

# CONSERVATION education

Loudoun Soil and Water Conservation District

August 2021

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.



## TEACHERS!! Take advantage of our FREE Conservation lessons...

We offer in-person, live presentations over video and pre-recorded video learning options. Our online version of our most popular lesson – the Enviroscope Watershed model (geared toward third–sixth graders) is comprised of two videos which are available on our YouTube Channel. [The first video](#) covers what is a watershed, watershed addresses of Loudoun County, stormwater runoff, where our water comes from and the importance of clean water. [The second video is the actual Enviroscope Demonstration](#). We also offer in-person conservation lessons presented by LSWCD staff. These lessons may also be checked out by teachers to use at their convenience. [Go to our website to see what we offer](#). Lastly, we can provide live interactive lessons over video—please contact the education specialist, Jennifer Venable ([jennifer.venable@lswcd.org](mailto:jennifer.venable@lswcd.org)), to learn more.



## Learn more about the Virginia Dominion Energy Envirothon



**What is ENVIROTHON?** It is a team based natural resources competition for high school students. Students prepare as a team for an online competition in Wildlife, Forestry, Aquatics, Soil

and a Special Topic. This fall we plan to offer hands-on training on **Saturday November 20, 2021** at Graves Mountain. There will be a soil pit, skulls, tracks, trees and macroinvertebrates to identify to get your hands-on experience! Videos of the training will likely be provided. Learn more—[www.loudounsoilandwater.com/education/envirothon](http://www.loudounsoilandwater.com/education/envirothon).

## MERCER MS, BRIAR WOODS HS, SELDEN'S LANDING ES, ROSA LEE CARTER ES, WAXPOOL ES...these amazing schools all had winners in our 2021 Conservation Poster contest!

Our local Soil & Water Conservation Poster Contest, with the theme “Healthy Forests, Healthy Communities”, [received many amazing works of art \(take a look\)](#)! Thank you students of Loudoun for supporting forest conservation. [Check out the winning posters](#). They will all compete in the state level Conservation Poster contest this Fall. Stay tuned!



## Teacher Mini Grants now available!

The Loudoun SWCD Mini Grant program offers a limited number of mini-grants of up to \$500 to Loudoun County teachers. The Mini Grants are intended for projects that integrate soil & water conservation into any curriculum. Criteria for projects:

- \* Addresses soil and water conservation and environmental education objectives.
- \* Increases awareness about natural resources.
- \* Presents a specific, feasible plan of action to accomplish well defined, short term and long term results.
- \* Develops new or expands use of existing educational resources.
- \* Offers the potential to serve as a model for use in other schools or classrooms.

[Please click here for more details, past participants and an application.](#)

# Local Artists of all ages support forest conservation!

Check out the **AMAZING** winners of our 2021 Soil & Water Conservation Poster contest...visit [www.loudounsoilandwater.com/education/swsw-poster-contest](http://www.loudounsoilandwater.com/education/swsw-poster-contest) to see all of the amazing entries.



Vaibhav Vadrevu  
K - 1 Grade Category  
Waxpool ES



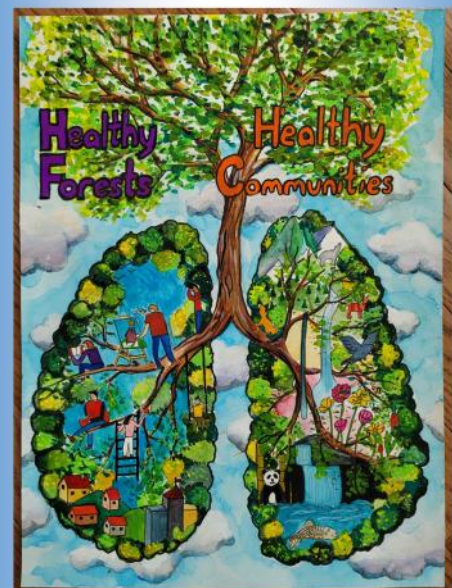
Emily Kim  
7th-9th Grade Category  
Mercer Middle MS



Viraj Nimkar  
2nd-3rd Grade Category  
Rosa Lee Carter ES



Hanna Hong  
4-6 Grade Category  
Seldens Landing ES



Andrew Park  
10th-12th Grade Category  
Briar Woods HS



## Community happenings...

**Loudoun Nature Days—Fall Park Tour (October 2-3rd)** — [Loudoun Nature Days – Fall Park Tour](#), sponsored by LEEA (Loudoun Environmental Educators Alliance) and PRCS, will promote getting the community outside and becoming more aware of the parks and outdoor spaces for their use in the county. This event will be similar to farm tour events. It will highlight activities or demonstrations that will be scheduled throughout the weekend at various outdoor parks and green spaces within Loudoun County to promote getting outside.

