

CRANBERRY CREEK MONROE COUNTY

WATER QUALITY STANDARDS REVIEW STREAM REDESIGNATION EVALUATION REPORT

**Segment: Basin
Stream Code: 04940
Drainage List C**

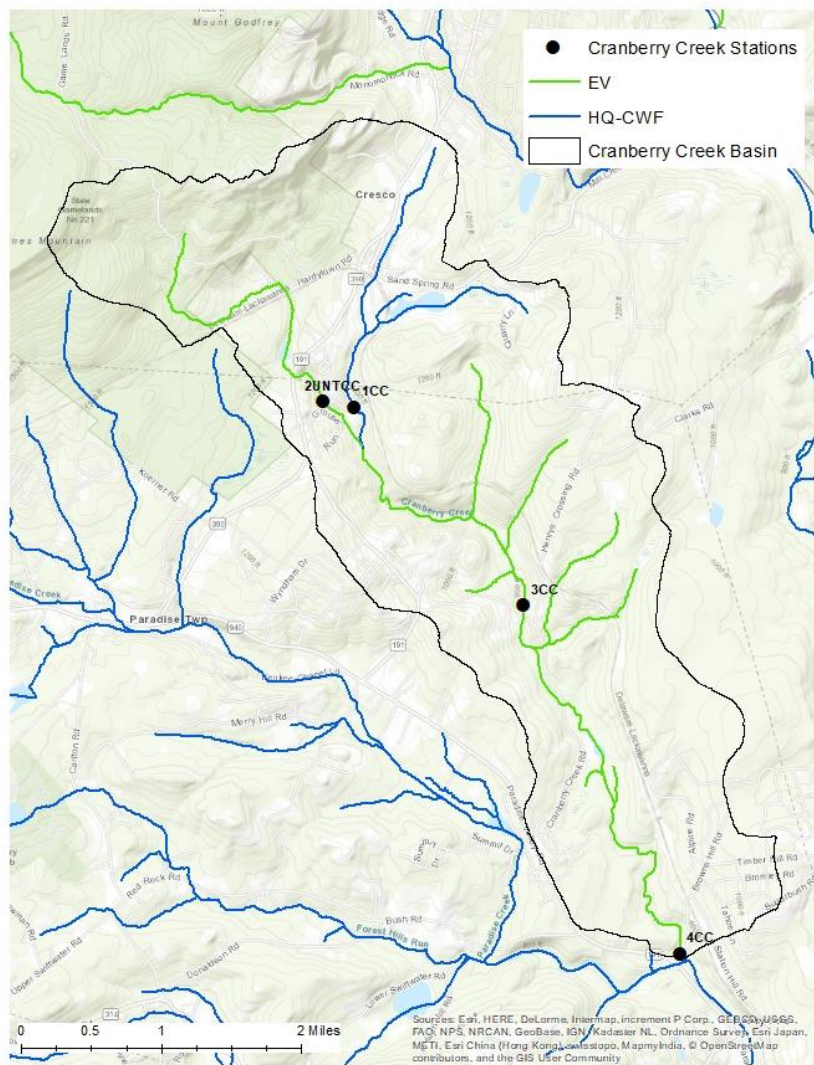
**WATER QUALITY MONITORING SECTION (MAB)
WATER QUALITY DIVISION
BUREAU OF CLEAN WATER
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION**

2021

INTRODUCTION

The Cranberry Creek basin is currently designated High Quality - Cold Water Fishes, Migratory Fishes (HQ-CWF, MF) and was evaluated for a redesignation to Exceptional Value (EV) in response to a petition to the Environmental Quality Board (EQB) from the Brodhead Creek Watershed Association dated January 7, 2013. The petitioner requested redesignation of the Cranberry Creek basin, from its source to mouth, asserting that the existing aquatic life use of the basin is of higher quality than is represented by the current HQ-CWF, MF designation. The EQB accepted the petition for further study on April 16, 2013. DEP staff conducted field surveys in the basin on March 5, 2013.

The stream redesignation process begins with an evaluation of the “existing uses” and the “designated uses” of a stream. “Existing uses” are water uses actually attained in the waterbody. Existing uses are protected through permit or approval actions taken by the DEP. “Designated uses” are water uses identified in regulations that protect a waterbody. Candidates for stream redesignation may be identified by the DEP based on routine waterbody investigations or based on requests initiated by other agencies or from the general public through a rulemaking petition to the EQB.



