

# Cooks Current

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

Volume 5, Issue 1

Newsletter of the Cooks Creek Watershed

Spring 2008

## 2008 CCWA Events

### Regular Board Meetings:

#### Springtown Fire House

7:30 PM (March 27, April 19, May 22, June 26, July 24, Aug. 28, Sept. 25, Oct 23, Nov. 20, Dec. 18)

*All are welcome! We appreciate your involvement!*

### Special Events:

- April 5 Spring Clean-Up
- April 19 Annual Meeting
- June 14 Mini Monster Mayhem
- Oct. 4 Fall Fellowship Dinner
- Nov. 1 Fall Clean Up



See Back Page for Details!

**We're on the web!**  
[www.cooks creek pa.org](http://www.cooks creek pa.org)

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

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Hans Reimann

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## From Across the Board...



*Spring Arrangement: Cut back your red twig dogwood and add some blooms such as witch hazel, pussy willows, or daffodils. Extend the life of the arrangement by keeping the twigs and replacing fresh spring blossoms*

Another winter is drawing to a close, and spring can't come soon enough for me. In the meantime, there are meetings to attend and planning for our usual rush of spring and summer events. In the middle of this, we are about to face another disturbing affront to our peaceful community. In February, Pennsylvania Power and Light came to Springtown to present its plan for a new power line and substation to be run up from Quakertown through to Coopersburg. The Firehouse was packed with res-

idents, many of whom were surprised to find that the only location for a new power line was right through the forested headwaters area of the Tohickon Watershed. The Cooks Creek Watershed borders on the Tohickon Watershed on the southwest corner of Flint Hill and the Lookout. The Lookout is recognized in the Natural Areas Inventory for Bucks County, but this fact seems to have been overlooked by PPL. Even though none of the project will be built in the

Cooks Creek Watershed, the proximity to our headwaters practically ensures that there will be spill over impacts from loss of habitat, invasive species and pesticides. Because of this, CCWA went on the record early opposing this plan, but now the proposal is before the Pennsylvania Utilities Commission for approval.

To learn more about it, and why the overland route was chosen, visit this website:

<http://www.pplelectric.com/>

*(Continued on page 2)*

## Across the Board, Cont'd from page 1

[Community+Services/coopersburg-quakertown](#)

At the Board of Supervisors meeting on February 26, Springfield Township voted to file an objection to the application. We applaud the BOS for this action, but realize it will take more than that to push back on PPL. Keep an eye out for fundraising efforts to support Springfield's fight. It is also important to let your Harrisburg and Washington representatives know of our opposition to putting infrastructure through our resource protected areas. Both Representative Clymer and Senator Wonderling have suggested alternative routes along Rt 309 or the SEPTA right of way as preferable to the overland route. After all, that's what commercial and industrial zoning districts are for. Let them know you agree.

On the lighter side, the CCWA will have its usual slate of events for the spring. I hope you will find time to join us as we clean up our roadways on Saturday, April 5 (9am to 4pm). Just come on down to the Springtown firehouse and grab a cup of coffee or chili and a safety vest and join your neighbors as we pick up the winter debris. Our educational programs will also be coming up; we will help Palisades Middle School celebrate Earth Day, help Trout Unlimited and the Heritage Conservancy with their fly fishing seminar Saturday, June 7, 9:00-11:00AM in Springtown. Ages 12 and up. Registration is required; for information and registration, call 215-345-7020 ext. 103. free to the public. The Mini Monster Mayhem (June 14). If you have time, our annual business meeting will be held Saturday April 19, 2008. Time: 9:30am – 12:30pm. Place: Hans Reimann's place at 2915 Springtown Hill Road, Springtown, PA. Look for the Cooks Creek Watershed sign.

Yours in Conservation,  
W. Scott Douglas, President

## Children's Backyard: Recycle an Old Sweater

By: Lois Oleksa

Spring is here, so take a look at the sweater that kept you warm this past winter. Is it too small, stained or worn, even having holes in it? Instead of throwing it out, recycle it. Follow the eight steps below and turn your sweater into a bag or purse.

- The best felting is done with a sweater that is 100% wool; however, even if it is at least 80% wool, the wool will full/felt.
- Fill the washing machine with hot water (lowest water level possible) and add 1 – 2 tablespoons of detergent. Place the sweater to be felted into the washing machine. To control the amount of lint, I suggest that the sweater be placed into a cloth or mesh bag. Set the machine to agitate. Check progress every few minutes. You may need to wash the sweater more than once. My sweater took 30 minutes of agitation to felt. When done washing, (you will not see any individual knitted stitches anymore) take the sweater out of the machine and dry it either in the dryer or lay it out flat. Make sure you clean out the fuzz left in the machine.
- Notice how much your sweater shrank. The whole sweater fits on



top of the washing machine. You have "fulled" or "felted" the sweater. "Fulled" is the real term for this process of taking an already existing piece of material which was knitted or woven of wool, and shrinking it in hot wa-

ter. "Felting" is taking the natural wool fibers and shrinking them. You are now ready to start the creative part of your project. You can snip or cut the fabric with scissors and it doesn't fray, it is felted.

- Cut the sweater into the shapes you desire to make your project and stitch it together. I cut the sweater below the arms and then in pieces to make a bag/purse. Piece together the fulled material and sew it into a bag shape. I zig-zagged the edges together. You could also hand sew or embroider the project together. For ideas of



what to make, think creatively. Look at the colors and amount of fulled material. You could make mittens by tracing your hands, leaving enough of a seam to turn them right side out. Stuffed animals in fantastic colors could be



made. Pillows or hats are easy.

(continued on page 3)

(Children's Backyard continued from page 2)

- Now it's time to recycle some other things lying around the house. Any of these items can be used to

decorate the bag/purse: old buttons, yarn can be braided into the strap(s), shoe laces can be used as drawstrings (remember you can clip the material and it won't fray), belts and buckles, beads and even seashells and twigs.

- To make my fulled flowers: Take the cut off neck band of the fulled sweater and roll it into a flower; baste with thread to keep it together. The frilly flower was made from two 3" by 5" pieces of fulled sweater. Fold the 3" X 5" rectangle in half to a long rectangle. Then sew down the edge.



Clip into the folded edge, staying 3/8" from the edge you just sewed. Then roll the flower and again sew the base together. That is the inner flower.

