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Briefing: Environmental Legislative, Policy Opportunities, Challenges; Court Actions In 2018



The environmental agenda facing Pennsylvania-- both in legislation and policy-- presents challenges and opportunities in 2018, especially since it's an election year.

Actions taken need to be judged by one simple rule-- how they support local and state environmental protection and restoration efforts in the most effective and efficient ways.

The PA Supreme Court and Commonwealth Court are also expected to issue additional decisions that could have major impacts on

environmental policies, programs and the budget in Pennsylvania in 2018.

Legislative/Policy Opportunities

Here are just a few of the legislative and policy challenges and opportunities facing the Commonwealth in the coming year--

-- A Large Chunk Of DEP's Budget No Longer Supports Environmental Protection Efforts That Meet Minimum Federal Requirements: The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency [notified DEP last year the resources](#) the state allocates to enforce Safe Drinking Water Act are not adequate to meet minimum federal standards. While DEP is [finalizing an increase in permit fees](#) for the program, it will not be finalized until sometime past mid-year at the earliest, years late to address the real needs. Some water companies are also opposing the fee increases meaning there could be legislative action to block the increases at the same time the General Assembly has cut General Fund dollars to support this and other programs.

Pennsylvania has received similar notices from other agencies about not meeting minimum federal standards in the air quality, surface coal mine regulation, [the critical MS4 stormwater management program](#), Chesapeake Bay cleanup and drinking water and wastewater revolving fund programs. [Click Here](#) for more.

With the General Assembly cutting General Fund support for DEP programs, to survive,

DEP will have to rely even more on increasing fees on those it regulates. Half of DEP's budget now comes from permit fees, 30 percent from the federal government and only 20 percent from the General Fund and that's apparently how the Legislature likes it.

With the Independent Fiscal Office saying the state faces a nearly \$1 billion budget shortfall in FY 2018-19 funding and the [Governor's Budget Office saying no revenue increases](#) or supplemental appropriations are needed in the coming year, these budget issues will again be front and center.

Federal Funding Cuts

DEP is also facing cuts in federal funds paid to the state to administer federal programs that DEP Secretary Patrick McDonnell said have an "[immediate and devastating effect](#)" in Pennsylvania. While some cuts were mitigated somewhat by Congress in 2017, it will continue to be a threat.

-- Special Fund Transfers To Balance The Budget Will Kill Local Environmental Restoration, Recreation, Land Conservation Projects: A core group of conservative House Republicans believes, [all evidence to the contrary](#), there is "unused" and "surplus" money just laying around in special funds, in particular those that support local environmental restoration, recreation and land conservation projects. They succeeded in getting a version of their proposal passed by the House in 2017 that would have [cut \\$317 million from environmental funds alone](#) to balance the General Fund budget. The final budget directed the Governor to [withdraw \\$300 million from special funds](#) of his choice to balance the budget. The House Appropriations Committee has a hearing on [DEP, DCNR special funds set for January 25](#) signaling strongly this issue is not dead.

Note: The [Senate and House had a \\$94.9 million surplus](#) in their legislative special fund accounts in FY 2016-17.

These efforts are part of an overall strategy by some: Step 1: Starve environmental agencies for money to cut staff and resources [accomplished]; Step 2: Cut funding for local environmental, restoration and recreation projects to get at the other end of state programs-- the local communities [underway]; Step 3: eliminate environmental protection laws and programs themselves [[already suggested in a number of bills](#) and by one House Republican who said he wants to get rid of the mandate to recycle and added in response to a question on the Growing Greener Program-- "[Two-thirds of the state is covered by woods, so "how much greener should we be?"](#)"]

Budget pressures and election year politics will no doubt drive this issue.

-- Doing Nothing Allows The General Assembly To Block Environmental Regulations: The Senate has already passed legislation-- [Senate Bill 561 \(Disanto-R-Dauphin\)](#)-- that allows the General Assembly to block major environmental and other regulations by doing nothing. The bill is now in the House State Government Committee which held multiple hearings on "regulatory overreach" and whose [Chair has already said](#) he wants to adopt similar regulatory "reforms." Election-year politics will no doubt drive this issue.

-- Environmental Permit "Reforms" That Would Eliminate DEP Review Of Permits: Several proposals, some passed by the Senate and agreed to by the Wolf Administration, would have eliminated DEP review of environmental permits and delegated that function to third party land surveyors, landscape architects, geologists or engineers without regard to their expertise; establish "deemed approved" programs that stops DEP permit reviews after a certain number of days; or takes away the authority of DEP to establish general permit requirements for methane

emissions in favor of a legislatively dominated approval panel. These particular changes were part of the debate over a natural gas severance tax. [Click Here for more.](#)

There were other permit review “reforms” introduced in the House specific to one or more programs with one intent-- to take away all or part of DEP’s ability to review environmental permits. [Click Here for more.](#)

Of course the primary cause of permit backlogs and longer review times has been cuts in DEP’s budget and 25 percent cut in staff by the General Assembly and Governors since 2003; but no mention has been made of this handicap.

DEP has a number of permit reform initiatives underway within its very limited resources to address these issues that aim to make permit reviews and inspections more efficient and just as effective. [Click Here for more.](#)

Sen. John Yudichak (D-Luzerne), Minority Chair of the Senate Environmental Resources and Energy Committee, has [introduced Senate Resolution 226](#) to require the Legislative Budget and Finance Committee to do an independent performance evaluation of the two DEP permit programs most critical to development-- the Chapter 102 (Erosion and Sedimentation) and Chapter 105 (Water Obstruction and Encroachment).

This represents a much more thoughtful approach to looking at the entire scope of the permit review problem. [Click Here for more.](#)

Election-year politics will no doubt drive this issue.

-- Developing A Data-Driven Plan To Meet Pennsylvania’s Water Quality Cleanup

Obligations: 2018 will be a make or break year in terms of decisions on how to meet Pennsylvania’s water quality cleanup obligations, particularly with respect to the Chesapeake Bay Watershed which covers more than half of the state.

2017 started optimistically with the bipartisan members of the Chesapeake Bay Commission [writing to all members of the Senate and House to outline the need](#) to address the state’s water pollution cleanup problems and propose a potential solution - a dedicated Clean Water Fund for Pennsylvania. But nothing ever came of it during budget discussions.

Legislation is moving in the Senate and now on the Calendar to regulate the application of lawn fertilizer that can be a source of nutrient pollution-- [Senate Bill 792](#) (Alloway-R-Franklin).

On the negative side, there is a resolution on the House Calendar urging Congress to eliminate the [MS4 Stormwater Pollution Reduction Program](#) which is critical to meeting Pennsylvania’s clean water obligations and [legislation has stalled in the Senate](#) to allow communities to fund local stormwater and flood reduction projects needed to make up for the lack of state funding.

The [PA Chesapeake Bay Steering Committee](#) is now preparing the plan needed for Pennsylvania to live up to its nutrient and sediment reduction commitments in the Chesapeake Watershed. The Phase III Watershed Implementation Plan is [due in December to EPA](#).

Data-driven decisions to identify the best on-the-ground [pollution reduction measures with multiple benefits](#), geographically how they should be targeted to get the biggest bang for the buck and what additional resources are available to meet those requirements will all be issues the Committee will wrestle with in 2018.

Green infrastructure improvements that [have the triple benefit](#) of nutrient, sediment and stormwater pollution, flooding reduction need to be favored over single sector, single solution options to both make the most of scarce resources and gain the most benefits. These solutions

are hands-down the most effective pollution reduction options data shows.

There also needs to be an effective way to bring more private money into the system to provide these triple benefits through [expanding tax credit programs](#) and the newer [pay-for-success models](#).

It is important to note the decisions and programs developed to meet the Chesapeake Bay obligations have served in the past to help meet pollution reduction obligations in federally-required Total Maximum Daily Load Plans all across the state.

-- **Assuring Continued Local Environmental Project Funding From Act 13 Drilling Impact Fees:** A [Commonwealth Court decision in March on the definition of stripper well](#) in Act 13 threatens to reduce revenue from the Act 13 drilling impact fee by another 10 percent (\$16 million) a year. Although the [Public Utility Commission is appealing](#) the decision, Rep. Pam Snyder (D-Fayette) introduced [House Bill 1283](#) in April to fix the problem ([sponsor summary](#)). The bill is in the House Environmental Resources and Energy Committee. [Click Here for more](#).

The whole debate over a natural gas severance tax is not mentioned here because the proposal most actively being considered in the House-- [House Bill 1401](#)-- provides no benefit to environmental programs.

The Senate, with the Wolf Administration's blessing, did [pass a severance tax in July](#) that provided some money to backfill declining Act 13 drilling fee revenue, but provided no new funding.

In October a [bipartisan group of 11 Senators](#) did encourage a portion of any new severance tax to go to at least go to the Environmental Stewardship (Growing Greener) Fund, but nothing ever came of that.

-- **Public Costs Of Pipeline, Other Protests Paid By Protesters:** With issues surrounding federal and state decisions on natural gas pipelines expected to continue to be controversial in 2018, legislation introduced by Sen. Scott Martin (R-Lancaster)-- [Senate Bill 754](#)-- that could impose any public costs for dealing with any "public assembly, meeting or gathering" entirely on the individuals doing the protesting if they are convicted of a felony or misdemeanor in connection with that demonstration could see action. He introduced the bill because he was concerned about what those against the Atlantic Sunrise Pipeline project going through Lancaster would do. Many groups view this as a limitation on free speech and the right to protest. [Click Here for more](#).

-- **House Republican Clean Power Climate Plan:** [In October, Rep. John Maher](#) (R-Allegheny), Majority Chair of the House Environmental Resources and Energy Committee, announced his intention to introduce his own version of a PA Clean Power Climate Plan. No language is available, but it is something to watch for in 2018.

-- **Bipartisan Energy-Related Initiatives:** A number of bipartisan energy-related initiatives have been introduced in the General Assembly and hope to see action in 2018, including--

-- **Local Clean Energy Funding:** [House Bill 1722](#) (Harper-R-Montgomery) would authorize local governments to create energy improvement districts to help fund energy efficiency, renewable energy and water conservation projects by commercial and industrial buildings to reduce their operating costs is pending in the [House Local Government Committee](#) ([sponsor summary](#)). Thirty-three other states have adopted similar PACE Programs.

A companion bill-- [Senate Bill 234](#) (Blake-D-Lackawanna)-- was reported out of Committee on October 24, amended on the Senate Floor and is now in the Senate Appropriations Committee. [Click Here for more](#).

-- **Electric Grid Resiliency:** Rep. Stephen Barrar (R-Delaware) introduced and hearings were held in [June](#) and in [November](#) by the House Veterans Affairs and Emergency Preparedness Committee on [House Bill 1412](#) that proposes a regulatory framework to encourage energy storage and microgrids to improve electric grid resiliency during disaster emergencies and other circumstances. This bipartisan issue that could unlock more potential for renewable energy.

-- **Alternative Natural Gas, Electric Ratemaking:** Rep. Sheryl Delozier (R-Cumberland) introduced [House Bill 1782](#) providing for alternative ratemaking for natural gas and electric distribution companies designed to encourage energy efficiency improvements and distributed energy resources such as renewable energy projects. A hearing was held on the bill [in November](#) by the House Consumer Affairs Committee.

-- **Electric Transportation Infrastructure Bill:** Rep. Marguerite Quinn (R-Montgomery) introduced [House Bill 1446](#) related to establishing an electric vehicle transportation infrastructure. A hearing was held on the bill [in November](#) by the House Transportation Committee.

-- **Updating Act 101 Municipal Waste Recycling, Planning:** 2018 marks the 30th anniversary of the passage of the state's basic recycling and waste planning law-- Act 101-- and legislators in both parties and DEP have begun to take a look at what kinds of updates are needed.

Rep. John Maher (R-Allegheny), Majority Chair of the House Environmental Resources and Energy Committee, said several times during 2017 there is a need to update Act 101. The [Joint House/Senate Conservation Committee held a hearing](#) on the issue in June and received lots of suggestions.

The [PA Resources Council held two regional roundtables](#) on updating Act 101 one in Delaware County and another in Allegheny County.

The [PA Recycling Markets Center released a study](#) in October showing recycling is responsible for over 66,000 jobs and \$22.6 billion in economic activity to the state.

A workgroup on [DEP's Solid Waste Advisory Committee](#) met several times in 2017 to develop recommendations on how to update Act 101 and developed lots of background information.

Recommendations for updating Act 101 are expected from these initiatives in 2018.

-- **Fixing The Electronics Waste Recycling Program:** Another opportunity for bipartisan action is fixing Pennsylvania's electronics waste recycling law.

In July, Sen. Richard Alloway (R-Franklin) [introduced Senate Bill 800](#) which totally revamps the whole electronics waste recycling law and puts in its place a new system that he believes will fix many of the problems.

The Senate Environmental Resources and Energy Committee held a [hearing on the bill on October 23](#).

-- **Littering Penalties:** On July 8 the Senate passed [Senate Bill 431](#) sponsored by Sen. Mario Scavello (R-Monroe) to significantly increase fines for littering. Currently, fines for littering under Title 18 (Crimes and Offenses) run from \$50 to \$300 for a first-time offense, and \$300 to \$1,000 for a second and subsequent offense. Under Senate Bill 431, fines would be increased up to \$2,000 for multiple offenses, based on the size and weight of litter. The bill is now in the House Transportation Committee.

