**Allegheny County Sportsmen's League**

www.acslpa.org

# Conservation Committee Report

Volume 17 Issue 4 | Jack Walters—Conservation Chairman | June—July 2015

**The Conservation Pledge**

**I give my pledge as an**

**American to save and faithfully defend from waste, the natural resources of my country; the soil, the water, the air, the minerals, the plant life and the wildlife.**

**This is my Pledge!**

**Inside this issue:**



## Clean Water Rule Protects Streams and Wetlands Critical to Public Health, Communities, and Economy

*Does not create any new permitting requirements and maintains all previous exemptions and exclusions*

In an historic step for the protection of clean water, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Army finalized the Clean Water Rule today to clearly protect from pollution and degredation the streams and wetlands that form the foundation of the nation's water resources.

The rule ensures that waters protected under the Clean Water Act are more precisely defined and predictably determined, making permitting less costly, easier, and faster for businesses and industry. The rule is grounded in law and the latest science, and is shaped by public input. The rule does not create any new permitting requirements for agriculture and maintains all previous exemptions and exclusions.

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## EPA Report Shows Progress on E-Recycling and Identifies Opportunity to Advance G7's Recognition of Circular Economy

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) released the Advancing Sustainable Materials Management (SMM) Facts and Figures report showing progress in consumer electronics recycling in the United States. Consumer electronics recycling went up from 30.6 percent in 2012 to 40.4 percent in 2013, the same year EPA launched the SMM Electronics Challenge to promote responsible donation and recycling of used electronics.

Through EPA's Sustainable Materials Management program, the agency seeks the most productive and sustainable use of materials across their life cycle, minimizing the amounts of

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## Clean Water Rule Protects Streams and Wetlands (continued)

“For the water in the rivers and lakes in our communities that

flow to our drinking water to be clean, the streams and wetlands that feed them need to be clean too,” said EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy. “Protecting our water sources is a critical component of adapting to climate change impacts like drought, sea level rise, stronger storms, and warmer temperatures – which is why EPA and the Army have finalized the Clean Water Rule to protect these important waters, so we can strengthen our economy and provide certainty to American businesses.”

“Today's rule marks the beginning of a new era in the history of the Clean Water Act,” said Assistant Secretary for the Army (Civil Works) Jo-Ellen Darcy. “This is a generational rule and completes another chapter in history of the Clean Water Act. This rule responds to the public's demand for greater clarity, consistency, and predictability when making jurisdictional determinations. The result will be better public service nationwide."

People need clean water for their health: About 117 million Americans – one in three people – get drinking water from streams that lacked clear protection before the Clean Water Rule. America’s cherished way of life depends on clean water, as healthy ecosystems provide wildlife habitat and places to fish, paddle, surf, and swim. Clean and reliable water is an economic driver, including for manufacturing, farming, tourism, recreation, and energy production. The health of our rivers, lakes, bays, and coastal waters are impacted by the streams and wetlands where they begin.

Protection for many of the nation’s streams and wetlands has been confusing, complex, and time-consuming as the result of Supreme Court decisions in 2001 and 2006. EPA and the Army are taking this action today to provide clarity on protections under the Clean Water Act after receiving requests for over a decade from members of Congress, state and local officials, industry, agriculture, environmental groups, scientists, and the public for a rulemaking.

In developing the rule, the agencies held more than 400 meetings with stakeholders across the country, reviewed over one million public comments, and listened carefully to perspectives from all sides. EPA and the Army also utilized the latest science, including a report summarizing more than 1,200 peer-reviewed, published scientific studies which showed that small streams and wetlands play an integral role in the health of larger downstream water bodies.

