

# Cooks Current

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

Volume 6, Issue 1

Newsletter of the Cooks Creek Watershed

Spring 2009

## 2008 CCWA Events

### Regular Board Meetings:

**Springtown Fire House- 7:30 PM**  
(April 18, May 28, June 25, July 23, Aug. 27, Sept. 24, Oct. 22, Nov. 19, Dec. 17, 2009)

*All are welcome! We appreciate your involvement!*

### Special Events:

- Apr 4 Spring Clean-Up
- Apr 18 Annual meeting
- June 20 Mini Monster Mayhem
- Oct 3 Fall Dinner
- Nov 7 Fall Clean-Up



See Back for Details!

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

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

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## From Across the Board...

Being the president for this organization is often very rewarding and sometimes even flattering, given the attention that the Cooks Creek receives at both a local and even State level. It seems that we always are approved for our grants, and my phone calls to our elected reps are returned promptly.

But this week (second week in February), I was reminded of how far we yet have to go in Pennsylvania to get protection for all of our shared resources. I was appalled when I read the decision by the Administrative Law Judge regarding Springfield Township's contesting the route selection for new power lines in Richland and the western part of Springfield. PPL (formerly known as Pennsylvania Power and Light) selected a route through forest and riparian lands in the center of the largest intact forest tract left in Bucks County. Despite multiple experts' testimony to the contrary, PPL claimed



*Spring buds on a Magnolia*

that their route selection was needed, cheaper, and wouldn't cause any significant harm to the upper Tohickon Creek watershed.

Upon review of Judge Jones' decision, it seems that she took whatever PPL's hired guns said as factual, despite the two sides in some cases being diametrically opposed. Some of the more outrageous examples involve PPL's assertion that there are "no invasive plant issues on power line rights of way", and that "cutting down mature trees low-

ers water temperature in streams". These are simply false statements, if not outright lies, and are refuted in any number of introductory ecology texts. My disgust with those professionals who can be paid to help destroy what they have been taught to protect is beyond words.

That the Commonwealth is ignorant of the simplest aspects of modern resource management is disappointing, but not too sur-

*(Continued on page 2)*

(Across the Board, Cont'd from page 1)

prising. Pennsylvania's history on natural resource protection is among the worst in the nation. What is surprising to me is just how massive the inequity of the system is that supposedly protects the "public interest" here. PPL is a multi-billion dollar international energy company, not a not-for-profit public utility that needs the protection of the Commonwealth in order to perform actions for the greater good. The only recourse for those who dare to question the integrity of these giants is a legal process that pits corporate attorneys with limitless resources against lawyers willing to work for local governments and advocacy groups with little or no money to pay them. Springfield Township spent over \$150,000 on their opposition, and I for one truly appreciate the courage shown by the Board of Supervisors. The final backstop is a review by the Pennsylvania Public Utilities Commission (PUC). Despite being originally set up to control the rampant greed of the utilities, the PUC has a long history of siding with the energy companies. I am sure they will grant PPL's application, regardless of the damage that will be done to our neighboring watershed.

While this outrage cannot be undone, we can let our elected officials know that we saw what happened and we care. I encourage all of you to send an email to your representatives in Harrisburg and to Governor Rendell urging him to stop the destruction of wild habitat in upper Bucks County. And ask him to change the system that puts anyone who wishes to contest the power companies in a no-win situation with the taxpayers holding the bag. Why should we care about what happens in a neighboring watershed? Because it will likely bring in commercial development to our west, adding to the pressure we already feel. And the new substation that will be built on Hickon Rd. will spawn further connections in order to feed the electricity needs of the metropolitan giant to our east. I shudder to think of where the next line will be run. Let's let Harrisburg know that we in Cooks Creek will not lie down easily.

***For more information on the PPL proposal and the arguments against the cross country route, as well as contact information for your representatives in Harrisburg, click on [www.sbulu.org](http://www.sbulu.org).***

Yours in conservation,

W. Scott Douglas



9<sup>th</sup> Annual  
Mini Monster Mayhem

*A professional biologist presents a fun-filled, kid-friendly introduction to watersheds, watershed protection, and stream entomology. All ages are welcome to join us for our annual romp through the Creek with the kids, looking for the amazing mini-monsters that crawl in, on and under Cooks Creek.*

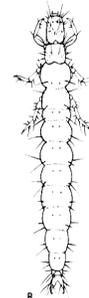
9:30am – 12:00 noon Saturday June 20, (raindate Sunday).  
At the Douglas', 3450 Rt. 212, Springtown

*This event is free and open to the public*

**Bring your water shoes (or other footgear), we will be walking in the Creek!**

*Children under 12 must be accompanied by an adult throughout the event.*

***RSVP by June 15, (610) 346-1604***



## Creature Feature: Spring Peeper (*Pseudacris crucifer*)

By: W. Scott Douglas

*This is the Tenth installment of a series of articles on the fauna of the Cooks Creek.*



Spring Peeper (*Pseudacris crucifer*)

When I was a child growing up in northern Vermont, I spent as much of my leisure time outside as possible. My favorite activity was wading through streams and ponds observing, catching and playing with the local fauna. Frogs supplied endless hours of entertainment due to their number and the fact that they responded pretty well to at least temporary captivity. Tadpoles were my favorite, and I became a local expert on where you could find egg masses in the spring. Spring in VT is particularly special because the winters are so cold, dark and seemingly endless. I eagerly waited for the days when the creeks would run swollen with snow melt and the fecund smell of wet earth permeated everything. I would listen for the sleigh bell chorus of frogs from my favorite wooded wetlands and head out with a bucket and a dip net to collect the gelatinous egg masses. Now that I've grown up, I still feel a special pull when the frogs start up their springtime chorus from the pond next door. And rather than being annoyed with the sometimes deafening sound, I lay in my bed with the window open and smile.

The most common chorus frog in the Watershed is the Spring Peeper. Their high peeping call is just a little bit lower in pitch than a dog whistle, and consists of single notes or trills. When a pop-

ulation emerges from under logs and loose bark in springtime, the males gather near a body of water and actively advertise for mates by calling. When conditions are right, the frog calls blend together, sounding like sleigh bells. The best breeding habitat for Peepers is wooded wetlands and vernal ponds. The reason for this is that these bodies of water are dry at least part of the year, so they do not harbor predators which would eat the tadpoles. Once the tadpoles have grown up and left the pond (eight weeks), they search out meals of beetles, ants, flies and spiders from woodlands and overgrown fields. Peepers are nocturnal, using darkness to hide from herons, snakes, rodents and other predators. Despite their loud calls, the frogs themselves are quite small; they could sit comfortably on a dime. They are considered tree frogs, and have little sticky pads on their feet that help them grip branches as they climb.

