



# West Virginia YOUTH Environmental Program



Fall 2016

WV Department of Environmental Protection ([www.dep.wv.gov](http://www.dep.wv.gov))



Tours at this fall's Youth Environmental Conference include stops at Seneca Rocks (above), the Dolly Sods Wilderness area (bottom right) and Smoke Hole Caverns.

## Great job youth groups!

Do you ever wonder just how much material is recycled every year by Youth Environmental Program members? How about how many miles of roadway are cleaned?

Reports submitted every April by YEP-member clubs and schools give us at least a snapshot of the great work being done by West Virginia youth. And we know you're doing more!

If your club or school is involved with a project, take time to file a report with the YEP. Not only do we love hearing about your efforts, but by submitting a report, your club becomes eligible to win cash prizes. If you need help with your report, contact your district coordinator.

### YEP Recycling\* (April 2015 to April 2016)

Material	Pounds
Steel	120,347
Paper	87,951
Plastic	15,175
Aluminum	12,499

### YEP Litter Control\*

Bags of trash collected	1,805
Miles of road cleaned	118
Communities/schools cleaned	85
Tires collected	84

### Other Projects Completed\*

Environmental Education	32
Wildlife Management	18
Trails cleaned/maintained	7
Forest Fire Prevention	7
Backyard Composting	7

\* Statistics based on 54 filed reports.

## Message from the director . . .

This has been a trying summer for many West Virginians. The devastating floods in June ravaged parts of our state and left families shaken and shattered. The entire Youth Environmental Program staff sends out its continued thoughts and prayers to those affected by the disaster.



**Diana Haid**  
YEP Director

With the arrival of September, the cool breezes of fall are just around the corner. And with every autumn comes our yearly Youth Environmental Conference. This year's conference is the 41<sup>st</sup> annual and is set for Canaan Valley Resort State Park in beautiful Tucker County, Sept. 30-Oct. 2. A great schedule of activities and tours, including visits to the Dol-



ly Sods Wilderness Area, the Seneca Rocks Discovery Center and Smoke Hole Caverns, awaits YEP members, ages 14-18, who participate in the conference.

The event also provides a tremendous opportunity for youth groups from around the

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[www.facebook.com/depyouth](http://www.facebook.com/depyouth)

## YEP News

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

# News from the YEP districts

## District 1

Brad Blaine  
District Coordinator



**SUMMER** has been a busy time for the Youth Environmental Program in District 1. I am particularly proud to have participated in the 75<sup>th</sup> annual West Virginia State Conservation Camp at Camp Caesar in Webster County. It is the oldest of its kind in the United States and received numerous awards and recognitions. I encourage all YEP members to participate next year as we have many scholarships.

Fall marks new opportunities for YEP members. In District 1, many colleges and universities have environmentally related service-learning opportunities for incoming students.

WVU had students working on community agriculture initiatives throughout the region. Fairmont State promoted its student organizations such as STAND (Students Taking Action in Nature's Defense). K-12 schools in the region have been involved in

recycling, school gardens, pollinator habitat improvements, and celebrating the 100 year anniversary of the National Park System. The Mountaineer Area Council of the Boy Scouts announced the Lion Program, a pilot project which focuses on kindergarten age boys.

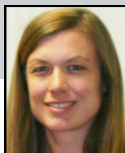
With the fall hunting season approaching, YEP members may participate in hunter safety initiatives, which qualify for the YEP's \$300 Environmental Education Award.

The Quality Deer Management Association's Rack Pack for young hunters has a variety of wildlife habitat improvements in the areas of food and cover, which make them eligible for the YEP's \$300 Wildlife Management Award.

Regardless of the season, conservation is a year round endeavor.

## District 3

Callie Sams  
District Coordinator



**SCHOOL** is back in session but there are plenty of fun events coming up in District 3 to keep us all busy and having fun outdoors. As we enter fall, many of us start thinking about hunting season, or perhaps you're already planning a great fishing trip for next spring.

