

# For Immediate Release:

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**To:** Editor

**Date:** February 10, 2017

**Re:** Crooked Creek Environmental Learning Center - Plans 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Alle-Kiski-Connie Rivers Sojourn

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## 20<sup>th</sup> Annual River Sojourn Being Planned

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The **Armstrong Center for Community Learning (ACCL)** and the **Crooked Creek Environmental Learning Center (ELC)** have begun plans for the **20<sup>th</sup> Annual Alle-Kiski-Connie Rivers Sojourn** to take place May 18, 19, 20 and 21 with overnight accommodations at their outdoor educational center adjacent to Crooked Creek Park in Armstrong County. This four day event, sponsored in part by the **Armstrong County Tourist Bureau, Pennsylvania Organization of Watersheds and Rivers (POWR)** and the **American Canoe Association (ACA)**, will incorporate elements of canoeing, kayaking and informal education, while it promotes the use of our excellent local waterways as a destination of outdoor recreation enthusiasts.

**At its planning meeting, held recently at the Crooked** Environmental Learning Center, it was announced that the event will involve a free workshop, May 18<sup>th</sup>, on **River Reading and Paddling** (*only for those who sign up for one, two, or all three days of the event*). The refresher course will take place on **Crooked Creek Lake**, followed by an event orientation including a discussion on the Park's role in the prevention of major flooding in our region and beyond. Also it was announced; that the event will involve a total of 30 miles on the river, covering a different section of local waterways each day with at least one interpretative program taking place daily.

**Friday, May 19<sup>th</sup>**, participants will travel down the **Red Bank Creek** for a full day of paddling; stopping along the way at the site of the region's earliest **Native American Village called Fish Basket**, for an interpretive program by Ken Burkett from the **Brookville Historical Society**. After taking out in New Bethlehem, Sojourners will return to the Environmental Learning Center for a "Thanksgiving Feast" and an evening educational game of "**River Trivia**," complete with awards and prizes. During the event participants will be treated to a unique program on the history of the Allegheny River celebrating its being named the "**2017 PA River of the Year**."

**Saturday, May 20<sup>th</sup>**, the participants will be shuttled to Bolivar, a small village on the **Conemaugh River**, then paddle to a take-out in Blairsville. During the 12 mile paddle the group will view remnants of the **Old Main Line Pennsylvania Canal** and have a chance to experience some exciting rapids and standing waves. From there, the group will move onto

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Spring Church for wine tasting and a tour of the **Spring Church Winery** before returning to the base camp at the Crooked Creek Environmental Learning Center where they will enjoy a take-out meal of **Clem's BBQ Ribs and Chicken**. That evening, the sojourners will be treated to an educational program on the **Old Main Line Pennsylvania Canal** provided by **Jack McGuire** of the **Saltsburg Historical Society**.

**Sunday, May 21<sup>st</sup>**, it's off to 10 mile paddle from the Loyalhanna Dam to Avonmore before finishing the event with an ethnic dinner provided by the **Avonmore Polish Club** where the paddlers will celebrate the **20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Alle-Kiski-Connie Rivers Sojourn**. Here awards will be given out for individual achievement, including the **"Broken Paddle Award"** and a special award to honor the memory of **Kathie Males** who helped to establish this one-of-a-kind regional event over 20 years ago.

Accommodations for participants, according to the event spokesperson, will be in "dorm style" bunk rooms, tents and RV's in space provided by the Crooked Creek Environmental Learning Center. The cost per day will be only \$50 per person which includes food, lodging, programs and shuttles or \$125 per person for the entire multi-day program, which includes an official event tee shirt.

The Alle-Kiski-Connie Rivers Sojourn is one of about a dozen state-wide events coordinated by the **Pennsylvania Organization of Watersheds and Rivers (POWR)** and funded, in part, by the **PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR)** and sanctioned by **the American Canoe Association**. For more information about this event and a registration flier, you can go to the Sojourn's website: [www.AKCSojourn.org](http://www.AKCSojourn.org) or call the Armstrong Center for Community Learning at 724-543-2599 for more details.