



APWC Newsletter

Spring 2023

www.apwc-pa.com

APWC.NEPA@gmail.com

PO Box 360 Kresgeville, Pa. 18333

(570) 992 5125

2023 Meetings are being held at Polk Township Municipal Building at 7pm on the third Tuesday of every other month: May 16, July 18, September 19. (November meeting TBD)

Economic and Health Benefits of Preserving Open Space

Protecting open space and preserving high quality streams and rivers has significant fiscal, environmental, and health benefits associated with it. Especially in areas such as the Poconos where tourism has always been a major source of income for many businesses. Examples abound such as canoeing/rafting/kayaking on the rivers, fly fishing in the clean streams, plus hiking, biking, skiing and horseback riding through areas of natural beauty. Resorts exist here because of these recreational opportunities and unspoiled views, plus many other co-dependent businesses such as restaurants and shopping are able to thrive. These are activities that draw millions of visitors annually. What a great place for a mega distribution center-NOT!! These enormous buildings are cropping up all over. While most of us will agree that there must be some economic development, the importance of controlling it and planning into the future cannot be overstated. For example, on the front page of the Morning Call April 18, 2023 the headliner article is: **Lehigh River placed on "endangered" list.** The environmental group *American Rivers* has ranked the Lehigh as seventh out of ten most at risk in the whole country. American Rivers is a nonprofit organization that advocates for clean water, habitat and environmental protection, flood mitigation, etc. The listing of the Lehigh is primarily due to poor planning which has allowed the tremendous proliferation of mega distribution centers/truck terminals in the area. The building over of wetlands, meadows, and forested areas for these cement beasts negatively impacts habitat, air, and water quality in the immediate areas and beyond. Additionally, the way that water moves across the land is permanently altered: instead of being filtered before entering streams, it is warmed up and carries pollutants more directly into water bodies. At this point you are probably thinking: "Carolyn, you are preaching to the Choir!". To the Choir, I urge you to please get involved in your local municipality and reach out to the residents and officials about the impacts of out of control development. What we need are local ordinances that are very specific in their definitions of what type of building is allowed or prohibited in an area depending on how it is zoned. We must not allow a few businesses, such as these mega builders and the trucking industry, to grow while others that have thrived in our area for generations are put at risk. Resources for action (beyond your township) include Our Pocono Waters, The Delaware Riverkeeper Network, PennFuture, the above mentioned American Rivers, and yours truly APWC. Share concerns on social media! Write letters to the Editor! Get more involved with us as we plan events, presentations, and community days in the upcoming year! There is much work to be done to protect what is dear and essential to us all- like clean water and a livable planet. We are at a crossroads. I fear for future generations of humans and *all* species. Keep fighting!!

Article inspired by Linda Snyder, written by Carolyn Lange

PROTECT YOUR DRINKING WATER-PROTECT YOUR WATERSHED

Recent Events

APWC requested and was granted standing before the Ross Township Zoning Hearing Board (ZHB) regarding the Tighe and Neil Scott application for a preliminary opinion of the Zoning Office. Background: The Scott brothers own property in Monroe County at the intersection of Rt. 115 and Rt. 33. This land is immediately adjacent to the headwaters of the Aquashicola Creek (if you are familiar with the former Ross Common Spring Water facility, it is just uphill from that). The Scotts intend to sell the property to a developer who has plans to build a 316,800 square foot facility with a total tract area of 1,679,408 sq. feet, multiple truck bays and even more parking spaces. They claim that this is a “warehouse” and not a “distribution center/truck terminal” (DC/TT). APWC obtained copies of Ross Twp. Zoning Ordinances and definitions of various types of buildings, uses, and landscape features. The property is located in the General Commercial (GC) Zone. A Warehouse in the GC Zone is a Permitted use subjected to the requirements of the SALDO, whereas a DC/TT would be considered a Special Exception requiring a Planning Commission review and approval by the ZHB. As a reminder, Zoning Ordinances are adopted by townships for the purpose of regulating development and activities within the township borders in accordance with the Pennsylvania Municipality Planning Code. On March 8th Carolyn attended this meeting. Citing the proximity of the property to the creek and noting the many years that we worked to have it redesignated by DEP to EV status, our request for participation in these proceedings was granted. At the meeting it became clear that our Zoning Officer considered a facility of these specifications to be a DC/TT not a warehouse. This decision is what the Scotts appealed to the ZHB. No decision by the ZHB was made on this date. There were three other parties who also requested standing on this issue: One was PennFuture, and the other two were neighbors to the property. As interested parties we were provided the opportunity to submit a written statement of our position/opposition to this matter by March 31st, which we all did. The next meeting was scheduled for April 12th. Everyone showed up except for the all-important Court Recorder, so the meeting was postponed to May 3rd. Stay tuned!!

