (WCD Director) and Wes Gordon (NRCS District Conservationist).

Ray Foote, Vice-President for Program Development, *Scenic America*, presented attendees with an informative speech.

Awards were presented in the following areas:

- **Special Conservation Recognition**

Monastery Run Steering Committee – for advancement of watershed restoration at Saint Vincent College.

- **Outstanding Forest Manager**

Bill Rea – for quality forest management practices on his Cook Township property.

- **Conservation Partner**

Allegheny Power – for promoting good stewardship of Pennsylvania's natural resources through local conservation projects.

- **Conservation Farmer**

F. Rodney Smith – for quality agricultural conservation practices on his Rostraver Township property.

- **Special Conservation Service**

J. Roy Houston – for years of dedicated service to the Westmoreland Conservation District.

Certificates were presented to the following groups and individuals:

- *Theresa Rohall* – for assistance in the area of environmental education
- *Kathy Fritz* – for fifteen years dedicated service to the District
- *Boy Scout Troop 465* – for projects completed in the Ann Rudd Saxman Nature Park
- *Judy Shields* – for volunteer efforts in New Kensington beautification efforts, and
- *C.R. Greene* – for technical assistance to the District and our cooperating agencies.



Chairman Roy Houston received special awards from County Commissioner Terry Marolt.

Database Detective Solves Case



The computer database is effectively managed by Karen Barnhart.

The Scene:

The office of the Westmoreland Conservation District

The Weapons:

Detailed lists of names and addresses, computer equipment, and the reliable and immeasurable help from a local attorney (and computer whiz!)

The Characters:

Greensburg Attorney Pat Iezzi and his able assistant Wendy Weaver, Karen Barnhart, Lorrie Stouffer, and other staff members

The Plot:

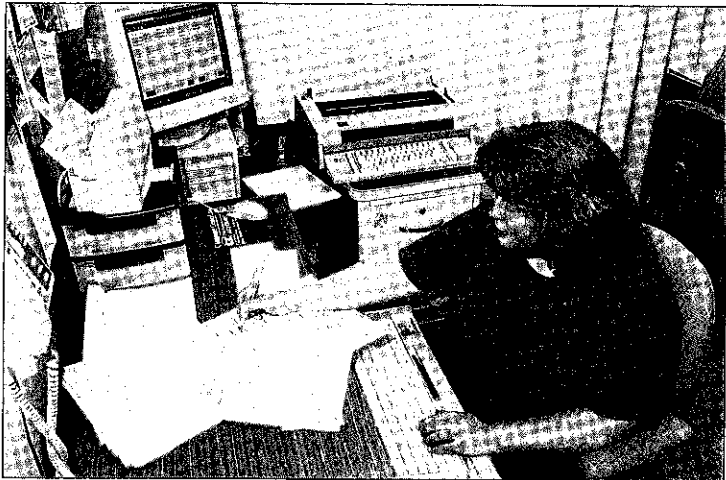
An inability to divide and sort labels for our mailings. The Westmoreland Conservation District's mailing list has grown to over 4,300 individuals and organizations. A more distinct breakdown of categories in our existing database was needed.

Our Story:

As another day dawned in the busy office of the Westmoreland Conservation District, the mystery was trying to decide who should be included on a particular mailing...and why our mailing list was not organized in a more efficient manner. The District database had grown at such a fast rate, it was agreed that we should have a more detailed and exact list of categories to quickly sort the mailings. Whom we should turn to in our hour of need?

Enter our heroes – the capable and efficient Wendy Weaver and Pat Iezzi. These friendly and helpful allies came to us in our hour of need, asked a few questions, worked up a great program and then disappeared into the night. With a new program at our fingertips, labels printed up in the wink of an eye, and a wide variety of specific categories from which to choose were available in a flash. This new database will also enable us to expand in many new directions and as a result better help and serve the people of Westmoreland County.

Another Computer Caper



Y2K will be no mystery for Kathy Fritz.

