

THE CATALYST

SLIPPERY ROCK WATERSHED COALITION MONTHLY ACTIVITIES UPDATE

NEXT MEETING: TBD per COVID-19 regulations; tentatively planned for 7 PM on 10/13/22 at Jennings Environmental Education Center. Pizza/pop return; social distancing will be followed.

Foltz School House Renovations and Grand Reopening Dedication

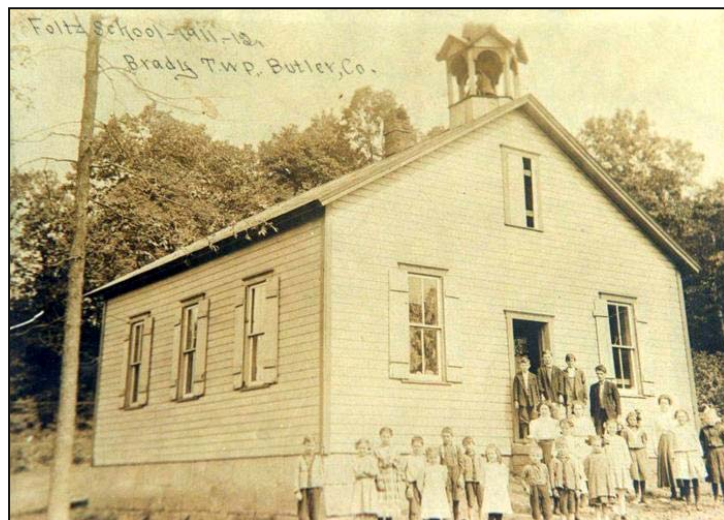
The Foltz school house, located in Slippery Rock, is under the control of Jennings Environmental Education Center. Located off of state Route 8 (William Flynn Highway) in Brady Township along the North Country National Scenic Trail, this historic structure is rich in culture and history. Foltz school was built in 1880 and was the third school built in this area. It was one of the early county controlled, township-based schools that would become known as one room school houses used to teach students in grades 1 through 8. It was one of the longest continually running one room schools in the state, closing in 1963. It was the last one room school to close in the state of Pennsylvania. The school was abandoned and fell into disrepair around 1967 and continually deteriorated until an initial stabilization project began in the year 2001. Interestingly, there are still alumni of the school living in the area. The school's rich history varied over its long timeframe and coexisted with the Brydon mine (1939-44), the mine site renovation in the 1970s under project Scarlift, and the passive treatment research and demonstration site work accomplished by Stream Restoration Incorporated that is still effective.

Local volunteers have been pitching in to help with school house renovations for the past several years. The Foltz school renovation project is a volunteer-based group working with DCNR's Jennings Environmental Education Center and the 3mjc (Moraine, McConnells ill and Jennings Commission), an independent parks all-volunteer friends group. The first Foltz school renovation project started in 2001 when Jennings acquired the school with a parcel of land intended to protect and manage the passive treatment system located on the property. Further renovation work occurred in 2006 when the building was stabilized and renovated as an historic feature shell with no interior. The current full restoration project was started in 2018 with the goal of completing the building's features and interior using all outside funding and volunteer labor. Many groups of helpers have lent a hand in the renovation work, including students at the Butler County Area Vocational Technical School. In the winter of 2020, woodworking and carpentry students prepared rough cut stock lumber to achieve tongue and groove pine that were used in the Foltz School restoration. The project has lasted five years and is near completion. Some grounds work and landscaping still remain to be completed next spring, but the building itself is ready to once again be a place of learning, to host groups of students and other guests.

A public dedication is planned for **Saturday, October 22**. This special event is invitees-only in the morning, but is *open to the public beginning at 12:30 PM*. There will be tours of the school house, North Country National Scenic Trail, and the Jennings passive treatment system. The school house doors will close at 2:30 PM on the 22nd. Visitors planning to join in this event should meet at the Center's classroom and can call the center at 724-794-6011 for more details.



A tree was once growing up through the wall of the school house (top), but renovations both outside and inside (bottom) have this historical building ready for learning once again!



Now and then... The Foltz school house was a fixture in the Slippery Rock area community for 83 years. This one room school house has undergone significant renovations and will be celebrated with a dedication on October 22. The public is welcome to attend afternoon festivities beginning at 12:30 PM.

