

# Conservation Committee Report

Volume 21 Issue 3

Jack Walters—Conservation Chairman

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## DEP Penalizes EQT for Well Site Violations in Allegheny County

### 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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The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has collected \$330,775 in civil penalties from EQT Production Company (EQT) for violations at its Prentice and Fetchen well sites in Forward Township, Allegheny County.

A February 23, 2018, DEP inspection re-

vealed sediment-laden water from unstabilized portions of both well sites had overtopped numerous erosion and sedimentation controls beyond the limit of disturbance of both sites. The sediment-laden water flowed from the Prentice site into roadside ditches and ultimately into an unnamed tributary to Kelly Run.

DEP's inspection also showed that a proposed access road — from the Prentice site to a meter station that EQT was working with DEP to authorize — had already been constructed without a permit.

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## DEP Releases Report on Impaired Waterways in Pennsylvania, Stresses Need for Restore Pennsylvania for River Health

The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) released its 2018 Integrated Water Quality Monitoring and Assessment Report, which details the health of rivers, streams, and lakes across Pennsylvania. With the

release of this biennial report, DEP Secretary Patrick McDonnell highlighted how Restore Pennsylvania can help clean up Pennsylvania's polluted waterways.

The report evaluates whether waterbodies across Pennsylvania are achieving the

water standards that protect clean water. Streams, lakes, rivers, and other water resources are evaluated on how well each waterway is meeting its assessed use, such as drinking water supply, aquatic life,

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## **DEP Penalizes EQT for Well Site Violations in Allegheny County (continued)**

Numerous erosion and sedimentation controls were found to be inoperable or ineffective. EQT also violated state law and its permit by failing to report the inoperable or ineffective erosion and sedimentation controls. Many of these problems continued into March at the Prentice well site and July at the Fetchen well site.

As of May 29, 2018, EQT completed all corrective actions at the Prentice well site and DEP approved a modification to properly permit the illegal access road, correcting these violations. The violations at the Fetchen well site were corrected by November 1, 2018.

“DEP expects all permittees — particularly large, longtime operators — to construct facilities and report problems in accordance with state regulations and permit conditions, but these failures demonstrate the importance of verifying compliance and enforcing the regulations,” said DEP Deputy Secretary for Oil and Gas Management Scott Perry.

A copy of the Consent Assessment of Civil Penalty (CACP) for the Prentice well site can be viewed at <http://files.dep.state.pa.us/RegionalResources/SWRO/SWROPortalFiles/EQT/CACP-2019-04-18-EQT-373892.pdf> and CACP for the Fetchen well site can be viewed at <http://files.dep.state.pa.us/RegionalResources/SWRO/SWROPortalFiles/EQT/CACP-2019-04-18-EQT-373891.pdf>.

Source: The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)

## **DEP Releases Report on Impaired Waterways in Pennsylvania, Stresses Need for Restore Pennsylvania for River Health (continued)**

recreation, and fish consumption.

“Clean water is vital to the health and safety of Pennsylvanians, our wildlife, and our land,” McDonnell said. “As we continue to protect and restore water quality in Pennsylvania, the commonwealth’s support is critical to funding restoration projects. Restore Pennsylvania prioritizes environmental protection in its infrastructure revitalization plans and would direct funding so that Pennsylvanians can better protect and fully enjoy our natural resources.”

Restore Pennsylvania is a statewide plan to aggressively address the commonwealth’s vital infrastructure needs, including protecting waterways by funding restoration projects. Funded through a commonsense severance tax, Restore Pennsylvania is the only plan that will help make Pennsylvania a leader in the 21st century.

Thanks to new scientific analysis techniques pioneered by DEP staff, the 2018 Integrated Report includes, for the first time, aquatic life use assessments of the middle and lower reaches of the Susquehanna and Juniata rivers.

“DEP remains committed to continuing work on the Susquehanna River, and has completed extensive work resulting in a new assessment methodology that will increase our ability to monitor Pennsylvania’s waterways,” said DEP Secretary Patrick McDonnell. “For the first time, we’ve been able to assess the middle and lower reaches of the Susquehanna River. Additionally, this is the first fully digital interactive Integrated Report, making it the most user-friendly and transparent Integrated Report ever created.”

