

# Conemaugh Valley Conservancy

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Executive Director

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Conemaugh means “otter ” in Lenape-Delaware

John Wenzel  
OSU Professor of Entomology  
17 years



Director  
Powdermill Nature Reserve  
10 years





The Atlas of Common Freshwater  
**Macroinvertebrates**  
of Eastern North America

ORDER ▾

FAMILY ▾

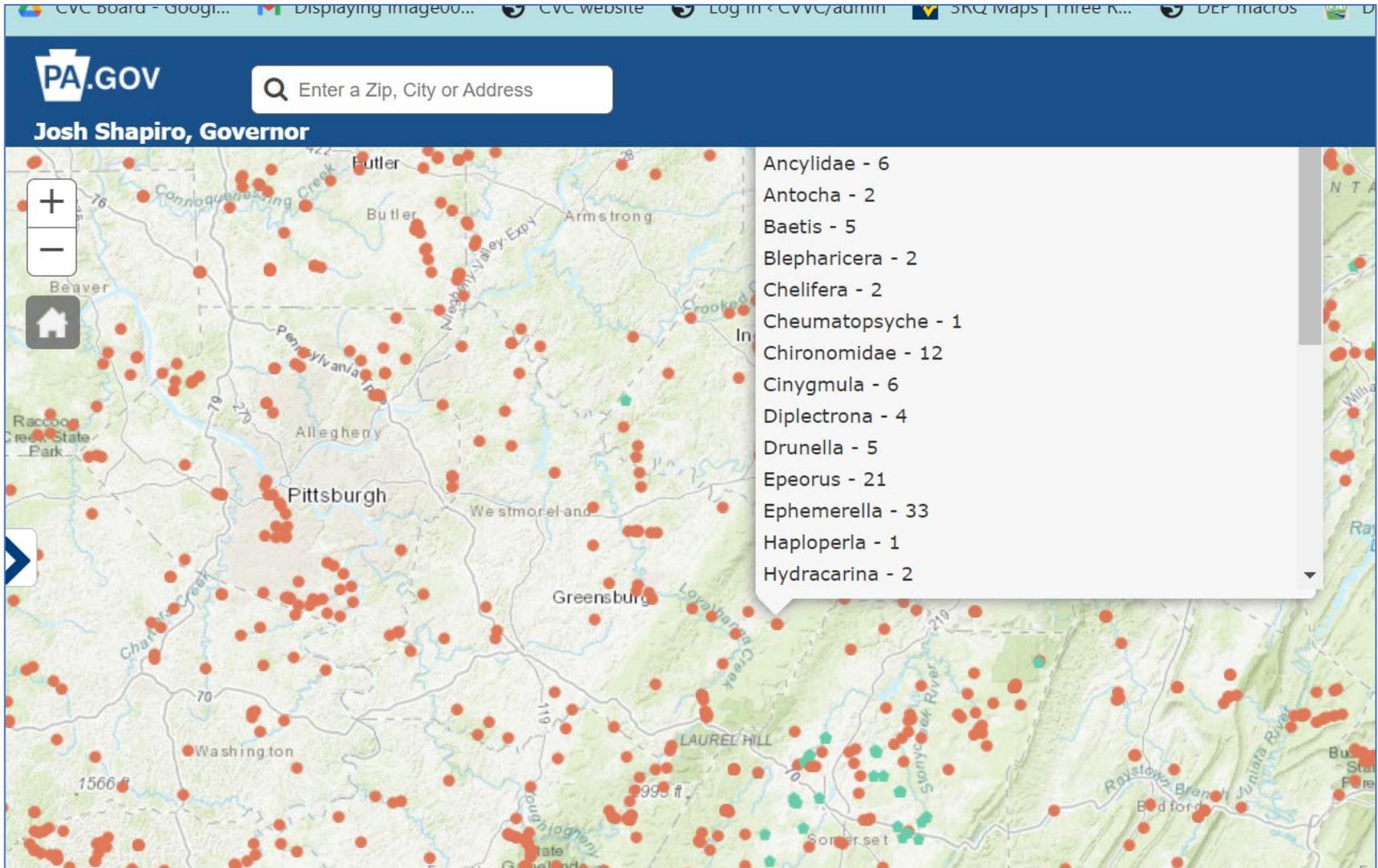
GENUS ▾

Ephemeroptera Ephememeridae *Hexagenia*  
"Burrowing Mayflies"



