

Bucktail Watershed Association

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Bucktail Watershed Association

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Important Dates:

January 10, 2012
Winter Membership Meeting
6:30 pm

Monthly meeting
1st Tuesday of each month
Cameron County Courthouse
7:00 pm

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BWA Continues Work on Invasive Plants

For the third summer in a row, the Bucktail Watershed Association has been actively working to control Japanese knotweed in the Driftwood Branch Subwatershed. Last year, we treated over 40 acres of knotweed on about 18 miles of stream banks, as well as along some roadsides and other upland areas on over 150 public and private properties. We worked on Four Mile Run to Portage Creek, and Portage Creek to Emporium. We also treated the lower sections of Cook's Run and Clear Creek and the Driftwood Branch from Indian Camp Run to the fairgrounds. This year we added three more miles on the Driftwood Branch, from the fairgrounds through the town of Emporium and downstream for two miles. We have treated knotweed along 21 miles of stream corridor and 26 upland sites ranging from patches in backyards to plants growing out of the cracks in the pavement at a powder metal plant.



BWA contractor treats an invasive population of mile-a-minute

Many of these sites were being retreated after their initial treat-

ments last year. This perennial plant is very hard to kill due to its extensive roots. The BWA is planning to plant native plants to restore some of the larger patches of knotweed once the knotweed has been eradicated. The remaining locations will be restored through passive restoration; that is, removing and controlling the invasive species will allow the native plants to grow. The BWA will continue to seek funding to revisit and retreat these areas for knotweed and assure the success of this project.

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Winter Membership Meeting January 10th

The BWA will be holding its winter membership meeting on Tuesday, January 10 at 6:30 in the court room of the Cameron County Courthouse. We are happy to announce that Cecil Houser, retired manager of the PA Fish Commission Cooperative Nursery Program, will be our guest speaker. Cecil volunteers with his wife to monitor 9 bald eagle nest sites for the PA Game Commission. Cecil will be sharing an excellent slide presentation about the Reintroduction & Biology of Bald Eagles in PA. The general public is invited to attend. Following Cecil's presentation, we will hold our membership meeting. We hope to see you all there.

Sinnemahoning Invasive Plant Management Area (SIPMA)

The BWA is a partner in a unique local collaboration known as the Sinnemahoning Invasive Plant Management Area (SIPMA), a diverse partnership between numerous state agencies, land resource companies, local private landowners, and other stakeholders to address invasive plant problems in the Sinnemahoning Creek Watershed. SIPMA's mission statement is "To protect and restore habitat through the cooperative identification and management (suppression, control, or eradication) of noxious and exotic invasive plants in the Sinnemahoning Creek Watershed."

This project is an effort between various SIPMA partners, with the Bucktail Watershed Association taking the lead and administering the grant funds.

At the beginning of the year, the BWA was awarded a grant to fund a coordinator for the SIPMA. Tanya Meyer, who has been managing our Japanese knotweed control efforts, will be coordinating among the different groups and agencies to share resources, map invasive plant populations, manage control projects, and reach out to the general public to educate local people and visitors to our state parks about the problems of invasive plants. The coordinator will also have time to write grants to continue both project work and maintain the coordinator position.

Sinnemahoning Invasive Plant Management Area (SIPMA) takes off! Keep your eyes open for these target invasive species in our watershed!

The Sinnemahoning Invasive Plant Management Area was formed around a project to control mile a minute vine in the First Fork of the Sinnemahoning Creek Valley in 2007. Since then, the SIPMA expanded their focus to include other target invasive and noxious weeds of limited distribution in the Sinnemahoning Creek Watershed. Other plants targeted are Japanese knotweed, Japanese barberry, and glossy buckthorn. The SIPMA is working together to perform early detection and rapid response to invasive weed populations in the watershed, monitor treated sites, and to educate the general public about the problem.

Formation of the Sinnemahoning Invasive Plant Management Area has resulted from the collaboration of a broad base of diverse partners united in their goal to manage invasive and noxious weeds in the Sinnemahoning Creek Watershed. The cooperative weed management project could not have been successful without the support of local stakeholder organizations and individuals. Through meeting together to share ideas and success stories, SIPMA partners have encouraged and empowered one another to apply for grants and undertake control projects for invasive and noxious weeds.

