

## \$100,000 Grant Advances Education Program

The District's new conservation education program received a major boost — nearly \$100,000 — from the U.S. Department of Education's Fund for the Improvement of Education.

The \$99,410 grant is the second-largest single award the District has received since it began to build its formal conservation education program in 1998. It is the first major grant dedicated specifically to program development.

U.S. Senator Rick Santorum played the key role in helping the District receive this latest grant by linking the District's education program needs with the appropriate federal funding source. The District first outlined the vision for its new education program to the senator in early 2003.

*"I am very pleased that the Westmoreland Conservation District received this grant from the U.S. Department of Education."*

- U.S. Senator Rick Santorum

The grant will fund the conservation education staff, which consists of an education coordinator and a part-time assistant, through 2005. The education coordinator is a full-time position and the assistant devotes three-quarters of her time to the work of the education program.

"I am glad that I had the opportunity to work with the Conservation District to help secure this funding. It will allow full implementation of the education program at the Conservation District," Santorum said. "The education staff now will be able to reach more people with the important message about conservation."

Photo by Mark Jackson



U.S. Senator Rick Santorum (right) presents a check to District Vice Chairman Ron Rohall (left) and District Chairman Roy Houston (center).

During the next two years, the education staff hopes to develop and implement programs that will reach upward of 3,500 people in the county with the conservation message.

Through workshops and tours, they especially will reach out to area decision- and policy-makers, landowners, and residents to help them understand and

prevent the major causes of non-point source pollution, which today is the number one environmental problem in Westmoreland County and Pennsylvania.

The Fund for the Improvement of Education is a national grant program established in 1973 by the U.S. Department of Education.

### Just what is Non-point Source Pollution?

"Non-point source pollution" is a problem for our rivers, creeks, lakes, and ponds.

"Non-point source" means that the pollution doesn't originate from a single, easy-to-see place, such as a pipe from a factory. Instead, this kind of pollution usually originates over a broader area...it may be a mile-long stretch of bare streambank, or many acres of paved parking lots, or a group of backyards in a neighborhood.

The kinds of "pollution" that come from these places also vary. They can be the bare soil that slides down into

the stream from a steep bank, or the motor oil and debris that the rain water picks up from a parking lot and carries along on its journey to the creek, or the excess lawn fertilizer that doesn't soak into the ground but instead washes off (and into the nearby river) during a heavy downpour.

The good news about non-point source pollution is that people can have a tremendous, positive impact on preventing it! The goal of the District's education program is to show how and to encourage people to take action.





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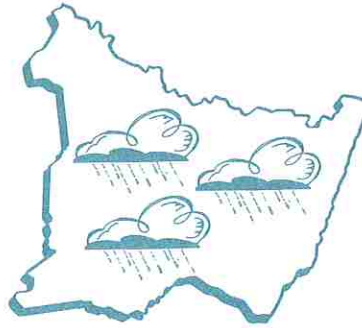
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# Hurricane Ivan brings record rainfall to Westmoreland County



A number of properties were damaged or destroyed as Hurricane Ivan unleashed a record rainfall – as much as six inches in some areas – onto Westmoreland County on September 17.

In a storm of this historic proportion, there is not much that anyone could have done to fully safeguard every property and, unfortunately, some suffered great or even total loss.

Areas around New Kensington and Lower and Upper Burrell townships were among the hardest hit. Residents in the city of Monessen and in Ligonier Township, especially those living near the Loyalhanna Creek and Mill Creek, also saw significant flooding.

Four days after the rains, public safety officials reported that 29 buildings in the county had been destroyed; 155 buildings had sustained major damage; 394, minor damage; and 135 had been affected by flooding.

To their owners, it may be small comfort to know that even greater

and more widespread damage in Westmoreland County may have been prevented because of the work that has been going on here for the past 50 years – work between the Westmoreland Conservation District and hundreds of Westmoreland County landowners to control stormwater on their property.

On farms, in forests, on development sites, and in residential neighborhoods all through Westmoreland County, the District has been working with local residents to help them manage stormwater.

Over the years, we have advised many landowners who have installed diversions, swales, catch basins, cisterns, ponds, and other improvements that help retain rain water, or allow it to infiltrate into the ground, instead of running off and adding more volume to our creeks, streams, and rivers.

***The combined effect of those hundreds of individual efforts may well have averted even greater flood damage in Westmoreland County.***

Thank you to everyone who has taken steps to manage stormwater. We are confident that your efforts helped during the rare and extreme rainfall from Ivan, and we know that your efforts help during more normal circumstances to keep our streams clean, recharge the groundwater, and prevent flooding.

***The Westmoreland Conservation District is available to work with all Westmoreland County landowners to help them manage stormwater on their property.***

We do not build structures, install plants or rock riprap, or pay for improvements. But we do provide the information, education, and technical assistance that landowners need so that they can install stormwater-control measures that work well. We also have access to many special grant programs that can provide funds for projects.

For existing buildings, our staff can recommend the best stormwater controls for the location and conditions, help design the controls, and assist with

getting any permits needed to install the controls.

For undeveloped land or new-home construction, our staff can evaluate the site, and provide information about any nearby streams, floodplains, and any applicable permits required to install stormwater controls.

The District also offers general education programs to help all

*continued on page 13*



# WCD Director Kim Miller Wins State Award

**W**estmoreland Conservation District director Kim Miller received the Ann Rudd Saxman Volunteer of the Year Award at the 57th Joint Annual Conference of the Pennsylvania Association of Conservation Districts and the State Conservation Commission in July in Pittsburgh.

Photo by Rob Cronauer



Kim Miller

The statewide award recognized Kim for his outstanding volunteer contributions to conservation.

Kim has made community service a top priority in his life, and devotes at least one out of every two waking hours to the work of organizations

such as the Pennsylvania Association for Sustainable Agriculture and the Westmoreland Conservation District.

For the District, Kim donated the barn and, during the past three years, volunteered more than 1,000 hours of his time to oversee the work of turning this 120-year-old structure into a conservation education center. "In the history of our organization, there are

certain people who stand out as exceptional volunteers. Kim Miller is one of those people," said District Manager Greg Phillips.

