



Westmoreland  
Conservation  
District

2011 ANNUAL REPORT



***On the cover:***

This photo montage represents Westmoreland County's land use – 50% forests, 30% agriculture, and 20% urban.

In the bottom right corner District Assistant Manager/Technical Programs Director Tony Quadro listens to District Associate Director Barbara McMillan talk about plans for her farm and woodlot.





*Dear Friends:*

Clean streams, stable soils, productive farms, healthy forests and sustainable communities are critical to the quality of life in Westmoreland County. The Westmoreland Conservation District is able to respond to the needs of the county through our programs, and by keeping in touch with its citizens through the County Commissioners, the District Board of Directors, Associate Directors, and Advisory Committees. We pride ourselves in staying ahead of the curve so we can deliver quality core programs, while keeping a

sharp look out to see what's next on the horizon of cutting edge conservation.

The District put many high-value conservation projects on the ground in 2011. This was accomplished despite a tough economy and flat budgets. How did we do it? We did it with the encouragement of our Advisory Committees and actions taken by our Board of Directors, which resulted in raising fees for our valuable services, and focusing on more creative, accurate ways to implement cost recovery.

One of the most important keys to success continues to be solid partnerships and relationships with other agencies, organizations, businesses and individuals. We've never operated in a vacuum. In fact, one of our greatest capabilities is being able to make the kind of connections that get things done. The Westmoreland County Industrial Development Corporation, Westmoreland County Bureau of Parks & Recreation, the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, and USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service are all examples of key partners we work with every day.

We've focused our communications efforts on one of our main strategic plan goals, which is being "the first-in-mind conservation organization" for specific audiences and the public. In order to accomplish this, we are utilizing our newly refined database and a carefully balanced combination of electronic and print media.

In 2011, we used several targeted email blasts to help gain support for important conservation issues. Based on input from our Communications Advisory Committee, we will be reworking our major print publications –the *Landmarks* newsletter and Annual Report – to more strategically serve our audiences.

We hope you enjoy reading this Annual Report and thank you for taking an interest in conservation and how it affects our quality of life. May we all continue to learn how to help each other "use our resources wisely."

Yours in conservation,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ronald J. Rohall". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

