



ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES NEWSLETTER

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



NEWSLETTER HIGHLIGHTS

With the temperatures dropping after Thanksgiving (the wind this week has been brutal!) it's clear that the fall semester is coming to an end. This will be the final issue of the semester and it has quite the variety in it. First is an internship spotlight from the Cuyahoga Valley National Park, then, details about career advising and study spaces in McGilvery Hall, an interview with one of the first environmental studies graduates, results from the November election regarding the Portage Park District levy, and finally a story about a class project in designing more sustainable cities.

On behalf of the entire newsletter team, I want to wish everyone good luck on exams, and we hope you have a great winter break!

-Miles Powell, Co-Editor-in-Chief



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"IN THEIR OWN WORDS..."

INTERNSHIP SPOTLIGHT: SAMANTHA POORE

by: Samantha Poore



Hi! My name is Samantha Poore and I am a second year Environmental Studies student. This past Summer, I had the privilege of working in Cuyahoga Valley National Park (CVNP) as a Community Engagement Intern. Here, I worked alongside Park Rangers and other interns within CVNP, as well as many volunteers. Our work revolved around sharing the rich history of CVNP and inspiring others to value and care for our natural resources.

One of the ways we did so was through our Get Up, Get Out and Go programs! These programs include a broad range of recreational activities (biking, fishing, hiking, field activities) and appeal greatly to summer camps and local daycares. Oftentimes, we'd go on mindful hikes and really hone into the environment surrounding us, utilizing all five senses. The Ledges was a common hike for this program. Another favorite of mine was assisting with the biking programs on the Towpath Trail, running along parts of what used to be the Ohio and Erie Canal. This program is awesome as it allows us to see a great deal of the beauties and history CVNP holds whilst staying active! Additionally, Community Engagement also runs Read with a Ranger programs and Pop-ups. Pop-ups are educational tables we set up featuring information pertaining to various aspects of the park and world around us. Our job is to make these Pop-ups appealing, fun and engaging for all age levels. These Pop-ups are also easy to take out of the park and to others, continuing one of our goals which is to make the park accessible to everyone. Overall, I couldn't have asked for a better internship and am so grateful for the experiences I collected and memories I made. If you're looking for a local, summer internship, I highly recommend considering CVNP, and more specifically, an internship in the Community Engagement sector.



CAREER ADVISING AND STUDY SPACES IN MCGILVERY HALL

by: Andrew Shenal

Drop-In Career Advising:

Internship opportunities have been opening throughout the semester making it increasingly important to have professional resumes, cover letters, and skills necessary to have a successful interview with an employer. This can be a difficult process to navigate for many especially for those who are unfamiliar with the process.



Luckily, **Bryan Kline** is available to help. He is a KSU Career Advisor offering important resources and support with a specialization in the energy, wildlife, and natural resources industries. **Every Tuesday from 12:00 to 2:00PM in McGilvery Hall room 417** Bryan is available for drop-in career preparedness help. For more information and resources such as access to professional headshots and a career closet with accessible professional clothing go to the Career Exploration and Development website at kent.edu/career.



Need a place to be outside of the classroom?

Next to the Geography office, the **Raup Library (Room 417)** is available for students to socialize and study throughout the week!

Available:

- Monday: 9AM-5PM
- Tuesday: 11AM-5PM
- Wednesday: 9AM-4PM
- Tuesday: 11AM-5PM
- Friday: 9AM-5PM



In the corner of the third floor, **Room 317** is also available as a quiet study space!

Available:

Monday through Friday: 9AM-5PM



ALUMNI INTERVIEW - GINA KAMPI

by: Tessa Stevens

Currently interviewing **Gina Kampi**, program coordinator for the Pine Township Parks and Recreation Department in Allegheny County, Pennsylvania:



What was your undergraduate degree?

I graduated in 2019 with a Bachelor of Arts in Environmental Studies.

