



'Possum Watch

Winter 2011

Volume 6, No. 1

The Construction Has Begun!

It's started!

What we've all been patiently (and sometimes not so patiently) waiting for – construction on the dam and spillway at Opossum Lake has started!

For more of the latest photos, go to Facebook on the Internet. It's not necessary to sign in to Facebook – just Google "**opossumlake facebook**" and then click on the link to check out the latest photo albums without actually logging in to Facebook.

The contractor has moved in equipment and a construction trailer near the spillway off Mt. Zion Road.



Breaking up the spillway begins:



(Continued on page 4)

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.

The President's Corner

Dear FOLC Friends:

Greetings! Rest assured that FOLC refuses to sit idle while the rebuilding of the dam and spillway take place! See Ed Franco's construction update on page 4 for the latest activity!

FOLC is cautiously optimistic that three projects will be addressed in 2011 through our working partnership with the PA Fish & Boat Commission (PAFBC), Lower Frankford Township, and the Carlisle YMCA:

- A new canoe/kayak launch site for which the Carlisle YMCA has committed funding assistance.
- Continued maintenance silt removal at the north end of the lake through the PAFBC.
- A large scale fish habitat improvement project by the PAFBC (see the article on Page 6).

All these projects will hopefully be completed while the lake is dry, obviously, the easiest and least expensive time to do them. FOLC is now searching for funding in addition to that committed by other agencies to assist in these time-critical projects at the lake. Projects such as these take tremendous cooperation between various agencies and organizations and FOLC is proud to participate as a small cog in a much larger wheel!

During 2010, Lower Frankford Township completed the pavilion and picnic area, installed pit toilets, and completed installation of video surveillance cameras to assist in reducing the vandalism Opossum Lake has experienced (see the article on Page 5 about what to do if you see vandalism occurring).

FOLC extends a heartfelt thank you to all individuals who answered the donation challenge placed by Ed and Mary Franco, in which their \$1,000 pledge brought in an additional \$1,725 for a total of \$2,725. As promised, this money will be put towards the funding of the projects mentioned above.

Also, rest assured that, even though FOLC is looking for ways to improve the lake and bring the lake back, we balance such opportunities with keeping a watchful eye on how we spend your dollars. I know I speak for the entire Board of Directors when I say that we appreciate your trust in us with your hard-earned money to be used as FOLC sees best. It is for this reason that FOLC strives to make the best use of each dollar spent.

Matching Grant Results!

The Matching Challenge Grant was a resounding success!

Ed and Mary Franco pledged to match up to \$1,000 in donations for this special challenge. And that was all it took for FOLC members and friends to start sending in the donations!

Counting the Franco's \$1,000 initial challenge, a total of **\$2,725** was added to FOLC's general fund! The FOLC Board of Directors would like to thank Ed and Mary Franco for their generosity.

And THANK YOU to everyone who stepped up and supported FOLC through this matching grant.

You're the best!

(The President's Corner continued...)

I am very proud of what has been accomplished with the funding you have provided over the years, and I sincerely hope you feel the same.

One way everyone can continue to stay informed and involved is through the newsletter. However, there are costs involved in mailing the newsletter several times a year to all our members and friends. Check out Cindy Criswell's article, "Membership Appeal" on Page 3 for some interesting information!

No one will want to miss this exciting year at the lake as dam rebuilding continues, special projects are tackled, decisions are made, and friendships are formed. 2011 promises to be the best year that Opossum Lake has seen in a long time!

As always, members, friends, and the general public are welcome to attend our monthly FOLC Board of Directors meetings. The Board meetings are held on the first Wednesday of each month at 7 PM at the Lower Frankford Township Building, 1205 Easy Road, Carlisle. Everyone is also very welcome to attend the FOLC Annual Meeting held at the lake in May as well. Watch for details about the Annual Meeting in the next newsletter!

I wish you all the best in 2011 and hope to see you soon!

*Tim Barrick
President, FOLC*

Membership Appeal

Since the organization of FOLC in 2006, we've gathered a long long list of members and friends.

Friends of Opossum Lake Conservancy (FOLC) has always tried to spend your membership dollars in the most beneficial manner possible. In the trying economic times of the past few years, we realize that by sending your hard-earned money to an organization such as FOLC, you are placing your trust in us. By joining FOLC or renewing your membership, you trust that we will spend your money wisely and for projects that will lead to the repair and restoration of Opossum Lake – everyone's ultimate goal. We are humbled by your continued support and trust in us over the years.

