



QEW P GETS NEW LOOK

The Quittapahilla Educational Wetland Preserve is ready to be discovered and explored! The seven acre wetland site, located on the property of the Lebanon County Career and Technology Center, is now known as "the Quittapahilla Educational Wetland Preserve." This preserve provides a vital link to the health and welfare of the Lebanon community. In addition to providing a unique habitat for wildlife, the wetland protects our community from flooding, traps sediments and nutrients, and filters our local waters.

The wetland is already full of bustling animal and plant life! Muskrats, turtles, frogs, ducks, geese, herons, fish, and aquatic plants and insects can readily be seen at the wetlands. Boardwalks, interpretive signs, picnic tables, bathrooms, and educational resources and equipment have now been installed and are available for use by local teachers and students, thanks to generous grant monies from the Chesapeake Bay Commission, the Department of Community and Economic Development, the Greater Harrisburg Foundation, and the Department of Environmental Protection Environmental Education Grants Program. In addition, local businesses, including Lebanon Hardware, Valspar, Spinnaker, South Lebanon Township, the Lebanon Conservation District, and the Lebanon Valley Conservancy, have also supported the project. The facility is fully equipped to provide a natural, outdoor classroom where schools and community groups can experience, through hands-on learning, the value of wetlands and the creatures that inhabit it.

Most recently, a mural has been added to the façade of the pavilion, depicting a cross-section of a wetland and its flora and fauna. Local artists Elizabeth and Megan George of Wernersville—a mother/daughter team—designed and painted the mural at home in their art studio on 5x5 ft. sections of canvas. On Saturday, May 10th, the artists and a group of volunteers from the QEW P Committee helped glue the canvas to the pavilion's façade. Since this was Liz and Meg's first attempt, they contacted Michael Miller for advice and council. Michael Miller is the artist of many of the murals in Reading. The mural and the metal roll doors were the final additions to the pavilion and was made possible by the Greater Harrisburg Foundation.

Now that the site is fully operational, we hope you will come out and explore the wetlands. As a teacher, you can help your students gain knowledge about watersheds, wetlands, and related content in preparation for Pennsylvania's Environment and Ecology Academic Standards. You and your students can conduct water quality tests and take soil samples; explore wetland habitats and observe the variety of plants and animals which live here;

use the interpretive signs to learn more about wetlands and watersheds.

The general public is also welcome to tour the wetlands and view the waterfowl and wildlife that visit QEW P. Interpretive signs, a walking trail, and boardwalks will further assist you in your exploration of the wetlands.

We invite you to discover the many treasures hidden in your own back yard at the Quittapahilla Educational Wetland Preserve, at the intersection of Birch Road and Metro Drive - across from Home Depot .



THE POSITIVE SIDE TO THE HIGH PRICE OF GAS

Gas prices are near \$4 per gallon and it is likely that we'll never see prices under \$3.50 per gallon again. Most of us still don't have the alternatives we need to adapt with grace. We will run out of gas on I-80, ease our minivans over to the shoulder and tell the kids everything is O.K. We'll fall behind on Visa bills to pay for gas so we can buy food made ever more expensive by energy costs.

There is no faster way to change human behavior than to hit them where it hurts most—their pocketbook. Americans are finding options where there seemed to be none. They're ready to change — and waiting for their infrastructure to catch up. They are driving to commuter-rail lines only to find that no parking spots remain. They are running fewer errands and trading in their SUVs for a more fuel-efficient car. Public-transit use is at a 50-year high. Gas purchases are down 2% to 3%. And all those changes bring secondary, hard-earned benefits.

So what are the benefits of this increase in fuel costs?

- ◆ **Globalized jobs return home.** The cost of making and importing products is starting to make doing business in the U.S. look more feasible.
- ◆ **Sprawl Stalls.** Across the country, real estate agents are reporting that many home buyers are looking to

move closer to cities where either the job is closer or mass transit opportunities are more available for commuting.

