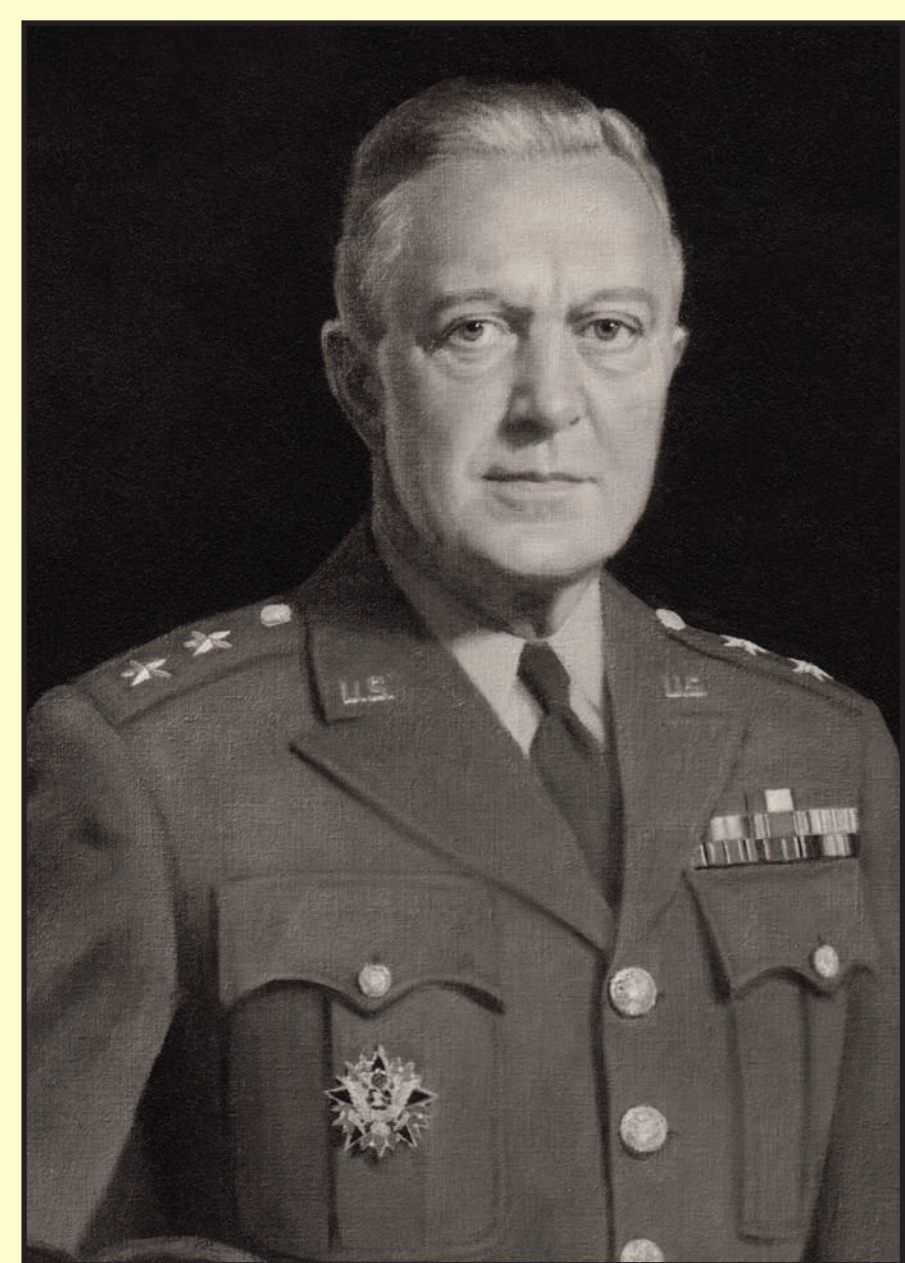


# 2024 J. Roy Houston Conservation Partnership Award

## Richard King Mellon Foundation

The Richard King Mellon Foundation (the Foundation), based in Pittsburgh, PA was established in 1947 by Richard King Mellon. Conservation and preservation of the natural environment, along with protecting wildlife, were some of Mr. Mellon's many passions. Since its founding, the Foundation's Conservation program (one of six funding programs) has aided in preserving more than 4.5 million acres of land and habitat across the United States. The Conservation program covers four categories – habitat conservation; stewardship; activation; and sustainable communities. Projects under these categories are eligible to receive grant funding upon application approval.



Richard King Mellon

The Westmoreland Conservation District's (WCD) relationship with the Foundation began decades ago. Projects undertaken by WCD over the years have fallen within the Foundation's Stewardship category, which prioritizes improving water quality and ecosystem health. The Foundation considers granting funds for projects involving stream channel restoration; removal of barriers to aquatic organism passage; riparian buffer reforestation; sustainable forest management; and minelands restoration.

One of WCD's early projects made possible by the Foundation was for the expansion of WCD's campus - this involved acquiring an adjacent building and renovating it to make it a more sustainable, green building. In 2015, WCD received funding to develop a plan to manage local water resources; obtain



The GreenForge building renovations at Donohoe Center included the first green roof in Westmoreland County.



Monitoring Brush Creek in the Turtle Creek Watershed.

scientific data regarding stormwater management; and install a green parking lot at a church in Ligonier. In 2021, WCD was awarded funding to conduct a feasibility study on a potential revolving loan program to complete green infrastructure and stormwater management projects. Recent funding has enabled WCD to complete several Stewardship conservation projects throughout Westmoreland County, including:

- Stormwater basin retrofits at Ligonier Valley School District which included modifying three existing basins to allow for more storage capacity, resulting



Stormwater basin retrofits at Ligonier Valley School District to allow more storage capacity.