-- **Game, Fish Commission Fees:** Bipartisan legislation passed the Senate in March giving the Game and Fish and Boat Commissions the ability to set their own fees by regulation is now stalled in the [House Game and Fisheries Committee](#).

[Senate Bill 30](#) (Eichelberger-R-Blair) authorizing the Fish and Boat Commission to adopt its own fees saw no action on the bill in Committee. [Senate Bill 192](#) (Stefano-R-Fayette) authorizing the Game Commission to adopt its own fees was Tabled in the Committee. [Click Here for more.](#)

-- Designating Eastern Hellbender PA's State Amphibian: A [project of the Chesapeake Bay Foundation's Student Leaders group](#), Sen. Gene Yaw (R-Lycoming), one of Pennsylvania's members on the interstate [Chesapeake Bay Commission](#), introduced [Senate Bill 658](#) in May to name the Eastern Hellbender as Pennsylvania's state amphibian.

The bill was reported out of the Senate State Government Committee on June 14, passed the Senate November 15 and is now in the House Environmental Resources and Energy Committee. [Click Here for more.](#)

It's worth remembering that any legislation not on the Governor's desk by the November 30, 2018 end of the session will die and have to start over in 2019.

Court Actions

Two important environmental cases will be the subject of additional action by the PA Supreme Court and Commonwealth Court in 2018--

-- Environmental Rights Amendment Decision: The [PA Supreme Court issued a decision](#) in June saying actions by the General Assembly and the Governor to transfer funds from DCNR's Oil and Gas Lease Fund to balance the state budget and for other purposes was unconstitutional. The Court said it violated the Environmental Rights amendment to the constitution and the "public trustee" role that amendment establishes.

The Court remanded the case to Commonwealth Court to sort out how it will [affect the \\$1.1 billion at stake in these transfers](#), including from the FY 2017-18 budget settlement. The Court is expected to have a hearing on the case in the first part of 2018.

The "public trustee" principle established in the June decision may have a much broader application to all actions by the General Assembly and the Governor beyond just the budget. It could also be applied to state and local decisions about changing programs and on individual permit decisions.

These ramifications will not be known until this all unwinds in future court decisions.

-- Fundamental Challenges To How Environmental Penalties Are Calculated: [Last January EQT drilling won a Commonwealth Court](#) ruling challenging the way DEP calculates its penalties for pollution, specifically, that each day is a separate offense.

This same language is included in almost all major state environmental statutes. If successful, it will drastically reduce pollution fines in the state to practically nothing.

DEP appealed the decision to the PA Supreme Court and [filed briefs on the case in May](#). [EQT drilling also appealed a decision](#) by the Environmental Hearing Board on another penalty to Commonwealth Court in July.

These are not the only environmental and energy challenges and opportunities Pennsylvania will face in 2018, but they are some of the more important ones.

Let's see how it goes and carefully measure the results! After all, 2018 is an election year for the Governor, all of the House and half of the Senate.

(Photo: Artwork by then Penns Manor 6th Grade student Matthew Cramer for the PA Recycling Poster/Calendar Contest in 2002. Matthew would be about 27 now.)

NewsClip:

[Bagenstose: After Tough Year, Environmentalists Seek Wins In 2018](#)

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[Posted: Dec. 27, 2017]

Elections, Budget Will Dominate 2018 Legislative Politics And Session

With the Governor, all of the House and half the Senate up for grabs in 2018, election year politics can't help but color every action of the General Assembly, budget deliberations especially.

Add the fact House Speaker Mike Turzai (R-Allegheny) and Sen. Scott Wagner (R-York) have both announced they are running for the Republican nomination for Governor, and the plot thickens, as they say.

Senate

In the Senate, Republicans have 18 seats up for re-election and so far have two of their members retiring-- Sen. Stewart **Greenleaf** (R-Bucks), long-time Chair of the Senate Judiciary Committee, and Sen. Scott **Wagner** (R-York), as noted running for Governor.

Republicans up for reelection include: **Tomlinson** (R-Bucks), Majority Chair of the Consumer Protection Committee; **McIlhinney** (R-Bucks), Majority Chair of the Law & Justice Committee; **Browne** (R-Lehigh), Majority Chair of the Appropriations Committee; **Baker** (R-Luzerne), Majority Chair Health & Human Services Committee; **Mensch** (R-Montgomery); **McGarrigle** (R-Delaware), **Eichelberger** (R-Blair), Majority Chair Education Committee; **Stefano** (R-Fayette), Majority Chair of the Game & Fisheries Committee; **Corman** (R-Centre), Senate Majority Leader; **Aument** (R-Lancaster); **Vulakovich** (R-Allegheny); **Scavello** (R-Monroe), Majority Chair Community, Economic & Recreational Development Committee; **Rafferty** (R-Montgomery), Majority Chair of the Transportation Committee; **Bartolotta** (R-Beaver); **Folmer** (R-Lebanon), Majority Chair State Government Committee; and **Brooks** (R-Crawford).

Senate Democrats have 7 seats up with no announced retirements so far. Democratic districts include: **Tartaglione** (D-Philadelphia); **Haywood** (D-Philadelphia); **Williams** (D-Philadelphia), Minority Chair State Government Committee; **Yudichak** (D-Luzerne), Minority Chair Environmental Committee; **Boscola** (D-Lehigh), Minority Chair Consumer Protection Committee; **Blake** (D-Lackawanna); and **Fontana** (D-Allegheny).

House

The House lost two members to other positions December 31-- Rep. Brandon **Neuman** (D-Washington) to be a county judge and Scott **Petri** (R-Bucks) Majority Chair of the Gaming Oversight Committee, will become head of the Philadelphia Parking Authority.

Three House members-- all Republicans-- said they are not running for re-election so far-- John **Taylor** (R-Philadelphia), Majority Chair of the House Transportation Committee, Eli **Evankovich** (R-Westmoreland) and **Lewis** (R-Chester).



Three other House Republicans are running for other seats-- Rep. Kristin **Phillips-Hill** (R-York)-- for Sen. Wagner's seat; Rep. Ryan **Mackenzie** (R-Lehigh)-- to fill Dent's Congressional seat; and Rep. Stephen **Bloom** (R-Cumberland)-- running for Barletta's Congressional seat.

Gerrymandering Cases

The wildcard in the upcoming election season are challenges in federal and state courts to the way the state drew its Congressional districts. Both courts have promised decisions quickly in time to have an impact, or not, on 2018 Congressional races.

Commonwealth Court Judge Kevin Brobson [issued a 130-page report Friday](#) saying in his view the Democratic voters suing to invalidate the current Congressional districts have not proven it unfairly favors Republicans.

The report was ordered by the PA Supreme Court, but it is not clear what the justices will do with it.

Technically, Pennsylvania will have three open Congressional seats. A special election to fill Republican **Tim Murphy's** seat in Western Pennsylvania will be held on March 13, Republican U.S. Senate candidate **Lou Barletta** said he will not be running for his Congressional seat that stretches from Harrisburg to Wilkes-Barre and Congressman **Charlie Dent** in the Lehigh Valley announced he was retiring at the end of his term.

State Tax Cuts On Top Of Federal Tax Cuts

State lawmakers have already announced plans to introduce legislation to cut state personal and corporate taxes and make other changes in response to federal tax changes. In addition, implementing the provisions of the homestead property tax referendum passed by voters last November will be a hot topic, especially in this election year.

Rep. Seth Grove (R-York) circulated [a co-sponsor memo](#) just before Christmas proposing to piggyback on federal tax cuts by cutting Pennsylvania's Personal Income Tax from 3.07 percent to 2.8 percent and the corporate net income tax from 9.99 percent to 4 percent and "end corporate welfare."

It's another attempt by conservatives to shrink the size of government without making the messy choices of what specific programs to eliminate to meet reduced state revenues.

Sen. Lisa Boscola (D-Lehigh) said she [plans to introduce legislation](#) allowing owners of homestead residential properties to deduct their real estate taxes from their state income tax since federal changes limited that deduction.

House Majority Leader David Reed (R-Indiana) and Sen. David Argall (R-Schuylkill), prime sponsor of [Senate Bill 76](#) the school property tax replacement bill, have both said implementing the homestead exemption property tax referendum will be a catalyst for restructuring Pennsylvania Tax Code.

Of course neither the Independent Fiscal Office or Governor's Budget Office revenue projections so far include any state tax cuts or the impact from federal tax changes or local property tax replacement proposals.

Revised IFO revenue estimates are due in late January.

Budget

With the Independent Fiscal Office saying the state faces a nearly \$1 billion budget shortfall in FY 2018-19 funding and the [Governor's Budget Office saying no, no revenue increases](#) or supplemental appropriations are needed in the coming year, we'll have to wait to see what reality brings.

Everyone is holding their breath that revenue counted as part of the budget, including from the sale of casino licenses-- \$238.5 million and the expanded Sales Tax-- \$43.5 million-- and a new tax on fireworks-- \$31.7 million -- \$313.7 million in all, will actually be collected.

Then there's the legal challenge to the transfer of \$200 million to the General Fund from the Professional Liability Joint Underwriting Association Fund now working its way through court. Court action successfully thwarted a similar transfer last year, we'll see what happens this year.

The FY 2018-19 budget season formally kicks off on February 6 with the Governor's Budget Address.

With Republicans talking about tax cuts to one-up the Governor, the IFO saying there will be a \$1 billion deficit to make up, the Governor's Office saying the state's structural deficit is all but gone and election year politics affecting everything, this budget season is shaping up to be a real humdinger!

The Senate and House open the new legislative session January 2, but don't get down to real work until the week of January 22.

Welcome to 2018!

(Written By: David Hess, Editor PA Environment Digest)

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[Posted: Dec. 29, 2017]

In Memoriam: Robert Eppley, Jr., A Passionate Volunteer Restoring The Environment



Dr. Robert L. Eppley Jr., an environmental scientist and chemist and long-time active member of the [Blacklick Creek Watershed Association](#) in Cambria and Indiana Counties, passed away on December 24. He was passionate about the environment. Some of his accomplishments include developing partnerships to clean up abandoned coal mine drainage and discovering caves as president and technical director of Blacklick Creek Water Association, leading and participating in the [National Speleological Society](#) and Chestnut Ridge Explorers Association and serving as past president of the

[Western PA Coalition for Abandoned Mine Reclamation](#).

He received the [Evergreen Conservancy's](#) lifetime achievement award and the Pennsylvania Abandoned Mine Reclamation Mayfly honor.

[The Association said](#), "Dr. Eppley became very instrumental in securing and managing a number of DEP Growing Greener and other grants, resulting in the construction of a series of successful passive AMD treatment systems. These efforts culminated in the watershed receiving the PaDEP Governor's Award for Environmental Excellence. These systems remain in existence today and stand as Dr. Eppley's legacy of being a tireless, environmental advocate for the

Blacklick Creek Watershed Association.”

“The legacy of Bob Eppley’s work is more than a dozen mine drainage treatment projects, miles of streams clean streams and restored landscapes, it is a permanent monument to the power of partnerships to cleanup our environment,” said former DEP Secretary David E. Hess, who had the opportunity to meet Bob and talk about his vision for the watershed. “Volunteers like Bob who care about their watershed can and have accomplish amazing things all across Pennsylvania, when given the right tools and support, something we need to remember now more than ever.”

Here’s a *PA Environment Digest* profile of Blacklick Creek Watershed Association accomplishments featuring Bob Eppley and his involvement in cleaning up the watershed that is a wonderful review of this part of his life--

It’s tough to start a watershed association, just ask Bob Eppley of the Blacklick Creek Watershed Association in Cambria and Indiana counties. But, the rewards are worth it.

“One of our first projects was an acid mine drainage conference and a mine owner heard me on the radio talking about mine drainage problems,” said Bob Eppley, President of Blacklick. “He came storming into the meeting wanting to see the S.O.B. that was talking bad about mine operators!

“Thanks to someone else, it didn’t come to blows,” said Eppley. “But you know, that same mine operator later donated land and helped us with one of our mine treatment projects”

The Association started in the 420 square mile Blacklick Creek Watershed in 1993 and now boasts about 150 members.

The watershed has 270 miles of streams polluted by 90 discharges from more than 300 coal mines and 170 coal refuse piles.

The Association has so far completed 13 mine drainage treatment and reclamation projects in the watershed, has a regular water sampling program staffed by volunteers and works with many diverse partners to do their projects. Some of those partners include the DEP, Game Commission, Fish & Boat Commission, county officials, township officials, conservation districts, Indiana University of Pennsylvania students and faculty, utilities and coal mining companies.

The group is now completing the [Laurel Run 2 project](#) in a tributary to the Blacklick that will treat the second of two large abandoned deep mine discharges. Re-mining operations, mining that recovers coal left behind from previous mining and reclaims the land to modern standards, successfully stopped two other discharges in the Run.

“In the 1920s Laurel Run was a native brook trout stream with a beautiful waterfalls, until deep and surface mines came and turned the stream acid and orange,” said Eppley. “Two years ago we finished the project to treat the first discharge with Stream Restoration, Inc. and in May we started the Laurel Run 2 project.”

The project involves filling in and grading a 290 foot long, 60 foot highwall as well as building two treatment ponds to treat water coming from a mine seal that blew out in 1970. The ponds use a relatively new sulfate reducing bacterial technology. The 160 acre project was funded by a \$287,000 grant from the Department of Environmental Protection’s Bureau of Abandoned Mine Reclamation.

