

Bucktail Watershed Association

Volume 2018, Issue 1

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Bucktail Watershed Association

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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,
Kirk Bainey
Gary Russell
Josh Morgan
Denny Neal

Conservation District Enhances Waterways

A year in review from Todd Delucia

It was a busy year with stream projects as usual in 2017. In all, 7 stream-bank stabilization and fish habitat enhancement projects were completed in Salt Run, Sizer Run, Portage Creek, Brooks Run, Wyckoff Run, Sinnemahoning Creek and George B. Stevenson Dam.

The Salt Run Habitat Restoration took place at the Children's-Only fishing area at the Andrews Farm. Old structures installed years ago had become rotten and were not functioning well. The old jack dam structures were removed and 4 log cross vanes were installed.

The Bucktail Rod and Gun club project took place in Sizer Run. The existing splash dam that acted as the intake structure for the club pond had suffered



Cross vanes installed along Wyckoff Run. Cross vanes deflect high flows away from the stream banks and help form deeper pools

from several years of flooding and the structure had become rotten. We removed the structure and installed a new crossvane in it's place to protect the intake pipes and allow adequate water at all times of the year.

The Little League Field Fish Habitat Enhancement was the wrap up of the Portage Pool Habitat Initiative. Studies showed that lower Portage Creek was lacking pool habitat. This grant was to create more

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The BWA Needs YOU as a Member in 2018!

The State of the Bucktail Watershed Association

Last year was an interesting and challenging year for the BWA that promises to continue, at least early on, into 2018. As you may recall, last year's newsletter profiled our new SIPMA (Sinnemahoning Invasive Plant Management Area) coordinator, Nikki Ryan, hired in November of 2016 and our new Board of Directors member, Dr. Kimberly Bohn, who came aboard in January of 2017. Nikki has since secured full time employment and resigned in September and Kimberly removed herself from the board in December, citing a full plate at work and a long and dicey winter drive to attend board meetings. We thank them both for short but productive relationships with the association. Additionally, Kim Lott, having served on the board since November 2015, tendered her resignation in July. We wish her well with future endeavors.

We are facing a new year with a deficit of 2 board members and no SIPMA coordinator. Fortunately, herbicide spraying operations were well under way and nearing completion for the season when Nikki departed and, with 3 very competent and reliable herbicide application contractors, invasive plant treatment goals were met. Public outreach efforts were cut back last year with less people to help out but that will, hopefully, be a temporary situation. Our relationship with the conservation district remains solid with continuing chances to partner with

them on stream improvement projects. Water quality monitoring opportunities are still available for anyone that is interested.

Board of Directors' reorganization plans for 2018 are still somewhat in flux but the association has been fortunate in hiring Kate Morgan on an occasional basis to help pick up the slack with some administrative details as they relate to keeping the spray program afloat. Kate is the Assistant District Manager of the Cameron County Conservation District and we certainly appreciate her moonlighting to help us out. Options are being considered as to how to do business this year regarding grants, interacting with our contractors, and other projects. Also, we're searching for 2 more board members in order to bring our 7 member board to full compliment. If you have a genuine interest in the health of Cameron County's predominant watershed and have a couple hours a month to spare, please give consideration to throwing your hat in the ring. Also, if you have ideas for new or improving existing projects, feel free to get involved. Meetings are the first Tuesday of each month at 6:30 PM in the county courthouse.

In the meantime, the association very much needs your support by renewing your membership. Membership fees remain quite modest so that nearly anyone can afford to be part of our efforts to maintain, improve and advocate for the invaluable aquatic and riparian resources of our beautiful county.



Native plants replace invasive Japanese knotweed after a BWA intervention

Weeds in the Watershed

To the left is a picture taken in August of 2017 on Hopp's Island. The island is below the confluence of the Portage and Driftwood branches.

This island was thick with Japanese knotweed when we began the spraying several years ago. During the first few years it took hundreds of gallons of herbicide mix and several days to treat. In the late summer of 2017 it took just several hours and less than 1 backpack (3 gallons) to treat.

Many areas are coming back with native plants. Others are coming back with Japanese stiltgrass. There are challenges but the spraying program works! Read more about the work by the BWA to control invasive weeds in the watershed

Conservation District Adds Amenities to the Watershed

Continued from page 1

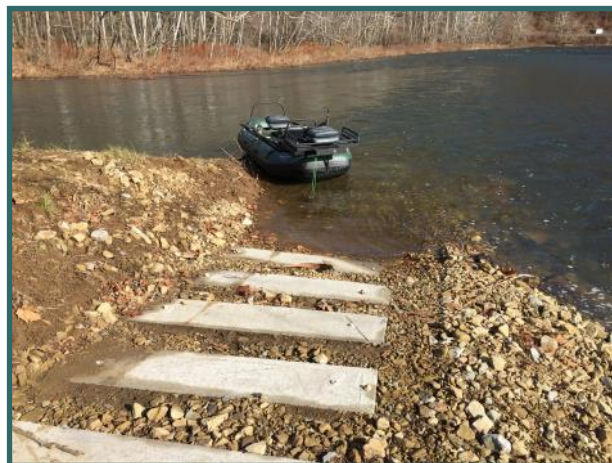
pools and was for the construction of 6 log cross vanes throughout the lower 6 miles of Portage Creek. The final cross vane was installed near the Little League field and was the last one closing out that program.

