

The Saluda-Reedy WATERSHED NEWS



Photo Courtesy of Jennifer Remicks

Attendees on the first 2006 water quality field trip looking at an innovative option for controlling sediment onsite to prevent erosion problems associated with construction.

GETTING DOWN AND DIRTY: Watershed Tours and Field Trips Focus on Water-Quality Issues in our Watershed

Now through mid-summer, the Saluda-Reedy Watershed Consortium is offering a variety of free tours and field trips throughout the watershed. The tours will introduce community leaders and decision makers to a range of watershed conservation issues. A newly-developed series of field trips will enable water-quality professionals to see innovative, cost-effective programs that promote water quality and facilitate professional networking.

Each of the events is free of charge (with a fully-refundable deposit to hold your space) and open to the public. For more information, visit our website (http://www.saludareedy.org/outreach/tours_trips_brochure.pdf) or contact Kathy Chandler (kathy@launchsomething.com or 864-596-5075) to register.

- *How to Identify Erosion Control Problems Before they Start*; April 28, 2006
- *Healthy Rivers as an Engine of Development in Greater Greenville*; May 2, 2006
- *Learning from Charlotte's Floodplain Management Program*; May 11, 2006
- *The Impacts of Land-Use Change on Lake Greenwood*; May 25, 2006
- *Low-Impact Development as a Market Differentiation Strategy*; May 31, 2006
- *Economic Development & Water Quality in the Lakelands Region*; June 8, 2006
- *Key Management Issues in Lake Greenwood and other Piedmont Lakes*; June 13, 2006
- *Infrastructure Management and Risk Reduction in Urban Floodplains*; June 23, 2006
- *Innovative Stormwater Management on Small Urban Sites*; June 30, 2006

WELCOME TO THE SALUDA-REEDY WATERSHED NEWS!

The purpose of this newsletter is to keep citizens and leaders throughout the Upstate up to date on the progress of the Saluda-Reedy Watershed Consortium's efforts to ensure clean, healthy, and abundant water for all.

Each issue includes updates on a variety of Consortium projects, as well as information on upcoming events of interest to watershed professionals, local officials, and concerned citizens.

WHAT IS THE SALUDA-REEDY WATERSHED CONSORTIUM?

The Saluda-Reedy Watershed Consortium is a collaborative effort by organizations and individuals concerned about the impacts of changing land use on the purity and abundance of water in the rivers and lakes of the Saluda-Reedy watershed.

As our region grows, the shift from rural to urban land use has the potential to do lasting damage to rivers, lakes, and streams - unless we develop with care.

The goal of this project is to provide local leaders and the public as a whole with the tools and information they need to take good care of our rivers and lakes.

FACES OF THE WATERSHED:

Park Interpreter Catherine Taylor



Catherine Taylor is the Park Interpreter for Greenville's Paris Mountain State Park. She recently shared some of her thoughts on educational programs that benefit the health of our watershed.

What is the significance of Paris Mountain State Park to the Saluda -Reedy Watershed?

The park, located six miles north of downtown Greenville, encompasses about 1,500 acres of forest, streams, and lakes, including Lake Placid, which was created in 1898 to protect one of Greenville's drinking water sources. Although much of the park itself is in the Enoree Watershed, many of its visitors come from the Saluda-Reedy Watershed. The rapid growth that Greenville has experienced in the last few decades has meant the loss of significant amounts of our natural areas. Large, intact areas like Paris Mountain State Park are critical resources for the recreational opportunities they provide as well as for the vital watershed functions they perform.

Can you describe the educational programs you conduct at the park?

Our educational programs, designed especially for 2nd and 5th graders, explain why a forested watershed is a healthier watershed.

More specifically, the 2nd grade program focuses on life cycles within a forested watershed. Students spend time in the waters of Mountain Creek searching for animals such as stonefly nymphs, mayfly nymphs, and salamanders, which are only found in clean waters.

The 5th graders that visit the park learn about water quality by examining the biotic (insects and other animals) and abiotic (temperature and acidity levels) factors of the creek through actual water sampling tests. All of the findings go into the weekly nature log kept by the park. This log enables me and other rangers at the park to track ecological trends over time from week to week and year to year.

How do you feel that these programs have a positive effect on the watersheds in which we live?

The children we work with today will be the decision makers of the future, deciding how we use our

resources. We hope that the experiences they have at our park inspire them to become better stewards in the future. An immersion experience – actually going into the creek with dip nets – enables children to see the connections in nature first-hand and understand the benefits of a forested watershed.

Are there programs at your park or other parks in our region that are developed for adults?

Adults do join school children at these same programs, and there are other programs at this park, and other parks in the region, on the weekends for guided hikes and other nature programs. For example, Friends of Paris Mountain offers a program on most 4th Saturdays led by local experts on a variety of topics. Dr. Wade Worthen of Furman University leads folks into the creek in search of dragonfly nymphs once a year and has identified 23 kinds of dragon and damselflies in the park. I often lead a hike at 1 pm on 4th Saturdays, as well.



