

Conodoguinet Creek Watershed Association Newsletter

March 2004

President Gil Freedman - REPORT TO MEMBERS

Ask Your Legislator to Amend the Good Samaritan Act

The Environmental Good Samaritan Act, passed on December 15, 1999, was intended to limit civil and environmental liability for landowners and volunteer groups who conduct reclamation or water treatment projects, thus encouraging the execution of such projects.

Landowners are protected from lawsuits who provide access to their land without charge or payment for reclamation projects that *restore mineral extraction lands or water pollution abatement projects that stop pollution caused by abandoned mines or oil and gas wells*. Also, any person, including non-profit organizations, who "provide[s] equipment, materials and services at no charge or at cost" are entitled to immunity.

Unfortunately, the Act does not cover restoration work or water quality monitoring conducted by individuals or groups in watersheds *unaffected by abandoned mine drainage*. Therefore, sponsors of watershed projects in about two-thirds of the state are not currently protected under the Good Samaritan Act, even though a great deal of good work is being conducted in these agricultural and urban watersheds. These include restoration or monitoring projects for channel stability, sediment and debris, and water quality.

The law should be changed to extend the same protections to landowners and environmental volunteers, such as our stream monitors and property-owning hosts.

Please contact your state legislators and encourage them to amend the Environmental Good Samaritan Act to extend protection to all such projects, not just abandoned mine projects.

To find out who your Representative and Senator are, and for contact information, go to <http://www.legis.state.pa.us/cfdocs/legis/home/find.cfm>. To read a copy of the Environmental Good Samaritan Act, visit <http://members.aol.com/StatutesP9/27C.html> and click on "Chapter 81."

Gil Freedman

**Program Meeting
Thursday, March 25, 2004**

Watershed Association Explores Pennsylvania's Kittatinny Ridge

From Chambersburg to Allentown, Central Pennsylvania residents and visitors are graced with a long stretch of forested ridge that forms a wall of woods on the north edge of the Cumberland Valley. The Kittatinny Ridge (locally known as "Blue or North Mountain") stretches 185 miles through 11 counties from New Jersey to Maryland, and is the largest forest area in this part of the Commonwealth.

Paul Zeph, the Kittatinny Ridge Project Director for Audubon Pennsylvania, will present Pennsylvania's Kittatinny Ridge – Its Value and its Future at the Conodoguinet Creek Watershed Association public meeting on Thursday, March 25, 2004.

"Many people tend to take the ridge for granted not realizing how its existence benefits our everyday lives," says Zeph. In addition to providing critical habitat for nesting songbirds, large mammals, and other forms of wildlife, the ridge offers unique recreation for bird-watchers, hunters, and hikers. In autumn, its many rock outcrops provide ringside seats as tens of thousands of hawks follow this important migration corridor southward. Additionally, Blue Mountain's thousands of acres of forest protect hundreds of streams originating on its flanks.

In this inspiring presentation, Zeph will reveal the value of the Kittatinny Ridge, outline threats currently facing this magnificent landform, and discuss initiatives being explored for its protection. Come and learn more about this unique natural area right here in our backyard.

This program will be held at the Stuart Community Center (formerly the Carlisle Community Center) at 7:00 pm and is free and open to the public. To reach the center, travel west or east on High Street to College Street (Route 74). Turn north on College Street and travel two blocks and turn left onto North Street. The first street is Franklin Street; turn right and continue two blocks. Look for the center, a retired school building, at Lincoln Street on the far right corner. Parking is on the north (far side) of the building.

For more information about the program or the activities of the Conodoguinet Creek Watershed Association, contact Gil Freedman at 717-697-2513 or visit the CCWA website at <http://www.conocreek.org>.

Wildlife Habitat Stewards Sought

The National Wildlife Federation and the Pennsylvania Wildlife Federation are looking for a few dedicated individuals to train as Habitat Steward volunteers. Once trained, these volunteers will be a resource for their communities to assist people who want to create a landscape that is wildlife-friendly and good for the environment. Volunteers will be able to teach people how to get their backyards, schools, work places, or other community sites certified by NWF as official Wildlife Habitat sites.

The training will include guest speakers and topics such as Gardening for Birds, Why Native Plants, Planting for Wildlife, Planting for Reptiles and Amphibians, and other habitat topics. The Habitat Stewards training will take place at the Warwick Hotel, Hummelstown, PA (near Hershey and Harrisburg), on the following dates: April 17 from 8:30 AM to 4:30 PM; April 20 from 6 to 9 PM; and April 22 from 6 to 9 PM.

