

October 2004
Volume 1
Issue 2



President's Message - Peter Wulfhorst

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Board of Directors

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The mission of the Conservancy is to promote a better understanding of the Twin/Walker Creeks Watershed and its ecosystems and to protect, restore and enhance the watershed through proper management and watershed stewardship.

As I mentioned in my previous report, the Conservancy is the recipient of a grant from the Canaan Valley Institute to conduct on-lot septic system education for the residents of the watershed. Over 35 residents of the watershed recently attended a Septic System Seminar conducted by Bruce Fox at the Shohola Township Building. Another facet of the Canaan Valley Institute grant is a septic system/oil tank questionnaire that was mailed to all residents of the watershed in early August. We hope you filled out the questionnaire and mailed it to the Conservancy. The questionnaire will assist the Conservancy in ascertaining the potential impact of development, specifically on-lot septic systems/oil tanks on the water quality of our watershed. The results are strictly for informational purposes but should also serve to increase owner awareness and lessen future problems. If you didn't receive a copy of the questionnaire, please feel free to contact me to obtain one.

We have also distributed another educational component of the Canaan Valley Institute grant - a Septic System Fact Sheet as well as a Homeowner's Septic System Checklist. If you would like additional copies of Fact Sheet or Checklist, please feel free to contact the Conservancy or you can access them at our website at www.twcwc.com.

We will be having our next public meeting and annual meeting on Saturday, November 13 at 2 pm at the Walker Lake clubhouse. The meeting will be on "Keep Pike Green - Conservation of Natural Areas" and the presenter will be Peter Pinchot, grandson of Gifford Pinchot. There is ad-

ditional information on the meeting on page 2. We look forward to seeing you at the meeting.

The Conservancy recently received a set of two stream signs for the watershed. Shohola Township has installed the signs for Twin Lakes Creek and Walker Lake Creek on Twin Lakes Road.

The current 2-year terms of the officers of the Conservancy expire this fall. According to our by-laws, a nominating committee of Joe Messineo & Peter Loenwigkeit was established to nominate a slate of officers at our upcoming Annual Meeting. Please send your nominations for all officers by mail to Nominations, 100 Walker Lake Rd.

Finally, the Conservancy is the recipient of a Northeastern Pennsylvania Environmental Partnership Award. The Environmental Partnership Awards pays tribute to organizations and individuals of Northeastern Pennsylvania that have achieved environmental protection or conservation through partnering with others. The Conservancy is proud to be an award recipient for 2004. The Conservancy will receive the Northeastern Pennsylvania Environmental Partnership Award on Wednesday, October 20 in Wilkes-Barre.

If you care about the water quality of our watershed and want to ensure that it remains healthy and pleasant, then **we need you to become a member of the Twin/Walker Creeks Watershed Conservancy**. Membership information is found on page 4 of the newsletter. To become a member, contact me at 570-296-2244 or visit our website at www.twcwc.com. All membership contributions are tax deductible.

Volunteer Water Quality Monitoring - Joyce Laudise

Eighty per cent of the volunteers who took the 3 session monitoring course in the spring of 2002 helped with monitoring this summer. Joe Judge brought up his testing kits and used them on Big Twin Lake and Little Twin Lake. His results have been noted on the data sheets. Chet and Pat Dawson collected water samples from Walker Lake at the end of June, July, August and September. Joyce Laudise went out with John Laudise, Peg Bruton and Janet Perper to do the same on the Twin Lakes. All water samples were brought to a commercial laboratory for analysis. Bill Andrews was the delivery man on 3 occasions. Robin Kadlec recorded Secchi depth readings on Little Twin Lake while Joe and Pat Messineo, Rich Schuster and Nancy Eisenhower did the same for Big Twin Lake.



