

Glade Run Lake group aims to build membership More than 100 attend meeting in support

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Paula Grubbs

MIDDLESEX TWP — Of the 100-plus people who came out on a cold, wet Wednesday night to support the Glade Run Lake Conservancy's efforts to rebuild and refill the lake, one particular donor showed that every little bit helps.

Brandi Reynolds, 6, brought a flowered white piggy bank containing coins and small bills she has collected from family members and friends since Easter.

"I did it so I could help restore Glade Run Lake," said the diminutive donor. "There's nowhere for the fish to live or the crabs."

When conservancy president Siggy Pehel shared Brandi's selfless act with the crowd at the Middlesex Township Fire Hall, they began stuffing the piggy bank with a lot more than nickels.

Pehel said the meeting was meant to gain memberships. Conservancy volunteers and boy and girl scouts manned tables where those in attendance could join the fight to fulfill Brandi's goal of restoring the lake.

"We hope in the future Brandi and her family can go there to fish, play or walk their dog," Pehel said. "Thank you, Brandi."

Gary Moore, special projects coordinator with the state Fish and Boat Commission, said the 52-acre Glade Run Lake off Overbrook Road in the township was one of 16 lakes in the state identified in 1997 as a high-hazard dam.

A more recent inspection showed the dam was seeping, so Fish and Boat Commission engineers decided to draw down the water level by two or three feet to reduce the seepage.

Moore said after that draw down, experts discovered the dam was still seeping and took the water level down even further. But the lake became so shallow that temperatures would rise too high for the fish living in the lake.

"So we had to completely draw down the lake and salvage as many fish as possible and relocate them," Moore said. "That was done on June 6."

He said the repair and replacement of the lake will cost about \$4.2 million. Pehel told those in attendance that because state funding is unavailable, a

strong grassroots effort is needed to raise funds for seed money to spur grants.

He said conservancy members could serve as ambassadors for the lake, sharing the cause with businesses, civic organizations, and others could donate time, effort or money to the nonprofit group.

"It's a win-win for everybody," Pehel said. "It doesn't matter what your politics are or whether you're rich or poor. This is something everyone can latch onto. It's a common cause for the district and the region."

Pehel said the conservancy has been seeking advice from conservancies formed after the draining of Opossum Lake in Cumberland County and Leaser Lake in Lehigh County. Both lakes have been restored, thanks to the conservancies.

Pehel also presented a save-the-lake petition signed by 2,000 people to Robert Johnson of Gov. Tom Corbett's southwest regional office.

He said, "The conservancy is a great step, and we look forward to doing what we can to support fundraising and other efforts."

Butler County Commissioner Jim Eckstein said he hopes some of the funds to be received by the county through a natural gas driller impact fee approved by the commissioners last month will go to restoring the lake.

Eckstein praised the efforts of the conservancy.

"It's a great cause that will benefit the community as a whole," he said. All three township supervisors attended the meeting.

"(The conservancy) is going to work," said supervisors chairman Mike Spreng. "This is only the beginning."

Debbie Gottshall of Penn Township said she lives a few miles from the lake property and hated to see it drained. She said she was shocked at the large number of families using the lake during a kayaking trip.

Gottshall owns a summer home in the Pocono Mountains in eastern Pennsylvania that is on a lake, and appreciates all the activities a lake can offer.

"I am definitely interested in preserving something that's such a benefit to the community," she said.

Marianne and David Hill of Sarver said the lake provides inexpensive family entertainment for people throughout the region.

"It's a good place for kids to get outdoors and away from the TV and electronics," said David Hill.

More information on the Glade Run Lake Conservancy as well donating or becoming a member is available at the group's website, www.gladerunlakeconservancy.org.