Climate change makes protection of water resources even more essential. Streams and wetlands provide many benefits to communities by trapping floodwaters, recharging groundwater supplies, filtering pollution, and providing habitat for fish and wildlife. Impacts from climate change like drought, sea level rise, stronger storms, and warmer temperatures threaten the quantity and quality of America’s water. Protecting streams and wetlands will improve our nation’s resilience to climate change. (continued on page 3)

## Clean Water Rule Protects Streams and Wetlands (continued)

Specifically, the Clean Water Rule:

- **Clearly defines and protects tributaries that impact the health of downstream waters**. The Clean Water Act protects navigable waterways and their tributaries. The rule says that a tributary must show physical features of flowing water – a bed, bank, and ordinary high water mark – to warrant protection. The rule provides protection for headwaters that have these features and science shows can have a significant connection to downstream waters.
- **Provides certainty in how far safeguards extend to nearby waters.** The rule protects waters that are next to rivers and lakes and their tributaries because science shows that they impact downstream waters. The rule sets boundaries on covering nearby waters for the first time that are physical and measurable.
- **Protects the nation's regional water treasures.** Science shows that specific water features can function like a system and impact the health of downstream waters. The rule protects prairie potholes, Carolina and Delmarva bays, pocosins, western vernal pools in California, and Texas coastal prairie wetlands when they impact downstream waters.
- **Focuses on streams, not ditches.** The rule limits protection to ditches that are constructed out of streams or function like streams and can carry pollution downstream. So ditches that are not constructed in streams and that flow only when it rains are not covered.
- **Maintains the status of waters within Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems.** The rule does not change how those waters are treated and encourages the use of green infrastructure.
- **Reduces the use of case-specific analysis of waters.** Previously, almost any water could be put through a lengthy case-specific analysis, even if it would not be subject to the Clean Water Act. The rule significantly limits the use of case-specific analysis by creating clarity and certainty on protected waters and limiting the number of similarly situated water features.

A Clean Water Act permit is only needed if a water is going to be polluted or destroyed. The Clean Water Rule only protects the types of waters that have historically been covered under the Clean Water Act. It does not regulate most ditches and does not regulate groundwater, shallow subsurface flows, or tile drains. It does not make changes to current policies on irrigation or water transfers or apply to erosion in a field. (continued on page 4)

## Clean Water Rule Protects Streams and Wetlands (continued)

The Clean Water Rule addresses the pollution and destruction of waterways – not land use or private property rights. The rule protects clean water necessary for farming, ranching, and forestry and provides greater clarity and certainty to farmers about coverage of the Clean Water Act. Farms across America depend on clean and reliable water for livestock, crops, and irrigation. The final rule specifically recognizes the vital role that U.S. agriculture serves in providing food, fuel, and fiber at home and around the world. The rule does not create any new permitting requirements for America's farmers. Activities like planting, harvesting, and moving livestock have long been exempt from Clean Water Act regulation, and the Clean Water Rule preserves those exemptions.

The Clean Water Rule will be effective 60 days after publication in the Federal Register.

**More information:** www.epa.gov/cleanwaterrule and http://www.army.mil/asacw

Source: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

# EPA Report Shows Progress on E-Recycling (continued)

materials involved and all associated environmental impacts. Earlier this month, the G7 committed to ambitious action to advance the efficient use of natural resources throughout their life cycle.

“For the first time, the leaders of the G7 have officially recognized the importance of the link between materials recovery and the global economy, and established the G7 Alliance on Resource Efficiency,” said Mathy Stanislaus, assistant administrator for EPA’s Office of Solid Waste and Emergency Response. “Building on the progress on sustainable materials management, EPA is engaging the business, government and NGO sectors to leverage this new report and G7 Declaration to identify and act on opportunities for resource efficiency.

Sustainable materials management is a systemic approach to using and reusing materials more productively over their entire lifecycles in order to identify opportunities to reduce environmental impacts, conserve resources, and reduce costs. EPA is advancing sustainable materials management by convening dialogues with key SMM stakeholders, providing sound science and information to the public, and establishing challenges to specific sectors to achieve shared goals.

