

Loyalhanna Watershed Association  
**2022 Annual Report**

## *Dear Fellow Members and Friends,*

As the Loyalhanna Watershed Association is well into it's second 50 years of operation, it seemed appropriate to take a look back in time as to what has made our organization the success it is today - Partnerships, Projects and Professionalism.

The timing was perfect in 2022 to be invited by the Richard King Mellon Foundation to apply for a new grantmaking program as part of their recently updated Strategic Plan. This new "Organizational Effectiveness" initiative was created to assist nonprofits that have the capacity and potential, as well as demonstrated success, to achieve the highest levels of operational excellence. We were privileged to work with Jordan Pallitto of The Hill Group to complete this project, one that we may not have ever been able to tackle on our own. While planning and policies are typically not the most glorious side of nonprofit work, they are still equally as important.

Thanks to this effort, LWA was able to continue to improve its position as a professional nonprofit organization through this investment in leadership, governance and human capital management. Specifically, by detailing plans to prioritize the attraction and retention of diverse, high-performing leaders, enhancing board development and engagement, measuring impact, and refreshing and updating overall policies, procedures, evaluations and practices.

To personally witness the growth of our Association over the years has been a true joy, and can be attributed to the dedication of our incredible staff, numerous dedicated volunteers, innovative programs and projects, and most importantly, to our ever-increasing, involved and interested membership. On behalf of the Board of Directors, I wish to thank everyone involved in our growth outlined in the following Annual Report, and invite you participation in any or all of our future endeavors. The best is yet to come!

With gratitude for your years of support and time well spent,

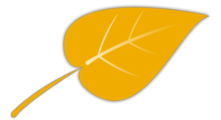
*Wink*

William S. Knowles

President



# Regional Grant Announcement Brings Attention to LWA's Restoration Efforts



It was a picture perfect early spring morning on March 10, when LWA's Project Manager, Josh Penatzer, welcomed guests from the PA Department of Environmental Protection and other area partners at a stream-side event along Mill Creek for the agency's announcement of \$3 million in Growing Greener Plus Grants to benefit watershed restoration projects in six area counties. LWA was fortunate to receive \$233,000 of these grant funds to improve sections of Mill Creek and Fourmile Run over the next three years as part of this most recent grant round.

DEP's Southwest Regional Director, Jim Miller, was on hand to make the announcement along with State Representative Leslie Rossi, and PA Fish & Boat Commission Stream Habitat Section Chief, Mark Sausser. Jim spent his childhood growing up near Johnstown and remembered fishing Mill Creek frequently when he was a teenager.

"We're thrilled to highlight the Loyalhanna Watershed Association's approach to watershed restoration here and support each of the fantastic projects funded through this round. When you're out here and can see the streambank erosion and sediment in the channel yourself, the need is clear," Miller said during the announcement.

Work on Mill Creek will be completed in three phases, the first of which began in the summer of 2022, and will continue through 2024. In total, approximately 3,000 feet of waterways will be restored through the construction of streambank stabilization structures and natural channel design. Projects such as these are designed to improve water quality by reducing sediment, as well as enhance habitat and improve recreational use.

The Loyalhanna Watershed Association was honored to be featured in this regional spotlight, with two Pittsburgh news networks covering this story. It was incredible to be part of some good news on TV for a change!





# Water Quality Initiatives



## Restoration Work Improves Three Area Waterways

**I**t was a busy summer along three streams in the upper watershed! A homeowner along Naugle Run who was experiencing severe erosion of the nearby streambank so much so that it was endangering the home's foundation got some long-awaited relief with the addition of a two-section modified mudsill installed along 50 feet of stream to alleviate the impacts to the bank during high flow conditions.

