

NEWS RELEASE

From the Brodhead Watershed Association

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE Monday, July 24, 2017

Project will guide Monroe leaders in protecting land that protects drinking water naturally

Keeping drinking water safe the old-fashioned way — by not polluting it in the first place — is cheaper, easier and more natural than trying to fix it after it's been contaminated. Monroe County municipal leaders need accurate, complete information to make good choices for preserving land to keep drinking water safe.

Providing that information is the purpose of a new partnership between Brodhead Watershed Association and Monroe County Planning Commission, with funding from the Open Space Institute. The goal is to create a leaders' guide based on water science, with detailed maps of land that is most important to keeping water pure naturally.

The "Plan for Clean Water" project team also includes representatives from Pocono Heritage Land Trust, The Nature Conservancy, Wildlands Conservancy, Monroe County Conservation District, North Pocono CARE and Aquashicola-Pohopoco Watershed Association, Brodhead Creek Regional Authority, and municipalities such as Smithfield and Stroud townships.

Many municipalities have funds to protect forested land and water, but need information to use those funds wisely — and to explain the "why" of their decisions to constituents.

The reports, maps and data this project provides will help officials do just that. The research will pinpoint properties that would provide the most protection for water quality and quantity if they remain natural and undeveloped.

"The study will look at properties throughout the county, not just within the Brodhead watershed," says Bob Heil, BWA executive director. "We hope this way of looking at water issues — taking into account both political boundaries and watershed boundaries — will be a model for other watershed organizations."

The summary report, "Our Land, Our Water," will set out the findings of the technical studies in plain English. It will include a matrix of lands important for drinking-water protection, stream flow and quality, and groundwater recharge. Detailed maps will make clear the best land for protecting water.

The work will be completed by late 2018, and delivered to county and municipal elected officials — with tailored guidance for each.

Jackson, Paradise, Smithfield and other municipalities have such funds available. Some have asked for exactly this kind of information. Now, they'll have concrete guidance for protecting citizens' drinking water.

This project was supported through the Open Space Institute's Delaware River Watershed Protection Fund, which is made possible with a lead grant from the William Penn Foundation. The Delaware Watershed Protection Program seeks to ensure abundant, clean water within the 13,000 square mile drainage of the Delaware River.

For information about the program, visit brodheadwatershed.org/PlanforCleanWater.html.

Brodhead Watershed Association is a nonprofit environmental organization formed in 1989. BWA is dedicated to protecting and preserving water resources and the environment of the Brodhead watershed, and the water quality of the Brodhead, Cherry, Marshalls, McMichael, Paradise and Pocono creeks and their tributaries. BWA assists municipalities, residents, businesses and groups with protecting natural resources through education, workshops, seminars, public programs and stream monitoring. For information: info@brodheadwatershed.org or 570-839-1120.