



Basin business

Eastern Basin Coordinator Alana Hartman is just as comfortable wading in a stream as she is sitting behind a desk.

For DEP's four basin coordinators, prioritizing duties a big challenge

By Tom Aluise

The goal of the basin coordinators in the Division of Water and Waste Management's Nonpoint Source Program is to help make West Virginia's streams and rivers cleaner.

Sounds simple, right?

Well, it's about as easy as writing convoluted federal

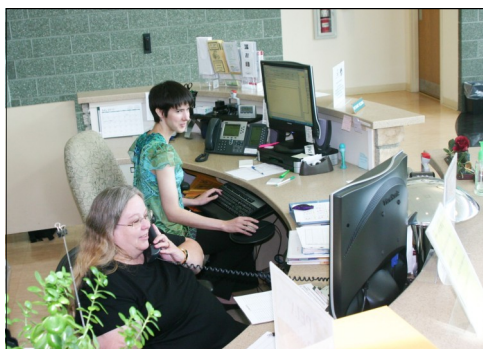
grants, monitoring water quality on rural streams, managing a myriad of projects from streambank stabilization to treatment of acid mine drainage, implementing detailed watershed based plans, educating a skeptical public about septic systems and facilitating contentious meetings.

Basin coordinators are

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Northern Basin Coordinator Lou Schmidt has been with the program since its inception.



Receptionists Judee Weese (left) and Bethany Belding said, for the most part, callers to DEP headquarters are friendly and understanding.

On the front lines

DEP receptionists know a thing or two about teamwork

By Colleen O'Neill

Upon entering the front doors of the Kanawha City headquarters of the Department of Environmental Protection, the first people you see are two ladies sitting be-

hind a big desk. They look pleasant as they do paperwork and answer the phone.

Judee Weese and Bethany Belding are their names and they are as different as ice cream and chocolate sauce. Weese is petite and Belding is tall. Weese is a blonde and has been a DEP receptionist — first at Hansford Street —

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tasked with all of those duties and more.

“Some days their greatest skill is being a mediator,” said Jennifer Pauer, the DWWM’s Watershed Management basin coordinator. “When issues hit close to home, people get hot and the basin coordinator is the person in the room who’s responsible for getting everyone to work together.”

West Virginia’s four basin coordinators are Lou Schmidt (Northern); Jennifer DuPree (Southern); Alana Hartman (Eastern); and Dustin Johnson (Western).

And while each coordinator deals with non-point source water pollution issues that are unique to their area of the state — Hartman, for example, is heavily involved with how conditions in the Eastern Panhandle’s streams and rivers are affecting the Chesapeake Bay — the common threads that run through their job responsibilities are many.

To fund projects, they all deal with the complex process of securing federal grant money through the Clean Water Act and state funds through the Stream Partners Program. They all rely heavily on the grassroots efforts of watershed groups to help train and educate the public in best management practices and to carry out water quality improvement projects. And they all struggle with the difficult and never-ending task of prioritizing. Volunteers tug one way and governmental responsibilities pull in the opposite direction.

“I guess the biggest challenge is that every day is different and it’s hard to prioritize,” said Hartman, who’s in her sixth year as a basin coordinator and works out of Romney. “Today’s biggest challenge might be helping a watershed group’s intern get access to a computer. Tomorrow



Top, Southern Basin Coordinator Jennifer DuPree and two EPA officials (right) take a tour of wetland treatment sites at a McDowell County wastewater project. At right, Western Basin Coordinator Dustin Johnson takes part in the DEP’s Earth Day celebration at the Clay Center.



row it might be a report that’s due. We always have partners or volunteers who need something and it’s hard to balance that.”

DuPree, who works out of Oak Hill and is a third-year coordinator, said no watershed is more important than another.

“I really struggle with what to do first or next,” she said.

Said Schmidt, “There are only so many hours in a day. I’ve got to put my time in where I’m most needed.”

An agency veteran of 20 years, Schmidt became a basin coordinator when the positions were created close to eight years ago.

“I’m the grandfather of the bunch,” he said.

Working out of his native Harrison County, where he deals mostly with acid and alkaline drainage from pre-law mining activities, Schmidt continues to be amazed that funding even exists to treat impaired streams in West Virginia.

“If someone would

have told me before I was an agency person that someday there would be money dedicated to restoring streams affected by mine drainage, I would have said it was a pipe dream,” Schmidt said. “Now, I’ve come full circle. I’m doing a job I never thought would exist.

“I’m seeing things happening on the ground that I never thought I would see in my lifetime. I guess when I retire I can take that with me.”

Unlike Schmidt, Johnson is still learning the ropes. He worked in permitting in the Division of Mining and Reclamation’s Oak Hill office for two years before taking over his current position in January.

An avid outdoorsman, Johnson was attracted to the Nonpoint Source Program after becoming involved with local watershed groups.

“I was really amazed

by the projects the volunteer groups were doing,” said Johnson, who works out of the Kanawha City headquarters.

“One of the bigger challenges for me is getting different agencies together on the same page,” Johnson added. “A lot of them don’t see eye-to-eye with our goals.”

Also daunting is the steep learning curve associated with finding and securing grant money for his watershed groups, Johnson said.

