

Raccoon Creek News

Spring 2019

Springing into Warmer Days

2019-2020 AmeriCorps Member Recruitment

By Annika Gurrola – AmeriCorps Member

Join the Raccoon Creek Partnership team!

Recruitment for the 2019-2020 Ohio Stream Restore Corps (OSRC) AmeriCorps term is underway. If you are looking to begin a career in watershed management, then this might be the opportunity for you. Raccoon Creek OSRC members assist with all aspects of watershed management including; chemical, physical, and biological monitoring, grant writing, data entry and analysis, outreach and education, project maintenance, and so much more!

Here's what our current members have to say about their AmeriCorps term so far:

"AmeriCorps has been a great way for me to grow. I have learned many new skills and had a lot of fun doing it. What makes our service enjoyable is working with like-minded people and just knowing that we are making a difference in the world." Nikki Salas

"I am so happy that I found the AmeriCorps program right out of college! It has allowed me to gain experience in a field that's relevant to my degree while I figure out my next step. AmeriCorps has also introduced me to so many new people that I have grown close to." Annika Gurrola

Applications are being accepted until June 1st for an August 16, 2019 start date, but APPLY SOON for full consideration as interviews will begin in April. Visit www.raccooncreek.org or www.ruralaction.org for information on how to apply!



<http://ruralaction.org/get-involved/ameri-corps/available-positions/>

Farewell to Waterloo

By Nikki Salas – AmeriCorps Member



In 2018, we parted ways with the Waterloo Aquatic Education Center. Over the past decade, there were many fun educational events held there, countless crafts made, and lots of wildlife discovered by curious young minds.

There's no reason to be sad, though, because the Waterloo Wildlife Area is still available for use. There are 35 walking trails, designated access roads for

ATVs, stocked fishing ponds, and land for hunting wild turkey, white-tailed deer, cottontail rabbit, and more. However, RCP will no longer be holding camps and events at Waterloo. We will be utilizing other parks and recreational buildings/lands in and around the watershed.

A huge thanks to ODNR Division of Wildlife for allowing us to use the building since 2007, and more thanks to all the volunteers, interns, AmeriCorps, board members, etc. who helped to maintain the building and facilitate programs at Waterloo!



ATHENS

GALLIA

HOCKING

JACKSON

MEIGS

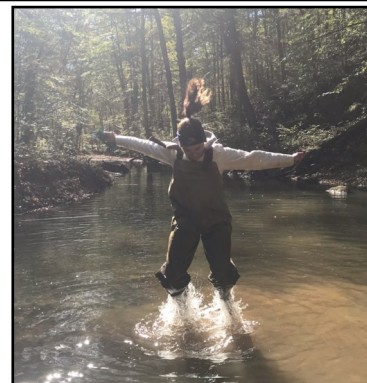
VINTON

Good Luck, Jennie!

By Amy Mackey – Raccoon Creek Watershed Coordinator, Ohio University Voinovich School



With office space at the Ohio University Voinovich School, RCP staff and AmeriCorps have the opportunity to meet and interact with many OU undergrad and graduate students. Jennie Brancho entered the Voinovich School's MSES (Master of Science in Environmental Studies) graduate program in August of 2017. Jennie would be working with Raccoon Creek and conducting her thesis research in Hewett Fork, a tributary to Raccoon Creek. The first few projects we asked Jennie to work on went great. She always showed up on time, she worked quickly, she was very nice, and had great attention to detail.



Then in the fall of 2017 I asked Jennie to assist on a fish sampling crew. Fish sampling is hard and dirty work. Lots of heavy equipment to carry, long days, slippery mud, mosquitoes, poison ivy, and of course...fish. It was on this day that Jennie informed me that she hates fish. She hates everything about fish. She hates eating fish, touching fish, looking at

fish, she doesn't even like talking about fish. So here I am, stuck with a fish-hater on a fish crew. Anyone who knows me understands why, at this point, I was no longer sure that I liked Jennie. How can you hate fish?!

Since that day in October 2017, Jennie has helped sample for fish, sort fish, teach youth about fish, calculate fish scores, and enter fish data. She has, on at least one occasion, held a fish, and she even told me one time that she thought a darter was kind of cute.

Jennie spent countless hours in the rain and the mud and the muck collecting her sediment samples in Hewett Fork. She sat for days and days alone in the lab preparing her samples. And even more days staring at the computer trying to get the model just perfect. Jennie defended her thesis "Effects of Precipitation Patterns on Sediment, Nutrient, and Biofilm Dynamics in an AMD Stream" on March 6th, graduates in May, and already has a job lined up as a Watershed Coordinator in Tinker's Creek. Jennie is an amazing student, a valuable member of the Raccoon Creek team, and a wonderful friend! Best of luck in all that you do, we are so proud of you and you will be missed!