The Scene:

The Westmoreland Conservation District's program secretary's office

The Weapons:

A Compaq Deskpro Pentium II Computer

The Characters:

Department of Environmental Protection

The Plot:

The Millennium bearing down on the unsuspecting employees of conservation districts everywhere

Our Story:

The crowd was in an uproar at a recent *Pennsylvania Association of Conservation District* meeting. The millennium is coming! The millennium is coming! The world and the erosion control program will come to a chaotic

end. The records for 65 counties will be lost. Questions were flying about. Are we going to lose all that data for the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System? Will we no longer know how many construction sites there are? Will the developers that owe penalties not have to pay because there are no records? What about Nutrient Management, Soil Survey, funding for salaries of the *Western Pennsylvania Coalition for Abandoned Mine Reclamation Program* and other elements in the fight against all that is evil? Will state funding come to a screeching halt because there is no way to track what we have done?

Then a man stood up and said, "I have your answers. The Governor is a step ahead of you. He is going to take care of all of you. He has decided conservation district activities play a very important role in land use in the state. We do not want the valuable information to be lost forever. So, to insure that all districts have at least one top-of-the-line computer in their office that has a way to communicate with the *Department of Environmental Protection*, I am buying 65 Compaq Deskpro Pentium II computers. One computer will be placed in each District office across the state and have a modem to establish direct contact with the Department. I have big ideas for the year 2000!"

The plot thickened when, a few months later on a sunny afternoon in November, Kathy Fritz, Program Secretary and Lorrie Stouffer, Assistant District Manager ventured to the DEP, Regional Office in Pittsburgh to pick up the "weapons," (computers) and to capture a few more clues about the governor's gift. District "suspects" from this region found themselves packed into a small room hoping to "get the word," and left with a monitor, speakers, and modem. The hard drive arrived by mail a few days later. The computer is now in operation, but the suspense grows and mystery remains. What lies ahead when the millennium arrives?

The Mystery Of The Tall, Thick Man

Volunteers assist in the installation of a 'jack dam.'



The Scene:

Streams, ponds, wetlands, and water bodies in Westmoreland County

The Weapon:

The District-DEP Delegation Agreement

The Character:

A tall, thick man with a clipboard

The Plot:

The District protects water resources

Our Story:

The bulldozer drivers were hard at work, shoving dirt and rocks into the wetland, burying the stream and the cattails as quickly as they could. Suddenly the brightness of the sun was obscured, not with a cloud, but with a deep, dark shadow that loomed over them. In fear, they turned...the tall, thick man stood behind them, silhouetted against the setting sun. The environmental destruction came to a sudden halt...

The old woman shivered against the cold damp wind. Once again her driveway had been washed out by storm runoff, and she had to walk to the store. Inadequate culverts, combined with years of development, had left her small stream overwhelmed by water and sediment, even after a minor storm. The woman wished there were someone who could help... someone who could cut through red tape. She heard footsteps behind her...heavy, steady, fast steps. She turned around. A tall, thick man was walking along the street with a clipboard...

Who is the tall, thick man? What does he do? Why is he tall and thick? The answer can be found at the Westmoreland Conservation District's office! There, with his able assistant Kathy, this mysterious person carries out the District's 'Chapter 105' delegation agreement with **PA DEP**. Chapter 105 regulates activities which impact streams, lakes, ponds, swamps, and other bodies of water. The District issues permits to people who wish to stabilize eroding streambanks, install driveway culverts, or lay utility lines across streams, for example. We also assist citizens in obtaining proper DEP permits for larger activities. Our technical staff helps engineers to design stream encroachments so that they do not block flood flows or impact wetlands. We have floodplain, wetland, and topographic maps, and soil surveys to help with the office detective work before anyone goes to the field.

The engineer made over 100 site visits in 1998 to investigate stream problems. Violations of the rules were turned over to DEP for further action. Education, always a District hallmark, is a centerpiece of our Chapter 105 program. Finally, one of our most important Chapter 105 projects in 1998 involved streambank stabilization and construction of a 'jack dam' at Greensburg's **Lynch Field** complex, in cooperation with volunteers from **Allegheny Power**, the **Game Commission**, the **Sewickley Creek Watershed Association**, and the **Greensburg Salem Middle School**. This project is a demonstration of 'bio-engineering', or, the use of natural materials and processes to solve stream problems and enhance the riparian habitat.

The TellTale Communications Caper



Paul Heyworth is a "slave" to the conservation movement.

