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AGY



MEHOOPANY CREEK WATERSHED ASSOCIATION

PO BOX 73

MEHOOPANY PA 18629

mehoopanycreek.org mehoopanycreek@yahoo.com

2016 APR 14 PM 3:26

RECEIVED
IRRC

April 14, 2016

Environmental Quality Board
P. O. Box 8477
Harrisburg PA 17105-8477
<http://www.ahs.dep.pa.gov/eComment>

Re: [25 PA. CODE CH. 93] Water Quality Standards; Class A Stream Redesignations

Board Members:

The Mehoopany Creek Watershed covers 134.5 square miles that encompasses Bradford, Luzerne, Sullivan and Wyoming Counties. The Association has done several stream restoration projects through Growing Greener Grants over the last several years. The natural stream restoration projects we've completed improve fish, fowl and animal habitats along with stream stabilization reducing sedimentation run-off issues. Our members monitor stream water quality, participate in litter pickup days and lime the South Branch usually at least annually if not semi-annually. Our members also participate in habitat improvement activities jointly with a local deer quality management group. We've pruned apple trees and planted food plots within SGL57. We also hold an Annual Trout Day Fundraiser and assist with the North Branch Trout Derby for our area's young and upcoming anglers.

The (South Branch) Mehoopany Creek is currently designated as a High Quality-Cold Water Fishery, Migratory Fishery.

The Class A Stream Redesignation rulemaking proposes the addition of Burgess Brook as HQ-CWF, MF. Burgess Brook is a tributary of the North Branch Mehoopany Creek. The rulemaking also notes in relation to Burgess Brook designating the North Branch as CWF, MF. The Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission for more than five years has listed Burgess Brook as a both a Pennsylvania Wild Trout Waters (Natural Reproduction) and Class A Trout Waters. With this designation, the Class A Trout Waters is a qualifier for a DEP designation as a HQ stream in accordance with the PA Code.

Like many of our tributaries, Burgess Brook's source lies within a remote area in SGL57. It is located in a remote, natural and unspoiled environment within the wilderness of SGL57.

The MCWA is pleased to see the codification of Burgess Brook as a high quality stream (HQ-CWF, MF) within the Mehoopany Creek Watershed. We strongly support Burgess Brook and North Branch Mehoopany Creek proposed stream redesignations.

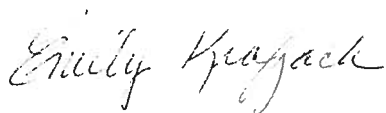
Please note, it has been almost five years since the 2011 floods that affected our watershed. It has been five years since the DEP evaluated any streams within our watershed. Several streams notably, Kasson Brook, Opposum Brook and Somers Brook all had sufficient data warranting another evaluation. We request that the DEP schedule evaluations on these three tributaries soon.

Additionally, we are unaware of any evaluation completed on the North Branch Mehoopany Creek, Farr Hollow Run, or Little Mehoopany. Through a Growing Greener Grant, we had a watershed assessment completed previously. Please advise if you may be unable to access the DEP provided copy. We request that the Department undertake an evaluation of the North Branch Mehoopany Creek, Farr Hollow Run and Little Mehoopany Creek.

We are quite interested in the Department evaluating and taking a closer look at these three streams. (North Branch, Farr Hollow Run and Little Mehoopany) Currently, the Mehoopany Creek Watershed has 14 stream segments listed on the Pennsylvania Wild Trout Waters listing (February, 2016). These streams represent 34% of the Wyoming County Wild Trout Waters. Our watershed has been affected by the legacy industries of timber, coal mining, shallow oil drilling and presently, shale gas drilling. Information on these streams along with all streams in our watershed will greatly assist us as we strive to improve water quality.

We appreciate the efforts that both the Department and PFBC has placed on our watershed. We thank you for the opportunity to submit a comment in support of Burgess Brook and the North Branch Mehoopany Creek stream redesignation.

Best Regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Emily Krafjack".

Emily Krafjack
President