

# CLEANUP

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Foley's project will include planting trees around the borough, including along the proposed greenway that was the site of last year's cleanup.

The cleanup netted 24 bags of assorted trash, much of it apparently thrown from the windows of cars speeding down the highway. A blanket of cigarette butts remains, and Mayor Timothy Carroll suggested they might be easier to pick up with a leaf vacuum once the ground dries out.

Among the more interesting finds was an old Pa. Route 115 sign, still on a post. Dave Krisanda, spokesperson for PennDOT, said maps from 1959 showed the road marked as both Pa. Route 115 and U.S. Route 309, so the sign likely had been in the creek for 40 years. The volunteers were careful not to disturb a pair of mallard ducks that have made a home near a small pool formed behind some rocks in the creek's path.

Ron Yablonsky, Watershed Manager for the state Department of Environmental Protection, congratulated the volunteers, and had an idea for how to make it easier and more effective next time.

"If 25 percent of the people who live around here come out, they'd each just have to walk down to the creek and back."



Maria Carr holds the bag open for Andrea Carr. Dallas Girl Scouts, including their daughters Andrea and Christina, were cleaning the stream to earn an environmental badge.



Joanne Stiff, Jackson Township, brought along a garden hoe to get at debris in the streambed.



Katie O'Neil and Michael Kukatchik, students at College Misericordia, helped with the cleanup. Also pictured is Gary Williams, Shavertown, in yellow.

## Emerging group aims to restore and protect Toby's Creek

By JENNIFER JUDGE YONKOSKI  
Post Correspondent

At one time the waters of Toby's Creek powered sawmills and gristmills. Later it determined the path of railroads and highways. Now it is largely ignored.

"The creek is one of the defining features of the Back Mountain," Gail Smallwood, a Dallas resident and member of the just-forming Toby's Creek Watershed Association, says. "The creek runs alongside a major artery, the Cross Valley Expressway, and we can't help notice it after a heavy rain, but most of the time we forget about it even though we drive over it all the time."

Ignoring the creek is something the members of the association hope Back Mountain residents will stop doing. The health of the creek says a lot about the health of the land, Smallwood explains. "We need to be able to take care of it. If the creek stays healthy, we know the land is staying healthy. If we put something in the land that shouldn't end up in the creek, then it proba-

bly shouldn't be in the land either."

Smallwood is not an expert on conservation, but she got involved in the project because she saw a need. "When The Post did the series on Toby's Creek, I contacted the editor and said I would be interested in getting involved with the group," she explains. "The creek runs not that far from my house and there's a lot of history there."

According to Josh Longmore, watershed specialist for the Luzerne Conservation District, groups like this one need people from all walks of life. He has worked with organizations that included factory workers and farmers, professional people and retired people.

"The commonality among group members is that they are interested in the natural resources of that watershed," Longmore explains. "I've had environmentalists working next to lifelong sportsmen. They're local volunteers whose focus is on conservation of their watershed." Longmore will assist the

group as they organize.

The group held its first meeting in March and agreed that the creek is too important to be left unprotected, noting its historic value and natural beauty, along with its role as a catch basin for storm water run-off. The group hopes to secure grant money to perform a formal assessment of the creek, but for now, no definite plans have been made.

"Each creek has different issues," Smallwood says. "Agricultural runoff might be an issue for some creeks but not for others."

Longmore predicts that runoff will be Toby's Creek's most significant issue. "It's likely that improper storm water management as part of growing land development is going to have a significant impact on the creek," he says. As fields are developed into residential neighborhoods, water that used to be absorbed becomes runoff. This can lead to pollution flowing directly into the creek, flooding and streambed erosion.

But Longmore also notes

that residents of the Back Mountain are on the right track to conservation, citing Dallas Borough's proposal to create a greenway along the creek. "The greatest potential the creek has is its advocates," he says.

The Toby's Creek group plans to hold its next meeting Wednesday, May 18 at 7 p.m. at Pizza Perfect. During this open session, they hope to gather more members so they can write a mission statement and propose group goals. A short walk along the creek, with views of a historic stone-arch tunnel and mill foundation will precede the meeting.