Many individuals and families initially paid for memberships, but over the past few years, they've allowed their memberships to lapse. Perhaps by accident, since FOLC does not "bill" members annually but appeals for membership renewals through our newsletter. Or perhaps these former members no longer wish to be involved in FOLC and our activities at Opossum Lake.

As keeper of the membership rolls, I recently conducted an analysis of those rolls. Here are some numbers you might find surprising:

Total Members (from 2006 to the present): 440

This number represents 262 "family units," which could be an individual, a couple or a family of 6.

Of those 440 members, **only 116 (or 69 family units) are current in their FOLC dues as of Dec. 31, 2010.**

That leaves 324 individuals (or 183 family units) who are not current in their FOLC dues!

However, all 262 family units (440 members) receive a newsletter when published 3 or 4 times a year in addition to invitations to the FOLC Annual meeting held in May of each year at the lake. Some family units receive their newsletter via email and some via US mail. If you have an email address and are willing to share it with me, it would be greatly appreciated. You'll receive your newsletter in PDF format.

Approximately half the individuals who have not paid dues for a number of years have email addresses and sending them FOLC's newsletter costs nothing but my time. Included on our mailing list are also individuals who have never paid for membership, but they have email addresses, so again, it costs FOLC nothing to send them our newsletter. However, the

other 50% of delinquent memberships do not have email available, so they have been receiving the newsletter via US mail. Postage costs come from FOLC's general fund – your membership dollars.

At a recent FOLC Board of Directors meeting, the following actions were proposed:

- 🐟 Individuals who no longer wish to receive the FOLC newsletter should notify me or another Board member immediately.
- 🐟 Individuals who have not paid any dues since December 31, 2009 will be dropped from the mailing list as of May 31, 2011.
- 🐟 Individuals who are not members and who do not have email addresses will be dropped from the USPS mailing list as of May 31, 2011.

If you haven't paid any dues for a long time, renewing is easy – choose a membership level and send a check to FOLC (see information below). Unlike your bank, we assure you no penalties or interest are involved!!!

We value ALL our members and friends. Removing people from our mailing list is not something that we like to do, but in trying to make the very best use of your membership dollars, it's necessary.

Don't panic if you're not sure when you last paid dues! Simply give me a call at 717-486-8904 or email me at cecriswell@embarqmail.com to check your membership status.

Cindy Criswell
FOLC Membership Secretary

Membership (Per Year)

Individual	\$10
Family	\$15
Student	\$1
Sponsor	\$50
Benefactor	\$100
Corporate	\$250

Lifetime Memberships

Family	\$275
Senior Citizen	\$150

Make checks payable to "Friends of Opossum Lake Conservancy" and mail to:

Friends of Opossum Lake Conservancy
1205 Easy Road
Carlisle, PA 17015

Construction Update

The excavating contractor has done a great job since moving on site on 11/15/10. Essentially, they completed all excavation and demolition by 1/15/11. The concrete spillway was broken up and used for fill, the rebar and steel was recycled, and the footer trenches have been dug for the spillway (these have been backfilled to prevent freeze damage). Despite the bitter weather, work is continuing on installing “rock anchors” that will be drilled into bed rock and used to anchor the concrete slabs in addition to the footers. If you visit the site, you will notice a large flat area where the labyrinth spillway will be constructed and a 13-foot high “step” downstream, which will drop the water to the lower level of the spillway (shall we call it “Opossum Falls?”), and then into the existing settlement basin below.

Gerry Woomer, the PAFBC engineer in charge, has been closely overseeing the project and is very pleased. Gerry comes from Pleasant Gap each Tuesday to review progress at the site with the contractors. As soon as the weather allows pouring concrete, we’ll see a beehive of activities as the retaining walls, spillway, and labyrinth are constructed. Lots of big concrete trucks will be seen on the road to Opossum Lake!



*Shale is ripped, drilled, and trucked to fill
The south side of the dam berm.*



*Exposed clay core of the original breastwork.
Care was taken to “save” excavated material
that will be used to backfill.*

Photo at
right:

The
existing
settle-
ment
basin
below
the dam
will
remain.



*Two photos at left: Large quantities of sand are used to
backfill around the new drain system used to divert
surface water.*



Work Days Scheduled

Mark your calendars now! In addition to the on-going construction around the dam and spillway, FOLC has scheduled the following volunteer Work Days at Opossum Lake in 2011.

 **April 2, 2011** (Saturday) - Trash pick-up around the lake and Anglers Access Trail maintenance work in addition to other miscellaneous work. Wear your work gloves and bring heavy trash bags if you have some to donate.

 **June 26, 2011** (Sunday) - Anglers Access Trail maintenance including trimming, stump removal, spreading of wood chips, and other maintenance around the trail. Bring trimmers and make sure you wear your work gloves and use tick repellent!

