

NEWS AND VIEWS



TOM WOLF, GOVERNOR • PATRICK MCDONNELL, DEP SECRETARY

Vision Fuels Innovation By Patrick McDonnell, Secretary

This week, I'm humbled to be at the fall meeting of the Environmental Council of the States, where Pennsylvania will be honored nationally as one of this year's State Program Innovation Awardees. Pennsylvania was singled out for this honor for our multi-agency, multi-partner Brownfields to Playfields pilot program. As I'll tell my colleagues from around the United States, innovation occurs when partners come together to envision transformations. That's exactly what happened with this program that will restore and repurpose more than 40 acres of former industrial lands across the state for recreation and conservation.

We're starting with seven pilot projects. Just a few include turning the site of a former carpet manufacturer into a destination in Carlisle, with hiking, hotels and shopping; reshaping an old rail yard into a community park in Susquehanna County; and redeveloping a former Washington County electroplating shop into public parkland. Through a roundtable discussion at the fall meeting, I'll be explaining to environmental agencies from all over the country what makes our work a replicable model. The key word is partnerships.

For more on Brownfields to Playfields, visit the [DEP Newsroom](#).

TOP STORIES

Many Hands to the Plow for Clean Local Waters

Good compliance rates were [found](#) in the first year, 2016-2017, of expanded agricultural inspections to help reduce pollutants in streams and rivers in Pennsylvania's part of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed. Among farmers inspected who are required to have an erosion and sediment control plan, a manure management plan, or both, 60-80 percent had them.

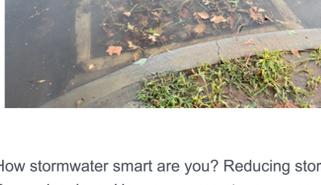
Look behind the numbers, and there's an even better story. It's one of stronger teamwork among small farmers, DEP, county conservation districts, the Department of Agriculture, and the State Conservation Commission. In the tradition of family farming, everyone's rolling up their sleeves to tackle together the great challenge of reducing non-point-source water pollution in the more than 3 million acres of Pennsylvania farmland in the Bay watershed.

Starting last summer, staff in 28 conservation districts willingly underwent new technical training, funded by the Environmental Protection Agency—another key partner—and headed out to farm sites to conduct inspections. DEP regional offices also stepped up to devote as much time and resources as possible to conducting inspections. Together, conservation district and DEP regional office staff inspected more than 393,000 acres of farmland.

More than half of the farms already had plans in place related to manure storage and application, erosion control, and other best management practices. Farmers who didn't were provided various options and timeframes to achieve compliance, and their response has largely been positive. This compliance-in-progress is important, as it shows that most farmers are on board with protecting water quality and will work with DEP and conservation districts to establish plans.



Jeff Hill, Lancaster County Conservation District agricultural program manager, and Litzitz farmer Nelson Stoner review Stoner's manure management plan.



Let's Be #StormwaterSmartPA

About 950 Pennsylvania municipalities that have urbanized areas are submitting [stormwater management permit applications](#) (called MS4 permits, "municipal separate storm sewer system") and, if required, Pollutant Reduction Plans on September 16. As part of this process, municipalities have to meet a number of requirements, one of which is educating the public about stormwater runoff pollution and how to reduce it.

How stormwater smart are you? Reducing stormwater pollution is a responsibility for all Pennsylvanians. Here are some steps you can take to be smarter about stormwater:

1. Know the impaired streams near you. Go to our [Pennsylvania stormwater GIS map site](#): Select your county, then select your municipality, and then hit "click to view features." All the red lines are impaired streams. Click on the streams to see their names and causes of impairment. What steps can you take to start making a difference?
2. Take a look around your residence and consider what you can do to reduce stormwater runoff. Can you set up a rain barrel to capture water from the roof to reuse later? Can you put in a rain garden? Can you cut down on lawn fertilizer?
3. Contact your borough, township, or city leaders to find out about their stormwater management plans. Ask how you can help implement them in your community. They'll welcome your interest.

