

NORTH AREA ENVIRONMENTAL COUNCIL NEWS

January/February 2013

American Rivers completes Sharpsburg and Etna Flood Reduction Study

by Lisa Hollingsworth-Segedy

In 2012, the national river protection group American Rivers completed a conceptual level study of opportunities to reduce flooding in Sharpsburg and Etna, PA. The project was funded by a Pittsburgh foundation and built on numerous existing studies and projects, including the Pine Creek Watershed Plan and the Allegheny River Towns plans. Project results included conceptual plans for the projects that were ranked as highest priority by the communities and American Rivers staff. These projects recognize the link between stormwater and flooding and promote flood reduction activities that also provide community green space, enhance recreational access, and improve local communities' regional competitiveness by reducing flood risk.

Three overarching community priorities were incorporated in preliminary project design: 1) natural, non-structural project approaches such as green infrastructure and floodplain reconnection are preferred over hard infrastructure; 2) proposed projects will not displace residents; and 3) proposed projects will not displace local employers or reduce local jobs.

The highest-ranking flood reduction alternatives are shown on pages 5 and 6. American Rivers is providing this information to the communities for inclusion in an upcoming multi-municipal plan.

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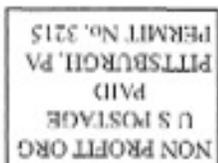
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Community Input Meeting

*Wednesday, January 23, 7:00 p.m.
Rose Barn, Pearce Mill Road*

Allegheny County and the Allegheny County Parks Foundation will host a public input meeting to discuss improvement projects in North Park. Residents are encouraged to attend to learn about the projects and to provide feedback and comments.

GAI Consultants will present schematic design options for the North Park Lake Trail Gateways and Municipal Row Path. An open forum and public discussion to gather input will follow the presentation.



Friends of North Park Schedule

Jan. 23, Wednesday, 7:00 PM, Community Input Meeting on North Park Lake Trail Gateways and Municipal Row Path area existing conditions and schematic design options. GAI Consultants Team Presentation and open forum for public input, North Park Rose Barn.

Feb. 6, Wednesday, 7:00 PM, FoNP Meeting. Join us at the Cabin for a presentation by Mary Bates, who will share with us the research she has done on the history of North Park.

March 6, Wednesday 7:00 PM, FoNP Meeting. Join us at the Cabin for a presentation by naturalist Meg Scanlon who will update on the interesting things happening at the Latodami Environmental Center in North Park.

April 2, Tuesday, 7:00 PM, FoNP Meeting. Join us at the Cabin for an update on issues related to the ecological protection and restoration of the Pine Creek Watershed presented by the North Area Environmental Council (NAEC). North Park Lake and the surrounding streams are at the center of this 67-square mile watershed.

April 20, Saturday, 9:00 AM, Earth Day Redd Up. Meet at the Cabin to help clean up trash from various locations in North Park.

May 4, Saturday, Noon, Lake & Land Clean Up. Meet at the Rose Barn on Pearce Mill Road to help clean up trash from various locations in North Park by land and in kayaks that will be provided by L.L. Bean.

May 7, Tuesday, 7:00 PM, Nike Missile Site Presentation & Tour. Meet at Police & Fire Academy located at 700 West Ridge Road. This event is back by popular demand again this year. Learn all about the air defense systems used to protect Pittsburgh during the cold war. Wear boots and bring a flashlight.

Allegheny County Developing First Countywide Stormwater Management Plan

by Beth Dutton

The Pennsylvania Storm Water Management Act (Act of Oct. 4, 1978, P.L. 864, No. 167), referred to as "the Act" or as "Act 167," provides for the regulation of land and water uses for flood control and stormwater management purposes. The Act authorizes a comprehensive stormwater management program designed to preserve and restore the flood carrying capacity of the Commonwealth's streams, preserve natural stormwater areas, and encourage planning and management of stormwater runoff consistent with sound water and land use practices.

