

MOUNTAIN WATERSHED ASSOCIATION

HOME OF THE YOUGHIOGHENY RIVERKEEPER[™]

2021 SUMMER NEWSLETTER

**PROTECTING, PRESERVING, AND RESTORING THE INDIAN CREEK
AND GREATER YOUGHIOGHENY RIVER WATERSHEDS**



FROM THE DIRECTOR

Dear MWA Members and Supporters,

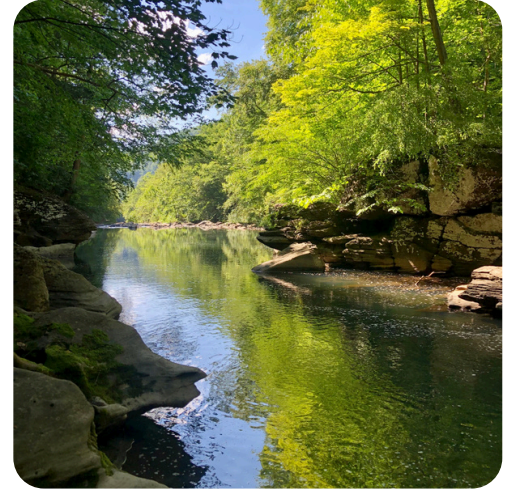
It's been over 8 months since I've stepped up to the helm at MWA. During this time, I've been so heartened and humbled by the dedicated support of our many volunteers, supporters, Board members, and staff. The work we do within our watershed is truly a unified effort of those who value the importance of clean water, healthy ecosystems, and thriving communities. Since the start of 2021, our volunteers have shown up in force: removing hundreds of tires and countless bags of trash from our rivers and roadways, helping to monitor our water quality, organizing their communities in the face of potential threats to the watershed, supporting our efforts to develop and improve the Indian Creek Valley Trail, and more.

Now that we can begin to gather safely in person, we've been delighted to connect face-to-face again with our supporters and volunteers. While most of our staff were working remotely during the pandemic, you can now find us back in the office - if we're not out sampling in the field or participating in a community meeting or event! To make our office space more accessible for our staff, supporters, and the communities we serve, we are currently planning significant improvements to what we are calling our "MWA Campus". We've been brainstorming plans to create a dedicated laboratory space, a resource library, a large community meeting room, an education center, and perhaps even a community garden. If you have suggestions on how our MWA Campus can better be a resource to our mountain community, please feel free to share your ideas with our staff or Board. We'd be glad to have your input as we move these plans forward.

We are so grateful for your continued investment in our work to protect, preserve, and restore the Indian Creek and greater Youghiogheny River watersheds. We'll be looking forward to seeing you soon.



Ashley Funk
Executive Director



There's nothing like a cool swim in the Indian Creek Gorge to relax and unwind on a hot, summer day!



An Aphrodite Fritillary butterfly enjoying a patch of common milkweed flowers on the Mountain Streams trail

CONSERVATION

Updates and Construction of AMD Treatment Systems

MWA currently operates and maintains five passive abandoned mine drainage (AMD) treatment systems. These "passive" treatment systems require a lot of maintenance and oversight. When built, they are only expected to last 10-15 years and, within that timeframe, rehabilitation to parts of the systems are necessary.

Rehabilitation of the Gallentine AMD Treatment System was completed this spring utilizing funding received from Growing Greener, Office of Surface Mining's Watershed Cooperative Agreement grants, Foundation for PA Watersheds, Fayette County Conservation Districts OEM Fund and Western Pennsylvania Coalition for Abandoned Mine Reclamation Emergency Response Emergency Repair Funding.

Work included upgrading the vertical flow pond and installing new pipes with additional cleanout ports. The majority of the original limestone was replaced. In addition, the main shutoff valve to the system was replaced although it was not part of the original rehabilitation plans. Crews determined it was not functioning during construction. Gallentine is once again treating the discharge and, with the ability to clean the pipe workings on an annual basis, we hope the system can last an additional 10 years or longer.

Both the Kalp and Melcroft treatment systems are being assessed by the PA Department of Environmental Protection's Bureau of Abandoned Mine Reclamation for possible redesigns and refurbishments. The Melcroft system is over 10 years old and is starting to experience some issues. Rehabilitation of the system is on our radar within one to three years. Also, it has been determined that the Kalp system is undersized for the size of the discharge. A redesign of that system and potential expansion is slated within five years.

Finally, the Rondell-Correal Pilot Mine Drainage Treatment System is scheduled for installation this summer. MWA has been working with Cosmos Technologies and Cox Industries who are building the system offsite. Installation is currently scheduled for August 2021. This is an exciting project because this system is expected to treat the high-aluminum Rondell Discharge. Stay tuned for more information about this system's installation.

