

# Raccoon Creek News

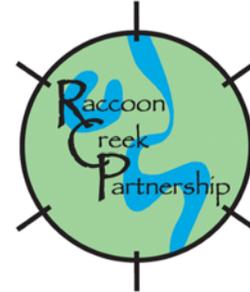
Spring 2017

Bucks, Barrels, Birds, and Sandboxes

## A Message from the Chairperson

Greetings Fellow Raccoon Creekers,

I hope all is well in Raccoon Creek lands! Its about that time again where we hang up our winter jackets and make way for sunshine and smiles. Get your cheeks ready for this years fun and exciting activities because they will surely bring out the smiles in us all. This years Summer camp registration will be online and will open on **March 20th**. If you have any questions relating to upcoming events or summer camps, please feel free to contact us! Also, keep an eye out for RCP updates and event schedules on our Facebook page. Lastly, we would like to send a very fond welcome to our newest board member, Dustin Hoy. We look forward to working with you and wish the Raccoon Creek Outfitters the best of luck.



*Molly Gurien, Raccoon Creek Partnership Chair*

### Raccoon Creek Partnership - Current Board of Directors

Molly Gurien (Chair), Heike Perko (Vice-Chair), Chelsi Hempstead (Treasurer),  
Bob Eichenberg (Secretary), Jessica Makosky, Vance Rannells, Dustin Hoy

## 2017-2018 AmeriCorps Member Recruiting

A recruitment banner for the Ohio Stream Restore Corps. It features a large, stylized letter 'A' in the background. To the left of the 'A' is a circular logo with a star and stripes, resembling the American flag. Text on the banner includes: "I will make our people safer, stronger and healthier.", "I will strengthen our communities.", "Facing adversity, I will persevere.", "I will carry this commitment with me this year and beyond.", "I am an AmeriCorps member, and I will get things done." Below the 'A' is the text "Ohio Stream Restore Corps" and "Getting Things Done For America- In Appalachian Ohio". At the bottom right are logos for "SERVE OHIO" and "Rural Action Working Together to Revitalize Appalachian Ohio".

### Positions Available! Ohio Stream Restore Corps 2017-2018

*Amy Mackey – Raccoon Creek Watershed Coordinator*

Looking for an opportunity to make a difference in the watershed? Become an AmeriCorps member! Ohio Stream Restore Corps members serving at Raccoon Creek assist with chemical and biological monitoring, outreach and education, grant writing, member recruitment, etc. There are many other positions available too! Position details are posted on the Raccoon Creek Partnership Facebook page or at <http://ruralaction.org/>

### Want to help Raccoon Creek? Register your Kroger Plus Card!

**Sign up Today by Following These 5 Easy Steps:**

1. Go to: [www.krogercommunityrewards.com](http://www.krogercommunityrewards.com) - Click "Sign in" or "Create an account" at the top of the screen.
2. To Create an account: simply fill in the requested information and a confirmation email will be sent to you.
3. Click on the link provided in the email from Kroger, and "Sign in".
4. Once signed in click on the "Edit Community Rewards Information" near the bottom of the screen. Then, in the "Find Your Organization" field, type in "Raccoon Creek Partnership". Select us and Save your Selection.
5. Swipe your Kroger Rewards Card every time you shop and help RCP grow!

ATHENS

GALLIA

HOCKING

JACKSON

MEIGS

VINTON

# Rain Barrel Workshops

*Bob Eichenberg, Raccoon Creek Partnership Board Secretary*

Here's an opportunity you can't miss!! Attend one of our Rain Barrel Workshops jointly sponsored by the Raccoon Creek Partnership and the Meigs County Soil and Water Conservation District. There is no charge to attend and the first 15 people to register will receive a free rain barrel with all the necessary hardware to put it into immediate action.

The Rain Barrel Workshop will be held Thursday, April 13, starting at 6 p.m. at the Meigs SWCD Conservation Area located on New Lima Road between Rutland and Harrisonville.



Teresa Caldwell, education coordinator with the Athens Soil and Water Conservation District, will be the guest speaker and topics will include: the benefits of collecting rain water, different ways of collecting rain water, setting up your own rain barrel, care and maintenance of your rain barrel, winterizing your rain barrel, and best practices of using a rain barrel. The workshop is free and open to the public!

