

Volume XXVIX
Number 3
Summer 2022

Save the Date:

September 15-

SCRIP board meeting, Old Country Inn, 615 Ragers Hill Rd., South Fork, 4:30pm. Tour of Puritan AMD treatment system, Portage, 3 pm.

<https://www.datasbed.org/project-puritan-discharge>

September 16-

Somerset Conservation District and Garrett College fish survey of lower Stonycreek and South Fork Benscreek. Meet at Riverside Trailhead, 200 Michigan Ave., Johnstown, at 8 am.

September 17-

Concert for Conservation, PNG Park, 4-9:30 pm.

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Stonycreek-Conemaugh River Improvement Project

Oven Run Rededication



U. S. Senator Robert Casey provides the Keynote Address at the Oven Run Rededication Ceremony. *Photo by Len Lichvar*

Senator Robert Casey was the Keynote speaker at the rededication ceremony of the Oven Run AMD Passive Treatment System, Site D, Oaks Trail in Shade Township Somerset County on Thursday, September 1. This location, along with Sites A, B, E, and F were reconstructed to continue treating abandoned mine drainage. The systems that were in place had run their course and were in need of upgrades. With this new construction that should last for 20-25 years, the Stonycreek can continue to run clean and support the businesses and activities that depend on it.

The ceremony was organized by the Somerset Conservation District. After a welcome and introduction of the speakers, the Master of Ceremonies, Len Lichvar, District Manager of the Somerset Conservation District and Vice-Chairman of SCRIP, began with an *In Memoriam* for the local, state, and federal officials and volunteers that we have lost who had a part in the cleanup.

In his Keynote, Senator Casey paid tribute to all those who made this possible, including the one he knew best, our former congressman Jack Murtha. He advocated for support of the STREAM Act, The Safeguarding Treatment for the Restoration of Ecosystems from Abandoned Mines Act, S. 3957, that would allow a state to set aside up to 30% of its annual grant for abandoned mine reclamation provided under the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act for the treatment and abatement of abandoned mine drainage.

Senator Casey (D-PA), along with Senator Mike Braun (R- IN) are the co-sponsors

and with the STREAM Act's passage in the House 391-9, it is truly bipartisan. He also reminded us of the PA Constitution that guarantees "The people have a right to clean air, pure water..." People are the trustees. Local, and state officials have a responsibility to provide this.

Other speakers were: John Hugya, former Chief of Staff to Congressman John Murtha; Gerald Walker, representing the Somerset County Commissioners; PA State Senator Pat Stefano; John Dawes, Foundation for PA Watersheds; Robbie Fulton, Federal Office of Surface Mining; Tim Schaeffer, Executive Director of PA Fish & Boat; *(continued on page 5)*



SCRIP Chairman Tom Clark speaks at the Oven Run Rededication Ceremony. *Photo by Len Lichvar*

Tom Clark, SCRIP Chairman's Message

One adage I always use when discussing mine drainage is that 100 years ago, if you found an orange stream and walked that orange back to its source, what you normally found was a prosperous town, but you do that same thing today and more often than not you find the opposite. This pollution has bred skepticism in people. "This stream has always been that way, and always will.." I run into that belief all over Pennsylvania. However, the stream I use to combat that belief is the Stonycreek River.

Here a group of like-minded people from public and private sectors came together, identified the pollution culprits, and attacked those to flip the switch, turning a pollution problem into a public resource. And what has been done here can be done everywhere. However, all of these plants have lifespans. They have operational costs that are required to maintain the gains and if we do not complete those, we erode that public trust that has been gained and the skepticism wins out. So not only is the Stonycreek my case study to explain to people how it's done, it is now also the case-study on how you keep it.

