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Back to the Past: A column highlighting the natural history of the Watershed

A Talk With Lynne Berseth

By: Jim Orben

A few weeks ago, I sat down with Lynne Berseth at the table in her kitchen. We talked about the things she and the Watershed Association had done to get the Cooks Creek watershed classified as Exceptional Value. In 1988, the Association was work-ing on two fronts to protect the quality of the watershed, the first being the Exceptional Value classification and in support of that, an upgrade of Cooks Creek's classification in Pennsylvania's Wild and Scenic Rivers program. The filling out of the applications and the pages of data that were needed seemed easy in comparison to the presentation and slide show we had to make in Harrisburg. We had a good laugh about my unclogging the carousel projector to keep the show within its thirty-minute time limit. Power Point would have made that so much easier. Steve Smith and Peter Fuller did a quick shuffle to make the talk fit into a little less time and the ride home was much more fun than it could have been.

With many thanks to Lynne's hard work and these new classifications, the creek could be protected by buffer zones and logging rules to limit the amount of sediment reaching the flowing water and to maintaining the canopy. The exceptional value classification of our Watershed has made it our job to convince property owners that what is best for Cooks Creek is what they want their properties to be. We talked a bit more about the Watershed and how it has changed since the 1980's and as I headed for the door, Lynne reminded me, "The canopy is the most important thing." And as I walked across her lawn I looked at the sky through a big ash tree nearby nodding my head in agreement.