

THE CATALYST

SLIPPERY ROCK WATERSHED COALITION MONTHLY ACTIVITIES UPDATE

NEXT MEETING: 7 pm on 2/14/19 at Jennings Environmental Education Center, pizza and pop provided.
1/10/19 meeting attendance: C. Denholm, M. Dunn, B. Kuban, F. VanAtta

2018 Year in Review:

Working Together for a Healthier Watershed

Education/Outreach Activities

- Prairie Improvement Day, Jennings Environmental Education Center—1/20
- Cliff Denholm guest speaker on AMD at University of Pittsburgh — 2/19
- Cliff Denholm guest speaker at Hillview Intermediate School's Eco Club, Grove City — 3/28
- Hillview Trout release—4/26
- Wolf Creek water sampling with Slippery Rock University students — 5/1
- Service Learning Workshop, Slippery Rock University — 5/7-8
- EYECon Camp kayak excursion on Slippery Rock Creek — 6/19
- Celebrate the Bloom, Jennings Environmental Education Center—7/28
- Erico Bridge passive system water fieldtrip and water collection/analysis by Westminster College students — 10/5
- Westminster College water sampling analysis presentation at SRWC monthly meeting—11/8
- Student Symposium on the Environment, Westminster College—12/6
- Adopt-A-Highway Program, clean-up effort for Interstate 79 mile markers 100-101
- "Data loggers" volunteer training, volunteer monitoring of water quality data with CTD sondes

Conferences

- West Virginia Mine Drainage Task Force Symposium, Morgantown, WV — 3/27-28
- American Society of Mining and Reclamation Conference, St. Louis —6/3-6/7
- PA AMR Conference, State College – 6/20-21
- Mined Land Reforestation Conference, Indiana University of Pennsylvania — 8/8-9
- 13th Annual PA NW GIS Conference, Clarion University—10/18-19
- 4th Biennial Pennsylvania Botany Symposium, State College — 11/2-3

Recognition

- Mercer County Conservation District's Lifetime Achievement Award for Pioneers in Conservation to Dr. Fred Brenner

Restoration Projects

- Blacks Creek Restoration Plan approved

Check Us Out Any Time!!

If you'd like to learn more about what the Slippery Rock Watershed Coalition is all about, please join us at any one of our monthly meetings! The SRWC meets the second Thursday of every month at Jennings Environmental Education Center: 2951 Prospect Rd, Slippery Rock. Everyone is welcome to attend and join us for free pizza and pop! Meetings begin at 7 PM and generally include a review of recent watershed restoration efforts, ideas for new ventures and outreach, and previews of upcoming activities. We love meeting new people, so if you have an interest in the Slippery Rock Watershed, be sure to join us some Thursday evening soon!





New exhibits have opened at Jennings Environmental Education Center.

Prairie Improvement Day at Jennings

The nineteenth annual Prairie Improvement Day was held on Saturday, January 19th at Jennings Environmental Education Center. The Jennings staff was looking for individuals willing to spend a Saturday morning outdoors to help manage the unique prairie ecosystem, and were not disappointed by a full registration of eager participants ready to lend a hand! Volunteers pitched in from 9 AM to 1 PM, working under a clear blue sky and fresh crisp winter air — and were rewarded with plenty of warm, hearty lunchtime soup and a special commemorative soup mug as a special thank you.

The unique prairie ecosystem at Jennings was discovered in the 1900s but did not start to be protected until five decades later. Public involvement in its care through education/outreach efforts like the annual Prairie Improvement Day and Celebrate the Bloom (an annual summertime festival held in late July) provide a great hands-on opportunity to learn and appreciate many of the special qualities of this rare habitat. 225 native plant species were identified at the prairie habitat of Jennings in 1964. One of the most well-known of these is the Blazing Star, which can grow up to four feet high and features spectacular purple flower blooms on its stalk from top to bottom. In addition to the Blazing Star, the prairie is also home to the endangered massasauga rattlesnake, a small shy reptile. Only 4 of 19 historic populations of this snake still exist in PA, making it a critically imperiled endangered species. Most prairie maintenance is done during the winter months,

