

FRIENDS OF THE NESCOPECK  
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## FRIENDS OF THE NESCOPECK

### 2024 NEWSLETTER



The Friends of the Nescopeck have been posting photos, updates, and new information on Facebook. Check us out and like us! To receive notifications of our postings, follow our page. Visit our website at <https://friendsofthenescopeck.org/>

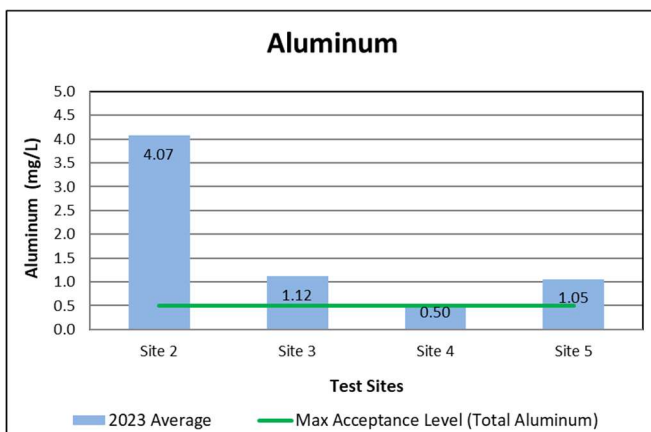
### Mission

Friends of the Nescopeck has a mission to educate the public about the importance of conservation, maintenance of quality fish and wildlife habitat, and natural diversity. The Friends want to develop and assist in programs that identify, assess, and monitor areas of impact within the watershed and to develop and assist in programs to maintain and improve the watershed.

### Water Quality

The Friends of the Nescopeck continued to test water samples monthly throughout the Nescopeck Creek watershed. This year marks our 8<sup>th</sup> continuous year of testing. We test five sites including our two largest tributaries – Little Nescopeck Creek and Black Creek, both of which are affected by AMD (acid mine drainage).

The Friends coordinate quarterly testing with PA DEP as our quality check and we share DEP results on parameters we are no longer able to test, such as aluminum, manganese and sulfate. High levels of aluminum, manganese and iron coupled with low pH flowing from the Jeddo Tunnel continues to pollute the Little Nescopeck Creek and the main Nescopeck Creek from Route 93 all the way to the Susquehanna River. DEP has listed this entire stretch as impaired as well as most of the length of Black Creek.

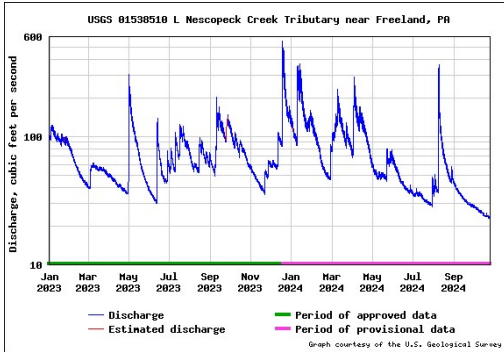


This past year we have been forced to selectively cut back on some of our testing due to the high cost of our reagent chemicals. Some of our equipment also requires replacement. If anyone wishes to help subsidize our testing program we would greatly appreciate any help – financial or if you would like to participate in the testing program.

Test results are available upon request.

## Jeddo Tunnel Update

The Jeddo Tunnel drains an area of 32 square miles and was originally built to drain the underground mines in the Hazleton area. The tunnel system consists of five tunnels with the Jeddo Tunnel emptying into the Little Nescopeck Creek near Fritzingertown. This polluted water, AMD (acid mine drainage), is low in pH and high in aluminum, manganese, iron and sediment.



Money may be available to treat the water so PA DEP BAMR is beginning the process of investigating the feasibility of building a treatment plant. USGS installed a new stream gage at the mouth of the tunnel in the fall of 2022 to monitor the real time flow. So we now have two full years of flow data. This data is available to all by looking at the USGS site -

<https://waterdata.usgs.gov/monitoring-location/01538510>

DEP has been sampling monthly and analyzing the chemistry at the mouth of the tunnel since February of 2023 and will soon have two years of current data. BAMR has now hired an engineering company to perform a phase 1 study of the feasibility of treating the water.

