



**Annual Report 2006**



*Dear friend —*

Conservationists, more than most folks, live with an awareness of their responsibility to future generations.

Most everything we do has at its core the desire to ensure that the water, trees, soil, and other life-supporting resources will be available and healthy for those who come after us.

Living the conservation life, for the most part, means living with respectful and careful stewardship. But sometimes it also can require a degree of sacrifice.

That's the way it was during 2006, when the Westmoreland Conservation District became immersed in the largest conservation project we have ever undertaken – refurbishing a vacant 25-year-old commercial building as a way to enhance the long-term future of conservation.

The potential of this GreenForge building is enormous. It can:

- provide reasonably priced **“incubator” space** for a mix of grassroots agriculture, conservation, and rural development organizations, and so support their work and increase their organizational capacity;
- bring **new organizations** to our conservation campus here on the Donohoe Road where they can interact with others in exciting new ways that ultimately will provide better service to the community (the Sustainable Energy Field Day in October is a good example of this);
- demonstrate practical ways to use **green building materials and sustainable energy technologies** so that builders, developers, and architects in our rapidly developing region will employ these in their projects;
- and, in the much longer-term (after the building debt is retired), provide a modest but dependable source of income **dedicated to conservation** work in the county.

Such a profound undertaking is not becoming a reality without sacrifice, and the District has had to make some hard decisions, such as limiting our traditional financial support for activities of our partner organizations, such as the Christmas tree recycling of Westmoreland Cleanways... postponing our annual banquet until 2008...and greatly simplifying the format of this annual report.

In spite of it all, we managed to continue to make good progress in our work in our core programs – erosion and sediment control, forestry, stormwater management, agriculture, and watersheds. And we even registered some significant achievements during the year. For instance, we:

- completed the first-ever guide to the District's stormwater policies and procedures,
- helped to develop nutrient management plans for more than 3,200 acres of farmland,
- worked with the county commissioners to identify 21 separate conservation projects for Growing Greener II funding, and
- won Best-in-the-Nation for our communications from the National Association of Conservation Districts.

Much of what we have been able to accomplish is because of the support of our partners and friends. We thank you for that support, and for your understanding of what we are doing today in the hope of making a better future tomorrow.

J. Roy Houston  
Chairman

## STABLE SOILS

Some of the county's largest earthwork projects in 2006 took place along US Route 22 and in county industrial development parks.

Route 22, an original US highway of 1926 and one of the county's major east-west thoroughfares, has been undergoing an extensive widening and renewal project since 1994, a section or two at a time. In 2006, two areas were being refurbished: the section that begins just east of the Cozy Inn cutoff in Murrysville and extends east to near the Route 22/66 Interchange in Salem Township...and the section that begins at the Sheetz in New Alexandria and ends at PA Route 982. Combined, this work disturbed 225 acres.

Work in county industrial parks in East Huntingdon and Upper Burrell townships disturbed a combined total of 96 acres as the land was prepared for new businesses and buildings.

Our staff was busy inspecting these major, active earthmoving sites as well as many other smaller ones to ensure that best management practices were being followed to control erosion and to infiltrate and/or slow down stormwater runoff. In all, District staff **conducted a total of 483 site inspections** during the year – a slight decrease from 2005's 502 site inspections, and most likely attributable to the slight, inevitable downtime associated with the technical staff changes that occurred (see page 9).

During 2006, the District continued to work with local municipalities to minimize another potential source of water pollution – unpaved roads. Eroding dirt and gravel roads can send significant quantities of sediment into nearby streams, compromising water quality.

**Three dirt and gravel roads were improved during the year** by installing cross culverts and adding road base: Oak Road in Donegal Township (benefiting Loyalhanna Creek); Sugar Run Road in St. Clair Township (benefiting Sugar Run Creek); and Rowe Road in Manor borough (benefiting an unnamed tributary of Bushy Run). Together, these projects helped to improve an additional three miles of stream.

In 2006, the Dirt and Gravel Road Committee also awarded grants for work to be done in 2007. This work will include: roadside swale stabilization along White Oak Road in Laurel Mountain Borough (benefiting Loyalhanna Creek), and along Church Camp Road in Fairfield Township (benefiting Tub Mill Creek); and culvert replacement along Ridge Road in Donegal Township (benefiting Four Mile Run).

Our erosion control specialists continued to work with developers, township officials, and architects to **encourage the creation of "low-impact" developments**.

These kinds of developments are designed to work with the natural characteristics of the property and to use the land wisely. They do such things as cluster the dwellings, and retain trees and buffers.

This approach also reduces the amount of earthmoving that is needed, and so reduces the amount of erosion and sediment buildup in streams. By leaving some areas in grass or woods, low-impact developments also reduce the amount of stormwater runoff created – another benefit to local streams as well as to the municipal storm sewer system.

In 2006, our District staff promoted these conservation measures by walking with developers on a number of potential residential development sites – in Washington Township, North Huntingdon, and Trafford – and using this opportunity to point out specific places where the developer could preserve the site's positive natural features.

