

Students Active in Chicques Project

(Editor's Note: This article was written by Wendy List, a Manheim Central High School senior. Wendy is an environmental agriculture student participating in an educational program co-ordinated by the Manheim Central Schools in conjunction with the Chicques Creek Watershed Project.)

Three hundred years ago our Pennsylvania soil was a protected land, sheltered from its natural enemies, or at least in a position where it could recover easily from any inflicted damages. It was a virgin land where the fields and the forests provided many a watershed, protecting the land from the annual rains. There was neither flooding nor drought; the soil was fertile and the harvests yielded much.

But then... there came a change over the countryside, the change was called

development, progress, commercialism. It was rampant throughout the environment, and once begun it was hard to control, for men acted with destruction rather than discretion. Pennsylvania's natural balance was being destroyed.

During the late 1800's and early 1900's there occurred the most extensive slaughter of nature Pennsylvania had ever experienced. It was a time of deterioration and ravishment of the environment. The destruction of woodland was commonplace; very few people even remembered the time when forests once ruled with such uniform authority. The earth was carved into a myriad of building foundations and construction pits, and the land was twisted and molded into a man-made environment.



Wendy List

The rapid development Pennsylvania underwent had its compensations and its consequences. First of all, Pennsylvania became a highly industrialized and wealthy state, which promised a stable future for its settlers. Secondly, the clearance of forests had provided abundant farmland which was the basis for agricultural status. The intentions for an agricultural industry were well-founded, for Pennsylvania had been known to have rich soil, a healthy climate and few natural disasters. Lancaster County became the bed of Pennsylvania's agricultural industry and the newly developed state anticipated the first harvesting year.

The anticipations and expectancy was in vain. The crops yielded little or nothing at all. Floods frequented Lancaster County, washing away

precious topsoil, and destroying roads and homes. When it rained everything was flooded, when it did not rain the land was barren. Deposits of silt, the result of erosion, changed the courses of stable water channels causing the uneven flow of water and more flooding. Wastes contaminated the water supply and polluted the streams and lakes. The sediment carried toxic chemicals and plant nutrients into the waters. The wildlife in affected areas was forced to leave natural habitats and seek refuge in unfamiliar environments where many could not survive. Pennsylvania could not adjust to the man-made environment and through much toil and many hardships its settlers were to learn a valuable ecological lesson in the following years.

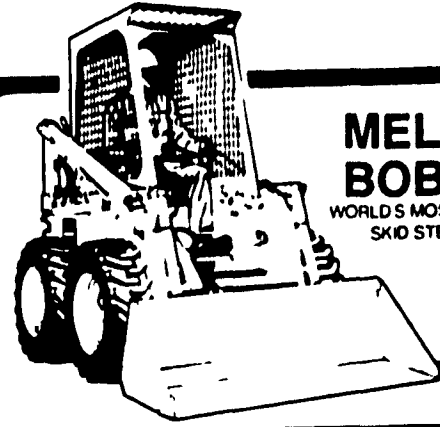
During an ecology presentation to environment students at Manheim Central High School, Walter Peechatka, director of the State Conservation Commission, outlined some measures necessary in controlling the environment, but preventing the destruction of its natural balance.

The initial concentration on any project or development should be in its planning and awareness of future effects. People should "act with discretion instead of destruction." The Manheim Central Schools are co-ordinating an educational program with the Chicques Creek Watershed Project. It is a local project which has the support and encouragement from The

House of Representatives, the Lancaster and Manheim Chambers of Commerce, the Lancaster County Planning Commission, the Lancaster Soil and Water Conservation District, the Pennsylvania State Soil and Water Conservation Commission, the Lancaster Area Manufacturer's Association and local

Manheim Borough associations. The project is proceeding effectively, and it is our objective to inform the public of its progress, for every individual's interest is important.

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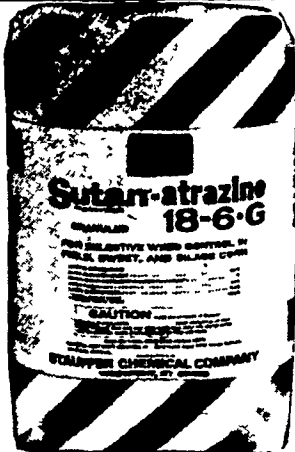
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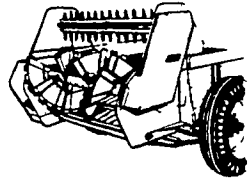
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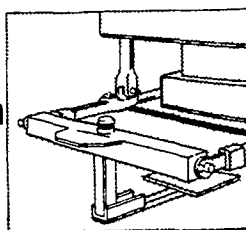
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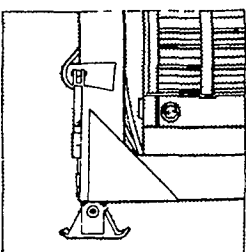
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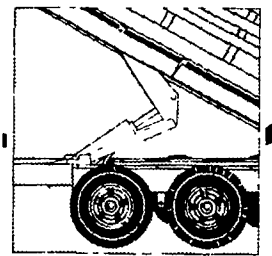
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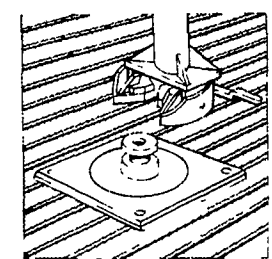
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