Students assist with park space design in Albion

*Immersive Learning course provides creative thinking*

In the small city of Albion, located in northern Indiana, lies the 40-acre Hidden Diamonds Park. This location was the site for Dr. Amy Gregg’s Outdoor Recreation class, her latest Immersive Learning course. Partnering with the city, Gregg and 19 students were given the task of planning potential development ideas for the park’s newly acquired 42 acres.

According to Gregg, the community partner hoped to utilize the students’ ability to think outside the box on creative natural uses for the land, providing an outsider’s perspective.

Students from various academic backgrounds worked in groups to create posters displaying numerous possibilities for how this new land could benefit the community as a whole.

Their posters displayed each group’s concepts and designs. Popular ideas included implementing prairie, wetland, trail, memorial, and amphitheater features for the park.

A weekend camping trip to the site gave the class a visual understanding of how the park is currently laid out and how this new land could be best developed.

Junior Jasmine Mason and her peers expressed that the course was greatly enjoyed by the students who participated, especially due to its student-led nature.

“I did really enjoy this class. My favorite part was that we were all from different departments. We each knew something or had a skill that would be beneficial to the entire project.”

“The best part was showing the visitors from Albion the finished product, receiving real critiques, and finding out that our solutions would likely be applied in some way down the line,” said Mason.

Additionally, the class participated in Ball State’s annual Immersive Learning Showcase, on December 14, which serves to highlight the completed community projects of the summer and fall Immersive Learning courses.

Overall the collaboration was deemed a success, with the course ending in a presentation of designs and ideas to the community partner, along with their preliminary reports.

Gregg was pleased that the course served as an opportunity that allowed her students to gain leadership and project management skills that they could utilize in their careers.
15th Annual NREM Internship & Career Fair continues to bring opportunities to campus

On January 28 the NREM Department hosted its 15th annual Internship & Career Fair. Tables for 23 different vendors were set up at the Ball State Alumni Center, with employers eager to find qualified students for summer, part-time and full-time positions.

NREM students, in addition to those from other departments, such as landscape architecture and biology, arrived throughout the day to explore the potential opportunities.

Exhibitors represented areas including state park management, environmental health inspecting with state and county health departments, environmental management, sustainable agriculture, gardening and hydroponics, environmental consulting, environmental education, DNR law enforcement, as well as representatives from the Indiana Wildlife Federation, Natural Resource Conservation Service, and the US Army Corp of Engineers.

Familiar faces of recent NREM graduates could be seen working at several tables, a promising sign to current students that events like this one can lead to a career in their field.

NREM purchases Unmanned Aerial System (UAS) for teaching, research

The NREM Department is excited about a unique new piece of equipment that they now have at their disposal. An Unmanned Aerial System (UAS), more commonly known as a drone, was recently purchased for the department to aid in research and teaching efforts by faculty and students.

NREM’s own lab and field instrumentation technician, Stan Ross, assisted in obtaining the UAS and foresees many potential uses for it within the department.

Ross explained that initial interest in the purchase came from Dr. John Pichtel, who envisioned using the UAS in his emergency management & homeland security course, to provide students with a better visual overhead view of how to position respondents during a hostage scenario.

The UAS, a DJI Phantom 3 Professional model (seen above), has both HD video and still photography capabilities. Ross is currently going through the complex process of registering the device with the Federal Aviation Administration.

He explained that once registered, multiple professors have expressed interest in using it. One idea involves utilizing the UAS to document local forest canopies from above to better understand the effects of the Emerald Ash Borer in this area. Additionally, it could be used to display the process of conducting prescribed burns, which are done at various Ball State field stations.

These five field stations are where Ross sees strong potential for its utilization.

“I’d like to document an aerial tour of each field station for us to be able to show to students. It would give them a better idea of what each of these places actually looks like, without being there.”

He also thinks the UAS could possibly serve as a unique tool for obtaining air or water samples more easily from certain locations.

Without a doubt, NREM’s new purchase holds a lot of exciting potential.
Students head to woods to learn about managing private forestland

For two semesters now Dr. Josh Gruver has worked on real-world forestry projects with the students of his Forest Planning & Stewardship course (NREM 401/501). Focusing on the unique perspective and needs of private forest landowners (PFLs), Gruver’s goal for the course is to help students understand that America’s forest resource is owned by many different people and organizations. In the Eastern half of the country especially, much of the forest land is privately owned.

“These private forest landowners control a resource that benefits all of us, so it’s important to understand how they engage with and manage their forests,” Gruver explained.

He emphasized that this course differs from those in the Biology Department in that his focus is on the social aspect of the forestry. Students utilize past survey data on PFL demographics and have a chance to engage with local landowners during the semester. This past semester took the students to a property called Cardinal Farms, located in Alexandria, about 30 minutes from Ball State.

Students explored nearly 30 acres of the forest property, which is held in a family trust, with three generations of relatives who have varying goals for managing the land.

In addition to learning about private forest landowners, the students also gained experience with tree identification and habitat surveys, travelling to the site multiple times during five weeks of their fall semester. The final product of the students’ work was a hard copy of their created forest management plan, that was given to the landowners, in addition to the priceless experience attained by working on a real-world project.

