

THE RE-CAP

Watershed Alliance of York's (WAY) quarterly newsletter with updates about the implementation of the Countywide Action Plan (CAP) for clean waters



IN THIS ISSUE

Re-CAP Issue 23

- **01//** WAY Board Update
- **02//** CAP Coordinator's Corner
- **03//** Local Highlights
- **05//** Projects Around the County
- **06//** Event Highlights
- **08//** Where in the Watersheds?!
- **09//** WAY Works



WAY BOARD

One of our main focuses over the past several months has been our large project, Lake Lehman, which is an Unnamed Tributary to West Branch Codorus Creek Stream Restoration that proposes the restoration of approximately 4,300 linear feet of existing eroding stream channel, 10 acres of floodplain and 7 acres of historical floodplain wetlands. We were busy developing funding and working with the contractors but were able to take a tour of the project during construction which was very cool. This is a three-phase project with the first phase completed at the end of October. We're currently seeking funding to complete phases 2 and 3 together. Check out 'Projects Around the County' for details of phase 1 of Lake Lehman. Our other focus was the 23rd Annual Watershed Week which you'll find highlights of under "Event Highlights".

WAY

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Hello Readers!

As the year end is closing in, I find myself reflecting on all the rewarding work WAY has been part of this year. Our biggest success of the year, by far, was bringing Emily on as Executive Director. Having her as WAY's full-time employee has allowed the organization to grow in capacity and be involved in many more water quality projects. We're applying for more grant funding than ever before and managing bigger projects than we ever previously have. Be on the lookout for an annual report early next year that will highlight all our 2025 efforts. This year we have been able to get out in the field to follow project leads, assist partners with education, table events, host events, and work clean ups more than we have in years past. Our collective impact as an organization has grown. I'm proud of how far WAY has come as an organization since 2020 when we decided to take on being the public facing entity implementing the York Countywide Action Plan (CAP). I think it was one of the best decisions the organization has ever made because it allowed us opportunities for growth.

A lot of readers are likely aware that long ago when all the CAP work started it was always stated that the end goal was 2025. Well, here we are at the end of 2025 so what's up? To be honest with you, I don't know. The language of "Beyond 2025" cropped up in 2024 and DEP has developed 9 new action committees with an array of different focuses and goals. Parallel to this, the Chesapeake Bay Program released the draft updated Chesapeake Bay Agreement in late 2025 for public comment. The Agreement also has language of "Beyond 2025" but was not clear on defined targets and goals and I've learned that the final version of the Agreement is likely a year or more down the road but has been accepted by Bay State Officials. It has long been the opinion of York County partners that the CAP goals are unattainable, especially without recommended State Programmatic Changes, and this stance has not changed. While it's unclear what the future of the CAP's will evolve into, I am certain that project implementation, restoration, conservation, and innovation will continue throughout York County with the goal of clean water for all.

In Stewardship,

Rachel Stahlman, CAP Coordinator / WAY President
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Local Highlights:

Stream Study Field Trips with the Lower Susquehanna Riverkeeper Association

Each year, WAY volunteers assist our partners at Lower Susquehanna Riverkeeper Association (LSRA) with educational field trips. In years past, students rotated through two or three stations and got to experience kayaking, stream study, and if time permits River Tales. This fall the field trips saw some reorganization thanks to LSRA Community Engagement Coordinator, Megan McCarthy, with the addition of a fourth station focused on people and places for some schools, and riparian forest buffers for the others. These new additions help local schools and teachers with their new State Education goals surrounding Meaningful Watershed Educational Experiences (MWEE). The MWEE is a K-12 educational framework used in Pennsylvania and other Chesapeake Bay watershed states to boost students' environmental literacy. The MWEE program aims for students to engage in hands-on, outdoor investigations of local environmental issues, leading to stewardship and civic action. The field trips hosted by LSRA do a fabulous job of checking the boxes of the MWEE program goals!

