



# ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES NEWSLETTER

*FOR AND BY ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES STUDENTS AT KENT STATE UNIVERSITY*



## NEWSLETTER HIGHLIGHTS

As we are approaching Earth Month in April, in this edition of the ENVS Student Newsletter we have a list of upcoming events from Kent State University in celebrating our planet. Also in this edition, you will find an internship spotlight from Jordan Troutman at H2OHio and an interview with Professor Dr. Andrew Lepp from the Recreation, Park, and Tourism Management major of Kent State. Thank you to our readers for your support! If you ever want to look back at old editions, feel free to do so on the Kent State Department of Geography website. When you click on the page for the Environmental Studies major, look to the left-hand side and click the page that is titled, Environmental Studies Newsletters. The link for that website is:  
<https://www.kent.edu/geography/environmental-studies-newsletters>



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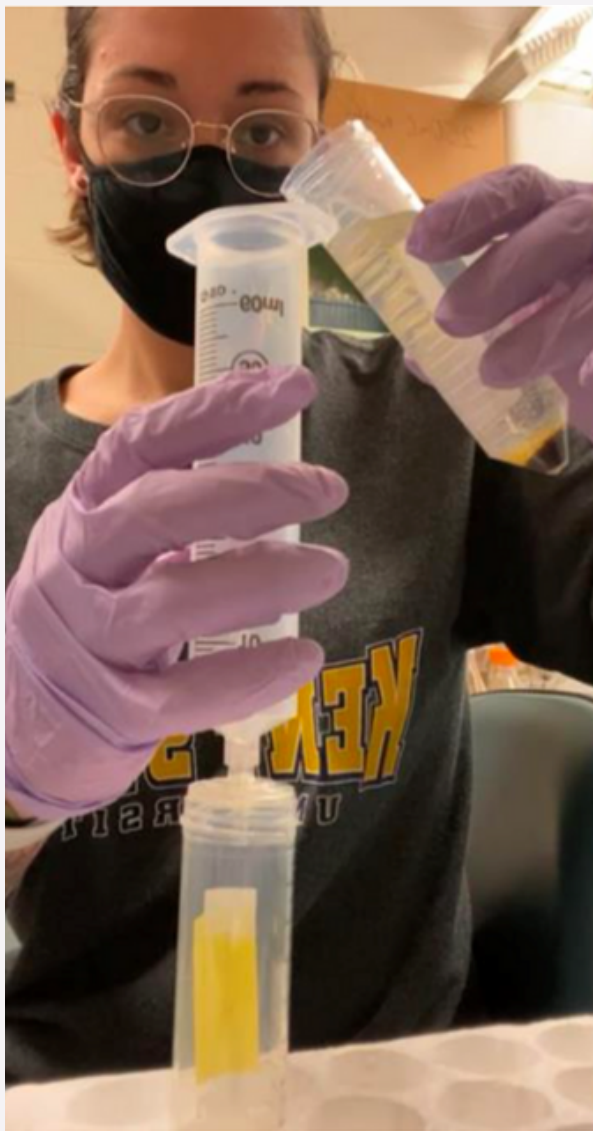
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"IN THEIR OWN WORDS..."

## INTERNSHIP SPOTLIGHT: JORDAN TROUTMAN

*by: Jordan Troutman*



ENVIS Student **Jordan Troutman** completes water quality testing assessment with H2Ohio

During the summer of 2021, I was accepted for an internship position with the **H2Ohio Monitoring Program**. This program was created by the Ohio Department of Natural Resources, the Ohio General Assembly, and the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency to restore wetlands that carry farm run-off, monitor farm run-off into those wetlands, and dispose of harmful septic tanks. My internship experience was awesome, to say the least. This was my first experience working on a study within my schooling and long-term career goals. Being able to see what happens within a controlled study to better our environment, working on that study, and being apart of the H2Ohio team is something that I get to hold onto for a lifetime and I am so grateful. The H2Ohio Monitoring Program is a government-funded program that ensures the removal of harmful natural processes that happen when nutrient farm run off makes its way into local wetlands. The program implements clean water in all parts of Ohio.



