

THE CATALYST

SLIPPERY ROCK WATERSHED COALITION MONTHLY ACTIVITIES UPDATE

NEXT MEETING: Tentatively planned for 7 PM on 9/14/23 at Jennings Environmental Education Center. Pizza/pop provided. 8/10/23 attendance: J. Belgraden, C. Denholm, M. Dunn, D. Johnson, S. Smith, A. Taylor, W. Taylor, S. VanDerWal

Celebrate the Bloom 2023 (in the rain)

The forecast was ominous – significant rain that could be accompanied by high winds, hail, and lightning. Planning for Celebrate the Bloom begins many months before the event and the potential for rain is always considered and emergency contingency plans are developed – however, it never seems to “get real” until that forecast is staring you in the face a week before the event and decisions that affect people’s health and safety must be made.

It is said that adversity generates innovation being forced to look critically at an issue and determine if the most efficient, safe, and enjoyable approach to that situation is being considered and implemented. This continually keeps projects and events fresh and relevant. For example, Celebrate the Bloom occurs in late July and features guided walks on the open, treeless prairie habitat. Excessive heat was becoming more of an issue – to address it, in 2022 the festival implemented cooling stations - misting fans, water, hand fans and umbrellas are now strategically located throughout the festival. With storms looming for Celebrate the Bloom 2023, the planning team once again needed to look creatively at an issue. Emergency plans were dusted off, critically examined, and shared. Solutions for keeping vendors relatively safe and dry were proposed – such as allowing vendors to operate out of their cars. This required a significant change to the festival layout, but ultimately ended up working quite well by freeing up valuable parking spaces and reducing set up and tear down chaos. Innovation was generated!



The rains came. A few vendors and musical acts cancelled. Festival set up was delayed for an hour and was ultimately quite soggy, but thankfully, there were no dangerous conditions. The rains let up by 10:00 a.m. and by early afternoon the sun came out and people came to see the prairie, listen to music, and visit the vendors. With more rain predicted in

the afternoon, the attendance ended up being about half of what was normally expected, but those that came had a thoroughly enjoyable experience and the prairie flowers did not disappoint. The day featured: a morning bird walk with the Bartramian Audubon Society; Eastern Massasauga walk with Western Pennsylvania Conservancy; State Parks Resource Management Initiative with PA DCNR Resource Management Division, Wildflower Identification and Prairie Pollinators with Jennings educators; Prairie management with Jennings goats (and manager). PA Forest District 8 brought and demonstrated their brush truck and other fire equipment. Fresh baked goods from Anna’s and Cookies by Rene, and fresh salads from Georgetown Eats were enjoyed by many. A variety of vendors, including Kellar Farms Nursery, had beautiful plants for sale and live music added to the festive atmosphere throughout the day.



Despite the forecast and regular rain, Celebrate the Bloom 2023 turned out to be quite successful. Many people stepped up to help and we appreciate the vendors and visitors that stuck with us! At Jennings we are continually touched by the interest our community has in celebrating our unique habitats. Celebrate the Bloom 2024 will only benefit from the challenges faced in 2023 and will be better than ever!



Spur Excavation, LLC removed all of the iron precipitate that had accumulated within the aerobic wetlands and placed in a newly constructed sludge pond.

Slippery Rock Passive Systems Receive Rehab

Some of the earliest passive treatment systems installed by the SRWC and its partnering organizations were constructed on Pennsylvania State Gamelands #95. Due to its location in Butler County and close proximity to the Greater Pittsburgh area, this is a heavily used Gameland property. In addition, the North Country Trail travels by or through six of these treatment systems. The SRWC has 10 passive systems that not only are collectively neutralizing 400,000 pounds of acidity per year and removing nearly 200,000 pounds of metals per year, but they range in age from 21 to 28 years old! Some rehabilitation was in order!

The SR114B and SR114D passive systems, located in the Slippery Rock Creek Watershed, were constructed in 1995 and are now 28 years old. Both systems have required very little maintenance during this time and are utilized as prime examples of the benefits of Anoxic Limestone Drain (ALD) technology when used for the proper water quality. System B was experiencing problems as flow rates from the ALD had significantly decreased over the years, an indication of plugging, compromised piping, or other issues and needed to be replaced. The System D system ALD was still producing net-alkaline water after 23 years; however, the area where it is located was dramatically sunken, indicating significant limestone dissolution. Construction began this spring. Because it was uncertain as to when it would cease to function, a conceptual design was developed where, for the B system, the ALD was replaced and increased to 500 tons of limestone. Sludge from the settling pond was removed and the pond was expanded. For the D system rehabilitation, the ALD was also replaced and increased to 1500 tons of limestone. Increasing the limestone in both ALDs is expected to increase the alkalinity production which will benefit Slippery Rock Creek. Iron and organic matter from all of the settling ponds and wetland were removed and placed in a sludge pond that was constructed next to the system as part of the rehab and improvements.

This rehabilitation was made possible through a PA DEP Growing Greener grant and funding from the US Office of Surface Mining, Reclamation and Enforcement (OSM) Watershed Cooperative Agreement Program (WCAP) and the Foundation for Pennsylvania Watersheds. With these much-needed improvements, we look forward to monitoring the systems for success in treating degraded water impacted by abandoned mine drainage.



The KIDS Catalyst

SLIPPERY ROCK WATERSHED COALITION FUN ACTIVITY



Insects Word Search

August is a special time in Pennsylvania (and other places!) for the sound of insects. On most August evenings, you can hear crickets, grasshoppers, cicadas, katydids, and more. You'll also likely see plenty of monarch and swallowtail butterflies fluttering around, searching for flowers. There are over 900,000 different kinds of insects currently known to us! Amazing! We chose 16 for this month's word search. They are hidden below vertically, horizontally, diagonally, and backwards. If you find all 16, be sure to 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!

Cricket
Grasshopper
Cicada
Katydid

Firefly
Praying mantis
Ant
Monarch

Dragonfly
Mosquito
Swallowtail
Bumblebee

Yellowjacket
Earwig
Lady beetle
Wasp

E	A	K	A	T	M	O	N	R	C	J	H	D	G	O	N	F	Y	L	O	W	S
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D	R	A	G	O	N	F	L	Y	C	I	P	E	M	G	S	R	T	F	O	U	A
P	U	J	V	C	H	U	F	I	R	D	G	O	Y	E	L	L	G	T	H	M	Y
C	R	I	S	I	T	N	A	M	G	N	I	Y	A	R	P	K	C	E	T	B	V
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Name _____ Age ____ Parent email address: _____



Slippery Rock Watershed Coalition c/o Stream Restoration Incorporated
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