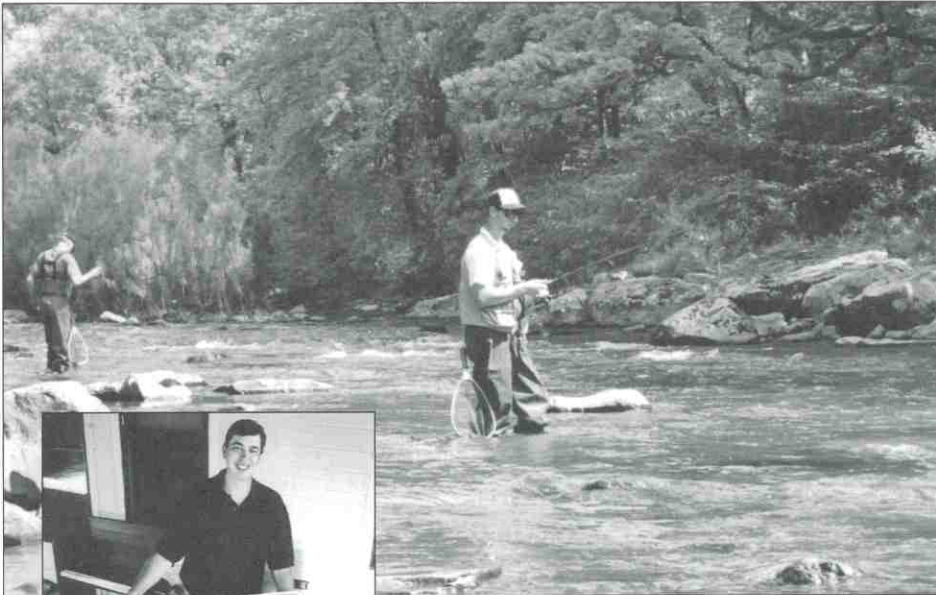


Focusing on Clean Streams...



Dirt and Gravel Roads to See Improvement; Area Streams to Benefit

by Mike Barrick

Residents in three Westmoreland County townships will find traveling a little smoother on some local dirt and gravel roads, and everyone who lives downstream will benefit from cleaner water, thanks to recent grant awards.

The grants are part of a program to address the impact local dirt and gravel roads have on the quality of water in our streams and waterways. In many cases, these unpaved roads run right beside the streams and, if the roads are not properly designed and maintained, can send significant quantities of dirt and gravel into the streams, degrading the quality of the water.

All of the following recent grants will benefit Westmoreland County's high-quality streams as well as the

continued on page 2



Area streams and rivers are beginning to get a little more attention, thanks to grants used to purchase and install name signs in 83 places in the county where state highways cross over streams and waterways.

Motorists traveling along Route 31, for instance, will now see signs with the name of the stream when they cross over Brush Run or Jacobs Creek, and travelers on Route 711 will see signs identifying Four Mile Run and Mill Creek.

The effort is part of a program to raise awareness of waterways, connect people to their watersheds, and encourage them to protect these water resources.

Mike Barrick, District watershed specialist (pictured with sign), helped local watershed groups partner with their municipalities to apply for the grant program. Signs were installed by the respective municipalities in the following watersheds: Jacobs Creek, Loyalhanna, Pucketa and Chartiers Creek, Kiskiminetas, Indian Creek, and Turtle Creek.

The program had many partners to make it happen. The Pennsylvania Organization for Watersheds and Rivers (POWR) initiated the idea and received a Growing Greener grant from the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection for the cost of the signs. POWR enlisted the resources of Pennsylvania's Resource Conservation & Development (RC&D) Councils to promote the program and accept applications, the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) to approve the format of the signs and their locations, and local municipalities to install the signs.

One identification sign is installed on each directional side of state-owned bridges that cross over the streams and rivers. It is estimated that traffic flow by most signs averages 500-1000 vehicles a day.

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Dirt and Gravel Roads continued from page 1

source of drinking water for many county residents.

Donegal Township, Indian Creek, Indian Creek Watershed – Received \$7,650 for work on about 2,200 feet of Lower Tabernacle Road, from Hunters Road south.

Over time, the driving surface of Lower Tabernacle Road has worn to the point where it is lower than the level of the ground on either side. This bowl-like shape causes the road to act like its own stream channel. Rain and melting snow flow down the road instead of sheeting off of the road surface and into drainage systems.

To correct this problem, the road will be filled with shale to raise it up to the level of the berms and to create a proper surface profile that will encourage runoff into new drainage systems, which will be added to minimize erosion of roadside ditches and sediment in nearby Indian Creek.

Cook Township, Four Mile Run, Loyalhanna Watershed – Received \$13,300 to improve a little more than

a quarter of a mile of Noel Road. This road experienced the same 'channeling' problem as Lower Tabernacle Road in Donegal Township (see previous).

Like Lower Tabernacle Road, Noel Road will be filled with shale and profiled to encourage proper drainage and to minimize erosion into the nearby stream, which in this case is Four Mile Run.

Salem Township, Crooked Run, Beaver Run Watershed – Received \$4,050 for work on a road (Crooked Run Road) and on the adjacent stream (Crooked Run), which in this case, is actually the cause of much of the road problems because it frequently jumps its banks and runs down the road.

Grant funds will be used to install rock along the bank of the stream (to minimize erosion), and to smooth out the stream's flow by building a head-wall that will direct it into an existing culvert.

Grant money also will be used to improve about one-half mile of Crooked Run Road.

The Beaver Run Watershed is the source of drinking water for some 40,000 customers.



Dirt and gravel roads are a problem for water quality when sediment from roadside ditches and driving surfaces washes into the streams. The sediment pollutes and potentially warms the water, both of which can cause problems for aquatic life.

The Dirt and Gravel Roads Program is designed to minimize sediment pollution to these waterways. It does this by using best management practices proven by the Penn State Center for Dirt and Gravel Roads.

Townships that applied for the grant program had their projects evaluated by members of the District's Quality Assurance Board (QAB), which consists of District Director and Vice Chairman Ron Rohall, District Watershed Specialist Mike Barrick, Waterways Conservation Officer Jim Vatter of the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission, and District Conservationist Tom Sierzega of the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

The QAB presented its recommendations to the Conservation District Board, which approved the awardees in November.

Grant money – provided by the Pennsylvania Conservation Commission – was distributed in December 2004 and January 2005.

Education Center Update



Gil Maurer and other members of the Botanical Society of Westmoreland County helped divide the perennials in front of the Center last fall.

Progress continues on transforming a 1880s barn into the District's conservation education center.

Recently, the large loft was completed. District Associate Director Keith Walters installed all of the electrical wiring and lighting, and Associate Director Al Barnett and staff Jim Pillsbury, Kathy Fritz, and Rob Cronauer stained the woodwork. Carpeting was installed and furniture is being ordered for this loft, which will serve as a resource library and small conference area.

The Education Center's first-floor main entryway and reception area also will be getting a new look, thanks to the District Board's approval to purchase new furniture for these areas.

Currently, the Board also is considering a plan to enclose the outdoor deck on the south side of the main meeting room to provide additional office and meeting space.

Forestry Partnership Revisited

by Tony Quadro

The Westmoreland Conservation District has been providing forestry assistance for more than 15 years to the forest landowners of Westmoreland County.

Part of the District's success in this area goes back to a 1990 agreement it made with the Pennsylvania Bureau of Forestry – Forbes District, in which the two agencies formally agreed to work together in the effort to conserve forests and associated resources on both public and private lands in Westmoreland County.

The District and the Bureau of Forestry outlined the specifics of their cooperative partnership in a written Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), which, for the past 14 years, has guided their work. Through the MOU, the District and the Bureau of Forestry have been able to provide a greater level of assistance than either agency could provide individually.

At the District's November 2004 Board meeting, it was recommended that this 1990 MOU be revisited to make sure that it is best meeting the needs of both the landowners and our forest resources. The Board appointed a committee to conduct the review: District Director and Vice Chairman Ron Rohall, Associate Director Bob Ackerman, and Forester Tony Quadro. This committee will meet with the Pennsylvania Department of Conserva-



Westmoreland County's forested land provides many benefits for all residents, including: clean air, clean water, protected soils, aesthetics, forest products, wildlife habitat, recreational opportunities, and economic benefits.

