

# THE CATALYST

## SLIPPERY ROCK WATERSHED COALITION MONTHLY ACTIVITIES UPDATE

**THIS MONTH'S MEETING:** Thursday 10/9/08 at 7 pm at Jennings Environmental Education Center, pizza and pop provided. 9/11/08 meeting attendance: B. Busler, I. Busler, M. Busler, S. Busler, C. Cooper, C. Denholm, M. Dunn, S.W. Ji, E. Jolly, V. Kefeli, C. Leininger, S. Mastalski, J. McGinnis, W. Taylor, J. Winter

### **Reclamation + History = A Successful PA AMR Conference!**

The 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Pennsylvania Abandoned Mine Reclamation Conference was held in State College, PA on August 11-14. This year's conference had a wide variety of fascinating presentations including a day and a half of talks focusing on coal mining and coke history/heritage in Pennsylvania. Several **Slippery Rock Watershed Coalition** participants attended the conference including **Dave Johnson, Wil Taylor, Margaret Dunn, Tim Danehy, Tom Grote, and Cliff Denholm.**

Dave Johnson co-presented a talk with **Dave Hamilton** of **US OSM** regarding the Appalachian Regional Reforestation Initiative (ARRI) project at the Jennings Environmental Education Center. Wil Taylor gave a presentation on coal mining history with a focus on how the Jennings Environmental Educational Center incorporates this topic into a number of educational programs through the use of historic mining equipment, interactive games, and discussions of life in the mines. Margaret Dunn gave a presentation on the success of the Slippery Rock Watershed Coalition's use of the Watershed Approach, which utilizes a public-private partnership effort consisting of government agencies, educational institutions, private industry (including mining companies), non-profits, and local citizens to restore streams through land reclamation and the installation of environmentally-friendly passive treatment systems. The presentation included the successful improvement of Seaton Creek which was formerly acidic with an average pH of 4.5 to a stream that now supports fish, with the lowest pH measured by the PA DEP of 7.1 (!!!!) during 2007 and 2008.

**Russ Wagner** of the **PA DEP** who administers the US EPA 319 program received the 2008 Mayfly Award. The Slippery Rock Watershed Coalition is very appreciative of the 319 program as it was instrumental in the demonstration and successful implementation of passive treatment systems within our watershed, including the unique system at Jennings. Margaret Dunn also received a 2008 Mayfly Award in recognition of her dedication to restoring streams impacted by abandoned mine drainage! A well deserving "Congratulations!!!" goes out to both Russ and Margaret!!!

In addition to the wonderful presentations, a very interesting field tour was conducted which included both active and passive treatment systems and a stop at the I-99 acid rock abatement project. Entertainment was provided at the social gathering on Wednesday night by guitarist **Ken Bonfield**. The audience was also treated to the world premiere of the "rough cut" version of **Andy McAllister's** film Out of the Ground: Western Pennsylvania's Coal Mining Experience which provided a moving and educational experience that resulted in a standing ovation. A great conference!!!

### **"Save-the-Date": Westminster College Students to Present Findings of Field Study**

For the third year in a row, **Westminster College** students from **Dr. Helen Boylan's** Advanced Laboratory class have participated in a collaborative effort with the SRWC to monitor the Erico Bridge passive treatment system. The project provides the students with a practical hands-on experience that allows them the opportunity not only to apply what they have learned through classroom and laboratory instruction to a "real world" application, but also to gain a better understanding of an important environmental issue and environmentally-friendly methods of addressing the problem. The students worked in groups with **Wil Taylor (Jennings Environmental Ed. Center)** and **Cliff Denholm (Stream Restoration Inc.)** to conduct water quality monitoring of each passive component. The students will present the results of

their study at the **October 9, 2008** Slippery Rock Watershed Coalition meeting at 7PM at Jennings Environmental Ed. Center. **Please come out to support the students!!!** As always, pizza and pop will be provided.





**Andy McAllister** of the **Western Pennsylvania Coalition for Abandoned Mine Reclamation** hands **Margeret Dunn** the Mayfly Award for her efforts in restoring streams impacted by AMD at the 10th Annual PA Abandoned Mine Reclamation Conference. (See article on cover page.)

