

# Bucktail Watershed Association

Volume 2014, Issue 1

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## *Bucktail Watershed Association*

Contact information:

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### **Important Dates:**

Monthly meeting  
1st Tuesday of each month  
Cameron County Courthouse  
6:30 pm

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### **BWA Board of Directors**

**Steve VanEerden**-  
Chairman  
**Kirk Baine**y, Vice Chair and  
Secretary  
**Mark McLean**, Treasurer  
**Kyle Banks**  
**Stan Hastings**  
**Denny Neal**

## **SRBC Monitoring the Watershed Remotely**

The Susquehanna River Basin Commission (SRBC) is an agency that coordinates water resource efforts of the three states within the Susquehanna River basing as well as the federal government. It's mission is to "enhance public welfare through comprehensive planning, water supply allocation and management of the water resources."

As part of this mission, the SRBC has established a remote water quality monitoring network (RWQMN) to keep track of water quality issues within the watershed. Through grants and other funding, the SRBC has been able to establish remote water quality monitoring stations like the one pictured to the right throughout the Susquehanna watershed that collect baseline data on water quality without the manpower required of traditional sampling. These units sample water temperature, pH, specific conductance, dissolved oxygen (DO) and turbidity. Additional information on these parameters is available on the SRBC website.

You may have seen units like this one throughout our watershed. The SRBC currently has remote monitoring stations along Portage Creek, Hunts Run, Hicks Run and along the Driftwood Branch above Emporium. The SRBC also hopes



SRBC water monitoring station. Photo courtesy of the SRBC website: <http://lmdw.srbc.net>

to establish a station at the mouth of Sterling Run in Lumber Township. You can learn more about these monitoring efforts and review the data collected in your watershed by visiting the SRBC website:

**<http://mdw.srbc.net>**

## **3rd Annual DriftwoodStock in the Works**

The BWA board is busy planning the third annual Bucktail Watershed Association DriftwoodStock picnic. This is a great event for members to join together and celebrate the accomplishments of the past year. As in the past, we ask participants to bring a covered dish to pass and the BWA will provide the entertainment and education. The event is open to members and those that wish they were. Stay tuned for the date, location, and entertainment have to be announced. If you would like to help with planning, please contact the BWA at [bucktailwatershed@yahoo.com](mailto:bucktailwatershed@yahoo.com) We hope to see you all there for an evening of fun and music!!

## Weed Work in the Watershed: Seeing Results

The Bucktail Watershed Association and the Sinnemahoning Invasive Plant Management Area continue to work to control some invasive plant species in the Sinnemahoning watershed. Last year, we treated 42 (gross) miles of stream bank for Japanese Knotweed from the headwaters of the Driftwood Branch watershed to Stillhouse Run as well as a few large, but isolated populations along the First Fork and Freeman Run. This summer, we will continue our push along the Driftwood Branch downstream toward Sterling Run. We cover fewer and fewer stream miles as the knotweed patches get wider along the stream bottom. Happily, it is becoming more difficult to find any knotweed on the Driftwood Branch or its tributaries upstream of Emporium.

The BWA also continues to treat persistent populations of mile-a-minute vine. Unlike knotweed, which is a perennial and produces relatively few seeds, the mile-a-minute vine is an annual that can produce up to 1,400 seeds *per plant*. This spring, we treated every known population of mile-a-minute with a pre-emergent herbicide that has drastically reduced the number of seedlings that sprout in each patch.

The Sinnemahoning Invasive Plant Management Area (SIPMA) is the local Cooperative Weed Management Area; a group of agencies, local businesses and nonprofit organizations that work together to control invasive species. The BWA is the financial manager for this organization. One of SIPMA's summer project for 2014 is to eradicate several small populations of an invasive tree called tree-of-heaven (*Ailanthus altissima*). Several patches exist in the village of Driftwood as well as along highways. Tree-of-heaven is a native of China and Taiwan that was brought to Pennsylvania as an ornamental. It has been report-



Tree-of-heaven. Photo courtesy of Doug Goldman—USDA-NRCS PLANTS database



A picture is worth a thousand words! This site along a small tributary to the Portage Branch was completely covered with Knotweed in 2010. After 3 years of treatment the native plant community has returned.

ed as an invasive species in 30 states and has become a problem in southern states, especially Virginia. In addition to causing damage to sewers and foundations, tree-of-heaven crowds out native vegetation and produces a toxin that prevent the growth of other plants.

