



# SOCIETY OF WOMEN ENVIRONMENTAL PROFESSIONALS

THREE RIVERS CHAPTER

Thanks for reading the SWEP Three Rivers Newsletter! This is a semiannual publication and offers a closer look at SWEP, our members, and events. If you would like to contribute to our next issue, please contact our [Communications Committee Chair!](#)

## A NOTE FROM YOUR 2020 SWEP CHAIR

To the SWEP Three Rivers membership, sponsors, committee volunteers and our dedicated board members, I would like to personally thank each of you for your continued support of our growing organization. When I was asked to take the role of the inaugural secretary for the Chapter in 2017, I didn't realize the relationships, friendships, and sense of belonging I would gain by joining the board. Flashing forward to 2020, my first year as Chair of the board, these personal connections helped guide me through the uncertain times we have all dealt with this year. The COVID-19 pandemic altered our way of thinking, communicating, and greatly changed the outlook I had in January for our Chapter. While many of our planned events since February have been postponed, some indefinitely, the board has come together to find ways to continue to connect with our membership.

In April, while in the "Red Phase" of quarantine, we launched a social media campaign to showcase our work-from-home spaces, our escapes into nature, and our families – including the furry family members. Check out our Instagram page to see the photos [@swep3rivers](#). If you are looking for a safe way to get out into nature and get involved while social distancing, please reach out to any of the board members! We are grateful that we were also able to give back to our Pittsburgh community with charitable donations to several deserving organizations during this time (see page 4).



As 2020 evolved, so did our programming for the year. In June, our first virtual signature "Conversation with Cindy Adams Dunn" was a huge success via zoom! The board and committees have been revamping all of our planned activities for the remainder of the year, and I am truly excited for the events we have to come this year.

Stay tuned and stay safe!

*Mallory Griffin, PE*

## SWEP THREE RIVERS BOARD MEMBERS

### Officers

Chair: Mallory Griffin, JMT

Vice Chair: Amanda Love,  
Moody & Associates

Secretary: Kimberly Kennedy,  
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Treasurer: Cindy Zuch,  
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Membership: Lauren Terpak,  
ms consultants

Immediate Past Chair: Heather Tahon,  
Geosyntec Consultants

### Committee Chairs

Programs: Hannah Baldwin,  
Gateway Health Plan

Programs Co-Chair: Ingrid Pearson, CEC,  
Inc.

Communications: Amanda McNally,  
Geosyntec Consultants

Mentoring: Renee Krynock,  
A.D. Marble

Acting Mentoring: Erica Love,  
TetraTech

Nominating: Amanda Love,  
Moody & Associates

Public Service: Vacant

Sponsorship: Holly Douglas,  
Cosmos Technologies

Visit our website at [www.swep3rivers.org](http://www.swep3rivers.org)  
to learn more about SWEP!

## SPEED NETWORKING MENTORSHIP EVENT

As part of our mission of professional development and networking, SWEP Three Rivers hosted its very first Speed-Networking Mentorship Event at Threadbare Cider House on January 29, 2020. The event followed a speed-dating format, in which attendees were able to meet and chat one-on-one with other environmental professionals. Each pair had a few minutes to chat and exchange information, then partners rotated when the time ran out. The goal was to facilitate new mentoring connections within our membership.

The division for rotating partners was based on years of experience (one side of the table sat women with 10 or more years of experience who stayed seated, and the other side were women with fewer years of experience who moved to the next partner when time ran out). But at the same time, participants kept in mind that mentorship is multifaceted and not a one-way street: both sides of the table have valuable insight no matter how long they've been in the industry. For a valuable mentoring relationship to last, interest and engagement from both parties is essential.



PHOTO CREDIT: RENEE KRYNOCK

The speed-dating format broke down the usual networking discomfort and by the end of the night, participants had made at least 15 personal connections, plus any other connections they made during mingling time before and after. Our members clearly have a wealth of advice, wisdom, and support to share. Between Threadbare's wonderful bar selection, delicious appetizers, and first-rate

company, it was a truly enjoyable night and a great way to kick off our 2020 calendar!



