

# THE CATALYST

## SLIPPERY ROCK WATERSHED COALITION MONTHLY ACTIVITIES UPDATE

**NEXT MEETING:** February 8, 2024, at 7 pm at Jennings Environmental Education Center. New faces are always welcome! Free pizza and pop provided! 1/11/2024 meeting attendance: C. Denholm, M. Dunn, D. Johnson, N. Lamagna, W. Taylor

### 16<sup>th</sup> Annual Student Symposium on the Environment

The 2023 Student Symposium on the Environment was hosted at Westminster College's McKelvey Campus Center on December 7<sup>th</sup> and drew in over 130 attendees. Each year, this symposium showcases the incredible research, internships, projects, service work, and artwork completed by students from several regional schools. A total of 74 projects were presented by students from six colleges and universities, including Westminster College, Saint Vincent College, Chatham University, Indiana University of Pennsylvania, Thiel College, and University of Pittsburgh at Greensburg, as well as from four high schools, Butler Senior HS, Central Valley HS, Wilmington Area HS, and Neshannock HS. As always, an impressive variety of topics were presented, including, but not limited to: pollution impacts on wildlife, behavioral/population changes of local PA species, and microbial influences on the environment.

Winners were celebrated across seven major categories: Environmental Project Posters, Environmental Research Posters, Oral Presentations, High School Presentations, Painting, Photography, and Creative Works, and were awarded cash prizes sponsored by BioMost, Inc. and Stream Restoration Inc.

This year's winners and honorable mentions were:

**Environmental Project Winner:** "Alaskan Fisheries Internship" by Bridgette Gorg, Saint Vincent College

**Environmental Project Honorable Mention:** "DIY Raman Spectrophotometer" by Zachary Burghgraef, Eilian Ascencio, Charles Moller, and Lucas Whitcomb, Westminster College

**Environmental Research Poster Winner:** "Utilization of under-road culverts by wildlife in riparian corridors" by Noah Gray, Westminster College

**Environmental Research Poster Honorable Mention:** "Variation in offspring sex ratio in American kestrels (*Falco sparverious*)" by Aislinn Andrews, Westminster College

**Oral Presentation Winner:** "Are deer exclosures really doing any good? Exploring native plant abundance and the legacy of white-tailed deer overbrowsing" by Gillian Revenis, Chatham University

**Oral Presentation Honorable Mention:** "It's an acquired taste: Annotation, phylogeny, and expression of gustatory receptors in *Culex quinquefasciatus* provides insight to mosquito host preference" by Sarah A. Parker, Chatham University

**High School Presentation:** "Advanced Scientific Research Student Projects - Works in Progress" by Mr. Chris Cassano's Advanced Scientific Research Students: Paige Buckwalter, Colin Hill, Ellie Cullen, Linnea Funari, Emily Fuchs, Ellie Postema, Casey Lukacs, Sonya Merz, and William Huff, Wilmington Area School District

**High School Presentation Honorable Mention:** "Integrating Place-Based Education into the Classroom Through Bird By Bird" by Sarah Maloney, Neshannock High School

**Photography:** "Historic Kijik Village as Viewed from Floatplane" by Bridgette Gorg, Saint Vincent College

**Photography Honorable Mention:** "Busy Bee" by Amelia Lenz, Neshannock High School

**Painting:** "Lazarus Species: Costa Rica Golden Toads" by Joshua Glaser, Westminster College

**Painting Honorable Mention:** "Field Guide: Cantharellus" by Hannah Piccirilli, Westminster College

**Creative Works:** "The Words of Westminster" by Amelia Mason, Kathryn Rankin, and Aaron Snyder, Westminster College

**Creative Works Honorable Mention:** "Ingesting Toxins" by Olivia Hodil, Kevin Wright, Connor Hutchison, Westminster College

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A group photo of several of the student winners and honorable mentions in the 2023 Student Symposium on the Environment (see front page article)

**...16<sup>th</sup> Annual Student Symposium on the Environment (cont'd from page 1)**

The new logo for the Student Symposium on the Environment was updated for this year's event (**pictured on the right**) and was designed and presented by Hannah Plowman, a junior Strategic Communications and Social Media major at Westminster College. Additional photos are available at: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/westminstercollege/albums/72177720313230681/with/53383247961>



Congratulations to the winners and to all the students for their remarkable work. Their hard work is recognized and appreciated. We also extend our appreciation to the judges for volunteering their time, to Westminster College for hosting the event, and to all the attendees who came out to support the students' work. The Slippery Rock Watershed Coalition was happy to have once again been involved as a co-host for this amazing event. Next year's symposium is already scheduled to be held on Thursday, December 5<sup>th</sup>, 2024, so save the date.

