

LANDMARKS

Vol. 15 No. 1

COMMITTED TO CONSERVATION

Summer 2000

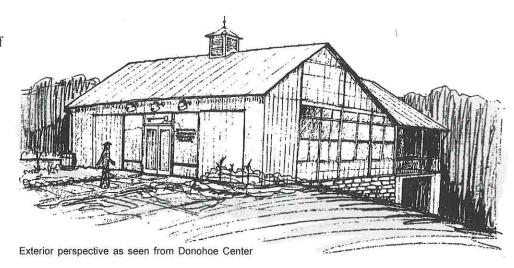
Center For Conservation Education Soon to be a Reality

ike wildflowers emerging after a long winter, the first visible signs of The Center for Conservation Education blossomed this spring. Survey flags were placed to mark the Center's future location on a gradual slope behind the District's headquarters, and yellow poplar logs were stacked nearby, waiting to be sawed into siding for the building's exterior finish.

Behind the scenes, the building's architectural design was finalized, a host of design and building permits were applied for and obtained, and capital fundraising efforts continued, adding the new avenue of in-kind donations to requests for capital funds.

The keystone of all in-kind gifts received was Mr. Kim Miller's generous donation of an existing 120-year-old bank barn. The barn, located in Penn Township, is no longer being used for agriculture. Amish carpenters will carefully dismantle the barn, and authentically reconstruct it on its new site.

Because the barn is approximately



33% larger than the Center as it was originally envisioned, it will give the District more desperately needed space for its conservation outreach programs, which last year reached nearly 25,000 people. The building's larger size also means that our fundraising effort was suddenly short of the mark. The \$252,000 the District had raised to-date would complete only a little more than

half of this larger physical structure. Another \$150,000 would be needed to finish the building.

"We have been aggressively pursuing both monetary and in-kind donations to make up this shortfall," explained District Manager Greg Phillips. So far, we have received commitments for:

- \$1,200 from the Hempfield Township Municipal Authority
- Some \$3,000 from a special appeal to engineering firms in the county
- 850 tons of stone from Pioneer Mid-Atlantic
- Site excavation work from Adam Eidemiller, Inc.
- Concrete block and rebar from Greensburg Concrete Block
- Design and materials for an innovative HVAC system that uses geothermal and fuel cell technologies from Allegheny Energy
- 10,000 feet of yellow poplar logs from Ed Nicholson & Sons Lumber Inc., Ken Nicholson & Sons Lumber

EDUCATION PROGRAM CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT PROGRESSES

our educators and an experienced facilitator have been hard at work developing the core curriculum for the District's soon-to-be-built Center for Environmental Education. The facilitator, Dr. Judith Hechtman, an experienced curriculum developer, has met with the district staff to learn about the District's goals for the education program and to build her knowledge of the technical aspects of the topics. The four educators consist of Ralph Lemmon of Kiski Area High School, Tom Pearson of Sloan Elementary School

(Franklin Regional School District), Fred Goodman of Derry Area Junior High School, and Gerry Police of Greensburg Salem High School.

The facilitator and educators have participated in a "conservation tour" of Westmoreland County and have met several times to develop curriculum for both watersheds and sustainable communities. They are well on their way to completing each curriculum. A one-day teachers workshop to introduce the curricula is planned for the fall.

Continued on page 2



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Center For Conservation Education... Continued from page 1

> Company, and Brown Timber & Land Co.

- · Trucking of those logs from Champion Lumber, and
- · Construction management and inspection services from Mr. Robert Amore.

Karen Jurkovic and Jim Pillsbury also wrote a proposal that received a \$74,000 grant from the state's Growing Greener program to create a stormwater demonstration area at Donohoe Center. Part of that grant will be used to install a cistern for the Center, which will collect and store stormwater so it can be put to beneficial use in the demonstration gardens and arboretum on the Donohoe Center grounds. Grant money also will be used to purchase materials for a new "all-green" 20-car parking lot and access road for the Center. The parking lot will feature a

variety of permeable materials, including recycled plastic pavers, and a non-paved access road from this new parking lot to the Center will demonstrate minimization of impervious surfaces.

"We also received an in-kind commitment for a donation of barn stone that has an especially interesting story with it," Phillips said. "Eleanore Pearson, daughter of Ann Rudd Saxman for whom Nature Park was named, told us she remembered a barn on the nearby property that her mother once owned, and Eleanore went to visit the current property owner, Mrs. Harriet Trice, who had bought the tract from Ann Saxman several years ago. Mrs. Trice told Eleanore that, yes, the stone was still there and that Eleanore should take it, because 'it's yours. When I bought the place, Ann told me that someday you would be back for it.' This is just one of the many ways we have felt the presence of Ann, who was an avid conservationist and member of our board, watching over this project."