PHOTO CREDIT: RENEE KRYNOCK

It's especially important in our current state of isolation to actively maintain career relationships. If you were in attendance, let this be a prompt to reach out to at least one connection you made. If you couldn't make it to the event, reach out to someone who's helped you along the course of your career. Big changes are happening for everyone- it's a perfect time to check in and show your appreciation.

A sincere thank you to all our attendees and volunteers for making this such a successful event! If you have any questions or want to get involved in the Mentoring Committee, please contact Renée Krynock at [rkrynock@admarble.com](mailto:rkrynock@admarble.com).

## PADEP HOSTS REGULATORY UPDATE FOR SWEP MEMBERS

On February 7, 2020, SWEP members trekked through wind, sleet, and snow to Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection's Southwest Regional Office for an update from Department staff during our Brown Bag lunch event.

Brian Schimmel, Local Government Liaison for DEP kicked off the meeting by introducing Regional Director Ron Schwartz. Director Schwartz provided an overview of operations and programs in the Southwest region, which covers eight counties and

494 municipalities, including Pittsburgh where the office is located. Director Schwartz outlined some challenges particular to the Southwest Region, including an increase in flooding events impacting permitting for projects across industry sectors and the institution and implementation of new e-permitting and other electronic filing initiatives, and described how the Department was adapting and rising to meet those challenges.

Director Schwartz was followed by Dana Drake, Waterways & Wetlands Program Manager in the Southwest Region. Ms. Drake provided an overview of hot topics in her program including the establishment of the Regional Permit Coordination Office, a centralized office within DEP to support Chapter 102, 105, and Section 401 State Water Quality Certifications required under the federal Clean Water Act for pipelines spanning three or more counties and two or more DEP regions or those crossing state lines. Ms. Drake also covered recent changes to the PAG-02, General Permit for Stormwater Discharges Associated with Construction Activities, which was renewed with significant updates in December 2019.

Our third and final speaker was Kareen Milcic, Environmental Group Manager for permitting in for the Oil and Gas program. Ms. Milcic focused her update on the Geologic Hazard Mitigation Program administered through the Erosion and Sedimentation Control General Permit For Earth Disturbance Associated With Oil And Gas Exploration, Production, Processing, Or Treatment Operations Or Transmission Facilities (ESCGP-3) that was finalized by DEP in October of 2018. The Geologic Hazard Mitigation Plan is a new component in the ESCGP-3 and is a vitally important component of the permitting process as flooding and landslide events continue to increase across the commonwealth.

We wrapped up the lunch with some cookies and a Q&A session, where all three speakers graciously answered questions from SWEP members. We are so grateful for the opportunity to hear from DEP in this

informal yet incredibly valuable setting for our membership! We hope to continue offering this event annually for our members and look forward to our next lunch with the Department.

### **DCNR SECRETARY CINDY ADAMS DUNN JOINED SWEP FOR OUR FIRST VIRTUAL “CONVERSATION” EVENT**

On June 16, 2020 SWEP hosted our first ever virtual Conversation with Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources Secretary Cindy Adams Dunn. We were so delighted to have Secretary Dunn join us, especially after having to cancel our in-person Conversation in mid-March as a result of the coronavirus outbreak.

Caron Glotfelty, Director of the Allegheny County Parks Foundation, active SWEP Program Committee member, and former “Conversation” interviewee, took on the role of interviewer and opened the Conversation with a question about the impact of coronavirus on DCNR. Secretary Dunn assured the members that all the facilities that will be reopening for public use this summer are now open and ready to be enjoyed by the public (For details on what facilities are open, visit <https://www.dcnr.pa.gov/FacilitiesMap/Pages/default.aspx>).