**"IN THEIR OWN WORDS..."**

## **INTERNSHIP SPOTLIGHT: JORDAN TROUTMAN**

The H2Ohio Monitoring Program states:

*"Ohio is a water-rich state. However, communities throughout Ohio face water quality issues, including harmful algal blooms (HABs) on Lake Erie, the Ohio River, and numerous inland lakes. HABs threaten the health of Ohioans and negatively impact tourism, outdoor recreation, real estate, and businesses that rely on clean water. In response, Governor Mike DeWine proposed H2Ohio, a water quality initiative that invests in targeted solutions to help ensure safe and clean water for Ohioans. In July 2019, the Ohio General Assembly agreed to invest \$172 million in H2Ohio. The focus of H2Ohio for the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) was first the development of 26 Phase I Wetland Projects representing a \$33 million commitment to create, restore or enhance more than 3,500 acres of coastal Lake Erie and inland wetland ecosystems. As of July 2021, approximately 57 Projects (Phase I and II) will be initiated for H2Ohio by the ODNR. Most of these Projects are in northwest Ohio counties that comprise the Western Lake Erie (WLE) Basin watershed. These Projects are designed primarily to mitigate nutrient loading that fuels annual HABs in Lake Erie (H2Ohio Monitoring Program Page 1)."*

Within my experience, I learned about how to create a controlled study and critically think about what could make the study better and more efficient. I got to experience how much time, passion, and dedication it takes to be a scientist. I learned the importance of lab safety and how dangerous Giant Hogweeds are; alongside working with an incredible team of people to achieve a common goal and I would do it all over again.



# FACULTY SPOTLIGHT: DR. ANDREW LEPP

by: Tessa Stevens

Currently Interviewing: **Dr. Andrew Lepp** *Recreation, Park, and Tourism Management*

## 1. Tell me about yourself

I grew up around here, I went to **Firestone High School** in Akron. My parents always took me on hikes, always took me camping, and we spent a lot of time visiting national parks. That was always a love of mine. So for college, kind of a funny story, I went to **Wake Forest University in North Carolina** and that's a liberal arts school, but they have a forestry degree. I was interested in **Forestry** or **Natural Resource Management**. So there at Wake Forest, I was doing so well, and it was going into my junior year when my advisor said, "Are you ready to transfer to NC State University?" and I was like "*What?? What are you talking about?*" They said, "Well, you're a forestry major and that's 3/2 partnership with NC State. You go to Wake for two and a half years to get your liberal arts degree and then go to NC State to finish your Forestry degree. So, I said *oh boy*, I got all my friends here, *I should have read the fine print*, I don't want to do that, so I stayed at Wake and graduated with a different degree. Then I took a year off to just kind of work and made money. Then I went to **Oregon State** and then I got a degree in **Natural Resource Management** which was awesome. I got a Master's degree there then I worked for the **US Forest Service up in Alaska**, got my hands dirty, and that was great. Did that for a few years, I worked for our National Park Service in South Dakota, **Badlands National Park** which was great, and all these jobs were part-time so the government would guarantee that there would be 18 months of work in a 24-month period. This was really nice for me as a young guy because I got very much off every year, but I was having a hard time getting a permanent job which is what I really wanted, then I discovered **Peace Corps**. United States Peace Corps had a program doing park management overseas and when you finish Peace Corps, you get a hiring advantage for National Park Service jobs or any federal job so that would have helped me get a permanent job. I was interested in working for a National Park overseas, so I did Peace Corps, which was a little more than two years, I was in **Uganda, East Africa** which was just amazing. I worked with the National Park Service there, and I loved it.





I met some great professors there from the **University of Florida** and started doing some projects with them, when I finished the Peace corps I came back to the US and then I actually got **a full-time permanent job at Cuyahoga Valley National Park**, right here where I grew up. My parents were so happy, so excited, you know Andy's back home after all these years. Meanwhile, those professors I met at the University of Florida were calling me saying "Hey come down, get a Ph.D., we've got money for you to go back to Uganda, do more research with us." I was really kind of torn because I loved my Uganda experience and I really enjoyed working with these professors but as you might guess I chose to go back to Uganda. **So I went to Florida, got a Ph.D. and then I was able to go back to Uganda several times for research. Luckily as far as my parents go, when I graduated from Florida a job came up from Kent State, so I came back home again, and it all worked out.** So that's how I got here, I've been at Kent State for 18 years. So, from Akron Public Schools, around the world, I worked so many different places from Alaska, South Dakota, New Mexico, Washington, Oregon, Uganda, and then back home to Kent State. I think this career or careers related to Natural Resource Management, Environmental Studies, Park Management, etc. For students that are interested in seeing the world there are opportunities all over the place or for students who just want to stay here right close to home there are lots of opportunities.