Adult Peepers are grey green brown to light brown, with a characteristic cross marking on their back, which gives them their Latin name. Like all amphibians, they are sensitive to water quality, particularly in their egg and tadpole stage. Wooded wetlands and vernal ponds that are well buffered and surrounded with vegetation are critical for reproductive success. While the little guys will use almost any body of water to breed (even puddles and roadside ditches), the eggs laid in these places will almost certainly not make it to maturity due to either premature drying up or toxins from road runoff. If you want to "go frogging", follow your ears! Bring a flashlight and wear waders. As you approach the pond, the frogs will become silent, but if you are patient and quiet, they will start up again. Look in the brush and reeds, just about a meter or so off the ground, and search for their throat sacs expanding and contracting as they sing. Jump, jump, jump little froggy!

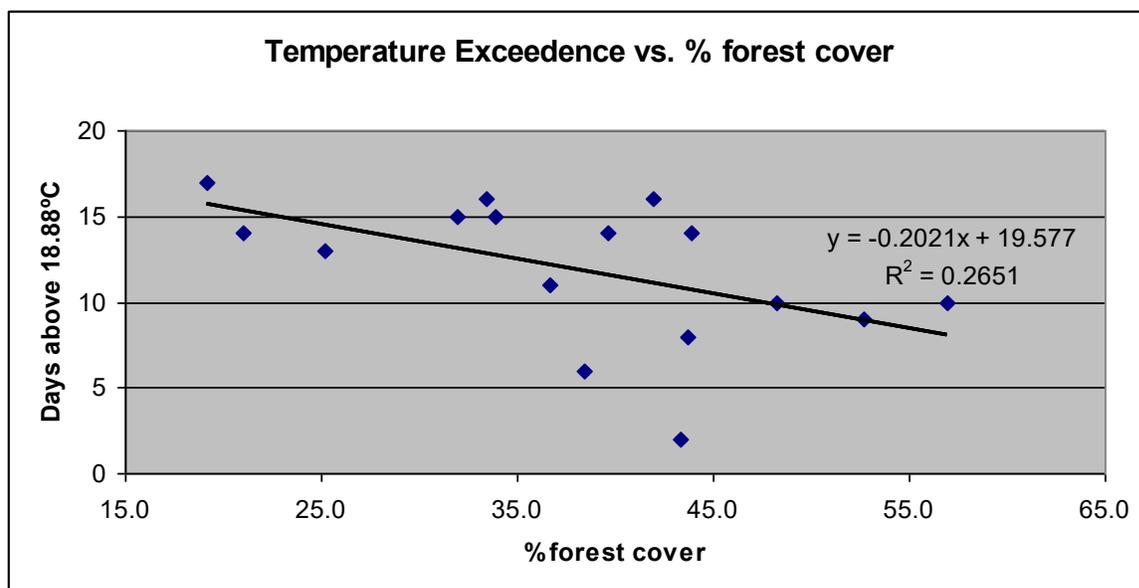
## Water Temperature and Land Use - More Evidence for Buffers

By: W. Scott Douglas

Last issue, I presented the first data from our new continuous temperature loggers and showed that the water temperature in at least two locations exceeded PADEP criteria for trout. Since that time, we have installed these loggers in a total of 16 different locations using money granted to us by the Lehigh Valley Community Foundation. Each logger was placed at a point in the stream intended to gather information about the land that is drained to that point – we call these subwatersheds. We began recording data on Labor Day weekend. We also collected water quality chemistry as well; dissolved oxygen, pH, conductivity, nitrates, alkalinity and hardness. Unfortunately, when we examined our first download of temperatures from the network of loggers in late November, we found that the temperature criteria was exceeded at least for a few days, in every one of the 16 subwatersheds.

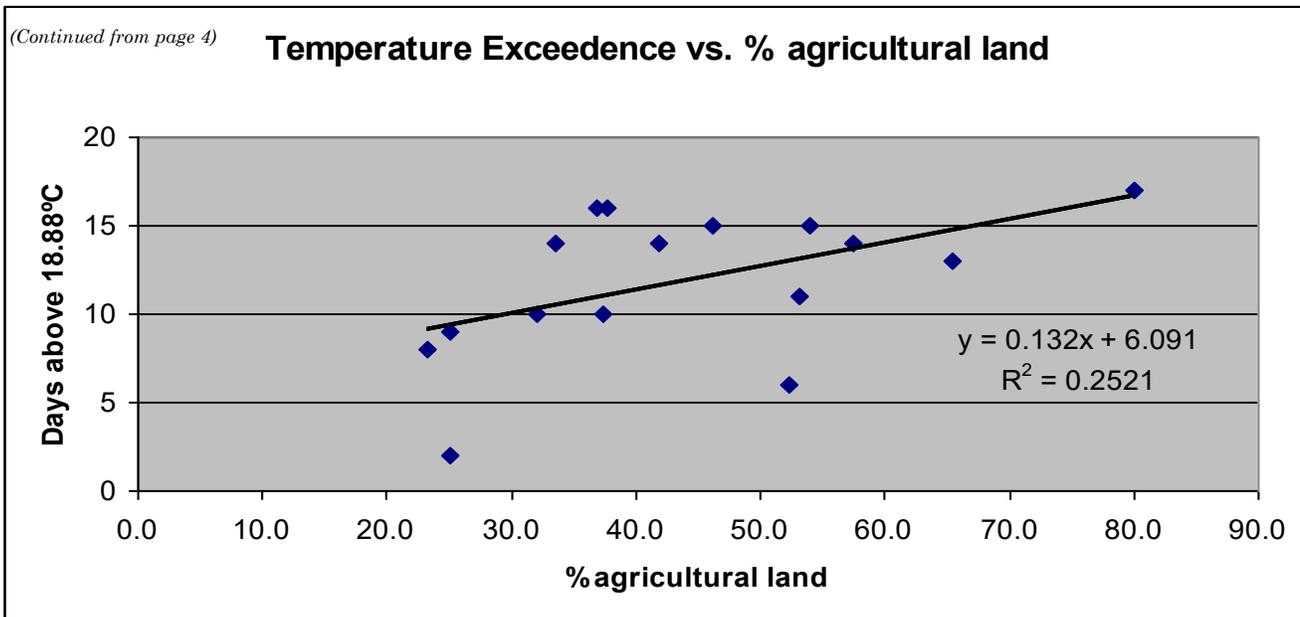
Upon further review of the data, we found that some of the stations showed more days “out of range” than others. We wanted to know why. Was there some difference in land use that caused some subwatersheds to heat up more than others? As part of his senior project at Palisades High School, my son, James, analyzed land use in the watershed using a Geographic Information System or GIS. The GIS is a tool that allows one to either visually display quantity data like chemistry or to quantify visual data like land use. This dual ability makes GIS a very powerful tool. James was able to take land use maps from Bucks County and quantify the amount of land use in each subwatershed.

