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Pennsylvania Resources Council, Inc.

"Working to protect the environment since 1939"

Fall 2004

Environmental Living



The Great PA Cleanup press conference at Negley Run in Pittsburgh attracted a number of public figures and community activists. From left to right are Ben Forbeck, Gabe Fertman, DEP Secretary Kathleen McGinty, PRC Western Regional Director David Mazza, State Representative Joseph Preston, the Litterbug, and State Senator Jim Ferlo.

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Letter from the Executive Director




The Pennsylvania Resources Council, Inc. (PRC) is one of the oldest nonprofit environmental education and advocacy organizations in the Commonwealth, dating back to 1939 when we were first established as the Pennsylvania Roadside Council. In fact we are celebrating our 65th anniversary this year! While our programs and activities have grown beyond roadside litter and

billboard control, our mission and objectives have remained steadfast. The focus of our in-school and community outreach programs is to educate the public so they can make more informed decisions which in turn will help minimize their footprints on the environment.

PRC has been fortunate over the past several years to receive Growing Greener grants through the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection to fund several of our education and outreach programs. The residents of Pennsylvania are also very fortunate to have such an abundance of natural and scenic resources. Our industrial heritage has supported both the state and national economies while supplying products and services to worldwide markets. But those same activities have unfortunately produced a legacy of scarred land, polluted streams and contaminated industrial sites. With the Growing Greener funds, capital improvement projects such as wetland enhancements, stream buffers, abandoned mine lands remediation and farmland preservation have been made possible. Still, much work needs to be done. Additionally, education and outreach must remain a key component of the process if we expect our residents to make positive lifestyle changes and protect our environmental resources for future generations. Only through education can we prevent new environmental catastrophes from occurring that will someday again require expensive fixing.

Governor Rendell has proposed a new Quality of Life program called Growing Greener II. In essence it is a renewal but major expansion of the original Growing Greener program that has helped fund so many, much needed environmental projects and activities. The original Growing Greener program in the past five years provided \$148 million for 1,290 projects across the Commonwealth. But the list of projects requiring remediation and protection remains long and, unfortunately, the current funding mechanism is not keeping pace. PRC strongly supports the Governor's proposed Growing Greener program and accelerated approach to address the lengthy list of remaining environmental liabilities. We also support the concept of placing a referendum on the spring 2005 ballot for the citizens of Pennsylvania to decide how the program is to be funded. We have, however, expressed concerns with the Governor's proposal to fund the bond indebtedness by imposing additional new taxes on Pennsylvania businesses through increased fees on their wastes. Since all Pennsylvanians will enjoy the benefits of the Governor's enhanced Growing Greener program, we believe everyone should share in the costs.

The marathon legislative budget session that wrapped up in the wee hours of July 3rd resulted in a recommendation to form a "Green Ribbon Commission" to develop recommendations for funding the program. We applaud the House, Senate and Administration for publicly declaring their commitment to work together to develop an acceptable funding and spending agreement. The collective efforts over the past several decades of stronger environmental laws and regulations, stepped-up enforcement,

research, remediation and education have resulted in great strides in cleaning up the Commonwealth and protecting our natural resources. But again, much remains to be done, and the longer we wait the more extensive the damage becomes and the more expensive remediation will be. 

Members' Corner

Mary Tracy — Fighting Billboard Blight with the Society Created to Reduce Urban Blight (SCRUB)




Mary Tracy is the Executive Director of SCRUB, a city-wide organization that works with citizens and neighborhood organizations to improve the visual environment and quality of life in Philadelphia. Mary first became involved in the billboard control issue in 1988 when she worked with her civic association to remove two illegal billboards located across the street from a church, school and her home.

Seeing the need for more effective control of outdoor advertising in Philadelphia, Mary helped form a citywide coalition of over 100 neighborhood, business, religious and health organizations, named the Society Created to Reduce Urban Blight (SCRUB). The coalition worked to secure passage of legislation that placed a cap on outdoor advertising space in Philadelphia and restricted billboards near schools, churches, parks, residences, playgrounds and within gateway and historical areas.

Mary first heard about PRC in 1993 when several billboard companies attempted to build billboards along the newly completed I-476 "Blue Route". She joined thousands of citizens in PRC's successful campaign to "Keep the Blue Route Green" resulting in the protective designation of the Blue Route as a scenic byway.

Since those early successes, SCRUB and PRC have worked closely together, securing removal of over 50 illegal or nonconforming billboards in Philadelphia, developing a Citizen's Manual for Billboard Control, and working with local, state and federal agencies on scenic environmental issues. SCRUB's volunteer attorneys have helped defend Philadelphia's sign control laws. SCRUB has defeated attempts by the sign companies to circumvent the law and has worked with neighborhood residents on improving quality of life through better enforcement of the Philadelphia code.

