

EARTH CONSERVANCY NEWS

VOLUME II

ISSUE 4

April, 1996

Community Offers Opinions on Development Concepts

Winter weather haunts Earth Conservancy's land use planning process, even in the spring. Since November, when the first community workshop on EC's land use plan had to be rescheduled because of the season's first Nor'easter, every planning meeting has brought snow and ice, keeping all but the hardiest travelers at home.

The March workshop 28 at Luzerne County Community College was no exception, accompanied by the requisite sleet, snow, and freezing rain. Yet, nearly 100 community residents braved the elements to get the first glimpse of three preliminary development concepts prepared by consultant EDAW for EC's approximately 17,000 acres.

"Much of our land needs very costly reclamation, and revenue for that needs to be generated by our land use plan."

Mike Dziak, EC President

President Mike Dziak opened the meeting, thanking those present for their interest in the eventual reclamation and re-use of the land, comprising three percent of Luzerne County. Formerly owned by Blue Coal Corporation, much of the land is damaged by strip mining. Mr. Dziak explained to the audience, in LCCC's Educational Conference Center, that

EC's final land use plan will have to generate income. "The strategies we decide on for the land must be able to support themselves," he said. "Some aspects of land development may be very desirable, but we ultimately have to have the right mix to make it realistic. Much of our land needs very costly reclamation, and revenue for that needs to be generated by our land use plan," Mr. Dziak emphasized.

Land Use Planning Committee chairman Ed Schechter urged the audience to freely express what they felt about the development concepts they were about to see. He noted that they were just concepts; the best components of each could be interwoven to create a "preferred plan." Mr. Schechter then introduced Richard Dorrier, project manager from EDAW, Inc., EC's land use planning consultants.

Mr. Dorrier, using slides, reviewed maps of the study area and EC property, photographs of EC parcels, and maps of environmental and mining constraints on EC land. He displayed a map showing areas suitable for future development. He noted that only approximately 6,000 acres of EC's total of approximately 17,000 acres are suitable for development, as many acres are too steep or too mine-scarred. A still undetermined portion of the 6,000 acres needs reclamation work at significant cost. Mr. Dorrier also presented information on local transportation and utility systems. (All of the maps shown on the slides were also on display outside the auditorium for public review.)

Trish Curran of Hammer Siler

George summarized the results of their demographic and market studies, and their analysis of the market demand projected for different types of privately-financed development on EC property.

EDAW principal Cales Givens then described three preliminary development concepts that the consultant team had prepared for the long-term use of EC properties. The concepts identified areas that could be developed for residential, industrial, and commercial use, as well as areas that could be retained in open space for recreational use. Concept A focused on growing the local economy, with an emphasis on maximizing employment opportunities. Concept B dealt with enhancing the quality of life, emphasizing tourist and recreational amenities for the Wyoming Valley.

continued on back page

DRAFT PREFERRED PLAN TO BE PRESENTED

A draft of Earth Conservancy's preferred land use plan will be presented Wednesday, May 22 at 6:00 PM at the EC offices, 101 South Main Street in Ashley. For more information call Elizabeth Ortega at 823-3445.



Land Use Planning Committee Gathers

Thirty-seven community volunteers have worked since January, 1995 on developing Earth Conservancy's land use plan.



Earth Conservancy News

is published by
Earth Conservancy
101 South Main Street
Ashley, PA 18706.

Inquiries and comments may be addressed to Elizabeth Ortega, editor, at the preceding address, or by calling 717-823-3445.

MICHAEL A. DZIAK
President and
Chief Executive Officer

JOHN RENFER
Executive Administrator

THOMAS R. CHESNICK
Engineering Projects Manager

ELIZABETH H. ORTEGA
Director of Public Affairs
and Development

Pictured at the March 28 workshop are:

First row (from left) Margaret Bakker, Bakker and Lewis Architects; Ed Schechter, Land Use Planning Committee chairman; Anna Cervenak, Bell Atlantic; John Klimuska, Hanover Township; and Howard Grossman, Economic Development Council.

Second row, Mike Dziak, EC president; Nancy Kostelega, LCCC; John Matusek, Luzerne County Office of Community Development; Joseph Hillan, Newport Township; Rev. Ron Wasowski, CSC, King's College; Bill Toothill, Wilkes University; John Jablowski, Mayor of Ashley.

Third row, Robert Ambrose, Nuangola Borough; Tom Chesnick, Earth Conservancy; Rick Allan, environmental consultant; Joe Terrana, Congressman Kanjorski's office; Richard Jumper, Nabisco; and Calvin Kanyuck, Nanticoke.

