

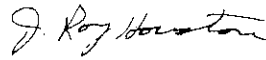


*Simple Gifts*

Westmoreland Conservation District  
2000 ANNUAL REPORT

*Dear Friends of Conservation,*

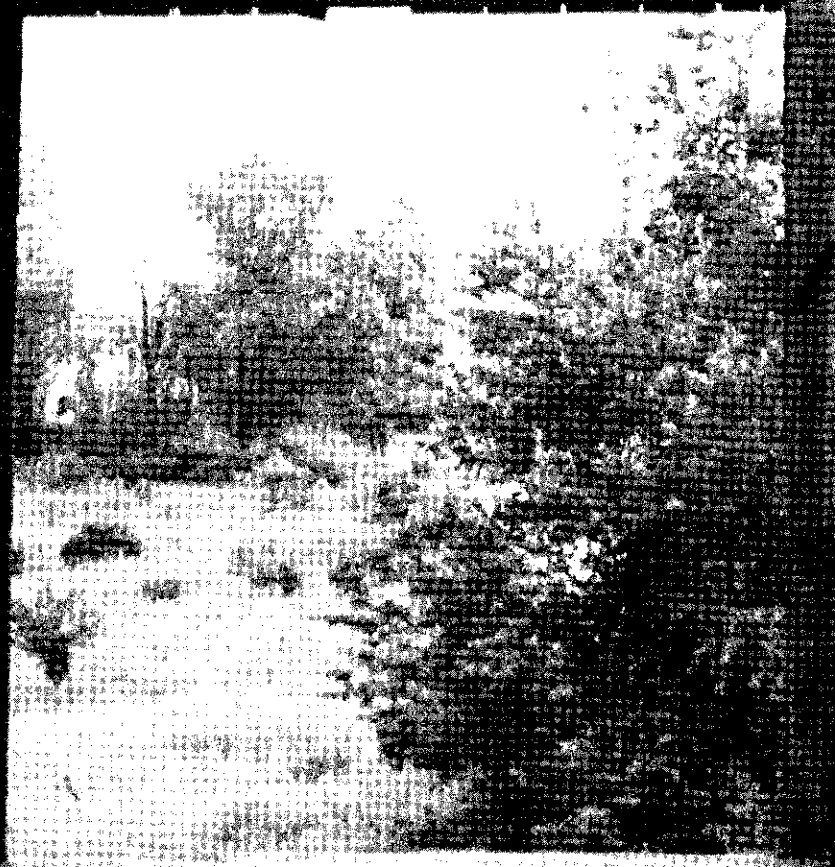
The Westmoreland Conservation District continues to grow thanks to gifts both simple and complex. They range from the daily efforts of our professional staff to the on-going work of our small army of dedicated volunteers and donors. Our partner organizations have also been a source of gratifying support. But perhaps the greatest gift of all this past year has been the support we have received for the new Center for Conservation Education. This generous present reaches far into the future of the conservation movement into the hearts and minds of tomorrow's leaders...our children.



J. Roy Houston,  
*Chairman*

*Thank You...*

Friends can always be identified by their steadfast support during difficult times. Such is the case of the Westmoreland County Commissioners who continue their financial investment in the region's quality of life during a period of austerity. We appreciate their determination in maintaining and advancing the conservation movement.



*It's the gift to be simple  
It's the gift to be free*

# Conservation Education

Looking at the 25-foot peak rising behind Donohoe Center and seeing the massive frame of 6 to 10-inch-thick oak and poplar timbers, it's hard to imagine that the District's soon-to-be-completed 7,600-square-foot Center for Conservation Education was initially conceived as a picnic pavilion.

It was just after Christmas four years ago, in early January 1997, that District Manager Greg Phillips first asked the District staff, directors, and associates to begin thinking about a dream he had had for some time — building an Education Center that would serve as a clearinghouse for conservation information and activities in Westmoreland County.

As they talked about the many ways a center could be used and what it might look like, a simple vision started to take shape. It would be an open-air pavilion, somewhere in the neighborhood of 24' X 36' in size, with a concrete slab floor, and a pitched roof.

Malcolm Sias and Jack Paulik from the county Parks Department, which had built such facilities at Twin Lakes and Northmoreland parks, were consulted for advice, as were members of the Nature Park Steering Committee, including Carol Pollock and Harold Grey. Soon the simple pavilion began to take on some practical additions: a men's and women's rest room... an enclosed area so the space could be used year 'round...and a desperately needed storage area.

Then, one day, as Greg and Karen Jurkovic were talking about the possibilities, the dream grew even further: Wouldn't it be great if the building itself could be more than just a functional space...if it could be designed in such a way that the structure itself would

be a statement of the conservation ethic...something, say, like a barn?

## *The Barn is Born*

Soon they enlisted Jim Pillsbury to sketch out a barn design and figure a preliminary materials list. The idea was to build an entirely new structure that looked like a typical Westmoreland County barn and incorporated some actual barn materials, such as beams.

The team visited local projects that had successfully blended the old and the new, including the log buildings that became the Southern Alleghenies Museum in Ligonier and the chestnut barn that became Lesley's restaurant in Donegal. As they learned more about how these projects were done and as they shared their concept with dozens of District colleagues and friends, the design evolved.

Volunteer Sue Snyder helped prepare professional schematic drawings of the barn's proposed floor plans and elevations and these became a key element of a comprehensive fundraising plan developed by Teeter and Associates and consultant Karen Jurkovic. "Initially, we set out to raise \$150,000 to build our proposed 3,600-square-foot building," Phillips explained. "Little did we know that, before it was all over, we would be challenged to raise significantly more — in the neighborhood of half a million dollars — and that our Education Center would not just include some actual barn materials, but that the entire structure would be adapted from an existing barn."

It was the generous gift of Salem township farmer and developer/contractor Kim Miller that radically

changed the scope and nature of the project. Kim had on his property a 7,600-square-foot bank barn that was more than 120 years old. He was no longer using the barn for agriculture and offered to make it a gift to the District, along with his services as general contractor for the project.

"So many people had told us that we should make the Education Center bigger than our original plan," Phillips said. "And when Kim made us this tremendous offer, it was everything we needed to do the Education Center right from the very beginning. It was the symbol of conservation we had hoped for — an existing barn. It was large enough to accommodate our needs, plus allow for growth. And it came with the services of someone experienced in making an ambitious project like this happen." Kim previously had worked with the Center's architect Richard Glance to convert a barn into offices for his own personal business.

With the District Board's approval, Kim went to work. One of his first tasks was to arrange for the Amish workers who have dismantled the barn and are painstakingly reconstructing it on the Donohoe Center site. Kim also has made all the arrangements for the stone masons, the carpenters, and the other craftsmen needed to make this Center a reality.

His work has been supported by the day-to-day oversight of the project by District Hydraulic Engineer, Jim Pillsbury. "Jim has been a real asset to this project. He has done everything from designing the site layout to obtaining all the building permits to doing structural design for the foundation to actually helping to pour the concrete," Phillips said.



The Amish live by a code of conduct called the Ordnung. This blueprint for expected behavior is not written down, but it is taught by example and maintained by tradition. It is the "understood" behavior people should exhibit.

Someday, through the efforts of the Center, good conservation practices may become that same kind of integral, natural part of the lives of the people of Westmoreland County.

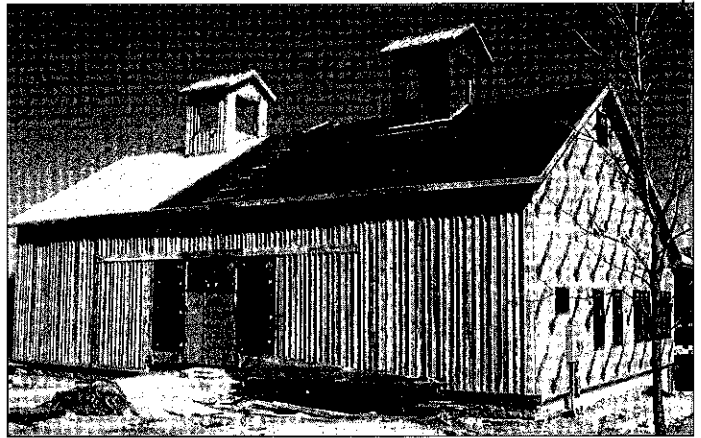
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The project has been blessed by the contributions of many District friends and associates, says Phillips. "From start to finish, it's as though this Education Center project is being guided by a higher power. When we've needed something, whether it was information or material or a contact, it has always come through. When we needed guidance, we've been fortunate to be able to turn to people such as Bob Amore, who is an engineer and real estate developer from Monroeville, Allegheny Energy electrical engineers Dave Higinbotham and Gary Valley, and Westmoreland County architectural and building specialists George Church and Mel Wohlgemuth. And

*Original frame prior to disassembly...*



The Center itself will be a model of sustainability. Adapted from a 120-year-old barn, it will feature a geothermal heat source, a fuel cell for supplemental electricity, innovative insulation panels, a cistern, and a variety of recycled materials.



*on the threshold of the future...*

when we've needed money, visionary funders from foundations to individuals have been there to help us."

The Center is now in the final phase of its fund-raising efforts, with the goal of raising the final \$50,000 needed to complete the capital costs of the project.