“We partnered with Robindale Energy Services, Inc. who is bringing in alkaline fluidized bed coal ash from the Seward Power Station free of charge to fill in the highwall,” said Eppley. “It works out well for them because they then carried abandoned strip pit coal refuse from the

nearby State Game Land No. 276 to Seward to burn.”

About 22,000 tons of ash will be needed to fill in the highwall area that is now about two-thirds full. The project is expected to be complete later in November.

The Laurel Run 2 project should restore the final three miles of the stream down to the main stem of Blacklick Creek.

“We also just finished another project with Robindale Energy Services, Inc. and DEP Bureau of Abandoned Mine Reclamation near Vintondale along the Ghost Town Trail that involved hauling out about 65,000 tons of coal refuse on 4.5 acres and filling in a 160 foot deep mine shaft and several hazardous concrete abandoned coal cleaning pits with beneficial alkaline ash,” said Eppley.

Why do people like Bob Eppley take on this huge challenge? He explains it this way...

“I was born and raised in Western Pennsylvania’s coal and steel country. My father and grandfather Eppley worked in the mills. My maternal grandfather worked in the coal mines - having begun as a teenage shaft digger.

“Where I grew up, most of the streams were orange, much of the terrain was black and often the sky was grey. Even so, I learned to appreciate clean streams, fishing and water.

“When I got a chance to attend college (and then grad school) I decided never to return to the coal regions except as a visitor. However, after a layoff from a large technology firm in New York State and after some medical problems, my wife and I decided to return to the area to secure recovery and employment.

“Seeing the streams and dumps again spurred my interests in environmental science. For the next 35 years, I was employed by industries associated with mining and electrical generation. However, I began to do environmental consulting on the side. I also was given the opportunity to teach chemistry at the college level as an adjunct evening faculty member. During that stint, I presented a section on "Water in the Environment".

“In 1994 after another corporate layoff, I was asked to join the newborn Blacklick Creek Watershed Association. As a fisherman with environmental interests, I joined and soon was inducted into leadership in the organization. My environmental science consulting continued and meshed well with watershed projects. I was designated Project Manager for BCWA remediation projects.

“Projects have grown both in size and difficulty. Many have resulted in significant successes in remediation and restoration of streams, refuse piles and abandoned mine areas.

“My backgrounds in chemistry, geosciences and management have given me an opportunity to provide services useful in environmental projects. Approximately 60 percent of my present efforts are volunteer.

“The Laurel Run 2 Project is an opportunity to at least get one complete stream in the Blacklick Creek watershed restored to pre-mining, historical conditions.”

Stories like these are repeated often across Pennsylvania and it’s one of many reasons watershed organizations have grown from less than 100 to over 400 since the start of the original Growing Greener Watershed Restoration Program in 2000.

Work like this is not only personally rewarding, but Blacklick Creek Watershed Association has won recognition as well. In 2003, the Association was awarded the Governor’s Award for Environmental Excellence.

Keep up the great work out there!

[Click Here](#) to read the full obituary for Robert Eppley.

Comments On Bob Eppley's Passing--

-- The **Slippery Rock Watershed Coalition** wishes to thank Bob Eppley for his love, knowledge, and persistence in addressing abandoned mine impacts in the Blacklick Creek Watershed. Bob has left a legacy that will continue to benefit the environment and contribute to future development of technology.

-- **Margaret Dunn** said, " As described in the Memoriam, Bob also realized the value of the many volunteers and organizations involved, including the state programs and agencies that enabled construction of the passive treatment systems and provided on-going encouragement and support."

(Photo: Dr. Eppley receiving the [Evergreen Conservancy's](#) lifetime achievement award.)

NewsClips:

[Mill Creek Watershed Benefits From Acid Mine Drainage Cleanup Grant](#)

[Barletta Views Trump Order On Rare Earth, Other Minerals Boon For Area](#)

Related Story:

[Presentation Proposals Wanted For 20th PA Abandoned Mine Reclamation Conference June 20-21](#)

[Posted: Dec. 29, 2017]

Senate/House Agenda/Session Schedule/Gov's Schedule

Here are the Senate and House Calendars for the next voting session day and Committees scheduling action on bills of interest as well as a list of new environmental bills introduced--

Bill Calendars

House (Jan. 2): [House Bill 1401](#) (DiGirolamo-R-Bucks) which amends Title 58 to impose a sliding scale natural gas severance tax, in addition to the Act 13 drilling impact fee, on natural gas production (NO money for environmental programs) and includes provisions related to minimum landowner oil and gas royalties; [House Resolution 284](#) (Moul-R-Adams) urging Congress to repeal the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's MS4 Stormwater Pollution Prevention Program ([sponsor summary](#)). <> [Click Here](#) for full House Bill Calendar.

Senate (Jan. 2): [Senate Bill 792](#) (Alloway-R- Franklin) requiring law fertilizer applicators to be certified in application techniques and creates an education program; [Senate Bill 799](#) (Alloway-R- Franklin) a voluntary program to allow municipalities to pay for nutrient reductions. <> [Click Here](#) for full Senate Bill Calendar.

Committee Meeting Agendas This Week

House: <> [Click Here](#) for full House Committee Schedule.

Senate: <> [Click Here](#) for full Senate Committee Schedule.

Bills Pending In Key Committees

Check the [PA Environmental Council Bill Tracker](#) for the status and updates on pending state **legislation and regulations** that affect environmental and conservation efforts in Pennsylvania.

Session Schedule

Here is the latest voting session schedule for the Senate and House--

Senate

January 2, 22, 23, 24, 29, 30, 31

February 5, 6 (Governor's Budget Address), 7

Budget Hearings: Feb. 20 - March 9

March 19, 20, 21, 26, 27, 28

April 16, 17, 18, 23, 24, 25, 30

May 1, 2, 21, 22, 23

June 4, 5, 6, 11, 12, 13, 18, 19, 20, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29

House

January 2 (non-voting), 22, 23, 24

February 5, 6, 7

March 12, 13, 14

April 9, 10, 11, 16, 17, 18, 30

May 1, 2, 22, 23

June 4, 5, 6, 11, 12, 13, 18, 19, 20, 21, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30

Governor's Schedule

Gov. Tom Wolf's work calendar will be posted each Friday and his public schedule for the day will be posted each morning. [Click Here](#) to view Gov. Wolf's Weekly Calendar and Public Appearances.

News From Around The State

Presentation Proposals Wanted For 20th PA Abandoned Mine Reclamation Conference June 20-21

The planning committee for the [20th Anniversary PA Abandoned Mine Reclamation Conference](#) is now accepting presentation proposals to be held June 20-21 at the Ramada Conference Center in State College. The deadline for proposals is March 1.

The theme of this year's conference is Reflections on 20 Years of Reclamation as the mine reclamation community celebrates 20 years of success and develops a wish list of accomplishments for the future.



The Conference provides a forum for the dissemination of information and encourages discussion between industry, watershed groups, and decision makers that can help to further innovations in public policy, abandoned mine reclamation and restoration of PA's watersheds and communities.

The range of topic submissions can include, but not limited to:

- New AMD treatment system technologies, tools, and products
- Construction case studies and lessons learned
- Land remediation, reforestation, reuse
- Water quality monitoring and treatment system maintenance
- Nonprofit organization capacity issues
- Community involvement, special events, education and outreach
- Coal mining history and heritage preservation
- Mapping, drones, equipment, and other helpful new technologies
- Legislative updates and concerns at all levels of government
- Economic redevelopment, health and safety, and quality of life topics

In the past, the Conference has had such varied topics as the history of baseball in coal patch towns, to the prevention of lyme disease, to preserving collieries, to computer software designed to estimate the required size of an AMD treatment system, to the reauthorization of the collection fees associated with the federal Surface Mine Reclamation Act, to designing soccer fields on AML sites, to providing construction jobs in AML-impacted communities, to AML issues in Germany and Bolivia, to the establishment and support of nonprofit organizations, and everything in between.

[Click Here](#) to look a past Conference agendas.

Submissions and questions should be emailed to Anne Daymut, [Western PA Coalition for Abandoned Mine Reclamation](#), at: anne@wpcamr.org.

To keep updated on Conference happenings, visit the [2018 PA Abandoned Mine Reclamation Conference](#) website.

NewsClips:

[Mill Creek Watershed Benefits From Acid Mine Drainage Cleanup Grant](#)
[Barletta Views Trump Order On Rare Earth, Other Minerals Boon For Area](#)

Related Story:

[In Memoriam: Robert Eppley, Jr., A Passionate Volunteer Restoring The Environment](#)

[Posted: Dec. 29, 2017]

Lehigh, Northampton Counties Master Watershed Stewards Info Sessions Jan. 10, 18, 24



Individuals interested in knowing more about the [Lehigh Valley Master Watershed Stewards Program](#) can attend a January 10 information session in Allentown, Lehigh County, January 18 in Nazareth, Northampton County and Bethlehem on January 24.

The information sessions will be held from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.--

-- **January 10:** Lehigh County Agriculture Center, 4185 Dorney Park Road, Room 108, Allentown;

- **January 18:** Northampton Extension Office, 14 Gracedale Avenue, Nazareth; and
- **January 24:** Illick's Mill, 100 Illick's Mill Road, Bethlehem.

Individuals that have an interest in the environment, a willingness to learn more, and most importantly, a strong desire to make a difference in the community are excellent candidates for the program.

To become a certified Master Watershed Steward, you must complete 40 hours of training and fulfill 50 hours of volunteer service within the first year. After becoming certified, you can maintain your status by giving at least 20 volunteer hours and attending at least 10 hours of continuing education annually.

The [Lehigh Valley Master Watershed Steward Program](#) is a partnership between Penn State Extension; the [Watershed Coalition of the Lehigh Valley](#); [Northampton County Conservation District](#); [Appalachian Mountain Club](#); [Lehigh Gap Nature Center](#); [Wildlands Conservancy](#); [Delaware and Lehigh National Heritage Corridor](#); [Nurture Nature Center](#); and Department of Conservation of Natural Resources.

Program sponsors include [Deer Park/Nestle Waters](#).

[Click Here](#) for more information. Questions should be directed to Erin Frederick by calling 610-391-9840 or send email to: elf145@psu.edu.

Penn State Extension helps with Master Watershed Stewards Programs in 11 counties and growing. [Click Here](#) for more information.

NewsClips:

[Lancaster Farming Year In Review- Chesapeake Bay And More](#)

[New Maps Tell Story Of Water Quality Thru Bugs, Slugs And Snails](#)

[Pennsylvania Wants Students To Know Their Watershed](#)

[Firm Must Pay Township's Legal Bills In Court Challenge To Stormwater Violation](#)

[Mill Creek Watershed Benefits From Acid Mine Drainage Cleanup Grant](#)

[Delaware RiverKeeper Dec. 29 RiverWatch Video Report](#)

[Latest From The Chesapeake Bay Journal](#)

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[Posted: Dec. 27, 2017]

Delaware River Watershed Fellowship Program Accepting Applications

The [Environmental Leadership Program](#) is now accepting applications for the [Delaware River Watershed Fellowship Program](#), an intensive leadership and skills training and provides the opportunity to learn and collaborate with regional and national networks.

The deadline for applications is January 10.

Through immersive retreats, emerging leaders hone their leadership styles, improve their strategy and organizational development skills, and strengthen their capacity to work with diverse



constituencies.

With the assistance of professional coaching and peer learning, each Fellow develops a Personal and Professional Leadership Plan and structures to support that plan.

Applicants must work in Delaware, New Jersey, New York, or Pennsylvania in the Delaware River watershed, and have at least three years of work experience.

For all the details, visit the [Delaware River Watershed Fellowship Program](#) webpage.

NewsClip:

[Delaware RiverKeeper Dec. 29 RiverWatch Video Report](#)

[Posted: Dec. 27, 2017]

Agriculture Accepting Research Grant Proposals On Lanternfly, Reducing Nutrient Loads, Other Issues Affecting Agriculture

Department of Agriculture Secretary Russell Redding Friday announced more than \$860,000 in grant funding is now available to researchers interested in finding solutions to some of the most pressing and persistent problems confronting the Commonwealth's farms and farmers. ([formal notice](#))

The deadline for submitting proposals is January 26.

"Sound research is important to the future of agriculture," said Redding. "There are a host of challenges and emerging threats that could undermine our ability to grow the food upon which we and our economy depend. Some of these are natural threats, others are the result of a changing marketplace. With better knowledge comes a better understanding of how we can address these real and potential impediments to our continued prosperity."

The solicitation details areas prioritized for funding during this grant cycle, as well as format requirements for each grant application.

Among the topics prioritized for funding this year are research into the spotted lanternfly; new methods and technologies for cost-effectively reducing nutrient loads to Pennsylvania's waterways; and the efficacy of various avian vaccinations.

Other areas of focus include research into production agriculture's ability to access capital, farm safety, and the public return on investment of farmland preservation.

The department will also offer micro-grants to research and support the development of micro-credentials or badges that teach specific workforce development skills; solutions to practical problems of hydroponic and aquaponic operations; and remedies to challenges common in urban agricultural operations.

In total, the Department of Agriculture received more than \$1.2 million for agriculture research in the state's fiscal year 2017-2018 budget.

The more than \$860,000 available for these projects represents the balance of funding not dedicated to research projects involving animal agriculture. Nearly \$430,000 was made available for animal research projects through the state's Animal Health and Diagnostic Commission earlier this year.

All proposals will be scored competitively to determine the final grant recipients.

All the details on how to apply are available on the [December 30 PA Bulletin](#) notice.

