

October - December 2008

Leading Creek News



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Enter the 2009 Photo Contest “Water and Wildlife”

The Leading Creek Watershed Group and the Meigs Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD) are accepting entries for their fifth amateur photo contest. This year’s theme is “Water and Wildlife.” This contest is open to Meigs County residents of all ages, but photos must be taken within Meigs County and relate to the theme.

There is a limit of two photo submissions per person. Pictures of any format, size, black & white, or color will be accepted. All photos

are welcome, current or historical, and will be displayed at the SWCD office, but only three winners will be chosen for the cash prizes.

Photos will be judged by a panel of area experts and residents. Entries are due to the Meigs SWCD office by Monday, March 30th, 2009. Photos can be delivered to the Meigs SWCD in Pomeroy or e-mailed to Raina.Fulks@oh.nacdnet.net.

Winners will be announced at the Leading Creek Stream Sweep, which will take place on April 18th at 9am at the Jim



Vennari Park in Rutland. The top three photos will also be displayed at the Meigs SWCD booth during the 2009 Meigs County Fair and at the Meigs SWCD 2009 Annual Banquet.

To obtain the required entry forms and detailed contest rules please contact the Meigs SWCD office at 740-992-4282.

We look forward to see how your photos will show off the water and wildlife of Meigs County!

Meigs SWCD Staff

- Steve Jenkins, *Program Administrator*
- Vicki Morrow, *Assistant Administrator*
- Jenny Ridenour, *Education Coordinator / District Technician*
- Jim Freeman, *Wildlife Specialist / Watershed Coordinator*
- Raina Fulks, *Leading Creek Watershed Coordinator*
- Mary Ann Hawk, *NRCS - District Conservationist*
- Jason Crislip, *NRCS - Soil Conservationist*

Our Partners

- Meigs Soil and Water Conservation District
- Agri-Drain Corporation
- American Electric Power
- AMP Ohio
- Buckeye Hills RC&D
- Boy Scouts of America
- Eastern Local School District
- Girl Scouts of the USA
- Leading Creek Conservancy District
- Leading Creek Improvement Committee
- Meigs County Commissioners
- Meigs County Engineer
- Meigs County Health Department
- Meigs County Recycling & Litter Prevention
- Meigs Local FFA
- Meigs Local School District
- Mid Valley Christian School
- Natural Resources Conservation Services
- Ohio Department of Natural Resources, Divisions of Forestry, Soil & Water Conservation, Mineral Resources Management, and Wildlife
- Ohio Environmental Protection Agency, Division of Surface Water
- Ohio State University Extension
- Ohio University, College of Engineering
- Ohio University, ILGARD
- PDK Construction
- Pheasants Forever
- Residents of the Leading Creek Watershed
- Rural Action, Inc.
- Rutland Village Council
- Southern Local School District
- Township Trustees of Columbia, Salem, Rutland, and Salisbury Townships in Meigs County

- U.S. Department of Agriculture
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- U.S. Office of Surface Mining

Mark Your Calendar for Stream Sweep 2009

It may seem like it's far away, but it's already time to plan for the 9th Annual Leading Creek Stream Sweep. Celebrate Earth Day this year by making a difference in your community! Join us on Saturday, April 18th at the Jim Vennari Park in Rutland. Volunteers will disperse and bring all trash back to the Park where trucks will be waiting. Bags, gloves, shirts, and lunch will be provided to



Above: Some of the 100+ volunteers from Stream Sweep 2008. Many of these children had a great time playing at the Rutland Park after working hard all morning to clean up trash.

all volunteers. Please contact the Meigs SWCD at 740-992-4282 to obtain registration forms or if you have a location you think should be cleaned up this year.



Calling All Bird Watchers

The 12th Annual Great Backyard Bird Count will be held February 13 - 16, 2009. This event is sponsored by Audubon and Cornell Lab of Ornithology and is great fun for the entire family or as a class activity. Tallies are compiled from all across the continent and show bird distributions and can indicate the health of the environment. For details as well as free posters go to www.birdsource.org/gbbc/



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What's Happening on Little Leading

On October 14th the Meigs SWCD hosted a "Leaf Hike" field trip for Mid Valley Christian school. The students learned all about tree identification and the science of fall as they hiked the trail at the Meigs SWCD Conservation Area along Little Leading Creek. Approximately 40 students attended from grades 1 - 4.

Two local Boy Scouts recently completed their Eagle Scout projects at the Conservation Area. Eugene Patterson of Rutland and Sam McCall of Shade, members of Pomeroy Boy Scout Troop 299, installed bat boxes and benches for their respective Eagle Scout projects. They also beautified the area by planting flowers and cleaning up the trails. The Boy Scouts have had the opportunity to work on their projects while at the same time providing a valuable benefit to the Conservation Area.

The Eagle Scout applications have cleared the local council and are awaiting confirmation from the national council. Boy Scout Troop 299 also helps out at the Conservation Area throughout the year by assisting in maintaining the hiking trail.

