

Colors of Conservation

Westmoreland
Conservation
District 

2002 ANNUAL REPORT



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.

Special Thanks

The Westmoreland Conservation District extends a special thanks to the Westmoreland County Commissioners Scott Conner, Tom Ceraso and Tom Balya, for their generous financial support which demonstrates a strong determination in maintaining and advancing the conservation movement.



WCD Board of Directors

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Not Pictured: Albert Barnett, *Director*; William Doney, *Director*; Scott Conner, *County Commissioner, Director*



District: A Portrait in Progress

Westmoreland County's environment is a portrait in progress. The masterpiece is being painted by an alliance of artists, from volunteers to professional conservationists. This report outlines how the portrait is taking shape and form.

Those who care about the soil and water are using a multi-colored palette to create their living work of art. The green forests stand in contrast to the fields of golden corn and grain. The azure blue streams and lakes often reflect brilliant red and yellow sunsets. The plowed fields of rich brown soil blend with the flowering trees and bushes along their borders.

Not all of the colors are pleasant. The orange iron oxide of abandoned mine drainage and the muddy brown of sedimentation are also part of the Westmoreland portrait. The artists are constantly trying to improve on some colors while reducing and eliminating others. The portrait is ever evolving, never quite completed. The artists are constantly learning and growing. They are undaunted even though they know their work is never done. The Westmoreland Conservation District salutes this creative effort and dedicates itself to the "portrait in progress."

—WCD Staff



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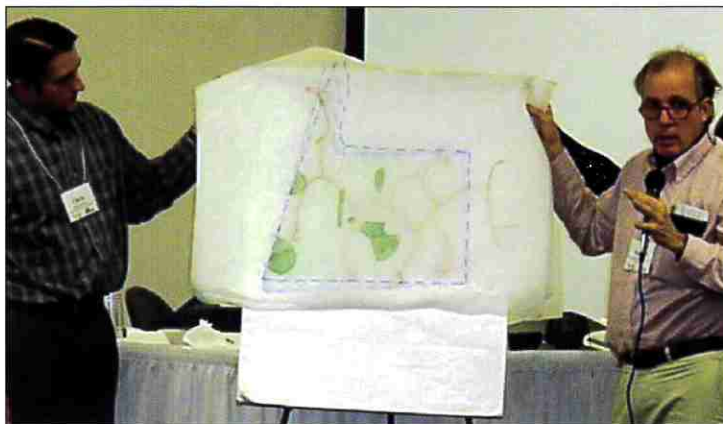


Artists Paint Rendering of Erosion and Sedimentation Control

Art in any age is the expression of the characteristic attitudes of the people of that age toward important aspects of life. In the past, religious and social patterns have often determined the nature and function of art. Often the artist's role was to mirror the etiquette of social activities and not to focus on individual expression. These cultural patterns left their mark on the following generations. Most art revolves around early traditions and forms, but most artists managed to leave an imprint of their personalities on their art. All artists have taken early influences and forms into account when creating a masterpiece; but, it is he or she who learns, grows and evolves from the past influences to improve upon the portrait that they're painting.

The erosion and sedimentation control program has evolved from its early days of the 1940's when artists first painted the picture of muddy colored streams from development and agricultural activities. Today's artists Christopher Droste and Michael Barrick have used the past influences of the previous generation of artists to create a new palette. Previous reviewers and inspectors have left a legacy on which to build upon. Chris and Mike have taken advantage of just that. The specialists have continued to change the portrait on which they paint. They envision the change of increasing development before them and adapt to the situations that challenge them everyday. They attempt to preserve the browns of the Weikert, the Wharton, and the Westmoreland silt loams, to the red tinges of the Upshur Gilpin soils from becoming the muddy brown silt that lies in the beds of the streams. Their goal is to keep the soils intact so they are useful to sink roots into, and not as pollutants that destroy habitat and cause flooding.

Chris and Mike's attempts to combat the erosion problem are gratifying. 253 plans were reviewed and approved by the specialists during 2002. In addition, they



Chris Droste of WCD and Randall Arendt, Planner explain Smart Development procedures to the audience.

completed over 600 inspections of residential, commercial, and road construction sites. The amount of ground disturbed last year was approximately 1,304 acres. Most of the sites remained in voluntary compliance by installing the appropriate controls which saved our fine blue waters from muddy brown sediment. In order for the artists to maintain the clear blue streams, they held two workshops that focused on contractors and home builders, and one workshop that focused on "Smart" land development practices.

Contractors canvas the landscape with machinery in hopes of creating a masterpiece. Our artists' goal was to influence them to install the appropriate controls such as building a better trap or basin, or installing collector channels or silt fence properly. These are tools to assure that our portrait doesn't degrade. The Smart development workshop focused on developers and municipal officials. Internationally-known landscape architect Randall Arendt, together with Alex Graziani from the Smart Growth Partnership paired up with Chris Droste from the District and developer Fredrick Crack of North Huntingdon. They first walked a site that was conducive for Smart Growth principles. The men then sketched out a layout of the site to preserve certain amenities such as trees, waterways, and natural features. This idea revolves around less earthwork and destruction to the natural landscape to protect valuable resources and to create a more appealing development. These practices also save money and make it profitable for the developer. This information was presented at the workshop. The workshop also had an interactive section that allowed for a hands-on approach to designing a "Smart development". Both workshops were a success.

The artists sometimes need direction and assistance from their partner Kathy Fritz, the program secretary. She provides an invaluable service by processing the permits



The brown sediment captured by this pond won't end up in a stream.

and plans that the artists need in order to paint their portrait. Kathy also assisted in the many workshops that the district staff presented. Not only is she constantly updating the database to allow the artists to reflect on their progress and presenting monthly reports for district staff progress, but she also prepares quarterly reports for DEP regarding our program.

The artists focused on reducing muddy-brown sediment from clogging our crystal blue waters by helping their respective watershed groups flourish. Mike is the president of the Jacobs Creek Watershed Association. His focus is to reduce bank erosion, mine drainage, and land erosion. He has written grants to secure funding for these important tasks, and has participated in the study for the Coal and Coke Trail. Chris is a board member and Secretary of the Turtle Creek Watershed Association. He is involved currently with a project at Borland Farm Road, an effort to reduce mine drainage. He also participated as a member of the feasibility study committee of the Saltsburg

to Trafford Trail. They approved the study, designed by Mackin Engineering, this past summer. Chris also completed a course in Wetland delineation science presented by the US Army Corp of Engineers. He plans to use this education in his attempt to preserve the integrity of the environment.

As the portraits change and evolve, the artists will continue to adapt and change. They will continue the pursuit for maintaining the rich red and browns of the fresh plowed earth and reduce the muddy-brown of sedimentation. Our artists have left an imprint for the future to observe, grow and evolve.

For more information contact:

Mike Barrick, *Erosion Control Specialist*
miketbarrick@yahoo.com

Chris Droste, *Erosion Control Specialist*
cedroste@yahoo.com



2002 Delegated Program Activities (The Artists' palette)

	2001	2002
Education Events	20	8
Number of participants.....	1103	960
Technical Assistance to the public (Erosion Control and Stormwater Mgmt).....	1083	1150
Conservation Partnership Agreements (New and retained).....	23	23
Plan Reviews (total number).....	240	253
Plan review project acres.....	4518	16,375
Plan review disturbed acres.....	1472	1304
Plan review fees collected.....	\$35,800	\$36,915
Erosion and Sediment Pollution Control Inspections (under 5 acres).....	352	403
NPDES (general permit) issued.....	33	32
NPDES (individual permit) issued.....	5	5
NPDES Permit Application Fees Collected.....	\$10,750	\$10,500
NPDES permitted Site Inspections (over 5 acres).....	290	351
Total Fees Collected	\$46,550	\$45,970
Total Site Inspections	642	754
Chapter 105 Stream Encroachment Permits	128	102

Forest Provides Myriad of Colors and Concerns

Many colors come to mind when talking about the forestland of Westmoreland County. A multitude of shades abound throughout the year and are reflected in the changing seasons. The year starts out with the browns and muted colors of winter. Dark green conifers dot the countryside contrasting the white snow cover forest floor. In February at the National Association of Conservation Districts meeting in Reno Nevada, foresters focused on national issues such as carbon sequestration and global warming, the national fire plan, windbreaks, and riparian buffers. Back in Westmoreland County we were busy working on 3 riparian buffer planting plans, a timberland appraisal for the Roaring Run Watershed Association, a PA Forest Stewardship Plan, and helping to produce a video on portable wooden timber bridges for timber harvesters.

A myriad of color blushes out in late April and early May with the appearance of wildflowers and new leaves. By summer, over 50% of the county's land area is covered with the cool green of the deciduous forest. The green pigment chlorophyll is a necessary ingredient in food making process of the trees – photosynthesis. Spring and summer are by far the busiest times of year for our forester, Tony Quadro. Inspections of timber harvesting sites ensure the protection of our streams at a critical time of year. Seventy inspections were completed on logging sites during 2002. A record 3000 Tubex tree shelters for spring plantings were distributed. A resource inventory and timber evaluation was conducted on the Hill property for a possible conservation easement. And a forestry program was presented to 180 students from Harrold Middle school at Camp Soles.