When we plotted up the number of days above the PADEP criteria of 19°C against the percentage of forest cover, agriculture, and residential land in each subwatershed, we found some interesting trends. The number of days out of range decreased as the percent forest increased.

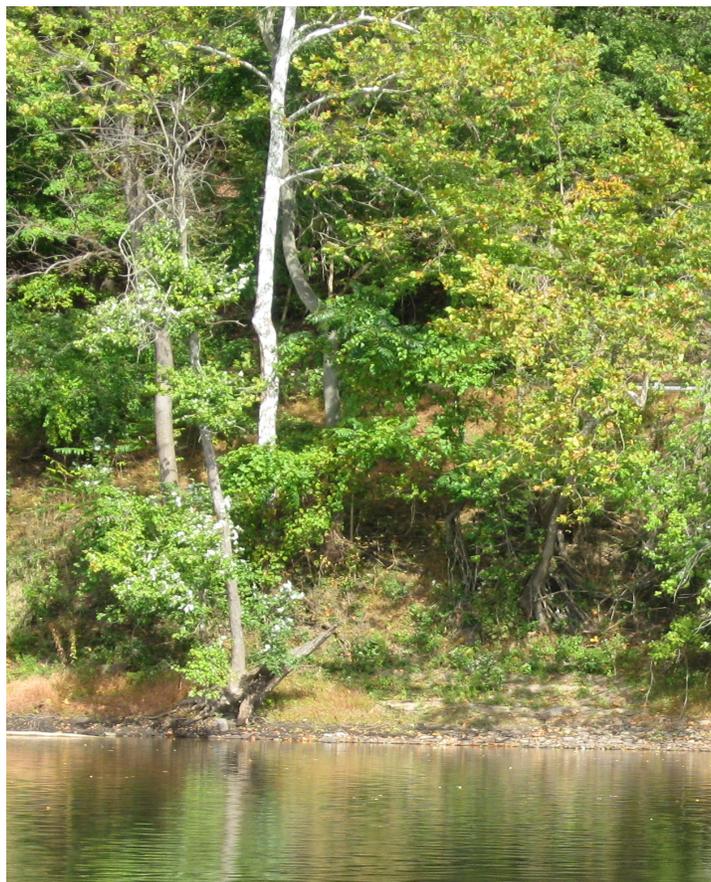


At the same time, the number of days increased as percent agricultural land use increased. Each relationship only explained about 25% of the variation between subwatersheds, but taken together, these two land use patterns ex-

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plain more than 50% of the variability in temperature. This makes intuitive sense. As the amount of cover decreases in a watershed, the sun has more time to increase the temperature of the water in the stream. Agricultural use (as measured by open fields) will obviously decrease the amount of coverage, unless a riparian buffer is respected. And what about residential use? That relationship was not statistically significant, probably because most subwatersheds have a very low percentage of residential land use. As we collect more data on each subwatershed, we may be able to find other things that influence temperature and increase our confidence in what is driving these temperature excursions. Other factors that may influence the temperature would be the amount of groundwater infiltrating the system, percentage of baseflow, whether the station is located in a second, third or fourth order stream, and the amount of land upstream of the station.



We will be examining the data more closely as time goes on, and I will keep you posted on the results. In the meantime, you can read my son's senior project paper showing all the data from the first and second rounds of sampling on our website; [www.cookscreekpa.org](http://www.cookscreekpa.org).

*Picture by Palms WIP Students*

## Children's Backyard: Spring Potato Printing and Planting

By: Lois Oleksa

If you have an old stained shirt, turn it into a new one. Anything you can carve into a potato, you can print onto a shirt. You might like to try leaves, fruit, vegetables, birds, water creatures, animals, a sun, moon, stars.... letters and numbers....soccer balls.... cars and trucks, or all of them! When you are finished printing with the potatoes, plant them in a garden (as long as they have two or more eyes) (See "Growing Potatoes") or toss them into your compost pile. (See "Make Your Own Compost")

**What you need:** a shirt, potatoes, fabric paint, pen, paint brush, cookie cutters, knife, and newspapers.



### What to do:

Cut some potatoes in half. Use a cookie cutter to cut out shapes or draw your design with a pen and then carve around it. Try a simple design first. Cut away the potato around the design. The design should stand up from the rest of the potato, so it will print clearly. Practice on a piece of paper until you have a design that you like. You are now ready to use your potato block and begin printing.

Lay a few sheets of newspaper flat inside the shirt so the paint won't go through to the other side. Paint the design on the potato with fabric paint, using your paint brush. Or pour a little paint on a plate and dip the potato into it.

Printing your shirt: Press the painted surface of the potato down on the shirt. Press evenly. If you need a handle for the potato stamp, simply stick a fork into the back of the potato. Your potato printing block can be used over and over again to make new prints. If you need to change colors, just wash off the potato, blot it dry and start again with your new color. When you are finished printing, allow the shirt to dry, leaving the newspaper inside the shirt. If you want to print both sides of the shirt, wait until one side is completely dry before you print the other side. Follow the instructions on the paint to make the paint permanent before you wash the shirt. You can save your potatoes to reuse another time by putting them into a plastic bag in the refrigerator. They will keep a week or two.

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### Notes:

Always be careful when using knives or other sharp tools. It is a good idea to have an adult nearby when you are cutting out your blocks.

A stamp ink pad can also be used. To make relief prints, scratch or cut lines into a smoothly cut piece of potato. Only the raised parts around the lines will touch the shirt and print color. A print made from areas or lines that are raised up from – in “relief” to – the rest of the surface is called a relief print.

Try potato printing on paper.

Using your paint brush, add eyes to your creatures, veins to the leaves, legs to crayfish .....

