

EARTH CONSERVANCY NEWS

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EC Accomplishments

- Reclaimed 1,276 acres at a cost of \$21.7 million
- Planned for an additional 1,219 acres to be reclaimed at an estimated cost of \$60.4 million
- Donated 205 acres valued at \$1.9 million to 20 entities

PLANNING FUTURE IS MAJOR EC OBJECTIVE

For Earth Conservancy, 2008 and 2009 were years of evaluating its progress and planning for its future.

Much of that time was dedicated to looking at the South Valley Corridor and laying the foundation for smart growth and better quality of living for the region.

Earth Conservancy was selected by the United States Environmental Protection Agency Office of Brownfields and Land Revitalization (EPA-OBLR) to receive targeted technical assistance that brought together multiple stakeholders and partners to begin the process of planning for the future of the Lower Wyoming Valley.

The EPA project, which was nationally competitive, provided EC with access to EPA's own experts, planners and consultants, all of whom focused their efforts on looking at ways to bring well-planned and vibrant growth to the area. Earth Conservancy was chosen for the project because of its success in revitalizing mine scarred lands.

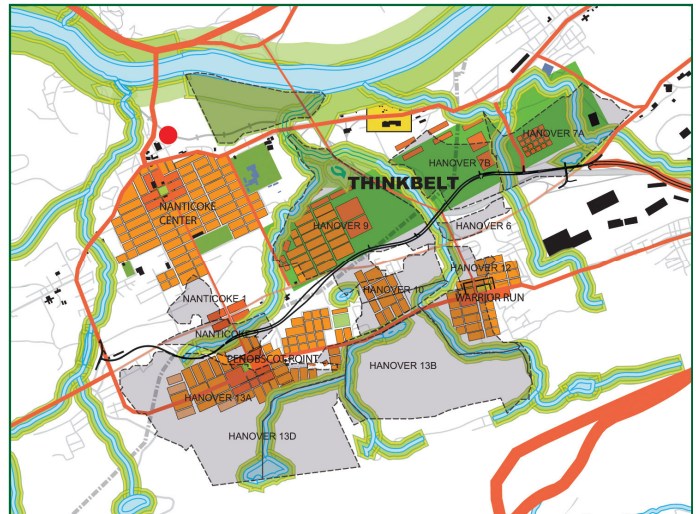
The project began with an examination of EC's Land Use Plan, completed in 1996, and built on the work developed out of that report. Team members then conducted an initial regional analysis of current economic data as well as development trends, opportunities, and constraints. The gathered data was used to develop a framework for planning of future mine land reclamation and economic revitalization. The analysis was conducted by SRA, International and Vita Nuova, Inc., with additional statistical information provided by the Joint Urban Studies Center of Wilkes University.

The study area included the City of Nanticoke and Hanover and Newport townships, all located in the Wyoming Valley, which runs in a northeast to southwest direction from Wilkes-Barre through Newport Township. Earth Conservancy owns approximately 1,150 acres in those areas.

The study, called the *Earth Conservancy South Valley Corridor Lands Reuse Analysis and Sustainable Redevelopment Framework*, found that the Wyoming Valley has some existing characteristics that are key to the foundation of developing a smart growth plan, including an existing network town and village centers, a transit system, and abundant recreational amenities. While improvements would be needed to begin the development process, the foundation exists to accept smart growth planning.

The existing network of towns and villages that developed around the numerous breakers throughout the Wyoming Valley could serve as the foundation for future smart development plans. Villages and towns that sprouted up around the breakers served a working population from the collieries, providing housing, retail and work opportunities. A trolley system provided transportation to other towns and cities. Re-utilization of existing infrastructure is key to smart growth. These small living centers, with enhanced transportation and employment options, could again form the basis around which better quality of life is achieved.

The region has a strong transit infrastructure that includes quick access to state and local highway systems, active rail lines and bus service. This existing infrastructure, while needing improvements, provides a basis for establishing improved travel systems for people and products.



One of the plans developed for the South Valley Corridor Project calls for the creation of a "Thinkbelt" that would be a mix of educational institutions, high-tech businesses, residential areas and parks.



EC'S REALIZES SEVERAL LONG STANDING LAND USE PLAN GOALS

During 2008 and 2009, Earth Conservancy was able to realize several goals established in its Land Use Plan (LUP), created in 1996 as a guide for the reclamation and reuse of its then 16,300 acres.

Among its achievements was the reclamation of its Huber III site, located at the entrance to Hanover Industrial Estates. The reclamation of the 82-acre parcel was the final piece of land owned by Earth Conservancy in or around the industrial park and exit 1 of State Route 29 that required reclamation. Huber III is now for sale and ready for industrial development.

Additionally, Earth Conservancy was able to purchase the 87-acre parcel adjacent to the Huber III site, which has been a long standing goal of the organization. Its reclamation will signal the complete reclamation of lands around the industrial park and at exit 1 of Route 29. Both projects received funding through the Pennsyl-



Franklin Bank pre reclamation



Franklin Bank post reclamation

vania Department of Community and Economic Development and Earth Conservancy. Once reclaimed, Huber IV will be available for industrial development.

