

# ACA Club-Fostered Stewardship Program



2009—2010 Report

Sponsored by **L.L.Bean**

Since 2002, the ACA has partnered with L.L. Bean to sponsor the Club-Fostered Stewardship (CFS) Program. The CFS Program provides funding and logistical assistance to local paddling clubs that undertake stewardship projects on local waterways. The purpose of the program is to support volunteer stewardship efforts, and encourage local clubs to take an active role in helping to protect and restore the nation's rivers, lakes and coastlines.

During the years 2009-2010, the ACA made 13 grants totaling \$13,867 to paddling clubs and stewardship organizations in support of volunteer-driven waterways stewardship projects. These grants were made possible by the generous support of L.L. Bean. Funded projects included river cleanups, stream clearing, invasive species removal, and improvements to water access. Many grant recipients partnered with other groups and organizations to achieve their goals and increase the impact of their grant funds.

Because of the drive and passion of the volunteers involved in these projects, the value of their outcomes far exceeded the dollar amounts of the grants made. The 2009-10 ACA Club-Fostered Stewardship Grant projects are described in detail below.



Northwest Indiana Paddlers Association

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### **Northwest Indiana Paddlers Association - Indiana**

The Northwest Indiana Paddlers Association (NWIPA) formed in January 2009 to promote paddling in Northwestern Indiana, and to work on stewardship and access projects. The club has been so successful in its first two years that the ACA gave NWIPA its Stroke of Achievement at the November 2010 National Paddlesports Conference in Asheville, NC.

One of NWIPA’s main goals is to open northwest Indiana’s streams to paddlers. There are several beautiful streams in the area that remain in a natural state. However, most of them are completely clogged with fallen trees, making them impassable for paddlers. In 2009, NWIPA received a \$1000 L.L. Bean Club-Fostered Stewardship (CFS) grant to purchase equipment needed to selectively clear this deadfall to make these streams passable, while preserving fish habitat. This work is physically challenging and sometimes dangerous, but NWIPA has undertaken it, and is making great progress.

Thus far, NWIPA has cleared two miles on the East Branch of the Little Calumet River. Eventually, these two miles will be part of a 16 mile water trail that will connect the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore to the NPS Heron Rookery in rural Porter County. NWIPA has also adopted and cleared three miles of Trail Creek in Michigan City, IN. In the near future, NWIPA will install two access points on Trail Creek, thereby opening the creek to paddlers.

However, NWIPA's stream clearing work is only part of the story of what the club has done with its CFS grant. After (and because of) receiving the L.L. Bean grant, NWIPA was able to raise additional grant funding from other sources. This additional funding has enabled it to dramatically and rapidly expand its programs. Working with the National Park Service, NWIPA is seeking designation of a long segment of the Lake Michigan Water Trail as a National Recreation Trail. NWIPA also helped a local land trust obtain a \$75,000 grant and raise \$60,000 in individual donations to acquire a 44 acre wetlands preserve on the Little Calumet River. This preserve will be used as an outdoor science lab and as a canoe and kayak launch site.

NWIPA has accomplished a lot in its first two years, and L.L. Bean deserves credit for some of that success. Their L.L. Bean CFS grant is helping them open two beautiful streams to canoe and kayak recreation, and also helped them raise funds that will make it possible for them to complete other outstanding projects.

### **Mississippi Coastal Rivers - Mississippi**

Coastal Rivers (CR) is a nonprofit organization formed in July 2008 to reduce the amount of marine litter in the coastal waterways of Mississippi. CR's volunteers regularly remove debris and litter along the coast and promote stewardship by educating the public about the negative impact of marine litter on both the environment and quality of life.

Coastal Rivers approached the ACA in 2009 with a proposal to use their cleanup activities to organize paddlers into a more cohesive group of river stewards. CR's Director, Jeff Wilkinson, said at the time, "[w]e know we have a fairly large group of paddlers (not officially organized) that we in past years



have not fully utilized in this annual event. My goal is to make these loose knit groups aware of the opportunity to participate in the clean-up and encourage them to form more structured groups to promote paddling for recreation and to become good stewards of our waterways." ACA awarded CR a \$1000 CFS grant for this effort.

In planning the 21st Annual Coastal Cleanup in October 2009, CR reached out to paddlers and asked them to participate. Many paddlers took them up on the invitation. At the five cleanup sites run by CR, 83 volunteers contributed 352 volunteer hours, cleaned ten miles of shoreline and removed 1600 lbs of litter. A total of 59 canoes and kayaks came out to help with the cleanup. One standout kayaker, working alone, removed 300 lbs of trash from Lamotte Bayou near the town of Gautier, MS.