“I get a lot of help from the other basin coordinators,” he said. “They’re always willing to point me in the right direction if I need to solve a problem.”

Like all jobs, it takes a certain personality to thrive as a basin coordinator, Pauer said.

“The job is scientific and technical, but you must also be able to

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Picking a favorite case not easy

Fenway Pollack is a senior counsel in the Department of Environmental Protection's Office of Legal Services.

He joined the DEP in April 2008 and is responsible for all litigation duties for the Division of Mining and Reclamation.



Pollack

Pollack, who grew up mostly in Illinois and New York, is married with two children. His daughter, Claire, is 7 and his son, Ryan, is almost 5.

1. What attracted you to the law profession?

It was a process of elimination. I knew I could not get a degree that involved too much science or math. I knew I did not want to work for a corporation. And I knew I needed a job that would be continuously challenging. And lastly, after making as little as \$13,000 some years as a journalist, I knew I wanted a decent wage.

2. How much did you know about mining before you joined the DEP?

I knew what a roof bolter did, because that's what my brother-in-law did. Other than



With Fenway Pollack

that, nothing.

3. How difficult has it been trying to understand and interpret all the different laws and regulations associated with the mining industry?

The interplay between federal and state law was, and still is, tough. The hardest part for me is anything involving math or science (see above). As a result, certain water cases have been the toughest, like one that involved the chemistry of dissolved iron in water. Due to the fact that we have great program people that know what they are doing, I have been able to muddle through.

4. What type of law did you practice before you joined the DEP?

I was in a small firm for six years doing personal injury, family law, criminal work, workers comp, property disputes and whatever else came in the door. Then I was at the Attorney General's office for four years doing work mostly for the

Tax Department.

5. What's been your most interesting case since you became an attorney?

It's hard to pick just one, I like almost all my cases. I'll pick two. First, I had a case in private practice where our client had bought around six to eight used coal hauling trucks and a part of the transmission case broke on every one. It was interesting in its complexity because we sued everyone, the truck makers, the transmission makers, the sellers and (I think) the people who had owned the trucks before. When I was at the Attorney General's we had a case that went all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court (they didn't take it) that involved taxing credit card companies despite the fact that they are out of state corporations.

6. Do you watch lawyer shows on TV? If so, what's your favorite one?

I watch a lot of lawyer shows. My favorite was "The Practice."

7. If they made a TV show about the DEP's legal team, what actor would play you?

More than one person has said I look a little like James Woods.

8. I understand you were once employed by ABC News in New York.

Which anchor did you like the best and why?

I was a grunt at ABC News, although my official title was "Desk Assistant." Desk assistants do everything in the newsroom, answer phones, open mail, and in my day ripped news-wire and faxed documents. If you worked for a show you ran copy as well. I only worked with two anchors, Peter Jennings and Carol Simpson, because interestingly Nightline was produced in New York, but Ted Koppel anchored in D.C., so I only met him once. With all due respect to Ms. Simpson, I like Peter Jennings very much, because he was very friendly and respectful to everyone, even desk assistants.

9. What was your favorite job before you became an attorney?

Being a reporter was fun, because you have a front row seat to the world, so on those front row days that was my favorite job, but I've liked something about every job I've ever had.

10. How do you unwind at the end of a long, stressful day?

I unwind every day by hugging my kids, but if it has been a truly stressful day, I skip the news and go right to mindless TV.

Forum to focus on mining's impact on bats

By Tom Aluise

The Department of Environmental Protection is teaming up with the Office of Surface Mining to present a four-day forum on coal mining's impact on threatened and endangered bats.

Scheduled from Aug. 31-Sept. 3 at the South Charleston Ramada Plaza, the forum is titled "Protecting Threatened Bats at Coal Mines" and is targeted for a 13-state

region from the eastern United States through the Midwest that is considered the habitat for the endangered Indiana bat.

Representatives from state and federal regulatory agencies, the coal industry, consulting firms and research institutes are expected to attend, said Bob Fala, a wildlife analyst with the DEP's Division of Mining and Reclamation and one of the organizers of the forum.

"We're trying to provide the science and technology to protect these bats and how to deal with them when you encounter them," Fala said.

In 2007, a DEP team led by Fala partnered with other state and federal agencies to produce West Virginia's plan for protecting the Indiana bat in mining areas. That award-winning document was then used by the U.S. Department of the Interior as a

model for its Range-wide Indiana Bat Protection and Enhancement Plan (PEP) Guidelines, released last year.

"I don't think the fact that OSM decided to have the forum here is a coincidence," Fala said.

The upcoming forum will focus on the effectiveness of the Indiana bat PEP guidelines in developing mining permits. It will also delve into the spread of a

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9 IS FINE

DEP wins 9th straight Cup crown

By Tom Aluise

It's a good thing the Corporate Cup team annually is strong in track and field events.

This year, the DEP trailed first-place Dow by 15 points going into the track and field competition on the final day of the YMCA's Corporate Cup at University of Charleston Stadium.

Five first-place, four second-place, two fourth-place, one fifth-place, one seventh-place and one eighth-place finish later, the DEP had its ninth consecutive Corporate Cup championship in Division III, which includes the largest companies in the Kanawha Valley.

