

# THE CATALYST

## SLIPPERY ROCK WATERSHED COALITION MONTHLY ACTIVITIES UPDATE

**THIS MONTH'S MEETING:** Thursday 12/10/09 at Jennings Environmental Education Center, pizza and pop provided. 11/12/09 attendance: N. Barefoot, J. Belgraden, E. Best, C. Bodle, H. Boylan, T. Breilla, D. Carney, S. Carney, C. Denholm, E. Cosgra, T. Danehy, M. Dunn, T. Grote, T. Hutchinson, A. Hayes, D. Johnson, L. Katrencik, V. Kefeli, R. Konik, E. Landis, T. Lynn, S. Smith, W. Taylor, P. Vowdrelee

### 2009 Port of Pittsburgh—Ohio River Watershed Celebration



Can you believe that the Ohio River Watershed Celebration was started 8 years ago?!!! The continued and growing enthusiasm by the participants is extremely rewarding!!! This year **about 800 were in attendance** for the 10/1/09 event!!! Like last year, two boats were needed... one for student-oriented presentations (See next page.) and the other for adults.

Both adults and students kicked-off the event by visiting the **over sixty (!!!) watershed-related displays** on board the Majestic. Emphasized were the contributions of watershed organizations, government agencies, individuals, businesses, and industries to the great improvement of water quality throughout the Ohio River Watershed and the value of the rivers to us all.

Prior to sailing, adults also had the opportunity to visit with the Imagination Cruise Staff to learn about the educational program being provided to K-12 students. Hands-on activities were available on the dock by the National Aviary (making bird feeders), US EPA (macro-invertebrates), and US Army Corps of Engineers (lock & dam model).

Both boats departed Station Square at 1:00pm to sail up the Monongahela through the Braddock Lock and Dam and back during the three-hour cruise. The Networker Cruise offered the unique opportunity for adults with diverse backgrounds and interests to meet and discuss the recovery of the Ohio River Watershed. The theme for this year's event was: "The Ohio River Watershed – Fuel for a Nation". As we cruised

the Monongahela River, the historic and current roles of production and distribution of energy resources were highlighted with presentations and narrations. Emphasis on watershed conservation underscored how new technologies in resource management and energy production lessen the impact on the watershed. One of the major highlights was the presentation of Watershed Awards to honor the positive efforts and impacts of small local groups who address watershed issues. Funds



for 1st (\$500) and 2nd (\$250) awards in each of 4 categories were donated by David Hess (former PA DEP Secretary) and an anonymous donor. **Denny Tubbs**, PA Fish & Boat Comm., announced the following 2009 Watershed Award winners: Community and Outreach—**Crooked creek Environmental Learning Center** and **Indiana PA Senior Environmental Center**; Most Innovative Project—**The Awesome Spirit of Wildlife** and **Stonycreek River Improvement Project**; Best Display—**Kiski-Conemaugh Stream Team** and **Natural Biodiversity**; Best Partnerships—**Washington County Watershed Alliance** and **Westmoreland Cleanways**. Additionally individuals, businesses, and local government agencies demonstrating a commitment to watershed or energy conservation were recognized with Environmental Awards announced by **Maggie Hall**, PA DEP: Government—**Green Tree Borough**; Individual Award—**Rev. Calvin Cash, Herron Avenue Corridor Coalition**; Organization Award—**Stony Creek River Improvement Project**; Business Award—**Pittsburgh Water Limo**; 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Energy Conservation Award—**City of Pittsburgh**.



Participants had the opportunity to listen to three very dynamic presentations during the voyage. **Jim McCarville**, Exec. Dir., Port of Pittsburgh Comm., talked about the importance of the rivers to both the general public and commerce. **Rev. Calvin Cash** talked about the Geo-thermal Energy System installed in his church. **James Sloss** of the City of Pittsburgh talked about Energy Efficiency Projects and the economic savings. A very informative talk was provided by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers about

the operation and importance of the lock and dam system as we locked through the Braddock Lock and Dam. **Jim McCarville** also discussed the economic importance of the locks and dams and informed us of the little known fact that the lock and dam system in the Port of Pittsburgh is the most extensive in the US. A great narration, provided by **Maggie Hall**, PADEP; **Dave Plank**, PA DEP (retired); and **Joe Dinkel**, West View Water Authority; highlighted many points of interest, current and historical, as the Celebration returned down river.

For further information and a "photo gallery" of the event, check out the online article in the **11/9/09 PA Environment Digest** at [www.paenvironmentdigest.com](http://www.paenvironmentdigest.com)!!!!

PHOTO OF  
THE MONTH



Taking a break from their hike in the woods with their dad, Sierra (top) and Alayna (front) Denholm enjoy being “water scientists” at Wolf Creek. The girls had fun using their dad Cliff’s pH and conductivity meters. There may be a couple of future scientists in the making here!