As Ms. Tracy states, "By working with neighborhood groups, SCRUB has been able to effect positive changes in zoning and land use law in Philadelphia. We started with billboards, and these successes have helped create community awareness about protecting the public spaces of our neighborhoods. We believe that this is critical to making our urban neighborhoods more attractive places to live and work. SCRUB will continue to work with PRC to provide the knowledge and tools to citizens of Philadelphia to help them to improve the visual environment and quality of life in their neighborhoods." 



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Welcome New Board Members



Dr. Patti Vathis is the Environment and Ecology Education Advisor for the PA Department of Education. Patti facilitated the development of the newly adopted PA Environment and Ecology Standards and provides statewide guidance for curriculum development for grades K-12 as well as teacher workshops. She holds several degrees and certificates from Indiana University of PA, Penn State and the University of Toronto including Secondary Social Studies, Elementary Education, Environmental Education, and Curriculum and Instruction.



Bill Middendorf is chairman of EPSYS Corporation as well as an independent consultant providing planning and management services to for-profit and nonprofit organizations. He formerly served as PADER Deputy Secretary for Environmental Protection and prior to that served with the Commonwealth's Department of Health. Bill holds a Bachelor of Science degree in biology from Gannon University and a Master of Public Health degree from the University of Michigan.

PRC's Summer Interns: hard work + lots of learning = good experience

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Hello, my name is Kelly Griffin. As a graduate of Saint Joseph's University entering my first year of law school, I was mainly interested in corporate or business-related law. After taking a few elective classes, however, my interests have shifted towards environmental and public health issues. I am currently going into my final year of law school at Temple University, with plans to gain employment in environmental or public health law.

This summer, as an intern at PRC, I have been working on a variety of projects. Some of my duties include conducting research on the zoning regulations for billboards and other outdoor advertisements and developing fact sheets for others to use as a guide to current signage laws. I have also reviewed and updated educational materials dealing with issues such as recycling, litter prevention, hazardous products, and energy conservation. Finally, I have spent some time lending a hand with summer camp directed by PRC. I am extremely fortunate to have the opportunity to work for this remarkable organization and I am grateful for its dedication to improving and protecting the environment.

My name is Forest Mullinary and I have spent several weeks this summer as an intern for the Pennsylvania Resources Council's western office. This fall I will be transferring to Penn State University as a junior and majoring in telecommunications. I hope to work in some form of mass media production after college. Although my major is not directly related to environmental issues, I do have a longstanding background in and deep awareness of them.



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Here at PRC, I have been involved in a multitude of projects with the staff. For instance, the Waste Cap of Allegheny County program, which consumed much of my time, required me to speak with scores of area business owners in order to promote the free waste assessments. I have also helped to coordinate PRC's appearances at various community events such as festivals and neighborhood meetings, where we raised awareness of the City of Pittsburgh's recycling program and PRC's anti-litter campaign, as well as provided entertainment with our Litterbug mascot. I helped the education staff prepare for a weeklong teacher's workshop and documented many of the activities during that week. Also, I participated in a collection of hard-to-recycle items at Construction Junction. I have really enjoyed my time here at PRC. The organization is full of great people who truly care about their work.

PRC's Mission Statement

Pennsylvania Resources Council's mission is to promote conservation of our natural resources and protection of scenic beauty through public education and outreach in a collaborative effort with government agencies, business, charitable foundations and other nonprofit organizations.

The Great Pennsylvania Cleanup: Volunteers Remove 40 Tons of Trash

On April 24th, thousands of volunteers across the state joined forces to pick up litter and trash at over 530 organized cleanup sites. The PA Department of Environmental Protection partnered with the recently formed nonprofit organization, Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful (KPB), to kick off what is expected to be an annual Earth Day event in the Commonwealth. PennDOT and the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, both founding members of KPB, were intimately involved in planning and implementing the program. PRC is also one of the founding members of KPB and organized three of the cleanup events with the support of many sponsors (*see page 11*).



These cleanup volunteers worked hard picking up garbage on the steep terrain of Negley Run Boulevard in Pittsburgh.

Negley Run Boulevard, Pittsburgh

Early in the morning of April 24, 2004, the sun's first rays of light peaked over the hills of Pittsburgh to lift the fog from the lowest valleys. Already, the Negley Run cleanup coordinators were on the move, setting up tents and placing tables on the lawn of the Pittsburgh Housing Authority Police Headquarters, the designated registration area for the day.

