

## **BWA awarded \$3000 environmental education mini-grant from DEP**

The Brodhead Watershed Association was awarded a \$3000 environmental education mini-grant from The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection for its pilot “This stream is my stream” mentorship program.

According to Dr. Patricia Kennedy, associate professor of Communication Studies at East Stroudsburg University and the BWA Board member acting as project director for the program,

“The object of BWA’s “This stream is my stream” mentor program is to introduce a younger and more diverse audience not only to some of the treasured spots in our local watershed, but also to the ways that threats to stream health are evaluated, and to the actions we can take to protect our unique watershed heritage.”

The stream mentorship project was designed in part to respond to Monroe County’s decade of rapid population growth. Kennedy observed,

“I am one of those newer residents. I moved to the Poconos in 2005. Although I identify myself as a water person, I started out here with very little knowledge of local waters. I have been exploring and learning more from the many who know our unique water resources well.”

During this year-long project, BWA board members and other community experts will act as mentors, working with local college students to lead “stream cohorts” of students and interested families, in multi-dimensional, hands-on explorations of specific streams. Each cohort group will be provided transportation to streamside locations where they can learn about their “their” stream’s ecology, topography, geography, fish, macro-invertebrate populations, and plants. In addition to streamside tours, cohort members will be introduced to places where they can investigate the details and history of their stream. and its health on many levels, including searches in local history collections, map repositories, newspapers, public and university libraries, the county courthouse, local historical society collections, planning departments and commissions, state agencies (e.g., DEP, DCNR), and fishing clubs.

Primary project planners for this mentorship effort include BWA Board members Robert LaBar, a JT Lambert social studies teacher, East Stroudsburg University faculty members Dr. Christopher Brooks, assistant professor of History and Dr. Paul Wilson, a professor of Biology. (see photo).

In addition, the project planners anticipate that students from ESU’s Public Relations Student Society of America, Environment Club and History Club will be participating as coordinators for students recruited from JT Lambert and other area schools. One goal of the project is to reach residents from younger generations including, but not limited to families, and students from local schools and colleges.

This program will begin the September, continue through the winter and spring and culminate with local presentations of findings in selected venues during May and June of 2013 and the

preparation and submission of a final report to DEP with evaluation and action plans by July 2013.

For more information contact: Dr. Patricia Kennedy at 570-242-9412.

DEP press release re: 2012 awards can be found at:

<http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/pa-dep-awards-grants-for-environmental-education-and-stewardship-148260865.html>

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