

# Post<sup>®</sup>

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## 'Gathering of Waters'



Bob Gay/The Dominion Post

**Local kayaker Nicolas Zegre (left)** passes a handcrafted clay vessel full of water from Deckers Creek to eco-artist Basia Irland for the "Gathering of Waters" project Sunday afternoon. The water in the vessel was collected at several points along Deckers Creek. The project was designed to unite the community and raise awareness about the health of the Deckers Creek watershed.

## Project organized to raise awareness of Deckers Creek health

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About 30 people gathered at the mouth of Deckers Creek to participate in a "Gathering of Waters" project organized by Basia Irland. Irland, from New Mexico, is in Morgantown as a resident artist with the Division of Art and Design at WVU.

The "Gathering of Waters" is designed to raise awareness for the health of the Deckers Creek watershed, which suffers from acid mine drainage and other industrial and residential pollutants.

The project involved getting individual volunteers, or groups of volunteers, to pass water from one party to another from the headwaters of Deckers Creek to its confluence with the Monongahela River.

The water was passed in a vessel, created from local clay, between participants stationed at various points along the creek.

Once participants received the vessel, they filled it with water from their positions on the creek and logged their experience in a handmade book traveling with the vessel.

Each participant, or group of participants, could walk, bicycle, run, kayak, skate or travel by any method with the vessel along the Deckers Creek Trail to the next selected point downstream.

The process was documented and the artifacts of the journey were collected in a sculptural "backpack repository" created by Irland.

In addition to the "Gathering of Waters," Irland used the opportunity to launch a series of ice books for a project she calls "Receding/Reseeding." Irland freezes seeds into blocks of ice, then carves those blocks into the shape of a book.



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**WVU art instructor Erika Osborne** prepares to launch an "ice book" into the waters of Deckers Creek during the "Gathering of Waters" project Sunday afternoon.