

# COLUMBIA COUNTY ADOPT-A-STREAM NEWSLETTER No. 21

*For a Better Environment*  
**MAY 18, 2005**

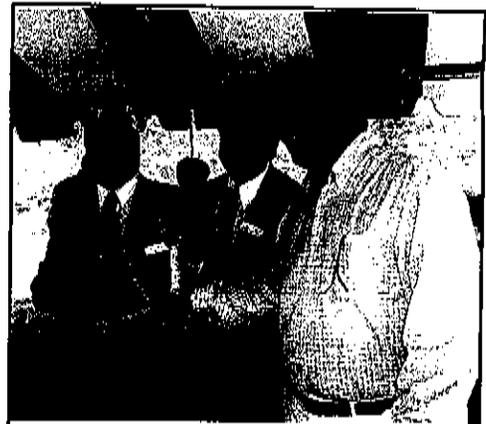
## ADOPT-A-STREAM WORKSHOPS AHEAD

**Frank Carl**, our local AAS trainer, has scheduled workshops this month at the Spirit Creek Forest Camp, this Saturday, May 21, and the following Saturday, May 28. If you would like to attend and be certified or re-certified, but have not yet called in, please contact this editor right away! The program will run from about 9 AM to 3-4 PM each time. Some participants plan to meet at 8:20 AM at the Bobby Jones - Washington Road Walgreen's drugstore, for the trip together to the camp.

## STREAM HISTORIES DISCOVERED

Thanks to **Frank Pizzi**, we are now aware of a publication by Michael C. White, found by him in the Gibbs Library. It is entitled "Columbia County. A Study of Its Streams, Rivers, and Historic Water Mill Sites." Some of our stream names have changed through the years. Attributions and dates, along with earlier and current names, are given below:

Stream	Page	Mill Sites	Comments
Betty's Branch	28f	0 known	Germany's Creek, after Robert Germany, 1750s Bettis' (Bettis) Branch Single tributary: Mt. Enna Branch (3 miles long)
Euchee Creek	24ff	6 (including tributaries)	Uchee Creek, after Uchee Indians, early 1700s Dyas [Deas] Creek; after John Dyass, 1750's
Crawford Creek	28ff	2	Underwood's Creek, after Isaac Underwood, 1970s After Charles Crawford, 1779
Jones Creek	29ff; 43	0 known	Jones Creek, after William Jones, 1856
Reed Creek	33ff	5	Savage's Mill [Savage's] Creek, 1756-1930s Reed's [Red's]



Commission Chair Ron Cross looks on with interest (anticipation?) while commissioners Tom Mercer and Steve Brown firmly grip a corn snake. The scene: Reed Creek Wetlands Park Dedication, 19 April 2005

Michael White is also the author of a similar book on Rae's Creek in Richmond County. Another observer of the scene notes that Mr. White has withdrawn from communication in recent times, so it is hard to determine whether more copies of his book can be purchased.

## NEW TEAMS TO START

We have been busy looking into the establishment of two new teams—both on Reed Creek. Because the workshops will keep new volunteers busy, only preliminary preparations will be undertaken this month. **Lee Mecikalski** and his son and occasional neighborhood boys will set up Site 2 on Stonington Drive.

There is a good likelihood that **Frank Pizzi** will lead a group at a Site 3 – adjacent to Reed Creek Wetlands Park, dedicated on 19 April (*photo, top*). Lee's site was featured recently.

## SNAKE IDENTIFICATION

Sometimes, with our at-a-distance armchair observations of nature, we jump to conclusions about the snakes we may see in our waters. Recently participants in the Reed Creek Park cleanup, and visitors thereafter, noted the slender black snakes they often saw in the waters. While they may have been the poisonous water moccasins (cottonmouths), there is a strong likelihood that they were swamp snakes (*Seminatrix pygaea*). According to Audubon, swamp snakes are timid nonbiters.

Water snakes can inhabit swamps and streams. These are often biters. While they are not venomous, at least some can inject anticoagulants that prevent blood from clotting, so you can bleed profusely if bitten. One such is the northern water snake [*Nephrodia (Natrix) sipedon*]. Also according to Audubon is often mistaken for the cottonmouth, and killed on sight. Immature cottonmouths in particular may have the brighter colors of this animal. **John Graham, John Furtner, and Bob Perry** observed what JG now suspects was a northern water snake swimming upstream gracefully in Crawford Creek at Site 2, on May 14.