## **2. Do you have advice for students looking to travel?**

I would say just to get out and travel, see the country, and see the world, right now while you can. Most students don't have to make payments on a house or on a car, so you got a little bit of freedom. A great way to start, you've heard it before from other professors, study abroad take advantage of studying abroad opportunities. I think there are also good domestic travel programs where you can get credit as a student but that's a good way to get confidence traveling. You know travel is like anything else, you do it the better you get at it

## **3. Is there any current research that you are working on?**

I've got a lot of research related to Natural Resource Management in Uganda. When I first got to Kent State, I published a lot on that. I still do from time to time but it's hard to get back to Uganda and collect data whenever I have a new research question although I'm always trying to do that. But I've published good research related to Natural Resource Management in Uganda but most recently, just having children of your generation become really interested in understanding smartphones and Internet-connected devices, social media, and on people's behavior. With related variables, academic performance, anxiety, boredom, the way that we experience life or thrill and excitement, physical activity, health, and well-being. I've published a lot on that, it's been fun. I always have research projects going on in that area too. I remember a couple of years ago I gave a presentation over there, for geography, I did a big survey of people through hiking the Pacific Crest Trail. So, these are people hiking from Mexico to Canada across the Pacific Crest Trail through California, Oregon, and Washington. We surveyed them on the trail, we were interested in understanding how they use smartphones while hiking, just before COVID and we surveyed 500 plus people, 99% use smartphones while hiking through the Backcountry. It's really common but it's also interesting to think about how that or how might either enhance the hiker's connection with nature or how might distract from the hiker's connection with nature, it can do both, those are some of the things that we were looking at that study.



What's funny is that we recorded how much people use the phone while hiking, and people who used it more experienced more boredom. We weren't able to tell cause and effect, so are these people who just get bored more easily and then turn to their phone to alleviate boredom or were they using their phone a lot, and that caused the boredom? With our survey we could only see the relationship, we weren't able to tell cause and effect, but you don't imagine the backcountry of the Pacific Crest Trail as a boring environment, it's full of stimulus with the scenery and wildlife and people you're hiking with but it is a long trip.

#### **4. What is your favorite part of your job?**

I really love research. I've had a lot of success with it, it's gotten me a lot of attention which is nice, but my favorite part of the job is truly teaching and being around students. I really enjoy getting to meet students, freshmen, and sophomores, you have them in class again as a junior and then as a senior and you see them grow, see them develop, and then see them graduate and go on to bigger, better things. I get to see that unfold every year, it's really what motivates me. This is actually the first semester in 18 years where I haven't taught a class which is unusual but every now and again professors get approval to take a semester and focus on research or grant writing. I got approval to do that, I'm working on some grants for work that I want to do in Uganda and it's really hitting me how much I miss being in the classroom and interacting with students. I like teaching and being around students, it's fun. As much as I love research and I do like research a lot but teaching is my favorite.

#### **5. What do you like to do in your free time?**

Well not surprisingly, I like to be outside and explore the local parks, hike with my kids and my wife, family stuff outside. Also, on the weekends and the winter, I like cooking a big meal and messing around in the kitchen, baking bread, or something like that which always has a payoff at the end that involves eating good food. I like getting outside but I always look forward to a big family vacation in the summer, going somewhere interesting, we try to do something different every year. Last spring break I backpacked the Grand Canyon with my high school senior, he's a freshman at Kent State now.



## 6. What is the most helpful advice you've received?

Some of the most meaningful experiences that I've had in my life have come from stepping out of my comfort zone a little bit. That was something that my dad always encouraged me to do growing up. For example, just taking my first job out of state. When I was an undergrad in college instead of coming back home to Ohio, I got a job working out in New Mexico and I was really nervous about it. My dad said get out there, you can do it. It's just three months, it's a summer job, and you'll be back in your comfort zone in three months. It has a clear starting point and a clear ending point. So, I did it and it was awesome, it was amazing. Then you have to take the next step. What about working in Alaska, I don't know about that. It's wild up there. Well, give it a try. It just takes you to new places, I think being able to challenge yourself just a little bit by finding your edge and taking a little small step past it to see what's out there.

