



# Somerset County Conservancy A Charitable Trust

[www.somersetcountyconservancy](http://www.somersetcountyconservancy)

## Newsletter

Spring 2011

### BIRDS HEADING TO HELP CONSERVANCY!

Though they may not be aware of it, the fact that the highest number of species of birds to occur in a single day in Somerset County usually occurs in early May is going to help these very species by raising money for the Somerset County Conservancy. Whether winging in from South or Central America, making the short leap from the Chesapeake Bay area, or being local birds making their presence known on May 7<sup>th</sup>, they may all be counted in trying to get a high species total. And with your support and pledges, the Conservancy will raise funds for bird breeding and stopover spots like the Kimberly Run Natural Area and other important habitats. The veteran birding team of Jeff and Chris Payne will serve as the nucleus of the team to scour the county environs for a 24 hour period. Normally this team participates in the World Series of Birding in NJ during this time period, but scheduling conflicts prohibit this. So they will turn their binoculars on Somerset County to see what can be found. Weather and migration timing are always variables, but they hope to identify between 100 and 140 species on the big day.

You can help by supplying the all important incentive to keep us digging for more birds...pledges! A pledge per species or a set amount for the day will greatly help the Conservancy's efforts. Of course, if you know the location of a Barn Owl, a secretive rail or other unusual bird, that information would be appreciated before the May 7th bird count. You can send your pledge to Jeff Payne 9755 Glades Pike, Berlin PA 15530

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### Pletcher treatment system

The Somerset County Conservancy (SCC) has accepted a donation of the Pletcher Treatment System on Coal Run near Boyton. The 14 acre site had belonged to Action Mining and was constructed as part of the settlement agreement with the Dept. of Environmental Protection (DEP). The Somerset Co. Conservancy has partnered with Casselman River Watershed Association to add additional treatment to Coal Run. SCC will allow the Casselman River Watershed Association to install and maintain a limestone dosing system on Coal Run a tributary to the Casselman River.

## The Somerset County Conservancy

Lester Brunell

Many on the Somerset County Conservancy's board of directors have been with us since our founding in 1994. The 15 current board members have varied career and personal backgrounds. This unique combination enhances our ability to get things done.

The all-volunteer SCC board usually meets on the first Wednesday of the month at 7:30 P.M. in the conference room of Partners' Hall on the Somerset ACM campus. These meetings are far from the extent of the Conservancy's work; there is much accomplished between meetings, ranging from operational matters to watershed monitoring to trail building and field work. From our founding, the vast majority of the SCC's work has been done by the board members. However, as our membership base continues to grow, we look forward to more SCC members participating in our projects and activities.

We also wish to extend an invitation to any SCC member-at-large to consider serving on the board; the Conservancy and Somerset County need your talents. Attend a few board meetings or contact any Somerset County Conservancy board member to find out if you might wish to become more involved with our efforts to preserve and enhance the natural resources of our region.

### In Memoriam

#### Ann Simpson

It is with great sadness that we report on the passing on March 26th of long time SCC Member and supporter **Ann Simpson, 78**. Ann was a regular at every annual banquet and picnic. She was the owner of the Erbe Shoppe in Somerset. Ann was our local authority on herbs, spices and teas as well as a major exhibitor at Mountain Craft Days. She will be sadly missed by the whole community.

### In Memoriam

#### Devon Bowman

We are very sorry to report the passing of **R. Devon Bowman, 66**, on November 17, 2010. Devon was an avid outdoorsman, hunter, fisherman and conservationist. He was a retired employee of Wheeler Brothers Inc. in Somerset. Devon was a long time supporter of this Conservancy. He attended our membership banquet and picnic, and was always looking for ways to help. Devon is sadly missed by all who knew him.

### New Donations in Memoriam

#### Devon Bowman

*Douglas Walters*

*Chad Wheeler*

*Jeff Payne, DVM*

*Wheeler Brothers, Inc.*

*Wheeler Brothers Employees*

*Jim & Meg Moses*

#### Ann Simpson

*Jeff Payne, DVM*

*Jim & Meg Moses*

#### John Porter

*Margaret Porter*

*Lester Brunell*

*Ann Simpson*

#### Lauretta Payne

*Janet and Michael Ahern*

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**The Somerset Conservation District now has a new Watershed Specialist -Please extend a warm welcome to:**

**~ Greg Shustrick ~**

I am a native to the Johnstown area and have had lifelong interest in the natural world. This is echoed primarily through several of my hobbies and interests, which include fishing, fly tying, bird dog training, paddling, music, hiking, camping and mushroom hunting, to name a few. In addition, I especially have a particular interest in our water resources.

A brief snapshot of my educational and career related background is as follows. I am a graduate from the University of Pittsburgh's Johnstown campus and have a BA in Environmental Studies and an A.S. in Wildlife Management from Penn State, DuBois. After graduation I completed a one year Americorps term and worked under a conservation district's Watershed Specialist. Upon completion of my Americorps service, I pursued my interest in watershed restoration and completed Dr. David Rosgen's Applied Fluvial Geomorphology Course, to further my education on stream channel design and restoration. Prior to obtaining my current position, I worked for another conservation district as Dirt & Gravel Roads Specialist and Erosion & Sedimentation Technician. In addition, in years past I had worked for a surveying outfit and performed construction stake-out for large scale construction projects, primarily in power plants and coal handling facilities.

My personal, professional and educational experiences have primarily been environmentally related and now have led me to water conservation, at which I am very pleased. I am also glad to be back to a region and watersheds that I call home. As the new Watershed Specialist with the Somerset Conservation District I am looking forward to assisting local nonprofit organizations in any way I can, as well as contributing my knowledge and abilities to regional watershed management and restoration.

***Please Reserve the date:  
September 18, 2011  
For the Annual  
Somerset County Conservancy  
Picnic***

## KIMBERLY RUN STUDY PROGRESSING

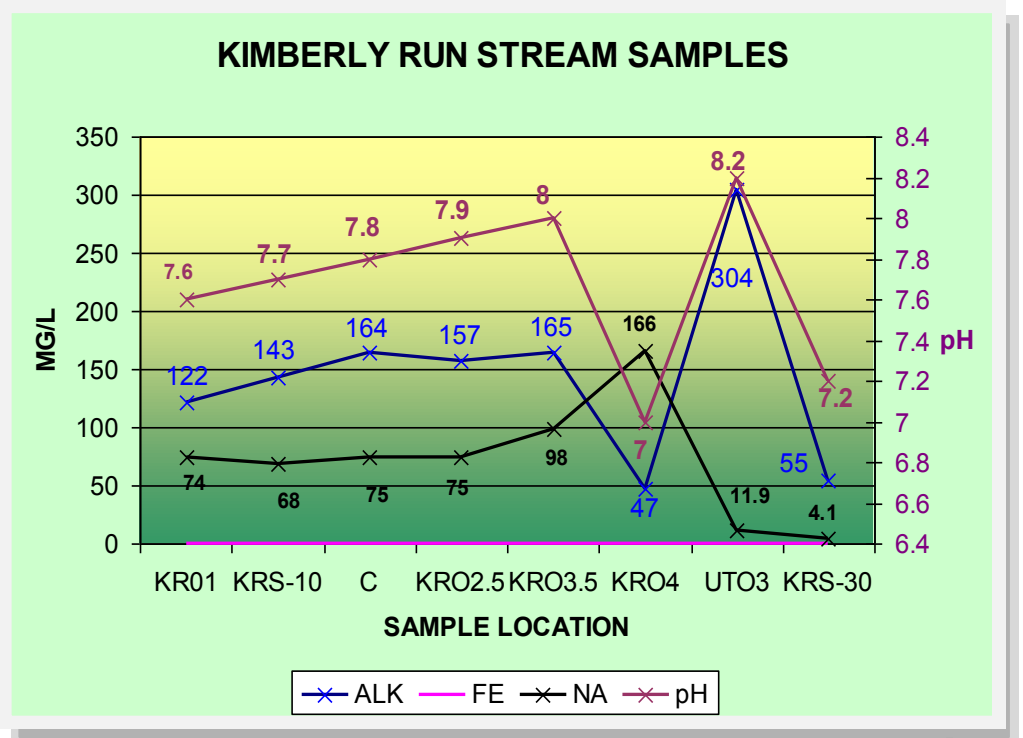
By Dan Seibert

The aquatic and water quality study funded by a \$35,000 grant from the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy has resulted in one year of water and aquatic sampling on Kimberly Run so far. The purpose of the study is to quantify and qualify water quality problems in Kimberly Run and identify their source. Once the study is complete and sources of pollution are identified, it is hoped that projects can be developed to correct the problems.

Twelve water sampling points have been established between the mouth of the stream near Stepping Stone Falls and the headwaters of the stream. Four fish and macroinvertebrate sampling points have also been established. The stream water quality samples do not indicate there are any toxic metal concentrations in the stream. The two parameters that are somewhat out of line for the "normal" stream in Somerset County are alkalinity and sodium (NA).

### Water Sampling Results

The graph shows, from left to right, water quality from the mouth of the stream to the headwaters. The pH, plotted on the right axis, and alkalinity increase from the mouth of the stream to the headwaters. The two lower values of pH, 7 and 7.2, and alkalinity are from tributaries that are near the headwaters. The very high pH value of 8.2 is the result of lime treatment of a mine discharge near the Mostoller landfill.



The highest level of sodium (NA), 166, is from the tributary that drains the area from the PA turnpike.

In addition to the laboratory samples being collected, two in-stream data loggers are continuously gathering data on pH, conductivity and temperature. The data loggers will capture any significant runoff events or cyclic discharges that may be occurring. The data gathered is downloaded into a computer for evaluation.

## Macroinvertebrate and Fish Sampling In Kimberly Run

Macroinvertebrate and fish sampling is another way to gather information on the pollution impacting Kimberly Run. Different species have different tolerances to pollution.

The fish populations found within Kimberly Run are indicative of a stream that has been impacted by anthropogenic sources. While surveying we noted several locations that had iron seeps, in addition to the elevated levels of conductivity and Total Dissolved Solids (TDS) observed at all three site locations. We found limited numbers of species and individuals in this stream, which was surprising based on the quality of the habitats surveyed. All species collected were in the intermediate to tolerant categories based on tolerance values to pollution. No trout were observed in Kimberly Run, in the sections that we surveyed. The elevated levels of



Total dissolved solids (TDS) and conductivity could be one of the reasons why trout are not found in this section of Kimberly Run.



Rock Bass were the most numerous species of fish collected in the survey



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## **Kimberly Run Property Weed Control Project**

By Dave Steele

Plans are underway to treat approximately 60 acres of the Kimberly Run Natural Area to control Autumn Olive. The property was evaluated in 2008 by Biologists from Natural Biodiversity, a Johnstown-based non-profit organization dedicated to controlling invasive weeds through education, outreach and demonstration projects that promote the establishment of native plant species in Pennsylvania landscapes. Natural Biodiversity concluded that Autumn Olive was a problem species at the Kimberly Run property that should be controlled before it got completely out of hand.

In 2010 the Somerset County Conservancy Board of Directors agreed to work with Natural Biodiversity, the Southern Alleghenies Resource Conservation and Development Council and Conservation Land Management to utilize 60 acres of the property as a selective control demonstration site. The purpose of this project will be to compare several different control methods to determine the least cost treatment option that provides the best long-term results. Full foliar spray, spring basal spray and fall basal spray methods of application of Garlon herbicide will be compared to determine the most effective control method with the least environmental impact. A final report will be prepared at the end of the study.



## **Our AmeriCorps Representative, Josh Penatzer**

I have been working with the Somerset Conservation District and Somerset County Conservancy since August 2010 as an AmeriCorps member. In that time I was fortunate to be a part of numerous projects. These included electrofishing surveys, macroinvertebrate studies, data loggers and other tasks involving water quality. I have enjoyed being able to work on these projects with the district and conservancy. For the conservancy I was mainly involved in the layout and mapping of the Somerset Lake walking trail, passive treatment systems, the biological assessment of the Boswell Passive Treatment system and the electrofishing study done on Kimberly Run.

I recently was offered a full time job with the Loyalhanna Watershed Association, in Ligonier, to be their new Project Manager. I accepted this position as I felt it would be an excellent opportunity for me and simply one that I could not pass up. I left my AmeriCorps position with the district and the conservancy in mid March and started my new job shortly after. I have been working at the Loyalhanna Watershed for a few weeks and I am involved in some interesting projects. I gained valuable knowledge that I am using now from working with the district and the conservancy. I appreciate being given the opportunity to work with the conservancy on some of their projects, though I wish I could have stayed on to see the projects through until their completion. I am sure our paths will cross again in the future. Thanks again for the opportunity to work with the Somerset County Conservancy, I thoroughly enjoyed it.

## **“My Summer”, as told by Water.**

*By Roger Latuch*

They say, (those who say it) that you find the time to do the things you want to do, and make excuses for everything else. If I share a common thread with the rest of the world's beings, it is that “we are all drawn to water.”



How fortunate we are to live in this place! By foot, bike or boat, our land and water trails provide mini-vacation opportunities that can be enjoyed in hours, or even minutes, and are only moments from our front doors. For as much as I truly do enjoy hiking, drifting with the current as the land stands still, brings a certain solace and peace that is only interrupted by the sounds of the churning waters ahead.

Despite juggling time with my profession, six grandchildren, and almost as many conservation groups, I have managed to find time for my passion, “water.” With spring soon within reach, I can only hope for a season even close to that of last. My aging knees have reluctantly changed my boat of choice from canoe to kayak, but the vessel is only a means to get to the places I enjoy so much! From the high waters of spring, swimming with the kids in August, a moonlight paddle in the fall, to the last outing on the Youghiogheny in November, it was a year to be remembered, shared with family, good friends, and the wildlife of the region.



During a long lunch break last March, I was able to enjoy a unique day on the Casselman River. With snow still lying deep on the banks, I witnessed an unsuspecting red fox chasing down a rabbit; and a doe, which was unaware of my presence, swim across the river just yards from my boat. On a warm summer evening in June, several beavers seemed to be mocking our paddles by slapping their tails upon the water, and an otter was spotted on a trip near Fort Hill. Geese, mergansers, wood ducks, and mallard's were routinely seen along the Casselman, as well as an occasional kingfisher, blue heron, bald eagle, and a black bear. The improved water quality of the Casselman has resulted in increased sightings of yet another common species, “the fisher people.” From the headwaters near Jennings, Maryland to its confluence with the “Yough”, fishermen are vying for increasing numbers of smallmouth bass. Stocked trout are also available in the cool waters of spring, and if you know where to look, even the mighty northern pike can be found within the banks of the Casselman River.



So choose your weapon, be it a pack and boots, rod & reel, bicycle or boat, and make this your year to enjoy the “Casselman”.





## Mother Earth News Fair

*By Brooke Mishler*

The inaugural Mother Earth News Fair was held in September 2010 at Seven Springs Resort. More than 9,000 people participated in nearly 200 workshops, countless demonstrations within the categories of Do it Yourself, Renewable Energy, Sustainable Agriculture, Real Food and Cooking, Organic Gardening, Green Transportation, Green Building, Modern Homesteading, and Nature and Community. I attended workshops such as Organic Gardening for Beginners, Raw and Living Foods, Top 10 Herbs for Women's Health, How Green will your Funeral Be?, Making Tinctures, etc. Many sessions were standing room only! There were also many vendors that were promoting their 'earth friendly' products. Such Companies such as Young Living, Northern Sun, Aubrey Organics, Southern Exposure Seed Exchange and the list goes on and on. Live music and good food were also available throughout each day of the event. I strongly recommend this event for the novice or the expert in the arena of 'green' living. The weekend pass for both Saturday and Sunday was a mere \$25 per ticket.

The next Mother Earth News Fair at Seven Springs will take place on September 24-25, 2011. The anticipated number of workshops is 120 and the anticipated number of exhibitors is 20.

For additional information on the event please visit the website:  
<http://www.motherearthnews.com/fair/home.aspx>.

