

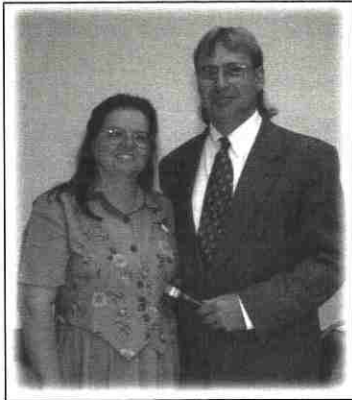


LANDMARKS

Vol. 16 No. 2

COMMITTED TO CONSERVATION

Fall, 2001



Theresa & Ron Rohall

Rohall To Serve as State Association President

Several staff members attended the Pennsylvania Association of Conservation District's (PACD) most recent meeting in State College for the nomination of Ron Rohall as President of the state association. Ron has served on the state board for the past eight years, and has represented Westmoreland County in several capacities. Since 1993, Ron has been the county's delegate, and in 1995 was elected secretary to the state board. In 1997, he was named first vice chairman. He has been the chairman of the Forestry Committee for several years, and his involvement has led to increased visibility for forestry activities at the local, state and national level (see Forestry Programs article, page 7). The Leadership Development Committee formed three years ago, has

Continued on page 2

Growing Greener

More than a million dollars of state Growing Greener funds are on their way to Westmoreland County, fueling six new conservation projects that will improve how residents live, play, work, and learn.



Anglers can look forward to some new fishing holes as Growing Greener dollars are used to remove abandoned-mine pollution from Turtle Creek and restore its status as one of the most popular trout fisheries in the state.

Residents in the southern portion of the county will be able to breathe a little easier as grant funds help pay for materials to stabilize stream banks

along Jacobs Creek and reduce the threat of flooding.

Elementary school teachers near the Loyalhanna Creek and throughout the county will be able to draw on new resource materials that explain just why some area streams are orange and how they're being cleaned up.

Continued on page 8

Westmoreland Conservation District

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 MIKE BARRICK, *Erosion Control Technician*
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USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
 WESLEY M. GORDON, *District Conservationist*
 LARRY STOKUM, *Soil Technician*
 ROB KNIGHT, *Soil Scientist*

Rohall To Serve...
 continued from page 1

also benefited from his expertise, and has produced manuals, presentations, and guidance to conservation district staff, boards, and cooperating agencies.

Locally, Ron was appointed to the Westmoreland Conservation District Board in 1993, elected Treasurer in 1996, and has served as Vice-Chairman since 1997. He is a local Consulting Forester, and is also active with the Loyalhanna Watershed Association, Society of American Foresters, Westmoreland Woodlands Improvement Association, and Powdermill Nature Reserve. His wife Theresa Gay Rohall, is the Coordinator of Education at the Powdermill Nature Reserve, Carnegie Museum of Natural History. She is a board member of the



Loyalhanna Watershed Association, and is involved with the Pennsylvania Alliance for Environmental Education. Theresa has been an associate director for the Westmoreland Conservation District since 1994.

Most recently, Ron provided testimony in Washington, D.C. to the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Agriculture, Sub-Committee on Department Operations, Oversight, Nutrition and Forestry, relative to forestry conservation programs administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. He and Theresa attended the NACD Forest Resources Committee meeting in Seward, Alaska in mid-August.

We congratulate Ron on his many notable accomplishments and his appointment.

On the Road to Recovery



Robinson Road, Loyalhanna Township

Five dirt and gravel roads will be repaired this fall and next spring with funding from the State Conservation Commission. \$67,091 will be spent on Peters Road in Cook Township; Sawmill Road in Mount Pleasant Township; Green Thumb and Frye Roads in Derry Township; and Robinson Road in Loyalhanna Township. These Townships are matching the grants with approximately \$71,000 of in-kind services on the projects in the

form of manpower, heavy equipment and other supplies. Since 1998, the program has granted \$75,789, and had in-kind contributions of \$63,219. Our townships have matched 94% of the grant monies for these projects!

Stay tuned for updates on the current road projects. If you have any questions on the Dirt and Gravel Roads Program or would like to visit one of these sites, please call Craig Barras at (724) 837-5271.



IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT

FOR ENGINEERS, DEVELOPERS & BUILDERS

District To Consider Dropping 105 (Stream Encroachment) Program Unless We Hear From You!

For six years now, the Westmoreland Conservation District has had an agreement with the PA Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to administer the Chapter 105 General Permit program. The District reviews applications for all stream encroachments which qualify for a general permit. This includes stream, pipeline, and agricultural crossings, bank stabilization, fish enhancement structures, private docks, and outfall structures where the drainage area is less than a square mile.

