



Celebrating 47 years of preserving and protecting the natural and historic resources of the Octoraro.



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Please hold the Date and join us in our new venue.

The Annual Dinner Meeting will be held at Memorial United Methodist Church, Quarryville on Thursday 16th April 2015

We hope to see you there!

President's Message

Linda Swank, President

The Holiday season is upon us so I hope this message finds you all well. As we close out 2014 know that the Octoraro Watershed Association has had a busy year. We continue to promote stewardship of our water resources realizing that water affects our lives in so many ways. Going into 2015 we know that the process will be ongoing. PA Act 167 or the Storm Water Management Act was a prominent issue in 2014. The Act was actually passed in 1978 but became more front page information in Pennsylvania as clean up of the Chesapeake Bay became more important to the Obama Administration.

Basically the law says that your storm water is your responsibility and that local municipalities will be held accountable by the state. This puts local officials in the hot seat on storm water management. OWA has recognized these issues for decades and is ready to partner with and assist municipalities in any way that we can. Unfortunately change never comes easy and education on Act 167 components will not be free. OWA will be seeking support from municipalities in 2015 and beyond. Some municipalities within the watershed have already come on board with support, knowing that OWA has been involved in storm water management on farms within the watershed for a long time. We appreciate their support and that of the citizens of the watershed.

Also another pressing issue going into 2015 will be bringing our Board back up to full complement. We are currently down two positions and are seeking persons who may be interested in serving on the Board. If you are interested in volunteering some time, feel free to contact our office or any Board member for more information. Many helping hands make for light work.

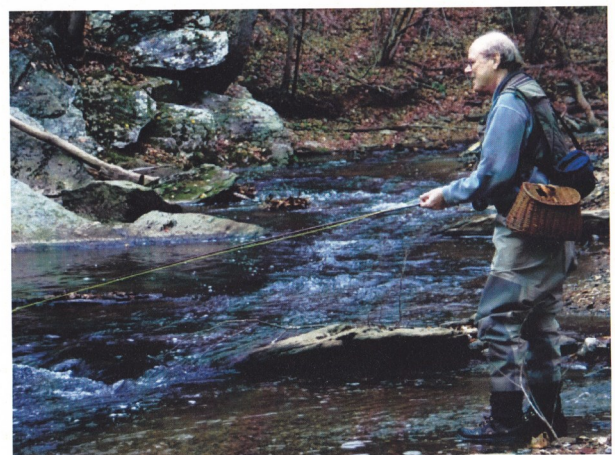
It will be an exciting year coming up for the Octoraro Watershed Association. We look forward to the challenges and hope to hear from you in 2015.

We'd also like to pay a tribute to John Shuman, who was President of our Watershed Association when he passed away in April.

John was an accomplished water resource scientist and avid fly fisherman who worked tirelessly to improve water quality in the Octoraro and many other watersheds in the Susquehanna River watershed.

He was the driving force behind not only our new Strategic Plan but also a multiyear grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, both of which are nearing completion!

He is sorely missed!



John Shuman fly fishing on the Octoraro

The Shuman family has set up a fund in John's memory
<http://lanconfound.org/fund/shuman-family-downstream-solutions-fund/>

OWA partners with the Sassafras River Association to coordinate "Project Clean Stream" at four Cecil County locations in the Octoraro Watershed

Traci Evans, Christa McIntyre, Harry Begg & Rupert Rossetti

Project Clean Stream, which is sponsored regionally by the **Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay** makes a difference in the lives of citizens living in the Chesapeake Bay watershed. Each year, thousands of volunteers spend a few hours outside cleaning trash from streams within their communities along with their neighbors, co-workers, and other volunteers. These volunteers beautify the neighborhoods in which they live and work, gain awareness towards the impacts of humans on the environment, and become more connected with their local streams. This year, Sophie Foscue of the **Sassafras River Association** was the overall coordinator for Cecil County and we (OWA) helped out with organization and distribution of supplies for the Octoraro .

