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Who's expected to visit a mudhole?

May 31, 2009 Publication: Observer-Reporter (Washington, PA) Page: C6 Word Count: 435

Again the people of southwestern Pennsylvania are finding out just how much the state government really cares about what happens here.

This week we learned that Ryerson Station State Park is included on a list of 50 state parks that could be closed in July if the state adopts a budget approved by the state Senate.

The Department of Conservation and Natural Resources prepared the list of possible park closings in response to a Senate committee request.

The criteria used to compile the list included budgets for each park, attendance, income, costs per visitor and the closeness of the park to other parks.

Ryerson Station had 44,230 visitors in 2008, an attendance number that is good when you consider that the main draw of the park, a 62-acre lake, has been sitting empty since 2005, when cracks were found in the dam there.

The DCNR has filed a mine subsidence claim against Consol Energy, claiming the dam was damaged by work at the company's Bailey Mine.

While that continues to be sorted out, the lake continues to sit empty.

In the meantime, the park operated on a budget of \$286,653 last year. That's far less per

year than the 21-year deal for naming rights for Pittsburgh's new arena likely cost Consol
- though the exact figure has not been released.

Because the state is looking for cuts, Ryerson may see its swimming pools, campgrounds,
restrooms and roads closed.

But, hey, you'll still be able to go to Ryerson and hike around the mudhole that used to be
a nice lake.

Isn't life grand?

First, the area is penalized by the loss of one of our few lakes. Then, we're penalized
because we don't go and visit the rotting corpse of that dead lake.

Makes sense to me.

* If your child is hoping to go hunting this fall and hasn't attended the mandatory hunter-
trapper safety course, June would be a good month to get it taken care of.

A number of courses are being held in Washington County - though none are available
next month in Greene County.

June is usually the busiest month for the courses.

Don't be one of those people who wait until October or November to start looking. By
then, it's usually too late.

* The McDonald Sportsmen's Club will hold a youth field day June 27 in conjunction
with the Wild Turkey Federation's "Jake Day."

For information, call 724-288-5092.

* The Buffalo Creek Watershed Alliance will host a rally June 14 at what used to be Dutch Fork Lake.

A number of speakers are scheduled, most notably, the Observer-Reporter's George Block.

For information, call 570-524-8666.

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Observer-Reporter (Washington, PA)

Date: May 31, 2009

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