On September 21, six dedicated alumni completed our annual community service project on the White River north of Noblesville, Indiana. In 2005, the NREM Alumni Society adopted the river segment that begins at the State Road 37 bridge and continues downstream along Hamilton County’s Strawtown Koteewi Park through DNR’s Adopt-A-River program. Twelve cleanups since then have resulted in just under five tons of trash, tires and debris being removed from the river and adjoining shore.

The success of this ongoing project would not be possible without the core group of dedicated alumni society board members who come out year after year to get their hands dirty. The Society has also received generous support from the Hamilton County Parks Department and the White River Canoe Company in Noblesville annual support since 2005.

For many of us working in NREM jobs, our days are filled with budgets, procedures, rules, permits, negotiations, meetings and reports. There are too few instances to experience making a direct, positive impact on our natural resources.

It is very satisfying after a half day on the River to stand over the pile of litter at the take out and know that your labor improved a section of the White River for others to enjoy.

The annual river cleanup provides for informal professional/social networking with NREM alumni as well as an opportunity for hands-on resource management on a beautiful stretch of the White River. All NREM students past, present and future are welcome to join us in upcoming events. We will celebrate ten years of river cleanups next August or September. Look for announcements in summer 2014.
Karee Buffin

Some people might compare running the NREM department to such activities as cliff jumping, the trapeze or high-wire walking. New administrative assistant Karee Buffin can handle all of the above.

Although she spends her current time as an "entropy executive," Karee's back-story includes cliff jumping, juggling, trapeze and high wire walking during her formidable 11-18 years of age with the Peru Amateur Circus. One of her more difficult activities was the high wire, which was 23-25 feet above the ground. "I popped my hip out of joint doing the splits," said Karee. "I hurt my back. It's really pretty safe, but I did do a lot of stupid stuff outside of that (to injure myself)."

Karee went on to earn a bachelor of science in exercise science in 1989, then added a master of science in 1999 from Ball State in physical education. More recently, Karee served as an epidemiologist, among other positions, during her 11 years with the Indiana State Department of Health. For the past six years, she's also taught anatomy and biology at Ivy Tech Community College in Muncie.

As an epidemiologist, Karee dealt with outbreaks of diseases you can get a vaccine to prevent. These diseases include measles, mumps and rubella.

"I left because the commute got to me,"
said Buffin, a Muncie resident. "That on top of the stress (of the job)."

Karee participates in many hobbies as well. She plays the flute and teaches the bass guitar. Additionally, she participates in a community garden at Hoyt Avenue and 13th St. where she tends tomatoes, corn, zucchini, radishes and onion. She's been blissfully married for eight years to Tony, who works for Ball State's transportation department.

Karee hopes to follow in retired administrative assistant Connie Tyner's footsteps. Connie served more than 40 years in the department.

Karee's favorite part of the job is basic to Ball State. "It's the students," said Buffin. "I know it sounds corny but that's the truth."

Megan Sharp

Originally from Indianapolis, Megan earned a bachelor of arts in political science from Ball State in 2007 with emphasis in the areas of international resource management and peace studies & conflict resolution.

She then received her master of environmental science from Taylor University, with a strong focus on issues of international community development.

Megan has had the opportunity for considerable international service, study and research. She has spent time in Germany, at the Grameen Bank in Bangladesh, with the ACTS Institute for Sustainable Development in India, with Mission Impact in Guatemala, and with the Bankoni community in Mali.

In recent years, Megan returned to Taylor University to help lead an international service learning course to Guatemala and to teach a graduate course in international community development, which has since been replicated at IUPUI. Megan has taught introductory courses in environmental science at The Chef's Academy in Indianapolis and online for TCA's North Carolina campus, as well as at the ACTS Institute in Bangalore, India.

Megan has served as Vice President of the Board of Directors for the IAMH2O Foundation, and continues to serve in an advisory capacity to that and other development-focused organizations based in Indianapolis. Megan joined Ball State's NREM department as adjunct faculty this Fall.