In the Annex to the G7 Leaders’ Declaration, it’s noted that establishing a G7 Alliance on Resource Efficiency will provide a forum to exchange, promote best practices and foster innovation together with business and other stakeholders, including from the public sector, research institutions, academia, consumers and civil society, on a voluntary basis. Unsustainable consumption of natural resources and environmental degradation translates into increasing business risks through higher material costs, as well as supply uncertainties and disruptions. Resource efficiency offers opportunities to reduce the burden on the environment while strengthening the sustainability, competitiveness and growth of the economy. The G7 Alliance on Resource Efficiency aims to promote an exchange of concepts on how to address the challenges of resource efficiency, to share best practices and experience, and to create information networks.

For every million cell phones we recycle, 35 thousand pounds of copper, 772 pounds of silver, 75 pounds of gold and 33 pounds of palladium can be recovered. Through EPA’s Sustainable Materials Management Electronics Challenge, equipment manufacturers and retailers are promoting responsible electronics recycling. Challenge participants send 100 percent of their used electronics to a recognized third-party certified recycler by the third year of their participation, and publicly report this information.

Consumers can find a location to donate or recycle their electronics by visiting: http://www2.epa.gov/recycle/electronics-donation-and-recycling

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# **EPA Report Shows Progress on E-Recycling** (continued)

Also in 2012, EPA launched the Food Recovery Challenge to address the largest waste stream going to landfills. More than 700 participants have joined and committed to preventing wasted food and feeding people.

EPA's Advancing SMM Facts and Figures report was formerly known as the MSW Characterization Report.

The full report and a summary factsheet can be found at:
http://www.epa.gov/waste/nonhaz/municipal/index.htm

More information on EPA's SMM efforts can be found at: http://www.epa.gov/smm/

For more information on the G7 Alliance on Resource Efficiency visit:
https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2015/06/08/annex-g-7-leaders-declaration

Source: The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

# Information about West Nile virus

Individuals can take a number of precautionary measures around their homes to help eliminate mosquito-breeding areas, including:

Dispose of cans, buckets, plastic containers, ceramic pots, or similar containers that hold water.

Properly dispose of discarded tires that can collect water. Stagnant water is where most mosquitoes breed.

Drill holes in the bottom of outdoor recycling containers.

Have clogged roof gutters cleaned every year as the leaves from surrounding trees have a tendency to plug drains.

Turn over plastic wading pools when not in use.

Turn over wheelbarrows and don't let water stagnate in birdbaths.

Aerate ornamental pools or stock them with fish.

Clean and chlorinate swimming pools not in use and remove any water that may collect on pool covers.

If a resident has stagnant pools of water on their property, they can buy BTI products at lawn and garden, outdoor supply, home improvement and other stores. This naturally occurring bacterium kills mosquito larvae, but is safe for people, pets, aquatic life and plants.

Additionally, these simple precautions can prevent mosquito bites, particularly for people who are most at risk:

Make sure screens fit tightly over doors and windows to keep mosquitoes out of homes.

Consider wearing long-sleeved shirts, long pants and socks when outdoors, particularly when mosquitoes are most active at dawn and dusk, or in areas known for having large numbers of mosquitoes.

When possible, reduce outdoor exposure at dawn and dusk during peak mosquito periods, usually April through October.

Use insect repellents according to the manufacturer's instructions. An effective repellent will contain DEET, picardin, or lemon eucalyptus oil. Consult with a pediatrician or family physician for questions about the use of repellent on children, as repellent is not recommended for children under the age of two months.

For more information about West Nile virus and the state's surveillance and control program, please visit www.westnile.state.pa.us.

Source: PA Dept. of Health

# Reasons We Need the Clean Water Rule

**By EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy and Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works Jo-Ellen Darcy**

EPA and the Army are finalizing a Clean Water Rule to protect the streams and wetlands we rely on for our health, our economy, and our way of life.

