Corporate Challenge underway

The Outdoor Education Trail is gathering the attention of educators from all over the State. Clemson University hosted local public school teachers for in-service trainings that focused on methods to better integrate cross-curriculum teaching standards into trail tours.

Outdoor environmental education lasts a lifetime. One of the most challenging issues facing teachers is the availability of funding for transportation to destinations beyond the school walls.

The Outdoor Education Trail is based on learning without halls, walls or fluorescent light bulbs. A Trail sponsor shares this vision and is providing surrounding schools the opportunity to experience the Trail.

Honda Manufacturing, located in Timmonsville, has pledged funds to make it possible for classes to travel to the Outdoor Education Trail. Honda will sponsor each class that visits the Trail from the Timmonsville area.

Honda, a first-year supporter of the Trail, has set the challenge for other local businesses to donate support to help kids from the surrounding communities participate in the outdoor experience.

For more information about becoming a Trail sponsor, contact Jim Frederick at: jfrdrck@clemson.edu

New Trail Focus

Renewable energy and energy conservation will be the focus of the Trail’s newest Learning Center.

Educational demonstrations, when completed, will compliment nearby research on switchgrass and other biofuels.
Florence District 1 Teacher Workshop

Teachers come to the Trail to learn too—and teach us a few things! An in-service training workshop for Florence School District 1 teachers succeeded in making the Trail more cross-curriculum oriented.

No longer is the Trail considered only for Science classes. Participants developed ways to integrate State academic standards for math, social studies, language arts and science curriculums into existing learning centers located on the Trail. In addition, a Francis Marion University intern compiled a teacher’s guide focusing on 6th grade curriculum. This guide will serve as a template for other grade levels. Ultimately, the Trail’s learning centers will provide the opportunity for teachers from all grades to teach a cross-curriculum syllabus.

The in-service also provided Trail staff insight into what information is needed for to the Trail to exceed State standards and better meet teacher needs.

Award Winning Trail

“outstanding dedication to conservation”

Amy Maxwell
Past President of S.C. Soil and Water Conservation Society

Clemson University professor and Trail coordinator, Jim Frederick (pictured at the left with Amy Maxwell), has been honored for his efforts in establishing an Outdoor Education Trail at the Pee Dee Research and Education Center near Florence.

Frederick was presented a Special Achievement Award from the S.C. Soil and Water Conservation Society during the organization’s recent partners conference at Myrtle Beach.

Amy Maxwell, immediate past president of the society, cited Frederick for “outstanding dedication to conservation” with his work at the Pee Dee REC.

The 1.2 mile long trail, which was dedicated in April of 2007, contains an abundance of information on the natural resources found in the Pee Dee region’s agricultural, forest, lake, wetland and urban ecosystems.

“We’re now planning to add a touch of rural heritage to our efforts,” said Frederick. “As permanent learning centers we hope to recreate an early 1900s farm and saw mill and a native American village.”

“On a bigger scale, we are working towards a Lifestyles and Rural Heritage Coalition, partnering with several groups such as the Pee Dee Land Trust, the Pee Dee Resource Conservation and Development Council, Backswamp School Association, landowners associations, the S.C. Department of Agriculture, Francis Marion University and the S.C. Department of Natural Resources,” he said.
O E T D e dication
Nearly 500 people enjoyed the Trail's first Open House and Dedication on April 14th. Clemson University's Dr. Laurie Lawson introduced speakers Dr. John Kelly, Vice-President of the University's Public Service and Agriculture; Mr. Breck Carmichael, Deputy Director of the State's Department of Natural Resources and Mr. Ed Falco, an Education Associate for the State's Department of Education. Other distinguished guests included Senator Kent Williams, Representative Denny Neilson and Representative Robert Williams.

The afternoon was a tribute to outdoor education for friends and families and included displays of animals and farm equipment, archaeological expertise, a nature walk with Rudy Mancke, an up close look at birds of prey and investigating the water quality of Dargan's Pond. All sorts of organizations helped to merge people with the environment.

Dr. Kelly recognized the Trail as a gem among the Clemson campuses. Mr. Carmichael, explained the many connections between the University and State institutions. Mr. Falco, reported how student performance improves with outdoor education.

Corn Maze
The Corn Maze was scary this year. Students, parents and teachers weaved their way around the nearly six acre maze adjacent to the Outdoor Education Trail. Not only was it a tangle of dead ends and winding paths, the maze took on a web-like pattern when seen from above.

When the group was successful in finding their way to the center of the web maze, they learned how corn is grown and harvested and the challenges to producing a healthy crop.

Groups also had the opportunity to learn about birds, their habitat needs and their adaptation of flight at the newly completed avian amphitheater.

Clemson University offers its programs to people of all ages, regardless of race, color, gender, religion, national origin, or disability and is an equal opportunity employer.
Outdoor Education Trail Accepting Spring Tour Registration

The winter has been too long for the animals and plants at the Pee Dee Research and Education Center. They have been waiting all season to hear the footsteps and excitement of children returning to the Outdoor Education Trail.

Our Spring Tours are open for reservations! Tour dates run throughout the months of April and May on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays.

Signing up is simple! Call us at 843 662-3526 x227 and make a reservation.

We also have set up a website that makes registration even easier. Visit us at the following website and fill out the registration:

www.clemson.edu/oet

There you can see which dates remain available for tours as well as explore the Trail map.