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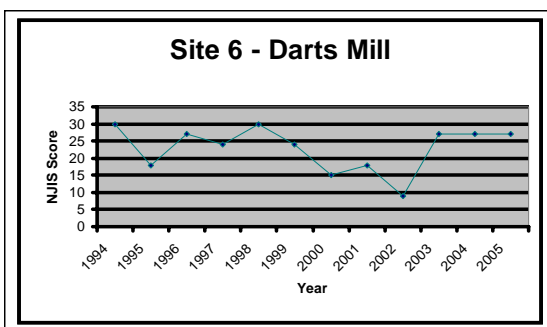
Health of South Branch Revealed at 12th Annual Monitoring Conference

By Nicole Rahman, Program Director

On Saturday, November 12, 2005, we presented the results of the 2005 river monitoring season. A presentation about "An Overview of Black Fly Biology, Surveillance, and Control" was the highlight of the event, presented by Tadhg Rainey, Director of the Mosquito and Vector Control Program for the Hunterdon County Department of Health in Flemington, NJ. He shared many interesting facts about black flies. One fact surprised a lot of people — there are many different species of black flies in New Jersey, but only a few of them actually bite humans, and even then it's only the females who bite. Also, despite the itchy bumps some can leave behind, black flies are an important food source for other animals such as fish and birds.

This is the 12th year of collecting data at 18 sites along the South Branch Raritan River and its tributaries for our volunteer biological monitoring program. Every June, trained volunteer "water stewards" collect a "bug" sample at an assigned site within the South Branch Raritan River watershed. Volunteers follow an EPA approved protocol to ensure accuracy and precision in collection of data. The sample is then sent to a certified lab for complete analysis. Different species of juvenile "bugs" that live on the bottom of river can tell us much about the quality of the water. Through the analysis of these "bugs," each site is assigned a New Jersey Impairment Score (NJIS) of non-

impaired, moderately impaired, or severely impaired. Of the 18 sites monitored this year, 15 were non-impaired, 3 were moderately impaired, and none were severely impaired. This is an improvement from the eight moderately impaired sites two years ago, and the four sites last year. It will be interesting to see if this upward trend continues next year.



This graph depicts the NJIS over time. The higher the score, the better the water quality.

Now that we have collected 12 years of data, it's time to analyze it further and document any trends that are revealed in a comprehensive report. We've received a \$10,000 grant from the EPA to use towards doing this analysis. The analyzed data can be used to help improve and protect the

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Check out our web site at www.sbwa.org.

After you read this newsletter, please pass it on to a friend or neighbor and ask them to join SBWA. Thank you.



An Introduction



Bill Kibler, Executive
Director

Hello. My name is Bill Kibler. I'm proud to be the Executive Director of the South Branch Watershed Association.

I'm new around here.

You can tell because I don't know how to pronounce "Sergeantsville" properly, because the traffic circles in Flemington still baffle me, and because I haven't yet mastered when I'm supposed to make my left turn from the right lane.

That and I still wander around our watershed mouth agape, like the tourists in Manhattan.

Last Friday, I went out to have a look at the southern end of the South Branch watershed. It was a sunny day, the bright blue winter sky reflected in the River, and I saw a lot of special places that tend to stay hidden when the leaves are out. I love traveling through the cradle of the South Branch: the River winding through valleys that are home to our members, the old mills, architecturally remarkable bridges, historic homes, and working farms. I'm regularly humbled to find such beautiful places hidden away in the most densely populated state in the union.

My wife, Susan, and I moved to our adoptive hometown of Califon three years ago. We're both from upstate New York originally, we were living in Switzerland in 2002, and we prepared to move to New Jersey with trepidation. We were captivated by what we discovered. When we found an old house on the South Branch in Califon for sale, we were hooked. We have lived in many places, but it was nice to find a home.

As a kid I spent a lot of time outdoors, and the first thing I can remember wanting to be when I grew up was Dan'l Boone. So when I went to West Point, my choice of majors was obvious — environmental science. After graduating, I spent a number of years as a Corps of Engineers officer, and then decided that I wanted to spend more time working for the environment. That choice took me to the Syracuse University College of Law. My legal practice focused on environmental and land use law, and I learned to be an effective advocate for my clients. When the opportunity arose to work for the South Branch Watershed Association, I knew I'd finally found my professional home. As an attorney, the South Branch is my ideal client.

My sincere gratitude to our Board of Trustees for entrusting me with this opportunity.

