

New fishing pier opens at Coonskin Park



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CHARLESTON, W.Va. — Young and handicapped anglers will get to enjoy a new fishing access point on Coonskin Pond in Kanawha County thanks to the efforts of union sportsmen and West Virginia American Water Company.

Officials cut the ribbon on the new fishing pier at the park in Charleston Wednesday afternoon. The pier replaced one which had fallen into disrepair.

“It’s a youth pier and also handicap accessible on a beautiful lake,” said Fred Myers, Executive Director of the Union Sportsmen’s Alliance. “The one they had was in disrepair and almost unusable.”

The money for the project came from the proceeds of an annual conservation dinner put on by the Alliance in partnership with the West Virginia AFL-CIO each year.

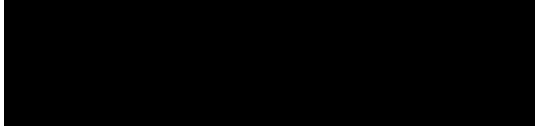
“We put on that dinner in Charleston every year,” said Myers. “We raised about \$50,000 last year and after expenses, half the money goes to support the Union Sportsmen’s Alliance, but the other half comes back to the community to do community projects.”

Along with the money for the project the union trades organization also volunteered labor for the project. The pier at Coonskin project received an additional boost when West Virginia American Water Company put up \$10,000 and also helped draw down another \$25,000 through American Water’s Charitable Foundation. The

Foundation provided the funding for three projects which involved improving public access to water based recreation. Those projects could have been in any number of state's where American Water has business.

Myers said they chose one project in Tennessee where the Union Sportsmen's Alliance is based, another in Illinois, and the Coonskin project in West Virginia was an easy selection.

"We're an organization made up of hunters, fishermen, and people who love to recreate in the outdoors," he said. "You can't get any better place than West Virginia to recreate in the outdoors."



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