

'Possum Watch

Summer 2007

Volume 2, No. 3

“The Lake is Coming Back!” “No, It’s Not!” “Yes, It Is!” “No, It’s Not!” “OK, What’s Going On Then?”

If you passed by Opossum Lake recently, you may have noticed some wells protruding from the back side of the earthen dam. Eichelbergers (a local well drilling outfit) drilled 7 bore holes and installed 10 piezometers, while URS Corporation (a consulting firm) provided oversight.

A piezometer is basically a well, established to gather sub-surface water level measurements. The piezometer is constructed of multiple sections of pvc pipe joined together and used as the well's "casing." (see drawing on Pg. 2) A seal made from bentonite clay is constructed around the well, just below the ground level. A protective steel casing is seen protruding from the ground, which houses the pvc piping within the larger steel casing. Certain sections of screened pvc piping are used at determined depths of known pockets of water or saturated soil (known as static water levels). This screened pipe is surrounded in the bore hole by sand. Static water easily filters through the sand and the screened pipe, resting within the piezometer. This allows static water level readings to be collected from each piezometer by simply removing the locked well cap and using a water level meter. This meter operates by lowering an electronic water sensor down until an audible beep is heard, which indicates top of the water in the piezometer. The depth is then marked and recorded to the nearest 0.01 foot. This data is



Drilling rig on dam breast

recorded twice a week from each of the 10 piezometers. The depth to the bottom of each piezometer is collected once a month and is obtained by lowering the water level meter probe until it contacts the bottom of the bore hole.

The second noticeable change to Opossum Lake in the coming months will be the slow and steady refilling of the lake to its full pond level. The lake will be maintained at its full capacity briefly until all data is collected (late September or October of 2007). Once the needed data is collected, the lake will be

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Our Mission

Friends of Opossum Lake Conservancy is a non-profit organization committed to restoring and preserving the lake through working collaboratively with the Township, the County, the Fish and Boat Commission, The Department of Environmental Protection, and the State Legislature.

A Message From The President

Dear Friends and Members of FOLC,

Thanks to all of you who have made contributions to the "Repair the Dam Fund."

We currently have approximately \$27,000 in our Repair the Dam Fund along with another \$10,000 from Lower Frankford Township's donation. FOLC will be paying \$6,000 for a survey, soon to be completed by Brehm Lebo Engineering, which includes some in-kind donations. URS Corporation will be completing soils testing and analyzing data from the piezometers that have been installed at the dam (see Tim Barrick's excellent description of this procedure on Page 1. Our thanks to Tim for heading up the ongoing monitoring!). FOLC has entered into a contract with URS to pay \$25,000 for their services and URS has also donated in-kind services.

I just received approval of both of our Department of Community and Economic Development grants to assist the Township in constructing a picnic pavilion (\$10,000 in materials) and in purchasing a mowing machine for the lake property (\$5,000). These grants were made at the recommendation and through the support of Senator Vance and Representative Gabig. Thank you, Senator Vance and Representative Gabig!

On June 4, 2007, Lower Frankford Township was allocated an additional \$109,308 from the County's Growing Greener II funds. This brings Cumberland County's commitment to a total of \$609,308 toward the dam restoration and, importantly, has set the date of June 4, 2008 as the time that the commitment would expire.

The Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission has now agreed to try and develop alternative spillway and dam armoring designs to attempt to lower the cost of the project. Gerry Woomey, one of the PAFBC's dam engineers, will be preparing alternative analyses and then will purchase some additional engineering consulting from URS Corporation. This approach may, in fact, save important dollars, both in terms of engineering costs and final construction costs. It is anticipated that final design plans and cost estimates are still possible by the end of this year.

It appears that the steps the PAF&BC, the County, the Township, and FOLC are taking now will make construction of a new spillway possible by 2010. Nevertheless, even under the lowest cost options, there is not adequate funding committed at this time to proceed with construction. Therefore, FOLC has agreed to put most of our efforts into fund raising and will be considering another round of appeals to the Governor in the new budget year.

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"The Lake Is Coming Back!"

