

## Controlling Erosion Key Among District Efforts



Barriers help keep loose soil from migrating off construction sites.

With shovels and hoes, bulldozers and cultivators, Westmoreland County's soil is in a continual state of being turned over, plowed up, dug out, pushed around, and trucked in or out.

Most of this deliberate disruption of the ground is done to support our daily lives.

Fields are plowed to grow our food.

Land is cleared to create houses and shopping centers.

Trenches are carved for pipes and cables that carry electricity, water, natural gas, and other utilities.

Roads are cut into forests to harvest wood for furniture.

Yet, every time soil is disturbed to produce something beneficial, there's also a chance for unwanted problems.

Loose soil, lifted by wind or pushed along by water, can end up in places where it doesn't belong, such as in streams where accumulations can stifle aquatic life and create flooding problems for the community. In waterways, soil becomes a pollutant and gets a new name, 'sediment.' Sediment is Westmoreland County's number one pollutant

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## Marcellus Shale: Involving Conservation Districts Would Add Benefit



Gas well near Donegal Lake, just off Route 711, in Donegal Township.

For decades, conservation districts have worked with professions of all types – farmers, timber harvesters, developers – to minimize erosion and stormwater runoff.

Currently in Pennsylvania, however, it is not conservation districts but the state Department of Environmental Protection that has official responsibility for these activities related to Marcellus shale.

DEP is responsible for issuing all National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permits...reviewing all site plans to control erosion and sediment and manage stormwater runoff...and

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### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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- William Doney, *Vice Chairman*
- Conrad Donovan, *Treasurer*
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### STAFF

- Gregory M. Phillips, *District Manager/CEO*
- Anthony P. Quadro, Jr.,  
*Assistant District Manager/Technical Programs Director*
- Karen Barnhart, *Fiscal Administrator*
- Sandra Dzendzel, *Director of Administration*
- Mark Jackson, *Visual Communications Specialist*
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- James W. Pillsbury, PE, *Hydraulic Engineer*
- Kathryn Hamilton, RLA, *Stormwater Technician*
- Robert D. Cronauer, *Watershed Specialist*
- Christopher Droste, *Senior Erosion Control Specialist*
- Matt Zambelli, *Erosion Control Specialist*
- Daniel Griffith, *Nutrient Management Specialist/  
Agricultural Conservation Technician*
- Kathleen Fritz, *E & S Program Administrative Assistant*

### EDUCATION STAFF

- Mimi Thomas-Brooker, *Education Program Coordinator*
- Dana Rizzo, *District/Penn State Extension  
Water Quality Educator*

### NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE

- Thomas P. Sierzega, Jr., *District Conservationist*
- Mike Hamilton, *Soil Conservation Technician*
- Paul Shaffer, *Soil Conservationist*
- Frank Ruffing, *Support Assistant*
- Vivian Bernardo, *Administrative Support Assistant*
- John Fior, *ACES Conservationist*
- Sherene Hess, *Field Office Support*
- Rob Knight, *Soil Scientist*

## 2012 District Meeting Schedule



District meetings are open to the public and held at the District's headquarters, Donohoe Center, 218 Donohoe Road, Greensburg.

Agendas are posted on the District's website, [www.wcdpa.com](http://www.wcdpa.com), prior to each meeting.

- Wednesday, January 11, 11:00 a.m.
- Wednesday, February 8, 11:00 a.m.
- Wednesday, March 14, 11:00 a.m.
- Wednesday, April 11, 5:00 p.m.
- Wednesday, May 9, 5:00 p.m.
- Wednesday, June 13, 5:00 p.m.
- Wednesday, July 11, 5:00 p.m.
- Wednesday, August 8, 5:00 p.m.
- Wednesday, September 12, 5:00 p.m.
- Wednesday, October 10, 5:00 p.m.
- November District Meeting/Annual Awards Banquet date to be determined
- Wednesday, December 12, 11:00 a.m.

## Taking Energy Conservation to the Next Level

Thanks to the vision and support of the Westmoreland County commissioners, we have been getting more involved in energy conservation work this past year, helping to host free workshops for area schools, businesses, nonprofits, and municipalities, and compiling information for a website.

Another fortunate outcome of this work is that one of our partners in these projects, AllFacilities Energy Group, offered to do a free energy performance evaluation and audit of our barn headquarters.

When we adapted a barn for our headquarters 10 years ago, we incor-

porated many energy conservation measures – from geothermal heating to structural insulated panels. But a lot can happen in a decade. Buildings age, thinking changes, and new products become available.

The audit showed us where we can make a good thing even better, often with relatively simple and low-cost steps such as adding more exterior caulking, and replacing some of our lights with LEDs, which stands for light-emitting diodes.

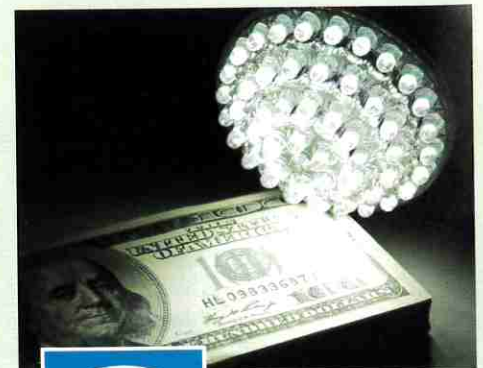
We will track our energy use before and after the improvements so that we can share the results with you.

Light-emitting diodes, or LEDs, offer better light quality than incandescent bulbs, last 25 times as long, and use even less energy than compact fluorescents.

LEDs work well in outdoor environments, too.

Look for ENERGY STAR qualified LED products at home improvement centers and lighting showrooms.

— U.S. Department of Energy



# 2011 Conservation Farmers of the Year: *Bill and Dianna Hoffer*



**B**ill and Dianna Hoffer, the Westmoreland Conservation District's 2011 Farmers of the Year, are as expert at managing water on their 120-acre Mount Pleasant Township farm as they are at managing dairy cows and beef cattle.

They've had to be.

Some of Bill's earliest memories of life on this land where he was born and raised are of his mother opening the front door of their farmhouse during a heavy rain to let the water roll out.

The original 1940s-era Hofer family home, barn, and out-buildings all sit toward the lower end of a long, gentle slope of farm fields and surrounding wood lots that once was pasture. Before conservation measures were installed, rain would roll off of this 1,500-foot-long stretch of land, gathering enough speed and volume to routinely pour three feet of water into the farmhouse basement and, all-too-often, enough to rise up to the first floor. From there, the water continued downhill to the buildings below, creating a serious mud problem, especially around the barn.

A 500-foot long by 10-foot wide by 1-1/2-foot deep diversion ditch created above the farmstead keeps the house dry today and is one of many beneficial conservation measures the family installed over the past three decades.

The original farm road into the fields behind the house also was treated to conservation improvements that transformed it from two deeply worn gullies that channeled water into the farm's equipment area to a re-graded, stable slope with periodic water bars that act like speed bumps to stop the straight downhill flow of water and angle it off into the vegetated fields.

