

Spring 2015

# Casselman River Watershed Association

## Laurel Hill Creek Access

*article and photos submitted by Gary Wetterberg*

The Casselman River Watershed Association (CRWA) recently competed for, and was awarded, two grants from the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy's Canoe Access Development Fund (WPC/CADF). The CADF goals broadly include:

- increasing accessibility of South West Pennsylvania's rivers and streams for outdoor recreation
- expanding partnerships in Western Pennsylvania communities
- providing "enhanced opportunities" for appreciation and knowledge of Pennsylvania's diverse terrestrial and aquatic flora and fauna (such as mink and otters in the Casselman and its tributaries), and,
- developing new sites for canoe and kayak access.

The Fund is especially oriented to "paddling waterways" featured in the "Canoeing Guide to Western Pennsylvania and Northern West Virginia (<http://www.cs.cmu.edu/~shaw/CG.html>)." Both of the grant applications had the full support of the Somerset County Conservancy, and the Mountain Watershed Association's Youghiogheny River Keeper, recognizing that such efforts would familiarize an increased audience with the Casselman, and hopefully would generate increased support for its protection as a major tributary of the Youghiogheny River.

### Laurel Hill Creek Kayak/Boat Run

The first grant, in the amount of \$5,000 was for development of a boater run on Laurel Hill Creek, the largest tributary of the Casselman River. The work was accomplished in close cooperation between Laurel Hill State Park at the upstream northern end and the Middlecreek Township, property owner at the Kings Covered Bridge area at the southern end of the planned kayak run, 6.13 miles downstream. The funds were divided between those two institutions according to the amount needed for modifications needed at each site.



The Trent Picnic Area of Laurel Hill State Park had the best potential launch site for kayaks

and canoes on Laurel Hill Creek, compared to other locations for miles upstream. It also had restroom and water facilities, as well as ample space for parking. It did however, require establishment of a distinct path and launch site to focus use, as well as brush clearing and bank stabilization. The State Park management team readily accepted the proposal, and did the modifications to the Park Management Plan needed to accommodate the development.

They anticipate sponsoring an "Opening Event," posting directional signs as needed, and developing a brochure and map for boaters to take with them as they enjoy the route. Downstream from the put-in at Laurel Hill State Park, the Somerset County Commissioners are donating a sign identifying Whipkey Bridge on Gary Road (Township Road 495) to help boaters keep track of their location along the route. Otherwise non-descript, Whipkey Bridge is located at the 1/3 point of the run, about a mile upstream from two small falls. Further downstream, the easily recognized Barronvale Covered Bridge is at the 2/3 point of the run.



CRWA Spotlight

**Mark your Calendar for Upcoming Meetings:**

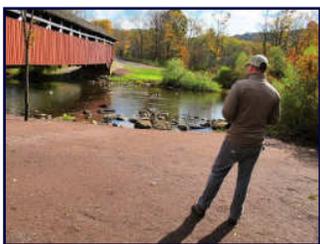
**March 25**  
**April 22**  
**May 20**

**June NO MEETING**  
**July—Annual Picnic to be scheduled**

All meetings are held 11:00 am at Hoss's in Somerset.

*\*Except for the annual picnic\**

# Laurel Hill Access (continued)



The scenic and historic Kings Covered Bridge (Highway 653) area at the downstream end of the run, is owned and maintained by Middlecreek Township. It too has ample parking, a picnic pavilion, and a porta potty during the boating season.

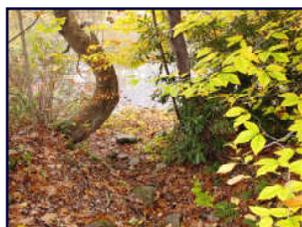
The related work involved stabilization of erosion at the take-out location, modification of rain-water drainages off the picnic pavilion, and physical improvements involving truckloads of crushed limestone and gravel.



