

**Volume XXVII  
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Summer 2020**

**Save the Date:**

**Sept. 17–** SCRIP board meeting, Greenhouse Park, 3 pm  
Please bring folding chair and mask.

**Oct. 8–** Virtual celebration of PennFuture’s Sixth Annual Women in Conservation Awards, 5:30 – 7 pm. SCRIP’s Melissa Reckner is one of the awardees. For information on tickets, see article on page 2.

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# Stonycreek-Conemaugh River Improvement Project

## Reconstruction of Oven Run AMD Passive Treatment Site F at Hawk View Completed

By Len Lichvar



**Soil is transported for the Hawk View Re-vegetation Project that will compliment the now completed reconstruction of the Oven Run Site F AMD Passive Treatment System.**

*Photo by Len Lichvar*

On August 20, 2020 the reconstruction of Oven Run AMD passive treatment Site F at Hawk View, located in Shade Township Somerset County, was completed under the oversight and administration of the Somerset Conservation District. Whitehorse Excavating served as the contractor for the project. The system’s redesign will enable it to treat more water than the original system and incorporate enough upgrades to sustain the full function of the system for the next 20 years or so.

With the previous reconstruction of Oven Run Site E this leaves Oven Sites A and D, which are not fully functioning, to be reconstructed and upgraded. The Pennsylvania Association of Conservation District’s Technical Assistance

Group has designed both systems while the Conservation District awaits release of funding for reconstruction. Recent information received from the Foundation for Pennsylvania Watersheds indicates that a contract for the funds could be in place by October, pending the completion of yet more administrative criteria and data that is required to be eligible for the funds.

In addition, the Somerset Conservation District’s Hawk View Revegetation Project is now being completed adjacent to Site F on the Hawk View property owned by the Somerset County Conservancy. This project will improve wildlife habitat’s 3 acres on the property. The District is working with the Conservancy, the Pennsylvania Game Commission and Somerset County Pheasants Forever on the project which will be initially planted with a cover crop; native plants and pollinators will be planted in the spring of 2021.

The culmination of the reconstruction of Site F and the improvement of the adjacent land will provide the public accessible site a vastly improved water quality project further protecting and enhancing the Stonycreek River while also significantly improving habitat for game and non-game wildlife species at the same location.

## Melissa Reckner Receives Woman of the Watershed Award



In 2015, PennFuture created its “Women in Conservation Awards” to highlight the work of exceptional women conservationists in Pennsylvania and encourage other women to continue their work in this traditionally male-dominated field. This year, PennFuture selected its award-ees from Southwestern Pennsylvania. SCRIP Secretary, Melissa Reckner, was named “Woman of the Watershed” in part for her efforts in restoring and conserving waterways. Melissa said she was flattered to be nominated and honored to be selected, saying, “It was a surprise! I wasn’t aware of these awards and considering all of the great women working to protect our environment, I’m speechless.”

Since Covid-19 concerns nixed an awards banquet, a virtual celebration will be held October 8, 2020 from 5:30 – 7 PM. Tickets to participate are \$40 and include a “swag bag” of goodies and a PennFuture membership or for \$65, you can receive the same perks, but make the donation in honor of the awardee of your choice. More details, including a list of award-ees, may be found at [www.pennfuture.org](http://www.pennfuture.org). PennFuture seeks to protect our environment and empower citizens to create sustainable communities, particularly through clean energy.

## Invasive Algae Found in Quemahoning Tailwater

By Melissa Reckner

Didymo (*Didymosphenia geminata*) has been identified in the tailwater of the Quemahoning Reservoir, and is likely in the reservoir itself. Commonly known as “rock snot”, didymo is a diatom that thrives in cold, low nutrient, fresh-water systems, both flowing and still. Regionally, it is found in the Youghiogheny River and was likely introduced to the Que by contaminated fishing and/or boating gear. Didymo “blooms” created large, thick mats that sometimes looks like wet toilet paper. It can limit the biodiversity of a waterway and make for slippery footing for water enthusiasts. Didymo can spread through just one drop of contaminated water as didymo is microscopic.

Additional information about the algae is on the New York [Department of Environmental Conservation](http://www.dec.state.ny.us) website.

There are no known methods of treatment. We can limit the spread by decontaminating gear. Detailed instructions for preventing its spread (Check, Clean, Drain, Dry and Disinfect) are included on the [Prevent the Spread of Aquatic Invasive Species webpage](http://www.dec.state.ny.us).

### Nine PA Counties Receive PENNVEST (Pennsylvania Infrastructure Investment Authority) Funding for Drinking Water, Wastewater and Stormwater Projects

Governor Tom Wolf announced the awarded projects including one in **Cambria County** at the end of July. The city of Johnstown received a \$6,517,110 grant and a \$4,382,890 loan to replace approximately 26,000 feet of sewer line. The project will reduce wet weather overflows into the Stonycreek and Little Conemaugh Rivers, decreasing public exposure to untreated effluent.

Funding was announced for projects across the state, including those in neighboring **Somerset, Westmoreland,** and **Bedford** counties.

For a complete list of all projects, see:  
<https://www.governor.pa.gov/newsroom/governor-wolf-announces-66-million-investment-in-water-infrastructure-projects-in-nine-counties>

## Newspaper and Magazine Articles of Interest



An article entitled, “E.P.A Relaxes Rules Limiting Toxic Waste From Coal Plants,” published on August 31 by the *New York Times*, describes changes made by the E.P.A. that

“weakened Obama-era rules meant to keep metals and other pollution out of rivers and streams, saving industry tens of millions of dollars.”

This move was hailed by coal industry executives who have seen the decline in their industry and criticized by environmental groups who say that it will “leave rivers and streams vulnerable to toxic contamination.”

Reading the *New York Times* requires a subscription but you can access a certain number of free articles each month. To access this article, go to NYTimes.com and enter title of the article in Search (top left corner).

“51 Years Later, the Cuyahoga River Burns Again” published in *Outside Online* magazine on August 28, describes how “the Ohio waterway that so famously caught on fire in 1969, inspiring the Clean Water Act, caught fire again this week.”

The first fire but not the last, was in 1868. The river would go on to catch fire 11 more times. The fire in 1969 was considered so small that no pictures were taken of that event but it was after this fire that a larger argument about pollution and its relationship to the quality of life and health began to form.

This most recent fire is a warning to all that if we are not vigilant, the progress made in recent years will be reversed. Link to the article is below.

[https://www.outsideonline.com/2416503/cuyahoga-river-fire-2020-1969?utm\\_medium=social&utm\\_source=email&utm\\_campaign=onsiteshare](https://www.outsideonline.com/2416503/cuyahoga-river-fire-2020-1969?utm_medium=social&utm_source=email&utm_campaign=onsiteshare)

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

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

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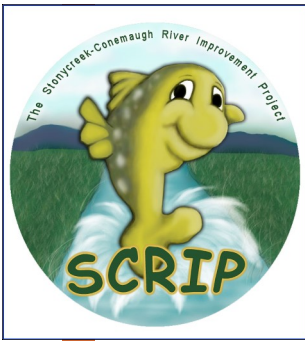
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Make your check payable to **SCRIP**, or for a tax-deductible contribution, make the check to **Southern Alleghenies Conservancy/ SCRIP**. \* If you are not sure of your membership status contact SCRIP's secretary at [info@scripPA.org](mailto:info@scripPA.org).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





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**Windber, PA**  
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**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.**

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**People of SCRIP**

**New and Renewing Members**

- |                         |                                 |
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