



# The Current

South Branch Watershed Association, Inc. Established 1959

... published quarterly at the Hermia Lechner House

## Local Waterways Are Healthy According to Stream Critters

By Nicole Rahman, Program Director

On Saturday, November 14, 2009, at the Echo Hill Environmental Education Area, we presented the results of our 2009 river monitoring season at our 16th annual Volunteer Biological Monitoring Conference. This was the 16th year of collecting biological data at 20 sites along the South Branch of the Raritan River and its tributaries. Two of those sites were new this year – High Bridge and Mulhockaway Creek!

Nicole Rahman, Program Director for the SBWA, along with two SBWA Volunteer Monitors, Alan Rennie from Califon Borough and Lisa Rodriguez from Glen Gardner Borough, presented this year's monitoring results and water quality trends seen over time. Bill Honachefsky, Section Chief, NJ DEP Bureau of Freshwater and Biological Monitoring, spoke about "Stressor Identification - Putting the Pieces Together." Honachefsky explained that there are many stressors, such as polluted runoff from parking lots and construction sites, in the South Branch of the Raritan River watershed that can impair water quality. He then discussed ways to prevent or reduce these stressors, which would help to improve water quality.

Every June trained volunteers collect a macroinvertebrate, or "bug" sample at their assigned sites along the river. They follow specific protocols to maintain accuracy and precision in the data collection. This bug sample is analyzed at a certified lab. The species of bugs present tells us whether the river is healthy or not. Certain bugs can live in polluted water, but others cannot. If you find a large number and variety types of bugs that need clean water to survive, you know you have a healthy river.



Participants at this year's Monitoring Conference.

Of the 20 sites monitored this year, 18 were non-impaired, 2 were moderately impaired, and none were severely impaired. This is a definite improvement over last year's results of 10 non-impaired and 8 moderately impaired. However, many of the non-impaired sites this year were on the low end of the range, so we need to keep an eye on these sites to see if they remain non-impaired next year, or trend downward in terms of water quality. With 16 years of data collected so far, it will be interesting to follow any trends in water quality that may be present.

Thanks to all of our volunteers, monitoring advisory committee members, spring workshop trainers, and sponsors. These dedicated people make the monitoring program possible. If you would like to be a monitoring volunteer, our spring training workshop will be held on Saturday, June 5, 2010 from 8:30 am - 12 pm.

For more information about the conference, or about becoming a volunteer monitor, please call Nicole Rahman, Program Director, at 908-782-0422 ext.14, or visit the Association's website at [www.sbwa.org](http://www.sbwa.org).

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**Winter 2010**

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SBWA is a proud member of Earth Share of New Jersey

Please check out our web site.  
[www.sbwa.org](http://www.sbwa.org)





## The Governor's Transition Team Committee Report

By Bill Kibler, Executive Director

On February 2, 2010, the Newark Star-Ledger published my letter to the editor voicing my concerns about Governor Christie's transition team report on the Highlands. The following day it was published by the Trenton Times as an op-ed piece. I am deeply concerned that the transition team report reflects an uncaring attitude in the new administration about water quality and the state of our environment in New Jersey. The text of the letter is reprinted below.

January 25, 2010

Dear Editor:

*The report from Governor Christie's transition committee on state authorities may be well-intentioned, but it is a disaster on multiple levels.*

*The transition team committee on state authorities was charged with reviewing the operations of state authorities, including the Highlands Council, and providing recommendations to Governor Christie. Regardless of one's personal opinion of the Highlands Act and the Highlands Council, it was incumbent upon the transition team to do its homework before presenting its reports to the Governor. In this case, the authorities committee did not interview John Weingart, the former chairman of the Highlands Council, or Jack Schrier, the acting chairman, both of whom were on the Council since its inception and both of whom have a great deal of institutional knowledge to share. In fact, the committee did not interview a single member of the Highlands Council. The committee did not interview Eileen Swan, the executive director of the Highlands Council or any of her staff. The committee did not ask for input from Highlands stakeholders. The New Jersey Highlands Coalition was not asked for its input (even though it was offered, unsolicited), and neither were the landowners' groups, as far as I can tell. No member of the Highlands Council or any stakeholder group was made a member of the transition committee dealing with the Highlands. I consider that a glaring shortfall for an issue as contentious and important as the Highlands.*