Courses she is currently instructing include: Environment and Society; Decision Making in Natural Resource Management; International Natural Resources. This coming spring, Megan will add teaching courses in Permaculture, as well as, International Community Development.
Michael Cooper comes from the southern hills of Indiana just outside of Louisville, Kentucky. He received his undergraduate degree from IU Southeast in business marketing and management. This is his second semester at Ball State and his first as a graduate assistant. For his graduate work, Michael is studying outdoor recreation and how to get people more involved outside. He is currently working under Megan Sharp leading two sections of NREM 101 Lab. When asked what he would like to do in the future Michael said, "I want to play outside and take others with me." Michael's interests include any and all things outdoors or sports related. He was fortunate enough to place 10th in the world in a professional arm-wrestling event in 2007 and loves to teach others about the sport (e-mail mcooper@bsu.edu if interested). Michael is also an IU basketball fanatic and loves to watch the games with friends.

Jeremy Ferguson, originally from Holland, Indiana, joined the NREM graduate program this fall. He graduated from Oakland City University in 2011 where he obtained a BS in biology. Before graduating from OCU, Jeremy took on a practicum and a work-study lab assistant position within the Biology Department. After graduation, he worked at Bristol Myers Squibb as an Analytical Chemist focusing on quality control. Jeremy has an interest in water quality and would like to work out in the field where he can manage a team conducting research and analyzing water problems in the environment. Jeremy is NREM graduate assistant duties include instructing a NREM 101 Lab and conducting research on domestic hate groups within the US. In his free time, Jeremy enjoys traveling and spending time with family and friends. He enjoys living in Muncie and taking trips out to Prairie Creek Reservoir.

Cathy Janiczak is from North Judson, Indiana. She graduated from Ball State University with a B.S. in wildlife biology/conservation and zoology in May 2012. She spends her summers working for the USDA-NRCS as a student trainee involved with soil conservation and wetland restoration. For her graduate work, she is focusing on women in the outdoors and hunting. She hopes to bring her love of conservation and working in the outdoors to the USDA-NRCS. Her work as a graduate student entails teaching one laboratory section for NREM 101: Environment and Society and conducting research with women regarding their barriers to participation in hunting. When she is not working, Cathy likes to listen to ska, travel, read, SCUBA dive, bird watch, rehabilitate wild animals, and enjoy a good glass of wine with family and friends. Cathy has fallen in love with the wilderness in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan and is making plans to apply for a soil conservationist position there after graduation.

Matt Litten is in his second-year with the Cardinals. Before Matt learned to chirp, he worked on perfecting the pen. The Rush County native spent a decade in central Indiana as a staff member, freelance scribe, or full-time editorial worker at various media outlets. Matt wrote "masterpieces" for newspapers like The Noblesville Daily Times, NUVO Newsweekly, The Indianapolis Business Journal, The Indianapolis Star, The Associated Press and The Spencer County Journal-Democrat. While his glamorous life as a journalist entailed following baseballs, footballs and basketballs to the end of their destination, his choices at Ball State are quite different. Tapping into his experience as a young person that grew up on the land in rural Indiana, Matt chose the Natural Resources and Environmental Management graduate program to further his study of human dimensions. His thesis project includes participatory observation of citizens of Appalachia who are affected by mountaintop removal. The young writer believes he can combine his love of writing, and study of people and nature with this project. He hopes to turn the project into a trans-media storytelling project by combining long form journalism, audio, video and a web presence to make a difference for future generations affected by this man-made malady. You can find more out about Matt by listening to his radio show, "The Last Story," which airs every Wednesday from 4-5 p.m. on WCRD, 91.3, or wcrd.net. You can also contact Matt at mclitten@bsu.edu or visit his website, www.wordpress.mclitten.com.
NREM Welcomes New Graduate Assistants

