

Raccoon Creek News

Spring 2020

Raccoon Creek is healthy and we hope you are too. Stay home and stay healthy RCP!

2020-2021 AmeriCorps Member Recruitment

Raccoon Creek Partnership is recruiting!

Recruitment for the 2020-2021 Appalachian Ohio Restore Corps (formerly Ohio Stream Restore Corps) AmeriCorps term has started. AmeriCorps positions last for a year and are 1700 hour terms. AmeriCorps members in this program gain a variety of training and experiences that help them further their careers.



If you or someone you know is looking to begin a career in watershed management and or water quality then this position is a great starting point. Members at Raccoon Creek assist with chemical and biological monitoring, project maintenance, grant writing, data entry, outreach, education, and lots more.

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 <http://ruralaction.org/get-involved/ameri-corps/available-positions/> for information on how to apply!

Moonville Rail Trail Pilot Project - Ohio AML Reclamation Economic Development Pilot Program

By Kaabe Shaw – ODNR Division of Mineral Resources Management & Amy Mackey – Raccoon Creek Watershed Coordinator, OU Voinovich School



The Ohio Abandoned Mine Land (AML) Reclamation Economic Development Pilot Program (Pilot Program) was authorized by Congress under the Consolidated Appropriations Act on December 18, 2015. Original appropriations provided \$30 million each to PA, WV and KY. An additional \$10 million each was added to OH, VA and AL in FY 2017. AML Pilot funding was renewed, adding an additional \$10 million each year for Ohio. Funds are to be used “for the reclamation of abandoned mine lands in conjunction with economic and community development and reuse goals.”

ODNR Division of Mineral Resources Management is currently developing one Pilot Project in the Raccoon Creek watershed. The Moonville Rail Trail Pilot Project combines the economic benefits associated with bridge construction along the Moonville Rail Trail with addressing adjacent Abandoned Mine Land (AML) Public Health and Safety features. This project compliments work being completed by the Moonville Rail Trail Association (a local nonprofit group).

The Moonville Rail Trail is a popular tourist destination in Vinton/Athens County, especially near the Moonville and King Hollow Tunnels. Thus, demand is high for use of this rail trail. Access to the historic tunnels and the remainder of the rail trail is difficult for many visitors and impossible for bicyclists and other users of the rail trail because the bridges across Hewett Fork were removed by the previous railroad owner. High water also provides a hazard to those who cross the creek in order to continue their journey along the rail trail. Design and construction of 7 new bridges across Hewett Fork, along the rail trail will open 8.5 miles of trail from Zaleski to just west of Mineral, Ohio.

In addition to bridge construction, 8 AML features will be addressed by mitigating the public health and safety hazards. These mine features are located on the Zaleski State Forest, adjacent to the Moonville Rail Trail and are a result of historic underground mining of the Middle Kittanning Coal (No. 6 Seam). Valley Coal Company’s No.1 Mine was abandoned in 1909. Specifically, there are 8 Priority 2 Portals that are accessible by humans and pose a danger due to their location on public property. The two main components of this project (bridge construction and addressing dangerous mine features) are complimentary to each other since hazardous features will be removed from the landscape that will likely see increased visitation from the nearby rail trail improvements.

ATHENS

GALLIA

HOCKING

JACKSON

MEIGS

VINTON

MEET A MACRO

Benthic Macroinvertebrates

Benthic = bottom dwelling

Macro = large

Invertebrate = no backbone

are good indicators of water quality.

By identifying and counting bugs, snails, and crayfish in our streams we can determine the general water quality.

Large numbers of sensitive species means healthier water!

Let's meet one...



Water Striders



WATER STRIDER

Let's be clear...this is NOT a water SPIDER! They only have six legs and one pair of antennae.

Their legs and bodies are covered in tiny hairs that hold air and help the insect skim the top of the water!

The middle legs act like OARS on a rowboat and help them maneuver.

Water Striders eat insects that have become trapped at the water surface. They are commonly found on ponds or other slow moving bodies of water.

Written by: Brooke Sanderson

Hauntings on Raccoon Creek Watershed

By Kelly Love, AmeriCorps Member

Everyone loves a good ghost story, especially if it takes place near them. Ohio is a state rich with history waiting to be explored. Raccoon Creek Watershed has many haunted places located throughout its 6 counties.

One of the most famous haunted places in the watershed is Ash Cave. Ash Cave is located in Hocking Hills State Park. It is well known for its beautiful waterfall, winding trail, and large cave. The trail is surrounded by hemlock trees and the scenery is amazing.