- Take the second 3" X 5" rectangle and do the same as the first piece of 3" X 5". Then wrap this second piece around the first piece to create the outer flower. Again stitch all around the base as you form the flower. The gray flower was made by braiding 18 strands of yarn together, then rolling and sewing the rolled flower together.



- To complete the fulled bag/purse, attach the flowers or other embellishments by sewing them to the bag. The button in the middle of the flower is holding the flower to the bag. Make a strap – again be creative. You could braid some yarn, use an old dog leash or choker chain. Add a snap on the inside to keep the bag closed; or cut a slit and use a button. Voila! You're done and you'll be sure to have made a bag/purse like no other.
- Use the scraps to make other items or add fulled pieces to other creations. For example – Take a sleeve and make a small pouch.

***A few facts on fulling:***

Felt is the oldest form of fabric known to human kind. Animal skins were used to make felted hats. Beavers were hunted to extinction in Europe and then North America became the main supplier of skins for the



trade. The fur was taken off the pelts with mercury and the fur was felted. The toxic mercury solution and its vapors produced cases of mercury poisoning among the hatters (those making hats). In fact the phrase "mad as a hatter" and the name of the character "The Mad Hatter" in Alice in Wonderland, may have been inspired by the felt making process.

Fulling mills were started in the early American colonies, powered by water wheels. Families sheared their own sheep, spun the wool, and then wove the wool into cloth which was brought to the mills to be fulled.

Pounding of the cloth with mechanical hammers while moving water and a cleaning agent caused the cloth to shrink, giving it strength, as well as removed the oil in the wool fibers, preparing it to be dyed. Fuller's earth was a type of fine clay used in the process of removing the grease; and the flower, soapwort, was also used as a natural detergent. You can find soapwort in our Watershed and cut a stem or two, rub your hands together and see the soapiness. The American wool industry caused much aggravation to England, who wanted to be the sole supplier of spun wool to the colonies. There were sanctions against the colonists for buying this wool cloth which may have contributed along with other dissatisfactions to the War for Independence.

Fulling/felting making is still done today in Central Asia where rugs, tents, and clothing are regularly made. A yurt is made of felted wool. You'll also see felt covering the slate surface of a billiard table. Piano hammers are made of wool felt around a wooden core. Since fulling happens to sweaters washed in hot water, wash your good sweaters only in cold water.

**Beavers  
Against  
Hats!**



## Upper Bucks Regional EAC Update

By: W. Scott Douglas

On Thursday February 28, about 25 people from Upper Bucks came together to learn about how PADEP regulates oil and gas exploration and extraction. Representatives from the PADEP Bureau of Oil and Gas Management as well as the southeast regional office (Kevin Munley) were on hand to present the facts and answer questions. If you aren't already aware, there are a number of leaseholds in Nockamixon, Durham and Springfield Townships and the PADEP has issued 2 permits so far for gas drilling in Nockamixon Township. These permits are available for viewing at the Nockamixon Township building.

While it appears that the construction of these sites is pretty well regulated, discussions became heated when the audience asked what municipalities and residents could do to protect themselves against loss of water quality or quantity. Apparently, there are no requirements from the DEP to test wells for either quality or quantity, but many gas companies do this as a precaution as they are responsible for any problems reported by adjacent landowners within 1000 feet of the well (if confirmed by DEP as being caused by the drilling). Attempts by Nockamixon to regulate this activity have been thwarted by the State; which claims jurisdiction. It seems that it may fall to the landowner to prove that they have been harmed – so it behooves landowners to be aware of drilling on adjacent properties and to consult a professional for advice.

Some attendees were also concerned about drilling on the old Cabot property, a known contaminated site. While DEP officials have made a determination that no threat to water quality exists, they readily admit that they do not have any models that illustrate the way groundwater moves in the area, nor did they have any information regarding groundwater contamination on the site.

When asked about the pipelines to remove gas, if found, the answers were also disturbing. Apparently the company does not need to divulge easement agreements or plans for pipelines in advance. There-

fore we do not know where they would run if needed. According to the regulations, wetlands and water bodies less than 1 acre in size and streams that are not shown on a 7.5' topography map are not protected. That means that there are numerous vernal ponds and intermittent streams in Gallows Run Watershed that would be excluded from protection. Although it is unclear if any drilling is proposed for Cooks Creek Watershed at this time, if gas is found we will need to be vigilant if our headwaters are to be protected. And while it appears that our local officials would be willing to write ordinances to protect the people and our water from harm, note that efforts by Nockamixon to regulate drilling have been thwarted by the State.



## The View from Laughing Springs: Invasive Plant Report By: Hans O.Reimann Jr.

On Feb 21, 2008 my wife and I attended the annual Land Ethics Symposium, hosted by the Bowman's Hill Wildflower Preserve. We were impressed with every speaker, from John Peter Thompson with his sustainable sites index, to a pair of Natural Lands Trust speakers on land stewardship, to a Maine gentleman speaking on stream bank restoration. But we were most amazed that every speaker spoke on the dangers of invasive plants in our life. Sound science continues to pile up across the country that when invasive plant populations crowd out native plants and farm their own communities (for example in our area: garlic mustard, Japanese honeysuckle, multiflora rose, and stilt grass) the ecosystem is horribly tweaked. Garlic mustard will insert foreign chemicals into the soil; high concentrations altering nutrient cycles by killing off certain microbes critical to naturally fertile soils. Japanese honeysuckle as a creeping and climbing vine, tolerant of light shade, will smother emerging native perennial wild flowers, as well as tree and shrub seedlings. This leads to a loss of native insect habitat, leading to a shortage of native pollinators of existing native plants. Further up the food chain, song birds find it harder to find insects to sustain themselves and their offspring. Multiflora rose and stilt grass are coexisting in riparian and flood plain areas, crowding out flood mitigating natives and thus contribute to flooding and sedimentation problems in stream beds.



