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From: Sue Thompson <sthomp@andrew.cmu.edu>
To: PA Biodiversity Listserve <PABIODIV@webmail.upb.pitt.edu>
Subject: PABIODIV: Snow and River Species

From Grist Magazine:

The massive storm that dumped feet of snow on the Northeast over the weekend was lovely to look at, fun to play in -- and bad news for some river species. In an effort to unbury themselves, many cities in the region dumped plowed snow directly into nearby rivers, a practice some scientists warn could harm stone flies, a delicate insect species near the bottom of the food chain. The flies, which help break down organic matter and are eaten by trout and other large fish, are just beginning to emerge at this time of year and are highly sensitive to water quality. As a result, stone fly populations could be devastated by the increased salinity resulting from the dumped snow, which contains substantial quantities of the salt used as a melting agent on roadways. Pennsylvania and West Virginia have no rules against dumping plowed snow in waterways; New Jersey and Massachusetts do, but both state suspended their rules in the aftermath of the storm.

The Pennsylvania Biodiversity Listserve encourages open discussion about biodiversity issues in the state. It is hosted by the Allegheny Institute of Natural History, University of Pittsburgh-Bradford and is moderated by the Pennsylvania Biodiversity Partnership. The opinions expressed in messages are those of the authors and NOT the Pennsylvania Biodiversity Partnership.