



P.O. Box 1071
Mt. Pleasant, PA 15666

From the Ridge to the River



Summer 2011

JCWA educates over 1,000 youth with outreach programs



JCWA helps Southmoreland students search for macroinvertebrates in Stauffer Run

May was a busy and exciting month for JCWA as we educated over 1,000 youth through our outreach programs. Outreach is important to JCWA because it gives the watershed association a chance to show people the wonderful resources we have in our watershed and also lets them know what meaningful projects we are completing. Educating youth about our environment is a priority for JCWA, as the following events will show.

Southmoreland 9th Graders Learn about Water Quality:

In an effort to illustrate the effects of acid mine drainage and urban runoff on local streams, JCWA helped students of Southmoreland teacher Lindsay DiCasolo's ninth grade Earth and space science classes to compare the water quality of two streams in the Jacobs Creek Watershed. JCWA members helped students assess the water chemistry, macroinvertebrate communities and physical parameters of Stauffer Run, an urban, channelized stream heavily impacted by acid mine drainage, to those of Greenlick Run, a forested stream with intact natural stream banks. Students found dramatic differences in the biological characteristics of the two streams, noting an abundance of mayfly,

stonefly and caddisfly nymphs in Greenlick Run, which is classified as an Exceptional Value stream. The presence of these insect larvae indicate high water quality as these species are most diverse in natural streams and decline with increasing watershed disturbance.

St. John's Environmental Day:

Canoeing on Greenlick Lake, searching for macroinvertebrates in Greenlick Run and building virtual wetlands were just a few of the activities that JCWA provided for students of St. John the Baptist Roman Catholic School during their Environmental Day on May 13, a school-wide event held every other year. Teacher Terry Springer said the reason for the outing is to get kids outside more so they can learn to enjoy the world that surrounds them. This year the event was held at Jacobs Creek Park with other environmental organizations such as the PA Game Commission and the PA Fish and Boat Commission also providing educational opportunities for students.

6th Graders Learn about Wetlands in Laurelville:

Each spring for over two decades, sixth graders from Southmoreland School District have been going to Laurelville, a retreat, camp and conference center in Western PA to learn about the environment and their local watershed. Partnering with the PA Department of Environmental Protection, JCWA educated students about the importance of wetlands and the ecosystem services they provide such as filtering out harmful impurities from the water supply and providing a resting place for many species of migratory birds. Students also played educational games to learn about the water cycle, the continuous movement of water throughout the atmosphere, and learned about Jacobs Creek as it runs through the Laurelville camp grounds. This was the first year JCWA helped out with Southmoreland's Laurelville trip and hopes to make it an annual outreach event for the watershed association.

Fayette County Children's Water Festival:

JCWA participated in the Fayette County Children's Water Festival, held May 24 at the Fayette County Fairgrounds. Members of the watershed spoke to students about rainwater and stream bank erosion, demonstrating the effects of storm water runoff. Students were given spray bottles and asked to spray water onto various surfaces including grass/soil, concrete to simulate roads and other impervious surfaces, sponges to replicate how a wetland absorbs water and porous pavement. Instead of rainwater surging rapidly into a stream, porous pavement filters storm water allowing it to deposit slowly into streams, preventing flooding and stream bank erosion. Students could also learn about JCWA projects that are underway such as the Scottdale Storm Water Retrofit, an effort to prevent storm water runoff from surging into Jacobs Creek by renovating the parking lot across from the Scottdale Library with porous pavement and vegetation.

If you would like JCWA to provide outreach to your group on watershed issues, please contact us at 724-887-8220, ext.3 or at jcwatershed@gmail.com.