The DEP finished with 250 points in the final standings, easily outdistancing DOW by 41 points. The final day was the only time the DEP led in the points standings during the entire two-week Cup competition.

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The Division of Water and Waste Management's Chris Daugherty prepares to let the shot fly during women's competition at University of Charleston Stadium. Daugherty finished second in the event.



The Division of Air Quality's Jerry Williams checks out the competition as he finishes up the men's Open 5-K run at University of Charleston Stadium. Williams placed fifth in the Division III category.



The DEP's bowling team of (from left) Lewis Halstead, Rose Brodersen, Dan Roberts and Margie Skeens finished sixth in the competition at Venture Lanes.

CORPORATE CUP 2010



The DEP's 10-person tug team finished second in Division III, losing in the finals to a strong City of Charleston team.



Amy Halstead hands the baton to Ed Hamrick during a relay event in track and field competition at UC Stadium.



The DEP's Corporate Cup hardware from the past decade is displayed outside agency headquarters during the team's luncheon in August.



DAQ's Jay Fedczak sizes up a shot during the Hoop Shoot at the Charleston YMCA.



With a ninth straight Corporate Cup championship safely tucked away, the DEP track and field team gathers for a group photo at UC Stadium.

Cup results

A list of Corporate Cup events, how DEP finished and who participated:

- Horseshoes** — 1st Place (Paul Frantz and Kathy Cosco).
- Softball** — Did not place.
- Billiards** — Did not place.
- Bowling** — 6th Place (Rose Brodersen, Lewis Halstead, Margie Skeens and Dan Roberts).
- Putt Putt** — 1st Place (Jay Fedczak and Becky Johnson).
- Volleyball** — 7th Place (Dan Roberts, Greg Null, Mike Warwick, Rich Boehm, Byron Dodson, Debbie Hughes, Debbie Peters, Chris Daugherty, Jenny Todd and Jean Sheppard).
- Tennis** — 1st Place (Robert Keatley and Lisa McClung).
- Darts** — 6th Place (Charlie Scruggs and Margie Skeens).
- Hoop Shoot** — 7th Place (Jay Fedczak, Chris Chadwick, Margie Skeens and Chris Daugherty).
- Closest to the Pin Men** — 6th Place (Jay Fedczak).



T-shirts for sale

Punt, pass and kick champ Margie Skeens displays the DEP Corporate Cup shirt that is available for \$10. Sizes range up to 3X. To purchase a shirt, contact Rose Brodersen at Rosalie.M.Brodersen@wv.gov or ext. 1608.

- Closet to the Pin Women** — Did not place.
- Table Tennis Women** — 3rd Place (Misty Nichols).
- Table Tennis Men** — 2nd Place (Robert Keatley).
- Corn hole** — Did not place.
- Combined Age Swim Relay** — 2nd Place (Mike Warwick, John Wirts, Ashley Carroll and Amy Molgaard).
- Medley Swim Relay** — 4th Place — (John Wirts and Ashley Carroll).
- Open 5,000 M Men's Run** — 5th Place (Jerry Williams).
- Open 5,000 M Women's Run** — 1st Place (Chelsea Jarvis).
- 35 & Over 5,000 M Men's Run** — 4th Place (John Tingley).
- 35 & Over 5,000 M Women's Run** — 2nd Place (Sandy Kee).
- 5000 M Team Walk** — (Jay Fedczak, Mike Egnor, Diana Haid and Megan Smith).

- Shot Put Men** — 7th Place (Mike Egnor).
- Shot Put Women** — 2nd Place (Chris Daugherty).
- Open 100 M Dash Men** — 2nd Place (Hunter Hamrick).
- Open 100 M Dash Women** — 8th Place (Rebecca Barnhart).
- 35 & Over 100 M Dash Men** — 1st Place (Ed Hamrick).
- 35 & Over 100 M Dash Women** — 1st Place (Amy Halstead).
- Punt, Pass & Kick Men** — Did not place.
- Punt, Pass & Kick Women** — 1st Place (Margie Skeens).
- Obstacle Course Men** — Did not place.
- Obstacle Course Women** — 4th Place (Amy Halstead and Chris Daugherty).
- 35 & Over 400 M Relay** — 1st Place (Ed Hamrick, Matt Sweeney and Amy Halstead).
- Open 800 M Relay** — 2nd Place (Ed Hamrick, Jamie Hamrick, Amy Halstead and Chris Daugherty).
- Tug of War** — 2nd Place (Jerry Forren, Hunter Hamrick, Jamie Hamrick, Corey McComas, David Keatley, Lewis Halstead, Margie Skeens, Diana Haid, Christy Puckett and Lisa McClung).

CUP

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"We ran away from everybody ... pun intended," said the Division of Air Quality's Dan Roberts, who coordinates DEP's team.

Matt Sweeney, from the Division of Water and Waste Management, heads up the

DEP track team.

"Matt did an incredible job," Roberts said.

First-place efforts on the final day were turned in by intern Chelsea Jarvis in the women's open 5-K run; Ed Hamrick and Amy Halstead in the age-graded men's and women's 100-meter dashes; Margie Skeens

in the women's punt, pass and kick; and Hamrick, Halstead and Sweeney in the 35-and-over 400-meter medley relay.

