STUDENT FACULTY MULTIMEDIA

ON THE WATER IN PHILADELPHIA (VIDEO)

A summer research seminar by the Penn Program in Environmental Humanities (PPEH) allowed students to conduct research on Philadelphia's waterways and collaborate with community partners.

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Summer days by the ocean are not unusual, but a group of Penn faculty and students spent 10 days this summer on, in, and along the urban waters of Philadelphia—the Schuylkill and Delaware Rivers and the Wissahickon Creek. The On-Water Intensive Research Seminar was an interdisciplinary effort organized by Penn Arts and Sciences' Penn Program in Environmental Humanities (PPEH) with Drexel University and its Academy of Natural Sciences.

The seminar used floats, wooden boats, and motorized launches, along with wading in creeks and marshes, as classrooms. Graduate and undergraduate students worked with faculty from Penn, Drexel, and other city programs to create and conduct research projects about how the city and its waters interact and how those relationships are changing.

PPEH Founding Director Bethany Wiggin, Associate Professor of Germanic Languages and Literatures, says, "We formed this research seminar that brought together science communicators, scientists, historians, environmental humanists, artists, students, and public partners to try to start building these thick collaborations that might provide a model for other places to be able to quickly connect research communities with public audiences."

Research findings and expressions from the On-Water Intensive seminar are available

at www.schuylkillcorps.org. The project supported Rising Waters, a Penn Arts and Sciences Making a Difference in Diverse Communities initiative in which Wiggin and co-director Nikhil Anand, Assistant Professor of Anthropology, are leading an effort to explore the futures of river and coastal cities in a time of climate change. The On-Water seminar was supported by a Summer Research Group Grant made by Penn's Center for Undergraduate Research and Fellowships (CURF).