In late 2001, the District invited Kim to become an associate director, and in January 2003, the Westmoreland County Commissioners named him as a full director to the Board.

The award Kim received is named for another outstanding Westmoreland Conservation District volunteer and friend, Ann Rudd Saxman. A botanist, landscape designer, and pioneer conservationist, Ann was an early advocate of soil and water conservation, composting, recycling, preservation of open space, and the beautification of the landscape. In 1969, she was the first woman ever to be appointed as an associate director of the District and she served in that capacity until her death in 1990. In 1995, the 60-acre Nature Park adjacent to the District's Education Center was renamed in her honor.

The Ann Rudd Saxman Volunteer of the Year award was established by PACD in 1990, and is funded through the generosity of the Katherine Mabis McKenna Foundation of Latrobe.



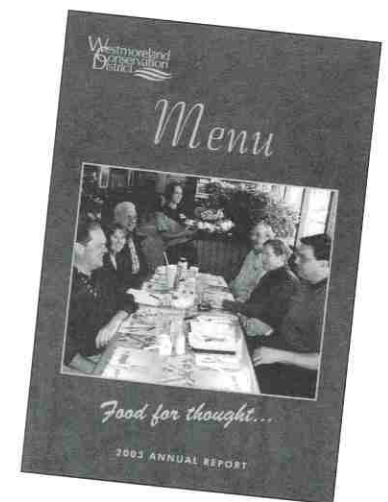
Ann Rudd Saxman

**The District played a lead role in organizing and hosting the PACD/SCC conference, including:**

- arranging a presentation on fuel cells by Siemens Westinghouse and a walk along the Allegheny River, led by the Pennsylvania Environmental Council and the Riverlife Task Force, to show how public access and water quality have improved this waterway
- hosting a hospitality suite featuring refreshments and short conservation films and comedies of the past, and
- leading committee meetings: Ron Rohall chaired the Education and Youth Committee; Tony Quadro, the Forest, Recreation and Wildlife Committee; and Lorrie Quadro, the Public Relations and Publicity Committee.

## Special thanks to those who helped sponsor the District's hospitality suite at the conference:

- Adam Eidemiller, Inc.
- Blazosky Associates, Inc.
- Bove Engineering Company
- Fahringer, McCarty, Grey, Inc.
- Jackson Graphics
- Land and Mapping Services
- Laurel Highlands Chapter of the Pennsylvania Society of Land Surveyors.



The Westmoreland Conservation District also was recognized at the conference with a second-place award for its 2003 annual report.

Photo by Mark Jackson



WCD Associate Director Paul Heyworth, who died earlier this year, was remembered at the conference's memorial breakfast.



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# Meet the Directors

*"One of the biggest challenges we face in Westmoreland County is how to keep farmers viable. It's great to preserve farmland, but we also have to preserve the farmer."*

- Dorothy Stoner

The Westmoreland Conservation District's priorities today and its direction for the future are guided by a Board of Directors — nine individuals who volunteer their time and share the wisdom they've gained from decades of practical experience in areas such as agriculture, forestry, wildlife management, economic and project development, fiscal management, government, education, and recycling.

The diverse backgrounds of this board ensure that the District's programs address the range of conservation needs in our community.

## Dorothy Stoner

*Dairy farmer in Unity Township for 50 years (now retired)*

Photo by Mark Jackson



Dorothy Stoner

Dorothy Stoner has been a passionate voice for farmers since she joined the District Board in 1995.

"One of the biggest challenges we face in Westmoreland County is how to keep farmers viable. It's great to preserve farmland, but we also have to preserve the farmer," she said, noting that, for the first time she can recall in

her 50 years of dairy farming, raw milk is being imported into the U.S. from Canada.

She advocates that "farmers need to make a decent wage...that they have to be able to get the same kind of help available to other small businesses, such as low-interest loans...and that young people have to see that there's a future in farming."

Dorothy's convictions have ensured that agriculture remains a top District priority (see page 8 for an article on the range of best management practices put in place on area farms in the past three years).

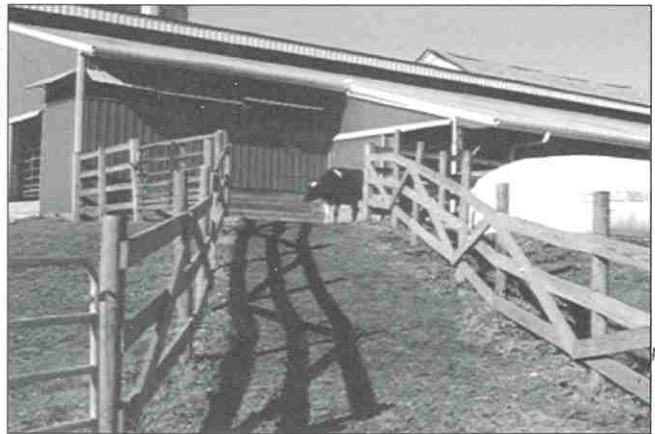
Dorothy, along with her late husband Dick, has passed her beliefs on to her children, including her son Sam, who with his wife Mary and son Brett, now run the 260-acre

Photo by Mark Jackson



Sam, Brett, and Mary Stoner

Photo by Dan Griffith



*The headwaters of Sewickley Creek literally run through the Stoners' Unity Township farm, so the variety of conservation improvements they have installed there since 1975 – from contour strips and grassed waterways, to stream crossings and manure storage – have not only benefited their farming operation, but also the thousands of people who live downstream in places such as Norvelt and Armbrust, Youngwood and Hempfield Township.*

Stoner operation in Unity Township. This next generation of Stoners is carrying on the conservation tradition in practice on the farm and in the community by showing support for the new public forum, "Future of Agriculture," which will be working to create a more certain future for farming in Westmoreland County.

