

Conemaugh Valley Conservancy

John W. Wenzel, Ph.D.

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



ORDER ▾

FAMILY ▾

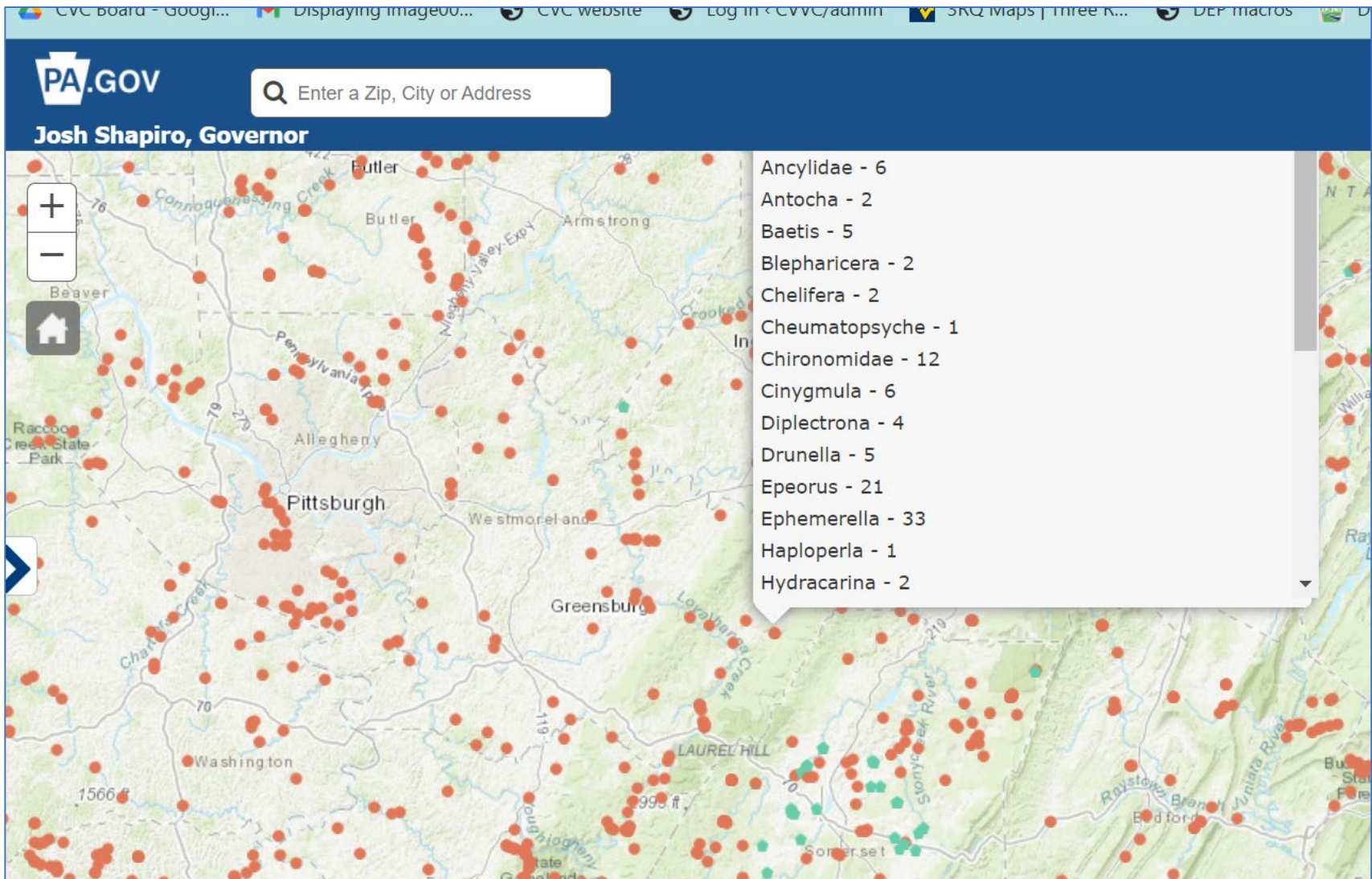
GENUS ▾

Ephemeroptera Ephemeridae *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>

