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Dragonfly Gazette

GEORGIA PROJECT WET Environmental Protection Division

Fall 2012

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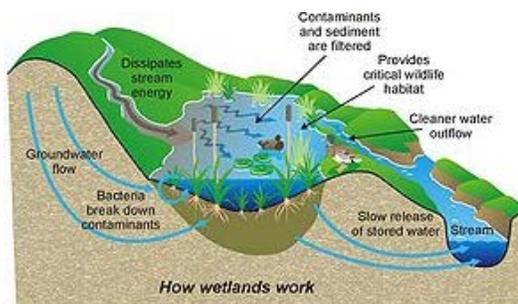
find advanced ideas to use with Wetlands education



What do you know about **Wetlands?**

Wetlands across the U.S. draw millions of visitors each year to walk, paddle, bird-watch, fish or hunt, as well as to enjoy the educational opportunities they present. Wetlands are special areas that at least sometimes are covered with water for a prolonged period and contain specialized plants which thrive in the hydric soil.

How amazing is it that a tree-studded swamp, a grass-filled marsh, a peat-filled bog or a shallow-water pond can be such extremely diverse areas that provide homes for a wide variety of plants, animals, birds, insects, amphibians and reptiles; and also restore and clean our delicate water ecosystem?!



Just **look** at the important physical functions of wetlands:

- storage for floodwater
- excess nutrient removal
- trapping of sediments
- processing of waste products
- water purification
- recharge areas for groundwater

Not to mention, WETLANDS provide:

- plants and animals that are harvested for food and fuel
- timber and other forest products associated with Georgia's largest industry
- beautiful and highly valued educational and recreational areas filled with unusual plants and animals interacting in complex food webs



Major Wetlands in Georgia

The state of Georgia has over 7.7 million acres of wetlands. Two major types of wetlands in this state are coastal *or tidal wetlands* and inland *or non-tidal* wetlands.



Okefenokee Swamp

The largest freshwater wetland, the [Okefenokee Swamp National Wildlife Refuge](#), was established in 1937 and covers more than 412,000 acres. Native Americans made this area their home as early as 2500 B.C., and later the Choctaw Indians named it Okefenoka, meaning "quivering earth" or "Land of the Trembling Earth."



Chickasawatchee Swamp

The second largest wetland is the [Chickasawatchee Swamp](#) or the "Swamp of Toa" in the Flint River Basin in southwest Georgia. During the winter months, it serves as an important recharge area for the Upper Floridian Aquifer and helps to maintain water quality. It is a designated Important Bird Area ("IBA"), as well as a state Wildlife Management Area ("WMA"), and as such, provides habitat for a great variety of plants and animals.

Salt or Tidal Marshes

Salt or tidal marshes in the state of Georgia form a band between the mainland and the barrier islands and make up one-third of the salt marshes found on the entire east coast of the United States. In 1970, the [State](#) recognized "the coastal marshlands of Georgia comprise a vital natural resource system. The estuarine area... is the habitat of many species of marine life and wildlife and without the food supplied by the marshlands, such marine life and wildlife cannot survive."



In the Altamaha watershed, the "[The Marshes of Glynn.](#)" were made famous by Georgia poet Sidney Lanier.

Wetlands in Trouble

For many years, wetlands were considered to be wasteland, filled with mud and biting insects such as disease carrying mosquitoes and snakes. As a result, they were often drained, dredged and filled so that they could be farmed or developed for housing or roadways. In the United States, and around the world, some of the most productive agricultural areas can be found in areas where organically rich wetlands once existed.



In 1989 it was determined that the lower 48 states had lost an estimated 53 percent of their original wetlands, equivalent to 60 acres of wetlands per hour between 1780 and 1980!

In a more recent report issued by the [United States Fish and Wildlife Service](#) in Oct. 2011, "the United States lost over 630,000 acres of forested wetlands during the five-year period between 2004 and 2009, mostly in the Southeast region. The loss reduces the nation's total wetlands acreage to just over 110 million acres in the continental United States."

Wetland restoration

In recent years a movement has begun to restore degraded wetlands and to create new wetlands to replace those lost to development. Here in Georgia, [Newman Wetlands Center in Clayton County](#) uses a unique constructed wetlands to provide tertiary water treatment to over 9 million gallons of treated sewage water per day. As a result of this natural filtration system, Clayton County is able to recharge their water supply for reuse.



During Georgia's second worst drought on record in 2007, Clayton County's raw water reserves remained at 77% of capacity.

For Your Calendar:

Plan ahead for the American Wetlands Month in May, a time for celebrating the efforts of agencies, businesses, non-profits and individuals who have realized the importance of wetlands and continue to work to preserve and restore this valuable resource.

