



ENVIRONMENTAL NEWS

DEQ Public Affairs Office, 629 East Main St., Richmond, Va. 23219, fax (804) 698-4346
www.deq.virginia.gov

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Aug. 6, 2009

Contact: Krystal Coxon
(804) 698-4399
krystal.coxon@deq.virginia.gov

Terri Edwards
(413) 253-8324
terri_edwards@fws.gov

YOUTH WORKING FOR WILDLIFE CONSERVATION HELP PLANT NATIVES ON VIRGINIA'S EASTERN SHORE

RICHMOND, VA. – Twelve teenagers with the Youth Conservation Corps worked with state and federal agencies to successfully plant more than 550 native plants on the Eastern Shore in two days.

The teenage crew worked with staff from the Eastern Shore of Virginia National Wildlife Refuge and the Virginia Coastal Zone Management Program at the Department of Environmental Quality to complete the installation of two native plant demonstration landscapes at the refuge on July 7 and 21.

The increase in native vegetation will provide water quality benefits of critical importance to maintaining a potable water supply on the shore, help maintain optimal water quality for Virginia's shellfish aquaculture industry, and help provide habitat for the millions of migratory birds and other wildlife that rely on the shore.

Demonstration landscapes are an important part of a multi-year campaign called "Plant Eastern Shore Natives" to urge residents to plant native vegetation around their homes and in their communities. The landscapes at the refuge highlight native plants most attractive to pollinators including butterflies.

The refuge received support from the Virginia Coastal Zone Management Program, The Nature Conservancy Virginia Coast Reserve, Virginia Field Office Partners for Fish and Wildlife, Eastern Shore Soil and Water Conservation District, and refuge volunteers. Stimulus funding under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act enabled the Fish and Wildlife Service to double the size of the YCC crew this summer.

"We're thrilled with the results of this collaborative project and grateful for the Recovery Act funding that allowed us to involve students in this important wildlife conservation work,"

said Sue Rice, manager of the refuge. “The Youth Conservation Corps crew worked hard and made a positive difference for residents and wildlife.”

To learn more about the “Plant ES Natives” campaign, how tens of thousands of migratory songbirds and raptors rely on native vegetation for food and shelter, and how these native plants are “shore beautiful,” visit www.deq.virginia.gov/coastal/go-native.html.

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