

# Raccoon Creek News

Fall 2022

*You autumn know...*

## Hocking Hills Orchard

*Derek Mills– Hocking Hills Orchard, Four Seasons Cabins, Traveling Chapel*

A little about Hocking Hills Orchard.

In 2021 we were listed as one of the best UPic orchards in the US by Pioneer Woman. Not for the size, the orchard is only on 12 acres, but the sheer diversity of what we grow. I have been a member of NAFEX (North American Fruit Explorers) since the middle 80's. NAFEX is a group dedicated to the preservation of heirloom varieties of fruit grown in North America. I remember I had read a story in a magazine where the author wrote about Newtown Pippin and it being one of George Washington's favorite apple varieties. How does he know that I wondered? So I wrote a letter and received a reply back along with a root stock and a piece of scion with instructions on how to graft and about joining NAFEX. This will never work I remember thinking but it did and that began my journey in Pomology.

After grafting Newtown Pippin I followed up with Esopus Spitzenberg and Black Gillflower. Then I read about red fleshed apples and obtained Pink Pearl. From grafting one Newtown Pippin in 1985 to now grafting 200 to 300 new trees every year. Our orchard is up to 1,700+ varieties, the majority being apples but also 160 varieties of pears, and 100 or so varieties of grapes and assorted peach and cherry varieties. Clearly apples are my favorites to grow! There can be so much history in a variety that has been around for a hundred or even hundreds of years.

People will ask me at the classes I give what is my favorite variety? And I always reply with the cliché answer of whatever is ripe at that time. But if I could only grow 5 or 6 trees I have no problem picking what they would be:

Blue Pearmain – always a shy bearer but the flavor is so distinct and the bluish bloom on some of the ripe fruit so unusual that this medium to large fruit is worth growing. We eat them up as they ripen so never have a chance to add them to cider or pies.

Red Devil – The fruit is medium size red skinned and red fleshed with a nice sweet tart flavor that my granddaughter calls “the strawberry tree”.

Green Newtown Pippin – a sport of Newtown Pippin with medium size fruit that stay more greenish yellow when ripe rather than all yellow like Newtown Pippin. Has contorted limbs like a contorted filbert so even the curvy branches are cool to look at. Heavy producer year in and out and great for eating fresh, baking and cider.

Continued on Page 2

Raccoon Creek Partnership will be holding an apple tree grafting workshop with Derek Mills this spring! Keep an eye out on social media and our website for more updates and information!



Apples from Hocking Hills Orchard.

ATHENS

GALLIA

HOCKING

JACKSON

MEIGS

VINTON

## Hocking Hills Orchard Cont.

Moyer's Spice – I obtained this back in the late 80's from the late Henry Morton. A lot of apples have names that make me question how they were named that but not Moyer's Spice. On a warm August afternoon when I pick one of these from the sunny side of the tree it is like biting into warm apple pie! Medium size mostly red apples with great flavor and a lot of juice.

Golden Russet – the first russet apple variety I grafted and still one of my favorite. Medium to large size fruit with a medium coarse russet over yellow skin. The flavor gets more sweet the longer in storage and we always use this variety in our cider.

I like unusual and heirloom varieties so I concentrate on red fleshed apples, cider varieties, extremely large varieties and anything with an unusual history. About 270 different varieties out of our 1,700 varieties have red, orange or pink flesh. From light pink flesh like Pink Pearl to dark beet red like Rubaiyat and all shades in between.

Email me at [derekcs2005@aol.com](mailto:derekcs2005@aol.com) with any apple queries and I will do my best to give an answer. And go to my orchard, Hocking Hills Orchard, website at [www.hockinghillsorchard.com](http://www.hockinghillsorchard.com) And for even more current orchard info go to my orchard Facebook page at: [www.facebook.com/hockinghillsorchard](http://www.facebook.com/hockinghillsorchard)

## Become a Citizen Scientist with a My Backyard Stream Water Quality Testing Kit!

Starting in May 2022, Raccoon Creek Partnership is a collaborator on the My Backyard Stream water quality testing initiative started by the Voinovich School of Leadership and Public Service at Ohio University. My Backyard Stream is a grant-funded initiative that provides water quality tools and education to citizens. A My Backyard Stream toolkit allows citizens to collect data on the chemical, biological, and physical water indicators of any body of water and aims to empower citizens to learn about their surrounding environment. In

addition to providing feedback on the overall health of a stream, collected data can also be uploaded into a water quality database on <https://watersheddata.com/Education/BackyardStreamCode.aspx>. This database allows for the public to access water quality data for streams across the state, including pH, conductivity, alkalinity, transparency, total hardness, as well as other parameters.

