

THE CATALYST

SLIPPERY ROCK WATERSHED COALITION MONTHLY ACTIVITIES UPDATE

NEXT MEETING: 7 pm on 3/8/18 at Jennings Environmental Education Center, pizza and pop provided.
 2/8/18 meeting attendance: C. Denholm, M. Dunn, B. Kuban, S. Smith, W. Taylor, F. VanAtta

Current Trends at Jennings: Exploring Nature at Night!

The park closes at sunset except a few times of the year when the staff of Jennings Environmental Education Center take visitors out into the darkness to explore at night. Nighttime programs have proven to be very popular. What's so enticing about these programs? Could it be the excitement of experiencing something that is typically "off limits"? Is it the comforting feeling of being part of a group at night? Perhaps, it is the simple curiosity of what the darkness brings to Jennings. Consider participating in a future nighttime program to find the answer for yourself.

Program topics vary and take place in all seasons. Some past topics have included Moths, Nighttime Ecology, Bats, Winter Snowshoe Experiences, and Summer Nighttime Fun. In the recent past, Jennings "Rang" in the New Year in the prairie with a First Night Hike. Despite the -5° F temperatures, 35 participants ventured out on a one-mile moonlit hike. The conditions were pristine with moon shadows resting on freshly fallen snow. Shortly before midnight, everyone huddled around a glowing fire enjoying hot apple cider and cocoa eagerly awaiting the moment the clock struck midnight and Auld Lang Syne filled the air.

Just a few days later, on a warmer night of 8° F Jennings staff guided 50 participants out on the trails again, this time to prowl on owls. Staff used iPads to play the calls of the Eastern Screech and Barred Owls. Nature did not disappoint. Immediately a Screech Owl (lower left) and a Barred Owl (lower right) flew in close and although they did not call, a few minutes later a separate pair of Barred Owls, very close to the group, began a duet of their "Who cooks for you? Who cooks for you-all?" call.

March 20th will bring the next opportunity for visitors to explore after dark with: "What's Cool in the Pool?" Park staff will lead registered participants to a vernal pool to explore and discover what animals use these special areas.

Looking ahead, summer will bring the soft glow of fireflies to the forest and prairie of Jennings. Guest speaker Jeffrey Calta will give a brief indoor presentation starting at 8:30 PM followed by an outdoor walk on July 14th to celebrate the various fireflies in Pennsylvania. Stay tuned for further details.

To stay up-to-date with Jennings and other state parks programs visit the Online Calendar of Events page at <http://events.dcnr.pa.gov/>. To receive the monthly Jennings program announcement email simply send an email to jenningsssp@pa.gov and ask to be placed on the emailing list! We hope see you soon!





US Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke (center) presents a ceremonial check pledging \$300.7 million of federal money for the reclamation of abandoned mine lands across the country. Pictured with him are US Representative Keith Rothfus, government officials from the PA DEP and OSM, and several local citizens.

Secretary of the Interior at AML Ceremony Announcement

United States Secretary of the Interior **Ryan Zinke** was on hand February 24 at the East Bethlehem Volunteer Fire Hall in Fredericktown, PA for a funding ceremony, where a ceremonial large check for \$300.7 million was presented, money that will go to reclamation of abandoned mine lands across the nation, including the local Black Dog Hollow project. Secretary Zinke addressed a crowd of approximately 50 invited guests, announcing that \$55.7 million of the mine reclamation funds will be spent in Pennsylvania. His Twitter account February 24 read “Good to be in #Pennsylvania #CoalCountry today to announce \$300M in grants to reclaim and repurpose old mine lands.”

SRWC participants **Shaun Busler** and **Tim Danehy** accepted invitations by the PA DEP and OSM, which organized the event, to attend the ceremony and meet Secretary Zinke. Shaun enjoyed meeting Secretary Zinke (photo at right) and commended him on how the Office of Surface Mining (OSM) is administered and should be a model for other federal agencies.

