

NORTH AREA ENVIRONMENTAL COUNCIL NEWS

November/December 2012

Retrospective on the recent panel discussion: “Visions of Gray and Green: Stormwater Solutions in Western PA”

by Mary Wilson

On Tuesday, October 2nd NAEC hosted an informative panel discussion about the current challenges facing ALCOSAN and the municipalities and the potential role of green infrastructure in helping to address them.

A relatively small but very interested audience heard about the federal mandate ALCOSAN is under to reduce the contamination of regional waterways from Combined Sewer Overflows (CSO) during storm events, and about the ALCOSAN authorities’ strategy in addressing the consent order. Audience members also learned how the municipality of Shaler has been promoting infiltration of stormwater to reduce the burden on ALCOSAN’s system, as well as about a project by 3 Rivers Wet Weather to identify areas in the ALCOSAN service area where green infrastructure is feasible to further reduce stormwater inputs into the system.

The Clean Rivers Coalition is advocating the implementation of green infrastructure alternatives by highlighting areas comparable to Pittsburgh where they have been used already and by educating the public about their potential. While the \$2.8+ billion budget identified for ALCOSAN’s revisions seems extreme, most people

See *Visions*, page 3

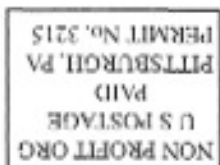
Inside this issue

Cut Flower Property Fundraiser.....	2
Preview: 2013 Seedling Sale.....	2
Brochure: Streamside Property.....	3
Pennsylvania House Bill 2224.....	3
Friends of North Park Schedule.....	3
The Greening of Millvale.....	4
Thoughts from PennFuture.....	5
Smartphones Gather Air Data.....	5
Trout Unlimited Cleans Up.....	5
New State Parks Director.....	6
More Photos from Millvale.....	6

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Contact: Corresponding Secretary
Marian Crossman at 412-366-3339
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Pittsburgh Cut Flower Property Christmas Luminary Fundraiser

In our last two newsletters we wrote about the Pittsburgh Cut Flower property in Richland Township. The Allegheny Land Trust (ALT) is raising funds to purchase the property and conserve it as permanent green space. The purchase price is \$1.4 million. Most of it can be raised from foundation, corporate and government grants. The community is asked to raise 10% of the cost to show local support for the project.

To contribute to this community effort, the Orchard Park Neighborhood Association (OPNA) is holding a Christmas Luminary Sale. The goal is to sell 500 Luminary Kits in the neighborhood and the community at large. Local sponsors have underwritten the cost of assembling the kits, so 100% of the profit from the sale of the kits will go to ALT for the property purchase. Each kit is packaged in a clear plastic bag and contains votive candles (15 hour), white paper bags, instructions and a listing of the sponsors.

The kits cost is \$10 for 8 luminaries and \$20 for 20 luminaries. To download a luminary mail-in order form, visit www.orchardparkneighborhood.info. To order online through PayPal or a credit card visit www.alleghenylantrust.org. Mail and online orders must be received by December 7. Shipping is available, at additional cost, for those who cannot pick up their order at the Richland Township Municipal Building, December 17th through 21st, 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. Kits may also be purchased in person at Weischedel Florist, 9:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Mon. - Fri. and 8 p.m. - 5 p.m. Saturdays, or at the Richland Municipal Building.

Looking Ahead to 2013 Seedling Sale

by John Warren

Early in NAEC's 43-year existence, we began to celebrate spring each year with our seedling sale. Multiple generations of North Hills residents have by now planted thousands of native trees and shrubs, providing habitat for native creatures and enhancing the natural beauty of this area.

The 2012 sale, which featured an expanded selection of native plants, was one of our most successful. Preliminary work on the 2013 sale is now underway. Naturalist Meg Scanlon is seeking native plant varieties that will be available for the NAEC sale in spring of 2013. Those planning for garden additions may contact her with their ideas. As in 2012, most of the seedlings will be sold in sets of 3 or 5, and will come from growers in this region. Types offered are chosen for their beauty and value in the natural landscape. Meg can be reached at 724-935-2170 and latodami@yahoo.com.

