

THE RE-CAP

Watershed Alliance of York's (WAY) quarterly newsletter with updates about the implementation of the Countywide Action Plan (CAP) for clean waters



IN THIS ISSUE

Fall 2024 | Re-CAP Issue 21

- **01//** WAY Board Update
- **02//** CAP Coordinator's Corner
- **03//** Local Highlights
- **05//** Projects Around the County
- **06//** Event Highlights
- **08//** Where in the Watersheds?!
- **09//** WAY Works



WAY BOARD



Both summer and fall proved to be busy with opportunity for WAY. We began implementing changes recommended during our Spring capacity building which included meetings on a bi-monthly basis. As we continue to make recommended changes for the organization, we are focused on making calculated decisions that will ensure a bright future for WAY. Currently, we are seeking funding to hire the very first WAY employee and we are close to having funds for the first year secured. It's our hope that changes made in summer and fall paired with chasing new opportunities will usher in big changes, including our first employee, in the early part of 2025. As always, we are still looking for our next Treasurer...is it you?!

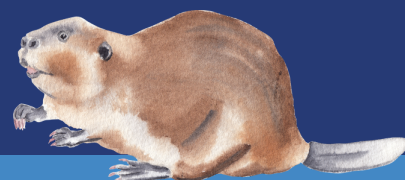
WAY

BOARD OFFICERS

RACHEL STAHLMAN,
PRESIDENT
DUANE HYSON,
VICE PRESIDENT
EMILY NEIDEIGH,
SECRETARY
VACANT,
TREASURER

BOARD DIRECTORS

LETTICE BROWN
TED EVGENIADIS
MATT ATTIG
DIANE OLESON
JODI SULPIZIO
MARK LENTZ
ROB HARVEY
ETHAN DAVIAU



Hello Readers!

Since the last Re-CAP and Coordinator's Corner update in June there has been no shortage of work. June through September there were many awesome events that WAY and partners hosted/organized/attended. Tap Talks was back this summer with an array of new topics covered that were fun and interesting and the crowds were some of the largest we've hosted to date. Tap Talks are one of my favorite events and I'm looking forward to what next summer's topics will uncover for us. There were also ample clean-up opportunities over the summer and the start of fall. Between Willis Run, Codorus Creek, and the Susquehanna River several thousand pounds of trash have been removed and properly disposed of again this year. WAY began partnering deeper with our friends at the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay on their Project Clean Streams effort which paid off both in trash being removed from our waterways and partnerships strengthening. WAY's 22nd Annual Watershed Week also occurred since the last Re-CAP and I must say that without a doubt, this was the best Watershed Week to date. There were 12 events hosted throughout the week with about 575 people attending overall. It's a lot of hard work to pull off Watershed Week but with the support of our awesome partners and sponsors, each year somehow works out better than the previous. We are already looking for new partners and new events to host for the 23rd Annual Watershed Week. Please feel free to send in suggestions and requests.

The planning and implementation of projects continues to be a focus for WAY. The project management of about a dozen grant funded projects continues to move forward with only minimal challenges. Early to mid-2025 several projects will wrap up in completion which will be quite exciting. I'm happy to report that we have successfully secured two more grants via the PA DEP's 319 grant program. Both 319 grants are funding the design and permitting of stream restoration projects. Construction funding for these projects will come down the road a bit. The WAY Watershed Forestry Program has seen another successful season of riparian forest buffer implementation. We added another 23.89 acres of riparian forest buffer across York County this season thanks to the willingness of several wonderful landowners.

2025 will be a big year for WAY and the CAP. The transition of the CAP is still to be determined but "Beyond 2025" is a discussion that is deepening at the State level. For WAY, our hard work is starting to pay off and we are excited that coming in 2025 we will finally hire our first ever staff, a Director. Keep up with us, exciting times are ahead. I hope you have a wonderful rest of fall, winter, and enjoy the coming Holidays. Thank you!!

