

Teacher's Conservation Corner

John Marshall Soil and Water Conservation District

Virginia Conservation Assistance Program (VCAP)

The Virginia Conservation Assistance Program (VCAP) is a new program being offered to reduce stormwater pollution and correct erosion issues. VCAP reimburses eligible practices at 75% of the cost.

Best Management Practices (BMPs) increase the filtering capacity of a site and work to reduce impacts from highly developed areas. All non-agricultural property owners, **(including schools)** are eligible for VCAP assistance. Under VCAP, a JMSWCD staff member will visit the site to review current conditions, potential water quality issues and the feasibility of installing various urban BMPs.

VCAP can serve your school by not only solving a stormwater or erosion issue, but can also serve as a learning tool to help educate students about these problems. In fact, projects that will be used for education will be higher on the funding priority list.

A conservation design may be developed and submitted to the state VCAP committee. If the practice is approved by the committee, the practice will be installed, inspected and paid at the reimbursement rate. Property owners will agree to maintain the practice for ten years. Several of the practices have the added benefit of enhancing habitat for pollinators, birds and other wildlife.



VCAP will provide funding for the following practices: Impervious Surface Removal, Conservation Landscaping (meadow, tree, or mulched bed planting), Rain Gardens, Dry Wells, Constructed Wetlands, Vegetative Stormwater Conveyances (dry swales, wet swales, step-pool conveyances), Rainwater Harvesting, Bioretention and Infiltration systems, Permeable Pavement, Green Roofs, and Living Shorelines.

For more information or to schedule a District site visit, contact Michael Trop at 540-316-6639.

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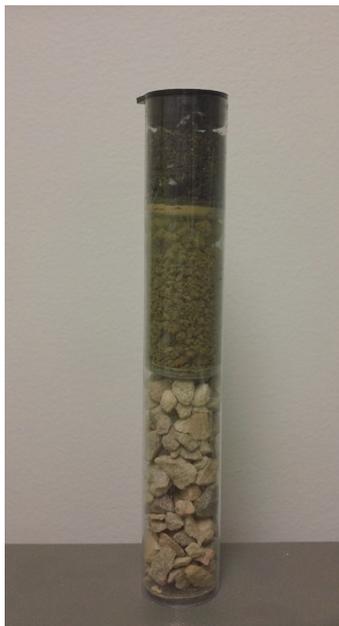
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Soil Programs Available

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.

In the past school year, the District conducted the soil tube program at seven elementary schools in the county, reaching over 550 students. Our goal this year is



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

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.

Enviroscape

The Enviroscape is an interactive table top model used to demonstrate soil erosion, watersheds, land use, and pollution.

Students take turns spreading different “pollutants” - soil, pesticides, fertilizers, etc. - on the model and then see what happens when it rains (a spray bottle is used to simulate rainfall).

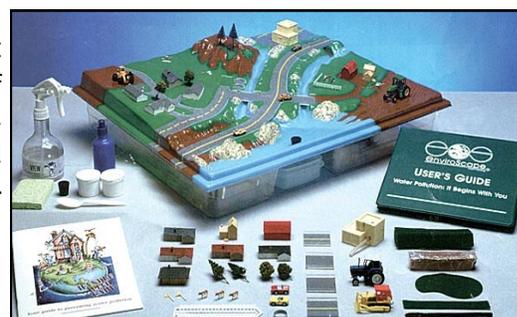
We typically use the Enviroscape model for grades 3-6, but can be adapted for older grades as well. The presentation is similar for all grade levels, but different features are emphasized based on what specifically is being studied.

We encourage teachers to participate so they can help emphasize what is being covered in class. This activity

takes between 30 and 60 minutes to complete, depending on the specific subjects that students are studying as well as available class time.

This model is a great visual representation of rainfall transporting pollutants through a watershed, and students always enjoy seeing what happens.

Please contact the District if you are interested in learning more or scheduling a program.



The Enviroscape model.