

THE CATALYST

SLIPPERY ROCK WATERSHED COALITION MONTHLY ACTIVITIES UPDATE

NEXT MEETING: 7 pm on 7/11/18 at Jennings Environmental Education Center, pizza and pop provided.
6/14/18 meeting attendance: S. Busler, C. Denholm, M. Dunn, D. Johnson, J. Puskas, S. Smith, W. Taylor, F. Van Atta

Lightning Safety: Don't Be a Victim

June 24-30 was National Lightning Safety Awareness Week. Started in 2001 to call attention to this under-rated killer, United States lightning fatalities have since dropped from about 50 per year to about 30. This reduction in fatalities is largely due to greater awareness of the lightning danger and people seeking safety when thunderstorms threaten. If you enjoy spending time outdoors like we do, there are several important reminders about lightning safety that could potentially save your life. More people are struck by lightning in July than any other month. Anyone who is outside in the summer needs to understand some basic information about lightning. Each year, thunderstorms produce an estimated 20 to 25 million cloud-to-ground lightning flashes in the United States — each one of those flashes is a potential killer. Some of those flashes



strike directly under the storm where it is raining, but some of the flashes reach out away from the storm where people perceive the lightning threat to be low or nonexistent, and catch people by surprise. Based on cases documented by the National Weather Service in recent years, about 30 people are killed by lightning each year and hundreds more are injured, some suffering devastating neurological injuries that persist for the rest of their lives. About two thirds of the deaths are associated with outdoor recreational activities. Soccer is the sport with the most lightning fatalities (yes, even more than golf).

If you hear thunder, lightning is close enough to strike you. It does not have to be raining where you are. A significant lightning threat extends outward from the base of a thunderstorm cloud about 6 to 10 miles. Lightning and thunder can normally be seen and heard from a distance of 10 miles away. There is no place outside that is safe when a thunderstorm is in the area. Outdoor activities should be stopped immediately and you should get to a safe place immediately. Substantial buildings with wiring and plumbing provide the greatest amount of protection. Office buildings, schools, and homes are examples of buildings that would offer good protection. Once inside, stay away from windows and doors and anything that conducts electricity such as corded phones, wiring, plumbing, and anything connected to these. Note that small outdoor buildings including dugouts, rain shelters, sheds, etc., are NOT SAFE. In the absence of a substantial building, a hard-topped metal vehicle with the windows closed provides good protection.

If no safe shelter is available and you are stuck outside, there are some tips to follow that may save your life — but remember no place outdoors is safe.

- Avoid open fields, and do not go to the top of a hill or a ridge top.
- Stay away from tall, isolated trees or other tall objects. An isolated shed is not a safe place to hide.
- If you are in a forest, stay near a lower stand of thick small trees.
- If you are in a group of people, spread out to avoid possible current traveling between group members.
- If you are camping in an open area, set up camp in a valley, ravine or other low area. Remember, a tent offers NO protection from lightning.
- Stay away from water and wet items, such as ropes, and metal objects, such as fences and poles. Water and metal do not attract lightning, but they are excellent conductors of electricity. The current from a lightning flash will easily travel for long distances.
- If caught in a large level field far from shelter and you feel your hair stand on end, lightning may be about to hit you. Crouch down on the ground immediately (like a baseball catcher stance), with feet together, placing your hands over your ears and bending forward. Don't lie flat, this makes you a larger target.



High school students enjoyed a fun kayak trip along the Slippery Rock Creek as they learned about stream bank stabilization and erosion control methods, as part of EYECon camp (see article below).

EYECon Campers Enjoy Learning Via Kayak Trip

About a dozen area high school students participating in EYECon camp experienced an exciting educational water adventure on June 19th. Participants got to kayak a section of the Slippery Rock Creek near the Slippery Rock Campground as leaders taught them about the efforts of the Slippery Rock Watershed Coalition and Stream Restoration Incorporated to stabilize the stream bank. Led by **Miranda Crotsley**, the Program Coordinator at Jennings Environmental Education Center, **Shaun Busler** (of SRI and an SRWC participant), and several folks from the Western PA Conservancy, the students were treated to a unique view of two completed stream bank projects. Located at the Slippery Rock Campground and at the Carney property nearby, the stream sites had been subjected to an extreme amount of erosion. The SRWC and SRI used boulders, root wads, erosion control blanketing, and live stakes to stabilize the stream bank. Many native plants, shrubs, and trees were used in the stabilization process, primarily willows. Part of the afternoon's lesson dealt with invasive species versus native species. The students' kayak excursion also took them to a future stream bank project located at the camp ground. This third stream bank stabilization site appears to be the most difficult section yet, with significant erosion, a very steep drop, and a location very close to several trailers at the campground. The remediation will commence once design and permitting is completed. The design will be similar to the other sites with the addition of soil lifts for extra stabilization.