Many people who have hiked around Ash Cave have felt like they are being followed. Many people describe having goosebumps while walking the trail. People have reported being followed by a ghost on this trail. The ghost is a woman wearing 1920's attire who seems to enjoy following groups of hikers along their journey. Usually when she is spotted by someone in the group she will disappear before everyone can see her. No one knows who this mysterious ghost woman is. 1 out of every 4 night hikes report seeing her. I like to think she is a friendly ghost who follows hikers to keep them safe since people have lost their lives from falls in the area. I plan on going hiking at Ash Cave. Maybe I will find her.



@HockingHill.com

Don't Forget to Renew Your Kroger Community Rewards Every April!

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



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!

Exploring Raccoon Creek

By RCP members, supporters and friends!

We asked people on Facebook what they love about Raccoon Creek and here are a few of their responses. Thanks for sharing and if you have a photo or story to share please send it our way!



Staphan Smith enjoying Raccoon Creek.



Brandon Montgomery: "Raising tobacco on the first flats above the creek, duck hunting, swimming, and of course



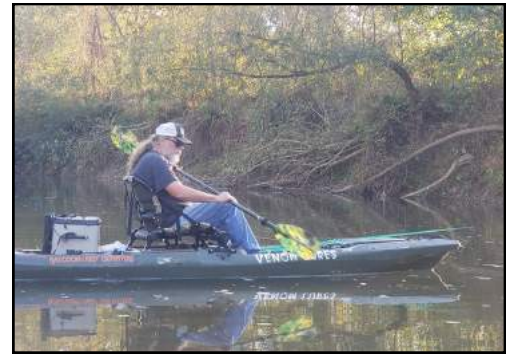
Josh Frost out with his family on Raccoon Creek.



Peter King: "I paddled the whole length in 2016, I think, during the 17 year cicada bloom. It was surreal, and a little maddening. The noise was pretty intense sometimes.



Mike Gilbert: "Grew up on this creek. We were on the poor side of life but this small water way made our lives rich. Best catfishing I've found to this day."



Dustin Hoy- "Dave with uncle bucks riding stable."

The Effect of AMD on Plant Life

By Miles Makosky, 7th grade at Athens Middle School



"I live in the Raccoon Creek watershed, and when I explore the area around me I can find multiple abandoned mines, gob piles, and seeps situated directly next to the tributary that flows by my house. All of this evidence made me wonder what affect this acid mine drainage was having on plants in the surrounding area. So for my project, I took 4 different plants (pothos, grass, soybean, and spider plants) and watered them with three different local water sources (one with a low pH of roughly 3, one with a high pH of about 12, and one with a balanced pH of 7). I gathered my waters from local streams and seeps. I collected my low pH from a small seep before the Carbondale doser. I gathered my high pH from after the Kerns Hollow slag bed. I purchased my balanced pH from Le-Ax water distributor/used my tap water. So for the last

few months I have been watering the plants with the waters I collected, then I gathered data such as how tall the soybeans and grass were above ground, the coloration of all plants, and overall growth." *Miles Makosky*



We look forward to learning the results of Miles' experiment when it's complete!

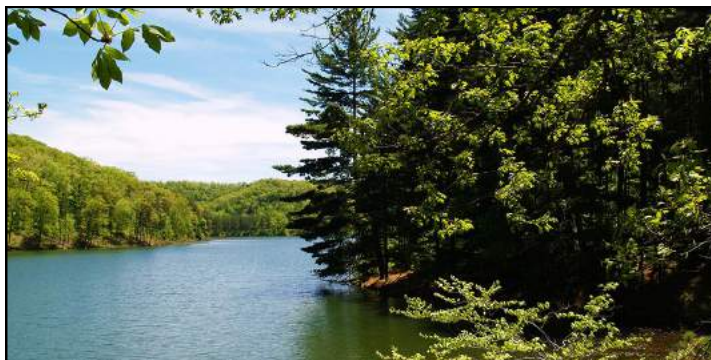
Outdoor Exploration in Times of Social Distancing

By Annika Gurrola OU Voinovich School MSES Graduate Student (and RCP AmeriCorps Alumni)

I'm sure that by now, we have all been urged to commit to social distancing to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. Getting outside and moving our bodies is one of the best ways to stay healthy and avoid the stir-crazy feelings that come with social isolation. Hiking around with your pets and even friends and family (...if a 6 foot distance between you is kept consistent and you are all in good health!) is a great way to clear your mind and enjoy nature during these uncertain times. Check out the info below for two of the best places in southern Ohio to explore the outdoors!

