

NW Passages

September 2015

*Exploring NW PA's
Greenways, Heritage & Recreation*



NW Passages

September 2015

Volume 2, Issue 4



The 1858 Erie Harbor Pierhead Lighthouse at Presque Isle State Park plays host to the Victorian Princess (right), a replica of an 1800s paddleboat, and the Scallywags Pirate Ship, which provides fun family adventures on Lake Erie.

Photo by Jane Curtze McNally

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Letter from the Editors

Welcome to *NW Passages'* September edition, with summertime weather winding down and autumn gearing up!

There are lots of great projects and events being undertaken by our Partner Agencies, check them out on the News Briefs pages.

Ed Bergin of Franklin, floats the idea of boosting heritage tourism in the Oil Region of NW PA and beyond, by emulating success stories such as Branson, Missouri.

This month's featured photographer, *Jane Curtze McNally* of Erie, spotlights the wonders and attractions of beautiful Presque Isle State Park, NW PA's "ocean front."

Be sure to peruse the schedule of events for the month ahead in the *Afield & Afloat* section. There's something for everyone in the fields of Nature, Heritage & Recreation in *NW Passages'* ten-county coverage area.

Happy Trails!

Stephen & Beth West

Publishers/Editors ~ Stephen & Beth West
Writers ~ Ed Bergin, Debra Frawley, Toni Henry, Toni Kresinski, Sandy Mateer, Wes Ramsey & Stephen West
Photographers ~ Jane Curtze McNally & Stephen West

We welcome story ideas, event info, photo submissions & more! Subscriptions to *NW Passages* are free, email: stephen@westpamag.com

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Franklin Historic
Oil City Historic



About the Cover

A butterfly and bumblebee share a rich pollen harvest at Presque Isle State Park in Erie, PA. Our Featured Photographer, Jane Curtze McNally, has focused mainly on the Erie Peninsula's diverse flora & fauna, providing amazing views of this natural treasure.



www.eriepittsburghtrail.org

The **Redbank Valley Trail**, which was voted the **2014 Pennsylvania Trail of the Year**, travels 41 scenic miles along Redbank Creek in southern Clarion County, leading to the Allegheny River in East Brady, Armstrong County. There, the RVT connects with the Armstrong Trail to Brookville, Jefferson County.

The Redbank Valley Trail serves as an important connector to the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail, providing an east-west route into the PA Wilds. The RVT also forms a part of the much larger north-south EPT network, which connects Erie to Pittsburgh, then onto Washington, D.C. via the Great Allegheny Passage.

The RVT's PA Trail of the Year honor was due to this connectivity to other trails, and to the incredible work accomplished by its corps of mainly volunteers, who have improved the trail at a record pace. The RVTA plans to take over ownership of the system soon.

Successes so far include decking and railing fifteen of the nineteen railroad trestles along the RVT, improvement of sixteen miles with crushed limestone, and ongoing efforts to open the Climax Tunnel in 2016.

The Redbank Valley Trail Association's efforts this past summer and fall have concentrated on the first fifteen miles, overcoming mudslides and seventy downed trees. The RVTA hopes to have all fifteen miles improved with a crushed limestone surface this year. Focus will then shift to the Sligo Spur, which may provide an alternate route for the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail until Armstrong's Brady Tunnel is opened.

The RVTA was awarded a grant in December 2014 by the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy to install a canoe and kayak launch at the scenic Moore Road parking area under the Rev. Dr. Joseph Mateer bridge. Work is projected to be completed in 2015. Plus, all thirteen miles of the trail in Jefferson County have now been improved.

Being part of the EPT and its large network promises a bright future for the Redbank Valley Trail. This association also helps the RVT in identifying and obtaining grant opportunities, and draws greater attention and more visitors to see a new scenic trail that forms an important connection to the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail.

Donations assist with trail improvements; please visit the group's website for more.

www.redbankvalleytrails.org



The County of Venango is one of **NW Passages'** Partner Agencies, and offers a vast array of Nature, Heritage



& Recreation throughout nearly 700 square miles. French Creek, which is formed in New York state, winds through Venango County and joins the Allegheny River near Franklin, the county seat. Major greenways include Oil Creek State Park and Two Mile Run County Park, as well as a 60-mile network of paved bike/hike trails. Numerous historic buildings and sites are within its borders, including the 1868 Venango County Courthouse (*above*) and historic districts on the National Register of Historic Places.



www.oilregion.org

There's still time to register for the 2015 Victorian Architecture Conference in Franklin, Venango County on September 18-19. The theme is **"Preserving Timeless Treasures."** Guests may attend the entire two-day conference or individual programs, including:

- * Bus tours -- Victorian Homes of the Oil Region
- * Preserving Victorians as Bed & Breakfasts
- * Historic Franklin Walking Tour
- * Tiffany Windows of St. John's Church Tour
- * Economic Benefits of Historic Preservation
- * Researching Victorian Homes & Buildings
- * Walking Tour of Historic Miller Park
- * Preserving Hardwood Floors
- * Historic Preservation & Community Assets
- * Traditional Victorian Tea

Educators may receive Act 48 continuing education credit by attending one or more of the 16 accredited workshops.

Eric A. Hutchinson, a 1986 graduate of Oil City High School, will speak at a Dessert Reception on Friday night at DeBence Antique Music World; Lu Donnelly, a historian and author from Pittsburgh, is the keynote speaker at the concluding banquet on Saturday.

