



West Branch Susquehanna Restoration Coalition

Summer 2010



5th West Branch Susquehanna Restoration Symposium a Success



127 people attended the 5th West Branch Susquehanna Restoration Symposium hosted by Trout Unlimited and the West Branch Susquehanna Restoration Coalition. Dr. T. Allan Comp of the US Office of Surface Mining gave the Keynote Address, which was followed by a variety of presentations highlighting the recovery that is taking place in the West Branch, as well as, research findings related to mine drainage, mine lands, and passive treatment systems. Please see the article titled "Study Shows Improvements" for a summary of the West Branch Benchmark Recovery project results that were presented at the symposium by Becky Dunlap of Trout Unlimited.

On May 7th, 41 people attended the first ever "Field Training Day" where participants learned how to collect water samples, take flow measurements, assess stream habitat, and collect benthic macroinvertebrates ac-



ording to state and/or federal protocol. Representatives from the PA Department of Environmental Protection, Susquehanna River Basin Commission, and US Geological Survey were on hand to demonstrate

these monitoring techniques and answer any questions that folks had. Members of the Centre County Senior Environment Corps demonstrated the proper use of Hach test kits and how they can be used to evaluate water chemistry in the field and determine if AMD is present in a stream. Thank you to everyone who helped to make this Symposium a success!

For more information about the Symposium or to download the presentations or view pictures from the symposium and field day, please visit www.wbsrc.com/symposium.html and click on the link to the 2010 symposium.

Study Shows Improvements in West Branch Susquehanna River

A study conducted by Trout Unlimited shows that the overall health of the West Branch Susquehanna River and its tributaries has greatly improved, compared to 25 years ago.

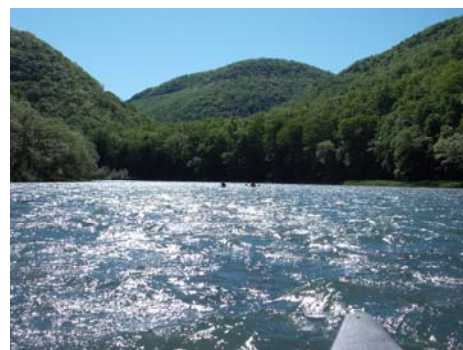
The study examined how abandoned mine restoration has affected the West Branch Susquehanna River and its tributaries. Scientists monitored 12 sites on the river and 69 tributaries and examined habitat, water quality, fish and aquatic insect populations.

The findings were released at the West Branch Susquehanna Restoration Symposium, on May 6th, 2010. The research, conducted last year, was funded by the Pa. Department of Environmental Protection (DEP).

"This research shows that in just a short time, the river's health is improving," said Amy Wolfe, director of TU's Eastern abandoned mine program. "We still have a long way to go to repair the damage from historic coal mining, but the tremendous

effort at the state and local levels to restore the West Branch Susquehanna watershed is clearly paying off."

The study found significant water quality improvements and enhanced fish and aquatic insect populations from the river's headwaters in Cambria County to Lock Haven, Pa., a distance of over 250 miles. In Karthaus, Pa., the river contained 72% less iron and 87% less aluminum



than it did in the mid-1980s. In addition, the river's acidity has significantly decreased

to a level deemed safe by the DEP. Surveys conducted at Hyner, Pa. showed that fish populations have increased by more than 3,000 percent, compared to surveys conducted in 1999.

The Pa. Fish and Boat Commission and the Susquehanna River Basin Commission assisted in the study and assessed fish populations at 12 sites on the river. The final report on the findings will be released later this year.

Over \$2 Million in Grants Awarded in the West Branch

On April 5th the State of Pennsylvania awarded over \$16.5 million for environmental projects. Of this total over \$7.43 million was awarded to projects that address mine drainage and reclamation. Over 2 million dollars was awarded to WBSRC member organization throughout the watershed for a variety of projects, which will continue the improvements which were recently documented.

WBSRC members from Clearfield County received over \$1.2 million for four projects. The Clearfield County Conservation District received money for two passive treatment systems. The first system will be constructed with Growing Greener funds and will treat the ROSS mine drainage. The second system will be designed using the grant money and will work to treat water flowing into Morgan Run. Moshannon Creek Watershed Coalition also received a grant to construct a treatment system to abate drainage on Sandy Ridge. The

Clearfield Creek Watershed Association received a federal 319 Non-Point Source Grant to reclaim 18 acres of mine lands near Little Laurel Run. In a collaborative project with Lawrence Township the Conservation District also received money to treat the MON 30 discharge which effects Montgomery Creek.

WBSRC members from Clinton County received over \$472,000. The Clinton County Conservation District received a grant for a passive system to treat mine discharges which impact Muddy Run. The project will complete the reclamation project on Muddy Run.

Trout Unlimited was given a grant to continue its Technical Assistance Program which provides assistance to groups working to clean-up AMD.

Many other valuable projects have been funded by Growing Greener throughout the state. To find out more about these projects and to see a full list of grants visit the DEP website.

Honors Paid to Volunteers, Professionals, and Students

At the recent West Branch Susquehanna Restoration Symposium awards were presented to those individuals and groups who have made outstanding contributions to the clean-up of the West Branch. They are as follows: Outstanding Watershed Group of the Year – Clearfield Creek Watershed Association; Outstanding Volunteer Commitment Award – Art Rose; and Outstanding Professional DEP's Scott Roberts for the many contributions he has made toward cleaning up the West Branch over the course of his career. Congratulations to all of these folks. If you see them around, make sure to thank them for their continued dedication to restoration of the West Branch.

At the symposium, a student poster contest was held to highlight the research



that is being done by students related to abandoned mine drainage and the West Branch Susquehanna watershed. Winners are as follows: 1st – Andrea Graham, Penn State University, Dubois campus; 2nd – Claudia Rojas, Penn State University, main campus; 3rd – Ben Moorhead, Penn State University, main campus. Each student received a certificate and a monetary award. Congratulations to these up and coming young professionals.



Not a member of the WBSRC?

It's easy to join—see our website for more information:

www.wbsrc.org

Education Events Continue to Battle AMD Apathy

Trout Unlimited and the WBSRC have been working to get the message of treating and controlling AMD to middle and high school students throughout the watershed. In an effort to battle AMD apathy, three separate events were held this year educating approximately 800 students about AMD and how it effects water chemistry and stream biology. Students also



learned what a watershed group is, and how to help local streams.

Building upon the success of these events, as well as the success of the WBSRC's earlier mini-symposium education events, a series of similar education events will be held around the watershed thanks to a recently awarded DEP environmental education grant and funds from the DANSKO Foundation. These events will

show the economic benefit of cleaning up AMD, and hopefully increase youth membership to watershed associations. There will be 5 programs throughout The watershed which will target grades 6-12.

For more information about these educational programs contact Trout Unlimited at 570-748-4901