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The mission of the Conservancy is to promote a better understanding of the Twin/Walker Creeks Watershed and its ecosystems and to protect, restore and enhance the watershed through proper management and watershed stewardship.

## *Protecting the scenic and rural character of Pike County - Peter Wulfhorst*

Pike County is changing. Our population has been increasing over the last thirty years and will continue to grow over the next 20-30 years. Our natural heritage and small town character is at risk with this population growth. We can balance the needs of a rapidly growing population with the need to protect our rural heritage for future generations. Other Pennsylvania counties have proven that it can be done. But it will only happen if we seize the **opportunity to act** now.

The Alliance to Keep Pike Green is a coalition of conservationists, business people, landowners, local officials, builders and community residents who are committed to preserving Pike County's high quality of life through good planning and active conservation. On **Saturday, October 22 at 10 am** at the **Walker Lake Clubhouse**, the Alliance to Keep Pike Green will be discussing the Keep Pike Green initiative that is committed to preserving Pike County's quality of life through good planning and active conservation. Please attend the meeting and bring a friend with you. The future of our watershed and Pike County is at stake.

## *Keeping an Eye on our Lakes - Joyce Laudise*

The Watershed Conservancy will spend \$1,100 for testing and analysis of the 3 lakes in 2005. Volunteers collected water samples in June, July and August. The last set of samples will be collected on Sept 24 and 25. When volunteers are out on a lake they use the probe to record water temperature, dissolved oxygen (DO) and pH. They also can record conductivity and total dissolved solids from the probe. Using a secchi disk they determine the depth the sunlight penetrates and therefore the depth to which plants can grow. The samples and the on site data sheets are delivered to FX Browne at Marshalls Creek. The water samples are analyzed for total phosphorus and chlorophyll *a* in their laboratory. Knowing the results for the parameters measured one can calculate a Carlson Trophic State for each lake. FX Browne will compile a report after the September analysis is done. This report will reference the 2005 data as well as data collected in the past to give a clearer picture of the health of all three lakes. A summary of the report will appear in the next issue of the newsletter.

It would not be possible to monitor the lakes without volunteers. The Conservancy Board especially wishes to thank Peg Bruton, John Laudise and Janet Perper from Big Twin Lake plus Pat and Chet Dawson from Walker Lake. They braved some cold rainy days to collect the samples. Bill Andrews along with Bill and Nancy Fore delivered the samples to Marshalls Creek. Joe Messineo fixed the Van Dorn bottle that is used to collect samples below the surface. Dave Kirk has helped to calibrate the probe. He will inventory and order new supplies for the laboratory in the spring.

We are grateful to the Walker Lake Landowners Association for allowing us to use space at their club house for the laboratory and for allowing us to hold meetings there.

## *Septic System Survey - PD McCullough*

Last year we mailed out about 700 questionnaires concerning each property owner's septic system to all the homeowners we could identify in the watershed. The response was around 30%. The purpose of wanting this information was to learn of the conditions of the septic systems of the homes in our watershed. People must realize that the quality of the water coming out of our faucets is not under the control of some nearby water authority. The disposal of waste from our sinks, toilets, washing machines is not passed on to some municipal sewage commission. These two things, the supply and disposal of water are the direct responsibility of each and every one of us homeowners.

Many of the "new" homeowners (and by "new" I mean those who have bought existing homes as long as 40 to 50 years ago) may not realize the responsibilities they have taken on with home ownership in this area. So a secondary but equally important purpose of this questionnaire or survey is education. All homeowners must be conscious of their responsibilities both for their own sakes and for their neighbors.

The Conservancy plans again to mail this questionnaire to those from whom no response was received. We are requesting that all who receive this questionnaire please take the time to fill out all the information you can and return it to us. We need a reply even if it is "I don't know". Members of the Conservancy or probably even a neighbor would be willing to help one figure out your septic system.

Information received from this survey will NOT (I emphasize NOT) be used for punitive or enforcement action.

Some septic tanks as young as 20 or 25 years old were of steel construction. As these systems are being serviced it is found that the tanks are severely rusted if not entirely gone. Effluent is now going directly into the surrounding soil and will soon, if not all ready, be polluting nearby wells and bodies of water. Preventing this from happening is the goal of our surveys and education programs

So please service your septic system and return the survey you receive if you have not done so all ready.

## *2004 Septic System Survey Concerns - Ralph Cioppa*

The Conservancy reported in our May 2005 newsletter a summary of the results of our 2004 Septic System Survey. A total of 243 surveys were returned out of 750 surveys sent. Our thanks to those who responded. Our thanks to those homeowners who used the educational information provided to them to upgrade their septic systems. The Conservancy has noticed.

This fall we will send out a second survey to those households in the watershed that didn't respond to the 2004 survey.