For more info, visit: www.oilregion.org (click on the Victorian Conference icon) or call Toni Kresinski, Project Manager: (800) 483-6264 x110



Council on G&T
217 Elm Street
Oil City, PA 16301
(814) 677-3152
email: dfrawley@oilregion.org

www.nwpagreenways.org

The Council on Greenways & Trails (CGT) is a partnership that works with those in the region that are realizing the value of our natural and outdoor recreational resources, through partnerships to protect and/or develop those resources. Two of the founding members of CGT are examples of partnerships that achieve both conservation and development of outdoor recreation -- the AVTA and the AVC.

The Allegheny Valley Trails Association (AVTA) is an all volunteer, non-profit organization founded in 1990. The AVTA's mission has been the acquisition of abandoned railways in the Allegheny River watershed, and their rehabilitation into multipurpose, non-motorized recreational trails. As the AVTA acquired property to develop this extensive trail system, some larger parcels came with the former rail corridor. Since much of the corridor is located along the river, the group realized that assistance was needed from a conservation organization, and the AVC was created.

The Allegheny Valley Conservancy (AVC) was formed in 2002 as a sister organization to AVTA. The group hoped to continue to protect the beautiful natural areas of the watersheds of the Allegheny River and also French Creek. AVC is now a stand-alone non-profit land trust governed by a Board of Directors. This is composed of regional people representing many professions, including environmental engineering, law, water quality, education and leaders in trail development. The primary land preservation tool of the Conservancy is the conservation easement. AVC assists landowners in exploring appropriate means of preserving the natural value of their property.

Thanks to the connections found through membership in the CGT, a project was completed that exemplifies the benefits of this partnership. AVTA owns property through which the trail travels, but it had erosion problems along the stream that threatened the trail as well. AVC was able to obtain grant funding that enabled completion of a streambank stabilization project and blocked future trespass that was causing it.

The AVC also constructed a scenic overlook and erected interpretive signage to explain the project and its context. There is even an Adirondack shelter there now for camping. Conservation and recreation development can go hand-in-hand. The Council on Greenways & Trails makes it happen through partnerships.



Resource Conservation & Development Council

www.pennsoil.org

Penn Soil RC&D created a new geoartwork project to provide adventure-filled days of geocaching opportunities in the Warren area, and publicly released the coordinates at the 'Hatch Fun Caching' event last month. The event was co-sponsored by two other non-profit organizations - the Warren County Conservation District and Conewango Creek Watershed Association. Global positioning system (GPS) units were available free of charge for newcomers to the wilderness sport.

The new work of geocaching art involves 136 mystery geocaches at locations which create the outline of a native American paddling a canoe, much like a connect-the-dots image.

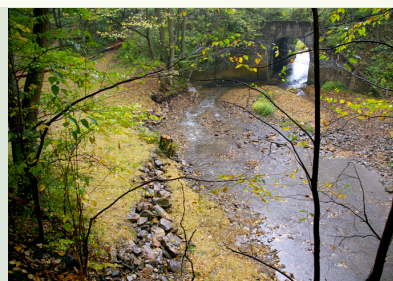
The 136 caches are placed in the vicinity of the Hatch Run Conservation Demonstration Area owned by the Warren Conservation District, plus adjacent lands owned by Collins Pine Company.

Approximately 150 geocachers from three states (PA, OH, & NY) attended the Hatch Fun event to get started on the geoartwork project and socialize with fellow geocachers. The theme for this year's artwork was developed to help promote the **Conewango Creek** as the **2015 Pennsylvania River of the Year**.

The plan is for a new work of geoart to be created each year to promote healthy exercise for people and to promote regional economic and tourism benefits through new geocaching opportunities in NW PA.

The current geoartwork caches will be available until August 1, 2016; then they will be archived to allow the creation of a new geoartwork project, to be unveiled on August 16, 2016.

For more info, contact: *Wes Ramsey, Director of Penn Soil Resource Conservation & Development Council ~ (814) 726-1441 or email: pennsoilrcd@wccconservation.net*



Erosion problems were threatening the water quality entering Mill Creek in Venango Co., and contributing to the collapse of the trail. Allegheny Valley Conservancy, with assistance from

the Venango Conservation District, conducted a streambank stabilization project and blocked motorized access to the creek.

Tourism Boomtowns

The Oil Heritage Region's
Future is Historic

Story by Edward J. Bergin

A very wise person once said, "The problem with low expectations is that they're almost always realized."

Here in our scenic Venango valley, events took place that forever changed and transformed modern civilization. Who could have predicted the global impact of the first commercially successful oil well? Under the leadership of Colonel Edwin Drake, the well struck oil on August 27, 1859 near Titusville. Drake Well was soon producing 400 barrels a day, and hundreds of oil wells soon followed his lead throughout Venango, Crawford and surrounding counties.

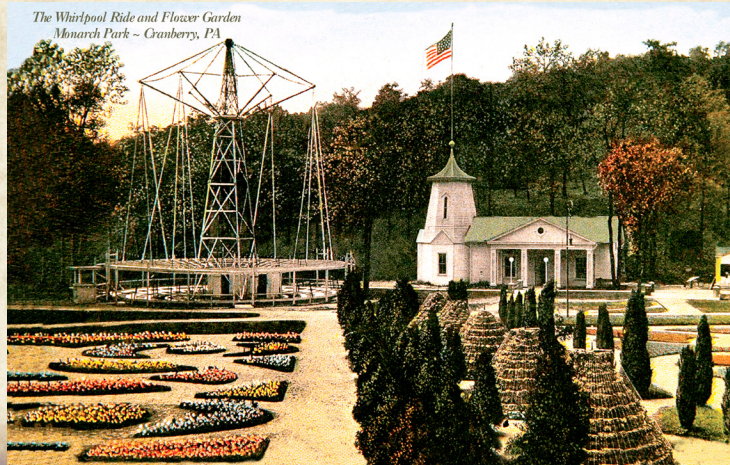
The oil industry has shaped our civilization, our culture, our lifestyle, our economy and even international politics. And it all started here, in our backyard.