The Scene:

Conservation Communication Center

The Weapons:

The Pen (mightier than the sword)

The Characters:

Paul Heyworth and his secret gang of communicators

The Plot:

A mild-mannered retiree takes matters into his own hands to combat the evils of ignorance and indifference

Our Story:

The retirement of a great crime-fighter is often problematic for a mystery writer. He soon finds his character cannot retire in the face of great public demand. For example, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle attempted to kill off Sherlock Holmes, only to be forced by public outcry to bring the famed detective back after several years, his apparent death only a ruse. Our very own crime-fighter, Paul Heyworth, a long-time associate of the Conservation District, recently retired from the Tribune-Review, where he was a writer, photographer, and editor. Retirement, however, has neither slowed Paul's reaction time nor dulled his senses. With newfound free time, he has been actively devoting himself to his beloved conservation causes.

This is the way he fights the insidious evils of disregard for our natural resources: Instead of a .44 Magnum, Heyworth uses his mighty pen (or borrows someone's word processor). With this weapon he helped with the District's 50th anniversary materials, fund raising, *Landmarks*, and the annual report. Most recently, Paul spearheaded the rebirth of the *Jacobs Creek Watershed Association*, which is dedicated to improving water quality in the southern part of the county. He has put his pen to paper and his shoulder to the wheel on behalf of the *WPCAMR* and the *Yough River Improvement Council*.

As we benefit from Paul's "retirement," we can be thankful for his never-ending fight against those "evil" forces which despoil the countryside.

Storage Mystery Solved

Another mysterious figure finds no skeletons in this closet (only old E&S files.)



The Scene:

The District Office at Donohoe Center

The Weapons:

Boxes

The Characters:

District Staff

The Plot:

Battling clutter, organization of offices and more room

Our Story:

As District Manager, Greg Phillips, roamed the halls of the four-year-old district office, he scowled. "I cannot believe we have all this space filled already! We've been in bomb shelters, old office buildings, and we finally get a beautiful new building...and we're already bursting at the seams! We need organization, we need a solution now!" Driven by worry and resolve, he dashed into Lorrie Stouffer's office for a conference (his usual procedure).

Lorrie cleverly responded, "I bet if we put our heads together we could find a solution." The district staff looked through files, re-evaluated their individual office space and itemized things which could be kept in house, items which could be stored nearby for easy access, and those which could be recycled. The list was shocking!

After Lorrie's inspired investigation into what other agencies do to address this problem, she decided a small storage unit located one-half mile down the road would do the job. Greg, saved once again by his staff, was pleased and took credit for the whole idea.

With much effort from all the staff, everything was labeled, boxed and shipped down the road...and on March 2nd, the clutter was gone. Now, as Greg roams the halls closely overseeing the staff, he has room to breathe and brag...knowing it is only five minutes to the well-organized storage facility and the treasures of yesteryear.

The Incident of the Silty Soil Survey



Alex Dado and Rob Knight join forces to solve this case.

The Scene:

A man sits in a dark room, hunched over a glowing light table

The Weapons:

30" x 24" sheets of clear mylar, black and red lead mechanical pencils, and erasers

The Characters:

Two soil scientists; one from the Natural Resources Conservation Service, and one from the Westmoreland Conservation District

The Plot:

A 30-year-old soil survey is being updated and digitized

Our Story:

As the man sat hunched over the light table in the darkness, he pondered the immensity of the project he had been faced with. His thoughts turned to the impact this project could have on the future. "This soil survey...this valuable map of the various types of soil found throughout the county, is important to so many people. It is used daily by engineers, planners, developers, farmers, foresters, landowners and others who need to know the properties of the soil on a tract of land and how best to manage it." He was thankful for the cooperative effort between the District and the *Natural Resources Conservation Service* to modernize this soil survey.

The man thought back to the previous year and the quest he and his partner, the enigmatic Rob Knight, had ventured out from Donohoe Center to complete. After spending the spring, summer, and much of the fall in the field collecting data, our dedicated soil scientists faced the arduous task of transferring all of the soil maps for the county into a computer format. This involves tracing them onto mylar and scanning them.

Rubbing his forehead, the man's thoughts raced over the enormous amount of land that encompassed this project. Prior to 1998, 140,000 acres were traced. During 1998, the two soil scientists traced over 210,000 acres. Their goal for 1999 is to finish the remaining 310,000 acres in Westmoreland County.

Smiling now with satisfaction, the man felt a growing sense of accomplishment. The end of the quest was beginning to take shape. He knew that once the maps are completed, they will be joined up and will be available in a CD-ROM format and hopefully, will someday be available over the Internet.

