

July 2024 - December 2024

CONSERVATION CORNER

Durham Soil and Water Conservation District



Our Mission

To conserve, enhance, and promote the natural resources of Durham County by providing technical assistance, environmental education information and economic incentives to County citizens and by exhibiting a diversified program to meet its changing needs.



Soil & Water



We offer free educational opportunities and resources for Durham schools and teachers.

Our programs include:

- Conservation & Bookmark Contests
- NC Envirothon Program
- NC Resource Conservation Workshop
- Classroom Presentations
- Environment Education Learning Library
- 3rd Grade Environmental Field Days
- Teacher/Educator Workshops
- And More!

Contact Us:

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Find Us At:



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This Issue

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ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION



Classroom Presentations, Pre-K-12th Grade

We offer classroom presentations and hands-on activities on a variety of natural resource topics for classes across Durham.

Popular presentations include soils/erosion, watershed models, wildlife, water quality, vermicomposting, recycling, , pollinators, and more!

We also offer presentations on agricultural topics such as gardening, greenhouse gas production, animal agriculture, best management practices, and more.

3rd Grade Environmental Education Field Days

The 3rd Grade Environmental Education Field Day is a chance for Durham students and teachers to put down the books, get out of the classroom, and learn firsthand about our natural world directly from scientists and conservationists, all while having fun! Topics include soils, water/aquatic environments, forestry/plants, wildlife, and environmental issues. Field days will be held at the school at which they're scheduled.

[Click here to schedule a field day at your school.](#)

Science Days & Booths

Are you hosting a Science Day event or would like resource professionals to host an interactive booth at your school? We are available to attend!

Schedule an Event

Contact Lisa Marochak at Imarochak@dconc.gov or 919-560-0558.

Environmental Education Learning Library

The Durham SWCD Environmental Education Learning Library provides environmental education materials to teachers & other educators who work with children & aspire to share the joy of nature & the environment with them. The library contains fiction & non-fiction books, videos, & magazines about the environment and natural resources targeting ages 2-9.

All Learning Library materials are available FREE of charge for a two-week loan period to qualified participants. Applications, request sheets, & a book list can be downloaded from our website: <http://dconc.gov/swcd>.

NC ENVIROTHON

Important Dates

February 5, 2025 at 5pm:
Last day to register teams

March 20, 2025:
Area IV Envirothon Regional
Qualifying Competition

May 2-3, 2025:
NC Envirothon State
Competition

Register your team at
www.ncarea4envirothon.org

The NC Envirothon program is a hands-on environmental science and natural resources competition for middle and high school students. Five-member teams of students study, train, and are tested on their knowledge of five subject areas: Soils, Wildlife, Aquatics, Forestry, and Current Environmental Issues.

Through outdoor activities, teamwork, critical thinking, leadership skills training, and more, the Envirothon program is developing tomorrow's informed leaders!



Schedule a training session or borrow materials!

We work with teams to coordinate training sessions with resource professionals. These trainings allow students to learn the hands-on components of the Envirothon material such as skull and pelt identification, using a Biltmore stick, navigating the soil survey book, and more.

Teams can also borrow training materials to use on their own time. This includes our set of pelts and skulls and macroinvertebrate samples. If you are interested in scheduling a training session or borrowing study materials, contact Lisa Marochak at lmrochak@dconc.gov or 919-560-0558.



NCF Diversity Grant

The NCF and USDA Forest Service have created the Diversity Enhancement and Underserved Audience Grant to support teachers and students who want to engage in Envirothon.

Awards can be used to fund travel to Envirothon events, translate educational materials, increase accessibility, and more.

Apply for the Diversity Grant at
www.envirothon.org.

CONSERVATION CONTESTS

Details

Open to all public schools, private schools, homeschool students, and student clubs in Durham County.

