

Conservation Committee Report

Volume 18 Issue 3

Jack Walters—Conservation Chairman

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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!

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DEP Authorizes Emergency Contract to Stop Mine Subsidence Damage in Pleasant Hills

The Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has authorized an emergency contract to stop serious mine subsidence in Pleasant Hills, Allegheny County. Two homes on Brushglen Lane have shown considerable structural damage due to the shift of ground underneath their foundations.

DEP inspectors were first alerted to the problem on March 16. During an on-site survey the following day, they noted significant damage throughout the homes and were able to trace the problems to mine subsidence. The homes are located over the abandoned Pittsburgh Terminal No. 6 mine, which was abandoned prior to 1936.

Damages to the homes include cracks in the plaster walls in several rooms; stuck doors and windows; floors that are now tilted; and significant cracks in foundations, in some cases up to one inch wide.

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DEP Cites Pittsburgh Water and Sewer Authority for Unapproved Water Treatment Change

The Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) issued an Administrative Order citing the Pittsburgh Water and Sewer Authority (PWSA) for making a substantial modification to its drinking water treatment system without prior ap-

proval by DEP. The change, which occurred in April 2014, involved the use of caustic soda in place of soda ash to control corrosion in PWSA's water distribution system. PWSA went back to the use of soda ash in January 2016.

"Preliminary data shows no imminent threat to the public as a result of this unauthorized change. We are asking PWSA to analyze all data from April 2014 to January 2016,

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DEP Authorizes Emergency Contract to Stop Mine Subsidence Damage in Pleasant Hills (continued)

The subsidence continues to impact the homes.

The emergency authorization allows DEP's Bureau of Abandoned Mine Reclamation to immediately gather estimates, choose the most qualified bidder, and contract to begin work to stabilize the site. Quotes are scheduled to be received by DEP by the morning of Thursday March 24, with work scheduled to begin Tuesday, March 29. The project is anticipated to take two to three weeks to complete.

DEP continues to encourage residents of the importance of having mine subsidence insurance. A typical homeowner's insurance policy rarely covers mine subsidence damage, leaving the property owner with repair expenses which can often exceed \$100,000 per building. Mine subsidence insurance is an affordable option that protects homeowners from the cost of potential damages caused by subsidence.

The insurance, which is administered by DEP, is inexpensive, at about 55 cents for every \$1,000 of coverage. An average policy of \$175,000 would cost just \$95 a year, about \$8 a month or .25 cents a day. But, despite the low cost, only about 62,000 buildings are insured statewide.

As part of an ongoing awareness campaign, DEP mailed details of the insurance program to Pleasant Hills residents a year ago, alerting them to the danger posed by abandoned coal mines underneath their properties. Much of the area in the southern and eastern Pittsburgh neighborhoods and suburbs are undermined. An estimated 1,000,000 buildings are constructed over abandoned mines in Pennsylvania. Because subsidence hasn't occurred in a particular neighborhood in the past doesn't mean it won't happen in the future.

Detailed information about the mine subsidence insurance program can be found online [here](#), or call 1-800-922-1678.

Source: PA Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)

DEP Cites Pittsburgh Water and Sewer Authority for Unapproved Water Treatment Change (continued)

the period the authority used caustic soda, and the rest of 2016,” said DEP Secretary John Quigley. “We have put PWSA on notice that its unilateral decision to change treatment was a clear violation of safe drinking water regulations. PWSA had no authority to modify its treatment without first demonstrating to DEP that the proposed change would not adversely impact the corrosion control treatment, and obtaining DEP approval via a permit amendment.”

