

WATERSHED CONNECTIONS

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13th WASHINGTON COUNTY CHILDREN'S GROUNDWATER FESTIVAL HELD ON MAY 14

Another successful Washington County Watershed Children's Groundwater Festival was held at California University of Pennsylvania on Wednesday, May 14 with more than 1100 students on campus for the event.

The students came from nine Washington County schools, both public and parochial, and one Greene County school. The schools included Allison Park and Bobtown Elementary Schools and Bentworth, California Area, Charleroi, John Fitzgerald Kennedy, Jr., Madonna Catholic, McGuffey, and Trinity Middle Schools.



Festival Committee members at a Festival Planning meeting.

In photo on the left: Josephine Posti, PA American Water Co., and Barbara Dunst, a committee member for 13 years;

In photo on the right: Donna Lee Stone, California Area Senior High School teacher, who has supported the festival since 1995 by arranging for hundreds of student volunteers, and Joseph Cerenzia, Public Relations for CONSOL Energy.

CONSOL Energy and PA American Water Co. are the major donors that have provided the essential financial support for the Festival for many years.



ON THE CALENDAR

SPECIAL EVENTS, MEETINGS

June

18 — **Alliance Meeting**; 7 pm; WCCD Ag Office, Crouse-Hinds Building., Meadowlands

26 — **Invasive Plants Display**, with Martha Washington Garden Club at Washington Crown Center.

July

16 — **Alliance Meeting**; 7 pm; WCCD Ag Office, Crouse-Hinds Building., Meadowlands

August

9-16 — **Washington County Fair**

20 — **Alliance Meeting**; 7 pm; WCCD Ag Office, Crouse-Hinds Building., Meadowlands

BRIEFS: NEWS and NOTES from the WATERSHED ASSOCIATIONS

❖ **BUFFALO CREEK**

The Buffalo Creek Watershed Association held its water festival at Sunset Beach on May 17. The festival featured kayak demonstrations in the pool by Gander Mountain staff. The festival had watershed and environmental-related activities and displays, including those from DEP and the **WHEELING CREEK WATERSHED CONSERVANCY**, among others.

The Association is trying to raise some seed money for restoration of Dutch Fork Lake, a \$6 million project, and raffled a pair of kayaks as part of the effort.

This spring the Association had two interesting programs. In March Dr. Kathy Patnode gave a talk on pollinators, especially native pollinators, and also discussed the decline of the honey bees. The April meeting featured a presentation by Dr. Dick Dougall, president of the Western Pa. Mushroom Club, who gave a fascinating talk on mushrooms and mushroom identification.

The Three Rivers Birding Club led several spring birding walks with members identifying a great variety of birds on the watershed, which includes IBA-80.

❖ **CHARTIERS CREEK**

The restoration and improvement of Canonsburg Lake continues to be the main focus of the Chartiers Creek Watershed Association. Later this summer the Army Corps of Engineers expects to complete its plans for lake restoration and habitat improvement. The committee is now working to raise the required matching funds, 35% of the total cost.

In April the committee to Save Canonsburg Lake held three very successful days of fund-raising and outreach at the Lake, selling caps, t-shirts and other items, and talking with many people about what will be needed to save and restore the lake. More such events will be held during the summer.

❖ **CROSS CREEK**

The Streambank Restoration Project on Cross Creek was completed prior to the Grand Re-Opening of the Meadowcroft Rockshelter. The stream bank area that was restored is directly below the Meadowcroft Rockshelter and just upstream of the new bridge that was built in 2004. The rockshelter has been closed for over a year so that a new canopy could be constructed to replace the old enclosed working platform. While work on the new canopy proceeded, Blazosky Associates worked on the stream bank restoration design and obtained needed permits. The contractor, BKG, won the bid, and started work in March 2008 on the stream bank and rock deflector.

The final touches, stream bank planting, seeding

and mulching, were completed on April 5th by volunteers. They included members of the Cross Creek Watershed Association, Boy Scout Troop 1366, Avella Community Services Club, Meadowcroft Village director and family, WCCD and WCWS Julie Sigler who coordinated purchasing and delivery of the plants.

The majority of the plants were purchased locally through Habitat Solutions. The plants used needed to serve multiple purposes. They needed to be historically accurate, according to native species found at the archaeological excavation, and to be suited to their riparian location. It was also desired that the selected plants not block the visibility of the rockshelter when they are fully grown. At the time of the Grand Re-Opening on May 8th all plants and seeding were doing well.

