

Featured Student

Emma Macturk '23

Emma has been a great addition to the Washington College GIS Program. Currently, she is working on a project related to K-12 education for the state of Delaware developing dashboards, maps, apps, and cleaning up data.

I started working as a GIS intern after being introduced to the program through CES fellows. As an intern, I've learned valuable GIS skills that I can now use in my classes, research, and in future jobs. Working in the GIS lab and with the GIS staff has certainly been a positive experience that I plan to continue during my time at Washington College. -- Emma Macturk '23



Emma Macturk
WASHINGTON COLLEGE
CENTER FOR ENVIRONMENT & SOCIETY
300 WASHINGTON AVENUE
CHESTERTOWN, MD 21620



The Center for Environment & Society at Washington College

FBBO Bands its 300,000th Bird



Foreman's Branch Bird Observatory (FBBO), which is part of Washington College's Center for Environment & Society, reached a major milestone on October 21, 2020, when the station banded its 300,000th bird, a White-throated Sparrow. Founded by Jim Gruber in 1998, FBBO is one of the largest volume banding stations in the east and bands about 15,000 birds each year. FBBO is located at

The banding crew present on October 21, 2020 with the 300,000th bird ever banded at FBBO. From left to right: Phillip Mercier, Michael Gamble, Jim Gruber, Maren Gimpel, Madelaina Ondo, Jonathan Irons.

Washington College's River and Field Campus just outside Chestertown, about ten minutes south of the main campus.

continued inside ...



Did you know?

Environmental archaeology sometimes involves examining the remains of plants and animals to learn which species were present at a site when it was inhabited and to understand how earlier societies used and managed them.

Stay in touch with us on Facebook, Instagram and our website to celebrate with us at many events throughout the year.

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Alumni Spotlight

“If there was any advice I would give to students in their under-grad it would be to always be open, stay curious, and ask questions.”

Amanda Bland

I graduated from Washington College in May of 2019 with a B.A. in Environmental Studies and minors in Sociology and Chesapeake Regional Studies. After graduation, I began an internship with Bergeson and Campbell, P.C., and environmental law firm in DC. The various opportunities I had to draft reports, attend hearings, and conduct research for clients prepared me for my next position, and really enabled me to transition out of undergrad and into my career field.

In August of 2019 I began my year in the Chesapeake Conservation Corps (CCC), a program through the Chesapeake Bay Trust which partners young professionals in the environmental field with environmental organizations in the Chesapeake Bay region. I matched with the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay. While at the Alliance I provided outreach, project management, and event coordination for the Maryland Program Restoration team. I also had the opportunity to present my living shoreline research at the Chesapeake Bay watershed forum, and received a grant through the Chesapeake Bay Trust enabling me to design, coordinate, and launch an experiential learning environmental elective at a school in Edgewater, MD.

After graduating from CCC, I was hired full time by the Alliance. I now work to support and manage our large scale living shoreline and stream restoration projects as the

Maryland Projects Assistant. Before COVID my position required me to often travel throughout the state while attending site visits. Not only did I find it remarkable to watch the sites transform, but it's inspiring to work alongside ecologists, hydrologists, and environmental engineers.

In the fall of 2016, I had the opportunity to attend the Chesapeake Bay watershed forum while in the Chesapeake Semester Program. Only 4 years later I now work for the organization which hosts the forum, and I know that this opportunity would not be possible if not for the mentors who have supported me along the way. If there was any advice I would give to students in their undergrad it would be to always be open, stay curious, and ask questions. The Chesapeake Bay community is small, and full of individuals who are passionate about what they do, and eager to pass that on.



News from the Public Archaeology Lab

As you can imagine, the Public Archaeology Lab (PAL) hasn't been very public since March of 2020. The pandemic brought our normal operations to a screeching halt. But, in trying to make the most of an undeniably terrible situation, we shifted our focus to things not so public. With few students and no community members engaged in lab work during the pandemic, we took the opportunity to assess and address our collection of artifacts from more than 22 years of research and excavations. That's right, we've been providing field and lab opportunities to our students and the public for over 22 years! Our first excavation took place in 1998 at the Cray House in Stevensville, Maryland, and we've been at it ever since.