Conemaugh Valley Conservancy

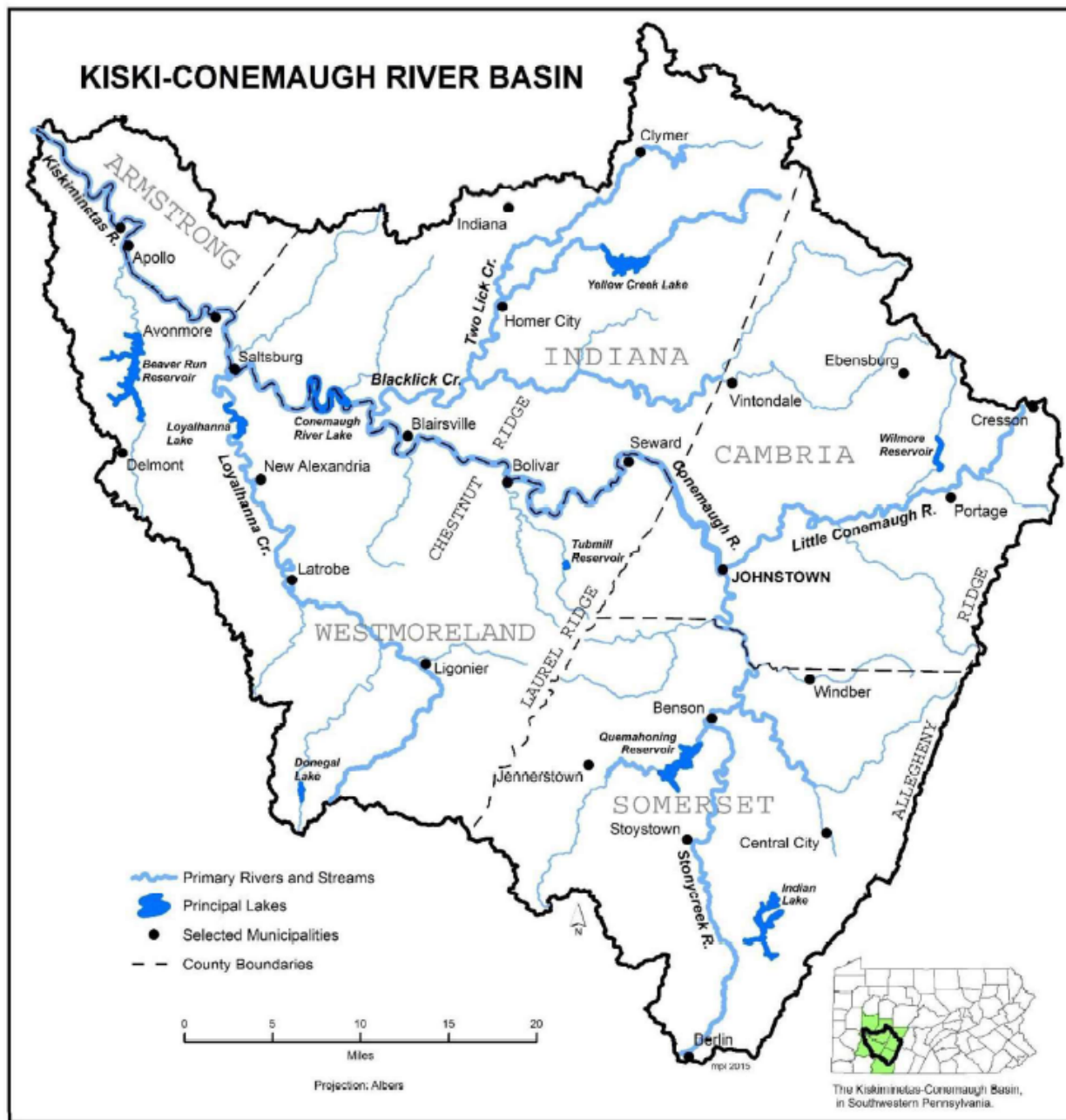
John W. Wenzel, hired 2022

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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.

