

EARTH CONSERVANCY NEWS

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EARTH CONSERVANCY WINS 1998 GOVERNOR'S AWARD FOR ENVIRONMENTAL EXCELLENCE

One of only four Land Use category winners in the state

EC's Land Use Plan took one of the state's top environmental honors in September when it won a 1998 Governor's Award for Environmental Excellence.

EC was one of only 42 organizations in Pennsylvania to receive this prestigious award and one of only four qualifiers in the Land Use category.

The awards were initiated by the Ridge Administration and sponsored by the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection to recognize energy efficiency and pollution prevention achievements of those who go beyond mandated compliance requirements.

The Land Use Plan, a comprehensive, long-range plan for the 16,300 acres of former coal company-owned land EC bought in 1994, was developed by a 38-member Land Use Planning Committee chaired by EC board member and local businessman, Ed Schechter. The plan took a year to create and was adopted in October, 1996.

Implementation began last year and will take about 25 years to complete.

"Our Land Use Plan was developed through the collective efforts of Earth Conservancy and the Land Use Planning Committee (LUPC)," said President Mike Dziak.

"Both have given a lot of time and hard work developing and implementing this plan, which will result in responsible re-use of these lands."

"This award signifies a major accomplishment for both EC and the LUPC and we are very proud to



Gov. Tom Ridge presents a Governor's Award for Environmental Excellence to EC President Mike Dziak. Also in picture are Stacy Richards, far left, deputy secretary for DEP's Office of Pollution Prevention and Compliance Assistance, and James Seif, far right, DEP secretary.

have been recognized by Gov. Ridge in this way."

Winners were honored at a ceremony in the State Capitol Building in Harrisburg on Sept. 22 and were highlighted in a video tape production focusing on all of the winners.

The ceremony was broadcast live on the Internet, and winners were featured on DEP's website for one month.

The City of Wilkes-Barre also won a Governor's Award for its recycling program. EC contributes to that program by accepting yard and leaf waste from the city at our Newport Twp. composting facility.

Earth Conservancy is a non-profit, 501(c)(3) organization formed "To serve as the steward in the reclamation and utilization of degraded land in partnership with government, business, and education; and to develop environmentally related technologies that improve the economic competitiveness and quality of life in our community."

Officers of the organization are: Dr. Christopher Breiseth, Chairman; Mark Dingman, Vice Chairman; Susan W. Shoval, Secretary; Harold C. Snowdon, Jr., Treasurer; Michael Dziak, President and CEO. Other board members are: Margaret Bakker, Stephen Barrouk, Joseph Hillan, A. Peter Kanjorski, Fr. James Lackenmeier, C.S.C., James Manley, John McCarthy, Jr., Robert Mericle, Edward Schechter, and Rhea Simms. Board meetings are open to the public and usually held the first Thursday of each month at 8 a.m. at Earth Conservancy's offices, 101 S. Main St., Ashley. The December board meeting will be Wednesday, Dec. 9.

** Check the Times Leader and Citizens Voice for notices of upcoming meetings/scheduling changes.*

WETLANDS PHASE II ALMOST COMPLETE

Should be treating mine drainage by December

Earth Conservancy's second artificial wetlands project is just a few weeks away from beginning operation.

The 2.2-acre site, along Dundee Road in Hanover Twp., will treat mine drainage from the Askam Borehole that now flows into Nanticoke Creek.

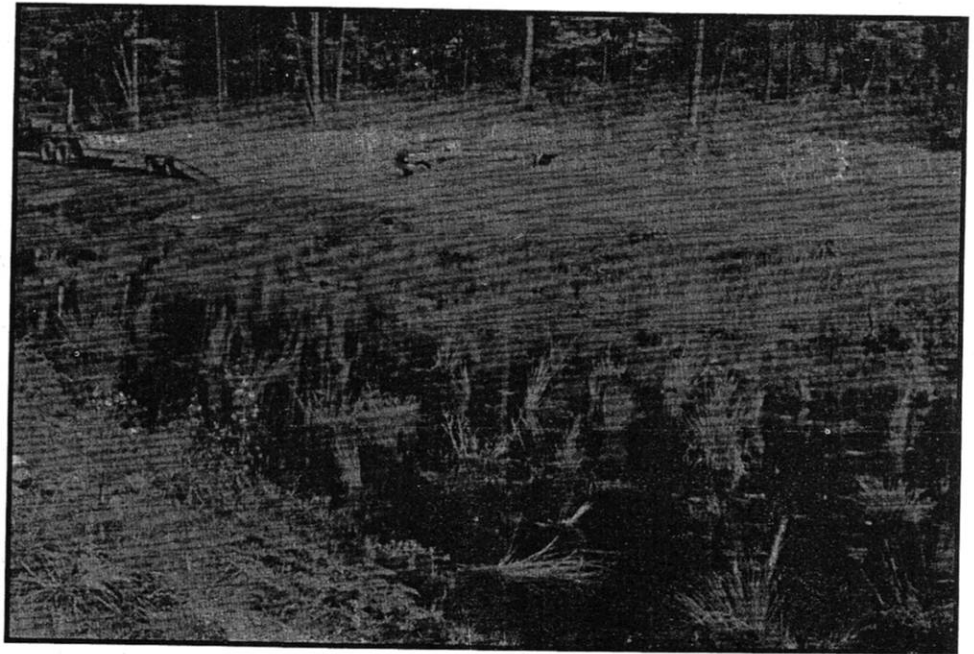
This wetland will treat about 500 gallons of mine drainage per minute.