DORSAL

# Current DEP macroviewer is based on Powdermill GIS lab web tool that was developed 2012-2014



<https://www.depgis.state.pa.us/macroviewer/index.html>

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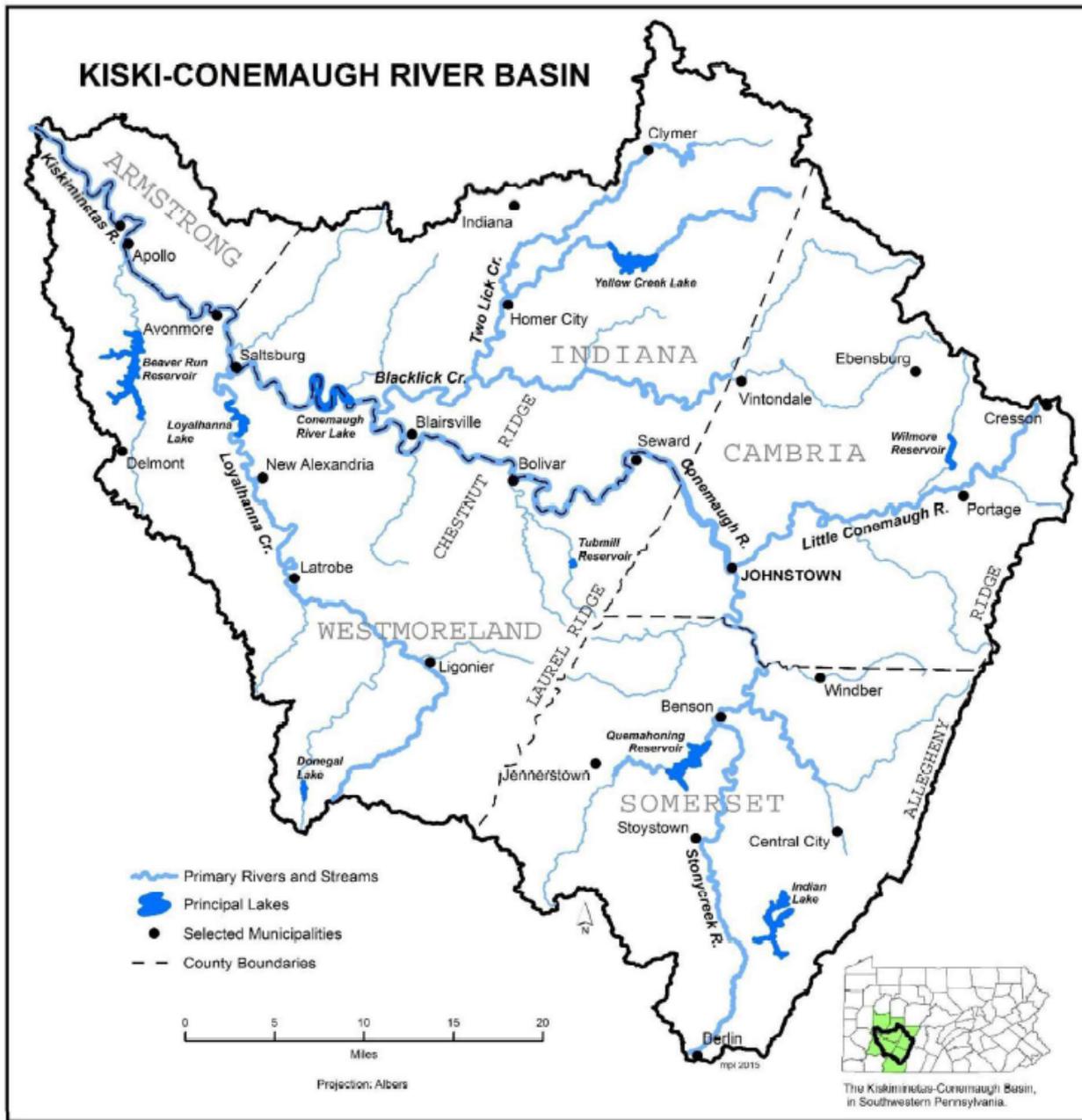
John W. Wenzel, hired 2022

