

THE CATALYST

SLIPPERY ROCK WATERSHED COALITION MONTHLY ACTIVITIES UPDATE

NEXT MEETING: 7 pm on 2/13/14 at Jennings Environmental Education Center, pizza and pop provided. 1/9/14 meeting attendance: C. Denholm, V. Kefeli, B. Kuban, J. Puskas, F. VanAtta, S. VanDerWal

Watershed Renaissance Grant Awarded!!!!

We are excited to announce that the **Slippery Rock Creek Watershed Renaissance Grant** has been awarded through the **Act 13 Abandoned Mine Drainage Abatement and Treatment Program (AMDATP)**. Act 13 of 2012 establishes the Marcellus Legacy Fund and allocates funds to the **Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development** and the **Commonwealth Financing Authority**. Funding from this grant will be used for many improvements in the 408-square mile Slippery Rock Watershed, which encompasses parts of 5 counties and 38 municipalities.

One exciting facet of the grant is a **nano-power project that uses treated AMD to generate electricity**, which will be installed at the **Jennings Environmental Education Center**. This project will be included in existing education programs for students, teachers, and the general public, and will give many people an opportunity to learn about the potential to generate power from an unlikely source, abandoned mine drainage. Funding will also expand the monitoring efforts by the **“Adopt-A-Passive System”** volunteers who live in various municipalities in the watershed. Stream monitoring will be conducted at sites in numerous municipalities along Slippery Rock Creek and major tributaries. Both the stream and system monitoring information will be uploaded to the **Datashed** website, **www.datashed.org**.

This grant money will also go towards on-the-ground construction efforts which include repair, maintenance, and improvement activities at 3 passive treatment systems located in Marion, Brady, and Venango Townships, Butler County. Most of the more than 15 passive treatment systems in the Slippery Rock Creek Watershed have been online for about a decade or even longer. Funding will also help cover future mid-term maintenance and end-of-design-life rehabilitation. We are thankful to the Commonwealth Financing Authority for the opportunity to accomplish so many great projects in the watershed!

Growing Greener Grant to Aid Streambank Stabilization of Slippery Rock Creek

Over the last several years, local citizens have approached the SRWC and Stream Restoration Incorporated about several stream erosion problems that were occurring along Slippery Rock Creek. In 2012, a small section of streambank on the right bank of Slippery Rock Creek was stabilized with a grant from the **Foundation of Pennsylvania Watersheds**. SRI was recently awarded a **PA Growing Greener** grant to continue the streambank stabilization efforts downstream and on the left bank of another severely eroding section of Slippery Rock Creek. Over 20 feet of streambank have been cutback along a 500-foot section of Slippery Rock Creek due to erosion on **Slippery Rock Campground Association (SRCA)** property in the last few years. This erosion has increased sedimentation with an estimated 100,000 cubic feet of soil loss, which is equal to nearly 800,000 pounds of sediment. The unstable banks also increase the risk of accident when driving or walking along the steep bank and are undermining a utility pole. In addition to stabilizing the streambank, a 50-foot riparian buffer will be created for wildlife habitat.

This site also provides a significant educational opportunity as over 1,100 lots at the campground are within a short distance of the project area. During busy summer weekends, 3,000 to 4,000 individuals can be at the campground. A pamphlet will be developed for interested campers describing the need and purpose of the project. We can't wait to get started and are very thankful to Growing Greener for this new funding!



Active erosion of the streambank at the Slippery Rock Creek Campground. The utility pole (upper left) was moved in June 2011 and previously was over 20' away from the top of the bank. In March 2013 the pole was only 5' away from the bank. Thanks to a PA DEP Growing Greener grant, a 500-foot long segment of this streambank will be restored. (See article on the first page for more information.)

Ohio River Watershed Celebration
BENEFIT DINNER — Tuesday, March 4, 2014 at 7:00 pm
Mad Mex Shadyside, 220 S. Highland Ave, Pittsburgh, PA 15206

The ORWC celebrates the successes of the watershed communities, businesses, industries, and government agencies in restoring their environment through partnerships and perseverance. Join us for a special Benefit Dinner through our generous partner, Mad Mex in Shadyside, to help raise money for this free, public event that has attracted over 700 participants annually for the past 12 years.

A \$50 donation is requested for each reservation. Reservations, which are available on a first-come basis, are due by February 25, 2014. Email **Anne Daymut at anne@wpcamr.org**. Make checks payable to the non-profit organization—Stream Restoration Incorporated. Dinner includes a buffet meal and one adult beverage.

The Catalyst Archive Updated on SRWC Website

Past issues of *The Catalyst* are now available on the new and improved web site of the Slippery Rock Watershed Coalition! Visit **www.srwc.org** and select “Publications” from the drop-down menu at the top. The “Catalyst Archive” option will display the years 1998 to 2013. Now our readers can access nearly any past issue of our monthly newsletter. Parents, *The Kids Catalyst* pages can be easily printed from home for use as a great rainy (or snowy!) day activity! Over 100 educational, science-themed word puzzles, games, mazes, most including fun and informative facts on a science topic, are now at your disposal! We hope many of you have taken the time to visit our updated website. Our goal is to keep you better informed and updated on the activities going on in the Slippery Rock Watershed, and to encourage more new citizen volunteers to get involved. Check out our new articles on projects, volunteer opportunities, new photos, history of the organization, partners, and so much more!

January 2012

THE CATALYST
SLIPPERY ROCK WATERSHED COALITION MONTHLY ACTIVITIES UPDATE


THIS MONTH'S MEETING: 7 pm on Thursday 1/12/12 at Jennings Environmental Education Center, pizza and pop provided. December's meeting was cancelled due to Student Symposium on the Environment. (Over 100 attendees!!!!!!)

