

Stonycreek-Conemaugh River Improvement Project Make Use of Our Rivers

**Volume XVII
Number 2
Spring 2010**

Save These Dates:

June 18-SCRIP Meeting at Centennial Farm Gun Club (with covered dish) 9 AM

July 9-SCRIP Meeting at Disaster's Edge with field trip to Saltlick Reservoir AMD Project (tentative) 9 AM

July 10- Que Classic at Quemahoning Reservoir. Check in starts at 6AM

September 15-Ohio River Watershed Celebration in Pittsburgh on Gateway Clipper

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NEXT ISSUE- Que Classic Outcomes

Grant Awards Will Help in Remediation and Protection of Paint Creek Watershed

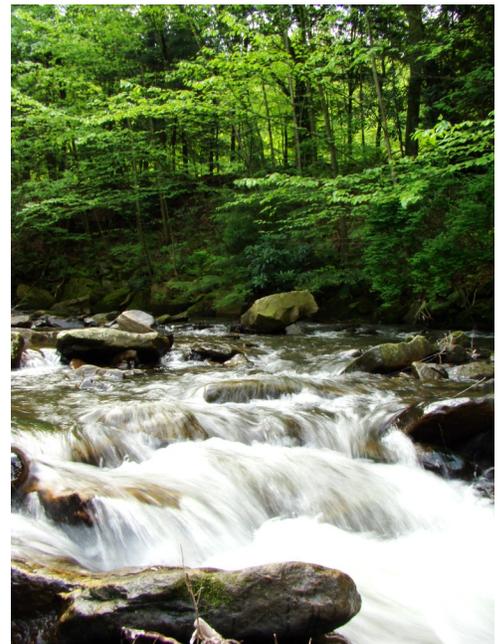
The Paint Creek Regional Watershed Association (PCRWA) is working to restore waterways in the Paint Creek Watershed, which, among all its tributaries, contributes the most pollution to the Stonycreek River.

PCRWA was formed in 2000 and soon received a Growing Greener grant to assess the watershed and prioritize potential projects. Tom Clark authored the Paint Creek Restoration Plan, which details the problems facing the watershed, and initiated some exploration projects.

The PCRWA Board of Directors is utilizing that plan to implement projects that will benefit the health of waterways and residents. Earlier this year, PCRWA was awarded a large Growing Greener grant from the PA Department of Environmental Protection to remediate several abandoned mine discharges degrading Weaver Run, a 1.2 mile tributary to Seese Run, which flows into Paint Creek. Limestone beds and an oxic limestone drain will treat these acidic discharges and, in a few years, should allow aquatic life to return to Weaver Run. Additionally, PCRWA received grants from the Coldwater Heritage Partnership Program and Dominion Foundation / Western PA Conservancy to complete a coldwater conservation plan for Little Paint Creek, one of the few streams of high quality in the watershed. The health of Little Paint Creek is threatened by resource extraction and urban development, which could cause sedimentation and thermal pollution. This plan will summarize past studies of the watershed, gather present-day data, identify specific threats to the watershed, and recommend action measures to protect Little Paint Creek and its tributaries. *Continued on p. 3 PCRWA*

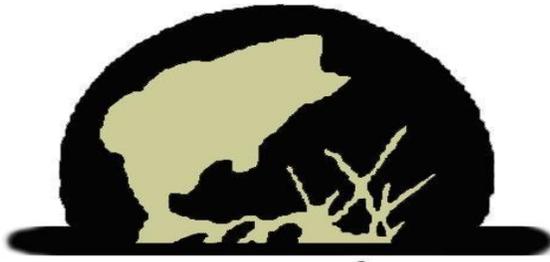


Rich Wargo (right) receiving the grant award from a Dominion Foundation representative. Photo courtesy of Western PA Conservancy



Little Paint Creek
Photo by Melissa Reckner

5th Annual Que Classic Set for July 10



Quemahoning Classic

Fishing Tournament

SCRIP is hosting the Fifth Annual Quemahoning Classic Fishing Tournament on Saturday, July 10 at the Quemahoning Reservoir to highlight the improved water quality that is benefiting fisheries across the Alleghenies and to raise funds that SCRIP invests in remediation and environmental education projects.

