



## The Chairman's Corner

Rep. Scott E. Hutchinson, Chairman

The Joint Conservation Committee has been examining the Pennsylvania Heritage Parks Program (PHPP) in an effort to provide additional resources for the program, and heighten its presence on the radar screens of economic development, education, community preservation and tourism. The PHPP, administered by the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR), provides a

regional strategy for identifying, conserving and enhancing Pennsylvania's rich industrial history and the natural, cultural, recreational and scenic resources associated with it.

Within the last year alone, the committee has visited six of the state's nine officially designated heritage regions and its two proposed regions (with plans to visit all 11 regions), sponsored a statewide meeting of stakeholders, heritage region managers and DCNR officials, and provided information to members of the General Assembly on the needs of heritage regions and their proximity to all Pennsylvania citizens. Several members (including myself) have both testified and written letters in support of increased funding for the PHPP during budget hearings.

The committee also asked several questions centered on the theme of, "Have you ever visited a Heritage Park," as part of Mansfield University's "The Public Mind 2001" statewide telephone survey. You will find the survey results included as an insert in this month's *Environmental Synopsis*. Because of this special insert, Research Briefs will reappear in next month's edition of the *Synopsis*.

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Craig D. Brooks, Director

How did you use oil today? If you brushed your teeth with a plastic toothbrush, wore a nylon jacket, drank orange juice from a paper carton sealed in wax, or drove on roadways paved with asphalt then you began your day by using products made from oil.

Many people probably think that the first oil well was drilled in Texas, but actually it was drilled in Pennsylvania. The discovery of oil in Venango County in 1859 by Colonel Edwin Drake made our state the site of the world's first commercial oil well. No one at the time could have estimated the impact this discovery would have, or the legacy or heritage that would follow. It shaped the industrial revolution in the United States and ultimately changed the face of the world.

Committee members and staff had the opportunity to visit several heritage areas this summer including the Oil Heritage Region and in particular, Drake Well Museum in Titusville with its full-sized replica of Drake's well. At the museum you can observe a re-creation of a Pennsylvania oil production operation of the 1920's and see how oil wells were maintained and equipment repaired.

In places like Pithole City and Petroleum Center you can get a closer look at oil boomtowns that sprang up overnight and disappeared almost as fast, and learn the valuable cultural and historic significance this region played throughout the world. You can hear stories about how nitroglycerine was introduced into the oil fields of Venango County, the rags-to-riches story of "Coal Oil Johnny" and how the Oil Creek and Titusville Railroad provided a unique service in 1944 by carrying materials for the war effort at passenger train speed.

Other heritage areas in Pennsylvania have equally unique significance. At the beginning of the 20th century, southwestern Pennsylvania's smelters, foundries, machine shops and mills forged raw materials into steel. The makings of "Steel City" is uniquely a Pittsburgh story, one that shaped America's rise as steel maker to the world and had a profound impact on United States labor policies.



The banks of the Monongahela River hold landmarks of the former Carnegie Steel property that tell the story of the 1892 Battle of Homestead and the struggle between the union and Carnegie Steel Pinkerton guards. The sites, which include the Carrie Furnace in Rankin and Swissvale, and the Hot Metal Bridge and Pump House in Munhall are important to the rise of the steel industry, the

history of labor unions, the creation of wealth in Pennsylvania, and the overall attraction for immigrant life in the Commonwealth.

When combined with sites like the Carnegie Science Center and Pittsburgh's Voyager (a river-based learning center), these heritage areas have become a network of industrial and cultural sites that identify, preserve, and interpret the significance of Pennsylvania's historic resources.

Pennsylvania's oil and steel heritage is only a small portion of the rich heritage that the Commonwealth has to offer and is the focus of this month's *Environmental Synopsis*. I encourage everyone to visit these heritage regions as we did. I guarantee that you won't be disappointed.

