

CURRENTS

Spotlight: Allegheny River



It is hard to imagine that a small stream, on a farm located 352 miles northeast of Pittsburgh, could grow into the same river that the Pittsburgh Water and Sewer Authority (PWSA) relies on to provide drinking water for around 500,000 people downstream in Pittsburgh. The Allegheny River, originating in Potter County, is a river with unique geologic, geographic, and environmental qualities that distinguishes it as an exceptional resource among waterways.

The Allegheny that we know today was largely shaped by the surreal, land-changing forces during the ice ages

over 12,000 years ago. Before the most recent ice age, the Allegheny River was comprised of three “little Alleghenies”, all of which used to flow north toward Canada. These little Alleghenies were transformed at the end of the ice age and reshaped into a single river as massive amounts of meltwater from receding glaciers overwhelmed the original waterways. This carved a new path and reversed the flow of the river to a southerly direction.¹

The Allegheny’s riverbed is sandier than the Monongahela and Ohio Rivers which has led many Pittsburghers to

recall it as the clearest of our three rivers. This relative clarity hearkens back to its distant ice-age past; the river carries glacial stones and sands southward contributing to the formation of the river’s many islands and supporting the most populous freshwater mussel habitat in the world in its upper stretches.

The Upper Allegheny winds through national forest, pastoral farmland, small towns, and valleys. The scenic nature, remarkable fish and wildlife varieties, and recreational opportunities preserves this upper portion under the 1968 Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. Recognition under this act is a distinction earned by only a tiny percentage of American Rivers.² As the Allegheny flows downstream to Pittsburgh, its waters and surrounding environment are protected to benefit current and future generations.

The condition of the upper Allegheny benefits those downstream who receive its waters and a reminder that clean waterways are the result of collective care and concern. Each individual’s decisions on land affect water and are amplified along the course of the entire river.

Next Board Meeting: November 17

For more information and to join a PWSA Board Meeting, please visit pgh2o.com/board

For a complete list of PWSA’s community meetings and events, please visit pgh2o.com/events-meetings.

At PWSA, we are doing our part to conserve and improve the condition of our waterways which means taking steps to manage stormwater and reduce pollution entering our streams and rivers. PWSA’s green infrastructure projects slow the flow of stormwater over land and actions such as separating stormwater flows from pipes which carry sewage significantly improves water quality. We continually monitor the conditions of the Allegheny and collaborate with our community and regulatory partners to protect the integrity of this vital resource.

The actions that we choose to take each day add up as the river flows from a far-away farm field to our faucets. You too can help protect the amazing Allegheny, our source water, and Pittsburgh’s other local waterways: pgh2o.com/help-manage-stormwater.

1. Mary Ann Gross, John A. Harper, and Albert D. Kollar, September 7, 2019, Pittsburgh Geological Society Guidebook, 62 p. Geology and Archeology of Meadowcroft Rockshelter and the Multiple Ice Ages of Southwestern Pennsylvania (2019)

2. U.S. Bureau of Land Management. Allegheny River. Rivers.gov. Available at: <https://www.rivers.gov/river/allegheny> (Accessed: 20 September 2023).

Join our email list to get the latest news and updates. Signing up is simple at pgh2o.com/subscribe.





Additional Stormwater Resources

Explore the resources below for additional information about the stormwater fee, the stormwater credit program, and a searchable map to understand the amount of hard surface on your property.

Stormwater Credit Program: Property owners choosing to manage stormwater on site may reduce their monthly stormwater charge by installing stormwater management systems such as a rain garden or an underground stormwater system on their property. For information about the stormwater credit and to apply visit pgh2o.com/stormwater-fee.

Fee Finder Website: Use our searchable map to view the amount of impervious surface on your property and understand your stormwater fee. To use the site:

- Launch the [Fee Finder Website](#)
- Enter your address in the search bar and press enter
- Click inside the boundaries of your property for the amount of impervious surface and Equivalent Residential Units (ERU's)
- To determine your fee amount, multiply the number of ERU's by the current stormwater rate and subtract any credits that may apply

Disputing Stormwater Fee: If you have questions about the amount of impervious surface calculated for your property or believe there is a discrepancy, please contact our Customer Service department by calling 412-255-2423 (Press 5), to start the process.

Questions: Please call PWSA Customer Service at [412-255-2423 \(Press 5\)](tel:412-255-2423) or email info@pgh2o.com for questions about the stormwater fee or general questions about the credit program. For more information about our plans to manage stormwater, please visit pgh2o.com/stormwater.

Neighbors Helping Neighbors

Your donation to PWSA's Hardship Grant Program will directly benefit PWSA customers having difficulty paying their bill. Donate online at pgh2o.com/give.

Enroll in eBilling

Convenient and easy to use, our online billing and payment portal ensures timely delivery of bills and payments. Visit pgh2o.com/ebilling to enroll.

Penn Liberty Plaza 1
1200 Penn Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15222

Customer Service*

T 412.255.2423 (Press 5)

info@pgh2o.com

**translation services available*

Emergency Dispatch*

412.255.2423 (Press 1)

Available 24/7

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WATER WISE

FOGs: Keep away from your drain!



Rich foods can be an enjoyable part of your family's fall celebrations, but the fats, oils, and grease (FOGs) that are produced when cooking can create serious problems in the sewer system. This holiday season be thankful for the service your pipes provide to you each and every day by disposing of FOGs properly.

FOGs come from foods like cooking oil, meat, butter, dairy products, salad dressings, gravy, mayonnaise, and peanut butter. If these items are poured down kitchen drains, they harden inside household pipes and public sewers, restricting the flow of wastewater. These blockages are a leading cause of sewage backups in buildings, which result in high costs for cleanup and repairs. If FOG buildup gets bad enough, sewage can even overflow into yards, streets, and storm drains, contaminating waterways and causing public health hazards.

Help keep fats, oils, and grease (FOGs) out of the sewer system:

- **Cool It:** Allow FOGs to cool to a safe handling temperature after cooking.
- **Can It:** Pour cooled FOGs into a sealable container, like a jar or can. Store the container in the refrigerator until it is full.
- **Trash It:** Never put FOGs down sink drains or in-sink garbage disposals. Scrape food scraps into the compost or trash. Wipe up FOGs left on pans or dishes with a paper towel then discard in the trash. When your sealed FOG container is full, trash it.

Learn more at pgh2o.com/defend-your-drains.