

THE CATALYST

SLIPPERY ROCK WATERSHED COALITION MONTHLY ACTIVITIES UPDATE

NEXT MEETING: TBD per COVID-19 regulations; tentatively planned for 7 PM on 6/10/2021 at Jennings Environmental Education Center. No pizza/pop; social distancing will be followed.
 5/13/21 meeting attendance: J. Belgraden, C. Denholm, M. Dunn, D. Johnson, B. Kuban, S. Smith, W. Taylor, F. VanAtta

2021 Fish-for-Free Days in Pennsylvania

The Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission has designated the annual Fish-for-Free Days for Sunday, May 30 and Sunday, July 4. Anyone, resident or non-resident, is eligible to fish without a fishing license or trout or Lake Erie permits. These days are great opportunities for families to try fishing for the first time. There are great opportunities for fishing in the Slippery Rock Creek Watershed. Some of our personal favorites are Slippery Rock Creek Gorge in McConnells Mill State Park and Lake Arthur. Or if you are up to a challenge, you can attempt to try to catch some naturally reproducing brown trout in Hell Run. Please remember that all other fishing regulations still apply!

For those without fishing equipment, the PFBC has developed a Fishing Tackle Loaner Program where you can borrow fishing equipment similar to the way you borrow a book from a library. For more information, please visit the PFBC website at <https://pfbc.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=eea001d1a15b49b9ae8375136b8c97ae>.



Guest Speaker at St. Luke Lutheran School

On April 13th, biologist Shaun Busler visited the 7th grade students at St. Luke Lutheran School to discuss abandoned mine drainage and the work of the Slippery Rock Watershed Coalition. Shaun, of Stream Restoration Incorporated, explained the history of AMD in Pennsylvania, the extent of the problems, and about active and passive treatment systems. The students were interested to learn about the colors of mine drainage. Some of them had seen an orange stream in the past but many had not, which is a testament for all the hard work that has been done over the last 25 years to clean up the problems. Shaun's presentation showed students photos of AMD-impacted water all over the world, then focused on the Slippery Rock Creek Watershed. He reviewed the basic design of a passive treatment system including a schematic of a Vertical Flow Pond, and showed how such systems successfully treat billions of gallons of water in the watershed each year. He shared information about the work of the Slippery Rock Watershed Coalition. The students enjoyed seeing samples of iron and manganese precipitates that were recovered from the passive treatment systems and learning about how they are used in glazes for pottery, ornaments, and other ceramic collectibles. Thank you Shaun, for taking time to visit St. Luke's and providing insight into real-life science work for the 7th graders!





Mouth of Slippery Rock Creek.

H.O.P.E. (Highlighting Others Partnership Efforts) **Wild Waterways Conservancy**

Over the years, Wild Waterways Conservancy (WWC) has been working to preserve unique ecological features in the Slippery Rock Creek and Connoquenessing Creek Watersheds. This all-volunteer, charitable land conservancy is devoted to working cooperatively with both private and public partners to conserve these resources and provide recreational opportunities.

Recently, the group has announced the acquisition of an additional parcel of land along the Connoquenessing Creek just upstream from Ellwood City off Country Club Drive. This 1.2 acre area was acquired through the generosity of the Connoquenessing Country Club. The property will be open to the public for fishing and other stream activity. Future plans include a canoe and kayak launch. The organization also acquired and opened an out and back walking trail from Park Gate to the Koppel Bridge, along the former Pittsburgh and Lake Erie rail grade, a distance of about 2 ½ miles round trip. This trail is maintained by local Ellwood City residents and provides walk-in access to the south side of the WWC Rock Point property. This corridor property adds about ten acres to WWC's other holdings around Rock Point, making a total area of approximately 135 acres open to the public. Although no other formal trails are maintained, the area below the old rail grade is a rich and biologically diverse creek bottom, well worth a visit for the spring wildflowers. On the Lawrence County side of Rock Point, the public is invited to explore the old amusement park site, now a mature hardwood forest, and enjoy warm season vehicular access to the mouth of Connoquenessing Creek. Please note that the Rock Point Boat Club launch is available to the general public for canoes and kayaks, but other use of the launch is limited to Boat Club members.

Deer hunting is permitted with permission on all WWC properties except Glacier Wetlands off Swope Road near Slippery Rock. No motorized vehicles are permitted on WWC trails. All users are requested to carry out their own trash and are asked to assist in keeping the properties clean.

Currently, WWC owns just over 500 acres in the watersheds, and, together with Allegheny Aquatic Alliance, provides numerous creek access points beginning north of the City of Butler to the mouth of the Creek at Rock Point. Connoquenessing Creek Natural Area, just north of Zelienolpe, also contains a network of hiking trails. More information is available on the website: wildwaterwaysconservancy.org.



The KIDS Catalyst

SLIPPERY ROCK WATERSHED COALITION FUN ACTIVITY



Identify That Fish

There are many different types of fish native to the Slippery Rock Creek Watershed. We are lucky to have some great game species of fish! Did you know that bass were not originally native in the eastern half of Pennsylvania in the Susquehanna and Delaware River basins? State and federal fish commissions widely stocked bass in other watersheds because they are so fun to catch.

If you successfully identify all of the fish, be sure to mail us your completed paper — because we will then send you a \$1 Amazon credit through a parent’s email address! Amazon credits can be saved up so you can buy yourself something really cool!







Choose from: Black Crappie, Bluegill, Largemouth Bass, Muskellunge, Pumpkinseed, Smallmouth Bass, Yellow Perch

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. May distribution: 240 copies