Many thanks to Abby and Brigitte of PennFuture for their guidance, to Linda S. for showing up at meetings and lending her support, and to Bob B. for his technical assistance.

Carolyn

Our Spring “Adopt-A-Highway” Clean-Up a Big Success!!

On April 22nd, (Earth Day-how fitting!) a group of APWC members and friends removed 17 bags of trash, 9 tires, assorted car parts and miscellaneous trash from along the Aquashicola Creek along Lower Smith Gap Road and Covered Bridge Road in Lower Towamensing Township. We send out a huge “THANK YOU!!” to volunteers Al, Gerry, Charlie, Linda C, Corissa, Misty, Jim, and Carolyn for coming out to beautify APWC’s little piece of the Earth!

Upcoming Event: Help us celebrate the Earth at PEEC!!

On April 29th from 11:00am to 4:00pm Master Watershed Stewards and APWC will be at the Pocono Environmental Education Center (PEEC) Earth Day event with a display showing the importance of riparian buffers. Other activities include hands-on learning stations, interpretive hikes, conservation exhibits, crafts, food, music, and much more! Please come out and join us at this very impressive facility that is dedicated to environmental education-something that we all benefit from!

Pre-registration is NOT required. There is a \$5 per car fee.

PROTECT YOUR DRINKING WATER-PROTECT YOUR WATERSHED

Cue the Applause! Update from Our Partner *Save Carbon County*-A BIG WIN!!

On April 19th SCC reported that the property owner at Mauch Chunk Lake, Ed Kanick, has officially dropped his plans to develop the ten acres that remain in his possession. He has withdrawn his plans to build up to 9 homes from consideration by the Borough of Jim Thorpe. SCC did an awesome job of getting the word out and getting folks to come out to JT Borough Council meetings to show opposition to this development.

SCC continues to work to obtain Resolutions of support for their plans to see that sewage sludge is no longer used as fertilizer on Carbon County farms and to see a change in the State Law that prevents local municipalities from regulating sewage sludge application and other extreme farm activities such as industrial scale pig farms and feedlot operations. Municipalities are prevented from regulating these activities and nearby residents affected by the health and welfare impacts are prevented from suing.

At this point six municipalities have adopted the Resolution. They are Jim Thorpe, Mahoning, Nesquehoning, Lower Towamensing, East Penn, and Summit Hill. SCC made presentations to three municipalities that are expected to adopt the Resolution. They are Lehighton, Penn Forest, and Lansford. Two municipalities have tabled the issue. They are Palmerton and Towamensing. There are 23 municipalities in Carbon County so there is still a way to go. Many thanks to all of the Save Carbon County Folks who are out fighting the good fight!! We should not have to, but if we want a livable planet now and in the future, it is what must be done. If you live in Carbon County and are not yet a member of SCC, we encourage you to check out their FB page or website, and get involved with this tenacious group!!

Book Review: “The Nature of Oakes”

Another book from the best-selling author Douglas W. Tallamy titled “The Nature of Oakes” is a trove of information on our most nourishing native tree. Tallamy is an incredible source of information on Ecology, Botany, Entomology and science in general. A Professor for over 40 years with over 100 research publications, his latest book is a must-read for anyone with an inquisitive mind.