To manage water, the Hoffers also installed 500 feet of animal walkways and added a drip line along all of their out-buildings. Bill says this ground-level pipe and gravel system "is better than gutters in managing the water."

The Hoffers also installed 6,200 feet of fencing and a 40-foot wide vegetated buffer area along the stream, an unnamed tributary to Jacobs Creek, which flows through their property. "Before we did this, the cows really had this area beat down,"

Bill said. "It was very muddy in there, and it made the cows more prone to health problems."

Now, the cows can access clean drinking water carried in a unique application from a spring through a pipe to new water troughs, and they can cross the stream at one of several stabilized stream-crossing areas the Hoffers installed.

The Hoffers will be formally presented with their Conservation Farmer of the Year Award at the District's next awards banquet, tentatively scheduled for fall of 2012.



The Hoffer homestead in Mount Pleasant Township.



District Agricultural Conservation Technician Dan Griffith (left) stands in the large diversion ditch that the Hoffers created to show just how significantly the land had to be recontoured to eliminate the severe stormwater problems on the property.



The Hoffers added fencing and a vegetated buffer to protect the tributary to Jacobs Creek that flows through their farmstead.

by volume.

Reducing erosion and avoiding sediment buildup is the full-time job of Westmoreland Conservation District's technical staff. They monitor earthmoving sites all across Westmoreland County – from timber harvests in the mountains to the east...to commercial developments along major highway arteries to the west – to make sure the unwanted movement of soil is kept to a minimum.

Controlling erosion was the main reason that conservation districts came

into being, and has been a hallmark of Westmoreland Conservation District's efforts since its founding in 1949. In those early days, our District, like most others, focused on agriculture, working with local farmers to help them keep the prime soils that produce healthy crops. Over the years, as our county and nation urbanized, districts extended their erosion-control efforts to include new areas, such as housing and commercial development, as well.

In 1972, when Pennsylvania adopted regulations to control erosion, Westmoreland Conservation District became

one of the very first districts in the state to turn its voluntary work into a formal soil erosion and sedimentation control program, and the Department of Environmental Protection gave us authority to regulate the state's new erosion-control laws in Westmoreland County.

## Services We Provide

Today, our staff work to reduce both erosion and sediment not only with our first audience of farmers, but also with almost everyone who does any work at all that disturbs the soil, including

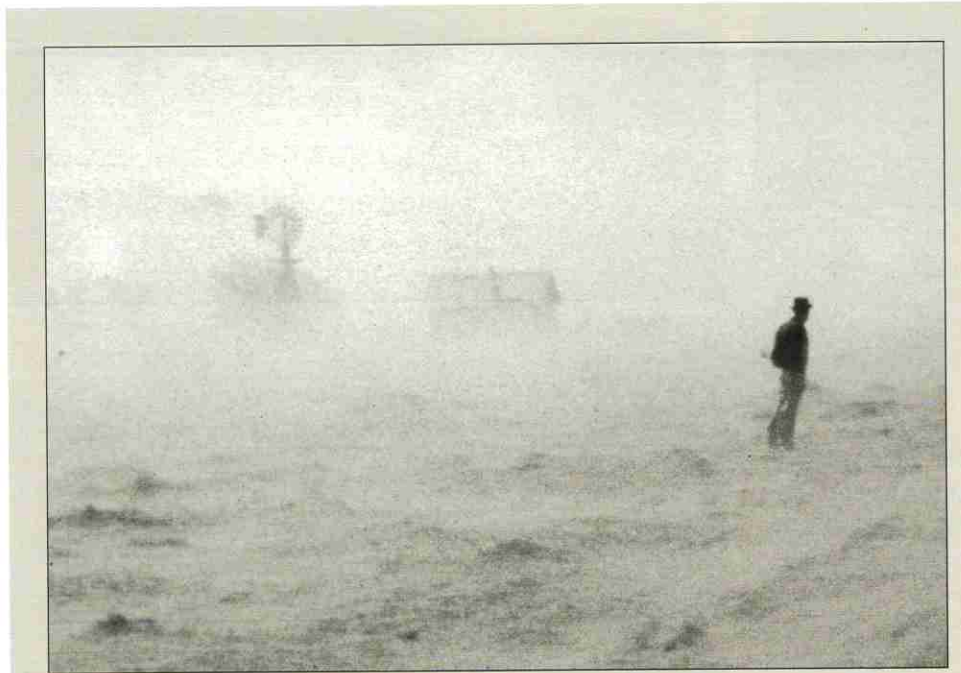


Photo courtesy of the Natural Resources Conservation Service

## The Hard Lesson

Unfortunately, it took a national catastrophe to make people aware of just how important it is to keep soil in its place and to create a nationwide network of technical advisors like the District staff to help people prevent erosion.

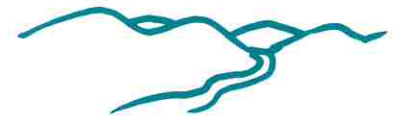
Back in the 1930s, several years of drought and destructive farming practices that left too much exposed soil combined to create a perfect (dust) storm. Over a period of months, wind lifted millions of tons of this unprotected farmland into the air, blew it from the Midwest eastward across the country in clouds big enough to darken the sky, and dropped it into the Atlantic Ocean. Millions of acres of farmland became useless and hundreds of thousands of people who depended on the land were left without a livelihood.

In 1935, Congress established the Soil Conservation Service, a forerunner of conservation districts. Soil Conservation Service advisors began helping farmers across the country implement new ways of farming that reduced erosion, such as strip cropping, terracing, crop rotation, contour plowing, and planting cover crops. And the land began a slow return to health.

## Factors that Influence Erosion and Sedimentation



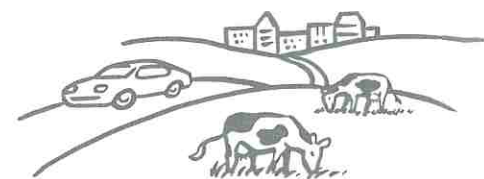
**Climate** – Frequency of storms, intensity of precipitation.



**Soil type and geologic features** – Soil type influences how much water can soak into the ground and how much runs off. Steep slopes erode more easily than flatter terrain.



**Amount and type of vegetation** – The more vegetation (grass, trees), the more water is retained.



**Amount and type of human activity** – Roads change drainage patterns. Construction, logging and heavy grazing by animals reduce vegetation.

developers, earthmovers, timber harvesters, utility contractors, and road builders. These professions are involved with projects that impact the soil in a variety of ways and on a variety of scales, from an individual building a single-family home to the state constructing a major highway.

Our focus with all audiences is to help make sure that earthmoving projects are done in a way that doesn't adversely impact the environment and that complies with state laws.

