

Honeymoon Haven to



It Began Forty Years Ago

The Scrantonian--Sunday, September 10, 1972
"National Park Service, Keystone Junior College Plan Education Center"

"Keystone Junior College and the National Park Service (NPS) have become partners in the operation of a facility to be known as the Pocono Environmental Education Center. The Center will be a part of the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area and is expected to provide, among other things, environmental education and cultural programs for park visitors."

According to Harry K. Miller, former Keystone College president and Founder and Chairman of PEEC's Board of Trustees, this partnership, forged in the early 1970's, was the first time that the National Park Service made an agreement with an institution of higher education to provide education in a national park on an ongoing basis. The foundation for this pioneering agreement was laid almost twenty years earlier.

In 1955, two tropical storms caused severe flooding along the Delaware River. The floods were followed by drought conditions in the early 1960's. As a result, Congress authorized the Army Corps of Engineers to study the water resources of the Delaware River Basin.

The study recommended the construction of the Tocks Island Dam across the main branch of the Delaware River five miles north of Stroudsburg. The resulting reservoir would have stretched thirty-seven miles north to Matamoras, Pennsylvania, covering about 12,500 acres of land with water. The purpose of the dam was to provide a protected water supply, recreation, hydroelectric power, and flood control. Congress then authorized the development of the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area (DWGNRA) in conjunction with the dam project. The Recreation Area was established, but the dam was never built due to environmental and economic concerns, and lack of public support.

During the 1960's and early 1970's the Army Corps of Engineers was involved in acquiring land for the Tocks Reservoir and the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area (DWGNRA). When the Corps acquired a property, if it was located below where the high-water line would be, the property was retained by the Corps. If it was located above the high water line, ownership of the property was turned over to the National Park Service for administration, but the Park Service didn't have the legislative authority to do anything with the properties. According to Jerry Howard, PEEC's first Director, the idea to get non-profit organizations to do something with the properties came from Peter DeGelleke, who became the first Superintendent of the DWGNRA.

In 1972 Honeymoon Haven, a functioning 38 acre resort located above the high water line, was acquired by the US Army Corps of Engineers for the DWGNRA and turned over to the NPS. Relationships between the Park Service, the Army Corps, and local residents were strained

Environmental Education Center

because of the acquisitions being made in the area, and there were concerns about leaving the resort property unoccupied. Peter DeGelleke had a previous relationship with Keystone Junior College because two Keystone faculty members operated a successful Youth Conservation Corps camp in the area. He approached those faculty members with the idea of establishing an environmental education program in the Honeymoon Haven buildings.

NPS officials sought the services of a competent educational institution to develop programs for the center. Why Keystone? Through Congressman Joseph M. McDade's interest, KJC in cooperation with the University of Scranton and Penn State University (Worthington-Scranton Campus) had been chosen to conduct a Youth Conservation Corps (YCC) camp during the summer of 1972 at Sky's Edge in the DEWA not far from Honeymoon Haven.

Mr. De Gelleke and his NPS colleagues were favorably impressed by the efficient and creative way the YCC camp was operated under the leadership of Howard Jennings, a KJC biology instructor and Dr. Michael W. Mould, KJC Director of Athletics. With the potential site for an environmental education center within its management and the need for education in National Parks becoming more apparent, the NPS turned first to KJC as a possible partner and cooperator. College trustees and administrators, after on-site inspections, conferences with NPS officials, and a feasibility study conducted by Dr. George Fuge, Professor at Cortland College, NY, decided to enter into a partnership with the NPS. This partnership with PEEC has lasted for almost a half century.

DeGelleke's proposal was presented to Keystone President, Harry Miller, and within ninety days the Pocono Environmental Education Center became a reality. Jerry Howard, then Dean of Students at Keystone, was appointed Director of PEEC. According to Howard, the first winter was spent "trying to keep the pipes from freezing, and figure out what was what." Nevertheless, during that first year the PEEC staff expanded to include the soon-to-be PEEC President, Jack Padalino, and together, Padalino and Howard began to develop an innovative residential environment education program that served over 1,800 visitors that first year.



The 30's



Cabins 1 & 28

When KJC accepted the challenge to occupy the property, it included a large central building (Main Building) which contained a swimming pool, sauna, locker rooms, a six-lane bowling alley (now classrooms 1, 2, and 3), offices and large open areas. There were 59 cottages including a half-dozen "Cinderella coaches," trailers that were removed during the mid-eighties. Most of the cottages were constructed after 1960. A dining hall contained a fully equipped kitchen. Rounding out the structures were a laundry, garage, maintenance workshop, pump houses, and storage sheds.

A variety of recreational facilities including an outdoor swimming pool, basketball court, miniature golf course, toboggan run, archery range, shuffleboard deck and a half-acre pond were also on site. Only the basketball court remains. NPS has made available additional adjacent property and facilities including housing for staff members. The use of adjacent property for trails and the responsibility for managing Loch Lomond and the Schoolhouse has enhanced the partnership as well as our cooperative programs.

PEEC was founded at a time when the proposed Tocks Island Dam was still in the NPS master

40th Anniversary

A Sense of Place



Honeymoon Haven



PEEC's Dining Hall



PEEC's Entrance

plan. With completion of the dam it was envisioned that approximately 10.5 million annual visitors would frequent the DEWA. One clientele for PEEC would be park visitors. Today, with Tocks Island Dam no longer part of the master plan, DEWA serves over 7 million visitors. This distinguishes the park as among the top ten most visited places within the 370 units of the National Park system. PEEC's educational programs, which are offered to park visitors, include workshops, institutes, and special programs.