River Conservation Plans Come to Fruition

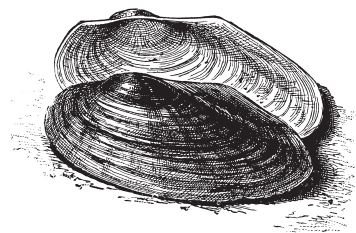
MWA recently released the draft version of the Indian Creek River Conservation Plan: The Sequel. This project is three years in the making and has included two rounds of public meetings, key individual interviews, public surveys, and lots of research into the Indian Creek watershed. The plan is currently available on our website and open for public comments through August 1, 2021. In addition, we have a public survey in which we are asking the public to help us prioritize the management recommendations that have been identified during the development of the plan. These recommendations are how the plan will be implemented. To view the draft plan or to complete the survey please visit www.mtwatershed.com/river-conservation-plans

The Youghiogheny River Conservation Plan: Part 1 Headwaters to Dunbar Creek is still in the research and development phase. We have a public survey on our website that we are asking watershed residents and visitors to fill out. The questions are centered around what resources/activities in the watershed you use/enjoy and what you would like to see for the future of the watershed. To complete the survey, visit www.mtwatershed.com/river-conservation-plans and click the link to the Google Form.

BIODIVERSITY

Mussel Surveys

In an effort to better understand the holistic health of water quality within the Indian Creek and Yough River watersheds, MWA is partnering with the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy to conduct freshwater mussel surveys at strategic locations within the Indian Creek and Youghiogheny River watersheds. Findings will be reported to the Fish and Boat Commissions Scientific Collectors Database.



The mussel survey work is funded in part by a grant from the Community Conservation Partnerships Program Environmental Stewardship Fund under the administration of the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Bureau of Recreation and Conservation administered through the Pennsylvania Environmental Council's Laurel Highlands Mini Grant Program.

We are trying to target 16 sampling sites over 3 field days throughout Somerset, Fayette, Westmoreland, and one site in Allegheny County. Five sampling locations will be within the Indian Creek watershed in Westmoreland and Fayette counties in Pennsylvania. The remaining 10 sites will be within the Youghiogheny River watershed: • Laurel Hill Creek – 3 sites in Somerset County • Casselman River – 2 sites in Somerset County • Sewickley Creek – 1 site in Westmoreland County • Youghiogheny River – 5 sites in Allegheny, Fayette, and Westmoreland counties.

Ultimately, sites will be selected where mussel populations are likely to exist. These sites will be selected using GIS, personal knowledge of mussel habitats, and where access permission is granted. This work is scheduled to begin in mid-July.

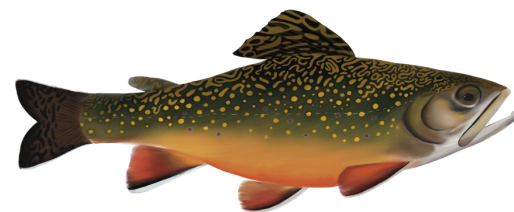
Planting Trees at Marsolino



We received 300 free trees from the Pennsylvania Game Commission in exchange for opening the Marsolino AMD treatment system site up for hunting access. 200 black locust, pine, and oak trees were planted by 10 volunteers on a cold, windy day with on-and-off hail. Thank you volunteers! The remaining 100 trees have been potted and stored for later planting.

A Biodiversity Art Project

MWA's 2020/2021 Americorps Intern, Morgan Moran is sticking around for another year-long term and has an exciting project to share:



**A Brook Trout drawn by
Morgan Moran**

"I'm proud to devote my time to the Mountain Watershed Association. There is one project that I'm especially excited for: illustrating identification guides for the Indian Creek Watershed. So far, I have pulled species from our recent fish shocking report. I would like to illustrate invasive species, venomous snakes, and edible plants. However, I am interested in what the rest of the Indian Creek community would like to see! If you have any ideas for me please send them my way at morgan@mtwatershed.com. Thank you!"

WATER SAMPLING

Sampling Continues for Roadside Springs

In 2020 we asked community members to share the locations of frequented roadside springs in the greater Indian Creek area. This year, we started quarterly sampling efforts of 6 frequented roadside springs: Red Dog Road, the Drill on Ore Mine Hill Road, Beck Springs on Jones Mill Run Road, Bando Road, Blue Hole Spring, and the Summit on Route 40. We will be adding Cool Springs Road near Sutersville and the spring on Neals Run Road in Champion for our 3rd quarter sampling.