## 2009 Imagination Cruise Energizes Students and Educators

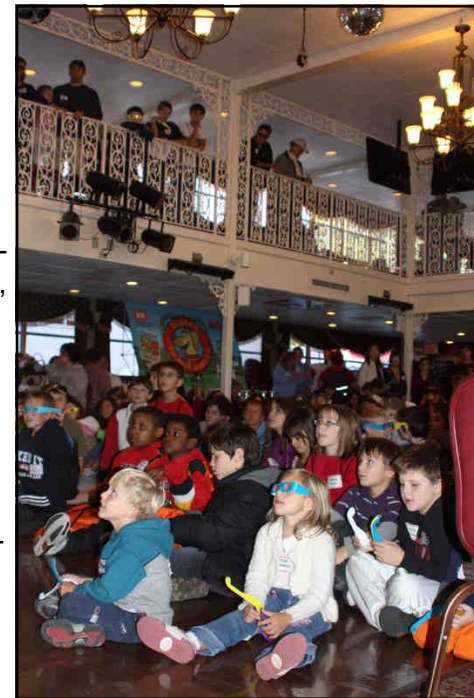
Students cruised the Monongahela River aboard the Gateway Clipper Fleet’s vessel *Empress* on 10/1/09, as part of the 8th annual Port of Pittsburgh – Ohio River Watershed Celebration. This year’s “Imagination Cruise” offered public, cyber and home-schooled students in grades K-12, along with parents and teachers, a chance to learn how the resources of the Ohio River Watershed have shaped the culture, economy, and environment of the region. Dynamic, hands-on activities from energy-related organizations and industry relating to the theme, “Ohio River Watershed – Fuel for a Nation”, demonstrated how the watershed, which has supplied energy for a growing country for over 250 years, continues to be a leader in innovative energy conservation and alternative energy technologies.

Everyone’s interest was *sparked* with the kick-off presentation of “It’s Electric” by Carnegie Museum of Science, which showed how electricity is created and transmitted to power homes, schools and businesses. Through fun, educational activities and interactive displays located on all three decks, students learned about various energy sources, including coal, natural gas, oil, the sun and garbage! Groups of students used Lego construction sets to build solar cars, then raced them against one another to find out which designs were most efficient. They learned how sunlight energy flows through food chains and supports food webs; discovered how solar energy can be used to heat and pump water; compared the amount of energy used by several types of light bulbs; and computed the efficiencies of shipping goods via river barges. They also found out how waste equates to energy, and how they could do their part to conserve energy by reducing, reusing and recycling. Many discovered how little of the earth’s supply of water is available for drinking. Some grabbed fishing rods to practice fly casting and experience how energy and physical forces are involved in the casting motion. Others were amazed by the variety of fish that live in the Ohio River Watershed, and at the adaptations they have for survival.



There was plenty of time to participate in the various activities, while still enjoying the view from the deck rails, as the boat sailed up the Mon River, under historic bridges, through the Braddock Lock and Dam (with narration by a representative of the US Army Corps of Engineers), then back to the dock. Each student was given a specially designed “Learner’s Log” in which to write and draw records of information gained and experiences enjoyed along the way. The log helped them build knowledge, as well as lasting memories of their river journey.

Representatives of 19 government agencies, conservation and educational organizations, and private industry were involved in the planning and implementation of the Imagination Cruise, which received rave reviews from participants. **Jennings Environmental Education Center**, Bureau of State Parks, PA Dept. of Conservation & Natural Resources staff “made this event happen”!!! The committee has already begun looking ahead to making next year’s event even bigger and better!!!

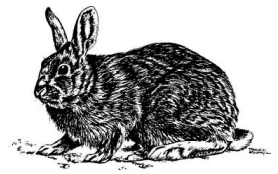




# The KIDS Catalyst

## SLIPPERY ROCK WATERSHED COALITION FUN ACTIVITY

### Cottontail Rabbit Pathfinder!



There are 9 species of cottontail rabbits found in the United States. Cottontails like to live on field edges, in gullies covered with debris, in brush piles, natural cavities, and in landscaped backyards where food and cover are available. Underground dens are used in very cold or wet weather and to escape pursuit. Brush piles and other areas of cover are often adequate alternatives to burrows. In spring and fall, rabbits use a grass or weed shelter called a "form." The form is a nestlike cavity on the surface of the ground, usually made in dense cover. Rabbit tracks are often visible in the snow during the winter. See if you can tell which path the cottontail rabbits like to follow in the tracks shown below. Start at the bottom left and color in the tracks which spell out COTTONTAIL in order, to help the rabbits reach the safety of their brush pile! If you mail us your completed paper, we'll send you a free gift certificate!

The maze consists of various tracks with letters. The correct path to follow is: C (bottom left), O, T, T, O, N, T, A, I, N, T, A, P, T, L, B, U, H, Y, E, T, K, C, O, T, T, O, N, T, A, I, N, T, A, P, T, L, B, U, H, Y, E, T, K.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_



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