 **September 24, 2011** (Saturday) - Trash pick-up and Anglers Access Trail maintenance work. Again, wear your work gloves and tick repellent and bring heavy trash bags if you have any to donate.

For each of the Work Days scheduled, volunteers should meet at the main (large) parking lot at the lake at 9:00 AM. Groups will be dispatched from that central location.

Children under the age of 18 will be required to have a permission slip/waiver signed by a parent or guardian.

For more information on this or any of the Work Days, please contact Todd Deihl, FOLC Volunteer Coordinator, by email at tdeihl@ccpa.net or todddeihl@gmail.com or by phone at 717-226-9022.

Check out the "I'm a Friend of Opossum Lake" t-shirts for sale (see box at right). 

Normally priced at \$15, discount prices on FOLC t-shirts are offered for volunteers at FOLC Work Days! Plan to get yours at the next Work Day!

We hope to see you at these FOLC Work Days in 2011!

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

Cindy Criswell
email: cecriswell@embarqmail.com
telephone 717-486-8904

Problems at the Lake

There has always been vandalism of some sort at Opossum Lake over the years. Whether it's spray painting porta-potties, knocking down recently planted trees or running vehicles over grassy areas and leaving deep ruts, vandals have always been attracted to the lake area.

The Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission (PAFBC) offers the following advice. If you witness vandalism on or around the Opossum Lake property, do not take matters into your own hands. **First call 911 (PA State Police) and then call 717-486-7087 (PAFBC's Regional Office) to report the incident.**

Lower Frankford Township has installed an electronic surveillance system at the lake to monitor vandalism and assist in apprehending the vandals. If we all stick together, maybe the vandals will discover that Opossum Lake is not as attractive to them and their activities as it has been in the past!

I'm A Friend of Opossum Lake!

**FOLC T-Shirts in Various Colors
Are available in Youth Sizes &
Medium, Large, XL and 2XL
Adult Sizes.**

Cost: \$15.00 ea.

**(Discount prices will be offered
for volunteers 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 any checks payable to:
Friends of Opossum Lake Conservancy**

Fish Habitat Planned

Fish habitat at Opossum Lake? Wait, you say, there's no water in Opossum Lake right now! Why in the world would a fish habitat project be done in a lake without water?

That's the best time to do a large scale fish habitat project in a lake according to Ben Page of the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission (PAFBC). And 2011 will be a year of construction on the dam and spillway with very little water running through the mostly dry lake bed.

At a FOLC Board of Directors meeting last fall, the PAFBC proposed a large scale fish habitat project at Opossum Lake during 2011. An assessment and survey of the lake as it is at the present time was conducted by the PAFBC and a plan map showing proposed artificial fish habitat structure was prepared. The structures proposed for Opossum Lake's large scale fish habitat include 10 spider humps, 20 rock stars, 26 post clusters, 160 rock rubble humps, and 16 root wads.

While all this may sound like it's from outer space, Ben assures us it will greatly improve the fish habitat in Opossum Lake once the lake is refilled with water. Fish habitat increases the abundance of submerged natural materials that mimic native or natural habitats (wood and rock rubble). It increases anglers' success and opportunities for aquatic animals to increase in number. The PAFBC calls it a "win-win lake management tool."

FOLC's Board decided to partner with the PAFBC to undertake the proposed large scale fish habitat project utilizing various funding sources. The total cost for the large scale fish habitat project is estimated at \$21,730. The PAFBC CHIP materials contribution will be \$6,000, lowering the total funds needed to \$15,730. Various "funding balls are in the air" at the moment – in varying amounts. If necessary, after all other funding sources are exhausted, FOLC will offer \$6,000 towards this project.

The PAFBC will perform all the work utilizing their specialized aquatic and land-based equipment to construct and place all of the proposed structures quickly. A large scale fish habitat project such as the one proposed for Opossum Lake can typically be accomplished within weeks.

The lake may be dry now, but the water will be returning soon – we're just planning ahead!

More Construction Photos



*Cutting rebar in the old spillway
(materials were recycled)*



*An aerial view of the project site
(courtesy of Gerry Woomer, PAFBC)*

Even if you can't attend a Work Day, you can still help save FOLC some cash!

Any of the following can be dropped off at the Lower Frankford Township Building at 1205 Easy Road, Carlisle, PA:

- "Forever" postage stamps
- #10 business size envelopes (any color)
- 6" x 9" white envelopes (for newsletters)
- Large outdoor size heavy trash bags

FOLC greatly appreciates those individuals who make a point of donating postage stamps on a regular basis. Thank you very much!