## 7. Do you have any advice you want students to know?

Well of course I always want students to take classes related to the majors that I teach but I think students need to take whatever they're passionate about. You need to find your own passion and there are so many majors on campus where you can find something you're passionate about. Once you find it it's going to be really easy to do well. You won't have any trouble getting up and making it to that 8:00 AM class, two days a week. Well, you might have a little trouble but it's going to be easier than studying something that you feel unenthusiastic about. If I want to make you know \$200,000 a year, I have to take this major, but I don't believe that. I think studying what you're really deeply interested in and passionate about will help you do well. Or you'll do better than you would in a major you're not interested in. Then you've got a college degree with a good GPA, and you've got skills and knowledge in something you're interested in. You can sell yourself at that point to lots of different employers just by saying look I finished college in four years, I've got really good grades, I'm a real passionate person that can bring this passion to you know your job or your agency. I think it starts with finding your passion on campus and perusing it in the classroom.





**6. Do you have anything else that you would like to mention that we didn't talk about today?**

I teach in the **Park Management minor** and **Environmental Education** and for Environmental Studies students that are interested in working out in the parks have them send me an e-mail and we'll get them started. I've got a lot of Kent States students working in local area parks and I have a lot of good contacts for them.

**If you are interested looking more in depth at Dr. Lepp's research**  
search for Andrew Lepp on Google Scholar of the link is:

*[https://scholar.google.com/citations?  
user=MWH2iYAAAAJ&hl=en&inst=1300648478797694909](https://scholar.google.com/citations?user=MWH2iYAAAAJ&hl=en&inst=1300648478797694909)*



**Dr. Andrew Lepp** backpacking in the Grand Canyon last spring.



# EARTH MONTH EVENTS AT KENT STATE UNIVERSITY

- April 3 - Grand Opening: Draining the Swamp Art Gallery
- April 3 - April 21 - Draining the Swamp Art Gallery
- April 4 - Clothing Swap
- April 10 - Earth Month Book Club
- April 11 - Earth Month Speaker Panel: Investing in a Clean Energy Future
- April 11 - Electric Vehicle Education Event
- April 12 - An Evening with Madeline Sayet Hosted by Jessica Vallejo, Lake Erie Native American Council
- April 13 and 14 - The 8th Annual Kent State University Environmental Science and Design Research Institute (ESDRI) Symposium
- April 14 - Meet the Author of Tree Story, Valerie Trouet
- April 17 - Kent State University Undergraduate Research Symposium
- April 18 - Kent State University Earth Fest
- April 19 and 20 - Make a Reuseable Beeswax Food Wrap!
- April 20 - Green Chemistry Speaker
- April 20 - Honoring Earth Day Glow and Give Ride
- April 20 - Observing the Night Sky Clinic
- April 21 - BioBlitz
- April 21 - Park Volunteer Clean-Up
- April 23 - Earth Day Celebration at Kent State Stark
- April 24 through 28 - Annual Fundraising Plant Sale
- April 25 - Kent State Farmers' Market
- April 28 - Hike and (SPIN) Bike
- April 29 - Mindful Hike