In addition to her service with the District, Dorothy serves on the Citizens Advisory Board for the Laurel Valley Transportation Improvement Project. She is a past committee member of the Farmers Home Administration, and the Farm Service Agency Community Committee. For many years, she opened her farm to Latrobe Elementary School students to give them a firsthand look at how cows make milk, how milk becomes butter, and what life is like on a dairy farm.

Photo by Dan Griffith



*Milk from Stoners' 100 cows is picked up every other day by Turner Dairy of Penn Hills. Some of it becomes a summer time treat for kids of all ages: "If you've ever eaten Kerber's ice cream, you've gotten our milk," Stoner says.*



# New Stormwater Effort Flows Along

by Jim Pillsbury

This summer's rainier-than-usual weather brought timely significance to the area's newest stormwater management effort, called IMEF.

The Inter-Municipal Environmental Forum, guided by Stan Kabala of Duquesne University's Center for Environmental Research and Education (CERE), seeks to unify municipal efforts in addressing stormwater management problems.

In keeping with the District's goal of managing stormwater as a resource, WCD's Hydraulic Engineer Jim Pillsbury and Watershed Specialist Mike Barrick have helped organize IMEF's outreach program.

The first session, held in March in Turtle Creek, was to interest municipalities

in participating in such a joint effort. More than 120 municipal officials came to learn the details of implementing the Department of Environmental Protection's new stormwater regulations.

The second session, hosted by Bruce Light at Penn Township's new municipal garage in June, gave municipal employees hands-on, practical training in various aspects of stormwater management. About 40 people from nearly a dozen municipalities attended that session.

The program's next major milestone will be the awarding of 'mini-grants' to municipalities for innovative projects to address stormwater problems. Interested municipal officials should contact the Westmoreland Conservation District at 724-837-5271 for more information.

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## Also participating in the IMEF effort are:

- Turtle Creek Watershed Association Director Diane Selvaggio
- 3 Rivers Wet Weather Demonstration Program's Project Manager Joan Blaustein
- consulting engineers Pete Niederberger from Michael Baker and Fran Albright from Gannett Fleming
- the municipal governments of Murrysville, Penn Hills, Penn Township, Monroeville, and Allegheny County.

Funding for IMEF has been provided by the Heinz Endowments.

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### Want to learn more about Stormwater?

You can learn more about stormwater, even on a bright sunny day. Just take a walk around the grounds of the District's Education Center.

Bright blue signs guide you through a 15-station interpretive trail that explains what stormwater (also called rain water) is, and how this free resource can be put to good use in your home or business.

The central idea is to think about stormwater in a new way. Instead of letting it just run into the storm sewer system, the trail shows how you can capture rain water in cisterns and rain barrels for use later to water your lawn or gardens. The trail also shows how you can use rain water to create a tranquil rain garden or to build a pond that attracts wildlife.

The stormwater trail also offers detailed fact sheets on the various projects for those who want to take away specific, "how-to" information.

The stormwater trail was funded by a Growing Greener grant.



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# Watershed News

## FLOATING THE LOYALHANNA

by Mike Barrick and Nicki Foremsky

Photo by Nicki Foremsky



The crew stopped at different areas along the stream to mark tributaries and collect stream data, such as pH and conductivity. Here, under the Oasis bridge, which marked the halfway point of the paddle tour, they paused along a sandbar where creek willows were sprouting to collect macroinvertebrate and water quality data.

The “Float the Loyalhanna” sojourn, sponsored in late July by the Loyalhanna Watershed Association, was more than just a fun day on the water. It was part of an ambitious, multi-year project to assess the entire Loyalhanna Creek Watershed that, with its 300 square miles of land and 2,500 miles of streams, is the largest watershed in Westmoreland County.

Since the spring of 2003, volunteers have helped conduct field assessments on the upper section of the watershed — from the headwaters of the Loyalhanna Creek on Laurel Ridge through the City of Latrobe. Much of this work was done on foot, either walking along or wading in the Loyalhanna and its tributaries.

Assessment of the lower section of the watershed, where foot access to the creek is limited, began in canoes and kayaks with this “Float the Loyalhanna” paddle tour.

WCD staffers Mike Barrick and Nicki Foremsky joined other volunteers and LWA staff for the 10-mile journey from what Latrobe-area residents refer to as “Third Bridge,” a vehicle bridge that crosses the Loyalhanna at the border of Derry and Unity townships, to the Loyalhanna Lake near Mannitto. Their purpose was to visually assess this section of stream for

any problems with water quality caused by abandoned mine drainage.

Water quality problems were immediately obvious. Fluffs of iron-stained foam floated in the cloudy brown water around the boats as soon as they put in. Along the journey, a tributary — Crabtree Creek — carried iron-laden orange water into the Loyalhanna, staining the shoreline and the vegetation growing there, orange. In another section of the creek, the rotten egg odor of hydrogen sulfide was overwhelming.

There were some positive notes along

the way, such as an osprey nest and the manmade boxes installed to attract wood ducks. The float experience itself was positive as well because it gave participants a unique view of the creek. Many were amazed by how much the Loyalhanna changed shape from the launch point, which had an active channel width of about 25 feet, to the take out just below the Route 22 bridge, where the creek widened to the flood pool of the Loyalhanna Dam.

All of the data collected during the float, as well as in previous field trips, will be used to write a comprehensive restoration plan for the entire Loyalhanna Watershed. The restoration plan will prioritize areas for clean up, and is scheduled to be complete during the summer of 2005.

In addition to District staff and Loyalhanna Watershed Association staff, participants in this “Float the Loyalhanna” assessment included:

- the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy Watershed Assistance Center
- the Department of Environmental Protection
- the Youth Conservation Corps
- PA Trout Unlimited
- Saint Vincent College Summer Institute.

### Loyalhanna Watershed Snapshot

Largest watershed in Westmoreland County

**Size:** 300 square miles of land and 2,500 miles of streams

**Headwaters:** Stahlstown and the western part of Laurel Ridge

**Character:** Main branch (Loyalhanna) is heavily forested and vegetated; much of it runs through land managed by state, federal, and local agencies, including the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Army Corps of Engineers, and Westmoreland Parks and Recreation. Its only ‘urban’ section is through the City of Latrobe. Feeding streams flow through active agricultural and old coal-mining areas.