The 174 acre Conservation Area is located on New Lima

Road midway between Rutland and Harrisonville. The goal of the Meigs SWCD is to turn the property into the area's premier outdoor learning center. Since acquiring the property in 2003, the SWCD has created a parking lot, the Pauline H. Atkins Memorial Nature Trail, a 2.2 acre wetland, and completed native grass and wildflower plantings. Grant funding and local donations are being sought to construct a shelter house, restroom, and a new wetland trail.



Above: Installation of bat boxes at the Meigs SWCD Conservation Area.

These boxes provide habitat for bats and are a fun construction project. They are also popular with people interested in low maintenance, environmentally friendly insect control.

One small bat can capture more than 1,200 mosquitoes in a single hour.

The Meigs SWCD is now partnering with the Gallia, Jackson, Meigs, & Vinton (GJMV) Solid Waste Management District to recycle all office paper products. This includes things like printer paper, newspapers, magazines, and boxes like tissue and soda pop boxes. The SWCD already recycles aluminum cans and plastic bottles. In the past, paper recycling was not locally available. We are excited to see how much this addition has cut down our waste stream!



If any businesses in the Leading Creek Watershed or Meigs County would like to begin recycling office paper please contact the Meigs SWCD at 740-992-4282 for details. You can also contact Michael Massie, Recycling Coordinator at the GJMV Solid Waste Management District at 1-800-544-1853.

Bringing Back Freshwater Mussels

Freshwater mussels are found on every continent but Antarctica. They are most diverse in eastern North America where they number nearly 300 species. But they are also one of the most endangered groups of animals due to factors such as overharvest and habitat degradation.

Plans are being finalized to reintroduce freshwater mussels back into Leading Creek. The Meigs SWCD is partnering with the Columbus Zoo and Aquarium / Ohio State University and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to establish freshwater mussels and fish, including Brindled Madtoms, in Leading Creek. The goal is to augment these populations that were eradicated by a devastating coal mine pumping in 1993.

The native freshwater mussels of Leading Creek were severely impacted by the dewatering of the Meigs Mine. All mussels downstream of the discharge were killed. Although some mussels remained upstream, the majority of the mussels had occurred in the impacted reach. A mussel survey by



Many mussels have extensions that look and move like fish to entice their host fish to them.

Once the fish nibbles on the moving lures it releases mussel larvae that attach to the gills of the host fish. After a period of time the baby mussels fall off into the bottom of the stream where they mature and live their lives. Some mussels are particular to a certain fish, so it can be a challenge to reproduce them in captivity.

Dr. G. Thomas Watters (Ohio State University) in 1987 found 10 species in the watershed. Although no state or federally listed species were encountered, the creek was considered to have a healthy and typical mussel fauna in its lower half.

Several limited efforts to reintroduce mussels back into the creek have taken place, including trans-locating adult mussels from neighboring river systems and the release of newly metamorphosed juveniles. Now the Columbus Zoo and Aquarium Freshwater Mussel Facility plans to propagate and release eight mussel species that were recorded from earlier surveys in the creek.

Right: The White Heelsplitter is found in pools or sluggish streams with a mud, sand, or fine gravel bottom. Other common names include Pancake and Razorback.

Because freshwater mussels require fish to act as hosts for their larvae, re-colonization requires both mussels and host fish to be present. Host fish have already been identified for all of the species known from Leading Creek. This year long project will involve use of adult mussels from neighboring rivers whenever possible as brood stock. Also juveniles of the mussels will be propagated on fish for release into the creek. Some mussel species that will be released include the Pocketbook, Fat Mucket, Heelsplitter, Creeper, and Mapleleaf.



* This publication was funded in part by U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service.

2008 Watershed Accomplishments



The Unnamed Tributary on Bailey Run Road (known as TF15) is shown here as it relentlessly discharges acid mine drainage into Thomas Fork.

The past year has been an eventful one for Leading Creek. **We've been thrilled to see so many watershed residents show stewardship for the area and participate in our activities.** One highlight of 2008 was the 8th Annual Leading Creek Stream Sweep. It was held on April 19th **in Rutland and this year's was** arguably the largest ever in the history of the event. Over 100 volunteers showed up to clean up locations in Rutland and Salisbury townships and in the village of Middleport. In 2009 we hope to top that!

New horizons continue to be explored in the Leading Creek Watershed. In addition to our ever expanding outreach programs, we continue to focus on restoration and conservation projects. One project involved Dave and Marilu Enterline who

enrolled 12.3 acres of riparian habitat along Leading Creek into perpetual environmental covenant. The landowners were compensated for this protection through U.S. Fish & **Wildlife Service's Leading Creek Improvement Account.**

The Leading Creek partnership has continued to plan and monitor for reclamation projects and seek funding sources. Plans are being finalized to reclaim the number one site of acid mine drainage (AMD) in the Leading Creek Watershed, the Unnamed Tributary of Thomas Fork (TF15). A feasibility study and preliminary design has been completed for the reclamation, known as the Thomas Fork Doser Project. This project will be completed in partnership with ODNR-DMRM, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Leading Creek Improvement Committee. Contracts and funding agreements are now being drafted to begin construction at this site in 2009.