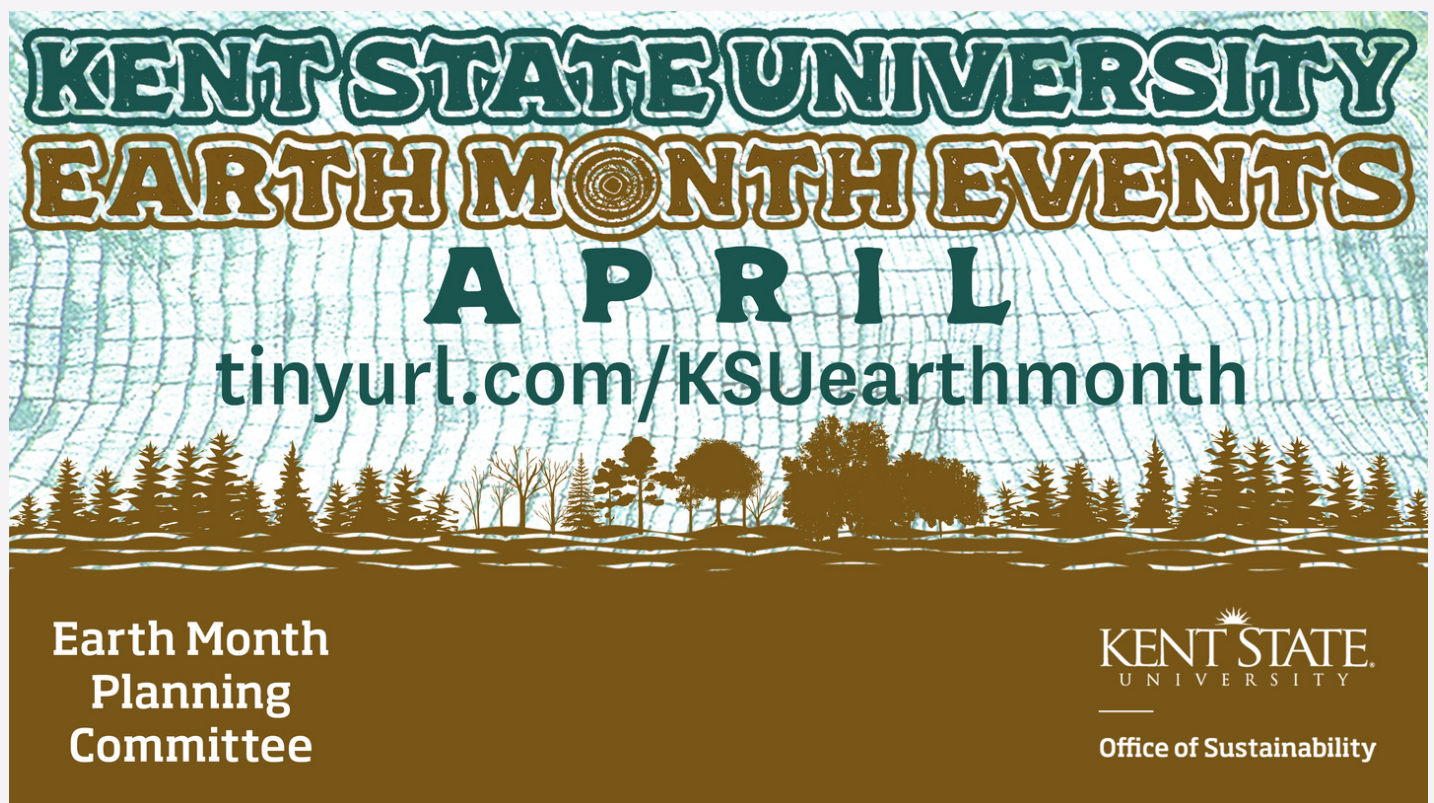


# EARTH MONTH EVENTS AT KENT STATE UNIVERSITY

If you are interested in looking more in-depth at the activities that are being offered visit the Office of Sustainability's website under the Earth Month section.

The link for the website is:

<https://www.kent.edu/sustainability/earth-month>





# KENT STATE UNIVERSITY EARTH FEST

APRIL 18 FROM 11AM-2PM

RISMAN PLAZA

FREE  
PRIZE  
DRAWINGS

FOOD,  
MUSIC, AND  
GIVEAWAYS

**Be part of the Kent State University Earth Fest Celebration!**

Join us for a fun-filled Earth Day event at Kent State  
with food, music, giveaways, prize drawings, and activities  
from 40+ on and off campus organizations and departments!

**FREE** event open to KSU students, faculty, staff, and community!

## Participating Organizations

Active Minds at KSU  
Akron Zoo  
Biology Club  
Brewer-Garrett  
Cleveland Museum of Natural History  
College of Aeronautics and Engineering  
Conservancy for Cuyahoga Valley National Park  
Cuyahoga Valley National Park  
Davey Resource Group  
Division of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion  
Drive Electric Ohio  
Environmental Science and Design Research Institute (ESDRI)  
Environmental Studies  
The Fabric Pantry  
Flashes Fighting Hunger  
Herrick Conservatory  
The Herrick Conservatory and Sustainability Club  
Kent Career Exploration and Development  
Kent Environmental Council  
Kent Parks & Recreation  
Kent State Construction Management Student Organization  
Kent State of Well-being  
Kent State Student Media  
Kent State University Office of Sustainability  
The Nature Conservancy

