



# Somerset County Conservancy A Charitable Trust

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

## Newsletter

Fall/Winter  
2018



### “Craigwood”

Just past the gate at the entrance to Kimberly Run Natural Area you may have seen the “Craigwood” sign. A stroll down the lane will bring you to the remains of a Family Cabin. This was the weekend and summer vacation retreat for Bill McMaster. When he was in high school Bill would come here from his home in Pittsburgh with high school friends to relax, explore and play in the creek. This location holds many memories of friends and



family for Bill. He tries to come and visit this site at least once per year. When the Conservancy acquired this property in 2012 and invited public access Bill was welcomed into our family. Together we have cleaned up the site, added a bench honoring TOM CRAIG, HOWARD MCMASTER & BUD MCMASTER, Bill's ancestors responsible for building the Cabin. We recently completed restoring the chimney still standing on the site.

The next time you visit KRNA please take the opportunity to see Craigwood.



**Bill McMaster**



## **Somerset Lake Action Committee**

### **Fall 2018 Update**

Even though the repairs to the dam are delayed until a new start date of next Spring, there has been progress on Somerset Lake Nature Park. In the early summer Wood Duck Road which traverses the Park was ground up, smoothed out and resurfaced with a permeable surface. This was done with a grant to Somerset County facilitated by the Somerset Conservation District using the Dirt and Gravel Road Program. The new surface is a wonderful improvement over the old, oft-patched bumpy road!

Work is also progressing on the northern parking area and the first section of a multi-use trail from the north end of the lake south to an area across from Seimon's Nursing Home. This work is being done with a \$50,000 grant to the County from a DCNR program which was matched with \$50,000 raised for SLAC by the Give a Dam Fundraisers. The area should be greatly improved when finished and it is hoped that a pad will be available to work on a picnic pavilion at one end of the parking lot.

A Vision Statement and Master Work Plan is also currently being developed by Mike Riggs who has been appointed by the County as the SLNP Plan Coordinator through the end of 2018. Mike will establish concrete goals and a working timeline to help direct future development of the park so that it is an attractive County asset at the time of the dam being repaired and Somerset Lake being refilled.

SLAC has also presented a proposal to the PA Fish and Boat Commission to help do habitat work in the lake bed which would benefit both the fish and migrating shorebirds. This would of course benefit both fishermen and birders by adding more structure for fish and seasonal mud habitat for the hard to find in PA shorebirds (see related article). Grants have been applied for which could be used towards conducting the work. A decision on doing the work is pending.

### **Education Committee Update**

Somerset County Conservancy has been expanding our education programs to include: grade 6 students, biology classes, Advanced Placement Biology students, Advanced Placement Environmental Science students and the environmental science club from Somerset Area School District.

On May 4, 2018 the students from the environmental science club at SASD completed training at Kimberly Run. These students then assisted the grade 6 students by providing small group instruction on the week of May 14, 2018. The students assessed stream quality by collecting macroinvertebrates and vertebrates from Kimberly Run.


SASD biology students analyzed Kimberly Run in May. The conclusion of a healthy stream was made by the collection of macroinvertebrates (mayfly, crane fly, dobsonfly and caddis fly larvae among other organisms), vertebrates (frogs, fish and salamanders), and chemical parameters (dissolved oxygen, alkalinity, acidity, etc.).

In September, Advanced Placement Biology students also assessed the stream while dealing with high swift water from the rains. Students were able to determine a healthy stream from the macroinvertebrate species and chemical parameters.

In October, Advanced Placement Environmental Science students also assessed Kimberly Run as part of a yearlong study. Students will assess water quality and biological indicators every month for the next school year. This ongoing project will provide us with data about Kimberly Run which we presently do not have access.


## SCC Picnic 2018

On September 16<sup>th</sup> about 35 Conservancy members met at the Cabin on Kimberly Run Natural Area for our annual picnic. For the first time in years we had no rain in spite of the remanence of Hurricane Florence. With good weather, good food, a roaring camp fire we had a chance to tryout the new picnic tables and benches built by Travis Fike, a Somerset Boy Scout Troop # 131 Eagle project. A good time was had by everyone.



## An Invitation to our Annual Membership Banquet

**The Somerset County Conservancy**  
**Wednesday, December 5, 2018**



Cocktails at 6:30 pm Dinner at 7:00 pm

### **Somerset Trust Company's Meeting Room**

The Trust Building at the corner of N. Center Ave. & Union St.  
Enter through the Union St. side door entrance (post office side)  
131 North Center Avenue  
Somerset, PA 15501

**Come and enjoy dinner under the Dome**

**Catered by Chuck Wagon Restaurant**

\$25.00 per person at the door

**Reservations required**

**E-mail [mail@somersetcountyconservancy.org](mailto:mail@somersetcountyconservancy.org)**

**Or phone Jim at 814-445-4850**



## Eagle Scout Project

Travis Fike is a 17-year-old Somerset Area School District senior. He has been a Scout since he was about six and is a member of Boy Scout Troop 131. He contacted the Somerset County Conservancy in January 2018 and presented his Eagle Scout project ideas at the board meeting in February. After hearing some suggestions from the board members, Travis updated his final plans and presented them at the March meeting. The final project was to make 2 picnic tables, 4 benches that turn into tables, and 2 regular benches. They were made so people can use them to enjoy nature by the trails and rest as needed. SDC Building Center and Berlin Lumber Company donated materials and supplies. The Fraternal Order of Eagles and Somerset Trust Company donated money. The total amount of funding raised was \$783.30, which allowed Travis to build one more bench than he was planning. Volunteers, which included other Scouts, and various family members donated 147.4 hours to complete the project. The tables and benches were delivered to the Kimberly Run Natural Area on August 25, 2018, which was in time to be used at the annual picnic. Each table and bench have the Somerset County Conservancy logo on it.