Properly managed forests provide a greater amount of benefits than non-managed lands. Mismanaged forests may be damaged to the point of non-productivity.

tion and Natural Resources Bureau of Forestry District Forester Ed Callahan, and Service Forester Tom Fitzgerald.

Together, the committee and its advisors hope to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the forestry program and meet the management challenges and opportunities facing today's forest landowners.

If treated with respect and caution, our forest resources will provide benefits today without compromising their ability to continue to provide for future generations.

Some of the forestry services that the District provides are:

- woodland management planning,
- reforestation and tree-planting advice,
- erosion-control advice,
- Stewardship Plan development, and
- general technical advice.

Clean Water & Dollars May Flow Into Sewickley Creek

Information contributed by Bob Hedin, Hedin Environmental, a consulting firm in Pittsburgh
Photos courtesy of the Sewickley Creek Watershed Association

In addition to its benefits to Sewickley Creek, the Youghiogheny River, and local industry, this project has the potential to influence the future of AMD cleanups in other parts of Westmoreland County, the state of Pennsylvania, the United States, and perhaps even in the world.

By recovering a marketable product in the process of cleaning a discharge, the Lowber project demonstrates a financial incentive – which may attract more commercial investment in these projects ... and so can accelerate the number of stream cleanups.



Harvesting iron oxide at Lowber.



The iron oxide is dried and compressed so that it can be used to manufacture pigment.



The concrete floor at the Westmoreland Conservation District (left) and the picnic table (above) were colored with pigment from Lowber iron oxide.

Every year for the past 50 years, water escaping from an abandoned coal mine near Lowber has been flowing into Sewickley Creek, and polluting it with about one million pounds of iron oxides.*

This abandoned mine discharge (AMD) is the largest in the lower Sewickley Creek watershed. One of the biggest challenges to getting it cleaned up has been the amount of money it would take to build, operate, and maintain a treatment system large enough to do the job.

For several years, the Sewickley Creek Watershed Association has been working on an innovative idea that has the potential to clean up this sizeable discharge and, at the same time, create a commercial product that could be sold to pay for most, if not all, of the cost of the cleanup.

The idea, developed by Pittsburgh-based Hedin Environmental, is to create manmade ponds and wetlands near the discharge and route the mine water into this system, where it will be held long enough for the iron oxide to settle out. This is essentially the same passive process used in the AMD treatment system at Saint Vincent in Latrobe.

The difference is what happens next. At the Lowber site, the iron oxide would be periodically removed from the system, and cleaned, dewatered, and dried to form a clean solid that could be sold as a pigment.

A pilot project at the site several years ago proved that this idea of recovering a resource from an abandoned mine discharge is possible, and that there is a market for the product. In that test, 80 tons of iron oxide from Lowber were

recovered and processed, and sold to a pigment company for coloring in wood stains, paint, and concrete. Since then, another 1,000 tons of iron oxide have been removed.

The next step in the process is to build the actual full-scale treatment/processing system. \$1.2 million was received last year from the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection's Growing Greener program for construction, and the project is now in the design phase.

Clearing and grubbing and rough earthmoving at the site will likely begin this winter. The bulk of the construction will occur in the summer of 2005, and the project is scheduled to be completed by the end of 2005.

When it is fully operational, the system should reduce the amount of iron from the 70 milligrams per liter

currently in the discharge, to less than 5 milligrams per liter after the discharge is treated and allowed to enter Sewickley Creek.

The Lowber treatment project is a partnership effort.

The Westmoreland Conservation District is providing technical and administrative assistance for the project. Because of his work with a number of watershed associations in Westmoreland County, District watershed specialist Mike Barrick will regularly share

the progress and positive outcomes of this project with those in other parts of the county who might also be able to apply a similar approach to the AMD problems they face.

The Sewickley Creek Watershed Association obtained the Growing Greener grant to construct the treatment project and is administering the project. Hedin Environmental is the lead consultant.

** figures from Hedin Environmental, Inc.*

Sewickley Creek originates near Pleasant Unity in Unity Township and travels through Mount Pleasant Township, Hempfield Township, Youngwood, New Stanton Borough, Hunker, South Huntingdon and Sewickley townships before emptying into the Youghiogheny River near West Newton.

In addition to Lowber, other major abandoned mine drainage (AMD) sites in the watershed include Wilson Run and Brinkerton.

AMD is one of Westmoreland County's most serious water-quality problems. Approximately 10% of the streams in our county are impaired with mine drainage.

Flooding Aftermath Assessed



WCD Hydraulic Engineer Jim Pillsbury inspects flood debris from the Loyalhana Creek near Latrobe after Hurricane Ivan.

Ahurricane and heavy rains – contributing to a year-and-a-half-worth of rain falling in just one year – have caused a good deal of damage in our county.

In the past few months, the District assisted the Natural Resources Conservation Service in identifying properties in the county damaged when Hurricane Ivan hit in September. District Hydraulic Engineer Jim Pillsbury and Erosion Control Specialist Rob Cronauer accompanied NRCS District Conservationist Tom Sierzega to sites in the Ligonier, Derry, Greensburg, and New Kensington areas.

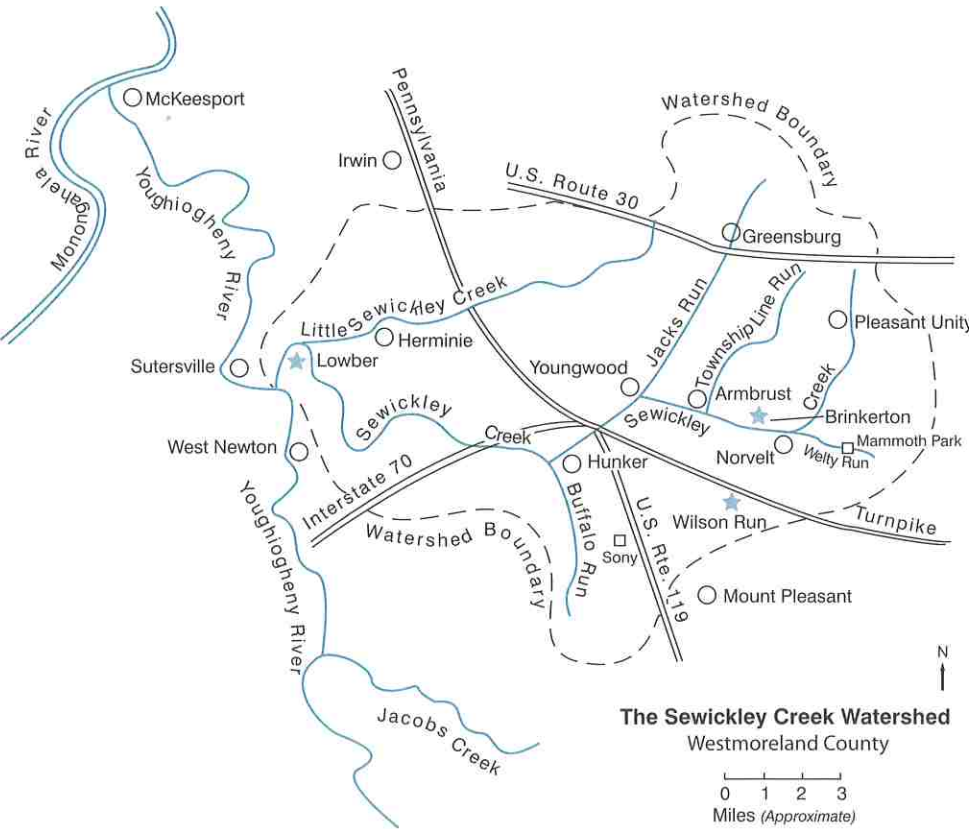
Properties damaged by streambank erosion during the hurricane are eligible to receive federal aid because of the federal disaster declaration.

Remediation measures will be designed by the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, making this effort a true local, state, and federal partnership.

