



TAKING MEASUREMENTS were George and Bettie Roberts.



RECORDING GRAVESTONE DATA were Patty and Justice Pittman.

Gravestone data measured in Casco

CASCO — Twelve people joined Gary Lewis, director of EarthTrek, to learn how to measure gravestones as part of a scientific research project on Saturday.

The project, part of the global citizen science program called EarthTrek, aims to look at how marble gravestones have been weathering not just in our region, but around the world.

“Having local people help to collect data is very important for this scientific research,” Lewis said. “It enables us to obtain data from many places that we just could not reach ourselves.”

The data being collected will help Lewis and his scientific part-

ner in Sydney, Australia to get a better understanding on how gravestones are weathering due to changes in atmospheric chemistry. The final product will be a world map showing the rates gravestones are weathering.

The group was trained on how to seek permission, how to be sensitive and protect gravesites while taking measurements and how to record and log data online.

“We ask people to follow the data collecting protocols on the website very closely and to take careful accurate measurements to help our research. It is not difficult to do, and it is a great reason to visit your local graveyard,” Lewis

said. “It was wonderful that local people came to join us to see how they can participate in real research and we are looking forward to seeing their data.”

EarthTrek projects are a great way for people to participate in real science outdoors. Collecting data can provide a focus to weekend excursions for the whole family and is a great way to encourage young people to become involved locally in global environmental

studies.

Data collected by Lewis and others from graveyards in Casco will also be given to the town for its records. That data could be used to work out a plan for preservation of some of the more historic sites.

EarthTrek is a project of the Geological Society of America and partners around the globe. For more information visit EarthTrek online at www.goEarthTrek.com

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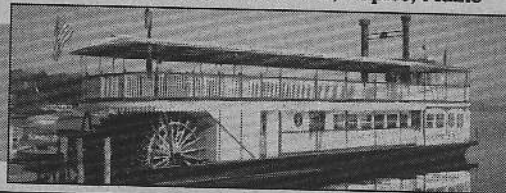
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