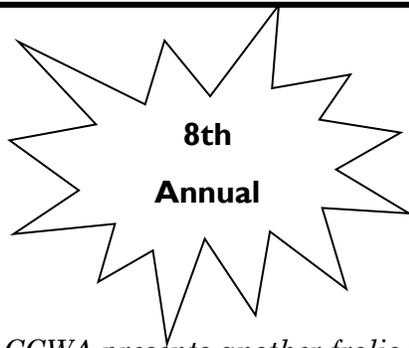
*Now for some good news: My annual native plant lists that mail order seed & plant catalogues offer.*

- From Gurney's catalog, the good guys: shellbark hickory, maximilian sunflower perennial, Joe Pye weed, Coneflowers, Black-eyed Susan, meadowsweet, orange butterfly plant, Bee balm, wood poppy, Virginia bluebells, trillium, lady fern, ostrich fern, fern leaf bleeding heart (flowers the whole growing season), lily of the valley, creeping phlox, red twig dogwood, pink smoke tree, beauty berry, Canadian hemlock, tulip tree, redbud, sugar maple, sassafras, pin oak, red oak, switch grass, white pine, red cedar, mountain laurel.
- The bad guys to avoid from Gurney's are: Russian olive, Norway maple, sawtooth oak, mimosa, Amur maple, burning bush, privets, butterfly bush (very invasive), vinca minor, crown vetch, pampas grass, maiden grass, hostas.
- These good guy and bad guy lists don't change much between the Gurney's and Henry Field's catalogs that most of us receive. Some exceptions of note: Henry Field's wildflower seed mixes (ask them for native species list in mixes). Henry Field's does offer the invasive red leaf barberry (North Dakota, West Virginia, and Michigan don't allow this plant to be sold in their states).
- The Henry Field's catalog and Burgess's catalog both offer native daylilies.
- Henry Field's, however, has their own niche of native plants for sale: staffa aster, tall garden phlox, cinnamon fern, maidenhair fern, jack in the pulpit, Dutchman's breeches, coral bells, golden sedum, American arborvitae, American bittersweet vine, American linden, black gum, mountain ash.
- The Burgess catalog overall has the weakest offering of native plants, all of which are offered by Field's and Gurney's. However, Burgess gets the greatest criticism for offering the Tatarian honeysuckle (invasive) which is banned from New Hampshire, offering burning bush twice in the same catalog (invasive) banned from Arizona, and offering barberry (invasive) banned from West Virginia. I always recommend buying vegetable seeds from Field's and Gurney's, but please buy local or regionally for your native plants.
- Bowman's Hill Wildflower Preserve ... [www.bhwp.org](http://www.bhwp.org), and Edge of the Woods Nursery ... [www.edgeofthewoodsnursery.com](http://www.edgeofthewoodsnursery.com), are good sources of Native Plants.

**Emergency address markers** are available for every home in Springfield Township and throughout the Springtown Fire Company's service area. This includes Durham Township as the fire company does answer calls there if necessary. The signs are reflective green and have the numerical street address on them. These markers allow emergency services (fire, ambulance, and police) to find your home quickly in the dark of night.



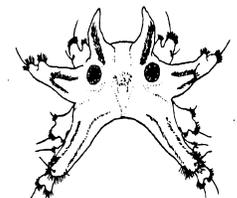
Obtain a sign by calling the Fire Company at 610-346-8383 or stop by the Firehouse.  
Signs are \$10 each, to cover the cost of the sign.



*Mini-Monster  
Mayhem*



*CCWA presents another frolic in the Creek on Father's Day Saturday. Our own Scott Douglas will put on his "Bill Nye the Science Guy" type persona and break out the water quality toilet to teach young and old alike about the wonders of water, water quality and the myriad of life in our beloved Creek.. This event has been well received as a fun and interactive way to be introduced to the science of water. If you haven't yet been, come along! It's free and you are guaranteed to learn something. Bring your water shoes, and be ready to get wet!*



**9:30 to 12:00 noon**  
**Saturday June 14th (Rain date Sunday)**  
**At the Douglas house 3450 Route 212, Springtown**  
**RSVP at 610-346-1604 by June 7th**

# WHITE-NOSE SYNDROME

BY: DAVID OLEKSA

You've probably heard the adage that if your dog has a cold nose, he's healthy. There's another story about animal noses and it's quite scary. White-nose syndrome, a deadly disease, is ravaging the bat population in the Northeast United States.

The disease was first found in four caves in New York State last year and has since spread to caves in Vermont and Massachusetts. An estimated 11,000 bats have died from the disease which gets its name from the white fungus that grows around the noses of affected bats.

So far no affected bats have been found in Pennsylvania but it is a great concern to us in the Watershed. The Durham Mine Bat Hibernaculum is the second largest bat hibernation site in the state.

An infestation of white-nose syndrome among our bats would be devastating.

The disease was never seen before last year, so its cause and cure remain a mystery.

If you do run across a dead bat or for that matter, a live one with white fungus around its muzzle, do the following:

1. Take a picture of the potentially affected bat.
2. If you physically came into contact with the animal, contain and decontaminate your clothing and thoroughly wash yourself.
3. Contact the nearest Fish and Wildlife Service to report what you've seen.

Report any bats found outside or any unusual number of bats seen outdoors during cold weather, especially near locations where bats hibernate.

