

In This Issue:

Framework Group Meeting	2
Bring Back the Water Fountain	2
One Man's View of the River	3

The Tributary

BRWA's 2012 Annual Meeting

Tuesday April 17 6:00 p.m.

"The West Virginia Horizontal Well Act"

This year our annual meeting will feature guest speaker Mr. John M. S. King. Mr King is is an Environmental Resource Analyst with West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection's Office of Environmental Advocate. The Advocate office is dedicated to providing special assistance to communities and individuals who feel a particular issue warrants additional scrutiny or who need help locating an expert in a particular field or office. John's public service is to facilitate open communication among agency personnel, industry representatives and concerned citizens all while encouraging inclusive stakeholder collaboration. John graduated from Marshall University in 2007 with a B.A. in Criminal Justice and M.S. in Physical Science. While working towards his graduate degree, John was accepted into the Governor's Internship Program and began working with WVDEP's Watershed Assessment Branch in 2004. He officially joined WVDEP in 2006 as an Environmental Resource Specialist in the Public Information Office with the Youth Environmental Program. In 2008 he transferred to the Environmental Enforcement section within the Division of Water and Waste Management. As an Environmental Inspector, John helped citizens resolve complaints, provided permittees with compliance assistance and enforced NPDES permit terms and conditions in Wood and Wirt Counties. John is also a founding member of the Morris Creek Watershed Association located in the Upper Kanawha Valley and credits the organization's volunteer efforts as sole inspiration for choosing to work in the environmental field.

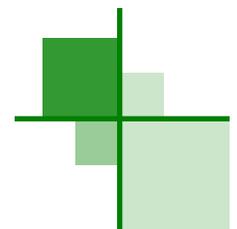
Unconventional drilling in West Virginia began in 2008 to aid the development of vast Marcellus Shale gas resources. Since then, West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection has issued over 3,000 horizontal well permits using a regulatory framework designed for smaller traditional vertical wells. In addition to Emergency Rules enacted by Governor Tomblin in August 2011, State law-makers recognized the need for newer updated statutes to protect the environment and provide industry with regulatory certainty. John King's presentation is entitled, "West Virginia Horizontal Well Act" and is a summary of H.B. 401 passed December 14, 2011.

The meeting will be held in the Upshur County Commissioners' Room located on the top floor of the Courthouse Annex in Buckhannon, WV. This meeting is open to the public and we hope you will join us. This will also be a great opportunity to renew your membership or to join the Buckhannon River Watershed Association (BRWA). Annual dues are \$5.00 for individuals and \$25.00 for businesses and organizations.

Elections to the BRWA Board of Directors will precede Mr. King's talk. Nominations to the BRWA Board from the floor are encouraged, but the nominee must be present to accept the nomination. For more information, please see the BRWA website at www.buckhannonriver.org or email us at brwainc612@gmail.com.



Detail of Tower for drilling horizontally into the Marcellus Shale Formation for natural gas, just north of Pennsylvania Route 118 in eastern Moreland Township, Lycoming County, Pennsylvania, USA. Image by "ruhrfisch"/Wikimedia Commons.



Buckhannon River Watershed Association, Inc.

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R. Calkins
T. Hackett
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Notes from the Framework Group Meeting, March 2012

The Buckhannon River Watershed Association hosts a meeting with federal and state agencies three times per year in which activities in the watershed and associated problems and solutions are discussed and acted on. The most recent such meeting was on March 20, 2012.

Major points presented were as follows:

1. The two acid remediation projects on Smooth Rock Lick Run on the Left Fork of Buckhannon near Alton have been completed, although additional post-project water-quality monitoring continues. These totaled over \$300,000. Completion of these projects follows BRWA's involvement with the completion of the 250 thousand-dollar Mud Lick project just west of Buckhannon.

2. WV Dept. of Environmental Protection reported that there is only one disposal (injection) well for drilling fluids in Upshur County, is near Alton, and is non-commercial, used only by the owner. It will receive approximately 4000 barrels monthly for pumping into the Gordon sandstone layer 4200 feet below the surface. The D.E.P. inspector said the pressure used is low and below the maximum allowable 540 lbs./square inch. His report was reassuring. Reduction in the total area of bare soil should mean a reduction in sedimentation. That is good news, because it implies less flooding and less filling up of the pool behind Buckhannon's dam with sediment.

