

Paxton Creek Watershed and Education Association

Spring 2010

Volume 9, Issue 2



Exhibitors at *Urinetown*, the Musical (See p. 2)

PCWEAers & Associates Gather for Annual Meeting Near the Equinox

Equinox is not a new night club in the 'Burg. It is a time when people observe changes of seasons. Members of Paxton Creek Watershed and Education Association (PCWEA), partners, & associates gathered at the Giant Community Center on March 19, on the eve the spring Equinox. Besides a meal, music, and a puppet show, the main activities included a brief summary of achievements in the past year, a review of current activities, and a selection of a slate of candidates for the PCWEA Board of Directors.

Music, Puppets, Food & Frolic

Attendees participated in both the puppet show, and music choices. The puppet show, entitled *Wildwood -- Wonderful, Wondrous Wetlands!* featured a boy and girl learning about themselves, and the uses of wetlands from Mother Nature, a skunk, a fish, and a visitor (an alligator) from Lake Tobias. The music selections were retro tunes of the last half-century, from international folk songs to rock, classic, country, Broadway show, and children's albums. Kelly O'Neal of the Chesapeake Bay Foundation also briefly addressed the group about a Congressional bill for supporting implementation of TMDL initiatives for pollution reduction.

Road Protection–Vegetated Swale Project & Sign Erections Coming

Community involvement will peak on May 8 in a joint effort by PCWEA, private partners, and Susquehanna Township in protecting about 300 feet of Paxton Church Road from creek erosion and pollution. In this project rip rap with fascines vegetation will be used to stabilize a severely eroded embankment, and protect it from future creek flows. A vegetated swale installed by PCWEA and the partners will also be built nearby to infiltrate and treat (partially remove) stormwater pollutants from adjacent overland and road runoff. Tentative dates for the embankment work are set to begin on April 26, with planting of the swale vegetation done on May 8. The web site will have project details.

Delayed, But Unforgotten Signs

For PCWEA garden projects really never fully end: ongoing maintenance is necessary, and after the planning, digging, and planting are over, some projects need educational signs, information sheets, and sites of Best Management Practices (BMPs) shown on tour maps. Why all the bother? Education is part of what PCWEA does, & signs are important in communicating information about the BMPs, including locations of BMPs that can guide people toward similar efforts needed in improving water quality, diminishing floods, and achieving other benefits. Tentative places and dates, times for the sign installations are:

- St. Thomas Roasters Coffeehouse, Rain Garden, Linglestown, April 23, 10 am
- HACC Bioretention Gardens, accessible via entrance 3 off Wildwood Park Drive (former name: Industrial Road), May 14, noon.

Check web site for details or changes before attending.

----- EXTRA, EXTRA News Flash! -----

PCWEA Exhibit & Mini-Talks on stormwater at **Wetlands Festival**, April 24, Wildwood Park, 10a-4p.

Need More Watershed Information?

See www.PaxtonCreek.org

HACC Gardens Smashed by Snow; Rehabilitation Set for April 17

Following heavy snows at Harrisburg Area Community College (HACC) in Harrisburg during February, the huge western parking lot was plowed. Careless contract plow operators piled snow over warning stakes located between the gardens and parking area, past the garden signs, and into the beds, breaking & uprooting much perennial vegetation. Re-habilitation will be on April 17, 9 am-noon; rain date, April 18, 2-5 pm. Details are on the PCWEA web site.

'Twas Full House at the Popular Bugabration: 'Midwinter Macros'

Twenty-eight participants from four organizations – a room full of people -- attended the sixth 2010 training session 'Midwinter Macros' held at HACC in Harrisburg on February 24. At this sixth annual celebration of water bugs (aquatic macroinvertebrates), HACC students, PCWEAers, and the community heard talks about, and made hands-on inspections (even a live collection) of the critters. Bill Kosmer of Doc Fritchey Trout Unlimited showed how information on the bugs is helpful in tying flies, and habitat data allows successful fishing. Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) entomologist Dave Rebuck showed how similar information on the bugs can both indicate water quality of waterways, and is important for executing the Black Fly (gnats) Management Program of the DEP.

Green Living Fair + *Urinetown* Musical Add Up to Series of PCWEA Displays

Over a nine-days period (February 27-March 7) PCWEAers were busy presenting the organization's initiatives to the public at local events: a Green Living Fair at HACC Midtown, and performances of *Urinetown* -- the musical at Central Dauphin East High School. For the Green Living Fair, which featured exhibits & environmental workshops, PCWEA displayed its Big 5 Actions for watershed rehabilitation. At the musical performances about a community with inadequate wastewater disposal, these items and other educational materials were made available to the musical goers. Providing assistance at the sites were PCWEAers Arlene Taylor, Brian Genesse, Charles Brunner, and the Buskirks: Carol and Drannon. Rhonda Hakundy-Jones compiled a display ad for the musical program.

Big Benefit of Winter Training: Materials for Big 5 Initiative!

Despite sparse attendance at the winter watershed training sessions, a peripheral benefit was compilation of background materials suitable for general watershed education. Highlights of the training sessions included considerations such as the following:

- 1 -- Session on developing a common watershed image via visioning, survey research, and consensus dialog methods; inputs from diverse stakeholders throughout; visioning process steps; stormwater issues in highways, roads, & urban areas; lessons learned.
- 2 -- Session on the 3 Rs: reduction, replacement & retrofit of impervious surfaces (IS); modification of stormwater control facilities; differences among the approaches, their dynamic actions, and structural Best Management Practices (BMPs) for the 3 Rs.
- 3 -- Session on maximum local infiltration of stormwater precipitation as soon as they occur: infiltration benefits, types, and mechanisms; site constraints and considerations; infiltration BMP designs, effectiveness, and failures; infiltration BMP examples.
- 4 -- Session on adoption of new land development and in-fill ordinances based upon Better Site Design and Low Impact Development principles, with improved ordinances enforcement: ordinance pre-conditions, impediments, & compliance factors; crucial need for overlay district type of land development ordinance.
- 5 -- Session on stakeholders education, and practices for pollution avoidance and prevention: education challenges, guidance questions; considerations in message effectiveness; education strategy components; PCWEA's diverse education initiatives, including teaching database, brochures, & online tours.

Currently planned for writing additional sheets include working titles such as: *IS & IC -- Hard Act(ion)s To Follow; Uncommon Efforts for Common Watershed Images; Neighborhood Infiltration Celebrations!; Ways to Wrestle Pollutants Inside and Outside; BMPs -- the Solutions to Pollution?* and *No Ordinary Ordinance for Paxton Creek ...*

PCWEA is a non-profit, 501(c)3 organization. Its mission is to help avoid or mitigate watershed problems such as erosion and stormwater runoff, to protect and enhance watershed resources, and to facilitate practical, hands-on education.

PCWEA Lifetime Members: Frank & Judy Beskid, E. Drannon Buskirk, Jr., R. D., Tom Embich, Jan Fisher, Fred Heagy, Joe Link, David Sheridan, & Arlene Taylor.