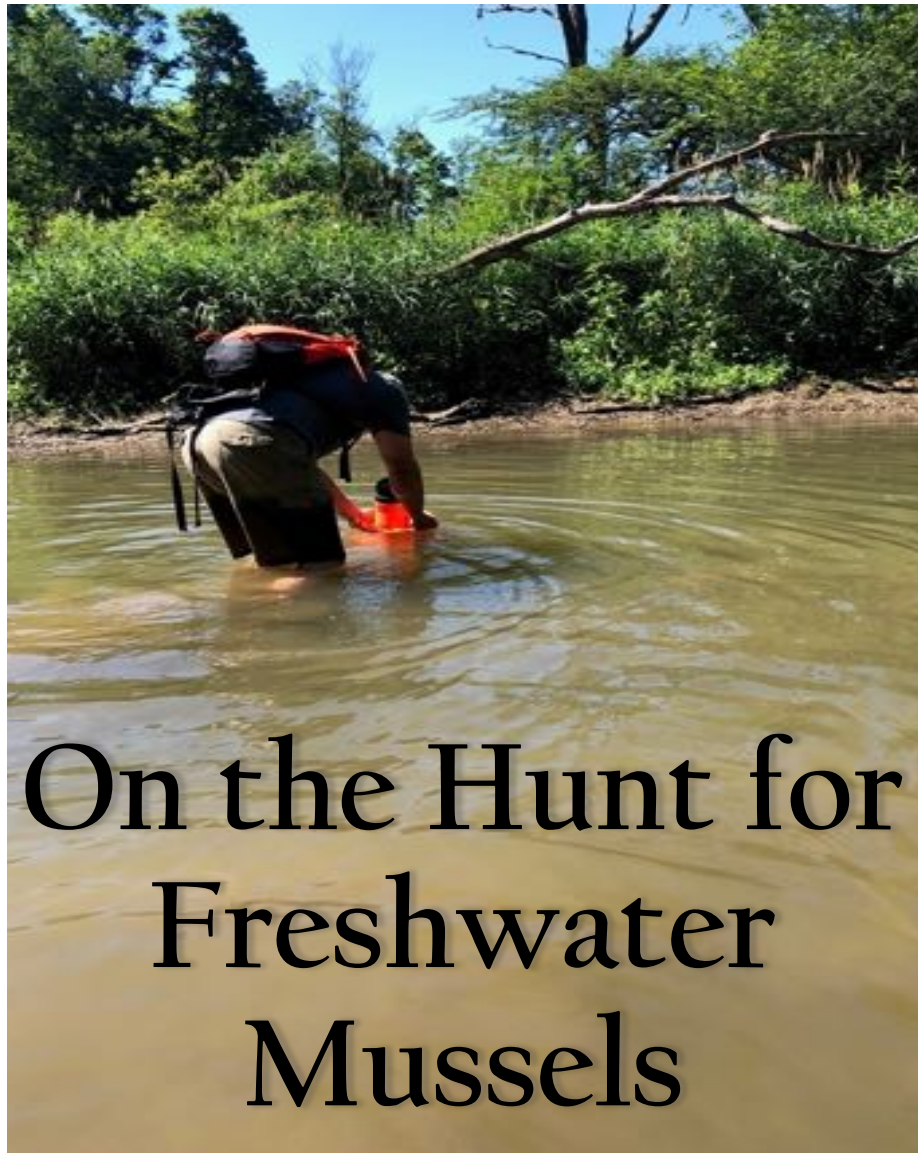
A similar situation was also occurring to a home along Old Linn Run Road, as severely eroded undercut banks that were 8 feet high in some sections were encroaching on the home. Ten sections of modified mudsill, a log-framed cross vane and rock cross vane, and rootwad deflectors were installed to repair the damaged banks and improve in-stream habitat of roughly 270 feet of Linn Run. Both of these projects were funded through the DEP's Office of Water Management programs.

In addition to these individual sites, the first of three project phases under the Growing Greener funded Mill Creek and Fourmile Run Stream Improvement Project was completed. The "Mallard Lane" site along Mill Creek had been significantly altered as a result of recent flooding events. As a result, the stream channel along this section of the cold water fishery changed drastically, and become over-wide, with limited flow and depth in the summer months. Work on this 350 foot stretch included the construction of a 15-section modified mudsill and log-framed cross vane, as well as the addition of several rootwad deflectors.

These improvements have already dramatically narrowed the channel back to an appropriate width for the size of Mill Creek in this stretch in just a few short months, and additional habitat has been created for trout and other aquatic life, which will only enhance this section as a popular destination for anglers.







# On the Hunt for Freshwater Mussels

A Pennsylvania Natural Diversity Inventory (PNDI) search is a requirement of all permit applications on any project that may impact the quality of a Pennsylvania waterway, including projects that are planned to improve water quality such as those implemented by LWA. A “PNDI hit” is alerted by the reporting state agency, such as the PA Game Commission, PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources or the PA Fish & Boat Commission, if the agency recognizes the potential of harm to a species listed as a species of special concern, threatened or endangered. If a project area is found to possibly contain a species like this, additional investigation is necessary.