Many thanks to Don Einhorn for handing to me a well-run, professional organization. And thank you, the members, for your support. Like you, I love the South Branch and I love what I do. I look forward to meeting you and I'm excited to work with you to protect the water resources of the South Branch watershed.



16th Annual SBWA Stream Clean-up on April 22



Some of the Trash Collected Last Year at Round Valley Reservoir

Our 16th Annual Spring River Clean-up will be held on Saturday, April 22nd, from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. Volunteers are needed to help clean up the river and surrounding land throughout the entire watershed from Budd Lake in Mount Olive Township to the confluence in Branchburg. Come join us and spend the morning giving back to your community!

Anyone can participate! Individuals, families, scouts, schools, churches, senior citizen groups, and any others are all welcome to join us. Last year, over 400 volunteers collected several tons of trash at 18 sites throughout the watershed. The Association needs your help to have a successful clean-up again this year!

For more information or to register, please contact Lawrence Lewis, AmeriCorps Watershed Ambassador, at 908-782-0422 ext. 13, or via email at lawrence@sbwa.org. (See article by Lawrence on page 6.)



Hauling Trash Away from the River in Califon

Join Us at the River This Spring for Group "Bug" Studies

Spring is almost here and along with it comes the Waterways Stewardship Project, our core environmental education program. This program provides in-class, in-field, and computer-based environmental education designed to foster students' appreciation for the natural world, from the tiniest "bug" that lives in the bottom of their neighborhood stream to the larger ecosystem supported by the watershed in which they live. Recognizing the need to establish a human connection with the natural world, the program provides students with the very tangible and personal experience of discovering "hidden" aquatic life while conducting in-field observations and experiments, the results of which can be used to form a hypothesis in a real life science project directly related to the community in which they live. This experience, coupled with the knowledge gained during their in-class sessions, promotes a sense of stewardship for

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MARK YOUR 2006 CALENDAR

Community Well Testing Check the web site at www.sbwa.org for additional dates.

Alexandria Township — April 26

Lebanon Township — May 22

Hunterdon County Green Table — March 16 at Echo Hill Lodge 8:00 — 10:00 a.m.

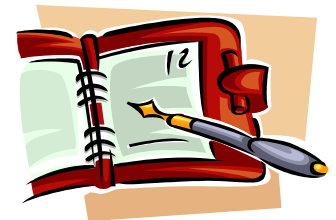
Topic: *Regional Watershed Management Planning*. See related article on page 4.

Annual Membership Meeting and Dinner — March 24 — See article on page 8.

Spring River Clean-up — April 22 — See details above.

"Ride for the River" Motorcycle Poker Run Fundraiser — May 20 — Details will be in the next issue.

Visit the Calendar page on the SBWA web site at www.sbwa.org for dates of other meetings and events throughout the year.



Mark your day to volunteer at SBWA. Please look at the SBWA web site for a list of volunteer opportunities.



THE HUNTERDON COUNTY GREEN TABLE SERIES

By Michael Rehman, Watershed Project Manager

Land preservation in Hunterdon County depends on the cooperative efforts of individuals, non-profit organizations, municipalities, the county, and the State. In response to the high interest level in land conservation, the Hunterdon County Green Table was organized in 2001 by the South Branch Watershed Association (SBWA), Hunterdon Land Trust Alliance, NJ's Department of Environmental Protection Green Acres Program, and Hunterdon County's Department of Parks & Recreation to create a forum for land conservation leaders in Hunterdon County. The mission of the Green Table is to provide a forum for the exchange of information and ideas in order to improve communication, develop successful partnership ventures, identify land preservation resources, and broaden awareness of conservation efforts throughout the county.

Some of the topics covered include "Land Preservation Efforts across Municipal Boundaries" and "Conservation Easements I: Drafting Easements" presented by Margaret Waldox from the Hunterdon Land Trust Alliance; The "Spruce Run Initiative" presented by Dan VanAbs, PhD., with the NJ Water Supply Authority; "Hunterdon's Historic Structures and Landscapes" presented by Dan Saunders, Principal Historic Preservation Specialist with New Jersey's Historic Preservation Office; and a two-part session led by Tim Dunne, a biologist from the Natural Resources Conservation Service, on Managing Grassland Habitats in New Jersey which included a field session at a local grassland.

