

I have literally spent my entire life and definitely my working career dealing with water and trying to control it. I grew up in our family owned heavy highway construction business and everything we did from paving roads, building bridges, laying sewer and water lines, installing storm sewers to dredging creeks had to do with controlling water. From the time I was 6 years old going to work with my father on a storm sewer project to put a small creek underground and provide drainage to a marshy area in Montoursville to this year's flood of 2011 flood recovery efforts, much of what I do has involved trying to control the flow of water.

I am not educated in hydrology, fluvial geomorphology or hydraulics but I've built a lot of the experiments that the ones educated in these fields have tried. I've tarred the joints on the storm sewers on the steep hillsides of South Williamsport, installed the gabion basket weirs at the PA Game Farm in Loyalsockville, lined stream floors and banks in Jersey Shore with gabion mattresses after the floods of the 70's. I've removed more sand and gravel bars in Lycoming, Sullivan, Bradford and Tioga counties than probably any other contractor. I've paved the floors of many streams with poured concrete and revetment mats, some of them more than once. We built the Grays Run Dam, Maggio Mountain spillway and we have worked on Dunwoody's dam, Lloydell Dam in Johnstown, Cowanesque Dam in Lawrenceville, the Pine Creek Dam and on and on. We are just finishing the Lake Makoma spillway here in Sullivan County at a cost in excess of 2 million dollars.

After the '96 flood we were the only Pennsylvania contractor that had divers in the water able to shore up the bridge foundations with intrusion grout and rip-rap. We installed the only two successful Susquehanna River water main crossings done in the past 2 decades in our region. I hold 2 patents on a successful internationally marketed erosion control product. Our firm was the 1st contractor in the region to embrace and study fluvial geomorphology. If it has to do with trying to control water in this region we have done it.

Impervious pavement does not cause flooding, roofs do not cause flooding, stone parking lots do not cause flooding, and farm fields do not cause flooding RAIN CAUSES FLOODING. The amount of impervious area that we have created is inconsequential, excess rain causes flooding. We are being regulated into expensive systems to try and control, detain, retain, infiltrate and evaporate rain water and none of this makes any difference when it floods. Dams help control flooding, we aren't building them anymore. Cleaning out the streams helps control flooding, we aren't doing that anymore.

This most recent flood is a perfect example of what the lack of maintenance of the streams does during flooding. My house overlooks Joe Grays Run, when I go to work every morning (until now) my path follows Joe Grays Run to Wallis Run and then to Loyalsock Creek to my office which is located within sight of where the Loyalsock Creek dumps into the Susquehanna River. Every day I see the gravel bars, trees, stumps and boulders that are causing the streams to change course ... nobody is doing anything about it. The Commonwealth of Pa claims the streams as the waters of the Commonwealth, well then they should take care of them. What do you think would happen to the roads of the Commonwealth if Penn Dot allowed broken down vehicles, accident scenes, rock slides, animal carcasses and collapsed bridges to go unrepaired and in the way? All you had to do was drive up Route 87 from Loyalsockville to Shore Acres after the September flooding and you would see, people go around the obstacles and create new routes.

This is what is happening to our streams when we don't maintain them, water will follow the path of least resistance. When a tree falls across the stream the water will hit it and change its natural course forcing it into a bank on one side or the other. Eventually this erodes the bank causing the eroded material to fall into the stream either creating a gravel bar or blockage further downstream.

This is so basic and simple why aren't we taking care of our streams ... because of the vocal minority that are worried more about minnows, crayfish and hellgrammites more than human life and property. The wild trout stream initiative is being used more to block development than to save the trout. The Loyalsock Creek was upgraded to EV to block a proposed commercial development on the Loyalsock Creek near Montoursville and now the gravel bars at the two Montoursville Bridges and the now destroyed railroad bridge are a perfect example of what happens when a creek and all its tributaries are classified as exceptional value. Now it is next to impossible to get in to remove the gravel for normal maintenance. It is not the volume of water the gravel takes up that is the problem; it's the gravel forcing the water to the banks that causes the problem. What we fail to realize is that we are creating more sediment and pollution by not properly maintaining the streams.

Maybe if we quit forcing the taxpayers and developers to fund expensive storm water management gimmicks, like rain gardens and pervious pavement, and spend the money on taking care of and maintaining our creeks and streams so they can handle the runoff we would be further ahead.