GENERAL WATERSHED DESCRIPTION

Cranberry Creek is a relatively small, cold and shallow third-order tributary to Paradise Creek at River Mile Index (RMI) 3.16 located in Barrett and Paradise Townships, Monroe County and drains 6.85 square miles with a total of 13.32 stream miles (Figure 1). Cranberry Creek is located on the Buck Hill Falls, Mount Pocono and East Stroudsburg 7.5-minute series USGS quadrangle maps. Land use consists of approximately 90% forested land, 8.8% developed land and 0.2% wetlands. There are three permitted storm-water discharges and one permitted pesticides treatment area in the headwaters.

WATER QUALITY AND USES

Surface Water

No long-term water quality data were available from the Cranberry Creek basin that would allow a direct comparison to water quality criteria. The DEP collected biological data at four

Figure 1. Cranberry Creek Basin - Station Locations

stations within the Cranberry Creek study area on March 5, 2013. The DEP also collected field meter data at three of the four stations. There was no field meter data collected at station 1CC (Figure 1, Table 1). Despite the limitations of instantaneous field meter data, these observations can provide an overview of Cranberry Creek’s water quality (Table 2).

Table 1. Cranberry Creek Basin – Station Locations

| STATION | LOCATION |
|------------|---|
| 1CC | Cranberry Creek approximately 500m upstream of unnamed tributary Paradise Township, Monroe County Lat: 41.144142 Long: -75.283420 |
| 2UNTCC | Unnamed Tributary to Cranberry Creek upstream of Snowbird Lane Paradise Township, Monroe County Lat: 41.144489 Long: -75.286695 |
| 3CC | Cranberry Creek upstream of Cranberry Creek Rd. Paradise Township, Monroe County Lat: 41.128577 Long: -75.265961 |
| 4CC | Cranberry Creek at mouth Paradise Township, Monroe County Lat: 41.101375 Long: -75.249727 |
| 1DMB (ref) | Dimmick Meadow Brook, 50m upstream of Schocopee Rd Milford Township, Pike County Lat: 41.349413 Long: -74.835960 |

Table 2. Cranberry Creek March 2013 – Discrete Field Measurements

| PARAMETER | STATIONS ¹ | | | | | REFERENCE ² |
|----------------------|-----------------------|-----|--------|-------|-------|------------------------|
| | UNITS | 1CC | 2UNTCC | 3CC | 4CC | 1DMB |
| Dissolved Oxygen | mg/L | - | 13.6 | 13.50 | 14.30 | 9.68 |
| pH | pH units | - | 7.33 | 8.00 | 8.50 | 6.78 |
| Specific Conductance | µS/cm ^c | - | 53 | 86.9 | 97.0 | 27.9 |
| Temperature | °C | - | 3.5 | 3.8 | 2.6 | 11.1 |

¹ Refer to Figure 1 and Table 1 for station locations

² Reference Station – Refer to Table 1 for location

Aquatic Biota

The indigenous aquatic community is an excellent indicator of long-term conditions and is used as a measure of water quality. DEP staff collected habitat and benthic macroinvertebrate data at four Cranberry Creek basin locations and at one EV reference station, Dimmick Meadow Brook, on March 5, 2013 (Table 1, Figure 1).

Habitat. Instream habitat was assessed at each station within the petitioned basin. Instream habitat was also assessed at the Dimmick Meadow Brook EV reference station. The habitat scores for the four Cranberry Creek basin stations ranged from 199 - 209, reflecting optimal habitat conditions (Table 3).

Table 3. Cranberry Creek Basin – Habitat Assessment Results, Riffle/Run Prevalence

| PARAMETER | SCORING RANGE | STATIONS ¹ | | | | REFERENCE ² |
|------------------------------------|---------------|-----------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------------------|
| | | 1CC | 2UNTCC | 3CC | 4CC | 1DMB |
| 1. instream cover | 0-20 | 17 | 18 | 17 | 16 | 18 |
| 2. epifaunal substrate | 0-20 | 18 | 17 | 17 | 18 | 19 |
| 3. embeddedness | 0-20 | 18 | 17 | 15 | 16 | 17 |
| 4. velocity/depth | 0-20 | 12 | 13 | 16 | 14 | 14 |
| 5. channel alterations | 0-20 | 17 | 18 | 17 | 17 | 18 |
| 6. sediment deposition | 0-20 | 18 | 18 | 18 | 18 | 18 |
| 7. riffle frequency | 0-20 | 17 | 18 | 18 | 18 | 19 |
| 8. channel flow status | 0-20 | 16 | 16 | 17 | 17 | 16 |
| 9. bank condition | 0-20 | 15 | 17 | 18 | 17 | 18 |
| 10. bank vegetative protection | 0-20 | 16 | 18 | 17 | 18 | 19 |
| 11. grazing/disruptive pressures | 0-20 | 17 | 19 | 19 | 19 | 20 |
| 12. riparian vegetation zone width | 0-20 | 18 | 20 | 19 | 18 | 20 |
| Total Score | 0-240 | 199 | 209 | 208 | 206 | 216 |
| Rating ³ | | OPT | OPT | OPT | OPT | OPT |