In Stewardship,

Rachel Stahlman, CAP Coordinator / WAY President
rstahlman@ycpc.org | 717.771.9870 x 1763



Local Highlights:

Year Two: Freshwater Mussel Surveying

This summer we were fortunate enough to conduct a second year of freshwater mussel surveying in York County streams. This important and exciting work would not be possible without our partners at the Western PA Conservancy. We cannot thank Western PA Conservancy enough for their dedication and expertise when it comes to the research, restoration, and conservation of freshwater mussels. Readers may recall that last year we surveyed Codorus, South Branch Codorus, Conewago, Little Conewago, and Muddy Creeks. This year we decided to survey deeper and more upstream into Conewago and Codorus Creeks and added Bermudian Creek, Bennett Run, and the Yellow Breeches into our surveying. We have found freshwater mussels in several York County streams thus far, but we have been finding the most diversity in the Conewago Creek. This fact helped us in deciding locations for year two of surveying. Before anything could begin, we needed to make sure that we had good access, permission, and conditions at potential surveying sites. To ensure this means physically go out to the sites and assess conditions in person. A week before Western PA Conservancy arrived, we scoped out and assessed the conditions of 21 sites. Luckily, most of the sites were on public or county accessible land. We needed to ask permission from 8 landowners to get good access to creeks from private land. Once we received landowner permission, we sent all these potential locations to Western PA Conservancy to include with their potential sites which ended up mounting to nearly 50. The survey took place on September 10, 11, and 12 and over those three days we were able to visit 14 sites.

Since last years surveying, York County Planning Commission and WAY partners have attended the Susquehanna River Basin Commission (SRBC) led Freshwater Mussel Partnership meetings which include an array of partners from across the Bay watershed. It was awesome to have partners from SRBC and Department of Environment Protection (DEP) out on some of the surveying days. It gave York County partners the opportunity to deepen our partnerships and further share our initiatives around the research, conservation, and restoration of freshwater mussels and our watersheds. SRBC partners made a cool video that captured the surveying efforts... check it out: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7P4LEcePJ8Y>



Western PA Conservancy scientists collecting data.



Surveying in Bennett Run.



Eastern Elliptio (left) Yellow Lampmussel (right).

Local Highlights:

Year Two: Freshwater Mussel Surveying



Survey group in Codorus Creek at Bantz Park.



Eastern Elliptio's found in a Bermudian Creek mussel bed.



Eastern Elliptio foot. The mussel foot helps them bury in the creek bed.



Live Elk Toe found in Conewago Creek.



The five Eastern Elliptios found in the Yellow Breeches.

The September 10th survey day started mid-morning when the Western PA Conservancy crew arrived from Indiana, PA. The first stop of the day was Codorus Creek at the mouth near the Codorus Furnace. We found 0 freshwater mussels and moved upstream to Bantz Park in the City of York for our second site. Although we did not find any live mussels at the Bantz Park location, we did find weathered and dead shells. We decided to wrap up surveying of Codorus Creek and move to Conewago Creek for the remainder of the day where we were able to survey two more sites. The Conewago sites were near the mouth where the creek enters the Susquehanna River. We ended the day with a lot of excitement finding two weathered and dead Rainbow (*Villosa iris*) mussels which is a species we had not found before.

Our September 11th survey day started early in East Berlin along Bermudian Creek. We surveyed three sites on Bermudian and were extremely surprised at our results. For the first time, we found beds of mussels and numbers of individuals we had not seen in York County waters. There was diversity as well! Even though an overwhelming number of individuals found were Eastern Elliptio (*Elliptio complanate*) we also found several Yellow Lampmussel (*Lampsilis cariosa*). After surveying Bermudian Creek, we headed back to Conewago Creek to survey two sites higher in the watershed. These surveys produced more excitement as we found live Elktoe (*Alasmodonta marginata*) when last year we only found weathered and dead.