What were you drawn to about the environmental studies program at Kent?

I knew I wanted to be in this program because environmental studies has the perfect combination of the social and science aspects of the environment. I think it is a great program for someone who wants to be involved with the environment but does not know what exactly they want to do yet as a job.



ALUMNI INTERVIEW - GINA KAMPI

Could you explain your career choice after graduation? How did you find out about your current career and what made you choose this field?

After graduation I had an internship in South Fayette (in Western PA) where I assisted the parks and recreation director. Their director is a graduate from Kent State as well! I was in charge of helping with events, especially their Touch A Truck event. I assisted with their Community Day event as well. Overall, I realized I really enjoyed the planning aspect of the events, and I liked how I had office work but also got to be away from the desk and help with the events! After the internship ended I worked at my local YMCA working with the kids there. This was a fun job! During this time I was on the hunt for a full time job. My sister knew this as well and was helpful. She saw a job post for a program coordinator position in the parks and recreation department in Pine Township (located in Western PA) from there I went through the interview process and got the job. Thank goodness for older sisters!



ALUMNI INTERVIEW - GINA KAMPI

What does a day-to-day workday look like for you?

My day to day changes a lot. As the program coordinator I oversee the programs, events and the fitness classes as well. When I am at my desk I am working on programs for the community center and reaching out to local businesses to bring their programs here. Event wise I am making the schedule of events and ordering fun activities and food for the events as well! One thing I really like is that I can put my own creative spin on the events and my programs. For example my one program is called Muck N Mess where I get to make messy crafts with kids. Crafts where you don't want to clean up at home! So I get to think "What would 5 year old Gina want to make?". I genuinely enjoy thinking like that and then seeing the kids having what the activity I come up with. Overall, the main task of my job is planning. Which I love to do!

What kind of programs and/or events do you plan?

Event wise we have many throughout the year. My next event is Breakfast with Santa where Santa comes down to the community center and does sing-alongs with the kids and there is a breakfast buffet for them! Some of our most popular events are Community Day and Holiday Dazzle. These events are large so the whole parks and recreation team gets involved. Community Day is in the summer where there are food vendors, live performances, animals and more! We just had our Holiday Dazzle event and at this event Santa is there, carriage rides, cookie decorating, we had a Muntjac (one of the world's smallest deer), and so much more! There were about 1,500 people in attendance for this event. Some of the smaller events we have that I am specifically in charge of are the Annual Egg Hunt, Dino Day, Royal Tea Party, Touch A Truck and so much more!

ALUMNI INTERVIEW - GINA KAMPI

Do you have any long-term career goals you would like to accomplish?

I will be honest, as of now I am comfortable where I am at being the program coordinator. Hopefully, I can get up to being the program manager. Overall, though, I genuinely enjoy my job and planning community programs and events for those within the community. At the end of the day I am making fond memories for these people and I like to think they really appreciate it!

What advice would you like to share with current students?

I would say as long as you are learning and doing something you are fond of then you are on the right track! I really liked going to the classes within the Environmental Studies program. I think my favorite class was Nature and Society. I will be honest I struggled a lot with the GIS class but I did find it very interesting! Overall, just have fun and take well written notes in your class, and if you are struggling with a class either ask your professor or a fellow classmate for help. That's what I did a lot of the time. It is always okay to ask for help. Good luck to all the students!