Upcoming Fall Fun at Jennings Environmental Education Center

As the leaves change color and the air grows colder and crisper, many people enjoy venturing outdoors for some fall activities. There is plenty happening in October at Jennings Environmental Education Center, and we hope you'll considering a visit to enjoy one of the following:

Finding Ferns and Their Friends

Sunday, October 2, 2:00 PM (No registration required)

Ferns and their allies (other spore-bearing plants) are sometimes overlooked in favor of flashy flowers, but they are, in truth, an incredible example of resilience able to bounce back through difficult times. Explore these ancient life forms during a guided walk. There are many lessons to be learned from these plants that have survived and thrived throughout pre-history and into modern times. The trails followed are rated easy, but do consist of uneven ground and some steps.

Self-Guided Fall Foliage and Autumn Wonders Walkabout

October 8-16 (No registration required)

Experience the extraordinary transformations occurring in the fall forest community on this special, limited-time only Self-Guided Fall Foliage and Autumn Wonders Walkabout. From Saturday, October 8 through Sunday, October 16 during peak fall foliage color, visitors can pick up free guide and follow a designated route to discover the incredible abundance and activity of autumn. Trees are laden with nuts, birds migrate through skies of magnificent blue, and the forest is bathed in a spectacular display of color. More than just familiar signs of fall, these are actually critical changes taking place in preparation for the coming winter that visitors can see up close during this self-guided walk. No registration is required, but visitors wishing to receive the guide electronically may contact jenningsssp@pa.gov or call 724-794-6011. The printed guide and experience are available sunrise to sunset October 8-16 beginning at the Center entrance. The route contains some steps and uneven terrain, but is generally easy.

Bears!

Sunday, October 9 at 2:00 PM to 3:30 PM (No registration required)

Join Jennings staff for this indoor presentation highlighting the natural history of Pennsylvania's largest mammal, the black bear. This program is free and being held in the classroom / nature center.

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The KIDS Catalyst

SLIPPERY ROCK WATERSHED COALITION FUN ACTIVITY



Pathways to Recycling

You've probably been told it's important to recycle. But maybe you've never given much thought as to why. Did you know the average person in the United States makes 1700 pounds of garbage per year? Many people try to recycle what they can, but we can always do better. For example, not everyone realizes the thin cardboard which makes cereal boxes, boxes for crackers and cookies, etc. can be recycled. Americans recycle about 2 out of every 3 soda cans they use, but in the US only 30% of plastic bottles end up being recycled. It's much better to use a re-usable water bottle or thermos. Some materials decompose, or break down naturally, much quicker than others. This means some materials should be avoided when possible. The cool-looking maze of paths below will teach you how long it takes certain substances to decompose. You can guess your answers first, if you'd like to. Then trace each path to learn the correct answer. You can then write it inside each box on the line. If you'd like to mail us your completed paper when finished, we'll mail you a \$1 Amazon credit to a parent's email address!

Plastic bag _____		500 yrs.
Plastic bottle _____		450 yrs.
Disposable diaper _____		One million years
Newspaper _____		It will NEVER decompose
Styrofoam _____		20 years
Soda can _____		250 yrs.
Glass bottle _____		5 weeks

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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Upcoming Fall Fun at Jennings Environmental Education Center

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Fall Nature Detectives: The Mystery of the Changing Forest

Sunday, October 16

9 AM, 10 AM, 11 AM, 1 PM

Pre-Registration is required!

Change is all around us. Individual family groups and small “pods” are invited to become “nature detectives” as we investigate the Jennings forest to discover what changes are happening with plants and animals this time of year and why. Families/cooperative groups/“pods” can register for their own time slot. Time slots are available for one family/cooperative group/“pod” at a time (max 12 people/group).

Jennings’ Nature Detectives programs are designed for families with children age six and older, as well as anyone who is a kid at heart. Children should be accompanied by an adult. Pre-registration is done by clicking “Register” on the Jennings/DCNR web page or calling 724-794-6011 is required by Thursday, October 13 and space is limited. When registering, register a responsible adult, and provide names for participants and ages for children in the “Additional Info We Should Know” section.

And looking ahead to winter...

Did you know cross-country skiing and snowshoeing are also popular activities at Jennings? All trails north of PA 528 (prairie side) are recommended for cross-country skiing, which is a great way to stay fit during the winter months. Most agree cross-country skiing is easy to learn, with the original version of the sport involving a straight-line stride. The stride itself is called either a “diagonal stride” or “kick and glide.” But if cross-country skiing intimidates you, snowshoeing is also popular at Jennings. Snowshoes are available to borrow Monday through Saturday when there is adequate snow cover. The idea of snowshoes is to increase traction when moving through snow, with the special oversized shoes designed with a large footprint to spread the user's weight out and allow them to travel largely on top of, rather than through, snow. Adjustable bindings attach snowshoes to appropriate winter footwear, and can be combined with adjustable poles to increase traction even more.