

# Conservation Committee Report

Volume 10 Issue 6

By Jack Walters, ACSL Conservation Chair

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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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## Phosphate Detergent Ban Expanded to Help Improve Water Quality

Gov. Rendell this week signed legislation sponsored by Sen. Mike Brubaker (R-Lancaster) to expand the ban on phosphate detergents statewide to improve water quality.

“Pennsylvania is part of the multi-state Chesapeake 2000 agreement to remove the Chesapeake Bay from the federal list of impaired waters by 2010,” Sen. Brubaker said, noting that under the agreement, the state must reduce its levels of nitrogen going into waterways by 34 percent, phosphorus by 31 percent, and sediment by 11 percent. These reductions are required by both point sources,

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## Support for PA Fair Share For Clean Water Plan Grows, New Website Open

The [PA Fair Share for Clean Water Coalition](#) this week announced the number of supporting organizations for the Pa Fair Share for Clean Water Plan has grown to 25.

The original groups: Pennsylvania Farm Bureau, Pennsylvania Municipal Authorities Association, Pennsylvania Association of Conservation Districts, Pennsylvania Builders Association and the Chesapeake Bay Foundation-- have grown to include the:

Pennsylvania Association of Realtors, PA Federation of Sportsmen Clubs, PA State Association of Township Supervisors, County Commissioners Assoc of PA, PA State Assoc. of Boroughs, PA Landscape and Nursery Association, Juniata Valley Audubon, American Farmland Trust, Environmental Defense

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## Phosphate Detergent Ban (continued)

such as sewage treatment facilities, and nonpoint sources, including farmland and stormwater runoff.

“More often than not, the reductions required by wastewater treatment plants require large capital investments to install nutrient reduction technology,” Sen. Brubaker said.

However, Sen. Brubaker continued, approximately seven to 12 percent of the phosphorus entering such a plant comes from automatic dishwashing detergents.

The new law requires that the phosphate in household automatic dishwashing detergents be reduced from 8.7 percent by weight as allowed under current law to 0.5 percent by weight by July 1, 2010. This is consistent with the detergent industry’s goal to reduce phosphate in these detergents nationwide on the same timeline, which provides time to develop formulas that meet consumer satisfaction for performance and allows for a smooth transition to the new standard.

“Phasing out the level of phosphate in these detergents will help our communities make progress toward their phosphate reduction goals in a small but significant way that is also cost-effective,” Sen. Brubaker said, adding that a similar phase-out has already occurred in liquid hand dish detergents and laundry detergents. “In fact, calculations show that the elimination of phosphorus from automatic dishwashing detergents will reduce total chemical and sludge costs by 23.8 percent, resulting in an average savings for Pennsylvania of about \$7 million each year.”

“Passage of this legislation lets every household become part of the solution to reducing pollution going into Pennsylvania’s waterways and we want to thank Senator Brubaker for his leadership on this issue,” said Matthew Ehrhart, Executive Director of the Pennsylvania Office of the Chesapeake Bay Foundation. “Environmental groups, wastewater plant operators, farmers, county conservation districts and builders are working together to support fair share efforts to reduce pollution and sediment runoff and we welcome leadership from the state and federal government to help with these efforts.”

A coalition of environmental, farm, businesses and municipal groups developed the [PA Fair Share for Clean Water Plan](#) to help wastewater plant ratepayers and farmers finance improvements needed to address Chesapeake Bay and statewide water quality improvement mandates while preserving economic opportunity for future homeowners and businesses.

The groups include: PA Municipal Authorities Association, PA Farm Bureau, PA Builders Association, PA Association of Conservation Districts and the Chesapeake Bay Foundation. In addition, the PA Association of Realtors, the Federation of Sportsmen’s Clubs, local government and other groups have voiced their support for the plan.

The seven-year plan includes \$500 million to help finance a portion of the upgrades needed by 184 wastewater treatment plants in the region and \$390 million to help farmers install conservation practices.