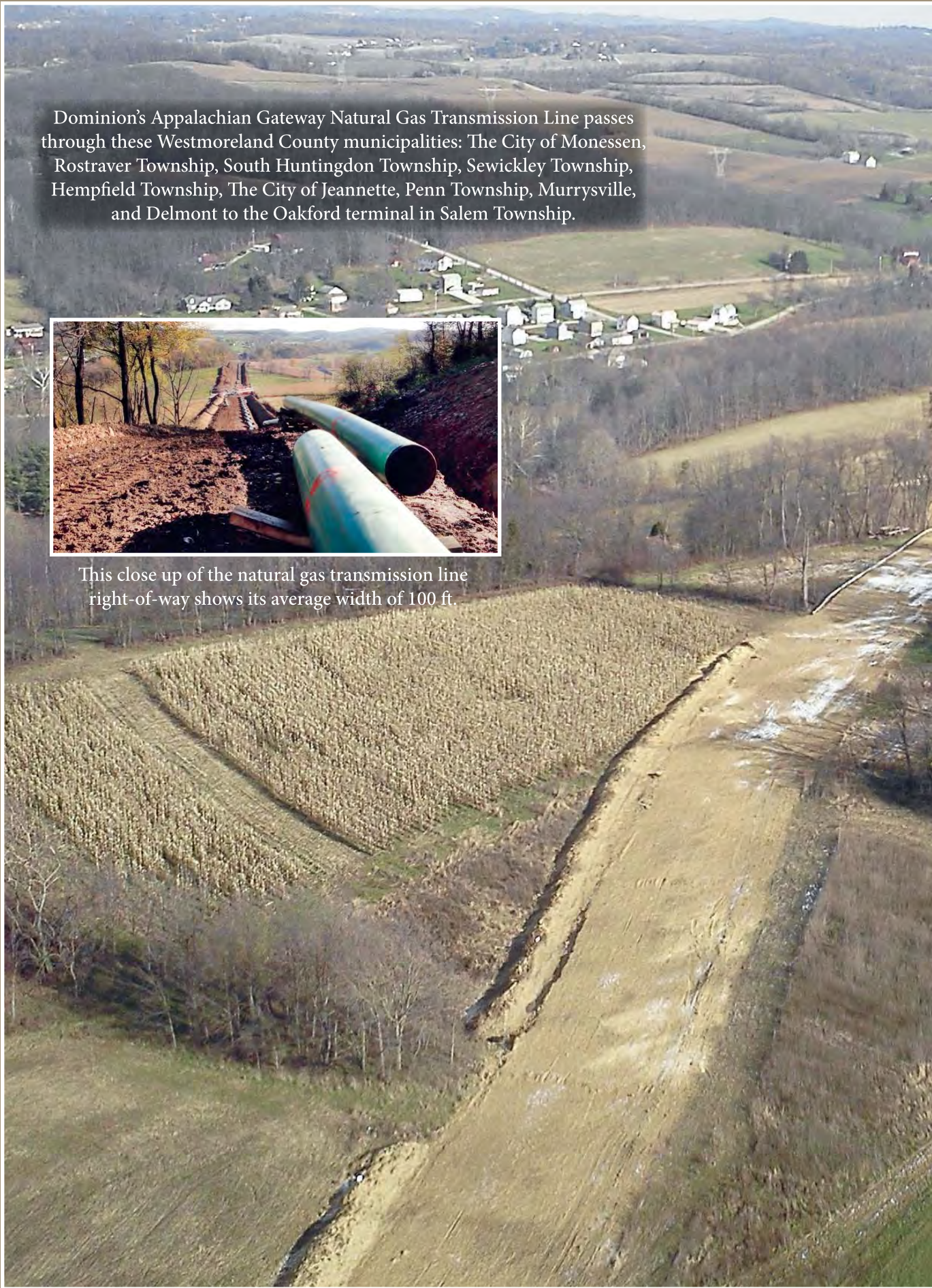
Ronald J. Rohall, *Chairman*



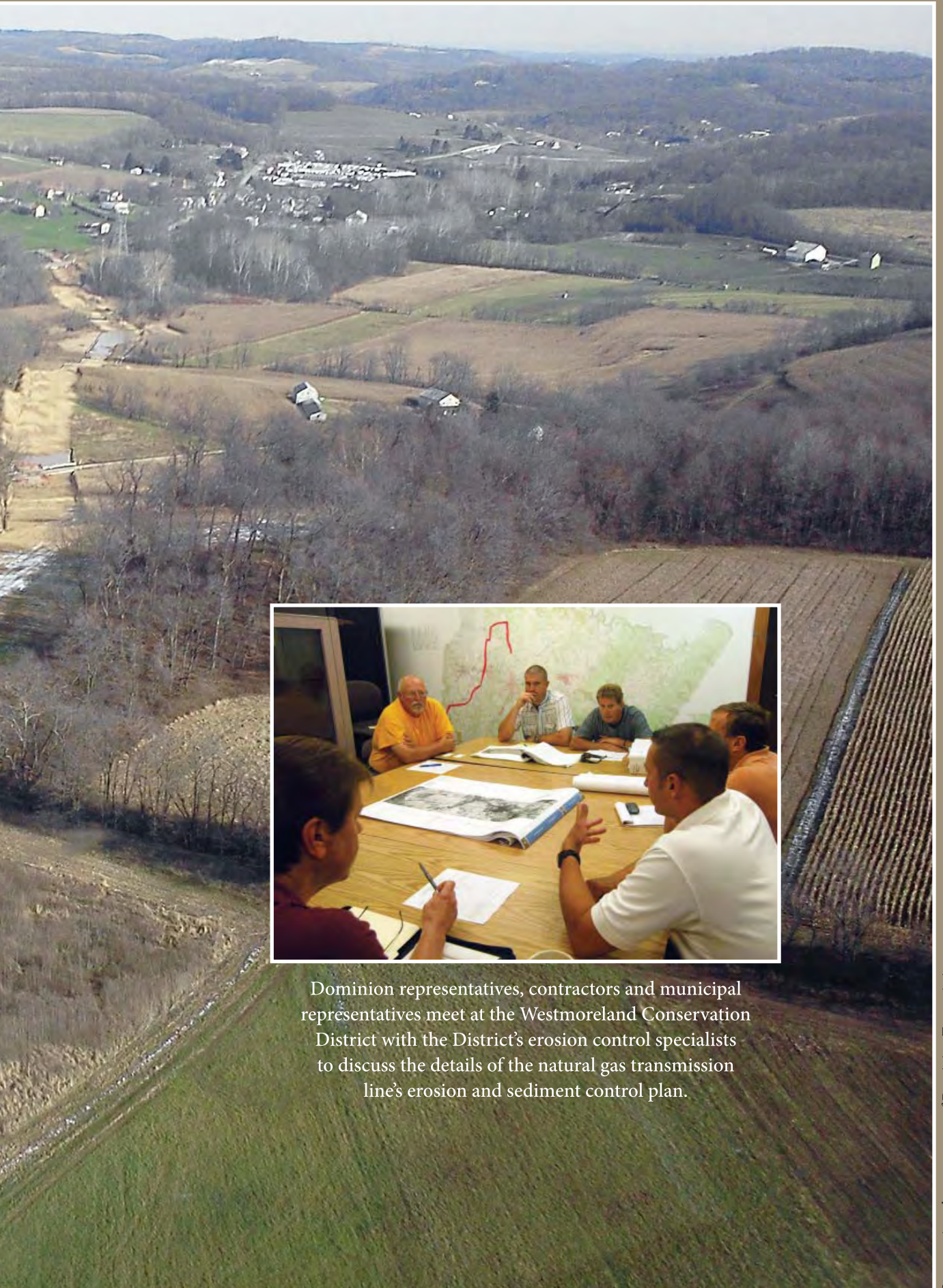
Dominion's Appalachian Gateway Natural Gas Transmission Line passes through these Westmoreland County municipalities: The City of Monessen, Rostraver Township, South Huntingdon Township, Sewickley Township, Hempfield Township, The City of Jeannette, Penn Township, Murrysville, and Delmont to the Oakford terminal in Salem Township.



This close up of the natural gas transmission line right-of-way shows its average width of 100 ft.







Dominion representatives, contractors and municipal representatives meet at the Westmoreland Conservation District with the District's erosion control specialists to discuss the details of the natural gas transmission line's erosion and sediment control plan.





District Senior Erosion Control Specialist Chris Droste (l) and Erosion Control Specialist Matt Zambelli (r) inspect an erosion control barrier at a commercial construction site in Latrobe.



District Watershed Specialist Rob Cronauer (l) and Intern Samantha Pedder (r) measure the nearly completed Kinloch Basin. It has a 400,000 gallon capacity and is one of the largest stormwater basins the District has ever built. See page 17 for more information.



A debris basin on Little Pucketa Creek near Valley High School in New Kensington will help keep the waters of this creek under control.



Contractor Nick Eremic of Eveready Construction (l) and District Watershed Specialist Rob Cronauer (r) review construction plans.



High stream flows are restricted by a row of three-foot square concrete blocks, which direct excess flow and debris into the basin where it is captured. The basin then allows the water velocity to decrease, thus dropping out the debris before the water returns to the creek.





District Agricultural Conservation Technician Dan Griffith (l) inspects young trees protected by Tubex® with farmer Scott Malnofski (r) of Derry Township. These trees are part of a buffer which will help protect the Stony Run Watershed.



This lush vegetated buffer on the Malnofski Farm helps protect a small tributary to Stony Run.





District Director Paul Sarver greets customers at his Farmer's Market space at Lynch Field in Greensburg.



District Associate Director Barbara McMillan and District Forester Tony Quadro evaluate timber potential at Barbara's farm in Donegal Township.





The District's annual Engineers' Workshop held at the Fred M. Rogers Center, Saint Vincent College, Latrobe.



Westmoreland Conservation District/Penn State Extension Water Quality Educator Dana Rizzo (l) and Bryan Swistock, Senior Extension Associate, Water Resources, Penn State School of Forest Resources (r) test water samples at a water testing clinic session at Donohoe Center.





A bus tour of the Phase I residential rain gardens designed and installed by the District in the Ramsay Terrace neighborhood of Mount Pleasant.



At the “Remembering Roy” event–The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) presents a special recognition to the family of J. Roy Houston in honor of his 40 plus years service as Westmoreland Conservation District Chairman. (l-r) Charles Duritsa, District Director; George Jugovic, DEP Southwest Regional Director (at the time this photo was taken); Roy’s daughters Kathy Heider and Traci Halleck; Roy’s friend Phyllis Kennedy; and Ron Rohall, District Chairman.



# Moving Conservation Forward

## HIGHLIGHTING OUR 2011 ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND MORE



The following sections of the 2011 Westmoreland Conservation District Annual Report were developed and designed for quick and easy reading. These administrative and program highlights are identified with short bold titles. We can't say everything about what we and our conservation partners do in just 28 pages. So if you would like

to know more about a particular subject please feel free to contact me via email, [greg@wcdpa.com](mailto:greg@wcdpa.com), phone 724-837-5271 or contact the staff specialists listed after each program area. I also invite you to visit our website: [www.wcdpa.com](http://www.wcdpa.com).