The purpose of this article is to present a vision, a challenge if you will, to the conventional thinking about these events. For example, awhile back I read an article in the paper lauding the fact that the area had secured a small grant that would pay for a historical marker to be installed near the former oil boomtown of Pithole City.

Of course this is a good thing, but shouldn't we really be thinking on a much grander scale? How many thousands, even hundreds of thousands, of tourists would visit an authentic Victorian era oil boomtown?

Why not reconstruct Pithole City or Monarch Park? And while we're at it, why not seek major foundation support for all of this?

At Monarch Park (*below*), a luxury amusement park that operated in Cranberry from 1896-1926, we could rebuild the Dance Hall and bring in musical attractions. There could be a huge merry-go-round, a children's-sized train running around the park, grand gardens, stone paths, picnic tables and swimming pools. The Victorian theme would also include a historic playground.



If this vision were to be fulfilled, the 'Oil Heritage Experience' could easily draw hundreds of thousands of visitors a year to the region.



In early 1865, oil was discovered at the base of a wooded hillside near Pithole Creek. Within nine months, Pithole City (*above*) was a community of 15,000 speculators, coopers, blacksmiths, teamsters, wildcatters and Civil War veterans from everywhere.

When it was incorporated in December 1865, Pithole City had 54 hotels, three churches, the third largest post office in the state, a newspaper,

theater, railroad and the world's first oil pipeline.

Visitors could stay in the new Pithole City Victorian hotels, eat and drink in saloons with honky-tonk pianos, singers and dance hall reviews.

Yet within eighteen months, Pithole had become a ghost town, as the oil wells dried up and terrible fires leveled much of the hastily-built wooden city.



Diorama of Pithole City at the Pithole Visitor Center, which has limited seasonal hours. The center is managed by Drake Well

Museum, under the purview of the PA Historical and Museum Commission. Maybe they'd sell it for pennies on the dollar to an ambitious party, such as the county, a municipality or an economic development agency, in order to expand the facility into a full-scale replica of the original oil boomtown.

It's imperative that we develop a partnership between the private sector, government and a non-profit foundation to create incentives for owners of historic Victorian-era buildings. With several significant mansions, the goal would be to restore them to period standards and allow the homes to be shown and open to the public for tours. To add to this experience, we could have a cadre of trained volunteer docents in period costumes, educating and entertaining visitors within a historical context.

There is no doubt that such projects would bring change, and change is challenging. To find out how challenging, I talked with some officials from tiny Branson, Missouri (pop. 6,050), a small town like Franklin that became a hugely successful national tourism destination by becoming a center for country and western music.

More than half a century ago, this sleepy little Ozark Mountain town -- about the size of Franklin or Titusville -- became a hot spot for fishing after a dam was built nearby, creating a good-sized lake. Fishermen came in droves, but their non-fishing spouses and children found themselves largely at loose ends, having no diversion of their own. A local family country group featuring four singing brothers called the "Bald Knobbers," founded the first country music entertainment center in Branson to fill an amusement void.

From this small start, Branson now attracts over 7.8 million tourists a year to enjoy its 50 live entertainment theaters, and to stay in its 208 hotels with 22,000 rooms. They tap their toes to country music provided by local and national, second and third generation performers. And the best news of all: these tourists spend an estimated \$3 billion a year in Branson!

Another challenge faced by the little Missouri town was the preservation of the historic section of town in the midst of dramatic changes throughout Branson. This would certainly pose a challenge to us here in the Oil Heritage Region, where we have so much to preserve and protect. With proper planning and decent market incentives, we could get this ambitious project completed, while at the same time preserving our unique small town heritage.

But like little Branson, we would all have to pull together. There would be no sense in trying to do this if Franklin, Titusville, Oil City or any factions in the region fell to squabbling. What we are trying to envision here is on the scale of Branson, Missouri; Colonial Williamsburg, Virginia; the Victorian Village restoration in Cape May, New Jersey; and the wild west town of Tombstone, Arizona. All of these communities have established successful tourism destinations.



The Oil Heritage Region already has many great resources and amenities available or under development for a Heritage & Nature Tourism boom, including sixty miles of paved bike/hike trails; state and local parks; great waterways and forests; numerous historic buildings and sites; and wonderful restaurants, venues and museums.



Oil City Community Playhouse is several years into a fundraising and restoration project of the 1927 Lyric Theatre, and will be using it as a community theater someday soon.

The 1946 Kayton Theatre in Franklin was in serious disrepair when the local theater group, Franklin Civic Operetta Assn., bought it at tax sale and transformed it into a world-class entertainment venue through philanthropy and volunteerism.



DeBence Antique Music World restored a historic 1907 building in downtown Franklin, and filled it with antique mechanical musical instruments dating from the mid 1800's to the 1940's.



The 1905 Oil City Post Office was transformed into the Venango Museum of Art, Science & Industry, providing a wide range of displays and presentations.



However, I believe that a good case can be made for effecting change right here in the Oil Heritage Region. Since I was a youngster, Venango County has lost about a third of its population, including a significant number of its talented young people. Many of the best-paying manufacturing and oil industry jobs have also been lost. Let's reverse this trend, and encourage our descendents to make the Oil Heritage Region their home.