Christy Puckett, who works for the Division of Mining and Reclamation out of Welch, drove to Charleston two weeks in a row to compete first in softball and

then in the tug-of-war at track and field day.

Roberts said the focus has already shifted to winning a 10th consecutive crown.

"Ten is just a more intimidating number — it's a decade of wins," he said. "I think we're all motivated to get that one more and make it 10."

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relate to and be willing to invest time in people," she said. "Sometimes, that's the toughest part."

Often, that time is spent explaining to property owners why dumping raw sewage into a stream or allowing a streambank to erode are detrimental to water quality and subsequently to both human and aquatic health.

"You have a lot of people who don't understand what they're doing, but when you explain it to them, it starts to click," Johnson said. "They love fishing and hunting and when you tell them they might not have the same

opportunity to do that with their children, they connect with that."

In the community of Ashland in McDowell County, DuPree was instrumental in securing an onsite wastewater treatment system that will bring 23 homes and businesses treatment for the first time and halt the discharge of raw sewage into a stream.

These days, she is going door-to-door downstream of Ashland, offering residents grant/loan packages to install septic systems where it is practical.

In Harrison County, Schmidt convinced several landowners to allow the construction of pas-

sive wetland treatment cells on their property to clean up AMD-tainted Lambert Run, a West Fork River tributary that had been severely impaired by years of pre-law mine drainage.

Today, life is returning to Lambert Run.

"Everything we do is based on voluntary compliance by the landowners," Schmidt said. "We can't force anyone to do anything."

Basin coordinators are not regulators, a fact the public doesn't always easily grasp, DuPree said.

"You have to start off by saying, 'That's not what we do.' But I love the people.

"I'm a social person.

You have to have that social skill," DuPree said.

"Our job is really fun," Hartman said. "We're not preaching, 'You'd better do this or you're going to be fined.'"

Schmidt, meanwhile, said he keeps his focus on moving forward.

"Our program still exists and that's the good thing," he said. "As long as somebody understands what we do and we have some success doing what we do, then we'll get money.

"Our program is pretty transparent. There are no egos involved. There are no axes to grind. We're out there for one purpose: to try to make things better."

DEP staffers win another SAG award

By Colleen O'Neill

The Information Technology Office has won yet another award.

Its Technical Applications and Geographic Information Systems Unit (TAGIS) has been honored with a SAG award, which stands for Special Achievement in GIS.

The Department of Environmental Protection's ITO was chosen, along with 139 others, from a list of 250,000 organizations for this international award. This is the fourth SAG award that TAGIS has won. TAGIS also won SAG awards in 2000, 2005 and 2009.

SAG awards recognize organizations that have made extraordinary contributions to society and set new precedents for the GIS community.

TAGIS has embraced the technology of Environmental Systems Research Institute Inc., or ESRI, the world leader in GIS modeling and mapping software and technology. Its GIS mapping software helps users understand and visualize data to make decisions based on the best information. ESRI is built on the philosophy that a geographic approach to problem-solving ensures better communication and collaboration. Its GIS technology leverages this geographic insight to address social, economic, business, and environmental concerns on local, regional, national, and global scales.

Two TAGIS members worked on developing these applications, which use a browser rather than specialized software. This enables access to these applications to be possible from any computer with any browser, so no additional training is required.

"State government agencies struggle with standing up the ArcGIS Server backend for these applications because it requires a more knowledgeable staff and more robust infrastructure (servers and network capacity)," said Larry K. Evans, supervisor of TAGIS. "Of those that manage to suc-

cessfully stand up ArcGIS Server, most outsource their geospatial applications development because finding and keeping staff that are knowledgeable about developing Rich Internet Applications, using one of the three ESRI applications programming interfaces (APIs), is even harder. Examples of a bordering state that has outsourced development using the same Adobe Flex API that we have been using is Maryland.

"Adobe Flex is a programming environment that allows a program to be written to run on a browser, such as Microsoft's Internet Explorer or Firefox (with Adobe Flash player installed) on an employee's PC from anywhere that has Internet connectivity," Evans said.

"The application on the browser runs processes on a server that can access information many miles away. As an example, a user can run the Equis application on their browser in the Logan field office, but the serious computing happens on a blade Server in our computer room in Kanawha City. The results of the processing show on his or her browser in Logan."

Like ArcGIS, which is DEP's desktop mapping software that requires hours of training, this software allows users to see the environmental problem. It can use data, like layers, from other state agencies or even other Internet-based sources.

"This is the future, it is an easy way to provide real time information, both visually and accurately," said Zahid Chaudhry, one of the TAGIS members who worked on developing these applications.

"ESRI's server technology allows us to publish any data layer that we feel might be useful," said Mike Shank, the other member of the development team. "We use some of these data layers in our own applications, but essentially anyone could use them in their own applications.

"Also, our applications



Last year's Employee Appreciation Event drew a good crowd.

Volunteers needed for Event picnic

Volunteers are needed for various duties before, during and after the DEP Employee Appreciation Event picnic on Sept. 22 at Little Creek Park in South Charleston.

Event organizer Kenna DeRaimo said she needs people to help with setup, which includes erecting tents, decorating and putting out coolers with water.

During the event, she is looking for bingo callers and someone to lead a nature walk.

