



Somerset County Conservancy A Charitable Trust

www.somersetcountyconservancy.org

Newsletter

Spring 2012

Kimberly Run Natural Area is Growing

There is now public access available

The Conservancy has acquired a wonderful piece of property that adjoins our Kimberly Run Natural Area. A 53 acre parcel purchased from the family of Raymond and Dorothy Florence on Craig Road will finally allow us to have a public access to the original KRNA. This purchase along with the August, 2011 acquisition of the Louie-Beech mitigated wetlands along the PA Turnpike brings the total acreage of Kimberly Run Natural Area to almost 360 acres.

Our plans for the new property include a parking lot at the Craig Road entrance which will allow a walk in access to the level surface gravel road, and planned trail extensions to the existing hiking loop that will provide nearly 3 3/4 miles of trails through varying natural habitats. The central location within Somerset County is convenient for local school groups to use for nature studies and for local citizens to use for hiking, photography, fishing or hunting. A kiosk will be built there to show the trails and pavilion locations. This new addition to KRNA magnifies the beauty because it contains numerous large hemlocks, white pine and hardwoods as well as an additional 1/3 mile of Kimberly Run. Already several improvements have begun, removing a large downed tree from the stream and construction of the parking area. An access road to the pavilion is under construction and in June Mitchell Black Life Scout from Berlin, will begin his Eagle Scout Project building and marking interconnecting trails from the new parcel to the existing trails on KRNA, adding to two other Eagle Scout projects done by Matt Payne and Jacob Craig.

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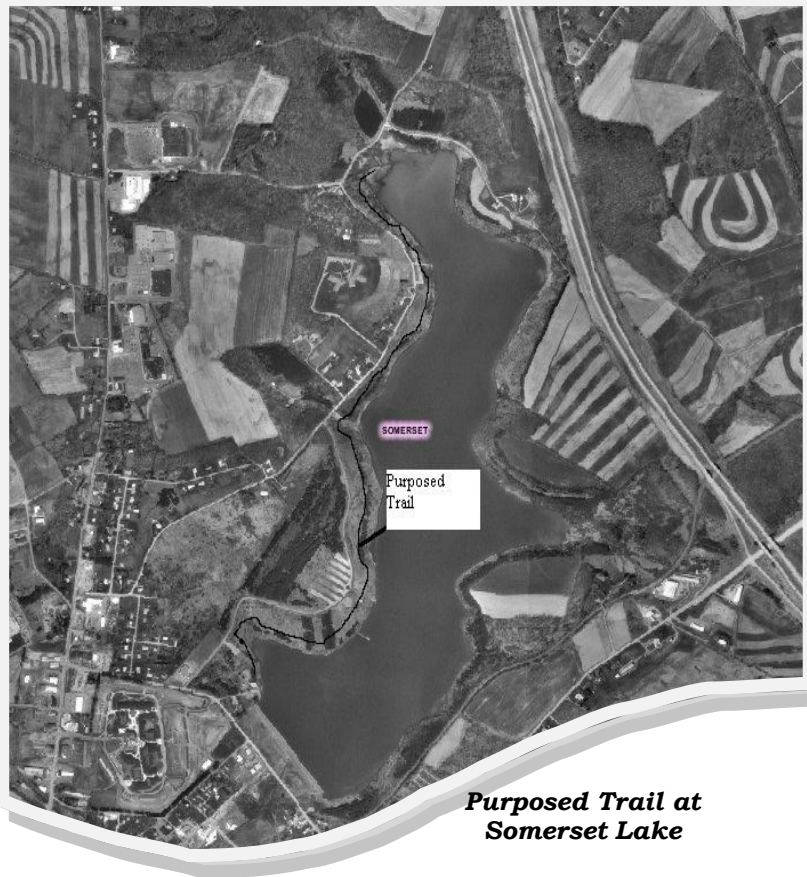
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Somerset Lake Project

PA Fish & Boat Commission Agreement is signed

Somerset Lake located in Somerset Twp. has been drawn down 5 feet to alleviate the problem of water seeping in the dam. The drawdown is to identify the problem and address the safety issue. The lake will remain drawn down until the problem is identified and repaired. At present there are no funds available to make repairs to the dam or to replace the previously identified high-hazard spillway. It may take years to accomplish these improvements, but in spite of the bleak outlook the Somerset County Conservancy had entered into an agreement with the PA Fish & Boat Commission to build an access path along the western side of the lake. This path will improve access for Fishermen and Bird watchers to the western shore of the lake. Somerset Lake is an IBA (important birding area) designated by the Audubon



***Proposed Trail at
Somerset Lake***



Purple Martin House

Society of Pennsylvania for migrating birds and waterfowl. It is used by thousands of birds during the spring and fall migrations.

