



SOMERSET COUNTY CONSERVANCY A Charitable Trust

www.somersetcountyconservancy.org

Newsletter

Spring , 2010

LAMBERTS RUN UPDATE

By Dan Seibert

Flight 93 Passive Treatment System Sampling

The scheduled February sampling of the Flight 93 treatment system did not occur due to the heavy snows, approximately 70 inches at the park in February. Sampling will take place as soon as the treatment ponds are reasonably accessible.

Data collected to this point shows that temperature is a strong influence on the effectiveness of the treatment system. The December sampling showed a significant increase in the iron levels leaving the system and entering Lamberts Run. The iron level jumped to nearly 3 MG/L which calculates to an iron load in the stream of 52 pounds per day which is about 32 percent of the total iron pollutant load in Lamberts Run. The summertime iron load is only 3 pounds per day. Methods to improve the wintertime treatment are being considered.

Heinemyer Discharge

The design for the passive treatment system is completed.

The EPA National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit needs to be acquired. The Somerset Conservation District is assisting the Conservancy with the permit.

The Heinemyer discharge occurs on National Park Service (NPS) property. In order to work on the property the NPS must have an Environmental Assessment (EA) completed that evaluates all the benefits and potential impacts of the project on all natural resources present at the site. Social and economic benefits and impacts must also be evaluated. The Conservancy has prepared the EA and it is currently being reviewed by NPS staff at their Somerset office.

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In Memoriam Laretta Payne, DVM.

Retta was a Life member of the Somerset County Conservancy and contributed in many ways to our organization. Retta was the leader and administrator of the New Jersey World Series of Birding fund raising campaign for the Conservancy. She volunteered on work days. She attended all of our outings and picnics. She was always there when we needed something. She will be greatly missed by Family, friends and the Conservancy.



Donations in Memoriam of Laretta Payne

Larry & Nancy Adams
Allegheny Bird Dog Club
Allegheny Plateau Audubon Society
Bob & sue Bastian
Doug & Kathy Bell
John & Diane Benson
Thomas Bodenschatz
Troop # 135 Berlin Boy Scouts of America
Cub Scout Pack # 135
Lester Brunell
Edith Burke
Cheryl & William Burke-Schwartz
Amy Carroll Law Office
Robert Clark
Berlin High School class of 2011
Robert & Roxanne Croner
Dr. Colleen Currihan
Gerald & Carol Darr
Denise & Jeffery Davis
Andrew & Eleanor Deeter
Denise & Mike Demchak
Tom & Sally Dick
Gregory & Deborah Dodson

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Brenda Elder
Wanetta Escherich
Dr. Beth Ferry
Deborah Gary-Taskey
Ruth Gilbert
Bill & Edna Good
Marcy & James Griffith
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Drs. John & Bonnie Jones
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Rob & Brooke Mishler
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James & Margaret Payne
Daniel & Viktoria Payne
Jeff, Matt & Chris Payne
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Barbara Pyle
Kathryn & Charles Randall
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James & Christine Richey
Richland Veterinary Hospital
Michele Romesberg
Lynn & Paula Sanderson
Ann Simpson
Suzanne & Donald Stack
Robert & Charlotte Stewart
Ronald Stormer
Ernest & Caroline Stull
Lee Tosh
Ron Trench
Dale Trump
Adeline Vieregge
Ralph & Rosemary Vitt
Stacy & Joan Weaver
Walter & Sandra Wojcik
Leslie & Frances Young
William Zoller
Peter & Jeannie Gallardy
Walter Payne Jr.

Giving a Hoot to Support Migration Studies of the Saw-whet Owl!

By Brooke Mishler

In October 2009, my husband Rob and I ventured onto the Allegheny Plateau anxious to spend a few hours with some owls. The time was 9:00 pm and we were trying to find the Allegheny Front Hawk Watch Site. Although it was dark as we drove I knew that Shaffer Mountain was something to behold! I could see the shadow of the valley as the moon lit our way and we climbed higher into the mountains. As a Somerset County resident for the majority of my life and outdoors woman I knew we had come to a special location in the county.