Real-time Water Monitoring Points Setup by SRBC

On August 18 the Susquehanna River Basin Commission (SRBC) installed two real time water-monitoring stations near Emporium on the upper Driftwood Branch of the Sinnemahoning Creek watershed. The first of the two stations was installed on the upper end of the Driftwood Branch at the Shippen Township office, while the other one was installed on the Sinnemahoning Portage Creek at the Cameron County Little League complex.

These monitoring stations are equipped with solar panels to supply energy, along with water quality sensors and a transmitter to continuously report water temperature, pH, dissolved oxygen, turbidity (water clarity), water depth and conductance (ability to conduct electricity). Elevated conductance levels in water can be an important indicator of pollution stemming from the Marcellus shale natural gas industry if it were to occur, due to the high conductance of brine and waste fluids associated with the hydrofracking process.

Besides providing an early warning system for pollution, the monitoring network will also be useful in collecting base line data for use by local universities working on watershed research and local public water

Invasive Plant Work Cont'd

The Bucktail Watershed Association has also been working on a forestland site just west of Emporium that is infested by mile-a-minute vine. We had several contractors working on the site, as well as volunteer work parties, with dedicated BWA volunteers spending five summer evenings looking for and killing mile-a-minute. This is the second year this site has been treated. It will be necessary to return and treat plants for several years until the seed bank has been exhausted. Mile-a-minute is an annual plant that poses an enormous threat to regenerating forests because it grows rapidly and produces thousands of seeds each growing season. Unfortunately, these seeds are viable for up to seven years.

This summer, we added a new invasive to work on: glossy buckthorn. This plant was introduced from Eurasia as an ornamental, but has started moving into our forests. Buckthorn is a small tree or shrub that grows up to 20 feet tall. Buckthorn crowds and shades out native shrubs, forbs and trees. Dense stands of buckthorn prevent native plant regeneration, reducing healthy forests to monocultures. Although our watershed is not yet infested with large amounts of buckthorn, a sizeable population is present on State Game Lands 14 in the Hicks Run sub-watershed, where land managers have obtained funding to control this weed. It also occurs in high densities on a large piece of private property west of the Elk County/Cameron County line, a property that borders SGL 14.

All this work was made possible by grants from the USDA Forest Service Headwaters RC&D Council Sinnemahoning Stakeholders Commission and the Growing Greener Grant Program.

SRBC water monitoring cont'd

suppliers, local watershed groups and communities. The Driftwood Branch and Portage Creek water monitoring stations, along with the approximately fifty others that make up SRBC's remote water quality monitoring network, continuously measure and report water quality conditions on an ongoing, twenty-four hour, real-time basis. Current water quality conditions for these sites can be viewed at the Commission's website, www.srbc.net under programs and remote network.

The SRBC itself is not a pollution control agency. It manages water flows and withdrawals within the Susquehanna Basin and has no jurisdiction over water quality issues. However, the remote water quality monitoring network will provide early warnings to help the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission and the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Resources respond more rapidly and to better pinpoint the causes if a pollution event were to occur.

The Portage and Driftwood Branch monitoring stations join two other recently installed stations within the Sinnemahoning Creek Watershed. Earlier this year the SRBC installed real time monitoring points on Hicks Run and the East Fork of the Sinnemahoning Creek. Both were located on state forest land and were funded by the state Department of Conservation and Natural Resources.

The Driftwood Branch monitoring station that was installed in August was the last of the original thirty monitoring points planned to be installed when the SRBC embarked on its remote water quality-monitoring program in 2009. These original thirty monitoring stations were funded with a grant from Marcellus shale giant East Resources, Inc. The Portage Creek monitoring station was funded by a grant from Headwaters Resource Conservation and Development Council through the Norfolk Southern spill settlement. The grant was applied for by SRBC in cooperation with the Bucktail Watershed Association.

The four new SRBC monitoring stations within the Sinnemahoning Creek Watershed will complement the volunteer water monitoring effort being undertaken by the members of local Trout Unlimited chapters, the First Fork Watershed Association, and the Bucktail Watershed Association.

BUCKTAIL WATERSHED ASSOCIATION
P.O. BOX 123
EMPORIUM, PA 15834

BUCKTAIL WATERSHED ASSOCIATION SUMMER 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
P.O. Box 123
Emporium, PA 15834



Name

Address

Phone

Sign up for:

- Individual Membership
- Family Membership

Annual Dues

\$5.00

\$7.00

Amount Enclosed _____

Email Address

Signature