



STONYCREEK-CONEMAUGH RIVER IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

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SAVE THE DATE

September 18- SCRIP board meeting, Chuck and Chuckie's 4318 Somerset Pike, Hollsopple, at 3:30pm. Potluck to follow. Facility has a full kitchen, restrooms and electricity.

October 14-16- PA Abandoned Mine Reclamation conference, Toftrees Resort in State College. Register and find details:

<https://2025.treatminewater.com/>

30 PLUS YEAR HISTORY OF OVEN RUN AMD ABATEMENT PROJECTS PROGRAM

By Len Lichvar

On July 16, 2025, Bottomlands Conservancy's Vice-Chairman Lenny Lichvar presented a program on the 30 plus year history of the Oven Run AMD abatement projects to attendees at the Pennsylvania Association of Conservation Districts (PACD) State Conference at Seven Springs Mountain Resort. The program focused on public sector agency professional staff as well as volunteers, coupled with public funding, that all combined to reduce historic water quality impairment and generate new recreational opportunities that have created positive economic impacts in the Cambria-Somerset region.

In the afternoon of that day conference attendees travelled to and visited both the Oaks Trail and Mountain View, also known as Site B, AMD treatment systems owned by Bottomlands Conservancy. Somerset Conservation District Watershed Specialist Greg Shustrick, along with PACD Technical Assistance

Group Professional Engineer Danielle Kalp and Conservation Technician Phil Wilson as well as Lenny Lichvar, led the tour that explained how the systems function and discussed how the significant water quality improvements have impacted the Stonycreek River watershed.



Pennsylvania Association of Conservation Districts (PACD) Technical Assistance Group Conservation Technician Phil Wilson, right, explains the operation of the Oven Run Oaks Trail AMD Treatment System in Somerset County during a tour of the site of attendees from the PACD State Annual Conference held at Seven Springs Mountain Resort in July.

Photo by Len Lichvar



Author Josh Penrod, left, and Len Lichvar at the recent book signing and discussion on Penrod's recently published book, *Johnstown Waters*, at Classic Elements in Johnstown.

NEW BOOK, *JOHNSTOWN WATERS*, DETAILS STEEL INDUSTRY AND RELATED TOPICS IN JOHNSTOWN AREA

By Len Lichvar

The new book, *Johnstown Waters*, details the steel industry and related topics in the Johnstown area. However, the primary focus of the book is on the essential water impoundments, such as the Quemahoning Reservoir and others, and how they came to be, how they have impacted the region and how they have now become public rather than private assets. Portions of some of Len Lichvar's many articles on these subjects are included in the book, as well as excerpts from other local writers and key people involved in the evolving and unique history of these water impoundments.

Although there are some missing specific details as they relate to SCRIP, Southern Alleghenies Conservancy and the Conservation District's essential involvement in the public acquisition of the Manufacturers Water Company properties, the book does provide a narrative that anyone that cares about or wants to learn more about the past, present and future economic and recreational opportunities driven by our water resources in the area should read. The book, published by the History Press, is available at Classic Elements in Johnstown and on Amazon.

Loyalhanna Watershed Association (LWA) Weighs in on Proposed 37-Acre Solar Power Farm in Ligonier

The Ligonier Township Planning Commission recommended approval for a Sun Vest Solar LLC's proposed 37-acre solar power farm as a conditional use on farmland at 111 Springer Road in Ligonier on a 3-1 vote. The board will hold its regular meeting on September 23 during which they could vote on approving the conditional use on land zoned for agriculture use. The company still would have to win approval of a detailed site plan. The Loyalhanna Watershed Association stated in a submitted letter from Executive Director Susan Huba that it is concerned about possible impact of erosion and watershed contamination. Good news for solar farm advocates: a July, 2024 [study by Penn State researchers](#) suggests that excess runoff or increased erosion can be mitigated if solar farms are properly built.

SCRIP DIRECTOR DESCRIBES IMPORTANCE OF FEDERAL FUNDING IN CHENEY RUN AND OTHER PROJECTS

Will adequate funding be available for future needs?



The Tribune-Democrat had a series of stories titled Federal Fallout addressing the potential local impact of funding cuts.

In a story dated June 27, 2025, John Dryzal, SCRIP director and Cambria County Conservation District manager, was interviewed by reporter Joshua Byers. *Photo by John Dryzal*

Dryzal described the Cheney Run project, a stream bank stabilization project in Southmont that finished in May. Several feet of the bank had eroded over time and a tropical storm that occurred in 2024. This endangered Shady Lane and a water line on that side of the road as well as the electrical poles. The bank was rebuilt using large stacked stones, new sod and the addition of a chain-link fence for safety. The \$224,000 Cheney Run project was 75% funded through the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) program and 25% of funding from the PA Department of Environmental Protection. Southmont requested the stream bank rehabilitation work and the county conservation district sponsored and coordinated the work. "Having that funding available was extremely important for Southmont Borough," Dryzal said. "because they were able to get that funding to stabilize that stream, to protect their road and to protect their water line." The Southmont Borough Manager, Amanda Layton, agreed with Dryzal that the funding opportunity was important to having the work completed.