It is said that the poisonous water moccasins can hide among the roots and other entanglements of our streams; that it can be aggressive—especially if it is protecting young. We observe lots of small holes along the stream banks. While we don't know whether those holes harbor snakes, we recommend caution when near them. Carry a "poke" stick with you to test patches of leaves you would be likely to pick up for macro assessment.

We recommend that you find web site or field guide photos of these animals.

## BEAVER STUFF

Speaking of holes, **John Furtner**, who lives next to our Crawford Creek study site, the other day fell into a hole dug by a beaver. The opening was about 10 feet from the stream bank. John traced the tunnel from the hole to the bank. Note that the opening conforms to the shape of John's foot!



## CRAWFORD CREEK SITE 2 ADDS VOLUNTEERS

Thanks to **John Furtner, Jaime Baggenstoss, and Bob Perry**, the macro studies, time-consuming anyway, were accomplished sooner by **John Graham** in the absence of **Brenda Ricketson**, who had to work that day. **Elliott Perry**, on whose property the site occurs, was invaluable in finding a worm and a scud, both of which put the team "over the top" (that is, into the "fair" category). The elder gents, minus Jaime, returned on Sunday to complete a phosphate/nitrate test and to document the lower half of the stream reach.. Photos on the next page show some of the activity.

On the same day **Judy Gordon and Deborah Wilson**, at Betty's Branch, carried out the phosphate/nitrate test and reviewed the reach.

## BACTERIAL AND BIOLOGICAL OXYGEN DEMAND VALUES OBTAINED

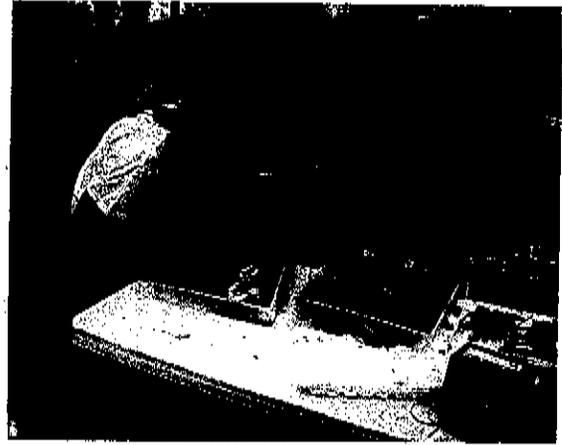
On April 26 water samples were obtained at **Euchee Creek and Betty's Branch** for analysis. Two were obtained at Euchee—one by **Garrett Weiss**, one by **John Graham and Bob Perry**. Another was retrieved from Betty's Branch by the latter two. Results: Bacterial at Euchee: 64 and 109 CFU/100 mL. Bacterial at Betty's Branch: 380 CFU/100 mL. These values are all considered within the normal range.

Biological Oxygen Demand (BOD) values for Euchee Creek were 1.9 and 1.7 mg/L; for Betty's Branch the reading was 2.2 mg/L. Processing was accomplished at the Water Lab.

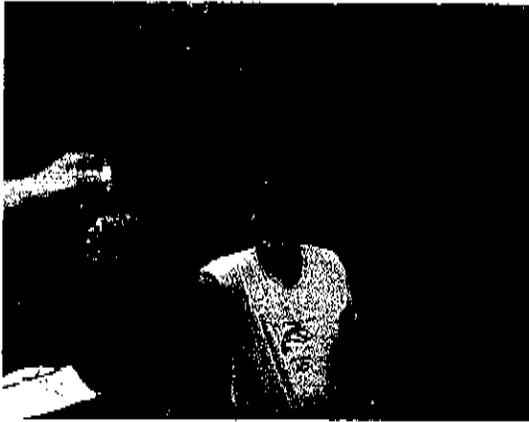
PHOTO PARADE



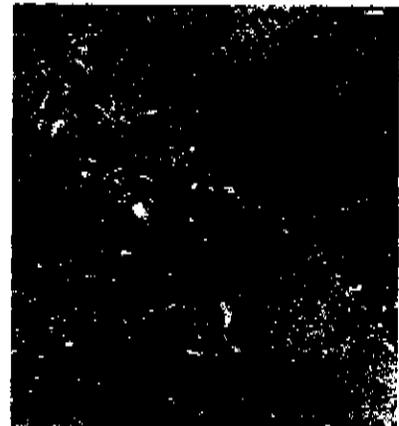
Elliott Perry and Bob Perry (no relation) search for Crawford Creek macros.



