

# NW PAssages

*Exploring the Greenways, Heritage & Recreation Opportunities of Northwest Pennsylvania*

*September 2014*



# NW PAssages

September 2014

Vol. 1, Issue 3



Photo - Don McClelland

Tree Swallow chick & father at Presque Isle

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It's free to subscribe to *NW PAssages* ~ simply email us with your request. We want to hear from you! Story ideas, event information, photos and suggestions are welcome.

email: [stephen@westpamag.com](mailto:stephen@westpamag.com)

## About the Cover ~

The beacon of the 1868 *Erie Harbor Lighthouse* shines brightly, as dawn breaks over Lake Erie. Situated on the North Pier of Presque Isle State Park, the cast-iron square structure continues to guide sailors through the Erie Harbor entrance to Presque Isle Bay. The lighthouse's beacon is maintained by the U.S. Coast Guard, which has a station there. The historic lighthouse is one of four lighthouses at Presque Isle, three of which are active.



Photo by Don McClelland, Featured Photographer

**Congratulations** to Dianne & Jeffrey Hall of Franklin for submitting the entry receiving the most votes in our *Name the NWPA Greenways E-zine Contest!* They will receive a \$25 gas card prize. Thanks to all the entrants ~ we appreciate your creative submissions.

## Photography Contributors

*Brian Fisher, Mike Henderson, Kylie Maland, Don McClelland, Bently Morrow, Dave Putnam, Rick Rogers, David Schmude, Piper VanOrd, and the Shenango River Watchers*

## Letter from the Editors

Welcome to the September issue of *NW PAssages* ~ the E-zine has a fitting new name! Thanks for all the wonderful suggestions and the many votes cast for your favorites. ("Trails & Tales" was a close second).

As Summer turns to Autumn this month, we're exploring the Allegheny National Forest in Warren & Forest Counties, heading down the Allegheny River with our Featured Business - *Allegheny Outfitters*, birdwatching at Presque Isle State Park with our Featured Photographer, and celebrating *McConnells Mill State Park* at their annual Heritage Festival.

Our partner agency spotlight shines on the *Northwest Commission*, a Commonwealth creation based in Oil City that's been on a mission for nearly half a century to improve the economics, job outlook and quality of life for northwest Pennsylvanians.

Thanks for embarking on this regional journey with us. Happy Trails!

*Stephen & Beth West*

This monthly electronic E-magazine was produced with financial assistance by the PA Dept. of Conservation and Natural Resources, Bureau of Recreation and Conservation via Greenways Block Grant Program grant to the County of Venango, awarded by the Northwest PA Regional Planning and Development Commission. Additional funds were provided by the Oil Region Alliance of Business, Industry and Tourism; the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail Alliance; and the Council on Greenways and Trails. Opinions and information expressed in this E-magazine are not necessarily those of the County of Venango, DCNR, ORA, EPTA, the Northwest Commission, or CGT.

# Northwest Pennsylvania's National Treasure



Warren and Forest Counties are the western gateways to the *Allegheny National Forest*, offering a half a million acres of fun & adventure, mainly free of charge. Favorite activities include hiking the North Country Trail, canoeing the Allegheny River, fishing the Allegheny Reservoir, visiting the Kinzua Skywalk and ruins of the 1882 Kinzua Bridge, as well as driving along the

National Longhouse Scenic Byway.

Amenities include: *three scenic overlooks, four beaches, six boat launches, nine picnic areas, sixteen campgrounds and dozens of trout streams. Plus, hundreds of miles of trailways for hiking, biking, ATV riding and cross-country skiing.* Horseback riding is permitted on the undeveloped trails. Developed campgrounds offer hot showers, playgrounds, hookups and other modern conveniences, while other primitive reservoir campgrounds are only accessible via boating or hiking. Outstanding fishing opportunities abound at the Allegheny Reservoir, along with smaller reservoirs and five hundred miles of streams.

The Forest Service brought new concepts in forest management to the Allegheny Plateau, providing multiple benefits and sustainability. The Organic Act of 1897 introduced the National Forest mission:

*To improve the forest, provide favorable conditions for water flows, and furnish a continuous supply of wood to meet people's needs.*

On these lands, seedlings for tomorrow's forest are the focus of forest management activities. Watersheds are managed to ensure clear water for fisheries like trout, and clean drinking water for all. Over time, various laws added other benefits like wilderness, heritage resources,



*Hikers navigate a floating bridge (above) and a woodland path (below) along the North Country Trail in the Allegheny National Forest, Forest County.*



and grazing to the original ideas of watershed protection and continuous wood supply. The Multiple Use-Sustained Yield Act of 1960 recognized outdoor recreation and habitat for wildlife and fisheries. 



