

THE CATALYST

SLIPPERY ROCK WATERSHED COALITION MONTHLY ACTIVITIES UPDATE

NEXT MEETING: Tentatively planned for 7 PM on 1/12/23 at Jennings Environmental Education Center. Pizza/pop return. December meeting cancelled.

Westminster Students Present Data Findings from De Sale Excursion

Nov. 10, 2022. A projector buzzed as images of students knee-deep in vegetation and at the edges of orange-tinged water flashed across a large screen. A nervous excitement permeated the air as a group of undergraduate students from Westminster College made their way to the front of the meeting room at Jennings Environmental Education Center in Slippery Rock, PA.

Dressed in their business casual finest and surrounded by nature displays and images from across the Western Pennsylvania region, the young adults lined up across the front of the room to face a group of representatives from the Slippery Rock Watershed Coalition. Their mission - to present findings from a semester-long Environmental Analysis class project. The class, and project, were led by **Dr. Helen Boylan**, professor, and director of the Center for the Environment at Westminster College. The project started with a field sampling excursion led by **Boylan, Wil Taylor**, park manager of Jennings Environmental Education Center, and **Cliff Denholm**, senior environmental scientist from BioMost Inc. and representative for the nonprofit Stream Restoration Incorporated (SRI). Also in attendance was **Krista White**, Slippery Rock University Graduate Student and SRI intern.

The project's purpose was to sample and test the water quality from the De Sale site in Venango Township, and to determine if the current site's water treatment systems were still in functioning order. The site houses a forebay, vertical flow ponds, a settling pond/wetland complex, and a horizontal flow limestone bed. The students used the collected water samples in their school lab to identify iron, manganese, aluminum, and PH levels. The presentation allowed the students to talk about their experience from field to lab. Presenting in a panel-style discussion, each student took turns highlighting areas of learning. Areas highlighted included: a background in Acid Mine Drainage (AMD) and its impact across the state, an understanding of the type of AMD passive treatments located on the site, field data and lab data findings from the water samples taken at the site, and what type of lab processes used for individual tests.

After the presentation, students fielded questions from the audience, which ranged from an interest in a fluorescence spectroscopy test that was utilized in the lab to results on how the students felt the experience fits into their future career goals. **Matthew Kane**, environmental science sophomore at Westminster, said that the fieldwork was fun and that he realized how much teamwork is involved in field and lab work. "Doing the labs and this exercise builds on the knowledge and experience that you can push forward into a career, future class, or even to help someone else complete a project," he said. Kane added that the presentation experience gave him insight into how future oral presentations may go for him and that he appreciated the experience.

Students also presented their findings at Westminster College's 2022 Student Symposium on the Environment on Dec. 1st

(See photos). Look for an upcoming Student Symposium article in the January *Catalyst* issue!



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Environmental Analysis students from Westminster College presented their semester findings at Jennings Environmental Education Center on November 10 at the monthly meeting of the Slippery Rock Watershed Coalition (see article, page 1).

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SRI Takes on Fall Semester Intern

Krista White started as an intern with Stream Restoration Incorporated in August. White is a graduate student at Slippery Rock University (SRU) working on her second master's degree in Environmental Education. She also has an M.S. in Park and Resource Management from SRU. White comes to SRI with a journalism and nonprofit background. She worked as an education funding writer and editor for over 13 years and has written in other genres for nationwide newsletters, newspapers, blogs, and online magazines. Her undergraduate degree in English is from the University of North Carolina Wilmington.

Following her true passion – to work in environmental conservation – White began her graduate school journey at SRU to help merge her knowledge in communications with a strong background in environmental issues. “I see a strong need to build better bridges of understanding between what is happening in the fields of science and what the layperson understands,” she said. “I hope to understand how to make those gaps in knowledge smaller through the work I take on.”

White also served as an intern for the Shenango River Watchers, a nonprofit working to restore and protect the environmental, scenic, and recreational attributes of the Shenango River Watershed. During her time there, she helped find grant opportunities and write grant proposals, created a yearly grant calendar for the organization, spearheaded the beginning development of the organization's five-year strategic plan, wrote content for the organization's website, and created and implemented a macroinvertebrate curriculum geared toward middle school students.

Before joining SRI, she also served as a Land Management Intern at The Villa Farm, a 759-acre organic farm owned by the Sisters of the Humility of Mary. While there, White learned about sustainable agriculture methods and environmental systems. This hands-on experience allowed her to get involved with routine farm tasks, help with soil management and preparation, understand crop production from beginning to end, maintain trails on the land, and even drive tractors! In addition, White worked with visiting school and camp groups to provide farm-based environmental education.

“My time at SRI has made me realize how easy it is for people to live with a huge environmental issue right in their backyards and not even realize the magnitude of the problem,” said White. “All these silent heroes are here doing amazing things to help keep our environment safe and free of pollutants. It has become my mission to build community awareness about environmental issues and how people can become advocates for their own outdoor spaces.”





