Mark Your Calendars for Sunday Creek Watershed Group’s Spring Watershed Tour

By Amber Leasure-Earnhardt

Would you like to learn more about the Sunday Creek Watershed and have a guided tour of some of the sites? Then mark your calendars for Friday, April 8th, 2011 when the Sunday Creek Watershed Group will be hosting a spring watershed tour. This tour is open to the public and will be from 9:30 am to 3 pm. The watershed tour will begin in the West Branch of Sunday Creek where the watershed group has completed several reclamation projects. The morning will consist of a walking tour of Rodger’s Hollow Stream Capture Project (Scenic Road) led by Bill Jonard from Ohio Department of Natural Resources, Division of Mineral Resources Management (ODNR-DMRM) and the newly completed West Branch Headwaters Project (St. Rt. 155) led by Jeff Calhoun from ODNR-DMRM. Then there will be a break for lunch at the park in Corning. The afternoon will consist of a short hike on the Wildcat Hollow Hiking Trail, part of the Wayne National Forest and near the East Branch of Sunday Creek, led by Andrew Bashaw, the Regional Trail Coordinator at North Country Trail Association. Finally, we will return to Glouster to end the day with a hike at the Trimble Township Community Forest led by Rural Action’s Environmental Education Coordinator, Joe Brehm. This will be a great day to get outside and see some of the work that the watershed group is accomplishing and some of the natural wonders and destination spots in our watershed! The watershed group will provide transportation and lunch. If interested in attending this event please RSVP to the Sunday Creek Office by April 1st (740.767.2225 or amber@sundaycreek.org).
a note from the coordinator

By Amber Leasure-Earnhardt

The holidays are over and we are back to full steam here at the Sunday Creek Office. Leah, Michelle, Joe and I are all trying to keep warm at our office this winter. This fall we had a successful fundraiser and raised almost $600 for the watershed program. Thanks again to all those who made donations and to those who bought tickets to help support the work we do at Sunday Creek. We are very grateful! We are currently planning another fundraiser for this spring, a 5K run at Burr Oak State Park, to raise funds and to get more people involved and interested in our work.

Other things to look forward to this spring are the watershed tour in April, our February and April community meetings (anyone is welcome to attend), our first annual photo contest, and the Ohio River Clean Sweep in June. We want to give everyone more opportunities to get outdoors and work for a cause that helps their neighbors and protects their natural resources. Exciting new reclamation projects scheduled for completion this summer are phase two of the West Branch Headwaters Project and the West Rendville Stream Capture Project.

We are happy to announce that Michelle Shaw will be staying on staff as a part-time Water Quality Specialist. The Water Quality Specialist position has been funded by ODNR-DMRM through July, when the position will be up for renewal for another six months. Michelle began working with Sunday Creek this past June as an ODNR intern. Her main tasks will be updating Sunday Creek’s Acid Mine Drainage Abatement and Treatment Plan (AMDAT) and coordinating all of Sunday Creek’s water quality monitoring efforts. Michelle is excited to be able to continue seeing improvement in the watershed and working on important water quality issues.

Sunday Creek Watershed Office Staff

Amber Leasure-Earnhardt Watershed Coordinator
Joe Brehm Rural Action Environmental Education Coordinator
Leah Graham AmeriCorps Member
Michelle Shaw Water Quality Specialist
Sunday Creek First Annual Photo Contest!

By Leah Graham

Calling all photographers and nature enthusiasts! The Sunday Creek Watershed Group is holding its first annual photo contest. Pictures must be taken in the Sunday Creek Watershed (see map or visit sundaycreek.org).

Open to all amateur photographers of any age! The Sunday Creek Watershed provides a unique backdrop for photographs of our region including water quality restoration sites, the Wayne National Forest, Burr Oak State Park, and the Buckeye and North Country Trails. The intention of this photo contest is to familiarize people with the Sunday Creek Watershed and the SCWG and its mission. We hope to show that the efforts being made by the SCWG and its partners will make scenic photographs more commonplace throughout the Sunday Creek Watershed.

There is a limit of three photographs per person. Please submit hard copies of photographs no larger than 11”x 14” (color or black and white) and a completed entry form to the Sunday Creek office at 69 High Street, Glouster, OH 45732. Obtain official rules from the SCWG office or the Sunday Creek Watershed Group website. Remember to always respect private property.

