Global Warming: are we or aren't we?

The weather is in the news these days, especially considering that the five warmest years worldwide since the 1890s are 2005, 1998, 2002, 2003, and 2004!

Both the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and NASA have websites that discuss global warming:

NOAA Global Warming: frequently asked questions
http://lwf.ncdc.noaa.gov/oa/climate/globalwarming.html

NASA: 2005 warmest year in over a century

NOAA reports record warm January across the US (Feb. 7, 2006)
http://www.noaanews.noaa.gov/stories2006/s2576.htm

The United States had an average January temperature of 39.5 °F, which is 8.5 °F above the 1895-2005 mean. The Climate Prediction Center is expecting the weather to be more “typical” of winter for February, with below average temperatures in the southeast.

Websites you may not have known about, but are very interesting:

Environmental Health Perspectives (EHP) Science Education Program:


Lessons are aligned with National Science Education Standards in biology, chemistry, environmental science, geology, and physical science, and are targeted at students in grades 9-12. The EHP Student Edition, corresponding lessons, and individual news articles can be downloaded for FREE from this website. Educators are encouraged to use this resource and provide feedback.

Earth Science World Image Bank:
http://www.earthscienceworld.org/imagebank/search/index.html

Caves, dunes, groundwater, soils and a wide variety of other natural features are available on this site. Images can be searched using category, continent, county, and keyword. Some fascinating photos!

National EE Week:

National Environmental Education Week is April 16-22. Visit their website at
http://www.eeweek.org/

The site contains information on planned activities and how to sign up. Here are some ideas of things you can do:

• Create a backyard or schoolyard habitat.
• Plant a garden or tree.
• Start a recycling program either in your school, at home, or within the community.
• Create a campaign to encourage biking and walking.
• Develop a butterfly garden for elementary school children
• Work with local parks on maintenance, trail establishment, and trash pick-up.
• Study an endangered species.
• Adopt a nearby lake, river, or stream
• Plant and maintain flowerbeds around the school or throughout the community.
• Make a visit to your local zoo, aquarium, museum, or nature center.
• Take students to a local park, wildlife area or farm.
• Bring in a guest speaker - there are many environmental professionals available to visit your class and address the students.

Upcoming Classes:

NC Estuarium Nature Photography Seminar
March 4, 2006 from 10:00 am – 4:00 pm at the Estuarium in Washington NC
Fee: $50.00. Pre-registration and pre-payment are necessary. Call 252-948-0000 to register.

The seminar will focus on getting the most from your equipment while keeping costs to a minimum. Compositional pointers, close-ups in nature, and types of film and cameras will also be discussed. The seminar is open to everyone, beginners or professionals, teens and seniors - anyone with a camera who wants to improve their skills. Bring your camera and examples of your work.

WASTE IN PLACE & FEED THE BIN
Elementary Curriculum Training
March 21, 2006 from 8:00 am – 1:30 pm at the North Raleigh Hilton

Utilizing the NC Standard Course of Study, Wake County Solid Waste provides recycling information and lessons to area environmental educators. Lesson plan topics include recycling, closing the loop, landfills, litter and composting.

Tours of material recovery facilities, composting facilities, reuse agencies and/or the landfill will be offered. The participants will receive a curriculum manual, resource samples, lunch and tour transportation.

All participants will need to attend the main session on Tuesday, March 21, 2006 from 8:00 am -1:30 pm at the North Raleigh Hilton. The cost for the main session is $22.00 for non-Wake County teachers.

FOR ELEMENTARY TEACHERS TO RECEIVE 10 HOURS OF CREDIT:

Attend the main session on March 21st.

Conduct one lesson plan mentioned in the main session and fill out an evaluation form to be turned in at the follow up session.

Create one lesson plan about litter, composting, plastics or reuse to be turned in at the follow up session.

Attend a follow up session on April 29, 2006 from 9:00 - Noon. The session will involve collection of homework and evaluations plus two facility tours. Tours will depart from Wake County General Services Center at 401 Capital Blvd, Raleigh.

FOR ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATORS TO RECEIVE CREDIT FOR A 10 HOUR EE CERTIFICATION CRITERIA 1 WORKSHOP:

Attend the main session on March 21st.

Attend a tour to be held right after the main session on March 21, 2006 from 1:30 - 4:30 pm. This costs an extra $10.00.

Write a paragraph about what you learned from the tour you went on and email it to: FeedTheBin@co.wake.nc.us

Conduct one lesson plan mentioned in the main session by June 1, 2006 and fill out an evaluation form to be emailed to: FeedTheBin@co.wake.nc.us

To sign up, complete the registration form located at:
and fax it to the Carolina Recycling Association at 919-545-9060.