### ***Opening to the Public in Spring***

When it opens this spring, the Center will offer the public information programs that help them learn more about their own backyard — the streams, soils, woods,

and fields of Westmoreland County — and to incorporate some easy measures in their daily routine to maintain those resources and so the quality of life.

"Sustainability is the next frontier for conservation education," Phillips said. "When I first became District Manager in 1984, the staff was small — only 3 people — and we focused mostly on erosion and sedimentation control. In the past 16 years, the District has grown considerably. Our staff now numbers 13 and we have technical expertise not only in

erosion control, but also in forestry, stormwater, minewater, agriculture, nutrient management, and other conservation areas. We've helped launch a number of community conservation organizations, including the Sewickley Creek and Jacob's Creek watershed associations and the Western Pennsylvania

Coalition for Abandoned Mine Reclamation. And so now, it is only natural that we go the next step and reach out with the conservation message in an even broader way, to the entire Westmoreland County community."

### ***Special Thanks to Our Many Donors...***

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*This donor listing includes contributions for the year 2000.*

# Forestry

Simply put, forestry is the art and science of tending a forest. Far from simple, the forest is a complex system. To manage these complex forest systems, foresters use the principles of silviculture. Silviculture is the art and science of cultivating forest crops – the practice of managing the establishment, growth, and composition of the forest. Proper management of the forest enhances a variety of forest resources for human benefit while conserving those resources for future generations.

Westmoreland Conservation District forester, Tony Quadro, provides professional forest management assistance to help county woodland owners manage their resource wisely. One way that a landowner can do this is to have a Forest Stewardship Plan. The stewardship plan is a comprehensive document in which the forest is broken down into management units. Information such as management history, inventory and description, management objectives, and detailed recommendations are provided. The plan provides a schedule of activities to meet the desired objectives, which can be based on timber, wildlife, aesthetics, and other forest resources. The District developed two Forest Stewardship Plans in 2000 covering over 400 acres.

During the year the District provided information and advice to nearly 100 landowners and loggers. Examples are: timber sale and management advice to 12 woodlot owners including the Youngwood Sportsman's Club, planting plans for Ethel Springs Lake and Sagamore Mine Reclamation, two "Clean and Green Law" inventories, assistance with 15

logging erosion control plans and road layouts, and numerous calls on a variety of forestry and related subjects such as permitting and regulations.

We feel that the key to the future of our forests is education. The District sponsored two environmental logging workshops for timber harvesters in cooperation with the Sustainable Forestry Initiative of PA. Thirty-five loggers attended these workshops in which they learned how to develop erosion control plans for timber harvesting operations. The District also worked cooperatively with the Westmoreland Woodlands Association and Penn State's Stewardship VIP (Volunteer Initiative Program) to hold two workshops and a statewide summer meeting attended by 120 woodland owners. Topics covered included deer management, grouse habitat and Pennsylvania's Forest Stewardship Program. Forestry programs were held for over 200 students at both Camp Soles in Somerset County and Westmoreland's Ann Rudd Saxman Nature Park.

Other accomplishments include: 1300 Tubex tree shelters distributed, 10 Trees of Distinction added, an Arbor Day tree planting, and 2000 seedlings distributed. The District also helped to revise the Timber Harvester's Action Packet and Pocket Guide as part of a statewide committee.

Aldo Leopold put it simply, "Conservation is a state of harmony between men and the land." The Westmoreland Conservation District's woodland management program will continue to offer sound management advice to county landowners to help them manage their forest resources in harmony with the land.



# *Envirothon*

Following months of classroom study and preparation, teams from 10 area school districts competed in the 2000 Westmoreland County Envirothon. Students were tested on their knowledge of several environmental subject areas including: aquatics, forestry, soils and land use, wildlife, and the 2000 current issue – wetlands. The year 2000 marked the 15<sup>th</sup> consecutive year the Westmoreland Conservation District has sponsored the competition.

After one of the closest competitions in the history of the event, Kiski Area High School emerged as the victor. This was extremely significant as they unseated the 13 year champions of the event, Franklin Regional High School, who took second place. Third place was won by Hempfield Area High School.

Following the competition which was held at Twin Lakes County Park, all participants listened as Mark Killar, regional coordinator of the Western Pennsylvania Coalition for Abandoned Mine Reclamation, explained how wetlands can be used to clean up polluted mine water discharges.

County champion Kiski went on to compete against 61 teams at the state event which was held at Shawnee State Park in Bedford County. Kiski finished a respectable 13<sup>th</sup> place.

The Envirothon is an excellent way for youth to learn about and develop a respect for our natural resources. It encourages them to become environmentally aware, action oriented adults.

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## ***2000 Envirothon Team***

### ***The Participants***

Burrell High School  
Franklin Regional High School  
Greensburg Central  
Catholic High School  
Greensburg Salem High School  
Hempfield Area High School  
Kiski Area High School  
Mount Pleasant High School  
Norwin Senior High School  
Yough High School  
Derry Area High School

### ***The Agencies***

Natural Resources  
Conservation Service  
PA Bureau of Forestry  
PA Department of  
Environmental Protection  
PA Game Commission  
Powdermill Nature Reserve  
Westmoreland County Bureau  
of Parks and Recreation

### ***Our Sponsors***

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Jackson Graphics

# *Erosion & Sediment Control*

Our Erosion and Sediment Pollution Control Program has been one of the most important and longest running programs. It started out with simple concepts to control runoff from residential and commercial development. A few District staff was more than ample to handle the duties of the program. With the recent growth the county has been experiencing, the workload has also increased.

During 2000, many of the duties of the staff shifted and more people were hired. Craig Barras has reduced his amount of inspections and reviews due to his new position as Watershed Specialist. As a result, another technician, Michael Barrick, was hired to compliment Chris Droste with the review of erosion control plans, site inspections, and technical assistance. Michael received a degree in Environmental Business Administration from St. Vincent College. He brings his knowledge and experience from his previous position with Scottdale Borough working on the Jacobs Creek Flood Control Project and working as a Zoning Officer. The technicians have split the county into two sections to deal with the ever-growing development. Our Technical Program Secretary, Kathy Fritz, has prepared and issued permits, assisted engineers with plan submissions, and assisted the technicians with workshop preparations and setting up pre-construction meetings. Sandy Dzendzel was hired to provide additional secretarial assistance with the program.

The staff took a pro-active role by providing increased technical assistance, site inspection frequency, pre-plan meetings, site visits, and pre-construction meetings with contractors, developers, and engineers.

Staff also attempted to secure Conservation Partnership Agreements with municipalities and conducted three workshops for engineers and contractor/developers to educate them on best management practices for earthmoving activities.

In 1999, staff provided technical assistance to 265 people and in 2000, we increased that number to 493! The technical staff recorded 233 plan reviews and 590 total site inspections. The number of inspections has increased by 130 over last year! Conducting pre-construction meetings with contractors is an effective approach to maintaining compliance on sites. The staff conducted 14 pre-construction meetings during the year. This was an increase of 50% from 1999. In 2000, the staff set out to establish a conservation partnership agreement with Hempfield Township and the city of Lower Burrell. Both agreed to sign the agreement and begin strengthening ties with the District.

Early in 2000, the District staff conducted a workshop for engineers and municipal officials. We explained new design methods that they would need to include on plans for erosion control and to show municipal officials what they need to look for in their review. In June, we conducted a workshop for land developers and contractors. This workshop focused on proper installation of erosion controls. And in the fall, we conducted a workshop again for engineers and municipal officials to explain the new Erosion and Sediment pollution control manual. The workshop focused on new methods to control erosion set by the manual. In all, 590 engineers, contractors, excavators,

and municipal officials attended our workshops in 2000. This number has increased from 460 in 1999.

Because of the persistent work of the staff providing educational programs, conducting pre-construction

meetings, and conducting frequent site inspections, proper installation of best management practices on the land has increased significantly so much that 98% of the sites inspected were in voluntary compliance.

<b>2000 DELEGATED PROGRAM ACTIVITIES</b>		
	<b>1999</b>	<b>2000</b>
<b>Educational Events</b>	10	14
Number of Participants	580	922
<b>Technical Assistance</b> to the public (Erosion Control & Stormwater Mgmt. Programs)	265	493
<b>Conservation Partnership Agreements</b> with Municipalities (new and retained)	17	19
<b>Total Number of Plan Reviews</b>	249	233
Plan Review Project Acres	4,006	4,397
Plan Review Disturbed Acres	1,880	1,460
Plan Review Fees Collected	\$18,000	\$27,000
Erosion & Sediment Pollution Control Site <b>Inspections</b> (Sites under 5 Acres)	251	344
General NPDES Permits Issued	41	26
Individual NPDES Permits Issued	2	0
Total Permit Application Fees Collected	\$11,250	\$6,500
Permitted Site <b>Inspections</b> (sites over 5 acres)	209	246
<b>Total Inspections</b>	460	590
<b>Stream Encroachment Permits</b> Issued	193	163

## *Dirt & Gravel Roads*

Our dirt & gravel roads provide a bird's eye view of the simple, natural beauty of Westmoreland County. 2000 was another year of progress for the District's program to address erosion drainage problems on these roads. An in-depth survey of every single dirt/gravel road in the county was conducted in the spring to identify priority sites for future projects. The survey identified over 100 specific sections of roads that negatively affect stream quality because of erosion and sediment pollution. In the next few years, the District will utilize State Conservation Commission funding to help municipalities address as many of these sites as funding permits.