"We are trying to find people who are interested in working to preserve and protect Toby's Creek," Smallwood notes. "We hope to have representatives of the different municipalities. The watershed area is quite large, spreading into Jackson Township, Dallas Township, Dallas Borough, and into Edwardsville where it drains into the Susquehanna. All the land use comes into play; whatever we do comes into play."

## A surprising find near Back Mountain Trail

By CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK  
Post Correspondent

KINGSTON TWP. — Six abandoned computer cash registers, once apparently used at a restaurant, were found April 16, dumped over the edge of an access road that leads to the Back Mountain Trail in Kingston Township. They were spotted by a regular walker of the trail, Bill Hottenstein.

The Micros machines carry menu selections and serial numbers. After inspecting them, the company that originally sold the registers, Digital Control Systems, in Plains, gave Kingston Township police officer Ed O'Hara the name of a Wilkes-Barre restaurant where the company said they had been installed when new.

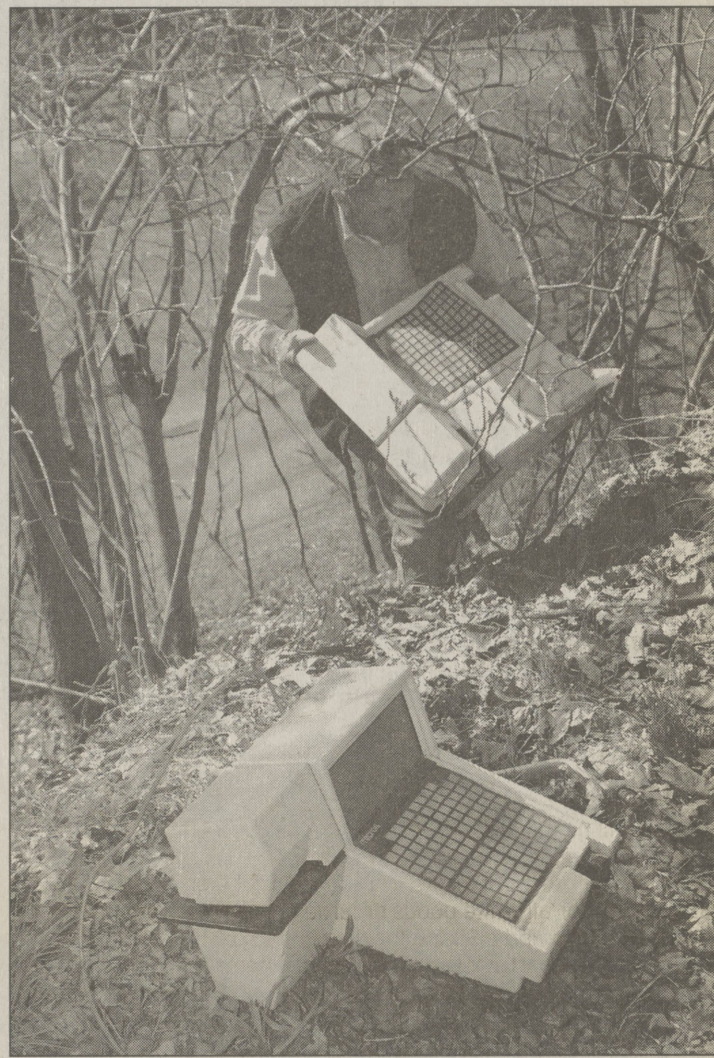
Mark Albrecht, a member of

the Back Mountain Trail Council, said he was told the machines had been reported stolen from the basement of the restaurant, where they had been stored after being replaced.

"There is a \$300 fine posted right here for dumping things," said Albrecht, organizer of the annual spring cleanup on the trail. "We'll get rid of these computers, but whoever put them here should be prosecuted."

Albrecht and Judy Rimple, executive director of the Anthracite Scenic Trails Association, while surprised at this type of dumping, admit that opening the trail has caused refuse issues. Still, they do not want to gate the trail and restrict access.

The other four machines were removed during the April 23 cleanup along the trail.



Mark Albrecht, from the Back Mountain Trail Council, loads one of six cash registers dumped along a trail access into a Kingston Township police car. Officer Ed O'Hara is investigating the source of the abandoned machines.

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