



WE NEED YOU!

WHO	Volunteers
WHAT	Field Sampling and Data Collection
WHERE	Little Sewickley Creek Watershed
WHY	Environmental assessment of Little Sewickley Creek and its watershed
HOW	Actively visiting sites along the creek
WHEN	Training Sessions on June 14 and June 21, 2017 Additional 10-15 hours in the field between June 2017 and April 2018

DID YOU KNOW.... Little Sewickley Creek is one of the cleanest streams in Allegheny County and is classified as High Quality – Trout Stocking Fishery by the state of Pennsylvania? Those of us who live, work and play near the stream know that it is a natural treasure. It is also an important “field station” for environmental education programs for local school children. The Little Sewickley Creek Watershed Association (LSCWA) has been working since 1972 to protect and conserve its natural beauty and environmental health.

HELP US KEEP IT THIS WAY.... This summer LSCWA will undertake a watershed assessment to identify problem areas along the stream that may be impacting it.

We have engaged a professional environmental consulting firm to direct the assessment, **BUT WE NEED VOLUNTEERS** for the field work. If you love the stream and being in and around it please join us! Your volunteer commitment would require:

- Participation in training sessions to learn the USDA Visual Assessment protocol and chemical testing techniques. The training dates:
 - [June 14, 2017, 6:00 pm – 7:30 pm at Fern Hollow Nature Center](#) – introduction and general overview of program
 - [June 21, 2017, 4:00 pm – 8:00 pm at field locations](#) doing practice assessments
- A minimum of 10-15 hours doing field sampling and data collection between June 2017 and April 2018
- Actual field work in the creek will include taking measurements, testing for chemical parameters, making visual assessments, taking pictures and working with a GPS.

If you are interested or have some questions, please do not hesitate to contact info@lscwatershed.org. If you would like to participate but cannot attend both training sessions, contact us as we may add another training session.

The LSCWA is excited about this stewardship project and looks forward to working with new volunteers that share our interest in the creek and its health.

Information on the Little Sewickley Creek Watershed Assessment Project

Background

Since the 1980s, Little Sewickley Creek has been designated by the state of Pennsylvania as a “High Quality - Trout Stocking Fishery”, the second highest stream quality designation in the state. Few streams, especially in Allegheny County, hold this designation. In 2012, a petition was submitted to the state to upgrade the stream designation to “Exceptional Value.” During the review process, several water quality problems were identified, and the petition was not approved. Conversations with members of the review board indicated that sedimentation is a problem, as well as a lack of sustainable macro invertebrate populations.

Rationale

Since our inception in 1972, it has been the mission of the LSCWA to protect and conserve the biodiversity of our 9.5 square mile watershed and to maintain a high level of stream water quality. The rejection of the re-designation petition was a “wake-up” call for the LSCWA and raised questions about the overall health of the creek. Although many studies of the stream have occurred over the years for many different reasons and in many different locations, a complete watershed assessment of Little Sewickley Creek has never been performed by professional environmental consultants. It seems the time has come to look at the whole creek system, and not only its parts, to determine potential stressors based on scientific analysis.

Purpose

The main purpose of our stream assessment project is to identify conditions which are having a negative impact on the water quality and biological health of Little Sewickley Creek and to design a “plan of action” to remediate those conditions. The project will rank these identified impairments according to severity, and provide a list of specific remediation/restoration projects. We have engaged the services of Civil and Environmental Consultants (CEC), a professional environmental consulting firm, to provide us with a solid scientific basis for our remediation/restoration projects.

Volunteer Effort

In an effort to minimize costs, the LSCWA approached the Allegheny County Conservation District with a request that they provide training in USDA Visual Assessment protocol for the volunteers who will be doing the bulk of the field work over the assessment time frame of July 2017 through April 2018. An information/volunteer orientation program is scheduled for June 14th, 2017, at Fern Hollow Nature Center. The actual training of volunteers will take place on June 21st, 2017, at Fern Hollow Nature Center and in the field. A volunteer recruitment flyer may be found

Project Funding

The overall cost of the assessment is expected to be close to \$30,000. The LSCWA has received a \$10,000 grant from the Allegheny County Conservation District, and is now pursuing a foundation grant for close to \$20,000. The Watershed Association board of directors has also earmarked funds to make up any costs not covered through grant money.

Project Deliverables

At the end of the project, in June of 2018, CEC will provide the Watershed Association with a summary of findings. We hope to present these findings on our website. These will include:

1. A chart summarizing stream visual assessment field data collected by volunteers
2. A chart summarizing water-chemistry data
3. A stream-assessment “scoring map” indicating impairments and impaired reaches within the watershed
4. A ranked list of greater potential restoration projects, including degrees of effort, budget ranges, and time frames to complete the projects
5. A ranked list of lesser potential remediation projects that could be undertaken by the LSCWA itself with existing resources
6. Suggestions for grant opportunities or partnering organizations to pursue or approach for undertaking the more significant potential restoration projects

Long Term Goals

Over time, as we address the identified restoration projects within the “action plan”, it is hoped that the long-term outcome will be the overall improvement of the health and biodiversity of the stream and its watershed, so that Little Sewickley Creek may continue to be a community and county treasure of aesthetic beauty, educational and research opportunities, and safe recreational pursuits.