**Challenges to water quality:** Abandoned mine drainage, nutrients, sewage, sedimentation





# Nearly \$1 Million Invested in Westmoreland County Agriculture Conservation Projects

by Dan Griffith



**T**wenty-three farmers in the Kiski-Conemaugh Watershed just completed a three-year effort that benefited the health of nearly 3,000 farm animals, treated more than 5-1/2 miles of stream, and improved water quality for thousands of citizens throughout the larger region.

The District coordinated this major agricultural conservation program, which used \$486,000 in Pennsylvania Growing Greener grants to share the cost with local farmers of installing stream crossings, waste storage, diversions, gutters and downspouts, curbing, grassed waterways, and other proven best management practices to improve their farming operations and, at the same time, reduce the amount of sediment and nutrients washing into nearby streams.

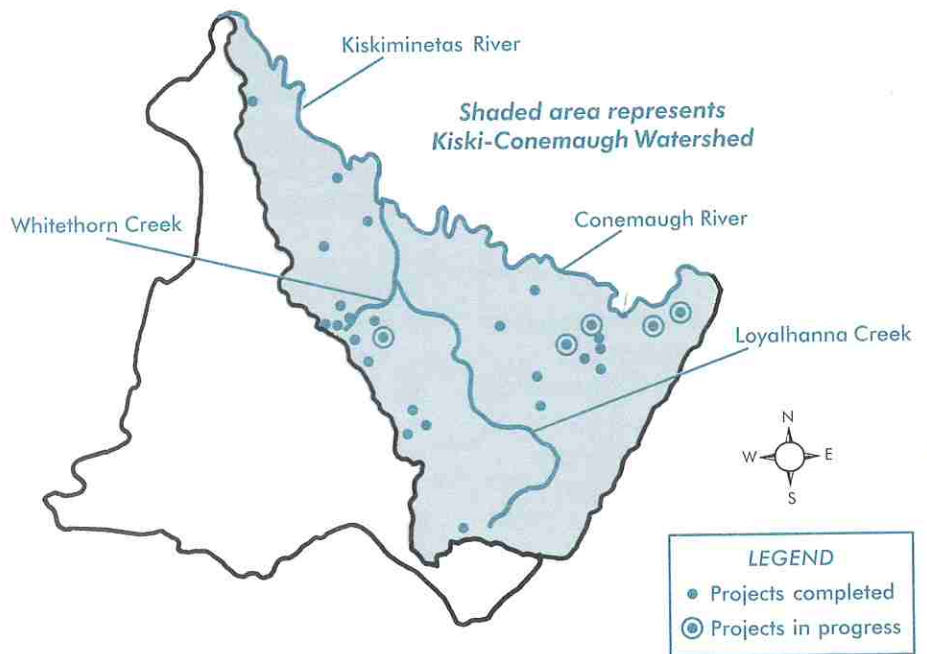
The Kiski-Conemaugh Watershed was identified for this project because it contains the second-highest concentration of farms in Westmoreland County. A sub-watershed, Whitethorn Creek, received special emphasis in the project. Whitethorn Creek flows into the Loyalhanna Creek and then into the Kiskiminetas River.

To be eligible for this program, farmers had to invest at least 25% of the cost of their conservation project(s). In many cases, they put in more than the minimum required.

Whenever possible, Growing Greener funds also were matched with funds from the Pennsylvania Act 6 program, the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP), the Environmental Quality Improvement Program (EQIP),

and the Westmoreland Conservation District. Combined, all sources of matching funds added another 95 cents to every Growing Greener dollar, making a \$950,000 total investment in Westmoreland County agriculture and clean streams.

The photos with this article show some of the many improvements made through this comprehensive program.



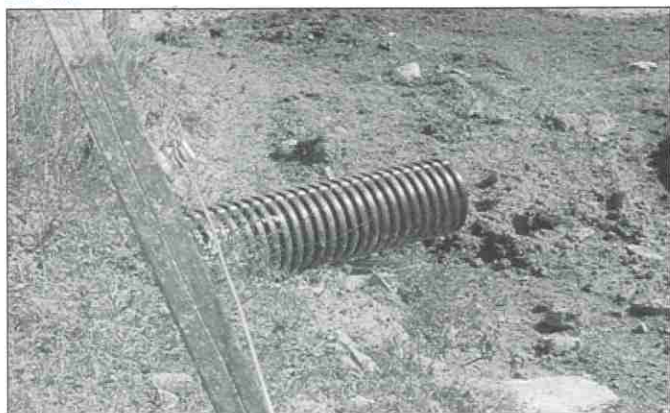
One of the most important conservation practices in this program was the installation of fencing – both along streams and for rotational grazing paddocks. Dairy farmer Jim Merichko installed streambank fencing to keep his cows from freely accessing an unnamed tributary to Whitethorn Creek that begins on his farm. The fencing not only reduced the amount of sediment in the stream, but also prevents animal waste from entering the waterway.



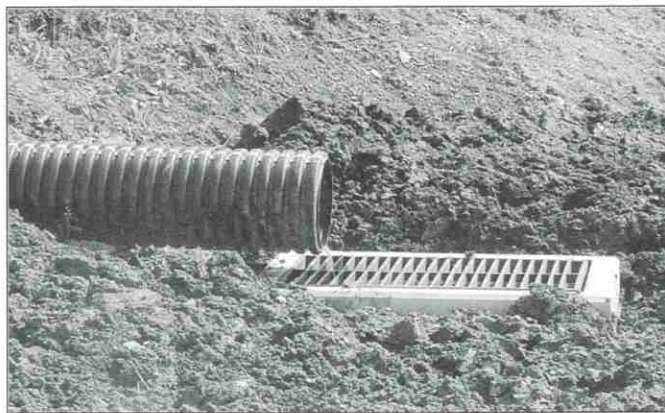
Once the animals are fenced out of the stream, some farmers agree to plant trees in the area between the fence and the stream, creating a riparian buffer. Riparian buffers are very effective vegetated filter areas that help keep sediment and nutrients out of the water. The white tubes are protecting the young trees from hungry deer.



