

Raccoon Creek News

Fall 2012

The Recreation Edition - Explore Raccoon Creek!

A Message from the Chairperson

Dear Raccoon Creek Partnership Members,

As summer winds down, it is a great time to reflect on the beauty of Raccoon Creek and all the recreational opportunities available in the watershed. Not many years ago, many stream miles were heavily impacted by historical mining, limiting fish populations and impacting habitat. In the past decade, over \$10 million has been invested in the restoration of Raccoon Creek Watershed; you can see some of the success we've achieved in the Watershed Coordinator's article. The water quality and habitat restoration has been such a success that we can now look at the creek as more than a polluted water body, but as a recreational opportunity! From fishing and boating on Lake Hope, Lake Rupert and Tycoon Lake to paddling on the mainstem of Raccoon Creek to picnicking in Raccoon Creek County Park to hiking in Zaleski State Forest, the watershed has a lot to offer. With the completion of the brand new water trail map and so many water quality successes, this fall is a great time to Explore Raccoon Creek!



Natalie Kruse, Raccoon Creek Partnership Chair

Raccoon Creek Partnership - Current Board of Directors

Natalie Kruse (Chair), Molly Gurien (Vice-chair), Amber Brookins (Treasurer), Bob Eichenberg (Secretary)
Monte Edwards, Heike Perko, Rob Wiley

2012 RCP Annual Dinner - Sunday, October 14th

Announcing the 6th Annual Raccoon Creek Partnership Annual Dinner. This year's dinner will be held once again at the New Marshfield (Waterloo) Community Center, located in New Marshfield across from the post office. The dinner will be a potluck, so please bring a dish to share. There will be a 50/50 raffle and a silent auction that gets better every year, featuring gift certificates, crafts, and food items from many local businesses, artists, and gardeners.

This year RCP has two board positions up for election and nominations should be sent to **Natalie Kruse at krusen@ohio.edu or Amy Mackey at mackey@ohio.edu or 740-594-1473** by October 1st. Nominees must be current RCP members in good standing by the time of the election. The annual dinner is a great time to renew your membership for the upcoming year, and get caught up on Raccoon Creek. We hope to see you October 14th, 4:00pm at the New Marshfield Community Center!

Pig Roast and Paddle

Live Music by The Rarely Herd and Willie Phoenix

Saturday, September 22, 2012

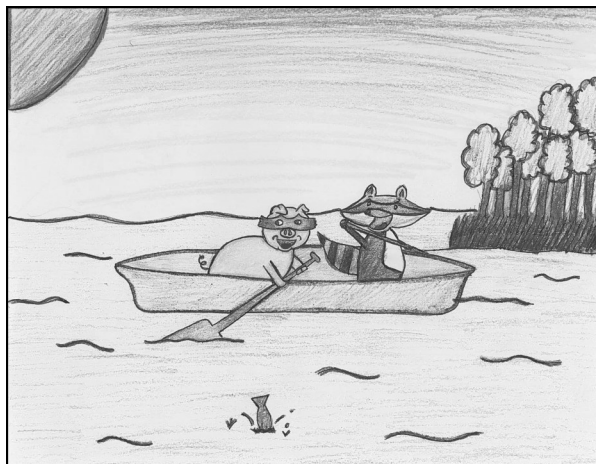
Proceeds to benefit the

Raccoon Creek Partnership and
Athens Building Industry Association

Paddle at 1:00pm on Lake Hope

Pig Roast at 5:00pm at Uncle Bucks Riding
Stable and Dance Barn

For Tickets call 740-597-1473 or for more information check out: www.raccooncreek.org