While it doesn’t happen very often, this summer we received such a notice on a section of Fourmile Run for none other than a freshwater mussel species of special concern - the Wavy-rayed Lampmussel. Josh Penatzer had the unique opportunity to spend a day with Nevin Welte, Malacologist with the PA Fish & Boat Commission, to conduct a site investigation in Fourmile. Sure enough, one was found and was safely relocated.

## What is a “Wavy-rayed Lampmussel”?

The Wavy-rayed Lampmussel (*Lampsilis fasciola*) is a Pennsylvania Freshwater Mussel Species of Concern. It is a relatively small mussel distributed throughout Southern Canada, and the North-eastern sections of the United States. The mussel is characterized by its yellow to yellowish-green color, and receives its name from the numerous thin wavy rays that cover its shell.

Wavy-rayed lampmussels are historically distributed throughout the Ohio River basin, and live in gravel and sand bottoms in medium-sized streams. They are particularly sensitive to changes in their environment, and are typically found in streams with good currents near riffles. Their sensitivity to chemical contaminants along with loss of habitat, has caused a continuous decrease in the mussel’s population within the Ohio basin. The invasive Zebra Mussel is in direct competition with the wavy-rayed, and often impair their ability to feed, reproduce and move.

Like other native mussel species, conditions such as natural flow alteration, siltation, channel disturbance, and other point and non-point source pollution factors have threatened their populations within the Loyalhanna Creek Watershed. Thankfully, work to reduce sedimentation and improve riparian buffer and in-stream habitats helps to keep them here.





# Land Conservation Efforts

Thanks to Shirley Smith and her family, an additional 2.4 acres of property along Fourmile Run was added to the list of LWA's conserved parcels. Mrs. Smith generously donated the property in June, 2022, which is mostly comprised of the riparian area and stream channel near the sharp curve along Fourmile Run in Darlington below the Red Rock community.

The parcel was ranked high for protection by LWA's Land Committee due to its location along a major tributary to the Loyallhanna Creek, a healthy riparian habitat, and past streambank stabilization work. Due to its proximity to the road, the property will also serve as public access for outdoor recreation and passive use, such as fishing, which is very popular in this section of Fourmile Run.

Thank you Shirley for this contribution that will be enjoyed by many for years to come!



Working with our partners from the Lincoln Highway Heritage Corridor, the former “Donato’s Gas Station” parcel located at the intersection of S.R. 30 westbound and S.R. 259 was transferred to LWA to add to the

existing Route 30 Corridor Conservation Easement in that area. This additional 5.6 acres will continue to provide access to fish the lower portion of Coal Pit Run, and will also protect special habitats that exist on the property including numerous vernal pools.



# Riparian Buffer Landowner Assistance Program

The Riparian Buffer Landowner Assistance Project is a new localized effort by LWA to provide education and funding assistance to area homeowner with small properties along tributary streams within the upper and middle watershed areas to restore or improve the riparian buffers along their streams. One of the most common pollution impacts noted through the organization's recently completed watershed reassessment plan was riparian buffer loss leading to erosion.

Riparian buffers are defined as the area of land that borders streams, rivers, lakes or ponds that are planted with vegetation to protect the water source from pollution and provide wildlife habitat. In addition to filtering nutrients and other pollutants, buffers control erosion and sediment runoff during high water events, help stabilize streambanks to reduce erosion, reduce the impacts from flooding and provide habitat for wildlife and pollinators.

Thanks to a generous grant provided by the PNC Charitable Trusts, this new program will provide technical assistance, materials and professional installation of riparian buffer vegetation at no cost to eligible property owners. The goal of this effort is to re-establish healthy buffer areas along sections of streams of greatest need. While there are a variety of federal and state programs that provide technical assistance and financial aid to agricultural land owners for planting riparian buffers, assistance for the average homeowner is a little harder to come by.

LWA plans to work with six homeowners for the inaugural year of this effort. Together, we hope these small steps will lead to a greater improvement in the water quality of our region.



