

Kettle Creek Watershed Association News

Enhance
Preserve
Monitor
Protect



April 2012

Perseverance Pays Dividends to Brook Trout KCWA Habitat Project Wraps-up

In late July 2011, friends and strangers came together in the name of brook trout. It wasn't a fishing trip, but the possibility of future fishing trips is a bit more achievable due to their work.

The confluence of Trout Run and John Summerson Branch saw severe bank erosion during the 2010 flooding in the Hammersley Wild Area of the Kettle Creek watershed. The silver lining of this flooding was installation of some 20 instream devices,

mostly simple log deflectors, to stabilize the accelerated erosion and provide brook trout habitat. Three "log jacks" were also installed. Both streams are categorized as Exceptional Value by the PA Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and "Class A" Brook Trout Waters by the PA Fish & Boat Commission (PFBC). These structures are intended to create better habitat, while keeping the stream cool, and protecting the banks.

KCWA worked in partnership with the PFBC, the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR), and many others to complete this project. This project required a number of key elements, of which two of the largest are "boots on the ground" and planning.

The "boots", or wet sneakers on the ground included Dick Sodergren, Brian Burger, Dave Cardellino, Terry Murty and Jim Toth. Trout Unlimited interns Angela Brison, Krista

Leibensperger, and Steve Roberts also offered assistance. Others who worked swinging sledges were conservationists and anglers Dale Burger (Bucks County), Bill Hartle (Lock Haven) and Steve Kotroba (Delaware County) and from the PFBC, David Keller and intern Chad Lauer. Fox Hollow Construction, LLC of Mill Hall was contracted for excavation and other machinery work.



The funding for this project came primarily from the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service's Eastern Brook Trout Joint Venture through the PFBC. This funding, which totaled nearly \$17,000, was obtained and administered, respectively, by PFBC staff Jason Detar, and Jeff Schmid. Other funding and support came from DCNR Bureaus of

Forestry and State Parks. KCWA sponsored the cost of lunches and a porta-potty on site.

Efforts like this can take years to come together, but the hours of office work by KCWA board member Brian Burger, PFBC designer and site technician Dave Keller were what made this project great. The willingness and support of a great number of agencies, organizations and staff ranging from the Army Corps, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, DEP, DCNR, Clinton County Conservation District, Leidy Township, and Trout Unlimited all became key ingredients.

~ Continued on page 2 ~

KCWA Habitat Project (Continued)

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No project goes on without wrinkles and some tense times of "uh-oh's", but KCWA and its supporters persevered. Volunteers logged approximately 300 hours of total project time. The project was proposed and completed in about one year. Additional field evaluation of the project sites through fish surveys and habitat assessments will be performed by PFBC biologists.

KWCA has the opportunity to do many more of these projects, but coordinating these projects takes an enormous effort. Obtaining permits and in-kind contributions of materials and labor from various partners takes considerable time, diligence and patience.

A major portion of this is planning is finding and prioritizing the locations for these projects. To help with this it has been suggested that we consider multiple, volunteer "water-keepers" within the watershed. Like river-keepers in other parts of the world, these persons would take on the role of locating issues on a given tributary or section of Kettle Creek.

The board would like to know your thoughts on this and, even more, have your name as a volunteer in this capacity. For questions or suggestions, call any one of our board directors.



Trees Available for Landowners

This year the KCWA is offering a new resource to private landowners along streams to further improve the stream. For the first time the KCWA will be able to offer trees and shrubs to any landowner that owns property along the mainstem of Kettle Creek or one of its tributaries. Eligible properties must be located in Clinton County and landowners must be willing to allow volunteers to access their property to plant trees and shrubs within 25 feet of the stream on their property. If you are interested in having trees planted on your property please contact Dave Cardellino at (570) 923-0778.



Member Profile – Dave McIntyre

Most of you know Dave McIntyre and many of you know him well. He's Mr. Fix-it, Mr. Tool Man, Mr. Outdoorsman, but he is better known for his thousands of hours spent helping the residents of the Kettle Creek Valley.

He first visited the area in 1959 as a teenager with his father. They terrorized the fish and game in the area on a regular basis. The family built a small camp on Mac's Lane, and he has been coming here every year since, except in 1967 when he was serving his country in Viet Nam. He and his wife Sharon live in Duncansville and maintain a home there, but they have spent most of their time in the valley since Dave retired in July of 1999, after 30 plus years of service with AT&T as a Communications Technician. They have since built a lovely retirement home on Mac's Lane beside the old camp building.