Volunteers are needed for cleanup as well, which includes taking down the tents, boxing decorations and packing vans.

The event begins at noon.

If you'd like to help, contact DeRaimo at ext. 1544 or Kenna.M.DeRaimo@wv.gov.

indepth

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Fairmont first WVSC member

By Tom Aluise

West Virginia Sustainable Communities has come a long way since 2005, when a group of young interns from the Student Conservation



Association ventured to Braxton and Nicholas counties to preach the values of sustainability to residents, schools and businesses.

What began as an initiative of the Department of Environmental Protection has evolved into a well-developed program administered by the West Virginia Community Development Hub. It provides the tools necessary for communities to be sustainable at all levels — environmentally, economically and socially — for the people who live there now, as well as in the future.

“I believe that West Virginia communities have the ability to help themselves grow stronger, lead healthier lives, and become more prosperous now and into the future,” said Greg Adolfson, sustainability officer for the DEP. “I know that communities have within them the leadership and ability to make more informed decisions about solutions to problems and West Virginia Sustainable Communities will help them realize their potential.”

One of those communities is the city of Fairmont, which, in early July, was selected by the Community Develop-



The City of Fairmont (above) was named in July as the first West Virginia Sustainable Communities member.

ment Hub and other sustainability leaders from a list of 20 applicants as the first official West Virginia Sustainable Communities (WVSC) member.

In all, the Hub and its partners — the DEP, Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation, Bridgemont Community and Technical College and Travel Green Appalachia — will name five WVSC members who will employ the WVSC Step-by-Step process that focuses on creating awareness, assessing needs, developing a Sustainability Action Plan and implementing that plan.

WVSC staff will provide continual support through workshops, training, monitoring and evaluation as the communities work toward goals that include lower energy costs, water conservation, improved air quality and social and economic development.

Fairmont, which hopes to have its Sustainability Action Plan in place by the end of the year, was chosen as the first WVSC member because of its initiative and

commitment to the program, said Tomoko Tamagawa, WVSC program manager.

“Fairmont was able to rally private and public support for their application pledge very promptly,” Tamagawa said. “Without our prompt, they created a sustainability committee, which will be their working group. We have no doubt they’ll be able to take advantage in the coming months of the resources we have up our sleeves.”

Fairmont City Planner Kathy Wyrosdick said her community takes sustainability concepts seriously and had already moved ahead with plans to retrofit traffic signals with energy-efficient LED (light-emitting diode) lights before being named a WVSC member.

Still, she said Fairmont’s work toward implementing other sustainable measures hasn’t been as focused and coordinated as it should be.

“We felt that West Virginia Sustainable Communities would provide us with the organization

and focus we needed to really make a difference,” Wyrosdick said. “We acted quickly to meet the application deadline and to tap into the available resources as soon as possible.

“Becoming a sustainable community will provide us with much-needed guidance and technical assistance to make our ideas become reality. Our dedicated team has the motivation and many great ideas but too often lacks the resources and time to follow up.

“Through West Virginia Sustainable Communities, we’ll be able to create a sustainability action plan that will help prioritize our goals for sustainability so that we can start realizing those that are most important on a community-wide basis.”

Wyrosdick said there are a number of projects she is interested in researching through WVSC, including sustainable land development, energy-efficient building design and retrofits on public facilities, neighborhood design that is sustainable and includes providing alternative modes of transportation and historic preservation.

“I am excited about Fairmont’s commitment to West Virginia Sustainable Communities and hope other communities follow suit,” Adolfson said. “I hope Fairmont realizes the benefits of fiscal resilience, public empowerment and competitiveness and how these will translate into creating a sustainable community.”

Youth Environmental Program numbers steady

By Colleen O’Neill

The Department of Environmental Protection’s Youth Environmental Program has more than 800 clubs enrolled statewide and

over 74,000 members.

YEP enrollment figures for 2010 were recently released. The numbers have held steady the past five years largely because of the personal attention

given by the field staff and YEP Coordinator Diana Haid.

“The Youth Environmental Program enrollment grew to over 1,200 groups in the early 90’s,” said Haid, who’s been in

charge of the program since 1982. “Program enrollment stabilized at over 800 groups in 2004 and fluctuates somewhere between 825 to

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Waking up the walls



New paint scheme, photos breathe life into DEP hallways

By Tom Aluise

If June Casto required any more convincing that the main hallways in DEP headquarters needed a facelift, she got it in the form of a slip of paper deposited in the first-floor suggestion box — by a visitor to the building, no less.

“You need to break the monotony in the hallways and make it more welcoming instead of being so sanitized and impersonal,” the note read.

That happened in 2008 and Casto, chief of the DEP’s Office of Administration, had long thought something needed to be done to add personality to the building’s staid hallways that were drawing comparisons to the inside of a hospital.

“I’ve always wanted to do something with the walls,” Casto said.

That thought process picked up steam this past spring when discussions began about placing photos depicting West Virginia scenes on the first-, second- and third-floor main hallway walls.

DEP Communications Director Kathy Cosco suggested new paint schemes as well and a project was born. Black paper squares were placed along the third-floor hallway wall where photos might hang and splashes of different colored paints were added to walls as samples.