We are optimistic that if we can get our State and Local Politicians together with fisherman, sportsmen, birdwatchers and concerned citizens of the community the financing can be found to restore this crown jewel. You can help, please write your state and local government officials and let them know how you feel.

PARTNERSHIP INITIATES CONSTRUCTION ON HEINEMYER DISCHARGE

by Dan Seibert

THE PARTNERSHIP

The Somerset County Conservancy in partnership with the Somerset Conservation District and the National Park Service has started construction on a passive water treatment system to treat the Heinemyer mine discharge. The Heinemyer discharge is located in the Flight 93 National Park near the headwaters of Lamberts Run above Lambertsville in Stonycreek Township.

The Somerset County Conservancy coordinated the planning, data gathering, permitting, and design of the project. The Somerset Conservation District received and is administering a grant from the DEP, Bureau of Mining and Reclamation, to pay for the project. The National Park Service who owns the Heinemyer discharge has been a strong advocate for the project and has assisted in obtaining permits and review clearances within the National Park Service.



Technical design and construction inspection assistance was obtained through the Pennsylvania Association of Conservation Districts. Eric Robertson and Philip Gardener who work out of the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service office in Somerset are providing this technical assistance.

The contractor for the project is Earthshapers, LLC. Ebensburg, PA. They submitted the low bid for the project of \$117,654.

THE PROJECT

The Heinemyer discharge is the largest source of iron loading in Lamberts Run that historically has been an acidic, high iron discharge. In the past several years the discharge has improved to a pH of ~ 6.9, alkalinity of 193 MG/L and iron of 62.8 MG/L. This improvement is attributed to the flooding of the abandoned PBS deep mine workings. This change in water quality makes this discharge very treatable by constructing a settling pond for iron removal. Currently, thirty two percent of the iron pollution load in Lamberts Run is from the Heinemyer discharge. The passive treatment system being constructed is planned to remove 100 percent of the iron load entering Lamberts Run.



PROJECT BENEFITS

The benefits of this project include economic benefits, along with improvements to surface water quality, restoration of aquatic and fishery resources and improved aesthetics to the Flight 93 Park.

ECONOMIC BENEFITS

The construction of the project will provide economic benefits to the local area through payroll and purchase of construction material for the project. A long term economic benefit has been calculated based on the improved water quality in Lamberts Run and the Stonycreek River. These economic benefits based largely on an improved fishery in Lamberts Run and the Stonycreek River along with lowered water treatment costs for downstream municipal water supplies. The long term economic benefits provide a dollar value greater than the cost of the project, so the benefit to cost ratio for this project is greater than 1:1.

SURFACE WATER QUALITY BENEFITS

Treatment and removal of the iron will allow water quality improvement to a point that 7600 feet of the stream can be returned to a trout fishery. Constructing the Heinemyer treatment system along with the high alkalinity water provided by the PBS - Flight 93 discharge will produce water quality suitable for the establishment of the 7600 feet of fishery from the Heinemyer discharge to Lambertsville.

AQUATIC AND FISHERY BENEFITS

Aquatic resources are expected to improve to a level that would allow a trout fishery to be established. The iron precipitate on the stream bottom that smothers aquatic life will be removed and flushed down stream within one year of the construction of the project. The return of a diverse macroinvertebrate population will follow within a year and will continue to diversify with time.

AESTHETIC BENEFITS

The unsightly deposits of iron around the discharge point and downstream will be eliminated with time. All of the iron currently being deposited on the stream bottom will be captured in the settling pond. The flight 93 Park aesthetics will be enhanced with the elimination of the iron deposits.

