



Volume #21 Issue #3
March 18, 2016

Current in the Creek

Creek Connections Student
Research Symposia

YMCA Camp Kon-O-Kwee: April 8

Allegheny College: April 29

See you there!

Environmental Conservationism for the Next Generation

By Rodrigo Lopes, Franklin Regional High School Student

Franklin Regional High School students are participating in Creek Connections in Mrs. Smith's Environmental Science class. In addition to monitoring the creek in front of Sloan Elementary School, they are preparing and leading environmental activities for the third grade students at Sloan Elementary. This fall they completed their second activity day with two more planned this school year. The high school students are developing leadership skills along with a deeper knowledge of environmental subjects, and the third graders are enjoying the learning activities as well as the attention of the teens.

Mrs. Smith's students are teaching the third graders environmental conservation through fun activities and experiments. Though it may seem like child's play, these activities actually bring up thought-provoking questions of the environment such as the air we breathe and the water we drink. I was able to document how the day went. At the Speck (air quality) station my fellow classmates were teaching the kids how to power on and take measurements of two places of interest with the air quality meter. They also showed the younger students how to read the numbers on the screen and what the readings meant. The places where the measurements took place included near the windows and in the cafeteria. Next, I

went to the Cattfish (water quality) station, where they were talking about how many molecules are in soft drinks like lemonade, Dr. Pepper, etc. Using the Cattfish, they were able to count the amount of molecules/pollutants in the cola. One activity, which I'm sure the kids enjoyed the most, was the ozone layer. By building the molecules out of fluffy marshmallows, they were able to discuss the importance of ozone in the air. At the last station students made Truffula trees from Dr. Seuss' "Lorax", and discussed how to "Speak" for the trees. The high school students did a good job socializing with the third graders in their own terms and being their mentors. I personally enjoyed it and can't wait for the next time to see the kids.



Above: Students use the Speck to monitor air quality in Sloan Elementary School.

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How TVs are Threatening our Waterways?

By Johanna Stanley, Allegheny College Student

Residents of Pennsylvania have spent years cleaning and protecting their local water ways. Last September, over 800 volunteers helped remove a record-breaking 42,925 lbs of trash from French Creek watershed. Despite efforts to keep the waterways clean, more and more trash appears in the waterways each year.

In November of 2010, Act 108, the Covered Device Recycling Act (CDRA) became law in Pennsylvania, which requires electronics manufacturers to collect their own electronics, such as computers, laptops, printers, televisions, etc. A disposal ban went into effect in January of 2013, under the same act, which stopped PA residents from being able to dispose their electronics in the trash. Manufacturing companies were expected to cover the cost of processing these electronics, but unfortunately, there are only 150 sites across PA that will collect these electronics. These sites only cover about 63.5% of the state's population, meaning 36.5% of the population has no options to properly dispose their electronics, causing a drastic increase in illegal dumping.

Furthermore, the lack of support from electronic manufacturers is causing an additional

20 sites to close down or discontinue their service to PA residents. The cost they cover does not account for changes in scrap value, which leaves an unfunded liability for the recyclers. This has caused two companies to have to close down all together and other companies are forced to reduce their participation in the program. Because the cost isn't being covered adequately for the collectors, many times it's the township or authority that has to provide the service.

Unfortunately, all these factors are forcing collectors to become less active in their recycling in order to maintain revenues and be able to succeed as a business, leaving too many PA residents without a way to properly recycle their electronics. The scrap that is ending up in PA's waterways often contains heavy metals such as lead that are extremely damaging to the water and the ecosystem as a whole.

The people of Pennsylvania have worked hard to fight for clean waterways and a better earth. If you have concerns about the decline in recycling in our neighborhoods and the improper disposal of this scrap, contact your legislator, voice your concerns, and ask them to repeal Act 180 to keep Pennsylvania safe and green.