*Although reasonable minds can disagree on Highlands issues, a reasonable committee would have done its homework instead of offering our new Governor a report that is unsupported by substantive research and is worth little more than gossip. If the Governor is looking for gossip and innuendo, I recommend he pick up a copy of the National Inquirer. If he's looking for helpful recommendations on the Highlands, I recommend he burn this report and start over. Start by talking to people who know the Highlands.*

*Sincerely,  
William S. Kibler  
Executive Director, South Branch Watershed Association*



### Find us On Facebook



Check out our page on Facebook. Go to [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com), sign in, search for "South Branch Watershed Association" and sign up as a fan. We

will be using our Facebook page to keep you informed of events and activities. Let us know what you think of our page.



## Help Clean Up the South Branch Raritan River on April 24

We will hold our 20th Annual Spring River Clean-Up on Saturday, April 24 from 9:00 a.m. to noon. Volunteers are needed to help clean up the river and surrounding land at 21 sites throughout the entire watershed from the river's beginning at Budd Lake in Mount Olive Township to its end in Branchburg. Come join us and spend the morning making your community sparkle!

Anyone can participate! Individuals, scouts, schools, churches, and senior citizen groups are just some of the people who have participated in the past. Last year, over 700 volunteers collected over four tons of trash throughout the watershed. We need your help to have a successful clean up again this year!

For more information or to volunteer, please contact Jeremy Carlson at 908-782-0422 ext 16 or e-mail [jercarlson@sbwa.org](mailto:jercarlson@sbwa.org). Please pre-register by Tuesday, April 20, 2010.

## Eighth Annual Ride for the River Fundraiser on May 15



On Saturday, May 15, SBWA is holding its eighth annual Ride for the River fundraiser, a Motorcycle Poker Run that highlights the beauty of the South Branch Raritan River Watershed.

The SBWA is seeking sponsors for the event. Last year's event was sponsored by over 40 businesses and individuals whose names were featured at the event. The SBWA is also soliciting donations of prizes for the participants.

Details will be published in the next issue of *The Current* and on our website.

## Third Annual Treasures of the South Branch on June 12



Mark your calendars for this great event! Last year over 500 people enjoyed the many festivities celebrating all that the South Branch of the Raritan River has to offer in the areas of environment, recreation, and history.

Volunteers are needed to help. If you are interested in sponsoring or exhibiting at this event, please call Lynn Becker at 908-782-0422, ext. 13. Details on sponsorships, exhibiting, and highlights from last year are on our web site [www.sbwa.org](http://www.sbwa.org).

## MARK YOUR 2010 CALENDAR

**Community Well Testing** — Please check our web site for dates and locations.

- **Union Township — April 14**
- **Alexandria Township — April 19**
- **Lebanon Township — May 3**

**Hunterdon County Green Table Forums** — Please check our web site for dates and topics.

**Earth Share Celebrates New Jersey — March 26** at Laurita Winery in New Egypt. Check their web site ([www.earthsharenj.org](http://www.earthsharenj.org)) for details.

**Annual Member Meeting and Dinner — March 26.** See details on page 8.

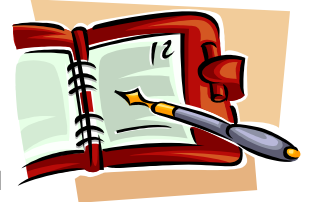
**Annual Spring River Clean-up — April 24.** See article above.

**Annual Ride for the River Fundraiser — May 15.** See article above.

**Annual Treasures of the South Branch — June 12.** See article above.

**Volunteer Monitoring Spring Training Workshop — June 5.** The next issue of this newsletter will have details. Also check our web site. See related article on page 1.

Visit the Calendar page on the SBWA web site [www.sbwa.org](http://www.sbwa.org) for dates of other meetings and events throughout the year.