DEP has determined that the Juniata River from the confluence of the Raystown Branch in Huntingdon County to the mouth at Duncannon, Perry County and the Susquehanna River from the confluence of the Juniata River at Duncannon to the Route 462 bridge near Columbia, Lancaster County are both impaired for aquatic life use due to high pH. DEP is currently evaluating the sources of impairment.

These impairment determinations are consistent with the Chesapeake Bay Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) goal to reduce nutrients and sediment.

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## **DEP Releases Report on Impaired Waterways in Pennsylvania, Stresses Need for Restore Pennsylvania for River Health (continued)**

The report also notes that smallmouth bass population levels have returned to near-record levels in previous areas of concern. Collaborative work between DEP, the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC), and several other partners identified the two most likely causes of the smallmouth bass disease and population decline as endocrine-disrupting compounds and pathogens, such as Largemouth Bass Virus and parasites. The aquatic life use impairments on the Susquehanna and Juniata rivers are based on physiochemical water quality and benthic macroinvertebrate monitoring data. These assessments have been arrived at independently of the decline and subsequent recovery of smallmouth bass populations in the Susquehanna and Juniata rivers over the past decade and a half.

A requirement of the federal Clean Water Act, the Integrated Report is a biennial comprehensive analysis of the water quality status of the more than 86,000 miles of streams and rivers and more than 160,000 acres of lakes in Pennsylvania. Rivers, lakes, and streams are assessed in four categories: Aquatic Life, Water Supply, Fish Consumption, and Recreation.

The full report and supporting documents can be found at here  
[https://www.depgis.state.pa.us/2018\\_integrated\\_report/index.html](https://www.depgis.state.pa.us/2018_integrated_report/index.html).

An interactive map of Pennsylvania waterways and use assessments can be found here  
[https://www.depgis.state.pa.us/integrated\\_report\\_viewer/index.html](https://www.depgis.state.pa.us/integrated_report_viewer/index.html). With this mapping tool, users can identify individual stream/river segments and any applicable use assessments and their causes.

Source: The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)

## **DEP Announces PFAS Sampling Plan to Identify Possible Water Contamination**

As a part of the Wolf Administration's efforts to address contamination from per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) announced a statewide sampling plan to identify impacted drinking water supplies.

The sampling plan will test water taken from more than 300 public water supplies (PWS) with elevated potential for contamination, based on proximity to common sources of PFAS, such as military bases, fire training sites, landfills, and manufacturing facilities. The sampling plan will begin collecting information in May 2019, and the first planned phase will last approximately one year.

"Addressing PFAS in drinking water is one of the top priorities for DEP," said DEP Secretary Patrick McDonnell. "DEP is taking unprecedented steps to address PFAS, including beginning the process to set a Maximum Contaminant Level for the first time, and this sampling plan will shed light on the extent of PFAS contamination in Pennsylvania."

DEP announced that it is beginning the process of setting a Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL) for PFAS after the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) did not commit to doing so in February 2019. This will mark the first time that DEP has set an MCL rather than adopting standards set by the federal government, as it has with all other regulated drinking water contaminants.

"DEP will not hesitate to step up when the federal government fails to," said McDonnell.

The sampling plan will be discussed at the next PFAS Action Team meeting, scheduled for April 15, 2019, at the Abington Senior High School. Governor Tom Wolf created the PFAS Action Team in September 2018 to address PFAS contaminants across the commonwealth and protect Pennsylvania residents.

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## **DEP Announces PFAS Sampling Plan to Identify Possible Water Contamination**

(continued)

The sampling plan will not be the first time that Pennsylvania PWSs will have been tested for PFAS. In 2012 EPA had sample results collected from 175 systems under the “unregulated contaminant monitoring rule” (UCMR) which collects data on chemicals suspected to be present in water, but do not have set regulations. In the third iteration of the UCMR, EPA sampled for six PFAS chemicals, including PFOS and PFOA. These chemicals now have an EPA health advisory limit of 70 parts per trillion (ppt). In Pennsylvania, this sampling included some of the largest systems, including Philadelphia and Pittsburgh, both of which were found to be below the 70 ppt level.

More information on PFAS in Pennsylvania can be found here [www.dep.pa.gov/pfcs](http://www.dep.pa.gov/pfcs).