¹ Refer to Figure 1 and Table 1 for station locations

² Reference Station – Refer to Table 1 for location

³ OPT=Optimal (≥192)

Benthos. Benthic macroinvertebrate samples were collected on March 5, 2013 for this evaluation using the Department’s Rapid Bioassessment Protocol (RBP) benthic sampling methodology, which is a modification of the US Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA) RBPs (Plafkin et al. 1989; Barbour et al. 1999). Benthic samples were collected from four stations in the Cranberry Creek basin and one on Dimmick Meadow Brook (Table 4). Taxa richness, modified Ephemeroptera Plecoptera Trichoptera (EPT) index, Hilsenhoff Biotic Index (HBI), and % dominant taxa metrics for stations 2UNTCC, 3CC, and 4CC were very similar to those of the reference station 1DMB. Candidate station 1CC had lower taxa richness and higher modified HBI then the other sample stations in the basin (Table 5). The dominant taxon at 1CC was Chironomidae, a pollution tolerant invertebrate directly responsible for elevated HBI values.

Table 4. Cranberry Creek Basin - Semi-Quantitative Benthic Macroinvertebrate Data

| TAXA | STATIONS ¹ | | | | REFERENCE ² |
|---|-----------------------|--------|-----|-----|------------------------|
| | 1CC | 2UNTCC | 3CC | 4CC | 1DMB |
| Ephemeroptera (mayflies) | | | | | |
| Baetidae; <i>Baetis</i> | | 2 | 4 | | 6 |
| <i>Dipheter</i> | | | | 1 | |
| Ephemerellidae; <i>Drunella</i> | | 3 | 5 | 16 | |
| <i>Ephemerella</i> | 25 | 97 | 37 | 16 | 30 |
| <i>Eurylophella</i> | | | 2 | | |
| <i>Serratella</i> | | | 10 | 26 | |
| Ephemeridae; <i>Ephemera</i> | | | 2 | | |
| Heptageniidae; <i>Cinygmula</i> | | 1 | 1 | | 18 |
| <i>Epeorus</i> | 3 | 6 | 16 | 25 | 32 |
| <i>Leucrocuta</i> | | | | | 1 |
| <i>Maccaffertium</i> | 10 | | 7 | 4 | |
| Isonychiidae; <i>Isonychia</i> | | | 2 | | |
| Leptophlebiidae; <i>Habrophlebiodes</i> | | 2 | | | |
| <i>Paraleptophlebia</i> | | 3 | 3 | 11 | 5 |

Table 4 (cont). Cranberry Creek Basin - Semi-Quantitative Benthic Macroinvertebrate Data