Sincerely,

Greg Phillips

District Manager/CEO

### LANDMARK YEAR FOR CONSERVATION PROJECTS

The District put many high value conservation projects on the ground in 2011. These projects span the entire spectrum of the programs we offer, and are located throughout Westmoreland County. Some examples are:

- rehabilitation of over 2,000 ft. of Bailey's Road in Fairfield Township under the Dirt & Gravel Roads Program,
- completed installation of six best management practices on the Laughlin Farm, in the Stony Run Watershed,
- construction of a debris basin along Little Pucketa Creek by Valley High School in New Kensington as part of a series of five stormwater best management practices installed in this area,
- began installation of ten residential rain gardens in Mount Pleasant as part of Phase II of this project,
- retrofit of three stormwater control islands in the tax office parking lot in Scottdale,
- reclamation of 59 acres of abandoned mine land by a landowner in Wyano,

- completion of the final stormwater control pond at the Westmoreland Fairgrounds in Mount Pleasant Township as part of a stormwater control system.

These projects will benefit the quality of life in Westmoreland County now and for years to come.

### J. ROY HOUSTON LEGACY LIVES ON

J. Roy Houston served as dynamic chairman of the Westmoreland Conservation District for over forty years until his death in November of 2010.

In August 2011 family, friends and associates of Roy's were invited to attend a special event at the District's headquarters celebrating his life and legacy. (See page 21.) The positive energy generated by this event paved the way to raise monies which will help enclose the barn deck at the District's headquarters. This will add much needed meeting space to the facility.

Roy's legacy of devotion and service also inspired the establishment of the J. Roy Houston Partnership Award. This award will be given for the first time in 2012 at the District's annual banquet in the fall, and then will be given each year thereafter in recognition

of outstanding community conservation partners. We welcome Roy's former employer Peoples Natural Gas as the sponsor of this award.

### TRACKING THE DISTRICT'S RESOURCES

The District's administrative staff and assistants worked together to improve and further develop the systems we use to track and organize important information, so we can make the wisest use of *our* resources – human and financial. This included reorganizing and updating the database, and the development of:

- an annual program cost review,
- a time management tracking system,
- a resource/financial tracking system,
- a listing of who is utilizing district services, and
- improved contact and targeted mailings lists.

### BUDGET CHALLENGES

How did the District deal with flat funding and budget demands in 2011? For starters we made substantial budget cuts. The Board of Directors passed a budget with a deficit in it knowing we had the capability to make up the difference later in the year. We also



Westmoreland County Commissioners (l-r) Ted Kopas, Charles W. Anderson, Chairman, and R. Tyler Courtney

Our sincere thanks to the Westmoreland County Commissioners for their continued financial support and encouragement. Eight years out of the last ten the Westmoreland Conservation District has held the line and not increased its budget request.



had to dip into our operating reserve for \$50,000, and worked diligently to make up the deficit by carefully tracking our project cost recoveries, increasing fees, and pursuing grants.



### GREENFORGE GOAL

Nestled in a hillside on the north-eastern side of the Donohoe Center campus in Greensburg, the yellow contemporary GreenForge office building became a conservation showcase when the District led its green rehabilitation in 2006. Since then visitors have come from all over to study its geothermal heating and cooling system, use of recycled materials, vegetated green roof and other cutting edge stormwater control practices.

One of the major goals of the District's strategic plan is for GreenForge to become economically sustainable. We got closer to this goal in 2011 with the help of the Westmoreland Industrial Development Corporation, the Economic Growth Connection, the Katherine Mabis McKenna Foundation and the pledged support of the Westmoreland County Commissioners.

GreenForge houses our conservation partners Westmoreland Cleanways, the Western PA Coalition for Abandoned Mine Reclamation and the Smart Growth Partnership. In 2011 we welcomed the Westmoreland County Federated Library System as a long term tenant.

### PLUGGING IN ENERGY CONSERVATION PROGRAMS

As part of our interest in promoting sustainable communities, the District held energy conservation workshops for building owners with the support of Westmoreland County and the U.S. Department of Energy. Targeted audiences included schools, non profits, small and large businesses, and indus-

try. A total of 191 people attended five individual workshops.

An energy audit was done on the District's headquarters and we acted on it by installing energy efficient LED lights, sensors at the light switches and a computer after-hours shut off system.

The District also began developing a special section on its popular website dedicated to energy conservation. The first step was to work with Westmoreland County to give a new home to its web information on energy conservation

*continued on page 13*

## FINANCIAL STATEMENT

### Concise Statement of Financial Position

Combined Funds - December 31, 2011

#### ASSETS

Cash .....	\$ 448,104
Loan Receivable-GreenForge, Inc. ....	\$ 214,597
General Fixed Assets .....	\$ 7,205
Total.....	\$ 669,906

#### LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS

Current Liabilities.....	\$ 507
Funding Source Share of Equipment .....	\$ 7,205
Total Liabilities .....	\$ 7,712
Net Assets .....	\$ 662,194
Total.....	\$ 669,906

### Concise Statement of Activities

Combined Funds - Year Ending December 31, 2011

#### SUPPORT

Westmoreland County.....	\$ 950,675
State Grants .....	\$ 484,480
Other Revenue.....	\$ 26,126
Fees .....	\$ 113,019
Farmland Preservation .....	—
Interest Income .....	\$ 27
Donations .....	\$ 14,161
Special Projects.....	\$ 146,507
Total.....	\$ 1,734,995

#### EXPENDITURES

Program Services .....	\$ 1,086,605
Management & General.....	\$ 461,150
Fundraising .....	\$ 39,449
Total.....	\$ 1,587,204
Excess (Deficiency) - Current.....	\$ 147,791
Net Assets - Beginning Balance.....	\$ 514,403
Net Assets - End of Year .....	\$ 662,194





### The Westmoreland Conservation District Board of Directors

(back row, 1-r) Charles Duritsa; Fred Slezak; Paul Sarver (front row, 1-r) Ron Rohall, *Chairman*;  
 Kim Edward Miller, *Secretary*; Conrad Donovan, *Treasurer*; William Doney, *Vice Chairman*; Albert Barnett;  
 (not pictured) Westmoreland County Commissioner Ted Kopas



### The Westmoreland Conservation District Associate Directors

(back row, 1-r) Joseph Kalinowki; Robert Ackerman; John Turack  
 (front row, 1-r) Ellen Keefe, Dwight Sarver, Bruce Corna, Joseph Dietrick, Alex Graziani,  
 (not pictured) Karen Jurkovic, Barbara D. McMillan, Theresa Gay Rohall, Jesse Jon Salensky, Keith Walters



for building owners. We hope to unveil the District's new Energy Conservation section at [www.wcdpa.com](http://www.wcdpa.com) in the near future.

