

Streamlines



THE NEWSLETTER OF THE BRODHEAD WATERSHED ASSOCIATION

SPRING 2016

Coming soon to a vernal pool near you

By Carol Hillestad

On one of the first warm, springlike nights of the year, as you listen to the soft rain and wait for sleep, the floor of the forest outside your window begins rippling with life.

Many salamanders and other amphibians are "fossorial" — they live in the damp under rocks and in the rich humus-y earth of the forest, eating just about anything that will fit in their mouths, from insects and insect larvae to small worms. And every spring, when temperatures rise to at least 42 degrees at night and a gentle rain is falling, first the males and later the females leave the safety of last year's leaf litter. Hundreds of thousands of creatures throughout the watershed make the trek



Red eft near Swiftwater Forest Preserve. (Carol Hillestad photo)

to woodland vernal pools to lay and fertilize eggs.

Vernal pools are seasonal wetlands found in forested areas on high ridges, in low valleys, and everywhere in between. They are small, shallow, and free of fish. The water that collects here at this time of year comes from

groundwater, snowmelt and runoff. By summer, most vernal pools go dry. The only signs that this is the site of a vernal pool may be blackened leaves, water marks on trees, and mucky dampness underfoot.

But because the pools eventually go dry, the young

salamanders, toads, and frogs have a better chance of surviving: no fish to eat the eggs or larval hatchlings.

Pennsylvania's mole salamanders are among the "indicator animals" of a vernal pool — animals that require the special properties of a vernal pool to reproduce. The 6- to 8-inch, dark spotted salamander breeds in March, and the smaller, long-toed Jefferson salamander breeds as early as February. Wood frogs, the 2-inch loudmouths of the spring woods, and springtime fairy shrimp are also indicator animals.

The Nature Conservancy has a great booklet with more information and photos of vernal pools and their denizens. Visit www.naturalheritage.state.pa.us. Click on Resources, then Vernal Pools.

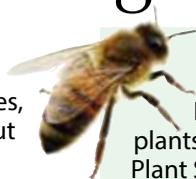
Let it bee: Plant a garden for pollinators' sake

By Andrea Higgins

Smart gardeners are glad to see butterflies, bees, and birds populating their yards, but that's not just because they're beautiful.

A pollinator's task is simple yet vital: spread pollen and create fertile seeds. In this way, pollinators help a garden's plants reproduce, maintain genetic diversity, and encourage environmental adaptability.

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ANNUAL NATIVE PLANT SALE ON JUNE 3-4

For environmentally friendly plants, come to BWA's Native Plant Sale on June 3-4 at Pocono Township Fire Company's "carnival building" on Route 611, Tannersville.

On Friday, the sale will be held 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. for members only. You can sign up at the sale for a 10 percent discount on your plant purchase!

On Saturday, the sale opens to the public from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Both days, plant experts will offer advice on your garden, and how native plants make gardening easier on you and the environment.

Call 570-839-1120, email info@brodheadwatershed.org, or see brodheadwatershed.org.

BIG PLANS AT BWA

Green infrastructure ideas expanding

For the past several years, BWA has tested water quality in the Brodhead, McMichael and Pocono creeks. The findings are clear: the streams where they flow through Stroudsburg and East Stroudsburg are not safe for swimming and other water contact.

That finding led to a grant from the National Fish & Wildlife Foundation to look for sources of pollution and clean up the streams.

BWA and municipal partners – East Stroudsburg, Stroudsburg and Stroud Township - want to fix the problems before they get worse.

When water tests showed that some of the problem was caused by large gatherings of ducks and geese (drawn by people feeding them), BWA designed and purchased “Don’t Feed the Ducks” signs, and municipal partners installed them at popular duck-feeding spots.

THE NEXT STEP: YOUR OPINIONS, ASSISTANCE NEEDED

The next step in the NFWF-funded project is to develop a plan for future projects. BWA has hired Hanover Engineering Associates for that task.

Hanover will “provide municipalities, residents, and businesses a model plan to follow for protection and restoration of the Lower Brodhead Watershed,” the Bartonsville consultants said.