DEP sampled PWSA water on Friday, April 22, as it leaves the plant on its way into the distribution system. The results showed lead levels at less than 1 part per billion; and copper levels less than 4 parts per billion. The federal Lead and Copper Rule (LCR) establishes an action level of 15 parts per billion for lead, and 1,300 parts per billion for copper

PWSA’s public water supply permit, approved in 1995, requires the use of soda ash for corrosion control. Soda ash (sodium carbonate) is used because of its ability to prevent corrosion in water pipes, and because it helps to prevent leaching of lead and copper into the water. Caustic soda (sodium hydroxide) raises the pH of water to bind up metals, but does not have carbonate to coat water lines, and relies on the natural carbonates in the authority’s source water from the Allegheny River. Although caustic soda is approved for use by some water systems, it will only be approved by DEP after proof of its effectiveness in each system

In its Administrative Order, DEP requires the following of PWSA:

- Provide initial notice to all 300,000 customers about its prior change in corrosion control chemicals and the measures it is undertaking to evaluate impacts

- Complete two rounds of lead and copper tap monitoring from 100 Tier 1 sites throughout the authority’s distribution area; with the first set of tests to be completed by June 30, with results to DEP by July 10; and the second set by December 31, with results to DEP by January 10, 2017

- Provide any sampling data PWSA collected since June 1, 2013

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DEP Cites Pittsburgh Water and Sewer Authority for Unapproved Water Treatment Change (continued)

- Develop plan to investigate lead levels within its system, the effect of changes to treatment methods for corrosion control, and recommendations for appropriate changes to assure the best possible corrosion control measures for the system
- Outline in subsequent customer notices details of water sampling and analysis, and updates on investigation of treatment change impacts.

“DEP does not take this action lightly,” said Secretary Quigley. “We do not tolerate deviation from water quality regulations that might, in any way, potentially compromise the public’s health and safety.

Earlier this year, PWSA renewed its efforts to get customers to take advantage of free in-home tap water sampling. Customers who have concerns about their tap water can contact PWSA for free test kits and instructions on how to use them. Information on in-home testing is available on the PWSA web site: www.pgh2o.com.

PWSA has cooperated with DEP’s initial investigation into the water treatment changes, and DEP expects that PWSA will continue to comply by conducting the required increased sampling, investigating any adverse impacts from the treatment change, and providing outreach to its customers.

For more information, including the Administrative Order, Notice of Violation, and details about this investigation, visit DEP’s Southwest Region page [here](#).

Source: PA Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)

EPA Awards \$500,000 to Help Reduce Children's Exposure to Pesticides

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced two grants to help reduce students', teachers' and staffs' exposure to pests and pesticides in our nation's schools, while saving money, energy and pesticide treatment costs.

"Children are among the most vulnerable members of our society, and EPA is working to protect them from needless threats," said Jim Jones, assistant administrator for the office of chemical safety and pollution prevention. "Our goal is to have schools across the nation implement sustainable pest management practices to provide a healthier learning environment for our students and teachers."

Integrated pest management (IPM) is a sustainable approach to controlling pests that focuses on prevention. This program is designed to utilize all appropriate pest management strategies, including the judicious use of pesticides.

These strategies include repairing water leaks, adding weather stripping to windows, and installing door sweeps. The result is a reduction in pest problems, pesticide use, and treatment costs along with water and energy savings. The IPM approach emphasizes removing the underlying conditions for pest to thrive.

The two projects that received awards are:

NEHA Mentorship Program for Developing School IPM Capabilities-- National Environmental Health Association, \$241,000

This project will promote effective and environmentally sensitive pest management practices in schools through an intensive mentorship program between local health departments and underserved school districts. The mentorship program, pairing local health departments with school districts, will provide increased access to technical resources, and partnerships. This project will take place in 2016 and 2017.

Keeping the Pests Out: The Economics of Integrated Pest Management in Schools – Health Resources in Action, \$300,000

This project will examine the costs and benefits of implementing school IPM activities. Currently, there are only a few studies about the economics of school IPM. This project will help school districts understand the costs and benefits associated with establishing and sustaining IPM programs. The results of this two year project will be available in early 2018.

IPM is a smart, sensible, and sustainable approach that takes advantage of all appropriate pest management strategies, including the judicious use of pesticides.

These projects support EPA's vision that all of the nation's students can attend schools with IPM programs.

For more information on EPA's School IPM program, visit: <http://www2.epa.gov/managing-pests-schools>.

U.S. EPA Provides \$30 Million to Create Research Centers at Three Universities

Carnegie Mellon, Harvard and Yale will study how to reduce air quality impacts on public health

The funding the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is announcing will be used to investigate regional differences in air pollution and the effects of global climate change, technology, and societal choices on local air quality and health.

