

Spring moves students outdoors

Spring fever is upon us, with students itching to get out of the classroom and into the great outdoors. Outdoor classrooms are the perfect answer, bringing learning and blue skies together.



Shannon Carey

Gresham Middle School

A 15-member group of CAC AmeriCorps volunteers from the Water Quality, Earth Flag, Urban Agriculture, Home Energy and Keep Knoxville Beautiful

teams descended on Gresham Middle School's Outdoor Classroom on March 10. The group, led by Ruth Anne Hanahan and Tim Gangaware of the Tennessee Water Resources Research Center, got a head start on preparing the area for students' research this spring.

The volunteers cleaned up the classroom's water feature, removed privet and poison ivy, and repaired some structures.

Volunteer students, parents and community members worked on additional clean-up March 11.

Halls Middle and High

Halls Middle School science students got a chance to stretch their legs Friday. After ecology-minded presentations from Daniel Horne of Knox

County Soil Conservation, the students planted 250 seedlings along the streambank in the Halls outdoor classroom. Helped along by AmeriCorps volunteers Hanahan and Gangaware, they planted trees and shrubs that will help control bank erosion, provide habitat for wildlife and beautify the area.

In another part of the classroom, Halls High School students from Kerrie Coley's ecology classes built to-scale models of silt fences. Coley said her students are learning about different types of water pollution, including sedimentation.

"We're looking at best management practices to prevent all that," said Coley.

Building real silt fences, she said, is impractical.

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Daniel Horne of Knox County Soil Conservation teaches Halls Middle School sixth graders about water quality issues.



CAC AmeriCorps volunteers Jenni Johnson and Meagan Jones clean up the Gresham Outdoor Classroom water feature.



Haley Wright and Kari Summers plant a seedling and get a helping shovel from Tennessee Water Resources Research Center's Tim Gangaware.



Halls High ecology teacher Kerrie Coley (right) teaches Kayla Davenport and Brittney Beason about erosion controls with a silt fence model.