

# Conservation Committee Report

Volume 8 Issue 8

By Jack Walters, ACSL Conservation Chair

August 2006



## 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:***

**HUMAN CASES OF  
WEST NILE VIRUS  
THIS YEAR IN  
PENNSYLVANIA  
Page 5**

**USDA TO MANAGE  
AND CONTROL  
INVASIVE SPECIES  
Page 7**

## Federal Agencies Collaborate to Expedite Construction of Alaska Natural Gas Pipeline

### Agreement Establishes Framework for Increasing Energy Security

The U.S. Department of Energy and fourteen other federal departments and agencies have signed an agreement to expedite the permitting and construction of the Alaska Natural Gas Pipeline which, when operational, will substantially increase domestic natural gas supply and advance the Administration's energy security policy. The agreement signals the U.S. government's commitment to expedite the federal permitting processes for the Alaska Natural Gas Pipeline and establishes a project management framework for cooperation among participating agencies to reduce bureaucratic delays in construction of the pipeline and delivery of natural gas to consumers.

(continued on page 2)

## GOVERNOR RENDELL ANNOUNCES BEAVER COUNTY SITE FOR 'SMALL WIND ENERGY PROJECT'

### 15 Small Wind Turbines for Public Areas Statewide to Promote Alternative Energy

Governor Edward G. Rendell said people who live in 15 Pennsylvania counties will soon get a first-hand look at the benefits of wind energy now that schools, local government buildings and other public facilities have been approved to receive free, small wind turbines.

"Alternative energy, especially wind energy, is soaring to new heights in Pennsylvania," Governor Rendell said of the project, which is funded through a grant from the Pennsylvania Energy Development Authority. "This Small Wind Energy Project will bring these new sources of power into peoples' daily lives.

(continued on page 3)

## Federal Agencies Collaborate to Expedite Construction of Alaska Natural Gas Pipeline

(continued)

"We need to do all we can to increase our domestic supply of energy – including natural gas – and the Alaska Natural Gas Pipeline will help us do that," Secretary Bodman said. "Alaska's North Slope is a valuable natural resource that has tremendous potential to provide a significant portion of our nation's natural gas needs to help heat homes, and build industry. I appreciate the coordinated effort of all of the federal agencies who are working together to help make the pipeline a reality."

The Federal Interagency Memorandum of Understanding for the Alaska Natural Gas Transportation Project was signed by senior executives from fifteen federal organizations. It defines responsibilities related to the approval of the pipeline project and provides for streamlined regulatory and environmental processes and reviews/approvals for the giant undertaking.

The pipeline is expected to supply about 10 percent of future U.S. natural gas demand. When the Alaska pipeline is fully operational, it will carry 4 billion cubic feet of natural gas each day. Natural gas serves six of every 10 American households, about 62 million homes, and is used to generate about 16 percent of the nation's electric power. Natural gas is also indispensable as a feedstock for fertilizer and chemical manufacturers. In recent years, rising demand and limited increases in supply have resulted in high natural gas prices that affected residential and industrial users across the economy.

Alaska Governor Frank Murkowski has called a second special session of the State Legislature to begin on July 12th to consider and pass a new oil and gas tax structure, amendments to the Stranded Gas Act, and the gas pipeline contract. Once the gas transportation contract and related legislation are passed by the Alaska State Legislature, the State of Alaska will join with industry to form a corporate entity that will build the pipeline.

The Alaska Natural Gas Pipeline Act, enacted on October 13, 2004, established the expedited federal review of a natural gas transportation project that would carry Alaska natural gas to the border of Alaska and Canada. In accordance with the Act, President Bush nominated former Alaska State Senator Drue Pearce as Federal Coordinator for Alaska Natural Gas Transportation Projects. Until her confirmation, the position's temporary authority is vested with the Secretary of Energy.

The MOU was signed by the Departments of Energy, Agriculture, Commerce, Defense, Homeland Security, Interior, Labor, State, Transportation, Treasury, and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, Council on Environmental Quality, Environmental Protection Agency, Federal Inspector for Alaska Natural Gas Transportation Projects, and the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission.

