

Raccoon Creek News

Spring 2018

Recruitment, projects, and accessing Raccoon Creek

RCP to Host Ohio River Sweep clean-up site

Nora Sullivan, Raccoon Creek Partnership's Vice-Chair

Raccoon Creek Partnership will once again host a cleanup up site for the 2018 Ohio River Sweep. The Ohio River Sweep is a riverbank cleanup that extends the entire length of the Ohio River and many of its tributaries. Last year, thousands of volunteers removed litter, especially plastics from the Ohio River before those plastics could reach the ocean. The Ohio River Sweep is an important regional event which addresses a global problem: plastics in the ocean. This is the largest environmental event of its kind and encompasses six states.

The Ohio River Sweep is scheduled for Saturday, June 16, 2018. Volunteers are needed for this massive event. Volunteers can meet at designated location and time. Volunteers should wear clothes that can get dirty and closed toe shoes. Trash bags and gloves are provided. Each volunteer will receive a free T-shirt.

This year we plan to clean up the area around the historic King's Hollow Tunnel. We will meet at Waterloo Aquatic Education Center at the corner of ST RT 56 and ST RT 356, at 9AM, and return to Waterloo by 1PM.

Please come help keep Raccoon Creek Watershed trash free!

For more information call Nora Sullivan at 740-593-0838, or visit the website www.OhioRiverSweep.org.



Raccoon Creek Partnership - Current Board of Directors

Molly Gurien (Chair), Nora Sullivan (Vice-Chair), Jessica Makosky (Treasurer),
Heike Perko (Secretary), Glenn Stout, Constance White, Angie Cameron

2018-2019 AmeriCorps Member Recruiting

Amy Mackey - Raccoon Creek Watershed Coordinator

I will serve America and make our people safer, smarter, and healthier.
I will serve Americans together to strengthen our communities.
Faced with apathy, I will take action.
Faced with conflict, I will seek common ground.
Faced with adversity, I will persevere.
I will carry this commitment with me this year and beyond.
I am an AmeriCorps member, and I will get things done.

Ohio Stream Restore Corps

Getting Things Done For America- In Appalachian Ohio



Positions Available! Ohio Stream Restore Corps 2018-2019

Looking for an opportunity to make a difference in the watershed? Become an AmeriCorps member! Ohio Stream Restore Corps members serving at Raccoon Creek assist with chemical and biological monitoring, outreach and education, grant writing, member recruitment, etc. AmeriCorps members receive a living allowance of \$13,732 and an education award of \$5,815. There are many other positions available too!

Position details are posted on the Raccoon Creek Partnership Facebook page or at

<http://ruralaction.org/get-involved/ameriCorps/>

Accepting applications NOW through June 1st, 2018, but interviews will start in April. If you are interested, apply early for full consideration. Check the facebook page or website and email me at mackey@ohio.edu for more information.

ATHENS

GALLIA

HOCKING

JACKSON

MEIGS

VINTON

Raccoon Creek Water Trail Access Signs

Abby Costilow, AmeriCorps Ohio Restore Corps member

Raccoon Creek is an impressive body of water that spans 112 miles across 6 counties, reaching all the way down to the Ohio River. Its size is something to behold and so are the many beautiful landscapes through which it runs. Some days you just want to grab your kayak, camera, and some snacks and go for a paddle. After all, it is a great way to put your mind at ease. However, before you go running off for a great day on the water, you might pause to wonder “Where should I go to actually get into the creek?”

Well, you won't have to wonder much longer! We, here at the Raccoon Creek Water Trail Association, are underway in our goal of putting up our Water Trail Access signs. The access points are listed on our Water Trail Map, but sometimes finding points along the creek is a bit harder than finding it on paper. These signs will help rid any doubt from your mind of whether or not you're launching off at an approved point.