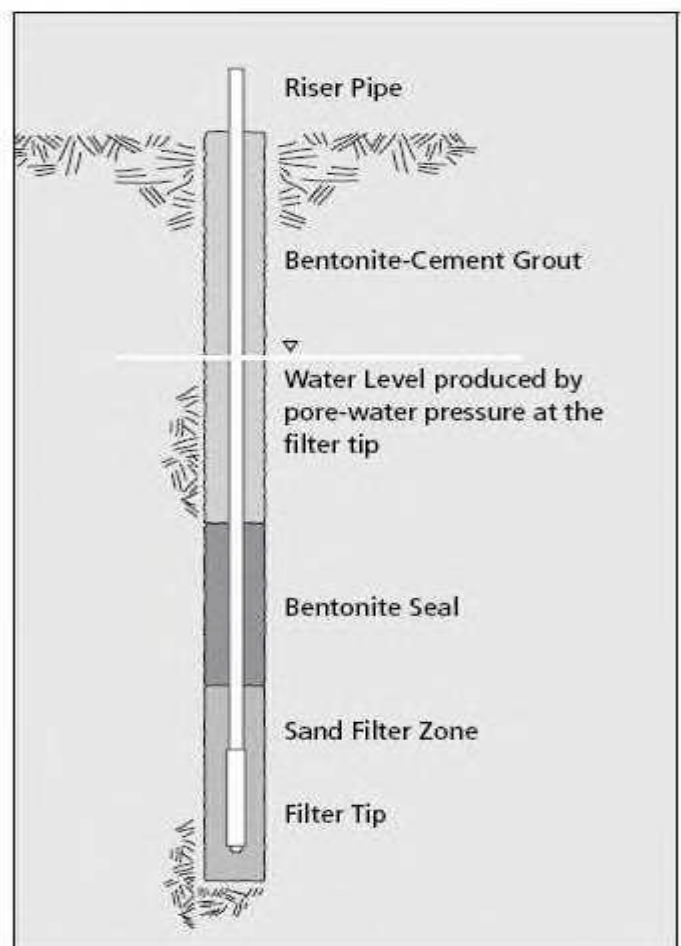
(Continued from Page 1)

slowly drained down fourteen feet to ensure that no further erosion occurs to the spillway. This temporary controlled filling of the lake is being done to obtain measurements of potential water infiltration problems in the earthen dam breast.

Trained FOLC volunteers are taking piezometer readings twice a week through September 2007, thereby reducing the cost of this pre-engineering work.

The information gathered and analyzed will provide important necessary information to move on to the next phase in the dam and spillway engineering and design.

By Tim Barrick
FOLC Board Member



Your donation of \$50 or more helps not only financially, but also politically by demonstrating the community's commitment to this important natural resource.

Ed Franco , FOLC President

Welcome New Members!

WOW! The Friends of Opossum Lake Conservancy (FOLC) membership roster is continuing to grow and now totals **307!** Alphabetically, new members are as follows:

Carrol Adams	Vonnie Heishman
Jeff Adams	Corey Holland
Marlene Adler	Barbara Houston
Michael Adler	Christopher Houston
Sydney Adler	Teri Istle
Barbara Barnes	Deborah Kelly
Wayne Barnes	Robert Kelly
Mario R. Bartoli	Thomas Kelly
Stephen J. Bixler	Barry Kramer
John W. Brown	Allen N. Marshall, Jr.
Thelma P. Brown	David S. Masland
Michelle Campbell	Denise Mesaros
B. Ciglar	Michael J. Mesaros
K. Crawford	Donald H. Mowery
Elizabeth Damico	Robert Shepler
Richard Damico	Susana Shepler
Jack A. Danner	Avelrey Throne
Daniel Deardorff	Terry Throne
Joseph Dennison	Steve Thumma
Sue Ellen Dennison	Susan Thumma
Larry Finkenbinder	Mr. & Mrs. Thomas
Rose Finkenbinder	Whisenand
John Fry	Judy Whitekettle
Lois Fry	Richard Whitekettle
Dorothy A. Heffelbower	Barbara J. Wilke
Gary Heishman	

The following corporations and organizations have contributed to FOLC since our last newsletter by a financial contribution to the "Repair The Dam" fund or through in-kind donations of services, materials and/or supplies. We greatly appreciate their support!

