

Newsletter Spring 2019

Octoraro
Watershed
Association



Celebrating 52 years
of preserving and
protecting
the natural and
historic resources of
the Octoraro.



Anders Alfelt giving Zach
Stephan the President's
Award for 2018

President's Message

A Happy 2019 to all! The world has faced a great deal of challenges over the past year, but I am in awe of how our organization - and our larger watershed community - have responded. We have come together to provide advice, education, empirical data and a lot of elbow grease to make the Octoraro a better place for the people and wildlife that live here.

Some of the things OWA has done include:

- Provided a *presentation to Mifflin County Conservation District* about our Amish Outreach model, which educates the farmers and facilitates implementation of best management practices (BMPs) for farmers.
- Held our *annual dinner* to encourage community participation in OWA activities and promote environmental awareness. Over 50 people attended, and students from the West Nottingham Academy presented about their program for turning the school's food scraps into farm animal feed and powering a compost digester to generate electricity.
- Organized an *annual watershed cleanup* activity to remove trash and debris from sensitive areas of the watershed, both in Pennsylvania and Maryland. Between the two sites, over forty people participated and literally a ton of trash (including tires) was removed from the watershed.
- Published a *spring newsletter* that was distributed to over 600 members of OWA, watershed residents, businesses, townships and the surrounding communities. We also distribute our newsletter electronically. The newsletter highlights OWA activities, opportunities for community participation in our activities and general knowledge pieces about environmental issues and ways each person can help the environment.
- Continued our *Amish Outreach* to educate and support the implementation of best management practices on Amish farms. Our field worker has visited approximately 240 farms so far this year. OWA has facilitated the writing of *20 new conservation plans and 10 new Manure Management Plans* as well as facilitating multiple BMP implementations on at least 40 farms.
- Continued active participation in the *Source Water Collaborative group*, which brings approximately 20 organizations and governmental agencies together to address issues in the watershed.
- Actively *contributed to the Watershed Implementation Plan (WIP)* for our area. OWA was represented at WIP meetings, which also included Amish and Menonite Church leaders.
- Facilitated in the *installation of sondes units* along major water ways in the Octoraro Watershed. A sondes unit measures different water quality parameters (e.g., pH, temperature, dissolved oxygen).
- Sponsored the *planting of approximately 50 trees* along Stuart's Run to create a riparian buffer. The owners of the property open the area to fishermen, and it is highly utilized by the community.

Upcoming Events (See website for details)

Annual Dinner Meeting:

Thursday March
28, 2019 @ 5:30
p.m.

Memorial United
Methodist Church,
Quarryville.

Octoraro Reservoir Clean-up:

Saturday April 13,
2019 @ 9 a.m.

Stream Monitor-
ing: Monthly
sampling runs
above and below
the reservoir.

President's Message Continued...

We at OWA also continued our partnership with the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay (ACB). With ACB, we added greatly to our list of accomplishments:

Held an *informational breakfast program* at an Amish farm in the Octoraro Watershed for Amish farmers to educate them regarding conservation plans, manure management plans and other best management practices. Cost sharing for implementing the BMPs was also discussed.

This summer we *held our first "Octoraro Farmer Field Day"*. Information was provided, and discussion revolved around soil health, riparian buffers, pesticide credits and funding sources for conservation practices. A tour was given of the hosting farm which has implemented the BMPs required in that farm's conservation plan.

Continue to *use LiDAR (Light Detection and Ranging) maps* to develop a confidential database of farms. This information is being compiled to aid in prioritizing farms, waterways and sub-watersheds for installation of BMPs.

Organized a *forest management workshop* for all farmers and members of the community.

Expanded the Octoraro Watershed Association *Volunteer Monitoring Program*. In 2017, the Octoraro Source Water Collaborative was formed by The Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay (ACB) the Octoraro Watershed Association (OWA) and a growing list of partners to restore the rivers and streams within the Octoraro Watershed and especially those draining into the Octoraro Water Reservoir. To track results of restoration work, monitoring efforts have been organized. OWA, ACB, Susquehanna River Basin Commission (SRBC), US Geological Survey (USGS), Chester Water Authority (CWA), the PA Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Office of Water are working collectively via the Collaborative's Monitoring Workgroup (chaired by OWA) to share resources and monitor as much of the watershed as possible. OWA has received a grant of \$3,776.82 for the purchase of their own equipment through the Lancaster County Conservancy's Lancaster Water Week Program, with matching funds from the Chester Water Authority, who will analyze up to 20 samples a month for nutrients and alkalinity.

Of course, none of these things happened on their own. A great Board of Directors, dedicated part-time staff and a host of hard-working volunteers put their talents and energy toward improving our community. Here's to all of you!

Because of term limits in our bylaws, I will be stepping down from the Presidency of OWA at our upcoming annual meeting. I intend to stay on the Board of Directors and continue to work with all the wonderful people I have encountered over the years. Thank you for making our watershed such a wonderful place. Enjoy the newsletter, and I looked forward to seeing you at our Annual Meeting!