ELECTRONICS RECYCLING

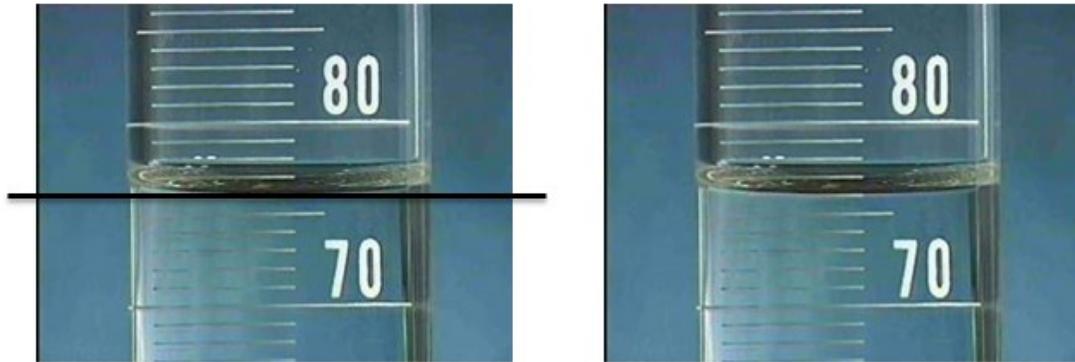
"MAKING US USEFUL AGAIN"



Testing Tip

By Matthew Hutchinson, Allegheny College Student

When doing tests that involve using test tubes or graduated cylinders, make sure to measure from the bottom of the meniscus. A meniscus is made because the water particles have a stronger attraction to the container than they do to each other, so they “climb” the container. For example, in these pictures the reading would be 76, not 78.



Feature Creature

By Kala Mahen, Allegheny College Student



I am a threatened species in the state of Pennsylvania. You might find me nesting in places near reservoirs and other bodies of water. In fact, I am often referred to as a “fish hawk” because of my diet.

I am hard to miss with my wingspan that can exceed 6 feet! I have a dark brown back and white belly. I can be easily identified by my dark eye stripes. You might spot me hovering over a body of water while looking for my next meal.

Although my species is threatened, our population is increasing, and our status may soon be changed to being a protected species within the state of Pennsylvania. Nationally, we are neither threatened nor endangered, but are protected under the Migratory Bird Act of 1918. Internationally, you can find us on

every continent except Antarctica. Can you guess what creature I am? See back page for answer.

Picture and information from:

<http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt?open=514&objID=1777316&mode=2>



Many thanks to Palmiero Toyota Scion for donating \$1000 to Creek Connections through their Helping With Hybrids event in January. Check out the new Prius and Hybrid RAV 4!

Feature Creature Answer from page 3:
Osprey, *Pandion haliaetus*

Connect with

CREEK CONNECTIONS

Allegheny College
 520 North Main Street
 Meadville, PA 16335

Phone: 814.332.5351

Email: creek@allegheny.edu

Web: creekconnections.allegheny.edu

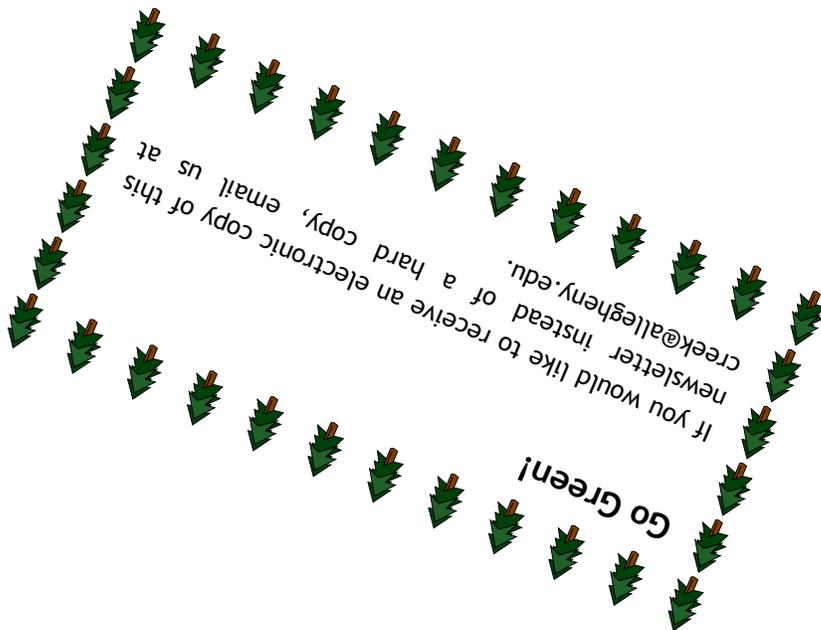


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CREEK CONNECTIONS
 Allegheny College
 520 North Main Street
 Meadville, PA 16335