Casto said some folks were just happy to have black squares of paper to look at.

“I actually had people come down the hall and say, ‘I’ll take this.’ They were just happy to have something up there.”

Deputy Cabinet Secretary Lisa McClung, Executive Assistant Autumn Smith and Executive Secretary Gary Casto joined June Casto and Cosco in going through over 100 photos by local photographer Steve Payne.

Once the photos were selected, paint colors were chosen.

Casto said the group tried to select photos for the first floor that emphasized the sky and clouds to mesh with the first-floor Division of Air Quality offices.

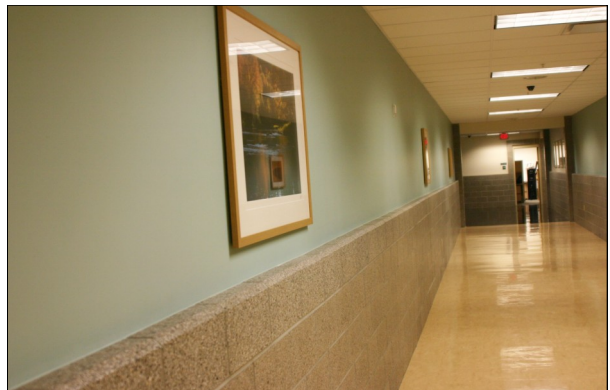
A water theme was sought for second-floor pictures to jell with the Division of Water and Waste Management offices.

“The third floor was a mix of everything,” Casto said.

In all, 56 pictures of varying sizes were cho-



FIRST FLOOR: “SOCIALABLE”



SECOND FLOOR: “QUIETUDE”



THIRD FLOOR: “BONA FIDE BEIGE”

sen, some of which were placed in the Executive Offices and West Virginia room.

On June 18, General Services painted the walls with eco friendly paint — third floor features “Bona Fide Beige,” second “Quietude” and first “Socialable” — and Payne hung the photos himself on June 20.

Casto said everybody seems pleased with the new look.

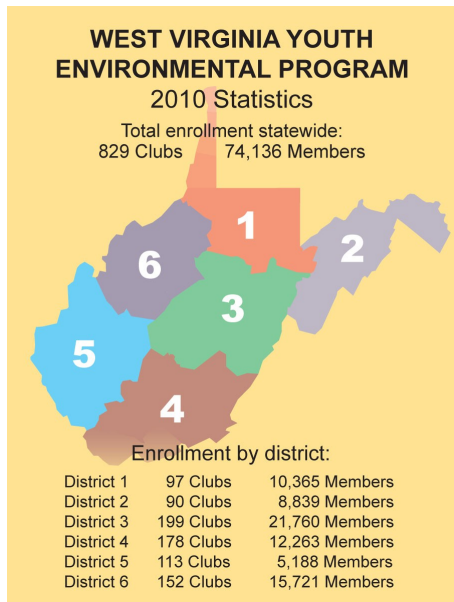
“I have not had one negative comment,” she said. “People are saying it’s starting to look homey.”

Rick Doneghy, an Information Systems manager for DEP, said he makes it a point to walk through the hallways to admire the photos.

“The photographs chosen to decorate the walls are incredible works of art,” Doneghy said. “I thought some of them were paintings.

“I’ve often heard that the photographer attempts to make his photos look like paintings, whereas the artist tries to make his paintings look like photos.

“These photos are amazing and they were all taken in West Virginia.”



NUMBERS

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850 groups.” Currently there are 829 youth groups enrolled in the YEP statewide, representative of 74,136 members. The state is split up into six districts. “YEP tracks the youth groups’ projects by the reports they turn in,” Haid said. “As far as submitting reports, Mason and Wood counties turn in more reports, posters and scholarship applications than the other counties. However, there are several counties that have really active youth groups, including Harrison, Upshur, Preston, Pleasants, Wirt, Jackson, Roane, Fayette, Summers and Putnam.”

The most recent reporting year ran from April 16, 2009 through April 15, 2010. Youth groups don’t usually meet during the summer, so most of their projects, such as recycling and cleanup work, start in the fall when school starts and run through spring.

Haid said only 48 of the 829 groups submitted reports for 2010. District III, which has the most clubs (199) and members (21,760) includes Braxton, Clay, Lewis, Nicholas, Pocahontas, Randolph, Upshur and Webster counties.

FORUM

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fungus known as White-nose Syndrome that has killed at least one million hibernating bat species in nine states, including West Virginia.

The seriousness of White-nose Syndrome, first discovered in 2007 and named after the white ring of fungus found around the nose of affected bats, accentuates the coal industry’s need to be mindful

of bat populations in mining areas.

“White-nose Syndrome is such an important issue and it will be an important part of this presentation,” Fala said.

The forum will begin with a field trip on Aug. 31 to pre-law mining sites along the New River Gorge, where the DEP’s Office of Abandoned Mine Lands has installed several bat friendly, gated closures on mine portals. It will include a stop at a surface mine

near Kanawha State Forest on the Boone-Kanawha line and in the vicinity of an Indiana bat colony.

Several speakers have been lined up as well for the forum, including the DEP’s Jim Ratcliff, Robert Rice and Ashley Carroll.

