



Mehoopany Creek Watershed Association

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Spring 2017 Newsletter

Please Join Us!

Trout Day Fundraiser

April 15th, Forkston Four Corners 8 am til 1 pm

Litter Pickup

Earth Day April 22!! Meet at Henry Lott Parking Lot 9AM

Need more information? Email mehoopanycreek@yahoo.com

The PFBC has scheduled trout stockings April 4th and 26th. Remember to stop by and see us at our annual fundraiser. We'll have our usual yummy Trout Day menu, our MCWA outdoor wear and locally crafted bat boxes. As you read this issue, you'll see that bats are under a new threat, so maybe you have a great location for a bat box? Feel free to renew your membership today or on Trout Day! We look forward to hearing about the big one that got away!

This year's newsletter focuses on our watershed's challenges and solutions that we hope you'll join with us in addressing. We hope you enjoy this issue and we'll see you soon!

President's Message

Hello Members!

As I sit here writing this, winter is still upon us. Hopefully, spring is right around the corner because I'm ready for some warmer temperatures and that means it's time to chase trout and turkeys.

Let me take a moment and introduce myself, because I'm sure most of you do not know me. I was elected President of the watershed association in January after our former President, Emily Kraffack, stepped down from the position. We should all thank her for the work she has done, and continues to do for the association. She is a great asset to the association. I'm a 2005 graduate from Penn State University, with a Bachelor's degree in Wildlife and Fisheries Science. After college, I became a New Jersey State Conservation Officer, covering Sussex County until 2015 when I moved to Forkston Township with my wife. I currently work for the United States Department of Agriculture and when I'm not at work, I'm usually hunting, trapping, or fishing somewhere.

In the past year, we were awarded a Growing Greener Grant to begin construction on the (Wintermute) Roger's Hollow Stream Restoration project. We are currently in the process of acquiring the necessary permits for the project, and if everything goes smoothly, I hope to be able to start construction on the project in June. Of course, when dealing with permit applications and Mother Nature, you never know what setbacks may arise, but the project is moving forward.

We're continuing our liming applications this year, again with help from Whitetails Unlimited, Pennsylvania Game Commission and through a grant from Eastern PA Coalition for Abandoned Mines

Reclamation (EPCAMR). The target area this year is along the newly improved Coal Mine Road in SGL 57. Applying the lime here will allow it to be slowly released into Red and Stony Brooks, and then finally making it's what into Mehoopany Creek. It will help mitigate low pH levels along the way. If you haven't ventured out Coal Mine Road yet, I highly recommend it. The PGC did a great job with the road, and as the name implies, it ends at an old coal mine.

We continue to have our spring and fall litter pickups. If you are interested in helping, we meet at the Henry Lott Parking Lot on Windy Valley Road. Check our Facebook page for dates and times.

As always, our big fundraiser for the year is Trout Day at Forkston's Four Corners on April 15th. Be sure to stop by and grab a snack or just shoot the breeze for a bit.

Our meetings are the 3rd Thursday of every month (except December) at the Forkston Municipal Building. Stop by and share some new ideas or concerns you may have about our watershed. We would like to see some new faces, plus there is usually a dessert to enjoy! I can also be reached anytime via email at mehoopanycreek@yahoo.com.

Kyle Ziegler
President

CHALLENGE: EROSION & SEDIMENTATION



Rogers Hollow Project

Our next stream bank stabilization project is Mehoopany Creek on the border of Forkston and Mehoopany Townships. This is a very large project and will take years, including several funding opportunities to complete. Currently, we're finishing up on the Design and Permitting phase. We hope our application for the joint DEP/ACE permit will be approved later this year. We were fortunate to receive a second funding through PA DEP Growing Greener II that will provide us with the ability to begin construction once our permit is approved. This project will reduce erosion, stabilize the stream bank and also provide support for RT87 and Creek Road.

Does your streambank look like this?

Between Mid-March and Mid-April Live Staking is a solution that will help. Penn State Extension offers several great resources to help explain how Live Staking is an affordable and easy stream restoration technique. You can learn more here:

<http://extension.psu.edu/natural-resources/water/watershed-education/watershed-publications/live-staking>



CHALLENGE: BEAUTIFICATION

Do You Have A Pet Peeve?

By Marilyn Stark

I do, and that is litter. Drive around our watershed and you will see aluminum cans, plastic bottles, Styrofoam cups, papers, vacuum cleaners, car seats, and sundry other items. Disheartening to think that so little regard for our landscape is shown by our fellow citizens. It is not only unsightly, but the broken glass cuts people and auto tires, plastic chokes and kills animals, and chemicals can pollute our streams. You see this not only along our local roadways and streams, but also travelling along state and interstate highways. Litter is not only a problem in our watershed, but it is everyone's problem. It not only degrades the beauty of our Commonwealth, but it is expensive to us as taxpayers. In 2004, (probably much costlier now), road side cleanup cost nine times more than collecting it from trash receptacles. Litter can last for years. For example, plastic bags can last 10-20 years, tin cans – 50 years, aluminum cans – 500 years, glass bottles – 1000 years, Styrofoam - ??