As you wrap up your work in the yard this fall, we hope you will give some thought to what you might want to plant next spring. A few weeks after the calendar turns over to a new year, the next issue of this newsletter will arrive, containing the details of the 2013 seedling sale.

With your support, we can make 2013 an even bigger year for planting native shrubs and trees!

Responses to the Phoning Committee calls help NAEC manage mailings efficiently. We thank everyone who let us know their mailing preference, whether print or Email.

NORTH AREA ENVIRONMENTAL COUNCIL

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Visions, continued from page 1

concede that the green infrastructure can only *support* the ALCOSAN and municipal gray infrastructure revisions, not replace them.

We are likely to hear much more about this issue in the years to come. Based on the numerous questions asked by audience members, it is a topic many follow closely.

We thank the panelists Tim Rogers, Michael Lichte , John Schombert, and Jennifer Kennedy and moderator Susan Hockenberry for sharing their time and information in this event. We also thank Ward Allebach for his effort in organizing the panel.



Moderator and panel discuss stormwater options

If you have a streamside property, NAEC board member Beth Dutton recommends the brochure “*Caring for Your Streamside Property*” from the Delaware County Conservation District. It is available at this link: <http://www.delcocd.org/Streamside%20Property%20Bochure1.pdf>

Danger!! *Pennsylvania House Bill 2224 would allow local municipalities to sell public parks. The proposed changes would allow municipalities to dispose of many public lands without any oversight by the courts and for reasons other than those currently allowed under existing law. This bill has passed the PA House and is now in the PA Senate. More info at http://www.palwv.org/files/294_12-10-16-HB2224MailToMembers.pdf*

Friends of North Park Schedule

Dec. 28, Friday, 6:00-9:00 PM, Full moon hike on the South Ridge in North Park led by Pittsburgh Trails Advocacy Group (PTAG) and L. L. Bean Pittsburgh Outing Club. Meet at Pie Traynor Field parking lot. For more information, see <http://www.meetup.com/L-L-Bean-Pittsburgh-Outing-Group/events/90414622/>

Feb. 6, Wednesday, 7:00 PM, FoNP Meeting. Join us at the Cabin for a presentation by Mary Bates, who will share with us the research she has done on the history of North Park.

March 6, Wednesday 7:00 PM, FoNP Meeting. Join us at the Cabin for a presentation by naturalist Meg Scanlon who will update on the interesting things happening at the Latodami Environmental Center in North Park.

April 2, Tuesday, 7:00 PM, FoNP Meeting. Join us at the Cabin for an update on issues related to the ecological protection and restoration of the Pine Creek Watershed. North Park Lake and the surrounding streams are at the center of this 67-square mile watershed.

April 20, Saturday, 9:00 AM, Earth Day Redd Up. Meet at the Cabin to help clean up trash from various locations in North Park.

May 4, Saturday, Noon, Lake & Land Clean Up. Meet at the Rose Barn on Pearce Mill Road to help clean up trash from various locations in North Park by land and in kayaks that will be provided by L.L. Bean.

May 7, Tuesday, 7:00 PM, Nike Missile Site Presentation & Tour. Meet at Police & Fire Academy located at 700 West Ridge Road. This event is back by popular demand again this year. Learn all about the air defense systems used to protect Pittsburgh during the cold war. Wear boots and bring a flashlight.