In early January 2005, heavy rains resulted in serious flooding along the main stem of Sewickley Creek. Homes, businesses, and public property were under water in Youngwood, New Stanton, and the Waltz Mill areas.

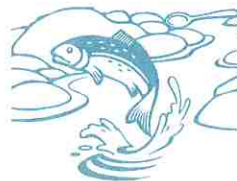
The District plans to promote new efforts to address flooding and the management of stormwater in the Sewickley Creek Watershed (see map on this page) during the coming year. A comprehensive plan for the watershed would identify problem areas, recommend solutions to flooding, and establish guidelines for municipalities and land developers to follow to prevent future runoff and flooding problems.

District staff can provide information, education, and technical assistance to Westmoreland County landowners to help them control flooding and manage stormwater on their property.



Lowber is just about two miles upstream from where Sewickley Creek empties into the Youghiogheny River...so much of the polluting iron oxide from the Lowber discharge ends up in that river, often showing up as a large orange plume of pollution that travels along the river's eastern shoreline.

Sewickley Creek is a popular fishery above the Lowber discharge.





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Meet the Directors

The 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 development, project and 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.

In this issue, we focus on Conrad Donovan.



Conrad Donovan

Perhaps more than any other single individual, "Connie" brings a range of valuable insights and talents to the Board. His diverse experience as a cattle farmer, municipal manager, historic home restorer, and auditor all have helped the District successfully undertake some very nontraditional projects – the largest being the new Education Center.

Connie's start on the board began in 1995 when he was

recruited by one of Westmoreland County's conservation pioneers, Frank Skacel.* Connie explained that day: "I was baling hay for Frank, and when we got to talking he said that he was about to retire from the District Board after more than 20 years as treasurer and that he'd like to nominate me for a Director position." By early the next

year, the transition was made. Connie, who at that time had a 100-head cattle farm near Donegal, served for three years as a farmer Director until 1998, when the Board appointed him treasurer – a position he has held ever since.

Connie's skills and his experience as an auditor with Sarp & Company in Greensburg were invaluable when the

District undertook the most ambitious capital project in its 50-year history: moving, reconstructing, and transforming a 120-year-old barn into an Education Center. "What started out as a picnic pavilion with storage became a \$1.6 million project with financial and in-kind support from more than 100 different supporters," Connie explained. Accounting for that variety of income and for the many



Connie reviewing a subdivision plan to ensure it meets ordinance regulations for development.



Photo by Sandy Donovan

Connie custom round bales as a contractor for various farms in Derry Township from mid June through mid July.

expenditures of the project could not have been done without Connie's skills.

Likewise, his abilities in historic renovation – he has been interested in historic furniture since 1970 and currently is restoring an 1848 farmhouse near Derry – also helped the District manage the many challenges of making an 1880s barn habitable for people, while retaining its historic value.

In April of 2004, this talented man entered yet another field – municipal management – when he became the township manager for Mount Pleasant Township. It is a job that takes him into all functions of daily governance, from township road maintenance to community recycling ... from sewage enforcement to stormwater management.

He also serves as treasurer of the Westmoreland County Cattlemen's Association, and as a board member of the Westmoreland Fair. Connie also is involved with the new public forum, "Future of Agriculture," to create a more certain future for farming in Westmoreland County. "We have to help farmers have local markets for their products so they can make a profitable living and we can keep farming in our county," he said.

The Donovans' recently restored stone farmhouse in Derry Township was originally built in 1848.

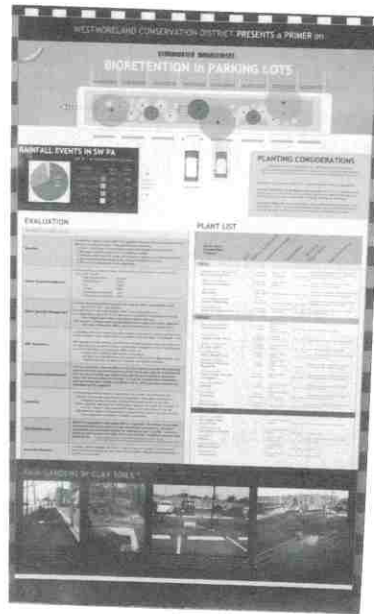
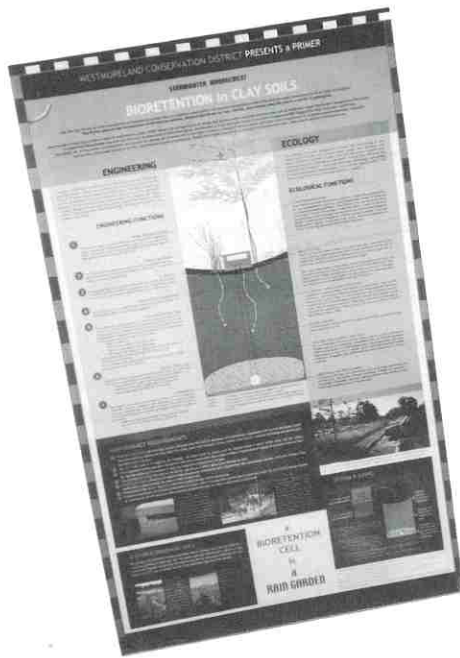


The Donovans at home: (l to r) daughter Valerie, wife Sandy, and Connie

* See page 15 for a tribute to Frank Skacel, who passed away on September 29, 2004.

The “Flip Side” of Stormwater Management: Poster Details the “Tasteful” Attributes of a Bioretention Cell

by Jim Pillsbury



New two-sided poster features bioretention cell – an ideal way to manage stormwater from large paved surfaces, such as parking lots.

One of the tastiest breakfasts imaginable on a gray winter day is a huge stack of fluffy, golden-brown hotcakes. The right way to cook them is to use an old-fashioned iron skillet, heated up and greased with bacon drippings. Pancake batter made from a local mix is best—Hepler’s Hardware in New Stanton and the Saint Vincent Gristmill both sell their own mixes. After pouring a ladleful of batter onto the griddle, the cook (none other than this hydraulic engineer) watches until little bubbles form and break. Then, he flips the pancake over...cooks it on the other side...and eats it with butter and maple syrup!

With this mouth-watering illustration in mind, consider the complex nature of stormwater management—the wide variety of site factors that go into a design, the broad scope of rainfall and resource data available, and the numerous solutions available to the problem of increased volume and velocity of runoff. Designers use Best Management Practices (BMPs) to address stormwater issues, and finding detailed BMP design information in one place is certainly quite helpful. On

the other hand, so much information might be overwhelming; it would fill a thick book!

Recently, the District partnered with Pittsburgh landscape architect and stormwater specialist Suzy Meyer of Image Earth to produce a BMP design aid – a full-color poster – that guides designers through the process of creating a relatively new, effective, and aesthetically attractive way to manage stormwater. Called a “bioretention cell,” this method is ideal for managing water runoff from the large expanses of paved surfaces in parking lots.

A bioretention cell can be any shape, but all are created below the surface of the parking lot, filled with soil that has been amended with sand and organic material, and planted with shrubs, flowers or trees. What looks like a landscaped island functions as a kind of catch basin that captures the rain and snow melt from the parking lot and slowly allows it to sink into the ground below.

The Westmoreland Conservation District has been actively promoting this kind of innovative stormwater management method because it has so

many benefits over the conventional storm sewer approach. These benefits include: less need to build and maintain an elaborate infrastructure (and so less taxes), more recharging of the groundwater, less flooding, and cleaner water (plants, grass, and soil all act as water filters).

Over the past few years, the District has installed demonstrations of innovative stormwater approaches – from wildlife ponds and rain gardens, to cisterns and swales – on the grounds of its Conservation Education Center. This new poster on bioretention cells is the latest product cooked up in the effort to showcase their benefits.

Like a pancake, this poster is done on both sides. One side has engineering information to aid designers in choosing the right mix of soils and the right type of stone underdrain. It lists maintenance requirements for bioretention cells and discusses the ecological benefits of a typical cell – benefits that include removal of pollutants, cooling heated runoff, and reduction of peak flows. It includes a graphic illustration of the volume of water retained in the bioretention cell.

