

Del. Water Gap Farmers

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records and make life easier for the farmers when they apply to the park service for a permit to use pesticides. He has met with mixed emotions.

Michaels doesn't like the idea, because it would cost him about \$4 per acre for work he says he is already doing.

The per-acre fee would help pay for the full-time scout, said Craig. "They (the park service) are looking for somebody to say, 'Yes, these farmers need to use these products,'" he said.

The out-of-town growers like the idea, and have spoken in favor at meetings held to discuss the possible creation of the crop management association. Others, though, are not jumping at the idea.

"We don't really have anybody chomping at the bit here," reported Fred Suffian, Monroe County's soil conservationist who has been involved in trying to pull together the association. "It means change, the farmers aren't always anxious to change the things they've been doing for a long time. They're a little bit gunshy."

The park service, said Johnson, supports the idea of a crop management association, but will not require growers to join the group.

The control of pesticides is critical within the recreation area, a popular spot for vacationers and visitors from the New York and Philadelphia metropolitan areas

that are two hours away. When the U.S. Congress created the recreation area, it clearly stated that the primary purpose was to provide citizens with a place to enjoy outdoor activities. Visitors are free to traipse wherever they want within the park's boundaries, including on land that is being farmed.

Michaels said that fishermen sometimes dig through his plowed fields in search of worms, and hikers occasionally pick ears of field corn, thinking they will be sweet corn ideal for the family picnic.

Johnson said the park service is most concerned with how the visitors can come in close contact with potentially lethal pesticides. Farming is not a priority use within the recreation area, as established by Congress, and is done because it has historical significance.

Farming Plus Recreation

Michaels' family has been farming the land since before the Revolutionary War, and while the park service doesn't have any plans to restrict farming in the area - in fact some lands that have been identified as former farm plots are being returned to production - it does have an interest in making farming and outdoor recreation co-exist without harm to either, said Johnson.

There was talk of getting the Water Gap farmers to join the nearby Lehigh Valley Crop Management Association that was formed last year by growers in Northampton and Lehigh counties,

outside of the federal land boundaries. The association weathered a rough first year and lost some members because of problems with the scouting system, said Clarence Fehnel, the treasurer of the association who runs a Northampton County dairy farm in Palmer Township.

Fehnel considers the \$4-per-acre fee an investment. He knows he should watch his crops closely, but doesn't always have the time, and a missed opportunity can lead to great drops in crop yields. Likewise, said Fehnel, he doesn't need the added expense of applying a pesticide if he doesn't really need it.

But there are problems with the Water Gap farmers joining the Lehigh Valley Association's 12 members and 2,800 acres. The area covered would be so vast, stretching from Lehigh County at Macungie to Milford, nearly 100 miles away in Pike County, that some have doubts about the effectiveness of a scout asked to cover such a huge territory.

Craig, a former scout himself, plans to keep up the struggle, to convince farmers within the federal lands to create an association. He is being helped by his Warren County, N.J. counterpart, Extension Agent Everett Chamberlain, and by Tim Dunn, a soil conservationist in Warren County who has been involved in

drawing up conservation and crop rotation plans for Water Gap farmers.

The 1986 growing season is too far advanced for a crop management association to help much now, Craig concedes, but he is hopeful that he can create a group, probably incorporating

farmers from surrounding, private lands, by next year.

It doesn't appear as though the National Park Service is going to back down its stance on controlling pesticide use on its lands, and farming will only get more difficult - with fewer important chemicals permitted - without some action by the renters.

Sportsmen To Campaign for Acid Rain Controls

HARRISBURG - Citizens for Conservation Action (CCA), a project of the Pennsylvania Federation of Sportsmen's Clubs Inc., will be visiting counties across the state to increase public awareness of the acid rain problem and to gain support in the way of petition signatures, letters to local congressmen, and contributions to continue the statewide effort to enact acid rain legislation.

Citizens for Conservation Action's goals are to develop grassroots support and participation to enact strong legislation which will reduce sulfur dioxide and nitrous oxide emissions by about 50 percent.

In 1985 Pennsylvania recorded the most acidic rain of any state for the third year in a row. Work on acid rain legislation is especially

timely since there is legislation pending at both federal and state levels.

CCA will also work on other legislative priorities of the PFSC, such as a state Bottle Bill, in the coming year.

For further information contact the Pennsylvania Federation of Sportsmen's Clubs at 2426 North Second Street, Harrisburg, PA 17110. Telephone: (717) 232-3480.

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