

# NIE Connect with your environment

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CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Students help to maintain the area near the Country Fair on the corner of East 12th and Parade streets.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Conducting a cleanup and collecting data help students understand problems related to trash.



ANNA McCARTNEY/Contributed photo

A watershed game like this one is on the list of projects students will complete.

## Pfeiffer-Burleigh students learn to be good stewards

By ANNA McCARTNEY  
Contributing writer

The Pfeiffer-Burleigh Green Team is making a difference in their community by making their neighborhood a better place to live and learn.

With 50 students on the roster, they are helping to create and maintain landscaped garden areas on the school campus and a green space adjacent to the Country Fair on the corner of East 12th and Parade streets.

Forty of the students also documented the trash they collected around their school neighborhood for the International Coastal Cleanup. They filled 10 bags in a one-mile area around their school. Their data was added to the PA Lake Erie ICC results, sent to the Ocean Conservancy and added to data collected around the world.

The data is used to raise awareness about the problems caused by marine debris and what can be done to solve them. Pfeiffer-Burleigh students are sharing their ideas about how marine debris impacts the Great Lakes and the ocean in their entries to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Marine Debris Art Contest.

Led by dedicated teachers Danielle Baldi, Jane Ross, Julie Boam, Julie Wonner, Colleen Tetrake, Lisa Sinicki and Kathie Church-Rivera and Assistant Principal Holly Northrup, these students will continue to clean up litter and improve the green spaces while they educate their peers throughout the year. They also have some planting events scheduled

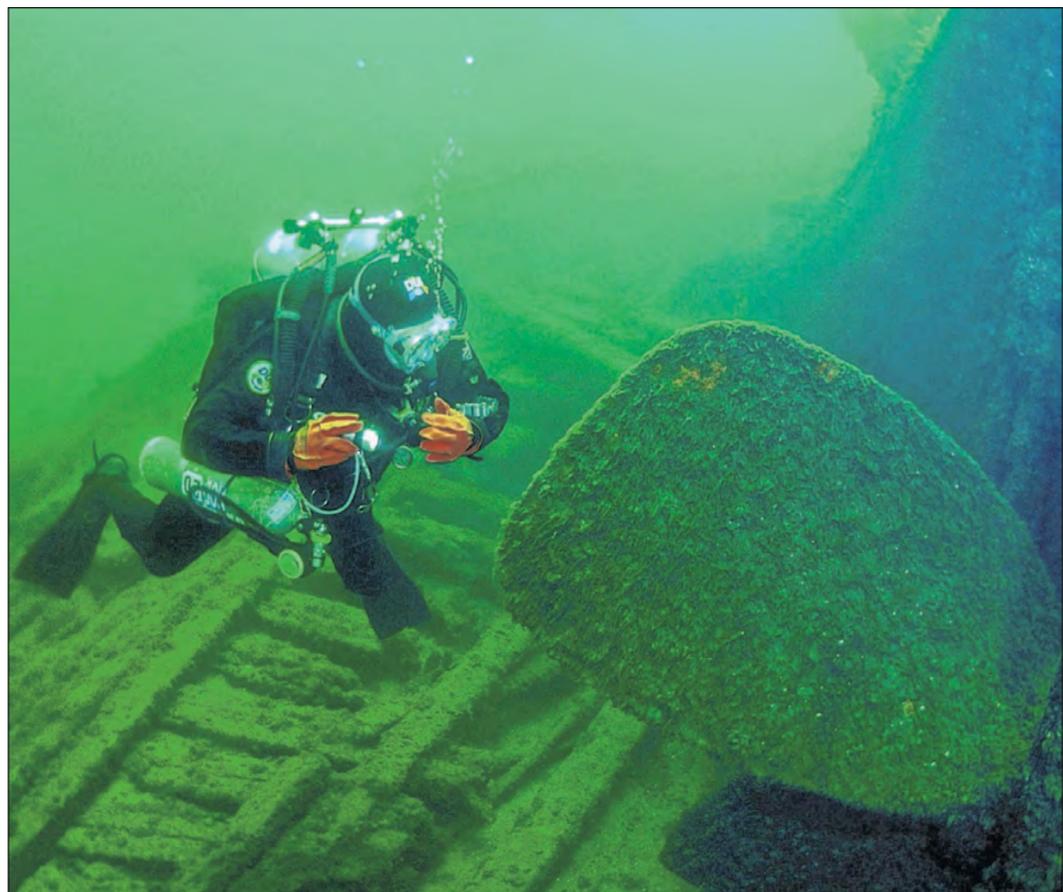
for the spring of 2015.