### **DISTRICT DIRECTORS HELP PROVIDE REGIONAL LEADERSHIP**

The Northeast Association of Conservation District Employees (NACDE) awarded Westmoreland Conservation District Chairman Ron Rohall the 2011 NACDE Award for Outstanding District Supervisor.

District Director Chuck Duritsa was named chairman of the Ohio River Valley Water Sanitation Commission. Appointed to the commission by former PA Governor Rendell in 2005, Chuck has also served as secretary-treasurer and vice chairman.

### **IMPLEMENTING OUR STRATEGIC PLAN**

In 2011 the District continued to pursue the goals of our strategic plan:

- Program—to provide vital and progressive quality programs to meet the needs of our local citizens through effective partnership and community service.
- Finance—to achieve a sustainable, positive net asset to ensure the district's continuity.
- GreenForge—to maintain GreenForge as a standard for low-impact green development, as an environmental model, and as a conservation incubator while moving it to financial sustainability within three years.
- Marketing—to be the first in mind conservation resource for targeted audiences and build organization identity among the public.
- Organization—to ensure the integrity and quality of leadership is maintained and developed.

### **LEARNING ABOUT THE MARCELLUS SHALE GAS DRILLING INDUSTRY**

The District continued to learn more about the new Marcellus Shale gas drilling industry in 2011 to see how

we can get involved in order to help protect our natural resources during and after the drilling process by applying our conservation know-how.

District staff members are also learning how Marcellus Shale drilling affects the conservation program work they do, and the various ways they can work with the industry.

The District hosted two roundtable meetings with government agencies, watershed associations, engineers and others who are directly involved to share information and explore possible partnerships.

We continue to explore funding which would allow us to offer our conservation expertise.

## **THANK YOU DONORS**

Thank you to everyone who made a donation to the District during 2011.

### **BENEFACTOR**

*\$5,000 and above*

Katherine Mabis McKenna Foundation

Laurel Foundation

### **PATRON**

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

Louis Battistella

### **SPONSOR**

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

William Doney

Gary & Cindy Dzendzel

In memory of Myrna Heyworth

– Valorie & Margorie Heyworth

Sewickley Creek Watershed Association

### **PARTNER**

*\$500 to \$999*

Michael & Karen Jurkovic

Kim Miller

Murrysville Volunteer Fire Department

David & Barbara Pezze

Greg, Leanne & Brandon Phillips

Westmoreland County

Boroughs Association

### **ASSOCIATE**

*\$250 to \$499*

Conrad Donovan

Traci Halleck

Kathy Heider

Mary Lou Houston

Richard Kacin

Teeter Associates, Inc.

### **DONOR**

*up to \$249*

In memory of Ardis Altman

– Alice Meadow

Jason & Karen Barnhart

Botanical Society of  
Westmoreland County

Robert Brooks

Alton & Pauline Brown

Joanne Caffrey

William Crawford

Charles Duritsa

Terry & Sandy Dzendzel

Bernadette Fondy

Don and Rita Granata

Cathy Herrholtz

Jack Hoey

Mark & Jill Jackson

Joe Kalinowski

Mr. & Mrs. Richard Kralik

Stephen Pilipovich

Carol Pollock

Ron & Theresa Rohall

Robert Scheib

Christie Sebek

John Skiavo

Jay & Mary Lou Tarara

Nevin & Judy Ulery

Roger Wigle

List reflects donations received from 1-1-11 to 12-31-11.

If more than one gift was received, values were combined to determine the level of giving.





## The Westmoreland Conservation District Staff

(back row, l-r) Jim Pillsbury, *Hydraulic Engineer*; Mimi Thomas-Brooker, *Education Program Coordinator*; Dana Rizzo, *District/Penn State Extension Water Quality Educator*; Greg Phillips, *District Manager/CEO*; Dan Griffith, *Nutrient Management Specialist/Agricultural Conservation Technician*; Sandy Dzendzel, *Director of Administration*; Mark Jackson, *Visual Communications Specialist* (front row, l-r) Rob Cronauer, *Watershed Specialist*; Christie Sebek, *Receptionist/Secretary*; Tony Quadro, *Assistant District Manager/Technical Programs Director*; Karen Barnhart, *Fiscal Administrator*; Matt Zambelli, *Soil Erosion Control Specialist*; Kathy Hamilton, *Stormwater Technician*; Kathy Fritz, *Erosion & Sedimentation Program Administrative Assistant*; Chris Droste, *Senior Erosion Control Specialist*

# Controlling Erosion and Sediment



### GAS LINE LARGEST PROJECT

The construction of Dominion's Appalachian Gateway Natural Gas Transmission Line is the largest earth disturbance project the Westmoreland Conservation District has ever been involved in. Out of the four Pennsylvania counties the gas line runs through, Westmoreland is the lead county with regard to permitting the project since it has the most disturbed areas. This natural gas transmission line averages 100 ft. wide and stretches a total of 110 miles. The final 26 miles are

in Westmoreland County where the line ends at Oakford terminal near Delmont.

A 2011 pre-construction meeting hosted and coordinated by the District brought together Dominion representatives with affected municipalities and contractors.

Dominion has its own team of environmental inspectors who report to the Westmoreland Conservation District should there be any modifications to the construction plan. The District's senior erosion control specialist inspects the project regularly. During three inspections in 2011 the site was found to be in compliance.

**District Partners:** PA Department of Environmental Protection, City of Monessen, Rostraver Township, South Huntingdon Township, Sewickley Township, Hempfield Township, City of Jeannette, Penn Township, Murrysville, Delmont, Salem Township.

### TECH STAFF TEAMWORK

The District's technical staff boasts a wide range of education, expertise, and experience. Staff members are passionate about conservation and Westmoreland County and that shows in their 191 total years of service as of 2011. We had one change this year – Erosion Control Specialist Nicole Miller left in June. After a careful search the District hired Matt Zambelli in September, 2011 to fill this position. A 2008 Landscape Architecture graduate of Penn State University, Matt interned with the District during the summer of 2004.

**The District tech staff reviewed and approved the following Conservation Plans in 2011:**

Erosion and Sedimentation.....160  
Stormwater Management..... 36



*The following permits were also approved:*

Post Construction Stormwater Management (PCSM)..... 52  
 National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES)..... 52  
 Chapter 105 Permits..... 46  
 Erosion and Sediment Control General Permit (ESCGP-1) (transmission lines)..... 3  
**Technical Assistance provided**  
 Phone calls, field and office visits.....2,272

The District has always sought voluntary compliance of conservation laws through education. The PA Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) delegates the District the power to enforce the law if we choose to do so. In 2010 the District Board of Directors voted to use enforcement procedures as a last resort to stop those who blatantly violate conservation law. In 2011 two enforcement actions were taken. Both of the violating sites were found to have inadequate erosion controls which caused sediment pollution in tributaries of Little Pucketa Creek. One site was residential and did not even have the proper permits. The other was a fill site.