Construction began in April and included the creation of two treatment "cells," the first of which contains a settling basin, into which the water will go prior to being allowed to enter Nanticoke Creek in a much cleaner state.

Water from the borehole will be pumped uphill into an aeration device known as a Maxistripper, which adds oxygen to it.

The water will then flow into a wetland "cell" where the iron hydroxide will settle to the bottom.

The water then flows into the



EC Field Supervisor Mark Taney and EC field personnel recently finished planting these wetland plants at the Phase II Wetland on Dundee Road, and they are thriving. Wilkes University biology professor Ken Klemow and a group of his students also spent a Sunday morning planting additional wetland plant species in preparation of the wetland operation beginning later this month.

second cell, where additional polishing and iron hydroxide removal will take place before the water is directed to Nanticoke Creek.

Compost from EC's Yard and Leaf Waste Composting Facility in Newport Twp. was used to line the wetland cells and provide a healthy growing medium for the plants that will help in the water treatment process.

Dr. Ken Klemow, a biology professor at Wilkes University, and his biology students helped vegetate the wetlands. Klemow also heads the University's Wetlands Technical Team, which provided technical support to this project.

It is EC's intent to use the Phase II wetlands as an educational tool to teach local

school children about the mine drainage problem in our region and the use of artificial wetlands in treating it.

Informational signs have been designed to explain the wetland treatment process and local schools have been informed of EC's desire to use the site as an educational tool.

Anyone interested should call Amy Gruzesky at 823-3445 for information on scheduling a tour or informational session.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency funded the wetland projects.

Approvals and permits were acquired through the state Department of Environmental Protection's Northeast Regional Office and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.



Workers installed the Maxistripper last month. It adds oxygen to the water as it enters the wetland, making the iron particles heavier and causing them to fall to the bottom.

Open Space Plan Near Completion

Figuring out what to do with more than 10,000 acres of land is a daunting task, but by year's end, EC will have a working plan for the land we aside for open/green spaces.

EDAW, the Virginia-based consultant hired to develop a plan for open/green and recreational spaces on parcels located throughout the southern Wyoming Valley, presented a draft of EC's Open Space Plan, to the Conservancy's board on Nov. 18.

EDAW is now incorporating suggestions made at the meeting, and a final draft of the plan will be submitted to the board in December. A copy will then be forwarded to the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources.

Public meetings were held in May and on Oct. 7 to collect public comments on the plan and gauge what types of activities and facilities were most needed and wanted by Luzerne County residents.

EDAW representatives also interviewed local officials, recreational enthusiasts, and others in the spring, to gauge what the Wyoming Valley needs in term of recreational and open space lands, what it lacks, and what assets it already possesses.

The plan contains three major components -- trails, park lands and conservation lands.

Implementation of various aspects of the plan are expected to begin early next year, and EC has already begun applying for state and federal grants to help fund some of these projects.

One of the key components of this plan is an Escarpment Trail on the northern reach of Penobscot Mountain, along the southern side of the Susquehanna River.

EDAW has proposed an 8.9-mile, unimproved hiking and mountain biking trail connected to secondary and technical trails that loop back to

three proposed trailheads. These trails will also provide cross-valley, as well as linear trail connections.

The first section of the trail planned for development is the Mocanaqua Loop, a 3.3-mile trail that begins in Mocanaqua, leads users to the mountain's ridgeline where they can enjoy spectacular views of the Susquehanna River and the Valley, and then back along other trails to the starting point.

The plan's proposals also include a Motor Sports Park on a heavily mine-scarred area in Newport Twp., with trails designed specifically for ATV use and a competition area for organized races and events; a scenic drive through the historical communities in the Wyoming Valley; a Mocanaqua Outdoor Center that would provide access to the Escarpment Trail, rock climbing areas, and boating activities on the Susquehanna River; and a Penobscot Ridge Mountain Bike Area on reclaimed areas of land south of Wanamie.