The tree-of-heaven is easily mistaken for sumac species, or even ash and black walnut because of its compound leaf structure. However, the leaves and twigs give off an odor when crushed leading to the nickname stinking sumac. SIPMA hopes to get control populations before they spread within the watershed. If you think you have found a population of tree-of-heaven, please contact Tanya Meyer at [tanya@sipma.org](mailto:tanya@sipma.org).

Interesting fact: the tree-of-heaven was the tree that "grows in Brooklyn." Let's help it stay there!

## Conservation District Projects Continue to Clean Up the Streams

Planning for projects this construction season has been the norm for the Conservation District the past few months. There are several streambank stabilization and fish habitat enhancement projects in store for the summer. Projects are slated for Driftwood Branch, East Cowley Run, Sterling Run, East Hicks Run, North Creek, and West Creek. Structures installed include modified mudsill cribwalls, log crossvanes, multilog deflectors, and rootwad reclamation. The projects will be a total of 2600 linear feet of stabilization and habitat enhancement and over 70 structures.

There are also several projects shovel-ready for the Sterling Run AMD restoration. Last year, 2 treatment systems were installed in the May Hollow drainage. The MAYH49 site which is an old, deep-mine that was the major contributor of acid mine drainage (AMD) to May Hollow was completed and is working perfectly. Mine water entering the system with a pH of around 3.0 is leaving the system as clean water with a pH of close to 7.0. The Cameron County Landfill was the

second completed site and is also working as planned. Now water quality in May Hollow is much better than it has been in the last 50 years. In 2014 2 treatment systems will be built. One in Finley Run and one in Portable Run. The FIN32/33 site is the biggest contributor to Finely Run and the entire Sterling Run drainage. This passive treatment system will cleanup over 60% of the AMD entering Finley Run. The PORT14 site is the largest and really only significant discharge to Portable Run. The construction of these systems is a major leap forward toward our ultimate goal of bringing Sterling Run back to the beautiful wild trout stream it was before the early coal mining days.

As one can see, there is a lot planned for the Conservation District in 2014. We will continue to work towards our goal of repairing and making Cameron County's beautiful waterways that much better.

## Keeping an Eye On Invasives: Watching the Water

You may have noticed a focus on invasive plant species in the last several years and wondered why the BWA is so concerned with the plants. Invasive plants can out compete the native plants for growing space along out streams. The problem: loss of native plant cover may increase erosion impacting water quality as well as decreasing cover for native animal species. Some invasive species (including Japanese knotweed) may also negatively affect stream macroinvertebrate (mayflies, stoneflies etc.) communities that feed on their leaves.

There are in-stream invasive to watch out for as well. Though not currently found in our watershed, a species of growing concern is Didymo (*Didymosphenia geminata*). Didymo is an exotic algae species that has been found in western Maryland and northeastern Pennsylvania streams. It may have the ability to negatively affect

*Prevent the spread of  
invasive species by  
cleaning your equipment*

stream insect and mussel communities and is possibly dispersed (accidentally) by anglers. Several non-native crayfish species including the rusty crayfish (*Orconectes rusticus*) may be a growing problem within PA watersheds. Nonnative species displace natives and may exist at densities high enough to impact other stream inhabitants like mayflies and caddisflies and may reduce fish reproduction by eating eggs.

Though many of these species may be difficult to identify, you can do your part to prevent their spread into our watershed by cleaning your angling equipment thoroughly before entering out streams and avoiding dumping extra bait in the stream or transporting bait species between streams. For more information on aquatic invasive species visit the PA fish and boat commission website: <http://fishandboat.com/ais.htm>

### BWA Members:

**Please renew your membership now for 2014. This helps us keep track of membership. Your membership dollars help our work to improve the watershed. Our organization is managed by volunteers, so we have no overhead. Every dollar goes directly to watershed work.**

**BUCKTAIL WATERSHED ASSOCIATION  
P.O. BOX 123  
EMPORIUM, PA 15834**

BUCKTAIL WATERSHED ASSOCIATION WINTER NEWSLETTER ENCLOSED

**BUCKTAIL WATERSHED ASSOCIATION  
MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION**

If you are interested in becoming a member or renewing your membership, please send this form along with cash or a check for the annual dues to:

Bucktail Watershed Association  
P.O. Box 123  
Emporium, PA 15834



\_\_\_\_\_  
Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Address

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Phone

Sign up for:

- Individual Membership
- Family Membership

Annual Dues

\$5.00

\$7.00

Amount Enclosed \_\_\_\_\_

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Email Address

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Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date