Services we offer can begin even before a project's plans and blueprints

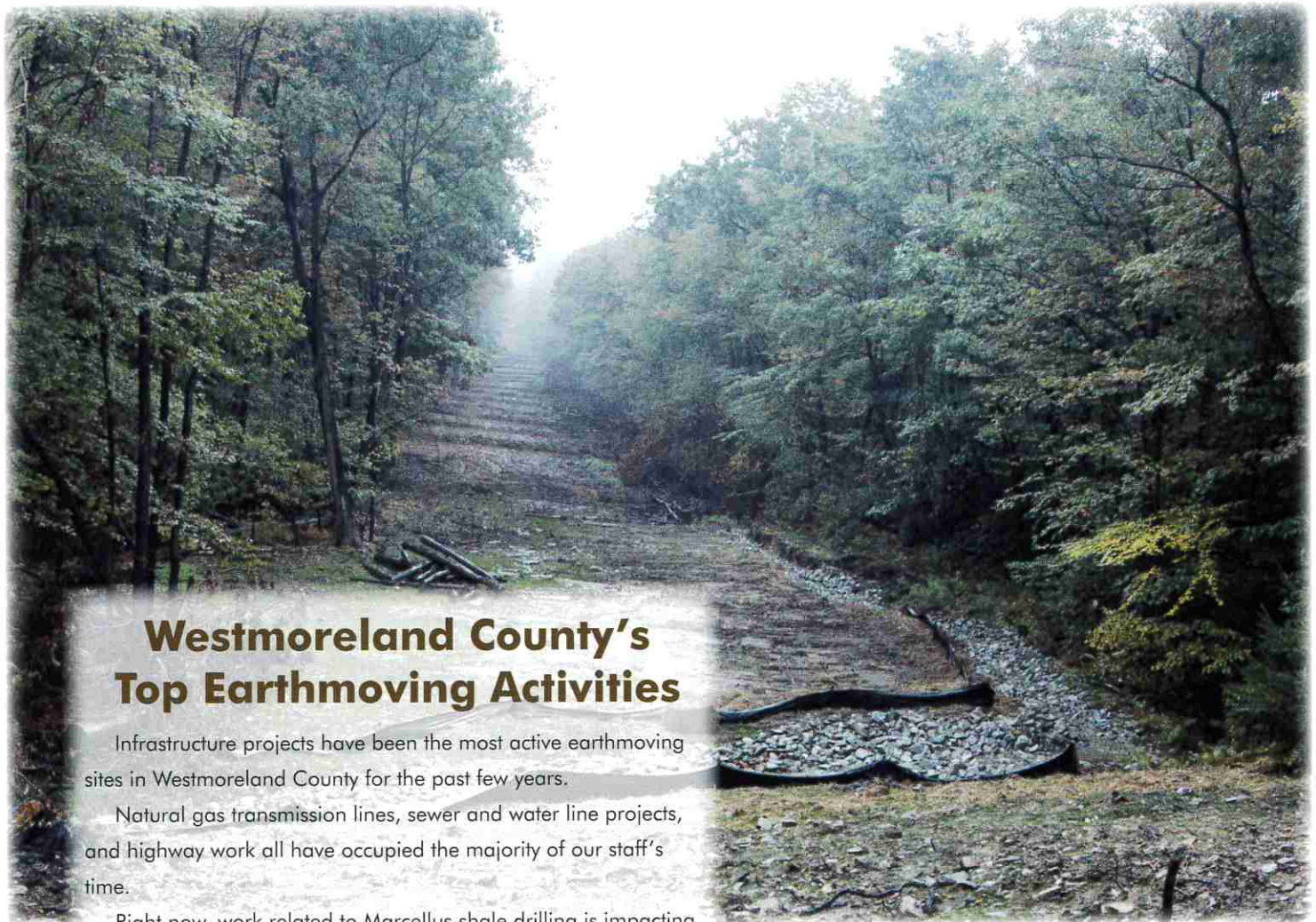
are developed. Our staff can look at a proposed construction site and suggest ways to lessen the project's impact on the land, often saving money on earthmoving costs in the process.

They also can offer general advice and recommendations on what should be in an erosion and sediment control plan, which is required for all earthmoving activities...review written plans when the project needs to have one...offer advice on any municipal or state permits needed for the project and issue permits...and inspect the site during construction to make sure erosion is being effectively

controlled.

Through many years of practical, day-to-day experience, we have found that the vast majority of people will voluntarily take measures to protect the natural resources. In the few instances when we aren't able to get voluntary cooperation, our staff also records violations of the state law and initiates enforcement actions. This authority to enforce the Clean Streams Law in Westmoreland County was delegated to the District in 2010 by the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection.

It takes 500 years to create  
just one inch of topsoil.



## Westmoreland County's Top Earthmoving Activities

Infrastructure projects have been the most active earthmoving sites in Westmoreland County for the past few years.

Natural gas transmission lines, sewer and water line projects, and highway work all have occupied the majority of our staff's time.

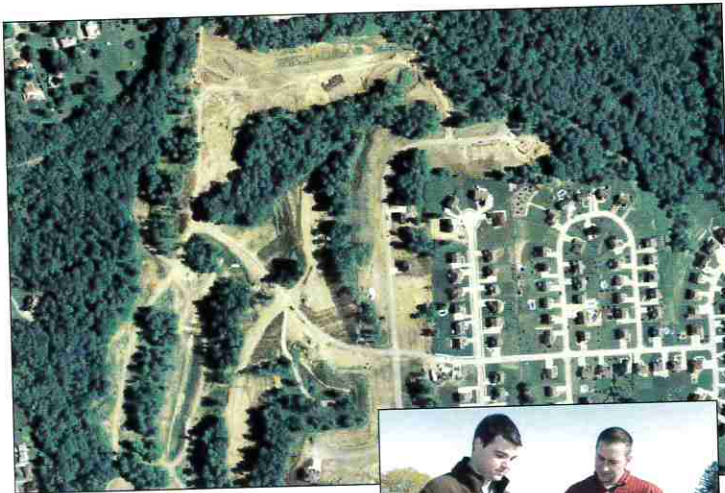
Right now, work related to Marcellus shale drilling is impacting about 1,000 acres of soil a year in Westmoreland County – the same amount development impacted when it was at its peak a few years ago.

Currently, with the exception of natural gas transmission lines, we do not inspect Marcellus shale activities.

North of Ligonier, the Municipal Authority of Westmoreland County is installing a water line.

# Controlling Erosion Throughout the County

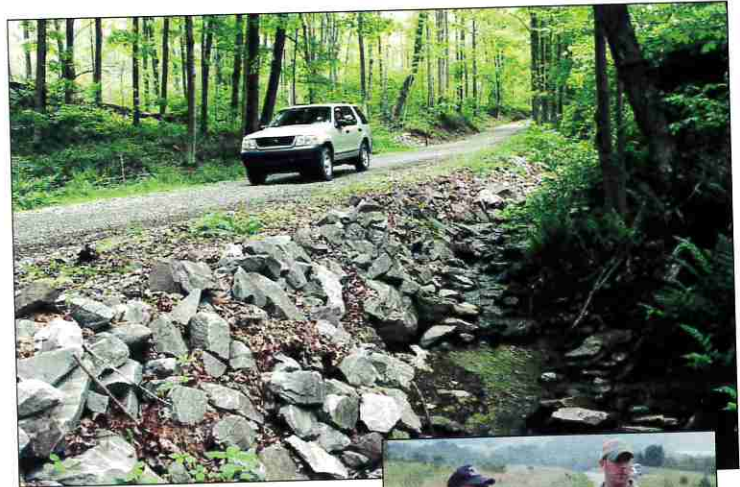
District staff can be found on farms, roads, development sites, and in forests, helping to prevent erosion. Here are our erosion staff and some examples of the work they do.