| TAXA | STATIONS ¹ | | | | REFERENCE ² |
|---|-----------------------|--------|-----|-----|------------------------|
| | 1CC | 2UNTCC | 3CC | 4CC | 1DMB |
| Plecoptera (stoneflies) | | | | | |
| Capniidae; <i>Paracapnia</i> | | 1 | 1 | | 6 |
| Chloroperlidae; <i>Alloperla</i> | | | | 1 | |
| <i>Haploperla</i> | | | 1 | | |
| <i>Sweltsa</i> | 1 | 1 | 3 | 5 | 2 |
| Leuctridae; <i>Leuctra</i> | 9 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 3 |
| Nemouridae; <i>Amphinemura</i> | 1 | 1 | | | 1 |
| <i>Prostoia</i> | 13 | 3 | | | |
| Peltoperlidae; <i>Tallaperla</i> | 2 | | | | 3 |
| Perlidae; <i>Acroneuria</i> | 2 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 6 |
| Perlodidae; <i>Isoperla</i> | 8 | 2 | 7 | 2 | 4 |
| Pteronarcyidae; <i>Pteronarcys</i> | 2 | | 1 | | 5 |
| Taeniopterygidae; <i>Bolotoperla</i> | | | | 2 | |
| <i>Oemopteryx</i> | | 2 | 3 | | |
| <i>Strophopteryx</i> | 1 | | | | |
| <i>Taenionema</i> | | | 9 | 14 | |
| Tricoptera (caddisflies) | | | | | |
| Brachycentridae; <i>Brachycentrus</i> | | | 2 | | |
| Goeridae; <i>Goera</i> | | | | 1 | |
| Hydropsychidae; <i>Ceratopsyche</i> | 4 | | 5 | 9 | 5 |
| <i>Cheumatopsyche</i> | 4 | 3 | 3 | | |
| <i>Diplectrona</i> | 27 | 17 | 9 | 6 | 7 |
| <i>Hydropsyche</i> | 8 | 1 | | | |
| Lepidostomatidae; <i>Lepidostoma</i> | 1 | | | | 2 |
| Odontoceridae; <i>Psilotreta</i> | | | | 1 | |
| Philopotamidae; <i>Chimarra</i> | | | | 2 | |
| <i>Dolophilodes</i> | 4 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 |
| Polycentropodidae; <i>Polycentropus</i> | | 1 | | | |
| Rhyacophilidae; <i>Rhyacophila</i> | 10 | 4 | 9 | 9 | 8 |
| Uenoidae; <i>Neophylax</i> | | | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Diptera (true flies) | | | | | |
| Ceratopogonidae; <i>Probezzia</i> | | 2 | | | |
| Empididae; <i>Chelifera</i> | | | | 1 | |
| Simuliidae; <i>Prosimulium</i> | | 10 | 3 | 13 | 34 |
| <i>Stegopterna</i> | 2 | | | | |
| Tipulidae; <i>Antocha</i> | | | | | 1 |
| <i>Dicranota</i> | | | | 1 | |
| <i>Hexatoma</i> | | | | 1 | 2 |
| <i>Tipula</i> | | | | 1 | |
| Chironomidae | 74 | 36 | 37 | 37 | 28 |
| Megaloptera (dobson, fishflies) | | | | | |
| Corydalidae; <i>Nigronia</i> | 1 | 1 | | 1 | |
| Odonata (dragon, damselflies) | | | | | |
| Gomphidae; <i>Lanthus</i> | 2 | | 1 | | |
| Coleoptera (aquatic beetles) | | | | | |
| Elmidae; <i>Oulimnius</i> | | 1 | 15 | 4 | 1 |
| <i>Promoresia</i> | 1 | 2 | 6 | | 7 |
| <i>Stenelmis</i> | | 1 | | | |
| Psephenidae; <i>Psephenus</i> | | | | 3 | 2 |
| <i>Ectopria</i> | 3 | | 2 | | |
| Ptilodactylidae; <i>Anchytarsus</i> | | 1 | | | |
| Non-Insect Taxa | | | | | |
| Turbellaria | | | | 1 | |
| Oligochaeta | 1 | 1 | | | 1 |
| Ancylidae; <i>Ferrissia</i> | | | 1 | | |
| Sphaeriidae | 2 | 1 | 1 | | |
| Taxa Richness | 27 | 31 | 35 | 32 | 28 |
| Total number of individuals | 221 | 212 | 214 | 223 | 222 |

BIOLOGICAL USE QUALIFICATIONS

The DEP applied its integrated benthic macroinvertebrate scoring test described at 25 Pa. Code §93.4b(b)(1)(v) to the petitioned Cranberry Creek basin. Selected benthic macroinvertebrate community metrics from the petitioned basin stations were compared to those from the reference stream station. The reference station on Dimmick Meadow Brook was used as a reference because it is within the same Atlantic Highland ecoregion and is of comparable drainage area to the candidate stations. In addition, Dimmick Meadow Brook has served as an EV reference stream in other DEP surveys. The comparisons were done using the following metrics that were selected as being indicative of community health: taxa richness, modified EPT index, modified HBI, percent dominant taxon, and percent modified mayflies.

Based on the benthic macroinvertebrate scoring test described above, three stations (2UNTCC, 3CC and 4CC) had Biological Condition Scores (BCS) that were above the 92% EV qualifying criterion required to qualify as Exceptional Value Waters (§ 93.4b(b)(1)(v)) (Table 5). No other Antidegradation qualifying requirements listed in § 93.4b(b) apply to the Cranberry Creek petition area.