We parked and walked a short distance toward voices in the night. After arriving, we introduced ourselves to the bundled group sitting on camping chairs. Everyone seemed to know each other and conversations amongst the group were enjoyable to listen to. After only a few minutes, everyone stood up and began walking down a small path. We followed along with very little knowledge of where we were going and what was to come. Within a few feet the moonlight shown on nets that were roughly 8 feet high. People were looking in the nets. In the background I saw an owl perched on a stand with a megaphone making a hooting sound. I understood quickly that the group was using this to call the owls into the nets. Within minutes, people were opening brown paper bags and putting little owls into them. The process was quick. Rob and I stood in a bit of confusion and amazement! The group shuffled to a picnic table with tablets and tools on it. Dave Darney, the obvious leader of the group and owl expert handled the birds while another member of the group took notes. One by one, the bags were opened and little owls were pulled out and held by their feet. Dave took measurements of wing span, weight and the sex of each owl. It was most fascinating to see these little owls. Their stunned bright eyes looked confused and a little unaware of what was happening to them. I simply stood marveling at the beauty of these little creatures and stunned to be so very close to these elusive night birds!

During the first group of owls collected, Rob and I each had the fine experience of holding a little Saw-whet owl until it was tagged and then we released the owls back to their natural habitat. There are other groups in our state and New England states that also catch and release owls. The owls we tagged were migrating south from the New England states. If our birds happen to be caught in another state their individual number would be recorded. This record keeping gives experts a chance to learn more about the migratory patterns of these birds.

We repeated this process until 9 owls were caught, measured, tagged and released back into the wild. Of the group total we caught 8 Saw-whet owls and 1 Screech owl. It was one of the most amazing experiences of my life to date! Please take a look at the Allegheny Plateau Audubon Society website at: alleghenyplateauaudubon.org to obtain more information and dates in which you can participate.

Dave Darney

The leader of the group and owl expert handling the bird



CONSERVANCY RECEIVES TECHNICAL ASSISTANT GRANT

By Dan Seibert

The Somerset County Conservancy has received a \$35,000 technical assistant grant from the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy (WPC). The grant will provide \$2,000 for equipment and on site technical assistance from the WPC.

The focus of the grant will be a detailed study of Kimberly Run, a tributary of Coxes Creek. Kimberly Run flows through the Conservancy owned Kimberly Run Natural Area, located near the end of the 4 lane Route 219, east of Somerset.

The Kimberly Run study will look at stream chemistry, along with fish and macroinvertebrate populations. Portions of the stream have fish populations and portions appear to be void of fish. The portion flowing through the Kimberly Run Natural Area appears to be poorly populated with fish.

Potential problems in the watershed include salt from the Pennsylvania Turnpike, mine drainage from abandoned coal mines and possibly the Mostoller landfill.

Previous study of the watershed identified these potential problems but no final assessment and interpretation of the collected data was completed. The data collected showed no severe water quality problems that would account for the low fish populations. The WPC study will collect new data and compare it with past data to determine any trends in water quality and the impact on stream life. It is believed that water quality problems may be intermittent or cyclic in nature and are therefore hard to document with scheduled water quality testing.

To capture the intermittent or cyclic water quality problems, in stream water quality data collectors will be used to continuously monitor water quality. The data collection is expected to continue for a year.

The WPC technical assistance will also include Geographic Information System (GIS) abilities that will be used to develop detailed maps of the watershed.

A local technical review committee will be established to help with the study and provide overall technical guidance.



The Nature of Heritage

You are cordially invited to participate in Outdoor Heritage Month activities this April! Each spring, the Pennsylvania House of Representatives declare April Outdoor Heritage Month in the Pennsylvania Alleghenies. Outdoor Heritage is designed to celebrate and promote the rich cultural and natural resources of the Pennsylvania Alleghenies and to propel its citizenry, leaders, entrepreneurs, and youth towards stewardship.