Neuroscience Club  
NOPEC  
Northeast OH Regional Sewer District  
ODNR- Div of Natural Areas and Preserves  
Office of Global Education - Education Abroad  
Ohio EPA  
OSU EXTENSION -MASTER GARDENERS - 4-H - CAMP WHITEWOOD  
Portage County Recycling- PCSWMD  
Portage Park District  
Public Health Student Alliance  
RecWell Adventure Center  
Socially Responsible Sweatshop  
Spin Scooters  
SRVSS  
Students for a Democratic Society  
Students for Environmental Change  
Summit Metro Parks  
Undergraduate Student Government  
United Print Alliance  
University Culinary Services  
USDA-NRCS  
West Creek Conservancy  
Wick Poetry Center  
Zero Emission Vehicle, College of Aeronautics and Engineering  
FOOD TRUCK: the green vegetarian

**Earth Month  
Planning  
Committee**

[tinyurl.com/KSUearthmonth](https://tinyurl.com/KSUearthmonth)

**KENT STATE**  
UNIVERSITY

Office of Sustainability



# KENT STATE STUDENT-RUN CLOTHING SWAP

by: Madilyn Lococo

It is currently my senior year and the final semester of college at Kent State. I am in the honors program, majoring in Fashion Merchandising with a minor in Sustainability. One of the requirements involves having a certain amount of honors credits every semester to stay in the program. The more advanced classes get, the harder it is to enroll in an honors class. Because of this, Kent State gives us the opportunity to instead of taking an honors class, create an honors project for a class we are already enrolled in. I emailed Professor Widner and asked if she would be interested in letting me complete an honors project for her *Conservation of Natural Resources* class, and she agreed. She was very flexible with me and let me choose to do my project over whatever I wanted. This is a student-driven project, so I have a lot of creative liberty and freedom. We have check-ins and meetings to make sure I am on track, but other than that it is completely up to me. This really excited me and allowed me to really think about what I was passionate about and what I thought would satisfy me.

One of my interests in sustainability particularly is the fashion industry, and I am always looking for ways to help contribute some environmental good to clothing. I decided to do some research on sustainable clothing and try to find some ideas and inspiration for my project there. I remember thinking to myself that while a lot of places recommend donating all unwanted clothing, a lot of places that people donate to, end up simply throwing away clothing, further contributing to the problem of waste. That's when I thought of a clothing swap. I did some research on it and decided it could be a great idea.



Essentially, a clothing swap is an event where people bring in unwanted clothing in exchange for another's unwanted clothing. This provides people an opportunity to go shopping for new clothing that they could love, and also give away clothing they no longer need or want. The best part, it's all completely sustainable. No waste occurs, no new clothing is being made, and people still get to shop and clear out their closets. Not only that, but it also provides people who have a mutual love for clothing and sustainability with a social event, an opportunity to make new like-minded friends.

The clothing swap took place at 8 pm on Tuesday, April 4th, in the DI Hub auditorium outside of room 219. Any unwanted clothing at the end is donated to the Women's Shelter and Salvation Army. Students gathered to create a community and share their creative side in swapping clothing items and creating outfits. The clothing swap also helped students learn about how you can easily reduce waste in your daily life by swapping clothes with friends.







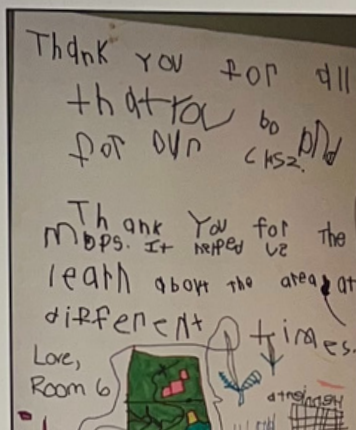
# DRAINING THE SWAMP

An Environmental History of Wetlands on the Kent Campus

Jennifer Mapes, Lauren Kinsman-Costello, and Seth Rainey



## ABOUT THE PROJECT



***Sneak peek of the Draining the Swamp Exhibit***



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**You may also visit the official program  
website for additional information:**

<https://www.kent.edu/geography/environmental-studies>

