



For Immediate Release:

August 22, 2017

Contact: Faith Zerbe, Monitoring Director, Delaware Riverkeeper Network, 215-369-1188 ext. 110

**Stream Re-designation to Exceptional Value Becomes Realized for a
Berks County Tributary that Feeds the Schuylkill River**

Delaware Riverkeeper Network Petitioned in 2011 for Upgrade

Harrisburg, PA – The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (PADEP) upgraded the designation for Mill Creek, a Schuylkill River tributary. Mill Creek was re-designated to Exceptional Value status at the latest Environmental Quality Board meeting, joining an elite and small percentage of streams in the Commonwealth that have this designation for diverse and healthy water quality. The multi-year effort to upgrade this stream began in 2009 when the Delaware Riverkeeper Network (DRN) and Berks County Conservation District sampled this tributary to the Schuylkill River and determined it had healthy stream life indicative of other Exceptional Value streams in the region.

Delaware Riverkeeper Network (DRN) submitted a petition and this data to PADEP in February 2011 for the re-designation of Mill Creek from Warm Water Fishery, Migratory Fishery (WWF, MF) to Exceptional Value, Migratory Fishery (EV, MF). At that time the DRN petition had support from 65 residents and co-petitioners that included the Berks County Conservation District, the Township of Union Environmental Advisory Council, PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, and Berks Conservancy.

The new EV designation provides additional protections to the stream, although the new designation falls short of the complete upgrade DRN was seeking – it applies to 5.6 miles of the 7.7 stream miles. DRN petitioned for EV status of the Mill Creek in its entirety and submitted subsequent data to the DEP by volunteer monitors and others to support including the excluded Snyder's Run tributary, but DEP did not grant EV protection to that tributary. DRN will continue to work with interested landowners to enhance and improve riparian buffers along the remaining WWF, MF segment to advocate for it receiving a higher designation in future years.

"Mill Creek is a source of clean, fresh and healthy water. We must preserve our exceptional waterways and protect them from pollution and harm so we can honor our commitment to present future generations a resource that is healthy and thriving. We are pleased that Pennsylvania's Exceptional Value status is given to Mill Creek as we have petitioned for, as it is an important step to ensure all of our communities can continue to benefit from these waterways," said Maya van Rossum, the Delaware Riverkeeper.

“A stream re-designation upgrade, often spurred by local volunteer community monitors, takes years to work through the regulatory process, but it’s a great week for Mill Creek and a few other tributaries in the Delaware River Basin that got the green light from the PA Environmental Quality Board this week, including Sobers Run and Swiftwater Creek that also received upgrades. On the downside, Pickering Creek and Dwarfskill Creek did not receive the upgrades community groups were seeking,” Faith Zerbe, Delaware Riverkeeper Network said.

###

Delaware Riverkeeper Network is a nonprofit membership organization working throughout the 4 states of the Delaware River Watershed including Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Delaware and New York. DRN provides effective environmental advocacy, volunteer monitoring programs, stream restoration projects, public education, and legal enforcement of environmental protection laws.