

Ecology Field Day Held in Penns Creek at New Berlin

On Saturday August 3, 2013, two Ecology Field Day events were held in Penns Creek at the New Berlin Commons. One session was held in the morning and one in the afternoon. Despite the threat of stormy weather, approximately forty-five (45) people, both adults and children, collected and learned about the water quality, insects, crayfish, clams, and fish that inhabit Penns Creek; and how the surrounding land use affects the creek ecology. Both groups were successful in collecting many species of animals and fish. (Examples include: mayflies, crayfish, hellgrammites, dragonflies, beetles, water scorpions, giant water bugs, smallmouth bass, red-breast sunfish, margined madtoms, rock bass, cutlips minnows, and darters).



Mike Bilger of EcoAnalysts, Inc., (wearing hat and waders) helps youngsters and an adult collect aquatic animals and fish out of Penns Creek at the Ecology Field Day.

After the aquatic animals and fish were caught, the participants were able to study and identify them under microscopes furnished by Susquehanna University's Biology Department. This proved to be a highlight of the day as the participants were able to observe the various structures of the animals and handle the fish species. At the conclusion of the day, all animals were released back into the creek unharmed.





Three youngsters look at aquatic life collected from Penns Creek through microscopes at the Ecology Field Day.

This Ecology Field Day was funded by PACD (PA Association of Conservation Districts) through an educational grant initiated by the Snyder County Conservation District (SCCD) and awarded to the Lower Penns Creek Watershed Association (LPCWA). Jason Winey, SCCD Watershed Specialist, took a leadership role in event facilitation. Faculty and students from Susquehanna University in Selingsrove, Mike Bilger of EcoAnalysts, Inc., of Selingsrove, and Janet Bilger of Snyder-Union Community Action Agency (CAA) were also an immense help with this project.

Ecology Day events have been held since 2011. If funds become available and interest remains high, another similar event may be held in the future.

Questions about this event or the Lower Penns Creek Watershed Association (LPCWA) can be forwarded to [Jason Winey](mailto:Jason.Winey@lpcwa.org) at 570-837-3000, extension 112. Questions about other Snyder County Conservation District events and programs may be forwarded to [us](mailto:us@lpcwa.org) at 570-837-3000, extension 110.

Information about the following supporting groups can be found on their respective websites:

EcoAnalysts, Inc.: <http://www.ecoanalysts.com>

Susquehanna University Department of Biology: <http://www.susquehanna.edu/academics/Biology.asp>

Snyder Union CAA: <http://www.union-snydercaa.org>

Snyder County Conservation District: <http://www.snyderconservation.org>

PA Association of Conservation Districts, Inc.: <http://pacd.org>

Note: Most of this material was supplied by Mike Bilger of EcoAnalysts, Inc., Selingsrove. Photos in this article were supplied by Dianne Lengle of LPCWA.

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