

# Saving Childrens Lake— *Heartbeat of Boiling Springs*

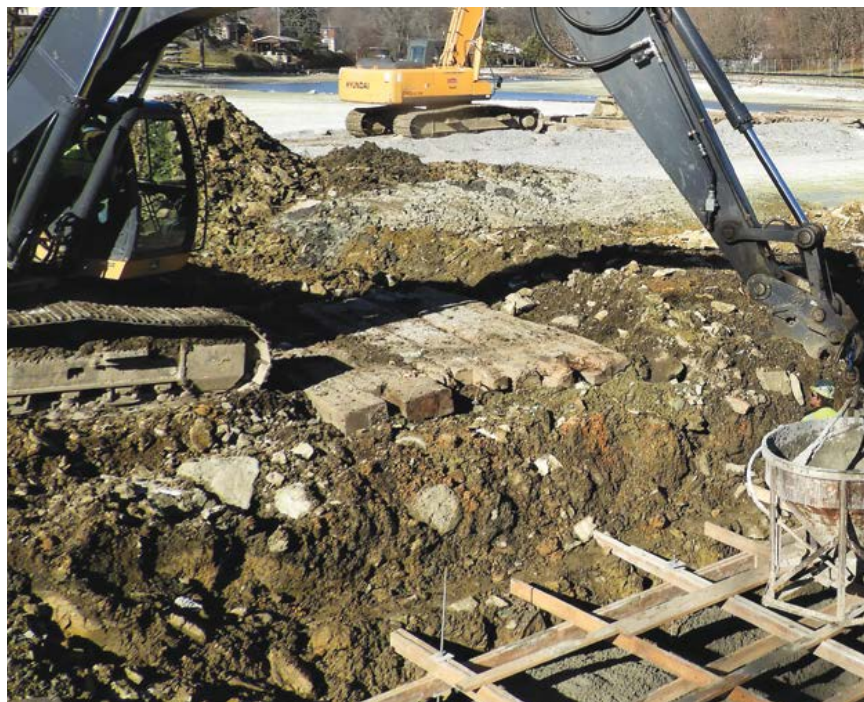


*by Samuel J. Rob*

*photos by the author*

**B**oiling Springs, Cumberland County, is a picturesque village of a little over 3,000 people nestled in southcentral Pennsylvania. The center of the village (listed on the National Register of Historic Places) is Childrens Lake. The lake is as integral to the village's identity as its people and buildings.

First created in the 1750s to provide waterpower to the iron works, the 7-acre lake later became the centerpiece of an early 1900s amusement park. Named Childrens Lake in 1987, the lake today is a magnet for anglers, hikers, artists, photographers, birdwatchers, and those inclined to sit on a bench and enjoy beautiful scenery. The lake is the site of annual village events such as the Carlisle Summerfair Anything Floats boat races and the holiday season luminaries, floating Christmas tree and Santa crossing the lake by boat. The lake is bordered on the northeastern side by the Appalachian





*Childrens Lake project, Cumberland County, November 5, 2022*



*Childrens Lake project, December 2, 2022*

Trail. The lake is owned by the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC), with the grounds around the lake leased to South Middleton Township and maintained by the Boiling Springs Civic Association.

The lake is fed by approximately 30 underground springs, the largest of which, the Bubble (7th largest spring in the state), has a daily flow rate of 22 million gallons. The 52-degree F temperature water, originating near York and flowing under South Mountain, provides a perfect habitat for trout. The PFBC and the local Yellow Breeches Anglers and Conservation Association provide multiple stockings throughout the year. The outflow from the lake (known locally as “The Run”) dumps into the mile-long catch and release section of the Yellow Breeches Creek, which attracts fly anglers from all over the East Coast.

In 2016, a sinkhole was discovered that threatened the integrity of the lake’s dam. A grassroots citizen movement “Save the Lake” raised some funds, leading to involvement by South Middleton Township, influential state officials and ultimately the PFBC. The lake was closed to the public and drained in late summer of 2022, and a project groundbreaking ceremony was held on September 2, 2022. The \$5.2 million project constructed a new dam, a new retaining wall around the lake, upgraded the boat launch and made an American with Disabilities Act compliant fishing pier. The general contractor for the project was Charles J. Merlo, Inc.

Upon completion of the project, Cory Adams, South Middleton Township Manager, expressed appreciation. “The township is grateful to the outpouring of support and tireless efforts of countless individuals who had a hand in making this project possible. It has restored a cherished community landmark that will offer outdoor recreational opportunities to future generations to enjoy,” said Adams.

While the ever-popular opening day of trout season on Childrens Lake did not take place in 2023 and the project was delayed several times due to the COVID-19 pandemic and permit issues, mild weather over the winter of 2022-2023 allowed the contractor to bring the project in on budget and ahead of schedule. The lake has been refilled and stocked with trout.

On April 6, the opening day of Pennsylvania’s 2024 trout season, in what is a family tradition for many generations, Childrens Lake was ringed with the young and old, armed with fishing poles and dreams of trophy fish. Most importantly, the restored lake is once again in its rightful place as the heartbeat of the village of Boiling Springs. □