We're aiming to have the signs up by June, weather permitting and permit permitting. The signs will be posted at each of the 22 points along Raccoon Creek at which you can enter. They will list information about that site, the distance to the next site, and the distance to the Ohio River.



Signs will look like this, once installed. Ooooh, fancy!

Rain Gardens

Jennie Brancho—Ohio University MSES student

Shallow, depressed landscapes planted with native plants, rain gardens both filter and process pollutants like oil, fertilizers, pesticides, and chemicals from runoff before it reaches local waterbodies. Rain gardens are constructed using amended soils for infiltration and native plants tolerable of both wet and dry conditions. These gardens provide many environmental and aesthetic benefits for homeowners. Usually absorbing water from rain events in less than one day, rain gardens provide flooding and ponding prevention. Rain gardens help to improve regional water quality through water treatment and storage while providing habitat and food for pollinators and other animals.

To find more information about rain gardens, check back with Ohio University in days to come. They will soon be adding more information about rain gardens to their website.



RCP's New Website

Abby Costilow, AmeriCorps member



We are glad to announce that RCP has its website up and running, better than ever before. With much gratitude, we wish to thank Jennie Brancho and everyone who has worked on the site for all their hard work. They did an excellent job putting it all together, and it shows!

RaccoonCreek.org now has information about the watershed, the partnership, the water trail association, our educational programs, involvement opportunities, news, events, resources, and how to contact us.

All of our upcoming events and project updates are now easy to find. Our monthly board meeting's minutes are also typed up and shared for all to see. Also, information about our AmeriCorps position openings can be found under our 'Get Involved' tab.

So come and poke around on the site. You might be surprised at all the neat things you discover.

Under Construction! Current Reclamation Projects

Amy Mackey, Watershed Coordinator

Raccoon Creek water quality has struggled from impacts of historic (pre-law) coal mining since the boom of the coal era in the late 1800's and early 1900's. To date (since the late 1990's), Raccoon Creek Partners have completed 20 reclamation, treatment, and major maintenance projects in the watershed at a cost of about 14.5 million dollars. These funds come from a variety of state and federal sources, including (but not limited to) the Abandoned Mine Land Fund (a result of the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977), Office of Surface Mining, and State and Federal Environmental Protection Agencies. These projects have successfully reduced the amount of acidity and metals in 82 miles of Raccoon Creek and its tributaries to concentrations that can once again sustain healthy fish and macroinvertebrate population.

There are two reclamation projects currently under construction in the watershed. Both projects are "source control" projects that should prevent acid mine drainage (AMD) from forming, thus reducing the amount of acidity and metals entering the stream. The basic concept of a reclamation project is to keep the three "ingredients" of acid mine drainage (water, oxygen, and iron pyrite in coal spoil) from coming in contact with one another. Typically coal spoil is re-contoured to allow for positive drainage, the area is capped with a layer of compacted clay, then re-vegetated. This will encourage surface water to run off of the site instead of percolating into the spoil and forming AMD.

The Daniels Reclamation Project is located in Jackson County and drains directly into Little Raccoon Creek. This project is funded by a Watershed Cooperative Agreement Program Grant through the Office of Surface Mining, the Abandoned Mine Land Fund (ODNR Division of Mineral Resources), and Health and Safety (ODNR Division of Mineral Resources). Dirt Works Express LLC of Logan, Ohio began construction in 2017 and were able to drain the two acidic pits, regrade the 10 acres of spoil, address a dangerous highwall, and clear the borrow area before stabilizing the site for winter. Construction will resume this spring with contractors pre-liming the existing spoil, re-soiling the 10 acre site, planting a native seed mix on the reclaimed site, and planting hardwood trees on the borrow area. This project is managed by ODNR Division of Mineral Resources Management and will reduce acid and metal loads entering Little Raccoon Creek. Expected completion date: June 30, 2018.