NewsClips:

[Lancaster Farming Year In Review- Chesapeake Bay And More](#)

[Cradle: PA Surges To 2nd In Organic Products Sales, Lancaster A Driving Force](#)

[Philly's Hydroponic Metropolis Farms Thrives, Fueled By Pot, Biofuel Research](#)
[Penn State Study Looks To Reduce Cows' Contribution To Global Warming](#)

[Posted: Dec. 29, 2017]

DEP, EQB Schedule Additional Hearings On Water Toxics Strategy, Triennial Water Quality Reg Changes For Jan. 30

The Department of Environmental Protection published notice in the December 30 PA Bulletin scheduling additional public hearings on [proposed changes](#) to the Water Quality Toxics Management Strategy by DEP and [proposed changes](#) to the Triennial Water Quality Standard regulations by the Environmental Quality Board for January 30.

The notice also formally extends the comment period for both the proposed changes to February 16.

The DEP hearing on the Water Quality Toxics Strategy will be held at DEP's Southeast Regional Office, 2 East Main Street in Norristown, Montgomery County at 1:00 p.m.

The EQB hearing on the Triennial Water Quality Standard regulations will be held at DEP's Southeast Regional Office, 2 East Main Street in Norristown, Montgomery County at 2:00 p.m.

DEP and the Environmental Quality Board held three hearings on each of the Water Quality Toxics Strategy and the related Triennial Water Quality Standard regulation changes earlier in December.

[Click Here](#) for more information on the proposed changes to the Toxics Strategy. [Click Here](#) for more information on the changes proposed in the Triennial Water Quality Standard regulations.

For more information, to submit comments and to review copies of the proposals, visit DEP's [eComment](#) webpage.

Sign Up For DEP's eNotice: Did you know DEP can send you email notices of permit applications submitted in your community? Notice of new technical guidance documents and regulations? All through its eNotice system. [Click Here](#) to sign up.

[Posted: Dec. 29, 2017]

DEP Board Publishes 2018 Schedule Of Sewage Enforcement Officer Certification Exams

DEP's [State Board for Certification of Sewage Enforcement Officers](#) published notice of its 2018 schedule of certification exams in the [December 30 PA Bulletin](#).

For more information, visit DEP's [State Board for Certification of Sewage Enforcement Officers](#) webpage. Questions should be directed to Kristen Szwajkowski by calling 717-772-2186 or send email to: kszwajkows@pa.gov.

[Posted: Dec. 29, 2017]

Gov. Wolf Announces Tax Credits To Revitalize Fmr Pittsburgh Steel Mill Site At Hazelwood Green

Gov. Tom Wolf Wednesday announced Commonwealth Cornerstone Group has completed a



\$15 million New Markets Tax Credit financing transaction that will support the adaptive reuse and redevelopment of “Mill 19,” a riverfront brownfield site that is part of the planned [Hazelwood Green project](#) in Pittsburgh’s Hazelwood community.

Mill 19 will be redeveloped by Regional Industrial Development Corporation of Southwestern Pennsylvania into a light-industrial, research and development, and flexible office space attractive to technology companies.

The redevelopment project will consist of three phases that will restore the 264,000-square-foot former steel mill building. It features a "building within a building" concept by including a new, high-tech, three-story building under the old mill’s existing steel skeleton.

The cutting-edge facility will house research, development and office space for the non-profit Advanced Robotics for Manufacturing Institute, a \$250-million public-private collaborative led by Carnegie Mellon University, and for CMU's Manufacturing Futures Initiative.

Additional flex space will be made available to the university’s partner organizations. Work at the site is expected to produce significant job opportunities.

“This project has great potential for revitalizing an unused brownfield site and bringing jobs and additional high-tech employers to Hazelwood,” said Gov. Wolf. “We’re excited about the business synergies that could be created here to benefit the local community and the entire region.”

A special feature of this project is its goal of meeting LEED gold standards for the building’s core and shell construction. The building will implement a large 2 megawatt rooftop solar array, as well as reduce indoor water usage. The end result should be a site that boasts net-zero energy usage and is environmentally sustainable.

“Hazelwood was hurt when the steel mill there closed in the 1990s,” said Brian A. Hudson Sr., CCG chairman and executive director of the Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency (PHFA). “This project holds tremendous promise for not only bringing back jobs but attracting good-paying technology positions. We also think this project could be a regional model for smart energy usage.”

CCG was created in 2004 by PHFA to serve as a nonprofit community development entity.

"The Regional Industrial Development Corporation’s mission is to support economic development in communities around the region by breathing new life into facilities that housed the great companies of Pittsburgh's past," said Donald Smith, president of RIDC. “This tax credit program is crucially important in enabling us to apply state-of-the-art design and development strategies to bring this property back to life.”

This project is expected to create 132 temporary construction jobs. The developer already is working the Trade Institute and the A. Philip Institute to place low-income residents in apprenticeship and construction jobs. Additionally, the project will create 116 full-time permanent jobs and retain 63 full-time positions.

Carnegie Mellon University and its partners are working on a workforce development center in connection with this project that would help train low- and moderate-income residents with entry level technology skills that could be used by employers at the site.

In addition to New Markets Tax Credits from Commonwealth Cornerstone Group, the developer also received tax credits from Pittsburgh’s Urban Redevelopment Authority, Telesis, and PNC Bank.

For more information on the project, visit the [Hazelwood Green](#) website.

NewsClip:

[Hazelwood Green, Fmr Steel Mill Site Transformation Gets Boost](#)

Related Stories:

[Last Major Pittsburgh Steel Mill Site Reborn As Hazelwood Green](#)

[Request For Qualifications To Design Public Plaza At Hazelwood Green Site In Pittsburgh](#)

[Posted: Dec. 27, 2017]

PUC Report: Fewer Households Starting Winter Without Heat, Help Available



The Public Utility Commission Friday released the results of its annual [Cold Weather Survey](#), which showed that more than 19,000 households across the state who had their utility service terminated this year are entering the winter season without heat-related utility service or using unsafe heating sources.

That figure is approximately 12-percent lower than last year's survey (2,730 fewer households starting the winter without heat), and 20-percent lower (4,880 fewer households) than the winter of 2015-- with improvements

noted by nearly all the state's major electric and natural gas distribution companies.

The annual Cold Weather Survey, along with a mid-winter resurvey, serve as "snapshots" to help gauge utility and PUC outreach about heating assistance programs.

The survey tracks the number of households whose heat-related utility service was terminated during the year, and who remain without service at the start of the winter and at the mid-way point of the heating season.

More extensive data about utility service – including terminations; reconnections; the number of low-income and payment-troubled customers; and the size and scope of various customer assistance programs is available in the PUC's annual [Universal Service Report](#).

"For the third year in a row, we have seen a notable decrease in the number of Pennsylvania families who had their utility service terminated this year and are starting the winter without heat-related electric or natural gas service, or depending on potentially unsafe heating sources," said PUC Chairman Gladys M. Brown. "Additionally, the direct contact that occurs between utilities and consumers during the survey process resulted in over 33,000 households receiving payment arrangements and being reconnected to service while the survey was still underway – which is the driving purpose of this effort."

Despite the results of the Cold Weather Survey and the number of pre-winter reconnections, the PUC remains concerned about the thousands of households who struggle stay warm and safe during the winter.

Residents experiencing financial difficulties are encouraged to contact their utilities and/or the PUC for information about numerous programs available to help them restore and maintain their utility service.

The 2017 Cold Weather Survey showed the following (as of December 15):
-- 6,351 residences whose utility service was terminated this year are without safe electric heating, including 6,057 households without electric service and 294 households that are heating

with potentially unsafe heating sources.

-- 12,944 residences whose utility service was terminated this year are without safe natural gas heating, including 12,125 households without natural gas service and 819 households that are heating with potentially unsafe heating sources.

-- Additionally, 11,173 residences where electric service was terminated this year and 4,096 residences where natural gas service was terminated this year now appear to be vacant.

-- Note: Some households may be without both electric and natural gas service, resulting in a double-counting of some households.

According to the survey data, the number of families whose electric utility service was terminated this year and remain without service is 9-percent lower than last winter.

The number of homes where electric utility service was terminated this year, and who are now depending on potentially unsafe heating sources, dropped by 23-percent compared to last winter-- while the number of natural gas customers whose utility service was terminated this year and are now depending on potentially unsafe heating sources, dropped by 28-percent.

Across the state, six of Pennsylvania's eight major electric distribution companies reported improvements in their Cold Weather Survey data, as did eight of the state's nine natural gas distribution companies.

The utilities conducting the Cold Weather Survey provide service to more than 5 million residential electric customers and nearly 2.3 million residential natural gas customers.

As part of the Cold Weather Service process, utility representatives attempted to contact approximately 31,000 households using electric heating and approximately 39,000 households using natural gas heating, whose service was terminated this year.

Help Available

"There are a variety of options available to low-income households who are struggling to maintain their heat-related service," said Chairman Brown. "We encourage anyone experiencing difficulties to call their utilities as soon as possible about a variety of PUC-required assistance programs to help heat their homes or pay their energy bills – such as Customer Assistance Programs (CAPs) and Low-Income Usage Reduction Programs (LIURP)."

According to the PUC's most recent [Universal Service Report](#), those assistance programs impact more than 474,500 households and are valued at over \$397 million per year.

As part of the annual "[Prepare Now](#)" campaign, the Commission continues to [appeal to utilities to increase their efforts to educate consumers](#) about other available resources that may be available, such as grants under the federal [Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program](#) (LIHEAP)-- which is administered by the Department of Human Services (DHS) – with information available through local County Assistance Offices or via the LIHEAP hotline at 1-866-857-7095.

The PUC emphasized that consumers without utility service should understand their rights and responsibilities, including additional options that may be available for those who are seriously ill or are facing other unique circumstances, such as a protection from abuse order.

Consumers should call their utility first to make arrangements to pay their bill. If they are unable to reach an agreement with the utility, the PUC may be able to provide assistance. The PUC can be reached toll-free at 1-800-692-7380.

Every year, the state's electric and natural gas distribution companies under the PUC's jurisdiction are required to survey residential properties where service has been terminated and has not been reconnected during this calendar year. Every December, the PUC releases those

survey results.

As part of the survey, the utility or its representative makes four attempts to contact consumers who are known to be without heat-related utility service. The attempts may include telephone calls, letters and personal visits to the residence and are done on different days of the week and at different times of the day. If the first three contacts are unsuccessful, the PUC requests that the fourth attempt be an in-person visit to the residence.

Homes using potentially unsafe heating sources are reported separately in the survey because of additional risks in those situations.

According to the National Fire Protection Association, potentially unsafe sources of heat include kerosene heaters, kitchen stoves or ovens, electric space heaters, fireplaces and connecting extension cords to neighbors' homes.

For more information on help with winter heating bills, visit the PUC's [Prepare Now](#) webpage.

NewsClips:

[Coal To The Rescue As Record Cold Grips The East](#)

[Peoples Natural Gas Rates To Decrease](#)

[Erie Woman Receives \\$284 Billion Electric Bill From Penelec](#)

[FirstEnergy: No Evidence Of Erie Woman's \\$284 Billion Electric Bill](#)

[PPL Customers To Pay 55 Cent DISC Fee For \\$900M Line, Pole Repair Program](#)

[Power Outages Affect Thousands In Pittsburgh](#)

[Why Has PPL Stock Dropped 20 Percent Since September?](#)

[PPL To Send Crews, Trucks To Puerto Rico To Help Restore Power](#)

[3 Months After Maria, Roughly Half Of Puerto Ricans Still Without Power](#)

[Anger Builds 100 Days After Maria Hit Puerto Rico](#)

[Trump's Energy Agenda Hits Its Stride In 2018, But Pitfalls Lurk](#)

[U.S. EIA: Monthly Renewable Electricity Generation Surpasses Nuclear For First Time Since 1984](#)

[Nuclear Energy Wants A Spot In Trump's Infrastructure Bill](#)

[Dominion's Cove Point Plant Preparing To Export Natural Gas](#)

[Energy In 2017: Federal Regulatory Rollback, Environmentalist Angst](#)

[Posted: Dec. 29, 2017]

DEP Assesses CNX Gas Drilling \$433,500 For Violations In Greene County

The Department of Environmental Protection Thursday announced [CNX Gas Company, LLC](#) has agreed to two civil penalties totaling \$433,500 for violations at well sites in Greene County.

A penalty of \$241,000 was assessed for violations at CNX's GH9AHSU and GH53BHS well sites, and \$192,400 for violations at the GH58HHS and GH46AHS well sites.

The penalties mark the culmination of a long-term investigation by DEP, and are based on impacts to groundwater in a special protection watershed, high quality surface waters, including Jacobs Run and an unnamed tributary to Jacobs Run, and vegetation, as well as the severity of the violations which occurred in 2015 and 2016.

"If incidents occur, it is incumbent on the operator to promptly address the cause, remediate the site, and prevent a reoccurrence," said DEP Secretary Patrick McDonnell. "DEP inspectors and investigators work diligently to ensure that safeguards are in place and operators

are held accountable if they fail.”

The violations for which CNX was cited include:

- Failure to properly control, dispose and collect flowback and drilling fluids
- Failure to maintain containment during drilling and hydraulic fracturing activities
- Unauthorized disposal of residual waste
- Unauthorized discharge of industrial waste into the waters of the commonwealth
- Failure to maintain erosion and sedimentation best management practices (BMPs) in accordance with the associated permit
- Failure to implement effective BMPs to minimize erosion and sedimentation
- Failure to maintain alternate waste storage practices requested by CNX and approved by DEP

Remediation at the well sites was completed and included cleanup of any soil, groundwater, and surface waters impacted by the spills in accordance with Pennsylvania’s Land Recycling and Environmental Remediation Standards Act and DEP’s technical guidance documents.

