

Volume XXVIX  
Number 2  
Spring 2022

### Save the Date:

**June 16–** Family Fishing Event, Que Family Recreation Area, 6:30-9pm. **Preregistration by June 13 is required. See page 3 for details.**

**June 20-24–** Four day fishing camp for children in Hooversville. Register at the Tackle Box: <https://tystacklebox.com>

**July 21–** SCRIP board meeting, at The Launch, 2856 Seanor Road, Hollsopple, very near boat launch on the Stonycreek in Foustwell, at 3 pm.

**August 5–**PA Pollinator Photo Challenge. **See page 4 for details.**

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## Stonycreek-Conemaugh River Improvement Project

### Len Lichvar, SCRIP Vice-Chairman, Wins Outdoor Writers Award



The Pennsylvania Outdoor Writers Association presented its annual Excellence in Craft Awards at a spring conference banquet held Saturday, May 21 at Mansfield University. Len Lichvar, SCRIP Vice Chairman, won the Trout and Coldwater Resource Award, sponsored by the Pennsylvania Council of Trout Unlimited for his article, “What’s the difference between wild and stocked trout?” published in the *Daily American* on October 27, 2021.

Lichvar stated, “The impetus for the article is that far too many trout anglers believe the only way there are trout in the stream is if they come out of a bucket. Wild stream-bred trout have always been in existence and have survived and expanded their range and exist in far more numbers and waters than anglers believe here locally and elsewhere because of significant water quality improvements.” In discussing his work, he stressed the push by the conservation community to restore native species and wild native brook trout where possible.

In his present position and as past Chairman of SCRIP, Lichvar led the fight to improve the water quality in our area and as a frequent contributor to this newsletter and other publications, worked to educate citizens about these improvements. Explaining the connection between fishing and water quality, he said, “Wild trout are indicators of good water quality which is essential for far more than fishing so the more we do to improve our water quality, the better it is for the wild trout and people as well.”

Our most recent event to celebrate SCRIP’s 30th Anniversary, a public tour of Oven Run AMD Passive Treatment System Site D (Oaks Trail) followed by an evening social gathering at the Crows Nest restaurant, showcased the tremendous progress in water quality improvement in the upper Conemaugh River watershed since SCRIP’s formation in 1991, and promoted the need to sustain this progress. The Oven Run Trust Fund was established to help with this sustainability.

Lichvar has been a professional freelance outdoor writer since 1980 and a Pennsylvania Outdoor Writers Association (POWA) member since 1986. The POWA mission is “to enhance the skills of its members, provide a strong and resounding conservation message to the public, hold its membership to the highest ethical standards and provide a legacy for future generations of outdoor communicators.”

# South Fork Branch of the Little Conemaugh Watershed AMD Remediation Planning

by John Dryzal and Jackie Ritko



**Little Conemaugh River, looking upstream, right before it joins the Stonycreek to form the Conemaugh River at The Point in Johnstown, on June 3, 2022.**

On March 29, the Cambria County Conservation District (CCCD) and Brandon Diehl of the Foundation for PA Watersheds held a meeting at the St. Michael's Firehall to discuss the need and potential solutions to clean up the South Fork.

The South Fork of the Little Conemaugh River has great potential to become one of Cambria County's newest cold water fisheries. Polluted with abandoned mine drainage since the 1960's, the stream flows from the intersection of Bedford, Cambria, and Somerset Counties through Beavertdale, Sidman, St. Michael and to South Fork Borough where it joins the main stem of the Little Conemaugh.

Water quality is excellent in the extreme headwaters but once it reaches the Beavertdale area, several abandoned deep mine discharges enter near the ball fields and motorcycle hill climb, essentially killing the stream. The largest polluter on the South Fork, the St. Michael Discharge is currently being treated by Rosebud Mining, but four other significant discharges flow into the South Fork untreated. The Sulfur Creek discharge, Beavertdale discharges and the Logan (fan house) discharge all significantly impact the South Fork.

