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INDEPENDENT REGULATORY
REVIEW COMMISSION

2834

From: Tisha Walmer [tmw@lmf.net]
Sent: Tuesday, June 08, 2010 12:33 PM
To: EP, RegComments
Subject: Proposed Downgrade Hammer Creek
Attachments: Environmental Quality Board comment letter.doc

Attached and below is the text of comments regarding the downgrade of the Hammer Creek. Thank you.

Dear EQB,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment to the proposed stream redesignations published in the April 24, 2010 PA Bulletin, specifically the downgrade of the Hammer Creek in Lebanon County.

We have lived in the Hammer Creek Watershed since 1995. In that time, we donated an agricultural easement on our 28+ acre farm and placed a 7-acre riparian strip in CREP. Our intentions were the obvious preservation for the future but even more so to establish conservation-minded farming practices in order to improve the water quality with the hope of proposing an UPGRADE to the Hammer Creek. We have taken advantage of the FSA's Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program to provide for 2,400 tree/shrub plantings and allowed another previously farmed area to revert to its natural wetland state.

We have been aware of the petition for the downgrade but hoped that this petition would be voided since the township's need for sewers has been resolved by the planned connection to the Lebanon City plant and because the DEP would note a local interest in improved water quality. High school biology classes along with CBF scientists have conducted consecutive stream testing noting marked improvement in the stretch of stream flowing through our property since the stream bank restoration changes and riparian zones have been established on this portion of the Hammer. One comment was that, "The testing samples and water quality of the stream indicate the stream classification is high quality. However, additional stream bank restoration and improved riparian zones up/down stream of the Walmer property could easily provide the necessary improvements to upgrade to the highest classification possible, exceptional value." Too few waterways in Pennsylvania are classified exceptional value. To have the opportunity to help elevate a stream to such a prestigious status is the responsibility of all of us.

We feel strongly that there is much potential and public interest for improvement with programs similar to CREP to be utilized. We dispute the assertion that BMP's cannot remedy the Hammer Creek and are taken back by the possibility that the DEP would retreat from it's own objective to protect the water quality of it's rivers and streams, thereby negating all that we and our neighbors have done.

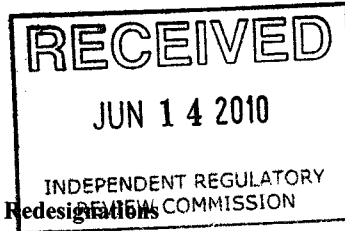
The present high quality designation provides a protection for streams like the Hammer Creek which - with ever-increasing development, erosion, runoff and pollution that we see everywhere - is a much-needed safeguard in order to prevent loss of clean stream and surface water.

In closing, we again thank you for the opportunity to comment and request an explanation as to why the DEP would accept this downgrade and not continue to promote the best stewardship possible.

Steven A. Walmer
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June 8, 2010

Environmental Quality Board
P.O. Box 8477
Harrisburg, PA 17105-8477



RE: Clarks Creek, *et al.*; Stream Redesignations

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Sincerely,