



SCWA Newsletter

FALL EDITION

NOVEMBER 2018

Sewickley Creek Watershed Association

*Working Together
For A Better
Environment*

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Thomas W. Keller
Executive Director

**NOTICE: SCWA Monthly Strip
Tickets must be claimed within
30 days of the jackpot drawing.**

We're On The Web!
www.sewickleycreek.com

Second Annual Lowber Family Field Day

On August 4, we hosted our second annual Family Field Day at the Lowber Abandoned Mine Drainage facility in Lowber, PA. The event was an environmental education field day that included stations where visitors could learn about the site and the science behind what we do there. Professors from local colleges and representatives from local organizations presented on a wide range of topics, including water testing, microbiology, and kayak and water safety.

The Foundation for PA Watersheds provided funding for the event. Additionally, the Lowber Volunteer Fire Department directed traffic.

Lowber Family Field Day also marked the first use of the new pavilion at the Lowber site. The pavilion will be used to shelter classes doing research there.



Tom Keller, SCWA Executive Director, hosts a group at one of the informative stations set up during the second annual Lowber Family Field Day held on August 4, 2018.

Cruise for Conservation



Attendees of the first annual "Cruise for Conservation" check out one of the classic cars on display during the June 23 event.

On June 23, SCWA, in partnership with the Westmoreland Conservation District, hosted its first annual "Cruise for Conservation" fundraiser in the parking lot of the Donohoe Center in Greensburg.

Over 30 participants braved the rainy day, bringing out a wide variety of vehicles. In addition to enjoying the antique and high-performance vehicles on display, visitors were able to check out the 1880s Pennsylvania barn that serves as the Conservation District's headquarters, tour the nearby Westmoreland County Penn State Master Gardens, and learn how conservation best management practices and watershed restoration efforts help maintain and improve the quality of life in Westmoreland County.

Earth Day Festivities

SCWA marked Earth Day this year by erecting bluebird and bat boxes in Youngwood. Approximately 15 volunteers helped install 26 bluebird boxes and three bat boxes. Firestone Building Products graciously opened up their facilities, giving us room to assemble the boxes.

The bat boxes will each house 250 guests. Because bats eat several times their weight in insects each night, they are an important addition to the Youngwood site. In the future, SCWA hopes to erect additional boxes at other locations, where standing water can be a haven for mosquitoes.

Firestone Building Products purchased the bat boxes and the PA Game Commission donated the bluebird boxes. Youngwood Borough provided a Bobcat and Bobcat of Pittsburgh donated the use of an auger to dig the holes for the bat box installation. Boy Scouts from Troop 465 and 416 hung bluebird boxes.



Blue Heron Rookery Research

A few years ago, the SCWA was entrusted with the care of a site near Yukon that serves as a rookery for blue herons. An avian research coordinator with Powdermill Nature Reserve, the environmental research center of the Carnegie Museum of Natural History, will be evaluating the site with us.

The primary goal is to evaluate the best way to protect the blue herons who use this area for nesting. However, we will also be determining whether it is feasible or appropriate to create access points or viewing areas that would allow visitors to see this long-established rookery.



Coke Oven Cleanup



In early May, around 15 volunteers worked to clear trees and overgrowth around the 50 beehive coke ovens at the Brinkerton site. The ovens are the remnants of the Hester Coke Works, which was in operation commercially between 1900 and 1913. Batteries of ovens such as these were used to transform coal

into coke, a fuel with fewer impurities that was used in the steelmaking process. They are among the best-preserved coke ovens in the area, and clearing trees was part of an effort to prevent the further deterioration of these historic structures. If you would like to volunteer for the coke oven cleanup day in 2019, contact the SCWA!



Mike McCrea (center), Firestone Building Products Plant Manager, presents the Bridgestone Americas Trust Fund Award to SCWA Vice-President, Ted Curnow (left), and SCWA President, Dean Nelson (right), at a recent ceremony. SCWA is pleased to partner with Firestone on many local projects.



Bylaws

The Board of Directors of the Sewickley Creek Watershed Association will vote on a proposed change to its Bylaws at the December meeting. If Approved, the amendment will add the position of "Director Emeritus" to the Board.