Over 130 volunteers participated in the event, making the cleanup along Negley Run one of the largest in the state. The crews removed more than 24 TONS of debris from Negley Run including 425 tires, 315 bags of recyclables, and 11 pick-up truck loads of scrap metal. Additionally, volunteers filled one 30 yard roll-off with rubbish in addition to partially filling a rear loader garbage truck. These efforts were all in a day's work for the volunteers.

Following the cleanup, everyone was treated to a picnic lunch at the registration headquarters. Shari Richards, a local blues singer, performed as volunteers sat on blankets in the grass.

Ridley Creek State Park, Delaware County

PRC East answered DEP Secretary McGinty's call to action and immediately began planning a clean-up day for the 2,606 acre Ridley Creek State Park, where PRC East is a tenant. April 24th dawned under the threat of rain, but Mother Nature cooperated, and the entire event was completed before any rain arrived. Nine teams of 125 volunteers, including state representative Tom Killion, spread out over the Park and in 3 hours brought in 2,400 pounds of trash! (We know exactly because PRC's regional director Barley Van Clief weighed each piece of trash prior to depositing it in bins for collection.) Enough tires to outfit an 18-wheeler rolled in, as well as a barbecue grate and miscellaneous auto parts. Linden Hall School for Girls in Lititz sent a team of litter busters: most of the girls hail from foreign countries. PRC East's education manager Sue Cochrane hosted the girls for an after event program on litter and recycling. The Litterbug traveled throughout the Park, meeting and greeting the volunteers and posing for countless photos!



Eastern Regional Director Barley Van Clief (center) weighs trash collected in Ridley Creek State Park.

Hempfield Township, Westmoreland County

In Hempfield Township, PRC partnered with the Sewickley Creek Watershed Association and PA CleanWays to clean up an illegal dump site along Sweitzer Road. Approximately 35 volunteers removed over 15 tons of trash including several dozen major appliances and pieces of furniture.

For information on the Great Pennsylvania Cleanup, visit the DEP Web site at www.dep.state.pa.us and click on the Great Pennsylvania Cleanup logo, or call toll-free 1-888-548-8372. 

PRC thanks its partners in the Great PA Cleanup

Colonial Pennsylvania Plantation, Friends of Ridley Creek State Park, PA CleanWays of Westmoreland County, PA DEP, Pittsburgh Clean Neighborhood Collaborative (PCNC)*, Ridley Creek State Park Staff (PA DCNR), Sewickley Creek Watershed Association

**Representatives from PCNC include the City of Pittsburgh, PRC, PA CleanWays of Allegheny County, Conservation Consultants, Inc., Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy, OMNI Associates, City Source Associates.*

PRC Promotes Backyard and Worm Composting



PRC East Instructor Barbara Tollen explains a variety of composters at PRC's compost demonstration site.

If you are an average American, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) estimates that you will throw away about 4 pounds of trash today. If you are like most Americans who generate roughly this amount of trash daily, your personal contribution to the local landfill is nearly 1500 pounds of trash each year. Of that trash, the EPA estimates that 17.6% is yard waste, 7.5% is food waste and over 40% is paper. Although typically considered waste products, most of these materials are organic in nature, and when composted, they can be recycled back into a rich soil conditioner that benefits your gardens and yards. Since 2000 PRC has been helping people do just that through our backyard and worm composting programs.

Since November of 2000 the PRC western regional office in Pittsburgh has partnered with the Allegheny County Health Department and the City of Pittsburgh Environmental Services Division to offer backyard composting classes and bin distributions to Allegheny County residents. In less than four years, over 4000

Allegheny County residents have attended the backyard composting presentation. In the spring of 2004, the eastern regional office started its classes—4 sessions have been held so far with 3 more scheduled for the fall. Although students from all over Delaware and Chester Counties have attended, PRC has a special cooperative agreement to teach residents in Edgmont Township. The township has recently enacted an ordinance banning the burning of leaves; the push for composting is giving the residents a more productive option.

Both offices offer two-hour presentations covering everything you ever wanted to know about composting and possibly more. Topics include a brief introduction to soil, an explanation of the benefits of composting, details on how to set up and maintain a compost bin and a discussion of how best to use compost. Additionally, thanks to the generosity of the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, participants at both ends of the state also receive an Earth Machine Compost Bin at the end of the session. Ideal for backyard composting, this compost bin has an 80-gallon capacity, and usually retails for \$60 to \$70.


Encouraged by the overwhelming response to the backyard composting program, in 2003 the western regional office also developed and piloted a new worm composting program, where participants receive a worm bin, red worms and all of the information needed to set up and maintain a worm composting bin. Over 120 people have attended the four worm composting classes given to date. The eastern office also maintains a worm bin on site; having used the bin as an educational tool for its summer camp sessions, the staff plans to offer worm composting information to elementary school students in the fall.

