



Newsletter

September 2008

Sustainable Schools Initiative

Big Sweep

What: Annual Clean-up of our waterways

When: September 27, 9am

Where:

- Wrightsville Beach @ Johnnie Mercers Pier
- Carolina Beach @ Boardwalk
- Kure Beach @ Pier
- Greenfield Lake @ Boathouse

Welcome to the first issue of Keep America Beautiful of NHC: Sustainable Schools Initiative Newsletter. With protection of the environment on the forefront of everyone's mind, we need to do our part for our children's future. By implementing sustainable programs in schools we can guide the next generation to environmental responsibility, divert, waste and conserve resources all at once. In this and every future newsletter, we will offer information, ideas, and insight for parents and teachers on:

- Our Global Environment
- Our Local Environment
- Classroom activities
- How to get involved

We hope to inspire and guide you to implementing waste-reduction practices and environmental education in the classroom and beyond.

Danielle Richardet

Co-founder, Sustainable Schools Initiative

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The phrase "The more, the merrier" certainly applies to making sustainable programs, like recycling, a daily— and widespread—habit. A good first step is to form an environmental committee or Green Team made up of key players in your school, including an administrator, custodian, teachers, parents and students. If you start by gathering ideas from each team member, you will learn what each sees as possibilities in their area. Also, you will probably uncover steps that team members can do to support each other.

When establishing any sustainable program or event, the steps that we recommend are:

1. Form an Environmental Team or Committee
2. Identify Tasks
3. Set Goals
4. Educate & Implement
5. Evaluate & Monitor

For more information and to get involved visit us at:

www.nhcgov.com/agnanddpt/kab

Our Oceans: World’s Largest Trash Dumps

There is an area in the North Pacific Ocean between California and Hawaii that is accumulating garbage at an alarming rate. Commonly known as the Great Pacific Garbage Patch, it is the result of disposable lifestyles and represents an environmental disaster for our world’s oceans.



The Central Pacific may seem a million miles away, but marine debris is everyone’s problem. The Garbage Patch likely exemplifies the future of many marine areas: subtropical gyres,

The environmental risks posed by the Garbage Patch is widespread. When the area was sampled in 2001, it yielded **six pounds of plastic for every pound of plankton** in the water. The garbage or “plastic soup” also accumulates and absorbs toxins and pesticides, which are in turn eaten by unwitting animals. Marine life including birds, mammals, fish and jellyfish suffer because they mistake the garbage for food—thus entering the ocean food chain. It has been estimated that over a million sea-birds and one hundred thousand marine mammals

and sea turtles are killed each year by ingestion of plastics or entanglement.

like the Sargasso Sea in the Atlantic, cover 40% of our world’s oceans. Research in the Sargasso Sea has also demonstrated high concentrations of plastic particles present in the water.

Take note: We all have some kind of control over marine debris either by what we do or do not do. To learn more visit these web sites:

www.greenpeace.org/international/news/trashing-our-oceans/ocean_pollution_animation

www.epa.gov/OWOW/OCPD/Marine/contents.html

Stormwater in New Hanover County does not go to a treatment plant! Anything that enters the stormwater system— like litter, motor oil, pesticides— is all discharged untreated into the waterways we use for swimming, fishing and other water related activities.

Coastal Clean-up

In 2007, International Coastal Clean-up volunteers collected more than 6 million lbs. of debris from 33,000 miles of shoreline— approximately 182 lbs of trash per mile!

The Top 10 Debris Items:

1. Cigarettes/Filters
2. Food wrappers/containers
3. Caps and lids
4. Bags
5. Plastic Beverage bottles
6. Glass Beverage bottles
7. Cigar Tips
8. Straws/stirrers
9. Beverage Cans
10. Cups/Plates/Forks/Knives/Spoons



Focus on Writing: This is Your Life



- What am I used for?
- What information is on my label?
- What am I made from? Glass, tin, cardboard, aluminum?
- Do I come from a living or non-living resource?
- Am I thrown away after I am used once?
- Will I break down if I am buried?
- What ways could I be reused?
- Can I be recycled?
- What am I made into when I am recycled?

Students often learn best by looking at the world around them. To combine writing practice with learning about the waste we generate, ask students to bring a product package with label from home. Students can write about the package's life story by answering the following:

- What do I look like?

Summary: Do you think I am an environmentally friendly container? Why or why not?

Once everyone is done, ask them to share so everyone learns about what happens to various types of products.

Tip: This makes a great home activity to do with kids of all ages!

It Starts With Me!— Others will watch and learn

Practicing the 3 R's at school is an excellent way to teach our future generations that they can make a difference in our world.

Reduce

- Double-sided prints and copies
- Promote Waste-free lunches
- Use email whenever possible

Reuse

Create reuse boxes for paper that has only been used on one side

Maintain/repair products

Bags, containers, and other items

Borrow, rent or share less used items.

Sell/ donate books or lost and found items

Recycle

- Establish a Recycling Program
- Choose recyclable products
- Buy recycled products
- Compost

Respond

- Educate others
- Contact Manufacturers
- Rethink: be creative



According to the EPA, Americans use 85 million tons of paper a year. Each ton of recycled paper can save 17 trees, 380 gallons of oil, 3 cubic yards of landfill space, 4000 kilowatts of energy, and 7000 gallons of water.



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Founded by Wilmington, NC parents, Sustainable Schools Initiative's mission is to foster green programs in North Carolina Schools. Partnering with Keep America Beautiful of New Hanover County, we are committed to helping new and established environmental committees and their efforts of starting and maintaining green programs in our local schools. It is our goal to unite school communities and give the needed tools and resources to accomplish the sustainability goals of each individual school. In doing so, we— along with everyone involved— will foster the development of generations of students becoming good stewards of the earth.

For information on Sustainable Programs in your school visit our web site www.nhcgov.com/AgnAndDpt/KAB

Events and Opportunities

Upcoming Events

- *2nd Annual Commuter Challenge:* September 15 –October 17 Commute to and from work as efficiently as possible by carpooling, biking, walking, or using public transportation. www.capefearbreeze.com
- *Take a Child Outside Week* September 24-30 www.takeachildoutside.org

Workshops

- *Project Learning Tree Teacher Workshop: K-12 Fire Focus,* November 10 & 11 at Halyburton Park www.ces.ncsu.edu/nreos/forest/plt/calendar.html

Grants:

- *Captain Planet Foundation Grants:* \$250-\$2500 grants to school and community groups to support hands-on environmental projects. For more information visit: www.captainplanetfoundation.org
- *NC Beautiful Windows of Opportunity Grants:* \$1000 to NC K-12 educators who use creativity in fostering environmental stewardship, leadership, and awareness and initiating a sense of community service. Applications will be accepted from Sept. 1– Nov. 10, 2008. www.ncbeautiful.com/programs/windows-of-opportunity.html or contact Louise Carey at (919) 828-3190 or lcarey@ncbeautiful.org

Fundraising:

- *The Chico Bag Company* has developed successful fundraising methods that will allow you to raise money for your organization as well as educate your community about the importance of reuse. <http://store.chicobag.com/html/fundraise.html>

Sources: Google Images, www.oceanconservancy.org, www.resourcefulschools.org, City of Wilmington Stormwater Services, Greenpeace International, www.algalita.org, www.epa.gov, www.bestlifeonline.com/cms/publish/travel-leisure/Our_oceans_are_turning_into_plastic_are_we_5.shtml