The resolution of these enforcement actions brought both violators back on track with good conservation practices and cooperation with the District.

**SHARING KNOW-HOW**

The District’s technical staff often shares its valued expertise by serving on statewide committees. Our senior erosion control specialist is assisting with the technical changes in Chapter 102/105, and the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Rules and Regulations. He also serves on a training committee for Erosion & Sedimentation Control Technical Staff.

Our erosion & sedimentation program administrative assistant is helping refine an Administrative Policy and Permitting Manual, which will assist the PA Department of Environmental Protection and the PA Association of Conservation Districts in running the Erosion and Sediment Control program more efficiently.

**STORMWATER ADVISORY COMMITTEE HELPS EROSION PROGRAM**

Controlling stormwater and soil erosion go hand in hand. The District’s Stormwater Advisory Committee added the Erosion and Sediment Control program under its umbrella in 2011. This committee is composed of experts including engineers, municipal representatives and contractors who took a careful look at our plan review services. It was determined that these services are critical, well-organized and valuable to our clients. A review of the fees charged indicated that they were below the average and should be raised.

**MORE PLANNING MEETINGS AND INSPECTIONS NOW REQUIRED**

New National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) earth moving regulations from the PA Department of Environmental Protection now require pre construction meetings with the District as well as more on site inspections during critical stages of construction. This also includes final inspections once construction is completed, and a paperwork process to ensure stormwater best management practices are installed and functioning, and that a responsible party is selected to maintain these practices. Stormwater management has become a big part of this planning.

The District technical staff had to make several changes in 2011 to its inspection procedures and the handling of NPDES best management practices to ensure erosion controls and stormwater best management practices are inspected and installed appropriately.

It is more economical to plan thoroughly up front than have to rework a project once construction has begun.

Chris Droste,  
*Senior Erosion Control Specialist*  
 email: [chris@wcdpa.com](mailto:chris@wcdpa.com)  
 Matt Zambelli,  
*Erosion Control Specialist*  
 email: [matt@wcdpa.com](mailto:matt@wcdpa.com)  
 Kathy Fritz,  
*E&S Program Administrative Assistant*  
 email: [kathy@wcdpa.com](mailto:kathy@wcdpa.com)

# Managing Our Forests



**HELPING TIMBER HARVESTERS IN WESTMORELAND COUNTY**

The Westmoreland Conservation District’s forester understands the timber harvesting industry. He works to earn the trust of timber harvesters so he can help them keep in compliance with erosion control and clean stream regulations. This cooperation helps them avoid enforcements and penalties.

An important part of the timber

harvest planning process is a pre-plan meeting, which occurs before an erosion and sediment control plan is actually drawn up. At this meeting our forester will look at the harvest site layout to see where the skid roads and log landings are to be located, and help the timber harvester think through where to apply the appropriate erosion control measures such as water bars,

*continued on page 16*



culverts and broad based dips. He will also discuss any permits that may be necessary.

It is especially important to talk about the erosion control best management practices recommended for installing logging roads and crossing streams.

Once a plan is completed and approved, our forester will then follow up by visiting and walking the site during various harvesting stages to be sure that erosion and sedimentation control plans are being followed, the best management practices are properly installed, and the land is stabilized when the job is completed.

**REVIEWS, SITE LAYOUTS, PLANS AND WOODLAND EVALUATIONS**

Timber Harvest Site Review prior to plan development .....13

Timber Harvest Erosion & Sediment Control Plan Assistance including site visits.....22  
Woodland Evaluations and Timber Sale Advice.....11  
Comprehensive Stewardship Plans for woodlot care and management..... 1

**IMPACTS OF MARCELLUS GAS ON FORESTLAND WEBINAR**

Our district forester participated in presenting a webinar titled, "Impacts of Marcellus Development on Forestlands." 134 people attended the webinar on December 18, 2011. As of this writing there have been more than 245 national/global recorded views.

Our forester's topics included: how the Marcellus footprint impacts the landowner's ability to market timber; accessibility; manageability, and erosion and sediment control issues.

A recorded version of the webinar is currently available on the Westmoreland Conservation District's website, [www.wcdpa.com](http://www.wcdpa.com).

**District Partners:** Penn State Extension in Westmoreland County, Smart Growth Partnership

**ACTION PACKET REVISED**

The Timber Harvesters Action Packet is an easy to use publication, which has been helping timber harvesters stay in compliance with erosion control and clean stream regulations for many years.

Our forester sat on a statewide committee to help revise the Action Packet regarding changes to Chapter 102 regulations.

**TWO ENFORCEMENTS**

On two timber harvest sites where sediment pollution occurred enforcement action was taken in cooperation with the PA Fish & Boat Commission.

Tony Quadro,  
Assistant District Manager/Technical Programs Director/Forester  
email: [tony@wcdpa.com](mailto:tony@wcdpa.com)

# Working with Our Farmers



**COMPLIANCE CHALLENGES**

When Chapter 102 of the Pennsylvania Clean Streams Law was revised in 2010 the PA Department of Environmental Protection started to look more closely at farmers because of increasing concern over nutrient and sediment pollution occurring in streams. Nutrients are good for the farmers soil, but stream water quality is degraded when rain washes excess nutrients off of the soil into the streams.

A new regulation changed the minimum disturbed acreage requiring a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit from five acres to one.

In the past the District always

encouraged Westmoreland County farmers to voluntarily comply with regulations. We pointed out that it made good economic sense and was good for the environment. However, the new emphasis on regulations compliance has become a big concern for farmers and those who work with them.

**TOURING MUDDY FARMS AND STUDYING ENFORCEMENT**

Concerned about the strong emphasis on compliance now facing local farmers, the Westmoreland Conservation District Board of Directors took a "Muddy Farm Tour" through areas of Westmoreland County to see some examples of farms where little or no conservation best management practices are in use.

They then reviewed current agriculture regulations and enforcement procedures required by the PA Department of Environmental Protection, and discussed how enforcement of

these regulations would affect farmers in the county.

The Board also invited Don McNutt, Manager of the Lancaster County Conservation District, to share information about his district's enforcement procedure processes.

The Westmoreland Conservation District is doing more up front education and working with existing funding sources to get more best management practices on farms in Westmoreland County. We are also looking into more ways to get voluntary compliance from local farmers in the future.

**TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE**

The District's nutrient management specialist/agricultural conservation technician provided assistance on 45 farms in 2011. This assistance involved several visits per farm and mostly focused on implementing conservation best management practices.