Source: Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)

## **DEP Will Soon Begin Control Work for Black Flies**

The Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) will begin both aerial and backpack spraying on roughly 1,700 stream miles in 35 Pennsylvania counties to control black flies.

The first aerial spraying, dependent on weather and stream flow, could take place on the Schuylkill River and several of its tributaries within the week. Other waterways will be treated as stream levels drop and weather conditions allow.

“As warmer weather returns, black flies are a pest that can inundate folks seeking outdoor recreation, especially around rivers and streams,” said DEP Secretary Patrick McDonnell. “Using environmentally compatible methods, this annual initiative reduces this nuisance so that Pennsylvanians can enjoy our natural resources.”

This year, 48 rivers and streams spanning more than 1,700 miles will be monitored and treated as needed. Spraying activities will be performed both by helicopter and ground crews. The frequency will depend upon weather and biological conditions. Treatments cannot occur during periods of heavy rain or when water levels are high as these conditions lower the effectiveness of the treatment as well as significantly increase the cost of the control operations.

DEP uses Bti, a naturally occurring bacterium, to treat the larval stage of four specific human pest black fly species. This bacterium degrades quickly in the environment and does not harm the aquatic ecosystem, birds, or other insects.

DEP notifies county and local emergency management officials prior to any spraying activity. Helicopters can be seen flying over waterways and ground crews using backpack sprayers off bridges and wading in streams conducting control operations on behalf of DEP’s Black Fly Suppression Program. Anyone concerned at the sight of a helicopter or ground personnel is encouraged to call their county emergency management office to verify that a black fly treatment is taking place in their area on that day.

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## **DEP Will Soon Begin Control Work for Black Flies (continued)**

Below is a list of participating counties and the waterways in each of them that will be sprayed for black flies:

### **Adams**

Conewago Creek

### **Armstrong**

Allegheny River

Kiskiminetas River

Mahoning Creek

Redbank Creek

### **Berks**

Manatawny Creek

Schuylkill River

### **Bradford**

Chemung River

North Branch Susquehanna River

### **Bucks**

Delaware River

Tohickon Creek

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**DEP Will Soon Begin Control Work for Black Flies  
(continued)**

**Chester**

Brandywine Creek

Octoraro Creek

Schuylkill River

French Creek

**Clarion**

Allegheny River

Clarion River

Redbank Creek

**Clinton**

West Branch Susquehanna River

Bald Eagle Creek

**Columbia**

Fishing Creek

North Branch Susquehanna River

**Cumberland**

Conodoguinet Creek

Susquehanna River

Yellow Breeches Creek

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**DEP Will Soon Begin Control Work for Black Flies  
(continued)**

**Dauphin**

Juniata River  
Mahantango Creek  
Susquehanna River  
Swatara Creek

**Elk**

Clarion River

**Fayette**

Youghiogheny River

**Forest**

Allegheny River  
Clarion River  
Tionesta Creek

**Huntingdon**

Aughwick Creek  
Frankstown Branch Juniata River  
Juniata River

**Indiana**

Conemaugh River  
Kiskiminetas River

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**DEP Will Soon Begin Control Work for Black Flies  
(continued)**

**Juniata**

Juniata River

Susquehanna River

Tuscarora Creek

**Lawrence**

Connoquenessing Creek

Neshannock Creek

Slippery Rock Creek

**Lehigh**

Lehigh River

**Luzerne**

North Branch Susquehanna River

**Lycoming**

Loyalsock Creek

Pine Creek

West Branch Susquehanna River

**Mifflin**

Juniata River

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**DEP Will Soon Begin Control Work for Black Flies  
(continued)**

**Montgomery**

Manatawny Creek  
Perkiomen Creek

**Northampton**

Delaware River  
Lehigh River

**Perry**

Juniata River  
Sherman Creek  
Susquehanna River

**Schuylkill**

Schuylkill River

**Snyder**

Middle Creek  
Penns Creek  
Susquehanna River

**Union**

Penns Creek  
West Branch Susquehanna River

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**DEP Will Soon Begin Control Work for Black Flies  
(continued)**