The rotation that WAY volunteers assist LSRA with is stream study which involves searching for macroinvertebrates in Fishing Creek at Craley by flipping rocks and using kick nets. Students gather the macroinvertebrates they find, put them in tubs of creek water, and identify and count diversity between the species. At the end of the session they determine if the diversity found, paired with features of the creek and surrounding area reveal if Fishing Creek is a healthy stream or not. This fall, students found lots of diversity in macroinvertebrate species from hellgrammites of all sizes to different species of stonefly and mayfly. Fishing Creek always uncovers great wonderment for the students of the LSRA field trips.

The diversity of the stream studies is impressive, and the education numbers are impressive! Check this out...this fall, 500 students visited Fishing Creek from 7 different schools across 15 days. This amounted to about 270 LSRA staff program hours and about 68 volunteer hours. Way to go, LSRA!



A group of field trippers getting ready for a fun day on the water.



A Giant Stonefly.



Four Hellgrammites found by students by using the kick net method.

Projects Around the County:

Oil Creek Floodplain Restoration

Last year in the “Projects Around the County” section we featured Site A Phase 1 of the Oil Creek Floodplain Restoration. This October, Site A Phase 2 was completed which included an additional 2,211 linear feet of stream restoration and 5 acres of wetland restoration. As a reminder, Site A Phase 1 consisted of 1,300 linear feet to stream restoration, 5 acres of wetland restoration, and 500 linear feet of floodplain grading. This project is massive and a testament to the power of partnership. The purpose of this project was to address the stream degradation and to make improvements to the channel, floodplain, wetlands, and adjacent riparian area. Oil Creek is an impaired York County stream for pathogens and agricultural nutrients and sediment. This project addresses those impairment concerns while also greatly adding to the beauty of the Hanover Trolley Trail and enhancing the ecosystem of the area.

This project is made possible through the efforts of the York County Rail Trail Authority (YCRTA). The YCRTA received a generous grant from the J. William Warehime Foundation and an easement from Warehime Enterprises, Inc. Grant funding was also secured in partnership with York County Conservation District and York County Planning Commission, as well as PA DEP, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, and the PA Redevelopment Assistance Capital Program to support this project. ARRC, C.S. Davidson, Land Studies, and Kinsley were responsible for the restoration work. In total the York Countywide Action Plan supplied \$815,968 to this project which was just a portion of the total price tag.



During construction in July.



After construction in October.



After construction in October.

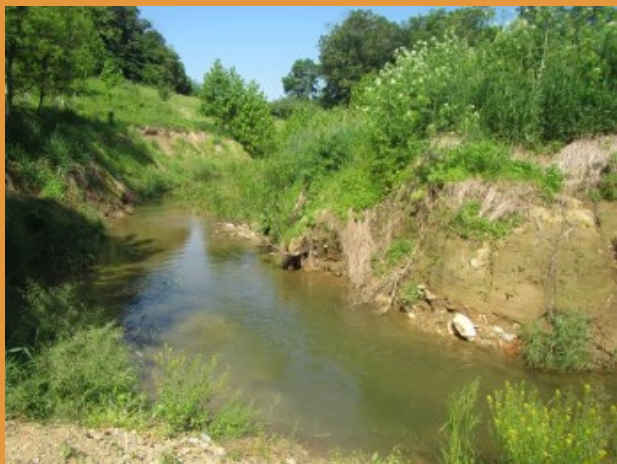
Projects Around the County:

Codorus Creek Tributary at Lake Lehman Floodplain Restoration

In 2024, we were busy working on getting a huge project permitted. By the fall of 2024, after working closely with LandStudies on the design, a permit was in hand for the Codorus Creek Tributary at Lake Lehman Floodplain Restoration project. The scope of the project includes restoring approximately 4,500 linear feet of stream with legacy sediment removal, 10 acres of floodplain and 7 acres of historical floodplain wetlands. The site is situated where the previous Lake Lehman and dam were located before the dam was breached and the lake drained. The draining of Lake Lehman resulted in an unstable stream system eroding through the old lakebed and transporting legacy sediment downstream of the site.