Ratcliff, from the Office of Explosives and Blasting, will talk about ground-breaking research on the effects of surface mine blasting on pre-law underground

mines that harbor bats. Rice, from AML, will speak on gating mine portals to preserve bat habitats. And Carroll, from DMR, will talk about how White-nose Syndrome is affecting the state’s mining program.

Other speakers scheduled include J.D. Wilhide, from Compliance Monitoring Laboratories in Chapmanville, who has been monitoring the Indiana bat colony in Boone County.

Timeliness of claims key to reimbursement

By Colleen O’Neill

In the United States in 2008, 277,680 state and government workers were out of work from occupational injuries and illnesses.

At the Department of Environmental Protection, close to 25 Workers Compensation claims were filed in fiscal year 2010. So far, in FY 2011, two claims have been filed.

“Most accidents that require medical attention and a subsequent Workers’ Comp claim are due to trips, slips and falls, as well as back injuries due to improper lifting and so forth,” said Teresa Weaver, the agency benefits coordinator. “Insurance is just one of the benefits of working at DEP. Very few Workers’ Comp claims resulted in missed work time. The employees don’t abuse or take advantage of the system.”

If you have an incident or an accident and need to

miss work, or if you have a serious illness that causes you to miss work, what do you do?

“Always file an accident report for any workplace incident or accidents and notify Human Resources ASAP to file a claim if medical attention is necessary,” Weaver said.

She stressed that the claim needs to be filed when the event happens, within one or two days.

“The claims are important — reimbursement depends on a timely claim being filed. If employees wait too long to file a claim, then it’s harder to verify and that affects reimbursement. And with the economy being the way it is, people need every possible penny.”

Weaver tries to educate employees by sending out helpful e-mails that outline what needs to be done. Such an e-mail was sent out in July.

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AWARD

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often include layers from sources outside the DEP,” Shank said. “Increasingly, other agencies, like the Division of Natural Resources and the Department of Transportation, are implementing the same technology, which allows us to use their data directly without having to get a copy from them. We also use base layers available from ESRI, and sometimes Bing (Microsoft) in our apps.”

As the DEP is an agency dedicated to the preservation and cultivation of the environment while allowing man to prosper, the rewards from using GIS technology to visualize the situation in question is great.

“It is very useful for oil and gas folks,” Chaudhry said. “They can see whether there is a chance of hitting a mine or any hazard for a proposed oil and gas well site.”

DEP July retirements

Tim Bennett

Office of Oil and Gas
Last day: July 30, 2010
Years of service: 21

Dick Darnell

Office of Abandoned Mine Lands
Last day: July 30, 2010
Years of service: 34



Larry Robertson

Division of Water and Waste Management
Last Day: July 16, 2010
Years of service: 17

Robertson says:

I am retiring and wish to say goodbye to those I have worked with at DEP. This is my second retirement, with the U.S. Army being the first in 1992.

The past 18 years have passed quickly and I have truly enjoyed my job as an Environmental Enforcement Inspector.

The job of an Enforcement Inspector allows him/her to be in direct contact with the public on a daily basis and actions taken by these inspectors have a direct impact upon improving the environment and community he/she works. These impacts and their successes are what I have thrived upon for the past two decades.

I have also enjoyed working with those professionals staffing DEP. All those I have come into contact with have gained my respect for their desire to do the best job possible.

I feel fortunate to have been able to retire and to have had the opportunity to serve with each of you and the Department of Environmental Protection.

Thank you!

New Additions Recent DEP hires

- ▶ Michael Ashworth, ITO
- ▶ Angelita Casto, DWWM
- ▶ Fred Degasperin, DMR
- ▶ Daniel Feuillet, DMR
- ▶ Jarrett James, DAQ

Human Resources corner



PLANS Project Q&A

(Hay Classification and Compensation Project)

1. When do I have to have the Job Content Questionnaire (JCQ) completed?

There is no set date for now. The most recent communication that has been provided indicated the site will open soon for the Human Resources Section. There will be updates to the system before anyone can submit the JCQ electronically.

2. Should I go ahead and complete the JCQ though the electronic submission is not available?

Yes. Go ahead and complete the form and save it in Word format. Once the electronic system is available you will be notified.

3. Is there time for other small groups to work on a group JCQ?

Yes. If you have a small group of folks within the same classification performing same or like duties, we encourage a group JCQ. If assistance is needed, you can contact the HR section for help.

4. Am I required to participate in a group JCQ?

No. Though it is encouraged, it is not a requirement.

5. Does my manager/supervisor need to complete the JCQ once the employee has completed his/her section of the JCQ?

Yes. The manager/supervisor has a section that will require his/her comments, much like the current position description form requirement.

6. I anticipate some changes to my current duties, so should I describe my job as it is now, or should I include duties that I anticipate for the future?

You should describe your duties as they currently exist.

7. Should I list a one-time duty or a temporary assignment as part of my duties?

No. This process is to designate the major most important permanent responsibilities of your job.

8. What should the Job Purpose section include?

The job purpose section is a summary of the job and what is the overall end result expected for the job and should be no more than two (2) to three (3) sentences. It is not a laundry list of tasks.

9. What if a question(s) do not apply to me, should I leave the space blank?

No. If it does not apply to you, then respond N/A.