The purest water sampled so far is at Beck Springs and Blue Hole Spring. E. Coli bacteria was found in a couple commonly used springs, which means these springs do not meet EPA drinking water standards. Elevated levels of manganese were found in the Bando Road spring during our 2nd quarter sampling, which surpasses EPA drinking water standards.

The samples we collect at each spring analyze pH, total suspended solids, aluminum, iron, manganese, and fecal coliform among other parameters. Lab results and information about what these results mean for water quality are posted on our website at www.mtwatershed.com/springs. If you have any questions, please email Jace@mtwatershed.com or call 724-455-4200 ext. 5#.



Beck Springs on Jones Mill Run Road has great water quality for drinking

Swimmable Waters

We test 13 popular swimming, wading and paddling spots around the Youghiogheny River and Indian Creek watersheds for E. coli weekly between May 1 and September 30. Be sure to check our website weekly for updates from our Bacteria Sampling. Or visit theswimguide.org. If you are interested in volunteering or sponsoring a site, contact Eric@mtwatershed.com for more information!

Text "YoughSwimmableWaters" to 84483
to receive alerts when new water data is available

Fecal Coliform

Last year, we started source-tracking from Jones Mills to Nebo Road to identify where specific sources of fecal coliform levels are entering Indian Creek. Coliform bacteria are common in our world, even within the soil and surface water. They are commonly found in human and animal waste. The amount of bacteria in a waterway is dependent on many things. Weather, population, land use, and the presence of water treatment infrastructure are all contributing factors. Most types are harmless to humans. Some, however, can cause mild illness and a few cause serious waterborne illnesses. Although coliform bacteria may be present, it does not necessarily mean drinking the water will cause illness. We have pinpointed locations of increased coliform levels and are monitoring these locations to ensure dangerous levels are not reached.

TRAILS

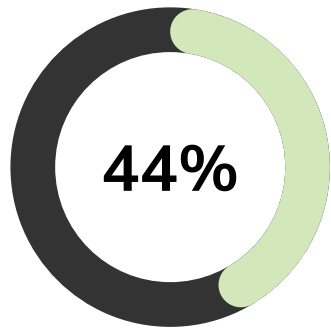
The Steyer Bridge Project

Fundraising efforts to complete the Steyer Bridge project on the Indian Creek Valley Trail have been going at full speed this year. With the help and leadership of our Trail Fundraising Committee, we have raised over \$30,000 this year alone from a March Calendar Raffle, our first annual Golf Scramble, and a float trip on the Youghiogheny River.

Along with these fundraisers, we have received a \$25,000 grant from the Local Share Account via the Fayette County Redevelopment Authority and a \$75,000 grant from the Allegheny Foundation.



It looks like the local beavers are ready to start work on felling trees for the Steyer Bridge planks!



To complete the project, we'll need:

\$90,000 for bridge decking and safety railings

\$240,000 for drainage, regrading, and a new gravel surface for 6/10th of a mile from Rt. 381

Current Progress: \$144,000 of \$330,000

Kayak Launch Built on Indian Creek

Last year, we were gifted 20.5 acres along Indian Creek and an existing section of the Indian Creek Valley Trail. This land was donated by Tina and Ethan Miller in memory of Willis B. Miller and Mary L. (Swisher) Miller.

MWA hopes to uphold the memory of Willis and Mary and the tradition of the family by channeling the donation for conservation, recreation, and education, practicing good stewardship of the woods and fostering new growth.

We have been working closely with the Indian Head Church of God to build a kayak launch at this location. This location on the creek is calm and should serve as an excellent spot for launching and landing. Eventually, we hope to create an Indian Creek Water Trail. Funding for the kayak launch project was provided by the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy.

This project will include spreading gravel for parking, replacing a small footbridge, installing signage, installing a stream depth gauge, and clearing a path through the woods to our launch site. Much of the work has already been completed.



The new footbridge to the kayak launch and donated property. Thank you goes out to Springfield township for the assistance in building the bridge!

TRAILS

ICVT Maintenance and Improvements

The Indian Creek Valley Trail (ICVT) continues to be a staple of the region as both a source of recreation on its own, as well as a veritable highway for fishermen, bikers and other adventurers gaining access to Indian Creek and beyond.

