

Cooks Current

"To protect, preserve and improve the quality of water, land and life in the Cooks Creek Watershed"

Volume 2, Issue 4

Newsletter of the Cooks Creek Watershed Association

Fall 2005

2006 CCWA Events

• **Regular Board Meetings:**
Springtown Fire House 7:30 PM
Dec 22, 2005, Jan 26, Feb 23,
Mar 23, Apr 27, May 25, Jun 22,
Jul 27, Aug 24, Sept 28, Oct 26,
Nov 16, Dec 21.

All are welcome! We appreciate your involvement!

- *April 1 (no kidding) Spring Cleanup*
- *April 22 Annual Meeting*
- *June 17 Mini Monster Mayhem*
- *October 14 Fall Fellowship Dinner*
- *November 4 Fall Cleanup*



See insert for details.

Cooks Current is a publication of the Cooks Creek Watershed Association.

Board Members:

President: W. Scott Douglas

Treasurer: Margaret McDonald

Membership Chair: Sherry Brodhead

Recording Secretary: Jim Orben

Lois Oleksa

Hans Reimann

Stephen Smith, MD

Water Crisis in Springfield Township

By: W. Scott Douglas

The Springfield Township Board of Supervisors (BOS) is currently facing a huge dilemma: do they face the cost of maintaining and upgrading a decades-old water distribution infrastructure alone, or do they sell the system to an outside agency?

The village of Springtown's water is currently supplied by a Township-owned water system built early in the 20th century. It includes gravity-fed springs and a modern well drawing water out of the limestone valley of the Cooks Creek Watershed. The system supplies water to over 200

homes. Originally, the system was privately run by the village residents who built it, but was purchased by the Township in 1976.

Until recently, the system was operated and managed by the Springtown Water Authority, which was disbanded by the BOS a couple years ago, amid a controversy involving allegations of mismanagement.

Last year the BOS hired Bucks County Water and Sewer Authority (BCWSA) to operate the system. Since then, the BCWSA has offered to buy the system from Springfield for as little as \$100,000. Why such a small amount, for

such an important system?

BCWSA's engineer, Carroll Engineering, gave the BOS an estimate of about \$1,000,000 worth of repairs and upgrades needed to bring the system up to BCWSA standards. This makes the current system a huge financial liability to the Township.

If the BOS sells the system, BCWSA would make repairs and manage the system, but would also obtain the right to expand the system as they see fit. The acquisition of the system would also give them the right to charge hookup fees and to raise rates after three years.

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Cooks Creek Watershed Association— Who Are We and What Do We Do?

This is not our first newsletter but it is the first time we have circulated our newsletter to over 3,000 members of the Cooks Creek Watershed community. You may or may not know who we are and what we do, but read on! You might be surprised at some of the activities in which we are involved.

Cooks Creek Watershed Association (CCWA) was organized in 1974. Our mission: "To protect, preserve and improve the quality of water, land and life in the Cooks Creek Watershed." Community action and education of and communication with

the community are strategies we use to carry out our mission.

Cooks Creek Watershed is a 30-square-mile limestone valley watershed in northern Bucks County. The main stem of Cooks Creek flows in an easterly direction into the Delaware River. The watershed area consists of a number of small, mostly unnamed tributaries in Springfield and Durham Townships. Some of the headwater tributaries are located in Lower Saucon Township, Northampton County. Areas of the watershed are also found in Upper Saucon and Williams Townships in Northamp-

ton County and Haycock and Richland Townships in Bucks County.

In the late 1980s, after much work on the part of the members of CCWA, the classification of Cooks Creek was changed from "warm water fishery" to "cold water fishery". It was given the highest designation that can be given to a stream in Pennsylvania, "exceptional value waters", by the state's Department of Environmental Protection. CCWA realized that the high quality of the water of Cooks Creek sup-

