

# Raccoon Creek News

Spring 2015

Wild Boar, Boats, and Bees - What more could you ask for?

## A Message from the Chairperson

Dear Raccoon Creek Partnership Members,

Spring has sprung in Raccoon Creek Watershed! After a long, cold winter, crews are happily getting back out into the watershed to monitor water quality. Waterloo Aquatic Education Center has hosted one Spring day camp and an Apple Grafting Workshop—if you missed out this year, we have these events annually and would love to welcome new faces! As the Water Trail continues to develop, you'll start to see some improved signage thanks to support from the Ora E. Anderson Conservation Fund for Appalachian Ohio. We are gearing up for a busy Spring and Summer full of water sampling, biological monitoring, two weeks of summer camp, and paddling scenic Raccoon Creek! We hope to see you creekside soon!

Natalie Kruse, Raccoon Creek Partnership Chair



### Raccoon Creek Partnership - Current Board of Directors

Natalie Kruse (Chair), Heike Perko (Vice-chair), Amber Brookins (Treasurer), Bob Eichenberg (Secretary)  
Lauren Dick, Rocky McNickle, Rob Wiley

## Award of 2015 Boating Safety Education Grant

*Alicia Rector, Raccoon Creek Ohio Stream Restore AmeriCorps Member 2014-15*

November 2014, Raccoon Creek Partnership (RCP) and Raccoon Creek Water Trail Association (RCWTA) applied for the 2015 Boating Safety Education Grant from Ohio Department of Natural Resources Division of Watercraft (ODNR DOW). February 2015, RCP/RCWTA was notified that we received the grant funding we requested with a few minor modifications. With these grant funds RCP/RCWTA intends to have seven people in southeast Ohio certified as American Canoe Association (ACA) Canoe Skills Instructors and one person will be certified as an ACA Canoe Instructor Trainer. In order to get the ACA certification, one must be current with their American Red Cross First Aid, exhibit ACA canoe skills, take an ACA Instructor Certification course, and be registered as an ACA



Photo depicting a canoe over canoe rescue provided by Glenn Stout

member. The grant funds are helping RCP/RCWTA pay for all of these required courses and for the materials needed to teach these courses. The eight people RCP/RCWTA has selected to participate in this opportunity are eight people that currently live in southeast Ohio, work for RCP/RCWTA directly or work with RCP/RCWTA indirectly through use of our canoes. The end goal of this grant is to have more people in southeast Ohio certified to safely teach ACA canoe skills courses to adults and children which will hopefully increase the amount of people out exploring our waters and expose them to our remarkable stories of recovery.

Register your Kroger card at [www.krogercommunityrewards.com](http://www.krogercommunityrewards.com) and select "Raccoon Creek Partnership". You must renew every April! Swipe your Kroger Rewards Card every time you shop & help RCP grow!



ATHENS

GALLIA

HOCKING

JACKSON

MEIGS

VINTON

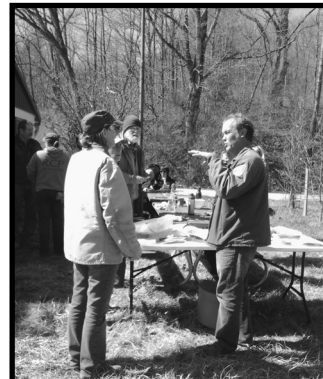
## Another Busy Spring in Raccoon Creek

*Amy Mackey, Raccoon Creek Watershed Coordinator*

The redbud trees are blooming, there's a warm breeze in the air, fish are jumping, and the grass needs cut...it must be springtime in Raccoon Creek! Spring is always a busy and exciting time for us here at Raccoon Creek. The creeks have finally thawed out so we can resume monitoring, the grass planted on last year's new projects is greening up, and outreach and education events are being planned and facilitated. We have already had several interesting events this year.

In February we had a very successful Owl Prowl at the Lake Hope Lodge. Thanks to the Lodge for allowing us to use their facilities. Thanks to Pat Quakenbush (Hocking Hills Naturalist) and John Hickenbottom (Lake Hope Naturalist) for the interesting program. Thanks to our current AmeriCorps members Dustin and Alicia for planning the event. And a big thanks to YOU for attending!

