



Penns Valley Conservation Association

www.pennsvalley.net

Summer 2009



Fifth grade students at Muddy Paws Marsh with Environmental Educator Jesse Yonkovich.

Environmental Days at Penns Valley Schools a Big Success

--by Jesse Yonkovich--

Despite some difficult weather conditions, Spring Environmental Days went very well this year.

Centre Hall Kindergarten classes worked with April Kocis-Fix to grow a vegetable garden and took a trip to Full Circle Farm in Spring Mills. There, April and farm owner Sabine Carey organized activities to show some of the features of the farm, including the animals, soil and seeds, fruit trees, and the pond.

Farming was also a topic for the first grade. Students role-played bees and apple trees to understand pollination first hand. Rebersburg

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Volunteers Needed August 24th on Penns Creek!

Come help with the Kline Road stream improvement project! Contact George Kelly at gkelly@uplink.net or 571-5387

Why You Should Come To Crickfest!

Come on down to CRICKFEST 2009!

**in Coburn Park at the forks of
Pine, Elk and Penns Creeks**

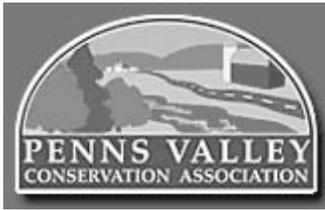
Sunday, September 6, 11:00 AM to 6:00 PM

Penns Valley is blessed with a great diversity and quantity of natural features that are appreciated by its residents and celebrated at CRICKFEST. We celebrate these natural gifts: the clean streams brimming with mayflies and trout, the fields bearing the fruit of the farmers' labor, the mountains and forests teeming with wildlife, trees and wildflowers as well as the vibrant, creative culture of our community's artists and musicians at CRICKFEST. The event is a terrific community-building opportunity, as dozens of volunteers participate in planning, setting up chairs, tables and tents, growing, preparing and serving food, staffing displays and workshops and cleaning up the park. CRICKFEST contributes to our community by raising funds to support the environmental education program in Penns Area Valley School District that is sponsored by PVCA.

CRICKFEST is chock full of fun and educational activities for the whole family:

This year there will be container gardening and rainbarrel building workshops. Farmer Dan's popular farm animal meet and greet will return to Coburn park. Learn ways to reduce your carbon footprint from Lynn Heritage and observe the Solar Power Lion brought to us by Penn State Engineering Students for Sustainability. There are games and craft activities appropriate for a wide range of age groups, guided excursions led by naturalist experts in topics such as bird watching and aquatic insect identification, fly casting and tying demonstrations and instruction as well as educational displays of many

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President's Column

--by Ann Glaser--

Summer's here already, and school's out. Jesse Yonkovich, our Environmental Education Coordinator, has shepherded hundreds of students through educational experiences at learning centers at the schools, local farms, and other sites in Penns Valley. Through his efforts, students were provided experiences in the natural and social sciences, arts, and other fields that went beyond the standard curriculum provided by the district. We surveyed teachers, and many responded that Spring 2009 Environmental Days were the best ever.

The program has been supported through a mix of grants and private contributions as well as volunteer hours from individuals and businesses that share PVCA's vision of stewardship of the watershed. Our sincere thanks to all of you! Please keep up your generous support so we can maintain and improve our environmental education programs.

Jesse was recently awarded his Masters degree by Penn State, and has decided to resign from PVCA and to seek out new career opportunities. He told me that he does plan to remain in the area for a short time, and we look forward to seeing his soaring bottle rockets at Crickfest.

We wish Jesse success and fulfillment in his next endeavors. Thanks for doing a great job for PVCA and the PV School District!

We will continue to provide enhanced environmental education programming to the school district, and are currently searching for a new coordinator. If you know of anyone who might be interested, a job posting is available at www.pennsvalley.net.

See you at Crickfest!

Ann

***PVCA is seeking a part-
time Environmental
Education Coordinator***

**Details are available at
www.pennsvalley.net.**

Mission Statement

Penns Valley Conservation Association (PVCA) serves as a steward for the natural and cultural communities in the Upper Penns Creek watershed. We seek to preserve and honor the agricultural roots of Penns Valley by protecting and conserving its waters, farmlands, forests and rural heritage.

Vision

PVCA envisions an engaged community, where growth is balanced with support for healthy natural systems that foster the local economy. Our valley has dark night skies, clear streams, healthy forests, prosperous farms, and local jobs.



