

Allegheny River Stewardship Project

Volunteer Newsletter

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PARTNERS

Alle-Kiski Health Foundation

Rachel Carson Homestead

RiverQuest

Venture Outdoors

*University of Pittsburgh Graduate
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*UPCI Center for Environmental
Oncology*

Purpose

The purpose of the Allegheny River Stewardship Project (ARSP) is for leading researchers in environmental and behavioral health sciences to work together with concerned citizens of the Alle-Kiski Valley river communities, volunteers from communities around the Allegheny River watershed and strategic partners to determine the sources and types of river pollutants by monitoring the levels of toxins in fish living in the river and to create long-term community environmental and specific water quality goals so that the footprint of the project widens and deepens with the passage of time

THANKS TO ALL WHO CAME OUT AND SUPPORTED THE PROJECT ON OUR FIRST COMMUNITY FISHING DAY!

May 10th our first community fishing day at Rosston Eddy and Ford City was a great success. We were greeted by eager anglers at 6:00 a.m. Saturday morning. We were ready because camp had been set up the day before. So we registered the waiting anglers as participants and they were catching fish as the rain was coming down. Needless to say the rain did not dampen spirits. Dr. Volz and the graduate students began dissecting fish as they came in. Around 9:00 a.m. the rain stopped and the sun came out in full force as well as people young and old to fish. There were a number of young people from various schools who took advantage of the RiverQuest vessel. Many took advantage of the canoes, rods and reels furnished by Venture Outdoors.



MAY 31st Community Fishing Day Cheswick/Springdale

We once again start our community fishing day at 6:00 a.m. on May 31st. We will again have a registration tent where participants can meet and register for prizes as well as obtain information on where ARSP is focusing our fishing efforts from moment to moment at this site.

This site is split into two areas. Our main activity will be at the Rachel Carson Community Park in Cheswick. There is a large fishing pier, registration tent, dissection area, and porta-johns.

Directions to the Rachel Carson Community Park:

Take Rt 28 to the Springdale/Cheswick exit. Coming off the exit make left and go a short way to the first street on the right. This is Pillow Avenue. Make a right onto Pillow Avenue and proceed down this long hill. At the bottom is Freeport Rd. Make a left onto Freeport Road and proceed past the Cheswick Cinemas. Not far past this is a sign on the left for Allegheny Valley High School. Make a right onto this street which is right next to the Reliant Energy Plant. Proceed down to the river on this street. The park is located at the end of this street.

On the other side of the Reliant Energy Plant and the adjoining PPG plant is the PA Fish and Boat Commission launch site. This is where boats can put in to fish the river. It is best to put the boat in at this area and then boat over to the fishing pier and tie up and check in at the registration tent.

Directions to Boat Launch

Take Rt 28 to the Springdale/Cheswick exit. Coming off the exit make left and go a short way to the first street on the right. This is Pillow Avenue. Make a right onto Pillow Avenue and proceed down this long hill. At the bottom is Freeport Rd. Make a left onto Freeport Road and proceed past the Cheswick Cinemas and past the Reliant Energy Plant and PPG Plant. Turn right off Freeport Road onto Colfax Street and follow this down to the river. The PA Fish and Boat Commission launch ramp is on the left across from the PPG Plant.

River Quest will again be providing a vessel for four two hour fishing and education trips on the river. We are reserving these trips for students. No fishing license is required on this vessel for catch and release fishing only and rods and reels are provided if the student does not have their own. When the fishing tour with RiverQuest is completed students are invited to use canoes provided by Venture Outdoors and view the fish dissection process and ask questions. In order to take advantage of this opportunity please register your group with the time slot you will be using with the project manager Chuck Christen (chec@pitt.edu, 648-2342). The time schedule is listed below. Please arrive early as we will be leaving the dock promptly at the departure time listed below.

Trip 1 – Depart: 8:00 a.m. - Return 10:00 a.m.

Trip 2 – Depart 10:30 am. – Return 12:30 p.m.

Trip 3 – Depart 1:00 p.m. – Return 3:00 p.m.

Trip 4 – Depart 3:30 p.m. – Return 5:30 p.m.

Please be advised that food and drink must be supplied on your own. There are many food establishments and places to purchase bottled water in Cheswick and Springdale on Freeport Road.

Once again we ask that you not wear perfume, colognes, deodorant, sunscreen or bug repellent on this day. We are testing for substances that are contained in these products and could be picked up by the fish when being handled.



