

# Allegheny River Stewardship Project

## Volunteer Newsletter

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### **PARTNERS**

*Alle-Kiski Health Foundation*

*Rachel Carson Homestead*

*RiverQuest*

*Venture Outdoors*

*University of Pittsburgh Graduate  
School of Public Health*

*UPCI Center for Environmental  
Oncology*

### **Purpose**

The purpose of the Allegheny River Stewardship Project (ARSP) is for leading researchers in environmental and behavioral health sciences to work together with concerned citizens of the Alle-Kiski Valley river communities, volunteers from communities around the Allegheny River watershed and strategic partners to determine the sources and types of river pollutants by monitoring the levels of toxins in fish living in the river and to create long-term community environmental and specific water quality goals so that the footprint of the project widens and deepens with the passage of time

### **UPDATE ON OUR COMMUNITY FISHING DAYS!**

#### **Attention!!**

There is a correction on the last newsletter. We apologize for the error in reporting our first community fishing day in June. The correct date is **JUNE 7<sup>th</sup>** and **NOT June 1<sup>st</sup>**. The community fishing days schedule is at the end of this newsletter.



## **Announcing**

RiverQuest is providing a great opportunity for students and young people at the first three of our community fishing days. River Quest will be providing their research vessel Scout for four two hour fishing and education trips on the river. We are reserving these trips for students. No fishing license is required on Scout and rods and reels are provided if the student does not have their own. After fishing on Scout students are invited to view the fish dissection process and ask questions. Teachers who bring groups of students may have access to some of the data collected when we have finished our data collection in June or July. Teachers may then demonstrate to students examples of basic descriptive statistics on the data. In order to take advantage of this opportunity you must register your day and time slot with the project manager Chuck Christen ([chec@pitt.edu](mailto:chec@pitt.edu), 648-2342). The time schedule is listed below. Please arrive early as we will be leaving the dock promptly at the departure time listed below.

**Trip 1 – Depart: 8:00 a.m. - Return 10:00 a.m.**

**Trip 2 – Depart 10:30 am. – Return 12:30 p.m.**

Trip 3 – Depart 1:00 p.m. – Return 3:00 p.m.

Trip 4 – Depart 3:30 p.m. – Return 5:30 p.m.



## Call for Volunteers

### FISH RETRIEVAL

We are in need of volunteers to help with our fish retrieval when a fish is caught either on shore or on a boat! This is a very important part of the operation. Fish retrievers will use a GPS locator to identify the longitude and latitude of where the fish is caught so that we are able later on to create a map of the species and where it was caught on the river. Retrievers will also document date, time, and other important information on rain paper. Then they will sacrifice the fish according to our IRB Protocol (pithing). Then wrap the fish in the rain paper document and then aluminum foil. Then store the fish for transport to the dissection area.

### ADVERTISING PROJECT

We are in need of volunteers to help with identifying and distributing information and flyers on the project and the community fishing days. There are churches, Boy Scout and Girl Scout troops, bait shops, sporting shops, and sportsmen, fishing and environmental groups, that we do not know about or who have not been contacted about the project. We need your help to get the information to these folks. It is very important that we have a large number of people fishing on our community days. We are hoping to catch 100 fish for our sample at each location. There will still be abundant fishing for the season.

### VOLUNTEERS TO HELP STAFF THE FISHING DAYS

We are in need of volunteers to help with organizing and working the community fishing days. We will need volunteers to help set up the site for fishing and dissection. We will need help directing anglers and with registration for prizes. We would like to invite food vendors to sell food at the events. We will need help with providing water from the river for the dissection area as well as replenishing drinking water, coffee and other beverage. We will need help with clean up also.

AS ALWAYS THANK YOU FOR YOUR WILLINGNESS TO VOLUNTEER FOR THIS PROJECT!!!!

## PROJECT ACTIVITIES TO DATE

**OUR FIELD COORDINATOR PAUL CARUSO CREATED BIODEGRADABLE CORK COASTERS WITH THE PROJECT NAME, WEBSITE, AND PARTNER NAMES ON THEM. THESE ARE BEING DISTRIBUTED AT ALL THE EVENTS WE ATTEND. THANK YOU PAUL!**

**March 3<sup>rd</sup>** – Dr Volz presented the Allegheny River Stewardship Project (ARSP) to a full house at the meeting of Café Scientifique at Penn Brewery on the North Side of Pittsburgh. There was a good deal of discussion on the project and its importance. A good number of people signed up to volunteer and fish with the project.

**March 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>** – The graduate students working on the project were warmly welcomed at the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) offices on Washington's Landing in Pittsburgh. They completed file reviews of various plants and water treatment facilities. These reviews included Discharge Monitoring Reports (DMR) and Permits. This information will be used to plan our water and sediment sampling expeditions. We are thankful to the DEP for their help and cooperation.