Also during the summer, twelve woodlot management plans were completed, a training session was attended to allow Tony to become a certified Tree Farm inspector, field work was completed for the Gearhard Stewardship Plan, and forestry talks were given to attendees at the Lenape Day Camp and the State Service Foresters at the Center for Conservation Education.

The greens of summer eventually give way to the yellow, orange, scarlet, gold, red, and many hues of fall color in the county. It was a good time to show off the Jacobs Creek riparian demonstration area on the Stairs farm to a busload of extension agents from Ohio State University. Yet another forestry presentation was given to



Forester Tony Quadro explains photosynthesis to children attending a Lenape Day Camp.

90 students from Metzger Elementary school in Ann Rudd Saxman Nature Park. Tony was also involved in a meeting to help PA CleanWays improve their seedling program.

By years' end, the somber colors of early winter return, yet the reddish brown leaves still hang on the oaks. And, it's time to look back on the year's accomplishments. Plan reviews for timber harvesting operations occur throughout the year, and in 2002 over 30 Erosion Control Plans for timber harvesting were reviewed. In addition, three new Trees of Distinction were added, and over 150 technical assistance calls were answered.

For more information contact:

Tony Quadro, Program Specialist/Forester
tonyquadro@yahoo.com



Stormwater Spans the Spectrum

Ask any elementary-school age child what color water is, and the response will be, 'Blue!' Ask someone who lives on the banks of the Mississippi River in the South, and their answer might well be 'Brown!' A scientist would respond that pure water, H₂O, is clear — the original colorless and odorless liquid. Using paints and brushes, an artist will depict water in every color of the rainbow. But to the Westmoreland Conservation District's stormwater management professionals, stormwater takes on many colors.



Uncontrolled runoff from a heavily developed urban area caused flooding of several townhouses in Greensburg.

Improperly managed crop field may end up being green as well — yet this is not good at all! If excess nutrients (Nitrogen, Phosphorus, Potassium) are applied to land, and the rainfall washes them off into ponds and streams, they can cause uncontrolled growth of algae, resulting in loss of oxygen in ponds and giving the water a foul odor. Overload of nutrients is a typical problem for Westmoreland County streams.

New State and Federal regulations began to require treatment of runoff from urbanized areas. DEP's new NPDES Phase II construction site permit requires 'Post-Construction Stormwater Management' (PCSWM) for all permitted sites. The PCSWM plan must address water



The crushed stone parking lot behind our Barn uses a geotextile layer to keep the stone clean and optimize infiltration of rainfall.

Japanese water gardens often feature green water — water tinted by microscopic algae to an olive-drab tone. The Japanese consider this hue to be a peaceful reflector of the surrounding trees, rocks, and landscape. Stormwater from a residential subdivision, or a golf course, or an

quality issues for the 2-year, 24 hour storm. A site must either infiltrate the entire volume of this storm, or, treat the water quality with a

stormwater management BMP, that is, a Best Management Practice. Infiltration of stormwater into the ground will treat and remove pollutants and help to prevent flooding during storms. Alternatively, a well-designed wetland treatment system, or a 'wet' detention pond with a permanent pool of water, will capture the errant nutrients and remove them from stormwater before they cause trouble.

Moral relativists often speak of issues as having 'shades of grey'. The more upright prefer to view events in terms of 'black and white'. In this county, stormwater may often have any particular shade of grey, or be black, or, white! District staffers recently found white water in a backyard stream — a plasterer had dumped his excess material into a storm drain, a tributary of a High Quality trout stream. Other staff discovered that a stream in our Nature Park had turned black — DEP's water quality specialist tested and found that a nearby industry was running carbon powder down their storm drains. Grey water, alas, is ubiquitous in our county, as thousands of homes with failing (or non-existent) septic systems discharge sewage into streams, leaving a tell-tale greyish slime on the bottom.

The State's newly-created MS4 program (for Municipalities — M — with Separate Storm Sewer Systems — S4) plans to address these black, white, and grey stormwater problems. Each MS4 municipality must implement plans to control illegal discharge of wastewater into storm systems and streams. Septic system and sewage problems must be identified and a plan developed to address them. The Conservation District will be providing technical support to many MS4's in the coming years, to help them clean up their stormwater.

Perhaps it is the second-grader's bright blue which should be our Stormwater Management goal. Bright, clean, blue, reflecting the clear skies over our county. Blue, because the county residents have been wisely using their natural resources in the very best way. Blue, because land developers have left vegetated buffer areas between their developments and the streams. Blue, because homeowners have been careful about their landscaping chemicals. Blue, because municipalities have studied their storm sewer systems and have made repairs, and treated illegal polluted discharges. Blue, because earthmovers have installed and maintained erosion controls. Blue, because infiltration of rainwater maintains a good quality flow in our streams.



Underground retention tanks are one way of reducing the volume of runoff, but they do not improve the water's quality.

For more information contact:

Jim Pillsbury, P.E., Hydraulic Engineer
jwpillsbury@yahoo.com

District Weaves Tapestry of Education



Students search for aquatic life in Donohoe Creek.

The District's education program is like a tapestry. Colors from each program area – forestry, watersheds, erosion control, agriculture, storm water management and water quality – are being interwoven through our various workshops and tours to make a beautiful picture.

This year has been the beginning of weaving this tapestry. Some of our established programs such as the Westmoreland County Envirothon and our workshops for municipal officials are the older yarns becoming the foundation for building our Education Program. Some



Kids love learning about our environment!

new events such as the "Smart Development Workshop" and the Conservation Tours have brought new colors like the yellow of the sun adding a bright splash of color to this tapestry. Some workshops may be a one time only event – such as the Lenape Day Camp – adding a single, but colorful thread to the weaving. As time progresses, watch for this tapestry to evolve from

simple strings of yarn into a larger, complex beautiful work of art to be admired and enjoyed for years to come.

The artist's view of this tapestry is to have the finished project, our Education Program, express our vision of Conservation. We want our tapestry to be very visible in Westmoreland County and to affect those around us. Our tapestry will encourage all citizens to adopt a way of life that incorporates the thoughtful, wise use of our shared natural resources.

Some of the colorful threads that were woven into our tapestry in 2002 include the following activities and number of attendees:

- Open House (200+)
- Conservation Tour (70)
- Westmoreland County Envirothon (95)
- Builders and Contractors Workshop (60)
- Earth Day Celebration (1800)
- Youth in Government (26)
- "Watersheds and Sustainable Communities" Teacher's Workshop (16)
- School Field Trips and Presentations (Grades 3 and older) (300)
- Eagle Scout Projects (7 scouts – 150 helpers)
- Scout Badge Work (100)
- Fayette Children's Water Festival (640)
- State Service Forester Conference (50)
- State Watershed Conference (800)
- PACD Annual Conference Marketing and Public Relations Workshop (35)
- Camp Soles (450)
- Soil Survey Training (20)
- Riparian Buffer Training and Planting (50)
- "500 Years of Conservation" Day Camp (42)
- Farm Field Day (45)
- "The Green Edge of Westmoreland County" Art and Poetry Show (100+)
- Watershed Golf Scramble (66)
- "Conservation Partnership" Vision Session (32)
- "Smart Development" Workshop (75)
- Drinking Water Workshops (40)
- Pond Workshops (25)



Bright yellow corn — the center of attention for Day Camp children.

As you can see, the education program is beginning to be developed. The yarns are on the loom and the weaving has begun. The tapestry will come alive with color over the next few years. If you have any ideas for programming and you would like to suggest a new color for our tapestry, you are always welcome to bring your suggestions to Leanne at 724-837-5271. If you would be interested in helping with the educational advisory committee, let her know also. This is a magnificent work we are about to undertake. May it be a blessing to the whole community!

For more information contact:

Leanne Griffith, *Growing Greener Program Assistant*
leannegriffith@yahoo.com

Farming Gets Down to Black and White Basics

If you take all the world's colors and mix them up in a single space the result is a rich, earthy blackness... just like the productive soil of farming. It is as simple as black and white. Well, perhaps it is a bit more complex – farming, that is. Although the daily operation seems simple, the overall production of food and fiber is extremely complex. Our job at the District is to help farmers to continue to create a wide range of colorful products, such



Two generations on a farm.

as: cool, fresh milk from black and white cows; warm, cozy wool from white sheep; fresh white eggs from white chickens, etc. The Conservation District staff and volunteers are “assistant artists” trying to provide the brushes, paint, and encouragement. The rest of us “artists and critics” enjoy the results of their talented and skillful labor.