In 2000, St. Clair Township spent approximately \$45,000 and over 1,800 man hours making substantial improvements to the surface and drainage of Johnny Hare and Wildcat Roads. These roads intersect near, cross, and run parallel to Shannon Run, a high-quality

trout stream. The township crew spent their own extra time and money to complete the project in a quality manner. This project is a testament to the people in the county that go the extra mile to preserve the resources that give them a better quality of life.

District Watershed Specialist, Craig Barras, administers the Dirt and Gravel Roads program in the county. Duties include meeting with municipal officials to choose project sites; assisting with the preparation of grant applications; coordinating meetings with the Quality Assurance Board who determines which projects get funded; and inspecting work sites before, during, and after construction. This program does not throw around huge amounts of money, but is a great tool for getting small, highly effective projects on the ground in a timely manner without a lot of the red tape associated with most grant programs.

*"Tis the gift to come down  
where you ought to be..."*



# Stormwater Management

**March 6, 2001**

In these hectic days, a common theme of many people is, "Simplify!" Business persons carry a "Palm Pilot" to simplify scheduling. Cellular phones act as pagers and internet browsers to reduce the number of devices one must carry. And if you buy a new Cadillac, the car will order airline tickets for you, give you driving directions, and call for help if you wreck. The District's Hydraulic Engineer, Jim Pillsbury, enjoys none of these hi-tech doodads, but he does enjoy his simple day-to-day routine...an example of which follows:

**8:38 AM** The engineer begins his day by poring over a pile of General Permits deposited on his desk by Kathy Fritz, the Technical Program Secretary. He checks each permit for the pertinent information, looks at the sketches and maps, and marks each approved. Each permit issued by our office saves applicants much time, money, and difficulty, and helps to ensure that stream projects are properly done.

**9:03 AM** A consulting engineer enters the office, bearing rolls of drawings, a notebook, and a box of donuts. He needs help — the numbers for his new development aren't turning out the right way. With a calculator in one hand a chocolate crème filled éclair in the other, our staff engineer begins to review the other's work. Soon some errors are corrected, numbers are adjusted, and the red Bic Wide Body pen begins to move on the visitor's blueprint. In under an hour, the project is saved. Protection for the stream below has been designed, and the visiting engineer

leaves with a practical, workable plan. Jim calls the township's engineer and discusses the revised plan with them to keep them informed of the site's progress. Municipal cooperation is essential to our task of stormwater management!

**9:56 AM** The District's engineer is reviewing new stormwater information from DEP when the phone beeps. Joanne announces a call on line 2 — a homeowner with a problem. Jim answers and patiently discusses the complaint. It seems the runoff from an older shopping center goes down the shoulder of a PennDOT road, crosses the road, and fills the homeowner's yard with anti-skid and debris. The engineer finds out details of the situation and promises to help. He then calls the highway department and the municipality and sets up a meeting on the site to investigate the problem.

**11:14 AM** Engineer Jim is in the Dodge Dakota, zooming down the Donohoe Road towards his 11:00 AM appointment in Ligonier. Members of a small community have a perennial flooding and erosion problem from a stream. Once on the site, the engineer listens carefully to the residents and views their photos of the problem. He walks the area, his Hush Puppies ranging from the top of the streambank to the bottom. Not minding the mud and water, the engineer makes a thorough tour of the area, taking some notes. Afterwards, back on top of the bank, he explains to the owners how to apply for GP-3, DEP's permit which allows them to stabilize their streambank. He discusses the procedure for installing rock riprap and removing

debris with one homeowner, a retired contractor who will do the work.

**12:20 PM** The engineer is back in the District's pickup, heading towards home. He is eating a double-scoop ice cream cone from Bruster's and shifting gears at the same time! On his way, he swings by a housing development to see if the detention pond riser has been installed and the pond seeded and mulched.

**1:09 PM** The telephone is once again in use as the engineer answers his voicemail. A call from a city engineer seeking help with a flooding problem is first. Next, an engineer from Ohio needs local FEMA Floodplain and wetland information for a commercial development she is planning. A landscape architect has called wanting to know the stormwater standards for a site in Murrysville — the Turtle Creek watershed. Another plan designer wants a copy of the latest DEP stream encroachment rules. With the assistance of Kathy and Joanne, Jim gets all the information sent out.

**1:41 PM** A visitor interrupts the engineer's phoning. Joanne ushers a contractor in; the man is obviously unfamiliar with stormwater management, and he has a detention pond to build. He wants to do his project the right way and the township's zoning officer has referred him to our office. Our engineer explains erosion control and pond construction principles to the man, doing some explanatory sketches for him as well.

**2:15 PM** Jim begins to spread the contents of a folder out on his already-burdened desk. He is working on a special project, the stabilization of a streambank in the Nature Park. He lays out the work

areas and begins to calculate the amount of stone, coconut fiber, seed, and mulch needed. Special projects occupy much of Jim's time. The other project he will work on today is for a stormwater demonstration trail around Donohoe Center and the new education building. From time to time, he pulls information out of the file cabinets, consults it, and re-files for future use. The files contain much technical information gathered during his 13 years on the job.

**3:04 PM** The District's engineer, forester, watershed specialist, and technicians have a meeting to discuss the upcoming seminar for utility line contractors. Each of our staff has something valuable to contribute to the workshop — experience, knowledge, and the deep desire to see our resources wisely used!

**3:16 PM** Kathy interrupts with a phone call for Jim. A resident of Hempfield Township has a complaint — someone is filling a wetland! He writes down all the information and locates the site on a topographic map. Checking the calendar, he schedules a site visit, and calls the township engineer for more info.

**3:50 PM** Jim discusses stormwater calculations with an engineer from the Latrobe area who has phoned. His development site has no obvious place to outlet water, and he doesn't want to flood anyone out. Familiar with the area, our engineer's experience enables him to suggest a solution that nobody had thought of. The caller is pleased. To reward himself, our engineer goes out back to check on the progress of the Barn.

**4:16 PM** While reviewing a stormwater plan for a building in an industrial park, the engineer notices that the designer has failed to consider the elevations of a railroad track in his ditch design. "You can't make water run uphill," grumbles Jim as he begins to compose a letter to the designer. Half an hour later, he is still listing deficiencies! His review prevents untold

trouble to future inhabitants of the property and to its downstream neighbors.

**5:02 PM** The engineer climbs into his aging Oldsmobile and drives out of the Donohoe Center parking lot. Another successful day of conserving our county's water resources has come to an end.

## *Nutrient Management*

A gift is a communication between the giver and the recipient.

A simple gift of pristine water and fertile land is what the true stewards of this creation we call Earth wish to bestow on those coming after us. We at the Westmoreland Conservation District assist farmers to enable them to give such a gift as an expression of their heritage. As part of that effort, nutrient management is becoming a much more important concept as people realize that whatever they do to the land affects the water.

Farmers want all the nutrients that they apply to the land to stay there, not run off into the stream. Also, the general public does not want nutrients flowing into their drinking water sources. So, the two groups are joining their efforts in unprecedented ways that are gaining results that neither group could have done on their own. This process is called partnering. The District promotes partnering as much as possible with the 40 different organizations that we work with.

Farmers are installing Best Management Practices

on their land that are being paid for in part, or sometimes wholly, by the general public. This effort is called "cost-share" funding. Both groups gain, in that farmers keep the expensive nutrients on their land, and the public has cleaner waters of the Commonwealth. The District has information about nine different groups or agencies that are offering from \$800 to \$75,000 per farm to help install these practices.

Contact Dan Griffith at the District for more info on this and other cost share programs.

A simple example of an effective practice is rotational grazing. Large pasture areas are fenced into smaller paddocks of several acres each and grazed in a round-robin style. Typically, animals are fenced away from streams and an alternative water supply is furnished for drinking. Both the farmer and the public gain from not having the animals in the stream. The animals stay healthier when they are not in muddy areas next to streams. The grazing of the grass is limited so it recovers quicker and remains healthy.



A buffer area at least 15 feet wide is maintained along the stream to filter any pollutants from getting into the stream. Six local commercial fencing contractors install about 12 miles of high tensile fence every year in Westmoreland County, besides about the same amount that farmers install themselves. A demonstration area of rotational grazing was established on the Jess Stairs farm which has seven paddocks, three stream crossings, 3,000 feet of high tensile fencing which protects 1,500 feet of stream with trees planted in the buffer area next to the stream. That farm will be used in the future for field trips to explain the benefits of rotational grazing.

Stabilized alleyways and heavy use areas are other examples of how farmers can keep animals out of the mud. A 3,200 sq. ft. stabilized alleyway was cost shared by the Project Grass effort on the Richard Love farm in East Huntingdon Township. A 25,000 sq. ft. stabilized heavy use area was installed on the Earl Sadler farm in Donegal Township.

Cost share funding is available for large ag waste

storage structures, also. Having manure storage capacity allows a farmer to spread it on the fields at the proper time – when it will do the most good. Two farms are now approved for ag waste structure funding – Stoner's and Pecora's. They will each receive \$75,000 for their farms to install ag waste storage.

