



Sleepy Creek Watershed Association

Protecting and Preserving Sleepy Creek in Morgan County, WV November 2005

Points of Note

- **December 1: Membership Meeting** at 7p.m., County Commissioners Office
- **SCWA is 2005 WV Watershed Association**
- **\$5,000 Grant Awarded** to SCWA by NFWF, NACo, and WHC
- **Stream Partners Grant**
- **2005 Stream Corridor Assessment**
- **SC Selected as Top Priority** for Potomac Tributary Strategy
- **Local Ordinances for Subdivisions, Storm Water, etc.,** on new Morgan County Web site
- **Intersex Fish Found** in Cacapon River

Membership Meeting: Dec 1

A general membership meeting will be held on Thursday, December 1st, at 7 p.m. in the Morgan County Commissioners Office on Fairfax Street. The meeting is open to the public.

On our agenda are election of board members, an update on SCWA's 2005 Stream Bank Assessment Project which is now complete, and two new stream bank restoration projects currently under consideration by the association.

For more information about the Membership Meeting, please contact Gale Foulds at 304-258-6155.

SCWA Wins "WV Watershed Network Award, 2005" Includes \$5000 Cash Award, Plaque, & Highway Signs

SCWA was named West Virginia Watershed Association of 2005 at the Watershed Celebration Day in Elkins, WV on September 24, 2005. A plaque and a \$5,000 cash award, donated by the Dominion Foundation, was received by President, Gale Foulds. The WV Division of Highways also awarded SCWA highway signs designating the association as the watershed of the year.

The Watershed Celebration was held at Davis and Elkins College in Elkins, hosted by the West Virginia Watershed Network. This event recognized 15 watershed groups and one individual for work and perseverance in protecting and restoring streams and providing water quality education in their communities.

"These groups are at the very heart of

environmental protection efforts in West Virginia," said DEP Cabinet Secretary Stephanie R. Timmermeyer. "Over the past decade, the watershed movement has really gained momentum. Having citizens who are willing and able to step up and make a positive difference helps us promote a healthy environment."

West Virginia Watershed Network includes the West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection, Division of Forestry, Division of Natural Resources, West Virginia Conservation Agency, U.S. Office of Surface Mining, U.S. Geological Survey, U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resource Conservation Service, Canaan Valley Institute, River Network, and the Rivers Coalition.

Stream Corridor Assessment

An intern, Wendy Maddox, from Shepherd University's Environmental Sciences curriculum was hired to perform a stream corridor assessment by walking Sleepy Creek this past summer. She recorded locations of bank erosion, insufficient or nonexistent buffers, sediment problems, and livestock in the stream, among other things.

All sites were mapped using GPS and GIS so that locations could be revisited and remediation planned. Significant photos were included in this assessment. Overall the intern felt Sleepy Creek was a healthy stream. The assessment will be continued next summer with the final half from Smith Crossroads to the stream headwaters. EPA has indicated that there are some bacteria problems, as well as sediment, and assigned a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) for those

factors.

This project was funded through a West Virginia Stream Partners grant. SCWA is working with Shepherd University and the Eastern Panhandle Conservation District to conduct assessments of the creek. This is another step in working to keep Sleepy Creek healthy for all Morgan Countians.

Sleepy Creek Watershed Association

Board Members

President: Gale Foulds
Vice President: Charles Biggs
Treasurer: Robert Velte
Secretary: Don Bearden (acting)
Board Member: Jim Michael

P.O. Box 991
Berkeley Springs, WV 25411

Monitoring of Habitat & Biological Integrity

All six Sleepy Creek monitoring sites recently surveyed had excellent to good overall results. However, the State Manager of Stream Monitoring says the quantity and diversity of invertebrates has declined which he considers a negative trend. Based on this conclusion, something seems to be negatively impacting the stream's biology.

Partnering with Local Organizations

On October 1, SCWA joined in the county-wide effort to cleanup up Morgan County roadsides. Nine members met to cleanup up Rock Gap Run and Luther Michael Road.