John McCarthy Jr. Named to EC Board

John D. McCarthy Jr., of Trucksville, was named to EC's board of directors in September.

McCarthy is president of McCarthy Tire Service Company, Inc., with locations in Wilkes-Barre, Allentown, Reading, and Lancaster, and is vice president of McCarthy Realty Company.

A graduate of Bishop Hoban High School and King's College, he also serves on the board of directors for Pennsylvania Enterprises and PG Energy, and is on the Michelin Tire Corporation Dealer Council.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH EFFORTS

Our Efforts

Earth Conservancy actively contributes resources, knowledge and time to pursue efforts that will help make the Wyoming Valley a better place. To accomplish these goals, EC has participated in numerous community outreach activities in the past year alone and wants to participate in as many as we possibly can.

Over the past few months, EC staff members have spoken to various groups about our ongoing reclamation and land recycling efforts to foster a better community understanding of exactly what EC is and what we do.

This summer, Engineering Projects Manager Tom Chesnick spoke to a group of children at a day camp sponsored by the Riverfront Parks Committee.

Mr. Chesnick described the mine-scarring that exists in the Wyoming Valley, particularly on EC lands, and told the children about EC's Open Space Plan and the trails network and recreational areas EC is planning for the future.

A group of campers at Frances Slocum State Park learned about EC's reclamation efforts and its Land Use and Open Space Plans back in June, when Amy Gruzsky, Director of Public Affairs, gave a presentation at the park as part of the environmental education

program there.

She also spoke to fourth, fifth and sixth-grade students at Wilkes-Barre Area's Mackin School in November about EC's efforts to restore land and water in the Wyoming Valley that has been damaged by past mining activities and how that land will be re-utilized once it is reclaimed.

What We Will Do

EC staff will visit area schools to give educational presentations about what we do and how we do it, as well as the benefits associated with land reclamation and recycling.

Early this fall, EC President Mike Dziak addressed a group of Nanticoke High School students, and used slides of various EC lands and projects to highlight our land use efforts.

EC has also allowed its Phase I artificial wetland in Hanover Twp. to be used by college students for educational and water testing purposes and will use the Phase II Wetland, now nearing completion, to educate middle and high school students and their teachers about mine drainage and water reclamation.

We are interested in finding more ways to work with groups in educational and environmental endeavors and are open to any

requests or suggestions.

Where We Need Your Help

One area in which EC needs help is in litter clean-ups. Illegal dumping is a widespread problem on EC lands, and we would welcome assistance from any volunteer groups interested in conducting a trash clean-up.

EC also wants to hold more tree-planting programs, since past efforts were favorable, and is researching ways to obtain trees and volunteers to plant them on EC property.

If you or your group is interested in having EC do a presentation, touring our wetlands, or in helping us with the types of volunteer activities mentioned above, or you have any suggestions for similar efforts, please call Amy Gruzsky at 823-3445.

EARTH CONSERVANCY NEWS

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Inquiries and comments may be addressed to Amy Gruzsky, editor, at the preceding address, or by calling 570-823-3445.

Earth Conservancy is a private, non-profit, 501 (c)(3) corporation.

*The Staff and Board of Directors of Earth Conservancy
would like to wish you and yours a*

HAPPY HOLIDAY SEASON!

EC'S EFFORTS EARN HONORABLE MENTION

Earth Conservancy's environmental assessment of 230 acres in Hanover Twp. won honorable mention for environmental action in this year's PO-NE Awards, sponsored by the Pocono Northeast Development Council.

The awards honor the efforts of organizations that help improve Northeast Pennsylvania's communities, environment and economy.

Forty acres of this site became an emergency landfill after the 1972 Agnes Flood.

The \$245,000 environmental assessment EC commissioned in 1997 and completed in 1998,

determined that contamination did not exceed hazardous levels and that the site is suitable for re-use -- removing years of uncertainty and negative speculation.

It was rezoned to light industrial use and the Greater Wilkes-Barre Chamber purchased 170 acres for industrial development.

This site was part of EC's purchase of 16,300 acres of former coal company-owned land in 1994. The assessment marks another step in realizing our vision to see abandoned lands productively utilized.