Turtle in North Park, by Robert Habegger

The Greening of Millvale by Beth Dutton

The Borough of Millvale is currently engaged in many exciting environmental initiatives. These include:

- Western Pennsylvania Conservancy was awarded a generous Penn Vest grant to plant 850 trees and construct bioswales in Millvale in 2012 and 2013. About 250 trees are being planted this fall at the Millvale Riverfront Park, and on the hillside along Ohio Street between Route 28 and Ohio Street. About 20 of trees will also be planted at the Grant Avenue Pocket Park in the heart of Millvale's business district. The November tree planting marks an especially important milestone as TreeVitalize Pittsburgh is reaching its goal of planting 15,000 trees in the Pittsburgh area and will be planting the 15,000th tree (a beautiful swamp white oak) at the Millvale Riverfront Park at that tree planting event. Volunteers from NAEC are welcome to join in the plantings either this December or next year when Millvale will be doing many more plantings.
- Large bioswales will be constructed on the property of the Sisters of Mt. Alvernia campus at 146 Hawthorne Street. Bioswales are being planned both along Hawthorne Road, and in front of Mt. Alvernia's Mother House. Millvale plans to monitor the bioswales to see how effective they are in capturing and infiltrating stormwater in order to improve water quality and decrease sewer overflows to the Allegheny River.
- Western Pennsylvania Conservancy and TreeVitalize put up an attractive and informational window display in one of the empty storefronts in the heart of downtown Millvale (217 North Avenue, two doors down from Jean Marc's French Bakery) to educate the public about the benefits of trees to our daily lives.
- A rain garden on Butler Street captures and treats stormwater from the adjacent parking lot. It was created through a partnership between the Millvale Borough, GTECH, EcoSeeds, and the Heinz Endowments. Stop by to see it and read the wonderful informational signage that was installed to educate the public about rain gardens.
- Millvale is developing a stormwater management system at the Millvale Community Library which features a working system of disconnected downspouts and rain barrels with the overflow leading to a rain garden. Once complete, it will

have an informational display about how Millvale citizens can get involved to help manage stormwater.

- Through a grant from the Mellon Foundation, 3 Rivers Wet Weather is using their "RainWays" web-based tool and the EPA's SUSTAIN software to do a high-tech evaluation of potential locations to site green infrastructure in Millvale in order to reduce sewer overflows, and to estimate the cost and the amount of stormwater captured by these practices.
- The Gardens of Millvale program of the Millvale Borough Development Corporation coordinates multiple community gardens, the community orchard, an outdoor cobb oven, and various beautification plantings throughout the Borough.



Rain Garden on Butler St., Millvale

Photo by Brian Wolovich. There are more of his photos from Millvale projects on page 6.

The innovative "Pivot Project" was unveiled to the public at a community meeting in early November, and will guide Millvale's eco-district planning efforts. Through the three pronged approach of water-food-energy Millvale will be looking at ways to become a more sustainable community.

The energy and environmental stewardship that the Millvale community is showing with these initiatives is tremendous, and will contribute to Millvale being an even more healthy and forward-thinking community in which to live, work, and play.

Contact Brian Wolovich at 412.977.7672 or brian.wolovich@gmail.com if you or your group are interested in becoming involved in any of these projects.

Some Thoughts from Penn Future

by Anya Litvak

While everyone is buzzing about the presidential election, PennFuture's CEO George Jugovic is focused on some not-so-glitzy state races. "The sleeper election results for the environment were the re-election of Rob McCord as state Treasurer, and election of Kathy Kane as Attorney General," he said. McCord has been an advocate of investing Pennsylvania's money — he invests about \$80 billion per year — in green-minded efforts. His department's investment policy, for example, tells investors that companies' exposure to climate change and the regulatory vulnerability of fossil fuels, coupled with state incentives for renewable energy, should play a major part in investment decisions.

As for Kane, Jugovic said the Attorney General elect will put an emphasis on the Environmental Crimes Section which, he charged, "withered on the vine" during (then Attorney General Tom) Corbett's tenure. In Kane's pitch on environmental enforcement from her campaign website, she specifically highlighted Marcellus Shale activities and wrote this:

"Comprehensive oversight in the Marcellus Shale is critical for the future of Pennsylvania. Protecting landowners who enter lease agreements, the public from potential release of harmful chemicals into the waterways or air, and the preservation of our natural resources are an absolute priority. Kathleen also recognizes the potential economic gain for Pennsylvania on the development of a clean energy source."

