



Newsletter, #66 Fall 2022

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Evergreen Conservancy Donated a Bench to Aging Services Mahoning Hills Social Center

Evergreen Conservancy donated a plastic bench to Aging Services Mahoning Social Center on Wednesday September 7th. Participating in this ceremony were family members of Ellen Chambers – late active member of Mahoning Hills Social Center, Mary Beth Wilson manager of the Social Center, as well as Cindy Rogers and Bob Lankard representing Evergreen Conservancy.

Evergreen Conservancy earned this bench by collecting over 500 pounds of plastic bags through a program run by TREX, a nationwide recycling effort. TREX sends a bench to any organization that collects 500 pounds of soft plastic in a six-month time period. The conservancy is calling this effort "Bags to Benches". The conservancy selected Aging Services to receive a bench because they are a very active donation collection point. Other recipients of a bench include The Chevy Chase Center, The Indiana County Conservation District, YMCA, Community Garden at Mack Park, Giant Eagle, and ICCAP. Future donations are planned for the S & T Arena and Evergreen Conservancy's Tanoma Education Center, in memory of Paul Yacovone.

During their visit to the Mahoning Social Center, Cindy and Bob had the opportunity to visit with Doris Hicks. Doris and her late husband Paul regularly performed maintenance on the Baker Trail – it was their mission. Also, when Evergreen performed litter

clean up on the Hoodlebug Trail, Paul and Doris would pick up on the more cluttered Route 119 side of the wall along the trail. During the visit Cindy, Bob and Doris discussed plans to dedicate a future bench to Paul's memory and place it somewhere along the Baker Trail.

This soft plastic recycling concept came to Indiana County as an Eagle Scout project. The purpose of the collection of soft plastics is to prevent these items from going into landfills.



Evergreen Conservancy and the League of Women Voters picked up on this practice and have alternated six-month projects of collecting 500 pounds of plastic. The organizations are now in their ninth round of plastic collection. Since starting, 4800 pounds of plastic have been collected. Donors take the plastic to different locations including the YMCA, the Indiana Borough building and S & T Arena and deposit it in a collection box. Plastic is collected by

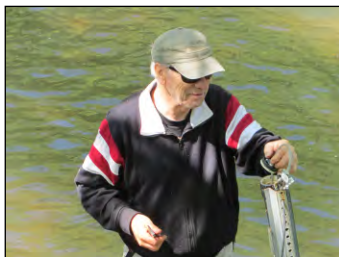
volunteers, weighed, reported to TREX, and taken to Giant Eagle which bales and forwards the plastic to Trex.

Other organizations involved in recycling soft plastic include Calvary Church/Rotary Club and the Clymer Community.

The opportunity to recycle soft plastic is ongoing. Residents can donate grocery bags, bread bags, water case and soft drink case overwraps, dry cleaning bags, newspaper sleeves, ice bags, etc.

In Memoriam

We've lost another member of the Evergreen family. Long-time member and energetic volunteer Paul Hicks has passed away. Our next bench donation will be in his honor.



A bench in honor of former board member Paul Yacovone will be installed at the Tanoma Education Center.



Board Members

Cindy Rogers - President • Shannon Kundla - Vice president • Becky Snyder -Treasurer
Tara Binion - Secretary • Dan Boone • Bob Lankard • John Dudash • Mike Tyree
David Janetski • Malcolm Hermann • Adriene Smochek • Monica Lee

OUR MISSION:

To advance the preservation, protection and stewardship of Natural, Cultural and Historical Resources in and around Indiana County, PA

Environmental Education

ICCD Jr Envirothon

The Jr. Envirothon was held on September 29th in Blue Spruce Park. Schools from the surrounding areas sent their 7th and 8th grades to compete in this year's competitions. Scattered throughout the park were five stations (aquatic, wildlife, current issues, forestry, and soils) all with the overall topic of invasive species. The aquatic station informed the students about the spread of several invasive species and the effects they have on the environment. The wildlife station used their time to focus on the whitetail deer population in PA. Current issues informed students about the Spotted Lantern Fly and the damage it can cause to local crops and the forest ecosystems. The forestry station taught students how to correctly ID invasive plants to their native look-alike. At the soil station students learned about invasive worms such as jumping earth worm and the hammerhead worm.



