



runs n' ruffles

on big fishing creek

a publication of the
SUGAR VALLEY WATERSHED ASSOCIATION

WINTER 2020/2021

A NEIGHBOR'S TRIBUTE TO DAVE SNOOK

By Glenn A. Vernon, Founding President, Sugar Valley Watershed Association

I was standing on the porch of our office at the old general store at Logan Mills when Jim Harbach drove by and asked if I'd heard the news that our neighbor Dave Snook "didn't wake up this morning." I had just spoken to Dave a few days before and was as shocked and surprised as everyone at this sad news. Dave was one of the first people I met when I moved to this valley in 1997, and we became good friends while we served together as officers and directors of Farm Bureau and the Sugar Valley Watershed Association. Although we didn't always agree on every issue, we were always able to set those differences aside when the meetings ended, knowing that being good neighbors was much more important than any issue that might divide us.

As anyone who knew Dave well can tell you, Dave was a great story teller too--he loved to talk about anything and everything, and if he stopped by for a chat, you knew you'd better set aside at least an hour and could count on him to tell you at least one thing you needed to know, and a few things you probably didn't at the time but glad you did now. He seemed to have his finger on the pulse of life in this valley, traveling up and down and across its length delivering farm supplies while taking in the latest news. He was a tireless advocate for the farmer's point of view and could recite regulations chapter and verse. And when Dave laughed, he threw his head back and his whole body laughed. He was the real deal, a guy who was "comfortable in his own skin," as people around here like to say.



David Lewis Snook, Sr., 62, of Loganton, passed away Monday, Aug. 24, 2020 at his home.

I see Dave's wife Pam often driving alone now on 880, the road I still call Summer Road because Summer Road seems so much more meaningful than the name PennDOT replaced it with, and I think of Dave every time I see Pam driving alone on Summer Road now, remembering his stories, his laugh, his point of view about farming and about life in general. And like Summer Road, I won't forget that Dave Snook was the real deal too-- a good friend, a good neighbor, and a good steward of the land and the waters that flow through this valley who will be missed by all of us who depend on both of them for our lives and for our livelihoods.

INVASIVE PLANTS

By Dan Heggenstaller

The mountains and valleys of Pennsylvania are home to diverse ecosystems ranging from dry-oak ridge tops to dark, hemlock-lined stream valleys. These different habitats are home to over 2,000 native plant species, from tiny grasses and sedges to towering pines. These complex plant communities form the broad and important base upon which wildlife populations are built. Everything from brook trout to white-tailed deer are impacted, either positively or negatively, by the vegetation on their stream bank or in their forest. Lots of factors can impact the health and diversity of wild plant communities. Some of these factors are difficult or impossible to change, such as soil type, landscape position (in a valley or on a mountain top) or aspect (north or south facing). Other factors can change over time, but are hard to control or predict, like wildfires, wind storms or ice damage. Still other factors are the result of human activities, like timber harvesting, mowing or agricultural practices. The combination of all of these factors, past and present, create a condition where certain plants grow and others don't. Moist gaps favor hemlocks, yellow birch and striped maple. Rocky mountain flats favor oaks, pitch-pine and huckleberry.

That is, until non-native invasive plants enter the picture. Invasive plants are those that have been introduced from another place and rapidly expand and dominate native vegetation. By definition, they cause some sort of harm to the ecosystem they have invaded. Invasives displace native species resulting in patches or sometimes large areas of only one plant species. There are many reasons why some introduced plants become invasive. Often, whatever keeps that plant under control in its native range is absent in its new home. Nothing eats it, or no disease weakens it. Invasives form dense monocultures that can be persistent and very difficult to control. These plants often have very low browse or food value for wildlife and can completely prevent native plants and trees from growing. Farmers and landowners have an opportunity to improve wildlife habitat and future timber value of their forests by actively managing infestations of invasive plants. But how?

On a crisp early fall morning in September, community members gathered to talk invasive plants and how to manage them. SVWA hosted a free, well-attended workshop at Dancing Bear Lodge in Eastville to hear from two Penn State experts about how to properly identify common non-native invasive plants and how to manage their impact. Art Gover (PSU Dept. of Plant Science) and Dave Jackson (PSU Extension Educator) provided an entertaining and informative presentation focused on basic ID and responsible chemical control. Many invasives common to Sugar Valley were discussed, such as bush



Art Gover discusses managing bush honeysuckle.

Photo credit: Toby Boyer, Watershed Specialist/Education Coordinator, Clinton County Conservation District



Dave Jackson shows how to control invasives with the hack-and-squirt method.