As the ICVT grows in both usage and footprint the need for an encompassing maintenance plan has become evident. The ICVT has many players involved when it comes to upkeep. Having largely had volunteers as the driving force behind its maintenance, there are also local municipalities and MWA employees with a vested interest in seeing the trail be the best it can be year after year. As a maintenance plan comes together our team will develop a long term management strategy that notes problem areas (washouts, broken fencing, invasive species etc.), how often certain maintenance needs to be done (mowing, clearing encroaching shrubs/trees etc.), and who is responsible for that maintenance

This maintenance plan will ensure MWA staff, our local Township offices, and trail volunteers can work together to address upkeep of the Trail.



New maps have been placed on the trail kiosks. You can also find trail brochures at each kiosk to keep for easy reference.

Heavy Rains Created Washouts in the Gorge

There have been major washouts in the Gorge section of the ICVT storms and heavy rains in early July. We don't recommend using this section of trail until we're able to make repairs, but if you do, please use extreme caution. Due to the steep hillsides and topography of this section of trail, MWA staff and volunteers are currently strategizing long-term engineering efforts we can utilize to ensure heavy rains don't continue to wash out sections of the Trail in the Indian Creek Gorge. Designing and installing a solution to this issue is going to require us to raise additional funds - if you'd like to donate to these efforts, please note "Gorge Trail Repairs" when making your contribution.



Use caution when recreating in the Indian Creek Gorge until we repair the recent storm damage.

ADVOCACY

Residents Turn Out for Invenergy Public Hearing

On June 8th 2021, the Allegheny County Health Department (ACHD) hosted a public hearing for the proposed 639MW shale gas-fired power plant, Invenergy's "Allegheny Energy Center." The proposal was met with fiery formal comments unanimously opposed to the development. Despite numerous setbacks and delays to the proposed plant's construction, the community showed up in force, having continued to monitor its creeping progress.

Leading up to the public hearing, Mountain Watershed Association, with the support of Environmental Integrity Project and local residents, organized the community for an Environmental Justice meeting and a Technical Comments Prep meeting. MWA also coordinated with ACHD and local residents to provide an in-person viewing of the hearing at the West Newton Gymnasium so those with access issues could still watch and provide testimony. More than 200 residents joined the public hearing and more than 100 spoke out on record against the plant.

Residents who testified at the hearing cited hits to the critical regional tourism economy, increased reliance on fossil fuels, and Allegheny County's already abysmal air quality as grounds to deny the draft air permit. Several grassroots environmental organizations spoke alongside residents.

If built, Invenergy's plant would include 180-foot emissions towers. These would be situated over the famous GAP Trail and Youghiogheny River, which continue to be a growing economic driver for tourism in the region, for bike trips, fishing, and boating. It would also add another major source of air pollution to a county that already earns an 'F' rating for air quality by the American Lung Association.



Scene near Invenergy's proposed site, currently popular for outdoor recreation activities like boating, biking, and fishing

Other residents focused on pressuring ACHD to make the permit as protective and environmentally sound as possible in the event that it is granted. "It's time for the health department to step up and require Invenergy to continuously monitor the air quality in the environmental justice communities of West Newton, Sutersville and Smithdale," West Newton resident Joanne Hall emphasized at the hearing. She was not the only resident to express dissatisfaction with draft language in the permit allowing Invenergy to self-report certain emissions only once every two years. Ken Ball, a cattle farmer in Allegheny County, likened it to the fox watching the henhouse.

The public hearing wrapped up after just under three hours of comments, and ACHD will now consider the permit's path forward. On top of resident and organization comments, highly-technical comments arranged by engineers and attorneys—including graphics designed by the CREATE Lab at Carnegie Mellon University and the Environmental Health Project—were submitted to ACHD that same night. Mountain Watershed Association will continue to support residents opposing this development and keep the community informed on its status moving forward.

Reach out to James Cato, MWA Community Organizer, if you would like to be involved. Email James@mtwatershed.com or call 724-455-4200.

ADVOCACY

Rustic Ridge's Impacts and Impending Expansion

Rustic Ridge, an underground coal mine operated by LCT Energy within Donegal and Saltlick Townships in the Indian Creek watershed, first received its permit from the PA Dept. of Environmental Protection (DEP) back in 2016. MWA has been leading monthly community meetings around the issues pertaining to this mine. What started as concerns of potential harm have led to tangible impacts to the local community: water loss, degradation of water quality, air pollution, minor to major subsidence impacting local homes, property value loss, and excessive and dangerous coal truck traffic along Route 31, Route 711, and County Line Road. Over the past several months, MWA has learned of at least five homes in the footprint of the deep mine that are experiencing significant mine subsidence issues. Mine subsidence occurs when underground mining operations, either active or abandoned, cause the earth's surface to shift. These shifts can damage homes and other built structures, causing cracks in foundations, walls, and roofs. "I have been fighting this mine since before it was put in the ground and now I am falling into it," noted one resident who lives in the footprint of LCT Energy's Rustic Ridge Deep Mine in Saltlick and Donegal Townships.

