

# CONSERVATION CORNER

(EDUCATORS NEWSLETTER)

Durham Soil & Water Conservation District



## Our Program Offerings

The Durham Soil and Water Conservation District offers **FREE** educational opportunities and resources to teachers and education on nature, the environment, STEM focused activities, and more. Our programs include:

- Conservation & Bookmark Contests
- NC Envirothon Program
- NC Resource Conservation Workshop
- Classroom Presentations
- Environment Education
- Learning Library
- 3rd Grade Environmental Field Days
- Green Infrastructure Trainings
- Educator Workshops
- And More!



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# Durham Soil & Water Conservation District

The Durham Soil & Water Conservation District's mission statement is:

*To conserve, enhance, and promote the natural resources of Durham County by providing technical assistance, environmental education information and economic incentives to County citizens and by exhibiting a diversified*



The District is dedicated to encouraging and sponsoring a strong and active Environmental Education Program for all age groups in Durham County. Our goal is to support educators and teachers in teaching environmental conservation education. We offer a number of different education programs for various age levels throughout the year **FREE** of charge.

Please feel free to contact us for more information about any of the programs you see detailed here or for information on how your student can participate.

Join our mailing list by emailing [Lmarochak@dconc.gov](mailto:Lmarochak@dconc.gov)

## Find us at:



[DCoSWCD](#)



[Durham SWCD](#)



[Durham SWCD](#)



[Durham County Soil and Water Conservation District](#)





## District Staff

- Eddie Culberson, *Director*
- Lisa Marochak, *Senior Administrative Officer, Education Coordinator, NC Certified Environmental Educator*
- Saad Masood, *Agribusiness & Environmental Services Manager*
- Sherry Scully, *Ag. Development Coordinator*
- Dustin Brewer, *Natural Resources Coordinator*
- Elicia Senff, *Environmental Education Contractor*
- Kim Lahman, *Technical Contractor*

## Board of Supervisors

- Talmage Layton, *Chair*
- Anjali Boyd, *Vice Chair*
- Ken Browning, *Secretary/Treasurer*
- David Harris, *Financial Officer, Board Supervisor*
- Mark Waller, *Board Supervisor*

## Contact Us

201 E. Main Street  
5th Floor  
Durham, NC 27701

Phone: 919-560-0558

FAX: 919-328-6192

Hours: 7 AM - 5 PM  
Mon. - Fri.

<http://dconc.gov/swcd>

# Important Dates

February 1, 2024 at 5pm:  
Last day to register teams

March 14, 2024:  
NC Area IV Envirothon  
*Regional Qualifying Competition*  
([ncarea4envirothon.org](http://ncarea4envirothon.org))

April 26-27, 2024:  
NC Envirothon State Competition  
(<https://sites.google.com/site/envirothonnc/home>)

## Area IV Envirothon

The Area IV Envirothon program is a hands-on environmental science and natural resources competition for middle and high school students. Five member teams of students study, train, and are tested on their knowledge of five subject areas (listed below). Through outdoor activities, team work, critical thinking, leadership skills training, and more, the Envirothon program is developing tomorrow's informed leaders!

Durham has an active Envirothon program and is committed to its growth. District staff will work with each team to coordinate the necessary training they need to succeed. For more information, contact Lisa at (919) 560-0558 or [Lmarochak@dconc.gov](mailto:Lmarochak@dconc.gov).

### Soils

Learn about soil structure, how to interpret soil maps and evaluate land forms, and soil characteristics that affect urban and agricultural land issues. Gain an understanding of the ecosystem that lies beneath the surface.

### Forestry

Gain an understanding of the practices for maintaining healthy ecosystems through the help of professional foresters. Learn the basics of species identification, forest structure and dynamics, and management.

### Current Environmental Issues

Explore the facets of current environmental issues facing our state, nation, and the world. Learn about the complexity of real-life environmental decisions.

### Aquatics

Study marine and freshwater ecology to assess the quality of delicate aquatic ecosystems. Learn to identify aquatic organisms, watershed management, and non-point source pollution issues.

### Wildlife

Learn firsthand from wildlife experts about animal populations, their dynamics, and the importance of habitat conservation. Learn identification skills used by wildlife resource professionals in the field.





## Classroom Presentations, Pre-K - 12th Grade

We offer classroom presentations and hands-on activities on a variety of natural resource topics for classes across Durham. Popular presentations include: soils/erosion, watershed models, wildlife, water quality, vermicomposting, recycling, watersheds, pollinators, and more! We also offer presentations on agricultural topics such as gardening, greenhouse gas production, animal agriculture, best management practices, and more.

To schedule, contact Lisa Marochak at [Lmarochak@dconc.gov](mailto:Lmarochak@dconc.gov) or (919) 560-0558.