We also held an apple grafting workshop at Waterloo where participants learned how to properly graft heirloom varieties of apples onto rootstocks that are designed to grow well here in our region. A big thanks to Derek Mills from Hocking Hills Orchard for coming out for the day. If you wanted to attend to get a tree of your own but couldn't make it, you're in luck! Derek has established trees for sale (contact him directly), or RCP will be selling trees grafted this spring at many of our events this summer and fall. Contact us if you are interested. Trees will be \$10.00 each and ready to plant by mid summer.



Derek Mills at RCP's Apple Grafting Workshop

A Spring Day Camp focusing on amphibians was held at Waterloo with great attendance and Dustin and Alicia are busily planning the summer watershed camps. The July camp is full, there are still a few spots left in the June camp. See the website or facebook page for more details. If you are interested in volunteering during the camps, please contact us, help is always GREATLY appreciated!

Don't forget to renew your Kroger Community Rewards; you need to renew every spring (it's easy and instructions are included on the front page of this newsletter!). Also, AmazonSmile (instructions below) is another great way to support RCP by buying things that you are already buying!

Thanks to all of our members and volunteers who have contributed their time and knowledge to support the mission of Raccoon Creek!

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!



## Amphibian Camp

*Dustin Gross, Raccoon Creek Ohio Stream Restore AmeriCorps Member 2014-15*

On April 11th RCP held our annual Spring Amphibian Camp at the Waterloo Aquatic Education Center. In spring, the Waterloo Wildlife Area surrounding the WAEC is an excellent place to find many species of amphibians, and each year we invite local kids and their parents out to learn and explore. This year, our thirteen campers got up-close and personal with American Toads, Red Spotted Newts, Red-backed Salamanders, tadpoles, and various aquatic insects. We always encourage our campers to get their hands dirty and this year's kids had no problem braving the mud to see what kinds of critters they could catch. The campers also enjoyed crafts and a lesson on amphibian life cycles. RCP understands that getting kids excited about nature is the best way to encourage the next generation of environmental stewards, and our free day camps give them the opportunity to discover the outdoors and have lots of fun in the process.



## Water Quality Update

*Sarah Landers, Raccoon Creek Water Quality Specialist*

Two more acid mine drainage remediation projects were completed in the watershed this past year. With the completion of the Middleton Run II Reclamation Project and the Lake Morrow Project we now have a total of 16 projects completed with one more underway currently in 2015. Our current project is the Flint Run Wetland Berm Project. This project is taking place in a wetland located downstream of two of our treatment projects located in the Flint Run/Broken Arrow wildlife area just outside of Wellston, Ohio. A berm will be installed perpendicular to the flow of the water to increase the time it takes the water to move through the wetland. This extra time will allow more time for metals in the water to drop out and become part of the sediment instead of continuing on down the Flint Run tributary into Little Raccoon Creek.

After the cold weather we had this winter I am sure looking forward to summer! This summer we'll be collecting macroinvertebrates and electrofishing at many sites throughout the Raccoon Creek and Little Raccoon Creek watershed to measure biological recovery in the creek. We conduct chemical water quality monitoring at projects and downstream of those projects to make sure they are working. We also collect chemical data at over 50 long term monitoring locations multiple times throughout the year. Some locations we have data dating back to the 1980's! To see our water quality data, visit: [www.watersheddata.com](http://www.watersheddata.com) and for additional water quality information contact Sarah: [sdlanders@gmail.com](mailto:sdlanders@gmail.com).

## "A Day in the Woods" Is Back by Popular Demand

"A Night in the Forest" kicks off This year's 2nd Friday series on Friday, May 8th. The workshops take place at the 12,000 acre Vinton Furnace State Experimental Forest, near McArthur.

Other "2nd Friday Series" programs scheduled for 2015 include: Forest Health and Invasive Species (June 12); Historic Land Use-How it Shaped our Forests (July 10); Tree Identification at Hocking College (July 24); Pollinators in the Woods (August 14); Fall Wildflowers and Edibles (September 11); and Monitoring Woodland Wildlife (October 9).

