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Millions of Students and Teachers Celebrate Environmental Education Week *Largest national education event yet focuses on water conservation*

WASHINGTON, D.C.—Millions of students from around the country this week will participate in environmentally themed lessons as part of National Environmental Education Week, the single largest organized environmental education event in the United States.

EE Week, a seven-day lead in to Earth Day, features field trips, class exercises and other activities. The program has grown to include [more than 2,500 partners](#) – including classroom teachers, schools, museums and nature centers – and reaches an estimated 4.5 million students. EE Week promotes understanding and protection of the natural world by actively engaging K-12th grade students and educators in an inspired week of environmental learning.

“The growth of this program has been just explosive,” said Diane Wood, president of the National Environmental Education Foundation (NEEF). “We’re seeing environmental education flourish around the country. Environmental education is being incorporated into more subject areas at every grade level. No longer is environmental education considered an add-on; it is essential to train our children to prepare them for the challenges they will face and for the emerging green economy.”

This year’s “Be Water Wise” focus includes lesson plans, quizzes, water-themed nature journaling blogs, water-quality testing kits and “ask-an-expert” opportunities with water professionals who help students understand the importance of this precious resource.

Teachers oversaw the development of the curricula for their peers.

Tasha Kirby, a Seattle-area fourth grade teacher, served on the EE Week Teachers’ Advisory Committee, a group of 11 instructors across the country who helped evaluate materials for relevance and usefulness in the classroom.

“Water is something that is all around us, yet very few young students understand watersheds and the importance of protecting streambeds, rivers, lakes, and oceans,” Kirby said. “It is important for students to know that clean water is a necessity for all life on Earth. I have found that young people are often the best caretakers for the environment – once they know why something needs to change, they work hard to make it happen at school, home and in the community.”

Governors in 22 states and mayors in as many cities have signed proclamations commemorating EE Week. In addition, 115 businesses, government agencies and nonprofits have contributed content, promoted resources or held EE Week activities.

A wide variety of water-themed lessons, trips and activities are planned around the country.

- At Nichols Junior High School in Arlington, Texas, students will work on water-focused essay assignments, conduct water analysis and investigation lab assignments, vie for prizes in water fact competitions and conduct field studies.
- AmeriCorps Watershed Ambassadors will teach biological stream monitoring lessons to students at Williamstown Middle School in Williamstown, N.J., including working with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to plant wildflowers in a drainage area on the school's property.
- Regina Dominica High School in Wilmette, Ill., will hold its seventh annual Earth Rally, an outdoor event where students create and purchase handmade items. Money raised through the event will be donated to an organization that helps people in developing countries develop sustainable drinking water resources, sanitation facilities and hygiene education programs.
- Adopt-a-Stream in Anchorage, Alaska will make presentations in three schools about water, especially focusing on fresh water and resource management.
- Students from the Good Shepherd School in Pacifica, Calif., will be taking field trips to Mori Point, a protected habitat area.
- A pilot program involving 14 Miami-Dade County schools, "Be Water Wise Miami!" will kick off April 15 with an event at Jose de Diego Middle School. City of Miami Mayor Manny Diaz, who also serves as president of the U.S. Conference of Mayors, will take part in the launch event.

We are grateful to the Wal-Mart Foundation for its national sponsorship of EE Week and to Canon USA for their ongoing support.

For more information about EE Week and activities in your area, call Dan Seligson, 202.261-6481 or visit <http://www.eeweek.org>.

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The National Environmental Education Foundation (NEEF) provides knowledge to trusted professionals who, with their credibility, amplify messages to national audiences to solve everyday environmental problems. Together, we generate lasting positive change.

NEEF partners with professionals in health, education, media, business and public land management to promote daily actions for helping people protect and enjoy the environment. Through our primary programs -- Classroom Earth, National Public Lands Day, National Environmental Education Week, Business and Environment, Earth Gauge® and Health & Environment -- we offer Americans knowledge to live by. To learn more, call (202) 833-2933 or visit www.neefusa.org.