**Attention Students! A Call for Papers!**

Join the Slippery Rock Watershed Coalition, mine reclamation and ecosystem recovery professionals, educators and watershed organizations for an evening showcasing student research!!! Students from local colleges and universities are invited to present their research, projects, and discoveries relating to water quality, biology, environmental education, soil science and ecosystem recovery to professors, organizations, professionals and their peers at the **2008 SRWC Student Symposium!** This exciting opportunity will provide valuable experience and encourage the networking of students and potential employers. The Student Symposium will be held at the McKelvey Theater on the campus of Westminster College on **Thursday, December 4, 2008.** The schedule of events is as follows:

- 5:30 p.m. - 6:30 p.m.      Networking and Poster Session.  
    Student research and organization posters.  
    Networking of student presenters, sponsoring professors and professionals.  
    Refreshments to be served.
- 6:30 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.      Student Oral Presentations.  
    Opening Remarks.  
    Student presenters (15-minute audiovisuals for completed and on-going research)

*The SRWC is currently accepting abstracts from students interested in presenting. To apply, complete an abstract submission form, available by contacting the SRWC at 724-794-6011, or e-mail [wilbutaylo@state.pa.us](mailto:wilbutaylo@state.pa.us). The deadline for proposals is November 17<sup>th</sup>, 2008.*

***We look forward to this unique event supporting student research through public/private partnerships! Whether you are interested in presenting your research or have an interest in listening and learning about the watershed issues area students are investigating, we hope to see you at the McKelvey Theater on December 4th!!!!***



