

Bucktail Watershed Association

Bucktail Watershed Association

Contact information:

P.O. Box 123
Emporium, PA 15834
www.bucktailwatershed.com
bucktailwatershed@yahoo.com

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 Bainey, Vice Chair and Secretary
Mark McLean, Treasurer
Kyle Banks
Josh Morgan
Stan Hastings
Denny Neal

BWA Plans for 2015 Weed Work

In 2015, the Bucktail Watershed Association is planning to continue work controlling invasive plant species in the Sinnemahoning Creek Watershed. The BWA currently has funding from the Sinnemahoning Stakeholders Committee (from the Norfolk Southern chemical spill settlement), PA Growing Greener, The US Forest Service and The Dominion/Western Pennsylvania Conservancy mini-grant program to work on Japanese knotweed and mile-a-minute vine.

Many Cameron County residents and landowners are familiar with Japanese knotweed, also known as “bamboo” (though it is not a bamboo) and locally as “Moody’s cow feed.” It is a large, perennial plant that is aggressively invading stream banks throughout Pennsylvania, including the Driftwood Branch of Sinnemahoning Creek. This plant crowds out the native plants, and has little wildlife habitat value. Deer do not eat it, birds do not eat the seeds. Its growth is so dense that tree seed-



A patch of Japanese knotweed after spraying

lings are unable to sprout underneath a patch of knotweed. This will stop natural forest succession. Fish in Pennsylvania streams require the cool water temperatures provided by shaded streams, but dense stands of knotweed will eventually push back riparian vegetation and trees from the bank of the creek.

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What is the Bucktail Watershed Association?

The Bucktail Watershed Association is a non-profit organization dedicated to maintaining and improving the health of our beautiful watershed by working to improve water quality and wildlife habitat. It is run by a volunteer Board of Directors, and holds monthly meetings on Tuesdays at 6:30 PM in the Cameron County Courthouse. Everyone is invited to join us there and learn more about the work and share ideas for future projects.

Weed Work Plan

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Since 2009, the BWA has been working to control Japanese knotweed. Starting at the top of the Driftwood Branch and working downstream, the BWA has treated knotweed on the Driftwood Branch from Indian Camp (above Rich Valley) to Moatville (near Square Timber Run, below the Emporium Country Club), as well as the tributaries of Clear Creek, Four Mile Run, Cook's Run, The Portage Branch, and small sections of May Hollow and Tannery Run. We have surveyed and sprayed about 30 gross miles of stream, from top to bottom. We have also treated some random patches of knotweed around Emporium. If you have any knotweed located above Square Timber, please contact us and we will remove it. Locals will see the BWA staff and contractors starting work on this weed in the late summer and early fall.

Unlike knotweed, mile-a-minute vine is an annual plant, and it makes a lot of seeds which are spread by the birds, so it pops up in unexpected places. The BWA has been working on a population west of Emporium, but in 2013 we discovered a large patch along the Driftwood near Sterling Run. Cameron County landowners can help protect the watershed from further



Identifying mile-a-minute? Here's what you can look for this spring!

invasion by learning what the plant looks like and contacting the BWA if you find it. The BWA has requested funding to continue to spray this plant this coming spring and summer. It will be sprayed with a pre-emergent herbicide to kill the seedlings in early spring and sprayed again in the late spring to get any remaining plants.

Water Quality Data Now Available Online

The Susquehanna River Basin Commission (SRBC) established the Remote Water Quality Monitoring Network in January 2010 in response to natural gas drilling activities that were starting up in the basin. More than 50 water quality monitoring stations are set up and have been operating in watersheds that are experiencing hydrologic fracturing shale gas development. Each station continuously monitors the following parameters: pH, temperature, specific conductance, dissolved oxygen, turbidity, and relative water depth.

These testing parameters are defined by the US Geological Service:

Water temperature is not only important to

swimmers and fisherman, but also to industries and even fish and algae. Temperature also can affect the ability of water to hold oxygen as well as the ability of organisms to resist certain pollutants.

pH is a measure of how acidic/basic water is. Since pH can be affected by chemicals in the water, pH is an important indicator of water that is changing chemically.

Specific conductance is a measure of the ability of water to conduct an electrical current. It is highly dependent on the amount of dissolved solids (such as salt) in the water. Specific conductance is an important water-quality measurement because it gives a good idea of

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Update from Sinnemahoning Invasive Plant Management Area

The Bucktail Watershed Association is the financial manager for the Sinnemahoning Invasive Plant Management Area (SIPMA), a group of public and private groups who work together to control invasive plants.

In 2014, SIPMA treated some small stands of tree of heaven. While the name may sound pleasant, this invasive tree grows quickly and makes thousands of seeds, out-competing our native trees.

Like knotweed, it does not provide much habitat for wildlife, and its roots can also cause a trouble around structures. Fortunately, there is very little tree of heaven in our area. There are a few stands remaining around the borough of Driftwood, and a big patch at the Cameron-Clinton County line. There was patch along the First Fork, right next to Highway 872, and one up in Clear Creek, but those were sprayed and cut. It's very rewarding to be able to remove this invasive tree.

SIPMA also sprayed a huge patch of Japanese barberry near the town of Emporium. This thorny shrub can take over the forest, and although it has many berries on it, few wildlife species will eat them. However, the dense growth encourages deer ticks to breed there.

The BWA has also received funding from the US Forest Service to work on knotweed in Potter County, treating parts of Nelson Run, Freeman Run near Austin and the First Fork. This is a total of 15 miles of stream.

