

Volume XXXI  
Number 1  
Winter 2024

### Save the Date Litter Cleanups:

**March 24-** Bens Creek near Jim & Jimmies at 10 am.  
Contact: *Greg Shustrick*  
*greg-scd@npia.net*

**March 30-** L. Paint Creek & Berwick Road at 8:30 am.  
Contact: *Melissa Reckner*  
*mreckner@brandywine.org*

**April 13-** Yellow Creek (Bedford Co.) at 9 am.  
Contact: *Dave Wright*  
*orvinator3@gmail.com*

**May 4-** Clear Shade Meet at the “Iron Bridge” at 9 am.  
Contact: *Dave Wright*  
*orvinator3@gmail.com*  
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# Stonycreek-Conemaugh River Improvement Project

## Projects Receive Growing Greener Funding

by Jackie Ritko



The Cambria County Conservation District received \$226,979.00 in PA DEP Growing Greener Funding to implement several Watershed Sediment Reduction Projects in the Ohio Watershed in Cambria County. Three stream segments will be addressed including the North Branch of Blacklick, South Branch of Blacklick, and Laurel Run (*pictures by the author*) which is a tributary to the South Fork Branch of the Little Conemaugh.

Projects will address eroding stream banks through utilizing bio-engineering methods such as live stakes, riparian plantings, rock framed deflectors and fish habitat structures. These methods will reduce sediment loading, a pollutant into our local waterways.



## Dawes Recognized For Tenure With Watershed Group

by Len Lichvar



*Left to right, Pennsylvania Council of Trout Unlimited (PATU) Program Manager Rachel Kester, PATU President Lenny Lichvar, Former Loyalhanna Watershed Executive Director Lysle Sherwin, recently retired Executive Director of the Foundation for Pennsylvania Watersheds R. John Dawes, Director of the Governor's Advisory Council for Hunting, Fishing and Conservation Derek Eberly, current Executive Director of the Foundation for Pennsylvania Watersheds Deb Nardone.*

*Photo Courtesy of Len Lichvar*

At the Keystone Coldwater Conference in State College, the Pennsylvania Council of Trout Unlimited, along with the other Conference sponsors, recognized R. John Dawes for his decades long tenure and service to natural resources via the Foundation for Pennsylvania Watersheds. The Foundation, under his leadership, empowered countless organizations to achieve their conservation project goals. John was also the driving force behind the creation of the Keystone Coldwater Conference 24 years ago and the (*continued on page 2*)

## Dawes Award (cont.)

Foundation has been a primary sponsor of the event ever since. Locally, it was the Foundation that directed the funding to the Somerset Conservation District that enabled the District to administer, redesign, and reconstruct the four Oven Run AMD treatment systems on the Stonycreek River. Without this empowerment by the foundation, the Stonycreek River would have been degraded significantly. Instead, more water is being treated than ever before, and 1.3 billion gallons of clean water now enters the river each year from just these four systems.

### Save the Date (cont.)

**May 15**— SCRIP board meeting at Windber Hotel, 3 pm

## Music to Our Ears

by Melissa Reckner



**Lobby of the Pasquerilla Center at the Feb. 10 concert.** *Photo by Sue Konvolinka*

SCRIP directors, Karlice Makuchan and Malcolm Crittenden, prepared and staffed a table on behalf of SCRIP at the Johnstown Symphony Orchestra's "Growing Our Future" event on February 10 at its "Mountaintop Masterpieces" concert at which eight, local conservation organizations were present to share information about their groups and regional resources. SCRIP directors Jackie Ritko and Melissa Reckner were also present representing the Cambria County Conservation District and Brandywine Conservancy, respectively. It was a good opportunity to introduce concert goers to non-profit entities working in the Laurel Highlands.

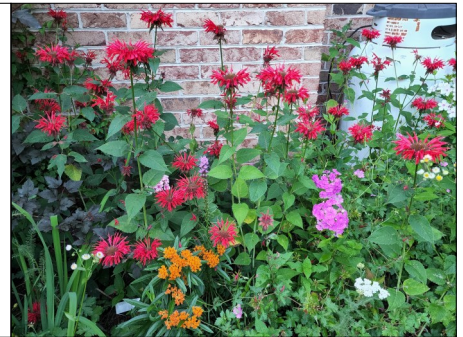
## Native Plant Sale

by Melissa Reckner

Penguin Court, a private preserve of the Brandywine Conservancy that is located in Laughlintown, will be hosting an online native plant sale again this spring. While the sale website is not yet live, it should be by the end of March. Visit [Brandywine Conservancy's Event](#) page for the link later this month and shop dozens of native plant species that you can add to your landscape. Plant pickups will be scheduled for May 3 & 4 at Penguin Court – in time for Mother's Day! Native plants are a great way to bring birds, butterflies, moths, and more wildlife to your yard, while adding great color and texture to your place!