We work towards maintaining long-term sustainable farms. Those

farms are ones that have a bottom line in their budget that is solidly black. Profitable farms are the ones that will stay in business and provide food and fiber for all of us.

Several cost share programs are offered by the state of PA through the District to help farmers with their bottom line. One of those assistance programs is called the “Act 6” cost share program, which has provided some money for large manure storage structure projects last year. Three farmers received a total of \$225,000 in 2002 and matched it with approximately \$87,000 of their own. Another cost share program is called “Growing Greener”. It is designed to encourage farmers to install fences along streams to keep their animals out of the water. If the animals will then need alternative water sources or other accommodations, we try to work those costs in under the program, too. Last year we had 9 farmers take advantage of that program with a total of \$114,000 provided from the state to match their \$28,000 contribution. A third cost share program is called “Project Grass”. Project Grass promotes the use of rotational grazing of animals, which helps pastures by giving the grasses a rest between the grazing times. Two farmers installed grazing fences and received a total of \$5,300 in reimbursement. Several other programs have become available in the county to help farmers. If you are interested in starting a project, talk to us at the District first to see if we might have anything



Contented cows and well-managed manure go together on a County farm.

available for you, especially if it will improve the quality of water in your community.

The choice is black and white as to whether we want to support our local farms. To maintain a nice standard of living where all of us can dress in any color of clothes that we wish requires that we have local farms producing goods that we can use here or trade with others in other parts of the world for something more desirable. We do not want to get ourselves into a fix where the food or fiber that we want is only supplied by other countries in the world that do not always agree with us and might at any time withhold those products. We will continue to support our local farms because for us, the choice is black and white.



Green and brown contour strips are the color of soil conservation.

For more information contact:

Dan Griffith, *Nutrient Management/Ag Conservation Technician*
nmctus@yahoo.com

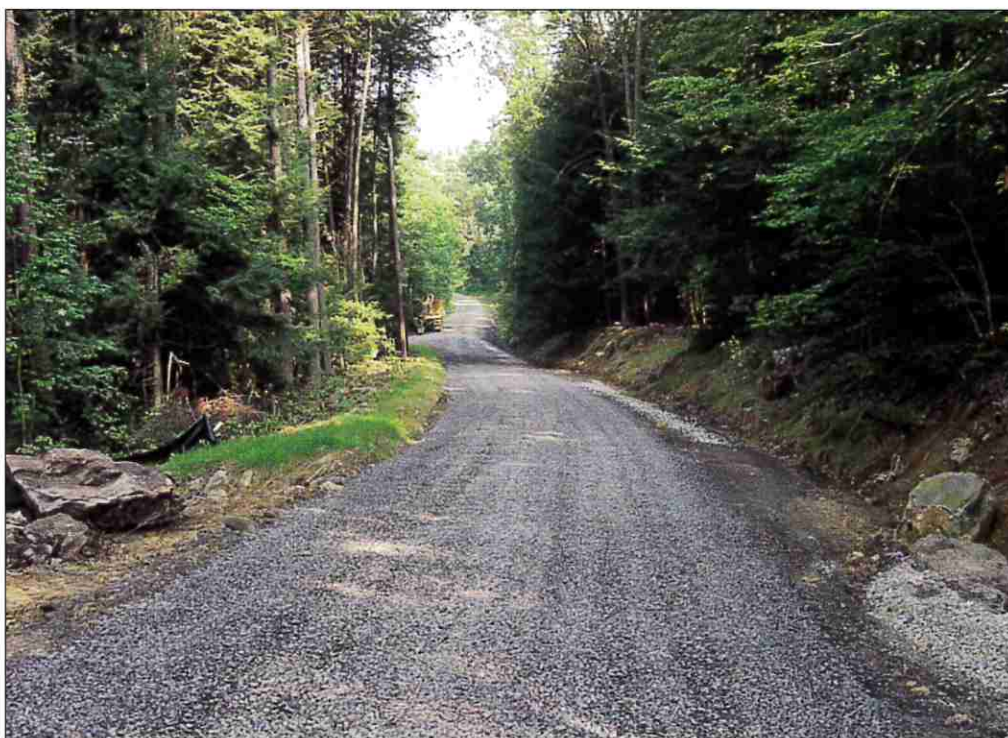
Roads Going from Brown to Blue

Over the course of 2002 a few roadside streams in Westmoreland County turned from a shade of brown to more of a clear blue. This occurred mostly because of the hard work, dedication, and commitment to conservation from some of our county's finest local leaders and public workers. Loyalhanna, Derry, Cook, and Mount Pleasant Townships used \$67,091 in grant money from the State Conservation Commission and matched it with \$155,028 of their own funding through equipment, labor, and material costs to complete improvements on five dirt and gravel roads. The municipalities stabilized 565 square feet of outlets; 29,718 square feet of

eroded ditch; 17,124 square feet of road bank; 3,600 square feet of stream bank; installed 16 cross pipes for a total of 500 feet; and stabilized 300,459 square feet of roadways. This hard work and commitment to getting the job done right is a great example of the conservation ethic that is flowing through Westmoreland County like a clear, blue mountain stream.

For more information contact:

Craig Barras, *Watershed Specialist*
craigbarras@yahoo.com



Road surface stabilization, bank and shoulder vegetation, and drainage repairs are all part of the Dirt and Gravel Roads program.



Watersheds "Growing Greener"

Westmoreland County's watersheds are continuing their marked improvement in water quality, and educational awareness. This is due in large part to the many active watershed associations that have taken it upon themselves to improve their communities. These groups have formed and/or grown in the last few years by leaps and bounds due to the concerted efforts of the District and the Growing Greener Program through the DEP. All of the active groups in the county have benefited from this program, and we urge the leadership in Harrisburg to keep this program funded because it is getting results. Thousands of feet of streambank are being stabilized from erosion; miles of stream are being restored from abandoned mine drainage, and municipal governments are working with local groups to educate the public and restore their watersheds.

Jacobs Creek Watershed Association

The JCWA worked towards completing its first Growing Greener Grant. Three areas along Jacobs Creek were stabilized with root wads and rock rip-rap for a total of 700 feet. One area was at the confluence of Laurel Run with Jacobs Creek, and the other two were on opposite sides of Jacobs Creek just below the 5th Avenue bridge in Scottdale. The group will complete this project by planting a few hundred trees and shrubs at the sites below Scottdale in the spring of 2003. The Penn State Center for Watershed Stewardship completed the Keystone Project for the group in May. This plan will be used by the group and communities to prioritize programs and projects in the coming years. The group also completed a Water Quality Monitoring Plan for the watershed through assistance from the C-SAW program with Canaan Valley Institute, Fayette County Conservation District, DEP-Watershed Mgmt., WPCAMR, Penn State Coop. Ext., and Westmoreland Conservation District. This plan will be the reference point for all future sampling by the group.



Jacobs Creek near Laurel Run, in Laurelville after stream bank stabilization.

Kiskiminetas Watershed Association

The KWA started to move out on its own in 2002; away from its initial sponsor, the Roaring Run Watershed Association (RRWA). They have formed a strong, diverse board of directors that has many great ideas. The group partnered with RRWA in the spring to co-sponsor the "Know Your Watershed Day" at the Roaring Run Trail along the Kiski River in the spring. They have active water quality and education committees that have been coordinating sampling and future educational events. They also have a land conservation committee that is busy looking to protect the riparian areas along the river. They acquired a 12 acre parcel in West Leechburg Borough known as "Buttermilk Falls", and have cleaned up trash that was dumped on the property. Nature/wildflower walks were conducted with the assistance of the Westmoreland County Botanical Society.

Loyalhanna Watershed Association

The LWA had a busy year planning for future projects. They started their strategic planning in their new office, the old Ligonier Township building along Old Lincoln Highway. They received a few Growing Greener grants. One was to conduct a detailed assessment of the water resources in the entire watershed. This project will begin in earnest in the spring of 2003. They took the initiative to organize a committee for the inaugural Westmoreland Earth Day at Saint Vincent College. This first year event was considered by many to be an outstanding success by drawing over 1,800 people on a rainy day in April. They kicked off a program called "Sources and Solutions" that took a few hundred people to different operations in the watershed that may cause non-point source pollution. These included field trips to a working strip mine, a quarry, and the Rolling Rock Brewery. The visits highlighted how these operations work to prevent pollution by recycling water and re-using materials. LWA continued planning what they would like to do at their recently acquired McConnaughey Farm behind their office. The group also worked with local municipalities and PA CleanWays to establish a Recycling Center near their office off of Route 30. Finally, they continued to work on AMD issues around the large discharges at Crabtree and Latrobe.

Mountain Watershed Association

The MWA had a productive year in 2002. They completed an assessment of the Mill Run sub-basin in July with a Growing Greener Grant. They will address some of the action items from this assessment in 2003. The Jones Mill dump site was cleaned up with help from the Donegal Township Supervisors and many volunteers during the annual River Sweep in June. The Sagamore AMD Remediation project was completed and dedicated in



Public input is key to watershed projects.

