

## **Remediation Project in Cambria County Brings Volunteers Together to Improve Local Waters, Recreation Opportunities**

Cambria Township – Thanks to a partnership between local non-profit organizations and local and state government, a four-mile stretch of the Little Conemaugh River has been restored providing quality recreational opportunities for the region, while raising the water quality and improving the native brook trout fishery.

The South Fork Abandoned Mine Drainage (AMD) Remediation Project is a collaborative effort of several partners, property owners, state and federal agencies and non-profit organizations. The project focused on a stretch of the river from the Lloydale Dam to Beaverdale.

“Abandoned Mine Drainage is a sad reality in many of the communities throughout Cambria County,” said Robert Piper, Jr., Manager, Cambria County Conservation District (CCCD). “We were fortunate through the persistence and commitment of our local volunteers and partners to have the ability to address the mine drainage issues on the Little Conemaugh. But we did more than just apply a band-aid for a quick-fix, our team created a long-term, sustainable solution that will serve our county and this community for years to come.”

The Remediation Project was started in 2006 when Joel Kosmac, a local volunteer with the Little Cambria Watershed Association (LCWA), began monitoring AMD discharges in the headwaters of the river. In 2007, the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Watershed Manager became interested and started working with the LCWA, the CCCD, and the Dunlo Rod and Gun Club (DR&GC). CCCD and LCWA received a Growing Greener Grant (\$105,000) to construct several limestone beds and trenches to reduce aluminum in the stream and raise pH levels. The DR&GC received funding for limestone sand dosing.

Aside from the Growing Greener Grant, sources of funding and resources came from the Eastern Brook Trout Venture through the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (\$46,000), U.S. Office of Surface Mining through the Southern Alleghenies Conservancy (\$30,000), PA Fish and Boat Commission’s installation of fish habitat structures, PACD Somerset Engineering Assistance Program’s provision of engineering and design, Hedin Environmental’s development of treatment priorities and conceptual recommendations, and Nick Deitle’s (a local Forest Hills High School student) design and construction of the watershed signs.

The Conservation District hosted a site dedication on October 19, 2011. They were joined by members of the LCWA, DR&GC, and Beaverdale Conservation Group. Jim Penna, a representative for Congressman Critz, was also in attendance. Jackie Ritko, CCCD Resource Conservation Supervisor, and Malcom Crittenden, DEP, spoke about the project and its history and led the group in a tour of the treated areas.