10. Is there a certain order in which the essential duties should be listed?

Yes. The essential duties should be in order of importance.

11. Can I use acronyms when describing my duties?

No. Please spell out the word(s) you are using when describing your duties.

12. If I do not understand the question or should I need assistance, who should I contact?

You can visit the website designated for this project: <http://www.plans.wv.gov/Pages/default.aspx> or you can contact Debbie Hughes, Kim Akers, Sheri Richardson, Debbie Pickens, Judy Smith or Sandy Kee in HR.

▶ Please look for more information on the PLANS Project in the future, as well as other related Human Resource topics.

FRONT

Continued from Page 1

for 15 years. Belding is a brunette and has been a receptionist for two months.

But like ice cream and chocolate sauce, they complement each other well. Weese has the experience, having been with DEP for almost 27 years, first as a custodian before becoming the front desk receptionist. She is laid-back, easy-going and reserved. She exudes a confidence that only comes from experience.

"I guess you could say I grew up here," Weese said.

Belding, on the other hand, just came to DEP and this is her first stint as a receptionist. Her experience lies in other areas. She was once a statement clerk at a bank. And she is skilled at being versatile, having worked temporary assignments. She is enthusiastic with high energy and enjoys socializing.

"We get along, which is good as we work so closely together, in such tight accommodations," Belding said of her relationship with Weese.

She went on to explain how they work together and support each other, especially when one is having a bad day. "If we're about to snap, we say something and then go outside and take a walk. We back each other up," Belding said.

A large part of their job involves answering the phone. And every call isn't easy to deal

"I do think it is good experience and a real learning challenge to deal with all sorts of people."

Judee Weese
DEP receptionist

with.

Belding said a large part of calls come from people wanting to be connected to a particular person or extension.

"I've never tried to count, but I'd guess those as at least half," Belding said. "Then there are calls where people start giving me permit numbers or file names and I have to stop them and back them up to what department they need.

"Then there are calls where people don't know what to ask for, and we have to keep asking questions until we know where the call goes. Many calls start with people telling me that they don't think I can help them. Fortunately, they're usually wrong.

"I've gotten a few angry or upset callers. I always try to listen, let people know who works on their problem and say where I'm sending them next.

"I haven't yet had someone who was so upset they didn't calm down when I tried to help them."

Weese said for the most part, people are nice.

"There are those few

who aren't so nice, but you will have that when working with the public," she said.

All jobs have challenging aspects. Weese and Belding have varying viewpoints about what's the most difficult aspect of their position.

"The most difficult aspect of the job is difficult people who won't be reasoned with," Weese said. "I do think it is good experience and a real learning challenge to deal with all sorts of people. Without the bad, I would not know how good the good was."

"Keeping track of visitors can be so hard," Belding said. "We have to log everyone in and out. But when the lobby is very busy, sometimes we realize someone's gotten by without logging out.

"That's something we do our best to keep from happening.

"But when people enter and leave the building through other doors, it's not something we can prevent, and it's a major safety concern. If someone needs to reach a visitor who came in with someone at the side, the front desk will tell the caller that per-

son didn't sign in. Then the caller won't know where to look. If someone never signed out and an emergency happened, we might have a rescue worker risking themselves to search an unsafe area, trying to save someone who left five hours before."

One thing both women have in common is their fondness for DEP and their job.

"I like mostly everything about my job, I guess that is why I have been doing it so long," Weese said. "I have to say we have the best view in the building and the biggest room, although we share it with everyone. I have an opportunity to learn all aspects of DEP."

"I like the people and the interesting things they do," Belding said.

"John Wirts recently spared some time to tell me about the water lab, for example, and some of the work he'd been doing. I've spent other breaks looking at the rain garden.

"Handling calls is more than hearing a name and looking it up," Belding said. "I do a lot of reading about DEP, and sometimes I randomly ask people what they do, or go ask a division secretary for information.

"Also, I like the view from the front. Sometimes, just after we've been slammed with activity, I look out and the trees are green and the sky is vivid, and everything is suddenly better."

CLAIMS

Continued from Page 10

"I thought it would be beneficial to the employees if I listed the steps they need to follow," Weaver said. "I know it can be confusing and overwhelming, and sometimes having a list in front of you helps.

Steps include:

► Reporting accidents/incidents to your supervisor immediately.

► Submitting a com-

pleted accident/incident report to Tammy Thornton, safety coordinator, within two days of accident/incident (with/without injury).

► If medical treatment was required, contacting Weaver within one day of treatment to file the employer's portion of the Workers' Comp claim.

"I also put the Workers' Comp brochure on the employee intranet," Weaver said.

"The Workers' Comp-

sation system, although on a rather tight schedule, does work, and if things are done in a timely manner, it runs quite smoothly."

■ ■ ■

New insurance premiums went into effect July 1 and Weaver said employees should check to make sure they have been charged the correct premiums.

Weaver said employees should compare insurance deductions on

the July 16 paycheck to the corresponding insurance rates listed in the insurance shopper's guide.

"Remember, the rates listed in the guide are tobacco user rates, you will need to deduct the appropriate amount listed in the paragraph at the top of the insurance rates page for non-tobacco user rates," Weaver said.

Contact Weaver with any questions.