



Fall 2022

WV Department of Environmental Protection 

Closer to normal!

After two years of COVID-related restrictions, the YEP has in-person Youth Day and Junior Conservation Camp in the books for 2022!



Message from the director . . .

We have had a productive summer in the Youth Environmental Program. Well, let me rephrase that: we have had a normal summer in the YEP ... finally!

Youth Environmental Day at North Bend State Park in May and Junior Conservation Camp at Cedar Lakes in June were an absolute success, as you can see from the photos above.

After two years of COVID-related restrictions, it was refreshing to be back in-person with our youth from around the state.



Annette Hoskins
YEP Director

Now, we look forward to the in-person return of another event – the Youth Environmental Conference. This year’s conference is scheduled for October 7-9 at beautiful Twin Falls State Park and we’d love to have you. Twin Falls is located in Wyoming County, near Mullens.

Among our plans are visits to the Raleigh County Recycling Center and the Exhibition Coal Mine and Youth Museum, both in Beckley.

The recycling center is operated by the Raleigh County Solid Waste Authority and a large portion of the facility is devoted to education. There is a display area that allows employees to demonstrate items that can be recycled, as well as products made from recycled materials.

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www.facebook.com/depwv

YEP News

WV Youth Environmental Program
601 57th St. S.E., Charleston WV 25304

News from across the state

Northeastern

Susan Parker
Coordinator



AUTUMN truly is one of the most beautiful seasons we get to enjoy here in West Virginia.

I know I can hardly wait to decorate and to experience the sights, smells and sounds of the season.

With the start of the new school year, clubs and other fall activities should remember to include some environmental focus on your agendas. Incorporating something as simple as a recycling drive or tree planting can make a huge difference in your community.

The Youth Environmental Program is happy to lend a hand and give you the resources you need to have an environmental-friendly year.

On another note, I recently visited one of our local parks, Cacapon State Park and Resort in Berkeley Springs. The park allows me to do programming at the nature center and it is one of my favorite places to interact with youth.

The nature center hosts amazing visitor programs and houses a beautiful butterfly garden.



Additionally, new this year are some raised garden beds (see photo).

The nature center was able to secure a rain barrel from one of the WVDEP rain barrel workshops and it is used now at the center.

If you are looking for a great day trip to enjoy and embrace nature, check out a nearby West Virginia state park and keep in mind they are always looking for partners to volunteer for projects.

YEP appearing at hunting and fishing event

West Virginia will celebrate National Hunting and Fishing Days September 10-11 at the Summit Bechtel Reserve in Glen Jean, Fayette County.

And the Youth Environmental Program will be among the stops included in the Outdoor Youth Challenge (OYC). The OYC includes activities and displays that provide opportunities for hands-on learning about wildlife, hunting, firearms safety and outdoor recreation.

At the YEP booth, participants will learn about trout habitat and West Virginia's state fish, the brook trout. There'll also be a prize for youth who complete the YEP activity.

Other stops in the OYC include wildlife identification, boating and water safety, Division of Natural Resources laser shot, touch a snake, wildlife jeopardy and more.

National Hunting and Fishing Days, the largest outdoor hunting and fishing show in the state, is sponsored by the DNR.

Central

Beth Henry-Vance
Coordinator



RANDOLPH County elementary students will learn about a program called Leave No Trace this fall, as part of Kids Day at the Mountain State Forest Festival in Elkins.

Campfire safety, protecting nature, respecting wildlife and being considerate of others will be part of the lessons featured during hands-on Leave No Trace activities on October 6.

They will be presented by staff members from the U.S. Forest Service, with help from the West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection, the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources, AmeriCorps and other agencies.

Hundreds of students will learn ways that all of us can protect the environment and reduce our impact on parks, campgrounds and any natural areas.

USFS staff also will share information with Forest Festival

visitors on October 7 and 8 at Elkins City Park.

Three "hot spots," or areas of concern, are located within West Virginia, including New River Gorge National Park, Summersville Lake and Dolly Sods Wilderness.

These areas have experienced increased impacts based on a growing number of visitors, including litter, trail erosion, vandalism, damage to trees and plants, etc.

The Leave No Trace program was developed in the 1960s to protect official wilderness areas and to encourage people to be respectful of nature and others. It has since become an international nonprofit organization, with training, youth events and other activities available.

For more information about Leave No Trace, visit its web site at: lnt.org.

Southeastern

Sara Prior



MY time with the West Virginia Youth Environmental Program will always hold a special place in my heart.

