

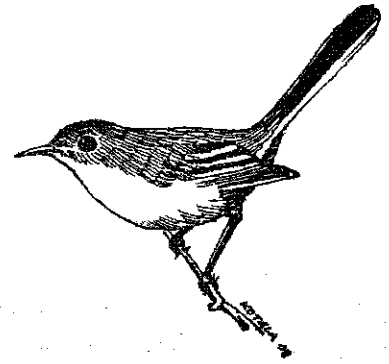
The Gnatcatcher

Newsletter of Juniata Valley Audubon

Volume 43 No. 5

Nov/Dec 2011

www.jvas.org



Bellwood Pumped Storage Project threatens Trout Stream, State Game Lands, and Important Bird Area

According to an article in the Altoona Mirror, Utah-based Symbiotics Energy LLC, has submitted a preliminary permit application to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission for the construction of a \$2 billion dollar pumped storage hydroelectric project to be situated on State Game Lands 158 between Bellwood and Tipton in Antis Township.

Symbiotics, doing business as Bellwood Hydro LLC, proposes building two reservoirs, an upper and a lower, that would generate power using a tunnel that would take water from the upper reservoir at 12,000 cubic feet per second down a 2,570 foot-long "power tunnel" to the lower reservoir.

This project would result in no NET generation of energy. Water would be pumped from the lower reservoir to the upper reservoir using electricity at 16 non-peak hours and then the water would flow back down through the turbines, generating electricity during 8 peak hours. Thus, the only thing that would be generated is money for the owners, who would use cheaper non-peak electricity to pump water up and then generate more expensive peak electricity when the water flows back down through the turbines.

According to the Altoona Mirror, such projects "make money on the difference between the cost of pumping the water during off-peak times and selling the power generated during peak times, although doing so requires careful management of the station and understanding of the sophisticated energy trading market. The station also uses more electricity than it generates"

Juniata Valley Audubon, Save Our Allegheny Ridges and the Moshannon Group of the Sierra Club are unconditionally opposed to the Bellwood Pumped Storage Project because:

1. This project would inundate a mile of High Quality trout stream in Mulligan Hollow, directly affecting Tipton Run, a Class A High Quality trout stream.
2. This project would destroy 200+ acres of forest in a designated Blair County Natural Heritage Area (designated in the Blair County Natural Heritage Inventory)

FROM THE ALTOONA MIRROR:

With the filing of a preliminary permit application with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, a Utah-based energy firm has shown its intentions of exploiting the construction of a pumped-storage station in Antis Township, an idea that doesn't sit well with local environmental watchdogs.

Stan Kotala, conservation chairman of the Juniata Valley Audubon Society and executive board member of the Moshannon Group of the Sierra Club, said both groups are "unconditionally opposed" to Symbiotics Energy LLC's proposed Bellwood Pumped Storage Hydroelectric Project.

Kotala pointed out that most of the more than 221-acre project would sit on what is now State Game Land 158, would affect the state-designated Class A High Quality trout stream Tipton Run by inundating a mile of one of its tributaries, a High Quality trout stream in Mulligan Hollow, and destroy important migratory bird habitat.

"It's absurd," Kotala said.

He said the project's planners haven't contacted the Pennsylvania Game Commission about the proposal and noted such a project constitutes a large-scale industrial site with no redeeming factors that outweigh the environmental consequences.

Kotala said the planned reservoirs, 101 acres and 120 acres, would not support aquatic life because of the "wildly fluctuating water levels."

Public lands, Kotala said, should not be used for such a project when there are other streams, particularly ones affected by acid mine runoff, that could be put to use.

Kotala said the fact the facility would offer no net gain to power production and "the only thing that would be generated is money for the owners" was another reason the conservation groups were against it.



3. This project would be built almost entirely on State Game Lands 158 and would take 200+ acres of land that was set aside for wildlife conservation and public recreation. We find it absurd that the developer is making such plans and not even informing the owner of the land, the Pennsylvania Game Commission.

4. Almost the entire proposed upper reservoir of this project is in the watershed of the AWA's Bellwood Reservoir (specifically the Shaw Run watershed) and would adversely affect water quality and quantity in Shaw Run.

