

Bucktail Watershed Association

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Bucktail Watershed Association

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Important Dates:

January 5, 2009

Winter Membership Meeting

6:30 pm

Monthly meeting

1st Tuesday of each month

7:00 pm

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BWA Restores Streamside Forests, Planting Over 650 Tree Seedlings in 2009

Members of the Bucktail Watershed Association met to restore the riparian forest buffer habitat along 300 feet of North Creek on Monday, November 16. Volunteers planted and placed tree tubes on 50 tree seedlings and also planted 30 silky dogwood and elderberry cuttings. The plantings were done at the site of a Cameron County Conservation District habitat project where log vane deflectors had been constructed to remediate stream bank erosion.

This project was one of three tree-planting projects undertaken by the Bucktail Watershed Association in 2009. In May, Bucktail Watershed Association volunteers planted 450 native tree and shrub seedlings and cuttings at a Hunts Run site lacking shade cover. At another workday an additional 150 tree seedlings were planted at a site along the Mckinnon Branch, a tributary to Hunts Run.

Forested buffers are essential components of healthy cold-water trout streams in Pennsylvania. Besides



BWA Member helps plant trees along the stream bank.

shading the stream from harmful high summertime temperatures, streamside forests stabilize stream banks with their roots and help filter polluted runoff. Leaves from riparian forests are also the food source for many species of mayfly and stonefly nymphs. The leaves that fall into streams in autumn act as the carbon source that fuels the food chain in many of our trout streams.

If you are aware of any local streams within the Driftwood Branch or First Fork Watersheds that lack streamside forest cover, contact the Bucktail Watershed Association to plan a tree planting project.

Winter Membership Meeting To Be Held

The annual Bucktail Watershed Association winter membership meeting will be held on Tuesday, January 5 at 6:30 pm in the Cameron County Courthouse courtroom.

As part of the meeting the Bucktail Watershed Association will be hosting a special presentation describing the potential threats to our most precious resource, water. Jim Clark of Penn State Cooperative Extension will be the featured speaker and will be presenting "Gas Well Drilling and Water Quality."

After the presentation, the Bucktail Watershed Association will be sharing plans for the establishment of a volunteer water quality-monitoring network for portions of the Sinnemahoning Creek Watershed. Interested individuals will have a chance to sign up as volunteer monitors.

All members are encouraged to attend, and the general public is also invited. We have a lot planned for 2010. With your help we can make a difference in the Driftwood Branch and First Fork watersheds.

With Help of Landowners, Knotweed Project Is Huge Success

With the help of local landowners, the Bucktail Watershed Association was able to treat approximately 15 acres of Japanese knotweed on 47 different properties in the upper reaches of the Driftwood Branch and its tributaries during 2009. Funding for the initial project work was obtained through grants from the USDA Forest Service and Norfolk Southern settlement money awarded by the Sinnemahoning Stakeholders Committee.

Project work focused on knotweed patches on the upper end of the Driftwood Branch in Rich Valley, Cooks Run, Clear Creek, Four Mile Run, and in Cowley Run within Sizerville State Park. Without the help of local volunteers and the cooperation of local landowners, the project could not have been a success.

During the past decade Japanese knotweed has established itself within the stream corridors of the Driftwood Branch of the Sinnemahoning Creek Watershed. Japanese knotweed spreads aggressively through its roots, sending up shoots that form dense colonies and crowd out native plant communities through its aggressive competition. In the process of destroying plant communities, the wildlife that relies on these habitats is also displaced, and the natural biological processes performed by these ecosystems are disrupted.

Due to its extensive root system and resilience, one treatment is generally not enough to eliminate a well-established Japanese knotweed colony. Although we are anticipating an 80% reduction in the size of the treated Japanese knotweed colonies, most patches will resprout this coming spring. The BWA will be working with our contractor to retreat these sites with a glyphosate-based herbicide early next summer. In some cases a third treatment may be necessary for any resprouting shoots at the end of next summer.

The BWA was able to treat approximately 15 acres of Japanese knotweed on 47 different properties



Vegetation Managers employee treats a stand of Japanese knotweed.

Following the eradication of Japanese knotweed, the BWA will be contacting cooperating landowners regarding the restoration of the sites. On very small sites restoration will not be necessary; natural reseedling will quickly revegetate these sites. However, on larger patches, the BWA will work with landowners to restore sites with native trees and shrubs for streamside forests or native wildflowers and grasses for meadow habitat.

The work being conducted on the Driftwood Branch is being done according to a Japanese knotweed eradication and habitat restoration plan that was developed by the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture for the BWA and Driftwood Branch Watershed. Although, similar work is being done in other parts of Pennsylvania, this project is the first of its kind, a watershed-wide invasive plant eradication/restoration project involving multiple landowners across the watershed landscape. The BWA is in the process of developing a sustainable long-term habitat restoration effort that can be adapted to other watersheds in Pennsylvania.

