



Sewickley Creek Watershed Association

NEWSLETTER

17 South Sixth Street
Dale Wiseman, President 925-6925

Youngwood, PA 15697
Sue Wiseman, Editor

Vol. 3, No. 2
Spring 1994

Partial Funding Approved

It was Memorial Day, 1991 when Henry Sabota commented to Congressman Murtha, "Isn't that terrible," as they walked across the bridge spanning the orange colored Sewickley Creek in Armbrust. Henry was referring to the polluted waters that spoiled an otherwise beautiful stream. Congressman Murtha was attending the special celebration to help dedicate the new veterans' memorial. "You know, Henry, there's federal money appropriated for cleanups like this". That was the beginning.

Several months and meetings later, the Sewickley Creek Watershed Association was formed. Its driving force was to attain federal funds to cleanup the mine acid drainage polluting the Sewickley Creek.

Recently, unofficial word has been received that some federal funds will soon be coming our way - less than three years since the association's formation.

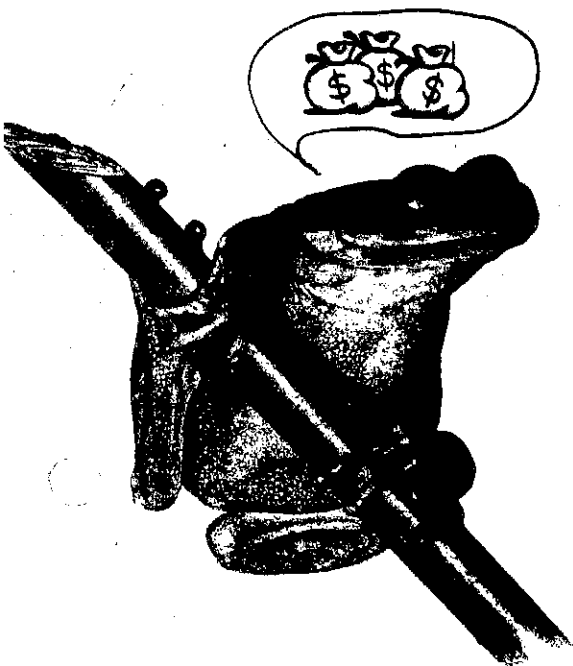
These monies will be used to initiate a treatment program for the mine acid drainage that is polluting Wilson Run. Treatment of this discharge will not impact the waters running beneath the bridge that Henry and Congressman Murtha crossed since it is a tributary that joins with the Sewickley Creek downstream of Armbrust. The project will however, improve the water quality of the remaining stretch of Sewickley Creek, the Youghiogheny River...and every other waterway downstream.

The discharge site is located where Route 819 crosses over the Pennsylvania Turnpike. A 2 acre orange pond collects the iron-laden mine water that surfaces 500 feet away from an abandoned underground mine. One to two million gallons of water exit via a 8' X 8' mine shaft each day.

At the request of the association, Terry Ackman, a mining engineer with the U.S. Bureau of Mines, applied for funding from the federal Office of Surface Mining (OSM) to treat the waters through a low-cost, low maintenance aeration system using nearby and additionally constructed wetlands. Terry's proposal included the following argument for funding.

"There are growing numbers of non-profit environmental organizations (i.e., watershed association, fish and wildlife organizations) throughout the United States that are willing to provide labor and small amounts of funding for the restoration of their local waterways polluted by abandoned mines. Consequently, the concept of perpetual treatment in the abandoned mine land setting, once considered to be cost prohibitive, should be re-evaluated... There is a need for simple, low-cost, low-maintenance treatment technologies that can be installed, operated, and maintained by conservation groups, organizations, or concerned citizens.

The OSM funding promised will not cover the entire cost of the project Terry proposed. It will however get the project started. Terry has applied for additional funding from the Department of Environment Resources Water Quality program.