As I'm writing this, my mind is flooded with fond memories. To the many partnerships and friendships created along the way, thank you for making my time with the program fun and rewarding.

Whether it be volunteering with a group during a Make It Shine event, presenting to 200 students at a Water Festival, or being a Junior Conservation Camp leader at Cedar Lakes in Ripley, I was always proud to be working for such a wonderful organization.

I am so thankful to be a part of a dynamic group of change makers.

I hope to continue to witness your amazing work in my new adventure as a 4-H Extension Educator for West Virginia State University.

I'm sure we will cross paths again and hopefully I can still support your group in some capacity.

My new program is called Sowing Young Sprouts, and just like the Youth Environmental Program, I will focus on empowering young people to learn how they can make a difference in the world.

My main focus will be to develop programming and provide resources to underserved communities, with Fayette, Raleigh, Summers and Wyoming counties being my main focus. Thank you for being a part of my journey to get to where I am today.

This is a "see you later" and definitely not a "good-bye." If you have any questions or would like to keep in touch, feel free to contact me at:

sara.prior@wvstateu.edu

I hope to hear from you.

Southwestern

Tom Aluise
Coordinator



THE Forks of Coal State Natural Area is officially open for business.

With the completion of the Claudia L. Workman Wildlife Education Center on the property, this 102-acre tract of land just south of Charleston is now a must-see destination for nature lovers.

The Forks of Coal staged its official grand opening this summer and is now ready to welcome visitors from all over, including from the 165 public and private schools that are located within a 45-minute drive. The area borders U.S. Route 119 and sits at the confluence of the Big Coal and Little Coal rivers. The land was donated to the state Division of Natural Resources by the Workman family.

In addition to the roughly five miles of beautiful hiking trails, the Forks of Coal now boasts a \$6.2 million education center that offers state-of-the-art exhibits for all ages and sizes.



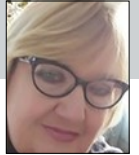
There are replicas of not only birds and trees one might find in the area, but also of animals once extinct or nearly extinct in West Virginia that were brought back through wildlife management.

Among the highlights of the education center is a 1,200-gallon aquarium featuring several different species of fish native to the Coal River drainage.

The education center is open Tuesday through Saturday from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. and field trips are welcome. For more information contact Kim Smith at 304-932-7402 or email: kimberly.smith@wvstateu.edu.

Northwestern

Debbie Florence
Coordinator



WEST Virginia Envirothon is a conservation education program and competition for students in grades 9-12.

Like the Youth Environmental Program, Envirothon's mission is to expand the knowledge of the natural environment and foster an interest in active conservation measures in West Virginia's youth.

Senior Girl Scout Troop 34988 from Roane County entered this year's event at Cacapon State Park.

The troop competed against other teams from around the state in a two-day event during which participants were tested on their natural resource knowledge, skills and problem-solving capabilities in four key environmental areas (soils and land use, aquatics, forestry and wildlife).

The teams were also judged on their ability to prepare and deliver a presentation on a current environmental issue.

Troop leader Thanh Ashman



(pictured above) shared that the training and competition provided her girls valuable lessons in taking a hands-on approach to solving real-life environmental scenarios.

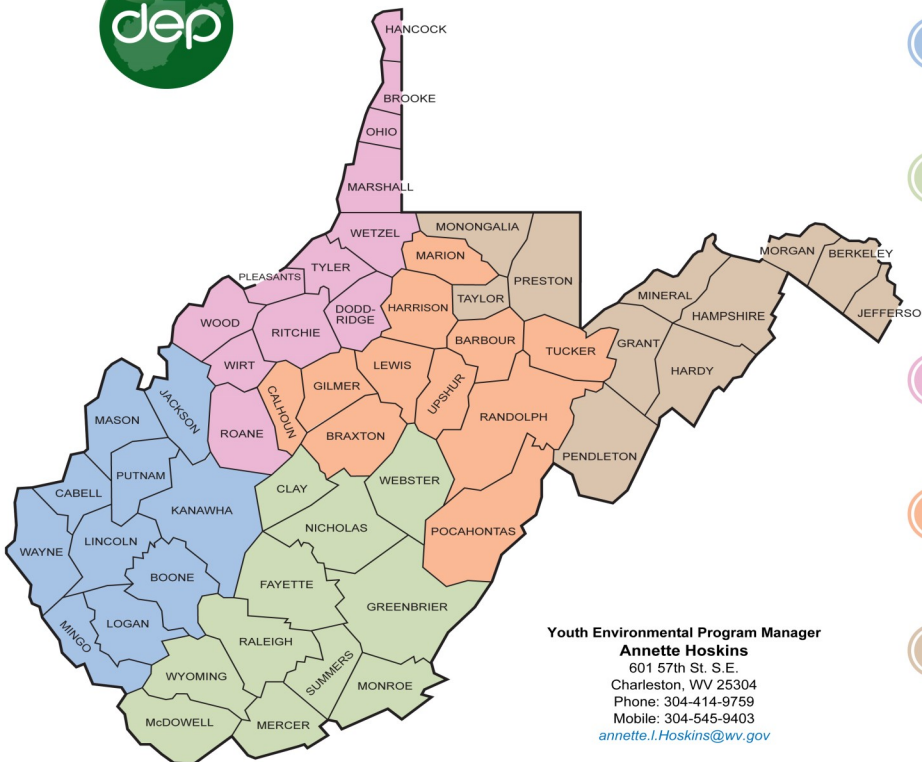
She said the importance of these types of opportunities cannot be overstated because, "we need to teach our children to be good stewards for the earth they will inherit so they can preserve it for future generations."