“We eagerly anticipate the centers’ new models and research insights that will lead to improved air quality and public health,” said Dan Costa, national program director for EPA’s air, climate and energy research program. “Understanding how to maintain and improve air quality as the climate changes is the first step in working together to reduce risks.”

These grants to the universities are funded through EPA’s Science to Achieve Results (STAR) program:

- Carnegie Mellon University, Pittsburgh, Penn. to create the *Center for Air, Climate, and Energy Solutions (CACES)*, which will improve current air quality models; develop new, faster, simpler models for evaluating policy options; and conduct detailed measurement studies in Pittsburgh, Los Angeles and Austin to identify the factors influencing regional differences in air pollution concentrations.
- Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass. for *Regional Air Pollution Mixtures: The Past and Future Impacts of Emission Controls and Climate Change on Air Quality and Health*, which will investigate pollutant mixtures across the country using past data and future projections; will examine how changes in emissions, climate, and other factors affect pollution mixtures; and will predict how future changes in social and economic factors will affect air pollution and health-related impacts.
- Yale University, New Haven, Conn. for *SEARCH: Solutions for Energy, AiR, Climate and Health*, which will research the impacts of changes in the use of energy in the power and transportation sectors, such as impacts of expansion of the port of Baltimore following the expansion of the Panama Canal.

Since 1999, the work of EPA’s own staff scientists has been complemented by EPA funded research centers that enable some of the nation’s best scientific experts in academia to research pressing environmental issues. Research results from these centers have contributed significantly to advancing air quality and environmental health science, and have been used by researchers and policymakers around the world. The centers that are being announced today represent the next generation of these important and productive air research centers.

For more information on EPA’s air, climate and energy research: <http://www2.epa.gov/air-research>

Learn more about the grant recipients:

https://cfpub.epa.gov/ncer/abstracts/index.cfm/fuseaction/recipients.display/rfa_id/588

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

EPA Report: Diesel Engine Grant Program Nets Major Air, Public Health Benefits

Clean diesel grants aimed at cleaning up old diesel engines have greatly improved public health by cutting harmful pollution that causes premature deaths, asthma attacks, and missed school and workdays, according to a new report by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Since its start in 2008, the Diesel Emission Reduction Act (DERA) program has significantly improved air quality for communities across the country by retrofitting and replacing older diesel engines.

Diesel exhaust significantly contributes to the formation of dangerous soot and smog and is likely to increase the risk of cancer. The funding from the program has helped clean up approximately 335,200 tons of nitrogen oxides (NOx) and 14,700 tons of particulate matter (PM), which are linked to a range of respiratory ailments and premature death. The program has also saved 450 million gallons of fuel and prevented 4.8 million tons of carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions – equivalent to the annual CO₂ emissions from more than 900,000 cars. EPA estimates that clean diesel funding generates up to \$13 of public health benefit for every \$1 spent on diesel projects.

“EPA is making a visible difference in communities that need it most through the funding of cleaner trucks, buses, trains, and other heavy equipment,” said Janet McCabe, the EPA’s Acting Assistant Administrator for the Office of Air and Radiation. “The report on DERA’s impact offers striking evidence that this program is succeeding in providing Americans with cleaner air where they live and work while also cutting the pollution that fuels climate change.”

Operating throughout our transportation infrastructure today, 10.3 million older diesel engines – the nation’s “legacy fleet,” built before 2008 – need to be replaced or repowered to reduce air pollutants. While some of these will be retired over time, many will remain in use, polluting America’s air for the next 20 years. DERA grants and rebates are gradually replacing legacy engines with cleaner diesel engines. Priority is given to fleets in regions with disproportionate amounts of diesel pollution, such as those near ports and rail yards.

This third report to Congress presents the final results from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, and covers fiscal years 2009-2011. It also estimates the impacts from grants funded in fiscal years 2011-2013.

Additional report highlights include:

Environmental Benefits

18,900 tons of hydrocarbon prevented

4,836,100 tons of CO₂ prevented – equivalent to the annual emissions from about 900,000 cars

450 million gallons of fuel saved

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EPA Report: Diesel Engine Grant Program Nets Major Air, Public Health Benefits
(continued)

Public Health Benefits

Up to \$12.6 billion in monetized health benefits

Up to 1,700 fewer premature deaths

Although not quantified in the report, NOx and PM reductions also prevent asthma attacks, sick days, and emergency room visits.

