

# Foundation Supports Second Offering of WVU Parkersburg Environmental Course



What is better than camping throughout the beautiful state of West Virginia for an innovative course at West Virginia University Parkersburg? Returning for a follow-up learning experience! That is exactly what WVUP Professors Phil and Denise McClung did when they selected ten students to begin this second journey into the mountains of West Virginia on May 11 – 16, 2008.

Stopping first at the Kayford Mountain mine site, the team heard from renowned expert Larry Gibson about the devastation from mountaintop removal mining (MTR). Even strong winds and a tornado warning did not prevent students from gaining a powerful awareness of the harmful impact of MTR.

Other stops included Hawks Nest Dam to speak with power plant representative Dan Barnhart about hydropower; Cranberry Glades to tour the bogs, plants, and animals; and Greenbank National Observatory to view the telescopes. The list of rewarding visits continued, with excursions to Cass Railroad, the top of Snow Shoe and Seneca Rocks, Seneca Caverns, Dolly Sods, the wind farms on Backbone Mountain, Blackwater Falls State Park, and Coopers Rock.

The students evolved not only in their increased concern for the environment, but also in their ability to work together as a caring group and in their individual journeys of self-discovery. They participated in numerous team-building activities including a high-ropes Challenge Course developed by WVU.

While the natural environment provided many wonders, it is no wonder that this course – supported by the Kate Svitek Memorial Foundation – has been highlighted in the school's recruitment presentations! This outdoor learning experience will lead to recycling and other efforts to make a difference in the future of the community.