BEFORE



AFTER



Jeff Telford's farm is located on an unnamed tributary to Whitethorn Creek. One of the conservation measures installed on his farm addressed the problem of a culvert under a township road that dumped water into his barn yard, creating mud, exacerbating erosion, and making a potentially unhealthy environment for his livestock. These photos show the field before (left) and after (right) the drainage measures were installed. Subsurface drains and water-control structures allow the water to flow to the creek without creating gullies and causing pollution.

BEFORE



AFTER



Ken Bayle's farm contains a long reach of stream that his 110 cows had free access to. Animals tromping in and alongside the stream are one of the worst causes of water pollution from farms. Their heavy hooves dislodge soil that erodes into streams, clogging the channels and smothering aquatic life. The area around the farm's water trough (photo on left) shows the kind of damage that cows can do to the soil. The photo on the right shows how the water trough area has been stabilized with a heavy landscape fabric and various sizes of well-packed stones to prevent further erosion.

BEFORE



AFTER



Before Bill Selembo purchased this farm in Salem Township in 2003, it was one of the largest sources of nutrient pollution in the watershed. Bill has made a number of improvements, including a paved animal walkway (photo on right). Bill first installed fencing to keep the animals out of the stream and then installed this paved walkway to guide them from one area of the farm to another. The paving reduces mud and sediment pollution, and keeps the animals healthier.

*continued on page 11*





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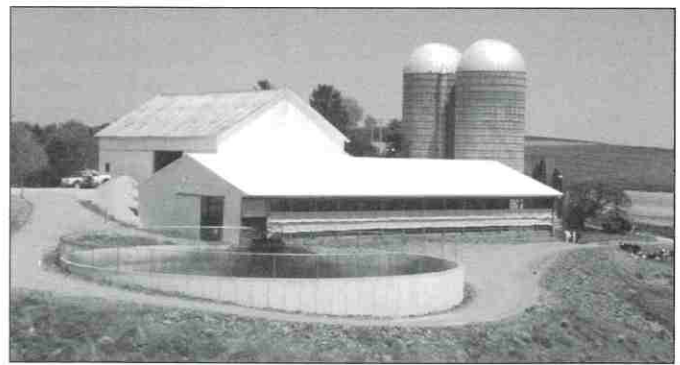
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BEFORE



AFTER



All photos in this article by Dan Griffith

At his home farm, Bill Selembo also installed a new waste storage facility (round structure in photo on right). Bill also installed a milk house waste system. The waste storage facility handles all of the manure from the cows, plus the waste from the milk house. It is desirable to keep milk house waste out of nearby streams for a number of reasons, including the fact that it takes a very long time to decompose.

*Here are some of the measurable improvements produced by this project.*

Improvement	Kiski-Conemaugh Watershed	Whitethorn Watershed	Total Improvement
Rotational Grazing Fencing (feet)	39,164	15,122	54,286 feet
Streambank Fencing (feet)	9,428	8,629	18,057 feet
Stream Crossings	5	4	9
Animal Walkways (feet)	250	11,258	11,508 feet
Manure Pits	1	2	3
Spring Developments	5	3	8
Riparian Buffers (acres)	2.0	10.4	12.4 acres
Diversions (feet)	9,299	—	9,299 feet
Roof Runoff (feet)	1,378	337	1,715 feet
Grassed Waterways (acres)	6.2	—	6.2 acres

*These farmers deserve a lot of credit for installing conservation practices to help keep our water cleaner, and if by chance you meet them, please congratulate them for their conservation efforts.*

**Kiski-Conemaugh**

Stanley Auen    Mark Feiling    Pat Lentz  
Adam Batistella    Wayne Frye    Ray Machulsky  
Ray Butz    Bob Graham    Earl Sadler  
Otis Case    Jim Kepple    George Stanislaw

**Whitethorn**

John Starr    Ken Bayle    Bill Selembo  
Jim Stiffler    Wayne Frye    Bill Smith  
Lewis Thomas    Jim Kepple    Jeff Telford  
Bob Zundel    Jim Merichko

**Financial Assistance Available**

If you are interested in installing agricultural conservation improvements, you may be eligible for financial assistance. A few of the programs available are shown here. Note that all federal programs require that your farm have a conservation plan.

The federal Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) offers funding for all of the best-management practices shown in this article except manure storage.

The federal Environmental Quality Improvement Program

(EQIP) offers financial support for some of the more construction-style projects related to livestock (such as feeding pads, paved walkways, and gutters and downspouts on barns).

Also, Governor Rendell is advocating for legislation to be passed this fall for a ballot initiative in the spring of 2005 that would allocate a multi-million-dollar bond for environmental programs.

For more information on these or other programs, call Dan Griffith, agricultural conservation technician, at the Westmoreland Conservation District: 724-837-5271.



# Staff News

## New Assignments

The District recently made some organizational changes and additions to help it operate more efficiently, and better serve the growing needs of Westmoreland County residents.

- Greg Phillips, district manager, takes on the additional title of CEO to more fully reflect the scope of his duties.
- Tony Quadro assumes additional duties as technical program director/assistant district manager.
- Sandy Dzendzel has been named administrative assistant.
- Karen Barnhart assumes the new position of assistant financial administrator.
- Mark Jackson, owner of Jackson Graphics, comes on board as visual communications specialist.
- A communications committee has been formed and includes: Greg Phillips, chair; Mark Jackson; Karen Jurkovic, a communication specialist, fundraiser, and long-time consultant to the District; Ted Kopas, chief of staff for Westmoreland County Commissioner Tom Balya and former public information specialist for DEP's Office of Policy and Communications in Harrisburg; John Turak, Washington Township supervisor and freelance writer with experience in public relations; and Anita Foriska, owner of Laurel Circle, a public relations and communications agency in Greensburg.

