



Reconnect with your environment

Learn about environmental issues, their affect on your community and actions for your involvement.



U.S. EPA

Great Lakes monitoring and research is conducted on the U.S. EPA R/V Lake Guardian.

Applications due soon for workshop on ship

By ANNA McCARTNEY
Contributing writer

The Center for Great Lakes Literacy, Great Lakes Sea Grant Network and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency invite fourth- through 12th-grade teachers and non-formal educators to apply for the Shipboard Science Workshop for teachers from July 7-13.

You will work beside scientists participating in Great Lakes research on the EPA's R/V Lake Guardian and stop in ports for additional science experiences. Experience Lake

Erie ecology, geology, geography, weather and biogeochemical processes, with particular emphasis on human impacts.

If you are willing to incorporate Great Lakes science into your teaching or work at an educational institution that has Great Lakes programs or exhibits, you can apply. Teachers will earn a stipend and graduate credit is available. Complete application forms are due by March 7. Space is limited to 15 teachers.

For an application form and more information, visit www.paseagrant.org.



ANNA McCARTNEY/Contributed photo

You can see where the water from the Raccoon Creek watershed drains into Lake Erie by visiting Springfield Township's lakeside park. A newly built picnic pavilion, other public facilities and magnificent views of Lake Erie make this a public access gem for fishing and other recreation.

Source course

Can you name streams that feed Lake Erie?

By ANNA McCARTNEY
Contributing writer

People often don't know how fragile their water source is until a major chemical spill or other problem makes it undrinkable.

What about you? Can you name your watershed? Do you know where runoff from your home, street, neighborhood or town drains? Do you know the location of chemical tanks, waste pits, dumps and storm sewers? Are the major land uses industrial, agricultural or urban and are there enough protected green spaces? Does your community have a long-term strategy or laws to test, restore and protect your source of water?

Lake Erie and its tributaries add up to a vital resource that is ultimately connected, so becoming familiar with all the Pennsylvania Lake Erie subwatersheds can help protect your source of drinking water, whether it's groundwater or surface water.

The Pennsylvania Lake Erie watershed has 17 named subwatersheds that drain into Lake Erie. Conneaut Creek, Ashtabula Creek and Turkey Creek begin in Pennsylvania but empty into the lake in Ohio. Twenty Mile Creek begins in New York but its mouth is in Pennsylvania. The others lie completely in Pennsylvania.

This week, our watershed exploration takes us to the Raccoon Creek subwatershed, located entirely in Springfield Township. If you've never been to Raccoon Creek Park in the most distant northwest corner of the state, you're missing one of the most beautiful spots along Lake Erie. Take a tour using the Google maps satellite image to follow Raccoon Creek from its mouth at the park to the headwaters, west of Route 6N and north of Interstate 90 near the intersection of Huntley Road and Griffey Road just south of Conneaut Creek.

Most of Raccoon Creek runs through wooded lands, and portions run through state game land

314, which extends to the Ohio border. Intact wetlands and riparian buffers and a large protected biodiversity area adjacent to the park make this one of the healthiest streams in the Pennsylvania Lake Erie watershed.

This state game land is a designated Audubon Important Bird Area and is included in the North American Waterfowl Management Plan. The mix of forest, scrub-shrub and wetland along the lake shore is critical for migratory species. State-threatened and endangered flora and fauna are present in this area, and federally protected species utilize the habitat during migration.

The most recent survey of Lake Erie tributaries in 2011 by Pennsylvania Sea Grant found that Raccoon Creek had the highest diversity and the highest vegetative zone width. This riparian buffer serves as an important filter to keep pollutants from entering the stream, controls erosion and flooding, and provides important habitat. In stream-ranking from best condition (one) to worst condition (36) for total habitat scores, Raccoon Creek was ranked two. Its class was ranked as good to fair.

Threats to be aware of include invasive plants and animals and lack of laws to protect vegetated buffers. Raccoon is one of three Pennsylvania creeks that are treated with lampricide, a chemical used to kill young invasive sea lampreys before they mature and cause havoc in the lake. Invasive plants introduced by people or their activities threaten the native and endangered plants. Finally stream buffers like those along Raccoon Creek are not protected from new development.

Why don't you get involved in protecting this watershed and solving these issues?

ANNA McCARTNEY, a communications and education specialist for Pennsylvania Sea Grant, can be reached by e-mail at axm40@psu.edu.



WESTERN PA CONSERVANCY

The Western PA Conservancy, PA Sea Grant and the Lake Erie Region Conservancy work with landowners to conserve property like this one in Springfield Township for its ecological and recreational value.



DAVE SKELLIE, PA SEA GRANT

Riparian buffers on this property conserved by WPC help to control floods, filter pollution and protect wildlife habitat. Pennsylvania municipalities could ensure buffers are protected and restored with their land-use regulations.



NY DEC

Raccoon Creek is one of three PA Lake Erie tributaries treated with a controversial lampricide to kill young invasive sea lampreys before they mature because of the danger they pose to steelhead trout.

Landowners can offer space for public to fish

The Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission and Pennsylvania Sea Grant are looking for landowners willing to develop public fishing easements in the following streams: Conneaut, Crooked, Elk, Walnut, Four Mile and Twenty Mile.

Landowners receive a payment based on stream length and value of the fishery for allowing access for public fishing and PFBC management activities along a stream corridor. The program is funded by the sale of Lake Erie

permits and trout-salmon/Lake Erie combo fishing permits.

In addition to fishing easements, other eligible uses of EAI funding include outright acquisition of important properties for fishing access, development of public fishing access improvements such as fishing piers, and habitat improvements that support fishing. Property owners interested in learning more about the EAI program should contact Dave Skellie at 217-9011, ext. 103, or e-mail him at dus18@psu.edu.

yourspace
a place to share



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The Neighborhood Art House Green Team adopted this lot.

Art House Green Team needs push mower

This report was submitted to Kim Green, executive director of the Erie Redevelopment Authority.

The Neighborhood Art House Green Team has adopted the lot at East 10th and Parade streets and we are doing our best to keep it clean and make it beautiful.

We planted two crabapple trees with Sarah Galloway, city of Erie arborist. We have planted daffodils and tiger lilies and pulled out weeds. We also pick up litter regularly. It would be great if the city of Erie would put trash and

recycling cans on the corner like they have in other neighborhoods.

We still need to replace the path at East 10th and Parade streets, so we would like a push lawn mower to mow the grass. We would like to hang a sign that says: "This lot is adopted by the Neighborhood Art House Green Team." In the spring we would like to put in a birdbath and also fill in the holes in the grass and continue to pick up litter.

This report was written by Dalaysa, Franco and the Green Team.

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Check out these websites to learn more:

www.glfcc.org/sealamp/
<http://conservationtools.org/guides/all>
www.paseagrant.org/topics/watersheds/

Do you follow the news to learn what's happening in your neighborhood? Are you connected with others that live in the region? The newspaper is a great way to educate yourself about projects and people that affect your water. Letters published from readers in the editorial pages or in this weekly "your space" feature also give you a chance to share your projects and ideas.

Are you participating in any watershed projects at your school? Send your projects and photos for possible publication in "your space" to axm40@psu.edu.

