Roaring Run Recreation Area  
Kiski Township, Armstrong County

**Site Context**

The Roaring Run Recreation Area (RRRA) consists of 650 acres of former coal mining land and an abandoned railroad. Over the last 20 years over 7 miles of rails-to-trails and 15 miles of hiking and mountain biking trails have been developed.

**Project Overview**

Trails were put in place using existing topography and creating minimum alterations to the landscape. Scrap metal found on the property has been recycled and the proceeds were used to help offset the cost of maintenance for the facility. Some of the steel rails found on the property were used in the anchor system for the 72’ suspension bridge that crosses over Roaring Run along the Rock along the Rock Furnace Trail. Remnants of the Biddle Iron Furnace (circa 1825-1850) are found along the Rock Furnace Trail. Remnants of the Pennsylvania Mainline Canal lock at Roaring Run and the tow path bridge over Flat Run are mostly intact and provide visitors an appreciation of the fine stonework used in the Canal’s construction. Also, remnants of Leechburg Mining’s coal loading station are visible. An interpretive display is planned for this area.

**Sustainable Practices**

**Water**- Drains, culverts and piping are used along the trail to divert stormwater away from the trail and prevent erosion. The restroom facility utilizes a waste holding tank and does not use water. An AMD discharge called the Trux Discharge has been diverted through piping to stop erosion to the trail. Future plans include treating this discharge. The canoe/kayak launch was constructed using the Armor-tech design. Rip Rap was placed around the structure for erosion control from high water periods on the Kiskiminetas River.

**Natural Landscaping**- A native grass wildflower meadow was completed in 2010 on 15 acres of the reclaimed coal waste area. 10,000 starter tree shoots, including a number of 95% American Chestnut, and other hardwoods were planted adjacent to the meadow. The entire 19 acre site was fenced in to prevent deer damage. The Indiana Bat and Pennsylvania Fence Skink, as well as bald eagles, coyotes, black bear, and blue heron are found on the RRRA. Japanese Knotweed was removed from 5 miles of trail to open views of the Kiskiminetas River.

**Materials Selection and Construction**- Recycled plastic decking was used on the 72’ suspension bridge that was constructed by the volunteer corps in 2007. Crushed limestone, purchased from nearby quarries, was used on the Kiski River Trail.
**Sustainable Practices Cont.**

**Connect People to Nature** - Since the first 1 ½ miles of the Roaring Run Trail was completed in 1993, thousands of visitors have enjoyed the Roaring Run Recreation Area (RRRA). Over the last thirty years the Roaring Run Watershed Association (RRWA) has taken control of 650 acres of land, some very much desired, especially the Roaring Run Valley, other portions horribly damaged by former coal mining operations. The Association has cleaned up the entire area and it is now a beautiful place for the public to enjoy. A recent trail addition, the “Kiski River Trail”, now allows the residents of Apollo to access the RRRA without having to drive from town.

A former gas well access road was converted into the “Rock Furnace Trail”. This trail is the gem of the property, allowing visitors to view and admire beautiful Roaring Run, as it cascades over boulders and small falls on the way to its confluence with the Kiskiminetas River. The RRWA has been working with the Kiskiminetas River Watershed Association over the last 10 years stocking the “Kiski” with trout purchased with donations from local businesses and the sale of “buttons” that fishermen in the Kiski Valley display proudly. During the last two springs trout have been stocked in Roaring Run and fishermen are enjoying this wonderful resource.

**Environmental Stewardship** - Visitor brochures explain how the old industrial and mining lands were re-purposed into a recreational asset that the residents of the Kiski Valley can be proud of. Along the trail a kiosk sign tells of the project to rid the RRRA of knotweed.

The Environmental Committee attends local functions spreading the word about Roaring Run and how citizens of the can become better stewards of the land.

*Information provided by: Rich Dixon, Roaring Run Watershed Association (2013)*

**Operations and Maintenance** - Over 700 members have supported the Roaring Run Watershed Association over the past 30 years. Both public and private funding was used to purchase the 650 acres. Federal and State funding was used to construct the rails-to-trails. All of the funds to maintain the facility come from the local community and members. No tax money is used.

All mowing clippings are spread about on site. Mowing occurs at the trailhead area and along 7 miles of rail-trails. The rest of the property is left untouched. However, invasive species like Japanese Knotweed and Tree of Heaven are eradicated.

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**Project Partners/Consultants**

- Kiskiminetas Township
- Armstrong County