



At left, Karns High student Matt Marler presents his class's creek monitoring results to the Beaver Creek Watershed Association. Above, Halls High teacher Mike Blankenship discusses the school's outdoor classroom. (Photos by S. Carey)

Students speak at Beaver Creek Watershed meeting

By Shannon Carey

The Beaver Creek Watershed Association heard a special presentation at last Thursday's meeting. Students from Karns High School gave a PowerPoint presentation detailing their classroom analysis of water samples taken throughout the watershed.

Karns students Matt Marler, Dillon Mount and Jacob Sampson were assisted by AmeriCorps volunteer Mia Akaogi. She gathered samples throughout Beaver Creek watershed and brought them to Doug Lakin's ecology classes for study.

The most surprising student findings were high chlorine levels in two samples. Since these samples were taken near swimming pools, it is possible that the pools were leaking or the owners emptied them improperly.

Chlorine in the creek dissipates quickly, but it can have a devastating effect on creek ecology.

"It's really not acceptable for aquatic life," said Sampson.

The students recommended allowing pool water to sit longer before emptying to reduce chlorine levels.

Ruth Anne Hanahan of Knox County Adopt-A-Watershed suggested that the students develop educational materials on how to empty a swimming pool correctly.

North Knox Vocational Center horticulture teacher Mike Blankenship suggested that the Karns students come to his classes to give the presentation.

"This is how ideas get exchanged," he said.

The students said the project increased their awareness of pollutants in the creek. The presence of the bacteria *E. coli* effected them the most.

"I've heard of it before, but I just never thought it could be in our water system," Marler said.

"We need to get it out of the streams," said Mount.

BCWA president Tim Ezzell discussed a rumor of fill work proposed at Powell Airport. The area is part of a city of Knoxville annexation, and Ezzell was concerned that BCWA may not have representation in decisions.

Ezzell asked members to support him in approaching City Council member Bob Becker.

"I intend to be proactive and find out what's going on," he said.