

Primrose Creek Watershed Assoc.

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Quality of Water Affects the Quality of Life

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Update - PCWA files appeal with the Pennsylvania Environmental Hearing Board challenging the PA DEP permit approval of NHCS quarry. by PCWA

In September, 2011 attorneys with Citizens for Pennsylvania's Future (PennFuture) filed an appeal on behalf of Primrose Creek Watershed Association before the Pennsylvania Environmental Hearing Board (EHB). The appeal challenges the action of the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) that revised New Hope Crushed Stone's (NHCS) surface mining permit to authorize the quarry to mine to a depth of -170 feet MSL from its previously authorized depth of -120 feet MSL and that reissued the quarry's permit authorizing its discharge to Primrose Creek. The EHB has the power to revoke the permit or to remand it to the DEP for further consideration.



Primrose Creek

The following are excerpts from the notice of appeal:

1. "The Departments (DEP) action is contrary to law because it fails to maintain and protect the existing uses of Primrose Creek and the level of water quality necessary to protect those uses and because it fails to protect the designated uses of Primrose Creek...."

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2. "The Department's action is arbitrary, capricious, and an abuse of discretion because it authorizes the expansion of the New Hope Crushed Stone quarry, which it has already determined to be a source of aquatic life impairment of Primrose Creek, without imposing any new conditions or requirements to address that impairment....."



Primrose Creek

The parties are currently in the middle of a three-month stay of the litigation to continue settlement discussions that began in June. Below are excerpts from the parties' last Joint Motion Proposing a New Case Management Schedule:

1. On June 20, 2012, the Board granted the parties' Joint Motion Proposing a New Case Management Schedule to allow time for the parties to focus on settlement discussions.
2. As detailed in the parties' joint reports to the Board on July 20, 2012, July 27, 2012 and August 10, 2012, the parties have spent considerable time and energy discussing potential scenarios over the past two months that could lead to settlement, including engaging in multiple joint sessions, coordinating various technical conference calls between the parties' respective consultants, and exchanging various proposals.
3. This has allowed the parties make considerable progress toward a mutual understanding of the nature of and potential remedies regarding the issues raised in the consolidated appeals.

By order of the Board, PCWA is limited in the information that it can provide about the substance of the negotiations. All PCWA can say at this time is that settlement discussions are ongoing. If a settlement cannot be reached, the litigation will resume, with factual discovery set to close in early February.

**2012 Primrose Creek Watershed Association/PCWA Annual Meeting
November 8th, 2012 7:00 PM, Phillips Mill 2619
River Road, New Hope PA
by Hope Blaythorne, PCWA Board Director**

The event is free to the public. Light refreshments will be served. This is an opportunity for all of us to meet and discuss a variety of issues with our neighbors.

Initially for a brief time, a summary of PCWA 2012 activities will be presented. After that, the main events will be presented, "**Water Resources in the Home- What you can do to improve and protect your water**" and "**Ghosts of New Hope**". Does this sound like a mismatch? No. We believe since a community is comprised of countless interests, the PCWA Annual Meeting should include a mixture of topics as well.

2012 PCWA activities

Kevin Morrissey President of the Primrose Creek Watershed Association will open the session by reporting on issues and activities concerning the Primrose as well as neighboring watersheds. This has been an active year with several field projects/workshops. In addition, an important focus has been the PCWA/PennFuture appeal of the DEP/New Hope Crushed Stone quarry permit.



Water Resources in the Home

With 55% of the US operating under drought conditions, water issues are of paramount importance to many cities in our country. The majority of Solebury and New Hope households supply their own water resources via a private well, as well as water/waste removal by a septic tank. Our annual meeting will focus on providing information to help home owners as they strive to protect their water resources. *Continued on page 3*

PCWA Annual Meeting *from p 2...*

Phil Getty, a local environmental hydro geologic consultant and an Aquetong Watershed Assoc. board director will speak on the causes and solutions for common water and septic problems.

Les Isbrandt, a PHD chemist and founding board director of the Aquetong Watershed Assoc., AWA will share his expertise on how homeowners can help preserve their water resources and offer solutions for the future.

