

*Protecting, preserving and restoring the Indian Creek
and greater Youghiogheny River watersheds.*



Join Us for the Wild & Scenic Film Festival in Ohiopyle on August 8!

Highlights:

- We're accepting resumes for our AmeriCorps position! See page 2.
- Do bomb trains run through your community? Are you in the evacuation zone? See page 6.

We're bringing the Wild & Scenic Environmental Film Festival to Ohiopyle! Join us at the Ohiopyle Community Center, 15 Sherman Street, on August 8 from 6:30-10 PM. This event will feature live music from The Joint Commission, great food and drinks (craft brews from Bloom Brew, located right on the Yough in West Newton), and nine awesome films with an environmental and outdoor theme. Sponsors include Bloom Brew, Wilderness Voyageurs, Ohiopyle Trading Post & River Tours, Riversport and Unit4Media. Admission is \$15 at the door. We'll start with a reception at 6:30 and the films will begin at 8:00 PM. For a preview of the films we'll be screening as well as more information please visit our website or contact Krissy. See you there!

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Indian Creek Valley Trail Council Formed As Trail Construction Continues

As people become aware that the bridge across Indian Creek in Jones Mill connects Route 31 with another eight+ miles of trail to the south, the trail is enjoyed by more and more users. You can park in Champion and ride north about 1.5 miles crossing the newly constructed bridge, then turn around and bike all the way into Springfield Township—roughly nine miles. The entire trip will cover about eighteen miles. Short rides or long rides—you can do both or either.

You can also hike or bike near and into the Indian Creek gorge---the object of the majority of this year's trail construction efforts. We are trying to correct the drainage issues deep in the gorge and complete surfacing the entire 4.3 mile length, a project that will cost over \$200,000. **You can help support this** effort by making a tax deductible donation to MWA. Write "trail" in the memo line of your check or make a restricted donation on our website (mtwatershed.com/give).

We held a meeting on June 18 to organize a Trail Council, an important group that will oversee maintenance and monitoring. If you walk, run, ski, hike or bike on the trail, you can help! A follow-up meeting was held July 6 to begin planning for the Council. For information about how to participate contact

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We're Hiring!

We're presently accepting resumes for our AmeriCorps Volunteer position. This position is offered through the Pennsylvania Mountain Service Corporation and is a full-time temporary position from August 20, 2015 – August 12, 2016. We are looking for an individual who enjoys working outside and wants to be challenged. Candidates who have completed their Bachelor's degree or are working towards a degree in the environmental field are preferred. Experience working in the field and Microsoft Office proficiency requested. Flexible scheduling is available; however some evening and weekends will be required occasionally.

A living allowance of

\$12,530 is distributed bi-weekly during the program year and will be provided through the Pennsylvania Mountain Service Corps. In addition, a post service education award of \$5,730 will be awarded when the candidate meets all the terms of their agreement with Pennsylvania Mountain Service Corps. For more information about compensation and benefits visit pmsc.org/benefits.

To apply, please submit a cover letter, resume, and three references to Carla Ruddock (carla@mtwatershed.com). Email applications are preferred. Applications will be accepted until the position is filled. More information can be found at mtwatershed.com.

2015 Yough Defense Party

Join us November 19, 2015 at Falls City Pub in Ohiopyle for our 6th annual Yough Defense Party! This event is the single largest fundraiser for our Yough Defense Fund which supports our advocacy, monitoring and legal work in the Youghiogheny River

watershed. The party features live music, great food and drinks, silent auction items and more! Many thanks to Wilderness Voyageurs for once again hosting this event. Stay tuned for more information, and we hope to see you there!

General Membership Meeting Scheduled

Who is thinking about November already? We are! MWA's General Membership Meeting will be held on November 11 at 6 pm at the County Line Church Social Hall, 1411 County Line Road, Champion. In keeping

with the past several years, the meeting will start with a Thanksgiving Dinner. Please bring a covered dish to share. We will provide the turkey and/or ham. Save the date and plan to attend!

Investigation of Meadow Run Water Quality Continues

As a result of our ongoing investigation into water quality issues in Meadow Run, we're proud to announce we've partnered with the Fayette County Conservation District to submit a grant proposal to Growing Greener for projects designed to curb pollution.

