

THE CATALYST

SLIPPERY ROCK WATERSHED COALITION MONTHLY ACTIVITIES UPDATE

THIS MONTH'S MEETING: Thursday July 14 at 7 pm at Jennings Environmental Education Center, pizza and pop provided. 6/9/05 Meeting Canceled due to SRWC Festival.

First Festival Full of Fun!!!

The Slippery Rock Watershed Coalition is pleased to report back that the first ever community Watershed Festival was a great success!!! Combining the usual annual SRWC Symposium and SRWC Get-Together into a single festival event full of fun and educational activities was a great idea that will likely be repeated in the future. More than 75 individuals joined in the fun on Saturday, June 11 at **Jennings Environmental Education Center** and **Boyer's Sportsmen's Club**, with one person even traveling all the way from Canada! For the most part, the day was warm and sunny—a perfect day for the festival.

Over 30 folks tried their hand at fishing the Boyer's Sportsmen Club's pond, a private fishing spot which was specially opened to the public for the Festival. Most people caught bluegill, in addition to some bass and pumpkinseed. One young fellow even caught his first fish ever! (Don't worry—all fish were thrown back into the pond!) Helping out at the fishing locale was **Jherek Christy** from the PA Fish and Boat Commission, **Shaun Busler** from Stream Restoration Incorporated, **Heidi Solley** and **Leslie Kapsar** from JEEC, and a large snapping turtle even paid a visit. Fish were also a theme with t-shirt decorating, as festival participants were able to make their own fish print t-shirts. Thanks to Charlie Cooper for providing the giant, 5-foot diameter, helium filled balloon that sailed over 100' in the sky marking the location of the event.



Back at the Boyer's Sportsmen's Club, participants had the opportunity to meet and talk with the SRWC, Jennings staff, and members of the Sportsman's Club while viewing educational displays. In addition, the **PA Bluebird Society** was on hand as was **Beth Langham** from **St. Vincent's College** who taught participants to tie-dye t-shirt using iron precipitate from a mine drainage wetland treatment system as the pigment dye! Another big hit was eating the *delicious* chicken BBQ dinner while enjoying the excellent music of talented singer/songwriter **Jay Hitt** of Valencia!



Margaret Dunn, **Tim Danehy**, and **Cliff Denholm** from SRI led two tours of a passive treatment area attended by a dozen people. They went through the history of the site, explained how passive treatment works, and discussed the area's wildlife. Another tour enjoyed by festival participants was the limestone quarry tour, handled by **Jeff Ankrom** of **Quality Aggregates**. Kids got another special treat at the limestone quarry when they were allowed to have their picture taken beside a massive rock truck, with wheels over 8 feet high!

Evening activities then moved to the Jennings Environmental Education Center where participants had the pleasure of seeing the amazing educational and entertaining performance of **Richard Pawling** of History Alive take on the persona of an early 1900's Irish coal miner depicting life in a Pennsylvania coal mining town. Prior to the performance **Tim Danehy** presented the SRWC Appreciation Award to former Jennings employee **Cindy Shirley** for her service and dedication to our education and outreach efforts.

Special thanks to the **Boyers Sportsmen's Club** for use of their facilities, including the fishing pond, and for preparing the tasty chicken meals! Special thanks also to the Jennings staff and volunteers who helped make the event possible! Thanks also to the many hours **Will Taylor** of the JEEC, **Cliff Denholm** of SRI, and **Janice Belgraden** spent organizing and planning the majority of the festival's details! Look for the Festival next summer! Hope to see you there!



SRWC Festival participants show off their t-shirts dyed with iron oxide recovered from mine drainage wetland treatment system at St. Vincent College. Thanks go to **Beth Langham** from St. Vincent for coming and sharing her knowledge and tie-dyeing talents!

SRWC in Green Ribbon Commission Testimony

Bruce Golden, Regional Coordinator for the **Western PA Coalition for Abandoned Mine Reclamation**, was asked to give a testimony on acid mine drainage before the Pennsylvania Green Ribbon Commission. Bruce testified in Harrisburg on January 25 before the Commission, which includes members from the House and Senate; **Kathleen McGinty**, Secretary of the Department of Environmental Protection; **Michael DiBerardinis**, Secretary of the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources; and **Roy Kienitz**, Deputy Chief of Staff to the Governor. The Commission was established by the Legislature to examine and develop recommendations to fortify the Commonwealth's environmental investment programs. The following is an excerpt of Bruce's testimony. Thank you, Bruce, for your strong commitment to the improvement of Pennsylvania's environment, and thank you for mentioning the SRWC in your testimony.

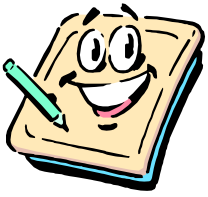
"...Throughout coal country, rust-colored, lifeless waters are testament to a century's worth of unregulated mining. Acid mine drainage (AMD) is the culprit. Characterized by its acidity and metal content, streams affected by AMD are generally not suitable for drinking or recreation. We've inherited well over 4,000 miles of these seriously degraded waterways, now Pennsylvania's single worst water pollution problem.

In spite of the magnitude of this problem, a truly remarkable phenomenon is happening in Pennsylvania: AMD impacted watersheds are being transformed into usable and desirable resources. This renaissance of sorts is not just the story of environmental improvement, but one of the passionate people acting at the local level in partnership with government, business, industry, academia, non-profit organizations and foundations to bring about meaningful change. It's also the story of the success of passive treatment systems that have been instrumental in the treatment of AMD. I'll illustrate...

