



NEWSLETTER

February 2009

Rain Barrel Sale

When: February 12, 2009
(2nd Thursday of every month) from 9 am– 5pm

Where: New Hanover Soil & Water Conservation District office. Located in the NHC Government Complex (the side facing College Rd. between Club Tan and the Driving School.)

Details: 65 gallon, 100% recycled, first come, first serve

Cost: \$95 (Cash and local checks only!)

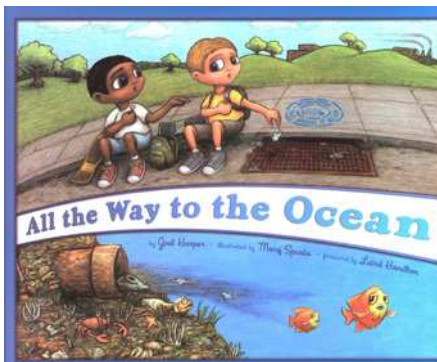
Contact: 798-6032 or
rain@nhswcd.org

Water Matters

It is no coincidence that Earth is often referred to as 'the water planet'. Earth is unique amongst planets of our solar system largely because of its abundant water - in oceans, in the atmosphere, in glaciers and as fresh water on land. Without water, life as we know it could not exist.

Even though water is abundant, the amount of usable fresh water available is a tiny fraction of the total amount of water in the world. Fresh water that is available to us is degraded by polluted stormwater. When we drop litter onto the ground, pour chemicals into

storm drains, or let fertilizers get washed away, they get washed down storm drains and into our rivers or the ocean.



"All the Way to the Ocean" children's book by Joel Harper, illustrated by Marq Spusta with a foreword by Laird Hamilton

No new water is being made and water cannot escape from the Earth; the water on Earth is recycled over and over again

in the water cycle.

Take time to learn about where your water comes

from, where water goes after you use it, learn ways to minimize your impact and most importantly teach our children about respecting and restoring this vital resource.

Get students thinking about water by asking them to complete the following statement:

"I know water is vital to people and the environment because..."

8th Grade Enviroscape Presentations

Stormwater Services, in cooperation with Cape Fear River Watch and New Hanover Soil & Water Conservation District, conducts Enviroscape watershed presentations for all 8th grade science classes in New Hanover County Schools.

What is the Enviroscape presentation?

The Enviroscape is a scaled-down model of a watershed that enables students to visually learn about stormwater runoff, water pollution, water quality, watersheds, and personal

stewardship through a speaker-led presentation.

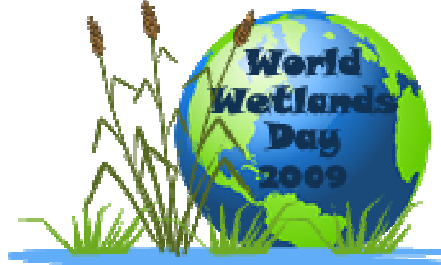
For more information and to schedule an Enviroscape presentation for your class, visit: www.wilmingtonnc.gov/enviroscape/tabid/98/Default.aspx

World Wetlands Day

Wetlands and waterways provide habitat for wildlife, breeding grounds for fish, and the source of life for entire communities - including humans. They are also places of great natural beauty where we can enjoy a swim, cast a rod, or pitch a tent by the riverbank. Though we are not always aware of it, everything that we do in our cities and in the country is eventually reflected in our water.

On February 2, celebrate World Wetlands Day by taking a look at our own wetlands and waterways and their interconnections with the environment—how they benefit the surroundings and, of course, how activities throughout the river basin may affect our wetlands. We are all interconnected within the river

basin, we can be impacted by the activities of those upstream of us and our activities affect those downstream. Our behavior can



have an impact on the soil, water, air, plants and animals. And whatever we do will eventually have an effect downstream or upstream from us!

We can change what happens in our river basin, for better or worse, by what we do to the basin's natural resources.

☞ Take note of what goes

down the drain

☞ Conserve water

☞ Use environmentally friendly cleaning products:

Phosphorus increases nutrient loads in rivers and can cause excessive algal growth and harm or kill aquatic plants and animals.

☞ When It Rains It Drains:

Everything on the ground finds its way into waterways.