Mary Ellen Noonan, horticulturist and educator with the Bucks County Conservation District will reveal how the BCCD can help, as well as expand upon some other options for home owners as we strive to maintain water resources and our own water utilities in the home.

At the end of this segment there will be a panel discussion when the audience will be able to ask questions of the presenters.

Ghosts of New Hope

Adele Gamble from “**Ghost Tours of New Hope**” will regale us with a “Spirited” history of Solebury and New Hope sharing with us some Ghost stories from the area. Adele has been interested in ghost hunting for a long time and knew it would be her passion in her life. Adele has hosted the popular Ghost Tours of New Hope Tours for decades and will help us to understand why the New Hope region has been named “The Most Haunted Village in the World.” Regardless of your opinion of the existence of ghosts, you will find this to be a fascinating presentation.



Adele Gamble

More information can be obtained about our speakers and their organizations on the following websites:

-AWA- www.aquetongwatershed.org

-BCCD- www.bucksccd.org

-Ghost Tours of New Hope –
www.ghosttoursofnewhope.com

New Hope Solebury Middle School students field trip in May, 2012

by Carol Cope, PCWA Board Director

On a beautiful day on May 9, 2012 PCWA volunteers Carol Cope, Kevin Morrissey and Dennis Mankin had a great time working with and teaching a group of New Hope Solebury Middle School students. They helped by sharing knowledge and teaching a biology class field coordinated by Diane Smith, an Environmental Educator at Honey Hollow Environmental Education Center and Mary Ellen Noonan of Bucks County Conservation District (BCCD). The students were there with their teacher, Betsy Halsey, to determine the health of the watershed at Phillips Mill. These students had fun and an informative experience taking water samples and measuring chemical, physical and biological parameters as well as identifying and counting Macro Invertebrate samples to answer the following questions:

-Why is it important to have healthy watersheds in Solebury Township?

-What is the general health of the three watersheds that were observed?

-What can be done to keep the watersheds healthy?

-How do chemical and physical test results determine the health of the water?



New Hope Solebury Middle School students

The class was the result of a grant by the DEP given to the Bucks County Audubon Society. It was a nice afternoon for both the kids and volunteers, who learned something, got a little wet and had fun at the same time!

**PCWA Sponsors Macro Invertebrate Workshop held at Honey Hollow lead by internationally acclaimed Stroud Institute / assisted by Delaware Canal Park
by Kevin Morrissey, PCWA President**

Do you ever wonder what lurks beneath the surface of the stream? On Saturday, September 22, PCWA sponsored a "Macro Invertebrate Workshop" to answer that question. This full day course that was held at Bucks County Audubon Society's Honey Hollow Environmental Center (2877 Creamery Rd, New Hope) provided the opportunity to learn about the natural history of macro invertebrates that live on the stream bottom.

Instructor Christina Medved, Stroud Water Research Education Programs manager and assistant Ian Kindle, DCNR/Delaware Canal Park educator provided an introductory hands-on workshop. The 20+ participants who are watershed volunteers, EAC members and teachers learned simple techniques to collect and identify macro invertebrates. With this knowledge, they were able to determine what these animals can indicate about stream health.

Throughout the day there was a variety of discussions, field, and lab experiences.



Macro Invertebrate workshop at Honey Hollow

PCWA always has tried to leverage limited resources to maximize educational and volunteer endeavors. The Macro Invertebrate workshop is another example. While working with the Stroud Water Resource Center we were able to combine several grants with our existing DEP Growing Greener grant, class registration fees and membership contributions to pay for the instruction and materials. Consequently, we were able to utilize resources from DEP, Consortium for Scientific Assistance to Watershed, Pocono Northeast Resource Conservation & Development Council and DCNR/Delaware Canal Park. We are very appreciative for all of these contributions.

Continued on column 2

Macro Workshop from col 1...



Christina Medved (far right) addressing the workshop during the field segment of the class



The 9am to 3pm workshop provided a full day of educational and enjoyable experiences.

What are macro invertebrates and why should we care that they are in our streams? Read "Why Macro Invertebrates are a big deal" in this newsletter to find out.

Why Macro Invertebrates are a big deal By Kevin Morrissey, PCWA President

Admittedly during this intense political period, the topic of Macro Invertebrates may not be included in many heated discussions. However they are important. Important enough that we were able to obtain funding for a full day SRO class at the Bucks County Audubon Society's Honey Hollow Environmental Center on 9/22 (refer Macro Invertebrate workshop article).