An important goal of the SIPMA is education, and in 2014, we did three workshops on invasive plants, in conjunction with the Sinne-

*Plan to attend SIPMA
invasive plant control
workshops this summer!*

mahoning State Park. Two workshops were about invasive vines, with a special focus on mile-a-minute, and one was on controlling Japanese knotweed. These events were well-attended and well-received, and we plan to repeat them in 2015. The vines workshop will be held March 27th, and the knotweed workshop on August 21st. Continuing education credits are available. Please see the SIPMA Facebook page for dates (TBA).

SIPMA meetings are open to the public and held three times per year. Our next meeting will be February 25 at 10AM at the DCNR Building in Emporium. All are welcome. Our speaker, Pete Zoschg, will discuss the control of goatsrue.

The SIPMA thanks **Seneca Resources** for their very generous cash donation to the cause of fighting invasive plants.



SIPMA and Sinnemahoning State Park hold a knotweed control workshop

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BWA Members:

Please renew your membership now, at the beginning of 2015. 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, so ever dollar goes directly to watershed work.

Water Monitoring Project Planned for 2015

The Bucktail Watershed Association is planning to lead a network of volunteers to monitor creeks and streams in the Sinnemahoning Creek watershed. We have all of the equipment and supplies needed for this work, and will hire a coordinator to manage the program.

Most Americans associate water pollution with industrial point source impacts such as factories and spills. In 2001, less than a quarter of those surveyed nationwide were aware that nonpoint source pollution (pollution from diffuse sources) is the leading cause of watershed impairment. In the Sinnemahoning Creek Watershed, nonpoint source pollution can come from forestry activities, abandoned coalmines, oil and gas well drilling, agricultural practices, acid precipita-

tion, and dirt and gravel roads. Watershed monitoring, including chemical, physical and biological factors, can give us valuable information and up-to-date status of watershed health.

Volunteer watershed monitoring programs are an excellent way to collect information about the condition of our streams—and many people can cover more ground than one person. Community members and camp owners can test their favorite stream several times throughout the year to learn about its health and what is going on upstream. Healthy streams support healthy fish and wildlife populations.

The BWA will hold several free trainings in the spring and lend out equipment to people interested in participating. If you are interested in participating, please call Steve VanEerden at 814-486-1740.

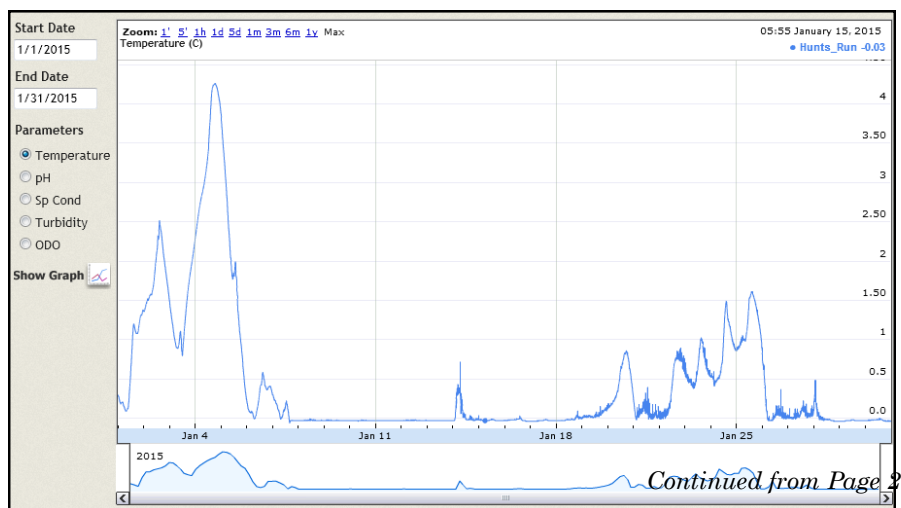
Water Quality Data Online

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the amount of dissolved material in the water.

Turbidity is the amount of particulate matter that is suspended in water. Turbidity measures the scattering effect that suspended solids have on light: the higher the intensity of scattered light, the higher the turbidity. Turbidity makes the water cloudy or opaque.

Dissolved oxygen: the oxygen dissolved in lakes, rivers, and oceans is crucial for the organisms and creatures living in it. As the amount of dissolved oxygen drops below normal levels in water bodies, the water quality is harmed and creatures begin to die off.



Water temperature recorded from the Hunt's Run monitoring station in January 2015 shown on www.srbc.net

The data are collected at five-minute intervals and uploaded to SRBC's publicly accessible website (www.srbc.net). There are a number of active monitoring stations in our own Sinnemahoning Creek watershed. They are on West Creek, the Upper Driftwood, the Portage Branch, Hunts Run, and Sterling Run. We encourage all to review the SRBC site. The amount of data is impressive, and it shows that the quality of our water is excellent!

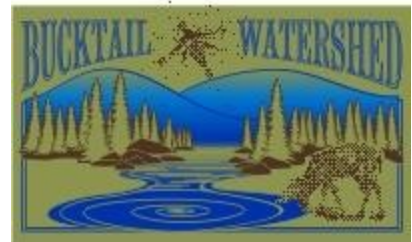
**BUCKTAIL WATERSHED ASSOCIATION
P.O. BOX 123
EMPORIUM, PA 15834**

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 _____

Email Address

Signature

Date