

*Protecting, preserving and restoring the Indian Creek  
and greater Youghiogheny River watersheds.*



### Highlights:

- We recently launched a new website. Visit [www.mtwatershed.com](http://www.mtwatershed.com) to see our new layout.
- Mark your calendar for our upcoming events! See the back of your newsletter for a complete list.

## Newly Proposed Deep Mine Threatens Gateway to the Laurel Highlands

The latest threat to the Indian Creek Watershed and our community quality of life is a proposed deep mine that, if permitted, would undermine about 2841.4 acres and cover 67.7 acres with surface facilities in Donegal Township. A significant portion of the deep mine would also undermine part of Saltlick Township. The company that wants to disrupt our community is LCT Energy LP from Johnstown.

According to the maps submitted to the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection by LCT, the surface facility would be located on property leased by Sarah McNiel.

MWA is reviewing the pre-application, which is available on CD and in the office. We have engaged a hydrogeologist and an attorney. Signs expressing

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## Operation, Maintenance & Replacement Plan

When MWA began in 1994 the founding members along with the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (PADEP) identified more than 130 mine drainage discharges throughout the Indian Creek Watershed. These discharges were the result of 150 years of mining practices, the same activities that resulted in more than 5000 miles of dead streams in the state of Pennsylvania alone. Other states have similar problems.

What to do? In 1999 MWA along with the PADEP Bureau of Abandoned Mine Reclamation (BAMR) and the Natural Resources Conservation Service developed Comprehensive Restoration Plans to attempt to clean up enough of these discharges to restore Indian Creek to the amazing fishable and swimmable watershed it once was.

Still following the plan today, MWA staff and volunteers raised more than \$186,000 to buy property upon which to build the Marsolino Treatment System to treat toxic aluminum and iron discharges flowing into Newmyer Run and wiping out the fish populations there and in Poplar Run of which Newmyer is a tributary. Purchase of the land should be complete this summer and with some luck, the state may be able to bid Phase I of the project out this fall or winter.

While this is going on, we are monitoring the other five systems we have

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## Summer Interns

In May, MWA welcomed two summer interns, JoElla Gearhard and Stephanie Novak. JoElla and Stephanie have been busy collecting macroinvertebrates and water samples, downloading dataloggers, and conducting maintenance at our mine drainage treatment systems.

JoElla resides on her family's farm in Murrysville, PA and is a student at St. Vincent College majoring in Environmental Science with a minor in Biology. She expects to graduate in May 2014. In addition to all the field work, JoElla is developing educational signage for our abandoned mine drainage treatment systems within the Indian Creek watershed.

Stephanie lives in Lowber, PA and is a recent graduate of St. Vincent College with a bachelor's degree in Environmental Science. Stephanie has been assisting with

fieldwork and conducting research on impacts that aluminum in our streams has on the health and wellbeing of aquatic insects, animals, and humans.

Through our partnership with the Pennsylvania Mountain Service Corps, MWA has been selected as a host site for the 2013-2014 program year, so Stephanie will be staying with us and in the fall will begin serving as our AmeriCorps Volunteer.



Above: Joella and Stephanie demonstrating the need for some mowing at one of our treatment systems.

## Benefit Rabies/Parvo Vaccination Clinic

Bring your dog or cat for low-cost Rabies and Parvo vaccinations *and* support our Yough Defense Fund!

**When:** Monday, August 12, 2013, 6:30 PM—8 PM

**Where:** Wilderness Voyageurs, 103 Garrett Street, Ohiopyle, PA (Pavilion behind store)

**Cost:** \$10 per vaccine

The rabies vaccine is \$10 and is available to dogs and cats in good health and over 3 months of age. The Parvo vaccine is \$10 and is available for dogs in good health and over 6 weeks of age. Please

bring your pet in a carrier or on a leash. No RSVP is required.

