

SWEP Capital Chapter Quarterly Newsletter



Society of Women Environmental Professionals awards a \$500 scholarship at annual "Making Environmental Connections" conference



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SWEP Capital Chapter awarded a \$500 scholarship to Dolores McGee, a Horticulture student at Harrisburg Area Community College (HACC), at the 4th Annual Making Environmental Connections Conference on March 5, 2009. Scholarship applicants were asked to submit a description of an independent project they are working on, and how the knowledge gained from the project can be applied to current environmental issues.



will include an invasive plant survey of the area, research on plant culture and an investigation on control and elimination methods. Based on the findings of her research, Ms. McGee hopes to illustrate the threat of invasive plant species to native plants in the area and in turn, the threat to the regional waterways. She will be making recommendations on how to effectively control or eliminate invasive species in the study area to prevent further degradation to Paxton Creek and other connected waterways. Congratulations

Ms. McGee, whose Horticulture major course of study includes an emphasis on sustainability and conservation, is studying the impact of in-

vasive plants in areas bordering Wildwood Lake, Wildwood Park and along Paxton Creek, a tributary to the Susquehanna River. Her project

to Dolores for being selected to receive the scholarship!



Events at a Glance

- May 2009- Business Meeting -TBD
- June 2009- Lunch & Learn—TBD



Tips From the Flower Show

In case you missed it, the Partnership for the Delaware Estuary worked with the Philadelphia Water Department to create an exhibit at the Philadelphia Flower Show on March 1-8. Over 200,000 people visited the exhibit, which highlighted various ways homeowners can help keep their local waterways clean through some cool new additions to their yards.

http://www.delawareestuary.org/publications/newsletter_articles/winter_2009/tips_from_the_flower_show.asp



Member's Corner: Spotlight on Heidi Biggs

Most women love shoes. Now I won't exclude myself from the majority, I do love shoes, but my preferred footwear for as long as I can remember has been fishing waders. I mean really, if you love versatility, you just can't beat waders! You can go fishing in them, stay clean and dry while four-wheeling through mud puddles; they would work great in a flood and I suppose you could even go sled riding in them. And where I grew up, in Somerset County, you can even wear your waders *to town* without getting funny looks.

I consider myself pretty lucky to be able to wear my footwear-of-choice at my job. I've worked as a Water Pollution Biologist for the DEP for the last three years. Although I spend many of my days in the office reviewing studies, guidance and regulations and going to meetings, I also get plenty of opportunities to get out in the field with my coworkers, pull on my waders and jump in the "crick." (You'd call it a crick too if you came from where I came from!)

My favorite kind of fieldwork is electro-fishing, which involves shocking fish with electricity, which stuns



them and enables you to catch them in a net to see what you've caught. I do love fishing the old-fashion way, with a hook and line or a fly, but if you want to catch a lot of fish in a short amount of time, electricity is the way to go! Don't worry, the fish recover! By the way, the Steelhead trout I am holding in the picture was caught fly-fishing, not electrofishing!

Now what do I do when I am not playing—err, um—working in the crick? My job at the DEP involves the development of statewide water quality standards and specifically, implementing regulations that protect aquatic organisms from the thermal discharges associated with power plants and manufacturing facilities and also the intake structures they use to withdrawal water. I get to wear another type of footwear for that

sort of fieldwork: steel-toe boots!

So maybe waders are more function and less fashion, but I think they can still make a statement... even if that statement is just, "yes I'm a girl, but I am definitely not afraid to get dirty!"

Heidi Biggs has a Bachelor of Science degree in Environmental Biology and Marine Biology from Millersville University.



The SWEP Capital Chapter would like to make "Member's Corner" a reoccurring feature in our newsletter. Please consider submitting a short piece about something that has impacted the path of your personal or professional life.

Member's
Corner

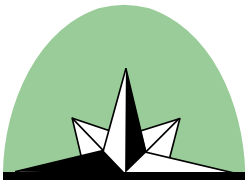
Save the date:

April 15, 2009

"Emerging Contaminants"

forum

Rachael Carson State Office Building



Welcome to Member's Corner - A venue to introduce and share information about your fellow SWEP members!

First Pharmaceutical Collection event in Berk's County – In an effort to avoid soil and water contamination, residents turn in unused medications - Lyn OHare

The July 2008 newsletter featured an article titled "DEP and USGS's cooperative Emerging Contaminant Research in PA" highlighted a May Lunch and Learn presentation. That along with numerous press release articles brought to light the issue of pharmaceutical and personal care products making their way into streams and rivers. The states' waterways happen to be a major source of drinking water supply in Pennsylvania.