District staff promote innovative ideas such as low-impact development, which minimizes erosion by not creating it in the first place. Instead of the traditional approach of reconfiguring the terrain, this approach assesses the natural features of a site and designs in harmony them. The result is a more organic-looking development that preserves good features, leaves streamside buffers, and works with – not against – the topography.



*Matt Zambelli, erosion control specialist and Chris Droste, senior erosion control specialist*



Unpaved roads can be inadvertent polluters, with loose dirt and gravel eroding into nearby, often high-quality, streams. The District's Dirt and Gravel Road Maintenance Program improves the surface and drainage from these roadways, reducing sediment and improving the quality of the water for everyone downstream.



*Rob Cronauer (right), watershed specialist*



Following the contour of the land rather than its slope was one of the fundamental erosion-control methods introduced after the Dust Bowl. Contour strips work by reducing the speed and power of rain and melting snow as they flow across the land. Alternating strips of sod with rows of crops adds yet another erosion barrier.



*Dan Griffith (right), agricultural conservation technician*



Improperly located logging roads, not the cutting of the trees, is the biggest cause of erosion during timber-harvesting. District staff work with timber harvesters to install measures such as waterbars, which divert the path of water and prevent it from forming ruts in the temporary roads.



*Tony Quadro (left), forester*

# A Brief History of Soil Conservation

**1935**

Congress declares soil erosion "a national menace" and establishes the Soil Conservation Service.

Farmers are paid to practice soil-conserving farming techniques, such as strip cropping, terracing, crop rotation, contour plowing, and planting cover crops.

Locally, the Soil Conservation Service selects the Beaver Run Watershed to demonstrate these soil-conservation practices.

Some 70% of this watershed has moderate to severe erosion problems, with many hillsides simply abandoned by farmers because erosion has made them unproductive.

Through the two years of this demonstration project, some 200 farmers in this 35,000-acre area are given conservation assistance.

**1936**

Farmers in the Beaver Run watershed, greatly impressed with the demonstration project, form the "Beaver Run Soil Conservation Association."

Members vow to reduce erosion and promote soil-conserving practices.

All sign cooperative agreements with the Soil Conservation Service.

The Soil Conservation Service publishes the soil conservation district law. It recognizes that new farming methods need to be accepted and employed by the farmers on the land rather than by bureaucrats in Washington.

If passed by the states, this law allows farmers to set up their own soil conservation districts.

**1937**



Photo courtesy Natural Resources Conservation Service

Pennsylvania legislature passes the District Enabling Act, allowing local landowners to organize into districts if a majority vote in favor of the referendum.

**1949**

The Beaver Run Soil Conservation Association takes the lead in forming a "Soil Conservancy District" in Westmoreland County.

At the second request of area farmers, on October 21, the Westmoreland County Commissioners unanimously pass a resolution establishing the entire county as a "soil conservation district" – the 26th county in Pennsylvania to be set up this way.

**1954**

First county-wide survey of soils begins. Five Soil Conservation Service soil scientists undertake this work, each walking and surveying the county, acre-by-acre.

This field work continues until 1962.

**1963**

In light of changing land-use trends, Pennsylvania amends its soil conservation law to permit District directors to include one urban director in place of one farmer director.

**1965**

Soil names and descriptions are approved for Westmoreland County's first soil survey.

**1970**

Elwood Leslie becomes the District's executive assistant.

Among his accomplishments are building the District's erosion and sediment control program, which reviews plans for and inspects active earthmoving sites in the county.

**1972**

Pennsylvania adopts regulations for the control of erosion and sediment pollution.

The Westmoreland Conservation District is one of the first in Pennsylvania to implement a soil erosion and sedimentation control program.

**1977**

District hires its first erosion and sediment control technician, Tom Perrine.

**1991**

As land development increases and the number of cooperative agreements with municipalities expands, demand for the District's technical services grows, too. In response, the District adds a second erosion and sediment control technician position, and hires Kelly Sofaly to fill it.

**1992**

The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection delegates to the District responsibility for the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permit program, which controls water pollution by regulating point sources that discharge pollutants into streams and rivers.

This program raises the level of erosion controls required on large earthmoving sites and, in the years that follow, it grows into one of our most important regulatory efforts.

**1997**

Work begins to update the county's soil survey.

Soil and land characteristics determine much of the future of our county – where development will take place, where the best farm soils are, where land of special value exists.

The Pennsylvania State Conservation Commission establishes the Dirt and Gravel Road Maintenance Program to reduce sediment pollution from unpaved roads.

**1998**

Westmoreland Conservation District makes its first allocations under the Dirt and Gravel Road Maintenance Program. Some \$30,000 is shared by Donegal, Fairfield, and Salem townships for projects that improve unpaved roads in their high-quality watersheds.

**2000**

The District reviews its 5,000th erosion and sediment control plan.



**2005**

The District unveils a soil-education exhibit, and becomes one of only a few places in Pennsylvania where visitors can see an interpretive display of our most basic resource.

**2010**

The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection delegates to the District the authority to enforce the Clean Streams Law in Westmoreland County. Having this authority means that, in the few instances when we aren't able to get voluntary cooperation, our staff can take quick and definitive action to correct violations on problem sites and protect our natural resources.

inspecting all active drilling operations statewide, related to Marcellus shale.

But conservation districts like Westmoreland's would still like to be involved, and have a lot to offer.

"Conservation districts have a tremendous amount of local knowledge –

about our counties...our natural resources...and about how to practically balance the needs of industry...landowners...and the environment so that everyone benefits," said Greg Phillips, Westmoreland Conservation District's manager/CEO.

"If conservation districts, the Department of Environmental Protection, the industry and landowners formed a

partnership, we could take Marcellus shale to the "next level" of good conservation practices...and make this a model conservation industry."

One way conservation districts could add value is through a staff person funded to work in areas not currently being addressed. "Conservation district staff could augment the state's regulatory work by promoting additional, voluntary "best management practices" that the industry could adopt," Greg explained. "Many of these practices do not add significantly to the time or cost, but add up to major environmental benefits, especially when you consider the fact that drill sites can remain active for long periods of time."

Best management practices for Marcellus shale drilling could be the same kind of practical steps that many timber harvesters, farmers, developers, and others have voluntarily adopted in their lines of work – things such as reforestation, road stabilization, pasture seeding, soil amendments, and stormwater infiltration and management.

Conservation district staff also could bring to the table new ways of thinking that reduce the impact on the environment or avoid it all together – such as working with the industry and landowners to site drill pads and access roads so that they follow the natural contours of the land (reducing the need to move earth) and avoid prime resources, such as farm fields with productive, high-quality soils and quality timber stands.