The ‘flip side’ of the stormwater poster helps designers to evaluate the suitability of bioretention cells and to choose appropriate plants to grow. It covers BMP integration; that is, the use of multiple BMPs to address varied stormwater management conditions. It also illustrates the frequency and intensity of rainfall events in southwestern Pennsylvania. Photos, resources, and web links are included on both sides of the poster.

Thanks to funding from the Western Pennsylvania Watershed Protection Program and the Canaan Valley Institute, we are able to distribute this poster to engineers, designers, and municipal officials hoping to learn more about bioretention of stormwater.

For more information, contact Jim Pillsbury at 724-837-5271.

County Adopts Comprehensive Plan

At the end of December, Westmoreland County Commissioners voted to adopt a Comprehensive Plan.

District Manager and CEO Greg Phillips was part of a steering committee that worked to gather information, solicit public input, and develop the plan, which is a vision statement for Westmoreland County.

“Westmoreland County is a very special place to live,” Greg said. “We have an enviable mix of rural farmland and small town urban areas. Our families can enjoy miles of trails, acres of parks, some of America’s earliest historic sites, and professional quality art, music, dance, and theatre. Our residents are seeing increasing opportunities for employment and real job growth in economic sectors that pay above-average wages. And it is important that we set and follow a vision for our county that will allow us to protect – and enhance – these things that make Westmoreland so special.”

County leaders and expert planners held 13 public meetings over the past year in communities throughout the region to get the thoughts of area citizens on Westmoreland County’s strengths and weaknesses, and what they wanted our county to look like in the future.

That public input, along with demographic, regional, and other relevant data, helped produce the County Comprehensive Plan.

The plan offers specific recommendations local governments and citizens can follow to ensure that our county maintains a pleasing quality of life. Some of those recommendations include ways to improve transportation, create more choices in housing, improve the visual aesthetics in the



Alex Graziani, executive director of the Smart Growth Partnership of Westmoreland County, speaks in support of the Comprehensive Plan at the December 30, 2004 County Commissioners meeting.

built environment, protect open space, and revitalize older towns.

The District has a copy of the plan, which is several hundred pages long. Anyone who would like to come into the District offices to review it is welcome to do so. The Westmoreland Conservation District office is located on Donohoe Road, just one mile from Westmoreland Mall in Hempfield Township, and office hours are Monday – Friday, 8 a.m. – 4 p.m.

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Annual Banquet Showcases Long Time C

More than 150 friends of conservation gathered in a glistering ballroom of the Four Points Sheraton on Friday evening November 19 to enjoy fellowship, honor outstanding service to conservation, and partake of a feast of international flavors and farm-fresh bounty.

John Lohr, county executive director of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Farm Service Agency, graciously donated his time and talents to serve as master of ceremonies for the evening's events.

District Chairman J. Roy Houston conducted a meeting of the board that included brief reports from staff highlighting some of the conservation work underway in the county – projects that included water quality, erosion and sediment control, watershed activities, and stormwater management.

Next was dinner – a unique variation on the traditional smorgasbord. Instead of one long food table as most buffets have, a variety of food stations were set up. Four stations featured international cuisines – the flavors of Italy, America, Mexico, and Eastern Europe. There also were stations for salad, homemade breads, desserts, and beverages. Guests moved among the stations as they liked, picking and choosing whatever foods they wanted to try.

Featured fare also included foods grown and produced on farms here in Westmoreland County.

- Friendship Farms of Unity Township provided the breads
- Sand Hill Berries of Mount Pleasant provided the berry pies
- Kerber's Dairy of North Huntingdon provided the ice cream, and
- Hutter's Dairy of Kecksburg provided the white and chocolate milk.

The evening concluded with the presentation of five awards for outstanding commitment to conservation.

Farmer of the Year went to Hopeway Dairy Farm in Crabtree. Wayne and Hope Frye, along with their grown children Kelley, Patrick and Craig, and long-time farmworker Dave Faith, manage the day-to-day responsibilities of this sizeable operation, which encompasses some 700 owned and leased acres and more than 400 cows. Hopeway has one of the highest numbers of cows in the county and so what



It's a full house.



Door prizes featured locally produced items.

happens on this operation in terms of conservation measures makes a significant impact.

Over the years, the Fries have installed a number of important conservation measures and best management practices, including: several spring developments ... contour strips ... roof runoff management ... a manure storage pit and milkhouse waste management ... and a forested riparian buffer along the stream corridor on their home farm that flows into Crabtree Creek.

They also installed stream crossings, and rotational grazing on a farm they rent in the Whitethorn Watershed, which has been identified as a local watershed of special emphasis. Whitethorn is part of the larger Kiski-Conemaugh Watershed, which contains the second-highest concentration of farms in Westmoreland County.

Conservation Service Award went to Wesley Gordon, who recently retired as district conservationist with the Natural Resource Conservation Service.

In the 27 years he spent in Westmoreland County, Wes helped scores of farmers and landowners implement conservation measures on their properties – from contour strips to diversions; from crop rotations to waterways. Today, the office that Wes ran helps more



Paul Heyworth's accepted by his WCD



Waiting for Kerber's ice cream to top a piece of pie from Sand Hill Berries.



Retired Penn's Corner RC&D Coordinator, Nevin Ulery (left) receives award from WCD Director Albert Barne

than 1,200 farmers practice conservation each year.

Wes also took a leadership role in a number of important community-based conservation initiatives – from the early projects of the Rural Abandoned Mine Program...to the Jacob's Creek Flood Control project that created three dams and one channel to protect areas such as Scottdale and Everson from the devastating effects of major flooding...and, most recently, to the system of wetlands at Saint Vincent in Latrobe that demonstrate how iron oxide can be removed passively and effectively from an abandoned mine discharge.

Conservation Service Award also went to Nevin Ulery, who recently

Conservationists and Bounty of the County



Induction into the Hall of Honor is Cyrena and daughter Valerie from Chairman Roy Houston



Socializing and networking



WOW...Hot keilbasa and kraut on a fresh hard roll from Friendship Farms!



Four members of the Frye family were on hand to receive the Farmer of the Year award from District directors Roy Kemerer and Kim Miller.



Retired NRCS Conservationist Wes Gordon, center, is recognized by WCD Directors Dorothy Stoner and Ron Rohall.

retired after 30 years as coordinator of Penn's Corner Resource Conservation and Development, a federal program that helps rural communities improve their economies through the wise use and development of natural resources. For 12 years prior to that, Nevin worked for the Soil Conservation Service, now known as the Natural Resource Conservation Service.

In those 42 years, Nevin managed an enormous variety of projects all over Westmoreland County. Many of these projects improved our quality of life and will continue to do so in the years to come – projects such as the development of the lake at Northmoreland Park, the handicapped access in Twin Lakes Park, and the mine water remediation work in Sewickley Creek Watershed.

Making these projects a reality took a lot of skill and hard work. Nevin interfaced with hundreds – possibly even thousands – of people here in Westmoreland County. And he did an

outstanding job of getting the right people together and behind a project. His ability to balance the needs of our local area with the objectives of the federal agency he represented created win-win situations for all.

Eagle Scout Project – A certificate of recognition was given to Glenn Ruff of Jeannette, a junior at Penn Trafford High School, who improved pathways and drainage in Ann Rudd Saxman Nature Park as his Eagle Scout Leadership Service Project.

A key intersection of the park's popular walking trails was muddy and uneven from poor drainage and part of the path was overgrown with vegetation.

Glenn enlisted family and friends and built two drainage ditches, each about two feet wide and one foot deep. They used the earth they excavated to rebuild eroded sections of the path.

Hall of Honor – Paul Heyworth, a retired area newspaper writer and long-time conservation advocate, was post-

humously inducted into the District's Hall of Honor.

Paul served the District as vice chairman from 1968-1970 and as associate director from 1975-2004. He was one of conservation's most passionate advocates. His style was designed to get people thinking and talking about the soil, forests, land, and water.

Wherever he went, Paul cajoled and challenged because he made it his purpose to stir up passion, and ultimately action, for the cause of conservation.

In more than 30 years of dialog with friends and strangers alike, Paul helped to create an army of new conservation advocates, generate financial and in-kind support, and create public policies that benefited the Westmoreland Conservation District and the overall cause of conservation.



