

# Earth Day 2012



## Career Profile

**Name:** Michele Nesbit  
**Job Title:** Water Quality Specialist Supervisor  
**Location:** Northeast Regional Office  
**Years with DEP:** 9

### **What kinds of activities do you perform on a daily basis?**

As a supervisor I provide guidance to the regulated community, department certified tank handlers and DEP staff concerning regulated and non-regulated storage tanks. This can include reviews of various reports demonstrating compliance with the Storage Tank and Spill Prevention Act or PA Clean Streams Law. I also initiate correspondence, supervise and train water quality specialists and environmental trainees, initiate escalated enforcement actions and perform field inspections when needed.

### **What kind of educational background do you have?**

I have an associate's degree in applied science in natural resource conservation. I also have a bachelor's degree in geologic and environmental science from Susquehanna University.

### **What is the most challenging part of your job?**

A challenging part of my job is convincing the regulated community to comply with rules and regulations. Many times they plead financial hardship, which is understandable in this economy. I try to relate to them that the regulations are not designed to cost them money but to protect human health and the environment. I also try to find less expensive alternatives to reach the same goal.

### **What got you interested in working in an environmental field?**

I grew up on a small farm where we raised livestock and grew food for our own use. My immediate and extended family care about what happens to the environment. After a stint in the military, I went back to my roots, my spiritual beliefs and a love of the outdoors and decided I wanted a career in the environmental field. I wanted to be in a position where I could make a difference in the community. I felt the best avenue for doing that would be to secure a position in an environmental regulatory agency.

### **What is the most rewarding part of your job?**

It is rewarding to know that what I do, in some small measure, protects the environment and human health. To know at least in northeastern PA I am working toward ensuring future generations have access to clean water, soil and air. It is also rewarding when the regulated community says thank you for doing what I do-what we all do.

### **What advice do you have for someone thinking about a career in environmental science?**

Make sure environmental science is what you want to do. It is hard work and long hours to get an environmental science degree. Be prepared to have two or more labs a week. If you are in high school be sure to take a lot of math, science and English classes. Above all else you must have a love of the outdoors as that is where your work will take you.