



JIM LOCKWOOD / STAFF PHOTO

The muddied Roaring Brook in Scranton is seen Feb. 21 in the area of Richter Avenue and Myrtle Street.

## DEP analyzing Roaring Brook, Lackawanna River muddied by reservoir dam project



COURTESY OF STATE DEP

A state Department of Environmental Protection employee collects a sample of sediment on Feb. 20 from the No. 7 Reservoir dam rehabilitation project.

*Survey of macroinvertebrates also conducted.*

**BY JIM LOCKWOOD**  
STAFF WRITER

The state Department of Environmental Protection sampled water and sediment from Roaring Brook and the Lackawanna River muddied by Pennsylvania American Water's project to rehabilitate the No. 7 Reservoir in Dunmore, the DEP said Friday.

Testing of the samples remains underway and there are no results yet.

The dam project inadvertently released large quantities of silt and sediment into Roaring Brook and the Lackawanna River, muddying the waters for miles. The DEP became aware of the pollution Feb. 4. Environmental advocates of clean waterways fear that ecological damage from the sediment will significantly impair the

waters and their aquatic wildlife of macroinvertebrates and fish for some time, perhaps years.

The DEP collected samples over the past few weeks and also conducted a survey of macroinvertebrates in the waterways, according to an update on the situation provided by agency spokeswoman Colleen Connolly.

The DEP's actions were outlined as follows:

### **Sediment**

On Feb. 24, DEP's Environmental Cleanup Program took three samples from Roaring Brook, including one downstream from a silt screen/boom near the dam project and the other two from stockpiled dredged material

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## **WATER:** Weekly inspections done

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originally deposited behind the dam. The samples will be analyzed for the compounds listed in DEP's Clean Fill Policy as well as per- and poly-fluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), so-called potentially toxic "forever chemicals."

### **Water**

DEP's Clean Water Program took six samples of water, including on Feb. 14 and Feb. 20 at the following locations:

**Roaring Brook:** upstream of the reservoir and existing railroad bridge; 200 meters downstream of the reservoir; 100 meters upstream of the Myrtle Street bridge; and where Roaring Brook flows into the Lackawanna River.

**Lackawanna River:** just upstream of the Roaring Brook confluence and 800 meters downstream of it.

A DEP lab will test and analyze these water samples for 37 water-quality parameters, some of which include

total suspended solids, total and dissolved metals, total dissolved solids, biochemical oxygen demand and total phosphorus.

### **Macroinvertebrates**

Surveys were completed to determine and document impacts to aquatic life in Roaring Brook at these locations: upstream of the reservoir and railroad bridge; 200 meters downstream of the reservoir and upstream of Little Roaring Brook; and 100 meters upstream of the Myrtle Street bridge.

Stream field chemistries were collected using a water-quality meter for pH, conductivity, dissolved oxygen, salinity and temperature.

DEP's Clean Water Program will analyze the surveys, and this should take a few weeks to complete.

The DEP will produce a report on the results of the testing and analysis of the water and sediment samples. There is no timetable for how long this might take.

### **Weekly sight inspections**

DEP's Waterways and Wetlands Program also is conducting weekly sight inspections of Roaring Brook and Lackawanna River, looking at the state of the sediment in the water and conditions of the waterways.

Meanwhile, the water company's work on the reservoir dam project remains on hold.

The Lackawanna County commissioners last month called on the Lackawanna County district attorney's office to investigate the situation.

Lackawanna County District Attorney Mark Powell had said he would discuss the matter with the state attorney general's office to determine the best course of action. On Friday, Powell said, "The matter is being investigated, although we have not determined at this stage which agency will make prosecutorial decisions."

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