Our staff also **held 11 pre-plan meetings with engineers, and 13 pre-construction meetings with contractors**. All of this "preparation" work is making a significant, positive difference once the earthmoving actually starts. It also is helping to develop real-world developments that incorporate conservation elements. One example is The Willow Heights plan in North Huntingdon, which was designed according to low-impact principles, and was approved by the township in early 2007.

Proposed development activity in Westmoreland County continued at a steady pace, evidenced by the number of plans that were submitted to the District for review.

During 2006, we **reviewed a total of 259 initial development plans**, and another 50 plan revisions (numbers for 2005, adjusted, were 271 and 50 respectively).

Our technical staff **fielded 183 separate requests for information and technical assistance** during the year. Most of the requests were telephone calls that ranged from engineers asking about which permits are required for specialized



The undisturbed land in the foreground of this photo is part of an innovative way a new single- and multi-family development in the Ardara section of North Huntingdon is managing stormwater.

This 1/10-acre infiltration area gives a feeling of open space, while performing the important function of allowing stormwater to infiltrate into the ground.

The site, which was featured on our conservation tour, also features rock sumps.

earthmoving projects, to homeowners seeking guidance on the best way to go about selling their timber.

Some 200 engineers came to **our annual, all-day workshop** that this year focused on “Practical Best Management Practices: How-to and How not-to.” In addition to District staff, speakers included Ken Murin, Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection’s chief of the Division of Waterways, Wetlands, and Erosion Control; and Scott Brown, PE, land use and development specialist, The Pennsylvania Housing Research Center at Penn State.

We met with Hempfield and North Huntingdon townships in 2006 as part of our program to regularly review and, if necessary, **update our Conservation Partnership Agreements.**

These documents outline the details of how the District and the municipality will work together to minimize the impact of development on the natural resources in that location.

We have Conservation Partnership Agreements with most of the larger Westmoreland County municipalities because these are the areas with the most development and activity.

## **HEALTHY FORESTS**

In 2006, our forester **helped a number of woodlot owners develop plans to manage their property wisely.** He completed a comprehensive Stewardship Plan for the owner of a 110-acre wooded parcel in Hempfield Township. This type of plan is very specific to the property and quite detailed. It not only looks at ways to effectively manage the timber, but also at other aspects of the land, such as the presence of invasive plant species, or the effects of deer overpopulation and the need to encourage regeneration.

Our forester also created a number of “mini management” plans for a dozen other woodlot owners. These plans are less detailed than a Stewardship Plan, but still provide site-specific guidance on how to best manage the particular forested parcel.

He also reviewed a comprehensive forestry plan that will guide the management of the 1,300-acre Loyalhanna Gorge property owned and maintained by the county’s Bureau of Parks and Recreation. This unique property contains steep slopes, old-growth timber, and several unique species of plants and animals.

Before timbering began at various locations in the county, **our staff reviewed some 39 logging plans** to help ensure that erosion from these sites and sediment in nearby streams both would be kept to a minimum.

The number of timber-harvesting plans the District receives each year for review has been steadily increasing, a rise that is due in part to the fact that more municipalities in the county have adopted ordinances that require this review before the harvesting can begin.



Our forester personally **visited active logging sites** in the county to make sure that work was being done according to the erosion and sediment control plan. Controlling erosion is a challenge on most logging jobs because roads have to be cut across the forest’s earthen floor to get the harvesting equipment to the trees, and then to provide a pathway for skidding the heavy logs out.

The largest active timbering site in Westmoreland County in 2006 was a 400-acre harvest along the Kiskiminetas River between Truxall and Salina.

The District continued to **host our highly popular Forestry Workshops**, offering two courses in 2006 that were attended by a total of 41 people. The workshops discussed a variety of forest topics, from basic tree identification and measurement and timber-volume determination, to more advanced topics, such as forest ecology and silviculture.

In addition to our own education offerings, we **partnered with other organizations to present information relevant to forestry.** For example: More than 60 people came for a workshop on Timber Sale Issues that we hosted in cooperation with the Westmoreland Woodlands Improvement Association. Our forester spoke on permits and legal issues and regional timber-harvesting ordinances.

We also helped the Sustainable Forestry Initiative of Pennsylvania conduct a workshop targeted to loggers on erosion



Whether in an outdoor class for small woodlot owners (top left) or in practice on an actual logging site (top right and bottom), our forester works one-on-one with several hundred people each year, helping them to manage forests carefully, in ways that conserve soil, and protect water quality.

The Westmoreland Conservation District encourages anyone thinking about harvesting timber to call us first for a free, professional woodlot management plan.

and sediment regulations. Twenty people attended.

And, as a member of the forestry committee of Penn's Corner Resource Conservation and Development Area, we helped to sponsor a Backyard Woods Workshop in nearby Somerset County.

