

# Teacher's Conservation Corner

*John Marshall Soil and Water Conservation District*

## Soil Studies

The John Marshall Soil and Water Conservation District is geared up to help teachers conduct soil studies. Last year, almost 500 third graders made **Soil Tubes** and over 1400 students crawled through our **Soil Tunnel**.

The Soil Tube program takes about 30 minutes per class and is geared for third grade. We can set up in the classroom, or outside. Students re-view the importance of soil and the soil layers, and each student makes a soil tube that they

take home. There is no cost involved. Most third grades study soil in the fall, but a few wait until spring. We can visit anytime.

The Soil Tunnel can be set up and left for several days so students from all interested classes can visit and crawl through it. We can set it up in a classroom, on a stage, or wherever you want!

Please contact the District by email or phone to schedule the Soil Tunnel and a Soil Tube program.



**Topsoil, subsoil, bedrock!**  
Students at M.M. Pierce get their hands dirty as they construct their Soil Tubes



The **Soil Tunnel** is about 9 feet long and can be set up anywhere. Students can crawl through the tunnel so they can see what is above as well as what is below the ground.

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*Special points of interest:*

- **Soil Studies**
- **Project Wet**
- **Trees**
- **Third Grade Farm Tour**
- **Field Trip Grants**



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## Project Wet

The Staff at John Marshall is working with Pat Johnson of Taylor Middle School to develop water related activities adapted from the **Project Wet** manual.

We are working on **Capture, Store, and Release; The Incredible Journey; and Water Works.**

These programs should be ready later this fall.

They are designed so staff from John Marshall can make the presentation, or we can show teachers how they work so they can do it themselves.

## Trees

Trees play an important role in maintaining the quality and quantity of our soil and water resources. Several grades study trees and forests in some aspect of the Living Systems SOL's.

The John Marshall staff can assist with tree studies by offering tree identification activities. This can follow one or two scenarios. We have walked the grounds of most

schools in the county and have a good idea of what trees are found at your school. We can take students for tree walks so they can see and identify trees.

We also maintain a collection of pressed specimens that can be used for indoor study. We can send these to teachers via the courier, or we can bring them and conduct a program indoors.



The trees that border this stream play a role in filtering sediments and pollutants before they reach the stream.

## Third Grade Farm Tour

Each spring, the John Marshall Soil and Water Conservation District conducts the Third Grade Farm Tour with the help of a lot of volunteers and professionals from other agencies.

Last April, about 800 students from 9 schools visited Choice

Longhorns in Bealeton and Baerback Farms in Orlean. Each farm is set up so students rotate through 9 educational stations featuring agricultural and environmental topics. We look forward to hosting another tour in 2010.



## Field Trip Grants for Teachers

Field trips are fun, but with today's budgets, they can be hard to afford. There are numerous sources of funds that teachers can utilize to pay for field trips.

The folks at Target have a grant program that funds up to \$800 for qualifying field trips. Eligible field trips include art, science, and cul-

tural museum visits; community service and civic projects; and career enrichment opportunities. Funds may be used to cover trip-related costs such as transportation, ticket fees, resource materials, and supplies.

The application deadline is No-

vember 3. For more information and to apply online, check out <https://targetfieldtripgrants.target.com>.

There are many nearby places ideal for natural resource related trips including Sky Meadows State Park, the State Arboretum, and Shenandoah National Park.

