

EARTH CONSERVANCY NEWS

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Earth Conservancy Accomplishments:

- Reclaimed 1,366 acres at a cost of \$21.7 million
- Planned for reclamation of an additional 1,189 acres at an estimated cost of \$60.4 million
- Donated 205 acres to 20 entities at an estimated value of \$1.9 million

RECLAMATION EFFORTS SHIFTS TO SOUTH VALLEY IN 2010

Movement on South Valley Parkway and other projects signify changes to come

By the end of 2010, Earth Conservancy moved closer to reaching its long-standing goal of having a South Valley Parkway built and began implementing South Valley-related reclamation projects.

Plans for the South Valley Parkway were first suggested in Earth Conservancy's Land Use Plan, issued in 1996, as a way to improve safety along Middle Road and as a means to open the South Valley for economic development.

The proposed highway will run from Exit 2 of Route 29 at Middle Road to Luzerne County Community College (LCCC) just prior to Kosciuszko Street. The highway will total two and one-half miles in length. In addition, there will be traffic roundabouts at Kosciuszko, Espy and Prospect streets.

The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) initiated the project in 2001. Throughout the years, multiple designs and configurations were considered. At a recent public meeting held by PennDOT, a new alignment was revealed that has scaled the project from the initial four-lane \$102.5 million cost estimate to the current alignment two-lane highway estimated to cost \$34.5 million.

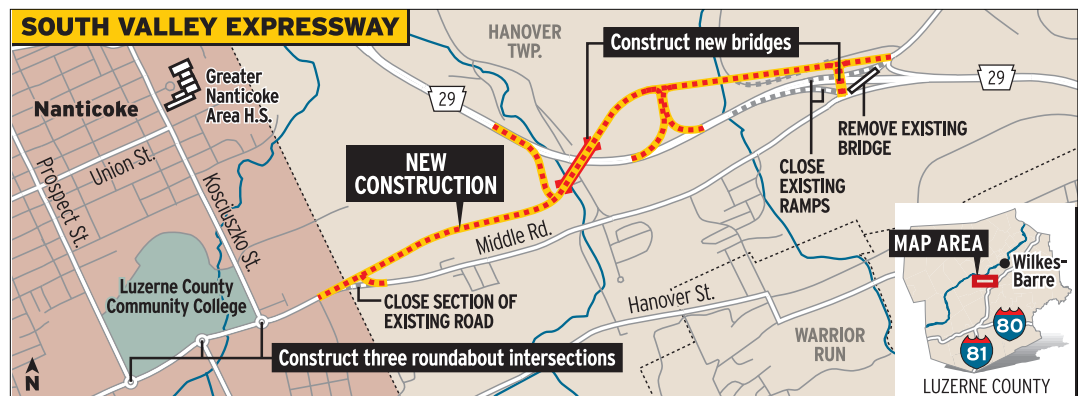
The next step will be to circulate the Project Environmental Assessment Report (EA) for public comment, and potentially a public hearing. After that, the EA will be sent to the Federal Highway Administration for approvals. With final design and permits to follow, construction is not set to begin until June 2013 and is expected to last until September 2016.

Earth Conservancy is a major land owner, along with the Wilkes-Barre Chamber of Business and Industry and other private parties, in the area to be used for the highway.

With reclamation work around Exit 1 and 2 of Route 29 virtually completed, Earth Conservancy has begun to focus its reclamation work further west in the Wyoming Valley to those lands around the proposed highway, specifically one of its larger parcels requiring reclamation.

Hanover 9 is approximately 390 acres, sitting in both the City of Nanticoke and Hanover Township. The site is triangular in shape and bordered by State Route 29 to the east, Middle

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The new South Valley Parkway will run from Exit 2 of Route 29 at Middle Road to Luzerne County Community College just prior to Kosciuszko Street, bypassing Middle Road for the 2 1/2 miles of new construction.

Graphic courtesy of Gary Visgaitis/Times Leader



ESPY RUN WETLANDS UNDERGOES ENHANCEMENT

The Espy Run AMD Treatment System Project is intended to increase the treatment capacity and improve the performance of the existing constructed wetland passive treatment system and therefore reduce the amount of Acid Mine Drainage (AMD) that is being introduced into the Nanticoke Creek Watershed and Susquehanna River.

The discharge is located near the creek, and is referred to as Espy Run Discharge. A discharge can be a natural formation where water comes to the surface through a natural break and typically flows to the nearest creek, in this case Espy Run.