All three sessions should be attended. The Pennsylvania Wildlife Federation will pay the training costs so there is no charge for attendees. Interested participants should contact Cathy Pomanti at (717) 566-6136 or cpomanti@bearingpoint.net for an application form and more detailed information.

County To Publish Creek Guide

The Cumberland County Planning Commission, under the leadership of staff member Stephanie Williams, is publishing a waterways guide to the Creek. Williams gives the association credit for contributing material.

The free guide will be available by next month at the Cumberland County Planning Commission Office, 18 North Hanover Street, Carlisle, PA, and at municipal offices. Email, phone and fax requests will be taken, Attn. Stephanie Williams at sjwilliams@ccpa.net , 240-5358 phone, and 240-6517 fax. The enclosed map is very good and shows many public access points and the activities available at those sites, like hiking.

Reminder:
Creek visitors should ask landowners
When crossing private land to gain creek access.

Beware of the Creek when high or flooding.

It's easy to slip in, and this time of year the water is so cold it stuns.
Especially avoid our few remaining dams at this time - they're drowning machines.

CCWA Monitoring Program Update

Late in 2003, the Conodoguinet Creek Watershed Association (CCWA) began to implement its new "study design" with a revised Monitoring Program, based upon past results and present issues within the stream corridor. As volunteers, we could not have gotten to this point on our own.

The CCWA wants to recognize the work that the staff at the Alliance for Aquatic Resource Monitoring (ALLARM), headquartered at Dickinson College, Carlisle, PA, did over the years and in 2003, not only analyze and interpret the 5 years worth of baseline data that the monitors had collected, but to lead the new study design meetings -- and new monitoring project.

First, they held a data analysis workshop for CCWA that laid the foundation for our volunteers and members to understand how data is analyzed. ALLARM staff spent many hours graphing and analyzing the past data, and then presented the most important results to CCWA in an easy-to-understand format. This analysis was critical for the group to move on to an updated monitoring program and study design.

Under ALLARM staff facilitation, we embarked on a study design process that took many hours of meetings during the summer months of 2003. Although we had fun together going through the process (and eating everyone's great potluck dishes!), the volunteers and ALLARM staff worked diligently to update the monitoring program to fit today's issues and needs within the Conodoguinet Creek watershed.

A study design calls for the group to ask basic questions and seek answers, such as *Why are we monitoring*, and *How can the data results be utilized*, in a way that results in an "action plan" of sorts. Our study design process led to the new monitoring program we are presently beginning to work on, and we wish to acknowledge the hours and hours of work invested by our partners at ALLARM.

Thanks to Candie, Lauren and all the ALLARM staff that have assisted us over the past five years. We truly appreciate having friends like you on our team!

For more information about ALLARM:

<http://www.dickinson.edu/storg/allarm/index.html>

Susan Parry, Volunteer Coordinator

☺ **Look for monitoring activities to start at full swing in April!**

To review the new CCWA study design, or to find out how you can become a CCWA volunteer, check out the website at:

www.conocreek.org

Middle Conodoguinet River Conservation Plan: Final Steps!

The Conodoguinet Creek Watershed Association (CCWA) held a final public meeting (and pancake breakfast!) for community members throughout Cumberland County to finalize and celebrate the *Middle Conodoguinet River Conservation Plan*. The event, which was open to the public, took place on Saturday, February 7, 2004 at Oak Flat Elementary School, in Newville, PA.

Over thirty people attended, including citizens, municipal elected officials, as well as CCWA members. The event was a huge success, and input given during the meeting will be incorporated into the draft before it's submitted to Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) for approval. Municipalities in the watershed also will be asked to approve the plan.

The *River Conservation Plan*, funded by DCNR, is the result of a five-year study process undertaken by the CCWA. The plan study area covers the middle portion of the Conodoguinet Creek watershed including all or part of the Borough of Newville, as well as Upper and Lower Frankford, Upper and Lower Mifflin, West Pennsboro, North and South Newton, Southampton, North and South Middleton, Dickinson, and Penn Townships in Cumberland County.

The primary goal of the study was to develop recommendations based on identified and prioritized opportunities for water resource management in the middle third of the watershed. The resulting recommendations encourage land use planning, including multi-municipal planning to address corridor-wide issues. This document will be a valuable resource for county and municipal bodies in creating and reviewing land use plans and policies for communities in the area. The CCWA welcomes input regarding the final plan from any and all interested parties.

