

THE CATALYST

SLIPPERY ROCK WATERSHED COALITION MONTHLY ACTIVITIES UPDATE

THIS MONTH'S MEETING: Thursday 3/11/10 at Jennings Environmental Education Center, pizza and pop provided. 2/11/10 meeting cancelled due to snow.

We Cannot Tell a Lie—The Cherry Pie Hike was Tons of Fun!

You'd have to be slightly crazy to willingly spend your free time on a cold Saturday trudging miles through deep snow in the middle of the woods. It was interesting to learn that's what George Washington would likely have said about the 80 folks who met at the Old Stone House along Rt. 8 in Slippery Rock on Saturday, February 20 to partake in a "Cherry Pie Hike". In 1753, the imperial nations of France and England and Native Americans claimed the Ohio Country, the area encompassing present-day western Pennsylvania and eastern Ohio. Acting on orders from Virginia Governor Robert Dinwiddie, twenty-one year old George Washington embarked upon a dangerous expedition through the region, traveling through what would become Butler County, Pennsylvania. To honor the first president of the United States of America, **The Butler Outdoor Club, North Country Trail Association Butler Chapter, North Country Brewing Co.,** and the **Old Stone House** co-sponsored this fun, free history-hiking adventure, complete with delicious cherry pie and brand new freshly brewed original recipe coffee compliments of the **North Country Brewery** (which will soon be opening up their own coffee house!) Thank you very much to all 4 of these groups!

Joyce Appel gave opening announcements and kept things running smoothly. We thank her for her hard work the entire day prior to the hike tramping down the trails to try to pack down the snow to make hiking easier for folks on Cherry Pie Day! Prior to the hike, folks enjoyed homemade cherry pie and sipped coffee in front of a beautiful fire in the Old Stone House's fireplace. **Dr. Aaron Cowan**, curator of the Old Stone House and Slippery Rock University history professor, gave a short presentation entitled "Beyond the Cherry Tree: George Washington and Early Americans' Complicated Relationship with Nature." He informed the group before the question could be asked: No, George Washington never slept in the Old Stone House! President Washington had been dead for over 20 years before it was constructed! It was interesting to learn how George Washington was an avid journal writer, who apparently defined "wilderness" as "places to avoid." Dr. Cowan also read from the original manuscript the famous cherry tree story from young George Washington's life. Also adding to the day's festivities was an appearance by George Washington re-enactor **Jason Cherry** (see Photo of the Month).

Shaun and Melissa Busler, participants in the **SRWC**, were two of the "slightly crazies" to hike on the North Country Trail to commemorate George Washington's birthday. The Cherry Pie Hike crowd could choose from a short hike (1 or 2 miles) or long hike (3 to 5 miles) along the Old Venango Trail. Those hiking the longer distances were thankful for the shuttle van which took them back to their parked cars! There were 39 folks in Shaun and Melissa's group, which hiked the 3 to 5 mile option, led by **Tom Baumgardner** (pictured at right). Naturally their hike was mostly uphill, but they got the workout they wanted! The bright sunshine made up for the chilly temperature, and led most hikers to shed layers of coats, sweatshirts, and hats as most worked up quite a sweat! The path took hikers along portions of the trails at Jennings Environmental Education Center, past the newly renovated "old school house" and by the large passive treatment system with wetland. Tom gave a brief description of the treatment system and the past mining done in the area, and also taught hikers about the meaning of the blazes (the blue markings) on the trees in understanding how to correctly follow the trails. Some participants in the Cherry Pie Hike chose not to hike but rather to visit JEEC and give their snowshoes and skis a try.



Thank you so much to The Butler Outdoor Club (and president **John Stehle**, who led the short hike), which promotes outdoor education and provides year-round outdoor activities in Western PA and surrounding areas, for all levels (www.butleroutdoorclub.org). And thanks to the NCTA Butler Chapter! As one of Pennsylvania's five North Country Trail Association chapters, the Butler Chapter is responsible for building, maintaining, and promoting its section of the North Country Trail while also seeking to promote outdoor activities and lifestyles in and around Butler, Pennsylvania (www.northcountrytrail.org/but/). The NCT in Pennsylvania runs from the Allegheny National Forest southwest to the border with Ohio. The North Country National Scenic Trail stretches from Crown Point in eastern New York state to Lake Sakakawea in western North Dakota. Built and maintained primarily by volunteers of the North Country Trail Association, its planned route of 4,625 miles will make it the longest of the country's eight National Scenic Trails!



