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Teachers learn how to use outdoor trail in lessons

By **Jamie Durant**
Special to the Morning News

FLORENCE — Science teachers in Florence School District 1 will have a new resource for teaching their students available starting Sept. 18.

Clemson University's Pee Dee Research and Education Center in Florence taught the teachers Wednesday and Thursday how best to use the new Outdoor Education Trail for teaching environmental science, Carolyn Jebally, outdoor trail coordinator, said.

The trail is a one-mile stretch located near Dargan's Pond featuring an educational

information center, an outdoor museum and a collaborative effort on the parts of everyone involved in the program.

"We've been working with Jim Frederick, who is a research scientist here, and Carolyn Jebally and Scott Park, who also are working here," Ned Owings, the former science coordinator for Florence School District 1, said. "They are with the Clemson University's Pee Dee Research and Education Center."

Owings retired shortly before the program was completed, but he came back just to see it to fruition.

"This started last year

when some of the teachers came out, and Anne Neely came up with this idea of having the teachers to come in to see how South Carolina standards could be applied to hands-on experiences," Owings said.

Beth Moore, a science coach at Dewey Carter Elementary School, said that although she has taught in the classroom for several years, her new position as a science coach will have her teaching the teachers instead of the students.

"Right now, we're learning the resources that are available out here, but my job as a

coach means that I will be working with science teachers at my school, helping them use resources and plan lessons," she said.

Moore said the program has been an amazing new way to help teachers learn how to integrate many subjects into one outdoor classroom.

"We've got teachers out here from all different subjects," she said. "We took a walk on the trail yesterday (Wednesday), and now we're going through our standards and coming up with activities and lessons that we can use with the students."

The program was created

to be useful for students from kindergarten to graduation, Moore said. The trail has been designed to help children learn through their natural inquisitive nature using a hands-on learning process.

"We're out in nature, so the children are free to explore everything around them," Moore said. "Everything's inquiry based, so they are coming up with their own questions and that's what we want them to do.

"We don't want to just say this is the only answer possible. We want them to take a question and investigate it, and become little scientists."