## **CLEAN STREAMS AND WATER RESOURCES**

Our staff got a lot of people talking during the year when they **introduced record numbers of audiences to new ways of managing stormwater.**

In a steady stream of programs customized to land surveyors, township solicitors, architects, utility companies, contractors, municipal employees, landscape architects, engineers, lawyers, and builders, our stormwater staff showed how stormwater management can go beyond the "square hole and chain link fence" type of detention pond, to options that blend naturally with the surroundings, are aesthetically pleasing, reduce the burden on community infrastructure, and improve water quality.

Our District staff, and our hydraulic engineer in particular, has established a strong reputation as a knowledgeable and reliable source of stormwater management information, and so we are seeing a steady **increase in the number of requests for him to speak** at seminars and workshops in many surrounding counties as well as on a statewide level. During 2006, he was on the road an average of four days each month, and spoke to more than 540 people.

In addition to sharing information about these new, stormwater best management practices, we were gratified to see them **actually put into practice in several applications in Westmoreland County in 2006.**

In an industrial park in Penn Township, a company called Ventana created a water-quality treatment area that includes a diversion swale and wetland channel. In North Huntingdon Township, a company called Lock-up Storage installed forebays to treat the stormwater runoff from its five-acre development site for water quality before it enters a detention

basin. And in the city of Greensburg, the amount of stormwater runoff from a new asphalt parking lot was decreased by adding infiltration islands, which are soil- and sand-filled trenches planted with shrubs, flowers, or trees. These islands work like catch basins to capture rain and snow melt and allow it to slowly sink into the ground below (see page 4).

All of these examples illustrate the new view of stormwater – that it is a valuable resource to be managed rather than a waste to be disposed of, and that infiltration (rather than retention) is the preferred way of management.

One of today's most groundbreaking stormwater management practices – planting a building's roof with living, green plants – was implemented in the fall on the GreenForge building (see page 6).

This is the **first commercial green roof in Westmoreland County.**

District staff and volunteers from local conservation organizations planted more than 6,000 sedums on two flat roofs totaling 9,000 square feet.

A green roof is a natural way to moderate building temperature (and so reduce the amount of energy needed to heat and cool the building), reduce stormwater runoff (and so alleviate pressure on the local stormwater system), enhance air quality (by absorbing and converting carbon dioxide and producing oxygen), insulate sound, and improve aesthetics.

Our hydraulic engineer represented the southwestern Pennsylvania region on a committee that, in 2006, **completed writing Pennsylvania's stormwater best management practices manual**, a guidance document for municipal officials and engineers on the state's stormwater standards.

In addition, **the District completed its first-ever comprehensive written guide to the policies and procedures that govern our stormwater program.** The 100-plus-page Stormwater Management Program Manual features answers to questions such as "Who is responsible for water flowing across one property from another?," definitions of terms such as "point source discharge," a short explanation of hydrology and hydraulics, and the details of how the District conducts its stormwater plan reviews, provides technical assistance, interfaces with environmental regulation, conducts site visits and inspections, and handles complaints. The manual also includes examples of the latest stormwater best management practices. It was approved by the State Conservation Commission in November.

Our 25-person **Stormwater Advisory Committee** met several times in 2006 to help advise us on a number of matters. For instance: They were involved in the creation of the District's Stormwater Management Program Manual, adding a valuable "user's perspective" to the content and making it especially relevant to the needs of designers, developers, and agency representatives who work with stormwater management.

When the City of Greensburg invited the Westmoreland Conservation District to help the city's engineering consultant design a new parking lot in the cultural district, some creative things happened.

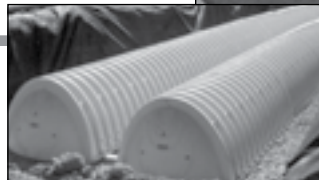
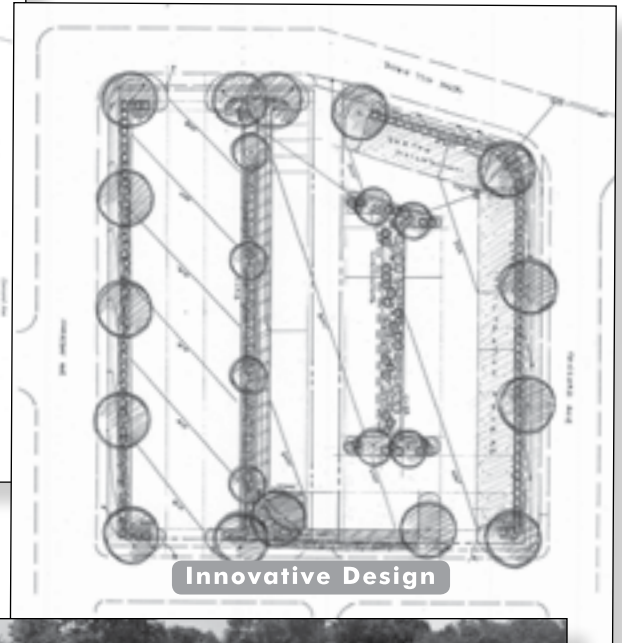
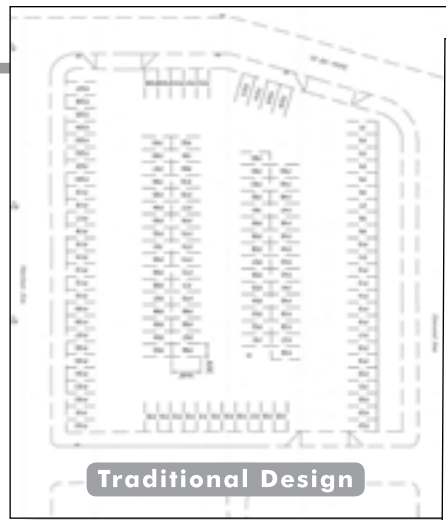
The design evolved from a standard flat lot of totally impervious paved spaces (top left), to an attractive design that includes landscaping and storm-water infiltration, with virtually no loss of parking space (top right).