when the ground is frozen, as this is when the massasauga hibernates. Clearing brush (which volunteers did a lot of on January 19th!), carefully timed mowing, prescribed burning, and establishing prairie grasses, wildflowers, and native prairie plants are all done to help ensure the survival of the massasauga and its unique home. Fire enhances seed viability and helps reduce insect predators which could harm the Blazing Star. Controlling the propagation of tree seedlings is also always a key focus in prairie maintenance, as this is one of the greatest challenges to the prairie preservation. Be sure to visit the Jennings prairie (any season of the year!) and check out one of the lovely hiking trails winding through its beauty.





The KIDS Catalyst

SLIPPERY ROCK WATERSHED COALITION FUN ACTIVITY



Animal Babies

One of the fun things about the month of February is, of course, Valentine's Day — a day to show our love in special and fun ways to our families and friends. This month's activity is a tracing maze tied in to the love of mother animals for their animal babies. Many animal moms sacrifice sleep and food to care for their young, some in very amazing ways! The female octopus' mission is to have just one successful brood in her lifetime. She will lay roughly 200,000 eggs and do anything to protect them. During the month of caring for the eggs, the female octopus is starved nearly to death. She may even go as far as eating her own arms before she will leave her eggs for food! Once hatched, the offspring float around in blooms of plankton. The mother, too weak to defend herself at this point, often falls prey to predators. Talk about sacrifice! Follow the paths below to figure out the interesting baby name for each animal. Write the baby names in the correct boxes, and if you send us your completed paper we'll send you a \$1 Amazon credit by way of a parent email address. You can save up your credits to buy something extra fun! And have a Happy Valentine's Day!

kangaroo _____		kit
goat _____		spat
mosquito _____		joey
dove _____		squeaker
oyster _____		fry
fish _____		wiggler
skunk _____		kid

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. Feb. distribution: 250 copies

Who Saved Room for Pie?

Upcoming Annual Cherry Pike Hike is Feb. 23rd

Come enjoy a taste of history and a taste of pie at the same time! February 23rd is the day to dress warmly and come to Jennings Environmental Education Center for a special event which combines the annual "Cherry Pie Hike" and "Washington's Trail Hike." The February 23rd activities will commemorate George Washington's birthday and the Virginia Colony mission demanding French withdrawal from British territory that precipitated the French and Indian/Seven Years War. Participants in the 30-minute history hikes will learn explanations of Washington's 1753 mission and witness the musket shot that almost killed Washington at age 21. There will also be historical displays, and reenactors with clothing and equipment of the time period.

The day-long event will begin at 8:30 AM and end at 2:00 PM. It will also feature 45-minute winter nature walks led by Jennings' staff, and a 7-mile hike along a section of the North Country Trail where Washington may have traveled. For those interested in the 7-mile long hike, it will most likely last from 9:00 AM until approximately 1:00 PM, depending on hiking speed. This long hike will cover 7 miles from the boat launch located under the Route 528 bridge in Moraine State Park to Jennings. The long hike is recommended for ages 12 and up. The long hike is rated "moderate," and will traverse varied terrain, with some slopes and winter trail conditions (it is NOT suited for tennis shoes). Participants should park and meet under the 528 bridge to begin the hike. They may hike back or return via shuttle. Call 724-290-2129 if you have questions or are not able to register online (online registration is available at the DCNR Calendar of Events page, by clicking on Jennings Environmental Education Center).

Participants can choose one or more favorite hike options and enjoy a taste of cherry pie, courtesy of North Country Brewing Company. The event is free and open to the public, although a \$3 per person donation will be encouraged for participation in the guided hikes/walks. **Reservations are required for hikes and nature walks by February 21.** Carpooling is encouraged, because parking may be limited.

Many thanks to the generous sponsoring organizations: Butler Chapter of the North Country Trail Association, Washington's Trail - 1753, Harmony Museum, Butler County Tourism and Convention Bureau, and Jennings Environmental Education Center.