The Hlesboro Reclamation Project is located in Hocking County and drains into the West Branch of Raccoon Creek. This project is funded by a Section 319 (h) Nonpoint Source Grant (Ohio EPA) and Abandoned Mine Land Funds (ODNR Division of Mineral Resources). Ohio Erie Excavating LLC of Bolivar, Ohio began construction in February of 2018 and they have been working on clearing the 34 acre site. Many trees need to be cut, then windrowed or chipped before any earthwork can begin. Once the site is cleared, the two strip pits will be drained, the spoil will be graded to obtain positive drainage, pre-limed at 20 tons/acre, capped with 1-2 feet of suitable re-soil material (from an adjacent borrow area) and re-vegetated; preventing the formation of Acid Mine Drainage (AMD). Open limestone channels will convey water off of the site and into the receiving tributaries. This project is managed by ODNR Division of Mineral Resources Management and will reduce acid and metal loads entering the headwaters of Raccoon Creek. Expected completion date: December 21, 2018.



Right of Entry Forms

Jennie Brancho—Ohio University MSES student

Biological and chemical monitoring throughout the watershed allows us to measure RCP's success in improving and protecting water quality throughout Raccoon Creek watershed. As of 2016, RCP and its partners identified improvements based on warmwater habitat standards in 82 stream miles in Raccoon Creek. After the completion of 20 restoration projects, the stream acidity and metal concentrations in Raccoon Creek have decreased dramatically. Today, all but six of the 117 long term monitoring stream miles currently meet the pH target of 6.5 or higher. Without access to our long-term monitoring sites, we would not be able to track our successes and identify new areas for restoration or preservation. Near the end of 2017, we sent out right of entries to the landowners near our sampling sites to allow us to continue to monitor stream quality. Thank you to all the landowners who have sent these ROEs back, and if you haven't sent yours yet, we are looking forward to hearing from you soon!

Asian Carp - After Dark

Neil Gillespie, Carterville FWCO

With the sun sinking westward and daylight fading on a cool September evening, most people were ready to shed their workday responsibilities and get some much deserved rest. However, on this evening, a small group from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Carterville Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office (FWCO), Ohio Department of Natural Resources, and Raccoon Creek Partnership had just clocked in and were making their way out onto the water to begin a night of gill netting for an elusive giant – the bighead carp.

Bighead carp, a lesser known cousin of the acrobatic silver carp, are an invasive species native to Asia that have been invading waters of the United States since the 1970s. They can grow much larger than their silver cousins, reaching lengths of over four feet and weighing as much as 88 pounds. Both species are planktivores, filter feeders of microscopic organisms in the water, creating competition with many vital native species and threatening entire food webs. Bighead carp are of increasing interest to researchers due to their ability to easily move upstream and invade new waters.



Work boats outfitted with LED lights navigate through the fog on Raccoon Creek. Credit: Neil Gillespie, USFWS



Wyatt Snodgrass of ODNR (left) and Amy Mackey of the Raccoon Creek Partnership (middle) prepare to weigh a 78.5 pound bighead carp. Credit: Lucas Shea, USFWS

On this night, however, these bighead carp had moved into Robert C. Byrd Pool of the Ohio River, a “no-go” zone requiring an interagency response of capture and removal to slow their upstream spread. Daylight netting of bighead carp within this reach had been attempted before, with no success. But, based on successful nighttime harvesting by several local bowfishermen, the USFWS decided to test the idea that bighead would be more active and thus easier net after dusk. Two boats outfitted with work lights and gill nets traveled to a potential hotspot for bighead carp known as Raccoon Creek. Nets were set across the deep and slow moving creek to enclose a section that likely contained several bighead carp. The trap was set. Smaller fish would easily pass through the five inch wide holes in the mesh, but the larger bigheads would not be so lucky. Within minutes, a section of one of the nets sank and then exploded from the water. A bighead had become trapped in the mesh, thrashing and fighting to get free, yet only becoming more entangled. One crew raced to the net where the fish was caught and managed to lift the 55 pound carp into the boat. At that moment, another explosion from the water was heard, but this time from a different net further upstream. Another crew raced to the site. This 78.5 pound, four and a half foot long monster was going to require all three crew members giving all they had to wrestle the massive fish into the boat. This would occur two more times, with only one being successfully pulled into the boat.

