



WSWA Newsletter

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2015 Stream Partners Grant at Work

Did you see the article in the Morgan Messenger on October 21st on the conveyer belts installed in Greenway Cemetery to help deflect stormwater runoff? That is your latest Stream Partners grant at work for you.

We have published many articles in this newsletter describing stormwater runoff and the problems it is causing here in Morgan County. Stream Partners is a cooperative effort of the WV Conservation Agency, WV Division of Environmental Protection, WV Division of Forestry, and WV Division of Natural Resources to assist watersheds in completing projects aimed at improving the community and watershed.

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation grant awarded in 2013 to bring green infrastructure stormwater control practices to Greenway Cemetery allocates funding to implement only a portion of the practices identified in the cemetery's master plan. A Stream Partners Grant awarded for 2015 provided additional funds to install conveyer belt diversion breaks, among several practices, in an effort to reduce erosion and runoff on this road.

On October 23rd, four water diverters were installed on a hilly road at the north end of Greenway Cemetery. The diverters, which are made out of treated lumber and recycled conveyer belts, were installed at a 30 degree angle to the road to divert water into an existing ditch and culvert system next to the road. Bob Wurster, Stan Oaks and Brian McCann constructed the devices. The Mellott Company in Warfordsburgh, PA, donated the recycled conveyer belts. GHS Incorporated, a Morgan County, company, dug the trenches into which the diverters were fitted and then compacted the area around them

Rebecca MacLeod checked the system during a rainstorm

and determined they are indeed doing their job.

In the process of installing the water diverters, it became apparent that some adjustments were necessary. For example, Dennis Schaeffer of GHS felt that over time just replacing the soil dug up from the trenches might not be sufficient to hold the diverters in place when cars drove over them. Compacted crusher run was then used to secure the diverters.

The Warm Springs Watershed has further plans to reduce erosion and stormwater runoff in this section of Greenway Cemetery. Where appropriate, ditches will be replaced by swales that better hold stormwater runoff until it can be absorbed into the ground. No- or low-mow grasses will be planted in the swales to catch eroded material; the roots of these plants will draw up water, thus preventing it from flowing downhill. Runoff that is captured and held by the swales, and then absorbed by plants, never makes it to the stream.



Water diverters installed in Greenway Cemetery

New Area of Purple Loosestrife Found in Wetlands

A quick call to action sent the Purple Loosestrife Task Force forth on October 1st to combat an area not previously seen with the plant. Larry Lower spotted the large patch of invasive plants while on a walk for the rail trail. The wetlands area is located just off Route 522 across from the American Legion. A team of 10 volunteers quickly dispatched the patch by cutting off and bagging the tops of the plants, thereby prohibiting the seeds of the plants from dropping off. This action did not kill the plants since no herbicide was used at this time. The Task Force will return in the summer to administer the herbicide, the only sure way of killing this invasive plant.



Photo by Andy Swaim



Purple Loosestrife (Lythrum salicaria) – The tiny seeds of purple loosestrife develop in a capsule less than 1” long. One plant can make over 2 million seeds. (Photo by Linda Wilson)

President’s Perspective *by Kate Lehman*

Does the work we do make a difference beyond the watershed, beyond Morgan County? We know we’re working toward a healthier Chesapeake Bay. However, it may seem as if our efforts here are a little “diluted” by the time water from the Run reaches the Bay.

Here’s a story to illustrate that we are part of an interdependent web of all existence, and that what we do does make a difference beyond our personal orb.

First some background. I was working at the Museum when three women standing in front of the geology exhibit began screaming “Uncle Brian, Uncle Brian.” It turns out the exhibit mentions a fossil first found and named by their uncle when he was a teenager living in Hancock. Shortly thereafter, while playing bridge, I met a woman with the same last name. Sure enough, she’s married to “Uncle Brian.”