Amy Rhodes is a Hoosier from Noblesville, Indiana. A non-traditional graduate student, Amy joined the department with over 15 years experience as a Montessori educator, trainer, and program coordinator. Owner of Land-Based Education & Agritour Design, www.listentotheland.com, she has spent the last five years as a consultant and contract environmental educator for farms in Central Indiana and Illinois. As Director of Education at Traders Point Creamery, Amy first became interested in returning to school and joining the NREM department when hosting tours for Dr. Brian Lepore’s Sustainable Ag class. The real connection happened, however, when Amy met Dr. Amy Gregg in the fall of 2010. Amy R. served as community partner representative for Traders Point Creamery in a Building Better Communities project with Dr. Gregg’s Environmental Interpretation class. Reflecting on the experience, Rhodes said, “I was incredibly impressed with the immersive learning component, the professionalism and motivation demonstrated by the students, and Dr. Gregg’s enthusiasm.” Now as a second year graduate student, Amy has a working title for her thesis, Building a Bioregional Sense of Place: Place-Based Education in Central Indiana. She hopes to continue her educational adventure at BSU after achieving the master’s degree to pursue a doctorate in Adult and Community Education.

Jason Sprung was born in Berrien Springs, Michigan, but calls the cornfields of northern Hamilton County, Indiana home. After high school, Jason played a year of football at Murray State University in Kentucky where he studied wildlife biology. Homesick after a year Jason returned to Indiana to attend IU. After 3 years at IU Bloomington, he enlisted in the Army in 2005 as a Cavalry Scout. He trained in Ft. Knox, Kentucky, and then was stationed in Schweinfurt Germany for about 9 months. In late 2007 through early 2009, as part of 2nd Squadron 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment, Jason was deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Participating in counter-insurgency operations for 15 months in various areas of the country, he had ample opportunities to get shot at and blown up. After Jason was redeployed, with all his fingers and toes, he left the Army and took advantage of the Post 9/11 GI bill by going back to school at IUPUI. He finished his undergraduate studies in 2012, with a BA in geography and certificates in GIS and environmental studies. While wrapping up his degree at IUPUI, Jason worked as a GIS intern in the Wrangell St. Elias National Park/Preserve in Alaska. After graduation, Jason took a temporary position as a GIS specialist with the BLM in Idaho. He worked last summer with the Forest Service in Montana as a biological science technician. Jason hopes to complete his masters in spring or summer of 2014.

Rupal Trivedi was born in India and moved to Kokomo, Indiana at the age of ten. She received her bachelor degree in biology from Purdue University. Rupal is currently pursuing a masters of science in dietetics at Ball State University. Reflecting her experience as a biology student, Rupal joined the NREM department working in the soils lab. Currently, she is a graduate research assistant for Dr. Gregg, working on a survey analysis for Outdoor Parks and Recreation Services. She is also involved with two other research projects in dietetics regarding cancer and diabetes, and is the Promotions Manager for Indian Student Association. In her spare time, Rupal enjoys the company of her friends and family, dancing, pottery, and English/Hindi movies.
What are NREM Alumni up to? All sorts of things! We recently heard back from two Alumni, Donny Aleo and Jenny Sunday. They shared some of their experiences following graduation from Ball State University.