## 3rd Grade Environmental Education Field Days

The 3rd Grade Environmental Education Field Day is a chance for Durham students and teachers to put down the books, get out of the classroom, and learn first hand about our natural world directly from scientists and conservationists, all while having fun! Topics include: soils, water/aquatic environments, forestry/plants, wildlife, and environmental issues.

Dates available: October 26, November 2, December 5th & December 7th

Field days will be held at the school at which they're scheduled. To schedule a field day complete the registration form [here](#) by September 8th. Spots are limited, and early registration is encouraged. Contact Lisa Marochak at [Lmarochak@dconc.gov](mailto:Lmarochak@dconc.gov) or (919) 560-0558 for more information.

## Science Days & Booths

Are you hosting a Science Day event or would like resource professionals to host an interactive booth at your school? We are available to attend.

Contact Lisa Marochak at [Lmarochak@dconc.gov](mailto:Lmarochak@dconc.gov) or (919) 560-0558 to schedule your event.

## Environmental Education Learning Library

The Durham SWCD Environmental Education Learning Library provides environmental education materials to teachers & other educators who work with children and aspires to share the joy of nature & the environment with them. The library contains fiction & non-fiction books, videos, & magazines about the environment and natural resources targeting ages 2-9.

All Learning Library materials are available FREE of charge for a two week loan period to qualified participants. Applications, request sheets, & a book list can be downloaded from our website: <http://dconc.gov/swcd>. Or click on the link below: [Learning Library Webpage](#)



## Details:

Open to all public schools, private schools, homeschool students, and student clubs in Durham County.

Poster Contest

3rd - 5th Grade

Essay Contest

6th Grade & 9th - 12th Grade

Slide Show Contest

6th - 8th & 9th - 12th Grade

Public Speaking Contest

7th - 8th & 9th - 12th Grade

Let us know if you are interested in your students participating in any of these contests. Entry forms and rules can be found on our site:

<http://dconc.gov/swcd>

This year's theme can be incorporated into and/or enhance the NC DPI Standard Course of Study: Essential Standards for Science in each grade level. Grade level correlations are available upon request.

## 2024 Conservation Creativity Contests

Students in grades 3rd - 12th are encouraged to participate in our annual Conservation Creativity Contests.

The Durham Contests are a part of a statewide series sponsored by the NC Association of Conservation Districts, with multiple opportunities to win awards and prize money. First place winners in Durham will advance to a regional contest. If successful, they will go on to a state-wide event.

**This year's theme is: [The Living Soil](#)**

Did you know that a teaspoon of healthy soil contains more living microorganisms than there are people on our planet? While you may not think much of it, the ground beneath our feet is filled with life. These organisms, like worms and bacteria, contribute to the soil's health, which directly impacts our food and water. Students are invited to explore concepts related to soil organisms, enhancing soil health through best management practices, and more!

**Contest entries due on: February 16th, 2024 @ 5 PM.**

## Prizes

1st place: \$50 + Award presented at the annual District Awards Banquet + a yard sign

2nd place: \$25 + Award presented at the annual District Awards Banquet + a yard sign

Teachers: If one of your students wins 1st place, you will receive \$30!



## Bookmark Contest, K - 2nd Grade

Durham County students in K - 2nd grade are invited to participate in the annual Spring Bookmark Contest sponsored by Durham Soil and Water Conservation District. Winners from each grade level will have copies of their bookmark given to their whole class!

The contest is open to any public, private, or homeschooled K - 2nd grade student in Durham County.

Contact Lisa Marochak at [Lmarochak@dconc.gov](mailto:Lmarochak@dconc.gov) or (919) 560-0558

## Details:

This year's theme, official rules, and entry date will be posted on our website by

March 1, 2024:

<http://dconc.gov/swcd>





## Durham County Agricultural Economic Development Grant Program

The Agricultural Economic Development Grant Program offers cost share grants to assist farmers, nonprofits that impact the local food system, and schools that endeavor to promote Agriculture Development and Outdoor Environmental Learning Centers.

School grants are awarded for up to \$1,500 with a required 15% match. Past projects have included raised garden beds, chicken coups, a greenhouse, vegetable plants, and more!



### To Apply:

- Find the application on our website: [www.dconc.gov/swcd](http://www.dconc.gov/swcd)
- Pick up an application at our main office: 201 E Main Street, 5th Floor.
- Request a copy through the mail by calling 919-560-0558 or emailing [Sscully@dconc.gov](mailto:Sscully@dconc.gov)
- Submit in person, via mail, or email your completed application to [Sscully@dconc.gov](mailto:Sscully@dconc.gov)

## Important Dates

July 1, 2023:  
Applications Released

July 11, 13, & 18, 2023:  
Training Sessions

August 25, 2023:  
Application Deadline

September 15, 2023:  
Award Recipients Notified

