



West Branch Susquehanna Restoration Coalition

Fall 2009



Internship Program Receives Money for Study



Photo Credit: Terry Malloy

On August 12, WBSRC & Trout Unlimited interns Aaron Furguele, Zack Bassett, Lori Smith & Zeb Buck presented the findings of a yearlong study they completed for the Old Town Sportsman's Association. The study looked at the health of the West Branch between Curwensville and Clearfield based on water chemistry and macroinvertebrate (aquatic bug) life that was found in the river and several major tributaries. The study showed that over the past 10 years, the river has improved in most areas.

Upon completion of the study, a check was presented to the WBSRC from the Old Town Sportsman's Association in the amount of \$1000. This money will be used to support future internships in the West Branch. The complete report will be available soon at www.wbsrc.org under "Plans & Projects".

Fish, Bike, Paddle, Hike (And Support the West Branch While You Do It!)

Over the past several years, the West Branch of the Susquehanna River has been receiving a lot of positive attention: in 2005 it was named River of the Year for its beauty and recreational potential and several local organizations have taken notice and taken action, but it hasn't always been this way.

Long regarded as a "dead" river from the effects of unregulated coal mining, the West Branch Susquehanna is beginning to recover and has seen a resurgence of outdoor activity in recent years. A host of events including a triathlon, canoe/kayak races, and even a fishing tournament or two

have popped up in the watershed in support of the river's recovery. This is good news for the river and the local economy, as these events draw in visitors who enjoy the river and spend their recreation dollars at local stores, hotels, restaurants and outfitters.

About 5 years ago, the Clearfield County Conservation District hosted the first Upper West Branch Triathlon at Curwensville Lake. Teams and individuals were invited to compete in the 4.4-mile run, 5-mile paddle, and 15-mile bike event along the West Branch Susquehanna River. Proceeds from this annual event, held each May, benefit Clearfield

County's Environmental Education Fund which is used to host their annual Conservation Celebration, a watershed festival held each fall, also at Curwensville Lake. For more information, on either event, visit www.cfldccd.com or call (814) 765-2629.

Just downstream from the triathlon, near the town of Clearfield, the annual Riverfront Canoe Race is held on the first weekend of June. Dave McCracken, owner of McCracken Canoe Sales & Rental in Shawville and one of the organizers of the event, said that this race has been taking place each year for at least the last 12 years.

All proceeds go to support the following year's race. Dave said that the idea for the race was to promote tourism along the West Branch and bring folks in to help bolster the local economy. Dave is your go-to man for paddling information on the West Branch. He has been paddling it for the past 34 years and is excited to see interest grow in the watershed. For more information on the Riverfront Canoe Race or paddling the West Branch, contact McCracken Canoes at (814) 765-1410 or paddle@uplink.net.

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Making Progress on Morgan Run

For the past 8 years, the Clearfield County Conservation District, Clearfield County Senior Environment Corps and Morgan Run Watershed Group have been working with various partners to restore Morgan Run, a once pristine trout stream that flows to Clearfield Creek but has suffered damage due to abandoned mine drainage.

Coal and clay mining in the watershed have impacted most of the stream's 14 miles; however, all that is beginning

to change. This past spring, the project partners announced the completion of the MR Frog & MR Tuff passive treatment systems in the headwaters of the stream. An open house will be held in late September to celebrate these successes. Contact Kelly Williams at (814) 765-8130 for more information.

Still not a member of the WBSRC?

It's easy to join—go to
www.wbsrc.org
for more information.

Fish, Bike, Paddle, Hike cont...

Another great event that made its debut this year in July is the Bricktown Challenge, hosted by the Beech Creek Watershed Association (BCWA). This is a canoe/kayak race held at Bald Eagle State Park with all proceeds going towards the construction of the Bricktown Trail, a 14-mile proposed rail-trail that would connect Beech Creek Borough, Bald Eagle State Park, Howard Borough, and Curtin Village. The trail will promote the brick making history of the area and be part of the larger Beech Creek Greenway. For more information about this event, please visit the following site: www.beechcreekwatershed.org/bricktown or email bcwainfo@kcnet.org. It should also be noted that members of the BCWA who participated in the Hyner View Trail Challenge wore the WBSRC logo on their shirts...thanks for the support guys!

Now you've heard about the paddling...how about the fishing?! A number of WBSRC member organizations have held fishing derbies/tournaments throughout the West Branch. The Chest Creek Watershed Alliance hosts an annual kids fishing derby at Curly Hurd Memorial Park near LaJose each May, while the Clearfield Creek Watershed Association holds an annual kids fishing derby at the Dysart Dam, also in May. For links to both websites, visit www.wbsrc.org and click on the "Partners" tab at the top of the page.

Other member organizations such as the Curwensville Anglers Restocking Program (CARP), PJ Bressler's Bait &

West Branch AMD Education Tours a Success Thus Far!

Utilizing funding from the DEP's Environmental Education Grant Program, R.K. Mellon Foundation, and Water Resource Education Network, TU has partnered with the Clearfield County Conservation District to bring AMD Education to the West Branch. Three of the six planned tours have been completed in the Headwaters, Anderson Creek, and Moshannon Creek areas. Between 40 and 50 folks attended each workshop and tour. Speakers at each tour have highlighted the history of coal mining in each water-

shed, restoration efforts that have been or are being planned for each area, and the economic benefits of AMD restoration here in the West Branch.

Tour participants have visited many sites that we often hear about including the former Barnes-Watkins pile & the Barnes & Tucker Lancashire #15 discharge in the headwaters, the Korb Mine along Anderson Creek and the Rushton active treatment plant on Moshannon Creek.

If you have not attended one of these **FREE** tours, there

are still three more opportunities in the Babb Creek, Clearfield Creek, and Beech Creek watersheds. Please visit www.wbsrc.org and click on the AMD Education Program link or call (570) 748-4901 for more information.



Barnes & Tucker Lancashire #15 Discharge

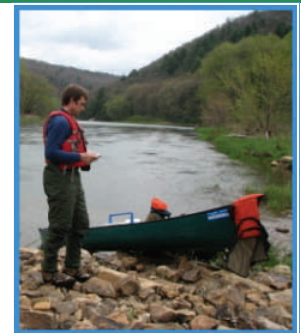
Team TU continues to grow!

Trout Unlimited (TU) is excited to welcome Aaron Furguele to our West Branch Susquehanna team. Aaron is a graduate of Pennsylvania State University with a degree in Environmental Engineering. You may recognize Aaron as he has been working on restoring the West Branch for the past several years; first, as a

VISTA volunteer at the Clearfield County Conservation District and most recently as a summer intern with Trout Unlimited.

Aaron has been hired as Field Technician for the West Branch Susquehanna Restoration Initiative and can be contacted at:

afurguele@tu.org or 570-748-4901.



Aaron in action along the West Branch!

More, Old Town Sportsman's Association & Jim's Sports Center are also involved with holding several fishing tournaments on the West Branch each year. Proceeds are generally used to improve habitat and stock fish in Curwensville Lake and along the river.

As you can see, improvements to the river are already benefiting the local economy. If you know of any other great events that support the West Branch, please let us know so we can feature them here in the future!



Photos courtesy of the Clearfield County Conservation District