

# MONDAY'S SPECTACLE IN THE SKY

Maximum coverage  
in Scranton (95%)

**Begins:**  
2:08:28

2:30

3:00

3:26:43

3:45

4:10

**Ends:**  
4:35:04

# The Sunday Times

www.thetimes-tribune.com

We're *All* About It

SUNDAY, APRIL 7, 2024

\$3.00 NEWSSTAND

## Mishap at dam badly impacts stream

*Macroinvertebrates mostly wiped out in some spots.*

**BY JIM LOCKWOOD**  
STAFF WRITER

Pennsylvania American Water's inadvertent release of large amounts of silt and sediment from a dam rehabilitation project has significantly impaired Roaring Brook, nearly wiping out macroinvertebrates as water-quality advocates have feared, a state DEP study determined.

The excessive sediment pollution buried stream-bottom habitats, reducing macroinvertebrates by 90-95% in some areas, according to the report released Friday. New deposits of sandy silt ranged from shin to 3.5 feet deep in some spots, the study said.

The sediment pollution will be an ongoing problem — for how long was not clear — as silt continues to redeposit downstream.

The presence of certain metals in the waterways also increased, but some of this was attributed to other factors, including stormwater runoff.

The water company is working with DEP on a remediation plan, PAW spokeswoman Susan Turcmanovich said.

"We are aware of the DEP's stream survey and report and are currently reviewing it," Turcmanovich said. "The study, along with our ongoing discussions with the DEP, are being used to develop a response plan to address the sediment in Roaring Brook.

*Please see WATER, Page A7*



Copyright © 2024 The Sunday Times

**Good morning**



**Warmer,  
high 55**

**Weather, C8**

**The Sunday Times**

**Subscriptions:** 570-348-9190  
**Classified ads:** 570-348-9157  
**Newsroom:** 570-348-9121  
**Sports:** 570-348-9125

Brides ..... B5 Lottery ..... A2  
Business..... A9 Nation/World..... A6  
Classified..... B7 Obits..... A11, 16-17  
Editorial..... A15 Puzzles ..... A12-13  
Health/Sci ..... A14 School notes.....A4-5  
Horoscope ..... A12 Travel ..... B4

# WATER: Company says it is working with regulators on the issues

FROM PAGE A1

We will continue to work with the DEP to review and finalize our plan of action to remove sediment in the stream.”

The DEP became aware of the pollution Feb. 4 from the No. 7 Reservoir in Dunmore into Roaring Brook and investigated. Last month, the DEP determined the severe muddying of Roaring Brook and the Lackawanna River violated the state law and regulations.

Environmental advocates of clean waterways, including the Lackawanna River Conservation Association and Trout Unlimited, had expressed fears that ecological damage from the sediment will significantly impair the waters and their aquatic wildlife of macroinvertebrates and fish for some time, perhaps years.

Some details in the report released Friday include:

■ The DEP documented turbid flows and sedimentation from the dam to the confluence of the Lackawanna River 4.9 miles downstream. Extensive sediments were accumulated behind the dam with evidence of scour and discharge.

■ On Feb. 14 and Feb. 20, the DEP collected water samples and conducted surveys



JIM LOCKWOOD / STAFF PHOTO

**The confluence of Roaring Brook and the Lackawanna River in South Scranton shows Roaring Brook discolored brown from silty sediment upstream from Pennsylvania American Water's No. 7 Reservoir dam rehabilitation project in Dunmore, and the stark contrast of the muddied Roaring Brook where it dumps into the clear waters of the Lackawanna River.**

of macroinvertebrates in the waterways.

■ During Feb. 14, a 36-inch drawdown outlet pipe of the dam was closed and a 48-inch valve was partially closed to a 4-inch opening, causing the dam to start to refill. By Feb. 20, water again was flowing over the dam's spillway.

■ Roaring Brook below the dam and the river at the confluence are both designated as “cold water fishes” and both already had been impaired for aquatic life and recreational uses for various reasons, including acid mine drainage, metals and runoff/storm sewers.

foot deep in the heaviest areas and created new stream banks. Sediment minimizes availability for macroinvertebrate and fish use. The total number of macroinvertebrates found here, 205, represents an 89.5 % reduction from the estimate of 1,960 at the upstream reference station. “The habitat in this reach was a significant change” from station 1 and indicative of impairment.

■ Station 4 upstream of the Myrtle Street bridge had large deposits of sand/silt bars. Collections found 88

macroinvertebrates, which was a very low density that represented a 95.5% reduction compared to station 1 and indicative of significant impairment. “Extensive deposition of new sand, gravel and silt was present throughout the reach and appeared to have buried the stream bottom throughout.” On Feb. 22, a measuring rod pushed 3.5 feet deep into newly deposited sediment. “The amount of unstable sediment present within and along this reach will present ongoing sediment issues for down-

stream reaches as future high flows will scour this material and move it downstream through the system.”

■ The Lackawanna River upstream of the Roaring Brook confluence flowed clear and was not impaired, contrasting starkly with the muddied brook that feeds into the river. The river downstream of the confluence was discolored and sub-optimal for macroinvertebrates.

**Contact the writer:**  
jlockwood@scrantontimes.com;  
570-209-5893.

■ Water chemistry samples were collected and habitat evaluations were conducted on Feb. 14 at four locations on the brook and two spots on the river, and measured for temperature, pH, conductivity, and dissolved oxygen.

■ Macroinvertebrate samples were collected at three spots on Roaring Brook on Feb. 20, including one upstream of the reservoir as a reference and two downstream of the dam.

■ The reach of sample station 2 between the dam and Little Roaring Brook was composed of gravel, sand and silt deposits up to and over 1