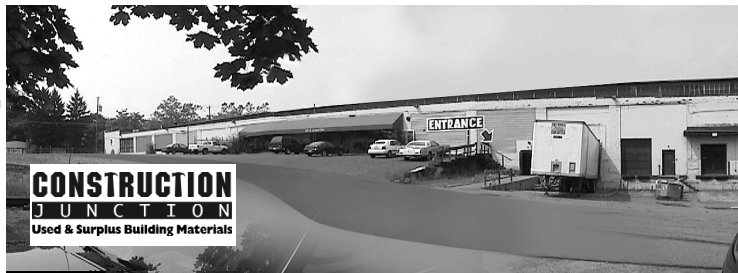
If you are interested in attending a backyard and/or a worm composting class, please refer to the Calendar of Events on page 11 or contact Christine McHenry-Glenn in the western office at 412-431-4449, ext. 325, or Rosemary Kesling in the eastern office at 610-353-1555, ext. 228.



Chris McHenry-Glenn from PRC West demonstrates proper worm handling for worm composting class participants.

PRC-East To Host SunFire Institute

On February 2 and 3, 2005, PRC's Environmental Living Demonstration Center at Ridley Creek State Park will host the prestigious SunFire Institute, an intensive two-day certification program on natural, organic land care methods and land design principles. SunFire embraces a philosophy of gentleness toward the Earth, and provides state-of-the-art information about transforming pesticide/synthetic fertilizer land care practices into natural/organic ones. The course is intended for municipal, school district and private landscape managers, garden center and nursery employees, architects and landscape architects as well as the general public. PRC members and early registrants will receive a discount on the fee. For information about the course, registration forms and a full course syllabus, call 610-459-4644. 



SALVO Readies for 2nd Annual Salvage Arts Festival


The second annual Festival of the Salvage Arts, coming October 2nd to Construction Junction's Point Breeze warehouse, will cap off a year of exciting programs for SALVO (Salvage Artists Linking Venues and Opportunities), an organization dedicated to raising awareness of environmental issues through creative use of salvage materials.

In addition to offering salvage art classes at its 4000 sq. ft studio at Construction Junction, SALVO has created innovative collaborations with numerous community and school groups such as Garfield CISP (at risk teens); Associated Artists High School Careers in the Arts Program; Wilkinsburg Middle School After-School Program; Allegheny East MH/MR Art Therapy Program; Pittsburgh Environmental Teachers Workshop (sponsored by Green Education Movement); and the Pittsburgh Center for the Arts. Community festivals around Pittsburgh have enjoyed SALVO artists' unique hands-on activities including the Ellsworth Avenue Arts Festival, Earth Day on Walnut Street, Whole Food's Earth Day, Pittsburgh Aviary's Think Green Festival, Penn Avenue Arts Festival, E-Fest, and IKEA's Children's Festival where packaging materials were recycled into whimsical animals and hats. This year's festival will once again transform Construction Junction's 30,000 sq. ft. warehouse into a salvage art wonderland with workshops for all ages in sculpture, mosaics, metal casting, musical instrument making, jewelry, assemblage, door painting, clothing design, lamp making, plus a junkyard orchestra and the ever popular salvage fashion show emceed by Phat Man Dee. It's the not-to-be-missed event of the season!

For more information, visit www.SALVOarts.org or email SALVOmail@aol.com. 

Used But Not Unwanted – Construction Junction Gives New Life

Construction Junction breaks another record! June, typically not a strong month for its operation, was its best month ever. The \$62,593 in sales eclipsed the old monthly sales record by 14%. June was also the first month that CJ recorded over 2000 purchases. If CJ continues this sales trend, the retail operation will soon be self-sustaining. Self sufficiency was one of the goals PRC set for CJ in 1999, when it secured the start up funding for this used and surplus building material retail warehouse. PRC and CJ remain active partners even though CJ now has its own nonprofit status.

CJ is also continuing to advance its two newest projects: SALVO (Salvage Artists Linking Venues and Opportunities—see article) and Deconstruction Junction (DJ). Deconstruction is the process of disassembling buildings so as to salvage as much material as possible. So far, DJ is meeting its sales projections and will continue as a two-person operation through 2004. The project is expected to add about \$60,000 worth of material to CJ's inventory. Two members of CJ's staff will be traveling to Oakland, California to the Used Building Material Association's 4th Annual Deconstruction Conference to learn how other deconstruction operations are performing. Look for a conference update in the next PRC newsletter! 