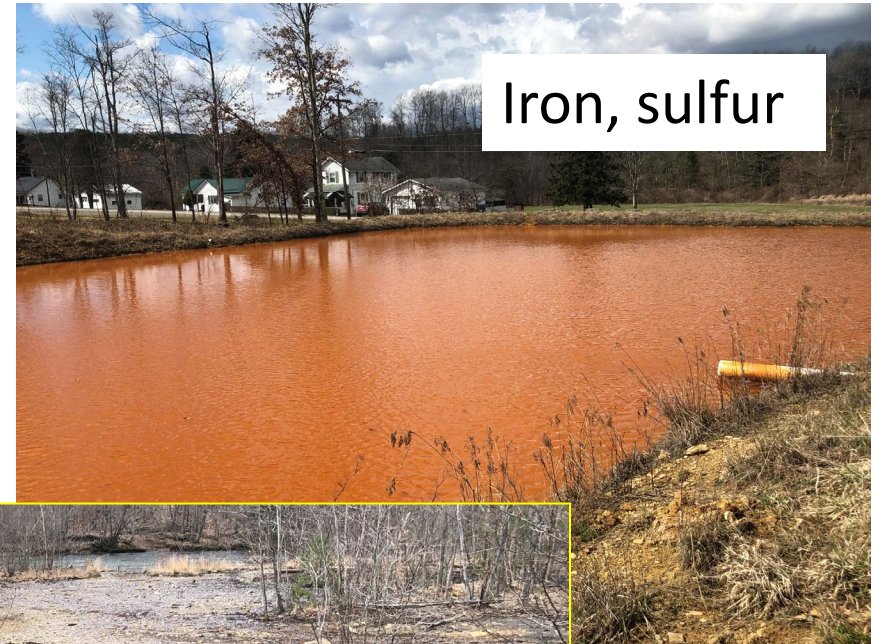
Figure 2 – Location map of the Kiski-Conemaugh River Basin

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.



