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Group to investigate old mill

The Friends of Schlatter's Mill hope to do an architectural and archaeological investigation of an 18th century paper mill found near Paper Mill Road.

By Chris Lilienthal
Staff Writer

The Friends of Schlatter's Mill was recently formed to proceed with archaeological investigations into the ruins of an 18th century paper mill, recently discovered near Paper Mill Road in Springfield Township.

In December, T. Scott Kreilick, an architectural conservator and metallurgist from Oreland, presented his research findings on the ruins to the Springfield Township Historical Society.

He identified the ruins as the one-time paper mill of Swiss-born clergyman Michael Schlatter.

Cynthia Hamilton, a member of the historical society, was alerted to the ruins of the paper mill by a township resident earlier in 2000.

She was instrumental in obtaining the local history grant from the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission Grant Program that allowed the historical society to retain Kreilick's services in conducting the archival research.

The Friends of Schlatter's Mill will take the project into the next phase by contacting archaeologists, specializing in early industrial sites, to determine what type of archaeological investigation would be appropriate for the site.

The ruins of the milling complex include a dam, raceway, sluiceway, waterwheel and other structures.

The Friends will also work to raise funds for the archaeological work.

In the meantime, the historical society is emphasizing that no one should attempt to seek out the milling site, as it is now on private property and archaeologically sensitive.

"The site is not very accessible, and no matter what route you take, you're going on private property," Kreilick said.

Anyone interested in joining the Friends of Schlatter's Mill can call 215-233-4600.