

DEP has new leadership

When Randy Huffman took over as the Cabinet Secretary for West Virginia's Department of Environmental Protection on May 1, he brought with him 22 years of experience in state government.

A native West Virginian, Huffman wanted to be an underground miner and he earned a degree in mining engineering to pursue that career; however, his career took a slightly different turn.

His first venture was with the Abandoned Mine Lands Program when it was in the Division of Energy. Then he joined the Office of Waste Management in the Division of Natural Resources, where he started the Pollution Prevention and Open Dump Program, then later took on creating the Landfill Closure Assistance Program.

When the Office of Waste Management joined the newly formed Department of Environmental Protection, Huffman began his ascent. He was named the Chief of the Office of Administration, followed by a number of titles including Director of Mining and Deputy Cabinet Secretary, duties for which he performed at the same time.

"Being the director of mining was stressful and hard, but I thoroughly enjoyed it," said Huffman about his three-year stint as director of the mining program. "When I took it, it was out of my comfort zone. It was challenging, and I loved it - the work, and the people. Being director of mining prepared me for my current role."

"I know that most secretaries say this, but I really love this agency - this place, these people - what we do," he said. "I am in awe at the magnitude of the responsibility of this agency. And take very seriously the impact our decisions have on the environment, on the economy, on people's lives, on people's jobs. I never take that for granted. I think about it every day."

When you love something, you often make plans for it. And when it comes to the DEP, Huffman is no different. He has plans for the DEP.

"As the governor said, my appointment brings consistency and a smooth transition, things will keep running the same," Huffman said. He also stressed his strong belief that customer service and law enforcement can co-exist. "We can regulate them while providing good customer service. We should help the people who have a desire to be environmentally responsible."



Randy Huffman a native West Virginian, is now in charge of protecting its environment

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Rain gardens come to DEP

The state agency with the certified green building will soon have an environmental parking lot. The West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection is building a rain garden in its parking lot.

“It will be in the northwest corner of the parking lot, right behind MacCorkle Avenue,” said Taryn Murray. She is one of three people largely responsible for this endeavor. “This will filter the storm water runoff from approximately 1.5 acres of the parking lot.”

Construction began in July, with work expected to take two weeks. DEP is supplying the land, the hydrologic design, and the materials such as a special soil mix, plants and trees, and mulch. The Department of Administration is providing the landscape design, and the Division of Highways is ponying up the equipment and the labor. There will be a dedication ceremony upon completion.

“When constructing a commercial rain garden, a layer of gravel is often placed at the bottom of the facility,” Murray said. “This provides additional water storage while creating an anaerobic environment, which allows for denitrification. The most important component is a layer of soil medium, which is made up of sand, top soil and compost. This creates a very permeable filtration media. Ultimately, the polluted storm water runoff is “treated” by a series of physical, chemical and biological functions.”

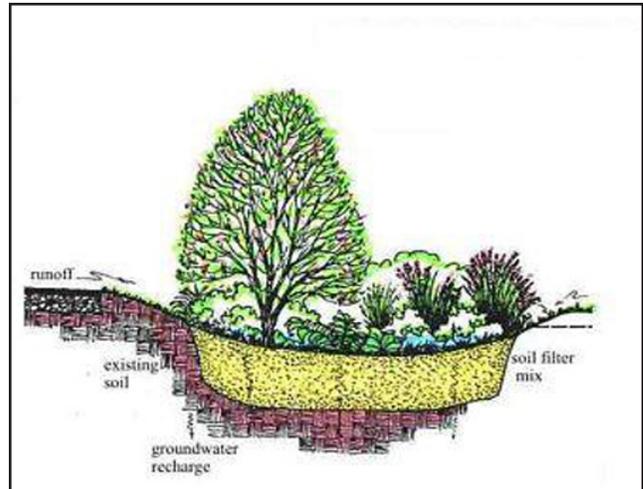
“As far as I know, this will be the first one at a West Virginia state agency,” she said. “Maryland is considered a pioneer in the field of bioretention. They have done several bioretention studies and rain garden demonstration projects. Other states, such as Montana, Minnesota, Wisconsin and Michigan, have developed initiatives toward rain gardens and other low impact development techniques”.

