

# The Chalfant Run/Thompson Run Watershed

There is a story here, really, of legacy industrial pollution, life rebounding and hope,

## The beginning...

This whole thing started because I took in a dog in 2017. He had been re-homed 5 times for behavioral issues--but all he needed was to run!

He was bred to be a working dog, and he just needed *a lot* of exercise. So we needed places to take him...

# The beginning...

We discovered an abandoned golf course near the neighborhood, which had a stream!

# The beginning...

On some days, the water was clear. On others, it was cloudy, even a bright blue! What led to that? And what stream was this, anyway?



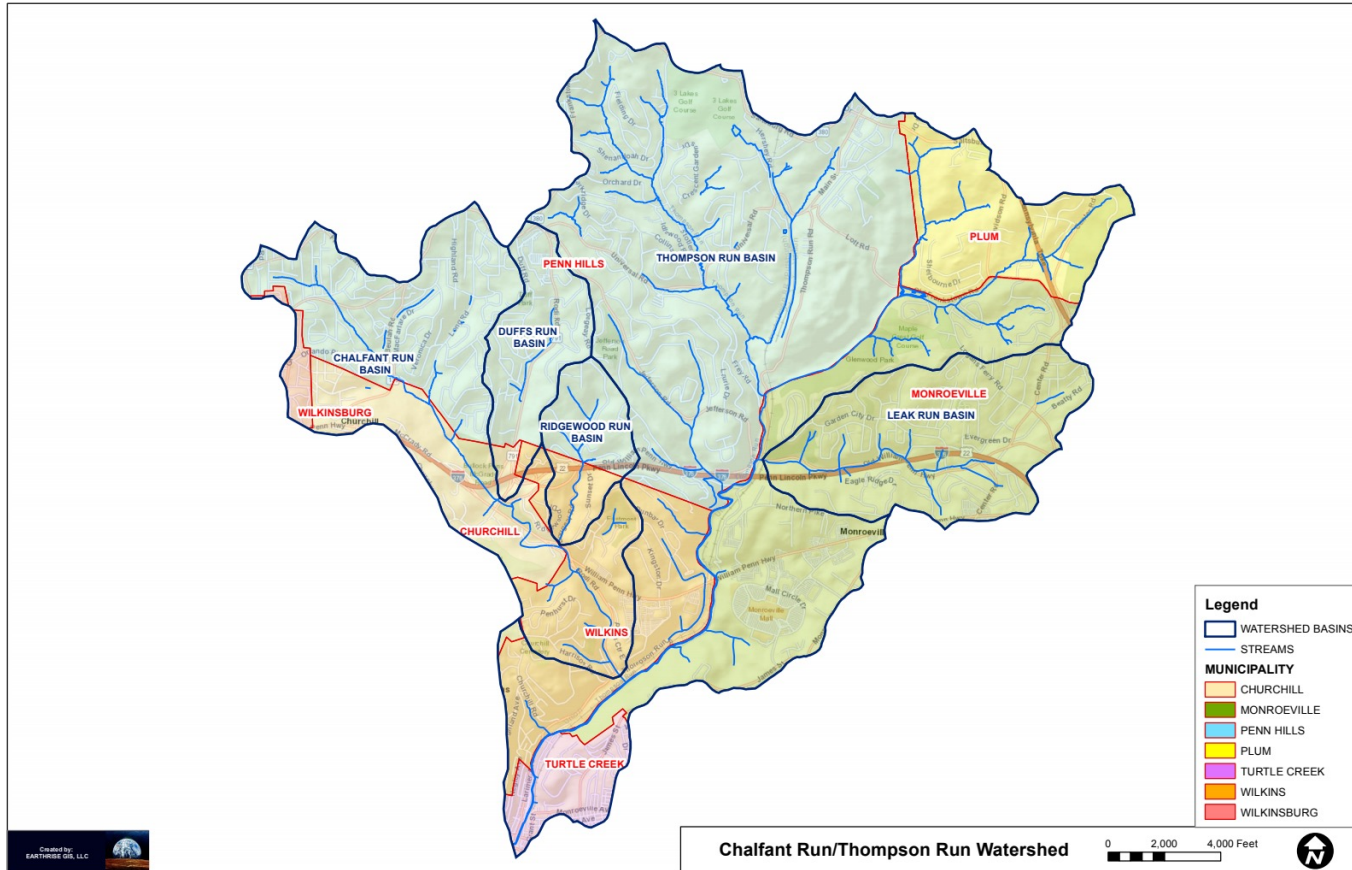
The year is 2019...