The lot, which is being built as this publication is going to press, includes a number of innovative stormwater management practices, including: landscaped islands, infiltration pavers, and large buried chambers (bottom) that hold rainwater and release it into the ground slowly over time.

The design is such that, in what engineers call a "two-year storm" (in the Greensburg area, this is equal to 2.5 inches of rainfall in a 24-hour period), no extra water from the lot will be added to the storm sewer system – all of it will sink into the ground.

This kind of stormwater management creates a number of benefits. It:

- recharges the ground water,
- prevents overloading the infrastructure or requiring costly upgrades,
- prevents flooding, and
- reduces the amount of pollution (such as motor oil) that eventually finds its way into our streams.



Actual Construction

The number of stormwater plans submitted to the District for review has tripled in the past few years, as more county municipalities have adopted stormwater ordinances and federal regulations have changed to now require sites as small as one acre to have a stormwater management plan. Of the 259 initial development plans reviewed for erosion and sediment controls in 2006, 70 of them also required a review for stormwater management and post-construction stormwater management plans.

In light of the escalating volume of work, our Board felt that the District needed to begin to recover some of the associated costs and voted in 2006 to implement fees for stormwater plan reviews for the first time in the program's 18-year history. The fees will go into effect in 2007.

## PRODUCTIVE FARMS

In 2006, the District concluded its four-year targeted effort to improve water quality in the Mid-Yough Watershed.

This ambitious program invested a total of \$173,000 to install streambank fencing, stabilized stream crossings, roof

runoff management systems, and other conservation practices on 18 farms, with the ultimate goal of reducing the amount of sediment, nutrients, and stormwater entering the waterways in that watershed.\*

Our part-time agricultural conservation program assistant comprehensively tracked all the measurable outcomes of this important program, which directly treated 13,800 feet of stream.

We continued to assist the Sewickley Creek and Loyalhanna watershed associations in their efforts to put best management practices in place on agricultural operations in those watersheds. To-date, some \$120,000 in Growing Greener grant money has been invested in this effort, which will conclude in mid-2007.

Our agricultural technician personally visited some 70 farms to provide site-specific technical assistance on topics

*\*Funding for this program came from a variety of sources, including the Pennsylvania Growing Greener program, the Pennsylvania Act 6 program, the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP), the Environmental Quality Improvement Program (EQIP), the individual landowner/farmer, and the Westmoreland Conservation District.*

ranging from appropriate best management practices to cost-share funding available to local farmers.

Five Westmoreland County farm owners worked with the District to **voluntarily create nutrient management plans** for their operations in 2006. They are: the Chuck Carr farm in Salem Township (719 acres); the Frescura farm in Unity Township (193 acres); the Heinnickel farm in Hempfield Township (1,590 acres); the Catalina farm in Scottsdale (670 acres); and the Smith farm in South Huntingdon Township (70.5 acres).

That means that a total of 34 farms in Westmoreland County now have these plans in place.

A nutrient management plan is a guide to help a farmer manage fertilizers and animal wastes profitably and efficiently, based on the specific conditions and needs of the land. Good management not only saves the farmer time and money, but also helps the community by keeping excess nutrients out of nearby streams and waterways.

For the second year in a row, **our annual banquet featured only foods that were raised, grown, or produced in Westmoreland County.** From hors d'oeuvres to dessert, the fare featured:

- kielbasa and smoked meats from Bardine's Country Smokehouse in Crabtree;
- pasture-ranged, grain-fed chicken from Hearts Content Farm in New Alexandria;
- Angus beef from Heinnickel Farms in Greensburg;
- produce from Schramm Farms & Orchards in Harrison City;
- cabbage from Wendel Springs Farm in Hermine;
- sauerkraut from Dorothy Stoner & family\* in Latrobe;
- cheese, eggs, and butter from Hillandale Farms\* in New Kensington;
- condiments from Bellview Foods\* in Penn;
- salsa dips from Salsa Sisters in Latrobe;
- dinner rolls from Friendship Farms in Lycippus;
- wine (table centerpiece prize) from Stone Villa Wine Cellars in Acme;
- pies from Sand Hill Berries in Mount Pleasant;
- ice cream from Kerber's Dairy\* in North Huntingdon; and
- milk and ice tea from Hutter's Dairy in Kecksburg.