October. Volunteers from local scout groups and schools planted trees on a portion of the site. The group also moved into a new office that has more space for staff, files, and meetings.

Pucketa & Chartiers Watershed Association

PACWA used a WPCAMR grant to identify and monitor five (5) AMD discharges in that area. They also started working on a Water Quality Monitoring Plan with Canaan Valley Institute, and the Allegheny and Westmoreland Conservation Districts. One part of this plan was completed when the group held a Watershed Walk in May. Volunteers walked Pucketa and Little Pucketa Creeks, and Chartiers Run conducting visual assessments and some field measurements to determine initial water quality. The group also completed a brochure that will help them build a membership and volunteer base for future projects.

Sewickley Creek Watershed Association

The SCWA continued to work diligently to move the Brinkerton AMD project forward. This is the largest discharge in the watershed, and when abated will bring back miles of Sewickley Creek to fishable waters. The other major discharge, Lowber is being targeted also. The water coming from this site will be turning from orange to clear in a few years with the work being done at this site, near the confluence with the Youghiogheny River. Hedon Environmental is capturing and selling iron oxide to a pigment company. This resource recovery concept will hopefully help fund this project and others with similar water chemistry in the region. The group is also working with the Western PA Conservancy's Watershed Assistance Center to complete a Watershed Conservation Plan through funding from the DCNR. Once this project is completed in 2003, the group and all municipalities in the watershed will be eligible for additional grant monies for environmental improvement projects. SCWA continues experiments with different types of aeration of mine water at Wilson Run along the PA Turnpike.

Turtle Creek Watershed Association

The TCWA hired a new Executive Director in November to help the group complete existing projects and plan for

future ones. They currently have four Growing Greener Grants that are in different stages of completion. Stream banks in Jeannette and Manor were stabilized in the spring and summer, and one additional site is planned for Pitcairn in the spring of 2003. Work is progressing on a study of the Export AMD discharge. These studies will result in a plan of action and preliminary design for abatement of this destructive flow. Construction will begin on the Borland Farm Road AMD project in the spring of 2003. The group played host to DEP Secretary Dave Hess in July for a tour of the watershed. This was a tremendous opportunity for the TCWA to show off its projects and needs. An Eagle Scout project provided for five signs along roadways in the area denoting the watershed boundary in two cases, and the crossings with Brush Creek, Haymaker Run, and the Saunders Station Fishing Access for the other three. The TCWA completed its Rivers Conservation Plan in June which will be the guide for future restoration and improvement projects in the watershed.

These summaries of watershed activity are accounts of larger projects targeted by our watershed partners. These groups in cooperation with local, state, and federal agencies, and hundreds of volunteers are really making a difference in the quality of life in Westmoreland and surrounding counties. We applaud their stewardship and pledge to assist them in any way we can in the coming year.

With all of us working together, we can showcase the beautiful colors of our watersheds.



Students from Penn State New Kensington, staff from Penn State Cooperative Extension, Allegheny and Westmoreland Conservation Districts and volunteers from Pucketa-Chartiers Watershed Association look for macroinvertebrates in Pucketa Creek in Upper Burrell Township.

For more information contact:

Craig Barras, *Watershed Specialist*
craigbarras@yahoo.com

Rainbow of Programs Helps Water Quality



Water quality — a hot topic best explored in cool summer shade.

Water quality is more than just water. It deals with water, land, and what people do or fail to accomplish.

The water quality program shares a vision between the District and Penn State Extension. We help people make wise decisions in managing their water resources. The program serves as an educational arm of the District with a rainbow of programming on drinking water, wastewater management, pond water quality, stream health and watersheds. The water quality program uses the information from Penn State University and the District specialists to reach diverse audiences of adults and young adults.

Over the past year, crystal clear drinking water was the topic of five water programs. The 54 program participants were taught ways in which tap water differs from bottled water, the different methods of testing water and how to interpret the test results. Participants also learned how to maintain a good quality water source by finding ways to treat pollutants found in the water. An additional 45 people received individual assistance by phone, email, or office visit.

The water quality program developed an educational brochure for the Alternative Wastewater Management Demonstration Area at Twin Lakes Park. This brochure explains how the wastewater from the new flush toilets in the Activity Center, Environmental Center, and Boat House area enters an EcoFlo® alternative system to be treated.

The water quality staffers joined forces with the Wildlife Habitat Council and the Botanical Society to present programs on Backyard Buffers. Trees, shrubs, and flowers in a multitude of colors outline Beaver Run, the stream that runs through the Dominion transfer property at Oakford Station. This site hosted two "Backyard Buffers" workshops where members of watershed groups and homeowners learned about riparian buffer benefits, installations, and the best plant species to place along streams. Craig, Nicki and board member Al Barnett put

heart, sweat, and tears into planting the buffer so we could use it to promote ways to reduce Non Point Source Pollution in our county.

In the summertime, the water quality staff addressed additional issues. Bluegills, bass, catfish and other types of fish swimming in Westmoreland county ponds had to share the water with lush green mats of algae and aquatic plants. Dense areas of growth seemed to overwhelm our ponds, threatening our fish by using up the oxygen in the water when the plants began die and degrade. Thirty pond owners took action and attended the Pond Management Workshop at the Center for Conservation Education. They investigated methods to control aquatic weeds by using barley straw and aerators. An additional 30 pond owners concerned over water quality inquired and received assistance through telephone calls and site visits.

Determining the quality of water in our county happens on a watershed basis. Westmoreland County has many watersheds with association members who are trying to improve the quality of their streams. The water quality program aids watershed groups in determining or assessing stream water quality by conducting visual assessments of the stream's banks and beds, performing chemical tests on the water itself bubbling and frothing over rocks, and searching for and identifying the tiny brown and green creatures burrowed in the sand or clinging to rocks. All of these assessments provide clues to the overall health of the streams.

In addition to sampling streams, the water quality program reached over 2,000 individuals with educational programs and interactive displays at the Westmoreland Earth Day 2002 Event, Camp Soles, and class visits throughout the county. Water Quality educational programs included presentations on topics of: stream and ecosystem health, water quality testing, watersheds, acid rain & wetlands, and water conservation. Furthermore, the District continued to provide the teachers workshop "Exploring the Watersheds and Sustainable Communities of Westmoreland County" with excellent reviews.



For more information contact:

Nicki Foremsky, District/Extension Water Quality Agent
nmf125@psu.edu

Education Rolls in Big Red Barn

The District's new education center probably would be painted black if it had been built in central Kentucky. Or green, if its address was somewhere in Virginia horse country. The color which people traditionally paint barns varies, depending on where they are geographically.

Here in western Pennsylvania and throughout much of the rural US, the most popular barn color is red. Historians say it's not because of red's symbolic meaning (although it's certainly a bonus to be linked with such positive qualities as vitality and energy). But the real reason barns ended up being red is — frugality.

Farmers, as we all know, are a frugal lot. And so, many years ago, when they needed a way to keep their barn wood from decay, they mixed a wash from ingredients they had right there on the farm. Milk, slaked lime, and cement, plaster, or salt set up the basic recipe. A little iron oxide — often scooped up from the soil — was thrown in to help preserve the wood. It also colored the whole mix red with a pigment so durable that one application often lasted many years. In later times, when commercial paint became more readily available, farmers continued to use red on their barns because it had become so firmly established as the color of choice.

When we were building the District's new education center, there was discussion about what color the roof should be and what color the windows should be trimmed in. But there was never a question that the outside of the building would be red. It is the color that ties us to our native place — western Pennsylvania — and directly to the structure of the soil under our feet. It is a visible reminder that our natural resources are the reason for everything we do.

Much of what we did in 2002 was to finish construction of the Center and to get the staff in place to launch our education program. Bringing conservation education to the general public was our number one goal in the Long-range Plan that we launched in November 1997. And just about exactly five years later, we now have all the pieces in place to make it a reality.

This \$1.5-million Education Center, plus the education staff and our locally-focused education programs, represent the biggest single accomplishment in the District's 53-year history. It was possible only because more than 100 foundations, businesses, individuals, and government agencies believed along with us in the value of promoting the conservation ethic.

As each new partner stepped forward to support the Center with funds or material or guidance, it was both wondrous and humbling to discover how deeply the desire to safeguard our natural resources runs through our community. And it didn't take us long to realize that, in the process of building a building, we were also building a new corps of conservation advocates.

Each partner has a special set of technical skills, a

unique viewpoint, and a spirit that wants to make a difference for conservation. The possibilities for collaboration are staggering, and have only just begun to be explored.

What these partners can do together to clean our streams, stabilize our soils, protect our forests, and make our communities more livable will, as much as the District's direct public education program, be the hope for the future of this special place where we live.