The ultimate goal is to keep soil and



nutrients on the land where they belong rather washing off into a stream.



### NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT

Nutrient management plans help farmers save time and money while keeping nutrients from manure and fertilizers out of our streams.

In 2011 the Westmoreland Conservation District Board of Directors reviewed and approved nutrient management plans for the:

200 acre Jones farm helping protect the Jacobs Creek Watershed,

420 acre Kepple farm helping protect the Loyalhanna Watershed,  
120 acre Snyder farm helping protect the Loyalhanna Watershed,  
350 acre Borbonus farm helping protect the Conemaugh Watershed,  
750 acre Carr farm helping protect the Loyalhanna Watershed.

Nutrient management plan status reviews and updates were done for 12 farms.

### LAUGHLIN FARM HELPS THE STONY RUN WATERSHED

The installation of conservation best management practices on the Ken Laughlin farm in the Stony Run Watershed was completed in 2011.

The practices included:

- a heavy use area with manure storage,
- rotational grazing paddocks with water supplies,
- 2,000 feet of stream now protected with streambank fencing, stabilized streambanks, crossings for animals and vegetated stream buffers.

With the Laughlin farm as a good example, our agricultural conservation Technician will be working with three other farms in the near future to continue improving and protecting the water quality in Stony Run Watershed.

*Partner: The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service*

Dan Griffith,  
Nutrient Management Specialist/  
Agricultural Conservation Technician  
email: dan@wcdpa.com

## Improving Our Streams

### LITTLE PUCKETA CREEK NOW FLOWS MORE CONTROLLED AT VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL

The section of Little Pucketa Creek which flows in front of Valley High School near New Kensington is now able to accommodate high volumes of water more naturally. This is due to a wide variety of recently installed stormwater controls coordinated by Westmoreland Conservation District's watershed specialist starting in 2009.

The final control to be installed was a five foot deep, 70 ft. x 250 ft. debris basin completed in 2011. This helps keep debris from building up and choking areas of the Little Pucketa Creek by filtering it out of the stream. Debris can be anything from old shopping carts and trash to tree branches and excess streambed cobbles.

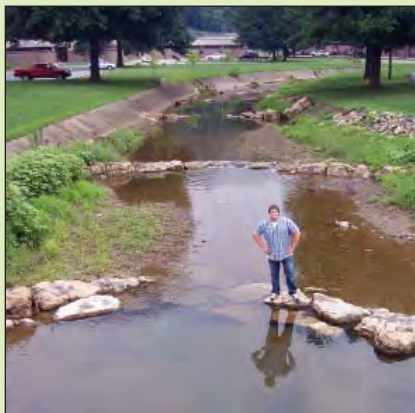
The debris basin represents a new stormwater control technology, and is the first one constructed in the county. It was also one of the most expensive projects the District has ever built.

Other stormwater control practices installed along and in Little Pucketa Creek in this area include:

- over 2,000 ft. of streambank stabilized,

- nearly 50 trees and shrubs planted,
- 15 cross rock vanes in the streambed,
- and an infiltration parking lot approximately 150 ft. x 150 ft., which is the largest the District has installed to date. This lot provides 39 parking spaces.

*District Partners: Pucketa and Chartiers Watershed Association, former Representative John Pallone, former Senator Sean Logan, The Westmoreland County Commissioners, PA Department of Environmental Protection, PennDOT, New Kensington-Arnold School District, The Municipal Sanitary Authority of New Kensington, The City of New Kensington*



### STORMWATER RETROFIT HELPS KINLOCH COMMUNITY

The small community of Kinloch along Route 366 near Pucketa Creek has been dealing with big stormwater runoff problems since the 1960s. That's about the time a development was built directly uphill. During the 1960s new developments typically had no stormwater controls installed.

In 2011 the District took the lead in building a large stormwater control basin just below this development. The basin has a capacity of 400,000 gallons. During a storm event it captures and holds excess stormwater runoff to help prevent damage downhill in Kinloch. The basin also helps control the volume of stormwater reaching Pucketa Creek and other communities downstream.

*District Partners: City of Lower Burrell, The Municipal Sanitary Authority of New Kensington, Westmoreland County Planning, Westmoreland Housing Authority*

*continued on page 18*



### FAIRGROUNDS BASINS FINISHED

The last of three stormwater control basins was installed at the Westmoreland Fairgrounds in Mount Pleasant Township. This 40,000 gallon capacity basin was designed to help control stormwater runoff coming from the Fairgrounds and Fairgrounds Road. This benefits the Sewickley Creek Watershed by helping keep nutrients and sediment out of a tributary to Sewickley Creek.

**District Partners:** *Mount Pleasant Township, Westmoreland Fairgrounds Association, PA Department of Environmental Protection, Westmoreland County Commissioners*

### TURTLE CREEK STABILIZATION

Approximately 1,000 feet of streambank along Turtle Creek was stabilized in the area downstream from the Saunders Station Bridge. Here the stream “braided,” a condition which often occurs near bridges when a stream widens out and allows sediment to collect. The streambank was stabilized with over 200 tons of rock reused

from a bridge reconstruction project over the Conemaugh River.

This project was challenging due to access issues and competition with one of the largest stands of the invasive Japanese Knotweed in Westmoreland County.

**District Partners:** *Turtle Creek Watershed Association, GenOn Energy, PA Fish and Boat Commission, PennDOT*

### GRAVEL DRIVEWAYS AND UNPAVED LANES WORKSHOP

Our watershed specialist conducted a workshop for private residents on issues involving unpaved driveways, farm lanes and access roads. He advised

an audience of 52 people on how they could keep gullies from forming in order to save money and keep materials from washing into local streams.

### RIDGE ROAD COMPLETED IN DONEGAL TOWNSHIP

The District helped coordinate the rehabilitation of over 2,600 ft. of Ridge Road in Donegal Township as part of its dirt and gravel roads program.

**Partners:** *Donegal Township, The State Conservation Commission Dirt and Gravel Roads Program*

Rob Cronauer,  
Watershed Specialist  
email: [rob@wcdpa.com](mailto:rob@wcdpa.com)

### Ridge Road in Donegal Township



Before rehabilitation



After

## Educating Our Audiences

### ENGINEERS WORKSHOP GROWS

The District helps engineers who work with land development keep up to date on regulations and technology by offering an annual Engineers’ Workshop. Participants receive the professional development hours (PDH’s) they need to maintain their licenses.

A total of 342 engineers attended the 2011 Engineers’ Workshop. This was a 60% increase over the previous year. Our education program coordinator and the District technical staff presented the same workshop over two sequential days giving those who wished to attend some flexibility so they could fit the workshop into their busy schedules.

Topics included: updates from the PA Department of Environmental

Protection, a review of the Mount Pleasant Rain Garden projects and helpful information on site inspections.