The theme of Outdoor Heritage this year is *Learn and Serve Outdoors: Discovering Nature's Wonders and Working to Protect Them* and provides hands-on learning experiences intended to inspire lifelong environmental stewardship by cultivating an appreciation for the natural world. Numerous events, including workshops for children at the Heritage Discovery Center in Johnstown, Earth Day celebrations, and litter clean-ups, encourage innovation and action.

Outdoor Adventures, a special attraction of Outdoor Heritage, will be May 6 & 7 at the scenic Summer's Best Two Weeks camp at the Quemahoning Reservoir. Outdoor Adventures is a favorite field trip for elementary-aged students from public, private and home schools that involves over 40 organizations, presenters, and exhibitors and educates over 1,000 children about ecosystems, wildlife, conservation, energy, and many other important concepts. Endorsed by the PA Association of Environmental Educators (PAEE), Outdoor Adventures engages youth through creative, interactive activities and exhibits and provides experiences that will have a lasting impact on participating children. Outdoor Adventures has just been named the PAEE's 2010 Outstanding Environmental Education Program!

Outdoor Heritage is an initiative of Kiski-Conemaugh Stream Team and Natural Biodiversity that is supported by over three dozen organizations, businesses and individuals including the Somerset County Conservancy.

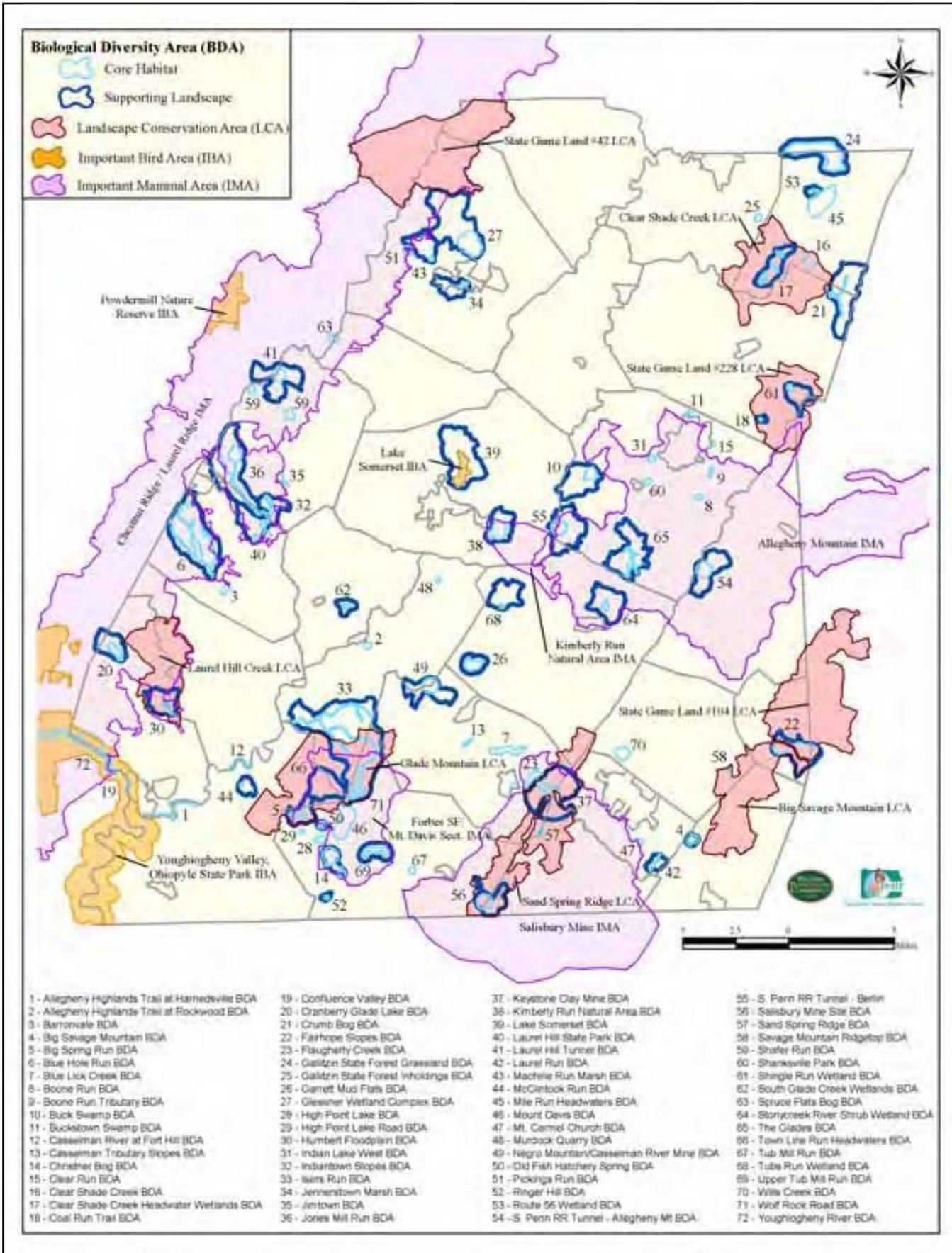
Please plan to join in Outdoor Heritage events. Volunteers are needed for many activities. For a growing calendar of events and information on how to get involved, visit the Outdoor Heritage website at www.ohmonth.com.



