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<http://www.timesleader.com/sports/Stocking_plan_hatched_08-23-2009.html>.

[Stocking plan hatched](#)

Authority, PFBC help Crestwood start Trout in the Classroom

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Sports Reporter

WRIGHT TWP. – Almost two years after an ammonia discharge from the Mountain Top Area Joint Sanitary Authority entered the Big Wapwallopen Creek and killed an estimated 3,000 fish, the effects of the incident still linger today.



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Mountain Top Area Joint Sanitary Authority executive director Tom Keiper presents a \$1,000 check to Crestwood High School teacher Fran Gough, center, to fund the school's Trout in the Classroom program. Waterways Conservation Officer Greg Kraynak will assist the school with the program.

Fred Adams photos/for the times leader



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From left, Waterways Conservation Officer Greg Kraynak talks with Crestwood teacher Fran Gough and Mountain Top Area Joint Sanitary Authority's Tom Keiper about Crestwood's Trout in the Classroom program.

This time, however, a collaborative effort between the authority, the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission

and the [Crestwood School District](#) have put a positive conclusion to the negative event.

Last week the authority made a \$1,000 donation to the school district to fund a Trout in the Classroom project for the upcoming school year and beyond. The educational program is administered by the PFBC and the agency supplies participating schools with trout eggs that will be cared for by students.

When the eggs hatch, the agency mandates that the trout be stocked in a waterway open to public fishing. At Crestwood, the trout will be put back into the Big Wapwallopen Creek.

The sanitary authority paid a \$10,000 fine to the state Department of Environmental Protection last year, but wanted to do more.

“We met with the fish and boat commission and DEP and asked if there was something we could do to make a positive outcome out of this. Something proactive,” said authority executive director Tom Keiper. “We suggested restocking the stream or doing something beyond paying the fine.”

Waterways Conservation Officer Greg Kraynak, who covers part of Luzerne County, suggested a donation to help implement a Trout in the Classroom program at Crestwood.

The idea made sense, according to Keiper, considering it would result in trout being released into the creek and, just as important, expose students to a unique form of environmental education.

“It was the first time I heard of the program,” Keiper said. “You get a great return as far as getting our future adults involved with the environment.”

Now, all they needed was a teacher at Crestwood interested in overseeing the program.

And that’s where environmental science teacher Fran Gough got involved.

Gough, who is a life member of Trout Unlimited, wanted to implement Trout in the Classroom at Crestwood for several years, but a lack of funding made it impossible.

When Kraynak called and said the sanitary authority was willing to make a donation to implement the program, Gough jumped at the opportunity.

“The biggest piece of the puzzle was the money, and this wouldn’t happen without that donation,” Gough said. “I’m really looking forward to it.”

The authority’s \$1,000 donation will cover the cost of equipment, including a 50-gallon aquarium, a filter and other specialized equipment needed to hatch the eggs.

With the PFBC providing approximately 300 brook trout eggs, Gough hopes to have everything up and running by mid-October. He said the eggs take three to four weeks to hatch and the trout will be released into the creek next May when they are four to six inches in length.

Although confirmation of the program is still recent, Gough said four other teachers already have contacted him regarding involving their classes in the project.

“It will give the students an appreciation of what it takes for a wild trout to hatch, develop and survive,” Gough said.

“Every year I have a student or two who wants to take up an environmental career. This project will expose them to another field – fisheries.”

In addition to the fine levied by DEP, Kraynak said the authority also paid a fine of approximately \$4,000 to the PFBC. He said he was glad to hear the authority wanted to restock the stream to do something more, but he felt the Trout in the Classroom project would have a longer-lasting impact.

“Restocking the stream with 1,000 trout would be nice, but those fish would be gone before long,” Kraynak said. “By providing the money to get this program at Crestwood, it will have benefits year after year by drawing kids into the outdoors.”

Keiper said the authority is interested in providing future funding, if needed, to keep the program running on an annual basis at Crestwood.

That’s fine with Gough, who anticipates the program generating quite a bit of interest among students.

“As a teacher, seeing students become interested in environmental careers is rewarding. A program like this gives them another career option,” he said. “What happened with the fish kill in the Big Wapwallopen was unfortunate. But the authority chose to do something more than just pay the penalties, and there will be something positive to come out of it.”

Students’ help sought

According to Fran Gough, Crestwood students in any class or grade are welcome to help out with the Trout in the Classroom program. Help will be needed to monitor water conditions in the aquarium and feed the fish, among other tasks. Any interested students can get involved by seeing Gough after the school year begins.

For information on the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission’s Trout in the Classroom program, visit www.fish.state.pa.us and click on “Learning Center” on the left.