



Reconnect with your environment

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



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Vote to support the Weather, Water and Wave Buoy.

You can vote to boost bid for grant for buoy

By ANNA McCARTNEY
Contributing writer

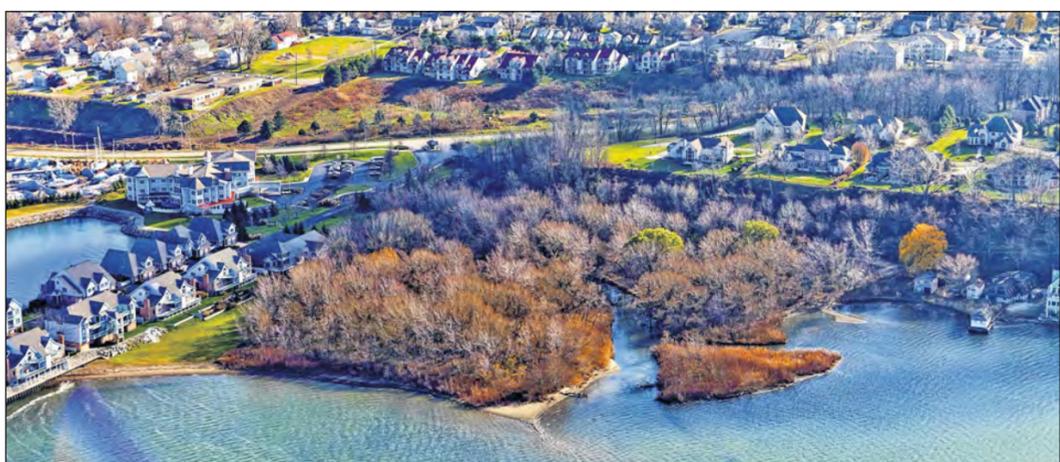
The Regional Science Consortium needs your votes to receive a grant from the Boat U.S. Foundation to support the Weather, Water and Wave Buoy System we will deploy this May in the Pennsylvania waters of Lake Erie.

Every 20 minutes, this buoy will provide real-time data on the lake conditions that everyone can

access and therefore will help keep local citizens and tourists safe. Click on our project to read the summary and access our YouTube video. Vote once a day until March 28 to help make our buoy the best community-supported one in the Great Lakes! Please tell your families, friends, colleagues and members of your clubs to vote at: website and mobile: <http://shout.lt/rgQ> or Facebook: <http://shout.lt/rgG>.



JERRY SKRYPZAK/Contributed photo



PENNSYLVANIA COASTAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

Little thought was given to the negative affects on water quality or wildlife habitat when watersheds near Lake Erie and its tributaries were developed. The top photo from the 1960s gives clues on how Cascade Creek and Presque Isle Bay became polluted. The bottom photo, taken in 2011, shows the changes in land use where Cascade Creek empties into Presque Isle Bay. A watershed approach and millions of dollars needed to repair locations upstream are improving habitat and water quality downstream and in the Bay.



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Erie students explain their school designs.

Erie students design green school project

By ANNA McCARTNEY
Contributing writer

The efforts of Erie School District students to design and build a classroom or school area that incorporates natural and green design elements are on display at the Tom Ridge Environmental Center until March 31.

To design the project, the district participated in the Green Schools Academy, a two-year program that provides opportunities for students to work with internationally known experts on health and high-performing school design. For more information contact Doreen Petri at dpetri@eriesd.org



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Our Lady's Christian students work at Cascade Creek.

OLCS students test Casade Creek waters

By ANNA McCARTNEY
Contributing writer

Nicole Fuhrman, a science teacher at Our Lady's Christian School, is teaching new standards with her sixth-grade students through an "environmental" lens focusing on the Cascade Creek watershed. Students have been testing water samples and documenting the physical and biological characteristics of Cascade Creek.

In small groups, they research topics such as how precipitation affects stream pH, how water quality data from Cascade

Creek compares to other local creeks, and how land use in the area affects water quality. (They compare water samples taken from Frontier Park to those taken directly next to commercial areas, etc.)

Students are looking at bird movements, biological life in healthy watersheds versus unhealthy streams, erosion and weathering of stream rocks, and erosion of soil near creek beds.

They will present their projects at a special science event on April 12 at OLCS and on April 11 at the Creek Connections Symposium at Allegheny College.

On the mend

10-year effort helps to restore Cascade Creek

By ANNA McCARTNEY
Contributing writer

This week's watershed focus is Cascade Creek, a heavily urbanized watershed located in Millcreek Township and the city of Erie. You can no longer follow Cascade Creek, which flows through commercial, industrial and residential areas, to its headwaters, because it is encased in underground concrete pipes in many locations. The vegetated riparian buffers that stabilized the streambanks were removed, as were wetlands and floodplain areas that helped to filter pollutants

from runoff and to prevent flooding downstream.

Because the stream was a major source of pollution and sedimentation for Presque Isle Bay, it contributed to the bay being listed in 1991 as an Area of Concern, or one of the most polluted places in the Great Lakes. While much work still needs to be done, Cascade Creek and the bay, which was delisted as an AOC in 2013, have improved. A 10-year stream restoration effort, including numerous projects in Frontier Park and property adjacent to the Bayfront Parkway, have repaired 3,900 linear feet along Cascade Creek.

This will improve water quality and fish and wildlife habitat by keeping 463.8 tons of sediment out of the stream each year.

Read more about the AOC at www.pibpac.org/ and Cascade Creek projects at www.paseagrant.org/projects/cascade-creek-restoration. To get involved, contact Cascade Creek watershed representative Ed Kissel at sonslakeri@aol.com.

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



ANNA McCARTNEY/Contributed photos

Many local partners, including Pennsylvania Sea Grant have worked hard to restore riparian buffers and make other Cascade Creek improvements in Frontier Park, left, and other locations. Vice president of the S.O.N.S. of Lake Erie, Ed Kissel, who has worked tirelessly to improve the stream, surveys the location near the Bayfront Parkway, right, before work began. You can help the S.O.N.S. with their adopted stream annual cleanup on April 5.



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SEAN RAFFERTY, PA SEA GRANT/Contributed photo

A hazardous landfill, streambanks armored with concrete, floodplains crowded with parking lots, buildings, roads and other impervious areas and uplands and wetlands that were paved and filled have degraded Cascade Creek. The Currie Landfill, left, has been restored. The stream section, near the West Erie Plaza, right, needs to be restored.

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Check out these websites to learn more:

www.americanrivers.org/
www.sonsoflakeerie.org/index.htm
www.pibpac.org
www.paseagrant.org

The restoration work on Cascade Creek is a good example of what can be done to improve water quality. Not mowing to the edge of a stream but instead planting native plants to create a riparian buffer is one remedy for eliminating sediment in our streams. Why should people become involved in events like planting trees to reduce stormwater? Share your ideas with other students and Erie Times-News readers. Send them to Anna McCartney at axm40@psu.edu for possible publication on the "your space" feature.

