

SUNBURY Wetlands



An Ecological Restoration Opportunity

Located in downtown Sunbury is a 1-acre natural palustrine wetland that has been severely degraded by urban neglect. Despite its relatively poor ecological condition, it is a valuable urban refuge for birds, amphibians, and wetland plants. In February 2008 it was drained as part of a crime scene investigation. The groundwater table was lowered, exposing much of the marsh plants and soil. If nothing is done to help restore the wetland it will likely deteriorate completely in a very short period of time.

Hydrologically, it appears to be a through-flow wetland, with rainfall and surface water ponded on organic-rich overbank deposits overlying coarse river gravels. Significant groundwater inflow from uplands to the east helps sustain the wetlands during drier periods of the year. The elevation of the wetlands is approximately 20 feet above the water level of the Susquehanna River at Shamokin Dam. Its geologic origin is unknown, but believed to be a remnant of an abandoned Quaternary paleochannel.



PROJECT IDEAS

- Natural palustrine wetland located along the Susquehanna River at the junction of the North and West Branches
- Small (1-acre) size with easy access
- Significant habitat improvement possible
- Opportunity for student research and teaching
- Community outreach and improvement
- Create local ecological area for the public and nearby schools.
- Opportunity to involve with volunteer groups in cleanup
- Long-term hydrologic and ecologic monitoring possibilities