Students are also researching their watershed and creating a life-size watershed game that incorporates best practices so students gain an understanding of watershed issues and solutions through stewardship projects. Ross and her students will be using the watershed game to teach others about how they can improve water quality. Their green spaces and the cleanups are definitely ways to achieve that goal.

School projects such as this work best when there is community support. And the Green Team is getting lots of support, which includes funding from the Erie Insurance Giving Network and support from Environment Erie for the Pfeiffer-Burleigh beautification project. The team is also getting funding and support for field trips, the watershed game and materials for stewardship projects from Pennsylvania Sea Grant through the Center for Great Lakes Literacy (CGLL), a partnership between the Great Lakes Sea Grant Network and the Environmental Protection Agency's Great Lakes National Program Office.

For more information about Environment Erie Education, contact Nate Millet at nmillet@environmenterie.org or 440-3953. For information about PA Sea Grant CGLL, contact Marti Martz at mam60@psu.edu or 217-9011, ext. 104.

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TANE CASSERLEY/NOAA

The Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary, headquartered in Alpena, Mich., is one of 14 sites managed by NOAA's Office of National Marine Sanctuaries, and the only one in the Great Lakes. It features some of the world's best-preserved shipwrecks, which visitors can explore first-hand through diving, snorkeling and kayaking.

# Treasure test

Could Erie become National Marine Sanctuary?

By ANNA McCARTNEY  
Contributing writer

This is Erie's opportunity to tell the world "this watery place is special." For the first time in more than two decades, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration is considering new areas for designation as national marine sanctuaries. Communities across the U.S. have been invited to nominate their most treasured places in America's marine and Great Lakes waters for protection.

Currently, there are 14 protected areas. The NOAA Office of National Marine Sanctuaries serves as the trustee for these sites chosen for their scenic beauty, cultural heritage or ecological significance for America. They include beautiful coral reefs, lush kelp forests, whale migration corridors, spectacular deep-sea canyons and underwater archaeological sites.

These exceptional places, which provide homes to thousands of unique or endangered species, range in size from one square mile to almost 140,000 square miles. They contain natural classrooms, cherished recreational spots and valuable commercial industries, and they have proved that protecting marine resources can enhance local economies.

The Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary on Lake Huron near Alpena, Mich., is the only protected freshwater site. Since it was established in 2000, the Thunder Bay sanctuary has benefitted the area enormously, becoming an engine for economic diversification and stability for the area.

NOAA and the state of Michigan are working with local agencies and private



NOAA

The sanctuary's Great Lakes Maritime Heritage Center, also in Alpena, features more than 10,000 square feet of interactive exhibits drawing more than 80,000 visitors annually. This and other sanctuaries across the country play an important role in the regional economy.



THUNDER BAY NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY

The defunct Fletcher Paper Mill, a victim of difficult economic times, was renovated for the Great Lakes Maritime Heritage Center (above), now a popular destination for visitors of all ages.

and nonprofit organizations to conduct, support, promote and coordinate scientific research and monitoring of the maritime heritage resources to ensure their long-term protection. Thunder Bay features some of the world's best-preserved shipwrecks, and visitors can explore them first hand through diving,

snorkeling and kayaking.

This sanctuary has hosted scientific and archaeological researchers; held global student robotics competitions and partnered with educational institutions to help students develop maritime careers; and it has attracted tourists from around the world.

Recently the boundaries

## COMING UP

A public information session about National Marine Sanctuaries will be held Tuesday, Dec. 9, at 6 p.m. at Blasco Library's Hirt Auditorium. Taking part will be Ellen Brody, Great Lakes regional coordinator for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Office of National Marine Sanctuaries, and Jeff Gray, superintendent of the Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary.

were expanded from 448 square miles to encompass 4,300 square miles. The expansion, which was driven by strong public support and based on several years of research by NOAA and its many scientific partners, now protects an additional 100 known and suspected historic shipwreck sites. The expanded area includes the waters of Lake Huron adjacent to Michigan's Alpena, Alpena and Presque Isle counties to the Canadian border.

Because national marine sanctuaries promote an understanding that the Great Lakes and oceans are critical to our future, they ensure that future generations will continue to experience and value irreplaceable marine treasures. Reopening the public process to nominate new areas provides an excellent opportunity for communities to actively participate in protecting their special ecological, historical, archaeological and cultural sites.

Next week: More about the nomination process.

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<http://paseagrant.org>

Use the newspaper to learn about important cultural, environmental and historical places in the Erie region. Do you have a favorite place to visit? Share your special places with readers. Include the reasons they are special to you and why others should take time to check them out. Send your ideas to axm40@psu.edu for possible publication in the "your space" feature.

