

Introduction

The mission of the University of Delaware's Institute for Public Administration - Water Resources Agency (IPA-WRA) is to provide water resources planning and policy assistance to governments in Delaware, the Delaware Valley, and along the Eastern Seaboard through the University's land grant public service, education, and research role. In fulfillment of the IPA-WRA's public service and education role, staff and graduate student research assistants participate in several outreach and

education initiatives throughout local schools and the community to educate in areas related to watershed protection and conservation. Several of the outreach and education initiatives the IPA-WRA was recently involved with include participation in the Business, Industry, Education (BIE) Alliance's "What in the World?" program in several local elementary and middle schools, lessons in watershed protection using an *Enviroscape*® model in two local elementary schools, participation in the University of Delaware's Ag Day and Coast Day, and participation in

the City of Newark's Community Day. Additionally, graduate student research assistants at the IPA-WRA recently formed a new graduate student group at the University of Delaware, the Delaware Student Chapter of the American Water Resources Association (AWRA). With a fundamental objective of promoting awareness of water related issues, the student chapter is striving to expand the IPA-WRA's public service mission across the University of Delaware campus and local community.

"What in the World?" Career Day

The "What in the World?" program, sponsored by the Business, Industry, Education Alliance (BIE), is offered throughout the state of Delaware and is geared towards students from third through twelfth grades. Volunteers from a variety of occupations explain their careers while stressing the importance of math, science, and/or technology. The IPA-WRA staff and graduate student research assistants facilitate activities for the "What in the World?" program that explain the education and training required for jobs in the water resources field and encourage students to continue to work hard in their math, science, and technology classes. The IPA-WRA has participated for several years in the program with interactive memory games, Geographic Information Systems (GIS) maps, and quiz games informing the students about their watershed, water use, and water conservation initiatives.



Photo Credit: Kathy Adkinson



Delaware Student Chapter of the American Water Resources Association (AWRA)

The mission of the DE Student Chapter AWRA, formed in March 2008 by IPA-WRA graduate student research assistants, is to raise awareness across the University of Delaware's campus and throughout the community about water related issues. The organization strives to inform the public about where they live within their watershed and how their daily activities can potentially impact water supply and water quality. To accomplish these goals the organization has participated in several community events, such as the University of Delaware's Coast Day, Ag Day, and Newark's Community Day. In addition, the students have participated in stream clean-ups, tree planting events, and enjoyed a kayak trip.

Community Outreach Initiatives

Newark Community Day

Each year the City of Newark hosts Community Day to educate the public about the numerous and diverse organizations located within and around Newark. The IPA-WRA has a booth at Community Day to highlight the accomplishments in the field of water resources in the Newark and surrounding area and to teach citizens about the importance of protecting and conserving these valuable resources.

University of Delaware Coast Day

The University of Delaware's College of Marine and Earth Studies hosts Coast Day each year at the Lewes Campus in order to emphasize the importance of marine and coastal resources to Delaware. The IPA-WRA participates in this event to raise awareness about watersheds by interacting with the public through an educational exhibit as well as educating youth about the functions of watersheds using a fun and interactive *Enviroscape*® model.

University of Delaware Ag Day

Ag Day is an annual event hosted by the University of Delaware's College of Agriculture and Natural Resources to educate about the importance of agriculture and the environment. The IPA-WRA participates in Ag Day to educate the campus and wider community about protecting watershed resources with an educational and interactive exhibit.



Challenges & Rewards

Through various interactive approaches in both schools and the community, the IPA-WRA endeavors to raise awareness on the importance of both watershed protection and water resource conservation. The benefits the IPA-WRA receives through its watershed education initiatives far outweigh any challenges of communicating its message. For the IPA-WRA, interacting with the public and students is a very rewarding experience. It is beneficial for the IPA-WRA to be able to highlight the important work accomplished in the field of water resources and at the same time it is

beneficial for the public to be educated about their dependence on water resources.

The IPA-WRA recognizes that youth environmental education can be an extremely effective way to increase environmental stewardship behavior and to achieve lifelong environmental values in the community. It is because of these rewards that the IPA-WRA will continue to devote resources to raising awareness of the importance of protecting and conserving water resources across the state of Delaware and surrounding region.



Contact:
Institute for Public
Administration - Water
Resources Agency
Delaware Geologic Survey
Annex
Newark, DE 19716
www.wra.udel.edu