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*White Clay Creek
National Wild and Scenic River*

**Watershed
Management
Committee**

2008 UPDATE

www.whiteclay.org



Welcome February 2009

Welcome to the White Clay Creek Update. The Watershed Management Committee, which administers the White Clay Creek National Wild and Scenic River program, presents our 2008 accomplishments to watershed partners, legislators, and the community.

The Watershed Management Committee, with our local and state partners, is charged with promoting the long-term protection of the White Clay Creek watershed and its resources in Pennsylvania and Delaware through the implementation of the Watershed Management Plan. For more information regarding the White Clay Creek Watershed Management Committee, Management Plan, role of the National Park Service and River Administrator, history of the White Clay Creek's Wild and Scenic River designation, and past and current projects and events please see our website, www.whiteclay.org.

Partnership Wild and Scenic River System

The 1968 Wild and Scenic River Act calls on the nation to preserve select rivers in free-flowing condition. Rivers are chosen on the basis of outstanding values such as scenic, recreational, ecological, geologic, historic or cultural.

Most Wild and Scenic Rivers flow through federal lands, but Partnership Rivers flow through privately held lands or lands owned by local or state governments. The National Park Service provides funds and staff assistance to communities and local, state and county representatives to manage these rivers for the benefit and enjoyment of present and future generations.

White Clay Creek was designated a Partner Wild and Scenic River by an act of Congress signed into law by President Clinton in October 2000.

Watershed Health Report

On June 3, 2008, the University of Delaware, a key partner, presented the State of the Watershed in the White Clay Creek National Wild and Scenic River to nearly 100 partners and friends gathered to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the National Wild and Scenic River Act. This report provides a snapshot of current conditions and includes recommendations to protect and restore the watershed's health.

The report card graded landscape, hydrology, water quality, and habitat to assess the health of the wild and scenic river. Grades range from an "A" for the large amount of open space, to "C" for declining macroinvertebrate populations. Some measures of water quality have improved but some stream sections remain impaired due to high levels of nitrogen. Fish consumption advisories are still in effect due to historical PCB contamination. The report's 21 recommendations will help prioritize the Management Committee's activities and budget over the next several years.

Federal congressional representatives, Delaware and Pennsylvania leaders, and local representatives and stakeholders attended the 40th anniversary celebration and gave recognition to the National Wild & Scenic River Program's 40 years of national service and the White Clay Creek Watershed Management Committee's 8 years of local contributions. The report and more details of the celebration are online at www.whiteclay.org.

Reforestation: A Plan

As an integral part of the natural landscape forests provide habitat benefits for plants and animals, cre-

ate conditions for healthy streams and soils, and enhance ground water conditions. In recent decades, development has claimed forests at an alarming rate in Chester County, Pennsylvania. Meanwhile that portion of the White Clay watershed included several of the county's fastest growing municipalities.

Stroud Water Research Center's studies have found that the percentage of forest cover within a watershed is the single most important factor in predicting stream health. A study of tree cover in the Philadelphia area concluded that an average 40% tree cover is desirable for watershed and landscape health. Based on the existing 20% tree cover in the Pennsylvania portion of the watershed and water quality findings, the State of the Watershed Report (see above article) recommends implementing a watershed reforestation program. Consequently, recognizing that forests provide a multitude of ecological services at relatively low cost, the Management Committee contracted Brandywine Conservancy and Taproot Native Design to develop a reforestation plan for the White Clay Creek Watershed.

The plan will: outline the extent and location of existing tree cover in the Pennsylvania portion of the watershed; establish reforestation priorities; identify funding sources; outline implementation approaches, management, and monitoring needs; determine the feasibility of the 40% tree cover hypothesis; develop a summary of the restoration goals and priorities; and include a series of maps showing current conditions and proposed areas for reforestation. The plan will be available to the White Clay Management Committee and local municipalities and will aid in procuring funding for implementation and landowner outreach and education.





Protecting Through Preserving Open Space

The fiscal downturn impeded open space preservation success but not activity. The New Garden Township 7 acre Koeppel property overlooking the historic village of Landenberg was protected by year's end. Six more properties, totaling 169 acres and an approximate \$2.5 million value, are on their way to settlement in 2009. Meanwhile our partners, Natural Lands Trust and Brandywine Conservancy, are in the "talking" stage with landowners to preserve an additional 300-plus acres.