Please join us at the West Virginia Celebration of Hunting & Fishing Days at Stonewall Jackson State Park, Sept. 17-18 (see photo). Youth Environmental Program coordinators will be leading the Leave No Trace booth, part of the Outdoor Youth Challenge.

Anytime we spend time outdoors, it's important to leave the environment the way we found it, particularly if you are on public land, such as a state park or state forest. This year, we will have a Leave No Trace mock crime scene for youth to investigate. The Outdoor Youth Challenge is free for those ages 6-18,



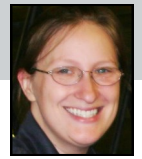
who want to participate just for fun or as part of the competition.

Participants have the chance to win prizes throughout the weekend, including a lifetime hunting or fishing license. Scholarships to both State and Junior conservation camp also will be given away.

We'd love to see you there! For more information, go to [www.wvdnr.gov/NHFD/Youth.shtm](http://www.wvdnr.gov/NHFD/Youth.shtm) or contact me at 304-924-6211 or email: [callie.c.sams@wv.gov](mailto:callie.c.sams@wv.gov).

## District 2

Harmony Dressler  
District Coordinator



**IN** West Virginia, it's easy for us to take our amazing state for granted. However, there's always something interesting to learn, fun to do, or spectacular to see. Nowhere is this more obvious than at The Mountain Institute (TMI) in Pendleton County, located on Spruce Knob Mountain. TMI offers several opportunities for youth groups to learn about the great outdoors.

There are several ways you can take advantage of what TMI has to offer. You can visit the facility with your group or family, take part in one of TMI's educational courses, or attend one of its summer camps for youth.

The Spruce Knob Mountain Center offers a wide variety of activities for its visitors: camping, hiking, canoeing, fishing, and stargazing. TMI encourages guests to explore its property and the surrounding Monongahela

National Forest.

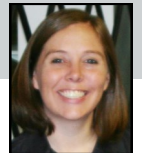
Through a partnership with WV DEP's Save Our Streams program, TMI offers a low-cost citizen science program to learn about watersheds. TMI staff can lead your youth group through a stream study to learn about water quality. This can include a local stream sampling or a field course at the Spruce Knob Mountain Center.

The Mountain Stewards Summer Camp is a six-day expedition that blends stewardship, education and exploration into a single experience. The program offers families a sliding scale, making it affordable for everyone. The program is open to middle and high school students and they will receive service-learning credits for their participation.

Visit their website for more information! [www.mountain.org/appalachian](http://www.mountain.org/appalachian).

## District 4

Sara Prior  
District Coordinator



**MEADOW** Bridge High School's AP Environmental Science class created and completed its inaugural Know Your Environmental Impact Day in May 2016.

The class of 10 students planned and organized a morning of games, painting bird houses, and a campus litter sweep to teach about the importance of taking care of the environment.

I was able to attend numerous 9 a.m. classes to assist in brainstorming and the planning process.

There were many great ideas and the students decided to combine most of them to create this special day.

By creating this event, the students were able to teach a fifth-grade class from Meadow Bridge Elementary School about bird habitats, how long it takes for trash to decompose, how to leave no trace, and why it's important to not litter.

The AP students were very dedicated to this idea and made a difference at their school and in their Fayette County community.

Brittney McCoin, one of the event organizers, stated that, "all of the kids really seemed to enjoy the day." Another event organizer, Micah Farr, said that she thought it was "very successful."

Meadow Bridge has been a member of the Youth Environmental Program for several years and during the planning process, this class enrolled the school in the Adopt-A-Spot program as well. Adopt-A-Spot is a litter control outreach initiative offered by REAP (Rehabilitation Environmental Action Plan), under the DEP's Division of Land Restoration.

If you would like to create a special event at your school let us know, we would love to help.