Program Accomplishments

642 grants funded

\$570 million funds awarded

73,000 vehicles or engines retrofitted or replaced

81% of projects targeted to areas with air quality challenges

3:1 leveraging of funds from non-federal sources

For more information on the National Clean Diesel campaign, visit:

<http://www.epa.gov/cleandiesel>.

To access the Report, visit: <http://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2016-03/documents/420r16004.pdf>

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

Philadelphia Prison System Receives Accolades from EPA For Food Recovery Achievements

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency recognized the City of Philadelphia today for its innovative food recovery achievements at the Philadelphia Prison System that include composting 1.35 tons of wasted food each day and saving the city \$31,000 each year in landfill fees.

The city was among more than 800 governments, businesses and organizations nationwide that participated in the 2015 EPA's Food Recovery Challenge. These entities diverted food waste from entering landfills or incinerators through a variety of innovative actions.

"The Philadelphia Prison System sets a tremendous example on using innovation to reduce food waste," said EPA Mid-Atlantic Regional Administrator Shawn M. Garvin. "Businesses and communities across America are taking positive steps to address the food waste challenge, and they're saving money, helping the environment, and feeding hungry people in the process."

The city received special recognition for its achievements nationally under the innovation category. Along with the composting, the Prison System's food recovery program provides inmates with hands-on job training in horticulture and urban gardening onsite at the Orchard Program located on property behind Philadelphia Industrial Correction Center on State Street.

Nationwide, Food Recovery Challenge participants diverted nearly 606,000 tons of wasted food from entering landfills or incinerators in 2014, nearly 88,600 tons of which were donated to people in need.

For more information on the Food Recovery Challenge, visit: <http://www2.epa.gov/sustainable-management-food>.

Source: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Wolf Administration Investing \$1.19 Million in Projects to Clean Up Acid Mine Drainage

Pennsylvania Governor Tom Wolf announced the selection of 4 projects to receive \$1,193,603 in funding for the rehabilitation of Pennsylvania's water resources. The selected projects mitigate acid mine drainage (AMD) and support programs that improve water quality in watersheds, wetlands, and fisheries that have been impaired by AMD.

"The health of Pennsylvanians depends on the health of Pennsylvania's waterways" said Governor Wolf. "These grants will aid projects that are committed to protecting public health by eliminating acid mine drainage."

"Pennsylvania's history is inextricably linked to mining," said Department of Environmental Protection Secretary John Quigley. "Unfortunately, acid mine drainage has also been a part of this history. The investments we are making today are essential in correcting the errors of the past to restore water quality in our streams for generations to come."

Funding for the AMD Set Aside Program comes from a fee on the active mining industry designated in the Federal Surface Mining Conservation and Reclamation Act. For more information on the AMD Set Aside Program, [click here](#).

The organizations that were awarded are listed below, by grant type and alphabetically by county, with the project name and funding amount:

Elk

Headwaters Charitable Trust, Kyler Hollow AMD Passive Treatment System - ALD 1 & ALD 2 Rehabilitation: \$618,118

Headwaters Charitable Trust, Hayes Run & Backside Hayes AMD Passive Treatment Systems - Modifications/Improvements: \$384,918

Fayette

Mountain Watershed Association, Inc., Rondell-Correal AMD Treatment System: \$123,543

Schuylkill

Schuylkill Conservation District, Upper Swatara Creek QHUP AMD Monitoring Project: \$67,024

TOTAL: \$1,193,603

DEP Releases Sample Results of Drinking Water Served by Berks County Vendor

The Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) released its own results from a water sample taken March 8 at Crystal Spring Water, a company that sells well water through vending machines in Adamstown, Berks County. The Department's testing indicated a lead level of 1.8 parts per billion, within the acceptable maximum contaminant level of 5 ppb.

