



April 8th - Reserve the date for our Spring Program at Blue Spruce Park Lodge River Otters in PA

Have you ever seen an otter? Kind of unlikely since they are Pennsylvania's least abundant fur bearing animal. But otters will be front and center at Evergreen Conservancy's Spring Event. It will be held at Blue Spruce Lodge on Friday April 8th at 7:00pm.

Leading the discussion about river otters will be Wildlife Conservation Officer Pat Snickles. Mr. Snickles has been a conservation officer for more than 15 years.

The evening will begin with Mr. Snickles' presentation. What has Evergreen Conservancy been up to lately? We will follow up the otter presentation with a report on our current projects. A period of refreshments will conclude the evening.



Consider these facts about river otters:

- They are protected and insulated by a thick, water-repellent coat of fur.
- Otters are active all year round, no hibernation even during Alaskan winters.
- Otters can swim, walk, run, bound or slide.
- They can remain underwater for up to four minutes and swim at seven miles per hour.
- They have an unusual sense of play; otters can be seen wrestling, playing tag, and bouncing objects with their paws. I still remember Disney nature specials seeing otters sliding down a muddy bank.
- They are one of the few mammals to use tools, a stone to open a shell.
- They were once abundant, but were trapped nearly out of existence in Pennsylvania. But the Pennsylvania River Otter Reintroduction Project initiated in 1982 increases the chances some of us may see an otter.

Our gain! We are very excited to announce the arrival of our new OMS/VISTA worker. We would like to introduce Katie.

Katie Oberthaler joined Evergreen in January as the organization's new AmeriCorps*OSM/VISTA volunteer through the Appalachian Coal Country Watershed Team. Katie is a native of Kansas and earned her bachelor's degree in creative writing from the University of Kansas in 2010. Previously, she worked as a journalist for a remote sensing research laboratory on climate change issues. Katie will be partnering with Evergreen, Crooked Creek Watershed Association, and the Indiana County Conservation District to help develop education activities, write grants, produce an environmental radio program, monitor water samples, liaison with local artists, and coordinate volunteers. She is eager to use her background in communications to educate the public about environmental issues.



OUR MISSION:

To advance the preservation, protection and stewardship of Natural, Cultural and Historical Resources in and around Indiana County, PA

Sprout Fund Spring Grant:

We were awarded a \$5,000 grant to purchase environmental educational materials and develop programs for the community. We will be ordering materials, doing outreach to community groups and students to offer programs related to the environment. We can do these programs at Tanoma and for groups at their sites.

"Spring" is a program of The Sprout Fund supporting local biodiversity initiatives that inspire greater stewardship of our region's natural resources. Supported by The Pittsburgh Foundation, Spring catalyzes community-based projects that positively impact biodiversity in Pittsburgh and the surrounding communities of Southwestern Pennsylvania."



"The Sprout Fund enriches the Pittsburgh region's vitality by engaging citizens, amplifying voices, supporting creativity and innovation, and cultivating connected communities. Founded in 2001, Sprout facilitates community-led solutions to regional challenges and supports efforts to create a thriving, progressive, and culturally diverse region."

If you work with youth groups and would like more information about the environmental education programs we can provide – please let us know. If you would like to schedule a program – we would be happy to work with you.

Contact us at rogers944@comcast.net or call 724-349-4333.



Coal Ash Disposal Hot Topic Across the Nation

Our dependency on coal for energy use involves several types of environmental impacts, from acid mine drainage entering our waterways to increased carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. Another form of coal by-product, called coal ash or fly ash, can also find its way into our ground water when not properly handled following coal combustion.

During combustion in power plants, scrubbers remove residual matter called coal ash or fly ash. Coal ash can contain mercury, arsenic, lead, selenium, among other heavy metals. The coal ash is then stored in clay-lined landfills or ponds. It is also frequently recycled into construction materials such as concrete. When recycled and used in "green" buildings, as defined by the U.S. Green Building Council, it can receive LEED credits.

The regulation standards for coal ash storage and disposal gained the national spotlight in 2008 when a Tennessee Valley Authority coal ash pond near Kingston, Tennessee overflowed due to improper lining. The spill released 5.4 million cubic yards tons over nearby land and water. More recently, The Maryland Department of Energy recently sued a power-plant company after high levels of selenium and chloride were found in ground water adjacent to their coal ash landfills. Residents in Labadie, Missouri are currently debating a controversial ash landfill proposed to be built above shallow ground water reserves. A study released just this month by Earthjustice, Physicians for Social Responsibility and the Environmental Integrity Project claims that three fly ash disposal sites within Pennsylvania have leaked toxic hexavalent chromium into

nearby groundwater. The study cites GenOn's Seward power plant in Indiana County as one of the locations contributing to contaminated water. The report urged the EPA to classify fly ash as hazardous waste.

Since the Kingston spill, The EPA has been debating how to classify coal ash. Regulations limit how refuse can be stored or reused. As the study advises, the EPA is considering classifying the material as special hazardous waste. This classification would enact stricter federally-enforced regulations on coal ash disposal and use under Subtitle C in the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act. Another option, under Subtitle D, would place the enforcement of EPA-developed waste disposal standards in the hands of citizens' civil law suits. Many worry that classifying coal ash as hazardous waste would limit the recycling of coal ash into other products such as cement. The EPA cites that about 37% of all coal ash refused is recycled into other materials. The EPA is now considering how to frame exceptions for beneficial reuse while enacting stronger requirements for or phasing out landfills entirely.

Coal ash landfills exist not just in Pennsylvania, but in nearly every state. Numerous incidents across the nation show a need for a uniform, federal ruling to ensure that toxic chemicals will not leak into groundwater drinking sources on which communities living near landfills depend. However, safety should also not eclipse effective reuse of this product. The EPA has yet to release a ruling but remains open to discussion.