Funding for the project was a combination of grants from several sources including PADEP's Growing Greener, Western PA Watershed Program, Community Foundation for the Alleghenies, and Washington County Conservation District.

❖ **PETERS CREEK**

The Peters Creek Watershed Association has received a DEP Growing Greener Grant of \$59,055 to perform an assessment of and develop a Management Plan for the Peters Creek Watershed.

PCWA is also working with Allegheny Land Trust and Chatham University to develop a Greenprint for the Peters Creek Watershed. Mike Kotyk, a graduate student seeking a Master's of Landscape Architecture at Chatham will be developing this Greenprint as his Master's Thesis/Final Project. A Greenprint is a Land Conservation Model that seeks to identify and prioritize natural infrastructure within the watershed which contributes significantly to flood control, preservation of biodiversity, maintenance of scenic character and recreational opportunity. PCWA received a 2008 Dominion Mini-Grant to provide community outreach for this effort.

❖ **RACCOON CREEK**

The Raccoon Creek Watershed Association was awarded a \$400 Dominion-Western PA Conservancy Watershed Mini-Grant to purchase water monitoring equipment for the Solar Mine AMD Treatment System in Findlay Township, Allegheny County. Students from Robert Morris University will work with Hedin Environmental to test for alkalinity and pH to monitor the system's long-term effectiveness. The Solar Mine system is owned by Independence Conservancy.

Independence Conservancy enjoyed a very successful spring season in the Community Tire Collection Program. Findlay Township hosted the

ChCWA SPRING WATER QUALITY MONITORING

On May 1, 2008, Tom Smith and Kevin LaFrance met Chartiers Creek Watershed Association volunteer Jean Bear to test Chartiers Creek's water quality at Station 4, outside Washington.

The two men work at Coca Cola's DASANI water bottling facility in Washington and have had extensive experience in doing chemical tests on water.



Tom Smith (on left) and Kevin LaFrance with kick net used for collecting macros

In addition to the tests for certain chemicals, the volunteers also collected and identified macro-invertebrates, the small creatures that live in streams. While counting the macros, the team was excited to find eggs and some hatchlings, probably tiny minnows. The count included a stonefly and mayfly nymphs, caddisfly larvae, and other more common macroinvertebrates. (The types and numbers of macros tell us a lot about the water quality of a stream.)

During the chemical testing, which was performed in record time, Tom and Kevin proposed to recruit a team of co-workers who could spend a day testing at all four of the Association's stations, four times each year. The DASANI Production Center of Coca-Cola Enterprises Inc. recently became a member of the Chartiers Creek Watershed Association, one way in which the company has expressed its interest in becoming more involved in stewardship and sustainability of environmental resources.

The team could also conduct macro studies at the sites in spring and fall.

Jean Bear also took the lead in monitoring at other sites in the Chartiers Creek Watershed.

On May 3, Jean was joined by Carrilee Hemington and Joan Jessen in monitoring ChCWA's site on Little Chartiers Creek next to Linden Road. While the macro count here was lower than normal, the types of macros and the results of the chemical testing confirmed the good water quality of this stream.

And on May 9, Jean, Kevin LaFrance, Art Kaste and Chris Inman at a site on Chartiers Creek in Houston. Again, the macro count was somewhat low. As is usual with the main creek, water quality needs to be improved.

MORE OPPORTUNITIES TO LEARN ABOUT INVASIVE PLANTS

Anyone who wants to learn more about invasive plants can still do so. The display that made the rounds of the county's libraries last year was available at Hickory Garden Day on May 2. It will also be at the Martha Washington Garden Club's exhibits on June 26 at Washington Crown Center.

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largest single event in the history of the program with 1355 fugitive tires brought in for proper disposal by the Road Department and the local public.

Independence Conservancy was awarded a \$330,000 Growing Greener Grant to restore 1.6 miles of erosion and storm damage on Raredon Run, a major tributary of Raccoon Creek in Independence Township, Beaver County. Natural Stream Channel Design techniques will be used to stabilize eroded banks, build floodplains and re-establish normal flow patterns to this troubled stream whose headwaters begin at the Pittsburgh International Airport.