The NRCS Solves Major Mysteries



Larry Stokum and Wes Gordon provide valuable assistance to local conservation efforts.

The Scene:

A county the size of Rhode Island with a wide variety of land uses, soils and water quality problems

The Weapons:

Professional conservationists, federal money, and a desire to sustain and improve the environment

The Characters:

District Conservationist Wesley Gordon and Conservation Technician Larry Stokum

The Plot:

Providing technical assistance to landowners and users, especially farmers

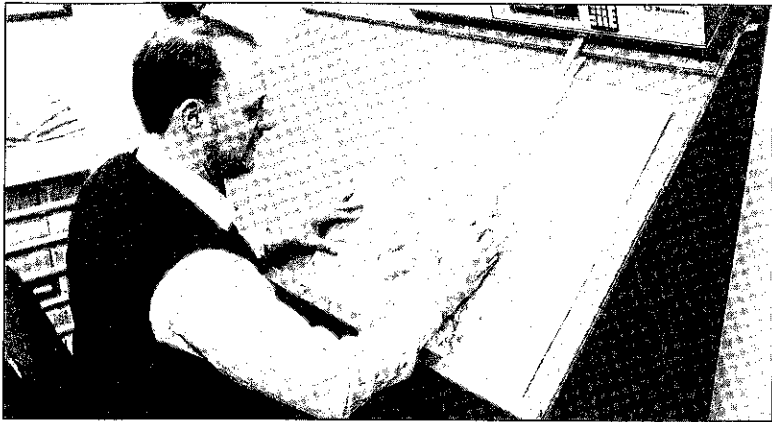
Our Story:

Just like two detectives working together to solve a great mystery, the *U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service* provides technical assistance to landusers in cooperation with the Westmoreland Conservation District.

The "detectives" had another successful year for the Monastery Run project as two more wetland systems were completed. Dedication of passive treatment systems, Wetland #1 and #2 occurred as part of the annual fall symposium. NRCS has been a major partner in this cooperative effort to improve the water quality of the Loyalhanna Creek by treating the abandoned mine discharges.

NRCS has also provided technical assistance to several other abandoned mine discharge problems including Brinkerton, Keystone Park, Freidline Mine and Saxman Run. NRCS continues to provide, upon request, on-site technical assistance to land users to plan and install soil and water conservation practices. During 1998, they provided assistance to farm operators on rotational grazing, barnyard stabilization, contour stripcropping, grass waterways, spring developments, stream corridor management and other practices to protect and utilize soil and water resources. They also helped administer at the local levels both the *Environmental Quality Incentives Program* and the *Conservation Reserve Program*. Assistance was provided to the Westmoreland Conservation District on projects such as non-point source pollution evaluation, dirt and gravel road improvements, watershed grant applications, stream corridor improvements, promotion of watershed initiatives and others.

The "Eerie" Innovation in Environmental Improvement



John Lohr sifts through clues to the Farm Service Agency puzzle.



The Scene:

Farm Service Agency, Donohoe Center

The Weapons:

Valuable assistance programs

The Characters:

Local gumshoe John Lohr and his dedicated staff

The Plot:

"New" Conservation Reserve Program put into action

Our Story:

Definitely not a crime or a caper, the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) is the Federal Government's single largest environmental improvement program and one of its most productive and cost-effective. It is administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's *Farm Service Agency* (FSA).

Established in 1985, the CRP encourages farmers to voluntarily plant permanent areas of grass and trees on land that needs protection from erosion or in places where vegeta-

tion can improve water quality or provide food and habitat for wildlife. Farmers must enter into contracts with FSA lasting between 10 and 15 years. In return they receive annual rental payments, incentive payments for certain activities, and cost-share assistance to establish vegetative cover.

Today in Westmoreland County the CRP safeguards hundreds of acres of topsoil from erosion; and by reducing water runoff and sedimentation, it protects groundwater and helps improve our county's lakes, rivers, ponds and streams.

With the "new CRP" launched in 1997, FSA is working to maximize the program's environmental benefits. Only the most environmentally sensitive land, in relation to costs, is now accepted into the program, making optimum use of each taxpayer dollar to improve the environment. Erosion control remains a top priority, and now water quality and wildlife habitat improvement are given greater emphasis than before.