In his past books he shows us how to live with nature and promotes its health as well as our own. “Bringing Nature Home” (2007), “The Living Landscape” (2014), and “Natures Best Hope” (2019) are also great reads. Some of our Master Watershed Stewards may have taken his Penn State 8-week webinar course in early 2019 (cost of \$40), “The Woods in Your Backyard”.

In this latest book, Tallamy starts off by visiting an Oak Tree on his property in October. This is chapter one with each following chapter describing what different events happen in nature involving the oaks and their visitors for the next eleven months. There are dozens of color photographs and dozens of side trips that most people never think about.

This is not only a book about Oak Trees, but also about birds, turkeys, deer, moths, and insects galore. After reading this book you will leave with a better understanding of and a better appreciation for the Oakes, “Our Most Essential Native Tree”. I give this book five green thumbs up!

Charlie Ogle

PROTECT YOUR DRINKING WATER-PROTECT YOUR WATERSHED

Neonicotinoids

Based on an article from Trout Unlimited by Shauna Stephenson

The Journal of Biological Conservation released a report in 2019 regarding the worldwide decline in insects. The conclusion was that 40% of the world's insects could disappear in the coming decades if changes were not made to industrial agriculture, habitat destruction, urbanization, and climate change. The usual suspects.

The prognosis for aquatic insects is equally concerning. The authors concluded that at least 33% of aquatic insects, especially the indicator species such as mayflies, caddisflies, and stoneflies, are in the bullseye. Aquatic insects cannot fly or walk away from a direct threat- they are stuck in the stream where they reside. The authors, Francisco Sanchez-Bayo and Kris A.G. Wyckhuys, concluded pesticides were the cause. Specifically, neonicotinoids, a.k.a. neonics.

Neonicotinoids were developed in the 1990s and quickly became one of the most used insecticides in the world. They work by being absorbed in insect tissue and targeting the nervous system. For commercial agriculture, they are applied directly to plants or are used as a seed coating and used in massive amounts. The general public also contributes- neonics are also used in flea collars, over the counter sprays for home gardens, and even on the plants you buy for landscaping. Lethal doses have been found in plants labeled "Bee Friendly". Neonicotinoids are also widely used in parks and schools. As a result of all of this they are showing up in wetlands and in groundwater.

Testing was done by the EPA using water fleas (*Daphnia*), a species less sensitive to toxins than other aquatic insects- sometimes by several hundred times! So the limits set by EPA do not protect many of the insects. Jack Williams, former director of the TU science team, has stated "For aquatic insects such as mayflies, caddisflies, and stoneflies, the presence of neonics in the parts-per-*billion* range are lethal".

The USGS has found that synthetic chemicals including pesticides and other pollutants are one of the largest threats to healthy freshwater ecosystems from both an aquatic life and human health perspective. Getting out of this glass of chemical cocktail we are in will not be easy. There is no magic bullet to make this problem go away. Perhaps a good starting point is to reduce use of pesticides and herbicides as much as possible. Read labels and try to use organic products, including natural repellents for ticks and fleas. Research where your nursery stock comes from. Buy local! Most big box stores purchase huge blocks of plants from commercial growers that use massive amounts of insecticides to maximize yield.

Jim Vogt

A Message from the Secretary

As I work on this newsletter I think about the many projects that we would like to get going on such as buffer plantings, upcoming community events, and improving our water monitoring program (not to mention fighting the scourge of distribution centers). If you are able, please lend a hand! If your membership is due for renewal, you will find enclosed a membership form. We sincerely hope you continue to support our efforts at this crucial time!

Thanks Much, Best Regards, and Happy Spring!!

Carolyn Lange, Secretary/Treasurer

PROTECT YOUR DRINKING WATER-PROTECT YOUR WATERSHED