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# 2013 Annual Report



Our mission is to protect, preserve and restore the Indian Creek and greater Youghiogheny River watersheds. Your support both financially and through volunteer efforts has made our work possible. Through this Annual Report we would like to share some of our many activities from 2013 with you.

## 2013 By the Numbers...

**68** Number of water samples collected in the Yough watershed as part of our quarterly monitoring project.

**\$125,000** Amount received from the state to create a trust fund for operation & maintenance of our treatment systems.

**4** Additional miles of the Indian Creek Valley Trail completed or improved, including 2 bridges.

**635** Square miles in the Yough basin in MD & WV that are now included in our Riverkeeper program jurisdiction due to our recent expansion.

**26** Dataloggers we maintain throughout the Indian Creek & Yough River basins to monitor and establish baseline water quality.

**3,334** - and counting! Number of bugs collected through our spring macroinvertebrate sampling.

## A letter from MWA's Executive Director

Dear Friends of the Watershed,

Last year our Annual Report stated that we were monitoring possible permit activity for a proposed deep mine in the Indian Creek watershed. In June of this year LCT Energy LP submitted a pre-application to the PA Department of Environmental Protection (PADEP). In September PADEP sent LCT a deficiency letter noting 95 significant deficiencies. LCT has responded to some of the deficiencies, but not all. DEP is now reviewing those responses.

We are working with a hydrogeologist to review the pre-application and past records. We sent a letter out to most of the people located over or adjacent to the proposed mine and contacted the Loyalhanna Watershed Association as the company indicates they plan to expand north of the Turnpike all the way to Mammoth and Stahlstown. We continue to track the activities of this company and DEP's responses.

The Center for Health and the Global Environment at Harvard Medical School has stated, "The life cycle impacts of coal and the waste stream generated are **costing the U.S. public** a third to over one half a trillion dollars annually." For the past 19 years this organization has spent millions to restore our area from the ravages of mine drainage. Our comprehensive plan found that every \$1 we spend on mine drainage restoration in the Indian Creek watershed will result in a \$2.40 return to the local economy. Clearly, clean water is good business— which is why we are opposed to any additional deep mining in this watershed.

Our annual report is an opportunity for us to share our work over the past year with you. Thank you for your ongoing support, and please consider making a year-end contribution so that we may continue this valuable work in 2014— our 20th anniversary.

Sincerely,

Beverly Braverman  
Executive Director

# 2013

## Yough River Water Quality Monitoring

We continue to conduct quarterly water quality monitoring at 17 sites in the Yough River watershed— 9 sites on the main stem and 8 on the major tributaries. We've gathered some interesting data through this initiative. Generally water quality in the Yough is very good. Some tributaries continue to be impacted by active and abandoned mines, agriculture, and erosion and sedimentation issues. We've also uncovered areas with high levels of E. coli and are currently raising funds to trace this pollution upstream. We recently received a grant to conduct targeted E. coli sampling at areas with high levels of contact recreation and to engage the public in determining what those locations should be; this initiative will begin in Spring of 2014.



*Left: Our Yough Riverkeeper  
Krissy Kasserman taking a  
water sample on the Yough.*

## Fundraising & Funds Diversification

MWA has been fortunate in receiving various grants that enable us to do critical work. This includes a grant from the Community Foundation of Westmoreland County in the amount of \$17,000 to develop a plan to diversify our funding. Through the creation of this plan we discovered several compelling issues, one of which is that we need to build up our private donor base. Our fundraising policy is, "The Mountain Watershed Association (MWA) will honor the privacy of individual donors, honor their requests for conditional uses of donated funds, and accept only donations of funds, goods, or services that will enable MWA to further its mission. All fundraising will be conducted in accordance with legal and ethical standards."

# 2013

## Indian Creek Valley Trail Expansion

Progress was the watchword for the Indian Creek Valley Trail this past year. MWA volunteers completed new segments and upgraded others. A new map was produced and is available locally and on our website. The Melcroft Bridge was completed as part of the Melcroft Mine Drainage Project; this added .8 miles to the Saltlick Township section of the trail. A 3200' segment in Springfield Township has expanded the total trail mileage to 9 miles.

MWA received a \$10,000 grant from the Richard King Mellon Foundation and another from People for Bikes to help with the Donegal Bridge. We also received a \$15,000 grant from the Redevelopment Authority of Fayette County. The vision to have a continuous trail beginning near Route 31 and reaching the Youghiogheny and the Great Allegheny Passage becomes more of a reality every day.

