

August 2011

Volume 8

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President's Message - Shirley Masuo

As our watershed bustles with summer activity, the TWCWC remains at work, continuing our mission to protect, restore and enhance the watershed.

On March 12, we were represented at the 2011 Schuylkill Watershed Congress in Pottstown, Pa. with an informative display and presentation on volunteer water quality monitoring. It seems our Conservancy's testing equipment and data collection is some of the best in the region. (full report in this newsletter) Bravo! to our presenters.

Controversy over Chapter 102 Erosion and Sediment Control & Stormwater Management Rules continues in the township, with the majority of supervisors unresponsive to our request for a presentation on the revisions. An update on stormwater regulations will be included in our public meeting in September. We also have a representative attending the Planning Commission's SALDO workshops where possible changes to conservation design are being addressed. These subdivision and land development ordinances are important as they can ultimately affect not only the character of our township, but the quality of our watershed as well.

Gas drilling continues to be addressed and debated on the local, state and federal levels. The TWCWC has written letters to both the DRBC and Governor Corbett, asking that no drilling take place until a cumulative impact study and the current EPA study on the effects of drilling on drinking water have been concluded. A TWCWC representative is supplying information to our township's solicitor who is studying the latest developments in local zoning control. We hope for progress on this and a protective gas drilling ordinance for our township within the year.

If you care about the quality of our watershed and want to ensure that it remains healthy, **we need you to become a member of the Twin/ Walker Creeks Watershed Conservancy.**

Membership information is found on page 4 of the newsletter. All membership contributions are tax deductible.

To learn more about the Conservancy or view previous newsletters, visit our website at www.twcwc.com.

We will continue working to keep our watershed the best it can be. Please consider making a donation, as it is your crucial dollars that help us continue our work.

A happiest of summers to all!

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.

Treasurer's Report - Linda Cioppa

Not much has changed since our last newsletter. As of June 30, 2011 our checking account has \$7156.09 and our money market account has \$11,311.12. We have finished paying the annual fees to FX Browne for the water testing of our lakes in the 2010 season. We have renewed our liability insurance with the Pennsylvania Organization for Watersheds and Rivers. We have had 42 people/families renew or become members of the Conservancy since November. **We thank you for your continued support.** We ask that you please contribute to the Conservancy as generously as possible so that we may continue to provide information, programs, and services to our watershed residents.

As always, we ask that you help us continue our work by contributing!! We are also interested in members who would like to become more involved. If you are interested, please contact our President, Shirley Masuo.

Presenting and Learning at the 2011 Schuylkill Watershed Congress - Pat Dawson

On Saturday, March 12th, Chet and Pat Dawson attended the 2011 Schuylkill Watershed Congress at Montgomery County Community College in Pottstown, PA. It was announced at the beginning of the program that over 300 people registered for this conference. Faculty, environmental consultants, concerned citizens, teachers, members of watershed conservancies, native plant nurseries, lawyers attended this conference. There were groups from Delaware and New Jersey, so the meeting had a regional flavor and a broad representation of many disciplines and interests.

Pat and Chet represented the Twin & Walker Creeks Watershed Conservancy as well as STEM at this meeting. The Conservancy had a display with brochures and newsletters as handouts, and Pat co-presented with Kirk Mackey who oversees the water quality monitoring program for the Conservancy. The presentation was called "Volunteer Monitoring: Health Indicators for Twin & Walker Lakes, Pennsylvania," which lasted 1 hour. The talk gave a brief overview of the 3 lakes, their location, geography, and characteristics, then discussed the mission and organization of the Conservancy before getting into the meat of the presentation. The presentation focused mainly on the procedures and equipment used in taking water samples for determining Chlorophyll a (amount of photosynthesis), phosphate levels (nutrients entering lakes), and secchi disk readings (clarity of lakes) that are converted by FX Browne into a number that indicates the health of the lakes. After attending other sessions that discussed monitoring activities, it became apparent that Twin & Walker Creeks Watershed Conservancy has more advanced equipment and is collecting far more data than the others groups.

