



TOBYHANNA CREEK  TUNKHANNOCK CREEK
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2020 President's Message

By Geoff Rogalsky

What is required to be taken seriously?

- *Being a scientist is like doing a jigsaw puzzle in a snowstorm at night, with some pieces missing, and with no idea what the finished picture looks like.* – Anonymous scientist

A primary goal of any non-profit organization is to further their *cause célèbre*. To do this effectively, it must achieve a rather ill-defined status which is that of being taken seriously by relevant policy-makers. This is a particularly challenging issue for a small non-profit such as ours. Any non-profit and its constituency will, of course, have a passion for their cause. This contrasts with the policy makers, whose responsibility it is to dispassionately manage resources in the interests of the overall public good. So in order to have the best chance of being heard regarding controversial issues, and lacking the raw political power of a larger non-profit, the smaller non-profit must present arguments that the policy-makers can rely on as being based on objective material, i.e. "facts."

Salient facts for addressing environmental issues are generally science based. In presenting scientific facts, it must be kept in mind that such facts generally report the past. They are used as the basis for generating projections that anticipate the future with varying degrees of likelihood. Thus many of the facts used to support a policy position are qualified based on numerical analysis – generally statistical – and, as noted by Gregg Easterbrook and requoted *ad nauseum*, "Torture numbers, and they'll confess to anything."

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The Tobyhanna getting ready for spring!

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President's Message

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It gets you nowhere to label anyone's facts as "wrong," since some basis or source can almost always be provided. The real question is whether that basis or source is sufficiently relevant to the circumstances for which one seeks a reliable prediction of the future. Asking this question further complicates the validity of the presented fact however thoroughly it might be qualified by statistics. A compounding complication is that whatever projection a policy-maker leans on to justify a decision, the consequences of that decision may alter the assumptions on which the projection is based. Long-term outcomes may then intentionally or otherwise deviate from the expectations generated from the projection. This then provides ammunition for second-guessing the original decision. As the opening quotation suggests, science has an uphill battle under the best of conditions.

So having established that facts can be quite fickle, how then does one go about offering facts that will be taken seriously in this era of polarization, where audiences often have pre-decided what they are going to believe before even hearing facts that support another position? Even if an audience can be persuaded to open their minds, where does it turn to confidently obtain facts that present a picture that is as complete, unbiased, and most importantly, meticulously relevant as possible. This is among the roles TCTCWA seeks to fill – to provide our membership with vetted facts and the opportunities to convey them to the appropriate policy-makers.

It continues to be TCTCWA's job to speak for the watershed's resources on behalf of its users, silent or otherwise – to help the users understand what is at risk and provide options to avoid serious losses of values. If no one shows that they care, is it possible to be taken seriously regardless of how hard we work at it? American "rugged individualism" may not serve us well when resources reach their limits and we are confronted with a clear choice between short-term gratification and long-term stewardship. How long can we continue to take the resources for granted? At this writing, everyone's focus is understandably on the COVID pandemic because we have lost control of our livelihood – and in some cases actual life. But what about the ongoing ash and hemlock pandemics? And the elm and chestnut pandemics before them? And these are just the trees. Must we wait until we've lost the watershed values we treasure before people start to collectively care?

In the end, you are our "raw political power" and we need to ensure that you have as many of the important and accurate facts as possible. And if you're looking for something to do, we can probably find a way for you to help us get taken more seriously!

Hope all's well out there –

Rogo

Issues Currently on TCTCWA'S Radar

UPDATE - Climate Change: This global phenomenon influences our position on most other issues. TCTCWA continues to believe that global changes to climate are occurring faster than can be attributed to natural cycles in the earth's history and are predominantly attributable to human activity. The volume and complexity of studies makes a factual summary an overwhelming undertaking. We believe that a point of no return exists to stop and possibly reverse the impacts but do not have confidence regarding when that point will be reached. We acknowledge that we need to investigate this topic more deeply.

Based on our current understanding, TCTCWA believes that the watershed has and will continue to experience gradual and cumulative changes including lower stream baseflows and higher water temperatures, which bodes ill for recreational uses. Specifically, the function of snowpack melt that replenishes shallow groundwater, which sustains stream baseflows, will need to be replaced. And since impoundment volumes and surface areas remain relatively constant, the residence time of water will increase allowing each lake to more closely function as a bath tub, accumulating heat and contaminants and resulting in more frequent suspensions of water-contact recreation for health reasons. The percentage of the remaining water lost to evaporation will also consequently increase.