NC Marine Educators Sleep with The Fishes!
6 pm March 31 until 12 pm April 1 at the NC Aquarium at Fort Fisher

Registration deadline: March 15th

Pre-registration and a fee are required:
$10 for MAMEA members
$20 for non-MAMEA members

You are invited to spend the night at the aquarium! Each participant will go home with examples of activities they can use in their own
classroom and during a field trip to the aquarium. There is an optional canoe trip to Zeke’s Island from 1:00 to 4:00 pm on April 1st, which has an additional $20.00 fee.

This overnight can be used for Criteria II and III for NC EE Certification. Teacher Renewal Credit is also offered.

To register or for more information call Ruth Schneider at 910-458-7468 or email her at: ruth.schneider@ncmail.net

3rd Annual Sustainable Energy Conference

The 3rd Annual Sustainable Energy Conference, “Strategies to Manage High Energy Costs,” will be held at the McKimmon Center, N.C. State University in Raleigh, March 29 from 8:00 am – 4:30 pm.

Registration fees are $50 for NC state government employees and $85 for all other registrants. After March 15, registration is $100.

Refer to the State Energy Office website for more conference details, registration, sponsorship and exhibitor forms:
http://www.energync.net

Hazardous Household Waste, Clothing Drive, and Electronics Recycling Event

Brunswick County will hold the event on April 16 from 9 am to 2 pm at the Wal-Mart parking lot in Shallotte.

This is a one-day collection only. Items will not be picked up with the regular trash service and will not be accepted at the four convenience sites or at the landfill. This collection will be free for county residents and farmers only; no commercial or industrial waste will be accepted. Pesticide waste will also be accepted from farmers outside of Brunswick County, due to assistance from NCDA&CS.

Household Hazardous Waste should not be disposed of with your regular trash. When handling Household Hazardous Waste use gloves and extreme caution, and do not smoke. Keep the hazardous materials in their original containers and never mix hazardous materials.

Accepted materials include: adhesives, aerosols, automotive fluids including antifreeze, batteries, cleaners, cosmetics, fertilizers, paint, paint remover and thinner, and pesticides.

The following materials cannot be accepted: radioactive materials, smoke detectors, infectious or biological waste, propane cylinders, explosives, shock sensitive materials, non-household materials (such as tires), and containers greater than 5 gallons. For more information on Household Hazardous Waste, contact the Brunswick County Solid Waste Department at 253-2520.

The electronics recycling event is for county residents only, no businesses. The following items will be collected:

All electronic equipment, production equipment, computers and computer accessories (PCs, printers, monitors, tape drives, keyboards, etc.).

Personal home office equipment and products (telephones, typewriters, pagers, answering machines, cellular phones, etc.).

Small home appliances (microwaves, toasters, blenders), entertainment and visual equipment (televisions, VCRs, stereos, cameras, video game players, etc.).

Large metal items, such as refrigerators, air conditioners, washers and dryers will not be accepted at this event, but are taken for free at the landfill and all County convenience sites throughout the year.

NC Wildlife Commission classes:

Project WILD: March 6, Kenansville
Barbara Sharpe, (910) 296-0228
bsharpe@jscc.cc.nc.us

Barrier Island Mammals: March 10, Beaufort
Amy Sauls, (252) 728-2170
amy.sauls@ncmail.net

Project WILD Aquatic: March 23, Kenansville
Barbara Sharpe, (910) 296-0228
bsharpe@jscc.cc.nc.us

Amphibians: March 31, New Bern
Mike Campbell, (252) 514-6663
mike.campbell@ncwildlife.org

Salamanders, frogs, and toads oh my!

Project WILD: April 4, Wilmington
Mike Campbell, (252) 514-6663
mike.campbell@ncwildlife.org
Most of North Carolina’s survey respondents (96%) reported having a yard that they personally mow. When asked how they disposed of grass clippings, the responses were:

- 53.7% left the clippings in the yard. This practice, known as grasscycling, reduces the need for fertilizer applications by returning nitrogen to lawns. It also protects local waters.
- 16.4% mulched or composted the yard waste (also good for protecting waterways).
- 26% collected grass clippings for disposal in the garbage, and
- 1.5% report raking or blowing grass clippings into storm drains.

For those who fertilize their own yards, the majority (54%) responded that they did not use soil tests (FREE service by NCDA!).

The majority of respondents (75%) who reported they owned a vehicle were asked if they changed their own oil. Nearly 80% reported using commercial oil change facilities. Of the 17% who change their own oil, the most frequent answer (32.2%) was to place used oil with other garbage for disposal, and roughly 20% take their oil to a recycling facility. Unfortunately, 22% reported dumping oil onto a designated part of their lawn, and 20.6% poured used oil down storm drains.

Sincerely,

Diana M.C. Rashash, PhD
Extension Area Specialized Agent
Natural Resources-Environmental Education

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