The Sewickley Creek Watershed Association Newsletter

17 South Sixth Street
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Youngwood, PA 15697
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Spring/Summer 1995
Tom Keller, Exec Dir 925-9190

SCWA Makes a Difference We Can See

It's been a busy spring for the Sewickley Creek Watershed Association. After years of dedication and hard work, many of the improvement projects have started to happen and we can actually see the difference we've made - a trashfree section of stream with trout nosing their way to the surface for insects. It's only the beginning. One section at a time, we will be addressing the creek's needs.

This special spring issue will share with you some of the success we've had and hopefully prompt you to become a member if you have not already done so. It takes more than volunteers doing the work, it also takes a strong and healthy membership to keep this effort going. If you're already a member, help us get new members by sharing this newsletter with friends and family. Our dream someday is to have a clean, healthy stream filled with aquatic life flow past our homes. You can help make that dream come true.



Elijah has fished in the Big Sewickley behind his home in United since he was old enough to hold a pole. With the recent trout stocking, he'll now be able to catch fish worthy of tales.

Trout Stocking

It happened! The PA Fish Commission stocked 1,400 trout in the upper Sewickley Creek this year.

On opening day, local fishermen enjoyed a cool, crisp, sunny day testing their skill in small pools along the creek. Families, groups of young boys, and teenagers, formed small groups at hopeful hot spots. An unknown number of the pre-season stocking of 600 brown and rainbow trout averaging 10" were taken home for dinner or released for another day of fun.

Two in-season stockings of 800 trout added to the new aquatic population. The mix was 70% rainbow and 30% brown. A higher percentage of "genetically voracious" rainbow were stocked as they are easier to catch. The more cautious brown trout also have a higher tolerance to warm waters enabling the "smarter" brown trout that survive the initial season to survive the warmer waters. Thus then extending the season to mid summer. The water temperatures are expected to be too warm in late summer to support trout.

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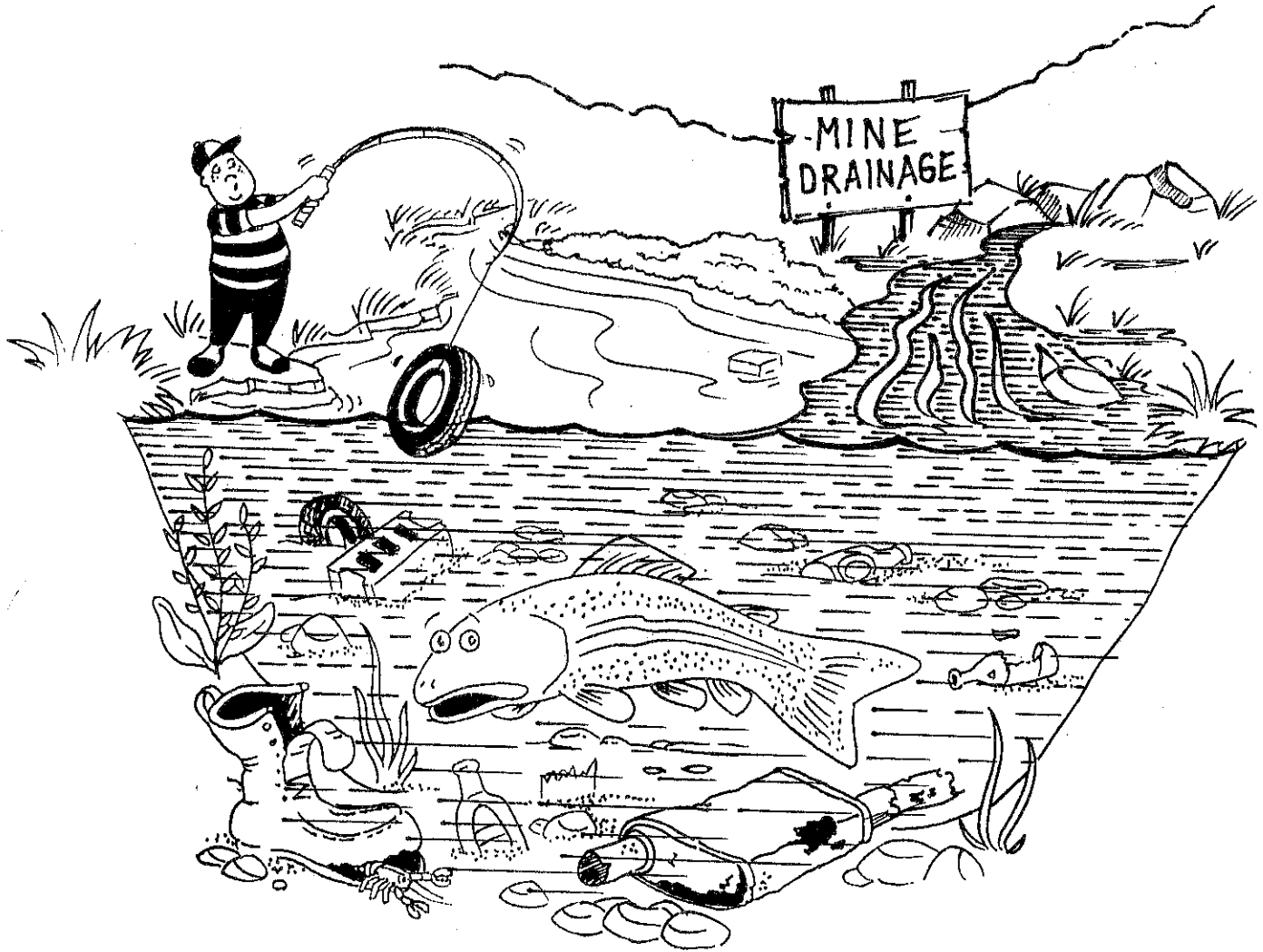
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Winter 1996
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We're looking for some 1996 Clean Stream Sponsors
To help us turn this . . .