Raccoon Creek Project & Monitoring Updates

By Amy Mackey – Raccoon Creek Watershed Coordinator, Ohio University Voinovich School

2018 was a wet year! The above average rainfall, followed by flooding and soggy soils, effectively delayed project completion and watershed monitoring. Many times this summer we had great crews of volunteers, AmeriCorps, and staff from Ohio University, ODNR, and Rural Action lined up to help sample, only to cancel at the last minute due to storms, flooding, and muddy water! We did manage to finish all of our chemical monitoring and all but a few biological monitoring sites but it was definitely a struggle.

The three active projects in Raccoon Creek were all impacted by the rain to some extent. The Daniels Run Reclamation project in Jackson County was completed in August of 2018. In the spring of 2019, post construction monitoring will begin and in the spring of 2020, native hardwood trees will be planted on site.

The Ilesboro Reclamation Project in Hocking County has been winterized and will resume as soon as ground and weather conditions allow in the spring. The site is ready for resoil and seeding and is scheduled for completion in the summer of 2019. Post construction monitoring will begin fall 2019.

The Big Sandy Run Low-head Dam Removal Project will be completed in 2019. To minimize site disturbance and downstream movement of sediment, the project should be completed at low flow. When stream conditions allow, the dam will be removed to allow for fish passage and to restore the habitat to more natural conditions.

Project photos and updates are posted to the Raccoon Creek website. Follow the projects at <http://www.raccooncreek.org/category/project-updates/>

You can also view annotated 360° photos of our current projects at <http://watersheddata.com/Education/Stream1.html>

Experiments at Home with Your Children

By Natalie Kruse Daniels – Director of Environmental Studies Program, Ohio University Voinovich School



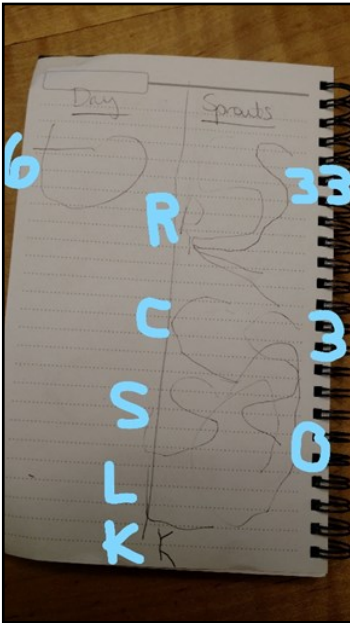
Children love the outdoors and working with their hands, so how do we facilitate that during dreary winter days? This “science experiment” is a wonderful way to get children thinking and involved in their world.

It was time to start spring seeds to plant out in our greenhouse, so I worked with my four-year-old to design an experiment and observe the seeds sprouting. We filled two trays with planting mix and added water. We then went through our seed collection to talk about what plants can tolerate the cold and which cannot. We settled on starting radishes, kale, chard, lettuce, and spinach. We added seeds, spread them out evenly over parts of the trays and labelled them to ensure we knew which seeds were where. After putting covers on the trays, we put them under grow lights from 7:00 am to 9:00 pm. When I asked

him how many days he thought it would take for sprouts to start growing, he said five. This was the beginning of making a hypothesis and testing it.

Each day, he checks on the trays to see if any sprouts have emerged. Not only has he remembered to check, he has been eager to do so. After checking, he makes notes in his notebook (photo to the right). We prepared pages to note what day it was and how many sprouts he counted. He is still learning to write numbers (I've added text to make it easier to interpret), but this gives him meaning to those numbers and motivation to practice – you can see on day 4 he asked me to write the numbers. By observing the trays every day, he is able to start finding changes, even small ones, like a little bit of fungus growing in the tray or the condensation on the lid. Each of these observations allows us to talk about what's happening in the world around him.

On the sixth day of checking, right before leaving for school, he ran to the trays and, finally, saw sprouts. We were waiting until he got home from school to check them out further. He decided to write down how many sprouts he saw and what kind they were.



Counting the sprouts provided a challenge, because while he is able to count to 100, organizing the sprouts visually into groups is difficult for a young child. It is easy to forget which sprouts you have already counted, even for an adult! The first time he counted, he almost gave up, but we worked together to count them all. The first sprouts to emerge were radishes, and he was able to sound out the word and remember the kinds of seeds we started. After counting the radish sprouts, he looked closer and saw just a few chard sprouts. He counted those too.