**Annual Cherry Pie Hike Set for February 25**

Join the Butler County Chapter of the North Country Trail Association for their 20th Annual Washington Cherry Pie Hike on February 25 from 9 AM to 2 PM at Jennings Environmental Education Center near Slippery Rock. Participants can take a 7-mile hike on the North Country Trail or choose between two nature walks in the state park or six history hikes. Come on out to meet George Washington or history authors Jason Cherry and Brady Crytzer, visit with French and Indian War reenactors, and of course eat some delicious cherry pie! Please note that reservations are required and there is a suggested cash donation of \$3 to help offset costs. The long hike starts at 9 AM under the 528 bridge. Dress for weather, wear sturdy shoes or boots, as hikers may encounter muddy trail conditions, and bring water. To get more detailed information and to reserve a spot please visit

[https://events.dcnr.pa.gov/jennings\\_environmental\\_education\\_center/calendar/day/2023/2/25](https://events.dcnr.pa.gov/jennings_environmental_education_center/calendar/day/2023/2/25)



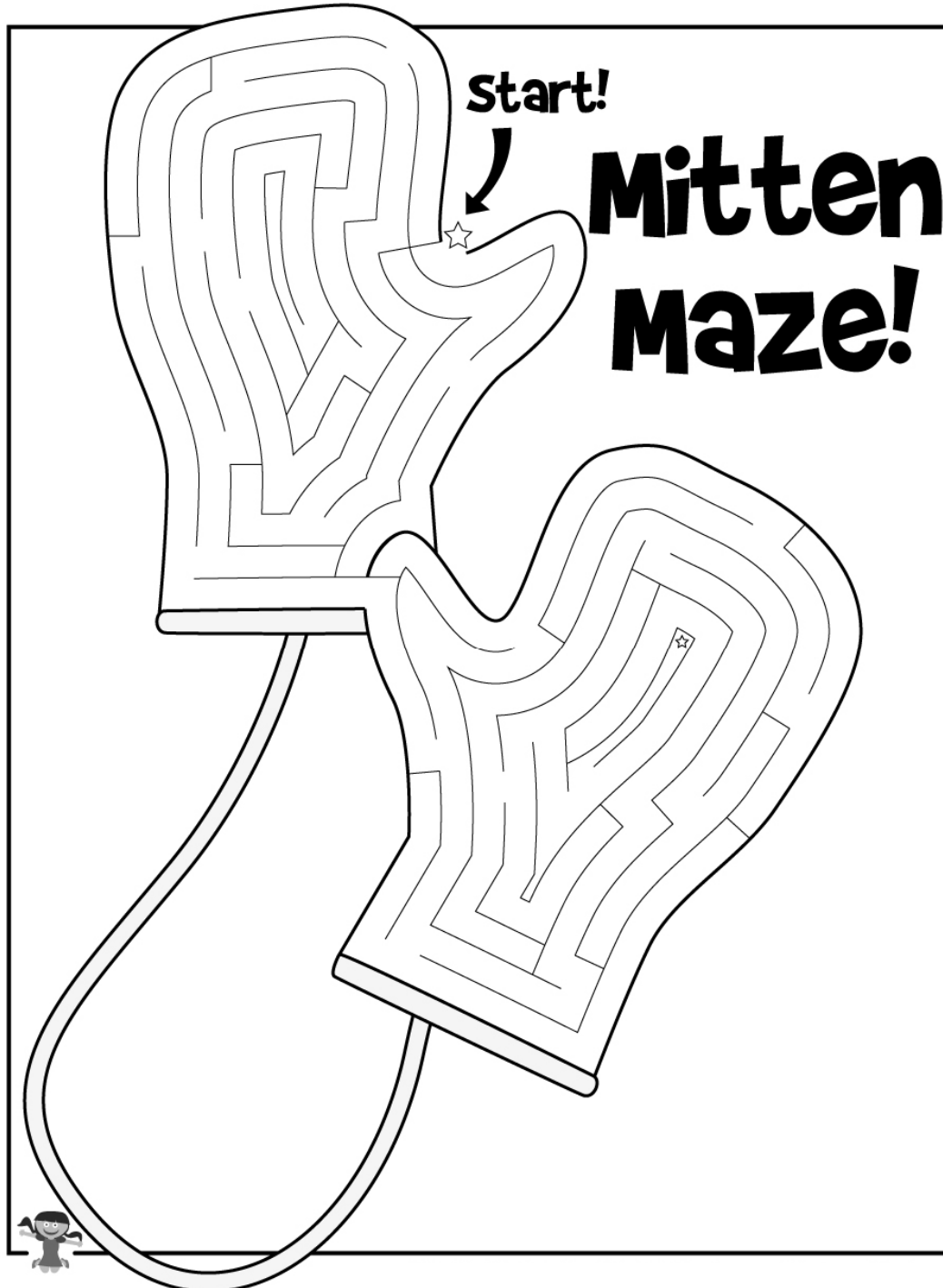
# The KIDS Catalyst

SLIPPERY ROCK WATERSHED COALITION FUN ACTIVITY



## Mitten Maze

January is the coldest month of the year where we are based in western Pennsylvania. It's hard to believe, but the coldest temperature ever recorded in the state of PA was  $-42$  degrees Fahrenheit on January 5 in the year 1904 in the town of Smethport, which is in McKean County. January is definitely a month to wear your hat, gloves, and winter coat! This month we have a fun mitten maze for you to try. Begin at the star at Start, and wind your way through some twists and turns to hopefully reach the small star near the middle of the mitten on the right. If you send us your completed maze, we'll send you a \$1 Amazon credit through a parent's email. You can save up credits to shop for something extra special. Stay warm!



Name \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_ Parent email address: \_\_\_\_\_



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