



SCWA Newsletter

WINTER EDITION

JANUARY 2013

Sewickley Creek Watershed Association

*Working Together
For A Better
Environment*

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We're On The Web!
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Come Join Us for Dinner!

It's almost that time of year again! The 2013 Fundraiser Banquet will once again be held on Saturday, March 9 from 6:00 - 9:00 pm at Giannilli's II Restaurant located on Route 30 west of the Mountain View intersection. Dinner will include a hot buffet and cash bar will be available. Raffle prizes, as well as a 50/50 drawing will be given away.

At our 2012 banquet, guests won raffle prizes valued at \$1,300 including green fees at local golf courses, wine baskets and gift cards for area merchants. Individual tickets are \$25 each, and must be purchased in advance. Business sponsorships are available for \$250, which includes eight (8) dinner tickets, a one-year Association membership and recognition as a sponsor at the dinner as well as in our newsletter and on the SCWA Website.

Our guest speaker this year will be Ellen C. Keefe, Executive Director of Westmoreland Cleanways. The topic of her presentation will be "Sewickley Creek Watershed Association and Westmoreland Cleanways—Working Together to Protect our Watershed."

Your help is needed to make this fundraiser another exciting and successful event! This is an opportunity for all of us to celebrate our Association's achievements in conserving our natural resources and promoting recreation. We ask each member to invite a guest so we can showcase to them how we are improving the streams where they live. Hope to see you there!

Banquet Details

Saturday, March 9
6:00—9:00 pm

Giannilli's II, Route 30 West,
Greensburg

Tickets: \$25.00
Call (724) 836-8764
for reservations

Firestone Sponsors Lynch Field Tree Planting



Thank you to all of the volunteers and partners who assisted in Phase I of this restoration effort!

With a grant provided by the Bridgestone Americas Trust Fund, the first phase of stream bank stabilization was initiated along Jack's Run at Lynch Field in Greensburg. On November 10, 2012, volunteers from Firestone and SCWA planted 5 large deciduous trees and 15 shrubs, as well as reseeded the banks around the bridge to the swimming pool. The week before, the City of Greensburg maintenance Department, supervised by the Westmoreland Conservation District, excavated the eroded banks along that section of Jack's run and placed large boulders to prevent further erosion.

The area restored is part of a multi-phased project to repair sections of Jack's Run impaired by increased stormwater runoff.

Stormwater Under Control at WCCC Parking Lot

SCWA, cooperating with the Westmoreland Conservation District and Westmoreland County Community College, recently completed a project at the college's Youngwood campus to control stormwater runoff from the main parking lot. The project helped to improve water quality in a small tributary to Sewickley Creek running through the campus.

Prior to this project, uncontrolled runoff from the four-acre asphalt lot often overloaded the small stream, causing damage to the stream from flooding and erosion, as well as affecting aquatic habitat and life. Pollution problems occurring from the parking area included elevated runoff temperatures, trash & debris, sediment and automotive fluids.

After meetings with SCWA's Larry Myers and WCD's Jim Pillsbury, the college agreed to eliminate a 30' x 400' strip of the parking lot adjacent to the creek. Silvis Group performed the work by removing the pavement and excavating four bio-infiltration cells designed to capture and hold runoff from the parking lot, slowly releasing it into the soil. Over a dozen trees and 70 shrubs were planted to create a streamside buffer, and a rain garden and permeable concrete sidewalk were installed to complete the \$150,000 Growing Greener project



Photos courtesy of
Kathy Hamilton,
Westmoreland
Conservation District.

Sewickley Creek Watershed Association
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Remember to renew your SCWA Membership!

History of Brinkerton Coke Works

The H.C. Frick Coke Works at Brinkerton had 240 ovens and was served by The Pennsylvania Railroad on the Hecla Spur. In 1917, the Brinkerton Mine produced 209,775 tons of coal of which 97% was used for coke. This yielded a total production of over 136,000 tons of coke that year! The remaining coal was sold to local trade, used by the employees or used at the mine for steam and heat. That year, 201 ovens were operated for a total of 301 days and employed close to 200 people with no reported accidents. The superintendent of The Brinkerton Mine and Coke Works was John Henry Bitz. He served the plant for 25 years, retiring in 1929, eventually passing away June 20, 1932 in Alverton at the age of 72.

In July 1962 a trash fire burning too close to an abandoned drift opening of the mine ignited coal which burned through about five acres of underground mine and over an acre of outcrop. Mount Pleasant Township was forced to close a local road damaged by the fire and joined in an effort with The Interior Department Bureau of Mines and The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania to extinguish the blaze. In 1971, another interesting event occurred at the site when the PA Department of Environmental Protection announced that they were going to court to halt the illegal use of 40 coke ovens at Brinkerton. The complaint filed with the Commonwealth Court alleged that somebody was firing the ovens for over a year without first obtaining the necessary permits. The case was dismissed from court in April 1971. Stricter environmental laws enacted in the 1970's later brought an end to the "beehive" coke era.

Anyone having more information or photos of the Brinkerton Coke Works is asked to please contact the SCWA to assist in our historical account of this mine.