Berlin School District third grade class tours Oaks Trail at Oven Run

On May 15th Mrs. Darlene Beachley's third grade students toured our Oaks Trail at Oven Run site. The Acid Mine Discharge Passive Treatment site includes an interpretative trail designed and built by the Mountain Laurel Chapter of Trout Unlimited. The interpretive trail has signs posted at each of the ponds describing how the system works. Conservancy Board Members Jeff Payne DVM and Lester Brunell were the hosts and tour guides for this event.



You Can Make A Difference

The Future of Conservation is at stake in Pennsylvania

For two decades, Pennsylvania has made tangible and lasting investments in land conservation thanks to two taxes dedicated to that purpose: 15% of the Realty Transfer Tax for the Keystone Recreation, Park and Conservation Fund and \$20.5M of the Cigarette Tax for farmland preservation. With the support of these dedicated tax revenues, Pennsylvania has been protecting and establishing recreational areas, important wildlife habitats and other green spaces that will define PA communities and shape the lives of Pennsylvanians for decades and centuries to come. Likewise, these dedicated tax revenues have been protecting the rich soils needed to ensure the security of Pennsylvania's food supply and farm economy. There still is much to be done but the past two decades have put Pennsylvania on the right track. We can't afford to lose these hugely successful and efficient programs; we can't afford to lose the private and local investments that state conservation investments leverage. The threats to our special open spaces and productive soils won't take a break if the proposed cuts become law.

Please speak to your State Representatives ask them to restore the Keystone Recreation, Park and Conservation Fund.

Up-Coming Events

- May- The Country Clovers 4-H group will be doing a spring cleaning of the grounds and building a fire ring at the Cabin. As well as holding their meeting.
- June- There will be a Public Dedication of the new access to NRNA.
- July & August will be construction and marking of new trails
- September- Our Annual Membership Picnic .
- December- our Annual membership Banquet

Please Save the Date:

**September 23,
2012 @ 1:00 PM**

**For our annual
membership
picnic at KRNA**

Water Wars in Laurel Hill Creek, Somerset County

Reprinted from the Casselman River Watershed Assoc. Newsletter

A lot has been happening with this small watershed in Somerset County. It was formally designated a Critical Water Planning Area in December, 2009. In addition, the Back Creek watershed (a tributary to Indian Creek in Fayette county) was also designated. Why was Back Creek chosen? Because it shares the same ridge as Laurel Hill Creek and it shares Seven Springs Resort's water withdrawals. It was determined that there could be an interconnection between the aquifers.

A Critical Water Planning Area is defined as a "significant hydrologic unit where existing or future water demands exceed or threaten to exceed the safe yield of available water resources". ***Results have shown that water use is exceeding water availability and may be harming the fishery, ecosystem and the potential to provide drinking water to additional residents in both watersheds.***

The next steps in this process is to complete a Critical Area Resource Plan for both watersheds which includes: define existing conflicts between water use and aquatic resources and propose alternatives to alleviate existing conflicts; determine what impact the likely increase in human population will have on water quantity in the future; supply-side and demand-side alternatives to assure an adequate supply of water in the future; and promote water conservation practices and Best Management Practices (BMPs) designed to conserve water use. Critical to the next phase of the project is education and awareness of the two Plans.

It was also very disheartening to find out that the PA Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has issued the Bakersville III quarry permit to deep mine 200 acres of the Loyalhanna limestone formation which lies between the Mauch Chunk and Burgoon sandstone formations. These two formations contain the aquifers used by Hidden Valley Resort, Laurel Hill and Kooser State Parks, Somerset Borough and Seven Springs Resort for drinking water and other uses. How can we really be sure that this mine will not harm the aquifers that provide water to the thousands of visitors and residents? Regardless of the assurances from the quarry and the PA DEP, no one can possibly guarantee that water loss will not occur. It is unknown as to whether any of those entities will appeal the permit.

The fight for water continues . . .



Somerset County Conservancy
Box 241
Somerset, PA 15501

HELP US SPREAD THE WORD!

Pass this newsletter on to a friend and ask them to join.

Enclosed is: \$ 15 Individual Member

\$ 25 Family Member

\$ 75 Sustaining Member

\$100 Patron, Club, Organization Member

\$750 Lifetime Member

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

E-Mail: _____

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SEND ALL SUBMISSIONS
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The above address