Between 1986 and 1998 Allegheny County completed six Act 167 plans for nine of its designated watersheds, covering approximately 45% of Allegheny County's land area. In 2010, an

See Stormwater, page 5

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*Responses to the Phoning Committee calls help NAEC manage mailings efficiently.
We thank everyone who let us know their mailing preference, whether print or Email.*

NORTH AREA ENVIRONMENTAL COUNCIL

___ NEW MEMBERSHIP
___ RENEW MEMBERSHIP

Name _____ DATE _____

Address (unless on mailing label)

Phone _____ Municipality _____

Email _____

___ Please send my newsletter by email.

___ \$20 Individual ___ \$30 Family
___ \$50 Business or Organization

___ \$10 Student or retired person

Additional contribution \$ _____

Please make your check to NAEC; mail to:
North Area Environmental Council
P.O. Box 71, Ingomar, PA 15127

2013 Seedling Sale

North Area Environmental Council

A non-profit, citizens, conservation group in northern Allegheny County since 1969.

Trees and shrubs, most are native species, are available through NAEC each spring. Our bulk ordering allows us to offer them at lower prices to you. Most plants are nursery grown in Pennsylvania, bundled and packed bare-root. The species are specially selected to create and improve wildlife habitat, as well as for their beauty. They will suit a variety of sites and conditions. For additional printouts of this information, including order form, please check **NAEC Website: naecwpa.org** ORDER FORM follows plant descriptions - - **Print and mail with check by March 16, 2013.**

Plants must be PRE-ORDERED by March 16. Plan ahead for the Pickup Date on April 13th, 9 am to 12 pm at Latodami Nature Center Barn, located at 575 Brown Road, on North Park's north border. To arrange an alternate pick-up time or **for Bulk Ordering Discounts**, please call Meg Scanlon at 724-935-2170.

Make checks payable to NAEC. Mail order form and check to: Meg Scanlon, 575 Brown Road, Wexford, PA 15090

American Scarlet Elderberry (*Sambucus pubens*) – Native, deciduous shrub for moist soils, best in partial shade, up to 12 ft high with 8 ft spread. This vigorous grower has lustrous dark leaves with large, creamy flower clusters in May, producing brilliant red berries in fall. Fabulous for wildlife and outstanding for jelly or baking.

Black-eyed Susan (*Rudbeckia fulgida* 'Goldsturm') – Perennial flower. A very vigorous and compact variety of Black-Eyed Susan (native wildflower), with exceptionally bright golden flowers, July into fall. Height and spread 2 to 2 1/2 feet. Easily reseeds. Seeds attract wild birds, a favorite of wild turkeys. Spectacular in mass plantings, use along fences, driveways, walks, property boundaries.

Black Gum (*Nyssa sylvatica*) - Also known as Black Tupelo. Deciduous tree, to 30 feet high, spread 30 to 50 feet. A native tree of great ornamental and wildlife value. A handsome pyramidal tree of medium vigorous growth with waxy and lustrous dark green leaves, turning a brilliant red in the fall. Female trees produce a small blue fruit that birds relish. This tree grows on dry upland sites or just as well in moist or wet sites where other trees will not grow. Good wetland species.

Blue Rug Juniper (*Juniperus horizontalis* v. 'Wiltonii' 'Blue Rug') - This beautiful blue, creeping evergreen plant will grow to 4 to 6 inches in height and spread of 6 to 8 feet or more. Rapid growing, extremely low juniper. Intense silvery-blue foliage assumes light purplish tinge in winter. Plant in full sun. Excellent as a ground cover on hillsides and terraces.

Butternut (*Juglans cinerea*) – Also call the White Walnut, Butternut is a species of native walnut. A medium sized, native tree that grows to 60 ft with a 40 ft spread. Grows best on moist, well-drained soils in full sun to partial shade. The highly prized buttery tasting nuts are eaten by humans and animals alike, and are used in baking and making candies.

Eastern Hemlock (*Tsuga canadensis*) – Large, native, evergreen tree, to 80 ft high and 35 ft spread. This beautiful ornamental does well in a variety of soils, but best in loamy, moist soil. Slow-growing, long-lived tree (500 yrs +), hemlock thrives in the shade. As the Pennsylvania State Tree, the hemlock provides valuable winter shelter for wildlife and the seed is a preferred food for American goldfinch, boreal chickadee, ruffed grouse, pine siskin and red-winged and white-winged crossbills.

