

Cooks Current

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

Volume 2, Issue I

Newsletter of the Cooks Creek Watershed Association

Winter 2005

From Across the Board

2005 CCWA Events

- **Regular Board Meetings:**
Springtown Fire House 7:30 PM

Jan 27, Feb 24, Mar 24,
Apr 23, May 26, June 23,
July 28, Aug 25, Sept 22,
Oct 27, Nov 17, Dec 22

All are welcome! We appreciate your involvement!

- **Apr 2: Watershed-Wide Clean-up**
- **Apr 23: Annual Meeting @ Hans Reimann's place**
- **June 18: Mini Monster Mayhem**
- **Oct 8: Fall Fellowship dinner**
- **Nov 5: Fall clean-up**



See Page 4 for Details !!

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

Board Members:

President: W. Scott Douglas

Vice-President: Brad Schultz

Treasurer: Margaret McDonald

Membership Chair: Sherry Brodhead

Lois Oleksa

Jim Orben

Hans Reimann

Stephen Smith, MD

Judy Seigfreid

Welcome to the second edition of our newsletter! Our Association is evolving into a real force for change and we at the Board want to keep you informed and active in the protection of our Watershed. Last year was particularly exciting, and this year promises to be even better. Now that we have developed a successful formula for our spring and fall meetings, Mini-monster mayhem, and roadside cleanup, we need to forge ahead with a resumption of native plant sales and the dormant water quality monitoring program. We will also continue to develop our adopt-a-reach program starting with stream assessments and headwater mapping. The Board recently approved the purchase of equipment necessary to begin these programs. The CCWA will also take a more formal role in the open space/ conservation easement programs by gathering information and reporting on the

A stream is a stream

By: Jim Orben

A stream is a stream is a stream (Richard III, Act II, scene 3). Here in the Cooks Creek Watershed, just as in the play, a stream carries water to the sea. This winter, our water table is high and more water than usual is flowing from our springs into streamlets and from there into Cooks Creek, the Delaware and on to the Atlantic. To give us a better understanding of where the water in Cooks

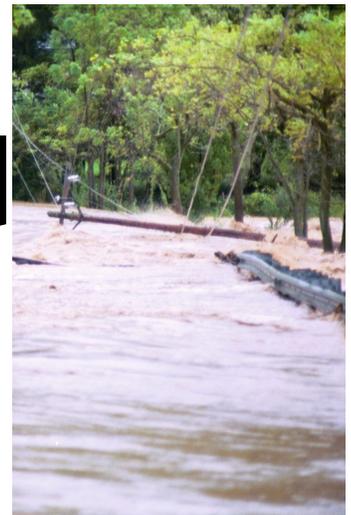
actions taken throughout the Watershed. Keep an eye on our website for this information (www.cooks creekpa.org). Members in Springfield have recently begun participating in a workgroup to develop a Sourcewater Protection Plan for the Springtown water supply system that should be completed in 2005. Some of those same folks are working with Springfield Twp. to re-

We're on the web!
www.cooks creekpa.org

write the zoning ordinance. Between these two workgroups we will have our first opportunity in years to affect lasting protection for our Watershed, so please provide support at the public hearings when they are announced. If you want any more information on any of our programs and activities, please drop me an email at

info@cooks creekpa.org.

W. Scott Douglas, President
President



Hurricane Ivan '04
Durham Road, Durham PA

Photo by: Scott Douglas

Creek actually comes from, and the distance it travels, we would like to follow as many of Cooks Creek's tributaries as we can to their source.

Using a GPS data logger our survey teams will walk along each streamlet recording its location. Many of these small streams have not been mapped so their existence has never before been known to us. The families living along

these small parts of Cooks Creek have known about them and enjoyed their coolness and music. Now we will add them to the map and keep track of them. If you see one of our teams, say hello and we will show you how the GPS can locate your part of Cooks Creek.

Solar electric power in the Cooks Creek Watershed...is it affordable?

By: Rachael Orben

I am going to start this article with the acknowledgement that installing a home solar energy system is expensive. In states like California, New York, New Jersey and even in the PECO service area of Pennsylvania there are substantial subsidies that make the purchase and installation of large home systems a reasonable investment. However, because home solar power systems are becoming a viable alternative in these states, soon solar power may become more affordable for the rest of us.

I have spent the last few years working as a field biologist and solar electric power has become a vital part of much of the biology I do. It never ceases to amaze me that a few deep cycle batteries and solar panels have the ability to support comput-

ers or digital recorders. Of course, making these systems work involves a fine balance of solar input and the size of the battery bank. As a homeowner in Pennsylvania, batteries can be completely excluded from a solar system. This works by using the grid as the battery bank. Unfortunately this means that during power outages the system (even if it is sunny out) will not provide power. But using the grid does provide a much less expensive alternative to setting up a large battery bank and with a bit of forethought an emergency power supply can always be added.