Brandon, along with us from the Conservation District, led the discussion. The Dunlo Rod & Gun Club, located in the watershed, had its President Shawn Dibert and two organization members attend. Robb Piper and Dave Leifert attended for SCRIP. Jon Smoyer, Mike Timcik and Patt Webb from the PA DEP-Bureau of Abandoned Mine Reclamation attended with Rich Beam representing the Federal Office of Surface Mining & Reclamation (OSMRE). Peter Sharpe from the National Park Service also attended. The National Park Service has some funding dedicated to address water quality issues on their properties. They are very interested in seeing the South Fork cleaned up and the fishery restored as it flows through the South Fork Dam National Historic Site at St. Michael.

Patt Webb from DEP provided a detailed account of the funding that will be coming to Pennsylvania from the new Federal Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL). PA will be receiving over \$244 million during the next 15 years for mine reclamation that includes treating abandoned mine drainage. Previous DEP requirements said that all hazards had to be ranked, with only Priority 1 and 2 projects completed due to limited funding. This new money does not follow this rule. Large discharges such as the South Fork discharges can only be adequately treated with very expensive active treatment plant technology. DEP just bid and awarded a \$26 million treatment plant contract to treat the Wehrum Discharge on Blacklick Creek that will cleanup that water. DEP stressed that the number of cleaned up stream miles gained is a weighted factor in decision making for spending funds. DEP is currently working on a plant to remediate several large AMD discharges degrading the mainstem of the Little Conemaugh in the Portage area, upstream of the confluence with the South Fork Branch.

The Cambria Conservation District is very excited about the on-going remediation efforts in the Little Conemaugh and we are eager to work with our agency partners to utilize this new funding opportunity to address the South Fork Watershed so that the entire watershed may eventually be restored to a cold water fishery.





# Family Fishing Program



**FREE**

**Looking for a great way to connect with your family?**



**Discover just how much fun fishing can be when you do it together at a Family Fishing Program!**

Learn basic fishing skills like knot tying, casting, baiting the hook, and taking a fish off the hook. You and your family will have the opportunity to fish – no fishing license required. All equipment provided.

**Thursday, June 16<sup>th</sup>, 2022  
6:30 - 9:00 pm  
Quemahoning Family Recreation Area**

**PRE-REGISTRATION BY JUNE 13<sup>TH</sup> IS REQUIRED**

*Please register online at  
<https://www.register-ed.com/events/view/183219>  
Contact Mandy Smith at 814-443-9841 for more information.*



*"takemefishing."*

Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission &  
Stonycreek Conemaugh River Improvement Project



## TIC is Back! by Melissa Reckner



**Adam Cotchen leading a macroinvertebrate collection and ID session for Conemaugh Township Middle School students.**

*Photo by M. Reckner*

For the first time in two years, several local schools participated in Trout in the Classroom (TIC), raising rainbow trout from egg to fingerling stage in a classroom aquarium, complete with a chiller and filter, and releasing them in area streams.

The PA Fish and Boat Commission and Pennsylvania Council of Trout Unlimited have supported TIC in the Commonwealth since 2006, and our local chapter of Trout Unlimited, Mountain Laurel, has been involved the whole time. The pandemic caused a little hiccup in the program, but this year, several schools embraced the project and were rewarded with a fun field day.

Since it takes a maximum of 30 minutes to release trout raised in the classroom, and a bus was secured to get students and the fish to a state-approved body of water, learners participate in a day of Outdoor Discovery Workshops, which were led by partners including:

DCNR's Blue Knob State Park  
DCNR's Gallitzin State Forest  
DCNR's Prince Gallitzin State Park  
Dunlo Rod & Gun Club  
Mountain Laurel Trout Unlimited  
PA Fish and Boat Commission  
PA Game Commission  
PA Master Naturalist  
Penguin Court, a preserve of Brandywine Conservancy  
Saint Francis University  
Shade Creek Watershed Association  
Somerset Conservation District  
Stonycreek Conemaugh River Improvement Project  
Western PA Conservancy

Thank you to all who helped with these field trips. We'll do them again next year!

