

Protecting, preserving and restoring the Indian Creek Watershed and surrounding areas.



Highlights:

- We've hired a new Community Organizer! Learn more about Kathryn on page 2.
- This edition contains a volunteer survey. Learn more about the survey and volunteering with MWA on page 3.
- Mark your calendar for our Wildflower Walk! See page 2 for details.

8th Annual Clean Water Banquet & Silent Auction

Our eighth annual Clean Water Banquet and Silent Auction will be held on Saturday, April 20, 2013 at Brady's Restaurant on Route 31 in Acme, PA. Auction doors will open at 5:00 PM (please come early if you are bringing items for the auction) and dinner will be served at 6:30 PM. Tickets are \$25 and can be reserved by contacting Terri at (724) 455-4200, ext. 5# or terri@mtwatershed.com. We must receive your reservation no later than close of business on Monday, April 15, 2012.

A vegetarian option will be available. Please mention if you are interested in a vegetarian meal when you call to make your reservation.

If you'd like to make a donation to our silent auction, please contact Terri.

Our banquet is a great time for us to celebrate our accomplishments and our volunteers and to raise money to continue protecting and preserving clean water in the Indian Creek and Yough watersheds. Please plan to join us!

S&T Bank Promoting Gas Drilling Agreement

An agreement with S&T Bank is currently being circulated around the Indian Creek Valley. After a review, it appears this agreement will include shallow gas and not simply Marcellus gas but ANY other deeper shale gas as well as oil. Joining a pool of property owners interested in leasing their gas rights can provide added protections to the landowners when signing a gas lease. However, these agreements can also remove landowners from the negotiation process when a third party takes the lead in dealing with a gas company on your behalf. ALWAYS have a neutral attorney review ANY agreement you are asked to sign.

The agreement has some vague language which landowners should note. Objections in writing to the Bank's reporting must be made within 15 days, but the agreement does not specify whether this is 15 days of receipt, of mailing or emailing. Fifteen days is not very long and from what date that 15 begins should be clearly set forth.

In addition, although 6% of the lease bonus is not unreasonable, per the agreement the Agent will also receive 6% of the sale of any interest, surface damage payments (this is particularly troublesome since the damage payments should compensate the landowner for any damage done to their land— take 6%

continued on page 4...

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Natural Gas and Climate Change & Proposed Deep Mine Area Expands	3
Emergency Drawdown at Kalp Site	4
Indian Creek Valley Trail Expansion & Fayette ZHB Issues Curry Exception	5
Marcellus Citizen Stewardship Project Network Expands	6
Our Laurel Landscape & Volunteer Survey	7



1414-B ICV Road
PO Box 408
Melcroft PA 15462
(724) 455 4200
www.mtwatershed.com

Staff

Beverly Braverman

Executive Director
mwa@mtwatershed.com

Krissy Kasserman

Youghiogheny RIVERKEEPER®
& Assistant Executive Director
yrk@mtwatershed.com

Charlotte Shetler

Office Administrator
charlotte@mtwatershed.com

Carla Ruddock

Field Technician
carla@mtwatershed.com

Melissa Troutman

Outreach Coordinator
melissa@mtwatershed.com

Kathryn Hilton

Community Organizer
kathryn@mtwatershed.com

Terri Springer

AmeriCorps Volunteer
terri@mtwatershed.com

Deb Simko

Project Coordinator

Meet Kathryn

In February, we said goodbye to Veronica Coptis, our Community Organizer. Veronica has moved back to Greene County and has accepted a position with our partner, Center for Coalfield Justice.

Taking Veronica's place is Kathryn Hilton, whom we welcomed in February. Born in South Carolina, Kathryn always considered the Appalachian mountains as home. She became a volunteer activist/leader in 2007 while attending the University of South Carolina. During this time, she was very active in coordinating opposition to what would have been SC's 12th coal fired power plant. Kathryn discovered a passion and knack for organizing through this and subsequently refocused her studies in school towards Communications in order to gain tools for success. She graduated in Spring 2011 from University of South Carolina, Aiken.