**District Partners:** *The PA Department of Environmental Protection, Fred M. Rogers Center, Saint Vincent College*

### MUNICIPAL ROUNDTABLE RETURNS

The District values the strong working relationships we have with municipalities. Currently we have Conservation Partnership Agreements (CPAs) with 26 municipalities throughout the county. These are agreements between the District and a municipality which spells out the expectations for each.

In January, 2011, we hosted our first Municipal Roundtable in seven years. Topics included: Stormwater

Management trends, our role in DEP’s enforcement process, and encouraging land development engineers to schedule a meeting with the District to discuss conservation details prior to drawing up their plans for a site.

The 39 attendees found the morning so beneficial that it was agreed the Roundtable should be held annually.

### STUDYING THE IMPACT OF MARCELLUS SHALE GAS DRILLING ON RURAL DRINKING WATER

The District’s water quality educator participated in a Penn State University research and education effort to help determine the impact of Marcellus Shale gas drilling on rural drinking water. She visited 10 sites in Westmoreland County to collect water samples from private wells before and



after drilling and hydrofracturing. The study revealed minimum effect on drinking water.

However, one important result of this testing was the discovery of pre-existing conditions – bacteria, etc, which emphasized the importance for citizens to have their water tested annually, whether there is Marcellus drilling activity in the area or not.

To see the report visit [www.ruralpa.org](http://www.ruralpa.org)

**District Partners:** Penn State Extension in Westmoreland County, Penn State University, The Center for Rural Pennsylvania, The Pennsylvania Water Resources Research Center



### GRANT FUNDS WATER QUALITY EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

A \$7,500 PA Department of Environmental Protection Environmental Education Grant helped fund a series of Home Water Conservation and Leak Repair Workshops in 2011.

The grant also funded water quality outreach education materials for teachers in Westmoreland County and the development of a television public service announcement, which should be ready for broadcast in 2012. The message is simply, “Get your water tested.”

Visit Penn State University’s water testing website <http://extension.psu.edu/water>

**District Partners:** Penn State Extension in Westmoreland County, PA Department of Environmental Protection, Lowes, Home Depot

### SEMINARS FOR HORSE OWNERS

Over the last decade the horse population in Westmoreland County has increased significantly.

Horses require special care and are harder on pastures than other animals due to their method of grazing with both top and bottom teeth. Mud and lack of vegetated cover are always challenges in horse pastures.

In the summer of 2011 the District helped present a series of seminars for horse owners featuring Dr. Ann Swinker of Penn State University’s College of Agriculture. These well-received, interactive seminars covered pasture management, forage choices

and other helpful topics. The seminar presentations are currently available on the District’s website.

**District Partners:** Penn State Extension in Westmoreland County, Penn State University, The Western Pennsylvania Conservancy, The United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service, Kencove Farm Fence, Inc.

### WATER QUALITY ON THE RADIO

If you tuned into WCNS Radio, Latrobe between 6 - 6:30 a.m. during 2011 you may have heard our water quality educator speaking on *Farmer’s Focus*. She presented a series of three to five minute long water quality segments covering proper well maintenance, well health, on lot septic systems, ponds and seasonal water quality topics.

The series will continue in 2012.

**District Partners:** Penn State Extension in Westmoreland County, WCNS Radio, Latrobe

Mimi Thomas-Brooker  
Education Program Coordinator  
email: [mimi@wcdpa.com](mailto:mimi@wcdpa.com)  
Dana Rizzo  
District/Penn State Extension Water Quality Educator  
email: [def18@psu.edu](mailto:def18@psu.edu)

## Managing Stormwater

### MOUNT PLEASANT RAIN GARDEN CONSTRUCTION CONTINUES

Rain gardens reduce flooding by absorbing some of the rainwater that would normally flow into sewers and releasing it slowly into the ground where it helps to nourish an attractive garden of specially selected plants.

Phase II of the residential rain garden program continues in the Ramsay Terrace neighborhood of Mount Pleasant. These additional residential rain gardens were more challenging to retrofit due to site limitations. All the residential rain gardens in Phase II should be completed in 2012.

The District’s stormwater technicians designed the rain gardens, prepared

the construction documents and oversaw the construction.

**District Partners:** Mt. Pleasant Borough, PA Department of Environmental Protection, McCormick Taylor Engineers, Jupina Landscaping (contractor)

### PARKING LOT RETROFIT KEEPS STORMWATER OUT OF SCOTSDALE TAX OFFICE

The Scottdale Tax Office’s asphalt parking lot is located adjacent to the building and slopes towards it. For many years stormwater runoff from this parking lot and the borough lot above it regularly invaded the office.

Our stormwater technician designed a system of stormwater controls which



could be retrofitted into the existing parking lots.

There was no funding available to repave the lots. So their design

*continued on page 20*



needed to work within the existing asphalt pavement. Three infiltration areas approximately six feet wide and 120 feet long were placed across the parking lot. Here the old asphalt was removed and soil beneath excavated to install Silva Cell™ stormwater control devices. Then these infiltration rows were topped with porous concrete punctuated with a variety of trees. When finished, cars were able to park on the remaining asphalt facing towards these attractive tree rows.

Our watershed specialist oversaw construction. There are 90 parking spaces in the finished lot. These stormwater controls will also help reduce the impact on Jacobs Creek.

**District Partners:** *Jacobs Creek Watershed Association, Scottdale Borough, Scottdale Tax Office, Widmer Engineering, Silva Cell™, PA Aggregates and Concrete Association, PA Department of Environmental Protection*

**STORMWATER PLAN REVIEWS**

Stormwater Management Plans.....35  
National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System/Post Construction Stormwater Management Plans.....40  
Chapter 105 Permits.....44

**OPERATING ENGINEERS TRAINING CURRICULUM EXPANDED**

Our stormwater staff worked with the Western PA Operating Engineers Joint Apprenticeship and Training Program to develop a detailed script which helped expand the stormwater management curriculum they created in 2010 into a multimedia, interactive, online tutorial. Members of the Western Pennsylvania Operating Engineers can use this tutorial, which targets the stormwater control curriculum to a very professional audience.

Our stormwater staff also taught this program in a classroom setting.

**WORKSHOP TOUR VISITS MOUNT PLEASANT RAIN GARDENS**

The District conducted a Rain Garden workshop in October, 2011, which included a bus tour to the Mount Pleasant residential and commercial rain garden sites. There were 53 participants, which included engineers, municipal officials and representatives from Westmoreland County Parks. They learned about the stormwater management advantages of rain gardens. Then they were also able to see completed rain gardens with healthy growing flowers, plants and shrubs as well as rain gardens under construction.