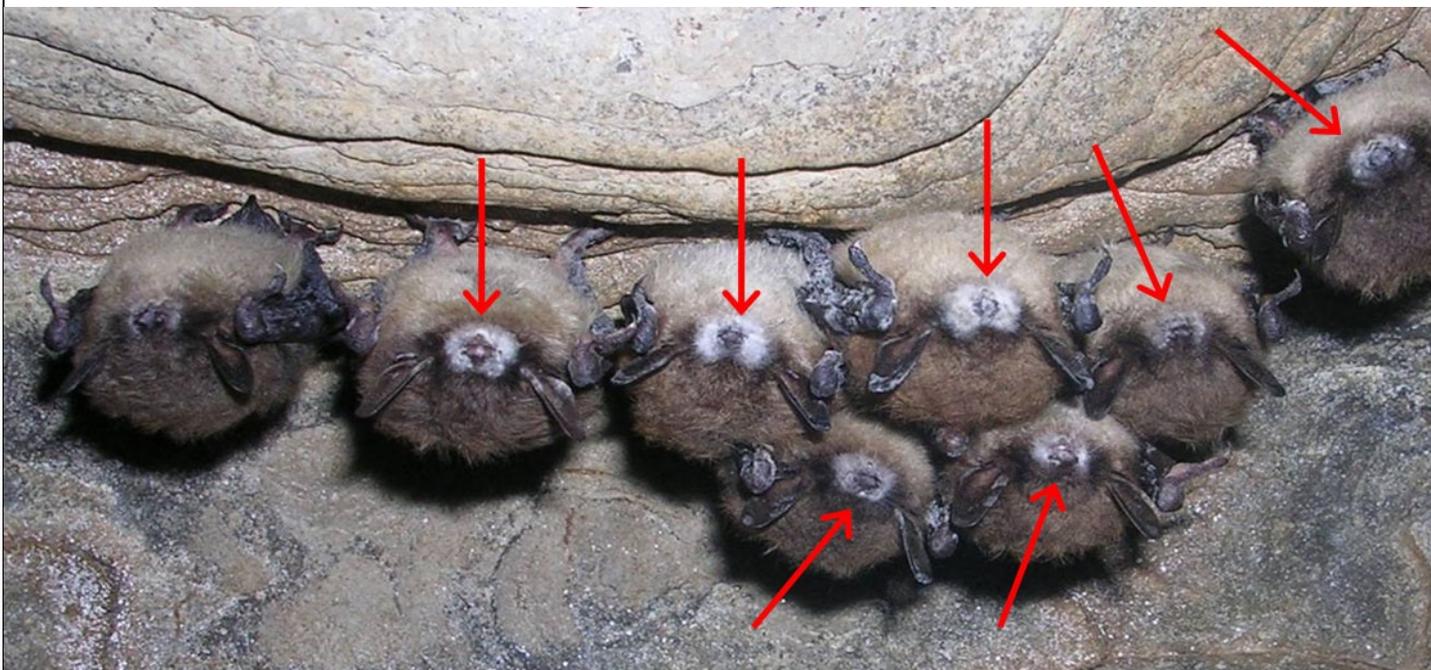
The Durham Bat Hibernaculum is home to between 6,000 and 10,000 bats including: Big Brown, Little Brown, Long-Eared, Eastern Pipi-



strelle and the endangered Indiana Bat.

Should the bat population be infected by the syndrome, the effect to our local environment would be noticeable. Bats are a natural insect control and without them, the number of pesky insects would increase or would have to be controlled with pesticides. It is estimated that the Durham bats consume an amazing 6 tons of insects every summer.

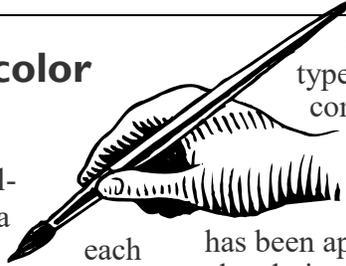
Be vigilant and if you see anything suspicious with our local bats, contact the appropriate authorities immediately.



White nose syndrome of bats photo from [www.necaveconservancy.org](http://www.necaveconservancy.org)

## Getting Started in Watercolor

By: Stephen Smith



There is a misconception that watercolors are difficult. True, watercolors are a bit "unforgiving" in the sense that each brushstroke is permanent but the advantages are many. It's very simple and quick to set up, doesn't make a mess, and is relatively inexpensive. If you are suddenly called away, as I frequently am, you can just rinse your brushes, pour out the water, pack up your stuff and you're off. So, here are a few tips on getting started!

What you will need: A simple set of dry "cakes" in a metal or plastic box will do but most serious watercolorists use the more semi-liquid colors in tubes. Lots of colors are available of course, but it's wise to start with only half a dozen or so. My favorite colors are Yellow Ochre, Cadmium Yellow, Sap Green, Prussian Blue, Payne's Grey, Cerulean Blue, Bright Red and Raw Umber. Dick Blick sells these in 5ml tubes at about five to seven dollars a tube but a little goes a long way.

You will need only a few brushes and I recommend you start with a No. 12 round, a No. 8 round, and a No. 4 round. Somewhat counter-intuitively, you will find the No. 12 to be the most utilitarian by far. Tiny brushes have very limited use in watercolor. A 3/4" flat brush or No. 24 round is nice for laying down "washes" such as sky, ocean or under painting. Buy very good stiff brushes with a lot of resiliency. Soft cheap brushes are worthless. I paid a fortune for a Kolinsky sable No. 16 round from the Daniel Smith catalog which is great but a street painter in Florence, Italy told me about an inexpensive brush in a local art shop which proved to be the miracle he said it was. The brush is labeled 1600 Goya Toray Nero; it's a No. 12 round with black bristles. It has lots of "body" and is very resilient.

Watercolor paper is special. Start with an Arches Watercolor Block. 9 x 12 inches or 11 x 14 inches, Cold Pressed, 140lb. Cold pressed means that the surface is a bit rough and this "tooth" is essential for the textural beauty of watercolor. The Arches blocks are not inexpensive but are convenient and for a beginner, well worth trying.

For a palate you can use a glass baking dish, a china

dish from your kitchen or one of many types of commercial plastic palates with little compartments or wells for the colors. An enameled pan from a lab or darkroom will work fine too. Paper towels are essential for blotting color when too much has been applied or if there is a drip or run. You can also drain some paint off your brush by a light touch on a paper towel for more precise painting.

Getting started: I find that it's helpful to lightly sketch the picture you wish to paint with a very hard pencil. Use a "Magic Rub" to erase and refine the sketch. Years ago an oil painting kit was marketed called "Paint by Number" in which the scene was divided into lots of little numbered mosaics corresponding to a given numbered paint color. Quite by accident I discovered a similar technique in watercolor. After sketching your scene, fill in the different shades, reflections, shadows and color variations with a faint pencil line. This is, in fact, called the mosaic technique and seems to be a simple way to obtain a good result. What this requires is that you study the object(s) that you're painting very closely to discover as many different tones, colors, and reflections as possible. You can color code some of the mosaics in the field if you want to finish the painting indoors at a later time.

Start with very simple subjects like a door knob, a shoe, one of your paint brushes, or a pitcher. A musical instrument may be too complicated to start with but will make a great subject with more practice. Sketch the object in such a way that the surface of the paper is at least two thirds filled by the drawing. Painting directly without sketching is OK too but the results will be much different. Try doing it both ways. I like to place masking tape around the perimeter of the paper covering the margin by about 1/2 inch. This produces a nice white border after removing the tape when the painting is done. After placing the tape draw your fingernail across the inner margin to close the seam so no watercolor leaks underneath. (continued on page 9)

(Getting started in watercolor continued from page 8)

Most of the time I will then tint the entire surface of the paper with a dilute wash of Yellow Ochre as an "under painting". If there is some bright white surface in my subject I will leave that white when tinting the paper with the Yellow Ochre wash. Wait for the wash to dry before doing the sketch or direct painting.