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Created in 1994

- to promote the conservation and preservation of the natural, cultural and historic resources
- to encourage prudent land practices by restoring and enhancing the watershed's land and water resources
- to promote citizen stewardship through low-impact recreation.



1,887 sq. miles  
 150 river miles  
 from  
 headwaters  
 east and south  
 of Johnstown to  
 where the  
 Kiskiminetas  
 river joins the  
 Allegheny,  
 including 1,650-  
 foot deep  
 Conemaugh  
 Gorge.

Figure 2 – Location map of the Kiski-Conemaugh River Basin

1999: CVC published Kiski-Conemaugh river conservation plan, (second largest basin in PA at the time with a conservation plan) updated 2017.



Coal refuse pile above Yellow Creek, Indiana Co.

The legacy of intense development of coal mines and steel mills left this region deeply scarred and polluted.



# Restore streams, monitor water quality

Volunteers monitor water on dozens of streams  
>100 sites, ~3 samples per site, 4 times per year.



River ecosystems are recovering after exodus of industry and mitigation of pollution sources. Fish have returned.

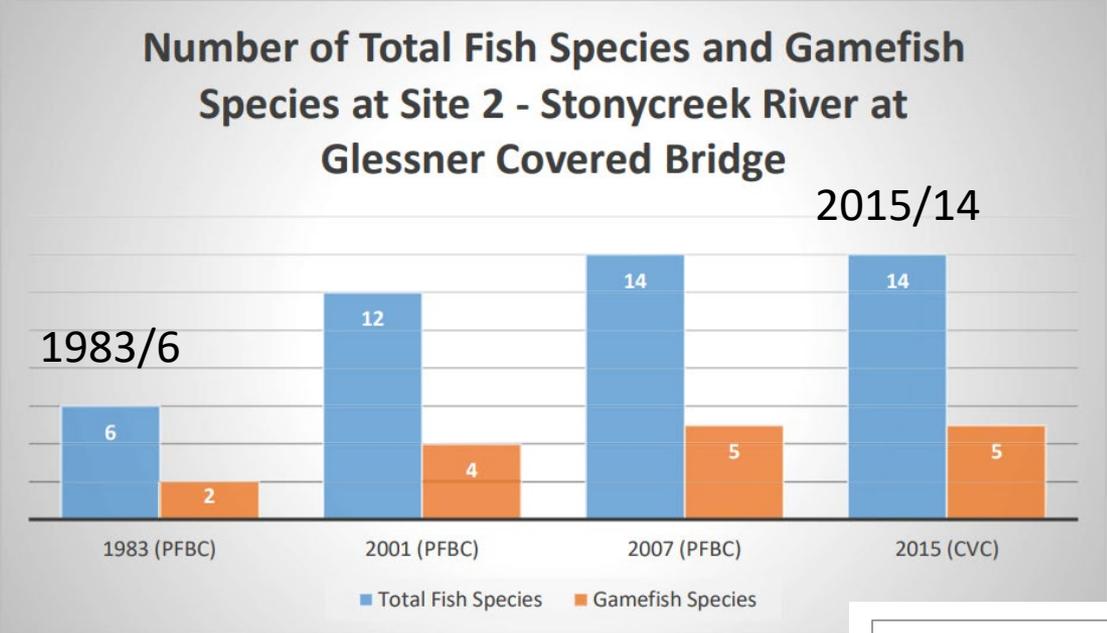


Figure 92 – Graph of the number of fish species collected during

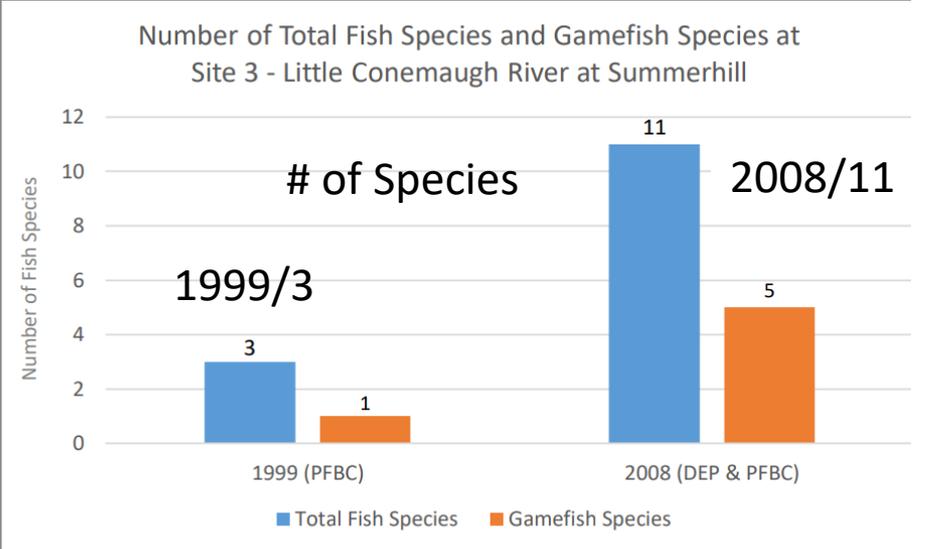


Figure 114 – Graph of fish species diversity in the Little Conemaugh River near Summerhill