### Growing Potatoes

If the potatoes you used for your printing are still in good shape and have at least two eyes, try planting them in your garden. Add a few others and you will have a potato patch. Potatoes love cool weather, so plant as early as the soil can be worked. In our area, I plant my potatoes in late

April. A later planting, in mid or late spring will produce fall potatoes. If you start with large potatoes, cut them in pieces containing one to three eyes apiece. (The eye is the dormant bud.)

Let the cut surfaces dry for a day or two before planting so the surface can heal over. This makes the potato less likely to rot in the ground.

Prepare your garden soil and place the potato pieces with the cut side down every 10 to 12 inches in trenches that are 2 to 3 feet apart. Cover them with three inches of soil. When the tops grow to be about 9 inches high, draw up loose soil around the plants.

After the potato plants flower, you can start looking for your harvest. Sneak your hand into the soil at the base of the plant and check on the size of your potatoes. When the potato tops have dried completely, it is definitely time to harvest them.

### Make Your Own Compost

Fill a large flower pot about one-quarter full of dirt. Add food scraps, including your potato printing blocks, until the pot is about half full. Then cover the food with a thin layer of dirt to keep it from smelling and to keep bugs away. Don't use meat, fat, or dairy products like milk and cheese.

Put your pot outside and cover it with a plastic bag. Add a little water to the pot every few days, just to keep it damp. After adding the water, stir the mixture with a large spoon or small shovel. All the little organisms breaking down the scraps need air and water to live and do their work.

After 3 to 4 weeks, most of the food will have turned into soil. You've made compost – fertilizer. Plant a flower or vegetable into the pot, or use the compost on your garden.

## Chainsaw Safety and Tips

By: Steve Smith

Despite certain safety features now on state of the art chainsaws, they, and tree work in general, pose significant dangers for both amateurs and professionals. The extremely high RPM and wide kerf of chainsaws can cause formidable wounds and I have found them among the most difficult to treat, as the chain removes a discrete width of tissue making direct repair of nerves, tendons and bones a challenge.

While chainsaw wounds can be limb threatening, falling trees, large limbs (widow makers), and the sudden shifting of logs are more of a threat for major extremity amputation and loss of life. This short article is inspired both by the many injuries that I have treated as an orthopedic surgeon over the years in addition to the personal misadventures I have had, using both very large and very small chain saws.

### Safety Equipment:

Always use true safety glasses with side protection. A face screen is advisable in addition to the safety glasses. Eyes are at risk not only from flying wood chips but also from twigs and leaves when a limb is suddenly released. A face screen is generally attached to a hard hat which in itself can be life saving. A hard hat saved my life when a large limb fell at least thirty feet striking me directly on my head. I was knocked down and dazed, and my hard hat was knocked off but needless to say, I have never used a chainsaw without a hard hat since.

Hearing protection is essential! Even short bursts of exposures to the high decibel noise of a chainsaw without using hearing protection can cause permanent hearing loss. It is advisable to use both foam ear plugs and high quality ear muff type hearing protection when working with a chainsaw for long periods.

Thick leather gloves and thick leather boots are a

good idea. I can attest from both personal experiences as well as from my patients' stories that many fingers and toes have been saved with these simple precautions.



### Using the Chainsaw:

It might be a temptation to use your chainsaw like a machete to remove brush, but this seems to be just about the best way to derail the chain from the bar. Striking at small diameter limbs will pop the chain off the bar and drive sprocket, causing damage to the chain. Frequent checking of chain tension is worth the time; sloppy chains are likely to derail.

Small dust like chips, smoke, slow cutting, or a tendency for the saw to cut off at an angle rather than straight, are indications that the chain is dull. Avoid chain contact with the ground as even a small stone will immediately dull the chain. It's not uncommon to find ancient fence wire buried in wood near the base of a tree and contact with this metal will dull the chain instantaneously. If you see sparks while cutting near the base of the trunk, think fence wire. Naturally if you are traveling a distance to cut wood, one or two spare chains should be available.

When cutting up an entire tree which has been felled, generally start with the branches. This helps to reduce complex tension-compression forces in the wood which can quickly trap the bar. Always cut on the tension side, being aware that about half way through the log, tension can rapidly turn to compression. As this happens there are two options. One, remove the saw and continue cutting from the opposite side; or two, stop the saw and drive one or two plastic wedges firmly into the cut already made to maintain the opening (and the tension in the wood remaining to be cut). The second method assumes the cut is deep enough to accommodate the wedges. Use steel wedges for this purpose

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with caution as contact with a moving chain will dull it immediately.

After starting the chainsaw it is advisable to let it warm up at medium speed for a minute or two before cutting at maximum RPM. Most saws are adjusted so that the bar and chain oil runs dry at the same time the gas tank empties.

Be especially cautious when cutting branches that are under compression and tension from the weight of a freshly felled tree. Go slowly, prepare for sudden shifts of the tree, feel carefully for compression forces about to pinch the bar and chain. A branch that is released under tension can snap back with enough force to break an arm or leg or cause serious facial injury (hence the value of a wire mesh face mask and hard hat).

A tree which has fallen against another tree, and is leaning at an angle, can be especially treacherous. It is best pulled down with a truck, tractor or "come-along" so that it is lying horizontally before cutting it up. It may be necessary to make a single cut at the base of the trunk to separate the tree from its root system.

Start by cutting a wedge several inches deep on the upper side then proceed to the underside, driving plastic wedges into the cut to eliminate entrapment as the saw approaches the midway point. As the cut is completed the tree may fall or suddenly shift, posing serious risks. Once the cut is completed, pull the tree down using a chain or suitable rope, but make sure that it is long enough to keep you out of harm's way!

Log splitters are fun but dangerous. A good friend of mine, a cardiac surgeon, and I were having a delightful afternoon when I noticed the tips of his gloves lying on the ground next to the splitter. Yikes, missed his fingertips by millimeters! Actually, unless the wood is full of knots or is elm (not much of that around anymore) splitting with a maul or axe is often much faster than using a log splitter.

The tree in the photo is about two hundred and fifty years old by tree ring count. We did half with a log splitter and half with a maul and axe; no comparison in time and effort, the maul won hands down.



