



WSWA Newsletter

Volume 3, Issue 2

WSWA Annual Meeting: April 23rd

The WSWA annual meeting is scheduled for April 23rd at the Board of Education Headquarters from 6:00-8:00PM. The agenda will include a discussion of the budget for 2014, a presentation from Brent Walls, and an election of new and old members of the Board of Directors.

We hope many of you will join us for this annual get together so we can also review the grants and activities that are planned for the coming year. We are making headway at Widmyer over the wetlands, have scheduled workshops and tree plantings, and are implementing a unique business campaign that we hope will inspire businesses in Berkeley Springs to support our efforts to protect the Run. As always, refreshments will be served.

Guest Speaker: Brent Walls

We are very fortunate to have as our guest speaker, Brent Walls from Potomac Riverkeeper, who will speak from 6:00-7:00. His presentation will focus on how concerned citizens can respond to various threats to the well being of Warm Springs Run, including those posed by hydraulic fracturing, commonly known as “fracking.” Even if no well is fracked in Morgan County, there are still potential threats to the watershed and the Run, including the transportation of natural gas, and transportation and disposal of waste into local landfills.

Brent has been an advocate for clean water for over a decade, advising local watershed groups and developing the award-winning Water Reporter App. With an Environmental Science background in fresh water ecology, Brent brings a valuable scientific perspective to the field.

Board of Directors Slate of Candidates

We will be voting for five members of the board to fill three-year terms: two are returning board members while three will be filling vacancies.

The two-year terms for **Susan Jones**, Secretary, and **Andy Swaim**, Treasurer, are up and they will be standing again for their positions on the Board.

The following candidates are first-time nominees:

Jeff Hankey: Jeff is a science teacher at Berkeley Springs High School. He has received grants for an experimental design course for college-bound juniors and seniors that makes extensive use of the Widmyer wetlands.

Tim Rowland: Tim is a writer who works as a syndicated columnist for various organizations, including the Bay Journal News Service. In addition to writing, Tim is an avid outdoorsman, having climbed in the Himalayas, hiked the Inca Trail and ridden a bicycle across the United States. He has climbed all 46 Adirondack high peaks over 4000 feet.

Bob Wurster: Bob is an amateur naturalist who likes to fish. He has shared his skills as a scout master.

Annual Dues are Due!

As a reminder WSWA dues run the calendar year and are now due. Your dues must be up to date in order to vote for the board candidates or any motions. You may pay at the meeting or send in your dues to Andy Swaim, Treasurer, at P.O. Box 757, Berkeley Springs, WV 25411.

Quarterly Highlights

- ✚ **It was too cold, too snowy to be outside for much...**
- ✚ **2013 Volunteer of the Year** – The board elected **Tyler Orr** as our candidate for the Chamber of Commerce Volunteer Recognition Day. Stacy Dugan will interview Tyler and present the award. The award will be presented on April 26th.
- ✚ **Hotel/Motel Tax Distribution** – The board submitted an application for the Hotel/Motel Tax Distribution and received \$500.
- ✚ **WSWA T-shirt almost ready!** – The Publicity Committee has selected a WSWA T-shirt design that was created by local artist, Mary Klotz, and approved by the board. While the t-shirts will not be ready for distribution at the Annual Meeting, they should be ready by late July/early August.
- ✚ **EPCD Watershed Group Gathering** met March 26th in Martinsburg. This annual meeting affords the opportunity for watersheds in the Eastern Panhandle to find out what is happening in other watersheds and to learn about resources to improve our work.
- ✚ **Widmyer Wetlands Maintenance Agreement** - The School Board has reached a **maintenance agreement** with the Eastern Panhandle Conservation District to insure appropriate care of the Widmyer Wetlands. WSWA will be involved in coordinating efforts and helping to enlist the help of students for appropriate projects. Thanks to Heather Ishman at EPCD, Kate, and school officials for working so hard to get this agreement in place.

President's Perspective *by Kate Lehman*

I am captivated by the message presented by a movement called The Birthplace of Rivers. The goal of this organization is to have the Monongahela National Forest established as a National Monument so as to protect the six rivers “born” in that area.

West Virginia Rivers Coalition, a partner with The Birth of Rivers movement, pretty much sums up the importance of this goal when they write in the winter, 2014 edition of their newsletter: *“If it’s true that water is life, then life begins in the headwaters. Headwaters are where rivers are born.”* When I see a statement like that, I think of the headwaters of Warm Springs Run.

