

Beczak Installs New High Tech River Monitoring Equipment

Data Available Online

Thanks to new equipment installed at Beczak you can see what's going on in the river right from the comfort of your own home, classroom or anywhere with an Internet connection.

A water and weather monitoring station was installed in the river just outside of the marsh. The equipment records weather conditions like air temperature, barometric pressure, wind speed and direction, and rain-fall, as well as water conditions in the river such as temperature, salinity, pH, and dissolved oxygen. The data is collected and transmitted to a computer in the center via radio telemetry. This equipment was funded in part from the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation's Hudson River Estuary Grants program.

This data will be part of an interactive exhibit at our Center focused on the dynamic conditions in the Hudson River estuary. We will also be incorporating the real-time data into the new marsh educa-



Positioning the equipment



Screenshot of monitoring website

Key to Abbreviations Used on the Monitoring Data Web Site

Weather Parameters

Level	change in water level
Temp.....	internal temperature of weather station
WindDir	wind direction
WindSp.....	wind speed
AirTemp.....	air temperature
RH.....	relative humidity
BP.....	barometric pressure
RainFall	amount of rainfall
RainInten	rain intensity
Hail amt.....	amount of hail
HailInten	hail intensity
Bat.....	battery power of weather station

Water Parameters

Temp.....	water temperature
Sp Cond	specific conductivity
TDS	total dissolved solids
Sal.....	salinity
DOSat.....	dissolved oxygen saturation
DO	dissolved oxygen
pH.....	pH
Bat.....	battery power of water station

tional programs we are currently developing. Future plans for the project include adding a second water monitoring station in the marsh which will allow us to compare conditions between these two different habitats. We are still seeking funds to fulfill our vision for this project.

Our data can be viewed online at www.trial.wqdata.com (username: beczak; password: beczak06). Through the web site, parameters can be selected individually or viewed with other parameters, a range of dates for data can be selected and the data can be displayed as a graph or data table and even downloaded to a spreadsheet. While viewing graphs the measurements can be converted between metric and English units and the scale may be adjusted.

All this comes with the warning that viewing this information can be very addictive! We have already received reports that people are taking time out from work to check on the river.

Look for our continuing series of articles on the parameters we are monitoring in future editions of our newsletter, *The Beczak Net*. 🐟



Vicky and Jenn brave the cold water (4°C to be exact)

BECZAK

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION CENTER

35 Alexander Street, Yonkers, NY 10701
914.377.1900 • www.beczak.org

Beczak's mission is to educate people about the ecology, culture and history of the Hudson River by providing interactive educational experiences focused on the river. We do this so that everyone we reach can become better stewards of the Hudson and better citizens of their community.

Staff

Kathleen Savolt, Executive Director
Cynthia Fowx, Director of Education
Jennifer Mokos, Educator/Exhibit Curator
Victoria Garufi, Educator
Sarah Macdonald, Volunteer and
Community Outreach Coordinator
Tripper and Cedar, Canine Mascots

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PHOTOS

Riverfest photos, John Abella
All other photos, Beczak
staff using a FujiFilm FinePix F700
generously donated by FujiFilm USA.

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends:

After our last newsletter, we received a letter from a supporter questioning Beczak's acceptance of a cash donation from Entergy, owner/operator of Indian Point. As you may know, some community leaders and organizations are calling for the power plant to be shut down.

At first, the letter came as a surprise. As an educational center, we haven't inserted ourselves into the discourse about Indian Point or any other controversial environmental issue surrounding the Hudson River, Westchester County or Yonkers. I soon realized the letter writer had actually done Beczak a great service. We have not articulated our organizational philosophy recently. This includes where we stand on issues that may concern our supporters and our policies regarding their own private information. I will remedy that oversight right now.

First and foremost, Beczak is an educational organization. As stated in every newsletter, our mission is to educate people about the ecology, culture and history of the Hudson River. We are half-way through our fiscal year (July 1 – June 30) and are projecting we will deliver close to 350 programs this year. This is a 30% increase over last fiscal year and we have almost reached maximum capacity of our new center (after opening only one year ago!). So, we figure there is real demand for Hudson River-based environmental education and Beczak is exploring creative ways to meet both the increasing demand and need for increased funding.

As educators, Beczak has chosen not to take stands on issues. Instead, we strive to present all sides of the issues and let you decide for yourself where you stand. We will not preach, advocate or lobby concerning any specific issue be it Indian Point or specific development projects in Yonkers. We will try to offer roundtable discussions and lecturers on the issues that matter.