By handling the program at the local level, the District can save clients much time from what it would take to go through the DEP. Also, clients can come in to see one of the technical staffers and receive one on one assistance to help them get through the process. Not only will the District guide people through the paperwork, but they also help with design ideas and proper permit selection. "This service is invaluable to our firm," says Vaughn Neill, P.E. of DMJM Harris. "It helps to keep our projects on schedule."

The District does not make any money on the program. For years now we have been losing money on the 105 program, says Tony Quadro, program specialist/forester. "We figure the program costs us about \$20,000 per year in staff time, and yet the State has only given us an average of \$4,000 per year to run the program.

We just can't afford to do it much longer at that rate. To be honest, we came close to dropping the program last year, but the State did increase the funding a bit."

District Manager Greg Phillips knows how important the program is to District clients. "We would hate to discontinue the program," said Phillips, "but our county budget gets tighter every year, and although the State has increased the funding to \$6,000 this year, it's just not enough."

In addition to reviewing plans, the District inspects sites for compliance and responds to complaints regarding the program. Six technical staff employees spend a portion of their time providing a variety of services. Over 175 permits were processed last year and that number is ever increasing.

If you are a customer of the District who does not want to see the program dropped, call, write or e-mail by November 15 and let the Board know how important the program is to you. This will help the District Directors to evaluate the value of the program and determine whether to continue the agreement with the DEP. It will also help if you write your State Representative and ask that the program be funded at a level that reflects the actual cost of the program.

If you do not want to see the 105 Program dropped, please contact us by November 15!

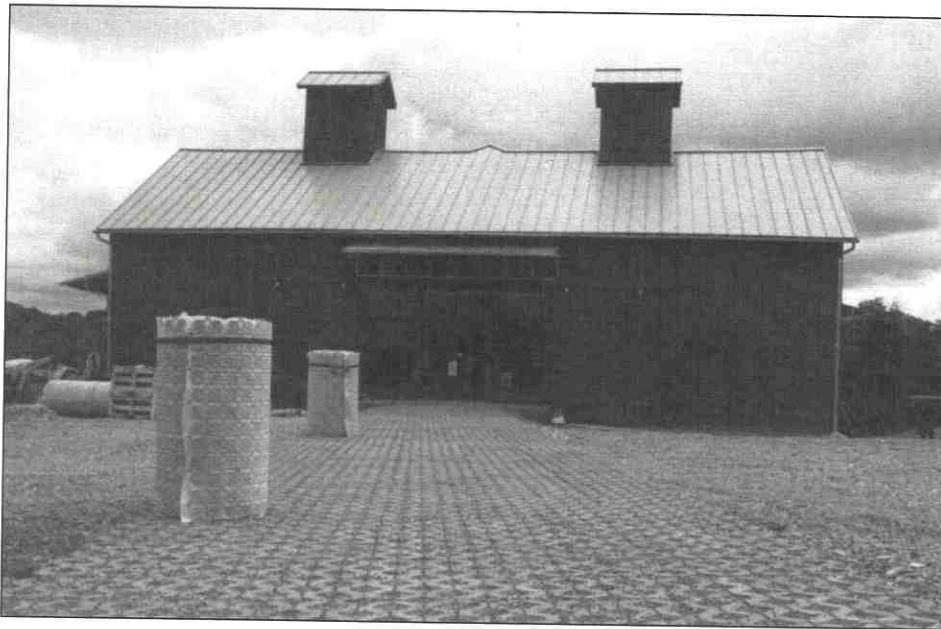
Westmoreland Conservation District
Donohoe Center • RD #12, Box 202-B • Greensburg, PA 15601

Phone: (724) 837-5271
Fax: (724) 837-4127

email: wcd202b@aol.com

Center for Conservation Education

A NEW ERA BEGINS



Permeable pavement leads to the entrance of the Center for Conservation Education.

It was down to details – grab bars in the bathrooms, final wiring connections, and testing the fire alarm system – during these last few months as the District prepared the main floor of the Center for Conservation Education for occupancy.

The first staff members moved into the converted 120-year-old barn in August, after Hempfield Township gave approval to occupy the upper level of the building.

“This is a moment we’ve been looking forward to for a long time,” said District Manager Greg Phillips who, along with secretary Sandy Dzendzel, now has an office in the Center.

The Western Pennsylvania Coalition for Abandoned Mine Reclamation, the National Park Service, and Penn State Cooperative Extension are also slated to share space in this multi-purpose conservation-education facility. WPCAMR has made the move and is settling in... the Park Service will arrive shortly... and Penn State is scheduled to join the other tenants early next year, when the lower level of the center is complete.

Exterior work progressing as well

A \$74,000 grant from Pennsylvania’s Growing Greener program is now being used to equip the Center with a variety of demonstration controls for managing rainwater, including the creation of a permeable parking area in front of the building.