For more information on the clinic please contact Loyalhanna Veterinary Clinic at (724) 593-6111 or visit [www.loyalvet.com](http://www.loyalvet.com).

While you're in town, check out Wilderness Voyageurs for gear for your pooch— leashes, collars, toys, life vests, and more. Wilderness Voyageurs has the best selection of doggie gear around!

We'd like to offer a big thanks to Loyalhanna Veterinary Clinic and Wilderness Voyageurs for sponsoring the clinic!

# Children's Fishing Derby Scheduled for September 28

Join us on Saturday, September 28 at Resh Park in Indian Head for Mountain Watershed Association's Annual Children's Fishing Derby and Rubber Ducky Race.

The fun begins at 10:00 a.m. with the start of the Children's Fishing Derby. Kids ages 12 and under can participate with adult supervision. This event is free of charge. There will be a break in the fishing action for lunch (also provided free of charge). Participants must bring their own rod and tackle. Bait will be provided. All participants will be entered into a door prize drawing. Pre-registration is not required, but would be appreciated

(contact Carla at [carla@mtwatershed.com](mailto:carla@mtwatershed.com) or 724/455-4200 ext. 3# to preregister).

Ever wonder what 1,000 rubber ducks would look like floating down Indian Creek? Here is your chance to find out! At 1:30 we'll watch the rubber ducks battle it out. The Rubber Ducky Race is a fundraiser to help support MWA and the Children's Fishing Derby.

At our duck race we place 1,000 rubber ducks into the stream. Each duck is numbered 1-1,000. They are all released at the same time and float down Indian Creek approximately 100-200 yards to the finish line. The winning ducks are the first four sold ducks and the

very last sold duck to enter the trough at the finish line.

For a donation of \$5 you will receive two chances to win. First prize is \$500!

Ticket holders need not be present to win. In addition to the MWA office, tickets are being sold at the following area establishments: G&D Market, Donegal Pharmacy, Brady's Restaurant, Sarnelli's Market, Shari Bukovac's Bookkeeping, B & G Bait Shop, Indian Creek Valley Municipal Authority, LLL Daycare, and Ritenour's Sporting.

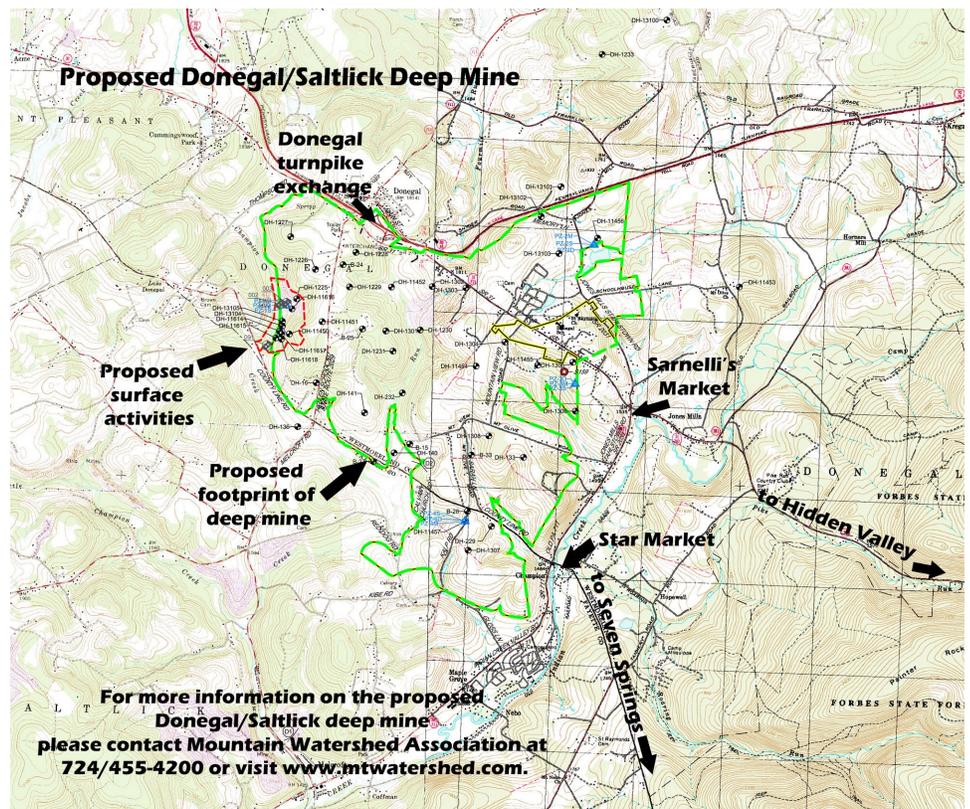
For more information, to purchase tickets, or to pre-register for the fishing derby, please contact Carla.