*Bent Run Falls in the Allegheny National Forest, near the city of Warren.*

*Photos by Mike Henderson*



**ATV ACTION AWAITS IN THE ANF, with more than 100 miles of trails for All Terrain Vehicles. *ATV season:* Memorial Day weekend - last weekend of Sept.;**

**Winter season: Dec. 20 - April 1.**

**An annual \$35 permit fee is required, and can be purchased from any ANF office, some local vendors, or online: [fs.fed.us/r9/allegheeny](http://fs.fed.us/r9/allegheeny)**

**ATV TRAILWAYS IN THE ALLEGHENY NAT'L FOREST**

**Marienville ATV/Bike Trail** - on State Route 66 east of Marienville.

**Timberline ATV Trail** - accessed from State Route 948, north of Ridgway (*also connects to the Marienville ATV Trail*).

**Rocky Gap ATV Trail** - accessed from Township Road 3005, southeast of Warren.

**Willow Creek ATV Trail** - on the eastern side of the Allegheny Reservoir, just south of the New York State line. Closed during the winter season.

**Additionally, state forests throughout Pennsylvania have designated and maintained ATV trails to accommodate trail enthusiasts. ATVs are not permitted on State Game Lands, except those used by disabled hunters.**

**The Allegheny National Forest** is administered by the U. S. Dept. of Agriculture ~ Forest Service  
Forest Supervisor - Erin Connelly  
4 Farm Colony Dr., Warren, PA 16365  
(814) 723-5150  
*website: [fs.usda.gov](http://fs.usda.gov)*

**Bradford Ranger District**  
District Ranger - Macario Herrera  
29 Forest Service Dr., Bradford, PA 16701  
(814) 362-4613

**Marienville Ranger District**  
District Ranger - Rob Fallon  
131 Smokey Lane, Marienville, PA 16239  
(814) 927-6628

**PA Game Commission**  
Northwest Region  
Butler, Clarion, Crawford, Erie, Forest, Jefferson, Lawrence, Mercer, Venango and Warren counties  
PO Box 31, Franklin, PA 16323  
(814) 432-3187 (814) 432-3188  
*website: [pgc.state.pa.us](http://pgc.state.pa.us)*

**PA Fish & Boat Commission**  
Boat Reg./Titling: (866) 262-8734 (866-BoatReg)  
Fishing Licenses: (888) 723-4741 (888-PaFish1)  
*website: [fish.state.pa.us](http://fish.state.pa.us)*



*The Allegheny River flows past Tidioute Overlook in Warren County, on the western edge of the Allegheny National Forest.*



## Featured Business **Allegheny Outfitters** Warren, PA

Life can change dramatically in an instant, just ask adventure entrepreneur Piper VanOrd of Warren, PA. Eight years ago, her longing for home motivated her to switch gears from a promising career in aeronautics, to ownership of a canoe & kayak rental business in northwest PA.



*The Allegheny River is the pot of gold at the end of the double rainbow.*

Photos by  
Piper VanOrd

### NW Passages Q & A ~ Piper VanOrd

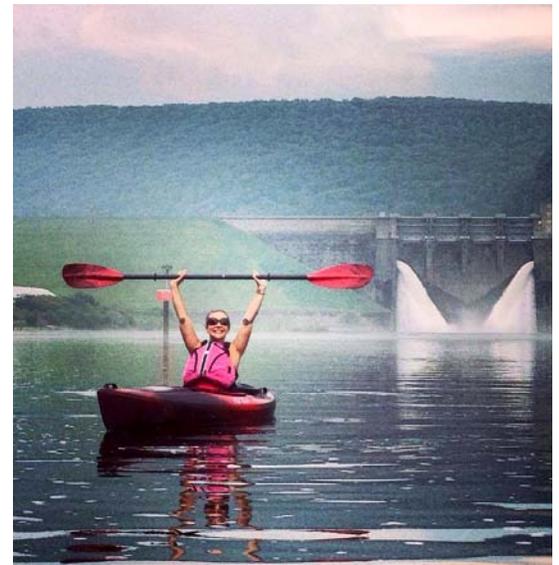
#### ***When did you start canoeing/kayaking, camping, outdoor adventuring?***

I've had an adventurous spirit as long as I can remember. I was very little the first time I went canoeing (*maybe three years old*), and I cried uncontrollably for the first half hour, so I can certainly relate to folks that aren't quite sure about giving it a try. I was very content as a kid to play all day in a creek or forest, building forts and catching crayfish.

#### ***What inspired you to start Allegheny Outfitters? Why Warren?***

There's an old saying I've heard since I was little, "*Once you step foot in the Allegheny, you never quite get out.*" Move away, adventure afar, but something will always bring you back. It's definitely been true in my case. In 2006, I was a few classes shy of my Masters of Aeronautical Science, having spent the last eight years as an air traffic controller in the U.S. Navy. I was living in Anchorage, Alaska, ready to make the leap into the civilian world of air control when the FAA had a hiring freeze. Late one night, I was reading my hometown newspaper online (*The Warren Times Observer*), and came across a 'for sale' ad in the business section for Allegheny Outfitters, a canoe/kayak rental company.

