

# EARTH CONSERVANCY NEWS

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## Our Mission

Earth Conservancy, a non-profit organization committed to the revitalization of 16,300 acres of former coal company-owned land, will plan for its most productive use and manage that land for the next 20 years.

Over 10,000 acres of Earth Conservancy land will be committed for open spaces and recreational purposes.

Working cooperatively with local, state, and federal agencies, governments, educational institutions, and local residents, Earth Conservancy will return these abandoned lands into productive assets for the communities in which they lie.

Reclamation, conservation, responsible development and recycling will be employed for this purpose.

Innovative environmental technologies will be used to improve the quality of the land and water. Knowledge will be shared with students, learning institutions, and interested community groups.

Earth Conservancy's actions will improve local tax bases, help create new and better jobs, and develop and apply new environmental technologies.

## 1998 ANNUAL REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY

The past year was a busy one at Earth Conservancy and it is with pride that we present our 1998 Annual Report to the Community. This report details EC's accomplishments over the past year and our goals for 1999.

We begin this new year with several major projects already underway and a list of challenging and far-reaching goals aimed at making Luzerne County a better place to live and work.

A noteworthy change at EC as we begin this new year is our updated mission statement, shown at left. This most recent version better describes EC's objectives and goals and reflects the present and future challenges we face in our efforts to reclaim, revitalize and utilize former coal company-owned lands in Luzerne County.

The driving force behind our mission and our achievements are the people and organizations who support and work with us on our various initiatives and projects. We would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge and thank all of our supporters, volunteers, Board of Directors, staff, and those organizations that provide funding, partnership, and/or professional expertise to EC.

## MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS

### *Land and Water Reclamation*

➤ In 1998, EC reclaimed 50 acres in Hanover Twp., and began an 83-acre reclamation project in Nanticoke. EC also worked with the state Department of Environmental Protection's Bureau of Abandoned Mine Reclamation to reclaim 30 acres near the South Newport Center Cemetery and begin reclamation on 39 acres in the Wanamie section of Newport Twp.

➤ Culm and silt removal are another type of reclamation pursued by EC. These materials can be processed and re-used as an electric generating fuel source. Throughout 1998, culm was removed from EC's Huber, Loomis, and Reynolds sites, and a new agreement was entered into to remove this material from the Bliss Bank, a 114-acre site in Hanover and Newport Townships. Removal of these materials eliminates an existing land and water pollution source, which will result in restoration of the watershed.

> EC also worked with the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources' Bureau of Forestry to develop a plan for re-forestation on a 110-acre site in Newport Twp.

> The Phase II Wetland Project along Dundee Road in Hanover Twp. was completed and will begin operation in the spring.

This 2.2-acre artificial wetland will treat 500 gallons of mine drainage per minute that flows from the Askam Borehole into Nanticoke Creek.

This site will be used by EC as an educational tool to teach local students about mine drainage, and how this problem can be treated.

> \$90,000 in funding was secured from the PA Department of Environmental Protection and U.S. Geological Survey to perform an assessment of the Newport and Nanticoke Creek watersheds.

This study will determine how much water is being lost throughout each watershed due to percolation into the mine pool and the impact acid mine drainage has on these watersheds.

## Land Use Planning

> Funding was obtained for a 1,800 acre Mixed Use Land Development Project in Nanticoke and Hanover and Newport Townships which incorporates a high-tech industrial park -- Hanover Crossings -- being developed by the Greater Wilkes-Barre Chamber

of Business and Industry, affordable single-family housing, and recreational/open spaces.

This project will provide much-needed industrial land for economic development and new housing opportunities in a "green" setting. It will be the first of its kind in Northeastern Pennsylvania and complement other economic development and transportation initiatives taking place in Luzerne County. Legg Mason Real Estate Services, with support from Killinger Alberto Town Planning and Borton-Lawson Engineering, is developing the project master plan, which should be complete in mid-1999.

> The Greater Wilkes-Barre Chamber purchased 170 acres in Hanover Twp. from EC for the above-mentioned Hanover Crossings, which will target companies that offer high-skill, family-sustaining jobs.

> EC made a significant contribution to the Keystone Opportunity Zone application process of Lackawanna and Luzerne Counties, offering 859 acres of its land for inclusion in the KOZ.

> The Lower Wyoming Valley Open Space Master Plan was completed, setting aside more than 10,000 acres of EC lands for recreational/green spaces.

This plan outlines 55 miles of hiking/biking trails, 32 miles of motorized trails, 6 parks, 6,694 acres of conservation areas and 4,258 acres of open space. Implementation of the plan's compo-

nents is now in the planning stages, and will take many years to complete.