The CRP ranks highly with America's most successful wildlife conservation efforts. The program encourages diverse covers of natural grasses and other plantings, with the specific aim of sheltering and feeding a variety of wildlife.

The CRP's benefits go beyond improving the environment. The program also makes valuable contributions to the economy. CRP economic benefits include increases in farm income, timber resources, soil productivity, water and air quality, and hunting activity.

Contact the local Farm Service Agency office at (724) 834-0830 for more information on the Conservation Reserve Program.

The Preservation Plot



The Scene:

Westmoreland County with productive farmlands dating back to 1765, when agriculture was at the top with king coal. But today agriculture struggles to survive the effects of bulldozers and developers.

The Weapons:

Agricultural Security Areas, conservation easements, marketing local agriculture products, effective USDA conservation planning, preferential tax assessment, and the Conservation Reserve Program

The Characters:

Ms. Scarlett (Betty Reefer), Professor Plum (Hilary Schramm), Mr. Peacock (Blaine Hutter), Mr. White (Rick Pounds), Rev. Green (Father Murrman), Mr. Green (Richard Comp), Hogarth (Jim Mathews) and of course, Colonel Mustard (Don Fretts)

The Plot:

Our passion and love of the land spreads deep in the roots of county citizens. Many farms have been lost, but now there's a way to turn the tides. The Ag Preservation Board must slow the development of prime farmland while there is still time.

Our Story:

From the great hall of Donohoe Center, Ms. Scarlett watched nervously as her devoted surveyor Leonard struggled into her office with a huge farm map in tow. "Careful, careful, it's our greatest prize of preservation," Scarlett cautioned. The artwork was unrolled to reveal one of the greatest conservation farms in the county...the year long effort by the *Westmoreland County Agricultural Land Preservation Board* was not in vain. "It's magnificent...a masterpiece of effective agricultural conservation practices." Colonel Mustard poked his head into the office for a view. "Yes,

yes, but let's keep this thing covered until we unveil it to the entire county, demonstrating effective preservation of our farms to the north," the Colonel blurted out.

Farmland Preservation has helped to bring more pieces of the puzzle together, to begin solving the mystery of what is best for Westmoreland County. What people of this county want most is to keep Westmoreland beautiful, productive, and a desirable place to live. Farmland protection will help achieve those three things. The board purchased five new agriculture conservation easements during the year. The first easement in Unity Township was purchased on 102 acres of beautiful farmland owned by Roy and Thelma Kemerer. Another first came in Derry just a few weeks later, with the protection of a 157-acre beef and crop farm owned by Dr. Frank Skacel. A second County-Only easement is in place on the David and Barbara Brillhart farm (50 acres) near Ruffsdale, and nearby, on the historic family farm of Frank and Quintin Suter (100 acres of crop and dairy land). Also approved was the first farm in South Huntingdon Township, Branthoover's Dairy, near West Newton, protecting 257 acres.

FPP has been involved with the Southwestern Pennsylvania Regional Ag Initiative Committee and the Pennsylvania Association of Sustainable Agriculture...developing a plan for a regional farm market, providing a year-round market space for local ag producers and consumers. As this plot thickens, some wonder, will it ever be?

Local produce enhances farm markets.



The Escapade of the Abandoned Mine

The Scene:

Westmoreland County and Western Pennsylvania Streams

The Weapons:

Watershed Associations, concerned citizens, local legislators, and state and federal agencies

The Characters:

Two Coordinators and their groups of pollution fighters

The Plot:

To uncover the best way to tackle pollution problems long considered too massive to undertake

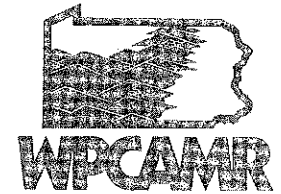
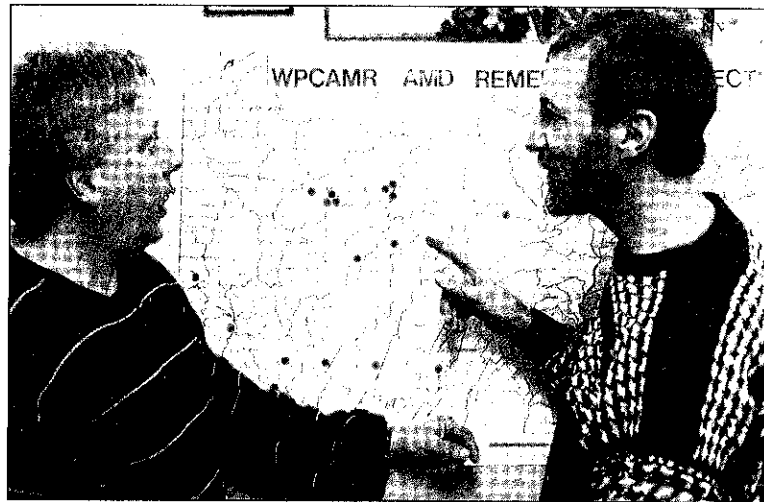
Our Story:

Many theories exist as to why our land and water have been treated so unkindly. We see the evidence all around us: streams that run bright orange with the color of rust, now lifeless; drinking water with the smell of sulfur and the taste of iron; large black piles of rock and coal often looming over our quiet towns and hidden among the countryside; tunnels that cave in causing houses to tilt and break; the earth itself breathing fire and smoke from abandoned mine workings; gaping holes and barren lands left on the landscape.

Such are the legacies left to us as a result of fueling an industrial revolution, fighting two World Wars and bringing us the comforts we often take for granted. The development of the now long-abandoned coal mines that created those legacies also help to create our close-knit communities and bind together people often separated by cultural and language differences.

Mark Killar and his newly hired partner Jeff Fliss are working through the Western PA Coalition for Abandoned Mine Reclamation (WPCAMR) and the conservation districts to develop new ways to tackle our abandoned mine problems.

Working closely with Westmoreland county groups like the



Jeff Fliss is "startled" by the range of WPCAMR projects pointed out by Mark Killar.

Turtle Creek, Loyalhanna, Sewickley Creek, Mountain, and Jacobs Creek Watershed Associations, they help by providing hands-on assistance in clean up efforts. Their work has been supported by local legislators through the development of laws that would provide more funding directly to watershed groups and the creation of "Good Samaritan" protection for landowners that help local efforts by allowing the use of their properties for clean-up activities.

This year, in cooperation with the *PA Department of Environmental Protection*, WPCAMR helped develop the "Regional Watershed Support Initiative" which works to create new watershed groups in areas where help is needed in cleaning up abandoned mine problems.

The coming year looks to be a good one with the announcement of the governor's "*Growing Greener*" initiative that will redirect funds to Pennsylvania's biggest water pollution problem, drainage from abandoned coal mines.

The "Mine Water Guys" urge everyone, from our senior citizens to our young conservationists, to become actively involved in a local watershed group. If everybody works together, no problem is too big to overcome.

A solution cannot be reached until you read the last clues to the puzzle:



- Bob Ventorini left the Western Pennsylvania Coalition for Abandoned Mine Reclamation to pursue a career as an environmental scientist during the latter part of the year and was just recently replaced by Jeff Fliss of Indiana, PA. A feature on Jeff will appear in the spring edition of *Landmarks*.
- Nutrient Management Specialist Holly Dugan resigned and moved to Colorado to serve as a program coordinator for the YMCA of the Rockies in Winter Park, CO.
- Karen Barnhart was hired as a secretary/clerk in January. Her duties include secretarial support to the District's administrative staff and assisting with bookkeeping.
- New associate directors were appointed during 1998, including Bill Clark, Steve Simpson, Paul Heyworth, and Harry Meyer.
- A District Retreat was held early in February at Powdermill Nature Reserve with the Board and staff attending. Goals and objectives for the year were reviewed and updated using the new Long-Range Plan as a tool.
- Greg Phillips and Betty Reefer are serving on an Open Space Steering Committee, which guides the formation of a county-wide comprehensive recreation, park and open space plan. The Plan will guide the Westmoreland County Bureau of Parks and Recreation in its mission "to provide for the recreation and leisure needs of county residents and provide park land and open space that is accessible and available to residents" for the next five to ten years. The Committee includes members from industry, private business, education, tourism, foundations, and county and state government.
- The Department of Environmental Protection conducted a review of the District's erosion control program in early 1998. DEP was pleased to discover we were carrying out our delegated responsibilities, and made special mention of our education, stormwater management and erosion control programs.
- Bob Ackerman, WCD Associate Director and Greg Phillips conducted three Alternative Sewage Treatment workshops in 1998. Seventy-five people attended the events. We hope these presentations and discussions will lead to viable alternatives to remedy situations where conventional septic systems malfunction and pollute streams and groundwater.
- WCD Directors Ron Rohall and Roy Houston, Associate Director Mark Jackson, and staff members Tony Quadro and Greg Phillips attended the PACD Capital Day in Harrisburg. They met with legislators to discuss increased state funding for conservation districts.
- Chuck Kubasik, (DEP) was named as the District's new field representative replacing Harry Meyer. He will serve as a local liaison between conservation districts and DEP.