Watch for DEP's #StormwaterSmartPA public awareness campaign on Facebook and Twitter this month and visit the DEP [Stormwater Smart](#) web page. Help us spread the word to reduce stormwater pollution in Pennsylvania.

NEWS FROM AROUND THE STATE

Penncrest High School Named National Envirothon Winners

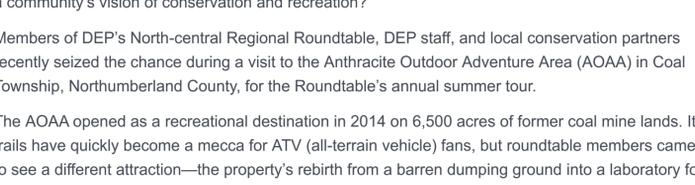
A five-member team of high school students from Delaware County's Penncrest High School has been named the [2017 NCF-Envirothon](#) first place team, taking its fourth gold medal since 2000. This year's NCF-Envirothon tested teams on their knowledge of soils and water conservation best management practices and hands-on engagement.

This year's Environmental Issue was Agricultural Soil and Water Conservation Stewardship, which easily translates across all provinces and states.

Each team's knowledge was tested under the supervision of foresters, soil scientists, wildlife specialists and other natural resource professionals. Teamwork, problem-solving and presentation skills are evaluated as each team offers a panel of judges an oral presentation with recommendations for solving the specific challenge of the year's issue.



DEP's Southeast Regional Director Pat Patterson (far left) and Assistant Regional Director Sachin Shankar (third from the right) met with the National Envirothon winners from Penncrest High School at the Delaware County Conservation District Office.



DEP North-central Regional Roundtable Tours Anthracite Outdoor Adventure Area

Have you ever stood on the back of a whale made of solid rock and seen a landscape transformed by a community's vision of conservation and recreation?

Members of DEP's North-central Regional Roundtable, DEP staff, and local conservation partners recently seized the chance during a visit to the Anthracite Outdoor Adventure Area (AOAA) in Coal Township, Northumberland County, for the Roundtable's annual summer tour.

The AOAA opened as a recreational destination in 2014 on 6,500 acres of former coal mine lands. Its trails have quickly become a mecca for ATV (all-terrain vehicle) users, but roundtable members came to see a different attraction—the property's rebirth from a barren dumping ground into a laboratory for environmental conservation.

Carbon Run, flowing orange with acid mine drainage, is treated through a series of ponds, with the final pool sustaining a population of fish before discharging into the stream. Hybridized American chestnut trees are growing at an astonishing pace on abandoned mine lands. Acres once littered with thousands of illegally dumped tires, beer bottles, and other trash have been cleaned up. And opportunities are expanding for scientists and citizens to view the "whaleback," a unique geologic formation that inspires awe in visitors as they glimpse the exposed folded rock structure of the Appalachian Mountains in miniature.

The DEP North-central Regional Roundtable is a group of stakeholders representing industry, academia, conservation groups, and local governments who meet with DEP staff quarterly to learn about DEP programs and discuss issues of concern.

For more information on the conservation work implemented on the AOAA property, visit <http://www.aoaatrails.com/about/aoaa-property-conservation>. Project funders include DEP, DCNR, PennDOT, and Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful.

Pioneer Tunnel Headframe Dedicated

A new headframe now greets visitors to the Pioneer Tunnel in Schuylkill County. It stands 35 feet tall and is a reminder of what greeted miners when they entered the dark tunnels of coal mines in the early 1900s.

Thanks to a federal Abandoned Mine Land grant, the frame has been refurbished and sits along the driveway leading up to the Ashland Coal Mine Tour. The frame was once part of the old Mahanoy Colliery, which operated in the early 1900s. The old frame and hoisting drum were removed from Bowman's Shaft in Mahanoy City, taken to the tour site, cleaned and painted and now stands tall near the mine tunnel where more than 30,000 visitors a year can see it. It stands as a daily reminder of coal mining's history and the impact the industry had on the local economy.