Like any good scientist, he then had to make notes about what he saw. We started a new page in his notebook for the new observations. He soon realized that he had to change how he made his notes because there were sprouts of different kinds.

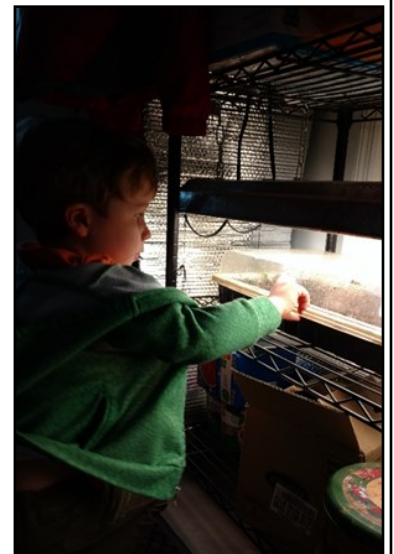
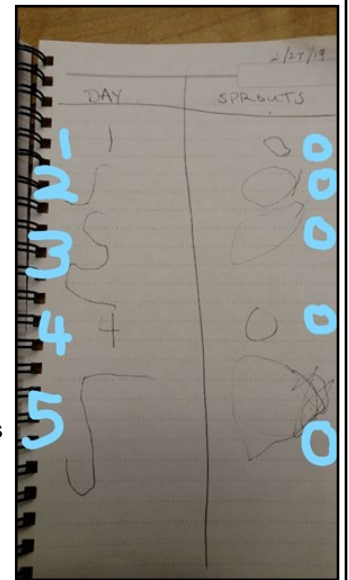
This gave him an opportunity to think about how to write down his observations so that we can compare them to what we find next. Photo to the left: You can see he is still learning his letters and numbers (added text to show what his writing says). R = radish, C = chard, S = spinach, L = lettuce, and K = kale.

While this is a simple experiment, young children learn from experiences and observation. This small effort has allowed a four-year-old child to practice literacy, writing, numbers, observation of the world around him, organize his thoughts

into notes, and practice responsibility.

After all of the types of seeds sprout, we plan on working together to plant them in the greenhouse and watch them continue to grow. We hope that involving him in growing food will also help him be more willing to try new foods and give him more joy in being outside.

Hopefully you can take these ideas and make them your own, children are natural scientists and it takes very little effort to bring it out in them! What a great way to celebrate the coming of spring!



Owls of Ohio

By Annika Gurrola, AmeriCorps Member

Even though the RCP Owl Prowl was cancelled due to heavy rainfall this year, we still wanted to provide some information on the owls of Ohio for anyone who hoped to attend the event.

Ohio is home to many types of raptors, or birds of prey, and the owl is one of them. There are six species of owls that can be found in Ohio, according to ODNR: Barn Owl, Barred Owl, Eastern Screech Owl, Great Horned Owl, Saw-Whet Owl, and Short-eared Owl. Because owls evolved to be nocturnal, there is less competition for food between raptors when the owl comes out to hunt. Owls are capable of hunting at night because of a highly developed auditory system which amplifies sound with a disk of feathers that surrounds their ears. They are also able to turn their heads over 180 degrees to track sound. Some species are even able to hear a beetle running through grass 100 feet away! In addition to their excellent hearing, owls have large eyes so that they can see more light at night. These adaptations make owls excellent nocturnal hunters.

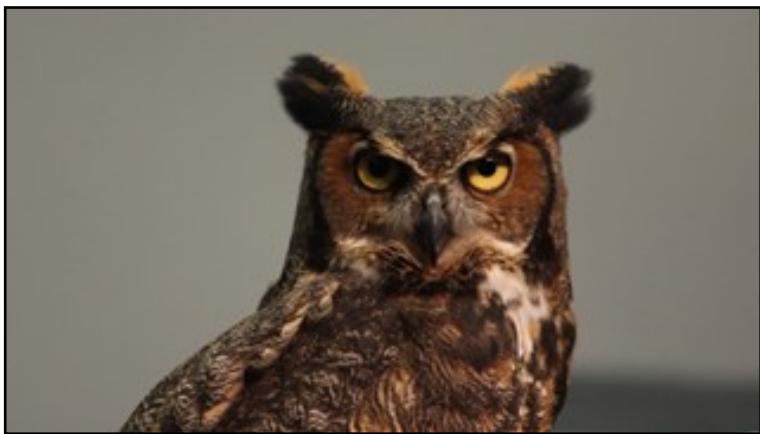
Here are some ways that you can help these amazing critters thrive in Ohio:

Be cautious when driving at night! Some species can be found on the side of the road and it is important that we are aware of them so a collision can be avoided.