Reach out to Ashley Grace at [rca.amicorps.1@gmail.com](mailto:rca.amicorps.1@gmail.com) with your name and contact information to borrow a water quality kit. One toolkit can be borrowed at a time unless circumstances require an exception for additional kits, each loan duration is one week unless otherwise communicated. Funding for this program was provided in part by Ohio Environmental Education Fund, U.S. Department of Energy EM PPPO, the AEP Ohio Fund of the Columbus Foundation, Ohio STEM learning Network, and the Voinovich School of Leadership and Public Service at Ohio University.



Salamander found using the My Backyard Stream kit.



Large dragonfly nymph caught at Chieftain Elementary School.



The biology portion of the My Backyard Stream kit in use.

# Exceptional Raccoon Creek Recovery

*Amy Mackey- RCP Watershed Coordinator, Ohio University Voinovich School*

If you have been following the story of Raccoon Creek, you are probably aware that the watershed has struggled with a long history of resource extraction. Coal mining that occurred across the region from the late 1800s through the 1970s was largely unregulated, resulting in acid mine drainage and sedimentation throughout the watershed. These environmental stressors degraded chemical and physical water quality and severely impacted the stream's ability to sustain aquatic life. For many years, Raccoon Creek was considered "unrecoverable"...too far gone to ever rebound from the negative impacts of unregulated, pre-law coal mining. Fortunately, a group of concerned citizens in the 1980s cared deeply about the watershed and succeeded in getting the support of agency partners. The grassroots Raccoon Creek Improvement Committee, becoming the Raccoon Creek Partnership (RCP) in 2007, has been an integral part of the recovery of Raccoon Creek. RCP has worked with countless partners over the years but those responsible for most of the funding, project construction, and monitoring efforts are Ohio Department of Natural Resources Division of Mineral Resources Management (ODNR DMRM), Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (OEPA), Office of Surface Mining (OSM), and Ohio University Voinovich School. Combined efforts and resources of these partners have secured over 17 million dollars in grant funding for the successful completion of 22 restoration projects in the watershed. These projects have greatly improved water quality and habitat in Raccoon Creek and have restored this "unrecoverable" wasteland, devoid of aquatic life and choked with sediment and metals from abandoned coal mines, back to a thriving, healthy biological community!

Project success and water quality improvements are determined by conducting chemical and biological monitoring throughout the basin. Regular and consistent monitoring is necessary to determine project effectiveness, maintenance needs, and long-term water quality trends over time. Chemical and biological monitoring conducted by a variety of partners over the past 40 years has shown consistent improvement since watershed remediation efforts began in the 1980s. In recent years, we have had the honor of sharing with you the exciting news of the recovery of Raccoon Creek as chemical water quality parameters have improved and biological communities have rebounded. Currently, Raccoon Creek is home to over 80 species of fish, including the state threatened paddlefish.

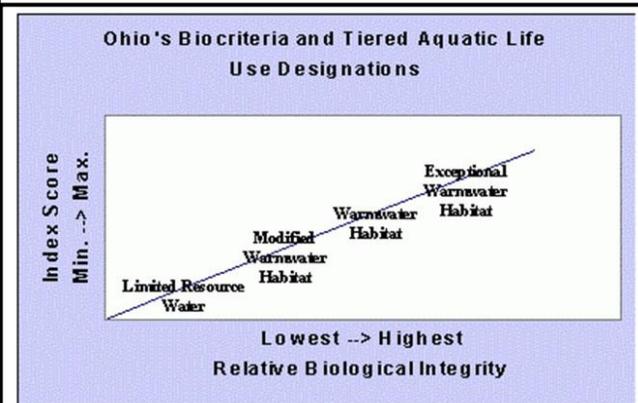


Canoeing on Raccoon Creek

2022 is an exciting year for Raccoon Creek. On August 18<sup>th</sup>, 2022, Ohio EPA officially approved upgraded Aquatic Life Uses for much of Raccoon Creek. This is big news! The headwaters of Raccoon Creek (from river mile 95.52 to river mile 111.0), previously designated Limited Resource Water (the lowest degree of biological integrity) is now recommended and meeting Warmwater Habitat! Raccoon Creek from the low-head dam in Vinton (river mile 40.3) to the backwaters of the Ohio River (river mile 8.15) is now recommended and fully meeting **Exceptional Warmwater Habitat (EWH)**! EWH designation is reserved for waters with rare and unusual species, high