PRC's Annual Awards Dinner to be Held November 9

Mark your calendar now for PRC's annual awards dinner, which is going to be held earlier than usual this year on Tuesday, November 9th, at the Sheraton Society Hill in Philadelphia. PRC board member Phil Hinerman of Fox Rothschild, LLP, is chairing the event. The honorary chair is James M. Seif, Vice President Corporate Relations, PPL and former secretary of the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection. Speakers and award winners will demonstrate the 2004 theme: "Sustainability through Education: Celebrating 65 Years of Success." PRC's Fox Calhoun Award will be presented this year to Larry J. Schweiger, President and Chief Executive Officer, National Wildlife Federation, and former president and CEO of the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy. This prestigious award was named for the founders of PRC and has only been awarded 16 times during PRC's history.

Other awards will honor leaders in sustainability:

- For sustainable building: Engineering and Design Institute at Philadelphia University
- For sustainable partnerships: Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful, Inc.
- For sustainable education: Patricia Vathis, Environment and Ecology Education Advisor, Pennsylvania Department of Education

The evening should be lively, with good food and opportunities for networking and camaraderie - not to be missed! Dinner prices range from \$80 (nonprofit individual ticket) to \$3,000 (table of 8 people, a full-page advertisement in the dinner program, and a table top exhibit space.) There are many options available in between those prices. For more information or to make reservations, please call PRC's eastern office at 610-353-1555, ext. 228.



Environmental Education at PRC

BRINGING ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION INTO THE CLASSROOM

To achieve its mission of resource conservation through education and outreach PRC has developed a number of education programs. Focusing on issues of waste reduction, recycling, composting, litter prevention, energy conservation, and watershed education, our dedicated team of environmental educators presents programs to children and adults on both sides of the Commonwealth.



Johnston students participate in an environmental inventory of the Southside during a fieldtrip to the CCI Center.

In Pittsburgh, PRC continued its task of educating students and teachers throughout Allegheny and Beaver Counties on key environmental issues. The Resource Conservation Program (RCP), designed to instruct students on issues of solid waste and closing the recycling loop, was presented to 95 classes in the '03-'04 school year. The "Recycling and Magic Show" an entertaining and informative assembly program that augments RCP, was presented in 45 schools this year. Culminating student activities this year included the Recycling Olympics, a Recycled Fashion Show and the installation of several vermi-composting bins in area classrooms.

PRC's Watershed Awareness Program was presented to more than 700 middle school students this year. Funded by grants from the Dominion Foundation and the Allegheny County Conservation District, the Watershed Awareness Program utilizes an EnviroScape 3-D watershed model to help students conceptualize watersheds while graphically demonstrating human impacts on them. Because the model provides a basic understanding of watersheds, students can begin to understand how their everyday actions and activities can impact their local watershed.

PRC and Conservation Consultants, Inc. received a grant from The Grable Foundation for a two-year collaborative project with the Mon Valley Education Consortium. The goal of the project was to foster environmental awareness in schools throughout the Mon Valley. A four-session in-classroom program on energy and waste reduction was presented to fifteen classes this year in Mon Valley schools. In July, twenty teachers participated in a dynamic, interactive, five-day workshop called the Pittsburgh Environmental Teaching Workshop presented by members of the Pittsburgh Green Education Movement (GEM), a consortium that includes PRC and six other environmental organizations. Teachers learned firsthand about key local environmental issues and concerns and how to pass this valuable information along to their students. **PRC**

WATERSHED EDUCATION HAS BEGUN AT PRC-EAST!

Each week this summer, campers spent a morning learning about watersheds and "Raindrops to Rivers" as they pushed giant raindrops down the slopes behind PRC's facility. Our EnviroScape arrived just in time to be "broken in" by campers: they love it! It is such fun making sludge out of cocoa powder and following its course down to the creek as it "rains" — of course all the time learning about the problem of non-point source pollution.

Under a DEP Growing Greener grant, PRC is planning to present 60 in-school programs and 30 field trip programs at the Ridley facility. An advertising campaign inviting teachers to reserve programs has been sent. Response to the mailings is on a first-come, first-served basis. Presentations have already been booked for organizations as far afield as Harrisburg. **PRC**



Campers are enraptured by PRC consultant Maury Hutehmyer and the EnviroScape.

SPREAD THE WORD: LITTER EDUCATION ABOUNDS!