Other important reclamation efforts listed in the LUP and completed in 2009 were the Franklin Bank Project, located in Hanover Township, and the Silt Pond Reclamation project, located in both Hanover Township and

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Cleanups of illegal dump sites on EC lands collected 7 tons of trash, nearly 4 tons of scrap metal and 3 tons of tires.

BOARD WELCOMES THREE MEMBERS AND BIDS FAREWELL TO THREE OTHERS

The years 2008 and 2009 were ones of welcoming new members and bidding goodbye to dedicated members. Newly welcomed Board members are Joseph C. Hillan, son of the late Joseph A. Hillan, Thomas E. Lawson, P.E., P.L.S., and Susan W. Shoal. Earth Conservancy Board of Directors were saddened by the loss of longtime director Joseph A. Hillan, who died on July 30, 2009. The Board also thanked Bernie McGurl for his six-year term and Robert Mericle for his 11-year term with the organization. Both left the Board in 2008.

Joseph C. Hillan is employed by Newport Township. He is a lifelong resident of Glen Lyon, graduating from Nanticoke High School. Prior to working for the Township, he worked for many years with Techneglas and in the garment industry.

An active community member, Mr. Hillan has served on the Newport Township Board of Commissioners and has been active with the Newport Township Little League since 1980, a group to which his father was also very dedicated.

Mr. Hillan is married to Diane and has two daughters, Leah and Angela. He looks forward to continuing his father's legacy with Earth Conservancy.

Mr. Lawson is Executive Vice President of Client Development and Quality at Borton-Lawson Engineering. He is a registered Professional Engineer and a Professional Land Surveyor.

His career includes work with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Baltimore District, where in the 1970s he was involved with area reconstruction efforts after the 1972 Agnes Flood.

His professional affiliations include: the Luzerne County Chapter of the Professional Engineering Society; the PA Society of Professional Engineers in Private Practice; the American Society of Highway Engineers, Northeast Pennsylvania Section; the PA Highway Information Association and Associated Pennsylvania Constructors; the Metropolitan Planning Organization for Luzerne and Lackawanna Counties; the American Consulting Engineers Council; and, the American Society of Civil Engineers.

His community affiliations include: the Greater Wilkes-Barre Chamber of Business and Industry; the Diamond City Partnership; the YMCA; the Institute for Public Policy & Economic Development; and,



Joseph C. Hillan



Thomas E. Lawson, P.E., P.L.S.

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Nanticoke City. Both projects were funded in part through the United States Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Brownfields and Land Revitalization Program, which is designed to help communities realize environmental and economic improvements through the cleaning up of brownfield sites. The 13-acre Franklin Bank site is now available for sale as a residential area, while the Silt Pond site is being left as green space.

Earth Conservancy met another of its mission objectives in 2009 with the transfer of 1,300 acres of pristine forest land to the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR). The lands are located off State Route 309 and Pine Run Road, in Hanover Township. The DCNR will keep these lands as green space in perpetuity. The transfer moves Earth Conservancy toward its goal of dedicating 10,000 acres as green/recreational space.

Earth Conservancy was awarded funding for the start of other reclamation projects, including the Espy Run Wetland Enhancement Project and the Hanover 9 Reclamation Project Parcel A, located in Nanticoke City.

The Espy project will enhance the existing Acid Mine Drainage (AMD) passive treatment system so that a greater percentage of the Espy Run Creek will be cleaned of the iron oxide that is polluting the stream. The iron can be seen in the thick orange sediment on the stream sides and bottom, a reminder of the pre-regulatory mining days. This is part of a larger reclamation of the Nanticoke Creek Watershed, and is in the planning stages. Funding for this project is provided in part by the EPA's Brownfields Program, the Pennsylvania Association of Conservation Districts, Trout Unlimited, the Foundation for Pennsylvania Watersheds and EC.

The Hanover 9 Parcel A Reclamation project will reclaim an approximate 37-acre portion of a larger 70-acre site located in Nanticoke City. The entire Hanover 9 site is more than 390 acres and will be remediated in phases. This project is in the planning stages. This project will be funded in part by the EPA Brownfields Program, the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection Growing Greener Program and EC. When completed, the site will be made available for mixed use development.

Earth Conservancy participated in cleanups of another sort in 2008 and 2009 with the cleaning up of illegal dumpsites on several of its properties. In partnership with the Pennsylvania Environmental Council (PEC), several long-standing illegal dump sites were cleared of household garbage, appliances, furniture and old tires. Once cleaned, future access was blocked to the areas. For the cleanups, volunteers, community services persons, and contractors were used to assist with cleanups in Mocanaqua and Newport Township. The Newport Township Community Organization was instrumental in getting multiple properties cleaned throughout the township, not all on Earth Conservancy's property. In 2009 alone, seven tons of trash, almost four tons of scrap metal and three tons of tires were removed from Earth Conservancy properties.

In 2009, Earth Conservancy continued work in and around the Greater Hanover Area Recreation Park by

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Focus 81. In his spare time, Mr. Lawson enjoys golfing and auto racing.