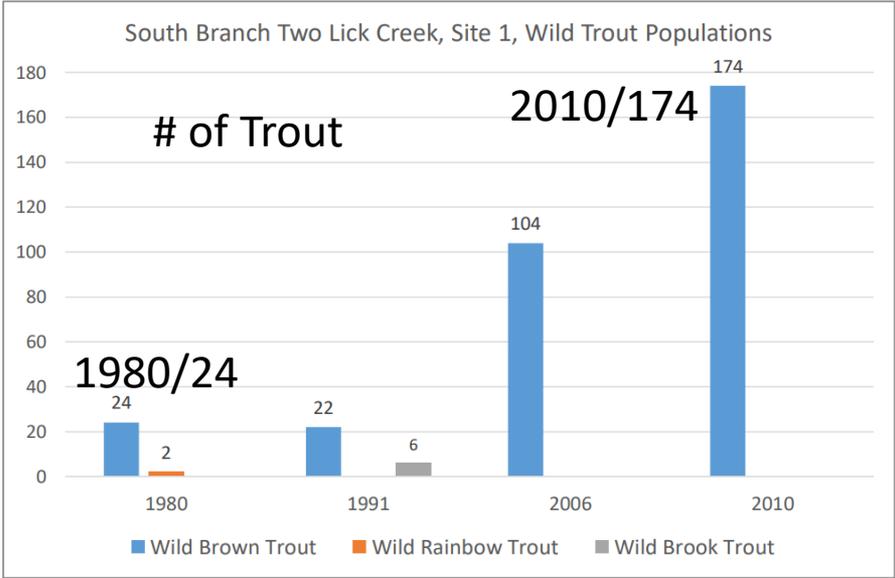


Figure 134 – Wild trout populations over time in the South Branch Two Lick Creek

# Provide recreation opportunities



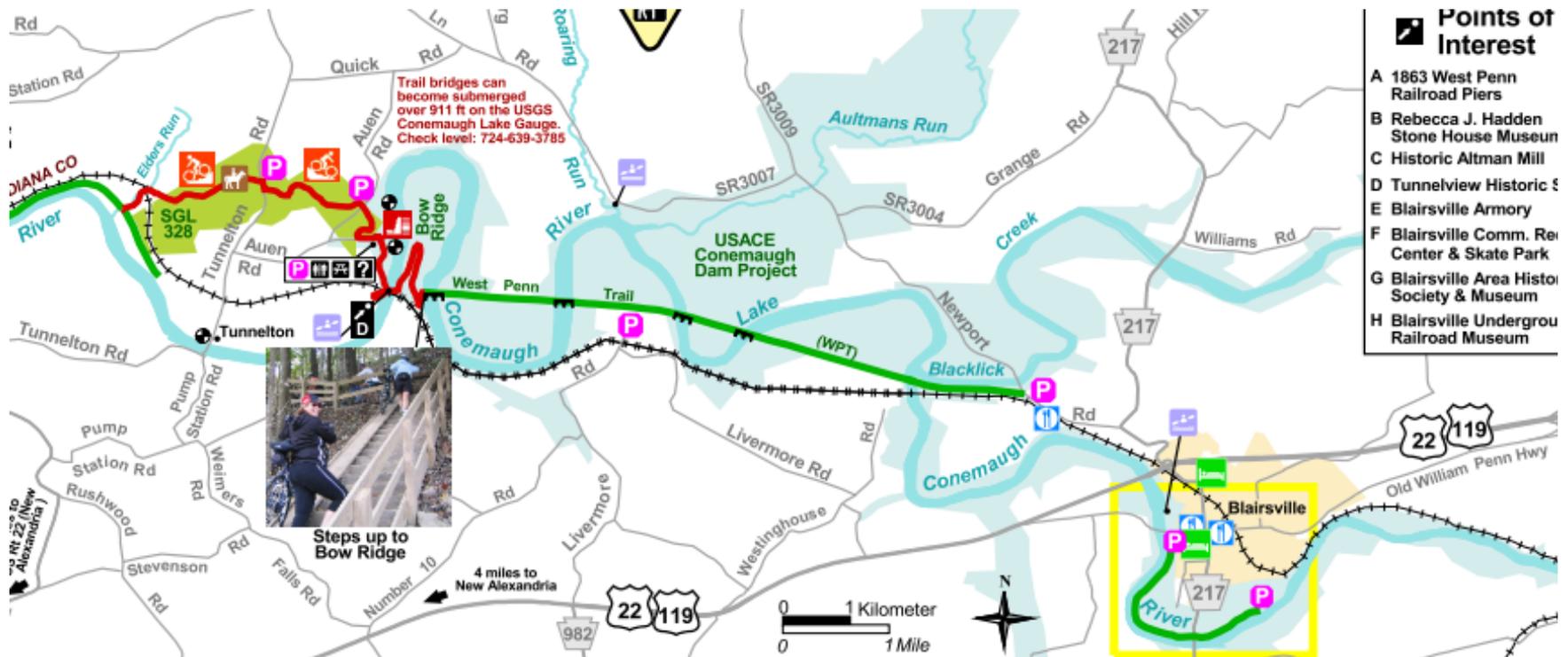
Four-day River Sojourn in June,  
50 boats in 2022

West Penn Trail Triathlon in  
October, 120 people in 2022



# West Penn Trail

CVC built and maintains the 17-mile West Penn Trail which will connect to PA Main Line Canal Greenway, running from Harrisburg to Pittsburgh, and the Ghost Town Trail (47 miles).



We also built Jim Mayer trail (3 miles) and Path of the Flood trail (14 miles) in Johnstown, all along rivers.

# More trails

Mountain bike trails on the cliff  
with the Inclined Plane in  
Johnstown and around  
Quemahoning reservoir



# Reservoirs in Cambria and Somerset Co.



CVC spearheaded the \$6M purchase in 2000 of the Quemahoning reservoir as well as the Hinckston, Wilmore, South Fork, and Border dams, ensuring that the reservoirs and 5,200 acres of land would be preserved for public recreation.

Placing a valve in the Que dam allows control of outflow from reservoir to Stonycreek for white water on alternate weekends.