The Espy Run discharge has a constant flow of water contaminated with high levels of iron. In the presence of oxygen, the iron precipitates out of water as iron hydroxide (an orange-yellow scum), which coats the bottom of the stream channel and prevents its use by a variety of organisms and animals for foraging, resting and building habitats.

Found mainly in regions where mining has taken place but is now ceased, AMD is a pollutant that, if not treated, can render any stream unable to support aquatic or plant life. Pyrite (iron disulfide) is the main precursor of AMD and is an acid-generating rock mineral. It is frequently found in underground mine workings or mountains of coal waste material, called culm. The elevated iron level also acts as a chemical barrier to fish movement into the Nanticoke Creek watershed from the Susquehanna River.

The project will increase the retention time of water in the ponds, allowing for increased iron precipitation out of the water and more effective treatment of the discharge. This will be accomplished by creating two larger settling ponds, improving the flow of water into the ponds as well as from one pond into the other and renovating intake and outlet weirs.

Enhancing the treatment system at this discharge will go a long way toward removing iron from the creek's headwaters. This will allow life forms to once again thrive in the stream, thereby encouraging a normal functioning stream that will serve both water and land ani-



Pictured above are the two settling ponds for the Espy Wetlands AMD Enhancement Project, with a berm dividing the two ponds.

In Pennsylvania alone, an estimated 5,000 miles of waterways are AMD-impacted.
— EPCAMR



The green piping will serve as an inlet for water from the Espy Discharge into the two settling ponds. Once in the settling ponds, iron deposits will sink to the pond bottom, thus clearing the water.

mals.

The project was funded by a US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Brownfields and Land Revitalization Cleanup Grant and through Earth Conservancy.

Engineering services were provided by John Coleman, P.E. of the Pennsylvania Association of Conservation Districts (PACD) through its Engineering Assistance Program, which provides statewide engineering and technical assistance to entities on a grant basis. Funding for the program is provided by the Pennsylvania Growing Greener Program and the United States Department of Agriculture.

Additional consulting assistance was provided by Hedin Environmental through Trout Unlimited.

SIGNIFICANT BOARD CHANGES FOR 2011

The start of 2011 brought changes to Earth Conservancy's Board of Directors with the election of three new members and retirement of three longstanding members.

Joining the Board of Directors is: Michael J. Johnson, Thomas P. Leary and, Kathy L. Pape. Leaving the board is: Thomas A. Blaskiewicz, Mark R. Dingman and Rhea P. Simms. The non-profit mine land reclamation organization is guided by a 12-member volunteer board of directors.

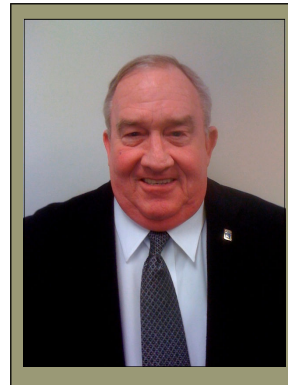


Kathy L. Pape

"We are pleased to welcome Michael Johnson, Tom Leary and Kathy Pape to our Board," said Michael A. Dziak, President and Chief Executive Officer of Earth Conservancy.

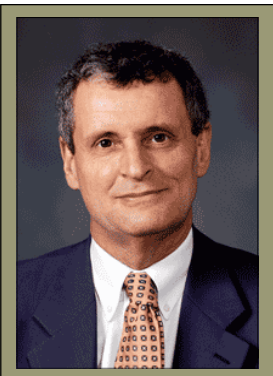
"Each of the new members brings unique and important experience that will assist in guiding the organization's work for the next several years. We are equally grateful for the dedication shown by our departing members Rhea Simms and Mark Dingman, who both served 15 years on the board, and for the service of Tom Blaskiewicz, who served for five

years. They each contributed significantly to the success our organization has achieved in reclaiming mine scarred lands and increasing the opportunity for economic development and recreational spaces in the Wyoming Valley," said Mr. Dziak.



Michael J. Johnson

Mr. Johnson is Executive Vice President of the commercial and insurance divisions at Lewith and Freeman Real Estate, Inc. He has 44 years experience working in the real estate, insurance and mortgage lending industries. He is a member of the National Association of Realtors, the Pennsylvania Association of Realtors and the National Association of Mortgage Brokers. Mr. Johnson also serves as President of the Greater Wilkes-Barre Association of Realtors and serves on several of its committees. "I am honored and pleased to join the Board of Directors of the Earth Conservancy. In my past employment, I served as the environmental risk officer for a 2 billion dollar bank, and I look forward to seeing the many advances made in the reclamation of abandoned mine land," he said.