DEP and BAMR staffers were at the coal mine tunnel tour, along with Pioneer Tunnel board members and local officials to dedicate the headframe.



From left to right: Dave Hamilton, Office of Surface Mining; Duane Feagley, Retired Miner; John Stefanko, DEP Deputy Secretary for Active and Abandoned Mine Operations; Frank Staudenmeier, Pioneer Tunnel Board Member and County Commissioner; Ed Wytovich, Pioneer Tunnel Board; Rep. Neil Goodman, Schuylkill County; Conrad Falvello, Congressman Lou Barletta's Office; David A. Lucas, Retired Miner; Gary Hess and George Halcovage, Schuylkill County Commissioners

ENVIRONMENTAL TIPS

Tips for proper pool drainage

- NEVER dispose of pool water through a storm sewer, which would discharge into a stream
- be the municipal authority grants permission, pool water may be disposed of through the sanitary sewer system
- If a sanitary sewer is not available, the water can be used for irrigation if it stays on the property and does not run off into a storm sewer
- If you are lowering the level of your pool, let it drain on the lawn to prevent it from running off into a storm drain

Did you know? Chlorine is harmful to aquatic life!



SOCIAL SCENE



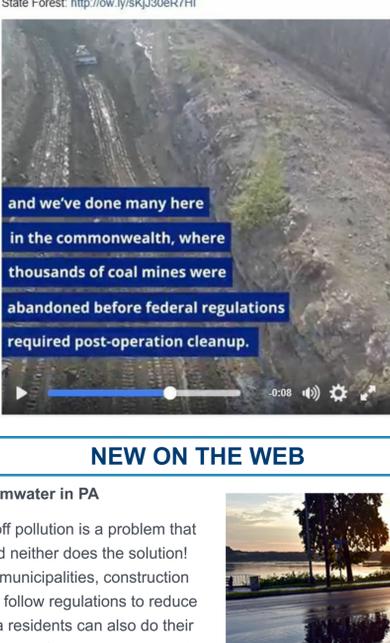
DYK: Mussels born today will spend the next 80 or more years filtering nutrients and sediment from our water! [ow.ly/wFrX30f0Vv9](#) @USFWS



Many anglers and other fans of the beautiful Sproul State Forest have waited a long time for this. [ow.ly/YDHZ30ek98Z](#) @OSMRE



DEP Earns National Mine Reclamation Award for Enhancing Safety, Boosting Local Economic Impact of ATV Trail While Restoring Part of Sproul State Forest: <http://ow.ly/sKjU30eR7HI>



NEW ON THE WEB

Ways to Manage Stormwater in PA

Urban stormwater runoff pollution is a problem that has no boundaries, and neither does the solution! While DEP works with municipalities, construction firms, and industries to follow regulations to reduce runoff, all Pennsylvania residents can do their part. Visit DEP's [Stormwater Smart](#) web page and watch for our #StormwaterSmartPA public awareness campaign on social media to help us spread the word to reduce stormwater pollution in Pennsylvania.



QUESTION OF THE MONTH

Land developers were required to install EPA stormwater best management practices beginning in what year? 1978; 1985; 1991; 1999; or 2005?

2005. Development installed before 2005 usually had no stormwater controls other than to convey it away as quickly as possible. Starting in 2005 new development was required to install best management practices that slow down the stormwater and infiltrate it into the ground. Some examples are: infiltration basins, forested buffers, vegetated swales, rain gardens, and rain barrels. Since most of our current development was created before 2005, we need to treat its stormwater with "retrofit" BMPs as much as possible.

Have a question you would like to see featured as a question of the month? Submit your questions to ra-epnews@pa.gov.