“Rain gardens are popping up all over the place, particularly in areas with stormwater issues,” Murray said. “A rain garden collects and naturally filters polluted rainwater that would otherwise runoff of impervious surfaces and eventually end up in our rivers and streams.”

The three people making this happen are Murray, Sherry Wilkins and June Casto. Each has contributed to this endeavor. Murray is responsible for the hydrologic design, Wilkins is the project manager and Casto is providing administrative and financial support.

“Ninety percent of West Virginia’s rain events are one inch or less,” Murray said. “Our rain garden will be able to collect and treat close to 0.6 inches of rain over a 24 hour period, or roughly eighty percent of the annual rain that falls on that section of parking lot.”

“There is a storm drain next to where the rain garden will be constructed,” she said. “The parking lot is already graded to direct runoff toward that drain. This is a convenience as far as rain garden design is concerned. Any rain that the rain garden can’t handle will overflow into the storm drain. There should never be standing water in the parking lot.”



This rendering of a basic rain garden shows how runoff from the parking lot drains into the garden.



The Young Street Habitat for Humanity on Charleston’s West side recently dedicated its rain garden.

Restoration of Abram Creek announced

Mount Storm, W.Va – In April, Governor Joe Manchin III was on hand to announce a project to restore the Abram Creek watershed in Grant County.

The goal of the project is to improve water quality, thereby restoring aquatic life and recreational fisheries in more than six miles of tributary streams, and more than 18 miles of the Abram Creek mainstem.

Acid mine drainage from previous mining activities in the area has resulted in the loss of aquatic life in Abram Creek and many of its tributaries.

Restoration of the watershed will be achieved by ongoing neutralization of the acid content in the water by using limestone dosers, which are structures placed alongside a waterway that release limestone into the water increasing the pH level. In addition, limestone fines will be placed in the tributaries to be naturally dispersed into the streams by rain or rising water levels.

Governor Manchin praised the cooperative efforts of all those involved in the project and recognized the Mid-Atlantic



(right to left) DEP's Ed Hamrick, Governor Joe Manchin and Paul Kayzak, the state liaison to the Maryland Highland Action Program. They are standing in front of one of Fairfax Materials, Inc. trucks. Fairfax is providing limestone for the project for one year.

Highland Action Program for coordinating the initiative.

“Several state and federal agencies, as well as private entities have worked together to make this stream restoration possible,” Manchin said. “As water quality improves, Abram Creek is expected to provide a diverse trout fishery, with opportunities for native brook trout expansion in the headwaters. In addition to increased recreational opportunities, the economic benefits of the project are estimated to generate \$600,000 annually from trout fishing alone.”

The project is being funded primarily by the West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection's Abandoned Mine Land fund and funds for aquatic mitigation for the Corridor H highway construction.

Abram Creek was prioritized by the multi-state North Branch Potomac River Task Force and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers as the most significant West Virginia contributor of acid water to the North Branch of the Potomac, and thus to the Chesapeake Bay.

DEP's annual fishing tourney

Exerting their prowess over the fish, six men participated May 17 in the 10th annual Department of Environmental Protection's bass fishing tournament. This year held at Burnsville Lake in Braxton County, the location of the tournament changes as a way of keeping the playing field level.

This year, three teams of two people participated. There's the rule that at least one team member must be employed by either DEP or DNR. With three boats on the lake, the fish still had much to fear. Jackie Taylor of DEP's Oak Hill office and his

fishing partner, Mark Carter, reeled in first place. In addition to taking possession of the trophy for one year with a total weight of 9.44 pounds, they also walked away with the big fish pool.

The winners, Jackie Taylor (DEP employee, right), and Mark Carter (Left) proudly pose with the trophy. The winners keep the trophy until the next tournament.