Submitted by Kristina Tarasan, JCWA member and outreach volunteer

Treasure hunters help JCWA remove 1.31 tons of trash



Crystal Miller, CITO organizer and Cong Area Cacher, removes trash from the shores of Greenlick Lake

Braving the winds and rain, nearly 40 volunteers helped to remove 1.31 tons of trash from Jacobs Creek Park during the Greenlick Lake Cache In Trash Out event held April 17. Cache In Trash Out is an ongoing environmental initiative supported by the worldwide geocaching community. Each spring since 2002, geocachers across the globe celebrate International Cache In Trash Out weekend by hosting and participating in Cache In Trash Out Events in their local area. JCWA has at least three clean-up events each year and this is the first time that geocaching was added. It was such a success that JCWA added geocaching to its June 21st River Sweep cleanup at Bridgeport Dam. Community Boy Scout troops as well as a local geocaching group, the Cong Area Cachers, came out to help find treasure while cleaning up garbage along the lake. The volunteers collectively covered 100 acres of land and removed over 30 tires from the watershed.

Geocaching is an outdoor treasure hunting game where players try to locate hidden containers, called geocaches, using GPS-enabled devices. Treasure can include geo-coins which have different tracking numbers inscribed on them. Individuals can visit www.geocaching.com to track where the coins have been, log them onto the website and then leave them in a different cache for someone else to find. In a Cache In Trash Out event, geocachers search for their caches and clean up any litter or trash along the way, so they have fun while helping the environment.

As part of JCWA's Cache In Trash Out event, PA Cleanways donated clean-up supplies and Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful provided pizza for all attendees. Allied Waste Services/Greenridge Reclamation Landfill disposed of the trash collected by the volunteers and donated water for the thirsty volunteers. JCWA thanks all volunteers for donating their time and energy to help in this worthwhile cleanup. Please join us for our fall cleanup in November, 2011. Details will be in JCWA's next newsletter and at www.jacobscreekwatershed.com.

Submitted by Kristina Tarasan, JCWA member and outreach volunteer

JCWA Upcoming Events

July 8: Project Weed Whack. Cut Japanese Knotweed as the group boats down the Middle Yough. Registration required. Call 724-329-5818

July 24: JCWA Annual Members Picnic. 1:00 pm at main pavilion of Jacobs Creek Park by main entrance. Food, fun, games and boating on Greenlick Lake! For details, call 724-887-8220, ext. 3 or email at jcwatershed@gmail.com.

July 28-Aug. 6: Fayette County Fair. Fayette County Fairgrounds. Check out JCWA's display in the commercial building area. For information, visit www.fayette-fair.com.

Aug. 14: Scottdale Picnic in the Park. Visit JCWA's tent for coloring contest and free popcorn. For information, visit www.scottsdale.com

Aug. 19: Project Weed Whack. Quebec Run Wild Area of Forbes State Forest. Call 724-329-5818

Sept. 16: 10th Annual Riffle Run Scramble. Donegal Highlands Golf Course. Tee off is at 8:30 a.m. Register at jcwatershed@gmail.com or call 724-887-8220, ext. 3

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Mission

Jacobs Creek Watershed Association is a non-profit organization dedicated to the conservation of our natural resources, rehabilitation of the creek and watershed, environmental education and recreation.

For More Information

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Jacobs Creek Tour Bus Highlighting interesting places in our watershed Coal & Coke Trail - A Ride through History

If you're looking for a way to escape the heat of the summer, why not take a cool ride on the historic Coal & Coke Trail? The tree-lined trail provides a shady break from the summer heat for most of its 5 mile, relatively level route. The trail follows Jacobs Creek for a good portion of your ride, so you can always take a break and to dip your toes in the water to get refreshed!

The Coal & Coke Trail was first opened for use in 2007 after 8 years of planning and hard work by the Coal and Coke Chapter volunteers and community partners. The trail connects the communities of Scottsdale and Mt. Pleasant and is bookended by community parks, so it's an enjoyable way for families to have hours of fun. The trail begins and ends in either Kendi Park in Scottsdale or in Willows Park in Mt. Pleasant, so begin your adventure at one park and ride to the other. Take time to have a picnic lunch and let the kids enjoy the playgrounds before you head back on your return trip.