Separate from the grant, the Township Supervisors also helped locate and install a Casselman River Watershed sign, highlighting Laurel Hill Creek, in cooperation with the CRWA. The Laurel Hill State Park and the Middlecreek Township will maintain their respective sites on the boat run in the coming years.

## Harnedsville Access to Casselman River

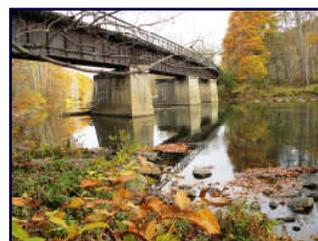
The second grant, in the amount of \$2500, is for development of a boater access at the point where the Great Allegheny Passage (GAP) crosses Hog Back Road near Ursina Pennsylvania. This required authorization of the Somerset County Parks and Recreation Board which controls the 50 foot right-of-way on either side of the GAP Trail throughout the County.



In conformance with the grant proposal, the river access site and its related trail, from the bike path to the river, would be within the right-of-way. The GAP extends from Pittsburgh, near the starting point of the Ohio River, crosses the Eastern Continental Divide, and ends at Georgetown in Washington, D.C.

The construction of the boater access and trail leading to the water will be undertaken by the volunteer members of the CRWA, with the grant being utilized for construction equipment and materials. Work will be done in the current parking area to encourage “nose-in” rather than “parallel” parking, and brush will be cleared.

This new river access site will provide a take-out point for boaters coming downstream from launch sites upstream such as those found at Fort Hill, Markleton and Rockwood. It also will provide a put-in for boaters who wish to head on downstream towards the town of Confluence or on into the Youghiogheny River.



The Harnedsville trail and launch site will continue to be maintained by CRWA members in the future, just like the other five launch sites along the Casselman River, as it winds through Somerset County.

*Meysdale*



*Garrett*

*Rockwood*



*Markleton*

*Fort Hill*



# *In Memoriam*



Left to right: Jim Procyson, Joel Pontorero, Page Wetterberg

*Loyal and long-time member, Joel Pontorero,  
passed away in 2014.*

*Joel was dedicated to our goals of natural resources  
conservation within the Casselman River Watershed  
to ensure the quality of life in our communities.*

*He volunteered his valuable time and his vast  
knowledge to resolve water quality issues in the  
watershed. Without his assistance, the Casselman  
River's water quality would not have been restored  
to the level it is today.*

**From contributions received in Joel's memory, CRWA  
will place a bench along the Great Allegheny Passage  
to honor Joel.**

Casselman River Watershed Association  
c/o Roger Latuch  
215 Tatunka Trail  
Somerset, PA 15501



The *CRWA Family Fishing Event* is scheduled for *May 9, 2015*, 9 am to 1 pm, on Coxes Creek, a tributary of the Casselman River in Rockwood Borough. Courtesy of Greg Miller, property owner, the event will be held along an easily accessed and cleared section of the stream. The location is just off the 900 block of Main Street on the NE end of Rockwood opposite the car wash. Hungry trout from the CRWA Co-op Nursery will be stocked immediately prior to the event to ensure the participants will have a good opportunity for success.

The event is targeted for children 15 years of age or younger and is free of charge. Fishing licenses are not required for children under 16. PA Fish Commission certified instructors will be available to assist participants where needed. The PA Fish Commission is providing gear, and bait will also be available for participants to use during the event.

All participating "*young anglers*" will have the opportunity to win a variety of prizes, donated by the Casselman River Watershed Association. Lucky winners will be drawn at noon.

*Winners must be present to receive prizes.*

**Join the CRWA, a clean environment for your children starts with you!**

*Enclosed is my 2015 Membership.*

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

City/State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP Code \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ \$5.00

\_\_\_\_\_ \$10.00 Family

\_\_\_\_\_ \$20.00 Club/Small Business

Make checks payable to the **Casselman River Watershed Association, Inc.** and mail to:

Susan Moon, CRWA Treasurer

c/o Somerset Conservation District

6024 Glades Pike Suite 103

Somerset, PA 15501