As summer kicks off, many of us plan to be outside with our friends and families fishing, paddling, surfing, and swimming. And for the lakes and rivers we love to be clean, the streams and wetlands that feed them have to be clean, too. That's just one of many reasons why this rule is so important. Here are several more:

**Clean water is vital to our health.** One in three Americans get drinking water from streams that lacked clear protection from pollution without the Clean Water Rule. Finalizing the rule helps protect 117 million Americans' health.

**Our economy depends on clean water.** Major economic sectors—from manufacturing and energy production to agriculture, food service, tourism, and recreation—depend on clean water to function and flourish. Without clean water, business grinds to a halt—a reality too many local small business owners faced in Toledo last year when drinking water became contaminated for several days.

**Clean water helps farms thrive, and the rule preserves commonsense agriculture exemptions**. Farms across America depend on clean and reliable water for livestock, crops, and irrigation. Activities like planting, harvesting, and moving livestock across streams have long been exempt from Clean Water Act regulation; the Clean Water Rule doesn't change that. The final rule doesn't create any new permitting requirements for agriculture, maintains all previous exemptions and exclusions, and even adds exclusions for features like artificial lakes and ponds, water-filled depressions from construction, and grass swales—all to make clear our goal is to stay out of agriculture's way. *Just like before, a Clean Water Act permit is only needed if a water is going to be polluted or destroyed—and all exemptions for agriculture stay in place.*

**Climate change makes protection of water resources even more essential**. Impacts from climate change like more intense droughts, storms, fires, and floods—not to mention warmer temperatures and sea level rise—threaten our water supplies.
But healthy streams and wetlands can protect communities by trapping floodwaters, retaining moisture during droughts, recharging groundwater supplies, filtering pollution, and providing habitat for fish and wildlife. With states like California in the midst of historic drought, it's more important than ever that we protect the clean water we've got.

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# **Reasons We Need the Clean Water Rule** (continued)

**Clear protections mean cleaner water.** The Clean Water Act has protected our health for more than 40 years—and helped our nation clean up hundreds of thousands of miles of polluted waterways. But Supreme Court decisions in 2001 and 2006 threw protections into question for 60 percent of our nation's streams and millions of acres of wetlands. Using the latest science, this rule clears up the confusion, providing greater certainty for the first time in more than a decade about which waters are important to protect.

**Science shows us the most important waters to protect.** In developing the Clean Water Rule, the Agencies used the latest science, including a report summarizing more than 1,200 peer-reviewed, published scientific studies—which showed small streams and wetlands play an important role in the health of larger downstream waterways like rivers and lakes.

**You asked for greater clarity.** Members of Congress, state and local officials, industry, agriculture, environmental groups, scientists, and the public called on EPA and the Army to clarify which waters are protected under the Clean Water Act. With this rule, the agencies are responding to those requests and addressing the Supreme Court decisions. EPA and the Army held hundreds of meetings with stakeholders across the country, reviewed over a million public comments, and listened carefully to perspectives from all sides. All of this input shaped and improved the final rule we're announcing today.

**Just as importantly, there are lots of things the rule doesn't do.** The rule only protects waters historically covered under the Clean Water Act. It doesn't interfere with private property rights, and it only covers water—not land use. It also doesn't regulate most ditches, doesn't regulate groundwater or shallow subsurface flows, and doesn't change policy on irrigation or water transfers.

These are just a few of the many reasons why clean water and this rule are important—learn more here http://www2.epa.gov/cleanwaterrule and share yours with #CleanWaterRules.

Source: US EPA

# DCNR Celebrating 20th Anniversary with New Outreach Tool

For the month of July, the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources will be celebrating the 20th anniversary of its creation with a digital education campaign to inform citizens about its mission and encourage more people to visit Pennsylvania's public lands.

"On July 1, 1995, a bill was signed into law that restructured the Department of Environmental Resources into two cabinet-level agencies – Conservation and Natural Resources and Environmental Protection," said DCNR Secretary Cindy Adams Dunn. "Although we had a long history of stewardship through our bureaus, the move made conservation and management of our natural resources a priority, and recognized the importance of our parks and forests to quality of life, tourism and our economy."