Contracts and funding agreements are now being drafted to complete reclamation at three other top AMD sites in the Leading Creek Watershed,

including Casto's Seep, Hysell Run, and Bailey Run.

Proposals have been approved for funding by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to reintroduce two animals into Leading Creek., freshwater mussels and Brindled Madtoms. While the fish were discussed in a previous issue of this newsletter, please see the previous page for details on freshwater mussels.

The Little Leading Creek Sediment Study being conducted by Ohio University is now in the final draft stages and is expected to be completed very soon.

We thank our many partner agencies that have helped to make these exciting things possible and look forward to exploring new opportunities in 2009.



This source mine pool is in Hollow 4 of Bailey Run and causes many of the acid mine drainage issues there.

Leading Creek Watershed home to part of new recreation area

By

Jim Freeman

*Wildlife Specialist / Watershed
Coordinator*

Meigs SWCD

The Leading Creek Watershed is home to portions of **American Electric Power's** (AEP) new AEP-Gavin Wildlife Area in Meigs and Gallia counties.

The AEP-Gavin Wildlife Area consists of 6,885 acres located in Salem and Rutland townships in Meigs County and Cheshire Township in Gallia County. Much of the wildlife area is associated with property connected to the abandoned coal conveyor belt that ran from around Salem Center to the Gavin Plant at Cheshire.

The parts of the Leading Creek Watershed associated with the new recreation area are mainly found along Parker Run Road, portions of the old belt line, and areas along Parkinson Road and Titus Road.

The area was available to hunters during the most recent deer gun season. Sportsmen who want to hunt, trap or fish

on the property must first obtain a free permit which is available from deer check stations and other local businesses. A permit can also be obtained via American **Electric Power's website** at <http://www.aep.com/environmental/recreation/recland/permit.aspx>.

Permits and maps are also available for no charge at the Meigs Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) office at 33101 Hiland Road in Pomeroy.

The permit authorizes the holder to hunt, fish, and trap on the property in accordance with state laws and regulations; the exception is that beaver trappers will need a special beaver trapping permit. The rules and regulations are written on the back of the permit.

Not all AEP property in the two counties is included in the agreement, including the property associated with the now-closed Southern Ohio Coal Company mines and the coal prep plant.

The recreation area is the result of a long-standing

partnership between AEP and the Ohio Department of **Natural Resources' Division** of Wildlife. In the past few years, or at least since the conveyor belt has been closed, many people have been trespassing on the property with four-wheelers and other vehicles for various reasons. The partnership will help address that issue by adding a law enforcement presence to the property.

The Meigs SWCD is holder of a conservation easement on almost 1,000 acres of the property, which is located mostly along Parker Run Road. This partnership will help protect that land by adding a law enforcement presence to enforce wildlife laws, prevent illegal trash and tire dumps, and to prevent the use of off-road vehicles.

The AEP-Gavin Wildlife Area can be accessed via State Routes 124 and 325 in Meigs County, and State Route 554 in Gallia County, and by various county and township roads in both counties.



Leading Creek Watershed Group Membership Form

Join us today! Leading Creek wants *you* to become a member!

To become a member of the Leading Creek Watershed Group simply fill in your information below and drop this form off at our office or mail it to us c/o Meigs SWCD
33101 Hiland Road
Pomeroy, OH 45769

Yes, I want to join today!

And I want to donate! (see options below)

Name (Please print) Organization (if applicable)

Mailing Address

City State Zip

Telephone Email

Signature Date

Benefits of Membership

All members receive personal invitations throughout the year to participate in activities such as watershed tours, group contests, litter clean up days, and water sampling demonstrations.

Option to Donate

Here is your chance to help us restore and protect the watershed. All donations are used to directly benefit the efforts of the Leading Creek Watershed Group. Those who donate \$25 or more receive one of our newly designed t-shirts. Also keep in mind that your contributions are tax deductible.

Please make checks payable to Leading Creek c/o Meigs SWCD.

- \$10 *Donor* Preferred Shirt Size (If applicable) _____
- \$25 *Supporter*
- \$50 *Patron*
- \$100 *Sponsor*
- \$500 *Benefactor*
- Other \$_____

The Leading Creek Watershed Group is a partnership of residents, officials, and agencies united by common interest in restoring the Leading Creek Watershed to add to the quality of life for the residents of the watershed and surrounding communities.

Thank you for your membership and for your support!

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

January 15th: Leading Creek Improvement Committee Meeting at 9:45 a.m. at Logan office of OEPA

February 12th: Leading Creek Improvement Committee Meeting at 9:45a.m. at Logan office of OEPA

March 30th: Submission deadline for photo contest entries

April 18th: Leading Creek Stream Sweep

Office Closed for Holidays:

January 19th

February 16th



www.geocities.com/meigsswcd

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