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The Hemlock

Volume 1, Issue 2 (April 2008)

"Find your place on the planet. Dig in, and take responsibility from there." --Gary Snyder



Welcome Back!

We were delighted with the enthusiastic response to the first issue of [The Hemlock](#) and are pleased to offer you another issue. *The Hemlock* is a publication of the [Environmental Focus Group](#), whose goal is to help the LHU community develop a deeper sense of place. Such a sense of place involves stewardship of natural resources (environmentalism), meaningful outdoor experiences, and appreciation for the heritage of the region. We'd be delighted to publish articles from faculty, students, and staff on any aspect of these issues. If you'd like to contribute or if you have an idea that you'd like to see developed, please contact [Bob Myers](#). A theme of this issue is water--if there is anything that is central to the cultural, environmental, and recreational identity of Lock Haven, it's the Susquehanna River.

Earth Day

On April 22, 1970, the first Earth Day was celebrated, an event that coincided with the beginning of the modern environmentalist movement. Since then Earth Day has represented an opportunity to focus energy on worldwide environmental citizenship and progressive action.

This year, Earth Day falls on a Tuesday, but Lock Haven University will be celebrating the spirit of Earth Day on Saturday, April 26th. The [Student Cooperative Council, Inc](#) and the [MountainServe Community Service Office for Global Citizenship](#) will be teaming up for an all-out community service day. They have called the day "[THE BIG](#)

[EVENT](#)." The plan is to mobilize students, staff, and faculty to give back to the community. On this day, all 14 Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education Schools will be doing community service simultaneously. Registration applications are available in the Student Cooperative Council, Inc office in the PUB or the Community Service office in Raub 103.

[Clinton County Cleanscapes](#) offers a wonderful opportunity to honor Earth Day on April 26th by participating in a clean-up of an area that is part of the proposed Castanea Rails-to-Trails Connector ([see below](#)). We strongly encourage LHU faculty, staff, and students to contact Elisabeth Lynch McCoy at 570-893-4123 or by email at elynch@clintoncountypa.com. For information about Clinton Cleanscapes, including the 2008 schedule of cleanups, check out their [website](#).

Our River: The West Branch of the Susquehanna

--Md. Khalequzzaman (LHU Geology Professor)



Not enough can be said about the role that water plays in our life. Water is life, and rivers are the lifelines that connect communities. Since the amount of water is not increasing, but the population that relies on that water is growing fast, humans are putting increasing pressure on this limited resource. Accordingly, water has become a major source of conflict, and some believe that

the next world war will not be fought over land, but over water. In many parts of the world both the availability and the quality of water are steadily declining. Developmental pressure, changes in the land-use practices, and climate change are contributing to deterioration of the quality of water in the world, including the water in our own backyard – Pennsylvania.

Here in the heartland of Pennsylvania we are blessed with a fair amount of surface water and groundwater. The major source of our water in central Pennsylvania is the West Branch of Susquehanna River and its numerous tributaries. Water in the West Branch drains parts of 12 counties and is the thread that connects over half a million people living within its 3,345 sq. miles of watershed. The West Branch also connects our two campuses at Lock Haven and Clearfield. In 2005, in recognition of her breathtaking beauty, the West Branch of Susquehanna River was named the "River of the Year" by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Unfortunately, in the same year, the Susquehanna River was also named "America's Most Endangered River" by American Rivers, a national conservation organization. How can the "River of the Year" be the "Most Endangered River" in the same year? The truth is that our beautiful river is seriously ill. We need to work tirelessly to cure her ill so that she can serve us well in years to come. While we have enough water to meet the needs of our current population and projected population growth in the immediate future, we face serious challenges in terms of the quality of that water.

One major source of pollution is acid mine drainage (AMD) that discharges over six tons of toxic metals annually into the West Branch and ultimately the Chesapeake Bay. AMD is the legacy of unregulated coal mining activities in Pennsylvania, and it renders the water unsuitable for aquatic life. Millions of dollars have been spent over the last few decades for various types of AMD treatment facilities, but the end is not in sight. The total cost for treatment of the acid drainage will exceed \$16 billion and will take several decades. Once the river and its tributary streams are restored there is tremendous potential for tourism dollars through recreational fishing.