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From Across the Board

Although our annual Covered Dish Dinner was cancelled due to almost 11 inches of rain, we have had an exciting few months since our last newsletter. As many of you know, the turnout for the Springfield Township public meetings on the water system were heavily attended by friends of the Cooks Creek Watershed. The voices were both numerous and unanimous in their support for the protection of our Watershed and the need for conscientious decision making on the part of our elected officials. Not only did residents from Springtown and the Watershed speak out against any decision which might result in loss of local control of our resources, but we also received considerable support from surrounding townships and other resource groups like Trout Unlimited, the Gallows Run Watershed Association and the Delaware Riverkeeper. I cannot express thanks enough for each of you who came, whether you spoke out or not. Although it appeared to be touch and go for a while, the Supervisors in Springfield finally relented and formed an *ad hoc* committee to study the options available for the repair and future maintenance of the public water system in Springtown. For more details on the ad hoc committee, please see the article inside this issue.

The CCWA took advantage of the heightened interest in Watershed issues to bring together some of the local townships and groups at our last Board meeting to discuss the formation of a regional EAC to provide a forum for environmental issues of regional concern. Representatives from Durham, Springfield, Lower Saucon, Gallows Run WA, Heritage Conservancy and others were in attendance. It was decided that the CCWA and the GRWA will take the lead to provide workshops on topics of regional interest. The first workshop will take place this winter on the topic of the Highlands Act. Keep a close eye on the website for updates (www.cooks creekpa.org).

On other matters: we received notice from the office of Senator Wonderling that our grant application for the Adopt-a-Reach program has been approved. As soon as we get our contract and our equipment, I'll be reaching out for volunteers to attend a workshop on water quality monitoring. Please take a look at the website and pick your reach, then let me know you'd like to volunteer. If you haven't noticed yet, we finally got the



Clockwise from Bottom Left: Karyn Oleksa, Sherry Brodhead, W. Scott Douglas, Margaret McDonald, Lois Oleksa, Hans Reiman looking at the new sign!
Picture by Ellen Walter.

signs for the Adopt-a-Highway section on Route 212. The crew picked up again the first Saturday in November, thanks to all who helped! Looking ahead to the spring, hold the first Saturday in April for our watershed wide Green Up day. Special for this year: tackle Richlandtown Pike - It's a real mess! Have any thoughts or questions: drop me a line at info@cooks creekpa.org.

W. Scott Douglas, President

Yours in Conservation:

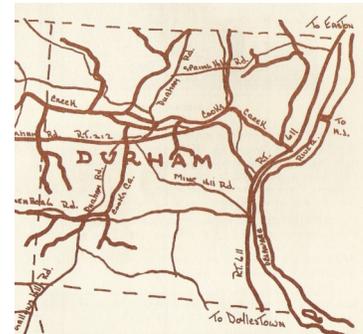
Durham Nears Completion of New Comprehensive Plan

by W. Scott Douglas

Durham Township is nearing completion on the long-awaited update to their Comprehensive Plan. Comprehensive Plans are intended to be the vision statement for municipalities and are updated on a periodic basis. Durham's has not been updated since the mid 1970s and been in need of an overhaul. Given Durham Township's leadership on environmental planning – they sponsored the development of the Cooks Creek Watershed Protection Plan - CCWA has been eagerly awaiting this document. On first review, it appears to be exactly what we have been looking for, with the Cooks Creek Watershed receiving mention on the first page, and throughout the document, as a critical resource that

requires special consideration. Those of you who live in Durham should feel free to take a look at the document by stopping by the Township Building, and by attending upcoming meetings of the Planning Commission. Once the document is finalized, a public meeting will be held to obtain citizen's comments. If possible, we will post the document on our website. I encourage all friends of the Watershed to attend this meeting to support the provisions that protect the Watershed, and particularly to request that water impact studies (groundwater and surface water) be required for all large developments. Once this document is approved, Durham Township will be looking to revise their ordinances for zoning, subdivisions and stormwater. This process will be public

and needs the participation of as many friends of the Watershed as can be mustered, particularly those of you who live in Durham. We will be posting important dates as we obtain them.