Additional thoughts from Jeanne Clark: I would add that Auditor General-elect Eugene DePasquale is also likely to be an environmental champion, since he previously worked for DEP, and was a great environmental vote as a legislator. On the Federal level, Pittsburgh's member of Congress, Mike Doyle, is now the Dean of the Pennsylvania Delegation, so his leadership will be key. He currently serves on the Energy and Commerce Committee and the Subcommittee on Energy and Environment. Mike has a 91% rating with the League of Conservation Voters.

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Smartphone Users Gather Air Quality Data

The Group Against Smog And Pollution (GASP) has initiated a project in which some of our readers may want to participate.

The GASP SENSR project has two parts. One part is a bicycle air-monitoring project in which bikers install air monitors on their bikes that sample air as they ride. The other part is a "Dirty Diesel" project that uses geolocated smartphone photos of smoky diesel vehicles to both get a sense of what companies show up a lot in the photos and where the smoky exhaust problem is worst. When a smartphone photo is sent it pops up on a Google map.

To volunteer or to find out more about this project go to www.gasp-pgh.org/projects/bam.



Workday Makes Pine Creek Improvements

A previous newsletter announced the Trout Unlimited workday in Pine Creek. The project was in the Pine Creek delayed harvest area. TU in cooperation with the Allison Park Sportsmen's Club installed a mud sill and 3 log deflectors. The work was financed by a grant from GENON power company and supervised by the PA Fish & Boat Commission. Here's a photo from that day.



DCNR Appoints New Director of the Bureau of State Parks

(Press release from the DCNR)

The Department of Conservation and Natural Resources Secretary Richard Allan recently announced that he is appointing a 38-year veteran of the state park system to lead the Bureau of State Parks.

David L. Kemmerer, who has risen through the management ranks and has served as assistant bureau director for the past eight years, will oversee Pennsylvania's system of 120 state parks and almost 300,000 acres.

"Dave Kemmerer brings to this position the experience, enthusiasm and energy needed to run a park system as large and complex as ours," Allan said. "Dave has a wealth of experience to draw upon in his new role overseeing the bureau, and I have complete confidence that he will improve resource management and visitor satisfaction; and that DCNR staff across the state will embrace his leadership."

Kemmerer, 61, of Mountain Top, takes over the reins of a park system that is nationally recognized as one of the best in the nation.

"I have great loyalty to the bureau that I have served for many years and am truly excited and honored to be a part of an organization that is dedicated to strong public service and wise stewardship," Kemmerer said. "It's a great service we provide to people – the opportunity to recreate in the outdoors."

Kemmerer served for many years as the manager of the bureau's eastern region where he oversaw the operations, management and staff at 35 state parks. He obtained experience managing park facilities as the park manager at Promised Land and Beltzville State Parks and assistant manager at Hickory Run State Park.

Kemmerer has a bachelor's degree in parks and recreation with a minor in accounting from Penn State University.

Pennsylvania's state park system is nationally recognized for providing a quality visitor experience and excellence in management thanks to its dedicated staff. The 120 state parks are not only beautiful, but provide unique opportunities for outdoor recreation of all types – hunting, fishing, swimming, picnicking, kayaking, biking, hiking, wildlife watching — as well as environmental education. They also are economic engines for local communities generating almost a billion dollars in economic activity each year.

There is a state park within 25 miles of every Pennsylvanian. For more information on Pennsylvania's state parks call 1-888-PA-PARKS, or visit the DCNR website at www.dcnr.state.pa.us and choose "Find a Park."

More Photos from Millvale



Community Garden on Butler St., Millvale



Oven made from cob, a mixture of clay-based soil, sand and straw, at the Community Garden



Elijah and Mandy celebrate planting a tree at Millvale Riverfront Park