In addition to the competition, the girls enjoyed the experience of meeting new friends and exploring a part of West Virginia they had never seen.

west virginia department of environmental protection



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Spotlight on.



Busy 4's 4-H Club

Location: Mason County

Number of members: 11

The Busy 4's emphasize the three R's — Reduce, Reuse, Recycle in their monthly activities. For example, they recycle newspaper for the local animal shelter and also donate cat or dog food, pet toys and cleaning supplies. They fill used milk and water jugs with water to make ice for the community center's two ice cream socials. And after the holidays, the club recycles Christmas card boxes. Often, this project will yield one or even two truck loads of boxes. The Busy 4's motto is don't throw it away if it can be reused or recycled!



September 10-11 — Hunting and Fishing Days, Summit Bechtel Reserve, Glen Jean.

September 24 — Adopt-A-Highway Fall Cleanup.

October 7-9 — Youth Environmental Conference, Twin Falls State Park.

October 16-18 — REAP/Solid Waste Conference, Glade Springs Resort.

November 15 — West Virginia Recycles Day.

November 19 — Recycling Coalition of WV ReFashion Show, Huntington Mall.

November 30 — Deadline for Recycling Coalition of WV Youth Contest entries.

** For more information about Make It Shine and Adopt-A-Highway events, call:*

1-800-322-5530.

MESSAGE

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There also is an education classroom with seating that overlooks the recycling area, giving visitors a bird's eye view of the recycling process in action.

The Exhibition Coal Mine takes visitors through a vintage underground mine. Tour guides are veteran miners who can speak from experience about the daily responsibilities and dangers encountered by past and present miners.

Also on the grounds and available for tours are restored coal camp buildings, including the Coal Company House, Superintendent's Home and the Helen Coal Camp School. The buildings give visitors a look back at 20th century coal

camp life.

The Youth Museum features a planetarium, as well as interactive exhibits.

The conference is open to youth ages 13-18 and scholarships are available. For more information and to learn more about registration, visit dep.wv.gov and type "Youth Environmental Conference" into the search feature.

On another note, I want to apologize for the delay in issuing checks to a number of award winners from Youth Day. I am working diligently to fix the problem and will have checks in your hands as soon as possible.

To help avoid similar delays in the future, starting in 2023 the YEP will require those who have not won an award in the past to submit a

W-9 tax form with their report, poster, essay or any awards submission.

Also, anyone who submits a report, starting next year, will be required to file the first page of the Summary Report Form electronically. The remainder of the report may be submitted through email or as part of a scrapbook.

Finally, it is with a heavy heart that the YEP says goodbye to Sara Prior, our South-eastern District coordinator since 2014. Sara's extensive knowledge about the environment, her boundless energy and kind-heartedness will be greatly missed. We wish her the best of luck in her new position with the West Virginia State University Extension Office.

Booking a YEP coordinator has never been easier

Did you know requesting an in-person presentation from a Youth Environmental Program district coordinator is as easy as one click of your mouse?

Just go to dep.wv.gov and search for "YEP." Once you've landed on the YEP homepage, there is a "YEP Presentation Request" tab that will take you to a fillable form.

Let us know where you are located and more about the type of presentation you prefer and a district coordinator near you will be in touch. It's that simple!

Of course, you can still call or email us any time. Our contact information is in this newsletter.