Source: DOE

**GOVERNOR RENDELL ANNOUNCES BEAVER COUNTY SITE FOR 'SMALL WIND ENERGY PROJECT'**

(continued)

“Pennsylvania is a leader in the country’s efforts to build a clean and secure energy future, and this project to bring alternative energy to the grassroots level will propel the emerging markets even further.”

Brought back to life by Governor Rendell after years of inactivity, PEDA recently awarded a \$193,000 grant to Southwest Windpower to place 15 small, advanced-technology wind turbines in highly visible locations at schools, local government buildings and other public facilities across the state.

Each of the turbines will generate enough electricity to power a typical residence --- and get people thinking about adopting alternative energy sources in their homes and businesses.

“America needs to create its own sources of energy and find ways to power our future without sacrificing the quality of our environment,” Environmental Protection Secretary Kathleen A. McGinty said in announcing Economy Borough as one of the turbine recipients. “The Small Wind Energy Project is another step along the path to a clean and secure energy future for Pennsylvanians.”

Economy’s wind turbine will be located in the middle of 35 acres of Economy Borough-owned property, where three office buildings, a road department garage, a police building, and the park and ball fields are located. The turbine will be in full view of anyone driving through the area.

Successful applicants are receiving one of the Southwest Windpower small-scale wind systems and basic installation at no charge. The wind energy systems will be mounted in the ground on 35-foot towers and will generate 1.8 kilowatts of electricity each, enough to meet the needs of a typical home. The units are valued at \$10,000 each.

The sites selected are spread across the commonwealth in diverse demographic areas. Each grant application was required to include plans for educational outreach.

The recipients include the Bayfront Center for Maritime Studies in Erie, where students will help craft educational activities, and rural Troy Township, Bradford County, where the turbine at the municipal building will be one of the first alternative energy projects in the area. A full list of the 15 sites is attached to the end of this release.

Pennsylvania is a leader in wind production east of the Mississippi, with 153 megawatts that provide enough clean energy to power 70,000 homes. The growth potential is significant. There are more than 5,000 megawatts of untapped wind power in the state, with the potential to generate 45 billion kilowatt-hours annually, or enough to power more than 5 million homes.

Pennsylvania’s Alternative Energy Portfolio Standard, one of the most progressive in the nation, ensures that 18 percent of all retail electricity generated by 2020 comes from clean, efficient and advanced resources. The Alternative Energy Portfolio Standard will create the demand for more than 3,000 megawatts of wind energy over the next 15 years.

(continued on page 4)

**GOVERNOR RENDELL ANNOUNCES BEAVER COUNTY SITE FOR  
'SMALL WIND ENERGY PROJECT'**

**(continued)**

Part of the demand for wind energy will be met through the efforts of Spanish wind-energy company Gamesa Corp., which chose to base its North American headquarters in Pennsylvania following a campaign spearheaded by Governor Rendell. Gamesa, the second largest wind energy company in the world, earlier this year increased its investment in the commonwealth to more than \$84 million, including manufacturing facilities in Bucks and Cambria counties. Gamesa will create as many as 1,000 jobs in Pennsylvania over five years.

The commonwealth also is central to growing solar and biofuel sectors. Pennsylvania's clean energy law mandates some 700 megawatts of electricity from solar photovoltaics by 2020, the second largest solar requirement in the country. Within the year, the state also could be the nation's leading producer of biodiesel with a projected 40 million gallons of annual production.

The growth potential of these sources, combined with Governor Rendell's strategic investments in cutting-edge projects, is drawing national and international attention.

Governor Rendell's energy plan includes transportation fuels, a key to developing energy security for Pennsylvania residents and businesses. Pennsylvanians now spend some \$30 billion per year on imported energy fuels. Instead of spending overseas, Governor Rendell is investing at home and putting Pennsylvanians to work.

Governor Rendell's "PennSecurity Fuels Initiative" will produce and use 900 million gallons annually of clean, domestic fuel --- an amount equivalent to what the state is expected to import from the Persian Gulf 10 years from now. The Governor is investing \$30 million over the next five years to build re-fueling and production infrastructure to support wide distribution of the alternative fuels.

