Date

Mr. Gary Walters

Division of Water Quality Standards

Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection

Dear Mr. Walters:

 We are pleased to support the Petition by the Aquashicola/ Pohopoco Watershed Conservancy to change the designation of Aquashicola Creek, from a High Quality Coldwater Fishery (HQ) to Exceptional Value (EV). The requested segment would be from the source to the confluence with Buckwha Creek. We agree that these waters should be given the highest level of protection.

 We want to protect this valuable resource for the following reasons:

EV Qualifiers:

1. Location: The upper section of the Aquashicola Creek is still relatively undeveloped. It links contiguous preserved tracts of land including sections of the Cherry Valley National Wildlife Refuge and PA State Game Lands 168. The creek also runs parallel to the Kittatinny Ridge, a world famous Migratory Corridor and the Appalachian Trail. It is near areas of historical significance such as Ross Common Manor and Ross Common Spring Water.
2. Exceptional Value Wetlands: The Aquashicola Creek runs through wetlands that are given special protection under Pennsylvania Code because they are home to threatened and/or endangered species of both flora and fauna.
3. Class A Wild Trout Stream and Naturally Reproducing Trout Stream: The Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission has designated sections of the Aquashicola Creek with these important titles.
4. Biological High Quality Criteria: Macroinvertebrate samplings done by both the Monroe County Water Quality Study and PA DEP in this area support upgrade to exceptional value.

Updates since 2010 filing:

1. Litigation concerning Alpine Rose has been settled, contested land is now part of State Game Lands 168.
2. A species of dragonfly, the Brook Snaketail, was discovered for the first time in Pennsylvania on the creek near SGL 168.
3. 1,000 acres in both Ross and Eldred Townships were added to SGL 168 upstream from the Alpine property. This tract is on both sides of the creek.
4. Ross Common Creek, a major tributary of the petitioned stream, is located entirely in the Cherry Valley National Wildlife Refuge. The Refuge boundary extends approx. eight miles downstream along the Ross Common and Aquashicola Creeks.

Sincerely,