As an added bonus, you'll be riding along a trail with some great historical significance. The trail follows the route of the old Pennsylvania Railroad, which transported coal and coke from our area to all parts of the country. You'll see evidence of past coal and coke activities on your ride, including large coal spoil piles, also known as boney piles or gob piles. But that's just a part of the Coal & Coke Trail's history. The Willows Park area is along the route that General Edward Braddock's troops marched through on their fated 1755 journey to encounter the French militia at Ft. Duquesne. George Washington was part of General Braddock's troops during that expedition. (See JCWA History Corner of this newsletter for more information on that march). As you cross Old Mt. Pleasant Road at the Iron Bridge area, you are at the site where Judge James Finley built the first U.S. suspension bridge across Jacobs Creek in 1801 (See JCWA History Corner in Spring 2011 JCWA newsletter for more information on the bridge). At the Scottsdale end of the trail as you continue towards Kendi Park, you can follow Overholt Drive to historic West Overton Village, where Henry Clay Frick was born. That's a lot of history in a mere five mile stretch!

To get to the trail at Willows Park in Mt. Pleasant, follow Rt. 31 and turn onto Center Avenue. Make a left in front of the Fire Station at the sign for Willows Park. Follow the road and turn left into the pavilion parking area. Cross the small bridge to access the trailhead.

To get to the trail at Kendi Park in Scottsdale, follow Rt. 819 and turn onto Overholt Drive, across from West Overton Village. At the first stop sign, turn right onto Mt. Pleasant Road. Kendi Park is on the left.



Jack and Elle Crislip enjoy a summer bike ride on the Coal & Coke Trail

Watershed Words: Invasive Species

What Is An Invasive Species? Invasive species can be plants, animals or other organisms such as microbes that are not native to the ecosystem under consideration. Often referred to as exotic, alien, introduced, or non-native, invasive species are noted for their ability to grow and spread quickly and aggressively, displacing other species. They are usually introduced by people either accidentally or on purpose, into a region far from their native habitat. In their natural range, these species are limited by environmental, pest or disease conditions, keeping them in balance within their ecosystem. When introduced into an area where these limitations are absent, invasives become difficult and expensive to control and can dominate whole areas. You might be surprised to learn that invasive plants are the second-biggest factor in the decline of native plant populations. (The largest factor is habitat loss from development.) Invasive species also impact nearly half of the species currently listed as Threatened or Endangered under the U.S. Federal Endangered Species Act.

Why Are Invasive Species A Problem? Invasive plant species are a problem because they directly threaten our native environments and can cause serious environmental and economic problems, costing over an estimated \$100 billion annually to the United States. When harmful, non-native aquatic plants such as purple loosestrife, Eurasian water-milfoil and hydrilla are planted, they frequently escape from the area they were intended to stay and aggressively move into surrounding ecosystems. Unchecked, invasive plant species displace our native plants and degrade habitat for native animals and insects. For example, the invasion of purple loosestrife into a wetland can result in the destruction of the resident plant community and the eventual alteration of the wetland's structure and function. Many of Pennsylvania's rare, endangered and threatened native species are at direct risk of elimination from invasives because they often occur in small populations, making them particularly vulnerable. More information about invasive species in PA can be found at: <http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us/conservationscience/invasivespecies/index.htm>.

What Can I Do About Invasive Species? The first step to help eliminate invasive species is to refrain from planting them. Avoid using plants you know or suspect are invasive and start educating others about the threats of invasive plants. You should also survey your property regularly for invasive plants, remove them properly before they spread and replace them with native plants. For more information on planting natives, visit: <http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us/forestry/plants/nativeplants/index.htm>.

Also, consider working to control invasive species with the Southern Laurel Highlands Plant Management Partnership. Their volunteer based program, known as Go Native! Project Weed Whack, allows you to participate in hands-on field identification and eradication events that target a wide variety of invasive plant species threatening our native plants. The next two Weed Whack events will be held on July 8th and August 19th - see JCWA Upcoming Events on page 4 for details. For more information about participating in a Project Weed Whack volunteer day, please contact Connie Ranson of the National Park Service by phone at 724.329.5818 or by e-mail at connie_ranson@nps.gov.

