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DEP Launches Sustainable Travel Pilot Project

Project will help travelers find green destinations in West Virginia

by Jake Glance

There is a segment of the traveling population who, in addition to asking the standard questions like "What is check-in time?," also want to know what sustainability efforts their hosts are involved in.

DEP's latest pilot project, Sustainable Travel West Virginia, is designed to help them more easily get an answer that question.

Greg Adolfsen, the DEP's sustain-

ability officer, and Kelley Gillenwater, the communication director, shared how business owners can get noticed by those travelers during the annual Governor's Conference on Tourism at Canaan Valley Resort and Conference

Center.

Sustainable Travel West Virginia is the first in what is hoped to be many efforts to promote sustainability efforts in several business sectors.

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Sustainable Travel West Virginia



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Office of Abandoned Mine Lands & Reclamation's Work Will Last For Centuries

Massive projects are vital to state's environment and public health

by Jake Glance

It might be impossible to overstate the impact that the DEP's Office of Abandoned Mine Lands and Reclamation (AML&R) is having on West Virginia's future.

There are countless abandoned mines in West Virginia - some dating back more than 100 years and some that have not even been rediscovered yet - that require extensive reclamation to ensure that they do not pose a threat to the safety and health of citizens.

That is why AML&R is so vital - the past must be corrected to promote a healthy environment in the present and future.

In the past year alone, AML&R has completed 56 projects to protect



AML&R's projects included this one at the Black Eagle #2 refuse pile in Wyoming County. It's one of dozens of projects that eliminated health and safety hazards for citizens living in mining areas of West Virginia.

the life, health, and safety at sites across the state.

Those 56 projects were not cheap. All told, the AML&R projects cost more than \$23.2 million dollars.

AML&R completed six water line projects through the issuance of sub-grants. More than \$12.5 million dollars was spent on these projects.

Because of these projects, 1,089 customers, whose drinking water had been adversely affected by pre-law (before the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977) mining, are now being provided clean drinking

water.

In the last 12 months there were 23 emergency projects - projects where human life was in danger - completed at a cost of more than \$2.5 million.

The Acid Mine Drainage (AMD) Set Aside Program treated water on seven projects to restore more than 93 miles of streams that had been adversely affected by AMD. Those projects were completed at a cost of nearly \$312,000.

AML&R also supervised the reclamation of 20 dangerous mine sites at a cost of nearly \$7.9 million.

DEP & Governor Award \$1M Grant to 3 Coalfield Counties

by Jake Glance

Hundreds of miles of streams in the Guyandotte River Watershed in Boone, Logan and Mingo Counties will be cleaned up, thanks to a \$1 million dollar grant provided to the Human Resources Development Foundation (HRDF) by the West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection.



Gov. Earl Ray Tomblin and DEP Cabinet Secretary Randy C. Huffman presented the grant on Sept. 23 at the Ralph R. Willis Career and Technical Center, which sits next to the Guyandotte River north of Man.

The grant presentation was attended by workers from the HRDF - many of whom are coal miners who are currently out of work due to the industry downturn.

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How Important Is Clean Water? It's ...

Hard 2 Overstate

Events show how water and the environment affect one another

by Jake Glance

Recent water festivals have helped hundreds of students across the region learn more about the water cycle and the importance of clean drinking water.



These students were not afraid to get their hands dirty at the display hosted by Glenn Nelson, WVDEP Save Our Streams Coordinator. He showed the impact impaired streams can have on insects.

Tomi Bergstrom, an environmental resources specialist with the Division of Water and Waste Management, said there have been seven water festivals this year and each one has been a resounding success.

The water festivals don't just focus on the importance of clean drinking water. They focus on how clean water affects many aspects of the environment, such as the impact on plants and animals.

The festivals also included displays that showed students how air quality is tied to water quality.

The West Virginia Department of Natural Resources also participated in the water festivals, with snake expert Jim Fregonara sharing information about venomous and non-venomous snakes and how to tell the difference.

As usual, Fregonara's display,



Water festivals don't just focus on water quality. The Division of Air Quality's Rex Compston and Theresa Adkins explain to students how the environment can be adversely affected if one element is contaminated.

which allowed students to touch snakes, and the display staffed by Glenn Nelson of the DEP's Watershed Improvement Branch, which allowed students to handle insects, were the most popular.

"If children know where their water comes from and all the pollutants that can get in it - many from humans - then they will likely have more respect for clean water and not waste it or take it for granted," said Bergstrom.

"After attending our festivals they may begin to notice if a stream's water is clear or not, if there's trash in the stream, if it holds aquatic life. It gets their brain asking questions and thinking outside the box. By introducing them to these topics through hands on activities, we think they will take an interest in protecting water for them-

selves and their environment."

Partnerships with local watershed associations helped make the events more successful.