Dave was one of the early watershed board members and was very active for several terms of office on the board. He served on the Fish Habitat Advisory Committee during his tenure and was the most "hands on" member during that time. You could see him running a front-end loader at the Headgate Project, setting logs on several other projects, or swinging a sledge at all of the projects. He and Sharon were always there to help plant trees for the watershed on tree planting days. While some of us talked a lot during meetings, he tended to be more quiet. Building the



stream structures is where he was in his element.

But, working with the watershed was only a small portion of his time that he has devoted to the people who live in or visit the valley. He directs and delivers corn to the feeders in Leidy Township and makes arrangements and delivers trout for the Kettle Creek-Tamarack Sportsmen Association. He volunteers with the Kettle

Creek Hose Company with their many fund raisers including the Snake Hunt and breakfasts they provide for hunters and anglers. He and Sharon are both certified EMS drivers and make many midnight runs to help local people in their time of need. They work with the other volunteers to put on the Music Festival held each August to raise money for the Kettle Creek Ambulance Association.

Why does everyone call on him when he is so busy? Because he is a willing volunteer and he loves helping people. He has every tool known to man, and he knows how to use them. Whether it is driving an ambulance, running his Kubota to fix or plow the lane, delivering fish or corn, building a better fish tank, rewiring the addition to the fire hall, or installing a dryer vent for a friend, he is in his element. We should all follow his lead and become more involved in helping our community.

Thanks Dave and Sharon for all you do for the Kettle Creek Valley.

Reclamation at the "Three-Fingered Devil" to Begin Soon

Approximately 100 acres of nearly barren, abandoned strip mine in the Huling Branch and Middle Branch drainages of the Twomile Run watershed is slated for reclamation to begin possibly sometime this year or next spring. This area — known as "Area 7" or the "Three-Fingered Devil" (and it does produce devilish mine drainage) — is located on the Sproul State Forest. Part of the Whiskey Springs ATV Trail System is within the project boundaries, so as a result the trail system will be temporarily closed while the reclamation is underway. Please check with the local Bureau of Forestry office in Shintown for details and timing of the temporary closure.

Reclamation at this site is a critical compo-

nent of the overall restoration plan for the Twomile Run watershed. This reclamation project, in combination with some additional abandoned mine lands that will still need to be reclaimed, the passive treatment systems that have been constructed or are currently under design, will ultimately help to restore and reconnect more than 11 miles of native brook trout habitat. Water quality benefits will also be seen in Kettle Creek and the West Branch Susquehanna River.

This reclamation project was identified through the Twomile Run AMD Remediation Master Plan developed by Hedin Environmental and is funded by the PA Department of Environmental Protection.

It's Tree Planting Time!

The KCWA has been hosting annual tree plantings for the past 15 years. In this time the KCWA has added native vegetation to over 25 sites, or well more than 8 miles, along Kettle Creek and its tributaries. These trees and bushes that are planted in a strip approximately 25-35 feet wide along the streambank are known as riparian buffers. These buffers help to filter water entering a stream to remove sediments and pollution from entering the water and help to stabilize the stream bank. In addition, the trees provide cover which helps to maintain the cooler water temperatures trout need to survive. Riparian buffers are vital in maintaining the health of the Kettle Creek watershed, and helping to ensure the great fishing opportunities the watershed has to offer.

Every tree planting event has been accomplished with volunteer labor. From everyone in the KCWA, a big thank you goes out to those of you who have come out early on a Saturday morning to help plant trees over the years. Since the plantings typically occur in early May, the weather has not always made these events pleasant to participate in, and many dedicated volunteers have planted in rain, cold temperatures, or unseasonably warm weather. A special thanks goes out to the Clinton County Adult and Juvenile Correction Facility for in past years the Facility has provided labor to the tree plantings. Another thank you is owed to the Clinton County Conservation District, which in recent years, has assisted by finding funding for the purchase of trees.

Another special aspect of this year's planting is the participation of Bucktail Area High School students. On Friday, May 4th students from the school will be planting seedlings along Kettle Creek. These students not only will be providing

a vital service, they also will be learning the importance of riparian buffers and stream restoration. These students will also get a chance to see the impact of volunteers in their own backyards. Engaging the students in tree planting will hopefully inspire them to become active as volunteers in the watershed to help sustain the KCWA's efforts for generations to come.

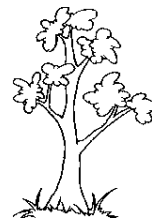
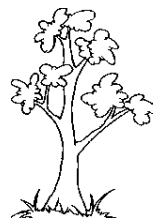
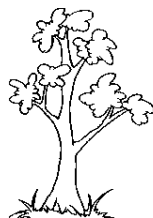
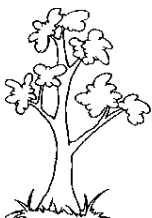
This year KCWA has ordered 3,420 trees from Howard Nursery. Species include, Canadian hemlock, common elderberry, grey stemmed dogwood, black walnut, Chinese chestnut, apple trees, as well as red, black, and white oaks. Each tree will need to be planted along with a fertilizer pellet. Many of the trees will also have specially designed tree tubes placed on them. Volunteers are needed to plant trees, construct the tubes, stake the trees, and other tasks.