WAY and LandStudies decided to split the project into 3 phases to better tackle funding challenges. In the spring of 2025, WAY put the project out to bid with Flyway Excavating winning the bid. By summer, construction was underway with phase 1 work of the project completed in October 2025 which included 9.2 acres of riparian forest buffer, 2.5 acres of restored floodplain/wetland and 1,220 linear feet of existing stream channel restored with legacy sediment removed. Phase 1 received \$1,098,360 in CAP funding as well as funding from the York County Conservation District, PA Fish and Boat Commission, Kinsley Foundation, Warehime Foundation, and York County Community Foundation. The total project cost is estimated to be \$2,697,576.

The purpose of the project is to remove legacy sediment and restore the floodplain to conditions that resemble as close to an approximation of pre-settlement conditions as reasonably possible, considering site constraints. Removing the legacy sediment from this system will eliminate a substantial sediment and nutrient source from the Codorus Watershed. The restored floodplain will act as a sediment and nutrient sink that will remove, and process nutrients supplied by the upstream watershed. The project will provide significant systemic ecological uplift and reestablish the floodplain connections to the active channel and groundwater. WAY is looking forward to continuing our work with LandStudies and Flyway on phases 2 and 3. We hope to construct both in 2026 if the funding falls into place.



Before



After

Event Highlight:

23rd Annual Watershed Week

The purpose of Watershed Week is to increase awareness about the importance of clean water to community health and the practices we all do to keep our watersheds healthy. Watershed Week attendees get to know their watershed and the folks and organizations who are working hard to enhance, restore, and protect them. This September, we celebrated the 23rd Annual Watershed Week where we hosted, were part of, partnered on, or supported 19 different events. These are a few highlights of some of those events. We will begin planning for the next Watershed Week in the first quarter of 2026. If you have ideas for an event or are part of an organization that would like to team up on an event, please contact us, we'd love to work with you.

Watershed Week events kicked off with a cleanup of Willis Run, a tributary to Codorus Creek. A small but mighty team filled a dumpster in just a couple of hours! It was very surprising to us to find freshwater mussels in Willis Run. We were closer to Kiwanis Lake than we have ever been before, so we suspect the mussels are coming from the lake in high flow events. Finding freshwater mussels in Willis Run makes our intent to clean it up all that much more important.



Above: The cleanup crew gathers for a photo after collecting a dumpster of trash from Willis Run.

Below: A native freshwater mussel found in Willis Run.



Left: From inside the Mill. Right: The stream study group.

The Master Watershed Stewards hosted a stream study of Rambo Run at Wallace Cross Mill. A good group of families came out to discover the macroinvertebrates living in the stream. We found great biodiversity indicating that Rambo Run has decent water quality. After the stream study, the Mill was open for tours and harvest days.

Hopewell Fish and Game Association welcomed attendees to our annual event of Fly Fishing Essentials. WAY's Executive Director started the evening with an overview of WAY's programs, initiatives, and opportunities. Hopewell Fish and Game's President, Michael Males, followed with a discussion about the importance of clean water for great fly fishing. At the end of the evening, we gave one lucky attendee a complete fly fishing kit.



Left: Folks listening to Michael Males' talk on water quality importance.

Event Highlight:

23rd Annual Watershed Week



The group practicing casting techniques under the guide of TU Vice President, Ethan Daviau.

Our partners at Codorus Creek TU hosted a wonderful Intro to Fly Fishing event. Members collected macroinvertebrates from the Codorus Creek to be observed, discussed, and related to fly fishing. Attendees were able to ask questions about the importance between macroinvertebrates and fly fishing. Next, we went outside where TU members demonstrated several casting techniques to attendees and assisted them in making great casts. We even got to try the bow and arrow cast! Everyone headed back inside where we were able to get up close and personal with fly tying, an artful task to say the least. We ended the evening with a wonderful discussion and demonstration of some of the most desirable and useful fly fishing gear.