For more information contact:

Greg Phillips, *District Manager*
gmphillips2001@yahoo.com



Center for Conservation Education Red-letter Construction Accomplishments of 2002

SPRING

- 500 native perennials are planted in front of the Center.
- A new walking trail is added to more easily link the Center with its outdoor classroom, the 63-acre Ann Rudd Saxman Nature Park.

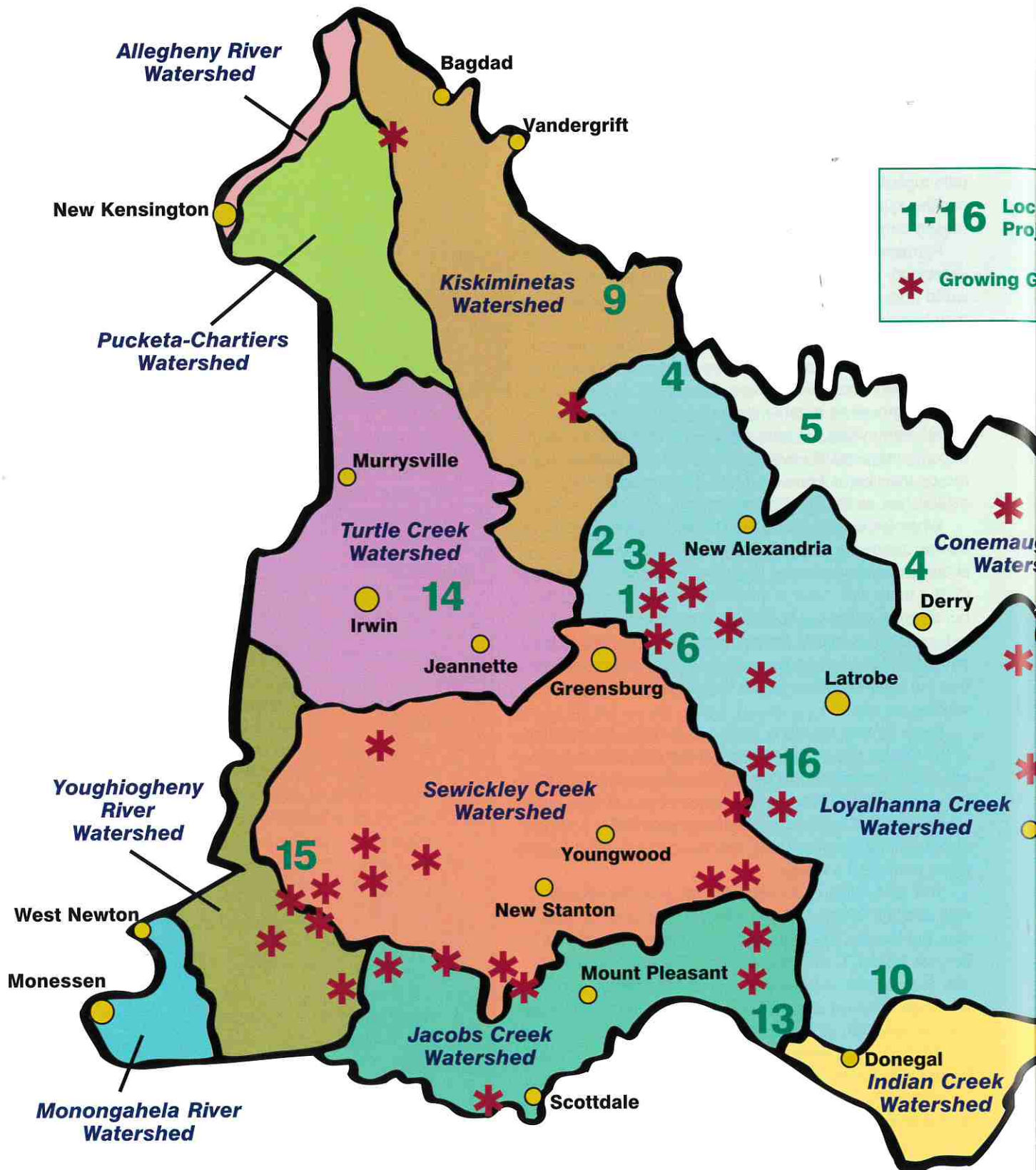
SUMMER

- The lower level of the Center is finished and the full complement of District staff moves in.
- Donations approach \$1 million.

FALL

- Demonstration areas are installed around the Center, and include a parking area designed without asphalt or cement, a 3,000-gallon cistern to collect rain from the Center's roof, and a "rain garden." These, along with others to come, are part of a trail illustrating beneficial ways to use rainwater.
- The Donor recognition wall is unveiled. More than 80 foundations, corporations, and individuals are permanently recognized on the glass in the Center's front entrance for their major contributions to the project.
- Work began on a one-acre area on the south side of the Center which will be transformed into a meadow of warm season grasses and wildflowers.
- The driveway around the Center and the fire truck turnaround in the front of the building are paved.
- A stone parking area to accommodate 10 cars is created behind the Center.

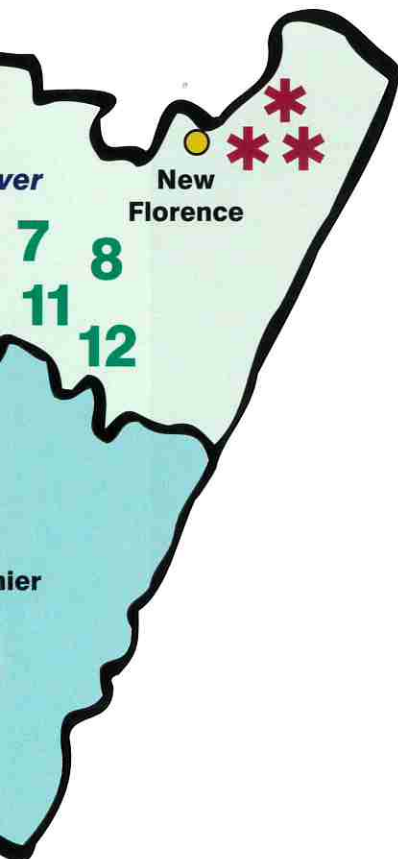
District Projects on We



Moreland County Farms

Act 6 and Growing Greener cost-share funds help install Best Management Practices to save soil and improve water quality.

of Completed
er Projects Started



Participating Farmers

Numbers on map show location.

Best Management Practices Installed

- | | | |
|-----------|-------------------------------|---|
| 1 | Bill Selembo | Manure pit, gutters and downspouts |
| 2 | Jeff Telford | Stream crossings, streambank fencing, riparian buffer zone with tree planting, drop box and drains |
| 3 | Ken Bayle | Stream crossings, streambank fencing, riparian buffer zone with tree planting, spring developments with troughs |
| 4 | Stanley Auen | Grassed waterways, subsurface drains, dry pond, diversion ditching, stabilized barnyard |
| 5 | Mark Feiling | Barnyard roof |
| 6 | Wayne Frye | Streambank fencing, riparian buffer zone tree planting, spring development with trough |
| 7 | Bob Graham | Streambank fencing |
| 8 | Pat Lentz | Rain gutters and downspouts |
| 9 | Ray Machulsky | Diversion ditch |
| 10 | Earl Sadler | Barnyard roof |
| 11 | George Stanislaw | Spring developments with troughs, piped waterline, cistern, obstruction removal, streambank fencing, rotational grazing fencing |
| 12 | George and Lewis Thomas | Streambank fencing |
| 13 | Jess Stairs | Stream crossings, fencing and stabilized alley way |
| 14 | Tony Pecora | Manure storage structure |
| 15 | Scott Branthoover | Manure storage structure |
| 16 | Richard Stoner | Manure storage structure |

For more information contact:

Dan Griffith, Growing Greener Program & Act 6 Program
nmctus@yahoo.com

Banquet Alive with Color



The District Players celebrate the "Happy Days" of the 50's.

style evening which began with a reception at the Center for Conservation Education. The facility was appropriately decked out in streamers of bright red and pink and shiny silver to emulate a sock hop right out of the golden days of rock 'n roll. The party then moved to the Four Points Hotel, where district staff treated attendees to a zany skit based on the popular "Happy Days" TV series. To end the evening, guests were invited to stay and "twist the night away" at a sock hop. Former County Commissioner Terry Marolt, who served as Master of Ceremonies during the awards presentation, put on his "Commish & Company" disk jockey hat and wowed the crowd with the very best rock 'n roll oldies of yesteryear. District Director Connie Donovan and his wife Sandy won an award for "Best Dressed" 50's couple.

