Buildings on unstable soils are subject to damage from landslides.

PREVENTING LAND USE PROBLEMS WITH THE USE OF THE SOIL SURVEY

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Today, Pennsylvanians are paying dearly for rushing into land deals without looking at the soil. In their desire to own property, people are purchasing all kinds of land. Millions of dollars are spent annually by landowners in correcting problems caused by improper use of the soil.

Recently in Pittsburgh, after a period of heavy rainfall, a number of homes were extensively damaged by landslides because of unstable soils. In Chester County, Mrs. William E. Pulliam purchased a home on a slowly permeable soil and soon learned her septic system did not work. “It cost over $1,000 to relocate our system in a soil adequate for sewage disposal,” Mrs. Pulliam reported. These situations have one thing in common, they are related to the soil. If advanced consideration had been given to the soils, most of these problems could have been avoided.

Usually when individual problems such as those mentioned above become serious or widespread, they become of concern to the community. It is at this point that the local governmental officials are faced with finding a solution.

For example in Beaver County, it is costing homeowners $100,000 to purchase houses in the Valley Road-Wood Street area of Harmony Township. These homes had been severely damaged by landslide damages in late December and are a threat to the people living in them.

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