A similar story comes from the heavily mining-impacted watershed adopted by the Slippery Rock Creek Watershed Coalition in Venango, Butler, Mercer, and Lawrence Counties. Collectively their 12 passive treatment systems process 500 million gallons of AMD per year, enough water to supply 3 cities the size of Punxsutawney. They remove enough iron and aluminum annually to construct 200 small pickups. In 11 miles of streams fish, absent for 100 years, are back and reproducing. The environmental success is equaled by the success of people and partners who have bought into the process and become involved at many levels. As proof that these projects take on lives of their own, I've given you a publication called "Accepting the Challenge" produced by the Slippery Rock Watershed Coalition that eloquently develops this topic. I urge you to examine this very approachable work.

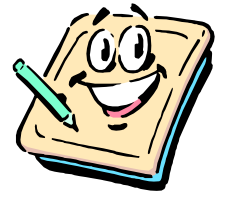
I could go on and on about the successes that are being achieved throughout the Commonwealth by the people comprising more than 150 watershed groups and their partners. The energy and creativity released on projects is often something to behold. These are action-oriented people on a mission to improve their environment. If we could bottle this determination, energy and enthusiasm, we'd make a fortune."

To review the entire written testimony, see the January 28, 2005 edition of the PA Environment Digest at www.paenvironmentdigest.com!



The KIDS Catalyst

SLIPPERY ROCK WATERSHED COALITION FUN ACTIVITY



Native Species Word Search

A "native species" is any species, like a specific kind of plant or animal, that occurs naturally in a certain area or habitat. It was originally living or growing in that area and was there historically over time. Sadly, the number of native species of plants and animals is getting smaller as non-native species are introduced to an area. Plants and animals that are not native to an environment, that are introduced intentionally or accidentally, are called non-native. When these plants or animals outcompete and crowd out native species for space, light, and nutrients, they are considered to be invasive. The non-native plants and animals sometimes take over an area and can kill off native species, which have little defense against the new, exotic species. Some common invasive species in Pennsylvania that cause problems are the gypsy moth, Asian lady beetle, starling, zebra mussel, purple loosestrife, and Japanese knotweed. Below is a list of several well-known species native to Pennsylvania. Circle them in the word search, and if you mail us your completed paper we will send you a free gift certificate! Good luck!

Copperhead	Brook trout	Map turtle	American toad	Phlox
Timber rattlesnake	Bluebird	Redback salamander	Spring peeper	Red maple
Eastern garter	Peregrine falcon	Spotted turtle	Sunflower	Pin oak
Mountain laurel	Northern pike	River otter	Bald eagle	Osprey

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Name _____ Age _____ Address _____



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Last Call to Cruise Pittsburgh's Rivers!

There is still time to sign up for the 4th Annual Ohio River Watershed Celebration! **Over 550** individuals have already registered, and if you'd like to join them go to www.streamrestorationinc.org/rsvp to sign up! We will be sailing aboard the Gateway Clipper Fleet's beautiful vessel the *Majestic* on portions of the Monongahela, Ohio, and Allegheny Rivers on **Wednesday, July 27** from 1 PM to 4 PM. This fun and educational cruise will focus on watershed stewardship and cover topics like river history, aquatic life, drinking water, energy leadership, river recovery, and river resources. The cruise will feature expert guided narration of interesting landmarks along the riverbanks, door prizes, and collector's edition souvenir guidebooks. Join watershed groups, tournament sportsmen and their families, business, industry, government agencies, educators, professionals, interested citizens, and others—everyone is welcome! Pre-cruise festivities will take place in the dock area of Station Square beginning at 11 AM, so be sure to arrive early! Enjoy educational poster displays, speakers, and presentations with a watershed theme. Come learn more about the Ohio River Watershed and the role you can play to make a difference in the health of your own local watershed. **The deadline for registering online is June 30.** After this date, you may be placed on a waiting list if space remains available. Questions? Contact **Margaret Dunn** at **724-776-0161**.

An "Excellent" Award from the Carnegie Science Center

It was a night of stars as the 2005 winners of the **Carnegie Science Center Awards for Excellence** were honored with a reception and special program on April 27 at the Carnegie Museum in Pittsburgh. **Margaret Dunn** of the SRWC was honored to receive an award in the Environmental category. Nominated by co-worker **Shaun Busler**, Margaret's accomplishments as a leader of the SRWC in utilizing passive treatment technology to treat over 500 million gallons of mine drainage each year were acknowledged in front of a crowd full of distinguished honorees. Recipients of the Awards for Excellence have made unparalleled contributions to science and technology in education, research, entrepreneurship, and commerce. The inspiration and determination of the award winners in their pursuits were best reflected in the keynote speaker of the evening's program, **NASA** astronaut **Edward Michael "Mike" Fincke**, a Pittsburgh native.



This was the 9th annual celebration of outstanding achievements in science and technology related fields in western Pennsylvania. Honoring the award recipients with letters of acknowledgment and congratulations were Governor **Edward Rendell**, Chief Executive of Allegheny County **Dan Onorato**, City of Pittsburgh Mayor **Tom Murphy**, and the Pittsburgh City Council. Congratulations, Margaret, on this prestigious award, and to the following 2005 awardees: Paul Arch; Stephen F. Badylak, D.V.M., M.D., Ph.D.; Jennifer Bails; Marguerite Barger; Peter M. DeComo; Winston Erevelles, Ph.D.; Lisa Faddis; FedEx Ground; Bethany Foster-Wilhelm; Jim Hopton; Keith LeJeune, Ph.D.; Marlin H. Mickle, Ph.D.; Richard Pethia; Bill Phillips; James G. Rutkowski; Steven G. Zylstra.