Volunteer Water Monitoring Network

Have you wanted to participate in protecting the health of our watershed but aren't able to attend the BWA meetings or activities? This fall, members of the watershed association began planning for the creation of a volunteer water monitoring network for the First Fork and Driftwood Branch watersheds. Interested individuals will be able to help the BWA collect data that provides a measure of stream health such as dissolved oxygen, pH, conductivity, nitrates and sediment loading. This data will allow the watershed association as well as state organizations to create a baseline of stream health.

With periodic monitoring of stream health indicators, the BWA will be able to determine when and where problems may occur.

The association submitted a grant proposal to the Sinnemahoning Stakeholders Committee to obtain equipment and hope to begin monitoring in the summer of 2010. If you are interested in participating in monitoring a point along your favorite stream, contact a member of the Bucktail Watershed Association at

bucktailwatershed@yahoo.com

Sinnemahoning Grant Awards for Local Projects

It has now been 3 1/2 years since the 2006 derailment of the Norfolk Southern train in Gardeau in Mckean County. The resulting 40,000 plus gallon chemical spill released sodium hydroxide solution into tiny Big Fill Run, a tributary to the Sinnemahoning Portage Creek and killed fish for thirty-five miles downstream.

Following the spill, the state of Pennsylvania received \$7.35 million in settlement money from Norfolk Southern. The money was divided equally between the Fish Commission and the Department of Environmental Protection. Both agencies have now developed a grant program to fund conservation projects with the settlement money, with the DEP money being disbursed by a local stakeholders committee.

This past week the Sinnemahoning Stakeholder Committee accepted its 2nd round of grant proposals to be awarded in 2010 for projects in the Bennett and Driftwood Branches of the Sinnemahoning Creek. In 2009 over \$153,000 in funding for 9 projects in the Sinnemahoning Creek Watershed was awarded from the initial grant round. Many of the projects have already been completed.

Among projects that were funded in the Driftwood Branch Watershed during the 1st grant round were an acid mine drainage assessment of Parker Run being conducted by the Mckean County Conservation District, a fish habitat project on the Driftwood Branch awarded to the Emporium Borough, an illegal dump cleanup in Eddy's Run conducted by Shippen Township, matching funds for acid mine drainage treatment in Sterling Run

for the Cameron County Conservation District, and invasive plant eradication and habitat restoration work in the Driftwood Branch being conducted by the Bucktail Watershed Association.

In August, the Fish Commission also announced the recipients of its first grant round involving the Sinnemahoning settlement, awarding \$1.36 million in grants for twenty-four projects in Cameron, Elk, Mckean, and Potter Counties. During this first round, eleven projects were funded within the Sinnemahoning Creek Watershed.

The Potter County Conservation District received funding to improve habitat and stabilize stream banks at four severely eroded sites on the First Fork of the Sinnemahoning Creek. The PA Department of Agriculture and Sinnemahoning State Park both received funding for projects involving invasive plant eradication and restoration of native plant communities along First Fork. Sinnemahoning State Park also received funding for the development of educational programs involving fishing and aquatic resources.

In the Driftwood Branch, the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy received funding to assess and develop a comprehensive restoration plan for the Sinnemahoning Portage Creek and Driftwood Branch. The Bucktail Watershed Association received funding for invasive plant eradication and restoration of riparian forests along the Driftwood Branch and its tributaries. The Cameron County Conservation District received funding for the construction of acid mine drainage passive treatment systems within the Sterling Run Watershed and for fish habitat work on the Sinnemahoning Portage Creek.

BWA Shirts and Hats

The Bucktail Watershed Association has made hats and t-shirts for our members and supporters. Both are attractive natural green colors with the watershed logo printed on them.

The new "BWA-wear" will help get our organization's name out among the public in a visible manner to help familiarize watershed constituents with the group. Ultimately through raised awareness in the BWA we hope that we will be more effective through our watershed outreach and education.

Both hats and t-shirts cost \$10. The hats are 'one-size-fits-all,' while the t-shirts come in small, medium, large, XL, XXL, and XXXL sizes.

To order at-shirt or hat, send your check to

Bucktail Watershed Association
4 East Sixth Street
Emporium, PA 15834.



**BUCKTAIL WATERSHED ASSOCIATION
4 EAST SIXTH STREET
EMPORIUM, PA 15834**

BUCKTAIL WATERSHED ASSOCIATION WINTER NEWSLETTER ENCLOSED

**BUCKTAIL WATERSHED ASSOCIATION
MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION**

If you are interested in becoming a member or renewing your membership, please send this form along with cash or a check for the annual dues to:

Bucktail Watershed Association
4 East Sixth Street
Emporium, PA 15834.



Name

Address

Phone

Sign up for:

- Individual Membership
- Family Membership

Annual Dues

\$5.00

\$7.00

Amount Enclosed _____

Email Address

Signature