



# Stonycreek-Conemaugh River Improvement Project

Volume XXI  
Number 2  
Spring 2015

Save the Date  
June 13– Somerset  
Lake Fest. For info:  
[www.somersetconservancy.org/slac](http://www.somersetconservancy.org/slac)

June 18– SCRIP  
Board meeting,  
**Crow's Nest**,  
6:30pm

June 19– Give A  
Dam Fundraiser,  
Hayloft in Rock-  
wood, 6:30 pm.  
See Facebook page  
for details.  
*Cont. on page 2.*

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## Scrip Board Members Receive Awards



(L to R) Tom Chernisky, Cambria County Commissioner and Cambria County Conservation District Board member, Bob Ritchey, Johnstown Sportsmen's Association's 2015 Sportsman of the Year Award recipient, Robb Piper Cambria County Conservation District District Manager. The award was presented at the Johnstown Sportsmen's Association's Annual Banquet on April 15. SCRIP board members Joe Gorden and Robb Piper are past recipients of the award.

*Photo by Len Lichvar*

Randy Buchanan, right, President of the Mountain Laurel Chapter of Trout Unlimited, presents the **chapter's President's Award** to Robb Piper, District Manager of the Cambria County Conservation District. The District was recognized for its many contributions to the enhancement and protection of the cold water resource in Cambria County.



*Photo by Len Lichvar*



Conemaugh Valley Conservancy's Stream Team wins the Governors Trophy. Pictured left to right are: Davitt Woodwell, Pennsylvania Environmental Council President, Melissa Reckner, Stream Team Director, Eric Null, Stream Team biologist, and John Quigley, Acting DEP Secretary.

*Photo by PEC*

# A Look at the Treatment to AMD Discharges in the Shade Creek Watershed

by Len Lichvar

The Somerset Conservation District, Shade Creek Watershed Association, PA Department of Environmental Protection and the Kiski-Conemaugh Stream Team have begun to take a serious look at the potential to treat the yet unabated AMD discharges in the Shade Creek watershed. The two Reitz # 2 discharges, Reitz #4, which is the largest discharge in the Stonycreek River watershed and the Loyalhanna discharge comprise the “Big Four” AMD discharges that combine to render miles of Dark Shade Creek virtually lifeless and impairs the Stonycreek River downstream of its mouth as well.

Discussions, during the Conservation District sponsored Oven Run II meetings, have initiated a new impetus to revisit the options an active treatment system solution to all four discharges. With the recent construction and success of active treatment systems on other large discharges and multiple funding sources available the partners have agreed now is the time to seriously examine a conceptual plan.

A study by CME Engineering has already established some parameters, but much more information needs to be gathered. A year’s worth of chemical and flow data is the immediate need and that is planned to underway soon.

A determination of a cost for construction of an active treatment facility as well as a location for a site and mine pool mapping must all be accomplished as well.

Certainly successful AMD abatement has occurred in the Shade Creek watershed, but many previous attempts to find a solution to the “Big Four” have never become a reality. The untapped recreational opportunities and economic stimulus to finally accomplish that goal should be motivation enough to empower volunteers, professionals and elected officials to push hard for that resurgence.

The complete AMD cleanup of the Stonycreek River has yet to be accomplished. The additional projects still needed on sub-watersheds such as Pokeytown Run, Shade Creek and solutions to the many various AMD problems in the Paint Creek watershed are still required in order to accomplish anything close to a full watershed restoration success story.



Dave Leiford, of the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, examines the flow at the Reitz #2 AMD Discharge. Photo by Len Lichvar

## Save the Date (cont.)



June 25&26– AMR Conference, State College PA

Info:2015.treatminewater.com

July 15– SCRIP Board meeting, Greenhouse Park, 9 am

August 20– SCRIP Board meeting, 6:30pm, place TBD

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## A Witness to Baker Whitley Mine Pool Eruption

By Len Lichvar

On March 18, 2015 a surge of sediment laden water erupted **from the Marquise Mining Company's site located along Shade Street** at the village of Baker Whitley near Hooversville. The blow out of the underground mine pool ravaged the roadway to the point that Penn DOT was immediately called in for significant repairs to the roadway so that it could be usable.

The surge of water passed downhill through Dixie Run and into the Stonycreek River at Hooversville. An untold amount of sediment entered the river. The pH of the water was alkaline so no immediate impact on aquatic life occurred. However, this same mine pool erupted three years ago almost to the day causing similar consequences.

Representing SCRIP, Somerset Conservation District and the PA Fish and Boat Commission, I was on site of the episodic event the day of and morning after and conferred with Penn DOT, PA DEP and Marquise Mining officials.

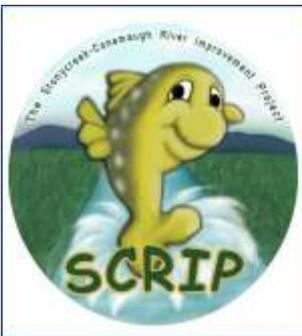
The PA DEP District Mining Office is accountable, along with Marquise Mining, for finding a permanent solution of the issue. Meetings scheduled between the two are and will be held to work toward that goal.