PRC continues to spread the word (not the trash) about litter and recycling. Summer campers spent a half-day discovering ways to reduce, reuse and recycle. Programs at local schools and camps help reinforce PRC's message. Recently, in one day the entire 6th grade of Great Valley Middle School participated in litter awareness programs. It was a great day for them, but a bit tiring for the PRC educator who gave 9 presentations in a row! The follow-up comments in thank you letters say it all:

"I now know to use a trash can,"

"I'm learning to improve my habits on littering,"

"You really opened my horizons to what polluting and littering can do to the environment." **PRC**

In June, our community seminar for barnyard managers and horse owners highlighted the **PASTURE MANAGEMENT PLAN AT THE ENVIRONMENTAL LIVING DEMONSTRATION CENTER (ELDC)**. As participants enjoyed a delicious dinner provided by the Brandywine Conservancy's Environmental Management Center, they learned about best management practices that have been installed at the adjoining Clonmel Farms equestrian center. Tim Smail, Conservationist for the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, walked the group through the plan both figuratively and (after dinner) literally. Dana Pollack, who runs the Clonmel Farms, also spoke about the plan from the land manager's point of view as the participants explored the many practices that have solved runoff and nutrient management challenges in the barnyard and pastures- all part of learning about watersheds! **PRC**


PRC's new series of **COMMUNITY EDUCATION PROGRAMS** began in August with "Bird Beaks and Fowl Feathers," a family exploration of songbirds whose presence or absence is an indicator of world environmental health. The series will continue throughout the year, covering all sorts of topics from forest ecology and watersheds to organic lawn and garden care - and best of all, PRC members receive a great discount at registration! Check PRC's website for information. **PRC**

“Hands on the Environment” Summer Camp A Smash Hit

Getting out of the starting block a bit behind schedule (due to changes in personnel), PRC East originally planned to host three or four weeks of summer camp for up to 10 campers, age 7 to 10, each week. Due to the generosity of two organizations, the Ethel Sergeant Clark Smith Memorial Trust Fund and another anonymous donor, we were able to complete five weeks of camp and serve over 75 campers! Combining campers from the surrounding community with kids whose registration was covered by the grant funds proved to be a marvelous blend! The older kids all pitched in to help out those younger or smaller and smiles abounded.



Kids become a windfarm

by Mostardi's, a local nursery); produce from the garden; and a solar cooker creatively crafted from a pizza box! (Note: Office staff attendance was 100% on Thursdays, because the campers used the solar cookers to make Solar S'mores.) We sent home tired but very happy campers who have all committed to a return voyage through environmental camp next year, and hopefully a voyage into a more environmentally sensitive lifestyle! Watch for announcements of “Hands on the Environment Summer Camp 2005!” 



Summer camper makes recycled paper

Each camp day featured a “special” topic or theme.

Monday the campers learned about littering and recycling, and made their own recycled paper. Tuesdays were devoted to water testing and watersheds, with frogs and turtles and rolling “raindrops” down the slope of a mini-watershed. A field trip to the Colonial Pennsylvania Plantation and a creek walk highlighted each Wednesday. Thursday found the campers posing with pinwheels to replicate a wind farm as they learned about energy conservation and alternative sources of energy. On Fridays the kids were up to their elbows in the organic children's garden. Each day ended with the kids taking something home—booklets generously donated by PA CleanWays and Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful; crafts from recycled materials; compost towers they made and used to compost lunch scraps; terrariums constructed from old 2-liter bottles (and plants donated

In addition to the Great PA Cleanup, PRC celebrated Earth Day 2004 at the following events:

- Earth Day Extravaganza at the Pittsburgh Zoo and PPG Aquarium (co-sponsor)
- 2nd Annual Earth Day on Walnut Event with the Shadyside Chamber of Commerce
- Westmoreland County Earth Day event at St. Vincent College
- Earth Day at Duquesne University, Earth Day Celebration at Perkiomen Watershed Conservancy
- Earth Day at the Philadelphia Zoo, Exelon Corporation's Earth Day Event



The Litterbug is reprimanded by attendees of the Duquesne University Earth Day Celebration.

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An Active Summer on the Billboard Front

PRC East continues to work on billboard control along our roadways and the removal of illegal billboards. We received a second round of funding from the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation for 2003-2004 to continue work on effective billboard control in Pennsylvania. The goal of the project is to help "protect public investment in the surface transportation system by helping communities assess, plan, and control general outdoor advertising impacts within their jurisdictions."