CT Boys with Litterbug – Conemaugh Township school students pose with the Litterbug at Outdoor Adventures 2009.



CT Boys with Litterbug – Conemaugh Township school students pose with the Litterbug at Outdoor Adventures 2009.



Conservation Easements

By Les Brunell

This is the fourth article on conservation easements since the spring 2007 newsletter. The accompanying map identifies the general areas in which we should concentrate our efforts to acquire easements. The Somerset County Natural Heritage Inventory contains detailed information and topographic maps for each of these areas. Landowners who wish to prevent development of their land can do so by giving a conservation easement to the Somerset County Conservancy or another land trust organization. The owner retains title to the land, but may get a tax benefit by donating an easement to the Conservancy. Anyone who is interested in an easement or looking for more information may contact any board member or the Conservancy at P.O. Box 241, Somerset, PA 15501-0241 or on the web @ somersetcountyconservancy.org

A copy of The Somerset County Natural Heritage Inventory is available at library's throughout the county or at the Somerset County Planning Commission.

The Kiski-Conemaugh Stream Team has published its first, official annual report detailing its accomplishments in 2009!

The Kiski-Conemaugh Stream Team is a program of the Conemaugh Valley Conservancy that educates and engages citizen stewards in restoring, enhancing and maintaining the natural resources of the Kiski-Conemaugh River Basin, which includes the Stonycreek River Watershed. In cooperation with the PA Department of Environmental Protection, the Stream Team collects water quality data from Abandoned Mine Drainage (AMD) discharges, AMD treatment systems, and impaired waterways that are used to evaluate and aide restoration efforts.

The Stream Team also provides environmental education programs and is currently overseeing Trout in the Classroom (TIC) projects in these Somerset County schools: Berlin-Brothersvalley High, Conemaugh Township High, North Star East Elementary, and Shade-Central City High. The Pennsylvania Association of Environmental Educators has endorsed the Stream Team's TIC program and has named the Stream Team Outstanding Environmental Educator of 2010!

Also of note, the Stream Team will soon publish a coldwater conservation plan for Clear Shade Creek. This plan summarizes past studies in the watershed, identifies threats to these watersheds, and recommends protection measures.

For a digital copy of the Stream Team's annual report or the Clear Shade Creek Coldwater Conservation Plan, please email Melissa Reckner at mreckner@kcstreamteam.org or call 814.444.2669.



Kiski-Conemaugh
Stream Team

Somerset County Conservancy

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Somerset, PA 15501

HELP US SPREAD THE WORD!

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

Enclosed is: \$ 15 Individual Member

\$ 25 Family Member

\$ 75 Sustaining Member

\$100 Patron, Club, Organization Member

\$750 Lifetime Member

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