Some watercolorists like to do "wet on wet" which means that one color runs into another on a wet surface. This can produce some really beautiful results but really requires a lot of experimentation to use to full advantage. For years I mixed my colors on the palette before applying to the paper and was stunned by how ugly and muddy the colors looked. Janet Walsh, president of the American Water Color Society (the best of the best water color artists in the country) told me to try mixing the colors directly on the paper, and wow! Suddenly nice clear, bright colors. But a word of caution; avoid combinations of very bright garish colors unless you want to make a circus poster. Subdued colors with perhaps a very restrained splash of red in one small area of your work give a pleasing effect.

A few tips: Avoid blue skies at first. Leaving the yellow under painting for your sky, works just fine. Use green with great restraint, it's deadly when bright and overdone. Tone it down with other colors. Leave some areas of a surface unpainted for reflections. A large surface such as a wall looks dull if painted in monochrome; put some subtle color varie-

ty in it for the reflections that are there but may be hard to see. All leaves of a plant need to be painted with differing shades and tones as do petals. This can be done very subtly; otherwise the result is dull. If you get granulation, tiny specks of color precipitating out from your color, great! This gives added beauty to your color. As master art teacher Myron Barnstone says, "Don't be afraid to make a mess..." Have fun!



Model: Sherry Bodhead

## CCWA Tote Bags now for sale!

No need to toss out plastic grocery bags from the market when you can reuse a 100% cotton canvas bag. The handy size is perfect for grocery shopping and trips to the farmer's market. The extra long handles work comfortably over the shoulder for carrying books and paperwork, knitting and sewing projects, a change of clothes for the gym, for sports events and for whatever else needs toting!

\$12.00 each. To order, call

Sherry Brodhead at 610-346-8484.

## Buy Fresh, Buy Local!!

### Fun places to shop for your local produce this summer

By: Sherry Brodhead

Sitting at the computer, eagerly awaiting spring and the taste of fresh, locally grown produce, I found myself doing a search for what produce buying options may be available for me this summer. I came upon an exciting website from "Local Harvest - Real food, Real Farms, Real Community" (<http://www.localharvest.org>) where they put together a wonderful tool for researching local farmers' markets, family farms, and other sources of sustainably grown food by typing in the zip code for the search area. Wow! I had no idea that there is so much available to us here in Upper Bucks County! I urge you to check this out! In this day and age when most produce we buy from the supermarkets is shipped to us from anywhere in North, Central and South America at the expense of the environment by the fuel expended to get it to us, it is reassuring to have a sense of how, where and by whom our food is grown.

Closest to the Springfield Township area is **Flint Hill Farm** at 1922 Flint Hill Rd. Besides being an agro-educational center offering children's camps, seminars, training programs, vocational agricultural training for disabled teens and young adults, they also have a farm store where raw/pasteurized goat's milk, goat cheeses, cow's milk and cheese and hand spun yarns are sold.

#### Spring Open House Dates:

April 19th and 27<sup>th</sup>, 10am-3pm.  
Sheep sheering will take place on the 27th

Vocational Program Open House for all educators and families:  
April 26<sup>th</sup>, 11am-3pm

For more info call 610-838-2928 or visit their website at <http://flinthillfarm.org>.

Traveling a bit further west is **Gottschell Farm** at 5318 Limeport Pike, Coopersburg ([www.gottschellfarm.com](http://www.gottschellfarm.com)). This small family run farm owned by Steve and Nicole Shelly, offers a wide variety of organically grown, though not certified organic vegetables, herbs, herb plants and flowers. They sell eggs from free-range chickens raised on organic grains without the use of hormones and medications. Their farm stand will be open starting Mid-April to May and will be open every day, though it is suggested to check out their web site for updates on hours, especially on Sunday when they are busy selling their goods at the Emmaus Farmer's Market.

To the south in Bedminster Township is the **Myerov Family Farm** run by Neil Myerov. Though not organic, they avoid pesticides for their vegetable crops using an integrated pest management system and they use a composted horse manure mix for fertilizer. Here you can enjoy trips to the farm for "U-Pick It" outings for peas, green beans,

plum, grape and heirloom tomatoes, hot peppers, herbs, flowers, and many more goodies. They also offer cooking and canning classes. New for the 2008 growing season is the option to buy CSA shares (Community Supported Agriculture).

Located at 306 Elephant Rd, Perkasie (<http://myerovfarm.com>) 215-249-3145

**Community Supported Agriculture**, or CSAs as they are called, are farm ventures, often organic, where the public purchases "shares" at the beginning of the growing season for a weekly set quantity of produce, typically from late spring to early fall. Members receive their share of the bounty available for each given week. The crops are planted in succession to assure a continuous and varied supply of produce to the members throughout the season. Weekly shares will vary by size and types depending on the growing season and conditions. The CSA concept is wise for the environment because it encourages the establishment of local food production, less fuel is wasted on transport and food (continued on page 11)

*(Buy Fresh, Buy Local continued from page 10)*  
dollars are kept within the community. With the farmers creating a set market for their produce in advance, considerably less food waste is created and farmers can devote more time to growing and less time to marketing.

Spring is the time to buy shares and early sign-ups may offer discounts so don't delay!

**I am aware of three CSA programs that are convenient to our area:**

### **Blooming Glen Farm**

98 Moyer Rd. Perkasie, PA  
18944  
[www.bloomingglenfarm.com](http://www.bloomingglenfarm.com)  
215-257-2566

Listed as offering "chemical-free, sustainably and naturally grown" produce. They encourage member involvement, asking for 4 hours of work for the entire season (!). You can opt out by paying an extra \$30. A fall harvest festival, potluck dinners and a newsletter with recipes will also be offered.

### **Seasons' Harvest Farm**

3 Long Rd, Lenhartsville, PA  
19534  
[www.seasonsharvestfarm.com](http://www.seasonsharvestfarm.com)  
610-756-3910

I chose this one because they deliver to Coopersburg, as well as Doylestown, Allentown, Bethlehem and Easton.

They are a 100-acre vegetable and livestock farm, offering organic produce, free range chick-

en, pasture raised pork and beef without the use of hormones and antibiotics.

