



# West Virginia YOUTH Environmental Program

Spring 2015

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



## Hope to see you in May!

It's the place to be on the third Saturday of every May.

Where else can you camp for free, enjoy lunch on the house, dance the night away and be recognized with cash awards and scholarships for the outstanding work you do to protect the environment?

That's some of the highlights of Youth Environmental Day weekend, which begins on Friday, May 15 at North Bend State Park in Ritchie County and continues through Sunday morning, May 17.

A Friday night program highlighting a number of the youth environmental projects from around the state will kick off the weekend.

The 52<sup>nd</sup> annual Youth Day is Saturday, May 16, and will feature a parade of the various Youth Environmental Program groups in attendance, a parade hat contest, the awarding of \$15,000 in prizes to lucky groups and individuals, exhibits from several different state agencies, an evening dance and other fun activities.

Special appearances from Smokey Bear, Eco the Owl and Ralph the Recycling Raccoon are also scheduled for



Saturday.

Among the invited guests are officials from the Department of Environmental Protection, Toyota Manufacturing, DuPont and North Bend State Park.

Lunch is free on Saturday when close to 1,000 guests are expected.

More information about Youth Day is available on the YEP Web site, as are reservation forms. The reservation deadline is May 1.

## It's time to be thinking camp

There's something for everybody at the state Junior Conservation Camp. Whether you like to fish, take a nature hike, canoe, geocache, or learn about hunter safety, fun and knowledge await at Cedar Lakes in Ripley.

This year's camp, for those ages 11 to 14, is scheduled from June 15-19. Experts from the DEP, Division of Natural Resources, Division of Forestry, Conservation Agency and WVU Extension are among the camp leaders.

To attend, campers must be 11 by June 15, 2015, and must not reach age 15 on or before June 19, 2015. Cost of the camp is \$172 but many campers are supported financially by local agencies, such as solid waste authorities. Those wishing to attend camp are encouraged to seek sponsorship. Registration deadline is May 1.

## Message from the director

Welcome to the inaugural edition of YEP News, the official newsletter of the state Youth Environmental Program. We are always looking for ways to better connect with our enrolled groups and hope you find the newsletter informative. Please share it with your group's membership and pass it along to others not enrolled in the Youth Environmental Program. They might be interested in joining too! Our next edition will be released in the fall.



**Diana Haid**  
YEP Director

These are exciting times for the YEP. All six districts in the program now

have a full-time coordinator. The newest to come on board is Nedra Cyran, who took over District 6 on Feb. 16. You can learn more about Nedra on Page 4 of this newsletter.

Our district coordinators possess a wide variety of talents and experience, so I hope you'll contact your local coordinator anytime you need assistance or instruction for your group.

Spring obviously is a busy time for everybody involved with the YEP. Some of you might be working on an environmental project, or gearing up for the spring Make It Shine and Adopt-A-Highway cleanups, both scheduled for April. Everybody knows tax day is April 15. But it's also the deadline for YEP program reports, posters, scholarship applications, Hall of Fame nominations and essays, so mark your calendar! We'll honor the winners on Youth Day, May 16 at North Bend State Park.

Of course, it's not too early to be thinking about the annual Junior Conservation Camp at Cedar Lakes in Ripley, June 15-19. Spots will fill up fast for this popular camp, so don't wait too long to register.

See MESSAGE, Page 4



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**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



THE northern West Virginia district of the DEP's Youth Environmental Program has seen a variety of environmental activities.

Many revolve around the holiday season and are an annual hit, such as recycling Christmas trees, bird counts, and gift wrapping.

But with the frequent snow and inclement weather we have had, many groups have turned their focus to planning their spring and summer activities – spring Adopt-A-Highway and Make It Shine cleanups, plantings, camps and so on.

4-H volunteers recently had leaders' training at Jackson's Mill in preparation for the upcoming camping season.

YEP staff has been in summer camp discussions as well, for the Junior Conservation Camp at Cedar Lakes and State Conservation Camp in Webster County.

Despite the uncooperative weather, winter can still be a time of environmentally focused fun.

It just takes a little bit of creativity.

For example, Blackwater Falls State Park just recently hosted its annual cardboard and duct tape sled race.

