

ROUND THE BEND

"BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN ENGINEERING AND ECOLOGY"

WPI Organizes First Outdoor Environmental Education Day

Even though they were drenched from the torrential downpours that refused to let up, fifth grade students from Sharon and Farrell Schools tromped to their buses with smiles on their faces after the first ever Outdoor Environmental Education Day, held at Buhl Park in Hermitage on May 3rd. The event was organized by Wallace & Pancher Laboratory Manager, Jennifer Barborak, who also wears the hat of Shenango River Watchers board member. As both, she and a committee of five that included teachers from Sharon and Farrell Schools and representatives of Mercer County Conservation District and Buhl Park spent months planning the day that brought over 240 students, during a school day, to Buhl Park to learn about the environment.

The students were divided into seven groups. Each travelled through seven stations regarding environmental topics. WPI scientists manned two stations, one on streams and the insects that live in them and a second on wetlands and the plants, soils and organisms associated with them. At the streams station, Gary Geisinger and Josh Kelly, both Environmental Scientists in the WPI Laboratory, showed the students stream sampling equipment, demonstrated a sampling methodology, and let the students look at and touch macroinvertebrates commonly found in streams in our area. At the wetlands station, Brett Bell and Leslie Danos, both Assistant Environmental Scientists in

the Laboratory, taught the students about different wetland plants, showed them how to take a soil sample using a soil probe, showed them commonly found aquatic insects in a wetland, and let them touch live salamanders. When asked what she liked best about the day, one of the Case Avenue Elementary students excitedly talked about the salamander, "I didn't know we had them in this part of the world!"

Students enjoyed learning about plant and tree ID and the different uses for some of the plants by the Native Americans from Chris Mosbach of the Mercer County Conservation District. Cottage Gardens provided seeds and soil for the students to plant zinnias which would be later planted in the park and Hermitage Agway donated peat pots, pellets and sunflower seeds for the kids to plant a sunflower and take home with them. One student wrote in her thank you note that her favorite part of the day was "planting my sunflower, which is growing now and I would like to tell you about it when it finishes growing."

Home Depot provided the kits, equipment and volunteers to man a station where students built a flower box. One student from Case Avenue Elementary said that he really loved the Home Depot station because he loves to build.

The students also participated in a photography station where they received instruction from Debbie Paul about digital photography, tips for

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A NOTE FROM THE OWNERS

WPI CELEBRATES 10th ANNIVERSARY

It's hard to believe that this October marks the 10 year anniversary of Wallace & Pancher, Inc. As this special anniversary approaches we cannot help but to sit back and reflect on all that has transpired to shape our company into what it is today. We think about our humble beginnings in Dan's basement with minimal resources, wondering what our company would be in five or ten years. We think about the good times and the sometimes very stressful times and we think about how we have changed from engineer and biologist, working on every project together to our current roles within the company, rarely working on any projects together. We think about how young some of our children were when we started the company; how we've had children born and watched our oldest grow into adolescents and young men and women.

We think about the employees who have come and gone and realize how each touched our company in so many different ways. We've watched young college graduates enter our company for their first post-graduation job, full of energy and expectations, short on experience, transform into valuable young professionals, contributing to our projects. We've watched with pleasure as employees with a few years' experience blossomed into managers, contributing a great deal to the delivery of the very best consulting services to our clients.

Finally, we recognize that with about 130 employees, our business is now transforming into something new, a mid-sized company with a new set of expectations requiring even more hard work as we continue to shape it day by day. We thank all of our employees for their hard work and dedication, helping to transform our company, providing character. We thank all of our customers who find value in the services we provide to their organizations and we dedicate ourselves to you.

We've enjoyed working hard to create something special from nothing and we look forward to continuing our growth for the next ten years and beyond.



Geographic Information Systems Highlights

Mercer County GIS

Wallace & Pancher, Inc. (WPI) has been awarded a contract with Mercer County to provide GIS services to both the Department of Public Safety (E-911) and to the Department of Revenue (tax parcel mapping).

Jessica Sobah, a GIS Technician II, is leading this effort and is spending most of her time working at the county offices in Mercer. Ms. Sobah recently completed several ESRI online training courses in preparation of this. Kim Vaughn is providing technical and logistical support for the Mercer County project. Ms. Vaughn has over 20 years of GIS and programming experience and while working at Mahoning County in Ohio, she oversaw the development and successful implementation of creating a county parcel data layer and website data portal.

