

Newsletter Spring 2020

Octoraro
Watershed
Association



Celebrating 53 years
of preserving and
protecting
the natural and
historic resources of
the Octoraro.



Anders Alfelt giving Rupert
Rossetti the President's
Award for 2019

Upcoming Events (See website for details)

Annual Dinner Meeting:

**Thursday March
26, 2020. Doors
open @ 5:30 p.m.
Dinner to be
served @6:30 .
Memorial United
Methodist Church,
Quarryville.**

OWA Sponsored Reservoir Clean-up:

**Saturday April 18,
2020 @ 9 a.m.
Meeting place to
be announced.
Stream Monitor-
ing: Monthly
sampling runs
above and below
the reservoir.**

President's Message

Happy New Year to the members, friends and partners of the Octoraro Watershed Association. We had a very active and successful year in 2019, which would not have been possible without your participation and support. In particular, your membership dues, continued support from Chester Water Authority, and an unrestricted grant from the Joseph Roberts Foundation enable us to continue pursuing our initiatives.

Our all-volunteer water monitoring team sampled 12 sites every four weeks, in partnership with the Chester Water Authority sampling program. CWA analyzed our samples for nitrate, phosphate and alkalinity along with their own samples, providing us with a year-long set of nutrient data to help target our priority conservation and restoration efforts. Thank you CWA, and Thank you stream monitors!

Thanks to two DEP Growing Greener grants, Pat Fasano, our Amish Outreach coordinator, and liaisons Levi Fisher and Levi Stoltzfus continued to visit farmers, primarily in the Bells Run, Coopers Run, Meetinghouse Creek and Nickel Mines Run sub-watersheds. These visits are in part educational and in part prospecting for farmers willing and ready to implement Best Management Practices. The latter we passed on to the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay (ACB), who have funds for implementation, and TeamAg, ACB's technical service provider. We also did follow-up visits with the farmers to monitor progress. Thank you Alliance, and Thank you Team Ag!

As you'll read later in the newsletter, Board member Patty Blakeslee has been working with local landowners, ACB & the Keystone 10 Million Trees Partnership to plant trees and shrubs in the riparian buffer. If you have a stream reach where you'd like to plant trees, please contact us. Thank You Patty!

As part of our outreach, we hosted two clean-ups, one along the Octoraro reservoir that cleared a little over 2 tons of trash and debris and one in Rising Sun Veterans Park which cleared a dump-trailer load of garlic mustard in its pre-seed stage. Thanks to Linda Swank for mapping out the clean-up areas, to the board members who led the clean-up teams and thanks again to the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay, who organize the Baywide Project Clean Stream initiative and provided bags, gloves, guidance and a much needed stimulus to action.

We also worked with our partners in the Oxford Regional Planning Committee to host an Oxford First Fridays Watershed Awareness table. It was great fun. Mary Kay Phillips and I especially enjoyed watching Chotty Sprenkle working her Enviroscape with kids and adults alike. Thanks to watershed member David Ross for organizing our participation and to Chester County Conservation District for loaning Chotty back her Enviroscape!

We did have some time to relax and had a delightful picnic at the Fishing Headquarters in late September where the West Nottingham Academy students presented some of their Sustainability Programs. Thanks to Peg O’Grady for the superb organization and to Jim and Gina for letting us picnic, and to all the Board members for helping out – especially the grillmeisters!

I look forward to another great year in 2020 and hope to see you at one or more of the events. Thank you again for your support.

Rupert

President, OWA

Water Levels in the Octoraro Reservoir

You may have noticed that during the summer and fall of 2019 the water level in the Octoraro Reservoir was lower than normal. Chester Water Authority (CWA) is doing a major capital improvement project to the Pine Grove Dam gates. Octoraro Reservoir is a 520 acre lake that was created in 1950 by impounding the Octoraro Creek. The Dam has two large gates that control the Reservoir level. Normally water flows over the gates. During high water events, the gates are raised to let water out of the Reservoir in order to prevent flooding of the two roads that cross the Reservoir.

In order to work on the gates and to install a fresh coat of paint, a bulkhead was placed in front of each gate to perform maintenance and painting in a safe controlled environment. CWA lowered the Reservoir level to keep the gate dry with enough cushion in the event of a storm. The work was halted for the winter because temperatures were too cold for painting and the Reservoir level was allowed to return to normal. The Reservoir level will be lowered again in the spring of 2020 and is expected to be returned to normal when the work on the Dam gates is concluded in the fall. The work is expected to extend the life of the gates for 10 years or more.

Frank Humbert

Welcome to New Board Member Chotty Sprenkle!