Original donated barn to be relocated behind Donohoe Center

If you're in the neighborhood, please feel free to stop by and watch the Center's progress. We are planning to begin the major earthwork in June, and to hold a "barn raising" ceremony later this summer.

THE CENTER FOR CONSERVATION EDUCATION IN WESTMORELAND COUNTY

14 like to have a part in this exciting new outreach to encourage respect

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Return to: Westmoreland Conservation District Donohoe Center • RD #12, Box 202-B • Greensburg, PA 15601-9217



2000 Envirothon Champions - Kiski Area High School

2000 Envirothon Crowns Kiski Area High School

n May 1, students from 10 county school districts descended on Twin Lakes County Park to compete in the 15th annual Westmoreland County Envirothon. The 50 high school students were tested on their knowledge of soils, aquatics, forestry, wildlife, and this year's current issue wetlands.

The top team in this year's event was Kiski Area High School and was represented by: Emily Lauffer, Jon Vandenburg, Casey Conroy, Carolyn Kemp, and Missy Kamperin. The team's faculty advisor is Ralph Lemmon. Second and third place

went to Franklin Regional High School, and Hempfield Area High School respectively.

The Kiski team earned the right to compete at the State Envirothon at Shawnee State Park on May 24 and 25. The final level of competition, the National Envirothon, is to be held in Nova Scotia, Canada in August.

Financial support is provided by Allegheny Energy, SONY, Shop n' Save, Beckwith Machinery Co., Westmoreland County Sportsmen's League, and Jackson Graphics.

CAPITOL DAY

Seeking support for our dedicated staff

ow do we acquire the much-needed additional financial support for our conservation programs? The answer to this question lies on our ability to communicate effectively with our legislators in Harrisburg.

Conservation representatives who made the journey to the state capitol were called into a special meeting the day before they met with the legislators in their districts. The main focus of these meetings was to assist the districts in communicating effectively with the representatives. PACD speaker Kevin Abbey relayed several points that are needed to maintain a healthy relationship with the legislators. Ten items were addressed at the meeting: learn your district boundaries; visit offices and learn staff names; invite your legislators to the conservation district office; write letters and have follow up visits; tell your story using a Geographic Information System

as a demonstration model to show projects that you want funded and show how well the programs are working in their "own district area." This technique often helps relay a message to our legislators and allows them to see what is going on in their district. Providing this information to them is key if you want them to lobby support for your cause.

With these suggestions from the PACD, conservation district representatives arrived at the capitol anxious to lobby for increasing support for district programs and technical staff. Director Ron Rohall, and Craig Barras and Chris Droste from the WCD staff, visited 7 of our representatives. They expressed appreciation to each representative for supporting our programs and asked them to help seek additional support.

A better relationship with our legislators will ensure our message is heard.

Get Dollar\$ for Your \$tream!

Don't miss this conservation opportunity!



THE USDA HAS made enhancements to the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) continuous sign up.

OPPORTUNITIES:

- Create a fenced stream buffer area in pasture. 90% cost sharing for needed fencing, tree planting, stream crossings, and alternative water sources, such as spring developments or solar water pumps. Note: The stream buffer area does have to be planted in a certain number of trees. The area will be allowed to be mowed to control weeds.
- Building sod waterways or filter strips in eligible cropland. 90% cost sharing for construction and seeding.

NEW INCENTIVES:

- An up-front CRP signing incentive payment of \$100 to \$150 per acre will be paid as soon as the contract is approved and all payment eligibility criteria are met.
- The annual CRP rental and maintenance rate paid to participants for the stream buffer area is approximately \$38 per acre.

Sign up for this program is continuous. However funding for the enhancements is limited.

To enroll, Westmoreland County producers should plan to visit the Farm Service Agency office in the Donohoe Center. Contact the office by telephone at (724) 853-5555 option 2 with any questions or visit the FSA home page at www.fsa.gov for more information.