Photo credit: Toby Boyer, Watershed Specialist/Education Coordinator, Clinton County Conservation District

honeysuckle, autumn olive, Japanese barberry, tree of heaven, and Japanese stilt-grass. The presenters brought fresh cuttings of these and other species to assist with proper ID. The second half of the workshop was all about specific equipment, herbicides and tactics for landowners who want to take on their invasive plants. The focus was on low-cost, practical methods that most folks can use. Field demonstrations were made detailing safe and effective techniques. This workshop was registered with PA Department of Agriculture so that attendees could receive pesticide applicator credits.

Two more educational workshops (both with applicator credits) are planned for the coming months, with dates still to be determined. A late winter workshop will focus on weed control tactics and soil health in no-till crops, while a spring/summer workshop will continue our look at invasives with a field based event focused on control methods. Please keep a look out around the valley for posters as dates are selected for these events!

'TIS THE SEASON – TO BE GREEN

By Lisa Blazure

As you're driving around Sugar Valley, have you noticed the greenery of the season? We're not talking about holiday greens, decorations, and Christmas trees. We're talking about the hues of green in the farm fields. It's a beautiful sight to travel the valley and see that green contrast to the grays and browns of the winter landscape. Our local farmers have done a fabulous job this fall of planting cover crops.



Cover crops planted in Sugar Valley. Photo credit: Lisa Blazure

An effort is underway trying to document how many acres were planted with cover crops this year. But a visual estimate may be around 85% of the available acres. That's much higher than the 25% county wide average in November 2019 and even higher than the 37% Pennsylvania average according to the 2017 Census of Agriculture.

Cover crops are planted after the main crops have been harvested and serve many purposes. First and foremost, they protect the soil from eroding during rain events. In many places, this erosion has the potential to reach Fishing Creek or other streams. Cover crops feed the soil microbes that build soil structure which allows for water to soak into the ground instead of running off. This good structure also supports heavy farm equipment without compacting the soil. Cover crops capture sunlight energy through photosynthesis and take carbon out of the air and safely store that carbon as organic matter in the soil. Cover crops also capture nutrients from leftover fertilizers or fall manure applications and prevent those nutrients from leaching into the groundwater and the streams.

If you are a farmer in the valley – thank you for planting cover crops this year. For those of you who don't farm, we hope you make the effort to talk with a neighboring farmer. Thank them for doing their part to protect the soil and Fishing Creek; for capturing atmospheric carbon and reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Thank them for improving their soil health and growing crops and animals that supply our local communities.

This fall, we have a lot of good things happening in Sugar Valley's agricultural community. We are setting a great example of farmers doing their part to protect local waterways and improve soil health.

OBSERVATIONS

C. Sweeny

Fishing Creek flows behind the Booneville Campground then along Campground Road before turning west at the base of Greenburr Hill as it makes its way through Logan Township. Just before going west it is very visible from the highway. At this location Fishing Creek went dry this year on September 8th. In 2010 this happened on August 10 and in 2016 it was September 4th. These are the three earliest times in the last 11 years. The Creek did not go dry in 2018, 2017, 2015, 2014, 2012, or 2011.

This year was dry, but not as dry as 2016. It did not have as many 90°F days as either 2010 or 2016.



Rain as Recorded at Wolf Gap

	2010	2016	2020	10 year average
June	3.62	2.1	3.49	4.9
July	3.73	2.69	3.03	6.11
August	4.3	6.85	4.84	5.07
September	4.64	2.85	3.85	4.75
Sum	16.3	14.5	15.2	20.83

90°F Days

2010	2016	2020
32	11	7

**THE SUGAR VALLEY
WATERSHED ASSOCIATION**

2132 East Valley Road,
Loganton, PA 17747



**U.S. POSTAGE PAID
Non-Profit Organization
Permit No. 99
Lock Haven, PA**

**ECRSS-BLKRT
CARRIER ROUTE
BOX HOLDER
LOGANTON, PA 17747**

Board Meetings

We meet the first Monday of every
month unless otherwise noted.

7:30 pm

**In order to keep our members and
our community safe we are holding
meetings via conference call.**

**Just dial in:
978-990-5351**

**Then enter the access code:
2564176**

The board will meet at the Booneville
Campground in the spring, weather
permitting.

**Become a Member of the Sugar Valley Watershed Association
“flowing cleaner, growing greener”**

*... protecting the quality & beauty of Big Fishing Creek to enhance life in Sugar Valley by
promoting awareness & appreciation of environmental issues through education so the
community can make sound choices for a sustainable & ecologically healthy future.*

Help Support Our Organization by Joining at One of the Following Levels:

Individual	\$5.00	Patron	\$25.00	Stewardship	\$50.00
Family/Farm	\$10.00	Business/Corp.	\$75.00	Conservationist	\$100.00

**THE SUGAR VALLEY WATERSHED
ASSOCIATION OFFICERS AND
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