



# Somerset County Conservancy A Charitable Trust

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

## Newsletter

Fall/Winter  
2019

### Kimberly Run Natural Area Trails

Maintaining the trails at Kimberly Run Natural Area this spring and summer was quite a challenge for our summer internes Nolan Pitts and Grace Bell. All the wet weather kept everything growing at an accelerated rate or turned the trails to mud. If the mower got just slightly off the trail it would sink in the mud. The White Trail was like walking in mud-soup so we constructed an additional 300 feet of boardwalk (total almost 600 feet) to keep walkers out of the mud. It seemed that the break-away bridge on the White Trail got swept away every time it rained.

We also tried to control invasive plants along the trails and fields. Autumn olive growing in the fields and Japanese Barberry along the trails were treated with herbicide because they were too numerous to control by hand cutting.

A Doggie Waste Station was also added and is being filled regularly so we hope it is helping keep the trails clean.



# In Memoriam

## William McMaster

By Steve Cook  
Pittsburgh, PA

Bill McMaster died on 8/26/19 in Los Angeles at the age of 89. Bill's mother was a Craig family member, and they owned the property that is now part of Kimberly Run. He and his family would spend weekends and parts of summer vacation in Somerset, living two hours away just outside of Pittsburgh. His earliest memories are from the late 1930's.

Approximately 20 years ago I did some research for Bill concerning the sale of the property. We had visited the site and saw several improvements. I eventually came in contact with James Moses who told me about the Somerset Conservancy and acquiring the property. Bill was thrilled, becoming a lifetime member and was always happy about the progress of Craigwood.



Bill and I had visited Craigwood about every other year for the last dozen years. The visits were always fun, combining stories from long ago to the events taking place there present day. It is a beautiful place.

## Bob Bastian

Bob Bastian passed away on July 13, 2019. Bob was a well-known veterinarian and a PA State Representative, but was also active and recognized in the conservation community as well.

Bob, in partnership with former State Senator Rich Kasunic, was instrumental in securing the land from the State Department of General Services that would become the Somerset County Conservancy owned and managed Kimberly Run Natural Area. Bob was also a founding member and treasurer of the Wells Creek Watershed Association that has driven the local efforts that returned Wells Creek to a viable recreational waterway and fishery. He also initiated and organized a regional landowner association that focused on promoting sound forestry and land conservation programs for forest landowners.

Bob also personally made the direct connection, on behalf of the Somerset Conservation District, with U. S. Congressman Bill Shuster that led to the one million dollars of federal highway transportation funds that restored the historic King's Covered Bridge over Laurel Hill Creek to a popular eco-tourism destination point.

His wife, Susie, also served on the Board of Directors of the Somerset Conservation District for many years. Through that connection and many others, Bob often served as a liaison between the Conservancy, the District and other conservation organizations with the state legislature that enabled those groups to achieve their natural resource conservation project goals.






## SCC Picnic 2019


On September 23<sup>rd</sup>, under a sunny clear sky, about 35 conservancy members gathered for our annual fall picnic. Board member, Roger Latuch, brought his RTV (Rugged Terrain Vehicle) so some of our less mobile older members could tour the grounds, but it was a bigger hit with all the children that attended. I'm not sure if the RTV or the marshmallows was the biggest hit.

With good weather, good food, a roaring camp fire, a good time was had by everyone.



## An Invitation to our Annual Membership Banquet

The Somerset County Conservancy  
Wednesday, December 4, 2019



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

**Fall 2019**

## **Somerset Lake Action Committee Update**

Jeff Payne

Somerset Lake is drawn down and the contractor to replace the dam should be announced imminently. Progress is being made on the Somerset Lake Nature Park on several fronts. Exciting is the recent completion by SLAC of the Park's first picnic pavilion at the North parking area of the lake. Built by Joe Miller Construction the pavilion is local hemlock with a cement floor, steel roof and stone encased lower posts. Good job Joe and crew! The funds required to build it come from the many generous donors to SLAC over the years but especially the family and friends of Mike Ohler. In honor of Mike we are going to name it the Mike Ohler Pavilion. Soon the picnic tables we ordered should be delivered and we can officially hand it over to Somerset County.