Branson officials told me that the key to the kind of dramatic changes that occurred there was strategic planning. At first, the dramatic tourism buildup took them by surprise. The roads and tourism infrastructure, they explained, couldn't keep pace with the increasing stream of visitors. However, once the infrastructure problems were dealt with, things began to run smoothly.

The economic impact of such a project here would be enormous. Using Branson as an example, every million visitors they attract works out to \$350 million tourist dollars. And the tourism infrastructure that is needed to support these visitors translates into thousands of new jobs.

There was an old saying in Washington, D.C. policy circles that "you can't beat something with nothing." If we don't do something dramatic, then what's the alternative? Doing little isn't a realistic option, given the declines in our population and economic base.

But before we even consider doing something like this, we first have to discuss these concepts and see if there is a consensus to move forward. If so, we need to carefully build local, regional, statewide and national support for the project.

Then, we'll need to put together a powerhouse Board of Directors and establish a non-profit Oil Region Foundation dedicated solely to this purpose. Next up, detailed concept papers, architectural renderings, tourism infrastructure requirements, and statements of organizational and political support.

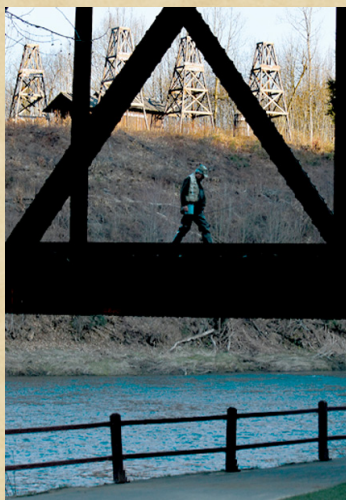
Mainly, we need to put together a comprehensive plan, including priorities, timetables and resource requirements. At that point, we would be ready to present to prospective funding sources, such as major foundations, economic development organizations and government agencies.

What does the future hold in the region for our children and grandchildren? With great expectations, perhaps we can create for them a prosperous and quality community for raising their own families. *(Article originally appeared in West PA Magazine - Autumn 2011)*

Author Edward Bergin was born and raised in Franklin, PA. Most of his worklife was spent in the Washington, D.C. area, where he was a senior policy advisor at the Dept. of Labor. He retired and moved back to the area several years ago. Bergin is a published author, with three books and numerous magazine articles to his credit. He is active in local charitable organizations, and was instrumental in establishing a grant research center at the Franklin Library. He also volunteers his time to teach grant writing classes throughout the region.

Fisherman crossing a century-old railroad bridge over Oil Creek in Oil Creek State Park. On the hill, a set of replica wooden derricks represent the area's 1800s oil boom.

Photos by Stephen West



School Heritage Tours at Drake Well Museum near Titusville, in northern Venango County, providing students a window to the early days of the Oil Industry in NW PA.



Oil City's Arts Program is thriving at the restored 1910 National Transit Building & Annex, which housed the pipeline subsidiary of Standard Oil.

On Thursday, September 17, the Titusville Historical Society and Drake Well Museum & Park will host Commonwealth Speaker and professional musician **Thomas Jolin** and his presentation of "Civil War Era Music."



This installment of the museum's annual Heritage Lecture Series will be held at the First Presbyterian Church Fellowship Hall - 216 N. Franklin Street Titusville, PA Crawford County.

The event will begin at 7:00 pm with doors opening and refreshments being served at 6:30. Mr. Jolin's presentation offers attendees the opportunity to explore the tumultuous 1860s through songs about soldiers' lives, domestic scenes and the fight to end slavery. Performing on hammered dulcimer, harmonica, button accordion and banjo, Mr. Jolin shares a mixture of music and commentary as he provides valuable insight into what it was like to live during the Civil War.

This event is free and open to the public.

For info, (814) 827-2797 or www.drakewell.org

Victorian Architecture Conference

Franklin, Venango County

Friday & Saturday, September 18-19

Hosted by the Oil Region Alliance of Business, Industry & Tourism

"Preserving Timeless Treasures" is the theme of the 2015 Victorian Architecture Conference which will be held September 18 & 19 at the Quality Inn & Conference Center in Franklin, PA. *The conference offers something for everyone, including workshops on:* the preservation & maintenance of hardwood flooring; how to research the history of your home or building; understanding slate roofing; how to repair plaster; a walking tour of Miller Park; an escorted bus tour of the Victorian Architecture of the Oil Region; and a traditional Victorian tea at the Egbert-Mullins-Koos house.

Guests may attend the entire two-day conference or any workshop, tour, tea, or meal which meets their schedule. Educators may receive Act 48 continuing education credit by attending one or more of the 16 accredited workshops.

Two featured speakers with local connections will provide talks on the rich Victorian Architecture of the Oil Region:

Eric A. Hutchinson, a 1986 graduate of Oil City High School, will speak at a Dessert Reception on Friday night at DeBence Antique Music World. He graduated from Washington & Jefferson College in 1990, and in 2004 received his Master of Arts in Historic Preservation from the Graduate School of Fine Arts of the University of Pennsylvania. He is currently employed as a Project Leader and Exhibits Specialist at the Historic Preservation Training Center, a unit of the National Park Service, in Frederick, MD.

Lu Donnelly, a historian and author from Pittsburgh, will present "Vernacular to Spectacular, Victorian Architecture in Northwest Pennsylvania" as the keynote speaker at the concluding banquet on Saturday at the Quality Inn. Lu co-authored "Buildings of Pennsylvania: Pittsburgh and Western Pennsylvania." She is currently on the Board of Trustees of the Pittsburgh History & Landmarks Foundation and writes a regular column entitled "Architecture Around Us" in the magazine, "Western Pennsylvania History."

