

Conodoguinet Creek Watershed Association Newsletter

February 2003

THE DROUGHT IS FINALLY OVER!

SIX SOUTHCENTRAL AND SOUTHEASTERN COUNTIES UPGRADED FROM DROUGHT WATCH TO NORMAL STATUS

On January 8, on behalf of Gov. Mark Schweiker, Department of Environmental Protection Secretary David E. Hess announced the six counties in southcentral and southeastern Pennsylvania, Berks, Chester, Cumberland, Delaware, Lancaster and York, were upgraded from a drought watch to normal status after several weeks of beneficial rain and snow. Seven counties on the western edge of the state, Beaver, Crawford, Erie, Greene, Lawrence, Mercer and Washington, remained in drought watch.

In lifting the drought watch, Hess said "We have been in a real drought-buster of a weather pattern in southcentral and southeastern Pennsylvania for about the past eight weeks or so." "The snow we received in late November, December and January was especially helpful because the slow melting of snow is excellent for recharging groundwater. The weather so far this winter, when it comes to precipitation, is just about the opposite of last year when the winter months were so dry." "Let's hope that 2003 turns out to be a year of adequate precipitation after a year that many of us won't forget."

Gov. Schweiker first declared a drought emergency for 24 counties in southcentral and southeastern Pennsylvania on Feb. 12, 2002. The emergency list was trimmed several times during the year until Gov. Schweiker dropped the final three counties from drought emergency in December. Of the state's 67 counties, only a dozen escaped being in a drought emergency, drought warning or drought watch at some point after Feb. 12 of last year.

A drought emergency, the third and most severe stage of the three drought levels, imposes mandatory restrictions on non-essential water use and can only be declared by the Governor. A drought warning, the second stage of drought, calls for a 10 percent voluntary reduction in water consumption. A drought watch, the first stage and least severe stage, calls for a voluntary 5 percent reduction of non-essential water use.

For more information on drought, including a color-coded map showing the status of each county, visit the PA PowerPort at www.state.pa.us, PA Keyword: "drought."

VISIT THE CCWA WEBSITE at <http://www.ship.edu/~cjwolt/ccwa/>

President's Notes - Gil Freedman

I want to welcome our new Board of Directors and officers, who are planning several productive, interesting and fun events for the Watershed Association this year.

You can help by participating in our meetings and outings, and recruiting friends to join us. Our new Vice President Don Seiple will be helping with meeting planning. Our new Secretary, Susan Parry, is also our watershed monitoring coordinator. Michael Foley is our new Treasurer. Jane Earle continues as our newsletter editor.

I would like to express my appreciation for the example set by our outgoing president of six years, Wilbur Wolf. He led us through water quality monitoring, support for education by providing

watershed association grants to local schools, communication with government bodies, and the Good Hope dam removal project. We received several conservation awards under his leadership. Thank you, Wilbur.

One of my goals this year is to help others share my enjoyment and appreciation of the Conodoguinet Creek. I enjoy fishing, floating and just looking. One summer morning I watched a succession of red fox pups, perhaps half grown, slip down to the Creek edge, sip some water, look around, and go back to growling and tussling with their litter mates.

I hope to see you at our next program meeting, Thursday, February 27, 2003.

Program Meeting February 27, 2003 - Wetland Secrets

The Conodoguinet Creek Watershed Association program for February will be presented by local biologist and educator H. Eugene Wingert of East Pennsboro Township. Mr. Wingert will speak on the importance of wetlands, particularly vernal ponds. Vernal ponds are shallow pools that fill with water in the fall and remain filled until spring or summer. Acting as sponges, wetlands and vernal ponds help make for a healthy watershed by collecting, holding, and filtering stormwater run-off and allowing for groundwater recharge. Wetlands provide habitat for a multitude of plants and animals, particularly amphibians. One of the first signs of spring is the chirping of the small Wood frogs or "spring peepers" in vernal ponds.

Amphibians that breed in vernal ponds produce the greatest vertebrate biomass in the forest. If all the amphibians that breed there were weighed together, they would outweigh all the birds and mammals of a similarly sized dry wooded area. Wood frogs are one of the first breeders in these forested wetlands.

Widespread development, especially in the eastern regions of Cumberland County, is impacting water quality and increasing flood hazards. Without adequate wetlands, stormwater flows off paved landscapes and quickly fills stream channels, which increases downstream flooding. Additionally, toxins from parking lots and other human activities are

washed into waterways. The Conodoguinet Creek is a major tributary to the Susquehanna River, which is the major contributor to the Chesapeake Bay. Preservation of wetlands, such as vernal pools, is an important component of maintaining the health of our streams and transporting clean water to the Chesapeake Bay.

The program is open to the public free of charge and will be held at the Carlisle Community Center, starting at 7:45 pm. The Center is located at 415 Franklin Street, Carlisle.