Thomas P. Leary

Mr. Leary is President of Luzerne County Community College. He has served in col-

legiate education administration for 36 years. He serves on the Board of Directors of the following organizations: Leadership Wilkes-Barre, Cultural Council of Luzerne County, the Institute for Public Policy and Economic Development, Advocacy Alliance, United Services Agency. "I am looking forward to serving on the Earth Conservancy Board and representing our students in helping to plan opportunities for the future of Northeastern Pennsylvania," said Mr. Leary.

Ms. Pape is President of Pennsylvania American Water. She has more than 30 years' experience in the utility industry and is a nationally recognized expert on the water and wastewater industries. In 2008, Ms. Pape was appointed to the Governor's Sustainable Water Infrastructure Task Force, and she was named to the *Central Penn Business Journal's* Women of Influence list in 2010. "It's



Rhea P. Simms, departing Chairperson and Board of Director, receives a plaque recognizing her years of service to Earth Conservancy from President Michael A. Dziak.

All Earth Conservancy members of the Board of Directors serve in a volunteer capacity to guide the work of the organization.

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Road to the south and Kosciuszko Street to the west. The site is located adjacent to the main entrance to Luzerne County Community College.

Currently, Hanover 9 contains the scars of mining including pits and spoil banks. The reclamation process will remediate those portions of the property requiring work, while leaving forested sections as green space. Because of the size of Hanover 9, reclamation work has been divided into smaller projects, allowing reclamation work to proceed more easily.

Earth Conservancy will reclaim this site with funding from the EPA, the US Department of the Interior Office of Surface Mining (OSM), the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and its own resources.

Located across State Route 29 to the east of Hanover 9 is Hanover Crossings Business Park and Earth Conservancy's reclaimed Hanover 7A. The Wilkes-Barre Chamber of Business and Industry and Earth Conservancy are currently conducting a land use study that includes these parcels along with Hanover 9.

The study will explore development potential for all three sites. It will consider impacts the proposed South Valley Parkway would have on economic improvement in the Lower Wyoming Valley.



Before reclamation began, Huber IV site was covered by large piles of coal waste that negatively impacted the environment.



The reclaimed Huber IV site will remove the culm banks and pits from the site, as shown by this completed section.

The study is expected to be completed in June of this year.

While the future of Hanover Crossings and the South Valley Parkway signify future endeavors for Earth Conservancy, completing Huber IV will be the final piece of reclamation work needed at Exit 1 of Route 29.

Huber IV, an 87-acre site, is located adjacent to Huber III, 82 acres. Both properties border Hanover Industrial Estates. Huber III was completed in 2008. Huber IV is expected to be completed later this year.

Both parcels will provide much-needed expansion space for the industrial park. These and other parcels available for sale can be found on EC's website.

With the completion of Huber IV in 2011, Earth Conservancy will have reclaimed more than 400 acres of mine scarred lands at Exits 1 and 2 of State Route 29, which will restore environmental health and economic development potential for the region. The lands also provide for recreational areas and residential development.

Earth Conservancy has been able to pursue the reclamation of Huber IV with funding assistance from the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED). For Earth Conservancy, 2010 was a year of completing long-term goals and beginning new large-scale reclamation efforts.

Reclamation of EC's Hanover 9 site will make nearly 400 acres available for mixed-use development.

ILLEGAL DUMPING TAKING TOLL ON EC SITES

Earth Conservancy is now getting more assistance in catching illegal dumpers with help from the Pennsylvania Game Commission and municipal police departments, which has led to citations and fines for those caught dumping.

Dumping on Earth Conservancy properties has been a problem for the nonprofit organization since its inception. It is not unusual to find sofas, refrigerators, washing machines, children's toys, household garbage and even construction debris dumped along roadways and even in back country settings. This illegal activity not only mars the landscape but creates potentially hazardous situations for area residents and wildlife.



Pictured above is one of the most recent sites where illegal dumping occurred on Earth Conservancy property.

After a recent incident in the Greater Hanover Area Recreation Park, which received local media attention, Wildlife Conservation Officer Gerald Kapral of the Pennsylvania Game Commission Northeast Region was contacted to determine what actions could be taken to catch the offenders. According to Officer Kapral, Earth Conservancy can pursue civil action against illegal dumpers.

Unfortunately, the Game Commission was unable to assist because the area of dumping was not located on lands that are part of the Game Commission's oversight.

