

Centre County Senior Environmental Corps Newsletter October 2018



Special thank you to Steve Lupis, (now a resident of Colorado), who helped establish the CCPaSEC, shown sampling Wolf Run

Chesapeake Bay *Washington Post*

For the first time in the 33 years that scientists have assessed the health of the Chesapeake Bay, the nation's largest estuary showed improvement in every region, a likely sign that a massive federal cleanup plan is working.



The bay's most important species — blue crabs and striped bass, which support commercial and recreational fisheries, and anchovies, the foundation of its food chain — earned top scores in a report card released 8/11/2018. Bright green underwater grasses — which help protect young fish before they venture into the Atlantic Ocean — are now thriving, even in some places where such vegetation had disappeared.

"While we can celebrate progress being made in the restoration of Chesapeake Bay, we can't take our foot off of the accelerator," Peter



Goodwin, president of the environmental science center, said in a statement

Friday. "It is critically important that we continue to invest in science and monitoring to improve management actions which ensure that the bay continues on its path to recovery."

Keep ticks away

Scientists at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) think they can fight the scourge of tick-borne diseases by encouraging people to douse their clothes in a chemical called permethrin.

In a new study, published in the *Journal of Medical Entomology* (May 24), researchers showed that permethrin-treated clothes can seriously mess up a tick's stride. Stick some adult ticks on a pair of regular pants tilted at a 45-degree angle, and 100 percent of them will still be clinging on 5 minutes later. Stick adult ticks on a pair of tilted pants treated with permethrin, though, and 42.5 percent will tumble off entirely. Even those that remain get seriously messed up. The researchers found that only 25 percent of the ticks were moving normally even 24 hours after exposure. *Originally published on [Live Science](#)*

"The discovery of the longhorn tick is another reminder of the importance of tick prevention for Pennsylvanians," Secretary of Health Dr. Rachel Levine said. "Ticks can be found in your own backyard, so it is essential to wear long sleeves and pants, use insect repellent containing DEET to help keep you safe from ticks and the diseases they carry. It is also important to

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check yourself and your pets for ticks, as pets can bring ticks indoors."

Officials said female longhorn ticks reproduce asexually and a single tick can reproduce and lay 2,000 eggs after feeding on a host. Cattle, pets, small mammals, birds and humans are all potential hosts.



By John Zaktansky jzaktansky@dailyitem.com

RADON from Fracking

According to a new study published by the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences, the level of Radon in Pennsylvania homes is increasing in areas where hydraulic fracturing is used to produce natural gas from the Marcellus tight shale formation.

Researchers at Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health found that radon levels in homes in Pennsylvania have been on the rise ever since fracking of the Marcellus shale began in 2004. The study, published in Environmental Health Perspectives, looked at radon levels in more than 700,000 structures between 2004 and 2013.

Pennsylvania has one of the most serious radon problems in the country. An estimated 40 percent of Pennsylvania homes have radon levels above Environmental Protection Agency's action guideline of 4 picocuries per liter.

Radon is the number one cause of lung cancer among non-smokers. It is a radioactive gas which comes from the natural decay of uranium in soil, rock and water and gets into air we breathe. It typically moves up through the ground to the air above and into homes through cracks and other holes in the foundation. Radon from soil gas is the main cause of problems.

Sometimes radon enters the home through well water.

What you should do

Testing is the only way to know if your home has elevated levels of radon.

An easy home test kit can be purchased at hardware or home improvement stores for about \$20 to \$30. You may also hire a state-certified testing company. Because radon levels are often highest in the basement, placing your test there is a good idea. However, radon levels can also be high above ground, even in homes without basements, so the ground floor is also a good location to test. If your radon test result is 4-8 pCi/L, you can do a second long-term (365 days) test to get a better idea of the annual average or do another short-term test (2-7 days). In either case, if the result is still 4 pCi/L or higher, you should take corrective action to reduce the radon levels in your home.

<https://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/drinking/private/wells/disease/radon.html>

My experience with radon. *Ken Johnson*

When I ran the Dukes County Senior Environmental Corps we participated with a Cape Cod RSVP program that assisted homeowners to test for radon. I was surprised to find it was a problem on Martha's Vineyard.

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Radon was on our mind when we moved to Pennsylvania. We noticed that many of the newer homes in Centre County had some form of radon abatement. Our new home had a passive radon system but it failed inspection. We had to have it modified with a power exhaust.

Radon in well water

My son's home is in Jaffrey NH. His well water has radon. He installed special equipment to outgas the radon.

If you suspect a problem and your drinking water comes from a private well, you may contact a state certification officer for a list of laboratories in our area that will perform tests on drinking water for a fee.

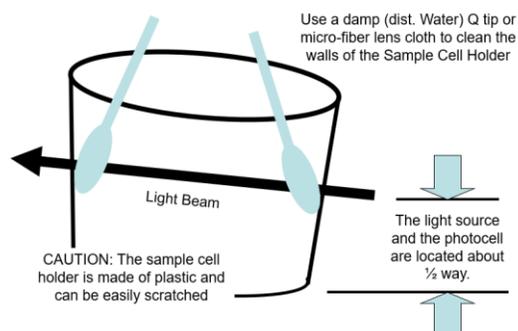
August 2018 Picnic *Betsie, Joyce and Patty*

On Aug 8 ten members and spouses of CCPaSEC traveled to Irvin Park in Curwensville to join the Clearfield county PaSEC for a picnic. Although the forecast called for a hot, humid day with possible thunderstorms the temperature was comfortable and we experienced just a short light rain. The day began with a social hour when members of the two groups had a chance to chat. Several of the Clearfield people were interested in coming to see how we do our monitoring. We shared a pot luck lunch. After lunch Clearfield Water Specialist Kelly Williams gave an interesting power point presentation titled "Restoration of the Deer Creek Watershed: The Ongoing Journey." Ms. Williams' presentation summarized the process of restoring the stream damaged by AMD (acid mine drainage). AMD is a major stream pollution problem in Clearfield County. Everyone enjoyed a pleasant day of good conversation, information and good food in a pleasant setting.

Colorimeter



Cleaning the DR-850 Colorimeter Sample cell holder



Please remember to keep the lid and sample vial together to avoid cross contamination.



