

Written Remarks of Tom McGlynn, Winola Industrial

Flood Mitigation and Storm Water Management Hearing

Senate Majority Policy Committee

Nov. 15<sup>th</sup>, 2011

My name is Tom McGlynn, of Forkston, Wyoming County, Pa. My background is in Heavy Industry, and I am educated as a mechanical engineer. I own a manufacturing and field service business in Wyoming County that employs 24 full time employees.

My home in Forkston was located near the Mehoopany Creek and has experienced flooding in the past. I have, since the flooding of Hurricane Irene in September, moved my house and garage to higher ground on another part of my property.

I am here today to try to express the realities and concerns of my fellow residents in Forkston. This is a very old community of settlers and mostly farmers. We have dealt with a "wild creek" for over 200 years. Never has it been so unpredictable or flood elevations been so high.

We who live in Forkston understand that our valley is simply filling up with gravel from broken rock outcrops on the steep mountains on each side. We understand these gravel bars are the cause of the destruction of the trees and the stream banks. The stream will fill up channels and shift course periodically if left to its own devices.

In years previous to the ban of dredging in the creeks, we would clear gravel bars and debris as they accumulated. We were especially wary of trees building up, as they would sweep away the old timber framed bridges quite easily. There was a time when a wood framed bridge would be erected in 3 weeks from being washed away in flooding.

So now our creek has not been cleaned out since 1976, when new environmental laws prevented us from dredging.

Understand that in our creek, dredging is the only real option. Because of the round stone and gravel in our creek's bed, the entire 7 mile length of the stream bed moves "en masse" to a depth of 4-8 feet below the surface. This means that spot fixes like bank restoration projects or individual gravel bar removals simply don't work, and are inundated by the next flood.

The only option we know is to re-establish the creek channel is by removing the gravel bars and trees, and reducing the depth of the bed by starting upstream and working down, casting the material out of the path of the creek.

Other considerations include the "CCC" camp in the 1930's placed some dams on the mountaintop swamps, which seemed to be effective. The dams have fallen to disrepair and some intentionally breached by the game commission.

We as residents have not been informed of any studies or plans produced by our government that would help us understand the condition of our creek, or our chances of improving it. No one with any engineering expertise has offered us any assessment.

Common sense tells us it would be more cost effective to clean out the creek than to spend 22 million dollars to repair the road and bridge damage caused by just one flood event.

As residents we have staged a protest, rallied our local officials, and talked to the press when the opportunity arose.

We believe we have now exhausted all options and are considering a class action lawsuit against the state agencies responsible for the lack of maintenance. We are focused on one specific event involving the lack of debris removal upstream from a recently repaired bridge that did in fact collapse during the recent flooding. Numerous residents warned officials of the imminent danger presented to the bridge. What we have come to realize is that the backup of water and debris behind the bridge and the subsequent release after the collapse caused a surge of water that caused substantial damage and put lives in direct jeopardy.

I thank you for your valuable time and make myself available for questions.

Tom McGlynn

Forkston Twp., Pa.