A panel of local experts and residents will judge photos. Submissions are due to the SCWG office by Friday, May 13th. Winners will be announced at Rural Action’s Annual Meeting on June 25th. The top three photos along with other submissions will be on display at the Sunday Creek office. Winning photos will receive cash prizes (1st place: $50.00, 2nd place: $30.00, 3rd place: $20.00) and will be used in the SCWG Splash newsletter, Sunday Creek website, and other publications or displays.

For additional maps or suggestions on where to take pictures contact the Sunday Creek Watershed office at 740-767-2225 or visit www.sundaycreek.org. Happy shutter-bugging!
Environmental Education Update

By: Joe Brehm

There are several exciting upcoming environmental education projects in the Sunday Creek Watershed for the coming year. We will continue to connect students and teachers with outdoor education opportunities and experiences. Environmental Education Coordinator, Joe Brehm, will work with Trimble High School teachers Gordon Gifford and Matt Williamson this spring to take students to Trimble Township Community Forest which also serves as a lab for Trimble schools. We will search for and record amphibian species in the vernal pools there, which are fishless wetlands that typically fill up in the spring and dry up during late summer and fall. Joe Brehm is also working with Trimble Middle School and Mill Creek Elementary teachers to design outdoor learning opportunities for students.

Rural Action and Sunday Creek Watershed Group are also active in extra-curricular environmental education. We have been facilitating programs for Kids on Campus at Trimble Elementary and the Glouster Public Library and will continue these partnerships into 2011. Also, dates for Sunday Creek Watershed Daycamps have been set for this summer! Camp will run from June 27-July 1 and will feature many exciting activities, field trips, and presentations. Contact Joe Brehm (joe@ruralaction.org) and the SCWG office (740.767.2225) to register.

Splash Spotlight: Community Member Jim Hart

By Leah Graham

Jim Hart has been involved with the Sunday Creek Watershed Group since 1999 as one of the group’s initial founders. Jim first got involved in creating the SCWG because of the creek on his 160 acre tree farm in the watershed. While his creek maintains good water quality, he has seen the effects of coal mining, oil and gas and has been involved with environmental issues for many years. Jim and the other SCWG founders saw that there was money out there to do good things and thought that they should take advantage of the opportunity. Jim wrote a grant for a watershed coordinator, which was awarded; hence the Sunday Creek Watershed Group was officially born.

Jim continues to be involved in the SCWG today and appreciates all the good work the SCWG staff, volunteers, interns and community members are doing. In the first 5-6 years the SCWG was actively involved in picking up trash from illegal dumping. Tons and tons of trash were picked up in the Sunday Creek Watershed and with the help of community members and volunteers much of the waste in the watershed was removed.

This involvement with trash was not a far stretch from Jim’s day job at the County Commissioners’ Office as Director of Perry County Waste Reduction and Recycling Program. Over ten years ago, Jim organized all the metal from New Lexington High School to be recycled. The art department had left two kick wheels out by chance that were missed by the recycling crew and were not taken away. In order to keep the wheels from going to the dump, Jim took the wheels back to his house. Jim has used the kick wheels to throw pots and do ceramics. In addition to pottery Jim enjoys woodwork, hiking, and learning to play the guitar. Originally from Marion, Ohio, Jim has lived in Corning for 41 years. The SCWG staff enjoys visits from Delilah, Jim’s dog, and Sam, his cat, when collecting well data. Thank you Jim for all your efforts in the SCWG!
Sunday Creek Natural History

By: Joe Brehm

As I hit the trail at Trimble Township Community Forest (TTCF) with Rural Action’s outstanding Americorps members in mid-December, I had birds on the brain. Previous hikes through parts of this landscape made it clear that TTCF is important wintering habitat for birds in the region. I had seen large flocks of Dark-Eyed Juncos, White-Throated Sparrows, American Tree Sparrows, as well as groups of Northern Cardinals, Eastern Towhees, Song Sparrows, and Golden-Crowned Kinglets. I also spotted a large nest high in the branches of a sycamore tree along a creek that most likely belongs to a pair of Red-Shouldered Hawks. What really got me thinking about this place as winter habitat for birds was an encounter with a Winter Wren.

Winter Wrens are cool for a lot of reasons. They are tiny birds that can survive the winter, one of the few species that actually sing in the winter months, and they flit around downed logs and thick brush, disappearing into tiny holes and crevices while bobbing up and down and giving their bubbly call notes. They are just fun to watch, and I was excited to see that a few of these feathered bundles of energy have set up shop for the winter at TTCF. Ohio is the northern reach of their winter range, and they are not very common in the Buckeye State.