September 12th was the last day of surveying for the year, and we focused on the Yellow Breeches. We surveyed five sites and at four of them all we found were weathered and dead Eastern Elliptios. It was at our last stop of the day and the last surveying opportunity for the year that we found 5 live Eastern Elliptios in the Yellow Breeches. It was awesome to end our survey on an exciting note that filled us with hope for our continued efforts.

The 'why' behind these freshwater mussel surveys remains seated in research, restoration, and conservation of these incredible filter-feeding mollusks. We continue to let science lead the way with the support of our partners and scientists at Western PA Conservancy. Next year, we hope to survey portions of the Susquehanna River along York County.

Projects Around the County:

Oil Creek Floodplain Restoration

While most of the York area is bone dry, Oil Creek's newly established wetlands in Heidelberg Township are truly wet! This project is made possible through the efforts of the York County Rail Trail Authority (YCRTA). The YCRTA received a generous grant from the J. William Warehime Foundation and an easement from Warehime Enterprises, Inc. Grant funding was also secured in partnership with York County Conservation District and York County Planning Commission, as well as PA DEP, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, and the PA Redevelopment Assistance Capital Program to support this project.

The purpose of this project was to address the stream degradation and to make improvements to the channel, floodplain, wetlands, and adjacent riparian area. Oil Creek is an impaired York County stream for pathogens and agricultural nutrients and sediment. This project will address those impairment concerns. You can see in the 'before' photo below, the stream banks were very severely eroded prior to the restoration work beginning.

The Oil Creek Floodplain Restoration includes 1,300 linear feet of stream restoration, 5 acres of wetland restoration, and 500 linear feet of floodplain grading in phase 1 on site A of this incredible project. A total of 8 acres will be treated by the installed best management practices. With this portion of Oil Creek restored, the stream will return to its natural pre-existing conditions and reduce flooding issues. If you take advantage of the Rail Trail, make sure you keep your eyes on this area as the restoration settles and the native fauna begins to fill in. The restoration of Oil Creek will continue in 2025 with another phase at site A and eventually site B restoration. This project counts towards and gives credits for the York Countywide Action Plan and the Chesapeake Bay Pollutant Reduction Plan, in turn helping DEP to reach its Chesapeake Bay goals. The project is estimated to annually reduce 221 pounds of nitrogen, 102 pounds of phosphorus, and 193,700 pounds of sediment.

Before:



After:



Event Highlight:

22nd Annual Watershed Week

The 22nd Annual Watershed Week was held September 21st through 27th this year. The purpose of Watershed Week is to increase awareness about the importance of clean water to community health and the practices we can all do to keep our watersheds healthy. Watershed Week is fun for the whole family and attendees get to know their watershed and the folks and organizations who are working hard to enhance, restore, and protect them. This year, more than 500 people attended events in person! The following are highlights from the week.



The 6th Annual Dam-Bridge Challenge hosted by the Lower Susquehanna Riverkeeper Association (LSRA) kicked off our Watershed Week events. About 75 racers participated in the event where you paddle your way on the river to a hopeful victory. WAY sets up our educational booth each year and it's a wonderful opportunity to meet new people in our community, particularly friends that travel from Maryland to race on the Susquehanna. Kudos to our friends and partners at LSRA for hosting yet another successful Dam Bridge Challenge!

Each year the Red Lion Municipal Authority partners with WAY and hosts tours of the Cabin Creek Drinking Water Treatment Plant during Watershed Week. This year featured demonstrations from their new Enviroscope. Attendees learn what it takes to turn water from Cabin Creek into drinking water, something that is vital to the health and well-being of everyone across many communities. Thank you to our partners at Red Lion Municipal Authority for their continued support and partnership.