Grove City Allied News
Features Article on
Service Learning Project and Student Presentations

The Saturday, November 12, 2011 edition of the *Grove City Allied News* included an excellent article by **Monica Pryts** detailing the research work and presentation of findings by students in **Dr. Helen Boylan's Advanced Laboratory** course for chemistry and biology majors interested in stream pollution and remediation. The De Sale Phase II passive treatment system in the Slippery Rock Creek Watershed in Butler County which relies on natural processes, such as wetlands, settling ponds, and limestone drains to treat the highly acidic, metal-bearing drainage from abandoned coal mining operations, was selected to provide the "hands-on" learning opportunity.

Ten **Westminster College** chemistry/biochemistry majors presented water quality results at the November 10th meeting of the Slippery Rock Watershed Coalition (SRWC) at **Jennings Environmental Education Center (JEEC)**. Their presentations included data on how much of a certain substance such as iron or calcium was found in their samples, which were collected in the field in October and analyzed in the lab at Westminster. Their results confirmed that the DeSale Phase II passive treatment facility is functioning well, and their new data was enlightening, greatly appreciated, and vital to determining the continued performance of the 11-year old system.

The work of collecting and analyzing water samples to determine how well a passive treatment system is working often requires manpower and funding not readily available to volunteer-based organizations like the SRWC. Hence the value of the partnership between Westminster College and the SRWC! College students from Westminster have been volunteering with the SRWC for six (6) years.



"This is what we call service-learning," said Dr. Helen Boylan and mentioned how thankful she was to show her students "chemistry in action" at passive treatment sites, which have been visited by people from around the world. She also expressed her appreciation of SRWC members **Wil Taylor** and **Cliff Denholm**, who "have been instrumental in facilitating this service-learning project."

Wil Taylor, JEEC Manager, called the college-coalition partnership "unique, interesting, and rewarding." The SRWC is always looking for more volunteers to help out. Anyone can contribute to the effort! For more information, please contact **Cliff Denholm** at Stream Restoration Incorporated at 724-776-0161 or **Wil Taylor** at JEEC at 724-794-6011.

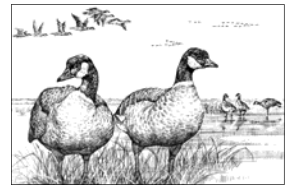
Thank you to Monica Pryts and Dr. Helen Boylan and a special thank-you, thank-you, thank-you to the following students for the positive, encouraging news from our watershed: **Stephen Cornich, Danielle Figueroa, Jamie Daum, Nicole George, Sarah Welsh, Hannah Anderson, Olivia Miller, Gavin Steadman, Mark Biedka, and Kelly Cholewa.**



The KIDS Catalyst

SLIPPERY ROCK WATERSHED COALITION FUN ACTIVITY

Life-long Love in the Animal World



In honor of Valentine's Day, this month we're focusing attention on several special animals that show unusual commitment to each other. While most animals form no such bond, these animals pair up one male and one female and they stay together in that relationship for life. The names of some of the animals that exhibit this amazing bond are given below, in scrambled form. Use the clues provided and rearrange the letters to correctly spell out the names of these creatures who are loyal to their mate for life. Some of the animals you see might surprise you! If you send us your completed paper, we'll mail you a free gift certificate. Happy Valentine's Day!

1. These animals are probably most associated with love, due to the heart shape a couple forms with their necks close together:

W S N S A

2. These dam-builders live in colonies made up of parents and offspring:

V A S E E B R

3. America's national symbol is also very loyal:

D L B A A L G S E E

4. These large sea birds typically live for 50 years!

T S L S A S E B O R A

5. These predators live in packs:

O V W L S E

6. Most people call an exterminator for these wood-eaters who live in colonies:

T R M T I S E E

7. Common throughout Europe and a symbol of eternal love, these birds are featured in the Bible, William Shakespeare's poems, and as a pair in "The 12 Days of Christmas."

U R T T E L D S O E V

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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Upcoming February Fun at Jennings Environmental Education Center!

Ready to take a break from your indoor winter hibernation? Jennings Environmental Education Center offers a variety of fun and educational winter programs, at an affordable cost (or free!) Check out what's available in the next few weeks and consider a visit to Jennings:

The Great Backyard Bird Count: Saturday, February 15th, 9 AM to 12 PM

Learn the basics of bird identification and feeding, while contributing to research about bird populations. The Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC) is an annual event that encourages citizens to help scientists gather data on the biodiversity of birds. The event is now global, integrated with eBird, an online global checklist program. Anyone in the world with an Internet connection can participate and view the results. Join Jennings and the Bartramian Audubon Society for an informative birding session. Observe and count birds at the feeders and find out how to contribute data to the GBBC. Use your new skills to observe birds and submit your own data at home. This free program is designed for ages 10 and up, and is particularly recommended for teachers and youth leaders who want to involve their students in citizen science projects. Register online or contact the Center at 724-794-6011 before February 12th.

Winter Tree I.D.: Sunday, Feb. 23rd, 2 PM to 3:30 PM

During the leafless winter months, trees may appear to conceal their identities. Discover techniques that can help distinguish Pennsylvania's common trees in any season, during this 90-minute guided hike. No fee or registration is required.

Snowshoeing: Snowshoeing is a popular winter activity at Jennings. Snowshoes are available to borrow Monday through Saturday when the snow cover is adequate.