A routine test sample collected by Crystal Spring owner Lynn Rannels in September 2015 contained a lead level of 16 ppb. According to the Safe Drinking Water Act, DEP should have been notified DEP within 24 hours of receiving this test result and customers should have been notified within 30 days. Neither notification was given.

"There is no question that the initial water sample taken from the facility contained an elevated lead level," said Lynn Langer, DEP South-central regional director. "DEP has verified the results of that initial test with the lab M. J. Reider Associates, Inc., which was chosen by the owner."

"Crystal Spring has a permit to operate as a public water supply, and is bound by the same regulations by which all similar water supplies operate," said Langer. "DEP took the proactive step of taking its own sample to protect the health and safety of the consumer."

There are a total of 12 regulated vended public water supplies in Berks, Lancaster and Lebanon counties. There are no monitoring compliance issues at the other 11 locations.

A Notice of Violation was issued on February 19, asking Crystal Spring to take and submit to the department additional samples. On March 8, DEP issued an Order to Crystal Spring which required additional samples and results reported to DEP.

Certified lab results are considered valid until the next set of results are obtained. Crystal Springs will still be required to take quarterly samples for the next year to ensure the water is below actionable lead levels.

Infants and children who drink water containing lead in excess of the standard could experience delays in their physical or mental development. Adults who drink this water over many years could develop kidney problems or high blood pressure. Customers with specific health concerns should speak with their doctors.

Source: PA Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)

Pa. Heritage Areas generate hundreds of millions in economic benefits, support thousands of jobs

A new study released recently shows that Pennsylvania's 12 state-designated Heritage Areas generate hundreds of millions of dollars in economic benefits and support thousands of jobs in addition to building awareness of the state's history and culture.

The study found that in 2014, tourists spent an estimated 7.5 million days/nights in Pennsylvania's Heritage Areas, purchasing \$2 billion worth of goods and services. This spending supported 25,708 jobs and generated \$798 million in labor income and nearly \$1.3 billion in value-added effects. In addition, 70 percent of visitor spending and associated economic effects would be lost to these areas if heritage anchor attractions were not available, according to the study.

The *Economic Impact of Pennsylvania Heritage Areas* study was co-sponsored by The Center for Rural Pennsylvania and HeritagePA. The research team was led by John M. McGrath, Ph.D., a member of the business faculty at University of Pittsburgh-Johnstown. For more information on Pa.'s heritage areas, visit [here](#).

Source: PA DCNR

DEP Cites Illegal Tire Dump in Allegheny County

The Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), partnering with the municipality of Penn Hills, has cited Monster and Mom and Bobo's Car Wash LLC, for illegally storing an estimated 50,000 waste tires.

Penn Hills Police discovered the tire dump, which is adjacent to a daycare center. The operators of the tire dump solicited the waste tires from throughout the area.

Penn Hills Police filed summary criminal charges against the owners of Monster and Mom in the Penn Hills District Justice's Office. After a hearing, the District Justice found Monster and Mom guilty and imposed a fine. In addition to the Penn Hills Police court action, DEP issued an order requiring the immediate cleanup of the site and the proper recycling or disposal of the tires. An investigation into other incidents of illegal tire dumping at the site is continuing.

Pennsylvania regulations require an operator of a waste aggregation and storage facility to first obtain a permit from the Department. A review of DEP records showed that Monster and Mom does not have a permit to store, collect, process or dispose of waste. Monster and Mom has a Waste Tire Hauler Authorization which authorizes only the transportation of waste tires from a source to a permitted recycling or disposal facility.

Recently, local environmental officials have noted an increase in the number of illegal tire dumps in Pittsburgh and the southwest region. These tires that should be recycled are dumped over hill sides. Unlicensed tire transporters and aggregators dump tires on vacant or private properties. These tire dumps are potential fire hazards, scar the land and provide a ready breeding ground for mosquitos during the spring and summer months.

Waste tire sources, like gas stations and tire retailers, have the responsibility of consigning their tires to permitted haulers and disposal facilities. These waste tire generators also must keep records documenting the proper handling of all waste tires.

DEP regulations require that all tires should be sent for recycling or energy recovery. Details of the agency's waste tire program can be found [here](#). For more information, visit www.dep.pa.gov.

Source: PA Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)