Farmers are beginning to use a "Nutrient Management Plan" which is individually tailored for them and their farms. Using this plan, the farmer can maximize the use of nutrients and minimize the cost of those nutrients. Following a plan also prevents over-application of nutrients to any fields that might have run-off into a stream. Nine farmers have started using approved plans for guidance on about 3,280 acres in the county. There is up to \$800 cost share money per farm to use to develop a Nutrient Management Plan.

As we begin this new millennium, let us pause to ponder how those who have gone before us strove to leave this world better than they found it. One conclusion we can derive from their message of stewardship is that the simplest methods are often the best.

# Watersheds

Our watersheds have no political boundaries. Every hill and dale in the county belongs to one watershed or another. It is a better, simpler way to keep track of our resources. The year 2000 was a fantastic year for our watersheds and the volunteers who are stewards of them. The District feels that watersheds are such an important part of natural resource conservation that we hired a 'Watershed Specialist', Craig Barras. This position is funded through DEP's Growing Greener program. The objectives of this position are to assist existing groups with projects and start new groups.

The more established watershed associations continued to perform and make great strides. Turtle Creek Watershed Association (TCWA) managed to get sections of that stream back on the Fish & Boat Commission's (PAFBC) trout stocking list for 2001. They also nearly completed their River Conservation Plan. The PAFBC had positive results from electro-shocking surveys that were conducted on the Brush Creek, a tributary of Turtle Creek. The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PADOT) committed \$200,000 in wetland mitigation funding to design a proposed mine drainage treatment system on Borland Farm Road in Murrysville. Their consultant, Skelly & Loy, Inc., began preliminary designs for the site.

Sewickley Creek Watershed Association (SCWA) began preliminary design on a mine drainage treatment system at the Brinkerton discharge. They also made great progress at their Lowber discharge resource recovery project funded by a \$150,000 Growing Greener grant. SCWA also received an \$85,000 grant from DCNR to prepare a River Conservation Plan for their watershed.

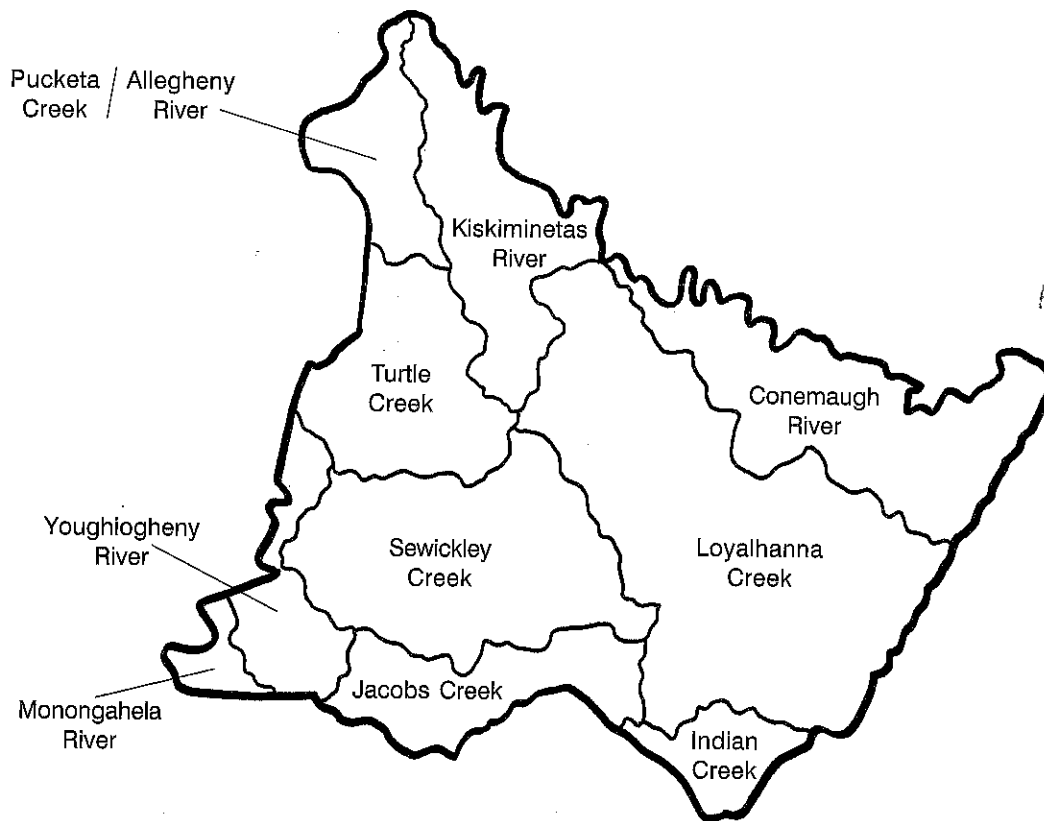
The Loyalhanna Watershed Association completed a few key projects and received funding for others this year. One ongoing project is the Kiski-Conemaugh Alliance Stream Team that monitors streams and discharges throughout the Kiski-Conemaugh River Basin, of which the Loyalhanna watershed is a significant portion. The two Americorps Coordinators for this program are supervised by the Loyalhanna Watershed Association. They have organized over 70 people and 8 school groups to take water samples throughout the river basin. The association, with assistance from the Bureau of Forestry and a \$240,000 grant from PennDOT, completed the P.W. & S. Bike Trail on Laurel Mountain. It consists of 34 miles of trail system that are utilized by hikers, skiers, snowmobiles and bikers. The trail grant focused on drainage, surface material and signage improvements. An \$8,160 Growing Greener (G2) grant paid for the modification of a borehole in Loyalhanna Creek to allow the group to monitor volume and chemistry of a large discharge near Adelphoi Village. Improvement projects continued at the Monastery Run mine drainage abatement project at St. Vincent College. A \$42,810 G2 grant was used to capture an additional discharge on the property and install liners in the experimental mesocosm. Another G2 grant of \$15,300 was used to stabilize the banks of Four Mile Run for approximately 200 feet around two historic bridges that support the network of trails at the site. This project continues to be the shining star example of cooperative-partnership watershed projects in our region.

The Mountain Watershed Association (MWA) was

incorporated in 1994. In that time they have accomplished a great deal. They completed a mine reclamation project at the Sagamore site that included the abatement of two discharges, and the relocation and reclamation of a 100,000 ton coal refuse pile. They have funding to start another project at the Gallentine site. A P.L. 566 project agreement was entered into by the MWA board and NRCS to treat 22 of the largest mine drainage

discharges in the watershed. This project will reduce acid, iron and aluminum loading by more than 90%, and allow the return of a high quality aquatic community on 17.4 miles of Indian Creek. The total cost of this project is estimated at \$4,166,000. The federal government will commit \$2,037,000 to the effort. The watershed also continued work on sections of the Indian Creek Trail. They cleared a mile and half section

### *Westmoreland County Watersheds*



of the trail near Jones Mills in Westmoreland County. The organization also revised its comprehensive watershed restoration plan.

The Yough River Council is a group that has been around since about 1998. They have a completed River Conservation Plan for the river corridor and are looking to implement some of the action items from that plan, which include watershed restoration projects and working with local municipalities to enact land use ordinances. In June, they had an update meeting at Sutersville in conjunction with Yough River Sojourn.

The Jacobs Creek Watershed Association got a major project on the ground this year. They worked with the District to complete an Agricultural Best Management Practice (BMP) project on the Jess Stairs farm along Jacobs Creek in Mt. Pleasant Township. The project was funded through a \$21,000 G2 grant. Practices installed at this project included tree planting, streambank fencing, bank stabilization and agricultural crossings. Quarterly stream monitoring/sampling at 26 sites across the watershed also began. Representatives from the watershed, WCD, WPCAMR and PAFBC began looking at treatment options for mine discharges in the headwaters of Stauffer Run in East Huntingdon Township.

Three new groups were formed in 2000 representing the Kiskiminetas River, Pucketa & Chartiers Creeks and the Conemaugh River watershed in Westmoreland County. The Kiskiminetas Watershed Association (KWA) started as a result of the vision of the Roaring Run Watershed Association and a recommendation from the Kiski-Conemaugh River Conservation Plan. KWA costs for public meetings, brochures, newsletters

and non-profit tax status are to be funded through a \$5,000 start-up Growing Greener grant. This new watershed held three initial public meetings to gather input and formed a steering committee to begin setting up by-laws, goals, and objectives for the organization.

The Laurel Valley Greenway is a community group from New Florence that is concentrating its initial efforts on acquiring property along the Conemaugh River for a hike/bike trail. The trail will run for four miles from New Florence to Lockport and will be named the "La Colle Recreational Trail & Greenway." The group submitted a grant request to the Department of Conservation & Natural Resources (DCNR) for land acquisition funding. The formation of this group was another recommendation outlined in the Action Plan portion of the Kiski-Conemaugh River Conservation Plan.

The Pucketa & Chartiers Creek Watershed Association is being sponsored by the City of Lower Burrell. They received a start-up \$5,000 grant from the Growing Greener program in December. They have met with officials from WCD and WPCAMR to apply for additional grants and look at mine drainage discharges in their area. 2001 will be a busy planning year for this group.