As if this weren't alarming enough, a notice of Intent to Explore a 15,000 expansion has been filed with the PA DEP to expand towards Acme Dam, Rodney, Austin Blvd., Bethel Church Road, and back towards Donegal. Exploratory boring is being pursued and pre-mining surveys are being sent to landowners. An opposition campaign is being developed and a committee is meeting regularly to work on outreach aimed at educating the community of the serious issues associated with this mining operation. To stay informed about future meetings and to learn more information about Rustic Ridge, contact Stacey at stacey@mtwatershed.com.

Proposed Strip Mine in Saltlick Township Met with Opposition

A strip mine is being proposed on a historic farm along Imel and Poplar Run Road in Saltlick Township. Community meetings are occurring monthly, typically the last Tuesday of each month. Concerned community members have placed 50 opposition yard signs along Poplar Run Road, White Road, and Imel Road. These signs are spreading awareness about the proposed strip mine and are creating an opportunity to discuss the serious concerns surrounding the proposed mine.

A pre-application was returned to the mine operator by the DEP on April 6 due to the document being incomplete. No further movement in permitting the site has been formally made at this time. Join our next community meeting on Tuesday, July 27 at 6:30pm. For community meeting details and more information regarding the Jordan Mine, contact Stacey.



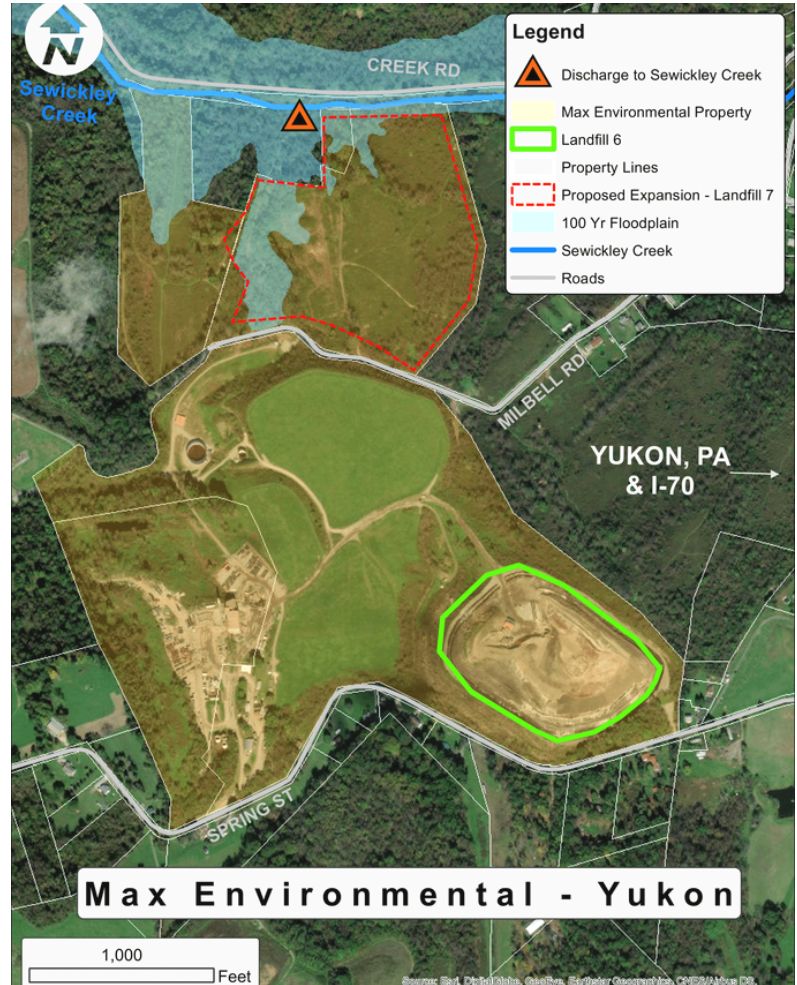
Local residents are adding yard signs to their property to convey their opposition to this proposed mine and encourage others to learn more.

ADVOCACY

MAX Environmental Impacting Yukon and Sewickley

MAX Environmental in Yukon, PA is the only Class C Hazardous Waste Facility in the state and is subject to EPA Corrective Action requirements for investigation and remediation of past chemical releases. This location accepts many hazardous wastes associated with fracking. Mountain Watershed Association has continued its longstanding monitoring of the facility in 2021 via water sampling, and added rounds of radiation sampling. Results of these analyses are pending.

