



TURTLE TRACKS SUMMER 2007 EDITION

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE TURTLE CREEK WATERSHED ASSOCIATION

Abandoned Mine Drainage

July 12th Tour of AMD Sites in White Valley

The Turtle Creek watershed has no shortage of AMD sites, stretching from one end of the watershed to the other. Emerging from a variety of old mines in anything from a slight backyard trickle to a wild industrial gush, these also have varying chemistries. Some offer the promise of being treated in concert with one another. Until we understand relationships between our surface and subsurface conditions, we cannot determine the best treatment options.

In order to lay more groundwork for comprehensive AMD planning in an area polluted by the Export and Delmont Mines, Jay Hawkins of the Pittsburgh office of the US Office of Surface Mining toured the White Valley area with Jim Kress, Russ Cepko, and Diane Selvaggio of TCWA and Bob Turka and Tom Gray of GAI. Ron Horansky of DEP and Craig Barras of TCWA intended to be there, but ran into unexpected conflicts. Ron will meet separately with Jay next month.

The Route Going from west to east, the group stopped at the Crouse property on Italy Road, the cemetery in Export, the Export Mine discharge at Dura-Bond, the Delmont Mine discharge at Borland Farm Road, the Apple Hill plan, and looked at Coal Loaders' re-mining operation in Delmont above Salem Plaza.

Jay offered immediate help with a portable camera for our Export Mine bore holes and transducers to give us continuous well monitoring for a short time. Later help is still to be determined.

Limestone Diversion Wells It appears as though, while not simple, the Apple Hill neighborhood at the headwaters in Delmont might be a good candidate for limestone diversion wells. To prepare, Russ Cepko is now reviewing the background material in our file on the well we installed some years ago in Export.

Passive Pond System As was determined more than a decade ago, use of the Hall property is the only reasonable option for passively treating the Delmont Mine discharge at Borland Farm Road. Export Borough has inherited the property, and until they determine its fate, the potential for a successful project is unknown.

Re-mining Italy Road has a series of small, but highly acidic discharges, especially on the Crouse property. Re-mining (opening an old mine to remove remaining coal – often in the pillars) is the most likely method to solve these problems. It is not a cure-all, but it can address a host of water quality problems.

This work is normally done as part of the ill-named Government Financed Construction Contract (GFCC) program (federally designed, but no money changes hands), which requires full site restoration but provides future liability protection from water issues.

Administered by DEP, qualifying guidelines consider project factors such as surface damage, open shafts or vents, high walls, etc., plus potential profits. (No water quality factors.) This is a difficult figure to calculate because of differences in gross profit possible (current market prices times coal type and volume estimates) and actual net profit or loss (extraction difficulties, site restoration obstacles, actual market prices, etc.). Site variables are numerous, and those can prove costly for extraction.

The other re-mining option is a Surface Mining Permit (SMP). Extraction of only the coal of interest and minimal site restoration will maximize profit, but the company bears full future liability for water issues.

As with a number of other sites in our watershed, contaminated water makes a GFCC the only reasonable re-mining option, even though potential profit margins are slim. With a GFCC, Coal Loaders would re-mine the Crouse site and others. However, with few obvious mining vestiges on the land surface, current regulations make it difficult for DEP to grant a GFCC. Until these regulations change, sites such as those on Italy Road will remain untreated.

Hybridization Any successful treatment system must be effectively adapted to site conditions, and these vary widely. As we discovered with the Delmont Mine discharge on Borland Farm Road, understanding exactly what those conditions are is vital to designing a functional system. Treating the Export Mine discharge presents many challenges, and the more we learn about the subsurface conditions, the more challenges we face.

We learned that during the original deep mining, because the coal was so close to the surface in White Valley, miners stayed away from the streams. Then during WWII, that coal was strip mined, with roads and streams repositioned afterwards. While valuable to know now, that fact changes some of our project concepts.

Our strategy for drilling monitoring wells to collect data for the Export Mine project has been revised to better determine the boundaries between the mine pool(s) and strip mine fill. Depending upon Terra Testing's schedule, drilling is expected to begin in September.