Upon graduating, Kathryn headed west for a season of trail

restoration with AmeriCorps in the Sierra Nevada's. She moved to Pittsburgh in May 2012 to work for the Sierra Club/Sierra Student Coalition as a Contract Campus Coordinator. After becoming familiar with shale gas extraction, Kathryn decided to stay in southwestern Pennsylvania. Once her contract ended with the Sierra Club, she began working three jobs to stay in the area while working for a chance to become part of MWA's team. Kathryn is settling into her new home in Indian Head and is looking forward to picking up where Veronica left off. We welcome her to our community and our staff!



Wildflower Walk Scheduled for April 27

We have scheduled our annual Wildflower Walk in the Indian Creek Gorge. This free event will take place Saturday, April 27, 2012 at 9:00 AM, rain or shine. We cover about a mile and a half at a very gentle pace on relatively flat terrain. The walk normally lasts until around 12:00 noon.

Meet at the entrance to the Indian Creek Gorge off of Route

381 near Mill Run, PA. From Route 381, look for the Camp Christian sign, and turn down the road toward the camp. At the Y, turn right and you'll see a small parking area on the right.

Our Wildflower Walk is led by local naturalist Lisa Smith. Bring sturdy walking shoes, water, and an umbrella, if necessary.

Come enjoy the beautiful Indian Creek Gorge with us!

Natural Gas: The Fix They Claim or More of the Same?

Part of the reasoning for the unconventional gas boom originated with thoughts of natural gas as a “transition fuel” bridging the gap from coal to renewables—and a solution to climate change.

Unfortunately, natural gas as a solution to climate change hasn’t been supported by science. Recent research has indicated unconventional gas development is NOT mitigating climate change but instead contributes to it.

A recent letter authored by Robert W. Howarth, Renee Santoro, and Anthony Ingraffea of Cornell University discusses the misconception of unconventional gas development as a solution to climate change. Methane, a major contributor to greenhouse gas emissions, is the main topic of the letter. As early as 2007 the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) focused on concerns with the use of Natural Gas and methane. According to the letter, “Methane is by the far the major component of natural

gas, and it is a powerful greenhouse gas: 72-times more powerful than is CO₂ per molecule in the atmosphere.”

For perspective on how this adds to climate change, “a typical well has 55 to 150 connections to equipment such as heaters, meters, dehydrators, compressors, and vapor-recovery apparatus. Many of these potentially leak and many pressure relief valves are designed to purposefully vent gas. Emissions from pneumatic pumps and dehydrators are a major part of the leakage.” These are all opportunities for methane and other greenhouse gas leaks to contribute to climate change.

Many other aspects of unconventional gas development also contribute to greenhouse gas emissions. For example, the widespread use of diesel fuel either in the form of emissions from hauling six million gallons of fresh water to a well pad, transporting many tankers full of waste water to

a disposal facility, or the operation of generators to power lighting equipment all contribute. Massive amounts of CO₂ are pumped into the atmosphere at every one of the thousands of well sites in Pennsylvania alone. Because wells are exempt from the Clean Air Act as sources of significant pollution and because wells in close proximity to one another are not aggregated, or considered cumulatively, it is difficult to scientifically show the true impact unconventional gas development has on climate change.

Additional research is underway, but existing efforts have shown the development of unconventional gas wells is not the solution. Meanwhile, in an attempt to reduce your personal impact, consider paying closer attention to what kind of energy you consume, and also how much. Visit www.epa.gov/climatechange/wycd/index.html for easy tips to curb climate change.

Proposed Deep Mine Exploration Area Expands

LCT, the company which is currently exploring our beautiful mountain area in their attempt to acquire a permit from DEP for underground coal mining, has submitted an expansion of the originally proposed exploration area. The revised map adds more acreage to the exploration area and more drill holes above the PA turnpike. Please visit our website (www.mtwatershed.com) to review the expanded map or make an appointment to come by the

office. We also have an extensive “Violation History” of past mining performed by the present LCT owners. This is also available upon request. Representatives of the company are currently in the area gathering information. Please be aware that without your permission, they have no right to access your property or your water supply. They still have not submitted a permit application to the Department of Environmental Protection.

The history of deep mining in this watershed is one of acid discharges, aluminum contamination, and loss of pristine water supplies. Given the success of our mine drainage treatment systems, the recovery of the fishery, and the increased importance of tourism in our area, this proposed deep mine could have significant negative consequences for the Indian Creek Valley.

