

TU provides stream surveillance training to Pa. members in Marcellus Shale Region

Anglers will learn how to conduct water quality assessments

Trout Unlimited and its Pennsylvania Council have initiated a new program to train Pennsylvania volunteers to use stream surveillance activities that monitor the impacts of Marcellus Shale development on streams where gas drilling is occurring.

Aimed at monitoring water quality in rivers and streams throughout the state's Marcellus region, the program will train volunteers to become part of its Coldwater Conservation Corps (CCC), a group that will serve as stream stewards. They will conduct routine surveillance and monitoring of local waters by taking water samples, measuring stream flow and conducting visual assessments.

Protecting coldwater fisheries is an integral part of TU's mission and with over 11,000 TU members in Pennsylvania, we have the opportunity to take an active role in stream surveillance activities in Pennsylvania, said Elizabeth Maclin, TU's Vice President for Eastern Conservation. As gas drilling activities increase, so does the potential for accidents and errors. It's important to train anglers and other sportsmen and women to be the eyes and ears in their home waters, Maclin said.

TU will conduct a series of trainings throughout the Marcellus region. The first training was held July 17 in Emporium. Additional trainings will be scheduled this fall.

Rivers and streams face numerous risks from drilling and extraction of gas, including increased erosion and sedimentation, water quantity and quality impacts due to water withdrawals for hydraulic fracturing and potential contamination problems associated with wastewater. We want to ensure that sportsmen and women play an integral role in preventing the destruction of important headwater habitats -- the places where we fish and hunt, said PATU Pres. Dave Rothrock. We must make sure these rivers and streams remain healthy for future generations.

TU is piloting the program in the Sinnemahoning Creek watershed through a grant from the Headwaters Resource Conservation and Development Council and its Sinnemahoning Watershed Grant Program. Additional funding provided by the Heinz Endowments will allow TU to implement the program statewide. The Heinz Endowments supports efforts to make southwestern Pennsylvania a premier place to live and work, a center for learning and educational excellence, and a region that embraces diversity and inclusion.

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