Conowingo Elementary:



This year, on Saturday, April 12, 2014, Conowingo Elementary held its first Project Clean Stream. Forty volunteers from our school, including twelve students in third, fourth and fifth grade, twelve parents, ten teachers and staff and six community members joined together to clean out marine debris along three sections of Octoraro Creek by Moore Road as well as a section along the Susquehanna River near the access gate to the Conowingo Hydroelectric plant. Our Conowingo volunteers worked non-stop as they hauled out 3,100 lbs of trash and made several trips to the Cecil county land fill. The debris included 14 tires, several carpets and mattresses as well as assorted metal signs, conduit, carpets, bottles, styrofoam and lots of plastic. Our students were also thrilled to also see a five foot black snake, many macro organisms like salamanders, centipedes and frogs and find several deer skulls.

The Sassafras River Association in conjunction with the Octoraro Watershed Association helped out by providing gloves, safety vests and bags for our event. our Conowingo PTO graciously donated water bottles and snack bars for all of our volunteers. Many thanks also go to Principal Marinelli and Vice Principal Mangold for securing a bus, to four of our neighbors along Octoraro Creek for allowing us access to their property as well as The Chester Water Authority and Exelon, to our custodians for helping to set up and clean-up our muddy tracks, to our "trash truck drivers" and most of all, to our students, parents, staff and teachers who helped to make this event a complete success. Kudos to all for a job well done! *(Cont'd on p.5.)*



Strategic Plan completed and dedicated to the memory of John Shuman

The Octoraro Watershed Association's Strategic Plan, which has been in the works for the last two years, is now complete.

The Plan, the first draft of which was written by John, will guide and prioritize our work through 2019, and has goals for improved water quality and organizational effectiveness and sustainability.

It is organized in a sequential order that first discusses current conditions in the watershed and identifies issues and needs. Key initiatives that can be undertaken by the Association to address these issues and needs are discussed next, followed by key initiatives that can be undertaken to enhance and assure the effectiveness and sustainability of the Association. The initiatives are summarized in the 2014 to 2019 strategic plan for the Association.

Top Actions for 2015 include:

- Implementation of BMPs that are identified in the recently completed Agricultural Conservation Plans
- Engagement with Community Leaders (Municipalities) to build partnerships, especially in support of Act 167 outreach and implementation
- Dissemination of information about completed projects, successes and remaining/emerging issues
- Fundraising, including sufficient unrestricted funds so that we can continue to do our implementation work
- Provision of part-time administrative assistance



We welcome your participation in any and all of our activities.
Just let us know where and how you would like to help!

Great Press in the Lancaster Newspaper and Lancaster Farming about our work! Pat Fasano took Staff Writer Ad Crable on a tour of the watershed with Amish Liaison David Fisher.

In late September, Pat Fasano and David Fisher took Lancaster Newspaper (LNP) Staff Writer Ad Crable on a tour of the watershed and explained our work on Amish Outreach. "Group hires Amish farmers as liaisons to arm-twist Plain Sect farmers in Lancaster County to make water-quality improvements" was published in the Sunday Sept 28th edition of LNP and reprinted in Lancaster Farming as "Amish farmers urge water quality improvements". The article, including a short video of Pat and David, can be found at <http://bit.ly/1vpsdzb>. The text is reprinted here by kind permission of the LNP.

Pat Fasano has measured it off. If he gets within 8.4 feet of the Amish farmers he's trying to talk into on-the-farm conservation improvements, they start talking in Pennsylvania Dutch so he can't understand them. Fasano, as project manager of the grassroots Octoraro Watershed Association, has been driving down farm lanes of Plain Sect farmers for 16 years, trying to convince them to do the right thing for clean water. He knows that Amish farmers in the Octoraro Watershed are among the most conservative in all of southeastern Pennsylvania. He knows not to stop by during harvest time. He knows not to blab what one farmer is doing to his neighbor, violating a core principle of privacy. He knows not to use the gambit that putting in a manure-storage pit will help clean the Chesapeake Bay. Few of the Amish in the watershed have ever set eyes on the estuary downstream of their farms. He knows that even if he offers to entirely pay for a project, he'll likely get a rejection if those funds involve state or federal dollars.

“Amish farmers don’t like change,” he says simply. “We estimate it takes three times as much time to get the same message across than to an English farmer, just because of the culture.”