The water festivals were held this year on May 24 in Ritchie County, Aug. 13 in Jackson County, Sept. 1 in Charleston, Sept. 7 and 8 in Ritchie County, Sept. 14 in Huntington, and Sept. 22 in Montgomery.

Nearly 1,500 students, ranging from third grade to high school seniors, attended.

ECOS Holds Fall Meeting in WV



The Environmental Council of States (ECOS) recently held its fall meeting at Oglebay Resort in Ohio County. DEP Cabinet Secretary Randy C. Huffman gave an introductory address in conjunction with a video welcome by Gov. Tomblin. ECOS is the national association of state, tribal and territorial environmental agency leaders. Its purpose is to improve the capability of state environmental agencies and their leaders to protect and improve human health and the environment of the U.S. Forty-two of the 47 ECOS member states were represented at the meeting. In the photo, Secretary Huffman is seen with Stan Meiberg, Acting Deputy Administrator of the USEPA, and Martha Rudolph, Director of Environmental Programs of the Colorado Department of Public Health & Environment.



Earl Ray Tomblin

Governor

Randy C. Huffman

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DEP, ReStore Team Up For Successful Paint Drive



The DEP and the Habitat for Humanity of Kanawha and Putnam County's ReStore had another successful latex paint drive on Sept. 14. More than 2,370 pounds of paint were donated to the ReStore through the drive. The paint will now be filtered, mixed, repackaged, and sold at the ReStore. Above, ReStore Donations Manager Courtney Crabtree (left) prepares to go live on WCHS-TV Channel 8 with Nick Patrick (center).

DEP Employee Picnic Set for Oct. 19

by Jake Glance

The 2016 DEP Employee Picnic will be held Wednesday, Oct. 19, at DEP headquarters in Kanawha City.

If you plan to attend, you should have already RSVP'd to Lori Saylor via email and provided your shirt size for your DEP polo shirt.

In addition to lunch being provided, this year's activities include a hike led by Dennis Stottlemeyer of the Office of the Environmental Advocate, a motorcycle simulator provided by the DMV, arts and crafts activities, and the always popular popcorn and cotton candy machines.

Rare Coin Treasure Found In Flood Debris, Returned To Owner

by Colleen O'Neil

Sometimes just doing your job can reveal your character.

For Chris Cartwright, an environmental resource specialist with the Department of Environmental Protection's Rehabilitation Environmental Action Plan (REAP) group, what started as a routine cleanup became one of those character revealing events.

"On June 28th, I was contacted by Sgt. Jerry Payne of the West Virginia Division of Natural Resource's Law Enforcement Section," Cartwright said.

"He explained that the Clendenin Church of the Nazarene needed assistance in getting their parking lot cleaned off."

A large pile of flood debris had accumulated in the church parking lot from the church and surrounding homes. Donations from other areas were pouring in, ready to be distributed to the local residents, but because of this obstacle, it was nearly impossible for local residents to access the church.

"I was able to contact a contractor in Putnam County that had expressed an interest in helping out free of charge, so I arranged for him to bring equipment and trucks to the church's parking lot on the morning of June 29th."

The cleanup started off as routine. Cartwright was working with the contractor, loading the flood debris into trucks and hauling it to the collection site at the Clendenin Park and Ride.

"As the excavators were working

the pile, crushing debris to reduce its volume, I noticed that a trash can in the pile had been overturned and that several live shotgun rounds had spilled out into the parking lot," he said.

"Out of concern for the safety of everyone working on the site, I quickly picked the rounds up, threw them back in the can, and placed it aside for later disposal."

After working all day on the pile, Cartwright took the trash can to the collection site at Elkview Middle School. The shotgun rounds were of the old paper type, soaked clear through, and the decision was made to place them directly into a truck going to the landfill. Before disposing of the trash can into a truck, though, Chris decided to go through the can, making sure everything was trash.

Good thing he did.

"The bottom of the can was full of water and what appeared to be small cardboard boxes and Ziploc bags. Upon further examination, I found that these boxes and bags contained old coins and currency."

Cartwright called Sgt. Payne and they decided Cartwright should clean up the coins and bring them to the Nitro DNR office where they could be put in a safe for safekeeping until Payne could track down the owners.

"The face value alone of the collection was nearly \$500, with many of the coins being worth more than that as



This is a small sampling of the rare coins and other currency found during the cleanup following the June floods. By cooperating with the WVDNR, the collection was returned to its rightful owner.

collectibles," Cartwright said.

"One coin, an 1892 \$20 gold piece, was valued at over \$1,000."

He described the collection, saying that there were many different coins in the bunch. There were over 100 silver dollars that were minted before 1940, many wheat pennies, several dimes minted before 1800, and other various coins, along with \$1, \$2, and \$5 bills, he said.

