

# Guardians of the West Fork Watershed

January 2012



## SCOUR WEED

Scour weed (*Equisetum arvense* Equisetaceae) Horsetail. This weed is found mainly along our creek banks. I have observed this in two locations in Northern Harrison Co. One place is the left fork of Lamberts Run and the other is the creek from Four States that empties into the West Fork River at the southern edge of Worthington. It is probable that it is also in other areas of Harrison County.

It is primarily known as Horsetail, and is a descendent of ancient plants. Some of these ancient plants were as high as thirty feet. There are some thirty different varieties of horsetail. It is believed that this weed came from South America, but is also found in Europe and Asia. It mainly grows in typically in acidic wet, poorly drained areas. It likes sunny stream banks, where it can crowd out other plant species, with its creeping string-like rootstock.

After researching this plant, I have new respect for scour weed. I was of the opinion that it was a weed, but the plant has many uses. It has many medicinal properties.

It has one of the highest silica content in the entire plant empire. Silica is an important trace element for the body; it helps in binding protein molecules together in tissues such as blood vessels and other connective tissues in the human body. It has been determined that broken and fractured bones tend to heal quicker if horsetail supplements are taken. This should be of great importance for people who suffer from Osteoporosis. It also helps with faster healing of sprains, dislocated joints, pulled hamstrings and torn ligaments. Herbal use strongly affects the functioning of the urinary system in people.

Horsetail plant is known mainly as scour weed for the reason that in colonial times as a plant used to clean pots and pans. It also has uses for polishing metals such as: aluminum, copper, and pewter. So from early times the plants rough texture and high silica content caused it to gain a reputation as a scouring aid.

In handling the weeds, it has been noted that the wax from scour weed has a lotion effect on the skin. Since scour weed grows so densely, its main drawback is it crowds out other plants thereby becoming a nuisance along our creeks and streams.

Jim Nedrow Elk Hunter.

## GUARDIANS



OF THE WEST FORK



## Subject: muskie in Dunkard Creek NO

John,

I'm president of the Dunkard Creek Watershed Assn., Inc., formed in 1995.

At our last meeting we adopted a resolution opposing the stocking of muskie in Dunkard Creek, and we have a petition for people to sign if they agree.

You probably heard about the disastrous kill of everything with gills in the entire creek, in September 2009. That included all the muskie. The DNR will tell you that muskie don't have a serious impact on the rest of the fish in a stream, and they always have an official count to prove it.

But the people who've lived here all their lives have a different story for it. Dunkard used to be a terrific bass stream. In 1964 the DNR, apparently in connection with Consolidation Coal Co., began stocking muskie, and have done so every year since then except for a couple of years. From that time on, the bass and other panfish such as bluegill have diminished in numbers, which is very discouraging to fishermen, except muskie lovers.

Muskie are not native to Dunkard Creek. People who WANT them there say that muskie are native to the Ohio River Basin. Maybe so, but they have not been in Dunkard Creek in recorded history and there's no indication of muskie in prehistoric times. Now that Dunkard Creek is apparently free of muskie, we have a chance for the creek to recover its natural state without the addition of a large alien predator to devour the native population.

The DNR has announced that in a couple of years, when there's enough "forage" in other words, smaller fish, to supply food for muskie, they will begin restocking the creek with muskie. Many people disagree with this plan, and we are speaking out. We have a couple of years to make our voices heard.

We believe the DNR should enforce their own rule about putting inappropriate fish into the wrong water.

Betty Wiley  
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# What's The River Worth?

Mike Myer , The Intelligencer / Wheeling News-Register

Here along the western edge of West Virginia, we revel in a sort of split-personality syndrome. Yes, we are Mountaineers. How, in one of the most hilly states in the nation, could we be otherwise?

But then, there's the river. We call it the "beautiful Ohio" for good reasons. It, too, is part of who we are.

In fact, to those of us in the Ohio Valley, the river is at least as much a part of our psyche as are the surrounding hills. At times we love it for its beauty and the recreational opportunities it affords us. At times, when the muddy flood water invades our homes, we don't love it so much.

A couple of conversations during the past two weeks made me think more about the river's value than its beauty.

On Friday, I spent a few minutes with members of an Ohio River Sanitation Commission research crew who travel the river checking the quality, quantity and diversity of aquatic life. What they do is fascinating (check them out this weekend at their 2,200-gallon aquarium on the grounds of the Vintage Raceboat Regatta at Heritage Port).

But why they do it is interesting, too.

The river is an incredible resource, ORSANCO biologist Ryan Argo reminded me. One reason for checking aquatic life in the Ohio is to keep tabs on the health of that resource.

Think about it: Hundreds of thousands of people get their drinking water from the river. As many use it to carry away the (hopefully) treated sewage they generate. It is a key transportation artery for industry, including local coal mines. Some industries use water from the river for purposes such as generating power (those huge white plumes above cooling towers are water from the river).