The Green Table forums have been a success, based on the positive feedback received from the participants in attendance. The forums are held on the 3rd Thursday of every other month from 8-10 a.m. at the Echo Hill Environmental Education Center adjacent to the SBWA office. This meeting time has proved to be popular as we have averaged between 25 and 50 participants at each of the Green Table forums. The SBWA has formed a steering committee to help select topics and speakers. The members of the steering committee were selected based on their involvement with land preservation efforts in Hunterdon County.

The next round of Green Table Forums are:

March 16th, 2006: Regional Watershed Management Planning

May 18th, 2006: Route 29 Scenic Byway Management Plan Update

If you have any questions on the upcoming topics or have any good ideas for future topics, please do not hesitate to contact us (call us at 908-782-0422 or email us at info@sbwa.org). We hope to see you at these highly educational and informative sessions!



Special Thanks To...

- Craig Proctor — donating a complete Pentium 3 computer system!

Belated Special Thanks To...

- Carl Weber of Central Liquors in Flemington — arranged for the vendors; provided signs, coolers and ice.
- Phil Ward of American Distributors — donated bottle of wine valued at \$700 for the silent auction.

For their contributions to the success of the October 2005 Wine Tasting Event.



WELCOME NEW MEMBERS *October 2005 thru January 2006*

John and Susan Clausen
Norm Crawford
Richard Dieterly
Thom Donnelly

Mitchell Epstein
Brendan Haines
Ellie Hilken
John and Theresa Moncado

George and Linda Muller
Ronald Pack
Richard and Heather Prant
Matthew and Laura Spann

It is always a pleasure to welcome new members. Please call us if you need information or have a concern about water quality or potential threats to our watershed. Also, please stop by our office to learn about the volunteer opportunities for you to help us continue our important work.

To All Our Members: Are your friends and neighbors members?

We can help you convince your friends and neighbors that membership in SBWA means helping to preserve a healthy watershed for the future. We have membership kits for prospective members that we can send to you or directly to your referral.

Another Note to Our Members: Are your employers corporate members?

Call us at 908-782-0422 to find out if your employer is a corporate member of the SBWA. Together, we can expand the ranks of the good corporate citizens within the watershed.

Join Us at the River This Spring for Group "Bug" Studies, continued from page 3



Holland Brook School Students Collecting Macroinvertebrates at the South Branch in Three Bridges.

the environment and an appreciation of the ways that human behavior can positively or negatively impact natural systems.

This program is currently being offered for grades 3 – 8. Topics include watersheds, groundwater, and macroinvertebrates. Schools, home school groups, and others are welcome to participate. Space is limited and fills quickly, so spread the word now!

Please call Nicole Rahman at 908-782-0422 ext. 14 for more information, or to schedule.



What Did We Catch?!
Holland Brook School Students Checking out Their catch at the South Branch Raritan River in Three Bridges.

SBWA STAFF: Bill Kibler, Executive Director; Nicole Rahman, Program Director; Michael Rehman, Watershed Project Manager; Dee Ely, Office Manager; and Mary Licetti, Accounting.

2005 OFFICERS: *President:* James Hill *Vice President:* Johannah Weinhofer
Secretary: Patricia Stover *Treasurer:* Ken Jagel

2005 TRUSTEES: Raymond Drake, Karen Elbert, Oliver Elbert, Kenneth Fisher, Amy S. Greene, Peter Kwiatek, Elizabeth (Tish) Plum, Fred Puelle, Kay Serebrakian, Sam Stothoff, and John Williamson

Contact SBWA at 908-782-0422 or email us at info@sbwa.org.



New Arrival: 2005–2006 AmeriCorps Watershed Ambassador

Another new staff introduction! LJ is an AmeriCorps member and is serving as a NJ Watershed Ambassador for 2005-2006. His time is split between the NJ Department of Environmental Protection, the Upper Raritan Watershed Association, and the South Branch Watershed Association. He will play a major role in helping us to coordinate and implement our annual stream clean up this spring. A special note of thanks to last year's Watershed Ambassador, Patrick Gallagher, who is now the Watershed Projects Manager for the Upper Raritan Watershed Association.

Lawrence J Lewis is the name my mother gave me, and I am 2005-2006's AmeriCorps member with the New Jersey Watershed Ambassadors Program. This year I will be working in Watershed Management Area 8, which is the North and South Branch Raritan. My base office is located within the Fairview Farm at the Upper Raritan Watershed Association in Gladstone, New Jersey. I will be working to raise public awareness about local watershed management issues and helping to increase public involvement in reducing water pollution.