In February, the DEP caught MAX in 4 new violations. These transgressions included open burning on the property. File reviews received by a right to know request, completed by advocacy staff, revealed that burning has been a historic concern on the site. MWA also scanned and reviewed South Huntingdon Township's ordinance and ethics documents to ensure compliance and to secure next steps with the township supervisors. Most recently, MWA circulated a radiation mailer highlighting the hazardous waste stream and its impacts for those living in a 3-mile range of the facility.



Moving forward, Mountain Watershed Association will announce analysis results of radiation and water samples taken from near the site to ensure health and safety for those living nearby and downstream on Sewickley Creek, which flows by the site and accepts its discharges. MAX is also in the early stages of applying for an expansion permit from DEP to build its 7th landfill, which could extend the life of the site by more than a decade. MWA will follow the progress of this permit closely and organize around the potential issues that may arise from extending the life of a hazardous waste facility with a history of environmental violations.

Please contact James@mtwatershed.com or Stacey@mtwatershed.com with questions, concerns, or ideas about this issue.

Environmental Film Screenings this Fall

This summer, Mountain Watershed Association is partnering with Rural Cinema to show four films scheduled for August through November. Venues will vary with each film to make each a unique experience best tailored to the film's subject matter. Check back on our website for schedule updates. The film series will consist of the following:

1. August 27 at Resh Park: The Last Mountain
2. September 26 at Sanaview Farm: Gather
3. October Date and Location TBD: Dark Waters
4. November 5 at the West Newton Gym: The Story of Plastic

RIVERKEEPER™

Cleaning up the Youghiogheny River

This Spring, we held three Yough River cleanup events. Our first cleanup was on the Casselman River in Meyersdale. Over 50 volunteers came out to help. With the help of our tireless volunteers, we were able to remove a massive amount of trash from the river. Thanks goes out to Immersion Research, Wilderness Voyageurs, the Casselman River Watershed Association, Fred Wright from Ohiopyle Prints, Byran Perry with the Great Allegheny Passage Trail Conservancy and the Meyersdale Borough and their employees.

Our second cleanup started at the Yough River Park in Connellsville. We had another great turnout and the weather was wonderful. We hauled 50 tires out of this short section. Wilderness Voyageurs graciously let us use their van and trailer to haul gear and tires. Thanks goes out to Hazelbakers for allowing us to use their canoes and river takeout access. Mayor Lincoln of Connellsville allowed us to use their dumpster to dispose of litter.



This photo from the spring Casselman River cleanup shows a small portion of the trash removed by volunteers in the background.

Also, we wanted to give a big shoutout to Immersion Research for donating 25 reusable bags that used to be billboards. Now, they'll be used as garbage bags so we reduce the amount of plastic bags needed for our cleanups.

Our final cleanup for the Spring season was in West Newton. We started at Cedar Creek Park on a beautiful morning. Cedar Creek Park is a wonderful facility for the nearby community. We monitor for bacteria (E. coli) at this location as part of our Swimmable Waters program which educates the public about which swim spots along the Yough and Indian Creek are safe for swimming with low levels of bacteria. Close to the park within the Yough, there's a place we call Tire Island. All the boats stop here and pull submerged tires from the mud. We have stopped here for 3 years and there are still many tires in this location among the thousands of tires that need removed from the Youghiogheny River. In the past 3 years, we have removed over 1,000 tires from the Yough near West Newton.

We use the Tires4ward program through Bridgestone to dispose of the tires we remove from the river during cleanups. Although we are making big strides in implementing river cleanups, there is still so much more to be done. We want to thank all of our supporters, volunteers, and organizations who make these cleanups possible. Over 400 volunteer hours went into removing hundreds of tires and pounds of trash from the river. Nice work, everyone!



Loading up a Wilderness Voyageurs raft with tires.

If you missed the cleanups this past Spring but would like to get involved, we are hosting cleanups this Fall in the same three locations. You can find the schedule in this newsletter as well as on our website and Facebook page. We hope to see you there!

Check out the Event Schedule in the newsletter to find river cleanup dates this fall. We hope you can join us!

RIVERKEEPERTM

Coal Refuse Site Proposed near the Casselman River

Back in February of this year, MWA hosted a community meeting to share information on the development and history of the Shaw Mine complex prior to a PA Department of Environmental Protection public hearing. This public hearing was provided for community members to voice questions and concerns regarding the proposed 131-acre coal refuse site to be added to the already massive Shaw Mine complex along the Casselman River in Meyersdale, PA.