Not present when photo was taken are committee members Stephen Barrouk, Wilkes-Barre Chamber of Business and Industry; Robert Betzler, Wyoming Valley Sanitary Authority; Dr. Dale Bruns, Wilkes University; Edwin Correll, Laurel Run Borough Council; Stan Davies, Penna. Environmental Council; Jay Delaney, Senator Musto's office; Mark Dingman, UGI Utilities; Robert Jones, Jr., Plymouth Borough; Gene Klein, chief clerk for Luzerne County; Joseph Kotroski, Conyngham Township; Chuck Mattei, Penna. Department of Transportation; Patrick Mullen, Mayor of Sugar Notch; Gerald O'Brien, Mayor of Warrior Run; Daryl Pawlusch, Conyngham Township Supervisor; Joseph Perugino, PG Energy; Frank Revitt, Wilkes-Barre Township; Allen Sachse, Penna. Department of Community Affairs; Frank Shaulis, Nanticoke; Rosemary Sigmond, Coon Industries; Sam Sorber, Hanover Township Commissioner; Jack Varaly, Wilkes-Barre Planning and Community Development; and Steve Yokimishyn, Penna. Department of Commerce. ♦

In addition to its work on a long-range land use plan, Earth Conservancy continues to be involved in a number of environmentally related projects that are funded by various federal and state grants. These projects are part of EC's mission to improve our region's economic competitiveness and quality of life. Here is an update on these projects:

LAND RECLAMATION

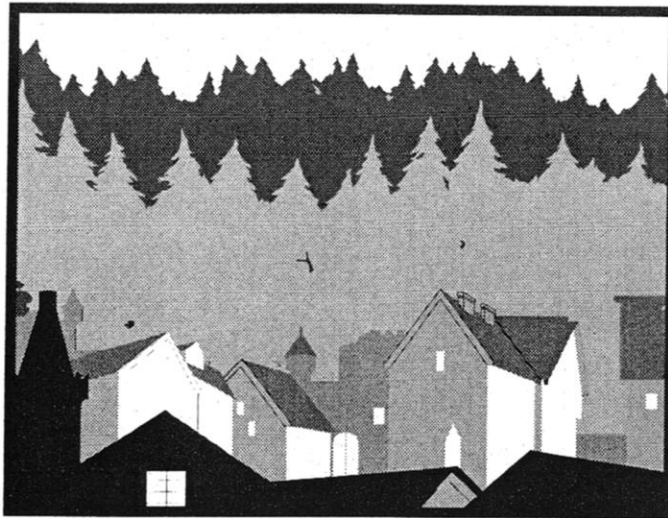
Earth Conservancy has begun reclaiming a 47-acre parcel in Nanticoke as part of its REES project (Restoration of Environmentally exploited Sites). REES is funded by the Advanced Research Projects Agency of the U.S. Department of Defense. All of the necessary permits for the project have been received, and workers are now clearing the site. The reclamation will include leveling hills of mine spoil, filling in pits, grading, and seeding the area. Work on this site should be finished by fall. Reclamation of a similarly sized site in Newport Township will begin immediately thereafter.

The REES project is technically supported by scientists from Wilkes University's School of Science and Engineering, under the direction of Dr. Brian Redmond.

COMPUTERIZED SYSTEM FOR ENVIRONMENTAL SURVEY AND LAND USE (SESLU)

Earth Conservancy is developing a computer model that provides a large scale environmental and geographic inventory.

SESLU, a Geographic Information System (GIS), delineates information on geography, topography, demographics, population, municipal boundaries, utilities, roads, flood plains, mining hazards, and other environmental and geographic data. The GIS will be used in EC's land use planning,



and in future applications requiring large scale mapping. During the last several months, researchers have coordinated the SESLU data with the computer system housed by EDAW, the planning consultants. SESLU has been extremely helpful to the consultants, who would have had to compile similar data had SESLU not existed.

The project is funded by the Advanced Research Projects Agency, and is managed by Dr. Dale Bruns from Wilkes University and Rev. Ronald Wasowski from King's College.

WATERJET TECHNOLOGY

The ability to safely and economically extract energetics from conventional munitions is a major challenge for the U.S. Government. Earth Conservancy's Recycling Operation with Waterjet (ROW) project has the potential to save the Department of Defense millions of dollars.

Construction of the recycling system at the University of Missouri - Rolla has been completed. Representatives of the Army and Navy have examined the assembled

system and approved it pending the military safety inspector's approval. The dismantling and moving of the unit to the Crane Naval Base in Indiana will begin in May. It is anticipated that the full-scale demonstration process will begin in late spring or early summer.