I had become a PA Master Watershed Steward and The Chalfant Run/Thompson Run Watershed Association had become a 501c3, but the scope of my undertaking was still not clear...

# The year is 2019...

This region was extensively undermined and also experienced heavy industrial use and abuse. There is a **square mile** slag heap—a ***square mile!!!***—hidden in the heart of Penn Hills. Our streams run blue because of the underground mines, and the slag leeches unknown—but immense—quantities of toxic metals into what becomes the drinking water for millions of people.

# Our 16 square mile watershed



## A bit of extra info

This whole stream system was declared dead in 1909, and yet, life is trying to come back. That is our mission—to bring our streams back to life.

## A bit of extra info

When you look at a map of the streams in Allegheny County, Pittsburgh is noticeably barren. There are no streams now. There were streams, but they buried them. Ran them with the sewers. We're lucky because, here, in the CR/TRW, our streams run open and above ground, waiting to be restored.

And now...

Some images from the @crttrwa facebook page!



“Sometimes a little time  
along an idyllic stretch  
of the Thompson Run  
is the best way to  
spend the afternoon!  
This is the 1870's  
bridge that was part of  
the Old Northern Pike”

Posted Mar 28,  
2022





“At the Churchill Valley  
Greenway....Our  
sampling today was  
rained out! Thank you  
Patrick Shirey PhD and  
Sarah for bringing your  
students!”

Posted July 28, 2022





“Why we can't sample!  
Just 15 minutes of rain  
and it's raining rapids  
here!”



Posted July 28, 2022



“Thompson Run, just south of Universal Road and Stotler Road. The camera didn't capture it, but there are fish AND a Great Blue Heron!”

Posted July 1, 2022





“This is Duff Run,  
which runs next to Rodi  
Road and is mainly  
underground, but open  
here. It is just lovely.”

Posted June 10, 2022





“I did not get a photo  
but I just SAW A  
MUSKRAT!!! I LOVE  
THEM SO MUCH!!  
What a great morning!”

Posted March 18, 2022





“Thank you Gabby!”



Posted March 1, 2022



“This is the Chalfant  
Run today...I have  
never seen it thos  
blue!”



Posted March 1, 2022



“More waterfalls,! This  
is like Land of the  
Lost!”

Posted Feb. 27, 2022





“More waterfalls,! This  
is like Land of the  
Lost!”



Posted Feb. 27, 2022



“Main body of the  
Thompson Run  
through Gascola. It is  
unnaturally blue-green”



Posted Feb. 27, 2022

“This is a tributary of the Thompson Run that flows through Gascola, the notorious slag heap. It glows blue for miles! This is super disturbing....”

Posted Feb. 26, 2022





“Blue as far as the eye  
can see...and we have  
ZERO water quality  
data on this stretch! In  
Gascola”



Posted Feb. 26, 2022



“The stream is beautiful  
in the ice...and soon  
there will be SNOW!  
Can't wait to come out  
and look for tracks! At  
the Churchill Valley  
Greenway!”

Posted Jan. 16, 2022





“Sampling again! We are in the midst of a year long study--and we have big plans for cleaning all of this up!!! Watch this space!! We wil have A HUGE ANNOUNCEMENT in 2022 and we will need your help!!!”

Posted Nov. 24, 2021





“Blue Lagoon...This is the legacy of mining-- this blue color is AMD-- and it is caused by metals, in this case Aluminum and Manganese. This flows downstream, into Turtle Creek and then into the Mon. This is someone's drinking water!”

Posted Sep. 27, 2021



“Blue Lagoon...This is the legacy of mining-- this blue color is AMD-- and it is caused by metals, in this case Aluminum and Manganese. This flows downstream, into Turtle Creek and then into the Mon. This is someone's drinking water!”

Posted Sep. 27, 2021



# Thank you!



All images in this powerpoint can be found  
at  
<https://bit.ly/CRPPTimages>