☞ Reduce areas of exposed soil:

Plant native trees, shrubs and grass. They will protect water quality and improve wildlife habitat.

☞ Take time to enjoy what you help protect.

Visit Carolina Beach State Park, Halyburton Park, Wade Park, Anne McCrary (a stormwater demonstration park) or any of the many parks in our area.

Polluted Stormwater Runoff Is ...

America's number one water pollution problem. EPA reported in 2002 that 45% of our waterways are too polluted to support basic uses such as swimming and fishing. And 50% of water pollution problems in the U.S. are attributed to stormwater runoff.

www.waterkeeper.org

It Starts With Me!—Stormwater Pollution Prevention

Students can assist in reducing stormwater pollution in their school. Your class can identify activities to be involved in, including:

- Removing litter
- Educating other students, parents, or educators not to litter
- Creating signage explaining to dog owners the importance of cleaning up after their dogs or the importance of not littering
- Placing trash cans in the best position so they are used properly
- Planting and mulching areas of soil in the school where there is a lot of water runoff
- Cleaning dirt and leaves from concrete gutters

- Monitoring the school sprinklers
- Establishing or maintaining a school compost system
- Producing and distributing a fact sheet of things that should and should not go down drains

For tips by age group visit:

www.aquakids.tv/

edu.ecotips.html

The Rain Garden: Gregory Elementary

Burnt Mill Creek is the most degraded creek in Wilmington and is on the EPA's most impaired waterways list due mainly to urban stormwater runoff. Untreated stormwater runoff carries gasoline, litter and pollutants such as pet waste and fertilizer directly into the creek, which then drains to the Cape Fear River. Gregory Elementary is in the Burnt Mill Creek watershed and they're taking simple steps to be part of the restoration of their watershed, including a rain garden and a cistern. The rain garden at Gregory was constructed in an area between the school's front parking lot and Ann Street to temporarily hold and filter stormwater, in order to keep

polluted parking lot water from reaching Burnt Mill Creek - and ultimately the Cape Fear River and the Atlantic Ocean.

Burnt Mill Creek isn't the only watershed in our area that is impaired. Find out what watershed you live, work, go to school, or play in and be part of the restoration of our waterways.

Surf your watershed:

<http://cfpub.epa.gov/surf/locate/index.cfm>

To learn more about Gregory Elementary's project visit:

www.nhcs.k12.nc.us/gregory/raingarden.htm



Earth's Water as an Apple

Begin this activity by asking where water is found on the Earth. Allow students to brainstorm where water is found. This list should include: oceans, seas, glaciers, ice caps, snowy mountain ranges, aquifers, ground water, lakes, rivers, and streams.

Pretend an apple is the earth. Round, beautiful, and full of good things. Ask the students: What percent of the earth is water?

Right away, cut the apple into quarters. Toss one quarter (25%) away. This one quarter you just removed represents dry land. What is left (75%) represents how much of the earth is covered with water – oceans, lakes, rivers, and streams.

Remove the peel from one of the three remaining quarters. This represents 3% of water on earth that is freshwater. The remaining pieces represent the saltwater of the oceans.



Cut the peel into three equal pieces. Set two pieces aside. The remaining piece represents 1% of the freshwater not frozen in the polar ice caps (2%).

Of this remaining 1%, not all of it is potable – some is contaminated by pollution.

Ask the following questions:

What happens if we don't protect this resource?

What can we do to protect, and restore this resource?

How can we conserve the usable water available?

Ask students how much water they think they use each day. And have students take a water use survey home and measure their water use for one day.

www.4empowerment.com/en/curricula/science/water_stories/water_lesson3.pdf



Contests & Awards for Students

☞ **Aqua Kids: Be an Eco-Hero!**— Kids email their story to AquaKids about what they're doing to protect the waters near them and the wildlife that lives there. "If your story is chosen, the Aqua Kids will come to your hometown and film a show about you, your friends and/or your school and what you're doing to help the environment." For more information and to submit a story, visit: www.aquakids.tv/ecohero.html

☞ **Earth Day T-Shirt Contest 2009:** Each school may only submit one entry per division (K-3, 4-6, 7-9 and 10-12). Individual artwork division winners will receive a t-shirt that portrays their artwork and a \$50 US Savings Bond (Series EE). The deadline for submission is March 13, 2009. For complete details, visit: www.nesecenter.com/page13/page13.html

