

# Stonycreek-Conemaugh River Improvement Project Make Use of Our Rivers

Volume XI X  
Number 2  
Spring 2012

**Save the Date:**

June 15— SCRIP board meeting, Sewak house, 9 am. Bring covered dish.

June 16— River of Year Sojourn and Appreciation Day at Greenhouse Park. *See schedule p. 2.*

Week of June 18— Fish survey on last mile of Quemahoning Creek below the reservoir and possibly further downstream on the Stonycreek. For exact dates, locations and times, contact PA Fish and Boat Commission SW Regional Office or Len Lichvar at len-scd@wpia.net.

June 26 -Willmore Dam, 9 am  
June 27 Hinkston Dam, 8 am  
Fish structures will be built and installed at both locations. Meet at boat launches. For more information, contact Robb Piper at piper@co.cambria.pa.us

June 28— Stream Team and others receive Western PA Environmental Awards presented by PA Environmental Council and Dominion in Pittsburgh

June 30— Jim Mayer Trail restoration, 9am-12pm. *See p.3 for details.*

July 20— SCRIP board meeting, Greenhouse Park, 9 am

July 20— Registration due for PA AMR conference in State College. *See p. 2 for more details.*

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## Paddle the Que Event Set for August 18



Have you ever watched the paddlers along the Stonycreek River or elsewhere and thought maybe that was something you would like to try? Now is your chance! This summer you will have the opportunity to learn basic paddle skills in a safe environment. SCRIP, along with the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission, is sponsoring a Paddle the Que event on August 18 at Summers Best Two Weeks along the Quemahoning Reservoir beginning at 9 am. Participants will rotate through three stations in 20-30 minutes. The stations will focus on life jackets, equipment and paddling safety, and paddling skills such as entering and exiting the water and paddling strokes. At the end of the instruction time, participants will have an additional 30 minutes of paddling time.

Registration for the event will be on a first come first served basis. The nonrefundable fee will be \$3 per person or two for \$5; children 14 years of age and under are free. Children must be big enough with the arm strength to paddle. All registrants must pay in advance and register by August 10. Send check to: SCRIP, P.O. Box 164, Windber, PA 15963. Please include the names of all participants, ages of any children who will be participating and contact information. If you have a preference, indicate a first and second choice of desired start time ( 9, 9:30, 10 or 10:30 am) and whether you prefer a kayak, canoe, or a tandem kayak, of which there are two. We will do our best to accommodate your request, but cannot guarantee it. We will confirm your time slot and boat as soon as possible. Plans for any on-shore activities, booths or displays still need to be finalized. If you have any questions, please contact Melissa Reckner, at 814-444-2669 or mreckner@kcstreamteam.org. We hope you will come out for a fun day and paddle the Que with us!

Jacob McClosky, a St. Francis University student in the Environmental Engineering program, works as an intern with the Kiski-Conemaugh Stream Team under the direction of Melissa Reckner. See his article on page 3.

*(Photo by Melissa Reckner)*



## In Honor of the Stony as PA River of the Year



*(Photo from SCRIP website)*  
Clear Shade Creek, one of the two main tributaries of the Stonycreek.

The Stonycreek River has changed immensely over the last two decades. The important cleanup efforts made way for the quality recreation that people enjoy today. The June issue of *Somerset Magazine* contains a feature article and photos by Len Lichvar, SCRIP chairman, on the Stonycreek River watershed in recognition of the "River of the Year" designation.

The "Stonycreek River and Upper Conemaugh River Basin Restoration Time Line" that covers the who, what, when and where of the over 20 year history and story of the water quality improvements in the Stonycreek River watershed compiled by Len Lichvar and edited by Joe Gorden is available on the Somerset Conservation District web site at [www.somersetcd.org](http://www.somersetcd.org) and on the SCRIP web site at [www.scrippa.org](http://www.scrippa.org).

**Don't forget the River of the Year Sojourn and Appreciation Day** on June 16 at Greenhouse Park beginning at 10 am and going long into the evening. *See p. 2 for an updated list of activities.*



*(Photo by Tom Murray)*

**Melissa Reckner receives "Order of the Mug" award** from *Mountain Laurel Trout Unlimited* (MLTU) Secretary Dave Maher. This award is presented to the member who most advances and supports the goals and mission of MLTU.

## Schedule of Events for June 16 Stonycreek River of the Year Celebration @ Greenhouse Park

10:00 am to 2:00 pm: River Sojourn: Hollsopple to Carpenters Park Pre-registration @ Benscreek Canoe Club website: [benscreekcanoeclub.com](http://benscreekcanoeclub.com)). 50% discount to first 50 registrants.

All Day- Coal Tubin tube floats from Greenhouse Park to Moxham. Great fun! Info at [coaltubin.com](http://coaltubin.com).

