

All are invited to attend the monthly meeting of the
Nittany Mineralogical Society
Wednesday, April 18, 2012

The Interstate 99 Project from a Science Education Perspective

by

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Our April meeting will be held Wednesday the 18th in the room 114 auditorium of Earth & Engineering Sciences Building on the west side of the Penn State campus in State College, PA. Maps are available through our web site.

6:30 to 7:30 p.m.: Social hour, refreshments in the lobby

*7:30 to 8:00 p.m.: announcements, questions, answers;
door prize drawings*

about 8:00 p.m.: featured program

*The event has free admission, free parking, and free refreshments, and is open to all –
Bring your friends and share an interesting evening.*

The Interstate 99 (I-99) highway project has been the source of extensive attention over the past few years. Its most infamous aspect is the excavation of a geological formation – the Bald Eagle Sandstone – that was found to contain acidic rock material, which, upon exposure to water, leached sulfuric acid to several surface water bodies and private groundwater wells. This matter managed to suspend construction of the project for several years. Numerous parties, representing academia, government (particularly the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (PA DEP) and the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT)), private industry (consultants), environmental organizations and advocacy groups, and the citizenry, have been involved in the development of a resolution to the I-99 acidic rock problem. The interactions among these parties are interdisciplinary by nature, given the sectors of society that they represent.

Consideration of how these parties interacted with each other while evaluating the options for addressing the environmental dilemma posed by the I-99 project provides opportunities for academic research. The discipline of Science Education is viable for studying the I-99 case, with accompaniment by 2 other disciplines, which have direct relevance to this case: Geology/Earth Science (per the underlying cause of the I-99 acidic rock problem) and Environmental Policy (per the regulations and policies that had to be followed while developing a solution to the environmental dilemma). Pairing Science Education with the other two aforementioned disciplines can create additional niches for the former discipline, and enhance academic research both within itself, and, across other disciplines, as relevant.

