



# Somerset County Conservancy A Charitable Trust

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

## Newsletter

Fall 2021

### Family Aquatic Adventure



On July 18, 2021, Somerset County Conservancy presented a stream study on Kimberly Run at the Kimberly Run Natural Area. Families and members collected macroinvertebrates from the stream with nets and turned over rocks to find the organisms that live in the

stream. Most macroinvertebrates, like mayflies, stoneflies, and dragon flies, spend two years of their life living in the water before becoming adults. These organisms indicate the health of a stream. A healthy stream has many macroinvertebrates who provide food for other organisms like fish, frogs, and salamanders. Many organisms were caught and identified by the participants at this activity.



## **President's Message**

**Jeff Payne**

It has been a busy season for the Somerset County Conservancy. We finished off the late spring with a very well-attended walk at Somerset Lake where a group of our Somerset Lake Action Committee folks from the Conservancy walked attendees along the new lake trail and discussed the fish structures, new island, and some bottom contouring SLAC helped put in place. Later in the summer, SLAC oversaw construction of the fishing platform, discussed later, which should be done soon. Bob Hook and I gave a presentation about the Conservancy to the Somerset Rotary which was well received.

Very well-attended, and superbly done, was a wildflower walk led by Dr. Scott Bastian. Attendees learned not only the names of many flowers and other plants but also some of their medicinal and food uses—thank you Scott! Kimberly Run Natural Area was very busy with hikers and dog walkers. So many people use the area and it takes a lot of time and effort from our hard-working maintenance crew of Chief, Jim Moses, and intern, Nathan Wingard, to keep the trails, boardwalks, and bridges presentable. Hats off to Jim and Nathan!

The SCC owns the ground where 5 different abandoned mine drainage (AMD) passive treatment sites are located which greatly contribute to the cleaner water in the Stonycreek and Casselman Rivers. The job of maintaining those AMD systems, which need periodic maintenance both small and large, falls to the Somerset Conservation District. In order to help fund some of this maintenance work, SCD Manager, Len Lichvar, has started an Oven Run Trust Fund. To support this worthy cause the SCC had issued a Challenge Grant where we would match \$5,000 in donations to this fund. With the successful celebration of Stonycreek River Improvement Project's 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and the media's attention on the recreation on our cleaner rivers we have presented this check to the Conservation District!

The Board has been working on some possible areas to expand Kimberly Run Natural Area and add onto the hiking trails. While this is in the early planning/negotiating phases it will be important to have the support of our members and the community. Ask your friends and neighbors to join the Conservancy now for 2022!

We hope to see you at our Annual Banquet at the Somerset Trust Company's Trust office under the dome (next to the post office) on Wednesday, December 1.







## **Somerset Lake Action Committee**

**Jeff Payne**

Joe Miller Contracting has finished the roof covering and concrete pad and Maust Excavating is actively working on the parking area (with the help of Somerset Township) and connecting trail so the handicap accessible fishing platform at Somerset Lake is nearly done! The lake area in front of the platform has been deepened and additionally some rock piles have been placed to be fish attractants once the lake is refilled. SLAC will be ordering some benches to be placed at the

back of the covered area and we hope to be able to dedicate it and turn it over to Somerset County for the Somerset Lake Nature Park later this fall. Then we only need to add water! We are being told that the dam work will be completed this fall and then filling can commence.

We would like to sincerely thank the following for their contributions and help making this project possible:

**CME Engineering**  
**Joe Miller Contracting**  
**Maust Excavating**  
**Somerset Township Supervisors**  
**Riggs Industries**  
**Berlin Lumber Company**  
**Sanner Concrete**  
**Alan Miller Woodworking**  
*and*  
**All the many businesses and individuals**  
**who contributed to SLAC**



We encourage everyone to visit this project along the new hiking trail across from Siemon's Lakeview Manor.



## Intern Projects

Jim Moses

Our Summer Intern, Nathan Wingard, has been busy this summer with a variety of projects. His primary duties are cutting grass and weedeating the walking trails at Kimberly Run Natural area and at Mallards Rest. In addition to routine trail maintenance we have had a number of trees falling on the trails during this summer's storms. A couple of them were very large and required help from volunteers' (thank you Jacob Morgan) with chains and a come-along to move sections of tree from the trail. On the Creekside Trail we built wooden steps on a steep section to aid navigating the path's slope. 3 to 4 foot sections of rebar had to be driven into the ground to anchor the steps. The Creekside Trail was rerouted



to avoid a very muddy section on the upper portion and it now joins up with the Blue Trail near the Vernal Pond. Bridge decks and boardwalks were repainted with non-skid deck refinisher.