Dep partners with WVU to study switchgrass

The West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection and West Virginia University have begun working together to study the potential for growing switchgrass on sites of former surface mines across the state.

Switchgrass is a tall grass that grows from three- to ten-feet tall, has a deep root system and grows annually after harvesting. It is often used to rehabilitate exhausted croplands by rebuilding soil structure, nutrients and organic matter. Switchgrass can also be converted to ethanol, which is a flammable alcohol and can be made by fermenting plant products such as corn, barley, wood and straw.

“Last year, 20 percent of the U.S. corn crop was used to produce five billion gallons of ethanol, which is about one percent of petroleum consumption in the United States,” said Paul Ziemkiewicz, PhD, with the WVU Water Research Institute. “If our entire corn crop went to ethanol production, it would only replace seven percent of our annual petroleum use. In addition to competing for limited cropland, corn-based ethanol production consumes nearly as much energy as it produces.”

According to a recent report by the National Academy of Science, the net energy yield of switchgrass ethanol was about six times better than corn ethanol.

“While corn ethanol will continue to reduce our dependence on foreign oil, we clearly need to develop additional sources for ethanol production,” said Governor Joe Manchin III. “This

study is designed to provide us the information we need to determine whether developing a switchgrass-based industry in West Virginia is the direction we want to go.”

“Large surface mines can range from 1,000 to 12,000 acres; many have road networks, access to transportation, water, utilities and even locations for ethanol processing facilities,” said Ken Ellison, Director of the WVDEP Division of Land Restoration. “But first, we need to know how many tons of switchgrass hay will be produced on an acre of mined land, track developments in ethanol conversion technology and the economics of ethanol production and processing.”

The project will be managed by the Water Research Institute at WVU. The researchers will test the performance of three switchgrass varieties in large, ten-acre plots in both northern and southern West Virginia. Hay yields and carbon sequestration will be measured over a seven-year period; and researchers will document costs related to switchgrass plot establishment, harvesting and maintenance.

“This project is an example of the DEP’s continuing effort to find productive uses for mine lands,” said Stephanie Timmermeyer, former Cabinet Secretary for the West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection. “If we discover that growing switchgrass on these lands is a successful endeavor, it is the perfect example of an enterprising and environmentally healthy use of those lands.”

Sharing water quality smarts on the international scene

Being the state Project WET Coordinator, Rose Long was asked recently to share her knowledge of water quality.

Little did she know that this endeavor would have her traveling to Uruguay.

Project WET is a global action made up of individuals who care about reaching children with information and educational materials on water resources, its protection and management. In 2006, the United Nations Education, Sciences, and Culture Organization-International Hydrological Program partnered with Project WET in delivering the program, “Water and Education” to the Americas and the Caribbean.

“I was talking with Dennis Nelson, he’s president of the Project WET foundation, and he asked me if I would be interested in participating in a training exercise in Uruguay,” Long said. She is employed by the state Department of Environmental Protection and is located at its Charleston headquarters. “Everything was paid for by the foundation. It was a fabulous opportunity.”

The training was in Montevideo, which is the largest city, the capital and chief port of Uruguay. It has one million people and beautiful beaches along the Rio de la Plata. Its harbor is one of the most important in the Americas.

The Rio de Plata grows 137 miles wide where it opens on the Atlantic Ocean, making it the widest estuary in the world. It

forms part of the border between Argentina and Uruguay, with the major ports and capital cities of Buenos Aires in the southwest and Montevideo in the northeast.

American instructors who participated in this global knowledge-sharing experience, where about 70 teachers representing all parts of Uruguay were in attendance. The educators were Long, Nelson and Holly Denham, the Project WET coordinator for North Carolina.



The group of teachers at the workshop.



DEP employee, Rose Long, poses for a picture.

“We went there on a Saturday and spent the rest of Saturday and Sunday preparing, and held training Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday,” Long said. “Monday and Tuesday was the Project WET teacher workshop, and Wednesday was Train the Trainer session, which was teaching them how to hold their own Project WET workshops.”