I graduated from Kean University in 2005 with a bachelor's degree in earth science. The two minors I have include communications and meteorology. This New Jersey Watershed Ambassadors Program serves as a challenge to me and I am looking forward to having a positive impact on it, while still increasing my education of the environment.

I am available to make presentations to schools, corporations, and community organizations. These presentations will include information about what watersheds are, and the different non-point source pollution issues we have here in New Jersey. We hope that after group members are educated on these issues, they will become more involved by volunteer stream monitoring.

Volunteer Stream Monitoring combines two techniques to help determine the health of the water in an area. I am available to train motivated people on both, the visual and biological aspects in order to understand the negative effects of non-point source pollution in New Jersey's waterways.

The relationship between the environment and people is priceless, and I look forward to helping strengthen that relationship. If I can be of assistance in anyway, please don't hesitate to contact me. We could arrange presentations, stream assessments, stream clean-ups, and different types of training. Remember, all it takes is one person to make a difference, but with many people there is no limit. Give me a call at 908-782-0422 ext. 13, or email me at lawrence@sbwa.org. Together, we can make this an unforgettable experience.



12th Annual Monitoring Conference, continued from page 1

water quality within the watershed. A comprehensive analysis can tell us what streams may be showing signs of stress. It's not unlike having your pulse and blood pressure checked during an annual physical. If one reading is off, it usually means something is going on. These bugs are the pulse of the watershed system, they tell us if we need to look further to determine what is causing problems. This information can then be used to properly plan for how development is accommodated or curtailed and where restoration efforts need to be focused.



Black Fly Adult
(not life-size!!)

Thanks to all of the volunteers, monitoring advisory committee members, spring workshop trainers, and sponsors. Without all of these dedicated people, this monitoring program wouldn't be possible.

For more information about becoming a volunteer monitor, please contact Nicole Rahman at 908-782-0422 ext. 14.

AMERICAN HOLLY

American Holly, *Ilex opaca*, is easily identifiable, with its dark green leaves, leathery and tough to the touch with "prickly" edges. Between April and June, the Holly shows its colors with small white flowers. The Holly also produces a fruit, called drupes, which are green initially, but turn to a bright red upon ripening. These drupes grow between September and November and stay on the tree throughout the winter. The presence of the bright red drupes over the winter months is an easy way to identify the American Holly. Holly's are often associated with Oaks, Hickories, pines, Sweetgum, and American Beech trees to name a few. American Holly is also a widely used food source by a variety of fauna, including Wild Turkeys, Cedar Waxwings, American Goldfinches, Eastern Gray Squirrels, Eastern Chipmunks, Red Fox, Eastern Cottontails and the Eastern Box Turtle. These animals also serve as dispersal agents for the seeds of the Holly to be sowed elsewhere. Insects, most notably bees, wasps and moths, pollinate the flowers. Our most familiar use of the American Holly is as Christmas decoration, but it is also an excellent wildlife attractor as part of your lawn's landscape. American Holly wood has been used to make handles, rulers, violin pegs and piano keys as well.

By Michael Rehman, Watershed Project Manager



Wish List...

- Computers - Pentium 3 equivalent or greater
- Copies of "A Guide to Common Freshwater Invertebrates of North America" by J. Reese Voshell, Jr., 2002, McDonald and Woodward Pub. Co., ISBN 0939923874
- Thesaurus – Hardcover – 1996 or newer
- LCD/Video projectors for PowerPoint presentations
- Microsoft Windows 98, 2000, ME, or XP - original CD's with license (OEM only w/computer)
- Microsoft Office 2000, XP, or 2003 - original CD's with license
- Slide projector case, cordless remote control, and spare bulbs
- Clipboards

Please call first to see if our need has already been met. Thanks!



Annual Membership Meeting and Dinner

All members of SBWA are invited to attend the 2006 Annual Dinner and Meeting on Friday, March 24, 2006. The meeting will be at the *Mangia Bene* restaurant located on Route 202/31 in Flemington, from 6:00 p.m. to 10 p.m. The cost of the buffet dinner is \$30.00 per person. The special guest speaker will be Dan Bacon, who is a wildlife photographer and co-owner of the Lakota Wolf Preserve in Columbia, NJ. You can find out more about the Preserve at www.lakotawolf.com.

We encourage you to come out and celebrate our accomplishments from 2005 and hear about plans for 2006 and beyond!

For more information about, and tickets for the dinner, please call Dee Ely at 908-782-0422 ext. 10.



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