

Newsletter

Upper Chartiers Creek Watershed Association (UCCWA)

June 2023

Greetings from UCCWA

In January, when I began my term, I knew that our board of directors would have an exciting as well as challenging year creating the change we wanted to see in our organization and in our watershed. As we look back on our first quarter of 2023, we are proud of our accomplishments, energy, and growth. We've expanded our educational and environmental stewardship opportunities and are in the process of evaluating, expanding, and improving our long-term study of the water quality in the watershed. Moving forward, we'll use that data to inform our decisions regarding appropriate and substantive projects. We are also expanding upon existing relationships as well as establishing new and rewarding collaborations with our local municipalities, educational institutions, and residents as we work together toward clean water and improving our opportunities to engage with our local natural environment.

As the year progresses and our projects take root and grow, we'll need your help. We have an amazing core of dedicated volunteers who have set the groundwork for environmental advocacy, environmental education, environmental studies, municipal engagement, and collaboration with diverse and multi-faceted groups within our community. But the old adage, "many hands make light work", is indeed true. It doesn't matter what your background, interest or time limitations may be, there is a place for you in our community of environmentally minded volunteers. Don't put it off. There is something you can do. Contact us today to see how you can help.

Virginia McAnulty, President

Schedule of upcoming events:

June/July - Birding at Canonsburg Lake - July 16th from 9-11

Throughout the summer - Chemical Monitoring

Fall Clean up with Washington & Jefferson College - TBD

Spring Wetlands Walk and Clean up

April 29, 2023

The Upper Chartiers Creek Watershed Association with Dr. Jason Kilgore from W&J College, hosted a combination educational walk and creekside clean up in North Strabane on Saturday Apr 29, 2023. Dr. Kilgore, a plant ecologist and former wetland consultant with an exceptional gift for education, gave an engaging presentation with a wealth of information regarding the plants, soils and defining features of the wetlands located along Little Chartiers Creek near the Canonsburg Lake. After the walk, the 25 participants stayed and helped with a litter clean-up of the area. We collected about 30 bags of garbage, 4 tires and several “mystery” items. This event was made possible by the generous support of Pennsylvania American Water and North Strabane Township. Thank you to all who helped make it a great experience.



Wild about Washington County Watersheds

The Upper Chartiers Creek Watershed Association in partnership with Washington County Parks and Recreation held a “Wild about Washington County Watersheds” on Thursday June 1 at Mingo Park. Roger Shaw, a member of UCCWA and a PA Master Naturalist, led the educational event to inform participants about the importance of the many watersheds within Washington County. Point and nonpoint pollution simulations were conducted to show the impacts of pollutants on our streams, creeks, lakes and ponds. It was a beautiful day for getting wet, so participants pitched in to complete a biological sampling, more commonly known as macroinvertebrates collecting. An unofficial identification and tally of the macroinvertebrates within Mingo Creek showed this creek to be in excellent health.



Erosion Study

In April 2023 the Washington County Watershed Alliance (WCWA), in partnership with the Upper Chartiers Creek Watershed Association (UCCWA), the West Virginia Water Research Institute (WVWRI), the Washington County Conservation District (WCCD) and Houston Borough began an erosion study of approximately 1,000 linear feet of the Chartiers Creek streambank that is adjacent to the Houston Community Park Baseball Field. The measuring pins were installed in April and the first measurements were taken on May 15th. The study is expected to continue for approximately 8 months.



The roots of many trees are showing along this part of the creek because the soil is being eroded out from under them and there's an island of deposited silt that is being formed in the creek. Those are both tell-tale signs that erosion is an issue because when the trees were growing their roots were, of course, covered by soil but now the roots are exposed due to the action of the water carrying away the soil and then dropping it to form the island. The eroded soil also makes the water muddy which, in turn, degrades fish habitat.