3. A recent legal public notice indicated intention to mine under the city of Buckhannon. This will be looked into for more details and whether there might be concerns.

4. Two WVWC Environmental Studies majors in Professor Bjorgo-Thorne's research group reported on vegetative cover and land use in the Buckhannon and Little Kanawha watersheds. The studies showed, among other things, how the extent of bare soil in each of the two watersheds. Reduction in the total area of bare soil should mean a reduction in sedimentation. That is good news, because it implies less flooding and less filling up of the pool behind Buckhannon's dam with sediment.

Copies of BRWA's newsletter are often available in the City Building, County Courthouse Annex, The Daily Grind, Market Bistro, and the Hometown Market. To be put on the mailing list for the next few newsletters or to join (dues are \$5.00 /year), contact G. Paul Richter at 112 Fayette St., Buckhannon, WV 26201.

JOIN OR
RENEW YOUR
BRWA
MEMBERSHIP
TODAY!

Bring Back the Water Fountain

By Nancy Stoner, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Last summer I was walking through the French Quarter of New Orleans. It was a hot, steamy summer day and I was thirsty, so I looked for a water fountain. After several blocks of searching, I realized that while there is a bar on every corner, there are no drinking fountains in sight. The lack of public water fountains is not unique to New Orleans – water fountains have been disappearing from public spaces throughout the country over the last few decades. And with the loss of drinking fountains also comes a loss of public knowledge about the importance of investing in drinking water systems, which provide dependable, affordable and clean water.

Reinvigorating public water fountains provides a variety of benefits. They provide a service to residents and tourists who need a drink of clean water. They provide an alternative to sodas and other high-sugar drinks for children, both in schools and around town. When old, broken-down drinking fountains are restored it preserves historic relics of our cities.

Water fountains can also save money. The U.S. provides some of the highest quality tap water in the world at a very low cost to consumers. Municipalities work hard to provide this service, spending billions of dollars to provide clean tap water, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. On average, the cost to treat, filter and deliver tap water is 0.2 cents per gallon – roughly 750-2,700 times less expensive than bottled water. In spite of this cost difference, Americans drink around 30 gallons of bottled water per person per year. *(continued bottom of page 3)...*



Image by "philovivero" /Wikimedia Commons

One Man's View of the Buckhannon River

by Don Gasper, retired DNR Fish Biologist

The Buckhannon River is a beautiful mountain river, especially in its headwaters where steep, clear streams flow from infertile geological strata. The flows begin at over 3,000 feet of elevation, falling to 2,000 feet at Alexander, where the two main forks meet. Its forks all have native brook trout streams, but tributaries flowing over the Pottsville geology are too pure to support fish. Without rich buffering these have become more acidic over 50 years of acidic deposition ("acid rain"). The two main forks themselves are stocked with catchable-sized trout in addition to the resident brown trout population that is maintained by fingerling stockings. In these reaches the smallmouth bass population begins and extends down to the six-mile-long Buckhannon Reservoir, where the city gets its water. Trout-stocking occurs in the big boulder-strewn main Buckhannon River down to the reservoir, even though the water is warmed along this stretch. The mile of access to the river at Alton is a favorite trout-fishing reach of many anglers.

Streamside shade is vital in trout reaches to keep the river cool. A protective border of streamside trees can be used for public access and to take up excess nitrogen that the trees can use as a fertilizer for their growth. Excess nitrogen can promote algae blooms in the Buckhannon reservoir. This bloom can impart a bad taste and smell that cannot be entirely removed from the public water systems in the hot months of some summers. Overfilled septic tanks and other un-sewered systems can be important sources of excess nitrogen, as can cattle and horse pastures.

However, the Buckhannon water plant has been entered into water-tasting contests among cities and has received several awards. An important factor for good-tasting, safe water is Buckhannon's getting the first use of its water source. There are no municipalities above us on our watershed; furthermore, approximately 80% our watershed is forested, about 90% in the headwater areas. Soil erosion and sedimentation are low in forested areas. Forested land produces the finest quality water by far. With the beautiful slopes, tumbling streams, and clean water, we are fortunate to live in such an area.