E-911

The need for a high level of technical skills and robust quality control is paramount when working with emergency services such as the E-911 data. To date, much of Mercer County's backlog of pending changes and additions to the GIS database (i.e. geocoding new roads, street addressing, adding new structures and editing road names) have been completed. As new and additional information becomes available each week, Ms. Sobah will personally keep the E-911 system up-to-date.

Future work will include the development of methods and work flow necessary to implement additional GIS layers such as fire hydrants and hydrography data to further enhance the County's E-911 functionality and usefulness. As new GIS layers are added, WPI's experienced Programmers will also develop and/or modify custom tools to streamline the work flow and reduce the potential for error.

WPI has also recommended a County Ordinance/Plan to develop the protocols necessary for directing flow of information (new roads/structures) from Developer to Municipality to the County. In addition, this plan would also present preferred methods and data types that will be acceptable for input into the County E-911 database along with the required metadata. These protocols and methods will be incorporated into an overall County GIS Plan and will contain ordinances to ensure compliance from constituents.

Tax Parcel Mapping

The County (under a previous contract) began converting paper tax maps into digital format. Much work still needs to be done, including scanning additional maps to digital format, clipping boundaries, digitizing the scan images and performing quality control quality assurance (QAQC) on all the mapping products.

Once this work is completed, WPI will begin associating the database of addresses with individual tax parcels and enter this information into the Department's GIS tax parcel layer. This association will be completed by establishing table relationships between the two GIS layers and will allow the display and query of each address that is currently available for each tax parcel.

Ms. Sobah has also been providing on site GIS software training to the Department of Revenue's staff. This training will allow for the current Department of Revenue staff to provide in-house completion of future GIS needs.

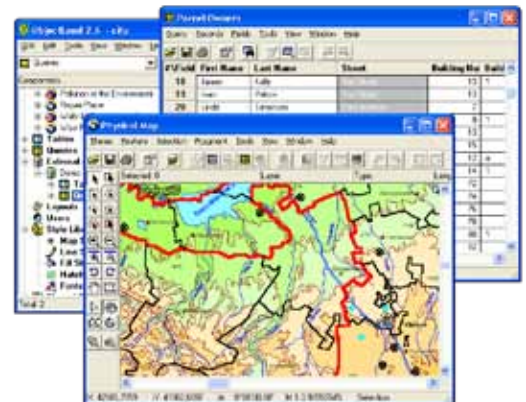
Overall County GIS Needs

Procedures will need to be enacted to ensure all current and future GIS data is in compliance with PGDSS 2.5 (Local Government Handbook for GIS Implementation within the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania). WPI will provide recommendations on future GIS software and hardware needs, as well as evaluate current third party data sets such as aerial imagery and make recommendations as needed or upon request. Lastly, a best practices plan will be implemented for networking information between Mercer County's IT and GIS servers and end users to ensure data additions, edits, etc. are available to all users (avoiding data isolation and processing duplication) in as close to real time as possible.

At WPI's initial presentation to the Mercer County Commissioners and County IT, WPI demonstrated the usefulness of utilizing a website that would provide access for Mercer County residents to all the County GIS data layers and related information. WPI hopes to develop a long term relationship with the County by providing local GIS support and services with superior technical skills.

For more information on WPI's Municipal Services or to inquire about our GIS services in general, contact Jeff Mihalik, GIS Department Manager (jmihalik@wallacepancher.com).

- Jeff Mihalik
GIS Manager, Project Manager



fresh faces



Gabe Miller
GIS Technician
I am able to walk on stilts



Tobey Black
Asst. Environ. Scientist
I love fishing and hunting



Luke Bobnar
Asst. Environ. Scientist
I play the 5 string banjo



Alison Roch
Landscape Technician
I tend to judge peoples' landscape



Ryan Cockrill
Asst. Environ. Scientist
I have a huge fear of swallowing a spider



Jennifer Sabol
Asst. Environ. Scientist
I plan on biking from Pittsburgh to DC



James Podwoiski
CADD Draftsman
My wife says I am a "neat freak"! I love photography and outdoor grilling



Jodi Raymond
Receptionist
I love boating and spending time with my husband



John Dzurko
Designer
I love to camp, read and cook.