Work was completed at Sinnemahoning State Park on 2 different projects. The lake was lowered and the lake was dredged removing thousands of tons of sediment from the lake. As part of this, Brooks Run was realigned so that it did not enter near the boat launching area causing sedimentation there and making it difficult to launch watercrafts. As part of this the Conservation District worked with the contractor to install 2 log cross vanes as additional habitat in Brooks Run and to assist with grade control of the new stream channel. Also at the park we worked with PA Fish and Boat Commission, Sinnemahoning State Park and many volunteers including several from the Bucktail Watershed Association to install over 250 lake habitat structures. Two hundred short plank vertical structures and 54 porcupine cribs were constructed. Short plank vertical structures are geared towards the larger fish like smallmouth and largemouth bass to use. They can sit in wait and ambush prey. The porcupine cribs are geared towards smaller fish for protection. This in turn brings the game fish trying to attack those fish.

The Wycoff Dam Removal and Stream Restoration



Short-plank vertical structures are created to provide habitat for large game-fish in the lake.



A boat launch was created at the confluence of the Driftwood branch and the Bennett's branch of Sinnemahoning Creek.

was partially completed. This was completed at the Children's only fishing area near the Wycoff Cooperative Nursery. Two dams were removed that were impeding fish passage. Four log Cross vanes were installed to increase habitat and one of the structures acted at the new intake for the hatchery. In 2018, 2 more structures will be installed.

The District partnered with Bucktail Watershed Association, DCNR, Lumber Heritage, Western PA Conservancy, and the Cameron County Canoe and Kayak Classic to install a boat launch at the confluence of the Driftwood Branch and Bennetts Branch of Sinnemahoning Creek. This will act as the take out for the annual Canoe and Kayak Classic. This will also be a great take out for anybody paddling the Bennetts Branch as well or putting in to head down the Sinnemahoning.

2018 is already shaping up to be a busy year as well with streambank stabilization and fish habitat enhancement projects slated for Driftwood Branch, Sterling Run, Wycoff Run, and North Creek. In addition, the District just received funding for 3 new passive treatment systems in Finley Run and May Hollow for our continue efforts to clean up acid mine drainage (AMD) in the Sterling Run Watershed. We are for the first time seeing aquatic life in some areas of Finley Run, Portable Run, and May Hollow that haven't seen life in over 50 years.

The BWA seeks new invasive species in the Watershed

Our work to control invasive plants along the Driftwood Branch and its tributaries leads to improved water quality and stream bank stability. We focus our efforts on Japanese knotweed, Mile-A- Minute, Asiatic or Oriental bittersweet, Japanese barberry, Japanese stilt grass, Common and glossy buckthorn and purple loosestrife. This project will continue to manage invasive plants under the BWA's proven method of monitoring invasive plants and treating them through contractors by allowing us the latitude to determine what plant, method of treatment is required for the area of concern. The method of early detection and rapid response also allows us the flexibility to shift our focus is a new invasive plant or area of infestation is discovered. This method was proven, in the last spraying season, when a contractor was spraying Japanese knotweed along the Driftwood Branch and discovered Mile-A-Minute vine.

The majority of this grant request will fund licensed commercial herbicide applicators to treat Japanese knotweed populations using a proven treatment protocol. We treat knotweed with an herbicide called glyphosate, in a formulation approved by the EPA for use near water, in the late summer when the plant is drawing energy into its roots for the winter. This damages and kills the plant's root and rhizome system. In this and future newsletters, we will profile other invasive species so you can be part of the team working to detect these species in the watershed



American bittersweet (*C. scandens*). Photo: Stacey Leicht Young, USGS

Asiatic or Oriental bittersweet

(*Celastrus orbiculatus*) is a perennial, woody vine that quickly climbs over and smothers native vegetation, especially trees, which may die from excessive shading or breakage; the increased weight can lead to uprooting and blow-over during high winds and/or heavy snowfalls. Oriental bittersweet is displacing our native American bittersweet through competition and hybridization. A large population is in the village of Cameron.



Purple loosestrife can take over wetland habitats crowding out native plants and reducing diversity. Photo from the USFWS.

Purple loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*)

invades wetlands, outcompeting and replacing native grasses, sedges, and other flowering plants that provide a higher quality source of nutrition for wildlife. It will form dense, homogeneous stands that restrict native wetland plant species and reduce wildlife habitat. So far there are only limited populations, but because of the aggressive nature of the plant, we are actively treating the locations while scouting for new areas.

We will do treatments in July, before the seeds have set, we will hand pull smaller plants and apply glyphosate approved for use in wetlands to the older, larger plants. This will be repeated later in the summer when the plants are more susceptible to herbicide. We will also continue to spray any loosestrife that we find along the creek banks.

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