**If you would like to review the plan, or just to find out more about the
Conodoguinet Creek, contact President Gil Freedman at 697-2513,
or check out the website at:**

www.conocreek.org

PLEASE NOTE OUR NEW WEB SITE ADDRESS

<http://www.conocreek.org>

CCWA Schedule 2004

You may also check the CCWA web site, created and maintained by Prof. Christopher Woltemade:
www.conocreek.org or <http://www.ship.edu/~cjwolt/ccwa/>

DATE	TYPE	TOPIC	REMARK, COORDINATOR, SPEAKER
1/22	General	Waste Management	Dave Simko, Tom Imphong
2/10	Board		
3/25	General	Conserving The Kittatinny Ridge	Holly Smith, Paul Zeph, PA Audubon
4/13	Board		
4/24	Hike?	Blue Ridge	Waiting for coordination
5/20	General	Bay-Friendly Gardening?	Alliance For The Chesapeake Bay? Don to explore. Note 3 rd Thursday
5/22	Field	Wild flower walk	Melanie Wertz, Jane Earle
6/8	Board		
June?	Field	Tree frogs, ponds	Jane Earle, Don S.
TBA	Field	Float trip with others	?
6/26	Riparian	Maintenance	Willow Mill, Melanie
7/17	Creek	Clean-up project, picnic	Upper Frankford, Holly, Kurt 7/24 if water high
8/7	Field	Secret Nightlife of the Creek/Night Herons?	Cindy Dunn?
8/10	Board		
9/23	General	Air Quality In The Cumberland Valley?	
10/28	Combined	Elections	
11/9	Board		

Additional Programs As Needed:

Stream Monitoring Updates Whenever Available

Erosion & sediment control: Best Management Practices, Construction Erosion Control, Dirt & Gravel Road Program

Program Chairman Don Seiple may modify from time-to-time.

Day & Time: General meetings are the 4th Thursday of the month, and board meetings the 2nd Tuesday, alternating monthly with generals, and except as noted. Meetings will start at 7p.

Site: General meetings– Carlisle Community Center

Board Meetings held at– Cumberland County Conservation Office

TBA = To be announced.

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Conodoguinet Creek Facts

The Conodoguinet Creek flows through a lovely scenic riparian corridor. A succession of wildflowers can be viewed along its banks. Many birds frequent the corridor, including wading birds such as Great Blue Heron and Great Egret, Mallards, warblers, and sparrows. Ospreys and Bald Eagles may occasionally be seen on the Creek. There are also rumors of a resident Otter in the lower watershed.

The main stem Conodoguinet Creek is no longer considered impaired by the PA Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)! All 105 miles from source to the Susquehanna River attain aquatic life use. The Creek was improperly classified as impaired on earlier DEP 303d lists. Unfortunately, several tributaries, are still impaired by excess siltation and organic enrichment from agricultural activities, construction or urban runoff. The Cumberland and Franklin County Conservation Districts have received grants from the US EPA Section 319 Nonpoint Source Program and the DEP Growing Greener Program to implement agricultural best management practices (BMP's) on watershed farms to reduce agricultural runoff.

Impaired tributaries are Trindle Spring Run, Hogestown Run, Wertz Run, Alexanders Spring Creek, Mount Rock Spring Creek, Back Creek, Green Spring Creek, Bulls Head Branch, Newburg Run, Paxton Run, Clippingers Run, Middle Spring Run, Gum Run, Rowe Run, Big Spring Creek, Whiskey Run, and several unnamed tributaries.

**For more information check the DEP website at www.dep.state.pa.us -
For the DEP Integrated List of All Waters.**

Conodoguinet Creek Watershed Association Officers and Board Members

President: Gill Freedman, 49 Sample Bridge Road, Mechanicsburg, PA 17050
697-2513 or gil49@comcast.net

Vice president: Donald Seiple, Treasurer: Vacant
Past President: Wilbur Wolf, Secretary: Susan Parry

Board Members: Kurt Henry, Evan Jenkins, Ray Stiteler, Diane Hollinger,
Jerry Hollowell, John Perry, Holly Smith, David Simko,
Chris Woltemade.

Membership: Kelly Meinhart and Andrew Donaldson

Web Page: Chris Woltemade

Newsletter Editor: Jane Earle

JANE EARLE
20 RED FOX LANE
MECHANICSBURG PA 17050