



Seasonings

Newsletter of the *Teacher Resource Center*

Fall 2004

Audubon Society of Western Pennsylvania Beechwood Farms Nature Reserve • 614 Dorseyville Rd., Pittsburgh, PA 15238-1618 • 412 963-6100

“Seasonings,” the newsletter of Beechwood’s Teacher Resource Center, is published by the Audubon Society of Western Pennsylvania. Use this newsletter to “season” your lessons with nature activities, many of which are contained in resource materials located in the Teacher Resource Center (TRC).

The Teacher Resource Center, housed in the Audubon Society of Western Pennsylvania’s Education Building at Beechwood, offers an ever growing selection of curriculum materials, periodicals, and specific activities as well as books dealing with environmental education methods and philosophies. Materials are for your use—to “season” your classroom with outdoor discovery.

ASWP ASKS Whose Land Is It Anyway?



Connellsville Area High School students count deer pellet groups as part of a deer population survey for ASWP’s *Whose Land Is It Anyway*

ASWP’s education staff is pleased to announce the latest addition to its Outdoor Discovery Program lineup! Entitled **“Whose Land Is It Anyway,”** this exciting multi-session course provides students in grades 7-12 with real life, hands-on experience in researching, analyzing and making informed decisions about two of the most visible and pervasive environmental issues of our day—

the effects of habitat degradation on wildlife and the tension between current land development practices and the preservation of natural resources.

The goals of the program are to increase student awareness of these issues; to develop and refine critical thinking skills; to promote decision-making skills that are in the best interest of people based upon weighing all sides

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of an issue; and to introduce students to the natural environment of western PA.

In the classroom, students are assigned to role play various community members who are subsequently made aware of a public hearing on a proposed development at or near their school site. Broken into like-minded teams, students are called into action to collect environmental data on the site. Teams are introduced to important ecological concepts by participating in ASWP's Birds of Prey program.

During a field visit to the site named in the mock exercise, students participate in an environmental assessment to determine what environmental impacts the development will have and to gain objective insight into the site that will help them to make informed decisions about the proposal at the hearing. The physical landscape, flora, fauna and water quality are all researched and analyzed during the experience in the field.

The culminating event is a mock public hearing during which students debate the issue from the perspectives of the community members to which they have been assigned. Environmental, economic and social issues come to the forefront as County Commissioners (played by students) vote on whether or not the development will proceed as planned, proceed but with specific restrictions or not proceed at all.

Through funding from U.S. EPA and Community Foundation of Fayette County, ASWP had the opportunity to pilot the program with students from Connellsville Area High School, who were more than enthusiastic to participate! Connellsville's particular program focused on "Pyle Highlands", a mock development slated for a 200-acre plot of publicly-owned land adjacent to Ohiopyle State Park. Students journeyed to Ohiopyle for their environmental assessment and then joined in a heated debate of the development during the mock hearing back at their school.

Students and teachers agree that the best part of the entire program was students having the opportunity to do battle with their peers regarding the mock development. "The town meeting was great!" one student commented. "We had to think on our feet and were able to openly express our ideas." Another student presented proof of the direct connections of the program to real life situations: "I personally have had to deal with many of the same issues involved in this program because my family owns property [involved in land use dispute]." Others were equally impressed with the field experience. Said one student, "I wish there were more programs like it."

To learn more about the program and how you and your students can get involved, please contact ASWP's Education Department at 412-963-6100. ASWP thanks the Environmental Protection Agency and the Community Foundation of Fayette County for their invaluable support.

ASWP'S SCHOOLGROUND HABITAT ENHANCEMENT & RESTORATION PROJECT IS BACK!

The Audubon Society of Western Pennsylvania has received funding from the Grable Foundation in support of its efforts to train and direct schools from the Pittsburgh region to develop long-range natural habitats on their schoolgrounds. Since 1998, over 5,000 students and 44 teachers from 11 participating schools have directly participated in the two-year project and have become stewards of their schoolground environments by actively creating schoolground habitats using mostly native plants. By creating trails, making bird feeders and houses and planting trees, shrubs and wildflowers, students have taken ownership of these habitats and they continue to learn about stewardship by practicing skills taught across the curriculum.

New to the 2004-2006 project cycle, ASWP is establishing a Schoolground Habitat Mentoring Forum which will formally replace the successful Mentoring Initiative created in 2001. The Schoolground Habitat Mentoring Forum will exist to better address the needs of new Schoolground Habitat Enhancement and Restoration participants and to provide a guidance network for non-project educators involved and/or interested in schoolground habitats.

ASWP plans to host its Schoolground Habitat Enhancement and Restoration Symposium in Fall 2005. An engaging forum for western Pennsylvania educators to

learn how local students, teachers, administrators and communities work together to improve the habitats of local schoolgrounds, the symposium provides traditional keynote presentations and concurrent workshop sessions, augmented by naturalist-led experiential learning classes that take advantage of the unique natural resources of Beechwood Farms Nature Reserve. In addition, teachers can stock up on free environmental education materials and participate in drawings for valued resources and equipment. Schools can also enter ASWP's Schoolground Merit Award Contest, which honors schools that demonstrate significant achievement in schoolground enhancement.

Project applications will be available at the beginning of October 2004. The number of schools selected to participate in this project is contingent upon the total amount of funding received. The Audubon Society of Western Pennsylvania is grateful to the Grable Foundation for its continued support of ASWP's educational endeavors.



