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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Contact: Shelby Chunko
LandStudies, Inc.
(717) 627-4440**

Egg Planting Completes McIlvaine Run Restoration

High hopes and low-tech tools were plentiful at recently restored McIlvaine Run in Chester County, when a dozen people came together on December 16th for the final phase of the Growing Greener-funded project – planting trout eggs.

Representatives from West Whiteland Township in Chester County, Valley Forge Trout Unlimited, and LandStudies, Inc. gathered streamside with shovels, sieves, buckets, a funnel, and a length of rubber hose to plant at least 1,000 eyed brown trout eggs, supplied by the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission, in five separate riffles along the relocated and restored lower section of McIlvaine Run.

With shovels and sieves, workers scooped out, cleaned, and sorted gravel, replacing all but the silt and sand back into the man-made nests. (Female trout achieve the same results by using their bodies to move gravel and dislodge the finer materials from the egg-laying site.) The largest material was laid back into the excavated depression first, to hold one end of the rubber hosing through which the eggs are flushed into the gravel.

The activity capped more than four years of planning, designing, and construction of the new channel and floodplain. McIlvaine Run, spring fed and wholly contained on private property, is a tributary to West Valley Creek, a known brown trout stream. The lower 900-foot portion of the channel, which now meanders through a newly reforested

meadow, had been channelized decades ago and, in recent years, had become little more than a polluted ditch running immediately adjacent to a heavily traveled highway near Exton.

Valley Forge Trout Unlimited and officials at West Whiteland Township applied for and received a \$182,558 Growing Greener Grant to relocate the lower portion of McIlvaine Run, restore the floodplain, install native plantings along the riparian corridor, and plant brown trout eggs in the new channel. LandStudies, Inc., an environmental restoration and land-planning firm based in Lititz, Pa., in nearby Lancaster County, provided the design and construction management for the project. Another Lititz company, Ecological Construction, which specializes in environmentally sensitive excavation, provided the actual channel and floodplain construction services.

LandStudies also brought to the project the expertise of highly respected wild brown trout ecologist Dr. Robert A. Bachman of Lancaster County, who is responsible for the increase and restoration of numerous wild brown trout populations in the waterways of the Mid-Atlantic region.

Joseph Roscioli, West Whiteland Township director of public works, credits many people for the success of the project, including Trout Unlimited, property owner Louise McIlvaine, and the state and federal regulatory agencies that provided guidance through the entirety of the project. “These folks made it happen.”

The eggs are scheduled to hatch on Christmas Eve, but the fingerlings won’t emerge from the protection of their gravel nests until sometime in the first quarter of 2005. The final goal of the project is to see wild brown trout returning, typically in three years, to their hatching site in McIlvaine Run to create nests and lay eggs on their own.

“That,” exclaims Bob Bachman, “will really mean we did it!”

PHOTO CAPTIONS

1. Bob Bachman, in white cap, explains the redd-building procedure to workers from Trout Unlimited and LandStudies.
2. The small dark spot in viable, “eyed” eggs actually is an eye, the first part of the fish to develop.
3. Eggs and water are poured into a funnel and flushed through the hose. As the eggs are delicately flushed into the redd, the hose is gradually withdrawn. To ensure that all the eggs have been flushed, the hose is cleared by gently blowing into it until bubbles surface from the redd.

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