ATHENS

GALLIA

HOCKING

JACKSON

MEIGS

VINTON

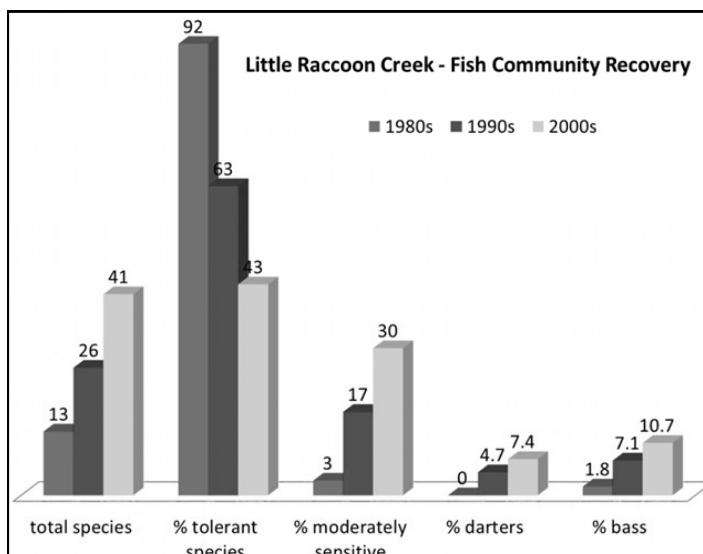
Fall is the Perfect Time to go Fishing in Raccoon Creek

Amy Mackey, Raccoon Creek Watershed Coordinator

Grab your fishing pole, load up your canoe, call a friend, and get out on the creek to catch some fish!

What?! Fishing in Raccoon Creek?! ... YES!!!

As many of you know, much of Raccoon Creek was once considered “dead”. The acidic conditions and high metal concentrations (primarily iron and aluminum) resulting from historic coal mining throughout the area had left the streams unable to support life. In the past two decades, over \$10 million has been spent on 14 reclamation and treatment projects in the Raccoon Creek watershed. These projects have been focused in the Raccoon Creek Headwaters and in the Little Raccoon Creek subwatersheds; the two areas most heavily impacted by acid mine drainage (AMD). These projects reduce the amount of AMD created from abandoned mine lands, remove metals from the water, and add alkalinity to buffer the acidic waters which increases stream pH. These improved chemical water conditions have resulted in dramatic improvements of the biological community in the stream.



In Little Raccoon Creek, where the most drastic improvements have been documented, average fish per sampling site has increased from 20 in the 1980s (with some sites having zero fish), to near 100 in the 2000s! Not only are there *more fish*, but the species composition and diversity has also improved. As you will see in the graph above, total species have increased and among those species, percentages of tolerant species (those able to withstand poor water quality) have decreased, being replaced by those species more sensitive to water quality. These more sensitive species serve as indicators of improving water quality.

Our work in Raccoon Creek is not done yet, there are still many stream miles needing improvement, but, these sections of the stream that have gone from “dead” in the 1980s to “fishable” in the 2000s should serve as valuable reminders of what our streams could be in the future! Stay tuned for several reclamation and treatment projects in the Little Raccoon Creek Watershed in 2012/2013. Thanks to all of our partners who have made this improvement possible!

Anglers “Drum” up Surprise Catches

By Steve Johnson – watershed resident (article compiled from email correspondence with Amy Mackey)

While we are not members of the organization yet, we will be soon. I grew up on the banks of the Little Raccoon, between US 32 & SR 124 in Jackson County. I remember when the water was dead. I recall the strong sulfur smell that oozed from the mud when we played and swam in the creek. The efforts to restore the creek are nothing less than miraculous. I recall the words of my father, an avid hunter, fisherman and an original conservationist, when he said, “We’ll never catch fish in that creek.” Unfortunately, my father past away before the projects began. If only he could see these photos.



My daughter and I have covered many miles of both branches (Raccoon Creek and Little Raccoon Creek) from CR39 to Vinton (Little Raccoon) and SR 124 to Vinton (Big Raccoon) this summer. Our initial goal was to make it to the Ohio before the end of summer, however circumstances have prevented us from anything south of Vinton.

The Bass my daughter caught was a complete surprise, I cannot describe to you that moment we shared after landing the fish. She was excited about the sheer size of the fish and

I was completely speechless in the knowledge that 20 years ago nothing more than bullhead catfish could have been obtained from that very spot. We could not speak for 20 minutes, only laugh like two kids that just discovered the “Bunnies Nest.” And of course the next morning I landed the big Drum!

-Steven C. Johnson - USN Retired



More Than Just “from point A to point B” on the Water Trail

Karla Sanders, Ohio University Masters in Environmental Studies Graduate

When I moved to Athens several years ago I fell in love with the quiet rolling hills and miles of meandering streams that wind through the valleys. As an Ohio University student I became interested in stories about the local land and our complex history of natural resource extraction to build communities. This interest spiked through my work as an AmeriCorps volunteer in a local watershed, and I discovered how groups like the Raccoon Creek Partnership clean up degraded areas while bringing environmental awareness into communities. As a graduate student in the Environmental Studies program, my adviser Dr. Bernhard Debatin introduced me to the Raccoon Creek Water Trail Association and its efforts to bring more recreation and awareness to Raccoon Creek. The group needed a map and guide to help grant Raccoon Creek official water trail status. With my background in cartography in addition to my focus on visual environmental communication, creating this map seemed a perfect fit for my Master's leadership practicum.