Lipstick, pink poodle skirts, vibrant red-and-white checked tablecloths, black vinyl 45 record albums and fizzy brown colas were the backdrop for the Westmoreland Conservation District's 2002 Annual Awards Banquet. Over 150 guests were treated to a 50's-

For more information contact:

Lorrie Quadro, Assistant District Manager
lquadro@yahoo.com

The Westmoreland Conservation District made presentations in the following categories at the 2002 Annual Awards Banquet:

CONSERVATION FARMERS OF THE YEAR

Bob and John Graham
Contour strip installation, streambank fencing, riparian buffer plantings, alternative water supplies, stream crossing, stabilizing alleyway

CORPORATE CONSERVATION PARTNER

Adam Eidemiller, Inc.
Education Center earthmoving, asphalt driveway, Nature Park pathway, excavation for cistern, time and material donations

VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR

Kim Miller
Education Center barn donation, service as project coordinator and advisor, time and material donations

CERTIFICATES

Graydon Long
Retiring WCD Director, 12 years service

P. Roy Kemerer
District Director, 15 years service

Mark Jackson
Associate Director, 15 years service

Harry Meyer
Associate Director, 5 years service

Charles Bowers
Bowers Lumber, Education Center lumber

C.R. Greene
DEP District Mining Operations, Education Center parking lot materials

Jack Parry
Hempfield Area School District, Envirothon Advisor

Dominion Peoples Gas
"Putting our Energy to Work for the Environment", Education Center interior finishes

Pucketa and Chartiers
Watershed Association Organization formation

Kiskiminetas Watershed Association
Organization formation

Municipality of Murrysville
Bear Hollow Streambank Stabilization and Stormwater Ponds

City of Jeannette
Bull Run Streambank Stabilization

Thunder Mountain Lenape Nation
Education Partner

Wachtshu Ehachping
Education Partner

Derek Sinchar
Boy Scout Troop 405 Eagle Scout Project

Steve Regola
Boy Scout Troop 465 Eagle Scout Project

Steve Kifer
Boy Scout Troop 480 Eagle Scout Project

Conservation Farmers of the Year Create Harvest Hues

Bob and John Graham know intimately the rich browns, bright greens, and golden and harvest yellows which make up the colorful land surrounding their family dairy farm. These colors surround them as they go about their daily chores on their farm, which is situated along Rt. 259 about 10 miles north of Rt. 30 in Fairfield Township, and is home to about 100 cows. And because of their hard work and conservation ethic, they were named the Westmoreland Conservation District's 2002 Conservation Farmers of the Year.

Bob and John have cooperated with the Natural Resources Conservation Service and the Conservation District in the installation of contour strips, streambank fencing, riparian buffer plantings, alternative water supplies, a stream crossing, and a stabilized alleyway. They were the first farmers in the county to cost share

streambank fencing and riparian plantings of trees with both the Conservation Reserve Program and the Growing Greener Program. A stream crossing allows the animals to cross the tributary to Hypocrite Creek without making it muddy, and the alternative water supply lets the animals drink cool fresh water in a trough right from a spring. A stabilized alleyway on both sides of the stream crossing keeps the cows from getting muddy in low-lying damp ground, which also keeps the herd healthier.

The Westmoreland Conservation District is pleased to recognize these hard-working and conscientious farmers!

For more information contact:

Lorrie Quadro, Assistant District Manager
lquadro@yahoo.com



Bob & John Graham



Clean, healthy cows



Spring-fed water trough



Contour Strips



Conservation - grown corn

Partners and Clientele Interactions Chart

	2001	2002
Individuals from Outside Agencies'		
Visiting Donohoe Center/Education Center.....	1,244	3,044
Visitors to WCD Office.....	779	585
Individuals Involved in Special Events.....	1,984	4,618
Individuals Attending WCD, WPCAMR Meetings.....	2,042	1,813
	6,049	10,060

Agency Reports

Five Star Trail



On September 13, 2002 officials gathered at the Westmoreland County Community College in Youngwood, under a bright blue and white tent, to dedicate the long awaited trail connection to the college

campus. Ed Hutchinson and Bob Wile, trail founders, began in 1995 to promote the concept of a biking and walking trail to connect Lynch Field Recreation Area in Greensburg to the Westmoreland County Community College in Youngwood. They envisioned students commuting to class by bicycle and young baseball players walking or biking to games at Lynch Field, and all doing so on a safe, automobile-free trail. Over 100 people gathered to recognize the completion of this dream, the celebration of which concluded with the cutting of an emerald green commemorative ribbon by members of the Special Olympics Bike team.

Two other key Five Star Trail highlights occurred in 2002. First, the Highland Avenue parking lot and trail access ramp was graded and blacktopped to create over 40 top quality parking spaces. This effort was funded by a grant from the Community Foundation of Westmoreland County and the work was completed by the City of Greensburg's Department of Public Works. City of Greensburg crews also resurfaced one half mile of trail from Mount Pleasant Street north toward Lynch Field, laying bright white crushed limestone to reestablish the worn trail surface.

In the year ahead the Board of Directors looks forward to working with a consultant to develop design plans and engineering for the extension of the trail south from Hunker to Scottdale, and to the construction of the trail south from Youngwood to Hunker by the Hempfield Township Municipal Authority. Hempfield Township also plans to complete construction of the trail east from WCCC to Armbrust. These projects promise exciting years ahead for the Five Star Trail.

The Five Star Trail is operated and managed by the Five Star Trail Chapter of the Regional Trail Corporation. Seven municipal partners, Greensburg, Hempfield Township, South and Southwest Greensburg, Youngwood, New Stanton, and Westmoreland County combine their resources with those of the 200 chapter members to operate the trail. Other key organizations that assist include the Westmoreland Conservation District and the Penn's Corner RC&D. Serving on the Chapter's Board of Directors during 2002 were: Chris Zundel, President; Dave Fait, Vice President; Greg Phillips, Treasurer; Duane Wolley, Secretary; Malcolm Sias, Sam Testa, Frank Lehman, Ed Hutchinson, James Roman, Dale Hassinger, William Brandt, Graham Davis, Jackie Timko, George Church, Nevin Ulery, and Jeff Parobeck.

PA CleanWays Westmoreland Co.



The gray skies and white landscape of winter grudgingly yielded to azure blue skies and greening vegetation, heralding the beginning of spring and PA CleanWays' schedule of events. Last year we joined with several conservation organizations to institute a Westmoreland Earth Day event at St. Vincent College. The event proved popular as approximately 1,800 residents toured the various exhibits and learned about the many conservation programs available in the county.

Several illegal dump cleanups were scheduled before the rapidly growing vegetation hid the trash and clutter from view. 119 volunteers removed approximately 42 tons of trash and 769 tires from dump sites in Cook, Allegheny, South Huntingdon, and Sewickley Townships. We also teamed with the DCNR, PA CleanWays State Organization and the Cambria Chapter to cleanup several dumpsites in Laurel Ridge State Park.

Tire collections were very popular in 2002 as the fear of West Nile Virus spread through the state. We assisted municipalities with the disposal of 393 tires, the Fugitive Tire Program saw 15 youth groups bring in 4,342 tires, and an additional 3,575 tires were collected during 7 recycling events. Those recycling events also collected 387 lead acid batteries, 389 freon-containing appliances, and 125 non-freon white goods.

The sixth annual household hazardous waste (HHW) collection resulted in the proper disposal of 48,900 pounds of HHW. A total of 143.6 tons of HHW has been collected during the six events. That is a lot of potential pollution that has been kept out of our soil and water. The residents who participate in these events and municipal sponsors are to be applauded for their conscientious efforts to safely dispose of these materials.

PA CleanWays staff spoke to more than 1,500 school children about recycling, conservation and the environment during the year. Education is the key to maintaining a picturesque and safe environment for all who live, work and visit in Westmoreland County.

Westmoreland County Bureau of Parks and Recreation



The Westmoreland County Bureau of Parks and Recreation encompasses nine diversified parks and two trails (over 2,700 acres)! The parks are open year round offering walking and biking trails, picnic and play areas, recreation programs, fishing areas, active sport facilities, as well as plenty of open fields, forests, and streams to discover. More importantly the parks provide opportunities

for living and learning, as well as avenues for pleasure, health and wellness

The parks system is composed of four regional parks which include Twin Lakes, Mammoth, Northmoreland and Cedar Creek; four special use parks which are Ann Rudd Saxman Nature Park, Sewickley Creek Wetlands, Bridgeport Dam, and Chestnut Ridge; and Historic Hannastown, a national historic site. Trails are operated in conjunction with the Regional Trail Corporation and local trail chapters and Historic Hannastown is managed in partnership with the Westmoreland County Historical Society.

The Citizen's Advisory Board for Parks and Recreation works closely with the parks staff and advises and assists with projects, programs, and public relations. In 2002 CAB members included Win Beidler, Dr. Barbara Ferrier, John Framel, Alex Graziani, David Hawk, Paul Heyworth, Nancy Kukovich, Dr. Edward Lewis, and Angela Rose-O'Brien.