☞ **Eco-Hero Awards Program 2009:** Action for Nature seeks applications from students (ages 8 to 16). Action For Nature will award cash prizes of up to \$500 to young Eco-Heroes from around the world for their outstanding accomplishments in environmental advocacy, environmental health, research or protection of the natural world. Their individual initiatives will inspire others to preserve and protect our fragile environment. Application deadline is February 28, 2009. Guidelines & application form: www.actionfornature.org/eco-hero/ecoheroawards.html

☞ **Write On! Wetlands Challenge:** Create a children's book written and illustrated by kids for kids! Students in grades 6-8 write a children's book with a wetland theme: The Case of the Wetland Mysteries. Entries must be received by March 1, 2009. For details and how to enter, visit: www.wetland.org/education_writeon.htm

☞ **RE3.org Recycling Commercial Contest for NC High School Students** hosted by NC Department of Pollution Prevention and Environmental Assistance and Time Warner Cable. Students may submit a 30-second ad to be aired across NC on cable television. The ad must have a recycling message geared toward other high school students, but how the message is delivered is entirely up to the entrants. They're seeking originality and unique submissions, so entrants have a complete creative license. To see past entries, official rules, prizes and make a submission, visit: www.re3.org

What's Polluting Our WaterWays?

Learn about what's in stormwater, what watershed YOU live in, how pollutants impact our waterways and what you can do to help.

To schedule a FREE Stormwater 101 Presentation, contact: Jennifer Butler, City of Wilmington Stormwater Services at 343-4777 or Jennifer.Butler@wilmingtonnc.gov and/or Dru Harrison, New Hanover Soil and Water Conservation District at 798-6032 or Dru.Harrison@nhswcd.org



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.

3002 US Highway 421 N.
Wilmington, NC 28409

For information on Sustainable Programs in your school visit our web site

www.nhcgov.com/AgAndDpt/KAB

Phone: 910-798-4404
Fax: 910-798-4408
E-mail:
SSInitiative@aol.com

Upcoming Events & Opportunities

EVENT:

- ☞ **Great Backyard Bird Count:** An annual four-day event that engages bird watchers of all ages in counting birds to create a real-time snapshot of where the birds are across the continent. Anyone can participate and you can watch birds in your yard, a park, schoolyard or anywhere birds are found in nature! It takes as little as 15 minutes on one day, or you can count for as long as you like each day of the event. February 13-16. To learn about birds before you start watching and share what you saw, visit: www.birdsource.org/gbbc/kids

WORKSHOPS:

- ☞ **NC CATCH (Caring for Aquatics Through Conservation Habits).** An aquatic resource education program that provides workshop training to adults to enable them to work with youth ages 8 to 15 in discovering aquatic environments through learning activities, educational materials, aquatic field trips and fishing experiences. This FREE workshop counts as a Criteria I workshop for NCEE Certification with the completion of a homework assignment. When: Saturday, March 7, 9am-4pm; Location: Harris Lake County Park, New Hill, NC (Southern Wake County). Spaces are limited and pre-registration is required. Call Amy Corbally at (919) 387-4344 for more information or to register.
- ☞ **Project Wet 2-Day Workshop** (10 hours). This two-day workshop for educators to learn the importance of water as a natural resource with a focus on non-point source pollution. Experience first hand the diversity of North Carolina's water resources in Wake County and discover new ideas for teaching about water in both the classroom and the field. When: Thursday, March 19, 9am-4:30pm and Friday, March 20, 9am-1pm; Fee: \$15 per participant. Spaces are limited and pre-registration is required. Call Christina Sorensen at: (919) 387-4345 to request a registration packet.

FUNDRAISER:

- ☞ **"It Starts With Me" T-Shirt Fundraiser.** Proceeds from this fundraiser benefit the development of green programs in New Hanover County schools and promotes environmental consciousness, increases county-wide initiatives such as school recycling and beautification, and provides funds for your school-based organization at the same time. The fundraiser is open to all schools/school based (non-profit) groups during February 2-13. If you are interested in fundraising or would like a general order form, please contact us: SSInitiative@aol.com or 798-4404