Another way conservation district staff could bring value is by working with landowners and the industry to install conservation practices on completed drilling projects that actually enhance the condition of the soil, streams, ponds, plants, trees, and habitat (e.g., lessen soil compaction).

As a first step in getting conservation districts involved with Marcellus shale work, the Westmoreland Conservation District hosted two roundtable meetings this year with government agencies, watershed associations, engineers, nonprofit organizations, and others in the county who are directly involved with some aspect of the Marcellus shale industry. These meetings have been an opportunity to demonstrate expertise, share information, and explore possible partnerships.

## What is Marcellus shale?

Marcellus shale is a rock layer that's a mile or more underground.

It has been underneath western Pennsylvania (and other parts of our region) for millions of years, but most of us didn't know it until recently, when advances in technology made it economically profitable for companies to tap into the natural gas that is stored in the Marcellus shale rock layer.

## How does drilling for natural gas in Marcellus shale impact the environment?

Just as with coal mining and other types of natural resource extraction, drilling for natural gas in the Marcellus shale layer disturbs the land and impacts the waterways.

Drill pads in Westmoreland County, for example, range anywhere from 5 to 17 acres in size. In addition to disturbing land for the drill pad, drilling also disturbs land when it creates access roads and lays pipelines to gather the gas from the drill sites and transmit it to other areas of the country.

Each drill pad can have multiple wells on it and each well will use anywhere from one to five million gallons of water in the hydrofracturing process...plus more for drilling.

## Vertical Versus Horizontal Drilling





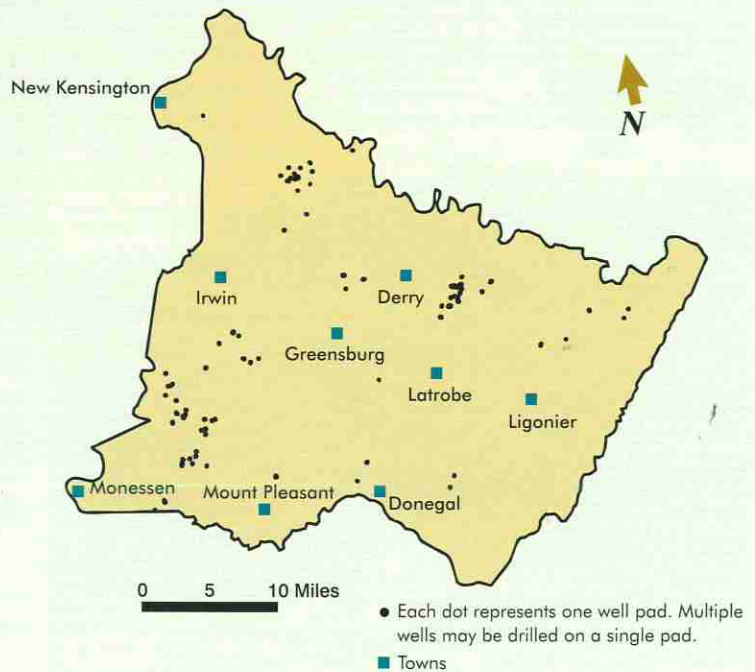
## Marcellus Shale Well Pads in Westmoreland County

Westmoreland County is sixth among Pennsylvania counties with regard to the number of Marcellus shale wells (as of October 2011).

For the period March 2008 through June 2011, there were 83 Marcellus shale well pads in Westmoreland County, representing 420 acres of disturbed land.

**When the amount of land disturbed for pipelines, access roads, and other related activities is added in, the Marcellus shale industry is disturbing about 1,000 acres of ground a year in Westmoreland County – the same number of acres that development was disturbing when building was at its height several years ago.**

In its most recent strategic plan, the Westmoreland Conservation District identified Marcellus shale drilling as one of the top issues, trends, or activities impacting our county.



## Bell-View Food Co-Owners Make Planned Gift, District's First



**R**obert and Betty Fawcett, co-owners of Bell-View Foods of Penn, have made the Westmoreland Conservation District's first-ever planned gift.

"Bell-View Foods works to provide the very best in jellies, pickles, olives, relishes, and much more. The quality of our products depends heavily on the quality of the farm produce we use. That's why we support the work of the Conservation District, which does so much to keep farms viable," said Robert Fawcett, whose father, Hugh, was one of the company's three original founders.

Bell-View was established in 1930 on Pittsburgh's North Side. Located in Penn Township, Westmoreland County, since 1948, the company is still owned by the founders' families.

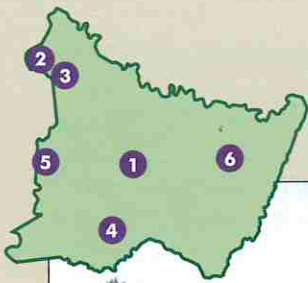
"We are extremely grateful to the Fawcetts for their long-standing support of the District and are very appreciative that they are making our first planned gift," said Greg Phillips, District manager and CEO. "Bell-View Foods stands out as a hometown company that provides quality products and good jobs in our area."

The Fawcetts have been involved with the District since 2006, when Bell-View generously provided all the condiments for our annual banquet. They have continued that tradition ever since, and more. Mr. Fawcett served for two and a half years as a member of the Board of Directors of GreenForge. "We see the good work the District does and we want to make sure that it continues," said Betty Fawcett. "We hope others will consider planned gifts."

Planned gifts are generally those that a person makes as part of an overall financial or estate plan. These gifts can take many forms such as securities, insurance or real estate, and be made in a variety of ways. The Fawcetts chose to make a bequest to the District from their will. Their gift is unrestricted, meaning that the District can apply it at its discretion.

Planned giving is a very personal process – something that each individual determines according to his or her personal life goals and available assets. It is highly advised that planned giving be done in consultation with a professional advisor, such as a lawyer or certified estate planner.

# Conservation Across the County



## 1 Reclaiming land in Bovard

This coming spring, approximately 10 acres of ground that has been damaged from past strip- and deep-coal mining will be reclaimed.

The District is working with the owner of the property in Bovard and the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection on the project, which will add sediment basins and rock channels, and grade the land and reseed it so that what is now unusable can return to productive use.

The Pittsburgh coal seam, which runs right through our county, is the single most valuable mineral resource ever found in the United States and the reason why there was so much coal mining in our county.



## 2 Reducing flooding in New Kensington

We just completed the latest addition – a debris basin – to a major, multi-phase project that's been going on for the past four years to relieve flooding along Little Pucketa Creek near Valley High

School.

The basin, basically a bowl-shaped area of land, is about one acre in size and is located at the far end of the high school property, between the athletic fields and Route 56.

The basin acts similar to the strainer in your kitchen sink, catching pollution – anything from soil to litter – that the creek has picked up as it flows along. Catching pollution at this point in the stream's course prevents it from clogging up downstream near the high school, and contributing to flooding problems.

The basin is a unique design, the first of its kind in Westmoreland County. One like it was created to help relieve similar problems along the flood-prone Girty's Run in Allegheny County, which runs through Millvale.

