

Sewee Association

Friends Group to the National Wildlife Refuges and Forest of Coastal South Carolina



Education Updates... This is no ordinary science class!!

July 2013

16 years of getting kids excited about science, math and the environment!

Dear Supporters,

*With the school year over we wanted to take a few minutes to share with you some of the amazing experiences you have made possible for kids along the South Carolina coast. Your support of **Music and Oysters for Wildlife** each January and you generous contributions to the Association through the year make all of this possible, and we absolutely could not do it without you.*

We are all about getting kids outdoors and active and giving them the opportunity to come to identify with science as something they want to seek out, engage in, and contribute to. Thus far in 2013 we've worked with nearly 2,500 students... and hopefully helped them understand that science isn't just in power point slides and the periodic table; it's being curious

about everything around you and discovering some of the amazing plants and animals that are right here in our community!

Stewardship projects like Seeds 2 Shoreline (see below) give kids a chance to be active stewards of their environment, and learn they really can make a difference. Your support allows us to provide this unique educational experience.

Thank you and enjoy reading about what you make possible.

*Grace Gasper
Executive Director*

*Allie Kreutzer
Education Coordinator*



OYSTERS ARE HABITAT FORMING! In this lesson we talk about the value of our salt marshes and oysters reefs as habitat. Students then dissect a live oyster reef discovering and taking data on all of the critters that live in our marshes!

How many fiddler crabs?

Fiddler crabs are an important decomposer in the salt marsh. They keep the marsh clean, add nutrients back to the sediment, and help aerate the marsh with their burrows, because of this they can be used as an indicator of the health of the marsh.

Students conduct their own field study, figuring out how best to count fiddler crabs and using scientific sampling techniques to assess the health of Cape Romain National Wildlife Refuge. Often, our lessons can be just as beneficial for the teachers as the students. We are always recruiting new volunteer educators! Seniors from Wando High School helped 4th graders from Jennie Moore Elementary calculate how many fiddler crabs are living in the refuge.





Tools of the trade...

Water parameters such as salinity, dissolved oxygen, and pH can give valuable insight into the health of our rivers and oceans.

Students learn how to measure these parameters in the field and enter their data into a statewide database online. Then, students can take their data (as well as data collected by other groups throughout the year) back into the classroom to analyze and graph changes over season or even years

Using specialized tools is a very important part of science (and the new South Carolina science standards). We give students an opportunity to use equipment (like refractometers) that may not be available in their classroom.

“Seeds 2 Shoreline”

We started a new long-term, service learning program this year called Seeds 2 Shoreline. Beginning in the fall (with a trip to harvest *Spartina alterniflora* seeds from the marsh) students spend the year learning about the plant life cycle as they incubate, germinate, and grow marsh grass in their classrooms (and a greenhouse at the Sewee Center). Then, in the spring, students get to “give-back” to the Refuge when they transplant their seedlings to help restore an area of ailing salt marsh.



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***Spartina* grass planted and a small section of marsh on its way to recovery!**



Discovering the ACE Basin!

These students from Minnie Hughes Elementary live next to some of the most important protected land in the Lowcountry, the ACE Basin. Through our Earth Steward program they get to explore all the wonders of ACE Basin National Wildlife Refuge and learn about the many ecosystems in the refuge. During a pond ecology lesson students were delighted to find giant water bugs and dragonfly larvae in a pond on ACE Basin National Wildlife Refuge, practically across the street from their school!



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Exploring a barrier island:

To conclude our four week study on Barrier Island Ecology, the 7th grade from Lincoln Middle School took a trip to Bulls Island in Cape Romain National Wildlife Refuge! Students got to better understand the geo-morphology of an undeveloped barrier island and witness the effects of climate change and sea level rise first hand as they hiked from the salt marsh, through maritime forest and finally arrived at the beach (to see what treasures we could find). Our generous partner *Coastal Expeditions* provided the boat trip to the island. We hope to make trips like this available to even more of our students next school year.



Sewee Association

www.seweeassociation.org

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Interested in giving a gift to support our programs or volunteering?

Contact us at sewee.association@earthlink.net or 843-697-7535

Wild Wonders of Waccamaw!

Students from Georgetown and Horry Counties participate in our Earth Stewards Program at Waccamaw National Wildlife Refuge with lessons unique to the region. We also offer programs at Waccamaw on reptiles, swallow-tailed kites, black bears, bats, and even how to be a National Wildlife Refuge

Manager!!

These first grader students from Coastal Montessori compared the organisms found in a small pond to the critters living along the banks of the Pee Dee River.



Students from the near-by Sampit Elementary met our resident alligator and learned why it is important to respect (but not fear!) these and all reptiles!