*Bill McCarthy, left, and author's son, Tyler Smith with 250 year old red oak*

## Creative Approaches for Ecological Landscaping

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

This was the theme of the ninth annual "Land Ethics Symposium", facilitated by Bowman's Hill Wildflower Preserve. The importance of this one day gathering of landscape professionals, municipal officials and natural area managers was underscored by the presenting sponsor of this event, the Bucks County Commissioners. Other premier sponsors included: North Creek Nurseries, Princeton Hydro Engineering and Temple University (Ambler campus). These sponsors share elements of the important mission of Bowman's Hill Wildflower Preserve; that is, to lead people to an appreciation of native plants, to an understanding of their importance to all life, and to a commitment to a healthy and diverse natural world. As one of your Watershed Association board members this last decade, attending this symposium enabled me to bring to our membership and community, opportunities for education, native plant conservation and stewardship.

The first speaker at this year's "Land Ethics Symposium" was a land planning engineer from Oregon, Grant Jones. His theme of "a marriage with the land" spoke to Native American principles of living. He believes that when you live in a place or community, you should allow yourself to be defined by the

natural community that surrounds you. A feeling of oneness with nature can develop, making the land and water resources easier to read. Mr. Jones then spoke of how nature becomes a partner in your community and gives a voice to the place you live; for example: through poetry. He expressed the importance of accepting the mystery of nature to help guide us in forming new community frameworks including green infrastructure. Using the concept of watersheds as a unifying spectral framework, he stressed the need to soften the distracting ideals of people's intent on possessing and controlling nature. Mr. Jones talked also of a land ethic triad in land planning that encompasses, green infrastructure services, scenic cultural infrastructure and the spiritual value of nature. Mr. Jones then advises us to interpret technical and "lyrical" aspects of nature to initiate landscape planning partnerships that foster green infrastructure services such as food production, climate mitigation and our collective spirit of well being. Two books for further study are: "Nature's second chance" by Apfelbaum and "Cities in the Landscape" by Bruce Babbitt.

Speaker number two, Jason Lubar, is an accredited arborist from the Morris Arboretum. He does forestry consulting on land development projects; commer-

cial and residential. Tree protection during construction was his theme at the "Land Ethic Symposium". Stressing the aesthetic, ecological and economic value of trees, he prepares a report that includes accounting for all trees on a property to be developed, listing native and non-native species and showing impacts already underway among trees such as disease, earth compacting, flooding, etc. His report then shows tree protection zones protecting structural and nutritional roots. His tree protection zones are based on different trees' tolerances to disturbance, with a formula used for calculating the radius of different zones. His report then moves to protect trees during construction phases. These may include foundation modifications, test trenches, causeway construction, pier and footing adaptations and raised decks and walls. A new technique uses an air tool to blow away dirt from roots to show where they are. More tree friendly access roads to move equipment and materials would use mulch and stone instead of plywood over root areas. Post construction guidelines including monitoring tree health for moisture, insect and disease control, soil aeration, and proper fertilizing, along with fill grade adjustments help insure trees' abilities to live a full and productive lives.

Mark Gallagher, of Princeton Hydro was the third speaker at the symposium. His theme was

“Changing Conventional Engineering Thought on Stormwater Mitigation”. The fundamental premise, according to Mr. Gallagher, is to think of stormwater as a water resource instead of a waste runoff. His forward-thinking principles use nature as a model for mitigating stormwater running off our impervious surfaces. He believes that all new stormwater facilities and especially the retro-fitting of old facilities should be redesigned to become integrated into our communities as natively vegetated green infrastructure. He emphasized that the eco-services green infrastructurally designed stormwater facilities can perform, are the same natural functions as riparian corridors, wetlands and flood plains. Volume management, groundwater recharge, pollutant removal, aesthetically pleasing, and reversing flood channel instability are positive results of these new designs according to Mr. Gallagher. He also explained that these new designs for stormwater mitigation require minimal maintenance compared to conventional facilities. I was very pleased when he said that invasive plant management plans should be mandated into every new and retrofit plan. Mr. Gallagher stressed that Pennsylvania’s Stormwater Manual contains all these preceding principles to guide municipalities in their quest for the best ordinances to regulate stormwater. (Suggested reading: "Bringing Home Nature" by Doug Tallamy)

The fourth speaker of the day was Stephanie Cohen, with a rousing talk on the merits of attractive native perennial flowers. She

kept our attention with humor and wit; straight talk and honest assessment. She stated her weariness with the word "sustainability" and substituted "Earth-friendly" when espousing the benefits of native plants in our landscapes. Many of her plants on the following list, I have recommended and planted at Laughing Springs and other native plant gardens in the area: Columbine for butterflies, foamflower for a ground cover, nodding onion, thread leaf bluestar and eastern bluestar, variegated Jacob’s ladder, Phlox divaricata for its spring flower, blue false indigo, fringed bleeding heart for its long bloom season in partial shade, wood geranium growing in partial shade, mountain mint for its long bloom season and being a great pollinator, Joe Pye weed for butterflies and also drought and deer tolerant, sunflowers which are perennial, lobelia a moist and partial shade lover, ironweed, grasses such as Panicum, Andropogon, and Carex penna. This is just a partial list of her favorites.

The final speaker of the day was a research professor from Rutgers University who was doing research on urban tree planting. His concepts could be important in our village, commercial and industrial areas where impervious surfaces abound. Mr. Grabosky is experimenting with constructed soil mediums to enable the planting of trees in planting boxes underneath sidewalks, on bridge overpasses, parking lots and other urban environments. His work includes root growth issues of expansion, moisture, and nutrient absorption in artificial soil mediums.

The wildflower preserve staff hosted a wonderful day of information and networking with like minded individuals. One such person I met is tasked with implementing a riparian buffer project in our watershed, but that, is a narrative for our next issue. Regards: Hans, retrofitting for Spring!



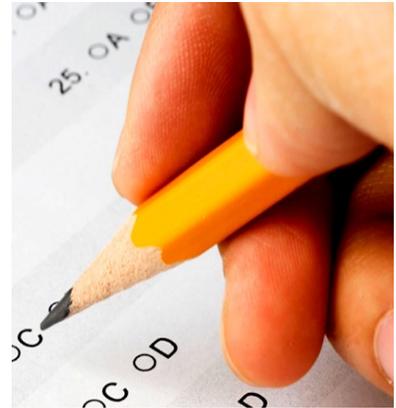
*Greek Valerian - Jacob's Ladder from:*  
<http://www.types-of-flowers.org/jacobs-ladder.html>

***More information on Bowman’s Hill and native plants can be found at:***

***<http://www.bhwp.org/native/index.htm>***

## MARK YOUR CALENDARS!!!

# GRAND OPENING for the 2009 SEASON of the SPRINGTOWN FARMERS' MARKET



**Wednesday, May 6<sup>th</sup> from 3:00PM to 6:00PM**

*At the Springtown Firehouse parking lot (please note the **change in hours** from last year and the earlier season opening of the first week of May)*

Springfield Township is dedicated to keeping our rural character alive through Open Space initiatives. It is our mission to promote sustainability and contribute to the prosperity of our local community by providing the opportunity for residents to buy locally produced food and products. We also wish to increase the community's awareness of farmers who make their living from working with the land and their vital importance to the integrity of our community. We are dedicated to making our community stronger by bringing our residents and its farmers together based on the buy fresh/buy local concept.

