



Shore Conserver

Eastern Shore Soil and Water Conservation District

promoting locally led conservation

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November 2020

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Getting Kids Outdoors

Even in the middle of a pandemic, the Eastern Shore Soil and Water Conservation District is finding ways to help teachers and students keep learning. Under the direction of the district's Education Director, Julie Head, and Cora Johnston Baird of the University of Virginia ABCRC in Oyster, the outdoor classroom at Kegotank Elementary School has been refurbished.

In early September, they held a professional development session with the KES teachers asking them what would make them more likely to use the outdoor classroom. Those ideas were collected and a plan of work was organized to make the outdoor classroom more user friendly for the teachers. Additions to the outdoor classroom that were done at the request of the teachers included a clock, a whiteboard, individual clipboards that are stored in a way that is easy to disinfect, plants, and fertilizer.

Five volunteers spent more than five hours one Friday cleaning up and organizing the classroom. Weeds were pulled, trees and bushes were trimmed, garbage was thrown away, the greenhouse was cleaned out, and the outdoor seating areas were rearranged to allow for social distancing.

Several weeks later, Julie and Cora did another professional development with teachers to help them develop specific plans using the outdoor classroom area. Teachers worked together to develop lessons going across all subjects using objects in provided in nature boxes. One box contained sweet gum seed balls, pine cones, and sycamore seed balls. The other contained acorns from five different types of oak trees.

While gardening is certainly one use for an outdoor classroom, there are many more ways that an outdoor classroom can be used to enhance the educational setting. Getting students outside exposes them to nature, and depending on school policies, may provide them with some mask free time while they are learning.



Left to Right: Cora Johnston Baird (ABCRC), Julie Head (ESSWCD), Martina Coker (Master Naturalists), Buck Doughty (ABCRC), and Donna Fauber (ABCRC) show off some of their handiwork.

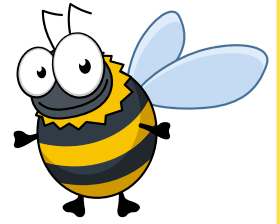


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2020 Poster Contest



Where Would We BEE Without Pollinators?



The annual Conservation Poster Contest provides kindergarten through 12th grade students and opportunity to convey their thoughts about soil, water, and related natural resource issue through art. The theme is set each year by the National Association of Conservation Districts. This year's theme is "Where Would We BEE Without Pollinators?" Students participate by grade category.

2nd- 3rd Grade Category



1st Place
Isaac Dail
Homeschool

4th - 6th Grade Category



1st Place, Jacob Dail
Homeschool



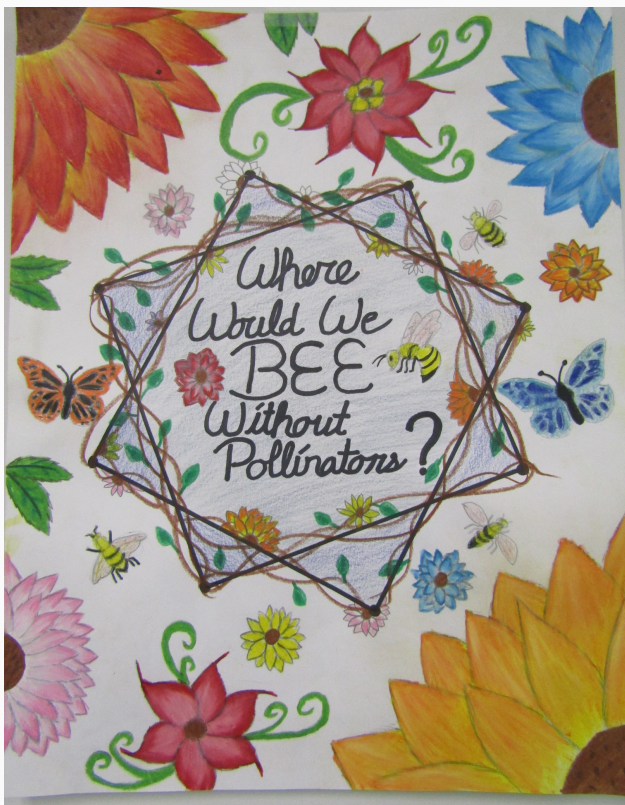
2nd Place, Corrin Burrell
Montessori Children's House

2020 Poster Contest

7th - 9th Grade Category



1st Place - Adreona Amicucci, Northampton High School



2nd Place - Sergio Torres
Broadwater Academy



3rd Place - Leah Smith
Broadwater Academy

2020 Poster Contest

10th - 12th Grade Category

1st Place - Kyra Stratton
Northampton High School



2nd Place - Rocio Cruz Pineda
Northampton High School

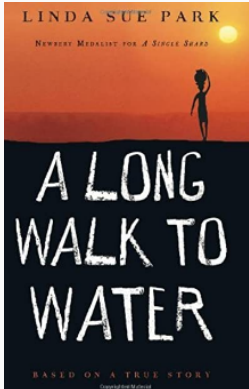


3rd Place (tie) - Tyneisha Abbott
Nandua High School



3rd Place (tie) - Areli Enriquez
Nandua High School

Educational Programs



Environmental Literacy

A Long Walk to Water by Linda Sue Park is a great book to help teach students about the importance of safe drinking water. The district's Education Director, Julie Head, along with Renee Lee, a language arts teacher at Nandua Middle School, and Kathleen Overman Blessing, a science teacher at Arcadia Middle School, developed a cross curricular literature unit this summer based on the book. These materials have been used with 6th graders at Nandua Middle School and the TAG students at Northampton Middle School this year to help students understand how important a safe, clean supply of drinking water is.

In addition, eight homeschool students in Northampton County attended a book club run by the Education Director. If you have a group that would be interested in having an in-person or virtual book club based on this book, please contact Julie Head at julie.head@esswcd.org or 757-302-4433.

From Caterpillar to Butterfly

Second graders at Kiptopeke Elementary School and Occohannock Elementary School had the opportunity to get up close and personal with the life cycle of a monarch butterfly this fall thanks to the ESSWCD and Kiptopeke State Park.

Each second grade classroom was provided with everything they needed to watch the process of metamorphosis in their classroom. The students were provided with a butterfly enclosure, caterpillars, several chrysalis, milkweed, a book about the life cycle of a butterfly, all the materials for a butterfly life cycle craft, and a variety of other butterfly themed cross-curricular education materials. Once the butterflies emerged from their cocoon, they were released to begin their migration to Mexico.



The Commonwealth of VA supports the Eastern Shore SWCD through financial and administrative assistance provided by the VA Soil and Water Conservation Board and the Department of Conservation and Recreation.

Eastern Shore SWCD programs, activities and employment opportunities are available to all people regardless of disability, race or color, national origin, traits historically associated with race or religion including traits associated with hair, religion or creed, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, pregnancy status, childbirth or related medical conditions, marital status, veteran status, whistleblower status or genetic information.