The February 20th Cherry Pie Hike (see article on p.1) was great fun for all involved! Old Stone House Curator Dr. Aaron Cowan shared about George Washington (middle picture). In George Washington-inspired garb, Jason Cherry (far right) talked to visitors about his illustrated book, Sassafras in the Window, which chronicles Washington's near-death experiences in Western PA.

ASMR in Our Own Backyard!

We in the SRWC are excited to have ASMR so close by this year! If you haven't done so yet, mark your calendars for the 27th Annual Meeting of The American Society of Mining and Reclamation to take place **June 5 to June 11, 2010** in one of America's most livable cities, beautiful Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania! The Joint Conference of ASMR, which includes the Appalachian Regional Reforestation Initiative (ARRI), US Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement (OSM), and the PA Annual Abandoned Mine Reclamation Conference (WPCAMR), will be held at the Radisson Hotel. Registration information will be posted online at: www.pghminingreclamationconf.com. To reserve a room at the Radisson, call 1-800-333-3333. We look forward to seeing old friends and making new ones, as Catalyst readers from all across the country will congregate near SRWC headquarters!!!



Winter with The Point North

"Thinking Green" since 1991, The Point North magazine has been a refreshing alternative for readers and advertisers in the greater Pittsburgh area. Each issue has upbeat and informative articles, many of which focus on health, family, and the environment. Now exclusively a webzine, it has gone one step farther to support "green" efforts to benefit the environment. Check it out! To sign up for the (free!) monthly "E-mail Magazine" just go to www.thepointnorth.com and look for the Sign Up box in the lower left corner.



In the February online article for the "Our Environment Matters" feature, **Stephanie Taylor of Jennings Environmental Education Center (JEEC)** offers a piece about snowshoeing. She provides a brief history of the snowshoe (one style is pictured above), describes some benefits of trying this fun winter activity, and offers some advice on what you should know before you begin. JEEC provides snowshoes to those interested in giving it a try, from 9 AM to 2 PM on Monday through Saturday, provided at least 4 inches of snow is on the ground. Snowshoes are lent in exchange for a driver's license. Some guidelines to help snowshoe enthusiasts leave as little impact as possible on the environment can be found at www.treadlightly.org.