biodiversity, and exceptional chemical and physical water quality. As of August 18, 2022, the entire mainstem of Raccoon Creek, from the Ohio River in Gallia County to the confluence of East and West Branch in Vinton County, is recommended Warmwater Habitat or Exceptional Warmwater Habitat.

It is so exciting to finally be able to share this official good news with the people who have supported Raccoon Creek over the years! It's been a long journey and the journey is far from being over. Once again, I want to thank everyone who has supported us. Thank you to the RCP membership for your generosity over the years and thank you to our agency partners for providing the technical expertise and grant funding to make this recovery possible! We couldn't do what we do without all of **YOU!**



Graphic from: <https://www.epa.gov/wqc/ohios-tiered-aquatic-life-use-designations-turn-20-years-old>

## Duck Derby Winners!!!

Congratulations to our First Annual Duck Derby winner! In first place we had Swimee. Second place was Jarmason, and in 3rd place was Donut. Last but not least, the slowest duck award goes to José Carioca!

Thank you to everyone who signed up and adopted a duck as well as a big thanks to those that attended the race on September 25th near Moonville Tunnel. We can't wait to race again next year.

Watch out on Facebook and Instagram for updates on the RCP Duck Derby for 2023!



Duck Derby Winners!

## Upcoming Events and Opportunities

**RCP Annual Meeting** \_\_\_\_\_ **Oct 26th, 6pm-8pm**

**Raccoon Creek Outfitters: 74815 US-50 #8010, Albany, OH 45710**

**Bring your own chair! There will be a bonfire, s'mores, cider, Snowville hot chocolate, story telling from Pat Quackenbush, board elections, and a silent auction**

**R.O.A.R. Day** \_\_\_\_\_ **Oct 29th, All day**

**Rural Ohio Appalachia Revisited Day at Lake Hope State Park**

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

For info or directions visit our Facebook page:

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

Or e-mail [raccooncreekpartnership@gmail.com](mailto:raccooncreekpartnership@gmail.com) or [mackey@ohio.edu](mailto:mackey@ohio.edu)



## 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 6 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!
6. **Remember to renew every April**

# Summer Camp 2022

*Kelsey Daniels- RCP AmeriCorps Member*

Over the summer Raccoon Creek Partnership hosted Summer Camp at Raccoon Creek Outfitters. This was a week long day camp where campers got to experience all kinds of activities. Day one was pirate themed and we practiced orienteering with compasses by having a scavenger hunt with pirate treasure at the end. We also had folks from the Hocking College Nature center come out for a live bird presentation. Day 2 we had a plant ID hike, played recycle relay and dissected owl pellets. Later in the week campers learned archery and we had the Division of Wildlife come out and do a fish sampling demonstration. On the last day we all visited Lake Hope for some fun in the water and a way to cool off. We visited the nature center, went canoeing and ended the day with swimming in the lake. Thank you to all the volunteers that helped out to make this camp possible! It was such a great week getting to know everyone and we can't wait to have camp again next year!

Stay updated on 2023 camp registration through our Facebook and Instagram.

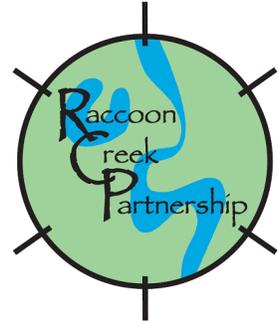


# Raccoon Creek Partnership

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

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## Send To:



Printed on post-consumer recycled paper

*Voinovich School of Leadership and Public Affairs*

*Raccoon Creek Partnership*

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**Please make checks payable to the:**

*Your contributions are tax deductible.*

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

	Creek Chub	\$15
	Johnny Darter	\$30
	Channel Catfish	\$50
	Grass Pickerel	\$100
	Spotted Bass	\$500
	Paddlefish	\$1000

### Membership

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