Eastern White Pine (*Pinus strobus*) – Large, native, evergreen tree, to 150 ft high, spread 25 to 40 feet. After established, they have rapid growth. Not tolerant of salt, but will grow in most any soil or exposure. A beautiful landscape tree with soft, light green-blue needles. Excellent ornamental tree for specimens, naturalizing, windbreak or dense screen and, second to oak, they are one of the most valuable plants for food and shelter for wildlife.

Midget Arborvitae (*Thuja occidentalis* v. 'Hetz Midget') - A very small, dwarf, globe-shaped evergreen. Slow to medium growth to a height and spread of 18 to 24 inches. Fine, rich, green foliage is unusually dense and compact. Never needs pruning or shaping. Foliage takes on a bronze-green winter colour. Plant in full sun and prefers sandy, well drained soil. Attractive selection for rock gardens, along walkways, foundation planting and low maintenance hedges.

Pachysandra (*Pachysandra terminalis*) - Grows in full sun or deep shade, to a uniform height of 6 to 12 inches. A dense, lustrous evergreen, trailing vine-type of ground cover. White flowers in March to early April. If planted 6 inches apart, it will give a pleasing effect immediately and in two years time form a solid ground cover. Excellent in masses under heavy shade of trees in any soil type. Great for terraces or any place where grass is not successful. It is very hardy.

Continued next page

Paw Paw (*Asimina triloba*) – Beautiful, small, deciduous, native tree, to a height and spread of 20 ft. Plant in partial shade to full sun, this low maintenance tree does well in most soils. Fragrant, cup-shaped purple flowers appear in spring, and give way to edible, oblong, yellowish-green fruits which mature in early autumn to a dark brown. Flavour and fleshy consistency of the sweet fruits is said to resemble bananas. Fruits are frequently eaten raw or used in ice creams or pies. Wildlife eagerly seek out the fruits and often beat humans to the harvest.

Shagbark Hickory (*Carya ovata*) - A large, native, deciduous tree with a narrow, upright growth to 90 ft. Plant in full sun or partial shade in any soil, wet or dry. Mature shagbarks have the distinctive shaggy, shredding bark. Extremely popular with humans and wildlife alike, the nut is highly edible and has a very sweet taste. The foliage is seldom nibbled by deer. Fall colours are yellow and golden brown tones.

Shamrock Inkberry Holly (*Ilex glabra* v. 'Shamrock') – A compact, evergreen shrub growing to a height and spread of 5 feet. Plant in partial to full sun. Prefers moist, well drained soil. Bright, glistening green new growth matures to lustrous dark green. Displays an abundance of dark purple to black berries through winter. Deer resistant. Useful as accent plant, low hedges or foundation planting.

Latodami can be reached from Route 19 Wexford via the turn at CVS Pharmacy onto Brown Road, turn left at Wexford Elem School (still Brown Rd), travel about 1 mile. Driveway to Latodami Barn is on left.

OR from Route 910 (Orange belt) turn south (toward North Park) onto Pearce Mill Road, go .6 mile and turn right onto Kummer at the park entry sign, from Kummer go straight onto Brown Road. Driveway to Latodami Barn is about ¼ mile on right.

Remember, PICK UP DATE is Saturday April 13, 9 am to 12 pm at Latodami Nature Center Barn on Brown Road. **Please note this on your calendar as a reminder.**

MAIL this ORDER FORM to Meg Scanlon at 575 Brown Road, Wexford, PA 15090.

Send by March 16, 2013 with check payable to NAEC

Order Form: Please indicate how many bundles of a specie you would like and their total cost.

Plant Species and size in inches	Number of Bundles	Plants per Bundle	@ \$Cost per Bundle	Total
Am. Scarlet Elderberry - 24-48"		5	\$ 8	
		10	15	
Black-eyed Susan - 1 yr in pot		5	8	
		10	15	
Black Gum - 6-12"		5	5	
		10	10	
Blue Rug Juniper - 3-6"		5	10	
		10	18	
Butternut - 24-36"		5	10	
		10	18	
Eastern Hemlock - 15-30"		5	12	
		10	22	
Eastern White Pine - 24-36"		5	6	
		20	22	
Hetz Midget Arborvitae - 3-6"		5	10	
		10	20	
Pachysandra - rooted cutting		5	4	
		10	8	
Paw Paw - 12-18"		5	5	
		10	10	
Shagbark Hickory - 10-18"		5	8	
		10	15	
Shamrock Holly - 3-6"		3	5	