*(Also see the "Sustainable Communities" section for information on the 2006 award recipients.)*

The District helped to **raise awareness of local agriculture in a number of ways, with a number of**

*\*These producers provided their products at no cost for this event.*

### **important audiences.**

In October, we hosted Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection officials on a tour of a local farm that has in place a wide variety of working, agricultural best management practices – from roof runoff systems to spring developments.

We also participated with one of our nominating organizations, the Farm Bureau, in an event that gave area legislators a chance to tour a working, Westmoreland County plant nursery.

**A day-long forum** we helped to sponsor in February on **the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)** attracted 80 attendees, and 30 new enrollees to the program.

In this program, landowners voluntarily agree to take measures to reduce erosion on their properties. Reducing erosion benefits Westmoreland County's number one industry, agriculture, because it helps retain important, fertile soils...and it benefits water quality by minimizing the amount of soil in streams and waterways that can harm aquatic life and promote flooding.



The Southwest Regional Tillage Conference

For the second year in a row, the District also was a cosponsor of a **regional Tillage Conference** promoting minimum- and no-till farming methods.

This innovative way of farming reduces the number of trips a farmer has to make across the field before crops are planted, saving time, reducing costs, creating bigger crop yields, and reducing erosion.

More than 140 people attended.

Our visual communication specialist began providing graphic design and layout services for a **"Pennsylvania Water Quality Action Packet for Agriculture,"** being developed for farmers throughout the state. Bradford and Lancaster conservation districts are providing copy writing and editorial services, and the entire project is being overseen by the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection.

When completed, the action pack will be a simple, convenient tool farmers can use to assess their operations for compliance with state water quality regulations.

## SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

The newest building addition to our growing “conservation campus” – **GreenForge** – came alive in late 2006, as the first tenants moved into this uniquely refurbished and “green” space.

Rural Development, an agency of the US Department of Agriculture, became GreenForge’s first tenant and the organization’s bright, new, second floor space has given it nearly one-third more room in which to work. The Western Pennsylvania Coalition for Abandoned Mine Reclamation was the next organization to set up shop in the building, bringing activity to the building’s first floor.

The 23,000-square-foot, 25-year-old GreenForge building is being transformed into a conservation incubator that will provide much-needed, reasonably priced lease space for regional grassroots conservation and rural development groups. The building is located next to both the agricultural service center, Donohoe Center, and the District’s headquarters.

The fact that so many like-minded groups are now just steps away from each other on this conservation campus increases their opportunities for interaction, exchange of ideas, collaborative efforts, and sharing of resources. The ultimate result will enhance both the individual agencies’ capacity and the benefits they provide to the community (see “Sustainable Energy Field Day” below).

In getting GreenForge ready for its new use, the District has been incorporating many practical conservation practices and materials – from densely packed cellulose fiber insulation to an advanced geothermal system that can provide both heat and cooling at the same time to different parts of the building in response to the particular needs of the tenants.

These **green building and alternative energy elements** will not only make the operation of GreenForge more efficient and keep costs affordable, but they also will **serve as real-world demonstrations of the technologies**. We plan to showcase them in our conservation education program as a way to encourage builders, architects, developers, and others throughout our rapidly developing region to incorporate such proven, sustainable practices in their building projects.

In fact, we began this education effort in October, while rehabilitation work was under way, when we partnered with other agencies on our campus to host a “**Sustainable Energy Field Day**,” and featured GreenForge’s geothermal heating and cooling system and its 9,000-living-plant green roof (see page 3). Three hundred people attended this event that included technical workshops, tours, and an open house.

In 2006, we continued our efforts to **raise public and private funds to help underwrite the costs of the GreenForge project**, which are estimated to total \$2.1 million. Thanks to the generosity of many conservation-minded

organizations and citizens, we were approximately halfway to that goal at year-end.

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### GreenForge Donors

As of May 30, 2007

#### Benefactor

*(\$10,000 and above)*

Adam Eidemiller, Inc.

Richard Glance, architect

R. I. Lampus Co.

Katherine Mabis McKenna Foundation, Inc.

Richard King Mellon Foundation

Kim Edward Miller, Wolf Lake Incorporated

Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection,  
Energy Harvest Grant Program

The Growing Greener County Environmental Initiative  
(Westmoreland County)

The Western Pennsylvania Watershed Program

Westmoreland County Industrial Development Corporation

West Penn Power Sustainable Energy Fund

#### Patron

*(\$5,000 to \$9,999)*

Allegheny Energy

Westmoreland Conservation District

#### Friend

*(\$2,500 to \$4,999)*

O.C. Cluss Lumber Company

#### Sponsor

*(\$1,000 to \$2,499)*

Botanical Society of Westmoreland County

Ligonier Construction Co.

#### Partner

*(\$500 to \$999)*

Blazosky Associates Inc.