Raccoon Creek

SOUTHEASTERN OHIO 112 MILE WATER TRAIL

Raccoon Creek is an ideal stream for small vessels such as canoes and kayaks. The northern section features a number of parks and forested areas and is not always navigable during dry months. The southern section features an agricultural landscape as the creek widens near its mouth at the Ohio River. Use this guide to plan a safe and exciting journey.



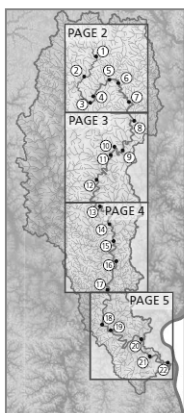
The water trail is scenic and rural, featuring a number of historic sites and opportunities to fish and view other wildlife.



Raccoon Creek was named for a Native American village in the headwaters of the creek. The Wyandotte tribe called this village "Etcha-Petcha" which translates as "Raccoon Town."

TRAIL SUMMARY

ACCESS SITE	GPS	RIVER MILE
1 Vinton County Road 1	39.363439 N 82.385767 W	110
2 Ohio State Route 328	39.32045 N 82.418133 W	104.6
3 Low Water Bridge	39.267283 N 82.405116 W	98.3
4 Moonville trailhead	39.280986 N 82.39125 W	96.9
5 Wheelabout Road	39.317075 N 82.351264 W	92.3
6 Moonville Tunnel	39.307272 N 82.322445 W	89.9
7 Crowe Road	39.269486 N 82.297439 W	84.7
8 Bolins Mills	39.230872 N 82.285817 W	80.6
9 Ohio State Route 32 (1st)	39.167614 N 82.313661 W	71.2
10 Arbaugh Bridge	39.171583 N 82.336816 W	67.8
11 Ohio State Route 32 (2nd)	39.15765 N 82.345523 W	66.1
12 Clanton Road	39.106311 N 82.384314 W	58.2
13 Ponn's Bridge	39.048103 N 82.376325 W	50.1
14 Ohio State Route 160	39.014347 N 82.35225 W	44.5
15 Vinton Park	38.978564 N 82.339611 W	40.2
16 Glasburn Road	38.934861 N 82.334528 W	35.3
17 Adamsville	38.874772 N 82.355308 W	29.3
18 Macintyre Park	38.803608 N 82.371417 W	22.1
19 Ohio State Route 775	38.790575 N 82.347194 W	18.7
20 Bakers Landing	38.771403 N 82.268194 W	8.9
21 Thivener	38.735222 N 82.24595 W	5.3
22 Ohio State Route 7	38.721175 N 82.195828 W	0.4



DIRECTIONS

Raccoon Creek is located in Appalachia Ohio, primarily flowing through Vinton and Gallia counties, but the watershed also comprises Meigs, Athens, Jackson, and Hocking counties. The water trail can be accessed from U.S. 33 or 32, as indicated above. View a local highway map for more details.

TRAIL ATTRACTIONS

Public Parks

Lake Hope State Park (740) 596-5253
Offers hiking trails, camping, and a scenic lake.

Waterloo Aquatic Education Center
(740) 589-9930 Formerly farmland utilized for wildlife research.

Zaleski State Forest (740) 596-5781
Offers hiking through 26,827 acres of forest surrounding wetland areas and wildlife.

Raccoon Ecological Management Area / Vinton Furnace Experimental Forest
15,857 acres of forest teeming with wildlife.

Tycoon Lake Wildlife Area (740) 589-9930
Features a wetland area and variety of birds.

Wildlife: Birding & Fishing

The watershed features a number of species which can be spotted on the trail. Of note are wood ducks, the heronry and an abundance of fish.



RESOURCES

Cell phone service is not reliable in all areas, so make sure to plan well before beginning your journey.