**Venango**

Allegheny River  
French Creek  
Oil Creek  
Sandy Creek  
Sugar Creek

**Warren**

Allegheny River  
Brokenstraw Creek  
Conewango Creek

**Westmoreland**

Conemaugh River  
Kiskiminetas River  
Loyalhanna Creek  
Youghiogheny River

**Wyoming**

North Branch Susquehanna River  
Tunkhannock Creek

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**DEP Will Soon Begin Control Work for Black Flies  
(continued)**

**York**

Conewago Creek

Susquehanna River

Yellow Breeches Creek

For more information on Pennsylvania's Black Fly Suppression Program, visit DEP's website

Source: The Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)

## **EPA, DNREC, DHSS sign partnership agreement With Delaware State University to enhance environmental stewardship**

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Delaware State University signed a renewed memorandum of understanding (MOU) to continue to work together to enhance research, teaching, outreach, career development, and stewardship in the environmental sciences at the university.

Also joining in the MOU were the Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control (DNREC) and the Delaware Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS).

“EPA has a long history of partnership with Delaware State University, and the Trump Administration is pleased to build on that success today,” **said EPA Regional Administrator Cosmo Servidio**. “This partnership will link education, outreach and hands-on work experience to strengthen interest in environmental careers and encourage environmentalism. The partnership also strives to ensure that careers in science reflect the diversity of the communities we serve and our nation as a whole.”

The MOU was signed at a campus ceremony today to formalize the partnership.

“This partnership is consistent with our top priority of student success as it will expand the inroads to career possibilities for our graduates in the environmental-related professions,” **said Delaware State University President Wilma Mishoe**. “This agreement also aligns well with the University’s Core Value of ‘Community’ as it will also promote a heightened consciousness among our students of their individual responsibilities to protect the environment.”

“Today, we are continuing a partnership that unites our three government agencies with Delaware State University to work toward the common goal of providing broader opportunities for students in environmental science, public health, and related fields,” **said DNREC Secretary Shawn M. Garvin**. “This partnership also gives us the opportunity to promote talent development and recruitment of students to form the next generation of our environmental workforce.”

“We are excited about the potential of this partnership in developing the public health employees of the future, whether in state government or in the private or nonprofit sectors,” **said DHSS Secretary Dr. Kara Odom Walker**, a board-certified family physician. “Plus, we look forward to strengthening our existing relationship with Delaware State University as we further community initiatives across our state that will help us build a stronger and healthier Delaware.”

Building on the success of the original MOU signed in 2012, the renewed MOU aims to:

- \* Promote student recruitment, internships, career development and employment in agricultural and environmental sciences, public health and related fields;
- \* Enhance professional development between partners;
- \* Support the enhancement of DSU’s environmental and public health sciences curriculum;
- Enhance the involvement in sustainable environmental and public health initiatives within the DSU campus community and surrounding off-campus communities;

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**EPA, DNREC, DHSS sign partnership agreement  
With Delaware State University to enhance environmental stewardship  
(continued)**

- \* Support capacity-building efforts directed to increase DSU's participation in federal programs at EPA and state programs at DNREC and DHSS; and
- \* Coordinate summer environmental programs for students from DSU and local high schools.

The MOU is part of EPA's Minority Academic Institutions Program, which was created to increase opportunities for Minority Academic Institutions to participate in federal programs. EPA works with these schools to increase participation in ways that will strengthen them by promoting faculty development, increasing institutional capacity, and fully developing the diverse talent pool that constitutes our nation.

For more information about EPA's Minority Academic Institutions Program, visit:  
[https://intranet.epa.gov/r3intran/ocr/minority\\_institutions.html](https://intranet.epa.gov/r3intran/ocr/minority_institutions.html)

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

## **Pennsylvania Releases State Climate Action Plan, Join U.S. Climate Alliance**

Governor Tom Wolf was joined by Representative Steve McCarter, Senator Steve Santarsiero, Senator Jay Costa, Representative Frank Dermody, Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Secretary Patrick McDonnell, Department of Conservation and Natural Resources Secretary Cindy Adams Dunn, and members of the Climate Caucus to announce Pennsylvania's membership in the U.S. Climate Alliance and release the state's new climate action plan.

