

REAL Recycling Project

By Emily Hyde, Maplewood High School student

Organizing 300+ high school kids to convene at a given spot on a given day to recycle some old muddy tires may just sound impossible, especially to those who work with or know high school kids. Now add the fact that they are doing it willingly.

That was my goal as the student organizer of Maplewood's 2008 Waste Tire Removal Project, to get enough kids excited about helping their environment. When it came time for the trip slips to be signed, I had volunteers who weren't even in science classes and some who went last year and wanted to help out again. Talk about exciting! I soon had enough kids from all of the schools (Cambridge Springs, Maplewood, and Saegertown) who were ready to do this project.

For most of the students this year was their first time. We explained to them what the impact of the project would be and what was expected from them. They listened and understood and all behaved accordingly. All of them were courteous and hard-working; understanding they must be serious enough to get the work done efficiently and that once done they could then have fun.

Putting a lot of work into such a large project pays off well. On the day of the project, working with my peers and friends to clean our ecosystem together, I was elated. As I told one group I was presenting to, I thanked them for being so willing to come help and we all did an amazing job that day, I could not have asked for better or kinder workers.

Mr. Drake, the teacher in charge of the project, may talk about the emotions 'stress' and 'worry'. I will agree with him, but all-in-all when we were done and out of that ravine, we were mud-died and tired but fully aware that we had just done something amazing and unique to our school district. I felt a sense of satisfaction and relief seeing how many tires were moved. It's the coolest experience I have ever had in my life.

This project is my senior project, so I will not be able to attend next year, however I know the success will continue to make an impact to help the environment.



Above: PENNCREST students pulling tires out of the creek.



Above: PENNCREST students loading tires onto trailers.

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Creeking at Allegheny

The following are blog entries made by campers during Creek Camp at Allegheny College. To see the rest of the entries go to: <http://www.creekcamp.blogspot.com/>

22 July 2008 Today we went to Woodcock Creek to go on a electroshocking expedition. Due to the rain the night before the water was quite muddy so it was a little difficult to see all the fish when they would float past you. Even though conditions were not perfect we did manage to get some different species of fish such as log perch, hog nose suckers, creek chub and black nose dace. In some of the deeper pools of the stream we had some bigger fish float up like small mouth bass and one trout but still after they get shocked the fish are still challenging to scoop them up.



Above: Creek Campers from Session II, July 2008

18 July 2008 After touring the farms, Eric (the mussel man) came to talk to us about local watersheds and the effect they had on the environment. After we listened to him, April Claus, a local herpetologist, came and talked about the local reptiles and amphibians. She brought in many live animals and even let us hold some, there were different species of snakes, salamanders, and turtles. Afterwards we went to French Creek to look for hellbenders, and freshwater mussels. Even though we did not find any hellbenders we did find some mussels and had a blast in the process. when we were done playing in the creek we dried off and went searching for salamanders and other amphibians at Bousson, a remote research area owned by Allegheny College. We found many different species there, at least seven. When we were finished looking for salamanders, we tried to call for owls but to no avail. This was our last day at creek camp and it was a nice way to end things.



Above: Creek Campers and counselors from Session I, July 2008

TESTING TIP *by John Milligan, Allegheny College Student*

GETTING ACCURATE COLOR COMPARISON

For water parameter tests such as nitrate/nitrogen and orthophosphate, the test results in a color change if these nutrients (nitrates=pink; phosphates=blue) are present. The reason this works is because the chemicals used in the test react with the nitrate and phosphate anions to produce colored solutions (the liquid will look pink or blue, but there is nothing solid in it). Because the shade of pink or blue is the way to tell the amount of nitrates or phosphates, it is important to get an accurate shade comparison. Make sure you are in a location with ample light when testing. If the device you are using has a right-angle mirror (orthophosphates), make sure the caps of the sample tubes are off before comparing.

Welcome!

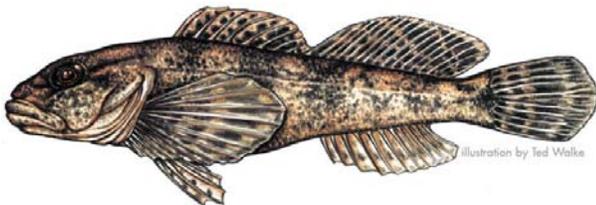
Several new teachers and classes have joined us this school year. Pictured to the right are students with the Edinboro Homeschoolers Cooperative. They paid us a visit here at Allegheny College to be introduced to the program and watersheds, then we took them to Woodcock Creek to practice water testing and check out the creek critters. We'd like to extend a hearty welcome to these and all the other new students involved in Creek Connections this year!



Feature Creature

By Ian Armstrong, Allegheny College Student

I am a fish who rarely grows larger than 3-4" long. In different environments I have the ability to blend in extremely well due to my brown splotchy coloring. Unlike most fish, I lack a swim bladder to help me float in the water; therefore I spend my days at the bottom of the stream eating mostly small macroinvertebrates and fish smaller than myself. I am rather sensitive to changes in temperature of the streams that I live in, so I am often found in streams also inhabited by cold-water fish. After laying eggs the males protect them in cavities under rocks until they hatch. Can you guess what I am?



Information sources:

Picture: <http://www.fish.state.pa.us/pafish/mottscum.jpg>
<http://www.fish.state.pa.us/pafish/fishhtmls/chap20.htm>

See back of newsletter for answer.



2008-2009 Creek Staff. From left to right; Back Row: John Milligan, Mark Kirk, Cameron Eddy, Sarah Dippold, Ian Armstrong, Jim Palmer; Middle Row: Kelsey Mitchell, Brandon Goeller, Zach Piso; Front Row: Sara Salisbury, Emily Ricotta, Wendy Kedzierski, Amy Kerschner, Sarah Culver, Perry Bruno. Not pictured: Laura Branby.

FEATURE CREATURE ANSWER:

This issue's Feature Creature (pg. 3) is a mottled sculpin, *Cottus bairdi*.

Connect to

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