The Springtown Farmers' Market advisory board has **exciting plans** for this year's market so be sure to check it out on **opening day May 6th!**

Keep up to date with "happenings", vendor listings and weekly produce availability by logging into our new website at <http://www.SpringtownFarmersMarket.org> (to be available by early April).

At this time, there is still room for additional "producer only" vendors. If you are interested please go to either our website or to the Springfield Township's website at <http://www.springfieldbucks.org> (click "Downloads" and scroll down to Springfield Farmers' Market) for more information as to how to apply.

To contact us please leave a message at the Springfield Township office at 610-346-6700 ext 23. Be sure to use the Farmers' Market's exclusive extension of 23 when dialing!

Volunteers are also welcome. We will be in need of help with parking, events, fundraising and publicity.

Hope to see you at the Market!

Sherry Brodhead

## Art Project for CCWA

The beauty of our Watershed is often taken for granted. With the wealth of artistic talent in the area, the Watershed Association felt that perhaps we should sponsor an art event. It would give artists a chance to get together to appreciate the Watershed and to record it in some fashion. With a plethora of mediums to choose from, it became difficult to choose just one event; so we have decided to sponsor two. One will be centered on artists who specialize in drawing, watercolor and oil painting. The second will be open to artists who have an interest in photography. Hopefully, we will be able to garner some beautiful works of art that will highlight the wonderful area in which we live, and perhaps we could translate some of these works of art into postcards, calendars, etc.

On May 23, 2009, from 9:00 to 5:00 the first Cooks Creek Watershed Association Art Workshop will be held on the property of Steve and Ruth Smith (3250 Slifer Valley Road). A covered dish lunch is planned and all participants are requested to bring food to share. The workshop will be limited to the first twenty artists who register. Drawing, Watercolor, and Oil painting instruction in composition and color theory will be offered. Bring a lawn chair, art supplies in the medium of your choice, drawing board or easel. The venue is a marvelous example of Bucks County country living and will provide a wealth of ideas for sketches and paintings. If interested, clip the registration form below, fill in the requested information and mail it to CCWA, P.O. Box 45, Springtown, PA 18081. Please RSVP by May 10, 2009.



Saturday, June 20<sup>th</sup> will provide the second opportunity for an artistic event. Scott Douglas will be hosting the annual Mini Monster Mayhem at his home (3450 Rt. 212, Springtown) from 9:30 am to 12:00 noon. Rain date is Sunday, June 21<sup>st</sup> (same times). The art event will be run concurrently with the Mini Monster event. Participation will be limited to the first five professional photographers that register. Live models (of the mini monster type) will be available to be used as subjects. Or you might find something else of interest that will capture your attention. If interested, fill out the registration form below and mail it to CCWA, P.O. Box 45, Springtown, PA 18081. Please RSVP by June 15, 2009.

### **Drawing and Painting Art Workshop:**

I plan on attending the workshop on May 23rd. My medium is: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Photography Workshop:** I plan on attending the workshop on June 20, 2009

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

Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_



## WIP Notes... *(From the students of the Palms Watershed Integration Program).*

You may be wondering what we have been doing so far in the third marking period, or as we would call it, our third theme. Well, that's easy!

The leaf pack project is something that we started in the beginning of March. We were all required to break up into groups of about four or five kids, take a mesh bag, and add leaves to it until it weighed about 14 grams. After that was done, we added name tags and headed out to Cooks Creek. Once we were there, we were told to get into the water and find a rock, then remember where it was, and carry it to Mr. Gluck and Mr. Harris. They then tied a rope around the bag and the rock. After the tying process was done, we brought the rock back to its spot and left. Soon we will return to Cooks Creek and take back our leaf pack, empty it out, and see what we find!

We have been learning all about forces and motion. Like how force, equals mass, times acceleration or even Isaac Newton's laws. We learned about Archimedes and about his manuscript, as well as all the inventions and discoveries he made.

Coming up in the WIP program, we will be doing surveys on "how green" Palisades really is. We will be monitoring not only the school, but our own homes and communities. Surveys will be taken and data will be collected. Also coming up, we have our Environmental Research Paper. As



part of the seventh grade curriculum, every 7<sup>th</sup> grade student is required to complete a research paper. In WIP, we will be selecting the topic of our choice that has something to do either with the environment, nature, or our local watersheds. That will then be researched, written into a rough draft, re-written into a good copy, and handed in.

(Continued from page 14)



As already explained in the discussion of the topics of study for this particular theme, our explorations will consist of re-visiting the Cooks Creek sites to collect our leaf packs and an upcoming visit to the Michener Art Museum. At the Michener Art Museum, we will be observing The Watershed Sculpture. This formation is located in the sculpture garden of the museum – it starts in the front of the museum, travels through the lobby and ends at the back of the garden. While at the museum, we will also visit the Lenfest Gallery – this gallery contains landscape paintings that include the Delaware River. In addition to visiting the Michener Art Museum, we will also have the opportunity to make connections with art and nature in another way. We will be studying “temporary art in nature.” What type of art is this? Well, we take elements of nature such as; leaves, rocks, wood, twigs and then create our own model that will last long, hence the word temporary. We will look at the work of Andy Goldsworthy and his movie, “Rivers and Tides”. During one of our visits to the Cooks Creek sites, we will create our own temporary art in nature.

We were fortunate to have Kristen Travers, a stream ecologist and educator from the Stroud Research Center, visit our program . Some of our reactions:

**Essi-** It was kind of cool how we got to see the mayfly’s gills under a micro scope.

**Sarah-** I thought it was really fun to analyze and name the macro-invertebrates.

**Gel-** It was really awesome how she had us create a watershed by crumbling up a piece of paper to show a landscape including peaks of mountains, creeks, and pollution.

**Mary-** It was gross how in my group there was a huge grub that kept crawling out the container and flopping around on the table.

**Sera-** I thought it was amazing how many creatures we discovered in a little bit of water; with mayflies, stoneflies and aquatic worms.