Wilkinson's efforts to organize the paddling community in Southern Mississippi are bearing fruit. The newly formed South Coast Kayaking Club

played a big role in the cleanup, and a local outfitter provided loaner kayaks for the volunteers. L.L. Bean's support has set Coastal Rivers up for success in its efforts to clean up coastal Mississippi.

### **Northern Virginia Conservation Trust - Virginia**

The Northern Virginia Conservation Trust (NVCT) is a land trust that protects land and provides kayak-based environmental education opportunities in the Virginia suburbs of Washington, D.C. In 2009, NVCT received a \$1000 grant to acquire tools and supplies for volunteer-assisted restoration projects on three properties near tributaries to the Potomac River.

For this project, NVCT identified three properties with significant invasive species infestations within highly-developed residential areas. They recruited neighborhood residents, a local naturalist organization, and other volunteers from throughout the Northern Virginia area to assist with removal of the invasive species. Volunteers then replanted the area with native species. The goals were to prevent erosion and sediment deposition into nearby creeks and the Potomac River, and to educate landowners within the watershed neighborhoods of the importance of invasive species control.

NVCT's work on these properties continues, and the tools and supplies they purchased with their L.L. Bean grant continue to assist them with their stewardship efforts. Ashley Stanton of NVCT reports "[w]e certainly would not have been able to accomplish all that we did without your support, the support of LL Bean, and the support of our hardworking volunteers. Our capacity to promote environmental stewardship throughout Northern Virginia has now been tripled, and I am looking forward to many wonderful years of outreach ahead."



**Trails Planning Team of Moses Lake**

### **Trail Planning Team of Moses Lake - Washington**

In 2008, a group of citizens in Moses Lake, Washington formed a team to plan a water trail on Moses Lake. Working with the City of Moses Lake and the Moses Lake Irrigation District, the Trail Planning Team was able to establish a trail with multiple access points along the lake's 120 miles of shoreline.

In 2009, TPT received a \$1000 CFS grant to purchase a new picnic table for the water trail. Volunteers working with the Team planned to install the table on an island in the lake that is used primarily by paddlers, and to complete some restoration work on the island that included removing litter and overgrowth and repairing an existing picnic table.

Unfortunately, TPT's plans were disrupted when the City of Moses Lake was unable to obtain the necessary permit to install the picnic table on the island. However, the Trail Planning Team showed great flexibility, and instead built three picnic tables at the newly constructed Marina Park on the lake's shoreline. Paddlers will be able to access the park and the tables from both the land and water. TPT is still hoping to place picnic tables on the island at some point in the future if the required permits can be obtained.



### **Friends of the Chemung River Watershed - New York**

The Chemung River in southern New York State is one of the northernmost tributaries to the Susquehanna River and the Chesapeake Bay. The Friends of the Chemung River Watershed (FOCRW) is a watershed group dedicated to the protection and restoration of the river. In 2010, the Friends partnered with the Chemung Basin River Trail Partnership on a project to conduct monthly cleanups on the Chemung River. The Friends received a \$600 grant to support this project.

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Chemung River Cleanup

Using the equipment purchased with their CFS grant, the Friends conducted nine cleanups between March 20 and September 25, 2010 and removed a little over 1.5 tons of trash from in and along the Chemung River. The trash and litter removed included beverage containers, paper, bicycles, tires, shopping carts, televisions, car parts, pipes, clothing, lawn furniture, baby strollers and yard waste. More than 100 people participated, including 28 children, contributing 468 hours of volunteer service. The Friends also set up a unique program with the Chemung County Probation Office through which low-risk offenders on probation could do their community service hours helping FOCRW clean up the river.

Jim Pfiffer, President of the Friends said “[t]he cleanups improve the beauty and health of the environment and help participants realize that the river is a beautiful and fragile asset that must be protected. I believe our cleanup volunteers develop a greater reverence and appreciation for our waterways and environment. The cleanups seem to have special meaning to the children, and that’s important as they are the river’s future stewards.”

### **Greater Baltimore Canoe Club - Maryland**

The Greater Baltimore Canoe Club (GBCC) is a paddling club based in Baltimore, Maryland, with members throughout the Chesapeake Bay region. For many years, the club has participated in an annual cleanup on the Patuxent River, which flows from west of Baltimore south through rural Maryland and into the lower Bay. During the 2009 cleanup, GBCC decided to target a large dump site that had been in the floodplain of the river since the 1950s. The club received a \$1000 CFS grant to assist with this effort.