Help us keep our watershed beautiful. Adopt a highway with Penn Dot. Encourage good litter management at home and in your travels.



Pictured above are just a few of our members who work to keep this area beautiful.

MCWA does litter pickup in the spring and fall. Our pick-up area is from Henry Lott parking lot to Camp Earl. You no doubt notice that the area is more beautiful due to the work of MCWA members.

CHALLENGE: CANDIDATE, THREATENED & ENDANGERED SPECIES



The Monarch Butterfly –Losing a Wonder of Nature

By Marilyn Stark

Habitat loss and degradation are the main causes of species declines. This is most evident in the declining numbers of one of our best loved species – the Monarch Butterfly. In just two decades, Monarchs have declined by 90 %. Why has this happened? Loss of habitat is the key reason and the Milkweed plant is the key to its survival. Milkweed is the only plant upon which the female butterfly lays her eggs, where the caterpillars hatch and feed, and which provides toxins that make it unappealing to predators.

The Monarch is a wonder of nature not only for its beauty and as a pollinator, but for its annual migration. Weighing less than a dollar, and comprising four generations, the Monarch flies 2500 miles from Canada and the United States to Mexico and back. It navigates by using complex eyes to follow the sun and antennae to track the time of day.

We can help the Monarch by restoring milkweed in our backyard gardens, along roadways, ditches, and along the edges of farm fields and migratory corridors. Also, planting native flowers as sources of nectar not only helps the Monarch, but other pollinators as well.

Information from "Solutions" Winter 2027 EDF

For more information on Monarch Butterflies including "How to Grow Monarch Butterflies" <http://www.monarch-butterfly.com/>



Target – Five Species of Bats

A coalition formed of nine gas industry operators, includes Chesapeake Energy, Southwestern Energy and Williams operating within our watershed. The operators have applied to the Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) in order to obtain a 50 year Incidental Take Permit (ITP). The permit will allow them to freely kill five targeted species of bats in the entire tristate area of Pennsylvania, West Virginia and Ohio. The trouble is, all these bats are in trouble!

All five species most of which are federally or state protected species, the Indiana bat, northern long-eared bat, little brown bat, eastern small-footed bat, and tri-colored bat are currently experiencing declining populations due to White Nose Syndrome (WNS). When the Pennsylvania Game Commission publishes a notice in 2012 that indicates since 2008 three species populations have declined, two by 99% and one by 98% it just makes absolutely no sense that a regulator would consider such a ludicrous idea put forth by none other than the oil and gas industry; and yet, lacking any suitable studies to really indicate the total impacts the oil and gas industry has already caused. The bats, with no voice and no vote, are being impacted in ways that were never conceived 50 years ago.

MCWA is concerned about bats within our watershed. Bats do indeed find good habitats and nesting areas within our watershed. Bats are important mammals in our watershed. They eat stink bugs. Tricolored bats feed on large hatches of grain moths that emerge from corn cribs. Bats provide a great service to us by the amount of night flying insects including beetles, flies and mosquitoes they eat. Did you know, the Little Brown Bat is capable of catching 1,200 insects per hour at night and a nursing mother can

consume more than her body weight in a single night!

Our members attended a FWS meeting in December where the permit was outlined. There's a public process, so MCWA submitted a lengthy comment giving a voice to the bats and advocating for habitat protections.

MCWA is opposed to a 50 year time frame for the Incidental Take Permit. We are also categorically opposed to an ITP being issued for any state or federally protected threatened and endangered species. Further, we are opposed to the possibility that once the ITP is issued, the Coalition Nine operators will apply for amendments to expand it to include other species as well.

Our watershed is only as healthy as the protected species that live within.

More information on the NCRS Golden-winged Warbler program

<https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detailfull/national/programs/?cid=stelprdb1046990>

Species at Risk: Golden Winged Warbler

The golden-winged warbler is a vibrantly colored migratory songbird that breeds and nests in the United States and winters in Central and South America. 80% of the golden-winged warbler's nesting area is on forested private lands. Our watershed is included within the habitat area for the golden-winged warbler. Forest landowners are part of the solution. Landowners can help the golden-winged warbler rebound by voluntarily conserving habitat on their land. Please contact our local NCRS office 570-836-5111 for the details.

