



SCWA Newsletter

SUMMER EDITION

JULY 2014

**Sewickley
Creek
Watershed
Association**

*Working Together
For A Better
Environment*

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UPG Capstone Senior Research Project at Lowber

Eric Deihl's University of Pittsburgh at Greensburg Capstone senior research project is growing plants to test the uptake of metals. Part of the project involves growing lettuce, tomatoes and sunflowers at SCWA's Lowber passive treatment site. The plants will be watered once a week using water from the first settling pond and grown in compost from a local farmer, housed in planters made of tires collected along the roadside. Following the first month, the plants will be watered with the water from the second to last settling pond, which contains high concentrations of iron, along with some aluminum and manganese.

After the plants have grown to maturity, they will be harvested and tested for their concentrations of iron, aluminum and manganese, the three common metals in the AMD water at the Lowber site. Each part of the plant will be tested separately to show if there is any difference in concentration in the roots, stalks or vegetables of

the plants. If the vegetables themselves contain levels of the three metals that comply with the Food and Drug Administration's standards, they will be safe to eat. The goal of this project is to produce a sustainable way to treat abandoned mine drainage, and also to find potentially useful applications of AMD.



(L-R) Dr. Mark Shaffer, Assoc. Professor of Chemistry, Eric Deihl, Sharon P. Smith, UPG President, and Tom Keller pose at Deihl's project site at Lowber.

Sewickley Creek Stocking Another Success!

The reality of a dream continues in the Sewickley Creek Watershed! For the third year in a row, SCWA and the West Newton Sportsmen's Association (WNSA) stocked trout in Sewickley Creek



(L-R) SCWA's Ted Curnow and Mark Mennaro, Scoutmaster of Troop 465 help stock trout in Sewickley Creek.

between Apples Mills Bridge and Lowber. WNSA president, Paul Angelcyk, beamed as club members, association members and other volunteers met on Saturday mornings in April and May along the banks of Sewickley Creek to carry buckets of trout to the water. Mark Mennaro, scoutmaster of Boy Scout Troup 465, and his scouts also helped with the stocking this year.

Back at the clubhouse, SCWA and WNSA provided hot dogs, hamburgers and other "fixings" for the volunteers, as they gained a better understanding of the organization's and the value of this partnership. All trout stocked were purchased from the sale of raffle tickets throughout the year. The tradition hopes to continue in 2015!

Indian Lake Assessment Underway

California University of PA's Water Pollution Biology class (an upper-level major's class) has been conducting a preliminary lake/watershed assessment through this past school year in cooperation with North Huntingdon Township at Indian Lake, a tributary to Sewickley Creek.

Dr. Robert S. Whyte, Associate Professor of Biological and Environmental Sciences said, "We are limited in what we can do, but this should give us a good picture of the lake's water quality and provide sufficient information for possible follow-up work throughout the summer and fall. We will look at soluble reactive phosphorus, total phosphorus, nitrate and ammonium, and a number of basic parameters including dissolved oxygen, turbidity, alkalinity, pH, conductivity and possible others. We will also look at the watershed and its potential impacts to the lake and hope to directly involve Norwin High School students in the study."

Awards Presented at Annual Fundraiser Banquet



Award recipients this year included the City of Greensburg, Westmoreland County Community College, West Newton Sportsmen's Association, Kathy Hamilton, and Nicholas Wolfe. Dorothy Bibby, an employee of Helper's Hardware, was also recognized for her ongoing fundraising efforts for the Association.

Guest speaker for the event was State Representative Mike Reese, who provided a detailed history of how many of our local communities originated from coal mining and coking operations. His presentation revealed how some of those activities resulted in the AMD discharges we are dealing with today. Rep. Reese credited local non-profit organizations like SCWA for their commitment and leadership in remediating many of these pollution and landscape blight issues.

Tom Keller, provided a brief "Who we are and what we do" presentation explaining how the organization was founded, and what projects SCWA is involved with. Nicholas Wolfe, Troop 465, presented his Eagle Scout project, which included the construction and installation of wood duck boxes, a purple martin house and new sign posts at the Brinkerton AMD treatment facility.

SCWA expresses its sincere appreciation to all who attended and supported the 2014 banquet, including event sponsors: University of Pittsburgh at Greensburg, Hepler's Hardware, The PT Group/Kraisinger Family Dentistry, Rachel Hoza, CPA, Westmoreland Conservation District, West Newton Sportsmen's Association, T.P. Electric, American Recovery Specialists, Adam Eidemiller, Inc., and Gibson-Thomas Engineering Co.

SCWA was very pleased to present Community Environmental Service Awards at its annual fundraiser banquet held March 8th at Giannilli's II Restaurant in Greensburg. Each year, the Association recognizes local individuals, businesses and groups for their leadership in conserving natural resources and improving the quality of life in our communities.

Environmental Programs Increase at Lowber Treatment Project



The SCWA Lowber Minewater treatment project is one of the largest outdoor classrooms in the area for University of Pittsburgh at Greensburg and California University students. The concept is to provide actual hands-on training in many different environmental facets available to be researched, studied and collected.

Sharon P. Smith, UPG President, Dr. Mark Stauffer, UPG Associate Chemistry Professor, and Dr. Robert Whyte, California University Associate Professor of Biological and Environmental Sciences participated in a two-hour tour conducted by Lewis Stout, SCWA tour guide and Bob Hedin, Iron Oxide Recovery. Hedin designed and maintains the Lowber Minewater Treatment facility for the Association.

Tom Keller, SCWA Executive Director, told the group that the Association wants to erect an environmental study pavilion with tables for student use as they collect, assemble and record the various data. The goal is to get college and high school students working side-by-side getting their feet wet and hands dirty while they learn!

Lewis Stout, SCWA Tour Guide, discusses environmental issues at Lowber with Alex and Rachel Hoza, Dr. Mark Stauffer and Sharon P. Smith, on a bridge that was built from funding from a Dominion/Western PA Conservancy mini grant.



Dr. Tim Savisky, UPG Biology Professor, and Mary Toland, UPG biology student, are conducting a macroinvertebrate sampling project to characterize the water quality above and below the Brinkerton AMD treatment area. The goal of the project is to document the projected improvement of the water quality as a result of the new treatment process at the site. Benthic macroinvertebrates are a good indicator of stream health.