Kudos out to those on the ground that made this happen. The Len Lichvar's and Greg Shusktick's of the world. Jon Smoyer and everyone at DEP Bureau of Abandoned Mine Reclamation for acting quickly seeing this need. And to Senator Casey for listening and recognizing the need and championing the STREAMS Act. Let's not lose our gains, not just here, but everywhere. So, off to the next. Hopefully the next time I see everyone together in the same place like this we are cutting a ribbon at the treatment system that will return Shade Creek, the next Stonycreek success story, because the work is not finished.



Pennsylvania Association of Conservation District's Technical Assistance Group Conservation Engineer Danielle Kalp and Conservation Technician Phil Wilson, (foreground), lead a tour of Oven Run Site D for attendees of the Oven Run Rededication ceremony.

Photo by Len Lichvar

Oven Run Rededication Tour

When the speakers finished, lunch was served followed by a tour of the system led by Danielle Kalp, Phil Wilson and Greg Shustrick. Individuals can tour Site D since a sign at the beginning of the trail explains the system and a second sign at the end of the Interpretive Trail depicts the system's impacts.

The discharge from the mine enters the system with a pH less than 5 and a concentration of aluminum and iron that is lethal to aquatic life. The first sediment basin allows the suspended solids to drop then the water flows into the first wetland which slows the water down and allows the dissolved metals to oxidize and settle out. The water then enters the first Successive Alkalinity Producing System (SAPS). At the bottom of this pond, there are 3 1/2 ft of limestone rocks covered by 18 inches of compost which increases the water pH and causes more of the metals to drop out.

Sediment Basin #2 is the next step. This basin retains the metals in the form of sludge before entering Wetland #2 that filters and absorbs additional metals from the partially treated water.

(continued on page 5)



Concert for Conservation

Saturday, September 17th | 4:30 - 9 pm

Peoples Natural Gas Park | Downtown Johnstown

FEATURING



Buffalo Rose

Pittsburgh's widely acclaimed and wildly charismatic six-piece modern folk Americana band. Amazingly loose yet tight!



Tickets \$20 in advance, \$25 at the door.
Scan the code above to buy now:
<https://events.eventgroove.com/event/Concert-For-Conservation-64743>

Proceeds benefit the following local conservation and recreation groups:

- Conemaugh Valley Conservancy
- Bens Creek Canoe & Kayak Club
- Laurel Highlands On- and Off-Road Bicycling Association
- Stonycreek-Conemaugh River Improvement Project
- Stonycreek-Quemahoning Initiative
- Friends of Cambria County Trails
- Cambria County Conservation and Recreation Authority
- Somerset County Recreation & Trails Association
- Somerset County Parks & Trails Dept.
- Friends of Inclined Plane Trails
- Nathan's Divide Environmental Education Center
- Cambria County Conservation District
- Somerset County Conservation District
- Somerset County Conservancy
- Vision 2025 Upper Basin Capture Team
- Vision 2025 Greenspace Capture Team
- Trout Unlimited Mountain Laurel Chapter

WITH

The Meanwhile Trio

A rich, spontaneous, and undeniably fun acoustic ensemble of acclaimed musicians fusing jazz, folk and bluegrass.

JD & Cindy

Multi-instrumental acoustic music covering Jethro Tull, Fleetwood Mac, the Lumineers, and Alison Krauss.

Sponsored By

- | | |
|--|-----------------------|
| Community Foundation for the Alleghenies | JAHA |
| Stone Bridge Brewing | Boulevard Grill |
| REI | Stadium Pub and Grill |
| | Ski Den Sports |

Questions? Contact Brad Clemenson, Clemenson.brad@gmail.com

Plus Food Trucks & Fun!

Concert for Conservation



The Concert for Conservation will bring together more than 15 conservation and recreation groups to celebrate the Cambria-Somerset region's outstanding recreational opportunities that have come about through the great progress in cleaning up area waterways and other environmental improvements.