- Big Spring Fish and Game Association, Inc.
- Carlisle Health & Wellness Foundation
- Cumberland Design & Building Co., Inc.
- Imprint Wearhouse
- Land O' Lakes Foundation, Mid-Atlantic Grant Program
- Poe Landscape Contracting
- The Printed Image
- Veterans of Foreign Wars, Hamilton-Myers Post #6070, Newville, PA
- Y Men's Club of Carlisle



**THANK YOU TO EVERYONE
FOR YOUR SUPPORT!**



New Board of Directors Elected At Annual Meeting

At the Annual Meeting on May 5th, the following individuals were elected to the Board of Directors for 2007/2008. The Executive Committee was then elected at the Board of Directors meeting on May 9, 2007. Please feel free to contact any member of the Board of Directors at any time with your questions or concerns about current events at Opossum Lake.

Ed Franco, President (717-243-9863)
efranco99@comcast.net

Steve Fealtman, Vice President (717-243-2027)
steve@sdf-consulting.com

Cindy Criswell, Secretary (717-486-8904)
Membership Committee Chair/Newsletter
gc_criswell@peoplepc.com

Craig Houston, Treasurer (717-243-8941)
houstona@epix.net

Tim Barrick (717-240-0896)
Dam Construction Liaison Committee Co-Chair
Tbarrick@state.pa.us

Gary Criswell (717-486-8904)
Projects & Trails Committee Co-Chair
g_criswell@peoplepc.com

Wayne DeMoss (717) 241-4086)
Dam Construction Liaison Committee Co-Chair

Mort Fegley (717-258-6376)
lwrfrankford@aol.com

Mary Franco (717-243-9863)
mfranco@comcast.net

Hal Gardner (717-258-6932)
hrlldgrdnr@aol.com

Eric Klinedinst (717-448-3483)
eric@ericklinedinst.com

Ruben Lao, Jr. (717-323-1002)
Projects & Trails Committee Co-Chair
ftwnride@yahoo.com

Cheryl Pauli (717-258-6932)
halcher@comcast.net

Jan Ruby (717-323-1002)
jrruby@ship.edu

Allen Shank (717-243-3389)
Fundraising Committee Chair
bojadancer@aol.com

We Need Your Help!

Those are the words on the front of FOLC's new tri-fold brochure. And we DO need your help to get the word out about Opossum Lake and FOLC. If you'd like to share Opossum Lake's story, handing out a brochure or two will help in a big way. Here are some ideas on how to do just that:

- Take them to work and share them with your fellow employees.
- Share them with all your fishing buddies.
- Post one on your church's bulletin board and ask your pastor to include it in the morning announcements.
- Take a few to your local bait/tackle shop.
- Share them with your service group.
- Ask your company's in-house newsletter to print a short article.
- Post one at your local Mom & Pop grocery store.
- Give a few to your neighbors.
- Hand one to your "environmentally conscious" friend.
- Ask your local supermarket to post one on their bulletin board.

The brochures are now available at the new kiosks at the lake or by contacting Mary Franco at 243-9863 or Cindy Criswell at 486-8904 to arrange delivery.

I'm A Friend of Opossum Lake!

FOLC T-Shirts are available
in both adult and children's sizes.

Cost: \$15.00 ea.

(Discount prices will be offered
at FOLC events!)

FOLC Baseball Caps (in deep blue)
are also available for only \$5!

Order by calling Mary Franco
(717) 243-9863

Email: mfranco99@comcast.net

Make checks payable to:
Friends of Opossum Lake Conservancy

New FOLC Brochure And Trail Guide

All members of FOLC recently received a mailing containing several color Opossum Lake brochures. This brochure was developed by a Shippensburg University student, Patty Sulzberger, under the guidance and direction of Janet A. Ruby, FOLC Board member and Professor of Art and Computer Design at Shippensburg University. Jan strives to bring a sense of reality to her classes by assigning real-life projects in computer design.

