

THE CATALYST

SLIPPERY ROCK WATERSHED COALITION MONTHLY ACTIVITIES UPDATE

NEXT MEETING: 7 pm on 9/10/15 at Jennings Environmental Education Center, pizza and pop provided. 8/13/15 meeting attendance: S. Busler, C. Denholm, M. Dunn, V. Kefeli, B. Kuban, F. VanAtta

Over 400 Visitors Celebrate the Bloom at Jennings Environmental Education Center!

Saturday, July 18th brought beautiful sunshine as well as many visitors eager to “celebrate the bloom” at Jennings Environmental Education Center. The festival had much to offer for every age to enjoy! There were numerous activities all throughout the day. The prairie hosted many visitors during the nature exploration walks. These walks presented information about birding, wildflowers, insects, and of course our favorite massasauga rattlesnake! A prairie journey walk was also available where visitors learned about the plants and animals of the prairie as well as the prairie’s history and geology. Special thanks to **Joe and Bonnie Isaac, Dave Johnson, Harold Willis**, and the **Bartramian Audubon Society** for a wonderful job in educating our festival-goers this year!



The fun kept on going with great demonstrations, food, and music! Visitors learned about blacksmithing at the Salmon Forge booth where they could see metal working in action with a working forge. The massasauga rattlesnake and other live amphibians were presented. Visitors also had the opportunity to watch a live honey extraction thanks to **HoneySweet Apiaries**. **Greg Kedzierski** from **Ernst Seeds** was on hand to talk about native seeds and meadow establishment. Kids had the opportunity to cool off on the dueling bikerators brought to us by **ZeroFossil**, as well as test their fire crew skills playing the prairie fire dash game. Live music brought a gathering of people to the prairie pavilion seeking great entertainment, which included **BeJae Fleming with Jackie Blount, The Carpenter Ants, Tony Denikos, and Nameless in August!** Families who made their way to the other side of the park and into the Jennings classroom found themselves in the Prairie Science Lab. Here they could become a botanist, paleontologist, entomologist, or herpetologist and discover many different resources the park has to offer. Delicious **Randita’s Grill** provided fresh, locally-grown food and the **Cranberry Area Lion’s Club** served burgers, hotdogs, fries, and more of everyone’s favorite classics. Dessert included **Susie Q’s** homemade ice cream with many delicious flavors to pick from. The **Moraine McConnells Mill Jennings Commission**, also known as **3MJC**, had a booth that provided water, tumblers, children activities, pins, and other souvenirs to visitors. 3MJC is a friends group that helps out with numerous events and projects throughout the three parks.

Over 400 participants came to the festival, whose main goal was to draw the attention of as many people as possible to recognize the bloom of the prairies’ Blazing Star flower (*Liatrix spicata*). This beautiful prairie species grows to heights of 4 to 6 feet and blooms from the top down. The flower is not commonly found here in the eastern U.S. and needs a specific ecosystem in which to survive. Jennings is lucky to have the only prairie in Pennsylvania. Blazing Star can be found blooming at Jennings during late July and early August, as this time of the year provides the dry, warm climate in which the flower was established around 2000 B.C. The flower was also used by Native Americans to make tea that would treat abdominal, kidney, and bladder troubles. Chewing the roots would cure stomachaches, improve appetite, and cleanse wounds. Inhaling smoke from the Blazing Stars’ burned rootlets would help treat headaches, tonsil inflammation and nosebleeds. Though the Blazing Star flower



was not in full-bloom for the festival, it was beginning to bloom and could be seen from numerous spots on our Blazing Star Trail that makes its way through the prairie. Whether it was joining one of the informative prairie walks or a simple family stroll, many visitors to the festival found themselves enjoying Jennings’ very special prairie. Many sponsors made the festival possible and thanks goes to the **Botanical Society of Western PA, Zero Fossil, Butler Garden Club, Dennis McCurdy/Lonesome No More Productions**, and **Bartramian Audubon Society**.

(Thanks to contributing author Emily Kuhs!)



Brady Mahony cleans the stone at the Erico Bridge Passive Treatment System as part of the Slippery Rock Creek Watershed Renaissance grant awarded by the PA Department of Community and Economic Development. More about Brady next month...

Lake Arthur Regatta a Great Success!