In the year 2002 major events in the County Parks system included:

- New pavilions were constructed at both Mammoth and Cedar Creek Parks. The Mammoth pavilion seats 200 people and includes a built in kitchen, while the Cedar Creek pavilion seats 100. To accommodate the new construction a smaller pavilion that seats 25 was relocated at Cedar Creek to the group camping area.
- A new lakeside wall was built at Twin Lakes Park from the concession area through the festival area and past the island stage. The wall was built to eliminate erosion, improve access for fishing, and add to the beauty of the lower lake area.
- New composite play areas were added at both Cedar Creek and Mammoth. The Bureau of Parks and Recreation is completing a long-range plan to update and renovate all playground areas to meet National safety standards.
- The Five Star Trail extension to Westmoreland County Community College was dedicated on September 12, 2002. This extension is the first leg of the Sewickley Creek Trail, which will eventually connect from the Five Star Trail in Youngwood to Mammoth County Park.
- A feasibility study on the Trafford to Export to Saltsburg trail corridor was completed in the fall of 2002. The study recommended construction of the trail from Export to Saltsburg and documented problems that prohibit trail construction at this time on the section through Export and Murrysville. The Turtle Creek Gorge, from the western end of Murrysville to Trafford, was recognized as a significant potential greenway that requires preservation for the enjoyment of future generations. Trail construction through Trafford and into the gorge was also found to be feasible.
- Surveying, appraisals, and negotiations were completed for the purchase of land for the Coal and Coke Trail, which will connect Scottsdale to Mount Pleasant. The final acquisition of the trail corridor should occur in the year ahead.
- Historic Hannastown programs, under the direction of the Westmoreland County Historical Society, were revamped and expanded, and attracted a much larger number of participants in 2002. New additions are also being planned for 2003.
- Overall park programs continue to attract very large numbers of County residents. Attendance at all park special events was near event capacities in 2002. The Bureau of Parks and Recreation has concentrated on developing family-oriented, low-cost events that offer a wide range of attractions for various age groups.
- The Bureau of Parks and Recreation and its Citizen's Advisory Board have concentrated on carrying out the County's Comprehensive Plan for Parks, Recreation, and Open Space, which was adopted by the Board of County Commissioners in 2000. Plans for future acquisitions and facilities, as well as new methods and means of funding plan objectives, are being created and developed. Partnerships have been upgraded and expanded in an attempt to fulfill plan goals. The Bureau of Parks and Recreation will continue to focus on providing a dynamic series of programs and facilities to benefit County residents.

Farm Service Agency



The Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (Farm Bill) represents the single most significant commitment of resources towards conservation in the Nation's history.

The legislation responds to a broad range of emerging natural resources challenges faced by farmers, including soil erosion, wetlands, wildlife habitat, and farmland protection. Private landowners will benefit from a portfolio of voluntary assistance, including cost-share, land rental, incentive payments, and technical assistance.

The Farm Service Agency is responsible for administering the new programs involving grain and milk producers including the associated conservation requirements involved with using land and water for crop and livestock production. The 2002 Farm Bill allows many new farms to participate in programs requiring a large increase in the development of USDA-approved conservation plans for this land.

We continue our partnership with the Natural Resources Conservation Service and the Conservation District to address conservation problems on farms. Programs like the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) and Environmental Quality Incentive Program are being partnered through the Conservation District with the state's Growing Greener and Act 6 programs to provide additional funding to help landowners get conservation on their land.

In 2002 water quality was improved along thousands of feet of small streams when farm landowners established riparian buffers using funding from the Conservation Reserve Program. All these buffers were pastureland adjacent to streams that were planted to trees to filter out pollutants and provide shade for fish and wildlife. Livestock was excluded from both the buffers and the streams with fencing. Crossings were installed to allow livestock to move across the stream with little negative impact to the water. Additionally on most of the sites, program cost sharing was used to build livestock watering facilities outside the buffer area away from the protected stream.

The new farm bill also allows for managed haying and grazing of CRP land while protecting both the wildlife and conservation aspects of the program. Regulations are being written that are expected to also allow harvest of the biomass for energy production.

A general CRP sign-up period is expected to be authorized in 2003. During these general sign-ups applications are ranked nationally and selected based on an index that is intended to maximize the environmental benefits gained per USDA dollar invested in the program. Landowners can improve their chances of being accepted into the program by maximizing the potential of their offer to conserve soil, improve air and water quality and provide wildlife habitat for the least cost.

Landowners interested in conservation programs should contact the USDA or Conservation District offices in the Donohoe Center. Additional information is available on the web at <http://www.usda.gov/farmbill>.

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service



The land in Westmoreland County is an ever-changing kaleidoscope of color. From the beauty of the Laurel Highlands, with its verdant greens, browns, and blues, to the urbanization of the eastern part of the county with its gray sidewalks, slate-blue office buildings, and multi-colored homes, the land – the soil and water – remains at the heart of the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) mission.

NRCS continues to provide assistance to land users in planning and installing conservation practices on the land. Primary clients remain farm owners and operators with the objectives of reducing soil erosion, improving water quality and environmental improvement. Technical assistance is provided in cooperation with the Westmoreland Conservation District (WCD).

Early in 2002 Wes Gordon and Larry Stokum assisted with the WCD Growing Greener Whitethorn Creek water quality improvement project on active dairy farms as a demonstration. We provided planning, design, and contract administration and installation assistance on a project to remove livestock from the stream corridor, a tributary to the Whitethorn Creek. A riparian buffer zone was established

on both sides of the stream along a 6,629 foot section, which also included stream crossings, stable alleyways, surface and subsurface water controls. In addition to the cleaner water, the WCD was able to show off the area by conducting a bus tour for some important people. We also provide technical assistance to some of the participants in the Kiski/Conemaugh watershed Growing Greener program area.

We have also cooperated with the Farm Service Agency to make use of the Continuous Conservation Reserve Program to build and improve grass waterways in cropland fields. Ten waterways were installed/improved using this funding mechanism. It remains a good option for land users to install this important conservation practice.

In 2002 we continued to provide technical assistance to farm producers to install a variety of conservation practices. These practices range from the traditional contour strip-cropping, grassed waterways and diversions to the newer practices of conservation tillage, intensive rotational grazing, barnyard stabilization, access road improvements, solar water pumping, etc. We are also introducing new "tools" to the conservation work such as Global Positioning Systems, Geographic Information Systems and common computer mapping platforms within USDA.

NRCS continues to partner with local watershed groups to collaboratively seek ways to improve the quality of water from abandoned mine discharges.

Conservation Planning for USDA compliance, agriculture land preservation and "as-requested" continues to be a major portion of the workload. In Westmoreland County more than 3000 acres of conservation planning was accomplished in 2002.

We were pleased that a new staff member was added in July. Bobbi Bailey came onboard as a Soil Conservationist to assist with the conservation planning functions associated with the 2002 Farm Bill. In addition to conservation planning, she has become very active with the grazing initiatives, an area of interest and expertise for her. Bobbi works throughout our field area, which includes Indiana County.

Soil Scientist Rob Knight reported that the updated Soil Survey of Westmoreland County was nearing completion at the end of 2002, and is currently available in various electronic formats. Two new versions of the interim soil survey have been developed. A digital edition of the soil survey for Westmoreland County is now available for \$25.00 from the Westmoreland Conservation District. The CD contents include the soil layer, soil data viewer (the interpretations and soil database), and aerial photo coverage for the county. GIS software like ArcView is needed to make this version work. A \$10 PDF version is also available in a format that can be run on most computers. Coming soon is the web based soil survey and the WCD Internet home page will be linked to the link to the information. These CD's are interim editions and are subject to change. A SSURGO certified edition is to be issued following a technical edit and review.

Penn's Corner Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Area



The Penn's Corner RC&D Area is a nine-county area in southwestern Pennsylvania which includes Westmoreland County. It is sponsored by the Board of County Commissioners and the Conservation District in each county. Penn's

Corner was authorized for operation by the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Agriculture in December 1975.

Technical and financial assistance for locally led RC&D projects is available from the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and other USDA agencies. The NRCS also supplies a full-time coordinator and a program assistant to provide day-to-day assistance.

The Executive Council is currently in a process of revising its Area Plan for Penn's Corner. This is the document which sets forth the goals, objectives and priorities for work to be done over a period of five years. Also, the Penn's Corner Conservancy has become incorporated recently. This is the non-profit fiscal arm of Penn's Corner which administers most of the grant money from foundations, private contributions and governmental sources which is used to implement various projects.

Some of the most recent Westmoreland County projects assisted by Penn's Corner are the Yough River Remote Sensing Project in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Energy; Switchgrass for Bioenergy; Project Grass Intensive Grazing Program and the Brinkerton Abandoned Mine Drainage Remediation Project.

Western Pennsylvania Coalition for Abandoned Mine Reclamation



Paint WPCAMR in various shades of green. Green for \$131,000 in Growing Greener projects and \$115,000 from EPA Section 319 funding. Green for full speed ahead in

the communications and education arena.

Green for helping to improve the ecology of our watersheds.