**A portion of the lovely pollinator garden at the home of the author.**

*Photo by Melissa Reckner*



**SCRIP board member, Larry Hutchinson, leads two girls in an activity to color iron oxide chalk. One of the girls, (pictured in the foreground in purple), is Zoe Eckenrode, daughter of board member Jim Eckenrode, and one of many children to participate.**

*Photo by Melissa Reckner*

## NatureWorks 2024

SCRIP, along with 24 other state agencies, environmental groups and outdoor organizations, took part in making this year's expo another huge success by providing activities and information to families who were looking to ease into spring and see what the

*(continued on page 3)*

## Tribute to Women

by Melissa Reckner

I am pleased to share that SC RIP Board Member, Karlice Makuchan, has been selected to receive the YWCA's S.T.E.M. Award this year as part of the Y's Tribute to Women.



*Photo courtesy of YWCA*

After earning her Master's of Education from I.U.P., Karlice taught math and science at Conemaugh Township Elementary School for 30 years and fostered a love of science in thousands of children, including myself! She brought science to life and showcased that life through the various "critters" she had in her classroom, while demonstrating that girls have an equal and justifiable place in S.T.E.M fields. The positive impact and ripples a teacher create can never truly be measured, and I bet her acknowledgement through this award brings other students forward to share their memories.

Karlice has over 40 years of experience in landscaping with native plants at her home in Johnstown, making her an early pioneer in "walking the talk." Native plants are critical for healthy, balanced ecosystems, and she shares her knowledge with the community, in part, through her involvement with the Garden Club of Johnstown, of which she has been a member since 2008. At one time, she served as co-president.

Continually embracing S.T.E.M., she chairs the Garden Club's Conservation Committee and incorporates these same principles in the 19 gardens managed by the club. Karlice leads spring garden programs at Sandvale Memorial Gardens to promote conservation-friendly practices in home gardens. She manages the club's website, which she created, and, during the worst of Covid, she organized the club's Zoom meetings. Most of the Garden Club's members are women, and its monthly gatherings allow these ladies to support each other in life beyond the garden through friendships and camaraderie.

Further embracing technology, Karlice is also the website creator and manager at her church and hosts its weekly Zooms to provide access to those who physically can't attend. She has overseen the development of a native garden at her church, as well. Accepting additional leadership roles, she currently serves as her church's president and was formerly its secretary.

For 16 years, she has served on the Board of Directors of the Stonycreek Conemaugh River Improvement Project and publishes the group's quarterly newsletter. Additionally, she volunteers her time and assists with environmental education Initiatives, such as Trout in the Classroom and NatureWorks, programs that further involve youth in S.T.E.M. activities.

For over six years, she has been involved with the NAACP, where she serves on the Board of Directors and on special committees. Currently, she is chairing Black History Committee.

Karlice's hobbies include aerobic swimming at the YWCA, reading non-fiction, participating in a book club for teachers, attending wine auctions, international travel, and ballroom dancing with her husband.

### NatureWorks (Cont.)

area has to offer in the natural world.

The Bottle Works and Brandywine Conservancy, sponsors of the event through their organizers, Sue Konvolinka and Melissa Reckner, have hit on a formula that attracts people, both contributors and attendees. Each year is better than the last! They are to be commended for their hard work.



Other volunteers at the SC RIP table were Linda Yuhnke, board member Karlice Makuchan, and Adelaide, daughter of board member Adam Cotchen, (*pictured left*). Thanks everyone for your help.

# Time is Now for Consequential Mine Reclamation and Treatment in Pennsylvania

by Tom Clark

Past estimates have placed the burden of reclaiming Pennsylvania's (PA) mine scarred lands and treating mine impacted water at around \$15 billion. While significant improvements have been made, particularly with the funding entering the Commonwealth each year from the fees associated with the 1977 Federal Surface Mine Control and Reclamation Act (SMCRA) and grant awards issued from the 1999 Commonwealth Growing Greener Act, large consequential legacy mining pollution features could not be tackled due to the amount of cost versus the amount of the available funding.

This cost / available funding challenge, at least for the next 15-years, has been nullified due to new Federal funding entering the Commonwealth from the Biden Administration's Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) focused on tackling abandoned mine land (AML) and abandoned mine drainage (AMD) problems. Through this legislation, PA should receive about \$244.9 million per year over the next 15-years (\$3.7 billion total) with the singular focus of correcting legacy mining land and water pollution problems. Additionally, with the recent passage of the STREAMS Act and its allowance for setting aside a percentage of the IIJA funding each year, that 15-years could turn into decades more of significant annual investments into AML reclamation and AMD treatment projects within PA.

To put this amount in perspective, the largest annual SMCRA award ever received by the PA Department of Environmental Protection Bureau of Abandoned Mine Reclamation (BAMR), the Commonwealth agency tasked with completing AML reclamation and AMD treatment projects, was slightly over \$100 million. Starting in 2022, when you add the approximately \$244.9 million from IIJA, the annual award from SMCRA, which is still received, and additional awards from the Office of Surface Mining's Abandoned Mine Land Economic Revitalization (AMLER) Program, BAMR should receive over \$300 million annually for AML / AMD projects for the foreseeable future.

This amount, around three times greater than the highest previous total ever received annually from SMCRA, will allow BAMR and others to finally contemplate very large and significantly consequential AML / AMD pollution reduction projects that were previously too expensive to consider. For example:

In September 2023, the Foundation for Pennsylvania Watersheds (FPW) received an IIJA AMD / AML Grant Award for the North Portage (Little Conemaugh River) AMD Active Treatment Plant (ATP) Project which will design and implement Phase I of the Little Conemaugh AMD Treatment Facility recommended in the "Super 7" Report and the Little Conemaugh River Hydrologic Unit Plan which both prioritize the AMD treatment projects needed for the restoration of the Little Conemaugh River in Cambria County near Johnstown. The Sonman and Hughes Mine Discharges, two of the "Super 7", will be addressed in this Phase I project. (*See photo below.*)



**Hughes Borehole impacting the Little Conemaugh River.**

*Photo by Jonathan Henke*

In the same September 2023 grant announcement, the Shade Creek Watershed Association (SCWA) in Somerset County received an IIJA AMD/AML Grant Award for the Shade Creek—Central City Development Project which will collect the needed data to decide how best to treat the “Big 4” AMD discharges that impact the Dark Shade Creek near the town of Cairnbrook and the Borough of Central City. (*See photo on page 5.*) Upon completion of this data collection phase, SCWA will then have the information needed to move into the  
*(continued on page 5)*

**Mine Work** (continued from page 4)

design phase of an ATP that would restore about 15 miles within the Shade Creek Watershed and four additional miles of the Stonycreek River as it travels toward Johnstown.

Without IJA funding for these large-scope AMD/AML projects, they would have a very difficult time even being considered. Consequently, we are at a precipice of monumental positive change to our lands and rivers over the next few decades. In my opinion, while some tributaries will absolutely remain impaired because even with this amount, we do not have enough to restore every stream, a reasonable goal through the lifetime of this funding should be the restoration of every large AMD-impaired mainstem stream in the Commonwealth. We finally have the funding to shine the restoration light on ALL the [Little Conemaugh/Shade Creeks] of Pennsylvania and I couldn't be more excited to be a part of that change and to catch that "first fish" in those formerly dead waterways.



**Reitz #4 Discharge impacting Shade Creek**  
*Photo by Tom Clark*

**This article was originally published in the Winter 2023 edition of the *Keystone Tap*. It has been edited for space.**

**Join or renew\* SCRIP today!**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_

State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Do you wish to volunteer? \_\_\_\_\_

**To renew or become a Member, please complete Parts 1 and 2 below.**

**Part 1. Check your desired membership level.**

_____ Student (\$6)	_____ Individual (\$15)	_____ Family (\$20)
_____ Club/Small Business (\$50)	_____ Patron (\$50)	_____ Sustaining (\$100)
_____ Sponsor (\$500)	_____ Lifetime (\$1000)	

**Part 2. Select Option A OR Option B:**

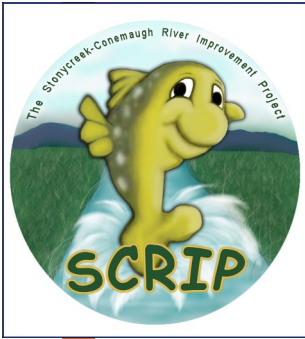
\_\_\_\_\_ **A. I am fine receiving an electronic version of the newsletter for the cost listed above for my membership level. My email address is:** \_\_\_\_\_

*(Please mail your check in this amount to the address below.)*

\_\_\_\_\_ **B. I would like to receive a mailed copy of the newsletter. Add \$5 to membership cost listed above.**

*(Please mail the membership fee plus \$5 mailing fee to the address below.)*      Total Cost \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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](mailto:info@scripPA.org).* Send donations to: **SCRIP, P.O. Box 164, Windber, PA 15963**



**SCRIP**  
**P.O. Box 164**  
**Windber, PA**  
**15963**

**Place  
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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**

- |                                      |                    |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------|
| Adam Cotchen<br><i>Chairman</i>      | Malcolm Crittenden |
| Len Lichvar,<br><i>Vice-Chairman</i> | John Dryzal        |
| Melissa Reckner,<br><i>Secretary</i> | Joe Gorden         |
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|                                      | Karlice Makuchan   |
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|                                      | Jackie Ritko       |
|                                      | Jeff Sarver        |

**People of SCRIP**

**New and Renewing Members**

- |                             |                                 |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Patrick & Etta Albright     | John & Beth Pile                |
| Alexander Charlton          | Robb & Pam Piper                |
| Malcolm Crittenden          | Gerald & Ruth Pozun             |
| David Fink                  | Melissa Reckner                 |
| Joe & Esther Gorden         | Somerset Conservation District  |
| Larry Hutchinson            | Somerset Co. Sportsmen's League |
| Jenner Township Supervisors | Eva Strang                      |
| Joseph & Arlene Johns       | Dave Thomas – NEW               |
| Sue Konvolinka              | Bob Wardrop                     |
| Dave & Marsha Leiford       | Dave Wright                     |
| Rob & Cindy McCombie        |                                 |