Using solar power as an alternative energy source around the home certainly should not be discounted. For small low energy things such as gate openers and path lights it is already a simple solution. Hopefully,

the next few years will see solar power becoming more and more of an affordable option.

A few websites to explore:

U.S. Department of Energy <http://www.eere.energy.gov/>

Database of State Incentives for Renewable Energy <http://www.dsireusa.org/>

Mainstay Energy <http://www.mainstayenergy.com/>

Akeena <http://www.akeena.net/index.html>

Sierra Solar Systems <http://www.sierrasolar.com/index.html>

www.sierrasolar.com/index.html

The View From Laughing Springs

By: Hans Reimann

The collective beauty of our forest ecology here in this unique watershed inspires a sense of place that transcends time as we know it. May I share with you some wisdom from the past, a stark reality of the present, and finally a brief profile of native plants for sale which, when recognized and or planted can help secure a hopeful, healthy future for our watershed. In 1901, yes a 104 years ago, John Muir, the great naturalist, was persuading Theodore Roosevelt to create the National Forest system when he wrote these words: "The forests of America, however slighted by man, must have been a great delight to God; for they were the best he ever planted. The whole continent was a garden, and from the beginning it seemed to be favored above all the other wild parks and gardens of the globe. To prepare the ground, it was rolled and sifted in seas with infinite loving deliberation and forethought, lifted into the light, submerged and warmed over and over again, pressed and crumpled into folds and ridges, mountains, and hills, subsoil with heaving volcanic fires, ploughed and ground and sculptured into scenery and soil with glaciers and rivers, --- every feature growing and changing from beauty to beauty, higher and higher. And in the fullness of time it was planted in groves, and belts, and broad exuberant, mantling forests, with the largest, most

varied, most fruitful, and most beautiful trees in the world" Thank you Mr. Muir!

Into this forest garden man has accidentally unleashed plants, that without natural checks and balances, at the present time are crowding out our native plants at an alarming rate. One of the most prolific of these invasives is Garlic Mustard, *Alliaria petiolata* (Eurasian Origin). Garlic Mustard is a biennial herb that completes it's life cycle within two years reaching heights from one to nearly four feet. Identifying characteristics of first year growth include kidney shaped basal leaves with second year growth stem leaves growing alternately, sharply toothed and triangular, with the strong garlic odor when crushed. It flowers early in Spring in clusters of small four-petal white flowers in axils of leaves. This plant is frequently seen in disturbed woods, flood plains and waste ground throughout the watershed. I have found the best control method is: in early spring when the ground thaws, pulling the plants, with the root intact; or removing plants in the late fall after native plants have died back. In both cases, carefully bag for disposal because a dropped plant or root can regenerate.

Native alternative ground cover plants include: Wild Ginger, Spring Beauty, Foam Flower, Creeping Phlox, and New

York Fern. These and other native plants can be found at Edge of the Woods Native Plant Nursery in Fogelsville, PA and Bowman's Hill Wildflower Preserve in Washington's Crossing, PA.

Our Watershed can be preserved and enhanced by planting one native plant at a time. Each Spring the Watershed Association participates in the Lehigh County Conservation District Tree Seedling sale. We will be purchasing the following trees as bare root specimens: Red-Osier Dogwood, Black Gum, Black Cherry, and Red Oaks. To obtain a complete list of plants for sale, please contact the Lehigh Conservation District at: 610-391-9583, ext: 17 between 8AM and 4PM; or Laughing Springs Forest Community at 484-554-6829. Now, is the time to plan for spring planting. Thank you for your support.



Stormwater 101

By W. Scott Douglas

Since our experiences with hurricane Ivan, lots of folks have renewed their interest in stormwater and its effects on our Watershed. I've been asked lots of times about the damage from hurricane Ivan and what we could have done to prevent it. The answer I give is very simple: very little. Let me explain. Every time it rains, the water can really only go one of two places: into the ground or over the ground. The amount that goes in each direction depends on lots of factors: the amount of moisture in the soil, the intensity and duration of the storm, the slope of the land, and the nature of the soil (or lack of soil), to name a few. Usually we are happy when the water soaks into the ground because this supports forests, lawns, gardens, and crops, not to mention recharging the aquifer that we rely on for drinking water. However, there is almost always some amount that runs off the land and into the myriad tributaries of Cooks Creek. As long as there is native vegetation along the way to slow down and purify the water, the Creek is nourished by the storm. However, when we strip off the native vegetation to make way for lawns, streets, parking lots and buildings the water can be a source of pollution and damage the fragile stream ecosystem. Hurricane Ivan reminded all of us the power of Mother Nature and just what water can do. Ivan dumped so

