

## **Introduction:**

Many fish-rearing organizations exist in the Commonwealth, as part of the PA Fish & Boat Commission's Cooperative Nursery Program.

The enclosed profile of one successful sportsmen's club, the Stony Creek Anglers in Norristown, Montgomery County appeared in the Winter/Spring, 2008 issue of *Branches*, the newsletter of the Park Resource Branch of PRPS.

— John P. Mikowychok,

Branch Membership Secretary  
and Newsletter Editor

Profiles

of  
Park Resource  
Agencies

## Agency Name: Stony Creek Anglers

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**Website:** www.stonycreekanglers.org

**Director's Name and Title:** Charles Wood, Club President

**Year Founded:** 1997 (they commenced the cooperative nursery, or trout-rearing agreement with the PA Fish and Boat Commission in 1998, and began operating the facility in 2001).

**Current # of Members:** 320; about 15 members manage the trout-rearing facilities.



**Mission Statement:** We are an environmental group dedicated to the preservation of the Stony Creek and the children of Norristown, PA

**Major Initiatives:** They are the only cooperative nursery in Montgomery County. Their facility manages some 9,000 rainbow and brook trout per year on the grounds of the Norristown State Hospital and Montgomery County's Norristown Farm Park. The facility utilizes two wells from the old Hospital's reservoir as its cool water supply. This water, which is a constant 52 degrees, is sent through a series of buckets filled with rings, as well as a generative blower with ceramic diffuser stones to force nitrogen gas out, and oxygen in.



A youngster peers into the stepped, concrete raceway, newly stocked with fingerlings, after stocking in fall 2001. The PVC pipe and plastic lattice at right are covers, which lay over the raceway to prevent predation by wading birds.

The water then flows into eight, 25-foot-long pens, made of gunnite. Each pen holds some 1,000 to 1,200 trout. For those not familiar with the PA Fish and Boat Commission's Cooperative Nursery program, it is set up to allow local clubs to raise fish, thereby augmenting local fishing streams with reared trout and allowing local clubs to contribute to the labor intensive effort. The trout are received in July and are small fingerlings. When released by the Club into area creeks the following spring, they are 18 months old and over 14.5 inches long. They grow about 1.5 inches per month, and are fed twice a day with automatic feeders and manual feeding.

Creeks which receive the fish include Stony, Kepner, Towamencin, Perkiomen, Pennypack, and Skippack Creeks.

**Past accomplishments, initiatives, recognitions:** The Club also provides local programs and events for the community. During trout season, they hold fishing outings once per week with the patients of the State Hospital. Other visitors include elementary schools, who learn about stream quality and the benefits of stream bank improvements, and scouts, who learn how to fish and complete service projects and complete merit badge requirements. Norristown High School also uses the nursery and grounds for educational purposes such as composting.

Special events include an annual picnic for patients of the State Hospital, an annual fishing tournament for the community, and a bass tournament for children 12 and under. They also participate in Montgomery County's Youth Field Day, and help with bluebird trails in the Park. Outreach programs include assistance to the Coventryville Trout Club in northern Chester County, training local watershed groups in monitoring water quality, and streambank restoration projects (through the PA Fish & Boat Commission's Adopt-a-Stream program).

**Awards:** The Club received a stewardship award from the Montgomery County Commissioners, and a certificate of excellence from Norristown State Hospital. The latter was received for the club's work in educating their patients (many with serious mental disabilities) how to fish, and the therapeutic value of this activity.

## A Bucket List: How It Works

Visitors to the SCA's trout-rearing site at Norristown State Hospital will notice an unusual contraption at the high end of the raceway. This column and series of buckets filled with plastic rings is called a Digassing Column [See diagram, at right]. Water from a wellhouse is pumped to the top of the column, and by running through each successive bucket, is exposed to a large surface area created by those rings, decreasing nitrogen and increasing oxygen levels. That, coupled with other aerification devices constructed with PVC pipe and openings along the raceway, provide the oxygen-rich water that trout require.

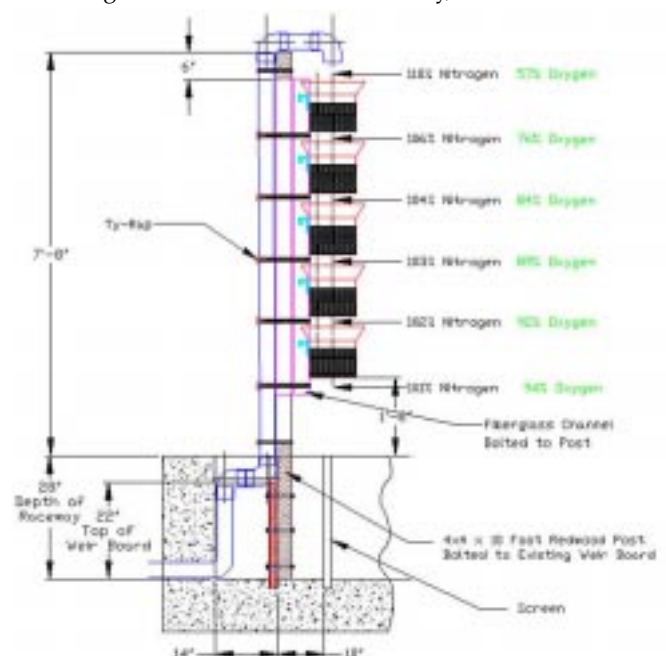


Illustration courtesy of Ray Duff