**If you or someone you know is interested in learning more about this new program and how to qualify for free assistance, we would love to speak with you!**

**Contact Josh Penatzer, LWA Project Manager, to set up a site visit.**

**josh@loyalwater.com or  
(724) 238-7560, ext. 2#.**



# Education & Outreach

Thanks to the incredible efforts of LWA Educator, Lynne Donnelly, and partnerships with other area groups including the Ligonier Valley Weeders & Seeders, Latrobe Parks & Recreation, PSU Master Gardeners, Ligonier Valley Tiny RAMS, Ligonier Valley High School and Ligonier Valley Middle School Outdoors Club, a variety of programs were conducted both at the Watershed Farm as well as the classroom last year!

In the summer months, a new series of “Eco-Explorers” day programs welcomed over 75 children in preschool – sixth grade for hands on lessons and activities. LWA also partnered with Latrobe Parks & Recreation on their summer day camp and Creekside education programs.

With the full return of field trip experiences for area schools, the spring and fall field trip seasons were filled once again, involving over 1,000 students from Grandview Elementary School, Mountain View Elementary School, Latrobe Elementary School, R.K. Mellon Elementary School, Laurel Valley Elementary School, Ligonier Valley High School and Derry Area Middle School.

One of the only positive things that came out of the pandemic was the opportunity to partner with other organizations and groups that we have not worked with in the past. Our education space has grown from hosting just LWA programs events to having a multitude of organizations use the facility on a regular basis, including Forbes Trail Trout Unlimited, Ligonier Valley Weeders & Seeders, the PA Master Naturalists, Laurel Highlands Antique Auto Club, Quacked Glass Studio and even the Loy-ahanna Dance Society, just to name a few!

Looking ahead, we hope to continue our goal to devise new programs and initiatives that meet the ever-changing needs of our community!







We were pleased to once again partner with the PA DCNR-Forbes State Forest on a successful Youth Conservation Corps Summer Internship Program! This year, we welcomed three area college students who worked alongside DCNR staff to complete valuable trail and other public access improvement projects, as well as participate in a variety of outdoor experiences, include whitewater rafting! At the conclusion of the program, interns were each awarded a \$2,500 scholarship thanks to the generosity of long-time program underwriter, the Katherine Mabis McKenna Foundation.

## In Memoriam - Gary Gula



It was with a sincere heavy heart to convey the passing of Gary Gula, long-time volunteer, member and supporter and past board member of LWA on September 10, 2022.

When looking through photos of Gary over the years, it makes perfect

sense that every one of them had him helping in some capacity. Whether it be hauling debris out of the Loyalhanna after a flood, setting up our giant canopy tent, or even attempting to keep Wink in line during a birdseed sale, he was there. His sense of humor, kind demeanor and love of those around him was evident in all he did. No matter how tedious or mundane our, "Hey Gary, can you do us a favor?" request was, he always said yes.

Gary took pride in everything he did for our organization, as well as all of the other groups he devoted his time to. We are all extremely blessed to have shared such a small part of his tremendous life well-lived.



Thanks to Justin Helsel and his crew from Helsel Home Remodeling, the farmhouse front porch was beautifully replaced in September.

In only six short years since the initial farmhouse restoration took place, the main support pillars were already damaged due to weather impacts and the flooring and stairs were becoming unsafe.

Thanks Justin, for making sure the porch will be safe and sound for years to come!



# 2022 Events and Happenings



**PA Bluebird  
Society Program**



**Over the Hill  
Challenge**



**Loyalhanna  
Sojourn**



**Great Ligonier  
Valley Cleanup**



**Loyalhanna  
OktoBrewfest**



**Harvest Dinner**



**Endless Staff  
Adventures!**



# Financial Report

## FY 2021-2022

The Loyalhanna Watershed Association's accounts are kept on a fiscal year basis, beginning on July 1 and continuing through June 30 of the following year. In the fiscal year ending June 30, 2022, income from all sources totaled \$524,819. This reflects a net loss of (\$38,505) in Investment Returns. Of this total, \$341,035 came from Restricted Project Grants and Unrestricted General Operating Grants; \$80,696 came from Special Events/Fundraisers; \$119,084 came from General Contributions & Membership Dues; and \$22,509 from Rental Income and Other Sources.