11:00 am to 6 pm: Nonprofit conservation organizations displays and demonstrations @ Greenhouse Park.

Noon - 12:30 pm: Opening Ceremony & River Blessing: Greenhouse Park

12:30 to 2:00 pm: Greenhouse Park to Inclined Plane River Float: Bring your canoe or kayak or use equipment provided by PA Fish & Boat (limited equipment available). Return shuttle to Park provided.

2:00 pm to 3:00 pm: Carpenters Park to Whitewater Park Boat Race

2:00 pm- Laurel Highlands On & Off Road Bicycling ride from Greenhouse Park; 20-25 miles, 2-3 climbing hills at 11-13 mph pace.

12:30 pm to 4:00 pm: SurfSUP: Paddleboarding demonstrations in Whitewater Park (standing on a paddleboard in the waves), plus instruction for newbies on how to paddleboard. Paddles and gear provided at no cost. Great fun!

### Save the Date *(continued)*

July 28- Jim Mayer Trail restoration, 9am-12pm. *See p. 3 for details.*

July 28- Shade Creek floating event. For more information: [www.shadecreekwatershed.org](http://www.shadecreekwatershed.org)

Aug. 2-4- 4th Annual Abandoned Mine Reclamation Conference, Ramada Inn and Conference Center, State College *See box to the right for more details.*

Aug. 4- Somerset Conservation District work day. Meet at the boat launch at the Quemahoning Reservoir Recreation Area, 9 am- 12pm.

Aug. 18- Paddle the Que event at Summers Best Two Weeks, starting at 9 am.

Aug. 25- Jim Mayer Trail restoration, 9am-12pm. *See p. 3 for details.*

Sept 12- Somerset Conservation District work day. Meet at the boat launch at the Quemahoning Reservoir Recreation Area, 5pm.

2:00 pm to 4:30 pm: FreeStyle Ro-deo @ Whitewater Park

4:30 pm to 5:45 pm: Playboater Race @ Whitewater Park

2:00 pm to 5:00 pm: Whiskey River Panhandlers

5:00 pm to 8:00 pm: South Side Strays

8:00 pm to 11:00 pm: Halftime String Band

### Trout in the Classroom Program Creates Interest in Conservation

*by Melissa Reckner*

During the 2011-2012 school year, the Kiski-Conemaugh Stream Team and Mountain Laurel Trout Unlimited supported nine Trout in the Classroom (TIC) projects at the following schools: Berlin-Brothersvalley High, Conemaugh Township Middle, Forest Hills High, North Star East Elementary, Penn Cambria Middle, Saint Benedict, Shade-Central City High, and Cambria Heights Middle, which participated for the first time.

Most projects were extremely successful, with students consistently engaged and exposed to the early life cycle of brook trout and high numbers of 3-5" fingerlings to release. One project at Penn Cambria struggled with trout mortality for unexplainable reasons. Still, the goals of TIC are to create enthusiasm and interest in the care of trout and in the conservation of their natural habitats, and I believe we accomplished that.

Several schools' projects culminated in release day activities, which, for most, included 3-6 outdoor workshops that expanded upon lessons learned throughout the year in the classroom.

### PA AMR Conference

The annual *PA Abandoned Mine Reclamation* conference will be August 2-4 at the Ramada in State College. For details, including an agenda, speakers, and lodging info, please visit [www.treatminewater.com](http://www.treatminewater.com).

The fee is only \$40.00 for members of non-profits and an additional \$10 if you wish to go on the tour. Register by July 20!

Thank you to the following for assisting with these activities: Beaverdam Run Trout Nursery and Co-op, Kiski-Conemaugh Stream Team, Mountain Laurel Trout Unlimited, Natural Biodiversity, PA Fish and Boat Commission, SCRIP, Shade Creek Watershed Association, and Somerset Conservation District.

Funds from a GenOn Energy grant received by the Kiski-Conemaugh Stream Team, Pennsylvania Trout Unlimited grants, MLTU, schools, and volunteers supported these projects and activities.

Next year, Bishop McCort High School will be joining the aforementioned schools in TIC. If you would like to help – and we will need help coordinating education efforts and implementing activities, please contact me at 814-444-2669 or [mreckner@kcstreamteam.org](mailto:mreckner@kcstreamteam.org).

Thank you and have a great summer!



*(Photo by Melissa Reckner)*

Jim Eckenrode teaches students how to do a visual assessment and how to test for a few water chemistry parameters.