Craig has worked with new and existing groups to establish and implement their goals and objectives. He will be available to help these groups obtain funding, facilitate public meetings, set objectives, and manage projects. The health of our watersheds is the framework for the health of our communities. Watershed groups and initiatives are preserving and improving the quality of life in Westmoreland County.



*“And when we find ourselves  
in the place just right...”*

# Water Quality

The Westmoreland Conservation District and Penn State Cooperative Extension felt there was a need for water quality education in the county. As a result, the two organizations created an exciting partnership focusing on water quality education that has given information about water issues to youth, farmers and homeowners.

**YOUTH:** Conservation water quality educator Nicole Foremsky helped revise the watershed and sustainable communities curriculum for the Center for Conservation Education. The curriculum focuses on local issues in Westmoreland County and is designed for high school students.

During 2000, Nicole also presented a conservation lesson to a group of 13 Boy Scouts. They learned how soil travels and ends up in the air, water, and roads instead of where it belongs, on the land. They also learned about backyard conservation by taking part in a hands-on composting activity. They received a small gift of gummie worms, after learning that earthworms play an important role in composting.

Approximately 400 third grade students in the Penn Trafford school district learned about their watershed through a program given by the Turtle Creek Watershed Association and Nicole. Maps of the Turtle Creek watershed, including the Bushy Run Battlefield, Boyce Park, and Turtle Creek itself were distributed. The energetic students learned how the water in their watershed affects larger bodies of water through a demonstration using an EnviroScape model.

A group of 15 middle-school aged youth from the Monessen Alternative Education Center were given a

chance to test their drinking water during a program in November. The students learned that the water they drink has less chemicals and nutrients compared to lake water. They were also able to see first hand the microscopic organisms living in lakes and ponds.

**FARMERS:** As a simple gift, nine dairy farmers in the area received drinking water tests for dairy cows as a part of a statewide study. To protect the water quality for the animals, the farmers needed to know what to look for in the water. As a result of the study, they were able to focus on important contaminants and see how their water sources compare to other dairy farms throughout the state.

**HOMEOWNERS:** Safe Drinking Water Clinics were held at Donohoe Center for people who wanted to learn more about their drinking water. Participants were given valuable information about maintenance and treatment options for their water supplies. Four local laboratories sponsored discount coupons for the 33 participants simply for attending.

Homeowners and the general public were able to receive individual assistance on a daily basis. Nicole spoke to over 500 people and answered over 60 phone calls concerning water issues since May 2000. As a result, people are more knowledgeable about where to have their water tested, what they should test for in the water, and what the test results means. About ten concerned residents brought water samples into the office to be tested. Because of this service, residents have an idea of what may be in their water, and if necessary, Nicole can suggest the correct method of treatment.

# Growing Greener

Governor Ridge and the state Department of Environmental Protection have made a \$650 million dollar, 5-year commitment towards the Commonwealth's watersheds and greenways. Several groups in Westmoreland County, including the District, have taken advantage of this program and received grant monies during this past year. The District nearly completed one project and received funding for two additional, large, water quality improvement projects this year.

The project which was almost totally completed in 2000 was the Jacobs Creek Restoration Project. The Westmoreland Conservation District was the recipient of a \$21,000 DEP Growing Greener grant for this site. When completed, the site will demonstrate how a stream can be protected from the effects of degradation and pollution caused by unlimited access for livestock.

Readily visible from both the Pennsylvania Turnpike and Clay Pike are 375 feet of stabilized stream bank; three stabilized cattle crossings; a total of 21 green ash, flowering crabapple, and serviceberry trees planted in the riparian zone, and the fencing off of over 1,500 feet of stream channel.

The site is located on the Jess Stairs farm near Acme in Mount Pleasant Township. The District plans to utilize the site as a demonstration area to show farm-

land owners, watershed groups, students, and other interested citizens how to manage stream corridors on active farms. The project is to be completed in 2001 with the planting of live stakes of willow and dogwood to further shade the water and stabilize banks.

The District was awarded two Agricultural Best Management Practice grants for farms in the Kiski-Conemaugh River Basin and the Whitethorn Creek watershed. Both of these grants were in the amount of \$200,000. The Whitethorn Creek is a tributary to the Loyalhanna Creek. Both of these grants will pay a share of the installation of streambank fencing, livestock stream crossings, riparian plantings, barnyard stabilization, diversions, waterways, streambank stabilization, spring developments, and manure storage facilities. These are exciting projects that will benefit the farmers, downstream residents, and of course, the quality of the effected streams.

Look for updates on these projects and others in our quarterly newsletter, *Landmarks*.

The District is charged with acknowledging and/or supporting all Growing Greener project applications in the county. The District and DEP watershed staff also have and will continue to support groups in applying for funding and assisting with project management issues.

# Highway Beautification

Over the course of the year, several projects were put "on the ground" utilizing special funding, volunteer labor and staff participation.

Highway beautification continued along several roadways in Westmoreland County. The district's participation in the Route 30 Greengate Mall intersection involved assisting in the planting of 6,000 annual flowers. Sixty volunteers representing Hempfield Township, Western Pennsylvania Conservancy, Hempfield Rotary, City of Greensburg, Central

Westmoreland Chamber of Commerce, and Adam Eidemiller, Inc. participated.

Over 50 volunteers assisted at the Westmoreland County Courthouse by planting impatiens and petunias, and Jupina Landscaping pruned several Linden trees. Participants included Penn State Master Gardeners, the Botanical Society of Westmoreland County, and 4-H Youth. A replacement planting inside the Youngstown cloverleaf on Route 30 brightened up that intersection during mid-summer.

# Soil Survey

Simply put, soil is the most important natural resource that we have. The Conservation District and the Natural Resources Conservation Service are in the last stages of updating the soil survey for Westmoreland County.

We all benefited from our four-month visit from Natalie Irizarry during the late summer and fall of 2000. Natalie came to us as a government exchange student from Puerto Rico. She returned to the island in December to finish an undergraduate degree in soil science at the University of Puerto Rico.

Alex Dado who served as a Soil Scientist for Westmoreland County for over four years, was transferred with the Natural Resources Conservation Service to Franklin, Pa. He is still keeping a hand in the Westmoreland County soil survey by helping to edit the data base and updated soil maps. Ned Ellenberger

headquartered in Bedford, PA, has been active as a part time Soil Scientist helping with all phases of the update over the past four years.

Project leader, Rob Knight, along with Alex and Ned have finished the tedious job of updating the soil maps for the 663,526 acres in the county. The soil survey interpretative tables and soil descriptions were also updated to go along with the maps. The map compilation center at State College is currently in the process of putting the newly updated soil mapping in an electronic format that can be used in a computer or printed to a paper copy.

Throughout the coming year the soil survey team will complete the final editing of the digital soils layer and the soil survey data base for Westmoreland County. The final product will be a fully digitized soil layer with the accompanying soil data and interpretations.



# Board & Staff News

In January three District Board Directors were appointed to new terms. They were Connie Donovan, Roy Kemerer and Ron Rohall. Also this year we appointed Elmer Slezak, a retired schoolteacher, as an Associate Director for the District and sadly had to accept the resignation of Steve Simpson as an Associate Director.

Assistant District Manager Lorrie Stouffer, with the help of accountant Richard Patterson, developed a financial management and internal accounting manual that can be used by all of the Conservation Districts in the state. The manual was presented at a Financial Reporting and Internal Control Training Session at the state association meeting in July, and again at the fall Joint Annual Conference. She was assisted in this project by the District's Administrative Secretary, Karen Barnhart.

Resource Specialist Craig Barras has been re-assigned as Watershed Specialist. Thanks to a Growing Greener Grant, this new position will require Craig to provide watershed restoration and protection projects, work with watershed groups, conduct public meetings, work on newsletters, newspaper articles and with the media, and monitor watershed activities.

Michael Barrick joined the District staff as an additional Erosion Control Technician in July. His primary duties will be to help keep up with the addi-

tional E&S workload created by the shifting of Craig Barras's duties. Mike has also served as Executive Director for the Jacobs Creek Watershed Association and continues to volunteer his time toward this valuable cause.

Melissa Anderson, our part-time secretary left us this summer after the birth of her first child to become a stay-at-home mom.

Nicole Foremsky joined the District staff as a shared employee with Penn State Cooperative Extension Service in May. Her title is Water Quality Specialist, and she is a graduate of Elizabethtown College with a degree in Environmental Science Resource Management.

Sandy Dzendzel was hired as a full-time secretary in October. This position will provide much needed assistance to existing staff plus the added responsibilities required of the Conservation Education Center.

Deb Simko joined the WPCAMR staff on January 3<sup>rd</sup> as the new Watershed Coordinator. In addition to working with Mark Killar in addressing the water quality issues associated with abandoned mine lands she brings a wealth of experience working with the Turtle Creek Watershed Association.

Paul Heyworth assisted the WPCAMR staff in the capacity of Project Manager for Project Gob Pile, a program initiated through a Growing Greener Grant.

# Awards

In response to a request to "simplify" the Annual Awards Banquet, in November of 2000, the Westmoreland Conservation District joined forces with the Penn State Cooperative Extension Service to recognize and give tribute to those who have had a significant contribution in natural resource conservation.