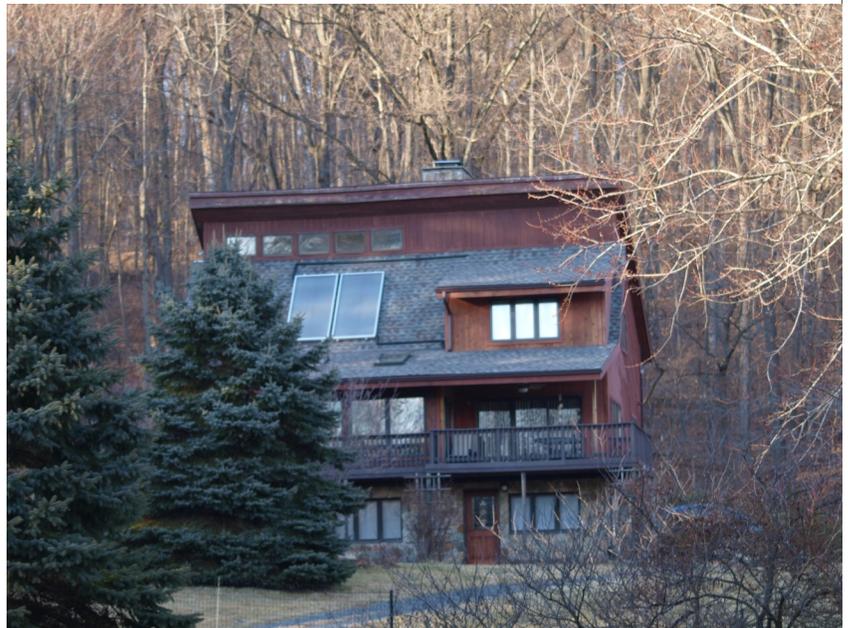
**Karl-** We simulated the effects of a watershed in a very interesting and creative manner.

**Alex-** My group thought we saw the miracle of life, but we were informed that it was only layered protection of the scuds.

## How Hot is the Sun? By: Jim Orben

On the last weekend in January the sun was real hot, and here's why. In the past two years our house has changed a lot. In an effort to reduce our carbon footprint we are keeping the temperature a little cooler in the winter and wearing an extra layer of clothing. All but a few lightbulbs are now florescent and three ceiling fans take their turn overhead. Cellular shades increase the insulation of most of our windows and the compact florescent lights get turned off when rooms are not in use.

This past December we decided to check on the cost and availability of solar collectors for our hot water. After an email and a phone message to Heat Shed in Revere we got a call, were told they no longer did hot water systems and recommended we call Solar Living, Inc. in New Jersey. In the last week of December we talked to Richard Bonte and he agreed to come and make an estimate on the following Saturday. Saturday came and so did Richard. We talked for an hour or so, he gave us a price and arranged to install the system on the next Tuesday. I came home at lunch that day and found Richard and two helpers busily at work. The two collectors were mounted on the roof and piped. The new hot water tank was placed and was being connected. There remained only some wiring before the system would be ready. I went back to work. When I got home everything was as I had hoped. The job was done and waiting for the sun. And for the sun we waited. And waited. As you may remember a lot of rain, sleet, ice and snow came down in early January but very little sun. While we shoveled, what little sun there was did actually warm the tank, but it seemed the clouds had taken over.



Then it happened. On the fourth weekend, the sun shone. It was cold and clear, bright and sunny, perfect. At the end of the day we had eighty gallons of 118 degree water. It needed only a small topping up to

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reach our setpoint of 124. We were nearly there. Sunday was just as bright, just as sunny and at sunset the water was indeed hot. We had eighty gallons of water at 135 degrees. At four o'clock the timer switched on the water heater and there was no work for it to do. When I showered that evening and felt the warmth of the sun on my back, I smiled. The sun has been there all these years just waiting to heat my water and I had finally caught up with it. Life is good.

We are hoping to save about \$500 each year on our electricity costs. The solar water heating system cost \$6200 and we will get an \$1800 tax credit from the IRS in 2009. So in about eight years the investment will have paid for itself and our hot water will be virtually free!



**COOKS CREEK WATERSHED ASSOCIATION  
ANNUAL MEETING 2009**

**Saturday, April 18, 2009, 9AM – Noon**

**At**

**Springtown Fire Company, Springtown, PA.**

**Come hear what's happening in the Watershed**



*I find you in the garden at dusk  
where you kneel among newly-sprouted  
spinach greens*

*Your fingers drop seeds  
lightly into the compliant earth, nudge  
them under the soil's dark crevices  
where they will germinate like a memory  
held in the lacunae of the mind.*

*You labor patiently, knowing  
there will always be green shoots,  
blossoms, some fruit.*

*Come spring... you say.  
I am amazed at your unfaltering belief,  
your readiness to trust implicitly  
in every seed you plant.*

**-Calliope**

Julie Cooper-Fratrik earned her MFA in Creative Writing from Goddard College in Vermont. She is a former Bucks County Poet Laureate, and a winner of an Achievement Grant in Poetry from the Leeway Foundation in Philadelphia. She is on the Language and Literature faculty at Bucks County Community College, where she teaches creative writing and poetry, runs the tutoring center on the Upper Bucks campus in Perkasi and serves as an advising specialist for the department. Julie also serves as the copy editor for the American Anti-Vivisection Society. She resides on the old Freeh farm on Route 412 in Bursonville and has graciously allowed us to print some of her beautiful poetry in our newsletter.

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## Green Tip # 7 Greening your green space

You might not realize it, but many yards and gardens are not as green as their color suggests. It has been said that “a healthy lawn is a sign of a sick society”. That’s because we often fail to take advantage of the bag of tricks that Mother Nature has provided for us and fall back on chemicals to do it for us. If you want your yard and garden to be both lush *and* green, follow these easy steps:

**Use water sparingly.** Make sure to water at dawn or dusk to minimize evaporation. Mulch your gardens, shrubs and trees to keep the ground moist. Make and use a rain barrel for spot-on watering, or design a gravity fed drip irrigation line.

**Compost.** Nothing keeps plants healthy and veggies producing better than good old fashioned compost. The trick is to make good compost. Keep your pile small (3x3 or less) and keep it moist and well aerated. Put in a balanced mixture of yard waste, kitchen scraps, and dead plants from the garden or house. No fat or meat, it attracts animals that will dig up your pile.

