

**Volume XXV
Number 2
Spring 2018**

Save the Date:

June 20-21– AMR Conference, Ramada Inn, State College.

June 22– Knotweed Cutting, hosted by Somerset Conservation District, Greenhouse Park, 10 am.

June 28– Introduction to River Paddling, Greenhouse Park, 6-6:40 pm or 6:30-7:10 pm., followed by 2.5 mi. Float at 7:15 pm. depending on water level. Registration required 814-472-2120.

July 12– SCRIP Board meeting, Greenhouse Park, 9am.

July 25– Introduction to Kayak Fishing, Quemahoning Family Recreation Area, 5:30pm. Information: www.fish.state.pa.us. Click on Calendar of Events, July 25.

Sept. 20– Fish Habitat Day at Que Family Recreation Area, 5 pm.

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Stonycreek-Conemaugh River Improvement Project

Oven Run Rehab on the Stonycreek



The Oven Run Abandoned Mine Treatment Project which began along the Stonycreek River over 20 years ago used passive treatment systems along 6 sites to treat abandoned mine drainage.

These treatment systems use a series of ponds to remove metals and raise the pH of the water (if it's net acidic). The limestone rocks at the bottom of the ponds, pull metals from the polluted water and over time, get caked with materials that make them less effective.

At Site E (*as seen in the photos*), an Earth Shapers LLC excavator is being used to scoop up piles of limestone from the bottom of a pond. By agitating the rocks, the coated material is removed and the rocks can be returned to be reused making the ponds more effective.

This is one small part of the work that needs to be done. More funding is needed, so citizens need to talk to local lawmakers to get the message across.

“A lot of people think that the pollution is gone—that everything is fine now on the Stonycreek,” said Len Lichvar, SCRIP President.

“But it’s sites like Oven Run that are holding it all together. If part of all of the system fails, the Stonycreek would quickly go spiraling backward.”

Photos above by Len Lichvar

Kiski-Conemaugh River Basin Conservation Plan

by Melissa Reckner



The Conemaugh River (left) and Loyalhanna Creek combine in Saltsburg to form the Kiskiminetas River, a tributary of the Allegheny River.

Photo by Melissa Reckner

Earlier this year, the Kiski-Conemaugh Stream Team released the long-awaited update to the *Kiski-Conemaugh River Basin Conservation Plan* that was originally published in 1999.

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This new document provides the status of the 120 recommendations made in that plan, quantifies changes to the watershed since 1999, and offers new recommendations as conservation and restoration work continues

The 1999 Plan was heavily utilized with 88% of its recommendations implemented to some degree. Visually and anecdotally, people could tell our rivers were improving, but no one had quantified and publicized these changes since the original Conservation Plan was issued. Among other things, the new State of the Kiski-Conemaugh River Watershed: Community Shift shows that rivers that were previously net acidic are now net alkaline and supporting a completely different fish community. Instead of fish species tolerant of pollution dominating the collections, surveys are now dominated by fish more sensitive to pollution, and fish diversity has increased.

This recovery is a result of laws and regulations, a decline in industry, and the increase of public-private partnerships that local watershed associations and county conservation districts, as well as state agencies, utilize to implement Abandoned Mine Drainage abatement and Abandoned Mine Lands restoration projects.

Details of these and other surveys may be found in the *State of the KC* document, which may be downloaded at www.conemaughvalleyconservancy.org; just click “Initiatives,” “Learn more about Stream Team” and scroll down to “Stream Team Documents.” For those not eager to delve into a 500+-page document, a three-page Executive Summary may also be downloaded from the same website! I encourage you all to take a few moments to at least read the summary.