Sediment laden mine pool water enters the Stonycreek River at Hooversville.

*Photo by Len Lichvar*

## SCRIP Awards Scholarships



The Stonycreek Conemaugh River Improvement Project announced in its Winter newsletter that it would be awarding a \$500 Scholarship to a **SCRIP member or the member's child** who was studying at a Pennsylvania college or university in an accredited environmental field. The applicant had to reside in one of the counties that

includes the Kiski-Conemaugh Basin, which encompasses Armstrong, Cambria, Indiana, Somerset or Westmoreland counties.

**The residency requirement applied to either the applicant's home or the school he or she attended.** The applicant had to explain his or her professional goals, how the course of study would meet those goals and any involvement to date in the field. **A copy of applicant's latest transcript also had to be included.** The deadline to submit was March 30, 2015.

A scholarship was offered in 2014 but the applicant had to be at least a college sophomore and reside in either Cambria or Somerset county. No scholarship was awarded that year because of the lack of applicants, so the residency and college year requirements were modified for this year.

The 2015 applications were forwarded to the Education Committee composed of three board members and were scored individually. The committee then met, discussed the applications and agreed on the top two candidates. This information was presented to the full SCRIP board when it met. The board voted to award two \$500 scholarships since the top two candidates were very close and no scholarship was awarded in the previous year. The scholarship winners were: Jonathan Graffius, a Junior at Saint Francis University majoring in Environmental Engineering and Logan Lichvar, a Sophomore at California University of Pennsylvania majoring in Fisheries and Wildlife Biology. The award recipients will be advising SCRIP of their academic achievements and future career plans and these articles will be published in a future SCRIP newsletter.

# Conemaugh Valley Conservancy's Stream Team Wins Governor's Trophy

by Melissa Reckner



The Conemaugh Valley Conservancy was presented a Pennsylvania Governor's Award for Environmental Excellence on April 28 for its Kiski-Conemaugh Stream Team program. There were fifteen winners from across the state. The Stream Team works primarily within Somerset,

Cambria, Indiana, Westmoreland and Armstrong Counties and coordinates a robust water monitoring program that focuses on Abandoned Mine Drainage (AMD) discharges, AMD treatment systems, and many streams and rivers. It also facilitates water conservation and restoration projects, offers technical assistance to watershed organizations, and provides environmental education, particularly through Trout in the Classroom projects, for which it was just awarded a Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Environmental Education and Stewardship grant.

Acting DEP Secretary John Quigley and Pennsylvania Environmental Council President Davitt Woodwell presented the Governor's Awards at a dinner in Harrisburg. Winners were selected based on their project's demonstration of protecting the environment, partnerships, public service, education and outreach, pollution prevention, economic impact, and innovative technology.

The Kiski-Conemaugh Stream Team is currently monitoring 40 AMD treatment systems, in which over \$15 million have been invested, including the Oven Run, Jenners, Boswell, Rock Tunnel, and Weaver Run systems in Somerset County and the Beaverdale, Coal Pit Run, and Vintondale systems in Cambria County. It also is preparing an update to the 1999 *Kiski-Conemaugh River Basin Conservation Plan* that will highlight the improvements and challenges to local waterways, assisting over a dozen watershed organizations with project development and implementation, grant writing, and data acquisition, engaging over 140 volunteers annually in conservation and education efforts.

Melissa Reckner, Kiski-Conemaugh Stream Team Director, said, "We are honored to receive this recognition and to work with such outstanding volunteers and partnering organizations. Clean water and a healthy environment are in the public's best interest. The Stream Team is committed to restoring both and will continue to work hard to make a positive difference."

For more information and to support the Stream Team or become a member of CVC, visit [www.conemaughvalleyconservancy.org](http://www.conemaughvalleyconservancy.org).



SCRIP Chairman Len Lichvar, fishing with his 5-week old granddaughter Mackenzie Leigh Rosenbaum, on Youth Mentored Day on a section of the Stonycreek River that is trout fishery today because of the coordinating efforts of SCRIP and its many agency and organization partners.

*Photo by Becky Lichvar*

# Pennsylvania Environmental Council and Dominion Recognized Paint Creek Regional Watershed Association

by Melissa Reckner



Since 2000, the Paint Creek Regional Watershed Association has been working to cleanup Paint Creek, its tributaries, and the land around these waterways. It's been a slow process, but positive change is happening. From establishing a volunteer-based organization, to hosting an annual Watershed Awareness Day, to conducting litter cleanups that engage dozens of volunteers, and ultimately securing grant funds to design and construct treatment systems to abate old, Abandoned Mine Discharges that dot the landscape and render many streams orange and lifeless, the Paint Creek Regional Watershed Association is making a difference.