I guess you could say the rest is history. I'd always wanted a reason to move home. I was born in Warren, spent much of my childhood in Virginia and North Carolina, moved back to Warren in high school, then left the day after graduation for my Naval career. I left the Navy in August 2005, spent two weeks in Warren, then moved to Alaska. Something had changed in me, though. It was the first time I'd been home during the summer in eight years, and I was amazed by the lush green vegetation. All of a sudden, I gained a new appreciation for this unique half-million-acre National Forest in our backyard, as well as the National Wild & Scenic River that runs through our town. I wanted to give my kids the adventures I'd experienced, and much more.



*Kayaker downstream of Kinzua Dam*

#### ***What waterways and counties do you operate along? What level of difficulty are the waterways?***

We span a 107-mile stretch of the Allegheny River from Kinzua Dam to Emlenton, and the Allegheny Reservoir. We also offer backpacking gear rentals and guided trips in the Allegheny National Forest. We've helped folks get outside in six counties, including Warren, Forest, McKean, Clarion, Venango and Elk.

The upper Allegheny is considered 'Class One,' the calmest official river designation there is. In some spots you can wade from one side of the river to the other without getting your shorts wet; in others, the water is deep due to dredging. The river has a few wild spots, but for the most part the water is calm and slow. Part of the Allegheny's draw is that Kinzua Dam regulates it, making it more predictable than many other waterways, even in times of heavy rainfall or drought.

The river is popular among families, novices and large groups who are looking to take multiple-day trips, such as the Boy Scouts. The Allegheny River is also a favorite among professional paddlers, home to the annual PA State Canoeing and Kayaking Championships, and the U.S. Canoe Association's national championship races on the Allegheny every other year.



*Taking University of Pittsburgh at Bradford students on a paddle around the Allegheny Reservoir.*



### *What other organizations do you collaborate with?*

We've collaborated with numerous organizations and businesses over the years, from working with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Penn Soil RC&D and Allegheny Outdoor Club; to donating graphic design work for kiosks at Kinzua Dam's new eagle-viewing platform; and volunteering our time, resources and instructors for the Warren YMCA, Girl Scouts and Women's Outdoor Workshops. Our largest collaboration is the Allegheny River Clean-up, now in its sixth year, which covers a 40-mile stretch of the Allegheny and two of its tributaries.

We close our store and livery for a week every September, donating our canoes, kayaks and shuttle services to raise awareness while getting grubby cleaning our beautiful natural resource. Over the last five years, we've removed (and recycled!) more than 50,000 lbs of just metal alone. We have more than 100 organizations and businesses from our community that pitch in for this event.

### *How many people do you employ?*

AO has two year-round full-time employees and a team of 12-14 during the summer months. Our team is our power. We've been extremely fortunate to have staff that is very hard-working, and holds the same appreciation and love for the outdoors. They all wear a number of hats, and are each so important to our success. Without them, we wouldn't be who we are, period.



*GeoCaching coin featuring Allegheny Outfitters*

### *What have been the greatest challenges and triumphs with your endeavor?*

The start-up was a huge learning experience. Friends and family thought I was crazy to leave a career that paid very well, pack up my three kids (*who were 1, 2 and almost 5*), and move home to start a business that was not only in a small town off the beaten path, but also so dependent on weather. We've had our share of flooding (*this year was the worst -- closed 31 days this summer*), but that's made us get creative. We're now offering backpacking trips and equipment rentals, plus paddling on the Allegheny Reservoir when the river floods. In 2011, we opened an outdoors store that offers quality gear for rent or purchase, such as canoes, kayaks, backpacks and tents.

*Allegheny Outfitters* has grown from getting roughly 2,000 people on the water in 2006, to helping almost 13,000 people experience the water and land trails each year. My passion lies in helping people get out there. For some, it's stepping outside their comfort zone to try something new. For others, it's a childhood experience that they want to pass along to their loved ones. Hearing the silly stories of families and friends, the relaxation in someone's eyes that has been going through a hard time, and everything in between ~ that's what I love. I'm playing a small part in helping folks find what they need in Nature, such as confidence, strength, laughter, and hopefully, some peace.



*Piper VanOrd holds a Bachelors of Science degree, is a graduate of the National Outdoor Leadership School and is a Leave No Trace Master Educator. She helps thousands of visitors plan and conquer paddling and backpacking expeditions each year.*



**NW Passages E-zine**  
**Featured Partner:**  
**NW Pennsylvania**  
**Regional Planning**  
**and Development**  
**Commission**

**Oil City's**  
**historic**  
**Hasson**  
**Park**  
**received**  
**some much-**  
**needed**  
**attention**  
**in 2011**  
**from the**  
**Council on**  
**Greenways**  
**& Trails.**



*The endeavor remedied erosion damage along a stream that runs through the park, and the repair and replacement of several foot bridges. The CGT's project partners were Venango Technology Center's Natural Resource class and the City of Oil City.*

Founded in 1967, the **Northwest Commission** has been on a mission for almost a half century to strengthen business and job growth in northwestern Pennsylvania, while improving the environment for economic and community development. They've accomplished this by collaborating with numerous county and municipal governments, conservation districts, conservancies, an educational institution and others.