We know that clean water is the basic support of all life. Without clear water, nothing else matters. Nothing else is possible.



Macro Invertebrates

Consequently when we think about macro invertebrates, we should think about the axiom, "WHTHU", *what harms them harms us*. If water is not healthy enough to support macro invertebrates (aquatic insects, crustaceans, and worms), we should be concerned with the water being healthy enough for us.

A particular type of macro invertebrates serve as bio indicators of good water quality. When present in large numbers, this suggests the stream is in good condition. If these organisms were once abundant, but subsequent sampling shows a decline in numbers, it may indicate that a pollution incident occurred. Some macro invertebrates tolerate poor quality water. A large quantity of these organisms suggests environmental conditions in a stream have deteriorated.

Continued on column 2

Why Macro Invertebrates are a big deal from col 1...



Ice trays are commonly used to separate and classify Macro Invertebrates

In many communities, groups have formed to evaluate the presence and type of macro invertebrates. In Solebury, PCWA have 3 teams that evaluate the chemical proprieties of the Primrose Creek. Shortly, macro invertebrate analysis will be included. Through macro invertebrate monitoring, we will be able to add to our tools of evaluating the health of Primrose. Additionally, once a history on the health of a stream, our water source is compiled, future monitoring can help identify when and where pollution incidents occur.

Now that you know Macro Invertebrates are a "big deal", you might be interested to participate in our next class and perhaps assist in one of our monitoring teams. Please send us an email (primrosecreek@gmail.com) or call 215-862-5256 to find out more.

Attend One of Our Events!

We are planning activities continually.

Join us at one/all of the following:

- Annual PCWA meeting - 11/8, 7pm, Phillips Mill
- Native Plant workshop - spring 2013, Honey Hollow
- Earth Day- Spring 2013
- Stream Monitoring Spring - Fall 2013.

For more details, send an email to primrosecreek@gmail.com or call 215-862-5256

A Little Bit of History: As with the rest of Solebury/New Hope, the general area of Primrose Creek Watershed is steeped in history. The following is an example:

**Kildonan School
by PCWA**

Kildonan School is a world renowned school located in Amenia NY dedicated to students with Dyslexia. The student body is derived from all over the US and some of the most far reaching countries in the world. The founder, Diana Hanbury King who is in her mid-80s, still travels throughout the world lecturing and consulting on Dyslexia. Thousands of students and parents attest to the school's success with Dyslexia as being no less than miraculous.

During the early 1970s, with a shoe string budget Diana King started Kildonan in Solebury in the current day Holly Hedge. The student ages ranged from eight to nineteen. Many of us know Holly Hedge located on Upper York road, near the Center Bridge as one of Solebury/New Hope's many wonderful destinations for a wedding, weekend retreat or other special events.

While emphasis was on one-on-one reading and writing tutoring, the school offered a holistic academic experience including music and woodshop. Ms. King remembers "Gradually the school took advantage of the craftsman in nearby New Hope and Peddlers' Village." Through these connections they were able to offer leather working, ceramics and stained glass. However, she admitted that music program never really took off. The students seemed always to sing off tune and had difficulty reading music. In retrospect, she has wondered whether they were doing it on purpose.



Former Kildonan School-Current Day Holly Hedge

Continued on column 2

Kildonan School from col 1...

Along with the School's achievements, Diana King remembers many stories about the students and teachers:

-“Peter Moses became one of our most imaginative history teachers. He frequently appeared in class in whatever period of history he was teaching. Once I was momentarily startled in the faculty room when I turned around to see a Zulu warrior, wearing little more but a loincloth and carrying a menacing staff.”

-“It was not unusual for the students to invent their own diversions. A group of boys thought it would be fun to climb onto the horse stable roof and slide down into a hay stack. The fact that the haystack frequently was mixed with horse manure did not seem to dissuade them.”



