

**Upper Monongahela River Association, Inc.**

**P.O. Box 519  
Granville, WV 26534-0519**

Donald C. Strimbeck, Secretary  
109 Broad Street, P.O. Box 519  
Granville, WV 26534-0519  
304-599-7585 (Fax:4131)  
Email: dcsinks@comcast.net

Dunkard Creek-Byrd-23SeptY2K9

Rev 1, 24 Sept 09

Friday 25 September 2009

SENT VIA FAX

TO: Senator Robert C. Byrd  
Washington: 202-224-3954, Fax 202-228-0002.  
Charleston: 304-342-5855, Fax 304-343-7144.

SUBJECT: Dunkard Creek Fish Kill

Dear Senator Byrd:

During September 2009 there has been a massive fish kill on Dunkard Creek. The creek meanders for 38 miles along the county line between Greene County, PA, and, Monongalia County, WV.

The cause of this disaster is still undetermined, and not even the state of origin has been determined.

This appears to us to be a Federal issue, both because Federal regulations have been violated and because the effects are multi-state.

I have attached a Summary and Questions document concerning this disaster. Our UpperMon.org website also provides information about this disaster.

Many West Virginia, Pennsylvania, and Federal agencies are involved in the investigation. It appears that they are all acting independently, and that there is no lead agency. This results in a duplication of efforts, and thus a reduced chance of a successful outcome.

Please take whatever actions you feel are appropriate to see that the US EPA is identified as the lead agency for this investigation as soon as possible.

Questions should be directed to Barry Pallay, VP UMRA, and, Chair, Mon River Recreation & Commerce Committee, Morgantown Area Chamber of Commerce. Barry's phones are 304-599-2077, and, cell 304-276-3792.

Sincerely,

Donald C. Strimbeck  
Secretary UMRA, and, Vice Chair, MRR&CC

ENCL: Dunkard Creek Fish Kill Summary & Questions

CC VIA FAX W/ENCL:

Senator John D. Rockefeller IV  
Washington: 202-224-6472 (fax 7665). Fairmont: 304-367-0122 (fax 0822).

Congressman Alan Mollohan  
Washington: 202-225-4172 (fax 7564). Morgantown: 304-296-0013. Fax 304-292-3027.

Senator Robert P. Casey, Jr.  
Washington: 202-224-6324. Fax 202-228-0604.  
Pittsburgh: 412-803-7370. Fax 412-803-7379.

Senator Arlen Specter.  
Washington: 202-224-4254. Fax 202-228-1229. Pittsburgh: 412-644-3400 (fax 4871).

Congressman John P. Murtha.  
Washington: 202-225-2065 (fax 5709). Johnstown: 814-535-2642. Fax 814-539-6229.

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## United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS  
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6025  
<http://appropriations.senate.gov>

December 10, 2009

Mr. Donald C. Strimbeck  
Upper Monongahela River Association, Inc.  
P.O. Box 519  
Granville, West Virginia 26534-0519

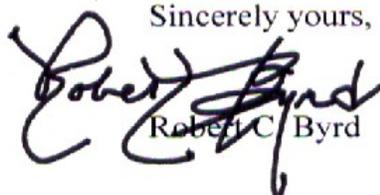
Dear Mr. Strimbeck:

Enclosed you will find correspondence sent to me by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, in response to my expression of interest in your behalf.

I was pleased to contact the responsible officials about this matter, and I hope that you find the enclosed report useful.

With kind regards, I am

Sincerely yours,

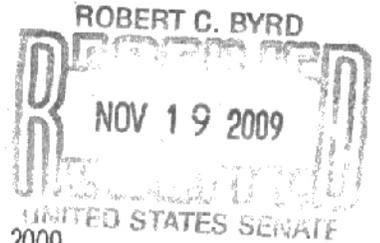


Robert C. Byrd

RCB:rd  
Enclosure



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY  
REGION III  
1650 Arch Street  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19103-2029



NOV 10 2009

Honorable Robert C. Byrd  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Byrd:

Thank you for your letter of October 14, 2009 to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) on behalf of your constituent, Mr. Donald C. Strimbeck, concerning the recent fish kill in Dunkard Creek and your request for EPA to take over the investigation. EPA shares your concern over the substantial loss of aquatic life in Dunkard Creek and has been working collaboratively with other federal and state agencies to identify the cause.

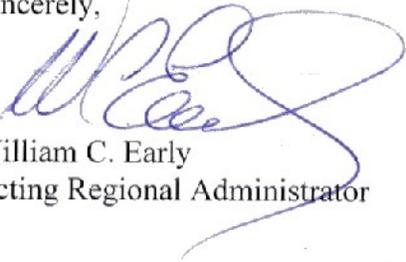
The investigation of the Dunkard Creek fish kill is not complete, but has identified that a substantial bloom of the golden algae *Prymnesium parvum* was present in Dunkard Creek at the time of the kill. This identification has been confirmed by experts from North Carolina, South Carolina, Florida, and Oklahoma. These saltwater algae can produce a potent toxin that is capable of killing fish, mussels, and salamanders in Dunkard Creek. This toxin affects gill breathing organisms and is not toxic to humans, waterfowl, or livestock. *Prymnesium parvum* is found worldwide and is most common in saltwater. It is an invasive saltwater algae now being found in brackish (both natural and anthropogenic) inland waters and has been documented in many states.

Given what has been seen in other states where these harmful algal blooms occur and what we know about this kill, we believe the toxin from this algae bloom led to the kill of fish, mussels, and salamanders in Dunkard Creek. Although at this time we do not know where the algae came from originally, the elevated conductivity in the Creek provided favorable conditions for the algae to bloom and produce the toxin. Since total dissolved solids (TDS) affect the conductivity in Dunkard Creek, and there are numerous National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permitted discharges into the Creek that contain TDS, EPA is also examining all of those discharges as part of our investigation of the kill.

EPA is currently leading an effort to compile and analyze data collected by the various agencies investigating the fish kill. In addition, EPA is working with the academic community to better understand *Prymnesium parvum* and the conditions that favor the algae so that a plan can be developed to avert future blooms. EPA will continue to collaborate with other federal and state agencies to identify the cause of the fish kill and will ensure that appropriate actions are taken to restore the water quality and aquatic life in Dunkard Creek.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me or have your staff contact Mrs. Jessica Greathouse, EPA's West Virginia Liaison, at 304-234-0275.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'W. C. Early', with a large, sweeping flourish extending from the end of the signature.

William C. Early  
Acting Regional Administrator