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## BACK TO NATURE

Project to fix abandoned Schuylkill mine lands and stream advances



West Creek flows through Branch Twp. on Monday. **PHOTOS BY MATTHEW PERSCHALL/MULTIMEDIA EDITOR**



A turtle swims in West Creek in Branch Twp. on Monday.

**By Michael Urban**  
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Plans to fix up abandoned mine lands and clean a mine-polluted watershed in two Schuylkill County municipalities are moving forward thanks to a \$550,000 federal grant.

The money is to be used to design the project and obtain permits for the work to take place in Branch and Reilly townships where underground and surface coal mining happened decades ago.

The grant will cover engineering design in advance of the work to improve the West Creek and the Schuylkill River watershed that the creek flows into, Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection officials said.

The grant was obtained by Schuylkill-based nonprofit Woodlands for Wildlife, which for two decades has worked to clean up abandoned mine lands and waterways in the county.

Organization president Robert Hendricks believes that since DEP approved funds for the design and permitting phase of the project, it is highly likely

that the agency will also approve funds for the construction.

The land totals 500 to 600 acres and is owned by several individuals who have given permission for the work to take place, he said.

The mine features that the project will address include sheer rock walls as high as 100 feet created by strip mining, surface mine pits, coal refuse piles and embankments, DEP officials said.

When Hendricks, 44, was growing up in Reilly Township in the 1980s he would often play and fish in the coal fields near his home, not realizing the dangers that mine lands pose to visitors, or the harm those old mines were doing to the watershed. But as an adult he learned about the harm that abandoned mines cause, and created Woodlands for Wildlife to help correct it.

Local mining history is personal to Hendricks in other ways, too, as his aunt and uncle were among six young people killed in April 1984 when their SUV plunged down a mine shaft on the Sharp Mountain in the Llewellyn section of

See **GRANTS** on Page A8

## Fall in the air with cooler temps

Cooling trend ‘not entirely unusual’ for this early in September

**By Christine Lee**  
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The first day of fall might be a few weeks away, but with cooler weather in Northeast Pennsylvania it’s already feeling like autumn.

While temperatures have fluctuated this month, they are in line with the average temperatures for early September, multiple meteorologists said Monday.

Temperatures in Lackawanna and Luzerne counties so far this month have been between 2 and 5 degrees below normal, said Ben Lott, a meteorologist at the National Weather Service’s Binghamton, New York, forecast office. Temperatures for September in the area typically average in the upper 70s down to the upper 50s, with around an inch of rain on average.

He expects temperatures and precipitation being around average through the end of the month, with a chance they will be above normal during the second half of the month. The last day with temperatures in the 80s tends to be in late September.

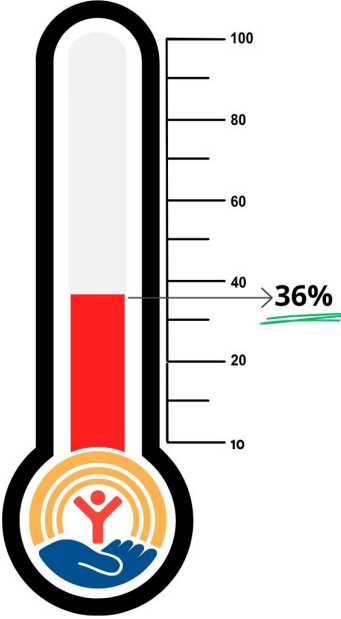
In Schuylkill County, the average temperature for early September is in the low 70s for a high and dips into the low to mid-50s, with precipitation around 2 inches, said Aaron Tyburski, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service’s State College forecast office, which covers the county. He expects sunny weather — but toward the end of the month, those sunny skies could turn

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**\$1,190,000**



United Way honors six officers at campaign kick off. See **Page A4**

## Study: Climate change hitting our sweet tooth

**By Seth Borenstein**  
ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — Global warming in the United States is amping up the country’s sweet tooth, a new study found.

When the temperature rises, Americans — especially those with less money and education — drink lots more sugary beverages and a bit more frozen desserts. That amounts to more than 100 million pounds of added sugar consumed in the nation a year, compared to 15 years earlier, according to a team of researchers in the U.S. and United Kingdom.

When temperatures go

between 54 and 86 degrees, the amount of sugar the average American consumes goes up by about 0.4 grams per degree Fahrenheit per day, based on researchers tracking of weather conditions and consumers’ purchases. At 54 degrees, the amount of added sugar for the average American is a little more than 2 grams. At 86 degrees, it’s more than 15 grams.

Beyond that, appetites lessen and added sugar falls off, according to the study in Monday’s Nature Climate Change.

“Climate change is shaping what you eat and how you eat and that might have a bad effect on your health,” said

study co-author Duo Chan, a climate scientist at the University of Southampton.

“People tend to take in more sweetened beverages as the temperature is getting higher and higher,” Chan said. “Obviously under a warming climate that would cause you to drink more or take in more sugar. And that is going to be a severe problem when it comes to health.”

**A LITTLE ADDED SUGAR EVERY DAY ADDS UP**

The daily difference from higher temperatures doesn’t amount to even a single candy bar for the average

See **SUGAR** on Page A5



A person eats ice cream Friday in Cincinnati. **JOSHUA A. BICKEL/ASSOCIATED PRESS**

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