The Homer Center Eco Warriors placed first in the 7th grade category.

Micah Masua, Julia Fabin, Alex Rager, Catherine Sisak, and Titan Wolfgang

At the end of the day there were six winning teams (three 7th grade and three 8th grade teams). Out of the 7th graders the Eco Warriors from Homer Center won first place followed by Team Black from Indiana and Pure Genus from Penns Manor. Out of the 8th graders Team Red from Indiana won first place followed by Hive Five from Marion Center Junior High and Homeschoolers for Christ Co-Op.

Cub Scouts Visit Tanoma

On October 5th a group of Cub Scouts visited Tanoma to learn about how the system works, about water conservation, watersheds, how water gets polluted and ways to help prevent pollution.

Emily Raballa



Indiana Team Red placed first in the 8th grade category.

Connor Fleming, Chloe Camerata, Julia Weber, John Cross, and Sydney Adamsky

Weed Wrangle® at Tanoma

Phase 2 - August 28th

The newly formed Weed Wrangle group in Indiana County did two invasive clean ups at Tanoma to get rid of invasive plants. We pulled over 200 multiflora roses and many bush honeysuckles. We piled them up to let them dry out then shredded them into mulch.



The second work day we pulled more multiflora roses and alien honeysuckles and cut down many autumn olives and treated the stems to kill the trees. Thanks to all the IUP students and others who came out to help.

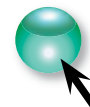


Walmart Registry, a Reminder

Want to donate to the Evergreen Conservancy but not sure how? We have partnered with Walmart's Registry for Good and have registered for items that our organization needs. You can log on to Walmart.com, and under the drop-down menu, click on Walmart Services. You can then click on Registry for Good. It will direct you to a page that shows the registries in the Indiana PA area. Once you add the items to your cart, you can pay and have them shipped to Evergreen Conservancy! It is that easy! Thank you to the folks who have donated to Evergreen Conservancy in this way. It is much appreciated!

Go to www.walmart.com/registry/registryforgood/welcome and look for Evergreen Conservancy

Click Here to Help Us
With Our Wish List.



Tanoma:

A new construction project was begun at Tanoma to improve the efficiency of the system. The work is being done by BioMost with a grant from the Office of Surface Mining. It began on Wednesday October 5th with a dye test to track the flow of water. The work is about 50% complete and we will be monitoring the efficiency and the improvements. Work is being done throughout the system with the majority in the first pond to help the iron drop out better. We also received funding for a new multiprobe data logger and that will help us to monitor the water quality and improvements. Thanks to IUP students and Dr. John Benhart for their work with drones to take pictures of the flow.



A new tree was planted at Tanoma in memory of Bob Curey. A ceremony will be held at a later date.

Evergreen Conservancy Picks Up Trash at Blue Spruce Park

Evergreen Conservancy picked up trash at Blue Spruce Park on Saturday October 15. It was a beautiful day and I am reminded that last year's fall pick up was cancelled due to inclement weather.

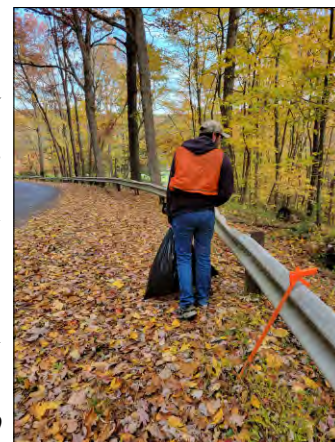


A record low six bags were collected. It appears that visitors are very vigilant to not toss garbage out. In the trip around the lake only a few items were picked up. Some claimed trash was hidden by fallen leaves.

We were blessed to have two IUP student volunteers who were members of the fishing club.

