

Report from the President

October 2002

Our Board of Directors is pleased to announce our officers for the 2002 – 2003 year. Peter Wulfhorst is our president, Patricia Messineo, Secretary, Linda Cioppa, Treasurer, Joyce Laudise, and President-elect. We will introduce them at our next general meeting on October 5, 2002, 2:00 pm to be held at the Walker Lake Clubhouse. At that meeting, we will conduct a Safe Water Clinic jointly with the Penn State Cooperative Extension. You are welcome at that meeting even though you have not registered to have your water sample tested. Come for information and meet our group.

The past year has been very positive for us. We welcomed nearly 165 contributing members who have given us much helpful information. Our first Growing Greener Grant was completed and we used that money to establish our monitoring program, train volunteers, buy equipment and send information to our community. Our second Growing Greener Grant allows us to continue monitoring our water quality, forming a database to be used to ascertain our needs, which the third grant will address next year. Pennsylvania's Department of Environmental Protection has received considerable funding as the result of the overwhelming interest shown by all watershed members concerned with their environment and property values. We are pleased to be part of this wave of funding.

We have a web presence within Pennsylvania's Department of Environmental Protection website. Find us at www.dep.state.pa.us/growgreen/. Jeff Seeds, of Walker Lake, is working to establish our own website to keep us all up to date. That site is not ready yet but will be at www.twcwc.com. Email is established at watershed@twcwc.com.

Zoning rules are constantly changing. Shohola approved changes to ordinances regarding exceptions to the 50 foot rule from water bodies. There are limits to: dock extensions, patios, and structural walkways. Covered structures are not permitted within this 50 foot barrier even on private lakefront properties. The Shohola Supervisors meet every first Thursday of the month, we need to be there and make our concerns known. Changes in Township, County, State and Federal Laws will affect our mission. We must assure waters remain healthy and pleasant, understand the characteristics of our watershed, protect, restore and enhance our watershed, encourage participation, and cooperate with other organizations. We have formed liaisons with watersheds in Shohola, Milford, Delaware Highlands, and Dwarfskill. In addition we are involved with Pike County, Penn State, and the state of Pennsylvania. Davis Hess, Secretary of the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection visited us and was very pleased with our monitoring program.

Our monitors report that our waters are clean and healthy. We need to insure that they stay that way to protect our property values. Along with water quality, our volunteer monitors will check for macro invertebrates and Zebra Mussels. We are also concerned about the use of gasoline motors on oversize boats on our lakes.

We are asking that you renew your membership for the 2002 – 2003. You will find the registration form with this newsletter.

Ralph Cioppa

No Zebra Mussels Found at Lake Wallenpaupack but Caution Is Advised

The PA DEP has a zebra mussel-monitoring program. Acting on reports of zebra mussels in Lake Wallenpaupack, the Lake Wallenpaupack Watershed Management District notified the DEP and professional divers were sent to investigate. No zebra mussels were found. If you should see or suspect you see zebra mussels let the Watershed Conservancy president know or call Tony Shaw at DEP. He can be reached at 717 783 3638.

Zebra mussels are native to Eastern Europe. They were introduced to the US during the mid '80s when ocean-going ships released infested ballast water into the lower Great Lakes. Adults are no larger than 2 inches and have a distinct zebra pattern.

The PA DEP states that these aquatic pests are a serious nuisance. Adult zebra mussels can filter about a quart of water each day, removing plankton, a major food source for fish and other

shellfish. Zebra mussels readily form clusters on submerged objects, quickly clogging the piping systems of industrial plants and water or electric power utilities. Boats, trailers and other water recreation equipment can easily transport juvenile or young adult zebra mussels from one body of water to another.

The DEP has suggestions to keep the zebra mussels from entering a watershed. **INSPECT** your boat, trailer and all boating equipment that gets wet and remove any plants and animals that are visible before leaving any water body. **DRAIN** water from the motor, live well, bilge and transom wells while on land before leaving any water body. **EMPTY** your bait bucket on land before leaving the water body. **NEVER** release live bait into a water body or release aquatic animals from one water body into another. **WASH** and **DRY** your boat and equipment including tackle. This can be done on your way home or once you return home. Since zebra mussels can survive 10-14 days out of water it is important to rinse your boat and equipment that normally gets wet with hot tap water or wash wet gear using a concentration of ½ cup of salt to 1gallon of hot water. Salt will kill the mussels. However, you must thoroughly rinse with fresh water to prevent damage to gear from the salt or **SPRAY** and **DRY** your boat and equipment with high-pressure water at least 5 days before launching somewhere else.

