



Rick Roach, front, Adopt-a-Stream coordinator for the St. Luke, Knoxville group, and Jim Fahel haul branches up a steep bank of a Williams Creek tributary in late November.

St. Luke, Knoxville

• By Nancy Mott

The highly polluted Williams Creek, which flows through East Knoxville into the Tennessee River, last fall came under a spotlight when St. Luke, Knoxville, made it a long-term church cleanup project.

More than half the active members of the small congregation remained after the fellowship hour one summer Sunday to learn about pollution in the area watershed — the land that drains to nearby bodies of water.

Experts from the public/private coalition Water Quality Forum came to the church to give instruction, including City of Knoxville employee John Shubzda and a researcher with the Tennessee Water Resources Research Center at the University of Tennessee, Ruth Anne Hanahan, who also is a member of Good Shepherd Episcopal Church in Knoxville.

Afterward, a sizable number of communicants signed on to participate in the church's environmental stewardship group.

The congregation decided to formally adopt a quarter-mile section of Williams Creek through the Adopt-a-Stream program, which is coordinated by the Water Quality Forum, a consortium of 12 community and government groups that works with the municipal governments and community groups in Knoxville and Farragut



Photos by Nancy Mott

St. Luke, Knoxville, member Rose Spears, left, with area neighbor Michael Freeman, checks the pile of garbage gathered along Williams Creek on Nov. 24. For its first cleanup, the St. Luke's crew accessed from Spears' property the section of Williams Creek that the congregation has adopted.

(see www.waterqualityforum.org/).

Church member Rick Roach received additional training to take on the role of congregational program supervisor.

Adopt-a-Stream requires commitment to rigid cleanup protocols, using approved protective gear.

Project members agree to engage each year in two cleanups, a walk to visually assess the stream's health, three "watches" to note changing conditions and a pipe and drainage ditch inventory to detect sources of pollutants.

Roach and fellow church member Lida Mayer walked door-to-door throughout the neighborhood to encourage community participation in the church project.

On Nov. 24 — the Saturday during the Thanksgiving weekend — 16 church members and two neighborhood participants tackled their first cleanup effort, focusing first on an area adjacent to the property of longtime church member Rose Spears.

To learn about watersheds, pollution and how you might launch a similar effort in your community, refer to the resolution proposed by the Rev. Carter Paden of St. Peter, Chattanooga, and passed by the 2007 diocesan convention. It calls upon parishes to take responsibility for their own watershed areas. It may be found



Justin Badgett deposits garbage into a bag held by John Mott, St. Luke's senior warden, while Linda Minton works in the background. Workers follow Adopt-a-Stream protocols in cleaning the polluted waterway and charting its return to health.

online at etdiocese.net/cj2007/8sec3.minutes.pdf, on page five of the 2007 convention minutes.

More information about watersheds and what community groups can do to positively affect their environment is available at www.scorecard.org/env-releases/water/.

St. Luke, Knoxville: 865-522-4244