The Center’s landscape committee is putting the finishing touches on a design that uses native plantings and typical farmstead elements – including a grape arbor and feed troughs – to create a realistic, period feeling for the grounds. Several sponsors have generously provided grant money to begin to implement the landscaping effort.

Also outside, railings have been added to the Center’s two rear decks and the District is in the process of preparing a grant request that will enable them to use reclaimed tires for the floor surface of these outdoor areas that overlook Ann Rudd Saxman Nature Park.

Partnerships more important than ever

“All the progress we have been able to make on this important Center has happened because we had the generous support of the community,” Phillips said. “This project – with its estimated \$1.1 million price tag – is far beyond the District’s ability to undertake alone.”

To-date, about \$760,000 has been

Some of the most recent contributors to the Center for Conservation Education include the following:

BENEFACTOR

(\$10,000 and up)

Westmoreland Conservation District
(Second donation)

PATRON

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

Mr. and Mrs. Robert W. Shuster

SPONSOR

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

Mr. and Mrs. P. Scott Conner
(completed pledge)

Richard W. Clark

Carol Pollock
(gifts of stock)

PARTNER

(\$500 to \$999)

Beckwith Machinery Company

Municipal Authority
of Westmoreland County

ASSOCIATE

(\$250 to \$499)

Bierwerth, Barton, Burr & Associates

If you believe in the value of conservation education, and would like to make a tax-deductible donation, please refer to the pledge card on the back page of this issue.

contributed in cash, in-kind donations, and pledges from foundations, businesses, individuals, grassroots conservation organizations, and others.

“Raising the last \$313,000 we need to finish the building is proving to be the biggest challenge of all,” Phillips said. “Everyone is feeling the effects of the downturn in the stock market and many are holding back on their charitable giving.”

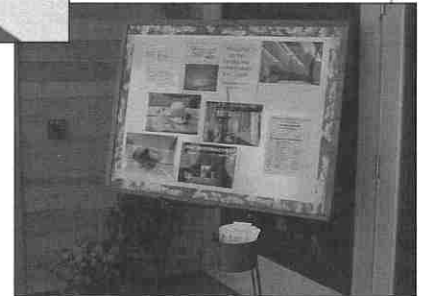
In this critical time, every donation – regardless of size – is important to the project. “It’s the same basic principle that applies to putting conservation into practice,” Phillips said. “If each of us would just do one small thing, the combined effect would make a tremendous positive impact.”



District Manager, Greg Phillips confers with WCD Chairman, Roy Houston on fundraising efforts.



Secretary Sandy Dzendzel begins to feel at home in the new Center for Conservation Education.



Displays will be an important feature of the new facility.

District, Nominating Groups “Inaugurate” Center

The Westmoreland Conservation District hosted a special presentation for our Nominating Organizations in August, prior to the regularly scheduled district meeting. Following an informal barbecue in the Center for Environmental Education, the twenty-one organiza-

tions and additional guests received information from presenters Greg Phillips (WCD District Manager), Chuck Kubasik (DEP Field Representative), and Jennifer Kemerer (Westmoreland County Chief Clerk) regarding the nominating process for district directors.

Annually, each of our nominating

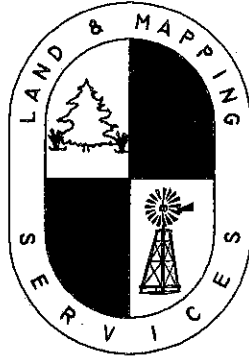
organizations has the opportunity to submit names to the Westmoreland County Commissioners to fill vacancies on the Westmoreland Conservation District’s Board of Directors.

The Westmoreland Conservation District is led by a nine-member board of directors. Guidelines established by the State Conservation Commission indicate that this board must consist of five farmer-directors, three public directors, and one county-commissioner director. The Nominating Organizations which have been approved by the State Conservation Commission are:

Westmoreland Woodlands Improvement Association	Home Builders Association of Westmoreland County	Loyalhanna Watershed Association
Westmoreland Conservancy	Westmoreland County Bird Club	Westmoreland County Sportsmen’s League
PA CleanWays	Westmoreland County Dairy Herd Improvement Association	Westmoreland County Farm Service Agency
League of Women Voters in Westmoreland County	Turtle Creek Watershed Association	Westmoreland County Beekeepers Association
Sewickley Creek Watershed Association	Botanical Society of Westmoreland County	Westmoreland County Farm Bureau
Westmoreland County Cattlemen’s Association	Pomona Grange #38	Westmoreland County Association of Township Officials
Society of American Foresters	Economic Growth Connection of Westmoreland County	Westmoreland County Boroughs Association

