

2018 WILD & SCENIC  
CLARION RIVER SOJOURN

Sponsored by The River Network & Patagonia



The 2018 Wild & Scenic Clarion River Sojourn, funded in part by The River Network and Patagonia, was not only a celebration of the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act that protects this and many other of our nation's most beautiful and beloved streams, but also a celebration of the remarkable resilience and recovery of the Clarion River!

Sojourners enjoyed a rare treat for mid-August in Pennsylvania, as preceding rain filled the Clarion River to an enjoyable level for paddling. Although it did rain on us as 48 sojourners embarked on our journey Saturday morning; it added some adrenaline-pumping excitement to navigating the riffles-turned-rapids! "It felt like being in an action movie!" ~Harper (14)

By mid-day, the rain had passed and we basked in the warm sun to enjoy lunch at the confluence of Callen Run and hear about the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy's efforts to reconnect vital headwater streams to the Clarion River by removing dams and replacing culverts that block fish passage.

Thanks to the swollen river, the afternoon leg of our paddle quickly delivered us to Clear Creek State Park, where PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) staff informed sojourners and park guests about its unique place along the Clarion River and the multitude of outdoor recreation amenities it has to offer. Following the introduction to the park, Joshua Bridge of the U.S. Forest Service at Allegheny National Forest recapped a timeline of the Clarion River's past impacts and remarkable recovery and designation as one of the national Wild & Scenic Rivers that have been protected by this legislation marking its 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. The Secretary of DCNR, Cindy Adams Dunn, affectionately referring to herself as a fellow "river rat," further expounded on the efforts of numerous environmental champions to conserve and protect the river for this and future generations to adore and celebrate its bounty of resources and splendor through paddling sojourns like this.

## DAY 1



Safety briefing and paddling instruction in the rain; we got wet before even getting on the water

## DAY 1



Participants ready to embark on the 13-mile paddle from Hallton, Pa. to  
Clear Creek State Park



## DAY 1



Enjoying the scenic views and good company

## DAY 1



The Wild & Scenic Clarion River is suited to paddlers of all abilities, making it great for families to get out on the water together, like this mother and son

## DAY 1





## DAY 1



Some paddlers were pretty successful at fishing during the sojourn too



## DAY 1



Sojourners and Clear Creek State Park guests gathered to hear remarks on the celebration of the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Wild & Scenic Rivers Act and the Clarion River's designation before ending the day with a delicious catered dinner

As dawn broke over the Clarion River Sunday morning, 45 paddlers regrouped for breakfast provided by a local business, The Farmers Inn. With renewed energy for the day, we gathered at the park amphitheater where DCNR park educators Suzann Rentzle and Dale Luthringer provided an educational segment on the cool critters of the Clarion River, including otters, mink, and fishers, and signs to look for their presence as we paddle down the river. We also learned of the characteristics and nesting habits of bald eagles and golden eagles and the differences between the two birds of prey.

Then, Eric Chapman, WPC's Director of Aquatic Science, showcased some of the remarkable work that has been done to study unique creatures like the eastern hellbender salamander and freshwater mussels. He detailed a landmark effort to salvage mussels in harm's way nearby on the Allegheny River and reintroduce them to the Clarion River, a ecological marvel that would not have been possible without human intervention due to a dam constructed on the Clarion River near its mouth that prevents natural dispersal.

Eli Long, WPC Watershed Manager, showcased efforts to establish and improve river access through WPC's Canoe Access Development Fund during our launch from Clear Creek State Park. After the first seven miles of paddling, we stopped at Cook Forest State Park, where Mr. Luthringer got most of the sojourners involved in a fun comparative demonstration of the size of some of Pennsylvania's largest trees in relation to the largest trees across the nation and the world. While ours may pale in comparison to the mighty redwoods, it is pretty special to know that Cook Forest State Park is home to several old-growth forest stands and some of the state's record setting trees.

## DAY 2



Clear Creek State Park educator, Suzann Rentzle, introduces us to the river otter, mink, and fisher

## DAY 2



Sojourners learned about studies of the eastern hellbender salamander and a multi-agency effort to re-introduce more than 30,000 freshwater mussels to the Clarion River



## DAY 2



The second day's paddle traversed 11 miles of the Clarion River from Clear Creek State Park to Cook Forest State Park

## DAY 2



The partly sunny weather brought out a lot of smiles

## DAY 2



Cook Forest State Park educator, Dale Luthringer, got nearly all of the sojourners involved to demonstrate the circumferences of the largest trees throughout the world



## DAY 2



Thanks to the success and momentum built from the 2018 Wild & Scenic Clarion River Sojourn, partners along the Clarion River corridor have begun collaborating on additional conservation projects to further restore this magnificent river and nominate it in the running for Pennsylvania's 2019 River of the Year!