New to the Watershed Week roster of events this year was Waterways on Wheels hosted by our partners, Penn State Extension Master Watershed Stewards. WAY Board Director and Master Watershed Steward Assistant Coordinator Mark Lentz led a group of 16 cyclists on an educational and fun bike ride on the York County Rail Trail along the Codorus Creek. The ride featured several stops to discuss water features and fauna. The tour ended with York County produced snacks and drinks for attendees to thoroughly enjoy.

Each Watershed Week, York County Parks along with the Friends of Wallace Cross Mill who also happen to include the WAY Vice President, Duane Hyson, and our most dedicated volunteer, Cindy Pizziketti, host a stream study of Rambo Run at Wallace Cross Mill and open the historic mill for tours. Wallace-Cross Mill is a restored 1826 water-powered grist mill located near Cross Roads, East Hopewell Township. It was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1977. Harry Cross, the last operator of the mill, presented the building to York County in 1979. The mill is situated to have once used the resources of Rambo Run making the connection between the stream study and our past relevant to Watershed Week.

Event Highlight:

22nd Annual Watershed Week



The 5th Annual Youth and Family Fishing and Conservation Day held at Kiwanis Lake was a smashing success for multiple partners involved! Each year, an event flyer is distributed at the City of York schools in hopes that locals in the community will come visit their waterway and enjoy a day of fishing and educational activities. Volunteers and partners help with fishing rod distribution, putting worms on hooks, reeling fish in, and measuring catches. At the end of the event, prizes in the form of fishing rods are awarded to the biggest catch, smallest catch, and first catch of the day. Every child that attended received a drawstring bag filled with snacks and small gifts like stickers from partnering organizations. Each year partners receive wonderful feedback and many thanks from the families who attend. For many of the children, this is their first time getting to experience fishing and for others, this is an event they now look forward to each fall. Epically large thank you to our partners at York County Community Foundation, Lower Susquehanna Riverkeeper Association, Penn State Extension Master Watershed Stewards, Mid Atlantic Youth Anglers, Codorus Trout Unlimited, and the City of York for continually making this a successful, fun, and safe event!



For the last three Watershed Week's WAY has partnered with friends at Hopewell Fish & Game Association to host a special edition of Fly Fish and Tying. All attendees are entered into the Fly Rod and Reel Combo raffle upon entry of our free event. This year there was guest fly tying demonstrations and a special presentation by the one and only Tom Herr who is a world-renowned tyer. Congratulations to Evan Krause of Felton, PA, for winning the Fly Rod and Reel Combo at this years event. WAY cannot thank our partners and friends at Hopewell Fish & Game Association enough for their continued support, and for opening their clubhouse (and kitchen) to us year after year to host this special event. Check them out and learn of the very cool ways they support conservation and the youth!



Event Highlight:

22nd Annual Watershed Week



Watershed Discovery at Keystone Kidspace is an event created by WAY in partnership with Keystone Kidspace and with support from the Master Watershed Stewards and York County Conservation District. Each year WAY creates a flyer for the event in which Keystone Kidspace assists with outreach to their mailing list. Watershed Discovery is a multi-station event where children learn about macroinvertebrates, freshwater mussels, and point source and non-point source pollution. The stations include fish and macroinvertebrate rubbings with crayons, examining real macroinvertebrates that are collected from Codorus Creek, an Enviroscape demonstration, running on a wheel to create a snow cone, viewing freshwater mussel shells and a video from survey collections, freshwater mussel scavenger hunt, interactive macroinvertebrate story, and the Keystone Kidspace science activities. This was the second year that this event was held at Keystone Kidspace.



In partnership with U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) York County has an incredible state-of-the-art water quality monitoring program. Each year since we have been collecting data, USGS has partnered with us to host a Continuous Real-Time Water Quality Monitoring Demo at our Goldsboro monitoring site. Partners at USGS demonstrate what it takes to collect samples and analyze the data that is collected as it pertains to the pollutants sediment, phosphorus, and nitrogen which are the pollutants York County is working to reduce for the health of our waterways and the Bay. Our six water quality monitors are situated across our watersheds so that they collect about 80% of the County's water flow. The monitors continuously collect water quality samples every 15 minutes which creates an incredible amount of data and will help York County better manage our watersheds with real science.