During the evening's festivities, the District recognized the following:

- **Bill Doney – Farmer of the Year**

A life-long practitioner of good conservation measures, Bill raises heifers for two separate dairy farm owners on his 225-acre farm. His farm showcases some of today's best conservation practices, many of which are designed to protect the local streams and waterways.

- **Stoy Excavating – Contractor of the Year**

Jim Stoy completed several environmental restoration projects during the year, including the Jacobs Creek Stream restoration, Ann Rudd Saxman Nature Park bank stabilization, and Monastery Run mine drainage treatment repairs.

Each project was completed in a timely manner and Jim's crew worked efficiently and turned out excellent work under less than perfect weather conditions. These projects will serve to demonstrate best management practices to the public.

During the December district meeting, certificates were given to staff and directors for their years of service. Those receiving recognition were:

- Jim Pillsbury – for his work and efforts for the Center for Conservation Education.
- Graydon Long – 10 years on the Board of Directors
- Al Barnett – 10 years on the Board of Directors
- Dorothy Stoner – 5 years on the Board of Directors
- Joanne Kitsko – 5 years employee
- Lorrie Stouffer – 10 years employee
- Greg Phillips – 20 years employee



Bill Doney  
*Farmer of the Year*



Jim Stoy  
of Stoy Excavating  
*Contractor of the Year*

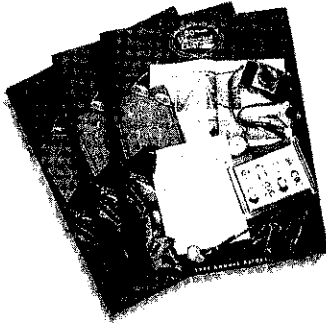
# Publications & Outreach

The Westmoreland Conservation District's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary played a major role in theme development for our quarterly newsletter *Landmarks*, and the development of the year-end Annual Report. Over 18,000 issues of these publications were mailed and distributed throughout the year. A newly developed partnership between the District and the annual Westmoreland Mall Book Sale has allowed over 500 of the general public to receive a copy of the Annual Report with a purchase.

The web page continued to grow and develop as district staff mastered new software and publishing techniques. The page was officially open to the public in early July and had registered more than 800 hits by

the end of the year. It is divided into several sections entitled Introduction, Agriculture Notes, Brief History, Calendar, Conservation Education, Current Events, Current Weather, Merchandise, Project Map, Publications, Request Mailing, Related Links, Review Fees, Staffing, Technical Services, and Watershed Notes. Daily graphic updates kept the public up-to-date on the latest construction developments of the Center for Conservation Education.

The District continued its outreach to the public through regular press releases to local newspapers in Westmoreland County. The district and its programs and projects were featured in over 125 articles throughout the year.



*The Westmoreland Conservation District's 1999 Annual Report now stands as one of the best conservation district publications in the USA. The report recently received top honors in the Special Publications Outreach category of a national competition sponsored by the National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) and the Equipment Manufacturer's Institute.*

*According to Ron Francis, Director of Public Affairs for NACD, "The 1999 Annual Report was not only a very attractive publication, but it served two distinct purposes. In addition to summarizing programs and activities of the District, the issue celebrated their 50th Anniversary in a very inventive way."*

# Agency Reports



## **Natural Resources Conservation Service**

The U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) provides technical assistance to land users in cooperation with the Westmoreland Conservation District. District Conservationist Wes Gordon and Soil Technician Larry Stokum have been invaluable friends to the district staff for many years.

During 2000, Wes and Larry provided assistance to the District on projects such as non-point source pollution evaluation, dirt and gravel road improvements, watershed grant applications, Nature Park bioengineering demonstration, stream corridor improvements, promotion of watershed initiatives and others.

NRCS continues to provide, upon request, on-site technical assistance to land users to plan and install soil and water conservation practices. Last year they provided assistance to farm operators on barnyard stabilization, contour stripcropping, grass waterways, spring developments, stream corridor management, solar pasture pump systems, rotation grazing systems, pond site selection and other practices to protect and utilize soil and water resources. Nearly 1,400 customers received assistance during the year, and 3,700 acres were covered under a conservation plan. Forty-seven customers received assistance with conservation buffers. They also helped administer at the local levels the Environmental Quality Incentives Program, Conservation Reserve Program, and Debt for Nature

Program. They cooperate with and provide conservation planning assistance to the Westmoreland County Farmland Preservation Program.

Technical assistance was provided to St. Vincent College, Loyalhanna Watershed Association and the Westmoreland Conservation District to implement their respective Growing Greener grants.

NRCS continues to be an active member of the Loyalhanna Creek Mine Drainage Coalition improving the quality of water at the Monastery Run Project. In Westmoreland County, they provided technical assistance to several other abandoned mine discharge problems including Brinkerton discharge, Keystone Park, Freidline Mine and Saxman Run.



## **Farm Service Agency**

The Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) administered by the USDA's Farm Service Agency is the federal government's single largest environmental program on private land. Today CRP is safeguarding topsoil from erosion, improving air quality, increasing wildlife habitat and protecting ground and surface water by reducing water runoff and sedimentation.

The CRP's success is accomplished through local voluntary partnerships between landowners and the government. The program uses financial incentives to encourage farmers to voluntarily establish valuable conservation practices. Under CRP contracts, farmers are compensated for planting permanent covers of grass and trees on land subject to erosion, where

vegetation can improve water quality, or to provide food and habitat for wildlife. Currently, there are 34 contracts in Westmoreland County covering 989.4 acres of land. These contracts are earning the landowners a total annual rental payment of \$33,514.

For certain high-priority conservation practices, farm landowners may sign up at any time, without waiting for an announced signup period. Provided certain eligibility requirements are met, acreage is automatically accepted into the program at a per-acre rental rate.

Marginal pastureland that is suitable for use as a riparian buffer is eligible to be enrolled under the continuous CRP signup. Areas of trees and/or shrubs next to ponds, lakes and streams filter out pollutants from runoff as well as providing shade for fish and other wildlife. The vegetation's natural litter also provides food and shelter for wildlife.

Riparian buffers are planted so that surface and subsurface runoff must filter through them before it reaches a pond, lake or stream. Additionally, cost-shared fencing and livestock stream crossings keep animals away from the water.

In 2000, additional incentives were offered to encourage farmers to participate in the CRP continuous signup. These incentives will be available through 2002.

Key provisions of the continuous signup enhancements include:

- An up front CRP signing incentive payment at \$100 to \$150 per acre.

- A practice incentive payment equal to 40 percent of the eligible installation costs. This payment is in addition to the regular 50 percent CRP cost sharing.
- New rental rates for marginal pastureland to better reflect the value of this land for farmers.

Interested landowners should contact the Farm Service Agency in the Donohoe Center. Administrative assistance is provided by the Natural Resources Conservation Service, the Cooperative Extension Service and the Westmoreland Conservation District.



## *Department of Environmental Protection*

Support from the Department of Environmental Protection for conservation districts was provided during 2000 in three significant areas.

The following are key investments and accomplishments for the year in the area of building conservation district capacity:

- Growing Greener Initiatives – Over \$7 million went to conservation districts for 65 different watershed based projects. In addition, districts are actively involved in many more Growing Greener watershed-based projects sponsored by other local groups.
- Watershed Specialist – Growing Greener provided funding in Westmoreland County to

employ Craig Barras as a full-time Watershed Specialist. His duties include the formation, development and support of new local watershed organizations, and as part of this grant, he attended an intensive one-week introductory course in the basics of watershed based planning and management.

- Agricultural Conservation Technicians – Funding was also provided at the local level to cost-share Dan Griffith, the Westmoreland Conservation District's Nutrient Management/Ag Conservation Technician. Dan works with landowners to help design and install many of the agricultural best management practices funded under the GG and other state and federal cost-share programs. In cooperation with the Natural Resources Conservation Service, these technicians attended a one-week intensive training session on basic skills needed to carry out their job duties.

Base funding for conservation districts, provided by the Department of Environmental Protection and the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture through the Conservation District Fund Allocation Program increased from \$2.2 million in 1995 to \$4.25 million in 2000. The tremendous growth of conservation districts within the last five years has created a greater need for the training of directors in leadership skills, and the development of higher level management skills for district managers. The following are key investments and activities in the areas of leadership development and management training which the Westmoreland Conservation District board and staff participated in:

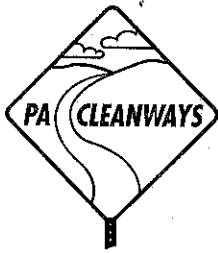
- Financial Management Handbook and Training – Developed by Westmoreland, Lancaster and

Bradford Conservation Districts and tailored to specific district needs, including items such as budgeting, establishing internal controls, preparing for audits, and analyzing financial management computer software. Training was provided at the July state association meeting and the fall Joint Annual Conference.

- Personnel Management Handbook and Training – Developed by Westmoreland, Lancaster and Bradford Conservation Districts and tailored to specific employment needs of conservation districts. Training was provided at the Pennsylvania Association of Conservation District's regional and joint annual conferences.

In this rapidly changing information-based society, information, innovation and technology will be important to help keep conservation districts and their programs on the cutting edge. The following are key investments and activities in this program area:

- Acquisition and training on a new ArcView GIS based software developed by the Dirt and Gravel Roads Program will assist in all program activities being accomplished electronically (short of the actual road work). Field training and manuals were provided to help standardize data collection and site evaluations.
- Field data collected by districts on 17,000 miles of dirt and gravel roads with laptop computers (in the field) identifying and characterizing 9,500 specific work sites. Assessment data was electronically transmitted and tabulated by Penn State University into a statewide database.



