

THE CATALYST

SLIPPERY ROCK WATERSHED COALITION MONTHLY ACTIVITIES UPDATE

NEXT MEETING: 7 pm on 11/8/18 at Jennings Environmental Education Center, pizza and pop provided.
10/11/18 meeting attendance: C. Denholm, W. Taylor, F. Van Atta, D. Wehman, R. Wehman

13th Annual Northwest Pennsylvania GIS Conference

Some of the best Geographic Information Systems (GIS) practices in our community today were showcased October 18th and 19th at the 13th Annual NW PA GIS Conference at Clarion University. Many GIS applications used for data gathering, analyzing, and sharing were discussed amongst dozens of GIS professionals and academics in an exciting environment for networking and education. Several GIS applications explored at the conference included drone deployment, crowd-sourcing techniques, water monitoring systems, evaluating bluff recession rates, GIS legacy parcel digitization, European bison reintroduction in central eastern Europe, PA Great Lakes water and land technical resources, and more.

Shaun Busler, a GIS Professional and SRWC participant, presented a “Review of Relict Prairie at Jennings Environmental Center Over Time Utilizing Open Source GIS Software.” In his presentation, Shaun shared the history of JEEC, the nearby Old Stone House, the role of the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy, and the Jennings relict prairie. Shaun discussed how the relict prairie has been expanded to about 12 acres to create additional habitat for the massasauga rattlesnake, a PA endangered species. The massasauga rattlesnake is known to be a timid, shy snake, growing to an average adult length of about two feet. Shaun shared results of a WPC telemetry study, suggesting between 90 and 100 massasauga rattlesnakes currently live in the Jennings prairie ecosystem. He also shared information on the symbiotic relationship between the terrestrial crayfish and the massasauga, which hibernates in crayfish burrows often seen along the walking trails of the prairie. Shaun also shared information about common limitations of aerial photos, and how the process of orthorectification can remedy such distortions.

Another part of Shaun’s presentation focused on the maintenance of the prairie, which includes prescribed fires. Over time woody vegetation has encroached upon the relict prairie. The prairie needs to be actively maintained in order to preserve this unique ecosystem. The first prescribed fire was originally conducted by the WPC in 1959; nowadays the prairie is split into quads and burned on a two-year rotational basis. The idea behind controlled burning is to simulate what was once a normal part of life for ecosystems like prairies.

Ecosystems native to the Midwest depend on periodic fire events to rejuvenate growth and ensure long-term survival. At Jennings, periodic fires slow the growth of woody plants and aid the growth of native grasses and wildflowers. One such flower the Jennings prairie is famous for is the magnificent blazing star. This bright purple flower is more commonly found around the Great Lakes and on the coastal plain of the eastern United States. But every late July and early August its 4 to 6-foot tall stalks burst with a bright brilliant purple during the hot and dry midsummer of western PA. Shaun enjoyed sharing



his GIS data analysis and interesting information about one of his favorite outdoor places to visit, and was equally thankful to learn more about others’ GIS applications in their respective lines of work. Excellent job to all who provided a poster and/or a presentation!

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Wil Taylor, Jennings Environmental Education Center, instructing Westminster College students on the use of field alkalinity test kits at the Erico Bridge Passive System

Coming Soon!
Student Symposium On The Environment



The Slippery Rock Watershed Coalition is once again partnering with Westminster College, who will host the annual Student Symposium on the Environment. The purpose of this event is to highlight environmental study, research, artistic expression, and service work being conducted by students in the re-

gion. Students from all disciplines and ranging from high school through graduate school are encouraged to participate. Research posters, art work, oral presentations, and even performances are welcome. This is a really nice, positive, friendly event with interesting research and presentations. The students always do a good job! The Symposium will take place on **December 6, 2018** at the McKelvey Campus Center at Westminster College from **5:30 pm to 9:00 PM**. A networking and poster session will begin at 5:30 in the Witherspoon Rooms with oral presentations to begin at 7:00 in the Mueller Theater. New this year: The Student Symposium on the Environment is partnering with Westminster's Professional Development Center! Presenting students can submit resumes to be screened for environmental internships or job opportunities and they will have the opportunity to network with potential employers during the Symposium! If you are a student in an environmental field of study, you won't want to miss this excellent opportunity to potentially gain employment or an internship!

Call for participants is be available online at www.westminster/environment. Remember, oral presentations, poster presentations, and creative works are all welcome! Abstracts may now be submitted online. *The deadline to register is Wednesday, November 14, 2018.* For more information, email **Cliff Denholm** at cliff@streamrestorationinc.org or **Dr. Helen Boylan** at env@westminster.edu. If you are free that night, please come out and support the students!!! All are welcome to attend this very enjoyable evening!





The KIDS Catalyst

SLIPPERY ROCK WATERSHED COALITION FUN ACTIVITY



November Word Search

Fall starts to look more like winter... animals get ready to begin hibernation... we celebrate Thanksgiving... and are busy raking up leaves or maybe roasting marshmallows over a fire on a chilly evening! November brings lots of changes! Try to find all 20 November words hidden in the word search below. Circle them, and if you mail us your successfully completed paper, we'll send you a \$1 Amazon credit (through a parent's email address). Credits can be saved up over time so you can purchase something especially cool! Happy November!

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| November | pumpkin | leaves | pilgrims | football |
| autumn | scarecrow | veterans | indians | elections |
| apples | windy | Thanksgiving | Mayflower | acorns |
| corn | rake | feast | parades | turkey |

W	I	V	S	C	A	Q	U	E	N	M	A	B	E	L	I	D	E	T	U	K	P	T
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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. Nov. distribution: 250 copies

Westminster College Students to Present at November Meeting: **Come Join Us and Show Them Your Support!**

Westminster College students from the **Lawrence & Mercer Alliance for Aquatic Resource Monitoring (ALLARM)** program, under the direction of **Dr. Helen Boylan**, conducted a service learning sampling project at the Erico Bridge passive treatment system. On October 5th, the students made the trek to the site where **Wil Taylor** of **Jennings Environmental Education Center** and **Cliff Denholm** of **Stream Restoration Incorporated** provided a tour of the system and explanations of treating the mine water using passive treatment. Following the tour, the students collected samples from various locations from the treatment system. The students then took the samples back to Westminster College to perform a variety of laboratory water quality analyses.

The students will be presenting their findings at the November 8th SRWC meeting which will be held at the Jennings Environmental Education Center at 7PM. Unlike past years, this sampling event was not part of a class requirement, but was completed by students who have volunteered their time. We hope to see you there to support the students! Students participating include: **Jessica Grady, Andrew Kearny, Victoria Lisbon, Emma Pollock, and Erin Ward.**