Poster Contest
3rd - 5th Grade

Essay Contest
6th Grade & 9th - 12th Grade

Slide Show Contest
6th - 8th & 9th - 12th Grade

Public Speaking Contest
7th - 8th & 9th - 12th

Let us know if you are interested in your students participating in any of these contests. Entry forms and rules can be found on our site: <http://dconc.gov/swcd>

This year's theme can be incorporated into and enhance the NC DPI Standard Course of Study: Essential Standards for Science in each grade level. Grade-level correlations are available upon request.

3rd - 12th Grade Contests

Students in grades 3rd - 12th are encouraged to participate in our annual Conservation Creativity Contests.

The Durham Contests are a part of a statewide series sponsored by the NC Association of Conservation Districts, with multiple opportunities to win awards and prize money. First-place winners in Durham will advance to a regional contest. If successful, they will go on to a state-wide event.

This year's theme is: Wetlands are Wonderful!

Entries are due on: February 14, 2025 at 5:00 PM.

Prizes will be awarded for each category.

- 1st place: \$50 + Award presented at the annual District Awards Banquet + A yard sign.
- 2nd Place: \$25 + Award presented at the annual District Awards Banquet
- Teachers: If one of your students wins 1st place, you will receive \$30!



GRANT OPPORTUNITIES

DCo Agricultural Economic Development Grant Program

The Agricultural Economic Development Grant Program offers cost-share grants to assist farmers, nonprofits impacting the local food system, and schools promoting Agriculture Development and Outdoor Environmental Learning Centers in Schools.

School grants are awarded for up to \$1,500. These funds can be **reimbursed** for the cost of improvements or other eligible expenses listed in the grant.

Previous grant awardees used the funds to purchase gardening tools, seeds, supplies for building garden beds, and more!

If you have questions about the grant or application process, please contact Sherry Scully at SScully@dconc.gov or 919-560-0558.



Important Dates

July 1, 2024:
Applications Released

July 16, 2024:
Training Session (recorded)

August 23, 2024:
Application Deadline

September 15, 2024:
Award Recipients Notified

To Apply

Apply for the grant using one of the following methods:

- Find the application on our website: www.dconc.gov/swcd/ageconomic/application
- Pick up an application at our main office: 201 E Main Street, 5th Floor
- Request a copy through the mail by calling 919-560-0558 or emailing SScully@dconc.gov

BIG SWEEP

Every September and October, residents from around Durham volunteer to pick up litter for Durham's largest litter clean-up event of the year! Since 2005, Big Sweep volunteers have removed 214,656 pounds of litter. Participate with your students by incorporating litter-themed lessons or by hosting a school clean-up.

Schedule a Classroom Presentation



The Enviroscope.

Durham Soil and Water staff are available to present on recycling, watersheds, and water quality topics. Potential lessons include modeling watersheds and pollution with the Enviroscope, sorting recyclables with a recycling relay race, and more.

Schedule us for a lesson by contacting Lisa Marochak at lmrochak@dconc.gov or 919-560-0558.

Host a School Clean-Up

Did you know all storm drains in Durham lead to the nearest body of water? Keep litter out of our creeks and lakes by hosting a clean-up at your school. We can help you host it! Clean-ups can be scheduled in conjunction with a classroom presentation.

Please get in touch with Lisa Marochak at lmrochak@dconc.gov or 919-560-0558 to arrange a clean-up for your school.



Creek Week in Spring 2025

CREEK WEEK BINGO

March 16-23, 2024
DurhamCreekWeek.org

DIRECTIONS: Mark completed squares with an X. See page 2 for more info!

Find a spot outside & sit for 10 minutes. Journal about your experience.	Find out the name of your local watershed.	Learn where your drinking water comes from.	Complete the Durham County scavenger hunt.	Write a poem about a creek or creek creature.
Clear litter & leaves from storm drains on _____	Plant native wildflowers.	Go on a nature walk near a creek or river.	Learn the origins of 1-2 NC place names.	Make an entry on the Wandering _____

Mark your calendars for Creek Week happening March 15-22, 2025. Creek Week encourages residents to learn about and protect their local waterways. We're available to present water quality, wetland-themed, or recycling lessons to your students.

We'll send out more information regarding Creek Week events in our next newsletter.