For more, visit website: oilregion.org or phone Toni Kresinski, Project Manager: (800) 483-6264 x 110.



Peanut Butter Festival

September 18 - 20

Gumtown Park - Water Street
New Bethlehem, PA - Clarion Co.

Friday 4-9 pm, Saturday 8:30 am-9:30 pm, Sunday 10 am-4:30 pm

Highlights of the Festival include: Crafters & food vendors throughout the weekend, plus ~ Friday: Peanut Butter Queen Crowning • Wine Walk • John Pezzuti on stage. Saturday: 5K Race/Walk • All Things Peanut Butter Bake-off • Mountain Bike Race • Parade on Broad St. • Bake-off Baked Goods Auction • Leather & Lace on stage • Fireworks. Sunday: Car Cruise-In • Antique Tractor Show • Motorcycle Rally • RVCC Memorial Dove Release, plus more.

Don't miss this "jam-packed" weekend!



More info at: www.visitpa.com/pa-events/peanut-butter-festival or call (814) 275-3929.

CRANBERRY FESTIVAL

Saturday, Sept. 19 - 10 am to 7 pm

Morrison Park - Allison Road
(off Main St.) Seneca, PA 16346

Join in the family fun at the annual

Cranberry Festival featuring:

children's events, food, arts & crafts vendors, 5K Run/Walk, scarecrow contest display, car & motorcycle cruise-in, Cranberry Bake-Off, Venango's Got Talent, live entertainment, fireworks & much more.



Visit www.venangochamber.org for info.

FAW Providing Three Hikes in Conjunction with PA Greenways & Trails Summit

Friends of Allegheny Wilderness is offering three free hikes within designated and proposed wilderness areas in the Allegheny National Forest as part of the upcoming PA Greenways & Trails Summit, which opens on Sunday, Sept. 20. The Summit is a biennial event held at various locations around PA, and this year, activities will be focused in Warren County in the heart of the Allegheny National Forest!

▶▶ Saturday, Sept. 19 -- Sunday, Sept. 20 ~ 13-mile overnight backpacking trip into the backcountry wilds of the Hickory Creek Wilderness, protected under the Wilderness Act in 1984. We will camp overnight Saturday night approximately halfway around the Hickory Creek Wilderness trail loop at Jack's Run. We will be back on Sunday in plenty of time for hikers to attend the 5:30 pm opening reception for the Summit in Warren.

Moderate difficulty level.

▶▶ Sunday, Sept. 20 ~ 12:00 noon until 4:00 pm Two-mile hike from the Minister parking lot on Route 666 to the Minister Overlook within the proposed Minister Valley Wilderness. This hike provides one of the most spectacular views in all of the Allegheny National Forest.

Moderate difficulty level.

▶▶ Wednesday, Sept. 23 ~ Seven-mile hike around the Minister Valley loop trail within the proposed Minister Valley Wilderness, culminating in a stop at the Minister overlook. A portion of this trail is also concurrent with the North Country National Scenic Trail - a long-distance trail that runs for 4,600 miles from North Dakota to the Adirondack Mountains in New York State (including 95 miles through the Allegheny National Forest).

Moderate difficulty level.

All three hikes are open not only to Summit attendees, but also to general members of the public. There is no charge to participate in any of the hikes, but hikers should bring all of their own food, water, hiking and camping equipment, and come prepared for any weather conditions. Register for any or all of the hikes by emailing: info@pawild.org.

For more about the 2015 Pennsylvania Greenways & Trails Summit, webpage: dcnr.state.pa.us/brc/conservation/greenways/greenwaysummit



Historic Places of Worship Tour in New Castle Saturday, September 19 ~ 1:00 - 6:00 pm

Inspiring, amazing architecture, skilled craftsmanship, a learning experience for all ages, touring places of worship in the city leaves you with the understanding of how rich New Castle was with many architectural styles, multiple cultures, nationalities, faiths & ideas.

Enjoy a guided tour of the eleven places of worship that reflect **The Soul of the City**. Visit www.ncnewsonline for a complete list of church and synagogue locations, or call (724) 654-7457

Tickets: \$10 advance or \$12 day of tours.

Children under 12 free. Tickets available at The Confluence, Breakaway Tours, or the Lawrence County Tourist Promotion Agency.

Benefits the Historic Warner Cascade Theatre Museum.



Munnell Run Farm Day

Sunday, September 20

11:00 am - 4:00 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 *Chuck Thorpe & Friends*
- * Free Wagon Rides/Children's Games

Munnell Run Farm - 753 Greenville Rd., Mercer
Free admission - canned good donation requested

For more info: (724) 662-2242
website: munnellrunfarm.org



McConnells Mill Heritage Festival ~ Sept. 26 & 27
McConnells Mill State Park ~ 2697 McConnells Mill Rd.
Portersville, PA - Lawrence County

Celebrate the operational time period of this historical gristmill - from 1852 to 1928. Costumed vendors will display crafts inspired by this time. Free tours of mill offered. A civil war encampment brings history to life, artisans & craftsmen will demonstrate their skills throughout the festival, plus much more. **Free and open to the public. Sat. 10 am - 6 pm & Sun. 11 am - 5 pm**
(724) 368-3612 www.visitpaparks.com

Fall Secrets of the Indian Medicine Man

6:30-7:30 pm Thursday, September 24

Oil Creek State Park in Venango County

The Park Naturalist will lead an exploration of Wildcat Hollow, revealing some of the plants that Native Americans used to survive in this wilderness area. Participants will learn plant uses for food, Indian medicine and survival. The park is located between Drake Well Museum and Titusville to the north, and Oil City four miles to the south. The main entrance to the park is off PA Rt. 8, one mile north of Rouseville.