The banquet attracted a great deal of interest from the local media, including the Latrobe Bulletin and Tribune-Review, both of which sent reporters and photographers to the event. The Tribune-Review also ran a full-page article on the awardees and locally produced foods on the front of its "Westmoreland Sunday" section of the paper the Sunday before the banquet.

People In The News

Recent Appointments

District Director reappointed

P. Roy Kemerer was reappointed to a new four-year term as a District director by the Westmoreland County commissioners at their meeting in late December.



Roy has been a vital part of the District since 1982, when he was appointed as an associate director. In 1988, he was appointed director, and in 1995, he was elected Board secretary.

Roy is the owner and operator of a 102-acre dairy farm in Pleasant Unity. He also serves the community as chairman of Governmental Relations Board, Westmoreland County Farm Bureau; Region V vice president of the Pennsylvania Young Farmers and National Young Farmers; leader of 4H dairy club for Mt. View agricultural projects; and chairman of the Trustees of the United Methodist Church, Pleasant Unity. He has been a superintendent for Ayrshire cattle at the Fair for the past 30 years.

Roy and his wife Thelma have six grown children, three of whom are actively working in agriculture on dairy farms in Kecksburg, Westmoreland County (daughter Nevada); Somerset County (daughter Sue), and Crawford County (son Richard). They also have 15 grandchildren and 12 great grandchildren.

District Associate Directors Change

Two long-time associate directors concluded their formal service to the District this fall and four new associate directors were appointed.

Harry Meyer, who has been a friend, advisor, and consultant to the District in various capacities for nearly 40 years, resigned his associate director position for personal reasons, including the significant travel involved to get to District meetings from his home near Washington, PA. We regretfully accepted Harry's resignation with the stipulation that he remain

available to provide guidance via the telephone and email.

Mark Jackson, who served as an associate director for 17 years, also resigned that position this fall to assume full-time employment with the District as a visual communication specialist providing graphic, photographic, design, and creative services.

The following individuals were appointed as new associate directors.

Ted Kopas – Chief of staff for Westmoreland County Commissioner Tom Balya and former public information specialist for the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection's Office of Policy and Communications in Harrisburg.



John Turack – Washington Township supervisor who boasts a variety of community involvement, including work with the Smart Growth Partnership of Westmoreland County, the Westmoreland Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee, and the



Westmoreland Conservancy.

Joe Kalinowski – Secretary of the Westmoreland Woodlands Improvement Association, member of the Volunteer Initiative Project of the Pennsylvania Forest Stewardship Program, Pennsylvania CleanWays, and retired mechanical engineer.



Anita Foriska – Owner/president of Laurel Circle, a local public relations and communications company, and owner of "Summer Winds Farm," a 30-acre farm in Unity Township.

Each new appointee received a copy of the District's recently completed guidelines for associate directors, which outlines their duties and responsibilities.

Staff appointments

District Manager and CEO **Greg Phillips** was reappointed to the Board of Directors and the Leadership Advisory Committee of the Smart Growth Partnership of Westmoreland County. He will serve a one-year term on the board and as a member of the Program and Planning Committee. The Smart Growth Partnership's mission is to work with the county's cities, townships and boroughs to address the challenges associated with economic growth and revitalization.

New County Commissioner appointed

Phil Light was chosen in October to fill the vacancy on the county board of commissioners created by the death of Terry Marolt. Thirty-four candidates



County Commissioner Phil Light visited the District in December to meet staff and get an overview of the conservation work being done in our county.

sought the position, which was filled by a decision of Westmoreland County's 11 judges.

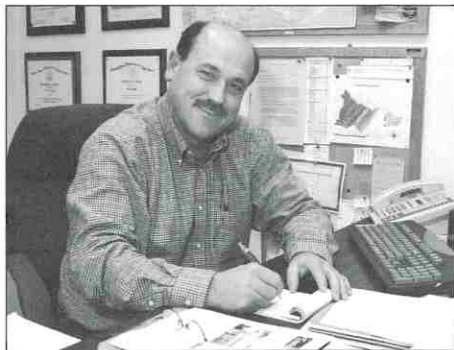
Commissioner Light is a resident of Laurel Mountain Borough, where he has served as mayor since 1998.

Prior to his appointment as county commissioner, he served as the county's assessment director.

Natural Resources Conservation Service appointments

In early August 2004, **Thomas Sierzega** was named District Conservationist for the USDA Natural

Resources Conservation Service. His office is in Donohoe Center and he heads a team of NRCS professionals that work primarily in Westmoreland County, but who also are available to assist with work in Indiana County.



During his 28 years with NRCS, Tom has developed a broad base of knowledge. He has worked in Virginia and Maryland as well as in Pennsylvania, and he has addressed natural resource needs in counties that ranged in nature from heavy dairy farming to up-scale horse farming (he prepared plans for farms owned by both Jack Kennedy and Elizabeth Taylor). He also has worked in urban environments.

Most recently, Tom was with NRCS in neighboring Washington County, which he says, is similar to Westmoreland in its diverse mix of urban and rural communities.

Tom has two children, a son Philip who is in his second year of studying new media design at Rochester Institute of Technology in New York state, and a daughter Katie who is a junior at Peters Township High School in Washington County. Tom can be reached at 724-834-3970, ext. 115.

Bobbi Bailey is the new Resource Conservation & Development (RC&D) Coordinator for the nine-county region in southwestern Pennsylvania known as 'Penn's Corner.'



She leads a council of volunteers from the local area who identify the needs in our region and undertake projects to address those needs. "When local communities have resource issues, RC&D can help in a number of ways – with technical assistance, administrative assistance, education, fundraising advice, partnership building, and so on," Bobbi explained.

Projects might include abandoned mine reclamation, recreational trail development, and the installation of dry hydrants (see page 1 for RC&D's latest project in Westmoreland County).

A native West Virginian, Bobbi especially enjoys the variety of projects her new job presents. "RC&D addresses a range of problems – from environmental to social, recreational to aesthetic," she said, "and variety is something I discovered I really liked when I worked as an agricultural extension agent for West Virginia University. There were a lot of different challenges in that job and I enjoyed finding ways to solve them."

Bobbi's experience also includes work as an environmental specialist with the West Virginia Conservation Agency – a position in which she was involved in nutrient management, erosion and sediment control, and watershed planning – and, most recently, service as a soil conservationist with NRCS in Greensburg, where she worked on conservation planning for agricultural producers in Westmoreland and Indiana counties.

Growing up on a beef cattle farm also fostered a life-long love of agriculture and led Bobbi in 2003 to start a college scholarship program for Future Farmers of America and 4H high school students interested in grassland management. The program has awarded \$4,000 to four students since it was founded.

Bobbi has both a Bachelor of Science and a Master of Science degree from Virginia Tech. She can be reached at 724-834-9063, ext. 116.

Michele McDonald is the newest addition to the Natural Resources Conservation Service team. She is working in the Donohoe Center NRCS office as a technician, which means she is helping to write conservation plans, doing soil maps, and assisting with the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program.

Michele graduated from Clarion University in 2001 with a Bachelor of Science degree in geography and Geographic Information Systems (GIS).

After graduation and while working in retail, she volunteered with the NRCS office in Clarion for about a year and spent a good part of that time

assessing that county's streams. "Many of the streams in that area were in horrendous condition from mining in the 1970s and 1980s," she explained.

In 2003, the Clarion NRCS office offered her a full-time job with expanded duties, and she took classes in soil science to supplement her degree and volunteer experience. As an NRCS technician in Clarion, Michele helped to layout spring developments, promoted Best Management Practices, and provided technical assistance to farmers and residents in the area.

She came to the Greensburg NRCS office in mid-October 2004, and can be reached at 724-853-5555, ext. 119.

Retirement

Shirley Toth, program technician with the United States Department of Agriculture Farm Service Agency (USDA-FSA), retired in November after completing 36 years of service.

Shirley joined the agency in November 1968 in a temporary position. "She thought she was just going to help out for a couple of weeks," explained USDA FSA County Executive Director John Lohr, "but she ended up staying for more than three decades. And we're glad she did. Shirley was a fine employee who did whatever was asked of her cheerfully and pleasantly."