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Growing Greener Grants Funded

State wide more than 800 groups applied for nearly \$26 million in Growing Greener grants to protect and restore watersheds and clean up pollution from abandoned mines. Almost 200 local governments and organizations were successful



DISTRICT PROJECTS FUNDED INCLUDE:

THE JACOBS CREEK Restoration Project, funded at \$21,000, will use a variety of riparian conservation techniques to reduce pollution and improve habitat. The Best Management Practices to be implemented include: streambank fencing, riparian tree planting, stabilized cattle crossings, warm season grass planting, rotational grazing, fish habitat improvement structures, and streambank biostabilization. The project is located on the Jess Stairs farm in Mount Pleasant Township.

The second project funded at \$73,940 will create a Stormwater Management Demonstration Project at the Donohoe Center in Hempfield Township. It will feature an interpretive trail circling the Donohoe Center. The trail will highlight the hydrologic cycle-runoff from impervi-

ous surfaces, storage of water in detention ponds, control of runoff by channels and pipes, and effects of development on stormwater runoff. The grant funds Best Management Practices such as grass-lined swales, waterbars, and infiltration pits. One special feature of the grant project is the installation of alternative pavement materials in the parking lot of the new Center for Conservation Education—plastic and concrete blocks designed to allow the infiltration of stormwater while at the same time supporting vehicular traffic.

Also funded by the grant are companion measures and activities designed to help engineers, developers, municipal officials, and members of the public understand stormwater management. A brochure, newsletter articles, press releases, and a slide-show will help spread the message. The continual use of the trail by District staff as part of their ongoing conservation education workshops program will ensure maximum benefit from the project.

OTHER COUNTY PROJECTS FUNDED INCLUDE:

 Turtle Creek Watershed Association Inc. — \$6,120 for comprehensive water monitoring assessment.

- Loyalhanna Watershed Association Inc. — \$5,675 for stream team monitoring program.
- Turtle Creek Watershed Association Inc. — \$10,200 for streambank stabilization.
- Saint Vincent College, Unity
 Township \$15,300 for streambank protection at Fourmile Run.
- Loyalhanna Watershed Association, Latrobe — \$8,160 for Loyalhanna Creek and Borehole study.
- Sewickley Creek Watershed
 Association, Sewickley Township —
 \$50,000 for removal of iron sludge from the Lowber site.
- Loyalhanna Watershed Association
 — \$4,080 for Loyalhanna Watershed
 Association GPS/GIS Database.
- Saint Vincent College, Unity
 Township \$31,000 for upgrade of experimental mesocosms and collection of abandoned mine drainage.
- Western PA Coalition for Abandoned Mine Reclamation, County-Wide— \$48,000 for Project Gob Pile to develop a strategy and funding mechanism for reprocessing coal refuse piles.

Dirt & Gravel Roads Survey Showcases Natural Assets of our County

uring the last two weeks of April, a District staffer spent almost every daylight hour completing a detailed survey of dirt and gravel roads in the county. This survey identified specific portions of these roads that are causing sediment pollution to waterways. 116 different work sites were identified on many different roads. Each site was given a score/rating based on criteria like: distance from the stream, condition of ditches/banks/surface outlets, canopy cover, road base materials, amount of sediment observed in receiving streams,



and slope of the road. These scores will be tallied and plugged into a fund allocation formula. The results will determine future funding allocations.

The survey showcased the natural

resources that abound in the county. Many of the roads led through some of its most beautiful spots. It is a blessing to have clean streams and diverse, natural areas. While there are erosion problems on some of these roads, it was also observed that the municipalities do a good job maintaining most of the roads on small budgets.

Washington and St. Clair Townships will be completing projects on Barr, Johnny Harr and Wildcat roads this summer. The next round of funding is proposed to be allocated in July.

News 'i

NATURE PARK



Bioblitz Held in Nature Park

The Westmoreland Conservation District along with the Westmoreland County Department of Parks and Recreation hosted a "Bioblitz" at the Ann Rudd Saxman Nature Park on May 6, 2000. A Bioblitz is an event that produces an inventory of the diversity and richness of species, both plants and animals, in a given area.

Several area experts including: a biologist, a botanist, birders, a forester, a herpetologist, and several area naturalists helped to identify nearly 200 different species in the park. Future examinations to find other species which appear later in the year are planned.

Volunteers Stabilize Streambank in Nature Park

In a bold move to counter over twenty years of stream bank erosion in the Ann Rudd Saxman Nature Park, over 25 resource conservation professionals joined Westmoreland's own Wes Gordon (NRCS), project designer, in a Bio-engineering project on April 5th. During an instructional session, the participants learned the technical details behind the many diverse products available for environmentally-friendly erosion protection. Upon descending in the park, the volunteers worked with shovels, picks, and hand tools to install coconut fiber matting on bare streambanks and place log-like rolls of coconut fiber at water's edge in eroded areas. Freshly cut 'live stakes' of wetland shrubs were driven into the stream banks - these will take root and stabilize the earth, and also provide wildlife habitat. In the end, all disturbed areas were seeded and mulched. Future work will address other stream problems in the park.