Josh McQuiston
Building Technician
I love camping, riding ATV's and playing video games



Kim Smith
Asst. Project Manager
I love to cook and bake and keep a blog of my recipes



Heather Burnett
GIS Technician
My pet peeve is sitting in traffic



Nathan Renaudin
Asst. Environ. Scientist
I can crack almost any joint in my body



Sean Cogswell
Building Technician
I love hunting, fishing and sports



Scott Crawford
Building Technician
I love woodworking and spending time with my kids

Environment Educational Day...cont'd

taking good pictures, and then were allowed to take pictures with a digital camera of things in the park. A student from Farrell Elementary School commented that taking the pictures really made her realize how you can look at things in different ways, how something looks different close up, and how interesting something as simple as a puddle can be. Another student wrote in her thank you card that the photography was the most inspiring thing she did that day.

Shenango River Watchers taught the students about watersheds and demonstrated different types of pollution using a tool called an Enviroscape, a model of a watershed with houses, farm fields, factories and a stream. Pollution is added to the model by way of sprinkling drink mixes and in the case of "cow pies" chocolate sprinkles. The model is sprayed with water to simulate rain and the kids can see how everything runs off impervious surfaces into the stream and how some of it enters into the groundwater. One Farrell student said she learned not to litter because it ends up in our river.

Trout Unlimited provided by far the most talked about station of the day. They talked about their work on Neshannock Creek, trout stocking, fish habitat and aquatic insects. Then, they showed the kids fly tying and some kids got their own flies. Kids got to test their skills at casting into Lake Julia, and though none of the students caught a fish, the osprey that circled above the lake all day finally caught a fish just

as the last Farrell students were boarding their buses. One of the case Avenue students wrote in his thank you card, "My favorite part was the fishing station, I never knew that you could fly fish with squirrel tails!" Another student wrote in her note, "I learned a lot of different things, especially from Trout Unlimited. That was my first time fishing, I have an AMAZING experience!"

Aside from the basic science and environmental learning that took place at each station, some students were even more insightful. A student from Musser Elementary in Sharon wrote in his thank you card, "You guys showed me that even though you are young, you can make a big difference. Now I trust in myself." Another student wrote in her thank you note, "I wish I could go back and do more, but I will at my own house, I will take care of the earth because your program taught me how to take care of it in a better way."

That's what makes the whole thing worthwhile; to hear that kids got something more out of it than just having a day out of school. Most of them actually became excited about the Park, the outdoors and the environment. We have such a problem with kids wanting to stay indoors and play video games these days, it was nice to see kids, even in the rain, enjoy themselves outside! Many of these kids had never been to Buhl Park, and some didn't even spend much time outside at their own homes, so to get them outside and seeing things in nature up close was essential. Students can

recite things about the environment, recycling, global warming, etc. but they can't tell you what watershed they live in or name things that they can do at home to decrease pollution. That's what we as scientists need to teach kids. If they don't understand how they fit into the bigger picture, environmentally, they will not want to protect the environment. That is more what this day was about than anything, getting kids outside to understand the bigger picture and to not just learn from a book, but to experience it first-hand.

Wallace & Pancher, Inc. is committed to assisting the same committee with the planning of a similar day in the fall of 2011, hopefully the weather will be more cooperative!

- Jennifer Barborak
Laboratory Administrator



Staff Promotions

At WPI, we strive to develop our staff to their fullest potential and encourage them to take on challenging responsibilities and projects to enable them to discover and expand on their capabilities.

Because of this, and because all our employees rise to these challenges, we take pride in promoting those who have proved themselves, and continue to do so, and who focuses on teamwork and servicing our valued clients.

Congratulations to our employees who have been promoted.

Waynesburg Office - Greg Moore and Marc Peugeot were promoted to Data Field Manager. They will be responsible for maintaining all equipment, keeping track of monthly flow monitoring process, new employee training, checking maps for biological sampling, among other day-to-day responsibilities.



CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL THE NEWLY WEDS!!

Dave Miller (GIS Tech II - Waynesburg) and his bride Keiko Sawada. They will be traveling to Japan and on to Yakushima a World Heritage Centre known for its ancient sugi (Cedars): <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/662>

Heather Szalkowski- Burnett (GIS Tech I - Southpointe) and her husband Scott

Rebecca Christie-Sior (GIS Tech I - Waynesburg) and her husband Matt

WPI Pre 4th of July Cookout!



Hey, I didn't know we had a movie star at WPI! (Jessica Sobah)



If I didn't know better I'm thinking Brian is ready to take aim at Dan's head.



Dan, typical engineer...trying to calculate how to get the bean bag in the hole. *Pictured with Josh Noble.*



"Just chill'n" Mike Hiet, Brad Goodballet, Danny Wallace.



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