## Promotions



After four years as District/Extension water quality educator, **Nicki Foremsky** was promoted from assistant to associate District/Extension educator. Nicki

presents a number of education programs for students and the general public on water quality and conservation, including field trips to sample streams in a watershed and classroom workshops on how to manage a pond, septic systems, and drinking water quality.

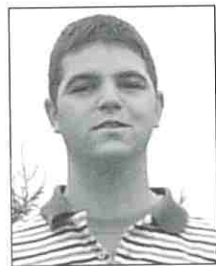
## Internships

**Katie Stokum** and **Matt Zambelli** joined us this summer as interns and made a big difference in our work and our surroundings.



Katie, who left in August to begin her freshman year at Seton Hill University, was a great 'all-around' help to anyone who needed it, but most

especially to our technical staff, who faced a major administrative challenge. "A new requirement came down that all site plans had to have the longitude and latitude of the location marked on them," explained Kathy Fritz, program secretary, "and that meant that someone had to go back through about five years' worth of plans and, one by one, determine the longitude and latitude of the site and mark it on them." Katie took on the project, and completed the work for every one of more than 200 plans.



Matt, a second-year landscape architecture student at Penn State, worked primarily outdoors, beautifying the landscape around the center, caring for the trees in the

arboretum, and revitalizing the entrance to Ann Rudd Saxman Nature Park. He not only provided the muscle to shovel mulch, spread pea gravel, and heft biologs, but also the creative ideas for a new flower bed design around the Ann Rudd Saxman memorial. Matt also accompanied our hydraulic engineer, Jim Pillsbury, on a site visit to Valley High School and worked with landscape designer Linda Allworth to build a new rock bed where the roof water runs off the side of the center. Even with a good many rainy days to work around this summer, Matt said he felt he "packed a lot of really good experience into one summer."

## With Sympathy



**Terry Marolt**, Westmoreland County Commissioner and a member of the Board of Directors of the Westmoreland Conservation District from 1989 to 2000,

passed away on September 5.

In 1998, Terry, along with then Westmoreland County Commissioners Richard Vidmer and Tom Balya, officially launched the District's education center by giving the county's endorsement to the project.

In 2002, while in between terms as a Westmoreland County Commissioner, Terry also helped the District through his love of music. A popular area disc jockey, Terry served as master of ceremony for the District's Annual Awards Banquet and then concluded the evening by entertaining the crowd with his D.J. skills.

## Transitions

*May The Force Be With You, Lorrie!*

by Kathy Fritz & Jim Pillsbury



In George Lucas's first Star Wars film, we (and Luke Skywalker) meet Yoda, the aged Jedi Master. Yoda instructs Luke in the way of the Force, and then he

and his swamp-side hut fade away in a touching and appropriate end for such a noble and wise character. Endings are hard, but sooner or later, all good things must come to an end; so it was that after spending 13 years at the District, our wise and multi-talented **Lorrie Quadro** announced in mid-July that she would leave her position as assistant district manager.

Lorrie was hired in March 1991 as the administrative secretary and was promoted to assistant district manager in 1994. She served as the editor of Landmarks and the annual report, publications that have won state and





AEM President, Dennis Slater, presents Lorrie with District Outreach Award.

national awards. Lorrie's creative spark developed many themes for the annual reports, from 'Welcome to the Show,' which featured movies, to the most recent 'Food for Thought,' which highlighted the favorite eating spots of District staff. Her talent for publications led to appointments on both NACD and PACD public relations committees.

As the task of managing the county's natural resources expanded, District staff grew from 5 to 15 professionals, and soon we needed a human resources person! Lorrie served as WCD's human resource administrator, helping to develop WCD's pension plan, employee handbook, job descriptions, financial

policy, and health care benefits. She also worked on a state committee to develop templates for employee handbooks. Although they were not glamorous tasks, Lorrie handled these important responsibilities with great attention to detail.

When Lorrie arrived at the District, we had two Tandy computers—neither one with a mouse! We had no Windows™, no color printer, no e-mail. But we had Lorrie's energy, and as the staff grew, the District's computer capability kept pace. Lorrie's computer oversight included the eventual development of our entire wireless network and web page. Like Yoda, Lorrie spent many patient hours instructing us in the mysterious and powerful ways of computers! We now have 16 state-of-the-art computers featuring in-house i-mail and web-page hosting and high-speed broadband wireless networking.

Besides these responsibilities, Lorrie's duties included managing the District's budget (which grew from \$250,000 to \$1.7 million during her tenure), planning several joint annual conferences with PACD, and preparing for our annual planning meetings, nominating organization

barbeques, and staff and board retreats.

This summer Lorrie began working as a part-time administrative assistant in the Natural Resources Conservation Services office in Donohoe Center. In her expanded free time, she is working with her flower beds at home, with her daughter Nicole, and gearing up for some Nebraska football (though some staff recently caught a glimpse of her Mustang with a Penn State bumper sticker on it). She also enjoys hiking, reading, and great movies—especially the Star Wars saga. So, as Lorrie jumps into her X-Wing Tie Fighter and zooms off into the stars, we can only say, 'May the Force be with you!'



Lorrie singing with Keith Largent at the District's 2001 Annual Awards Banquet.

Hurricane Ivan - Helping landowners manage stormwater continued from page 2

residents control stormwater and reduce the chance of minor flooding and wet basements. Here are some of the general suggestions we offer.

• **Support properly managed forests and farms.**

These areas act like sponges to soak up great quantities of rainwater and recharge the groundwater supply.

• **Reduce the amount of paved surfaces around homes and businesses.**

Lawns, herb gardens, and paths and parking lots made of gravel let water soak into the ground instead of running off into nearby streams.

• **Build a pond or a water garden; add a cistern or a rain barrel.**

All collect rainwater. Ponds and water gardens add beauty to the landscape; cisterns and rain barrels store water to

use later for gardening and other non-drinking purposes.

• **Protect the edges of streams with native plants, biologs, or rock riprap.** These reduce erosion and the amount of soil that builds up in the stream channel.