The Americorps members and I encountered two other species of birds that winter as far north as Ohio and are fairly uncommon here: the Yellow-Bellied Sapsucker, a Migratory Woodpecker, and the Hermit Thrush, a relative of the robin that can be as difficult to spot as its name implies. Both of these species winter as far south as Central America, so the birds that we saw chose to spend their winter in the Sunday Creek watershed instead of Panama or Costa Rica. The TTCF provides suitable habitat for these three species to spend their winter, and perhaps they will even stick around to breed in the summer.

Art Basket Raffle Winners

By Leah Graham

Congratulations to Jim Hart and Mary Ann Borch, winners of the local artists basket raffle. The drawing was held on Dec. 17th at the Rural Action Holiday Party. A special thank you to all the participants and artists who made this raffle possible! With your help we raised close to $600 for the Sunday Creek Watershed Group!
Upcoming Events and Volunteer Opportunities:

**FRIDAY **
**FEB**
**04**

*Living Downstream* Cinematic Feature-Length Documentary (7pm-10pm)
Ohio University Baker Center – Sunday Creek Watershed Coordinator, Amber Leasure-Earnhardt, will be on a discussion panel after the movie.

**THURSDAY**
**FEB**
**24**

SCWG Community Meeting (6 pm): SCWG Office (Glouster) Meeting will begin with a potluck dinner, Speaker- Michelle Shaw’s Master’s Leadership Project on Sunday Creek’s Pine Run Subwatershed

**FRIDAY**
**APR**
**08**

Sunday Creek Spring Watershed Tour (9:30 am – 3 pm): meet at the SCWG Office (Glouster)

**THURSDAY**
**APR**
**28**

SCWG Community Meeting (6pm): Glouster Park (weather permitting)
Earth Day/ Arbor Day Celebration

**SPRING**
**2011**

Adopt-A-Highway Clean-Up (details will be posted on website)

**FRIDAY**
**MAY**
**13**

Photo Contest Submission Deadline

**SATURDAY**
**MAY**
**21**

Sunday Creek 5K, Dash for the Darter (1 pm): Burr Oak State Park

**SATURDAY**
**JUN**
**18**

Ohio River Clean Sweep – Sunday Creek Watershed Group will be hosting a cleanup site (time and location to be determined)

**SATURDAY**
**JUN**
**25**

Rural Action’s Annual Meeting

**MON - FRI**
**JUN-JUL**
**27-01**

Sunday Creek Watershed Day Camp
MISSION:
The Sunday Creek Watershed Group is committed to restoring and preserving water quality through community interaction, conservation, and education; in pursuit of a healthy ecosystem capable of supporting bio-diversity and recreation.

MEMBERSHIP:
If you would like to renew your membership and support Sunday Creek, fill out the bottom portion below and send it back to us with your donation—thank you so much for your support!

The operation of a successful watershed program involves several partners. Foremost among those organizations is Rural Action, of which Sunday Creek Watershed Group is a part. Rural Action provides the non-profit status necessary to obtain grants, supports an AmeriCorps program and provides fiscal management. Rural Action also connects watershed restoration and watershed communities to a bigger agenda of building on our region’s assets and fostering sustainable development.

By becoming a member of Sunday Creek, you also become a member of Rural Action. Membership at any level provides you with the benefits listed below and access to all of SCWG and Rural Action programs.

Join today and become a part of the ACTION!

Membership Level:

☐ $20  Membership at any level provides you
☐ $40  with discounts on merchandise and
events, our quarterly print newsletter,
☐ $60  annual report and e-newsletter
☐ $100

Payment Type:  ☐ Check  ☐ Credit Card
MC/VISA # ________________________
Expiration Date ____________________
Signature __________________________
☐ Please make my membership anonymous

Go Green
☐ I prefer to receive publications electronically.

You can also join online by visiting: www.ruralaction.org/join

I am interested in the following program areas:

☐ Sustainable Agriculture
☐ Sustainable Forestry
☐ Watershed Restoration
☐ Environmental Education
☐ Energy
☐ Recycling & Waste Stream Management
☐ Volunteer Opportunities

Forms can be mailed to Membership | Rural Action | P.O. Box 157 | Trimble, OH | 45782