Membership - New or Renewal (Not necessary to order plants): Individual - \$20; Family – 30; Business/Organization – 50; Student/Retired – 10 \$ _____

Please consider an additional donation to NAEC to support research and education projects \$ _____

Total amount enclosed: \$ _____

Name: _____

Telephone: _____

Email: _____

Petition submitted to designate Little Sewickley Creek as Exceptional Value Stream by Nathan Reinhart and Ed Schroth

Over the last year and a half, Nathan Reinhart and Ed Schroth of Duquesne University have been on a mission. They believe that the Little Sewickley Creek Watershed located just 15 miles outside of Pittsburgh, deserves the highest category of protection, Exceptional Value (EV). The stream is currently designated as a High Quality Trout-Stocking Fishery (HQ-TSF).

Nathan Reinhart, a graduate student in the Environmental Science and Management Program, took on the process of completing a formal petition to send to the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). The DEP asks the petitioner to collect historical data and current data on the stream to defend their petition.



The petition includes data on: the overall land use of the watershed; physical, chemical, and both biological indicators, benthic macroinvertebrates, and fish populations; point and non point sources of pollution; and the EV qualifiers that the stream meets. The stream displays a very high biodiversity in both the biological parameters. There have been 30 documented families of benthic macroinvertebrates, over half of those families are intolerant of pollution and require cold clean water to survive. The population of fish is also diverse with 33 species living in the stream, including naturally reproducing brown trout and the state-threatened blue-breasted darter. On November 20, 2012, the DEP and the Environmental Quality Board (EQB) accepted the petition for further study. This will allow the DEP to visit the stream in the spring to sample and collect data for the redesignation process.

The petition is readily available to the public under the November 20 meeting agenda on the DEP website: http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/environmental_quality_board/14005/eqb_meeting_schedule_2012/1055511.

Stormwater, continued from page 2

updated Act 167 plan, known as the North Hills COG Act 167 plan was prepared for the watersheds of Girtys Run, Pine Creek, Deer Creek, and Squaw Run. With the exception of the watersheds covered by the North Hills COG Act 167 plan, none of the other Act 167 plans have been updated or revised since they were adopted. The remaining watersheds in Allegheny County are not covered by an Act 167 plan.

Allegheny County has begun work on developing its countywide stormwater management plan. They kicked off the public portion of the process with three regional community meetings in November 2012 with Watershed Advisory Planning Committees to seek municipal input in the development of the plan.

This effort is an implementation measure of *Allegheny Places*, the County's first comprehensive plan. Accelerated rates of stormwater runoff increase the severity of flood events, cause stream bank erosion, pollute waterways, degrade aquatic habitat, and overtax storm sewers. The process will produce a model ordinance, a guide for best management practices, and recommended green solutions for controlling stormwater runoff in the County.

Michael Baker Jr., Inc. was selected as the firm to spearhead this undertaking on behalf of the County, with the project website at <http://www.alleghenycountyswmp.com/Home>

If you have any questions about the Plan or would like to report local problems such as flooding, landslides, water pollution, or accelerated flooding, contact William McLain at (412) 350-1361 or wmclain@alleghenycounty.us.

Understanding the projects on this and the next two pages depends, in part, on the colors used to define some areas on the map. If you are reading the newsletter on paper in black and white, you may still be able to discern these areas from the labels on the diagram.

American Rivers Project: Tippins Brownfield revitalization

Project description: Employ Low Impact Design in the revitalization of the Tippins Brownfield (red outline), install green roof and green parking in adjacent industrial parcel (orange outline), and create a green infrastructure pocket park adjacent to Tippins (yellow outline).