Source: DEP

## HEALTH SECRETARY SAYS TESTS SHOW HUMAN CASES OF WEST NILE VIRUS THIS YEAR IN PENNSYLVANIA

State officials reported the first human case of West Nile Virus during 2006. The individual, a 43-year-old York County male, was hospitalized and released and has recovered.

State officials reported the second human case of West Nile Virus during 2006. The case involves a 42-year-old York County woman who was hospitalized but is now recovering at home.

State officials reported the third human case of West Nile Virus this year. This case involves a 47-year-old Lancaster County man. He has recovered from his symptoms.

“The fact we have seen human infections from West Nile reminds all of us that we should take precautions to help reduce the risk of illness,” Dr. Johnson said. “The chance of contracting West Nile virus from an infected mosquito is small, and your chances of becoming seriously ill are even smaller. However, it is important to keep in mind that all Pennsylvanians -- particularly older adults and people with compromised immune systems -- should take simple precautions to reduce their risk.” Secretary Johnson recommends these simple precautions to prevent mosquito bites, particularly for those most at risk:

- Make sure screens fit tightly over doors and windows to keep mosquitoes out of your home;
- 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); and
- Use insect repellents according to the manufacturer’s instructions. An effective repellent will contain DEET. Consult with a pediatrician or family physician if you have questions about the use of repellent on children, as repellent is not recommended for children under the age of two months. Two other insect repellants, Picaridin (KBR 3023) and oil of lemon eucalyptus [p-menthane 3,8-diol (PMD)], a plant based repellent, was tested against mosquitoes and provided protection similar to repellents with low concentrations of DEET.

Pennsylvanians also can reduce the risk of West Nile virus by eliminating the places where mosquitoes breed. Mosquitoes can breed in any puddle of water that lasts more than four days.

“The Department of Environmental Protection and our county partners are working hard to eliminate mosquitoes and mosquito breeding grounds in public areas, but we need homeowners help,” DEP Secretary Kathleen McGinty said. “For standing water on your property, remember this – dump it, drain it, treat it.”

McGinty suggests some simple steps that can be taken around the house:

- Dispose of tin cans, plastic containers, ceramic pots or similar water-holding containers that have collected on your property.
- Pay attention to discarded tires. Stagnant water in tires is where most mosquitoes breed.

(continued on page 6)

## HEALTH SECRETARY SAYS TESTS SHOW HUMAN CASES OF WEST NILE VIRUS THIS YEAR IN PENNSYLVANIA

(continued)

- Drill holes in the bottom of recycling containers left outdoors.
- Have clogged roof gutters cleaned every year, particularly if the leaves from surrounding trees have a tendency to plug up the drains. Roof gutters can produce millions of mosquitoes each season.
- Turn over plastic wading pools when not in use. Stagnant water in a wading pool becomes a place for mosquitoes to breed.
- Turn over wheelbarrows and don't let water stagnate in birdbaths. Both provide breeding habitats for domestic mosquitoes.
- Aerate ornamental pools or stock them with fish. Water gardens can become major mosquito producers if they are allowed to stagnate.
- Clean and chlorinate swimming pools not in use. A swimming pool left untended by a family on vacation for a month can produce enough mosquitoes to result in neighborhood-wide complaints. Mosquitoes may even breed in the water that collects on pool covers.
- Use landscaping to eliminate standing water that collects on your property. Mosquitoes may breed in any puddle that lasts for more than four days. For standing water that can't be eliminated, homeowners can buy Bti products at lawn and garden, outdoor supply, home improvement, and other stores. This naturally occurring bacteria kills mosquito larvae but is safe for people, pets, aquatic life and plants.