TCTCWA believes that the recreational use at greatest risk is trout fishing, as both fishing season length and suitable territory will continue to shrink. The Pocono game fish most suited to replace trout as the apex predator in warmer moving water environments is smallmouth bass, and the sport fishing community may be forced into this transition. Unfortunately, certain waters in the Poconos are under a smallmouth bass consumption advisory for mercury, which is a product of atmospheric fallout from coal-fired power plants to our west, so reduction of coal burning may benefit both the climate and the fish. Our most imaginative alternative is to encourage the Kalahari to add an indoor trout stream.

UPDATE - Exceptional Value Protected Use Redesignations: The most recent effort of the cynically-named Monroe County Clean Streams Coalition (MCCSC), a group of local pro-development business landowners that includes the Pocono Raceway and Kalahari Resorts, sought to have Pennsylvania water quality regulations altered to diminish the protective impact of Exceptional Value (EV) designations on development interests statewide. This attempt appears to have been unsuccessful as Pennsylvania's Independent Regulatory Review Commission reauthorized the regulations without changes to EV provisions

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Issues on the Radar
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in January, but legal maneuvering continues in the Pennsylvania House to stall reauthorization of the regulations for unclear purposes. It is also unclear what MCCSC will try next.

TCTCWA continues to support the existing EV provisions as appropriate balance between protection of special water resource values and economic development. The regulations do not prohibit development, but do place greater stewardship demands on activities involving discharges to EV surface waters. An unfortunate consequence of the EV regulations currently in place is to encourage transfer of wastewater out of the watershed area from which it was supplied. TCTCWA will continue to monitor developments on this issue.

UPDATE - Alignments: As discussed in last year’s newsletter, TCTCWA continues to embrace opportunities to amplify our message that align ourselves with other organizations that we believe are taken seriously. The work of the OurPoconoWaters Campaign (chaired by PennFuture) continues to advocate for EV protections of special waters with which the Poconos abound. The Watershed Coalition of the Lehigh Valley (WCLV) has a vested interest in the welfare of our watershed, as we constitute a large portion of the headwaters feeding the Lehigh River. WCLV includes a major population center in its constituency, which augments our political power. And the Watershed Alliance of Monroe County is beginning to rise from dormancy, after having been undermined by development interests that no longer hold sway at the Monroe County Conservation District. This group consists exclusively of watershed associations in the Pocono region, so we stand to benefit from collaborating on unified approaches to similar issues and goals. We encourage our membership to support these organizations.

A Boardwalk in the Bog

By Lorraine Kosciusko

In 2005 TCTCWA constructed a boardwalk behind the Pocono West high school. It is 1,100 feet long and passes through the wetland that is behind the campus. The boardwalk is used by the high school and environmental groups to experience the wetland without doing any damage to the sensitive plants that exist there.

The 15 years that have passed since its construction have been telling and this summer a Boy Scout named Jay Mecca will start reconstruction as an Eagle project. The hope is that he will be able to rebuild about ¼ of the boardwalk and then other Eagle candidates will continue the work. Of course, the coronavirus has had a significant impact on this since Jay cannot do fundraising or even meet with his troop. But we still have high hopes.

The boardwalk is a great tool for students and others to learn about the wetland. There is a curriculum on the TCTCWA website that includes information about different types of trees and plants that grow in our wetlands and other life that lives there.

TCTCWA welcomes anyone who wishes to volunteer or donate to support the effort. Feel free to reach out via email or phone. As always, any support is appreciated!



Dedication Day 2005



Water Specialist Trish Attardo conducting a tour of the Boardwalk on dedication day 2005.



Arial view of the Boardwalk behind Pocono Mountain West High School.



Boardwalk and Kiosk 2017



Monroe County Conservation District has a new manager: Kristina Heaney

By John Lyman

Monroe County has more than 900 miles of streams. Every single one of those is somebody's drinking water and the organization that works exceptionally hard at maintaining that clean water is the Monroe County Conservation District (MCCD).

Recently, MCCD hired a new district manager Kristina Heaney, and I had a chance to ask her some questions about where she was from and the future of Monroe County.



Kristina and a map of Monroe County

Tell us a little bit about your background and education.

I am a lifetime resident of the Poconos and I have a passion for conservation and our area's natural resources. I am a graduate of Lycoming College in Williamsport, PA where my focus of study was a blended Business and Biology curriculum that focused on Environmental Sustainability.

What brings you to MCCD?

As a career Conservation District staffer (previously Carbon & Northampton Counties) I admired the impressive programs and knowledgeable staff at Monroe County Conservation District. With its exceptional waterways and untouched beauty, Monroe County truly is unique. I was looking for a new challenge and a conservation community to call home.

What is the role of MCCD in protecting the waters of Monroe County?

Monroe County Conservation District works in both an educational and regulatory capacity. We work to regulate storm water and construction activities to reduce the potential for pollutants to enter our waterways and educate

the public on "the how" they can implement tools to protect their water resources and "the why" they should want to.

What are the positive impacts that MCCD brings to the community?

