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June 2011 Progress Report

Highlights

- Contacted numerous local artists to participate in the Anthrascapes Art Silent Auction. Distributed iron oxide and loaned mining memorabilia to be painted as a still life.
- Participated in and compiled minutes from personal notes and those of Program Manager for AMR Conference calls.
- Submitted grant application to ARIPPA on behalf of Huber Breaker Preservation Society.
- Met with Harvard Graduate School of Design graduate Jessica Wolff to review her thesis project on landscape design on reclaimed mine lands and development of the Huber Breaker park.
- Made AMD Chalk with approx 200 children at Hazleton Area Rails to Trails Hike and Bike Event.
- Attended Pennsylvania Association of Environmental Educators discussion forum on developing environmental education certification for PA.
- Assisted with three in-school follow up session for the Tree Trout environmental education programs—two at Kistler Elementary and one at Dan Flood Elementary.
- Wrote press release and distributed it to both Wilkes-Barre Times Leader and Citizen's Voice to raise awareness about the "Tree Trout" macro-invertebrates hung in public places. Press release also published on EPCAMR website.
- Began sketching scenes for AMD Avengers Backdrops.
- Assisted with monitoring Wyoming Valley Boreholes for the first time. Attempted to "unplug" two boreholes previously unmonitored.
- Spoke with Citizen's Voice reporter Elizabeth Skrapits about possible fate of Huber Breaker amongst bankruptcy hearings. Ms. Skrapits interviewed Ray Clarke and wrote front page Sunday article about the legal progressions of the state of the Breaker.

Education and Outreach

- Kistler and Dan Flood Elementary Schools participated in the final phase of the Tree Trout/Macro Mayhem Environmental Education program in the month of June. EPCAMR served the 5th grade classes of both schools during in-school session that included opportunities for the students to create leaf rubbings, view 3-d images of insects and arachnids, identify fresh water fish from rubber models, and trace and decorate their own macro-invertebrates. Each child got to create a leaf identification guide to take home with them to be used to identify tree species in their neighborhoods and throughout the city. They were also able to select from cardboard templates macro-invertebrates they had seen in the stream during their field trip and trace and decorate them. Students could keep their creations, or leave them for EPCAMR to laminate and hang on trees near the locations where students had participated in in-stream macro collection and identification. WCDC wrote a press release about the origination of the colorful “bugs” to be hung at 3 locations, and sent it to reporters at both the Citizen’s Voice and Wilkes-Barre Times Leader prior to hanging the “Tree Trout.”
- WCDC assisted fellow VISTA’s Mike Bloom and Jacklin Steege at annual Hazleton Rails to Trails Hike and Bike Event, sponsored by Hazleton General Hospital and the Greater Hazleton Area Civic Partnership. WCDC made AMD chalk with approximately 200 kids at the annual event to celebrate National Trails Day. VISTA Jacklin Steege of Eckley Miner’s Village helped with the kid’s tent by providing historical wooden toys and games that mining patch town children would have played with. Tara Snyder, volunteer, assisted children with planting sunflower seeds and columbine seedlings. Participants could take home their new plantings and AMD chalk once they were finished. Also in attendance at the event were the Friends of the Nescopeck, represented by Tim Ference, and the Delaware and Lehigh National Heritage Corridor with Dale Freudenberger. The Eckley Village Players also distributed information about Eckley Miner’s Village.
- WCDC began the initial drawings for the AMD avengers vs. Pollution Posse portable back drops. Both canvases have now been prepped in order to form 4 scenes on 2 panels, a total of 8 images that will connect to form the 4 scenes. Using a projector, images directly from the coloring book are enlarged to fit the canvas and create involved scenery to coordinate with the activities portrayed in the coloring/comic book.

Professional Development

- Attended a discussion forum hosted by the PA Association of Environmental Educators to talk about forming a non-formal environmental education standard to be certified by the PAEE. Moderators Chris Tittle and Ruth Roperti, PAEE president led the group and then split the group into smaller discussion topics to prioritize what issues and requirements area environmental educators felt were a priority for new educators to have knowledge of. Various certification formats such as a blanket issued test, a particular number of professional development hours, personal community projects, etc. and combinations thereof were all discussed as possible routes to gain PAEE certification credentials. There was also discussion as to what demographic of educators would most benefit from obtaining the certification, and whether it would enhance the experience of long time teachers, or just be a way for new employees to gain credentials and up their hireability. The session lasted 2.5 hours and was the 3rd one held throughout Pennsylvania,

following NW and SW PA forums. At least two more discussions would be held throughout the state in order to get information and priorities from each region. The certification development process is an ongoing agenda, and will be forming a 20-25 person working group to further the certification program decision-making process.

Technical Assistance

- WCDC developed a grant application to be submitted to ARIPPA for \$1,000 with the help of HBPS Chairman Ray Clarke. The money requested, if awarded, would fund the creation of a “man gate” in the existing iron fence edging the Huber Breaker Memorial Park property on South Main St. in Ashley. The HBPS is able to provide matching funds with money in the HBPS coffers and donated labor from students from Wilkes University, the Wilkes-Barre Area Career and Technical Center, and the Steelworkers Union Apprentices. Grant is administered through a partnership with EPCAMR, WPCAMR, and ARIPPA. Grant awards will hopefully be administered by late August or early September.
- WCDC and Program Manager monitored Wyoming Valley boreholes, including trying to unplug two that have been previously unable to be measured. The Lance borehole, below Route 11 next to a community park, has been water logged and filled with sediment and litter. Attempts were made to auger out the hole, and while the water level did reduce indicating that some kind of minor drainage was occurring, Program Manager and WCDC were unable to uncover and drain the hole enough to be monitored. The Gaylord/Nottingham borehole, directly adjacent to the Wyoming Valley West Elementary School in central Plymouth, has been filled with debris including plastic bottles and cans, toys, and other fodder from students and passersby. Attachments to the auger making it extend 16’ below the street were unsuccessful at dislodging the immense amount of litter compressed into the shaft. Attempts were made to measure around the objects, and with no data, it could possibly be a dray borehole due to collapse or other underground incident.