

Help keep your water clean

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The Brodhead Watershed Association turns 20 this year, and it's hard to think of a volunteer group that has done more good for a dynamic Monroe County. The association is calling for new volunteers to serve as stream watchers. This is a good opportunity for anyone who values a clean glass of water or who wants to fish in an unpolluted stream.

The BWA formed in 1989, a partnership of environmental activists, concerned developers and interested citizens who wanted to make sure that as Monroe County grew, its pristine streams, long a draw to trout fishermen and other outdoor lovers, did not become polluted.

Stream watchers visit an assigned location near their home once every month to sample and report on the water quality. Stream watchers make field notes — How high or low is the water? Is it clear or muddy? Does the water have any odor? — and at home, use a kit to check and record chemical qualities of the water sample.

Some BWA stream watchers have been at it for many years. Others move on to new interests. So the BWA is constantly recruiting and training volunteers to cover the 285-square-mile watershed, which extends from just beyond Monroe County's northern border down to Stroudsburg and East Stroudsburg, and west to Brodheadsville. Stream watch sites dot the Brodhead, Marshalls, McMichael, Paradise and Pocono creeks and their tributaries.

Monroe County has added scores of new housing developments, strip malls, schools and other buildings over the past 20 years. The earth moving at building sites can threaten stream quality. Increased storm water runoff poses its own challenges. More sewage flows into streams and into on-site septic systems.

BWA will hold a recruiting session at 9 a.m. Saturday, April 25, at the Pocono Avian Research Center, off Route 390 behind The Oaks senior housing center. Or call Darryl Speicher at (570) 595-9324 for more information. Learn more about how stream watchers help to protect the Brodhead and its many tributaries. Stream watchers may be the first to notice that lawn fertilizer is reaching an area stream, or that a sewage treatment plant is malfunctioning. BWA uses the information locally and submits it to a statewide data base.

Water quality is an issue of concern to everyone. Become a stream watcher, and help pass down a heritage of clean water to your children and grandchildren.