The valley carved by the Ohio, wider in some spots, narrower in others, provides sites for our homes and businesses, as well as some excellent farmland.

And there's the recreational component. There's nothing quite like a day on the river, either in a fishing boat or behind a ski boat.

In many ways, the Ohio River is who we are. But what, in dollars and cents terms, is its value to us?

Several days before I talked with the ORSANCO crew, I met Neil Hawkins, who's a vice president with Dow Chemical Co.

Hawkins told me about a \$10 million project involving Dow and The Nature Conservancy. A story we published in The Intelligencer yesterday outlined the collaboration.

The project excites Hawkins not just because of its business potential but also because he's got a strong streak of conservationist in him. Not everyone sees intrinsic value in nature, however.

Who can blame a company president or plant manager for worrying first about the bottom line and a lot later about a stand of trees or a stream beside the factory? That's what they're paid to do. Behaving otherwise would be cheating their employers and, perhaps, stockholders.

Hawkins thinks there's a way to make everyone happy, by demonstrating the dollar value of plant and animal life, water, air and land to businesses.

He and The Nature Conservancy could be on to something big.

Myer can be reached at: [Myer@news-register.net](mailto:Myer@news-register.net).

## Exhibit Pays Tribute to Life Lost in Creek

Morgantown *Dominion Post*

8 September 2011

by Lindsey Fleming

On a warm, damp summer day two years ago, Anne Payne stood, waders on, knee-deep in the middle of her friend Wendy's problem, one the Mount Morris, Pa., resident had been imploring her to check out for a while.

"She kept saying, 'You've got to come out. There's something wrong with my creek,' " Payne said. "I'm like, 'What am I going to do about her creek?' "

But the Morgantown artist knew, after witnessing the Dunkard Creek fish kill firsthand, she was going to have to do something.

White carcasses floated somberly downstream. Log jams of the living, seeking fresh water, were so desperate to reach the tiny rivulets trickling with it, they suffocated while throwing themselves on top of one another.

Mudpuppies, "with their little black paws," crawled up the banks to escape.

"That was it for me. I could have heard about it 'til the cows came home, but to stand there and see, it just made you want to weep."

Instead of weeping though, Payne decided she must educate herself. She began attending meetings about the massive kill and its implications. She researched the more than a 100 species of fish and mussels officially wiped out due to a toxin in the 2009 golden algae bloom, as the result of increased levels of total dissolved solids from mine discharge. And she found out about others — such as insects, salamanders and frogs — that no one she contacted in an official capacity confirmed for certain perished. It was the non-experts, the residents along the creek, who provided her with lists of those creatures, as well as historical records she uncovered.

Friday, artwork depicting 90 of those species, created by an equal number of artists, will adorn the walls of Arts Monongahela during the opening reception of an exhibit which pays tribute to their lives. There will also be photos of the creek, information about the species and the fish kill, an interactive display and a video of residents along the creek speaking about how the kill affected them.

The seeds of "Reflections: An Homage to Dunkard Creek" have been in the works since not long after Payne's visit to her friend's property. It was then when she made the ambitious decision to paint 116 of the species that were affected. By 2010, she only had 10 pieces completed.

"I'm thinking, I'm 69 years old, let's do the math here. No, this is not working," she said, laughing.

So, when a friend suggested she get someone else to help, she ran with the idea and decided to randomly assign a species to a number of fellow artists. Ninety, she said, seemed like a nice round number.

"I could probably have gotten famous artists from afar who are activists to participate but I thought, 'You know, I wanted to be kind of in a family of artists who have the same physical connection to the [Monongahela] watershed.' "

And that's when the onslaught of calls began.

She started with Ron Donoughe — a plein air painter she had no connection with, other than she had seen his work and thought it would be appropriate. He happily agreed. As did all of the participants she contacted, which include practicing artists who live, attended school or have vacationed in the area surrounding the watershed.

"It's a big network of people [who are] made of the same water," she said of the dozens of artists who hail from Boston, Mass., to Charleston and many points in between. "We drink it. It falls on us when it rains. Everybody felt the same connection to this in varying degrees."

"In some ways Ann looked at the watershed and saw it as an artshed too," said Brent Bailey, director of the Appalachia Program at The Mountain Institute, a nonprofit organization which sponsors the exhibit. "This is a whole community of people, [some of whom] have never even met each other, but are all tied to the same piece of land. There's a real heart response here for many of them."

It's something Payne realized quickly, during her recruiting efforts.

"A lot of people, I felt like they almost said, 'Gee, we've been waiting for your call,' " she said.