## ***PA CleanWays***

PA CleanWays Westmoreland County's mission is to protect, restore and maintain the environmental qualities of our county for the benefit of all who live, work and visit herein. Executive

Director Jack Driscoll and Program Director Ellen Keefe, coordinate local efforts from their Greensburg office with the assistance of many volunteers and local organizations. Their efforts are anything but "simple".

During the past year, PA CleanWays cleaned up seven trashed and littered areas, taking over 84 tons of trash to local landfills; continued the adoption of 79 local and county maintained roads; held seven recycling/collection events at locations throughout the county; and, held their annual household hazardous waste (HHW) collection where residents properly disposed of more than 24 tons of HHW. Through their various programs, nearly 10,000 tires were collected and properly disposed of or recycled. More than 2,000 Christmas trees were chipped and used as mulch or given to the Game Commission for use as animal habitats. Fourteen and a half tons of old telephone directories were also collected and recycled.

Educational activities and presentations took PA CleanWays staff into many schools throughout the county. Presentations were also given to civic and social organizations upon request. All in all, PA CleanWays' staff spoke to more than 5,700 residents during the year. In addition, displays were set up at the Westmoreland County Fair, educational symposiums, and community events, making people aware of PA CleanWays activities and accomplishments.

PA CleanWays Westmoreland County is currently

working to establish a countywide paper recycling program. During the coming year, businesses, schools, and individuals should be able to recycle newspapers, magazines, catalogs, phone books, office paper, and cardboard at collection sites located throughout the county.



## ***The Western Pennsylvania Coalition for Abandoned Mine Reclamation***

The reclamation of abandoned coal mine lands and the remediation of polluted water draining from those abandoned mines remained a high priority for WPCAMR, the Westmoreland Conservation District and the local watershed groups within the county. Working with partners from the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, Natural Resources Conservation Service, U.S. Office of Surface Mining, U.S. Department of Energy, local colleges and universities, private foundations and area businesses, several ongoing projects have continued to progress. New projects have also been announced thanks to funding from DEP's new Growing Greener program.

At Brinkerton, Mt. Pleasant Township, a project addressing the first large mine discharge to impact Sewickley Creek received additional funding from the U.S. Office of Surface Mining, which will help construct a series of ponds and wetlands at the site.

A new project, also on Sewickley Creek but in Sewickley Township near Lowber, was awarded funding from the Growing Greener program to investigate whether iron oxide, deposited in a pond from

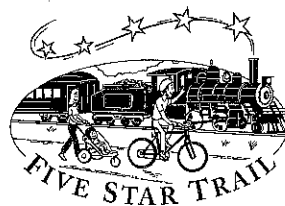
another large volume abandoned mine discharge, could be usable as a commercial product.

Also receiving funding from DEP's Growing Greener program was a project in the Turtle Creek Watershed in Export. The project will assess the feasibility of relocating a large acidic discharge into nearby underground mine workings where it would be neutralized by the water within the adjacent flooded mine. However, before this work would be done all other treatment alternatives will be looked at to determine whether relocating the discharge is really necessary. An engineering design is also being developed for an abandoned mine discharge located along Borland Farm Road in Murrysville.

In 2000, WPCAMR partnered with DEP's Bureau of Abandoned Mine Reclamation (BAMR) to accomplish the following reclamation and watershed restoration efforts in Westmoreland County:

- BAMR issued contracts to reclaim 113 acres of abandoned mine land, through Growing Greener and other funding sources.
- Remining incentives through the Reclaim PA program paved the way for industry to reclaim 70.5 acres and improve three miles of stream – \$764,500 worth of reclamation at no cost to Pennsylvania taxpayers. These remining operations are permitted through the Greensburg District Mining Office.
- WPCAMR was awarded \$50,000 through the Regional Watershed Support Initiative (part of the Reclaim PA program) to support local watershed projects.

- Volunteer watershed groups were awarded \$875,110 in grants through Growing Greener, including \$510,940 to the Westmoreland Conservation District and \$100,000 to WPCAMR.



### ***Five Star Trail***

The Five Star Trail, a tremendously popular, six-mile long, hiking and biking trail connecting Greensburg and Youngwood, continued

to be the third heaviest used recreation facility in Westmoreland County. Between 230,000 and 250,000 visits were reported in a survey conducted during the year. The trail is a mecca for bikers, walkers, joggers, and cross-country skiers in Central Westmoreland County. Maintained and managed by the Five Star Trail Chapter of the Regional Trail Corporation, the pathway is both a recreational trail and a transportation corridor, running through sections of five municipalities including the City of Greensburg, Hempfield Township and the Boroughs of Youngwood, South Greensburg and Southwest Greensburg.

In the year 2000, the Trail Chapter concentrated on expanding the trail beyond its current six miles. A Federal Transportation Enhancements Grant in the amount of \$206,000 was received through PennDOT for the construction of five to six new miles of trail, southward from Youngwood to Tarrs. Westmoreland County has also committed \$20,000 in matching funds to this project. The long-term goal is to connect to both the Youghiogheny River Trail in Connellsville and the Coal and Coke Trail in Scottdale to create a trail network connecting Central and Southern



Westmoreland County communities to the Yough River Trail.

Significant progress was also made in acquiring land to connect the Five Star Trail to the Westmoreland County Community College. This connection is also the first phase of the Youngwood to Mammoth Park Trail. Allegheny Energy donated approximately 1,900 feet of right-of-way between the Youngwood Train Station and W.C.C.C. to the Regional Trail Corporation. This was the crucial and final piece of land that is needed to make these connections. This section of trail is scheduled to be completed in 2001 and will add approximately 1.5 miles to the Five Star Trail.

The Five Star Trail Chapter of the Regional Trail is a cooperative effort involving Westmoreland County Parks, Westmoreland Conservation District, Penn's Corner R.C.&D., the five municipalities mentioned earlier, the Westmoreland County Industrial Development Authority and a 200-member volunteer force. Serving on the Chapter's Board of Directors during 2000 were Malcolm Sias, Cheryl Kemerer, James Roman, Jr., Frank Lehman, George Church, David Fait, Dale Hassinger, J. Edward Hutchinson, William Brandt, Vaughn Neill, Greg Phillips, Sam Testa, Jr., Nevin Ulery, Duane Wolley, and Chris Zundel.



**Westmoreland  
County Bureau  
of Parks &  
Recreation**

After nearly two years of work, Parks Horizons, a comprehensive plan for parks and recreation, and open space in Westmoreland County, was completed and

adopted by the Board of County Commissioners in June of 2000. The Parks Horizons plan represented the combined work of a thirty-member steering committee, the Parks staff and a planning consultant and includes large amounts of public input gathered through public meetings and a county-wide survey. Parks Horizons is the blue print and guideline for the management and development of parks and recreation programs and facilities in Westmoreland County for the next thirty years.

To help move the plan forward, a seven member Citizen's Advisory Board for the Bureau of Parks and Recreation was created by the Westmoreland County Commissioners. The Citizen's Advisory Board will work with the Parks staff and the County Board of Commissioners to accomplish the many recommendations contained in the Parks Horizons plan. Board members include Paul Heyworth, Linda Boxx, Dr. Edward Lewis, Winn Biedler, James Okonak, and John Framel. Park staff members Malcolm Sias, Jack Paulik and Dan Carpenter worked closely with district staff during 2000 to accomplish many tasks.

In the year 2000, major events in the Parks system included:

- Over three million visits occurred within the nine parks of the Westmoreland County Parks system. Visitors enjoyed a wide variety of park programs, concessions and park facilities, trails and beautiful, peaceful natural settings.
- Construction began on the Center for Conservation Education at the entrance to Ann Rudd Saxman Nature Park. This is a major educational effort of the Westmoreland Conservation District.

- The Coal and Coke Trail Chapter was formed to acquire and develop a rail-trail between Scottdale and Mount Pleasant.
- Planning and fundraising was nearly completed for the installation of an experimental sewage system to serve the eastern half of Twin Lakes Park. Penn's Corner RC&D, the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, and the Army Corp of Engineers are partners in the project.
- Two park tabloids describing programs and facilities were printed and distributed to 70,000 homes across the county. The tabloids were developed in response to citizen input indicating the need to provide more information to County residents about parks programs and facilities.
- A grant of \$206,000 was received for the expansion of the Five Star Trail southward from Youngwood through New Stanton to Tarrs.
- A grant of \$10,000 was received from D.C.N.R. to study the feasibility of constructing a trail from Trafford through Murrysville and Export to connect to Saltsburg and the Conemaugh Valley Trail in Indiana County.
- A new Maintenance Center Complex was constructed at Northmoreland Park.
- The Twin Lakes Park Lower Lake handicapped accessible walkway was completed. A figure eight loop around both lakes, approximately two and one half miles long, is now available for walkers and joggers.

- Installation of the Westmoreland County Vietnam Veterans Memorial was completed at Twin Lakes Park and the site was officially dedicated on Veteran's Day.