The public is invited to the concert scheduled on Saturday, September 17, 2022, at Peoples Natural Gas Park, Downtown Johnstown, PA. Gates open at 4, music begins at 4:30pm and goes on to 9:30 p.m. The headline performer will be Pittsburgh's Buffalo Rose, a widely acclaimed and wildly charismatic, six-piece modern folk Americana

band. Tickets are available on-line through web sites of participating organizations and at the Johnstown Area Heritage Association web site, <https://www.jaha.org/events/concert-for-conservation/>. Cost is \$20 in advance and \$25 at the gate.

Food and, with identification, beer and wine will be available for purchase. **Proceeds will benefit area conservation and recreation initiatives, with this year's proceeds going to the trust fund to protect the Stonycreek River by providing on-going maintenance of the abandoned-mine drainage treatment systems on Oven Run, a Stonycreek tributary.**

Buffalo Rose, the headliner, has been performing across a wide swath of the country. The group is described as totally loose yet absolutely tight on their harmony vocals and acoustic interplay. Also performing are:

- **The Meanwhile Trio** is a rich, spontaneous, and undeniably fun acoustic ensemble of acclaimed Pittsburgh musicians who fuse jazz, folk and bluegrass. The group includes Johnstown native John Bagnato on guitar.
- **JD & Cindy** deliver powerful vocals and multi-instrumental acoustic music covering a wide range that includes Jethro Tull, Jefferson Airplane, Fleetwood Mac, the Lumineers and Alison Krause. The Somerset couple also performs originals.

Brad Clemenson, one of the lead organizers, said, "Conservation and recreation groups have been talking for years about creating an event to celebrate the great asset of our region's mountains, valleys and waterways. Organizers intend to make the Concert for Conservation an annual event that benefits different recreation and conservation groups each year."

Sponsors are the Community Foundation for the Alleghenies, Johnstown Area Heritage Association, Stone Bridge Brewing, Boulevard Grille, Stadium Pub and Grille, REI and Ski Den Sports. Participating groups include Conemaugh Valley Conservancy, Bens Creek Canoe & Kayak Club, Laurel Highlands On- and Off-Road Bicycling Association, Stonycreek-Conemaugh River Improvement Project Stonycreek-Quemahoning Initiative, Friends of Cambria County Trails, Cambria County Conservation and Recreation Authority, Somerset County Recreation & Trails Association Somerset County Parks & Trails Department, Friends of Inclined Plane Trails, Nathan's Divide Environmental Education Center, Cambria County Conservation District, Somerset County Conservation District, Somerset County Conservancy, Vision 2025 Upper Basin Capture Team, Vision 2025 Greenspace Capture Team, and Trout Unlimited Mountain Laurel Chapter.

Randy Buchanan Tribute

by Len Lichvar



Randy Buchanan with a wild brown trout from one of his favorite waterways.

Photo by Len Lichvar

The Mountain Laurel Chapter of Trout Unlimited (MLTU) lost its President and the world lost a staunch natural resource conservationist with the passing of Randy Buchanan on June 30, 2022. Randy was a lifetime member of Trout Unlimited and during his 30 years as President of MLTU the chapter received local, state and national recognition.

MLTU was awarded the Silver Trout Award by National Trout Unlimited in 1999 and twice received the Pennsylvania Council of Trout Unlimited's Edward Urbas Outstanding Chapter Award under Randy's tenure. These recognitions were derived from the chapter's long time successful coldwater conservation projects and support of countless natural resource enhancements in Cambria, Somerset and Bedford Counties. Randy was recognized by PATU with the Doc Fritchey Award as the outstanding volunteer coldwater conservationist in the state in 2018. He also twice received the Order of the Mug Award from MLTU as the chapter's most outstanding member.

Randy was a founding member and served for many years as President of the Yellow Creek Coalition that has worked to enhance angling opportunities and water quality in the Yellow Creek watershed in Bedford County.

Randy was also well known as professional fly tyer and fly tying instructor and demonstrated and taught his skills at national fly fishing shows across the country as well as at countless local and state events. His angling and tying skills, as well as his signature fly patterns such as his Buchanan Stonefly Nymph, were profiled in many local, state and national outdoor magazines, newspapers, videos and other publications such as books authored by Charlie Meck and Ann McIntosh as well as the multi-authored book *Keystone Fly Fishing*.