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



## Member Profile

Name: Ilona English  
Resident of: East Amwell Township  
Member of SBWA since: 2003



Ilona English and her horse Matterhorn

Ilona and her husband Terry moved to East Amwell over 25 years ago and currently own a 22 acre horse farm in the Amwell Valley. A tributary of the Back Brook crosses their farm. When the Ridge Golf Course was approved for construction by East Amwell Township, they became increasingly more concerned about the water quality of the scenic Back Brook and especially the possibility of pollution caused by herbicides. This led them to become active with the SBWA to provide funding to monitor the water quality of the Back Brook and provide data on the water quality. The following comments from Ilona demonstrate her passion and action on behalf of the environment, and specifically the South Branch of the Raritan River:

*"I believe strongly that the issue of water pollution in New Jersey has often been handled by passing ordinances that are broad based and at times onerous to landowners – specifically farms. We need to take the approach of documenting water quality to provide data that will assist not only in identifying where and what pollution does or does not exist but to also use the data to identify point source pollution. This offers a more feasible and affordable method of rectifying problems and eliminating pollution at the source.*

*Our farm in East Amwell is our "dream farm" and we have worked very hard to not only maintain its historic home and barns but to take specific care in assuring that any new construction is sensitive to its historic character and is as non-intrusive as possible to the landscape. We installed large underground collection tanks for storm water management when we built our riding arena to collect rain water. The water is used to irrigate the riding surface and surrounding plantings so we don't have to use well water. The arena roof is also the location of our 27.8KW solar system which provides all of our electricity and an excess that we sell back to the grid. We feel this is our "Green" contribution to the environment.*

*Both Terry and I love trees. Terry has served on the Board of the Mohonk Preserve in New York for a decade assisting with their efforts to preserve and plant new trees. We have so far planted over 40 trees on our farm and have an additional 30 planned for this coming Spring. We have focused on native trees and double fenced our pastures to assure the trees will not be damaged by the horses. Planting trees to provide additional storm water management helps to diminish excessive top soil run-off into our brooks and rivers.*

*I have also been very active in the issue of historic bridge preservation in Hunterdon County. Too often the maintenance on our historic bridges has been deficient and the County has taken the approach of replacement over repair. This approach has all too often resulted in bridges that do not fit the landscape but bridges that also increase traffic and speed of traffic. A significant negative affect of these projects has been the disturbance to the banks of the brooks and rivers – and the brooks and rivers themselves. This has consistently resulted in an increase in the velocity of the water flow not only at the site of the work but at ever increasing rates downstream. This results in damage of significant proportions and specifically affects many of our mature trees along the river banks.*

*I praise the SBWA for their fine work in bringing increased awareness to the responsibility we all have to be stewards of our waterways – regardless of size. From the tributaries to the large rivers, it is one continuous link through all of our properties. We share the benefits and the beauty and we all share in managing this resource."*

SBWA is honored and grateful for such a dedicated member and for her actions on behalf of our watershed.



## THANK YOU NEW MEMBERS of 2009

Rick and Christie Alderman  
 Carl Andres  
 Richard Balak  
 Edmund and Andrea Becker  
 Edward Becker  
 Myron Bednar  
 Thomas and Deborah Biolsi  
 William and Margaret Browne  
 James and Genevieve Celentano  
 George and Joan Dandeo  
 David and Lindsay Dunne  
 Deedee Eisenberg  
 Sam and Dell Guynes  
 Young and Hyon Sook Hahn

Christine Hamill  
 Paul Hample  
 Keith and Dianna Harney  
 Terry Hayth  
 Geoffrey and Jennifer Hunt  
 Steven Krommenhoek  
 Alejandro and Linda Lara  
 Peter and Peggy Lefkin  
 America Lopez-Luis  
 Theresa Luksa  
 William and Marian Mardak  
 David and Lisa Maslankowski  
 Brett and Stephanie Melworm  
 Mary Monahan

Paul and Donna Morris  
 Joseph and Christine Olivo  
 Anne Marie Queenan  
 Marianne Rampulla  
 Juan and Janelle Reinoso  
 Rian and Kristen Robison  
 Art and Ignazia Schuler  
 Eric Sirota and Cara London  
 Robin Smith  
 Thomas and Camille Smith  
 Richard and Anne VanSickle  
 Joseph and Lois Zarish

Thank you to all of our new members who joined in 2009! We hope that you have enjoyed and benefited from your association with SBWA. Please call or e-mail with any comments or questions that you may have. We appreciate your commitment to keeping our river clean and beautiful, and look forward to a long relationship with you.

