

## Three Districts Hold Mini-Grant Funded Annual Conservation Tours: Westmoreland, Warren and Wyoming

Earlier this fall, three conservation districts held conservation tours that were funded, at least in part, with mini-grant funds. As is the goal with all mini-grant projects, these tours evaluated their participants for their learning and demonstrated an increase in the participants' knowledge of watersheds, nonpoint source pollution, and the impacts each person can have through daily habits and decision-making.



**The 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Westmoreland Conservation Tour**, titled "Top to Bottom in the Sewickley Creek Watershed", took place on September 26 with 56 participants. The Sewickley Creek Watershed provided an outstanding framework in which to present the concept "We All Live Downstream." Bus stops included the Lowber abandoned mine site, St. Boniface Woods' recent timber cut, Friendship Farms' award-winning agricultural BMPs, Mammoth Park to view lake sedimentation impacts, and sprawl near New Stanton where there is poor stormwater control due to lack of planning. Pre- and post-tests were given to participants and a follow-up survey was administered online. As a result of this tour, 20 participants reported an intention to install Stormwater BMPs and E&S Controls.



**The 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Warren Conservation Tour** was held on September 20<sup>th</sup> with 43 participants. The goal of the tour was to educate local decision-makers and the general public about conservation programs and practices within Warren County, as well as to encourage participants to take action on their own properties to reduce nonpoint source pollution. Information packets with fact sheets and other informative materials were distributed to all participants. The packets were also forwarded to important decision-makers such as State Representatives and Senators, County Commissioners, and various other agency personnel. The local newspaper, *Times Observer*, sent a reporter who followed up with a story in the newspaper. Participants visited two area farms, a rain garden, an irrigation system, and a dirt and gravel road site. As a result of this tour, 15 participants reported an intention to install Stormwater BMPs, 11 people to install Agricultural BMPs, and 3 people to install E & S Controls.



**The 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Wyoming Conservation Tour** was held on October 10<sup>th</sup> with 95 participants. This resource management and protection tour focused on the theme of "Sustainability in the Community". The goal of the tour was to provide an opportunity for the participants to learn how government, businesses and private landowners can work together to manage and protect our natural resources. The day-long tour was a perfect opportunity for participants to see what can be accomplished on their own land or in their own townships and included stops at 3 different stream restoration sites and two businesses practicing sustainability

efforts. The group was very excited to learn about how these projects can improve water quality throughout the entire watershed and how these improvements promote the “We All Live Downstream” concept. As a result of this project, 10 people reported being motivated to install Stormwater BMPs with more intending to do so in the future.

Please feel free to contact Mimi Thomas-Brooker of Westmoreland Conservation District (Mimi@wcdpa.com), Heather Wilcox of Warren Conservation District (Heather.Wilcox@pa.nacdnet.net) or Bernie Scalzo of Wyoming Conservation District (Bernard.Scalzo@pa.nacdnet.net) with any questions about these important projects that continue to heighten the public’s awareness of conservation issues and the impacts of our individual and collective actions.