



SCWA Newsletter

WINTER EDITION

JANUARY 2015

Sewickley Creek Watershed Association

*Working Together
For A Better
Environment*

Board of Directors

Dr. Ellen Uschak,
President
Ted Curnow,
Vice President
James W. Pillsbury,
Secretary
Larry D. Myers,
Treasurer
Ray Bennett
Darl Dodson
Dean Nelson
Tim Savinsky

Newsletter Contributors

Tom Keller
Ellen Uschak

Contact Us:

PO Box 323
Youngwood, PA 15697
Office Phone (724) 610-0829
scwa@sewickleycreek.com

Thomas W. Keller
Executive Director

**NOTICE: SCWA Monthly Strip
Tickets must be claimed within
30 days of the jackpot drawing.**

We're On The Web!
www.sewickleycreek.com

Now Taking Reservations for 2015 Annual Banquet!

Please plan to join us at our annual banquet being held Saturday, March 7 from 6:00 - 9:00 pm at Giannilli's II Restaurant on Route 30 East of Greensburg. This year, we have reserved the entire banquet facility so there will be plenty of room for everyone. Dinner will be a hot buffet with two entrees, salad and rolls, vegetables, dessert and coffee. A cash bar is also available.

Tom Keller, Executive Director, will provide an update on projects and activities completed in 2014 and planned for 2015. Our guest speakers this year will be professors Mark Stauffer and Tim Savinsky and several students from the University of Pittsburgh Greensburg Campus. They have been conducting water quality analyses on tributaries of Sewickley Creek and will be reporting on the health of the stream. And, as in the past, we will be presenting awards to a number of individuals, schools and businesses

to recognize their environmental leadership in the community.

Come learn how YOUR organization is helping to improve the quality of life in our neighborhoods.

Banquet Details

Saturday, March 7
6:00—9:00 pm

Giannilli's II, Route 30 East
Greensburg

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



A bench and tree to remember founding member Wayne Brinker now stand at The History and Railroad Museum in Youngwood.

~ In Remembrance ~

Summer 2014 brought the passing of one of the Sewickley Creek Watershed Association's founding members, Mr. Wayne Brinker. Wayne worked tirelessly for the organization, whether it be on our various projects, selling tickets or manning the kitchen at our earlier banquets.

He served on the Board of Directors well into his eighties. When asked how he was doing, he would reply, "I'm here!" In his memory, a Cherokee Dogwood tree has been planted and a bench placed at The History and Railroad Museum in Youngwood. With Mother Nature's help, the tree should provide shade and color for many years. Wayne will be deeply missed by all at SCWA.



Danielle Minkus, California University of PA undergrad, taking some GPS points at Lowber. The Lowber facility provides endless opportunities for hands-on environmental study and research for many students. Cal U students are continuing with the inventory of the dikes and vegetation at the Lowber site with the goal of producing an inventory and map in ArcGIS.



In 2015, a kayak/canoe access area will be constructed on Sewickley Creek at the Lowber Facility. The Association applied to the Western PA Conservancy for the Canoe Access Development Fund and was selected to receive funding. The Westmoreland Conservation District will design the access area, with construction planned for the spring.

Progress at Brinkerton Site



SCWA moved one step closer to having electric at its Brinkerton site. Early this fall, a small group of volunteers built a concrete pad around a newly installed utility pole. Afterwards, it was decided to move forward with the Association's portion of the electrical hookup. This included the installation of a new 200 amp 480/277v 3-phase overhead service, breaker panels and motor starters for the two blower motors. This work was completed in November. A security fence was also installed by Hepler's Hardware to help protect the new equipment along with patrols from the PA Fish & Boat Commission and PA Game Commission.

UPG Brinkerton Research Project

Students completed their study of macroinvertebrates upstream and downstream of the Brinkerton AMD site. They focused on how the two areas processed leaf litter in the stream.

The method involved assembling packets of fresh leaves in a mesh bag and attaching them to bricks placed in the stream for 2 weeks. The leaves included native species (Red Maple, American Elm, White Oak, Black Walnut) as well as invasive species (Japanese Knotweed.)

Leaves in the stream are eaten by aquatic invertebrates, which are then eaten by fish, so the leaves are a basic food in the stream food-web. In a healthy stream, leaves falling in the water would be eaten up quickly by invertebrates.

Mine drainage pollution effects the ability of invertebrates to live in a stream, and invasive plants are not as edible for the invertebrates as native species. This was the first study we know of that examined both the effects of AMD and invasive plants on stream biology. The results, as expected, indicated that there were fewer macroinvertebrates downstream of the AMD discharge, and it was also noted that fewer macroinvertebrates were eating the invasive knotweed leaves.



Mesh leaf packs were anchored into the stream using bricks and retrieved after a two week monitoring period.