

# THE CATALYST

## SLIPPERY ROCK WATERSHED COALITION MONTHLY ACTIVITIES UPDATE

**NEXT MEETING:** TBD per COVID-19 regulations; tentatively planned for 7 PM on 1/14/22 at Jennings Environmental Education Center. Pizza/pop return; social distancing will be followed. December meeting was cancelled.

### 2021 Student Symposium On the Environment

The 2021 Student Symposium on the Environment was held on December 2nd and was once again hosted by Westminster College at the McKelvey Campus Center and co-organized with the Slippery Rock Watershed Coalition. The Symposium is an annual event providing students the opportunity to showcase their environmental projects, research, internships and artwork. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the 2021 symposium was a hybrid event consisting of both in-person poster and oral presentations as well as pre-recorded video presentations that became available for viewing on YouTube on November 29. Viewers, judges and students were encouraged to comment, interact, and explore the virtual presentations. You can still watch the videos on the Student Symposium on the Environment YouTube Channel by visiting: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCVpVYCi3UuF8PY2jbhNhLQ>

Nearly 100 students participated in the event, representing Allegheny College, Chatham University, Thiel College, University of Pittsburgh at Greensburg, Westminster College, and Youngstown State University. The presentations were broken into four categories: Environmental Project Posters, Environmental Research Presentation, Oral Presentation, and Photography, which was a new category this year. For each category a winner and honorable mention were selected by a team of judges and a Video Viewer's Choice Award was given based upon the number of views, likes, and comments.

The list of winners...

**Sara Schmidt** from **Allegheny College** won Best Environmental Project for "Regulations at Scale in Ecological Economics." **Claire Mock** from **Westminster College** earned an honorable mention in the Environmental Project category for her video and poster on "Rehabilitation of Western Pennsylvania Mitigated Wetlands" from work done during a summer internship with Dr. Robert Whyte of California University of Pennsylvania.

**Erin Garrett** from **Youngstown State University** won Best Research Presentation for "The Use of Benthic Macroinvertebrates to Assess Water Quality in Tributaries of The Mahoning River." Honorable mention went to a team of students from Westminster College including **Chris Dombrowski, Olivia Droese, Mark Eminhizer, Anna Grimenstein, James Gilbert** for their video and poster on "Reckless Behaviors in Blue-leg Hermit Crabs (*Clibanarius tricolor*) Increase with Exposure to Microplastics."

**Jennifer Sabol** from **Chatham University** won the Best Oral Presentation for her research "Exploring the potential for native shrub assemblage restoration in northeastern forests with high whitetail deer and invasive shrub." Honorable mention went to a team of students from Westminster college including **Ethan Brady, Trevor McCabe, Braden Minter, Sammie Parsons, and Tyler Sportelli**, for their presentation "Japanese Hops along the Little Neshannock Creek and the Effectiveness of Steam Treatments."

**Claire Mock** of **Westminster College** won the Best Photography category with her photograph "Caterpillar in Stream." Honorable mention went to **Bella Buettner of Westminster College.**, for "Where the Sky Meets the Ocean," and the photography Artistic Expression Award went to **Stacey Badman of Westminster College** for "Fungi."

The Video Viewer's Choice Award went to **Olivia Postlewait** from Thiel College for her research "Medicinal Uses for the Fungi of McKean County, Pennsylvania" which at the time of review had registered 335 views, 55 likes, and 18 comments.

Congratulations to the winners and all of the students for their hard work. We greatly appreciate their efforts as well as the judges who volunteered their time and all of those who came to support the students. Hopefully next year we will be able to resume a fully in-person symposium. The event is scheduled to be held on Thursday, Dec. 1, 2022, so mark it down on your calendars!



Westminster College students at their poster on the evening of the Student Symposium on the Environment, showcasing some of the school's sustainability programs. *Please see article on page 1.*

### Grove City College GIS Presentation

On Wednesday, November 10th, Shaun Busler presented to Dr. Darren Wood's GIS class at Grove City College (GCC). This semester is the first time a GIS class has been offered at GCC. Shaun is a biologist and a certified GIS Professional from BioMost, Inc., Stream Restoration Incorporated, and SRWC volunteer. GIS stands for Geographic Information Systems and has become an indispensable tool for biologists and others in nearly every industry. GIS uses software to produce a system of maps and databases that allows you to create, manage, and analyze geographic data.

Shaun was able to discuss how he uses GIS throughout his typical workday. GIS has made the creation of maps easier and more accurate in comparison to the hand drafted maps of the past. Shaun explained the different programs and tools that he uses on a regular basis to create permit maps and analyze project sites. The Slippery Rock Watershed Conservation Plan heavily relied on GIS to both analyze and visualize data from within the watershed. Shaun also spoke to the class about mining, reclamation, and abandoned mine drainage.

Shaun also shared his story of how he secured his job with Stream Restoration Incorporated and Bio-most. Thanks to the connections that Dr. Brenner, a former professor of GCC, had with the Slippery Rock Watershed Coalition, Shaun was able to conduct research on the effectiveness of the passive treatment system located at Jennings Environmental Education Center. Both Stream Restoration Incorporated and BioMost were involved in the construction of the system at Jennings. Shaun stressed the importance for students to take on an independent research project to gain real-world experience and set themselves apart from other college graduates.

While on campus, Shaun was also able to check on the conductivity data logger that is located in Wolf Creek. The data has been regularly downloaded by Dr. Wood and will be analyzed and uploaded to the SRWC website in the near future.





# The KIDS Catalyst

## SLIPPERY ROCK WATERSHED COALITION FUN ACTIVITY

### New Year's Word Search



Happy New Year to all of our young Catalyst readers out there! We wish you a new year full of good health and much happiness! Below are 16 New Year's words hidden in our word search. See if you can find each one! Circle the words and mail us back your completed paper. We will then send you a \$1 Amazon credit through a parent's email address! You can save your credits to buy something extra special! Happy 2022!

Countdown	Calendar	Happy	Music
Celebrate	January	Noisemaker	Hat
Fireworks	Midnight	Resolution	Balloons
Party	New Year	Games	Tradition

H	C	F	R	J	C	A	N	U	S	N	O	O	L	L	A	B	M	R	T
A	V	X	D	M	I	S	W	O	O	K	R	E	S	V	N	A	L	E	R
D	O	N	O	I	S	E	M	A	K	E	R	Y	U	H	E	R	W	S	A
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J	A	S	Z	Y	M	X	C	A	L	D	C	G	A	M	W	Q	U	L	H
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R	E	S	O	W	Q	U	B	E	S	H	U	J	V	E	W	S	F	X	J

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

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