## Lights, Camera, Action!

by Melissa Reckner

Penguin Court, a preserve of the Brandywine Conservancy and the Westmoreland Pollinator Partners, are collaborating to host the second annual "Pennsylvania Pollinator Photo Challenge." The public is invited to observe, photograph, and submit up to three entries of pollinators found and photographed in Pennsylvania. Pollinators include beetles, bees, butterflies, flies, hummingbirds, moths, and wasps. Photos of people hand-pollinating plants will be considered, too.

There are categories for adults 18 and over and youth 17 years or younger. Parental/guardian consent is required for youth entries. Photographs must be submitted by August 5 and will be judged by representatives of the Southern Alleghenies Museum of Art (SAMA) and Westmoreland Photographers Society. First, second, and third places will be awarded in both the adult and youth categories, as well as honorable mentions, at the "Monarchs, Milkweed and More" event on August 21 at SAMA Ligonier.

As Penguin Court's Program Manager, I'm happy to report that the inaugural photo challenge received 443 entries from 178 adults and 48 submissions from 19 children. We anticipate receiving even more this year.

The pandemic spurred the photo challenge as more people were enjoying the outdoors and their home landscapes. We thought this would be a good way to get people to slow down, exhibit patience, and observe some lesser known, perhaps less flashy pollinators. It's called a challenge because it's tough photographing pollinators that dip, dive, dodge and duck!

Photographs will be scored on the image's relevancy to the theme, originality, impact, and quality. Photos that are in-focus are really important to the judges.

Complete rules and submission guidelines may be viewed at [www.brandywine.org/photo-contest](http://www.brandywine.org/photo-contest).

**Dr. John Wenzel, New CVC Executive Director,  
Visits SCRIP Board Meeting**

The Conemaugh Valley Conservancy's (CVC) new Executive Director, Dr. John Wenzel, attended the May 26 SCRIP board meeting and introduced himself to our board members. Dr. Wenzel assumed his duties this March and has plans to assume responsibility for the Stream Team activities and promote their trail-building and recreation programs. He would like CVC to connect more closely with area colleges to include students in their projects as well as increase CVC's membership and visibility to the public through renewed marketing efforts.

Dr. Wenzel's education background is extensive, beginning with his position at the age of 19 as a field assistant in Panama to E.O. Wilson, the famous entomologist and sociobiologist. He holds a Bachelor's degree from Harvard, and studied under the world's expert on wild bees, Charles D. Michener, at the University of Kansas, finishing his Ph.D. in 1988.

He had a series of postdoctoral research positions in the U.S. and France, and in 1994 joined the Ohio State University Department of Entomology. For 17 years he taught across the curriculum, from large-enrollment introductory classes to advanced graduate courses, and as a professor, he mentored graduate students. He was Director of the OSU Museum of Biological Diversity for 10 years.

As Director of Powdermill Nature Reserve, another 10 year position, in addition to research and education programs, he expanded physical facilities, including building trails and starting a mine reclamation project. He was responsible for annual expenditures of about \$1.2M of which \$300,000 is provided by central operating funds and the remainder is from grants, contracts, gifts, and endowment. He re-established donor relationships after several years of decline and resumed targeted fundraising, raising nearly the same amount of support in 2020 and 2021 as in 2019, despite the ban on events and general COVID shutdown.

**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)

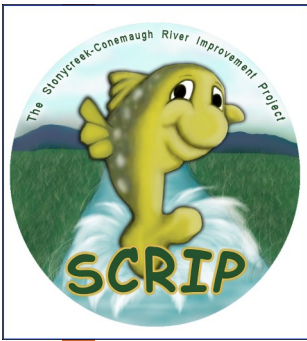
**Part 2. Select Option A OR Option B:**

\_\_\_\_\_ **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**

**People of SCRIP**

- |                                      |                    |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------|
| Thomas Clark, Jr.<br><i>Chairman</i> | Adam Cotchen       |
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|                                      | Larry Hutchinson   |
|                                      | Karlice Makuchan   |
|                                      | Pam Milavec        |
|                                      | Robb Piper         |

**New and Renewing Members**

No New or Renewing Members this quarter.