The plan will identify areas for green practices, such as:

- Green roofs
- Constructed wetlands
- Pervious pavement

- Rain gardens
- Rain barrels
- Planter boxes
- Vegetated swales
- Buffer restoration
- Lawn conversions (to native species, unmowed as natural area).

Where municipalities own land such as sidewalks, streets and parking lots, green practices can be installed by the municipality.

However, most land is privately owned, so private landowners will be encouraged to install green projects on their properties. A search for

funding to help landowners and municipalities “go green” will follow the plan.

Over the summer, public meetings will be held to discuss possible projects to include in the plan; please attend and offer your ideas.

To receive regular updates on the project, send an email to info@brodheadwatershed.org (subject line “green infrastructure”) or call 570-839-1120.

For information on the Green Infrastructure Project: brodheadwatershed.org/GreenInfrastructure.htm.

Rain gardens capture runoff from parking lots, roofs and streets, so BWA and community partners have planted rain gardens at East Stroudsburg High School South, East Stroudsburg, and Sarah Street Grill, Stroudsburg, and plan more.

These gardens capture polluted runoff before it can reach streams and allow it to infiltrated slowly through the soil.

Homeowners hold the real key to cleaning up polluted runoff. They can

install rain barrels under their downspouts (as John Provoznik has done at his East Stroudsburg law office), build their own rain gardens and pick up after their pets.

Take a plastic bag with you whenever you walk your dog.

STREAMWATCH TRAINING

Sixteen new people plus some veteran volunteers attended training on March 17 and 19 in Swiftwater, conducted by Tom Salmon, Ellen Davis, and Jackie Speicher.

BWA gained four new members and is assigning water testing points to new Streamwatchers now.

Anyone interested in becoming a Streamwatcher can learn more on the Streamwatch page at www.brodheadwatershed.org/streamwatchers.html, or email info@brodheadwatershed.org.

Right: Doug Spitzfaden and Emily Long learn how to test for water quality.



SPONSOR SPOTLIGHT



THE ROTARY CLUB OF THE POCONO MOUNTAINS has joined Brodhead Watershed Association as its newest Adopt-A-Stream site sponsor, supporting BWA's all-volunteer Streamwatch program through annual donations of \$300 or more. Welcome, Rotary!

Above: BWA Board member Al Johnson, left, presents an Adopt-A-Stream commemorative plaque to Rotary Club of the Pocono Mountains members Annie Messina, Blake Martin and Peter Pipolo.

Would you like to participate in the Adopt-a-Stream program? Email info@brodheadwatershed.org or go to www.brodheadwatershed.org/form_member.html.

Welcome, new members!

G. Kurt Zeisler of Wayne; Harriet Cramer of Stroudsburg; Rebecca Burlingame of Stroudsburg; Patrice Sheehan of East Stroudsburg; David & Sue Czahor of East Stroudsburg; Nancy & Jim Daniels of Stroudsburg; Daniel Mullen of East Stroudsburg; Melissa Penta of East Stroudsburg; Karin Hulme of Stroudsburg; James Pringle & Sally Griffith of Philadelphia; Robert Vaccaro of Bartonsville; David Wharton of Glenolden; Jane Snukis of East Stroudsburg; Tim & Linda Breen of Stroudsburg; Cathy Vogel of Saylorburg; John Yetter of East Stroudsburg; Bob Touw of East Stroudsburg; Gilda Spiotta of Basking Ridge, N.J.; David & Linda Levenberg of Elizabeth, N.J.; and Rick & Leslie Abbott of Bethesda, Md.

Wanted: Social media manager



Do you love to post and tweet? The BWA could use your help in managing our social media presence. If you'd like to volunteer, email info@brodheadwatershed.org.

Wanted: Board secretary

BWA's Board of Directors needs someone to take minutes (general notes; not word-for-word) at monthly meetings held in Stroudsburg and Mount Pocono areas. Stipend of \$50 per meeting. For information, email info@brodheadwatershed.org.