Questions should be directed to Lauren Fraley, DEP Southwest Regional Office, 412-442-4203 or send email to: lfraley@pa.gov.

NewsClips:

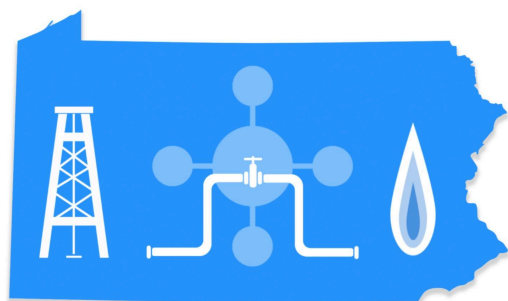
[CNS Gas Fined Over \\$400,000 For Drilling Violations In Greene County](#)

[DEP Fines Gas Drilling Company For Violations In Greene County](#)

[Sisk: PA’s Gas Fields Ramp Up For More Drilling In 2018](#)

[Posted: Dec. 28, 2017]

PEC Blog: Pennsylvania Moving Forward On Oil & Gas Industry Methane Controls



In November the Department of Environmental Protection released long-awaited revised versions of two permitting proposals which are [designed to help control methane emissions](#) from new unconventional natural gas wells and their accompanying transmission infrastructure.

At the moment, the Department is anticipating finalizing the proposals in early-to-mid 2018.

Perhaps the most substantial change to the proposals was to move what are considered “temporary

activities” (such as well pad drilling operations) out of the permit itself and into an existing exemption category that still requires operators to meet certain performance standards, but not within the compliance and reporting context of the permit itself.

This move was made in response to comments from industry that including these activities in the permit application created significant logistical challenges with respect to equipment identification and compliance.

These permits, once finalized, will address emissions from new operations and facilities.

The Department has also [provided a brief concepts overview](#) of pending rulemaking to address emissions from existing well production, as well as processing and transport infrastructure.

These concepts are based on federal Control Technique Guidelines (CTGs) for Volatile

Organic Compounds (VOCs). This approach is problematic for two reasons.

First, the Environmental Protection Agency has proposed withdrawing the CTGs, so the state would no longer have this basis to work from.

More importantly, the CTGs do not address methane directly and would be ineffective for comprehensively dealing with those emissions.

The CTGs would have limited or no application for “dry gas” operations (where there are few VOC emission issues), and further do not cover many of the activities and equipment that have been identified as critical to reducing known and fugitive methane emissions.

DEP will be bringing a more fully-formed rulemaking proposal to the [Air Quality Technical Advisory Committee](#) next year, most likely in late Spring or Summer.

The PA Environmental Council will be submitting new comments to the Department, both on how to improve the permitting proposals, and how DEP should develop a more comprehensive hydrocarbon rulemaking to effectively address emissions from existing sources.

Those comments will be posted on the PEC website in early January 2018.

For more information on the proposals, visit DEP’s [Methane Reduction Strategy](#) webpage.

For more information on programs, initiatives and special events, visit the [PA Environmental Council](#) website, visit the [PEC Blog](#), follow [PEC on Twitter](#) or [Like PEC on Facebook](#). Visit PEC’s [Audio Room](#) for the latest podcasts. [Click Here](#) to receive regular updates from PEC.

[Posted: Dec. 26, 2017]

DEP Extends First Come, First Served Alternative Fuel Vehicle Rebates Thru June 30

The Department of Environmental Protection has extended its [Alternative Fueled Vehicle Rebate Program](#) through June 30. (*formal notice*) The rebates available include--

- A \$1,750 rebate for battery electric vehicles (BEV) and plug-in hybrid electric vehicles (PHEV) with a battery capacity greater than or equal to 20 kWh.
- A \$1,000 rebate for BEVs and PHEVs with a battery capacity between 10 kWh and 20 kWh.
- A \$750 rebate for BEVs and PHEVs with a battery capacity less than 10 kWh.

In addition to rebates for new vehicles, residents in Allegheny, Armstrong, Bucks, Butler, Chester, Delaware, Montgomery, Philadelphia, Washington and Westmoreland counties are eligible for rebates on used alternative fueled vehicles if they meet certain other requirements.

Approximately 500 rebates at all levels will be available on a first come, first served basis.

All AFV rebates must be submitted online [using the eGrants system](#).

For all the details, visit DEP’s [Alternative Fueled Vehicle Rebate Program](#) webpage.

NewsClips:

[Northeast Transit Natural Gas Station Starts Next Year](#)

[Philly’s Hydroponic Metropolis Farms Thrives, Fueled By Pot, Biofuel Research](#)

[EPA Ethanol Study Now More Than 8 Years Late](#)

[Posted: Dec. 29, 2017]

Hearing, If Requested, On Graymont Company, Centre County RACT II Air Quality Plan Set For Feb. 9

The Department of Environmental Protection will hold a hearing on the proposed RACT II Air Quality Plan for the [Graymont facility](#) in Centre County on February 9, if a hearing is requested. ([PA Bulletin, page 7895](#))

To request a hearing, to register to speak at a hearing, or to inquire if a hearing will be held, contact Megan Lehman at 570-327-3659. The last day to preregister to speak at a hearing, if one is held, will be January 29, 2018.

The hearing, if held, will be at DEP's Northcentral Regional Office, 208 West Third Street in Williamsport starting at 10:00.

All pertinent documents are available for public review between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. at the Northcentral Regional Office, 208 West Third Street, Suite 101, Williamsport, PA 17701. Appointments for scheduling a review may be made by calling the Department at 570-327-0550.

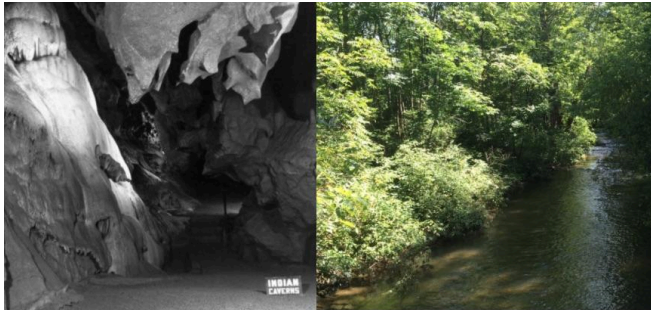
See the PA Bulletin notice for all the details. ([PA Bulletin page 7895](#))

NewsClips:

[PA Coal-Fired Power Plant Closing In 2014 Leads To Healthier Babies Downwind](#)
[AP: PA, 7 Other States Sue EPA Over Upwind Air Pollution](#)

[Posted: Dec. 29, 2017]

WPC Protected Land To Improve Bat Conservation, Fishing Access In Huntington County



The [Western Pennsylvania Conservancy](#) Wednesday announced the protection of 13 acres in Franklin Township, Huntington County, which includes a limestone cave system to be used for bat conservation and more than 1,200 feet of public fishing access to the renowned Spruce Creek. The property will be conveyed to the Fish and Boat Commission once work to replace an access bridge is complete. The previous

owners listed the cave system – publicly known as Indian Caverns – for sale in 2014 and closed operations in 2016.

Since 2014, the Conservancy has been working closely with scientists and wildlife managers from the Game Commission and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to obtain information and expertise on how the property can be restored for bat habitat and conservation.

Bats hibernate in caves during winter and require these areas to be cool and humid with stable temperatures between 33-50 degrees Fahrenheit. Native tri-colored and little brown bat species are known to have recently used the cave for hibernation, despite its decades-long commercial use and limited points of entry.

According to Game Commission Wildlife Biologist Greg Turner, this cave was also historically known to shelter the federally endangered Indiana bat. Cave dwelling bats' numbers have been decimated by the deadly bat fungal disease white-nose syndrome, so conservationists are interested in protecting the habitat for the bats.

“We have recently documented that bats that have survived WNS are seeking colder sites to hibernate, as these colder temperatures help them preserve their fat reserves longer and not be

exhausted by the disease before winter ends,” said Turner. “The Indiana, tri-colored and little brown bat species are all declining due to this disease, so improving access to and conditions within this cave are critical.”

Future restoration efforts include removing the door to the cave and implementing other measures to regulate airflow, temperatures and humidity. These efforts will provide more favorable environmental conditions now sought by syndrome survivors.

Also, the Fish and Wildlife Service documented that the cave is within a breeding and feeding zone of two existing Indiana bat refuge areas, further validating that the cave and surrounding natural area are essential for bat-conservation efforts.

After restoration concludes, scientists predict that several other nearby bat populations that forage along Spruce Creek could also use this cave and benefit from more favorable hibernation conditions.

The conservation of this property also provides increased public fishing access to Spruce Creek, a renowned wild brown trout fishery and tributary to the Little Juniata River.

Public access to Spruce Creek has been limited for decades due to the large amount of surrounding private lands.

Currently, less than a half mile of 16 fishable miles of Spruce Creek is open to the public for fishing. Conserving this land improves public access to Spruce Creek and protects approximately 1,200 additional feet of vegetative buffer.

“We are very glad to be able to protect this beautiful property that now will provide public fishing access along Spruce Creek-- such an extraordinary trout fishing stream-- and also will provide habitat for native bats given their dramatic decreases in population in recent years,” said Thomas Saunders, the Conservancy’s president and CEO.

Saunders also said the Conservancy’s conservation and funding partners were vital in helping to protect this special area that will soon be state public land.

“We are very excited to be able to work with WPC and a variety of conservation partners to acquire this property,” said John Arway, PFBC executive director. “Spruce Creek sustains a Class A wild brown trout fishery which attracts anglers from all over the world. We are grateful to be in the position to take ownership of the property and manage it to benefit natural resource conservation and public recreation.”

The Conservancy acquired the property thanks to the financial support from the Game Commission, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, [Richard King Mellon Foundation](#) and the Fish and Boat Commission.

More information is available on programs, initiatives and special events at the [Western PA Conservancy](#) website. [Click Here](#) to sign up for regular updates from the Conservancy, [Like them on Facebook](#), [Follow them on Twitter](#), add them to your [Circle on Google+](#), join them on [Instagram](#), visit the [Conservancy’s YouTube Channel](#) or add them to your [network on LinkedIn](#). [Click Here](#) to support their work.

(Photo: Bat caves, Spruce Creek.)

NewsClips:

[Lehigh Valley Receives \\$2.9M In State Open Space Grants](#)

[Murrysville Resident Enjoys Role With Westmoreland Land Trust](#)

[Posted: Dec. 27, 2017]

Delaware Highlands Conservancy To Begin Accepting Entries For Eagles & Their

Environs Photo Contest Jan. 15



The [Delaware Highlands Conservancy](#) will begin accepting entries for a new juried photo contest-- [Sharing Place: Eagles and Their Environs](#)-- for the Upper Delaware River region on January 15. The deadline for entries is February 15.

The contest is open to professional and amateur photographers who are invited to submit no more than two photos to the contest.

The Conservancy invites photographers to capture striking eagle-inspired photos in four categories: eagles; healthy eagle habitat; factors important to eagle welfare; and a wild card to feature insights gained in the process of photographing eagles and their habitat.

Photos will be judged on creativity, originality, composition, clarity and quality, and impact.

The Conservancy is also offering a guided Photo Workshop Bus Tour on February 3 with instruction from local photographer Sandy Long, but participation in the bus tour is not required to enter the contest.

Photographers must follow Eagle Etiquette when photographing eagles and avoid disturbing or disrupting the birds or their habitat.

The winning 15 photos will be chosen by a panel of judges, along with one People's Choice, and will be hung at the [ARTery gallery in Milford](#), Pike County, beginning with a reception on April 21st from 6:00 to 9:00 p.m. and on display until May 7th. The ARTery is a cooperative owned and operated by successful and emerging artists and artisans from the Tri-State area.

The winning photos will be exhibited with the ARTery member artists' own interpretations of eagles, raptors, and other species of birds. During the opening reception, members of the Conservancy will present a short background on the organization and eagles in the region.

For all the details, including the required rules acknowledgement form, visit the Conservancy's [Sharing Place: Eagles and Their Environs](#) webpage. Questions about the contest should be directed to Outreach Coordinator Jason Zarnowski by sending email to: jason@delawarehighlands.org or call 570-226-3164 ext. 6.

For more information on programs, initiatives and special events, visit the [Delaware Highlands Conservancy](#) website or call 570-226-3164 or 845-583-1010.. [Click Here](#) to sign up for regular updates from the Conservancy, [Like on Facebook](#) and [Follow on Twitter](#). [Click Here](#) to support their work.

(Photo: Eagle by Stephen Davis, copyrighted.)

NewsClips:

[Winter Eagle-Watching Trips Planned In Upper Delaware](#)

[See Pittsburgh Bald Eagles' Nests In High Def](#)

[Erie Bird Count Tallies More Than 70 Species](#)

[Duck Hunter Clears Presque Isle Bay Ice](#)

Related Story:

[Delaware Highlands Conservancy Winter Eagle-Watching Events In Jan., Feb.](#)

[Posted: Dec. 28, 2017]

Manada Conservancy Native Plant Sale Pre-Ordering Now Open In Dauphin County



The Manada Conservancy's [Native Plant Pre-Sale](#) is now open online. Shop the online store for native perennials, trees, and shrubs at a 10 percent discount from the regular sale day price.