The Sewickley Creek Watershed Association Newsletter

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Summer 1997
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Wetlands to be Classroom & Treatment Site



Bob Hepler, former president of the Sewickley Creek Watershed Association, and Dennis Markle, representing Norvelt Farms, recently visited the 53 acres donated to the Association

Wetlands have many roles to play in nature's scheme of things. Now the wetlands near the Brinkerton Mine Discharge has two more roles to play in SCWA's scheme of things — that of remediation site and classroom.

The Norvelt Corporation of Mt. Pleasant recently donated 53 acres of woodlands and wetlands near Brinkerton to the SCWA. Half of the acreage was requested by the SCWA to use in the treatment of the mine water which discharges from the property into the stream. However, the Norvelt Corporation generously donated the remaining acreage to the Association for environmental education and recreational purposes. Over half of the acreage is upstream of the mine water discharge point.

The miner-made discharge point, located at a low point in a vast underground mining system, spews about 200,000 gallons of minewater per hour into the Sewickley Creek. Acquisition of the property will enable the Association to proceed with its plan to treat the minewater.

In the meantime, John Young, a Youngwood native who "grew up in the swamps around Youngwood" and has a passion for nature has already turned the wetlands into an outdoor classroom.

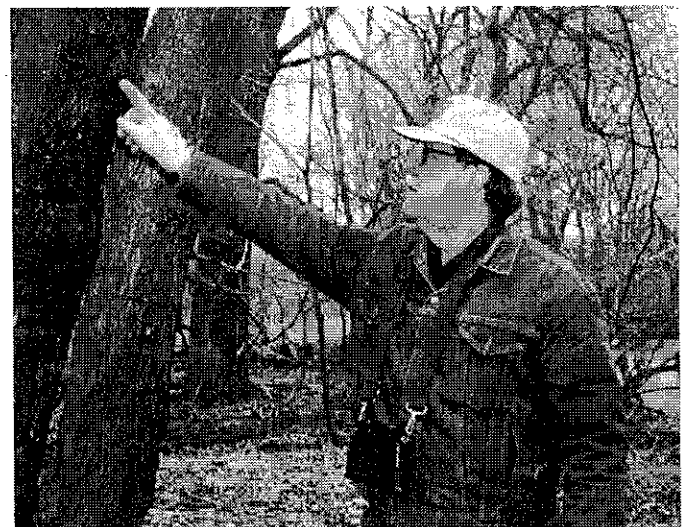
One problem though with an outdoor classroom is it doesn't have any temperature control as the students of his March 22 nature walk will tell you. The second day of spring had winterlike weather as several novice naturalists, bundled in winter attire, joined John on a short but fact-packed hike.