This may sound like a simple task, but with the outdoor advertising industry, even removal of illegal signs is not as easy as it appears. The sample survey we conducted in 2001 in partnership with SCRUB, a Philadelphia-based billboard control advocacy group, indicated that a number of billboards in Philadelphia were illegal and/or without permits. Based on our findings, we initiated discussions with the city, the Federal



Before action by PRC and SCRUB

Highway Administration and PennDOT to try to remedy the situation. One positive spin-off of the 2001 sample survey was the removal of newly erected illegal signs. Shortly after the survey was completed, several new signs popped up in the survey area. A new billboard company had come into town and was slapping billboards up in low-income neighborhoods -- in violation of Philadelphia's sign control law. When we reported these signs to the Philadelphia Department of Licenses and Inspections, with documentation that these signs were new, they promptly got a court order to have the signs removed. Since SCRUB and PRC began working closely together, we estimate that we have secured the removal of over 50 illegal or nonconforming billboards in Philadelphia and prevented construction of 50 new billboards and wall-wraps in protected areas.

A long-standing goal for the partnership is to have the Commonwealth do a systematic survey of billboards along the interstates and major highways in Philadelphia. The resulting database will allow for effective control of billboards in this area. After three years' work, PennDOT has contracted an engineering firm to do just that along Interstates 95 and 76 in Philadelphia. PRC and SCRUB will be meeting with the engineers and surveyors assigned to the project in the upcoming months and look forward to helping them in their work.

Why are these billboard surveys so important? Without accurate information, it is impossible to improve the visual environment of our

communities through control of billboards and other forms of visual blight. And why is fighting visual blight so important? Recent studies indicate that the visual environment in our communities is important for community health, safety and welfare. Visual clutter and blight from excessive signs, litter and roadside clutter have been linked to an increase in stress



After Action - one more illegal billboard gone.

levels and a decrease in a sense of well-being and ease. Dr. Jack Nasar, of Ohio State University, has conducted studies of residents and visitors to evaluate how their image of a community impacts their opinions and actions in that community. The study concluded that beauty in a community is not simply a matter of preference. People show a strong liking for areas that have natural features and for areas that have a sense of order, upkeep and a lack of clutter. When billboards and litter clutter our streets, they decrease that sense of naturalness, order and upkeep. People react to that by not shopping in the area, not visiting the area, or not investing in the area. Therefore, visual blight has a direct impact on our communities and should not be ignored.

It is somewhat ironic that these studies reach conclusions that the garden clubs and other community activists understood intuitively back in the 1930's and 1940's. These groups organized state Roadside Councils, like PRC, to fight visual blight because they understood the importance of a community's appearance from its highways and streets.

It is not hard to make our roadways into areas of beauty. But few communities look at the issue of roadside enhancement and visual blight in their comprehensive planning. If there is no mention in any planning document of the need to protect the visual environment along highways and roadways, a local billboard law can be in trouble. Find out what your community's planning documents or regulations say about enhancing or protecting the visual environment of your roadscapes. PRC can help strengthen these documents.

Learn more about how to control outdoor advertising in your community by reading our citizen's manual "Signs, Billboards, and Your Community." Write PRC East for your free copy, or download the online version at www.prc.org/community_visual_blight.html. Working together, we can fulfill the vision of the men and women who founded PRC 65 years ago and make sure we have a Scenic Pennsylvania for our children's futures.




Collections for Hard to Recycle Materials Continue Record of Success

Wet. Soaking. Drenched. Successful.

That just about says it all when describing PRC's July 17th collection for hard to recycle materials at Construction Junction. Sixteen enthusiastic volunteers helped approximately 160 individuals drop off latex paint, electronics, tires, and/or appliances on the rainy day. A scrumptious lunch donated by the Square Café offered a respite for the hard working volunteers. During the May 15th collection, PRC collected nearly four tons of latex paint, 206 tires, 4,726 pounds of electronics, and numerous appliances.

The purpose of these collections is to provide individuals with a responsible disposal outlet for materials and an opportunity to have their materials recycled or refurbished.

PRC thanks Office Depot for sponsoring the 2004 collections and recognizes the Square Café, Reclamere, and Appliance Warehouse for their involvement. The final collection for 2004 is Saturday, September 18, at Construction Junction from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Call 412-431-4449, ext. 243 or visit www.prc.org for more information. 




PRC board member Barry Stutts (right) confirms that the paint is latex at the July 17th collection.



Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) Collections 2004

“We’re moving in three weeks. What can we do with all of our partially filled paint cans and other chemicals?” “My elderly parent passed away a month ago and we’re closing up the house. We found shelves full of thirty year old chemicals in the garage. Help!” These are just two of the queries that routinely come into PRC’s office. Until recently PRC couldn’t offer a practical solution.

Fortunately, PRC staff can now direct western PA residents to a Southwestern PA Household Hazardous Waste Task Force sponsored collection event. The Task Force is an evolving partnership of individuals representing governmental, private, and public organizations dedicated to facilitating the proper collection and disposal of HHW and minimizing its generation through public education. PRC is currently the Task Force project administrator, overseeing the day-to-day operations of this complex multi-county undertaking.

