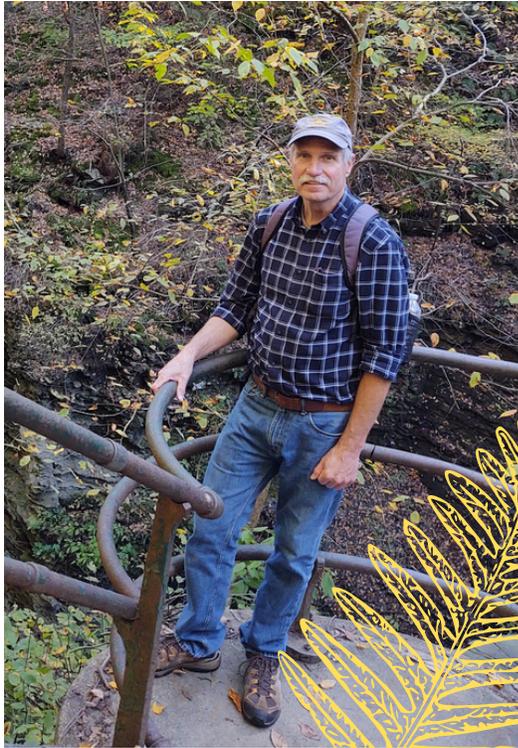


ESS Newsletter

Summer, 2023



Professor Bensele out and about in nature



New Department Chair

Every seasonal shift brings a change in the environment and this fall it will bring another change- Terry Bensele is taking over the ESS department's chair position! Our previous chair, Beth Choate, was offered a wonderful opportunity at Washington College in Maryland and we wish her well in her new position! Professor Bensele boasts many achievements such as the Julian Ross Teaching Award, being a noted scholar on forest ecological economics, research in Philippine Forests, and about three decades of experience teaching at Allegheny. He is also an avid gardener. These experiences will make him a great leader for our department. Congrats Professor Bensele!

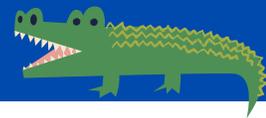
Jackie Digiacombo Internship

Summer can be a wonderful time for relaxation and recreation, and in order for people to safely enjoy the great outdoors without putting people or the environment around them at unnecessary risk, we need people like Jackie Digiacombo. This summer, Jackie ('26) is working as a Seasonal Park Ranger with the US Army Corps of Engineers at Shenango River Lake in western PA. In this position, Jackie does habitat enhancement, maintenance, patrolling of the lake and grounds, and public engagement, including one of her favorite parts of the job: teaching visiting kids about local wildlife. Jackie learned about this job through a representative visitor to a class at Allegheny and she was drawn to this work for the opportunity to spend time outside and connect to other people. With a good mix of conservation and public outreach, Jackie has certainly made a difference this summer!



Jackie posing with sunflowers!





Gators at Gettysburg Intern

Boy did our gators have fun at Gettysburg this summer! Aaron Kosmach was one of the two Environmental Science Students who spent eight weeks doing a summer internship in Gettysburg. As a Geographical Information Systems intern at Gettysburg National Military Park he hiked all of the trails in the park with a highly accurate GPS antenna to map the trail signs using a location, a picture, and notes on its condition and other information. By the end of the summer, he put together a report of all of the collected data and used his past hiking experiences to make recommendations on how to improve the trail signs. His project will be used to help law enforcement prevent theft and vandalism as well as let the park know what improvements could be made to keep the park a beautiful, useful space. Aaron loved combining his passions for hiking and improving the earth during his internship and would recommend it to anyone who is interested in government work!

