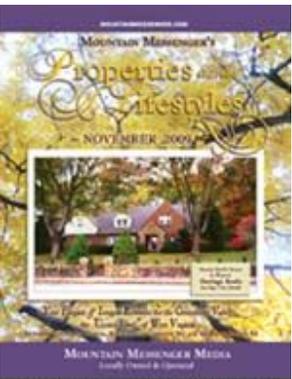




**MOUNTAIN  
MESSENGER**

THE WEEKEND  
NEWSPAPER FOR THE  
GREENBRIER VALLEY

Lewisburg, West Virginia



**REAL ESTATE**

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Tuesday, NOV 24, 2009

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**Concord U. student writes paper on local sinkhole**



Audrey Hedrick wades into science and sunfish inside sinkhole

Marcia Wilson-Cales 24.JAN.09

It has always been known as The Hole by Fort Spring locals. A picnic spot below one of the county's largest pawpaw groves, the sinkhole on the Miller Farm is believed to connect to Second Creek from the results of previous dye tracing. Over a hundred years ago it was thought of as a large spring, and at least two deaths are attributed to Typhoid when some women drank from the water. Their graves are in the cemetery above the sinkhole on the farm. Today, one woman decided it was the stuff of a great research project.

Audrey Hedrick, working under her Biology instructor Tom Ford at Concord University, finished a report on the results

of three-month's habitat assessment. To this end she drafted friends and family with useful skills into her 73-hour project and came out with a paper and PowerPoint film to be proud of.

Things have not changed so much since that long-ago Typhoid outbreak. The water was within the standards of quality for the West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection, but tests proved it was not safe to drink. Previous research from the GRWA suggests fecal coliform levels would be much higher if the sinkhole was not fenced off from the cattle. The amount of lime in the water was high but typical of our karstic watershed. During floods, the sinkhole will spew stormwater from over one-third of a mile over the surface of the farm and drain into the Greenbrier River, the first important confluence above the Davis, West Virginia's largest spring. Output of The Hole is unknown but during floods it clearly rivals or exceeds the one million gallon per day output of the Davis at normal levels.

Audrey would like to thank her volunteers for the project: parents Donna and Russell Hedrick (field assistance), friends Greg and Jennifer Sampson (sunfish collection and photo documentation), and uncle Dale Hedrick (plant ID).

A copy of Hedrick's report and PowerPoint film will be placed on the GRWA website in the near future at [www.greenbrierriver.org](http://www.greenbrierriver.org).

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