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The 1880s-era bank barn we converted into our offices and education center several years ago continues to **attract a significant number of visitors interested in undertaking a similar “adaptive reuse.”** In 2006, we received inquiries from the Murrysville Historical Preservation Society, Butler County Community College, the Mennonite Center in Laurelville, and a number of others.

Adaptive reuse is a conservation practice that takes an existing building that has out-lived its original purpose (e.g., a shuttered factory) and modifies it for a new use (e.g., an apartment building).





A "GreenBreaking" event was held in April to mark the official start of the GreenForge project. Joining us were more than 100 interested citizens, including (l-r): Westmoreland County Industrial Development Corporation Executive Director Larry Larese, Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection Secretary Katie McGinty, and Westmoreland County Commission Chairman Tom Balya (also pictured is District Manager/CEO Greg Phillips).

This newest building addition to our conservation campus serves the dual purpose of proving space for grassroots conservation agencies, and demonstrating green building materials and alternative energy technologies. GreenForge is the first green rehabilitation of a commercial building in Westmoreland County, and it also is the first demonstration of a green roof in the county.



There are many benefits to this approach, including the opportunity to retain historic structures and to reuse existing materials (for instance: more than 80% of the District's barn's original timbers of poplar, white oak, red oak, and chestnut were reused, and actually are in such fine shape that they should be able to stand and serve in their new purpose for at least another 120 years).

Conservation and community enhancement efforts in Westmoreland County received a \$1.75 million boost in 2006 through the state's **Growing Greener II County Environmental Initiative Program**.

Working with the Conservation District, the Westmoreland County Board of Commissioners **identified 21 separate conservation projects for funding** – projects that will build new trails and recreation areas, improve water quality, preserve valuable farmland, secure open space, and, overall, improve the quality of life throughout Westmoreland County. Many of these projects address the specific desires local citizens expressed for our communities during the creation of the county's comprehensive plan, including preserving our rural character, revitalizing older towns, cleaning up pollution in streams, and protecting scenic and open space.

The Westmoreland Conservation District is administering several of these projects, and partnering with a variety of

organizations in the county to undertake others. Preliminary work began last fall on projects that include: incorporating "green" stormwater management features in two large new parking lots in the city of Greensburg...an innovative blending of the modern-day need for vehicle parking with the restoration of Frederic Law Olmsted's landscape design for the city of Vandergrift's gateway...and addressing some long-standing runoff and erosion issues at the Westmoreland County Fairgrounds.

Pennsylvania citizens overwhelmingly voted to pass the Growing Greener II referendum in 2005, and it represents the single largest investment in the environment in Pennsylvania's history.

**Outstanding contributions to conservation were recognized** at our annual awards banquet in November.

Awards were given to: Adam Battistella – Conservation Farmer of the Year; Ann Rudd Saxman (posthumously) – Conservation Hall of Honor; Smart Growth Partnership of Westmoreland County – Sustainable Community Partner; Rostraver Township – Municipal Conservation Partner; Murrysville Parks Volunteers – Conservation Volunteer.

*(Also see the "Productive Farms" section for information on the local agricultural products featured at the banquet.)*

## EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

Seventy people came along on our **day-long conservation tour that highlighted conservation practices that are “Hidden in Plain View”** – places that many of us pass by every day yet don’t realize what they are doing to help clean our water, protect the soil, grow healthy food, prevent flooding, and bring about a variety of conservation benefits that make life a little better for all of us.

District staff took participants on an informative and fun tour of a reclaimed coal mine site in Marguerite; a stream-bank improvement project in Mount Pleasant Township; an infiltration parking lot at Powdermill Nature Reserve; the beautiful, forested Loyalhanna Gorge; and the Monastery Run passive wetland treatment system in Unity Township. These locations were also featured in our 2004 annual report.

During 2006, **a total of 708 visitors came to our office.** They came for technical assistance or information, to use the Conservation Resource Library, to learn more about how we adapted a barn for reuse, or just to see what a conservation district does.

Partner groups such as the Westmoreland County Cattle-men’s Association, 4-H, Economic Growth Connection, and the Westmoreland Woodlands Improvement Association also held their regular meetings here, **bringing another 2,700 people to our facility during the year.**

Students from **the Westmoreland Enrichment Classes** (a group of home school students based in Norwin) **won the 2006 Westmoreland County Envirothon.** Franklin Regional High School’s team captured second place and Kiski Area High School took third.

The Westmoreland Conservation District has been sponsoring this hands-on environmental competition for 21 years. This year’s competition attracted 101 students from grades 9-12, representing 12 Westmoreland County high schools.

The Westmoreland Enrichment Classes went on to compete in the state Envirothon, where they placed ninth overall in a field of 64 teams.

**Thirteen educators** who were attending the state environmental educators (PAEE) conference near Ligonier in March spent one of their afternoons at our headquarters. They **toured our facility and gained information on stormwater and erosion control** from our technical staff.

Our education coordinator arranged the visit, and also served as a speaker at the conference.