Second grade students record the temperature of forest soil at the Environmental Center.

students went to the property of local resident Fred Johnson, where many tree species provided a great place for learning. Fred helped students collect tree seedlings to transplant and take home.

Soil was the focus for the second grade. Students ran experiments on soils from different locations, looked for critters that help make soil, and took steps to prevent soil erosion. They also connected with their more primitive sides by using mud to create paintings. Some took this a step further, creating caveman words as part of their paintings.

The third grade focused on plants and habitats. Students learned about links between habitat destruction and species extinction, and improved habitats by removing invasive plants and transplanting trees. Centre Hall students learned about improving habitat during a tour of Penns Nursery, where employee Jeff Kozar showed how trees are raised on a large scale to be distributed to land owners and mining areas to attract wildlife and restore the land. Rebersburg's students took a trip to a section of Elk Creek to learn about the connections trees have to streams.

The study of plants, animals, and habitats was taken a step further with the fourth grade. Students participated in activities related to plant and animal adaptations, ecosystems, and watersheds. In one activity, they created their own paper watersheds and sprayed them down to see how water collects and drains, and how

land use impacts water quality. At Centre Hall, they put finishing touches on the new outdoor learning area, an area with benches and a table conceived by teachers and funded with a PVCA grant from NOAA. The students took tremendous pride and ownership in the construction of this facility.

Getting muddy was a big part of the fifth grade activities, which took place at Muddy Paws Marsh Wetlands Education Center. The day's activities focused on interrelationships that make ecosystems unique. Students got especially muddy while sampling and identifying wetland soil by its characteristic tan to grey profile. Then students rotated through learning stations to study how wetland plants have adapted to wet conditions, collect water dwelling critters, and traded places with wetland birds to learn about impacts of wetland destruction.

Sixth grade students visited the Penns Valley Environmental Center, removing invasive plants and clearing trash out of a sinkhole. They also learned about PA native plants and trees, drew the great detail nature displays, and searched for salamanders and mushrooms to learn about the role of dead wood in forests.

The 8th grade also spent the day at the environmental center. They had a scavenger hunt using GPS devices, correlated American history with a 200 year old oak tree and discussed environmental values while participating in team-building activities. They also discussed organic farming with local farmer Bob Vernon and planted vegetable seeds. Teachers reported the seed germination rate in the classrooms was 60-70%.

Each year Environmental Days are more elaborate, refined, and meaningful for students. We are having an impact!

Environmental days would not be possible without the dedicated work of volunteers and assistants. These include organic farmers Bob Vernon and Sabine Carey, PSU forester Mike

CRICKFEST CRICKFEST CRICKFEST CRICKFEST

Crickfest 2009 Music

Come on down to hear...



Berrit Smylin

*Bluegrass-influenced
Rock & Roll and Original Music*

The Chicken Tractor

Stringband, Old-time, Classic Country

Doug McMinn

Acoustic Blues

The Macgillicuddies

Zydeco and Electric Old-time

And More!



Looking for Baked Goods And Silent Auction Items!



As always! Please help PVCA make Crickfest a successful event with your donations of...

Baked Goods for the Sweet Creek Café!

Bring them the day of the event to the café tent! We all know that bake sale fundraisers never fail!

Silent Auction Items or Services

Have something we could auction off in our annual Silent Auction? We greatly appreciate your donations!

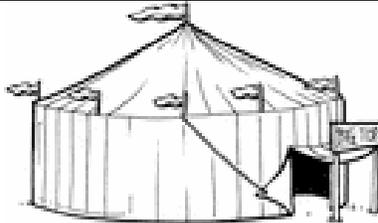
Contact Asta at pere_grine1@hotmail.com

 **CRICKFEST 2009** 

Sunday, Sept. 6th -- 11-6 at Coburn Park

Visit the Education Tent at Crickfest!

Come One!



Come All!

Enjoy Short Presentations Throughout the Day

- ↔ Fun and Edible Container Gardens
- ↔ Build Your Own Rain Barrel
- ↔ Reduce Your Carbon Footprint
- ↔ Flytying to Catch the Big One
- ↔ Birding in Beautiful Coburn Park
- & more!

Look for the Education Tent near the Food Pavilion



SEEKING FRIENDS AND SUPPORTERS FOR CRICKFEST!

