



Somerset County Conservancy A Charitable Trust

www.somersetcountyconservancy.org

Newsletter

Spring/Summer
2017

SCC Expands Biology Lab Space

The Conservancy recently enlarged the lab space used by High School Biology students in Somerset County. Our EITC approved program is becoming very popular among the high schools of the County. The Earned Income Tax Credit Educational program has helped defray the cost of this program, but more is needed. You don't need to be a Business to help. Anyone who may be interested in making a tax deductible contribution to the Somerset County Conservancy can ear-mark their contribution to go towards our Educational Program.



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Membership Renewal

If you haven't renewed your SCC membership for 2017 please do it today. The application form is on the last page of the Newsletter.

SLAC Update Spring 2017

The Somerset Lake Action Committee has been working on promoting development of the Somerset Lake Nature Park along with other groups and the Somerset County Commissioners. The lake is scheduled to be drawn down in mid-August this year to enable the old dam to be replaced. Work will be between the middle boat launch parking lot and the present dam area so park development in that area will have to be delayed. However, SLAC is promoting work to be done in the North parking lot area to include parking lot and boat launch improvements, a picnic pavilion, a handicap accessible, hard-surface trail from there to the south and a location for a future restroom site. To this end, a matching grant has been applied for and another application is being drafted.

The loop hiking trail is also getting attention with more clearing and stump grubbing in the works. The Somerset County Parks Board is having wetlands delineated and will be consulting with DEP on permitting requirements. In addition the Parks Board has chosen the design for picnic pavilions.

The Somerset County Conservation District has facilitated the approval for Wood Duck Road to get Dirt and Gravel Road funds for some desperately needed upgrades to this road's surface and drainage pipes. This work will be done this summer.

Upcoming events include a Snyder's of Berlin sponsored cleanup day to remove some accumulated debris. Also the much anticipated Give a Dam fundraiser is scheduled for May 19 at The Hayloft with food, drink, music, and fun. Tickets are available on Facebook.

SCC and EITC

How can I help The Somerset County Conservancy's (SCC) environmental education and save money on my taxes? The answer is EITC (Educational Improvement Tax Credit) program administered by the Community Foundation for the Alleghenies. SCC is an approved program for EITC. Donations can be made to the conservancy's environmental education program. Businesses can receive a tax credit for their donation.

Tax credits must be applied against the tax liability of a business for the tax year in which the contribution was made. Tax credits equal up to 75% of the contribution the first year and can be increased to 90% of the contribution if the business agrees to provide the same amount for two consecutive years. The maximum donation is \$750,00 a year. You must apply for EITC credits at:

<http://NewPA.com>.

Somerset County Conservancy has been approved as an innovative educational program. Berlin and Somerset school districts have participated in our educational programs. Berlin's third graders have participation in a wetland study at the Oak Trail AMD site. Somerset's AP biology and Keystone biology classes have been completing analysis of Kimberly Run stream for several years. Water chemistry, macro invertebrates and vertebrate organisms were collected and identified by students to assess stream health. The conservancy is able to provide specialized study to enhance the curriculum of the local schools.

Eagle View elementary students completed stream work with the help of Somerset high school students. The high school students were trained by Jennifer Brougher, Somerset biology teacher and Pam Diesel, Conservancy board member.

If you need a tax break and want to help environmental education in Somerset County, please donate to EITC. Our future generations need to learn an appreciation of the natural environment at a young age.



Kimberly Run Fish Stocking

Brook trout were again stocked in Kimberly Run on the property of the Conservancy prior to the opening day of trout season. The Conservancy provides these resources to encourage visitors to become members of the Conservancy. The Casselman River Watershed Association's trout hatchery raised the fish and delivered them to Kimberly Run where the Conservancy volunteers carried buckets of fish up and down stream.



Kestrel Box Program

The Somerset County Conservancy has partnered with Somerset Rural Electric to place five Kestrel boxes on old, recycled utility poles. The American Kestrel is the small, colorful falcon of open spaces and farmlands. The Kestrel nests in cavities and will accept man-made boxes. Their diet is small rodents, occasional small birds and snakes, and many large insects in the summer. Numbers of this once common bird which is often seen sitting on wires has been declining. It is hoped that we will get a couple nests our first year and that the partnership will continue with more boxes and monitoring in future years. To see one of the mounted boxes with predator guard visit the fields at Kimberly Run Natural Area.

Bluebird boxes on KRNA are also being replaced as needed, although it has been suggested by our maintenance volunteer's that we consider changing the name of the "Bluebird Trail" to "Tree Swallow Trail" because we host more Tree Swallows than Bluebirds.



Help Our Facebook Page Grow!

We would like to make an attempt to keep our Facebook page as active as possible and are looking for any or all photos and/or stories to share on our page! Please feel free to post on our timeline, or text your items to Martin Hurl at 814-279-2893. Let's do all we can to spread the word about the great works of the Somerset County Conservancy!



A Spring Ramp Recipe

- 8 oz. fresh ramp leaves, washed and cleaned
- ½ oz. fresh ramp bulbs, roughly chopped
- 1 heaping tablespoon sunflower seeds
- ½ cup sunflower oil or a combination of other cheaper oils; if you're on a budget, use canola
- 3 tablespoons finest quality parmigiano reggiano or another hard grating cheese



Heat oven to 300 degrees or so, toast the sunflower seeds until they're aromatic and lightly golden. In the meantime, bring a pot of water to a boil. Use enough water to accommodate your fresh ramp greens. Cook the ramp leaves just until they wilt in the water, and then immediately transfer them to an ice bath and chill. Remove the ramp leaves from the water, and squeeze the water out with your hands or by placing them in a towel. Roughly chop the ramp leaves. In the bowl of a blender, combine the ramp leaves, toasted sunflower seeds, cheese, ramp bulbs and oil. Begin the pureeing process by pulsing to break things up; then brace the top of the blender with a towel to prevent splatters, and puree on the highest setting for one minute. After pureeing, if the pesto isn't creamy, fluffy and light, drizzle in some more oil, and continue to puree until velvety smooth.

We Need You!

Please remember that the entire operating budget of the Somerset County Conservancy, the Kimberly Run Natural Area, and the Trail on the West Side of Somerset Lake are maintained by Memberships and Contributions. If you have already renewed your Membership for 2017 we thank you, if you have not or would like to become a new member Please fill out the form on the last page of this Newsletter and send it in.

We can't do it without you!!



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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: _____ \$ 20	Individual Member
_____ \$ 30	Family Member
_____ \$ 75	Sustaining Member
_____ \$100	Patron, Club, Organization Member
_____ \$750	Lifetime Member

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Somerset Co. Conservancy
P.O. Box 241
Somerset, PA 15501

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