Four volunteer monitors are members of the Conservancy Board. They include Bill Andrews, Peter Loewrigkeit, Joe Messineo and PD McCullough. Dave Kirk who was the principal instructor for the monitoring course has moved to Hemlock Farms but recently agreed to become an Associate Member of the Conservancy Board. He will oversee the Hydrology Lab and he has said "I will do whatever else the board wants even if it includes getting wet and dirty."

We finished monitoring for 2004. Our consultant has all sampling results and will send the Watershed Conservancy a report by December 1 of this year.

Photo taken of Joyce Laudise at a September water testing of Big Twin Lake. Janet Perper accompanied Joyce in the testing of Big Twin Lake.

New Development Concerns - Ralph Cioppa, Past President

Pike County continues to be one of the fastest growing areas in our country. This impacts upon the economy, our life styles, and health. We allow our roads, roofs, driveways, septic systems to seep into or rush into our streams and lakes. This water percolates down into the aquifer in the rock below our homes. Our wells then draw this water back to the surface for use in drinking and cleaning. This water must remain pure.

We can prevent problems in new development but this is not easy because of the concerns of developers and builders with regard to maximizing their investments. Shohola has instituted two acre zoning. This may seem to be a good technique but it results in parceling lots to homeowners that contain wetlands, hydric soils and valuable green areas. This could result in homeowners making changes to their properties, which are not sound practices or could result in homeowners being cited for violations involving altering areas governed by rules unknown to them. Education is necessary. All of us must understand the implications involved in poor or incomplete conservation planning. We can prevent this by using newly developed conservation practices.

Conservation practices involve not keeping two acre parcel zoning. This must be acceptable to municipality through a variance. The land sold to a developer is first surveyed for wetlands, streams, lakes, hydric soil, severe slopes and unbuildable rock layers. These areas are subtracted by law from the total acreage available for development. If 300 acres is available for development and 20 acres are subtracted, 280 acres are left for development. 140 parcels can be built upon according to the two-acre zoning ordinance. Conservation practices next involve locating and identifying areas of beauty, unique geological features, salvageable plant areas, etc. A specific percentage of land is designated for conservation purposes, usually about 30%. This acreage is also subtracted from the total developable acreage in a development and is now the total acreage available for development. In the example above, another 84 acres could be subtracted. Thus 196 acres are now available but they still provide 140 parcels, the original zoning number. The final total of the number of parcels remains the same as determined by zoning before but the parcels are smaller. The subtracted acreage remains "green" forever, never to be touched again and controlled by a homeowners' association or some type of conservancy. This acreage helps prevent the problems caused by storm runoff helping to keep our aquifer pristine. Conservation practices involve locating homes to maximize well and septic usage but minimize consequences. Conservation practices involve the careful placement of homes (roofs, driveways), roads, pools, tennis courts, parking lots and other areas that collect water. This could be called clustering. This water must go downhill but can be contained, filtered and its velocity minimized.

This type of planning may seem to be financially irresponsible to the investment purposes of the land seller, developer, builder, homeowner, and municipality. It turns out that this is not the case. The homes in a development built upon conservation practices are worth more. They will be clustered so that the total density of homes remains the same as the

municipality allows within its zoning ordinance. The land is more valuable, property taxes increase, the tax base is high and the development is magnificent. This is the topic of our next meeting with Peter Pinchot as the speaker. The development in our watershed is unavoidable but we can affect its consequences.

Keep Pike Green - Conservation of Natural Area Lands

The Conservancy's Watershed Assessment Study has recommended the need to manage growth within our watershed. The management of this growth will be the focus of our Annual Meeting. Peter Pinchot will present solutions to the population growth and development pressures of our private natural areas that is threatening our water, our land and our way of life. Peter will be discussing the Keep Pike Green initiative that is committed to preserving Pike County's quality of life through good planning and active conservation.

The Twin/Walker Creeks Watershed Conservancy share these same goals and have invited Peter Pinchot to share his thoughts with our residents. The Annual Meeting will take place on **Saturday, November 13 at 2 pm** at the **Walker Lake Clubhouse** on Walker Lake Road. Please attend the meeting and bring a friend with you. The future of our watershed and Pike County is at stake.