The proposed budget from the White House that the U.S. House passed in May recommended combining the NRCS program with other federal agencies and eliminating \$754 million in funding for private lands conservation operations which included elimination of the NRCS technical assistance program. NRCS helps decision-makers, conservation districts, local and state governments and other agencies with voluntarily maintaining, conserving and improving natural resources.

According to the fiscal document, the assistance program is being considered for elimination because the offering, which Cambria County has utilized in the past but not this time, "has historically received over a billion dollars in mandatory funding, in addition to funding at the state and local levels.

Additionally, the proposed budget eliminates \$16 million dedicated to renovation of locally owned dams in the NRCS Watershed Programs.

The Environmental Council of the States described the budget cuts to conservation efforts as potentially devastating to “economic development, critical infrastructure, and environmental protections across the nation.”

“If Congress were to adopt the White House recommendation for discretionary spending, states may be required to terminate primacy, delegation, or authorization agreements and return full program implementation to (the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency),” the ECOS statement said. “This would overwhelm EPA and have detrimental impacts to economic development.”

According to the council, 90% of the nation’s federal environmental programs depend on congressional support through partnerships and grants with the EPA.

Slashes to conservation efforts may “incapacitate state environmental programs while creating significant uncertainty for state legislatures and businesses across the United States,” the ECOS statement said.

Water infrastructure’

“Further, the proposal to dramatically shrink the Clean Water and Drinking Water State Revolving Funds will also hurt the heretofore unified effort to address the nation’s water infrastructure needs, which is necessary not only to protect human health and the environment, but also to grow the economy,” the statement said.

According to the Environmental Protection Network, the budget also proposes the EPA budget be cut by 55% or \$5 billion annually.

That’s a concern,” Dryzal said.

The district receives a lot of funding through state programs from the EPA budget. Those dollars are used for work with the agriculture community for conservation work, stream bank projects, and some abandoned mine reclamation undertakings.

“It’s just really hard to say how it’s going to impact us,” Dryzal said.

Other potential impacts include cuts to the Chesapeake Bay Program that could eliminate numerous state grant programs.

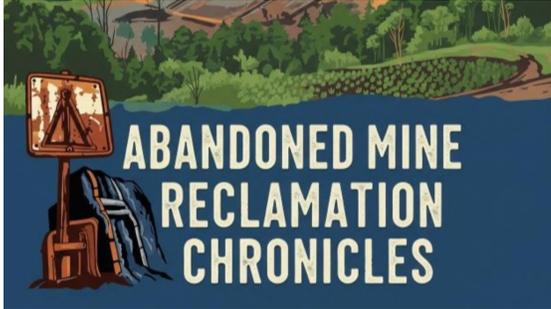
UPDATE from John Dryzal--September 8, 2025

The One Big Beautiful Bill Act signed into law on July 4 rescinded Inflation Reduction funds for things such as greenhouse gas reduction and environmental justice and eliminated some tax credits for solar, wind and electric vehicles. It redirected U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) conservation funds for climate smart initiatives into traditional USDA conservation programs.

The concern is what transpires with the FY26 budget and where cuts may be made or how some funds may be redirected. For instance, the White House proposed zero dollars for the [319 program](#). The house and senate proposals restore the funding. Another concern is the proposed budget "repurposes"

Continued on page 5

\$515M of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) funds initially intended for Abandoned Mine Land (AML). This would mean a loss of these federal dollars for Abandoned Mine Land- Abandoned Mine Drainage (AML-AMD).



Eastern Pennsylvania Coalition for Abandoned Mine Reclamation (EPCAMR) and Western Pennsylvania Coalition for Abandoned Mine Reclamation (WPCAMR) Podcast

https://www.youtube.com/live/WvZutcJn_nA

The Abandoned Mine Reclamation Chronicles is a one-of-a-kind podcast that converses with passionate community minded partners, highlights outstanding reclamation and community cleanup, showcases stream improvement successes, and shares emerging ideas and technologies to reclaim and remediate our legacy abandoned mines.

[This month, we are interviewing Jim Panaro of Robindale Energy.](#)

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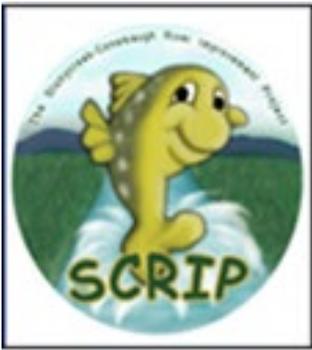
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Make your check payable to **SCRIP**, or for a tax-deductible contribution, make the check to **Southern Alleghenies Conservancy/ SCRIP**. * If you are not sure of your membership status contact SCRIP's secretary at info@scripPA.org. Send donations to: **SCRIP, P.O. Box 164, Windber, PA 15963**



SCRIP
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WWW.SCRIPPA.ORG

Stonycreek-Conemaugh River Improvement Project (SCRIP), a coalition of grass-roots groups and local resource agencies, is working to restore and promote the Upper Conemaugh watershed.

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