Meet at: Wildcat Hollow Parking
305 State Park Road, Oil City, PA 16301
(814) 676-5915 Manager -- David Hallman
email: oilcreeksp@pa.gov

Cook Forest State Park Activities



Register with park office:

(814) 744-8407

Fall Float through Clarion County

9:00 am-3:00 pm Friday, **Oct. 9**

Enjoy autumn colors during a leisurely eight-mile interpretive float from Maple Creek to Cooksburg. Presentations on basic boat safety and handling, as well as wildlife on the Clarion River. Pack a lunch, wear warm clothing, bring plenty of water & a fishing pole. Program starts at Park Office. Participants shuttled to starting point. \$30 per boat (payable at starting point -- check/money order). Lunch provided to those who register by Oct. 7 by calling the Park Office. Prior Cook Forest kayak training participants receive a 50% discount. **Registration required.**

Woodsy Owl Workday

8:00 am Saturday, **Oct. 17**

Please consider joining staff & volunteers for a day of park maintenance through various work projects. Woodsy Owl and Smokey Bear will be there to help, also. Work projects may include invasive species removal, trail maintenance, litter pickup, painting, wood stacking, etc. Free camping Friday and/or Saturday nights available for volunteers, with prior notice received by Friday, Oct. 3. Lunch provided. Contact Park Office two weeks in advance for volunteer project.



2015 Autumn Leaf Festival

Clarion, PA
Sept. 25 - Oct. 4

"Clarion ~ A Canvas of Color"

International award-winning homecoming festival that draws countless revelers to the Clarion area, coinciding with the changing of the vast forests of NW PA.

Ongoing offerings at the nine-day event include carnival rides/games and a wide variety of food vendors.

More Info: Clarion Chamber (814) 226-9161
www.clarionpa.com/events/autumn-leaf-festival



Antlers & Anglers



Sat. & Sun., Sept. 26 & 27

Crawford County Fairgrounds
20939 Hamilton Road - Meadville, PA

Celebrate National Hunting and Fishing Day on Saturday and continue the celebration on Sunday with more prizes, give-aways and seminars. Featured speakers include local professional outdoor writer, photographer and licensed fishing guide, **Darl Black**. *Buckeye Sportsman's Dan Armitage* will focus on children's fishing, *Field & Stream's Chris Sutton* and *Chris Snyder* will conduct seminars on steelhead fishing and archery, respectively.

Admission is \$2 or two non-perishable items. This year's proceeds will benefit the Center for Family Services.

For more info: www.antlersandanglers.com



Pithole Lantern Tours ~ Oct. 2 & 3, Fri./Sat.

Pithole serves as the backdrop for an evening experience that brings oil history to life. Visitors will meet historical figures during a nighttime tour of the legendary oil boomtown, listen to historical music, and enjoy seasonal refreshments and activities. Special admission fees apply. Tours begin at 6:30 pm.

Visit www.drakewell.org for more info.

Applefest 2015 ~ The best three days of the year!

October 2 - 4, Friday - Sunday

Located in beautiful Victorian Franklin, Venango Co.

Featuring:

- **Arts & Crafts - Over 300 Vendors**
- **Antique & Classic Car Show**
- **5K Race for Any Pace** • **Kids' Korner**
- **Apple Pancake Breakfast** • **Farmers' Market**
- **Apple Pie Baking & Eating Contests**
- **"MaryPoppins" at the Barrow-Civic Theatre**
- **St. John's Tiffany Windows Tours**
- **Live Music & Free Entertainment**
- **Lots of Great Food ~ Plus Much More!**

For complete schedule: www.franklinapplefest.com



Photographer's Bio

"Having been born and raised in Erie, PA, I have literally been 'Discovering Presque Isle' throughout my life. Whether it grows from the ground, flies overhead, walks on two legs or four, or spends its time in the water, the abundant life in the Peninsula is a magical kingdom. Photography provides me the opportunity to capture endless special moments.

I have learned to appreciate all four seasons of this beautiful eleven mile strip of land that extends into Lake Erie, even during wintertime when several inches of ice cover the bay and the lake.