The Quemahoning Classic is a catch-and-release tournament. Judges will measure fish as they are caught. All winners are determined by total inches in each species, while the grand-prize winner will be determined by total species caught and released, with any tiebreakers decided by total inches. Species judged include largemouth and smallmouth bass, all species of trout, pike, muskellunge, carp and walleye. Prizes will be awarded to men, women, and children in each category. Live bait and artificial lures may be used, but all must have barbless hooks or the hooks pinched down. Absolutely no gasoline engines will be permitted in accordance with reservoir regulations and no more than four contestants may be in a boat. Shore fishing is permitted within marked zones, with a limit of two rods per participant.



Berlin students, (pictured left to right) Zach Perry and George Boyer, release rainbow trout raised during a project inspired by Trout in the Classroom.

Photo by Melissa Reckner

Melissa Reckner, SCRIP Secretary, said last year 44 participants caught 52 eligible fish, which was down slightly from the year before when 82 fish were measured, but the weather was more challenging. She said a lot of bass have been caught over the years, although anglers have landed walleye and pike too.

Check-in for the Quemahoning Classic Fishing Tournament starts at 6:00 AM at the Public Recreation Area, while competitive fishing is from 7:00 AM – Noon. A catered lunch will be provided, while winners are determined. All participants must be back at the launch site by 1:00 PM for prize eligibility, while all in attendance will be eligible for door prizes.

If you are interested in sponsoring the Classic, contact Len Lichvar at 814-445-4652 x 136. If you would like to register as a participant, contact Melissa Reckner at 814-444-2669. If you would like to volunteer as a judge, contact Jim Eckenrode at 814-242-2310. Suggested donation for registration is \$25 for SCRIP members, \$35 for non-members, and \$10 for youth (15 and under).

Major sponsors to date include: Jenner Rod and Gun Club, Gander Mountain, and American Eagle Screen Print and Embroidery.

Trout in the Classroom Program Grows

The Trout in the Classroom program continues to grow across the state and in the Alleghenies. This year, at least 7 schools in Cambria and Somerset Counties participated in the program, including North Star East Elementary, Berlin-Brothersvalley High, Shade-Central City High, Forest Hills High, Conemaugh Township High, Penn Cambria Middle, and Turkeyfoot Valley High. Numerous sportsmen's groups and conservation organizations, including SCRIP and the Mountain Laurel Chapter of Trout Unlimited support these projects, which allow students to raise brook trout fingerlings in a classroom aquarium throughout the school year while learning about ecosystems, water quality, fish, and much more. The Kiski-Conemaugh Stream Team facilitates many projects and will need help delivering special lessons and activities in the schools next year. For more information, visit <http://www.mltu.org/classroomtrout.shtml> or call Melissa Reckner at 814-444-2669.



Last year, the United Nations named Pittsburgh as the North American host city for its 2010 World Environment Day celebration, and Pittsburgh embraced the call to action. Dozens of events planned between Earth Day (April 22) and World Environment Day (June 5) supported this initiative. I had the privilege of attending the Water Matters! Global Water Conference at the David L. Lawrence Convention Center on June 3 and staffing SCRIP's display, which was one of 35. Bill Flanagan, the event's master of ceremony, was pleased to say that Pittsburgh is "upriver from most," but we in the Cambria/Somerset area are really the ones with that good fortune, and I'm glad SCRIP was present.