## My Work As An Intern With the Kiski– Conemaugh Stream Team

by Jacob McCloskey

I'm Jake McCloskey, a work study for Saint Francis University with the Kiski Conemaugh Stream Team. I'm a sophomore in the Environmental Engineering program. I help my boss, Melissa Reckner, by downloading data from several data loggers the Stream Team has placed around the Kiski-Conemaugh river basin and run some field chemical tests on these streams. These streams are chosen based on their vulnerability to pollution sources, chiefly Marcellus Shale. I have to say that the job is pretty interesting. To get to these data loggers, I have to walk out to the middle of half a dozen different streams. Being able to play in the water for a job is pretty awesome, and the sites themselves are easily accessible and set in beautiful locations. It takes maybe 5 minutes to download data and to replace the logger in the stream, and the tests take about the same amount of time each. And because I only go out to check the loggers every other week, my schedule has been really flexible.

Working with the Stream Team is a great experience. Missy is great to work for. She's always been sure to help me when I need it and she's kept me busy going out to help with various other tasks like sampling AMD treatment facilities. In a few weeks I'll be at River Appreciation Day, helping celebrate the Stonycreek being named River of the Year, and I'll be sampling 25 sites in northern Somerset County for fecal coliforms in cooperation with the DEP.

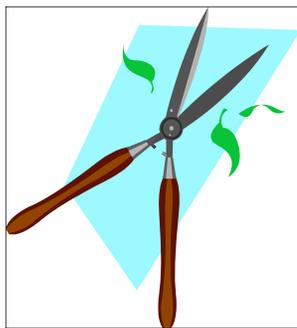


I've also been compiling data into user-friendly spreadsheets. The KC Stream Team has been involved in so much that it's hard to know what I'll be asked to do next. But I do know that it'll be interesting.

My work with the Stream Team is also helping me find out what I really want to do with my degree after I get out of school. The experience I have gained with water pollution has brought me into thinking about working in water treatment, to ensure that the water we consume is clean.

I know from past experience that doing service work or volunteering can be dull or annoying, but I've never had anything like that while helping out the Stream Team. The "work" I do for the Stream Team is much more like taking a walk through a park and my experience with the Team is helping me decide what I want my career to be. I've been exploring drinking water treatment because of the way the clear streams can be so unhealthy and acidic, and I hope my experience here can help me identify problems in source water. My time with the Stream Team has been very rewarding. For a short walk in a stream and a few minutes of doing tests, I get to enjoy the great outdoors, do my part to help monitor a few local streams and protect Pennsylvania's natural resources.

*Jacob is a part of the Watershed Restoration Amplification Program (WRAP), which offers different types of assistance to local watershed groups. If your group is in need of assistance, then perhaps WRAP can help. Please contact Dr. Bill Strosnider for more information at : [wstrosnider@francis.edu](mailto:wstrosnider@francis.edu).*



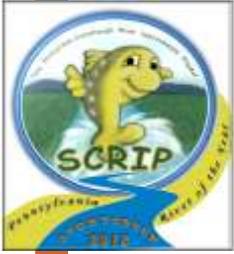
### Volunteers Turn Out for Riparian Improvement Project *By Kristina Strosnider*

As part of the Jim Mayer Trail Riparian Restoration Project, Natural Biodiversity is organizing volunteer days throughout the summer in an effort to control knotweed on the Jim Mayer trail along the Stony-

creek River. The project is being funded by the Foundation for Pennsylvania Watersheds GenOn funds and the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy's Dominion Watershed Mini-Grant Program, and it will center on improving and restoring the riparian buffer along this popular 2 mile trail. In doing so, the project aims to improve water quality, control erosion and sedimentation, provide flood control, restore habitat and beautify the area.

Volunteer knotweed control days are scheduled to take place on June 2<sup>nd</sup>, June 30<sup>th</sup>, July 28<sup>th</sup>, August 25<sup>th</sup>, with revegetation set to begin in the fall. In addition to hand cutting, some machine cutting will occur along the trail, and herbicide will be used this fall. Native tree species will be selected and planted in areas with the greatest potential to thwart re-establishment of Japanese knotweed, and a seed mix of native herbaceous riparian species will also be applied at intervals throughout the project. Methods and results will be analyzed in spring 2013 and long-term maintenance recommendations will be provided to the Cambria County Conservation and Recreation Authority, who currently maintains the trail and is an active partner in the project.

The site is uniquely situated just upstream of the Stonycreek's floodwalls within the city of Johnstown, and the project has benefitted from an outpouring of interest and community support. Interested individuals are encouraged to visit [www.naturalbiodiversity.org](http://www.naturalbiodiversity.org) and click on the *News and Events* page for more information about the project, or email [nbd\\_staff@naturalbiodiversity.org](mailto:nbd_staff@naturalbiodiversity.org) for details.



The Southern Alleghenies Conservancy  
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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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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 [mreckner@kcstreamteam.org](mailto:mreckner@kcstreamteam.org) or 814-444-2669.

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