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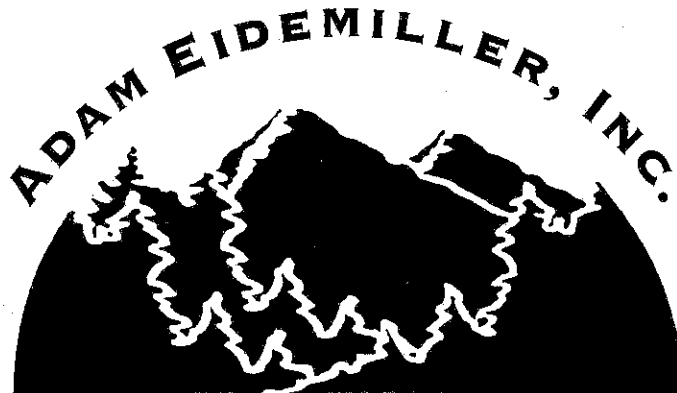
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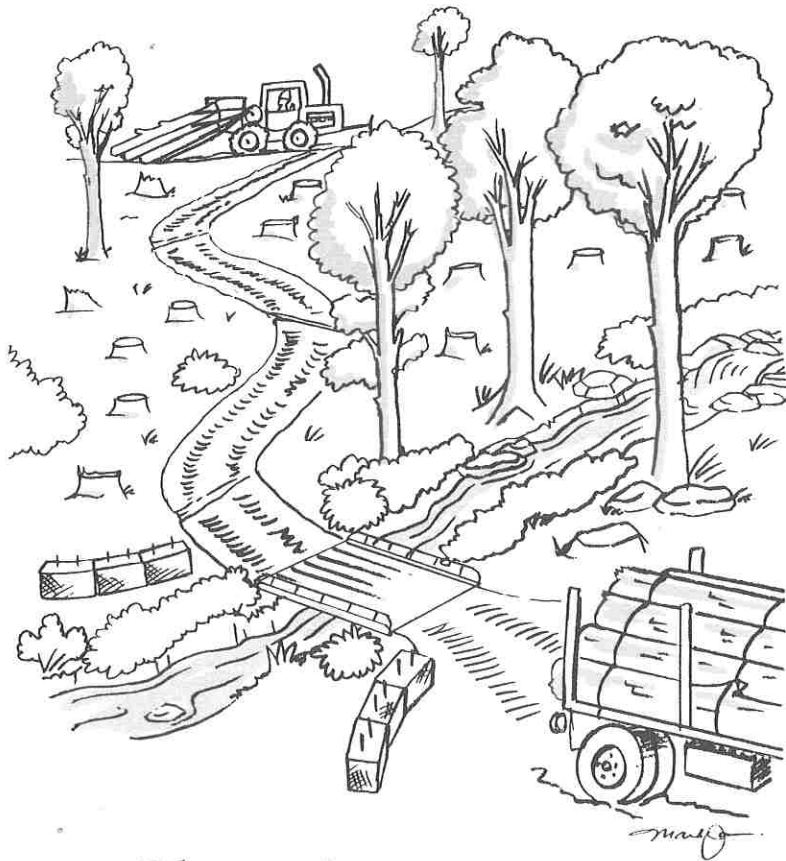
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Clean Streams Law Covers Timber Harvesting

Timber harvesting is considered an earthmoving activity. As such, it is subject to regulations set forth by the Pennsylvania Clean Streams Law (Chapter 102). This law requires any activity that disturbs over 5000 square feet or more of earth disturbance to have a written soil erosion and sediment control plan. These regulations have been in effect for nearly 30 years now and should be nothing new to loggers. However, recent changes to the law will affect the way that the E&S plan is prepared.

One of the new requirements is that the location of the waters of the Commonwealth which may receive runoff from the project and their classification pursuant to Chapter 93 must be included in the plan. Chapter 93 shows whether the stream is an exceptional value, high quality, cold water fishery, warm water fishery, or other designation. If the stream has an exceptional value

or high quality designation, the best management practices used to control erosion are more stringent.

Other changes include that the BMP's must be inspected after each rainfall event and repaired to insure effective operation, and that procedures must be undertaken to recycle and/or dispose of waste materials associated with the project site.

In order to help timber harvesters comply with the new regulations, a group has been formed to revise the "Timber Harvesters Action Packet." This group is composed of representatives of several conservation districts, the Sustainable Forestry Initiative, the Hardwood Lumber Manufacturers Association, the PA Game Commission, the PA Fish and Boat Commission, the DCNR Bureau of Forestry, and the DEP Bureau of Watershed Management. A copy of this packet can be obtained from the Westmoreland Conservation District.

District's Forestry Work Receives National Recognition

The National Association of Conservation District's (NACD) forestry newsletter, "Forestry Notes" recently published a series of articles entitled "Special Report: Forestry Activities in America's Conservation Districts." Several articles featured the Westmoreland Conservation District's forestry program. Although many districts nationwide have foresters, the Westmoreland district is one of only a handful in Pennsylvania with a staff forester.