Thanks to JoAnne and John Ferraro, Cindy Rogers, Shannon Kundla, Bob Lankard, Janis Long, Tom Miller, Caleb Roadcap, Becky Snyder, and Seth Steele who volunteered.

Bob Lankard



Grants

We received a CRSP (Climate and Rural Systems Partnership) grant to design and install signs to encourage conversations about climate change and the effect on our environment. To learn more about CRSP visit carnegiemn.org/educator/crsp. The signs are almost ready to get printed.

An Office of Surface Mining (OSM) grant was awarded to

Evergreen Conservancy to improve the efficiency of the Tanoma System.

We are also the pass-through organization for a new OSM grant for the Indiana County Conservation District who will be working on improvements to the mine discharge at the Twolick Waterworks Park.

Board Members Present at Summit on Water Improvements

On Saturday, October 8th, Evergreen Conservancy President Cindy Rogers presented on a panel on local water improvements as part of the Indiana County Sustainable Economic Development Summit. Rogers spoke on the Evergreen owned and operated Tanoma Wetlands and Abandoned Mine Drainage (AMD) treatment system, including its history, improvements to the watershed, and its significance as a location for environmental education programming.

Held at the Indiana University of Pennsylvania (IUP) Hadley Union Building, the panel also featured Evergreen Conservancy board member Adriene Smochek, who opened with an overview emphasizing the economic impact of water improvements. Smochek stressed that while other areas of the country are facing serious crises due to water quantity, Indiana county has ample water supply, but has quality issues largely due to legacy impacts of mining operations that occurred prior to increased federal oversight in the 1970s. She addressed the challenges local organizations face in working toward reclamation, as most watershed organizations, like Evergreen Conservancy, are volunteer based and have limited resources. Reclamation and water quality improvements serve as infrastructure for additional residential and industrial development, improve ecosystems to sustain aquatic life, and lead to increased quality of life for residents through the development of recreational infrastructure. One of the main sources of state funding through the PA Department of Environmental Protection requires an economic impact component, and in several current projects locally, this component will be the construction of a rail-trail for hiking and biking.

Speaking on one such project, panelist Shaun Busler, representing Stream Restoration, Inc., gave a detailed overview of his efforts with the Aultman Run Watershed for the Restoration of the Environment (AWARE) on an improvement project in the

McIntyre area. Together, Busler and AWARE have completed significant improvements the Aultman Run Watershed for 20 plus years, and their current project will make significant improvements to abandoned mine discharges into Neal Run while constructing roughly three miles of rail-trail on an abandoned rail bed they have



Cindy Rogers, Rob Nymick,
Shaun Busler, Adriene Smochek.

acquired. Evergreen Conservancy has partnered with AWARE to serve as the long-term landholder of the trail property once all construction and reclamation are complete. Another panelist, Rob Nymick, Manager for Homer City Borough and the Central Indiana County Water Authority (CICWA), spoke on a major undertaking in Homer City and Center Township that will remove the Tide coal refuse pile, identified as a primary source of impairment to Yellow Creek. Like the McIntyre project, Nymick's Homer City water improvements will be coupled with the construction of a rail-trail on an abandoned rail line CICWA acquired, as it is the location of their raw water line. The Homer City trail will connect to the existing county-owned trail system by way of the Hoodlebug Trail. Nymick reinforced

Smochek's concept of conservation and recreation's economic impact, as the improvement of Yellow Creek and construction of another area trail that will allow access to the stream provides for increased recreational tourism and sporting, including fishing, kayaking, bicycling, and hiking.

Also of interest in Smochek's opening comments was a summary of the DEP-owned and operated Blacklick Creek Treatment Facility, currently being constructed in Vintondale and slated for completion in 2025. The plant has a \$26 million budget and will treat the three major AMD discharges impacting Blacklick Creek, improving water quality for approximately 25 stream miles to fishable waters down to the creek's confluence with Two Lick Creek in Burrell Township, Indiana County.

