

## **Two Conservation District Managers Head up Coalition to Protect Source Water**



*Assistant Professor of Geology Dr. Chris Whisner and Dr. Jen Whisner, also an Assistant Professor of Geology, demonstrated the Groundwater Models at Bloomsburg University (BU). Attending the training was Maryruth Wagner, Columbia County Conservation District Manager, Nancy Corbin, Columbia County Conservation District, and Lauren Brousseau, a BU student volunteer. Not pictured, but attending, was Heather Almer, Columbia County Conservation District Watershed Specialist. The group learned how to use the groundwater model to demonstrate impacts from pollution on wells, septic systems, ponds, lakes and other water bodies. The training was an effort of the newly formed Columbia-Montour Source Water Protection Coalition.*

Columbia County Conservation District Manager Maryruth Wagner and Montour County Conservation District Manager Kim Leshock are working together to create a Columbia-Montour Source Water Protection Coalition. These partners will promote long-range strategies to urge protection and preservation of water resources for future generations.

"Through the WREN grant, we are working to bring together the partners from our communities to work towards a common goal. The goal is to ensure that our communities have clean water and a healthy environment. We have a large contingent that meets regularly that supports our mission," said Wagner.

The mission reads as:

*To promote the protection and conservation of source water resources by*

- Partnering with agriculture, industry, landowners and municipalities
- Educating the public
- Developing risk-reduction strategies for protection.



Under this umbrella, the Coalition will form a Source Water Environmental Education Team (SWEET) and conduct a series of public education and outreach events at schools and community meetings using models and maps to describe source water protection areas and to encourage land use planning and resource management practices that result in reduction of water contamination threats. The team will develop educational materials including a brochure and website for public outreach. The Coalition will also seek participation from all water suppliers in Columbia and Montour counties to develop source water protection plans.

This project is being funded by a \$7,000 grant from the Water Resources Education Network (WREN), a project of the League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania Citizen's Education Fund through a grant from the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection for Drinking Water Source Water Protection administered by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

