

# Kids in the Creek in Karns

Sixty sixth graders from Karns Middle School participated in the annual Kids in the Creek day conducted by the Beaver Creek Task Force. Students from the classes of science teachers Jane Buckner, David Hawkins, Peggy McGivney and Vinita Williamson descended on a tributary of Beaver Creek in the Westbridge Industrial Park last Monday.

Kids in the Creek is a program designed to give students an opportunity to study water quality and stream health in a hands-on manner. It is a part of the curriculum of the Adopt-a-Watershed program.

Divided into groups, the students go through four rotations. In one rotation, students put on waders and get in the creek with nets and buckets, stir up the bottom with their feet to capture aquatic insects and identify them with the help of experts from the UT Water Resources Research Center, the CAC AmeriCorp water quality team and TVA. The more bugs found, the better the health of the stream.

Aquatic biologists from the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation and from TVA shock fish in another rotation. The fish are then counted and examined for

health. The final two rotations are land use, where students learn about the effects of polluted runoff, and water chemistry, where students conduct tests on a creek water sample to determine if the water is healthy.

Representatives from the Water Quality Forum including Knox County, the UT Water Resource Research Center, TVA, TDEC, West Knox Utility District and the Beaver Creek Watershed Association helped plan, fund and run the Kids in the Creek event.

"This is wonderful. It's an experience the kids will never forget," Buckner said.



Hannah Smith pours a water sample from Beaver Creek into a test tube.

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## Daniel Horne highlights soil conservation at BCWA

"It's your tax dollar," social conservationist Daniel Horne told the Beaver Creek Watershed Association last week. "You might as well use it."

Horne, who works for the Knox County Soil Conservation District, highlighted government programs on the state and federal level that can help organizations and private citizens offset the costs of conservation and erosion control. The programs are mostly aimed at farmers, but many of the wildlife programs are available to anyone.

"I grew up on a farm," Horne said. "You want to maximize the land you can use, but if you don't stop erosion you're losing land."

Horne's job involves explaining government cost-sharing options to local farmers. He said the least expensive thing a farmer can do to conserve area creeks is to request a soil test before fertilizing. This prevents needless over-fertilization and can help a farmer's land yield better quantities of crops.

"There's no use in applying what your land doesn't need," Horne said.

Measures covered by these programs involve fencing livestock out of creeks, setting up separate watering stations for them and restoring native vegetation to creek sides.

Concerning government cost-

share potential, Horne said that government cost-share potential typically ranges from 50 to 90 percent cost share.

"If your papaw did it that way, and your dad did it that way, it's hard to change that," Horne said. "Farmers are more interested in economics. If you go out and pitch environmental views without explaining economic benefits, you're falling on deaf ears."

Horne used beef cattle farming as an example of these benefits.

"There are two things that make money for the beef farmer: food and water," he said. "If a cow walks more than 800 feet to a water source, it's losing weight. Cattle will drink more and gain more weight with a potable water supply from a well, spring, or city water."

Horne said that a properly fertilized field will yield more hay per cutting. "I want to work with any of you who need our services," he said.

The Beaver Creek Watershed Association will not meet again until September, but the group has many activities planned for the summer. The BCWA will operate a booth at the Karns Fair on Saturday, July 23, and will participate in the Powell Fourth of July Parade.

The Halls Greenway grand opening will be held soon.

— Shannon Carey