Springtown Sourcewater Protection Plan

by W. Scott Douglas

The Springtown Sourcewater Protection Plan is in the final stages of review prior to being passed on to the PA Department of Environmental Protection for final approval. The document is a blueprint for protection of drinking water in Springtown, including both the springs on Koehlberg Hill and the well at the Springtown Fire Company. Protection Zones include a substantial area

around the springs, as well as the entire Silver Creek Watershed above the Fire Company. If you want to know if you are in the protection zone, click on the sourcewater link at www.cooks creekpa.org. The CCWA is tasked with coordinating educational outreach on septic systems, groundwater and nonpoint source pollution, as well as working with the EACs in Lower Saucon and Springfield. We will be

posting this document on our website when it is final. Of particular interest is that both Lower Saucon and Springfield will be considering adopting a sourcewater protection ordinance in support of the Plan. Springfield has included this ordinance in their current revision of the zoning ordinance.

Springfield Township:

610-346-6700

(www.springfieldbucks.org)

2320 Township Road

Supervisors: 2nd Tuesday @ 7:30 PM

Planning Commission:

1st Wed. @ 7 PM

Supervisors/Planning Commission Work Session: 3rd Thurs. @ 7 PM

Environmental Advisory Council.: 2nd

Thurs. @ 7:30 PM

Durham Township:

610-346-8911

215 Old Furnace Road

Supervisors: 2nd Tuesday @ 7:30 PM

Planning Commission: 1st Tues @ 7:30 PM

EAC: 3rd Tuesday @ 7:30 PM

Lower Saucon:

610-865-3291

3700 Old Philadelphia Pike

Council: 1st and 3rd Wed. @ 7 PM PM

Planning Commission: 2nd Mon @ 7 PM

EAC: 1st Tues @ 7 PM

Williams Township:

610-258-6060

(www.williamstwp.org)

655 Cider Press Road

Supervisors: 2nd Tues @ 7 PM

Planning Commission: 3rd Wed @ 7 PM

Land Preservation Board: 3rd Mon @ 7 PM

Richland Township:

215-536-4066

1328 California Road

Supervisors: 2nd and 4th Mon @ 7 PM

Planning Commission: 3rd Tues @ 7 PM

Preservation Board: 2nd Tues @ 7 PM

Rivers Conservation: 3rd Tues @ 3PM

Flowering Native Understory Trees

By: Hans O Reimann Jr., The View from Laughing Springs

When we think of our beautiful forests, our hearts are uplifted as our eyes rise up to few oaks, poplars, hickories, etc... that tower eighty, ninety feet above us with spreading canopies of leaf and limb shading our families from the hot summer sun. No forest is complete however, unless those big trees have their smaller companions growing under them. These understory trees rarely grow higher than thirty feet but their ecological value is priceless as habitat for forest birds such as the wood thrush, tufted titmouse, sparrows and warblers. Many of these understo-

ry trees flower profusely in the spring, adding nectar sources for native bees and other insects. Local understory tree favorites include: flowering dogwood, hawthorne, crabapple, small cherries, maple leaf viburnum, redbud, gringetree, and southern arrowwood. Edge of the Woods Native Plant Nursery of Fogelsville and Bowman Wildflower preserve sell these and other native plants.

Highlighting this quarter's Invasive Plant

By: Hans O. Reimann Jr., The View from Laughing Springs

Most invasive plants have been introduced by accident; spread by unsuspecting animals and humans ignorant to their threat. However, a few plants recognized as invasive plant populations are sold at our local nursery and landscape outlets.

The butterfly bush (*Buddleja species*) is popular ornamental plant, native to Asia and Central American that is promoted as a butterfly magnet. The truth is that this plant can inhibit the native plants that butterflies need to complete their life cycle, and thus limit nectar for adults, digestible food for their caterpillars and safe places for cocoon building and hiding. Forest edges, roadsides, streambanks and rural dumps are favorite habitats for this "bad" plant. It spreads by seed through wind dispersal. For prevention and control, fading flowers need to be cut before seeds set and young plants should be weeded by hand or receive an application of glyphosate herbicide. To achieve total removal it is best to ensure a rapid ground cover of a native plant to prevent a butterfly bush from re-establishing.

Native alternatives include: butterfly weed (*Asclepias tuberosa*), sweet pepperbush (*Clethra alnifolia*), Virginia sweetspire (*Itea virginica*), blazing star (*Liatris spicata*), and New York ironweed (*Vernonia noveboracensis*).