Some of you may have seen me at public hearings regarding the Upper West Side (i.e., Alexander Street) development or other riverfront development. I have been vocal

about ways to enhance the Hudson and its habitats, including those for humans. I also have the privilege of serving the citizens of Yonkers on both the Local Waterfront Revitalization Program (LWRP) and Upper West Side Brownfields Opportunity Area advisory committees. I will continue to suggest ways I think the City of Yonkers and its developers can enhance the river and its inhabitants – both human and non-human.

In closing, everyone at Beczak hopes you had a joyous holiday season with your family and friends. If you haven't joined the "Friends to Beczak" recently by giving us a gift or if you can give a little more, please send a donation today. Whether you love the Hudson River and want to share that love with others, especially the next generation, or maybe you are concerned about the education of our children, Beczak is worthy of your consideration. Since opening our new center, our budget has almost tripled. We must raise over \$350,000 every year. Even though money is tight, you can be assured your privacy is protected. We will not sell our mailing list or donor information as a way to raise money. Please send a donation today. We need your support.

Thank you and keep those comments coming!

Kathleen Savolt
Executive Director

P.S. I cannot end without a personnel note: Please join us in welcoming our new Volunteer and Community Outreach Coordinator, Sarah Macdonald. Sarah is also a new resident of Yonkers and we are glad to welcome her aboard. Look for Volunteer News in upcoming newsletters and if you are interested in volunteering at Beczak, please call Sarah at 914.377.1900.



MEET VICKY GARUFI, EDUCATOR

CALENDAR AT A GLANCE

- Tuesday, January 17**
Striper Wars – An American Fish Story
Lecture by author Dick Russell
- Sunday, February 12**
Hudson River EagleFest
- Thursday, February 14**
Con Edison Lunchtime Learning Series
for Adults: What is an Estuary?
- Tuesday, February 21**
Something Fishy! Beczak introduces
Holiday Programs!
- Thursday, March 16**
Con Edison Lunchtime Learning Series
for Adults
- Wednesday, April 12**
Con Edison Lunchtime Learning Series
for Adults
- Saturday, April 22**
WHUD Kid's Fair at the Westchester
County Center, White Plains
- Sunday, April 23**
Earth Day Clean-Up
- Tuesday, May 16**
Con Edison Lunchtime Learning Series
for Adults



Vicky graduated from Southampton College of Long Island University with a bachelor's degree in psychobiology, where she dove into her love for marine biology. Ever since she was a little girl, Vicky has loved the water and all it has to offer; she is a true Pisces.

During her college studies, Vicky worked as an educator at Atlantis Marine World, in Riverhead, NY, leading tours through an interactive salt marsh. She also interned at The Riverhead Foundation for Marine Research and Preservation, assisting with all aspects of husbandry, rescue, release, and

rehabilitation of seals and sea turtles. One of Vicky's most memorable experiences was her nine week semester at sea aboard The Californian, a 145-foot sailing schooner. She sailed from Long Beach California south around the Baja Peninsula, studying the local flora and fauna of the Sea of Cortez.

After graduation she served as a seasonal plover steward for the Suffolk County Department of Parks, Recreation, and Conservation, helping to protect the endangered piping plovers of the local beaches from the threat of extinction.

In 2003 Vicky moved back from Long Island to her hometown Yonkers, where she faced the reality of finding jobs in the real world. She juggled between part time jobs and commuting to Norwalk, CT where she worked as an educator at The Maritime Aquarium. She taught marine life study cruises of Long Island Sound, aboard their Research Vessel Oceanic. It was during her experience there, that she realized she was destined to be an educator. After a year, she was determined to move up in the work world. Eventually all paths led to Beczak and in February of 2005, she finally found her niche along the Hudson River.

As an educator at Beczak Environmental Education Center, Vicky is responsible for helping to design and deliver our educational programs and create exhibits. When not trying to sneak into newspaper photos or cradling baby hogchokers, she can be found teaching our year long curriculum with Foxfire Elementary second graders, taking care of our aquaria and running two after school environmental clubs. Her abundant creativity and willingness to try new things are perfectly suited for her work at Beczak.

Vicky enjoys opportunities to work on a variety of indoor and outdoor tasks as well as to express new ideas for the organization.