Rich Wargo and his wife Ann hold the award presented to Paint Creek Watershed Association at the Westin Convention Center in Pittsburgh on May 27. Photo by Melissa Reckner

Following the *Paint Creek Restoration Plan* authored by Thomas Clark, the Paint Creek Regional Watershed Association recently constructed three treatment systems along Weaver Run, a small, headwater stream near Windber Stadium, that have improved water quality in it and its receiving stream, Seese Run, to the point that the Windber Sportsmen's Club has added it to its trout stocking program. The organization is currently pursuing a potential remediation project on Babcock Creek in the Gallitzin State Forest.

It is for these efforts that the Pennsylvania Environmental Council and Dominion recognized the Paint Creek Regional Watershed Association and three other organizations at a dinner at the Westin Convention Center Hotel in Pittsburgh on May 27. Winners were selected from a pool of thirty nominees by judges from across the country with entries judged on the basis of their relevance to local environmental priorities, evidence of their impact on the environment, their approach to solving an environmental problem, and the environmental benefit of their work.

Richard Wargo, Paint Creek Regional Watershed Association President, said, "This really is like winning an Oscar. It's tremendous receiving this recognition and spurs us to continue our work. It's not going to happen overnight, but we've made a good start."

The award also came with \$5,000 that the group will use for future projects.

If you would like to become a member of or volunteer with the Paint Creek Regional Watershed Association, contact Richard Wargo at 814-525-0844.

# Another Successful TIC Year!

by Melissa Reckner

May brought to a close the end of another year in which hundreds of local students raised brook trout fingerlings from eggs in a classroom aquarium. In November, eggs were donated by the PA Fish and Boat Commission to the participating schools and the students started their daily observations and care of their trout while teachers incorporated the project into their lessons throughout the school year. Many of the schools participated in a day of outdoor workshops coordinated by the Kiski-Conemaugh Stream Team and presented by its partners to whom we are very grateful. Assistance with these Release Days is always needed and very much appreciated. We need to “hook” the kids early if we want to engage them as future conservation leaders and this is a perfect project for that.

If you would like to help or make a donation, please contact me. A conservative estimate is that over \$14,000 of in-kind (mostly donated time and mileage) was invested this year in the 11 TIC projects with which the Stream Team helps. Hard costs were about \$4,000. Fortunately, a significant grant from the PA Department of Environmental Protection’s Environmental Education program and smaller grants from PA Trout Unlimited help to offset a lot of these costs, but they don’t cover everything. Please consider supporting this worthwhile program! In the meantime, I hope you find some of those trout we released and return them to the stream so they can go into healthy adults.



Larry Hutchinson, SCRIP Director, speaks to Shade-Central City High School students about AMD at the Reitz #1 treatment system. *Photo by Melissa Reckner*



James Eckenrode, Jr., SCRIP Director, speaks to Bishop McCort High School students about Non-point Source Pollution. *Photo by Donna Shull.*



## Saint Francis University Summer Science Youth Camps 2015

**10 Different Science Camps Available for Grades 1-10 with hands-on fun and learning! Camp topics range from: Space Camp, Earth Camp, Science and Engineering for Kids, CSI Loretto and more!**

**Camp attendance ranges from weekly to daily, depending on the camp and is held from 9am-4pm.**

**Find more information and to REGISTER use this link:  
[www.francis.edu/summer-science-youth-camps/](http://www.francis.edu/summer-science-youth-camps/)  
OR call SFU Science Outreach with questions at  
(814) 472-3878**

# Family Fishing Program at the Que on June 7, 2015



Heather Vavrek fishes with her son Dawson while in the background PA Fish and Boat Commission Waterways Conservation Officer Pat Ferko provides assistance to other participants. *Photo by Len Lichvar*



Pat Ferko, Waterways Conservation Officer, (*center*) and other Family Fishing Program participants practicing their fishing skills on the handicapped accessible pier at the Quemahoning Family Recreation Area. *Photo by Melissa Reckner*



(*Left*) Kristi Niekamp, Aquatic Resource Specialist with the PA Fish and Boat Commission, provides group instruction to the participants in the Family Fishing Program. *Photo by Len Lichvar*

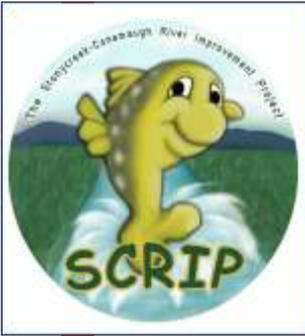


(*Right*) Donna Shull, Family Fishing Program participant and Joe Gorden, SCRIP board member, enjoying a wonderful day for fishing at the Que. *Photo by Melissa Reckner*

Join or renew\* SCRIP today!

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Street Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_  
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 Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Do you wish to volunteer? \_\_\_\_\_  
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 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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**[www.scrippa.org](http://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.

Board of Directors		People of SCRIP	
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