Three bigheads were removed from Robert C. Byrd Pool that night, with one more being captured and removed the following night. Despite the low number captured, the success of removing four individuals using a new capture method in an area not previously confirmed to contain carp was a rewarding experience for all involved.

Reprinted from USFWS Midwest Region Fisheries Program "Fish Lines."

RCP UPCOMING EVENTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Visit www.raccooncreek.org for details about upcoming events and activities, as well as event and meeting locations. Unless otherwise noted, many of our educational events take place at the Waterloo Aquatic Education Center (WAEC). Event dates and times subject to change!

Monthly RCP Meetings are held the Last Thursday of every month at 6:30 PM

RCP Spring Day Camp and Birding Hike_____	April 14th
Turkeys in Ohio Presentation at Vinton Community Center_____	April 19th
Monday Creek- Passport to the Outdoors_____	May 6th
Sunday Creek- Burr Oak Float_____	May 20th
RCP Family Outdoor Day_____	May 26th
Wildlife Rescue and Rehabilitation Presentation at Division 4 HQ_____	May 30th
Gallia SWCD Summer Camp_____	June 5th-7th
Monday Creek- Canoe Float_____	June 10th
Sunday Creek- Summer Camp_____	June 11th- 15th
Ohio River Sweep_____	June 16th
RCP Summer Camp_____	June 18th-22nd
Sunday Creek- Scientist Camp_____	June 25th-29th
Creek Jam at Eclipse Company Store_____	July 14th
Monday Creek- Summer Camp_____	July 9th-13th

RCP meetings are in **BOLD**. Events in the surrounding watersheds are in **SALMON**.

****All events subject to change. ****

For info or directions visit us at raccooncreek.org or
<https://www.facebook.com/raccooncreekpartnership/>
 Or e-mail raccooncreekpartnership@gmail.com



Effortless ways to help RCP

Set us as your Charitable Organization of choice.

AmazonSmile is the same Amazon you know. Same products, same prices, same service. Just shop on Amazon Smile and 0.5% of your eligible purchase price goes to RCP.



Just go to: <https://smile.amazon.com> and enter Raccoon Creek Partnership as your charitable organization. Then remember to go to smile.amazon.com next time you shop on Amazon! It doesn't cost you anything, and it helps to support the Raccoon Creek Partnership!

Want to help Raccoon Creek? Register your Kroger Plus Card!

Sign up Today by Following These 5 Easy Steps:

1. Go to: <https://www.kroger.com/topic/kroger-community-rewards-3> :Click "Sign in" or "Create an account" at the top of the screen.
2. To Create an account: simply fill in the requested information and a confirmation email will be sent to you.
3. Click on the link provided in the email from Kroger, and "Sign in".
4. Once signed in click on the "Edit Community Rewards Information" near the bottom of the screen. Then, in the "Find Your Organization" field, type in "Raccoon Creek Partnership". Select us and Save your Selection.
5. Swipe your Kroger Rewards Card every time you shop and help RCP grow!

Raccoon Creek Partnership

c/o Amy Mackey
Voinovich School
The Ridges, Bldg 22
Athens, OH 45701

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Name	
Address	
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E-mail	

Yes, I (we) would like to help protect Raccoon Creek

		Paddlefish	\$1000
		Flathead Catfish	\$500
		Spotted Bass	\$100
		Grass Pickerel	\$50
Organizational Membership			
		Golden Redhorse	\$500
		Longear Sunfish	\$100
		Fantail Darter	\$30
		Striped Shiner	\$15
Individual Membership			

A local partnership working towards conservation, stewardship, and restoration of the watershed for a healthier stream and community