A LOOK AT THE DISTRICT

District Retreat

The Westmoreland Conservation District held its retreat this year on February 19th at St. Joseph Center in Greensburg. In attendance were six directors, five associate directors, nine staff

members, two representatives from the Department of Environmental Protection, and a representative from the Western Pennsylvania Coalition for Abandoned Mine Reclamation. Tony Quadro (Program Specialist/Forester for the District) lead the morning session covering current District programs and the growth of District staff. Joanne Nardone (Conservation Program Specialist with the Department of Environmental Protection) facilitated the afternoon session; which included new programs, Memorandums of Understanding with affiliated organizations, workload analysis, and planning for future growth and expansion.

Workload Analysis Nears Completion

Working under a directive from the board of directors as a result of the district's spring retreat, Chuck Kubasik, DEP Field Representative, and assistant manager Lorrie Stouffer are in the final phase of a staff workload analysis. The analysis was requested based on indications by staff of growth and program direction, and future projections addressed in the most recent Long Range Plan.

Initial recommendations are to increase the current parttime secretary position to full-time, and to add one erosion control technician to the staff. Several job descriptions will need to be revised to reflect changes in workload, and a shift in duties is suggested for one clerical position.

Final recommendations will be presented to the directors at an upcoming board meeting for final action.

Conservation District Guidelines Under Development

Fueled by funding from a Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture Leadership Development Grant, a two-day workshop was recently held near State College to develop manuals related to Personnel, Financial, and Board/Staff Relationship issues aimed specifically at conservation districts throughout the state.

Directors, managers and staff from the Bradford, Lancaster, and Westmoreland Conservation Districts participated in the session.

which formed work teams to work on the initial draft outlines and materials for the three manuals.

A separate grant was awarded to the Westmoreland Conservation District in the area of Internal Accounting System Development, and is also under development with assistance from Richard Patterson, CPA. Manuals delivered under these grants will be printed in June and subsequent training sessions will be held at future PACD Conferences and regional director meetings.

Notes

PEOPLE

Joint Effort Results in Water Quality Agent

Human activity in the cities and on the farms of Westmoreland County inevitably impacts the quality of our water resources - the streams, rivers, and ground water we depend on for drinking water, recreation, and industrial processes.

To better educate the community about how their activities impact water quality, the Penn State Cooperative Extension has teamed up with the District in an exciting partnership to hire Nicole Foremsky as a Water Quality Extension Agent. Nicole is



a resident of North Huntingdon Township and alumni of Norwin High School. She graduated from Elizabethtown College in 1998 with a degree in Environmental Science/Resource Management. Nicole has gained experience by working with the award-winning Voyager program on Pittsburgh's Three Rivers.

Nicole's objectives will be developed by a committee of interested citizens and agency representatives. She will present education programs to the community and local officials in an effort to improve and protect our water quality. Nicole can be reached at 724-837-1402.

EDUCATION

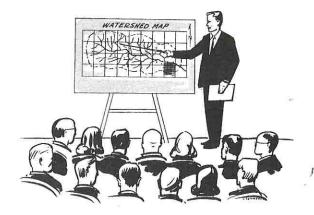
Environmental Logging Workshop Held

Over 25 area loggers attended a workshop on environmental logging which was held on March 24, 2000 at the Florence Lockhart Nimick Nature Center at the

Powdermill Nature Reserve.
Sponsored by the District and the Sustainable Forestry Initiative of Pennsylvania, the workshop included information on erosion and sedimentation laws and

plans, aesthetics, water quality best management practices, and harvest planning.





Pennsylvania's Second Annual Watershed Conference on Abandoned Mine Reclamation

This conference will be held June 16 – 17, 2000 at the Penn Stater Hotel & Conference Center. Reservations are required – Call Mark Killar at 837-5271 for additional information.

The format of this year's conference was specifically designed to encourage open discussion between conference participants and speakers. The Conference Planning Committee strongly encourages active participation in the conference session and sharing of experiences with other organizations.

Loyalhanna Creek Mine Drainage Coalition Monastery Run Project

This special session will take place on July 21, 2000 at St. Vincent College in the Biology Building — 9:30 am. Reservations are not required, but appreciated. Contact Angela Check, 724-532-6600, ext. 2330 for further information. Reports from Summer Institute for Watershed Restoration will be presented.