Submitted by Kristina Tarasan, JCWA member and outreach volunteer



Project Weed Whack volunteers beating down Japanese Knotweed

JCWA History Corner: General Braddock's Great Swamp Camp

Although many of us associate Braddock's Road with Rt. 40 and the Fort Necessity area, the historic Braddock's Road actually winds through a portion of the Jacobs Creek watershed. Braddock's Road is the 100 mile route that General Edward Braddock took from Fort Cumberland Maryland to Braddock's Field near Pittsburgh Pennsylvania, to lead his troops on an expedition to take Fort Duquesne from the French during the French and Indian War. Gen. Braddock's troops, with George Washington serving as a volunteer officer, actually camped near the present-day Greenlick Lake Reservoir in 1755 on this ill-fated march towards Fort Duquesne.

General Braddock was born in Scotland in 1695 and joined the British army at the age of 15. He had become a Major General by 1754 and came to the colonies in February of 1755 to command the British Army forces in North America in the French and Indian War. He led an estimated 1500 soldiers on this quest to take Fort Duquesne, a key outpost for control of the area. By July 1, 1755, Gen. Braddock's troops had advanced from Connellsville to Bullsken Township, but encountered a swampy area near the site of present-day Greenlick Lake. To navigate through the area, troops had to stop and build a "corduroy" road to get through the swamp. A corduroy road is made by placing logs perpendicular to the direction of the road to advance across a marshy or low area. The lined-up logs look similar to corduroy fabric, hence the name. The corduroy road construction took some time, so the troops camped in this area, now called The Great Swamp Camp or Camp near Jacobs Creek. The next day the troops began marching along a route that is now submerged under the far end of Greenlick Lake. They proceeded along Hammondsville Road, crossed Jacobs Creek, passed through Mt. Pleasant and headed towards the fateful battle with the French forces. On July 9th, just eight days after camping at the Great Swamp camp, the troops encountered French forces and General Braddock was shot in the chest, mortally wounded. The British retreated and General Braddock died 4 days later near Great Meadows. He was buried in the middle of the road so his remains would not be found and desecrated. George Washington presided over his burial service.

If you drive along Mudd School Road by Greenlick Lake, you will see a historical marker commemorating the Great Swamp Camp. Take a moment to reflect on the brave troops and the challenges they faced as they traversed our area over 250 years ago.



Be The Change You Want To See In The World -- Gandhi

Members and volunteer efforts help the JCWA to continue our mission. Without them the strength of our voice and the power of our actions is diminished.

Please become a MEMBER today. You'll be glad you did!

Yes! I want to help preserve and protect the Jacobs Creek Watershed

Date _____

Name _____

Address _____

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Annual Memberships

- ___ \$ 5 Student
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Make checks payable to:
Jacobs Creek Watershed Association
P.O. Box 1071
Mt. Pleasant, PA 15666
Phone (724) 887-8220, ext. 3

Foundation for Pennsylvania Watersheds Awards Grant to JCWA

JCWA has been awarded a grant from the Foundation for Pennsylvania Watersheds to fund a part-time project manager position for the next year. JCWA will be working on seven watershed improvement projects in the next year, which is an overwhelming number for a volunteer staff to oversee. A report from the Foundation's Capacity Building Program recommended that JCWA hire a part-time project manager to help with this enormous work load. JCWA had no funds to hire a project manager, but the Foundation came to our rescue with a \$12,500 grant to fund the position for one year. JCWA is extremely grateful to the Foundation for this funding, along with all the help and assistance it has provided JCWA throughout the years. JCWA looks forward to successfully completing our watershed improvement projects and furthering our mission to protect, preserve and restore the Jacob Creek Watershed.

The Foundation for Pennsylvania Watersheds is a grant making foundation that invests in local efforts to protect healthy, natural streams, to clean up pollution and to restore degraded wildlife habitat. For more information, please visit www.pennsylvaniawatersheds.org.