



## VA Office of Environmental Education Annual Report 2011

DEQ programs help educators across the Commonwealth work together to provide high quality environmental education to support school and community-based environmental literacy. The major priorities are implementing Virginia's Business Plan for Environmental Education, including the education commitments of the Chesapeake Bay 2000 Agreement and Virginia's academic standards. The office works to build capacity within communities to deliver standards-based environmental education. Across the state, regional teams bring together local conservation organizations and education agencies to implement stewardship projects, provide field experiences for students and to educate citizens about local issues.

### Virginia Naturally Summary

In 2011, 76 new partners signed up to participate in the statewide network. Electronic newsletters are sent to over 2,000 educators, litter and recycling program managers, and other interested parties across Virginia. The Annual Environmental Education Conference was held jointly this year with the Mid-Atlantic Marine Education Association in Williamsburg. Ten [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. Thirty-two (32) community leaders participated in the Coastal Leaders Summit prior the annual conference. Training was provided to 828 community educators at 51 professional development workshops. In addition, the office provided coordination, public information, and educational resources to 3,494 people at 9 outreach events. The Virginia Naturally website receives more than 11,700 hits and 1,200 downloads of educational materials monthly.



### Environmental Educators Leadership Program

Over 100 educators from various community organizations have enrolled in the Environmental Educators Leadership Program (EELP) from across the Commonwealth in the past four years. Four Leadership Summits have been conducted with the past four EE Conferences to provide educators enrolled in the EELP and members of the VRUEC with the latest knowledge and science related to social marketing, fundraising, climate science, and coastal resource management issues. Twenty educators have met the qualifications to be recognized in the fields of Water, Forestry, Karst, or Coastal Education. Additional information about this program can be found online at [www.deq.virginia.gov/education/eelp.html](http://www.deq.virginia.gov/education/eelp.html).

### K-12 Education Efforts

More school divisions are providing meaningful watershed experiences on Virginia's Chesapeake Bay, tributaries and local streams and incorporating current issues such as air quality, pharmaceuticals, and recycling into their units of study. Virginia curriculum resources were collated on a new webpage, [Learn About Virginia's Environment](#). The 2011 Love A Tree teacher kit sponsored by International Paper and the Virginia Coastal Zone Management program, *Habitats Bring Your Schoolyard to Life* included a poster with information on native plants in Virginia, links to schoolyard habitat resources and a lesson [Lunch Buddies](#).



### Non-Competitive Litter Prevention and Recycling Grants

In FY 2011 **308** (out of a possible 324) local governments were given non-competitive litter grants for litter and recycling programs. **\$1,742,782** was awarded to the local governments which in turn matched these awards with **\$14,656,272** in cash and in-kind services resulting in a match of 840%.

## **Project WET**

Project WET in Virginia was revitalized in September with the launch of the new K-12 Curriculum and Activity Guide. Eleven organizations across the state became local partners and will sponsor WET trainings in their regions. To view these host organizations on a map of Virginia please visit <http://www.deq.state.va.us/education/wet.html>. Refresher courses for current facilitators have been scheduled and trainings for educators are being scheduled by local partners for the spring and summer of 2012.



## **Regional Environmental Education Teams**

The Virginia Office of Environmental Office (VOEE) continues to build capacity within the 10 [Regional Environmental Education Teams](#) to provide high quality environmental education and encourage direct citizen involvement in natural resource stewardship projects. regional teams are working with with DEQ Regional Offices to establish working partnerships for the coming year.

## **Virginia Classroom and Partner Grants**

Students are conducting meaningful environmental watershed investigations with support from the [Virginia Naturally Classroom & Partner](#) Grants funded by NOAA Chesapeake Bay Office,. Two rounds of applications were awarded, distributing \$45,750 to 46 schools.

## **Watershed Education**

Efforts continue to support the Chesapeake 2000 Agreement's goal for Meaningful Watershed Educational Experiences for all Virginia students (MWEE). The second year of a 3-year NOAA BWET grant continues training nonformal educators in Virginia to deliver high quality, standards-based programs and services to K-12 teachers and their students. The first *Watershed Educators Institute* was held in the spring of 2011 and 69 community educators were trained with 26 of them receiving recognition as watershed education leaders for having completed a minimum of 30 hours of training. The second Watershed Educators Institute is currently underway and to date 67 participants are registered. Recommended resources for community and classroom educators are collated on Virginia Naturally.