# Birding at Somerset Lake Nature Park

By Jeff Payne DVM



***Ruddy turnstone***

Somerset Lake Nature Park (SLNP) is listed by the National Audubon Society as an Important Bird Area. It has a list of nearly 260 species which have been found on the lake or the surrounding 200 acres. Early Fall is a good time to see migrating forest birds such as warblers, tanagers and vireos and also to see the long distant migrants known as shorebirds. Shorebirds breed in the arctic and migrate to the southern coast of North America, Latin America or even the southern aspect of South America. They most typically are searched for along shorelines such as those in Delaware or New Jersey, but SLNP lies on the migration path and since the drawdowns started in 2012 there have been 31 of these often elusive species found at the lake including some rather

large numbers. Species seen on mudflats at the lake include:

Semipalmated Plover, Killdeer, American Golden Plover, Black-bellied Plover, Spotted Sandpiper, American Avocet, Greater Yellowlegs, Lesser Yellowlegs, Solitary Sandpiper, Whimbrel, Willet, Marbled Godwit, Ruddy Turnstone, Western Sandpiper, Semipalmated Sandpiper, Least Sandpiper, Sanderling, Pectoral Sandpiper, Dunlin, Stilt Sandpiper, Baird's Sandpiper, Red Knot, Buff-breasted Sandpiper, Ruff, White-rumped Sandpiper, Red-necked Phalarope, Red Phalarope, American Woodcock, Wilson's Snipe, Short-billed Dowitcher, and the Long-billed Dowitcher.

Also waterfowl migration can be spectacular as the weather turns cold and windy. If duck hunting season is in, it is best to go out on Sundays so that the birds are not being hastened south.

So find a pair of binoculars and go out for a look-be sure to look up as a Bald Eagle is often seen flying over!



***Red-necked phalarope***

## Beech Leaf Disease

by: Rebecca Raupach

Beech trees are mysteriously dying. Not a stranger to illness, the Beech tree has long suffered disease of the bark, a combination of an insect and pathogen. First discovered in Nova Scotia, beech bark disease slowly started to make its way into the Northern United States around the 1940's, reaching Pennsylvania by the 1960's. The latest threat to beech trees is the faster moving beech leaf disease, recently discovered in Ohio in 2012 by biologist John Pogacnik, during a routine survey of forests. Beech leaf disease has now shown up in nine



Ohio counties, in at least one western Pennsylvania county, in Southwestern New York, as well as Canada, and its spread shows no signs of slowing. The American beech inhabits vast regions from the Gulf of Mexico to southern Canada, and from the Atlantic Ocean to eastern Texas and Wisconsin. Scientists fear the beech could face the same devastation as other great American specimens such as the chestnut, elm, hemlock and ash trees. Most confounding of all is the inability of researchers to find the cause of the disease. Searches for a virus, bacteria or fungus, all common tree pathogens, have come up empty. Beech leaf disease is characterized by darker green bands or stripes on the leaves, as well as shriveled leaves. According to Forest Resources Educator Kimberly Bohn, "the first visible sign is a discoloration of the leaves in which the areas around the veins appear markedly darker than the rest of the leaf. The interior parts of the leaf between the veins then become paler and chlorotic (i.e., yellowish), resulting in a distinctive striped appearance. Eventually the leaves shrivel or curl before falling prematurely." While largely unimportant to the timber industry, beech is extremely ecologically important in the eastern United States, due to its almost unmatched ability to grow in deep shade, as well as the food it provides. Many animals such as bear and deer depend on beech nuts for survival where oaks are rare, in the north. A beech dieback would be a huge loss, it is clear. At Kimberly Run Natural Area, there are many beech trees, including one lovely grove on the White trail where the Fall color of all those beeches together is exceptionally beautiful. Because the disease seems to be spreading quickly, tracking its progress in the next few years is crucial. The Penn State Extension office says that if you think you've seen evidence of beech leaf disease in your forest, consult with your local DCNR Bureau of Forestry service forester to confirm the diagnosis.

## 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!





## ITALIAN APPLE CAKE (*Torta Di Mela*)

by: Chef Chloe Coscarelli

At apple season, this is a delicious way to serve up one of Fall's best fruits. And if you head to your local Farmer's Market or an orchard, good for you for supporting local! If you're feeling adventurous, try replacing one of the apples with a pear!

1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour  
3/4 cup sugar  
3/4 teaspoon baking soda  
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon  
1/4 teaspoon salt  
1/2 cup canola oil  
1/4 cup water  
2 teaspoons pure vanilla extract  
1 tablespoon white or apple cider vinegar  
3 apples, peeled and thinly sliced  
Powdered sugar for serving



Preheat the oven to 350°F. Lightly grease a 9-inch round pan and line with parchment paper. Grease again.

In a large bowl, Whisk flour, sugar, baking soda, cinnamon and salt. In a separate bowl, whisk oil, water, vanilla and vinegar. Pour wet ingredients into the dry ingredients and mix with a large spoon until just combined. Do not overmix. Batter will be very thick, but the apples will release moisture as they bake.

Arrange some of the apples in a circular pattern to cover most of the bottom of the prepared cake pan. Then gently fold in the remaining apples into the batter. Spoon the batter into the pan, being careful not to disrupt the apple pattern on the bottom. Use a spatula or your fingertips to pat it evenly into the pan.

Bake for 40 to 45 minutes, or until the center is set and the cake is lightly browned on top. Rotate the cake halfway through baking time.

Once cooled, run a knife around the edges to loosen the cake, and gently unmold so that the apple design is on top. Peel off the parchment paper. Dust With powdered sugar and serve. Serves 8

# ***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 2018 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!!**



**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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