When Cartwright was going through the coins, he found the handwritten names, "John and Sylvia."

He went to Payne and after some footwork, the sergeant located and contacted Sylvia. Her late husband was a metal detector enthusiast and an avid

currency and coin collector.

On July 1, she came to Nitro, identified the coins, and claimed them and the pistol ammunition as her rightful property.

Cartwright, who has been with DEP's Pollution Prevention and Open Dump Program for 12 years, has been involved with many cleanups. He says flooding events are always hard.

"The sad thing was the type of things that were in the pile, things that obviously under any other circumstances, no one would have ever thrown away," he said.

But because of his quick thinking and caring nature, one woman got back some sentimental, and valuable, items.

Hooked On A Feeling

by Colleen O'Neill

The rivers of the Mountain State have been a magical place to Ashley Thomas, an environmental resource specialist with the Division of Mining and Reclamation's Oak Hill Office, for a very long time.

"Never did I think it would become such a part of my life," he said.

For nearly three decades, he's been working on the rivers of West Virginia, first as a rafting guide and now as a professional fishing guide.

"I started my river life a week after my 18th birthday in 1989," he said.

"A good friend of mine in high school, his dad was a river manager and myself, as well as quite a few other friends, trained to be whitewater rafting guides that spring. I figured it would be a good summer job while I was in college."

After two decades as a rafting guide, Thomas decided to be a fishing guide. This kept him on the river and enabled him to get his "fix."

His season runs from March to October.

"I love to fish and doing it from a raft is awesome," he said.

"I work for West Virginia Experience, which is one of five or six fishing companies in the area. The company I work for fishes many sections of the New River from Hinton all the way to right under the New River Gorge Bridge. We even fish many stretches of the New River in Virginia. We also fish the Gauley and the Elk rivers."

The company Thomas works for does a lot of repeat business. This enables Thomas to become friendly with the customers.

"After being a fishing guide for almost 10 years, I have a host of folks that fish with me year after year," he said. "Over the few years I've been a guide, I average about 65 percent repeat guests and 35 percent new ones. Most of our clients are regular Joes, although many of them are extremely successful."



DMR's Ashley Thomas has been on the rivers of West Virginia as a rafting or fishing guide for the last 28 years.

"We predominantly target trying to catch smallmouth bass, but most of the rivers we fish have other species of fish like rock bass, walleye, carp, catfish and musky," Thomas said. "So there is a possibility of catching any one of these. Both musky and walleye have some fairly nice teeth. You do not want to get your fingers around their mouth."

"I had a 12 year-old kid hook a carp fishing on the New River in Virginia one time," he said. "We didn't even know what it was for about two minutes because it stayed too deep to see. After we saw it, the kid still fought it about 9-10 minutes and then he started complaining about how his arms were starting to hurt. This prompted me to erupt into a tirade about how soft today's youth had become and making fun of him whine about that 'little fishy' wearing him out. His father was belly laughing hysterically at me giving his son utter grief. In the end, we didn't even land the fish. It broke the line after about a 12 minute fight."

Thomas doesn't do this for the money. After putting in the time and effort required, he explained that he may clear between \$12 and \$14 an hour, before tip.

So why does he do this?

"I do it because I enjoy being the reason other people catch fish almost as much as I do catching them myself," Thomas said. "Spending time on any of the rivers we float around here is time well spent in my book. Every day is an adventure and the scenery never fails to soothe my soul. I can't explain how much floating or being around the waters of a river does to wipe away the stresses of this crazy world we live in now."

Two Tons of Debris Collected During Great Kanawha River Cleanup

Annual event
successful again,
thanks to
volunteers

by Jake Glance

In just a few hours on Saturday, Sept. 24, a team of dedicated volunteers were able to collect more than two tons of debris from the Kanawha River.

The Great Kanawha River Cleanup this year included sites in Fayette, Kanawha and Putnam counties: St. Albans, Winfield, Gauley Bridge, Dunbar and South Charleston.

Ten volunteers collected 400



pounds of debris at St. Albans; 30 volunteers collected 1,820 pounds of debris at Winfield; 16 volunteers collected 780 pounds of debris at Gauley Bridge; nine volunteers collected 560 pounds of debris at Dunbar; and 22 volunteers collected 500 pounds of debris at South Charleston.

The volunteers also collected six tires from the Kanawha River.



The Great Kanawha River Cleanup was successful again this year, thanks to the nearly 100 volunteers and dedicated cooperation between the DEP and countless site coordinators.

STWV

Con't from Page 1

"What we are trying to do is first, we are trying to market the emotional experience that you can have when you travel to different areas of West Virginia," Adolfsen said.

"Second, we are trying to send a message to participants in Sustainable Travel West Virginia that you're going to make money if you do the things you need to do to become more sustainable."