Beczak enjoys her energy, creativity and quirky sense of humor. 🐟

FRESH CATCH OF THE DAY

Here is a list of what we caught in our nets between August 16 and December 15, 2005. They were caught using seine, kick and dip nets in our marsh and along our beach.

- alewife
- Amercian shad
- American eel
- Atlantic croaker
- Atlantic menhaden
- Atlantic silverside
- banded killifish
- blue crab
- blueback herring
- bluefish
- comb jellies
- cryptoniscid larvae (order Isopoda)

- gizzard shad
- hogchoker
- mummichog
- naked goby
- northern pipefish
- sand shrimp
- shore shrimp
- silver seatrout
- striped anchovy
- striped bass
- striped searobin
- white perch



Riverfest on the Hudson

On October 1, 2005, Beczak participated in Yonkers Riverfest/Family Day, a celebration of Yonkers' cultural, ethnic and environmental diversity, showcasing the city, its heritage and health. Habirshaw Park was transformed into fairgrounds for the day and more than five hundred children and adults swarmed to Beczak to be close to the river and to participate in the days' activities.

A festive parade starring children disguised as Hudson River creatures and flying hand-crafted Japanese fish kites was choreographed from the Beczak Center into Larkin Plaza. Yonkers mosaic artist, **Haifa Bint-Kadi**, found models for her colorful costumes and props while children and some fun loving adults created Japanese fish kites with Beczak educators. The mini Hudson River flooded downtown Yonkers as the families proudly marched through the streets.

Back at the center, everyone was in great spirits, participating in family-focused and environmentally-minded activities provided by a variety of groups. As the day came to a close, enthusiastic children geared up in waders for a late afternoon seine in the river. The **Yonkers Paddling and Rowing Club** provided free kayaking next door and the paddlers watched curiously to see the catch of the day. It was truly a celebration to remember! 🐟



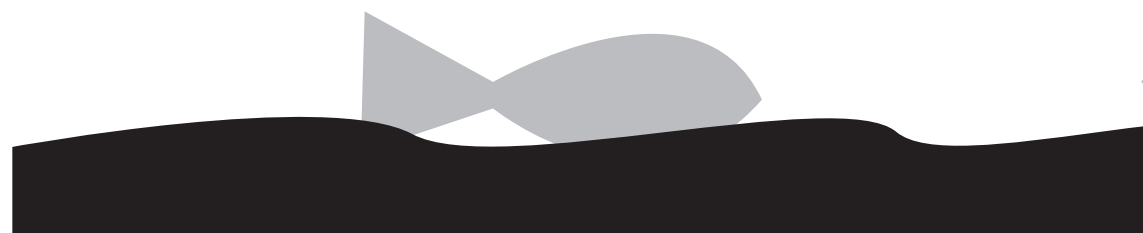
The Hudson River Comes Alive!



Getting ready for the parade



My masterpiece!



“Boo-zak” at Beczak!

On Halloween night, The Beczak Center welcomed over 120 children and adults of the community eager to celebrate another Halloween on the Hudson. The Beczak staff, volunteers and our community group co-sponsors provided a spooky Halloween décor for the evening. Spider webs covered the fish tanks, fog filled the air, scary surprises startled park visitors and creepy music echoed throughout the center. A variety of costumes entered the building; from princesses and action heroes to the cutest chickens and pea pods ever seen. The families indulged in healthy snacks, decorated pumpkins, listened to scary stories, viewed tank feedings, and participated in a variety of games. Prizes were handed out to every contest winner. By the end of the night, everyone went home a winner, as all the families left with treats and big smiles! 🐟



I won my very own pumpkin



Pirate Vicky and friends



Is it a spider or a fish?



I wonder how many bones



KIDS' CORNER

I. Circle the correct name of this Hudson River Fish.



- A. striped bass B. American eel
C. Atlantic sturgeon D. northern pipefish

TRUE OR FALSE

Circle true or false for each statement below.

2. There are approximately 200 fish species in the Hudson River.

True or False

3. The Atlantic sturgeon is the largest fish in the Hudson River.

True or False

4. The Hudson River always flows south.

True or False

5. Brackish water is a mixture of clean water and dirty water.

True or False

6. The Hudson River is 153 miles long.

True or False

Beczak Installs New President

At our annual meeting in September, Andrew Romano, a local attorney, was elected President of the Board of Directors at Beczak. Dr. Kathleen Pistone Carucci, a community leader, continues as Vice President. Rounding out the team of officers are Steve Newcomb as Treasurer and Barbara Karsten as Secretary.