Call for Volunteers

FISH RETRIEVAL

We are in need of volunteers to help with our fish retrieval when a fish is caught either on shore or on a boat! This is a very important part of the operation. Fish retrievers will use a GPS locator to identify the longitude and latitude of where the fish is caught so that we are able later on to create a map of the species and where it was caught on the river. Retrievers will also document date, time, and other important information on rain paper. Then they will sacrifice the fish according to our IRB Protocol (pithing). Then wrap the fish in the rain paper document and then aluminum foil. Then store the fish for transport to the dissection area.

VOLUNTEERS TO HELP STAFF THE FISHING DAYS

We are in need of volunteers to help with organizing and working the community fishing days. We will need volunteers to help set up the site for fishing and dissection. We will need help directing anglers and with registration for prizes. We would like to invite food vendors to sell food at the events. We will need help with providing water from the river for the dissection area as well as replenishing drinking water, coffee and other beverage. We will need help with clean up also.

AS ALWAYS THANK YOU FOR YOUR WILLINGNESS TO VOLUNTEER FOR THIS PROJECT!!!!



PROJECT ACTIVITIES TO DATE

April 2nd – Paul Caruso and Chuck Christen presented the ARSP to the Manor Township Council. Manor Township is where Rosston Eddy is located and the site of our first community fishing day. The township council was very supportive and interested in the project.

April 7th– Dr. Volz met with Jim Clark of the Penn State Cooperative Extension office, Sandy Thompson and Heather McKean of the McKean County Conservation District office. The purpose of this meeting was to view the fishing location for the last of the community fishing days, Saturday June 14th. The site we have chosen is Turtlepoint, and is basically not a town but located between Port Allegany and Eldred off Route 155 (north or south depending on which direction you're coming from) on the Allegheny River.

April 7th – Dr. Volz presents on Emerging Contaminants at the

University of Pittsburgh at Bradford. The audience was a diverse one primarily composed of academic and community people. The talk was well received by those in attendance. Many expressed enthusiasm for the upcoming fishing day on June 14th.

April 7th – Chuck Christen and Paul Caruso presented the ARSP to the Ford City Council. This was especially important because the Council adjourned in October.

April 9th – Paul Caruso presented the ARSP to the Pennsylvania Environmental Corps.

April 14th – Dr. Volz and Chuck Christen taped a program on the ARSP at the studios of WYEP Community Broadcasting for the Allegheny Front. The program aired two weeks later.

April 19th – Chuck Christen at the invitation of one of our volunteers presented to a camporee of about 50 Boy

Scouts at Boyce Park Ski Lodge. The scouts and their leaders were interested in the project and many volunteered to participate in the project

April 19th – Paul Caruso presented the ARSP to the Mingo Rod and Gun Club in Mingo Township Fayette County. This was our second invitation to the club.

April 28th – Chuck Christen presented the ARSP to the Lenape Vocational School at Ford City. About 40 students were in attendance.

April 29th – Chuck Christen presented the ARSP to St. Joseph's Elementary School in Verona as well as Verner Elementary School. The students were very interested.

April 30th – Chuck Christen presented the ARSP to the R.A.I.N Steering Committee. This is a network of water quality experts for the purpose of early warning monitoring of water outflows. This begins another collaboration with the

ARSP as well as the Center for Health Environments and Communities.

May 6th & 7th – The ARSP team of researchers and graduate students met at our research site to prepare for the May 10th community fishing days as well as water and sediment sampling at the Ford City Rosston Eddy site.

May 8th – Patty DeMarco, CEO of Rachel Carson Homestead presented the ARSP to the students of Freeport High School. Many students filled out pollution narrative statements. These statements along with others we have collected are now being placed in a database and will be analyzed for the significant information they have to offer.

UPCOMING EVENTS

May 23rd & 24th – The ARSP team will be on the river at Ford City Rosston Eddy taking water and sediment samples.

May 31 – Community Fishing Day. Registration at the Rachel Carson Community Park at Cheswick. This park is located directly next to the Reliant Energy Plant. Already a local Boy Scout troop and students have reserved space on the RiverQuest vessel.

June 7th – Community Fishing Day. Registration will be on River Avenue on the shore of the Allegheny River where Buffalo Creek enters the river.

**ANNOUNCING
THE COMMUNITY FISHING DAYS**

To Provide the Fish Sample for the Project

FORD CITY at Rosston Eddy & Crooked Creek

MAY 10, 2008 – 6:00 a.m. – 9:00 p.m

SPRINGDALE/CHESWICK at the Reliant Energy Plant Site

MAY 31' 2008 – 6:00 a.m. – 9:00 p.m.

FREEPORT at BUFFALO CREEK