In addition, Shaun was able to talk to Representative Rothfus, who discussed with Shaun his efforts to pass the SENSE Act. The SENSE Act is a bill that would provide some regulatory relief to specialized power plants burning coal refuse. These small plants are located throughout the bituminous and anthracite region of Pennsylvania and have provided a valuable service to the Commonwealth by removing a source of water pollution at no cost to taxpayers. **Please contact your local legislator in support of the SENSE Act.** Without passage of this act, these refuse piles will go unreclaimed and hundreds of jobs are at risk.





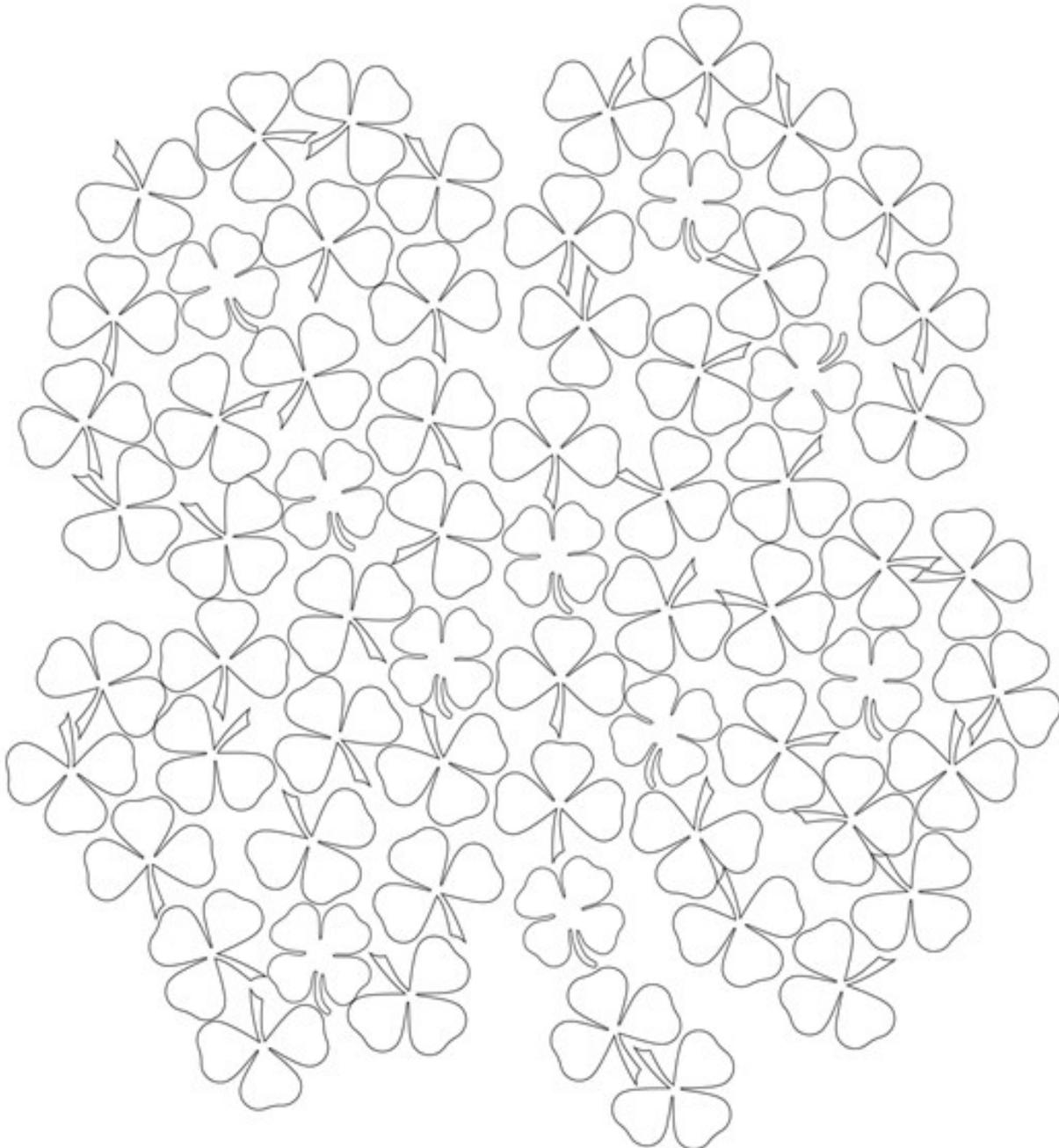
The KIDS Catalyst

SLIPPERY ROCK WATERSHED COALITION FUN ACTIVITY



4-Leaf Clover Hunt

A favorite food of white-tailed deer, cottontail rabbits, red foxes, cattle, sheep, groundhogs, wild turkey, Canadian geese... and a good luck charm? St. Patrick's Day is March 17, and as spring arrives this month you may find yourself outdoors searching for the rare 4-leaf clover. Clovers have three leaves in general, but about 1 in 10,000 clovers have four leaves. Tradition says those four leaves represent faith, hope, love, and (the 4th one) luck. 10 four-leaf clovers are in the clover patch below! Color them in, mail us your completed paper, and we'll send you a \$1 credit for Amazon through a parent's email. You can save up credits to buy something really great! And GOOD LUCK!



Name _____ Age _____ Parent email _____
Address _____



Slippery Rock Watershed Coalition c/o Stream Restoration Incorporated
A PA Non-Profit Organization
434 Spring Street Ext.
Mars, PA 16046

Thanks to The William & Frances Aloe Charitable Foundation, Environmentally Innovative Solutions, LLC, Dominion Peoples, Amerikohl Mining, Inc., Quality Aggregates Inc., Drs. Ron & Kathy Falk Family, BioMost, Inc., Allegheny Mineral Corporation and PA DEP for their support. For more information contact: Slippery Rock Watershed Coalition, c/o Stream Restoration Incorporated (PA non-profit), 434 Spring Street Ext., Mars, PA 16046 (724)776-0161, fax (724)776-0166, sri@streamrestorationinc.org, www.srwc.org. March distribution: 262 copies

A Visit to Pitt: Water Issues Class Learns About AMD