In 2010, Pennsylvania's delivery of economic development services changed due to a new program, the **Partnerships for Regional Economic Performance (PREP)**. The change combined funding for core economic development partners (Local Development Districts, Small Business Development Centers, Industrial Resource Centers, and county Economic Development Agencies).

The NW Commission is the coordinating entity for the PREP, with the partners augmenting each other's expertise in streamlining manufacturing processes; business outreach, planning and lending; and technical assistance for government contracting and export marketing. Business owners and potential entrepreneurs are now able to contact any partner for support and have access to the entire system, with a single point of contact to walk them through the process.

Overall, the Commission facilitates government contracting, international marketing, business finance, transportation, energy and greenways.

The Commission's greenways program received a powerful boost in 2009, when the Greenways Block Grant Program was made available to the northwest PA region. The NW Commission partnered with the PA Dept. of Environmental Protection and the PA Dept. of Conservation & Natural Resources to implement the new program.

There has been a total investment of \$2.2 million for 46 completed projects. These have included planning, development and technical assistance for greenways projects that addressed water quality and storm water, plus multiple aspects of the hiking, biking and water trails. Also, in response to the greenways plans, two greenways coordinators were assigned coverage of four counties ~ one for Lawrence and Mercer Counties; and another for Venango and Crawford Counties.

Another round of grant applications will be accepted in September for the Greenways Block Grant Program. Information is available at the agency's website: [northwestpa.org](http://northwestpa.org)

### Creating the Upper Shenango River Water Trail

NW Commission provided funding to the Shenango River Watchers, the Mercer Conservation District and other groups in raising more than \$140,000 to repair a deteriorated access road, improve parking, and enhance the loading and unloading area at the access point. The seven-



*Draft horses aided the Shenango River Watchers in clearing large trees blocking free access to the Shenango River.*

year project was an incredible example of a successful public-private partnership.

The SRW raised the renovation money via grants and donations. They held public meetings, met with 80 landowners along the river, and obtained permits from state and federal agencies.

As a result, the 22-mile section is now officially designated as the Upper Shenango River Water Trail, and meets the requirements as part of the PA Water Trail System. The non-profit shoulders the responsibility



*The Shenango River Watchers conduct two Group Floats annually to promote the waterway, with 140+ paddlers participating each time.*

of channel maintenance, while endeavoring to make improvements such as picnic areas with toilets, primitive campsites, and a new access point at New Hamburg that's being planned in association with PennDOT and the Army Corps of Engineers.

## Oil Creek Streambank and Fish Habitat Restoration



*Erosion site along Oil Creek before commencement of project (top) and during restoration (below).*

*Photos by Dave Putnam*



In 2013, the **NW Commission** was the funding agency for an endeavor spearheaded by the Western PA Conservancy, to improve the Oil Creek watershed near Titusville, Crawford County. Project partners included the Crawford County Conservation District, PA Fish & Boat, and U.S. Fish & Wildlife.

The creek was being adversely impacted by sediment and nutrient overload, which degraded water quality and impaired habitat quality for aquatic organisms.

The partner agencies stabilized 350 feet of streambank by installing devices to prevent future erosion, and by planting

135 native riparian (*waterside*) trees and shrubs. The project has promoted land and water restoration, decreased pollution, and expanded the local economy by boosting fishing opportunities. A public fishing agreement was established with the landowner of the site to ensure public access to Oil Creek for anglers. The landowner benefitted from the prevention of further erosion on the property.



*After restoration ~ Titusville H.S. students planting tree & shrub buffer along Oil Creek. Photo- Kylie Maland/Western PA Conservancy*

### The **Keystone Opportunity Zone Program**

Businesses looking to expand from out of state need to locate and operate within a KOZ to receive state and local business tax exemptions. The **NW PA KOZ** is made up of twenty sub zones in nine counties. Sites range in size from ten to thirteen hundred acres, with land available for sale or lease. For companies already located in Pennsylvania, these exemptions can be realized, provided companies either:

- Increase full-time employment by at least 20% in the first full year in the Zone; or*
- Make a capital investment equal to 10% of the previous year's gross revenues.*

In 2012, there were two new KOZ designations:  
Transfer, Mercer County - 13 Acres  
Franklin, Venango County - 64.4 Acres

In 2013 there were three new KOZ designations:  
New Castle, Lawrence County - 150.67 Acres  
Greenville, Mercer County - 32.02 Acres  
Greenville, Mercer County - 199.28 Acres

### The **Keystone Innovation Zone Program**

No additional KIZ property designations have been assigned over the last few years, but the designation of what is available does not expire. Eighteen companies in the region have received benefits from KIZ designation. And since inception, the program has provided thirteen micro-grants totaling \$165,420; plus \$1,412,638 in tax credits to these companies.