ORGANIZATION	CONTACT
Raccoon Creek Partnership	mackey@ohio.edu www.raccooncreek.org
Raccoon Creek Water Trail Association	molly@freestylecanoeing.com
Voinovich School of Leadership & Public Affairs	(740) 597-1473
Ohio State Parks	(614) 265-6561 www.dnr.state.oh.us/parks
Ohio Division of Watercraft	(614) 265-6480 www.ohiodnr.com/watercraft
Ohio Department of Transportation	(614) 466-7170 www.dot.state.oh.us
American Canoe Association	www.americancanoe.org

I began working on the Raccoon Creek Water Trail Map Brochure Project in October 2011, a process which involved proposing initial ideas for the brochure to my graduate committee and water trail association members. Over the next several months we all met and worked together to create the final product, which is a 22" x 25.5" double-sided brochure. This document features cartographic information about how to navigate through 22 access sites on Raccoon Creek, showing map readers local parks, hazards, dams, historical sites, and several other useful tips for navigating the stream by small vessel. On the other side of the navigation map is a synopsis of the Raccoon Creek region's history and lay of the land, all surrounding a full map of the Raccoon Creek watershed area.



Karla paddling on Lake Hope

My partnership with the Raccoon Creek Water Trail Association shared a common goal of helping people access Raccoon Creek and gain environmental knowledge through first hand encounters. To further help people experience

the creek, the map brochure is also broken down into a few simple 8.5" x 11" maps for you to print right from your home computer (Page 1, pictured above). These will be available as PDF's in the near future, while the map brochure is going through some final edits until enough funds have been raised to print it commercially. The brochure will be printed on quality paper and folded to resemble outdoor recreation guides often found in public parks.

I hope this brochure will help people appreciate the beauty of the humble hills and understand the significance of using our resources wisely. All environmental lessons aside, the brochure will certainly help people navigate from point A to point B with a bit more confidence.

Raccoon Creek ODNR/Ohio University Summer Interns

Renee Reber & Ryan Gilliom

written by, Sarah Landers



Renee Reber

RCP has many partners and this summer two of those partners: the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) Division of Mineral Resources Management and Ohio University Voinovich School of Leadership and Public Affairs were the employers of two summer interns. Renee Reber completed her Master's in Environmental Studies at Ohio University in the spring of 2012 and was employed through a partnership between Ohio University and ODNR. Ryan Gilliom, a sophomore at Haverford College in Pennsylvania, worked this summer on a variety of environmental projects for the Voinovich School. Our interns assisted Raccoon Creek during our busy biological monitoring season, conducted post project monitoring, entered data, helped out with summer day camps, and even assisted ODNR with water quality monitoring in other acid mine drainage impacted watersheds. Thank you summer interns for your help this year!



Ryan Gilliom

AmeriCorps: The people who "Get things done for America"

Dubbed the only "Environmental" AmeriCorps service program in the State, our Rural Action AmeriCorps members serve communities where historic resource extraction has impacted the environment and the quality of life for Appalachian Ohioans. Raccoon Creek Partnership is fortunate to have had AmeriCorps members working in Raccoon Creek for the last 3 years. These members are provided through Rural Action's Ohio Stream Restore Corps program where 14 members serve in 6 different watersheds. AmeriCorps members are vital to Raccoon Creek Partnership and just a few of their roles include: assisting with chemical and biological monitoring, organizing outreach and education (summer camps, family programs, press releases), organizing litter clean-ups, grant writing, and they play a huge role in the success of RCP as an organization. Thanks AmeriCorps!

Best Wishes! - Kristin Kindler and Kimberly Brewster

Kristin Kindler: My experience as an AmeriCorps was such an amazing experience, I learned so many skills and met so many great people. Everyone from Raccoon Creek Partnership and Rural Action in Trimble, OH were so helpful and understanding and friendly which made my experience more memorable. I am truly going to miss being an AmeriCorps and I am going to miss everyone that I worked with. I would recommend AmeriCorps to anyone in a heartbeat. Thanks!!



Kim and Kristin at an outreach event

Kimberly Brewster: My year of AmeriCorps service with RCP was an unforgettable experience. Not only did I learn many valuable skills, I also made professional and personal relationships that I hope to maintain for years to come. I want to give a big thank you to everyone who made this such a wonderful year - you are involved in an initiative that is truly important to southeast Ohio!

Welcome AmeriCorps 2012-2013

Hi Raccoon supporters! My name is Darcy VanDervort, I just graduated from Ohio University with a double degree in Environmental Geology and Spanish. This year I'm excited to get lots of hands-on field experience to prepare for grad school research next year. After grad school I'm interested in entering the environmental health field to combat dangerous pollutants. I look forward to meeting all of you water-lovers out there soon!

