TO: WCSU University Senate  
From: Frank J. Dye, Director, Westside Nature Preserve (WNP)  
Subject: Annual WNP Report (2013-2014)  
Date: 22 April 2014

**Maintenance**

The two informational kiosks, one at the beginning of the trails at the University Boulevard entrance to the WNP and one at the Middle River Road entrance to the WNP, have regularly been updated. Brochure boxes, next to the kiosks contain self-guided handouts for visitors to explore the two trails on their own. The WNP display case in the science building is updated with relevant photos and information with the change of each season. The WNP website is routinely updated.

**Development**

In June of 2013, I assembled a “task force” of colleagues from University Computing, Media Services, and Publication & Design. Two developmental projects came out of that meeting: (1) the creation of an interactive map of the Northern Trail, which is now on the WNP website and (2) the creation of new signage for each of the 10 station posts on The Northern Trail- these signs have QR codes which visitors may scan with their smart phones- doing so will take them immediately, while they are on the trail, to a narrative video clip that describes what is to be seen in the vicinity of that sign post.

**Research**

During the summer of 2013, I continued my research on the quality of the surface water on the WNP, using cell culture bioassays. This summer that work will be continued with an undergraduate student, using both cell culture and onion root tip bioassays.

**Teaching**

A number of Biology courses, including BIO 100, Concepts of Biology; BIO 103, General Biology I; BIO 200, Ecology; and BIO 311, Developmental Biology, include field trips on the WNP, which is a living laboratory.
**Community Outreach**

Our updated, multicolored, brochure has been distributed to various venues, including the Connecticut Welcome Center at Exit 2 (East-bound) on Interstate 84. Again, an original greeting card, using a photo taken at the WNP, was created and sent out (during the December holiday season) to Friends of the Westside Nature Preserve, members of the WCSU administration, and the CSU Board of Regents.

The Biology Club and the Honors Students Group has volunteered to work on trail maintenance on the WNP.

During the fall (2013) semester, guided tours were made available to the general public and the Student Veterans Organization.

We are listed in *Connecticut Vacations* as well as in *Unwind* - both publications of the Northwest Connecticut Convention and Visitors Bureau.

**Financial Statement**

The WNP Center continues to be financially solvent. Thanks to the generosity of Friends of the Westside Nature Preserve, our operating budget is several thousand dollars. Our endowment continues to grow as we use the operating budget to spare the endowment, and interest generated by the endowment continues to be added to the principal.

Respectfully submitted,

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