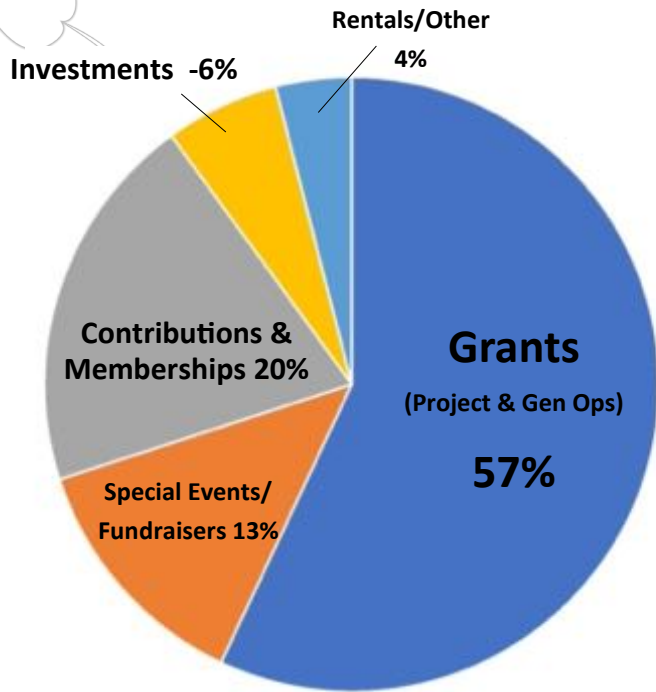
Expenses from both restricted and unrestricted sources totaled \$696,071. Conservation Program expenses totaled \$378,763 among the focus areas of Water Quality Improvement, Land Conservation, Education and Community Outreach; Special Event/Fundraising Expenses were \$76,540; and Administrative & General Operating expenses totaled \$124,629. Depreciation expenses totaled \$116,139, which is reflected in both Conservation Program and General Operating categories of our audited financial statements, but for the purpose of this report, are shown as a separate category.

## Assets/Liabilities

<b>TOTAL ASSETS:</b>	<b>\$4,242,300</b>
<i>Current Cash &amp; Investments:</i>	<i>\$1,094,404</i>
<i>Lands held for Conservation:</i>	<i>\$991,754</i>
<i>Buildings/Watershed Farm:</i>	<i>\$2,918,693</i>
<i>Furniture/Equipment:</i>	<i>\$69,489</i>
<i>Vehicles:</i>	<i>\$32,386</i>
<i>Accumulated Depreciation:</i>	<i>(\$864,426)</i>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES:</b>	<b>\$56,379</b>
<b>Total Net Assets:</b>	<b>\$4,185,921</b>

## Income

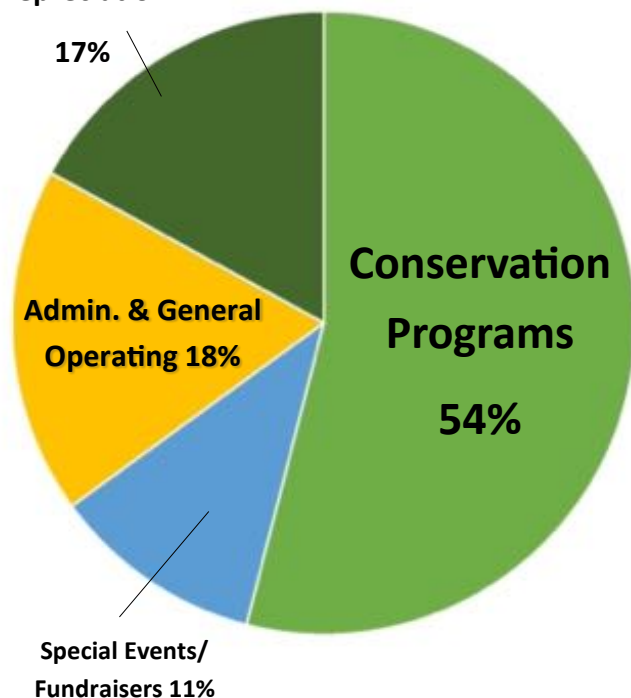
Category Percentages



## Expenses

Category Percentages

Depreciation







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*\*Denotes New Members*

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We sincerely apologize if  
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this listing.

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William Baber  
Robert Bell  
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The Loyalhanna Watershed Association would like to offer special thanks to the following foundations and individuals. Without their gracious support towards our general operations, LWA would not be able to fulfill it's mission.

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LOYALHANNA  
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## Loyalhanna Watershed Association

The Watershed Farm  
6 Old Lincoln Highway West  
Ligonier, PA 15658

P: (724) 238-7560

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[www.loyalhannawatershed.org](http://www.loyalhannawatershed.org)