His passion for angling was only surpassed by his drive and desire to protect and improve water quality and preserve the natural environment.

Growing up and living in southwestern Pennsylvania Randy saw firsthand how the degradation of natural resources negatively impacted not only recreational opportunities, but how it impaired the economy and quality of life of the residents. He voluntarily led many of the efforts that have now reversed much of that trend and his legacy will live forever within the confines of that unselfish and noble role.

Rededication *(continued from page one)*

John Stefanko, PA Department of Environmental Protection; Tom Clark, Stonycreek- Conemaugh River Improvement Project (SCRIP); Jim Moses and Jeff Payne, DVM, Somerset County Conservancy and John Dryzal, Cambria County Conservation District.

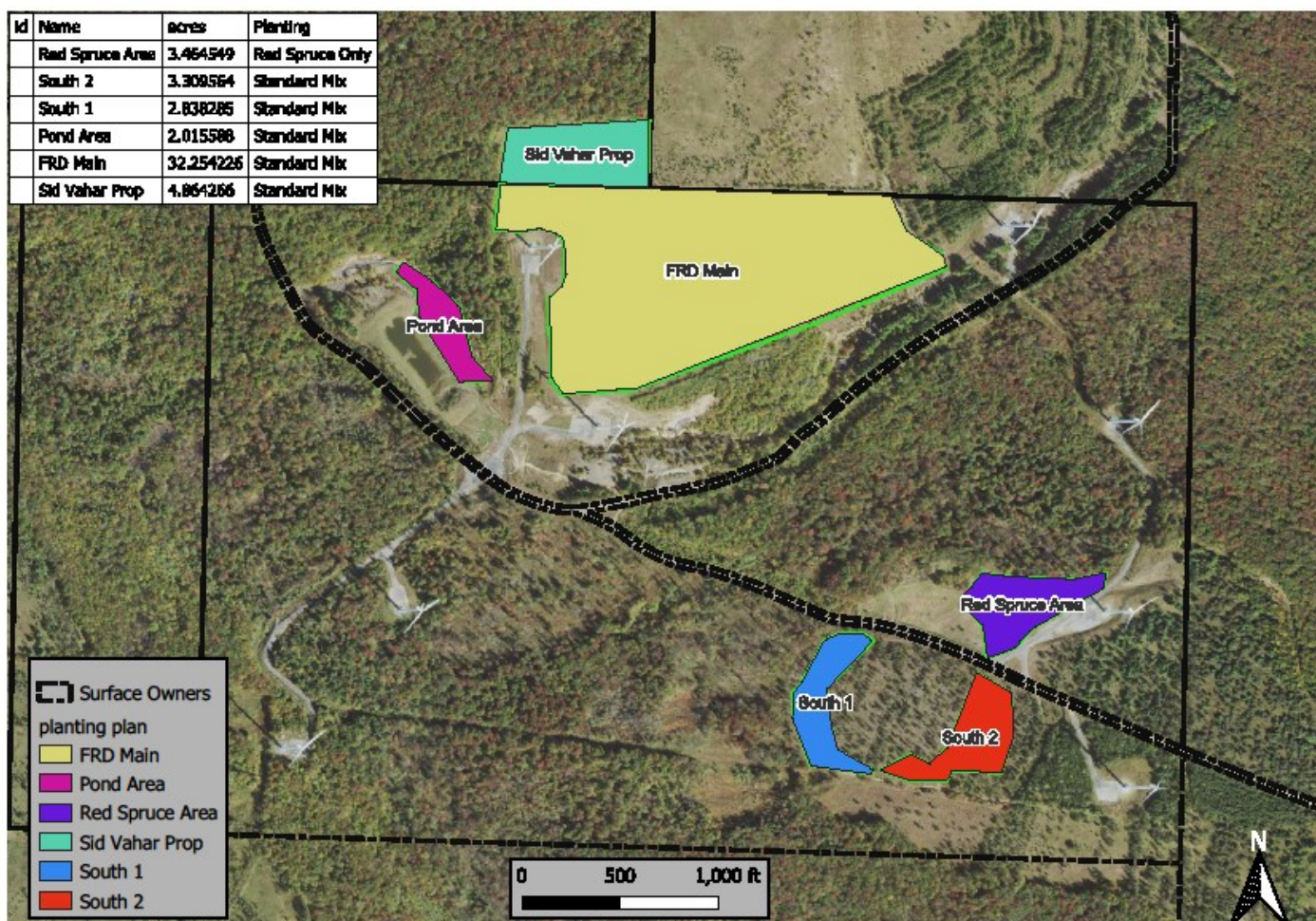
Tour *(continued from page 2)*

The water then flows into SAPS #2 which polishes the mine water in the same way as SAPS #1. Sediment Basin #3 contains any lingering metals and solids that drop from the water before the water is released back into the Stonycreek River.

This rehabbed system is expected to triple the amount of water treated from the original system. To date, 16 different species of fish were discovered and the hope is to ramp that up in the next five years.

Paint Creek Reforestation

by Tom Clark



In May of this year, the Appalachian Regional Reforestation Initiative (ARRI) completed a reforestation effort in the headwaters of Paint Creek planting about 34,000 tree seedlings on nearly 50-acres of formally mined land that has remained treeless post reclamation.

Work involved ripping the soil to 4-foot depths at 8-foot centers like a chessboard. A tree is then planted at each of those centers which amounts to about 700 trees per acre. Trees planted included oaks, cherries, dogwoods, poplars, white pines, black locust, maples, and red spruce, which is a high altitude species that was commonplace in this area prior to logging.