Our water quality monitoring has shown consistently high levels of E. coli bacteria in Meadow Run and its tributary Deadman Run. This pollution is problematic due to the large amount of contact recreation in Meadow Run (and in particular, on the Meadow Run natural waterslides which have recently been featured by National Geographic). We recently conducted molecular source monitoring which is an expensive but effective way of determining the animal source of the bacterial contamination. We found that

major sources are human and cattle waste.

Our portion of the Growing Greener project, if funded, will allow us to facilitate a public awareness and education campaign focused on proper maintenance of onlot septic systems to reduce E. coli pollution in nearby waters. The Fayette County Conservation District will partner with farmers to install best

management practices to manage manure on their farms.

Do you enjoy swimming or paddling Meadow Run? You can reduce your exposure to potentially harmful E. coli bacteria by limiting the amount of time you spend in the water within 48 hours of rainfall. Report pollution to us at (724) 455-4200 or mtwatershed.com.



Above: Taking flow measurements during sampling in Meadow Run.

Children's Fishing Day & Rubber Duck Race Scheduled

Join us for the Indian Creek Watershed Celebration Saturday September 26, 2015. Once again MWA will be hosting our annual Children's Fishing Event and Duck Race at Resh Park in Indian Head, PA from 10:00-2:00. Since moving our event to the fall and adding the Duck Race we have seen an increase in participation, and we're crossing our fingers for better weather than we had last year!

We will be stocking approximately 300 trout the morning of the event. The Duck Race will start at 1:30, and lunch

will be provided free of charge. We hope you will see a few new faces as we invite some other organizations and individuals to provide hands-on environmental education activities. Fishing is available to children under the age of 12 only with adult supervision. Please bring your own tackle.

Tickets for the duck race are \$5.00 each, and each ticket offers two chances to win. Due to changes in state regulations, you must be at least 18 years of age or older to purchase. Ticket holders need not be present to win.

Proceeds from the Duck Race benefit the Children's fishing activities. Cash prizes include: 1st Place—\$500, 2nd Place—\$250, 3rd Place—\$150, 4th Place—\$100, and Last Duck—\$50. Tickets are available through our office or at several area businesses.

If you would like more information about the event, would like to register, or are interested in volunteering please contact Carla.



Trail Council *(continued from page 1)*

Beverly at 724 455-4200 x1#.

On July 8 we partnered with the Healthy Lifestyles Task Force for a Wednesday Night Walk in the gorge. More than 70 people participated in spite of the rainy weather. Some details about the gorge section of trail offered by MWA board member Jan Show: two of the main stops on the B&O Railroad, which ran for about 145 years, were Mill Run and Indian Creek. The Indian Creek Valley Railroad was

completed in 1909 and ran from Indian Creek to Jones Mills, a distance of about 22 miles. This railroad was constructed mainly to transport logs, lumber, mine props and coal. The B&O bought the ICV Railroad in 1926.

The primary landowner of the gorge area is the Municipal Authority of Westmoreland County. They bought the land from American Water Works, who purchased it from PA Railroad. PA Railroad bought it from August

Stickel in 1892 in order to build a reservoir to supply their steam engines with water. This use was abandoned when diesel engines replaced steam.

The area has been designated one of exceptional natural diversity by the Western PA Conservancy. MWA is presently exploring ways to protect and conserve it.

To volunteer your time as a member of the Trail Council please contact Beverly.

Concerns with Proposed Rustic Ridge Mine in Donegal/Saltlick

Why do we oppose LCT's proposed Rustic Ridge mine? Some of our concerns arise from the history of mining in this area and the more than 130 abandoned mine discharges in the Indian Creek watershed. That said, we have also been dealing with new problems at our Kalp and Sagamore treatment systems—both treat water from old deep mines. The new issues are a result of recent natural activity underground that could not be foreseen or predicted or forestalled, except to know that these issues are inevitable when mining takes place in an area as fractured and hydrologically variable as this watershed. The Department of Environmental Protection has worked with MWA to restore this watershed to the tune of more than \$7 million.

An analysis of LCT's own piezometric data shows a high potential of breakouts (of mine drainage) in the Indian Creek valley from Jones Mills southward. LCT data, Amerikohl Mining data,

and Rand AM piezometric well elevations project discharges above the adjacent land surface.

In 1996, the Department of Environmental Protection denied the Rand Am permit and defended an appeal before the Environmental Hearing Board who upheld the permit denial. The proposed LCT deep mine is once again including two areas that were part of that review process.