- ◆ **Four-day Work Weeks.** Companies, colleges, and governments are moving to 4-day work weeks in order to save energy. Brevard Community College in Cocoa, Florida, went to 4 days for the 2007 summer session and saved \$268,000 in energy costs. Other unforeseen benefits included the reduction of sick leave by 50%, and turnover of staff dropped 44%.
- ◆ **Less Pollution.** As people consume less fuel, vehicle emissions will drop—resulting in less smog, bluer skies, more “fresh air”, and healthier living.
- ◆ **More Frugality.** Trucking companies are using software to help identify optimal places for drivers to refuel and the most efficient delivery routes. Waste haulers are checking tire pressure twice a day instead of every couple of days. We’re all wasting less. Vespa scooter sales increased 106% in May compared with the same time last year; Ford SUV sales dropped 55% in June.
- ◆ **Fewer Traffic Deaths.** Every year, about 40,000 people die in traffic accidents in the US. If you are age 5-34, you are more likely to die from a car accident than any other way. Higher gas prices cause many of us to drive more slowly to increase our fuel efficiency, or to drive less—which means fewer car accidents & deaths. Researchers are expecting as many as 1,000 fewer deaths per month.
- ◆ **Cheaper Insurance.** If you are driving less, you could qualify for lower car insurance rates. For example, if you have stopped driving to work, your classification has changed to “pleasure driver,” and you could save 10-15%, according to the Consumer Federation of America.
- ◆ **Less Obesity.** People are walking and biking more and are eating out less when gas prices are high. A permanent \$1 hike in prices may cut obesity 10%, saving thousands of lives and billions of dollars a year in health care. It may not be just the price of gas—more people are focusing on weight, exercise, community, and healthy living.
- ◆ **Less Traffic.** Travel on all roads dropped 2.1% in the first 4 months of 2008. People are using public transit, where/when possible. In Boston, turnpike use declined by 600,000 cars in May and officials are pleading with public-transit passengers to travel at nonpeak times.

By Amanda Bradley—*TIME Magazine*, July 14, 2008 pp 38-39

THE RACE TO OWN THE ARCTIC

A race at—and to—the top of the world has begun. And the outcome of the race could affect the lives and pocket-books of every American. It’s a race of scientists on ice-breaking ships, mapping the ocean floor to see who has rightful ownership to the sea floor and the wealth of natural gas and oil which lies below. If the race goes well, the United States stands to gain the rights to the oil and gas reserves under the ocean floor—an area 20 times larger than Kuwait.

But if other nations gain control of the disputed area, security may be handicapped. Some scientists fear that if the US doesn’t lead the way toward diplomatic solutions, a war could break out to decide who has ownership of the Arc-

tic Sea, it’s mineral rights below, and its shipping routes above. Eight countries surround the 5.5 million square miles of sea and land above the Arctic Circle. The area has some of the toughest conditions on Earth—subzero temperatures, icebergs that can destroy ships, and terrain that has killed hundreds of explorers.

Until recently, the Arctic’s wealth was too difficult to reach. But since the warming of the North Pole is occurring twice as fast as the rest of the planet, new shipping routes are opening and access to this area is now more easily reached. “As the ice shrinks and technology improves, it’s likely, if you live in Maine, that your gasoline will soon be coming from the Russian Arctic via icebreaking tankers,” says Mead Treadwell, chair of the U.S. Arctic Research Committee.

The new shipping routes will cut off more than 3,000 miles going from China to New York. Each trip would save as much as \$2 million on fuel and fees from the Panama Canal—savings that could be passed on to the consumer.

The melting icecaps will allow access to the annual estimate of \$1.4 billion worth of natural gas for the next 25 years. Arctic oil has already helped make Russia the world’s second



largest oil producer.

Scientists estimate the passage will be permanently ice-free during the summers sometime between 2013 and 2040. This could be big business for a town like Dutch Harbor, Alaska, which may become a trade hub as important as Singapore is today, as significant tonnage of world shipping passes through the town. That’s why the race is on to draw boundaries and why American, Russian, and Norwegian scientists were in the Arctic this summer mapping the sea floor.

Although Arctic relations remain friendly, disputes have erupted. Canadian and American claims overlap near Alaska. Russia claims regions bigger than the land masses of France and Spain combined. Canadian officials insist the Northwest Passage belongs to their country, while the U.S. wants it to be international. Some Arctic experts fear the war of words may turn into something far worse.

In the summer of 2007, a Russian mini-sub dropped a flag on the sea bottom at the North Pole. This sparked interest and debate and the race to see who will own the Arctic.

By Bob Reiss, *Reading Eagle PARADE*, June 1, 2008



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