**Avoid pesticides.** Pesticides and herbicides are NOT needed to keep the bugs away. The trick is to keep healthy, well fed and watered plants. Rotate crop locations regularly. Add compost and mulch. Plant mums and marigolds as a border to discourage insects. Purchase ladybugs or transplant praying mantis egg clusters to create your own army of pest killers. Or, pick pests off your plants by hand. If you feel compelled to use chemical warfare, consider naturally occurring minerals like borax or sulfur. Pheromone traps and bacterial sprays are also gentler on the environment.

**Grass cycle.** Mow no more than 1/3 of the grass length each time and leave the clippings on the lawn. This will both fertilize and mulch the lawn. Rake only if you must, but put the clippings on the compost pile. Do not use herbicides to control weeds, let them alone as they will keep the lawn green even in drought years. Minimize the lawn you have, and consider native grass mixes.

**Feed the birds.** Wildlife not only provides visual interest, but a healthy ecosystem requires less care. Plant native shrubs and plants that provide berries and flowers that attract birds and butterflies. Create islands of plantings with native trees and bushes (use curved shapes to make it easier to mow around). Plant a rain garden to soak up stormwater and to provide more diversity of native plants. Put out feeders and homes for our feathered and other winged friends.

## Springtown Water Authority

By: Ken Simmons, Chairman

Springtown Water Authority was re-established on September 12, 2007, when the township supervisors approved the five- year plan to repair and manage the Springtown water system. We have a seven - member board of people all of whom have professional talents and show up and manage the various details of the Authority's daily needs. In addition to the board, our certified operator is a resident of the area and is volunteering his "talents". We have a recording secretary who keeps the record of our activities. Can you imagine what this would cost to manage the system if these people were paid? All of those costs would be passed on to the users. SWA appreciates the opportunity to update our progress since taking charge.

Since the Water Authority took control in January of 2007 we have undertaken several projects to improve the system. To date, we have replaced all of the old, malfunctioning water meters with radio controlled meters. We have undertaken an extensive search for leaks and made repairs throughout the system, saving in excess of 5,000,000 gallons of treated water a year. We have installed a new 150,000 gallon water storage tank. The tank construction is complete and we are currently waiting for the temperature to moderate so we can coat the bottom of the tank, disinfect it and then fill it. The total amount we have expended to date for these projects is \$503,500. The balance due (including retainage) for the tank construction is \$70,750 - bringing the total for the completed projects to \$664,250.

The next phases of our plans for improvements to the system include the replacement of failing and undersized water lines and the installation of fire hydrants in the village of Springtown. We have estimated the total cost to complete these projects to be \$750,000. If we were able to obtain funding to achieve this goal our whole system would be like new and it should be able to run for generations to come with only regular, routine maintenance. We believe that if we begin work this spring, we will complete all of the line replacements and hydrant installations by the end of 2009. This may seem like a lofty and unattainable goal but look how far we have come in the past two years! We could not have done it if we weren't a bit optimistic and all of this would not have been possible without the "Clean Water Grant" of \$320,000 awarded us by Sen. Rob Wonderling. SWA has also secured a loan from Quakertown National Bank, which allowed us to complete the new tank. The rate increase to customers in 2008 is being used to support the debt service and this debt will be amortized over 25 years.

Going forward - we have completed most of the engineering requirements. We have run a simulation study which predicts the flow from the new fire hydrants. The resulting fire protection will allow residents to secure reductions to their home owners' insurance policies.

Budget estimates have been made for the new pipelines and hydrants and we believe the total needed to complete our five-year plan will be \$750,000. Completion of this plan will be of much value to the village of Springtown, which has been designated to be included in the "National Register

*(Continued on page 21)*

*(Continued from page 20)*

of Historic Places”. The project will also benefit other fire companies who would assist our local fire company in case of emergency.

SWA is applying for a grant from “Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development.” The program for “H2O PA Water Supply, Sanitary Sewer and Storm Water Projects” was filed in Harrisburg before the 2/13/2009 deadline. We are requesting a \$500,000 grant, which requires matching funds from SWA. We do qualify for the matching fund and await the decision to be rendered on 5/15/2009. Sen. Wonderling’s office in Harrisburg has been most helpful during this process.

Last, but not least, the successful completion of our program will be of important assistance to Cooks Creek Watershed, a Priority 1 Natural Area Stream.

Thank you for the opportunity to give you an update of SWA efforts. We do care about preserving our rural area.

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## “Anticipating Spring”

By: Julie Cooper-Fratrik

Spruce cones fall to the ground.  
 Insistent, the three note bird.  
 Silently through the old garden, winds move.  
 Throughout the day, I lift the curtain, listen  
 for your arrival. Two by two,  
 bluebirds settle into wooden houses.  
 In the field, evening descends. Crows  
 disappear into the bone-dark trees.

# Recycle!

## Local Recycling Information

### 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.

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 ; 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.



# Schedules of Local Government Meetings

**Springfield Township:**  
*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*  
610-346-8911  
215 Old Furnace Road

**Supervisors:** 2nd Tuesday @ 7:30 PM  
**Planning Commission:**  
1st Tues. @ 7:30 PM  
**EAC:** Quarterly on the 3rd Tuesday of  
January, April, July, October @ 7:30 PM

**Lower Saucon:**  
*www.lowersaucontownship.org*  
610-865-3291  
3700 Old Philadelphia Pike

**Council:** 1st and 3rd Wed. @ 7 PM  
**Planning Commission:**  
3rd Thur. @ 7 PM  
**EAC:** 1st Tues. @ 7 PM

**Williams Township:**  
*www.williamstwp.org*  
610-258-6060  
655 Cider Press Road

**Supervisors:** 2nd Wed. @ 7 PM  
**Planning Commission:** 3rd Wed. @ 7 PM  
**Land Preservation Board:**  
3rd Mon @ 7 PM

**Richland Township:**  
*www.richlandtownship.org*  
215-536-4066  
1328 California Road

**Supervisors:** 2nd and 4th Mon. @ 7 PM  
**Planning Commission:** 3rd Tues. @ 7 PM  
**Preservation Board:** 2nd Thur. @ 7 PM

## CCWA Tote Bags now for sale!

No need to toss out plastic grocery bags from the market when you can re-use 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.



## 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 mem-

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

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

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

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

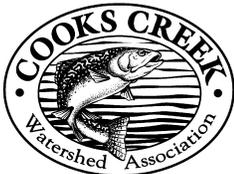
Total: \_\_\_\_\_

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 creekpa.org](http://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.