1999 ANNUAL REPORT REVIEWS

Thank you for sending me your 1999 Annual Report. As always, it's the best, most informative district report I've seen in my time of following conservation and environmental issues around the U.S. I'm forwarding it (once again) to our five-county land trust, which incidentally is moving beyond land easement activities into a broader conservation, land planning, environmental agenda.

Joseph Doherty Chestertown, Maryland

The 1999 Westmoreland Conservation District Annual Report just hit my desk. I immediately pushed all my other jobs, assignments, mail, call back slips and reports aside so I could look at your report and see what kind of neat stuff you did this year. As usual, you did a great job with the report. I look forward to getting your annual report — your accomplishments and the presentation of your success story is attractive.

Bruce Holbrook — DEP Harrisburg, Pennsylvania

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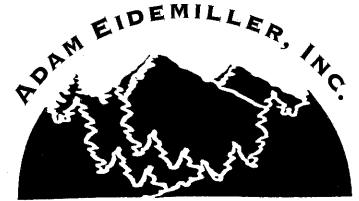
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DISTRICT VIDEO LIBRARY

he Environmental Fund for Pennsylvania and the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection have donated twelve "Green Works for Pennsylvania" videos to our library. "Green Works for Pennsylvania" is an award winning cable television show about Pennsylvania's environment.

Have you every wondered what people are doing to help save the environment? Have you ever wished you could see firsthand what you can do to join the effort? You and your family or organization can borrow these fast paced, thirty-minute videos from our library at the Westmoreland Conservation District by calling Joanne at 837-5271.

Topics include environmental careers, recycling, water quality and how to have a green home and more.

To learn about "Green Works for Pennsylvania," visit their website on the internet at www.GreenWorksChannel.org or call the Environmental Fund for Pennsylvania at 1-877-PA-GREEN.

TITLES INCLUDE:

Transportation and the Environment

This episode takes a look at the ways we get from place to place. Learn about people who get around in ways that minimize their impact on the environment.

Southwestern Pennsylvania Special

This special edition visits the people and organizations of Southwestern Pennsylvania who are working to protect their environment.

Governor's Awards for Environmental Excellence

Visit with several winners of the Governor's Awards for Environmental Excellence. The awards were created to honor those companies, organizations and individuals who excel in the fields of pollution prevention, recycling, land use, technology innovation, energy efficiency, market development, and environmental education and outreach.

Environment in the 21st Century

Learn about the Governor's 21st Century Environment Commission and the issues and problems it has identified in order for Pennsylvanians to maintain and enhance our quality of life.

Buy Recycled

This episode looks at the importance of closing the recycling loop by buying products made from recycled materials.

Home, Green Home

"Home, Green Home" looks at how we can incorporate environmentally friendly technologies in the home.

Environmental Careers

This show is intended for high-school-aged audiences. It features the many career choices available in environmental fields.

Shaping Our Communities

This show focuses on people working to prevent urban sprawl, protect parks and plan for a greener Pennsylvania.

Touch the Water

This episode focuses on water — or rather, it touches the water. This show is all about going out there into the natural world and seeing water up close.

GreenWorks Channel

This episode introduces *GreenWorks*, a new "Green Works Channel," a multimedia interactive Internet Channel that will serve as the center of environmental awareness in Pennsylvania and beyond.

GreenWorks Highlights

This episode is the perfect "primer" on GreenWorks for the first time viewer. This show includes notable excerpts from the preceding season, as well as information and background on this award-winning program.

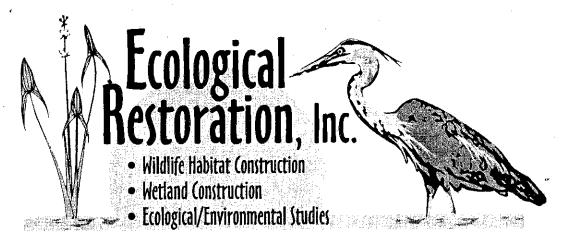
GreenWorks in the City

Green Works host, Anika Hawkins, will take you through various areas of Philadelphia as she tells us about the way environmental factors impact the health and the quality of life for city dweller.

Arbor Day Tree Planting



Planting a European Mountain Ash for Arbor Day at Donohoe Center: (l-r) Jim Pillsbury; holding shovel - Tim Dreier; Bill Davis; Mark Killar; Keith Largent; Kathy Fritz; Tony Quadro, kneeling. This event coincided with the DEP/District Regional Round Table.



