



Environmental Concern Presents:



NOW! News on Wetlands

A Quarterly Newsletter for Wetland Educators

Winter 2004-2005

Featured Schoolyard Habitats: Burtonsville & Hammond Schools

When everyone works together- it's amazing what you can accomplish! Designed using the *POW! The Planning of Wetlands* curriculum as a guide, these wetlands in central Maryland were built through a grant from the Chesapeake Bay Trust. Each site was excavated by Environmental Concern's construction department while students took turns observing and shouting words of encouragement and thanks. The wetlands were put to the test immediately as four inches of rain pelted Maryland from Hurricane Jeanne. To our delight, they filled with wa-

ter and soaked the soil for the upcoming planting. At the Hammond & Burtonsville Planting Day Festivals, over 500 students, parent volunteers and teachers



Students planting at Hammond Elementary/ Middle School

worked side by side, filling the freshly dug wetlands with native plants, including lizard's tail, buttonbush, and duck potato. The diversity of plants will add color to the landscape, help sustain local wildlife, and clean the water. As part of the planting days, students also made their own wetland crafts, took soil samples, dissected cattails, investigated wetland artifacts, and learned about run-off. Students left the Planting Days muddy but proud that they helped to build their wetland themselves and learned something in the process.

For more about POW!, visit: www.wetland.org/educ_pow.htm

Upcoming Workshops:

January 29—
WOW! Mandeville, Louisiana

February 21—*POW! Brevard County, Florida*

March 23—*POW! for Educators Norfolk, Virginia*

April 16—*POW! for Educators Philadelphia, PA*

We are actively scheduling for 2005. Please let us know if you're interested in setting up a workshop near you.

Two New Partners in Maine and Michigan

October 23, 2004 was a great day for wetlands. Environmental Concern's educators led simultaneous *WOW! The Wonders of Wetlands* workshops for educators in Midland Michigan, and Calais, Maine, strengthening the nation's ever-growing love of wetlands.

Calais's Downeast Heritage Center, on the shore of the

St. Croix River on the Canadian border, provides a wide range of interactive programs and exhibits to capture the rich ecology and culture of the area. Midland's Chippewa Nature Center, a non-profit organi-

zation, facilitates the enjoyment and understanding of natural and cultural resources as relevant to the Saginaw Valley's ecosystems, promotes environmental awareness and fosters responsible stewardship.

For more information about the Chippewa Nature Center, visit: www.chippewanaturecenter.com
For more information about the Downeast Heritage Center, visit: www.downeastheritage.org



Nutria: Weapons of Marsh Destruction



In the late 1800's and early 1900's nutria (*Myocastor coypus*) were introduced into 22 states across the U.S., and numerous countries worldwide. This South American aquatic rodent was seen by many in the trapping industry as a cash cow. Despite its less than glamorous outward appearance, nutria produce a

very soft and valuable fur. This soft hair is hidden or rather protected by the coarse - oily outer fur that helps the nutria live in an aquatic environment.

Released into environments less stressful than their native lands - ones with a steady supply of food and

water, nutria thrived. And, when the demand for nutria pelts dwindled, nutria populations exploded.

So, what do nutria do to marsh habitats? As they feed, nutria excavate plant roots, exposing the soil to erosion and the brackish wetland to salt water intrusion. The wetland is quickly converted to open water, removing all habitat benefits of the marsh for native species.

Currently, several organizations in Delmarva have joined forces to create nutria education activities and materials. Stay tuned as these resources become available.

Nutria Facts:

Did you know...

- Since their introduction, nutria have destroyed over 7000 acres of marsh at Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge in Maryland.
- In 1938, 20 individual nutria were introduced in Louisiana, and by the 1950's, nutria populations exceeded 20 million animals.
- In an effort to control populations, Louisiana trappers receive \$4 for nutria tails.
- Nutria become sexually mature at 6 months, and can have up to 3 litters of 4 young each year.

Wetland Holiday Gift Ideas, Now Available from Environmental Concern:

Natural Plant Candles (scents of Sweetbay Magnolia, Wild Rose, Oak Leaf, & Lotus) & Wetland Note Cards

Visit www.wetland.org for more information.

