

2017 MWMC Above and Beyond Award – Rebecca Kenyon-Sisler



Rebecca is the Biology and Advanced Placement Environmental Science teacher at Northern Garrett High School in Western Maryland. During her fourteen years of teaching, Rebecca and her students have contributed immensely to watershed awareness, advocacy, and stewardship. She and her class conducted Streamwader Volunteer sampling in the South Branch of Bear Creek providing data which helped classify this beautiful trout stream as an MDE-designated Tier II Stream. Rebecca works tirelessly to identify and coordinate outdoor learning experiences for her students. Her most incredible achievement to date has been the Cove Run Restoration project, a student-led project which resulted in the creation of vegetated riparian buffers within the headwater portion of Cove Run. The project involved land owner coordination; securing grant money to purchase monitoring equipment, waders, and aquatic macroinvertebrate collection supplies; and developing partnerships with the Youghiogheny River Watershed Association, Habitat Forever, LLC, California University of Pennsylvania, and various State and federal agencies to name a few. Components of the restoration included cattle fencing, tree and shrub plantings, and the installation of bluebird boxes. Over the past six years since the completion of the project, Rebecca and her students continue to monitor the stream and have found an improvement in water quality as well as the aquatic biota. As if teaching and these extracurricular activities aren't enough – Rebecca has also been the Envirothon coach for Northern Garrett High School for the past 12 years, leading her team to the state competition 10 out of the 12 years, placing in the Top 10 in four of those years, and finishing first last year in the Wildlife category. Rebecca's trophy shelf has been filling up lately – she was named the 2016 Maryland Conservation Education Teacher of the Year by the MD Association of Soil Conservation Districts as well as the 2015-2016 Garrett County Teacher of the Year. We are hoping that this year's MWMC Above and Beyond Award will make a good addition to her collection.