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Subject: : Conservation

Topic: : All central PA streams doomed?

Re: All central PA streams doomed?

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Date: : 2014/3/25 9:41:36

URL:

>>The acid rain issue is one thing I haven't thought about for a long time. I know its an issue, and has been worse than it is now, but I don't pay much attention to it. It has always seemed that acid mine drainage was the real problem acid related problem for PA streams. >>

It isn't always an either/or between the two causes of acidification and the problems they pose for Pennsylvania streams. Quite a few of the AMD discharges, especially around the edges of the historic bituminous regions of the state, are more aptly described as seeps. They are low volume and may only impact the receiving stream during high flow periods. So, they can be present in streams that still fish fairly well and appear relatively healthy because their effects are buffered out in an otherwise AMD-free watershed. But chronic acid deposition from rainfall can deplete the thin lifeline of buffering capacity in these streams and push them over the edge into full acidification.

So, in some PA streams, the effects of the two sources are additive. The streams can handle (and at least remain somewhat viable) either limited AMD seeps or low Ph rainfall, but not both. I think if you look along the edges of the old coal region, you'll see a number of streams where this is or has been the case. One that comes to mind (and where the remaining AMD has been eliminated and the stream has rebounded some) is the Coon Creek watershed in the lower Tionesta drainage. But I would imagine you could find quite a few more if you drew an arcing line from Tionesta/Leeper east to say, Lock Haven and took a look at the streams that cross this line flowing north.