### **Myerov Family Farm**

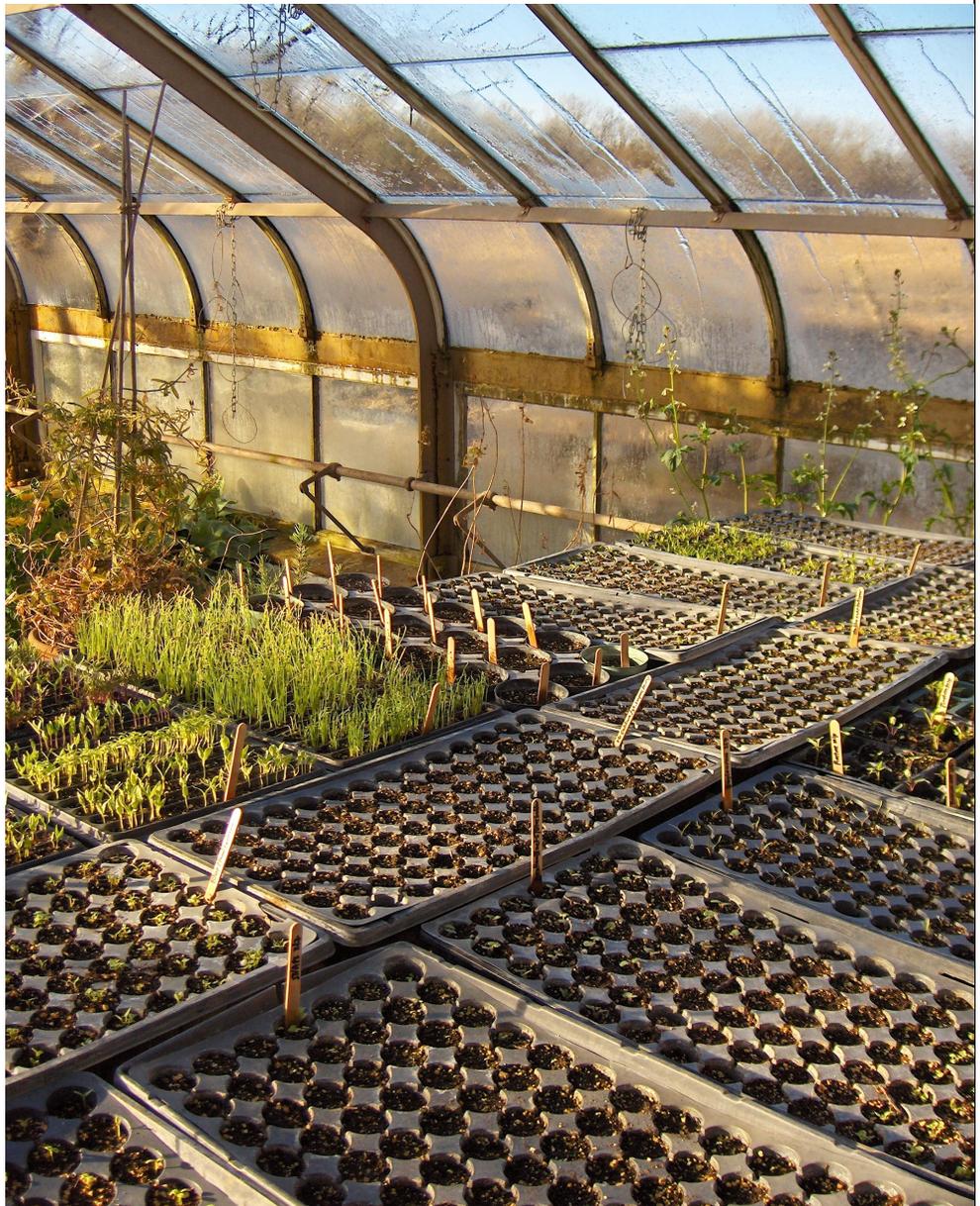
306 Elephant Rd, Perkasie, PA  
18944 <http://myerovfarm.com>  
215-249-3145

Info listed on page 10

For more information on share costs and specifics on each farm please visit their web sites or give

them a call.

I don't know about you, but all this talk of yummy, wholesome fresh food is making me quite restless for summer, the smell of dirt and all things green, growing and flowering...and very hungry!



# Low Maintenance Gardening

By Stephen Smith

The well tended garden is a beautiful thing to behold but those who have been at it a few years know the work can be daunting. While weather is certainly a factor, the simple fact remains that a bountiful garden requires effort. Up to a point, weeding can be pleasant diversion if the soil is soft enough to allow complete de-racination. But honestly, those gardens pictured in the seed catalogs are a complete fiction...or are they?

The two main problems for gardeners in this area are weeds and pests (mostly the four legged kind). Several approaches can be taken to the deer, rabbit and ground hog problem. Some of my friends use electrified fences which they claim work fine. I'm hoping this method works for my orchard and flower gardens but I've taken a more Fort Knox attitude for my vegetable garden. I've buried heavy gauge galvanized steel fence around the perimeter with a L-shaped bend to it projecting outward from the garden about a foot and a half below the surface of the soil. This leaves about four and a half feet above the surface stapled to the upright ten foot 4x4's buried two feet deep and stabilized with concrete. In addition, there are strands of wire above the mesh fence, strung horizontally about two feet apart extending to a full eight feet

above the ground. No deer or smaller mammals to deal with. The mice are eliminated by two Jack Russell terriers but because the subject of this article is "low maintenance" gardening pretend I didn't mention them.

Seeds or transplants started in the green house are planted in raised beds 4 feet by 8 feet made from 2"x6" boards. There may be some controversy about using pressure treated lumber but these frames will last a lot longer. Arrange the frames so you can walk and work comfortably between them. A 4 foot width means that you can plant and weed one half at a time without having to step into the bed which would of course compact the soil. When placing a new frame, it's advisable to cover the ground with newspaper four sheets thick or with corrugated cardboard. This will act as a weed barrier as the weed seeds in the ground germinate. It is advisable not to till the soil. Stems of existing weeds need to be eliminated by either a close mowing or with a weed trimmer. The frame then needs to be filled with a rich organic growing medium. The least expensive and most advantageous by far, in my opinion, is well aged mushroom soil, salvaged from the mushroom mines in Kennett Square. It's a good idea to let it age for at least a year, although I seem to manage by buying it in the fall, covering it with a tarp and then using it in



the spring. Used "fresh" it is much too "hot" and will burn the plants with the excess nitrogen. Compost of any sort can be used as long as it is free of weed seeds, drains well and has satisfactory nutrients in it. Aged mushroom soil just seems to be about perfect in this regard. It's also great for mulch around shrubs and trees.