Photo by Jim Orben, Esq.

Lock in for renewable heating oil this season at just \$2.27 per gallon!

By: Sherry Brodhead

The Energy Cooperative, a non-profit, member-owned energy cooperative serving Southeastern Pennsylvania is now offering bio-heating oil to the upper Bucks area. If you're a consumer looking for bio-heating oil, you can now purchase bio-heating oil through their partnership with The Good Fuels Company. Bio-heating oil contains between 20% and 50% biodiesel, blended with regular heating oil. Biodiesel is a clean-burning, renewable fuel made from vegetable oil instead of petroleum. Over 10,000 Pennsylvania homes currently heat their homes with bio-heating oil.

Bio-heating oil has many advantages over petroleum-based heating oil:

- Better for your furnace: You do not need to make any modifications to your furnace to use bio-heating oil. Your furnace will operate more efficiently because it burns more completely than regular heating oil. Bio-heating oil also acts as a cleaning agent, removing dirt from your system, and it will blend easi-

ly with any heating oil that may already be in your tank.

- Better for the US: Since biodiesel is made from home-grown, American products like soybean oil and recycled restaurant grease, using biodiesel strengthens our domestic economy and increases our energy independence.

- Better for the planet: Using bio-heating oil in place of regular heating oil decreases unhealthy air emissions, like particulates (which contributes to asthma), carbon dioxide (which contributes to global warming), and sulfur dioxides (which contribute to acid rain). Biodiesel is significantly less toxic than petroleum diesel, and is biodegradable, reducing the negative impacts of oil spills.

You can join the Energy Cooperative for a \$5.00 annual membership to take advantage of this service. Check out their web site at

www.theenergy.coop for enrollment instructions and further information, or call them at 215-413-2122. The distributor is Worley & Obetz in Lancaster Co. (www.worleyobetz.com) and The Good Fuels Company delivers the fuel.

In addition to the great price of \$2.27/gallon, The Energy Cooperative is offering referral discounts and you can find more information about that on their website (feel free to use my name when registering: Sherry Brodhead 610-346-8484).

So, let's expand the customer base in our area to send a strong message that the Upper Bucks Community supports the environment by using bio-fuels!

(Continued from page 1)

ported reproducing populations of brown and brook trout, had abundant macro invertebrates and many other small fishes.

Some of the ongoing projects of Cooks Creek Watershed Association:

- Ø Developing a calibrated hydrologic model for the watershed to guard against overuse of water resources at the expense of the Cooks Creek. This is done through water quality monitoring of Cooks Creek by stream testing at various locations. Two stream gauging stations, one in Durham and one in Springfield measure stream levels. As well, a monthly groundwater level monitoring program is in place.
- Ø Reduction of soil erosion and flooding through streambank stabilization efforts in Durham, Springfield and Lower Saucon Townships.
- Ø Support of agricultural easements that help conserve valuable agricultural lands and preservation of important headwater and other natural areas.
- Ø CCWA members are currently in-

involved in regional planning efforts that will ensure the long-term protection of the creek. Members are active in local government in Durham, Springfield and Lower Saucon townships.

- Ø CCWA members have provided assistance with the creation of a Geographical Information System (GIS), a mapping system which shows sensitive areas of the watershed. This mapping system can be accessed through our website www.cooks creekpa.org.
- Ø Workshops educating children about the interconnections of the ecosystem help prepare them to make decisions in an environmentally friendly manner. The annual Mini-Monster Mayhem program is a half-day workshop which introduces elementary age children to stream ecology and the importance of protecting water quality and conserving water resources.
- Ø The innovative "adopt a reach" program is a stream monitoring system in which members of the community are asked to participate in monitoring various aspects of the stream.

- Ø Highway litter cleanup programs covering roads within the watershed take place in the spring and the fall.

- Ø Our annual Covered Dish Dinner, a social and educational event that brings together members of the community for an evening of fun, food and information about the watershed.

Other programs are possible, limited only by the interest of our membership. We invite you to join Cooks Creek Watershed Association by completing and returning the enclosed membership form. Please take advantage of one of the premium membership levels and support not only CCWA but one of the generous businesses in our community who have agreed to assist us with our membership drive.