Work on the trail continues with Somerset County Parks and Trails Coordinator Lindsay Pyle coordinating county maintenance staff and PA Department of Corrections inmate's efforts to clear brush for the next section of trail from the North parking area to Wood Duck Rd. The trail footprint is clear and all the brush is chipped awaiting further construction. A Southern Alleghenies grant has been successfully applied for and that money will be matched by SLAC and the in-kind work provided by PA DOC and the county workers. The contract should be let out late fall for early spring construction.



Discussions continue with the PA Fish and Boat Commission on doing habitat work in the lake bed. The ideas include adding structure to the bottom to benefit multiple species including fish, reptiles and birds. Ideas to construct a partial dike which could incorporate parts of the lake trail have also been entertained. Engineering work still needs to be done and although SLAC still has some donated money left there will need to be more funds identified and grants needed.





# A Reverence for Trees



By Rebecca Raupach



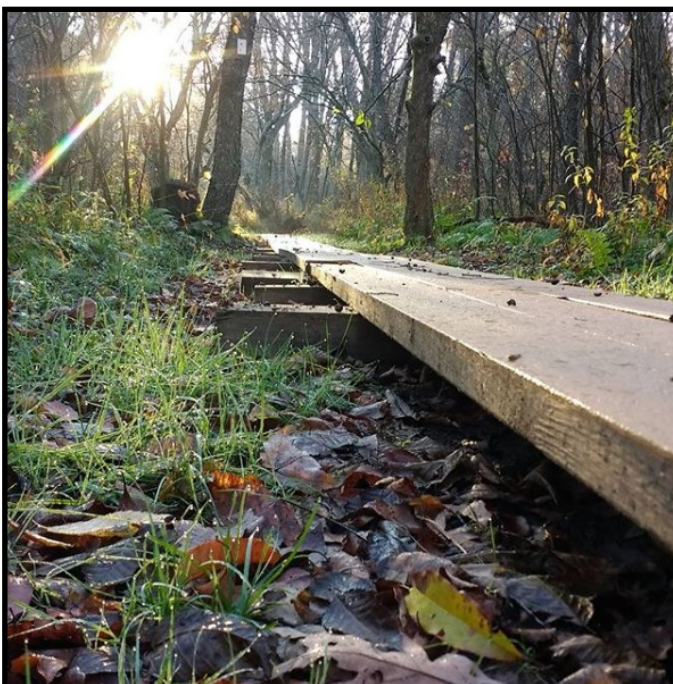
As Robert Frost once said so well in his titular poem, "Nothing gold can stay". Here we are on the cusp of leaf season, and before long, autumn will have faded away.

Luckily, I have just the thing for end-of-fall seasonal blues: tree identification. This is a terrific time of year to practice tree identification, with leaves and their changing colors still visible, along with the bark becoming more visible than it is in high summer. Take a walk with me, at Kimberly Run. Well, consider this a sort of self-guided tour. From the parking lot of Craig Road, we can see a mature Eastern Hemlock (*Tsuga Canadensis*), overlooking the Kimberly Run Natural Area's recently updated entrance map and sign. We walk up the stone drive, known as Red Dog Road, and once past the gate, we are instantly immersed in a dazzling display of tree varieties: a mixed conifer-hardwood forest. Oak, *Quercus*; maple, *Acer*; pine, *Pinus*; hemlock, *Tsuga*; cherry, *Prunus*; beech, *Fagus*; birch, *Betula*; hickories, *Carya*; cucumber

tree, *Magnolia acuminata* and more are to be found along the trails at KRNA. And oh, the fun in learning to identify one deciduous tree from another, when most of those leaves have fallen. A great source for tree identification from bark, is Michael Wojtech's book, *Bark, A Field Guide to Trees of the Northeast*. Wojtech lists five steps to identifying trees by bark using his identification keys.