Beczak also welcomes three new directors: Niyazi Bodur, Rochelle Odesser and Paul Meyer, Jr. Dr. Bodur is the Vice President of Information Technology and Infrastructure at New York Institute of Technology. He and his wife, Rosemarie, live in White Plains. Ms. Odesser is a financial advisor and investment counselor at Davenport & Associates. She lives with her husband Edward and their two children in Scarsdale. Mr. Meyer is an attorney with a general practice here in Yonkers and he is a former board member of Ducks, Unlimited.

Retiring from the board after many years of service are Joann Dedyo, Patricia Korn, Ned Kaufman and Dr. Robert Morrow. Everyone at Beczak thanks them for their dedication and service to our organization. Without them, the new Interpretive Center would still be just a dream. We wish them all the best in their future undertakings.

And, a huge thanks to Charlene Paden who stepped down as President, but continues to serve on the board. Charlene worked hard to define the board's role and increase its effectiveness as Beczak continued its transition.

There are still some vacancies on the Beczak board. We are particularly interested in recruiting people from the river towns, people with fundraising expertise and younger volunteers, especially parents of school-aged children. There are some minimum requirements for board service. Please call the office if you would like to know more about serving Beczak as a board member. ➤

KIDS' CORNER ANSWERS

1. Hudson River Fish: C. Atlantic sturgeon
2. True. Approximately 200 fish species are found in the Hudson River. The fish we catch in the most abundance at Beczak are striped bass, Atlantic silversides, killifish, American eels, white perch, herring and Atlantic tom-cod.
3. True. The Atlantic sturgeon (*Acipenser oxyrinchus*) is the largest fish in the Hudson River. They can grow to be as large as 10 feet and specimens from the Hudson River have weighed in at over 200 lbs! Sturgeons have been around for millions of years, which explains their noticeably prehistoric appearance. They have rows of shield like plates along the edges of their bodies. Mouths are located on the bottom of their long snout along with whisker like appendages, called "barbels" used for touching, smelling and tasting. Occasionally, sturgeons are spotted leaping out of the water.
4. False. The Hudson River flows both north and south. Approximately half of the river is an estuary which experiences tidal action from the Atlantic Ocean. When the tide rises in the ocean the current in the estuary is forced to flow north. When the tide in the ocean falls the current reverses and the Hudson drains to the south.
5. False. Brackish water is a mixture of salt water and fresh water. When salt water from the Atlantic Ocean mixes with fresh water from tributaries (streams and rivers connected to the Hudson) brackish water is formed.
6. False. The entire Hudson River is 315 miles long. The river is an estuary for 153 of these miles (between the Federal Dam at Troy and New York Harbor. The northern limit of the Hudson River is Lake Tear of the Clouds in the Adirondack Mountains (Mt. Marcy). The mouth of the river is New York Harbor.

Saunders High School Students Take a Snapshot of the River

Every year Beczak is fortunate to have at least two major opportunities to celebrate National Estuaries Day. One event is Yonkers Riverfest (see story page 4) and the other is Estuary Snapshot Day.

Estuary Snapshot Day (sponsored by the Hudson River Estuary Program of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation) is an event centered on the collection of scientific information and memorable anecdotes along the entire 153 miles of the Hudson River Estuary.

Environmental education centers and school classes investigate the variety and number of fish, the types of aquatic plants present, the temperature, pH and salinity of the water and concentrations of dissolved oxygen. The information is forwarded to the Estuary Program and Hudson Basin River Watch for posting on a web site within 48 hours. When compiled, a day-in-the-life picture of the river is created, allowing students to understand how the parameters of their local site are connected to the larger picture of the entire estuary.

This year the event was held on a very windy and rainy October 12th, and Beczak partnered with students from **Saunders Trades and Technical High School** (Yonkers) for the third year in a row.

We were all very thankful for our indoor facility as teams of students and educators shuttled equipment between the building and the river to collect information in the driving rain.



Measuring chlorophyll in river water

While higher than average tides and choppy water presented some challenges for catching fish and retrieving sediment cores from the river, the event was a success overall.

Beczak's data and all data collected during the past three years as well as lesson plans using the data can be found at the following url: www.ldeo.columbia.edu/edu/k12/snapshotday/ ➔



Students use spotting scopes to search for birds and watercraft.