5. This project would destroy 200+ acres of forest in the Allegheny Front Important Bird Area, which was designated by the Pennsylvania Biological Survey in 2006. The Allegheny Front IBA was designated as important habitat for breeding and migratory birds.

6. Unlike the other reservoirs in Blair County, these two proposed reservoirs would have wildly fluctuating water levels each day, as water is pumped upwards during non-peak hours and allowed to flow downwards during peak hours. This wild fluctuation of water levels would not allow these reservoirs to serve any ecological function.

JVAS has contacted the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission to express our opposition to this project.

Juniata Valley Audubon thanks its Corporate Sponsor

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NOVEMBER/DECEMBER FIELD TRIPS

November 6, Sunday — **MID STATE TRAIL HIKE:** Deb Tencer will lead this 4-mile, moderate hike from Jo Hayes Vista (on Rt. 26 south of Pine Grove Mills). The views are incredible along the way. There will be a shuttle. Meet at Jo Hayes Vista at 11 a.m., and bring a picnic lunch. Contact Deb at naturehikergal@gmail.com.

November 20, Sunday — **ZEN NATURE HIKE IN STATE GAME LAND 166:** We get the most out of our observations in nature when we are fully aware of our surroundings and with our minds focused on the present moment. Learn to train your mind and your senses to be fully present. Meet at Beaver Dam Rd. at the entrance of State Game Land 166, in Scotch Valley, at 11 a.m. For more info, contact trip leader Rich Hanlon at rphdeer@aol.com or Deb Tencer at naturehikergal@gmail.com.

November 26, Saturday — **POST-THANKSGIVING DAY HIKE ON THE LOWER TRAIL:** Dr. Stan Kotala will lead a 6-mile hike along the Lower Trail from Mt. Etna to Williamsburg. Meet at the Williamsburg Trailhead at noon. A shuttle will be available. Contact Stan at 946-8840 or at ccwiba@keycomm.net for more information.

December 17, Saturday — **ANNUAL JVAS CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT:** Spend the day in the field, and then enjoy fellowship at the Hoyers', on Brush Mountain, at 5:30 p.m. for a covered dish supper and a tally of the bird counts for the day. CBC compiler: Steve Bonta, phone at 684-1175 or e-mail at stevebonta@yahoo.com. (For more detailed information, [click here](#).)

December 17, Saturday — **HOLIDAY HIKE AROUND CANOE LAKE:** Dr. Stan Kotala will lead a 6-mile hike around Canoe Lake. Meet at the Canoe Creek State Park beach pavilion at noon. Contact Stan at 946-8840 or at ccwiba@keycomm.net for more information.

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER PROGRAM

November 15 — North to Alaska: Birds, Bears, and Beastly Adventures

The United States and Canada contain remarkable wilderness areas teeming with wildlife. From grizzly bear to Arctic tern, from old-growth rain forests to prairie wildflowers, our continent hosts a plethora of species. JVAS board members Mike and Laura Jackson will give a slide presentation of photographs they had taken during their 8,000-mile journey by car, boat, and foot. They also will talk about conservation efforts being made to protect our native species.

ABOUT JVAS PROGRAMS: Programs are presented on the *third Tuesday of each month, September through May (except December)*. They begin at 7 PM in the **BELLWOOD-ANTIS PUBLIC LIBRARY**. Take the Bellwood Exit off I-99, go straight thru the traffic light at the Sheetz intersection, proceed about 4 blocks and turn right just before crossing the railroad overpass. Turn left at the next intersection, another 2 blocks and the library is on the right.

join JUNIATA VALLEY AUDUBON!

Juniata Valley Audubon membership provides you with the following benefits:

Notification of Juniata Valley Audubon's exciting activities including nature programs, field trips and other events

Subscription to the bimonthly chapter newsletter, *The Gnatcatcher*

Opportunities to participate in conservation projects and environmental advocacy, and *have fun!*

Become a chapter-only member: _____ Individual: \$15 _____ Family: \$20 _____ Supporting: \$35

_____ Friend of JVAS: \$50 _____ Corporate: \$100

_____ Life Membership: \$500— All the benefits listed above for a once-in-a-lifetime fee.

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