## Butler Township Road Clean-up

Every year the Friends commit to a cleanup within the watershed. This year, the Friends partnered with Butler Township for 2024's Great American Cleanup. On April 13<sup>th</sup>, several members gathered in St. Johns to tackle trash on Biesel's Road and Authority Road. We removed 22 bags of trash, house siding, old tarps and a lot of broken glass from the creek banks along Authority Road. We want to thank Butler Township manager Alan Kost and the road crew for providing supplies and trash removal.

If you know of an area within the watershed along the Nescopeck Creek or a tributary that needs our attention, please contact us. [nescopeckfriends@yahoo.com](mailto:nescopeckfriends@yahoo.com) or on Facebook.

## Nescopeck Headwaters Hike

On June 4<sup>th</sup>, Friends of the Nescopeck co-hosted a hike with Nescopeck State Park to our watershed headwaters, Creasy Creek. Environmental Education Specialist Megan Fedor led the 6-mile round trip hike along the D&L Trail in Dennison Township. Tucked away in State Game lands, the trail passes by Moosehead Lake before arriving at Creasy Creek. Pristine and teeming with wildlife, the destination is worth the hike. Megan and Friends member, Gary Leander shared their watershed knowledge with the group during a respite by the lake. If you're interested in learning more about our watershed, visit our website at [www.friendsofthenescopeck.org](http://www.friendsofthenescopeck.org)



Photo by Gale Maleskey

## Macroinvertebrate Sampling in Nescopeck Creek

One of the Friends' most consistent activities in our efforts to improve and promote the Nescopeck Creek watershed is to regularly measure water quality in the Creek and its tributaries. Chemical testing is done monthly, but we also periodically do a biology-based test called macroinvertebrate sampling. "Macro testing" consists of following a standard protocol and collecting macroinvertebrates from the creek bottom, then counting all the insect larvae, worms, and all small invertebrates. Since the different species have highly different tolerances for water pollutants, the numbers and types of invertebrates found, applied to a mathematical formula, provide an accurate measure of the pollution level, or water quality.



On September 18, 2024 the Friends Of The Nescopeck conducted a macroinvertebrate count on the Nescopeck Creek at the Walp Road bridge. The collection began at 10 AM, three collections at three minutes each were conducted with kick nets. Specimens were counted and returned to the creek. Most abundant were Water Mites which numbered over 100. Larva and nymph forms found were Stonefly, Caddis Fly, Mayfly, Crane Fly, and Water Penny. In addition Crayfish, Snails, Aquatic Worms and a Leech were found. The species and their

quantities were used to calculate stream quality, giving the stream quality at that point the upper limit of a fair rating. The overall water quality ratings range from poor to fair to good.

The Friends are available to area individuals and groups who might like to learn this technique. It's good science and always an enjoyable experience.

## Conyngham Nature Park

In September, Friends conducted a tour of the recent reconstruction and expansion of the trail at Conyngham Nature Park. The trail now extends to Butler Avenue where a crossing will connect to Whispering Willows Park. The existing trail was repaved and additional reaches added. Plans for the future include boardwalks through the wetland areas and signage. Friends provided input to Borough Council and assisted in field surveys.

(Photo view from Butler Ave looking towards the Nature Park)

