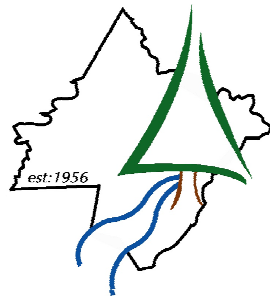


June 24, 2008



## Conservation Horizons

*Pike County Conservation District*

### **Do You Know Your Watershed Address?**

Everyone knows their mailing address and their street address but few people understand the importance of knowing their watershed address. Your watershed address provides you with a *natural* reference point that orients you to the region where you live.

To begin to understand and identify your watershed address, you need to think about where the water raining on your home and surrounding landscape goes. After it leaves your lawn, street or driveway, does it flow downhill straight into a nearby stream or lake? Does it wander into wetlands? Does it puddle in your backyard? Does it zip down a storm drain to the local river? Does it penetrate the soil surface and reach groundwater below to emerge later in a nearby stream or well? Whether it's a puddle, a pond, a stream, river or lake, that destination determines your watershed address.

Just like there are towns, within counties within states, in a natural watershed system there are sub-watersheds within watersheds within major drainage basins. For example, the rain that falls on the Conservation District office parking lot flows into Blooming Grove Creek, which flows into the Lackawaxen River, which flows into the Delaware River. So the watershed address for the Conservation District office would be: Blooming Grove Creek, Lackawaxen River, Delaware River even though our mail finds us through 556 Route 402, Hawley, PA.

Watershed boundaries are not drawn by humans or political processes; they are defined by *natural* drainage systems with changes in topography (elevation) being the main determining factor in setting the boundaries. A watershed can be compared to a huge basin collecting all the precipitation that falls within it and carrying this to a common outlet – a stream, a lake or river. A watershed includes not only the land within its

boundaries but also the surface water of lakes, streams and wetlands, the groundwater moving beneath the surface, and the living organisms, including people, who live there.

Since people are an integral part of any watershed, how we live on the land affects the quality and quantity of water resources within that watershed. Remember that watersheds often go beyond man-made boundaries like property lines, municipal, county, state, national or even international borders. So what you do in your backyard may affect the water resources within your home watershed and/or downstream communities. And, since we all live downstream, what someone is doing on the land further up in the watershed may affect your water resources.

Successful protection of surface and groundwater resources over the long-term means everyone must consider their individual responsibility for watershed stewardship. Stewardship begins with each individual property owner who is a part of the watershed. It is not really as complicated as it sounds. It starts with you “knowing your watershed address” and learning more about the impacts of different land uses that exist or are proposed within your home watershed. Then take it one step further. Plant a streamside buffer on your property, join a watershed group or conservation organization, volunteer for your township planning commission, attend town meetings to learn how land development plans might affect your watershed. We, as a community, can come together to protect and conserve the quality and quantity of our watershed resources for the future.

**May Question:** In addition to solid wood and wood chips, liquid fuel can also be made from distillation of wood. “Wood alcohol” has been used in race cars for decades. The scientific name for “wood alcohol” is \_\_\_\_\_

**May Answer:** Methanol

**June Question:** Stream gradient is a term that describes a way of grouping of streams and rivers based on size and location in the watershed. True or False?