



## CLIMATE CORNER

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By Ann Foster for Brodhead Watershed Association

# Climate change: Local impacts, municipal action

*Editor's note: This is the first in a 2021 series of articles on the impacts of climate change on our water resources and municipal government's role in working toward a solution.*

The connection between a warming climate and our water resources is indisputable.

Credible science supports that changes are already occurring and are projected to escalate in the upcoming decades if immediate action is not taken to curb carbon emissions caused largely by our dependence on carbon-emitting fossil fuels and methane gas products. The Brodhead watershed, with its plethora of coldwater resources, is not exempt from degradation of our waterways caused by climate change.

That is why our Climate Action Committee has made it a priority in 2021 to provide education on the impact a warming climate is having on our water resources and offer possible actions that can be taken.

Many of us are already familiar with the national, international, and personal changes that must occur to slow the warming of our planet, but few know that local government and communities have critical roles to play as well. Local actions are increasingly important.

That's why in 2021 we'll reach out to you, BWA's members, and directly to municipal leaders, to provide both education and resources. In a series of articles we'll discuss the science – what is happening and why, the impacts on our water resources, existing infrastructure, outdated stormwater management plans, and the costs in terms of infrastructure, water resources, and human services.

But we won't stop there. We'll discuss actions that can be taken on the local level – greenhouse gas inventories and climate action plans that your borough, municipality, or county can begin to develop. Climate action plans to not only cut carbon emissions, but to take steps toward developing a clean energy economy and save money by planning for projected weather patterns instead of using models based upon obsolete weather patterns of the past.

And we'll supply a few resources your local government can use to “get the ball rolling” and provide examples of other communities in Pennsylvania that are already making this work.

But we can't go at it alone. We need you, BWA members, to share your input: Can you become familiar with these issues and on what can be done by your local governments? Then you'll know the questions to ask your local leaders and become aware of how you can help them along the way.

*Ann Foster chairs Brodhead Watershed Association's Climate Action Committee.*