Wetlands of interest in GA:

[Oxbow Meadows Environmental Learning Center](#)

Columbus - Presidential Pathways

[Newman Wetlands Center](#)

Hampton - Atlanta Metro

[Phinzy Swamp Nature Park](#)

Augusta

[Billy Cullens Memorial Nature Trail and](#)

[Observation Towers](#)

Darien - The Georgia Coast

To find other wetlands near you,

contact [Georgia State Parks](#),

[Explore Georgia](#)

or the

[United States Fish and Wildlife Service's](#)

[National Wetland Inventory](#).



Get involved!

Participate in a **WOW! Wonder of Wetlands**

www.GAProjectWET.org and/or

Adopt A Wetland www.GeorgiaAdoptAStream.org
workshop!

[Support conservation and watershed organizations](#)

working to protect wetlands.

For more information click on

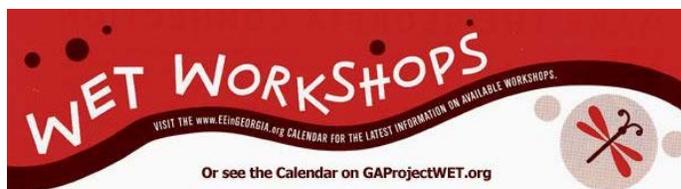
[Types of Wetlands](#)

or [Wetland Resources](#).

Exploring Wetlands through Project WET

Activity	Concepts
"Get the Groundwater Picture" p. 143	Students learn about basic ground water principles as they create their own geologic cross section or earth window.
"High Water History" p. 321	By calculating economic loss that results from flooding in a specific area, students investigate how people are affected by floods and other weather events.
"Just Passing Through" p. 163	In a whole-body activity, students investigate how vegetation affects the movement of water over land surfaces.
"Spring into Action" p. 203	Students actively simulate the process of water infiltrating down-gradient through varying soil layers, saturating the soil above an impermeable layer, flowing along an impermeable layer and naturally exiting the ground at a spring.
"Stormwater" p. 395	Students learn how water travels through a community and how it can be managed. Students use sponges to simulate how storm water can be captured, stored and released.
"Wetlands Soils in Living Color" p. 217	Students learn about the properties of wetland soils and classify soil type using a simple color key.

For more advanced information and activities on wetlands go to GAProjectWET.org and click on **Dragonfly Gazette**. Information will be available after September 10th.



Project WET 2.0 Re-certification Workshop

Presented by: [Confederate Hall Historical & Environmental Education Center at Stone Mountain Park](#)

Monday, Oct 8, 2012 9 AM to 12 PM

This workshop is for educators who have previously attended a Project WET workshop and who are interested in receiving a copy of the new and updated Project WET 2.0 guide.

For registration information, contact

[Michael O'Shield](#)

or

[Susan Meyers](#).

Triple Educator Workshop

Projects WET, WILD & Learning Tree

Presented by: Fortson 4-H Center

Monday, Nov 12, 2012 until Tuesday, Nov 13, 2012

Don't miss this opportunity to receive four curriculum and activity guides (Project WET 2.0, Project Learning Tree, Project WILD and Project WILD Aquatic) by attending this two-day workshop!

For information on this educator workshop
contact [Allen Nasworthy](#).

Triple Facilitator Workshop

Charlie Elliott Wildlife Center - Mansfield

February 28-March 1, 2013

Projects WET, WILD & Learning Tree combine to bring you skills to hold your own Educator Workshops!

Fills up fast!

Click here to [Register](#).



We are so happy to share this year's winners of the annual River of Words (ROW) program's environmental art and poetry contest with you. For 2012, the national organization selected 2 Georgia students as Grand Prize Winners in art and 9 others as National Finalists! And, 56 students were selected from over 1060 entries as Georgia winners.



Colors Under the Sea

Brooke Schieffelbein, grade 7

2012 Dragonfly Award Winner

The winning entries have been reproduced in a printed journal and displayed in 2 traveling exhibits. One exhibit is managed by the GA Center for the Book and sent to libraries throughout the state. The second exhibit is available for free checkout to educators, festivals, conferences, nature centers, and other interested parties.

For contacts and more information about the Georgia River of Words program and to see all of the winners since 2000 visit [GAProjectWET.org](#).



At this year's EEA conference in March, **Susan Meyers** from the Stone Mountain Memorial Association, was selected as "**Facilitator of the Year**" for her outstanding work with students on every level and her dedication to water education.
Great job, Susan!!

