

Appalachian Alternatives

Appalachia - Science in the Public Interest

Summer 2013 Number 105

Greetings All! On May 10 and 11th, we gathered to mark the 35th anniversary of ASPI's founding, to celebrate the revival of Rockcastle River Day, our beautiful valley and preserved forest, and the reopening of the Mary E. Fritsch Nature Center. In conjunction with the 131st anniversary of the city of Livingston, we hosted Boy Scout Troop 382 of Lexington, Kentucky and were impressed with the 40 industrious scouts and leaders who set up their tents in the rain and helped with various and sundry tasks throughout the weekend. Though Saturday began brisk and rainy, a good time was had by all around the campfire and grill, at the Nature Center, and along our trail overlooking the river. The sun eventually prevailed and we were proud to note ASPI's 35 years of Public Interest work.

Grow Appalachia Notes 2013 by Saxon Lee Brown

We are glad to be in our second year with the Grow Appalachia (GA) Program. From the GA website, "Through funding and technical assistance, Grow Appalachia has supported hundreds of gardens through dozens of community partnerships in four states; producing more than 574,000 pounds of healthy, organic food for thousands of people in its first three years... The program seeks both to educate communities and to learn from communities. It works to preserve the past, build hope for the future, and empower Appalachians to live healthy, productive lives."

This year at ASPI, we are working with 30 home gardening families and several community gardeners at the Mt. Vernon Community Garden on Richmond Street. A lot of the gardens have been slow this year because of cool late-spring weather, though we are thankful for no shortage of rain. We have a group of really enthusiastic, caring gardeners in our midst and every day there are

new wonders to notice. Not only do I feel like there is a loving, hard-working community of like-minded people in Rockcastle County, but I also learn many new things every day and am grateful for the opportunity to use my past and new-found knowledge to forward food security and the local community.



The new High Tunnel in the Mt. Vernon Demonstration garden

Our garden at the Mt. Vernon office has expanded after the community garden was moved to Richmond Street. The garden now sports a hoop house (used for season extension and also known as a 'high tunnel' - basically an unheated plastic greenhouse) growing tomatoes, peppers, eggplants, cucumbers and herbs watered with drip irrigation. The vegetables grown will be sold at market by our high school interns, who are working with us through a new program thanks to the GA grant. Dustin, Chris and Amber like to keep busy and share a lot of their own agricultural knowledge! In the rest of the garden we now have some perennial fruits, a Three

Sisters bed of corn, beans and squash, and just a whole lot more veggies. We have been utilizing our rain cistern to water and our greenhouse was used this year to start hundreds of plants! My pride and joy are the onions started from seed in February, now as big as baseballs and still growing.

From GA summer intern Samantha Lyons: "I am a recent graduate of Berea College where I received a Bachelor's degree in Ceramics. Crab Orchard and Berea is where I call home, Berea being where I spent my early childhood and the last four years in College, and Crab Orchard being where I lived on my family farm. I love to be in the garden and I love my community, so ASPI is a great opportunity to be more involved with both. I have been fortunate enough to intern at ASPI this summer under the home

gardening program. Working closely with Saxon Brown, we have travelled all over Rockcastle County meeting wonderful gardeners and people who invite us into their homes and gardens with kindness and enthusiasm. I have assisted in providing seeds, plants, and tools, but mostly I have been learning. Learning how to address specific needs in the garden such as pests, soil amendments, and disease that comes with any garden. In the future I hope to continue learning how to be a great gardener, and ASPI has been a wonderful place to start."

You can keep up with our activities by checking out the GA Blog, www.berea.edu/grow-appalachia/blog/; under "Partner Sites" click on "Appalachia Science in the Public Interest". All sites report to this blog, so it's a good way to keep up with all 25 Grow Appalachia locations. Happy Gardening!

Summer Interns Enliven The Nature Center

Sarah Green is working as a community garden intern with ASPI this summer. She attends Centre College where she will be a senior this fall. Her major is Environmental Studies and her minor is International Studies. "I'm very excited to be working with ASPI this summer! I have greatly enjoyed my experience so far working at the Mt. Vernon Community Garden as well as the garden at ASPI. I spend a lot of time in the gardens working on planting, weeding, and watering. I love learning all about growing your own food and getting to work with all the great people in this program. We have lots of great ideas for the community garden and I'm excited to implement them this summer!"

Libby Trevathan is a Senior at Centre College in Danville, KY. Over the course of this Summer, she will be an ASPI intern working at the Mary E. Fritsch Nature Centre in Livingston, KY. She has studied Environmental Studies, Biology, Ecology, and Glassblowing courses in depth over the past three years and intends to receive an undergraduate degree in "Environmental Design" in the Spring of 2014. In the context of necessary transitions to more resource efficient and sustainable living, Libby has become very passionate about exploring different methodologies and processes that focus on the way we design our physical environments and how one can convert traditional design into a sustainable reality.

Goals for Nature Center Internship:

- 1) Increase the number of educational program offerings and participants for pre-K-4th grade, middle school, high school, and adults
- 2) Create a sustainable and economically viable educational program and expand current facilities for regional populations to utilize
- 3) Publicize and market the program and facilities

This summer, Emelia and I will install new exhibits in the nature center and on grounds, assist with identifying four community programs (ecology oriented), distribute flyers and Facebook campaign, assist with Grow Appalachia Rockcastle, provide weekly blogs, and write a technical paper (tentatively about Rockcastle River & the sustainable construction of an educational dock to expand our aquatic educational opportunities and provide a resource for people on the river).