Building on its highly successful 2003 collection season, the Task Force is sponsoring five regional collections in 2004. To date, the three collections in Allegheny, Armstrong, and Lawrence counties have served more than 2,000 households and facilitated the collection of over 200,000 pounds of HHW. The remaining events in Butler and Westmoreland counties will help even more area residents to safely dispose of toxic household chemicals in an environmentally responsible manner. For more information about the Task Force and the topic of HHW visit www.swpahhw.org. 



A Task Force volunteer surveys one of the many cars in line at the HHW collection in Allegheny County.



Earth Day continued from page 8...

Activities included appearances by the Litterbug Mascot, a litter prevention display, a live interview on the Jane Nugent Garden Show, Recycling Olympics, and the Recycling is Magic show. Thousands of residents turned out to show their concern for the environment by participating in this year's activities. If you are interested in volunteering at one of next year's Earth Day activities, contact PRC at info@prc.org. Remember to do your part to make Earth Day every day!

Thanks

to the following
sponsors for making
PRC events possible:

*The Great PA Cleanups in Pittsburgh,
Ridley Creek State Park, and Hempfield
Township (Allegheny, Delaware, and
Westmoreland Counties)*

Dominion Foundation
Waste Management
Starbucks Coffee Company
Giant Eagle Conservation
The East End Food Co-op
Bridgestone-Firestone
Appliance Warehouse
The Home Depot
Whole Foods Market
Pennsylvania Food Merchants'
Association
Pennsylvania Soft Drink Association
Wawa, Inc.
Pathmark, Inc.
Back to Nature
Ironworkers Bank
PA Department of Transportation
Genuardi Family Markets
Unisys
Dept of Conservation & Natural Resources
Forest Beautification Program
Sheetz
Shop 'n Save
Sunoco

Collections for Hard to Recycle Items

Office Depot
Verizon Wireless
The Square Café
Allegheny County Health Department
City of Pittsburgh Recycling Division
Construction Junction

Barnyard & Pasture Best Management Practices Demonstration

Brandywine Conservancy Environmental
Management Center
Willistown Conservation Trust
Department of Environmental Protection
Growing Greener Grant Program
USDA Natural Resources Conservation
Service

We could use a few things..

Everyone needs a little help now and then - and PRC's eastern office would be grateful for the following (by the way, donations are tax deductible):

Wish List

Skilled Volunteer Help - carpenter,
stone mason, painter, electrician,
tree surgeon.
Insulation for attic
Paint Brushes/Painting Supplies
Hedge trimmer
Gas-powered weed trimmer
Assorted scissors
Hand towels
Dehumidifier
Children's games
Four-foot conference table
Wood chipper--donation of,
or use of one.
Computers with at least Windows 98
operating system
Patio furniture/picnic table
Large fire extinguishers
Window air conditioners
Power tools (various)
Telephone system
Flash lights/emergency light system
Blender for paper making
File cabinets {2 or 4 drawer)
File folders & hanging folders
Microscopes / kits
Working TV 24"+
Loose-leaf binders
Sign maker (\$5,800)
New Awning (\$4,000)

2004 Calendar of Upcoming Events September

4 - **PRC West** Composting Class
15 - **PRC East** Composting Class
18 - Collection for Hard to Recycle
Items at Construction Junction
18 - HHW Collection in
Westmoreland County
20 - **PRC West** Composting Class
21 - **PRC West** Composting Class
23 - **PRC West** Composting Class
24 - Stash the Trash School Event
(Pittsburgh)
25 - **PRC West** Composting Class
28 - Stash the Trash Awards Ceremony
(Pittsburgh)

October

2-3 - Festival of the Salvage Arts at
Construction Junction
5 - **PRC West** Composting Class
6 - **PRC East** Composting Class
13 - **PRC West** Composting Class
15-17 - Zoo Boo at the Pittsburgh Zoo
and PPG Aquarium
16 - **PRC East** "Recycling Crafts"
workshop
22-24 - Zoo Boo at the Pittsburgh Zoo
and PPG Aquarium

November

9 - PRC's Annual Awards Dinner
(Philadelphia)
17 - **PRC East** "Moving Toward a
Greener Lifestyle" workshop
18 - **PRC East** Composting Class

December

4 - **PRC East** "Nature Crafts"
workshop



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YOU CAN HELP SUPPORT US IN OUR MISSION BY MAKING GIFTS TO PRC DURING YOUR LIFETIME OR UNDER THE TERMS OF YOUR WILL THROUGH PLANNED GIVING.

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