**March 6<sup>th</sup>** – Chuck Christen and Paul Caruso presented the

ARSP to the Westmoreland Conservation League of Sportsmen at the Court House in Greensburg. The project was well received and the sportsmen asked a good deal of questions as well as offering information on the river.

**March 10<sup>th</sup>** – The staff and graduate students with the ARSP met all day with the scientists and researchers of the United States Geological Survey (USGS). The USGS is beginning a study of emerging contaminants on the rivers around Pittsburgh in July of this year. The ARSP is collaborating and sharing data with the USGS. This study will be a two year project studying fish, water and sediment in the Ohio, Monongahela and Allegheny rivers. This is very exciting for Pennsylvania and this area. The ARSP will also help with collecting samples in the later part of the summer.

**March 20<sup>th</sup>** - Patty DeMarco and Chuck Christen presented information on Rachel Carson and the ARSP to the 8<sup>th</sup> grade science students at Ford City Middle School. Students had many questions and were the first young people to add data to the study by sharing their pollution narrative statements with us. This is a good example of how young people are aware of the environment around them.

**March 24<sup>th</sup>** – Presentation of the ARSP at a special meeting

of the Allegheny Township Environmental Council. Many thanks to Phyllis Framel, a volunteer with the project, who spearheaded the organization of the meeting. There was a good attendance and once again many questions and a good number of people signed up as volunteers for the project.

**March 28<sup>th</sup>** – Rick Lorson, fish biologist with the PA Fish and Boat Commission held a fish otolith removal training session for the staff, graduate students and fish commission staff at the Somerset Lake office of the PA Fish and Boat Commission.

This training will be very helpful for this project because we are now able to report the age of the fish we catch. The otolith is the inner ear of the fish and basically each year the otolith grows a new calcium ring. We can remove this structure and with a microscope count the rings and be able to tell the age of the fish. This is important because the older the fish, the more the fish has accumulated the substances in the water. We can compare older and younger fish now in terms of metals and estrogenic compounds.



**March 29<sup>th</sup>** – Dr. Volz presented on "**Identifying coal fired power plant pollutants through examination of local fish.**" Following this Eric Schaeffer, Executive Director of the Environmental Integrity Project in Washington D.C. presented on "**Cleaning up after Coal: What to do about Waste Coal and Coal Waste?**" at the meeting of the Group Against Smog and Pollution (G.A.S.P.) at Rodef Shalom Synagogue in Oakland.

#### UPCOMING EVENTS

**April 2nd 7:00 p.m.** – Presentation of ARSP to the Manor Township City Council  
**April 7<sup>th</sup> 1:00 p.m.** – Meeting with Jim Clark, PSU Extension Cooperative to determine our final site at the head water of the Allegheny River.  
**April 7<sup>th</sup> 6:00 pm.** – Dr. Volz speaks on Emerging Contaminants and the ARSP at the University of Pittsburgh Bradford Campus.  
**April 7<sup>th</sup> 7:00 p.m.** – Presentation by Chuck Christen and Paul Caruso to the Ford City Council.  
**April 9<sup>th</sup> – 10:00 a.m.** Meeting with the Allegheny County Health Department Wet Weather Program

**April 16<sup>th</sup> 7:00 p.m.** – Dr. Devra Davis discussing her latest book, "**The Secret History of the War on Cancer**". At Pittsburgh Mills Royal Gatherings Banquet Hall next to Dingbats

**April 19<sup>th</sup> 11:00 a.m.** – Dr. Volz speaking at the Slipper Rock University Earth Day event at the McCloskey Center.

**April 19<sup>th</sup> 3:00 pm** – Chuck Christen and Paul Caruso presenting the ARSP to the Mingo Rod and Gun Club.

**April 29<sup>th</sup>** – Presentation of the ARSP to the students of St Joseph School in Verona

**April 30<sup>th</sup> 10:00 a.m.** Chuck Christen will present the ARSP to the RAIN steering committee meeting. Ground Floor Conference Room of the Riverside Center for Innovation.

For more information contact Chuck Christen at 412-648-2342 or email at [chec@pitt.edu](mailto:chec@pitt.edu). To volunteer for the project go to our website and click on the button on the left for volunteer information. To have a table of information at the conference go to the table registration online at our website [www.chec.pitt.edu](http://www.chec.pitt.edu) and click on the button on the left for table registration.

## ANNOUNCING THE COMMUNITY FISHING DAYS

To Provide the Fish Sample for the Project

**FORD CITY at Rosston Eddy & Crooked Creek**

**MAY 10, 2008 – 6:00 a.m. – 9:00 p.m.**

**SPRINGDALE/CHESWICK at the Reliant Energy Plant Site**

**MAY 31, 2008 – 6:00 a.m. – 9:00 p.m.**

**FREEPORT at BUFFALO CREEK**

**JUNE 7, 2008 – 6:00 a.m. – 9:00 p.m.**

**UPPER ALLEGHENY near Bradford**

**JUNE 14, 2008 – 6:00 a.m. – 9:00 p.m.**