The **Athens-Clarke County Water Conservation Office** was selected as the "**Organization of the Year**." In 2011, the staff met with 70 groups and presented 109 water themed programs which included Project WET activities. They have also partnered with other organizations to promote water education and all of their staff members are Project WET certified. Georgia Project WET thanks them for their dedication to water education!

To nominate someone you know, visit our [website](#).

To find more Project WET workshops visit [EEinGeorgia.org](#)

[TOP](#)



EEA's 20th Anniversary Celebration

20 events for 20 years!

Become a member of [EEA](#) and join in the fun!

Georgia Naturalist Rally

Saturday, Sep 15, 2012 8 AM to 7 PM

Presented by:

[Confederate Hall Historical & Environmental Center at Stone Mountain Park](#)

There is more to Stone Mountain Park than most people realize! Whether you are a seasoned naturalist or someone new to nature, this day-long event offers something for any lover of the outdoors. There will be a variety of walks, hikes, and other activities throughout the park's natural district.

Click here to [register](#).

Georgia Outdoor Learning Symposium

September 21, 2012

The Council of Outdoor Learning will present the 16th annual Outdoor Learning Symposium, "The World is Your Classroom,"

at the Gwinnett Environmental & Heritage Center in Buford. Scholarships are available. Click here to [register](#).

RiversAlive

Rivers Alive needs your help! Volunteer at a Rivers Alive cleanup event this fall and get dirty to help clean up our waterways! To find a cleanup event in your area go to [RiversAlive.org](#) and click on "Locate a cleanup."

Can't find one in your area? Maybe it is time to organize your own cleanup?

Rivers Alive is now hosting year round events so register your event and get it posted on the Rivers Alive map.

EEA 20th Anniversary Fall Retreat

Connecting, Inspiring, and Empowering Environmental Educators Past, Present, and Future

Wasega 4-H Center, Dahlonega

November 16 - 17, 2012

Register online at [EEA 20th Fall Retreat](#).

KAEE & Southeast EE Conference

September 14-15, 2012

The Kentucky Association for Environmental Education (KAEE) is hosting the first [Southeast Environmental Education Alliance \(SEEA\) Conference](#) at Lake Cumberland State Resort. The theme for KAEE's 36th annual conference:

"Creating Balance", teaching *how to think, not what to think*.

Georgia Project Learning Tree

Fall Refresher Training Workshop

Thursday, October 4, 2012 1:00-4:00 pm

Georgia Forestry Education Center, Forsyth

This refresher training will give you updates on new materials, resources and grants that are available to you as an educator or trainer. We will also have discussions on how we can help you in presenting the materials to your students.

[Click here to register](#).

CCWA's Annual Wetlands & Watershed Festival

Newman Wetlands Center

Saturday, October 6, 11 a.m. - 4 p.m.

This free festival provides educational fun for the entire family with environmental exhibits, wetlands activities, live animal exhibits, guided wetlands walks, children's nature crafts, a scavenger hunt along the 1/2 mile wetlands trail and lots more! The festival is held rain or shine.

For more information, call 770.603.5606.

2012 Water Essay Contest!

Deadline October 12th!

The Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District is pleased to announce the 11th Annual Water Essay Contest! The topic of this year's essay contest is **Stormwater Pollution**. Sixth, seventh and eighth graders in the following counties are encouraged to participate: Bartow, Cherokee, Clayton, Cobb, Coweta, DeKalb, Douglas, Fayette, Fulton, Forsyth, Gwinnett, Hall, Henry, Paulding and Rockdale. One City of Atlanta and fifteen County winners will receive a \$50 prize. A District-wide winner will receive a \$200 prize. [Click here for more details.](#)



Marine Mammals in Coastal Georgia Teacher Workshop

Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Brunswick

Friday, November 9, 2012 8:45AM - 5:00PM

Join experts in the Marine Mammal field who will speak on the North Atlantic Right Whale, Atlantic Bottlenose Dolphin, and Florida Manate. The K-12 CURRICULUM will be provided for all participants and is open to all educators.

COST: \$50, includes refreshments, lunch, and resource material. Contact [Georgia Graves](#) to register.

New Environmental Education Mini-grant

The Southeast Environmental Education Alliance is partnering with professional environmental education associations across the southeast to provide grants up to \$5,000 in support of programs and projects that support and advance environmental education and environmental literacy in the region. Proposals are due November 1, 2012.

For more details go to www.southeastee.org.

The Southeast Environmental Education Alliance is a network of eight state affiliates of the

North American Association for Environmental Education:

Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina and Tennessee.



Be sure to visit:

[Project WET Portal](#)

[Discoverwater.org](#)

Happy Fall!

[Jo](#) * [Monica](#) * [Sue](#)

Educator or facilitator for GA Project WET

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