EDAW, a national land use consulting company developed the Plan after studying land constraints and assets, and interviewing key local representatives about recreation/conservation needs and deficiencies.

Additional input was gathered from the community at public meetings in the summer and fall. The opinions and issues stated at these meetings were considered and studied, with many being incorporated into the plan.

> Subdivision approval was received from Hanover Twp. for Cherry Lane, a 23-lot residential subdivision.

> EC donated a reclaimed 45-acre parcel at Middle Road and Prospect Street in Nanticoke to Luzerne County Community College.

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private, non-profit, 501 (c)(3)  
corporation.

## Transportation Initiatives

> EC, working with the Greater Wilkes-Barre Chamber and several other stakeholders, completed conceptual designs of a Sans Souci/LCCC Connector Highway and a Route 115/Exit 46 Connector Highway for inclusion in the State Transportation Commission's 12-year Plan Update. These draft plans were approved locally and the funding plan starts engineering and design work in 2000.

The Sans Souci/LCCC connector will connect the Sans Souci Parkway to Middle Road, near Prospect Street in Nanticoke, and add a new exit to Route 29, providing new and improved access to LCCC.

These transportation initiatives, when implemented, will provide better access to lands for reclamation and development efforts, while also improving the safety and efficiency of neighborhood roads that now bear heavy traffic.

## Composting

> Three pieces of equipment were purchased for our composting facility, which helped increase the capacity and efficiency of the facility.

> The facility was expanded by 3 acres due to an increase in the amount of material being brought there.

> EC worked with state and local officials toward the goal of establishing a satellite drop-off area in northern Luzerne County.

## Waterjet Technology

> A contract was executed to remove the explosives from 19,000 military shells at the Crane Army Ammunition Activity, Crane, Ind. This operation involves the use of water in removing explosives from their shells.

## GIS Activities

> A Geographic Information System Analyst/Database Manager was hired to manage EC's GIS

lab. This lab provides EC with an integrated system for accessing, viewing, analyzing and/or producing maps based on geographic data related to EC's land holdings.

> Initiated a project to transfer the information contained on 1,200 Luzerne County colliery maps, presently drawn on linen and paper, onto computer discs for preservation and recording purposes.

## General Activities

> Updated EC's mission statement.

> Contributed to the American Heritage Rivers Application for the Lackawanna and Upper Susquehanna River to be designated a national Heritage River.

> Added two new members, Dr. Jon Larson and John McCarthy Jr., to EC's Board of Directors.

> Installed Y2K compliant software.

## Community Outreach

> Planted several hundred saplings on a reclamation site in Newport Twp. with Wyoming Valley West Middle School students.

> Participated in litter clean-ups with local community groups on EC lands.

> Provided local college students access to both of our constructed wetlands for tours and educational activities such as plant and water testing.

> Held public meetings on EC's Open Space Plan to collect public input that was then incorporated into the final draft of the plan.

> Gave a slide presentation and spoke to students at Nanticoke High School about EC and our reclamation and land use efforts.

> Spoke to students at a summer day camp sponsored by the Riverfront Parks Committee.

> Gave an educational presentation at Wilkes-Barre Area's Mackin Elementary School.

> Spoke to visitors at Frances Slocum State Park about EC's Open Space Plan.

## Awards

> Governor's Award for Environmental Excellence for the Land Use Plan.

> Waste Watchers Award for EC's compost facility.

> Honorable mention at the PONE (Pocono Northeast) Community Awards for an environmental assessment on Hanover 7A, the future site for development of part of the Mixed-Use Land Development Project.

## Goals

### *Economic Development*

> Work with the Greater Wilkes-Barre Chamber and Luzerne County Transportation Committee to ensure that design of the two connector roads begins in 2000.

> Complete market study and master plan for the 1,800-acre mixed-use park.

> Complete construction and begin sale of residential building lots at Cherry Lane.

### *Open Space/Conservation*

> Obtain funding to develop the 3.3-mile Mocanaqua Loop of the Escarpment Trail proposed in the Open Space Master Plan.

> Complete design and begin construction of a recreational area adjacent to Route 29 and Interstate 81.

> Continue to participate in the American Heritage Rivers Program, to help bring more funding for open space and watershed initiatives into our region.

### *Reclamation*

> Complete reclamation of 83-acre site off of Middle Road, in Nanticoke, adjacent to a previously reclaimed site at the corner of Middle Road and Prospect Street.

> Complete 39-acre reclamation project in Wanamie, Newport Twp.

> Complete assessments of Newport Creek and Nanticoke Creek watersheds and begin development of comprehensive watershed management plans for these watersheds.

> Work with DEP to complete reclamation of a 38-acre site in Hanover Twp., adjacent to the Wyoming Valley Country Club, as well as 40 acres of land in Plains Twp.