## District 5

Tom Aluise  
District Coordinator



FOR the typical outdoor enthusiast, Kanawha State Forest in the Charleston area is a breath of fresh air, a nice break from the hustle and bustle of city life.

To most pre-schoolers from inner-city Charleston, the sprawling forest is a new adventure, a first-ever look at towering trees, critter-filled creeks and roaming wildlife.

Piedmont Elementary School teachers understand the importance of introducing the outdoors to their pre-school students.

For the past three years, the school, along with the Vista View Head Start program in Charleston, has conducted a field trip to Kanawha State Forest and solicited the help of several state agencies to educate the wide-eyed pre-schoolers.

During this year's visit to the forest, close to 50 youngsters learned from experts from the Division of Forestry, Division of

Natural Resources and the state Department of Environmental Protection. Biologists from the DEP had fish on hand for the students to touch and hold, as well as a brown water snake.

I represented the Youth Environmental Program (Piedmont Elementary is a member) and led the kids in an activity about the water cycle.

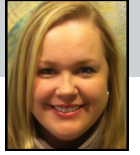
There was also singing, story telling, S'mores eating and plenty of play time built into the day.

Fun was had by all.



## District 6

Nedia Cyran  
District Coordinator



THE Patch Science Class at Geary Elementary School in Roane County had a very eventful summer.

The area had a huge flood on June 23, which prompted an idea for a rain garden (see photo).

There were signs that the hillside was slipping and runoff was pooling near the school playground. So, the Patch Science Class decided to do something about it!

The kids wrote letters to the Roane County Board of Education, Roane County Library Commission, their own school principal and the Geary Clinic Board of Directors to get permission to install the rain garden.

Next, they had to learn about rain gardens and their benefits. After research and classroom work, they began the task of finding the best location to help the landscape from erosion and storm water runoff.

The kids tested the soil to check for drainage and then they



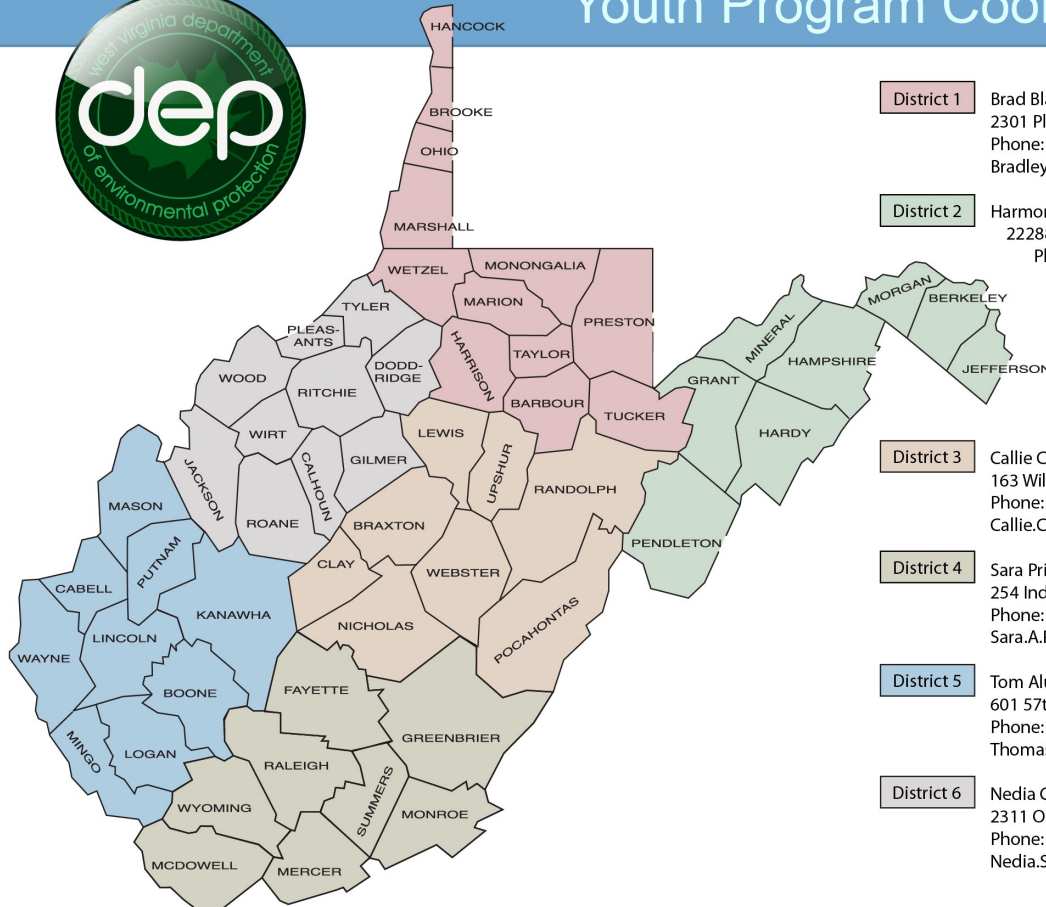
mapped out the garden and prepped the location. They planted eight plants and mulched the entire area.