Event Highlight:

22nd Annual Watershed Week

Street2Creek Storm Drain Art Tour is a special occasion for attendees to stroll through the downtown area of the City of York near Codorus Creek to view the public art exhibition that aims to raise awareness about stormwater runoff pollution. This initiative is made possible by the Penn State Extension Master Watershed Stewards. There are currently 20 painted storm drains downtown, all of which were completed by local artists, and of which are cared for year after year by the Master Watershed Stewards.



Each summer WAY, Penn State Extension Master Watershed Stewards, and Lower Susquehanna Riverkeeper Association team up to organize and host a series of Tap Talks. The premise of Tap Talks is to bring folks together at a local brewery, where clean water is important for good beer, and feature a talk about a clean water concept or initiative. The summer series of Tap Talks typically ends during Watershed Week. This year we heard from Sean Kenny, Executive Director of the York County Farm and Natural Lands Trust (FNLT), as he discussed Preserving York County Landscapes and Waterways. Sean enlightened attendees about the amazing work that FNLT does as a non-profit organization in York to preserve amazing farmland and natural lands, something that is vital to clean water in our community!

Watershed Connections was a new Watershed Week event in partnership with Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay and York Academy Regional Charter School. Roni Reed is the Biology, Chemistry, and Physics teacher at York Academy and she's doing amazing things for her students by exposing them to watershed work through their curriculum. We partnered with Roni and her students to host a clean up prior to Watershed Week. The Watershed Connections event was an opportunity for Roni's students to showcase all they have learned about watersheds, restoring them, and caring for them while also presenting water quality projects that could enhance the schools landscape and improve the health of our local waterways and community. Way to go, Roni!!



Where in the Watersheds?!



Interactive fun about York's 11 main watersheds! On this page are photos & clues about a place located in one of our 11 main watersheds. Play along by trying to guess the location & watershed.

Feeling extra playful? E-mail your answer along with mailing address to rstahlman@ycpc.org to get a WAY prize delivered to you if your answer is correct.

We also take submissions! Send in some sneaky photos from a favorite spot in one of our watersheds along with clues to the location and you may get featured!

Find the answer to 'Where in the Watersheds?!' in our next newsletter.

Clues

- Fear not these 'blue blazes', along with the yellow they represent a place where two different hiking trails overlap.
- One of the trails is named after two surveyors who helped resolve a border dispute between William Penn and Lord Baltimore.
- The Park is named after a famous former resident of Gray Towers in Milford PA. He later became the first chief of the US Forest Service.





Upcoming Events

Visit the 'events' tab on WAY's website to keep up-to-date with water quality events especially as winter begins to wane and spring starts to near!



Scan with your phone's camera to go right to our events tab to see all events and register!



YORK COUNTY
CONSERVATION DISTRICT

YORK COUNTY
YCPC
PLANNING
COMMISSION

YCPC is the primary entity for implementing the CAP, with support from YCCD. The public partner in this undertaking is WAY.

Contact us if...

- You have a water quality project and you are unsure if it's being counted for credit in restoration efforts
- You want to be part of WAY or any of the Committees of WAY
- You have any questions or comments



/WatershedAllianceOfYorkPA



@WAYorkPA



WatershedAllianceYork@gmail.com

Connect
with
WAY!

The WAY Board of Directors meet bi-monthly on the 4th Thursday in person at 6:30pm in Room 151 at 2401 Pleasant Valley Road, York

Join us virtually via TEAMS
Find the link under the 'About' section at watershedallianceofyork.org

The Watershed Alliance of York (**WAY**) is a group of volunteer stakeholders interested in improving local waterways for the betterment of the County and to meet clean water goals.

If you would like to get involved, **please contact Rachel Stahlman at rstahlman@ycpc.org**