To celebrate, Dunn said the department is launching an Instagram account @padcnr, and will feature 30 days of unique posts about the agency on it using #DCNR20. Content also will be shared on Facebook at Pa. DCNR and Twitter through @DCNRNews.

Visitors to state parks and forests are encouraged to submit photos of their experiences on social media.

"Most people are familiar with our state parks and forests, but many may be surprised to learn DCNR also helps manage gypsy moths and other pests; creates geologic maps; designs buildings for our system; and provides technical assistance and grants to help communities with local parks and recreation," Dunn said.

Dunn noted that DCNR accomplishments over the past 20 years include:

 Expanding the state park system to 120 – one within 25 miles of every Pennsylvanian – and being recognized nationally as the best park system in country;

 Becoming the first independently certified public forest in the nation, and the country's longest continuously certified, well-managed forest;

 Awarding grants that have assisted all Pennsylvania counties and more than 50 percent of all communities – urban and rural – in meeting their recreation and conservation needs;

 Created a conservation landscape program that is recognized as a national model for regional place-based landscape conservation;

 Constructed 10 LEED-certified park and forest buildings;

 Expanded the award-winning TreeVitalize community tree-planting and education program to communities across the state, planting about 400,000 trees;

 Launched Get Outdoors Pennsylvania-guided programs to use outdoor recreation activities such as hiking, canoeing, and biking to engage new audiences and to create meaningful and lasting connections between the commonwealth's citizens and its natural resources; and

 Completed and continue to upgrade a high resolution aerial photography and elevation data for Pennsylvania used by all segments of government, industry and the general population.

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# DCNR Celebrating 20th Anniversary with New Outreach Tool (continued)

“As part of Governor Wolf’s vision for government that works, the department continues to explore new tools to reach a broader and more diverse audience, attract them to our parks and forests and make sure that their experiences there include recreational opportunities and a stewardship message,” Dunn said.
For more information about DCNR visit the website at www.dcnr.pa.gov.

Source: Department of Conservation and Natural Resources

## RMEF Applauds Senators, Backs Efforts to Maintain Vital Conservation Funding

The Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation is urging the U.S. Senate to approve permanent reauthorization of the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF).

"We applaud Senators Jon Tester and Steve Daines for their efforts in advancing the LWCF out of committee toward a full Senate vote," said David Allen, RMEF president and CEO. "This funding is crucial in assisting our ongoing efforts to permanently protect and provide public access to important habitat for elk and other wildlife."

Since 1990, RMEF has utilized more than $85 million in LWCF funding across 62 projects in ten different states in partnership with federal agencies to protect, conserve and open access to some of the most vital elk country in the United States. Among them are the successful high-profile protection and public access projects of Tenderfoot (Montana) and Headwaters of the John Day (Oregon). Other states with RMEF projects that received LWCF funding include Alaska, California, Colorado, Idaho, North Dakota, South Dakota, Washington and Wisconsin.

Now in its 50th year, the LWCF helps conserve wild and undeveloped places, cultural heritage and benefits fish, wildlife and recreation. Its funding comes from royalties paid by energy companies drilling for oil and gas on the Outer Continental Shelf. The royalties bring in $900 million annually, most of which is diverted to other federal programs.

Senator Tester (D-MT) pointed out to members of the Senate Appropriations Committee that the original 2016 version of the bill included just $292 million for LWCF, $14 million below the levels from a year ago. He went a step further by calling on committee members to fully fund LWCF at $900 million but was voted down.

Senator Daines (R-MT), a member of the same committee, then pushed for an amendment restoring LWCF levels to 2015 levels while also ensuring four critical Montana LWCF projects receive full funding. The bill will now be considered by the full Senate.