### We Are Going Greener!

For years we have used 100% recycled paper for printing *The Current*. Beginning with the Spring 2010 issue of this newsletter, we are going even greener! Instead of mailing a paper copy of the newsletter, we will be sending you an e-mail message. This e-mail, announcing the availability of the latest issue, will also include a link to the newsletter on our web site.

Because we will also be using e-mail to keep members up to date on SBWA news and activities, it is very important that you keep us updated with your current e-mail address. Please send an e-mail to [lynnbecker@sbwa.org](mailto:lynnbecker@sbwa.org) with "SBWA News" as the subject. Be sure to include your full name. Thank you for helping with this tree-saving and cost-saving initiative.

Rest assured — we will not share our list or overwhelm you with spam!

**SBWA STAFF:** **Bill Kibler**, Executive Director; **Nicole Rahman**, Program Director; **Tom Southard**, Neshanic Project Manager; **Lynn Becker**, Director of Development and Member Relations; **Dee Ely**, Office Manager; **Mary Licetti**, Finance Director; **Jeremy Carlson**, Americorps Watershed Ambassador; **Alan Rennie**, **Kandi Kaczetow**, **Marie Comerford**, **Tom Southard**, **Harold Blackstone**, **Henry Cattle**, **Antoinette Boccuzzi**, and **Pat Dobson**, Environmental Educators.

**2010 OFFICERS:** *President:* Fred Puelle; *Vice President:* James Hill; *Secretary:* Skip Jonas; *Treasurer:* Christopher Trofimov.

**2009 TRUSTEES:** Randy Block, Dave Clapp, Karen Elbert, Ken Jagel, Nick Romanenko, Kay Serebrakian, and John Williamson

Contact SBWA at 908-782-0422 or e-mail us at [info@sbwa.org](mailto:info@sbwa.org).



**Thanks to all who donated to our 2009 Annual Appeal.**

Thank you to all who contributed to our Annual Appeal for 2009. Your support is so important to the work we do to protect and enhance the water resources of the South Branch. We had a record number of donors this year which was very gratifying. Our special thanks to our River Watch Club members listed below and to all who contributed to this special year-end appeal.

All 2009 Annual Appeal contributors will be recognized in the 2009 Annual Report that will be distributed at the Annual Member Meeting and Dinner on March 26, 2010. All contributors will be listed on our website, [www.sbwa.org](http://www.sbwa.org).

River Steward (\$1,000 +)

Cassa Family Fund For Charitable Giving

Ilona English  
Fred and Rose Puelle

Patricia Stover

Stream Steward (\$500—\$999)

Connie and Sally Kallas  
Verna Stothoff

Oliver and Karen Elbert

Site Steward (\$250—\$499)

Ira and June Kapp

Richard Stothoff

Friend of the River (\$150—\$249)

Anita Allen  
Lynn Becker  
David Clapp  
Tish Plum Doggett  
Robert and Juliana Drinane

Phil and Lucy Fleming  
Amy S. Greene Environmental Consultants, Inc.  
Elizabeth Hunton and Brian Bosenberg  
Teresa Martin  
Mary Melfi

John and Laraine Mocenigo  
Donna Morris  
Joseph and Mary Schwenkler  
Dan and Kay Serebrakian  
Catherine and John Sipe  
Tracey Spriggs  
Jim and Aimee Swain

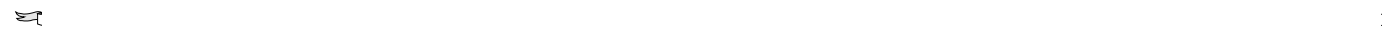


**Special Thanks**

- Alan Rennie & Lisa Rodriguez - reporting on their monitoring sites at our annual monitoring conference.
- Alan Rennie - repairing our broken groundwater model for our environmental education program.
- Tom Southard - donating a wheelbarrow for use in maintaining our office grounds.

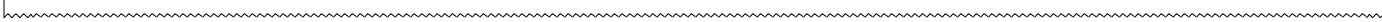
**Special Thanks to the Private and Corporate Foundations that supported us in 2009**

- Black Rock
- Dow Corporation Foundation
- Garden Club of Somerset Hills
- Johnson & Johnson Foundation
- Large Foundation
- Mary Reinhart Stackhouse
- PSE&G
- Schering-Plough
- Wal-Mart of Clinton
- Wal-Mart of Flemington
- The Watershed Institute



**Other Ways to Help ...**

- Donate a car or motorcycle to SBWA and get a tax deduction. Go to [www.vehiclemanagementservices.com](http://www.vehiclemanagementservices.com) or call 888-395-3955.
- Use GoodSearch.com as your search engine and designate SBWA as your cause.
- Contribute through giving programs at your workplace.