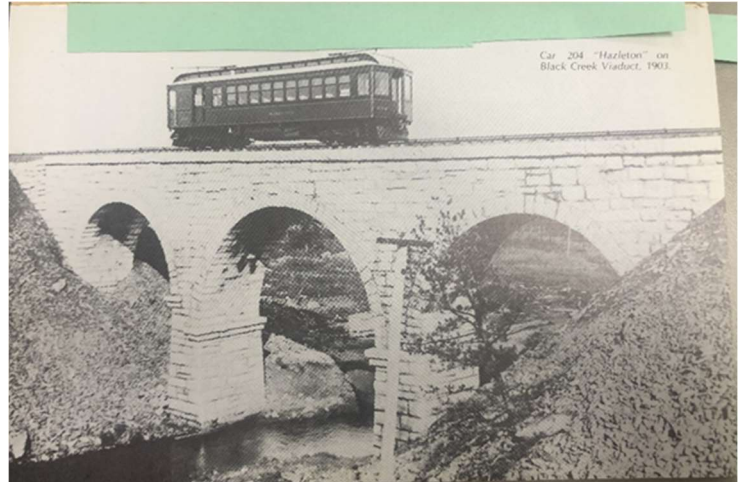


## Hazleton's Hidden Architectural Wonder

Hazleton has a few notable and quite visible feats of construction. These include the Israel Platt Pardee Mansion, City Hall, the Altamont Building, the Old High School as well as many beautiful churches. However, possibly its most unique architectural marvel is the one that is the most concealed.

The Wilkes-Barre and Hazleton Railroad was incorporated in 1899 and operated from 1903 to 1933.

In order to cross over the Black Creek in Hazleton a large three arch viaduct was constructed of stone.



*Bottom photo and write up by Jeff Sullivan*

Sadly, this unique 120+ year old structure is hidden behind the Sewer Authority inside the Valmont Industrial Park.

For a more detailed viewing go to YouTube and search Hazleton Viaduct.

## What is a Nescopecker?

Nescopeckers is the name of a Facebook group, with over 750 members, representing whitewater paddlers interested in paddling the Nescopeck Creek. This Facebook group provides an opportunity for fellow paddlers to receive updates on the water level (there is a stick gage at the putin), learn about any obstructions in the creek (extremely useful from a safety standpoint following high water events) and coordinate meeting times to paddle (useful from both a safety standpoint and to run car shuttles).

The whitewater section of the Nescopeck Creek is about five miles long and should only be run by experienced whitewater paddlers.



## Outreach

During 2024, members of the Friends participated in four community activities. We set up a stand displaying watershed maps, water quality results, photos and models all addressing many of the Nescopeck watershed issues. It's the perfect time to ask questions and learn more about our local watershed. Come look for us next year.

### **Nescopeck State Park Winterfest – February 3rd**

### **White Haven Trout Festival – June 1<sup>st</sup>**

Early June, Trout Unlimited held their 2<sup>nd</sup> annual Trout Festival at the White Haven Library. What a great event! Thirty-six vendors and exhibitors displayed their wares and information within the library and on the grounds. Along with Friends of the Nescopeck, there were conservation groups, fly shops, fly tyers, river boat guides, State Parks, State Game Commission, Fish Commission, PA Forestry, EPCAMR, D&L Corridor Trail, watershed groups and others. The number of attendees was impressive as well for this two-year-old event. If you're an environmentalist, fisherman, hiker, biker or you just want to see what is available in our beautiful watershed, this is an event for you.



Our hats are off to Mike Gondell of Trout Unlimited for the years of planning and execution. We wish him and Trout Unlimited many more successful Trout Festivals. We'll be there.

### **Conyngham Valley Day – August 3<sup>rd</sup>**

### **Brainerd Church – October 6th**

## Municipal Report

For the seventh full year, the Friends will be providing a report to watershed municipalities and partners detailing the results of our water quality testing. Results were individualized for host municipalities, other watershed municipalities, and partners. As in our first report, information was included on methodology, quality control, test parameters, site selection and characteristics, test results and test result comments. A combination of line graphs and bar graphs was developed by Gary Leander, Director of Testing, to provide more user-friendly data. Friends also offered to present the results at municipal meetings or activities.

PA/BAMR arranged with USGS to re-establish a stream gauging station at the mouth of the Jeddo Tunnel with live data available to the public beginning November 2022. PA/BAMR beginning in February 2023 is sampling water monthly at this same location with the PA/DEP lab analyzing the water quality. The Friends will download and organize this data to highlight in our annual report.