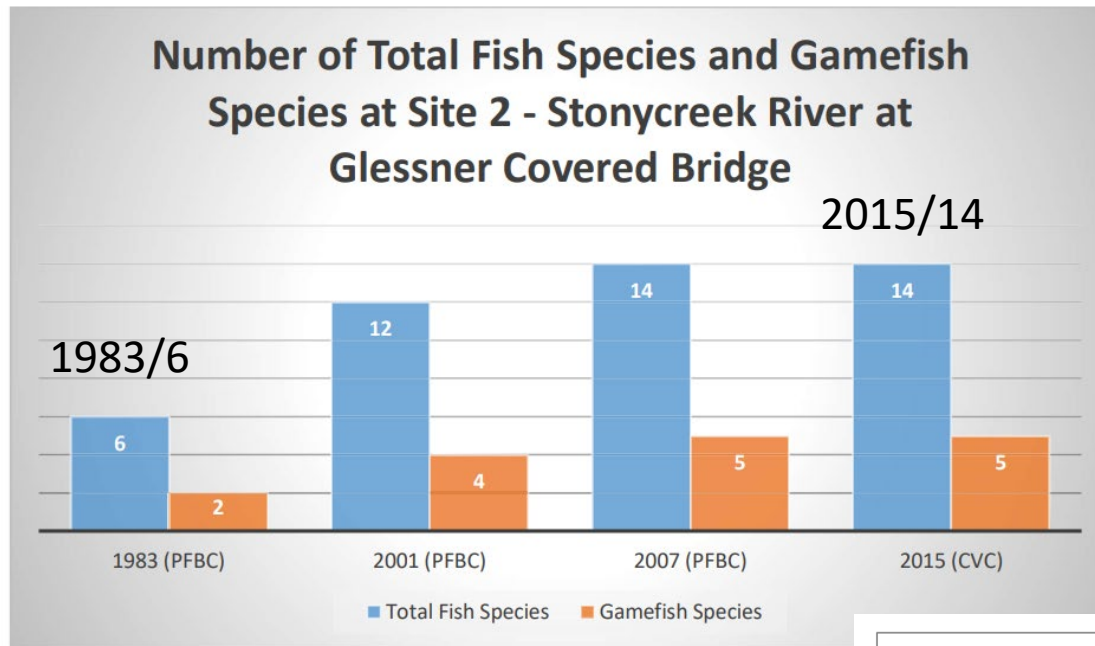


Figure 92 – Graph of the number of fish species collected during

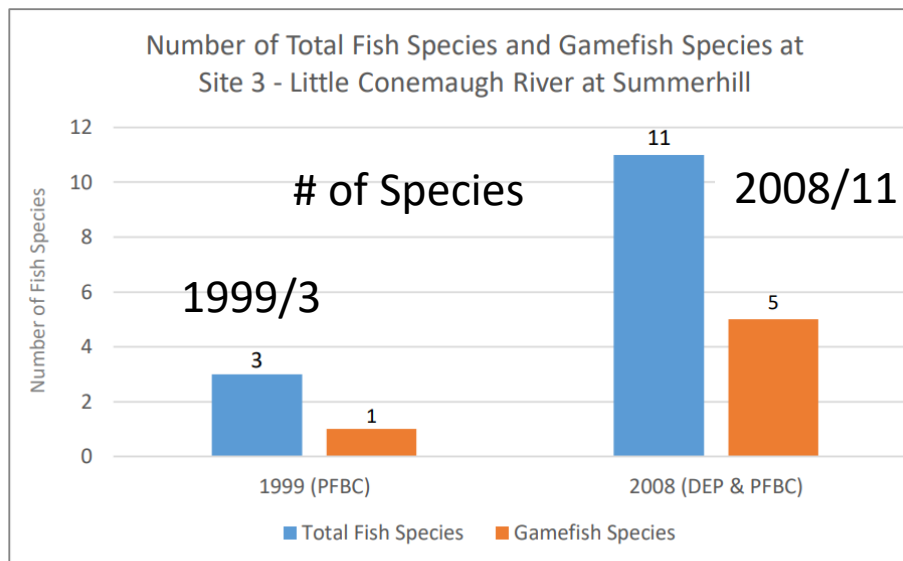


Figure 114 – Graph of fish species diversity in the Little Conemaugh River near Summerhill

