



Caroline County sixth graders get 'hands-on' environmental experience!

This year, the entire sixth grade class (347 students) from Caroline Middle School participated in the Meaningful Watershed Educational Experience (MWEE), an outdoor classroom event in which students experience the natural world and interact with environmental professionals on a wide range of natural resources topics. The Meadow Event Park (the new State Fairgrounds) provided the host facility that included field stations on Wetlands, Riparian Buffers, Water Quality Testing, Stormwater Runoff, Macroinvertebrates, and more.

The Hanover-Caroline Soil and Water Conservation District (H-C SWCD) coordinated the event as well as enlisting volunteers from the Va Dept of Forestry, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Soil and Water Conservation Districts, Va Dept of Conservation and Recreation, Master Gardeners, Hanover and Caroline County Public Works and Planning Departments, and many other experts.

Beginning with the class of 2005, H-C SWCD worked with Hanover and Caroline County public schools to create a customized MWEE curriculum that meets sixth grade Virginia standards of learning. This planning process included seven middle school teachers who formed a work group to offer input on the design of the curriculum and format of the field days. The District contracted with Department of Environmental Quality and worked to develop the written curriculum and hands-on field stations. An online curriculum provides both preparatory and follow up lessons for teachers to use in the classroom.

The Hanover-Caroline SWCD Meaningful Watershed Educational Experience is now in its second year. This year, nearly 1500 students from Caroline and Hanover County Schools participated in the program. A special thanks goes out to all the teachers, parents, students, volunteers, and the H-C SWCD staff for making this year's event a great success!



David Nunnally, Caroline County Environmental Planner and host of the 'The Wetlands Cafe,' talks about animals living in and around wetlands.

For more information, visit these sites:

- http://www.deq.state.va.us/vanaturally/mwee/mwee_partners.
- <http://www.co.hanover.va.us/soilandwater/>
- <http://www.deq.state.va.us/vanaturally/k12ed/Curric>