WCFGWA Attends Watershed Congress

WCFGWA members John Johnson, Don Finn and Liz Rutter attended the 2015 Watershed Congress, March 14, 2015 at the Montgomery County Community College in Pottstown, PA.

The Watershed Congress is hosted by the Delaware Riverkeeper Network and includes other regional groups such as West Chester Fish, Game & Wildlife Association and VF Trout Unlimited. The Congress has evolved over the past 15 years as a venue for citizens to share the best available information, tools and techniques for understanding, protecting and restoring watersheds.

Keynote speakers Maya K. van Rossum, the Delaware Riverkeeper and spokesperson for and leader of the Delaware Riverkeeper Network, and Jordan B. Yeager, Partner and Chair of the Environmental and Public Sector Section at Curtin & Heefner LLP spoke on the 2013 Pennsylvania Supreme Court Decision to strike provisions of Pennsylvania Act 13, which exempted drillers from local zoning ordinances. Rossum and Yeager's successful argument was based on Article 1, Section 27 of the Pennsylvania Constitution which promises: “A right to clean air, pure water, and to the preservation of the natural, scenic, historic and esthetic values of the environment. Pennsylvania’s public natural resources are the common property of all the people, including generations yet to come. As trustee of these resources, the Commonwealth shall conserve and maintain them for the benefit of all the people.” The court ruling returns zoning powers to municipalities with regard to shale gas drilling, and also requires municipalities to zone for drilling in a way that upholds the constitutional protections guaranteed by the Environmental Rights Amendment.

Participants also attended breakout sessions including an informative update on the Valley Creek Restoration Partnership given by Chuck Marshall and Pete Goodman, of Valley Forge Chapter of Trout Unlimited, and Owen Owens of the Valley Creek Restoration Partnership. Other breakout sessions included: Stream Restoration as a Means of Meeting Water Quality Goals; Impacts of the Emerald Ash Borer on Forest Health; Partnering with Farmers for Successful Watershed Improvement Projects; and Increasing Flood Resiliency in the Schuylkill Watershed; among many other interesting topics.

Additional information on the Watershed Congress and the Delaware Riverkeeper Network can be found at www.delawareriverkeeper.org and www.forthegenerations.org.
In Appreciation

We lost two dedicated members of our Club in March. David E. Dempsey, passed away on March 15, 2015 and Bruce G. Riddell, passed away on March 20, 2015.

Dave was a true outdoorsman. He enjoyed hunting, fishing, camping and gardening. Most of all, he loved spending time with his family.

Bruce was an avid outdoorsman, enjoying hunting, fishing and gardening. He was a member of the WCFGWA, serving on the executive board and participated in many projects and programs related to wildlife and nature conservation. He was also a member of the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, Trout Unlimited and the National Rifle Association. Bruce was a member of the West Chester Elks Lodge #853 for over 30 years where he volunteered and enjoyed gathering with friends for Friday night dinners.

Dave and Bruce were both hard working, committed club members. If you needed help on any project, all you had to do was ask.

Both Dave and Bruce set an example for all of us. They will be sorely missed.

Nursery Report - by Mike Colley

All the trout from West Chester Fish Game and Wildlife's nursery have been released into West Valley Creek as of May 15th. The stocking process started back on March 28th with the preseason stocking of 814 fish. The next major stocking was on April 14th for the Chip Gibson Trout Rodeo and the final major stocking concluded on May 15th for the Dave Heller Rodeo. A total of 2610 Brown Rainbow and Golden trout were released. In between the major stocking dates, a special crew of "float stockers" released trout in the hard to access sections of the creek. The Float stocking method insures that the trout are evenly distributed, thus providing for better fishing.

What many fishermen and women do not realize is that the State does not stock trout downstream from Boot Road. We do, however. The reason the Fish and Boat Commission does not stock the stream along Valley Creek Road is that there is not enough contiguous open land for public access to meet the States criteria, even though the stream is classified as an Approved Trout Water. Many thanks go to the property owners: The Clarks, Paradise Farm Camps, East Bradford Township, J C L Sterling Company and PECO for permitting us to stock and for the public to fish.
** Save the Date **

Fall Meeting
September 17, 2015, 6 PM
Paradise Farm Camp
1300 Valley Creek Road
Downingtown, PA 19335

There will be a
Guest Speaker,
Raffle,
Food and Fun

---

Let's Go Camping!

If you like the outdoors and learning about the environment through hands-on experiences, Conservation Camp is for you! Spend a week living in the outdoors with campers your own age - hunting frogs, catching fish, paddling a canoe, enjoying campfires and many other activities. Our theme explores water, water resources, watershed conservation and water recreation.