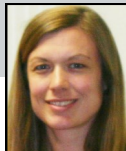
Re-using cardboard before recycling it is not only a good move for the environment but, as this event has shown, a lot of fun. Consider this the next time the weather turns snowy.

Although spring is just around the corner, I encourage all our YEP groups to keep doing the great work they're doing and be creative.

Ingenuity has always been key to promoting a healthy environment, the core mission of the state Department of Environmental Protection.

## District 3

Callie Sams  
District Coordinator



ON April 16-17, the West Virginia Envirothon will return to District III, but at an all new location — Camp Caesar in Webster County! The Envirothon is a statewide two-day competition with two distinct phases.

On the first day, teams are judged on oral presentations addressing a particular environmental theme that changes each year. This is known as the Fifth Topic Scenario, because on the second day of the competition, teams are tested outdoors on the other four topics: aquatics, forestry, soils, and wildlife.

This year, the Fifth Topic is "Urban Forestry," while previous themes have included sustainable agriculture, renewable energy, and grasslands.

After the scores from the oral presentations and outdoor tests have been tallied, the top five teams are announced. Finally, these top five teams present their

oral presentations again, this time in front of a special judging panel and the rest of the teams, advisors, and guests. The score for this presentation is added to the previous total, and then the winners are announced.

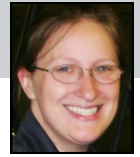
Each of the top five teams receives scholarship awards, and the first-place team goes on to compete at the North American Envirothon, held at a different state each year during the summer.

In 2015, the West Virginia champion will compete in Missouri for the national competition.

Schools, youth organizations, and home school groups are all invited to send teams, as long as the team is comprised of five members, each of whom are in grades nine through 12. Go to [www.wvca.us/envirothon](http://www.wvca.us/envirothon) to register!

## District 2

Harmony Dressler  
District Coordinator



PETERSBURG Elementary School, in Grant County, participated in an initiative to label the stormwater drains in Petersburg. The initiative was sponsored by the West Virginia Conservation Agency and the Chesapeake Bay Program.

In the spring of 2014, the fifth-graders competed in an art competition to design the drain signs.

The designs were voted on by several members of the community. The top three designs were chosen (see winning design by Isaac Snyder) and, in the fall of 2014, the students got to install their signs on the streets of Petersburg.

The signs are meant to inspire citizens to refrain from littering and dumping. Anything discarded on the sidewalk or lawns can be washed into storm drains when it rains. Stormwater drains in Petersburg discharge straight into the North Branch of the Po-



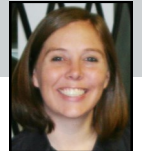
tomac River, which leads to the Chesapeake Bay.

Petersburg Elementary has participated in several environmental activities, from pulling invasive garlic mustard weed around Seneca Rocks Discovery Center, to monitoring water quality in a local stream.

The school partners with several different federal, state, and local agencies to effectively teach science and environmental stewardship. The school has been recognized as a West Virginia Sustainable School and as a U.S. Green Ribbon School.

## District 4

Sara Prior  
District Coordinator



THE Meadow Bridge Clovers 4-H Club, from Fayette County, joined the Youth Environmental Program in October 2014.

The group is interested in recycling, agriculture, and beautification projects. This year, the Clovers are excited to work on projects that promote taking care of the environment and giving back to the community. During the club's February meeting, members celebrated National Bird Feeding Month by reusing soda bottles to make bird feeders.

Spring projects include starting vegetable plants in containers made from recycled bottles, creating a self-watering system from plastic bottles and planting flowers to celebrate Mother's Day.

The club is also planning to work on a tree identification project where the members will identify and label trees for a local nature walk. Finally, the Clovers have several beautification pro-



jects planned to help spruce up their town.

The group's ongoing activities are collecting pop tabs for Ronald McDonald House Charities and recycling ink cartridges.

Jason Favor, 4-H leader, is excited for what is in store for the Clovers this year.

"We have BIG plans for this year, but most importantly we plan to have a great time doing it all," he said.

Great job, Meadow Bridge Clovers! Thank you for being stewards of the environment and setting an example for your community!

## District 5

Tom Aluise  
District Coordinator



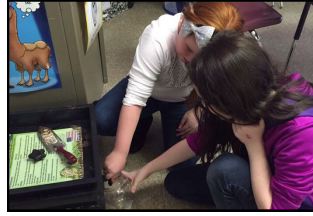
**HOMETOWN** Elementary School in Putnam County is a national Green Ribbon School, West Virginia School of Excellence and, much to our delight, a recent addition to the Youth Environmental Program.

