

New BWA President Ann Foster: Volunteerism is in her nature

By Morgan Natiello

When Ann Foster was a young girl, her father would take her on early-morning hikes along the Appalachian Trail. As an adult, she volunteered with the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources at Promised Land State Park. Now, she is president of Brodhead Watershed Association and already has plans for the future.

Ann is a determined leader. She graduated from Penn State University with a degree in horticulture and from Northampton Community College as a registered nurse. Following her conviction to improve the world one step at a time, she works a clinical research nurse at Hughes Cancer Center, East Stroudsburg. She believes that “education and learning is a life-long experience that continues long after you’ve left a formal classroom.”

The seeds of interest in watershed preservation were planted early in her life. While pre-dawn hikes may seem monotonous to some children, they fostered Ann’s love of the natural world. The first time she saw a bald eagle in the wild further inspired her interest in environmental conservation.

“I’ll never forget that moment,” she said.

The beauty of nature led her to environmental volunteerism, but her childhood exposure to the Tocks Island Dam fight of the 1960s and 1970s left its mark as well. The accomplishments and activism of what began as a small group of citizens working together to protect the waters of the Delaware River left a lasting impression.

Ann found herself drawn into BWA activity when former board members Chris Perry, Geri Daily, and Ellen Davis invited her to become a Streamwatch volunteer. Her involvement grew



from there. She admires the group’s diverse backgrounds and experiences, as well as the hard work and dedication of its volunteer members. “We’re a small group, but we pack a punch,” Ann said.

Ann’s goals include motivating and involving the BWA general membership: “Each and every member has something to contribute to watershed protection.”

The success of the ForEvergreen Nature Preserve building project is another of Ann’s priorities. “A physical presence in the community – with the opportunity to have a building where we can provide watershed education to our community and tourists – would be incredible,” she said.

Ann is also determined that BWA remain vigilant in its fight for water quality.

“We live in a ‘bubble’ here in northeastern Pennsylvania. Water is plentiful, generally clean and we’re lulled into a false sense of security that it’s always going to be that way. But it won’t. Degradation of our waterways and environment is often insidious.

“Stormwater runoff, decreased riparian buffers, elevated fecal coliform levels, rising water temperatures, decreased base flows are just a few of the many challenges we face today in the Brodhead Watershed,” she continued. “If left unchecked, they will change water supply and quality for our children and grandchildren.”

With her personal connection to the Brodhead Watershed, her firsthand knowledge of the dangers of water pollution and her years of leadership experience, Ann will lead the BWA to the waters of continued growth and outreach.