



VA Office of Environmental Education Annual Report 2009

DEQ programs help educators across the Commonwealth work together to provide high quality environmental education to support school and community-based environmental literacy. Major priorities are implementing Virginia's plan for Environmental Education, including the education commitments of the Chesapeake Bay 2000 Agreement, Virginia's academic standards and building capacity within communities to deliver environmental education. Across the state, 12 regional teams are bringing together local conservation organizations and education agencies to implement stewardship projects, provide field experiences for students and educate citizens about local issues. More school divisions are providing meaningful watershed experiences on Virginia's Chesapeake Bay, tributaries and local streams.

Virginia Naturally

In 2009, 59 new partners signed up to participate in the statewide network. Monthly electronic newsletters are sent to over 1,500 educators and litter and recycling program managers across Virginia. 146 people attended the Annual Environmental Education Conference, held at Hampton University in Virginia to receive state updates and professional development. Twelve [regional teams/alliances](#) are collaborating in various areas of the state to bring together educators and resources to deliver high quality education to citizens and schools in Virginia. Twenty one (21) community leaders participated in Water Leadership Training at the Jamestown 4-H Center. Training was provided to 847 community educators at 18 professional development workshops. In addition, the office provided coordination, public information, and educational resources to 1,570 people at 25 outreach events. 34 VaNaturally [partner organizations](#) received local, state and national awards. Stewardship Virginia reported that 7,876 organizations received certificates for 263 projects that were conducted during the spring and fall campaigns. Of the 263 projects that were registered, 134 were waterway cleanups.



Non-Competitive Litter Prevention and Recycling Grants

In FY 2009 305 (out of a possible 324) local governments were given non-competitive litter grants for [litter and recycling programs](#). In FY 2009 \$1,829,481 was awarded to the local governments which in turn matched these awards with \$8,885,383 in cash and in-kind services resulting in a match of 486%. The money for the non-competitive litter prevention and recycling grants is generated through a litter tax that is paid by Virginia manufacturers and retailers. Each local government decides how to best support anti-littering efforts within their region and uses the non-competitive grant funds to support these efforts.

Environmental Educators Leadership Program

The Environmental Educators Leadership Program (EELP) has involved over 100 different educators across the Commonwealth in the past two years. 47 educators participated in the Emerging Water Leaders workshop held at the Jamestown 4-H Center this past year focusing on Social Marketing, Critical Thinking in Science Education, and prioritizing state-wide Environmental Education initiatives. Additional information about this program can be found online at <http://www.deq.virginia.gov/education/eelp.html>.

Stewardship Training Workshops

The VOEE sponsored two successful Wetland [Stewardship workshops](#) in collaboration with the Department of Game & Inland Fisheries combining training in the Wildlife Mapping program and the Wonders of Wetlands Curriculum. A mixture of 50 formal and community educators were trained in two separate workshops. 11 additional Stewardship Training Workshops were sponsored by the VOEE which provided 127.5 hours of instruction and reached 292 educators across the state.

Regional Environmental Education Teams

The VOEE continues to build capacity within the existing 12 [Regional Environmental Education Teams](#) to provide high quality environmental education and encourage direct citizen involvement in natural resource

stewardship projects. Continued funding from competitive EPA Office of Environmental Education grants allows the VOEE to supply pass-through funds for regional team administration, professional development, and regionally focused collaborative stewardship projects.

Virginia Classroom and Partner Grants

Last year, with funding from the Virginia Environmental Endowment and the Department of Conservation and Recreation, students are conducting meaningful environmental watershed investigations through [Virginia Naturally mini-grants](#). Two more rounds of applications have been awarded, distributing \$50,150 to 70 schools. Additional funding from NOAA of \$40,000 expanded support to community and non-formal groups to build capacity in their localities for meaningful youth watershed programs. An [evaluation](#) of the program is currently underway.

C2K Meaningful Watershed Educational Experiences: MWEES

Through a NOAA Chesapeake Bay BWET grant for nearly \$100,000, an additional 11 school divisions worked with DEQ and the Virginia Department of Education to develop system-wide plans to integrate meaningful watershed educational experiences ([MWEES](#)) into their curricula. Over the course of 3 years, 25 divisions developed plans which included professional development and student field investigations.

6th Grade Science Standards Institute

The [Sixth Grade Science Standards Institutes program](#) was successfully completed. The program was offered in collaboration with other state agencies (DGIF, DOF, and DOE), Virginia Science Education Leadership Association and Virginia Association of Science Teachers and reached more than 100 teachers and 3,000 students.

Project WET

In 2009, a total of 200 Virginia teachers, non-formal educators and college students participated in 13 workshops for [Virginia Project WET](#) (Water Education for Teachers) and its associated curriculum.



Advanced Water Training: Healthy Water, Healthy People, Wonders of Wetlands, Places We Live

One workshop was conducted for 53 educators. These materials have been well-received and the web site, www.healthywater.org, is a terrific resource linking classroom activities to field activities and water quality parameters. Demand for these resources is growing as the new SOLs are being implemented. Virginia versions of two of the lessons (using DEQ's water quality data base) were developed and distributed at the workshops. Two Wonders of Wetland workshops were conducted for 55 people and one Places We Live workshop was conducted for 12 educators.

Oyster Festivals and other youth events

Oyster Festival Education Day – On November 6, Project Wet Trainer participated in water quality and wetlands education activities for 225 4th and 6th grade students from Middlesex and surrounding counties. VADEQ EE staff consulted on appropriate learning activities, assisted in the recruitment of guest instructors, and provided materials for 15 teacher's packets. With assistance from DEQ's Regional Offices and other agencies, staff supported events for more than 1,200 students participated featuring different air, water and waste activities. Student journals and teacher preparation helped make the experience meaningful.