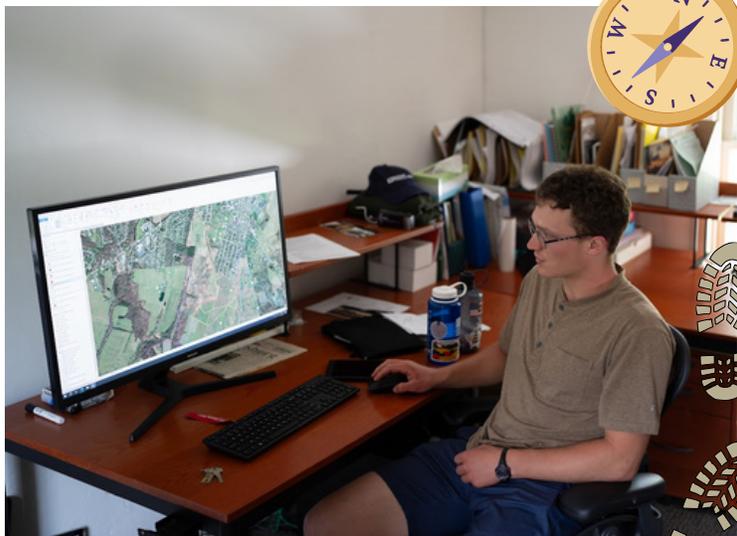


Wildflowers in progress outside of Carr Hall

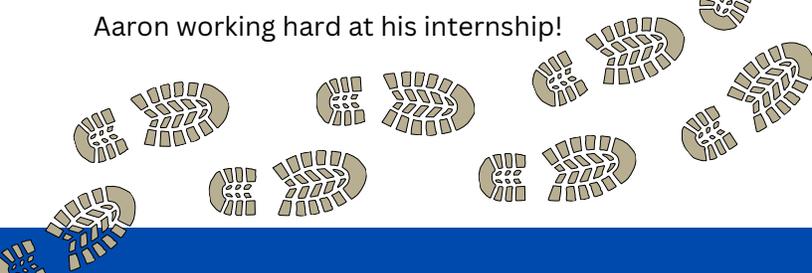


Carr Hall Wildflowers

Mirror, mirror on the wall. Who's the fairest of them all? The wildflowers outside of Carr Hall, of course! First envisioned by Eric Pallant and Director of Physical Plant Joe Michael, the wildflowers were planted during the summer of 2022 in an effort to convert unused lawn into more ecologically beneficial and productive areas. Large swaths of grass are "biological deserts and costly," explained Rich Bowden. Replacing grass with wildflowers will provide important nectar sources for pollinators, while making campus that much more beautiful. The wildflowers are a test run to see if it would be possible to convert other unused lawn on campus into pollinator habitat in the future, according to Bowden. Although the wildflowers won't be fully established until at least the summer of 2024, they are growing quickly and are already bringing cheery summer color to Carr Hall.



Aaron working hard at his internship!





The WCRC crew which helped with surveys at the restoration site in July.



WCRC Summer Stream Restoration Efforts

Last month, students employed at the Watershed Conservation Research Center (WCRC) worked in collaboration with the PA Fish and Boat Commission and the Crawford County Conservation District to restore the streambank of the Woodcock Creek watershed! According to Kelly Pearce, Co-Director of the WCRC, their primary goal was to “reduce streambank erosion and thus sedimentation,” and also planting indigenous grasses on the streambank. Pete Siebler (‘25) states that initial construction efforts often consisted of attaching logs with rebar to the streambank to change the stream’s flow. Pearce additionally says that the WCRC is conducting pre and post-construction surveys of “water chemistry [and] sedimentation, in addition to biotic surveys for macros and fish.” Overall, these efforts act as a continuation of previous work conducted by the WCRC in July 2022 which also occurred in the Woodcock Creek watershed. Best of luck to the WCRC and their future work!



Anthony Swanson Internship

What a great summer it was for ESS experiences on campus! A senior ESS major, Anthony Swanson lived on campus this summer while completing a Land Use Feasibility Study for the City of Meadville. This project focused on how to meet the needs of the community members of Meadville’s 5th Ward. Day-to-day he met with community members to learn about what needs they had and what strategies would be most beneficial to meet their needs. Overall, he said that the summer work was very rewarding and allowed him to meet and appreciate the Meadville community.

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the ESS Newsletter?**

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