An early vision that came to fruition was the services that PEEC would provide to school districts in the tri-states area. Park professionals looked to PEEC to provide courses for family groups and retired persons that would be aimed at encouraging the enjoyment of and respect for natural, cultural resources and the environment while they studied earth systems. As KJC saw it the center would eventually become a multi-purpose campus suitable for research in the life and behavioral sciences, new college curricula, and field trip experiences in conjunction with present programs at area schools.

How did PEEC fare during the early days? Jack Padalino became Director in '73 and a report to the KJC President on PEEC's development and current operations noted: "In the first four years of operation PEEC has developed into a nationally recognized field education facility dedicated to environmental education." The number and variety of users increased dramatically from 600 the first year to 16,000 during fiscal year 1975 and in 1997 approximately 24,000 people. KJC financial officers claimed that, "The development of the center has been hampered only by the limitations of the College's ability to underwrite the cost of operation." The problem that existed was that despite the success of PEEC from a client/user perspective, the financial burden which it has placed on the College had reached a critical stage.

From a financial perspective through June of '76, KJC supported PEEC expenses of approximately \$1 million with a return income of \$ 600 thousand. The operating deficit was approximately \$400 thousand and included an 8% fee for management services. As of fiscal year 1976 PEEC was on a sound fiscal basis since income exceeded expenses. PEEC was now in a position to begin to repay a portion of its \$400 thousand debt to KJC and the trustees assured continuation of the then operating arrangements for PEEC and the reduction of upward pressure on user rates created by the need to recover start-up costs.

Dr. Miller stated at the launching of PEEC, "We are convinced that the long-range benefits to be derived far outweigh the initial expenditure of funds and effort involved." He noted that "Keystone is offered the ground-floor opportunity to move forward in areas which are of growing interest to this region and the country, and to develop new programs which will augment, not replace existing programs offered at the College."

"This unprecedented opportunity of the partnership and cooperative arrangement with the National Park Service ... is the determining factor in making the operation feasible." PEEC remained a subsidiary of KJC for the following decade.

Harry Miller was one of the "magnificent seven" that came to PEEC's aid during the negotiations with KJC in 1986. When the College trustees encouraged PEEC to become a not-for-profit corporation, Harry served as a founding trustee and guided us with his wisdom through the initial phase of establishing a non-profit corporation and defining operating procedures and policies. Harry is the author and reviser "in perpetuity" of PEEC's By Laws.

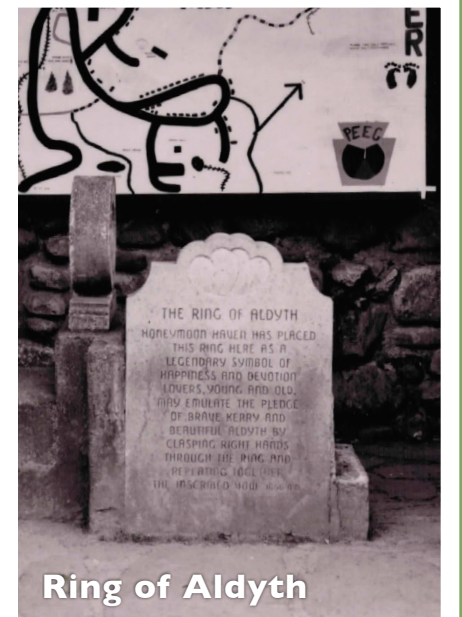
Jack Padalino served as PEEC's Director and President from 1973 through 2001. It was during his leadership that PEEC's mission, purpose and goals were established and many of its current programs, traditions and partnerships were initiated and nourished. PEEC programs were founded on the basic ecological principles that are still play. Jack put PEEC on the map and made it an annual education destination for thousands of visitors. It was during Jack's tenure that PEEC; incorporated as its own 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization in 1986, became one of only six resident environmental education centers located within the country's National Parks and its Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with NPS was given 10 year status.

Jim Rienhardt became PEEC's Executive Director in 2001. In the following 10 years Jim concentrated his skills, efforts and leadership in developing partnerships and relationships with multiple umbrella Community based organizations, corporations, foundations and the local, state, Federal governments and the National Park Service. His efforts were successful in utilizing the area's combined resources to rebuild PEEC's infrastructure. The National Park Service continued to recognize PEEC's achievements and leadership in environmental education renewing its MOU with PEEC for 30 years.

After serving as a PEEC volunteer for 12 years and a member of PEEC's Board of Trustees, Jeff Rosalsky was named PEEC's Executive Director in 2009. Over the past three and a half years, he has focused on improving PEEC's educational offerings for both school groups and the local community as well as the creation of PEEC's innovative EcoZone exploration and discovery room.

And now, forty years later, PEEC is still identified with programs of regional, national, and international significance that reach out to students, educators, families, underserved populations, and park visitors of all ages and abilities-over 24,000 people each year. PEEC programs will continue to grow and evolve, but some things have not changed much from that first winter in 1973-it's still all we can do to keep the pipes from freezing!

*Kate (Monahan) Foord
with Gerry Howard, Jack Padalino, Harry Miller, Flo Mauro*



Ring of Aldyth



Old Front PEEC

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