## Proposed Deep Mine *(continued from page 1)*

opposition to the deep mine will be available in the MWA office very soon.

The map at right shows the location of the proposed mine. The dashed line shows the proposed surface facilities. The solid line shows the underground mine area. People living above this area live in what is referred to as the "shadow land." We have larger, color copies of this map available in our office. Please call or stop by to obtain a copy. We can also email the map to you, and its available on our website at [www.mtwatershed.com](http://www.mtwatershed.com).

Call 724 455-4200, ext. 1# with questions or if you would like to volunteer some time to help spread the word.



## MWA Organizes Successful Grassroots Summit

Alongside community leaders and grassroots and citizen groups from across Pennsylvania, Mountain Watershed Association held its inaugural Grassroots Summit on June 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> at McKeever Environmental Center in Sandy Lake, Pennsylvania. Our goal was to bring individuals and grassroots groups together for in-person training, strategizing and rejuvenation as part of our Marcellus Citizen Stewardship Project (MCSP). Through our MCSP we facilitate monthly networking calls, but community leaders had a strong desire to meet in person.

Our Grassroots Summit helped sustain existing community leadership and resources; develop

new opportunities for leadership, networking, and citizen monitoring; mitigate burn out and increase retention of volunteers; streamline effectiveness of citizen advocates by providing fellowship and shared resources, and more. Attendees returned to their respective communities with more tools, stamina, and inspiration to continue this crucial work.

The Summit steering committee (MWA staff and community leaders) capped registration at 45 people. All 45 spots were reserved; 42 participants attended. Evaluations requested at the end of the Summit included rave reviews and only a few minor suggestions. There were no complaints.

As part of our Marcellus Citizen Stewardship Project, we've scheduled several upcoming events including a FracMapper training in Allegheny County on July 30, 2013 from 6-8pm in Pittsburgh at Carnegie Library-Main on Forbes Ave. in Oakland, and a volunteer water quality monitoring training with ALLARM on August 23, 2013 in Indiana County, location TBD.

These trainings are a backbone of community involvement and education, and serve as a launching point for engagement. To schedule a training in your community contact Kathryn at [kathryn@mtwatershed.com](mailto:kathryn@mtwatershed.com) or 724/455-4200 ex. 4#.



Above: Attendees at our recent Grassroots Summit show solidarity with farmers fighting fracking in Poland.

Review from a summit attendee:

*"In 35 years of professional life as a scientist and teacher I have attended dozens of workshops and seminars from Alaska to South Africa, from a handful of people to thousands, from an afternoon to a month long event, and from the perspectives of an observer, presenter and/or organizer (a very difficult role to play). Your workshop was among the top few of those many events."*

## Beware of Aluminum Flocculation

What do silverware, rubies, airplanes, power lines and pop cans have in common? Each of these items contains the metal, aluminum. Humans come into contact with aluminum so often it is not perceived as harmful; however, aluminum has the potential to be detrimental. It is a severe financial and health burden, particularly on the residents of Pennsylvania, because of extensive mining that once occurred in the state.