Once the raised bed is full, and this will take three or four wheelbarrow loads, I use a screed board made from pine about one inch thick by four inches by four feet long to level the bed. With long legs I can straddle the bed and smooth it down, as well as make horizontal furrows by pressing the board firmly into the soil. The type of plant grown in the bed will determine how deep and how far apart the furrows are made. The idea is to plant fairly close so that the weeds are (theoretically) crowded out by the plants. Some call this the

(continued on page 13)

(*Low Maintenance Gardening*, continued from page 12)

"French intensive" method. I have a bad habit of planting things like Brussels sprouts, egg plant and peppers too close, but I'm learning. I heartily recommend planting edible edamame soy beans as they are incredibly delicious and healthy, but beware of the stinging caterpillars sometimes camouflaged in amongst their leaves...OUCH!

I grow grass in between the rows which of course keeps down weeds but it does need to be mowed so the beds have to be no closer than the width of the mower. Some folks use gravel, wood chips or hay placed over a weed barrier. This looks good, but to me, grass is a little more luxurious. Mushroom soil is sterile and free of weed seeds but eventually weeds will form in your beds. The trick is to eliminate them before they mature and go to seed, otherwise the weeds will multiply exponentially. If the weeds have gone to seed, place a bag over the weed and cut it off near the base. Discard the bag and plant containing the weed seeds and dig up the root to discard as well. Don't throw weed seeds into a compost pile! Another advantage of a growing medium like mushroom soil is that weeds can be pulled with little effort, unlike in heavy clay soil, especially under dry conditions.

A word of caution, mushroom soil even when aged, is nitrogen rich and this encourages a

lot of leaf growth and sometimes the vegetables themselves are sparse or small. This happened to me with potatoes when the soil was not sufficiently aged; huge plants, tiny potatoes. On the other hand, many vegetable plants flourish when the mushroom soil is aged just over the winter.

Another tip is to cover your beds over the winter with a Geotextile fabric stapled to the top of the frames. If you don't do this, each bed will have to be weeded in the spring unless some other type of mulch is used. I don't recommend hay as mulch since the seeds will prove troublesome when they germinate. Cover crops may be a good alternative but I don't like to till the beds unless absolutely necessary. When tilling is necessary, a small two cycle cultivator is a great time saver, and with practice, you won't tear up the wood frame too much.

Since most folks would agree that tomatoes are the prize in any vegetable garden, I'll pass along a tip I got years ago from Burnett Bear Sr., a master gardener. He used heavy gauge wire mesh, used for concrete construction, with openings of about 6 inches. This can be purchased fairly cheaply and then cut to a length of about 6 feet. Cylinders six feet high are then formed. The steel fence cylinder is attached to a steel farm fence post driven into the ground on the west (windward)



side. Since tomato plants should be buried to all but the top two sets of leaves, I now use a post hole digger to plant them. The rows are covered with Geotextile fabric with X's made in them with a butane soldering iron to accommodate the tomato plant in the hole. Placing a spade full of mushroom soil in the bottom of the hole is helpful. The holes average about one foot six inches deep. Generally I don't waste raised beds for tomatoes or potatoes but they are great for sweet potatoes.

Ken Simmons has a drip irrigation system in his garden and it's nothing short of a miracle. I'll have to figure out some way to adapt this to my raised beds. He also collects rain water in a huge container. I have a hydrant out in my garden which gives me a supply of water for my oscillating sprinkler or soaker hoses. The advantage of the sprinkler is that it's less likely to forget that it's turned on than with the soaker hoses. The experts recommend that watering always be done in the morning and that planting transplants always be done on cloudy days. Good advice. Happy gardening!!



# Creature Feature: Craneflies

By: W. Scott Douglas

This is part of a series of articles on the fauna of the Cooks Creek.



Craneflies are a group of insects that we have all seen, but few know what to call them. When I was a boy, we called them “giant mosquitos” and would scare our younger siblings with made up tales of their bloodthirsty exploits. Fortunately, craneflies are not blood predators, in fact the adults have no mouthparts at all and only live long enough to mate, lay eggs and die. Craneflies are true flies, or Diptera, related to all other flying insects with only one pair of wings like houseflies, mosquitos or horseflies. Craneflies are members of the family Tipulidae. You may be surprised to know that this group of insects is one of the most diverse of the flies, with almost 1500 species described in North America alone, and divided into 64 different genera. They have exploited most of the habitats on Earth, with some

species even adapted to desert conditions.

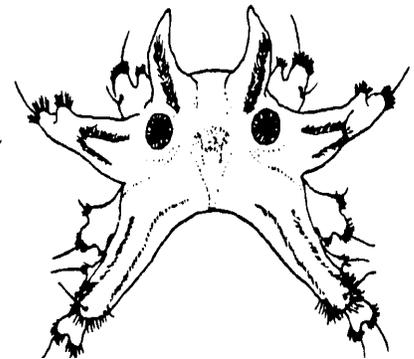
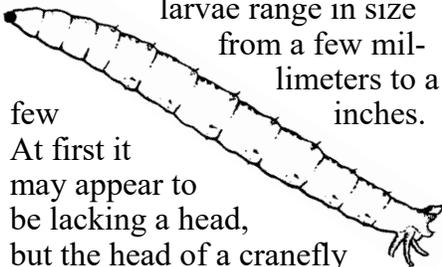
As with all flies, the larva is a legless maggot, and while many are revolted by their appearance, their structure is quite varied and fascinating. Pictures of the hind end of the larvae often look like a series of Rorschach blots. I leave it to you to decide what you see! These structures (see figure below) are actually part of the breathing apparatus for the insect, with the “eyes” being spiracles or breathing holes. The lobes may be gills, no one really knows for sure.

In Cooks Creek, crane fly larvae range in size from a few millimeters to a few inches.