For additional information on the **KOZ** and **KIZ** Programs:  
Travis Siegel, Mktg. Spec. - email: [traviss@northwestpa.org](mailto:traviss@northwestpa.org)

**NW Commission** was one of the four sponsors for **DyNet (Dynamic Networking for Small Business)**, held at the **Erie Bayfront Convention Center** in June



*Photo courtesy of NW Commission 2014. The conference brought together business owners and government contractors.*

The **NW Commission's Energy Program** is teaming up with the Northwest PA Oil and Gas Industry Hub to bring a conference to Cross Creek in Titusville on Sept. 10: "**Fueling Our Economic Growth with Natural Gas.**" The conference will showcase the business opportunities available due to the growth of the natural gas industry. To attend, sponsor, advertise, or exhibit, visit their website: [nwpaoilandgashub.com](http://nwpaoilandgashub.com).

The Energy Program will begin working with for-profit businesses only, beginning in October. Interested clients should contact the agency to determine needs and begin planning. Services offered include Technical Assistance/Consultation, Energy Audits, Utility Bill Analysis, and Thermal Imaging. The Commission will also be conducting energy-related workshops.

### **Northwest Commission**

395 Seneca St., Oil City, PA 16301  
(814) 677-4800; website: [northwestpa.org](http://northwestpa.org)

# GORGEous McConnells Mill State Park



Photo by David Schmude



Photo by Rick Rogers

*Hell's Run is part of a smooth and level hiking trail that begins at the Hell's Hollow parking lot and leads to a limekiln and Hell's Hollow Falls.*

McConnells Mill State Park in Lawrence County includes 2,546 acres of the spectacular Slippery Rock Creek Gorge, created by the northward retreat of glaciers thousands of years ago. The gorge is a National Natural Landmark, and includes the 1874 McConnells Mill Covered Bridge and the 1852 gristmill (above). The park has nine miles of trailways, including Alpha Pass, a moderate hike that follows Slippery Rock Creek, and is part of the North Country Trail -- a 3,200 mile trailway linking North Dakota to New York, traveling through northwest Pennsylvania. Slippery Rock Creek is popular with paddlers, varying from a Class II - IV river.

In 1852, Daniel Kennedy opened a gristmill on Slippery Rock Creek. Destroyed by fire in 1868, the mill was quickly rebuilt. The mill was purchased by the park's namesake, Thomas McConnell, in 1875. He replaced the waterwheel with water turbines and the grindstones with rolling mills. This made McConnell's Mill one of the first rolling mills in the country, processing oats, corn, buckwheat and wheat until it was closed in 1928. The Western PA Conservancy gained ownership in 1942, and transferred the land to the Commonwealth in 1957, when McConnells Mill State Park was formally dedicated.



Photo by Brian Fisher/fisherphotoart

**McConnells Mill Heritage Festival** will be held **September 27-28** from 11 am - 6 pm in **McConnells Mill State Park, Portersville, Lawrence County**. Free parking & admission! The 22nd annual family-friendly festival celebrates the historic gristmill's period of operation from 1852-1928. Free tours of the mill will provide visitors with a look at how the water-powered machinery once ground grain for the community surrounding Slippery Rock Gorge. A Civil War encampment brings history to life, including artillery firing by reenactors with the 19th Ohio Light Artillery. Artisans & craftsmen will demonstrate their trades, and Bluegrass by *Brush Creek*. Activities for children include gemstone & fossil panning, paper making, face painting, old time games and more! (724) 368-3612 email: [moraineenvedsp@pa.gov](mailto:moraineenvedsp@pa.gov) From I-79 exit 99, 422 West 2 miles.

**GEOCACHING AT THE BLUFFS**

Erie Bluffs State Park - Lake City, PA

Saturday, September 6 ~ 10 AM - 2 PM

Join Environmental Educators and explore the bluffs to look for hidden treasures using GPS units. Meet at the parking area of Erie Bluffs State Park off route 5 to receive coordinates and instructions. Please bring your own lunch & drink. No registration/fees. A few GPS units to lend.

Visit [www.geocache.com](http://www.geocache.com) for more on Geocaching

For more info: (814) 833-7424

**PEDAL THE LAKES BICYCLE TOUR**

September 12 & 13

Greenville Recreation Center  
45 Alan Ave., Greenville, PA

A bicycle tour for all fitness levels with multiple distances of 10 to 125 miles.

Registration - Sept. 12th from 5-9 pm.

**Free overnight camping available.** Registration - Sept. 13th from 7-10 am with rolling start. \$25 fee.

Tour is sponsored by Mercer County Trails Assn., Inc.

For more info: (724) 588-1472 or (724) 704-0437

website: [mctrails.org](http://mctrails.org)



The Allegheny Trail Crew has scheduled a work day for **Saturday, Sept. 6** on the **Tanbark Trail** in the Allegheny National Forest.

Work will consist of rehabilitating two broken bridges at the west end of the trail and installing water bars at the river end.

Volunteers should meet at 9 am at the Heart's Content Interpretive Trail parking lot, and bring a lunch, drinks and appropriate tools/clothing.