Hello fellow Raccoon Creekers! I'm Rebekah Korenowsky, I just graduated from Ohio University with a degree in Environmental Geology. During my time at OU, I worked on a senior thesis project, which focused on monitoring water and sediment quality in Hewett Fork. Next year I plan to attend graduate school somewhere on the west coast to study environmental sciences and water quality management. But for now you can find me in the streams of Southeast Ohio, wading in orange colored waters or in the Voinovich school, busting out grant applications. I'm very much looking forward to this year, and I hope that Darcy and I can accomplish some great things for the watershed! Can't wait to meet all of you!



Darcy and Rebekah; Getting their feet wet

Raccoon Creek Water Quality Update

Sarah Landers, Raccoon Creek Water Quality Specialist (Ohio Valley RC&D)

Water quality monitoring kicked into high gear in 2012 with the continued monitoring of East Branch treatment projects, maintenance on Little Raccoon Creek projects, and long term monitoring. So far in 2012, chemical water quality data was collected by Raccoon Creek partners at over 200 sites. During the month of July macroinvertebrates were collected at 28 sites. Fish sampling, via electrofishing equipment, has occurred at 12 sites and these sites will receive a second pass in September. Raccoon Creek Partnership held a project tour on July 25th where 17 participants toured three sites, including the newly completed Harble Griffith Reclamation site and the Orland Gob Pile Reclamation site.



Harble Griffith



Orland Gob Pile



RCP Summer Camps 2012

Kimberly Brewster, 2011-2012 RCP AmeriCorps Member

Raccoon Creek Partnership has had another successful season of Summer Science Daycamps! The first daycamp, held June 18th-22nd, featured a Watershed Wildlife theme and included fun activities such as pond studies, canoeing, and field trips to Lake Hope and Hocking Hills State Parks.

The second daycamp, held July 30th – August 1st, had a Sustainable Living theme designed for older youth. Activities included building vermicomposting bins, constructing bat houses, learning about edible wild plants, archery, and fishing. We also took a trip to the Blue Rock Station, an energy efficient house and farm built specifically for sustainability. This camp was funded through grants from The Athens Foundation and the ODNR Division of Wildlife's Step Outside Program.



Thanks to all of the wonderful campers, volunteers and parents involved in summer camps this year – we hope to see you again next year!

RCP UPCOMING EVENTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Visit www.raccooncreek.org for details about upcoming events and activities, as well as event and meeting locations. 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 Wednesday of every month

Monthly RCWTA Meetings are held the Second Wednesday of every month

September 14th—16th

Come visit us at the Pawpaw festival

September 22nd

Pig Roast and Paddle at Lake Hope and Uncle Buck's Fundraiser for RCP & Athens Building Industry Association

October 6th

RCP Fall Day Camp

October 14th

RCP Annual Dinner @ 4:00pm at the New Marshfield Community Center

October 20th

RCWTA Fall Canoe Float down Raccoon Creek

November 3rd

RCP Fall Day Camp 10-1 @ WAEC

"Like" us on Facebook!

To find RCP on Facebook, type "Raccoon Creek Partnership" in the search box and "Like" our page!



Send To:

Athens, OH 45701

The Ridges, Bldg 22

Voinovich School

c/o Amy Mackey

Raccoon Creek Partnership

Place
Postage
Stamp
Here



RCP Membership Application

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

Individual Membership

<input type="checkbox"/>	Yellow Warbler	\$15
<input type="checkbox"/>	Wood Duck	\$30
<input type="checkbox"/>	Kingfisher	\$100
<input type="checkbox"/>	Great Blue Heron	\$500

Organizational Membership

<input type="checkbox"/>	Channel Catfish	\$50
<input type="checkbox"/>	Grass Pickerel	\$100
<input type="checkbox"/>	Spotted Bass	\$500
<input type="checkbox"/>	Muskie	\$1000

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

Name

Address

Phone

E-mail

Your contributions are tax deductible.

Please make checks payable to the:

Raccoon Creek Partnership

and send to:

Raccoon Creek Partnership

Voinovich School of Leadership and Public Affairs

c/o Amy Mackey

The Ridges, Building 22 Athens, Ohio 45701