Learn more here-> <https://loudounnature.org/events/loudoun-nature-days>

Sign up here to be a part of this wonderful event -> <https://forms.gle/58JqCENRPZyBF8K7>



## Celebrate Native Trees at your school with Plant NOVA Trees Campaign!

### Schools Celebrate Native Trees

**Plant NOVA Trees** is the collaborative effort of numerous organizations and governmental agencies across Northern Virginia, all working together to promote the preservation and planting of native trees. **Schools are important participants in this effort. Here are some ways to help.**

#### Put on a Celebration of Trees event this fall!

The native tree drive launches this fall with events all across the region. Here are some ways you can get kids involved:

- Tree walks
- Tree plantings
- Tree rescues — removing invasive non-native vines that threaten trees
- Storytelling and story writing — traditional stories, or about trees that have meaning in the children's lives
- Tree art projects
- Poetry readings
- Book displays
- Labeling trees with their names
- Signs in front of trees describing their particular benefits to wildlife and humans
- Collecting seeds from your trees to be sent to the state nursery that grows seedlings ([easy instructions here](#))
- Scavenger hunts
- Fairy houses in the woods
- Anything creative you can come up with!

Please let us know your plans so we can track your great progress. Email: [plantnovatrees@gmail.com](mailto:plantnovatrees@gmail.com), and please specify whether you would like your event added to the calendar on [plantnovatrees.org](http://plantnovatrees.org).

Connect the trees and other native plants on school property to your curriculum

Even invasive introduced plants can serve an educational purpose — before you take them out!

#### Add native trees to the school campus

Rising temperatures are demonstrating the crying need for more shade in school yards. Why not have each grade plant and care for its own canopy tree? Underplant it with native shrubs and ground layer plants to create more habitat for butterflies and birds.

#### A nice example

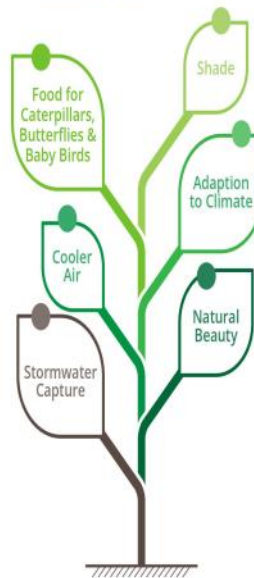
One elementary school has a "Grandmother Tree," to whom the little kids write letters and poems. Nearby is "Grandfather Tree," who sadly has passed and remains as a stump, and who is an equal inspiration for creative writing.



### plant NOVA TREES

Native trees and shrubs COUNT in Northern Virginia

#### Native Trees Provide...



#### Make a Difference: Plant NOVA Trees!

The Plant NOVA Natives partnership is launching Plant NOVA Trees, a five year drive to significantly increase and preserve the native tree canopy in Northern Virginia.

#### Native Virginia trees bring life to the landscape.

Only the trees that are native to our ecosystem are able to support our songbird populations, which have been steadily dwindling. This is because the primary food source for baby songbirds is caterpillars, and caterpillars (like most insects) can only eat the plants with which they evolved. The leaves of native trees are the required food for most of those caterpillars.

#### You can do it!

**Looking for help with selecting and planting a native tree on your property?** Our many knowledgeable and experienced partners can help! Together we provide the resources and guidance you need on [PlantNOVATrees.org](http://PlantNOVATrees.org).

**Working in a small yard?** Every space counts! Choosing native understory trees as well as shrubs contributes to a layered and living landscape in your community.

**Have native trees on your property already? Wonderful!** Preserving your mature trees is the most important action you can take.

#### Questions?

Would you like to sponsor this important campaign? Please contact Margaret Fisher

[plantnovanatives@gmail.com](mailto:plantnovanatives@gmail.com)

#### Watch the movement grow.

When you report your tree or shrub planting on the **My Trees Count** website, you can watch our progress and help the local jurisdictions meet their planting targets to reduce the impact on storm-water runoff on the Chesapeake Bay.

Learn more at [PlantNOVAtrees.org](http://PlantNOVAtrees.org)