During the 2007 spring semester, she asked her computer design students to develop ideas for several brochures. The students were given a broad introduction to Opossum Lake, its history and the issues and problems associated with funding the rebuilding of the dam in addition to maintaining the area around the lake and constructing the Anglers Access Trail. The students developed a wide variety of solutions to all these issues in the form of two brochures.

One brochure informed people about the situation at Opossum Lake, and FOLC and its activities (including fundraising). Patty Sulzberger's brochure was selected from twenty submissions by executive board decision. Patty is currently a junior at Shippensburg University.

The second brochure contained a trail map and guide focusing on the activities, wildlife, and fauna at Opossum Lake. Jamie McCoy, a graduating senior, developed the trail brochure with assistance from Hal Gardner (FOLC Board member). The trail brochure is now in final editing by Jan with assistance from other FOLC Board members and will soon go to print. FOLC would like to thank The Carlisle Area Health and Wellness Foundation for their contribution covering the printing costs for the trail brochure and to The Printed Image for their in-kind contribution.

Additional projects have been completed during past years by Shippensburg University students including posters, logos, bumper stickers, bookmarks, t-shirt designs, and marketing plans. Some of those projects now adorn the three new kiosks at the lake!

Jan reports that the students thoroughly enjoy working with projects such as this one that offer real-life experiences and opportunities for them, plus a lucky few get to have their designs published and distributed! In education, nothing could be better than that! FOLC is looking forward to working with Shippensburg students on future projects!

Memorial Guidelines Set

At a recent Board of Directors meeting, the Board of Directors of the Friends of Opossum Lake Conservancy (FOLC) approved the following guidelines for individuals and families wishing to memorialize loved ones through memorial plaques at the lake.

For memorials totaling \$50 to \$249:

A framed and inscribed watercolor print of Opossum Lake by Janet A. Ruby, Chair of the Department of Art and Computer Design at Shippensburg University. The artwork graces the cover of FOLC's new brochure!

For memorials totaling \$250 to \$999:

A small brass plaque (approximately 1 inch high by 3 inches long) to be placed on a larger wooden plaque, which will be created and posted in the future pavilion at Opossum Lake. Space for inscription of approximately two lines of text will be available on each small brass plaque. Numerous small brass plaques will be placed on the wooden plaque. A weatherproof enclosure for the wooden plaque is planned for the pavilion.

For memorials in excess of \$1,000:

A large bronze plaque suitable for placement on a bench or picnic table at Opossum Lake. A one line inscription ("In Loving Memory of...") will be available on the large bronze plaque. Please keep in mind that there are a limited number of benches and picnic tables currently available at Opossum Lake for placement of these large bronze plaques. Several additional more rustic benches are available along the Anglers Access Trail surrounding the lake.

If you have any questions about memorializing a loved one at Opossum Lake, please contact Cindy Criswell, Mary Franco, or Cheryl Pauli (see the Board of Directors listing on Page 4 for contact information).

First Annual Meeting

Approximately 75 people attended FOLC's first Annual Meeting on May 5th at Opossum Lake.

The day started with a Warbler Walk at 8:00 AM. Craig Houston gives the following account:

"Having heard the calls of a pair of barred owls at 6:30 AM on the west side of the lake, I was especially excited about our forthcoming warbler walk in that area later in the morning.

What a perfect day for a walk! And with the attentive guidance of Kim VanFleet, our group of eight was able to list 37 types of birds. Since the warbler flight was just getting under way, we were only able to record one warbler – a yellow-rumped. However, we listed an excellent cross-section of seasonal birds including the red-eyed vireo, the solitary vireo, the towhee, the Baltimore oriole, the eastern kingbird, the eastern phoebe, the spotted sandpiper, the killdeer, the eastern belted kingfisher, the green heron, the song sparrow, the wood thrush, the osprey, and the black vulture" among others.

