

Newsletter for CREEK CONNECTIONS

Based at
Allegheny College's
CEED
Meadville, Pennsylvania

The Great Outdoor Nature Adventure

By Rebecca Finch, Seneca Valley Senior High School Teacher

On April 16, 2007 twenty advanced biology students from Seneca Valley Senior High School and 150 kindergarten students from Connoquenessing Valley Elementary School met at Lutherlyn Environmental Education Center for the Great Outdoor Nature Adventure. It was decided that kindergarten students need exposure to the outdoors as early as possible, so Mrs. Rebecca Finch from the senior high school was approached to see if she would be willing to create a mentoring field trip using her advanced biology students. The idea was to move the kindergarten students around to four stations each covering outdoor topics being lead by her seniors. Thanks to Creek Connections, we were able to use several of their modules making it a very memorable experience for the children.

The biology students focused on four areas. The first station was live animals. This included stream macroinvertebrates, reptiles, amphibians and birds of prey (thanks to Mrs. Finch's husband who is a falconer). The second station allowed

the kids to explore the Lutherlyn discovery room and then move downstairs to learn about white-tailed deer and beaver. The kids also were able to use animal track stamps during a matching game. The third station was an outdoor hike through the woods. The kids were asked to try and locate various items such as holes in trees, squirrel nests and insects. The weather was unfortunately very uncooperative (snowing most of the time), but the kindergarteners were serious outdoorsmen and women! The last station covered concepts relating to birds where the kids learned about bird features and then played a fun bird/caterpillar game.

We are hoping that this field trip will continue for many years to come and possibly expand to other elementary schools as well. In a world where we are competing daily with television and video games, it is important to expose young children to the outdoors and show them there is just as much excitement there as the TV screen! Thanks again Creek Connections for all your wonderful modules!



Above: Seneca Valley High School advanced biology students who put on the nature program for a local Kindergarteners.



Above: Seneca Valley High School advanced biology students lead kindergarteners into the "wild" for hands-on learning.

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Camp Kon-O-Kwee A-Buzz with Creek Projects

By Kelsey Mitchell, Allegheny College Student

On Friday, April 13, 2007 Pittsburgh area students joined the Creek Connections Staff at YMCA Camp Kon-O-Kwee, for the annual Student Research Symposium. With another wonderful year under our belts, Camp Kon-O-Kwee filled with students eager to show off their research. Their presentations were nothing short of extraordinary. This year they ranged from “PA Birds of Prey,” “Mine Subsidence” and even “Recycling”. Student’s oral presentations also included “Peregrine Falcon Fisher” and “Animal Interviews.” Three students were even lucky enough to win a Creek Connections T-shirt! The students who correctly classified the Hellbender

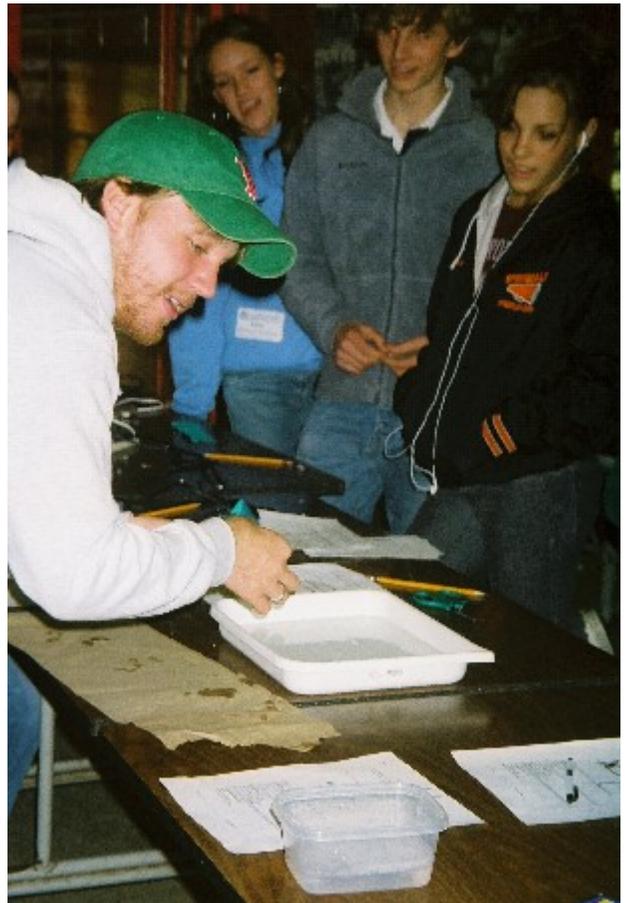
were Mike White (Upper St. Clair), Daniel (Brashear), and Ben White (Seneca Valley Intermediate).