York County has 6 real-time water quality monitors that are operated by U.S. Geological Survey (USGS). The monitors measure for pollutants such as nitrogen, phosphorus, and sediment. Each year, we gather on the banks of Fishing Creek at Goldsboro for a stream side demonstration of the ins and out of the monitor and sample collection. This is an important program and getting to engage with our partners each year is a time for us to keep the initiative in the forefront. This year, our dashboard went live, which added an additional element to be highlighted stream side.



USGS leading attendees in an in-depth demonstration of the workings of York's water quality monitors and what goes into sampling.



The Tap Talks crowd listening to USGS discuss water quality monitoring efforts they lead including York's.

Our partners at U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) were the guest speakers at Tap Talks hosted at Collusion Tapworks where they discussed not only York's real-time water quality monitoring program but also the wide range and in-depth ways that USGS preforms monitoring across the state.

Event Highlight:

23rd Annual Watershed Week



Left: Sean Kenny kicking the evening of Stream Restoration 101 off.



Right: Jon Kasitz leads the group through the restoration explaining how the project came together.

Mr. and Mrs. Davidson welcomed attendees to their home where Farm and Natural Lands Trust Executive Director, Sean Kenny, and Jon Kasitz of Resource Environmental Solutions (RES) joined to host a tour of an impressive mitigation project that took place on their preserved farmland. The mitigation project included extensive stream and wetland restoration. Jon did a wonderful job explaining to attendees how these complex projects come together from finding willing landowners and funding to the implementation of the project and the long-term ecological benefits that are created.

The showcasing of North America's largest native and edible tree fruit at Horn Farm Center's annual PawPaw Festival during the Wild and Uncommon Weekend was another huge success. This year, more than 2,000 people traveled from near and far to experience the pawpaw. For the last several years, WAY has set up our educational booth at the festival. This year we got to engage with so many people about our clean water initiatives. Our freshwater mussel work was certainly the leading topic discussed at our booth.



The WAY booth set up and ready to engage with many PawPaw Festival attendees.

Where in the Watersheds?!

Interactive fun about York's watersheds! On this page are photos & clues about a place located in one of our 11 main watersheds. Play along by trying to guess the location & watershed.

Feeling extra playful? E-mail your answer along with mailing address to watershedallianceyork@gmail.com to get a WAY prize delivered to you if your answer is correct.

We also take submissions! Send in some sneaky photos from a favorite spot in one of our watersheds along with clues to the location and you may get featured!

Find the answer to 'Where in the Watersheds?!' in our next newsletter.



Clues

- My headwaters are in Southern York County near Maryland
- To Native Americans, my name is Rapid Water
- There is an active Trout Unlimited that helps to protect me
- I'm sometimes known for Paper Mills





Upcoming Events

Visit the 'events' tab on WAY's website to keep up-to-date with water quality events!

December 20, 10am-12pm, Riverlands State Park Flood Plain Clean Up

January 12, 6:30-8pm, WAY Board Meeting

Watershed Week, September 12-20



Scan with your phone's camera to go right to our events tab to see all events and register!



YORK COUNTY
CONSERVATION DISTRICT

YORK COUNTY
YCPC
PLANNING
COMMISSION

YCPC is the primary entity for implementing the CAP, with support from YCCD. The public partner in this undertaking is WAY.

Contact us if...

- You have a water quality project and you are unsure if it's being counted for credit in restoration efforts
- You want to be part of WAY or any of the Committees of WAY
- You have any questions or comments



/WatershedAllianceOfYorkPA



@WAYorkPA



WatershedAllianceYork@gmail.com

Connect
with
WAY!

The WAY Board of Directors meet bi-monthly on the 3rd Monday in person at 6:30pm at the Lower Susquehanna Riverkeeper Association
338 S. Front St. Wrightsville, PA

Join us virtually via TEAMS
Find the link under the 'About' section at watershedallianceofyork.org

The Watershed Alliance of York (**WAY**) is a group of volunteer stakeholders interested in improving local waterways for the betterment of the County and to meet clean water goals.

If you would like to get involved, please contact Rachel Stahlman at rstahlman@ycpc.org

WAY