much water so fast that almost all of it ran off. Everywhere. Fast. Granted, the damage was exacerbated by development, but even if there was no development, there would have been too much water for the soil to absorb. High intensity storms happen infrequently. However, storms of Ivan's magnitude only occur once every century or two, on average. The Watershed and its wildlife can quickly recover from these storms and the cleansing of stream banks and scouring of the creekbed are actually good for the ecosystem (like a good spring cleaning). The real problem with stormwater is realized by the smaller, more frequent storms. If, by our development practices, we increase the amount of water that runs off (by decreasing native vegetation and permeable surfaces) and close off the floodplains, the water will erode the streambed and the banks during even moderate storms. Stormwater detention strategies used by developers actually increase the damage by increasing the duration of the runoff—keeping water levels high long after the rain stops. And clearing of natural vegetation from around stream banks will remove the natural filtering action that prevents pollutants like oil, pesticides, and fertilizers from getting into the stream. Filling in or isolating wetlands in floodplains also prevents these natural systems from

providing pollutant filters and sediment traps. What can you do? Realize that the small streams, wet areas and low spots that you have on your property are all integral to the healthy functioning of the watershed. Plant native plants and bushes along stream banks (NEVER mow to the water's edge) and provide places for water from your roof and driveway to flow across wide areas before they get to the stream, rather than pipe them away. Avoid forcing water through culverts or of filling in swales, ditches, and "ephemeral stream beds". Be conscientious about your use of chemicals and fertilizers. Minimize the amount of impervious surface on your property by using gravel or "pervious pavers" instead. In doubt? Need advice? Drop us an email at info@cooks creekpa.org and we'll be glad to help or find someone who can.

Book Review by Lois Oleksa

[Spineless Wonders: Strange Tales from the Invertebrate World](#)

By: Richard Conniff

Invertebrates really run the world. Their sheer body mass dominates. Richard Conniff writes an odyssey of these creatures in the most fascinating and engaging way. Included are stories of our Watershed invertebrates: the "mosquito hawk" - a dragonfly catching and grinding up mosquitoes: the detestable housefly - dining on a smorgasbord of food; wigglers - brought out by rain and vibration. I thoroughly enjoyed this often bizarre world of invertebrates. They are indispensable to life on Earth.



Local Government Meetings

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

Durham Township:

610-346-8911

215 Old Furnace Road

Supervisors: 2nd Tuesday @ 7:30 PM

Planning Commission: 1st Tues @ 7:30

EAC: 3rd Tuesday @ 7:30 PM

Lower Saucon:

610-865-3291

3700 Old Philadelphia Pike

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

Planning Commission: 2nd Mon @ 7

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

Land Preservation Board: 3rd Mon @ 7

Richland Township:

215-536-4066

1328 California Road

Supervisors: 2nd and 4th Mon @ 7 PM

Planning Commission: 3rd Tues @ 7

Preservation Board: 2nd Tues @ 7 PM

Rivers Conservation: 3rd Tues @ 3PM

Please Join Us...

All of us who reside in the area enjoy the beauty of Cooks Creek.

Those of us who are fortunate enough to live here are dependent upon this watershed not only for the beauty of the creek but our wells, the wetlands, the wildflowers and all of the beautiful landscapes in our townships.

It's up to all of us to protect this treasure. The Cooks Creek Watershed Association asks that you become a member and help in the task of protecting this special resource.

We are awaiting payment of 2005 dues.

Cooks Creek Watershed Association - Membership Form

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

Interests:

Newsletter: ___ Website: ___ Roadside Cleanup: ___ Event Planning ___

Christmas Tree Sale: ___ Providing Speakers: ___ Fund Raising: ___

Stream Studies: ___ Weekend Seminars: ___ Maintaining Open Space: ___

Individual Membership Fee: @ \$ 15.00 per year _____

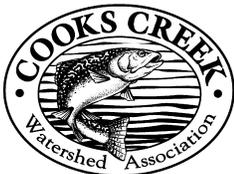
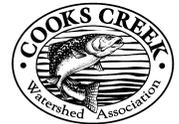
Family Membership Fee: @ \$ 25.00 per year _____

Donation: _____

Total _____

Please detach and mail to Cooks Creek Watershed Association , (CCWA)
P.O. Box 45 Springtown, PA 18081. *THANK YOU !*

*Checks can be made payable to Cooks Creek Watershed Association.
CCWA is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization.*



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

Place Stamp Here

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Mailing Address Line 3
Mailing Address Line 4
Mailing Address Line 5