For more info, contact Keith Klos (814) 484-7420 or email: [cloudy09@verizon.net](mailto:cloudy09@verizon.net)

Falls along the Tanbark Trail  
Photo by Piper VanOrd

**Environmental Impact** Traveling Exhibit  
thru September 30, 2014

Erie Art Museum Main Gallery ~ 20 E. 5th St., Erie, PA

Addressing controversial issues of environmental abuse and neglect, including land development, drought and water rights, Global Warming, and the dangers of nuclear energy, **Environmental Impact** features over 75 powerful works by painters, photographers and sculptors. These artists focus on global and local environmental issues, using the power of art to heighten public awareness about the degradation of earth's ecosystems.

For more info: [erieartmuseum.org](http://erieartmuseum.org)

**3D ARCHERY SHOOT**  
September 6 ~ 8 am - 2 pm

Come sharpen your archery skills on two 3D archery courses, target range, or top shot competition.

Plus Chinese Auction, food, and new 3D target door prize!

**Munnell Run Farm**  
753 Greenville Rd., Mercer, PA

\$10 - Adults/\$5 - 12 & under

For more info: (724) 662-2242

website: [munnellrunfarm.org](http://munnellrunfarm.org)



---> **Upcoming Cook Forest State Park Events** <---

**Sat., Sept. 13 - 10:30am-12:30pm - Snorkeling the Clarion**  
Bring your masks & snorkels to the Park Office to search the river for aquatic insects and fish. No children under 12.

**Sat., Sept. 20 - 7:30-9:00pm - Cathedral by Candlelight**  
Step back in time into the depths of the Forest Cathedral with an historical character from the past as your guide as you walk beneath the giants by candlelight. Refreshments will be served. Bring your flashlights!

**Sun., Sept. 21 - 1:00-3:00pm - Fire Tower Historical Tour**  
Please bring your binoculars to Fire Tower #9. Enjoy a breathtaking view from the very top of the tower and learn how it operated.

**Thur., Oct. 2 - 7:30-10:30pm - Night Fishin' on the Clarion**  
Did you know that nighttime is often THE best time to fish? The National Wild & Scenic Clarion River contains many different kinds of fish (i.e. catfish and walleye) and wildlife that are very active at night. Bring your fishing poles, lanterns, and bait to the Park Office (113 River Road, Coombsburg, PA) - we'll carpool to fishing hotspots along the river.

website: [visitcookforest.com](http://visitcookforest.com) (814) 744-8407



**Fall Harvest Festival**  
September 13 - October 31

Hay wagon rides, giant corn maze, pedal carts, slides, animal exhibits, pumpkin sales & more every day!

**School tours are available on weekday mornings by reservation.**

**Port Farms - 2055 Stone Quarry Road  
Waterford, PA - Crawford County**

For more info: (814) 796-4500  
website: [portfarms.com](http://portfarms.com)



**Ducks Unlimited Pymatuning Waterfowl & Outdoor Expo**  
Sept. 20th, 9 am - 5 pm & 21st, 9am - 2pm

Conneaut Area H.S. - 219 West School Dr., Linesville PA

Something for the whole family! Nationally known wildlife artisans, waterfowl hunting vendors, trapping & predator demos, fishing vendors, turkey & deer hunting vendors - plus more! Open Carving Competition - 12 noon Saturday, PA State Duck Stamp Competition - 1 pm Saturday.

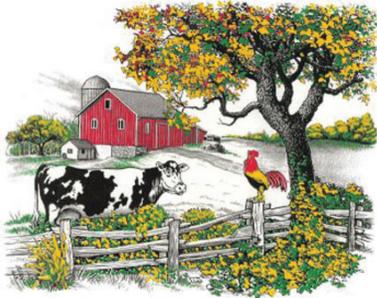
Cost - \$5 For more info: [pymatuningexpo.com](http://pymatuningexpo.com)

**Autumn Leaf Festival ~ September 20-28, 2014**

Week-long event includes - carnival rides, parade, food vendors, 10K race, cultural nights and Clarion University Homecoming weekend.



For info: Clarion Chamber (814) 226-9161  
website: [clarionpa.com/events/autumn-leaf-festival](http://clarionpa.com/events/autumn-leaf-festival)



**MUNNELL RUN FARM DAY**

**September 21, 2014**

11:00 am - 5:00 pm

Come for a day of fun that highlights local, rural heritage. Enjoy the many crafts, produce, historical exhibits, kid's activities and food from the local community.

Over 40 Local artisans, crafters, farm marketers, food vendors & exhibits! Plus:

- \* Civil War Re-enactors
- \* French Creek Living History Association
- \* Quilt Show sponsored by the MRF Quilt Guild
- \* Music by *Mandolin Whiskey*
- \* Free Wagon Rides/Children's Games

**Munnell Run Farm - 753 Greenville Road, Mercer, PA**  
**Free admission - canned good and donation requested**

For more info: (724) 662-2242  
website: [munnellrunfarm.org](http://munnellrunfarm.org)

**ASTROBLAST - September 23 - 28**

The Oil Region Astronomical Society's annual stargazing & camping experience at Lockwood Campground which surrounds the observatory site in Venango County's Two Mile Run Park. Celebrate the last year ASTROBLAST will be held at its the current site with the Grand Finale! Tours to the new site will be offered throughout the event.