FRESH FISH FINDER

For a handy search mechanism to find out where the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission is stocking fish this year, go to fbweb.pa.gov/stocking/. The site can also tell you which species are being stocked.



BEE

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To attract pollinators to your garden, plan and plant for them with these methods:

GO NATIVE: Pollinators have evolved with native plants, which are best adapted to the local growing season, climate, and soils. Most pollinators feed on specific plant species; monarch butterfly larvae feed only on milkweed. Non-native plants may not provide pollinators with enough nectar or pollen, or may be inedible to butterfly or moth caterpillars.

Native plants can help gardeners as much as pollinators do: Natives often need less water than ornamentals, and they do not spread too much, as invasive plants do.

CAN THE CHEMICALS: Pesticides and herbicides kill pollinators. Along with habitat loss, introduced diseases, and pollution, pesticide poisoning accounts for much of the population loss.

CONSIDER THE CALENDAR:

Flowers should bloom in your garden throughout the growing season to supply food for pollinators. Plant willow, violet, and mayapple for spring; aster, joe-pye weed, and goldenrod for fall flowers.

THINK DIVERSITY: Plant a diversity of flowering species with abundant pollen and nectar, and specific plants for feeding butterfly and moth caterpillars. Once you've chosen a species that works in your garden, plant big patches of it for better foraging efficiency.

GET A LITTLE MESSY: Make small piles of branches to attract butterflies and moths. Provide hollow twigs, rotten logs with wood-boring beetle holes and bunchgrasses and leave stumps, old rodent burrows, and fallen plant material for nesting bees. Leave dead or dying trees for woodpeckers. Most native bees nest underground, so avoid using weed cloth or heavy mulch.

April 23: Earth Day extravaganza

Monroe County's environmentally minded people will come together Saturday, April 23, for an Earth Day celebration at Northampton Community College's Tannersville campus. The event will be held 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Monroe County Conservation District co-hosts the event with NCC, and many Monroe organizations - including BWA - will participate.

The free celebration will include children's activities (such as the popular Water Cycle Relay), live animals, musical entertainment, exhibitors, workshops, green campus tours, food vendors, and a visit from Dr. Waters.

Monroe residents may responsibly dispose of their unwanted items at the "Give



and Take" sponsored by Close the Loop, in addition to tire amnesty and e-cycling offered by the Waste Authority.

For information and a schedule of events, see mcearthday.org.

Would you like to volunteer? Go to the website above to sign up. Also needed: volunteers for half-hour shifts at the BWA booth. Email info@brodheadwatershed.org for information.



LARRY SCHWEIGER will be keynote speaker at the celebration. A lifelong environmentalist and native of western Pennsylvania, Schweiger was appointed president and chief executive officer of Penn Future in July 2015. Prior to that, he was president and CEO of the National Wildlife Federation.

CALENDAR

SWIFTWATER FOREST PRESERVE

(a free Get Outdoors Poconos hike)
10 to 11:30 a.m. Sunday, April 24
Explore 98 acres of preserved open space. To register, call 570-839-1120 or 570-629-2727. Email info@brodheadwatershed.org or see brodheadwatershed.org/gopoconos.

THUNDER SWAMP

(a free Get Outdoors Poconos hike)
10 to 11:30 a.m. Saturday, May 21
A favorite of Pike County hikers. To register, call 570-839-1120 or 570-629-2727. Email info@brodheadwatershed.org or see brodheadwatershed.org/gopoconos.

NATIVE PLANT SALE

Friday & Saturday, June 3-4
See front page for information.

(Make the plant sale a stop during MCHA's "History in Bloom" garden tour! See monroehistorical.org for information.)

POCONO PADDLE AT SAYLORS LAKE

Saturday, June 4
Don Miller will lead this lake adventure. Keep an eye on brodheadwatershed.org for information as the date approaches.

The Brodhead Watershed Association is a non-profit organization formed in 1989 to promote and preserve the environment of the Brodhead watershed and the water quality of the Brodhead, Cherry, Marshalls, McMichael, Paradise and Pocono creeks and their tributaries.

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