



Turtle Creek Watershed Association TCWA REPORT

Spring 1995

600 Braddock Avenue
Suite G
Turtle Creek, PA 15145

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Executive Director
(412) 829-5042

SPRING CLEANING ALONG TURTLE CREEK

On April 1, 1995, approximately eighty volunteers took to the banks of Turtle Creek with Spring cleaning on their minds. After coffee and donuts, these volunteers helped to recover approximately eight tons of garbage along Turtle

Creek in only four hours.

The TCWA Annual Spring Stream Clean Up was held at two locations this year. The Saunders Station bridge location in Monroeville was co-sponsored by the Pitcarin-Monroeville

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Phi Sigma Pi Students at Saunders Station Clean Up

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PENN-TRAFFORD H.S.
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FRANKLIN REGIONAL
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-

TCWA ENJOYS NEW OFFICE

In February 1995, the TCWA began unpacking in its new office space at the R.I.D.C. Keystone Commons West Industrial Hall in Turtle Creek. (We are pleased to report that 800 United States Postal Service jobs will be located at the site of our former office.) Although the TCWA phone number is still (412) 829-5042, please make a note of the new TCWA address:

**600 Braddock Avenue, Suite G
Turtle Creek, PA 15145-2068**

ARBOR DAY 1995

Thanks to the PA Game Commission and the TCWA, 4,000 elementary school students in Westmoreland County were able to plant a tree this Arbor Day. The PA Game Commission provided Eastern Hemlock seedlings which the TCWA distributed to Harrison Park, Level Green, McCullough, Sunrise, and Trafford Elementary Schools in the Penn Trafford School District and Franklin Regional Upper and Sloan Elementary Schools in the Franklin Regional School District.

The Eastern Hemlock is Pennsylvania's state tree. When fully grown it can reach heights of over eighty feet, with a trunk diameter of more than three feet. The hemlock thrives in cool, moist situations. In Pennsylvania, it is often found along streams and along the edges of swamps and bogs or on steep north facing slopes. It is tolerant to shade and has a slow growth compared to other native trees.

In early times the hemlock was often cut down, stripped of its bark and the huge trunk left to slowly decay in the woods. The bark is rich in tannic acid which was in great demand for the tanning of hides. Native Americans and backwoodsmen often

brewed a medicinal tea from the leafy branchlets. Hemlock lumber is used mostly in building construction, including houses and barns. In addition to its use in commerce, hemlock is a valuable ornamental plant, hedge-shrub, Christmas tree, and watershed cover. It provides food and shelter for a variety of wildlife. This evergreen adds beauty and variety to our hardwood forests at all seasons of the year.

LEVEL GREEN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CONSERVATION FAIR

The Turtle Creek Watershed Association was invited to this year's Conservation Fair at Level Green Elementary School in the Penn Trafford School District. This was an opportunity for parents to roam the halls which

were decorated with tributes to the earth made by the K - 5th grade students. The Conservation Fair also gave many an opportunity to learn more about some of the local organizations that are working to preserve and protect natural resources in the local area.

Many of the students were extremely interested to learn about the TCWA OUTDOOR SUMMER FUN DAY which is scheduled for August 12, 1995. This activity provides all children under 16 an opportunity to fish in the pond at Oak Hollow Park which is stocked by the TCWA, North Huntingdon Township, and other local sponsors of the event. Prizes are awarded to the winners. Refreshments are also free to all family members. Environmental education displays are set up for all to enjoy at this fun filled event.

OHIO RIVER SWEEP

On June 17, 1995, the PA DER will host the Ohio River Sweep to beautify river banks from Pittsburgh to Cincinnati, OH. Volunteers are currently being recruited to help pick up garbage. Those from the Turtle Creek watershed area should meet at either West Mifflin's Nine Mile Run or McKeesport's Riverfront Park to pick up garbage bags, refreshments and their free t-shirt. For directions or more information, please contact Betsy Mallison of the PA DER at 442-4182. Minors need a guardian or parent to sign a waiver form.

TCWA AT LOCAL HIGH SCHOOL EARTH DAY PROGRAMS

The TCWA celebrated the twenty-fifth annual Earth Day with presentations at schools in the watershed. Festivities began on April 20, 1995 at Norwin High School's Environmental Program. Amy Cortese, Executive Director of the TCWA, spoke to seven classes about the Turtle Creek watershed and the Turtle Creek Watershed Association. A similar program was held the next day at Penn Trafford High School's Environmental Day Fair.

Many of the high school students were surprised to learn the size of the Turtle Creek Watershed. Most thought that Turtle Creek was confined to only the municipality of Turtle Creek, but the Turtle Creek watershed in fact extends from Braddock to Jeannette and the Export/Delmont area. All of the students learned that they are inhabitants of the Turtle Creek Watershed.

Discussions with the high school students also focused on the TCWA and its activities. Students learned that acid mine drainage (AMD) causes streams in the Turtle Creek Watershed to turn orange. They also learned about possible treatment techniques for AMD such as anoxic limestone drains and artificial wetlands. Unfortunately, the Tinkers Run discharge is unsuitable for treatment by these methods simply because this discharge is entirely too large.