Some 14,000 citizens and businesses downstream of this work near Valley High School benefit with less chance for flooding and cleaner water.

Partners in this project include the Westmoreland County Commissioners through the state's Growing Greener II fund; former state Senator Sean Logan and former state Representative John Pallone; PennDOT; a Safe Water Appropriations grant from the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, allocated by the Westmoreland County Commissioners; Pucketa and Chartiers Watershed Association; the Colcom Foundation; the New Kensington-Arnold School District, and the Municipal Sanitary Authority of the City of New Kensington.



## 3 Reducing flooding in Kinlock

A new 400,000-gallon detention pond recently built a few miles away from the community of Kinlock means residents there most definitely will notice a big, positive difference in their quality of life.

The basin will capture water that runs off the steep hills above it and then slowly release the water, reducing the damaging floods that have plagued the tiny community outside Lower Burrell for two generations.

Most of the funding for this project came from a Community Development Block Grant, given by the Westmoreland County Planning Department to the City of Lower Burrell. Other partners in the project include: Pucketa and Chartiers Watershed Association, the Municipal Sanitary Authority of the City of New Kensington, and the Westmoreland County Housing Authority.

Our Conservation District staff members are working on a number of conservation projects to improve the land, water, and quality of life throughout the county. Here are just a few.



#### 4 Reducing flooding in Mount Pleasant

The oldest existing borough in Westmoreland County, Mount Pleasant Borough, is undertaking what may be the most comprehensive, community-wide stormwater retrofit ever in Western Pennsylvania.

The Conservation District is working with the borough on the design and installation of upwards of two dozen rain gardens on borough properties and individual homeowner lots in a housing plan called Ramsay Terrace.

Rain gardens reduce flooding by managing excess rainwater. They take some of the rain that normally would flow into the sewer system or the street and collect it in a shallow, unseen trough underneath the plants. The plants then use this water to grow, and any water left over slowly sinks into the ground.

Compared to a conventional patch of lawn, a rain garden allows 30% more water to soak into the ground.

Funding for the rain gardens was provided by the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection through Section 319 of the Federal Clean Water Act administered by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.



#### 5 Improving water quality in Turtle Creek

In Penn Township, near the communities of Trafford and Level Green, about 2,000 feet of the bank along Turtle Creek has recently been rebuilt and stabilized.

The banks of the stream in this area were badly eroded, and were depositing a lot of polluting sediment into the water.

The District worked on this project with local landowners, PennDOT, the Turtle Creek Watershed Association, and the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission.



#### 6 Creating better roads in Fairfield Township and cleaner water downstream

In Fairfield Township, the Westmoreland Conservation District is adding its expertise in improving dirt and gravel roads to a partnership that is paving the way for a variety of positive conservation improvements in this community.

The entire 1.3-mile length of Bailey's Road is undergoing a major transformation – the road surface is being built up, drainage pipes are being added and, in the spring of 2012, the surface of the road will be covered with Driving Surface Aggregate, a compacted mixture of different-sized stones that creates a dense and durable wearing surface.

Not only will this improvement make things better for those who travel this road, it will also benefit everyone downstream by reducing the amount of soil that erodes into the nearby stream. Preliminary studies from the aggregate's developer, Penn State, show up to a 90% reduction in sediment runoff from this material, compared to existing road surfaces.

Partners in the project are Fairfield Township and the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy. Funding is provided by the Growing Greener Program.

Westmoreland  
Conservation  
District

[www.wcdpa.com](http://www.wcdpa.com)

## FEBRUARY



### Southwest Regional No-till Conference Wednesday, February 1

9:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Fred Rogers Center, Saint Vincent College, Latrobe

Park the plow and save the soil. It's a novel idea that is catching on with more and more area farmers because it has so many proven benefits – from improving the soil quality and increasing crop yields, to saving time and money.

Topics of this year's no-till conference will include: reviving the soil after gas well activities; continuous no-till corn in Pennsylvania; and advancements in nitrogen fertilizer.

One of this year's breakout sessions will focus on saving money on the farm. It will explore energy estimator tools for tillage, animal housing, and nitrogen rebate programs for industrial aspects of farming.

Credits available: Nutrient Management Credits, one Certified Crop Advisor credit.

All farmers and interested individuals are invited to attend.

Cost: \$30 if paid by January 20; \$40 after January 20.

Register at [www.wcdpa.com](http://www.wcdpa.com).

## MARCH

### Engineers' Workshop

Thursday, March 15; repeats Friday, March 16

Choose the day that is best for you.

Registration = 8:00 a.m.; Workshop = 8:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Fred Rogers Center, Saint Vincent College, Latrobe

This annual workshop will feature conservation topics of special interest to engineers, municipal officials, planners, developers, and others who routinely work with development projects.

Vendor products will be on display and Professional Development Hours certification will be provided.

More information and registration will be posted on [www.wcdpa.com](http://www.wcdpa.com).



### Fix a Leak and Water Conservation Workshop For Homeowners

Tuesday, March 20

1:00 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.

Westmoreland Conservation District, Greensburg

Learn how fixing leaks will not only conserve water, but also save you money and hassles – from lowering your water bill to preventing septic system failures. Learn how to make simple fixes in your home on faucets and toilets from a professional from Lowe's and learn other water-conservation tips from a water-quality educator. Participants will receive a gift card to Lowe's to put toward leak-repair needs.

Cost: \$5.

Space is limited and registration is required. If you have questions about the workshop, contact Dana at 724-837-1402 or [def18@psu.edu](mailto:def18@psu.edu).

*This is a partner program with Penn State Cooperative Extension, Westmoreland County, and it is supported with funding from the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection.*



### Drinking Water Clinic

Tuesday, March 27

The same clinic is offered twice on this day.

Choose the time that is best for you.

1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

OR

6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

Donohoe Center, Greensburg

This clinic is designed for anyone with a private drinking water system, such as a well or spring, or anyone interested in the quality of such systems. Topics to be covered include: private water system basics, proper well construction and management, wellhead protection and land-use impacts, drinking water standards and water test interpretation, and solving water problems.

Bring a water sample in a sterile container. We will test it at the clinic.

Cost: \$10.

Space is limited and registration is required. If you have questions about the clinic, contact Dana at 724-837-1402 or [def18@psu.edu](mailto:def18@psu.edu).

*This is a partner program with Penn State Cooperative Extension, Westmoreland County, and it is supported with funding from the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection.*

## Gravel Driveways and Unpaved Lanes

Wednesday, March 28

7:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

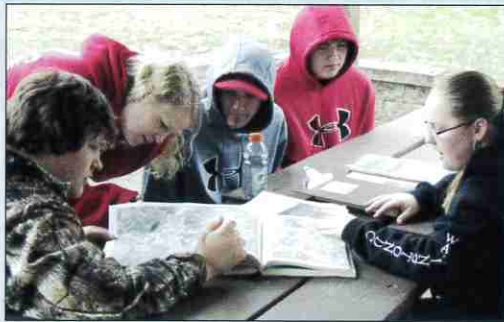
Westmoreland Conservation District, Greensburg

Heavy rains and flooding can wash out gravel driveways and unpaved lanes and access roads. In this informative workshop, participants will learn how to make repairs...and how to help prevent repeat problems in the future.

