

**Volume XXV
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Fall 2018**

Stonycreek-Conemaugh River Improvement Project

Somerset Conservation District Wins Environmental Achievement Award by Len Lichvar

Save the Date:

December 12– Upper Yoder Windmill Forum, Westmont Hilltop High School, 6:30 pm *(See page 5)*

January 17– SCRIP Board Meeting, Gander Outdoors, Richland, 9 am

March 2– Nature Works, Bottle Works, Johnstown, 10am-2 pm

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(Left to Right) Somerset Conservation District Manager and SCRIP Chairman Len Lichvar and Somerset Conservation District Board Chairman Roger Latuch with the District's Environmental Achievement Award. *Photo by Len Lichvar*

The Somerset Conservation District was recently awarded a national Environmental Achievement Award from the federal Department of the Interior's Office of Environmental Policy and Compliance recognizing the District for its long time contributions to the abandoned mine drainage (AMD) abatement efforts in the Lamberts Run watershed. The award was presented at the National Association of Abandoned Mine Land Programs Conference in Williamsburg Virginia.

In addition the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protect Bureau of Abandoned Mine Reclamation (PA DEP BAMR) and the National Park Service's Flight 93 National Memorial were also recognized with the same award.

Lamberts Run is a small but important tributary to the Stonycreek River that has suffered from severe water quality degradation from historic abandoned surface and deep mining

operations. Heavy loadings of iron and other metals rendered Lamberts Run severely impaired and also degraded the water quality of the Stonycreek River for much of the 20th Century.

The Conservation District, in cooperation with the PA DEP, began planning for AMD treatment options in the 1990's as component of the larger efforts then occurring to reduce AMD impacts in the Stonycreek River watershed. However, with the crash of United Flight 93 on 9/11/01 at the headwaters of Lamberts Run, the world changed and so did the dynamics of AMD abatement in the watershed.

The PA DEP, in cooperation with the National Park Service, designed, funded and constructed a pump and treat AMD abatement project on the Flight 93 Memorial property that has made a significant positive impact on the water quality of Lamberts Run and enhanced the Flight 93 Memorial grounds as well.

In addition, the Somerset County Conservancy oversaw construction of an AMD passive treatment system on another source of AMD on property they own adjacent to the memorial. The Conservation District, in cooperation with PA DEP and the PA Association of Conservation District's Technical Assistance Group (PACD TAG), then administered and constructed another

(continued on page 2)

Award *(continued from page one)*

system known as the Hinemeyer AMD treatment system on National Park Service property that reduced AMD impacts further downstream.

With these successful efforts in the watershed, the Conservation District, in 2016, with assistance from Hedin Environmental and PACD TAG, then embarked on reducing the final source of AMD with the construction of an Anoxic Limestone Drain treatment system near the village of Lambertsville. This project, funded by PA DEP, has significantly and successfully minimized the final source of iron contamination that had been entering and degrading the Stonycreek River.

In order to further reduce the impacts into Lamberts Run itself, the District has applied for a PA DEP Growing Greener grant for a Phase II component of the project. If funded and implemented, the potential to reestablish a brook trout population, as well as fully securing the water quality improvements in the upper Stonycreek River, may finally be realized.

While actively addressing Lamberts Run, the Conservation District continues to work to rehabilitate four of the Oven Run AMD passive treatment systems on the Stonycreek River. This extensive project has already seen progress, but additional funding is required to completely reconstruct and enhance the performance of the systems that are beginning to fail and jeopardize the nationally recognized water quality improvements that have occurred in the Stonycreek over the past 25 years.

Although much progress has been made in recreating fisheries, enhancing water quality and establishing the growing eco-tourism sustainable economic impacts in the region, the public sector driven initiatives to

address remaining water quality issues as well as maintaining existing treatment facilities is both ongoing and never ending.

Oven Run Site B Rehabilitation Plans

by Pam Milavec



Representatives from SCRIP, PA Department of Environmental Protection, Stream Restoration Inc., Somerset Conservation District and the PA Association of Conservation District's Technical Assistance Group examine the current status of the Oven Run Site B AMD treatment system.

Photo by Len Lichvar

Oven Run Site B was designed and constructed by the DEP Bureau of Abandoned Mine Reclamation in 1998, as part of the SCRIP coordinated Oven Run/Pokeytown Run AMD remediation project. Sites A – F were constructed under the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service PL566 plan to restore the Stonycreek watershed.

Site B was a particularly complex site with a 300+ gpm discharge that was characterized by very high iron and aluminum concentrations. When the \$1 million plus site was constructed, it was the largest passive treatment system built at that time. The system functioned well for only a short time, then started

to short-circuit and plug with metals. Two projects were completed by BAMR to improve the performance and the system functioned for several years, although the effluent water quality gradually deteriorated. Due to the complexity and the huge expense to rebuild the system, BAMR has been hesitant to attempt another rehab. However, the potential adverse impacts to the largely restored Stonycreek were a concern.

This past summer, SCRIP requested that Stream Restoration Inc. use their O&M technical assistance grant (TAG) to evaluate the system and recommend modifications to restore functionality. An on-site meeting was held on September 19th. Included in the meeting were representatives from BAMR, Stream Restoration Inc., Somerset NRCS technical staff, PA Association of Conservation District's Technical Assistance Group, and SCRIP representatives Len Lichvar, Pam Milavec and Bill Strosnider (also representing St. Francis University, along with some of their water resources technical staff). The site was reviewed and potential options were discussed. The next step is for Stream Restoration Inc. to evaluate alternatives, develop cost estimates and reconvene the group. That is expected to occur later this fall. BAMR will then conduct a cost-benefit analysis before making a decision whether or not to pursue a rehab project.