These suggestions are also helpful to keep out invasive non-native aquatic plants that can easily hitch a ride on water equipment that goes from one lake to another. These aggressive plants without natural enemies can overwhelm native species. Often they do not provide adequate food and shelter for local wildlife. One such invader is Eurasian water milfoil that has been found in some Pocono lakes. The spaghetti-like stems branch repeatedly at the water's surface creating a canopy of floating stems and foliage that shades native plants giving milfoil a competitive edge. Out of control, the plant can interfere with swimming and boating. Eurasian water milfoil has not been found in any of our 3 Watershed Conservancy Lakes.

Joyce Laudise

Is Your Drinking Water Safe? Homeowners and business people often take it for granted that the water coming out of their tap is safe for drinking. There are a number of potentially harmful substances that can harm your family or customers. These include bacteria, nitrates, iron and manganese. Some of these substances have health effects and others can cause unwanted stains and odors. It is also important that residents of the Twin & Walker Creeks Watershed understand the importance of their drinking water supply and the protection of our watershed.

On Saturday, October 5, Twin & Walker Creeks Watershed Conservancy and Penn State Cooperative Extension will have a Safe Drinking Water Clinic from 2-4 pm at the Walker Lake Club House. This clinic is designed for people interested in having their drinking water tested and finding out how to protect and maintain their water systems. If you depend on your own well or spring for your drinking water, it is your responsibility to have your water tested periodically at a certified water-testing lab. No government agency is going to require you to have your water tested. Peter Wulfhorst, Community Development Extension Agent and George Prosser of Prosser Labs will be presenting the program. In addition, Prosser Labs will be offering water testing for a fee. Containers for water testing are available at the Pike County Cooperative Extension office. There is no charge for the program. However, registration and a fee are required to test your water. For more information or to register, contact the Pike County Cooperative Extension office by phone at 570-296-3400.

Peter Wulfhorst

LAKE BOTTOM MAPPING: Joe and Pat Messineo have joined P.D. McCullough and have taken over 1450 data readings of the Big Twin Lake. This represents only 20% of the Twin Lakes area not including Walker Lake. It looks like this project will extend well into 2003. We are using global positioning system (GPS) readings to insure that we monitor the depth in the lakes at the same place each time. We expect to use GPS when we sample and monitor all our sites.

P. D. McCullough

LAKE AND STREAM SAMPLING PROGRAM: Under the terms of our second Growing Greener Grant from the Commonwealth [the "assessment" grant], the Conservancy was to provide sufficient trained personnel to accomplish the sampling and analytical tasks required by our grant. To that end, about seven months in 2001 were devoted to preparing the training program. The actual training was done on three alternate Saturdays this spring [2002]. We were very pleased with the number of volunteers. Seventeen people within the Watershed are now prepared to step in and not only sample our lakes and streams, but also perform the analyses in the Conservancy's "Hydro Lab".

As this Newsletter goes to press, we will have completed 75% of the expected lake samples and 25% of the stream samples. Why the difference? All of the lake samples are to be taken before October 1, while the stream samples are to be taken in each of the four seasons.

Regarding analysis, time-sensitive tests, such as dissolved oxygen, pH, and temperature are done in the boat or on the shore immediately as samples are taken. Others, e.g. chemical [nutrient] tests are done back in the Hydro-Lab. Some tests are also done at the F.X. Browne Lab in Marshall's Creek especially chlorophyll A and phytoplankton both of which require special equipment. There has also been one series of samples taken during a storm event. On August 28, 2002, rain began to fall just before mid-night and the forecast was for an inch or more. Our storm-testing protocol calls for capturing inlet stream samples [1] as the rain begins, followed by [2] samples at the height of the run-off and [3] again as the run-off returns to normal. We measured 1.9 inches of rain during this storm and the analytical data will be used to calculate the nutrient loading arriving in our lakes when such storms occur. As you can see, our volunteers agree to get very wet. Sampling of five such storm events is required by our grant. Space permitting in the next Newsletter, a picture of the class and a list of their names will be published.

What have we learned so far? The water in all three lakes and five streams is indeed high quality. We are fortunate to have no industry, sewage treatment plants or landfill activities, little commerce and few farms. Our environmental concerns are related to road run-off and private home sanitation and maintenance. We are only now beginning to see the results of the chemical analysis, so it is too soon to come to any comprehensive conclusions. One early observation is that all three lakes have high levels of phosphorous in the lowest layer of the water column. The chief source is almost certainly terrestrial run-off. More will be said of this in the future. The effect of our yearlong drought will also be examined.

Dave Kirk