Months later this woman, who lives in Berkeley County, approached me at a bridge tournament. Two articles in the *Messenger* had caught her attention.

Upon reading about the wildflowers at the Widmyer wetlands, she rescued some turtlehead recently deposited in her compost pile and replanted it in her garden. She had not realized that native turtlehead is relatively rare, and a plant to be treasured. She also determined that she would strive to eradicate the purple loosestrife found in a catchment pond on their property. She had not realized that despite its beauty, purple loosestrife is a scourge to be controlled if not eliminated.

Who knows how many other readers of those articles learned something that could make a difference in terms of their interaction with the natural world? Who knows how many of this woman’s friends may follow her example? The numbers don’t matter – to me it’s enough to know that the “little” things we do have the potential to bring about big changes. We are making a difference!

Widmyer Wildflowers

What began as a normal trail maintenance work - day to clear the paths of weeds, turned into an exciting treasure hunt for wildflowers in the Widmyer wetlands. On September 16, 2015, 10 people heeded the call to weed and do maintenance in the Widmyer wetlands. As the work progressed the team began to notice well-known and not-so-well-known wildflowers. Among those discovered were turtlehead, gentian, several varieties of boneset, fox tails, joe pie weed, several varieties of goldenrod, ironweed, and cattails.

Kate Lehman reported that Kieran O'Malley of the Department of Natural Resources had seeded the area with wildflowers back in 2010. Though these plants are normal for a wetland area and nothing was uncommon, it was still exciting to see these beautiful wildflowers blooming naturally in the wetlands.

In order to maintain an inventory of what has been seen in the wetlands, Norman Dean has agreed to head an effort that will include surveying the wetlands next year in spring, summer and fall and to compare with what was sown in Kieran's wildflower mix. Norman emphasized this will not be an extensive inventory, but an effort to see what flowers are blooming at different times of the year.



Photo by Kate Lehman

Turtlehead is a member of the Figwort family found in eastern US along stream banks. This is a hardy plant that provides lots of late season color.

Tree Planting at Big Blue

On Saturday, November 7, a broad coalition of community organizations demonstrated their commitment to improving the percentage of tree canopy in the Warm Springs Run watershed. Fifty-nine Girls Scouts and their families, as well as members of the Town of Bath Tree Board and the Warm Springs Watershed Association, joined teens from First United Methodist Church to plant 24 trees on the church property known as Big Blue on Fearnow Road. The trees were provided through a West Virginia CommuniTree (CTree) grant made to the Warm Springs Watershed Association. CTree promotes tree planting on public land in the eight West Virginia counties in the Potomac Bay Watershed. Property owned by faith-based organizations is considered to be public land since the public uses it.



Photo by Tim Rowland

In the above photo, Matt Pennington of Region 9 provided a tree planting demonstration for everyone, explaining not only proper planting techniques but also ensuring that safety measures were followed as well. The Girl Scouts teamed up and everyone was able to plant one tree. Many of the Girl Scouts had been involved in previous tree planting efforts and were aware of the benefits of a good tree canopy.

Continued on p. 4



Photo by Kate Lehman

Gentian is a genus of flowering plants belonging to the gentian family (Gentianaaceae) having opposite smooth leaves and showy flowers. With about 400 species it is considered a large genus. They are notable for their mostly large, trumpet-shaped flowers, which are often of an intense blue.



Photo by Tim Rowland

The Warm Springs Watershed Association and the Town of Bath Tree Board have planted close to 600 trees over the past five years. Both organizations are committed to establishing such partnerships with other faith-based organizations in the watershed.

*Many thanks to Tim Rowland for allowing us to use his lovely photos of the tree planting. His album of the event is available at:
<https://www.flickr.com/photos/55004990@N05/albums/72157660917757462>*

The Board of Directors generally meets every 4th Wednesday of the month at 6:00pm at the Extension Office. All members are urged to attend and participate.

There is no board meeting scheduled for this Nov - Dec

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