## 2011 Allegheny Mountain Green Fest



Natural Biodiversity is delighted to announce the Allegheny Mountain Green Fest:

Green Your Routine! The event will be held May 14, 2011 at University of Pittsburgh at Johnstown's Living Learning Center from 10am to 6pm.

Want to learn more about local food, energy conservation, backyard habitats, organic gardening, native plants and other ways to live green? Then come to Green Fest for a fun, affordable, all-day event! The Eco Expo will feature organizations and businesses offering products and services that help people green their lives, and in many cases save money. Green Fest will also include a native plant sale, hands-on workshops, engaging speakers, kids' activities, and more.

Keynote speaker Mike McGrath, host of National Public Radio show You Bet Your Garden, will present The Seven Secrets of Successful Organic Gardeners and a workshop on growing tomatoes.

ATTENDEES: Take advantage of reduced ticket prices by preregistering by Friday, May 6th.

ALSO...EXHIBITOR AND SPONSOR OPPORTUNITIES ARE STILL AVAILABLE!

Register your business or organization for an affordable booth in the Eco Expo or become a sponsor to support this great event. Exhibitor and sponsor registration deadline is April 15th. For more information on tickets, exhibit booths or sponsorships, visit <http://www.ohmonth.com/greenfest.shtml> or contact the Natural Biodiversity office at (814) 534-0204.





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## **United Nations Millennium Development Goals**

**By Lester Brunell**

Ten years ago as we entered the new millennium a meeting took place at the United Nations in New York City. Officials from 189 countries made a promise to try to achieve eight goals to make our world a better place by 2015. These are called the Millennium Development Goals (MDG). On September 20 -22, 2010 government representatives met again to talk about the progress we've made. They also discussed what more could be done in the next five years. The goals they set were 1. End Hunger, 2. Education for everyone, 3. Gender Equality, 4. Child Health, 5. Mothers' Health, 6. Fight Disease, 7. Protect our Environment and 8. Global Partnership.

Goal Number 7 is our Conservancy's reason for existing. The target of No. 7 is to ensure environmental sustainability by controlling the use of natural resources. The second target was to cut in half the number of people who don't have access to clean water. There are about six billion people on Earth; about one billion have access to clean water. Water is a global problem; water resources are much over-used and pollution is a never ending problem. Even in the United States access to clean water is not always a certainty. Recently we learned of the questionable quality of water being used by people living in the Somerset County community of Blough. That situation is now being alleviated. The Conservancy has been involved in improving water quality from the beginning. We are now involved in seeking a solution to the pollutions problems effecting both Kimberly Run and Lamberts Run.

Just as leaders from many nations have joined forces to improve our global quality of life, each of us can make a positive difference on a local level.

## **Somerset Chamber of Commerce 70th Annual Dinner**

The Annual Chamber Dinner is always a great event! Once again this year, I was excited to represent the Somerset County Conservancy at this event at Seven Springs. Our menu each year consists of Somerset County products, which I think is the best aspect of the event! This year's Outstanding Person of the Year Award was given to Brandon Fisher, CEO of Center Rock Inc. who along with his team was responsible for saving the 33 trapped Chilean Miners in October 2010. Two diplomats from Chile were in attendance and presented the award to Brandon. What an exciting moment to be a Somerset Countian! Once again this year, the Chamber Dinner was a great event!

## **Laurel Hill Creek**

We have had some great news recently on one of America's Most Endangered Rivers, Laurel Hill Creek! In December 2010 DEP Secretary John Hanger approved Laurel Hill Creek as a Critical Water Planning Area. The long-sought designation provides opportunities for residents and organizations to help decide how to use and preserve this valuable resource. The state will work with local advisory committees and water resource groups to develop a voluntary plan to address key problems and suggest measures to ensure an adequate supply of water in the future. Although the designation implementation is voluntary and will not add to the permit process, it's important for future planning and development.

Somerset County Conservancy  
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Somerset, PA 15501

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

**HELP US SPREAD THE WORD!**

Individual Member	\$ 15	Enclosed is:
Family Member	\$ 25	
Sustaining Member	\$ 75	
Patron, Club, Organization Member	\$100	
Lifetime Member	\$750	

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Somerset Co. Conservancy  
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