"We've seen lately even more evidence that there is a need for leadership on climate change. For that reason, Pennsylvania will join the U.S. Climate Alliance, a bipartisan coalition of 24 governors, representing over half of the U.S. population to work to implement policies that uphold the commitments our nation made in the Paris Agreement," said Governor Wolf. "With the federal government turning its back on science and the environment, I am proud to join with states that are leading the way towards new climate solutions, and taking concrete actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. States like Pennsylvania must take action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and protect our communities, economies, infrastructures, and environments from the risks of a warming climate."

The United States Climate Alliance is a bipartisan coalition of governors committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Led by state governments, the alliance facilitates state cooperation to accelerate the deployment of climate solutions to help each state achieve its climate goals.

"I applaud the efforts of the governor and his administration to address the impacts of climate change in the commonwealth head on," said Rep. McCarter. "The Pennsylvania Climate Caucus stands ready to help in any way to advance policy and legislation to meet what is surely humanity's greatest challenge here in Pennsylvania and across the globe."

"When future generations of Pennsylvanians look back at this critical moment in history, I want them to know they were not abandoned," Sen. Santarsiero said. "Entering into the U.S. Climate Alliance and implementing the Climate Action Plan sends a clear message that Pennsylvania is serious about addressing climate change."

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## **Pennsylvania Releases State Climate Action Plan, Join U.S. Climate Alliance (continued)**

In January 2019, Governor Wolf signed an executive order to set Pennsylvania's first statewide climate goals, aiming to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 26 percent by 2025 and 80 percent by 2050, compared with 2005 levels. The executive order also established the Green Government Council to ensure that state government offices lead by example to help achieve these goals.

The Pennsylvania Climate Action Plan 2018 is the new state climate plan developed by DEP and state agency partners with recommendations for government leaders, businesses, and citizens to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to a changing climate.

The plan describes over 100 actions, 15 of which DEP and partners analyzed quantitatively for potential greenhouse gas emissions reduction. The analysis showed that just those 15 actions, such as increasing renewable energy, incentivizing energy efficient buildings, and increasing the use of electric vehicles, would reduce emissions 21 percent by 2025. Any combination of the 85 additional actions would likely achieve even more emissions reductions.

"Perhaps the biggest recommendation of the Climate Action Plan is that a team effort is needed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in Pennsylvania," said DEP Secretary Patrick McDonnell. "Government leaders must lead by example, and businesses, farms, community organizations, and citizens can all make a difference to fight climate change."

"Trees and forests play an important role absorbing carbon dioxide and reducing greenhouse gas emissions," DCNR Secretary Cindy Adams Dunn said. "We're leading the way to a more resilient and sustainable Pennsylvania by managing forests in new ways, reforesting abandoned mine lands, and planting stream buffers to increase carbon storage."

Pennsylvania Climate Action Plan 2018 marks 10 years since state law first required the DEP to develop a climate plan and periodic updates. It's the third update to the first plan, which was published in 2009.

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The Climate Caucus is a bipartisan discussion forum for legislators from both chambers and both sides of the aisle to address all manner of issues relating to climate change in Pennsylvania, including jobs, industry, manufacturing, clean air, clean water, specific regional impacts, and others.

For more information on the Pennsylvania Climate Action Plan 2018, visit [DEP.pa.gov/Climate](http://DEP.pa.gov/Climate).

Source: Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)

## **2019 River Sweep**

### **Saturday, June 15, 2019**

### **History of the Ohio River Sweep**

Since 1989, River Sweep has been organized by the Ohio River Valley Water Sanitation Commission, an interstate water pollution agency for the Ohio River Valley, along with environmental protection and natural resource agencies from Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Kentucky, West Virginia, and Pennsylvania.

In 1990 The Allegheny County Sportsmen's League (ACSL) decided that since the Ohio River is formed by the Monongahela and the Allegheny Rivers the member clubs of the ACSL could band together and clean those river banks. Together with the PA DEP we have collected many tons of debris from the river banks.

Later the Beaver and Youghiogheny rivers and their tributaries were added to the task.

The River Sweep is the largest organized volunteer river cleanup effort in the country, winding through Pennsylvania, Ohio, Kentucky, Indiana, West Virginia and Illinois, covering more than 2,400 miles of shoreline.

2019 marks the 29th year of the ACSL's involvement. Let's hope that the next generation of ACSL member clubs will continue this excellent project.