To reach the center travel west or east on High Street to College Street (Route 74). Go north on College Street two blocks to North Street and turn west (left) on North Street. At the first street on right (Franklin Street) turn right, go two blocks and look for the center, a former school building, at Lincoln St. on the far right corner. The parking lot is on the north or far side of the building.

For more information about the program, contact Gil Freedman at 717-697-2513

or visit the CCWA website at

<http://www.ship.edu/~cjwolt/ccwa/>.

Upcoming Meetings and Events for Winter-Summer 2003

Date	Type	Topic	What-Where-When
Thursday February 27	General Meeting	Wetlands/Vernal Pools	7:45 pm Gene Wingert Carlisle Community Center
Thursday March 27	Board Meeting	Business	7 pm Conservation District
Monday Evening April 14	Field Trip	Vernal Ponds	Gene Wingert or Randy Cassel
Thursday April 24	General Meeting	Report on state of the Creek	ALLARM Carlisle Community Center
Saturday May 3	Field Trip	Wildflowers along the Creek	Melanie Wertz & Jane Earle
Thursday May 22	Board Meeting	Business	7 pm Conservation District
Saturday July 19 Rain date July 26	Outing/Picnic	Clean-up & Picnic	Good Hope Dam
Thursday August 21	Board Meeting	Business	7 pm Conservation District

Volunteers Needed for Monitoring “Snapshots” on the Conodoguinet!

By Susan Parry, Citizens Volunteer Monitoring Coordinator

The Conodoguinet Creek Watershed Association (CCWA) is looking for members as well as non-members interested in helping to plan and carry out local efforts to help with monitoring to maintain the health of this important local waterway. CCWA is expanding our efforts to include not only quarterly “snapshot” monitoring on more than 20 sites along tributary segments, but also to test after storm events to show the impacts of surface runoff on the watershed. The focus of the quarterly snapshots is look for cyclical trends and establish good baseline data.

Volunteers of all ages are needed to perform simple and fun tests in safe, accessible areas along the creek. We are preparing to launch our third annual DEP “Watershed Snapshot” event in celebration of Earth Week and groups will be testing the same locations as were done in the fall. **We will meet at 9:00 AM on Saturday, April 26th at the Cumberland County Conservation District Office** (From I-81, take the College St. Exit, turn left at stop then go about 1/2 mile to a traffic light. Turn right onto Brookwood, and the office is at 43 Brookwood on the right). The teams will spend approximately 2-3 hours collecting samples (scavenger hunt style!), then spend several hours analyzing the samples using state-of-the-art testing equipment. If you are able to help, you can decide and choose which part of the process interests you. If you’d like to assist with April’s snapshot or any other activities related to CCWA’s Monitoring Program, please contact Volunteer Coordinator Susan Parry at 717-761-1659. **This is a great way to learn more about your watershed!**

Check out the CCWA website for more information on the monitoring program at: <http://www.ship.edu/~cjwolt/ccwa/>, and remember to join us for an interesting presentation on the *Health of the Conodoguinet*, based on past volunteer data results, on Thursday, April 24th at 7:00 PM at the Carlisle Community Center!

PS: There are also opportunities to get involved in a brand new type of monitoring- dam removals! CCWA is partnering with several groups (ALLARM, POWR, and American Rivers) to set up new protocols in local dam removal initiatives by using volunteers to record baseline data of conditions above two dams on the creek, then look at the consequential effects of the dam removals. This project has begun and will continue over the next few years, so stay tuned!

River Otters Residing in our Conodoguinet Creek!

A resident of Hampden Township who lives along the Conodoguinet Creek contacted Wilbur Wolf in December 2002 about sighting an otter in the creek near his yard. He said that for the last two years he has been seeing a River Otter in his backyard that borders the creek. Although the sightings have been few & far between, in early January, he was able to observe and photograph the otter dining on crayfish as well as running across the ice to his den. The otter lives in a vacant lot that borders his property.

Dr. Tom Serfass, a biology professor at Frostburg University in Maryland, who was involved with the otter reintroduction project funded by the Wild Resource Conservation Fund, said that there has been evidence of otters repopulating portions of the lower Susquehanna River for about 10 years now. Merlin Benner, DCNR biologist, has been monitoring the population. He is not sure if the Conodoguinet Creek otters are coming from the native population in northeastern Pennsylvania, from otters reintroduced in the

northcentral Region of the state, from Maryland, or all of the above. He thinks the expansion of otters is a very exciting story, although few people seem interested in learning more about otters in this region. He participated in recent efforts to release otters in the Juniata River, but otters were known to be occurring in at least portions of the lower reaches prior to those releases. Last fall, he learned of a report of otters on Conewago Creek in York County. Similar verified reports have been received from Penns Creek in Centre County. More should be learned about otters along the lower Susquehanna River basin. He thinks otter documentation and protection would be a great project for local conservation groups. He thinks the return of the otter to this region of the state is news worthy.