There are some major differences between the birthplace of Warm Springs Run and the birthplaces of the eight rivers born in the Monongahela National Forest. For starters, the birthplace of Warm Springs Run is not exactly a place of spectacular beauty. In fact, until the Run flows past the schools, most people look upon it as a drainage ditch – that is, if they have any awareness of it. And unlike the eight rivers born in the Monongahela National Forest, Warm Springs Run is not a source of drinking water, recreation, or transportation.

Just because Warm Springs Run is small (at least most of the time) and does not have any “obvious value” does not mean it does not deserve to be restored, preserved and protected. In fact, that’s the mission of the Warm Springs Watershed Association.

One of my goals for the coming year is to look at ways WSWA can make the general population of Morgan County more aware of the importance of protecting Warm Springs Run so they will join us in becoming better stewards of it. Everyone will benefit!

Rivers Coalition Urges Monument for West Virginia by David Lillard

The West Virginia Rivers Coalition, along with a group of conservation, recreation, and clean-water organizations are urging the state's Congressional delegation to get behind the creation of a national monument in a remote and rugged part of the Monongahela National Forest that is headwaters to six rivers. The Birthplace of Rivers National Monument would offer enhanced protection to 75,000 acres surrounding the Cranberry Wilderness—which is also part of the proposal. National Monuments can be created by Congress or the President, offering special protections for land owned by the federal government.

“For millions of Americans the rivers born here are drinking water, a tourism draw, and economic vitality,” said Angie Rosser of the West Virginia Rivers Coalition. “In addition to being the Mountain State, West Virginia is the *Headwaters State*.”

Gas drilling, especially in the form of hydraulic fracturing, or “fracking”, on headwater lands could cause serious harm to wildlife and headwaters. They could also seriously compromise drinking water by fouling rivers serving public utilities.

Many business leaders and local governments have endorsed the monument proposal. In the wake of the Charleston water crisis, they say West Virginia needs a powerful, transformative way to show the world the state cares about clean water.

To Rosser, the Birthplace of Rivers National Monument would be a powerful first step for West Virginians to reckon with the Elk River chemical leak. It would, she said, help change our attitudes toward clean water and government accountability. “Our headwaters are West Virginia’s pride,” she said. “They are also our responsibility—to protect something so rare, scarce, and irreplaceable. If we can protect the headwaters of these special rivers, maybe we will treat all our rivers and streams differently, as something necessary to our lives.”

To learn more about Birthplace of Rivers, and to sign up for email updates on the proposal, visit www.wvrivers.org or email dlillard@wvrivers.org.

WSWA Make-it-Shine Day: April 8th

The annual **Make-it-Shine** day is scheduled for Tuesday, April 8th, with a rain date of the 11th. Participants are to meet at the Board of Education Headquarters at 9:00 AM for training. We will clean up trash from the Board of Education Headquarters to Jimstown Road. Our scheduled time of completion is approximately 12:00 noon.

This same stretch of the Run was cleaned last year and will be revisited because it was found to be very littered, not only in the Run but along the banks as well. Please join us as we work to make the West Virginia Make It Shine Program a success in Berkeley Springs and in Warm Springs Run.

Calendar of Events

- April 8 WSWA Make-it-Shine Day, 9:00AM Board of Education Headquarters (rain date April 11)
- April 16 Tree Inventory Workshop, 9:00-3:00 Board of Education Headquarters
- April 23 WSWA Annual Meeting, 6:00-8:00PM Board of Education Headquarters
- April 29 Town of Bath Tree Board Tree Planting, 9:00AM Train Depot
- May 9-10 WSWA Booth at Master Gardener Plant Fair, Berkeley Springs State Park
- May 28 May Board of Directors Meeting, 5:00pm Extension Office
- May 29 Training to Eradicate Tree of Heaven, 10:00AM Greenway Cemetery
- June 25 June Board of Directors Meeting, 5:00pm Extension Office

The Board of Directors generally meets every 4th Wednesday of the month at 5:00pm at the Extension Office. All members are urged to attend and participate.

It is a good idea to check Facebook for any changes in date, time or location!

WSWA Officers and Board Members

- President: Kate Lehman 304-279-0717.....goldfairy39@gmail.com
- Vice President: Betty Harmison.....304-258-1088
- Secretary: Susan Jones.304-258-6122.....wvbagend@frontier.com
- Treasurer: Andy Swaim304-258-0418
- Norman Dean.....deannorm@frontier.com
- Stacy Dugan.....sdugan@stacydugan.org
- Larry Lower.....larrylower@yahoo.com
- Rebecca MacLeod.....pendle35@gmail.com
- Carol Reece.....rocky2@earthlink.net