

THE CATALYST

SLIPPERY ROCK WATERSHED COALITION MONTHLY ACTIVITIES UPDATE

NEXT MEETINGS: Tentatively planned for 7 PM on 4/13/23 at Jennings Environmental Education Center. Pizza/pop provided. 3/9/23 attendance: J. Belgraden, C. Denholm, M. Dunn, D. Johnson, S. Smith, W. Taylor, S. VanDerWal

Busy Beavers at Jennings!

If you visit Jennings Environmental Education Center in Slippery Rock this month, you just might be lucky enough to spot a beaver or two! The resident beavers have been very “busy” living up to their name descriptor, and it’s very easy to see fun beaver evidence even if you don’t see any of the beavers themselves. Beavers moved into a small valley near a common hiking trail at Jennings around 15 years ago and created the upstream wetland area that has remained since then. This productive wetland habitat has been very beneficial to many other mammals, fish, reptiles, amphibians, and birds.



Beavers have come and gone from the little valley over the past 15 years, most likely due to food supply. The current beavers have been here since late last summer/early fall and have been very active building a large lodge and several dams, some of which are downstream on private property. Their activity has created some flooding on the trails and necessitated the closure of parts of trail at times. Visiting hikers will notice humorous beaver “warning” signage, as the furry rodents can cause trails to flood and water levels deeper than normal. Staff at Jennings are trying to work with the beavers by installing leveling pipes in an effort to maintain the water at a level that is deep enough for the beavers but also keeps the trails dry. Beavers need a pond deep enough to allow underwater access to their lodge and food stored under the water with room for the beavers to travel beneath any ice in winter. Beavers are very determined, so it takes constant adjustments on the part of maintenance staff to try to stay ahead of them. Staff have also protected some of the bigger trees that are valuable to the park, such as food sources for other wildlife, with protective wire fencing to prevent the beavers from chewing them down.



Catalyst writer Melissa Busler and her daughter were lucky enough to spot 4 beavers in early March while hiking in the valley. They were most likely a pair of adults, who mate for life, and two of last year’s kits who are now sub-adults. The sub-adults will stay with their parents for two years and help care for any new kits born this April or May. Visitors to Jennings might notice trail cameras have been set up to monitor beaver activity. Just how active are beavers? Beavers are one of only a few animal species that manipulate their surroundings to stay safe and warm. They fell trees by gnawing through them, then they carry or push the limbs to the water to float them to build their dam. They use their front paws to gather stones to reinforce the dam. Silt and grass from the pond’s bottom or the stream are used to cement the dam in place. The whole beaver family helps build the home, called a lodge, and the dam that allows water to be deep enough for the beavers to enter the lodge from underwater. Having their home in the middle of the pond helps keep them safe. Lodges have both eating and nesting chambers. Beavers are amazing creatures!



Beavers are busy this time of year at Jennings Environmental Education Center! If you're very quiet and patient you just might get to see a few of these furry rodents in action!

H.O.P.E.
(Highlighting Others Partnership Efforts)

AWARE Open House and Trash Cleanup

The Aultmans Watershed Association for Restoring the Environment (AWARE) was founded in February 2000 by concerned citizens from the area in and around the Aultman Run Watershed, located in Indiana County, to address the problem of abandoned mine discharges into waterways and groundwater in the watershed. The Association is involved in projects which will benefit the watershed and preserve its natural and cultural heritage, including trash cleanups, hiking/biking trails, and other projects for recreational development and historic site preservation.

About 80 people attended a fun, free AWARE Open House event featuring a social history of McIntyre by Susan Ferrandiz, historian and granddaughter of McIntyre coal miner, Pietro Arduini. Her presentation highlighted photos, documents and residents' memories. McIntyre was a company town of the Rochester & Pittsburgh Coal Company. The AWARE Open House included information about past and future projects in the watershed including a new rail-trail and coal refuse removal project, improvements to the Neal Run Passive Treatment System, State Game Lands 332 Projects, and the recovery of Aultmans Run. The Open House was hosted at the Coal Run-McIntyre Volunteer Fire Department.

AWARE is organizing a trash pickup at Reeds Run Restoration Area on **Saturday, April 29th from 10 AM to 2 PM**. All help will be greatly appreciated! The previous trash pickups held last year at Reeds Run were a great success, with close to half of the site's trash removed and almost all of the tires picked up as well. Trash has likely been accumulating at this old mine site for the last 40 years. An estimated 5,000 pounds of trash and 550 tires were collected at the site, filling an entire roll off dumpster! Most of the tires were recycled. The meeting location is at the main gate of the site on Locust Road near the town of Aultman. Gloves, trash bags, water, pizza, and snacks will be provided! Please contact Ben Busler at buslerbenjamin@gmail.com for more information.