To register, call the Meigs SWCD at 740-992-4282.

## RCP UPCOMING EVENTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Visit [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*

Gallia SWCD Recycle Day	March 18th
Hocking County SWCD Pond Clinic	March 28th
RCP Reptiles and Amphibians Spring Day Camp	April 15th
Feral Swine in Ohio with USDA APHIS Program	April 27th
RCP Water Trail Canoe Skills Course Challenge	May 6th
Summer Science Camp #1	June 19th-23rd
Summer Science Camp #2	July 17th-21st
Water Trails Fall Canoe Float	September 30th

\*All dates are subject to change. For more information regarding SWCD events please visit their websites or Facebook pages.\*

**“Like” us on Facebook!**

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

## Nighttime Sounds in the Winter Woods

*Wyatt E. Snodgrass, University of Rio Grande Student*

As the end of winter approaches, a remarkable sound emerges from the woods after sunset. February is a great month to hear the extraordinary calls of owls due to their early nesting habits. North America is home to nineteen species of owls, twelve of which have been recorded here in Ohio. The most common species that are seen and heard in the state are the Eastern screech-owl, barred owl, and the great horned owl. Barn owls are less common in the state but can be found in the limited areas in which they occur. The long-eared, short-eared and Northern saw-whet owls are regular migrants that frequently visit Ohio during the winter months. Another species, the snowy owl, has been a notorious migrant to the state most winters but occurs less often and in fluctuating numbers.



During the winter, owls communicate while breeding and choosing their nest sites. The largest of the commonly heard owls in Ohio is the great horned owl which are the first to mate and typically are already sitting on eggs in the months of January and February. They are known to use old hawk or crow nests to achieve this. The Eastern screech owl and barred owl are smaller in size and usually use cavities in trees to lay their eggs.

Owls possess many unique characteristics allowing them to be top predators in the dark. Exceptional hearing allows them to pinpoint the location of sounds. Specialized feathers that greatly reduce the noise that is made during flight allows them to silently ambush prey. Owls have Exceptional vision because of very large eyes that enables them to navigate extremely well at night. Owls can turn their head up to 270 degrees, giving the ability to look directly behind them without moving their body. Their fully feathered feet are adapted for cold weather condition and have powerful talons used for hunting prey.

While spring draws nearer don't miss out on what winter still has to offer to wildlife enthusiasts. Raccoon Creek Partnership offered a unique opportunity to experience our region's most stealthy predator, at this year's annual Winter Owl Prowl. The night included an educational presentation from Hocking Hills Naturalist Pat Quackenbush, delicious Snowville hot chocolate and the chance to get outdoors and call for owls.

## Finding Late Winter White Gold

*Chad Gatt, RCP Ohio Stream Restore Corps AmeriCorps Member 2016-17*

Looking for an activity to cure your cabin fever? I got the right activity for you! White-tailed deer shed hunting. Every year adult male deer shed their antlers after breeding season has come to an end and testosterone levels begin to drop. They will then begin to grow a new pair, often larger, in the spring. The exact time when deer begin to shed their antlers depends on a variety of factors such as nutrition, photoperiods, injuries, and several other environmental factors. However, you can typically expect deer sheds to start dropping beginning in January through April. Be aware that after the antlers are shed, they won't last long on the forest floor. Mice, squirrels, foxes, and even bears enjoy these tasty treats because they are filled with minerals, salts, and phosphorus. To be a top-notch shed hunter you should adopt some techniques and concentrate your efforts on certain areas.

First, always dress appropriately for the weather, bring a lot of water, and ask permission to be on private property. Shed hunting is not the easiest activity but it is well worth the long hikes to find some white gold! Next, walk SLOW and keep your eyes fixed on the ground around you. Every 15 yards or so, stop and do a 360 turn to analyze the ground around you. Try to concentrate your efforts on deer bedding areas, feeding areas, travel corridors, and waterways. Southern facing slopes are often great areas to search because deer will tend to bed here to soak up the sun's radiant heat. Also, check areas where deer tend to jump such as fence rows, ditches, or fallen trees. Lastly, HAVE FUN. Shed hunting is meant to be a fun and exciting way to get outdoors and enjoy the areas around you. Starting this year you will also have the opportunity to win prizes! Beginning on March 1st, Whitetail Properties Real Estate will hold a shed hunting picture contest where you could win prizes from Realtree, Scent-Lok, and many more. Just upload your pictures to social media with the hashtag, #ShedRally and #RCP. See you in the timbers!