Fall Lectures Focus on Local Environmental Issues

Rain Gardens

Anyone who has ever driven on a flooded parkway during a rainstorm has seen that laying down roads where water belongs creates a lot of headaches. When rainwater is forced to flow over water-impervious surfaces it not only causes flooding, it picks up pollution on its journey to streams, rivers and lakes.

In an effort to provide helpful and practical ways for Westchester residents to be better stewards of their environment, Beczak invited Catherine Wachs, the host of Larchmont Mamaroneck Community (LMC) TV's award-winning show, *The Lazy Gardener*, to give an evening talk on creating rain gardens. Rain gardens can increase property values, are low-maintenance, do not require much space, and help improve water quality. A rain garden receives storm water runoff from hard surfaces such as your roof, sidewalk, or driveway. If designed properly, the plants thrive on the rainwater and the garden, in turn, stores the water and slowly releases it into the soil, removing pollutants and recharging groundwater.

Catherine's entertaining talk provided our audience with the whys and how-tos of creating rain gardens. For more information, go to www.cbf.org and click on Bay Resources. Download "Build Your Own Rain garden" from CBF Publications.

Migratory Fish

In October, guest lecturer **Kathleen Nolan**, a professor from St. Francis College

in Brooklyn updated us on the status of migratory fish stocks in the Hudson River.

The room was packed with high school and college students, teachers, and many more adults from the Hudson River community. She spoke about the characteristics of some of the more well-known migratory fish in the river including the American eel, striped bass, and shortnose sturgeon.

Most of her talk focused on the decline of American shad and other river herring (blueback and alewife) populations during the last thirty years. Hudson River herring spend most of their lives in the Atlantic Ocean and migrate into the Hudson to spawn in the freshwater tributaries of the river (anadromous migration). Conditions in the Hudson affect the spawning of these fish. For example, impoundments and dams in tributaries block the herring's access to their spawning habitat, water intake pipes and heated effluent associated with some power plants kill fish in all stages of their life cycle, and poor water quality affects their ability to reproduce. Overfishing in both the river and the Atlantic Ocean may further reduce the number of river herring able to spawn.

Dr. Nolan is skilled at interpreting technical information for a diverse audience and her talk sparked many questions. Perhaps she inspired one of the many students in the audience to do their own research one day to keep the American shad, blueback herring, and alewives returning to the Hudson River for many years to come. ➔



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FROM THE DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

Thank You!

We wish to thank the following donors and grantors for their generosity:

HSBC in the Community for once again funding our HSBC Environmental Clubs with a grant of \$15,000.

The Westchester Community Foundation and Evelyn Zamboni Fund for \$10,000 to launch our volunteer program.

The New York City Environmental Fund, administered by the Hudson River Foundation and New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, for \$13,500 for various items related to our marsh education programs, including a new display in the Center.

Stew Leonards for their donation of juice for our thirsty Boo-zak partygoers.

Mr. Jay Friedman of ASAP Electrics and Reliable Electrics (Mt. Vernon) for his River Bank contribution to sponsor a class trip to Beczak by Mrs. Garufi's third grade class at Columbus School.

Fuji Photo Film USA for a grant to partially underwrite this newsletter and for donating an A350 digital camera and case and for repairing our much-used FinePix F700.

Pfizer, Inc. and Carol Casazza for heeding our call for lateral file cabinets. They donated 2 five-drawer cabinets which allowed us to consolidate eight small cabinets. With only 550 square feet in the office for 7 workstations, every inch counts.

Get Involved!

Volunteer at Beczak: There are many tasks and projects that need your help. Call Sarah Macdonald at 914.377.1900 to learn more.

Underwrite our next edition of *The Beczak Net*, or sponsor a class trip to Beczak for your favorite teacher. Please call Kathy at 914.377.1900 for details

Please remember Beczak in your will. Make your bequest by inserting the following language: "I bequeath to Beczak Environmental Education Center, Inc., a not-for-profit corporation located at 35 Alexander Street, Yonkers, NY 10701, ___% of my residuary estate for its general purposes." If you would like to designate your gift to a specific program, please call the office to discuss.

Wish List: Currently, we are in need of a small wheelbarrow, a hand truck, wooden crates from clementines, 2 bow saws and a mattock pick. Please check your basements and garages. 🐟