

April 2023

Watershed Partnership Wins National Award



The Ugly Truth of "Flushable" Wipes

That *little* wipe can be a *big* problem! Who would have thought a baby wipe or disinfecting wipe could cause a mess like a broken pump or a sewer overflow? Yuck! Unlike toilet paper, wet wipes don't break down in water. Even those that say "flushable" can pile up and clog pipes. Those clogs can cause sewer to back up in homes, or overflow into creeks! So do yourself and your neighbors a favor... **When it comes to wipes, trash 'em, don't flush 'em!**



Dedicated Stream Teams collect water samples in the sunshine, rain, or freezing cold!

Beckley Sanitary Board, in partnership with WVU Tech and Piney Creek Watershed Association is proud to announce our cooperative project **Piney Creek Watershed Monitoring Collaborative**, was selected to receive a 2023 National Environmental Achievement Award through the National Association of Clean Water Agencies (NACWA). The award-winning initiative began in Beckley in 2017 as the three partners set out to learn more about local water quality, engage volunteer "citizen scientists" and involve students in "real world" field science. In January 2019, four "Stream Teams" of students and other volunteers launched their first of many excursions. Each team collected and studied water samples from the four major streams in the Beckley watershed. Students also set up water analysis in the laboratory and helped study sample results to understand water quality trends. Since 2019, Stream Teams have been collecting data once every month, except for a three-month break due to Covid.

The information gained through the project has helped locate sources of water pollution, plan future infrastructure improvements, and direct ongoing research. More than 40 students have been involved, along with other dedicated community volunteers. The project recorded more than 1500 volunteer hours and many students turned their watershed research experience into career and or graduate school opportunities.

"The Beckley Sanitary Board is pleased the efforts of our staff, WVU Tech students, faculty and watershed volunteers have received much deserved national award recognition. This collaborative demonstrates the progress that is possible on challenging environmental issues when we work together from the classroom to the creek bank," stated Jeremiah Johnson, General Manager of BSB.

The watershed collaborative continues to grow and welcomes new volunteers each season. As Beckley Sanitary Board and its partners invest in the watershed future, the Piney Creek Collaborative is building a legacy of environmental cooperation and opportunity.

Beckley Sanitary Board and its partners were honored in February at the 2023 NACWA Winter Conference in Sonoma, CA.



Beckley Sanitary Board GM, Jeremiah Johnson presented the Collaborative Project Poster at the NACWA conference.

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Stormwater Upgrades Completed Throughout Beckley Area



Drainage in the area of City Ave was upgraded to replace old and failing pipes with stabilized grass swales. Spring 2022

It's been a busy construction season in the Beckley area! We completed stormwater improvements along City Ave and Maxwell Woods, just to name a few. In the summer of 2021, in response to aging and failing sanitary sewer and stormwater systems near City Ave, BSB initiated design for an upgrade of both systems. The stormwater project replaced pipes and restored drainage channels to a more natural flow. Construction on the million dollar upgrade was completed in 2022. Last fall, BSB completed an in-house construction project to study, design and upgrade drainage structures in Maxwell Woods. Ongoing projects like these help prevent flooding and reduce water pollution.



Concrete headwall installation during excavation of drainage swales in Maxwell Woods. Fall 2022

Brand New “Trash Trout” Litter Catchers Installed in Beckley!

If you've taken a look into Cranberry Creek or Little Whitestick Creek recently, you might have noticed some newcomers to these Beckley streams. What are they? We call them **Trash Trouts™** and they actually have a pretty cool job! Each of these boat-like contraptions is specifically designed to capture and hold aquatic trash (floating litter,) so it can be removed from the creek.



Trash Trout™ collecting litter in Little Whitestick Creek.

The Trash Trout™ project was developed in partnership with Piney Creek Watershed Association and Asheville Greenworks, with funding from the WV DEP REAP program and The Beckley Area Foundation. Thanks to these new devices, and the help of community volunteers, more than 60 lbs of floating litter has already been removed from the Piney Creek Watershed! Want to see



Volunteers clean out the Cranberry Creek Trash Trout™

them in action, or get involved? Join us for A **Trash Trout Celebration on April 21st**. Visit www.pineycreekwatershed.org/trashtrout for more info!

To report suspected stormwater pollution, please call BSB at 304-256-1760.