LCT states that there are more fractures as one draws nearer to Indian Creek. This is an admission that there is a presumption of pollution if mining occurs in those areas. We have had their new piezometer data and previous piezometer data reviewed by several hydrogeologists. Their conclusions support the fact that discharges will occur.

Quoting the Rand Am decision, "The potential for pollutional discharges from the proposed Rand Am No. 4 mine exists in the Champion Creek and Indian Creek Valleys." This decision held that there was a

strong potential for discharges in the Champion Creek Valley. It further stated that "Post-mining discharges from these mines (Melcroft Nos. 1 and 3 mines) show the potential quality of post-mining discharges from the proposed Rand Am No. 4 mine. "The Department proved by overwhelming evidence that the likely source of the Coffman Discharge is the Melcroft No. 3 mine, even though the Melcroft No. 3 mine pool is separated from the discharges by a 1,200 foot coal barrier." The proposed footprint of the LCT mine shares a substantial area with the denied Rand Am deep mine. The proposed coal barriers are significantly narrower than those recognized to be inadequate during the Rand Am hearings.

Because of the potential impact this proposal could have on Indian Creek and our watershed communities, we oppose the issuance of a permit for the LCT Rustic Ridge mine. To learn how you can help, contact Beverly.

MWA Holds Second Grassroots Summit on Shale Gas

On June 12-14th 2015, MWA held our 2nd annual Grassroots Summit for organizations and individuals advocating for change on shale gas issues. The summit was held at Laurelville Mennonite Center in Laurelville, PA. Over the weekend, we hosted workshops which focused on increasing communication and resource sharing between front-line communities dealing firsthand with Marcellus impacts. These workshops were meant to address some of the biggest challenges currently being faced by those working in the anti-fracking movement. To allow for breaks between the intense workshops, attendees had full use of Laurelville's facilities for fun activities like mini-golf, basketball, and swimming. We also had access to the beautiful natural trails and meditation labyrinth which many people utilized to relax and unwind.

One theme we identified at the Grassroots Summit is that sometimes we can be our own worst enemy. Most organizers and

advocates are full time volunteers, working to balance their personal and professional lives. In grassroots work, the challenges can be overwhelming and as a result community members often feel isolated in their fight. To address this, we integrated self-care throughout the entire weekend as well as plenty of opportunities for

one-on-one discussions. People were able to identify with others who are facing similar struggles within their own communities. Many expressed a sense of relief from their feelings of isolation by the end of the retreat.

Overall, the Grassroots Summit was a great success in bringing together local and regional community leaders working on shale issues. To help grow our capacity, we've joined efforts with Halt the Harm Network (HHN) to connect people and resources through an online network and database. If you are working to halt the environmental and community harms that accompany shale gas development, please consider joining as a leader in the network to access this valuable tool. By partnering with HHN and hosting networking opportunities like the Grassroots Summit, we are actively addressing one of the biggest challenges for organizers and advocates working on shale gas issues by strengthening our ability to communicate and share resources.



Above: A breakout session during our recent Grassroots Summit

Thank You to our Film Festival Sponsors!



Do You Live in a Bomb Train Evacuation Zone?

The dangers of transporting crude oil by rail are now well known following high profile and fiery derailments in Lynchburg, Virginia; Fayette County, West Virginia; and tragically, Lac-Mégantic, Quebec. From 2008-2013 transportation of crude oil by rail increased 4,111%. The federal government now predicts at least 10 derailments of trains transporting crude per year over the next two decades— at a cost of over \$4 billion.

Trains carrying highly flammable Bakken crude travel daily along the Youghiogheny & Casselman Rivers — through the towns of West Newton, Connellsville, Ohio, Confluence, Rockwood, and many others. Often over a mile long and with placards marked “1267,” these “bomb trains” endanger nearby residents— and our rivers.

Do you live in the half-mile evacuation zone if an oil train derails in your community? According to a new Public Source analysis one in nine Pennsylvania residents live within this evacuation zone and could be at risk if a train carrying crude oil derails nearby and catches fire. Public Source has created a map showing the evacuation zone as well as hospitals and schools along these bomb train routes. Check it out here: bit.ly/1K13sDR.