Coal companies mined large regions of PA for its bituminous coal. Once mining was completed, many sites were left abandoned causing local watershed degradation. There are 5,000 miles of streams and ground waters in Pennsylvania affected by abandoned mine drainage (AMD). In acidic AMD streams, aluminum comes out of from soil and rocks, releasing Al<sup>3+</sup> into the water.

Occasionally, the water level of a mine pool will fluctuate based on the water table, amount of precipitation or spring melt which releases large amounts of heavy metals, such as aluminum,

into a stream. Acid rain events can also significantly lower the pH of a stream and release large amounts of aluminum. Both of these situations are known as episodic events.

At high concentrations in streams, aluminum is hazardous to organisms such as fish and macroinvertebrates. Lethal doses of aluminum from an episodic event can kill an entire fish population. Acidic episodes cause unsustainable fish populations, costing Pennsylvania residents \$67 million annually from lost sport fishing revenue.

Excess aluminum in the water is also unsightly. Aluminum turns the water a cloudy white color. When conditions are right, aluminum will appear as foamy white clusters along the water's edge. These clusters are known as floc.

Aluminum contaminates both public and private sources of drinking water. Recent studies have suggested that chronic exposure of aluminum in drinking water is a contributor to Alzheimer's disease and other neurological disorders.

High exposure of aluminum has been known to cause symptoms such as nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, ulcers, rashes and joint pain.

Many streams in this area are affected by abandoned mine drainage and can contain high levels of aluminum making the water unsafe for human consumption or recreation. Avoid contact with the water source if there are any signs of aluminum contamination. Any safety concerns about a stream located in the Indian Creek watershed can be directed to us.



Indian Creek below Sagamore: Aluminum can be seen entering the stream as a white cloudy colored discharge.

## Donate to MWA During 2013 Day of Giving

On Thursday, October 3, 2013 the Community Foundation of Westmoreland County will hold its annual Day of Giving. This will be the third Day of Giving MWA has participated in. On this date, by visiting the Foundation's website ([www.westmorelandgives.org](http://www.westmorelandgives.org)) you can make a contribution to MWA

which will then be partially matched by the Foundation.

Donations must be received during the 24 hours of October 3, 2013 to be eligible for the match, and must be made by either Visa or MasterCard. Gifts are 100% tax deductible. Please consider visiting [www.westmorelandgives.org](http://www.westmorelandgives.org) on

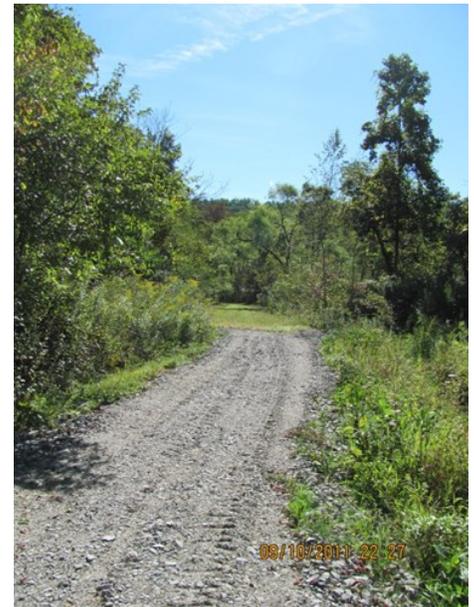
October 3 so that your contribution to MWA can work even harder. Please mark your calendars, and thank you for your support!

**WESTMORELAND  
GIVES.ORG**

## Happy Trails to You

With a goal to expand the Indian Creek Valley Trail all the way from Route 31 to the Youghiogheny, MWA staff and volunteers continue to work to make the trail one continuous pathway. If you are using parts of the trail, you will encounter them cutting brush and smoothing gravel. The Melcroft Bridge will soon be under construction; this will add almost another mile to the Saltlick section of the trail. The finished surface now extends into Springfield Township about 2/3 of a mile. We also recently received

the permit to rebuild the bridge crossing Indian Creek near Jones Mill. This is the final connection to complete the Donegal portion (pictured at right) of the trail. Hikers and bikers will be able to get on the trail in Indian Head and ride all the way to Route 31. We are always looking for supporters or volunteers. Contact us if you'd like to help out with trail expansion, or consider making a tax-deductible contribution earmarked for trail development and expansion. Visit [www.mtwatershed.com](http://www.mtwatershed.com) or contact our office to learn more.