Fun and funnel cakes! Swimming and sailing! Music, magic, and munchies! Hiking and happiness! Just over 20,000 visitors came to this year's Regatta at Lake Arthur! Magnificent Moraine State Park hosted a variety of activities August 1st and 2nd for the many participants. Folks of all ages were spotted throughout the two-day event enjoying and trying-out new things on the water. There were kayaking, stand-up paddle boarding, dragon boat racing, places to receive instruction and try out fishing and archery, a unique carve-your-own walking stick booth, information on how to make your own Puddle Duck vessel, live musical performances, craft and food vendors, and much more! There was a fun Baierl Toyota car cruise, the 2015 Puddle Duck World Racer Championship, 2015 PDGA Pro Disc Golf World Championship, and the 2015 SUP (Stand Up Paddleboard) Championship.

Boats big and small sailed the lake throughout the weekend, with many settling into the prime viewing area for the breathtaking fireworks display on Saturday night. Prior to the launching of the fireworks, a very cool show was put on by Sirkus Dayz, where the performers danced and performed tricks with fire (even eating it!) in front of an amazed audience. To provide educational opportunities to the interested public, live reptiles were on display in tanks, including three very cool but venomous species native to PA: the timber rattlesnake (shown in photo to right), copperhead, and massasauga. Kids had the chance to create their own wooden mini-sleds, pencil holders, or wooden boats at the Lake Arthur Lily Pad Children's Tent. Any child who wanted to could grab a hammer and follow the easy instructions to make and paint a cool keepsake.



SRWC participants **Shaun and Melissa Busler** (Principal Author of the *Catalyst*, and pictured on the paddleboard to the right) and their three children had a great time at the Regatta. It was a wonderful chance to enjoy one of Butler County's natural treasures, and if you missed it this year we hope you'll check it out next August!





The KIDS Catalyst

SLIPPERY ROCK WATERSHED COALITION FUN ACTIVITY



Are We There Yet?

Maybe you have asked a parent these words when you've been on a long car ride: "Are we there yet?" Some animals make amazingly long journeys during certain times of the year. These trips are known as migrations, and a few hours in the car is nothing compared to what some of these animals go through! Animals migrate most often to find food, to breed, or for more livable conditions. The harsh winters of Pennsylvania force some animals to leave the area for a warmer location, where they can find food. Then in the spring, when warmth and food return, so do the animals. Five of the most amazing animal migrations are listed below, with the letters that spell out the animal names all mixed up. Unscramble the letters to write the animal name in the blanks. If you mail us your completed paper, we'll email you a \$1 credit to spend on Amazon.com. You can save up your \$1 credits each month to buy something really great!

1. The _____ is the
N O A R M H C T Y T U F B R E L

insect that migrates the farthest, flying as far as 2,500 miles to reach its winter home.

2. _____ (a kind of deer) migrate farther than any other land
U A I R B C O

mammal, journeying up to 1,600 miles total each year.

3. _____ have the longest known migration of any
Y G A R W E L S H A

mammal, traveling between 10,000 and 12,000 round trip miles each year from their warm winter spot in Mexican lagoons to their summer feeding grounds in cold Arctic seas.

4. The _____ is a sea bird
O T O Y S S E R W R A A T E H

that migrates from New Zealand to the North Pacific, almost 40,000 miles per year!

5. The champion of migration, the animal which migrates farther than any other animal, is a bird called the _____ . It flies an average of 44,000
I A C T R C R E N T

miles each year, with one bird recorded as having flown over 50,000 miles! These birds live to be up to 35 years old, meaning the total life-time miles flown is equal to 3 round trips to the Moon!

Name _____ Age _____

Address _____

Parent's email address for Amazon.com gift credit: _____



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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SAVE THE DATE: **20th Anniversary Celebration**

Please join us on **Saturday, October 10th 2015** for a full day of events at the **Jennings Environmental Education Center** as the **Slippery Rock Watershed Coalition** celebrates our 20th Anniversary! This event is open to the public and **FREE** of charge!

Two short **kayak sojourns** on the Slippery Rock Creek for adults and children ages 14 and up (with adult) will showcase the water quality and new projects along the route. The sojourns will take place at 9 am and 1 pm, and will begin at the Jennings Center to arrange transportation and carpooling to the put-in. Abandoned mine drainage passive treatment system tours to sites throughout the watershed (which will include activities for adults and children) will also take place at 9 am and 1 pm, and will also begin at Jennings. **Registration, which will open on September 10, is required for the kayak sojourns and passive treatment system tours.** Some kayaks will be available on request. Other activities at Jennings throughout the day (that do not require registration) will include a "Watershed Science Lab" with hands-on, fun, activities for children and families, and shorter stream and wetland explorations at Jennings. Call 724-794-6011 or email jennings@pa.gov for more information, or to register on or after September 10.

Look for more information and a schedule of events in the near future on the SRWC website www.srwc.org and our Facebook page.