

FELIX DAM CLEANED UP AT LAST



The damage allowed the current to swirl against the riverbank and erode large sections. So much of the dam was exposed that the various pieces were a dangerous hazard to boaters.

Felix Dam, an original timber crib structure filled with rock, was originally constructed for the Schuylkill Canal Navigation System. It replaced the original dam built in the early 1800s. It was built from white and pitch pine. Some of the timbers were shaped from 150 yearold trees, making the wood 300 years old at this time. The dam was never intended as a flood control device. It impounded water, but didn't interrupt the flow, and was known as a 'Run of the River' dam. It trapped coal sediments to help clean up the river.

The project includes removing the accumulated sediments impounded upstream of the dam; removing both dams; placing salvaged rockfill in the eroded bank area on the east end of the older dam; seeding disturbed areas, and cleaning up the equipment and demolition debris.

Eventually, Muhlenberg Township intends to make more improvements to create a useful park for recreation. It includes a lock from the original canal that is in remarkably good shape.

The second dam, 453 feet wide, had been leaking since 1992, and was damaged by Tropical Storm Floyd in September, 1999.

—Tina