She said many became acquainted with their assigned species — which range from algae and large mouth bass to muskies and Fatmucket Mussels — for the first time. Even those who had initially expressed concerns about their picks, finding them boring, ugly or both, came to appreciate them. Some searched the Web. Others spoke with fishermen and professors to learn more. And a fair amount traveled to the Carnegie Museum of Natural History in Pittsburgh to study specimens up close and personal.

The result of such efforts is an abunwork as varied as the species they represent. Lithographs, prints, watercolors, oils and more, portray the kaleidoscope of colorful life just underneath the water's surface and range in tone from whimsical to contemplative.

In an effort to make the traveling exhibit portable, cost-effective and adaptable to different spaces, Payne required each artist to create on the same sized surface — a 10-1/4-inch-by-7-inch masonite art board covered with French watercolor paper.

"It's something that anybody can do without enormous resources," she said. "I made it to go in the back of a car."

For the next two years, "Reflections" will be on display in several galleries around the region. And if all goes well, even farther. The idea is to provide an exhibit that is accessible, so that anyone inspired by it can welcome it to their community or easily duplicate it.

This accessibly and the creative spin "Reflections" puts on the larger environmental issues of water quality and energy use, are at the crux of why The Mountain Institute partnered with Payne in its first artistic endeavor, according to Bailey.

The institute, active in West Virginia since 1972, focuses much of its efforts on environmental education in schools. With "Reflections" the organization saw a way to reach a broader audience.

"It's a really great way to raise awareness," Bailey said. "This seemed to be a part of that conversation about energy and water and how they collide. ... Water is probably the greatest resource that comes from mountains. And everything springs from the mountains and we feel like this is just an important resource that needs to be highlighted.

"And how do you get the public to really take an interest in something that is so valuable but probably so underappreciated? Creating this kind of an opportunity for public engagement, to come and learn and talk about it, seems like a really great way to further that awareness and that understanding."

Though the exhibit is intended to spark debate and raise questions, that's only a part of what "Reflections" is meant to inspire in viewers.

"Let's start with appreciation of what we have. And how we deal with it will be based on an understanding, an appreciation of what's here rather than just looking at numbers and figures," Payne said, referring to the fish kill and its future implications.

She added, "part of that honoring [of the species] isn't just to wring our hands and worry. It's to say, 'They're amazing. They're marvelous. They're beautiful. They're funny. They're interesting. They're useful.' And at the same time, the humans who created them are the same way. It's that interaction. And that's not about death. That's about life.

[http://web.me.com/paynestake/Homage\\_to\\_Dunkard\\_Creek/Welcome.html](http://web.me.com/paynestake/Homage_to_Dunkard_Creek/Welcome.html)

## Exhibition Schedule



### **Charleston WV**

University of Charleston

December 15, 2011 - January 25, 2012

*\*Reception & Gallery Talk, December 15, 6-9 p.m*

Contact: Ray Yeager, Curator 304.357-4387

[Rayyeager@ucwv.edu](mailto:Rayyeager@ucwv.edu)

### **Fairmont WV**

Fairmont State University

Brooks Gallery- Waldman Hall

February 2-24 2012

Contact: Marian Hollinger, Curator 304.367-4300

[mhollinger@fairmontstate.edu](mailto:mhollinger@fairmontstate.edu)

### **Waynesburg PA**

Waynesburg University

March 14-April 4, 2012

Contact: Susan Phillips 724.627-8191 or 724.222-4652

[sphillip@waynesburg.edu](mailto:sphillip@waynesburg.edu)

### **Pittsburgh PA**

The Art Institute of Pittsburgh

May 7 - June 9, 2012

Contact: Ann Rosenthal , Curator

[atrant@gmail.com](mailto:atrant@gmail.com)

### **Upper St. Clair PA**

The Gallery at Westminster

August 1 - September 1, 2012

Contact: Sue Wyble Curator

[suewy2@verizon.net](mailto:suewy2@verizon.net)

### **Parkersburg WV**

Parkersburg Arts Center

September 14- October 20, 2012(tentative)

Contact: Abby Hayhurst

[abby@parkersburgartcenter.org](mailto:abby@parkersburgartcenter.org)