The Conodoguinet Creek Watershed Association Board thinks the otter sights are exciting too. We will keep you informed and perhaps schedule a field trip to look for the otters. Has anyone else spotted any otters?

Conodoguinet Creek Watershed Association Officers

President:	Gill Freedman, Silver Spring Township email: gil49@comcast.net
Vice president:	Donald Seiple, Middlesex Township
Past President:	Wilbur Wolf, Penn Township
Treasurer:	Michael Foley, Carlisle Borough
Secretary & Monitoring Coordinator:	Susan Parry, Camp Hill
Web Page:	Chris Woltemade, Shippensburg
Newsletter Editor:	Jane Earle, Silver Spring Township

WHO ARE OUR CCWA BOARD MEMBERS AND OFFICERS?

Gil Freedman (President) is a consulting engineer on geothermal heat pumps and forensics. He is a former employee of an electric utility where he was concerned with energy and conservation. He likes to fish the Conodoguinet Creek and the Susquehanna River. He's published papers on combined sewerage mitigation and has training in air pollution control. While working as an aerospace technologist with NASA he helped develop and test the Apollo space suit. He's interested in preserving the good qualities of the Conodoguinet Creek and helping others appreciate the watershed.

Mike Foley (Treasurer) works as an Environmental, Health & Safety Specialist for Northrop Grumman-California Microwave Systems in Hagerstown, MD., involved with environmental compliance issues, storm water pollution prevention measures, hazwaste management and also has OSHA-related safety responsibilities. He has a BS w/concentration in Environmental Studies. He formerly worked in the IBM (Endicott, NY) Water Treatment Lab, assigned to a groundwater remediation project. He currently lives in Carlisle Borough and serves on the Borough's Water and Sewer Authority. He says "he enjoys being "above the tree line".

Susan Parry (Recording Secretary and Monitoring Coordinator) has a degree in Environmental Resources from California University of PA, and a graduate degree in Public Administration from Penn State Harrisburg. Susan fulfilled her internship requirement with the Bureau of Recreation and Conservation in PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR). She became Watershed Programs Coordinator for the PA Organization for Watersheds and Rivers (POWR), where she was responsible for developing and implementing statewide watershed projects. The Natural Resources Conservation Service presently employs Susan as the new Capital Area Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Coordinator, which allows her to work with local conservation organizations to develop unique program opportunities within our region. Susan lives between the Yellow Breeches Creek and Conodoguinet Creek watersheds and enjoys paddling on both creeks.

Chris Woltemade (Web Master) is a professor in the Department of Geography-Earth Science at Shippensburg University. He received his masters and Doctorate from the University of Wisconsin at Madison. His primary interests are water resources management, hydrology, geomorphology, and ecological restoration. He has recently worked on geomorphological projects in Pennsylvania and Nicaragua. He worked with several other university faculty to develop the Burd Run Research Laboratory for students at Shippensburg University that is funded by the National Science Foundation. He has also led a joint agency and public project to restore the channel and floodplain wetlands of Burd Run funded by a Department of Environmental Protection Growing Greener Grant. The project provides a hands-on opportunity for students to conduct research. He is an avid road and mountain bicyclist and heads two groups devoted to recreational and competitive cycling.

Dave Simko (New Board Member) is married with two Children. His wife has lived on the creek in Hampden Township since 1973. One of his great joys in life is taking his kids fishing in his backyard and enjoying the various waterfowl that migrate to and from the creek during the course of the year. He also enjoys skiing during the winter months. He has been a Management Trainee, Transfer Station Manager, Recycling Center Manager and District Hauling Manager for Waste Management and the former USA Waste Services since graduating from Allegheny College with a BS in Economics in 1987. Currently, he is the Career Center/District Manager for Waste Management of Central PA, Inc. that services 13 Counties in Central Pennsylvania with 250 collection routes operating daily.

More Bios Next Time

**IF YOU WANT TO CONTINUE TO RECEIVE THIS NEWSLETTER
PLEASE PAY YOUR DUES!**

***Conodoguinet Creek Watershed Association
Membership Application and Dues Payment for 2003***

Name _____
Address _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Membership Dues Categories		
Student	One year	\$10 _____
	Two years	\$20 _____
Individual	One Year	\$15 _____
	Two Years	\$30 _____
Family	One year	\$25 _____
	Two years	\$50 _____

Lifetime	\$150 _____
Conservation Organization	\$25 _____
Corporate	\$100 _____
Donation	_____
Total Enclosed	_____

Send to: Jane Earle
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Make checks payable to CCWA

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