Several things can be done to minimize risk to our communities and our rivers. DOT should limit the number of cars hauling crude in a single train to fewer than 20 (trains presently carry upward of 100 cars). The use of old model tank cars for crude oil

and other flammable materials should be halted immediately. These old model cars, called DOT-111's, and a more recent version called the CPC-1232, are vulnerable to puncture and thus explosion. New tank cars should be designed to withstand puncture at maximum speeds and include

to the public. After pressure from our organization and several others, this information was ultimately made available. We also recently provided comments on the new federal tank car standards.

We're often asked how the crude should be transported if not by rail. Some say recent rail



Above: A train transporting crude oil rolls through Ohio, PA.

thermal protection in case of an explosion.

Communities should be notified of the presence of bomb trains, and first responders should be warned about the presence of hazardous materials— and trained in responding to emergencies involving flammable crude.

Finally, bomb trains should slow down. Speed is often a contributing factor in the puncture of tank cars during derailments.

After the federal government ordered railroads to provide information on bomb train routes to states, Pennsylvania refused to release this information

accidents mean we should build more pipelines to transport fossil fuels. Others argue that leaky pipelines, high construction costs and environmental impacts prove that oil by rail is a better alternative. However, the number of derailments and explosions over the past few years indicates that developing and shipping highly flammable crude oil using any method will increase the occurrence of spills, accidents, and pollution. The real answer is to reduce our dependency on fossil fuels, and keep the oil in the ground.

Our Laurel Landscape: Water Conservation & Rainwater Collection

Unbeknownst to many long time southwestern Pennsylvania residents, a monsoon season does actually exist here in our small corner of the world. June 2015 was one of the rainiest months on record, with Fayette County receiving a whopping 14.4 inches of rain from May 9th to July 7th, a substantial 4.4 inches above average!

And while complaining about excess rainfall seems a bit selfish with the extreme drought conditions currently gripping parts of the Southwest, it can cause real problems for communities when the ground becomes fully saturated but the precipitation refuses to quit.

Storm water that is not absorbed into the ground naturally picks up debris, chemicals, sediment and bacteria which can then be deposited into local waterways – many of which serve as sources of drinking water. In cities, garbage and chemicals are the most likely pollutants, while in more rural areas such as the Laurel Highlands, run-off waste from farming activities play a major role.

One way to effectively curtail the negative effects of excess rainfall is to install a rainwater harvesting system. Setups range from the simple (a large barrel receiving rainfall from households gutters), to the more

elaborate (large cisterns capable of storing and filtering large amounts of water). Ready-made rain barrels can be constructed for under \$35, with pre-made 55 to 90 gallon barrels ranging in cost from \$50 to \$250. Cisterns range in price depending on size and features, and can cost anywhere between \$200 to \$5,000. It is also important for rain barrels to be made mosquito-proof to avoid any potential disease threat. Plans to construct your own rain barrel are available in many locations online.

Although rainwater collecting is still illegal in some states, not only is it legal here in

Pennsylvania, but it is being encouraged in some urban areas of Pittsburgh, with help from organizations like the Nine Mile Run Watershed Association (learn more at ninemilerun.org).

In addition to protecting waterways against potential pollution, rainfall harvesting can also help save money on your monthly water bill. Using generalized averages of 3,000 gallon per month household use, \$1.02 per 100 gallons, and 30% of total water consumption for outdoor use, utilizing a water harvesting system could save you \$110.16 a year!

Unlike “grey water” - water collected from showers and laundry machines - storm water does not include any harmful detergents or soaps that may harm plant life, making it ideal for keeping your tomatoes and lettuce vibrant and healthy even during dry periods. And by using natural rainfall in your gardens, you can eliminate possible negative effects from tap water additives such as chlorine or fluoride. Now that’s going organic!

For more information regarding water conservation and other ways that you can help reduce overall energy consumption, please visit mtwatershed.com/blog.



Above: A rainwater collection barrel. Photo courtesy of the city of Winston-Salem, NC.

Energy Consumption & Conservation Blog Series

Our AmeriCorps Volunteer Jordan Hoover has recently authored a series of seven blog posts about energy consumption

and how to conserve. Topics include solar, wind and geothermal, the importance of water conservation, and lots of great tips

for saving energy. Visit mtwatershed.com/blog to check it out!



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Upcoming Events

August 8

Wild & Scenic Environmental
Film Festival

September 26

Children's Fishing Day &
Rubber Duck Race

November 11

General Membership Meeting
& Potluck Dinner

November 19

Yough Defense Party

Visit www.mtwatershed.com
for more upcoming events.

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Please make checks payable to: Mountain Watershed Association
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