With the spring peepers in full chorus John pointed out a rare granddaddy bur oak on a flood plain with only grass growing beneath its massive sun-blocking branches - typical of great oak savannahs. John found probably the only acorn the squirrels left and showed us the "bur" or fingerlike projection on the cap that gave the tree its name. John also found a great horned owl pellet (fur, bones, and other indigestibles of past meals) lying on the ground.

SCWA Plans Nature Walk

John will conduct another nature walk July 30 at 7PM. In addition to other interesting wetland species, we hope to find evidence of nesting hard shell and soft shell turtles. We will meet at the bridge on Reservoir Hill Road near the intersection of Brinkerton Road.

For more information, call Sue 925-6925.



John Young points out the holes made by a yellow bellied sap sucker. The holes run around the circumference in a straight line.

Welcome to the most recent
edition of the...

SCWA Newsletter

Spring 1999



The
Sewickley
Creek
Watershed
Association pro-
motes the conser-
vation of natural re-
sources, monitors
and improves water
quality, and advo-
cates wise land use
practices in the
Sewickley Creek
Watershed.

As such, the Asso-
ciation shall use its
resources to edu-
cate the citizens of
the watershed as to
sound environmen-
tal practices. In ad-
dition, the Associa-
tion will seek out
and cooperate with
government agen-
cies, interested or-
ganizations, busi-
nesses and individ-
uals to implement
programs to im-
prove water quality
and encourage
proper land use.

Rail trail update

Many of you may remember the trail feasibility study that was done several years ago to see if building a trail from Youngwood to Mammoth Park was a good idea. We got the feeling that it was a good idea, and have since made some progress in the world of rails to trails.

Because there had been in-roads made in our County Seat into the establishment of a "rail with trail" from there to Youngwood, it seemed reasonable to get that trail going first. The Five Star Trail was established at a chapter of the Regional Trail Corporation, which is an organization providing planning and expertise to the local trail builders in this region, and the plans started to develop. It was clearly going to be easier to build the Greensburg to Youngwood trail on land that was already set up for the trail. This way, the community would see progress and action, and hopefully would get interested enough to see the other trails happen.

So the Five Star Trail has continued with noteworthy progress on their trail from Greensburg to Youngwood. As of this time, the bulk of the mainline trail is finished. Starting at the North end at Lynch Field, the upper reaches of Jack's Run and our Watershed, there is a tunnel under the former Pennsylva-

nia Railroad (now Conrail, soon to be Norfolk Southern) main line from Philadelphia to Pittsburgh. Proceeding south, the trail crosses a new bridge deck over the old railroad bridge over Pittsburgh Street, which was constructed by the Greensburg Fire Department. The trail continues over sections finished in 1997, past Offutt Field, Urania Avenue, over Mount Pleasant Street, and to Huff Avenue in South Greensburg.

The next section south was completed in 1998 from Huff

Avenue all the way to the two new bridges over Jack's Run near Midway. This next section was completed in 1997 all the way to Trolley Line Avenue in the Buncher Industrial Park. The full intent at this time is to route all trail traffic along Trolley Line Avenue, partly due to the concerns of the many industrial entities involved. Also affecting this decision was the fact that many people have used both Trolley Line Avenue and Jack's Run Boulevard for
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A paving crew works to make progress on the Five Star Trail section.

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