This project will be monitored closely over the next three years by ARRI volunteers. Why three years you ask? Planted trees seedlings abide by the adage of “sleep, creep, leap” during their first three years of life as the first two years are very much used for root expansion, with the third year being their first of significant growth above ground. Tree survival greatly increases if they survive to that third year.

If interested in learning more about ARRI, check out their website at <https://www.osmre.gov/programs/arri>



Kristi Niekamp, from PA Fish & Boat Commission instructs young attendees on proper fishing techniques.

Family Fishing Program– June 16, 2022

Len Lichvar, Vice-Chair of SCRIP introduced the session by reminding people of the work SCRIP and its partners have done to clean up the water that not only helps the economy in the area but makes fishing possible.

Kristi Niekamp used both classroom and hands-on instruction. A key part was use of the acronym

SMART:

S– Safety First– Know where the hook is; one hand on the line, one on the rod; take water, hat, sunscreen, sunglasses; dress for the weather; be aware of thunder and lightning; go with a buddy; tell someone where you are going.

M– Manners– Be polite; respect equipment; don't cross lines or cast if kayak goes by

A– Appreciate Clean Water– Take home what you brought; don't litter; don't leave fishing line or animals caught in the line; use the restroom if one is available

R– Release– If you are not going to eat it or if fish is too small

T– Teach Others

Of the twenty-two registered, seventeen people braved the severe thunderstorm warnings and tornado watch to take the class. Attendees saw not a drop of rain.

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)

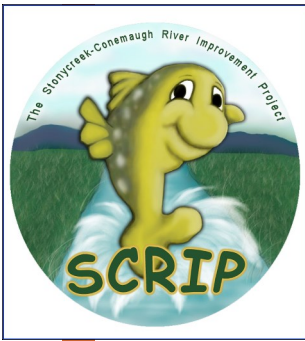
Part 2. Select Option A OR Option B:

_____ **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.* Send donations to: **SCRIP, P.O. Box 164, Windber, PA 15963**



SCRIP
P.O. Box 164
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15963

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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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| | |
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