Favorites sell out quickly so shop soon for best selection! Orders must be picked up on [Native Plant Sale Day](#), April 28, at the Hummelstown Borough Park in Dauphin County where you will

have the chance to browse our sale-day only selections from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

February 8

Join the Conservancy on February 8 for the [Nature Therapy: The Health Benefits of Spending Time in Nature](#) as Dr. Matt Silvis explores these benefits and how this directly connects to the vision of Manada Conservancy.

For more information on programs, initiatives and other upcoming events, visit the [Manada Conservancy](#) website.

NewsClip:

[Hayes: New Protections May Come For Native PA Plants](#)

[Posted: Dec. 29 2017]

Opportunity To Bid On DEP Well Plugging In Clinton County, Water Line In Clearfield County

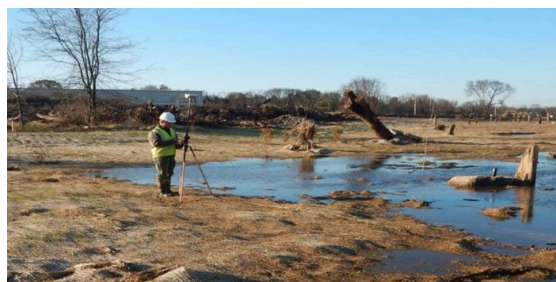
The Department of Environmental Protection published notice in the December 30 PA Bulletin of the opportunity to bid on an orphan oil and gas well plugging project in [Clinton County](#) and a water main extension project in [Clearfield County](#).

The **Department of Environmental Protection** has available a current list of Abandoned Mine Reclamation, Acid Mine Drainage, Surface Mine Reclamation, Cleaning Out and Plugging Oil and Gas Wells, Waterways Engineering (Concrete Dams/Concrete Lined Channels, Walls and Box Culverts, etc.), Hazardous Site Remediation, Removal and Disposal of Underground Storage Tanks, and Wetland Restoration projects available for bidding. [Click Here](#) for the list.

The **Department of Conservation and Natural Resources** has a current list of bid proposals for construction projects in State Parks and State Forests available online. [Click Here](#) for the list.

[Posted: Dec. 29, 2017]

Intern Wanted: LandStudies Water Resource Engineer Intern



[LandStudies, Inc.](#) is looking for a highly motivated student in Engineering or a related science to fill a

[Water Resources Engineering internship](#) position for the summer of 2018 in its Lititz, Lancaster County office.

The qualified applicant will be able to demonstrate training/education in water resources related studies. This internship will provide the applicant with an opportunity to gain experience in all phases of stream and wetland restoration as well as stormwater management through tasks including site assessment, modeling, design, permitting, construction, monitoring and maintenance.

[Click Here](#) for all the details. LandStudies is certified as a Women's Business Enterprise (WBE), Minority Business Enterprise (MBE) and Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE). [Posted: Dec. 27, 2017]

Public Participation Opportunities/Calendar Of Events

This section lists House and Senate Committee meetings, DEP and other public hearings and meetings and other interesting environmental events.

NEW means new from last week. **[Agenda Not Posted]** means not posted within 2 weeks of the advisory committee meeting. Go to the [online Calendar](#) webpage for updates.

Note: DEP [published the 2018 meeting schedules](#) for its advisory committees and boards.

January 2-- NEW. General Assembly kicks off 2018 legislative session.

January 4-- [DEP hearing on RACT 2 Air Quality Plan for NRG Energy Center in Dauphin County](#). DEP Southcentral Regional Office, 909 Elmerton Avenue, Harrisburg. 10:00. The deadline to pre-register is December 28. To register to speak contact Thomas Hanlon at 717-705-4862. (*formal notice with additional details [PA Bulletin, page 7349](#)*).

January 6-- [Delaware Highlands Conservancy](#). [Eagle Day](#). Wallenpaupack Environmental Learning Center, Hawley, Pike County.

January 10-- [House Consumer Affairs Committee](#) holds an informational meeting on [House Bill 107](#) (Godshall-R-Montgomery) providing for the recovery of natural gas distribution system extension costs ([sponsor summary](#)). Room B-31 Main Capitol. 10:00.

January 10-- DEP [Technical Advisory Committee on Diesel-Powered Equipment](#) (Coal Mining) meeting. DEP New Stanton Office, 131 Broadview Road, New Stanton. 10:00, DEP Contact: Peggy Scheloske, 724-404-3143, mscheloske@pa.gov.

January 10-- [DEP hearing on RACT 2 Air Quality Plan for Lehigh Cement Company in Berks County](#). DEP Southcentral Regional Office, 909 Elmerton Avenue, Harrisburg. 10:00. Deadline to pre-register is January 3. To register to speak contact Thomas Hanlon at 717-705-4862. (*formal notice with additional details [PA Bulletin, page 7351](#)*).

January 10-- NEW. [Lehigh Valley Master Watershed Stewards Information Session](#). Lehigh County Agriculture Center, 4185 Dorney Park Road, Room 108, Allentown. 6:30 to 8:30.

January 11-- NEW. DEP [Mining & Reclamation Advisory Board's](#) Regulatory Legislative and Technical Committee meeting. Room 105 Rachel Carson Building. 9:00 to 10:00. DEP Contact: Daniel Snowden, 717-787-5103, dsnowden@pa.gov. (*formal notice*)

January 11-- DEP [Mining & Reclamation Advisory Board](#) meeting. Room 105 Rachel Carson Building. 10:00. DEP Contact: Daniel Snowden, 717-787-5103, dsnowden@pa.gov.

January 11-- DEP [Coal & Clay Mine Subsidence Insurance Fund Board](#) meeting. 12th Floor Conference Room, Rachel Carson Building. 10:00. DEP Contact: Lawrence Ruane, 717-783-9590, lruane@pa.gov.

January 11-- [DCNR, PA Recreation & Park Society Grant Application Webinar](#). 10:00 to 11:30.

January 11-12-- [Morris Arboretum, 29th Annual Landscape Design Symposium](#). [Montgomery County Community College](#), Blue Bell.

January 16-- [Environmental Quality Board](#) meeting. Room 105 Rachel Carson Building. 9:00. DEP Contact: Laura Edinger, Environmental Quality Board, 400 Market Street, Harrisburg, PA 17101, 717-772-3277, ledinger@pa.gov.

January 16-- [DEP Citizens Advisory Council](#) meeting. Room 105 Rachel Carson Building. 10:00. Contact: Executive Director Lee Ann Murray, 717-787-8171, leemurray@pa.gov

January 17-- DEP [Coastal Zone Advisory Committee](#) meeting. 10th Floor Conference Room, Rachel Carson Building. 9:30. DEP Contact: Stacey Box, 717-772-5622, sbox@pa.gov.

January 18-- NEW. [Lehigh Valley Master Watershed Stewards Information Session](#). Northampton Extension Office, 14 Gracedale Avenue, Nazareth. 6:30 to 8:30.

January 20-- [Pocono Heritage Land Trust. Cross Country Skiing Adventure](#), Brodhead Creek Heritage Center at ForEvergreen Nature Preserve, 1539 Cherry Land Rd., East Stroudsburg, Monroe County. Noon.

January 22-- [Environmental Issues Forum, Joint Conservation Committee, Pumped Storage Hyrdo](#). Room 8E-A East Wing. Noon.

January 22-- [PA Chesapeake Bay Watershed Planning Steering Committee](#) meets. Room 105 Rachel Carson Building. 1:00.

January 23-- Delaware River Basin Commission. [Hearing on proposed fracking ban in Delaware Watershed. Ladore Camp, Retreat and Conference Center's Performing Arts and Recreation Center \(PARC\) Pavilion, 287 Owego Turnpike, Waymart, Wayne County](#). 1:00 to 4:30. [Click Here](#) to register to attend.

January 23-- Delaware River Basin Commission. [Hearing on proposed fracking ban in Delaware Watershed. Ladore Camp, Retreat and Conference Center's Performing Arts and Recreation Center \(PARC\) Pavilion, 287 Owego Turnpike, Waymart, Wayne County.](#) 6:00 to 9:30. [Click Here](#) to register to attend.

January 24-- [House Appropriations Committee](#) holds a hearing on special funds related to the Department of Community and Economic Development. Location, Time To Be Announced. [Click Here](#) for more.

January 24-- DEP [Small Business Compliance Advisory Committee](#) meeting. 12th Floor Conference Room, Rachel Carson Building. 10:00. DEP Contact: Nancy Herb, 717-783-9269, nherb@pa.gov.

January 24-- Dept. of Labor & Industry [Uniform Construction Code Review and Advisory Council](#) meeting. Room E-100, First Floor, Department of Labor of Industry Building, 651 Boas Street in Harrisburg. 10:00. Contact: Cindy Holtry, Department of Labor and Industry, 717-783-4560. (*formal notice*)

January 24-- **NEW.** [Lehigh Valley Master Watershed Stewards Information Session.](#) Illick's Mill, 100 Illick's Mill Road, Bethlehem. 6:30 to 8:30.

January 25-- [House Appropriations Committee](#) hearing on Special Funds Used By DEP and DCNR. Location, Time To Be Announced. Committee hearings are typically webcast through the [House Republican Caucus](#) website. [Click Here](#) for more.

January 25-- DEP [Water Resources Advisory Committee](#) meeting. Room 105 Rachel Carson Building. 9:30. DEP Contact: Diane Wilson, 717-787-3730, diawilson@pa.gov.

January 25-- Delaware River Basin Commission. [Hearing on proposed fracking ban in Delaware Watershed. DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Philadelphia Airport, 4509 Island Ave., Philadelphia.](#) 1:00 to 4:30. [Click Here](#) to register to attend.

January 25-- Delaware River Basin Commission. [Hearing on proposed fracking ban in Delaware Watershed. DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Philadelphia Airport, 4509 Island Ave., Philadelphia.](#) 6:00 to 9:30. [Click Here](#) to register to attend.

January 25-26-- [Chesapeake Bay Landscape Professional Certification Level I Training.](#) Lancaster.

January 30-- **NEW.** [DEP Hearing on Water Quality Toxics Management Strategy Policy Changes.](#) DEP's Southeast Regional Office, 2 East Main Street in Norristown, Montgomery County. 1:00.

January 30-- **NEW.** [Environmental Quality Board Hearing on Triennial Water Quality Standard Regulation Changes.](#) DEP's Southeast Regional Office, 2 East Main Street in Norristown,

Montgomery County. 1:00.

January 31-- [DEP Hearing On Air Quality Permit At Sunoco Marcus Hook Facility Delaware County](#). Marcus Hook Community Center, 7 W. Delaware Ave, Marcus Hook. 6:00 to 8:00.

January 31-- [Pocono Heritage Land Trust. Full Moon Night Hike](#), Jonas Mountain Nature Preserve, 506 Watercrest Dr. Monroe County. 6:00 p.m.

February 6-- Governor's Budget Address.

February 6-- [DEP Climate Change Advisory Committee](#) meeting. Room 105 Rachel Carson Building. 10:00. DEP Contact: Mark Brojakowski, 717-772-3429 or send email to: mbrojakows@pa.gov.

February 7-10-- [PA Association For Sustainable Agriculture Annual Conference](#). State College.

February 8-- DEP [Air Quality Technical Advisory Committee](#) meeting. Room 105 Rachel Carson Building. 9:15. DEP Contact: Kirit Dalal, 717-772-3436, kdalal@pa.gov.

February 8-- DEP [State Board for Certification of Water & Wastewater Systems Operators](#) meeting. 10th Floor Conference Room, Rachel Carson Building. 10:00. DEP Contact: Edgar Chescattie, 717-772-2814, echescattie@pa.gov.

February 8-- [DEP Hearing \[If Requested\] On RACT II Air Quality Plan For Jeraco Enterprises, Inc. Milton Plant, Northumberland County](#). DEP Northcentral Regional Office, 208 West Third Street, Suite 101, Williamsport. 10:00.

February 9-- **NEW.** [DEP Hearing \[If Requested\] On RACT II Air Quality Plan For Graymont Company, Centre County](#). DEP Northcentral Regional Office, 208 West Third Street, Suite 101, Williamsport. 10:00.

February 11--[Pocono Heritage Land Trust. Winter Snowshoe Adventure](#), Brodhead Creek Heritage Center at ForEvergreen Nature Preserve, [1539 Cherry Lane Rd., East Stroudsburg, Monroe County](#). Noon.

February 13-- DEP [Environmental Justice Advisory Board](#) meeting. 14th Floor Conference Room, Rachel Carson Building. 8:30. DEP Contact: John Brakeall, 717-783-9731, jbrakeall@pa.gov.

February 13-- Dept. of Labor & Industry [Uniform Construction Code Review and Advisory Council](#) meeting. Room E-100, First Floor, Department of Labor of Industry Building, 651 Boas Street in Harrisburg. 10:00. Contact: Cindy Holtry, Department of Labor and Industry, 717-783-4560. ([formal notice](#))

February 14-- DEP [Oil and Gas Technical Advisory Board](#) meeting. Room 105 Rachel Carson

Building. 10:00. DEP Contact: Todd Wallace, 717-783-9438, twallace@pa.gov.

February 14-- DEP [State Board for Certification of Sewage Enforcement Officers](#) meeting. Conference Room 11B, Rachel Carson Building. 10:00. DEP Contact: Kristen Szwajkowski, 717-772-2186, kszwajkows@pa.gov.

