



TCCCC, Inc.
P.O. Box 124
Blossburg, PA 16912
www.tcccc-inc.org
2018 Newsletter #2

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP NEWS

TCCCC Membership Contribution Reminder: Please remember to send in your 2018 membership contribution. These donations are the only means of funding the organization and as you will read in the **Watershed Update**, GREAT things are happening for our watershed!

TCCCC Sponsored Scholarships: Thanks to the generosity of Jack and Kris Reilly, we will be offering at least one TCCCC Environmental Scholarship in 2019.

WATERSHED UPDATE

Fall Brook AMD Treatment Systems Update: All of the limestone beds on both the north and south AMD Treatment Systems were cleaned in May of this year. A total of 1102.4 tons of limestone were added to replenish the beds. The systems went on line in November of 2015 and the recently completed work is part of the routine maintenance.

Abandoned Mine Land Reclamation Fiscal Year 2018 Economic Development Pilot Program (AML Pilot): A total of \$25M has been allocated to Pennsylvania for 2018 for construction projects that will assist with economic development opportunities while also addressing issues created from past mining practices. The watershed committee is working with the Bureau of Abandoned Mine Reclamation (BAMR) and the Susquehanna River Basin Commission (SRBC) on a potential project to treat Acid Mine Drainage (AMD) pollution in the Morris Run and Coal Creek tributaries. There are a number of projects throughout the State vying for this money. Our watershed has received a great deal of State recognition because of the Fall Brook projects which were funded entirely by private investment from Southwestern Energy (SWN). We received the *Governor's Award for Environmental Excellence* for this project. Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Secretary Patrick McDonnell toured the watershed in November of 2017 and was impressed not only with the work we have done, but also the money we are raising through the *Save The Tioga River* initiative. All of these things work in our favor as we move forward with the project to treat Morris Run and Coal Creek.

Using mine maps created as part of the Morris Run study and on-going physical surveying of the area, representatives from BAMR are exploring options for treating Morris Run and Coal Creek at a central active treatment facility. Preliminary design concepts, costs, and anticipated economic development components must be identified prior to moving forward with the project. Once defined, the project must pass several State reviews before submission by the Governor to the Federal Office of Surface Mining (OSM) for approval. The projects must be completed within three years of the approval date.

Studies indicate that 80 to 90 percent of the water flowing in Morris Run and Coal Creek is coming directly out of the coal mines located in the area. During times of low flow, that number increases to 100 percent. Redirection of the AMD discharges to a central treatment plant may create dry

stream beds as there is very little non-polluted base flow in these streams. However, the long-term benefit will be a fishable Tioga River and a restored Tioga Lake.

Qualified Hydrologic Unit – Susquehanna River Basin Commission (SRBC): As stated previously, the AML Pilot money must be used for construction of projects. It cannot be used for Operation & Maintenance (O&M). However, there is money available for O&M through Pennsylvania’s **AMD Set Aside Funds**. To qualify for access to these funds, a watershed must be a *Qualified Hydrologic Unit*. There are specific guidelines for establishing a watershed as a Qualified Hydrologic Unit that pull together a great deal of information about a watershed, including the development of scenarios for various types of treatment options and benefits. Tom Clark of SRBC is going to document this information for the watershed.

Summary of AML Pilot and Qualified Hydrologic Unit: We have tried to provide you with an overview of this project. We do not have all of the answers but we are working closely with the various government agencies to help move this project forward. This is a large project, over a number of years, and SRBC has indicated that they are willing to manage the grant and act as the pass-through agency for BAMR, taking a tremendous load off the TCCCC. We will need support from the community and property owners, an entity to maintain the system with help from BAMR, and we must identify the economic development potential. In addition to recreational fishing opportunities, property values will improve along the River corridor, and there is potential for increased revenue for local businesses.

Interpretive Sign, Potential Park Reopening and New Trails: We are working with the Bureau of Forestry to develop a kiosk near the Fall Brook AMD Treatment Projects that will not only describe the treatment systems and how they work, but also provide history about the local mining. This is a project that we have envisioned for some time. Forestry has selected a site near the pull-off at the Fall Brook Falls and is exploring the possibility of reopening the park and developing a loop trail to Pirates Rock. Forestry is also in the process of rehabilitating Pirate’s Rock swimming hole. All of these things are GREAT news for our area residents for our own recreational opportunities as well as the potential to draw others to the area to enjoy these trails and parks!

Long-Term Goals: The goal of the watershed coalition has always been *to restore the Tioga River to a condition that will support aquatic life, including stocked fish populations*. The TCCCC mission statement has always been *to protect and improve our environment*. It has taken decades, but this is the best opportunity in all of these many years to finally see it happen. The *Save The Tioga River (STTR)* funds will be used as a matching component to these projects. We hope you will consider donating. Checks should be made payable to the “TCCCC” and sent to:

TCCCC
ATTN: STTR
PO Box 124
Blossburg, PA 16912

***The Officers and Board of Directors sincerely appreciate
your interest in and support of the TCCCC!***