ASTROBLAST is a regional gathering of amateur astronomers, as well as the general public. On-site registration will be available during the event. Newcomers are welcome to attend. Astroblast-themed door prizes! New Observatory site will be ready next year for ASTROBLAST.

For info & schedule, website: [oras.org](http://oras.org) 814-437-2525

**National Public Lands Day ~ Saturday, September 27**

The day focuses on promoting service and recreation on public lands. NPLD celebrates the legacy of the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) by inspiring a new generation of volunteers committed to service in America's parks and forests.

Info: (202) 261-6479 email: [npld@neefusa.org](mailto:npld@neefusa.org)

website: [publiclandseveryday.org](http://publiclandseveryday.org)

Participating facilities in NW PA include Chapman State Park, Jennings Environmental Education Center, Oil Creek State Park and others.

The Allegheny National Forest will host the **6th Annual Allegheny River Cleanup**, 8 am - 5 pm on NPLD. Last year, nearly 300 volunteers removed debris from 31 miles of the Allegheny River and 18 miles of Conewango Creek. For info, contact Nathan Welker (814) 728-6163 email: [info@alleghenyoutfitters.com](mailto:info@alleghenyoutfitters.com)  
website: [alleghenyrivercleanup.com](http://alleghenyrivercleanup.com)

**SHENANGO RIVER WATCHERS FALL PADDLE FEST!**

Float the Upper Shenango River Water Trail from Pymatuning State Park, Jamestown, PA to Riverside Park in Greenville, PA -- **Saturday, September 27**

Paddle approx. 8.5 miles of Class I water. A shuttle will be provided from Riverside Park to access area at Pymatuning State Park dam.



Note: Drop boats at Pymatuning State Park first, then drive to Riverside Park for shuttle back to your boat.

Shuttle 8:00 AM - 10:00 PM

Upper Shenango River

\$15.00 donation requested per watercraft

For more info: (724) 342-5453

website: [shenangoriverwatchers.org](http://shenangoriverwatchers.org)



**Antlers & Anglers**

September 27 & 28



Crawford County Fairgrounds in Meadville, PA

Great opportunity for local hunting and fishing devotees to set up shop with their hunting, fishing and outdoor wares. The Field & Stream specialty store will also be on hand. Returning is Buckeye Sportsman's host *Dan Armitage* and his engaging, family-oriented fishing seminars.

For vendor applications or more info, contact:

Joan Kocan ~ (814) 333-6731 ext. 228

email: [jkocan@agoc.com](mailto:jkocan@agoc.com)

website: [antlersandanglers.com](http://antlersandanglers.com)

**Applefest 2014 ~ The best three days of the year!**

The first weekend in October ~ 3rd - 5th!

Located in beautiful Victorian Franklin, PA

Featuring:

Arts & Crafts - Over 300 Vendors

Antique & Classic Car Show

5K Race for Any Pace Kids' Korner

Apple Pancake Breakfast

Farmers' Market



"Chicago" at the Barrow-Civic Theatre

Live Music & Free Entertainment

Plus Food, Food & More Food!

For a complete schedule, visit: [franklinapplefest.com](http://franklinapplefest.com)



**The Tour-de-Forest -- October 4 & 5**



"Fall Ride" is an ATV leisure ride through the scenic Allegheny National Forest (Forest County) on designated forest roads and trails that are not usually open to ATV traffic. The *Tour-de-Forest* has a very low difficulty level and is good for riders of all ages and experience.

For more info/to pre-register: [marienville-fire.com](http://marienville-fire.com)

Marienville Vol. Fire Co. - (814) 927-6609

*Featured Photographer ~ Don McClelland*

Presque Isle State Park in Erie has long been a favorite Nature retreat for this month's featured photographer, Don McClelland. This fascination for the long, sandy peninsula jutting out from the Erie Bayfront has led him to become serious about photography, resulting in fascinating images of the park's natural habitat.



*Presque Isle is home to a vast array of flora and fauna, including this Hummingbird Moth.*

Awhile back, Don also officially became a 'Roving Ambassador' for the PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. He had volunteered with the organization for a few years, and jumped at the chance to take his volunteerism for them to the next level. Training by the DCNR is involved, after which the Roving Ambassadors provide all kinds of help to visitors.

These Presque Isle duties, combined with extensive time spent photographing, have made Don a regular sight at the state park.