“It was very rewarding to work with these teachers,” Long said. “They were the ‘Cream of the Crop.’ They all were fluent in English, which I thought was very helpful. We could communicate directly with them.

“In Uruguay, they use an innovative and new way to teach,” Long said. “They use an English-speaking teacher with a Spanish-speaking teacher to teach topics like Social Studies or Science in English. The kids don’t get English as a second

DEP announces 2007 Environmental Awards

Charleston – At the 9th Annual Environmental Awards ceremony, Department of Environmental Protection Cabinet Secretary Randy Huffman gave out awards recognizing businesses, municipalities and individuals who strive to protect the environment, work to be good corporate neighbors and educate the state’s citizens.

In the ceremony, Huffman said to the recipients, “We look forward to this event each year, because it affords us the opportunity to recognize businesses and individuals who go beyond compliance and strive for stewardship. The award you take back with you proves that when you say you care about the environment, you mean it.”

Eligibility for the industrial awards includes exemplary environmental performance in the past calendar year, a compliance record that reflects no outstanding violations, and a record of cooperation with regulatory authorities.

Regulated facilities aren’t the only award winners. DEP staff also nominated individual citizens who share their interest and knowledge with others in their communities.

Award categories and recipients were:

Hazardous Waste Generators: Walmart Supercenter #1351 in Beckley.

While not generally associated with something managed by retail stores, hazardous wastes are commonly generated from damaged consumer products, product returns, photo developing and automotive services. This location has a designated room to handle the material generated at the store.

Industry Greater Than 100 Employees – CSX Transportation, Multiple Sites in West Virginia.

With a designated remediation group, CSX has volunteered to remediate 33 sites throughout West Virginia so that the land can be used for redevelopment.

Municipal Landfill – H.A.M Sanitary Landfill, Inc. in Peterstown, W.Va.

H.A.M.’s landfill is a state-of-the-art composite liner facility that protects the environment by preventing groundwater and surface water pollution. In addition, the company worked with the county solid waste authority to establish a recycling program.

Most Improved – Armstrong World Industries, Inc., Beverly, W.Va.

The largest hardwood flooring manufacturer in the United States, Armstrong invested nearly \$2.5 million in improvements to its wood dust collection system to reduce its particulate matter emissions. In addition, the company uses the system to supplement its heating system, which reduces the plant’s energy needs.

Most Improved Sewage Treatment Plant Greater Than 400,000 Gallons Per Day – City of Grafton.

Last year, Grafton completed \$11 million worth of projects that have improved its ability to adhere to water quality standards and extended sanitary sewer service to unincorporated communities nearby.

Sewage Treatment Plant Greater Than 400,000 Gallons Per Day – City of Petersburg.

With an incredible growth in population, Petersburg invested \$5.6 million into its system and added more than 9,000 linear feet of collection pipe. The city has eliminated nearly 250,000 gallons of infiltration and inflow from its system.

Environmental Stewardship – Kevin Compton of Bluewell Public Service District in Bluefield, W.Va.

Compton is the chief operator of the Bluewell Public Service District and has taken a leadership role in finding solutions to problems and challenges, often volunteering to take on many tasks himself.

Brownfields and Voluntary Program – West Virginia Department of Transportation – Division of Highways in Morgantown.

The former headquarters for the Division of Highways cleaned up a site that once had underground and above-ground storage tanks so it could be used for non-residential development.

Community Involvement – Marcia Wilson-Cales of the Greenbrier River Watershed Association in Lewisburg, W.Va.

A volunteer with the Greenbrier River Watershed, Wilson-Cales has worked with students from Eastern Greenbrier Middle School to raise awareness of what impacts water quality

Environmental Volunteer of the Year – Doris Dean of the Wilsonburg New Horizon 4-H Club in Clarksburg, W.Va.

