

A.C.S.L. Conservation Report

By Jack Walters, Conservation Chair, A.C.S.L.

June 2005

Volume 7, Issue 6

Help Reauthorize The Abandoned Mine Reclamation Act!

On May 26, 2005, U.S. Rep. John Peterson submitted important legislation that will ensure that Pennsylvania's abandoned mine lands and polluted streams continue to receive the kind of attention they need. We have until September 30th to re-authorize the Abandoned Mine Reclamation Fund.

Information about Rep. Peterson's Bill:

H.R.2721 : To amend the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977 to reauthorize collection of reclamation fees, revise the abandoned mine reclamation program, promote remining, authorize the Office of Surface Mining to collect the black lung excise tax, and make sundry other changes.

Sponsor: Rep Peterson, John E. [PA-5] (introduced 5/26/2005) Cosponsors (16) Committees: House Resources Latest Major Action: 5/26/2005 Referred to House committee. Status: Referred to the
(continued on page 2)



We have until September 30th to re-authorize the Abandoned Mine Reclamation Fund.



God Bless America



STATE OFFICIALS REMIND PUBLIC OF PRECAUTIONS FOR WEST NILE VIRUS

Health Secretary Dr. Calvin B. Johnson, Environmental Protection Secretary Kathleen A. McGinty and Agriculture Secretary Dennis Wolff today reminded Pennsylvanians that it's the time of the year to start taking precautions against West Nile virus (WNV) and noted that efforts have already started to detect and control mosquitoes that carry West Nile virus. The three agencies are part of a multi-agency effort to help control WNV in Pennsylvania.

"With the recent warm weather, it's time for everyone to start thinking about West Nile virus," Dr. Johnson said. "People can protect themselves against West Nile virus by using insect repellent when they know that they will be in an area that could expose them to mosquito bites."

The Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) is coordinating the county-based mosquito surveillance and control portion of the multi-agency West Nile virus effort. DEP recently announced grants to counties to control mosquitoes that carry the virus. "DEP and its county partners have been working hard on an aggressive mosquito surveillance and control program to help us contain the virus in Pennsylvania," McGinty said. "Our experience is helping us target resources and ensure our field programs are even more effective. Residents still play an important role, too. People should continue to look for standing pools and puddles on their properties and remember:

'Dump it. Drain it. Treat it.' Mosquitoes breed in stagnant water, so get rid of standing water or treat it as soon as possible."

(continued on page 2)

**Help Reauthorize The Abandoned Mine
Reclamation Act!
(continued)**

House Committee on Resources.

Supporting letters from environmental organizations are needed. Send specific, non-generic letters supporting Rep. Peterson's H.R. 2721 to his office BY EMAIL to john.peterson@mail.house.gov.

Forward your letters of support for H.R. 2721 to Josh First at jfirst1044@aol.com. Josh will re-distribute them and make sure that all interested parties see them. Visit www.amrclearinghouse.org for more information, or contact Josh First by email or phone at 717 232-8335.

CONTACT: Josh First, jfirst1044@aol.com

Source: POWR

**WEST NILE VIRUS
(continued)**

If standing water cannot be removed, products that kill mosquito larvae are available at many lawn and garden, home improvement, hardware, and other retail stores. DEP and county staff use environmentally sensitive materials to control the mosquito population. To kill larvae, the predominant method of mosquito control, Bti and Bsph are used. These naturally occurring bacteria attack the digestive system of the mosquito larvae and have no effect on people, animals, plants or other insects. The other control product is an insect hormone, methoprene, which prevents mosquito larvae from developing into adults.

DEP and county coordinators use equipment called light traps, gravid traps and dippers to collect mosquitoes for surveillance purposes. During surveillance activities, officials search for immature (larvae and pupae) and adult mosquitoes. Once found, the mosquito species is identified and evaluated for WNV probability, population and geographic distribution. When large numbers of mosquitoes known to carry WNV are detected, they are controlled using a naturally occurring bacteria or mosquito growth hormone. Both these methods are harmless to humans and aquatic life. The Departments of Health and Agriculture also perform laboratory testing to determine if the virus is present in mosquitoes, animals and humans. "West Nile virus is a major concern for the agriculture community," Secretary Wolff said. "As the warm weather approaches, like all homeowners, farmers and other animal owners should eliminate all standing water from their properties and identify potential on-farm problem areas."

Wolff said that horses are especially susceptible to illness from WNV, and equine owners should consult their veterinarian about the two vaccines available. Pet owners can also talk to their veterinarian about repellants safe for domestic pets.

(continued on page 3)

WEST NILE VIRUS (continued)

As part of the state's WNV program, citizens are asked to report dead bird sightings so that officials can identify potential areas for enhanced surveillance. Pennsylvanians can report dead birds on-line at www.westnile.state.pa.us or by calling 1-877-PA-HEALTH. The West Nile Surveillance Program will collect up to five dead birds a week per county throughout the entire WNV season. Citizens can call 1-877-PA-HEALTH to find out if the dead bird they have sighted is appropriate for testing. If a bird is chosen for testing, citizens will be asked to deliver the bird to a centralized collection site.