## Bill's Week of Fishing

I thought I would take Dad Musky fishing along the West Fork River near Jackson's Mill. The water was up and murky but it was still fishable. We started fishing at 8:00 am at the first submerged log on the right side of the river going as you go upstream. I started with creature bait that looks like a crawdad "Sweet Beaver" – California #420. I pitched it to the root ball of the log; I watched my line until it stopped, picked the rod tip up and the line jumped; I set the hook, and appeared one fine airborne small mouth 16" and 2 ½ lbs. I released the fish reset the hook in my bait, moved the boat to the top of the root ball, pitched to the back side of the log, raised and lowered the rod tip a couple of times and bang set the hook in a 13" Kentucky Bass that weighed about 1 ½ lbs – reeled it in and then released it. I moved the boat up to the next log jam, I know that usually log jams are good fishing spots but after thirty-five minutes we had no bites so we moved on upstream; fishing all the logs on the route. We switched to the left side of the river to fish a log pile in three feet of water – I pitched the beaver in and "bang" I caught a 14" small mouth. Moving to the center of the river to the next log, I pitched the beaver to the root ball and let it hit bottom, picked it up; a set the hook in a 15" small mouth swimming down the river. All this time, Dad is chucking his 6" – 8" musky baits and grabbing the net for my bass. We move on upstream to the first shallow gravel bar where we have to push the boat through. On the up side of the bar I pick up my other pole with a shallow running crank bait "Mans" crawdad color to fish the shallow bend where I have caught small mouth before and three casts later I catch a 14" small mouth. I set that pole down and go back to fishing with the beaver bait. I pitched the lure to a maple tree lying ½ in the water and ½ out "Bam" as the line is moving down stream I set the hook on a 14" Kentucky Spot. Turned him loose and set my pole down to pull boat around to right side of island to get to best musky water; got back in boat. By now it is about 11:00 am; we continue moving up stream towards left bank where we came to a stump. I pitched the beaver lure, the water bubbled like it was boiling, I set the hook but my line broke, do not know if it was a turtle, bass or catfish. I hate that – something big – never knew what it was. I retie a new jig (1/8 oz.) and new beaver.

Moving on upstream to the next log, I pitched the beaver parallel to the log and "Bang" set the hook in a 14" small mouth bass. Meanwhile, Dad is still chucking "Grandma" with no follows or bites. We continue to move upstream along left bank to parallel next log; pitched in at treetop up to root ball; the next cast I made directly to the root ball and "bang" an 18" small mouth ripped the drag, went air born three times and then was caught in the net. It weighed about 3 ½ lbs. I pitched back to the same spot and caught a 13" small mouth. I really like that spot because I have caught multiple fish there before also. We next moved the boat under the shade of a tree to have lunch. After lunch, we continued to move upstream, through next gravel bar to where the river bends left to next log in the middle of the river. I switched poles to a white chatter bait; I ran bait in front of the log – watched a small mouth leap out and inhale the bait. It turned out to be a 15" small mouth. Moving upstream to the next log jam; fished below the log jam with no luck. We were unable to go past the log jam because it was too large to drag the boat over; we decided to head back downstream past where we had stopped for lunch on to the island and the gravel bar, fishing the right side of the river as we traveled. I pitched the beaver lure to a log in 2' of water - set the hook – did not move – saw big flash and an open mouth – a 40" musky trying to shake my 3" beaver lure out of its mouth. He cut my line - 12 lb test no match for musky teeth. I had to retie with another 1/8 oz jig and a beaver. Continue down stream to launch site. It truly was a great day of fishing on the West Fork River.

## **Officers, Directors. Contact Information**

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Wanda F. Ashcraft, Secretary  
602 Highland Street  
Shinnston, WV 26431  
(304) 592-2015

Non-officer board members:  
Dr. Thomas Bond  
(President, Board of Directors) Jane Lew;

Mike Murphy, Lumberport, WV

John Stenger, Shinnston, WV

James E Nedrow, Shinnston WV

Matt Hokom, Fairmont WV

## **Mark your Calendars**

### **Monthly Meetings**

*Meetings are held the third Tuesdays of the month, 6:30 p.m., at the Nutter Fort emergency services (911) building, about 200 feet south of the Joyce St./Rt. 98 intersection, on the right.*

Jan 18, 2012

Feb 15, 2012

Mar 21, 2012

April 18, 2012

The Guardians alternate general meetings with speakers and refreshments and board meetings where business is discussed. Feel free to attend any meeting and also bring interested friends and family.

## **To Join and Receive this Newsletter ...**

If you would like to join and receive a mailed copy of our quarterly newsletter, you can join Guardians of the West Fork Watershed for \$5.00 per calendar year (or at a voluntary, higher level). Send your membership check and address information to Elaine Lucente, membership coordinator, (Her address can be found on the Officers and Board Members page.), or simply join during one of our monthly meetings. To receive a free e-mail copy of the quarterly newsletter, please e-mail John Eleyette, at [JMELEYETTE@rocketmail.com](mailto:JMELEYETTE@rocketmail.com)

GWFW MISSION STATEMENT

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***Guardians of the West Fork Watershed is a volunteer 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to the preservation and improvement of the ecological integrity of the West Fork River, its tributaries, and its watershed. It will monitor and assist agencies in monitoring the biological, physical, chemical and cultural characteristics of the watershed to identify sources of degradation and suggest their elimination. It will publicize the status of the watershed and encourage education and recreational enjoyment of the watershed. It will seek wide membership and outside funding to support its activities.***