## MWA Files Comments on Proposed Route 219 Expansion

On February 8, 2013 MWA filed comments with the US Army Corps of Engineers on a proposal to expand Route 219 in the Casselman River watershed in Somerset County. Several MWA members as well as representatives of other organizations had reached out to us asking that we submit comments. The application, submitted by PennDOT, was for a Department of the Army Permit under the provisions of Section 404 of the Clean Water Act.

In our comments, we noted we are not opposed to the

expansion of U.S. Route 219. We believe the proposal will create jobs, make substantial improvements to the infrastructure in Somerset County, and increase safety along the corridor. However, as the result of significant final design modifications occurring **after** the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) was prepared, it is our opinion that the project needed to be re-evaluated under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) as a means to adequately identify the most prudent and feasible alternative.

In short, we believe the

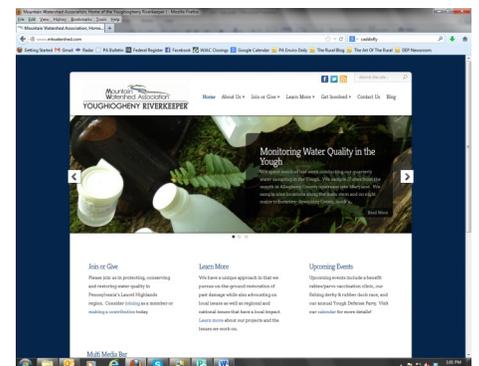
final environmental impact statement did not adequately capture the true impact of the project because of final design modifications (conducted post-FEIS) which resulted in significantly increased impacts on natural resources. Unfortunately, despite our request and the requests of other organizations to have the project reevaluated under NEPA, the Corps issued the permit in May 2013.

For more information on our specific concerns regarding this project please contact us.

## New MWA Website!

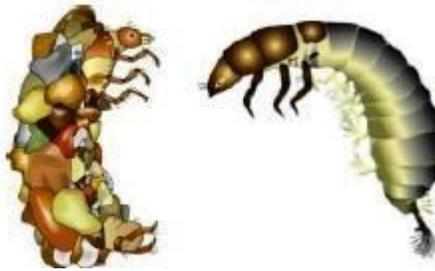
We recently launched a new website! We're happy to be able to keep you, our members, more up to date with the addition of a blog, and we've updated our content as well. Find recent news, information on our projects and

the issues we work on, and more at [www.mtwatershed.com](http://www.mtwatershed.com) (see a preview at right). While you're there, please consider joining as a member or making a contribution to support our work. Let us know what you think!



## Our Laurel Landscape...

### *Caddisfly Jewlery*



In the summer many people head to local streams for activities including fishing, swimming, kayaking, and canoeing. One thing that many people don't think of is going to a stream for jewelry. Living in streams are animals called macroinvertebrates. One that is particularly interesting is the caddisfly. This small insect is most well-known by fishermen for bait, however, they have also been introduced into the world of art!

Caddisflies undergo complete metamorphosis: egg, larva, pupa, and adult. Caddisfly larvae are most commonly found attached to the bottoms of rocks in good quality streams. The larvae are moderately sensitive to pollutants making them unable to survive in poor quality, polluted waters. Out of 45 families of caddisflies found worldwide, 15 of them are classified as case building, meaning that during the larva stage they build protective casings

around themselves, using silk to hold them together. This silk is naturally produced and excreted from caddisflies' salivary glands. Cases can be made of various materials including plant material, rock fragments, or just silk.

