

2023 Accomplishments

Upper Chartiers Creek Watershed Association (UCCWA)

A note from our President

As I conclude my first year as UCCWA president, I am thrilled and amazed by the level of hard work, collaboration and dedication shown by the volunteers of our group. The fact that we are an all volunteer organization is a reason for pride and certainly brings with it bragging rights. What our volunteers do, they do out of love for the natural resources of Chartiers Creek and the communities that fall within its watershed.

Thank you to everyone who is a part of our efforts to promote the natural resources of Chartiers Creek: UCCWA volunteers who run our meetings and help steer our course; Pennsylvania Master Naturalist who assist us with multiple projects ranging from native wildflower gardens to macroinvertebrate identification and streambank data collection; faculty and students of Washington and Jefferson College who are always ready to pitch in and help with a creek clean-up or provide community education for our members.

We thank you all for caring about your community and we look forward to seeing you out and about in our watershed in 2024.

Sincerely,
Virginia McAnulty
President.

Promoting Interest in Conservation:



Girl Scout Day of Thinking

Provided information to the community about native bees, various birding programs, macroinvertebrates in the creeks, the impacts of salt in the watershed and the importance of individual species to ecosystems.



North Strabane Annual Fishing Tournament

Volunteers displayed macroinvertebrate samples and explained their important role in the ecosystem as food for fish and excellent indicators of water quality.



Wild about Washington County Watersheds

An educational event to inform participants about the importance of the many watersheds within Washington County.

Studying Natural Resources:

Winter Salt Watch - Once again UCCWA volunteers participated in the Izaak Walton League Salt Watch last winter and will continue to participate in the winter of 2023-24. While salts spread on roads, parking lots and sidewalks help keep us safe in winter, too much salt can pollute our streams and waste money. Results from our volunteers were sent to Chartier Creek Municipalities along with educational material on the effects of salt on infrastructure within our waterways.

Spring and Fall Water Monitoring: UCCWA continued to monitor stream water quality through chemical testing and macro invertebrate studies. The four sites remained: Chartiers Run behind American Legion in Houston; Chartiers Creek main stem at Houston Ballfield and Scotty’s Ice Cream; and Little Chartiers at Linden Road and Linden Creek Road. This year we were fortunate to have a great turn out of volunteers. With continued interest and simplified protocols, the hope is to expand the monitoring to additional sites in 2024.



Identifying Macro-invertebrates



The water crew all decked out



It's a team effort

Here are the macroinvertebrate results for the year.

Stream	Date	Rating	Date	Rating
Chartiers Run	4/1	Good	10/21	Good
Chartiers Creek- Scotty's	4/25	Poor	10/28	Good
Little Chartiers	4/15	Excellent	11/2	Good
Chartiers Creek - Houston	4/18	Poor	10/7	Fair

Laboratory Testing: Thanks to a grant from BHE GT&S and the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy, our group conducted laboratory tests on portions of Chartiers Creek and tributaries. The purpose of the effort was to identify potential issues with the water within the Upper Chartiers Creek Watershed that are not identified with our regular stream monitoring. We tested seven sites using a combination of tests, hoping to get a broader range of data. The samples were taken on 7/16/2023 and analyzed by Penn State Agricultural Analysis Services Laboratory.

Results from the testing showed a high concentration of both E. Coli Bacteria and Coliform Bacteria in our streams. More detailed results were shared in our final 2023 newsletter. If anyone would like additional information on the study please contact us.



Collaborating with local communities.

10 Million Trees – Once again UCCWA helped recruit landowners who received and planted free trees on their properties in spring 2023. To help give the trees the best chance of survival UCCWA provided tree tubes, stakes and mats free of charge to those participating landowners who are residents of the Upper Chartiers Creek Watershed. The purchase of the tubes, stakes and mats was made possible through a grant from BHE GT&S and the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy.



Houston Ballfield Streambank Restoration: In April 2023 the Washington County Watershed Alliance (WCWA), in partnership with the Upper Chartiers Creek Watershed Association (UCCWA), the West Virginia Water Research Institute (WVWRI), the Washington County Conservation District (WCCD) and Houston Borough began an erosion study of approximately 1,000 linear feet of the Chartiers Creek streambank that is adjacent to the Houston Community Park Baseball Field. The measuring pins were installed in April and the first measurements were taken on May 15th. The study is expected to continue for approximately 8 months.

This Study is being completed with the support of the West Virginia Water Research Institute through the Generating Awareness for Project Success (GAPS) assistance program and is intended to provide the accurate data that is needed when seeking funding to pay for the completion of a streambank stabilization project at this location.

Birding at the Lake: Birders, both experienced and novice, brought their enthusiasm to Canonsburg Lake on a beautiful Sunday morning in July. The event, organized by the Upper Chartiers Creek Watershed Association and the Canonsburg Lake Restoration and Improvement Association, was attended by 20 local birders and led by birding enthusiast John Flannigan.



Spring Wetlands Walk and clean up: The Upper Chartiers Creek Watershed Association with Dr. Jason Kilgore from W&J College hosted a combination educational walk and creek side clean up in North Strabane on Saturday Apr 29, 2023. Dr. Kilgore gave an engaging presentation with a wealth of information regarding the plants, soils and defining features of the wetlands located along Little Chartiers Creek near the Canonsburg Lake. After the walk, the 25 participants stayed and helped with a litter clean-up of the area. This event was made possible by the generous support of Pennsylvania American Water and North Strabane Township.



Fishing Survey: Upper Chartiers Creek Watershed Association (UCCWA) members had a chance to assist with a fish survey conducted on twelve sites along the Chartiers Creek Main stem beginning near the headwaters in North Franklin Township and extending below Carnegie at the Thornburg Conservation Park west of Crafton, PA.

Due to the need to organize volunteers and collaborators from multiple organizations as well as the coordination of two boats and equipment and, of course, the vagaries of the rainfall, the project extended over several weeks beginning mid-June and extending into August. All twelve sites originally chosen were successfully complete.

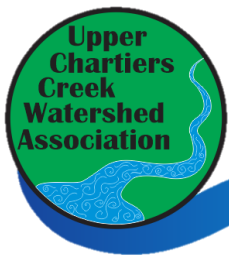
The survey, organized and conducted by Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission biologist Mike Depew, was completed in collaboration with the US Department of Environmental Protection and Upper Chartiers Creek Watershed Association.

The survey was completed to collect data on the fish populations of the creek. Historically, the creek and tributaries have high pollution levels affecting the number of fish. When UCCWA receives the final report, we plan to use the data to help inform future projects on the creek.



Odds and Ends

Canon Mac Dress Down Day: UCCWA president, Virginia McAnulty, was presented a \$145 donation from school secretary Denielle Bickmeier. The money was collected from the generous teachers and staff at the Canon McMillan High School who participated in a dress down week. In exchange for \$5.00 staff were permitted to wear jeans and casual clothing for a week. They also were introduced to local watersheds by receiving brief informative emails describing watersheds in general and the Upper Chartiers Creek Watershed specifically. Thank you to the fantastic teachers of Canon McMillan School District!



Logo Update: Maddy B, Canon McMillan Junior, under the guidance of her teacher, Dr. Cindy Carroll, volunteered to update our logo. Maddy produced a beautiful product that we are excited to begin using. UCCWA depends on people such as Maddy to help us achieve our mission in the Watershed. Thank you Maddy and Dr. Carroll, we couldn't do it without you!!





2023 Officers and Board Members

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Carrilee Hemington, Vice President
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