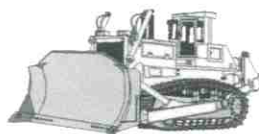
We also have a self-guided, educational stormwater trail around our office on Donohoe Center in Greensburg that anyone can visit. Our staff can be reached by calling 724-837-5271.



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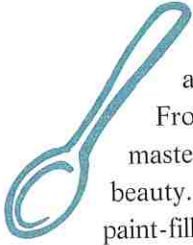


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# Find the Soup Spoon

by Joanne Kitsko



Oh, the splendor of autumn — soon Jack Frost will create another masterpiece of tranquil beauty. With the stroke of a paint-filled brush, vibrant shades of crimson and gold, mingled amidst the green foliage, will be transformed into a picturesque setting. Autumn brings about other changes — the days become shorter and there is a noticeable crisp chill in the air — just a subtle reminder of what is yet to come.

On these cool autumn days, what better way to warm the cockles of your heart than to serve a piping hot bowl of Sandy Barnhart's delicious Broccoli Cheese Soup from the recipe featured

in this issue of *Landmarks!* (see page 15). But, you must first find the soup spoon that has been hidden somewhere in this issue.

The 5th, 10th, and 15th callers to Joanne at 724-837-5271 correctly identifying the whereabouts of the spoon in this Fall 2004 issue will harvest a bountiful prize! Previous contest winners are not eligible; however, your comments regarding our publications are always welcome and very much appreciated. *Good Luck!!!*

The three lucky winners of our "Find the Soup Spoon" contest who correctly identified the whereabouts of the hidden spoon in the Summer 2004 issue are Nancy Baker, caller #4 of Greensburg, Claude Petroy, caller #11

of Greensburg, and Greg Kuhar, caller #18 of Latrobe. Congratulations to the winners, who each received a wicker basket of items for summertime fun!

## LANDMARKS

*The Official Newsletter of the  
Westmoreland Conservation District*

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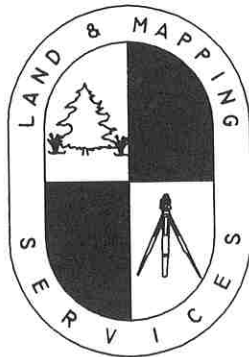
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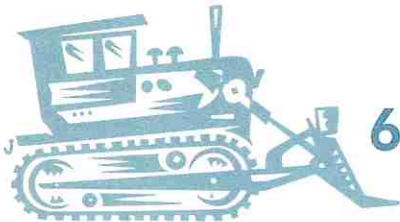


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## 6,000 and Counting...

by Rob Cronauer

*The 6,000th erosion & sediment (E&S) control plan was prepared by the EADS Group for a sewer and waterline replacement project in Ligonier Borough.*

The Westmoreland Conservation District received its 6,000th erosion and sediment control (E&S) plan on June 22, and approved it on July 17.

That's a major milestone for District staff, and also for the people of Westmoreland County. It means that thousands of acres of disturbed land have been monitored to make sure that, in the process of building homes or timbering a woodlot, our community's soil was protected.

An E&S plan is required for any work that disturbs one or more acres of land in Westmoreland County. District staff review these plans – and also visit the site while the work is being done – to be sure that there will

be only a minimum amount of erosion, and that the disturbed soil won't end up in a nearby stream or waterway where it can smother aquatic life and cause flooding.

About 1,000 acres of land in Westmoreland County are disturbed for development every year.

Any time you see a temporary fence of black plastic cloth or a row of straw bales around the edge of a construction site, you're seeing an E&S control.

*The District has been reviewing more than 200 plans a year and, at this pace, should receive its 7,000th plan in the spring of 2007.*

### Think a little dirt doesn't hurt?

Sediment – the name soil is called when it's in a stream instead of on the land – can smother the small creatures that live in the water. It also can fill up the stream channel,

so the water has less space, and floods happen more often. Sediment is the number one pollutant by volume in Pennsylvania!

Visit us on the web at:  
[www.wcdpa.com](http://www.wcdpa.com)



## NATURALLY Delicious

by Karen Barnhart

Here is another favorite from the family cookbook....

### Sandy Barnhart's Broccoli-Cheese Soup

- 1 large bunch broccoli, remove woody stalks and cut in pieces
- 1/2 cup butter
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 1/2 cup flour
- 2 cups milk
- 2 cups grated sharp cheddar cheese
- 2 cans chicken broth
- salt and pepper to taste

Cook broccoli until tender. Drain and set aside. Sauté onion in butter until transparent, stir in flour and cook for 5 minutes. Add milk slowly, stirring constantly; stir in grated cheese, blend until smooth. Puree half the broccoli. Slowly blend chicken broth into sauce mixture and then add pureed broccoli and remaining broccoli pieces. Blend well. Simmer for 15 minutes.



**NOV. 19**

**Westmoreland Conservation District  
Annual Awards Banquet**

6:30 p.m.  
Four Points Sheraton, Greensburg

A variety of cuisines will be featured at this year's banquet, "Food for Thought," and outstanding individuals and organizations will be recognized for their contributions to conservation. For reservations, contact Sandy at 724-837-5271. Cost: \$20/person.

**2005**

**EARLY THIS YEAR, WATCH FOR:  
CREP Training**

The Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program is a voluntary program designed to remove environmentally sensitive land from agricultural production. Conservation practices under this program can include riparian buffers, cool season grasses, warm season grasses, wildlife habitat, and shallow water areas. Contact Leanne at 724-837-5271.

**January**

**JAN. 7**

**Workshop: Working with Government  
Officials**

A special workshop for non-profit groups on how their organizations can effectively work with local, state and federal government officials. Contact Leanne at 724-837-5271. Nominal cost.

**JAN. 26**

**Western Pennsylvania's Tillage Conference**

9 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.  
Four Points Sheraton, Greensburg

No-till farming (sometimes called 'conservation farming') is a system of planting crops directly into the stubble of the previous crop. Unlike traditional methods, the ground is not turned over and disked before planting. This conference is for those interested in learning more about using no-till and minimum tillage equipment. Featured speaker: Tony Vyns, professor of agronomy at Purdue University. Contact Bobbi at 724-834-9063. Cost: \$20.