Emergency Drawdown at Kalp Site

In the fall of 2012, regular monitoring by MWA field staff of the mine pool for the Anna & Steve Gdosky Indian Creek Restoration Project (treating the Kalp discharge) indicated the mine pool was once again backing up. This creates a dangerous situation for those living near the site and also poses a threat to water quality as a mine blow-out could drastically affect water quality and stream life in Indian Creek downstream to the Youghiogheny River. The back-up led us to believe there was a clog in the treatment system. In late December, representatives from the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection came out and attempted to clean the pipes that channel water from the mine pool into the treatment system. At this time, it was discovered that the uncased portion of both boreholes had collapsed reducing the flow of water into the treatment system. This caused the mine pool to back up in the hillside.

When the project was originally constructed only the first 60 feet of the boreholes drilled to drain the mine pool into the

treatment system were cased.

As a result of the mine pool backing up, the project site was declared an emergency by PADEP early in 2013. REI Drilling was contracted and efforts to redo the directional drilling and install a stainless steel casing began in mid January. Despite a few minor setbacks, the project is nearing completion. Excavation work to restore the site and



Above: Directional drilling into the mine pool at the Anna & Steve Gdosky Indian Creek Restoration Project

dewater the mine pool—to a safe elevation and one at which the treatment system could once again function properly—will occur once the drilling is complete.

This situation illustrates why it is imperative to have an Operations, Maintenance and Restoration (OM&R) protocol in place in order to maintain mine drainage treatment systems. Our treatment systems, while effective, require constant monitoring, flushing, and other maintenance tasks. We were fortunate to receive a Growing Greener grant from PADEP in 2010 to establish our own OM&R Plan (to be completed in Spring of 2013). A portion of this grant is also for the establishment of an OM&R trust fund in order to care for our treatment systems into the future.

Your donation to our OM&R Fund will help cover costs associated with maintaining our treatment systems. You can donate by visiting www.mountainwatershed.com/donate.html or by mail at PO Box 408, Melcroft, PA 15462. Please note “OM&R Fund” on your check.

S&T Bank *(continued from page 1)*

of that away, and there may not be enough money to complete the repairs), rights of way agreements, or any settlements as a result of operations on principal's land.

Finally, landowners should be most concerned about the fact that nowhere in the agreement are there concerns about quality of life, health, and the environment.

These issues are important and should be discussed with landowners' agent prior to any negotiation with a gas company. For more information, please contact Beverly.

Indian Creek Valley Trail Expansion

Many exciting things are happening with the Indian Creek Trail expansion! We are currently working out the details for a “Share the Road” crossing at Route 31/381 in Donegal in order to connect the ICV Trail with the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources’ Blair Brothers railroad grade along the upstream portion of Indian Creek (north of the Route 381/31 intersection). We are also in the process of adding an additional mile of trail downstream from Indian Head and we recently refurbished a bridge on

that section of trail (see below for photos). We’re working to secure easements on the remaining portion of the trail between Indian Head and Mill Run. We’ve recently signed an access easement with the Municipal Authority of Westmoreland County for the trail right-of-way running through the Indian Creek Gorge, so while that section is unimproved, it is open to the public. We’re working on the bridge between the existing Melcroft Spur and the walking trail around our Melcroft Treatment System as well as the bridge near Jones Mills.

New and updated trail maps are currently under development and we expect to have them printed by spring of this year. We are also working on signage and branding for the trail. Visit our trail website at www.indiancreekvalleytrail.com for more information.

There are lots of exciting trail-related developments occurring. If you’d like to volunteer your time for trail construction or maintenance please fill out the volunteer survey included in this newsletter or call the office.



Before and after photos of the newly refurbished Section Seven Bridge in Springfield Township.

Fayette Zoning Board Issues Curry Special Exception

In December of 2012 the Fayette County Zoning Hearing Board, after a hearing which lasted several days, issued the special exception for the proposed Curry Mine in Dunbar Township, Fayette County. This location is adjacent to a high-quality section of the Youghiogheny River, the Great Allegheny Passage, and Ohiopyle State Park. During the hearings we presented testimony from several experts regarding the hydrology of the area and its importance to Fayette County both economically

and ecologically. Unfortunately this had little bearing on the ultimate decision to issue the special exception. Longtime members will recall the Zoning Board denying Amerikohl’s request back in 2009; unfortunately, the membership of the Zoning Hearing Board has changed substantially since that time and the new board did not recognize the concerns with mining in this portion of the Youghiogheny River gorge.