The Casselman River is already impacted by abandoned mine drainage (AMD). A 2017 study by Hedin Environmental described an ongoing “yellow plume” that oozed as far as 5 miles downstream to Garrett, PA. In 1993, snowmelt exposed AMD, overwhelming the river ecosystem. The result was 42 miles of widespread animal death, including thousands of stocked trout, until the tainted Casselman waters were diluted by the Youghiogheny. The mine operator was required to mitigate the pollution to prevent another disaster, which went a long way in improving the water quality. However, with the yellow plume as evidence, pollution from Shaw Mine still continues in the Casselman, even if it has been reduced.

The Youghiogheny Riverkeeper has continued to conduct water sampling and site monitoring at the historic mine discharge between Boynton and Meyersdale, which formed from the blowout in the 90s. This abandoned mine land seep has high levels of aluminum and a very acidic pH. Treating this seep proves to be difficult due to its proximity to the Casselman and its location within the perimeter of an active mine operation. Because it is in an active mining area, no money is available from abandoned mine lands funds.

MWA has been regularly monitoring the site and reporting complaints to the DEP’s Cambria office where several violations have been issued, including: failure to properly design, construct, or maintain erosion and sedimentation controls and failure to employ adequate air pollution controls. At this time a permit has not been issued for the Shaw Mines Coal Refuse Site.



This untreated mine drainage blowout flows into the Casselman from the Shaw Mine complex on the hill above.



MWA hopes to help reverse this trend and defend our right to clean, safe, thriving waterways. Our region relies on the Casselman for paddle sports recreation, along with tourism through the famous Great Allegheny Passage (GAP). Permanently planting thousands of tons of toxic waste beside a river not yet adequately maintained is questionable. Heritage Coal, the company proposing the waste refuse project, seeks to create an additional discharge into the Casselman River, which will parallel the GAP trail. It’s time for us to dispute proposals that treat these hills and valleys as a waste depository, leaning on history to teach us the most important lessons.

Aerial imagery shows the orange plume in the Casselman River

RIVERKEEPER™

The "Nurdle Turtles" Patrol

MWA has been organizing seasonal float trips to monitor nurdles floating down our rivers. Nurdles are oat-sized dots of plastic that serve as building blocks for most of the plastic items we buy in stores. Nurdles accumulate toxins and enter the food web as animals mistake them for a meal, and remain intact for centuries. It can be difficult to track who exactly is spilling these artificial fragments into our rivers, creeks, and lakes, due to their lightweight and miniature makeup, which allows them to be carried fast and far from point sources. To sample for nurdles, we use a manta trawl and plankton net protocol. This spring, MWA brought volunteers onboard from Climate Reality, West Virginia University, Beaver Country Marcellus Awareness Community, and University of Pittsburgh, among others. Nurdles were counted and collected in vials for future analysis and data keeping.

Supplemental riparian sampling along the Ohio River has yielded high nurdle counts along the debris lines. These sampling expeditions provide a more holistic picture of how nurdles travel and fluctuate with weather patterns and spills, as this protocol can be carried out more frequently than the float trips. MWA is continuing to work with researchers from UPitt, Carnegie Mellon, Indiana University of Pennsylvania, and other partner organizations to prevent future pollution and analyze collected samples.

If you find nurdles in your waterways, want to learn more about their impacts on wildlife and humans, or have any other questions, please contact james@mtwatershed.com.



James and Eric on nurdle patrol last Fall. (Left)

You can see a small, white plastic nurdle floating in this bag of debris. (Right)



The Yough Defense Party is Back!

We are thrilled to announce we will be resuming our annual Yough Defense Party at the Falls City Pub in Ohio! This will be our 13th year.

Join us Thursday, November 18 for live music, a silent auction, a potluck dinner, and great company!

Check back on our website or visit us on Facebook to stay updated about the event.

Last year, we weren't able to host our traditional event but we wanted to extend a huge thank you to our supporters for participating in our online silent auction and purchasing Defend the Yough merchandise.



We love this new logo designed by our Yough friend, Harris Wright. You can find this logo on merchandise in our online store!

OUTREACH

Submit your Yough photos for the Lottery Calendar

As a member of MWA, you are invited to submit your favorite photos to be chosen as monthly artwork for our annual Lottery Calendar. There are just a few criteria:

- photo must be taken in the Youghiogheny River watershed
- must not contain people or domestic animals
- must be landscape (horizontal) rather than portrait (vertical)
- unfortunately photos with a low resolution cannot be used, but if you're not sure just go ahead and submit anyway

You can submit your photos as by email to Hannah@mtwatershed.com. We start compiling the calendar by the end of July so don't wait to send your favorite pics!