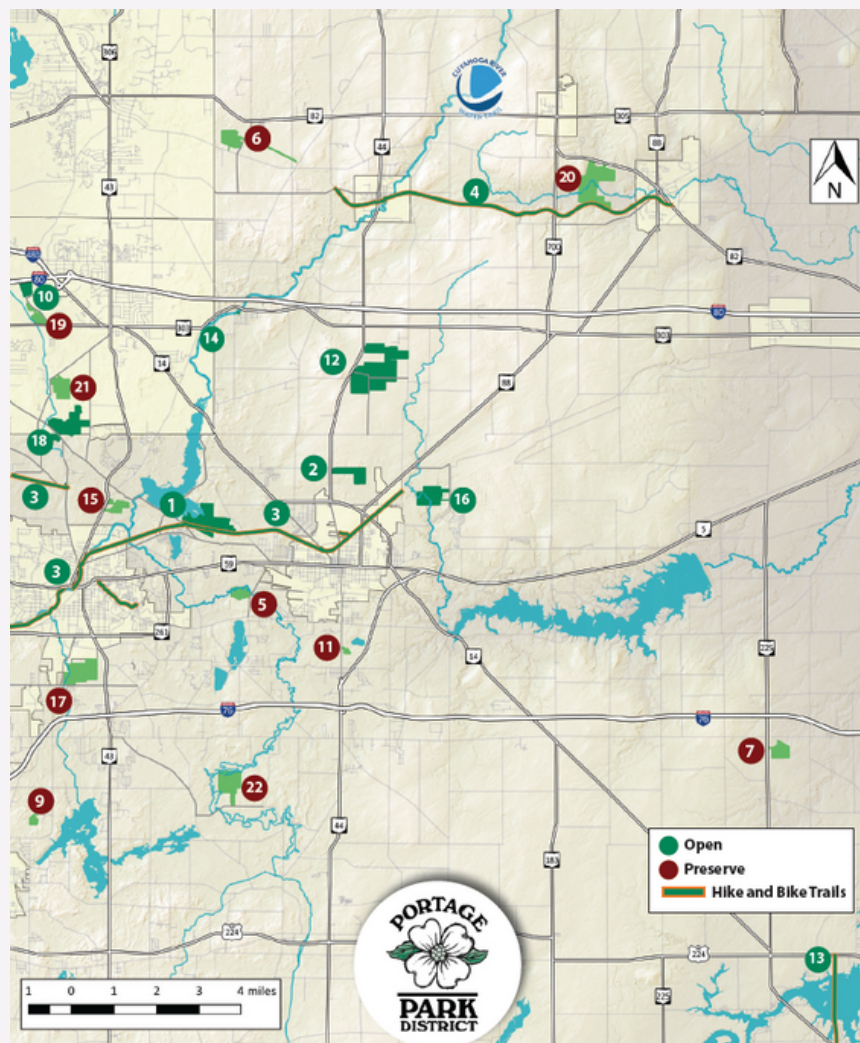
PORTAGE COUNTY PASSES INCREASED PARK FUNDING

by: Miles Powell

During the November elections, voters in Portage County voted to pass Issue 31, further funding the Portage Park District. The issue passed with the support of **58% of voters**.

The Portage Park District was created in 1991 and has parks and preserves all over Portage County. Currently, they run 10 parks, 11 preserves, and two hike and bike trails in the county. The first piece of land to be managed by the Portage Park District is Towner's Woods right here in Kent. This park initially opened in 1975 under the county's general administration, but was given to the park district to manage in 1993.

This 2023 levy isn't the first time funding the park district has been put to the voters. In 2014, voters passed a 1/2 million dollar levy to support the park district which expires at the end of this year. That levy has since become a major part of the park district's budget, providing 95% of its operating budget. Since 2014, the park district has expanded from 2 employees to 11 full time and 3 part time employees, opened 4 more parks, permanently protected an additional 1,335 acres of land, and renovated many buildings and trails.



PORTAGE COUNTY PASSES INCREASED PARK FUNDING

Issue 31 renews the 2014 levy and doubles it via an increase in property taxes throughout the county. The levy is expected to bring in **\$4.54 million annually**, which the Portage Park District plans to use on expansions to the Kent Bog State Nature Preserve in Brimfield, Headwaters Trail, and a 550-acre property in Shalersville Township as well as numerous smaller projects. The levy will last for 10 years.