As a result, we filed an appeal of this decision on February 7, 2013 with the Fayette County Court of Common Pleas.

In the meantime, please consider making a donation to our Yough Defense Fund to help cover costs associated with the appeal. You can donate by visiting www.mtwatershed.com/donate.html or by mail at PO Box 408, Melcroft, PA 15462. Please note “Yough Defense Fund” on your check.

Marcellus Citizen Stewardship Project Network Expands

It's been over a year since Governor Corbett signed the new oil and gas law, Act 13, into existence, and the Marcellus Citizen Stewardship Project (MCSP) network waits with baited breath to hear the State Supreme Court's decision about whether the law is constitutional. In October, MWA filed an amicus brief in support of a lawsuit against Act 13, which strips municipalities of the right to appropriately zone oil and gas activity. In Commonwealth Court, the new law was declared "unconstitutional," but the current administration, including DEP Secretary Michael Krancer, challenged the court's decision. MWA attended the Supreme Court hearing, where Chief Justice Ronald Castille stated at one point, "Maybe the People of Pennsylvania should sue the state."

His phrase speaks to the daily frustrations of our amazing MCSP volunteers. Water monitors and community leaders work so hard, year round, through rain, snow, stress and sickness to protect their communities. Nothing is more frustrating to them, and us, than running up against the same legal roadblocks over and over again and having to fight recurring battles to protect our communities from industrial activities. Just because something is legal doesn't make it right, and laws are ambiguous. Our own

U.S. Constitution, after all, once made it legal to own other people. Even when women were free from being legal property, they still couldn't vote until 1920.

We've come a long way since our original state and federal Constitutions, but not far enough. And we've gone the wrong direction when it comes to local rights. This year, the MCSP is focused on taking a liberating step off the regulatory "hamster wheel" to help develop the highest form of community leadership - self-governance. With the help of Community Environmental Legal Defense Fund (CELDF), the MCSP is working to establish county chapters of CEDLF's Pennsylvania Community Rights Network. CELDF teaches Democracy School, which is part history lesson and part "cooking" class for re-asserting our freedom, liberty, and justice for all...but not just for people. A key component of the CELDF drafted local ordinances also establishes the inherent rights of Nature.

Our community leader network has already grown by five more members and two counties in 2013 to a total of 21 leaders in 11 counties across Pennsylvania. In Potter County, two leaders have started a new community group that has begun fighting fracking waste disposal in the Exceptional Value and High Quality headwaters

of the Triple Divide. Westmoreland County leaders continue to hold events featuring amazing speakers, such as the "Fracking & Your Health" forum at St. Vincent College on March 19th. We are holding FracTracker trainings across the southwest region to unveil their new shale gas mapping system, continuing to network on monthly conference calls, and are planning regional Earth Day rallies at our respective DEP offices. Most exciting of all - we're organizing the first Grassroots Summit to come together in June to get trained, share resources and fellowship, and celebrate all the hard work we do.

Our water monitoring program with ALLARM is focused on follow-up trainings this year, but we are still conducting initial training for those interested in water monitoring for the first time. This year we're meeting with those who already monitor to organize, analyze, and aggregate the baseline data they've created and start to map the quality of our streams across the shale fields. Our new Community Organizer, Kathryn Hilton, will be heading up the monitoring program.

For more information on the MCSP or to get involved please contact mcsp@mtwatershed.com.



For MWA merchandise including t-shirts, decals, notecards and more, please visit www.mtwatershed.com or stop by our office!



Our Laurel Landscape...

I am a River Person...

The following essay was written by our AmeriCorps Volunteer Terri Springer for an AmeriCorps publication. We liked it so much we wanted to share it with our audience as well. Enjoy!

I am a river person.

