

Teacher's Conservation Corner

John Marshall Soil and Water Conservation District

Grant Money for Educational Activities

Grants are fantastic ways to get money for projects to enhance student learning. There are several groups which offer grants and have deadlines approaching.

The Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries and the Wildlife Foundation of Virginia have partnered together to offer \$45,000 in grants for youth outdoor activities (including education programs). Grant Proposals are due on September 1. Contact the District for more information about applying for this grant.

Project Learning Tree offers grants of up to \$1,000 for environmental service-learning projects that link classroom learning to the real world. Applicants must have attended a Project Learning Tree training either online or in person and applications are due on September 30. More information and an application can be found [here](#).

The Chesapeake Bay Restoration Fund is funded by the sale of Chesapeake Bay License Plates. This year, they have nearly \$300,000 available for Chesapeake Bay-related educa-

tion and restoration activities. The deadline for this grant is October 1. More information can be found [here](#).

The Chesapeake Bay Trust offers many different grants covering outreach, restoration, and education. Grants of up to \$5,000 are available to conduct meaningful outdoor learning experiences for students. The next grant cycle will close on January 13, 2017. More information can be found [here](#).

Additionally, if you have not participated in Trout in the Classroom before, it is a program in which students grow brook trout from eggs throughout the year. The fish are then released into streams in the spring to restore the native trout population. Friends of the Rappahannock has a couple of tanks and supplies available to schools in the Rappahannock Watershed.

For more information on any of these opportunities or if you are in need of assistance writing a grant, please contact the District at 540-347-3120 x3.

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Soil Tubes Offered Again to 3rd Graders

The John Marshall Soil & Water Conservation District is once again offering soil lessons to students of all ages. The main program (Soil Tubes) is tailored for third grade students (SOL: 3.1, 3.7). The District also does soil programs for middle and high school classes (agriculture, ecology, environmental science, etc.) which go more in depth about soil processes.



An example of a Soil Tube which students get to make and take home.

In the past school year, the District conducted the soil tube program at seven elementary schools in the county, reaching over 500 students. Our goal this year is

to have all 11 schools participate in this opportunity.

The Soil Tubes lesson for third grade students takes about 30 minutes per class. Each student gets to make a soil tube featuring topsoil, subsoil, and bedrock. The District supplies all the necessary materials for the lesson. Programs for older students involve a field component (soil sampling, pH measurement, etc.) and can be adapted to the length of the class period.

The District also has equipment that teachers can borrow to enhance their lessons. These include soil sieves (for comparing particle sizes), moisture meters, and soil pH meters.

If you would like to schedule a lesson or borrow any equipment, please contact Michael Trop at the John Marshall Soil and Water Conservation District by phone at: 540-347-3120 x3 or email michael.trop@fauquiercounty.gov.

Envirothon

Envirothon is a team based natural resources competition for high school students. Students who participate learn stewardship and management concepts and work to solve real world environmental problems. Each team consists of five students.

Throughout the year, students gain skills and knowledge in Soils, Aquatics, Wildlife, Forestry, and a current environmental issue. This year's current environmental issue will be Agricultural Soil & Water Conservation Stewardship. Previous topics have included invasive species, urban forestry, and estuaries. At the competition, students take tests in all five subject areas and also give an oral presentation formulating a strategy to address the current environmental issue.

The program is field-oriented, community based, and gives students an opportunity to work and connect with

natural resource professionals.

Area competitions are held in April with the State contest held in May. Dominion Power sponsors Envirothon on the local and state level and the contests are organized by Soil and Water Conservation Districts.

It has been many years since there was a team representing Fauquier County and we would like to have students be involved in this great learning and resume-building opportunity.

If you are interested in forming a team or know of students who would be willing to participate on a team, please contact the District. For more details on the Envirothon program, you can check out the Envirothon website at:

<http://www.vaswcd.org/promotion/envirothon-2012>.