Classes will run from 9:00am to 3:30pm and the registration fee for each class will be \$10 which will include lunches and handout materials. For more information and to register visit: <https://u.osu.edu/seohiowoods>

Also check out Vinton Soil and Water Conservation District's new website: [www.vintonswcd.com](http://www.vintonswcd.com)

## RCP UPCOMING EVENTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Visit us on **Facebook** or [www.raccooncreek.org](http://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 Wednesday of every month at 6:30 PM*  
*Monthly RCWTA Meetings are currently being held in conjunction with RCP meetings the Last Wednesday of every month at 6:00 PM and are subject to change*

<b><u>June 15th-19th</u></b>	<b>RCP Summer Kids Camp 6th Grade and up: SPACE STILL AVAILABLE</b>
<b><u>June 20th</u></b>	<b>Ohio River Clean Sweep Contact <a href="mailto:RaccoonCreekPartnership@gmail.com">RaccoonCreekPartnership@gmail.com</a></b>
<b><u>July 13th - 17th</u></b>	<b>RCP Summer Kids Camp 1st—5th Grade: FULL (sorry for the inconvenience)</b>
<b><u>August 8th- 9th</u></b>	<b>Raccoon Creek Partnership at the Ohio State Fair in Columbus, Ohio</b>
<b><u>September 11th - 13th</u></b>	<b>Ohio Pawpaw Festival, Albany, Ohio</b>

**"Like" us on Facebook!**

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



## Feral Swine: A Threat to Ohio's Native Wildlife

*Craig Hicks, USDA-Wildlife Services, Wildlife Disease Biologist/Ohio Feral Swine Coordinator*

Do you have feral swine on your property? If so, have you noticed a decrease in deer and turkey occupancy on your property? Most likely, the answer is yes. Feral swine compete with native wildlife species such as white-tailed deer, squirrels, raccoons, and wild turkey for valuable resources such as acorns, nuts, and other mast crops. Feral swine also compete with these species at man-made food sources, such as agricultural crop fields, orchards, gardens, wildlife feeders, and hunter bait piles. In fact, feral swine are much more aggressive and will dominate any food source they find. A recent study out of Auburn University found that occupancy rates for white-tailed deer at bait stations were 49% less when feral swine were present.



Photo provided by Craig Hicks

In addition to competition, feral swine are omnivorous feeders and can pose a predation risk to many of our native wildlife species. Although their diet consists primarily of vegetation, feral swine can also consume invertebrates, smaller vertebrates, eggs of ground nesting birds, reptiles, amphibians, small mammals, and even the young of larger mammals such as white-tailed deer and livestock.

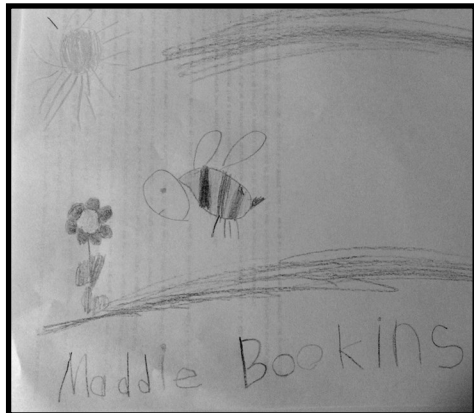
Lastly, feral swine threaten Ohio's native wildlife through the risk of disease transmission. They are capable of carrying at least 30 significant viral and bacterial diseases, as well as a minimum of 37 parasites that can affect people, pets, livestock and wildlife.

Wildlife Services, a program of the USDA's Animal Plant Health Inspection Service, is partnering with state and federal agencies to eliminate this highly destructive, invasive species from Ohio. Wildlife Services helps landowners experiencing damage by removing feral swine using a variety of methods that are biologically sound, environmentally safe, and socially acceptable. To report feral swine sightings, or to receive assistance with feral swine damage, contact Craig Hicks at 614-993-3444, or call toll free 1-866-4USDA-WS.

## Critter Corner: Honey Bees

*Amber Brookins, RCP Board Treasurer*

Honey bees are pollinators. They transfer pollen and seeds from one flower to another, fertilizing the plant so it can grow and produce food. 30% of crops and 90% of our wild plants need bees to pollinate them to survive. Without bees our diets would be mostly water and bread! Honey bees have a very organized society. Each bee in the hive has a very specific role: guards, nurses, housekeepers, construction workers, royalty (Queen bee), foragers and so on. Bees produce honey from the nectar of flowers to use as food. Honey is the only food produced by an insect that is eaten by humans. Spring to early summer is swarm season. This is the bees natural way of reproducing themselves. When a hive produces a new queen the old queen will leave the hive with her followers. The swarm will settle in a ball on a branch or bush and send out scouting bees to find a new home. The house hunting can take a few days.