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## Phosphate Detergent Ban (continued)

“I am very pleased that my colleagues also recognized the value of this measure and overwhelmingly supported [Senate Bill 1017](#) as it moved through the legislative process,” Sen. Brubaker said. “As a member of the Chesapeake Bay Commission and part of the Lancaster County Task Force on the Chesapeake Bay Strategy, I will continue to monitor this situation and to work with stakeholders to develop ideas that will help Pennsylvania address its role in the Strategy.”

Senate Bill 1017 is now Act 15.

For more information on the Pennsylvania Fair Share Plan for Clean Water, visit the [Fair Share Plan webpage](#).

Source: PA Environment Digest

## Support for PA Fair Share For Clean Water Plan Grows (continued)

Fund, Middletown Twp. Land Conservancy, Lower Susquehanna Riverkeeper, Northumberland Co. Conservation District, Brubaker Farms, Lancaster Farmland Trust, Tioga County Conservation District, Chester County Economic Development Council, Tioga County Concerned Citizens Committee, Inc., PA Project Grass, and the GreenTreks Network, Inc.

The Coalition also announced the opening of the [www.PaFairSharePlan.org](http://www.PaFairSharePlan.org) website where visitors can find background information on the proposal, a list of supporting organizations and a guide to upcoming meetings on infrastructure issues.

The website also shows how interested individuals can contact their House and Senate member as well as Gov. Rendell to urge them to support the Fair Share Plan.

The Pennsylvania Fair Share for Clean Water Plan proposes to invest \$500 million to help finance the upgrades needed by wastewater plants to meet the new nutrient reduction standards and \$390 million to help farmers install conservation practices over seven years. In both cases, local wastewater system ratepayers and farmers would shoulder half the costs of the upgrades and practices.

The proposal also calls for improvements to the state's Nutrient Credit Trading Program that will help reduce the costs of complying with these new limits by promoting wastewater plant-farmer cooperation on projects to reduce nutrients and allow for future growth and development.

Specifically for the FY 2008-09 state budget year, the Fair Share Plan would invest \$170 million in 2008-09 in several ways to reduce the financial burden on ratepayers and farms:

- \$100 million to help wastewater plants finance required improvements;
- \$50 million in direct cost share aid to farmers to install conservation practices (\$35 million for REAP farm tax credits and \$15 million in cost share grants);
- \$10 million to county conservation district to expand technical assistance to farmers;
- \$10 million to restore cuts to the Department of Agriculture budget in farm programs; and
- Proposes reforms to the state's nutrient credit trading program that will help to make it a viable alternative to provide for both environmental improvements to the Bay and sufficient future sewage capacity for new development.

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**Support for PA Fair Share For Clean Water Plan Grows**  
**(continued)**

For more information on the PA Fair Share for Clean Water Plan, visit [www.PaFairSharePlan.org](http://www.PaFairSharePlan.org) .

Video Blog: [Remarks By Coalition Partners on the Fair Share Clean Water Plan](#)

Video Blog: [Sen. Brubaker's Remarks on Fair Share Plan](#)

Links: [Coalition Proposes Fair Share Clean Water Funding Plan](#),

[Original Announcement](#)

[16,000 Miles of Polluted Streams Add Urgency to Call for Clean Water Funding](#)

[CBF, Other Groups Ask State to Be a Partner in Chesapeake Bay Cleanup Plan](#)

[40,000 More Acres of Corn, Soybeans Increase Conservation Needs](#)

[Brubaker, Musto Say Senate Infrastructure Bill Should Be Expanded](#)

[New Federal Farm Bill Promises Aid, But PA Farmers Need \\$600 M for Cleanup](#)

[Rep. Perry, 37 Co-Sponsors Introduce Chesapeake Bay Nutrient Reduction Plan](#)

Source: PA Environment Digest

**DEP SECRETARY REMINDS PENNSYLVANIANS TO STAY OUT OF MINES, QUARRIES****'Stay Out – Stay Alive' Program Highlights Dangers of Active, Abandoned Mines**

The idle equipment, steep cliffs, serene pools of water, and mysterious shaft openings of active and abandoned mines can be alluring for adventure seekers, but many times are deadly, according to Department of Environmental Protection Secretary Kathleen A. McGinty.