Cost: \$5.

Space is limited. Register at [www.wcdpa.com](http://www.wcdpa.com).

## APRIL



## Envirothon

Friday, April 27

Time TBA

Twin Lakes Park, Greensburg

This academic competition helps students in grades 9-12 develop a better understanding of the environment and their role in it. Topics include: aquatics, soils, forestry, wildlife and an annual current issue, which this year is nonpoint source pollution and low-impact development.

Free.

For more information, contact Mimi at 724-837-5271 or [mimi@wcdpa.com](mailto:mimi@wcdpa.com).

## JUNE

## Trees of Distinction Tour

Date TBA

Time TBA

Various sites in and around Greensburg and Latrobe

Join Forester Tony Quadro for this informative tour of trees in our area that are noteworthy because of their age, historical significance, size, or location.

Tour begins at Westmoreland Conservation District, 218 Donohoe Road, Greensburg, and participants will use their own vehicles to travel to four to six area sites.

Cost: \$5; free for members of Westmoreland Woodlands Improvement Association.

Register at [www.wcdpa.com](http://www.wcdpa.com).

# NATURALLY Delicious



by Karen Barnhart

## HOLIDAY EGGNOG BUNDT CAKE

- 1 box spice cake mix
- 1 (4-serving) package instant vanilla pudding
- 1 cup nonfat vanilla yogurt
- ¼ cup vegetable oil
- 1 cup eggnog
- 1 egg
- 3 egg whites
- 1 cup chopped walnuts
- powdered sugar

Preheat oven to 350 degrees and spray nonstick Bundt pan.

Combine cake mix, instant pudding, yogurt, oil, eggnog, egg and egg whites in a large bowl and mix well.

Stir in walnuts. Pour into prepared pan and bake 40 to 45 minutes.

Let cool and dust with powdered sugar.

## LANDMARKS

*The Official Newsletter of the  
Westmoreland Conservation District*

Donohoe Center  
218 Donohoe Road, Greensburg, PA 15601

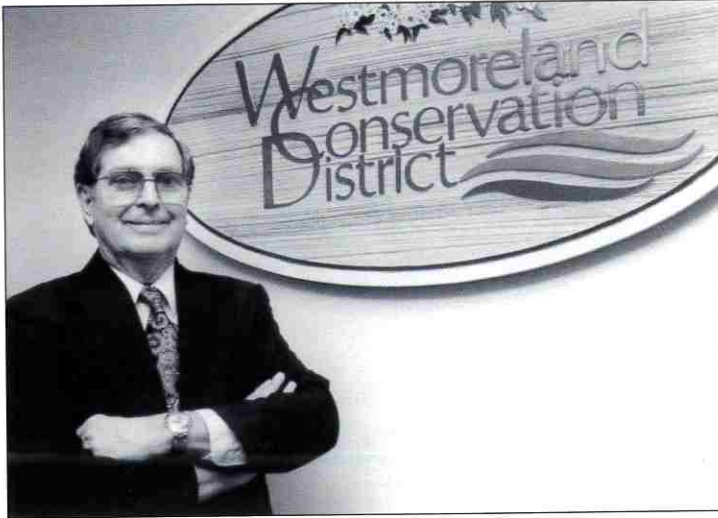
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*Contributing Photographers -  
Rob Cronauer, Chris Droste*

# Remembering Roy



- establishing and endowing the J. Roy Houston Partnership Award, to be given annually to recognize the outstanding contributions of a conservation partner or individual, and
- creating a fund to help assure the continued development of conservation programs relevant to the community.

The campaign goal to fund all three is \$150,000.

In the past few months, we've raised some \$30,000 toward this goal – \$20,000 donated by the District and some \$10,000 donated by friends, family, and colleagues of Roy.

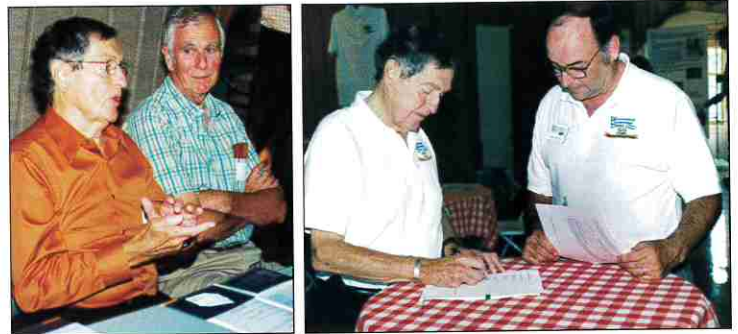
Some of these individual donations were made on the recent Day of Giving, making them eligible for additional matching funds (23 cents for every dollar donated) from the Community Foundation of Westmoreland County.

If you were lucky enough to meet him, you'll probably never forget J. Roy Houston. His quick, wry wit...solid sense of fairness...and cut-to-the-chase way of running a meeting were just some of the things that endeared him to so many people. When he passed away in November 2010, many of us lost a good friend and the District lost its leader and longest-serving volunteer.

In mid-August, we remembered Roy with a light and lively get-together that featured some of the things that were hallmarks of this one-of-a-kind conservationist – Necco Wafers™ ... Iron City beer...motorcycles...and a lot of funny stories.

And in late September, we launched a fundraising campaign to create three, permanent remembrances for Roy. These include:

- building out the District's barn headquarters to meet expanding needs and naming the entire 7,600-square-foot facility in his honor



## How to give

If you haven't yet but would like to be a part of this tribute to Roy, there are several ways to give.

You can send your donation, along with your completed donation form below to the District, or

You can go to the District website, [www.wcdpa.com](http://www.wcdpa.com), and make an immediate donation with your credit card.

## DONATION FORM

### Remembering Roy The Tribute Fund for J. Roy Houston

#### Categories of Giving

- Benefactor\* .....\$5,000 and above
- Patron\* .....\$2,500 to \$4,999
- Sponsor\* .....\$1,000 to \$2,499
- Partner\* .....\$ 500 to \$999
- Associate .....\$ 250 to \$499
- Donor.....\$ \_\_\_\_\_ other amount

\* Donors at the Partner level and above will receive permanent recognition on the Sustaining Donor Wall in the entrance to the District headquarters.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Amount enclosed \_\_\_\_\_ and/or Amount Pledged \_\_\_\_\_

If making a pledge, please indicate if you would like your pledge to be billed and over what period of time (1, 2, or 3 years) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Please make checks payable to:  
Westmoreland Conservation District.

Donations are tax-deductible.

Please return this completed form and your check to:  
Westmoreland Conservation District  
218 Donohoe Road  
Greensburg, PA 15601.

**Thank You.**

# Thank you, Donors!

Thank you to everyone who made a donation to the District in recent months, supporting not only the tributes to Roy, but also all aspects of our conservation work.