- Wetland Construction
- Wildlife Habitat Construction
- Environmental Sampling
- Streambank Stabilization
- Ecological Studies
 - Benthic Macroinvertebrate Surveys
 - Fish Surveys
 - Wetland Delineations
 - Wetland Mitigation Plans

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KATHY'S KIDS KORNER

By Kathy Fritz

Spring District Projects

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Can you find the following words in the puzzle to the left?

- 1. BMP Workshop 8. Floral Planting
- 2. Barn
- 9. Fund Raising
- 3. Bio Blitz
- 10. Growing Greener
- 4. CRP Funding
- 11. Nature Park
- 5. Capital Day
- 12. Technical Staff
- 6. Dirt Roads
- 13. WCD Retreat
- 7. Envirothon

- 14. Water Quality



THE WESTMORELAND CONSERVATION DISTRICT'S 1999 Annual Report mailing envelope featured this brief statement and pictured "Grandma Kuhns' cottage keys". We've hidden those keys in this issue of Landmarks, and will give special prizes to the 12th, 17th and 25th caller (to 837-5271) identifying their location. Good luck!



Looking For Fun Family Entertainment?

Come and enjoy the following events at various Westmoreland County Parks:

- · The 26th Annual Westmoreland Arts & Heritage Festival July 1, 2, 3, 4, 2000 Twin Lakes County Park
- Free Sunday Concerts Held on various Sunday afternoons at Twin Lakes, Cedar Creek and Northmoreland County Parks. Call 830-3950 for more information
- · Five Star Trail Poker Run July 29, 2000 Starting point Lynch Field (This event does require a minimal registration fee)
- August Fun Fest August 13, 2000 Cedar Creek County Park
- Labor Day Celebration September 3 & 4, 2000 Northmoreland County Park





by Karen Barnhart

Independence Day Cake

- 1 package Deluxe Fudge Marble Cake Mix
- 3 ounce package of strawberryflavored gelatin
- 3/4 cup boiling water
- 1/2 cup cold water
- 1 tub vanilla frosting
- 3 ounces softened Cream Cheese
- 2 teaspoons lemon juice
- 20 fresh strawberries

Dissolve gelatin in boiling water, add cold water; set aside at room temperature.

Prepare and bake cake as directed on package for 13" X 9" pan. Cool cake in pan on rack for 25 minutes. Poke deep holes through top of cake with fork; space holes 1 inch apart. Slowly pour gelatin mixture over

cooled cake. Set in refrigerator while preparing

In medium size bowl, mix cream cheese and lemon juice till well blended.

Stir in vanilla frosting. Spread on cake. Decorate with strawberries.

Note: Cake must be stored in refrigerator and served chilled.

LANDMARKS

The Official Newsletter of the Westmoreland Conservation District

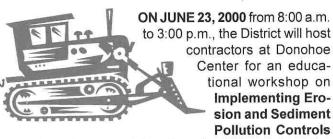
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JACKSON GRAPHICS: MARK JACKSON, STEPHANIE LAFRANKIE - GRAPHIC DESIGN

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Be in the Know...

Upcoming Workshop for Earthmoving Contractors



in the field. Representatives from the USDA-Natural Resource Conservation Service, Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection and the Conservation District will be on hand to cover various topics. Some of the topics included on the agenda include: Vegetative stabilization of sites for different slopes and soils; proper construction of swales, ditches, channels and sediment basins; alternatives for 'inlet protection' on street catch basins; and the importance of following proper construction sequences. Also, a special guest will be on hand to present each participant a certificate for attending the session. Call Kathy Fritz at (724) 837-5271 to register by June 16th. The cost is \$10 per person, to include a copy of workshop materials, coffee/donuts and a catered lunch. We look forward to seeing you there!

Nutrient Management Field Day Announced

WHERE:

Stanley Auen's Farm & Mark Feiling's Farm

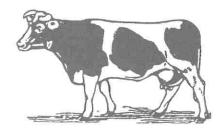
WHEN:

June 20, 2000 at 10:00 a.m.

DEMONSTRATIONS INCLUDE:

Manure injection, manure pit safety, tractor rollover demo, solar water pump demo, rotational grazing, etc.

Lunch provided if you register by June 19. Contact Dan Griffith, Nutrient Management & Conservation Technician at (724) 837-5271.



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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

Winner, National Association of Conservation Districts, 1997 Communications

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