Table 5. Cranberry Creek Basin - RBP Metrics Comparison

| METRIC | STATIONS ¹ | | | | REFERENCE ² |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|----------------|------|------|------------------------|
| | 1CC | 2UNTCC | 3CC | 4CC | 1DMB |
| 1. TAXA RICHNESS | 27 | 31 | 35 | 32 | 28 |
| Candidate/Reference (%) | 96 | 111 | 125 | 114 | |
| Biol. Cond. Score | 8 | 8 | 8 | 8 | 8 |
| 2. MOD. EPT INDEX | 16 | 16 | 24 | 20 | 18 |
| Candidate/Reference (%) | 89 | 89 | 133 | 111 | |
| Biol. Cond. Score | 8 | 8 | 8 | 8 | 8 |
| 3. MOD. HBI | 3.21 | 2.21 | 2.72 | 2.39 | 1.91 |
| Candidate-Reference | 1.30 | 0.30 | 0.81 | 0.48 | |
| Biol. Cond. Score | 1 | 8 | 6 | 8 | 8 |
| 4. % DOMINANT TAXA | 34 | 46 | 17 | 17 | 15 |
| Candidate-Reference | 19 | 31 | 2 | 2 | |
| Biol. Cond. Score | 3 | 8 ³ | 8 | 8 | 8 |
| 5. % MOD. MAYFLIES | 17 | 52 | 40 | 44 | 39 |
| Reference-Candidate | 22 | -13 | -1 | -5 | |
| Biol. Cond. Score | 5 | 8 | 8 | 8 | 8 |
| TOTAL BIOLOGICAL CONDITION SCORE | 25 | 40 | 38 | 40 | 40 |
| % COMPARABILITY TO REFERENCE | 63 | 100 | 95 | 100 | |

¹ Refer to Figure 1 and Table 1 for station locations

² Reference Station – Refer to Table 1 for location

³ Dominant Taxa with HBI < 3

PUBLIC RESPONSE AND PARTICIPATION SUMMARY

The DEP provided notice of this redesignation evaluation and requested any technical data from the general public through publication in the Pennsylvania Bulletin on September 27, 2014 (44 Pa.B. 6149). The Monroe County Planning Commission, Barrett and Paradise Townships were notified of the designation evaluation in a letter dated September 15, 2017. In addition, a notification was posted on the DEP's website. In response to the public notice water temperature data was provided for a headwater reach of Cranberry Creek by Karl M. Weiler.

Final Draft Notice, Comments and Response. Once the final draft report was completed it was made available to the petitioner, affected municipalities, County Planning Commissions, and County Conservation Districts in a letter dated July 13, 2018 with a public comment period ending 30-days later. In addition, the DEP provided public notice of the draft report comment period on the DEP's website and in the Pennsylvania Bulletin on July 14, 2018 (48 Pa.B. 4174). The PFBC offered comments in support of the recommendations. A total of 158 comments were received. Ten of the comments expressed opposition and 148 were in support of the recommendations. In response to a comment that criticized the notice of the redesignation evaluation through publication in the Pennsylvania Bulletin on September 27, 2014 (44 Pa.B. 6149), an additional notice of stream redesignation evaluation was provided in the Pennsylvania Bulletin on September 22, 2018 (48 Pa.B. 5924) to specifically identify the rulemaking petition submitted to the EQB by the Brodhead Watershed Association and to provide additional opportunity for submission of data relating to Cranberry Creek. A letter calling into question the DEP's recommendation was submitted by Manko, Gold, Katcher, and Fox LLP; an environmental and energy law practice who represents the Monroe County Clean Streams Coalition; and included a macroinvertebrate survey conducted by Normandeau Associates. Aside from the uncertainty expressed and arguments pertaining to the DEP redesignation process, the Normandeau Associates macroinvertebrate survey results were generally consistent with the DEP's recommendations in the draft report. DEP also received and replied to multiple Right-To-Know requests. All comments and data received throughout the public participation opportunities were considered in the evaluation and recommendations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on applicable regulatory definitions and requirements of § 93.4b(b)(1)(v) (DEP's integrated benthic macroinvertebrate scoring test), the DEP recommends that the Cranberry Creek basin, from and including UNT 04948 to its mouth, be designated in Chapter 93 as Exceptional Value, Migratory Fishes (EV, MF). The DEP recommends that the Cranberry Creek basin from the source to UNT 04948 maintain the current High Quality – Cold Water Fishes, Migratory Fishes designated use. This recommendation adds approximately 10.25 miles of EV streams to Chapter 93 and partially reflects the EV designation sought in the petition.

REFERENCES

Barbour, M.T., J. Gerritsen, B.D. Snyder, and J.B. Stribling. 1999. Rapid bioassessment protocols for use in streams and wadeable rivers: periphyton, benthic macroinvertebrates and fish, second edition. EPA 841-B-99-002. United States Environmental Protection Agency; Office of Water. Washington, D.C.

Plafkin, J.L., M.T. Barbour, K.D. Porter, S.K. Gross, R.M. Hughes. 1989. Rapid Bioassessment Protocols for use in streams and rivers: Benthic Macroinvertebrates and Fish. EPA/444/4-89-001. United States Environmental Protection Agency; Office of Water. Washington, D.C.