And of course, the solution
is that it takes all of us...

*the Westmoreland Conservation District working in cooperation with its partners, volunteers,
and friends...to solve the intricate **mystery** of natural resources conservation.
We thank **you** for the commitment you have shown in this worthwhile endeavor.*

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
- Rails to Trails
- Recreation
- Recycling
- Resource Conservation and Development
- Rural Abandoned Mine Program
- Soil Erosion and Sediment Pollution Control/Prevention
- 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.

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Albert Barnett, *Director*

P. Graydon Long, *Director*

Terry Marolt, *County Commissioner, Director*

Dorothy Stoner, *Director*

Keith Walters, *Director*

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Bill Clark

Jack Driscoll

Paul Heyworth

Mark Jackson

Tom Keller

Bill Kotsenas

Harry Meyer

Theresa Rohall

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Craig Barras, *Erosion Control Specialist*

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Daniel Griffith, *Nutrient Mgmt./Conservation Technician*

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Mark Killar, *WPCAMR Regional Coordinator*

Jeff Fliss, *WPCAMR Watershed Coordinator*

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PA Department of Environmental Protection

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Pennsylvania Association of Conservation Districts

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Westmoreland Woodlands Improvement Association

PA CleanWays

Penn's Corner Charitable Trust

Westmoreland Conservancy

Saint Vincent College

Powdermill Nature Reserve

Five Star Trail Chapter – Regional Trail Corporation

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.



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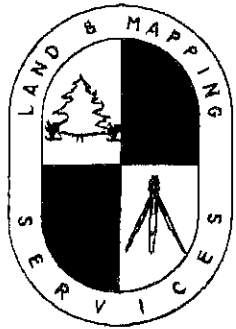
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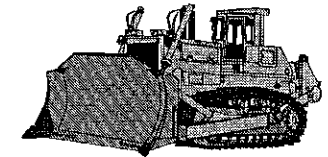
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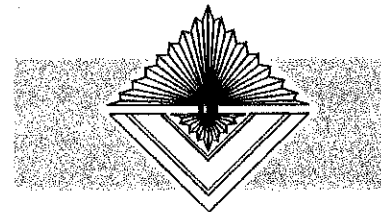
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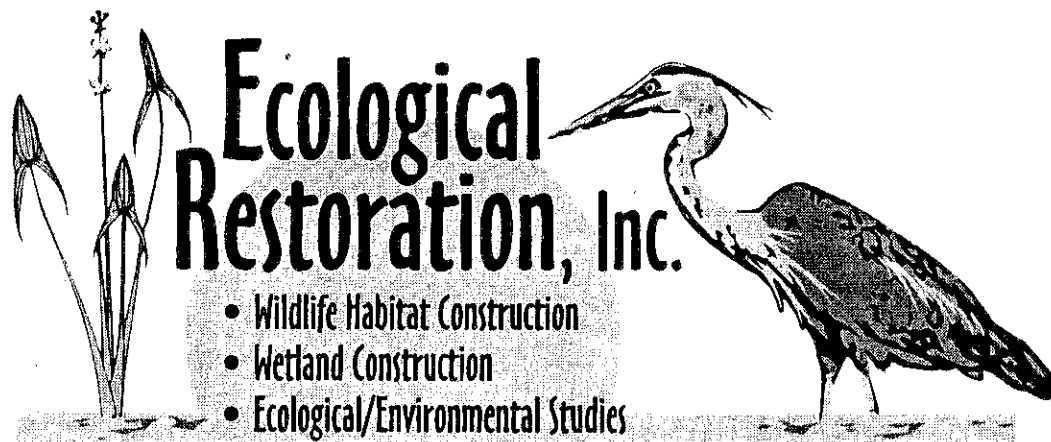
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