SCWA also sponsored two well attended hikes with the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club (PATC). On September 10, 22 hikers visited parts of the Sleepy Creek Wildlife Management Area. They climbed Eagle's Nest then descended into Devil's Nose Gorge where they crossed Meadow Branch and climbed to the top of Devil's Nose for lunch. On Veteran's Day, November 11, 10 hikers met at Cacapon State Park to enjoy an easy-pace hike with 1300 feet elevation gain to the top of Cacapon Mountain.

Environmental Education of Youth

Teens from Berkeley Springs High School enthusiastically participated in stream monitoring events on World Water Monitoring Day, October 15 with the assistance of SCWA Trainer/Coordinator Kris O'Brien.

**Please consider
birds, fish, and
animals when
discarding
monofilament
fishing line.**

ing session on August 19, at Robert Velte's farm near Sleepy Creek village. Kris O'Brien, SOS Trainer/Coordinator, instructed the volunteers in streamside biological and physical stream survey techniques.

This type of survey involves collecting a series of benthic macro invertebrate samples, placing organisms in trays of water, and sorting them into look-alike groups.

\$5,000 Grant Awarded by NFWF, NACo, and WHC

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, National Association of Counties (NACo), and the Wildlife Habitat Council (WHC) Five Star Restoration Program awarded SCWA \$5,000 for work in Warm Springs Run to control purple loosestrife. More than \$523,000 has been awarded to 53 community-led conservation projects to support wetland and streamside restoration projects nationwide.

The partners selected winning projects from a competitive pool of more than 200 applications. Funding consideration is based on a program's educational/training opportunities for students and at-risk youth, ecological benefits that would be derived from a project, and other cultural/economic benefits to the community.

Potomac Tributary Strategy Selection

Sleepy Creek watershed was chosen through a stakeholder process last fall to be a top priority for implementing the Potomac Tributary Strategy, a part of a multi-state Chesapeake Bay restoration effort.

Intersex Fish Found in Cacapon River

"Girly Fish" is a name coined by John Hay Rabb of Bass Times to

describe a condition known as "intersex."

This mutation occurs when female eggs or other reproductive elements are found in male fish. Intersex fish have now been identified in the Potomac River, the South Branch of the Potomac River, and in the Cacapon River by the Rt. 127 bridge.

Intersex fish are found worldwide in species other than bass. Other than this, scientists have little knowledge of this anomaly. Environmentalists and public health officials are concerned and working with government agencies and fish experts to determine the cause of the condition.

In 2003 the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) caught bass and found that 42% of the male bass had developed eggs inside their sex organs. A later survey in 2004 showed an even higher percentage, almost 80%.

This problem may be in the water everywhere. "We know there is a great deal of interest in this issue, both locally and nationally," said DEP Secretary Stephanie Timmermeyer. "We will continue to report our findings as important information comes along."

"Something is happening to the fish and this anomaly is a warning," said Ed Merrifield, the Potomac Riverkeeper. "These fish are similar to the 'canary in the mine shaft. They are telling us something is wrong and it could affect humans. We all need to remember that water flows downstream. Water with these fish in it begins in the Lost River, goes to the Cacapon and then to the Potomac along the edge of Morgan County."

The source may be in a class called "emerging contaminants," which includes everything from caffeine and prescription drugs to hormones excreted by livestock or humans.

One reassuring note, experts do not believe that eating fish with intersex will cause problems in humans, such as the negative effects from eating fish contaminated by mercury.

There could still be a danger to humans in the water itself. For example, a high rate of estrogen cancers in

Hardy County, through which the South Branch flows, may be related to emerging contaminants. Until we know for certain, studies raise concern about the quality of our drinking water. The problem is that most water systems do not filter out estrogen, emerging contaminants, and endocrine disrupters. In addition, thousands of people drink unfiltered water.