For further information regarding our current activities, please visit www.cooks creekpa.org.

Children’s Backyard: Acorn cups and saucers, pots and pans

By: Lois Oleksa



Pot and lid



Cup and saucer



Frying pan and lid



Tea Kettle

Photos by Karyn Oleksa



Serrated knife, nutpick, acorn, and acorn meat.

Try making a miniature set of dishes with an adults’ help. Be careful! Examine the pictures.

- 1) Gather acorns and their caps. Do not let them dry out.
- 2) Cut off the upper portion (tip) of the acorn. Use a serrated knife or small-toothed saw. Be careful!
- 3) Dig out the meat of both the top and bottom. A nut pick works well. You now have a pot and lid. Just add handles.
- 4) For handles: bend a straight pin into a “J” shape. Poke the pin into the top and you now have a lid handle. Repeat 2 times and you’ll have pot handles. Insert the handles on the sides. The extra length of the pins can be cut off.
- 5) For a teacup and saucer: Use the acorn

tops for saucers and make a cup by adding one handle to the cut and cleaned acorn.

6) A saucepan can be made by slicing the acorn in half; use the bottom half and add one straight pin, unbent, for the saucepan handle.

...

“Wait for me, do,” begged Phronsie, who was busy in putting the little acorn cups and saucers in a fine array on the big flat stone that served them as a table.” See the book [Five Little Peppers and Their Friends](#) Chapter XXVIII. The Little Stone Cupboard by Margaret Sidney

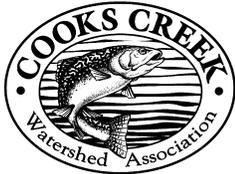
John Eakin Farm Tile

The Springfield Township Historical Society is offering the first in a series of tiles, the John Eakin Farm. The 2006 limited edition tile is hand-crafted by local artist Erika Bonner. Tiles are available for a minimum donation of \$35 towards continued historic preservation within Springfield Township. The John Eakin Farm, historically known as Kooker’s Tavern, was built in three sections between 1738-1773 and is located at the east end of Springtown. Tiles are 4” x 6”. For additional information, please contact Karen Freeh at (610) 346-6948



Errata: Allow the information below to serve as a correction.

From Across The Board, article; it was the SPRINGFIELD TOWNSHIP HISTORIC COMMISSION, that initiated, and secured funding to have a township wide, Historic Resource Survey conducted this past summer. This is the first step towards a Historic Preservation Overlay Ordinance, as recommended in our 2003 Comprehensive Plan. We also have secured grant funding to have this ordinance prepared for public review and Board of Supervisors’ approval. Hopefully it will be completed by the end of 2006.



Cooks Creek Watershed Association
P.O. Box 45
Springtown, PA 18081
www.cooks creekpa.org

Place Stamp
Here

Mailing Address Line 1
 Mailing Address Line 2
 Mailing Address Line 3
 Mailing Address Line 4
 Mailing Address Line 5

At both of the public meetings on the water system, the Springtown Fire Company opened up their meeting hall for all of us to participate (not to mention they host our CCWA Board meetings every month). At both meetings Fire Chief Robert Cressman presented his plan for emergency address markers at every home in Springfield, and throughout the Fire Company's service area. The signs are reflective green and have the numerical street address on them, perhaps you have seen them sprouting up around Springtown? These markers allow emergency services (Fire, Ambulance, Police) to find your home quickly in the dark of night.

**Allow emergency services (Fire, Ambulance, Police) to find
your home quickly in the dark of night!**

Obtain a sign by calling the Fire Company at 610-346-8383 or stop by the Firehouse.
Signs are \$10 each, to cover the cost of the sign.

If you hold precious the beauty that surrounds us in the Cooks Creek Watershed area and would like to be actively involved in it's preservation, than consider joining to be a board member. The Cooks Creek Watershed Association currently has vacancies for the addition of 2 more members to the board. Reach out to your community! We would love to hear from you!

Please drop us a line at info@cooks creekpa.org

CCWA is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization.