

**Volume XXIV
Number 4
Fall 2017**

Save the Date:

January 11– SCRIP Board Meeting, tentatively set for Laurel-Wood Care Center, 10 am-noon. *See note on page 3.*

January 11– Green Drinks, time and place TBD.

January 13– CVC Member Outing – Winter Hike or Ski - Laurel Mountain State Park Warming Hut, 10am. See details at: cvconserv@gmail.com.

March 3– NatureWorks at BottleWorks. *See page 2.*

March 30– SCRIP Scholarship application deadline. *See page 5.*

In This Issue:

Water Improvements By SCD <i>cont.</i>	2
NatureWorks	2
Lichvar Award Nomination	3
SCRIP Meeting	3
Outdoor Corps	3
Reitz # 1 Rehab	4
SCRIP Scholarship	5
People of SCRIP	6

Stonycreek-Conemaugh River Improvement Project

Somerset Conservation District's Water Quality Improvements in 2017

by Len Lichvar

The Somerset Conservation District had a very aggressive water quality improvement season in 2017. Foremost is the rehabilitation of four of the Oven Run AMD passive treatment sites on the Stonycreek River. The formation, design, funding and administration of these systems in the 1990's was coordinated by the SCRIP Board of Directors and put on the ground through the efforts of the Somerset Conservation District, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, Southern Alleghenies RC&D and Conservancy, Somerset County Conservancy, PA Department of Environmental Protection and the federal Office of Surface Mining. These successful efforts are what have enabled the Stonycreek River to make its historic return as an economic asset and recreational destination point.

The Somerset Conservation District, in the 1990's, was legally charged with the maintenance of these systems. This daunting task has been difficult to accomplish with the District's limited staff and even more limited funding.



The District was able to secure a PA DEP Growing Greener grant funded through the federal AML funds to rehabilitate four of the systems since they are in various forms of failure. The rehabilitation of Site E, located near Wilbur, is now underway with Earthshapers of Ebensburg as the contractor. The remaining three sites are in the final design stage by the PA Association of Conservation District's Technical Assistance Group, (PA TAG) which is also housed and overseen at the Somerset Conservation District office. All three additional site rehabs will be completed by the end of 2018.

Above and beyond that monumental task the District completed stream-bank stabilization and fish enhancement projects at Orenda Park in Boswell and at Plank Road, both on Quemahoning Creek. In addition the District, in cooperation with the Mountain Laurel Chapter of Trout Unlimited (MLTU), completed a stream improvement project on the South Fork of Bens Creek and the District, through Pennsylvania Department of Transportation mitigation funding completed another extensive stream improvement project on the South Fork just downstream of Jim and Jimmies Restaurant along State Route 985.

Continued on page 2

A water control structure being installed at Oven Run Site E.

Photo by Len Lichvar

Continued from page one

The District also devised and initiated the Soap Hollow Run project at Greenhouse Park by coordinating several knotweed cuttings with assistance from MLTU, Natural Biodiversity and local volunteers in the spring. The District also secured a National Trout Unlimited Embrace-A Stream grant on behalf of MLTU for future stream improvement set for next year on this wild trout water.

The District also sponsored and implemented the North Fork of Bens Creek Riparian Buffer Project funded by a Coldwater Heritage grant the District received to enhance and protect this wild trout stream that flows through the North Fork Country Club.

The District continued to actively pursue and secure a design and funding for a Phase II project on Lamberts Run to more fully minimize the iron loading entering the Stonycreek River.

Significant District staff time was also used to assist the Shade Creek Watershed Association that has led to the start up of the construction of the Coal Run AMD Abatement Project near the village of Gahagen.

The District also contracted Saint Francis University to conduct mass balance water surveys in the Quemahoning Creek and Lamberts Run watershed to fill data gaps in the current impacts of mine water treatment in both watersheds.

The rehabilitation of the Jenners AMD Passive Treatment System on Quemahoning Creek was also empowered by the District staff as well as the PA TAG through their coordination and oversight assistance with the PA DEP and Rosebud Mining in the design of that upcoming rehab project.

These efforts have all been facilitated, managed and coordinated by District Watershed Specialist Greg Shustrick and supported and assisted by other District staff.



Somerset Conservation District Watershed Specialist, Greg Shustrick, directs stream improvement construction on the South Fork of Bens Creek.
Photo by Len Liebvar

NatureWorks Scheduled for March 3 at BottleWorks

by Melissa Reckner

BOTTLE WORKS

Arts on 3rd Avenue

Interactive exhibits engaged youth in topics from AMD to wetlands. SCRIP and many of its partners will be present. SCRIP is also a sponsor of this event.

Ryan Keene, a nationally known Pittsburgh multimedia artist, will be NatureWorks' featured painter. Ryan uses his fly fishing talent to create unique artwork, illustrations, and paintings. His show opens on Friday, March 2 at 6 PM. All are invited to attend NatureWorks and Ryan's opening reception.

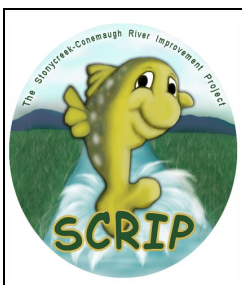
Len Lichvar Nominated for Award by Fly Fisherman Magazine



The Quemahoning tail water fishery project is one of many resource conservation projects Len Lichvar has been directly involved in over the years.

Photo by Bob Wardrop

SCRIP Chairman Len Lichvar has been nominated as one of America's Top Ten Conservationists by Fly Fisherman Magazine. The magazine annually names a National Conservationist of the Year and will do so once again on January 1, 2018.



January 11 SCRIP Board Meeting

The January 11, 2018 SCRIP Board Meeting is tentatively set for 10 AM - Noon at Laurelwood Care Center's Amber Lounge on

100 Woodmont Road, Johnstown (Westmont).

As many of you know, this is the care center at which Bob Ritchey is staying. Meeting attendees will have to enter through the main entrance and sign in.

If Bob is in the hospital (as he is now unfortunately), an alternate meeting location will be secured. Please check your email for changes or confirm the location before you attend.

Len is one of the ten candidates for that recognition that includes a \$5,000.00 award to go to a conservation organization of the winner's choice as well as a specially inscribed fly rod.

Len is the District Manager of the Somerset Conservation District and a professional freelance outdoor writer as well as a co-author of the book "Keystone Fly Fishing." He also is actively involved in many volunteer conservation organizations, is a state appointed official serving as the District 4 Commissioner for the PA Fish and Boat Commission and is a founding board member and long time chairman of SCRIP. He has been involved with and implemented countless natural resource conservation projects over the last 30 years.

Visit flyfisherman.com for additional information on the award and a brief bio of Len as well as the other award nominees from around the country.

Pennsylvania Outdoor Corps Accepting Applications



The Pennsylvania Outdoor Corps is offering paid work experience, job training and educational opportunities to young people who complete recreation and conservation projects on Pennsylvania's public lands.

Besides hands-on job skills, the program provides learning opportunities in resource management, environmental issues and topics, and recreation skills.

There is a 10 month program for 18-25 year old young adults and a six week summer program for youth between the ages of 15-18. Corps members will work 37.5 hours a week and receive \$10.25 an hour and health insurance.

For more information, and to apply, see: <https://www.thesca.org/serve/program/pennsylvania-outdoor-corps>

Rehabilitation of the Reitz #1 Treatment System

by Andrew Ferko IV, Ryan Siwy, Grace Bailey
Saint Francis University Environmental Engineering sophomores

In the fall of 2017, Larry Hutchinson of the Shade Creek Watershed Association contacted Stream Restoration Inc. (SRI) for technical assistance at the Reitz #1 passive treatment system outside Central City, PA. SRI subcontracted Saint Francis University (SFU) to investigate and address the issue. Drs. Julie LaBar and William Strosnider, of the Center for Watershed Research & Service at SFU, took the Environmental Engineering Field Measurements class to investigate the cause of the odor and get a chance to work in the field on a real project.

On August 31, 2017, the group from SFU traveled to the site in order to evaluate the situation. On this trip, several issues were identified. The first being the high level of water in the bioreactor causing the “egg smell” to be amplified. Additionally, this caused the water to flow out the emergency outflow, towards the malfunctioning weir, instead of through the system. The stop logs that control this flow were also in need of cleaning to remove built-up iron deposits. Furthermore, the rock baffles that separated the settling ponds were uneven, allowing the water to bypass much of the limestone used to create an elevation drop. The measurements taken during the first trip proved the system to be in decent working condition.

On September 7, the group finalized the plan for the system and gathered a list of materials. The initial objectives were to even out the limestone aeration structures that separate the ponds, build a compost island in the bioreactor (transplant from upstream cells), clean the stop logs in the Agri-Drains, rake the substrate in the bioreactor, increase flow through the bioreactor, and clean the area around the weir (bioreactor effluent).

The team returned on September 14th and 28th, and October 12th and 26th to finish the project. All of the goals were accomplished, as well as another project that arose throughout the course of construction. When the team returned for the third visit, the vertical flow pond was found to be drained. The team used this opportunity to redistribute the substrate at the bottom of the pond to enhance the chemistry and hydrology of the system. During the course of the weeks at the site, the limestone aeration structures were refurbished, an island was built in the bioreactor with transplanted vegetation, the substrate in the bioreactor was agitated, flow through the bioreactor was maximized, the smell was abated, and the Agri-Drain stop logs were cleaned. In addition, SFU Environmental Engineering student Andrew Ferko IV, a native of Central City, has been made available for the continued maintenance of the Reitz #1 system.



Ryan Siwy and Andrew Ferko agitating substrate in the bioreactor.

Photo by Ashley Rovder



Engineering students CJ West, Ryan Fife, and Grace Bailey reconstructing a baffle between ponds.

Photo by Ashley Rovder

SCRIP \$500 Scholarship

The Stonycreek Conemaugh River Improvement Project will be awarding a \$500 Scholarship to a worthy student for the current academic year. Deadline to submit is March 30, 2018.

Eligibility—Applicant must:

Either be a dues-paying SCRIP member or the child of a SCRIP member

Reside in one of the counties that includes the Kiski-Conemaugh Basin (Armstrong, Cambria, Indiana, Somerset, or Westmoreland). Residency means the student lives in or is a resident at a school in one of these counties.

Be in an accredited environmental field of study at a Pennsylvania college or university.

How to Apply:

The application should contain these three parts:

Part I- A cover sheet with the following information: name, mailing address, email address, phone number, college or university attending, year and course of study

Part II- A typed statement, double-spaced, 12 pt font size, no longer than two pages explaining applicant's professional goals, how the course of study will meet those goals and any involvement to date in the field.

Part III- A copy of applicant's latest transcript

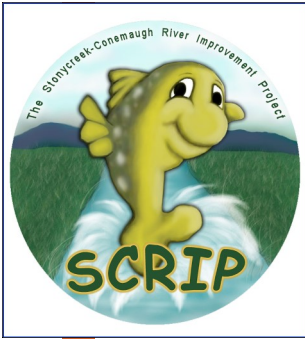
Applications must be received by March 30, 2018. Please send to: SCRIP, Scholarship 2018, P.O. Box 164, Windber, PA 15963. Award notification will be no later than April 30, 2018. Award check will be sent directly to the Financial Aid Office at the college or university. Award recipient will be required to inform SCRIP of his or her personal academic achievements, graduation and future career plans in article form for publication in the SCRIP newsletter. This information will be used to assist with promotion of any future SCRIP scholarship awards.

Any questions about eligibility or other parts of the application should be addressed to SCRIP at: info@ScripPA.org.

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**



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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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