Our conversation also touched on another pressing topic – the Black Lives Matter movement, and how DCNR is continually reevaluating and pushing forward efforts to diversify its workforce and to assure equitable access to public lands for all citizens of the Commonwealth. Secretary Dunn mentioned one way the Department encourages the growth in diversity is through its Pennsylvania Outdoor Corps program, which offers work experience, job training, and environmental educational opportunities to young people who complete recreation and conservation projects on Pennsylvania’s public lands.

Secretary Dunn also shared some of her personal story, and how her passion for the outdoors and

exploring new places led her to pursue a biology degree and, with the encouragement of one of her professors, a career in conservation. She also shared that she feels her proudest accomplishment is her ability to build coalitions to achieve common goals, which is a great testament to the kind of leader Secretary Dunn is.

One of her most poignant anecdotes, which I believe resonated with many SWEP members, is that self-confidence is a constant struggle for her. What she has learned about herself is that if she gives 100 percent to whatever task she has before her, that dedication and drive to do her best is freeing, and her

self-consciousness takes a back seat to whatever she is trying to accomplish.

It was such a pleasure to host this Conversation, and SWEP-Three Rivers would like to thank our Conversationalists, Cindy Adams Dunn and Caren Glotfelty, and our sponsors. We could not offer such a wonderful program without the following organizational support: Diamond Level Annual Sponsor, Geosyntec, and Sapphire Level Sponsor Arcadis, and Bronze Event Sponsors: Cosmos Technology and R2O.

Please Visit <https://swep3rivers.org/news> for more resource

## A REVIEW OF 2020 CHARITABLE GIVING

SWEP Three Rivers Chapter is proud to have donated to the following organizations in 2020 who have provided support and resources for our community. We recognize the work these organizations continue to do in the face of an ongoing global pandemic to support their communities.

412 Food Rescue: <https://412foodrescue.org/>

University of Pittsburgh Medical Center (UPMC) – Pharmacy: <https://www.upmc.com/services/pharmacy/presbyterian>

Womanspace East: <https://www.wseinc.org/>

Western Pennsylvania Diaper Bank: <https://www.wpadiaperbank.org/>



In April 2020, SWEP Three Rivers partnered with Sly Fox Taphouse to provide 60 lunches to the front line workers of the UPMC Pharmacy location in south side Pittsburgh. Sly Fox generously donated 15% of all food costs on top of the \$500 donation from SWEP and delivered the food to the staff directly.

*PHOTO CREDIT: MALLORY GRIFFIN*

In total, SWEP 3 Rivers donated over \$2,500 during the COVID pandemic to-date. Thank you to all our membership for your continued support.

## 2020 UPCOMING EVENTS

### August / September

Allegheny County Parks Volunteering:  
Register here:

<https://apm.activecommunities.com/alleghenyparks/home#>

Public Service - Charity Fundraiser  
Trivia via Zoom, **September 10th**

Public Service – *Virtual* ALCOSAN  
Open House, **September 12**

Public Service – Connoquenessing  
Creek Cleanup, **September 12**

### October

Programs Committee – Virtual  
Sustainability Panel Discussion,  
**October 1**

Eco-District Tour, TBD

Interested in joining a committee?  
Visit:

<https://swep3rivers.org/Committees>

## MEET A MEMBER: RAMA RAJENDRA PANDKAR

Rama is an engineer with Geosyntec Consultants in Pittsburgh. Read on to learn more about Rama and be sure to say hi at our next SWEP event!

### **What do you find exciting or challenging about your job?**

I really enjoy working on variety of projects and learning something new every day. It can be a small thing like interesting tricks while working in AutoCAD or may be complex tasks involving design of water/wastewater treatment plant processes. Being a budding Environmental

Engineer, this field offers me a satisfying chance to make a difference in the public's everyday lives through the improvement of infrastructure.

### **What aspect of your education have you found most important in your career?**

Curiosity and perseverance in the face of challenging projects have helped me to come out of my comfort zone and think out of the box to find solutions to engineering problems. Moreover, I also realized the importance of communicating clearly through written and spoken words in day-to-day tasks.

