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ANNA McCARTNEY/Contributed photo

Union City High School students and their teacher, Racquel Gray, plant trees at the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy Lake Pleasant Conservation area in 2014.

## Sign up to plant trees at 3 sites

By ANNA McCARTNEY  
Contributing writer

Union City High School students planted 350 white pine seedlings at the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy Lake Pleasant Conservation area in 2014. The rain did not dampen their resolve to plant the trees to help protect the water quality.

Their teacher, Racquel Gray, is one of six teachers participating in Pennsylvania Sea Grant's Great Lakes Great Stewards project to promote locally relevant, experiential learning by fostering watershed education and encouraging partnerships among other environmental organizations.

This spring, a new group of Gray's students will once again help the WPC plant more trees on May 1 at French Creek Flats in Wattsburg.

However, more volunteers are needed to plant trees at other WPC conser-

vation areas along French Creek on April 30, May 1, May 5 and May 6.

WPC is looking for 20 to 40 volunteers per day. The sites are:

Starting at noon on April 30 and at 9 a.m. on May 1 at the 7.2-acre West Branch French Creek Conservation Area (Bowen site) at 10928 Wildman Road and the 2.2-acre French Creek Flats (Howe site) at 9629 North Street in Wattsburg.

Starting at noon on May 5 and at 9 a.m. on May 6 at the 6.3-acre Mystic Valley Conservation Area (Regensburger site) at 14285 Mystic Road in Cambridge Springs

To sign up, contact: Kelly Horrell khorrell@paconserve.org or call (724) 471-7202, extension 5100.

**ANNA McCARTNEY**, a communications and education specialist for Pennsylvania Sea Grant, can be reached by e-mail at [axm40@psu.edu](mailto:axm40@psu.edu).



PA FISH AND BOAT COMMISSION

This photo shows the view looking upstream of the log and rock step-pools of the Crooked Creek fish passage restoration effort at Springfield Road in Girard Township.



PA FISH AND BOAT COMMISSION

Before the restoration, a fish passage barrier restricted the upstream migration of native fish and steelhead past the bridge on Springfield Road.

# Barrier grief

## Stream crossings blocked fish passage

By ANNA McCARTNEY  
Contributing writer

The completion of the road-crossing restoration on Springfield Road removes an obstacle that obstructed upstream fish movement on Crooked Creek.

When stream crossings like this one were installed in the past, they were not designed to avoid potentially destructive consequences for the stream ecosystem. Little or no thought was given to how these obstacles would impact water quality or quantity or how their placement would restrict the movement of fish and wildlife.

Scientific studies confirm that stream crossings degrade and destroy habitat and cause wildlife population fragmentation and isolation. Once stream connectivity is reduced or eliminated, it is only a matter of time until species are lost from that part of the stream.

A National Fish and Wildlife Foundation Sustain Our Great Lakes Community Grant was awarded to Girard Township to fix problems at two Crooked Creek stream crossings, including the one on Springfield Road. Girard Township, the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission, Pennsylvania Sea Grant and the Regional Science Consortium collaborated on technical design support, angler and construction access



PA FISH AND BOAT COMMISSION

The steel angle iron forms a lip that serves as a barrier to the invasive sea lamprey, yet will allow resident fish and recreational important steelhead to pass.



BRIAN BERCHTOLD/Contributed photo

Steelhead travel from the depths of Lake Erie to spawn in nearby tributaries. Those migrating upstream in Crooked Creek should now have easier passage.

easements, construction oversight, outreach and biological monitoring support.

"The Springfield Road habitat restoration project gives me much job satisfaction because we have worked with wonderful partners to make a place better for both fish and

fisherman," said Ken Anderson, Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission fisheries biologist.

A pre- and post-construction evaluation of the new fish passage project was conducted to determine if native fishes and/or hatchery salmonids were utilizing the passage to

move upstream of Springfield Road. The survey before the restoration found they were not.

When PF & BC officials did the follow-up fish survey early last fall, they found young of the year steelhead in the fish passage pools along with two target resident fishes, Golden Redhorse and Northern Hog Sucker. "Although they did not find that any target resident fish had ascended upstream of Springfield Road, it is encouraging that fish are finding their way into the passage facility," said Anderson.

Since the post-construction sample occurred only two months after the completion of the project, the fish communities upstream and downstream of the new fish passage will be re-evaluated in 2017 after native and recreationally important fishes have had enough time to utilize the structure.

Crooked Creek is the third largest of the western Pennsylvania Lake Erie creeks and is a popular steelhead fishery. Removing the road-crossing obstacles will create more opportunities for steelhead to travel further upstream, and this in turn increases prospects for anglers.

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CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Brett Puharic



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Maeby McQuaid

## Tracy students urge water conservation

Everybody should protect water resources because many countries have water disadvantages. Only 3 percent of Earth's water is fresh water and only 1 percent of that is readily human-accessible. People die from dehydration. Young girls in India have to dig holes in the ground to search for water. Drinking unclean water causes half of the deaths in Haiti. Since the world's population is increasing, we need to save water. Eventually, the water shortage will affect everybody. We can take shorter showers and turn the water off when we brush our teeth. Everyone can help!

— Maeby McQuaid, fourth grade, Tracy Elementary School

think we're running out of water. Yet, this is happening in California and Arizona. Also, there are people in China, India and Nigeria who don't have enough clean water to drink. Average Americans use 100 gallons of water per day. On the other hand, poor countries only use 2 gallons of water per day. Population has a big impact on how much water is available. More people equal less water for everyone to use. Climate change, caused by global warming, is melting the glaciers and ice caps. This causes fresh water to flood into the ocean. A hotter Earth causes more evaporation, too. We must conserve our water resources now. We must also do our best to keep our water as clean as possible.

— Brett Puharic, fourth grade, Tracy Elementary School

Saving water is an important thing to do. Most people in America don't really

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Check out these websites to learn more:

- <http://fishandboat.com/>
- [www.habitat.noaa.gov/restoration/techniques/srmonitoring.html](http://www.habitat.noaa.gov/restoration/techniques/srmonitoring.html)
- [www.nfwf.org](http://www.nfwf.org)
- [www.paseagrant.org](http://www.paseagrant.org)

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