

Published: September 7, 2013

Conservancy head: Lawmakers need to step up for lake

[By Paula Grubbs](#)

Eagle Staff Writer, Butler Eagle, September 7, 2013

MIDDLESEX TWP — While Siggy Pehel is happy with the community support he has received, the Glade Run Lake Conservancy president said legislators are not helping with a quicker fix for the lake's faulty dam.

Pehel and a handful of others started the conservancy after the 52-acre lake off Overbrook Road was drained in August 2011 because of a needed \$4 million fix to the lake's dam.

Since then, the conservancy has picked up 1,860 members and raised more than \$130,000. But Pehel said the conservancy may face a long dry spell if legislators don't support the program.

He noted legislators elsewhere are helping their communities.

He points to Speedwell Forge in Lancaster County, which was also drained after being deemed unsafe. Although Glade Run Lake was drained first, Speedwell Forge already has been repaired and refilled because of strong support from legislators in that area, he said.

"There has been no such outrage for Glade Run Lake except from those of us who were concerned enough to form the conservancy," Pehel said.

Pehel said representatives from both sides of the legislative aisle have staunchly supported the restoration effort for Speedwell Forge. That support earned Speedwell Forge a \$6.4 million appropriation from Gov. Tom Corbett, a Growing Greener Grant disbursement; a \$440,000 state grant for sediment removal; and \$300,000 from the state Fish and Boat Commission.

"It seems the money goes to the lakes in the east and center in this state," Pehel said. "We in the west, Glade Run Lake and Hereford Manor Lake, are conspicuously absent of any funding."

Hereford Manor Lake, just west of Zelenople in Beaver County, was closed in October 2012 to prepare for draining. Both the upper and lower lakes were drained before crews removed a faulty section of the dam on the upper lake and a portion of the dam on the lower lake.

Corbett spokesman Jay Pagni confirmed the funding for Speedwell Forge was a result of pressure from legislators who supported the restoration of the lake.

"One avenue the (conservancy) could pursue is to garner the support of the local legislative body," Pagni said. "Those are the types of avenues that can be extremely helpful in moving these things forward."

Eric Levis, spokesman for the Fish and Boat Commission, said while the commission's annual budget is \$60 million, there are 54 or 55 dams that are in need of repair across the state. He said a capital budget list contains every project requesting money from the governor.

Levis said it is the task of legislators to work together and with the Fish and Boat Commission to persuade the governor's office to release the money for a project. "There are more challenges ahead of you (if a project lacks legislative support)," Levis said.

Pehel said while State Senator Randy Vulakovich, R-40th, supports state funding for restoration of Glade Run Lake, state Rep. Daryl Metcalfe, R-12th, has been clear that the \$4 million needed to restore Glade Run Lake should be raised through the conservancy and private donations.

"If he really cared about his constituents and infrastructure like he says he does, he would be getting people together," Pehel said of Metcalfe. "He supports the conservancy, but won't do anything else. He's not representing his constituents."

Metcalfe did not return repeated calls from the Butler Eagle regarding Glade Run Lake.

Pehel said he would like to see Vulakovich rally support from legislators in districts surrounding the 40th and 12th, as people have come from all over Western Pennsylvania to visit Glade Run Lake.

"We're trying to make this a regional effort," Pehel said.

State Rep. Scott Hutchinson, R-21st, said he is "certainly in support to the project" and has discussed it with state Fish and Boat Commission officials. He said Vulakovich has taken the lead on the issue, and he has pledged his support.

"We have told (Vulakovich) we will do whatever we can to help him out," Hutchinson said.

Pehel said the Butler County commissioners gave \$4,000 to the conservancy from Marcellus Shale impact fee funds, but said they could have donated more.

"Although we are thankful for that, for this to take off and go we need a major commitment from the county commissioners," Pehel said. "We're not getting the support we should be getting."

Commissioners Chairman Bill McCarrier said the decision on whether to appropriate more than the \$4,000 to the conservancy will be decided later this year when the commissioners begin discussing the 2014 county budget.

He would not say whether he would support a larger donation until the budget process begins.

"There are a lot of things we can do with the money, but some has to be set aside for conservation," McCarrier said.

He said he is a member of the conservancy, and he said the lake is an asset to the county.

"But there are so many assets in Butler County, and everyone wants the commissioners to fund them," McCarrier said. "Our response is, 'If we give you the money, would you be in favor of raising taxes?'"

Meanwhile, Pehel said the conservancy will continue its efforts, undeterred by the lack of legislative support.

He said he has applied for a state Growing Greener grant for park improvement and a state Department of Environmental Protection grant for sediment removal at the dam.

Pehel said the conservancy used the Right to Know Act to get engineers' drawings of plans for the lake's repair, and found that 30,000 cubic yards of sediment must be removed from the lake bed before it can be refilled.

The conservancy also is asking members to volunteer at the lake. He said adult members are being asked for 12 hours annually, and families for 24 hours. Businesses are being asked to volunteer 40 hours annually at the lake.

"For every hour of commitment we get, that's \$7.25 we can commit toward matching funds for the (sediment-removal) grant," Pehel said.

For more information or to become a member of the conservancy, log onto www.gladerunlakeconservancy.org.

- See more at:

<http://www.butlereagle.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20130907/NEWS01/709079868#sthash.ZugysJzQ.dpuf>