For a travel and tourism-related business to take part in this program, it

would need to enter information into third-party database called EnviroIndex.

Data such as the number of energy efficient windows, water usage per guest, the amount of recycling per guest, and electricity usage is crunched — and then the business gets a rating.

A logo showing membership in the program and the rating, which is signified with one to five green leaves, can be used in promotional material for the business to tout its sustainability efforts - attracting the travelers who sometimes make destination decisions based solely or partially on green efforts.

The project also includes inclusion

of information about each participating businesses on a searchable map accessible to the public.

Kathleen Panek, the owner of the Gillum House Bed and Breakfast in Shinnston in Harrison County, said she plans to take part in the pilot project because green practices for her business are better for her bottom line.

"To me, 'eco' is 'economical.' It is green in my wallet," Panek said.

"If I buy in bulk, it costs less. If I limit my amount of water usage, it costs less. If I use perfume free, dye free, laundry detergent I am not going to trigger allergies for my guests. So we do things the way we do because it

GREEN TRAVEL

According to TripAdvisor, 79 percent of travelers said implementing eco-friendly practices is important to their choice of lodging.

But only 8 percent said it was easy to find green travel options.

Sustainable Travel West Virginia will help address that gap.

makes sense to save money, and yes, save the environment."

For more information on Sustainable Travel West Virginia, [check out this page on the DEP website.](#)

GRANT

Con't from Page 1

The grant money comes from a DEP fund into which solid waste assessment fees are deposited. Under the Solid Waste Management Act, a portion of these fees can be used, at the DEP secretary's discretion, for the "purposes of reclamation, cleanup and remedial actions intended to minimize or mitigate damage to the environment, natural resources, public water supplies, water resources and the public health, safety and welfare which may result from open dumps or solid waste not disposed of in a proper or lawful manner."

This grant will fund the HRDF's efforts for one year. It will also cover the costs of proper disposal of the collected materials.

About two dozen streams, including the Guyandotte River, are being targeted for cleanup under the grant. Other worksites, such as parks, may be identified by HRDF and county commissions as well.

Approximately 30 workers - displaced coal miners, veterans and residents impacted by floods and other disasters - will be hired with the funding, and will also receive training and



DEP Cabinet Secretary Randy C. Huffman and Gov. Earl Ray Tomblin presented the ceremonial check to the workers of the HRDF on Sept. 23 at the Ralph R. Willis Career and Technical Center in Man.

job placement assistance.

Johnathan Bradford, a laid off coal miner who is now a worksite supervisor with the HRDF, said that crews he has worked with over the past year have cleared 211 miles of streams in Boone, Logan and Mingo counties and have removed 371 tons of trash and debris.

That's more than 3,500 pounds of trash per mile. Even Gov. Tomblin, during his remarks at the presentation, remarked at how trash strewn the Guyandotte River was in the past. He said that following floods, the high water mark was clear because of the debris stuck in trees.

It's the efforts by people like Bradford and his hard working crew that will try to make sure that never happens again.

"It takes a special person to reach down in places that normal people don't want to reach," Bradford said of his co-workers.

"To reach down under a brush pile and pull a pop can out. You don't know what's under that brush pile."

The cleanup of the Guyandotte River can help stimulate other projects in the area, including the Hatfield-McCoy ATV trail system.

Bradford said he believes the southern coalfields' natural beauty can rival that of another area of the country famous for its rugged appeal.

"I've been to the Smoky Mountains. The Smoky Mountains ain't got nothing on us. This is my area and my home and I hope to make it look 100 percent better when we're done."



DID YOU SERVE? ARE YOU SERVING? DEP WANTS TO THANK YOU!

The DEP is planning a special tribute to veterans for the November edition of inDEPth.

If you wish to take part in this salute to our veterans, email [Jake Glance](#) for more information.

This salute is strictly voluntary.

Even if you do not wish to take part, thank you for your service to our nation.

New Hires

- Jonathan Carney, Division of Air Quality
- Matthew Codispoti, Division of Air Quality
- Logan Dominick, Environmental Enforcement
- Benjamin Fancher, Division of Land Restoration
- Thomas Hymes, Business and Technology Office
- Dominique Madison, Division of Water and Waste Management
- Stephen Morgan, Office of Environmental Remediation
- Chad Swick, Environmental Enforcement
- Julie Wandling, Division of Water and Waste Management

Recent/Upcoming Retirements

- Dwayne Bolyard, Abandoned Mine Lands
- Ralph Coffield, Abandoned Mine Lands
- Ed Hamrick, Executive Office
- Denise Hight, Office of Environmental Remediation
- Gleason Horrocks, Division of Mining and Reclamation
- Deanna Liegey, Division of Land Restoration
- David Montali, Division of Water and Waste Management
- Robert Price, Division of Mining and Reclamation