Dean is the leader for the Wilsonburg New Horizon 4-H Club and has used hands-on education to engage her members in promoting a healthy environment through recycling and other efforts.

Environmental Stewardship Awards for Education – Janet M. Butler of the Ohio River Islands National Wildlife Refuge in Williamstown, W.Va.

Butler is the manager of the Ohio River Islands National Wildlife Refuge Visitor Center and an educator who promotes the use of the outdoors as a place where students learn to love and care for the planet. Through a mitigation compensation agreement between Coal River Energy and the DEP's Division of Mining and Reclamation, the company has made a five-year commitment to support and monitor efforts to restore more than 5,000 feet of stream within a four-mile section of the Little Coal River near MacCorkle in Lincoln County. The restoration project is expected to improve the overall habitat of the river.

Sharing water, continued from page 5

language, per say. They learn English, it is taught through the various usages.

“The kids get their lessons in both English and Spanish, they learn usage and vocabulary,” Long said. She explained how the water information could be incorporated into the lessons. “Some of the issues in Uruguay are the same as in the East, like water quality and groundwater.”

Long explained that water quality is a way of life. Our actions can either positively or negatively impact the water quality.

Through Project WET and UNESCO-IHP, children are learning about water quality and how to positively affect it.

Long found that working with the teachers was most rewarding.

“Seeing the teachers’ reactions, they were like ducks to water,” Long said. “They loved the children, they loved the activity, they were immediately able to infuse information that was local. The teachers were so enthusiastic. It made teaching a delight.”

State fair was fun and educational

With gas prices flirting with the \$5 mark, vacation plans are being made close to home. A nearby opportunity was the West Virginia State Fair, held in Fairlea, August 8 through 16. The attractions ranged from livestock competitions and craft shows to musical guests and state agency exhibits. And, as with most festivals, there's a lot of food.

This year, the musical guests included Merle Haggard, Blake Shelton with Miranda Lambert, Vanessa Hudgens with Jordan Pruitt, the Charlie Daniels Band, and Josh Turner. The star of *A Prairie Home Companion*, Garrison Kellor, along with Suzy Boggess also performed.

Many of the state agencies use this fair as an opportunity to educate the public on what their agency does, or about a specific program. The Department of Environmental Protection is no different. It had hands-on displays that illustrated what the speaker talked about. The displays enable people to see and to touch the images created by the spoken word.

Displays included a stream table, composting, macro-invertebrates, remains of meth labs, and a PowerPoint presentation about the Rehabilitation Environmental Action Plan. Speakers were Jennifer Dupree, Jan Borowski, Tim Craddock, and Anna Shahan.

DEP's booth demonstrated how conserving water can be useful and even beautiful. One corner displayed a rain barrel, which is a useful and inexpensive way to conserve and reuse rain water. Another corner featured a rain garden, a beautiful and simple way to reuse rain water. It has the added benefit of being the ending point for runoff, alleviating storm water runoff.

DEP gave away shoelaces made from recycled plastic bottles, and had daily drawings for items such as litter-gitters, shirts and plants.

DEP wins CC tournament

For the seventh consecutive year, DEP reigns as the Corporate Cup victor. Each year brought new challenges as our worthy opponents tried and failed to dethrone us. Guarding the championship has not always been easy.

Here is a rundown of the events and how DEP did.

1st Place - DEP (286 points)

2nd Place - Brickstreet (222.5 points)

3rd Place - Columbia Gas (206.5 points)

HORSESHOES - 1st Place (16 points)

Paul Frantz and Dianna Wallace

SOFTBALL - 3rd place (12 points)

Dan Roberts, Jay Fedczak, Tommy Chandler, Greg Null, John Damron, Josh Woody, David Johnston, Scott Eggerud, Rich Boehm, Chris Daugherty, Tonya Phillips, Margie Skeens, Sherry Oldaker, Angela Chestnut and Sarah Anderson

DARTS - 7th Place (4 points)

Robert Keatley and Margie Skeens

BOWLING - 4th Place (10 points)