Sliding down into a hay stack

-“Since we did not have a gym, we needed to develop a sports curriculum of some sort. Among other activities, we developed a ski program. During the initial interview of a new teacher, I asked him if he knew how to ski. He assured me he was an expert skier as he learned to ski in Scotland

But the first day I was surprised and suspicious when he fell at my feet at the beginner slop and did it again in the afternoon. Years later, he confessed to me he had lied and did not know how to ski at the time of the interview and spent his entire year-end paycheck on instruction after the disastrous first ski trip.”

The faculty, curriculum and student body continued to expand. After about 10 years in Solebury it was time to move to a larger campus. Although they moved to Amenia, NY, we can take pride in that Solebury was the developing ground for one of the premier schools for Dyslexia.

**The Importance of Being Native
(for a plant that is...) by Diane L. Smith**



Native Plants attract local life

There's a lot of talk about native plants in the garden being important, but what's the big deal anyway? Well, to start, let's define our terms.... What is a Native Plant? Most people agree that for us a native plant is one that was here before the European colonization of North and South America. That makes everything else a non-native.

Not all non-natives are created equal, however. Some are classified as invasive – so what's that? An invasive species can be any kind of living organism—an amphibian, plant, insect, fish, fungus, bacteria, or even an organism's seeds or eggs—that is not native to an ecosystem and which causes harm. Species that grow and reproduce quickly, and spread aggressively, with potential to cause harm, are given the label of "invasive". Think of our "friend" the brown marmorated stink bug as an example.

An invasive species does not have to come from another country. For example, lake trout are native to the Great Lakes, but are considered to be an invasive species in Yellowstone Lake in Wyoming because they compete with native cutthroat trout for habitat.

When choosing plants for your landscape, consider native alternatives to some of the common, popular plants chosen by contractors. For example, as beautiful as it is, the butterfly bush can become an invasive that will displace native plants in a variety of habitats such as stream and river banks, roadsides and forest edges. Replace this plant with sweet pepperbush, Virginia sweetspire, New York ironweed, blazing star or butterfly weed.

Continued on column 2

The Importance of Being Native *from col 1...*



NY Ironweed

Native plants have evolved together with our birds, bees and other pollinators and support our local fauna with nutritious nuts and berries while usually having minimal needs, once established in the landscape, for supplemental water. And they don't need costly chemical fertilizers and pesticides that can cause unwanted impacts to the ecosystem and more work for the gardener (and who couldn't do with a little less work, no matter how much you love to garden!)

Locally, a great source of information about native plants is the Bowman's Hill Wildflower Preserve (www.bhwp.org) and the growing number of landscape services that specialize in native plants such as American Natives (www.americannativenursery.com) in Quakertown. Good information is abundant on the web: <http://athome.audubon.org/> or <http://www.nwf.org/Get-Outside/Outdoor-Activities/Garden-for-Wildlife/Create-a-Habitat.aspx>

Thanks for Going Native!

Diane L. Smith is the Environmental Educator and Outreach Coordinator, Bucks County Audubon Society at Honey Hollow. The Bucks County Audubon Society (BCAS) is a private, non-profit organization founded as a chapter of the National Audubon Society in 1969. Since its inception, BCAS has been dedicated to conserving wildlife, promoting awareness of environmental problems, watching birds, educating the community about the interdependence of humans and their world, and furthering the wise use of land, air, and water. Visit them on the web at www.bcas.org

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Primrose Creek Watershed Association

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Thank you!

We hope you agree that during 2012, we have contributed to the sustainable character of Solebury and the surrounding community. However, very little would have been achieved without our membership donations, community volunteers and our grant providers.

Thank you.

Primrose Creek Watershed Association Board of Directors.

Hope Blaythorne
Carol Cope
Malcolm Crooks
Peter Grover
Larry Hampt- (Treasurer)
Dennis Mankin
Kevin Morrissey – (President)
Ruth Ann Wilson
John Winterbottom - (Secretary)

Join Us!

Primrose Creek Watershed Association is an expanding organization concerned with the conservation and restoration of the natural beauty of the general Primrose Creek Watershed area.

Primrose Creek Watershed is located in the middle of Solebury Township, Bucks County, southeastern Pennsylvania.

If you believe in our goals, please consider volunteering a little bit of your time to participate in one of our projects.

There are a variety of opportunities to assist, learn and enjoy.

To obtain more details, email primrosecreek@gmail.com or call 215-862-5256.