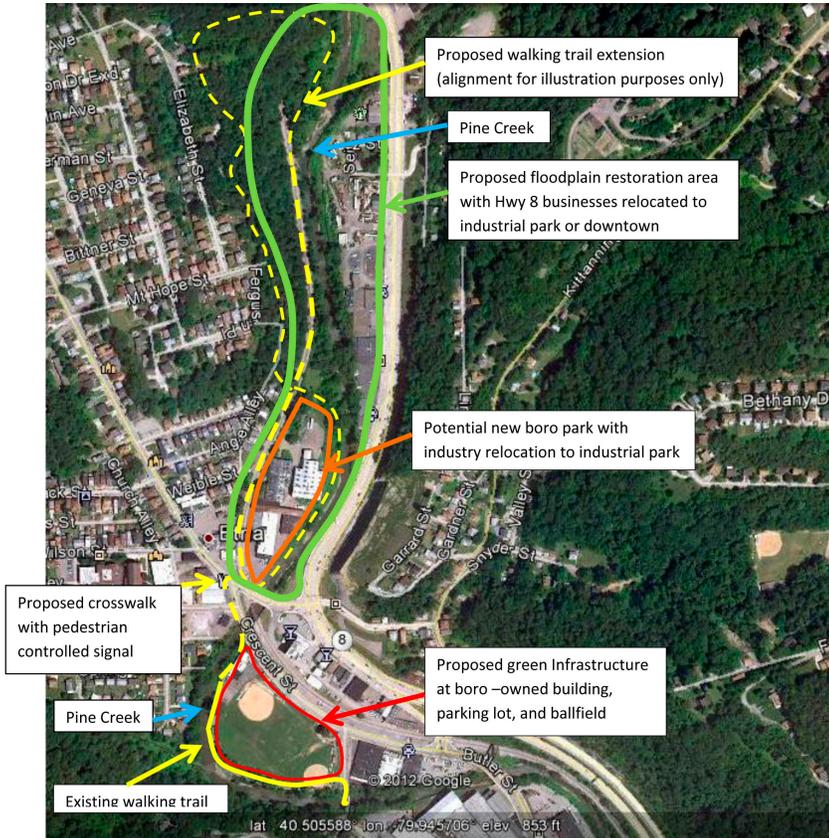
Background: Tippins Brownfield is slated for redevelopment. This highly visible location in downtown could serve as a green demonstration project, reduce stormwater contribution to Pine Creek, reduce flood impacts to Pine Creek, and improve the quality of stormwater entering Pine Creek. It could also add value to the upcoming Green Street demonstration project in downtown Etna, and create synergy for additional downtown green infrastructure investment.



Assessment

Benefits	Drawbacks
Reduces stormwater flows to Pine Creek	Requires owner commitment to Low Impact Design for brownfield redevelopment
Improves quality of stormwater leaving site and impacting Pine Creek	Possible conflict between LID standards and Borough's building code
Creation of pocket park will add greenspace to downtown.	Lack of incentives for adjacent property owner to retrofit with green roof and green parking
The site's high visibility makes it an excellent demonstration site	
Adds value to Borough's Green Street project	
Reduces flood impacts of Pine Creek in highway interchange area	

American Rivers Project: Etna Floodplain Reconnection with Greenway/Walking Trail Expansion



Project description: Acquire non-residential parcels in the Pine Creek floodplain as indicated on the conceptual plan above to reconnect Pine Creek to its floodplain for flood storage. This will alleviate flood damages in downtown Etna. Additional green infrastructure Best Management Practices at the ballfield will aid in reducing “nuisance” level flooding. Development of a community park and greenway trail will maximize the recreation benefits of the flood reduction project.