Rose Brodersen, Margie Skeens, Lewis Halstead and Ray Franks

BILLIARDS - Did not place

Margie Skeens and Randolph Ramsey

PUTT PUTT - 2nd Place (14 points)

Becky Johnson and Ray Franks

VOLLEYBALL - 3rd Place (12 points)

Dan Roberts, Greg Null, Mike Warwick, Robert Keatley, Tommy Chandler, Sherry Oldaker, Debbie Peters, Laura Jennings, Jenny Todd and Amanda Kramer



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“I believe that we should help everyone, not just the people with permits,” he said. “People should be able to live in peace and harmony with industry.”

In addition to his experience in environmental protection, Huffman brings military experience to his role as the agency’s leader. He has 26 years service with the Air National Guard, with a current rank of Lieutenant Colonel Commander for the 130th Aerial Port Squadron.

“I enlisted when I was 18,” he said. “I left for basic training four days after high school graduation. I missed the first days of the college semester because I was still at training.”

Married 22 years, Huffman has three sons, ages 18, 15, and 13 years-old, and is active in his church. He’s also been been

actively involved in his sons’ athletic growth. For 12 years, he coached baseball, and for seven years he coached football for one of his son’s teams.

“It’s thrilling to take a kid, get to know him over a period of time - three or four years in some cases - and watch him develop, watch him grow, then put him out on the field all by himself and watch him do what you taught him to and to be good at it,” he said.

Whether he uses his coaching skills, his military experience or his institutional knowledge of the DEP, Huffman has plenty of experience to draw upon to advance the agency.

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TENNIS - 3rd Place (12 points)

Lisa McClung and Nate Wadwha

HOOP SHOOT - Did not place

Lisa McClung, Scott Mandirola, Margie Skeens and Randolph Ramsey

TABLE TENNIS

Men - Ray Franks - 7th place (2 points)

Women - Lisa McClung - 1st Place (8 points)

CLOSEST TO THE PIN

Men - Jay Fedczak - 2nd Place (7 points)

Women - Becky Johnson - Did not place

COMBINED AGE SWIM RELAY - 1st Place (16 points)

Mike Warwick, Matt Sweeney, Ashley LeMasters and Amy Molgaard

SWIM MEDLEY - 2nd Place (14 points)

Mike Warwick and Ashley LeMasters

5000 METER TEAM WALK (16 points)

Mike Warwick, Jay Fedczak, Dianna Wallace and Sherry Oldaker

OPEN 5000 METERS

Men - Rich Boehm - 2nd Place (7 points)

Women - Marcy Holstein (3 points)

35 & OVER 5000 METERS

Men - Dan Lehman - 2nd Place (7 points)

Women - Amy Molgaard - 4th Place (5 points)

OPEN 100 METER DASH

Men - Matt Sweeney - 3rd Place (6 points)

Women - Sarah Anderson - 2nd Place (7 points)

35 & OVER 100 METER DASH

Men - Mike Arcuri - 1st Place (8 points)

Women - Amy Halstead - 3rd Place (6 points)

PUNT, PASS & KICK

Men - Chris Barry - 1st Place (8 points)

Women - Margie Skeens - 2nd Place (7 points)

OBSTACLE COURSE

Men - Matt Sweeney and Mike Arcuri (injury) - Did not place

Women - Amy Halstead and Sarah Anderson - 2nd Place (7 points)

35 & OVER 400 METER RELAY - 1st Place (16 points)

Ed Hamrick, Scott Mandirola and Amy Halstead

OPEN 800 METER RELAY - 1st Place (16 points)

Matt Sweeney, Chris Barry, Sarah Anderson and Nikki Reed

TUG OF WAR - 2nd Place (14 points)

Robert Keatley, Lewis Halstead, Shannon Dickens, Mike Egnor, Tommy Chandler, Corey McComas, Margie Skeens, Lisa McClung, Sherry Oldaker and Tonya Phillips