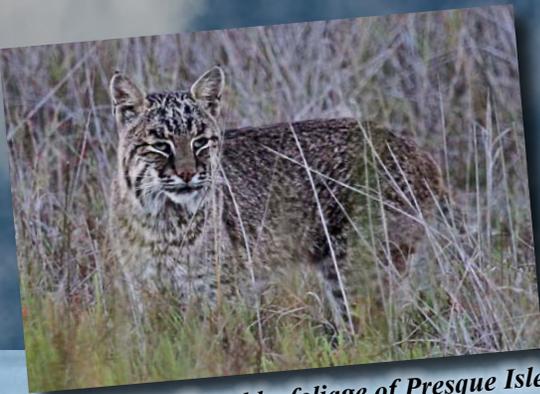


*Autumn in Presque Isle*



*Fawns explore a marshy shoreline at the park.*





*Bobcat camouflaged by foliage of Presque Isle.*

*Juvenile red foxes battle it out along the park's bike trail.*



*A Coyote maneuvers along the breakers near one of Presque Isle's many beaches, then takes a break upon the sand.*



*Presque Isle State Park* has been rated by *Birder's World Magazine* as one of the top birding spots in the country. Presque Isle's location on the *Atlantic Flyway* makes it a favorable spot for birds to stop to feed and rest on their migration across Lake Erie. Waterfowl migration occurs in March and in late November through December. Shorebird migration peaks in April and in September. Warbler migration is observed in mid-May and in September. Over 300 different species of birds have been identified on the peninsula. A bird checklist is available at the Stull Interpretive Center or the park office.

*Gull Point* offers a safe haven and resting spot for migrating and nesting birds. Shorebirds migrate yearly from beyond the Arctic Circle to the southern reaches of South America and back again. To preserve the resources of this area, the

easternmost portion of Gull Point has been set aside as a State Park Natural Area for rare and migratory shorebirds to rest, feed and possibly nest.

The natural area is closed to all public use from April 1 through November 30. Visitors can view this area from an observation platform reached via the Gull Point Hiking Trail.

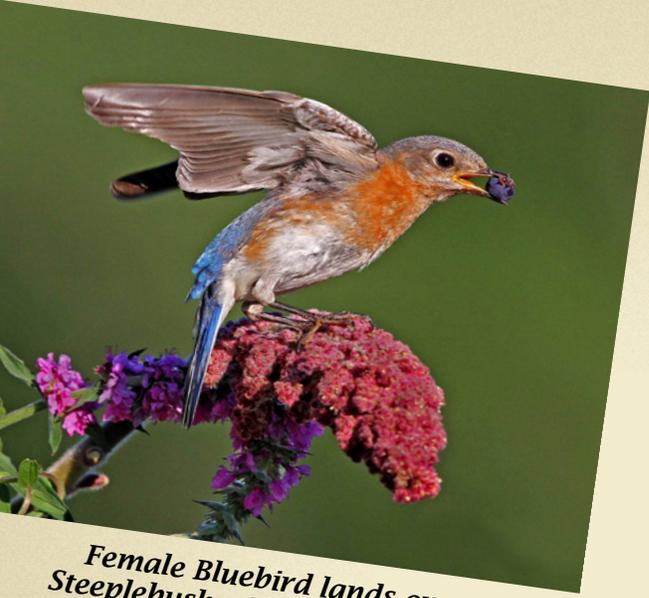
Birdwatchers's website: [presqueisleaudubon.org](http://presqueisleaudubon.org)



*During the winter of 2013-14, this month's Featured Photographer, Don McClelland (left, in photo), joined numerous other Nature lovers at Presque Isle State Park in observing and photographing an amazing influx of snowy owls.*



**Birding Paradise  
@ la Presque Isle**



*Female Bluebird lands on a Steeplebush with dinner in beak*



*American Bald Eagle soars*



*Wilson's Warbler awaits*

**Photos by  
Don McClelland**



*Male Wood Duck reflects*



*Snowy Owl  
on a  
snowy beach*



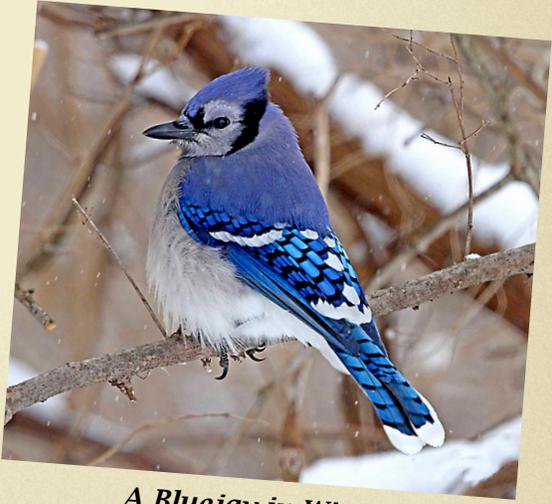
*Cedar Waxwing tosses  
back a ripe red berry*



*A sleepy Screech Owl*



*Aspidonotus Tern grabs a  
bite from Erie Bay*



*A Bluejay in Winter*



*Hungry Tree Swallow chicks  
at Presque Isle State Park  
anxiously await their next meal.*

*Photo by Don McClelland*