## Summer Camps at Waterloo

*Heike Perko, Raccoon Creek Partnership Vice-Chair*

We started the Waterloo Aquatic Education camps with the intentions of connecting our children to our local ecosystems, forming long lasting relationships, and giving kids a chance to explore the beauty of nature. The goal is to give kids a break from the academic rigor of our public and private schools. As a school teacher, I see how little the kids get a chance to be the explorers they innately tend to be. Every moment of every day is planned out and mandated by state and federal teaching requirements, giving little chance to head outside and explore the one and only beautiful planet Earth up close and personal. Teachers often want to do these things, however there is only so much time. Yes, we can google just about everything and have the knowledge in our brains, but do we have the love in our hearts? That comes through feeling, smelling, touching, using our bodies and our senses, exploring on our own, and sharing with our friends. With this in mind, we look at what we do during our summer camps and how we do it. We want the kids to have down time to chat, make new friends, to run around, play games, and to be OUTSIDE! We go with the flow. This is an important skill to have. We give the kids a chance to walk in the stream, discover on their own, and ask them what they think about this or that. To quote one of our early campers in the beginning days of our camps after a stream walk: "When can we go back? I lost my soul in the stream! I love it!" Camp is hard work, channeling the energy of youth in a constructive manner without too much restrictions, but it is also rewarded by priceless moments of kids holding newts and splashing each other with canoe paddles. We keep our numbers of participating campers low to ensure quality over quantity. We give out scholarships to families who do not have financial means and we strive to cover our cost only with our registration fees. Therefore, we depend heavily on volunteers! If what you read speaks to your heart, you may want to consider helping us during our two weeks of summer camp and you may contact me at [heikeperko@ohiohills.com](mailto:heikeperko@ohiohills.com) or 740-664-3248. Join our mission to give the next generation a chance to be with the Earth and to fall in love with Southeastern Ohio and the Raccoon Creek watershed.

## Regional Watershed Work

*Sarah Landers, Raccoon Creek Water Quality Specialist*

The Raccoon Creek watershed is just one of many watersheds in the Appalachian coal-bearing region. Water in these watersheds all drains into larger streams like Symmes Creek, Raccoon Creek, the Hocking River, the Muskingum River or several other small streams on the Eastern edge of Ohio. All of the streams within these watersheds eventually drain into the Ohio River. This Appalachian coal-bearing region consists of 36 Ohio counties! Raccoon Creek Partnership is a member organization of the Appalachian Ohio Watershed Council (AOWC). The Council is a collaborative effort whose mission is to support networking and mentoring opportunities for watershed groups and their partners in Appalachian Ohio and to provide a forum for a strong voice on regional water resource issues. The Appalachian Ohio Clean Watershed Initiative (AOCWI), which is a collaboration between Ohio University's Voinovich School of Leadership and Public Affairs and Rural Action, is providing an opportunity to address non-acid mine drainage water issues in the Appalachian Ohio region. Areas of focus include: riparian tree plantings, wetland protection and native plantings, invasive species removal, rain garden construction, failing home septic systems, and stormwater management for small rural communities. AOCWI is funded by a grant through Ohio EPA and US EPA under the provisions of Section 319(h) of the Clean Water Act. Ohio University Voinovich School received a grant this year from Ohio EPA's Ohio Environmental Education Fund to raise community awareness about protecting local waterways. A portable, interactive stormwater exhibit is being created to share at community events and paint and other supplies were purchased for communities to stencil storm drains. Storm drain stenciling involves volunteers using spray paint to stencil the message "No Dumping, Drains to River" along community streets. Educational hangtags are distributed to inform the community of the project and how to properly dispose of pollutants that commonly end up in storm drains.

If your community is interested in the storm drain stenciling program or any of the other programs mentioned above contact Sarah Cornwell at 740-593-9601 or [Landerss@ohio.edu](mailto:Landerss@ohio.edu)

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Just go to: <https://smile.amazon.com> and enter Raccoon Creek Partnership as your charitable organization. Then remember to go to [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com) next time you shop on Amazon! It doesn't cost you anything, and it helps to support the Raccoon Creek Partnership!