Watershed Assessment Study - Joyce Laudise

A 2 year in depth study of the 11.54 square mile Twin & Walker Lake Creeks Watershed was completed in December 2003. During that period citizen volunteers collected data and water samples from the streams and three lakes. Samples and data were sent to a lake management consultant who prepared the document. The study was wholly funded by a grant from the PA Dept of Environmental Protection Growing Greener Program. The project cost \$56,000 and over one thousand hours of volunteer time were donated. The document should serve as a plan for the long term management of the watershed.

The consultants took into account testing done plus data available from the past. Major non-point source pollution areas were identified. Extensive physical, biological and cultural information was compiled. These results were reviewed and synthesized to produce a management plan for all watershed resources. The goals and the steps we have taken to implement them are as follows:

1. Maintain and enhance the quality of the three main lakes so they remain suitable for swimming with phosphorus levels low enough to prevent excessive plant growth, with a diverse and healthy fishery and a diversity of vegetation. As the report states " Given the largely natural state of the upper and lower watershed and the extraordinary population growth and development pressure in Pike County, the potential for future water quality impacts from new development is high. These impacts can include increased nutrient pollution from storm water runoff, increased stream bank erosion, seepage from malfunctioning on-site septic systems and the reduction of groundwater resources due to increased water withdrawal and lack of groundwater recharge." They suggest watershed members work closely with Shohola Township officials to best protect this land. At the very least strict impervious coverage limits should be adopted and enforced. They further suggest that the Conservancy acquire easements or titles to land where possible. The Conservancy is actively working on these suggestions.
2. Reduce non-point source pollution. Best Management Practices (BMP's) should be implemented for highest priority non-point source pollution problem areas. Thirty one sites were identified in the report. One site at Sagamore Estates on Big Twin Lake has been taken care of with private funds. The Conservancy has applied for a Growing Greener Grant to improve 2 sites by Walker Lake and another on Big Twin Lake. Malfunctioning septic systems can be a significant source of nutrient loading to lakes. We are addressing this problem through education as in our July meeting about the care of on lot septic systems and through distribution of informative pamphlets. We have also sent out a septic system and oil tank questionnaire to encourage watershed residents to learn about and care for their own systems.
3. Partner with nearby watershed organizations and recruit new members. Members of the Conservancy board meet at the Pike County Conservation District headquarters with other watershed organizations. Under the leadership of Glyn Eisenhauer officers of the various associations in the watershed meet regularly. By getting together both groups have an opportunity to exchange information and learn from each other.

The study also says that for any changes to occur an effective watershed conservancy is needed. For the conservancy to be effective all residents should at least be conservancy members and as many as possible should be active conservancy members. With this guide in hand and your help we can effectively manage the watershed in the next 5-10 years.

If you are interested in reading this 107 page report please contact a board member.

Twin & Walker Creeks
Watershed Conservancy

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Shohola, PA 18458
570-296-3400
Www.twcwc.com

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*Next Meeting 2 pm —
November 13, 2004 at the Walker
Lake Clubhouse*

Resident
RR 1
Shohola, PA 18458

2004 CONSERVANCY MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

I am concerned with the future quality and quantity of the water resources in our neighborhood and would like to support the conservation efforts of the Twin/Walker Creeks Watershed Conservancy through a yearly membership.

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____ City _____

State _____ Zip _____ Email _____

I am interested in learning more about volunteer monitoring efforts

Check type of membership

Senior/Student—\$5.00

Individual— \$10.00

Family— \$15.00

Corporate— \$40.00

In support of the Conservancy's efforts, I would like to provide an additional gift in the amount of
\$ _____ Total Enclosed _____

Mail this form with check payable to:

Twin/Walker Creeks Watershed Conservancy
100 Walker Lake Road
Shohola, PA 18458