## **Benefactor**

*\$5,000 and above*

Laurel Foundation

## **Patron**

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

Louis Battistella

## **Sponsor**

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

William Doney

In memory of Myrna Heyworth – Valorie and Margorie Heyworth

Sewickley Creek Watershed Association

## **Partner**

*\$500 to \$999*

Michael & Karen Jurkovic

Kim Miller

David & Barbara Pezze

Greg Phillips

Westmoreland County Boro Association

## **Associate**

*\$250 to \$499*

Conrad Donovan

Traci Halleck

Kathy Heider

Mary Lou Houston

Teeter Associates Inc.

## **Donor**

*up to \$249*

In memory of Ardis Altman – Alice Meadow

Jason & Karen Barnhart

Botanical Society of Westmoreland County

Robert Brooks

Joanne Caffrey

William Crawford

Charles Duritsa

Terry & Sandy Dzendzel

Bernadette Fondy

Don & Rita Granata

Cathy Herrholtz, Ligonier Construction

In memory of Myrna Heyworth – Alton and Pauline Brown

Jack Hoey

Mark & Jill Jackson

Richard Kacin

Joe Kalinowski

Mr. and Mrs. Richard Kralik

Stephen Pilipovich

Carol Pollock

Ron & Theresa Rohall

Robert Scheib

Christie Sebek

John Skiavo

Jay & Mary Lou Tarara

Nevin & Judy Ulery

List reflects donations received from 1-1-11 to 11-15-11.

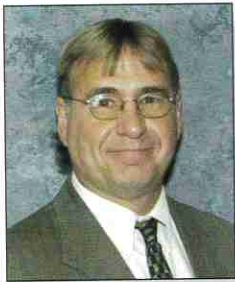
If more than one gift was received, values were combined to determine the level of giving.

# People In The News

## Directors and Associate Directors

**Ron Rohall** was appointed chairman, **Bill Doney** was appointed vice chairman, and **Chuck Duritsa** was named a member of the District's volunteer Board of Directors at the January 2011 board meeting.

Ron has been a member of the board since 1993, and served as vice chairman from 1999 until his appointment as chairman. Bill was appointed to the board in 2001, and served as secretary from 2008 until his appointment as vice chairman. Chuck served as a volunteer associate director from 2006 until his appointment to the Board.



**Ron Rohall** recently received the 2011 National Association of Conservation District Employees District Leader Award.

Ron was nominated for this distinction by the Pennsylvania Association of Conservation District's District Employees Committee. The award was presented during the National Association of Conservation Districts' Northeast Region Meeting in August.



**Chuck Duritsa** was elected chairman of The Ohio River Valley Water Sanitation Commission, which is the water pollution control agency for the Ohio River and its tributaries representing eight

states, including Pennsylvania.

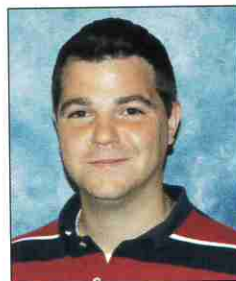
Chuck was appointed to the commission by former Governor Edward Rendell in 2005, and served as the organization's secretary-treasurer and vice chairman.



**Dorothy Stoner**, a long-time volunteer with the District as both a board member (12 years) and, most recently, as an associate board member (3 years), resigned from official involvement with the District in February.

Dorothy plans to continue to volunteer with the District in other ways.

## Staff



**Matt Zambelli** joined the District in September as erosion control specialist.

He is a 2008 graduate of Penn State University and has held various positions in landscape design since then, most recently with Origin4Design in Pittsburgh, where he used GIS to create 3-D models for renovation and retrofit urban design projects.

Matt interned with the District in the summer of 2004, and was instrumental in beautifying the landscape around the District, caring for the trees in the arboretum, and revitalizing the entrance to Ann Rudd Saxman Nature Park.

He replaces Nicole Miller, who resigned this spring to take other employment.

## Interns



**Zeki Alikaya** returned for a second summer internship with the District, doing site inspections for the Landowner Reclamation Program and streambank restoration work at Naugle Run. Zeki recently returned to Oberlin College for his senior year.



**Laura Beskitt** spent three weeks with the District this summer, sampling and analyzing area water quality, as part of an internship with the Municipal Authority of Westmoreland County. This work was a continuation of a project the Waynesburg University environmental science major began last summer.



**Samantha Pedder's** internship involved working on GIS agricultural mapping, sampling and analyzing farm runoff for nitrates, and learning to do agricultural conservation plans. She also worked on compiling a list of water-quality service providers.



## Partners



**Larry Larese** retired in July, after nearly four decades as Westmoreland County's top economic development planner.

He was appointed Westmoreland County's Planning Director in 1972, at age 24 the youngest in the state, and over the years has brought about many important achievements for our county, including 16 fully developed industry parks that attracted 123 businesses employing 9,000 people.

He also helped to found the Westmoreland Transit Authority and the Westmoreland Land Trust; partnered to build two hydroelectric plants; purchased and renovated an abandoned 33-mile railroad and built a \$10 million intermodal rail freight facility that businesses use to ship 5,000 rail cars a year; and initiated a county demolition program and downtown revitalization program.



**Jason Rigone** was promoted in August to executive director of the Westmoreland County Industrial Development Corporation and director of the Westmoreland County Department of Planning & Development.

Jason has been employed with the Industrial Development Corporation for 12 years, and has more than 16 years of experience in the economic development and planning fields, specializing in the development and marketing of industrial parks.

He also previously served as planning coordinator for the Westmoreland County Department of Planning & Development where he was responsible for administering and enforcing county land-use regulations and monitoring county-wide transportation projects.

Jason serves as on the board of directors of GreenForge, Inc.

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or [sandy@wcdpa.com](mailto:sandy@wcdpa.com)



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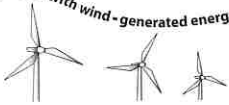


Winner, NACD Communication Award



Winner, Governor's Energy Award

Printed with wind-generated energy!



## Website gets new look, functionality

Last fall, we felt it was time to refresh the District's website, and if you've seen it lately, you know that that effort resulted in a total renovation.

The site has a completely new, fresh look that's easier to navigate, easier to read, and more intuitive, allowing visitors to quickly find what they're looking for.

"We switched the way we manage our content to a popular system called WordPress," explained District Visual Communications Specialist Mark Jackson, "and it's proving to be much more dynamic than our old site."

Shorter homepage items give visitors a quick visual overview of District activities and reduce the amount of scrolling. Content isn't sacrificed, though, as links are provided that offer a deeper level of information on subjects for those interested.

"We also added quick links to the forms and permit information our clients frequently use on the top right corner of the home page...and gave them the ability to track their plan reviews," Mark said.

The new system allows the site's



### Try these!

New, quick links let you access forms and permit information...and track plan reviews.

editors, Mark and Karen Jurkovic, to easily create information and post it simultaneously to different sections of the site, so no matter where a visitor enters, relevant information is available.

"We can create a news item for example, and then post it to the homepage, the calendar, and to a technical program section, all with just three clicks," Mark explained.

[www.wcdpa.com](http://www.wcdpa.com)