

SRBC and PPL Project Earth Partner With Local Organizations To Clean Up Four Creeks in the Wyoming Valley

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More than 100 volunteers today joined the Susquehanna River Basin Commission (SRBC) and PPL Project Earth to clean up litter in and along four Wyoming Valley streams. The cleanup project, called Streamside Cleanup 2001, is a joint initiative between SRBC and PPL Project Earth in partnership with the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, the Eastern Pennsylvania Coalition for Abandoned Mine Reclamation, the Wyoming Valley Watershed Coalition, the Pennsylvania Environmental Council, the Luzerne Conservation District and the Nanticoke Conservation Club.

(Photo: <http://www.newscom.com/cgi-bin/prnh/19981015/PHTH025>)

Volunteers removed tons of litter from Toby Creek in Edwardsville Borough, Solomon Creek in Hanover Township and Ashley Borough, Nanticoke Creek in Hanover Township and the Newport Outfall (impacted by acid mine drainage) in Nanticoke City. The litter included tires, shopping carts, plastic crates, articles of clothing; plastic jugs, glass bottles, and a host of other man-made debris.

According to Paul Swartz, SRBC executive director, litter along these Wyoming Valley streams can end up in the Susquehanna River and, ultimately, the Chesapeake Bay during high flows.

"We want people to realize that their actions upstream can impact and cost downstream businesses and residents," said Swartz. "The cleanup program is intended to connect people, not only to their local watersheds, but also to the larger Susquehanna River Watershed and the Chesapeake Bay Watershed."

Swartz said, "For the second year in a row, PPL provided the generous \$10,000 donation needed to make today's cleanup event possible."

Lynn Ratzell, manager-Environmental Management at PPL Corporation, said, "This year's streamside cleanup was a perfect fit for our PPL Project Earth team. Our volunteers were excited to lend a hand to the environment where they live."

Ratzell said, "We hope to find more project partners like SRBC to continue these types of cleanup programs in the future and build on this grassroots conservation effort."

This year's streamside cleanup event in the Wyoming Valley also is a registered event with the National River Cleanup Week, which runs from today through Saturday, May 19.

Swartz said, "We are grateful to PPL for its support of Streamside Cleanup 2001, the many Wyoming Valley organizations that partnered with us, and to the many residents who came out in force today to clean up their streams."

Acting Department of Environmental Protection Secretary David E. Hess said, "I'm proud to work side by side with the many volunteers involved in Streamside Cleanup 2001 and throughout the Commonwealth, who are helping to protect and restore Pennsylvania's environment watershed by watershed."

Hess said, "When we act to clean up our waterways, we cross over from learning about stewardship to becoming good stewards, and that's why I'm happy to pitch in on this project."

Ellen Alaimo, director of the Northeast Office of the Pennsylvania Environmental Council (PEC), said, "The Northeast PEC office is pleased to be a part of Streamside Cleanup 2001. This cleanup event provides a good chance for the Wyoming Valley community to become active in environmental work."

"The Wyoming Valley Watershed Coalition is a program of PEC and was created to help people get started with

projects like this in their own community," said Alaimo. "The Coalition and its members provide an avenue to share experiences and expertise with those who have or want to organize or implement watershed-related projects and initiatives in the Wyoming Valley."

Robert Hughes, regional coordinator of the Eastern Pennsylvania Coalition for Abandoned Mine Reclamation, said, "The Newport Outfall discharge site is an ideal candidate for a future abandoned mine reclamation project to construct a wetland."

Hughes said, "By cleaning up this discharge, we are one step closer to achieving this goal. Currently, there are 2,100 gallons per minute coming out of the discharge and about 2,000 pounds of iron per day that is deposited into Newport Creek and eventually into the Susquehanna River."

The following local organizations and agencies donated services or supplies:

- Acadia Realty Trust
- Ashley Fire Hall
- Brennan Electric
- Buttonwood Bakery
- Kanjorski Center
- Keystone Landfill
- Luzerne County Redevelopment Authority
- McDonald's Restaurant
- Nanticoke Municipal Authority
- Redner's
- St. Peter's Lutheran Church
- Subway Restaurant
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- Wyoming Valley Recycling
- Wyoming Valley Sanitary Authority
- Verizon Wireless

The Susquehanna River Basin Commission is the governing agency established under a 100-year compact signed on Dec. 24, 1970, by the federal government and the states of New York, Pennsylvania and Maryland to protect and wisely manage the water resources of the Susquehanna River Basin. The Susquehanna River starts in Cooperstown, N.Y., and flows 444 miles to Havre de Grace, Md., where the river meets the Chesapeake Bay.

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