Several presenters spoke of water's value and role in our world from an ecological perspective as well as political. While the event was meant to be inspiring and hopeful, I must say, I came away depressed largely because of facts and figures shared. As examples, 50% of hospital beds worldwide are filled with patients of a water-borne illness and an insane number of people, especially children, die from a lack of clean water; two-thirds of the global population will face at least intermittent water shortages by 2025; by 2050, the world's population will balloon from the 6 billion of today to 9 billion; the Clean Water Act called for the end of water pollution by 1985; and that a water gap is coming. People simply use more water than is available, partly because water is so cheap.

It's the lowest utility bill across the country, but these costs do not reflect water's true value. And why should they? The lack of water limits economic growth, so humans are going to do all that we can to squeeze every drop from our Earth, but we're still going to pollute and waste in efforts to make money.

One speaker said that with the level of inventiveness in Americans, there is no reason for water pollution to occur, yet there are little, if any, incentives in the law to not pollute and do better. Heck, government makes it easy on big business to do as they please as the "Halliburton loophole" in the 2005 Clean Water Drinking Act shows, but that's another story. Often it is cheaper to violate the law and pay a fine, than to construct or retrofit facilities to meet government standards or - imagine - not pollute at all!

Many placed calls for innovation, yet very few solutions were presented. In my opinion, conservation could have been promoted more. One plus is that several presenters felt that most people today understand that a good economy needs a healthy environment, that natural resources are limited, and that we need to work collaboratively to develop our markets while preserving nature. Besides innovation, stronger incentives are needed, as well as better infrastructure and we can help drive the market and environmental protection by what we demand, purchase, and consume. We are seeing a growing trend to buy local and organic products. Let's do the same to preserve our precious aquatic resources.



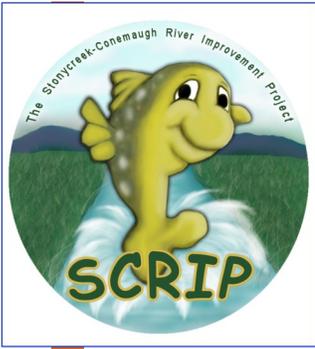
Josh Fox and Len Lichvar (at the podium) answer questions after the screening. *Photo by M. Reckner*

Gasland, an award winning documentary at the Sundance Film Festival that details some of the environmental and health effects of the hydraulic fracturing process used in gas extraction, was screened at North Star High School auditorium in Boswell on June 5. Sponsored by SCRIP, the Mountain Laurel Chapter of Trout Unlimited and the Conemaugh Valley Conservancy, this was one of the special screenings set up across Pennsylvania and neighboring states before its **airing on HBO on June 21 at 9 pm.** It is a timely topic because of interest in the massive Marcellus Shale field. Josh Fox, writer/director of the film, with help from a local expert panel, answered questions from the audience after the screening.

PCRWA *continued from page 1*

On April 24, members of PCRWA, Mountain Laurel Trout Unlimited, University of Pittsburgh at Johnstown's Geography Club, and Kiski-Conemaugh Stream Team participated in a litter clean-up along Berwick Road in Richland Township and Weaver Run in Paint Township. In just over two hours, 15 volunteers collected 148 tires and nearly 1 ton of trash from these two sites. PCRWA is very appreciative of the support it received and hopes to make this cleanup, which was part of the Great American Cleanup of Pennsylvania, Outdoor Heritage Month, and World Environment Day, an annual event.

PCRWA meets the 4th Monday of every month at 6:00 PM at the Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Rumel, near the Windber Elementary School. An annual membership is only \$5.00 for an individual! You are invited to join the group and help return Paint Creek to its former beauty when artists from the Scalp Level School of Art came to this region to capture its wild splendor. It's good to call first, though, to make sure the meeting isn't canceled. For more info, call Rich Wargo at 814-525-0844.



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Look for the new website online very soon!

www.scrippa.org

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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Do you wish to volunteer? _____

___ Student	\$6
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___ Sustaining	\$100
___ Sponsor	\$500
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Make your check payable to **SCRIP**, or for a tax-deductible contribution, make the check to **Southern Alleghenies Conservancy/ SCRIP**.
 Send donations to:
SCRIP
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