The additional funding allows the Portage Park District to continue growing and helps it get additional grants from outside the county. The 2014 levy helped the park district get an additional \$7.3 million in grants and donations and more than \$1 million in land donation value. The increased levy is expected to help even more so on that front. With this money, the park district can continue its mission of protecting water quality, providing recreational opportunities, and conserving natural landscapes.

According to Ideastream Public Media, **similar levies were passed all around Northeast Ohio**. In November, a levy was passed supporting the Lorain County Metro Parks, funding was passed for Lake County's Overlook Beach Park, and voters in Cuyahoga County voted to build five-foot wide recreation trails, or sidewalks, along Shaker Boulevard, South Woodland Road and Lander Road in Cleveland.



DESIGNING A SUSTAINABLE CITY WITH LEGOS

by: Sav Herald

For several fall semesters, the map library has become a host for innovative solutions surrounding urbanization as students attempt to conceptualize and address the challenges that come with creating more sustainable cities. The space is annually transformed into a mock city through ingenuity, problem solving, and the use of Lego blocks and other found materials. A Lego city comes to life through the hands of students, the blocks representing students' ideas expressed in physical reality.

This is all done in **Urban Sustainability**, which was created by Dr. Jennifer Mapes, assistant professor in Kent State's Department of Geography. The course is tangible and provides a different style of learning that can be exceptionally beneficial to students because it keeps them interested and creates an academic environment that is fun to be in.

The inspiration for this course manifested from her children's love of Legos, as well as James Rojas' influential work in participation-based urban planning workshops that have engaged communities across the country and encouraged active participation among various groups. Dr. Mapes wanted to create a course that engaged students with the learning material while also emphasizing creative expression in a relaxing and FUN environment. She believes promoting more robust participation can be a way to bring diverse groups of people together to work through communal problems and express visions and dreams of a more sustainable future.



DESIGNING A SUSTAINABLE CITY WITH LEGOS



In terms of layout for the course, each student is assigned to a group that works together in addressing a specific issue in urban sustainability. Group topics include water, waste, heat, food, buildings, housing, green spaces, cars/roads, walkability, placemaking and challenges to access and equity. Through these topics, students can expect to learn about key concepts in environmental and social sciences and how this knowledge can be applied to improving sustainability efforts in urban landscapes.

Students can also expect to learn about the economic and political challenges that arise when implementing changes at a city scale, and how these challenges, changes, and impacts can be felt quite differently across space and time. According to the course description, students will come to understand urban sustainability by “seeking to address equally measurable environmental benefits; reducing social inequality, and the economic value of sustainability (the 3 E’s), balancing the challenges posed by urbanization with a more optimistic view of the value of well-planned dense development, and explaining the environmental and social science research underlying approaches to urban sustainability.”



DESIGNING A SUSTAINABLE CITY WITH LEGOS

Ideas that have come to life include but are not limited to; rain barrel collection, community gardens, rooftop gardens, dense residential infrastructure resistant to horizontal sprawl, solar panels on every building, residential areas strategically placed close to the city's center, robust public transit systems, designated paths for scooters and bikes, dedicated places for play and recreation, vertical growth exploding throughout the city, co-ops, depictions of festivals, the list goes on and on. Essentially, if you can think of it and justify it through the lens of sustainability, then you can build it.

Using our hands to create and build is central to what makes us human. Through a project like Lego City, without having to rely on words to communicate, students can express their ideas through blocks to create a physical place. Through words, students can present not only the challenges they faced while making changes to the mock city, but also address policies and other factors that cannot be “built” into a city.

In this regard, students can address the economic, political, and environmental challenges that come with cities attempting to transition to a more sustainable model of planning and development. When asked what a sustainable city looks like, Dr. Mapes responded that a visual cue is how walkable it is. Walkability can inform how well a city is addressing the three E's, equity, economy, and environment. More generally though, she states that sustainability encompasses “things that make people happy and that can make future generations happy as well.”



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

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