The entire project took four weeks.

The plan is to add more plants as funds become available. The Patch Science Class is also teaming up with Junior Girl Scout Troop 4988

The Roane County-based troop will help maintain the garden throughout the school year.

## Youth Program Coordinators



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# Spotlight On.



## Junior Girl Scout Troop 4988

**Location:** Roane County

**Number of members:** 13

**Highlights:** Girl Scout Troop 4988 meets at Geary Elementary School and is very active in its community. The troop participates in a recycling program at school, Operation Wildflower, Adopt-A-Highway, and beautifies by planting flowers on Earth Day. The group always attends Youth Conservation Camp, the Youth Environmental Conference, and participates in the Re-Fashion show in Charleston.

## Calendar of Events

**Sept. 10** — Great Kanawha River Cleanup.

**Sept. 17-18** — National Hunting and Fishing Days, Stonewall Jackson Resort.

**Sept. 24** — Adopt-A-Highway Fall Statewide Cleanup.

**Sept. 30-Oct. 2** — Youth Environmental Conference, Canaan Resort State Park.

**Oct. 23-25** — West Virginia Educational Conference on Little Control and Solid Waste Management, Morgantown.

**Nov. 15** — West Virginia Recycles Day.

**Nov. 19** — Re-Fashion Show, Charleston Town Center.

**Nov. 30** — Recycling Coalition Youth Contest entries due.



## In a galaxy not so far away ...

Among the highlights at this year's state Junior Conservation Camp was a visit from a local Star Wars costuming organization. "Squad Corellia," of Vader's 501st Legion, includes DEP employees Amy Higgs and Michael Boyer.

## MESSAGE

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state to learn from each other and discover new ways to improve their schools and communities through environmental stewardship.

For more information about the conference or to inquire about whether spots are still available, please contact me via email or phone call (see contact information below).

If a trip to Tucker County isn't possible, perhaps you can make it to the Charleston Town Center on Saturday, Nov. 19, for the 14<sup>th</sup> annual West Virginia Re-Fashion Show, sponsored by the Recycling Coalition of West Virginia.

This is truly a unique event where spectators are always dazzled by the creative clothing made from recycled materials such as soda cans and newspapers. Perhaps you have a great idea for an eye-catching outfit and can transform that idea into an award-winning YEP project for your club or school. Go to [www.wvrecycles.com](http://www.wvrecycles.com) for more information.

As always, don't hesitate to contact me if you have questions or concerns. Myself and the entire YEP staff are honored to work with you, and for you, and appreciate your efforts to help make our state great. Have a wonderful fall!

**Contact :** [Diana.K.Haid@wv.gov](mailto:Diana.K.Haid@wv.gov) or 304-926-0499, ext. 1114.