Unfortunately, we have found the invasive Woolly Adelgid on our American Hemlock

Trees. Seven years ago we found some of our hemlock trees along the blue trail were infected, we think we treated the infected trees successfully. But to be totally honest we are not sure if our treatment was responsible for the decline or the extremely cold winters of 2014 and 2015. Either way the Adelgids were gone. This September we treated one hundred more trees and marked them with round metal tags so that we may follow their health. Along with this treatment we are hoping for a week or two of extremely cold weather to help retard the spread of the Wooley Adelgids attacking the American Hemlocks.



## **Parking Area at Cabin**

**Fred Will**

This project started over a year ago and was finally completed this past August. After some discussion and planning, the project started with a load of crushed stone donated and delivered by Mostoller Land Fill (now Advanced Disposal). A little later 2 loads of strip-mine fill were donated by John Beachley and delivered by Brian Black. In late fall 2020, Roger Latuch brought his excavator and did some digging and rock removal to install a 12 inch pipe to improve drainage and prevent flooding around the cabin.

This past summer Nathan Wingard worked as an intern for the Somerset Conservation District and the Somerset County Conservancy. He mentioned his father owned a business that rented skid loaders, and he would operate it if we rented one. The loader was rented from Bobcat of Johnstown (at a reduced rate, thank you Bobcat of Johnstown) and Nathan did an exceptional job moving and leveling the material. This resulted in better drainage and a larger parking area for handicapped and us senior citizens who have trouble walking up and down the steep access road to the cabin.

Additional improvements and a lot of grading and filling of holes was also done on the "Tractor Road" to improve better access to the pavilion and Blue Bird trail in the field.

A huge THANK YOU to everyone involved. This could not have been accomplished without your generous support.

## **Conservancy leaders host local Scouts at Somerset Lake Nature Park**

**Bob Hook**

As the afternoon slipped into sunset and the leaves fell from the maple and oak trees, a group of young Cub Scouts eagerly walked closer to listen to Mr. Hook as he continued with his guided walking tour of Somerset Lake.



Questions surrounding the lakes return of water, to the fish that will occupy the lake at that time, quickly passed over their breaths. Pack 131's young men have a love of nature and learning new pieces of information each outing. Somerset Cub scout pack 131 has prided on their "Do your best motto" each and every year by familiarizing with their community, family, and personal needs for continued education. Living in a region such as Somerset County, has afforded Mrs. Amy Thompson and her den leaders to establish insightful teaching experiences in and around the area as to provide a basis of next level thinking and community support.





## For the love of birds

Rebecca Raupach

As I am sitting writing on a very warm day this first week of October, my Autumn to do list is in mind. A favorite seasonal task is cleaning and refilling our bird feeders in the yard. The anticipation of seeing our much-beloved, feathered friends in our small yard throughout an often bleak winter landscape is a real pleasure. For the last several years I've kept bird feeders filled throughout most

of the summer months so that the birds would not get out of the habit of visiting our property. Due to the mystery bird illnesses and deaths affecting several Mid-Atlantic, Midwestern, and Southern states, I did not keep our feeders or bird bath full this summer at the recommendation of ornithologists at large. In late May, reports of sick and dying birds became widely reported to wildlife managers. Ocular and neurological symptoms presented mostly, although not exclusively, in nestling and fledgling songbird species such as Blue Jays, European Starlings, American Robins, and common Grackles. According to the National Wildlife Federation, the cause of the illnesses and deaths are still inconclusive, although researchers say, "One theory is that because the documentation of sick and dead birds overlays with the timeframe and geographic distribution of the periodical cicadas of Brood X that emerged this year, it seems likely that there's a connection. It could be some natural illness caused by ingesting cicadas or possibly secondary effects of pesticides that people sprayed on the cicadas (which is absolutely the wrong thing to do). It's important to note, however, that this cicada connection is still just speculation." According to the most recent update from the Cornell Wildlife Health Lab, it is currently deemed safe to put bird feeders and baths back out. Ornithologists recommend regular cleaning and disinfecting of feeders and baths to prevent the spread of disease.