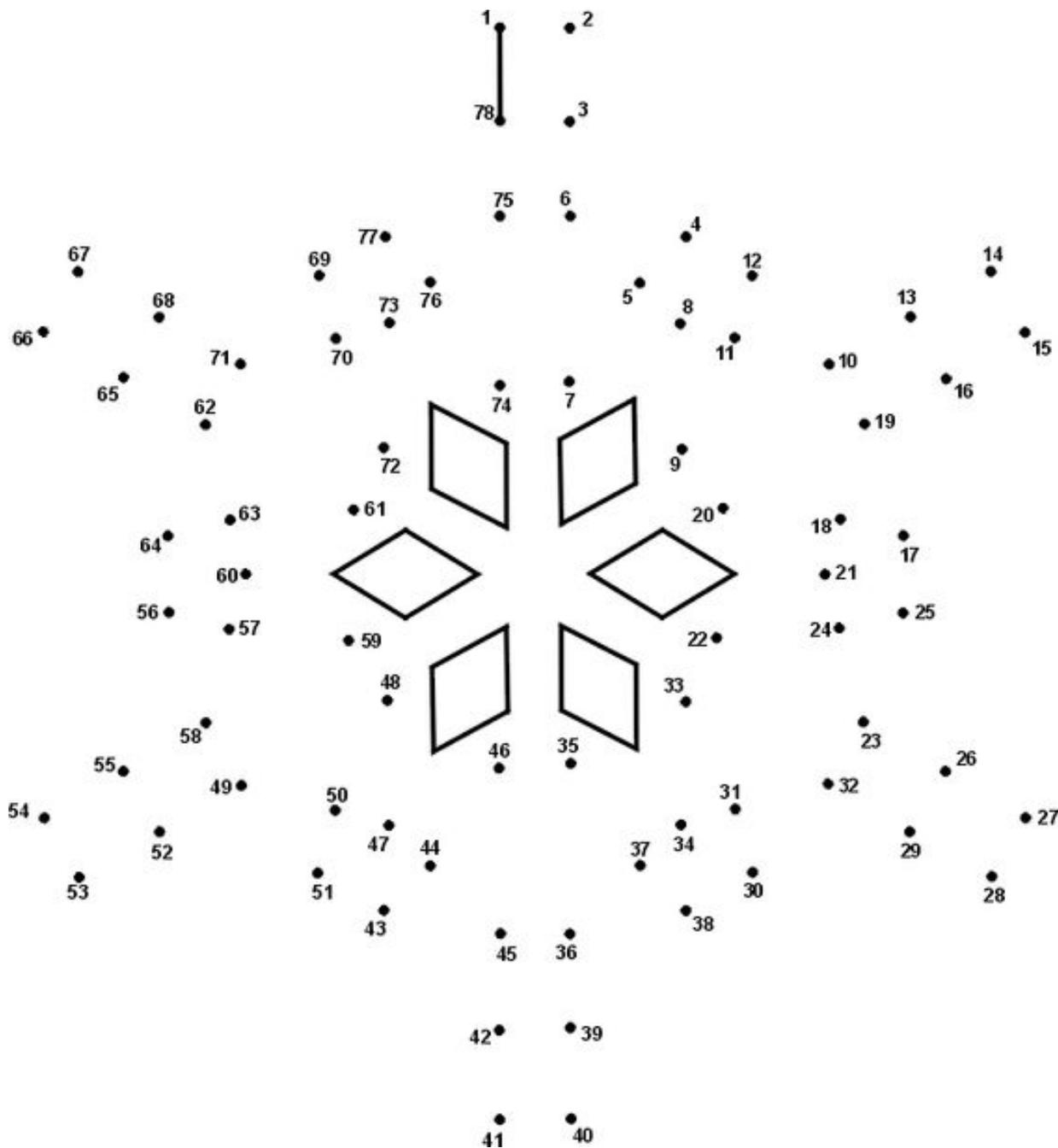
The KIDS Catalyst

SLIPPERY ROCK WATERSHED COALITION FUN ACTIVITY



Connect-the-Dots: Snowflake Fun!

Snowflakes are amazing! You probably have heard it said that no two snowflakes are alike, and this is true! It's because each snowflake follows its own unique path as it falls to the ground, and different factors affect it. Water droplets need something to freeze around, and usually this is dust in the air, but it can also be pollen. Scientists have created identical snowflakes in a laboratory, but that isn't quite the same as it happening naturally. Most snowflakes are 6-sided and have 6 points, but there are other types of snowflakes that look more like needles, bullets, or columns. The world record for largest snowflake was 15 inches wide and fell in 1887 in Montana! Have you ever noticed it's quieter when it snows? That's because snow absorbs sound! Pretty cool! Try the connect-the-dots below to create a snowflake! It could be a fun winter decoration. If you send us your completed paper, we'll send you a \$1 Amazon credit, through a parent's email. You can save your credits to buy something extra special!



Name _____ Age ____ Parent email address: _____



Slippery Rock Watershed Coalition c/o Stream Restoration Incorporated
A PA Non-Profit Organization
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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. Dec. distribution: 240 copies