Yours in Conservation,

Anders Alfelt
President, OWA

FUTURE COLLABORATIONS FOR OWA!

The MidAtlantic Youth Anglers and Outdoors program (MAYAP) is proposing to create 15 to 100 foot-wide riparian buffers across a privately held campsite property along McCreary Run, a natural trout reproduction stream as classified by PA Fish and Boat Commission, and a tributary of Octorara Creek-creating a total of 15 acres of riparian forest buffers along more than approximately 2,640 linear feet of stream corridor. The buffer will have a multifunctional nut and berry-producing buffer along commercial and agricultural sections of the stream for use as sellable products and/or for educational foraging and conservation education activities. The buffer will also provide a wildlife habitat forest for attracting deer considered pests to surrounding farms; attracting birds and bats whose specific diets consists in large part of mosquitoes, flies, and other insects harmful to the surrounding farms. The habitat for the stream's fish and camp's diverse wildlife is also useful for teaching hands-on wildlife and conservation education to campgoers in a curriculum aligned with PA Game, PA Fish and Boat, DCNR, and Delaware and Chesapeake Bay Watershed education.

OWA and our collaborators are eager to support this project. More information to come!

Report an Incident- PA DEP Emergency Response Program

The Department of Environmental Protection's mission during emergencies and disasters is to respond quickly and professionally to any incident which adversely affects the health and safety or the environment of the citizens of the Commonwealth. First on-scene is usually the Environmental Emergency Response Team whose members are highly trained, experienced emergency first responders

Please Call To Report A Concern: 866-825-0208

Welcome to New Board Member Todd Pride

Todd is the Managing Partner and Lead Coach of the Mid-Atlantic Youth Anglers & Outdoors Partners organization, headquartered in Philadelphia, PA and Southern Lancaster County, PA serving a 5-state footprint of New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, Central & S.E. Penna. and Southern NY. The organization has introduced over 11,000 youth to fishing, hunting, wildlife education conservation and related outdoors activities ranging from elementary, middle, high school and college students in suburban, rural and a large number in urban communities.

Todd has been a competitive bass fisherman for over 15 years having won seven season championships and is an avid bass angler and deer hunter. He currently lives in Nottingham, Chester County, PA and is a native of Overbrook Farms in Philadelphia, PA. He is an alum of The Episcopal Academy (Newtown Square, PA) and Temple University's Fox School of Business (Economics and Marketing) (Phila. PA).

He currently serves as the President of the Board of Directors for the Friends of FDR Park (Phila, PA), Member of the Board of Managers of Episcopal Academy (Newtown Square, PA) and a Board Member of the MLK Community Organization of Greater Kennett.



Octoraro
Watershed
Association



517 Pine Grove Road
Nottingham, PA 19362
717-529-2132

octorarowa@gmail.com www.theowa.org

Officers

President: Anders Alfelt
Vice-President: Linda Swank
Treasurer: Matt Kehoe
Secretary: Rupert Rossetti

Board Members

Patty Blakeslee
Pat Fasano
Frank Humbert - CWA
Mary Kay Phillips
Todd Pride

Newsletter Editor: pogrady314@gmail.com

Summer Farmer Field Day Workshop

On August 9th, 2018 the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay, TeamAg, and OWA organized a summer farmer field day on a Amish farm in the Octoraro Watershed. The workshop ran from 9am to noon with breakfast and lunch provided. The farmer who hosted the workshop is considered to be an environmental leader in his community due to the multitude of conservation practices on site. There were many barnyard improvements and a riparian buffer at the farm, which served as a great example for attendees. Farmers in the surrounding area were invited to attend the workshop to learn about a variety of topics regarding agricultural conservation including pesticide application, riparian buffers, and stream and soil health in hopes of inspiring attendees to take action on their own farms. Once the presentations were over, attendees were given a tour of the headquarters and then served lunch, which opened up further conservation discussions.

Leslie Weller
Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay

Many Thanks from OWA to Students and Staff at Swift Middle School

Volunteers.... Hmm.....Where are able bodied young people to plant riparian buffers? Why, Solanco School District of course. Last May approximately 25 kids from the Swift Middle School came to my place on the west branch of the Octoraro to plant 50 trees down by my eroding stream. This outing was led by teachers Jeff McCardell and Diana Lyons. The day started with a game where one student was a tree and the rest were drops of water. The water drops would run past the tree and as they were tagged, they turned into trees. As the trees accumulated, the drops of water had more trouble getting passed without getting tagged. Thus demonstrating how a buffer works. The students were fantastic and focused and we finished the planting in a few hours. They worked very well in teams. Afterwards, we explored the stream edge upstream in the wooded area and found some great specimens of Stoneflies and Mayflies.

Several tree planting projects are in the works for the spring. If you would like to join us, please just send an email to octorarowa@gmail.com. Volunteers always welcome!

Patty Blakeslee, OWA Board Member