



TURTLE TRACKS SUMMER 2004 EDITION

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE TURTLE CREEK WATERSHED ASSOCIATION

We hope you've missed us!

Due to monetary considerations, we were not able to print a winter or spring edition of our newsletter.

Now embarking upon a fund-raising campaign, we can start the presses rolling once again.

Borland Farm Road Project

At Long Last - Now Underway!!



Almost since our inception in 1970, the Turtle Creek Watershed Association has identified cleaning up the Delmont Mine discharge along Borland Farm Road in eastern Murrysville as a priority project. Responsible for nearly one-third of the contaminants in Upper Turtle Creek, the mine water is quite acidic and contains not just iron - responsible for coating the stream channel and turning the water orange, but dissolved aluminum as well. This metal is toxic to normal aquatic life, presenting an added challenge to any remediation efforts. In the early and mid 1990s, serious discussions about the best approaches to tackling the problems took place. It was not until the state legislature approved the Growing Greener Program in the late '90s that the opportunity to actually develop a project arose.

An outside company drafted the Growing Greener Grant applications for the project. It was envisioned

as having three phases - 1) existing mine spoil pile removal, 2) construction on the pile site of an anoxic limestone drain to remove the aluminum with a primary treatment pond to remove the iron, and 3) construction of downstream settling ponds and a wetland.

Due to the significant merits of the project, in 2001 it received the largest amount of Section 319 Fund money ever awarded by the US EPA in Pennsylvania. We also received substantial Growing Greener money. Along with PennDOT funds from the Route 22 expansion and TCWA funds, the full amount was nearly \$1 million.

Unfortunately, much of the data upon which the applications were based turned out to be inaccurate. The true costs of the project were double that figure.

For a couple of years, the total spectrum of issues related to the inaccurate data plagued our efforts to get the project up and running. Fortunately, property owners L&A Construction and Myers Coach Lines, officials and staff in Murrysville, and the folks at DEP's Greensburg office kept working with us to resolve all problems.

After a few false starts and wrong turns, the project came to life in May. The contractors were L&A Construction and J. Scott Enterprises. Mixed with the prescribed amount of ash and limestone, the pile material was to be used as fill for commercial property at the intersection of Noca Road and Route 66 at the eastern edge of Murrysville. Owned by Yorkshire

(Continued on page 2.)

Estates, there is mine drainage and evidence of former mining activity on the site, so it also qualifies as a reclamation project.



Unexpectedly, work came to a halt in early June when a local bank holding the mortgage on the Noca Road site had misconceptions about use of hazardous material, liability protection, permits, and contracts. Preferring to use outside attorneys and consultants rather than to meet with us and DEP, their concerns were resolved in late June.

Then another set of potential liability issues surfaced, and another set of attorneys became involved. Meetings with a DEP attorney finally cleared up those misunderstandings, and work began again in earnest at the end of July.

The silver lining to these storm clouds was the increased involvement of the DEP in Harrisburg. Now knowing the history of the project and the problems we have overcome, they are advocating for us. Our chances of getting a time extension and restructuring our budget to reflect the realities of the project are vastly improved.

As the pile is removed, CME Engineering and the Pa Bureau of Abandoned Mine Reclamation will do a comprehensive site evaluation. Based upon that, a final treatment system design specific to the site can be developed along with an operation and maintenance plan. We anticipate Robindale Energy Services to be the contractor for system construction.

Project Updates

Streambank Stabilization

1. The Duff Park stabilization sponsored by Levin Furniture has been on hold while we await the approval of DEP permits. These were anticipated to have been processed well before now, so we expect them any day now. Bear Hollow Trail in Murrysville is also scheduled to benefit from part of this work.



2. The heavy rains in April resulted in a washout below the Saunders Station Bridge, removing enough earth to expose the ends of the railroad ties on the Turtle Creek Industrial Railroad at the top of the streambank. Personnel from Monroeville, Penn Township, Allegheny Co., Westmoreland Co., DEP, and the PACD in Somerset were all quick to respond to this situation, and an emergency repair plan was developed. Wayne and Jim Norris of Dura-Bond Company and the TCIR assumed all responsibilities for the reconstruction.