February 22-- DEP [Agricultural Advisory Board](#) meeting. DEP Southcentral Regional Office, 909 Elmerton Ave., Harrisburg. 9:00. DEP Contact: Jay Braund, 717-772-5636, jbraund@pa.gov.

February 23-24-- **Registration Open.** [Keystone Coldwater Conference](#). State College. (*Join PA Environment Digest as a Conference sponsor.*)

March 2-- [Harrisburg University](#) Center for Environment, Energy and Economy. [Hosts The Fracking Debate Author Daniel Raimi In Discussion Program](#). Harrisburg University, 326 Market St, Harrisburg. 11:30 to 1:00.

March 6-- DEP [Storage Tank Advisory Committee](#) meeting. Room 105 Rachel Carson Building. 10:00. DEP Contact: Dawn Heimbach, 717-772-5556, daheimbach@pa.gov.

March 6-- DEP [Board of Coal Mine Safety](#) meeting. DEP Cambria Office, 286 Industrial Park Road, Ebensburg. 10:00. DEP Contact: Peggy Scheloske, 724-404-3143, mscheloske@pa.gov

March 6-- Dept. of Labor & Industry [Uniform Construction Code Review and Advisory Council](#) meeting. Room E-100, First Floor, Department of Labor of Industry Building, 651 Boas Street in Harrisburg. 10:00. Contact: Cindy Holtry, Department of Labor and Industry, 717-783-4560. (*formal notice*)

March 8-- DEP [Solid Waste Advisory Committee](#) meeting. Room 105 Rachel Carson Building. 10:00. DEP Contact: Laura Henry, 717-772-5713, lahenry@pa.gov.

March 12-13-- [PA Association of Environmental Educators. 2018 Annual Conference](#). State College, Centre County.

March 20-- Dept. of Labor & Industry [Uniform Construction Code Review and Advisory Council](#) meeting. Room E-100, First Floor, Department of Labor of Industry Building, 651 Boas Street in Harrisburg. 10:00. Contact: Cindy Holtry, Department of Labor and Industry, 717-783-4560. (*formal notice*)

March 22-- DEP [Radiation Protection Advisory Committee](#) meeting. Room 105 Rachel Carson Building. 9:00. DEP Contact: Joseph Melnic, 717-783-9730, jmelnic@pa.gov.

March 29-- DEP [Small Water Systems Technical Assistance Center Board](#) meeting. Room 105 Rachel Carson Building. 9:00. DEP Contact: Dawn Hissner, 717-772-2189, dhissner@pa.gov.

April 3-- Dept. of Labor & Industry [Uniform Construction Code Review and Advisory Council](#) meeting. Room E-100, First Floor, Department of Labor of Industry Building, 651 Boas Street in Harrisburg. 10:00. Contact: Cindy Holtry, Department of Labor and Industry, 717-783-4560. ([formal notice](#))

April 4-- DEP [Cleanup Standards Scientific Advisory Board](#) meeting. Room 105 Rachel Carson Building. 9:00. DEP Contact: Mike Maddigan, 717-772-3609, mmaddigan@pa.gov.

April 10-- DEP [Mine Families First Response & Communications Advisory Council](#) meeting. DEP New Stanton Office, 131 Broadview Road, New Stanton. 10:00. DEP Contact: Peggy Scheloske, 724-404-3143, mscheloske@pa.gov.

April 10-- [Center for Watershed Protection. 2018 National Watershed & Stormwater Conference](#). Maryland and Virginia In-person and online.

April 12-- DEP [Laboratory Accreditation Advisory Committee](#) meeting. DEP Bureau of Laboratories building, 2575 Interstate Drive, Harrisburg. 9:00. DEP Contact: Aaren Alger, 717-346-7200, aaalger@pa.gov.

April 17-- Dept. of Labor & Industry [Uniform Construction Code Review and Advisory Council](#) meeting. Room E-100, First Floor, Department of Labor of Industry Building, 651 Boas Street in Harrisburg. 10:00. Contact: Cindy Holtry, Department of Labor and Industry, 717-783-4560. ([formal notice](#))

April 17-19-- [National Forum On Low-Zero Energy Buildings](#). Wyndam Grand Hotel, Pittsburgh.

April 24-- DEP [Sewage Advisory Committee](#) meeting. DEP Southcentral Regional Office, 909 Elmerton Ave., Harrisburg. 10:30. DEP Contact: Janice Vollero, 717-772-5157, jvollero@pa.gov.

April 28-- NEW. [Manada Conservancy Native Plant Sale](#). Hummelstown Borough Park, Dauphin County. 10:00 to 3:00

May 2-4-- [PA Association Of Environmental Professional. Annual Conference](#). State College.

May 8-- [2018 PA Groundwater Symposium](#). Ramada Inn in State College, Centre County.

May 22-23-- [Choose Clean Water Coalition. 9th Annual Clean Water Conference](#). Lancaster Marriott.

June 20-21-- NEW. [20th Anniversary PA Abandoned Mine Reclamation Conference](#). Ramada Conference Center, State College.

July 25-27-- Registration Open. [Professional Recyclers of PA. 28th Annual Recycling &](#)

[Organics Conference](#). Best Western Premier Hotel, Harrisburg.

September 22-- Joint meeting of DEP Recycling Fund Advisory Committee and [Solid Waste Advisory Committee](#). Room 105 Rachel Carson Building. 10:00. DEP Contact: Laura Henry, 717-772-5713, lahenry@pa.gov.

September 28-- DEP [Low-Level Waste Advisory Committee](#) meeting Room 105 Rachel Carson Building. 10:00. DEP Contact: Rich Janati, 717-787-2147, rjanati@pa.gov.

October 17-21-- [Passive House Western PA](#). [North American Passive House Network 2018 Conference](#). [David L. Lawrence Convention Center](#), Pittsburgh.

Visit DEP's [Public Participation Center](#) for public participation opportunities. [Click Here](#) to sign up for DEP News a biweekly newsletter from the Department.

Sign Up For DEP's eNotice: Did you know DEP can send you email notices of permit applications submitted in your community? Notice of new technical guidance documents and regulations? All through its eNotice system. [Click Here](#) to sign up.

Check the [PA Environmental Council Bill Tracker](#) for the status and updates on pending state **legislation and regulations** that affect environmental and conservation efforts in Pennsylvania.

DEP Regulations In Process

[Proposed Regulations Open For Comment](#) - DEP webpage

Submit Comments on Proposals Through [DEP's eComment System](#)

[Proposed Regulations With Closed Comment Periods](#) - DEP webpage

[Recently Finalized Regulations](#) - DEP webpage

[DEP Regulatory Update](#) - DEP webpage

August 2017 DEP Regulatory Agenda - [PA Bulletin, Page 4922](#)

DEP Technical Guidance In Process

[Draft Technical Guidance Documents](#) - DEP webpage

[Technical Guidance Comment Deadlines](#) - DEP webpage

Submit Comments on Proposals Through [DEP's eComment System](#)

[Recently Closed Comment Periods For Technical Guidance](#) - DEP webpage

[Technical Guidance Recently Finalized](#) - DEP webpage

[Copies of Final Technical Guidance](#) - DEP webpage

[DEP Non-Regulatory/Technical Guidance Documents Agenda \(July 2017\)](#) - DEP webpage

Other DEP Proposals For Public Review

[Other Proposals Open For Public Comment](#) - DEP webpage

Submit Comments on Proposals Through [DEP's eComment System](#)

[Recently Closed Comment Periods For Other Proposals](#) - DEP webpage

[Other Proposals Recently Finalized](#) - DEP webpage

[DEP Facebook Page](#) [DEP Twitter Feed](#) [DEP YouTube Channel](#)

[Click Here](#) for links to DEP's Advisory Committee webpages.

[DEP Calendar of Events](#) [DCNR Calendar of Events](#)

[Senate Committee Schedule](#) [House Committee Schedule](#)

You can watch the [Senate Floor Session](#) and [House Floor Session](#) live online.

[PA Environment Digest Blog](#) [Twitter Feed](#) [PaEnviroDigest Google+](#)

Grants & Awards

This section gives you a heads up on upcoming deadlines for awards and grants and other recognition programs. **NEW** means new from last week.

- January 1--** [Governor's Awards For Environmental Excellence](#)
- January 1--** [DEP County Act 101 Waste Planning, HHW, Education Grants](#)
- January 10--** **NEW.** [Delaware River Watershed Fellowship Program](#)
- January 15--** [PA Land Trust Assn. Conservation Leadership Award](#)
- January 15--** [Register For Western PA Let's Clear The Air Student Poster Challenge](#)
- January 19--** [3rd Annual Western PA Zero Waste Event and Business Awards](#)
- January 20--** [What Does The Delaware River Mean To You? Beauty](#)
- January 20--** [CFA Solar Energy Program Grants/Loans](#)
- January 23--** [Start Applying: DCNR Community Conservation Partnership Grants](#)
- January 26--** **NEW.** [Dept. Of Agriculture Research Grant Proposals](#)
- February 1--** [U.S. Healthy Watersheds Consortium Grant Program](#)
- February 1--** [Delaware River Basin Commission Winter Photo Contest](#)
- February 1--** [ExtremeTerrain's Clean Trail Grant Program](#)
- February 2--** [Green Stormwater Infrastructure Partners Excellence Awards](#)
- February 5--** [PA Environmental Professionals College Science Scholarships](#)
- February 12--** [PA Land Trust Assn. Government Leadership Award](#)
- February 15--** **NEW.** [Delaware Highlands Conservancy Eagles & Their Environs Photo Contest](#)
- February 26--** [NRCS Conservation Innovation Grants](#)
- February 27--** [West Penn Power Sustainable Energy Fund Clean Energy Projects RFP](#)
- February 28--** [Schuylkill Action Network Student Street Art Contest](#)
- March 22--** [CFA Solar Energy Program Grants/Loans](#)
- March 31--** [DEP Municipal, Hazardous Waste Municipal Inspector Grants](#)
- April 1--** [DEP Farm Conservation Plan Grant Chesapeake Bay Watershed](#)
- April 6--** [Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program](#)
- April 7--** [DEP Local Recycling Implementation Grants](#)
- April 12--** [DCNR Community Conservation Partnership Grants](#)
- May 18--** [CFA Solar Energy Program Grants/Loans](#)
- May 23--** [SBA Flood Assistance Clearfield, Washington, 8 Other Counties](#)

June 30-- [NEW. DEP Alternative Fuel Vehicle Rebates](#) (first come, first serve)

July 20-- [CFA Solar Energy Program Grants/Loans](#)

December 31-- [DEP County Act 101 Waste Planning, HHW, Education Grants](#)

-- Visit the [DEP Grant, Loan and Rebate Programs](#) webpage for more ideas on how to get financial assistance for environmental projects.

-- Visit the DCNR [Apply for Grants](#) webpage for a listing of financial assistance available from DCNR.

[PA Environment Digest Blog](#) [Twitter Feed](#) [PaEnviroDigest Google+](#)

Environmental NewsClips - All Topics

Here are NewsClips from around the state on all environmental topics, including General Environment, Budget, Marcellus Shale, Watershed Protection and much more.

The latest environmental NewsClips and news is available at the [PA Environment Digest Daily Blog](#), [Twitter Feed](#) and add [PaEnviroDigest Google+](#) to your Circle.

Sunday NewsClips

[Robert Eppley, Jr., A Passionate Volunteer Restoring The Environment](#)

[Snyder County Farmers Make Sure Conservation Plans In Place](#)

[Nonprofit Takes Radon Initiative to 20 Households In Homewood](#)

[Editorial: Science Factory Expansion Testament To Learning Center's Success](#)

[In Memoriam: A Look Back At Those We Lost In 2017](#)

[Crable: Cold Snap Harshes Of Winter, Year 10th Warmest On Record](#)

[Crable: Meeting Set About Closing Of Recreation Area At Brunner Island Power Plant](#)

[Crable: For Some In Lancaster County Roadkill Is A Ready Meal](#)

Yearend

[Bagenstose: After Tough Year, Environmentalists Seek Wins In 2018](#)

[Briefing: Environmental Legislative, Policy Opportunities, Challenges, Court Actions In 2018](#)

[137 More Stories In 2017 About Hundreds Of Great PA Environmental Stewards](#)

[2017 Environmental Legislation Scorecard, The Naughty And Nice List](#)

[Elections, Budget Will Dominate 2018 Legislative Politics And Session](#)

[The Most Consequential Environmental Stories Of 2017 \(Federal\)](#)

[Energy In 2017: Federal Regulatory Rollback, Environmentalist Angst](#)

Air

[PA Coal-Fired Power Plant Closing In 2014 Leads To Healthier Babies Downwind](#)

[AP: PA, 7 Other States Sue EPA Over Upwind Air Pollution](#)

Alternative Fuel

[Northeast Transit Natural Gas Station Starts Next Year](#)

[Philly's Hydroponic Metropolis Farms Thrives, Fueled By Pot, Biofuel Research](#)

[EPA Ethanol Study Now More Than 8 Years Late](#)

Biodiversity/Invasive Species

[Hayes: New Protections May Come For Native PA Plants](#)

Chesapeake Bay

[Lancaster Farming Year In Review- Chesapeake Bay And More](#)

[Firm Must Pay Township's Legal Bills In Court Challenge To Stormwater Violation](#)

[Latest From The Chesapeake Bay Journal](#)

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Climate

[Penn State Study Looks To Reduce Cows' Contribution To Global Warming](#)

[UPenn Students Take On Peace, Water, Climate](#)