Waterways Receive Grants

by DYLAN JOHNSON dyl@dailyamerican.com

The state Department of Environmental Protection announced \$1.6 million in grants Wednesday to various conservation groups throughout the state for acid mine drainage remediation. Three of the seven awards are for projects in Somerset County.

The Somerset Conservation District received \$551,319 from DEP for construction of a passive acid mine drainage treatment system on Lamberts Run in Stonycreek Township. The stream runs just 1 mile from the Flight 93 National Memorial.

Lamberts Run also drains into the Stonycreek River, so the water quality of that stream should improve as well.

Somerset Conservation District Manager Len Lichvar said that this phase will be the culmination of more than 30 years of work by many local organizations to clean up the last source of acid mine drainage in Lamberts Run.

"It's an ongoing saga of remediating Lamberts Run," he said. "This should finally take care of the abandoned mine drainage into the Stonycreek, which will improve the water quality, fisheries, and put another layer of protection in case any other system goes wrong."

Lichvar said it will probably be two years before the system is installed. He thanked the three landowners who allowed the conservation district to install the systems on their properties.

"This will put a nice ribbon around the watershed there where we've been trying to achieve success for three decades," he said.

The Paint Creek Regional Watershed Association received \$48,193 for a limestone system to treat acid mine drainage in Babcock Creek in Gallitzin State Forest. This project is expected to enhance the habitat for brook trout there.

The Shade Creek Watershed Association received \$208,141 for an acid mine drainage treatment system in Coal Run in Shade Township.

Shade Creek Watershed Association President Larry Hutchinson was excited to hear that the department released this money for his association to finish its project in Coal Run.

He said the group is installing a limestone bed the size of a football field to filter out the acid mine drainage and bring fish back to the downstream waterways.

"At the top, there's an old mine up there where they strip cut, and, as a result, the coal companies didn't do a real good job of taking care of the water," he said. "The water then has changed into acidic.

"It got nasty."

Hutchinson and the association have been working on the project since 2015, but weather delayed it. With this grant, Hutchinson expects to finish the project and remediate 4 miles of stream for the native brook trout.

"Right now, if those fish go into Dark Shade (Creek), they're pretty much done," he said. "We're healing the rivers from the top down, healing the water, bringing back the water to the way it's supposed to be."

These grants were paid for with state Surface Mining Conservation and Reclamation Act funds and a state Abandoned Mine Land Program fund.

DEP Secretary Patrick McDonnell said in a press release that these projects will hopefully improve streams that were damaged before environmental regulations were put in place.

"These projects bring together the best resources in planning, design, construction and maintenance to help bring streams back to life," he said.

Reprinted from the [Daily American](#)

**Windmills Being Considered for
Upper Yoder Township;
Forum Scheduled for December 12**

**SCRIP Board Member Robb Piper
Named 2018 Pennsylvania
Outstanding
Inspector of the Year**



Competitive Power Ventures (CPV) is considering developing a windmill farm on land leased to them by the Greater Johnstown Water Authority (GJWA) on

Laurel Ridge in Upper Yoder Township. GJWA has large capital improvements that need done, a couple that are mandated by the state but unfunded, and plan to use the royalties from the windmills to fund these projects. Some residents that live near the area held a meeting at Eat N Park on November 26 to voice their questions and concerns. They fear that the windmills will adversely impact the environment and their property values.

State Representative Frank Burns, who represents the residents in the Upper Yoder area, attended the November 26th meeting and proposed hosting a town hall to provide a forum for them to ask questions and learn more about the size, scope, impact and timeline for the project.

The forum is scheduled for Wednesday, December 12 at Westmont Hilltop High School, 200 Fair Oaks Drive, Johnstown at 6:30pm. Burns has invited officials from the GJWA and CPV. All interested residents are invited to attend.



Robb Piper (left) receives the 2018 Outstanding Inspector of the Year Award from John and Maureen Burnham.

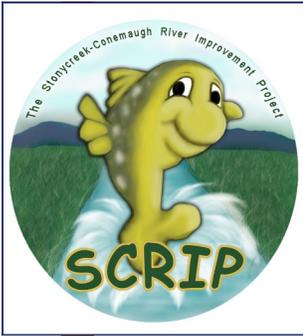
Photo by Caleb Wright

Robb Piper, SCRIP board member and retired Cambria County Conservation District Manager, was named the Pennsylvania Outstanding Tree Farm Inspector for 2018. Robb, an inspector since 1982, has certified over 50 Tree Farms. Pennsylvania Tree Farm Inspectors inspect Tree Farms to insure that the American Forest Foundation Standards and the Indicators that go along with them are met. The Pennsylvania Tree Farm Program participates in a full Certification Program which necessitates inspection of each Tree Farm every 5 years, amounting to over 70 inspections per year. Robb has been instrumental in achieving these goals. His help working with partners and Tree Farmers, offering advice and assisting in planning has been invaluable. Congratulations, Robb! *From PA Forestry Association*

Join or renew* SCRIP today!

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Make your check payable to **SCRIP**, or for a tax-deductible contribution, make the check to **Southern Alleghenies Conservancy/ SCRIP**. * *If you are not sure of your membership status contact SCRIP's secretary at 814-444-2669 or mreckner@kcstreamteam.org.* Send donations to: **SCRIP, P.O. Box 164, Windber, PA 15963**



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SCRIP is the Stonycreek-Conemaugh River Improvement Project,
 a coalition of grass-roots groups and local resource agencies working to
 restore and promote the Upper Conemaugh watershed.

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