On February 19, 2018, SRWC participant **Cliff Denholm** once again enjoyed the opportunity to participate as a guest lecturer for **Don Hopey's** Water Issues class at the **University of Pittsburgh**. The presentation focused on the importance of water, the formation of mine drainage, and active and passive methods of treating the polluted water. Cliff also discussed the past and present techniques of surface and underground mining and how the changing of these techniques has helped decrease the occurrence and severity of mine drainage. The importance of monitoring, operation, and maintenance of these treatment systems was discussed and the need for dedicated volunteers for programs such as our Adopt-A-Passive System. Cliff encouraged the students to seek out watershed organizations that likely are in need of volunteers. He also talked about the large quantity of metals that are being removed by passive treatment systems and how organizations like Stream Restoration Incorporated's Clean Creek Products are working on methods to recover and develop markets for these materials as an alternative to landfill disposal.

3MJC Foltz Schoolhouse Renovation Meeting

The Moraine, McConnells Mill and Jennings Commission (3MJC) will be holding a meeting at **7PM on March 21, 2018** at the Jennings Environmental Education Center to discuss their efforts to restore the Foltz Schoolhouse that will be used as an educational resource for programs at Jennings. The Foltz Schoolhouse was constructed around 1880 and operated as a one-room school until 1963, teaching children from the first to the eighth grades. Anyone interested in learning more about the history of the school and the efforts to restore it are encouraged to attend. If you can provide construction labor, school artifacts, monetary donations, or you are an alumni who would like to be videotaped sharing your school memories, please attend this meeting.

The 3MJC is a community-based, nonprofit organization dedicated to providing support to the local state parks of the same names in the Slippery Rock Creek Watershed. For more information about 3MJC, their projects and ways to help, check out their website **www.3mjc.org**.