A major objective of the PAL always has been to provide our students with opportunities for hands-on learning, while teaching them the methodologies used in both the field and the laboratory. Our summer field school supplies a constant stream of material in need of processing and analyzing. It has been said that each hour spent in the field produces seven hours of lab work. As you can imagine, the workload can back up quickly, especially when taking the time needed to ensure our students learn, build their resumes, and prepare for a successful career.

This period of closures and virtual learning gave us the chance to focus on our artifact collections - collections that are varied and numerous, spanning thousands of years of human history. From building new shelving for our storage units to re-bagging and boxing assemblages, we've been busy addressing our collection needs. By far, the most important and time-consuming task is completing the cataloguing of materials. Every item recovered from an excavation must be identified, coded and catalogued. This helps explain the 1:7 ratio of field to lab hours! Fortunately, it is a task we find particularly enjoyable.



As busy as we were tending to our collections, it did not stop us from getting out into the field. In partnership with our Geographic Information Systems Lab (GIS), we recently completed a non-invasive survey of the historic Rodgers Tavern and Lower Ferry Park on the Susquehanna River in Perryville, MD. This important river crossing and the tavern were a milestone on the route between Baltimore and Philadelphia. The objective of our work was to use ground penetrating radar (GPR) to record everything from early tavern related features to 19th century houses and railroad yards.

The GPR survey was conducted last fall in partnership with Maryland Environmental Service and with funding from the Maryland Historical Trust. Students came out to observe and learn about the process. The results of the survey, and additional historical research we conducted for the site, were incorporated into a comprehensive



database and GIS. The result is a comprehensive inventory of historic resources, which acts as a flexible, yet powerful, planning tool for the Town of Perryville.

Currently, we are working on another exciting, non-invasive research project – this time in St. Mary's County. Under subcontract to Kennon Williams Landscape Studio, the PAL and GIS are developing a cultural landscape and battlefield assessment of St. George's Island in the Potomac River. The Battle of St. George's Island (July 1776) was the first and only Revolutionary War battle in the state of Maryland. Project funding is provided by Preservation Maryland and the American Battlefield Trust.

Although we have been staying busy, we can all agree that the last year and a half has been a time of reflection. Assessing our 22 years of collections and research projects got us thinking about future plans and goals. As a result, we have decided to make some very invigorating and enterprising changes. Details will be announced later in the year as our plans progress, but the Public Archaeology Lab will be undergoing a reorientation and rebranding of its operations. We will be adjusting our focus, changing our affiliation and even moving our offices to a new waterfront location (that's a hint). Stay tuned...there are exciting new things ahead, with plenty of opportunities for student and community engagement!



On October 21, 2020, this White-throated Sparrow was the 300,000th bird banded at FBBO since its founding in 1998.

FBBO 300,000th Bird continued ...

Fall 2020 turned out to be a remarkable season at FBBO. In addition to banding the 300,000th bird, the season was very busy, in part due to an irruption of "winter finches." These are species that normally are rare in winter in Maryland, but this fall and winter have moved south in larger numbers due to food shortages in the north. As an example, FBBO banded over 800 Pine Siskins, a close cousin of the American Goldfinch, when in a normal year they would have banded only a handful. Another exciting highlight was that the station banded two species for the first time, a Red-headed Woodpecker and three Evening Grosbeaks (another species being found much farther south than usual). The fall season ended up as the biggest in the station's history—15,305 birds were banded. FBBO collaborates with other researchers on topics ranging from gut flora of birds to radio tagging individuals as part of the Motus Network and offers several paid internships to Washington College students each year. If you are interested in learning more about FBBO or the work that the Center for Environment & Society is doing at the River and Field Campus, please reach out to Maren Gimpel at mgimpel2@washcoll.edu