The secretary visited an abandoned strip mine in Joffre today that is less than 10 feet from the Pan Handle Trail—a popular recreation spot in the community—to warn residents to stay out of mines, quarries and abandoned mine lands because of the many dangers these sites can hold.

“There are thousands of abandoned sites just like this across Pennsylvania with steep cliffs, hidden underground mine openings and dangerous water bodies,” said McGinty. “Mines are not safe places for swimming, exploring or off-road riding. When you venture into these sites, you put your life and the lives of emergency personnel who conduct the search and rescue operations at risk.”

McGinty’s remarks kicked off the 2008 “Stay Out - Stay Alive” campaign to warn people about the dangers of trespassing in mines and quarries.

Since 2000, 31 people have died trespassing in mines and quarries in 19 Pennsylvania counties. The U.S. Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) reports that 249 people have died nationally during that same period.

To combat this problem, DEP has partnered with MSHA, other mining states and the mining industry to promote the Stay Out - Stay Alive program.

“Pennsylvania has been blessed with great mineral resources, and mining has been a cornerstone of our economy for more than 200 years, but the unregulated mining practices of the past have left us with one-quarter million acres of dangerous and deadly mine lands,” said McGinty. “Every year we hear of more tragic accidents: swimmers drowning in abandoned water-filled pits where water temperatures drop dramatically just below the surface; people entering abandoned mines or dilapidated structures and getting lost or trapped; and all-terrain vehicle riders breaking through brush on the crest of an old mine site and rolling down a hillside.

“Be safe this summer. Mines and quarries are not playgrounds; they can kill you. Stay out and stay alive.”

DEP recently began airing 30-second radio and television messages across the state as part the campaign to underscore the dangers of abandoned mine sites and quarries. The department conducts educational programs for community groups and distributes Stay Out - Stay Alive information to those receiving hunting and fishing licenses through the Pennsylvania Game Commission and the Fish and Boat Commission. The Department of Conservation and Natural Resources also distributes Stay Out – Stay Alive information with all off-road vehicle and snowmobile registrations and to users of state parks and forests. Additionally, DEP

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**DEP SECRETARY REMINDS PENNSYLVANIANS TO STAY OUT OF MINES, QUARRIES****(continued)**

works with state and local police and emergency responders to identify and limit access to dangerous sites. Pennsylvania has the largest abandoned mine lands problem in the country. Approximately 1 million Pennsylvanians live within one mile of a dangerous abandoned mine, while active mining operations are found in all but one of Pennsylvania's 67 counties.

Since 2003, Governor Edward G. Rendell has committed more than \$145 million to 240 abandoned mine reclamation projects across Pennsylvania, turning more than 6,100 acres of dangerous wasteland into opportunities for economic growth and improved quality of life.

The \$625 million Growing Greener II initiative allocates \$60 million to clean up rivers and streams affected by abandoned acid mine drainage and reclaim dangerous sites.

Governor Rendell was instrumental in persuading Congress to reauthorize the Abandoned Mine Lands Fund for another 15 years. The federal program, which is funded by a tax on modern mining activities, will direct \$27.6 million to Pennsylvania during 2008 to reclaim abandoned coal mines.

For more information on abandoned mine reclamation, or to view the public service announcement, visit [www.depweb.state.pa.us](http://www.depweb.state.pa.us), keyword: Stay Out Stay Alive. ###

Source: PA DEP

**FIRST PHASE OF IMPROVEMENTS TO POINT STATE PARK ARE COMPLETE****23 Acres of Park Now Open to Public**

The public will now be able to enjoy the improvements at Point State Park, including the City Side Lawn area, now that the first phase of the multi-million dollar effort has been completed.

The Governor said the initial phase of the improvement plan took a year to complete at a cost of \$7.1 million.

