



SCWA Newsletter

ISSUE 4

MAY 2010

**Sewickley
Creek
Watershed
Association**

*Working Together
For A Better
Environment*

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**Thomas W. Keller,
Executive Director**

Association Awarded Grant to Improve WCCC Stream



This unnamed tributary to Sewickley Creek runs in front of Founder's Hall at Westmoreland County Community College and is currently impaired by parking lot and roadway runoff.

As noted in our previous newsletters, the Sewickley Creek Watershed Association (SCWA) is conducting a comprehensive watershed assessment, restoration and implementation plan to identify pollution sources affecting various stream segments throughout the watershed. The study will examine the effects of these pollution impacts and prioritize Sewickley Creek stream segments for restoration.

Sewickley Creek is impacted by a number of point and nonpoint sources of pollution including stormwater runoff. One such site is an unnamed tributary (UNT) to Sewickley Creek that runs in front of Founder's Hall at Westmoreland County Community College (WCCC) in Youngwood, PA. Presently, the UNT lacks a riparian buffer, as its banks are kept mowed up to the water's edge. In fact, the end of the pavement in the parking area is only 25-30 feet from the bank of the stream in some places. The stream is also impaired by both parking lot, and roadway runoff. There is approximately .76 acres of unused pavement that increases the amount of stormwater runoff that drains into the UNT.

Recently, SCWA received a \$150,000 Growing Greener Plus Grant through the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection and

plans to partner with WCCC to address part of the runoff problem on campus. The current parking lot runoff will be decreased through the addition of infiltration areas and rain gardens, as well as porous pavements. To help improve the quality of the UNT, the banks will be stabilized and a riparian buffer will be restored. With the addition of stormwater Best Management Practices, more of the parking lot runoff will be infiltrated into the ground rather than flowing into the stream. Ultimately, by restoring the riparian buffer and restoring the stream bank, the amount of sediment entering the stream will decrease and water quality will improve.

Not only will this project contribute to the reduction of stormwater erosion on the UNT, but because of its location and exposure, the Best Management Practices used will be showcased to tens of thousands of visitors to the WCCC campus, including students, developers, landscape architects, and homeowners.

ABOUT THE PROJECT

Features:

- Removal of portions of existing pavement
- Construction of infiltration areas and rain gardens
- Installation of porous pavements
- Construction of stream bank stabilization structures
- Planting riparian buffers

Goals:

- Decrease stormwater runoff from parking lot into Sewickley Creek UNT
- Stabilize stream bank
- Restore riparian buffer

Sewickley Creek Watershed Association has always supported the idea of sound land use management, using our natural resources in a way that preserves their integrity while providing maximum beneficial use to the residents of the watershed and beyond.

SCWA properties have been enrolled in the PA Game Commission cooperative public access program to provide opportunities for hunters to use our properties for their recreational enjoyment. We have also partnered with the PA Fish and Boat Commission to open additional waters of Sewickley Creek to public fishing, and improved our waterways to increase opportunities for fishing, boating and other recreational opportunities.

A good example of this can be found at the abandoned mine drainage treatment system located in Lowber near the confluence of Sewickley Creek with the Yough River. This system removes essentially all of the iron from the Marchand Mine discharge that previously turned Sewickley Creek orange and stained the Yough for several miles.

At most of the SCWA project sites, volunteers have installed a variety of devices designed to enhance wildlife populations, most of which improve the recreational value of the area in which they are constructed. However, there are those in our community that seem set on abusing our natural resources, some of whom call themselves sportsman and recreationalists.

At the Brinkerton Mine Drainage Treatment Project site, there has been what seems to be a non-stop battle with people that would rather abuse natural resources than protect or im-

A Different Kind of “Sportsman”



The remnants of an ancient oak tree lay beside the Brinkerton Project Site.

prove them. One of the most recent incidents came just prior to deer season last winter, when a “sportsman” decided to cut a nearly hundred year-old tree down with a chain saw in order to gain access to the opposite side of the stream. You can imagine the shock at seeing a perfectly healthy old oak tree felled across the stream, apparently to use as a foot bridge.

This is only one in a series of incidents at Brinkerton since the project was completed. SCWA has always been an organization that promotes the use of properties for the enjoyment of our members and the public at large. It is disheartening to know that so many folks have yet to respect the gifts that nature has provided us and would think nothing of abusing the places we work so hard to conserve and restore.

We urge anyone who has information on these vandalism events to contact the State Police at 724-832-7977.

