

# Blackleggs Creek Memorial Park

## Size & Type of Project:

Rustic "Green" Park; 4 acres

## Location:

Indiana County,  
Pennsylvania

## Budget:

\$133,000

## Project Phase:

Complete



## Project Overview

This park was originally built by the Blackleggs Creek Watershed Association (BCWA) members and volunteers with funding from the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources and the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission. The creek itself is renowned for its trout fishing and trout nursery which is maintained by the BWCA and stocked seasonally. At the heart of the park sits a 24 x 36 foot covered pavilion, which was carefully constructed within touching distance of the big hardwoods. Within the headers of the pavilion is a sign honoring the past members and volunteers of Blackleggs Park. Picnic tables are scattered throughout the park, and several camping areas with fire rings are situated on both sides of the stream. The "green" project involved installation of an abandoned mine drainage (AMD) system and structures to improve the fish habitat, with funding from DCNR and PA Fish and Boat Commission. Ample parking has been installed on both sides of the park with access for both fishing and picnicking activities. A trail follows the path of the creek and leads to the Kolb site AMD treatment system. Future plans for the park include the installation of a comfort station and interactive signage detailing how the AMD treatment system functions.

## Sustainable Practices

### Abandoned Mine Drainage System:

The park features a two cell, passive abandoned mine drainage system with a serene fountain that assists with keeping the water-polluting iron in the outflow from a metal or coal mine from entering the stream as well as providing visitors to the park with peaceful background sounds and a beautiful fountain as a destination. The acidic water can be extremely damaging to eco-systems and habitats that directly surround the former mine or that may be downstream. An environmental engineering firm was hired to design and permit the system consisting of a wet seal to capture the underground mine discharge, piping network, innovative aeration system, and a settling pond.



### Improvement to native fish habitat:

Through the park flows 500 feet of the headwaters of Blackleggs Creek, which have now been stabilized and enhanced for the development of fish habitats with assistance from the PA Fish and Boat Commission. Installed structures include over half a dozen single-log vane and multi-log vane deflectors, several root-wad deflectors, and two modified mud sill cribbing devices, all of which protect the stream banks and direct water flow back to the middle of the channel.

### Native Vegetation and Riparian Buffer:

Surrounding the creek is a mix of native hardwood trees and riparian shrubs that not only provide enjoyable shade for park visitors, but protect the stream from the sun, keeping the water cool and well oxygenated for the fish and other aquatic life.



### **Maintenance**

The AMD system receives regular maintenance thanks to park volunteers including only one piping repair after ten years of successful operation.

### **Lessons Learned**

As the park began to come together and volunteers and visitors saw the outline of where the mowing would take place, a lot of questions and personal preferences arose. The goal of BCWA was to have a rustic park that kept the vegetation trimmed but not so short as to affect its ability to provide a buffer to the creek. Some of the volunteer mowers wanting to make the park look the best it could, misinterpreted the light weed-eating near the stream as a sloppy job and helped out by giving all of the vegetation a low and even trim. No harm done, but not necessarily the best management practice that was desired. The lesson learned is that education is the key to helping individuals, both volunteers and visitors, understand the importance of vegetation when it comes to the protection of water quality, and to see a stream bank in a park with some weeds not as wild and sloppy, but as a tool to help keep the stream that flows through the park in good shape. In addition to providing information about the AMD system there will need to be information on how the BMPs in the park are keeping it "green".

### **Issues/ Constraints of the Site**

The location of the park happens to be in a place where there is no cell coverage. This may be a good thing, even a great thing when you are out camping and fishing, but when you are trying to coordinate volunteers, call the construction crew, or just be available for questions, the lack of cell coverage adds a challenge to the project.

### **Project Consultants**

Skelly and Loy, Inc.  
Blackleggs Creek Watershed Association

Environmental Engineering  
Volunteer Maintenance and Fish  
Stocking