Chotty Sprenkle retired from her full time conservation and environmental education careers in 2016 to pursue other aspects of life. Little did she know that one of those would be photography. Over the last five years she has been taking photos of flora and fauna in the Octoraro Watershed. Her greatest audience has been her “friends” on Facebook, but she hopes to entertain attendees of the OWA Annual Meeting with a few of her favorite pics. Her specialties include micro images, landscapes, and mushrooms. Come prepared to relax, enjoy, and pick up a few tips on how to use a “point and shoot” camera for some really amazing pics. Chotty and her husband Dick live in Cochranville, Pa on the east branch of the Octoraro Creek.



Octoraro Watershed Association Photography Contest

Who May Enter? - This contest is open to photographers of any age. There are three age categories – Adults (18 years of age and above), Youth (13 to 17 years of age), and Youth 2 (12 years of age and under).

What to Enter? - All photographs must be taken within the Octoraro Watershed which encompasses the following townships in Eden, Bart, Sadsbury (in both Lancaster and Chester counties), West Sadsbury, Highland, West Fallowfield, Upper Oxford, Lower Oxford, East Nottingham, Little Britain, Fulton East Drumore, and West Nottingham, Pennsylvania and Cecil County, Maryland. All photographs must be identified by location within the watershed.

Photographs may be color and/or black and white. Photos will be entered and judged in four categories:

Wildlife – plants, mammals, reptiles, amphibians, birds, invertebrates, fungi (please, no domestic animals)

Landscapes – sites, scenery, historic buildings, farmland

Outdoor Recreation – show how people interact with the Octoraro Creek and its tributaries

Trailcam – interesting photographs captured on your trailcam

How to Enter? - All photographs must be in print form and sized 8 ½ by 11 inches. Each photo must be mounted on foam board of the same size. Please attach four Velcro pieces (Velcro side should be hooked, not smooth), one on each corner. All information should be printed on the back of the foam board: name, address, phone, email, location of photograph in the watershed – where the photo was taken. Please do not submit digital entries. We are not able to print or mount them for you and will not be entered or judged.

Bring your photos to the Octoraro Watershed Association office located at 517 Pine Grove Road, Nottingham, PA 19362 from 6:00 to 8:00 PM March 24, or 25, 2020. Mounted photographs may also be mailed to the Octoraro Watershed Office and must be received (*not postmarked*) by March 25, 2020. See address at the bottom of the page.

Judging The photographs will be judged by a professional photographer the hours prior to the Annual Dinner Meeting, March 26, Location and time. All entries will be displayed for the dinner meeting and become the property of the Octoraro Watershed Association. After the annual meeting we will feature the collection in a traveling show to various institutions (libraries, historical society, banks, schools) in the watershed. Winning photographs will also be featured in our newsletter and on our website. ***PLEASE, NO ENHANCED PHOTOS WITH PHOTOSHOP.***

Prizes

First Place, All categories – Ribbon and Monetary Prize (\$15)

Second Place, All categories – Ribbon and Monetary Prize (\$10)

Third Place, All categories – Ribbon and Monetary Prize (\$5)

Best of Show – Ribbon and Monetary Prize (\$50)

People's Choice – Ribbon and recognition

For more information, please contact Chotty Sprenkle at csprenkle9@gmail.com or 610-593-2808. We look forward to your photographs to show the beauty and wonder of the Octoraro watershed.

Octoraro Watershed Association

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www.theowa.org



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Officers

President: Rupert Rossetti

Vice-President: Linda Swank

Treasurer: Matt Kehoe

Secretary: Anders Alfelt

Board Members

Patty Blakeslee

Frank Humbert

Mary Kay Phillips

Todd Pride

Chotty Sprengle

Newsletter Editor: pogrady314@gmail.com

Riparian Buffers Restored

Slowly but surely riparian buffers are being restored by multiple organizations in Lancaster and Chester Counties. Last spring science teacher Jeff McCardell and approximately 20 students from Smith Middle School returned to Paradox Farm to plant another 75 trees on the west branch of the Octoraro Stream. They were enthusiastic and hard working. Included in the day were lessons on stream health and the importance of trees to provide cover to keep the water cool. The leaves also provide food and hiding places for beneficial invertebrates and the roots hold the soil. After the planting we all ventured in to hunt for mayfly larvae and crayfish. I could have done without someone finding a leech but the kids loved it! This fall on 2 separate days, a small group of dedicated OWA volunteers continued downstream and planted 150 trees on Camille and Mike Gracie's property. The highlight of the day was observing a mink exploring the bank. We are hoping to accomplish another planting this spring. If anyone is interested in helping, please email me at peb@ueavet.com.
Patty Blakeslee

Other Upcoming Events at the Octoraro Watershed Association

11th Annual Cecil County Wade-In

North East Beach at the tip of Elk Neck

Saturday, June 13, 2020 10 am to 2 pm Wade-In starts at noon.

Annual Picnic- Please join us!

11 am-1:30 Saturday September 19, 2020 (Date Tentative)

Fishing Head Quarters

212 Spruce Grove Road, Kirkwood PA 17536