The number of **volumes in our public Conservation Resource Library continued to increase** during the year, thanks to donations from area citizens and organizations, and to new resources purchased to support our growing involvement in green building practices and alternative energy (see page 6).

By the end of 2006, some 425 books and 185 videos on a wide range of conservation and related subjects were available in the library for free borrowing by area residents.

**Our communications efforts were named best in the United States** by the National Association of Conservation Districts and the Association of Equipment Manufacturers.

The joint award for Excellence in Communications was made at NACD’s annual meeting in Houston, Texas in February, and accepted by District Vice Chairman Ron Rohall.

The judges evaluated entries from all over the nation for their effective use of a variety of communications media, including newsletters, special publications, media, and campaigns.

Some of the specific communication items for which the Westmoreland Conservation District was recognized include our newsletter, Landmarks; our annual report, which featured a driving tour of conservation sites in Westmoreland County; and the wide variety of communications that promote our conservation-education program.



District communications were named Best in the Nation.

For the second year in a row, **coverage of District news and events in the regional media significantly increased.** The number of news releases our communications consultant issued increased by 25% over 2005, and the rate at which these items were used by the media continued to be high.

A number of reporters and photographers came to personally cover our events during the year, including our all-day conservation bus tour.

Our outreach efforts also got a boost from an intensive effort to **update and improve the functionality of our 9,000-name database.**

Our secretary and our E&S program administrative assistant worked directly with a database consultant to ensure that this important tool could provide the kind of information the District needs.

The two staffers also took a month-long class in the Access database program at Westmoreland County Community College to enhance their ability to work with the program.

Contact information for more than 100 regional conservation organizations was included in the **“2006-2007 Conservation Directory”** we issued free-of-charge in mid-year.

This valuable reference guide lists staff names, phone numbers, email addresses, fax numbers, and mailing addresses for federal environmental and agricultural agencies, as well as regional and local conservation groups.

## ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Once again, the District's work received **strong support from the Westmoreland County Commissioners.**

The appropriations they granted and the willingness they demonstrated to actively partner with us have made Westmoreland County a leader in conservation, and benefited all county residents.

Although we have worked together often in the past, the GreenForge project has significantly **increased the District's coordination with both the Westmoreland County Industrial Development Corporation and the Economic Growth Connection.**

We believe this growing interaction between conservation and economic development is beneficial for both organizations, giving each of us a better understanding of the other's perspective and opening up opportunities for future partnerships that effectively balance the concerns of these two very necessary efforts in our community.

**Staff promotions and additions** during the year included: Rob Cronauer, promoted to watershed specialist from erosion control specialist; Nicole Bossart hired as erosion control specialist; Dana Rizzo hired as water quality educator (shared position with Penn State Cooperative Extension, Westmoreland County); and Johanna Sheppard hired as agricultural program assistant (shared position with US Department of Agriculture).

**Our board and associate board also underwent some expected changes**, including the retirement of Dorothy Stoner and Bill Kotsenas.

During her 12 years of volunteer board service, Dorothy served on the Conservation Education Advisory Committee, provided guidance on the development of the district's Employee Handbook, and served on the planning committee for the district's annual banquet.

Bill represented the Botanical Society of Westmoreland County, a nominating organization for the district, on the associate board since 1993. He also served as the botanical society's president from 1988 to 1996.

Rob Zelmores and Jack Driscoll also chose to conclude their service as associate directors after serving for six and nine years respectively.

**New board and associate board members** were named in 2006. Fred Slezak, one of the county's largest no- or minimum-till farmers and manager/owner of Lone Maple Farms, joined our board; and Chuck Duritsa, retired regional director of the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, joined our organization as an associate director.

We successfully **increased the number of sponsorships of our annual banquet**, from three sponsors providing a total of \$660 in 2005, to seven sponsors providing a total of \$2,450 in 2006.

These sponsorships have been important in allowing us to continue to host a premier event at an affordable cost. For the 2006 banquet, we added something new – entertainment by comedian Jay Hendren – in addition to featuring a hearty meal of foods grown or produced by 14 farmers/agricultural operations in the county, and drew the largest crowd in history – 230 people.

We **realigned our budget process** in 2006 to accommodate the increasing line items associated with the GreenForge project.

Our assistant fiscal administrator also assumed responsibility for the full range of accounting work related to that project, including preparing the monthly Treasurer's Report, Income Sheet, and Balance Sheet, and cutting purchase orders and processing invoices.

Our **Employee Handbook** underwent its annual review and several changes were made to ensure that it remains relevant, including more clearly defining the terms of various benefit programs, such as specialized forms of employee leaves of absence.



