

# Lake Koon access improved

## Years of work, cooperation result in new pier, boat launch

**By Elizabeth Coyle  
Gazette Associate Editor**

A project that required the cooperation of agencies in two states was completed recently at Lake Koon in Cumberland Valley Township.

Through the guidance of the Evitts Creek Steering Committee, the City of Cumberland, Md., Cumberland Valley Township's supervisors and the Bedford County Conservation District, a new handicapped accessible pier and kayak launch will provide more access to the recreation offered at Lake Koon.

Where there was only a boat launch with some parking previously, there is a newly landscaped park with handicapped spaces in a parking area that connects to a paved trail down to the pier. It is located on Evitts Creek Road about 5 1/2 miles south of Centerville.

According to representatives, the project started several years ago after Cumberland Valley Township outdoorsman Dave Evans suggested the lakes needed an area for handicapped anglers and kayakers.

Don Llewellyn, township supervisor and member of the conservation district board of directors, said Evans, who is himself handicapped, pushed the steering committee to do the project.

"(Evans) was the inspiration behind the whole project," Llewellyn said. Evans lived in the township until about a year ago, when he and his wife moved to South Carolina to be closer to their daughter, Llewellyn said.

The project took years as the city of Cumberland, which owns the lakes and the property around them, sought out funding. Lakes Koon and Gordon are the drinking water source for the

city. Evitts Creek Water Company operates the lakes and the water system.

Raquel Ketterman, environmental specialist for the city, said the pier project turned out to be trickier than officials first believed.

"In the beginning, we were trying to obtain all the grants but all the Pennsylvania grants have different criteria," Ketterman said. In two of those cases, the city was not eligible to receive money.

Cumberland Valley Township stepped up and applied for a Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development grant of \$10,000. Also, Bedford County Conservation District agreed to serve as the grant recipient for a Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources grant of \$46,500. The city also supplied some money from its general fund to round out the project.

Cumberland was able to receive a grant from the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission for \$54,400. The project was about eight years in the making, Ketterman said, though Evans pitched the idea in general back in 1998.

Marcy Ladson, member of the conservation district board of directors and the steering committee and a township resident, said the pier and kayak launch helps more people take advantage of the lake.

"We like the idea that people who are more limited will be able to use it." The county and township are "a beautiful place to live and it's a beautiful lake," Ladson said.

"We have a large retired community and the lake is really a nice place for recreation and I'm glad that more people will be able to use it," she said.

Llewellyn said he's already

seen the pier have some use though it's not officially opened.

Volunteers spent a day last week landscaping and planting native shrubs, trees and flowers at the site. About 20 volunteers from REI's Bedford distribution plant, the Evitts Creek Water Company, Southern Alleghenies Conservancy, Conservation District and Evitts Creek Steering Committee all assisted with the planting. The conservation district supplied the plants.

Bedford Reinforced Plastics designed and manufactured the pier, one that won't rot or rust and should last for a long time, Llewellyn said.

Ketterman said the cooperation between the agencies was successful as all worked through the funding to finish the project.

"I want to say it's been totally beneficial working with Cumberland Valley township and the conservation district," Ketterman said.

The landscaping project on Sept. 21 at the new park and pier involved volunteers from one local business and a few agencies. REI Distribution Center volunteers included Debera Lehman, Nora Collins, Bridget Galliher, Denise Stoudour, Amy Brenner, Richelle Foor, Maureen Gromiller, Connie



Elizabeth Dean of Centerville and her 3-year-old son, Ryen Cobak, visit the new Lake Koon Fishing Pier and Kayak Launch late Thursday afternoon. Officials will have a ribbon cutting and dedication ceremony next Thursday at 10 a.m.

Gazette Photo/Elizabeth Coyle

Murnin, Rich Foor, Cory Miller, Teresa Robison, Byron Draeger, Todd Frost and Jill Latuch, outdoor specialist. Volunteers from the city of Cumberland were Kim Root, Paul Eriksson and Raquel Ketterman. Emily Vaughn, former AmeriCorps intern with Southern Alleghenies

Conservancy and Susan Llewellyn of Southern Alleghenies Conservancy staff also assisted along with Bedford County Conservation District staff member Guy Stottlemeyer.

The conservation district donated more than 30 plants. Vaughn and Latuch organ-

ized the activity and the volunteers for the planting project. Llewellyn provided lunch for the crew. Officials with all agencies will dedicate and officially open the pier/kayak launch Thursday, Oct. 13 at 10 a.m. following the Evitts Creek Steering Committee meeting.



—Photos Submitted

Volunteers from one county employer and several agencies combined for a landscaping project at the site of the new Lake Koon fishing pier and kayak launch on Sept. 21. REI provided volunteers along with the city of Cumberland, Bedford County Conservation District, and Southern Alleghenies Conservancy. The conservation district also donated more than 30 plants. Emily Vaughn, former AmeriCorps worker with Southern Alleghenies, and Jill Latuch, outdoor specialist for REI, organized the activity and the volunteers. Sue Llewellyn of the Southern Alleghenies staff provided lunch for the crew. The Lake Koon Fishing Pier and Kayak Launch will soon be open to the public.