With 85 students in pre-kindergarten through fifth grade, Hometown is a whirlwind of learning and activity.

Students are involved in a number of different ongoing projects, from raising trout in the school hallways and growing vegetables in a high-tunnel greenhouse on school property, to planting apple trees and composting with red wiggler worms.

The students eat what they grow — lettuce, peas, spinach, celery, cabbage and radishes, just to name a few.

“We’re getting ready to plant again and expect a new crop in May,” Principal Barbara Black



said. “The kids will try new food they haven’t tried before, just because they grew it.”

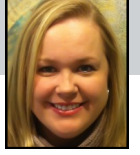
What they don’t eat is fed to the thousands of hungry worms hanging out in four different classrooms’ composting containers.

Compost juice and soil is, in turn, used in Hometown’s greenhouse as a fertilizer. Hometown is the only school in the county actively composting.

Hometown students plan to release their trout on Earth Day in April.

## District 6

Nedia Cyran  
District Coordinator



**HELLO**, my name is Nedia Cyran and I have lived in the Vienna/Parkersburg Area of Wood County my entire life.

I am a graduate of West Virginia University at Parkersburg with a bachelor’s degree in Business Administration and Marketing.

I joined the WVDEP on Feb. 16 after four years working for the State Tax Department where I held the position of Taxpayer Service Representative.

I am married to my awesome husband Dave, and we have two amazing sons, Dawson, age 15 and Carter, age 7.

We are also fostering a sweet 7-month-old daughter who has been placed with us since birth. We hope to one day get the opportunity to adopt and make her a part of our forever family. I adore animals and have 3 dogs – Liza Jane, Shiloh and Miss Beasley.

Some of my favorite things are sunshine, floating in the pool, Mexican food, sweet tea, and the month of October.

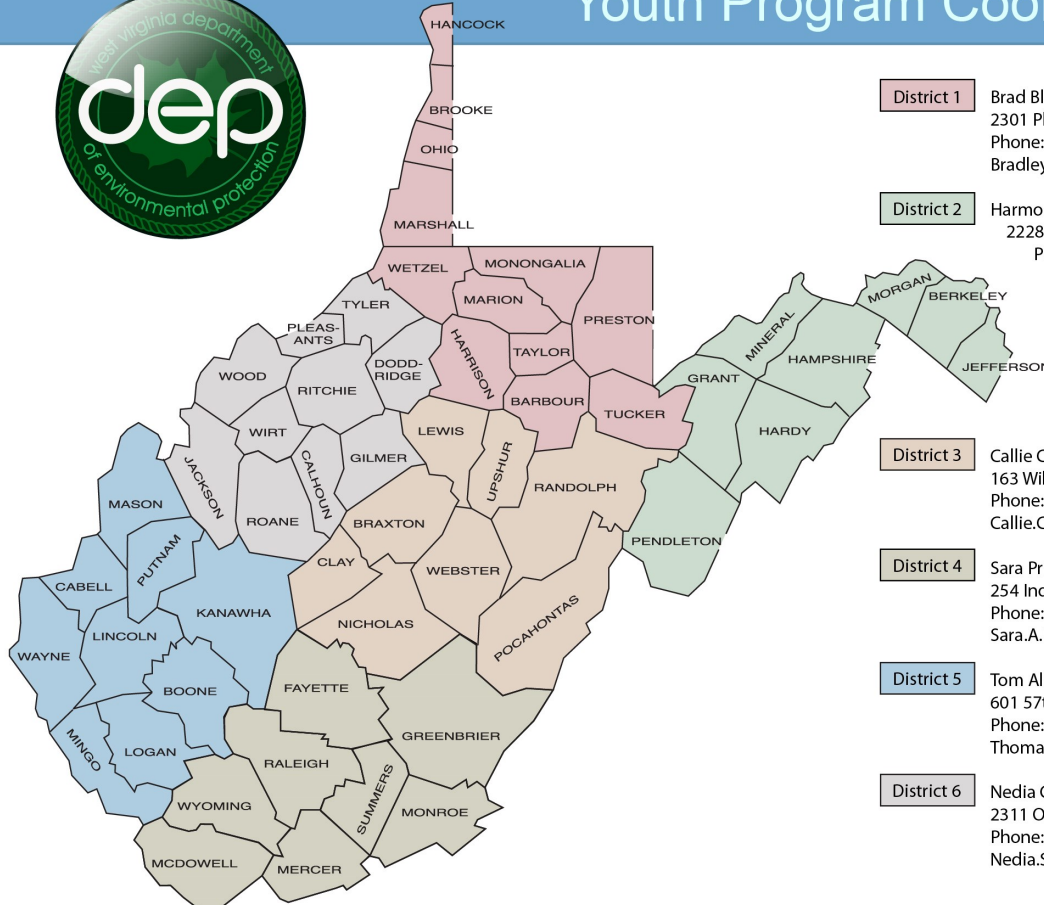
We also enjoy watching our boys play baseball and soccer, and we can’t live without our annual trip to the beach.