With chilly weather and a small break for lunch, students separated into their focus group activities that were located all across the camp. Some stood up to the cold weather and collected critters from a nearby stream while others stayed inside learning about pollution and even surface tension.

We always have a great time viewing the hard work of students and learning new and exciting ideas. This year was definitely no exception! Keep up the outstanding work!



Above: Laura Branby kicks the day off with some words of wisdom.



Above: Dave Cass demonstrates what kind of critter creation works well for the Life At the Surface Contest.



Above: Matt Knittel shares his original Creekrainium! Game with Some eager students.

Allegheny College is Home to All Watersheds For A Day

By Kelsey Mitchell, Allegheny College Student

Allegheny College hosted its long awaited student research symposium on Friday, April 27, 2007. The symposium provided a chance for teachers, environmental professionals, community members and students of all ages to come together and share their knowledge and experiences from the year. Students from northwestern Pennsylvania to the corner of New York came bright and early to set up their projects and start the day of fun. Project Director Jim Palmer opened with an inspiring speech that motivated students before the exciting day took off. He then introduced our guest speaker Ellen Gilinsky, Ph.D, the Director of the Division of Water Quality Programs at Virginia Department of Environmental Quality. She discussed where the environmental interests of the students today could lead them to in the future. Could we have future Creek Connections employees on our hands? Students were then able to browse the research of other schools, and show off all the hard work and effort they had put into their displays. This year's projects ranged from Wild Turkey Manage-

ment Study (Clymer Central) to Nonrenewable Resources (Saegertown High School). Students even enjoyed tapping their toes to some creek songs in Shafer Auditorium. Three lucky students even won a Creek Connections T-Shirt for identifying the Hellbender on the back! These winners were Karlee Green (Conneaut Lake), Taylor Shields (Meadville), and Shane Thurber (Jamestown).

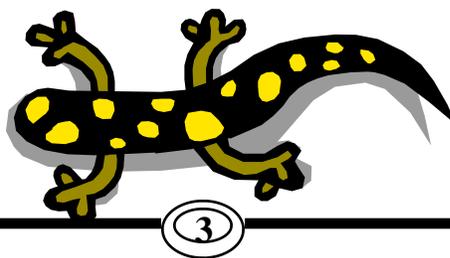
After Lunch students were eager to break off into their focus group activities, which were led by Allegheny project assistants, faculty and even several environmental organization employees. The activities included a variety of topics from identifying skulls to edible landfills. Some students were able to splash around in the creek and others could even explore the habitats of local creatures. Everyone had something new and exciting to learn. We had a great turnout and would like to thank everyone for participating in this year's symposium! Hope to see everyone next year!



Above: Mrs. Bires from Hermitage School District and her class lead the auditorium in some environmental songs.



Above: A Conneaut Lake Junior High School student shows off his interactive project to other attending students.





Creek Connections staff ready for the day at Camp Kon-O-Kwee! Thanks for a great year!

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CREEK CONNECTIONS

is supported by:

Allegheny College,
the Center for
Economic and
Environmental
Development, Bayer
Foundation, McKenzie Foundation,
Alcoa Foundation, Richard King
Mellon Foundation, Grable
Foundation, Howard Heinz Endow-
ments, the Frick Fund of the Buhl
Foundation, PPG Industries and The
Nature Conservancy.



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