

Tools monitor mix of weather, wildlife

Center's solar gear along Hudson River to help educate public

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The Journal News

YONKERS — There's no arguing that the snow-covered riverbank at the Beczak Environmental Education Center is cold.

But just how frigid will no longer be a matter of speculation with the installation of new solar-powered instruments that offer weather and water readings viewable on the Internet.

The equipment is another step in the Beczak center's efforts to educate the public about how weather affects wildlife on the Hudson River, the center's staff said.

"It's important to understand what the conditions are to understand the organisms," said Jennifer Mokos, a Beczak educator and exhibit curator.

Last week, technicians and Beczak staff affixed the devices to a white post rising out of the Hudson River near the decayed pier at the Beczak center's waterfront. One device, the sonde, sits underwater to measure water temperature, salinity, PH level and dissolved oxygen.

A weather instrument measures air temperature, wind speed and direction, humidity and precipitation, among other conditions. The information is visible on a Web site operated by NexSens Technology Inc. of Dayton, Ohio.

Mokos said having such readings helps educators explain the relationship between wildlife and the weather, which dictates animals' behavior and migration.

Beczak paid for the \$14,000 project with a \$9,900 grant from the state's Department of Environmental Conservation's Estuary Grant Program and \$500 from Project Aware.

The center is still hoping to raise about \$5,000 to finish paying

Keeping tabs on Yonkers riverfront

Weather and Hudson River water conditions at the Beczak Environmental Education Center at the downtown waterfront are now available on the Web.

Address:
www.trial.wqdata.com
Username: Beczak
Password: beczak06

for the devices.

Kathleen Savolt, Beczak's executive director, said the measuring devices were another step in the center's evolution. The nonprofit organization's operating budget has increased to \$350,000 and a new, part-time volunteer coordinator joined four full-timers at the center.

In addition, school group tours are booked solid throughout the academic year.

"It's growing and exciting," Savolt said. "Just like the rest of the riverfront."

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