Years ago, while at a wilderness camp in the Pine Barrens of New Jersey, I was told, if I closed my eyes and walked, I would naturally stop at the place that spoke to my spirit. I ended up on the bank of a stream. Lakes, ponds and wetlands are fascinating in their own ways, but there is something about moving water that feels spiritual to me.

Through the years, one river keeps winding in and out of my life. I was introduced to the Youghiogheny in 1970 when my group of friends decided to spend the day after our prom picnicking by the falls.

Our next meeting was three years later, when college friends convinced me to go whitewater rafting in the “Yough’s” exciting rapids. The beauty of this river was starting to take hold of me.

During the 1980’s, I was fortunate to find my way back to work as an Environmental Interpretor at Ohiopyle State Park, where I introduced hundreds of people to the unique cultural and natural history of “my” river. I loved being at the launch area first thing in the morning to read the river gauge. Standing alone by the river I would spend just a little time saying good morning to the Yough and all her relations. At the end of the day, I would close the gate to the take out area – the spot close to where the river leaves the park, to continue her journey to the sea. There I would pause to bid her good night.

I was pulled away from my

river for many years by a different job and other life duties, but this year, I have experienced the river in a most remarkable way. Working with Krissy Kasserman, MWA’s Youghiogheny Riverkeeper, I am, as part of my AmeriCorps duties, helping with the Youghiogheny River Comprehensive Water Monitoring Project where we follow the river from Oakland, Maryland which is near its source in West Virginia, to its mouth in McKeesport, Pennsylvania. Over three days, we stop at 17 sites to take water samples. It almost feels intimate to experience the river’s changing “personality” as it travels the 134 miles to the Monongahela. In all my encounters with the Yough, this has been the most rewarding because it is a service to the river.

I am a **Youghiogheny** river person.

Volunteer Needs & Survey

Since 1994, MWA has relied on the hard work and generosity of its members and volunteers to accomplish its goals of preservation and restoration of Indian Creek. Over the years, our membership has grown to over 1,000 people.

It has been four years since we last updated our volunteer database. To accomplish this, we have designed a “Volunteer Interest Survey” which has been included in this newsletter (an

electronic version can be found on our website at www.mtwatershed.com). The survey contains a list of areas where we need volunteers; please consider taking a few moments to review the list and answer the questions concerning your skills, interests and availability to help.

Volunteer opportunities are quite varied and range from filing and helping with mailings to assisting with water sampling and macroinvertebrate collection. There’s something for everyone!

We’re also happy to work with students and others needing service projects for school or scouting.

This survey in no way commits you to any activity. Please consider returning the survey and indicating whether or not you wish to volunteer and if so, what your interests are.

As always, we are grateful for your continued dedication and support. Many thanks for all you do.



PO Box 408/1414-B ICV Road
 Melcroft PA 15462
 724/455-4200
 www.mtwatershed.com

Protecting, preserving and
 restoring the Indian Creek
 watershed and surrounding
 areas...

Non-Profit Org.
 U.S. POSTAGE
 PAID
 Melcroft, PA
 Permit No. 002

POSTAL PATRON

Upcoming Events:

April 20
 8th Annual Clean Water
 Banquet & Silent Auction

April 27
 Annual Wildflower Walk

April 30
 FracTracker Training,
 Westmoreland County

June 18
 FracTracker Training,
 Fayette County

September 28
 Children's Fishing Derby &
 Rubber Duck Race

See www.mtwatershed.com
 for more information.

Please Invest in the Future of Our Mountains and Streams by
 Becoming a 2013 Member of the Mountain Watershed Association,
 Home of the Youghiogheny RIVERKEEPER®

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

Type of Membership	
_____ Basic (\$5)	_____ Stream Friend (\$45)
_____ Family (\$7) Number of people _____	_____ Stream Hero (\$90)
_____ Group (\$15) Number of people _____	_____ Lifetime Member (\$500)
_____ Stream Defender (\$20)	_____ Donation (Tax Deductible)

I would like to receive MWA's quarterly newsletter via email!

Please make checks payable to: Mountain Watershed Association
 1414B Indian Creek Valley Rd., P.O. Box 408, Melcroft, PA 15462

The official registration and financial information of the Mountain Watershed Association, Inc.
 may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling toll free,
 within Pennsylvania, 1 (800) 732-0999.