

2020 J. Roy Houston Conservation Partnership Award

The Municipality of Murrysville



Painting by Florian Lawton, commissioned by Richard Kelso. Courtesy of the Murrysville Historical Preservation Society

Murrysville is the first municipality to receive this award, which was established by Peoples Natural Gas in 2011. Murrysville has had a formal working agreement with the Westmoreland Conservation District since 1989, but the partnership between the two goes back as far as anyone can remember.

Murrysville’s leadership and citizens are very progressive. They’ve consistently led the way with many conservation ‘firsts’ – including installing stormwater ponds, creating ordinances, and promoting best management practices.

Water quality is just one of the many community benefits that Murrysville citizens enjoy because of the municipality’s commitment to conservation and, specifically, to managing both erosion and stormwater.

Before any earth is moved for development in Murrysville, officials and conservation district staff routinely meet with the developer or engineer to ensure that the work will be done in ways that make wise use of natural resources.



Volunteers helped to add plants to this stormwater pond.

septic systems in residential neighborhoods, which manage stormwater right at the source and reduce the need for larger stormwater detention ponds.

Murrysville requires that half of each new parking lot built in the community be made of permeable material. Permeable materials are another way to control stormwater right where it falls. These conservation materials also have been built into community recreation areas, several of which are near high-quality streams.



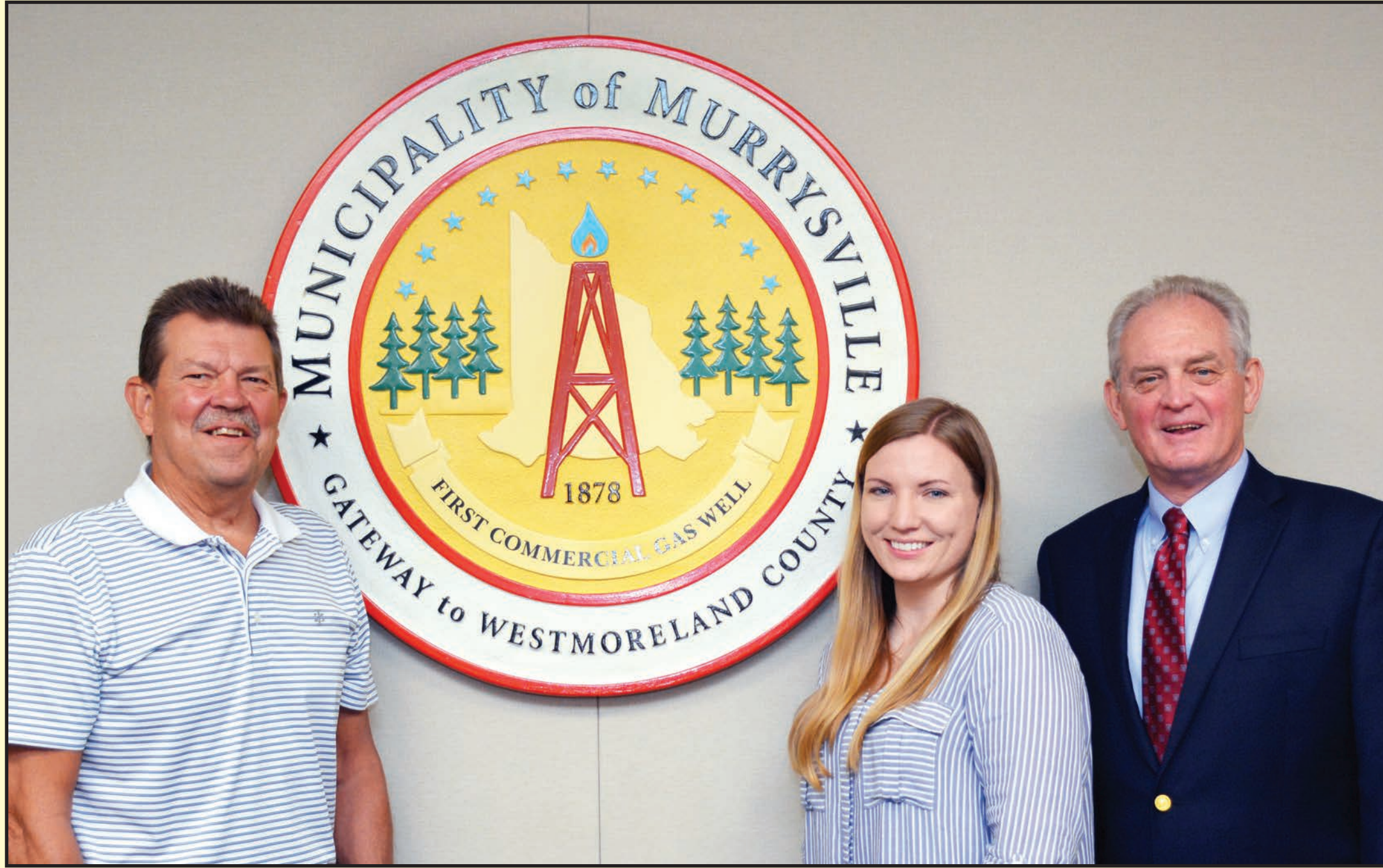
Murrysville is unique in that it has two high-quality streams within its borders, and officials protect them in a number of ways. They planted trees and shrubs and created a “no mow” zone along the stream banks, improved nearby unpaved roads to lessen erosion, and developed a progressive plan to reduce sewage overflows.



Murrysville is a designated agricultural security area, has an ordinance to manage erosion during timber harvesting, and has worked with the conservation district to stabilize the banks of Turtle Creek in preparation for the building of the Westmoreland Heritage Trail.

Many Murrysville children develop conservation awareness from an early age, and high school teams from the community have won the district’s annual Envirothon more times than any other.

Murrysville’s elected officials and professional staff are well supported by strong citizen involvement, including citizens who serve on the community’s Environmental Advisory Council and Parks & Recreation Commission, and those who are members of partnership organizations such as the Westmoreland Conservancy, Friends of Murrysville Parks, and the Murrysville Trail Alliance.



Jim Morrison, chief administrator; Emily Mallisee, engineer technician; Regis Synan, mayor.

Westmoreland Conservation District