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

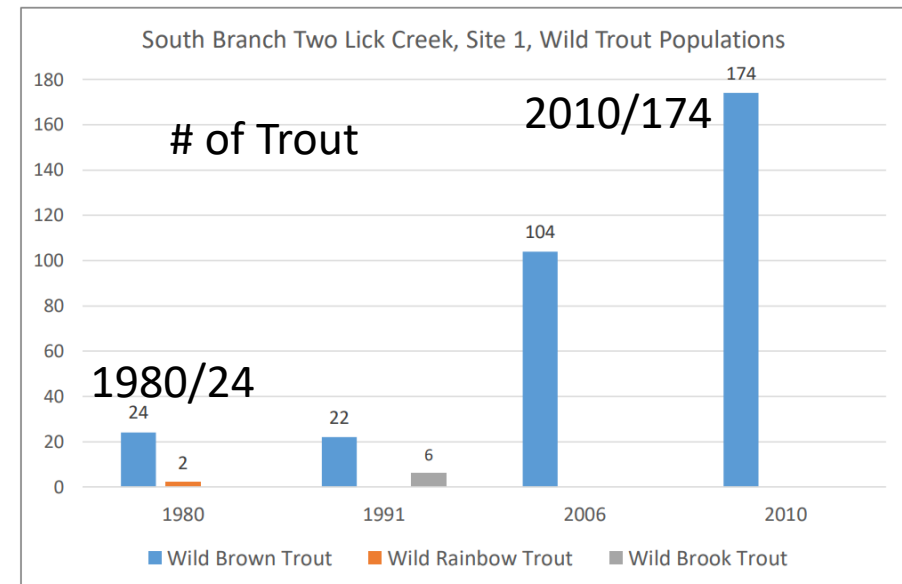


Figure 134 – Wild trout populations over time in the South Branch Two Lick Creek

Provide recreation opportunities



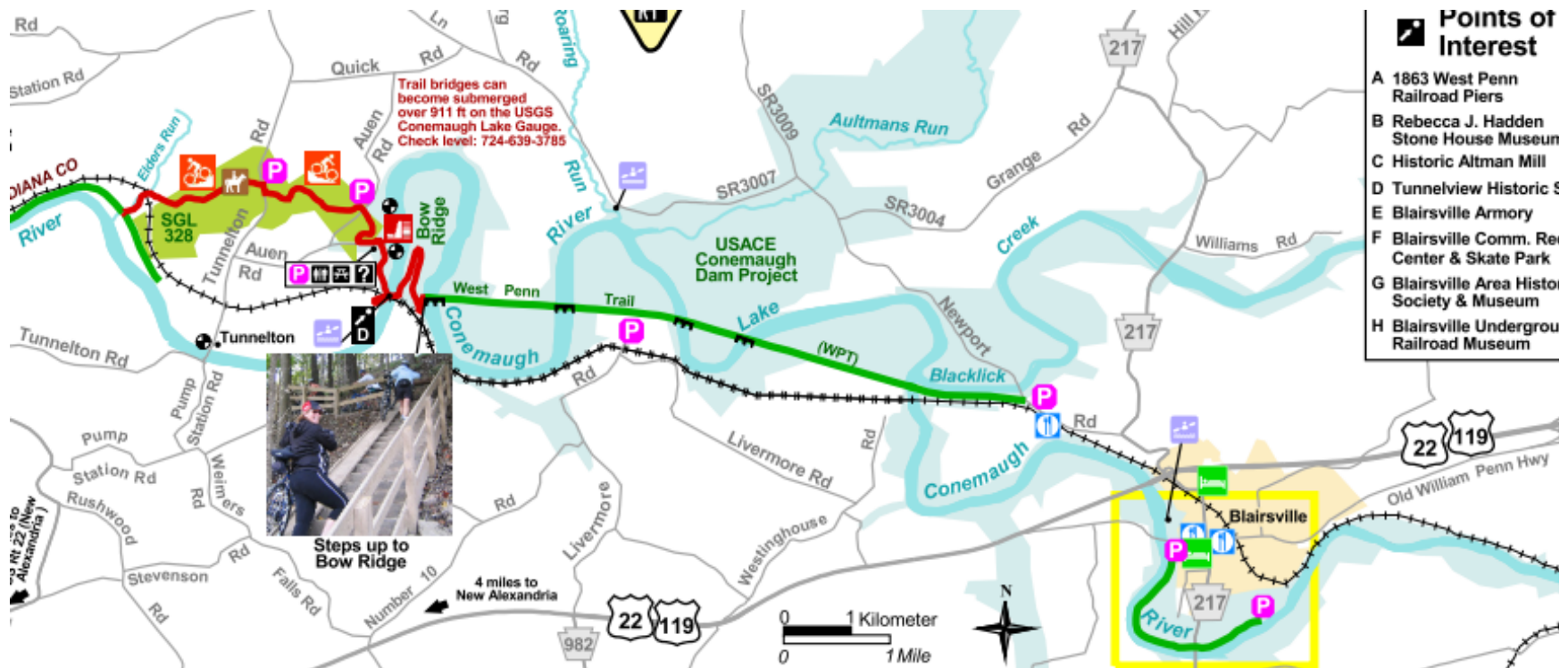
Four-day River Sojourn in June,
50 boats in 2022

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.