



Environmental Concern Presents:

NOW! News on Wetlands



A Quarterly Newsletter for Wetland Educators

Winter 2007

Wetlands on Wheels All Over Delmarva

It's part Alice in Wonderland, part wild kingdom, part laboratory, and all wetlands. It's the Wetland on Wheels Mobile Classroom, the newest wetland education initiative from Environmental Concern.

The 35 foot long mobile classroom is wrapped in a wetland artscape featuring 24

species of animals and 9 species of native plants. Children of all ages have fun trying to identify them all. Environmental Concern's wetland educators use the mural to teach about biodiversity, habitat, native plants and food webs.

Inside, the trailer has been converted into a classroom with

25 learning stations. A series of hands-on lessons, directly correlated to state standards of learning have been developed to help complement school curriculums.

Look for the Wetland On Wheels at an event near you for an unforgettable wetland experience -no waders necessary.

Currently available to schools on the Delmarva Peninsula with limited availability in the Mid-Atlantic Region.

For more about Wetlands On Wheels or to set up a visit, contact: Jodi Carr at youth.edu@wetland.org or 410-745-9620



Partner Spotlight: Snohomish County Surface Water Management

To many, springtime in Seattle brings to mind gray days with lots of rain – but to Environmental Concern's Wetland Educators, it

represents an exciting yearly tradition – a visit with our partner The Snohomish County Surface Water Management (SCSWM) to present a WOW! The Wonders of Wetlands teacher workshop!

SCSWM is a public agency dedicated to managing surface water with an emphasis on preserving Washington's water resources. SCSWM offers citizens the opportunity to learn about flooding, erosion, and drainage management – all important concepts when you live in one of the nation's wettest climates! In order to facilitate the public's

understanding of surface water management, SCSWM's Watershed Education Program offers a variety of fieldtrips and workshops, from starlight beach walks to stream restoration programs. WOW! The Wonders of Wetlands educator workshop fits right in, and EC has been invited back for the fourth consecutive year to present the workshop to local teachers.

For more information on SCSWM, visit http://www1.co.snohomish.wa.us/Departments/Public_Works/Divisions/SWM/



Sudden Wetland Dieback

Coastal salt marshes are one of the world's most biologically productive ecosystems, functioning as the basis of the food chain for many marine ecosystems and supporting the majority of commercial fish. These rich ecosystems also protect our shores from erosion, flooding and storm surges. So it is no wonder that people are very concerned by the phenomenon now known as Sudden Wetland Dieback (SWD).

SWD was first identified in Massachusetts in 2002, and is now reported as a concern from Maine to New York. SWD causes patches of mud and dead grasses to replace what was once a lush marsh. The pattern



is unlike the naturally occurring marsh losses due to rise in sea level, ice shearing and deposited wrack (matted plant debris).

The most alarming part of the problem is that after 4 years there are still no definite conclusions about the cause of SWD. Scientist are working on theories from drought to

fungal causes. There could be links to predators, soils or tidal changes, erosion or any combination of these occurrences. Studies are looking for global links, including possible connections to global climate change.

While concern grows about the loss of these valuable ecosystems, some say it is too early to sound the panic alarm. Scientists continue looking for possible SWD causes and ways to bring the marshes back.

To find more information about Sudden Wetland Dieback visit www.wetland.neers.org/.

Upcoming Workshops:

(full listing at www.wetland.org)

February

- 16 - WOW! Stuart, FL
- 17 - POW! Stuart, FL
- 23 - POW! Oakton, VA

March

- 3 - WOW! Everett, WA
- 9 - WOW! Holly Springs, NC
- 10 - POW! Holly Springs, NC
- 24 - WOW! Los Angeles, CA
- 24 - WOW! Fredrick, MD

April

- 13 - WOW! Elmdale, KS
- 13 - WOW! Houston, TX
- 14 - POW! Elmdale, KS
- 14 - POW! Houston, TX
- 17 - WOW! Oakton, VA
- 21 - POW! Midland, MI
- 23 - WOW! Corolla, NC
- 26 - POW! Greensboro, NC
- 27 - WOW! Early Childcare, Phila., PA
- 27 - WOW! Woodland, CA
- 28 - Wetland Plant ID, Phila., PA
- 28 - WOW! Facilitator, Wd., CA

Please let us know if you'd like to schedule a workshop near you.

World Wetlands Day

-just around the corner



February 2nd is World Wetland Day, the anniversary of the signing of the Convention on Wetlands in Ramsar, Iran in 1971. Ramsar founders set the international definition of wetlands now adopted by many countries and continue to designate wetlands of international importance.

February 2nd has been celebrated as World Wetlands Day (WWD) since 1997. This year's theme focuses on wetlands and fisheries. WWD is a great time to try new ways to raise public awareness of the values and benefits of healthy wetlands. Log on to www.ramsar.org to learn what others countries are doing protect wetlands and get ideas for projects of your own.

The Ramsar Secretariat offers free posters, stickers, videos and calendars as well as a multitude of information to inform people of the importance of wetlands.