District director Ron Rohall, a private consulting forester, who was featured in several of the articles, was quoted as stating, "The work of staff forester Tony Quadro is invaluable. He can provide a lot of information, and the way it works best is one-on-one in the field. We've done some seminars and sessions with landowners, but our sense of it is when you get out in the field with the landowner, you have the biggest impact."

The Westmoreland Conservation District has had a memorandum of understanding with the DCNR, Bureau of Forestry for over ten years now to help delineate responsibilities and reduce duplication of effort. It's a good system, said Rohall, "It seems to be working very well, it's mostly about how we share information. Our agreement is pretty casual."

The District was recognized by NACD for providing technical assistance including: timber harvesting information, tree planting advice, management plans, workshops and seminars, and especially the one-on-one contact with loggers and landowners. In a county which is 50% forested, conservation districts such as Westmoreland provide a valuable service because they are often a first contact with a local perspective.

Growing Greener

Funds fuel six new conservation projects in Westmoreland Co.



Growing Greener...continued from page 1

And local job-seekers may find opportunities in an interesting new industry, as removing the abandoned mine pollution from Sewickley Creek not only cleans the stream but creates a marketable product – iron oxide – in the process.

Growing Greener was signed into law by Governor Ridge in late 1999, with a pledge to invest \$650 million over five years in Pennsylvania's environment. Citizens, schools, local government authorities, watershed associations, conservation districts and other nonprofit groups may apply for the funds. The projects they submit must employ a partnership effort and be supported with in-kind or matching funds.

When the third round of Growing Greener grants was awarded this past July, Westmoreland County captured a major share – some \$1.1 million – of the nearly \$30 million distributed.

Specifically, the money will be used to fund the following efforts:

\$568,190 for stream cleanup in the Turtle Creek Watershed

This Growing Greener funding will be used to address an abandoned-mine discharge on Borland Farm Road in Murrysville that is responsible for about one-quarter of the pollution in Turtle Creek.

An 850,000-ton coal-refuse pile adjacent to the stream will be removed and an Anoxic Limestone Drain (ALD) and a settling pond will be built. The ALD is the first step in treating the mine discharge; the settling pond then will remove metals, such as iron and aluminum, from the treated water.

The coal refuse, known as gob, will be taken to a plant where it will be processed so it can be sold to a

company that can use it again. Profits from the reuse of the material will be turned back into the stream cleanup project, which should be complete early next year.

\$400,000 for stream cleanup in Sewickley Creek

This grant – along with some \$330,000 in matching funds – will be invested in the ongoing effort to clean up one of the biggest abandoned mine discharges in western Pennsylvania.

The discharge begins at a point near the village of Brinkerton in Mount Pleasant Township. Every minute, some 4,200 gallons of polluted water flow out of an abandoned coal mine and pollute nearly seven miles of Sewickley Creek.

Sewickley Creek Watershed Association and its partners will use grant and matching money to design and build a combination of wetlands and ponds that will clean up the pollutants from this major discharge. When the system is in place in the summer of 2003, it could remove as much as 400,000 pounds of iron each year.

\$75,000 for stream work and innovative reuse of the pollutant in Sewickley Creek

About seven miles downstream from the discharge at Brinkerton is another one at Lowber. In this innovative project, not only will the quality of the stream be improved, but economic development will be encouraged, too, because the polluting iron oxide removed at Lowber will be marketed for its beneficial use as a pigment – the “earth tone” color used in various products.

The Lowber discharge pollutes more than two miles of Sewickley Creek with 1,000,000 pounds of iron oxides per year.

Growing Greener will fund the first phase of the project – an extensive study of the Lowber site. Such careful research is necessary because the site contains many conditions – from coke ovens buried in place 15 years ago to waste coke, red dog, and refuse – that could add hundreds of thousands of dollars to the cost of building the treatment system if they are not properly addressed at the onset.

At the end of the study phase, a preliminary design will be developed for this first-of-a-kind passive treatment system that will both clean the stream and yield a marketable product.

\$67,428 for streambank stabilization, flood control, and recreation improvements in Jacobs Creek

This grant will help curb a serious erosion problem in several areas along Jacobs Creek. Large amounts of sediment and silt are washing into the creek and being carried downstream to Bridgeport Dam, where they ultimately settle out. This large volume of material will reduce the capacity of the dam and may compromise its ability to protect homes and businesses from the ravages of flood waters.

With help from Growing Greener, the soil along two hundred feet of Jacobs Creek in the Laurelville Church Camp area of Mount Pleasant Township will be held in place with man-made structures, tree saplings, and a variety of native plants. Besides reducing flooding, this material also will create new habitat areas for wildlife and fish. Jacob's Creek is classified as a Cold Water Fishery in the Laurelville

area and is stocked with trout each year.