Adriene Smochek

A Significant Contribution to the Renewable Energy System at Tanoma

Always trying to stay within a tight, grant-driven budget has meant installing inexpensive cables without conduit in shallow trenches to connect the solar panel arrays to the Renewable Energy System at Tanoma. As a result, cables have been sheared or damaged on three occasions in the past with lost power to the system. When this seemed to have happened this summer, Richard Flarend, the owner of Groundhog Solar and an installer of a number of local solar panel systems, volunteered to do some troubleshooting with me to make sure that a broken line was responsible for the outage. When he verified that the problem was indeed a broken line, he generously volunteered even greater assistance in solving the problem. He brought in his equipment to dig a deep

trench and installed heavy duty 3" conduit with professional-grade wire sets to connect up both solar panel arrays and the wind turbine, this time running deep underground. All of this was done at no cost to Evergreen Conservancy. I'm unable to even estimate how much this would have cost to have contracted the work out, and I am deeply appreciative of Richard's generous contribution of time, equipment, and material. We now have a much-improved and functioning Renewable Energy System that should generate trouble-free power for the foreseeable future.

Dan Boone

Mud Snails

The New Zealand Mud Snails are native to freshwater streams and lakes in New Zealand and the surrounding islands. However, they have spread to other countries, including the United States due to their wide tolerance of environmental conditions. There is no known origin of the species spread but it is theorized that anthropogenic intervention is a major contributor. Anthropogenic intervention is human involvement. The Mud snails were first found in Idaho Snake River in 1987. In 2006 they were found in four of the

ton. Due to rapid reproduction of the species, they consume large amounts of algae, out competing the native invertebrates. As a result of native species being out competed the food web is changed. The snails have then been targeted as a food source due to their small size. However, they provide very little nutritional value and sometimes go through the digestive system of the fish alive. Once in a stream it's hard to remove the snails without significantly disrupting the native invertebrate population. Unfortunately, there is no known method of removing this species once present in a waterway. A study was conducted by the Yellowstone National Park reported that streams and rivers impacted found 25%-50% of the macroinvertebrates were mud snails thus decreasing native mayflies, stoneflies, and caddisflies. The native invertebrates are a staple food source of trout species.

However, while mud snails are almost impossible to remove once in a waterway there are ways to prevent the spread in the first place. There are three ways to disinfect your equipment. One way is to freeze your gear for a minimum of six hours. The second option is to soak your gear in >120 Fahrenheit water for five minutes. The last option is to soak your gear in a 1:1 solution of formula 409 degreaser and water. For boats and other watercrafts, it is recommended to wipe your boat off with hot water or a high-pressure spray. It is also recommended draining your live wells, bilges, and other compartments on your boat. For the leftover bait it is recommended throwing it away in a trash can. Never dump your leftover bait in the water unless you collected the bait in that body of water.

five Great lakes including Lake Erie. Today Mud snails are found in many waterways throughout the commonwealth of Pennsylvania. As of this year they have found their way in PA fish and boat hatcheries in Centre County. Due to the recent infestations the hatcheries are increasing their biosecurity and disinfection. This includes the disinfection of fish raceways, creation of quarantine zones, monitoring groups of fish, and investigation of their water sources.

Mud Snails are nocturnal grazing species that consume plant matter and sediments that contain phytoplankton and zooplank-

Sources include:

PA Fish and Boat website, nps.gov, and Wisconsin.gov

Dates to Remember:

January 11th, 2023 . . . 6 pm Board meeting. This meeting will be in person at the new ICCD building and zoom. If interested please contact evergreenconservancy@gmail.com.

PR and Finance committee meetings, usually held at ICCD are canceled for December.