> Begin culm removal at the 114-acre Bliss Bank in Hanover and Newport Townships.

### *Community Outreach/Education*

> Promote use of the Phase II wetland as an educational tool for middle and high school teachers and students.

> Continue to give educational presentations at local schools and to interested groups.

> Start a comprehensive tree-planting program on EC lands with local volunteers and community/school groups.

> Increase community outreach/educational activities.

> Publish new general information pamphlet.





# Community Outreach

Earth Conservancy was one of the many companies throughout Northeastern Pennsylvania to participate in this year's Job Shadow Day, sponsored by Junior Achievement.

Each year, hundreds of students go to participating workplaces to "shadow" professionals and get an up-close look at what a "real" job is like. The program allows students to be introduced to different careers, understand necessary workplace skills, and connect education and job success.

Four high school students spent several hours with EC staff members on Feb. 2, learning about our reclamation and land use efforts.

Lindsey Griffiths, Riverside High School in Taylor, and Larissa Gibbs, Holly Goncheroski, and Jonelle Oram from Meyers High School in Wilkes-Barre, got an in-depth presentation on EC's history



*Job Shadow Day participants tour EC's Phase II Wetland on Dundee Road in Hanover Twp. Here, field supervisor Mark Taney shows the students the source of the mine drainage and explains how EC's constructed Wetland will treat it.*

and current projects, watched a computer demonstration in EC's GIS lab, toured the Phase I and Phase II Wetland projects and saw a reclamation project in progress, as well as a property that has already been reclaimed.

## 'Tis The Season...



You'd never guess the holidays were over from the looks of EC's Yard and Leaf Waste Composting Facility on West Kirmar Parkway in Newport Twp.

An estimated 10,000 Yuletide trees that adorned homes and businesses during the past holiday season were brought to the site for composting. Here, they will be processed into a mulch, which EC has been using on reclamation projects.

Material is accepted at the facility Monday through Friday, 7 a.m. to 4 p.m. There is no charge for Luzerne County residents or municipalities. Businesses must pay a nominal fee.

## Earth Conservancy Staff

**Michael A. Dziak**  
*President and CEO*

**John Renfer**  
*Executive Administrator*

**Thomas Chesnick**  
*Engineering Projects Manager*

**Mark E. Packard, Jr.**  
*GIS Analyst/Database Manager*

**Amy Gruzesky**  
*Director of Public Affairs  
and Development*

**Robert Eilar**  
*Operations Engineer - - ROW*

**Rick Ruggiero**  
*Property Documentation Specialist  
and Survey Coordinator*

**Tommy Thomas**  
*Document Researcher*

**Shirley Santine**  
*Real Estate Sales Coordinator*

**Anna May Hirko**  
*Administrative Assistant*

**Dana Kendreth**  
*Secretary / Courier*

**Mark Taney**  
*Field Supervisor*

**Steve Draus, Jr.**  
*Compost Site Foreman*

**Nicholas Kratz**  
*Field Personnel*

**Keith Scortichini**  
*Field Personnel*

**Michael Thomas**  
*Field Personnel*

**Terrence Walton**  
*Field Personnel*



## LCCC President Joins EC Board

Dr. Jon H. Larson, president of Luzerne County Community College, Nanticoke, has been named to Earth Conservancy's Board of Directors.

Dr. Larson holds a bachelor's degree in English and government from Norwich University, a master's degree in government and politics, and a doctorate in higher education administration from the University of Maryland.

He resides in Mountaintop.

## Land Use and Growth Management Conference

A Land Use and Growth Management Conference will be held May 6, from 1 to 7:45 p.m. at the Tobyhanna Army Depot.

This conference is sponsored by the Economic Development Council of Northeastern Pennsylvania and open to anyone

interested in rural and urban land use issues. Registration is from noon to 1 p.m. The event includes a general session, panel discussions, and dinner.

For more information, contact Len Carlin at EDCNP, at 655-5581.

Earth Conservancy is a private, non-profit, 501(c)(3) organization. Officers of the corporation are Dr. Christopher Breiseth, Chairman; Mark Dingman, Vice Chairman; Susan W. Shoval, Secretary; Harold C. Snowdon, Jr., Treasurer; and Michael A. Dziak, President and CEO. Other members of the board are: Margaret Bakker, Stephen Barrouk, Joseph Hillan, A. Peter Kanjorski, Fr. James Lackenmier, C.S.C., Dr. Jon H. Larson, James Manley, John McCarthy, Jr., Robert Mericle, Edward Schechter, and Rhea Simms.

Board meetings are open to the public & are on the first Thursday of each month at 8 a.m. at EC's offices, 101 S. Main St., Ashley.

Check the Citizens Voice and the Times Leader for meeting notices.



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