Then how is it that Fasano and the 47-year-old OWA have made amazing inroads in getting the attention of Plain Sect farmers in the 208-square-mile watershed that encompasses parts of Lancaster and Chester counties, as well as a small portion of Harford County, Maryland? Simple, really. Since 2001, Fasano’s drop-ins include one or two fellow Amish farmers. Amish liaisons, they are called. And David Fisher, one of them, believes in arm-twisting his own to improve their farms, both for enhanced productivity and to send cleaner water flowing downstream. They are encouraging farmers to plant a buffer of trees along streams, channel storm-water away from barnyards, rotate crops and take other steps to reduce the amount of soil and fertilizer running into waterways.

“It is to their benefit in more than one way,” says the 68-year-old retired dairy and tobacco farmer who spent most of his life in Vintage, Paradise Township. “It can mean cleaner water for the cows, just benefits to dairy farming in a lot of ways.”

Fisher’s brother, Levi, who lives in the Paradise area, also is a liaison employed by OWA. The first liaison, Henry Beiler, of Leola, was the first Amish farmer in Lancaster County to preserve his farm. He paved the way from 2001 through 2008.

“We’ve certainly pioneered this,” Fasano said.

Over the last three years, he and the Fishers have sought out 70 Amish farmers in the watershed who did not have state-approved conservation plans for their farms. All 70 now have the plans. The effort was financed by the private Alcoa Foundation, the private Foundation for Pennsylvania Watersheds, the state Department of Environmental Protection and the federal Natural Resources Conservation Service — the diverse partnerships testimony to OWA’s reputation. Land use in the Octoraro Watershed is 74 percent agriculture, of which 70 percent is farmed by the Amish. In addition to their powers of persuasion, the OWA also invoked the specter of a big stick. Octoraro is a “targeted” watershed by the state Department of Environmental Protection. That means that reducing soil and fertilizer runoff is considered vital in federal-state efforts to clean up the Chesapeake Bay. On two other watersheds in Lancaster County — Watson Run and Muddy Run — the federal Environmental Protection Agency announced a crackdown and threatened to fine Plain Sect farmers who did not have conservation plans. The Lancaster County Conservation District intervened and got the farmers to obtain the plans. Fasano was determined not to let a similar wave of fear pass through his beloved Octoraro.

“They’d like to stay as far away from the government as possible. We try to convince them this will be a buffer,” says the 61-year-old Fasano, an Oxford resident.

Supervisors in both Bart and Colerain townships have asked the conservation district to visit all their farmers to make sure they have the requisite conservation plans. The rapport and work paved by OWA is making that task easier, says Matt Kofroth, the conservation district’s watershed specialist.

“I know those guys are doing good work. It definitely assists us,” he says.

“There are definitely those among us who are interested in a clean Chesapeake Bay,” says Colerain Supervisor Walter Todd, a former OWA board member. Of OWA’s efforts, he observes, “I don’t know of any other group that has done more with so little.”

Fasano recalls the frustration in the early days when he would drive down lonely farm lanes by himself.

“I’d pull in and get out and have no idea what to do. I would explain the importance of reducing nutrient and sediment loadings in the Octoraro. They kind of looked at me with a blank stare and I’d get back in my car and drive away. Then I kept banging my head against the wall until the lightbulb went off that an Amish guy with me who really knows about this would be helpful.”

Now that OWA has steered the 70 Amish farmers out of harm’s way, Fasano wants them to follow through and start putting in place the improvements contained in their conservation plans.

“We know water quality won’t improve until the plan recommendations are in the ground,” Fasano says. “We clarified that when we paid for their plans. We said we don’t want this to be put on a shelf.”

It will be a tough sell, but OWA hopes to soon receive a three-year, \$130,000 state Growing Greener grant to do the followup outreach work on the 70 farms, as well as an equal number of neighboring farms. His goal: that 10 farmers sign agreements to put in conservation measures on their farms as soon as they can afford to do so.

