

Sample Articles and Presentations for Public Outreach

Adopt-A-Stream Group Surveys Beaver Creek

The West End Homeowners Association (WEHA) has completed a one year Adopt-A-Stream project on Beaver Creek. In partnership with the Johnson County Water Department and Georgia Adopt-A-Stream, the WEHA adopted a one mile stretch of Beaver Creek. The group completed a watershed assessment, four visual surveys and four litter pickups. Results show the creek generally in good shape, although the group has reported two illegal dumping incidents to the county (which has sent out crews to pick up trash and is investigating the dumper).

The WEHA was started by a group of landowners whose land borders Beaver Creek that wanted to learn more about and protect it. The land surrounding Beaver Creek (the watershed) is generally undeveloped; however, new development upstream is of concern. One upstream builder polluted the creek with sediment and litter until the WEHA, working with county officials, convinced the builder to put up silt fences and to store construction debris away from the creek.

WEHA learned a lot about Beaver Creek, the surrounding area, and how to help protect water quality. An example is keeping the area next to the creek natural so that this buffer area will protect the stream from pollutants that may wash into the creek during a storm. Also, watching how much fertilizer and yard chemicals are put out (especially near the stream) so that these chemicals will not wash into the water protects the stream. WEHA has sponsored a tour of the creek for other landowners and shared with them the efforts and desire for everyone to pitch in and help protect Beaver Creek. For more information about the WEHA Adopt-A-Stream project, call J. Concerned at 404-555-1212.

Clear Creek Can Be Improved

A student group at Baldwin High School, the Marshers, took on a new project this year. The Marshers joined the Environmental Protection Division's Adopt-A-Stream Program to learn about and protect Clear Creek. Clear Creek runs behind the high school, so it seemed to be a natural project for the students.

The Marshers started out by conducting a watershed assessment. Topographical maps of the area were used to study the watershed beforehand. During the assessment, students recorded land uses and potential impacts to water quality along a one-mile section of the creek upstream from the school. The students found that the creek drains both residential and industrial areas. There are some areas that need to be cleaned up and two places where the streambank is eroding. Also, downstream of the residential area lots of algae was noticed in the water, an indication that excessive nutrients are present in the water. Regular visual surveys confirm that there is a noticeable difference in water appearance and presence of algae upstream and downstream of the residential area. However, occasional oily sheens were noticed downstream from the industrial area.

Clear Creek is an important resource for the students at Baldwin High School and they plan to act on the information they have obtained. First, the Marshers will conduct a creek cleanup. Working with the local Rotary Club, the Marshers will sponsor the first annual "Clean Clear Creek" day and register with Rivers Alive. The Rotary Club will provide trash bags to volunteers. The first 100 people to bring in a full trash bag will also receive a t-shirt, compliments of the Rivers Alive program.

Next, the Marshers are working with the City of Baldwin to plant trees and other vegetation where the streambank is eroding. The City has contacted property owners and asked for their help to maintain the new plantings. The Marshers will check upstream and downstream of the newly stabilized streambanks to see if the plantings have decreased erosion. Finally, the students will send a letter to all the businesses in the industrial park to emphasize the importance of the creek. The letter will include some tips on how businesses can help keep Clear Creek clean.

Sample Presentation Outline for Public Outreach

- I. Introduction
Describe project--who is involved, what stream, what activities
- II. Importance
Why the stream is important to volunteers and community
- III. Results
What was found during Watershed Assessment, Visual Surveys, Monitoring, and Litter Cleanups
- IV. Potential Improvement Activities
What are some activities you can do, or several partners can do together, to protect or improve water quality?