Interested to Come Out and Help?

The tree planting will take place on Saturday, May 5th. The KCWA will provide most of the tools you will need, as well as a boxed lunch and drinks. The trees and bushes will be separated and ready to plant. A lesson on proper planting techniques will be given. If you would like to help, meet at the Kettle Creek Hose Company parking lot in Cross Fork at 8:30 AM on Saturday, May 5th. Please bring gloves and a carpenter's cloth bag to hold fertilizer pellets as you plant. Also if you feel comfortable crossing the stream to reach the other side, bring appropriate wading apparel.

Children are welcome to come help (please plan on providing adult supervision for your children). If you have any questions or would like other details please contact Dave Cardellino at (570) 923-0778.



Protecting Land in the Kettle Creek Watershed

At last year's annual banquet, staff from the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy and Trout Unlimited gave presentations on ways private landowners can permanently protect their properties using a tool called a conservation easement. Both organizations are encouraging their use in the Kettle Creek watershed because of its high conservation value and the threat future development poses to the region's woods and waters.

A conservation easement is a legal agreement between a landowner and a qualified conservation organization (e.g. the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy) that permanently limits future development and subdivision of land while keeping it in private ownership. Conservation easements may even provide financial benefits to landowners.

Conservation easements are customized to meet landowner objectives. They allow current uses of the land to continue, including farming and forestry, and can even allow for new construction in designated areas. Unless landowners desire it, conservation easements do not

grant the public the right to access their properties for recreational purposes.

The Western Pennsylvania Conservancy and Trout Unlimited are offering technical and financial assistance to Kettle Creek landowners interested in exploring their land conservation options, including conservation easements. The Western Pennsylvania Conservancy has funding specifically set aside to support the use of conservation easements to protect the Kettle Creek watershed. Trout Unlimited's Coldwater Land Conservancy Fund may also be used to pay for the costs associated with completing conservation easements that protect brook trout habitat.

To learn more about conservation easements and how they can help you create a conservation legacy for future generations, contact Matt Marusiak at the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy (mmarusiak@paconserve.org or 814-776-1114) or Amy Wolfe at Trout Unlimited (awolfe@tu.org or 570-786-9562). The Pennsylvania Land Trust Association's websites www.conserveland.org and www.conservationtools.org also contain helpful information about conservation easements.

Swamp Area Passive Treatment System Under Construction

Late last July 2011, earthmoving activities finally got underway for construction of the Swamp Area passive treatment system. Located in the headwaters of Twomile Run, this treatment system will treat the very first source of abandoned mine drainage to Twomile Run.

Twomile Run is a Class A native brook trout stream above the inflow of this source of mine drainage. This treatment system, in combination with the passive treatment systems in Robbins Hollow and Middle Branch will improve water quality on Twomile Run so that brook trout can once again thrive, at least until Huling Branch enters Twomile Run (Huling Branch will be addressed



through future reclamation projects; see article on the "Three-Fingered Devil").

The treatment system was designed by Hedin Environmental and is being constructed by Smith Excavating and Construction LLC from Renovo. The system consists of three vertical flow ponds, two settling ponds, and a wetland. Funding for the design, permitting,

and construction of the Swamp Area passive treatment system is coming from the PA Department of Environmental Protection's Growing Greener Program and AMD Set-Aside Program, Office of Surface Mining, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, and Richard King Mellon Foundation.

Kettle Creek Watershed Association
P.O. Box 317
Cross Fork, PA 17729

Address Correction Requested

Important Dates to Remember

Saturday, May 5, 2012 — Annual Kettle Creek Tree Planting. Meet at 8:30 AM in the Kettle Creek Hose Company parking lot in Cross Fork. Lunch is provided!

Saturday, May 5, 2012 — Annual KCWA Public Meeting and Potluck Dinner. Dinner begins at 6:00 PM, to be followed with presentations and updates on the KCWA's projects. Please bring a covered dish to share.

For more details on these and other meeting dates and times, please visit www.kettlecreek.org.



During a fish survey in October 2011, Trout Unlimited staff found that brook trout are now successfully reproducing in the section of Middle Branch that was once biologically dead from AMD. Now the entire stream supports aquatic life due to the Middle Branch passive treatment system.



Last year, 8th and 9th grade students from Bucktail Area Middle-High School in Renovo learned about testing water quality as part of their combination classroom and field learning experience with Trout Unlimited Education Coordinator, Rebecca Holler.