We feel the 2004 survey results are statistically valid and can be used to provide a snapshot of our watershed. These 2004 survey results raised some concerns for the Conservancy. There could be 113 cesspools in the watershed with 1 household having a cesspool less than 50 feet from their well and the lake. There could be 19



septic tanks that have never been pumped out, 177 absorption areas less than 50 feet from a well or lake, 321 absorption areas that are over 20 years old near wells and the lakes, 60 metal septic tanks which could be corroded and several households who know nothing about their septic systems. This all points to the potential for non-point source pollution to our surface water, i.e. lakes and streams as well as the groundwater wells that we are using for our drinking water.

## *Volunteers Always Needed - Nelia Wall*

Shohola Township has three volunteer Boards now and has been looking for concerned and willing residents to fill other positions as well. The Planning Board is a group of either 5 or 7 individuals (we have 5) whose duty it is to review plans for Land Use and Zoning changes and recommend or deny recommendation to the Board of Supervisors in each case based upon the existing zoning and sub-division plans of the Township. Each member should have a working knowledge of the Comprehensive Plan, the Zoning Ordinances and the Sub-Division & Land Development Ordinance of the Township. We are seeking at least two new candidates for this Board.

Another existing Board is the Zoning Hearing Board. The purpose of this 3 member group is to be available to hear an appeal to a decision made by the Zoning officer or the Planning Board.

Just recently, with the mandatory enactment by the State of the Building Code, it has been necessary to appoint another board of Appeals for all matters pertaining to the Statewide Code Enforcement. In Shohola we have appointed the same people as the Zoning Hearing Board to sit on this appeals Board.

It has recently been suggested that each Township appoint another group of individuals, ideally experts in engineering, law, planning and zoning to form an Environmental Advisory Commission whose role would be to advise the Township on its decisions with regard to environmental issues that may develop due to construction of roads, bridges or sub-divisions.

Suffice it to say that, with all of the needs of local Government and Volunteer organizations growing and less people willing to donate their time to so many different causes, it is difficult if not impossible to fill all of the volunteer positions mandated by the State and the Municipal Planning Code. We are always seeking new fresh ideas and people willing to see these ideas become reality. It takes commitment and caring to volunteer. Take an interest in your community and it will serve you better in the years to come.

## *Please Don't Drink the Lake Water - Ralph Cioppa & Joyce Laudise*

The Twin Lakes Property Owners Association and the Walker Lake Landowners Association regularly pay for testing the water at the beaches for E. coli during the summer months. Escherichia coli is a type of fecal coliform that is found in the gut of humans and warm-blooded animals. Its presence indicates that there is fecal contamination. Most E. coli is harmless but some strains can cause serious gastrointestinal problems if swallowed. People most susceptible are children under 5 and adults with other health problems.

This test is routine and required at public beaches. Even though our beaches are private we follow the recommendation for safety reasons. Joyce Laudise collects samples at both Twin Lakes and Ralph Cioppa collects at Walker Lake. The samples are put in a sterile container and sent to a certified laboratory for analysis. Any number below 235 colonies per 100 ml of water indicates the water is safe for recreational purposes but not for drinking. The samples taken from sites on the Twin Lakes have been below the detectable level of 4 colonies per 100 ml. Walker Lake samples are similar to those of Twin Lakes.

Any animal life (geese, beavers, deer, humans, stock) or defective septic systems will contribute to the input of E. coli in or around a body of water. During the summer months, the levels of water are lower and the lakes do not drain as rapidly. This allows the colonies of E. coli to increase. We have been very fortunate in that the counts have been low the last few years. Please remember to keep our waters clean.

There are 2 good reasons not to drink lake water. First there is a higher standard for drinking water. No fecal coliform of any kind is allowed in tap water. Second there are other organisms in surface water that can be harmful. A good example is Giardia lamblia. It can cause serious gastrointestinal discomfort like some E. coli strains. Giardia is a one-celled creature that can survive for long periods of time in a protective outer shell becoming active when it enters a warm human or animal body. The test for Giardia is extremely expensive and not deemed worth the cost.

Please remember to enjoy the lakes but don't drink the water.

Twin & Walker Creeks  
Watershed Conservancy

100 Walker Lake Road  
Shohola, PA 18458  
570-296-3400  
Www.twcwc.com

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SHOHOLA, PA 18458

*Next Meeting 10 am—  
October 22, 2005 at the Walker Lake  
Clubhouse*

Resident  
RR 2  
Shohola, PA 18458

## 2005 CONSERVANCY MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

*I am concerned with the future quality and quantity of the water resources in our neighborhood and would like to support the conservation efforts of the Twin/Walker Creeks Watershed Conservancy through a yearly membership.*

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

I am interested in learning more about volunteer monitoring efforts

### Check type of membership

Senior/Student—\$5.00

Individual— \$10.00

Family— \$15.00

Corporate— \$40.00

In support of the Conservancy's efforts, I would like to provide an additional gift in the amount of  
\$ \_\_\_\_\_ Total Enclosed \_\_\_\_\_

Mail this form with check payable to:

**Twin/Walker Creeks Watershed Conservancy**  
**100 Walker Lake Road**  
**Shohola, PA 18458**