Another serious problem is nutrient and sediment pollution from agricultural and urban run-off as well as wastewater discharge. Since the mid 1980s, the federal government and the six states that form the Chesapeake Bay watershed (NY, PA, MD, DE, VA, and WV) have taken initiatives to clean up the bay. The latest initiative is termed as the Chesapeake 2000 Agreement. Under this agreement, Pennsylvania's goal is to reduce the amount of nitrogen in its rivers from 112 million pounds to 72 million pounds, and the amount of phosphorus from 3.5 million pounds to 2.3 million pounds. Seven years into the agreement,

the goal is far from fulfilled. It is unlikely that Pennsylvania and other states involved will be able to accomplish the goals set for 2010. The main obstacles to the cleanup efforts include lack of coordination and commitments in Washington, lack of federal and state funds required to improve the outdated sewage treatment facilities (123 in PA), and conflict among the various groups involved in the cleanup. For example, although agriculture remains the major contributor of sediment and nutrient pollutions, local sewage treatment plants face a state and federal mandate to upgrade the existing facilities. Since few funds have been provided, many local governments and municipalities feel that they are being targeted unfairly, and many municipalities have filed a lawsuit against the state government challenging this mandate.

Should the Chesapeake Bay cleanup be a priority issue for the people living in the West Branch of Susquehanna River watershed? The answer is yes, absolutely. The Chesapeake Bay is a true national treasure and a unique ecosystem. Furthermore, many businesses in central Pennsylvania are dependent on the crabs and fishes from the bay, and many Pennsylvanians enjoy recreational opportunities available in and around the bay. A large share of pollutants that impair the bay originates in our own backyards, and it is our moral obligation to do our part. But we also need to clean our rivers to improve the quality of life and the economy of our region. It is only through a cleaner environment that we will be able to reclaim the true glory of the sparkling river that nestles in the heartland of Pennsylvania. Together we can transform the West Branch of Susquehanna River from being an impaired body of lifeless water into a true gem that bustles with life.

For more information visit the [Chesapeake Bay Foundation](#) website. There are two excellent books on the Susquehanna River: Susan Q. Stranahan's *Susquehanna: River of Dreams* (John Hopkins Univ. Press, 1995), and Jack Brubaker's *Down the Susquehanna to the Chesapeake* (Penn State Univ. Press, 2003). Both books are available at bookstores and at Stevenson Library. The excellent [Susquehanna River Water Trail--West Branch](#) map can be purchased at Rock River & Trail ([see below](#))

Rails-to-Trails

--Lenny Long (LHU Recreation Professor)

At its peak in 1920, the U.S. railroad system had 300,000 miles of track. However, the increasing popularity of the automobile and the airplane led to a significant drop in railroad travel. Today, only half of the original rail network is still in place, and each year the railroads abandon an additional 12,000 miles of track. As rails were removed, hikers and bicyclists discovered the opportunity to be immersed in nature by traversing these rail corridors. The abandoned rail beds are flat and gently curved, and they bordered formerly unreachable scenic destinations, connecting communities to the countryside. The strong interest in these abandoned railways served as a catalyst for support organizations to formally address the various issues associated with the conversion efforts. As a result, the [Rails-to-Trails Conservancy](#) (RTC) was founded in 1986, "as a non-profit organization working with communities to preserve unused rail corridors by transforming them into trails, enhancing the health of America's environment, economy, neighborhoods and people." The RTC cites that there are well over 1,000 trails extending more than 14,000 miles throughout the US. Furthermore, there are an additional 1,200 projects underway that will add approximately 18,000 more miles to this extensive system.

The RTC has documented many benefits of this trails conversion program. They include 1) the promotion of tourism and economic development, 2) the preservation of the nation's industrial heritage, 3) the provision of a safe place to walk or bike, 4) the cleaning of abandoned industrial sites, 5) the encouragement of alternative transportation routes, and 6) the preservation of natural corridors and native species.