Consider leaving an old barn or shed available for owl habitat—especially if there is already an owl living in it.

Spread the word about how amazing owls are. By teaching people about their unique qualities, we can work towards ensuring their safety from anthropogenic hazards.

Next time you are out at dark, listen for an owl calling into the night!



Great Horned owl, Photo taken by George Blankenhorn

Mushroom Hunting

By Nikki Salas, AmeriCorps Member

It's almost the time of year to start looking for morels. Morels (*morchella esculenta*) are a delicious type of mushroom that for some people is considered a meal in itself. They start popping up mid-March and can be found throughout the spring. It's best to look for morels at the base of trees and near rotting logs after a heavy rain. Look closely, because they can be hiding under leaves as well. Morels are usually about 3-6 inches tall and have a base of 1 ½ to 2 ½ inches thick.

It's important to make sure the mushrooms you are harvesting are morels and not their evil twin – false morels – which are not safe to eat. The easiest way to tell which one you have is by checking the inside of the mushroom. If the inside is hollow, it is a morel, but if the mushroom is solid all the way through, that is a false morel and shouldn't be eaten.

Always use caution while consuming wild/collected mushrooms or plants and make sure you are on property that you are allowed to be and where collection is legal. As stated on ODNR'S website, many state parks permit the hunting of mushrooms but special rules do apply, so contact the park office at each park you plan to visit.

Happy Hunting!



Source: Wikipedia.org

Thank you, Raccoon Creek Outfitters!

By Annika Gurrola, AmeriCorps Member

We want to send a huge thank you to Dustin and Bobbi Hoy of Raccoon Creek Outfitters for their continued generosity and unwavering support! Once again, they are donating an extremely impressive Bonafide SS127 kayak to our annual Paw Paw Festival kayak raffle. All proceeds from the raffle will go towards supporting the RCP mission of working towards conservation, stewardship, and restoration of the watershed for a healthier stream and community.

Interested in entering the raffle? We will be selling raffle tickets at Raccoon Creek Outfitters (74815 U.S. Highway 50, Albany) and Raccoon Creek Partnership's office (Building 22 Office 208, The Ridges, Athens—please contact Amy Mackey (mackey@ohio.edu) before stopping in) until September 16th! We will also be selling tickets at the 2019 Paw Paw Festival at Lake Snowden in Albany on September 13-15th at the RCP Booth. Tickets are \$5 each, or you can buy 6 tickets for \$20. For more information about the kayak and raffle or to buy tickets online, please visit our website <http://www.raccooncreek.org/>

The winner of the raffle will be selected on September 15th at the RCP's Paw Paw Festival booth! Good luck!



RCP UPCOMING EVENTS & OPPORTUNITIES

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

*For details about upcoming events and activities, as well as event and meeting locations, visit our [facebook](#) page, www.raccooncreek.org, or contact mackey@ohio.edu. **Event dates and times subject to change.***

Bat Talk	March 28th, 6:30pm
Division of Wildlife—360 E State St, Athens	
Jackie O's Earth Day Event	Late April, TBD
Spring Day Camp	April 27th. 10am-2pm
Raccoon Creek Outfitters—74815 Us Rt 50, Albany	
Family Outdoors Day	June 1st, 12pm-4pm
Lake Hope Shelter House—27331 St Rt 278. McArthur	
Ohio River Sweep	June 15th, 9am-1pm
Meet at Waterloo Wildlife Area—Intersection of Rt 56 and OH 356	
RCP Summer Camp *all spots are FILLED*	July 15th-19th, 9am-4pm
Raccoon Creek Outfitters—74815 Us Rt 50, Albany	
Fundraiser at Little Fish	July 28th, 12pm-4pm

Raccoon Creek Partnership Board meetings are the last Thursday of each month and open to the public.

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

For info or directions visit our Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/raccooncreekpartnership/>

Or e-mail raccooncreekpartnership@gmail.com or mackey@ohio.edu



Raccoon Creek Partnership

c/o Amy Mackey

Voinovich School

The Ridges, Bldg 22

Athens, OH 45701

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

Membership	
Creek Chub	\$15
Johnny Darter	\$30*
Channel Catfish	\$50*
Grass Pickerel	\$100*
Spotted Bass	\$500*
Paddlefish	\$1000*
*Any membership over \$30 receives a free Raccoon Creek Water Trail Map	

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