“If you’re not with David, Levi and I, that sounds ridiculously modest,” Fasano says. “If you’re on a farm with us and see the kind of resistance to change — it’s a huge goal. Having an Amish farmer sign a government letter would be a huge step, setting a precedent. We would just like to see them do the best that they can and not be financially strapped as a result of it. But if they do these

Basin Run:

Long Time members Harry and Margaret Begg organized fifteen of their neighbors to clean up a 0.7 mile section of Basin Run on April 5th. “The cleanup went very well and we completed the stretch of Basin Run in about 2 hours. Creek was high and cold because of rain the night before so we did not go into the creek. We will "brush up" far side when the weather gets warmer. A group lunch was held after the clean-up. In all, we collected 15 tires, 11 bags of trash and 12 bags of Recycling as well as 400 Lbs metal and 10 lbs aluminum cans which we took to a scrap metal dealer and received \$32. After expenses, \$20 was donated to the OWA. “



Editor’s Note: The donation was much appreciated! Thank you Harry & Margaret!

Stone Run—Triangle Park:



Board Member Rupert Rossetti organized a clean-up at Rising Sun’s Triangle Park on Saturday April 5th, and was joined by Pat Fasano and a dozen local residents. “We had one person (Pat) in the creek in waders, the rest of us concentrated on the park itself. We’d just about finished in an hour, collecting 14 bags of trash, 8 bags of recycling, 4 car tires and some odds and ends including an old section of silt fence. This was weighed in at the landfill scales at 560 lb!”

Stone Run - Stevens Road:

Local resident Roger Lamb has been organizing spring clean-ups along Stevens Road in Rising Sun for the last few years and did so again this year, on Saturday April 12th. He also helped out at the Triangle Park Clean-up. Thank you Roger!

In all, our four teams collected well over 4,000 lbs of trash that would otherwise have found its way into our streams, rivers and the Bay. Thanks to Site Captains Traci Evans & Christa McIntyre, Harry & Margaret Begg and Roger Lamb; to all the volunteers; to county coordinator Sophie Foscue of SRA; to the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay for organizing and provisioning this Bay-wide event; and to Cecil County DPW for helping with the outreach and waiving the land fill fees!

Join us in 2015— Project Clean Stream target date is Saturday April 11, 2015:

In 2015, we trust that the current Cecil County clean-ups will continue. In addition, the OWA Board plans to partner with the Chester Water Authority to do a clean-up at the Octoraro Reservoir - from Scroggy Road to the Covered Bridge. We’d love to have you join us, or, if you have your own reach of stream that needs a clean-up, why not become a Site Captain! We’ll coordinate with the Alliance and deliver the supplies (trash and recycling bags, gloves, safety vests, first aid kits, etc.)

For more information, go to www.cleanstream.allianceforthebay.org or call Rupert at 410-378-3473



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What is Act 167?

The Pennsylvania Stormwater Management Act of 1978 (PA Act 167) requires counties to prepare stormwater management plans for all watersheds within the county. Historically, these plans were to be prepared on a watershed by watershed basis, requiring extensive time and costs for completion. Recently, Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection has encouraged counties to undertake county-wide stormwater management plans to reduce the time and costs involved. The Act is intended to enable counties and municipalities to meet the following objectives:

- Manage stormwater runoff created by new development activities taking into account the cumulative basin-wide stormwater impacts from peak runoff rates and runoff volume.
- Maintain existing water quality by preventing additional loading of various stormwater runoff pollutants into the stream network.
- Maximize the use of stormwater management practices that provide groundwater recharge in an attempt to maintain the existing hydrologic regime.
- Preserve the existing natural drainage ways and water courses and provide for proper maintenance of all stormwater management facilities.

All Municipalities in Chester County have recently updated and adopted ordinances (or their equivalents) to improve stormwater management throughout their municipality, and work is under way to do the same in Lancaster County.

There is a great new fact sheet from Chester County Water Resources Authority titled "[STORMWATER MANAGEMENT FOR SMALL PROJECTS: What a Homeowner Needs to Know](http://pa-chestercounty.civicplus.com/DocumentCenter/View/20276)" which is very helpful in explaining the Whats and the Whys. Follow this link: <http://pa-chestercounty.civicplus.com/DocumentCenter/View/20276>