As always, if you find a sick or dead bird, report it to your local or state wildlife agency for documentation. Reports of the mystery bird illness and deaths that were received largely came from the public. The preservation and protection of wildlife and wild places is in everyone's best interests. I thank you, fellow conservationists, for your support of SCC and the wilds. For our out of state supporters, an online search for your state regional wildlife agency will yield information for reporting. In Pennsylvania, contact information for your local, regional wildlife agency can be found online at: <https://www.pgc.pa.gov/InformationResources/AboutUs/ContactInformation/Pages/default.aspx#offices>

Sources include: The Cornell Lab website: <https://www.allaboutbirds.org>

Pennvet Wildlife Futures Program: <https://www.vet.upenn.edu/research/centers-laboratories/research-initiatives/wildlife-futures-program>

The National Wildlife Federation: <https://blog.nwf.org/2021/08/update-on-mysterious-bird-deaths/>



From left, SCC member, Jim Moses, SCC President, Jeff Payne, present a check to Somerset Conservation District Manager, Len Lichvar, and Kecia Bal, Community Foundation for the Alleghenies, for the Oven Run Trustfund.

# Pumpkin Oatmeal Cookies recipe

Rebecca Raupach

2 cups all-purpose flour  
1 and 1/3 cups rolled oats  
1 teaspoon baking soda  
3/4 teaspoon salt  
1 teaspoon cinnamon  
1/2 teaspoon nutmeg  
1 and 2/3 cups sugar  
2/3 cup canola or safflower oil  
2 tablespoons molasses  
1 cup canned pumpkin, or cooked pureed pumpkin (do not use pumpkin pie mix)\*\*  
2 teaspoons vanilla extract  
1 tablespoon ground flaxseeds (optional) \*see note below  
1 cup pecans, finely chopped  
1/2 cup raisins (or chocolate chips if preferred)



Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Lightly grease two cookie sheets. Mix together the flour, oats, baking soda, salt and spices.

In a separate bowl, mix together the sugar, oil, molasses, pumpkin and vanilla (and flaxseeds if using) until very well combined.

Add the dry ingredients to the wet in three batches, folding to combine. Fold in the pecans and raisins.

Drop by tablespoons onto the prepared cookie sheets. They don't spread very much so they can be placed only an inch apart.

Flatten the tops of the cookies with a fork or with your fingers, to press into a cookie shape. Bake for 16 minutes at 350 degrees F.

If you are using two sheets of cookies on two levels of your oven, rotate the sheets halfway through for even baking. You'll have

enough batter for four sheets. Remove from oven, cool on the cookie sheets for two minutes, then transfer to a cooling rack.

These taste best when they've had some time to cool and set. They taste even better the next day.

\*Ground flaxseeds make a chewier, more cake-like cookie. For thinner cookies, omit the flax seed.

\*\* If out of pumpkin puree, a thick applesauce substituted in place of pumpkin makes a delicious cookie, too.



**An Invitation to our  
Annual membership Banquet  
The Somerset County Conservancy  
Wednesday, Dec. 1, 2021**

**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- [somersetconservancyevents@gmail.com](mailto:somersetconservancyevents@gmail.com)**

**Phone Jeff – 814-267-9247 Leave message**

## **Conservancy Annual Picnic**

**Pam Diesel**

On September 19, 2021, the Conservancy's annual picnic for members was held on a beautiful fall day at Kimberly Run Natural Area. Delicious burgers from the Latuch farm, hot dogs, and many great dishes were enjoyed by members. After eating, the 30 attendees enjoyed walks and mushroom identification through KRNA, a few participated in the annual side-by-side rides around the large field and down the newly improved tractor path and a dedicated group kept the campfire at the cabin going with lively discussion. The beautiful Creekside setting was enjoyed by all!



## **Help Our Facebook Page Grow!**

We work hard to keep our Facebook page current, but your assistance is appreciated! Please feel free to post your photos and/or stories on our timeline.



Let's do all we can to spread the word about the Somerset County Conservancy and its accomplishments!

**Somerset County Conservancy**  
**PO Box 241**  
**Somerset, PA 15501**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Enclosed is:   \$ 20   Individual Member

                  \$ 30   Family Member

                  \$ 75   Sustaining Member

                  \$100   Patron, Club, Organization Member

                  \$750   Lifetime Member

                  \$1,000 Corporate Member

**HELP US SPREAD THE WORD!**

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

Make checks payable to  
and mail to:

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