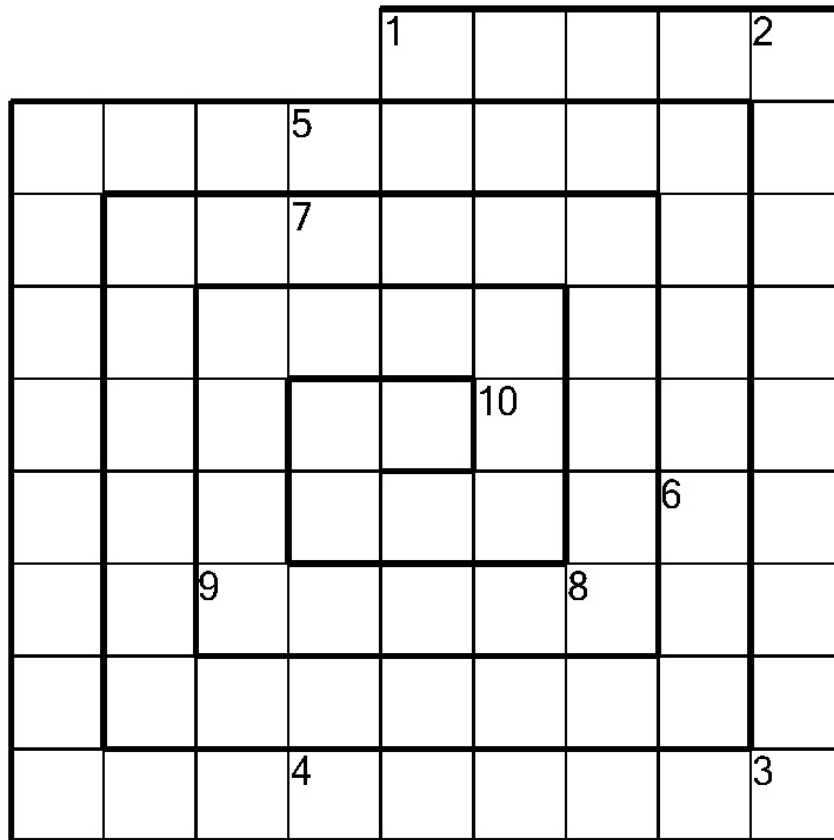
The KIDS Catalyst

SLIPPERY ROCK WATERSHED COALITION FUN ACTIVITY



Spring Spiral

Spring will be here before you know it! Complete the word puzzle below by writing in the answer for each clue in the numbered blocks, without leaving any blank spaces. (The first letter for each answer will go in the corresponding numbered box). If you mail us your completed paper, we will send you a free gift certificate!



- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. A type of precipitation | 6. Turning the clocks ahead one hour |
| 2. A yellow flower with a trumpet-shaped center | 7. A small pool of water |
| 3. A flower often associated with Holland | 8. An outdoor toy that works best on a windy day |
| 4. A day for pranks and jokes | 9. April showers bring these |
| 5. An object used to stay dry | 10. The season of the year which begins on March 20 |

Name _____ Age _____

Address _____



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

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Our Newest Intern... From Iowa to Slippery Rock

Hello all, this is your yearly edition of "Who's the New Intern?" For those of you who don't know me, my name is **Josh McGinnis** and I am currently pursuing a Masters degree in Sustainable Systems at Slippery Rock University. My journey here is quite unlike the previous interns. I was not born, raised, or even been to Pennsylvania before coming here for school. I was born and raised about 700 miles west of here in Dubuque, Iowa, a small town along the Mississippi River. It was there that I gained a love for both nature and the water. I took this love of all things natural to me with college, where I majored in both Biology and Environmental Studies at Iowa State University. Throughout my time there I've taken advantage of the opportunities that are available at large institutions. During my time at Iowa State I worked in several labs focusing on different things from genetics to plant pathology to water quality. Starting out as a glorified dishwasher and fly undertaker, I worked my way into a research position at the Iowa State University Limnology Lab, where I worked for nearly two years. There I was the jack-of-all trades, working in both our chemistry and biology lab, along with doing field work. It was there that I received much of my scientific training. It was my job to collect the water samples in the field, take them back to the lab, process them and run analysis on anywhere between 15-20 analytes. In the biology lab I used my identification skills to identify aquatic plants, phytoplankton, and zooplankton from the samples collected. I would then measure their size and calculate a bio-volume. Exciting, huh?

Now to how I got to be an intern here. While I was in Iowa and getting ready to go off to grad school I got my first introduction to Stream Restoration Inc. Reading a quarterly Sierra Club magazine a couple of weeks before I was to come out to Slippery Rock, I read about an interesting non-profit company that was using the by-products iron and manganese from the mining reclamation business as a glaze for local pottery businesses. After reading this article it piqued my interest and I knew that I must work with them in some sort of fashion even if I had to volunteer. So volunteer I did. I started attending Slippery Rock Watershed Coalition meetings and have helped out with many projects they were working on. So now in my last semester of school I needed to do an internship to complete my graduation. And so again, my first thoughts were to work with Stream Restoration Inc. in some sort of fashion. Although they weren't looking for an intern, they graciously agreed to take me on.



So my time here will be devoted to working on a number of projects, but my main areas of focus will be working on drafting a watershed conservation plan for the Slippery Rock Creek Watershed in conjunction with **Laurie Popeck**. In addition, I will be doing some research into furthering their business plan dealing with their resource recovery operation. I would like to give a special thanks to **Margaret Dunn** and all those working at Stream Restoration Inc. and BioMost Inc. for allowing me to work with them.