**District Partners:** *Mount Pleasant Borough, Pennsylvania Association of Conservation Districts*

**DISTRICT STORMWATER PROGRAMS ARE FAR REACHING**

Our stormwater staff also presented District stormwater related programs at 17 different events in 2011 including the District’s Engineers’ Workshop, the Pennsylvania/Delaware American Society of Landscape Architects Annual Conference, and the Philadelphia Low Impact Development Symposium.

Five examples of District stormwater best management practices were selected by the American Society of Landscape Architects as case studies which are now featured on their website, where they receive national and international exposure.

At these presentations we distributed many full color District bioretention-rain garden design posters.

**STORMWATER STAFF HELPS ENGINEER FIND A SOLUTION**

Our stormwater staff provided technical assistance to an engineer who was having problems with the PA Department of Environmental Protection’s new Riparian Buffer Rule. This rule states that no disturbance shall occur within 150 feet of a high quality or exceptional value stream.

The engineer was trying to build a garage for a trucking firm on a site in Washington Township near a tributary to Beaver Run. When the Buffer Rule was applied it left him very little room

to work with.

Our stormwater staff helped the engineer provide the data and details which built a case for the project. This resulted in a Buffer Rule waiver being extended from the PA Department of Environmental Protection, which adjusted the required buffer area from 150 feet to 50 feet making it possible for the project to be completed.



**MORE RETROFITS COMING SOON**

Preliminary design and survey work has been done for more stormwater best management practices to be installed in the near future.

A stream which flows through the Westmoreland County Community College parking lot at the Youngwood Campus will be protected by a vegetated buffer and infiltration devices. Additional parking will also be created during this project using permeable paving. These will help control stormwater runoff coming from the parking lot.

Permeable pavement areas and stormwater detention ponds will help control stormwater in Westmoreland County industrial parks located in South Greensburg and Penn Township.

**District Partners:** *Westmoreland County Community College, Sewickley Creek Watershed Association, Westmoreland County Industrial Development Corporation Both projects are funded by Growing Greener Grants.*

Jim Pillsbury, PE,  
Hydraulic Engineer  
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Kathy Hamilton, RLA  
Stormwater Technician  
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# Reaching Out for Conservation



## LIFE AND CONTRIBUTIONS OF J. ROY HOUSTON CELEBRATED

On August 11, 2011 family, friends and associates of J. Roy Houston were invited to celebrate his life and legacy at a special event hosted at the Westmoreland Conservation District headquarters. Roy served as chairman of the District for over 40 years until his death in November of 2010.

J. Roy Houston had a unique, caring personality accentuated by a savvy business intuition and a marvelous sense of humor. The celebration was called “Remembering Roy” and was focused on the simple things in life Roy liked – classic country music, fire trucks, motorcycles, pizza, Iron City beer, cheap sugar cookies and Necco Wafers. Most of all Roy liked people, and the atmosphere at this celebration prompted many great stories about Roy to be told and retold.

A special Powerpoint presentation ran throughout the event, which featured classic photos of Roy from District and family archives. There were also photo and memorabilia displays which included Roy’s Murrysville Fire Chief boots, hat and coat, a Harley-Davidson motorcycle and one of the Murrysville fire trucks.

The atmosphere was “light and airy” as Roy liked to say. There was much laughter and the kind of energy that spins a legacy of service into a grand future for the things Roy cared about.

## DISTRICT PUBLICATIONS STAY RELEVANT TO AUDIENCES

Rather than rely on emailing electronic documents as the only way to distribute *Landmarks* and the annual report, the District recognized that many people on our mailing list do not

own a computer with internet access, or they simply are more comfortable reading a printed piece.

When we polled them to see which they preferred, 500 out of approximately 4,200 opted to receive these publications electronically, while the rest wanted hard copies sent via the U. S. Mail.

Both the District’s Annual Report and *Landmarks* newsletter were produced in full color. The 2010 Annual Report featured special tributes to the District’s longtime Chairman J. Roy Houston, who passed away in November of that year. The District’s *Landmarks* newsletter celebrated its 25th Anniversary in 2011.



## TARGETED EMAIL BLASTS

As part of diversifying its communications efforts in 2011 the District made good use of its database to help launch a special email campaign targeted to 14 of our local Pennsylvania legislators. A specially timed series of eight individual emails asked them to support dedicated funding for Pennsylvania’s conservation districts as part of the proposed Marcellus Shale gas drilling impact fee.

The District visual communications specialist and communications consultant designed and developed a series of special photo message templates, which could be embedded into the body of the targeted emails. When

a template is embedded in an email, there is no attachment to click on. It appears as soon as the email is opened.

The District’s messages included an attractive photo of a conservation project or practice with a short list of how conservation districts positively impact their local communities.

## DISTRICT WEBSITE REFRESHED

We updated our website by changing it over to the WordPress content management system which offers more growth options, and is more dynamic and interactive than our former system. The District’s Communications Committee also weighed in on the growing popularity of WordPress in the cyber world and endorsed the website transition.

The new WordPress website was designed to be very user friendly. The homepage now has a cleaner look, topped off by a slide show featuring beautiful conservation photos. For convenience there is new set of quick links in the upper right corner, which is for frequently sought-after forms like Permits, Applications, and Fee Schedules. “In The Field” is a new homepage feature highlighting recent conservation projects and best management practices.

A special monitoring service now documents our website traffic and emails the District highly detailed weekly reports. We are currently averaging hundreds of visits per week. The most frequently visited sections tend to be erosion and sediment control, stormwater management and educational programs. Visit [www.wcdpa.com](http://www.wcdpa.com) and let us know what you think.

**Project Partners:** *The Westmoreland Conservation District Communications Committee*

Mark Jackson  
Visual Communications Specialist  
email: [mark@wcdpa.com](mailto:mark@wcdpa.com)





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These committees are made up of community volunteers, District board members, associate board members, and staff members. We very much appreciate all the volunteers who provide their professional expertise and give their time to help develop and sustain the District's programs.



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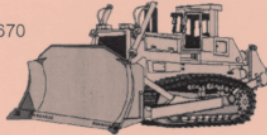
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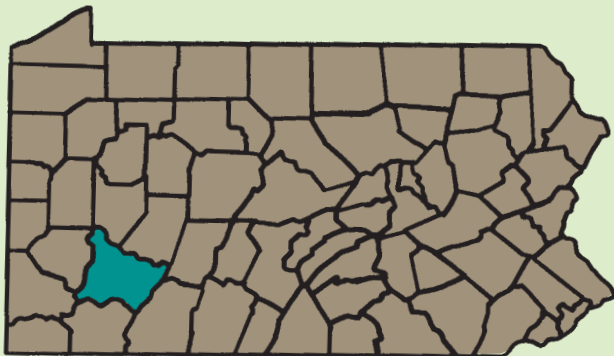
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