



Allegheny Brambles

An informational article about the Allegheny National Forest

United States
Department of Agriculture

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ALLEGHENY RESERVOIR NOW A CLEANER PLACE

Volunteers Make the Reservoir Better for Wildlife and Users

The aluminum Forest Service maintenance boat slid slowly up to the dock, grinding gently against the bumper. A pile of stuffed, white garbage bags filled the stern making a small mountain in the back of the boat. From the grin on Nate Welker's face you would guess he was carrying bags of gifts for restless kids on Christmas Eve rather than a heap of lakeshore variety rubbish. Eager volunteers seized the bags with the same energy and enthusiasm Nate showed in delivering them. Soon the waiting pickups were full for their "trash run". Does this sound like a fun thing to do on a Saturday in May? Fifty-one people thought so and showed up at the Kinzua Wolf Run Marina on May 13th to initiate a cleanup along the many miles of the shoreline of the Allegheny Reservoir.

This annual cleanup was initiated when Nate Welker, fisheries technician on the Allegheny NF, was sampling fish and noticed all the garbage littering the otherwise beautiful shoreline. "There has to be a way to tackle this problem," Nate said to himself as he continued to see the litter despoiling shoreline after shoreline. Fall storms, winter snows and spring floods take their toll on the waterways leading to the Allegheny Reservoir. Debris swept along the waterways makes its way into the reservoir. The garbage floats into a shoreline and accumulates over the winter. By spring, the shoreline is dotted with refuse as vegetation has not leafed out to cover the waste.

This year 51 volunteers showed up at the Kinzua Wolf Run Marina ready to take on the difficult task of walking the shorelines to pick up and bag trash for the boat to pick up when it made its run down the shoreline. These volunteers came from the different corners of McKean and Warren Counties. Several individual volunteers donated their time and several organizations donated member time for the cleanup. The Kane Fish and Game Club, employees from the campground concessionaires, and forty volunteers from the Warren County Adult Probation also worked on this cleanup. First thing Saturday morning all the volunteers were rewarded by the arrival of a mature bald eagle gliding down the waterway. For some it was their first opportunity to see the nation's symbol.

Rocks, downed logs and slippery slopes awaited the crew. But, everybody followed the safety guidelines and the afternoon ended with nobody getting lost, no turned ankles, and no serious cuts or scratches. And just what kind of “prizes” did these volunteers collect during the day? They were as varied as street-wide garage sales: ceramic flower pots, fishing line, plastic bags, tarps, large wooden telephone wire spools, rolls of plastic PVC pipe, camping equipment, the old style heavy camp cots used in army barracks, corrugated metal pipes, a TV, and even relatively new computer equipment.

The volunteers worked a total of 392 hours and hauled enough debris from the shoreline to fill the beds of four pickup trucks to a heaping level. The Allegheny Reservoir is now a much cleaner place for wildlife and for people to boat and fish. Nate Welker said “For me, the good feeling comes from knowing that wildlife will have less garbage to become entangled in and suffer stress or death.”

The annual Reservoir Cleanup will be offered again next year – mark it on your calendar for early May!

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Note to reporters: these three jpg photos attached for your use.