The camp, for girls and boys ages 11 to 14, takes place July 12 - 18, 2015 at Paradise Farm Camps. The tuition is $250.00 and covers all expenses for a week. For more information please contact:

Margaret Van Gilder, Director
Phone: 610-873-0830
Cell: 610-209-9410
email: margaretvg@verizon.net

---

Stream Report - by Steve Estberg

Tyler Neimond, Habitat Engineer for the PA Fish & Boat Commission, met with WCFGWA members on May 8th to walk the stream and evaluate the stream improvement devices constructed over that last seven years.

Tyler stated that he is extremely pleased with the current condition of the devices and reported that they are functioning as planned. The log deflectors are helping to scour the stream bottom removing silt and sediment, the cross vanes and mud sills help create prime habitat pools and hiding places for the trout and the bank protection is helping to prevent further stream bank erosion. He recommended that we continue to take pictures to further document the positive effects the devices are having in West Valley Creek. We discussed the log jams that have formed in a couple of locations along the stream. Tyler stated that these are naturally occurring and recommended we leave them in place. They tend to function as deflectors and help create further locations of prime trout habitat. We noted the trout holding in these locations.

We discussed stream improvement projects for 2015 and identified several areas that need further work. The top of the list is shoring up the willow tree at the cross vane from further erosion particularly during high water flow conditions.

If you would like to help, our next Stream Improvement Day is September 26, 2015. Bring waders and gloves. Lunch will be provided! Check the website at www.wcfgwa.org for updated information throughout the summer.
Fishing Fun at the Trout Rodeos
Kids in the Wild

We want to hear about your adventures fishing, hunting and wildlife watching! So please email your stories and pictures to News & Views at wcfgwa@gmail.com and receive an official WCFGWA T-shirt!

Bear Hunting by Colin Finn

This past fall I had the opportunity to go bear hunting in Bedford, Pa. Saturday morning we woke up around 4:30 in the morning. After getting the ATVs for the drive up to the mountain, we rode to our hunting spot and then walked up the side of the mountain to where we were going to sit. It was still dark when we got to our spots. Finally, the sun came out and so did a six point buck. Had it been deer season I would have got it. Unfortunately it was only bear season. The rest of the morning we didn't see anything. We went back down the mountain so we could have a break for lunch. After lunch we went back to our spots. Now that it was bright out, you could really see the mountain. They were cutting a lot of trees on the side of the mountain so you could see the valley below. We moved spots around on the mountain for better chances of a bear. This time I saw two deer walk in front of me. Then another deer came within five yards of me. It would have been a good day for deer hunting, but we were bear hunting. It finally got dark and we didn't get any bears. But as the saying goes: "A bad day of hunting is still better than a good day at work." Colin Finn is a junior at Henderson High School.

Hunter-Trapper Education Course July 18th

A Hunter-Trapper Education Course will be held July 18, 2015 at the East Bradford Township Building in West Chester, PA.

This is a one day training class. In order to prepare for your class, you must read Chapters 1, 4, 5 and 9 of Today's Hunter & Trapper in PA. These four chapters are part of the Hunter-Trapper Education course, but will not be covered at your class. It will be your responsibility to study this material before you attend a class. The online version of the manual can be accessed at www.hunter-ed.com/pennsylvania/handbook. Hard copies of the manual are available at Gordon's Sports Supply, 129 Pottstown Pike, Uwchland, PA 19480 or at The Downingtown Bicycle Shop, 833 W Lancaster Avenue, Downingtown, Pa 19335

All first-time hunters and trappers, regardless of age, must successfully complete Hunter-Trapper Education training before they can buy a Pennsylvania hunting or trapping license. A training certificate, which is recognized throughout North America, is awarded when you pass a test at the end of the course.

You must be at least 11 years old to enroll in a class. Parents are encouraged to attend with their children. The program is designed to produce safe, responsible, knowledgeable and involved participants.

The Township Building is located at 666 Copeland School Road, West Chester, PA 19380.

For more information and to register for the class, go to the PA Game Commission website at www.pgc.state.pa.us.
Upcoming Events

Executive Committee meets the second Monday of each month at the East Bradford Township Building.

June 11, 2015
Members’ Night at the Pond

June 20, 2015
Art Colley Bass Rodeo

July 18, 2015
Hunter Safety Course

September 17, 2015
Fall Meeting

September 26, 2015
Stream Work Day

Please remember to send your email to:
wcfgwa@gmail.com