MCCD along with the Kettle Creek Environmental Education Center offers the community a continued commitment: that we are working to protect the beautiful, natural resources within their backyards. Our Education Center staff offers outreach programs and events that add a fun and family-friendly introduction to the natural world and the resources in Monroe County. Our technical staff works behind the scenes to protect these resources. It is a cycle of conservation through education. We work to foster a passion for nature and an appreciation for our home, Monroe County.



Monroe County Conservation District.

Climate change has been in the news a lot lately. What impact will climate change have on Monroe County?

Climate change is an imminent threat that needs to be treated as the immediate and devastating pattern it is. Monroe County stands to face impacts both economically and environmentally. With a visible increase in the intensity of storm water events and climbing temperatures, it is definitely time to start making effective changes to reduce our impacts as a county and a nation.

What is MS4, and why is MS4 so important?

MS4 stands for Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System. Per Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection it is by definition: Conveyances or systems of conveyances including roads with drainage systems, municipal streets, catch basins, curbs, gutters, ditches, man-made channels, or storm drains that are owned or operated by a public entity, are designed or used for collecting or conveying storm water, and are not a combined sewer or part of a publicly owned treatment works.

The purpose of this program is to regulate the discharges from these MS4s to ensure a reduction in pollutants, minimize the impacts from runoff, and improve water quality. As the saying goes "we all live downstream" and many source their drinking water or use the watercourses for recreational use. It is important for MS4 operators to regulate and educate the community to ensure the safety of our waterways. These regulations are a federal and state requirement that have existed for more than 25 years.

Kristina Heaney
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Besides climate change, spotted lantern fly has also been in the news a lot. What can the local homeowner do?

Spotted Lanternflies are an invasive pest that has infiltrated our area and is causing major devastation to the agricultural community and homeowners within the quarantine area. Initial efforts made in Pennsylvania were to educate the public on the threat this insect posed, but there has been a recent push for invasive removal and control at the Conservation District level. Our Agricultural Specialist can offer assistance in educating homeowners on some of the methods for population reduction that the USDA has suggested such as: tree banding, hack and squirt (treating Ailanthus “Tree of Heaven” a known breeding ground for the insect), pesticide application, etc. Do not hesitate to reach out to us with questions.

What can people do to assist MCCD?

The short answer: Be an advocate for the earth! Support our mission by protecting our natural resources and keeping our waterways clean. Pick up litter, participate in stream clean-ups, come out to a Kettle Creek program and have some fun! Conservation comes in many forms and it starts with each and every one of us. Environmental stewardship begins at home. Most importantly I would like to remind everyone, if you see something questionable, say something. We are always here to help and offer our assistance.

LATEST ISSUE - Francis E. Walter Dam Reevaluation Study:

By John Lyman and Geoff Rogalsky

This is the newest issue of interest to TCTCWA. At the request of New York City (NYC), the United States Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) is looking into expanding the operational management plan for the dam and reservoir to accommodate releases specifically for preventing the transition point from fresh to briny water in the lower Delaware River/Estuary from reaching drinking water supply intakes for the City of Philadelphia, purportedly under drought conditions only. The operational plan currently focuses exclusively on flood control and recreational use, and study findings will reportedly include measures to

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By U.S. Army Corps of Engineers - U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Public Domain,
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F.E. Walter Dam

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maintain or enhance these uses. Alternatives to be considered range from no changes to substantial enlargement of the dam and reservoir to support the expansion of uses.

The justification for the study invokes the uncertainties associated with climate change and potential sea level rise, which make planning for protection of Philadelphia's drinking water supply prudent. While not a certainty, drought conditions have occurred within the watershed and it is highly probable that drought conditions will be experienced again at some point in the future. The salt water transition point is currently controlled by releases from NYC drinking water supply reservoirs in the headwaters of the mainstem Delaware River, ergo NYC's interest in looking for options to reduce their responsibility in this area and protect their constituents from drought impact. While stating that they have no interest in directly controlling F.E. Walter Dam operations, they may be trying to create a Federal mandate for the Corps to do so on their behalf as part of an overall plan that, on the surface, can be later

spun as having been developed to protect the drinking water supply of Philadelphia. The study is in its initial phase; the final report is scheduled to be released September 2022.

While the dam is not actually situated within our watershed, TCTCWA believes we are peripheral stakeholders in this study as it is part of our mission to broadly support regional water-based recreational opportunities. Recreational opportunities may potentially be diminished by alteration of dam operations and, if so, will likely create additional pressure on neighboring water resources including ours. The impact on recreational businesses could be very negative. There are a host of businesses that use the water releases from the dam for tourism. Fishing, canoeing, kayaking all benefit from the release of water from the dam. Besides the whitewater rafting and canoeing enjoyed because of dam releases, the impounded water behind the dam is enjoyed by people who love boating and fishing and walking, picnicking and other summer pastimes. A public comment meeting was held in February – the first of three currently planned – at which more than 300 people showed up to express their concerns about potential changes.