Morgan Emelia Williams is working as an intern at the Mary E. Fritsch Nature Center after hearing about ASPI from a beloved biology professor. She is a rising junior at Centre College in Danville, Kentucky, majoring in both Environmental Studies and International Studies, with a concentration in Development. She was raised on a farm of goats and cows with her family of eclectic artists (in their own right). A proud Kentuckian, Emelia has a passion for the people and the land of her home state, though her travels abroad to Nicaragua and Honduras cultivated a dedication for justice of all peoples and lands.



Summer Interns Libby, Sarah & Morgan at the Longest Day of Play festival on June 20th

Mt. Vernon Community Garden

ASPI is in a unique position to promote active living and healthy eating in Rockcastle County by supporting and maintaining the Mt. Vernon Community Garden. The Rockcastle County Industrial Development Authority (IDA) provides a place where neighbors gather to cultivate plants, flowers, and vegetables. This garden will improve physical activity, nutrition, community engagement, safety and economic vitality for our neighborhood and residents.

The Mt. Vernon Community Garden possesses characteristics that will increase potential to strengthen our community; we are host to educational opportunity and vocational skills offered by the Youth Internship program that was developed and created

by ASPI Director Suzi Van Etten and funded by Grow Appalachia. We are incorporating the selling of produce through our local Farmer's Market. The more we encourage pride and ownership of the open space to the community at large the higher the rate of success that will follow. That is why it is important to get engagement and as many organizations and people actively involved in maintaining the garden space.

We are providing an open space for Community gatherings and events. Our first event will take place on July 18th, 2013; in conjunction with the Farmer's Market. It is a performance arts program by two local artists, Drew Davidson and Octavia Sexton, at 12:30pm. For more information about this event contact Melinda Alcorn 859-200-0951 melinda@kyenvironmentalfoundation.org

Growing Warriors & ASPI



Growing Warriors has been growing!

On June 10th GW dedicated the new Jamison Stephens Memorial Community Veteran's Garden in a ceremony with Specialist Jamison's family and the Growing Warriors' families that garden at the site. Jamison's parents led the dedication, planting flowers in a memorial bed and funds were raised by donation for a delicious salad bar supper with local produce, breads, and dessert. As Jamison's family visited and remembered, the Growing Warriors families planted and tended. Jamison was going to college to become a counselor to assist his fellow veterans – and his family was proud that the garden with his name continues to serve those who served our country.

June 14th, Growing Warriors broke ground on new beds at the Big Sandy Community and Technical College in Floyd County. In conjunction with St. Vincent's Mission, GW is starting a program to pay unemployed veteran interns to tend the beds and learn agricultural techniques. The food produced will be donated to a local food bank.

Chickens are coming to Peacemeal Gardens! At the new Growing Warriors site on the Bluegrass Community and Technical College on Leestown Road in Lexington, plans are in the works to add the first chickens at the site. There is quite a bit of overgrown area that could use a good grazing and tilling in – and some veterans looking for fresh eggs! In North Carolina, GW presented a weekend conference on Spin Farming. The audience was attentive and eager to learn methods for growing in available spaces for market sales.

July looks to be just as busy! Keep Growing! Growing Warriors meets the second Monday of each month from 6-8pm at the ASPI offices. For more information contact Tisha Weaver at ragweavers@gmail.com.

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DOWN ON THE RIVER by Jack Kieffer

Many of our wild flowers have come and gone already. The little yellow five-petals of the sorrel are just emerging under the shade of our big tall trees. There are several species of goldenrod (Kentucky's State Flower), golden and white, both with very small flowers. Many of our forest flowers are very small, so you have to get down right on the ground near them to see the beautiful details. In the shade these plants may not get enough energy to produce a larger flower. The wonder of the dandelion caught my attention this year. The beautiful yellow sunny flower turns those petals into little seed parachutes that spread them wide, so one does not have to plant greens for your salad, you just have to harvest them. The purple flowers that come out of the stem where the leaves emerge are a variation of the flower that usually comes out on the top of the stem.

The black berries and black raspberries are just beginning to ripen. In the shade of the big trees they are slower to ripen than those that receive full sun each day. My cherry tree has produced its crop of cherries already this year. In the past it was the last fruit tree to bear its produce; the birds and the possum shared some of the cherries with me. They are tart but tasty. The plum tree is mostly leaves with a few green plums. Not too promising for this year. The white and yellow peach trees have a good number of small peaches; some have already been attacked by the brown mold that will shrivel a peach right down to the pit. We have not been able to find out what is causing the mold or how to stop it. It could be the reduced sun and more than enough rain; the right conditions for mold. The tree frogs sing to me as I walk in the evening and the trees look like tall Christmas trees as the lightening bugs are trying to find a mate. What a wonderful world! We have much to be grateful for!

ASPI Board of Directors: Tammy Clemons, President; Joshua Bills; Terrie Curd; Margie Stelzer; Shane Barton; Suzanne Van Etten, Executive Director.

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