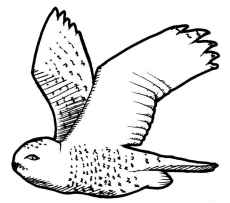


The students enjoyed their time in the creek, which had a swift flow due to high water levels from previous rainfall. They were even treated to king fisher and bald eagle sightings! If you or someone you know might be interested in joining EYECon in the future, be sure to check out their web site: <https://eyeconcamp.wordpress.com/>. EYECon stands for Experiencing Your Environment through CONservation, and gives teens some very cool summer science opportunities. They discover important conservation issues, design questions, work with biologists to discern the best methods to investigate their questions, carry out the investigations in the field, learn to effectively analyze their results, and present to their peers and professionals. The students' research questions are truly meaningful to conservation. They study and analyze issues facing conservation and propose practical measures to solve problems via investigations that can have a real impact on how natural resources are protected and managed.



The KIDS Catalyst

SLIPPERY ROCK WATERSHED COALITION FUN ACTIVITY



Whoooo Knows Their Owls?

Eight owl species call Pennsylvania home or regularly pass through our state. Owls are amazing birds that fill a unique niche in our environment, just like hawks do and other birds of prey. There is a tremendous variety of owls all over the world, from the tiny elf owl that weighs just 1 ounce (the weight of a big paperclip), to the huge great gray owl with a wing span of up to 60 inches. Since owls devour their prey whole, they regurgitate the indigestible elements (mostly bones and fur) from their meals in the form of small balls or pellets. These owl pellets can be dissected for examination of the tiny bones to determine just what the owl ate. Common prey for owls include rats, mice, birds, moles, voles, shrews, rabbits, skunks, insects, spiders, lizards, frogs, snakes, and snails. The word search below contains the names of Pennsylvania's eight owls and many of the prey they like to eat. If you find and circle all of the hidden words and mail us your paper, we'll send you a prize: a \$1 credit for Amazon.com. You can save up your credits to buy something extra awesome!

Snowy
Barn
Barred
Long Eared

Short eared
Great horned
Screech
Saw whet

mouse
rat
bird
mole

shrew
vole
rabbit
squirrel

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Name _____ Age _____

Parent email address _____



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

Thanks to The William & Frances Aloe Charitable Foundation, Environmentally Innovative Solutions, LLC, Dominion Peoples, Amerikohl Mining, Inc., Quality Aggregates Inc., Drs. Ron & Kathy Falk Family, BioMost, Inc., Allegheny Mineral Corporation and PA DEP for their support. For more information contact: Slippery Rock Watershed Coalition, c/o Stream Restoration Incorporated (PA non-profit), 434 Spring Street Ext., Mars, PA 16046 (724)776-0161, fax (724)776-0166, sri@streamrestorationinc.org, www.srwc.org. July distribution: 250 copies

Save the Date: **Celebrate the Bloom at Jennings Environmental Education Center**

Mark your calendars and spread the word to your family and friends, we hope to see many of you there for the annual Celebrate the Bloom event at Jennings! To be held on **Saturday, July 28th from 9 AM to 6 PM**, Celebrate the Bloom is a fun, free, educational event at Jennings Environmental Education Center (JEEC), located at 2951 Prospect Road in Slippery Rock, PA. Nature walks, live music, artisan and food vendors, workshops, and demonstrations are just some of the fun activities this day offers. Participants can enjoy the many unique trails and wildlife found at the JEEC, with a special focus on the awesome relict prairie habitat. Jennings Environmental Education Center is home to Pennsylvania's only prairie, also the easternmost prairie in the country. This 20-acre ecosystem is home to many unique native prairie plants, including the blazing star. The end of July into early August marks the peak bloom time of this spectacular purple prairie flower and many other flowers. It's definitely an excellent time of year to make a visit to the JEEC. The festival will include guided bird, butterfly, and wildflower walks, many engaging demonstrations, unique nature art for sale created by local artisans, and much more!



A view of Prairie Bridge at Jennings Environmental Education Center.

Adjacent to Moraine State Park, Jennings encompasses 300 total acres, three-quarters of which is covered by dense forest. There are more than five miles of well-maintained and marked trails that run on either side of Route 528. Visitors can follow the trails and enjoy an easy hike that will take them through forest, stream, prairie, and wetland habitats. A variety of plants and animals are easily spotted along the trails. The event is produced in cooperation with 3MJC (the friends group and funding partner of Jennings), Slippery Rock in Bloom, and Slippery Rock University. JEEC is located just over 1 hour from Pittsburgh, Erie, and Youngstown. Come join us for a day full of activities as we celebrate the only managed and protected prairie in Pennsylvania – and help to ensure it thrives for generations to come. Remember most activities are free and require no pre-registration. We hope to see you there!