Spread the word to anyone who might like to join in and help clean up Reeds Run!



The KIDS Catalyst

SLIPPERY ROCK WATERSHED COALITION FUN ACTIVITY



Busy Beaver Fun Facts Decoder

Beavers are really cool animals, and this month we're going to teach you some amazing facts and trivia about them! To find the answers to our beaver questions, you need to use the key code of symbols at the top. We also have included a cute beaver picture for you to color! If you mail us your completed paper, we'll send you a \$1 Amazon credit through a parent's email. Credits can be saved to buy something extra special!

! = 1	& = 2	+ = 3	# = 4	% = 5
? = 6	x = 7	o = 8	\$ = 9	> = 0

- How many minutes can beavers stay underwater? $\frac{\quad}{!} \frac{\quad}{\%}$
- Beavers live for about how many years in the wild? $\frac{\quad}{!} \frac{\quad}{\&}$
- Beaver lodges vary in size, but most are at least $\frac{\quad}{o}$ feet tall.
- Beaver babies are called kits, and usually $\frac{\quad}{\&}$ to $\frac{\quad}{\#}$ are born at once.

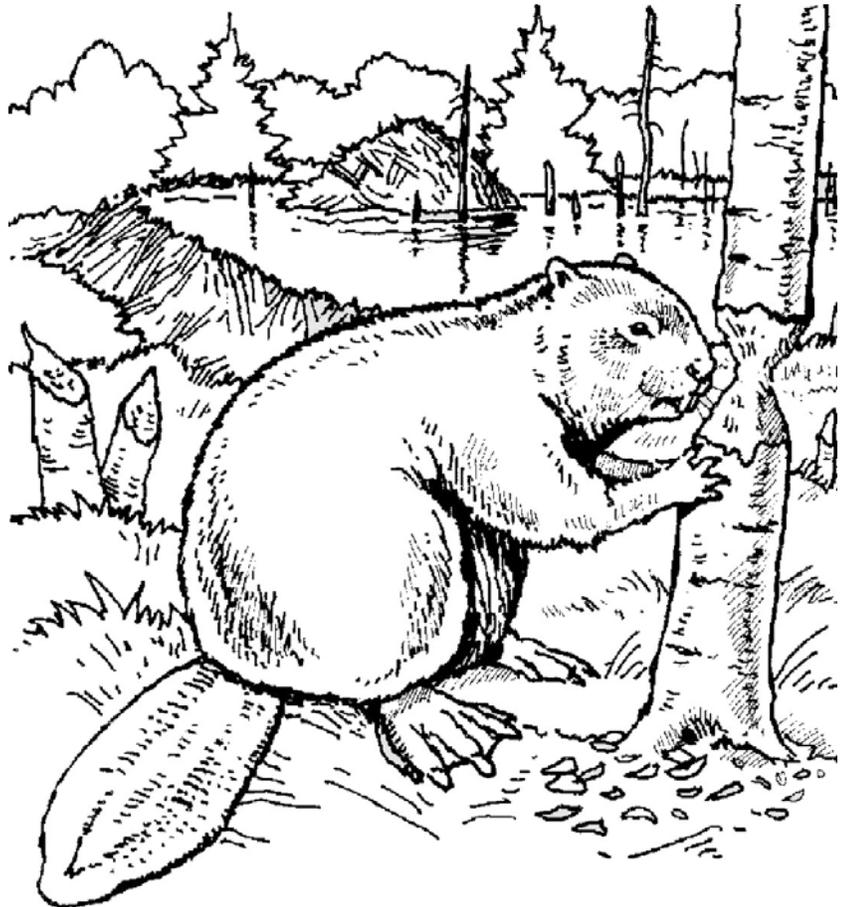
5. Beavers have been known to build an entire watertight dam in less than $\frac{\quad}{\&} \frac{\quad}{\#}$ hours.

6. Usually $\frac{\quad}{?}$ to $\frac{\quad}{x}$ beavers will live together in the same lodge.

7. Beavers eat about $\frac{\quad}{!}$ and a half pounds of wood per day.

8. The largest beaver on record weighed $\frac{\quad}{!} \frac{\quad}{!} \frac{\quad}{>}$ pounds! He was caught

in Wisconsin in the year 1921.



Name _____ Age ____ Parent email address: _____



Slippery Rock Watershed Coalition c/o Stream Restoration Incorporated
A PA Non-Profit Organization
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