"LWCF funds have protected land in every state. In Montana alone, that's a $237 million investment in our forests, waterways, recreation sites and parks. Congress needs to reauthorize this vital funding before it's too late. Failing to do so means we, as a country, will turn our backs on outdoor recreation, wildlife and wild places," added Allen.

The Land and Water Conservation Fund is set to expire on September 30, 2015.

Source: The Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation www.rmef.org

# Cabinet Secretaries Honor Nominees for U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon Schools Award

Earlier this year, PDE nominated Northampton Community College in Northampton County, Patton Middle School in Chester County, and the School District of Jenkintown in Montgomery County for the national Green Ribbon Schools Award.

The U.S. Department of Education began the Green Ribbon Schools Award in 2011 to inspire schools, districts, and institutions of higher education to become more environmentally friendly and educate their students about the importance of conservation and stewardship.

The award recognizes schools, districts, and institutions of higher learning that reduce environmental impact and costs; improve the health and wellness of schools, students, and staff; and provide environmental education. Combined achievement in these three areas is the basis for recognition.

Of the three Pennsylvania schools nominated, Northampton Community College and Patton Middle School were given the U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon School designation.

Since its pilot year in 2012, Pennsylvania has had twelve diverse honorees including school districts, elementary and middle schools, private and disadvantaged schools, career and technical schools, and a community college.

Educational institutions are encouraged to apply for the 2016 U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon Schools Award. The application will be posted here beginning on August 31 and will remain open until December 7.

For more information about the Green Ribbon Schools Award, click here.

**EDITOR'S NOTE**: A description of each nominee follows:

**The School District of Jenkintown**

Jenkintown is a true neighborhood school and there are no buses to transport students to and from school every day, which reduces their carbon footprint. In addition to walking, students utilize the nearby SEPTA regional rail.

Jenkintown has received several DEP grants to reduce its environmental impact: a Growing Greener Grant for an innovative stormwater management project and an Energy Harvest Grant for a solar PV array.

Students conducted an energy audit of the school building to identify areas where usage could be reduced. Not only did the students benefit from being educated, but they also made presentations to the school board and to Jenkintown Borough's Environmental Action Committee.

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# Cabinet Secretaries Honor Nominees for U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon Schools Award (continued)

**Charles Patton Middle School**

Charles Patton Middle School has reduced their water usage for irrigation by 65 percent from 2009 to 2014 by using native plants on school grounds and installing a drip line irrigation system in their greenhouse.

At Patton, a School Lunch Investigation Project measured the waste generated by the school population and resulted in a stronger emphasis on recycling, composting, and reducing overall waste.

Patton Middle School has a Wellness Committee that works to improve the overall health of students and faculty by offering yoga and a rock wall, and promoting healthy eating.

Patton Middle School has an exemplary garden-based learning program in their Family Consumer Sciences class. They have 30 raised beds to grow vegetables, as well as a greenhouse and two high tunnels. Of the produce grown, 95 percent goes to charity, mainly the Chester County Food Bank, with approximately 7,000 pounds having been donated thus far. Students learn about the growing and harvesting process, all while helping those who are less fortunate.

**Northampton Community College (NCC)**

The entire three-building Monroe campus of NCC has been designed and constructed to meet a minimum LEED Silver standard from the U.S. Green Building Council and is currently awaiting certification. One impressive feature is a large solar canopy that provides 40 percent of the campus electricity.

A “no-mow” area was established on the main campus to reduce fossil fuel use and allow that land to go to succession, over time increasing the amount of wooded area on campus.

A faculty and staff committee called the Wellness Warriors encourages coworkers to adopt healthy lifestyles through wellness seminars, cooking demonstrations, and a walking program.

NCC’s main campus has an exemplary community garden. The garden is a true living laboratory, with math, science, information technology, and culinary students all using it as an education tool. In addition to offering gardening plots to campus neighbors, they offer Community Education Courses.

Source: PA DEP