As early as the 1980's, artists began utilizing the craft and talent of these small creatures to create beautiful and unique jewelry. Artificial habitats can be set up in aquariums where caddisflies can be given special materials such as beads, pearls, gold, and other precious gems. The caddisflies will use these provided materials to build their cases. The design of the case can be influenced by a person. If a small section of the case is removed, caddisflies will repair their case, therefore incorporating other materials into the case. Once the case is constructed the caddisfly is removed from inside and the case can be utilized in jewelry pieces

including bracelets, necklaces, pendants, and earrings! The caddisfly is then free to start the process all over and create another case.

This unique art originally began as an entomology study. In 1834, a man from Geneva wanted to determine if it was possible for caddisfly species to work with materials that were unnatural to them. The first foreign material provided was rice. To the excitement of the entomologist, the caddisflies used the rice to build cases consistent with previous case construction! This study was the very first step in discovering the amazing ability of these small insects.

The next time you visit a stream, don't forget about these unique aquatic creatures. Turn over a rock and see if you can find any caddisfly cases!

*Photo from West Virginia DEP:  
[www.dep.wv.gov](http://www.dep.wv.gov)*

### **OM&R** (continued from page 1)

built in the last 13 years and trying to correct problems with them. At the Kalp System, tunnels drilled in 2005 to direct the mine pool into the treatment system collapsed causing the mine pool to fill up—again—and come out an old mine opening along Route 711. \$400,000 later, we are still working with BAMR to fix a few other problems there.

At Sagamore, built in 2000, an additional discharge appeared, loaded with aluminum and going around the treatment ponds. This

is ok because those ponds were not designed to handle aluminum. But it is not ok to have toxic aluminum running into Indian Creek. We applied for a Technical Assistance Grant through Trout Unlimited to help us evaluate what is happening and how to fix it, if possible.

We are completing an Operation, Maintenance, and Replacement Plan for all the projects in the watershed. When this is finished, hopefully in August, MWA will be awarded \$125,000 to start a trust fund dedicated to

keeping all of these systems running well. When it takes more than \$400,000 to correct a problem at one site, it is painfully obvious that \$125,000 is not a large enough trust fund to really keep all systems go. We need to build up this trust fund so we will be able to continue returning Indian Creek to a swimmable, fishable watershed. You can donate specifically to this trust fund in order to help with our efforts to restore the watershed. Visit [www.mtwatershed.com](http://www.mtwatershed.com).



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Protecting, preserving and  
restoring the Indian Creek  
and greater Youghiogheny  
River watersheds...

## POSTAL PATRON

### Upcoming Events:

August 12  
Rabies/Parvo Clinic

August 23  
ALLARM Training, Indiana, PA

September 28  
Fishing Derby & Duck Race

October 3  
Day of Giving

November 13  
General Membership Meeting

November 21  
Yough Defense Party

See [www.mtwatershed.com](http://www.mtwatershed.com)  
for more information.

Please Invest in the Future of Our Mountains and Streams by  
Becoming a 2013 Member of the Mountain Watershed Association,  
Home of the Youghiogheny **RIVERKEEPER**<sup>®</sup>

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

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

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

#### Type of Membership

_____ Basic (\$5)	_____ Stream Friend (\$45)
_____ Family (\$7) Number of people _____	_____ Stream Hero (\$90)
_____ Group (\$15) Number of people _____	_____ Lifetime Member (\$500)
_____ Stream Defender (\$20)	_____ Donation (Tax Deductible)

I would like to receive MWA's quarterly newsletter via email!

Please make checks payable to: Mountain Watershed Association  
1414B Indian Creek Valley Rd., P.O. Box 408, Melcroft, PA 15462

The official registration and financial information of the Mountain Watershed Association, Inc.  
may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling toll free,  
within Pennsylvania, 1 (800) 732-0999.