On November 13, 2013 at its General Membership meeting, MWA honored Alonzo Kalp Jr., long-time member of the Mountain Watershed Association and trail supporter, by naming the Donegal portion of the Indian Creek Valley Trail the Alonzo Kalp, Jr. Extension.



*Above: The dedication of the Alonzo Kalp Jr. Extension of the Indian Creek Valley Trail*

## Operation, Maintenance & Replacement Plan Complete

Over the last three years MWA has been developing an Operation, Maintenance, and Replacement (OM&R) Plan to oversee the organization's restoration projects. This plan not only identifies the operation and maintenance tasks associated with each of the project sites, it estimates the associated costs to maintain these sites and to replace them if and when necessary.

Although considered passive treatment systems, if operation and maintenance activities at our sites are not conducted routinely the systems will fail, resulting in untreated mine drainage flowing into Indian Creek.

Now that our OM&R Plan has been completed, we are being awarded \$125,000 from the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection to help establish a trust fund to offset future costs. However, this base amount is not enough to even repair or replace one of the treatment systems. As noted elsewhere in this report, the re-drilling at the system treating the Kalp discharge cost \$400,000. Obviously, in order to maintain all of the treatment systems necessary to keep Indian Creek a viable fishery, we need to have a lot more than \$125,000 in a trust fund to respond to maintenance needs that will most assuredly arise.

The completion of this OM&R plan is a major success for our organization and is a step toward ensuring the sustainability of our restoration projects. Please consider making a donation to increase this trust fund and help keep Indian Creek clean.



*Left: Evaluating the up-flow bed at the Anna and Steve Gdosky (Kalp) Treatment System*

## Stony Run Redesignation

By years' end we will have submitted a petition to the Department of Environmental Protection to increase the stream designation on Stony Run (Stony Run>Indian Creek>Youghiogheny River) from "cold water fishes" to "exceptional value." This higher level of designation will increase protections for the stream and will more accurately reflect the current water quality in Stony Run. Several local businesses and organizations have expressed their support for this petition in letters to the DEP; letters have centered on the importance of the fishery and resulting tourism in our area. Once the petition is submitted DEP will perform their own analysis and then make a decision.



*Left: Collection of macroinvertebrates in the Stony Run watershed*

## Marcellus Citizen Stewardship Project

This year our Marcellus Shale work focused intently on supporting citizen activists working throughout the shalefields. Our network has grown to over 60 community leaders in Fayette, Westmoreland, Greene, Allegheny, Butler, Beaver, Lawrence, Potter, Lycoming, Columbia and Bradford. These community leaders are networked to provide a support system for one another, share resources and partner more effectively. Our staff help to coordinate these efforts and provide technical support and guidance and act as a clearing house for information.

We also continue offering trainings in the use of FracTracker, an online mapping platform, in partnership with FracTracker Alliance, and in water quality monitoring through a partnership with the Alliance for Aquatic Resource Monitoring (ALLARM). In 2013 we hosted eight trainings and reached over 100 people.

## Ensuring Adequate Treatment of the Kalp Discharge

# 2013

In 2012 during routine monitoring of the Anna and Steve Gdosky (Kalp) Treatment System we detected a clog in the boreholes transporting mine drainage to the system. This clog caused the mine pool to back up which is a potentially serious problem. PA Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) declared an emergency situation at the site and immediately began to re-drill and case the boreholes. By March 2013, the re-drilling had been completed.

MWA applied for a Growing Greener Grant in order to rehabilitate the treatment system. However, until the grant is awarded and the work is complete, we are utilizing caustic soda to treat the increased volume



*Above: A horizontal drilling rig was used to re-drill the boreholes into the mine pool*

of water discharging from the mine pool. MWA has received several Quick Response grants through the Western Pennsylvania Coalition of Abandoned Mine Reclamation to cover some of the costs associated with repairs. DEP spent over \$400,000 re-drilling the boreholes. Fortunately, the caustic soda is providing adequate treatment of the discharge prior to it entering Indian Creek so downstream water quality has been unaffected.

## Expansion of Youghiogheny Riverkeeper Program

In October of this year Waterkeeper Alliance formally approved our petition to increase our jurisdiction to include the Yough headwaters in Maryland and West Virginia. This increased jurisdiction is a reflection of the monitoring work we're already conducting in those areas and will allow us to advocate for additional areas of the watershed— as well as the people who live and recreate in those areas.