The dump site was full of a variety of large items, including discarded appliances, marquis signs, 23 welding tanks and large car parts. However, the biggest items were five abandoned cars, which had been left on the site intact. Because they had been sitting in the floodplain for decades, they were partially buried in the mud and could not be easily moved.



Working with the Patuxent Riverkeeper and the Capitol Off Road Enthusiasts (CORE), GBCC removed most of the smaller items in 2009. They estimate 25 tons of trash were removed from area. After several weather delays, they returned to the site in 2010 to cut up the abandoned cars and haul them up to the road for removal. A metal worker (hired with grant funds) cut the vehicle into movable pieces. After the cutting was completed, GBCC and CORE volunteers dragged an estimated six tons of car parts to the main road using a combination of winches and brute strength. From there, a scrap metal company recycling company hauled them away free of charge.

Of the five cars, only a portion of one car remains on site, buried too deeply in the mud to be removed. The river bank at the dump site is now nearly free from trash and foreign objects, and returning to a natural condition.

Instead of planning the cleanups using staff or adult volunteers, FOR's Learn and Serve program goes into high school classrooms and teaches river stewardship, volunteer management and event logistics to high school students. Then these Learn and Serve students work hand-in-hand with FOR staff to plan and execute cleanup projects on the area's rivers.

### **Rock River Sweep - Illinois**

Rock River Sweep.org (RRS) is a grass roots, not-for-profit organization dedicated to preserving the health and ecosystem of the Rock River and its tributaries in Wisconsin and Illinois. RRS seeks to involve the communities along the banks of the Rock River in a unified, volunteer effort of river revitalization and annual river cleanups.

RRS had ambitious plans for its first river cleanup. They planned to hold cleanups simultaneously on all 285 miles of the river in Wisconsin and Illinois on Saturday, July 31, 2010. For this project, RRS received a \$967 Club-Fostered Stewardship Grant, which they used to purchase door prizes for cleanup volunteers as a thank you for their time and effort.

Record flooding along the Rock River forced RRS to scale back their plans and postpone the on-water portion of their cleanup efforts. However, they succeeded in cleaning eleven sections of river from shore, removing 10,000 lbs. of trash and fifty tires from the river. RRS plans to make the Rock River Sweep an annual event in order to celebrate the river and raise awareness of the need to be responsible stewards of this beautiful natural resource.

### **Saukenuk Paddlers Canoe and Kayak Club - Illinois/Iowa**

The Quad Cities area of Illinois and Iowa offers plenty of paddling opportunities on both the Mississippi and Rock Rivers. However, paddling on the main stem of the Mississippi means dealing with the locks and dams that make the river navigable for commercial barge traffic. Paddlers are allowed to pass through the locks, but this can be intimidating for newer boaters. In many instances, having a safe portage route is a better choice.

In 2010, the Saukenuk Paddlers Canoe and Kayak Club received \$1000 to construct a portage on Sylvan Island in Moline, IL. This portage is an important component of the Quad Cities Water Trail because it allows paddlers to safely bypass Lock and Dam 15 and an Army Corps of Engineers hydro-electric power dam. The Club combined its L.L.Bean grant with additional funds provided by River Action, a local river advocacy organization, to complete this project. With the combined funds, they bought five large pieces of limestone block, concrete, gravel, and pipe for a hand rail to be installed at the portage site. Saukenuk volunteers and local Boy Scouts installed the blocks and hand rail during three half day work sessions. The city of Moline also provided engineering advice and large equipment assistance where required.

With the new portage installed, the Quad Cities Water Trail will host several events in the coming years, among them Floatzilla, which typically attracts 1200 participants, and the River Rumble, which draws 250 participants. Because the portage is built from stone blocks, it should be able to withstand floods and serve paddlers for many years into the future.

### **Oregon Ocean Paddling Society & Willamette Riverkeeper - Oregon**

The Willamette River Valley runs through western Oregon from Eugene in the south to Portland in the north. Each year, the Willamette Riverkeeper organizes the Great Willamette Cleanup, a massive cleanup program along the entire 187 miles of the river. In 2010, the Oregon Ocean Paddling Society received a \$1000 Club-Fostered Stewardship Grant to support its participation in the Great Willamette Cleanup. Thanks to the Club and the 500 volunteers who participated, this year's cleanup was the most successful in its history.