Back on Red Dog Road, there is a large maple tree of note on the left of the trail, about fifty feet or so on from the orange traffic cone. Let's begin at the Blue/White Trail, at the memorial Piersol Trail rock, where we walk through so many pines that the resinous scent is delightfully noticeable. Not too far along the Blue/White Trail from the memorial rock, the White Trail takes off on your right. If you follow the White Trail, you will come to a small shelter, a covered table with benches that is surrounded by a lovely little grove of beech trees, identified by their smooth, unbroken, gray bark. These beech leaves turn a beautiful, yellow color in fall. About halfway along the White Trail, on the downhill stretch where there's a lot of tall, mature trees, and just before the second bench, you will find Shagbark Hickory, *Carya ovata* trees. Once you know the key identifying signs, a mature specimen of this tree is impossible to miss. It is perhaps the best ornamental hickory due to the open branching habit and extremely shaggy, gray bark that is broken into vertical strips. One clue, that you've found Shagbark hickory in fall is the litter of small, green nut shells all over the trail that the squirrels and chipmunks have left behind, as they gather the nuts found inside.

Leaning over the Gene Davis memorial bench, and just before the largest bridge on the White Trail, is a Hawthorn, *Crataegus spp*, so be sure to note the decorative and wicked sharp thorns on this specimen. Where the White Trail opens onto the meadow path, it's a short distance past the bogs to the return loop, (next trail on the left), of the Blue/White trail. Along this shorter trail, leading up to the large bridge is a lovely avenue-looking path of youngish Hemlocks. Once you've reached the bridge, note the majestic maples and yellow birch *Betula alleghaniensis* on the far side. From this bridge, it's just a hundred feet or so until you pass the beginning of the White Trail, on the way back to the Piersol rock at the head of the Blue Trail, and the short walk back up Red Dog Road to the parking lot, and the start of our tour. My thanks to you, fellow conservationists, in helping to preserve the trees of Penn's Woods through SCC. Some further resources for tree identification are: *Common Trees of Pennsylvania*, online edition; *A Field Guide to Eastern Trees* (Peterson Field Guides); and the *Arbor Day Foundation Tree Identification Guide* online.



## **We need interested people to help**

If you have ever thought you would be interested in joining a group of like-minded individuals and share interest in our mission or if you enjoy the benefits and experience of our Kimberly Run Natural Area we need your help. Please consider joining our Board of Directors and take part in managing and leading this great organization. Contact any Board member or E-mail us at [mail@somersetcountyconservancy.org](mailto:mail@somersetcountyconservancy.org)



## **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!



# Gingerbread Apple Pie

recipe courtesy of Isa Chandra Moskowitz

## FOR THE CRUST:

- 1 1/2 cups all-purpose unbleached flour
- 1/2 cup brown sugar
- 1 teaspoon ground ginger
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/4 teaspoon ground allspice
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/2 cup nonhydrogenated margarine, softened
- 1 tablespoon molasses
- 2 tablespoons cold water

## FOR THE FILLING:

- 2 pounds Granny Smith apples (about 8), peeled, cored, and thinly sliced
- 1/2 cup brown sugar
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/4 teaspoon ground or freshly grated nutmeg
- 1/4 teaspoon ground allspice
- 1/2 teaspoon ground ginger
- Pinch ground cloves
- 1/4 cup pure maple syrup
- 1 tablespoon canola oil
- 2 tablespoons tapioca starch or arrowroot

Preheat oven to 375 degrees F.

### *Make the crust:*

Sift together the flour, sugar, spices, salt and baking powder. Add the margarine one tablespoon at a time and cut in with a pastry cutter, knife or your fingertips. Drizzle the molasses and water over the dough, mixing with your fingertips until the crumbs of dough begin to cling together. Set aside 1/2 cup of the dough. Gather together the rest of the dough and knead it into a ball. Press it evenly into the bottom and sides of a pie pan and bake for 10 minutes.

### *Make the filling:*

While the crust bakes, combine in a mixing bowl all the filling ingredients except the tapioca starch. Sprinkle the tapioca over the apple mixture and mix until the starch is dissolved.

### *Assemble the pie:*

Fill the pie crust with the apple mixture, and crumble the remaining 1/2 cup of dough over the filling. Cover with foil and bake for 20 more minutes. Remove the foil and bake 30 minutes more; the filling should be bubbling and the apples should be tender. Serve warm or at room temperature.



**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  
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