Westmoreland County residents "simply" love their park programs and facilities and demonstrate that love by using them in ever expanding numbers. The Westmoreland County Bureau of Parks and Recreation recognizes and accepts this challenge and is dedicated to providing a dynamic series of programs and facilities for the use of all County residents.



### ***Penn's Corner Resource Conservation & Development Area***

Resource Conservation & Development (RC&D) is a nonprofit public-private partnership involving local community members working voluntarily on a multi-county basis to resolve issues and develop opportunities for rural development. The Penn's Corner Resource Conservation and Development Area began in 1975. The program provided continued technical and/or financial assistance to projects in Westmoreland County. Led at the local level by Coordinator Nevin Ulery and Program Assistant Vivian Bernardo, the partnership is governed by a volunteer board of directors.

On December 12, 2000, the Penn's Corner RC&D Area celebrated its twenty-fifth anniversary since the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Agriculture authorized this multi-county area for operations. The Penn's Corner Executive Council is currently in the

process of revising its Area Plan to redefine its mission, and to set goals and objectives for the next five to ten years.

This year's accomplishments included:

- The Penn's Corner Conservancy secured an \$80,000 grant from the USDI, Office of Surface Mining from the Watershed Cooperative Agreement Program on behalf of the Sewickley Creek Watershed Association. These funds will be added to the \$100,000 obtained by the Conservancy previously to assist with the abandoned mine drainage remediation project at Brinkerton.
- Approximately \$92,000 of additional funding for the Center for Environmental Education was "passed through" the Penn's Corner Conservancy for the Westmoreland Conservation District. This is in addition to the \$200,000 passed through for the District in 1999.
- The Conservancy has also served as a pass through organization for other projects and groups such as the Ann Rudd Saxman Park, the Westmoreland Farmland Preservation Program, the Westmoreland Soil Survey, and the Ligonier County Market.
- Penn's Corner contributed over \$5,200 to the stabilization of two serious erosion areas on the banks of the Fourmile Run.
- Efforts continued throughout the year to obtain an approved design, permits and additional funding sources to install an alternative wastewater management system at Twin Lakes Park. Also efforts have been initiated to provide wastewater

management for the Crabtree area of Hempfield, Salem and Unity Townships.

- Penn's Corner continued to work with the Westmoreland County Bureau of Parks and Recreation to implement the Forest Stewardship Planning component of the Westmoreland County Comprehensive Recreation Parks and Open Space Plan for all county parks.
- Assistance was provided by Penn's Corner to develop two separate statewide technical assistance grant applications for the Growing Greener Program. Sponsors for these programs are the Pennsylvania Association of Conservation Districts and the Pennsylvania Association of RC&D Councils. Also assistance was provided to several local sponsors in the preparation of grant applications, letters of support and other items for Growing Greener grant applications.
- Also Penn's Corner continued to provide assistance with several projects such as the development of the Five Star Trail, the Youghioghenny River/Sewickley Creek stream bank stabilization project and the All Hazards Mitigation Plan for the Monongahela River Watershed.

# *Westmoreland Conservation District*

## *Financial Statements*

### Concise Statement of Financial Position — Combined Funds December 31, 2000

Assets	
Cash	\$225,394
General Fixed Assets	60
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$225,454</b>
Liabilities and Fund Balance	
Current Liabilities	\$ 10,266
Long-Term Debt	60
Unrestricted Net Assets	215,128
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$225,454</b>

### Concise Statement of Activities — Combined Funds Year Ended December 31, 2000

Unrestricted Net Assets	
Support	
Westmoreland County	\$526,283
State Grants	88,784
Other Revenue	42,000
Fees	30,470
Farmland Preservation	37,470
WPCAMR	103,529
Interest Income	11,860
Special Projects	154,205
Education Building Revenue	296,885
	<b>1,291,486</b>
Expenditures	
Program Services	690,236
Education Building Expended	158,727
Management & General	314,046
Fundraising	6,976
	<b>1,169,985</b>
Excess (Deficiency) – Current	121,502
Net Assets – Beginning Balance	93,626
Net Assets – End of Year	<b>\$215,128</b>

*"Then by turning, turning,  
we come around right."*



# Year 2001 Conservation Team



## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

J. Roy Houston, *Chairman*

Ron Rohall, *Vice-Chairman*

Conrad Donovan, *Treasurer*

P. Roy Kemerer, *Secretary*

Albert Barnett, *Director*

William Doney, *Director*

P. Graydon Long, *Director*

Scott Conner,  
*County Commissioner, Director*

Dorothy Stoner, *Director*

## ASSOCIATE DIRECTORS

Robert Ackerman

Jack Driscoll

Paul Heyworth

Mark Jackson

Tom Keller

William Kotsenas

Harry Meyer

Theresa Rohall

Dr. William Shea

Elmer Slezak

Keith Walters

## STAFF

Gregory M. Phillips, *District Manager*

Lorrie L. Stouffer  
*Assistant District Manager*

Anthony P. Quadro, Jr.  
*Program Specialist/Forester*

Craig J. Barras  
*Watershed Specialist*

Christopher E. Droste  
*Erosion Control Technician*

James W. Pillsbury, *Hydraulic Engineer*

Daniel E. Griffith, *Nutrient Mgmt./  
Ag Conservation Technician*

Michael T. Barrick  
*Erosion Control Technician*

Kathleen Fritz, *Program Secretary*

Karen Barnhart  
*Administrative Secretary*

Joanne Kitsko, *Receptionist*

Sandra Dzendzel, *Secretary*

## PA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Darl Rosenquest, *Regional Soils Engineer*

Charles Kubasik, *Field Representative*

## USDA NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE

Wesley M. Gordon  
*District Conservationist*

Larry Stokum, *Soil Technician*

Rob Knight, *Soil Scientist*

## SPECIAL THANKS

Westmoreland County Commissioners

## COUNTY PARTNERS

Department of Public Works

Department of Planning

Penn State Cooperative  
Extension Service

Bureau of Parks and Recreation

## STATE PARTNERS

Department of  
Environmental Protection

Department of Agriculture

Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission

Pennsylvania Game Commission

State Conservation Commission

Pennsylvania Association  
of Conservation Districts

## FEDERAL PARTNERS

Natural Resources  
Conservation Service

Farm Service Agency

Rural Economic & Community  
Development Service

Penn's Corner Resource  
Conservation & Development

## LOCAL PARTNERS

Jacobs Creek  
Watershed Association

Sewickley Creek  
Watershed Association

Loyalhanna  
Watershed Association

Mountain  
Watershed Association

Turtle Creek  
Watershed Association

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

## SUPPORTERS OF:

*The Farmland Preservation Program and the  
Western Pennsylvania Coalition for Abandoned Mine Reclamation.  
Both organizations are guided by volunteer boards.*



## DIRECTORS

Donald C. Fretts, *Chairman*  
Livestock & Crop Farmer  
East Huntingdon

Blaine E. Hutter, *Vice-Chairman*  
Dairy & Crop Farmer  
Mt. Pleasant

Alquin Heinnickel, *Treasurer*  
Beef & Crop Farmer, Hempfield

Robert Ambrose  
Ridgeview Acres Farm, Cook

Ivan Campbell  
Building Contractor, Cook

Richard Comp  
Vegetable Farmer, Mt. Pleasant

William Ebert  
Dairy & Crop Farmer, Unity

Thomas Kerber, Sr.  
Township Commissioner  
North Huntingdon

Fr. Warren Murrman, O.S.B  
Saint Vincent Archabbey

Betty J. Reefer, *Program Administrator*

## DIRECTORS

C. LeeRoy Vatter, *President*  
Indiana County

Hank Webster, *Vice-President*  
Clearfield County

William Gresock, *Secretary*  
Jefferson County

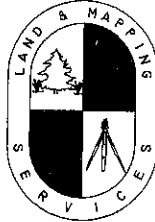
Doug Petro, *Treasurer*  
Fayette County

Mark Killar, *Regional Coordinator*

Debra Simko, *Watershed Coordinator*

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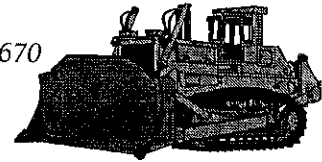
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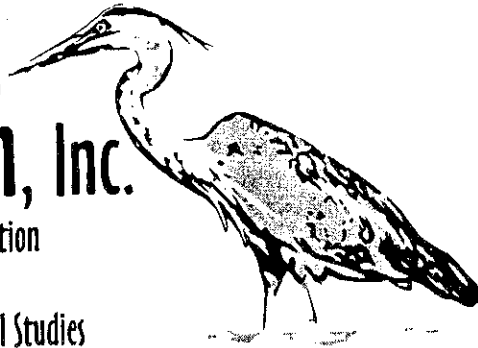
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  - Fish Surveys
  - Wetland Delineations
  - Wetland Mitigation Plans

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Export, PA 15632  
Phone: (724) 468-6944  
Administrative Office: (724) 334-3790  
Field Office: (412) 849-7946

Nursery:  
311 Crooks Road  
Apollo, PA 15613  
Phone: (724) 334-3780  
Fax: (724) 334-3781

# 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
- 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 & 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 will 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 

Westmoreland Conservation District  
Donohoe Center  
RD #12, Box 202-B  
Greensburg, Pennsylvania 15601

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