One local Rail-to-Trails project, the [Pine Creek Trail](#), was recently voted by USA Today as one of the "10 great places to take a bike tour." This 60-mile long trail travels through the Pine Creek Gorge. The Jersey Shore end of the trail is only 12 miles from Lock Haven University and provides the outdoor enthusiast with endless vistas, frequent glimpses of wildlife, and a nature bonding experience that will increase the user's attachment to central Pennsylvania.

A new Rails-to-Trails initiative would like to develop a 12-14 mile

connector trail from Castanea Township to the current trail head in Jersey Shore, bringing the trail even closer to campus. This projected adjunct will provide hikers and biking enthusiasts with significant historical and heritage interpretations, beginning with the renovated rail station in Castanea. There are also plans to include a number of fitness stations and a variety of supporting amenities (benches, bike racks, and picnic tables) to enhance the outdoor enthusiast's experience.

This Rails-to-Trails system is a terrific opportunity to experience the natural wonders of Central Pennsylvania. Get out and bike or hike and experience central Pennsylvania.

For more information visit the [DCNR Rails-to-Trails Guide](#) and the [Trails from Rails](#) website. If anyone has any questions concerning the Rails to Trails program in Clinton County, feel free to contact Elizabeth Vance McCoy, Clinton County Tourism Infrastructure Planner at 893-4039.

Rock River and Trail

--Amanda Alexander
(LHU Journalism Major)



Despite the beautiful scenery around us, many in the LHU community have yet to venture into the outdoors. If *The Hemlock* has sparked your curiosity about spending time outside, Rock River & Trail Outfitters is a great place to start. Located at 57

Bellefonte Avenue, just down the street from East Campus, RR&T has everything students need for a great day of hiking or kayaking, including name-brand gear and tons of free maps and map books.

For those who need a little more adventure in their lives, RR&T owner Rick Henrich recommends kayaking. Henrich said he mostly gets beginners in his store, and he gears his classes toward them. "I do a

rolling class at the YMCA for people that want to learn how to roll or brush up on their rolling skills," he said, adding that he also offers demos and guided trips with shuttle services. When he meets a beginner who wants to get started right away, the first thing he does is ask several questions to figure out what type of kayak would suit them best. The size of kayak depends on the size of the person, as well as where they choose to use it. Kayaks can be bought or rented.

Henrich established RR&T five years ago. "I thought it would be a good fit," he said. Henrich has spent plenty of time outdoors. "This is what I love to do. I have 25 years of experience," he said, noting 10 years of kayaking, 15 years of hiking, and some snowshoeing experience. Henrich can't name a favorite wilderness experience because "they're all good," he said.

Along with mountain biking, hiking and kayaking services, RR&T also offers snowshoe trips in the winter (snowshoes can be rented), as well as clothing for the outdoors and a full line of footwear. Hours of operation are Mon.-Thurs. 10-5, Fri. 10-7, and Sat. 9-5. You can contact Rick through the [Rock River & Trail](#) website, by phone, (570) 748-1818, or by [email](#). .

April's Hike: Where Your Water Comes From

Leonard Charles, Jim Dodge, Lynn Milliman and Victoria Stockley have developed a quiz to evaluate your sense of place. Titled "[Where You At? A Bioregional Quiz](#)," it asks a series of questions about the environment in which you live. The first question is: "Trace the water you drink from precipitation to tap." To help you get started answering this question, you might take the following hike.

From the Clinton County Courthouse (Water & Jay streets), turn right onto Jay Street. Go .7 miles and turn left onto 220 North (Williamsport). Go 4.5 miles to the next exit (McElhattan), and at the bottom of the ramp turn right. Continue 1.2 miles on Reservoir Road, which becomes a fairly rough gravel road after the first half mile. When you reach a red gate, park your car. Go through the gate (it's legal) and follow the gravel road.