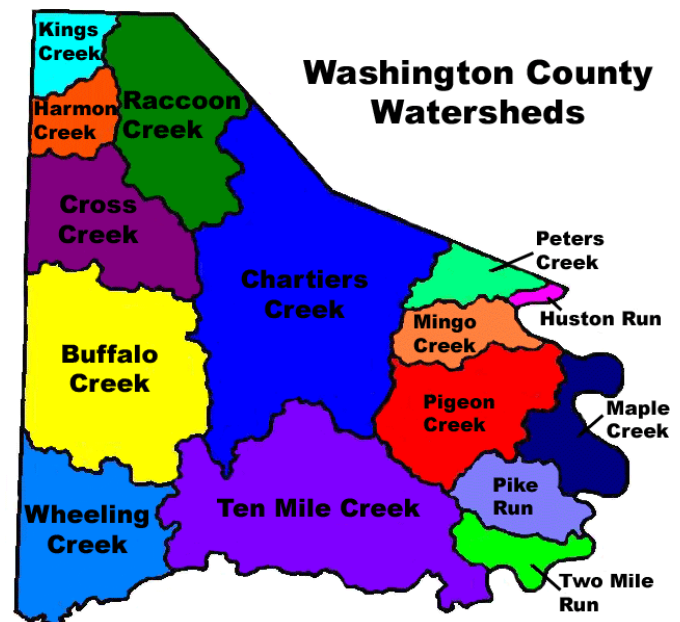
This Study is being completed with the support of the West Virginia Water Research Institute through the Generating Awareness for Project Success (GAPS) assistance program and is intended to provide the accurate data that is needed when seeking funding to pay for the completion of a streambank stabilization project at this location.

Educational Corner

Pennsylvania contains almost 83,000 miles of streams, ranging from small trickles to large rivers. All of these streams are important because they provide water for people, farms, and industries. They are home to many kinds of wildlife and fish. Streams also give us great places to go fishing, swimming, and boating.

Streams receive water from the land that surrounds them. The land area through which any water moves or drains to reach a stream is called a watershed. Every watershed is unique, and they range in size from a few acres to millions of acres. Anywhere you stand, you are within one small watershed that is also part of many larger watersheds.

Pennsylvania contains parts of six major watersheds, all of which eventually drain into the Atlantic Ocean. Which watershed do you live in?



Source: Penn State Extension

Upper Chartiers Creek Watershed Association Provided Free Tree Planting Supplies to Washington County landowners

Part of Watershed Effort to Improve Region's Soil Stability and Water Quality

Washington County landowners had the opportunity to receive free trees and some residents of the Upper Chartiers Creek Watershed also received tree tubes, stakes and mats along with the trees through the collaboration of the Upper Chartiers Creek Watershed Association (UCCWA), the Washington County Watershed Alliance (WCWA), the Washington County Conservation District (WCCD) and the Keystone 10 Million Trees Partnership.

Residents of Washington County had the opportunity to order free trees from the Keystone 10 Million Trees Program in partnership with the WCWA and administered by the WCCD. The trees were delivered to the WCCD office in April where the landowners picked them up. If they requested assistance, the WCCD also coordinated volunteers to help plant the trees.

UCCWA purchased 400 tree tubes, stakes and mats to provide, free of charge, to those landowners who are residents of the Upper Chartiers Creek Watershed and ordered trees through the program and intended to plant them along the riparian buffer of Chartiers Creek.

Alexis Blake, Watershed Specialist at WCCD, says, "By supplying the landowners with the proper planting supplies and assistance with planting the bare root trees, it is hoped that the survival rate and healthfulness of the trees will increase which should, in turn, increase the effectiveness of the initiative."

The 10 Million Trees Program was open to any landowner in Washington County who had an interest and the space to plant them. Although the specific dates are not yet known, the WCCD plans to take orders again for fall delivery. Interested landowners should contact Alexis Blake at ablake@pawccd.org or at 724-705-7098.

The purchase of the tree tubes, mats and stakes was made possible by the financial support of BHE GT&S which is dedicated to the economic, physical and social health of the communities that are served by BHE GT&S companies. The grant program is administered by the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy in commitment to its core mission of conserving Pennsylvania's diverse ecosystem through science-based strategy, leadership, and collaboration.

The Upper Chartiers Creek Watershed Association is an all volunteer water and natural resources conservation group under the auspices of the Washington County Watershed Alliance dedicated to creating and sustaining high environmental quality in the Washington County portion of Chartiers Creek. Chartiers Creek originates in Washington County and flows into Allegheny County, discharging into the Ohio river near McKees Rocks. Membership in UCCWA is open to anyone who lives, conducts business, or is actively involved within the Chartiers Creek Watershed.

Spring Water Monitoring results

Station #	Site Description	Stream Name	Date Sampled	Rating
1	American Legion	Chartiers Run	4/1/2023	Good
2	Houston Park	Chartiers Creek	4/18/2023	Poor
3	Linden Creek / Linden Road	Little Chartiers Creek	4/15/2023	Excellent
4	Scotty's	Chartiers Creek	4/25/2023	Poor



Contact Information

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Please reach out with questions, concerns or ideas for improving our watershed.