Other Projects & Ongoing Activities

OUTREACH

Municipal & County

- Presented comments on resource protection for: 3 large development projects in the watershed, City of Newark ordinances and Comprehensive Plan, and London Grove Groundwater Protection ordinance.

Citizen

- Exhibited at 2 community events.
- Partnered with 3 townships to hold 2 Community Spaces, Natural Places lectures (66 persons) and 2 field trainings (35 persons) on native landscaping, using Dockstader Foundation funds.
- Partnered to present a lecture (45 persons) on the White Clay Preserve historical buildings and a Build-a-Rainbarrel workshop (10 families, \$600 value).

School

- Partially funded 4 field study programs at White Clay Creek State Park for 27 Delaware School for the Deaf students.

General

- Provided input and a forum for discussion for 6 natural resource issues in the watershed.

TRAILS & RECREATION

- Neared completion for design phase of a visitor guide/trail map for state and county parks in the White Clay Valley and Fair Hill, Maryland.
- Continued assistance to London Grove, New Garden, London Britain, and Franklin Townships in preparatory work for developing a multi-municipal White Clay Trail plan.

WATERSHED MONITORING

- Completed Franklin township flora surveys and began London Britain Township surveys to provide helpful information for funding land conservation and management.
- Funded the final year of a three-year University of Delaware College of Agriculture and Natural Resources project to monitor the impacts of best management practices at the College's farm campus.
- Continued study of fish migration in the White Clay Creek.

Stretching our Federal Dollars

Like all Partnership National Wild and Scenic Rivers, we leverage National Park Service funding with fiscal or in-kind contributions from state, county, and local government partners as well as organizations and the community. In this year of economic downturn, our open space preservation success was more modest but still significant: one property, valued at \$70,000, preserved with Wild & Scenic assistance. Donations and in-kind services to the Management Committee in 2007 included: United Water Delaware (\$1,000); graphic artwork; professional assistance with land preservation, workshops & municipal outreach; State of the Watershed Report; website & mailings; and Management Committee volunteer time. This represents an estimated value of \$100,000 leveraged against \$148,000 in federal funding.

PARTNERSHIPS- Cost-Effective, Sustainable, Catalysts

Our 2008 Partners: Bi-state Preserve Council, Brandywine Conservancy, Coalition for Natural Stream Valleys, DE Department of Natural Resources & Environmental Control, DE Nature Society, Chester & New Castle County Conservation Districts, Friends of White Clay Creek State Park, Natural Lands Trust, Partnership for the DE Estuary, PA Boat Commission, PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Stroud Water Research Center, University of DE, White Clay Watershed Association, City of Newark, and Franklin, London Britain, London Grove and New Garden Townships.

Looking Forward Into 2009

Events

Join us **Saturday May 2nd** at **Creek Fest** to celebrate the White Clay Creek AND the 25th anniversary of the creation of the White Clay Bi-State Preserve. All ages welcome. The morning features Avon Grove Charter School's 2nd annual Trout Release and related activities at White Clay Preserve. The main event is 1-4 p.m. at White Clay Creek State Park Carpenter Recreation Area and includes a brief ceremony, live music, nature activities, displays, hikes, fly fishing demonstrations, door prizes, and more. Co-sponsored with White Clay Creek State Park and United Water Delaware.

Find information about Creek Fest and **native landscaping** and other **environmental stewardship workshops** at www.whiteclay.org.

Reforestation Project

The reforestation plan (see inside) is scheduled for completion by late winter 2009. The next step for the project is a phased implementation, which will include reforestation work in a portion of the watershed and one tree planting project.

Trail guide

The *Trail Map and Visitors Guide for White Clay Creek Watershed and Fair Hill Natural Resource Management Area* (NRMA) should be available in print and on-line by summer 2009. It will provide information to the residents and visitors about White Clay Creek State Park, White Clay Preserve, Middle Run Natural Area, and Fair Hill NRMA attractions, and show the recreational White Clay valley trails. Watch for details at www.whiteclay.org.



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*White Clay Creek Watershed
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