You'll pass a second red gate, and, after about .4 miles (8 minutes), you'll see some white buildings to the left. This is Zindel Park, a true oddity. In the late 1920s, the City of Lock Haven constructed the small reservoir and the house, which was occupied by water



officials. Next to the reservoir is a shrine, which contains lava from the Mount Etna volcano. After you've explored Zindel Park, return to the gravel road and continue up it for five minutes until you reach the dam of Keller Reservoir. Lock Haven's water supply is stored in this reservoir and in McElhattan Reservoir, which is 3.5 miles up McElhattan Creek. If you continue to follow the road to the left, it crosses the creek (depending on water level you might get your feet wet), and then runs beside the reservoir, offering great views. When you've reached the end of the reservoir, you've hiked about 1.25 miles--you can return to your vehicle or continue to explore the trails upstream from the reservoir.

The water we drink comes from rain and snow that falls on the ground within the McElhattan Creek watershed. Part of the precipitation forms surface run-off that flows to McElhattan Reservoir via McElhattan Creek. Other precipitation percolates into the ground and forms springs and groundwater that seep into McElhattan Creek. You probably recall that this fall, the McElhattan Reservoir was being repaired, and due to the drought conditions, Keller was drained almost to the bottom, which meant that Lock Haven had to draw its water from the Susquehanna River.

The Durrwachter Alumni Conference Center Goes Green

--Paula Kistler (LHU Foundation Fiscal Manager)



The Durrwachter Alumni Conference Center recently applied for LEED certification. According to the [U.S. Green Building Council](#),

"The Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Green Building Rating System is the nationally accepted benchmark for the design, construction and operation of high-performance green buildings. LEED certification provides independent, third-party verification that a building project is environmentally responsible, profitable and a healthy place to live and work."

The Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education has asked that all campuses strive for LEED design and certification while planning and building new facilities. The Durrwachter Alumni Conference Center will not only be the first LEED building on the Lock Haven University, it is the first in Clinton County and perhaps the first in the PA Wilds.

Throughout design and construction, the project team aspired for LEED certification. At points there was a potential for Silver Certification, but at the end of the day it submitted the application with 32 points, missing Silver by one point.

The process involves six major categories: Sustainable Sites, Water Efficiency, Energy & Atmosphere, Materials & Resources, Indoor Environmental Quality and Innovation & Design Process. The team attempted and applied for points in each of the categories. Notable aspects of the facility earning points include: a shower/changing room &

bike rack, designated parking for low-emitting & fuel efficient vehicles, optimization of energy performance, storage and collection of recyclables, construction waste management, regional materials and controllability of lighting systems.

Through a strong plan, over 85% of the construction waste was diverted from the landfill, earning the project two points. More than 20% of the materials used in construction needed to be manufactured locally, and of those materials, 50% harvested locally. 59.13% of the project's materials were manufactured locally while 56.8% were harvested locally, achieving two more points toward the certification.

While the team believes they have earned more than enough points to achieve certification, the application is under review by the U.S. Green Building Council. The design professionals believe it could take up to a year for final certification to be confirmed and awarded.

A Paddle Park in Lock Haven

--John Crossen (LHU Building Maintenance Foreman)

You might be wondering, "What is a 'Paddle Park?" It is a man-made area of a river or stream that provides a recreational area for non-powered, paddle craft (canoes or kayaks). Water parks in other parts of the U.S. have drawn boaters to



an area. Paddling clubs have used these parks for competitions such as slalom racing and rodeo events that test the paddlers' ability to perform turns, rolls and other technical moves. The parks offer a healthy and fun way to exercise, and boating is an excellent way to teach young people life skills such as swimming, basic boater responsibility, river etiquette and water safety. A well-planned park also enhances stream conditions for fish and other aquatic life, by providing habitat, shelter and resting areas for fish, birds, animals, and insects. Furthermore, paddle parks stabilize and improve stream banks. Currently, the closest paddle park is [Sunnyside](#) in Bellefonte, and one has been proposed at [Stony Creek Gorge](#) near Altoona. With the growing number of recreational boaters in

the area, Tim Holladay and Elisabeth Lynch McCoy of the Clinton County Planning Commission have been working to create one of these "park and play" areas in Lock Haven, perhaps on Bald Eagle Creek.