[It's Cold Right Now, But 2017 Was A Hot Year](#)

[Trump Calls For Some Good Old Global Warming As U.S. Experiences Cold Weather](#)

[Trump Says East Coast Could Use Global Warming During Cold](#)

[Trump Claims East Coast Freeze Disproves Global Warming](#)

[From Florida: Trump Says East Could Use Some Global Warming This Weekend](#)

Coal Mining

[PA Coal-Fired Power Plant Closing In 2014 Leads To Healthier Babies Downwind](#)

[Allegheny Front: From Coal Town To Trail Town](#)

[Eckley Miners' Village To Celebrate Movie Milestone](#)

[Anthracite Mining Heritage Month Will Be Marked With Presentations, Speakers](#)

[Barletta Views Trump Order On Rare Earth, Other Minerals Boon For Area](#)

[Coal To The Rescue As Record Cold Grips The East](#)

Compliance Action

[CNS Gas Fined Over \\$400,000 For Drilling Violations In Greene County](#)

[DEP Fines Gas Drilling Company For Violations In Greene County](#)

Delaware River

[Delaware RiverKeeper Dec. 29 RiverWatch Video Report](#)

Drinking Water

[Panel: Pittsburgh Water Authority Should Restructure, But Remain A Public Authority](#)

[Allegheny County Lead Testing Regulation For Children Takes Effect Jan. 1](#)

[Editorial: New Rule Requires Child Lead Screens In Allegheny County](#)

Education

[Pennsylvania Wants Students To Know Their Watershed](#)

[Barbara Chaffee Lands New Job With Tom Ridge Environmental Center](#)

[Schneck: When Is The First Meteor Shower Of 2018?](#)

[UPenn Students Take On Peace, Water, Climate](#)

Emergency Response

[Barletta Reforms To FEMA Included In House Funding Bill](#)

Energy

[PPL Customers To Pay 55 Cent DISC Fee For \\$900M Line, Pole Repair Program](#)

[Peoples Natural Gas Rates To Decrease](#)

[Erie Woman Receives \\$284 Billion Electric Bill From Penelec](#)

[FirstEnergy: No Evidence Of Erie Woman's \\$284 Billion Electric Bill](#)

[Power Outages Affect Thousands In Pittsburgh](#)

[PPL To Send Crews, Trucks To Puerto Rico To Help Restore Power](#)

[3 Months After Maria, Roughly Half Of Puerto Ricans Still Without Power](#)

[Anger Builds 100 Days After Maria Hit Puerto Rico](#)

[Why Has PPL Stock Dropped 20 Percent Since September?](#)

[Coal To The Rescue As Record Cold Grips The East](#)

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[Dominion's Cove Point Plant Preparing To Export Natural Gas](#)

[Energy In 2017: Federal Regulatory Rollback, Environmentalist Angst](#)

Environmental Heritage

[AP: Artist's Wintry Muse Was Pennsylvania's Industrial Landscape](#)

[Eckley Miners' Village To Celebrate Movie Milestone](#)

[Anthracite Mining Heritage Month Will Be Marked With Presentations, Speakers](#)

Farming

[Lancaster Farming Year In Review- Chesapeake Bay And More](#)

[Crable: PA Surges To 2nd In Organic Products Sales, Lancaster A Driving Force](#)

[Philly's Hydroponic Metropolis Farms Thrives, Fueled By Pot, Biofuel Research](#)

[Penn State Study Looks To Reduce Cows' Contribution To Global Warming](#)

Forests

[AP: Privately-Owned Forest Lands Imperiled As Aging Owners Divide, Sell](#)

[Forty Fort Remembers Its Tree Lady](#)

[Philadelphia Gets Grant For Planting Street Trees](#)

[Where To Recycle Your Christmas Tree In Lancaster County](#)

[Crable: Lancaster County Park Accepting Christmas Trees For Mulching](#)

[Christmas Tree Recycling Drop Off Sites In Blair County](#)

[How To Dispose Of Christmas Trees In York](#)

[Where To Recycle Your Christmas Tree In Pittsburgh](#)

Green Infrastructure

[Firm Must Pay Township's Legal Bills In Court Challenge To Stormwater Violation](#)

Hazardous Sites Cleanup

[EPA Cleaning Up Soil Contaminated With Lead In Muhlenberg](#)

Land Conservation

[Lehigh Valley Receives \\$2.9M In State Open Space Grants](#)

[Murrysville Resident Enjoys Role With Westmoreland Land Trust](#)

Land Recycling

[Hazelwood Green, Fmr Steel Mill Site Transformation Gets Boost](#)

Littering/Illegal Dumping

[Nearly 14,000 PA Volunteers Removed Over 860,000 Pounds Of Trash During Coastal Cleanup](#)

[Cigarette Buts, Food Wrappers Top List Of Litter Found Along PA Waterways](#)

Mine Reclamation

[Mill Creek Watershed Benefits From Acid Mine Drainage Cleanup Grant](#)

[Barletta Views Trump Order On Rare Earth, Other Minerals Boon For Area](#)

Oil & Gas

[CNS Gas Fined Over \\$400,000 For Drilling Violations In Greene County](#)

[DEP Fines Gas Drilling Company For Violations In Greene County](#)

[Sisk: PA's Gas Fields Ramp Up For More Drilling In 2018](#)

[Northeast Transit Natural Gas Station Starts Next Year](#)

[U.S. Steel To Allow Gas Drilling At Edgar Thomson Works Steel Mill](#)

[Peoples Natural Gas Rates To Decrease](#)

[Maykuth: Chesapeake Energy Agrees To Pay \\$30M To Settle Royalty Dispute, But](#)

[Editorial: Fix State Law To Guarantee Natural Gas Royalties](#)

[Letter: Documenting EPA Fracking Concerns](#)

[Fewer Earthquakes In Oklahoma After State Changed Drilling Regulations](#)

[Dominion's Cove Point Plant Preparing To Export Natural Gas](#)

Pipelines

[Atlantic Sunrise Pipeline Making Progress, Not Everyone Happy](#)

[Letter: Atlantic Sunrise Pipeline Should Meet Residents Halfway](#)

[DEP Scrutinizes Mariner East 2 Pipeline For More Unapproved Drilling](#)

[Top 10 Things You Need To Know About Mariner East 2 Pipeline](#)

[Editorial: Pipeline Fairness](#)

[Natural Gas Pipeline Proposed From Martins Creek To Philadelphia](#)

[FERC Pipeline Review Stokes Divide Between Environmental Groups](#)

Radiation Protection

[Op-Ed: Vermont Nuclear Power Plant Offers Cautionary Tale For TMI](#)

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Recreation

[Schneck: First Day Hikes Launch New Year At State Parks Across PA](#)

[Cralle: After 17 Years, Lancaster Couple Finish Appalachian Trail At Age 74, 75](#)

[AP: Cralle: After 17 Years, Lancaster Couple Finish Appalachian Trail At Age 74, 75](#)

[Allegheny Front: From Coal Town To Trail Town](#)

[Dec. 29 Take Five Fridays With Pam, PA Parks & Forests Foundation](#)

[Hiking, Biking Trail On Tap For Harrison This Spring](#)

[Editorial: Northeast Trails Trace History, Point To Future](#)

[Accessible Playground Equipment Being Installed In Pittsburgh Parks](#)

[AP: Winds Scuttle Washington's Crossing Despite Kids' Efforts](#)

[Barbara Chaffee Lands New Job With Tom Ridge Environmental Center](#)

Recycling/Waste

[Does Your Office Recycle? 40,000 Commercial Properties In Philly Aren't Following The Law](#)

[Wilkes-Barre Opens Lone Bid For Waste Collection, Recycling](#)

[Where To Recycle Your Christmas Tree In Lancaster County](#)

[Cralle: Lancaster County Park Accepting Christmas Trees For Mulching](#)

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Renewable Energy

[Legere: Success Of Solar Borders Law Could Hinge On Disputed Interpretation](#)
[Susquehanna University To Install Solar Panels On Campus](#)
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Stormwater

[Firm Must Pay Township's Legal Bills In Court Challenge To Stormwater Violation](#)

Wastewater Facilities

[Johnstown Sewer System Overhaul Comes With Hefty Costs](#)
[Sewage Fight Bogs Down South Hills Communities In Court](#)

Water Quality

[New Maps Tell Story Of Water Quality Thru Bugs, Slugs And Snails](#)

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Wildlife

[Lower Merion Deer Culling Begins In January](#)
[See Pittsburgh Bald Eagles' Nests In High Def](#)
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[Despite The Snow, There's Plenty For Birders To Enjoy In Erie](#)
[Erie Bird Count Tallies More Than 70 Species](#)
[Duck Hunter Clears Presque Isle Bay Ice](#)
[Christmas Day Storm Dumps Record-Breaking 53 Inches On Erie](#)
[3,300+ Requested Permits To Eat Roadkill This Year](#)
[Pittsburgh Mayor Signs Law Restricting Handling Of Wild, Exotic Animals](#)

West Nile/Zika Virus

[Zika Virus Down But Not Out In Lancaster County](#)

Hurricanes

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[Hurricane Maria Refugees Adjust To New Way Of Life In PA](#)
[Editorial: We Need To Remember The Reality Still Facing Puerto Rico](#)
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[Anger Builds 100 Days After Maria Hit Puerto Rico](#)

Federal Policy

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[Editorial: Regulatory Rollback Is An Encouraging Trend](#)
[Barletta Reforms To FEMA Included In House Funding Bill](#)
[Nuclear Energy Wants A Spot In Trump's Infrastructure Bill](#)

[Click Here For This Week's Allegheny Front Radio Program](#)

Regulations, Technical Guidance & Permits

The Department of Environmental Protection published notice in the December 30 PA Bulletin formally extending the comment period to February 16 for the [Water Quality Toxics Management Strategy](#) by DEP and the [Triennial Water Quality Standard Regulations](#) by the Environmental Quality Board and scheduling additional public hearings on both for January 30 at DEP's Southeast Regional Office in Norristown.

[Pennsylvania Bulletin - December 30, 2017](#)

Sign Up For DEP's eNotice: Did you know DEP can send you email notices of permit applications submitted in your community? Notice of new technical guidance documents and regulations? All through its eNotice system. [Click Here](#) to sign up.

Check the [PA Environmental Council Bill Tracker](#) for the status and updates on pending state **legislation and regulations** that affect environmental and conservation efforts in Pennsylvania.

DEP Regulations In Process

[Proposed Regulations Open For Comment](#) - DEP webpage
Submit Comments on Proposals Through [DEP's eComment System](#)
[Proposed Regulations With Closed Comment Periods](#) - DEP webpage
[Recently Finalized Regulations](#) - DEP webpage
[DEP Regulatory Update](#) - DEP webpage
August 2017 DEP Regulatory Agenda - [PA Bulletin, Page 4922](#)

Technical Guidance & Permits

Note: In 2017, DEP published 3,025 pages of public notices in the PA Bulletin related to permit actions, 38 percent of the Bulletin's pages. DEP had more pages of public notices in the Bulletin than any other agency, except the Unified Court System.

Note: DEP published 30 pages of public notices related to proposed and final permit and approval/disapproval actions in the December 30 PA Bulletin - [pages 7866 to 7896](#). In 2017, DEP published 3,025 pages of notices in the PA Bulletin related to permit actions.

The Department of Environmental Protection [published notice](#) in the December 30 PA Bulletin of final technical guidance on Coal and Noncoal Surface Mining Activity Permit Pre-Application

Review ([DEP ID: 563-2112-214](#)). This revised technical guidance describes a standard, voluntary pre-application process to facilitate discussion between a mine operator and the Department concerning items which will need to be addressed in the formal coal or noncoal permit application. This process is beneficial for ensuring the submission of a complete permit application with the goal of reducing the time required to process a permit application. This technical guidance was published as draft at 47 Pa.B. 5857 (September 16, 2017) and no comments were received. Questions should be direct to Sharon Hill at 717-787-6842 or send email to: shill@pa.gov.

DEP Technical Guidance In Process

[Draft Technical Guidance Documents](#) - DEP webpage

[Technical Guidance Comment Deadlines](#) - DEP webpage

Submit Comments on Proposals Through [DEP's eComment System](#)

[Recently Closed Comment Periods For Technical Guidance](#) - DEP webpage

[Technical Guidance Recently Finalized](#) - DEP webpage

[Copies of Final Technical Guidance](#) - DEP webpage

[DEP Non-Regulatory/Technical Guidance Documents Agenda \(July 2017\)](#) - DEP webpage

Other DEP Proposals For Public Review

[Other Proposals Open For Public Comment](#) - DEP webpage

Submit Comments on Proposals Through [DEP's eComment System](#)

[Recently Closed Comment Periods For Other Proposals](#) - DEP webpage

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Send your stories, photos and links to videos about your project, environmental issues or programs for publication in the **PA Environment Digest** to: PaEnviroDigest@gmail.com.

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[PA Environment - The Feds](#): site is intended to be a single point of reference for changing federal environmental policy and personnel that have an impact on Pennsylvania environmental issues and programs.

[PA Capitol Digest Daily Blog](#) to get updates every day on Pennsylvania State Government, including NewsClips, coverage of key press conferences and more. Sign up and receive as they are posted updates through your favorite RSS reader. You can also sign up for a once daily email alerting you to new items posted on this blog.

[PA Capitol Digest Twitter Feed](#): Don't forget to sign up to receive the **PA Capitol Digest Twitter** feed to get instant updates on other news from in and around the Pennsylvania State Capitol.

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