Pennsylvanians can take a few simple steps around their homes to reduce the risk of WNV. Since mosquitoes breed in standing water, even a small bucket containing standing water for only four days can become home to many mosquitoes.

Tips to eliminate standing water include:

Dispose of tin cans, plastic containers, ceramic pots or similar water-holding containers that have accumulated on your property. Do not overlook containers that have become overgrown by aquatic vegetation.

Pay special attention to discarded tires on your property.

Drill holes in the bottom of recycling containers that are left outdoors. Drainage holes that are located on a container's sides allow them to collect enough water for mosquitoes to breed.

Clean roof gutters on an annual basis, particularly if the leaves from surrounding trees have a tendency to plug up the drains. Roof gutters are easily overlooked and can produce millions of mosquitoes each season. Turn over plastic wading pools when not in use. A wading pool becomes a mosquito producer if it is not used on a regular basis. Turn over wheelbarrows, and do not allow water to stagnate in birdbaths for more than four days. Both provide breeding habitat for domestic mosquitoes.

A.C.S.I. Conservation

WEST NILE VIRUS (continued)

Aerate ornamental pools or stock them with fish. Water gardens are fashionable, but become major mosquito producers if they are allowed to stagnate.

Clean and chlorinate swimming pools that are not being used. Be aware that mosquitoes may even breed in water that collects on swimming pool covers. Landscaping can eliminate standing water on your property. Mosquitoes will develop in any puddle that lasts for more than four days.

In people, WNV most often causes mild infections. In rare instances, the virus can cause West Nile encephalitis, an infection that causes an inflammation of the brain and sometimes death. While anyone can contract WNV, adults over 50 years of age are at increased risk of developing severe illness. In addition to transmission through the bite of an infected mosquito, WNV can be transmitted through organ donation, blood transfusion, occupationally, and may be transmitted from mother to child (breastfeeding and transplacental). However, only a small proportion of WNV cases are transmitted in ways other than the bite of an infected mosquito. WNV cases occur primarily in the late summer or early fall, although mosquito season is usually April through October. In 2004, WNV was identified in 46 birds, 163 mosquito pools, 9 horses, 37 sentinel chickens and 16 people, with two human deaths. A website providing background information and regular updates about the WNV and is available at www.state.pa.us, PA Keyword: "DEP West Nile" or at www.westnile.state.pa.us. Visitors to the website can sign up to automatically receive news releases and other updates via e-mail. Source: PA Dep't. of Agriculture

RIVER SWEEP VOLUNTEERS SOUGHT

Annual Waterway Cleanup Scheduled for June 18

PITTSBURGH: Volunteers are needed for the 16th Annual River Sweep, the largest organized volunteer river cleanup effort in the country, set to take place from 8 a.m. to noon Saturday, June 18 in Allegheny, Armstrong, Beaver, Greene, Washington and Westmoreland counties.

“Heavy flooding in September left a lot of debris in southwestern Pennsylvania waterways,” Environmental Protection Southwest Regional Director Ken Bowman said. “We have our work cut out for this year as we clean up along our rivers and their tributaries so area waterways are sparkling in time for the Citgo Bassmasters Competition in July.” River Sweep, an annual six-state effort to clean up litter and debris in the Ohio River watershed, is sponsored by DEP, the Ohio River Valley Sanitation Commission and a number of Pennsylvania corporate sponsors. The event winds through Ohio, Pennsylvania, Kentucky, Indiana, West Virginia and Illinois, covering more than 2,400 miles of shoreline.

Last year, more than 1,000 volunteers collected trash and debris along the Ohio, Allegheny, Beaver, Monongahela and Youghiogheny rivers and their tributaries. Volunteers who participate receive trash bags and a souvenir T-shirt. Refreshments are provided at River Sweep sites.

Residents who want to participate in the River Sweep can find a site by checking DEP’s Web site at www.dep.state.pa.us, Keyword: “River Sweep,” for updates and site directions. Information also is available by contacting Betsy Mallison at 412-442-4182 or via e-mail at epsriversweep@state.pa.us.

\$760 Million Devoted to Fossil Energy Programs in FY 2006

Continued Commitment to Clean Coal Research; Increases for Carbon Management, Hydrogen from Coal, Gasification Technologies and SECA Fuel Cells

Washington, DC - The Department of Energy's FY 2006 budget request of \$23.4 billion, allocates \$759.9 million for fossil energy activities. Included is \$286 million for the President's Coal Research Initiative, \$50 million for clean coal demonstration projects and \$18 million for FutureGen, the world's first near zero-emissions hydrogen and electricity producing power plant. Fossil Energy's programs focus on supporting the President's top initiatives for energy security, clean air, climate change, and coal research. FY 2006 Fossil Energy programs.