

Columbia County Conservation District's Fishing Creek Nature Park

Columbia County, PA

Project Description:

The Frank W. Kocher Memorial Park provides unique recreational opportunities for Columbia County and the surrounding area. A \$75,000 Growing Greener grant by DCNR in 2001 helped to develop the park designed to be easily accessible to individuals with disabilities and to young children. It provides a place to enjoy nature and participate in fishing to individuals that would otherwise be unable to engage in these activities. There are few, if any, similar opportunities within the region. The park is also different because it provides visitors with the opportunity to experience indigenous ecosystems.

In the time since the park has been open to the public, recreational use by the community



"Located on Fishing Creek The Frank Kocher Park is a very unique park! To our knowledge there is not another handicapped accessible park that features a fishing area that courageous handicapped people will find quite accessible. Moreover, we have constructed a wetland for educational purposes with accessible trails where all people can enjoy watching hundreds of trees, flowers, and shrubs native to North East Pennsylvania. In addition, much of the land was recovered after we used Fluvial Geomorphology techniques to stabilize a badly eroded bank. Most of the hand labor to build the park was donated by the members of The Fishing Creek Watershed Association, The Conservation District, Boy Scouts from Light Street and volunteers from PPL and the surrounding community. A grant from DEP and The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service paid for all work done in the creek. Another grant from DCNR paid for the park.

Chuck Chapman, Former President, Fishing Creek Watershed Association

individual visits the park. The park sits at the lowest point on Fishing Creek that is currently stocked by the PA Fish & Boat Commission. This provides an excellent angling experience for disadvantaged residents and young children.



has been very encouraging. Many individuals with a

handicap, elderly residents, and young children have taken advantage of the park on a regular basis. Overall, there has been a wonderful response from park visitors.

The Park is adjacent to a well-traveled public road with excellent exposure from a bridge. The stream frontage offers opportunities for people of all abilities to access Fishing Creek. Since public access of streams in the area is very limited, this park is a valuable tool for both formal environmental education and informal education that takes place every time an

Amount of funds awarded, year and matching sources:

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- 2001: \$75,000 Growing Greener funding

 - 2001: \$99,818 Match from Columbia County including
 - \$4,287 in kind
 - \$62,375 donated services
 - \$11,981 volunteer services
 - \$9,175 equipment use
 - \$12,000 donated land value