Katie Obertbaler



More information can be found on the EPA website:

www.epa.gov/epawaste/nonhaz/industrial/special/fossil/ccr-rule/ccrfaq.htm#1

WHAT WE CONSERVE:

Wildlife Habitat • Stream Access • Scenic Vistas • Land in need of Restoration • Working Landscapes • Historic • Cultural Sites

Evergreen Conservancy Project Updates – visit our web site to learn more about these projects www.evergreenconservancy.org

Bear Run:

The Phase V lime silo is complete and we are awaiting final payment from DEP before lime fill-up and operation begins. This is the final project that EC has financial stake in in the Bear Run Watershed. About 2/3 of the Phase V Project was funded by the Indiana County Conservation District via the balance they had remaining from the Phase III Project. The remaining 1/3 was funded by EC via the balance remaining from the Phase I Project.



Lime Silo at Bear Run

Tanoma:

The renewable energy project is under construction. The solar panels are installed and are supplying electricity to the pavilion. The water and wind turbines will be finished and working by this Spring. Since the water flow from the mines was increased the rate of flow has decreased the efficiency of the passive treatments system. The level of the ponds became deeper and killed some of the plants. We are working to find a solution to these problems because right now too much iron is escaping into Crooked Creek. DEP has agreed to do some work on the ponds to help improve efficiency. Work will be done on the one overflow to prevent unnecessary water going into the creek. We hope to be adding oxygen to the ponds with aerators. In efforts to keep damage to our ponds to a minimum many muskrats were trapped again this fall out of the Tanoma ponds.



Solar Panels at the Tanoma AMD Site.

Grants in the works:

Dominion Watershed Mini Grant: A grant was submitted for outreach and to help support costs at the Tanoma AMD site.

Colcom Foundation Grant: A grant application was submitted for additional water monitoring equipment to monitor water quality in our county headwaters.

Board Members Needed

Are you interested in the environment? Do you want to help? Become an Evergreen Conservancy board member... Go to the [Evergreen Conservancy Website](http://www.evergreenconservancy.org) and print the [board application](#) and mail it in today!

If you believe that we need to protect our planet, visit www.GoodPawsGoodCause.org, an on-line store for good people and good pets!

10% of every Fur The Earth™ purchase benefits Evergreen Conservancy and The Conservation Fund.

Thanks to GoodPawsGoodCause for their year-end donation to Evergreen Conservancy.



Join Evergreen Conservancy Today!

Support the all-volunteer Evergreen Conservancy and its mission through your membership.

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Address: _____

E-mail: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____

Membership Levels:

_____ \$15: Student _____ \$25 _____ \$45 _____ \$70 _____ \$100 _____ \$ Other

_____ \$75: Business/Org Additional Donation: \$ _____

Complete this form and send check to:

Evergreen Conservancy, PO Box 0783, Indiana, PA 15701



**Many Thanks for the good-good Java that
THE COMMONPLACE COFFEEHOUSE & ROASTERY
donates to Evergreen Conservancy events!**



Volunteer Opportunity April 23rd

Earth Day is Friday April 22nd. Evergreen Conservancy has scheduled its cleanup of the Hoodlebug Trail in honor of Earth Day.

The Evergreen Conservancy will conduct a cleanup of the Hoodlebug Trail on Saturday April 23rd beginning at 9:00am. Volunteers will meet at the Homer City ball field parking lot.

Directions: To get to meeting place take old Route 119 south through Homer City (Main Street); go past the school. Take first right and follow that street about 1/4 mile to a stop

sign. Turn right and cross the Hoodlebug Trail; turn left and follow the trail into the parking lot.

Recent clean ups have been blessed with nice weather and a good number of volunteers. We have been able to finish our jobs in less than two hours. Those wishing to help with this cleanup should report to the ball field with gloves. Garbage bags will be supplied. The clean up will be conducted unless there is extremely bad weather. In this event an announcement will be made to local media.

You can help! – Adopt a Bridge

Would you like to adopt a bridge, or part of a bridge, as a donation to support Evergreen Conservancy? Each of the bridges cost \$650. We will put names of contributors on each bridge or a name in memory of a loved one.

Please send contributions to:
Evergreen Conservancy, P.O. Box 0783, Indiana, PA 15701



Great News, Water Quality will be Continuously Monitored



We were awarded a Growing Greener grant of \$29,400 in January to install water monitoring equipment in local creeks to detect nonpoint source pollution. The data loggers will continuously log data every 15 minutes, 24/7 and then we will do on-site downloads about twice a month. The data loggers will provide baseline water quality information and then be able to continuously detect any pollution issues. We will be partnering with the Somerset and Indiana Conservation Districts, PASEC, Trout Unlimited, Kiski-Conemaugh Stream Team, and the USGS for this project. If you want to get out in the field and help with this project, please let us know. We will be doing training on the process for volunteers. Stay tuned for up-dates.



Evergreen Events Calendar:

February 26th, 2011 Strategic Planning Meeting – 10:00am 1005 Oak Street, second floor

February, 2011 – Committee Meetings, 1005 Oak Street:

Finance and Fundraising, February 9th, 7:00pm

Public Relations, February 21st, 7:00pm

March 2nd, 2011 Board Meeting – 7:00pm 1005 Oak Street, second floor

March 19th, 2011 – 10:00am–3:00pm Evergreen will be at Family Fun Fest, Indiana Mall

April 8th, 2011 – Spring Program on River Otters by Patrick Snickles, Pa Wildlife

Conservation Officer, Blue Spruce Lodge, 7:00pm

April 23rd, 2011 – Hoodle Bug trail clean up, 9:00am Homer City Ball Field