Fun Day

Held on Saturday, June 16th at B-Y Pond, we again shared sponsorship with the Trafford Recreation Board and the Trafford Sportsmen's Club. The Rec Board stocked the pond with blue

gills and catfish and provided some bait. As last year, Kids All-American Fishing provided giveaway bags for each child. The sportsmen provided beverages and some archery instruction.

Amy Namachar worked to involve local sponsors who provided food, lunch supplies, and prizes. Bob Johns, nationally noted fishing expert, donated some jigs to each participant and family member. Heather Yanko, a local face painter, offered her services for the morning, creating novel designs on children's faces, hands, and arms.



John Mores, Bob and Bill Mazik, A.B. Carl, & Ed Fischer manned the grills and lunch assembly line.



A total of 77 children from age 2 to 15 registered (although more fished for a short time without registering), and 106 fish were logged in. A total of 16 prizes were awarded – nine fishing rods, a reel with two boxes of line, three filled tackle boxes, three children's rod packages, and one children's length and weight kit.

Summer Internships

Stormwater Practices & Costs This project is being funded by the Local Government Academy and Duquesne University. It also dovetails with our stormwater work sponsored by The Heinz Endowments and our Growing Greener Non-point Source grant.

David Deal is in the midst of interviewing people designated by their municipalities as “experts” in local stormwater issues. They are discussing various aspects of stormwater that impact municipal operations, the costs involved, their relationship to local ordinances, and what might offer the best solutions.

So far, we have had very good participation by Allegheny County communities, and we are revisiting those in Westmoreland. These interviews should be completed by mid-August. Related surveys should be completed and returned by late August. The final report is expected in late September.

Water Monitoring Teams Funded by VISTA, Zahava Cherapovich is putting together a publicity campaign, then a series of informational meetings across the watershed, then a series of EASI (Environmental Alliance for Senior Involvement) Program training sessions for interested volunteers - 18 and over. After that the new teams will start monthly monitoring at a variety of sites.



Interested?
Please contact the TCWA office at 412-829-2817 or at good.fish@verizon.net.

Early to mid-August meetings will be held at the Pitcairn-Monroeville Sportsmen's Club, the Murrysville Senior Center, and the North Huntingdon Township Building, with training sessions following in September.

Regional Water Quality

Task Force

Based at the University of Pittsburgh's Institute of Politics, this project is comprehensively studying our 11 county region, looking at drinking water, waste water treatment, stormwater management, AMD, and related issues. The main board is chaired by Dr. Jared Cohen of CMU and Dr. Angelo Armenti of CUP, and is comprised of 16 other high profile people appointed by their counties. TCWA is part of the Technical Advisory Committee.

Overall group goals are to look at all aspects of services needed, delivery requirements, infrastructure demands, resources available, financial limitations, and the like. Water-related issues are extremely complex, and costs to address them are becoming enormous. By identifying all our problems then looking at ways other regions have dealt with them, the RWQTF intends to find the best strategies to handle our own.

After a series of board and committee meetings, a series of public meetings, and much staff research, the Phase I Report is final. It focuses upon five areas:

1. Using similar regions as useful benchmarks
2. Surveys of local municipalities and authorities
3. Local case studies (looking at good and bad)
4. Financial viability assessments
5. Alternatives analysis to see what cost-effective solutions might work regionally

The full report and more information on Phase II can be found at <http://www.iop.pitt.edu/water/>.

Calendar

TCWA Meetings

Room 220 The Castle 7:00 p.m.

July 25th

August 31st

September 28th

October 25th - 5:30 *tentative* Stormwater Forum (Location to be determined. No charge, but reservations will be required.)

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 2007

Name: _____

Individual \$10 Family \$15

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Life \$100 Organization \$25

E-mail: _____

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Phone: _____ (h)

Corporate \$150 Other \$_____.

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Permission to list donor name: Yes No

Please make checks payable to:
Turtle Creek Watershed Association

Mail to:
325 Commerce Street, Suite 204
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Thank you very much!



TURTLE CREEK WATERSHED ASSOCIATION
THE CASTLE, SUITE 204
325 COMMERCE STREET
WILMERDING, PA 15148
412/829-2817

e-mail: good.fish@verizon.net

website: www.tcwa.org/

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