The Jacobs Creek Watershed Association is the lead organization on this project, which also will do similar work along the creek in Fayette County.

\$19,400 for education materials on abandoned mine pollution in Loyalhanna Creek

This grant's originator, Saint Vincent College Environmental Education Center, has documented a strong regional need for curriculum materials that demonstrate the causes, effects, and remedies related to abandoned mine drainage (AMD).

It has assembled a team of education specialists to meet this need by using Growing Greener grant funds to develop an activity booklet on AMD for students in grades 3-8, and a guide to help teachers integrate this information in their lessons. Both documents also will address the larger, multidisciplinary topic of watersheds.

A unique aspect of the materials is that they will address alkaline discharges from abandoned coal mines – such as the alkaline discharges that occur in the Monastery Run area – as well as the more common acid discharges.

The educational materials will be designed to fulfill state educational standards, and will be offered in both printed form and on-line. The activity book will be developed during the first year of the 21-month project. The materials are expected to reach 2,500 students from 100 schools in their first year of distribution.

\$14,798 for an integrated watershed plan for Nature Park

The Westmoreland Conservation District will lead this innovative effort, in which neighboring landowners and business leaders will work together to develop Westmoreland County's first, integrated, watershed protection/restoration plan.

The group will look at a number of conditions – including current patterns of land use, sources of pollution, availability of wildlife habitat, aesthetics and property values – in the 138-acre sub-watershed of Sewickley Creek which flows through the Nature Park behind Donohoe Center.

Their findings will be used to develop a comprehensive plan for this sub-

watershed that uses Best Management Practices to reduce existing water pollution and alternative approaches that will prevent additional stream degradation.

The project will directly benefit the quality of life in this watershed, and should improve life throughout the region as well, as participants apply their new knowledge in other areas of the county.

Countywide Land-Use Partnership Launched at University of Pittsburgh at Greensburg

The Smart Growth Partnership of Westmoreland County, a private community land-use advocacy group that deals with growth and quality of life issues, recently opened its offices at the University of Pittsburgh at Greensburg.

Through education outreach and project advocacy, the SGPWC aims to promote the development and implementation of cooperative land-use strategies to protect the quality of life in Westmoreland County while sustaining economic growth.

"With 65 municipalities and their various planning commissions and zoning hearing boards in Westmoreland County now independently involved in planning and no county comprehensive plan, it is no surprise that our development follows an uncertain pattern," says Alex Graziani, SGPWC executive director. "We feel the partnership can help by providing a more coordinated view of how the county can

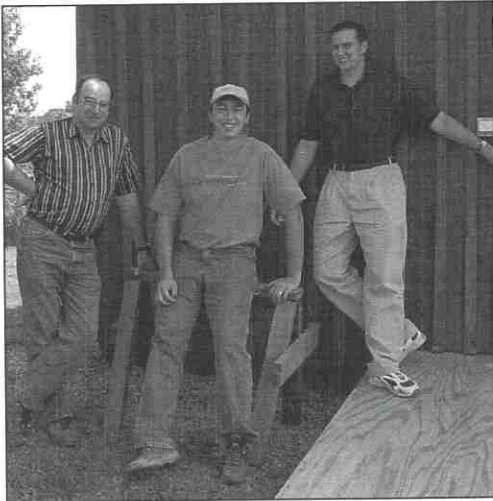
grow without the often accompanying sprawl and blight caused by retail corridors that just crop up and expand with little or no thought to long-term effects."

A certified planning professional, Graziani served as senior planner with Benatec Associates in Greensburg and as director of the Clearfield County Planning Department, where he helped write the first county-wide

subdivision and land ordinance that covered 30 municipalities.

The SGPWC is thought to be unique in Pennsylvania which recently passed land use legislation (Act 67 and 68) to encourage more cooperative comprehensive land use decision making among state, county and municipal planners. "What makes us a model," says Graziani, "is the partnering of business leaders, conservation agencies, developers and others with local and state officials in crafting the most intelligent long-term land use plans that will benefit everyone."





(l-r) Dan Griffith, Mike Barrick, Chris Droste

District Technical Staff “Outstanding” in the Field

The technicians at the Westmoreland Conservation District are your contacts for technical advice ranging from controlling accelerated erosion to nutrient management.

The erosion control program is a high priority effort at the district. District technicians have a number of delegated duties to manage.