# On The Horizon...

a look at upcoming committee events

- Sept. 11, 12 noon - 3 p.m., Hearing Room 1, North Office Bldg. — Infiltration Task Force Meeting.
- Sept. 13-14. Tour of Chesapeake Bay water quality projects hosted by the Chesapeake Bay Foundation.
- Oct. 1 at 11:30 a.m., Hearing Room 1, North Office Bldg. — Environmental Issues Forum. Guest presenter is Dr. T. Allan Comp, historian with the federal Office of Surface Mining.
- Oct. 15 at 9 a.m., Hearing Room 1, North Office Bldg. — Infiltration Task Force Meeting.
- Oct. 18 at 10 a.m., Penn Stater Conference Center, State College – Forestry Task Force Meeting. Discussion of forest legacy program.
- Oct. 23 at 8:30 a.m. — Environmental Issues Forum. Guest presenter is Prof. Susan Meo of Shippensburg University. Location to be announced.
- Oct. 29, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., Hearing Room 1, North Office Bldg. – Infrastructure Workshop. A joint workshop with the South-Central Assembly for Effective Governance.

## Committee Chronicles...

a review of some memorable committee events

Here are some scenes from the Joint Conservation Committee's series of tours of the state's heritage regions in July and August. The committee visited the Lumber Heritage Region, Oil Heritage Region, Rivers of Steel Heritage Area, Schuylkill River Heritage Corridor, Delaware and Lehigh Canal National Heritage Corridor and the proposed Lancaster-York Heritage Area.



Oil Heritage Region manager Marilyn Black and JCC staffer Geoff MacLaughlin demonstrate the original method of oil drilling at the Drake Well Museum in Titusville.



Committee chairman Rep. Scott Hutchinson (right) with committee member Rep. Tom Petrone (D-27) (left) and Rivers of Steel Heritage Area Executive Director Augie Carlino during tour of Pittsburgh's Carnegie Science Center.



The survey results showed that while the term Heritage Park was unfamiliar to many Pennsylvanians, heritage is an important consideration in vacation planning, and interestingly, it's entirely possible that individuals may have visited a heritage region and not even known it (see insert).

Survey results demonstrated the following:

— 69 percent of those responding said that heritage/historic sites are important in selecting a vacation location. (Other top choices, all of which can be found in heritage areas, are relaxation [94%], outdoor recreation [83%], and visiting family or close friends [83%]).

— 72 percent of those responding were unfamiliar with the term Heritage Park.

— Of 20 sites within Pennsylvania's Heritage Parks, selected as the most visited by Heritage Park managers, only two - Independence Hall and Gettysburg National Military Park - have been visited by a majority of the survey respondents.

— 68 percent or more of those responding have never visited 17 of the 20 sites.

— Regional proximity increased visitorship between 14-29 percent in 13 of the 20 sites.

The survey results underscore the need to provide heritage regions with more resources to carry out their mission and to do a better job of marketing and promoting the regions. Heritage Park managers themselves, in response to a committee survey, have stated that salary, staff and office support was inadequate to carry out the parks' mission, with staff shortages listed as the biggest drawbacks.

Similarly, a report entitled *Moving Heritage Tourism Forward in Pennsylvania* released in May by the Center for Rural Pennsylvania and other state agencies found that "...the current organizational structure and funding levels are insufficient if Pennsylvania wants to make significant advances in the amount and quality of heritage tourism in the state over the coming years."

The funding situation will grow even more acute with the expected acceptance of the two new additional regions - Lancaster/York and Lumber Heritage - into the PHPP system. Funding in the budget specifically for heritage regions has only grown from \$2 million in 1992 when there were three designated regions to a little over \$3 million in 2001, when there are nine with the potential to increase to 11. That is a drop in the state budget bucket.

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Even with the use of Growing Greener funds, and a \$1.3 million increase in park funding in this budget which may provide some additional funding for heritage regions, funding has not kept pace with either the number of regions or scope of projects, much less future plans. As far back as 1998, a recommendation was made stemming from hearings held by the JCC to increase funding by \$2.5 million a year. That need has only intensified.

Just in case you are one of the 72 percent unfamiliar with the PHPP, the nine officially designated Heritage Regions are: Oil Heritage Region; Rivers of Steel Heritage Area, National Road Heritage Park; Lincoln Highway Heritage Corridor; Allegheny Ridge State Heritage Park; Schuylkill River Heritage Corridor; Endless Mountains Heritage Region; Lackawanna Heritage Valley; and the Delaware and Lehigh Canal National Heritage Corridor. The two proposed regions are the Lancaster-York Heritage Area and the Lumber Heritage Region.

There is general agreement that Pennsylvania's heritage region system provides a nationwide model. Five of the 23 nationally designated heritage areas are found in the Commonwealth. This makes it all the more imperative that we provide the resources necessary for heritage regions to grow and flourish.

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