SCWA Bids Adieu to Eileen McIntire, SCWA Secretary

Eileen McIntire, formerly SCWA Board Secretary, has returned to the Washington, DC metropolitan area to be closer to family members and lifelong friends.

As one of the original members and a longtime SCWA Board member, Eileen made countless, invaluable contributions to the Sleepy Creek Watershed Association since its inception. Most recently, as SCWA Secretary, Eileen recorded, documented, and distributed meeting minutes of SCWA Board meetings; wrote and published the quarterly SCWA Newsletter; composed and developed SCWA pamphlets; and compiled and exercised the SCWA membership e-mail list, among other things.

The SCWA will greatly miss Eileen's participation, expertise, and many contributions.

Thank you, Eileen, for all you have done for Sleepy Creek Watershed Association. We wish you good luck and good fortune as you embark on your new adventure. We will miss you and wish you well.

The SCWA Board is grateful to Don Bearden for temporarily assuming Eileen's many Secretarial duties until a new secretary can be elected in December 2005.

Local Flora Photos & Info on Web Site

A list and photos identifying about 200 species of flora found in recent years in 150 acres of the Coolfont Sleepy Creek Association watershed area in Berkeley Springs is now on our Web site. The identifications and photographs were

produced by Jane Carroll, a part-time resident of this community, for her own use and not with the intention of publication. With Jane's permission, we have posted this information on the Sleepy Creek Watershed Association Web site:

sleepycreekwatershedassociation.org

Stream Partners Grant

The Sleepy Creek Watershed Association has been awarded a \$5,000 grant for 2005-2006 from the West Virginia Stream Partners Program.

The program is sponsored by the West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection, the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources, the West Virginia Division of Forestry, and the West Virginia Conservation Agency.

The association will use the grant monies to focus on stream bank quality and identification of watershed problems.

Flood-proofing Your Riverside Home

In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina and the resulting disasters in the Mississippi Gulf Region, we probably all would like a quick refresher on flood-proofing our riverside homes. Key areas include:

Protecting service equipment

- Anchor storage tank
- Raise it above flood level
- Protect it with floodwalls

Protecting your whole house

- Relocate the house

- Build protective levees & floodwalls
- Add wet flood-proofing
- Add dry flood-proofing
- Elevate the house
- Install backflow valves

For more detailed information visit the FEMA Web site at:

www.fema.gov

A new local government Web site includes:

**ordinances on
subdivisions, storm
water management, etc.,**

for Morgan County. Visit:

morgancountyeda.com/gov/

Building in the Floodplain?

If you are planning to build in the Morgan County floodplain, be sure to get a copy of the

Morgan County Floodplain Ordinance

from the County Commissioner's Office on Fairfax Street in Berkeley Springs.



**"We all live
downstream
from someone!"**

Top Ten Benefits of Streamside Buffers

1. Increases property value.
2. Improves privacy and tranquility.
3. Stabilizes banks and reduces erosion.
4. Reduces flooding during storms.
5. Filters sediment and pollutants from runoff.
6. Reduces the need for lawn care chemicals.
7. Provides shade for you *and* the fish.
8. Reduces time spent mowing the lawn.
9. Creates a colorful and eye-catching landscape to live in.
10. Attracts wildlife by providing food and shelter for a variety of birds, mammals, and other animals.

**Use Buffer Areas to
Maintain Soil &
Nutrients**

Do You Have E-mail?

Let us know your e-mail address so we can save trees and postage by e-mailing the newsletter to you. E-mail your address to us at:

info@sleepycreekwatershedassociation.org

We're on the Web!

www.sleepycreekwatershedassociation.org

Membership and Renewal Form

Membership year is from January—December

Dues should be paid by the first of the year.

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Individual — \$10 ☐ Group/Org — \$25 ☐

Family — \$15 ☐ Sponsor — \$100 ☐

Mail to:

SCWA, Bob Velte, Treasurer

P.O. Box 991, Berkeley Springs, WV 25411

Don't miss the Membership Meeting: December 1, 7 p.m., County Commissioners Office

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