- Review erosion and sediment control plans. This is done to make sure that the best management practices (BMP's) are utilized to minimize accelerated erosion from the construction sites. We suggest the best management practices to the plan designers if the controls they provided on the plan are not sufficient.
- Inspect earthmoving activities, making sure the contractors implement the appropriate BMP's as required by the erosion and sediment control plan.
- Investigate numerous complaint calls. The complaints vary from neighborhood disputes to violations of the clean streams law.
- Enter private property to investigate a suspected violation. If the technician finds no violation a report is written of the incident and kept on record for future reference. If the technician observes a violation on the site, the technician can either write up an earth disturbance report or a dam encroachment report depending on the violation. If, after several attempts to achieve cooperative compliance, the problem is not corrected, the technician may turn the violation into DEP for enforcement.
- Provide information and technical assistance, and hold workshops for our

clients to assist them in obtaining the necessary permits for activities in and around streams and wetlands.

The conservation district also has a nutrient management/conservation technician. His duties are similar to the erosion control technician except he works directly with farmers. His responsibilities are as follows:

- Aid the farmer with technical advice for the development of nutrient management plans and conservation plans.
- Review nutrient management plans to make sure the proper BMP's are

used on the farm to reduce problems from excess nutrients.

- Assist in implementing the measures designed in the nutrient management/conservation plan.
- Provides a seamless continuity of services between Farm Service Agency, Natural Resources Conservation Service and the WCD.
- Assist with a number of new cost share programs available through the WCD.

Depending on your needs, the WCD has a number of staff members which may assist you.

Technician gets Wet, not Muddy!

What is the best way to get wet? Erosion Control Technician, Chris Droste, recently found out the best way possible, by trudging through the Geneva Swamps! He was on a mission to determine what was so fun about meandering through sometimes high water in a pair of hip-waders – and found that not only was he very wet, there were also no fish to be found!

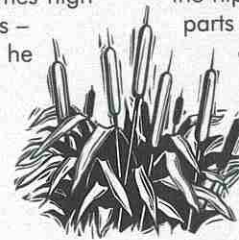
The free course offered by the US Army Corps of Engineers which Chris was attending on basic wetland delineation and identification was held in Meadville, PA.

During a 5-day program, they studied the principles that a person should know when determining a wetland. The goal of the training was to be able to classify any project area as being a wetland according to the rules

and regulations of the Corps of Engineers.

The classroom part of the program consisted of using keys to identify plants and soils, learning about how wetlands are formed and why criteria is needed to classify them. Then, they pulled on the hip-waders and wandered off into parts unknown, looking for any signs of wetland vegetation and hydrology. The experts sent them to 10 sites to see if they could properly identify the areas in question. Some sites were very hard to identify; others were easy. One thing

Chris learned is that knowledge is everything. The Corps has given him the knowledge to begin to identify these areas properly. Next spring, he will be attending yet another challenging course designed for those who want to become a delineator in the science of wetlands.





The Stoner Farm, located next to the village of Pleasant Unity, is one of six farms participating in the Act 6 program. The farm is owned by Richard and Dorothy Stoner.

Farmers Get Waste Storage Boost

\$407,000 WILL BE SENT TO SIX WESTMORELAND COUNTY FARMERS

this year to help cost-share waste storage structures on their farms. The use of waste storage structures will enable these farmers to spread manure on their fields at optimum times of the year. This practice prevents nutrient pollution of streams and provides nutrients for the plants at the best possible time.

Cost-share programs like the Act 6 program provide a limited percentage of the cost for some improvement projects on farms. Continually low commodity prices have placed most full time farmers in the situation of needing financial help if they want to improve water quality of streams on their farms.

One of the farms participating in the Act 6 program is owned by Richard and Dorothy Stoner, located next to the village of Pleasant Unity. Also sharing the work on the farm are Richard, Jr., and Sam and his wife, Mary, and their son, Brett, age 11.

This 100-cow, modern dairy farm has been upgraded many times over the years, and now is a showcase of many labor saving devices. The barn will now have automatic alley scrapers to move the cow manure from the barn into a gravity flow pipe that empties into the concrete storage structure. No pumps

or skidloaders are needed for the daily cleanup chores, saving labor and time. With this system, spreading manure on the fields everyday is not necessary. Stabilized alleyways, which prevent muddy cow lanes and nutrient pollution of streams, lead out to the cow

The use of waste storage structures will enable farmers to spread manure on their fields at optimum times of the year. This practice prevents nutrient pollution of streams and provides nutrients for the plants at the best possible time.

pastures. Streambank fencing and a stream crossing over Sewickley Creek keep machinery and cows out of the water.

The public supports the preservation of farms so consumers are not dependent on food from foreign countries. Several other cost share programs are also available through the Westmoreland Conservation District. If you have any questions, please give us a call.

Drought

What should we do?