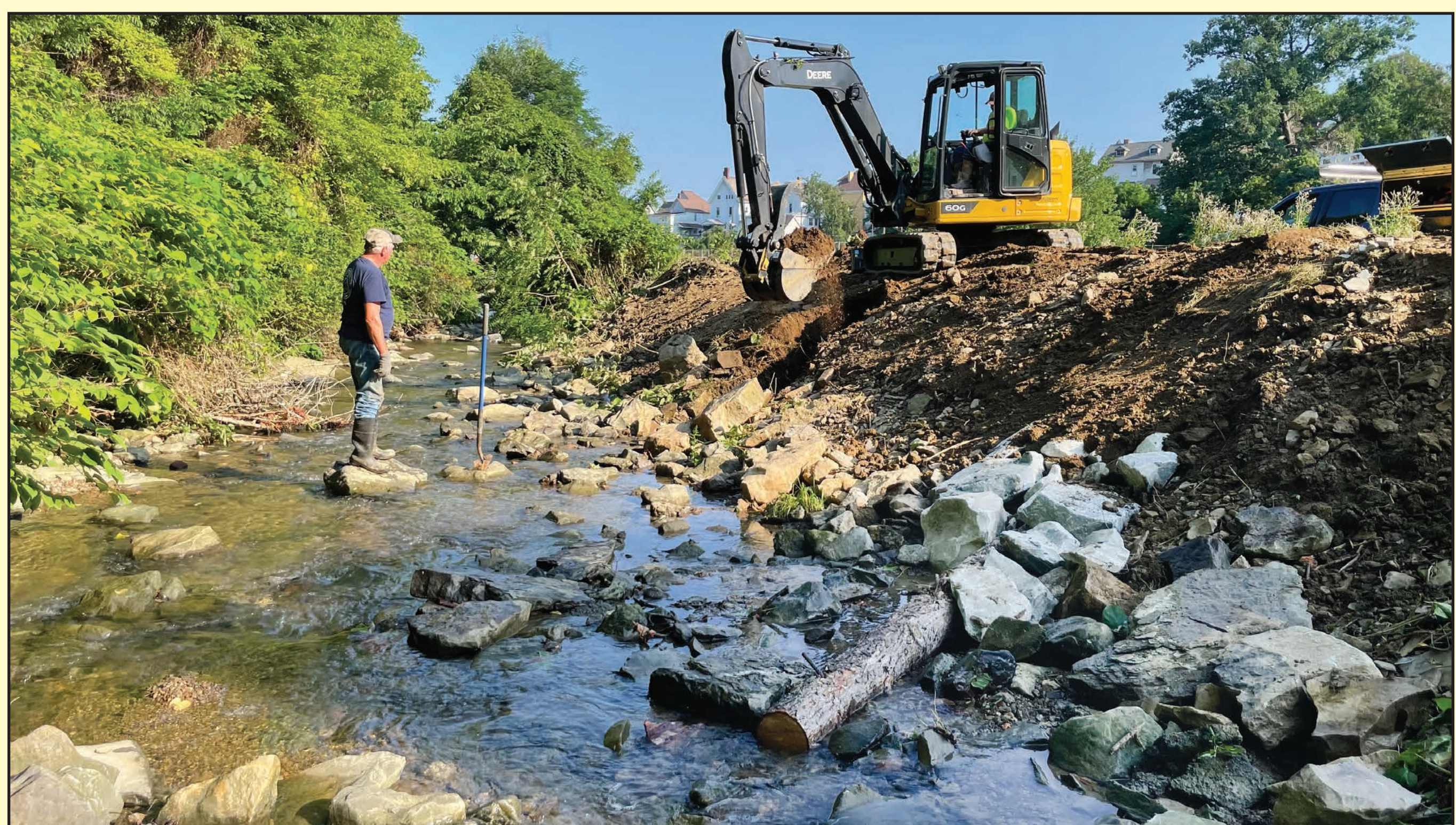
in improved water quality and protection of the surrounding habitat;

- Stormwater retrofits in Manor Borough which included establishing two rain gardens and adding permeable pavement at the borough building. Lawn areas were expanded, and trees and shrubs were planted to retain stormwater and improve water quality;



Permeable parking surfaces and rain gardens promote the infiltration of stormwater in Manor Borough improving water quality.

- Streambank stabilization along Shupe Run which included stabilizing 1,600 feet of eroding streambank along the Coal and Coke Trail in Mount Pleasant Township. In-stream fish habitat structures were installed, and native trees were transplanted to help restore the riparian buffer;
- Parking lot and streambank stabilization at Irwin Park which included stabilizing 450 feet of eroding streambank, installing two infiltration swales in the parking lot, and planting trees and shrubs along the streambank to restore the riparian buffer; and



Installing log veins and riprap to help stabilize a streambank in Irwin Park.

- A stormwater project at Winnie Palmer Nature Reserve which included installing a new pond to control stormwater runoff from Route 30 that had been negatively impacting walking trails and water quality.

Throughout the years, together with the generous assistance of the Foundation's grant program, WCD has been able to implement numerous conservation projects that have positively impacted the natural world by improving water quality and restoring habitat. The Foundation has been a friend to conservation by providing funding to many additional like-minded organizations throughout the county such as Westmoreland County Parks and Recreation, Westmoreland Cleanways and Recycling, Westmoreland Conservancy and the Loyalhanna Watershed Association. WCD looks forward to continuing to work with the Foundation to help restore the environment for both local communities and wildlife to enjoy.

# Westmoreland Conservation District