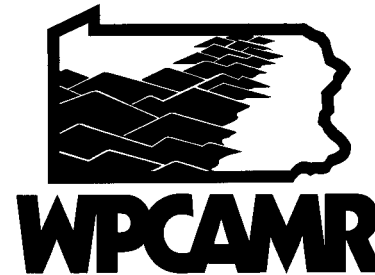
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## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

J. Roy Houston, *Chairman*  
 Ron Rohall, *Vice Chairman*  
 Conrad Donovan, *Treasurer*  
 P. Roy Kemerer, *Secretary*  
 County Commissioner  
 Tom Balya  
 Albert Barnett  
 William Doney  
 Kim Edward Miller  
 Fred J. Slezak

## ASSOCIATE DIRECTORS

Robert Ackerman  
 Chuck Duritsa  
 Anita Foriska  
 Alexander J. Graziani, AICP  
 Joseph Kalinowski  
 Ted Kopas  
 Theresa Gay Rohall  
 Elmer Slezak  
 John Turack  
 Keith Walters

## ADVISORY COMMITTEES\*

### Communications

Anita Foriska  
 Karen Jurkovic  
 Ted Kopas  
 John Turack

### Conservation Education

Angela Belli  
 Devin DeMario  
 William Doney  
 Lindsay DiCasolo  
 Karen Jurkovic  
 Theresa Gay Rohall  
 Tom Sierzega  
 Elmer Slezak  
 Joseph Stefko  
 Dorothy Stoner  
 John Turack

### Dirt and Gravel Roads

Ron Rohall  
 Tom Sierzega  
 James Vatter

### Forestry

Robert Ackerman  
 Edward Callahan  
 Thomas Fitzgerald  
 Ron Rohall

## Nutrient Management

John Lohr  
 Jill Mariani  
 Gary Sheppard  
 Tom Sierzega  
 Larry Stokum

## Stormwater

Linda Alworth  
 Emil Bove  
 Lucien Bove  
 John Campfield  
 Joseph Dietrick  
 Kim Gales  
 Donald Hixson  
 Charles Kubasik  
 Dallas Leonard  
 Suzy Meyer  
 Kim Edward Miller  
 Les Mlakar  
 Kenneth Murin  
 Stephen Pilipovich  
 Senator Bob Regola  
 Edward Ritzer  
 Darl Rosenquest  
 Tamira Spedaliere  
 John Surmacz  
 R.D. Whiting

## Sustainable Energy

Charlie Frederickson  
 Maggie Hall  
 Karen Jurkovic  
 Karen Kuhns  
 Barbara McMillan  
 Gary Sheppard

*\*District staff members also serve on these committees.*

## STAFF

Gregory M. Phillips  
*District Manager/CEO*  
 Anthony P. Quadro, Jr.  
*Assistant District Manager/  
 Technical Programs Director*  
 Sandra Dzendzel  
*Administrative Assistant*  
 Karen Barnhart  
*Assistant Fiscal Administrator*  
 Mark Jackson  
*Visual Communications Specialist*  
 Joanne Kitsko  
*Receptionist/Secretary*  
**Technical Staff**  
 James W. Pillsbury, PE  
*Hydraulic Engineer*  
 Kathryn Hamilton, RLA  
*Stormwater Technical Assistant*  
 Robert D. Cronauer  
*Watershed Specialist*  
 Christopher Droste  
*Erosion Control Specialist*  
 Nicole Bossart  
*Erosion Control Specialist*  
 Daniel Griffith  
*Nutrient Management  
 Specialist/Agricultural  
 Conservation Technician*  
 Johanna Sheppard  
*Agricultural Conservation  
 Program Assistant*  
 Kathleen Fritz  
*E & S Program Administrative Assistant*  
**Education Staff**  
 Leanne Griffith  
*Conservation Education Coordinator*  
 Dana Rizzo  
*District/Penn State Extension  
 Water Quality Educator*  
 Christie Sebek  
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# FINANCIAL STATEMENT

## Concise Statement of Activities Combined Funds – Year Ended December 31, 2006

### Concise Statement of Financial Position Combined Funds – December 31, 2006

#### Assets

Cash .....	\$194,706
Loan Receivable.....	893,307
General Fixed Assets.....	58,175
	<b>Total \$1,146,188</b>

#### Liabilities and Net Assets

Current Liabilities .....	\$ 1,371
Loan Payable .....	870,609
Funding Source Share of Equipment .....	58,175
Total Liabilities .....	930,155
Net Assets.....	216,033
	<b>Total \$1,146,188</b>

#### Support

Westmoreland County .....	\$783,104
State Grants .....	154,646
Other Revenue.....	55,853
Fees .....	34,525
Farmland Preservation.....	5,825
Western Pennsylvania Coalition for Abandoned Mine Reclamation.....	1,227
Interest Income.....	3,138
Special Projects .....	187,499
	<b>Total \$1,225,844</b>

#### Expenditures

Program Services.....	\$861,321
Management and General.....	391,076
Fundraising .....	0
	<b>Total \$1,252,397</b>

Excess (Deficiency)-Current .....	(26,553)
Net Assets-Beginning Balance .....	242,586
Net Assets-End of year .....	<b>\$216,033</b>

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*Photo – One of GreenForge’s many newly installed conservation features – a roof of live, green plants – is monitored by our stormwater staff. Data on the effectiveness of this and other conservation measures will be shared with builders, engineers, architects, and others throughout the region.*



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