## Meet Our New Watershed Ambassador



My name is Jeremy Carlson and I am the AmeriCorps Watershed Management Area 8 (WMA 8) Ambassador for 2009-2010. I graduated from Ramapo College of New Jersey with a B.S. in Integrated Science, a concentration in Business Administration, and a minor in Psychology. I am currently enrolled as an Environmental Management graduate student at Montclair State University. I am also a member of the NY NJ Trail Conference and volunteer my time as a trail maintainer in the Pequannock Watershed.

I will be helping with the SBWA River Clean-up in April. I am here as a free resource for stewardship opportunities and watershed education. I organize community volunteer programs such as: stream monitoring, stream clean-ups, and tree plantings. I also present educational programs about our watershed or other related topics to school groups, scout packs, community groups, fairs, or individuals.

If you are interested or have any questions, please e-mail me at [JeremyCarlson@sbwa.org](mailto:JeremyCarlson@sbwa.org) so we can make plans or discuss what can be done in your classroom or community group! I look forward to hearing from you and working with the South Branch Watershed Association!

## Donate On Line

Good news! You can now donate to SBWA through our website and save time, effort, and trees! Just hit the Donate Now button on our home page at [www.sbwa.org](http://www.sbwa.org). Network for Good is managing this process for us which minimizes our administration time. You will receive an e-mail acknowledging your donation on behalf of SBWA. Please note that your donation will appear on your credit card as "Network for Good", not SBWA. Please take advantage of this new service and support SBWA's programs!



### Please Donate to SBWA Today!

Yes, I/we want to support SBWA's efforts to protect and enhance our water resources!

My/our check is enclosed. *(Please make checks payable to "SBWA.")*

\$200     \$100     \$50    Other \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

My company will match my gift. I have enclosed an appropriate form.

I am interested in including SBWA in my will.

Please complete this form and mail with your contribution to:  
SBWA, Lechner House,  
41 Lilac Drive,  
Flemington, NJ 08822

**Thank you for your support!**

SBWA is a 501(c)3 organization.

All donations are tax deductible to the extent permitted by law.



## Annual Dinner and Member Meeting — March 26

All members and friends of SBWA are invited to attend the Annual Dinner and Member Meeting on Friday, March 26. The dinner will be at the Copper Hill Country Club, Ringoes, NJ, from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. The festivities will start at 6:00 p.m. with cocktails and hors d'oeuvres; the dinner and the program will start at 7:00 p.m. The cost is \$50 for members and \$60 for non-members.

The guest speaker will be Emile D. DeVito, Ph.D. Emile has been the Manager of Science and Stewardship at the New Jersey Conservation Foundation since 1989. He received a doctorate in Ecology in 1988 for research on bird communities and vegetation landscapes in New Jersey's Pine Barrens. Dr. DeVito develops management plans for NJCF's 20,000+ acres of holdings designed to protect and enhance biological diversity. Emile educates government officials, advocacy groups, land trusts, teachers and students on forest-interior habitat and migratory stopover needs of Neotropical songbirds. He is a trustee of the Pinelands Preservation Alliance and the NJ Natural Lands Trust. He serves on the Endangered and Non-Game Species Advisory Committee within the NJ Division of Fish and Wildlife, the New Jersey Invasive Species Council, and the Science Advisory Committee of the NY-NJ Trail Conference.

The following awards will be presented:

The Corporate Achievement Award to *Basil Bandwagon*

The Environmental Achievement Award to *Keep It Green Campaign*

The Hermia Lechner Award to *Amy Greene and John Belle, and Tom Southard*

For more information and tickets for the dinner, please call the SBWA office at 908-782-0422, or e-mail at [info@sbwa.org](mailto:info@sbwa.org).

Please bring your friends and neighbors to this exciting event.



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Environment”

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**\*\*\* This is the last print issue of our newsletter.  
Please make sure we have your e-mail address, so  
we can e-mail future issues to you. It will also be  
available on our website. \*\*\***



Printed on 100% Recycled Paper

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