**March**

**Date TBA**

**Forestry 2 Workshop**

Building on last summer's Forestry 1 Workshop, this program will help woodlot owners and others interested in forest stewardship. It will provide more specifics on forest ecology and on measurements and management methods, including how to use the prism, how to calculate board feet in a stand, and when to do thinning. Contact Leanne at 724-837-5271.

**April**

**Date TBA**

**Conservation Tours**

This year's tours will focus on some of the county's major urban areas and the conservation work there.

**APRIL 23**

**Earth Day**

Noon - 5 p.m.  
Saint Vincent College, Latrobe

More than 80 environmental and conservation groups gather for this special event, which will feature many new things for 2005, including new live shows. Contact Carole at 724-238-7560.

**May**

**National Water-awareness Month**

**MAY 2**

**Envirothon**

This academic competition helps students in grades 9-12 develop a better understanding of the environment and their role in it. Contact Leanne at 724-837-5271.

**MAY 14-15**

**Rural Living Expo**

Westmoreland County Fairgrounds

Sponsored by Penn State Extension, this regional event will include educational experiences, opportunities for networking, previews of new equipment, and other items of special interest to small farm owners and anyone living in the country. Topics may include: farm safety, water quality, horses and livestock, agronomics, landscaping and gardening, and rural issues. Contact Nicki at 724-837-1402.

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# Education News

by Leanne Griffith

## RECENT EVENT SUMMARIES

### Rain Barrel Workshop

We didn't have much hot, dry weather this summer, but that didn't deter 13 folks from coming to our rain barrel workshop on June 12 to learn how to make a barrel and collect some of the free rain water from their house gutters and drain pipes to use on their lawns, gardens, and flower beds. (Note: Rain barrel water is not drinkable.)

Jim Pillsbury, District hydraulic engineer, and Leanne Griffith, conservation education coordinator, helped participants create a total of 18 rain barrels from plastic barrels recycled from DeLallo's Italian Marketplace.

### Drinking Water Clinic

Thirty-three well and spring owners joined us for a drinking water clinic on July 29.

They got their hands wet as they tested water samples from their own homes for hardness, alkalinity, pH, total dissolved solids (TDS), nitrates, and phosphates. Nicki Foremsky, the District/Extension water quality agent, then explained what their results meant and how water can be treated for certain contaminants.

The workshop also included a PowerPoint program that showed common sources of runoff pollution and the importance of protecting the land around a water source.

### Forestry Workshop

Ann Rudd Saxman Nature Park was the outdoor classroom for 40 forest landowners who attended the Forestry 1 workshop on July 17.

The group – which included several parent-child participants – learned common forestry terms and basic tree identification, how to measure the amount of board feet in a tree, and how to use a prism to estimate stand size.

Workshop leader Tony Quadro, District technical program director, helped the group learn how to make knowledgeable decisions about the use of forested land.

### "Ag Basics" class and Contractors' Workshop

As Landmarks was in production, we also were holding an "Ag Basics" class for teachers and a Contractors' Workshop. Watch for more news about these in the next issue.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### October 2004

OCT. 16 & 24

#### Teachers' Workshop:

#### Watersheds and Sustainable Communities

8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Center for Conservation Education and Ann Rudd Saxman Nature Park

Learn more about conservation practices that improve the water quality and the quality of life in your community. Try new lessons that meet many of the PA Academic Standards for the Environment and Ecology. Successful participants will earn one Act 48 credit. Register through Westmoreland Intermediate Unit (724-836-2460, <http://wiu.k12.pa.us>). Cost: \$140.

### November

#### Envirothon Sign-up

Teachers: Sign your high-school students up now for this day-long outdoor challenge that tests their understanding of aquatics, forestry, soils, and wildlife. Students begin now to prepare for the May competition, where five-member teams do things such as explore a soil pit, measure trees, and test water samples. Winners go on to state and national competitions. Contact Leanne at 724-837-5271. Free.

NOV. 9

#### Monastery Run Symposium

9 a.m.-noon

Saint Vincent College, Latrobe

The focus of the symposium this year is for watershed groups to "show off" their organizations' AMD treatment systems. For more information, contact Beth at 724-805-2298. Free.

*continued on page 17*



# National book to feature Westmoreland Conservation District

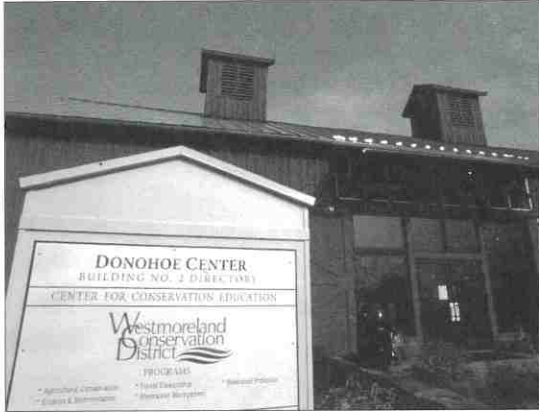
A new book, scheduled to be distributed nationwide later this year, will feature the District's innovative reuse of an original, 1880s Westmoreland County barn as its new headquarters and conservation education center.

The book will tell the story of this ambitious, three-year project that began with a crew of Amish craftsmen who carefully dismantled the barn's more than 300 original hand-hewn beams...and eventually grew to involve the skill, dedication, and financial support of hundreds of individuals, companies, and

organizations who helped rebuild and adapt the structure at its new site, for its new use.

The story of the District's barn is told in the book through photographs taken by Justin Merriman and prose written by Karen Jurkovic. The book also will feature other barns that have been given new life—as residences, retail establishments, offices, and so on.

Although not titled as of this writing, you can check for information on the book by going to the publisher's website: [schifferbooks.com](http://schifferbooks.com), and searching by author E. Ashley Rooney.



Photos by Justin Merriman