TEACHER WORKSHOPS

The following Act 48 courses are offered through the Audubon Society of Western PA. To register, contact ASWP at 412-963-6100.

ASWP VOLUNTEER NATURALIST TRAINING ACT 48 HOURS: 30

6 Mondays beginning September 13, 2004,

9:30 am – 2:30 pm

Beechwood Farms Nature Reserve

A great opportunity for educators on sabbatical, pre-service educators, substitutes and other part-time teachers, ASWP's volunteer naturalist program attracts both traditional and non-traditional educators to the world of outdoor environmental education. ASWP currently maintains a corps of over 70 active volunteer naturalists whose goal is to assist school students (ages 4-18 years) in understanding and appreciating the natural habitats and unique species interactions found in southwestern Pennsylvania. ASWP's Volunteer Naturalist Training program is now an Act 48 approved course.

To participate for Act 48 credit hours: 1) Pre-register and attend the thirty-hour (30) Volunteer Naturalist Training program. 2004 fall training will occur on six Mondays beginning September 13, 2004, from 9:30 am – 2:30 pm at Beechwood Farms. Call Scott Detwiler at 412-963-6100 for further information and registration; 2) provide at least 15 hours of ASWP program facilitation; 3) Submit evaluation and professional journal of activities to ASWP.

ASWP TEACHER RESOURCE CENTER OPEN HOUSE

ACT 48 HOURS: 2

Wednesday, November 17, 2004

5:00 pm to 7:00 pm

Beechwood Farms Nature Reserve

Earn Act 48 credit while you learn about how you can benefit from ASWP's many teacher services. Learn about ASWP's Outdoor Discovery Programs at Beechwood Farms and ASWP Outreach to your school. Find out how to add experience to your curriculum through ASWP interdisciplinary program packages. Browse through the Audubon Nature Store and learn about our online access. Explore our Teacher Resource Center, the largest collection of environmental education curriculum materials and activity guides in western Pennsylvania, and take home free environmental resources and materials that can be used directly in your classroom. This event is free and light refreshments will be provided.

To participate for Act 48 credit hours: 1) Pre-register and attend the entire two (2) hour Teacher Resource Center Open House on November 17, 2004, from 5:00 pm – 7:00 pm at Beechwood Farms; 2) complete the Teacher Resource Center scavenger sheet; 3) Submit evaluation and documentation to ASWP.

The following Act 48 workshops are provided by ASWP through the Allegheny Intermediate Unit (AIU). Register online at www.cpetracker.org, the AIU's system for workshop and in-service course registration.

PROJECT LEARNING TREE (PLT)

PLT is a nationally recognized interdisciplinary, supplementary environmental and conservation program which emphasizes the forest as a "window on the world" to increase students' understanding of our complex environment; to stimulate creative and critical thinking; to develop the ability to make informed decisions on environmental issues; and to instill the confidence and commitment to take responsible action on behalf of the environment. Through indoor and outdoor activities that take advantage of the unique resources offered at Beechwood Farms, teachers will become familiar with those activities which stress awareness and appreciation; diversity of values; ecological principles; management and conservation; trends, issues and consequences; and responsible human actions. Participants should bring a bag lunch and dress for the weather. (K-8)

Saturdays, October 9 & 16, 2004, 8:30 am- 4:30 pm

PROJECT WILD

Sponsored in Pennsylvania by the PA Game Commission, Project Wild is a nationally recognized interdisciplinary, supplementary, environmental and conservation program emphasizing wildlife. The goal of Project Wild is to assist teachers in developing awareness, knowledge, skills and commitment in students which can result in informed decisions, responsible behavior, and constructive actions concerning wildlife and the environment. Through indoor and outdoor activities at Beechwood Farms Nature Reserve and the Pittsburgh Zoo, teachers will become familiar with those activities which stress awareness and appreciation of wildlife; diversity of wildlife values; ecological principles; management and conservation; people, cultures and wildlife; trends, issues and consequences; and responsible human actions. Participants should bring a bag lunch and dress for the weather. (K-12)

*Saturday, November 6, 2004, 8:30 am- 4:30 pm at
Beechwood Farms*

*Saturday, November 13, 2004, 8:30 am-4:30 pm at the
Pittsburgh Zoo*



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Beechwood Farms Nature Reserve 614 Dorseyville Road

Beechwood Farms Nature Reserve is located in Fox Chapel, a northern suburb of Pittsburgh. It is only a few minutes from Hartwood Acres.

FROM PITTSBURGH: Take Route 28 North from downtown Pittsburgh, and exit onto Route 8 North toward Butler. At the first traffic light turn right onto Kittanning Road. Kittanning Road is a very narrow street that winds up Sharps Hill. Continue on Kittanning Road for 4.5 miles. Kittanning Road becomes Dorseyville Road. Beechwood is on the left side of the road.

FROM THE NORTH AND WEST: From Turnpike Exit 4 take Route 8 south toward Pittsburgh. Proceed 3 miles to traffic light just past Hampton Inn. Turn left onto Harts Run Road (follow Green Belt sign) and continue 3 more miles until you come to a "T" in the road. Turn right onto Dorseyville Road and proceed a short distance to Beechwood which is on your right.

FROM THE EAST: take Turnpike Exit 5 and go south on Old Route 28. At the Eat ' n' Park turn right onto Guys Run Road. Go 4.1 miles to the stop sign at Dorseyville Road. Turn left and proceed .7 miles to Beechwood on the right.

