

Kids Korner

Students Plant Trees On Earth Day

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Adams Co. Correspondent

Earth Day took on a special meaning for 21 high school students from Bermudian Springs School District who took part in planting trees along an eroded stream in Adams County.

Agricultural teacher John Wardle explained that the students — organized into teams — planted 700 black willow, pin oak and hawthorn trees along a tributary of Latimore Creek on the Green Vistas Farm owned by former Pa. Secretary of Agriculture Jane Alexander, who works as an attorney.

Wardle, standing in the pasture near the creek, said, "When you look up through here you can see a stream bank that's been washed away by erosion over the last several years. Also some animals off to the right that are contributing some nitrates and manure and we're trying to repair this area and actually make it better for water quality and wildlife as well as the environment. Hopefully we'll come back in a couple of years and see this area, having instead of a lot of erosion, water running through it, with a lot of tree planting, improving the habitat for the wildlife and eventually improving the water quality because this runs into the Chesapeake Bay."

The teacher explained that for his part — the project was a cooperative effort with the Adams County Conservation District. About 50 students competed in a contest to win the

right to take part in the actual tree planting.

David Kann, technician for the conservation district, sited the trees the day before the plantings took place and on Earth Day the students, in seven groups, each were given specific jobs such as digging the holes, planting the trees, and putting sleeves around them to protect the saplings from hungry wildlife.

The species of trees were chosen because they are common to the area and like a wet environment, Wardle said. The stream is already fenced off except for crossings in an effort to keep the cattle that graze in the pasture from polluting it.

Wardle said about 25 percent out of a student body of 550 is taking agriculture at Bermudian Springs. While not all of the students will actually be farming they will become involved in agricultural-related jobs.

Chris Seymore, 17, a senior, said he was helping because he likes the forest "and in a couple year I'd like to see what a difference it made."

Seymore is joined by Tyler Klunk, 16, a sophomore, and Jason Ahlers, 17, a senior, in digging holes to plant the trees.

Ahlers said he took part in the project because he liked to help improve the environment.

Keann said the conservation district received a grant from the Chesapeake Bay Alliance of Harrisburg to plant trees.

In addition in 1996, Gov. Tom



Students dig holes to plant trees along a tributary of Latimore Creek in Adams County. The students were part of a group who planted trees on Earth Day in a pasture area along the creek on Green Vistas Farm.

Ridge, as a member of the Chesapeake Bay Executive Council, helped set a goal of creating 2,010 miles of stream-side forest buffers in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed by the year 2010. Pennsylvania's portion of that goal is 600 miles.

In September, 1997, the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources helped coordinate a massive undertaking — named Operation Tree Rescue — to relocate more than 500,000 trees and shrubs from

the Musser Nursery in Indiana County.

Without the effort of DCNR's Bureau of Forestry and the Conservation Districts, the trees and shrubs would have been destroyed to make room for a new prison on the grounds. Some of these trees were used in the Adams County planting project.

Kann also said the project taught the students what a Riparian Buffer is and the benefits of such a planting.

He explained that "A Riparian Buffer is the first link between land and water. The buffer is an area of trees, shrubs, and herbaceous vegetation located adjacent to and up-slope from a lake, stream, or other body of water. The buffer serves several important functions. Simply put, it maintains stream system integrity, protects water quality, and improves the habitat of plants and animals on land and in the water."

For Parents

Innovative Toy Helps Diabetic Kids

(NAPS)—When Carol Cramer's six-year old son, Brian, was diagnosed with diabetes, she knew it was critical that he learn how to manage his condition.

To help Brian avoid the debilitating complications that juvenile diabetics often develop, she had to teach him to monitor his blood/glucose levels up to eight times daily, take insulin shots and wear Medic Alert ID.

But, instead of fretting, Cramer created Rufus, "the bear with diabetes." Rufus wears a Medic Alert bracelet engraved with the words "insulin dependent diabetes" and patches sewn to the areas where a child can administer insulin. "It was love at first sight," says Ms. Cramer.

The bear's Medic Alert emblem reinforces the need for medical ID, which, in the case of a life-threatening hypoglycemic incident, tells emergency responders that the victim is diabetic and requires special treatment.

Diabetes education organizations have embraced Rufus as an educational tool. "It's helping kids understand that it's no stigma to be diabetic, no stigma to wear a Medic Alert bracelet, and no stigma to have a medical condition," said Cramer.

To join Medic Alert, call 1-800-825-3785. To order Rufus, call 1-800-SHOP-5050.

Smart Stuff

WITH TWIG WALKINGSTICK

Do trees really clean the air?

The green-leaved wonders are our housekeeping crew for the air. It all starts, and ends, with an oh-so-important element — carbon. All living things are based on the element called carbon, and everything — including plants, animals, and you — has carbon as part of its chemical makeup. So what's that have to do with cleaning the air?

All that carbon would disappear pretty quickly if it was used only once. So, nature developed its own recycling plan, and air-cleaning plants are part of it.

People and animals breathe in oxygen from the air and exhale, or respire, carbon dioxide gas. (There's that carbon again.) Carbon dioxide in the air can also come from burning fossil fuels, like oil to run power plants or gasoline to run a car, and volcanic eruptions. But green plants such as grass, flowers and trees help prevent the carbon dioxide from building up in the air. They use sunlight, carbon dioxide and water to make carbohydrates, like sugars, and oxygen through a process called photosynthesis. In turn, the plants respire — the biological term for breathing out — the clean oxygen for you to use again.

But that's not all. Because animals and plants store large amounts of carbon in their bodies, they also release the carbon into the soil after they die and begin to decay. The soil stores the carbon until decomposers like worms and fungi change the carbon back into carbon dioxide gas. They do that through respiration, just like the people and animals do. Then the whole process starts all over again.

Scientifically yours,
Twig

OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF FOOD, AGRICULTURAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES

Have a question?
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Jenny Westfall, a senior at Bermudian Springs High School, wades through the creek while participating in the tree planting project for Earth Day.