## A Bird's Life: The Pileated Woodpecker

Bob Eichenberg, RCP Secretary

I have been fascinated by the Pileated Woodpecker (*Dryocopus pileatus*) for a long time but have been seeing more of them lately. I have some theories about why they seem to be doing well in my woods. I'm not sure whether they eat cicadas but many insect-eating species seem to take advantage of the cicadas when they are around every 17 years. I also have many dead and dying ash trees, so the opportunity for extra food and nesting cavities is greater. I also lost some big white pines near my pond, so the dead stalks provide that much more food too. This all adds up to a banner year for this largest of all woodpecker species.

For being so large, the Pileated can be a bit secretive. They are not likely to let you approach very closely. However, when they are drumming or pecking on a tree at up to 15 pecks per second, you know they are around. On an otherwise quiet morning, that sound will echo through the forest. The drumming is done to excavate holes for food, for attracting mates, and for defining territory. Their call is a loud *cuk cuk cuk* that they make even when in flight. The call was the inspiration for the cartoon character Woody Woodpecker. The wingspan is up to 30 inches and when they swoop in and land on a tree trunk I often have an image of Count Dracula and his flowing black cape.

Woodpeckers have a body that is top heavy so their perching style is vertical with strong tail feathers, legs, feet, toes, and claws. These aid the bird in balance and climbing those tree trunks that hold their food source. The Pileated's main food consists of ants and wood-boring beetle larvae. They also like termites and will eat grasshoppers, flies, and caterpillars. Other lesser foods are nuts, fruits, and wild berries. They obtain their food by peeling off bark and excavating large rectangular cavities to expose the insect galleries. I have noticed a lot of bark peeled off my dying ash trees by all the woodpecker species looking for insects. The tongue of the Pileated is long, barbed, and sticky so is the perfect tool for pulling insects out of tree cavities.

The territory of a Pileated Woodpecker is between 1000 and 4000 acres but they will tolerate other Pileated's during the winter months. This woodpecker stays with the same mate for life and will not abandon its territory even if it loses its mate. The Pileated has one brood per season with an average of 4 white eggs. Young are dependent on the parents for between 4 and 5 months after hatching.

Once in a while a Pileated Woodpecker will visit our bird feeders and it is always a special treat to see this large, red crested bird so close to the house. The woodpeckers like suet in particular. I hope everyone enjoys this unique woodpecker as much as I do.

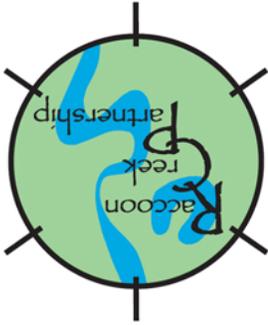


## Augmented Reality Sandbox

This past February, RCP was awarded the Ohio Division of Natural Resources Division of Wildlife Aquatic Education Grant in the amount of \$8,290. In cooperation with several watershed groups and soil and water conservation districts, the grant money will be used to build three Augmented Reality Sandboxes. The Augmented Reality Sandboxes allow users to create topographic maps and watershed models by shaping and moving sand. After moving the sand, a topographic map will appear on the sand via a short throw projector in real time with contour lines and simulated water flow. This model teaches geographic, geologic, hydrologic concepts in a way that will allow its users to have a fun hands



on experience constructing different landscapes while learning about them. Much of our time in the fall, winter, and spring is spent traveling to schools, events, and programs to teach WET/WILD curriculum. The model will be a vital tool in teaching the curriculum because it can be tied into a large portion of the lesson plans. We plan to construct three Augmented Reality Sandboxes because this will allow us to have two sandboxes in the northern Appalachian region and two in the southern region. The models will be utilized throughout the Appalachian region to teach kids and adults alike about geology, earth science, and environmental subject matter.



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"/>	Striped Shiner	\$15
<input type="checkbox"/>	Fantail Darter	\$30
<input type="checkbox"/>	Longear Sunfish	\$100
<input type="checkbox"/>	Golden Redhorse	\$500

### Organizational Membership

<input type="checkbox"/>	Grass Pickerel	\$50
<input type="checkbox"/>	Spotted Bass	\$100
<input type="checkbox"/>	Flathead Catfish	\$500
<input type="checkbox"/>	Paddlefish	\$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