Federal guidelines tell you not to flush medications down the drain. So what is a responsible person to do?

two convenient locations, the store along Fifth Street Highway in the Temple section of Muhlenberg Township and at the company's store along Perkiomen Avenue at East Neversink Road, Exeter Township.



SWEP member, Lyn O'Hare of the Berks County Conservation District, assists the Berks County District Attorney's office and Giant Food Store pharmacists collect unwanted medications from local residents.



Finally an option! Recently, collection events have been springing up across the state. Berks County Solid Waste Authority teamed with Giant supermarkets to conduct the first event of its kind in their county. It took place at

The drugs were collected at pharmacies in both Giant supermarket sites on March 21, 2009 between the hours of 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. A total of 220 residents, 80 from the Exeter store and 140 from the Temple store, dropped off expired or unused medicines. The drugs that were collected are:

- Liquid medicines, one 55-gallon drum.
- Pill and capsules, four 55-gallon drums.
- Aerosols, one 55-gallon

drum

- Nitroglycerin, one 5-gallon pail.
- Flammables, one 5-gallon pail.
- Narcotics, three 5-gallon pails.

Source: Berks County Waste Authority.



Representative M. O'Brian just introduced House Bill 33. To be known and cited as the *Pharmaceutical Drug Disposal Act*.

A New Generation of State Water Planning

On March 26, 2009, DEP and Statewide and Regional Water Resources Committee members unveiled a new water plan for the Commonwealth. This state water plan replaces an outdated plan that was completed in 1983.

The obsolescence of the former state water plan led DEP to conduct a series of sixteen water forums in the spring of 2001 that sought opinions from the public about water resource management. The forums helped DEP set its strategic wa-



Representative Kate Harper, a member of the Statewide and Delaware Regional Water Resources Committees, speaks about the importance of water planning at the March 26, 2009 State Water Plan Ceremony.

ter resources management agenda, and generated grass roots support for legislation to require adoption of a new state water plan. The Water Resources Planning Act of 2002, established a Statewide Water Resources Committee and six Regional Water Resources Committees, with approximately 170 appointed members, who were charged with guiding DEP through the development of the new plan and updating this plan at five year intervals.

(Con't page 4)

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A New Generation *(con't from page 3)*

Several SWEP members and other women professionals from around the state served as significant leaders throughout the process of developing this plan and contributed greatly to its success.

Major components of the state water plan include a groundbreaking GIS-based tool used for an initial statewide screening of watersheds to determine where water demands may exceed available water supply; a Statewide and Regional Water Atlas that illustrates regional trends using maps, charts, pictures, and text descriptions; a Water Plan Principles Document, which includes policies, priorities, a legislative recommendations paper and other recommendations of the State Water Plan; an enhanced website,

which is currently under development and will serve as the public portal to the plan's documents, data and information that will feature an interactive digital water atlas, data

download tool and advanced GIS viewer to facilitate informed local water resource decisions and education on water issues; and Chapter 110 Registration and Reporting Regulations that establish the permanent registration, reporting and record-keeping program.

The Draft State Water Plan has three top Priorities and several key Recommendations. In addition, each of



SWEP member Pamela Bishop chats with Statewide Water Resource Committee member, Paul Diskin (PUC), at the March 26th cere-

the Regional Committees has identified two top regional priorities and several key goals and objectives in their respective sections of the Atlas.

The Statewide Priorities are:

1. Continue Gathering, Analyzing and Disseminating Data (to ensure a continuous stream of fresh data to meet immediate planning goals and guide long-range objectives)
2. Promote Integrated Water Resources Management (taking a holistic approach to water resources planning in the commonwealth)
3. Encourage Innovative Technologies (to conserve and enhance water resources)

The Statewide and Regional committees will continue to meet to work on implementation of the recommendations in the plan, to work toward identifying Critical Water Planning Areas where demand for water exceeds supply, and to begin the five year update process required by the Water Resources Planning Act.

For more info on the State Water Plan visit:

<http://www.depweb.state.pa.us/watershedgmt/cwp/view.asp?a=1426&q=486209>

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NEWSLETTER ARTICLES AND MEMBER NEWS SOUGHT

Your input is extremely crucial to a successful and interesting newsletter!

Newsletters will be published each quarter.

- July 2009
- October 2009
- January 2010
- April 2010

Please have articles to committee 2 weeks prior to the beginning of the quarter.

If you are interested in submitting an article about a project you are working on or about a topic you are inter-



ested in, don't be shy, we would love to hear from you!

Also, please send us your news, photographs and announcements to include in upcoming newsletters. Please forward all information to SWEP Newsletter/Website Chair Rhonda Manning at rmanning@state.pa.us.