Shirley is well-known to many area farmers, and working with them was a part of her job she especially enjoyed.

Much of her work involved managing the administrative activities such as payroll, leasing, inventory, and elections that are part of FSA's operation. Her work increased in volume and complexity over the years to the point where, when she retired, Shirley had been tracking some 700 separate folders of information for the USDA's Direct and Counter-Cyclical Program alone.

"It is a job that could easily overwhelm someone, but Shirley developed a system for handling the many different aspects of the program that was efficient and systematic," John said.



continued on page 15



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Shirley also did administrative training for the Farm Service Agency.

In her retirement, Shirley plans to continue to sing with the Sweet Adelines, work at Heinz Field during Pitt and Steelers games, spend time with her grown children Leila and Joel, and enjoy the new home she and her husband Ken designed and built a few years ago with its views of Chestnut and Laurel Ridge.

With Sympathy

Frank E. Skacel Sr., a lifelong Derry Township farmer and pillar of the Westmoreland Conservation District Board of Directors for 26 years, died on September 29. He was 85.



Frank E. Skacel Sr.

Frank was appointed as a director of the District in 1968. In 1972, he was elected vice chairman of the Board and in 1975, he was elected to also hold the office of treasurer.

Frank continued in these dual roles until 1980,

when he and Gib Hutter divided up the responsibilities – Gib assumed the role of vice chairman and Frank, treasurer.

It was a role he held for the next 15 years and one he was uniquely suited to.

“Frank treated the District funds as if they were his own,” remembered District Chairman Roy Houston. “In



Frank Skacel, center, and a colleague help greet the Conservation Queen in the 1960s.

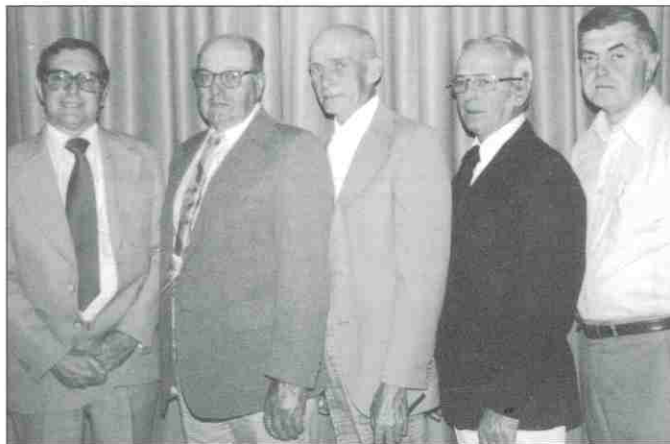
the early days, we would go out to his dairy farm twice a month with the checks for him to sign, and we’d sit at his kitchen table and enjoy some home-made pie or cookies made by his lovely wife Mary, while Frank went over each and every check. He asked tough questions about the reason for every expenditure and he scrutinized the allocation of every penny.”

The careful way Frank managed District funds helped to build a solid financial base that continues to benefit the organization today. And Frank’s unwavering dedication provided meaningful direction to nearly all other aspects of the District’s work as well. “Frank thought the District’s business was extremely important and he didn’t believe in canceling meetings for things like snow and bad weather,” Roy recalled, “so there were many times Frank and I would head home in a snowstorm after a District meeting, sure that we were about the only people on the road.”

Frank’s outstanding service to the District earned him the distinction of being named the organization’s first and only Director Emeritus. “We created this position of honor specifically for Frank after he retired from the board in 1995,” Roy explained. “We’ve had a lot of directors over the years and we certainly will have many more, but we wanted to pay tribute to Frank in this special way because he set a standard we all can aspire to.”

Frank received many additional, well-deserved awards during his lifetime, including awards for his farming operation, such as the Goodyear Award of Merit (1994) and Outstanding Young Farmer (1973). He also was a charter member of the Westmoreland Farmland Preservation Program, a founding board member and regional representative with the Young Farmers, and a supporter of the Future Farmers of America.

Roy Kemerer perhaps summed up



A distinguished group of WCD Directors pose during the 1970s. (l to r) J. Roy Houston, Frank Skacel, William Buttermore, “Gib” Hutter and Alex Smith.

this remarkable man most simply and best when he remembered Frank as “a very good farmer, good neighbor, and a good friend.”

Frank Skacel is survived by his wife of 62 years, Mary; his son, Dr. Frank E. Skacel; two daughters, Margery Schell and Linda Sinemus; a daughter-in-law, two sons-in-law, and four grandchildren.



Frank at his Derry Township farm with dog Bruiser in a portrait by Emil Kuhar.

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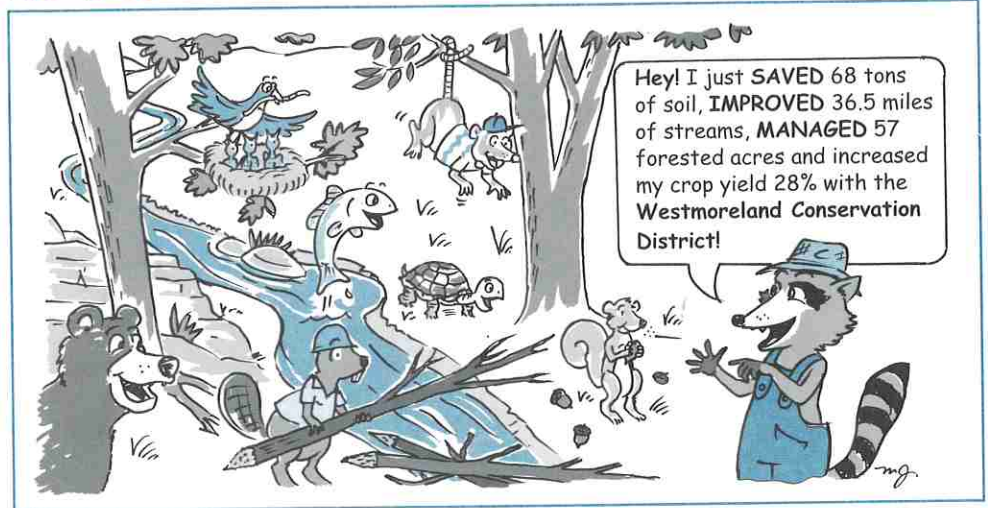
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In The Field

by Mark Jackson

Conservation Tip
This spring, do a soil test before you plant your garden. That way, you'll know which nutrients to add...and how much of each. For a soil test kit, contact Penn State Cooperative Extension Office at 724-837-1402.



KATHY'S KIDS KORNER

by Kathy Fritz



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Farmers - and Owners of Pleasure Horses - Please Note: You May be Affected by Changes in Nutrient Management Regulations

by Dan Griffith

Pennsylvania's Nutrient Management Law (Act 6) is currently under review, and while no changes have yet been made, there has been a good deal of discussion on some topics that could affect a number of Westmoreland County farms, if changes do occur.

The most far-reaching of these potential changes is that all livestock operations (including pleasure horse operations) that have eight or more "animal equivalent units" (8,000 or more pounds of animals) would be subject to the regulations of the Nutrient Management Law. Some operations also may be required to have a nutrient management plan.

As the Nutrient Management Law currently stands, only operations that have production animals and have them in a fairly high concentration are required to have a nutrient management plan.

Under the changes now being discussed, more kinds of operations – including those that raise or maintain livestock for production, for transportation, or for recreation – may also be required to have a nutrient management plan if they have eight or more animal equivalent units. If enacted, this change will affect a number of additional farms in Westmoreland County, including a number of pleasure-horse owners.

The proposed changes will not affect operations having less than eight animal equivalent units (less than 8,000 pounds of animals), regardless of the livestock density of the operation.

Other potential changes to the law now being discussed include:

- a requirement that **phosphorus application rates** be documented in all nutrient management plans (currently, the law requires that only nitrogen rates be documented),
- a requirement that a nutrient management plan can be approved only



What is a nutrient management plan?

A nutrient management plan is a recommended course of action a farmer can take to keep nutrients (fertilizers and animal wastes) out of nearby streams and waterways.