## Whitewater on StonyCreek, Somerset Co.

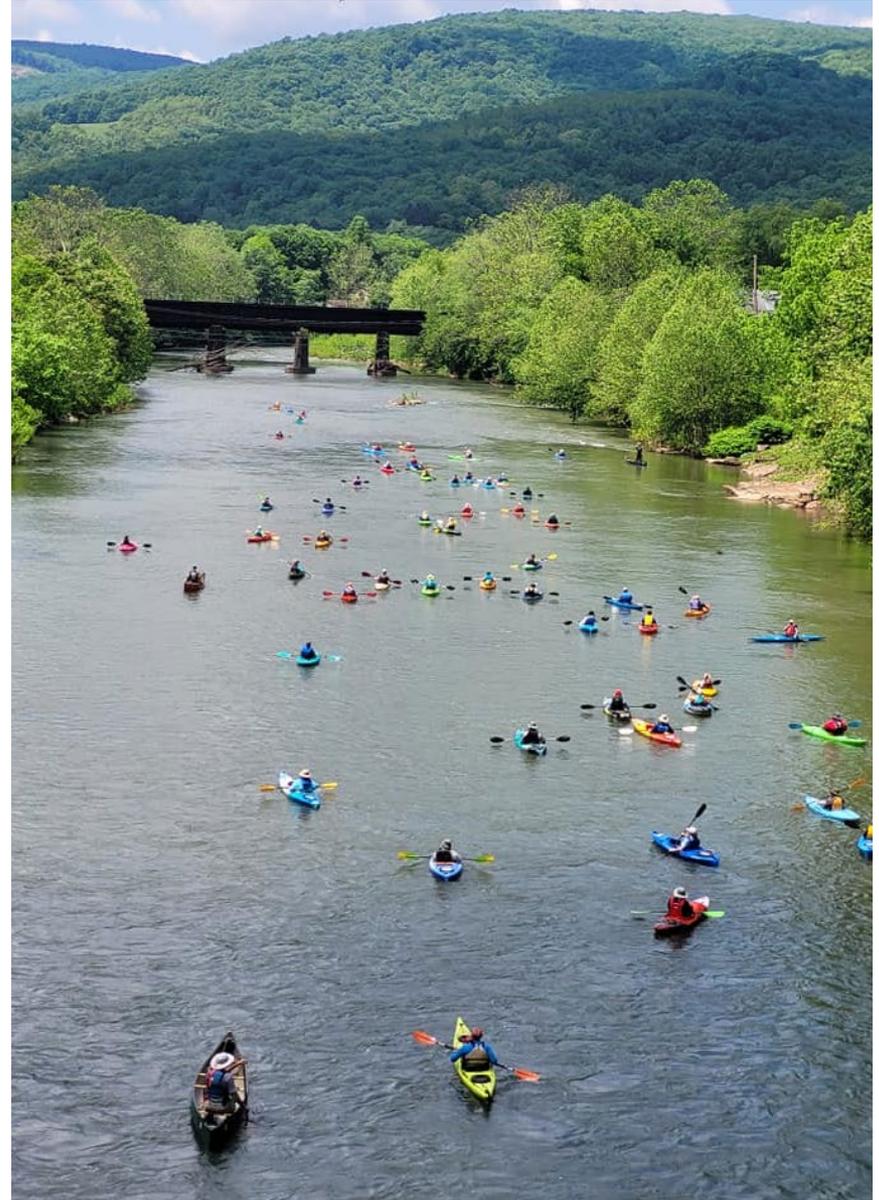
Stonycreek Canyon features 15 Class III and IV rapids within a 4-mile span, and another section of Class II and III rapids. Further downriver is Whitewater Park, designed for kayaking and tubing.



About 200 enthusiasts per day come from Ohio, New York, New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, and West Virginia to Stonycreek and the white water park constructed at Greenhouse park just upstream from Johnstown.

# Main Activities

- Restore streams, monitor water quality
- Conemaugh River Sojourn
- West Penn Trail Triathlon.
- Build trails for cycling.
- Mountain biking trails in Johnstown and Quemahoning Reservoir
- White water activity on the Stonycreek River.





*Rocky Gorge*, 1869,  
inspired by landscape  
of Stonycreek and its  
tributaries, often  
Paint Creek, named  
for the painters who  
were there each  
summer.

George Hetzel,  
founder of the  
“Scalp Level” school,  
our version of the  
Hudson River school.