CHALLENGE: WATER QUALITY

Unconventional Shale Gas in Our Watershed

For nearly eight years, we’ve had the unconventional natural gas industry operating within the confines of our watershed. We’ve had quite the experience. We’ve lost forested areas to pads and gathering pipelines, seen unnecessary sediment run into our ponds and streams due to poorly managed E&S measures, and have drilling in areas of orphaned and abandoned oil/gas wells, which fortunately to this point haven’t caused any known problems. But, what exactly are the challenges to our watershed, where are they happening and how much of a threat are they?

Challenges to our watershed are rooted in the associated risks inherent in drilling for unconventional shale gas in an area that was otherwise devoid of industrial development. Risks to water quality may not only be well pad point sources, but may also occur on our roads as trucks overturn and leak fluids.

**DEP Gas Complaint Hotline:
1-866-255-5158**

Water Resources

Use of water with drilling and fracturing varies among operators. Chesapeake has the majority of well pads within our watershed and their water use is reported as the most per well. For example, (2012) one CHK well in Mehoopany consumed 6.8M+ gallons to drill and fracture one well. Both fresh and recycled water was utilized along with many chemical additives, some of which are not disclosed to the public.

Where are well pads located?

The development within our watershed extends to Colley (Sullivan), Wilmot (Bradford) townships and the following townships in Wyoming County: Forkston, Mehoopany, North Branch and Windham. Our watershed doesn’t follow township lines. We only extended our evaluation to 37 well pads within our watershed.

Township / # of Well Pads	Wells not		Inactive Spud Wells	Plugged Wells
	Spud	Wells Spud		
Colley - 5	1	8	0	0
Wilmot - 10	0	28	4	1
Forkston - 5	5	8	0	1
Mehoopany - 5	0	12	4	0
North Branch - 3	2	6	3	0
Windham - 9	1	21	3	3
TOTAL	9	83	14	5

We’re in the vicinity of 100 wells in our watershed.

What kinds of impacts have they created?

Township	VIOLATIONS	
	Water Quality	VIOLATIONS Defective Casing/Cementing
Colley	6	0
Wilmot	8	2
Forkston	0	0
Mehoopany	4	0
North Branch	0	0
Windham	15	16
TOTAL	33	18

While most water quality violations are spills, releases and erosion & sediment issues, some violations were the result of the well pads being too close to a nearby stream, wetland or pond. Well pads having the most water quality violations are at a tie of six each: Roundtop (Colley), CDJ (Wilmot), Warren & DPH (Windham). The development in Forkston and North Branch is more recent and therefore, there is a reduced history of inspections.

Wilmot had two violations for defective casing/cementing (Lucarino), while Windham had 16 violations, (Jack receiving the most, followed by Piezala, DPH and Warren.) This is of concern because faulty casings are often the problem associated with impacted private water wells. Speaking of which, the DEP received private water supply complaints in all six townships. It is no surprise that Wilmot and Windham are the locations of most private water supply complaints.

Conclusion

One private water supply impact is one too many, and yet within the six townships, there has been a total of 56 complaints including 11 that have been given final determinations by the DEP as having been impacted by natural gas drilling. So, about 20% of the water complaints filed with DEP in the six townships were determined to be impacted by natural gas drilling. DEP keeps records by township not watershed. However, within our watershed, it is apparent; where there is more drilling; there are more private water supply impacts, water quality violations and defective casing/cementing violations. Based on this information it is plain that gas drilling is impacting water quality within the Mehoopany Creek Watershed. How significant? Well, it depends on where you live.



Stream Water Quality: Lime Applications

In a combined effort with Pennsylvania Game Commission and White Tails Unlimited along with the much appreciated funding we received through Eastern PA Coalition for Abandoned Mines Reclamation (EPCAMR), we were able to enhance stream water quality through the application of lime on SGL57 food plots.

CALLING ALL CAM FANS!

PGC Eagle Cam is back!

<http://www.pgc.pa.gov/Wildlife/WildlifeSpecies/BaldEagles/Pages/default.aspx>

PA DEP Falcon Cam is back!

<https://www.dep.state.pa.us/dep/falcon/>

The PGC Elk Cam is turned off for the season.

Mehoopany Creek Watershed Association
President, Kyle Ziegler
Vice President, Dennis Mingus
Treasurer, Dave Krafjack
Secretary, Marilyn Stark



<http://mehoopanycreek.org/>
Meetings: 3rd Thursday Monthly
Except December.
7PM Forkston Twp Building
244 Bowman Hollow Road

2017 Mehoopany Creek Watershed Association Membership

The MCWA is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization whose members care about maintaining and improving the natural resources of the Watershed. To keep up with events in your watershed, become a member and receive our newsletter.

Renewal **New Member**

Please send me newsletters by

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\$ 5 - Individual

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Mehoopany Creek Watershed Association, PO Box 73, Mehoopany PA 18629

Thank you for your support!