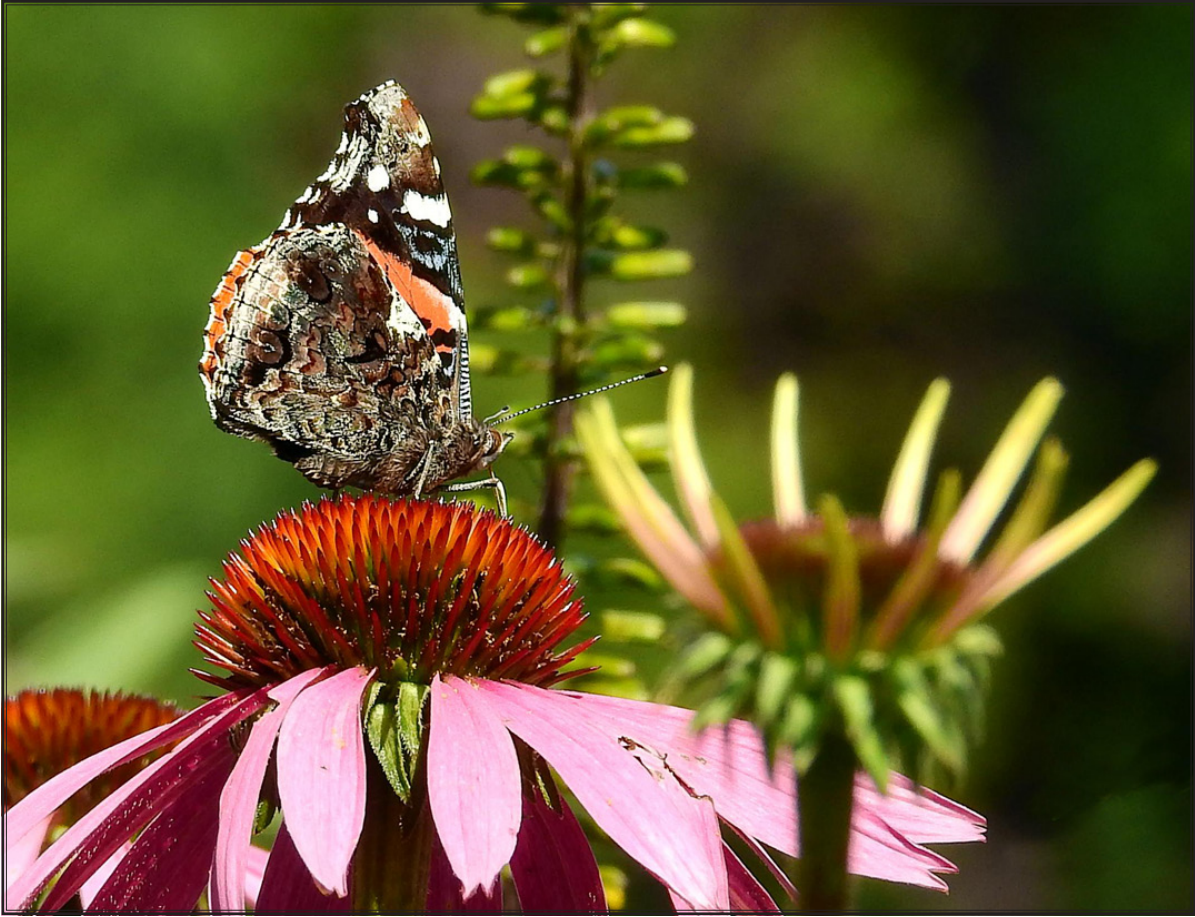
Many species of birds use this area when traveling from north to south and back again. With each and every visit to Presque Isle, there is always something new and exciting to photograph. I am so very grateful to have discovered Presque Isle, not only in person, but through photographs that display its true beauty and its vast array of creatures, great and small."

Tiny toadlet and a tinier slug, dwarfed by one thin dime.