Students were also interested in other issues affecting Turtle Creek such as erosion & sedimentation and flood control. Some major U.S. Army Corps of Engineer projects such as the Turtle Creek Dredging project and the Restructuring of the Lower Monongahela Locks and Dams will have a huge impact on water levels in Turtle Creek.

Finally, students learned about the Turtle Creek Watershed Association's program of environmental education. Currently, this consists of the Growing Together Program for elementary school students, the TCWA Report, Outdoor Summer Fun Day, and presentations at local schools.

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What is a WATERSHED?

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A watershed is a geographical area from which water drains and contributes flow to a given place or point on a stream or river. Unlike artificial boundaries that people create such as counties or municipalities, a watershed is a natural boundary created from water flow. Water that does not soak into the earth or evaporate, "runs off" and joins creeks and rivers which eventually drain into a larger body of water at one point.

The Turtle Creek watershed extends from the Monongahela River at Braddock all the way to Jeanette and the Export/Delmont area.

PA DER INVESTIGATES AMD IN EXPORT

Members of the Turtle Creek Watershed Association's Acid Mine Drainage Abatement Subcommittee accompanied two DER Water Pollution Biologists on a tour of acid mine drainage (AMD) hotspots in the Export/Delmont area last month.

Mike Jennewine of the AmeriCorps Mountain Service Corps informed us that some of the identified abandoned deep mine discharges are not contributing as much to the AMD problem as we first suspected. In fact, the

very headwaters or the beginning of Turtle Creek is actually where the problem begins. Mike has been taking samples in the upper Turtle Creek watershed for the past few months.

Pam Milavec and Kay Spyker of the PA DER also took water samples which are currently being analyzed in a laboratory. These results will help to determine if remediation efforts are appropriate for the upper Turtle Creek watershed.

The TCWA's Acid Mine Drainage Abatement Subcommittee is dedicated to improving water quality in Turtle Creek to conditions suitable to support aquatic life.

("Clean Up" cont. from p. 1)
and Braddock Sportsmen Clubs. The success of this location is due in large part to the Phi Sigma Pi Co-Educational Service Fraternity from the University of Pittsburgh. The Saunders Station location would not have been possible without Henry Hoffman, TCWA Board Member, who planned and organized the event.

The other meeting place for the TCWA Spring Stream Clean Up was in Export at the former Duff School. Volunteers met and developed a plan for garbage removal in the Murrysville and Export areas. A special thank you to Lu Randall from Intergenerational Programming, Mr. Rick Bullock, and his Franklin Regional High School students.

The TCWA would like to thank Monroeville and Murrysville, Valley Landfill and Tri-Valley Hauling for their help with hauling and disposal of the trash recovered. Most of all, thanks go out to all of the volunteers who spent their Saturday morning with us and helped clean up the local environment for everyone to enjoy.



Mr. Rick Bullock and the Franklin Regional HS students
in Duff Park for the TCWA Spring Stream Clean Up.

TCWA ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP CAMPAIGN

Every Spring, the TCWA asks individuals and families to become TCWA members or to renew their annual membership. The success of the TCWA's programs and activities depends on our members and their support. We need local people who care about the environment to stay in touch and participate in activities when they have the time.

The TCWA has been extremely active in our program of environmental stewardship. Over the past year, the TCWA has successfully completed Pittsburgh's first ever *Growing Together* environmental education program for over 1,700 elementary school students. Additionally, the TCWA organized volunteers to participate in the *Spring Stream Clean Up* and *Outdoor Summer Fun Day*. Moreover, the *Acid Mine Drainage Abatement* Subcommittee of the TCWA is dedicated to improving water quality to conditions suitable to support aquatic life. And these are only a few of the benefits that the TCWA provides to the local community!

Membership dues to the TCWA remain small to encourage individuals and families to become involved. Basically, the financial contributions help to cover annual postage and printing costs for each member. This helps us stay in contact and inform you of TCWA activities.

If you haven't yet taken the time to become a member or your annual membership has recently expired, please take the time to write the TCWA now. Thank you for your support.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone (H): _____

(w): _____

Fax: _____

Check One:

_____ \$ 5 Individual

_____ \$ 10 Family

_____ \$ 25 Organization

_____ \$100 Corporation

Please mail completed form and check made payable to the TCWA to:

TCWA
600 Braddock Avenue
Suite G
Turtle Creek, PA 15145-2068

TCWA Objective

The goal of the Turtle Creek Watershed Association, Inc. is to preserve and protect natural resources, educate the community about important environmental issues, monitor and improve water quality, and work with responsible agencies to encourage wise land use planning in the Turtle Creek watershed.

REMINDER:

The Acid Mine Drainage Abatement Subcommittee meets at *7:30 p.m. on the first Thursday of each month* at the Export Municipal Building.

TCWA Officers and Directors

Jim Tempero, President
Henry Hoffman, Vice President
Ed Fischer, Secretary
A.B. Carl, Treasurer

Jim Brucker Bob Mazik
John Mores Fred Siekkinen
Paul Teacher

NOTICE:

You are invited to attend our monthly meeting held at *7:30 p.m. on the second Wednesday of each month* at the Turtle Creek Municipal Building. Please call 829-5042 for more information.

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