Jaime Baggenstoss adds to the macro count at Crawford Creek.

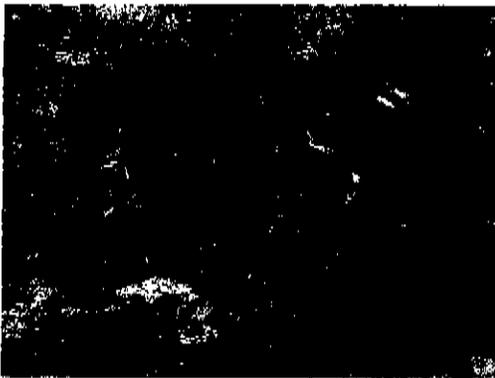


Bob Perry hands up a water sample for analysis.



This mussel left a trail on a Crawford Creek sand bank exposed at low water.

"PICTURES AT AN EXHIBITION"  
(Crawford Creek Site 2)



Evans High School students coordinate the task of measuring and sketching Crawford Creek at Site 2 (near Oakley Pirkle Road).



## COLUMBIA COUNTY RAINFALL FOR APRIL AND EARLY MAY 2005

In April, rainfall in Columbia County was less than that of the prior month. Recordings were spottier than in previously because of increased travel by participants (especially during Masters Week). Values in the last 1-3 days before any site visit may be the best for explaining peak values; baseline levels and flows are determined after peaks have passed. Allow five to 10 ten days of rainless weather to precede visits for viewing baseline levels and flows. Note: Mrs. Allison Hinchcliff is now Mrs. Allison Acker. She will soon be leaving for other pastures; we thank her so much!

Day (2004)	Jones Creek (Graham/Smith)	Crawford Creek (Ricketson)	Crawford Creek (Acker)	Betty's Branch (Capps)	Reed Creek (Fisher/Greenwood)	Enchee Creek (Garrett Weiss)	Columbia County Ave. of 4-6)	Airport (Bush Field)
1 Apr		0.40	0.50	1.10	0.50	Trace	0.417	0.41
2 Apr	0.44	0.50	^?			0.60	0.308	Trace
3 Apr			^?				0?	
7 Apr	0.90		^?	^?		0.48	0.308	1.27
8 Apr	0.14	1.00	0.95	^?		0.75	0.568	0.32
9 Apr		0.10		1.80			0.317	
12 Apr	0.02	^					0.004	
13 Apr	0.22	0.40	0.45	0.20	1.00	Trace	0.378	Trace
14 Apr	0.16		?			0.35	0.102	0.01
21 Apr		1.00	?				0.200	
22 Apr	0.78		?				0.256	0.34
23 Apr			?	0.80	0.90	0.20	0.380	0.23
24 Apr						Trace	0	
26 Apr				Trace			0	0.01
27 Apr							0	Trace
30 Apr						0.40	0.067	0.33
<b>APR</b>	<b>2.66</b>	<b>3.40</b>	<b>?</b>	<b>3.90</b>	<b>2.40</b>	<b>2.78</b>	<b>3.028</b>	<b>2.92</b>
1 May			?	0.55	^?	0.59	0.228	
3-5 May								Traces
6 May	0.01		?	?	^?	?	0.003	0.03
7-9 May			?	?	^?	?	0	
10 May	0.58	0.50+	?	?	0.50	?	0.527	0.48
15 May							0	0.07
17 May	0.25?	?	?	?		?	0.125	?

^ Rainfall on given date is thought to have occurred but was not checked until the date on which a starred value is next given. Such accumulated values are not used to compute averages.

***PLEASE TURN IN TO US COPIES OF YOUR MONTHLY REPORTS and PHOTOS if any!***

Contributions to this newsletter are always welcome.

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