

# Area teachers Adopt-A-Watershed program recognized by

The Water Quality Forum at the University of Tennessee held a banquet at the University Club Jan. 27 to honor teachers who have dedicated themselves to implementing the Adopt-A-Watershed program.

Area teachers who were honored at the banquet are:

• **Debbie Arnold**, environmental science teacher at Powell High School. Arnold has, among other activities, had her students monitor the health of Beaver Creek.

Over the years, her students have also conducted streamside plantings and assisted with a TVA-sponsored community-wide riparian seedling distribution workshop. Her most recent project is a tile mosaic that was sponsored and coordinated by Knox County Parks and Recreation.

The idea was spawned by **Karen Nolt**, Knox County's greenway coordinator, who contracted with a local artist to design a mosaic at the head of the new Powell Greenway. Nolt

then came to Arnold's ecology class for assistance. The students learned about Beaver Creek and then conceptually laid it into this beautiful mosaic. This project recently won a Keep Knoxville Beautiful Orchid's award.

• **Mike Blankenship**, agriculture teacher at Halls High School and North Knox Vocational Center. Beyond incorporating the many watershed protection concepts and skills that can be integrated into Ag classes, Blankenship has also devoted time to helping move the Halls High Outdoor Classroom project forward, as a result of a donation of more than three acres of floodplain property from Knox County to the school system. Blankenship has, among other tasks, worked with his class on conceptual designs, installing a detention area and will soon be installing TVA-donated plants. His students designed an award-winning brochure used by the Beaver Creek Task Force in this past year's riparian seedling distribution.

• **Ashley Whitmire**, biology and ecology teacher at Gibbs High. One of Whitmire's special projects is to provide each student with a camera to go out into the Beaver Creek Watershed and capture how various land uses are positively and negatively affecting Beaver Creek. The results are then put on posters and shared with the community.

Special recognition was also given to those teachers who are new participants to the program. These individuals have not been indoctrinated into the program yet through the four-day Adopt-A-Watershed sum-

mer teacher workshop required to fully participate in the program, but each have already made important contributions through their participation: Bob Lavoie, Powell Middle eighth grade physical sciences teacher; Michelle Stumbo, Halls High intern working with Mike Blankenship; Brenda Stewart, Karns High/Byington-Solway biology and ecology teacher; Tracy Smith, Karns High agriculture teacher; and Doug Lakin, Karns High ecology and chemistry teacher.

• **Kerrie Coley**, biology and ecology teacher at Halls High School. Coley joined an AAW Leadership Team that was formed three years ago to evaluate the program and take it to a new level. She attended an intensive ten-day regional AAW conference, where she led the group in developing a curriculum-based plan for the Halls High Outdoor Classroom.

She recently won an environmental educator award from Hallsdale Powell Utility District for her environmental work with her students, particularly getting them out into the watershed and teaching them how to protect their vital water supplies.

• **Mike Horner and Cindy Zachary**, life science teachers at Halls Middle School. Horner and Zachary have taken a team approach to implementing AAW. The teachers have involved their students in a number of projects, including a 10-week course to prepare them to plant more than 1,000 seedlings at the Halls Community Park.

• **Will Roberts**, environmental science teacher at Powell High. This past semester, Roberts' students participated in a wide range of hands-on watershed educational activities, learning about the many challenges that Beaver Creek currently faces. His classes will also be involved in the upcoming Powell Station Park.

• **Tom Jursik**, science teacher at Powell Middle. Jursik is one of the initial teachers who helped to kick off this program in 1997. Since its inception at Powell Middle, Tom has conducted AAW through his afterschool club. Over the years, beyond educating his club members on Beaver Creek, he has helped create a corner in the library that is dedicated to educating other students and school guests about Beaver Creek.

The Adopt-A-Watershed program was initiated by the Water Quality Forum partners in Knox County in 1997.

Students at 14 area schools have participated in projects to protect and restore our community's natural resources and instill a sense of civic pride.

Projects examples include: collecting watershed data and sharing it with the public, stabilizing stream banks through tree and shrub planting, decaling storm drains, educating community members about water quality issues, beautifying our communities through the arts, removing exotic plant species along riparian corridors creating outdoor educational spaces and conducting litter pickups.

For more info on the Adopt-A-Watershed program, contact Ruth Anne Hanahan at 974-9124 or e-mail at rhanahan@utk.edu.