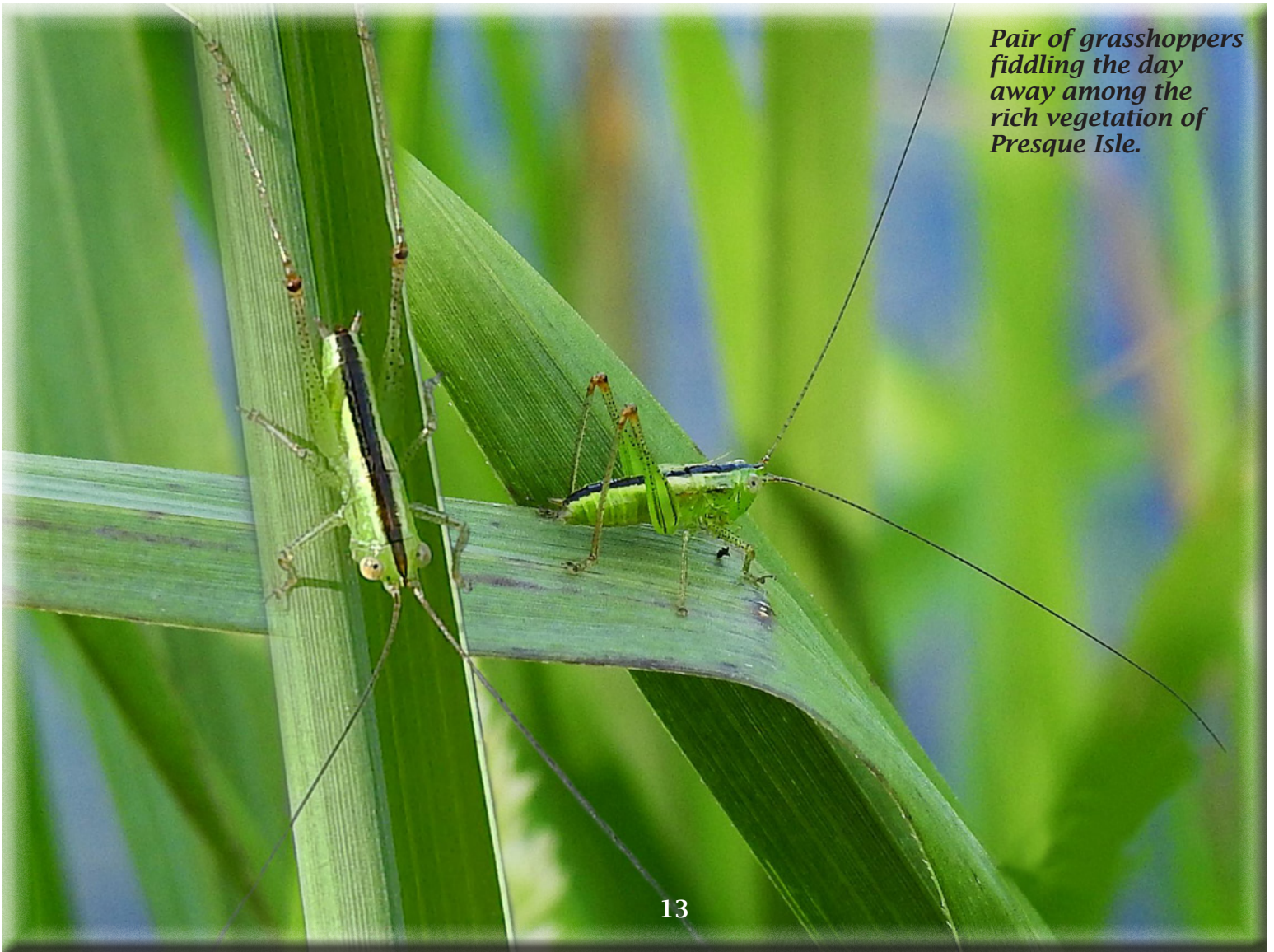


Mother Nature at her finest.





The majestic Red Admiral Butterfly is commonly seen in the Erie Peninsula.



Pair of grasshoppers fiddling the day away among the rich vegetation of Presque Isle.



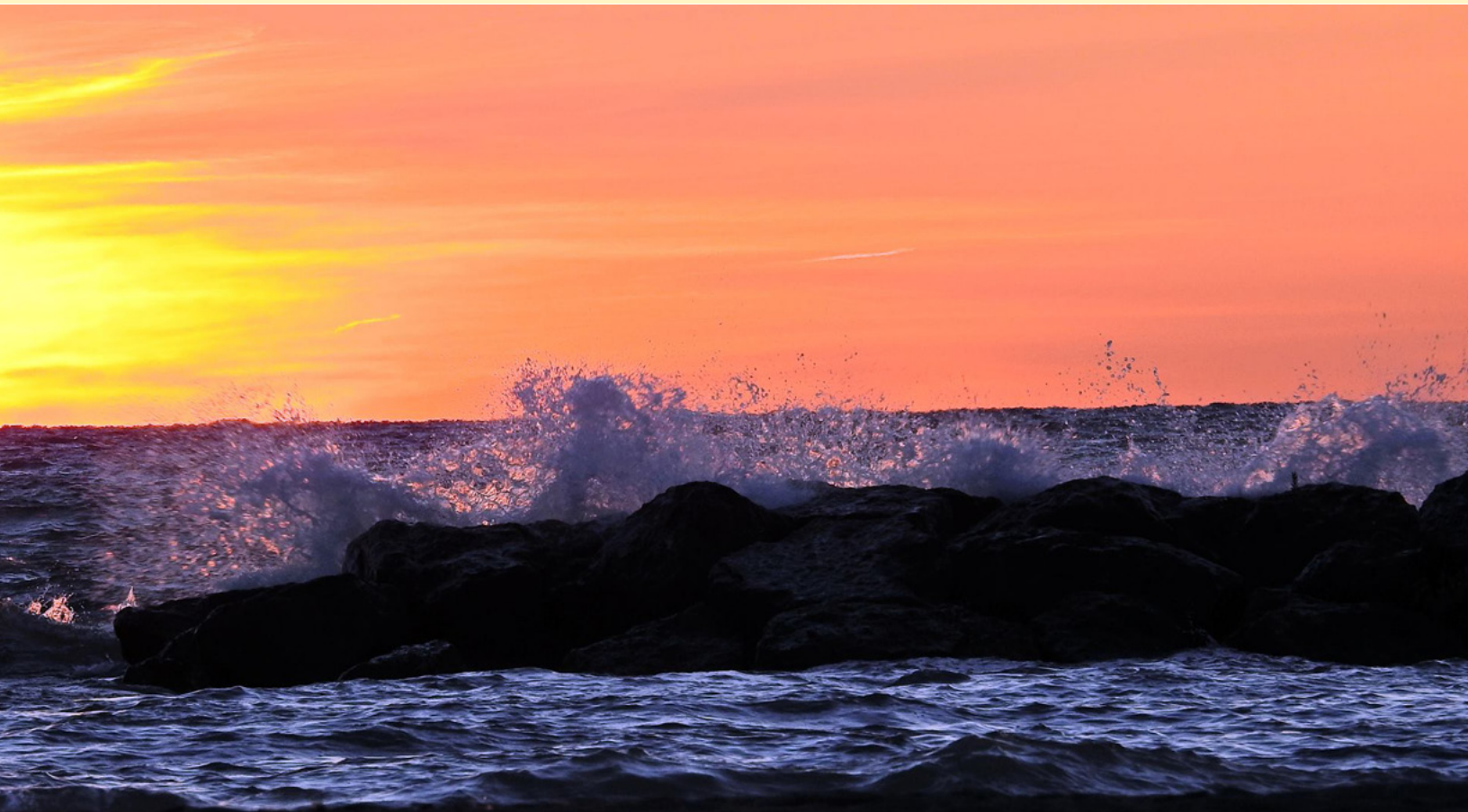
Mother mallard & ducklings sunning along the shoreline of Erie Bay.

Canada geese & goslings visiting a herd (aka bale) of turtles at Presque Isle State Park.





Surf, sand, seagull, breakers & sunsets over Lake Erie at the beaches of Presque Isle State Park.



*Photos by
Jane Curtze McNally*



As the summer season comes to an end, the gulls take over the beaches of Presque Isle State Park.