Some key points learned from other presentations include 4 keynote speakers whose talk was titled "Return on Environment: the Economic Value of Protected Open Space in Southeastern Pennsylvania." One of them discussed the economic value of parks and open space on home values. He presented the data from the perspective of an economist, a viewpoint not usually heard at an environmental conference. The Delaware River Keeper Network is working closely with the Alliance for Aquatic Resource Monitoring at Dickinson College to train volunteers to monitor streams near natural gas drilling activities. It was important to learn that water samples are being taken and stored for future analysis in case other chemicals are discovered in natural gas drilling waste water. Apparently the two signature chemicals from drilling into the Marcellus Shale are barium and strontium, both heavy metals and it may be helpful to have such testing done at the 3 lakes that we are monitoring in Pike County.

The three attendees came back with numerous handouts, brochures, several DVDs on storm water management and lots of new knowledge and contacts

Gas Drilling Update - Glyn Eisenbauer

After years of being mainly a topic of conversation only among environmentalists, gas drilling has entered the mainstream, garnering some prominent publicity in the media. Lawsuits are being filed by those who feel their health and property have been affected by the drilling process, and studies are underway to better understand Pennsylvania's geology and the impacts of gas drilling in the Marcellus shale, both under and above ground. In the latest news, it was reported that carcinogens have been found in air tests near gas drilling operations in New Mexico's San Juan Basin at up to 3,000 times safe limits.

In Pennsylvania, the PA DEP has outlined an overhaul of the state Oil and Gas Act, with stronger buffer zones to keep natural gas drilling away from water sources and tougher penalties for violations. The Governor's Marcellus Shale Advisory Commission has approved a recommendation for a fee on gas extraction, but also recommends forced pooling. They've also endorsed a public health study on drilling communities, as well as recommendations that would require more distance between drilling sites and public water sources.

While New York state regulators continue to conduct an environmental review and draft new rules for drilling, the New Jersey House of Representatives unanimously voted to effectively ban fracking in New Jersey because of concerns that the process will contaminate drinking water. The Senate also passed the ban and the bill has been submitted to Governor Christie for his decision. This is important, as Governor Christie is one of the five people who will be voting on the proposed Delaware River Basin Commission's gas drilling regulations. The DRBC has put out draft regulations for drilling within the 13,000 square mile watershed, and while the state feels the regulations are too stringent, the N.Y. State attorney general's office and the PA Fish and Boat Commission are supportive of the draft rules and want them to go even further.

Elsewhere, the Ground Water Protection Council and the Interstate Oil and Gas Compact Commission have jointly developed a new website called Frac Focus, to provide a hydraulic fracturing chemical registry, however, in this case, the chemical data is being submitted by the gas companies on a voluntary basis and they have reserved the right to withhold some information.

Pennsylvania inches towards better regulations for gas drilling, but it is only with the threat of federal regulation that we make progress. If we want proper regulation for natural gas drilling, it's important to keep the pressure on by supporting the FRAC Act (The Fracturing Responsibility and Awareness of Chemicals Act). Without full disclosure of the chemical components used in hydraulic fracturing, our regulators and representatives don't have a vital piece of the information they need to make educated decisions, and without cumulative impact studies on the effects of numerous wells on our environment, we cannot have a clear picture of gas drilling's effects. 3,000 wells have been drilled in Pennsylvania in the past three years and thousands more are planned in the coming years. Please contact your representatives to make sure they understand that we want regulation based on the facts.

Environmental Impacts to our Watershed

- Shirley Masuo

The Twin and Walker Creeks Watershed Conservancy will hold a public meeting **Saturday, September 17th, 2011** at the Shohola Elementary School on Twin Lakes Road at 10:00 AM.

Our guest speaker will be Susan Beecher of the Pike County Conservation District, who will speak on current conditions that could affect our watershed. The installation of natural gas pipelines will be among the topics discussed.

!This meeting is open to the public and coffee and refreshments will be provided. Please come and be informed



Twin & Walker Creeks
Watershed Conservancy

132 East Shore Road
Shohola, PA 18458
570-296-2244
Www.twcwc.com

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*Next Meeting 10 am—
September 17 at 10 AM at the
Shohola Elementary School*

Resident
RR 1
Shohola, PA 18458

2011 CONSERVANCY CONTRIBUTION

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 contribution

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 _____

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