

Restoring Balance:

Protecting Cacoosing Creek

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Prior to colonial settlement, attracted by the deep soils and fresh water springs, Leni Lenape tribes populated the Cacoosing Watershed. They named the area “Gokhosing’ meaning “place of the owl”. Fortunately, many forested and shrub wetland habitats along the Cacoosing can still be observed today, however, almost half of the watershed has been developed providing ample opportunity to implement conservation practices to enhance and protect the riparian habitat along the Cacoosing Creek.

The Cacoosing Creek Watershed is located in Berks County. It originates in the forested hills of South Heidelberg and Spring Township, just south of Sinking Spring and Wernersville Boroughs, and flows in a northeasterly direction for approximately 8.4 miles before its confluence with the Tulpehocken Creek. The 21.8 square mile watershed contains only one named tributary, the Little Cacoosing Creek.

The Cacoosing Creek is recognized as the primary coldwater tributary to the Tulpehocken Creek below Blue Marsh Lake. This section of Tulpehocken Creek has long been a favored trout fishery and destination for regional fisherman. The consistent cold waters from the Cacoosing provide a refuge for trout in the hot summer months, allowing angling enthusiasts to fish the waters year-round. The Creek is listed as Class-A Wild Brown Trout Fishery by the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC). Additionally, the Cacoosing Creek is designated as a Natural Reproduction Trout Stream from its headwaters to its confluence with the Tulpehocken.

Recently Kent Himelright, Watershed Specialist with the Berks County Conservation District organized a massive live stake planting on the Cacoosing Creek as part of an initiative for the Coldwater Conservation Plan for the Cacoosing Creek Watershed. The project was funded by the Pa Fish and Boat Commission. The Berks County Conservation District along with an outstanding showing of volunteers planted 1,000 native live stakes along 4,000 ft. of stream over the course of 2 days to enhance the streamside riparian to provide shade and habitat for aquatic wildlife, filter pollutants from stormwater runoff, and reduce streambank erosion. Volunteers from several groups including Boy Scout Troop 431, Master Watershed Stewards, Tulpehocken Creek Watershed Association, and local residents and homeowners worked together in an impressive effort to restore and protect a section of the creek. The volunteers' hard work and dedication overwhelmed BCCD staff, who never anticipated having such an amazing turn-out.

Earlier in the fall the restoration project along the Cacoosing Creek also included the installation of 5 root wads, 150 ft. rock toe streambank protection, 28 rock “barb” deflectors, and over 40 randomly placed boulders on over 4,000 ft. of stream. Livestock exclusion fencing will occur later this year.

For over 70 years the Berks County Conservation District has been dedicated to the encouragement of and education in the wise stewardship of soil and water. The BCCD has a long, successful history of partnering with local and state organizations to implement Best Management Practices (BMP) along

Berks County streams, such as the Cacoosing Creek, protecting the coldwater heritage of the watershed for generations to come.



[Before] Streambanks severely eroded by livestock access.



[After] A series of rock "barb" deflectors on the Cacoosing Creek.