Depending on the particular conditions of the agricultural operation, a nutrient management plan might recommend that the farmer: add fencing along the stream to restrict where the animals can cross the waterway, install gutters and drainage systems in the barnyard, build a storage pit for manure, or adopt a program of rotational grazing.

In addition to conservation benefits for the soil and water, a nutrient management plan also helps farmers by making them eligible to apply for certain cost-share programs that help pay for the conservation measures.

for operations that have a **current erosion and sedimentation control plan** (or conservation plan), since reducing soil erosion has a positive effect on reducing phosphorus loss,

- a requirement that **soil tests be conducted every three years** for fields covered under a nutrient management plan (currently, the law sets this test requirement at every six years), and
- a requirement that **manure tests be conducted every year**.

The State Conservation Commission (SCC) is reviewing the Nutrient Management Law and considering changes as part of a periodic review process to ensure that the regulations are appropriate and achieving the desired results. This is the first review undertaken since the Nutrient Management Law (Act 6) was enacted in 1997.



Twenty-nine farms in Westmoreland County currently have nutrient management plans. Every one of these plans – which identify ways to manage animal waste and protect water quality – was done **voluntarily** by the farmers. No farm in Westmoreland County currently has the kind of conditions that would require that farm to have a nutrient management plan. A farm is required to have a nutrient management plan if it has a certain "livestock density," which is the ratio of number of animals to acres of land. That livestock density is roughly two cows per acre.

The State Conservation Commission involved a number of people in the review process, including a statewide committee of representatives of various agricultural agencies and academic institutions. The SCC also held a number of public hearings on the law and potential changes.

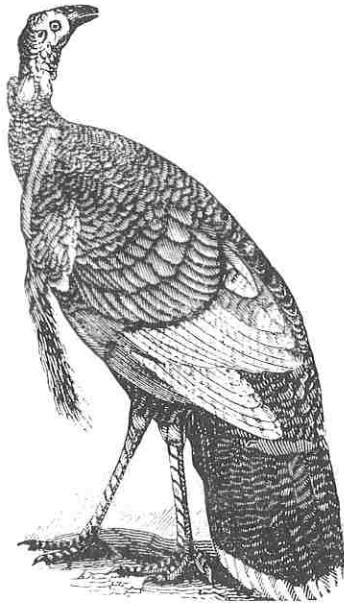
It may be yet another year before any changes are actually approved and incorporated into the law, so the items presented in this article could still change. Watch future issues of *Landmarks* for the latest information.

You also may call Dan Griffith, the District's nutrient management/agricultural conservation technician, if you would like to discuss the particulars of the law and how they relate to your operation. Dan also can help you explore the benefits of adopting a nutrient management plan for your property.

His number is 724-837-5271.

Cooking a Conservation Turkey

by Jim Pillsbury



One of our county's wilder inhabitants is the turkey. Once proposed by Benjamin Franklin to be our national symbol (the Bald Eagle won out), the wild turkey is a strong, smart, and resourceful resident of our fields and woodlands. Recently, one such creature found itself out-smarted by District Erosion Control Specialist Rob Cronauer, armed with a gun!

Arriving at work one morning last spring, staff found feathers strewn about and a large football-shaped carcass in the fridge. The task of turning this trophy into a tasty treat for our tummies fell to Hydraulic Engineer Jim Pillsbury and his able assistant Program Secretary Kathy Fritz. Jim went

to the store and bought the following items:

- bags of stuffing mix
- Granny Smith apples
- sweet onions
- green onions
- butter
- whole-berry cranberry sauce
- package of thick-sliced bacon.

Jim diced the apples and sliced up the green onions, while Kathy melted the butter and mixed it with diced sweet onion. In a large bowl, they combined the stuffing mix, apples, onions, butter, and the whole-berry cranberry sauce. Placing the turkey into an electric roaster, Jim and Kathy stuffed this mixture into the bird and packed the rest around the outside. (Wild turkeys don't have a very large opening to stuff.)

Jim added a little water and arranged the bacon strips in layers over the top of the turkey, in place of the turkey's skin, which Rob had abandoned in the woods for the raccoons. All morning long this delicacy roasted, driving the District employees crazy-er with its tantalizing scent. By noon, a large crowd had gathered, and soon the incredible taste of wild game bird satisfied us all!

Perhaps next Rob will bag a bear, and we will see what the engineer can do with that!

According to the Pennsylvania Game Commission, hunting of **SPRING GOBBLER** (bearded bird only) can be done from **April 30 to May 28, 2005.**

Only one spring gobbler may be taken during the license year.



NATURALLY Delicious

by Karen Barnhart

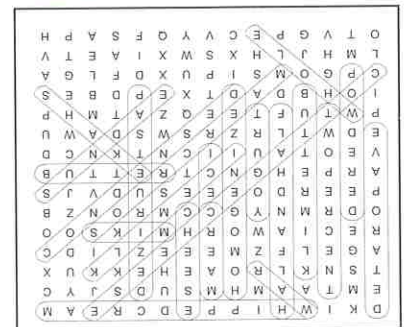
Here's another favorite from the family cookbook.... (great with conservation turkeys).

BREAD STUFFING

- 3/4 cup minced onion
- 1-1/2 cups chopped celery
- 1 cup butter or margarine
- 9 cups bread cubes
- 2 teaspoons salt
- 1-1/2 teaspoons crushed sage leaves
- 1 teaspoon crushed thyme leaves
- 1/2 teaspoon pepper

In large skillet, cook and stir onion and celery in butter until onion is tender. Stir in about 1/3 of the bread cubes. Turn into deep bowl. Add remaining ingredients; toss lightly. Stuff turkey just before roasting. Makes 9 cups – enough for a 12-pound turkey.

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Find The Spoon

by Joanne Kitsko

As we begin a new year, we reflect on the many happenings that have taken place in our Conservation for Education facility - affectionately referred to as "The Barn." And what a year it's been!

Now our surroundings have been transformed into the stillness of winter's blanket of white snow. And so, it never fails - when cold weather enters the picture, our appetites yearn for something soothing and comforting - such as a bowl of hearty soup! But before you can enjoy it, you have to find the soup spoon hidden somewhere in this Winter 2005 issue of Landmarks!



Soup's On!!! Come and get it!!!

The 3rd, 9th, and 16th callers to Joanne at 724-837-5271 who correctly identify the whereabouts of the spoon in this issue will receive a rewarding prize! Previous contest winners are not eligible to win; however, your comments regarding our publications are always welcome and very much appreciated (see back cover). Good Luck!!!

The three lucky winners of our "Find the Soup Spoon" contest who correctly identified the whereabouts of the hidden spoon in the Fall 2004 issue are Wanda Forney, caller #5 of Jones Mills, Chuck DeNunzio, caller #10 of Derry, and Rose McCaskie, caller #15 of Ruffsedale. Congratulations to the winners!

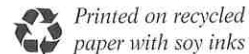
LANDMARKS

*The Official Newsletter of the
Westmoreland Conservation District*

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Design and Photography - Mark Jackson
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Get Your Conservation Gear

Be among the best-dressed conservationists this Earth Day (April 23) with quality hats, shirts, and rain jackets that sport the Westmoreland Conservation District logo.



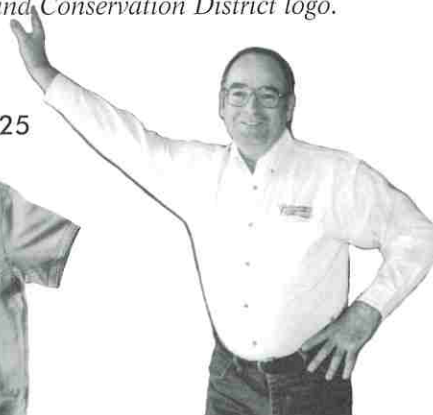
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Education News

by Leanne Griffith

RECENT EVENT SUMMARIES

Ag Basics Class

An apple orchard, a homemade ice cream operation, an apiary, and the county fair were some of the locations that illustrated the range of agricultural products and operations here in Westmoreland County for teachers attending the first-ever "Ag Basics" class offered by the District last August.