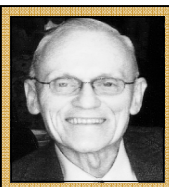
Susan W. Shoval returned to the Earth Conservancy Board of Directors in 2009. Ms. Shoval was one of the founding members of Earth Conservancy in 1994 and served on its board until 2005, when she stepped down for a well deserved break. After four years, Ms. Shoval was again called to serve and generously accepted the director's position.



Susan W. Shoval

Ms. Shoval serves as President of Guard Insurance Group, which she started in 1982 with her husband, Judd Shoval. The company is now licensed in 45 states and represents approximately 35,000 employers.

Ms. Shoval supports a variety of important social causes, including United Way and its many programs. Mr. and Mrs. Shoval are currently leading the annual fundraising drive for the Family Service Association of Wyoming Valley. Additionally, they started the Shoval Center for Community Engagement and Learning at King's College, in Wilkes-Barre. The center is dedicated to developing projects that serve the community and provide students with experiential learning opportunities.



Joseph A. Hillan

In addition to the Earth Conservancy, Ms. Shoval currently serves on the boards of Wilkes University, Highmark, Inc., the Institute of Public Policy & Economic Development, and is co-chair of the Luzerne County Diversity Commission.

Joseph A. Hillan, a board member since 1996, died in July, leaving behind a legacy of working for environmental and economic improvements for Newport Township and the Lower Wyoming Valley and helping to direct the mission of the organization. He served as board secretary from 2007 until his death. In the 13 years as a director, Mr. Hillan rarely missed a Board of Directors' meeting. His insight and dedicated presence on the board will be missed.

Mr. Mericle had served on the board since 1997. As President of Mericle Commercial Real Estate Services, his expertise in real estate development and construction was an asset to Earth Conservancy as it developed land use plans to serve as blueprints for future activities.

Mr. McGurl had served on the board since 2002. His background in historic preservation and environmental enhancement and preservation, as president of the Lackawanna River Corridor Association, helped Earth Conservancy maintain a strong connection to its vision and mission.



Rhea Simms (L), EC Chairman, and Mike Dziak (C), President/CEO, present Bernard McGurl (R) with a commemorative plaque.

Read the entire Earth Conservancy South Valley Corridor Lands Reuse Analysis and Sustainable Redevelopment Framework report on our website:
www.earthconservancy.org

(FUTURE Continued from page 1)

The study found the region has an abundant recreation system, including state parks, game lands, hiking and water trails. The framework developed out of this study calls for enhancing the trail network by connecting the trails to each other and urban centers.

Based on its findings, the team created potential development scenarios around accepted redevelopment, sustainable planning and Smart Growth principles, which strive to meet the needs of residents, municipalities the economy and the environment in a responsible and sustainable way. Each scenario is organized around two primary components: village centers and a "Thinkbelt".

The Village Centers scenario focuses on development around village and hamlet centers that, in many cases in the Valley, already exist rather than promoting urban sprawl. The plan would upgrade existing transportation options to enhance connections between villages and hamlets throughout the Valley and to larger urban centers like Wilkes-Barre. This scenario offers a solution to development that provides both the best aspects of in-town living and easy access to regional network systems. Improved retail, commercial and residential opportunities would make the Village Centers option appealing to those wishing to live in less urban settings with close connections to jobs, shopping and green space, potentially all within walking or cycling distance from home.

The "Thinkbelt" scenario would complement the Village Centers option by being a regional connector and an area in which green redevelopment and economic development would be focused around local universities and colleges and the physical connections that could be made between those located in more rural settings, as is Luzerne County Community College (LCCC), and those in an urban setting, as are King's College and Wilkes University. The geographical concept would be to utilize reclaimed land between LCCC and the Wyoming Valley Country Club as a setting for development of mixed use development including the development of businesses and additional collegiate spaces mixed with residential and green spaces so that a corridor of education and enterprise could be created that would provide jobs, educational opportunities, living space and recreational opportunities, all within a range that could be walked or cycled. See cover picture for the "Thinkbelt" overlay.

The study provided Earth Conservancy and the Wyoming Valley with the framework to begin implementation of one or both of these plans as greater numbers of mine scarred lands are reclaimed. A more detailed discussion of these principles is included in the report available on our website.

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developing the Sugar Notch Trail System. The system consists of two trails, the Ridgetop Trail at 3.06 miles and the Park Access Trail at 0.65 miles. The Ridgetop Trail begins at a trailhead beside the St. Mary's Cemetery on Main Street and runs the ridgeline through a wooded area, ending at a second trailhead adjacent to the lower level soccer fields. The Park Access Trail begins at the Sugar Notch Playground on Freund Street, passes through the proposed housing development and ends at the western end of the upper playing fields. Funding for the trails was provided by the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (Penn DOT) and Earth Conservancy. To ease access to the trailheads and recreation park, additional funding to pave portions of South Preston Drive was provided by Luzerne County Office of Community Development and Penn DOT. Earth Conservancy will seek funding to finish paving the road through future grant opportunities.



A portion of the Sugar Notch Ridgetop Trail

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