David Miko of the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission, explained how and why the Fish and Boat Commission uses trap nets. He set up a trap net by the parking area and walked through it as if he were a fish to demonstrate how the fish are captured. He also provided a large quantity of information for FOLC to distribute to those present and loaned a box of fishing rods and reels for use by young people at the lake that afternoon. Thank you to David for taking the time to spend several hours sharing his knowledge with us!

Following a delicious picnic lunch in the grove of pine trees just off the main parking area, those present were updated on where the process of restoring Opossum Lake stands. Cumberland County Commissioner Rick Rovegno and Tom Ford, representing the PA Fish and Boat Commission, spoke about the process. Thank you to Commissioner Rovegno and Tom Ford for their update information at FOLC's first Annual Meeting.

A new Board of Directors for 2007-2008 was then elected by members present. See Page 4 for a listing of members.

Thank you to all members who attended this important meeting! We hope you enjoyed the day!

Opossum Lake Natives

On a stroll along the circum-lake Anglers Access Trail at Opossum Lake, it's possible to find many native plants in addition to the many aggressive alien plants. The natives persist because the area has been Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission property for approximately 45 years and previously, much of the land was undeveloped bottomland. Because trees live for hundreds of years, they are the most persistent natives, especially on the south and east sides of Opossum Lake.

Spring flowers are abundant in the woodlands, where you can find dogtooth violet, wild geranium, May apple, beard tongue, spring beauty, violet, and many other less common species. A few skunk cabbages left high and dry from lake draw-down were transplanted to the area of the bog bridge.

Surprisingly, there are two small native prairies slowly being encroached upon by honeysuckle and other brushy plants. One prairie just east of the bog bridge is comprised mainly of little bluestem grass (*Andropogon scoparius*). Another prairie adjacent to Opossum Lake Road has a fair diversity for its small size, indicating that it has been undisturbed for a very long time. You will find two species of the lily, blue-eyed grass (*Sisyrinchium albidum* and *Sisyrinchium angustifolium*), broom sedge (*Andropogon virginicus*), spiked lobelia (*Lobelia spicata*), two species of goldenrod (*Solidago juncea* and *Solidago nemoralis*), pussytoes (*Antennaria neglecta*), wild strawberry (*Fragaria virginiana*), and among others, hairy-leaved sedge (*Carex hirsutella*).

It is FOLC's plan to improve these two small prairies. Are you interested in helping with these prairie restoration projects?

Please contact Hal Gardner to offer your assistance!

*By Hal Gardner
FOLC Board Member*



Can You Help on a Committee?

Help is always needed on FOLC committees!

Contact any of the committee chairs listed below to volunteer or for more information, please refer to our website:

www.opossumlakefriends.org

– Membership/Public Relations Committee

Committee Chair: Cindy Criswell (email: gc_criswell@peoplepc.com; phone 717-486-8904).

– Finance and Fundraising Committee

Committee Chair: Allen Shank (email: bojadancer@aol.com; phone 717-243-3389).

– Projects and Trail Committee

Committee Co-Chairs: Ruben Lao (email: ftwnride@yahoo.com; phone 717-323-1002) and Gary Criswell (email: gc_criswell@peoplepc.com; phone 717-486-8904).

– Dam Construction Liaison Committee

Committee Co-Chairs: Tim Barrick (email: tbarrick@state.pa.us; phone 717-240-0896) and Wayne DeMoss (phone 717-241-4086).

FOLC Wish List

You say you can't come to a work day or serve on a committee? That's OK! There are other ways you can help!

Donate an item from FOLC's "Wish List!"

- A book of 41-cent postage stamps
- Plain #10 white envelopes

Items on the Wish List will change depending on upcoming FOLC programs and projects.

Drop off your donation at the Lower Frankford Township Building at 1205 Easy Road, Carlisle, PA 17015 or call Cindy Criswell at 486-8904 to arrange for pick-up.

To comment on "Possum Watch" or request additional copies, contact the editor:

Cindy Criswell
email: gc_criswell@peoplepc.com
telephone 717-486-8904