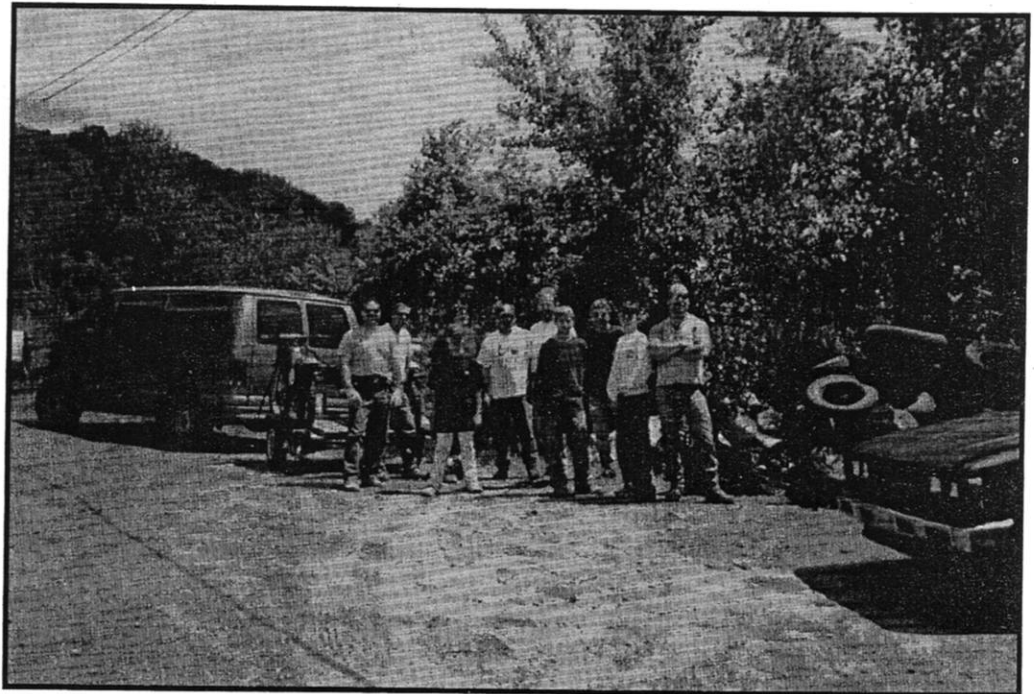
Community Clean-Up

This summer a local group of ATV enthusiasts, the Back Mountain Enduro Riders, helped EC by holding a clean up on EC-owned property in Plymouth Twp., at Routes 29 and 11, adjacent to the Hanover Nursery top soil facilities.

Club members spent a Saturday dragging tires, furniture, and other illegally dumped garbage from the site. They gathered 75 tires and 45 bags of trash, total.

Although the clean-up was successful, Bob Conner of the Enduro Riders noted that another is needed due to some large appliances and household carpeting that still remain.

EC has granted the Enduro Riders permission in the past to conduct organized events at this site, and in return, the group has graciously volunteered their



The Back Mountain Enduro Riders cleared 75 tires and 45 bags of trash from a site in Plymouth Twp. this summer. Pictured here are, front row, from left, Joe Stredney, Zackery Deubler, Curtis Mulhern, and Mark Wassel. Back row, left to right, John Karam, Rich Stredney, Dale Brennan, Charlie Gensel, Rick Deubler, and John Mulhern. Bob Conner, not pictured here, also participated.

time and efforts for clean-ups such as this one.

The group held a Hare Scramble, a two-hour endurance race, two weeks prior to their clean-up effort.

This event attracted 184 riders and 75 spectators from New York, New Jersey, Delaware, and local cities and townships.

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Nicholas Kratz
Field Personnel

Keith Scortichini
Field Personnel

Michael Thomas
Field Personnel

Terrence Walton
Field Personnel



Compost Facility Gets \$295,000 Grant

Three new pieces of equipment are making EC's Yard and Leaf Waste Composting Facility on West Kirmar Parkway in Newport Twp. much more efficient and productive.

In October, EC, under the sponsorship of Ashley Borough, received a \$295,000 capital equipment grant from the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection under the Act 101 Public-Private Partnership Recycling Grant Program.

The money was used to purchase an organic waste processor, a trommel screening plant, and a compost windrow turner. All three pieces of equipment are now being used in the facility's daily operations.

Our compost facility accepts yard and leaf waste from Luzerne County residents and municipalities free of charge. Tipping fees are required from commercial businesses such as landscapers, haulers and contractors.

To date, compost material generated at the facility has been used on an EC reclamation project in Nanticoke, at Middle Road and Prospect Street, adjacent to Luzerne County Community College, and as substrate for our Phase II Wetland project off of Dundee Road in Hanover Twp.

The facility recently expanded its hours to include Saturday, in order to better serve residents who were unable to make drop-offs during the week. The new hours are Monday through Friday, 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. and Saturday, 8 a.m. to noon. Saturday hours are seasonal and will remain in effect as need requires.

EC would also like to remind everyone that the facility also accepts natural Christmas trees at the facility after the Christmas holiday, however, all decorations must be removed.



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