WETLANDS PROJECT

Work on EC's man-made wetland demonstration project, along Espy Creek in Hanover Township, was on hold throughout the winter. When spring weather permits, workers will continue clearing and excavating the site for the wetland that will treat acid mine drainage (AMD) beginning this summer. Earth Conservancy is also designing a second AMD treatment project and hopes to complete design plans in the near future. If successful, these will be the first of many anticipated water treatment projects on EC land.

Earth Conservancy is committed to cleaning up the effects of coal mining on our land and water. This wetland project, the first of its kind in our area, is a demonstration

project funded by the Environmental Protection Agency. The scientists working on the project are Drs. Ken Klemow, Tom Walski, and Bill Tarutis from Wilkes University, and Dr. Susan Jones-Held from King's College.

COMPOSTING PROJECT

Truckloads of spring clean-up material continue to arrive at EC's yard and leaf waste composting facility located in Newport Township. This facility will turn the leaves and other yard waste into a rich compost material that can be used to promote the growth of new vegetation on reclaimed mine-spoiled land. Last fall's leaves from Wilkes-Barre City and Newport Township, the communities currently participating in the project, can become fertile compost in just three months with the process used at the facility.

After the holidays, several communities brought Christmas trees for chipping and recycling into compost material. Communities involved in this effort included Ashley, Edwardsville, and Hanover Township. The City of Nanticoke brought compostable material picked up after the January flooding. Since the composting facility decreases the amount of biodegradable materials going to area landfills, EC hopes to attract additional community participation now that spring clean-up activities have begun.

The design and startup of this project was made possible by a grant from Pennsylvania's Northeast Tier Ben Franklin Technology Center. The design of the site was performed by Smith Environmental Technologies, Pocono Summit, Pa., under the direction of Dr. Bryce Payne of Wilkes University. ♦

Community Offers Opinions on Development Concepts

Concept C focused on revitalizing existing communities - a "sustainable village" concept.

Mr. Givens reiterated that the concepts are not plans but are only the first step in developing a preferred or recommended plan. They are intended to encourage discussion and solicit constructive comment.

The three preliminary development concepts had been designed after a lengthy process of interviews and research performed by the EDAW team, including information gathered at the public visioning workshop held in November. Over the past several months, EDAW had interviewed members of the Land Use Planning Committee, EC's Board of Directors, municipal officials, neighboring land owners, and many others to gather data on potential land uses.

While these interviews were proceeding, the EDAW team prepared technical information on the current status of EC's land. These technical reports covered natural resources, cultural features, mining features, transportation and utility systems, and the local economy. This input, combined with the results of interviews and the comments from the visioning workshop on November 21, provided the basis for the concepts presented March 28.

After the EDAW presentation, the audience broke up into small discussion groups to review the concepts more closely. Led by a consultant team member, each group reviewed the three development concepts and identified the features they liked and those they didn't like. These comments were recorded on large sheets of paper. Each participant was also given a concept evaluation sheet and asked to separately record their comments. At the conclusion of the small group discussions, one representative from each group reported to the entire audience the results of their discussion.

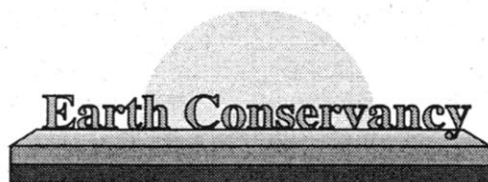
In addition to the community's comments made at the March 28 meeting, the planners will use input from the EC Board of Directors and the Land Use Planning Committee, that includes representatives from municipalities where EC's land is located. The next step will be for EDAW to synthesize all this information and develop a draft preferred plan that is both economically and environmentally feasible. This draft preferred plan will be presented at a Land Use Planning Committee meeting on May 22. ♦

EC to Sell Coal-Related Items



Several individuals have contacted Earth Conservancy about purchasing items left behind by Blue Coal Corporation, whose land and offices EC purchased in 1994. Many promotional materials remained in the building when EC bought the property from the trustee for the mining company.

EC has advertised that it will accept bids for such items as signs, calendars, clocks, posters, and other promotional pieces. The collection will be gathered for inspection and bids will be accepted in May. Interested parties should contact executive administrator John Renfer at 823-3445. ♦



101 South Main Street
Ashley, PA 18706

Phone: (717) 823-3445
Fax: (717) 823-8270

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Wilkes-Barre, PA
Permit No. 474