

## **Field Portion Completed of Little Sewickley Creek Watershed Assessment**

On May 12<sup>th</sup>, an important milestone was reached with the assessment of the final stretch of Little Sewickley Creek - and the conclusion of the field portion of the Watershed Assessment project!

To complete the assessment of the full 26 stream miles of Little Sewickley Creek and its main tributaries, an intrepid group of 38 dedicated volunteers braved all sorts of weather and difficult conditions during 63 different assessment outings over the period of a year, usually in groups of three or four. The project started in late June at the mouth of the creek at the Ohio River and concluded at the source of the creek near Acorn Park in Franklin Park Borough.

The volunteer group was made up of members of the Little Sewickley Creek Watershed Association Board (LSCWA), staff members from the Allegheny County Conservation District (ACCD), Allegheny Land Trust (ALT), Fern Hollow Nature Center (FHNC), and Sewickley Heights Borough Park, as well as Quaker Valley High School environmental science interns (QV Creekers), and members of the general community.

Over 800 hours were spent by the volunteers in the field as they collected data on bank erosion, sedimentation, invasive plant outbreaks, tire/trash dumps, abandoned gas wells, fish barriers, spring seeps, perched or collapsed culverts, etc. GPS units were used, and 2,737 photos were taken of points of concern or interest. The volunteers also came upon numerous areas of great natural beauty rarely seen by the public.

The next step in the project is the analysis of the data and photographs by Civil and Environmental Consultants (CEC) with whom we have been working. A final report due by the end of June will include a list of restoration projects prioritized by severity, as well as a list of lesser remediation efforts that LSCWA could undertake with its own resources and volunteers. We plan to share these results with the community and with the watershed municipalities over the coming year.

One of the greatest achievements of this project is that we now have a “snapshot” of what each area of Little Sewickley Creek and its tributaries looked like at this point in time – which will provide an accurate basis of comparison for any future issues that may arise.

The LSCWA is greatly appreciative of the grants we received from ACCD and the Colcom Foundation, which made the project feasible. Extra thanks are due to ACCD for the training they provided for the volunteers, the hours they spent in the creek sharing their knowledge and expertise, and the numerous ways they offered advice and moral support.