

Stonycreek-Conemaugh River Improvement Project

SCRIP Celebrates 25th Anniversary

By Len Lichvar, SCRIP Chairman

**Volume XXIII
Number 3
Summer 2016**

Save the Date:

Sept. 9-11– Vision 2025 River Wall Charrette
(pages 1 & 2)

Sept. 22– SCRIP Board meeting, Asiago’s, 4 pm

Sept. 22– Green Drinks, Asiago’s Mirage Banquet Room, 5:30pm
(see page 3)

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In 1991, with the backing of the late U. S. Congressman John Murtha, a small group of concerned citizens and public agency representatives met in Richland Township to form what was soon to become known as the Stonycreek-Conemaugh River Improvement Project (SCRIP). The members of each organization signed Letter of Mutual Intent that committed them to work together to begin to reverse the historic abandoned mine drainage (AMD) pollution that had for too long ravaged the waterways in the Cambria-Somerset region.

Now 25 years later, thanks in large part to the coordinating efforts of SCRIP, the Stonycreek River is a destination point for anglers, boaters, kayakers and others as are tributaries such as Quemahoning Creek. The Upper Conemaugh River basin’s water quality has seen a revival in the past quarter century. However, despite the tremendous improvements much more work is yet to be accomplished in the Stonycreek as well as tributaries such as Paint Creek and Shade Creek. Progress in the Little Conemaugh watershed has also occurred but significant AMD discharges still remain so the efforts of SCRIP and its partners is ongoing.

The initial AMD abatement systems, such as the Oven Projects, that have vastly improved water quality, were funded, designed, administered and put on the ground through the expertise of professional public sector agencies such as the

Somerset Conservation District and Cambria County Conservation District, PA Department of Environmental Protection, Southern Alleghenies RC&D and Conservancy, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, federal Office of Surface Mining, U. S. Geological Survey, Environmental Protection Agency, Foundation for PA Watersheds coupled with support from volunteer sportsmen’s groups, non-profits as well as local citizens and state and local elected officials.

(Continued on page 2)

Riverwall Revitalization Charrette —Sept. 9-11

A charrette* to revitalize Johnstown’s riverwalls is scheduled for September 9-11 at the BOTTLE WORKS, 411 3rd Avenue, in Johnstown.



** charrette (n): An intense period of design or planning activity in which all stakeholders for a project attempt to identify conflicts and map solutions. See page 2 for agenda and registration information. Photo: Vision 2025 Face-book page*

25th Anniversary *(continued from page one)*

Along the way organizations such as the Kiski-Conemaugh Stream Team were established and local groups like the Somerset County Conservancy, Shade Creek Watershed Association, Wells Creek Watershed Association and the Paint Creek Regional Watershed Association, created by local citizen volunteers, have contributed to and enhanced the overall improvement efforts.

SCRIP was simply the organization through which much of the work was coordinated, planned and orchestrated. Although SCRIP has evolved over time its board of directors and partners continue to coordinate, oversee and assist to plan water quality improvements in the Stonycreek and Little Conemaugh watersheds.

To recognize the 25 years of achievements of SCRIP and its partners a “Green Drinks” event is being hosted by SCRIP, Lift Johnstown and Vision 2025 on Thursday September 22, 2016 beginning at 5:30 PM at the Mirage Banquet Room at Asiago’s Restaurant located at the top of the Johnstown Incline Plane in Westmont.

Green Drinks is an informal social gathering, open to anyone interested in conservation and economic sustainability. A brief program will take place to recognize the accomplishments of SCRIP. The event is free and open to the public although donations will be encouraged and accepted.



Volunteers from the Somerset Conservation District, SCRIP, Somerset County Sportsmen’s League, Jenner Rod and Gun Club, Mountain Laurel Chapter of Trout Unlimited and Met Life assemble some of the 40 fish habitat structures that were placed in the Quemahoning Reservoir on August 11.

Photo by Len Lichvar

10th Anniversary of Fish Habitat Project

by Len Lichvar

This year marks the 10th Anniversary of the Quemahoning Reservoir Fish Habitat Project. The project was initiated in 2006 by the Somerset Conservation District. The reservoir was private until the public acquisition in 2000. After that the Cambria-Somerset Authority (CSA), that was created to manage the property, began discussions with the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC) to assume fish management for the reservoir.

Until that time no professional fishery management at the reservoir was ever implemented.

The PFBC Bureau of Habitat Management Lake Division noted that one of the limitations to an improved fishery was a complete lack of adequate underwater habitat.

The District, as the local sponsor for the project, worked with the assistance of the CSA and local conservation and sportsmen’s groups to create a cooperative effort that has now constructed and placed many large and small habitat structures in the Quemahoning Reservoir.

Most structures are of the crib type, which consist of wooden block weights and are placed strategically under a predetermined management plan designed by the PFBC.

In addition, shore line trees have been felled creating brushy additional habitat. Also when the reservoir was drawn down large habitat structures known as rock stars, were placed using heavy equipment and larger materials were placed in the reservoir.

(continued on page 3)

River Wall Charrette *(continued from page one)*

Experts from Harvard University, will lead our community in understanding ways to approach floodwall revitalization.

Agenda:

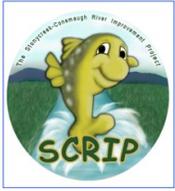
Friday: 9/9 2:30-5:30pm—Presentation by Harvard Loeb on strategies that other communities have tried.

Saturday: 9/10 9am-4pm—Full-day design charrette, facilitated by Loeb.

Sunday: 10am-12pm—Summary presentation

The charrette is free to the public but because space is limited, attendees are asked to register: www.v25.ticketleap.com/floodwalls.

For more information see: Vision 2025 Facebook page.



Join us to celebrate the 25th anniversary
of the creation of

**The Stonycreek-Conemaugh River
Improvement Project
(SCRIP)**

Thursday, September 22, 2016, 5:30 p.m.

**The Mirage Banquet Room
Asiago's Tuscan Italian Restaurant
(top of the incline)
709 Edgehill Drive, Johnstown, PA 15905**

What is Green Drinks?

The Green Drinks movement is an informal network for anyone interested in or working in conservation, economic sustainability, or other related fields.

SPONSORED BY:



Fish Habitats *(continued from page 2)*

The combination of locations for small young fish to escape predators and places for spawning all created by the habitat, combined with the abandoned mine drainage (AMD) abatement projects upstream from the reservoir, have all improved the fishing opportunities at the Quemahoning. Both size and numbers of gamefish such as large and smallmouth bass, walleye, pike, catfish and panfish have increased.

The habitat project will continue on into the future since there are still plenty of habitat placement opportunities available throughout the reservoir.

Materials for the project are provided through the PFBC along with local companies such as Shaffer Block and Concrete of Somerset. The other essential ingredient is the many local volunteers who spend the hours constructing the structures over the years.

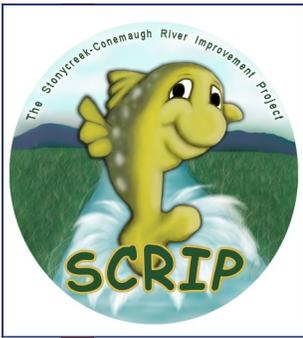
This project is yet another example of the public and private sectors cooperating for the benefit of the natural resources, recreation and economic vitality of the region.

Reprinted from *Somerset Daily American*

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**



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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People of SCRIP

New and Renewing Members

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
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