How fast is this summer going? Most people I talk to say too fast! And here we are already with Crickfest 2009 just around the corner! Which means it's time for us to approach our members and acquaintances to find financial support to help put on this year's event. Please consider joining that backbone group called the *Friends and Supporters* of Crickfest with a generous donation. Your support helps offset the costs for the many items needed for a successful event. All proceeds from Crickfest go to PVCA's Environmental Education programs in the PVASD. Please consider becoming a partner in our continuing efforts to inspire new stewards of our watershed.

What can you expect as a Crickfest supporter? The list of *Friends and Supporters* of Crickfest will be published on our flyers and in our newsletter. Posters hanging at this year's celebration will also list those who helped make it possible. Crickfest is a true community event and could not happen without our *Friends, Supporters* and volunteers. You may use the form below to pledge your support. If you have questions please call Barb Lange 814-349-5692.

Crickfest Volunteers Needed!

Want to be part of this great community event? Sign up to help with...

- ↔ Parking ↔ Setup
- ↔ Food Service ↔ Cashier
- ↔ Silent Auction Ticket Sales
- ↔ Kids Activities
- ↔ Breakdown at the end of the day

This is your chance to be part of an all community-powered event! If you're able to volunteer, contact Ann Glaser at 364-2339.

CRICKFEST, continued from p. 1

community service organizations. You can even shop at the extensive CRICKFEST silent auction, where you can bid on craft items, food, services and other surprises. There is live music from noon till 6:00 PM featuring great local and regional bands as well as Penns Valley and Ithaca favs, The Macgillicuddies! And you won't want to miss the outstanding food grown, harvested and cooked by local farmers, bakers and chefs.

CRICKFEST is becoming famous for the great food made available by local producers and the heroic efforts of Rich and Heidi of Nittany Catering. This year's menu will include: Chicken, pulled pork sandwiches, veggie wraps, coleslaw, pasta and tomato salad and potato pancakes. For dessert check out the all volunteer Sweet Creek Café for coffee, teas, and baked goods.



Name _____

Business _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Family Level / Friends of Crickfest----- \$25 \$50 I'd like to volunteer

Supporter Level / Friends of Crickfest----- \$100 \$200 Other \$ _____

Please keep my donation anonymous

Amount Enclosed _____

--All donations are tax deductible--

Please make check payable to PVCA and mail to PO Box 165 Aaronsburg, PA 16820

Roll Out the Rain Barrels!

--By Jill Buchanan--

Enthusiasm and interest were high as PVCA “rolled out the barrels” at their Rain Barrel Workshop on Saturday, March 28th, at the Old Gregg School Community Center . Some 40 plus pre-registered participants came and listened attentively as Dan Shimp, Community Outreach Committee volunteer, explained why and how to create their very own rain collection barrel from kits provided by the committee.



Rain collection is an old concept regaining popularity as concerns about more erratic weather patterns and potential drought periods abound. Collecting can save on the draw on groundwater supplies and the energy and resources (paying for your water?) that involves.

This workshop utilized 50 gallon recycled food quality plastic barrels, emanating a faint aroma of lemonade. Volunteers entrusted with power tools bored three openings; one on top to allow for water in, one high on the side for overflow and one about 6 inches from the base into which participants screwed a brass faucet fixture with the potential for a hose hook-up from which to water. Picture said barrel elevated on a block, positioned to receive water from the downspout off a roof, and situated uphill from the perennial

or kitchen garden plot. You get the idea!

No doubt the barrels created at the workshop are even now brimming in this unusually wet weather. Many attendees also expressed interest in larger collection units. Dave Zigler of Black Hawk Nursery gave an explanation of one such underground system that is commercially available. Susan Haney, one of the workshop organizers, agreed this would be a good area to expand upon at future workshops.

Many thanks to both the Community Outreach Committee, Ann Donovan from Centre County Conservation District, new volunteers and participants, as well as The Old Gregg School Community Center for making this workshop a fun and successful event!

KLING ROAD PROJECT UPDATE AND A CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS

--By George Kelly--

For over a year now you've been hearing about the stream improvement project on Penns Creek along Kling Road near the Spring Mills Sewage Treatment Plant. PVCA has partnered with the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Centre County Conservation District, and Gregg Township, to place a 600 foot mudsill (the longest mudsill in Pennsylvania!) on the severely undercut and eroded west bank of Penns Creek, construct four multi-vein deflectors, and install fencing and develop a riparian buffer on adjacent properties.