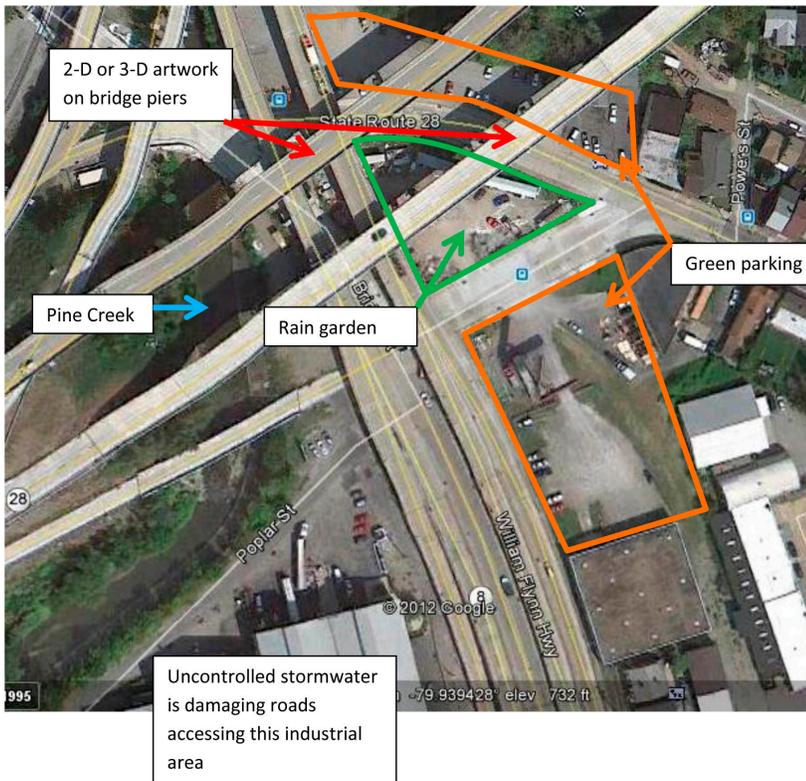
Background: The Borough of Etna has recently completed a walking trail along the banks of Pine Creek adjacent to their ballfield. In addition to providing a very popular greenway trail, this project involved cleaning debris from the floodplain which has resulted in some flood reduction benefits for the community. The Borough has indicated two priorities: 1) extend the existing greenway/walking trail; and 2) reduce downtown Etna’s susceptibility to flooding. Commercial and industrial uses developed in the Pine Creek floodplain inside the green polygon shown on the conceptual design are raising the flood elevation in downtown Etna.

The conceptual design shows the existing walking trail and areas where the Borough could multiply recreational and flood reduction benefits by: 1) installing green infrastructure at the ballfield; 2) installing permeable paving and bioswales at the ballfield parking lot; 3) adding a green roof on the borough building at the ballfield; 4) acquiring and reconnecting the floodplain to Pine Creek to provide flood storage to protect downtown Etna; 5) extending the walking trail into the new greenway area created by the reconnected floodplain along Pine Creek.

Assessment

Benefits	Drawbacks
Can be implemented in phases	Large, expensive project unless implemented in phases
Etna has available facilities and locations to accommodate businesses and industries that would be relocated	Requires property acquisition and relocation of businesses
Provides significant flood storage to reduce downtown’s flood susceptibility	Installation of pedestrian controlled crossing will require coordination with PennDOT
Provides green infrastructure Best Management Practices in a highly visible location	
Greatly multiplies the amount of greenway walking trail	
Increases recreational access to Pine Creek	

American Rivers Project: Gateway



Project description: Create a green gateway between Sharpsburg and Etna, utilizing a bioretention facility and green parking lots to control stormwater runoff from the Hwy 8/28 interchange. Enhance the aesthetics with two or three-dimensional artwork on bridge piers and create a sense of place at the transition zone between the two communities.

Background: Sharpsburg’s Forster Park was abandoned when this interchange was created. The area is now a sea of visually-unappealing, unimproved surface parking and gray concrete bridge piers. There is no sense of place at this otherwise primary gateway between Etna and Sharpsburg. The highway overpasses are generating large volumes of stormwater runoff and flooding, which is structurally undermining Poplar and Bridge Streets in Etna. The resulting road damage is impacting vehicular access to these local employers. In addition to addressing stormwater, the project will provide a visually appealing community character element for these two communities. Green parking areas could be dedicated to a “Park & Ride” facility for additional community benefits and green infrastructure visibility.

Assessment

Benefits	Drawbacks
PennDOT can partner in project implementation, since the stormwater results from highway overpasses	Coordination with PennDOT is required.
Some or all of the project sites are publicly-owned	
Sprout Fund and other local foundations are likely sources of bridge pier artwork.	
Artwork/painting on the Sharpsburg side of bridge piers can coordinate with color scheme for new public library, near the project site	
Project can be developed in phases	
Project will improve the quality of stormwater impacting Pine Creek	
The project will alleviate undermining of industrial access roads to local employers	
Sharpsburg and Etna can coordinate for a uniform gateway installation, or can create unique sense of place installations for each respective community	
Reduce flooding in the underpass area and Bridge Street industrial area	
Opportunity to create “Park & Ride” facility to serve community needs	