



PAEE JOURNAL

The Journal of the Pennsylvania Association of Environmental Educators

Schuylkill Conservation District 1206 AG Center Drive Pottsville, PA 17901

www.paeen.net Summer 2006



Inside: Conference 2006 Highlights

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The PAEE Journal is published regularly by the PA Association of Environmental Educators. Individuals or organizations are encouraged to submit suggestions, ideas, articles, and items to the PAEE office. All submissions must be typed. E-mail is the preferred method for submitting, but mailing or faxing is also acceptable.

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"The Pennsylvania Association for Environmental Educators unites, supports, and inspires individuals to be stewards of the environment".

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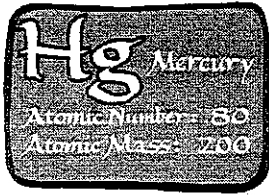
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On the Cover: PA Game Commissioner, Joe Stefko, led a field study into the Laurel Highlands at the 2006 PAEE Conference. The highlight of the trip was sighting a bear in its winter den. Photo by photo journalist, Karen Hohman. Other conference photos in this issue by Karen, Nancy Wells, and Natalie Price.



Legislative Update *By Jean Wallace*

Now is the time to step up and join a crucial effort to protect the health and well-being of Pennsylvania's children by supporting the Rendell administration's

stringent regulations to reduce emissions of toxic mercury from the Commonwealth's power plants.

Mercury is a neurotoxin that builds up in wildlife, particularly fish, and in people. Mercury endangers subsistence fishermen and recreational anglers, but especially pregnant women, unborn babies and children, who are most at risk for health effects that include brain and nervous system damage. U.S. Environmental Protection Agency scientists report that more than one child in six born in the United States could be at risk of having developmental disorders as a result of mercury exposure in the mother's womb. That means one child in six may develop disorders that result in life-long learning disabilities. That is just wrong and it is preventable.

Governor Rendell recently proposed an aggressive plan to significantly cut mercury emissions from coal-fired electric generating plants by 2010, with an ultimate goal of controlling 90 percent of the mercury pollution from this source by 2015. Most importantly, the Governor's plan will require in-state reductions of mercury pollution -- unlike the federal EPA mercury program that would allow Pennsylvania's dirtiest plants

to avoid reducing mercury emissions by purchasing pollution credits from cleaner plants in other states.

There is compelling reason for Pennsylvania to take action within its borders. Pennsylvania has 36 coal-fired power plants with 78 electric generating units that represent 20,000 megawatts of capacity. These units accounted for approximately three-fourths of the more than 5 tons of mercury emitted into the air from all contamination sources in the Commonwealth, ranking us second only to Texas in terms of total mercury emissions. In addition, according to the latest Toxic Release Inventory report, which EPA released April 12, Pennsylvania moved from third to second in the total amount of electric generating unit-specific mercury emissions in 2004. The Commonwealth previously had been third behind Texas and Ohio, respectively. Enough is enough.

Unfortunately, there is an aggressive effort underway in the Commonwealth to block the adoption of our toxic mercury reduction rule.

Two bills have been introduced -- S.B. 2610 and H.B. 1201 -- that would mandate that we follow the lead of the federal government and adopt their less-protective standard for toxic mercury. These bills will prevent us from doing the right thing for the health and well-being of our children. That's just wrong. Join us in this effort to do what's right for the health of all Pennsylvanians, especially our children.

PA Urban IPM Program Partners with New Jersey

UNIVERSITY PARK, Pa. - It is one of the nation's most significant and fastest-growing chronic health threats to children under 18 and the leading cause of death in the elderly. It's called asthma, and a Penn State program is working to combat its spread in urban areas by addressing asthma's chief causes: pests and pesticide misuse.

The Pennsylvania IPM Program (PAIPM) and the New Jersey IPM Program are collaborating in an effort in Philadelphia, Pa. and Camden, NJ to identify residents at risk of developing asthma due to pest and pesticide triggers. According to Lyn Garling, education specialist with the Pennsylvania IPM Program, inner-city residents are especially at risk for developing asthma and other health

problems from multiple sources of environmental pollutants and toxins. "In low-income urban communities, exposure to pests and pesticide is an everyday occurrence," says Garling.



"Residents living with serious indoor pest infestations become demoralized and desperate to get rid of these creatures, so they routinely and indiscriminately use 'bug bombs', 'bug sprays' or 'rat baits'. Recent studies indicate both pests and pesticides can cause and aggravate asthma and other health issues, especially with our children and elderly residents," she explains.

IPM is a kid-safe, economical,

and scientific approach to managing pests. IPM integrates knowledge of pest identity and biology with pest monitoring so that action, if needed, can be taken at just the right time. In addition, IPM uses a combination of management tactics that are more likely to be safe and effective.

Two years ago, the Pennsylvania IPM Program formed the Philadelphia School and Community IPM Partnership (PSCIP) in low-income African American neighborhoods in West Philadelphia. According to Garling, members include parents, students, administrators, teachers, agencies, churches, and community group or organization representatives working together to promote IPM as a means to reducing

IPM(Continued)

IPM (continued from page 2)

the risks associated with pests and pesticides. PA IPM and New Jersey IPM recently won a Northeast Regional Integrated Pest Management grant to further their work. These funds are administered by the Northeast Regional IPM Center, a part of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The current project will work to expand the groups' goals of reducing pesticide use through educational outreach throughout the targeted communities.

The program will first identify residents' attitudes and current activities concerning pests and pesticide use in the West Powelton neighborhood in Philadelphia and Camden, NJ. PA IPM has already been working in the West Powelton through PSCIP. "In Camden, our target community is within the Heart of Camden Program. The Heart of Camden program is an urban renewal project that renovates run down housing in Camden, NJ and then sells the homes at a discount to disadvantaged families. It is similar to the Habitat for Humanity program," Garling explains.

Each resident that participates will receive an IPM resource kit containing information about using IPM to control pests, nontoxic traps with instructions,

and sealed containers to store food items. PA IPM will also survey local stores to find out the types of pesticides that are being sold to local residents.

In addition, the project will develop new outreach materials to meet the needs of their target communities. "The new materials will empower residents to take control of the pest problems and make positive changes in the home, reducing the health risks associated with both pests and pesticides," Garling explains. The group will work with urban health partners to develop brochures, radio spots, presentations and other forms of communications. They'll also begin developing more multi-lingual publications, starting with Spanish. "We'll take advantage of the many social service agencies in both Philadelphia and Camden to help us distribute the materials to our target audiences. The materials will also be made available on our Web site at <http://paipm.org>."

Garling estimates that at least 500 residents and six health care organizations and their staff will be educated on pests, pesticide use and IPM. "In addition, we'll also be 'training the trainer' with various organizations so that a potentially a much larger population can be reached through their own clientele."

According to Ed Rajotte, PA IPM coordinator, the project will help address the new Federal IPM Roadmap that requires addressing urban pest problems. "IPM programming in the U.S. has mainly addressed agriculture. However, to understand and manage pest problems in urban environments, we have to go beyond looking for parallels from agriculture and moving them into the 'city limits.' We need to start from scratch by understanding the situation of our clients just as IPM implementers did with their agriculture clients more than 30 years ago," Rajotte explains.

For more information on this project and the PA IPM's Community IPM Program, visit their Web site at <http://paipm.cas.psu.edu/community.html>. Or, you may contact Michelle Niedermeier at the Philadelphia IPM office, phone (215) 435-9685, or e-mail mxn14@psu.edu.



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For everyone interested in environmental education.