The flow control tower at Francis E Walter Dam

TCTCWA supports the concept of planning before an emergency occurs, but is concerned that the study's main proponent is NYC. While we believe everyone should shoulder a fair share of wide-spread hardship, TCTCWA intends to be vigilant that the study does not result in reducing NYC's incentive to invest in water supply infrastructure repairs and conservation. We also will be watching to see whether the study considers the alternative of relocating Philadelphia's water intakes, which may eventually be rendered unusable anyway if the worst sea level rise predictions come to pass. We believe we should involve ourselves or risk selection of the easy solution to reduce NYC's obligations which is to provide them with whatever they think they need. The Corps of Engineers is not the best organization for looking at social impacts, but we are comforted that the Delaware River Basin Commission (which imposed a fracking moratorium, among other social/general-public-interest considerations in the watershed) is also a study partner. Water is a precious commodity; those of us that live or visit this area need to be the final decision-makers.

OUR MISSION

The purposes of the Tobyhanna Creek/Tunkhannock Creek Watershed Association shall be to promote and preserve the water quality and the environment of the Tobyhanna Creek and Tunkhannock Creek watershed including surrounding areas of special concern and improve the water quality of the associated creeks and tributaries, promote the natural bounties thereof, provide educational materials on the benefits of and methods to achieve protection and preservation of the natural integrity of the watershed, educate the general public and interested parties in the value of stress controls and land activities, promote and coordinate the conservation of natural resources of the watershed, and protect and preserve terrestrial and aquatic life in the watershed.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT
YEAR-END COMPARISON - 2019 VS 2018

	<u>Jan - Dec 19</u>	<u>Jan - Dec 18</u>	<u>\$ Change</u>	<u>% Change</u>
Ordinary Income/Expense				
Income				
4000 · Member Dues				
4002 · Single Membership	60.00	60.00	0.00	0.0%
4003 · Family Membership	240.00	300.00	-60.00	-20.0%
4005 · Adopt-A-Stream	300.00	900.00	-600.00	-66.67%
4006 · Other Membership	400.00	650.00	-250.00	-38.46%
Total 4000 · Member Dues	1,000.00	1,910.00	-910.00	-47.64%
4030 · Contributions Income				
4070 · Unrestricted	1,000.00	0.00	1,000.00	100.0%
Total 4030 · Contributions Income	1,000.00	0.00	1,000.00	100.0%
4100 · Grants				
4117 · Fidelity Grants	250.00	1,250.00	-1,000.00	-80.0%
Total 4100 · Grants	250.00	1,250.00	-1,000.00	-80.0%
4999 · Interest Income	9.90	10.78	-0.88	-8.16%
Total Income	2,259.90	3,170.78	-910.88	-28.73%
Expense				
6120 · Bank Service Charges	0.00	22.00	-22.00	-100.0%
6130 · Sec'y/Bkcp Expense	780.00	780.00	0.00	0.0%
6140 · Contributions				
6142 · Educational Expense	256.71	398.24	-141.53	-35.54%
Total 6140 · Contributions	256.71	398.24	-141.53	-35.54%
6160 · Dues and Subscriptions	0.00	30.00	-30.00	-100.0%
6180 · Insurance				
6185 · Liability Insurance	0.00	323.00	-323.00	-100.0%
Total 6180 · Insurance	0.00	323.00	-323.00	-100.0%
6250 · Postage and Delivery	114.50	116.58	-2.08	-1.78%
6260 · Printing and Reproduction	524.70	396.70	128.00	32.27%
6290 · Rent	509.20	507.20	2.00	0.39%
6340 · Telephone				
6341 · Voice Mail	69.69	75.37	-5.68	-7.54%
Total 6340 · Telephone	69.69	75.37	-5.68	-7.54%
6350 · Travel & Ent				
6360 · Entertainment	0.00	65.64	-65.64	-100.0%
Total 6350 · Travel & Ent	0.00	65.64	-65.64	-100.0%
6670 · Program Expense				
6672 · Stream Monitoring Expense	0.00	31.00	-31.00	-100.0%
Total 6670 · Program Expense	0.00	31.00	-31.00	-100.0%
6810 · Web Site	184.95	184.87	0.08	0.04%
Total Expense	2,439.75	2,930.60	-490.85	-16.75%
Net Ordinary Income	-179.85	240.18	-420.03	-174.88%
Net Income	-179.85	240.18	-420.03	-174.88%

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TC\TC WATNWS

**WATERSHED AWARENESS MONTH
MAY IS**

