

Conservation Awards Highlight Conference Banquet

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outstanding and long-term volunteer service in conservation. This year the award is presented to James Gemmell III, from Bucks County. Gemmell has 45 years of service to Pennsylvania's conservation efforts especially through the Bucks County Conservation District. In 1952 when the Buckingham Farmers Cooperative with Gemmell a founding member, initiated the move to establish a conservation district in Bucks County, he joined the endeavor. The quest to get the idea through the legislature took 10 years. But on April 24, 1961, the district was formed, and he has been a vital part of the district since then, working to ensure its growth and success.

ORGANIZATION AWARD

The Western Pennsylvania Coalition For Abandoned Mine Reclamation in Westmoreland County received the conservation organization award for noteworthy contributions to the conservation of Pennsylvania's soil, water, and related natural resources. The coalition was established in 1981 to provide leadership for encouraging the reclamation, development, and best use of abandoned mine lands in the bituminous coal area of western Pennsylvania. This independent, non-profit, non-partisan group supplements the efforts of the Pennsylvania Association of Conservation Districts, the Rural Abandoned Mine Program, and others with similar goals. The coalition encompasses 21 counties.

In recent years, the coalition

began to focus attention on the abandoned mine related water quality problems. In 1994, they were awarded a three-year grant under the non-point source pollution Clean Water Act. The grant provides \$900,000 in funding for mine drainage remediation efforts over the term of the grant. Designed to be implemented through the county conservation districts, the program helps institutionalize the state's acid mine drainage program. In one project, the Scrubgrass Run Water Project, just a few miles from downtown Pittsburgh, a local high school has become involved and has used the project to develop an integrated studies program related to the project and the local community.

EDUCATOR AWARD

The winner of the conservation educator award is Stephen Kline of Beaver Springs, Snyder County. The award is presented annually to teachers who have demonstrated a strong commitment to conservation education programs and activities. Kline teaches ag education at West Snyder High School for 26 years. He has also taught environmental education with subjects in wildlife, forestry, and water quality. He is also the adviser to West Snyder's Envirothon team.

Last year, Kline began the first West Snyder FFA Conservation Day at West Beaver and BEaver-Adams Elementary Schools. At this event the FFA members presented conservation programs to elementary students. In a special project funded by the Pennsylvania Bay Education office, the senior high FFA developed streambank

fencing, headwall construction, reseeding, pasture rotation, and a pasture pump livestock waterer.

MEDIA AWARD

The media conservation award is presented to individuals or professional communication organizations who have made an outstanding contribution to the public's awareness of conservation districts and to the public's understanding of natural resource conservation. This year's award was presented to *Lancaster Farming*.

According to the conservation associations *Lancaster Farming*, with its statewide reach and popularity, is a principal publication to highlight conservation practices and activities. The publication is often found in many ag businesses, banks, and ag agency offices around the state. Conservation district activities are kept before the public eye, frequently with front page coverage, pictures, and feature articles. Local papers serving the general public (both daily and weekly) regularly scan *Lancaster Farming* to do follow-up articles or stories of interest to their readers, thus multiplying the exposure of district activities.

Although *Lancaster Farming* serves the entire PACD area, it is headquartered in Lancaster County, and the Lancaster County Conservation District is proud to sponsor this year's winner.

GODDARD AWARD

This award in honor of former DER Secretary Maurice K. Goddard is presented to co-winners—William Mayberry of New Castle, Lawrence County, and Shelly Tree Farm, Thompson, Susquehanna

County.

Mayberry possesses a deep dedication to public education, especially youth education on forest stewardship practices and philosophy. A Tree Farm System member for 23 years, he has used professional foresters, both public and private, as advisors and consultants when implementing silvicultural treatments and commercial timber sales. In 1992 Mayberry enrolled 208 acres in the Pennsylvania Forest Stewardship Program and has a forest stewardship plan developed.

The Mayberrys have permitted the use of 25 acres of their property to be developed as a demonstration woodlot. This area has been extensively used by forest ecology classes from local colleges, high school FFAs, girl and boy scout troops, farm managers and neighboring conservation districts.

The Shelly Farm is one of the oldest tree farms still in existence in the state. Originally owned and certified to Dr. and Mrs. Robert Shelly in 1967, the farm is now owned by daughter Kathy Shelly and Ed Cameron. This tree farm has been three properties. One property was deeded to the Nature Conservancy so it can be perpetually maintained as a unique ecosystem as a boreal bog. It is maintained and open to the public for study and recreation.

On the home property, the wildlife habitat is excellent, and trails are used and maintained for wildlife viewing and hiking. A small cabin has been constructed for the enjoyment of friends, family, and

guests.

LEGISLATOR AWARD

State representative Ruth Rudy from the 171st district covering parts of Centre and Mifflin Counties received the legislator of the year award. Rep. Rudy has used her knowledge of conservation districts and of the value of their work to introduce, support and vote for legislation that has benefited the conservation movement in Pennsylvania. She sought and gained House committee assignments that enable her to enforce her interest in the use of knowledge of agriculture, conservation and rural life.

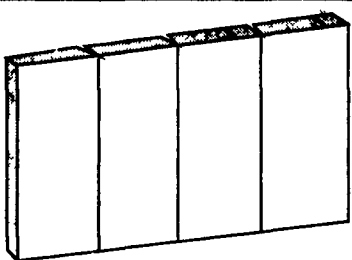
She has been chair of Central Pennsylvania Caucus, vice chair of the Ag and Rural Affairs committee, and a member of the Aging and Youth, and Education committees. She has sponsored and supported legislation for the agricultural security area law and other legislation for environmental study grants, nutrient management and environmental education.

SCHOLARSHIP AWARD

The PACD auxiliary scholarship award was presented to Christopher Klinger of Wiconisco, Dauphin County. Klinger is a junior at Slippery Rock University, majoring in environmental education. He will receive a \$500 scholarship.

The conference began on Sunday and continued through Wednesday noon with educational and business events as well as tours to points of conservation interest in Lancaster County.

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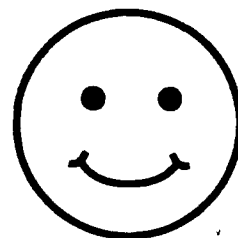
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