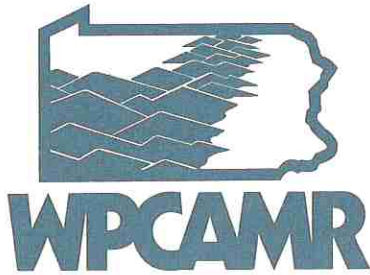
At the end of the summer, 45 counties in Pennsylvania were under a drought watch. This means that residents in those counties were asked to cut back on their water usage by 5%, or about 3-5 gallons per person a day. Westmoreland County was not one of the 45 counties, but Armstrong, Indiana, and Butler counties were on the list. Even though it isn't mandatory that we cut back on our use of water, we still can voluntarily conserve.

The DEP recommends refraining from watering lawns; taking shorter showers; running dishwashers and washing machines with full loads; and using a cup of water to rinse with when brushing your teeth instead of letting the water run when rinsing your mouth.

Conserving water is something that can be done all year long – especially if you have a private well, because if the water runs out, there is no backup supply. A useful conservation tip is to fill up a container of water and keep it in the refrigerator. You will always have a cold glass of water to drink and won't have to wait until the water coming out of the tap is cold enough to drink. You can also store water for emergencies. First, thoroughly wash plastic gallon jugs or 2 liter bottles with soapy water, then sanitize them with a chlorine bleach solution (1 teaspoon of bleach per gallon of water) for two minutes. Next, fill the jugs from the faucet, cap and label each container as drinking water, and record the date on each. If after six months you have not used the water, empty it (to water gardens or rinse the car) and refill the bottles using the steps mentioned above.

For additional tips and information on water quality and conservation, contact Nicole Foremsky, Water Quality Specialist, at 724-837-1402.

Coalition Creating Statewide Service Model



The Western Pennsylvania Coalition for Abandoned Mine Reclamation (WPCAMR) is developing a one-stop-shopping model for those groups working on reclamation and reducing mine drainage pollution.

Fueled by a \$40,755 Department of Environmental Protection Growing Greener Technical Assistance Grant (TAG), the project runs through 2003.

The mission is to create a web-based

clearinghouse on abandoned mine reclamation and will include information on watershed assessments, monitoring, restoration planning, project implementation, treatment systems, operation, maintenance and watershed

**The mission is to
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on abandoned
mine reclamation**

group development.

Five Operation Scarlift reports will be digitized and placed on the site as pilots. They are Clearfield/Moshannon, Yough, Kettle Creek, Turtle Creek and

Georges. The Coalition's 23 conservation districts, including Westmoreland, will serve as partners in this TAG effort. Others include the eastern coalition, Pennsylvania's Department of Environmental Protection, U.S. Natural Resources Conservation Service, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and Office of Surface Mining, the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy, Canaan Valley Institute, and numerous colleges and universities.

"We also hope to work with the mining industry, private consulting firms and others involved in the reclamation field," reported Deb Simko, for the WPCAMR.

The first steps will be developing the criteria for the web site and the format for digitizing Scarlift reports.

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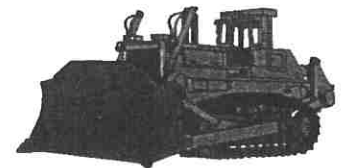
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The BLOB Attacks!

Early science-fiction movies often featured 'The Blob,' an amorphous glob of protoplasm which escaped from some remote government lab somewhere and took over a small town. Like their rapidly expanding subjects, these movies themselves mutated and reappeared in new forms many times over. In our modern times, we fear no such blob. For pond owners, however, 'The Blob' can easily become a reality as green slime takes over their once-pristine water body. Like good G-Men, Conservation District staff often come to the rescue with sound pond advice, some of which follows:

Algae is a plant. Like all plants, it needs water, light, and nutrients to grow. Removing water from a pond to control algae is counter-productive. What ponds really need is more water — fresh water, and a good circulation of it. To be fresh, ponds need a good spring, or a surface drainage area of at least 40-50 acres, to turn water over frequently. In a dry spell, adding water to a pond is quite difficult. In this case, the water already there should be circulated and freshened with a pump or a fountain.

All plants need light to grow. If the pond is deep enough, and shallow water areas are few, then light cannot reach to the bottom, and rooted algae types won't grow. Often, the accumulation of sediment in the pond will make the water shallow and allow rooted algae to grow. Removal of sediment by



dredging can reduce this type of growth. Pouring a dark blue dye into a pond will also foil the small green plants, although the result looks somewhat artificial.

Nutrients will cause the growth of algae in a pond. Algae receives nutrients from decaying material in the pond, from runoff of fertilizer from adjoining land, and from leaky or malfunctioning sewage systems. All these sources of

nutrients need to be controlled to limit algal growth. Fountains or aerators will assist in nutrient removal. Once again, dredging the pond to remove sediment may be the ultimate solution.

By careful pond management, 'The Blob' can be defeated! For more information, please call Jim Pillsbury at 837-5271 or Nicole Foremsky, Water Quality Agent, at 837-1402.

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