We've asked you to stay tuned for a schedule and we now have one to share with you. We've been procuring and stockpiling stone and logs needed for the construction, and equipment is scheduled to be on the site on Monday, August 24th, 2009. We still need and will accept monetary contributions and donations of materials (rebar, jute mat, straw mulch) but now that the actual construction is about to begin, we would like to compile a list of volunteers who can help with the actual physical labor of laying the mudsill, seeding the buffer, and planting shrubs and trees. Work will begin on August 24th and continue until completion. If you can spare a few hours, please contact us for the opportunity to become a Penns Valley conservation hero.

Volunteers to work on the project please contact Watershed Committee Member George Kelly at gkelly@uplink.net or call 814-571-5387. George Kelly or Tom Doman, PVCA Watershed Committee Chair: pennscreekguides1@yahoo.com can be contacted concerning donations of materials, and monetary contributions can be sent to PVCA.

PVCA and PSU Collaborate on Growing Greener Plus Grant Proposal

--by Lysle Sherwin--

A Growing Greener Plus 2009 grant application was submitted in mid-July by water resources faculty at Penn State School of Forest Resources to conduct multi-faceted watershed assessment and nutrient loading analysis research within Penns Creek watershed over the next three years in two interrelated phases beginning this fall.

The first phase will consist of a two-semester watershed assessment by a team of four graduate students from the Center for Watershed Stewardship (CWS), directed by Lysle Sherwin, a Penns Valley resident and PVCA member since 2007. The student team will focus on riparian buffer condition, streambank erosion problems, stream water temperature monitoring, and nutrient loading critical areas of the impaired water quality segments of Elk Creek. Other stream reaches scheduled for assessment include upper Penns Creek (Spring Mills to Coburn), Muddy Creek watershed, and lower Pine Creek.

The Center students will have a display at Crickfest describing the activities and invite watershed residents to stop by to discuss the work. The team is particularly interested in establishing access permission from property owners to do the data collection.

Dr. Hunter Carrick, Associate Professor of Aquatic Ecology, will lead the second phase beginning in 2010 if the Growing Greener grant is awarded. His research will examine stormwater runoff loading of nutrients (nitrogen and phosphorous) in impaired and unimpaired segments of Elk Creek. In addition to nutrients and stream discharge, his water analysis lab will measure suspended solids, various metals, conductance, dissolved oxygen, and other parameters. A riparian buffer area will also be selected for installation of a warm season pasture grass planting as a demonstration and research site to test the effectiveness of native grass buffers in reducing runoff to streams.

The overall objective of the project is to assist

Environmental Days, continued from p. 3



6th Graders proudly display 2 types of mushrooms found at the Environmental Center

Powell, landowners Greg and Mary Kay Williams and Fred Johnson, and assistants Willa Paterson, Genny Uhl, and Sara Eisenfeld. Special thanks go to Ann Donovan from the Centre County Conservation District. Thank you for your support!

On a more personal note, as an environmental educator for PVCA and the school district, the last three seasons have been truly rewarding and refining, more so than many other experiences I have had thus far. In turn, I wanted to express how truly grateful I am for being given the opportunity to be a part of this program and for being rewarded through the achievements we've accomplished, the students who remember my name year after year, and the friendships that I have developed in the process. However, I would also like to inform everyone that I feel the time is right to give other educators this same opportunity and to take the wealth of knowledge I have learned and apply it to other areas in need. Thanks to everyone for making my time here so memorable.

PVCA in effectively targeting its watershed protection efforts to accomplish maximum environmental benefits. A June 17 watershed tour with Ann Glaser, Jason Fellon, PADEP Watershed Manager, Carrick, Sherwin, and CWS students was helpful in developing the research proposal. PVCA's Board at its June meeting endorsed the grant proposal by Penn State and provided a letter of support to the DEP Grants Center.



PO Box 165
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Position Announcement

Environmental Education Coordinator

PVCA is now accepting applications for a Part-time Environmental Education Coordinator to provide programming in the Penns Valley Area School District. A full job description is available on our website at: www.pennsvalley.net.

Please submit a resume by August 14th to Ann Glaser at: bruceann@chilitech.com.

Kline Road Project Volunteers Needed

*Come help with tree and shrub plantings, mudsill laying, and buffer seeding and mulching! Volunteers will be needed starting on **August 24th** and continuing until the project is completed. To sign up, contact George Kelly at gkelly@uplink.net or 571-5387.*

Funds and Materials Needed Too!

We also much appreciate monetary and materials donations (rebar, jute mat, straw mulch). Contact George Kelly or Tom Doman, pennscreekguides1@yahoo.com

Crickfest 2009!



Sunday, September 6th, 11am—6pm
at Coburn Park