I’m super excited about my new position as District 6 coordinator and I look forward to meeting all of the groups and clubs within my district.

I am passionate about working with the public and am excited to teach children about all of the programs that WVDEP offers.

I was a Girl Scout as a child and I enjoyed it so much that I participated through high school. I really enjoy working with the youth and I am most excited to attend the Junior Conservation Camp in June.

## Youth Program Coordinators



**District 1** Brad Blaine  
2301 Pleasant Valley Road, Fairmont, WV, 26554  
Phone: 304-368-3950 / Fax: 304-368-3953  
Bradley.A.Blaine@wv.gov

**District 2** Harmony Dressler  
22288 Northwestern Pike, Romney, WV, 26757  
Phone: 304-822-7266 / Fax: 304-822-3687  
Harmony.F.Dressler@wv.gov

**District 3** Callie C. Sams  
163 Wildlife Road, French Creek, WV, 26218  
Phone: 304-924-6211 / Fax: 304-924-6781  
Callie.C.Sams@wv.gov

**District 4** Sara Prior  
254 Industrial Drive, Oak Hill, WV, 25901  
Phone: 304-465-1911 / Fax: 304-465-1524  
Sara.A.Prior@wv.gov

**District 5** Tom Aluise  
601 57th Street S.E., Charleston, WV, 25304  
Phone: 304-926-0499 / Fax: 304-926-0447  
Thomas.J.Aluise@wv.gov

**District 6** Nedia Cyran  
2311 Ohio Avenue, Parkersburg, WV, 26101  
Phone: 304-420-4636 / Fax: 304-420-4554  
Nedia.S.Cyran@wv.gov

# Spotlight On.



## Deer Creek Defenders 4-H Club

**Location:** Pocahontas County

**Number of members:** 45

**Highlights:** The Defenders are very active in their school, community and the local environment. The club's older members participate in the Adopt-A-Highway program and help clean up Route 92 near Seneca State Forest. The club decided this year it would continue its recycling efforts and AAH cleanup. In addition, the Defenders plan to work with Cass Scenic Railroad in a bat-box building project. The boxes will be installed at the park.

## Calendar of Events

**April 6-19** — WV Make It Shine Statewide Spring Cleanup.

**April 15** — Youth Environmental Reports due.

**April 25** — Adopt-A-Highway Statewide Spring Cleanup.

**May 16** — Youth Environmental Day.

**June 15-19** — State Junior Conservation Camp.

**June 20** — Ohio River Sweep.

**August 1** — Adopt-A-Highway Appreciation Day Picnic.

**September 5** — Great Kanawha River Cleanup

**September 26** — Adopt-A-Highway Statewide Fall Cleanup.

**October 9-11** — Youth Environmental Conference.

### MESSAGE

Continued from Page 1

I'm looking forward to another great and rewarding year as the director of the Youth Environmental Program.

Our membership, 800-plus groups strong from around the state, is the foundation of the program and I can't thank you enough for your environmental stewardship. It's what makes West Virginia shine. Please don't hesitate to contact me if I can be of service to you or your group.

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

## Scenes from Youth Days past

You never know who, or what, you might run into at Youth Day at North Bend State Park. You're liable to get a hug from a furry creature or get to hold a slithery one.

One thing is certain, you'll have a good time and learn about the environment while you're at it. So, mark your calendars for May 16 and come join the fun that's been going strong for 52 years.

