Summer's coming, with the Conemaugh Valley Conservancy

ANNUAL REPORT

The 2016 CVC Annual Report is now available! This report never ceases to amaze even those of us who work closely with the Conservancy. The organization achieves so much with so little. Your membership helps us keep up the good work!

STREAM TEAM

The Conemaugh Valley Conservancy is selling raffle tickets to benefit the Kiski-Conemaugh Stream Team's water monitoring, restoration, and environmental education programs. For $10, a person may buy two chances to win either a Feelfree Lure 11.5 Fishing Kayak (Retail ($1,249) or a Dagger Whitewater kayak (Retail $1,209) in stock at Rocky Mountain Kayak in New Stanton, PA or $700 cash. The winning number will be determined by the Pick 3 game of the PA Lottery drawing at 7 PM on July 4, 2017. Please contact program director Missy Reckner or any board member for tickets. Thank you!

The Kiski-Conemaugh Stream Team held its last Trout in the Classroom Release Day on May 30. Over 800 students from 9 schools directly engaged in the program and many participated in Release Day activities implemented by the Stream Team and its many partners. Dozens of positive comments were received, with some students even saying this is their favorite field trip! Check out the Conemaugh Valley Conservancy's Facebook page for photos from the Release Days.

WEST PENN TRAIL MEMORIAL

In early June volunteers placed a memorial stone for long-time volunteer Mike Demailo on the Saltsburg section of trail. The stone came about when several of Mike's friends organized donations to honor Mike's love for the trail, and it features an image of Mike's canine companion, Cinnamon. Thank you, Mike. You are missed.

THIRD ANNUAL PADDLE AND PICNIC

Edited from Annie Rizzo and Jim Struzzi, Indiana County Chamber of Commerce

Rarely is Mother Nature predictable or boring. The Third Annual Paddle and Picnic in Blairsville was no exception. The more than 50 kayakers who dared brave the rushing waters of the Conemaugh River on Saturday, May 27, were rewarded with an adventure that included everything from exhilarating thrills to breathtaking wildlife and tranquil moments with friends and family! Intense rapids in some sections of the river led to calm stretches of peaceful, placid waters and rising mists creating a truly memorable day and a unique experience for everyone.

The Chamber, in cooperation with the Blairsville Community Development Authority (BCDA), the Conemaugh Valley Conservancy (CVC) and the Pittsburgh-to-Harrisburg Main Line Canal Greenway, created the annual Paddle and Picnic in an effort to highlight the outdoor entertainment and recreational opportunities that are available in Indiana County. The Conemaugh River is a great showcase for kayaking, fishing, biking and hiking and other activities that can be found in communities like Blairsville.

After a brief safety review with the CVC, the kayakers launched into the river at Robinson around 10 a.m. to start the 10+mile journey back to Blairsville. The Conemaugh River was high due to rain earlier in the week, which created a fast-paced scenic adventure for participants. Unlike last year, the rain held off Saturday during the trip and allowed boaters to have an enjoyable experience on a warm, spring day.

If you'd like another chance to kayak the Packsaddle Gap and other sections of the Conemaugh River,
visit http://conemaughvalleyconservancy.org/recreation/skcs.html. For kayak rentals, visit Saltsburg River and Trail or Saltsburg Kayak and Canoe Outfitters.

STONY-KISKI-CONEMAUGH RIVERS SOJOURN

In other river recreation news, the 2017 Stony-Kiski-Conemaugh Rivers Sojourn, held June 1-4, attracted 74 paddlers throughout the weekend. Friday and Saturday continue to be the most popular days, with 44 people boating through Packsaddle Gap and 48 participants enjoying a stop at Saltsburg's Historic Canal Days Festival during Saturday's trip from the Conemaugh Dam to

Avonmore. Sojourners were treated to great weather, plenty of wildlife viewing, and sometimes high water. Many thanks to the Sojourn committee for their hard work pulling off this annual event – several sojourners commented that the event was well-organized and smoothly-run. We also thank sponsors Conemaugh Health System and Western PA Sports Medicine and Rehabilitation Clinic.

CVC BOARD WELCOMES NEW MEMBERS

The Board of Directors welcomed two new members at the Annual Meeting on May 10: Elena Kehres of McHenry MD; Courtney Crowe of Saltsburg; and BJ Bellotti of Avonmore. Earlier in the year, Timothy Messer of Johnstown filled a vacant board seat. We're delighted to have these new faces and the resources they bring to the board, even while we are sad to say goodbye to parting members Barry Tuscano and Brian Gunnlaugson.

The Board Development Committee asks new members to provide a statement about their interest in CVC. Let's hear from Timothy Messer:

"Johnstown has been our homestead for six years. I heard about CVC through involvement in Vision 2025 and discourse with several passionate leaders. My children are in college, so I now have personal resources to dedicate to my environmental passions. I would enjoy assisting the CVC by bringing my MBA, quality assurance, environmental and finance skillsets to bear to increase both financial and community support for CVC. I passionately believe that our children's and community's future rests within our ability to harmonize economic drivers with beauties of nature we have been provided with. To that end, I am passionate about trails, greenspace, and native biodiversity and will be an active and respectful team member."