

BRODHEAD WATERSHED ASSOCIATION

UP QUACK CREEK



Signs like this one posted along area waterways and ponds by the Brodhead Waterhead Association discourage visitors from feeding ducks and geese. Excessive droppings from waterfowl contribute to water contamination. KEITH R. STEVENSON/POCONO RECORD

Conservationists campaign against waterfowl droppings and roof runoff

By David Pierce
Pocono Record Writer

If you're feeding ducks you might not be able to duck responsibility for some of the worst pollution in the urbanized sections of the Brodhead Creek watershed.

That's what the Brodhead Watershed

Association is telling the public through a sign campaign in Stroudsburg, East Stroudsburg and Stroud Township.

For years, BWA and its volunteers have collected and had tested monthly water samples at 20 locations on the Brodhead, McMichael and Pocono creeks.

"It's just a snapshot of what's going by at that time," BWA Project Manager Edie Stevens said of the tests. "People are

out there monthly, on their own streams, looking for changes."

What they found is that creek sections that flow through the most urban areas of Monroe County aren't safe for swimming and other water activities. Water quality from the creeks is relatively pure in the rural sections where the streams originate.

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DUCKS

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•What it shows is it's getting worse and worse as it flows south and east. Stevens said. •Then when it gets back to the gorge in Delaware Water Gap (and empties into the Delaware River), it's better again. •

The Brodhead Watershed Association received a \$62,000 matching grant two years ago from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation to investigate the sources of the pollution and develop plans to clean up the streams.

BWA learned that a major pollution source is bacteria left by the feces of large numbers of ducks and geese. The pollution was worst where people fed the

animals, with the food attracting even more geese and ducks.

One particularly bad location was on a small, unnamed tributary between East Stroudsburg High School South and the borough's Dansbury Park, Stevens said. A particular spot near the park was a popular feeding site.

BWA used some grant funds to buy and erect a dozen signs at the most prominent duck pollution locations, asking residents not to feed the ducks and geese. This includes the parking lot side of •the duck pond• at Albertson Park, near the Stroud Township municipal building.

Another major pollution source is rain runoff from residential roofs. Residents are urged not to direct water from gutters onto streets, from where the flow has a good chance of emotvng back

into a stream.

Direct industrial discharges aren't a major pollution source in the three Strouds, Stevens said.

•It means that the pollution is coming from parking lots and roofs, and people not picking up after their dogs, and fertilizers and pesticides,• she said.

BWA is promoting use of rain gardens to capture runoff from roofs, parking lots and streets • before the water reaches streams •, so the water can slowly infiltrate through the soil. Brodhead Watershed and its partners have planted rain gardens at East Stroudsburg High School South and at downtown Stroudsburg's Sarah Street Grill.

Homeowners also can help by installing rain barrels under their downspouts.

BWA has hired Hanover

Engineering Associates to develop additional projects under the next phase of the National Fish & Wildlife Foundation grant. Hanover will create a model plan for municipalities, residents and businesses to follow. This might include •green• roofs, constructed wetlands, planter boxes, vegetated swales, buffer restoration and conversion of lawns to unmowed natural areas.

Public meetings to discuss possible projects for the plan will be held this summer.

Once the plan is developed, BWA will seek additional funding to help landowners and municipalities implement green solutions.

For information contact BWA at info@brodheadwatershed.org or 570- 839- 1120.