A local police department was contacted and all information gathered from the site and through Earth Conservancy's own searches was turned over to the department. One arrest was made, and the defendant was cited. Partnerships with local law enforcement agencies have proven to be useful in prosecuting those who dump illegally.

An equally important issue caused by illegal dumping is the dangerous situation caused when wild animals, such as bears, come to the piles and begin feeding on the garbage. This can lead to bears and other animals becoming dependent on garbage for food rather than using their natural foraging abilities.

Earth Conservancy has partnered with the Pennsylvania Environmental Council Northeast Division, (PEC) to conduct both volunteer and contractor cleanups. PEC has been a leader in the region securing grant funding to assist property owners like Earth Conservancy with eliminating illegal dumpsites from their properties.



Illegal dumping of garbage can cause problems other than environmental. Animals, like this Black Bear cub, become accustomed to eating garbage and don't forage for food, which is their natural way.

Recent cleanups netted seven ton of trash, almost three ton of tires and four ton of scrap metal. Earth Conservancy will continue to partner with PEC to address the problems on its lands.

After one PEC-sponsored cleanup, PennDOT erected a guardrail along the road at the illegal dump site to prevent further dumping.

With the help of PEC, the Pennsylvania Game Commission, PennDOT and local

(ILLEGAL Continued on page 6)

Illegal dumping on private lands impacts both the environment and wildlife.

(BOARD Continued from page 3)

an honor to join the Earth Conservancy's board and work with such a dedicated group of people who are bringing together community leaders, government agencies, education institutions and the private sector to restore the land's economic, recreation, residential and ecological value," said Ms. Pape.

Retiring Board of Directors members Rhea P. Simms and Mark R. Dingman each served for fifteen years. Ms. Simms served as Chairperson for eight years and Mr. Dingman for two years. Thomas A. Blaskiewicz served on the Board of Directors for five years.

All Earth Conservancy Board of Directors members serve in a volunteer capacity. The organization has benefited from the time and expertise provided by all those who have dedicated time to guiding its work.

Newly elected officers are: John D. McCarthy, Jr., Chairman; Rev. John J. Ryan, Ph.D., C.S.C., Vice-Chairman; Diane Kopcha Katlic, Esq., Secretary; Thomas E. Lawson, P.E., P.L.S., Treasurer; Michael A. Dziak, President/Chief Executive Officer.

The Board meets on a quarterly basis at the Earth Conservancy offices in Ashley.

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police forces, Earth Conservancy will continue to work toward eradicating illegal dump sites from its properties and prosecuting those who are found to be dumping illegally.

Those who see illegal dumping taking place on any private property are asked to contact their local police departments.

IN MEMORY OF STEPHEN A. DRAUS, JR.

On December 15, 2010, former Earth Conservancy employee Stephen Draus, Sr. lost his battle with cancer.

Mr. Draus was employed by Earth Conservancy as Field Supervisor for nearly 13 years. His work supported all Earth Conservancy reclamation projects, and he was an important part of the EC team.

He is survived by his wife Kathleen, sons Steven Jr. and Jeffery, daughter Sarah and their families.

A devoted family man, Mr. Draus enjoyed spending his free time with his granddaughters.

Mr. Draus will be missed by his friends and co-workers at Earth Conservancy.

OTHER EARTH CONSERVANCY NEWS & EVENTS

- Earth Conservancy recently started a watershed enhancement project called the Askam Borehole AMD Treatment System Project that will treat AMD-laden water from the Askam Borehole. The planned water treatment system is expected to use an oxidation system to treat all the water from the borehole. The project is in the early planning stages.
- The former Dundee Wetlands, which was closed following the collapse of the Askam Borehole, has been reopened. The US Department of the Interior Office of Surface Mining (OSM) oversaw fixing the collapsed borehole by drilling a new one, the effluent of which will feed the new Askam Borehole AMD Treatment System Project. The OSM assisted EC by placing a pump in an existing borehole at the Dundee Wetlands, allowing water to again flow into the system. The wetlands will now be used for educational purposes.
- EC was awarded a grant to replace worn signs at the Mocanaqua Loop Trail through the ARIPPA AMD/AML Reclamation program. The award is administered by the Eastern PA Coalition for Abandoned Mine Reclamation.

Earth Conservancy Officers & Board of Directors

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 Rev. John J. Ryan, Ph.D., C.S.C., Vice-Chair
 Diane Kopcha Katlic, Esq., Secretary
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*Dedicated to Mine Land Reclamation,
 Conservation and Economic
 Revitalization in the Wyoming Valley*

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