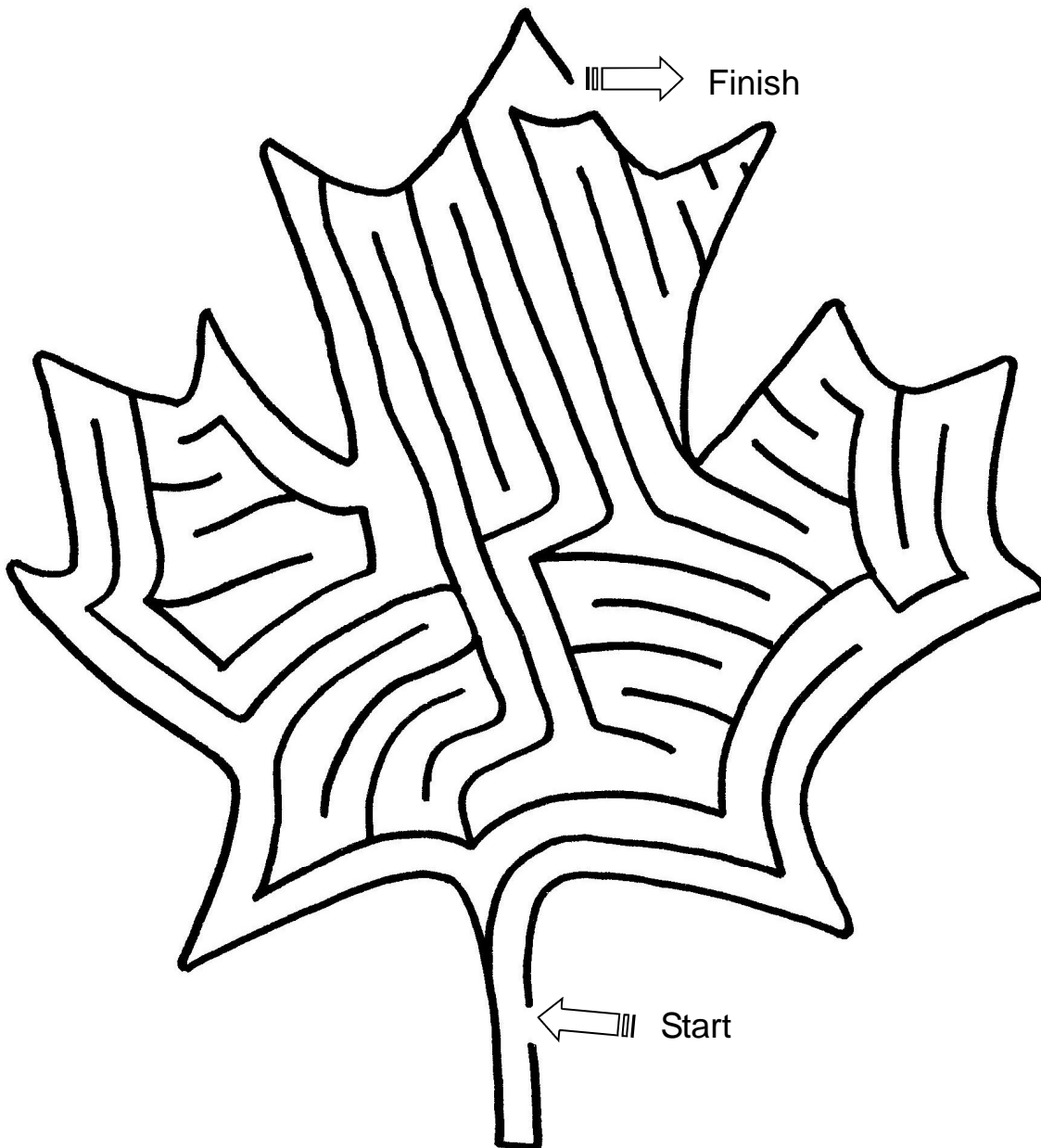
# The KIDS Catalyst

## SLIPPERY ROCK WATERSHED COALITION FUN ACTIVITY



### Maple Leaf Maze

Soon will be the time to enjoy raking up (and jumping into!) big piles of leaves! Deciduous trees lose their leaves every winter. Often, the trees provide a beautiful show of bright fall colors before they lose their leaves. There are a number of reasons for leaf loss, but basically trees lose their leaves to conserve energy over the winter and prevent damage to the tree. In the spring, the tree puts out new leaves so that the process can begin anew. Many deciduous trees are found in regions which have cold, dark, harsh winters. Trees lose their leaves to protect themselves during the winter months, as the cold dry winds in these regions will readily strip moisture from the trees through the leaves, which have a large surface area. By losing their leaves, trees can conserve their moisture in the trunk and branches, rather than drying out and dying. In addition, the leaf loss puts the tree into a state of dormancy, and greatly reduces the amount of energy that the tree needs to stay alive. The leaves fall down to the ground when the trees lose their leaves, providing a layer of protective mulch to insulate their roots, and the tree conserves its energy for the next year and a new growing season. Maple trees are one type of deciduous tree that lose their leaves. A maple leaf maze is provided below for you to try to navigate through! If you mail us your completed paper, we will send you a free gift certificate!



Name _____	Age _____
Address _____	_____
_____	_____



Slippery Rock Watershed Coalition c/o Stream Restoration Incorporated  
 A PA Non-Profit Organization  
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**Highlighting Other Partnership Efforts (HOPE!)**

**Aultman Watershed Association for Restoring the Environment**

The goldfish remained elusive at the “Great Goldfish Roundup”. On Sunday, August 3rd the Aultman Watershed Association for Restoring the Environment (**AWARE**) hosted an event open to the public and area media. Members of AWARE had lowered the water level of a pond that was a remnant of past mining reclamation operations in the Reeds Run area. This “draw down” decreased the water depth from approximately 8 feet to 4 feet and was done in order to help determine if the pond water contributes to the mine drainage emanating within Reeds Run. Pond water is thought to seep through the large coal refuse pile located along the stream, becoming acidic and iron laden. Members of AWARE will continue water testing upstream and downstream of the site this fall and construct a treatment wetland next summer.



Over 15 people attended the event who enjoyed yummy snacks, hot dogs, and baked goods. Electrofishing done by the Western PA Conservancy turned up bluegill and minnows, but the goldfish remained elusive! A local pet store had even provided tanks and aerators!!!!

The two youngest participants at the event, **Isaac and Ben Busler**, had brought along their fishing gear and the well-equipped brothers each caught some bluegill and pumpkinseed in the sediment pond! In 15 minutes time, Isaac (age 4) caught 4 fish; and Ben (age 2), caught 2 fish—the first fish he had ever caught!!!!!!!

The Aultmans Run Watershed occupies 28 square miles in southwestern Indiana County. Aultmans Run flows into the Conemaugh River near the village of Lewisville in Conemaugh Twp. The three major tributaries in the region are Reeds Run, Neal Run, and Coal Run. AWARE was formed in February 2000 by concerned citizens who wanted to do something about the problems of mine discharges entering the area waterways and groundwater.

AWARE holds regular meetings every third Monday of the month. For more information, call 724-357-3766 or email [bokey@iup.edu](mailto:bokey@iup.edu).