On a recent Friends Day in April, Park Interpreter Cathy Taylor helps Anna Redderson, Kayla Olsen and Anna's mother learn first-hand about the animals found in Mountain Creek at Paris Mountain State Park.

What resources or activities do you recommend for parents or grandparents who are interested in teaching their children watershed concepts in their own backyard?

A simple activity a parent can do with a child is to create two little hills of dirt – one covered with plants and one without. Allow the child to pour cup of water on the hills and talk about what happens. Even the youngest children can understand what happens to water poured on the hill with no cover!

For more information about Paris Mountain State Park and its educational programs, visit the park's website at www.southcarolinaparks.com. For more information about the weekend programs run by Friends of Paris Mountain, visit that website at www.pmspf.org.

RAIN GARDENING:

Make Your Yard Work for the Watershed

Although many people consider the drone of a lawn-mower a common sound of summer, few people enjoy the chore. In addition to the time you spend pushing a mower and the noise pollution you create in the process, there are other downsides to tending 'conventional lawns.' From pesticides and fertilizers to the enormous amounts of air pollution generated in a typical mowing session, the American obsession with a well manicured, expansive green lawn results in many undesirable environmental consequences.



Photo Courtesy of Wisconsin DNR

One example of how a rain garden can easily, and attractively, replace some of the grass in your yard.

There are a range of environmentally friendlier possibilities for the home landscape that minimize the lawn area and provide a range of benefits to the homeowner. One such alternative is the rain garden. Across the nation rain gardens are sprouting on military bases, commercial parking lots, school yards, and private residences. Simply put, a rain garden is a garden bed that is sunken into the ground and prepared to encourage the capture, storage, and treatment of rain water. Rain gardens of varying designs have been installed to accomplish the common goal of reducing stormwater runoff. Some rain gardeners direct gutters to their garden in order to collect the rain that lands on their roof. Other rain gardens are large but only slightly below the normal ground surface thus looking much like a typical garden bed. Some feature more wetland plants and are designed to handle relatively large quantities of water. Most rain gardens are filled with native plants and adequately mulched so that once they are established they require little maintenance other than the occasional weeding and watering during dry periods.

A relatively new concept in the Upstate, rain gardens have the potential to be highly successful in our climate. The average annual precipitation of 50 inches is evenly distributed throughout the year, making rain gardening a realistic landscaping alternative. We are rapidly losing the capacity to store and filter our rain water as fields and forests are converted to green lawns and park

ing lots throughout the Upstate. Rain events become more intense as our increasingly impervious ground surfaces convey storm water to creeks and rivers that are unable to adequately handle this surge of water. The ecology of these waterways is impacted by these fast flows and the content of the water flowing in them is increasingly polluted by pet waste, motor oil, and a host of other non-point source pollutants that are washed from our lands. Therefore, rain gardens are not only an attractive addition to the landscape that reduce the amount of time and labor spent on the lawn but they also serve a vital role in reducing air and water pollution.



Photo Courtesy of Jennifer Remicks

Evergreen Charter School, in Asheville, NC, has recently constructed a series of rain gardens to handle the stormwater runoff from their parking-lots and from the school roofs.

Rain Gardening 101

- **Learn**
Go to www.raingardens.org to get ideas and inspiration for designing your own garden
- **Select a site**
Naturally low lying areas work best
- **Determine your Drainage**
The size of the garden will depend on how much drains to it
- **Design**
Be creative- think native and low maintenance
- **Dig in**
Check for utility lines or septic fields first!
- **Layer**
Add materials such as gravel and sand to help the garden function
- **Plant**
Make it a fun, group effort by inviting friends and family to help
- **Mulch**
Some communities provide free mulch
- **Water**
Just until the young plants get established
- **Enjoy**
Plant a rain garden and start looking forward to rainy days



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WANT MORE INFO ABOUT THE PROJECT?

Contact Jennifer Rennicks,
 Saluda-Reedy Project Coordinator, at
 Upstate Forever (864) 250-0500 or
jrennicks@upstateforever.org

Interested in attending the next
 Watershed Leaders Forum?

From Floodplains to Greenways: A Half-day Symposium on Creating Parks Along River Corridors

Contact Jason Van Driesche at Upstate Forever
 or visit the project website at
<http://www.saludareedy.org/outreach/forums.html>

THE MOMENTUM CONTINUES TO BUILD: Second Watershed Leaders Forum Draws Large Crowd

On February 14, 2006, more than 175 attendees gathered for the second in a series of Watershed Leaders Forums entitled "Water Quality in Lake Greenwood: A Status Report and Next Steps."

A standing-room-only crowd heard a series of presentations and discussed the impact that water quality could have on the quality of life in the Lakelands region.

Attendees were the first to receive copies of the newly-released State of the Watershed 2005: a report outlining challenges to the watershed while offering specific actions to improve water quality.



Attendees pack the room at the Watershed Leaders Forum held on February 14, 2006 at Lake Greenwood State Park

Photo Courtesy of Rebekah Guss