Lake Hope State Park

Lake Hope is a beautiful area that we at Raccoon Creek Partnership have always enjoyed visiting. Whether you are itching to get out on the water or duck into the forested trails for some serenity, this state park has what you're looking for. The park encompasses nearly 3,000 acres of Zaleski State Forest and you are guaranteed to enjoy your time in the beautiful scenery found within the Raccoon Creek watershed! Photo from Vinton County CVB.



Serpent Mound Historical Site

While this is a bit further from home, Serpent Mound is a must-see in southern Ohio. Ignite your inner anthropologist as you travel to see the largest effigy mound in the world. Built by American Indians, visiting Serpent Mound is a great way to admire and respect the work of Ohio's original people. This site is considered for listing as a World Heritage site, so visit it while it is still a well-kept secret. Photo from Ancient Origins.

Batrachospermum Algae

By Emily Keil-Loudner

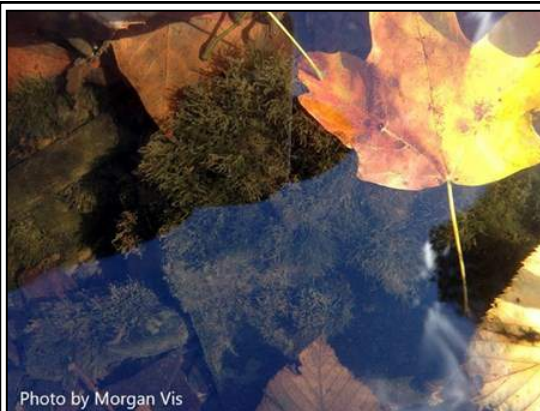


Photo by Morgan Vis

Algae. When most people hear that word, they think of green sludge over lakes, or harmful algal blooms that make people and animals sick. But that's simply not the case for all algae. Algae encompasses a large group of organisms that are photosynthetic (taking energy from the sun to make sugar, like plants) that are aquatic. Some algae, though the most notable, can form harmful algal blooms, but others can be indicative of clean water. Such a group is found in our own Raccoon Creek.

One of these groups, a freshwater red alga called *Batrachospermum*, has been found in Raccoon Creek near Lake Hope, and in Hewett

Fork. Despite being red algae, this group is more often a green or even purple. They cannot tolerate water that has a high amount of nutrients. When looking for *Batrachospermum*, they will look like little bushes in streams. They are important for the stream food web as they serve as delicious meals for some fish and macroinvertebrates. The next time you hear the word algae, remember they are an important part of our streams, just like fish and macroinvertebrates.



Photo by Sunil Tiwari

Quidel Cares Grant will support Water Recreation in Raccoon Creek

By Nora Sullivan, Board Chair of RCP

Raccoon Creek Partnership is grateful for the support from community member, Quidel Corporation. With a laboratory here in Athens, Ohio, Quidel is a California-based leading diagnostic healthcare manufacturer serving to enhance the health and well-being of people around the globe through the development of diagnostic solutions that can lead to improved patient outcomes and provide economic benefits to the healthcare system.

Through its Charitable Giving program, Quidel supports the missions of local non-profit organizations. Raccoon Creek recently was awarded a \$1500 Quidel Cares Grant to support the promotion of water recreation on Raccoon Creek. Funds will be used to renew registrations on our canoes and canoe trailer, update safety equipment, and other paddling, fishing, and recreational activities on Raccoon Creek. Thank you Quidel for supporting the mission of the Raccoon Creek Partnership!



QUIDEL



RCP UPCOMING EVENTS & OPPORTUNITIES

ALL EVENTS ARE CURRENTLY PENDING, UPDATES WILL BE POSTED TO FACEBOOK

Monthly RCP Meetings are held the Last Wednesday 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.****

- | | |
|---|-----------------------------|
| Family Outdoors Day | Date in June TBA!, 12pm-4pm |
| Lake Hope Shelter House—27331 St Rt 278. McArthur | |
| Ohio River Sweep | June 20th, 9am-1pm |
| Location: TBA | |
| RCP Summer Camp | July 15th-19th, 9am-4pm |
| Raccoon Creek Outfitters—74815 Us Rt 50, Albany | |

Raccoon Creek Partnership Board meetings are the last Wednesday 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

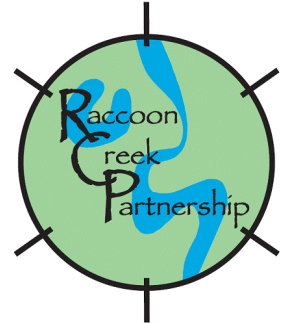
Voinovich School

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Athens, OH 45701

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Raccoon Creek Partnership

Please make checks payable to the:
Your contributions are tax deductible.

Name
Address
Phone
E-mail

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