How to Speak Pennsylvanian

--Bob Myers (LHU English Professor)

A key part of a strong regional identity is language. You'd expect a southerner to say "Are y'all fixin' to eat those grits?" and someone from New England might drive her "ca' up to Ha'va'd ya'd." Local-color literature in the late nineteenth century celebrated regional dialects and cultures, but, regrettably, mass culture has resulted in a leveling out of differences--eventually, we'll all speak like David Letterman. Knowing the "official" language is important, but preserving local dialects is also important. Were I to write a central Pennsylvania local-color novel, the characters might sound like this: "I was down at the crick when I remembered that my mom wanted me to redd up my room. So I jumped in my truck, but on the way home I swerved onto the berm. When I got home, I could see that my truck needed warshed real bad. Later I drank a few Ying-lings and thought about how great life is in Pee-Ay" Or somethin' like'at. Some of this came from the website ["You Might Be From Pennsylvania"](#) and the rest came from observations about my own speech proffered by my New England wife.

Environmental Ethics

How does our orientation to others and the world have an impact on the environment? What obligations do we have to the environment? Future generations? Others in the world? In the first summer session, Professor Whitman Hoff of the Philosophy Department will explore these questions in an online course--PHIL400 "Ethics and the Environment." The course will examine particular environmental issues and cases of ethical concern as well as world views and perspectives that influence one's attitude toward the environment. Philosophical and ethical frameworks will be discussed that will help work toward resolution of environmental problems. The topics may include preservation vs. conservation, holistic ethics, anthropocentrism, wilderness, feminist approaches to environmental ethics, Deep Ecology, radical environmental activism, and environmental justice. For more information, contact Professor [Joan Whitman Hoff](#).

Where to Eat in Central Pennsylvania

Artist Ken Hull recently published a guide to the best locally owned restaurants and bars in central Pennsylvania. *Going Local* gives directions to and reviews of his favorite places. You can buy the book at D. Dashem Books (109 E. Main Street), at the Old Corner (205 North Grove Street) or at the author's [website](#).

Beyond The Surface

--Vincent Goodwin (LHU English Major)

Do trees cry on rainy days?
Do all rainbows lead to gold?
Aren't trees worth more than
currency?
Are bare mountains still beautiful?

Do trees need warmth to survive?
Do bees make honey to stay alive?
And do they fight just to die?
I bet mother knows more about
surviving than I do.

Maybe we can learn a thing – or two
By listening to her voice – speaking
Can you feel her breathing?
Against your skin and through your
hair?
I can ... can you?
And do you care?
You would care if you understand...



Do you understand that people - like rivers come from bigger OCEANS?

And your first impression
Is a shallow understanding of the picture being painted

Do you see the puzzle?
Cause

Its
in
pieces

Because people won't tread deeper to reach the horizon
Where the water-and-sun meet
So does the beach do the ocean justice?
Will the world drown in reality?

And if it does can you save it?
You could if you helped
So will you help?
You would help if you cared
So will you care?
You would care if you understand
So do you understand?
Try listening to the Ocean's sand
Because then you will gain an understanding
Of reality in the deep end.

Other Interesting Websites:

- [League of Conservation Voters National Environmental Scorecard](#): LCV's mission is to advocate for sound environmental policies and to elect pro-environmental candidates who will adopt and implement such policies. Since all three candidates for President are senators, you can check their score on environmental issues.
- [Earthday.net](#): Founded by the organizers of the first Earth Day in 1970, Earth Day Network promotes environmental citizenship and year round progressive action worldwide.



19th-century view of Lock Haven from Peter's Steps. Note covered bridge at Jay Street.

The Environmental Focus Group

Bob Myers (chair), Md. Khalequzzaman, Lenny Long, Jeff Walsh, Danielle Tolton, John Crossen, Sandra Barney, David White, Tom Ormond. The committee is charged with promoting and supporting activities, experiences, and structures that encourage students, faculty, and staff to develop a stronger sense of place for Lock Haven University and central Pennsylvania. Such a sense of place involves a stewardship of natural resources (environmentalism), meaningful outdoor experiences, and appreciation for the heritage of the region.