### **What is your favorite Pittsburgh attraction and why?**

My all-time favorite place is Phipps Conservatory and Botanical Gardens. Every time it amazes me to see how it is amongst the most energy-efficient buildings that create their own energy and captures all the sanitary water and storm and treats it on site.

### **Tell us about a woman who inspires you.**

The person who inspires me the most is Savitribai Phule. She was the first to set up girl's school in India back in 1848 and worked to end gender and caste-based discrimination. She was the real iron lady who holds the courage to fight for the girl's education and all forms of social prejudices.

### **Have you learned any unexpected lessons since beginning your career?**

Don't ever afraid to ask questions or make mistakes. I believing learning is unending process and one should never hesitate to try out new things. My boss and colleagues have always been very supportive and motivating to help me grow in my career



## DIAMOND LEVEL ANNUAL SPONSOR SPOTLIGHT – GEOSYNTEC CONSULTANTS, INC.

Geosyntec Consultants, Inc. (Geosyntec) is a specialized consulting and engineering firm that works with private and public sector clients to address new ventures and complex problems involving the environment, natural resources, and civil infrastructure. Geosyntec has over 1,500 employees worldwide, including engineers, geologists, scientists, and other technical and project staff located in more than 85 offices throughout the United States, Canada, Europe, and Australia. Our Pittsburgh, PA office was started in 2012 and since has grown to provide a wide range of remediation, environmental management, geotechnical, and process engineering services.

Our Pittsburgh office is home to Geosyntec's Process Engineering Design Center, which provides water and wastewater engineering services to public and private sector clients not only locally, but also across our company's international territory. We provide a full range of water and wastewater consulting engineering

services, including planning studies; pilot and treatability studies; water and wastewater treatment plant design; surface water and groundwater treatment; water reuse; corrective action plan implementation; operations assistance; wastewater collection system design; pump station design; water distribution system design; collection and distribution system studies; program and project management; and construction supervision and inspection.

Geosyntec has designed water and wastewater treatment systems that range from the simple to the complex, with components such as constructed wetlands, packaged treatment plants (physical, chemical, biological) and site-specific treatment plants with stringent water quality-based discharge requirements. Our personnel have evaluated and, where appropriate, implemented treatment and management technologies that include air stripping; ion exchange; ultrafiltration; ammonia oxidation; suspended solids removal by flocculation; dissolved solids removal by acid precipitation and clarification; and sludge dewatering and incineration. We have also designed constructed wetlands for the treatment of wastewater, as well as activated sludge; anaerobic digestion; fluidized beds; slurry reactors; biofilm trickling filter; membrane bioreactors; thin film bioreactor; UV ozonation; carbon polishing; reverse osmosis; and breakpoint chlorine biological treatment systems.

Geosyntec has been a strong supporter of the SWEP Three Rivers Chapter since its inception and is proud to be this year's Diamond Sponsor. The mission of SWEP aligns well with our Women's Mentoring and Diversity and Inclusion Programs, which are integral to our success as a company. We look forward to a continued relationship with SWEP Three Rivers and to continued opportunity to get to better know its members and fellow supporters. Connect with us via our [website](#), [LinkedIn](#), [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#).

## THANK YOU TO THE SWEP THREE RIVERS ANNUAL SPONSORS FOR 2020!

**Diamond Level –  
\$2,500 (Exclusive Sponsorship):**

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CELEBRATING  
35  
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**Sapphire Level –  
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**Ruby Level - \$1,500 (Exclusive Sponsorship):** Currently Available, for information on sponsoring please contact our Sponsorship Committee Chair, Holly Douglas, at [hdouglas@cosmostechnologiesinc.com](mailto:hdouglas@cosmostechnologiesinc.com).

SWEP Three Rivers' mission is to provide women environmental professionals, working within the Three Rivers region, a community that recognizes and supports women's leadership and career development and provides a forum to share information and ideas and promote public service within the environmental field.

**Links:** Visit our website: <https://swep3rivers.org/>

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