

CONSERVATION education

Loudoun Soil and Water Conservation District

May 2019

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.



Greetings...



My name is Jennifer Venable, and I am the new Education Specialist at LSWCD. Charlotte DeMolay, my amazing predecessor, is moving out of state with her family. She has contributed enormously to the educational efforts of LSWCD and will be greatly missed. Good luck Charlotte!

I am a LoCo resident and have lived in Loudoun County for over fifteen years along with my husband. We have two children who currently attend Loudoun County Public Schools.

My passion is learning about and sharing knowledge of the natural world to help people make a nature connection. Most recently, I have been working with a Science in the Park program teaching elementary school children about natural science in an outdoor classroom. I am a certified Master Naturalist who has volunteered with various conservation organizations such as Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy, Banshee Reeks Master Naturalists, Audubon at Home Ambassadors and Plant NOVA Natives. I am excited to join LSWCD and look forward to continuing the LSWCD conservation efforts in education.

What is...

a Soil and Water Conservation District?

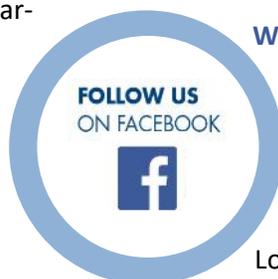
The mission of the Virginia Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts and its Foundation is to **provide and promote leadership in the conservation of natural resources through stewardship and education programs.**

What does this have to do with your classroom?

One of the Loudoun SWCD directives is to increase Environmental Stewardship through outreach and education. We want to **partner with teachers** and other education professionals to strengthen **conservation education** in Loudoun County.

What does this mean for you and your students?

- Classroom **presentations** on a variety of conservation subjects
- **Conservation Checkouts**—Lessons and materials available to borrow
- **Training** classes
- **Grants** for conservation education and projects
- Assistance for **Envirothon** coaches
- **Scholarships** for students interested in conservation subjects



Loudoun SWCD

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Highlights from our 2018-19 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 two schools a total of about \$950. Here is a look at their projects.

Lovettsville Elementary School

Hugh Brockway and the staff and students at Lovettsville Elementary have been taking care of a thriving garden located on the school grounds, which was funded by Loudoun Soil and Water two years ago. The students and staff recognized a need to capture and conserve rain water for this amazing garden. The garden area is located where there are no down spouts and surrounded by flat roofing. To remedy this problem, Mr. Brockway and his students, along with fellow staff members, collaborated and designed a structure that collects rain water and funnels it into rain barrels. Students will be doing data assessments to determine the amount of water saved and collected as the project continues.

What a great hands-on learning experience that benefits their school and the environment.

Thank you Lovettsville Elementary!



Forest Grove Elementary School

Ashana O'Connell and **Dawn Johnson** wanted their students to learn more about what watershed they belong to and how trash can affect it. Students designed and built tools using a 3D printer for picking up trash. They used these tool to help clean up a local storm drain area. Students also created a "Save the Watershed" video game to help increase water shed awareness. The collaboration between students and faculty was so successful, they will be presenting at Loudoun Inspire this year. Way to go Forest Grove!



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Envirothon Update...

We are very proud of the Loudoun County Envirothon team from Heritage High School who worked hard to compete in this awesome opportunity. This year's program was extremely competitive and all teams deserve recognition for a job well done. On May 7, this Loudoun team along with other Envirothon teams from across Northern and Central Virginia traveled to James Long Park in Haymarket to compete and earn a spot at the Virginia Dominion Energy Envirothon State Competition. Teams got up close to soils, aquatics macro invertebrates, wildlife specimens, trees, and gave fantastic presentations about agriculture and the environment. Congratulations to Louisa County H.S. for placing 1st, Thomas Jefferson H.S. for Science & Technology for placing 2nd and George C. Marshall H.S. for placing 3rd during this competition. On May 19th and 20th, these top three teams were among seventeen Envirothon teams from across Virginia who competed at the 24th Virginia Dominion Energy Envirothon State Competition at the University of Mary Washington. Congratulations to Jamestown High School who won first place overall. This hard working team will be traveling to North Carolina in July to compete against students from the United States, Canada and China in the NCF-Envirothon. Louisa County High School placed second overall, and Fort Defiance placed third overall. Over one hundred students participated in the State Competition. A huge thank you to Dominion Energy, Northern Virginia SWCD, Prince William SWCD, John Marshall SWCD, Culpeper SWCD, Loudoun SWCD, Thomas Jefferson SWCD, Virginia Dept. of Forestry, Virginia Tech College of Natural Resources and all of the Oral Presentation Judges for their support with NCF-Envirothon.



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Do you know about....

LESA (Loudoun Environmental Stewardship Alliance)

The Loudoun Environmental Stewardship Alliance (LESA) is a non-profit organization committed to helping families reconnect to Loudoun's outdoors. Their mission is *"To foster community stewardship through communication, education and collaboration to protect Loudoun County's environment and natural resources for present and future generations."*

They accomplish their mission by

- teaching awareness, appreciation and responsibility for actions
- providing access to quality resources and services
- collaborating as partners to empower the community to be environmental stewards
- communicating ways in which to improve and preserve the environment
- creating community partnerships to provide environmental outreach programs



On March 26th, LESA hosted the first-ever Student Environment Action Showcase (SEAS) at Heritage High School. Loudoun County Public Schools, Loudoun Environmental Stewardship Alliance (LESA) and Northwest Virginia Regional GREENetwork worked together to host the event. A generous \$1000 grant from the American Geophysical Union provided banners, signage and flags. In addition, AGU supplied refreshments for the SEAS organizing committee, community partners, and student volunteers.

There were 130 student exhibitors who showcased their displays in the cafeteria. Both individual student groups and students representing various community groups shared their work in the area of environmental conservation. Over 250 guests attended and found hands-on activities and information about volunteer opportunities to increase environmental awareness.



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