

Local projects win grant funds from the DEP

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By Mercury staff

Numerous area environmental projects were awarded their share of more than half a million dollars in grant funds from the Department of Environmental Protection last week.

The Environmental Education grants, totaling \$538,000, were given to 102 nonprofits, schools, institutions of higher education and conservation districts in the state.

The money comes from a program established in 1993 in the Environmental Education Act which requires 5 percent of fines and penalties leveled for pollution be set aside to educate the public about their environment and the need for better stewardship.

"Knowledge is power and we want to give communities the power to become more active in protecting the environment," DEP acting Secretary Michael Krancer said. "These programs will help Pennsylvanians of all ages to learn more about what we can do to promote sustainability and to help keep Pennsylvania a beautiful place."

The following area programs received funding in this round of grant awards:

Amity Township Environmental Advisory Council: Awarded \$1,000 to develop a booth for Amity Township Community Days promoting and explaining energy efficiency.

Berks County Conservation District Awarded \$3,810 to create signage at the agricultural center in Bern promoting best management practices for stormwater runoff.

Berks Career and Technology Center: Awarded \$7,500 to develop an outreach learning lab on geothermal heating and cooling, solar photovoltaic systems and solar thermal systems.

Berks County Conservancy: Awarded \$3,000 for an Eco-Awareness School Garden Project that will fund two teacher sessions and develop a scholastic garden kit.