The Western Pennsylvania Coalition for Abandoned Mine Reclamation's Growing Greener projects ranged from technical assistance efforts and working with decision-makers to the formation of an Ohio River Alliance. Our communications/education endeavors ranged from the formation of AMDEC – the AMD Education Coalition and the "Ask Me About Pyrite" program to the Abandoned Mine Posts email newsletter and the AMRClearinghouse website. We also worked on the media blitz aimed at re-authorizing the federal Surface Mine Conservation and Reclamation Act (SMCRA). The Coalition helped organize

the AMD Statewide Conference held at Penn State.

Some of the colorful highlights during the past year included WPCAMR's "coming of age" as an independent organization, as we separated from the Westmoreland Conservation District. We moved into new and larger office space in Donohoe Center. And we purchased our own vehicle. Sara Tumulty was hired as an Americorp member to handle the Decision Maker Outreach program. Tony Terretti is working part-time on both the Decision Makers and Ohio River projects.

Deb Simko continued to lead the effort to form an Ohio River Alliance, as part of a three-year Growing Greener Grant. She also worked with many watershed groups on a variety of projects and organized the distribution of more than \$45,000 in Regional Watershed Support Initiative grants to them.

Considerable time has been spent on the "Orphan Mine" issue, following the bankruptcy of LTV Steel. DEP and others are concerned about continuing mine pollution treatment at a number of sites in the region. The Coalition has launched a process leading to a long-range strategic plan, led by Janie French of the Canaan Institute.

WPCAMR received \$10,000 from Western Pennsylvania Watershed Protection Program to continue the effort to remove gob (mine refuse) piles in the region.

Department of Environmental Protection



Continuing its important mission of providing support and assistance to conservation districts in Pennsylvania, the Department of Environmental

Protection lends its expertise to many of the Westmoreland Conservation District's program areas.

Over the past year, the Department of Environmental Protection has continued to improve and enhance communications between districts and other agencies. DEP replaced computers loaned to districts in 1998. Kathy Fritz currently utilizes the DEP-provided computer at the Westmoreland Conservation District. The Division of Conservation Districts and Nutrient Management completed the second phase (design phase) of its E-commerce project to develop an online tracking, reporting, and invoicing system which will save time and money, and result in more timely reimbursements to districts for delegated and contracted programs. Lorrie Quadro serves on this committee representing conservation districts.

Under the Conservation District Fund Allocation Program (CDFAP) \$3,225,000 was provided for the cost sharing of salaries of 175 conservation district staff in Fiscal-Year 2001-2002. The Westmoreland Conservation District received \$53,770 to "cost-share" the district manager and two technicians salaries.

During 2002, 65 conservation districts had contracts with the state to administer the Dirt and Gravel Roads Pollution Prevention Program. The Division also developed

allocation worksheets; published allocation notices in the PA Bulletin; prepared and sent general invoices to the comptrollers office; answered financial questions from districts; ensured that funds were properly allocated and spent; provided input at four Dirt and Gravel Road Workgroup meetings; and provided general logistical support to the State Conservation Commission to assist conservation districts in administering this program. The Westmoreland Conservation District reimbursed \$67,091 to local townships for projects (see page 9).

The State Envirothon was held on May 20-21 in Montour County with 64 teams participating. The partnership provided assistance by serving as judges, steering committee members, and with the optional oral component of the event. The Westmoreland County team placed 18th at the state level with Penncrest High School from Delaware County winning the 19th State Envirothon going on to represent Pennsylvania at the Canon National Envirothon.

During 2002, districts continued to administer the Repetitive Loss Project by performing extensive fieldwork to update the addresses of properties that have submitted multiple flood damage insurance claims. With this information the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) will buy out these properties, raze the structures and return the floodplain to open space areas. Locally, Jim Pillsbury (WCD) helped update FEMA information on properties in Westmoreland County which experience repeated flood damage.

The 2002 Joint Annual Conference of the State Conservation Commission (SCC) and the Pennsylvania Association of Conservation Districts (PACD) was held in downtown Harrisburg with 159 attendees. The theme of the conference was "A River Runs Through Us." Both the SCC and PACD conducted business meetings and presented awards. General programs on director recruitment, phosphorus indexing for nutrient management, environmental land use planning and sustainable development, geographic information systems applications, natural stream design, and a public-relations session conducted by the

Westmoreland Conservation District were offered at the conference.

The "Building for Tomorrow" Leadership Development Program is a partnership effort of the SCC, the DEP, the PACD, the NRCS, Penn State Cooperative Extension and Pennsylvania's conservation districts. In 2002, this Program provided the following efforts and opportunities for conservation districts:

- Continued District Team Visits and provided visits to eight conservation districts. The Westmoreland Conservation District was scheduled to host a team visit in January of 2003.
- Encouraged districts to engage in strategic planning, by offering grants to cover up to \$1,000 in approved expenses related to the development and distribution of a complete strategic business plan. WCD received approval to begin the strategic plan process during 2003.
- Four training sessions were completed in April on "Operating with Proper Policies & Procedures." WCD Administrative staff attended the spring workshop in Somerset.
- The second District Manager Summit was held in June 2002. Greg Phillips and Lorrie and Tony Quadro attended the three-day session.

The State Conservation Commission's Nutrient Management Act Program is implemented as a partnership between the Commission, DEP, conservation districts, the PA Department of Agriculture, private sector planners, and farm operators. In 2002, Nutrient Management Specialist Dan Griffith coordinated WCD's successful program (see article, page 8).

Annual administrative training for the Chapter 102 and 105 delegated programs was held in State College with 217 conservation district staff attending. The September session was attended by several members of the Westmoreland Conservation District's technical staff.



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WCD Financial Statement



Concise Statement of Financial Position — Combined Funds December 31, 2002

Assets	
Cash.....	\$130,927
General Fixed Assets.....	13,106
Total.....	\$144,033
Liabilities and Fund Balance	
Current Liabilities.....	\$26,195
Long-Term Debt.....	13,106
Net Assets.....	104,732
Total.....	\$144,033

Concise Statement of Activities — Combined Funds Year Ended December 31, 2002

Unrestricted Net Assets	
Support	
Westmoreland County.....	\$624,642
State Grants.....	123,038
Other Revenue.....	62,580
Fees.....	36,929
Farmland Preservation.....	339
WPCAMR.....	106,246
Interest Income.....	12,629
Special Projects	494,768
	\$1,461,171
Expenditures	
Program Services.....	607,636
Education Building Expended.....	155,186
Management and General.....	563,510
Fundraising.....	19,776
	1,346,108
Excess (Deficiency)-Current.....	115,062
Net Assets - Beginning Balance.....	(10,331)
Net Assets - End of Year.....	\$104,731

Conservation Team Year 2003



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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 and
Boat Commission
Pennsylvania Game Commission
State Conservation Commission
Pennsylvania Association
of Conservation Districts

Conservation Team Year 2003

Federal Partners

Natural Resources
Conservation Service
Farm Service Agency
Rural Economic and Community
Development Service
Penn's Corner Resource
Conservation and Development

Local Partners

Jacobs Creek
Watershed Association
Sewickley Creek
Watershed Association
Loyalhanna
Watershed Association
Mountain
Watershed Association
Turtle Creek
Watershed Association
Kiski
Watershed Association
Pucketa/Chartiers
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 Agricultural Land Preservation Program and
the Western Pennsylvania Coalition for Abandoned Mine Reclamation.
Both organizations are guided by volunteer boards.



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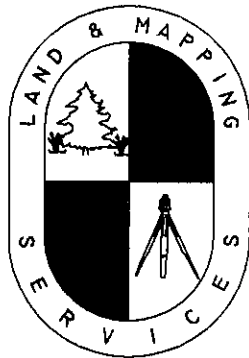


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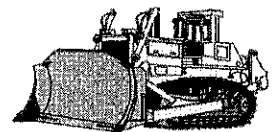
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Programs

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 and Sediment Control
- Soil Survey
- Stormwater Management
- Stream Encroachments
- "Waste-to-wealth" Beneficial Use Development
- Water Conservation
- Watershed Restoration/ Planning
- Western Pennsylvania Coalition for Abandoned Mine Reclamation
- Wetlands

We 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.



WCD Staff

(l-r) Leanne Griffith, *Growing Greener Program Assistant*; Mike Barrick, *Erosion Control Specialist*; Dan Griffith, *Nutrient Management/Ag Conservation Technician*; Jim Pillsbury, P.E., *Hydraulic Engineer*; Karen Barnhart, *Financial Secretary*; Greg Phillips, *District Manager*; Kathy Fritz, *Program Secretary*; Chris Droste, *Erosion Control Specialist*; Sandy Dzendzel, *Administrative Secretary*; Nicole Foremsky, *District/Extension Water Quality Agent*; Joanne Kitsko, *Receptionist*; Lorrie Quadro, *Assistant District Manager*; Craig Barras, *Watershed Specialist*; Tony Quadro, *Program Specialist/Forester*

Colors of Conservation



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