

Innovative Flood Project Protects Schools, Businesses and Homes in New Kensington

The Westmoreland Conservation District recently completed a major, four-year, multi-phased flood protection project in New Kensington. The project will safeguard the businesses, families and schools along the Little Pucketa Creek that have been in harm's way for decades.

The new debris basin, a bowl-shaped - one acre tract of land, acts as a strainer that catches debris that the creek picks up as it flows along the stream's course. The "strainer" collects pollution such as soil, garbage and the like and prevents it from gathering downstream and contributing to flooding problems. The basin is a unique design, the first of its kind in Westmoreland County. In neighboring Allegheny County, a debris basin was constructed to help relieve similar problems along the flood-prone Girty's Run in Allegheny County, which runs through Millvale.

Some 14,000 citizens and businesses downstream of this work near Valley High School benefit from this work with less chance for flooding and cleaner water.

The project was a joint effort from many throughout the community that ushered this project to fruition and helped to secure state grants including: the Westmoreland County Commissioners; former state Senator Sean Logan and former state Representative John Pallone; PennDOT; the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, Pucketa and Chartiers Watershed Association; the Colcom Foundation; the New Kensington-Arnold School District, and the Municipal Sanitary Authority of the City of New Kensington.