### **Triad River Runners, Tarheel Paddlers Association, Smith River Valley Canoe Club and Dan River Basin Association - North Carolina**

The Jessup's Mill section of the Dan River in North Carolina is popular with paddlers. Three clubs collaborate to maintain Hart's Canoe Access, the put-in site for this section of river. Hart's is located on private land that is leased to the county by the property owner to allow for river access. In the years prior to 2010, the elements took their toll on the driveway and parking area for the put-in, washing them out and making them mostly unusable.



Fortunately, in 2010, the three clubs partnered with a watershed organization to fix this problem. The Triad River Runners, Tarheel Paddlers Association, Smith River Valley Canoe Club and the Dan River Basin Association received a \$1000 to rent grading equipment and purchase gravel to improve this access point.

The clubs completed the project in August 2010. A committed corps of volunteers leveled the driveway and parking area, cut a 200' drainage ditch, cleared the canoe ramp of sand and debris, and lifted a rusted furnace out of the ditch. Then, using rakes and shovels, they spread 42 tons of gravel to level the parking area. They now have a reconditioned launch. In addition, because the driveway has been improved, the local fire department is now able to use the access point to obtain water for firefighting. Project manager Eric Juday says "the access looked great when we left and it was a fantastic feeling to know that when the community works together you can accomplish great things."

### **Interact Club of Addison Trail High School - Illinois**

Salt creek flows four miles through the town of Addison, IL. The Interact Club of Addison Trail High School is a volunteer club made of up high school students. The Club has adopted Salt Creek, and its main project is to clean the creek each year. The Club also provides students with basic canoe orientation, in part to prepare them for the cleanup, but also to expose them to canoeing as a sport, and to reconnect them with nature.

In 2010, the Club received a \$1000 grant to assist with the Salt Creek Cleanup. The funds were used to rent canoes and purchase grabbers for use during the cleanup. L.L. Bean's support made it possible for a group of underprivileged youth to give back to their community by cleaning the stream. It also gave them a valuable close-to-home outdoor experience that will increase their appreciation for nature and encourage them to engage active outdoor sports throughout their lives.



### **Friends of the Riverfront - Pennsylvania**

Friends of the Riverfront engages citizens in the Pittsburgh area in stewardship of the area's rivers and riverfronts by sponsoring activities and developing both land and water trails that help people enjoy the river environment. They were instrumental in developing the Three Rivers Water Trail, which was recently designated as a National Recreation Trail by the U.S. Department of the Interior. The Friends have published a map of the trail, and there are now eighteen access sites, each one complete with a walkway, directional signage and a boat rack where users can store their boats while exploring riverfront landmarks and restaurants.

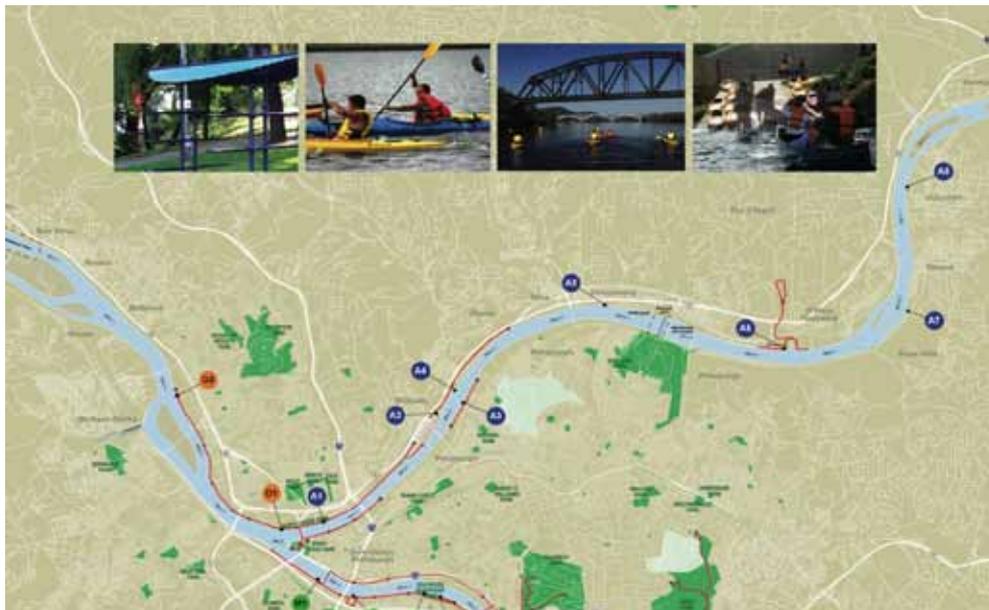
To supplement the printed map to the water trail, Friends has developed a Guide to paddling the trail. Volunteers for Friends have contributed 150 hours of work gathering data for the guide, which is now ready to be printed. In order to support the work of these volunteers, ACA awarded Friends a \$500 grant to assist with printing the new guide. In addition to providing geographic information about the trail, the Guide also provides safety information and identifies local amenities for trail users. The water trail map and Guide will be distributed free of charge by mail and on line, and through local outfitters.