Despite all of the improvements outlined in the *State of the KC*, our watershed remains at a tipping point in that if existing AMD systems are not maintained, we could lose the gains we’ve collectively made. Unfortunately, watershed groups struggle with securing funds to maintain systems and recruiting new, younger volunteers to carry on their work. I encourage you to become involved with your local watershed association. If you’re not sure who that is, drop me a line and I’ll connect you, because it is the passion and persistence of professionals and volunteers alike, as well as some larger, active AMD treatment systems planned by the state, that give hope that our rivers will only continue to improve, adding to the eco-tourism potential of Western Pennsylvania. If you’re not already, I hope you will become part of that movement.

Trout in the Classroom by Melissa Reckner



A Bishop McCort High School student releases several brook trout fingerlings into the Bens Creek at the Ferndale Sportsmen’s Club during a TIC Release Day.

Photo by Melissa Reckner

This spring, the Conemaugh Valley Conservancy’s Kiski-Conemaugh Stream Team organized and implemented Trout in the Classroom (TIC) Release Day activities for seven schools with a total of 480 fifth through twelfth-grade students, 18 partnering organizations, and 49 unique volunteers participating. The Stream Team does not track the number of brook trout released, as the focus of TIC is coldwater conservation education; however, it is safe to say well over 200 brookies were placed in area streams. More importantly, students were exposed to the life cycle of our state fish and enjoyed a fun and memorable field trip, while learning more about topics presented by CVC’s staff, extraordinary volunteers, and outstanding partners. Funds from Mountain Laurel Trout Unlimited, Johnstown’s Garden Club, Conemaugh Township Rotary Club, Pennsylvania Council of Trout Unlimited, and the Consortium for Scientific Assistance to Watersheds made these field trips possible.

Introduction to Kayak Fishing
July 25, 2018, 5:30 pm.
Quemahoning Family
Recreation Area



Stonycreek Conemaugh River Improvement Project (SCRIP) and The Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC) are sponsoring this event. This is a new program designed for participants interested in learning about basic paddling skills and kayak fishing equipment. Participants must be at least 16 years of age, and a parent or guardian must accompany minors. All equipment is provided. **Register at www.fish.state.pa.us. Go to Calendar of Events on the left side of the page. Click on July 25.**

NO Applications were received for the \$500 SCRIP Scholarship so there is no winner to announce.

Vote for the CVC/Stream Team to Win \$2500



Melissa Reckner, Stream Team Director, urges everyone to keep voting for the Conemaugh Valley Conservancy (CVC) in the Hairstory 1% for the Planet competition in which they could win \$2500. It's one vote per email address, and you have until June 30, not May 31 as they were previously told. Vote here: www.hairstory.com/1-planet/1-planet-cast-your-ballot. Thank you!

Colcom Foundation Awards Grant to Assess Combined Effects of Sewage and Mine Drainage

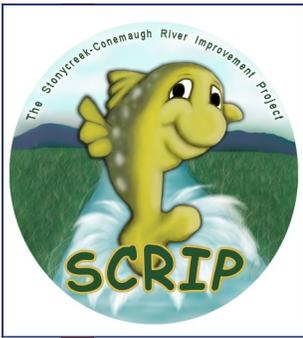
The Colcom Foundation has awarded a \$196,000, three-year grant to St. Vincent College, St. Francis University and the US Geological Survey to assess the combined effects of sewage and mine water pollution on human and ecosystem health in Southwestern Pennsylvania.

Dr. Peter M Smyntek, project director, said that due to decades of intensive private and public investment, the waterways of SW Pennsylvania are emerging from more than a century of severe acid mine drainage impacts, however other previously masked critical underlying water quality problems are becoming evident.. Of special concern is discharge of untreated sewage which is particularly common throughout Appalachia. The goal is to produce a policy guidance report and fact sheet for state agencies, foundations, watershed associations and conservation districts to guide management programs.

Join or renew* SCRIP today!

Name _____
 Street Address _____ City _____
 State/Zip _____ Email _____
 Phone _____ Date _____ Do you wish to volunteer? _____
 Student (\$6) Individual (\$15) Family (\$20)
 Club/Small Business (\$50) Patron (\$50) Sustaining (\$100)
 Sponsor (\$500) Lifetime (\$1000)

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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