At first it may appear to be lacking a head, but the head of a crane fly larva is actually complex and hardened, it is just retracted into the thorax when not feeding. The larva feeds on leaf litter and other detritus, and is an important food source for fish. The adults are fed upon by a whole host of birds, fish, reptiles, amphibians and small mammals. The larva goes through 4 instars before molting into a pupa over the course of a few days to a few years.

Craneflies live in almost all aquatic environments from slow

silt-laden rivers to rushing mountain streams. Some are quite intolerant of pollution; most are somewhat tolerant, but none are able to live in highly polluted water. You will probably find craneflies in most kick net samples, but you will find the most spectacular ones by looking through the leaves from the bottom of a quiet pool. Place the leaves in a dishpan with some water and agitate them gently to dislodge the residents. The largest crane fly larvae are brown, but their skin is translucent, making it possible to see their insides when they move. Gross!



**Green Tip # 3: The other R's in Recycling** Most of us that have a green outlook wouldn't even consider throwing away an aluminum can or a glass pickle jar. But recycling is only the last part of a three part effort to reduce our environmental footprint. "Reduce" and "Reuse" are less glamorous perhaps, but being creative and green at the same time can be fun. When you shop, select products that come in either reusable packages or that have minimal packaging. Even a single reuse of a plastic container can help and the recycling center doesn't mind if you've carried your lunch in that old yogurt container once or twice. I also use all manner of containers for storage of everything from rubber bands to nuts and bolts. Resist the urge to buy "special" organizing systems; just select products that come in cool reusable containers. Perhaps the biggest way to reduce waste is by buying in bulk. I use antique canning jars to store bulk dry goods like beans and pasta that I buy in super-sized containers. I also store manageable quantities of pet food in reused kitty litter buckets – allowing me to keep the economy sized bags from cluttering my precious inside storage space. Of course, bulk buying comes with an immediate reward of reducing your grocery bill as well. You are only limited by your imagination, have fun and be creative.

### Durham Township Recycling Center

Location: Municipal Building, 218 Old Furnace Rd, Durham

1st Saturday of every month ( 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday if 1<sup>st</sup> Saturday is on a holiday weekend)

Hours: 9:00AM – 12:00 noon

Accepting newspapers, magazines, junk mail, phone books, glass, tin, plastic, aluminum and cardboard.

Please note that this facility is available to all, not just Durham Township residents!

Contact Joe Kulick at the township building for more info. 610-346-8911

### Springfield Township

Location: Township Building, 2320 Township Road

Paper Recycling Bin Available at Township Building for your use!

A Recycling bin was recently placed here and is available to anyone. Cut down on trash and help the township earn extra money. You can drop off: Magazines, Shopping Catalogs, Phone Books, Newspapers, Office and School Papers, Mail.

Please do NOT include: Plastic, glass, metal, trash

Hours: Anytime ; Cardboard can be dropped off in the bin next to the paper retriever.

See website: [www.springfieldbucks.org](http://www.springfieldbucks.org) or call (610) 346-6700.

### Blinderman & Son

Location: 1320 Whitaker St, Hellertown. 610-838-9221

Hours: 7:30AM – 4:00 PM, Monday – Friday

7:30 AM – 11:30AM, Saturday

Accepting cardboard and most metals

### City of Bethlehem Theis/Cornfeld Recycling Center

Web site: [www.bethlehem-pa.gov/recycle/services/theis\\_cornfeld.htm](http://www.bethlehem-pa.gov/recycle/services/theis_cornfeld.htm)

Location: 635 Illick's Mill Rd, Bethlehem Phone: 610-865-7082 Hours: Weekdays: 10 AM to 5 PM, Saturday 9 AM to 5 PM, Sunday 11AM to 4 PM

Accepting glass, cans, plastics, newspapers, all books, magazines, catalogs, cardboard, mixed office paper, metals, textiles (clothing, shoes, etc) large appliances (certified freon-free). Call or go to the web site for specifics.

**Bonus!!** They provide FREE on site shredding services for businesses and private individuals. If you have 4 or more boxes, call 610-865-7082 to schedule an appointment

Hours of Shredding: Weekdays: 10 AM to 2:30 PM, Saturday: 9 AM to 2 PM

### City of Bethlehem Compost Center

Location: 1480 Schoenersville Rd., Bethlehem

Non-Bethlehem residents are not allowed to drop off materials at the composting center but the mulch and compost is available for free to anyone if loading services are not needed. They actually produce much more than what they can distribute, so they encourage anyone to take as much as they would like! Loading services are provided for a fee of \$10/cubic yard in the spring and fall. Call 610-856-7082 for hours.

## Local Government Meetings

### Springfield Township:

[www.springfieldbucks.org](http://www.springfieldbucks.org)

610-346-6700

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

### Historic Commission:

3rd Tuesday @ 7:30 PM

### Durham Township:

[www.durhamtownship.org](http://www.durhamtownship.org)

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:

[www.lowersaucontownship.org](http://www.lowersaucontownship.org)

610-865-3291

3700 Old Philadelphia Pike

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

### Planning Commission:

2nd Mon. @ 7 PM

EAC: 1st Tues. @ 7 PM

### Williams Township:

[www.williamstwp.org](http://www.williamstwp.org)

610-258-6060

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

## Please Join Us... Cooks Creek Watershed Association - Membership Form

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.

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Other household members:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_

Please send me CCWA e-news and  alerts  
CCWA does not share your e-mail address with any other

\_\_\_\_\_ **E-mail:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Interests: (circle)**

Newsletter      Website      Roadside Cleanup      Event Planning  
Membership      Fundraising      Stream Studies      Wherever I'm Needed

**Individual Membership Fee:** @      \$ 15.00 per year

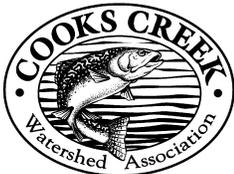
\_\_\_\_\_

**Family Membership Fee:** @      \$ 25.00 per year

\_\_\_\_\_

**Donation:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Total:** \_\_\_\_\_



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

NON-PROFIT ORG.  
STANDARD MAIL  
DURHAM, PA 18039  
PERMIT NO. 6

If you hold precious the beauty that surrounds us in the Cooks Creek Watershed area and would like to be actively involved in its preservation, then consider joining our association as a member. Reach out to your community! We would love to hear from you!

Please drop us a line at [info@cooks creekpa.org](mailto:info@cooks creekpa.org)

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