

Purpose

The Vermilion Soil and Water Conservation District (VSWCD) is a political subdivision and local tax exempt entity in Vermilion Parish who with the assistance of cooperating agencies, has carried on an intensive program providing technical assistance, planning, education outreach and other services to the people of Vermilion Parish. VSWCD is now implementing and managing a portable conservation classroom. With the assistance of partnering agencies, VSWCD is bringing awareness, knowledge, problem solving, decision making, action and stewardship to children, teens and adults. Our 40' gooseneck trailer is transported and set on school campuses, field days, soil judging competitions, education camps, conventions, etc. VSWCD's Conservation Classroom is impacting a large population on conservation issues and our natural resources all around the state of Louisiana.



Public Comments

"It took subjects that I'm teaching in my classroom and expanded on the students' content knowledge. I am actually teaching a lesson on soil right now, and to see the students' eyes light up and the smiles on their faces because they 'get it' just made my day. Thank you for making this available for our students," said Ms. Nikki Chapman, 4th grade teacher at Mount Carmel Elementary.

Classroom Stations

Soil:

Scope on a Rope is a hand held microscope that is used to magnify elements of inorganic soil. Sand, Silt & Clay are discussed and shown along with colors of soils, erosion and turbidity. Core Soils from Vermilion Parish are displayed.

Plants

The importance of agriculture in Louisiana is discussed, A miniature rice farm is on display with farming equipment to demonstrate the process of a rice crop. A crop ID kit, how a tree grows kit and poison ivy are all on display. Various types of root systems (tap, fibrous and adventitious roots) are discussed and shown.

Water

An Enviroscape is used to teach the understanding of a watershed and how water flows. Erosion, pest and nutrient management proper care of septic systems, responsibility and ownership of vehicles and homes are also taught. Wave and splash erosion are shown and explained. An aquifer kit with the water cycle is also on display.

Air

A brief video of the dust bowl days is shown, and the students are shown a miniature version of a dust bowl recreation. We discuss how wind is created through air pressure, and an experiment on air having weight is available for demonstrations. We also show how a wind mill can generate electricity and is an excellent form of clean energy.

Animals

A cattle farm is displayed showing best management practices that can be used. Beneficial and non-beneficial insects are displayed. An identifier of yard birds and frogs teaches the sounds of the various animals. An explanation of what products and foods come from various animals is displayed (i.e. chicken, cows, pigs). A display of animal hides, skulls and animal tracks are available along with brief facts of each animal on display.



Recycling

The students are taught that not only is recycling a good practice, but also buying recycled products is just as important. Carpet samples, a t-shirt and a lanyard are just some of the recycled products that are displayed. A telephone made of used plastic cups and string is used to teach how sound travels. The time it takes for items to decompose, and how much energy is used to make recycled products in comparison to new products is discussed.