Mining in the Kittanning coal from Alexander to Tenmile and at Sawmill Run have changed the water quality from one of the purest streams in the United States to one of moderate hardness due to the neutralization of sulfuric mine acid that is now necessary. This treatment of acid mine drainage has been going on for about 30 years at the cost of hundreds of thousands of dollars per year. This treatment must be continued indefinitely ("perpetually", as it is called), or the river would turn acidic and there would be few fish and other aquatic life, resulting in a reduction in the quality of wildlife and our life. It seems today a foolish legacy we must all bear long after the profiteers are gone.

The reservoir at Buckhannon has a boat access and parking area in town near its lower end, another about five miles upstream at Hampton, and two others below town. The reservoir has largemouth and smallmouth bass and musky, among other fish. These populate the river below where the gradient becomes flatter and the river meanders, leaving pools with sand bottoms. There are a few straight, steeper reaches with boulders well below the reservoir, but mostly the Buckhannon River continues flatter to its mouth at the Tygart River.



B.R.W.A. V.I.P's:

Left: G. Paul Richter; Right: Don Gasper

Accepting watershed awards at Celebration Day, 2009.

continued from page two...

And with one estimate that 1,500 bottles of water are consumed in the U.S. every second, this is a huge amount going into the recycling and waste stream. Since cities bear the cost of collecting, transporting, recycling and land-filling plastic bottles, reducing this stream could save city resources.

Many cities are taking action. Minneapolis, New York City, San Francisco and Washington, D.C. are encouraging residents to drink tap water, in part by reinvigorating public water fountains. EPA is also working with mayors across the country through the U.S. Conference of Mayors to promote the value of public water fountains.

Growing up, many of us remember getting thirsty and finding the nearest drinking fountain. It's time to reinvigorate and celebrate our public water system and the clean, safe drinking water we have. It's time to bring back the water fountain.

About the author: Nancy Stoner is the Acting Assistant Administrator for the EPA's Office of Water.

www.buckhannonriver.org

BRWA is a tax-exempt, 501(c)3 organization based in Buckhannon, WV. It is dedicated to pre-serving, conserving, and monitoring the health of the Buckhannon River Watershed and promoting our West Virginia river heritage through public awareness.

BRWA has received federal and state grant funding to cap a coal refuse pile, to reduce metal-containing acidic drainage into Mud Lick Run, and to capture and neutralize acid mine drainage on Smooth Rock Lick Run.

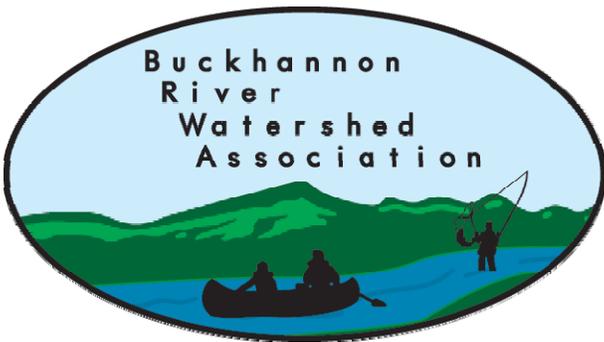
BRWA is a Community Engagement Partner of West Virginia Wesleyan College.

For information about the watershed or BRWA, contact G. Paul Richter at 304-472-3317 or at brwa612@gmail.com.

www.buckhannonriver.org

Email address:	
ADDRESS	
NAME	
Clip this out and mail to join the BRWA	
<p>Individual memberships \$5.00 / year Business memberships \$25.00 / year</p> <p>Mail to: BRWA, 112 Fayette Street, Buckhannon, WV 26201</p>	
<p>Become a BRWA Member Today! (or give a gift membership)</p>	
<p>The Buckhannon River Watershed Association, Inc. Telephone: (304) 472-3317</p>	

BRWA
 112 Fayette Street
 Buckhannon WV 26201



If your address label has a yellow dot, it is time to join or renew your membership in BRWA!