Scarlet Tanager photo submitted last year by Kerry Bell

Our Second Membership Drive

In lieu of our annual Clean Water Banquet in the spring, we hosted a membership drive. For every \$10 donated, supporters received an entry to win a plant-themed gift basket. The winner of the basket was Roger Loughney! Through the week-long membership drive we gained 121 members and raised \$7,636. This brings our total paid memberships so far for 2021 to 185 members who donated \$13,446.

Please note: Every person who supports the mission of MWA by volunteering and engaging with our efforts is considered a member! We have thousands of members throughout the Youghiogheny watershed and beyond! Your paid memberships provide us funds to continue our work preserving, promoting, and restoring the Indian Creek and greater Youghiogheny River watersheds. Thank you!

Hannah has been leading monthly "membership hikes" for active donors. Don't miss out on the notice for a hike - make sure you are signed up for our email list!

Water Sampling with Underwater Robots

This spring, Jace and Morgan visited Clifford Pritts Elementary's 4th grade students to teach them about abandoned mine drainage and why water sampling is important. During their classroom visit, the students were able to see the skeleton of a hellbender that Jace found in Indian Creek. They were also blown away while watching iron precipitate out of clear water from the Melcroft treatment system once the pH was raised with household bleach.

The second visit with the kids was held at the Indian Creek reservoir so the students could test out the water sampling robots they had built. This project was part of a STEM grant received by the school. Jace and Morgan had a great time! We look forward to more watershed education.

EVENT SCHEDULE

Trail Tuesday on the Indian Creek Valley Trail

Tuesday, July 27 | 6:30p - 7:30p | Meet @ Resh Park

Tuesday, August 3 | 6:30p - 7:30p | Meet @ ICVT Gorge Trailhead

The Last Mountain - Outdoor Film Screening

Friday, August 27 | Starts at 7:00p | Resh Park in Indian Head

The film explores the consequences of mining and burning coal, with a particular focus on the use of mountaintop removal mining in Appalachia.

Yough River Cleanup (West Newton)

Saturday, September 11 | 9:00a - 2:00p | Meet @ Cedar Creek Park

2021 Indian Creek Watershed Festival

Saturday, September 25 | 9:00a - 4:00p | Resh Park in Indian Head

Gather - Outdoor Film Screening

Sunday, September 26 | Time TBD | Sanaview Farm

A portrait of a growing movement amongst Indigenous Americans to reclaim their spiritual and cultural identities through obtaining sovereignty over their ancestral food systems, while battling against the historical trauma brought on by centuries of genocide.

Yough River Cleanup (Connellsville)

Saturday, October 2 | 9:00a - 2:00p | Meet @ Yough River Park

Casselman River Cleanup

Saturday, October 9 | 9:00a - 2:00p | Meet @ Jeffrey's Landing

Dark Waters - Indoor Film Screening

Date, Time, and Location TBD (in October)

The story dramatizes Robert Bilott's case against the chemical manufacturing corporation DuPont after they contaminated a West Virginia town with unregulated chemicals.

The Story of Plastic - Indoor Film Screening

Friday, November 5 | Time TBD | West Newton Gymnasium

A searing expose revealing the ugly truth behind plastic pollution and the false solution of plastic recycling.

Yough Defense Party

Thursday, November 18 | 2:00p - 11:00p | Falls City Pub in Ohio



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- Ashley Funk, *Executive Director*
- Beverly Braverman, *Director of Special Projects*
- Carla Ruddock, *Director of Conservation*
- Eric Harder, *Youghiogheny RIVERKEEPER[®]*
- Melissa Marshall, *Community Advocate*
- Stacey Magda, *Community Organizer*
- James Cato, *Community Organizer*
- Jace Marsh, *Field Technician*
- Hannah Spencer, *Outreach Coordinator*
- Alicia Martin, *Administrative Assistant*
- Morgan Moran, *AmeriCorps Member*
- Forrest Minteer, *AmeriCorps Member*
- Seth Sherman, *Legal Intern*

Visit our website: www.mtwatershed.com

BECOME A MEMBER

Join the effort to protect, preserve, and restore the Indian Creek and greater Youghiogheny River watersheds!

Name

Address

Phone

Email

Membership Levels

- \$10 | Stream Ally
- \$25 | Stream Friend
- \$60 | Stream Defender
- \$120 | Stream Champion
- \$240 | Stream Hero
- \$600 | Stream Guardian
- \$1,200 | Stream Sustainer

General Donation

You can make a donation or renew your membership on our website OR you can mail a check to
Mountain Watershed Association | PO 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