The comprehensive project necessary to restore the entire section will require significant funding.

Project Updates (con't.)

Inter-Municipal Stormwater Management

In these times of reduced local revenues and reduced federal funding, which leads to reduced state funding, it is more important than ever for municipalities to pool resources. To help punctuate that point, new federal and state regulations for stormwater management and water quality are in effect - without the corresponding money to implement them. To toss a wrench into things, the required Act 167 Stormwater Management Plans, done on a watershed-wide basis in the early 1990s, are now overdue for update. Both county and state funds were supposed to be available for these updates, but no money is available in the present economic climate.

However, both the Heinz Endowments and the Growing Greener Program are actively supporting inter-municipal cooperative efforts to address water quality and quantity issues.

In partnership with Duquesne University's Center for Environmental Research and Education, TCWA, and four of our municipalities - Monroeville, Murrysville, Penn Hills, and Penn Township are part of the Inter-Municipal Environmental Forum (IMEF). (All of our municipalities are welcome to join.)

Meeting regularly, we have held two events. The First Turtle Creek Watershed Stormwater Management Forum took place at the end of March at Olympia Hall in East Pittsburgh. Even competing with the Pitt-Oklahoma basketball game, we still had over 140 people representing most of our 33 municipalities. An assortment of presentations highlighted the broad spectrum of problems facing our communities. Group discussion afterwards helped to put the things we face into perspective.

At the end of June, a workshop geared towards Public Works departments was held at the Penn Township P.W. Garage. The crucial role these departments play in water quality and quantity management success was demonstrated by the 13 different presentations. Group discussion provided a good overview of the on-the-ground problems these departments face daily.

Mini-grants are available for multi-municipal projects.

Water Quality Monitoring

1. Having been warned that soon DEP would not be able to do our testing, but not having been notified by the state that the DEP lab would *not* be testing our samples, we have still been sending them. We know they are being received and being processed. However, we have not received any results this year - a good form of encouragement to find another means to have testing done.

2. On a more positive note, the EASI Program (Environmental Alliance for Senior Involvement) operated by Vintage in East Liberty, is providing us with a crack team of water monitors for Duff Park and Export. Known as the ROMEOs, Retired Old Men Eating Out, they have been doing this work for more than five years. Their testing will be a direct help to both our Duff Park and Borland Farm Road Projects.

Volunteers do not need to fall into the "senior" category, and comprehensive training is available.

Calendar

TCWA meetings

Room 220, The Castle, 7:00 p.m.

September 28th

October 26th

November 30th

No meeting in December

Murrysville Summer Celebration

September 18th, noon to 6:00 p.m.

Murrysville Public Works Garage on Sardis Road next to the Municipal Building.

Trout Stocking - April 2004



Join Us!!! Become a member of the Turtle Creek Watershed Association and become a partner in a dynamic local conservation effort. A broad base of financial and volunteer support from local individuals, families, communities, business, and industry will allow all of us together continue improving the quality of life in this region.

(Don't forget - it's tax deductible!)

Membership Form 2004

Name: _____

Address: _____

E-mail: _____

Phone: _____ (h)

_____ (w)

Permission to list donor name: Yes No

- | | | | |
|---|-------|---------------------------------------|----------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual | \$10 | <input type="checkbox"/> Family | \$15 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Organization | \$25 | <input type="checkbox"/> Municipality | \$50 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Small business | \$50 | <input type="checkbox"/> Life | \$100 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Corporate | \$150 | <input type="checkbox"/> Other | \$_____. |

Please make checks payable to:
Turtle Creek Watershed Association

Mail to:
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Wilmerding, PA 15148

Thank you very much!



TURTLE CREEK WATERSHED ASSOCIATION

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