

CONSERVATION education

Loudoun Soil and Water Conservation District

May 2018

Welcome to the Conservation Education Newsletter from the Loudoun Soil and Water Conservation District. This quarterly publication will keep you up to date on conservation education news from our District.



Loudoun at Envirothon...

For the first time in many years Loudoun had two teams at the Area II Dominion Envirothon competition. Envirothon is a series of competitions that begins at a local county level and ultimately to the national competition. Students are tested on their knowledge in five topic areas: soils and land use; aquatic ecology; forestry; wildlife; and a current environmental issue that changes each year.

Heritage and Rock Ridge High School teams began studying last fall and joined other teams from nearby counties at Fauquier Education Farm on April 25th. During a very wet day, teams rotated through the outdoor test sites and presented their oral presentation to a panel of judges.



Neither team will move on to the state competition but Loudoun did well and the experience gave them a lot of insight into competing next year.

Grant and Training Op...

Project Learning Tree offers GreenWorks! grants up to \$1,000 to schools and youth organizations for environmental service-learning projects that link classroom learning to the real world. Students implement an action project they help design to green their school or to improve an aspect of their neighborhood's environment.

To be eligible to apply for a grant, applicants must have attended a PLT workshop, either in-person or online, that provides training, lesson plans, and other resources to help integrate these projects and environmental education into your curriculum or youth programs.

The annual deadline to apply is September 30. Funding will be distributed in December.



Do you need PLT Training to be eligible for the grant? I am now a PLT Facilitator! If you are interested in a training, just let me know.

Loudoun SWCD

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Highlights from our Mini-Grant Recipients ...

Every fall Loudoun SWCD awards a limited number of mini-grants of up to \$500 to Loudoun County Educators. The Mini-Grants are intended for projects that integrate soil & water conservation into any curriculum. This year we awarded 7 schools a total of about \$2800. Here is a look at some of their projects.

Blue Ridge Middle School



Doug Everhart and his 285 6th grade science students built, decorated and installed 30 bluebird and tree swallow nesting boxes around the school. The students learned the value of insect-eating birds and are also monitoring the birds to collect data for the Virginia Bluebird Society.



Hillsboro Charter Academy



Miranda Meadows and her 2nd grade scholars have been busy analyzing soil, composting, and planting their veggie garden. They tested soil for pH, Nitrogen, phosphorus, and potash. They collected lunch and snack left overs and composted in our living worm composter. They are currently growing lettuce, beans, peppers, and tomatoes

in the indoor green house sprout starter. The kids have loved exploring the plant life cycle and why plants are important to us.



Sugarland Elementary School



Jenise Blondin and her 2nd graders used the grant to fund a school year long Outside Exploration. During their Spring Walk they noticed many different colors and patterns around our school. The students also noticed all the blossoms as the start of the life cycle of a crab apple. They collected small samples of nature to draw later. They have been able to document and wonder about the water cycle, weather patterns and seasons.



Embark Center



Andrea Cubelo-McKay, Kara Draper and **Billie Jo Bevin** along with students, staff and volunteers are working on a school garden project. In addition to beautifying what was narrow patch of grass, students are learning conservation methods like rain harvesting with a rain barrel and composting. They also plan on donating part of the produce they grow.



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Park View High School



Nora May and **Sherrie Merrell** along with several other teachers worked with students on a large project involving many partners. They began indoors with hydroponics, seeds and re-searching the various components of vegetable gardening. They moved outside to clear the grass and weeds from their plot. Next came composting thanks to daily donations from the cafeteria and leaves from other teachers. Next they worked with Home Depot and Master Gardeners to create 6 raised beds that are now planted with their seedlings.



JL Simpson Middle School

Tricia Carr and other teachers and staff are working on a three year project to create an outdoor classroom for the students. This year is Phase one with planting a Native Plant and Pollinator Garden. This spring they will be creating the beds and planting.

Have you got a great conservation project you would like to do with your students? Watch this newsletter and our website next fall!

“Without continuous hands-on experience, it is impossible for children to acquire a deep intuitive understanding of the natural world that is the foundation of sustainable development. ...A critical aspect of the present-day crisis in education is that children are becoming separated from daily experience of the natural world, especially in larger cities.”

-Natural Learning, Creating Environments for Rediscovering Nature’s Way of Teaching, Robin C. Moore and Herb H. Wong

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SOIL AND WATER STEWARDSHIP WEEK

2018 Poster Contest

Watersheds: Our Water Our Home

This year's theme is "Watersheds – Our Water, Our Home." A watershed is land that sheds water. Every piece of land on the planet is part of a watershed. You're sitting in a watershed right now!

Designing a poster and researching the theme can give you a voice in your community on important conservation issues! Posters capture people's attention and tell important stories in a language that everyone can understand. They inspire, increase awareness, and encourage us to work together to protect our natural resources.

The Poster Contest is open to all Loudoun County public, private and homeschooled students in grades K–12.

CONTEST RULES

- Any media may be used, including paint, crayon, colored pencil, charcoal, stickers, paper, or other materials.
- Hand drawn poster size **must** be 14" x 22" (half a poster). If sent digitally (photographs or scanned copies of the hand drawn posters in a JPEG format), the size doesn't apply.
- All posters must be created by an individual student, rather than a team of students.
- The 2018 theme "Watersheds: Our Water, Our Home" **must** be included on the front side of each poster.
- Each entry **must** be submitted with an entry form to be eligible for judging. The form **must** be completed and signed by a parent or guardian.
- Although younger students will most likely receive help in planning from parents or teachers, NACD encourages each student to do their own work. (Note: Entries with student handwriting and coloring will score better than those designed, drawn, and colored by adult assistance.)

POSTER EVALUATION

- Conservation message (50 percent) (Poster uses correct theme)
- Visual effectiveness (30 percent)
- Originality (10 percent)
- Universal appeal (10 percent)

PRIZES

Local awards and recognition will be given. Local winners in each category will be sent to the Virginia Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts. State winners will be eligible for NACD's National Poster Contest and prizes.

All poster entries should be sent to Loudoun Soil and Water Conservation District.

POSTERS ARE DUE MAY 15, 2018

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