



West Branch Susquehanna Restoration Coalition

Fall 2008



WBSR Symposium IV - Another Success

The 4th West Branch Susquehanna Restoration Symposium was once again a success. Approximately 110 people participated in the annual conference, held this year at the Nittany Lion Inn in State College, PA, on July 18th and 19th.

Attendance included a good representation of government agencies, academic institutions, conservation organizations, watershed groups, Trout Unlimited chapters, and private industry.

Not a member of the WBSRC?

It's easy to join—see our website for more information:
www.wbsrc.org

Two dozen people also participated in the tour of the Bennett Branch Watershed abandoned mine drainage projects, in the heart of the PA Wilds region, on July 19th.

Highlights of the symposium include the release of the West Branch Susquehanna Subbasin AMD Remediation Strategy and the Economic Benefit Analysis for AMD Remediation in the West Branch Susquehanna River Watershed.

Tim Palmer, award-winning author and photographer of 19 books on rivers, conservation, and adventure travel gave a memorable and inspiring keynote speech. His roots in Pennsylvania, not only from being native to



Trout Unlimited's Becky Dunlap & Amy Wolfe with Tim Palmer

the state, but his education at Penn State University more than three decades ago and work experience with the Lycoming County Planning Commission in areas such as Pine Creek, were important milestones for what would become his lifelong love and career of traveling, photographing, and writing about the importance of rivers conservation across the nation.

Economic Benefit Analysis

An Economic Benefit Analysis for AMD remediation, funded by Trout Unlimited, has been completed for the West Branch Susquehanna River watershed and was released at the WBSR Symposium. This important document will help WBSRC members and partnering organizations disseminate how remediation dollars will positively impact our local economy. The investigation consisted of a willingness-to-pay for remediation survey and explores how AMD-remediation will benefit local jobs and economic activity, recreational spending, property values, and drinking water.

Investigators determined that property located within 200 feet of an AMD-polluted water lost on average \$2,587 per acre simply due to its proximity to the pollution. However, the investigators also determined that the local benefits for AMD-remediation could generate up to \$616 million in capital expenditures, an annual \$23 million in operation and maintenance activities and an additional \$22.3 million in annual sport fishing dollars. What's more, based on the willingness-to-pay for remediation survey, it was established that Pennsylvania residents would spend \$73.6 million for remediation.

West Branch Susquehanna Remediation Strategy

The West Branch Susquehanna Subbasin AMD Remediation Strategy, a project funded by TU, DEP, and DCNR and completed by the Susquehanna River Basin Commission in partnership with the West Branch Susquehanna River Task Force, was released at

the WBSR Symposium. Through this strategy existing water quality data was inventoried, analyzed, and used to develop an integrated database and model that has the capability to simulate changes to water quality conditions given a select number of potential

improvement options.

*Copies of the **AMD Remediation Strategy and Economic Benefit Analysis**, can be obtained from the WBSRC website (www.wbsrc.org) or by calling 570-726-3118*

Partnering to Battle AMD-Apathy



Many watershed residents have become apathetic to AMD problems—even when the problems are located in their own backyard.

There have been many efforts and subsequent successes in the battle to restore the West Branch Susquehanna watershed from AMD. However, these improvements are often shadowed by the daunting amount of work that still needs to be completed and many local residents appear apathetic to both the successes and restoration work that still lies ahead. This apathy has had a direct stagnating effect on the membership of watershed

associations who are a key component to on-the-ground remediation.

Recognizing this apathy the Department of Environmental Protection's Environmental Education Grants Program awarded the Clearfield County Conservation District \$10,000 to leverage \$5,868 from Trout Unlimited to develop a series of public information sessions that detail the current abandoned mine

drainage problems, remediation activities, and economic benefits of remediation in the West Branch Susquehanna watershed. The series of six public information sessions will be hosted throughout the watershed at locations central to colleges and universities and will be targeted toward students, municipal officials, high school teachers, and the general public. For more information about these sessions, contact info@wbsrc.org.

2008 West Branch Awards

“When I found out that my favorite fishing spots were no longer thriving with fish, I set out to find out what I could do about it.” Carl Undercoffler, 2008 West Branch Susquehanna Watershed Volunteer of the Year

2008 marked the first annual awards for Volunteer of the Year, Watershed Group of the Year, and Professional of the Year at the West Branch Susquehanna Restoration Symposium. Award recipients were nominated by partners and supporters of the WBSRC. Carl Undercoffler, 2008's Volunteer of the Year, was recognized for his

efforts to work in Clearfield and its surrounding areas. The Babb Creek Watershed Association was selected as the 2008 Watershed Group of the Year due to its success in reclaiming Babb Creek and its tributaries and the 2008 Professional of the Year award was given to Trout Unlimited's Amy Wolfe for her

continued dedication to the West Branch efforts.



Jim Ryan and Bill Beacom, Babb Creek Watershed Association members, accept the Watershed Group of the Year Award

WBSRC Website — www.wbsrc.org



Join us at our next meeting! The WBSRC meets on a quarterly basis in either Clearfield or Lock Haven. Visit our website or call for more information.

With funds from the DAN-SKO foundation, the WBSRC has recently created a website specific to AMD in the West Branch Susquehanna watershed. The website will serve as a central location to obtain up-to-date information on AMD problems, solutions,

and activities. The site contains a history of mining in both Pennsylvania and the West Branch Susquehanna, an overview of abandoned mine drainage, a watershed description, meeting announcements, and partnering organization and Symposium information. In addition,

links to WBSRC-specific and partner-specific announcements as well as a monthly calendar of events is included. Help keep this site current by sending postings, articles, documents, and meeting announcements to info@wbsrc.org.