Second Wednesdays of every month Pennsylvania Senior Environmental Corps – (PASEC) Meetings. The Senior Environment Corps (SEC) program engages volunteers mostly aged 55 and over. SEC volunteers are engaged in numerous activities from water quality monitoring, stream habitat assessment, storm-drain stenciling, environmental education, community gardening, wildlife surveying, marking abandoned oil and gas wells, and cleaning up parks and trails. Please come to the meetings if you are interested in being involved in an active worthwhile activity and meeting new people. Indiana PASEC has people from all our watersheds and other local agencies that are interested in preserving and protecting our environment. Come join us! It meets at 9am at the new ICCD building.

Japanese Barberry – an Invasive Plant

On October 16th several people in the “Weed Wrangle” group and other volunteers were at Blue Spruce Park pulling out Japanese Barberry and other invasive plants. The following is some information about this invasive plant from Penn State and a poster Friends of Whites Woods published a while ago to inform the public.

Japanese barberry (*Berberis thunbergii*) is an invasive, non-native woody plant that can grow three to



six feet tall. This plant can dominate deep in the woods and along woodland edges. It crowds out native plants and disrupts ecosystems. Research has shown that the presence of the black-legged tick, which transmits Lyme disease, increases in areas with dense barberry. Japanese barberry has small, oval, alternate leaves. Young plants can be removed by hand, but this option is not going to work on well-established plants. Barberry can also be pulled out (a weed wrench is a great tool) or dug out. Information from extension.psu.edu/the-invasive-japanese-barberry.

Japanese Barberry Sale Banned in Pennsylvania in 2023

- What Changed? A shrub that's been a favorite of landscapers has been added to the Pennsylvania List of Noxious Weeds and its sale will be banned by the fall of 2023. Stock-reduction orders are already in place.
- Why was it banned? Japanese Barberry is rapidly invading Pennsylvania forests and is a significant threat to native Pennsylvania forest plants. It crowds them out! Deer won't eat it! And the shrub harbors the exploding population of ticks (and the mice that host them) that carry Lyme disease.
- Have other states banned the sale of Japanese Barberry? Many states, including New York, Maryland, and West Virginia, have already banned the sale of Japanese Barberry. Some did so as early as 2015.

What should I do with the Barberry That is Now in My Yard?

REMOVE IT!

But remove it carefully! Much of the Barberry damaging our forests migrated from residential properties.

What shrub can I use as a substitute? The following native shrubs are suggested as alternatives to Japanese barberry for landscape use: winterberry holly, inkberry holly, New Jersey tea, bayberry, wild hydrangea, ninebark, silky dog-

wood, red chokeberry, black chokeberry. New Jersey tea can really handle the sun and dry, sandy soils, though it's fine with a little less sun or more water. Its bright white clusters of flowers attract pollinators (even hummingbirds!), and it keeps a pleasantly dense, rounded shape without pruning, like barberry..

Tips For Removing Your Barberry

Before you rush out to your yard to pull the barberry, please follow these steps to remove it correctly and properly.

How to Remove Japanese Barberry:

1. Properly identify Japanese barberry. Educate your neighbors about what you are doing and why.
2. Hand-pull what you physically are able before Japanese barberry produces berries (seeds); preferably before July.
3. Use a weed wrench on hard-to-pull plants; again, preferably before July.
4. Hire goats. They will eat barberry!
5. Plants that prove too difficult to remove by way of pulling or digging, you can cut to one-inch stumps and immediately apply a glyphosate herbicide to freshly cut stumps using a paint brush or sponge applicator. Stump application is very effective during July, August, and up to mid-September.
6. Bag the barberry that you remove, let it dry, and deposit it in a landfill.

If you cannot stump-apply during the summer months, you can instead cut the plant six to twelve inches from the ground before it starts to produce berries (seeds) in July. After the taller stumps have re-sprouted, you cut them to one inch above the ground and immediately apply glyphosate herbicide to the freshly cut stumps. Allowing the stumps to re-sprout during the summer months draws carbohydrate and other growth com-

pounds from the roots and depletes some of the root energy making herbicide kill more effective.

(Use herbicide as directed by manufacturer.)

For more information see USDA Natural Resources Conservation Science Invasive Plant Control > barberry or Penn State Extension > Japanese Barberry.