**Donny Aleo (NREM ’06) Head of Parks & Recreation — Nappanee, IN**

Donny Aleo spent 5 years at BSU. Four of these “great years” were spent completing the Environmental Management option in NREM. Of the experience Aleo stated, “Dr. Godish and Dr. Pichtel were my main inspirations, but all NREM staff played a part in my passion and growth as an Environmentalist. The Alaska Field study with Dr. Pichtel in 2005 lit a fire in my soul that has yet to burn out.” It was in Alaska that Donny realized, with the support of a caring professor, he need not rush into graduate school or his career if there were other things he wanted to do. With that advice, Aleo decided to leave for Japan soon after graduating with the intent to teach English and travel as much as possible in a year. One year turned to two, two to three, and brought the addition of a wife then child. After five years in Japan, Donny moved his new family home to Indiana to pursue a career in the environmental field. In 2011, he accepted a position with the Elkhart County Health Department as an Environmentalist. “Compliance was no doubt in my wheelhouse with my degree, but the five years abroad teaching had initiated a thirst to make more of an impact on my community,” said Aleo. As fate would have it, the job of Superintendent of Parks and Recreation opened in his hometown of Nappanee. Donny believes his education, experiences abroad, and two years with the Health Department solidified the opportunity to make a difference in his local community. He is happy that his life will forever be bound to the duty of public service and the environment. Aleo is also a member of the local volunteer fire department with a focus in safety and hazmat and is vice-president of the local Tree Board. He currently lives in Nappanee with wife, Teruko, and daughter, Ayaka.

Paying tribute to the late Dr. Godish, Donny shared this quote from Aldo Leopold's Sand County Almanac,

“There is no escape from what is our business; that is why we call it business.”

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**Jenny Sunday (NREM ’13) — Florence, KY**

Last spring, Jenny Sunday landed a position with Environment & Archaeology, a small consulting firm that surveys construction sites, mostly pipeline related, for wetland, stream, endangered species habitats. Located just south of Cincinnati in Florence, Kentucky, Environment & Archeology collaborates with ACOE and other state and federal agencies to obtain permits for construction while working to minimize impact. Jenny is a biologist and environmental scientist and works with erosion and sediment control plans. She utilizes skills and knowledge she acquired through GIS, wetland remediation, research method coursework in both NREM and geography programs at Ball State. Jenny spends most of her time in the office, but also has opportunities to work out in the field. “It’s a nice balance,” she claims, “And our client’s projects are located all over the eastern U.S., so there is travel involved.” Jenny took some time away from her research over the summer, but now with fresh eyes, is ready to return to the task of getting it published. She is enjoying her new home and meeting people in the Cincinnati area.
NREM would like to thank those individuals who contributed to this issue of the newsletter. Your input is appreciated! Our gratitude goes to:

- Donny Aleo
- Karee Buffin
- Michael Cooper
- James Eflin
- Tracy Hendricks
- Cathy Janiczak
- Matt Litten
- John Maher
- Amy Rhodes
- Megan Sharp
- Jason Sprung
- Jenny Sunday
- Rupal Trivedi
- Laura Waldron

Support NREM and Achieve Active Alumni Status!

The Ball State University Alumni Association has historically provided “active status” to alumni when they make monetary gifts through the BSU Foundation. These monetary gifts may be of any amount, to any BSU Foundation account, and take the place of a dues paying program that some other universities utilize. We ask that you consider becoming active-- it is a great way to say thanks for your own education and to ensure that Ball State continues to provide outstanding programs for its students and alumni.

Your gift may be designated to any account in the BSU Foundation, including NREM. (Indiana residents can receive a 50% tax credit up to $200 when they file form CC-40 with their state taxes, reducing their out-of-pocket cost. Please contact either the BSUAA or Ball State University Foundation for more information).

Not a Ball State graduate? We need your support as well. Please consider a gift to one or more of the following BSU Foundation accounts that support programs and scholarships related to NREM:

- General welfare of the NREM department
- Operation of the Hults Environmental Learning Center
- NREM Alumni Society activities and award programs
- Research programs with the NREM department
- Soil research projects with the NREM department
- Soil and water conservation education activities
- Renewable energy and industrial ecology research
- NREM scholarships
- Clyde Hibbs Scholarship
- Alex and Ana Nicoloff Scholarship
- Charles Mortensen Fellowship

Questions?

To make a donation, please visit the NREM website and click on the link labeled “Make a Gift.” Or click this link: www.bsu.edu/giving

- For more information about giving to NREM, contact Darleen Lugenburg at dmlugenburg@bsu.edu
- To support the creation of a new scholarship, contact Dr. James Eflin, NREM Department Chair at 765-285-7055 or jeflin1@bsu.edu