Your Membership Support is Important

During recessions like the one we’re currently experiencing, many of us need to trim our expenses to make ends meet. We find ourselves being a little more judicious, especially about the donations we make and the organizations we choose to support. We all want to receive a good return on our investments.

Some of you reading this newsletter may be a little surprised that you received it because you did not renew your membership this year. We want you to know that we appreciate your past support and hope you’ll consider renewing your membership in SCWA. Although many of our major remediation projects are funded by federal and state grants, we still incur business expenses such as rent, utility bills, insurance, and staff expenses. (Not to mention, we want to continue publishing newsletters so our members and community residents see the good work we continue to do.)

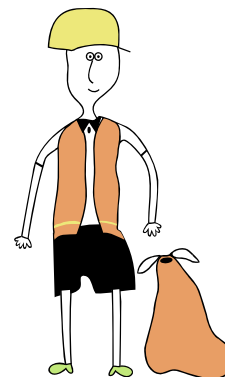
You may think that \$10 for an individual membership,

or \$25 for a family won’t make a difference, but it truly does. As just one example, the electricity need to power the aeration equipment at our Wilson Run project costs roughly \$400 a month. That’s 480 individual or 192 family memberships annually—every single membership is important!

Sewickley Creek is committed to restoring our waterways affected with abandoned mine drainage, controlling nonpoint source pollution, preserving historical landmarks, and developing recreational facilities in our local communities. But we can’t do these things without your help.

If you’ve allowed your membership to lapse, we ask that you please reconsider being a part of SCWA and ask a friend or family member to consider a membership as well. Visit our Website at www.sewickleycreek.com to see the progress we’ve made since 1991. Working together...we can make a difference !

Community Groups Celebrate Earth Day



Almost 80 volunteers came out on a rainy Saturday morning to participate in SCWA's sixth annual *Great American Cleanup of Pennsylvania* event.

Nearly 80 volunteers braved rain showers and traversed slippery hillsides to clean several miles of roadways, stream banks, and an illegal dump site in celebration of the 40th Anniversary of Earth Day and the Great American Cleanup of Pennsylvania on Saturday, April 24. SCWA partnered with Westmoreland Cleanways, the Borough of Youngwood, Wendover Middle School, Boy Scout Troop 465, Mill Service, Inc., and South Huntingdon Township for the annual statewide event.

The groups picked up a total of two dump truck loads of trash from an illegal dump site in Hunker, plus another 152 bags of garbage and 162 tires from the streets in the Borough of Youngwood, Armbrust Road, and the banks of a one-mile stretch of Jacks Run through Buncher Industrial Park. Unusual items included a pool table, a baby crib, appliances and furniture.

"We really appreciate the tireless volunteers who worked through the rain showers to clean up littered road-

ways and some of the eyesores in our communities," reported Larry Myers, SCWA Board member. "The good news...several volunteers noted that a few local roadways seemed to be less littered this year than in the past. The bad news...other sections continue to be polluted by thoughtless litterbugs."

Ellen Keefe, Executive Director of Westmoreland Cleanways, noted, "Local partnerships are the key to achieving long-term success in reducing illegal dumping and littering. The groups working today are building pride in their communities while eliminating some major threats to the environment. We are honored to support their efforts."

The group is very appreciative of the event sponsors who included Menasha Corporation, Wal Mart, Giant Eagle, Pepsi Beverage Company, Jioio's Restaurant, Lilja's Premier Pizza, Powerhouse Produce, Youngwood and New Stanton Sheetz Stores, and Youngwood Sunoco. The Sewickley Creek Watershed Association encourages everyone to support their businesses and thank them for supporting this annual event.

Hepler Memorial Tree Planted

A crowd of friends and family gathered near the Youngwood train station pavilion on June 10 in memory of the late SCWA Board member and past friend, Bob Hepler, by planting a tree in his honor. Boy Scout Troop #457 New Stanton assisted with the planting during the evening dedication held along the bike trail near the station.



Sewickley Creek Watershed Association
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Thomas W. Keller



*Working Together For A Better
Environment*

**Join Us At Our Next Monthly
Meeting!**

Every Third Thursday at 7:00 pm
WCCC Business and
Industry Center
Room 4104

Open To All!

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Mark Your Calendars!



**2010 Household Hazardous
Waste Collection.**
Saturday, October 2, 2010
9 am - 2 pm
Arnold Palmer Regional Airport
New Location

We're On The Web!
www.sewickleycreek.com

**If you would rather receive this
newsletter via email, contact
our office!**