### **Friends of the Rappahannock - Virginia**

Friends of the Rappahannock (FOR) is a very successful river protection organization based in Fredericksburg, Virginia. FOR has adopted an innovative approach to conducting river cleanups. Instead of planning the cleanups using FOR staff or adult volunteers, FOR's Learn and Serve program goes into high school classrooms and teaches river stewardship, volunteer management and event logistics to high school students. Then these Learn and Serve students work hand-in-hand with FOR staff to plan and execute cleanup projects on the area's rivers. In 2009, this partnership enabled them to recruit 300 community volunteers and remove 7,000 lbs. of trash from the Rappahannock in one day.

This year, FOR received a \$1 000 Club-Fostered Stewardship grant to purchase supplies for its Fall Cleanup. They used the funds to obtain litter grabbers, work gloves, trash bags and food for participants. FOR and 25 Learn and Serve students from Mountain View High School planned the event for October 23, 2010. On the day of the cleanup, 250 volunteers picked up 3,380 lbs. of trash at 40 sites along the Rappahannock River.



In addition to helping to plan the Cleanup, the Learn and Serve students organized fun crafts activities for cleanup participants, which gave the event an additional social component and made it feel like more of a community-based, grassroots event. The students also provided great insights on how to improve future cleanup activities.

### **Saint Cloud State University Outdoor Endeavors - Minnesota**

Outdoor Endeavors is a student activity program at St. Cloud Saint University (SCSU) in St. Cloud Minnesota. Each October, Outdoor Endeavors organizes a cleanup on a section of the Mississippi River that flows through the SCSU campus and adjoining city and state property. Since 2006, the event has drawn more than 400 volunteers donating more than 1600 hours of labor and gathering an estimated 7000 lbs. of trash for disposal and recycling.

In 2010, Outdoor Endeavors wanted to expand the cleanup to include more participants and reach beyond the area of the river adjacent to the campus. They also wanted to install fishing line recycling stations at some of the popular fishing spots to encourage anglers to dispose of their unused line properly instead of releasing it into the environment. They applied for and received an \$800 Club-Fostered Stewardship grant to assist with this project.

The 2010 Cleanup was another successful stewardship event. L.L. Bean funding made it possible for Outdoor Endeavors to publicize the event through print and web media, purchase supplies, install three fishing line recycling stations and feed their volunteers. They plan to install more recycling stations in the spring.

While the group continues to find significant amounts of trash in the river, they are also seeing a stronger stewardship ethic take root, particularly within the campus community. They plan to expand their education and outreach beyond campus borders in hopes of reducing the amount of trash that makes it to the river each year. Ivan Bartha, Outdoor Endeavor's Coordinator of Experiential Programs, offered this observation in thanking L.L. Bean and ACA for their support. "This collaboration is an outstanding example of how non-profit organizations and businesses can build meaningful relationships. It serves as a lesson and as an example to others who believe in these grassroots efforts."



### **Tennessee Scenic Rivers Association - Tennessee**

In 2010, the Tennessee Scenic Rivers Association (TSRA) received \$1000 to build an environmentally friendly access site for paddlers on the Stones River in Nashville, TN. TSRA has a long history of access site construction, and has worked extensively with government agencies at both the state and county level. They planned to use their grant to buy supplies to construct a box step pathway from the parking area to the river. Volunteers would be used to construction the pathway. Unfortunately, TSRA's construction project has been delayed for reasons beyond their control. However, they expect to complete the pathway construction project in 2011.



# L.L.Bean

The American Canoe Association thanks L.L. Bean for its many years of support for the Club-Fostered Stewardship Program. Working together, we have made the world a better place to paddle, and a better place to live.