The two-day course featured both classroom work and field trips and, overall, was an eye-opener for many attendees, including one who wrote in the evaluation: "I suppose I was naive as to how important farming is to daily life and how much responsibility a farmer and his family have when it comes to caring for animals and crops....I never really thought about the source of my food before I took this class."

Successful completion of the 30-hour course allowed the 13 teacher attendees to meet Pennsylvania's Academic Standards for teaching about agriculture and society. Teachers returned to their classroom with a copy of the Ag Basics curriculum, lesson plans related to agriculture, and a large number of reference and resource materials. A booklet of agricultural lesson plans written by the teachers during the course was copied and shared with all the participants.

The course was written by the District's Education Coordinator Leanne Griffith, Penn State Cooperative Extension Educator for 4H & Youth Joann Logan, and Tammy Gray, a second-grade teacher from Stanwood Elementary School who was named PA Farm Bureau's Outstanding Ag in the Classroom Teacher of the Year in 2002.

Ag Basics will be offered again in August 2005.

Teachers' Workshop Watersheds and Sustainable Communities

Eleven teachers attended this two-day workshop in October to learn about the natural (watersheds) and manmade (communities) features here in Westmoreland County and how both



Teachers explore the stormwater rain garden at the Westmoreland Conservation District Education Center.

impact our quality of life.

The group first investigated the basic geology of Westmoreland County's watersheds and our region's particular water quality challenges from mine drainage and nonpoint source pollution. Each teacher took water samples from an area stream and analyzed the results.

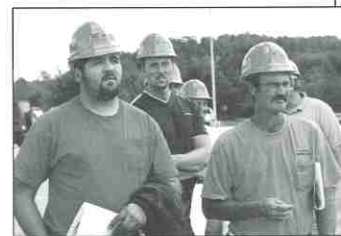
They also explored issues of community sustainability and got a firsthand look at a major commercial re-use site – the former Greengate Mall location, which is being redeveloped as a Wal-Mart/strip mall plaza.

At the conclusion of the workshop, the teachers received items to use in their own classrooms with their students: a water-monitoring kit for stream sampling, and lesson plans on the subjects of watersheds and sustainable communities.

Watersheds and Sustainable Communities will be offered again in the summer 2005.

Contractors' Workshop

The former Greengate Mall site also was an integral part of a technical workshop held for contractors in September.



Observing a hydroseeding demo at the former Greengate Mall site to learn about hillside stabilization.



Thanks to THF Realty and Mike Jupina, project manager and owner of Jupina Landscaping, the 21 earthmoving contractors who attended the workshop were able to witness some of the techniques actually being used to stabilize the soil and prevent erosion on that major commercial construction site in Hempfield Township.

The group witnessed live demonstrations of hydroseeding an embankment, mulching hill-sides with blown shredded straw, and installing coconut fiber blankets. The crews also created diversion swales and demonstrated proper installation of a blanket material to reduce erosion.

Other best management practices for preventing erosion were emphasized during the training, which began with a morning classroom discussion.

Erosion and sediment pollution control is the District's largest conservation program. Sediment is the number one pollutant (by volume) in Westmoreland County's waterways.

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UPCOMING EVENTS

PLEASE NOTE: Events are subject to change. Please telephone the contact person listed with each event if you are interested in attending.

March

March 4

Engineers' Workshop Stormwater Regulations & Innovations

9 a.m. – 3 p.m.

Four Points Sheraton, Greensburg

This workshop will feature some of the latest developments in stormwater management. Participants also may be among the first in the state to see the draft of the new statewide "Stormwater Guide." Also on hand will be the new District poster, which gives the specifics on innovative stormwater management practices (see page 8 for more information). Engineers also will have the opportunity to submit questions to and ask advice from a panel of professionals. Contact Leanne at 724-837-5271 or leanne@wcdpa.com by February 25. Cost: \$35.



Photo by Rob Cronauer

Stormtech[®] infiltration chambers are installed under a new parking lot on Urania Avenue in Greensburg. The system stores excess runoff and helps recharge vital groundwater resources.

March 19

Rain Barrel Workshop

10 a.m. – 12 noon

Westmoreland Conservation District
Center for Conservation Education

This workshop, designed for the general public, will explain how homeowners and landowners can capture stormwater – also known as rainwater – and use it to irrigate their gardens and lawns or to create a wildlife pond. Not only is stormwater a free resource, but capturing it also saves money in another way – by reducing the amount of storm sewers needed to manage it. Participants will create their own rain barrel out of a recycled food barrel. Contact Leanne at 724-837-5271 or leanne@wcdpa.com by March 10. Cost \$10.

April

April 2

Forestry 2 Workshop

Time – To be announced

Place – To be announced

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 or leanne@wcdpa.com.

April 8

Conservation Tour

This tour will focus on New Kensington, the county's largest city, and the conservation work there.

April 15

Conservation Tour

This tour will focus on the city of Monessen and the conservation work there.

April 23

Earth Day

Noon – 5 p.m.

Saint Vincent College

The Westmoreland Conservation District and more than 80 other 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

8:30 a.m. – 2 p.m.

Mammoth Park

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 or leanne@wcdpa.com.

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 or nmf125@psu.edu.



breakfast

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New Look for an Old Friend



It's not an extreme makeover, but you may have noticed that *Landmarks* has undergone a few tweaks and upgrades to the way it looks and reads.

One of the most obvious changes is the paper the newsletter is printed on. We switched from the original gray linen for a few reasons – availability (over time, that paper has become a 'special order' item), price (its cost was about 25% greater than the cost of the paper we're using now), and readability (white provides better contrast in the

photos and provides an opportunity to use a greater range of secondary colors). The new paper, like the old, is recycled, and we continue to print with soy inks, which are biodegradable.

We've made some changes in the content and style of information in *Landmarks*, too. We've added a special "tear out" section for our Education offerings. And we injected more sidebars, callouts, and captions throughout so you can get the information quickly, in easy-to-read 'bites.' And because not all our readers have technical backgrounds, we're working to do a better job of spelling out acronyms and explaining catch phrases.

Tell us what you think

We'd love to hear what you think about the changes ... and if there are any other things we can do to make *Landmarks* more meaningful to you. Drop us a note at: Landmarks Editor, Westmoreland Conservation District, 211 Donohoe Road, Greensburg, PA 15601 or c/o wcd@wcdpa.com.



Legislative Breakfast

(l-r) Ted Kopas, chief of staff to Westmoreland County Commissioner Tom Balya; Terry Van Horne, representing Senator Logan; John Lohr, county executive director of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Farm Service Agency; and Pennsylvania Representative Jess Stairs of the 59th District were among those attending the District's annual legislative breakfast, held on November 12 at the Education Center.

The event was an opportunity to update area legislators on District activities and to discuss how District staff can improve their service to legislators, such as providing information and technical assistance to the legislators' constituents.

District staff also stressed with the legislators and their staffs the need for continued state financial support of conservation – particularly the Dirt and Gravel Roads program (see page 1) and the Growing Greener Program, which has infused more than \$1 million in conservation-related projects in Westmoreland County (Growing Greener played a major part in two projects featured in this issue of *Landmarks* – the \$1.2 million Lowber project (page 4) and the stream sign project (page 1).

Represented at the breakfast were Pennsylvania Senators Ferlo, Kukovich, Logan, and White and Pennsylvania Representatives Pallone, Petrarca, and Stairs.

District Meetings

District meetings are open to the public and will be held in the Center for Conservation Education, 211 Donohoe Road, Greensburg, on the following dates in 2005.

Wednesday, March 9, 11 a.m.
Wednesday, April 13, 5 p.m.
Wednesday, May 11, 5 p.m.
Wednesday, June 8, 5 p.m.
Wednesday, July 13, 5 p.m.



Wednesday, August 10, 5 p.m.
Wednesday, September 14, 5 p.m.
Wednesday, October 12, 5 p.m.
Friday, November 18, 6:30 p.m.
(Annual Banquet; TBA)
Wednesday, December 14, 11 a.m.

Westmoreland Conservation District
Center for Conservation Education
211 Donohoe Road
Greensburg, PA 15601

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