West Nile virus is spread to people and animals by infected mosquitoes. The virus can cause West Nile encephalitis, an inflammation of the brain. While anyone can contract the virus, older adults and people with compromised immune systems are at highest risk of developing the disease. People with mild infections of West Nile virus may experience fever, headache, body aches, skin rash and swollen lymph glands. People with more serious infections may experience high fever, headache, neck stiffness, stupor, disorientation, coma, tremors, occasional convulsions and paralysis. Dr. Johnson advises anyone with any of these symptoms to contact a doctor. There is no specific treatment for West Nile virus. While most people fully recover, in severe cases, hospitalization is needed. Pennsylvanians should presume that West Nile virus is present throughout the state and should take appropriate precautions.

In 2005 there were 25 human cases and two related deaths and four blood donors positive for WNV. In 2004 there were 15 cases of human West Nile virus and one blood donor detected in Pennsylvania, resulting in two fatalities. In 2003, West Nile virus was detected in 237 Pennsylvanians and contributed to the deaths of nine people. For more information about West Nile virus, including current test results for mosquitoes, birds and horses, visit the West Nile virus website at [www.westnile.state.pa.us](http://www.westnile.state.pa.us) or call the Department of Health at 1-877-PA HEALTH.

Source: DEP

## USDA AWARDS \$4.1 MILLION IN GRANTS TO MANAGE AND CONTROL INVASIVE SPECIES AFFECTING GRAZING LANDS

U.S. Department of Agriculture Under Secretary Mark Rey today announced the awarding of \$4.1 million to fund 27 projects in 20 states to manage and control invasive plants, animals or insects that adversely affect private and tribal grazing lands.

“These grants will develop and strengthen partnerships among private landowners, organizations and state and local governments to prevent the spread of invasive species on our nation’s valuable grazing lands,” Rey said. “Farmers and ranchers take great care of the land and by working together we can maintain this national treasure.”

Rey announced the grants in Powell County, Mont. The Powell County Weed Board, a grant recipient, received more than \$120,000 to help about 300 producers combat 18 invasive weeds in that county and parts of Missoula and Lewis and Clark counties within the Blackfoot Watershed.

Funding for the 27 grants was provided from USDA’s Natural Resources Conservation Service’s Conservation Technical Assistance Program through the Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative (GLCI). GLCI is a partnership of individuals and organizations whose objective is to maintain and improve the management, productivity and health of the nation’s privately owned grazing land.

This is the first year USDA has offered these grants. USDA received 89 applications from 25 states totaling more than \$20 million in requests. Twenty-seven grants, ranging from \$50,000 to \$300,000, were awarded to fund projects in 20 states.

Selected through national competition, the approved grants will fund one to three-year projects to control and manage invasive species. The grantees—state and local governments, tribes and non-governmental organizations—must provide at least 50 percent of the project cost with non-federal funds and/or in-kind contributions.

Approved projects will inventory, map, contain or eradicate invasive species affecting grazing lands on a local, watershed, state or regional basis. In another example, the Stillwater County Weed District in Montana will use integrated pest management—including biological, chemical and cultural techniques—to combat invasive weeds on 9,000 acres of grazing lands. Ninety-five landowners will benefit from this project.

Limited resource farmers and ranchers and federally-recognized Native American tribes also benefit from the grants. USDA will fund projects in eight states—Florida, Idaho, New Mexico, Oregon, South Dakota, Utah, West Virginia and Washington—totaling \$1.4 million to help limited resource farmers and ranchers

(continued on page 8)

**USDA AWARDS \$4.1 MILLION IN GRANTS TO MANAGE AND CONTROL  
INVASIVE SPECIES AFFECTING GRAZING LANDS**

(continued)

and tribes control and manage invasive species. For example, the Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation in Washington will develop and implement an Integrated Weed Management Plan for the reservation's entire 1.2 million acres. The Seminole Tribe in Florida plans to track invasive species through a database linked to a geographic information system. The West Virginia State Conservation Agency and other partners will help 400 farmers, including many limited resource farmers, control multiflora rose and autumn olive, noxious weeds that infest their grazing lands.

A state listing of the GLCI grants (pdf) can be found at <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/glci/GLCI-tom.pdf>.

Additional information about the Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative can be found at <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/glci>.

Contact information:

Susan Fleming 202-720-6794

Terry Bish 202-720-5974

Source: USDA