Picture by: Maddie Brookins

If you see a swarm: LUCKY YOU! Nature is so cool! Don't kill them, instead give them space to be bees and they will move on once they locate a new home and will not attack. You can also contact a beekeeper to remove the swarm and give them a new home! Honey bees are docile and only want to complete their task. If you have a honey bee in your home don't kill it! Use a cup and a piece of paper to remove them from the house. Point blank we need bees to survive and to produce our food; they are a vital part of our ecosystem. If you would like to know more about bees or becoming a beekeeper contact your local beekeepers association or extension office.



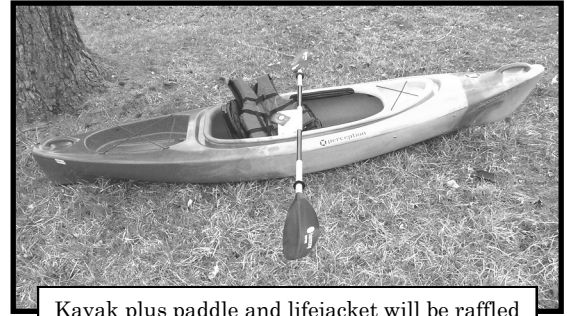
Picture by: Julia Dick

## Water Trail Update

*Molly Gurien, Chair, Raccoon Creek Water Trail Association*



The water has thawed and winter is behind us! The Raccoon Creek Water Trail is preparing for a great season of events and activities. We are excited to announce that we will once again raffle a kayak to help raise funds to support our public floats and river recreation and stewardship awareness initiatives. This year's kayak is a Perception Impulse, a great recreational kayak to paddle on Raccoon Creek and our local lakes. Raffle tickets can be purchased at any of our events or by emailing [www.raccooncreekpartnership@gmail.com](mailto:www.raccooncreekpartnership@gmail.com). The drawing for the kayak will be held September 13th at the Ohio Pawpaw Festival in Albany, Ohio.



Kayak plus paddle and lifejacket will be raffled

Another of this year's initiatives to promote the use of the water trail includes the development of Water Trail Access signs. Funding for these signs is provided through a grant from the Ora E. Anderson Fund for Appalachian Ohio. Look for these signs to be placed at all of the Water Trail access points later this summer. Each sign will include a map indicating river mileage and other features for that section of the trail.

This year's spring float occurred in April despite high (and rising) water levels from recent rains. I hope that some of you reading this article will have joined us on the float. If not, stay tuned for more opportunities to get out on the water!

## Reflections on Raccoon Creek

*Caleb Hawkins, AEP Graduate Research Assistant & Master of Science in Environmental Studies*

When I first moved to Athens, Ohio in the summer of 2013, I found comfort in the rolling hills and terrain that resembled the foothills of my native North Carolina. Prior to my first visit to Athens to discuss research opportunities in the East Branch of Raccoon Creek with Natalie Kruse and Dina Lopez, I had no concrete concept of Appalachian Ohio or the people who lived here. After a few weeks at the Ridges and some days spent in the field with RCP, I knew that I was in a special place with a well-intentioned, grassroots environmental initiative that is making positive impacts locally.

RCP field staff and Americorps volunteers welcomed me with open arms and guided me in my development as a scientist and an environmental professional. Now, after hundreds of hours of fieldwork, I've progressed from losing forceps and leaving my waders hanging on the side of the work truck to leading field crews and accomplishing rigorous sampling plans. My last water quality sampling session -- during which I sampled 16 water quality sites in sub zero temperatures with Sarah Landers and Dustin Gross -- exemplified RCP members helpfulness and patience (and ability to deal with borderline sampling insanity). I am indebted to them, and to the rest of the RCP folks in Building 22, for their help, guidance, and patience with me from day one to day 601.



RCP has inspired and impressed me with their other initiatives, as well. RCP is a prime example of a grassroots organization that is protecting the environment and engaging communities and government agencies with mindfulness and genuineness. I've seen this personally in the field and heard others tout their great abilities. Evident also in my numerous positive interactions with landowners and the environmental education camps put on by RCP volunteers, RCP is truly a special organization on an individual and a community-based level. The organization's members are examples of informed stewards who personify the behavior changes needed to cultivate a more sustainable world. My time working with RCP has been a heartwarming example of what community-based initiatives can accomplish with hard work and diligence, and it has been a privilege to see y'all in action. Thank you for everything and good luck!



Place  
Postage  
Stamp  
Here

**Send To:**

**Raccoon Creek Partnership**  
c/o Amy Mackey  
Voinovich School  
The Ridges, Bldg 22  
Athens, OH 45701



## 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