“Point State Park is a tremendous part of the city’s efforts to use its green spaces and its connection to its rivers as a tool in its renaissance,” Governor Rendell said. “With these and additional improvements to come, the park, once at the center of river travel, trade and even wars throughout the early history of Pittsburgh, is now a stunning waterfront gathering spot that will add to the daily lives of countless people who live and work in the city, as well as those who visit this unique, historic place.”

Improvements to the park are being completed in several phases. New features at the park after the first phase of improvements include:

- A new lawn area on the city side of the park for daily recreational uses and performances;
- Landscaping, benches, pathways and lighting;
- New irrigation, drainage and electrical systems;
- Electric and water hookups for vendors at events;
- A new stage pad; and renovations to the reflecting pool mechanical systems.

“The facelift at Point State Park is a symbol of the transformation of the Pittsburgh region, and a gift from the commonwealth as residents reflect on the past, celebrate the city’s 250th anniversary, and imagine what the future can be,” the Governor said.

The work on the first phase of the project was begun in the fall of 2006; funding came from the state’s capital budget.

“Supported by a combination of state investments and business and private donations, additional phases of work to be done at Point State Park will be upgrades to the Monongahela and Allegheny promenades along the wharfs to include water landings and marine tie ups; installations that interpret the history, indigenous cultures and natural resources of the park; trail connections; and a major overhaul of the city’s iconic fountain in the park,” said DCNR Secretary Michael DiBerardinis.

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**FIRST PHASE OF IMPROVEMENTS TO POINT STATE PARK ARE COMPLETE****(continued)**

Twenty three acres of the park are now open. Currently underway on the water side of the park, in the area known as the Woodlands, is the planting of 7,000 native trees and shrubs that is consistent with the original 1950s design for the park.

An additional \$25 million in state capital budget funds will be allocated for work at the park, which will be added to private and foundation support for the work.

Major partners in the planned improvements to Point State Park include the City of Pittsburgh, Allegheny County, Pittsburgh 250 Commission and Riverlife, and the Allegheny Conference on Community Development.

Point State Park is owned by the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources and is managed and maintained by the City of Pittsburgh. An estimated 3 million people visit Point State Park each year.

For more information on Point State Park, visit [www.dcnr.state.pa.us](http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us) and choose "Find a Park."

Source: PA DCNR

## 2008 RIVER SWEEP

**2008 marks the twentieth consecutive year for the River Sweep.**

**The River Sweep will be held Saturday, June 21, 2008.**

### Allegheny County

#### Southside Riverfront Park

Follow East Carson Street to the Southside. Turn onto 18th Street. Park is at the end of 18th Street.

#### Washington's Landing

Take Rt. 28 to the 31st Street Bridge. Turn onto River Road. Off River Road, turn left onto the 30th Street Ramp. Follow Waterfront Drive. Meet at DEP Building at 400 Waterfront Drive.

#### Crane Avenue, South Hills

Liberty Tunnels to Route 51 North. Go approximately 0.2 miles and make Left onto

Crane Avenue. Go under cement overpass. Go -100 yards and make Left into wooden- railed parking lot. Additional parking can be found at Brashear School on right up road.

#### Glenwillard

From Airport, take Beers School/Narrows Run Road from Airport -turn left onto Rt. 51 North at light. Follow Rt. 51 North to Glenwillard. Turn right at Riverview Road (by stone monument and across from Crescent Township Volunteer Co.). Go 1/10th mile and turn left under tunnel. Turn right at end of tunnel into boat club.

From North, take Rt. 51 South to Glenwillard. Turn left onto Riverview Road (by stone monument). Go 1/10<sup>th</sup> mile and turn left under tunnel. Turn right at end of tunnel into boat club.

#### Natrona Heights

From Rt. 28, take exit 15 (Natrona Heights) .Right on to Burtner Road. At the first stop sign, turn right on Spring Hill Road. At the second stop sign go straight to the red light. Go straight across and go down Spring Hill Road.

Go thru another stop sign, at second stop sign, go across railroad tracks to River Ave. Go around the bend to the next stop sign. Make a left onto Veterans' Way at Len's Auto Body. Look for signs and red, white and blue balloons.