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BWA and PennFuture sign federal consent decree with Mount Pocono Municipal Authority to resolve permit violations at sewage treatment plant

(Mount Pocono, PA - February 29, 2012) – Citizens for Pennsylvania's Future (PennFuture) announced today that PennFuture and the Brodhead Watershed Association (BWA) have reached a settlement with the Mount Pocono Municipal Authority to resolve the federal lawsuit that the environmental groups filed in late 2010 against the authority for more than 600 permit violations. The consent decree, lodged with the United States District Court for the Middle District of Pennsylvania, binds the authority to a specific timeline to improve its discharge of treated sewage to Forest Hills Run. This stream was once clean enough to earn the state's *high quality* designation, but was added to the state's impaired streams list in 2002.

“Thanks to today's agreement, a decades-old problem has been solved,” said Patricia Kennedy, associate professor at East Stroudsburg University and immediate past president of BWA. “Forest Hills Run has always been too small to receive the amount of discharge needed to serve the residents of Mount Pocono. This forward-thinking solution is a 'win-win' for the future of Mount Pocono residents and their downstream neighbors.”

The environmental groups could have pursued millions of dollars in civil penalties for the violations at the sewage treatment plant, but instead worked with the authority and the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection to develop a remedy that will provide the greatest benefit to the stream.

Under the terms of the consent decree, the authority will reduce the volume of its discharge to Forest Hills Run by applying increasing amounts of the discharge to a large parcel of open land, where vegetation and soils will filter out additional pollutants.

The authority will also permanently protect part of the open land for a trail that will run along Forest Hills Run. “It was critically important to BWA and PennFuture to ensure that Mount Pocono customers could enjoy the stream that their rates will be paying to protect and improve,” said Edith Stevens, vice president of BWA.

The consent decree allows the authority to increase its treatment capacity as soon as the stream is restored. The Borough of Mount Pocono needs the increased capacity in order to grow.

“Today's agreement protects and improves an important stream, provides a new public recreation area to Mount Pocono residents and visitors, and allows the borough to grow,” said Brian Glass, law staff chair at PennFuture, who represented BWA and PennFuture in the lawsuit. “It is further proof that every environmental victory grows the economy.”

A copy of the consent decree, which the parties will seek to enter following government and court review, is available on [PennFuture's website](#).

PennFuture is a statewide public interest membership organization that advances policies to protect and improve the state's environment and economy. With offices in Harrisburg, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, West Chester, and Wilkes-Barre, PennFuture's activities include litigating cases before regulatory bodies and in local, state and federal courts, advocating and advancing legislative action on a state and federal level, public education and assisting citizens in public advocacy.

BWA is a non-profit environmental organization founded in 1989 to protect and improve water resources and the environment in the Brodhead and Cherry creek watersheds. BWA assists municipalities, residents, businesses and groups with protecting natural resources through education, workshops, seminars, public programs, stream monitoring and baseline data collection and stream cleanups.