NREM graduate student, Kim Richardson, expressed that the class was a success for everyone involved.

“The landowners seemed to be appreciative of the information and plans that we presented to them on our final day of class. The final product was a comprehensive management plan to help them reach their unique objectives for the property,” Richardson said.

Gruver agreed and stated that he plans to continue teaching the course one semester each year. He recommends the class to any student interested in forest management and the human dimensions of natural resources.

What good is the warmth of summer, without the cold of winter to give it sweetness? - John Steinbeck
Ball State ENACT group reunites at Alumni Center

Alumni share memories of NREM and student activism

On the afternoon of December 19 there was much laughter and conversation to be heard at the reunion gathering for the Ball State ENACT (Environmental Action) Club. Alumni recalled fond memories of activism during a crucial and exciting time for environment. The 17 group members and spouses in attendance also enjoyed filling each other in on where their careers have taken them in the last 40 years.

Created in October 1970, the club began as a way for students who wanted to advocate for environmental protection to work together toward the cause. Sheryl Myers, ’71 MA 74, one of the club’s founding members, explained that the first Earth Day, on April 22, 1970, was to be declared a day of environmental “teach-ins” across the country. Ball State University hosted one of their own on campus, thanks to Brook Wiseman, a member of the BSU Student Council, for requesting funding for the event, and to Myers for organizing the program and inviting speakers from different disciplines to attend.

“Because of our efforts, Ball State was a charter participant in the first Earth Day event,” Myers explained.

It was many of the students that attended Earth Day who went on to become members of the Ball State ENACT Club, with Natural Resources professor Scott Fisher agreeing to be their faculty advisor.

In addition, Gipe detailed what he thought to be the biggest accomplishments of ENACT during his time with the club. They lobbied to ban the sale of phosphates in detergents, which were causing severe algal blooms in U.S. rivers and lakes. They also lobbied for the regulation of sulfur dioxide being released by the burning of coal, and participated in public hearings about the issue. Lastly, the group advocated for regulations on the surface mining of coal, with a half dozen students taking a study trip to Appalachia to learn more about the issue. Some students even travelled to Washington D.C. to lobby Congress, helping to eventually get a federal law passed.

Gipe, along with Cindy (Bass) Ewing, John Ewing, and Scott Fisher, published a book during their time with ENACT, entitled, *Surface Mining, Energy and the Environment* (1974), a copy of which was brought to the reunion to ensure its place in the NREM archives.

Dorel Hunt, ’74, led the program, which included presenting a card to Connie Tyner, ’79, longtime NREM administrative coordinator, in recognition of her great support and assistance with the club’s activities; and a group conference call with influential past NREM professors who were not able to attend: Don Van Meter, Mike/Jan Cronin, Scott Fisher, and Clark Judy. Hunt also arranged the venues for the gathering and dinner. Dr. Amy Gregg, interim chair of the NREM Department, brought the alumni and their spouses up-to-speed on events occurring in the department today.

All in attendance seemed to agree that being a part of the ENACT Club was a highlight of their time as students at Ball State, and for some, a path to their future career in the environmental field.
Support NREM, assist students, help fund research

The Ball State University Alumni Association has historically provided “active status” to alumni when they make monetary gifts to 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. Please consider becoming active by supporting NREM scholarships and programs.

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

Alumni and friends are asked to consider an annual gift to one or more of the following BSU Foundation accounts that support programs and scholarships related to NREM:

- 6201 General welfare of the NREM department
- 6203 Operation of the Hults Environmental Learning Center
- 6204 NREM Alumni Society activities and award programs
- 6216 Research programs with the NREM department
- 6217 Soil research projects with the NREM department
- 6218 Soil and water conservation education activities
- 6219 Renewable energy and industrial ecology research
- 6250 NREM scholarships
- 6253 Clyde Hibbs Scholarship
- 6254 Alex and Ana Nicoloff Scholarship
- 6255 Charles Mortensen Fellowship

Questions?

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

- For more information about giving to NREM, contact Kassie Cosgrove at kkcosgrove@bsu.edu
- To support the creation of a new scholarship, contact Dr. Amy Gregg at 765-285-5781 or algregg2@bsu.edu

Visit us on the Web!

http://www.bsu.edu/nrem

Thank You!

NREM would like to thank those individuals who contributed to this issue of the newsletter. Your input is appreciated! Our gratitude goes to:

- Amy Gregg
- Josh Gruver
- Stan Ross
- Paul Gipe
- Sheryl Myers
- Dorel Hunt
- Jasmine Mason
- Kim Richardson
- Lindsay Hylton
- Sue Taylor

Visit us on the Web!
http://www.bsu.edu/nrem

Contact NREM and submit news for consideration in the newsletter.

- For more information about news and upcoming events, contact Karee Buffin, administrative coordinator, 765-285-5780, nrem@bsu.edu
- Please send news about promotions or new positions, recognitions, and changes in your contact information to NREM Alumni Society at suetaylor@bsu.edu or 765-285-1408.
- “Like” NREM Alumni Society on Facebook, and visit their website. Click here to nominate an alumnus for an award. Also, visit NREM at Ball State University on Facebook for updates on current events.