

CHARTIERS CREEK

WATERSHED ASSOCIATION

Summer, 2007

Vol. 5, #3

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COME TO THE FAIR—AUG 11-18

INVASIVE PLANTS—tamarisk in Colorado, kudzu in the south, mile-a-minute plant and hogweed in this area—the list is long. They were brought into this country from other parts of the world with all good intentions.

But—invasive plants take over our gardens and fields, crowding out our more desirable native plants.

Information about invasive plants will be featured at Fair at the display of the Washington County Watershed Alliance and its affiliated watershed organizations.

Look for the Chartiers Creek Watershed Association and the Washington County Watershed Alliance next to the Washington County Conservation District's display.

The annual Washington County Fair will be held at the Fairgrounds in Arden from August 11 through August 18.

NOW THE WORK BEGINS

The Master Site Plan for Recreational Improvements at Canonsburg Lake has been completed and now work on implementing its recommendations will begin.

Two projects are on this summer 's schedule: construction of an informational kiosk in the main parking lot on the Peters Township side of the lake, just off McDowell Lane; and work on improving a trail on the North Strabane side of the lake, from the McDowell Lane causeway toward the dam. (A rough trail is now available on that side of the lake and is being used as an access for fishing.)

It is expected that the Peters Township Girl Scouts will also plan a work *Cont. on pg.2*

CALENDAR

JULY

11 — ChCWA monthly meeting. 7:30 pm.

AUGUST

8 — ChCWA regular meeting, 7:30 pm.

11-18 — WASHINGTON COUNTY FAIR

SEPTEMBER

12 — ChCWA monthly meeting, 7:30 pm.

19 — GPS TRAINING; WASHINGTON COUNTY WATERSHED ALLIANCE ANNUAL MEETING; 5:30 pm; Cooper-Hinds Building. (Details, pg.2)

ChCWA regular monthly meetings: 1st Wed., 7 p.m., (7:30 pm April-Sept.) Cooper-Hinds Building, Meadowlands.

SUMMER 2007 ACTIVITIES

In addition to participation in the Washington County Fair, the Chartiers Creek Watershed Association and the Washington County Watershed Alliance have been (or will be) involved in several activities this summer.

* **FUNCTION AT THE JUNCTION**

On June 9 the Association joined in the celebration at the junction of the Panhandle and Montour Trails. The trail associations recently completed the necessary connection between the two trails and invited our association, among others, to take part.

The connection is located near McDonald and Robinson Run, which is part of the Chartiers Creek Watershed. It was a very pleasant day—not too hot and rain-free. We were able to talk with quite a few people and explain what the Association is doing.

* **CUB SCOUT DAY CAMP AT CAMP ANAWANNA**

On June 19 the Washington County Watershed Alliance operated one of the stations of the first day of the day camp.

About 60 boys, grades 1 through 6, took part in the day camp. At our station, they learned about Living in Water, focusing on macroinvertebrates and what such creatures need to live and reproduce. We also worked with the watershed model, to explain what a watershed is and why we need to take care of our streams.

* **LITTLE LION'S ACADEMY, SCOTT TWP.**

On July 23 the Chartiers Creek Watershed Association will work with the South Fayette Conservation Group at a day camp sponsored by the Lion's Club. We will use the Enviroscope to demonstrate how streams become polluted and how to keep them clean. We did this last year also, and the campers enjoyed it very much.

Participants in these events: Sheila Burcin, Carrilee Hemington, and Joan Jessen.

Canonsburg Lake, Cont. from pg.1

session, continuing improvements started in 2006. That project is for the trail on the Peters Township side of the lake, between the main parking lot and the lower parking lot off West McMurray Road.

The Master Site Plan will shortly be available online at www.upperchartierscreek.org.

The Canonsburg Lake Restoration and Improvement Committee is seeking funding for additional recreational enhancements, as well as for the larger projects required to preserve and restore the lake.

New committee members will be most welcome. There is much to be done in the next few years. Anyone interested in working with the committee should call Debra Valentino at 724-746-4664.

NOTE: The Canonsburg Lake Master Site Plan has been approved by the PA Dept. of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR). It was financed in part by a DCNR Community Conservation Partnerships Program (C2P2) Grant.

STAFF CHANGE AT WCCD

Soon to be on board: a new Watershed Specialist for the Washington County Conservation District is expected in July and will be working with the District and the watershed groups.

Former Watershed Specialist Susan Carmichael resigned to take another position. Susie did an excellent job as watershed specialist. We wish her well in her new position.

ABOUT INVASIVE PLANTS

How Bad Are Invasive Species?

Invasive species impact native plants, animals, and natural ecosystems by:

- Reducing biodiversity
- Altering hydrologic conditions
- Altering soil characteristics
- Altering fire intensity and frequency
- Interfering with natural succession
- Competing for pollinators
- Repelling or poisoning native insects
- Displacing rare plant species
- Increasing predation on nesting birds
- Serving as reservoirs of plant

How Many Plants are Invasive?

According to the Plant Conservation Alliance's Alien Plant Working Group, about 1,000 plant species have been reported as being invasive in natural areas in the United States ... This represents an astonishing one-third or so of the exotic plant species established and self-reproducing in the wild. Some invasive species were planted intentionally for erosion control, livestock grazing, wildlife habitat enhancement, and ornamental purposes. Others have escaped from arboretums, botanical gardens, and our own backyards.

On the list: various thistles, spurges, honeysuckles, bittersweet, shrubby lespedeza, along with other well-known examples such as purple loosestrife and multiflora rose. Even English ivy, orange daylily and common periwinkle are included.

NEXT FOR THE LIBRARY DISPLAY ON NATIVE and INVASIVE PLANTS

Peters Township Library was the location in June for the Invasive Plants Display.

In July, the display will be at the McDonald Public Library, and in September at the Avella Public Library, completing the journey around Washington County.

Jean Bear designed the display and has been in charge of arrangements as it made the rounds of county libraries.

What Makes an Exotic Species Invasive? (When is a Guest a Pest?)

Many non-native species exist in apparent harmony in environments where they were introduced.

For example, a relatively small number of exotic plants (e.g., corn, wheat, rice, oats) form the basis of our agricultural industry and pose little to no known threat to our natural ecosystems. The most important aspect of an alien plant is how it responds to a new environment.

An **invasive** species is one that displays rapid growth and spread, establishes over large areas, and persists. Invasiveness is

Excerpts from Fact Sheet: *What the Heck is an Invasive Plant?* by Jil M. Swearingen, National Park Service, National Capital Region,

CHARTIERS CREEK



**WATERSHED
ASSOCIATION**

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ADDRESS CORRECTION?

Send to: Joan Jessen, secretary
159 Canterbury Lane, McMurray, PA 15317;
or email: jrjessen@comcast.net.

Chartiers Creek Watershed Association

Purpose: to enhance, protect and develop the ecosystem of the upper Chartiers Creek Watershed in Washington County, PA

Membership: open to anyone who lives in the watershed, as well as individuals, businesses and organizations that own property or are actively involved within the boundaries of the watershed.

Please join us! Annual Dues: Individual, \$10; Family, \$15; Organization, \$50

MAIL THIS FORM WITH YOUR CHECK TO:
Chartiers Creek Watershed Association
Carrilee Hemington, treasurer
107 Williams Drive, McMurray, PA 15301

Name: _____

Address: _____

Tel.: _____ Email: _____